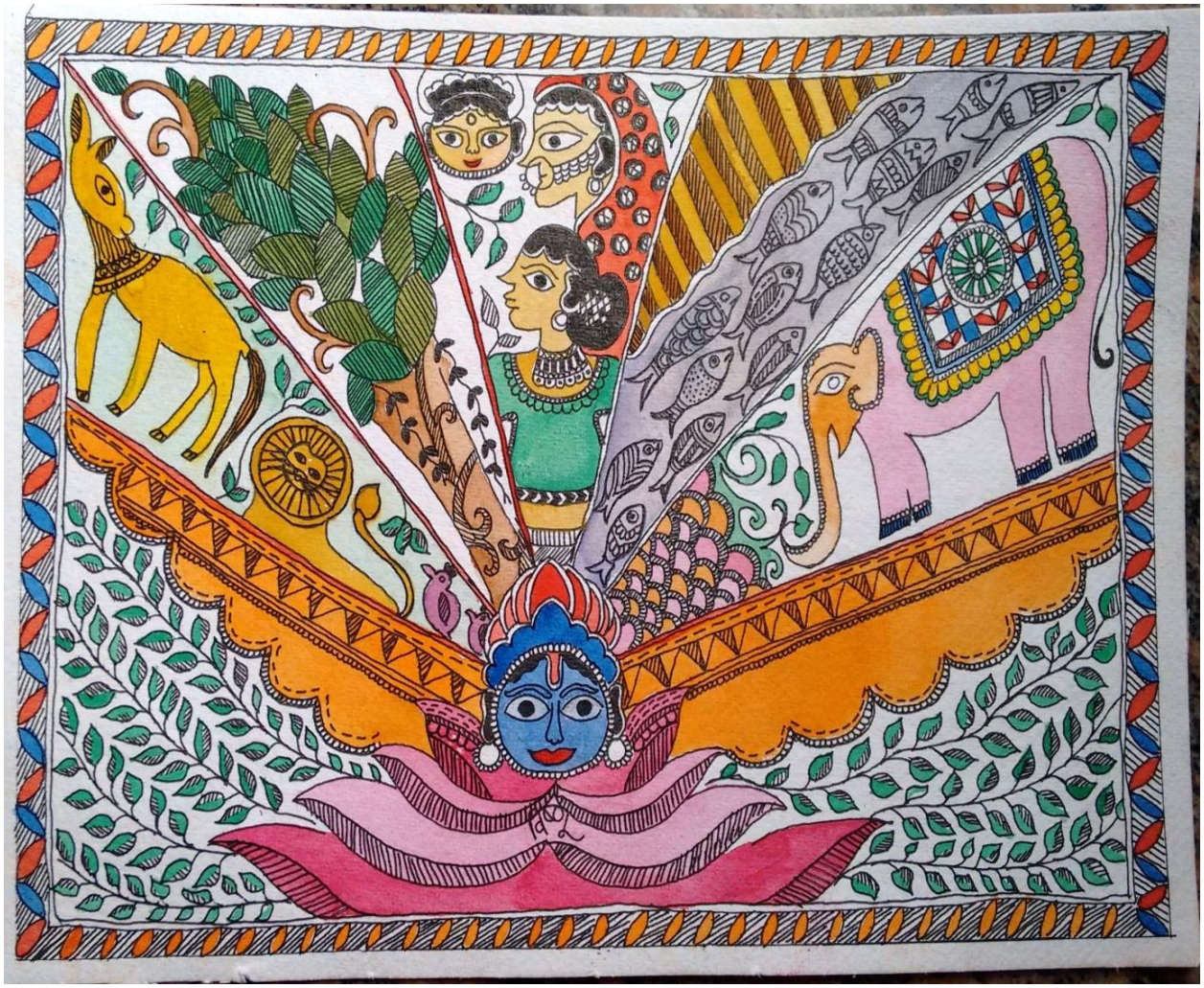
The Teaching of Viṣṇusahasranāma

Based on the teachings of

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

(With few Additions by Swamini Brahmaprajnananda)



Art work by Jamuna Inamdar

IMPORTANT NOTE

This is the digital version of the book based on Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati's talks on Viṣṇusahasranāma compiled by Smt Sunitha Santharam Amma and published by Sruti Seva trust, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Coimbatore, South India, 2005.

This is to expressly state that this digital copy is meant for your personal use only and not for any commercial use. This book or a part thereof should not be published in the form of a printed book without the permission of Sruti Seva Trust, Coimbatore.

In the text, some additions have been made by Swamini Brahmaprajnananda in blue text which include some sentences, relevant anecdotes or some stories from the Puranas.

With permission from the Trustees of Sruti Seva Trust
27th April 2020

26th April 2020

Namaste everyone.

On Akshaya Tritiya day in 2015 I had begun sharing Pujya Swami Dayananda 's teachings from the great treasure that is in the form of Viṣṇu Sahasranāma.

For more than 2.5 years, the meaning of one word a day on a facebook group and whatsapp group was shared daily. This teaching was intended to be an online supplement to the study of the Bhagavad Gita for most of my offline and online Vedanta students. But it became bigger than that. Many others joined and were able to discover much joy and meaning in their lives with the discovery of Īśvara. For those who already chanted the Viṣṇu Sahasranāma, their chanting gained greater depth and significance. Those who had never even heard of it, were inspired to learn. Much puṇya was gained and shared.

It is only an abundance of blessings that on Akshaya Tritiya 2020 this digital copy based on the book is now available for your personal use.

It is important to note that in the text I have added many sentences, some relevant anecdotes or some stories from the Puranas as I found appropriate and these are in blue text. Shankara Bhashya (in Sanskrit) is not included. If there are any errors found in this, I alone am responsible. Kindly bring it to my notice.

I am very grateful to Sruti Seva Trust, especially Smt Sunitha Santharam and Swami Sadatmananda ji to so promptly and kindly give me permission to make this available online. As a result of their generosity, more Vedanta studentsliving outside India can benefit especially those who may find it difficult to source this book.

My thanks to my loving and committed Vedanta students (Rashmi Kaikini, Rekha Nair and Sonali Ambasankar) who keyed in the whole text.

Continuing sincere prayers to Bhagavan Viṣṇu for preserving our great parampara of self knowledge transmitted down the ages and that true seekers may finally come home!

With love and prayers,

Swamini Brahmaprajnananda

Swaminiji@discoveratma.com

INTRODUCTION

In our religious Indian culture, a person who constantly repeats the name of the Lord, would be looked upon as a devotee. If the person keeps repeating His name the whole day, then that person is perhaps called 'an inspired devotee.' But, when a person repeats the name of any given person the whole day, then, that person is evidently, a mentally challenged person. Therefore, there is a difference in our attitude towards these two persons. Nāma is the name and nāmī is the one, who has the name. If the name happens to be a time-bound person with limitations, then repeating his name will become a mere obsession and will not be beneficial in any manner. Repeating the name of a rich person and talking about his glories all the time, just because he has a lot of power and influence, will not be be beneficial in any way. There is no benefit in repeating the name of a time bound person.

But when a person repeats the name of Parameśvara, the Lord, there is bound to be a benefit, there is a purpose in it. Why should anyone repeat the names of the Lord? What are the benefits? Why has the Lord so many names? What do they mean? Thus, these questions naturally arise! There is a difference between repeating the names of the Lord with understanding and repeating them without any understanding.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORD ĪŚVARA

All these questions become meaningful, only when we understand this Lord or Īśvara. Who is Īśvara? The Lord is called Īśvara. The word Īśvara is made up of two parts 'īś' and vara.' The part 'vara' is called 'pratyaya' and the other part 'īś' called 'prakṛti,' which is in the sense of 'aiśvarye,' ruling protection; just as in the word 'worker,' 'work' is 'prakṛti' and the 'er' is pratyaya.' So Īśvara is the one who protects, sustains and the one who is a source of blessing.

In the world, we find that the work of a police commissioner is to protect others. But we see that this person, whose job is to protect others, has also his own heavy security to protect him. He also needs protection. An employer is one who is responsible for giving employment to a large number of people and His employees look upon him. But we find that this employer also look up to a number of people and also depends on a variety of things. People like doctors, who cure people of their illnesses, also have to go to other doctors. Lawyers have to go to other lawyers and they also have to go to doctors. Doctors also have to go to lawyers, to solve their problems. A person is called a prabhu, a master, a lord. Still, when he wants to make a donation, he has to ask his wife, whether to donate or not. She may say 'I will tell you tomorrow.' Then, he has to wait. So everyone looks to someone else to make a decision. Everyone depends on others; every master has other masters to turn to; every lord is lorded over by other lords. Thus, no one seems to be a real prabhu, a real master. If this is the situation, who then is the real prabhu? The real prabhu must be the one who does not have any other prabhu. He should be the one, who is not dependent on anybody else, one who does not look up to anybody and one who is not lorded over by anybody.

In the Śiva-aṣṭottara, we find 'Īśvarāya namaḥ' which means my namaskāra, salutations unto the Lord. We also find another nāma as 'anīśvarāya namah.' The word anīśvara does not mean 'one who is not a Lord' but means 'the one who does not have a Lord.' Īśvaraḥ na vidyate yasya' He is the Īśvara and he has no Īśvara to lord over him. Unto Him my salutations. The 'varac pratyaya' has the meaning of tacchīlatva. When it is added to certain verbs, it gives the meaning

of one who always does, habitually does what is indicated by the verb. Thus added to the verbal root 'īśa aīśvarye' it indicates the one who has the habit of ruling, protecting. He is always the ruler, protecter and sustainer of everything. He does not need to be ruled, sustained or protected by anyone else and therefore He is Īśvara.

Sri Subramaniam is called in various ways as Subbu, Subbudu, Mani and also as S.S. For all these names, one Subramaniam responds. He also responds to words of relation such as uncle, daddy, mamma, anna and so on. All these are the different names for one and the same person. Now, does Īśvara also have similar names? Yes. They are these thousand names and when one understands Īśvara, all these names become clear.

This Īśvara, who we say is the cause of this scheme of things called jagat, is to be discovered. We generally assume, without much enquiry, that there is a power beyond ourselves called God. Organisations assume and talk that there is a power and give it a location and gender as 'Father in Heaven.' He is presented as a God who is highly judgemental and cannot stand any violation of His mandates etc. So much is taken for granted that God is the most misunderstood person. Because of this, many great people like the mathematician-philosoper Bertrand Russell and others do not want to have anything to do with God or the theologies that present Him.

Some get away from such theologies while some others get along with these assumptions for want of anything better. There are some others who ask, while I have enough to worry about in my life, why should I bother with one more thing.

CAUSE FOR ONE'S SELF-DISAPPROVAL

Every human being is a complex organism, highly self-conscious. Animals also have some self-consciousness in that they can recognize their own species, but they have neither complexes about non-acceptance of themselves. They do not seem to want to be different from what they are, if their behavior indicates anything. But the human being wants to be different in a hundred different ways, because he/she is totally conscious of the self. This, therefore, leads to self-judgement and self loath which in turn gives rise to complexes. So, the whole life is one of 'becoming.' The need to 'become' only reveals a self-disapproval and a conclusion that one is limited in every way. We have a body-mind-sense-complex which has various limitations. The body is limited time-wise, space-wise, object-wise; it is further limited from the standpoint of colour, height, weight, appearance and so on. We are further limited health-wise, knowledge-wise, money-wise, and so on. Therefore, in whichever way we look at ourselves, we are not acceptable to ourselves. This self-disapproval and non-acceptance cannot be got rid of by mere positive thinking. If at all positive thinking does something, it is to change one's negative thinking.

There is another fact about our self that forms the basis of our struggle. Here is a person who has never tasted coffee and now he tastes his first cup of coffee. He cannot make any judgement on it because he does not have a norm, a basis for it. He should taste varieties of coffee from various places and only then he would have a norm for making a judgement. Then, the look, flavor, etc. will tell him all about the coffee because now he has a standard to judge the taste of coffee.

So too, one should have a norm, a basis to judge oneself to say that this way one is not acceptable to oneself. How do we get the norm? We get a norm whenever we have a moment of

joy. Everyone experiences these moments of joy all through one's life and no one is denied this experience. The happiness is the same even if the means are different. Situations and experiences may be different, but the happiness is the same. So too, the sources of duḥkha, sorrow may be different, but the unhappiness is the same. A swami is unhappy because he has lost a kamaṇḍalu and it was imported. A businessman lost his money in stocks, while another person lost his kingdom. All are equally unhappy, though the causes are different. Now each gets back whatever he looses, and now their joy is more or less the same.

The means leading to unhappiness may be different, but unhappiness as such, is the same. Similarly, the means of arriving at happiness maybe different and varied, but happiness as such is always the same. Be it happiness born of knowledge, vidyānanda or happiness born of the sensory enjoyment of objects, viṣayānanda, or happiness born of various ways of dealing with the mind, yogānanda, the happiness is the same. Even though degrees of happiness may vary, but, the fact that one is happy is the same.

What is happiness? Happiness is that which is experienced when one is happy. There are various means employed to achieve happiness. Is happiness something that can be objectified? Looking at the stars may have made one happy. But, in fact, in happiness there is no object involved, nor can happiness itself be objectified. When one sees a flower, then the seer of the flower is the subject and the seen flower is the object. So, there is a subject-object relationship. This subject-object relationship is there with reference to everything that we objectify. Objects in the world are many and varied. Sounds are many and varied; forms of touch are many and varied; forms and colours are also many and varied. Tastes are many and varied and so too smell. Things presumed and inferred are many and varied. Things that are believed to exist are also many and varied. All these objects are objectified by you the subject. But, when one is happy, does one relate to happiness as the subject for whom, the object is happiness? No. We say 'this flower,' 'this pot,' but we do not say 'this happiness' because happiness is not centered on any object, but it is centered on 'I.' Hence we say 'I am happy,' So there is zero relationship, that is, there is no subject-object relationship. Even though a particular object might have been a kind of cause of happiness, still, there is no object involved.

NO SELF-ACCEPTANCE WITHOUT SELF-DISCOVERY

The fact that 'I am happy' is known to me. This becomes the basis of all the disapprovals and struggles in life, because, this is what one wants to be. I want to be happy. It is like a musician who sings in a concert. You enjoy the music and then go up to congratulate the musician on his wonderful performance. But the musician is apologetic and says 'I did not do well.' According to him he did not do well, but according to you he did very well. He is unhappy with his performance because he knows his height, the octave that he can normally reach, but could not reach that day. Therefore, he is not satisfied. Thus, there is a norm for each one and this is the truth about our self also.

All our wants, judgements, complexes, anxieties, concerns and all other issues resolve in a moment of joy. It does not wait for desires to get fulfilled. If all our desires have to be fulfilled to attain that moment to be happy, then it will never be possible to be happy. There are different kinds of desires. There are desires wherein one says,' I wish I had done this.' 'I wish I had not done this!' Thus there is always this guilt. 'How is it that I did the wrong thing? How is it that I did not do the right thing?' This conflict always exists. With reference to the behavior of others

also, desires are there, wishing that others would behave differently. Then, with reference to the political status of our country, with reference to the economic situation of the country, there are always desires which remain unfulfilled. We want the politicians to be straightforward, clean and well informed. We wish that the hygiene of the country was more acceptable. We want people to be different! How many desires and ambitions remain unfulfilled! Can we ever fulfill all of them?

All the unfulfilled desires give one a personality with certain angularities and almost predictable behavioural patterns. Every child knows what to tell and what not to tell his father, because he knows, that he has an emotionally predictable behavioural pattern. But, in spite of all these desires being unfulfilled, one can still have a moment of happiness and have a hearty laugh.

Now listen to this. 'Why is a mother-in-law like a standard battery?' 'Because she can go on and on and on! (laughter). Now all of you laughed, revealing the freshness of a child. What was the desire that you fulfilled now, so as to laugh? Nothing. That means, to be happy it takes only you, because it is centered on you. This is exactly what you are, and hence, this is what you want to be. So the whole pursuit in life is searching for the happy person that is you. The Vedas say that the moment of happiness that one experiences in life, is the basis for you to judge yourself as being acceptable or not acceptable. Therefore, 'ātmavit śokam tarati,' the one who knows oneself, crosses sorrow.

NO SELF-DISCOVERY WITHOUT DISCOVERING ĪŚVARA

To know oneself, to understand all about oneself, one has to find one's place in the scheme of things. You are an individual in the scheme of things, which is the world. The world means the society, the country and everything else that is immediately in front of you. This is the scheme in which one finds oneself. The scheme of things implies that which is given. The body is given, the mind is given, senses are given, contemporary society is given and you have to deal with all of them. The entire scheme of things is given with a variety of possibilities. But even the possibilities are not known to you now. In the wake of better data, you will discover more possibilities. It is all given. If all this is given, then naturally, there must be a giver. Now, let us call that giver, Īśvara. Without understanding Īśvara, and the relationship between Him and the world that is given, as well as you, you will not be able to fit into the scheme of things with ease. The given includes your body-mind-sense-complex. Supposing, the scheme of things which is given is not separate from Īśvara, then, in that understanding of Īśvara, you will find yourself to be in harmony with Īśvara, and therefore, with all.

Unless you see your body-mind-sense-complex also as part of the jagat, your position in the scheme of things will not be proper. It is like a person who is appointed as a supervisor in a manufacturing unit of a factory. He cannot start working on the very day that he is appointed, because, it is a supervisory job and he has to discover himself as a supervisor. Who are the people he should supervise? Who are the people to whom he should report? Who is the big boss? Who is the immediate boss? How much power has been delegated to him? What is the vision of the company? What is expected to be achieved by this unit? He has to know all this, in order to discover in himself, the supervisor. Only then can he fit into the scheme of things and function with ease.

THE WORLD IS INTELLEGENTLY PUT TOGETHER

You are an individual, in the scheme of things called jagat, and this jagat is the total. The scheme of things, called the jagat, is in time and space and it is given. It consists of all things – all situations, all forces, all means and ends, all actions and reactions–all of which are interconnected. Your whole body-mind-sense-complex is put together. In that, each part is also put together and they are all inter-connected. Even cells are put together and every organ is also put together. The external world is also put together. The seed, the tree and so on are all put together. The seed has enough nourishment to bring forth a tree. Thus, you can see that it is not only put together but it is intelligently put together.

THIS PRESUPPOSES AN INTELLIGENT CREATOR

Anything intelligently put together to serve a purpose, is preceded by knowledge. Without that knowledge it cannot be put together. The function is already visualized. For instance, what is the function of the kidney cells? What is expected of each one of them? All this has been already visualized. Visualising implies knowledge. Therefore, knowledge must precede anything that is intelligently put together and that knowledge must necessarily abide in a conscious being. Whatever is intelligently put together is called creation and there must necessarily be a conscious being behind every creation with the necessary knowledge.

The world that is the scheme of things, is created because it is intelligently put together. So a conscious being is assumed to be behind the entire created world. We understand that this being should have existed, when the world was intelligently put together and it is still existent, because the intelligently put together creation still continues to exist. This assumed intelligent conscious being, to account for the creation of this world, should have the knowledge, because we are talking of the total world. The created jagat itself provides the clues to show that without a conscious being, nothing can be put together intelligently. For instance, if there is a change that is taking place, say a bacterial change as in the case of milk turning into curd, then, the creators are the bacteria and they are responsible for turning the milk into curd. Other kinds of changes are also brought about by complex insects like termites, which make an anthill. To create this anthill, which is intelligently put together, there is activity on the part of the termites. The honeybees make a honeycomb. Any creation implies this kind of activity. The termites and the honeybees are intelligent beings having the knowledge and the skill to build the anthill and the honeycomb. The human being is one who has the capacity to think and develop the skills, and understand the capacities and possibilities that are given. He/she is also given the capacity to create.

THE CREATOR OF ALL MUST HAVE ALL KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL

In this context, we are talking about the creation of all these possibilities, including the capacity to think and create. Even the infrastructure for the scheme of things is created and put together. This entire jagat includes one's body, prāṇas, organs of perception and action and the thinking

faculty. The capacity to remember and recollect is all given. All this is included in the jagat, the total. So individually and totally, everything is put together. The one who has the prior knowledge of this samagram jagat, total world, is the one who has samagram jñānam, total knowledge. He has also the samagram vīryam, the total skills to create. Such a being is called Bhagavān, Īśvara.

This conscious being, Bhagavān, with total knowledge and total skill, is unfortunately thought of as one who is sitting somewhere, in time and space. But, time and space are not absolute. One cannot think of time and eternity together, because time itself is created. Creation includes time, space and everything that is in it. The creator of this entire jagat, cannot sit in time and space and therefore within the jagat and then create the jagat. To sit in the jagat and create the jagat is absurd! So, the Lord, who has total knowledge and skill, cannot be located in the world. Then, can we say that the Lord is located outside the jagat and from there He created the jagat? The concept 'outside,' is within space alone. Bhagavān cannot be 'outside' space, much less 'inside' space and time. Therefore, all that we can say is that the very jagat including time and space is Bhagavān. This means that Bhagavān has to be understood in a comprehensive way.

ĪŚVARA IS BOTH THE MAKER AND MATERIAL

Any creation requires two causes, the material cause and the efficient cause; the material and the maker. To make a modaka, one should have the knowledge of making the modaka and also the material to make it. Similarly, besides the knowledge to create, Īśvara must also have some material to create this world. Now, where is this material? There is no material which is separate from Īśvara. If the material were to be separate from Īśvara, then to separate the material, there should be space. Now, the question arises as to who created that material and also who created the separating space? The Vedas are very clear. They say that everything came from Īśvara. The Taittirīya-upaniṣad defines Īśvara thus, 'yato vā imani bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yat prayanti abhisamviśanti – that form which all these have come, in which all these exist, that is, by which all these are sustained, and unto which all of them go back, that is, Īśvara. The material is Īśvara and the space also is Īśvara.

Let us for instance take a shirt. When we say shirt, we find that it is made of fabric. Once the shirt is made, has the fabric gone and the shirt come? No. Shirt and fabric both are there. Wherever the shirt is, the fabric also is there. In fact, shirt is the fabric. Then why do you call it shirt? Because the shirt serves a purpose – it can be worn. The shirt is therefore, neither satya, real like the fabric and at the same time it is not tuccha, non-existent. It is mithyā, false. It is a real shirt, but it is not real like the fabric. The weight of the shirt is the weight of the fabric. Therefore, fabric is satya, real, while the shirt is neither real nor unreal. Shirt is only a nāma, a name with a corresponding rūpa, form of the fabric. Similarly, the whole jagat is the names and forms of Bhagavān. That is why Bhagavān has many names and many forms.

JAGAT IS ONLY THE NAMES AND FORMS OF BHAGAVĀN

In fact, all that is here is only names, and the names reveal Bhagavān. For example, fabric is only a name, the truth of it being yarn. And yarn is another name, because it is nothing but

fibers. Fibers are but molecules, molecules are atoms and atoms are particles. Particles are mere concepts and concepts are nothing but one's consciousness. Knowledge is consciousness, but consciousness is not knowledge. This knowledge alone manifests as the jagat. This total knowledge is the material cause and also the maker. Īśvara, the Lord is both the maker and the material and hence the jagat is a manifestation of Īśvara. Manifestation means, it is not separate from the material. It is an intelligent manifestation, like the shirt which is a manifestation of the fabric, even though here an intelligent but separate tailor is involved, unlike the intelligent manifestation of the jagat.

This manifestation of the creator is like one's dream. In sleep there is no jagat. When you wake up partially, you dream. In the dream the mind is awake partially, but at the same time, it is not awake to the body, to the senses, and to the world. You are awake only to your own knowledge and memories. You have the complete power to create the dream world. There is no big effort required to created mountains and trees in a dream. You just think of mountains and the mountains are there. Think of flowers and the flowers are there. It is effortless. Whatever that is thought of, is something that is known to you. A totally unknown thing cannot be thought of. Therefore, whatever is seen in dream is what is known. You may say, 'but, Swamiji, I thought of a turtle without a shell and with long legs.' You have seen a turtle and also long legs. So in this, you know all the components and out of these, you create a dream. The material that is necessary is you. In fact, the knowledge and the material are one and the same.

There is also the power to create and this power is called māyā-śakti, vaiṣṇavī-śakti. You think, and it it all there. What a śakti! You have the power to create the dream world. In the dream your knowledge and power are manifest in the form of the dream world. Knowledge and power together is called māyā and it is located in you. The space is you. The time is you. In fact, you do not create time and space in dream. You only think of stars are there, along with time and space. They come together. You do not first create time and space, and then put the stars therein. Time, space and the world of objects manifest together and they collapse together. When one goes to sleep, the jagat collapses into sleep, along with time and space. There is nothing that is left over. In sleep the whole thing becomes unmanifest. On waking up it becomes vyakta, manifest and then becomes avyakya, unmanifest again. Thus the cycle goes on.

Similarly, Īśvara is all knowledge and all power, which is manifest in the form of ākāśa – space, vāyu- air, agni – fire, āpaḥ – waters, pṛthivī – earth, oṣadayaḥ – plants, annam – food and this śarīra – the body. This śarīra is made up of the physical body, pranas, the organs of knowledge, the organs of action and the mind. All these, that is, the individual and the total are the manifestations of Parameśvara. Now where is Īśvara located? It is not that Īśvara is everywhere, but everything is Īśvara. All knowledge is Īśvara, space is Īśvara, and along with space comes time which is also Īśvara. Air is Īśvara, fire is Īśvara, water is Īśvara, earth is Īśvara, body is Īśvara, thought is Īśvara, the prana is Īśvara, everything is Īśvara. The one who is conscious of everything, that consciousness, is indeed Īśvara, because, without consciousness there is no knowledge. Knowledge is Īśvara, knowledge is consciousness. Therefore, knowledge is like the shirt, while consciousness is like the fabric, thr truth of knowledge. Consciousness is the truth of Īśvara and that is you. That is why there is oneness. This is nirguṇa, nirākāra, Īśvara. That consciousness is the truth of knowledge, there being no knowledge without consciousness but consciousnessis not knowledge.

You are that consciousness, but as an individual your knowledge is limited, whereas, the knowledge of Īśvara is total. The individual is the manifest form of Īśvara. The limitless knowledge of Īśvara is also consciousness and the limited knowledge of the individual is also consciousness. This is like the wave and the ocean, wherein, both are nothing but water. In that sense alone, when it is said that, 'you are Īśvara,' it does not mean that you are all knowledge, that is, omniscient. Your knowledge is limited and you are looking at consciousness through an individual's mind which has limited knowledge. Therefore, you are an individual. But when you say 'I,' you mean essentially consciousness, and this is the truth of Īśvara. Shirt exists but it is not satya, real. It is neither false nor non-existent. It is inbetween, anirvacanīya, meaning what cannot be categorically said to be satya, real, and what cannot be dismissed as tuccha, false. It is called mithyā. Shirt is mithyā. It is the manifestation of Īśvara.

When you say Bhagavān, He is the one who has total knowledge and total power. But when you say 'I am a jīva' you are one with limited knowledge and limited power.

THE MEANING OF THE WORD BHAGAVĀN

The one who has bala, strength, is balavān. The one who has guna, good qualities, is gunavān and the one who has dhana, wealth, is dhanavān. Similarly, the one who has bhaga is called Bhagavān. The word bhaga is traditionally understood as the six-fold virtues in absolute measure. They are: jñāna – all knowledge; vairāgya – total dispassion; vīrya – all power; yaśas – all fame; śrī – all wealth; and aiśvarya – overlordship. These are known bhaga.

The knowledge of Bhagavān is total and absolute, which means, it is free from any ignorance. The one, who has total knowledge, does not require a mind, or the senses, or the means of knowledge to know. When there is a mind, as in the case of an individual, ignorance would always be there. Thus, whoever is endowed with a mind to know, cannot be Bhagavān. The individual jīva has only limited knowledge and limited power. Absolute and total dispassion is called vairāgya, and the one who has this dispassion has no longing or insecurity. But the individual has only limited vairāgya, like after eating a banana, the peel is thrown away. There is no rāga or dveṣa, like or dislike towards the peel. Hence, there is vairāgya towards it. Similarly, an adult has neither likes nor dislikes towards balloons 'na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati.' This is vairāgya.

Vīrya is absolute power and this absolute power rests in Bhagavān. It is the capacity to create, to sustain and to resolve, whereas, the individual jīva, has only limited power. All glories belong to Him and they are absolute or samagram yaśas. That the eyes can see is a glory. That one can sing is a glory. All these possibilities are certain capacities that people have and they are all nothing but the glories of Īśvara. Every story, ever glory is the glory of Īśvara alone. Bhagavān has total wealth, śrī. When all that is manifest here is Īśvara, where is individual wealth? Our wealth is only what Bhagavān has given us. Children, home, real estate, one's capacity to earn, are all wealth and it is all given to us. It is the prasāda of Bhagavān, within His infrastructure called the jagat and it does not belong to us.

Total overlordship, aiśvarya, also belongs to the Lord. Īśvarasya bhāva, the nature of the Lord, the capacity to lord over and to be in control is aiśvarya. A plant, because of lack of water, is dying and you experience your aiśvarya, when you take care or do not take care of it. Take for instance, an ant that has fallen into the water and is struggling for life. There is a chance, to feel your aiśvarya, overlordship and help the ant to get out of the puddle. The same ant can be left in

the puddle, saying that it is its own karma. In case the same ant somehow escapes and gets into your ear, then there is no more aiśvarya. That is why, we are not Īśvara. Īśvara has samagra aiśvarya. He is one, who is not cause nor ruled by anyone, and who is not subject to the laws of someone else. These six absolute virtues constitute bhaga and the one who has these six-fold bhaga is called Bhagavān.

Īśvara is everything and everything constitutes the various forms of Īśvara. When we say form, it can be further reduced to another form and finally what is there, is only the cause of all, the Lord, and all that which was reduced to the Lord were but names, sustained by the same lord. That is to say that a name is recognized with a form. All forms are manifestations, as we have seen, of Īśvara. As the forms are countless, the names are also countless. Thus, Īśvara has infinite names, though only a thousand are given here. Names are but words and certain words, when understood, reveal Īśvara, like the word 'pot' reveals the object 'pot.' But we find that none of the known words can really reveal Īśvara.

Therefore, we have some special words which reveal the nature of Īśvara and these words are three-fold -

i. Words which reveal the essential nature of Īśvara, like satya, meaning that which exists in all the three periods of time.

ii. Words which reveal Īśvara, as the cause of the jagat. All that is here is Īśvara, and who is both the father and mother. Īśvara is 'He' from the stand-point of the maker, the efficient cause and 'She' from the stand-point of the material cause, as the one who is manifest in the form of the jagat.

iii. Words which indicate the manifest form, as even the form of an avatāra. Keeping māyā under His control, Īśvara is manifest in special forms like Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on.

So all these three sets of names given above constitute the sahasranāma, the thousand names of the Lord Viṣṇu. The first two sets of names are common to every sahasranāma. Only the third set differs, in that, it has special words for that particular form. Names like Viṣṇu, Śiva, Nārāyaṇa are all words that are used for Parameśvara.

There are many sahasranāmas that are available, like the Lakṣmī-sahasranāma, Śiva-sahasranāma, Gaṇeśa-sahasranāma, Dakṣiṇāmūrti-sahasranāma, Subrahmaṇya-sahasranāma, and so on, but the most popular of them are the Viṣṇu-sahasranama and the Lalita-sahasranāma. But, when merely the word sahasranāma is used, it refers to the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma which is the 149th adhyāya of the Anuśāsana-parva of the Mahābhārata. Tradition holds that it was composed by Sanaka, and was given to Bhīṣma. Bhīṣma, in turn, recited it to the Pāṇḍavas in the presence of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At the end of the war, Yudhiṣṭhira, the eldest of the Paṇḍavas, approached Bhīṣma who was lying on bed of arrows waiting for death, and asked him 'who is the supreme Lord of all, who is the refuge of all and by praising and worshipping whom, one gains all that is good and also the ultimate end?' In answer to this question Bhīṣma gave the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma. This is how the Mahabharata introduces the advent of these thousand names of the Lord.

The importance of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma is further enhanced by the fact, that a person, no less than Bhagavān Śrī Saṅkarācārya had written an elaborate commentary, for each of the namas. The tradition goes, that when Śrī Saṅkarācārya wanted to write his first commentary on the Upaniṣads, he asked one of his disciples to bring the Taittirīyopaniṣad, but the disciple brought the manuscripts of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma. This was repeated a second and a third time. Śrī Saṅkarācārya then felt, that this was ordained by the Lord himself and therefore he wrote his commentary on the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma first, before undertaking other bhāṣya works. Śrī Saṅkarācārya himself has written three invocatory ślokas, before commencing his commentary. In the first verse, he salutes Śrī Kṛṣṇa as param brahma, ātmā and also as the guru. In the second verse, he salutes Sage Vyāsa, the author of this sahasranāma and in the third verse, he praises the sahasranāma itself. He also gives the reason for undertaking the explanation of these nāmas.

सच्चिदानन्दरुपाय कृष्णायाक्लिष्टकारिणे |

नमो वेदान्तवेद्याय गुरवे बुद्धिसाक्षिणे ||

saccidānandarūpāya kṛṣṇāyākliṣṭakāriṇe |

namo vedāntavedyāya gurave bhddhisākṣiṇe ||

Salutation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, whose nature is sat, cit and ānanda, who acts effortlessly, who is to be known through Vedānta, who is (in the form of one's) guru and who is the witness of the intellect.

कृष्णद्वैपायनं व्यासं सर्वलोकहिते रतम् |

वेदाब्जभास्करं वन्दे शमादिनिलयं मुनिम् ||

kṛṣṇadvaipāyanaṃ vyāsaṃ sarvalokahite ratam |

vedābjabhāskaraṃ vande śamādinilayaṃ munim ||

I salute the sage Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana Vyāsa, who is desirous of the welfare of all beings, who is the sun to the lotus of the Vedas and who is an abode of the qualities like self-mastery and so on.

सहस्रमुर्तेः पुरुषोत्तमस्य सहस्रनेत्राननपादबाहोः

सहस्रनाम्नां स्तवनं प्रशस्तं निरुच्यते जन्मजरादिशान्त्यै ||

sahasramūrteḥ puruṣottamasya sahasranetrānanapādabāhoḥ |

sahasranāmnāṃ stavanaṃ prasastaṃ nirucyate janmajarādiśāntyai ||

The praiseworthy hymn of the thousand names of Puruṣottama, who has thousands of forms and thousands of eyes, mouths, feet and arms, is commented upon for the cessation of birth, old age and so on.

Traditionally, all the following verses of the Pūrvabhāga are chanted before the actual pārāyaṇa of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra, even though only thirteen verses, from the 6th to the 18th are found in the Mahabharata. Similarly, there are 33 verses (34 together with the verse starting with 'vanamālī….') chanted after the pārāyaṇa of the stotra, totally constituting 171 verses (29+108+34) of which only 142 verses (13+107+22) are from the 149th adhyāya of the Anuśāsana-parva of the Mahābhārata.

PŪRVABHĀGA

ओं शुक्लांबरधरं विष्णुं शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजम् |

प्रसन्नवदनं ध्यायेत् सर्वविघ्नोपशान्तये || १ ||

Oṃ śuklāmbaradharaṃ viṣṇuṃ śaśivarṇaṃ caturbhujam |

prasannavadanaṃ dhyāyet sarvavighnopaśāntaye || 1

One should meditate on Him who wears a white dress, who is all-pervasive, of the colour of the moon, who has four arms and a tranquil face, for the cessation of obstacles.

This verse is generally chanted as a prayer, to invoke the grace of Lord Gaṇeśa, before undertaking any work. The Lord is invoked both as Vighnarāja and also as Vighnahara.

Every action attracts two types of results – one that is dṛṣṭa, seen, and the other that is adṛṣṭa, not seen. Dṛṣṭa-phala is enjoyed immediately, whereas, the adṛṣṭa-phala is enjoyed much later, either in this birth or in other birth.

A human being is endowed with a free will. That free will can be used to do what is right, dharma. Then, the person incurs an adṛṣṭa-phala called puṇya which in turn manifests as circumstances which will give sukha. Or, the free will can be abused and used to hurt other living beings or other human beings and go against what is right, dharma, and thus incur an adṛṣṭa-phala called pāpa. This manifests as circumstances that gives rise to duḥkha.

So, the puṇya and pāpa stand in the account of the jīva, the individual, as long as one looks upon himself as a limited person, as a doer and enjoyer. In accordance to one's karma, a person is born at a particular place and time, with a particular parentage and culture. All the karma-phala standing in one's name cannot be fulfilled in one given birth. A human birth is a mixture of both puṇya and pāpa and every experience has both puṇya and pāpa. One keeps exhausting the puṇya or pāpa on the one hand and on the other hand adds a little more puṇya or pāpa in one's life.

The results of action are according to the law of karma, which is the manifestation of Īśvara. When one looks at the Lord as the giver of the results of action, He is the presiding deity of the law of karma, and thereby, becomes the giver of the result of action. The law itself is Bhagavān. The individual jīva is a karta and when one performs actions, the results are given, by the Lord.

But the law of means and ends, is presided over by Īśvara and with reference to that, the Lord is called karmādhyakṣa and as the giver of the fruits of action, He is called karma-phala-dātā.

The Lord is called Vighnarājā, the one who presides over the obstacles 'vighnānām rājā.' He is the one who throws the obstacles when he gives us the result of our pāpa. We invoke the grace of this 'obstacle-thrower.' asking Him to remove the obstacles. This is a well-directed prayer. Īśvara is invoked not only as Vighnarāja, but He is invoked also as Vighnahara, the one who removes the obstacles. This is when one invokes His grace, asking 'please remove the pāpa of all commissions known and unknown to me.' What one has done in this life or in other lives is not known to him and what is there in store for him also is not known. Every day the prārabdha-karma is unfolding itself in the form of various obstacles. Thus one prays to Him for the removal of all the obstacles.

All the obstacles that an individual meets in life with reference to any pursuit, fall into one of the three categories. They can be i. ādhyātmika–obstacles centered on oneself like mental disturbances, lack of concentration, anger, stomach-ache and so on. ii. ādhibhautika–obstacles caused by disturbances in the immediate environment, like the barking of dogs, mosquitoes and so on. (It also includes the people who irritate you) and iii. ādhidaivika–obstacles caused by natural forces like earthquakes, storms and cyclones. The last category is one over which we have no contol. These are the obstacles in one's pursuits. Therefore, Lord Gaṇeśa is invoked as Vighnahara to bless by removing the obstacles. So, at the beginning of any endeavour, dhyāyet, may one think of the Lord, meditate upon Him as Vighnahara, sarva-vighna-upaśāntaye, for the removal of all the obstacles.

Here the form of the Lord is described, for the purpose of visualization. The Lord is given a form in which He is invoked. We do not worship the form. We only worship the Lord for whom a form is given.

He is śukla-ambara-dhara, the one who wears white clothes. He is viṣṇu, all-pervasive and śaśi-varna, of the colour of the moon. That is, he is not scorching but pleasant to think about. The very thought of Him, makes one hopeful and makes all the tāpas, the afflictions of the individual go away. He is caturbhuja, has four hands and prasanna-vadana, a smiling, tranquil face. The Lord is pūrna, fullness, wholeness, and that is indicated by the smile. This description attributed to Lord Gaṇeśa can also be of Lord Viṣṇu Himself.

व्यासं वसिष्ठनप्तारं शक्तेः पौत्रमकल्मषं ।

पराशरात्मजं वन्दे शुकतातं तपोनिधिम् ॥ २ ॥

vyāsaṃ vasiṣṭhanaptāraṃ śakteh pautramakalmaṣam |

parāśarātmajaṃ vande śukatatam toponidhim || 2

I salute Sage Vyāsa, the great grandson of Sage Vasiṣṭha, the grandson of Sage Śakti, the son of Sage Parāśara and the father of Sage Śuka and who is (by himself) an adobe of tapas and who is blemishless.

व्यासाय विष्णुरूपाय व्यासरुपाय विष्णवे ।

नमो वै ब्रह्मनिधये वासिष्ठाय नमो नमः || ३ ||

vyāsāya viṣṇurūpāya vyāsarūpāya viṣṇave |

namo vai brahmanidhaye vāsiṣṭhaya namo namaḥ || 3

Salutations to Vyāsa, who is in the form of Viṣṇu and to Viṣṇu, who is in the form of Vyāsa. Salutations again and again to him, who is an adobe of the Vedas and who is of the lineage of Vasiṣṭha.

अविकाराय शुद्धाय नित्याय परमात्मने |

सदैकरुपरुपाय विष्णवे सर्वजिष्णवे || ४ ||

avikārāya śuddhāya nityāya paramātmane |

sadaikarūparūpāya viṣṇave sarvajiṣṇave || 4

(Salutations) to Lord Viṣṇu, who is the paramātmā, changeless, pure, timeless, always of the same nature and victorious over everyone.

यस्य स्मरणमात्रेण जन्मसंसारबन्धनात् |

विमुच्यते नमस्तस्मै विष्णवे प्रभविष्णवे || ५ ||

ओं नमो विष्णवे प्रभविष्णवे ||

yasya smaraṇamātreṇa janmasaṃsārabandhanāt |

vimucyate namastasmai viṣṇave prabhaviṣṇave || 5

oṃ namo visnave prabhaviṣṇave ||

(Salutations) to Lord Viṣṇu who is almighty and by remembering whom, one is liberated from the bondage of saṃsāra.

The Viṣṇu-sahasranāma itself is a stuti, a praise of the Lord. The following few verses are in the form of a dialogue giving the background of how the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma came about. They serve to show us, the importance of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma.

The Mahābhāratha is presented as a dialogue between Ugraśravas, the son of Romaharṣaṇa, otherwise known as Sūtapaurāṇika or Sūtaputra and a group of Maharṣis headed by Śaunaka. These rṣis were performing a yāga lasting for years (dīrgha-satra) in the Naimiśāraṇya forest. When Ugraśravas had come to visit them, they requested him to narrate to them anything new that he had come across in the course of his travels, which may be useful to them. He tells them the Mahābhārata story, which he says he had the pleasure of hearing from Sage Vaiśmapāyana. Vaiśmapāyana, who had got it from Sage Veda-vyāsa himself, was telling this story to Janamejaya, the son of King Parīkṣit, when he was doing a sarpa-yāga. Thus, this is a dialogue between Ugraśravas and Sage Śaunaka in which there is a dialogue between Vaiśampāyana and

Janamejaya. Vaiśampāyana now brings out the dialogue between Yudhiṣṭhira and Bhīṣma, which is relevant here. In the Purāṇās and the Itihāsas, like the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, only direct speech is used and hence in keeping with that, it is said uvāca.

श्रीवैशंपायन उवाच

श्रुत्वा धर्मानशेषेण पावनानि च सर्वशः |

युधिष्टिरः शान्तनवं पुनरेवाभ्यभाषत || ६ ||

śrīvaiśampāyana uvāca

śrutvā dharmānaśeṣeṇa pāvanāni ca sarvaśah |

yudhiṣṭhiraḥ śāntanavaṃ punarevābhyabhāṣata || 6

Śrī Vaiśampāyana said: Having heard all the dharmas without exception and also the acts that purify, in all ways, Yudhiṣṭhira again addressed (Bhīṣma) the son of Śantanu.

Dharmān aśeṣeṇa śrutvā—Yudhiṣṭhira had heard about all the dharmas, the karmas which are instrumental in gaining abhyudaya—results in this world and later and niśśreyas, that is, mokṣa. He had heard about all the karmas without exception, in the form of vidhi and niṣedha—enjoined and prohibited, for gaining all the puruṣārthas. Pāvanāni ca sarvaśaḥ śrutvā—He had also heard the prāyaścitta-karmas that purify in all ways. Different rituals and prayers are used to purify one from the hold of likes and dislikes and also to neutralize the pāpas to the extent that they can be neutralized. They are all dharmas, which are spoken of in the Vedas. So vaidika-karmas, which are in keeping with the Vedas.

Having listened to all this, Yudhiṣṭhira felt that there were still some inadequacies. He wanted to know a sādhana that would be sakala-puruṣārtha-sādhana–capable of achieving all the puruṣārthas, sukha-saṃpādya–easy to follow and enjoyable, alpa-prayāsa–with very little exertion, but analpa-phala–capable of attaining a great result, bhūma-phala. Such a result can only be mokṣa. Therefore, he again questioned Bhīṣma, the son of Śantanu. Śantanu's apatya, son, is Śāntanava.

युधिष्टिर उवाच

किमेकं दैवतं लोके किं वाऽप्येकं परायणम् |

स्तुवन्तः कं कमर्चन्तः प्राप्नुयुर्मानवाः शुभम् || ७ ||

yudhiṣṭhira uvāca

kimekaṃ daivataṃ loke kiṃ vā'pyekaṃ parāyaṇam |

stuvantaḥ kaṃ kamarcantaḥ prāpnuyurmānavāḥ śubham || 7

Yudhiṣṭhira said: What is that one Lord spoken of in all the śāstras? Which is the ultimate goal? Knowing and worshipping whom, human beings would gain auspiciousness?

Yudhiṣṭhira asks Bhīṣma the following six questions. For all the questions Bhīṣma points out to Nārāyana as the one answer and then gives out the thousand names of the Lord. Even though tradition makes it out as six separate questions, all of them are interconnected.

His first question is, loke kim ekaṃ daivatam–what is that one devatā, one Lord, that is spoken of in all the śāstras, by whose order alone all the other devatās function? Here, the word loka is derived as lokyate anena–that by which one gains knowledge. Thus it refers to the vidyā-sthānas, the śāstras, which are the sources of knowledge.

Loka kim ekaṃ parāyanaṃ–What is that paraṃ ayanam, that ultimate end mentioned in all the śāstras? Which is prāpyaṃ sthānam, that one end to be accomplished by all, and gaining which there is no other end to be accomplished? What is that end, knowing which, bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ–the knots of the heart are broken, chidyante sarva-saṃśayā–all the doubts are resolved, kṣīyante ca asya karmāṇi–one's karmas are all destroyed and there is no more rebirth? (Mu.Up.2.2.8). What is that by knowing which, mokṣa which is characterized by limitless anandā is gained and there is no more fear from anything else, because there is no second thing? What is that entering which there is no coming back and knowing which one becomes that itself? What is that leaving which there is no other path for human being? That can only be one thing, Brahman, because the upaniṣad says, 'brahmaveda brahmaiva bhavati–the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman itself'(Mu.Up.3.2.9). Thus the ultimate end in life is asked as the second question.

Tell me that one Lord, knowing and understanding whom, stuvantaḥ–praising whose glories, arcantaḥ–seeking and worshipping whom, mānavāḥ śubhaṃ prāpnuyuḥ–human beings will gain auspiciousness, both in the form of svarga and mokṣa.

> को धर्मः सर्वधर्माणां भवतः परमो मतः |
>
> किं जपन् मुच्यते जन्तुर्जन्मसंसारबन्धनात् || ८ ||
>
> ko dharmaḥ sarvadharmāṇāṃ bhavataḥ paramo mataḥ |
>
> kiṃ japan mucyate janturjanmasaṃsārabandhanāt || 8
>
> According to you, which is the highest dharma among all the dharmas? Chanting which does a jīva get freed from the bondage of saṃsāra, fraught with (repeated) births?

Sarva-dharmāṇām–among all the dharmas that you have told me, which according to your view, is the parama dharma, the highest means, by which one can accomplish the ultimate end? To achieve the ultimate end, what is the ultimate means?

Kiṃ japan–chanting and repeating which mantra, jantu–the jīva born of ignorance, janma-saṃsāra-bandhanāt mucyate–would accomplish the end, which is a release from the bonds of saṃsara, a release from this life of becoming? Janma, birth, stands for all the effects of ignorance. So, what japa would release a human being from ignorance and the bondages caused by its effects?

Japa can be ucca–loud, upāṃśu–soft, mānasa–totally mental. Though, Yudhiṣṭhira asked about release from bondage of saṃsāra, because this is the highest result that can be gained by a human

being, all other results are also included in this. As this is a stuti-karma, a prayer of praise of the Lord, Śaṅkara points out that it is capable of making one gain the other results also. Thus if a householder wants to repeat the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma for the gain of some artha and kāma, for the gain of his own welfare here and hereafter within saṃsāra–he is sure to gain them as a karma-phala.

Thus, Yudhisthira asked six questions and the answers to these are being given by Śrī Bhīṣma.

> श्रीभीष्म उवाच
>
> जगत्प्रभुं देवदेवमनन्तं पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
>
> स्तुवन्नामसहस्रेण पुरुषः सततोत्थितः ॥ ९ ॥
>
> Śrībhīṣma uvāca
>
> jagatprabhuṃ devadevamanantaṃ puruṣottmam |
>
> stuvannāmasahāsreṇa puruṣaḥ satatotthitaḥ || 9
>
> Śrī Bhīṣma replied: Praising by the thousand names, (Him who is) the Lord of the jagat, Lord of all the gods, limitless and the supreme person, the human being who is ever committed (goes beyond all sorrow).

Yudhiṣṭhira asked six questions in all. In essence, his question is, what is the means by which a jīva gets released from the bondage of saṃsara? The word Bhīṣma means frightening. Bhīṣma is a cause of terror to all his enemies, those that are outside and also that are inside the mind. The enemies inside are desire, anger and so on. They are afraid of him and do not come to him. The enemies outside also do not come to Bhīṣma since he is invincible.

Yudhiṣṭhira wanted to know, 'who is that one God?' He is jagat-prabhu, the lord of the entire jagat. The jagat includes the body-mind-sense-complex of the individual. Worship is always to the Lord as the nimitta-kāraṇa and not to the upādāna-kāraṇa. Even when we worship the māyā-śakti as Devi, still, it is along with the nimitta-kāraṇa. When a name and form is worshipped, it is nothing but the material cause. Still, it becomes the ālambana, a symbol, for worshipping the nimitta-kāraṇa. When a person has discovered something, we congratulate him only by shaking his hand. Though it is not the hands that discovered, one can convey the message to the person through the shake of the hand. Īśvara is the ruler of the entire jagat which is in the form of the movable and immovable. He alone delegates powers to all the other devatās. They are only executives of the orders of the ultimate boss, Parameśvara.

Every devata is Īśvara. Īśvara is manifest in the form of this jagat. We look at this jagat made up of various forms and colours, through our eyes. Our eyes are also a part of the jagat. That all eyes can see the colours and forms in the same way is because of the law that governs the eyes. At the total level, Īśvara is not only the eyes, but also the eyes that see, He becomes the adhiṣṭhana-devata, the presiding deity of the eyes, that is, the law and the phenomenon of sight, which the eyes are capable of. When you look at Īśvara from this stand-point, Īśvara becomes a devatā, that is, āditya, the sun. This physical sun is only a symbol.

Similarly, the mind is presided over by the candra-devata, the moon. The buddhi has the capacity of rational thinking and discrimination. So, when we look at the Lord through this phenomenon, this phenomenon becomes a devatā. The strength in the hands and legs has a devata. When you look at Parameśvara, through all these phenomena, then it is the law in total form. Parameśvara is deva-deva, the Lord of all the devatās, the one whose power alone is delegated to all these devatās. The devatās are included in Īśvara.

He is ananta, limitless, being both the nimmita-kāraṇa and upādāna-kāraṇa. He is limitless in terms of space, time and objects. We cannot really say, 'Īśvara and …' because there is nothing other than Īśvara.

He is the puruṣottama, one who is all-pervasive and kṣara-akṣarābhyām kārya-kāraṇābhyam utkṛṣṭah. Īśvara, in the form of this manifest jagat, is called kṣara-puruṣa and after resolution and before creation, in the form of the unmanifest jagat when it is in the causal state, is called the akṣara-purusa. But, in His own nature, He is above akṣara and kṣara–above cause and effect.

Satata-utthitaḥ purusaḥ–the human being who is always committed, nāma-sahasreṇa stuvan–by praising the Lord, singing His glories, with thesē thousand names, sarva-duḥkhātigaḥ bhavet–would to beyond all sorrow. The words 'sarva-duḥkhātigaḥ bhavet' are to be brought in from verse eleven. It does not mean that one would be free from sorrows or that one can bypass them. One goes through the duḥkhas without being affected by them.

To praise Parameśvara is to understand Him, and wherever any glory is seen, it is to be understood to be the glory of Parameśvara alone. That means, that only by understanding Him, one can praise him. Without understanding, any praise is not praise and with understanding, the praise becomes knowledge. When you understand the usefulness of a particular software, then, the software is praised. So, where there is knowledge, there is praise. The beauty of understanding Īśvara, results in endless admiration and awe, and the realization that one does not really have the capacity to praise the Lord, who is limitless.

The only altar of praise is Īśvara. Īśvara alone is all yaśas, glory. Every glory that you can praise or talk about belongs to Īśvara. So the only altar of stuti, praise is Īśvara. When you praise Īśvara, anything that you say in terms of praise, always falls flat, because it is like a great mathematician who is being praised by his illiterate driver. The praise falls flat, because, the one who praises is not qualified enough to praise. How can this limited jīva, being limited in every way, praise Īśvara? Now the only altar of praise is Īśvara and only a person who is a sarvajña, all-knowing, like Īśvara can praise Īśvara. But a second sarvajña, is not there. Thus, we cannot flatter Īśvara, because any amount of praise will not measure upto what Īśvara is. So our praise is only from the standpoint of our own understanding of Īśvara.

How does praising Īśvara help us? It helps us to recognize a reality, that any praise that is received by a person, is the praise of Īśvara. The praise of Īśvara makes me recognize the reality, that, all that is worthy of praise–worthy of praise not only in me, but also in everyone else–is Īśvara alone. So, by praising and praying to Him, the Lord, the thinking people, the jīvas, will gain śubha, auspiciousness. Then, there is nothing more for them to be accomplished and all their struggles will be over. Viṣṇu-sahasranāma is a prayer. It is meant to get rid of troubles here in this world and it is also a means to gain moksa.

तमेव चार्चयन् नित्यं भक्त्या पुरुषमव्ययम् |

ध्यायन् स्तुवन् नमस्यंश्च यजमानस्तमेव च || १० ||

Tameva cārcayannityaṃ bhaktyā puruṣamavyayam |

Dhyāyan stuvan namasyaṃśca yajamānastameva ca || 10

By always worshipping that imperishable Lord with devotion, meditating on Him, praising Him and by bowing down to Him, the worshipper (goes beyond all sorrow).

In this verse, the Lord is further pointed out as the avyaya-puruṣa. Puri śayanāt, pūrṇarvāt puruṣaḥ. He is one who obtains as the antaryāmī, parātmā in the body which is like a city. He is all-pervasive and ever full. He is avyaya, vināśa-vikriyā-rahita–free from destruction and change, free from waxing and waning. Tam eva ca arcayan nityam–always worshipping Him alone. One can relate to the Lord and worship Him in a three-fold way, kāyika, vācika and mānasa. The action is willed by the kartā, the doer and hence it is called karma. Where there is no will involved, it is not called karma, because, it is more a reaction than an action. Prayer is a karma. Anything that comes from the karta is a karma. The three kinds are pointed out by saying dhyāyan manasā–meditating, stuvan vacasā–praising orally, namasyan kāyena–bowing down physically.

Kāyikaṃ karma–this is an action, a ritual which is performed physically. It is related to saguṇa-brahma, that is, related to the Lord, as endowed with a form and attributes. There is an external altar of prayer, there is a devatā, and material is also involved. Pūjā, chanting Śrīrudram and doing abhiseka to Lord Siva, rituals and so on, are all included in kāyika-karma and these actions produce results. In a ritual many people are involved and it also involves distribution of food, clothes and dakṣiṇā. If a person is unable to do the rituals by himself, somebody else can to the rituals for him, but still he alone becomes the yajamana, the worshipper. So he either performs the ritual himself, or gets it done through someone else.

Namasyan means doing namaskara to the Lord and it stands for other upacāras also. Namaskāra is one such upacāra, in which the eight aṅgas, parts of the body, touch the ground. The chest, head, other parts of the body like the abdomen, feet, knees and hands– all these aṅgas of the body touch the ground. A mind full of devotion and also vāk are counted as the last two. Namaskara is a part of the ritual. Here, in the kāyika ritual, hands are involved in doing the arcanā. The vāk is also involved, because the names of the Lord are chanted during the arcanā and the mind is behind the vāk. Thus, in a kāyika-karma all the karaṇas are involved, the free will finds full expression and so it is more fulfilling.

Vācikaṃ karma–this is an oral action, wherein no material is involved. The physical body is not involved but only vāk, the organ of speech, along with the mind is involved. Singing, praising, chanting, all of them come under vācika-karma. Here stuti includes stutis from the Vedas and Purāṇas, which one can chant or get someone else to chant. It has more of dṛṣṭa-phala and the result is immediate. There is less of adṛṣṭa-phala.

Mānasaṃ karma–This is purely a mental activity, where there is no involvement of the body or speech. The prayer can also be mental. A mental activity, in which the Lord is involved, is

called meditation. Hence, only the yajamana himself has to do it. Another person cannot do this for him.

When a mantra is repeated mentally invoking the grace of the Lord, it is called meditation. But when the mantra is chanted either softly or loudly, it becomes a vācika-karma. Mentally doing pūjā to the Lord, wherein all the steps of pūjā are involved, is also meditation. Thus, as long as saguṇa-brahma is involved and it is done mentally, it is called meditation.

In all the three types of worship the mind is resolved to a certain extent and hence that itself is dṛṣṭa-phala, immediate result. Since there is also prayer to Īśvara, adṛṣṭa-phala in the form of puṇya will also be there.

Thus worshipping the Lord by meditation, praise and namaskāra, sarva-duḥkhātigaḥ bhavet–one goes beyond all sorrow (brought in from verse eleven).

> अनादिनिधनं विष्णुं सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
>
> लोकाध्यक्षं स्तुवन् नित्यं सर्वदुःखातिगो भवेत् ॥ ११ ॥
>
> anadinidhanam visnum sarvalokamahesvaram |
>
> lokadhyaksam stuvan nityam sarvaduhkhatigo bhavet || 11
>
> By always praising Viṣṇu, who has no beginning or end, the Lord of all the worlds, the witness of the universe, one goes beyond sorrow.

The Lord is anādinidhana. He has neither ādi nor nidhana, neither beginning nor end. He is therefore, the anādi-kāraṇa, the uncaused cause that which is the cause and not the effect. So it is the sarva-kāraṇa, the cause of everything. Beginning implies birth and it is an effect. End implies death. By saying that He has no beginning or end, not only birth and death are negated, but also, all the other bhāvavikāras are negated. The physical body jāyate–is born, asti–exists, vardhate–grows, vipariṇamate–undergoes modifications, that is, becomes an adult, apaksiyate–declines and vinasyati–dies. Thus it has these six changes or bhāvavikāras, but the Lord does not have these changes.

He is Viṣṇu, the one who is all-pervasive, that is, who is inside and outside. He is sarva-loka-maheśvara, the Lord of the entire world. Lokyate iti lokaḥ–that which is known and experienced by you is loka. The various lokas, spheres of experience have their own niyantās, īśvaras, rulers like Brahmāji, Indra, Varuṇa and others. Being the ruler of all the lokas and also the rulers of those lokas, He is sarva-loka-maheśvara. He is the boss; all others are only executives of His law and order. He is also the loka-adhyakṣa, the witness of the entire world. He directly perceives the entire world through the caitanya, consciousness, which is His nature. As the caitanya, He illumines and blesses the whole world without any action, without being either involved in or affected by the world.

Stuvan nityam–always praising Viṣṇu. Stuti is a vācika-karma invoking the grace of the Lord. Here both the mental and oral activities are involved. He is not flattered by our praise, because the one who praises can never really praise the Lord. Anything that we say always falls short because the Lord is always much more than whatever we can say about Him. Further, all the

words that are said and the one who says the words are all illumined by Him and all the words are made possible only by Him.

So, taṃ nityaṃ stuvan sarva-duḥkhātigaḥ bhavet–by always praising Him, one crosses all duḥkhas, sorrows. All the duhkhas can be divided into three types. They are ādhyātmika–centred on oneself, one's body-mind-sense-complex; ādhibhautika–coming from outside or from other jīvas over which one has some control and ādhidaivika–from sources over which one has no control. Śaṅkara points out, that crossing all sorrow, is the general phala for japa, arcana and stuti.

> ब्रह्मण्यं सर्वधर्मज्ञं लोकानां कीर्तिवर्धनम् ।
>
> लोकनाथं महद्भूतं सर्वभूतभवोद्भवम् ॥ १२ ॥
>
> brahmaṇyaṃ sarvadharmajñaṃ lokānāṃ kīrtivardhanam |
>
> lokanāthaṃ mahadbhūtaṃ sarvabhūtabhavodbhavam || 12
>
> (By always praising Viṣṇu), who is beneficial to brahma, and who is the knower of all dharmas, the enhancer of the fame of all beings, the Lord of all the worlds, the reality and the source of the existence of all beings, (one goes beyond sorrow).

The word brahmaṇya has many meanings and Śaṅkara points out, that all of them are relevant here. Brahmaṇe hitam–the one who is beneficial to Brahmāji, the creator, because even Brahmāji worships Him for His blessings, in order to do his job properly. Brahmaṇe, śrutaye hitam–beneficial to the śruti, the Vedas, because brahma means Veda also. What is the good that Īśvara does to the śruti? He makes the śruti valid. The śruti says, 'svarga-kāmaḥ yajeta,' 'putra-kāmaḥ yajeta' and so on. It gives certain karmas as sādhanas for gaining svarga, putra and other objects of desire. When a person performs a particular karma, the Lord as the karma-phala-dātā, blesses the person with the result for that karma, thus making the words of the śruti valid. Īśvara has to uphold what is said in the śruti, because it is His own words.

Again He is brāhmaṇāya hitam–a source of blessing to the brāhmaṇas, who have predominantly sattva-guṇa, follow a Vedic life, do the enjoined rituals and live a life of dharma. He is tapase hitam–beneficial to those who do tapas, who are contemplative.

Sarvān dharmān jānāti iti sarvadharmajñaḥ–He is all-knowing and therefore, knows all the dharmas. He is never confused about what is right and wrong. Dharma-saṅkaṭa, confusion about what is right and wrong. Dharma-saṅkaṭa, confusion of dharma is only for the jīva, never for the Lord.

Lokānāṃ kīrti-vardhanam–the one whose worship would make desirable fame grow. Kīrti is not popularity but fame and fame makes people proud. Accomplishments in terms of sāttvika learning, in terms of devotion and living a life of dharma–all these bring fame and this fame increases when they take refuge in the Lord. When they are filled with the devotion to the Lord, they are enlightened egos, that is, there is more Bhagavān and less of themselves. And so, their fame increases and they become a source of inspiration to others. Any glory is always within the order of Īśvara and hence the glory belongs only to Parameśvara. When any glory is gained by anyone, only Īśvara should be acknowledged for it.

He is lokanātha, the Lord of the world. Lokān īṣṭe– He rules the world and takes care of everyone. When that is so, there is no anātha, orphan in the world. People say, 'we take care of orphans,' when they themselves are dependent on many others for their daily needs. Whether one has parents or not, one is an anatha, if one does not acknowledge the Lord as the nātha who takes care of everyone. No one is an orphan, if one acknowledges this fact. He is lokanātha, because lokaiḥ nāthyate, yācyate–is implored, looked upto by people for gaining the puruṣārthas they seek. The word lokanātha also means that He is the one who is desired by all beings, one who rules, lights up and blesses the world.

The Lord is the one who is always existent and as Brahman, the truth of everything. He is mahad-bhūta. Sarveṣāṃ bhūtānāṃ yo bhavaḥ, saṃsāraḥ sa saṃsaraḥ yasmād udbhavati iti sarva-bhūta-bhava-udbhavaḥ. All the jīvas are born according to their karma, because He is the giver of the fruits of action. All of them live in their own world with their body, mind and their senses, a world that is conducive for eking out their own karma-phala. Each being has its own fears and problems and it goes through various experiences. So, the Lord is the udbhava, the cause for the bhava of all bhūtas, the cycle of births and sets of circumstances for each being to go through its karma-phala.

एष मे सर्वधर्माणां धर्मोऽधिकतमो मतः |

यद्भक्त्या पुण्डरीकाक्षं स्तवैरर्चेन्नरः सदा || १३ ||

eṣa me sarvadharmāṇāṃ dharmo' dhikatamo mataḥ |

yadbhaktyā puṇḍarīkākṣaṃ stavairarcennaraḥ sadā || 13

This is considered by me to be the superior dharma among all the dharmas, whereby a man always worships Puṇḍarīkākṣa by means of praises uttered with devotion.

Yudhiṣṭhira wanted to know what the greatest dharma according to Bhīṣma was. So, Bhīṣma gives him the answer in this verse. There are many dharmas given out by the Vedas and by the elders, which are in keeping with the Vedas. Sarva-dharmāṇām–among all of them, eṣaḥ dharmaḥ adhikatamaḥ–this dharma is the best; me mataḥ–this is my view.

Yat naraḥ sadā arcet–whereby man always worships the Lord. How? Stavaiḥ guṇa-saṅkīrtana-lakṣaṇaih–by means of praises that sing the glories of Parameśvara. Bhīṣma refers to Him here as Puṇḍarīkākṣa. Hṛdaya-puṇḍarīke prakāśamānaḥ puṇḍarīkākṣaḥ–the one who shines in the lotus of our heart, that is, the buddhi, as Vāsudeva, the ātmā.

Worshipping the Lord and bringing the Lord into one's life is the greatest dharma. This is the best means for achieving the ultimate end. Through worship with commitment and devotion you bring Īśvara into your life. More of Īśvara in one's life means there is more reality, more objectivity in one's life, because Īśvara is the reality.

What is the superiority of this worship which is in the form of guṇa-saṅkīrtana, hymns of praise? This method of worship does not cause any harm to others, does not require another person or object and is not determined by considerations of time and place. If a Vedic ritual has to be performed, a fire has to be lit, various materials have to be gathered and various oblations have to be prepared. There maybe ants, termites and also other insects in the firewood. It would be

hiṃsa, even if it is done without knowledge. Whereas, in this kind of worship, there is nothing else that is needed except oneself. Here it is only stuti, praise of the Lord, which is repeated. This stuti can be done loudly, softly or mentally. So, what is accomplished by the ritual can also be accomplished by stuti. This is not to put down the rituals but a praise of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma, so as to encourage people to chant the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma.

परमं यो महत्तेजः परमं यो महत्तपः |

परमं यो महद्ब्रह्म परमं यः परायणम् || १४ ||

paramaṃ yo mahattejaḥ paramaṃ yo mahattapaḥ |

paramaṃ yo mahadbrahma paramaṃ yah parāyaṇam || 14

He, who is the exalted and greatest light, the exalted and supreme ruler and the exalted limitless Brahman, is the ultimate goal.

Bhīṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhira, 'Listen to what I am going to say. I am going to tell you the thousand words, names of Viṣṇu.'

Yudhiṣṭhira asked "What is the ekaṃ parāyaṇam, the one ultimate end?' This is the second question and it is being answered here.

He is parama, exalted and mahat-tejas, the greatest light. The sun, moon, stars and so on are the luminaries. Among all the shining objects the mahat-tejas, the greatest light is the svaprakāśa-ātmā, paraṃ brahma. That light is all-shining in terms of knowledge and caitanya-lakṣaṇa, limitless consciousness in terms of svarūpa. He is sarva-avabhāsaka, the illuminator of everything, but is not illumined by anything.

Śaṅkara quotes from the śruti, to explain this. Yena sūryaḥ tapati tejasā iddhaḥ–that lighted by which the sun shines, that is spoken of by the devas as the jyotiṣāṃ jyotiḥ, the light of all lights. Neither the sun nor the moon nor the stars nor the lightnings light up that Brahman. How can this fire light it? Everything shines after that self alone, which is the light of all lights. By its light alone all this shines. 'Know that light, which obtains in the sun and lights up the entire world, that which obtains in the moon and the fire, to be mine alone.' says Bhagavān in the Gītā.

He is the paramaṃ mahat, the exalted and the greatest tapas. Tapati, ajñāpayati, īṣṭe iti tapaḥ. He is the one who commands and controls. He ordains, rules everything. It is because of His tapas, mandate, order, that everything functions. It is because of His delegation of power that all the devatās work, that is, the eyes function, the ears function, everything moves the way it has to move. Due to His mandate alone, everything does what it has to. Nobody can transgress that order. Even without knowledge, if you touch fire, the fire will burn. That is the order. So, He is the one whose order you cannot transgress, without getting the result given by the order itself.

Remaining inside all the bhūtas and in all the lokas as the antaryāmī, Īśvara, the cetana ātmā with His māyā, yamayati, rules. Bhīṣāsmāt, because of fear of Him the wind keeps moving; the sun rises everyday in the eastern sky and does not change its course. Agni and Indra do their jobs. Mṛtyu, the Lord of death, does his job even though he has to keep jumping from place to place. It is not really fear, but the tight order that makes every planet move in its own orbit.

Or we can see it all as the dance of Naṭarāja and when the dancing stops, everything goes back to the Lord. Naṭarāja is not dancing in the jagat, but the dance is itself the jagat. Creation is motion and when the dancing stops, there is no creation, no jagat. The dancing Lord is the jagat, non-dancing is pralaya, resolution and then all motion stops.

He is paramaṃ mahat brahma. Brahman is that which is big. Mahat brahma means that it is bigger than the biggest and there is nothing bigger than that. Everything is within that, there being nothing other than that. Further, He is parama. He is pointed out by the śruti as satyaṃ jñānam anantam, the ultimate truth of everything and limitless in every way.

He alone is parāyaṇa, the ultimate end, the final destination. The word parama along with parāyaṇa shows that it is punarāvṛtti-śaṅkā-rahita–it is the final destination, where the journey of the jīva comes to an end and there is no coming back, Usually, every end is only a leaving point for a new beginning; every destination becomes the starting point for further destination. If a person goes to svarga-loka, then that becomes the point from which he goes to martya-loka. What is the final destination? It should be one having reached which there is no going back. That is only paraṃ brahma which is not other than oneself. If you have to go anywhere, then you will come back. But if it is oneself, then one does not go and therefore, does not come back.

If the end is yourself and still you want to gain it, the gain can be only by knowledge. Therefore, you should ask the Lord 'please give me that knowledge because of which I will be you. You and I are one and the same, and since you are limitless, I cannot be separate from you.' If the individual is separate from the Lord, then the Lord will be limited. Therefore, the Lord is the parāyaṇa; He is the ultimate end achieving which you become the Lord. This is the greatest achievement and being limitless, there is nothing more to be achieved.

By the mention of the word parama everywhere, anything less than parama is negated. So the one, who is paramaṃ tejaḥ, who is paramaṃ tapaḥ, who is paramaṃ brahma, is that Lord who is paramaṃ parāyaṇam, the ultimate end and sarvabhūtānām ekaṃ parāyaṇam–the one ultimate end for all beings. This is the ultimate end which you asked me.

> पवित्राणां पवित्रं यो मङ्गलानां च मङ्गलम् |
>
> दैवतं देवतानां च भूतानां योऽव्ययः पिता || १५ ||
>
> pavitrāṇāṃ pavitraṃ yo maṅgalānāṃ ca maṅgalam |
>
> daivataṃ devatānāṃ ca bhūtānāṃ yo'vyayaḥ pitā || 15
>
> He who is the purest of all that is pure; the most auspicious of all that is auspicious; the Lord of all Gods and the imperishable father of all beings…

Pavitrāṇāṃ pavitram–There are many purifying rituals and all these are methods of getting onself religiously cleansed of all the defects of omissions and commissions. But, omissions and commissions are repeated again and again and so, one keeps doing the prescribed rituals again and again. One cannot live without hurting someone. It is unavoidable. There are many kinds of hiṃsa that are done. So one can only try to live causing the least hurt. There are many things that one has done, but should not have been done. There are a lot of things that one should have done, but has not done. This is endless, and hence one does all the nitya-naimittika-karmas, the

prescribed rituals daily, for neutralizing all the wrong actions that one has done. There are also special purificatory karmas like Gaṅgā-sāgara-gamana–bathing in the Gaṅgā and in the confluence of the river with the ocean, vrata-paripālana–observance of various vratas, dana – giving charity and so on. Thus, there are many rituals and forms of prayer. All these are considered to be pavitra and each of them can remove only one particular pāpa.

Among all these purificatory methods, that which is the most efficacious means for purification is Lord Nārāyana and His grace. He may be dhyāta–meditated upon, dṛṣṭa– visualized properly or invoked in a particular form. He may be kīrtita, His glories may be sung, stuta–praised, sampūjita–invoked and worshipped in a particular form, smṛta–remembered, praṇata–saluted with prostrations. Worshipped, remembered, or prostrated to, in whatever way we relate to Him, He blesses us and eliminates all our pāpas. He is the one who gives the purificatory karmas their capacity to purify. Hence, He is pavitrāṇām pavitra, the purest of the pure.

Further, it is because of His grace, that by discovering His true nature, that the impurities of puṇya, pāpa and self-ignorance that cause the bondage of saṃsara, go away. When self-ignorance goes, one wakes up as though from a dream and comes to know that 'I am a non-doer.' When the oneness of Īśvara and oneself becomes very clear, then, there is no more any necessity for doing all these purificatory karmas.

Further, if the grace of paramātmā is complete, then, one is led to a guru. Ajñāna, ignorance of oneself is the root cause of all the impurities. By the grace of the Lord and help of the guru and the śāstra, knowledge of the true nature of Īśvara is gained and by this the self-ignorance is destroyed. With that, the impurities of punya and papa, which cause the bondage of saṃsara go away.

Śaṅkara quotes a few verses from the purāṇas to highlight the pavitra nature of the Lord.

The Lord is not only the apavarga-prada, the giver of mokṣa but He also gives good looks, good health, wealth and pleasant experiences, if meditated upon regularly.

That Acyuta, when thought of, giving up all worries, definitely destroys all the varieties of afflictions. When that is so, why is it that He is not thought of?

Even though a person has done a lot of very serious pāpas, if he meditates, thinks of Acyuta even for a moment, he becomes a tapasvī. What kind of tapasvī? Paṅkti-pāvana-pāvanaḥ–one who is capable of purifying a paṅkti-pāvana. A paṅkti-pāvana is a brahmana, who is a śrotriya and does all the karmas prescribed in the Vedas and thereby capable of purifying the paṅkti, the very group of people around him.

When all the śāstras were churned again and again and analyzed, only one thing surfaced repeatedly. That was, that Lord Nārāyaṇa alone is to be meditated upon always. Saguṇa brahma, Īśvara alone is the dhyeya-vastu.

The one who is to be always meditated upon by all of you endowed with sattva guṇa, is Hari alone. 'He vipras! If you want to meditate on Nārāyaṇa, Keśava, all of you should do japa with Om.' Omkāra is the name of Bhagavān.

In every yuga, certain things are emphasized as to be done. In the kṛta-yuga otherwise known as satya-yuga, a lot of dhyāna has to be done. In the tretā-yuga, all vaidika-karmas like yajñas have to be done. In the dvāpara-yuga, a lot of pūjā, arcana has to be done. Dhyāna is more difficult than yajña. Then, yajña is more difficult than arcana because, in yajña the rules are many and sāmagrīs and mantras are many. But even for pūjā, there is niyama and one has to collect some materials. Whatever one gains by these three sādhanas, the same result one gains in kaliyuga, without doing them. How? Keśavaṃ saṅkīrtya–by praising and singing the glories of Lord Keśava. So this is a praise of saṅkīrana.

Even if evil-minded people think of Hari, by the fact that they remembered Him, He removes their pāpas, like even, one accidentally touches agni, the fire will definitely burn him. Even if a duṣṭa like Duryodhana, thinks of Hari, his pāpas will be removed. This is a praise of the nāma.

Knowingly or unknowingly, by singing and understanding the glories of Vāsudeva, all the pāpas get dissolved, just as the salt crystal put into water get dissolved.

Therefore, the name of Hari alone is enough; that alone is my jīvana, life. There is no other gati, refuge, indeed no other refuge in kaliyuga.

In all their undertakings there is no amaṅgala, no inauspicious end or failure at all– because everything is looked upon as the prasāda of the Lord. For whom? For those, in whose heart there is Bhagavān Hari, who is the abode of all maṅgala, auspiciousness.

Maṅgalānāṃ maṅgalam–He is the auspiciousness, that is, the real auspicious end. Maṅgala means auspiciousness. What is it that is considered auspicious? Sukha–happiness, sukha-sādhana–whatever is the means to happiness and tad-jñāpaka–whatever makes you know that, are all auspicious. The śruti is the pramāṇa to reveal the various means to sukha and reveals what is the real sukha and hence it is the most auspicious.

The sounds oṃkāra and atha are said to be indicative of maṅgala because they came from the mouth of Brahmāji. Before creation Brahmāji said, 'Oṃ atha' and started the whole creation. The creation is complete. Nothing is lacking and the job is well done.

Even though the śruti is maṅgala, that which is to be really known through the śruti and which is of the nature of paramānanda, is the real maṅgala and that is Īśvara. Generally, we find that every auspicious end is the beginning of another episode. It goes on like an endless serial. But when you are with the Lord and no more separate from the Lord, that is one with Īśvara, then there is no more the cycle of birth and death. The serial comes to an end. Therefore, He is maṅgalānāṃ maṅgalam.

Yudhiṣṭhira wanted to know that one devatā. Lord Nārāyaṇa is pointed out as the daivataṃ devatānām, as the Lord of all the devatās. He is the deva of all devas being the sat-cid-ātmā, the antaryāmi of all the devas, like Indra, Varuṇa and others. Every devatā is governed by an order and that order is Īśvara. It is because of the grace of Īśvara that Indra is able to function as Indra and Varuṇa is able to function as Varuṇa and so on. So, as Parameśvara also, He is the deva of all devas.

Further, He is bhūtānām, avyayaḥ pitā–all the bhūtas are subject to vyaya, loss. The whole jagat will resolve, dissolve into Parameśvara, who is avyaya, being the cause of everything. He does

not undergo any vyaya, any change or loss nor is He subject to death. He is the father and mother too, that is, the maker and also the material cause of all the beings, of all the elements and elementals and also the various types of bodies. He is the father of all of them. We may lose our local father but we can never lose Īśvara, the father of all, because He is avyaya, one who does not undergo any change.

HE IS THE ONLY DEVA

When it is said that Īśvara is eko devaḥ, does it mean that the deva is one and that the jīva is another one and different from Him? To point out that He is one without a second of any kind, Śaṅkara quotes from the Upanisads.

He is eka deva–there is only one deva and that is Parameśvara, without a second. After creating all beings, He entered into them and hid himself, sarva-bhūteṣu gūḍhaḥ. The word 'hidden' may give the idea of a location. But, that He is immanent and transcendental is pointed out by saying sarva-vyāpī, all-pervasive and sarva-bhūta-antarātmā, the ātmā of all beings. He is there in every being and at the same time transcends all beings. He is the karmādhyakṣa, the one who presides over the laws of karma and gives the results; sarva-bhūta-adhivāsa, one who is the adhiṣṭhāna of all beings. Who is He in reality? As the ātmā, He is sāksī, cetā kevala–the witness in the form of the non-dual caitanya and nirguṇa–free from all attributes. If He has guṇa, He will not be non-dual. This is the svarūpa of Parameśvara.

He is the one who created the creator Brahmāji and gave him the Vedas. At the same time, He is not located somewhere but is the deva who is ātmā-buddhi-prakāśa, seated in our buddhi, illumining it. To Him, as a mumukṣu, I surrender.

Śaṅkara also cites from the Bhagavād-gītā to show that the ātmā is one in all beings. All these are to point out, that there is no difference between the jīvā and Īśvara. Again, a doubt may arise, that if there is only one Lord, why do the Purāṇas talk of so many devatās, like Brahmāji, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others? Śaṅkara quotes from the Purāṇas, to show that, the one Lord alone assumes various names and functions and that even the Purāṇas talk of advaita as the ultimate truth.

It is one Lord Janārdana alone that assumes different names as Brahmāji, Viṣṇu, Śiva and so on, depending on the functions of sṛṣṭi, sthiti and saṃhāra–creation, sustenance and resolution.

Lord Yama tells his dūtas, 'Leave them at a distance and go away.' Whom? Those whose mati, mind, has acalā niṣṭhā in ananta, the limitless Lord who is hṛdaya-gata, obtaining in the buddhi. How? Sakalam idam aham–All this is me; sakalam idaṃ paramapumān vāsudevaḥ–all this is that supreme person Vāsudeva. Sa Parameśvarah ekaḥ–that Lord is one. Thus they know that all that is here, is one supreme puruṣa and that they are non-separate from that Lord. Therefore, Yama does not touch them.

In the Viṣṇupurāṇa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Lord Mahādeva, 'O! Śaṅkara! You are avibhinna, non-separate from me. Whatever abhaya is given by you, that is given by me. Which (truth) I am, that alone you, this jagat, devas, asuras and men are. Those, who are avidyā-mohitātmāna, deluded by ignorance, see and talk of a bheda, difference between us.

In the Bhaviṣyottara-purāṇa, Lord Maheśvara says, 'Whoever sees me or Brahmāji as different from Viṣṇu, these deluded durātmās are given to wrong reasoning and are roasted in naraka; they commit a pāpa equal to brahma-hatyā, killing a learned brāhmaṇa.'

Again in the Harivaṃśa, Lord Maheśvara says in the kailāsa-yātrā portion. 'O! Janārdana! I am you, who are sarvaga, all-pervasive and you are me. There is no difference between us in all the three worlds, by name or content. Whatever are your great names, they are mine also. There is no need for analysis or doubt. Worship done to you, is seva done to me. Whoever shows dveṣa towards you, shows it to me.'

For śuddhi, purification, we take a bath. We go on a pilgrimage and take a holy dip in the Gangā and other tīrthas for inner purification. Going to Mānasarovar is considered to be very holy. But without and travel we can take a snāna in the lake of our mind.

The ātmā that obtains in the mind is the mānasa-tīrtha. It is in that ātmā that the devas, Vedas and others (smṛtis and purāṇas) attain total oneness and purity. Taking a bath in this mānasa-tīrtha, one becomes amṛta, free from limitations.

One who takes a dip in the tīrtha of the mind, in the lake of jñāna, whose waters are the meditation on the Lord, and which totally destroys the impurities of rāga and dveṣa, gains that highest gati of no return.

One's own ātmā is the nadī, river which is filled with the water of controlled living, fed by the lake of truthfulness, with a life of dharma, as its banks and compassion for its waves. O! son of Pāṇḍu, take a dip there, because the mind is not purified by water.

Thus, Viṣṇu-cintana, remembering the name of the Lord, is the mānasa-snāna, and since this is so, the following verse is chanted before beginning rituals like puja and so on. Generally, one has to do snāna, ācamana, prāṇāyāma and so on before the rituals for purifying oneself. Apavitraḥ pavitraḥ va–whether one has or has not cleansed oneself thus; sarva-avasthāṃ gataḥ api vā–even if one has seen or uttered or done things that have dosa, if one remembers the name of Puṇḍarīkākṣa, he becomes clean inside and outside.

Verses 16 and 17 taken together makes a complete sentence.

यतः सर्वाणि भूतानि भवन्त्यादियुगागमे |

यस्मिंश्च प्रलयं यन्ति पुनरेव युगक्षये || १६ ||

yataḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni bhavantyādiyugāgame |

yasmiṃśca pralayaṃ yānti punareva yugakṣaye || 16

From whom all beings are born in the beginning of the yuga, and unto whom they all go back again at the time of pralaya…

Yataḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni bhavanti–He is the one from whom all elements and elementals have come into being ādiyugāgame–in the beginning of the cycle of creation. Here, yuga means kalpa, a cycle. Yasmin ca pralayaṃ yānti–He alone is the one unto whom all of them go back again,

punaḥ eva yugakṣaye–when the cycle of creation ends. From Him alone everything manifests at the beginning of the cycle and again everything goes into an unmanifest condition, unto Him alone. The word 'ca' indicates that while they are there also, they are sustained by the Lord alone. Therefore, there is nothing that is away from Him.

तस्य लोकप्रधानस्य जगन्नाथस्य भूपते ।

विष्णोर्नामसहस्रं मे शृणु पापभयापहम् ॥ १७ ॥

Tasya lokapradhānasya jagannāthasya bhūpate |

Viṣṇornāmasahasraṃ me śṛṇu pāpabhayāpaham || 17

O king, hear from me the thousand names of that Viṣṇu, who is the Lord of the universe, the highest in all the worlds, the names which will remove all pāpas and fear.

That Lord is Viṣṇu–all-pervasive, Jagannātha–the Lord of the entire jagat and also loka-pradhāna–the most important, the first and last in all the worlds for all the people. The word loka-pradhāna also means, the one who is described as the highest in all the lokas and in the śāstras.

As Bhīṣma is replying to the questions of Yudhiṣṭhira, he draws the attention of Yudhiṣṭhira by saying, 'me śṛṇu–listen from me, viṣṇoḥ nāma-sahasram–the thousand names of Viṣṇu.

What do these names do? Pāpa-bhayāpaham–they destroy fear and pāpa, fear of all the pāpa arising out of omissions and commissions. Everyone nurses guilt and shame. These thousand names of Bhagavān takes care of all that guilt. Fear is psychological and the various pāpas in one's account are the cause for fear. These thousand names of the Lord, will not only remove all the fears and neutralize all the puṇya-pāpas, but will also remove the fear of saṃsāra and then there will be no more saṃsāra, no more birth and death.

Now a question is raised, as to how words can be used with reference to param brahma. For words to have pravṛtti, access, there are five hetus, causes. They are ṣaṣṭhī–relationship, guṇa–attributes, kriyā–action, jāti–species and rūdhi–names by convention or proper names as Śrī Rāma, Śri Kṛṣṇa and so on. Words can function only within this range. Paraṃ brahma being non-dual, has no species or relationship; nor does it have any action or attribute. When that is so, how can any word have access, let alone a thousand names?

Even when this is so, Brahman–saguṇa-brahma with superimposed guṇas, without really undergoing any change, created and has become this world. Thus, Brahman alone manifests as everything and therefore all objects and all words are nothing but Brahman. All the words have access only in this way.

The Viṣṇu-sahasranāma is the praise of the Lord with thousand words. Each of these words is a name. Here, in this work, no argument or reasoning is given as to why something is said, as in the case of the study of the śāstra.

In the Muṇḍakopaniṣad, for example, we have a mantra which says, analyzing all experiences in life, a discriminative person gains dispassion, with an understanding, that all these means and

ends are only for survival and not meant for achieving the ultimate end. In fact, there is no 'ultimate' end; there is only one end. Finite means cannot lead to the limitless, and limitation is not something that one likes, because one cannot be happy being a wanting person. To be free from being a wanting person, one has to be the whole. One cannot become the limitless whole. One should already be the whole. If so, it has to be known. To know this fact, there is no adequate means of knowledge at one's disposal and hence in order to know, one should go to a guru. Then, it is a whole vision that is unfolded.

But here in the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma, the verses are different. It is only names. Each word reveals Īśvara. Each word is a window through which you look at Īśvara and understand Īśvara with awe and wonderment. There are no arguments given. This is the difference.

Further, these words are not descriptive, as when you say 'a big red rose.' In this, rose is the substantive; big and red are the attributes used to understand what kind of rose it is. When you hear the words 'a big red rose,' you automatically understand that it is not a jasmine or a lily and that it is not yellow or green and that it is not small. Thus, these very attributes, adjectives tend to narrow down what we are talking of, separating it from everything else. Whereas here, the words help to reveal the various aspects of Bhagavān, because everything is a manifestation of the Lord and everything is included in Him.

यानि नामानि गौणानि विख्यातानि महात्मनः ।

ऋषिभिः परिगीतानि तानि वक्ष्यामि भूतये ॥ १८ ॥

yāni nāmāni gauṇāni vikhyātāni mahātmanaḥ |

ṛṣibhiḥ parigītāni tāni vakṣyāmi bhūtaye ॥ 18

For securing prosperity, I shall enumerate those names of the Lord, Mahātmā, which are indicative of (His) qualities, well known and well sung by the ṛṣis (in the mantras).

Yāni nāmāni gauṇāni–those names that are connected to one guṇa or the other; mahātmanaḥ–of Parameśvara. Those names describe the glories of the Lord. They are vikhyātāni–they are well known in the śruti, smṛti and the purāṇas. Thus, they have been coming down the generations. Further, they are parigītāni–well recited and presented by means of the mantras of the Vedas, ṛṣibhiḥ–by the ṛṣis, the seers of the mantras. The stories of Parameśvara and His glories are spoken of in the Vedas and also in the purāṇas. The ṛṣis talk about the glories of the Lord not only through the vedas, but talk about them even in the purāṇas.

In this śloka, Bhīṣma refers to the Lord as mahātmā. Mahān ca asai ātmā ca iti mahātmā. It means the greatest, limitless ātmā. Śaṅkara quotes a well known sloka to remind us of the meaning of the word ātmā. Ātmā is that which āpnoti, pervades everything; ādatte, takes, withdraws everything unto itself; atti viṣayān iha, eats, experiences all objects; yat ca asya santataḥ bhāvaḥ–that adhiṣṭhāna because of which this world has a continuous existence. Thus by this meaning of the word ātmā and by the word mahān meaning big, it is clear that, that the limitless Paramātmā alone obtains as Parameśvara, the jīva and also jagat.

Tāni vakṣyāmi – I am going to tell you those thousand names of Parameśvara. For what purpose? Bhūtaye. Bhūti is prosperity, accomplishment. Any accomplishment falls under one of the four-

fold puruṣārthas. The recitation of Viṣṇu-sahasranāma produces puṇya and according to one's saṅkalpa, bhūti is gained. The one who seeks mokṣa should also recite these thousand names.

The following verses are also chanted traditionally while undertaking the pārāyaṇa, chanting, of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma.

ऋषिर्नाम्नां सहस्रस्य वेदव्यासो महामुनिः ।
छन्दोऽनुष्टुप् तथा देवो भगवान् देवकीसुतः ।।१९।।

ṛṣirnāmnāṃ sahasrasya vedavyāso mahāmuniḥ |
chando'nuṣṭup tathā devo bhagavān devakīsutaḥ || 19

For these thousand names, Veda-vyāsa is the ṛṣi. Anuṣṭup is the chandas and the son of Devakī is the devatā.

This is the laghunyāsa, that is, a smaller version of the nyāsa. The word nyāsa is derived from the verbal root 'as' with the prefix 'ni' and means 'placing.' The deity in the mantra and the presiding deities of the various limbs are visualized by the upāsaka, as being there in the various parts of the body. He visualizes the body with the mind and limbs the various devatās. The intension is that the level of the upāsaka will be raised, to become fit for doing the worship.

In nyāsa, the various deties are invoked; the deities are the various aspects of that particular Lord that one is worshipping. In Viṣṇu-pūjā the various aspects of Viṣṇu are invoked.

The one who gave out these mantras at the beginning is called the ṛṣi and here the ṛṣi is Veda-vyāsa. Anuṣṭup is the meter, which consists of thirty-two letters. Each verse is made of four quarters, each quarter being made up of eight letters. The deity spoken of in this stotra, is the devatā.

अमृतांशूद्भवो बीजं शक्तिर्देवकीनन्दनः ।
त्रिसामा हृदयं तस्य शान्त्यर्थे विनियुज्यते ।।२०।।

amṛtāṃśūdbhavo bījaṃ śaktirdevakīnandanaḥ |
trisāmā hṛdayaṃ tasya śāntyarthe viniyujyate || 20

For this Amṛtāmśūdbhava is the seed, Devakīnandana is the śakti, Trisāmā is the hṛdaya, the heart and japa is done for the sake of peace.

The Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra itself is considered a mantra and this mantra is likened to a fruit-yielding tree. The bīja, the seed of the tree, has the complete śakti of the tree in a subtle and unmanifest form. Here, the words of the sahasranāma, that is amṛtāṃśūdbhavaḥ, the name of the Lord that occurs in this stotra itself, is the bīja, the seed of the tree, which has the complete śakti of the tree in a subtle and unmanifest form. Any seed has a potential to become the tree. That śakti, or the potential that is present in the seed, is imagined as Devakīnandana, which is another name of the Lord. Trisāmā is another name of the Lord and it is visualized as the hṛdaya, the heart, that is the main theme. Viniyoga is the purpose, for which this Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-japa is being done. The purpose, for which this whole Viṣṇu-sahasranāma is employed, is for attaining śānti and that śānti can either be āpekṣika, relative or ātyantika, absolute. The devata that is

spoken of here is Mahāviṣṇu. He is visualized according to the following verses for the purpose of meditation.

विष्णुं जिष्णुं महाविष्णुं प्रभविष्णुं महेश्वरम्।
अनेकरूपदैत्यान्तं नमामि पुरुषोत्तमम् ।।२१।।

viṣṇuṃ jiṣṇuṃ mahaviṣṇuṃ prabhaviṣṇuṃ maheśvaram |
anekarūpadaityāntaṃ namāmi puruṣottamam || 21

I salute that Puruṣottama, who is all-pervasive, ever victorious and all-powerful, who is the lord of all, who puts an end to the asuras, who takes manifold forms.

This mantra is only a namaskāra, a salutation and is not included in the nyāsa. This Mahāviṣṇu is anekarūpa, one who has many forms and hence, He is Viśvarūpa. He is present in all forms that are existent, being all-pervasive. Hence, we cannot say that a particular form alone is His form. He is always the one who is victorious, all-powerful, the Lord of all the devas and the one who destroys all the evil forces. He is the one who is capable of being praised. Such a Lord, I salute.

The above three verses form the laghunyāsa. The names of Bhagavān Himself form the mantras for this nyāsa.

न्यासः

अस्य श्री विष्णोर्दिव्यसहस्रनामस्तोत्र-महामन्त्रस्य श्रीवेदव्यासो भगवान् ऋषिः । अनुष्टुप् छन्दः । श्रीमहाविष्णुः परमात्मा श्रीमन्नारायणो देवता। अमृतांशूद्भवो भानुरिति बीजम् । देवकीनन्दनः स्रष्टेति शक्तिः । उद्भवः क्षोभणो देव इति परमो मन्त्रः। शङ्खभृन्नन्दकी चक्रीति कीलकम् । शार्ङ्गधन्वा गदाधर इत्यस्त्रम् । रथाङ्गपाणिरक्षोभ्य इति नेत्रम् । त्रिसामा सामगः सामेति कवचम् । आनन्दं परब्रह्मेति योनिः । ऋतुः सुदर्शनः काल इति दिग्बन्धः । श्रीविश्वरूप इति ध्यानम् । श्रीमहाविष्णुप्रीत्यर्थे सहस्रनामजपे विनियोगः।।

Nyāsaḥ

asya śrīviṣṇordivyasahasranāmastotra-mahāmantrasya śrīvedavyāso bhagavān ṛṣiḥ | anuṣṭup chandaḥ | śrīmahāviṣṇuḥ paramātmā śrīmannārayaṇo devatā | amṛtāṃ śūdbhavo bhānuriti bījam | devakīnandanaḥ sraṣṭeti śaktiḥ | udbhvaḥ kṣobhaṇo deva iti paramo mantraḥ | śaṅkhabhrnnandakī cakrīti kīlakam | śārṅgadhanvā gadādhara ityastram | rathāṅgapāṇirakṣobhya iti netram | trisāmā sāmaghaḥ sāmeti kavacam | ānandaṃ parabrahmeti yoniḥ | ṛtuḥ sudarśanaḥ kāla iti digbandhaḥ | śrīviśvarūpa iti dhyānam | śrīmahāviṣṇu-prītyarthe sahasranāmajape viniyogaḥ ||

This is a bigger nyāsa. For this sahasranāma-stotra of Śrī Viṣṇu, which is like mahāmantra, Bhagavān Veda-vyāsa is the ṛṣi, the seer of this mantra. Anuṣṭup is the chandas, the meter, consisting of four quarters, each having eight syllables. Śrīmahāviṣṇu who is paramātmā and Śrīmannārāyaṇa is the devatā invoked through this mantra. Amṛtāṃśūdbhavaḥ bhānuḥ, the utkṛṣṭa-mantra in the entire Viṣṇu-sahasrānamā, is the bīja, the seed; devakīnandanaḥ sraṣṭā is the śakti, the power; udbhavaḥ kṣobhaṇo devaḥ is the highest mantra; śaṅkhabhṛn-nandakī cakrī is the kīlaka, the bolt which keeps the śakti from spilling out; śārṅgadhanvā gadādharaḥ is the

astra, the weapon that protects against the negative forces which disturb the upāsaka, the person who chants this mantra; rathāṅgapāniḥ akṣobhyaḥ is the netra, the eye that gives a special vision by which the upāsaka is able to see the meaning of the devatā; trisāmā sāmaghaḥ sāma is the kavaca, the protecting armour; ānandaṃ parabrahma is the yoni, the cause or the medium of manifestation; through this mantra, it comes to manifestation. ṛtuḥ sudarśanaḥ kāla is the digbandha, the protective tie. The meditation is on the Lord as Viśvarūpa. Engaging in the sahasranāma-japa is for pleasing Śrīmahāviṣṇu.

ध्यानम्
क्षीरोदन्वत्प्रदे शेशुचिमणिविलसत्सैकते मौक्तिकानां
मालाक्लृप्तासनस्थः स्फटिकमणिनिभैर्मौक्तिकैर्मण्डिताङ्गः।
शुभ्रैरभ्रैरदभ्रैरूपरिविरचितैर्मुक्तपीयूषवर्षैः
आनन्दी नः पुनीयादरिनलिनगदाशङ्खपाणिर्मुकुन्दः ।।२२।।

dhyānam
kṣīrodanvatpradeśe śucimaṇivilasatsaikate
mauktikānāṃ mālāklṛptāsanasthaḥ
sphaṭikamaṇinibhairmauktikairmaṇḍitāṅgaḥ
śubhrairabhrairadabhrairupariviracitair
muktapīyūṣavarṣaih ānandī naḥ
punīyādarinalinagadāśaṅkhapāṇir mukundaḥ || 22

May that Lord Mukunda, who is happy being Himself, who has in His hands the wheel, the lotus, the mace and the conch, whose limbs are decked with pearls which are as clear as crystal, who is seated on an āsana, and embellished by laces of pearls, in the abode of the milky ocean, with the sand shining, like the pure precious stones, under a canopy of white, water-laden clouds pouring the rain of amṛta-purify us.

The devatā that is spoken of in the Viṣṇu-sahasrānamā is Mahāviṣṇu and in the verse beginning with viṣṇuṃ jiṣṇuṃ, a short description of the form for meditation was given. That description is further elaborated in the verse starting from kśīrodanvatpradeśe and also in the following eight verses. Lord Viṣṇu is always spoken of as having a colour that is dark like the rain-bearing clouds, wearing yellow-coloured garments and reclining on the ādiśeṣa. Here, without all these usual forms, He is given a pure white form, for the purpose of meditation.

भूः पादौ यस्य नाभिर्वियदसुरनिलश्चन्द्रसूर्यौ च नेत्रे
कर्णावाशाः शिरो द्यौर्मुखमपि दहनो यस्य वास्तेयमब्धिः।
अन्तस्स्थं यस्य विश्वं सुरनरखगगोभोगिगन्धर्वदैत्यैः
चित्रं रंरम्यते तं त्रिभुवनवपुषं विष्णुमीशं नमामि ।।२३।।
ओं नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।

bhūḥ pādau yasya
nābhirviyadasuranilaścandrasūryau ca netre
karṇāvāśāḥ śiro dyaurmukhamapi

dahano yasya vāsteyamabdhiḥ |
anthasthaṃ yasya viśvaṃ
suranarakhagagobhogigandharvadaityaiḥ
citraṃ raṃramyate tribhuvanavapuṣaṃ
viṣṇumīśaṃ namāmi ॥ 23

Oṃ namo bhagavate vāsudevāya ।

I salute the Lord Viṣṇu, who is in the form of the three worlds; the one for whom the earth is the feet, the sky is the navel, vāyu is the breath, the sun and the moon are the two eyes, the quarters are the ears, the heaven is the head, fire is the mouth, the ocean is the bladder; this entire variegated universe – consisting of the devas, human beings, birds, cows, reptiles, celestials and demons – is present within Him and dancing beautifully within Him. To that Lord Vāsudeva, my salutations.

This verse is written by Śrī Toṭakācārya, the disciple of Śrī Śaṅcarācārya, in his work Śrutisārasamuddharaṇa. This is the viśvarūpa descrption of the Lord. In order to understand that the entire universe is His manifestation and that He is all-pervasive. He is pictured here as having all the three worlds, the earth, the heaven and that in between, as His body. Naturally the earth would be His feet and the heavens His Head and all the beings in all the worlds would be within Him. This variegated universe with all these varieties is as through dancing beautifully within Him.

This verse is followed by chanting the powerful dvādaṣākṣri-mantra 'Om Namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya,' consisting of twelve letters.

शान्ताकारं भुजगशयनं पद्मनाभं सुरेशं
विश्वाधारं गगनसदृशं मेघवर्णं शुभाङ्गम् ।
लक्ष्मीकान्तं कमलनयनं योगिभिर्ध्यानगम्यं
वन्दे विष्णुं भवभयहरं सर्वलोकैकनाथम् ॥२४॥
śāntākāraṃ bhujagaśayanaṃ padmanābhaṃ sureśaṃ
viśvādhāraṃ gaganasadṛśaṃ meghavarṇaṃ śubhāṅgam ।
lakṣmīkāntaṃ kamalanayaṃ yogihṛddyānagamyaṃ
vande viṣṇuṃ bhavabhayaharaṃ sarvalokaikanātham ॥ 24

I salute that Viṣṇu, who has a form that is calm, who with a lotus in His navel, has Ananta as His bed, who is the Lord of the devas and the support of the whole universe, who is all-pervasive like the space and dark like the clouds, whose limbs are auspicious, who is the consort of Lakṣmī, whose eyes are like the lotus petals, who is recognized though meditation, in the heart of the yogīs and who removes the fear of samsara and who is the only Lord of all the lokas, the worlds.

मेघश्यामं पीतकौशेयवासं श्रीवत्साङ्कं कौस्तुभोद्भासिताङ्गम् ।
पुण्योपेतं पुण्डरीकायताक्षं विष्णुं वन्दे सर्वलोकैकनाथम् ॥२५॥

meghaśyāmaṃ Pītakauśeyavāsaṃ śrīvatsāṅkaṃ kaustubhodbhāsitāṅgam ।

puṇyopetaṃ puṇḍarīkāyatākṣaṃ viṣṇuṃ vande sarvalokaikanātham ॥ 25

I salute that Viṣṇu, who is dark like the clouds, who wears yellow silken garments, who has the mark of śrīvatsa on His chest, whose chest is radiant with the jewel of kaustubha (in His necklace), who is the embodiment of all our puṇya (or who is attained through puṇya), who has long eyes like the lotus petals and who is the only Lord of all the lokas.

नमः समस्तभूतानामादिभूताय भूभृते ।
अनेकरूपरूपाय विष्णवे प्रभविष्णवे ॥२६॥

namaḥ samastabhūtānāmādibhūtāya bhūbhṛte ।

anekarūparūpaya viṣṇave prabhaviṣṇavave ॥ 26

My salutations to the all-pervading Viṣṇu, the one who is the ādi, the cause of all beings, who sustains the earth, who has manifold forms and who is omnipotent.

सशङ्गचक्रं सकिरीटकुण्डलं सपीतवस्त्रं सरसीरुहेक्षणम् ।
सहारवक्षस्स्थलशोभिकौस्तुभं नमामि विष्णुं शिरसा चतुर्भुजम् ॥२७॥

saśaṅkhacakraṃ sakirīṭakuṇḍalaṃ sapītavastraṃ sarasīruhekṣaṇam ।

sahāravakṣassthalaśobhikaustubhaṃ namāmi viṣṇuṃ śirasā caturbhujam ॥ 27

I, bow down (my head) and salute that Viṣṇu, who has four arms, who is (adorned) with the counch and the discus, with the crown and ear-rings, with yellow garments, with eyes like the lotus petals, with the jewel of kaustubha shining on His chest bedecked with necklaces.

छायायां पारिजातस्य हेमसिंहासनोपरि ।
आसीनमम्बुदश्याममायताक्षमलङ्कृतम् ॥२८॥

chāyāyāṃ pārijātasya hemasiṃhāsanopari ।

āsīnam ambudaśyāmamāyatākṣamalaṅkṛtam ॥ 28

The one who is seated on a golden throne, in the shade of the pārijāta tree, who is dark like the clouds; one who has long beautiful eyes; one who is adorned with beautiful ornaments (to Him I surrender).

चन्द्राननं चतुर्बाहुम श्रीवत्सङ्कितवक्षसम् ।
रुक्मिणीसत्यभामाभ्यां सहितमं कृष्णमाश्रये ॥२९॥

candrānanaṃ caturbāhuṃ śrīvatsāṅkitavakṣasam ।

rukmiṇīsatyabhāmābhyāṃ sahitaṃ kṛṣṇamāśraye ॥ 29

I surrender to that Kṛṣṇa, whose face is (beautiful) like the moon, who has four arms, whose chest is marked with the śrīvatsa, and who is along with Rukmiṇi and Satyabhāmā.

CONCLUSION TO ŚAṄKARA'S INTRODUCTION

In this Viṣṇu-sahasranāma even names like āditya are mentioned. Even though these are the names of particular devatās, the names of these devatās are nothing but the names of Parameśvara. Even the praise of a given devatā is only the praise of Parameśvara alone. Even if you worship an iṣṭa-devatā like āditya or the others, still the worship goes only to Parameśvara. As devatās, āditya and so on, are nothing but exalted jīvas. If an ordinary jīva is Parameśvara, then the devatās are also Parameśvara. When these devatās are worshipped, Parameśvara alone is being worshipped.

'All the luminaries in the sky like the sun, moon, stars and so on are Viṣṇu; the fourteen worlds are Viṣṇu; the forests and jungles are Viṣṇu; the mountains and the eight quarters are Viṣṇu; all the rivers and oceans are Viṣṇu.' In short, whatever obtains as 'is' or 'is not' is Lord Viṣṇu alone. In the Bhagavad-gitā also, in various places, such as 'ādityānām ahaṃ viṣṇuḥ,' Bhagavān points out that He is everything. In answer to Yudhiṣṭhira's question, one devatā is being spoken about. All the thousand names point out only to one Viṣṇu, one devatā alone. In fact, if there are more names, they also point out to only one Viṣṇu. In this sahasranāma, names of the individual devatās are also found. It is not that these devatās are separate from Viṣṇu. Therefore, they are again names of Viṣṇu alone.

Some nāmas may have the same vṛtti, meaning, like Śrīpati and Mādhava, both of which mean the Lord of Lakṣmī. But, as they are different śabdas, words, there is no punarukti-doṣa, defect of repetition. Again some śabdas, names like Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva, Padmanābha and so on are found more than once. But, as they are derived differently, they have different vṛtti, meaning. Therefore, there is no punarukti-doṣa, defect of repetition.

Whenever there is a word in masculine gender, that word is used to show that the Lord Viṣṇu is directly addressed. He is the viśeṣya, substantive and every nāma is the viśeṣaṇa, adjective for Him. Wherever a word is in feminine gender that word is also used for Viṣṇu, but it is addressed as the devatā. Devatā, being in feminine gender, becomes the substantive here. Where the name is in neuter gender, then the svarūpa of Viṣṇu which is Brahman is spoken about or they are adjectival to Brahman, being in the neutral gender. So all the three genders are applicable to the same vastu. This is to be understood.

Om

The Viṣṇu-sahasranāma begins with Ōm. It is an integral part of the sahasranāma. Ōm is a word, which is mangala-sūchaka, indicative of an auspicious beginning. It is also the name of Brahman, for both the saguṇa and nirguṇa aspect, for both the vastu and Parameśvara. The Lord is one and Ōm is also a single syllable word.

The word Ōm is derived from the verbal root 'ava rakṣaṇe' with the meaning of protecting. Avati rakṣati iti Ōm. Therefore, Ōm means that which protects. As Parameśvara, as Brahman along with māyā-śakti, He sustains the world. Therefore, He is the source of protection and also the source of blessing. As paramātmā, Brahman blesses by satta-sphūrti-pradāna, by lending existece and consciousness to everything.

It is the material cause that sustains the effect. Clay is the material cause of the pot. The pot has come from clay and when it is broken, destroyed, it goes back to clay. Even while it is a pot, it is nothing but clay. The pot cannot stand apart from the clay. The weight, consistency and the color of the pot belong only to the clay. Minus the clay, the pot has no separate existence. Therefore, the pot is sustained by the clay, the material cause.

The clay can be further reduced into something and finally into particles. Particles are mere concepts and they exist as objects of understanding. Any object of knowledge, be it perceptual, inferential or presumptuous; be it pot or clay or particle is nothing but consciousness. As the pot can be reduced to clay, so too, every object can be reduced to something else, without which it cannot exist. It is but a word centred on the tongue.

As Ōm is the name of Brahman, everything comes from Ōm, is sustained by Ōm and goes back to Ōm. Therefore, it is Ōm that sustains and protects everything. Again, Ōm is a word, and therefore, it is a pratīka or a sound symbol for Īśvara. Though it can be written, it is not a pratimā, a form symbol, popularly written as ॐ. Unfortunately these days when Om is stated, we only remember the symbol not what Om stands for.

How is Om a symbol for the Lord?
A flag is just a piece of cloth. Yet, we see that on the flag of a country, the constitution of the country, what the country stands for, is deliberately superimposed, loaded. Deliberate superimposition on something else makes it a symbol for what is superimposed. Therefore, the flag symbolizes the country and respect shown to the flag is the respect shown to that country. Defence force personnel follow a strict protocol in the flag hoisting ceremony.
Similarly, on the word Om, there is a deliberate superimposition of Īśvara and therefore it becomes a word symbol. The names that we give to people are also sound symbols, standing for the person. So,Ōm is a sound symbol, which is loaded with meaning.

Phonetically, 'A' is the basic sound that is produced by human being anywhere in the world, when he tries to make a sound by opening the mouth. In most languages 'A' is also the first letter of the alphabet. When a sound is produced by closing the mouth, what comes out is the sound 'M'. In between, when there is a rounding off of the mouth, the sound 'U' is produced. Since everything is the Lord, all names in all languages and in all dialects are the names of the Lord, and the names are nothing but the Lord.

Now, what can be the best name for the Lord, a name that would include everything? All objects are but names and all names are words. Words, being made of letters, are nothing but letters, and letters are sounds. Since sounds are produced by opening and closing the mouth, all sounds are phonetically between A' and 'M'. The Lord being everything, his name should include every name. The letter 'U' is inserted in between to indicate all sounds in between. Thus, Ōm that is made of the letters 'A', 'U', and 'M' includes, phonetically all sounds and therefore, all letters and all words of all languages and dialects. Therefore, it becomes a word which indicates all objects. In this way, Ōm becomes the name of Īśvara, the Lord.

It has been said that Ōm is everything. What is everything? That is indicated by the word 'Viśvam' which it is followed by in the sahasranāma.

1. Viśvam
विश्वं
The one that manifests as the universe.

The world is called viśva. Vividha-pratyaya-gamyam viśvam. That which is understood through various cognitions, cognized in a number of ways, is called viśva. There are many cognitions like flower cognition, book cognition, sound cognition, smell cognition and so on. So, that which is known, understood by you by a pratyaya, cognition, is viśva. There are some sounds that you hear, but there are others that you do not hear. Still, someone else or some animal can hear them. Similarly, animals have the capacity to smell, to see, what the humans cannot. Thus, all sounds, all touches, all forms, all tastes and all smells known and unknown, unknown to us, but known to someone else or knowable is viśva. All the objects of thought are also viśva. So the entire world is viśvaand it includes your body-mind-complex. In other words, it represents sarva, everything which is known and unknown.

Viśvasya jagatah karanatvena hi viśvam iti ucyate–when you say that this is a shirt, it indicates that fabric also. When you say that this is a pot, it indicates the clay too. Thus here, as the kārana, the cause of this viśva, Brahman is called Viśva. When we say the Lord is Viśva, we have access to thousands of names. If anything has a ray of glory, that glory is His glory and therefore, that is the name of Bhagavān. Therefore, it is proper that He can be praised through names such as Viriñci (Brahmāji), that is, those who are caused by Him. The tenth chapter of the Bhagavadgitāshows that all vibhūtis, glories, alone.

Yadvā parasmāt purusāt idam viśvam paramarthatah na bhinnam–further, this world is not separate from, has no reality apart from Brahman. Hence, Brahman is referred to as viśva. Śaṅkara quotes the śrutis to show, that all that is here is nothing but Brahmanand there is nothing that exists apart from Brahman.

Viśati iti viśvam–because Brahman has entered, it is called viśva. Or else Brahman is so called because viśanti sarvāni bhūtāniasmin–at the time of pralaya, all beings enter, resolve into Brahman. As both the maker and the material cause, Brahman, having created, enters the world, which is its effect. When the world, the effect dissolves again at pralaya, it enters into Brahman. Either way, becauseBrahman enters into the viśva or the viśva enters into Brahman, Brahman is called ‘viśva.’

Śaṅkara quotes a number of śrutis and smrtis to show that viśva also means Om, the pranava. Om is the name of the Lord and the Lord is viśva. So Om is viśva.

The Kathopanisad says, ‘sarve vedāh yat padam āmananti, tapāmsi sarvāni ca yad vadanti, yadicchantah brahmacaryam caranti tat te padam saṅgrahena bravīmiom iti etat’–that goal which all the Vedas reveal as the one to be achieved, for achieving which they enjoin tapas, various disciplines, desiring which people take to a life of brahmacarya–that end, I will tell you briefly and that is Om. Here, Om is really brief and it cannot be briefer.

Pranava is both aparam and param brahma. The three lettered omkāra is the ādyam brahma, that is the cause of this world and in that pranava alone trayī, the three Vedas, are established. The

three Vedas come from pranava, they are meant to reveal the pranava, and are established in the pranava. All speech is pranava; therefore, one should repeat the pranava always.

There is no difference between Brahman, the vācya and omkāra, the vācaka. All that is here, known and unknown, is Brahman. 'Being calm, one should meditate upon it as tajjalān, as that from which everything is born, unto which everything resolves and because of which everything is sustained.'

How to become calm is shown by this verse.

'Let the essence of the wealth of dharma be heard. Having heard, let it be well assimilated in the buddhi.' Let the value of values be well understood. What is this essence? 'What is pratikūla, inimical to you, do not do it to others.'

This is the sāmānya-dharma.

'People may be jada–may have starting trouble and even after starting have trouble in continuing, may be avivekis–have no proper discrimination between right and wrong, may be aśūras–frightened to face the least challenge or obstacle, may be anītimāns–have no justice. Still they have bhāgya-bhogyāni, they enjoy wealth, pleasures and kingdoms due to the punya they have earned earlier. Therefore, one should strive to follow dharma and earn punya, if one wants śrī, and strive to have samatva if one wants moksa.

Even smugglers and drug lords may have money. Even dictators and tyrants have enjoyed kingdoms. Even by hitting a jackpot one may gain wealth. However, these do not indicate any culture or growth. So money is not everything.

The name viśva indicates that it is Brahman alone that is in all beings. Therefore, one should do stuti and namaskāra to the Lord, without causing any himsa to any being, because 'ahimsā paramo dharmah' –non-injury is the greatest dharma.

Who is the real devotee of Visnu? Know him as the real Visnu-bhakta, the one who never swerves from his svadharma, who has a sama-buddhi towards a suhrt–who helps without any introduction or expectation, as well as to a vipaksa–who is inimical to him. Further, na harati, nahanti–he does not take anything or hurt or kill anything. His mind is vimala–free from likes and dislikes, amatsara–free from jealousy, prasanta–composed, subha-carita–of good conduct. He is akhila-sattva-mitra-bhūta–always a friend to all living beings, priya-hita-vacana–talks what is good and pleasing, asta-māna-māya–free from exaggerated self-esteem and malice. Vāsudeva always lives in the heart of such a person.

Lord Yama tells his servant, 'vraja dūratarena–move far away from those who have destroyed their kalmasa, impurities by the disciplines of yama–a life of control and niyama–living a clean life of Īśvara-arpana and Īśvara ārādhana, whose minds are āsakta–committed daily to Lord

Acyuta, and from whom mada, māna, matsara, that is, egoity, pride and jealousy have gone. Even Lord Yama keeps away from the Visnu-bhaktas. Thus, praise and namaskāra of Lord Visnu should be done with śraddhā and bhakti.

In the karmakānda portion of the Mahābhārata, it is said that avisnu–one who does not have this bhāvanāof looking upon himself as Visnu, but considers himself as different, should not do kīrtana, arcana or smarana of Visnu. Such a person would never gain Visnu. Therefore, as everything is included in the Lord, one should think of oneself as Visnu and then do the arcana, stuti and namaskāra to Visnu.

'Om' is the name of the Lord and the Lord is viśva. So, 'Om' is viśva. The Lord, being both maker and the material cause of the world, is not separate from the world. Therefore, the entire viśva is Parameśvara alone.

2. Viṣṇuḥ (258,657)
विष्णु:
The one who pervades everything.

In one's dream, all the animate as well as inanimate objects – water, mountains, trees, stones, furniture, and people – all of them without exception are pervaded by the intelligence of the dreamer. The material for the dream has also come from the dreamer and not from outside himself. As the material cause and the intelligent cause the Lord pervades everything. Try and think of one object, one situation, one person, one emotion which the Lord does not pervade.

The word Viṣṇu as derived from the verbal root 'viṣ' means one who pervades, permeates everything and is free from the limitations of time, space and objects. The Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad says, antar-bahiśca tat sarvaṁ vyāpya nārāyaṇaḥ sthitaḥ–it is Lord Nārāyaṇa, who stands inside and outside, pervading everything. As derived from the verbal root 'viś,' it means one, who has entered this world.

The Viṣṇu-purāṇa says, the root 'viś' has the meaning of entry. Since the entire jagat is entered into and pervaded by His śakti, law and order, He is well known as Viṣṇu.

3. Vaṣaṭkāraḥ
वषट्कार:
The one invoked through vaṣat.

Vaṣaṭ is a purely technical word used in the fire rituals. 'Kāra' is the pratyaya, the suffix, that is added to 'vaṣaṭ.' In a yajna, fire ritual, an oblation is offered unto the fire to a particular deity, with a mantra and the ritual itself is done for a particular purpose. Generally, the oblation is offered saying 'svāhā' or 'vaṣaṭ,' followed by 'idam na mama,' this is no more mine.

Yaduddeśena adhvare vaṣaṭ kriyate sa vaṣaṭtkārah–that deity to whom the oblation is offered by saying 'vaṣaṭ,' is called vaṣaṭkāra. All these deities are nothing but Parameśvara. It can be a

particular devatā such as Indra the deity of strength, Agni the deity of speech, Soma the deity of the mind, Bṛhaspati the deity of intellect, Varuṇa the deity of water and so on.

Where is the individual jīva? In which part of the physical body does he exist? The individual is all over the body, all-pervasive. When the little finger of the person is touched, it is not that only a part of the person is touched, but the complete attention of the person is drawn to the little finger. So too, every devatā is Parameśvara, because He is viṣva. Therefore, vaṣaṭkara, the deity invoked with a 'vaṣaṭ,' is Parames´vara alone.

Even though the oblation is offered only to a particular devatā, and it no doubt goes into the fire, still, it finally goes only to Parameśvara alone. Just as all the water that comes from the sky ultimately goes to the ocean through the rivers, similarly, all salutations go to Bhagavān. If this is the case with even the devatās, then the human beings, who receive namaskāras, must act as conduits and direct all the namaskāras to Bhagavān.

Yasmin yajñe vaṣaṭkriyā–in which yajn˜a an offering is done with the mantra 'vaṣaṭ,' that also is Viṣṇu alone, because yajño vai viṣṇuḥ. The connection between the karma and the karmaphala is governed by an order. That order is only Parameśvara.

If we rely on perception then there seems to be no connection between the karma, the fire ritual and the result which is heaven. In between, there is something called puṇya that is generated. That puṇya has to be exchanged for the final result. It is something like the token coins given in the gambling houses. They are not real coins, but they have to be exchanged later for real money, when you go out. That connection between the sādhya, the enjoyable heaven or something else and the sādhana, the ritual, is brought about by the adṛṣṭa-puṇya. So, the very yajña is Bhagavān, the result is Bhagavān, the connection is Bhagavān and the order by which the connection is brought about is also Bhagavān.

Śaṅkara quotes a sloka from the Viṣṇu-smrti. 'May that Viṣṇu be pleased with me, the one who is worshipped with the four syllable ośrāvaya, again with the four syllabled astu śrauṣaṭand then with the two syllabled yaja and the five syllable yeyajāmahe and again with the two syllabled vaṣaṭ.'

4. Bhūtabhavyabhavatprabhuḥ

भूतभव्यभवत्प्रभुः

The Lord of the past, future and present.

Bhūta-bhavya-bhavat-prabhuḥ–Viṣṇu is the Lord of the past, future and also the present.

A visual example to assimilate this better – Ganga originates from Gomukh in the North, flows southwards and then eastwards where it meets the sea at Gangasagar. Imagine yourself standing at a distance from Ganga, facing the East. The water that has already flown can be likened to the past, the waters you are facing are the present and the waters that are still to come are the future.

Further imagine that a satellite view of the entire stretch of the river was possible – the waters that are originating from the glacier, waters that are flowing and waters that have flown into the sea. The past, present and future are available to you at that moment. You are not bound by what you see. Bhagavān is the Lord of time but, He is not bound by time. So for Bhagavān, the entire kalpa, cycle is the present alone. Creation and so on is in the present tense. Every moment, a 'moment' is born, a 'moment' is gone and a 'moment' is to be born.

When it is said that Viṣṇu is the Lord of the past, He does not become the past. It is not as if He 'was'. Bhagavān creates, sustains and withdraws the creation all the time. Therefore, He is the Lord of time–the past, present, future from a standpoint, and hence, is not bound by time. Is He then outside time, that is, different from time? No, because time is the Lord.

Brahman is the ātmā, the self, that is the limitless consciousness, that which exists in all three periods of time, is timeless and time also. Therefore, time is not independent of timelessness. If time is analyzed, we find that past was always present. There is really no past. A lot of people say they need to deal with their past issues. Really speaking, nobody has to or can deal with the past. What people need to deal with is either the memory or the perception of past issues as they occur in the present, especially when these residual reactions from the past are spilling onto the present.

The past can never be thought of in the past. It can be thought of only in the present. So, past is the present thought. The future is also thought of only in the present. The past was 'present,' future will be 'present,' and the present is, of course, 'present.' If the present implies a certain length of time, then a valid question is 'what is the length of time of the present?' The present can be reduced to the present kalpa, present millennium, present century, present decade, present year and further into present hour, minute, second, micro-second and this can be further reduced mathematically. In all these, there is the consciousness of time. When you are thinking of a length of time, there is time-consciousness. Without the presence of consciousness, there is no time. So, what is the present? That consciousness alone is the present. The present 'is.' Hence, the truth of time is timeless consciousness, which is eternity. Eternity is not in time. The non-eternal time is sustained by eternal, timeless consciousness. In fact, there is no time. What is there is only timeless consciousness. Chronological time is entirely dependent on the limitless consciousness, which is sat, chit and ānanda. This is the truth of everything, the truth of time and therefore the truth of Īśvara. Time is Īśvara, but time is not self-existent.

Light travels at 180,000 miles per second. Our scientific understanding of time and motion are based on this assumed constant, the speed of light. However, this itself is not a constant. It is relative, because it is motion. Therefore, time is not constant. When you talk of a pot, the clay is present. When you talk of a shirt, there is fabric. When you talk of time, there is consciousness. When you talk of the clay, there is consciousness. When you talk of the fabric, there is consciousness. Therefore, the only thing, which is satya, is ātmā, Brahman. That is Viṣṇu and He is bhūta-bhavya-bhavat-prabhu, the Lord of the past, present and future. He is the timeless, limitless consciousness.

5. Bhūtakṛt

भूतकृत
The Creator of beings or the destroyer of beings.

Bhūtāni karoti iti bhūtakṛt – He is the creator of the entire world. There is nothing haphazard or random in the creation. We see that anything including a simple pot is put together. Even the mess that is there on many people's study table is created and there is a method to that madness or mess as it were.

As Brahmāji, taking recourse to rajoguṇa, He creates all the beings, the entire world. The five gross and subtle elements like space, air, fire, water, earth, time and so on constitute the world. The world, which is the scheme of things, includes my body, mind and senses. So, the five elements, elementals, and everything that is born of them are included in the world. The one, who is the maker of this world, is the efficient cause of the creation and hence He is the bhūtakṛt.

Bhūtāni takṛt–taking recourse to tamoguna, He destroys beings in the form of Rudra.

6. Bhūtabhṛt
भूतभृत
The sustainer of beings.

Bhūtāni bibharti iti bhūtabhṛt–keeping the sattva-guṇa of māyā under His control, He is the one who sustains the world and all the beings. He nourishes and keeps the world going. Being the material cause, He is in the form of the world and He sustains the world. Just as we sustain all the elements in our dream.

7. Bhāvaḥ
भावः
Existence.

You will note that the word is the noun form – existence and not as an adjective – existing. Let's say a flower – we are so caught up with the name and form that we forget it existed in unmanifest state before it became manifest. Something is and then we look at what it is. That Isness is bhāvah. In 9.4 of BG, Bhagavān says that the entire world is pervaded by me whose form cannot be objectified. All beings have their being in me.

The word bhāva is derived from the verbal root 'bhu - sattāyām' in the meaning of 'existing.' The Lord being the material cause, exists in the form of the world and hence is Bhāvah. Or else, he just exists as sattātmaka, of the nature of pure existence.

It is not a time-bound existence, not an existence subject to changes, but it is because of Him, that time itself exists. That existence is sat-cit-ānanda–consciousness which 'IS' and which is limitless.

8. Bhūtātmā

भूतात्मा

The ātmā of all

Bhūtānām ātmā, antaryāmī–He is in the form of all the bhūtas- beings. Bhuta also stands for the 5 elements – akasha/space, Aapah/water, Vayu/air, Agnih/fire, prithvi/earth. Bhuta is not a ghost as in Indian regional languages. He is the ātmā, the svarūpa of all the bhūtas. He is the adhiṣṭhana of all the bhūtas, all the elements and elementals, the truth of the entire world. He is the indweller of all the beings.

9. Bhūtabāvanaḥ

भूतभावनः

The creator and sustainer of all things

Some people can create things but cannot take care of them. Others can take care of things, but cannot create them. Some people can initiate a project but cannot run it. Others can run it, but cannot initiate projects. There are other people, who cannot wind up projects; they cannot give it up. A mother may give birth to a child, but may not be able to take care of it; she needs a baby-sitter. But, Bhagavān bhūtāni bhāvayati, janayati–creates all beings, and again, bhūtāni bhāvayati, vardhayati–looks after them, by providing all the nourishment for the variety of living beings. He is bhūtakr̥t, bhūtabhr̥t, bhūtabhāvana and bhūtakr̥t–He initiates the creation, takes care of it and also withdraws it, at the right time.

The Lord visualizes the entire world before creating it. He is the only creator and the only architect. There is no other architect for this creation. If Bhagavān is the karta, the doer, then, who is the kaarayita – the one who make a person do? Who is the one who makes Bhagavān work? If there were a kaarayita, then that person would become Bhagavān! So Bhagavān is both the karta and the karayita. Brahmāji is considered to be the creator, but the Lord is the maker of the creator, and He is also the one who makes the creator do his work. It is like the supervisor who is being supervised!

With one glowing fire-brand or phuljari (what we light during Diwali) many patterns can be drawn by whirling it around. This can be called creation of patterns. When the whirling is stopped, there is only one glowing tip and this is samhara or withdrawal(of patterns). Is this destruction? No. At the time of danger, a turtle withdraws its legs, neck and tail into the shell. When everything is safe, it comes out. There is no destruction in this withdrawal. Here too, it is the dance of Parameśvara. When He dances, the whole creation is set in motion. When the dance of Naṭarāja stops, the creation ends. It is only withdrawn, not destroyed because it will manifest again.

10. Pūtātmā

पूतात्मा

The pure self

The moment one hears pure self, the mind immediately jumps to thinking about it as the opposite of the impure self. In our tradition, the major impurity/mala is ragā and dveṣa and hence the emphasis on neutralization of ragā-dveṣasor what is referred to as antah-karana-shuddhi for the person who wishes to know.

The word Pūtātmā is to be understood as one, who has self-knowledge, is not touched by the complexes of the mind or by the actions of the body. The sarvajnatva of Iśvara, includes self-knowledge also, because, all knowledge cannot be there without including self-knowledge. Iśvara knows that in spite of creating, protecting and withdrawing this world, He is akartā. He performs no actions.

If Iśvara is manifest in the form of the world, then every mind is also His manifestation. The more we dwell on this, the greater acceptance is there of ourself. At the same time, it would be logical to say that all the confusions that exist in the various minds, will also belong to Him. Therefore, with the confusions of all the minds put together, Iśvara should be the most confused! Further, if He creates, protects and destroys taking recourse to the guṇas of māyā, would He not be tainted by those guṇas and actions?

Let us imagine two pots, a big pot and a small pot - suppose these pots are given a human mind. Human mind means they are conscious of themselves and able to make a judgment. Then, one would look at the other and think 'I am a small pot. Why am I small? I do not like myself.' From this, all kinds of problems would arise. But, if the pot were to be enlightened that its form is dependent on his own nature, clay that is independent of all form, then there would be no problem. The pot is clay but the clay is not pot. Even if there are a million pots, there is only one clay. The clay is not touched by the varieties of pots.

Just as the clay is untouched by the pot, the Lord is śuddha, untouched by anything. He is pūtātmā, one whose ātmā, nature, is always pu ̄ta, pure, unaffected and unattached.

11. Paramātmā

परमात्मा

The limitless.

This is a svarūpa word, a word referring to the nature of Viṣṇu. He is the ātmā, the self that is parama, free from limitations. When we look at any object in the world, let's say a pot – it is limited. It is limited by its size. It exists in space and it occupies a definite place. It has an insignificant spatial existence. Time-wise also, it is limited. It is born in time and there will be a time when it will not be there. Since it is bound by time, it ages also, it is limited. The size of other pots also limits the pot. Thus, every object is limited in a three-fold way, that is, in terms of space, time and objects.

Parama is that which is not limited by any object, because, every object that is there, is this reality alone. There is nothing other than this limitless reality. The effect (pot) is nothing but the cause (clay). From the standpoint of the pot form, there is dependence on the clay for its existence. From the standpoint of the clay, it is independent of the pot or any other form.

Space is ātmā. Space itself is consciousness. Therefore, limitation in terms of space is not there. Time is atma and so limitation in terms of time, is also not there. Time is consciousness, but consciousness is not time. Space is consciousness, but consciousness is not space. Object is consciousness, but consciousness is not object. Consciousness is satyam, and objects are not independent of this consciousness. All objects are only name and form. Every name and form can be further reduced to its reality, until finally what is there is only ātmā, that is, parama, free from limitations. That is the svarūpa of Parameśvara and that is the svarupa of yourself too.

Paramātmā is untouched and unaffected by anything. Again, it is both the cause and the effect. Being the adhiṣthāna of everything, it is kārya-kāraṇa-vilakṣaṇa, free from being the cause and the effect. It is nitya-śuddha-buddha-mukta-svabhāva, ever pure, ever conscious and ever free.

12. Muktānām paramā gatiḥ

मुक्तानांपरमागतिः

The ultimate goal of those who are liberated.

Muktānām paramā gatiḥ–it is the ultimate and the highest goal for all those who are enlightened, liberated. Gaining that goal, there is no further end to be accomplished. Since there is no losing it or getting away from the Atma that is paramā – Paramātmā , that alone is the paramā gati.

All other goals in life – family connectedness, big property, successful children, and finances to sustain retirement are works in progress. When can I say, enough? Rarely ever.The family situation can always be improved upon some more, Children could do, with being more successful, etc. When we look at our goals there are 3 things that are common in all of them.
No one wants to be bound by time, that is, nobody wants to be a mortal. Everyone wants to live. Even those, who are about to die, want to live a day more. 'I want to live' is a want that is natural to everyone. We want ourselves to live forever and the same applies to loved ones too. We also want conducive situations in our life to continue forever.

Everyone wants to be happy. No one wants to be unhappy. People want to commit suicide, not because they do not want to live, but because they see no way of living happily. They think that committing suicide will give them a release from their sorrow. Therefore, the desire to live becomes now 'I want to live and live happily.'

Again, nobody wants to be ignorant. 'Nothing should happen around me, that I do not know. I cannot see myself ignorant' is the feeling of everybody. Even though we may not believe in the daily horoscope forecast, it is difficult to resist a quick peek at the daily newspaper to know about how my day is going to pan out.

Thus, no one wants to be time-bound. No one wants to be unhappy, inadequate, small and imperfect. In other words, no one wants to be a wanting person. Nobody can accept oneself as being ignorant. Freedom from mortality, ignorance and inadequacy is what everyone wants. In fact, what one wants to be, is what one already is.

Mūkti, the goal to be achieved is your nature knowing which there is nothing more to be done. You want to be free from being subject to time. But, you are the very basis of time, the truth of time. The 'I' is the consciousness, which is limitless in terms of time and space. It is the whole; it is ānanda. It is both the subject and the object. When the subject is not a wanting person, at that time, it is wholeness that is experienced. When someone listens to music and is satisfied, then, the wanting person in him, does not rise. It is resolved for the time being. The subject and the object, the listener and the music, are fused into one.

You are ānanda, and that is the whole. You are free from time, free from inadequacy, unhappiness and that is your nature. You are the consciousness, because of which you know what you do not know and you know what you know. You are that consciousness, which sustains both ignorance and knowledge. You are free from being ignorant, free from being bound by time, free from being a wanting person. You are the whole and hence you are the Lord, who is paramā gati.

The Lord is the paramā gati and in this way alone, one understands the Lord.

13. Avyayaḥ

अव्ययः

The one free from decline and destruction.

Vyaya means change, decline and destruction. The nature of the human body is subject to vyayaa - disease, ageing and death. In fact, when Buddha was Gautama, he was moved so much by seeing the plight of people subject to changes, disease, ageing and death that he chose to find out the reality underlying it. Our respects to him on Buddha Jayanti.

The Lord is avyaya, free of vyaya. He does not undergo any change, any decline and destruction. He is nitya and avināśī. He does not undergo any kind of modification. Just Is. In Bhagavad Gita 2.17, the second line of the verse says – No one can bring about the destruction of that which does not change (विनाशंअव्ययस्यास्यनकश्चित्कर्तुंअर्हसि). The Lord is that avyaya.

What can change? Only that, which has a form, in time, can change. That which is free of form, does not undergo any change. The form itself is a kind of an attribute. What is a pot? A pot is that which has potness. Then, to what does the potness belong? The potness does not belong to the pot, because the pot itself does not exist. What is there is only the clay. The potness is only the dharma, nature of a form. The form is the potness.

Now, does the potness belong to the pot or to the non-pot? When you say potness, it is only the form. This particular form is called the pot and you say it has the potness. So, the potness belongs to the non-pot alone. Here the non-pot is clay. However, the potness is not the attribute of the clay. As it cannot be attributed to anything else, we have to say that the potness is only an incidental attribute of the clay. Therefore, whether that incidental attribute is there or not, the clay ever remains avyaya, unchanging. The clay remains as clay alone. So too, whatever may be the incidental attributes, Brahman remains as paramātmā alone, without undergoing any change.

14. Puruṣaḥ

पुरुषः

The indweller of the city

In Hindi or many regional languages of India, puruṣaḥ refers to a man. In Sanskrit, this word is looked at from different standpoints, besides the meaning of a person.

Puram śarīram–this physical body is the pura, city. Tasmin s´ete iti puruṣaḥ–the one who resides in the body is called puruṣa. In the Mahābhārata, Bhiṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhira, 'This physical body is a city with nine gates. It is endowed with the pranas, the indriyas and the antahkarana, all put together as an assemblage, because of previous punya. That mahatma, the Lord, pervading the entire body, remains there without getting affected. Therefore, He is called Puruṣa' (MB.Śā.210.37).

Bhaktānām hṛdayaṁ pūrayati iti puruṣaḥ – the one who fills up the hearts of the devotees, that is, the one who gives happiness, is puruṣa. Generally, people think that music, money or power fills up the heart. But the jijnāsu-bhakta recognizes that it is the Lord who fills up the heart of the devotee.

> There are basically two kinds of devotees referred to in BG 7.16
> चतुर्विधाभजन्तेमांजनाःसुकृतिनोऽर्जुन|
> आर्तोजिज्ञासुरर्थार्थीज्ञानीचभरतर्षभ|| १६||
> Arjuna, the foremost in the clan of Bharata! People given to good actions, who worship me are four-fold - the distressed, the seeker of security and pleasure, the one who desires to know (Me), and the one who knows (Me).

The first kind are the ārta and arthārthi devotees.

Ārta-bhaktas, are devotees who are in distress. They do not think of Īśvara until they get into trouble. Once they get into trouble, then, they come to Īśvara. They recognize, that it is only the grace of Īśvara, which will make a difference and so they finally pray and invoke the grace of Īśvara. Hence, they are devotees.

Arthārthi-bhakta–These devotees think of Īśvara before any undertaking. They know that they themselves cannot accomplish whatever they have undertaken, because they recognize that there are hidden variables over which they have no control. Even the known variables, cannot be totally controlled. When this is so, how can the ajnāta-pratibandhas, the hidden variables, obstacles, be controlled? One does not know them, because they are hidden. Therefore, these persons invoke the grace of the Lord to take care of these unknown obstacles.

This is what everyone does. So, whenever one undertakes a pursuit for accomplishing something, he invokes the grace of the lord. Even before starting the class, a prayer is chanted, because the blessing of the guru and Īśvara is required, in any pursuit. We do not want any obstacles in our pursuit and hence we pray. Even when a book is written, it starts with a prayer. Scholars refuse to accept and read a work, if there is no prayer. The idea is that the person, who

does not recognize these hidden variables, is immature. Prayers are only to influence the hidden variables. Any mature person will recognize the hidden variables. In general, the devotees are ārta and arthārthi-bhaktas.

The second type of devotees are the jijñāsu and jñāni devotees. This type of devotee is rare. Jijñāsā means the desire to know. Here the desire is to know Isvara. Jijñāsu-bhakta is a devotee, who has jijñāsā, the desire to know who Isvara is and what His svarupa, nature is? The knowledge of Īśvara is his first priority in life, What he wants is not just a general idea, but a clear and total knowledge of Īśvara. He has come to know that whatever can be got by fulfilling desires, is got by knowing Isvara and by this knowledge, one becomes secure. There is no greater security other than knowing Īśvara.

Once this is clearly known, then he becomes a jñānī-bhakta. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, 'jñānī tu ātmaiva me matam – the jñānī, the one who knows, is myself.' He understands that the Lord is pūrna, the whole and not separate from himself. Therefore, the jijñāsu-bhakta is the real bhakta. He too prays to the Lord to help him in his pursuits and when in distress. But, he is not satisfied with simple things from God. He is certainly not an underachiever! He wants God himself.

So the one who pūrayati, fills up the devotees' heart, is the puruṣa. He is the pratyagātmā, who resides in the hṛdayapura, who is indeed the parmātmā.

Other standpoints:
Purā eva āsīt iti puruṣaḥ–since He was there even before anything came into existence, He is called Puruṣa.

Puruṣa utkarṣaṣāliṣu sīdati iti puruṣaḥ – Further, He is known as Puruṣa because He resides, is well recognised in things which have excellence, eminence. Again, purūṇi phalāni sanoti, dadāti iti puruṣaḥ–He gives in abundance. In fact, He gives the limitless result called mokṣa.

Purūnṇ bhuvānani saṁhāra-samaye syati iti puruṣaḥ–He destroys all the worlds at the time of pralaya.

Pūraṇāt sadanāt vā puruṣaḥ–He pervades everything and resides therein, that is, He is all-pervasive.

15. Sākṣī
साक्षी
The witness (of everything).

Viṣṇu is the sākṣī, the witness of everything. Normally, we need the sense organs of perception, with the mind behind them, to see things. With respect to the mind, we gain the status of sākṣī as we are able to see directly what happens. If I ask you, 'What are you thinking about?" All of you will be able to tell me. How come? Because you can see your mind directly without the need of any sense organs.

On the other hand, Lord sākṣāt īkṣate, sees everything directly without the necessity, intervention of the sense organs or the mind. Hence His knowledge is free of the defects of the mind and the sense organs.

Further, He does not have to make an attempt to see. He sees all at once, the entire world of name and form as the consciousness which is His svarupa. That He is uninvolved in what He sees is also implied here.

16. Kṣetrajñaḥ

क्षेत्रज्ञः

The knower of the world of objects.

The Lord is the sākṣī and also the kṣetrajña, one who knows the kṣetra, the world of objects. The Gitā enumerates briefly all that which is included in the kṣetra as the five subtle elements, ahaṅkara–the sense of doership, buddhi–the cognitive faculty, avyakta–the unmanifest, that is, the prakṛti, the five organs of knowledge, the five organs of actions, the mind, the entire world of sense objects, the world of desires, aversions, sukha and duḥkha, the assemblage of this body, knowledge, fortitude along with all their modifications. (13.5, 6). Thus the entire viśva is called kṣetra. He is the one who obtains in everyone as the subject, the knower.

You are the subject and everything else, including your body, mind and sense organs, is the object. Whatever is objectified is insentient and being insentient, it cannot objectify you, the subject. The stomach does not talk back to you as it is insentient, not conscious by itself! What is experienced are only sensations in the stomach. But we know for a fact that one's stomach or for that matter, even the chair that one sits on, does not groan in pain. Neither the stomach nor the chair are sentient, conscious. These cannot objectify me.

The initial stages of bhakti are based on the premise that the Lord is other than me. If the Lord is other than you, then He would also become an object of your consciousness. Like other objects in the world, the Lord, then, would be inert, dismissible and time-bound. If He is not an object, then is He the subject? If He were to be the subject, then, as a subject he would be subject to pleasure and pain, puṇya and pāpa as a result of his actions and therefore, become a saṁsāri, someone subject to a sense of limitations. But this is not so.
In fact He is both the subject and the object, both the kshetrajn̄a and the kshetra. As kṣetrajña, he knows the entire kṣetra, which is pervaded by him. The kshetra is not any different from him. In fact, the Lord is neither the subject nor the object – as both are limited. But, without Him, there is neither the subject nor the object.

Questions on Facebook
//In Gita, Is kshetrajna means a jivatma or paramatma? Or sometimes they are interpreted differently in different standpoints??//
From the standpoint of the jivatma, kṣetrajña is the knower of the kṣetra-mind-body-sense complex. What is the status of this kṣetrajña? The Lord says I am the kṣetrajña in all the kṣetras. It is understood as a mahāvākya which is unfolded.

//Can you explain in which context it is said that "the Lord is neither the subject nor the object"?//
Let ‘s look at the person, I assume the status of a subject, kartā (doer) when I do/ say things to people. When I am the subject, everything other than me is the object.
When things – good, bad or ugly are done to me, I assume the status of object, bhogtā-the experiencer and the rest of the world assumes the status of a subject. It seems that my status of being subject and object are variable because I am not always the kartā nor am I always the bhogtā.
I am the consciousness that gives reality to both the status of the kartā(doer) and bhogtā(experience).
The same with the Lord – he is neither the kartā nor the bhogtā, neither the subject nor the object.

17. Akṣaraḥ

अक्षरः

The immutable.

This is a svarupa word. Even though the kṣetra is subject to decay and decline, the kṣetrajña, the subject, is Akṣara, never subject to decay and decline. Needless to say, not subject to modification either. In many Puraṇas, when we hear of the stories, we recognise the form subject to change, whether it was Shri Rama or Shri Krishna. These forms were avatāras, a human form of the Lord. We recognize the reality of the Avatāras as akṣaraḥ.

Svabhāvataḥna kṣarati–He never swerves from His nature. As derived from the root ‘as’ which has the meaning of ‘pervading’, akṣara also means one who is all-pervasive.

The word kṣetrajña refers to the one obtaining in the individual bodies and akṣhara refers to Brahman, who is all-pervasive. All pervasive means there is place that it is not, there is no time that it not present. In fact, Akṣhara is the very basis for time and space.

The words eva and ca indicate that, as pointed out in the mahāvākya, ‘tat tvam asi,’ the kṣetrajña and akṣara are not really different.

18. Yogaḥ

योगः

The one to be attained through yoga.

One of the most popular words in the world, yet not fully understood. Generally, people associate the word ‘yoga’ with asanas which is a disservice to yoga. Asanas is only one of the 8 limbs of Ashtanga Yoga. Here, we understand the many meanings of yoga and what it meant by Viṣṇu as Yoga. The root ‘yuj,’ from which the word yoga is derived, has two meanings, ‘yojana’ and ‘nirodha.’

‘Yojana’ is bringing together. What is separated either really or notionally is brought together and this is called union. Not knowing, that ‘I am the sought,’ one goes on seeking, and then

there can be a separation between the seeker and the sought. This is a notional separation like that of the tenth man.

Ten people went on a picnic and on the way, they had to cross a river. After crossing the river, the leader counted to see if anyone was missing and found that there were only nine of them. He started to search for the tenth man, though he himself was the tenth man. Here there is a seeker-sought situation. The loss is notional and so, the seeker-sought union is possible only through knowledge and this is called yoga.

'Yug' also means 'nirodha', that is, discipline, control, mastery. What is not manageable, is made manageable. The legs are not manageable and they are made manageable, so that one can sit down. Yoga also implies diet, a healthy life with reference to the body, a life of values, dharma, yama, niyama, life of devotion to Īśvara, study of Vedānta and also understanding the Viṣṇusahasranāma. So, with the help of all these various disciplines, called yoga, the mind that is not manageable is made manageable. This is also yoga. That which resolves the differences between the seeker and sought is also called yoga.

Tam vidyāt duḥkha-saṁyoga-viyogaṁ yoga-saṅjñitam–'may one know, that the dissociation from the association with sorrow is what is called yoga' (BG.6.23). Here 'yuj' is used in the sense of 'nirodha.' Saṁyoga is association and viyoga is dissociation. So, the dissociation from the false association with sorrow is yoga. The sādhana is yoga and the sādhya is also yoga.

Yogena sādhyaḥ, avāpyaḥ yogaḥ–the Lord is the one who is to be achieved by the various disciplines, so that one becomes together as a person. The Lord is the one, who is achieved by means of yoga and hence He is called Yoga.

Śaṅkara quotes a sloka in his bhāṣya to show that the mastering of one's mind along with the sense organs and the understanding of the oneness of the kṣetrajña and paramātmā is yoga, because, the jiva or the individual is essentially non-separate from Īśvara. Since He is to be gained by yoga, He is also known as yoga.

19. Yogavidām netā

योगविदांनेता

The leader of those, who know yoga.

The Lord is also called Yogavidām netā, the leader of the yogavids, that is, those who know yoga. Generally yoga is used in the sense of the means of accomplishing something and also in the sense of making oneself fit for gaining knowledge. In the explanation of the previous nāma, yoga meant the identity of the jīva and Īśvara. The kṣetrajña-paramātma-aikya is the yoga. So yogam vidanti, vicārayanti, jānanti iti yogavit–those who know this yoga or do vichāra, enquiry to gain the knowledge of the oneness and remove this false division between the seeker and sought, are the yogavids. The Lord is teṣām netā their leader.

How does he become the leader? He is the one who takes care of the yoga and kṣema of the jñānīs, because they themselves do not work for it. Here yoga is gaining what one does not have and kṣema is retaining that which is gained. A leader has people who willingly surrender to his

laws and principles. In the very recognition of the jñānam, a jṅānī has total surrender to Īśvara. The Lord through the law of karma, takes care of the jñānī.

Sri Kṛṣṇa says in the Gitā, 'For those who are always one with me, I take care of what they need to acquire and protect. (9.22). Interestingly, LIC (India's largest life insurance company) makes this claim (yogakṣemamvahāmyaham) and also has it on their logo. Practically speaking, they have their utility. Really speaking, the Lord is the only life insurance provider in all ways, not only in this lifetime, but also in all lifetimes and helping one to break the cycle too!
The jṅānī is yadṛcchā-lābha-santuṣṭa – the one who is happy with whatever is available by chance. Chance is nothing but prārabdha-karma and pra¯rabdha-karma is non-separate from Īśvara. So, by way of making them gain what they do not have and retaining what they have gained, whatever is essential for their śarīra dhārana, He is their netā.

As the giver of the yoga, both karma and jṅāna-yogas, He is Yogavidām netā, the leader of the knowers of yoga.

20. Pradhānapuruṣeśvaraḥ
प्रधानपुरुषेश्वरः
The Lord of pradhāna and purusha.

Anything put together requires a material cause and an intelligent cause. There was a time in India, when assembled personal computers were purchased. The spare parts of each assembled computer was put together with some intelligence, because of which it worked! Each personal computer was the product of an intelligent cause and the material cause. For this entire jagat, Pradhāna is māyā or prakṛti, the material cause and here puruṣa refers to the jīva. Viṣṇu is the lord of both the pradhāna as well as the puruṣa.

The word pradhāna is generally used by the Sāṅkhyas, a school of thought based on dualism. This is not to be confused with the word Sāṅkhya meaning Brahman, the absolute reality. The Sāṅkhya school of thought say that pradhāna, the material cause of the creation is jaḍa, inert and consists of the three guṇas–sattva, rajas and tamas. But, they say that pradhāna creates everything by itself independently. Again, according to them, ātmā, puruṣa, is totally asaṅga, uninvolved and therefore, does not participate in the creation. Being jaḍa, how can pradhāna create anything by itself? Only when it is blessed by Īśvara-caitanya, it is possible. The nimitta-kāraṇa, intelligent cause is necessary or else creation is not possible. Same is the issue with the big bang theory. Why the hot soup of matter started to cool down is not known.

When asked how pradhāna creates, they say that, at the time of dissolution, the three guṇas in the pradhāna, which account for the variety in the creation, are in a state of equilibrium, that is, they gain the same proportion. Because of this equilibrium there is dissolution. When this equilibrium is disturbed, then creation takes place. This is the view of the Sāṅkhyas. This leads us to ask, 'Who created this disturbance?' How can something that is in a state of equilibrium lose that state, when there is nothing else to disturb it? Everything else has to come only later on! Pradhāna being jaḍa, cannot disturb itself. So, what is it that disturbs the equilibrium? There must be somebody there to bring about this disturbance and that is Īśvara. But Īśvara is not accepted by the Sāṅkhyas and hence, their system becomes defective.

Here, He is the Lord of māyā and therefore, the one who keeps the power of māyā under His control. The creation of this entire world will not be possible, if Brahman were mere Brahman, mere limitless consciousness. To create without creating, to be this world without being the world, it must have an apparent power, because the world itself is apparent. It does not have a reality of its own. When we analyze the world, to determine its most defining, independent aspect, it reduces itself further and finally, what is there is only Brahman. That Brahman, which is the limitless consciousness, cannot be further reduced into anything else. The Lord is the māyāvī and He has this magic power called māyā or prakṛti. He does not come under the power of māyā but keeps it under His control. He is like a magician, who does not come under the spell of his own magic. So with the power of māyā, Brahman becomes Īśvara, who is the cause of the creation. Māyā has an existence only because of Brahman. That is why it is mithyā.

The jīva, person who is identified with the body-mind-sense-complex is under the spell of māyā and looks up to Īśvara. Hence, He is the Lord of the jīva also. He is the Lord of the jīva by giving the body to him as the karma-phala. One gains a given physical body, mind, parentage and so on, as one's karma-phala. So, by giving the karma-phala to the jīva, He becomes Īśvara. The jīva always looks up to Īśvara, who is the giver of the karma-phalas, the results of his actions, and mokṣa. Karma-phala-dātṛtva makes Him the Īśvara of the puruṣa, that is, the jīva.

Thus, the Lord is puruṣasya pradhānasya ca Īśvara–the Lord of both the pradhāna and the jīva.

21. Nārasiṁhavapuḥ

नारसिंहवपुः

The one with the body of a man-lion.

Nārasimha-vapu is one who has a body, wherein some parts are those of a simha, a lion and some parts are those of a nara, a human being. This is a saguṇa and sākāra form. This is the name of the Lord based on His avatāra. In an avatāra, the Lord assumes a particular form, to serve a particular purpose.

Lord Viṣṇu in His role as the sthiti-kartā, as the one who sustains dharma and so on, has to assume particular forms as an answer to the prayers of the people and this is called avatārā. Avatārā is līlā. One of His avatāras is Nārasimha-avatāra. Prahlāda is the son of Hiraṇyakśipu an asura, who won all the worlds and took himself to be the Lord. In his kingdom, everybody had to repeat only his name and nobody was to repeat the name of Lord Nārāyaṇa. His son Prahlāda, along with few other people went on repeating the name of Hari and singing the glories of the Lord. The father came to know about this, chastised him and forbade him to utter the name of the Lord. Prahlāda refused to listen to him and went on repeating the name of the Lord. The father tried many ways to punish and also to kill his son, but he could not do so. One day, the father confronted his son, asking him, 'where is the Lord Hari that you sing of?' Prahlāda replied that He is all-pervasive, He is everywhere. He is even in the pillar.

Hiraṇyakaśipu had a special boon granted to him. It was, that he should die neither inside nor outside the house, neither during the day nor in the night, neither on the earth nor in space,

neither at the hands of a human being nor an animal, neither by a wet nor a dry weapon. These were all his conditions and when the boon was granted to him, he thought he was invincible.

Now, Hiraṇyakaśipu asked his son, 'Is your Lord Hari in this pillar?' and thus asking, he kicked the pillar. The pillar burst open and the Lord came out in the form which was neither that of an animal nor that of a human being. He had the head of a lion and the body of a human being. The time was neither day nor night, but twilight, just before night sets in. He sat on the threshold of the door, which was neither inside nor outside, and placed Hiraṇyakaśipu on his lap because he should not die in space or on the ground. He should not use any weapons, and therefore He used His nails to kill him. Again the finger-nails cannot be said as wet or dry. This is an avatāra. This story just tells us that the Lord blesses His devotees. The Lord is presented in this story as Nārasimha. So, it has the features of both the lion and the human being obtain in this form, this form as Nārasimhavapu.

A jīva is an individual, born due to his own karma, with a particular body. When that karma is exhausted, he naturally dies. Rather, he quits this body to take another body which is in keeping with another set of karma. The cycle of repeated births and deaths is samsara and the one who is subject to samsāra, is a samsārī. To get out of this samsāra, knowledge is necessary. By understanding the names of the Lord, and knowing that the Lord and the individual jīva are essentially one and the same, one becomes free from samsāra. The mere repetition of the names of the Lord is only a ritual and while it will give some puṇya as the karma-phala, it may not be enough to get one out of the cycle of birth and death.

Even though essentially, Īśvara is not subject to birth, and is also all-pervasive manifesting as the entire world, how is it that He is born with a single body? Further, Īśvara is akartā, a non-doer, He has no karma and therefore can have no karma-phala of His own. If so, how then is birth possible without karma?

Here, Prahlāda was praying to the Lord and in order to save him, the Lord took a form as Narasimha. It is in answer to the prayers of all the devotees, that the Lord takes birth. When the prayers of the devotees reach a critical point and when it is time for their karma-phala to fructify, then the Lord comes into being.

The Lord is not born out of His own karma. As a result of the punya created by the prayers of all the devotees, and keeping the puṇya as the material cause, the Lord takes a particular form which is suitable to the situation and which will serve the purpose. While a jīva is born subject to māyā, the Lord is, as though born, keeping māyā under His control. This is His divya-janma.

Is it only the devotees or any ārta jīvas including Indrādi devatas? Also, is this puṇya of only devotees or maybe puṇya of hiraṇyakaśyapu, rāvanādi virodha bhaktas (those who constantly think of viṣṇu due to dveṣa or fear)? Essentially, I mean to ask that logically, it should be sum total of puṇyas of all the jīvas in jagat at the timeof avatāra as per their prārabdha. Otherwise, wouldn't lord be dependent on puṇya of jīvas to do avatāra līlā which will compromise the omnipotence of Bhagavān? Bhagavān can't be dependent on jīva's karma for avatāra līlā. Also, what constitutes a prayer for Bhagavān to take avatāra? ārta nāstik jīvas might also be invoking lord indirectly.

Ramāvatāra had curse from nārada, prayers from brahma as the foundation, but the curse was also arranged by bhagāvān through nārada's ahaṁkara alone. So, bhagavān ṢriHari was always akartā. I would love to hear more clarification on Bhagavān's divya janma
Reply - Referring to BG 4.7-9

Avatāra happens for three fold purposes.
1. For protection of those who are committed to life of dharma, for protection of dharmī is equal to protection of dharma.(परित्राणायसाधूनां)
2. To destroy those who follow adharma. Destruction here means, converting, chastising and disciplining adhārmic people, thereby protecting dharma. (विनाशायचदुष्कृताम्)
3. The third reason, and the real reason for avatāra is reestablishment of dharma. (धर्मसंस्थापनार्थायसंभवामि)
The collective prayer of everyone including devas, becomes the material cause, upādāna kāraṇa, for Īśvara's physical body.

Given the above, the idea of dependence on jīva's karmas does not arise. By the power of Māyā Īśvara has a birth, divya janma. The whole creation is Īśvara's form, but when he assumes a particular form for a particular purpose, we call that form an avatāra. The concept of avatāra is not mentioned in the Vedas, though devas are referred to. Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata are itihāsas, meaning 'this is how it was'. There are historical elements in them, but they are also poetry, and have the poetic license for creating the rasas, the aesthetic values, and all kinds of situations at will.

Though Kṛṣṇa's birth, body and actions are divyam, divine, it is to be understood as mithyā. If divyam is understood as something extraordinary, then we can get into difficulties about what liberation is. Pujya Swamiji clarifies that "tattvataḥ vetti", means knowing the reality of that divya janma. Reality means sat, and there is only one sat, and therefore, knowing sat can only mean knowing aikyam between jīva and Īśvara. This is a very important point to note. Else, we can become the Kṛṣṇa bhaktas and not jñāni-bhakta.

It is important for seekers to note that knowing the details of the avatāra is not critical to the understanding of Vedānta.

22. Śrīmān (also words 178,220,613)
श्रीमान
The one who has Lakṣmi (on His chest).

He is Śrīmān because Śrī, that is Lakṣmī resides permanently on His chest. Vakṣasi is the word, in the bhaṣya indicating the chest. Śrī generally means, the Goddess of wealth. She never showers her grace for long in one place or to one person. But, she stays permanently with Bhagavān. All the resources belong to Bhagavān. Therefore, the one who always has Śrī with Him on His chest, is Śrīmān. Śrī is always with Him and hence all wealth belongs to Īśvara.

A location is given for this ahankāra, the 'I,' and it is said that the heart is where it is located. This is the same as when we say 'he has given his heart to you.' If you want to own up an action of which you are proud, then, you touch the heart and say 'I did this.' Interestingly this is the same with people in all cultures. When they want to point to themselves, they don't point to their head saying, 'I did it'. This expression is based on experience. When it is said that Lakṣmi is in the heart, it means that, she is united with the 'I' of Parameśvara. Lord Viṣṇu is Parameśvara and He is all-pervasive. He is always united with Lakṣmi. The Lord is endowed with Śrī and without Śrī, that is, māyā there is no Īśvara. Lord Śiva with māyā is presented as ardhanārīśvara. One half is the female, śakti and the other half is male.

Śrī is required for sthiti or sustenance. Everything in the world is looked upon as Lakṣmī. Success is Jayalakṣmi, which is also Śrī and that success is got from Parameśvara. Dhana belongs to Him and hence any Śrī, any wealth that is there, is Dhanalakṣmi. Any marital happiness is Varalakṣmi. Home is that which gives happiness and that is called Grhalakṣmi. Children give happiness and that is Santānalakṣmi. Śrī is maṅgala. Bhagavān is the one who has the six limitless bhagas or virtues and one of them is Śrī. Śrī is the most important of these six bhagas and Bhagavān is Śrīmān.

23. Keśavaḥ

केशवः

The one who has beautiful hair.

The word Keśava has more than one meaning. This can be looked upon as a word that indicates Parameśvara or the avatāra, that is, the manifest form of Īśvara, especially as Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Abhirūpāḥ keśāḥ yasya saḥ keśavaḥ–one who has beautiful locks of hair.Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a particular form of the Lord. Once a form is given, this is the saguṇa aspect and it has attributes. The form with the attributes helps one to visualize and relate to the Lord. So, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a form with beautiful locks of hair and the name Keśava indicates that.

Alternately, kaśca aśca īśaśca keśāḥ–'ka' is Brahmāji; 'a' is Visnu and 'īśa' is Rudra; hence 'kesah' denote the trimūrtis, Brahmāji, Viṣṇu and Rudra. Te yadvaśe vartante – these trimūrtis constitute whom, He is Keśava. Here, each of the trimūrtis represents an aspect of Īśvara from three different stand-points, that is, creation, sustenance and resolution. Since they have been delegated their work, they are under the control of Parameśvara.

Keśivadhāt vā keśavaḥ – He is also known as Keśava, because of slaying the asura called Keśī. Keśī was an asura who came to Brindavan in the guise of a horse to kill Sri Krsna, but he got killed by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. A verse in the Viṣṇupurāṇa supports this meaning. There, Nārada tells Śrī Kṛṣṇa, 'because the duṣṭātmā Keśī was killed by you, you will be well known in the world by the name Keśava' (5.16.23)

24. Puruṣhottamaḥ

पुरुषोत्तमः

The foremost, the exalted among men.

‘Puruṣottama’ is a special word. This is a samāsa, a compounding, that is allowed only in the case of ‘Puruṣottama.’ But, here ‘puruṣāṇām uttamaḥ’ can be formed into a samāsa, because the Lord is not one among the group.

A small grammar point here – In the English language, there are compound words such as tabletop(the top of a table), lion heart (a brave person). Table top is neither the top nor the table but the top of the table. A lionheart is not a person who has had a heart transplant of a lion. It means a person who is brave. In Sanskrit too, words are compounded to indicate a specific meaning, the word being called a samāsa.
Puruṣottama is that kind of a compound word. In the case of ‘brāhmaṇānām uttamah’ it cannot be combined to say ‘brāhmaṇottama.’ It remains as ‘brāhmanāṇām uttamaḥ’ and stays without combining, because, compounds cannot be made with words which are a.jāti(group) e.g. a tree in a forest,
b. guṇa(attribute) e.g. the blue lily among all lilies,
c. kriyā(action) e.g. the one waving out to him in a crowd and
d. sambandha(relationship) e.g. son of the father.
But it is allowed in the case of ‘puruṣottama,’ because, other than the Lord, there is nothing else to compare Him with. Comparison is not possible. The Lord is uttama, superior, but not as one belonging to the class of men.

Since all that is here is the Lord, the Lord cannot be classified according to the group, he belongs to. Neither can the Lord be classified as having certain attributes and not the others, because all attributes of everything are a part of the order that is Bhagavan. Can some actions be classified as, of the Lord, and some not of the Lord? All actions possible in this world are a part of the laws and principles of physical sciences that is the Lord. Perhaps, the Lord can be classified by relationship then. No. The Lord escapes any and every categorization, because categorising limits the Lord! Readers will note that many of the category words one does use for Avatāras, as there is a form there.

In the Bhagavad Gitā, Bhagāvan says, ‘I am well known in the world and in the Vedas as puruṣottama, because I am uttama, superior to the kṣara-puruṣa and the akṣara-puruṣa’ (15.18). Sr̥ṣṭi, the manifest creation, is called kṣara-puruṣa and the avyakta, the unmanifest, is called akṣara puruṣa. He sustains both of them, but is neither of them. Therefore, He is superior to both of them, being the very adhiṣṭha ̄na, the basis of both and hence is called Puruṣottama.
Or Bhagavān is Puruṣottama being the Purusa, because of His all-pervasiveness, pūrṇatvāt, and Uttama, superior to all.

25. Sarvaḥ
सर्वः

The one who is (the source of) all.

He is known as sarva, not only because He is the cause of birth and dissolution of everything, but also sarvasya sarvadā jn̄ānāt, that is, always knowing everything. When we say, He knows everything; it means that He does not have any ignorance of anything (MB.Ud.69.11).

All the words in the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma are culled from the Śāstra. The Upaniṣads say, 'sarvam khalvidam brahma – all that is indeed Brahman.' 'Iśāvāsyam idam sarvam–all that is covered by Īśvara.' Brahman is Parameśvara, who is the cause of sarva, this entire world. When we say 'sarva-all,' what are all included in this 'all'? Any enumeration will be very long and still incomplete. Therefore, the śāstra uses methods of expressing in a short and comprehensive way.

One brilliant method is to say sat and asat–that which has a form and without a form–comprise sarva. All that is present in creation is sat and asat, that is, mūrta and amūrta. The elements space and air have no form. Even pleasure, love, anger and so on, have no form. The elements fire, (agni), water (āpaḥ), and earth (pṛithvī), the elementals and the physical body have a form. Therefore, those that have a form and those that have no form together constitute sarva, all.
The Lord is called sarva, because from Him alone sarvasya prabhava, the origin of everything takes place and unto Him alone sarvasya apyaya, the dissolution of everything takes place. The pot that has come from the clay and goes back unto the clay, is sustained in between also as the clay alone. So too, everything is sustained by the Lord alone and is non-separate from Him.
Another method used, is to say 'all' means known and unknown. It includes our body-mind-sense-complex also. All that is here, known and unknown, is indeed Brahman. What is unknown now is known to someone else or knowable in the future. Again, known implies the knower and knowledge and all the three is the sarva.

Further, in every action there are many factors involved, such as subject, object, instrument, location and so on, which are called kārakas, usually expressed with various case endings. These are also included in the 'all.' The word 'all' itself has relevance only when there is a manifest creation, because in the unmanifest state one cannot talk of 'all.'

Therefore, any way that we look at it, all that is there is non-separate from Ishvara. Hence, He is called Sarva.

26. Śarvaḥ
शर्वः
The destroyer.

The one, who destroys, withdraws everything unto Himself or causes to be withdrawn at the time of dissolution is Śarva (Saṁhārasamaye śṛṇāti, saṁharati samhārayati va). It is not total destruction. It is withdrawal from a manifest condition to an unmanifest condition.

When we look at creation we find that whatever is born, is sustained for a while, and then is no more there in the same form. There is no real destruction of matter or energy in the universe, much less the conscious being. We studied about the conversion of matter to energy and vice versa, in our School Science. It 's amazing when we assimilate that nothing is really totally destroyed. (pun intended , only for those who are familiar with tarka system of abhāva of atyanta – abhāva). Truly we cannot give the label 'destroyer' to Lord Shiva, because there is no real destruction of anything in the Universe. All that happens is things manifest from the unmanifest and again go into unmanifest form, to manifest again.

It is like, when we go to sleep daily, we become śarva. Our individual ways–the way we look at the world, all the knowledge that we have, all the problems, the entire world of experiences–all this is withdrawn into an unmanifest condition. Everything is again picked up the next day when we wake up. Therefore, it is not destruction, but only a temporary dissolution.

27. Śivaḥ
शिवः
The auspicious.

The Lord is called Śiva, auspiciousness. Being free from all the three guṇas, He is śuddha, pure. The Kaivalyopaniṣad talks of Him as, 'sa brahmā, sa śivah' (8) and the Narayaṇasūkta as 'sa brahma sa śivah.' He is Brahmāji, He is Brahman, He is Śiva and also the others.

This is an important name to note, both for exclusive Viṣṇu bhaktas and exclusive Viṣṇu bhaktas. Here Lord Viṣṇu is praised by a name such as Śiva. These names are also used for Lord Śiva in Śivā Sahasranāma, thereby, showing the abheda, non-difference between the two.
One may wonder, were the rishis confused? Certainly not.

It is important to understand the growth of a devotee, a person who is discovering his relationship to the Lord. Whether we like it or not, we happen to be connected to the Lord, pervaded by the Lord in more ways than we can imagine.

Initially, a devotee prefers to relate to the Lord as a single form (ekā-rupa). This could be Ganāpati, Viṣṇu, Śiva or any ishta devāta, liked deity that resonates with the devotee. The Lord is related to, as primarily this form. Fights emanate between different bhaktas, devotees because they think their Lord, the form they relate to is the best or the highest.

In time, the devotee recognises and accommodates many other functions and forms of the Lord. A simplistic example to assimilate this is the use of our hands and legs. It is one body; neither the hands nor the legs are superior in any respect. Both are required for functioning. The devotee may still relate to his/her ishta devāta. In addition, the devotee also relates and prays to other forms of the Lord (aneka-rupa). There is no conflict.

The devotee fulfills the purpose of his relationship with the Lord, in the discovery of the Lord as that formless reality (arupa) in all the deities and forms of the Lord. There is no form which is not the Lord.

28. Sthāṇuḥ
स्थाणुः
The one who is firm, immovable.

Because He is sthira, firm. He is called Sthāṇu. Since He is all pervasive, there is no place, to which He can move. We think our bodies are solid. Physicists will say we are just bundles of energy. Our minds are also subject to changing moods, emotions, positions. We like to hold on to a notion of permanence and look for that which is unchanging and firm.

The entire world is always moving and it moves on the Sthāṇu who is like an anvil that does not move. He does not undergo any change, but allows all the changes to take place. Changes can take place only with names and forms. But, being the adhiṣṭhāna, He does not undergo any change. The basis, on which change can take place, is always the changeless. Even the goldsmith uses an anvil on which metals are bent into shape.

The Lord does not undergo any change, but as the sākṣi becomes the witness of everything. This is His nirākāra aspect.

29. Bhūtādiḥ

भूतादिः

The source of all beings.

I may say that my parents were the cause for me to be here. Who was the cause for them to be here? Their parents and so on and so forth. Is there a unitary source from whom all have come? The Lord is the one who is the source, the cause of all beings. Here the word 'bhūta' can be taken to mean the five elements from which everything has come or it can mean all beings.
Before the bhūtas, elements like space and so on were born, the one who was already there is bhūtādi. Ādi means the beginning, the cause. The cause is always before the effect. For a given tree, the seed is the cause. But as in the tree and seed, it is not cyclical, the Lord is not present in a cyclical manner. The Lord is the causeless cause. Hence, He is bhutānām ādih, the cause of all beings and even of the elements. The Chāndogyopaniṣad says, 'Sadeva somya idamagra āsīt– that sat-vastu alone was there in the beginning' (6.2.1).

Generally the kārana, cause, undergoes a change to become the effect. But being sthāṇu, He does not undergo any change. Even though He does not undergo any change, He becomes the cause of everything. Without undergoing any change, He allows all changes to take place. The cause should not undergo any change, only then changes are possible.

30. Nidhiravyayaḥ

निधिरव्ययः

The indestructible receptacle.

Every word in the Viṣṇu Sahasranāma is a window of insight, a window of understanding one more facet of the Lord. There are words which indicate our value for our valuables. Nidhiravyayaḥ is one such word. Nidhi, treasury is the place, the receptacle, where all that is valuable is preserved, treasured and kept secure. For most of us this would mean a secure locker whether at home or in the bank.

Here Bhagavān is called Nidhi, because pralayakāle asmin sarvam nidhīyate–the entire world with all its precious things is placed in Him at the time of resolution. It is like keeping all the jewels in a locker, and bringing them out at the time of a wedding. Bhagavān also, at the time of creation brings back the entire world from the unmanifest. Even the Vedas come back.

A locker or a treasury, whether at home or in the bank is subject to changes like rusting or destruction (even banks are subject to earthquakes). That which was said as nidhi is avyaya. It means that the nidhi is always there. It is not lost nor does it change nor get destroyed. He preserves everything and does not lose anything.

When creation takes place, everything comes back again from the unmanifest to become manifest. Nothing is expended and nothing is lost. That which is manifest, goes back into the unmanifest state. Just as one goes to sleep and again comes back from sleep, it is a cycle.

31. Saṁbhavaḥ

संभवः

The one whose manifestations are by His own will.

For those of us familiar with Hindi and a few regional languages, sambhavah means possible. Here in Sanskrit, the Lord is called Saṁbhavaḥ because He can assume a samīchina-bhāvana, a suitable form, svecchaya, by His own will. We know how difficult it is to lose weight and we are talking only about modifying one's form. Even to play different roles, we don't change our form. We may wear casuals or formals. But, that is just change in clothes. We could have a makeover or even undergo plastic surgery. Still as humans, we cannot totally modify our human form.

The Lord can assume any form that He wants, like Matsya, Kūrma,Varāha, Narsimha, Śrī Rama, Śrī Kṛsṇa and other such forms. The birth of the jīva in a particular body is only bhāvana, because he is helplessly born due to the force of his own karma. Whereas, keeping the maya-shakti under His control, the Lord takes a body and therefore, it is a samīcḥina-bhāvana, a suitable and purposeful birth.

Why does He assume a body? Bhagavan himself says in the Gita, dharmasaṁsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge–I assume a body in every yuga for the establishment of dharma and vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām –in order to destroy the duṣtas, people given to adharma' (4.8). It need not always be a physical destruction. It can also be a change that is brought about in the person, by destroying the tendency to do adharma. If that mental change is not possible, then a physical destruction is done. Also, paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ – for protecting the sadhus who follow a life of dharma. Since the birth of Bhagavān is by His own iccha, it is garbha-dukha-vivarjita, the birth is immaculate without undergoing the sorrow of being inside a womb.

The Lord comes into being with a specific purpose. A bhāvana, birth at the right time and right place, in a right form alone can be conducive to the situation and will be purposeful. In answer to the prayers of Prahlada, if the Lord had come in the form that Prahlada had worshipped, that is, with shankha and chakra, then it would not have served the purpose. Hiraṇyakaśipu was given a boon by the Lord, that he should not be destroyed by man or beast and a few other almost impossible to achieve conditions by another human being (Refer to post no. 22). Therefore, in order to destroy him, the Lord had to come in a form which was neither man nor beast, as Narasimha. This is the uchitarupa, proper form, which is assumed at the uchitakala and uchitadesa, right time and place. That is why He is Saṁbhavaḥ.

32. Bhāvanaḥ

भावनः

The giver of the fruits of action.

Many self made people (by their own admission) may think that they call all the shots, are in charge of all factors in given situations. So it seems natural, that when things don't go their way, it is either other people's fault or their own fault! Unknown variables which could have played a role are rarely ever taken into account. Chennai Superkings, of the IPL cricketing league, who was on a winning streak despite a good form lost to another team, Mumbai Indians. It seems that luck was not on their side, in the final game. Whatever be the type of karma, actions we are involved in, be it the results of an exam, how one's own child turns out to be, all karma will have 4 possible outcomes:

Results are less than expected
Results are equal to what was expected
Results are more than what was expected and
Results are quite the opposite to what was expected

When we really look at it, people who are successful seem to have understood some principles of success, the connection between cause and effect; the connection between the different types of actions and the results. A psychological law that is understood by most parents is providing conducive conditions of care, education and values in a child's life is likely to lead to a healthy, independent and a contributing member of society. This principle, amongst many others, does not function on their own. And one can never be aware of all principles operating in the many spheres of our lives. Secular people who don't want to acknowledge the presence of God, will attribute results to the forces of nature. But, how does one account for these forces of nature to be so flawlessly intelligent? There seems to be no answer to that. The principle often expressed as the connection between the action and the result requires a conscious being to make the connection.

Many adrsta, unknown factors, seem to play a part. Attending any temple in India, one gets an idea of the role of prayer in people's life. One may chant a simple prayer and the result that is got is something entirely different. How the prayers bring about the results, is not clear. But, they work. So, Karma alone being jada, insentient can neither make the connection nor bring about the result. The one, who is in the form of the connection between the karma and the phala and who makes this connection, is Ishvara. He is the karma-phala-dāta.

Sarveṣām bhoktṛṇām phalāni bhāvayati iti bhāvanaḥ–He is the one who gives the right results, according to their karma, to all the jīvas, who are bhoktas, the experiencers of the result. We see in the purānās, that the devotees pray to the Lord to save them from their distress and the Lord answers their prayers by taking an avatāra at the right time. So, as the giver of the results for those prayers at the right time and place, He is called Bhāvanaḥ. Thus, the previous name Saṁbhavaḥ. is connected to this name Bhāvanaḥ.

33. Bharta

भर्ता

The sustainer of the universe.

To sustain a job, a family, one's body-mind-sense-complex is to keep it going in good condition. It takes a lot of knowledge, effort, skills and effort. And we are talking only about one person and his/her family. The one who sustains the entire universe is Bharta. He establishes dharma, sustains dharma, in the form of the order that exists, the order in the form of what is right and wrong. The Lord is not sitting somewhere and pulling the strings. The Lord is manifest as the order – the many principles – physical, physiological, biological, psychological principles of the universe. So, the Lord is dharmasya bhartā. The word "dharma" has multiple meanings depending on the context in which it is used. These include: duty (svadharma), nature of a thing, action (karma), right, justice, religious merit (punya), Dharma has no equivalent in English and hence we go with the word, by understanding it further.

Dharma has the Sanskrit root dhri, which means "that which upholds" or "that without which nothing can stand" or "that which maintains the stability and harmony of the universe." Dharma encompasses the natural, innate behaviour of things, duty, law, ethics, virtue, etc. Every entity in the cosmos has its particular dharma — from the electron, which has the dharma to move in a certain manner, to the clouds, galaxies, plants, insects, and of course, human beings.

Dharma is not present in some great grand book nor is it a list of dos and don'ts. The beauty is that in human beings, the Lord manifests as the understanding of dharma – the right thing to do in a given situation which is helpful and non harming to self and others. A 7 year old child playing with his toys when there are other children nearby who don't have toys, a couple who are having frequent fights, an employee fed up with his job, all of them irrespective of their age and stage in life, know what is to be done that is right in their situation. Still because people are inhibited by their desires and aversions, they can't seem to do what is right.

Duryodhana, in the Mahābhārta makes an insightful statement reflecting his condition –
'I know what is dharma, but I can't follow it. I know what is adharma, but I cannot refrain from it. There is something that pushes me to what is not right and I do accordingly. '
The joy that one gets out of reaching out to another person in distress, sharing even a smile with another, staying up late to look after one's ailing child, completing things on time, finishing the much postponed laundry is not the kind of joy that one gets out of pursuing wealth or even pleasure. This is the joy of dharma. It is a vast topic, to be covered later.

When there is an imbalance, a disturbance to the order of the Lord in the form of principles that sustain the universe, then dharma is suppressed by false beliefs and practices brought on by misguided leadership. Ishvara restores the balance again by taking the form of an avatāra if required and hence, He is the Bhartā.
Further, He sustains the entire prapanca, universe as the adhiṣṭhāna, by giving it existence and consciousness.

34. Prabhavaḥ

प्रभवः

The source of the elements.

He is called Prabhava because from Him alone the elements such as space(ākāsa), air(vāyu), water(āpa), fire (agni) and earth (prithvi) are all born. These five elements are the elementary building blocks at the total level. Everything else that we perceive are permutations and combinations. Every living body, post death will return to the elements whether cremated or buried or will become food for the fishes if the body is immersed in the river (like often done for sadhus), or will become manure for potatoes for one's great great grandchildren. Humbling thought, isn't it? On a related note, in the scheme of elements, I am not sure where plastic fits in. The Lord is dharmasya prabhava, the source of dharma. Dharma is not separate from him. That I don't want to be hurt or cheated and that the other does not want to be cheated or hurt is universal. A Masai warrior in Ngorongoro, Tanzania as well as a broker of Wall street (wolf or not) knows this. Some people can have double standards about this, reflected in, 'nobody should hurt me but I can hurt people from time to time. It 's not my fault, they drive me up the wall.' Clearly sāmānya dharma has to be assimilated well.

If God is all powerful, how can he allow suffering and so much adharma to be there? We have to understand here that dharma is meant for the welfare of human beings. Unlike animals which are programmed, human beings have a free will and hence can abuse it and go against dharma. They can even get into destructive activities; they can destroy the environment, destroy the earth and they can even destroy themselves. Or, they can make an effort to help each other, in accordance with dharma. Their understanding of basic dharma is inhibited due to inner pressure of strong likes and dislikes fostered by asking oneself 'What do I/he/ she really want to do in the situation?' and following through in terms of action.

We can start to ensure harmony with dharma in especially conflicting situations by asking ourselves a simple question and obviously answering it, ' What needs to be done in the situation which will be beneficial to all including myself? In time we will find that what needs to done in a given situation is also what I want to do in the situation. That reflects a lot of emotional maturity. In Buddhist teachings, what is often quoted is –Dhamam sharanam gacchaami – I surrender to dharma, the understanding of universal principles. It 's a helpful way to approach dharma.

Sri Krsna says in the Gita, 'bhuteṣu dharma-aviruddhah kamaḥ asmi–I am, in all beings, the desire that is not opposed to dharma' (7.11). So many people have suffered great guilt because they have been told that desires are bad. The power to desire and the very desire that we have, is the Lord. The freedom to desire is iccha-śakti, a power and the Lord is that power. The Lord is manifest in the form of desire in the individual and if the individual goes against dharma in fulfilling his desires, then, it is not the Lord who is there, but it is the individual. But the Lord gets blamed! When, in the fulfillment of desire, the individual conforms to dharma, then there is Ishvara, because the Lord who is there in the form of dharma. If fulfillment of desires conforms to dharma, then there is more of Ishvara and very little of jīva.

Prakṛṣtah bhavah, janma asya iti prabhavah–His taking a birth is special, exalted because, while doing so, He does not lose the knowledge about His svaru ̄pa and He is untainted by the karma that He does.

35. Prabhuḥ

प्रभुः
The one who has unsurpassed skill.

Professionals highlight their skills and competence on the professional CV depending on their area of specialization. It is still limited to particular field/s of operation. The reason one is able to even develop a skill or even hone it, is because of the capacity that has been given. The skill of a spider in weaving its web, the beaver who builds his nest, the Nepali Sherpa who climbs mountains playing the role of a porter far more effortlessly than the mountaineers, the cook who can put a delicious meal together – all these beings and others reflect some skills and capacities. Every skill possessed by anyone in the world is just a miniscule fraction of the unsurpassed skill of the Lord that pervades everything and everyone.

The one, who has unsurpassed skill in all actions is called a prabhu. Īśvara is that Prabhuḥ. (Sarvāsu kriyāsu sāmarthya-atiśayavān prabhuḥ). What is the sāmarthya, the capacity for? The capacity in absolute measure to create, sustain and resolve this jagat, without requiring the help of anything else or anyone else is the sāmarthya of the Lord. If the Lord had to create the jagat, he necessarily had to find material from within himself to do so. This is important to note, otherwise we will still localize the Lord.

When we think of an object, let's say table, in the table thought, all other objects stand excluded.
When we think of a person, other people are not included.
When we think of Bhagavān, what can we exclude?
To the extent that we understand Bhagavān we may include some things or exclude other things and situations. The more we exclude people, situations and things from the understanding of Bhagavān, the more we need to expand our understanding of Bhagavān. Each word of the Sahasranāmā is helping us do this. The Lord is manifest as the principles of this universe and pervades the individual totally.

As Prabhuh,there is excellence in His capacity. Being almighty and absolutely capable; there is nothing that He cannot do.

36. Īśvara
ईश्वरः
The one with unlimited lordship.

He is the Paramesvara. Aiśvarya is isvarasya bhavah, lordship, that is the nature of Īśvara. Even a CEO may have a board of directors to report to. Overlordship means there is no one else who lords over Īśvara.

Lord Viṣṇu is the Lord of all lords like Brahmaji, Indra and so on who gain an upadhi, (a conditioning adjunct which has a function) and that power as a result of their previous karma. But, Lord Visnu being the karma-phala-dāta, does not need an upadhi.. Therefore, He has the aiśvarya, the power to lord over all, without any upadhi. He stands in His own glory and His aiśvarya, lordship, is not subject to any limitation.

For the sake of understanding, there are two types of aiśvarya. One is an aiśvarya because of the upadhi and is known as sopadhika-aisvarya. Īśvara is sarvajñatva, sarvaśaktimatva, sarvavyāpakatva–being all-knowing, almighty and all-pervasive and so on, is due to His māyā-upādhi, his maya shakti and hence it is sopadhika-aiśvarya. The other is an aisvarya without upadhi and is known as nirupādhika- aiśvarya. Without the maya-upadhi, He is 'satyam jñanam anantam brahma.', that consciousness which cannot be negated.

Awareness of Īśvara is not simply thinking of Krishna. It is not simply thinking of the murti in the morning and then putting him in the cradle and rocking him to sleep at night. If you forget Krishna the next morning, you might feel guilty and say Krishna is angry at me. You are just putting your own projections on Krishna.

To relate to Īśvara to is to be aware of his presence in all situations.

Thus, He is Sambhava–takes forms out of His own will, because He is Bhāvana–the giver of karma-phala. He is Bhartā–the sustainer and is Prabhava–the source of everything needed for sustenance. The names Prabhu and Īśvara show, that He has the capacity to sustain without depending on anything else.

37. Svayaṁbhuḥ
स्वयंभूः
The self-existent.

The one, who is self-existent, not created by anyone, but anadi, beginningless - Svayameva bhavati iti svayaṁbhuḥ.

In India, many temples gain great fame and reverence because the deity whether Ganapati or Shivalinga are said to be svayambhuh, independently existing. The stones were found to be shaped in a particular form of the deity as mentioned in the Puranas. They did not need to be sculpted before consecration in the temple.

When we look around, everything else is created and everything has a dependence on something else for its existence. A shirt did not spring into existence. It depends on the fabric for its existence, whereas the fabric does not depend on the shirt. But, the fabric also is not independent. It is paratantra, dependent on something else, the yarn. The yarn depends on the fibres, the fibres dependent on molecules, the molecules depend on atoms, the atoms on particles and the particles in turn are dependent on knowledge. Knowledge is dependent on the consciousness. Thus we find that everything is paratantra, dependent on something else for its existence.

Even the different identities that we have built up are based on the roles we play – mother, father, sister, brother, son, partner, employee, student etc depend on the person, a conscious being. The person is independent of the roles. Roles are dependent on the person. The person needs to be there before the roles are picked up. Often, the person is disregarded, as the role, that dependent entity is taken to be real. It is this simple person that relates to the total, Isvara. In awareness of the total, that self existent, Svayambhuh, the person can relax as the sense of isolation, alienation

and loneliness start to fade away. He is svatantra, not dependent on anything, and can certainly be depended upon.

Isvara is Svayambhuḥ, because His atma is svayambhuḥ. As satyam jñanaṁ, it is the atma of everything. So the caitanya, consciousness, is the satya, which svayaṁ eva bhavati, exists by itself without depending on anything else for its existence.
Svayameva bhavati iti svayambhuh – He himself has become everything, manifests as everything because He has created everything out of himself.
Atha va svayambhuh paramesvarah svayameva svatantrah bhavati iti–or else, as Parameśvara, Even maya is not created. It is anadi, but is paratantra, being dependent on Brahman.

38. Śaṁbhuḥ
शंभुः
The giver of happiness.

Śaṁbhu is the one, who causes śam, gives sukha as karma-phala to the devotees, (Śaṁ sukham bhaktānām bhāvayati iti śaṁbhuḥ)–. The real sukha is moksa, the ultimate end. By knowing the Lord, by gaining the knowledge of the Lord and by the grace of the Lord alone, one gains that śaṁ, that happiness. The grace of Īśvara helps one to get the knowledge of Īśvara.

Grace has to be earned as results of reaching out actions in line with dharma and prayer. Prayer is an action and definitely gives a result. For so called practical people, they have no logic to prove that prayer does not work. They rely on perception and inference as a means of knowledge while we see the Veda as a means of knowledge, telling us what we cannot figure out ourselves. The matrix of karma is hugely complex. Which pāpa standing in the account gets neutralized and which punya karma fructifies, we can never know and hence we recognise the grace of Śaṁbhu. As more duritas, impurities in the form of obstacles get neutralized, there is more sukha in one's life.

There are two sets of situations in our relating to the Lord and for that we understand two nyāyas–mārkata-nyāya and mārjaraka-nyāya. Markāta is monkey in Sanskrit and marjara is a cat. According to the first logic, one naturally holds on to the Lord as even a markata, a baby monkey, holds on to its mother, as she jumps from one tree to another. Despite being challenged and scared, the baby monkey has complete trust and holds on to her mother. She surrenders.
But, how can one hold on to the Lord? Even to hold on to the Lord, one needs His grace. Therefore, He has to hold on to us as even a mārjaraka, a mother cat takes its kitten in its mouth to a safe place without hurting it. The baby kitten is totally helpless and cannot do anything. The baby surrenders. The lord lifts us from where we are to where it is safe for us. We have all been through situations where we felt totally cared for by the Lord.

Similarly, the Lord helps us to surrender to Him and to hold on to Him. Really, both these methods should go together. Surrender is born out of understanding and not so much an act of will as it is made out to be. We should try to hold on to Him and implore the Lord for His grace, so that He would always hold us. This is like the confluence of the river, where it is difficult to

say, whether the river reaches out to the ocean or the ocean reaches out to the river! Both reach out to each other.

One becomes a devotee, as an individual related to the total. Being a devotee is not being glowingly spiritual and romantic in some make believe spiritual la-la land. A devotee is highly pragmatic and objective because he recognises his relationship with the total that is Isvara. Just as an individual tree is related to the forest and sustained by the ecosystem as much as contributing to the ecosystem. The connection that we sought with people, places and situations to get over our isolation finally finds a direction as we reach out to the Lord. Hence, He is called Sambhu and by that knowledge, one becomes one with the Lord, not separated any more from the Lord.

39. Ādityaḥ (563)

आदित्यः

The one, who obtains in the sun's orb as golden coloured.

The physical sun is shining and in the morning makes the whole world manifest by its light (Āditya-mandala-antasthah hiraṇmayaḥ puruṣah ādityah) –Thus it is a source of blessing to all. The sun is an example by which we can understand the prakāśa-svarupa, the caitanya-svarupa of the Lord. Therefore, the śāstra gives the physical sun as a locus to meditate upon the Lord, as golden coloured.

What is it that lends the brilliance to the sun? It is nothing but Paramesvara Himself, who is manifest as the sun and lends light to the sun. The sun is the centre of the solar system. So too, the Lord is the centre and without Him, there is no activity at all. Therefore, the Lord is called Āditya. The Taittiriyopaniṣad points to the Lord as 'yah ca asau āditya, the one who obtains in the sun' and then says, 'the one who is in the sun, yah ca asau puruṣe, the one who is in the individual, sa ekah, both are one and the same'(2.8.5).

Or aditeh akhanditayah mahyah patih ādityah–here, aditi is māhi, the earth. As the Lord of the akhandita aditi, the undivided earth, He is Āditya, that is, He is the Lord of all life also. In the absence of the physical sun, there would be no life on earth and a possible ice age.
Dvadasa-adityesu viṣṇuh–Or He is Viṣṇu among the twelve adityas. It is said that there are twelve aditya-devatas and among them, one is known as Viṣṇu. Bhagavan says, 'among the āditya-devatas, I am specially manifest in the Viṣṇu-devata.

Or aditya-sadharmyat va adityah–Since, He is like the sun, He is called Āditya. Even though the sun is one, it appears as many, because of many reflecting media. Similarly, there is only one atma. This atma becomes the kśetrajña in all the different kśetras, bodies As the kśetras are many, the kśetrajña appears as though many. In every śarira, in every buddhi, there is reflection of the atma-caitanya. Therefore, as the buddhis are many, the reflections of the atma, are also many, even though the atma is only one. Just as the one aditya seems to become many, the one atma appears to become many and hence, He is adityah iva adityah – He is like the sun and therefore, Aditya.

40. Puskaraksah

पुष्कराक्षः
The lotus-eyed.

This name is given for the purpose of upāsana, meditation. The aksini, eyes, of the Lord are like the puskara, lotus. The lotus flowers are pleasant, similarly His eyes are pleasant to look at. His eyes are a source of blessing.

In the Indian religious culture, one looks forward to the Darshan of the lord, whichever be the devata of the temple. We have the experience of feeling deeply connected to another when we see the eyes of people we feel close to. Generally when we see the murti, we look at the eyes, again to connect.

Even if one is not able to go to the temple, where we are, we can meditate on the Lord. In the tradition, Meditation is defined as saguna brahma viśaya mānas vyāpāra - mental activity centred on saguna brahma i.e. Īśvara. Any mental activity is not meditation. Although every action is born in the mind, it does not necessarily remain in the mind. The act of speaking, for example, is born of the mind. The words are all formed in the mind and are then expressed through the organ of speech. Although all forms of action emanate from the mind alone, they do not always stop there. They may manifest through the various means of expression. But in meditation, the activity is born of mind and remains in the mind; therefore, it is purely a mental action.

So thinking of the Lord for half a minute in the morning and half a minute in the night is meditation? No. Only those mental actions concerning the chosen object flow for a length of time can be considered as meditation. Relaxation is a preliminary step in meditation. But some of us are so stressed that relaxation itself is considered meditation. Traditionally speaking, there is no meditation without Isvara. In order to pray effectively, I surface or invoke the meditator. Only a meditator meditates.

Here, in meditation, after relaxation, we visualize the eyes of the Lord, a source of blessing we bring to mind all the things, people and situations that we feel blessed with. And we can chant ‘anugr̥hitoham’, I am grateful. As we chant we see the meaning again and again.

41. Mahāsvanāḥ
महास्वनः
The one with the great (adorable or venerable) sound.

The Lord is known as Mahāsvanāḥ - the one with the mahānpujitāḥ svanāḥ, the great, adorable or venerable sound, because it is from Him that the Rk, Yajus, Sāma and Atharvana Vedas have come. The Veda, that is, the śrutī is the most sacred. It is in the form of śabda and hence it is referred to here as svanāḥ.

The Br̥hadāranyakopaniśad says that the entire Veda is His breath. The entire Veda is likened to His breathing, because He created the Vedas, anāyāsena, as effortlessly as breathing. This reveals the sarvajñatva, the all-knowing nature of the Lord, because He is śāstrasya api yonih, the cause for even the śāstra.

The śāstra reveals everything, including the Lord, and that śāstra is revealed by the Lord. There is no other way to know the Lord. If we follow the process of logic, every creation presupposes a creator but given the variegated nature of the jagat, are there many creators or one? This question cannot be resolved by inference. Śankarācharyā mentions in the adhyāsa bhāsyā that the construction of a big palace implies the contribution of many doers - architects, masons, carpenters, plumbers so on and so forth. Does the jagat have many creators? That the Lord is one and in fact all that is here is the Lord is revealed by the śāstra. This is not a matter of belief but a fact to be understood. Belief needs verification and so if we 'believe' in God, our faith will falter from time to time. And it needs to protected.

On the other hand, just like inference is a valid means of knowledge, when I start to see the śāstra as a valid means of knowledge, to tell me what I cannot figure out, my understanding starts to shift. All knowledge rests in a conscious being. The being is consciousness is all knowledge. This being so, you are also all knowledge because you are consciousness.

The Vedas says, 'you are all knowledge;' but, one finds that he is not omniscient. This is because that though the jiva is all knowing Īśvara, he is inhibited by ignorance. Whereas, the Lord has no ignorance about Himself or about anything else. All knowledge is vested with Īśvara.

Whatever is revealed is the knowledge of Īśvara. Therefore, finally it is Īśvara who is the revealer of everything, especially the Veda, which talks about things that we cannot figure out. The body of knowledge called the Veda, was given out by Īśvara to the rsis and they in turn, gave out this knowledge. So, it is a knowledge that was revealed by Īśvara.

42. Anādinidhanaḥ

अनादिनिधनः

The one without any birth or death.

The one, who does not have birth, anadī and nidhana, death, is anādinīdhanaḥ. There is neither real birth nor death for anything. It is only a cycle of manifestation and unmanifestation. We have supporting evidence from Science for this – Matter is never destroyed, it is only converted from one form to another. The creation is only a manifestation of the jagat, and again it becomes unmanifest and therefore is anādi.

Any form undergoes six modifications, it is born (jāyate), it grows (vardhate), it is present (asti), it transforms (vipariṇamate), it declines (apakśiyate), it dies (mriyate).

We may try and prolong life with more organic food and a healthy lifestyle. Still these are the changes the body will be subject to, and a full life span is likely to be about 120 years with a few exceptions. Some of us may say, "I am not afraid of death, but old age." Whatever be the fear, it is related to a sense of loss. The question then is, "Is this loss real or apparent?' if the loss is real, nothing can take away the fear and sorrow. If it is apparent, it is felt intensely based on the conclusion that the loss is related to I which is the body-mind-sense complex. How real is it? None of these changes affect I, as the conscious being.

The Lord Himself, when He takes an avatār is manifest and then becomes unmanifest. But, when there is the manifestation of a form that was not there, it is called birth and the disappearance of a form is death. So, we can and do celebrate Krishna Jayanti. As the Lord in His essential svarūpa has no form, He has neither ādi nor nidhana, no birth nor death and therefore no modifications. Hence, He is Anādinidhanaḥ.

43. Dhātā (951)

धाता

The support of the universe.

He is the one who supports and sustains the universe and hence is Dhātā.
This word comes from the same Sanskrit root from which the word 'dharma' is formed. The Lord in the form of Dharma too supports and sustains the order of society.

The game of snakes and ladders, earlier called Moksha patam has inbuilt scope to keep moving ahead in life, one place at a time. Sometimes one can get a ladder up (lots of pūnya in the form of a fulfilling job, comfortable living, a compatible partner, a brahma vidya guru etc etc). Sometimes one also gets bitten by a snake and has to retrace a few steps backward (Some pāpa in the form of unsupportive boss, financial difficulties, strained relationships, etc). The dharma or order of the game is that one moves ahead while both pūnya and pāpa fructify.

The only way out is to recognise the order of dharma as the Lord. It then becomes easier to commit to dharma in our actions. According to the Purānas the universe is borne by the thousand hooded serpent called Ananta or Ādiśēsa. The snake is always considered as a symbol of power and Ananta stands for His ananta-śakti, limitless power. He alone supports the universe as Ananta.

44. Vidhātā (also 484)

विधाता

The giver of the fruits of action.

The laws that make any action possible as well as the result of any action possible, is Vidhātā . He is the karmaṇām kartā, one who induces actions, tatphalānāṃ ca kartā, and also the giver of the fruits of action. Somebody who has paralysis of the left arm knows the difficulty involved in the simple action of raising the arm. For this action there are physiological laws and physical laws that operate, which are the order that is Isvara. For the success of any venture, the kind of people involved, their dispositions, the level of planning, the effort taken are just some of the variables that determine the success of the venture. According to the karma and saṅkalpa, He gives the appropriate amount of result at the appropriate time.

Time and place are involved, that is, the place where the individual will enjoy the result. I heard of a 68 year old sadhu who wanted to die in Rishikesh and was living there for the past 40 years. He got called for some legal formalities related to some property in Hyderabad and had a massive heart attack and passed away in Hyderabad.

Any guarantees where the results of the karma fructify. No? The person may enjoy the results of his actions in India, he may enjoy it in Heaven; we do not know. So where and when the fruit will be enjoyed has to be determined. All this is the law of karma. As the law of karma, He becomes Vidhātā.

He is vicitrasya jagataḥ dhātā, the sustainer of this world of many and varied things through the various laws and hence the Vidhātā.

45. Dhāturuttamaḥ

धातुरुत्तमः

The exalted sustainer.

The words dhātu and uttama are generally taken together as one nāma. It is linked with a sandhi. Again the word dhātu can be taken in two ways.

Dadhāti, that which sustains is dhātu or dhātā. Brahmāji, is called dhātā, because He has created this world. So, Parameśvara is dhātuḥ uttamaḥ–is utkṛṣṭa, superior to Brahmāji also, being the creator of everything and also the creator of Brahmāji, the creator.

The basic materials that go to make up something and thereby support and sustain it, are also known as dhātu. Thus, the five elements like the pṛithivī, vayū, agni and so on are dhātus; The things that constitute the body - blood, bones, flesh, marrow, fat, tissues, nerves and the other things are all dhātus. Everything in the prapañca, universe, both in the form of kāraṇa and kārya (cause and effect), is sustained by the cit, the consciousness. Therefore, as consciousness, He is sarva-dhātubhyaḥ uttamaḥ, superior to all the dhātus.

From another standpoint, Dhātu also stands for a root, the main building block, in Sanskrit language. By adding different prefixes and suffixes, millions of words can be formed in Sanskrit.

He is Dhātu, being in the form of cit, that is, the adhiṣṭhāna caitanya, which is the reality of everything. Anything that has something special is utkṛṣṭa, exalted. The various devatās like Brahmāji and so on are exalted beings. But, He is utkṛṣṭatama, the most exalted. The two names, they are taken together as one name. Dhātu is consciousness, the basic reality which sustains everything and Uttama means the most exalted.

46. Aprameyaḥ

अप्रमेयः

The one who is not an object of knowledge.

In the Gita also, Bhagavan is referred to as aprameya, the one who cannot be known as an object of knowledge. This post requires a little more attention as a technical discussion follows. Some of the reasons, we cannot dismiss Vedanta are:

Vedanta is not an abstract theory; it is about me, the subject, the knower. Neither is it about translating theory into practice, which could well apply for other matters.

Vedanta is not a matter of blind belief and faith.The guru respects the students

understanding and the commitment is to make the student see the reality about oneself.

Vedanta says that the person is already free from the sense of limitation the person experiences and hence the person must know.

Since self knowledge is the goal, Vedanta is a means of knowledge to remove wrong notions.

Pramā is knowledge and the means of knowledge is called pramāṇa. The one, who handles the pramāṇa, is pramātā, the knower, the subject. What is to be known, that is, the object of knowledge is prameya.

Na prameyaḥ aprameyaḥ. Therefore, aprameya means that which cannot be known as an object of knowledge, that is, it is not an object of any pramāṇa, any means of knowledge. The Lord is Aprameya, not available as the object of any means of knowledge. This sounds really contradictory! On the one hand, we hear – One must understand Īśvara and then we hear Īśvara cannot be known as other things are known? How is that possible?? Therefore, this nāma has to be understood well.

How do we know what we know? There are many means of knowledge. A friend was planning a holiday to Greece, and when she saw the website, she saw a section called 'sights and sounds'. By clicking on that, there were pictures and information about the main cities and the things that tourists could do. She was able to know more about Greece and accordingly plan her trip.

Our senses are faithful reporters of knowledge - the eyes for sight, ears for sounds, nose for smells, the tongue for sense of taste and skin for the sense of touch. In Sanskrit, they are referred to as jnānendriyah meaning sense organs of knowledge. All these constitute direct perception called pratyakṣa. How do I know the skin or rather hide of an elephant is rough? By touch. I cannot figure out the hide is rough by either seeing, smelling or hearing it. The sphere of operation for each sense organ is distinct. I can't see music. I can see musical notes but I hear music. Thus, if an object is to be known, is to be objectified by any of these perception based pratyakṣa-pramāṇas, it has to have a form or sound or smell or taste or touch.

Is the Lord available for knowledge through the sense organs? The sense organs are also the Lord, the sense objects are also the Lord and the perceiver is also the Lord. Therefore, He is everything. But, from the stand-point of His svarūpa, He is aśabda, asparśa, arūpa, arasa, agandha. Thus, śabdādi-rahitatvat – being free from sound, touch, form or taste, na pratyakṣa-gamyaḥ–He is not available as a prameya, an object of direct perception.

What is not available for pratyakṣa, direct perception, can be inferred. When you hear a distinct loud sound of a motorcycle, you say that a Royal Enfield bullet motorcyle is coming along, even though you do not see it. This is one step inference. You hear the sound and you say that it must be this particular brand of motorcycle, because earlier, you have seen that when there is the motorcycle, there is this loud, distinct sound - thus the two are associated with each other. Inference is anumāna-pramāṇa; it is also a valid means of knowledge.

Is Īśvara an object of inference? You may say, 'I see the jagat and therefore, there must be a cause, a kartā.' But, how can you say there is only one kartā for the jagat? There may be many

kartās, doers, just as, for a palace. But, how are you going to prove that this world is a creation, unless you have seen an earlier creation? And, without proving the creation, how are you going to infer a creator? There is no way of proving the creator because the psotualtes based on perception are not there. To know that this world is a creation, somebody should have seen that was there was a non creation before the creation. Īśvara is not purely anumāna-gamya, not arrived at by inference.

When a doctor makes a diagnosis that a person has TB of the spine, he has not cut open the body to see TB. The X ray indicates certain changes in the spine which are likely to be associated with tuberculosis. So he rules out other conditions and arrives at a medical diagnosis by a two step process – the results of the X ray and the signs and symptoms co existing with the condition of tuberculosis. This is a two step inference called arthāpatti, presumption.

Can we arrive at Īśvara through arthāpatti? Without seeing something, you cannot say that this must have definitely come from Īśvara. When perception (pratyakṣa) is not there, then anumāna and arthāpatti, inference and presumption, cannot work, because the basic data for any inference or presumption are provided only by sense perception. If it is not available for sense perception, then it is not available for anumāna and arthāpatti.

When you say, the wild beast in Africa look like a cross between deer and has the face of a bull, it is upamāna or comparison. You have seen deer and you have also seen the face of a bull. When you see an animal that you have not seen before and is roughly sized like deer and has a bull like face, you can conclude by upamāna, that it should be wildebeest. Comparison is also a means of knowledge.

Knowledge of the absence of an object in a given place is also a means of knowledge called anupalabddhi. There is no flower in my hand. With reference to the flower that you know you say, 'I see the absence of flower in your hand.' This is not based on perception. From a scientific standpoint to see something, light has to reflect off the surface of the object. In the case of an absent flower there is nothing for light to reflect off. We do not see absence in the way we see presence of a flower. This is a particular means of knowledge different from perception called abhāva-pramāṇa and by this you arrive at the absence of an object.

Now that we have looked at the 5 means of knowledge, let us try and put the Lord to a test. To see the Lord; the Lord must have a form ; only then upamāna, comparison is possible. Because the Lord is nirbhāga, has no parts to compare, upamāna is not possible. Anupalabdhi is recognition of abhāva, absence whereas Bhagavān has a bhāva, existence.The Lord cannot be inferred nor can a presumption be made.

Īśvara exists and if we cannot know Him through pratyakṣa, anumāna, arthāpatti, upamāna or anupalabdhi, what are the means of knowledge that we can use to know Him? Saguṇa-brahma, that is, Īśvara can be known indirectly by śabda-pramāṇa, the words of the śāstra. The śāstra says, that Īśvara, is in the form of the world and He is both the maker and material cause of this world. Other religions do acknowledge God as an almighty, intelligent being. The unique contribution of the śāstra is that 'all that is here is Isvara.' This can be neither arrived at nor

negated by any means of knowledge at our disposal like perception, inference, 2 step inference, comaparison, recognition of absence. The Lord is to be known only through the śāstra;

Pujya Swamiji says," Vedānta is a teaching tradition and the tradition looks upon it as a pramāṇa. Either you accept it as a pramāṇa or you do not even touch it, because to prove that it is not a pramāṇa, there is no pramāṇa.

The validity of an independent means of knowledge is not proved by another means of knowledge. The eyes see and the ears hear. Only ears have to prove whether they hear or not. Eyes have no access to prove whether the ears hear or not. Similarly whether Vedānta works or not, only Vedānta has to prove, not anything else.
Therefore looking upon Vedānta as a pramāṇa puts you in a frame of mind which is called śraddhā. By this śraddhā one gains the knowledge that ātmā is Brahman, the limitless. That is why the Bhagavad Gita, says, śraddhāvān labhate jñānaṁ - the one who has śraddhā gains the knowledge.

Some people may say, " I don't have enough sraddha in the sastra. ' It 's okay. We don't want to judge ourselves on that basis. As long as one has working 'trust pending understanding' in the śāstra, it is enough, to begin with. If one has this approach, then it works. Śāstra is a pramāṇa, in the form of words. It is means of knowledge. Words can talk about jāti, species; guṇa, attribute; sambandha, relation and kriyā, action. Please refer to details about the sphere of words in post 25 and word 24. पुरुषोत्तमः. Īśvara is not just another being who can just be described by words. No word can do justice, hence 1000 ways of looking at Ishvara through this Visnu sahasranama start to contribute to the understanding.

When we say Īśvara is aprameya, it does not mean that He cannot be understood even through the sastra; then, the śāstra would become useless. Here, aprameya means that it is pramāṇa-aviṣaya, not available for objectification by other pramāṇa, as in the case of other objects. Objectification makes something remote. But Isvara is not remote, sitting in a corner. Because of this understanding, we banish him to a corner and behave as if Isvara is dead in our life and in our situations.

But, the prakāśa-svarūpa, the self-revealing consciousness that lights up everything, need not be revealed by any pramāṇa, cannot be revealed either. That I exist is self evident. I cannot figure out that I exist, either by seeing myself in the mirror (perception) or concluding that 'I am married and therefore I infer I exist '(inference) or any other means of knowledge. About 'What I am' I can come to many conclusions. That 'I am' is clearly known, even by a baby who has not yet developed language.

Then, how does the śāstra work as a pramāṇa, as a means of knowledge? The śāstra says, that the essential nature of Īśvara is 'satyam jñānam anantam' and that is the Parātmā. The words are handled in a unique way such that the meaning stays while the word goes away. The reality of Īśvara is aprameya, not an object of any means of knowledge because it is nirguṇa, without attributes and nirākāra, without a form, but the basis for all forms. The śāstra works as a pramāṇa by implication, by negating all that it is not, but which has been superimposed wrongly due to ignorance.

47. Hṛṣīkeśaḥ

हृषीकेशः

The Lord of the senses.

The svarūpa of Bhagavān is presented here as the pratyagātmā, the inner self. Hṛṣīka means the sense organs. As the self, the kṣetrajña, He is Īśa, the Lord of the senses. It is because of His blessings that each sense organ is able to function in a specific way and so too the mind.
If one has a problem with the vision of the eye, then, generally one goes to an ophthalmologist. How can we trust this specialist if he has not seen the eyes of atleast 1 billion people in the world? He need not see the eyes of 1 billion people because the principles governing eyesight, the norms for conditions of the retina, cornea, range of vision are principles he has studied in ophthalmology. Opthalmology is a science and a peek into the laws of Isvara governing the visual order of sight. That the eyes – just a few cms wide and a few cms in length can see huge panoramas, can see colors that other animals cannot see, are protected by continuous natural moisturisation and blinking are just wonders. And we are only talking about the eyes here!
The taste buds of the tongue, designated for different tastes, have a distinct place on the small section of the tongue. So when we taste something and say the salt is not enough or it is too much, we are able to say it because of our taste buds, which don't create confusion. While talking, the tongue does its job. Each of these sense organs functions in a particular way because of the Lord in the form of the order.

All the sense organs and the laws that govern them are all under His vaśa, control. Therefore, as the ātmā of everyone, He is called Hṛṣīkeśa.

Or keśa means rays. The cool rays of the moon make you sleep and those of the sun wake you up and engage you in various activities. It is Bhagavān, who in the form of the keśa, rays of the sun and the moon, makes everyone hṛṣṭa, happy. Therefore, He is called Hṛṣīkeśa.

48. Padmanābhaḥ (also words 196, 346)

पद्मनाभः

The one who has a lotus in His navel.

This is a samasa, a compound word in Sanskrit indicating a being with certain charactersitcs. Padmanābha is one who has a padma, a lotus in His nābhi, navel. Brahman which is satyam jñānam anantam, itself free from birth, is the nābhī, the navel, that is, the cause of this entire jagat. From this navel, the lotus blooms forth in the form of the world.

Brahmāji, the creator, is depicted as being seated in the padma, lotus arising out of the navel of Lord Viṣṇu. Here, Lord Viṣṇu is none other than Parameśvara and is presented as the total. The Lord himself becomes the creator called Brahmāji, the sustainer called Viṣṇu or the withdrawer called Rudra. We understand that each is a standpoint referring to a particular function.

Brahmāji creates the whole world. The entire world which is created is an opened lotus. The world is in the navel of Parameśvara, the sadātmā of Parameśvara, as the blossomed lotus.

Brahmāji has the four Vedas as his four heads. Being the creator there should be knowledge with him and therefore his consort is Sarasvatī who is knowledge. The Lord is the creator of the creator Brahmāji also.

Nābhi, navel is the axle, the cause. Creation implies motion, change. It is only the wheel that moves. The axle remains constant. It does not move. It is kūṭastha. Therefore, this entire lotus is the created jagat with Brahmāji. Brahmāji is included in this lotus. The adhiṣṭhāna, the truth, of everything is Brahman and itself does not have another adhiṣṭhāna.

49. Amaraprabhuḥ

अमरप्रभु:

The Lord of the devas.

The devas, who are the citizens of svarga are called amaras, because they are maraṇa-rahita, do not age. Because of a lot of punya, they are exalted beings. Please note that the word used is svarga which is strictly not the 'heaven' of popular understanding. Other religions present heaven as eternal, from where there is no return.

Svarga as described in our shastra, is a temporary place of much enjoyment, a happy place where there are no core issues because one has a celestial body and also a place where there are no mosquitoes. If there is enjoyment, then music and dance cannot be far behind. There is always music and dance. Lord Death does not enter there. The devas live there for a very long time. Once the punya runs out, very similar to the credit card bill exceeding the credit limit, the being will return to another loka, another field of experience. This amaratva, immortality for the devas is only an āpekṣika-amaratva, a relative immortality.

The human body, while being one composite whole, has different organs with different functions. The eye has a different function as compared to the pancreas. The ear has quite another function to perform as compared to the alimentary canal. Each function of each organ can be likened to a being, the one in charge, a deva. As He is the Lord of all, He is the Lord of the devas also.

50. Viśvakarmā

विश्वकर्मा

The creator of the universe.

Viśva means sarva. The one, to whom all actions belong, is Viśva-karmā. Whatever karma is done by anyone, be it the devas or human beings, whether in India, Africa - anywhere in the world, all those karmas are His alone, because all are included in Him. Does that mean that one can get away with especially gruesome karma in a court of law, and attribute it to the Lord? Certainly not. Given free will of a person, it is not absolute, and the karma performed is still in a certain frame of reference. The person is responsible for his actions – good, bad or ugly. However, the Lord, in the form of the various orders, makes a simple action like speaking a word possible.

This whole world, manifest and unmanifest is His accomplishment; hence, He is Viśva karmā. Viśva can also be taken to mean big. The Lord's karmā is not one thing, but the entire world and so His actions are endless. Parameśvara is the sarva-sṛṣṭi-kartā, the creator of everything, sarva-sthiti-kartā, the sustainer of everything and sarva-saṃhāra-kartā, the withdrawer of everything. Knowing this, the limitations we place on the Lord stand negated.

Every person's finger print is unique and hence biometric identification is possible. 700,000,000 + possibilities account for minor changes in the finger print, all in the area of an inch. Mind boggling, is n't it? And here we are talking about 7 billion people in this world alone. Vicitra-nirmāṇa-śaktimattvāt vā viśvakarmā–He is Viśva-karmā, because He has this wonderful capacity to create this vicitra-jagat, the world with varieties of things. Everything is so orderly and purposeful.

Viśvakarmā is mentioned in the Purāṇas, as the deva-silpi, the architect of the heavens and of great fame. The Lord, being the architect of this entire viśva, is called Viśvakarmā, viśvakarma-sādṛśyāt, because He is like the heavenly architect Viśvakarmā. Heavenly architect means the house is not ordinary. The house has fourteen floors made of the fourteen worlds – fourteen spheres of experience, seven up and seven down.

51. Manuḥ

मनुः

The only thinker.

One who thinks is Manu. Bhagavān is the only thinker, as the antaryāmī in all, as the ātma-caitanya. According to our human experience, a thinker implies a mind. Here the cosmic or total mind is implied. That which makes thought and flow of thoughts possible in beings, is also Manu. 'Nānyo 'to' sti mantā–There is no thinker other than Him' (Bṛ.Up.3.7.23).

Manu is one of the prajāpatis. In every kalpa, cycle of creation, there are various Manus who talk about the life-style to be followed by people to gain material welfare and mokṣa. It is Īṣvara alone who functions through Manu, the prajāpati. The glory of Manu is the glory of Bhagavān and therefore, He is Manu.

Manu also means a mantra. A mantra protects. It 's not just a set of sounds. So, the Lord alone is the mantra and the very svarūpa of the mantra.

52. Tvaṣṭā

त्वष्टा

The one who dissolves everything.

This word is derived from the verbal root 'tvaks' meaning to make thin, to cut down. As the one, who brings about kṣaya to everything, who dissipates everything at the time of dissolution, the Lord is called Tvaṣṭā. He disintegrates, destroys, dissolves and takes into himself everything.

In creation there is a krama, an order and in dissolution, there is a vyutkrama, that is, the krama is reversed. From a very gross state everything is reduced to a lesser gross state, then into a subtle state and then into an unmanifest state. So the one, who is able to do this is called Tvaṣṭā.

53. Sthaviṣṭhaḥ (436)

स्थविष्ठः

The stoutest.

The Lord is Sthaviṣṭha, the stoutest because He is the virāt, in the form of the entire cosmos. When we look at the ocean, we are struck by its vastness. When we look at the sky, during the day, again we are amazed by how expansive it is. Certainly seems to be bigger than where the eyes or even the telescope reach. Since the earth, the skies, the mountains, the oceans and so on, are included in Him, there can be nothing stouter than Him.

54. Sthaviro Dhruvaḥ

स्थविरो ध्रुवः

The ancient and unchanging.

We refer to monuments as ancient if they are a few hundred years old. In jest we may refer to people as ancient, if they don't have the same tastes that we have. People who have a life span of more than 80 years old, may be called old and ancient. But, they change and age with time and finally die; they are anitya.

Sthavira means purāṇa, ancient. It also means the oldest. From the human standpoint, the Lord is the most ancient and oldest, because there is none more ancient than Him. But anything that is old is subject to decline and finally death. To offset the limitation of the word sthavirah, the word dhruvaḥ is used along with it. The words Sthavira and Dhruva together go as one name made up of an adjective and a noun.

Bhagavān, though the most ancient, does not age or change or die nor needs cosmetic surgery. Therefore, He is Dhruva, unchanging and ever the same. As He was before, He is even now; He is always the same. He is sat-cit-ānanda-pūrna-svarūpa, ever full. Therefore, Sthavira here indicates, timelessness.

Old age is necessary, otherwise there will be no death and everyone will remain here on earth. Then, there will not be any place for those who come in. The Lord is tvaṣṭā, is the clearing agent, a word referring to a function. Function implies action. At the same time He is Dhruva, Himself does not undergo any change.

55. Agrāhyaḥ

अग्राह्यः

The one beyond grasp.

The Lord is not grasped by the organs of action (Karmendriyaiḥ na gṛhyate iti agrāhyaḥ). He is never available for grahaṇa, grasping by any organ of action, be it the hands or legs. This nāma

can be looked at from the standpoint of Īśvara as saguṇa-brahma, as the creator. The sarvajñatva of Īśvara is agrāhya, cannot be grasped let alone the limited capacity of the human mind which has vast potential. There are two types of avidya that we have, mūla-avidyā, an ignorance with reference to the nature of one's ātmā and tūla-avidyā, ignorance of things other than ourselves such as electronics and so on. The Lord does not have both these types of avidyā. That Īśvara has no mūla-avidyā, self-ignorance, can be understood. But His sarvajñatva, the all-knowing nature, is agrāhya, difficult to understand.

We may know about the names and presence of many things in this universe. But we do not know all the aspects of those things. And there may be many, many more things, the presence of which, we may not even be aware of. Thus, no one can say what the word 'all' comprises of. How can we, then, understand what the all-knowingness of Īśvara is? Similarly, His sarvaśaktimatva, all-powerful nature is also agrāhya. We do not know what is limitless śakti, because the vast expanse of the jagat, with its expanding space, is not conceivable at all to the human mind.

Thus from the standpoint of our limited knowledge and limited power and skills, it is absolutely impossible to understand the sarvajñatva and the sarva-saktimatva of Īśvara. It is agrāhya, difficult to grasp by the mind, and difficult to grasp by words.

Previously, The Lord was spoken of as aprameya, as one who cannot be objectified by any pramāṇa, any means of knowledge. Words like puṇya cannot be objectified even by anumāna, inference and can be known only through the words of the śāstra. Some people say they don't believe in the shastra but believe in punya and papa. Whether they like it or not, this understanding comes only from the shastra - Puṇya is the result of good actions like prayer, reaching out actions and so on. Puṇya cannot be arrived at by inference or perception, but it can be known through śabda, the words.

That which is available as the meaning of a word is also grāhya. Śāstra describes puṇya as the adṛṣṭa, the unseen karma-phala that translates itself into pleasant situations. It is like the tree in a seed. The tree that is in an unmanifest state in a seed is not grāhya in the sense it is not available for direct perception. But, when it manifests later as a tree, it is grāhya, can be grasped. So too, puṇya though adṛṣṭa is grāhya, can be grasped when manifest as a result.

The Lord, in His essential nature as nirguṇa-brahma cannot be objectified by perception, inference or presumption. It is said, that He cannot be grasped even by the organ of speech, or words. The Taittirīyopanisad says, 'yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha–from where the words retreat along with the mind, not having reached it' (2.9). Why? Because words operate only with reference to jāti, guṇa, kriyā and sambandha.

Maybe the Lord can be known through unknown words such as ncsfheofwgfnkj. No. So then, known words are handled in an extraordinary way by a guru so that the Lord is revealed.

Suppose Devdutta, the corporate professional is introduced by a common friend from school, Yajnadutta to Somadutta who does not recognise him. Yajnadutta says to Somadutta, "That Devdutta is this Devdutta." The common friend, in his recognition gives Devdutta a hug. What

suddenly happened? The common friend is referring to one being only; When he says 'that' devdutta, he means the young school boy in shorts. By 'This' Devdutta, he means this corporate professional who is dressed as one. What is common in 'this' appearance and 'that' appearance is a single being, which was understood by implication. This and that were the direct words, but what was meant by this and that, was a single conscious being.

The essential nature of Parameśvara is understood as only one limitless consciousness and limitlessness is not an attribute. The śabda-vācya, or the immediate meaning of words cannot reveal the limitless consciousness. Therefore, it is only the śabda-lakṣya, the implied meaning of words, which can reveal it. When the śāstra says that the limitless consciousness is not available for words, it only means, that it is not the immediate meaning, but the implied meaning of the words. It is very much available as the ātmā.

The Lord was spoken of as aprameya and here, He is said to be agrāhya. As sat-cit-ānanda-advaya-brahma, it is the svarūpa of yourself also and hence, it is not available as an object of your understanding.

56. Śāśvataḥ

शाश्वतः

The ever existent.

He is Śāśvatah, because śaśvat means, he exists always, in all the three periods of time. The Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad talks of Him as śāśvataṃ śivam acyutam' (13.1). Īśvara in His saguṇa aspect also is Śāśvata, because He is manifest in the form of the world. Then Īśvara with the world goes into an unmanifest state. So, Īśvara is there when the world is resolved into an unmanifest state and He is also there when the world is manifest.

So what if the Lord is ever existent? We look into this, with a verse in the Gita where Bhagavan teaches the atma, I to be ever existent. A lot of our fears stem from a sense of loss. The loss of a favourite toy for a 5 year old child is as real and painful as the loss of a friend for a 20 year old or the loss of one's teeth for a 70 year old. Many people say, " I am not afraid of death but I am afraid of losing loved ones. I am afraid of losing my health or a particular person." All fears based on a sense of loss, are centred on the mind-body-sense complex as they are taken to be real. Please note the use of the word, sense of loss, not real loss. I use the word sense of loss because it is experienced subjectively, not universally. Someone may be happy to lose one 's partner following a difficult marriage as he wants to get married to another person. But the one who was subject to divorce proceedings, may experience a sense of loss. So sense of loss is subjective.

The sense of loss and fear is also highlighted by Bhaja Govindam, a beautiful text that helps to convert a samsāri into a mumukshu. In one of the verses, Sankaracharya, speaks about how things change one after the other – spring into summer, day into night and so on. Time has its play but the winds of desire continue to plague the person who has not yet discerned the limitations of his pursuits. The samsari, identified as he is, with the mind-body continues to be affected and tossed about by different circumstances and all because of the play of time. And the important thing, is, that he does not want to be affected.

We saw earlier that satyam is that absolute reality which cannot be negated, which always is. The physical body is subject to changes- birth, existence, growth, modification, decline and death. Due to lack of our understanding, the physical body is taken to me. The viveka required here is that the body is subject to change, the atma is not subject to any change in any way. Body is Atma. Atma is not the body.

In the Gita, 2.20, Bhagāvān says that the atma is never born, nor does it die. It is not that, having been, it ceases to exist again. The Atma is unborn (ajaḥ), eternal (nitya), undergoes no change whatsoever (śāśvataḥ) and is ever new (purāṇaḥ). When the body is destroyed Atma, I is not destroyed. This being the goal for our understanding, we prepare ourselves through a life style of karma yoga. Karma can be yoga only if Ishvara and his reality is understood.
From the standpoint of Īśvara, He is Śāsvata, eternal, and from the standpoint of His essential nature as saccidānanda-brahma also, He is Śāsvata, timeless.

57. Kṛṣṇaḥ (also word 550)
कृष्णः

i. The ever joyous. ii. The one of blue-black colour.

Lord Viṣṇu is called Kṛṣṇa because He is always sat-ānanda-ātmaka, of the nature of both existence and joy. The verbal root 'kṛṣ' means sattā, existence. 'Ṇa' means ānanda. In other words He is sat-cit-ānanda-svabhāva.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is an avatāra of Viṣṇu. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is presented as one who is always happy, unperturbed and always dancing to music. He is the one, who ākarsati, attracts, everyone to Himself. What is it that attracts everyone, that draws everyone? Whatever makes one acceptable to oneself, in the presence of whom one feels alright, that thing or person becomes the object of attraction.

The story of Śrī Kṛṣṇa 's life is inspiring. Even before he took on a human form, there were attempts to kill him and much through his childhood, the attempts to kill him by none other than his Uncle Kamsa continued. He grew up with his foster mother and faced many difficulties. No core issues.

In the Gita dhyana sloka, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is referred to as the jagad-guru, the teacher of the world. A teacher of the world can be a teacher of the world because he has a universal message. Without this message, the search of one 's life cannot come to an end.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa was Arjuna's buddy. Yet, when Arjuna discovered the student in him and asked Kṛṣṇa to teach him, Krsna taught him and through Arjuna, us. Kṛṣṇa did not refuse him nor did he promise to teach him once the battle was over. He did not ask Arjuna to believe him nor gave him a technique nor gave him advice on war strategy. In the midst of the battlefield, amidst the sounds of kettledrums, war trumpets etc, Kṛṣṇa taught Arjuna brahmavidya and yoga shastra. When one lives a life of dharma, there will be no conflict and hence there will be more ānanda. But the ultimate source of ānanda is Kṛṣṇa, because it is the svarūpa of the Lord and the svarūpa of oneself.

The uniqueness of our culture is that one can relate to the Lord in any way one is comfortable. Many women worship Krsna in his child form while there are others who relate to his form as a lover. There is no blasphemy involved. Any form of bhakti, devotion draws you closer. When bhakti fulfills its purpose in the recognition of oneness, there is no separation anymore.

Kṛṣṇa-varṇātmakatvāt–Kṛṣṇa means blue-black and Lord Viṣṇu is called Kṛṣṇa because of the colour. This form is given for upāsana. In the Mahābhārat, Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, 'I am so called because my colour is kṛṣṇa, blue black' (MB.Śān.342.79).

58. Lohitākṣaḥ

लोहिताक्षः

The red-eyed.

He is Lohitākṣa because His eyes are lohita, reddish in colour. The Taittirīya-āraṇyaka says, 'sa mā vṛṣabho lohitaākṣaḥ sūryo vipascin-manasā punātu–May the Lord as the red-eyed Sun protect me' (4.42).

The Lord is manifest as our solar system also and hence, the rising sun and the rising moon, which are red in color. The idea is, be it night or day, the eyes of the Lord are always seen in the form of either the sun or the moon. The sun and the moon are nothing but the manifestation of the Lord. We meditate on the Lord who has the sun and the moon as His eyes. This is for the purpose of upāsanā.

59. Pratardanaḥ

प्रतर्दनः

The destroyer.

At the time of dissolution, He completely resolves the entire jagat without leaving any trace of its existence. Hence, He is known as Pratardana. In fact, He does not destroy, but resolves everything into Himself. It is a state like samādhi. All the three, jñātṛ, jñeya and jñāna–knower, known and knowledge, all that is projected, is resolved into Him.

Śiva is presented in that particular form of samādhi. That Śiva is Viṣṇu alone. Only functionally there is a difference in the form of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmāji and so on. All of them are Viṣṇu alone.

60. Prabhūtaḥ

प्रभूताः

The one abundantly endowed (with special qualities).

He is Prabhūta because He is abundantly endowed with special qualities in absolute measure. You will notice that we use the word Bhagavan or Ishvara more than the word God. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, there is a beautiful verse explaining the six fold virtues, bhaga of Bhagavan.
The one who has bhaga is Bhagavān just as the one who has dhan, wealth is dhanavān. These six fold virtues are jnāna, all knowledge; vairāgya, total dispassion; the capacity to create, sustain and resolve, vīrya; absolute fame, yaśas; all wealth, śrī; and over lordship, aiśvarya.

To have all knowledge, jnāna is to be free from all ignorance, Hence the being does not require a mind, perception or a means of knowledge with which to know, Knowledge at some time, is preceded by ignorance in a human mind. This is not required for Bhagavān All the sciences that we study are just a peek into the knowledge that is Bhagavān.

The one who has absolute dispassion, vairāgya has no longing, no insecurity as he or she is always full. Vīrya is absolute power or sakti to create, sustain and resolve.

Absolute fame, yaśas is all fame, including my own or anybody else's. One who speaks eloquently may gain some fame, but that is just a ray of glory of the Lord. To sustain the jagat, many resources are required. Any wealth and resources that anyone may have (including all the people on the Forbes list of the richest people all these years) really is a miniscule fraction of Bhagavān 's wealth and we are only trustees. If the wealth really belonged to us, we would take it with us even after death.

Finally, the one who is not supervised, ruled, coached or mentored by anyone, not subject to the laws of anyone, has aiśvarya, over lordship. We, as individuals, function according to the laws of our place, we cannot go against them. Even an engineer who is responsible for executing a project cannot touch a live wire without facing consequences. In fact, it is because of the laws that electricity was generated to be used in the first place. But it cannot be abused. Thus, the one who is not subject to the laws of anyone is Bhagavān.

We are naturally drawn to people who have qualities that we admire, desire and respect. Infact, we find that the more we discover their sterling qualities, our affection and fondness for these people grows. In many cases, dwelling on these desirable qualities of the person makes us love them. And if we are able to relate to these people, depend on them and know that we are totally acceptable in their eyes and they are responsible for our sustenance, then things start to change. In our recognition we are transformed. When we surrender to an altar that we understand as Bhagavān, we are altered.

61. Trikakubdhāma

त्रिककुब्धाम

The abode of the three regions.

Some of us feel at home, at home. Some of us feel at home with people we are close to. This feeling 'at home' translates into being ourselves, feeling safe, protected and powerful. We recognise that we are totally acceptable. No need for masks. How much nicer it would be if we could feel at home anywhere we are? Being at home is recognizing that wherever I am, whatever I do, whoever I relate to, I am always in the presence of Īśvara. There is never a time or place that I am without Īśvara 's presence. If this is not in my awareness, I bring it to my awareness. That's it. I do not need to be judgmental any which way.

Trikakubdhāma is one word to reveal the Lord. Kakub means a direction or region. He is the dhāma, the abode of the three kakubs, the regions that are ūrdhva–above, adhaḥ–below and

madhya–in the middle. Not just present in a temple or puja corner, the Lord is all-pervasive. Dhāma also means support. Thus, He is also the support of all the three regions.

The three regions are the three spheres of experiences, that is, the higher or celestial experiences, the lower or animal experiences and the middle or human experiences. All these possible experiences are within Īśvara alone, because there can be no experience outside Īśvara.

62. Pavitram

पवित्रं

The one who purifies.

Pavitra is that which purifies. 'Pū' is the root and 'itra' is the suffix. Perhaps the word, 'pure' comes from the Sanskrit root.

In our shastra, we don't have the concept of a sinner at all. So called bad thoughts don't make a bad person. In the Gita, Bhagavan refers to Arjuna as anagha, the one who is sinless, also a word to reveal the Atma. By whom a person gets free from all pāpa that is pavitra. By remembering whom or by worshipping and relating to whom, people are freed from pāpa and become pavitra, By these and reaching out actions, the person gains punya. Īśvara is called Pavitra. What he is, is what he does!

The mantra that purifies you is also pavitra. Some scientific experiments suggest that the waters in which mantras are chanted have a different chemical composition as compared to waters where mantras are not chanted. The body composition largely being water, how much more effect will a mantra have on the person, if chanted correctly!

One who purifies, that is, a ṛṣi or a devatā can also be Pavitra. Here it is the devatā because we are talking about Īśvara. So, Lord Visnu is called Pavitra.

How does the Lord purify? Does the thought purify or does Īśvara purify? The thought by itself does not do anything. The thought only comes and goes, but it is only Īśvara who purifies. It is the thought of Īśvara alone that purifies, that frees me from the burden of my desires and aversions. My desires and aversions contribute to the impurity of subjectivity because of which I can't see what is. When I can't see what is, about myself, my situations, people around me, I am not in touch with reality. The Lord is the means of purification is called Pavitra.

63. Maṅgalaṃ param

मङ्गलं परम्

The ultimate auspiciousness.

There are many cultural practices in India which are considered to invoke auspiciousness such as drawing a rangoli at the doorstep, tying mango leaves at the door etc etc. Auspiciousness or mangalam is generally associated with wealth, property and family, in line with most people's priorities. Īśvara is in the form of the ultimate auspiciousness, which cannot be improved by anything. As Maṅgalaṃ, Īśvara is auspicious in every place, every situation and every time.

We consider certain times inauspicious because we find it difficult to see Īśvara‘s presence. We find it difficult because we want, what we want, when we want and how we want! And this disposition is justified by being an individual, a personality, a unique person. We do not acknowledge that while it is a privilege to desire, the results of our efforts, projects, ventures are subject to the order of Īśvara.

The whole striving towards individuality, ‘my choice’, ‘my voice’ is an attempt to feeling significant because I find myself to be insignificant, despite everything. Smaraṇa of Īśvara makes one pure. By merely remembering Him, all auspiciousness flows in and all obstacles go away.Then, there is less of me and more of Īśvara.

The Viṣṇupurāṇa has a sloka highlighting this. Yat–that, which, smṛti mātreṇa–be merely remembering (it), puṃsām aśubhāni nirācaṣṭe–removes all aśubha, obstacles of the people and śubha-santatiṃ tanoti–increases the flow of śubha, auspiciousness, tat brahma maṅgalaṃ viduḥ–they know that Brahman is the auspicious. All obstacles for the pursuit of knowledge are aśubha. Here, Parameśvara, who is jagat-kāraṇa is called Brahma. Those who know the śāstra know Him to be so.

Why mangalam param? While we may consider auspiciousness to be conditional, Brahman is known as paraṃ maṅgalam, that which is the ultimate maṅgala, auspiciousness, and that is mokṣa. The knowledge of Parameśvara releases one from saṃsāra, by discovering one’s nature as fulfillment in all places, in all situations and at all times.

Or, He is maṅgala due to His kalyāṇarūpa, auspicious form, and He is para, being superior to all beings. The two words together constitute one name.

64. Īśānaḥ
ईशानः
The ruler of all beings.

He is Īśāna, because He is the ruler of all the beings. Īśvara is the one who has the lordship. Every being is under His niyati, law. The word ‘ruler’ may bring up the notion of God being a dictator imposing his rules on poor, helpless subjects. Those who live in fear in most situations, and not courage, choose to conceptualise God as a dictator. That ‘s not what is meant here. These rules or laws are principles governing the different spheres of the jagat. Free will of the individual is also a part of the laws of Īśvara.

Citizens of a country feel supported when they are being led by a strong, decisive leader who establishes supportive policies. The employees of a company are motivated and encouraged by an able CEO because of respect for his/her qualifications and work practices.
Any modern day army battalion has so much trust in their leadership that they are willing to give up their lives for the sake of their country. As the famous quote goes, “ Ask not what your country can do, ask what you can do for the country’. These army personnel embody their willingness to do whatever it takes, including giving up their lives, if required. Their leadership inspires so much trust in them.

Leadership of the world is obviously no ordinary job and Īśvara is the one who has all the qualifications and rules all beings in the form of the order that sustains them.

65. Prāṇadaḥ (also words 321, 408, 956)

प्राणदः

i. The one who gives prana.
ii. The one who cuts prana.

There is no equivalent for the word Prāṇa in English. The word includes the understanding of breath, energy and also that which is life giving and life sustaining. Prāṇa is a subtle form of Vayu, one of the five elements that are the building block of this manifestation. The Lord is prāṇada, because He gives prāṇa; He makes life possible.

As life giving breath and energy, prāṇa is five fold, manifests in five different ways in the body. Prāṇa lends shakti to the body and enlivens its functions through: a. Prāṇa - Respiratory system (inhalation and exhalation), b. Apāna – evacuating system (waste removal), c. Vyāna – circulating system which circulates oxygen, d. Samāna – digestive system which allows digestion and assimilation of nutrients and e. Udāna- reversing system which operates at the time of death, when the breath is reversed and goes out permanently. The word Prāṇa refers to the composite whole of these five fold manifestations and sometimes refers only to the inhalation and exhalation. It depends on the context in which the word Prāṇa is used.

Every time breathing takes place, my namaskars to Bhagavān. Please note, I did not say, Every time I breathe because breathing is involuntary. Luckily Bhagavān made this involuntary. Imagine what would have happened if we had to remember to breathe, like other actions in life. Swamini Tattvavidyananda ji, a fine Vedanta teacher and a dear friend, has a profound byline 'Breathing in and out, namaḥ'. One lives in the appreciation and recognition of Bhagavān every moment.

The Taittirīyopanisad says. 'ko hyeva anyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt–if this ātmā were not there, who would live and who would breathe?' (2.7). He gives sattā and sphūrti to all beings as Īśvara, Between breathing in and breathing out, there is every possibility of the prāṇa not coming back. Therefore, Īśvara is the Prāṇada, the giver of breath and life.

Or else He is so called because He cuts away the prāṇa, detaches the life of a person in the form of kāla, when the enjoined life time of the person is over. He is thus known also because prāṇān dāti, He destroys the śakti of the indriyas, sense organs whose activity indicates the presence of prāṇa.

He has this name also because prāṇān dāyati, śodhayati–He purifies and brightens the activities of the indriyas. Anyone who has practiced prānāyāma can testify to this.
Thus, the Lord is the giver and also the taker of prāṇa, life.

66. Prāṇaḥ (also words 320, 407)

प्राणः

The individual self or the limitless self.

As Prāṇada, He gives prāṇa to the jīva. Who is the jīva? Jīva is also prāṇa, because prāṇiti, he does the activity of breathing and the body becomes active.

In one of the Santi mantras, this occurs – Namaste vayo, tvameva pratyaksham brahmasi, my salutations to Vayu, you indeed are Brahman. Here the word pratyaksham is an indication of direct recognition as well as vayu being directly perceived by the sense of touch. He is in the form of the order by which breathing in and breathing out happens. There is a certain order at work herē. The prāṇa that goes out comes back again. Suppose the prāṇa had a mind of its own and liked to hangout in an athlete's lungs because it is more roomy or the prana concluded that a smoker's lungs were to be avoided.

The jīva, that is, vyaṣṭi-prāṇa manifesting in the individual body while Hiraṇyagarbha is the samaṣṭi- prāṇa, that is, the total prāṇa. Paramātmā is the material cause and hence He is the prāṇa, the suble body itself.

He is the prāṇada, the one who gives prāṇa and He is also the Prāṇa, both at the individual and total level. He is also prāṇasya prāṇaḥ – the one because of whom the prāṇa works (Ke.Up.1.2).

67. Jyeṣṭhaḥ
ज्येष्ठः
The eldest.

Here the superlative is used. He is jyeṣṭha, vṛddhatama, that is, the oldest. How? Sarvasya kāraṇatvāt – because He is the cause of everything. As Prāṇa, that is, Hiraṇyagarbha, He is the eldest and there cannot be anything older than Him, because He is the cause of all. Hence, He is older than everything else.

68. Śreṣṭhaḥ
श्रेष्ठः
The most praise-worthy.

He is śreṣṭha, the most praise-worthy and the most exalted, the best. We find that national and international awards are constituted and bestowed on people in public life who have excelled in a sport or have contributed to society in significant ways. National awards like Bharat Ratna, Padmasri are given to people who are praise worthy and have significantly contributed to the country.

The Lord excels everyone in everything. All glories belong to Him. The Chāndogyopanisad praises Him as prāṇa, śreṣṭha and jyeṣṭha (5.1.1).

At this point, it is good to reflect on our status as a devotee. Related to my father, I am a son. Related to my employer, I am an employee. To relate to my father, I drop the role of employee when I come home (hopefully). To relate to my boss in the company, I drop the role of a son. Every day, we shift roles and at times we get stuck in the role because of the identity and sense of self worth that the role contributes.

When we relate to Bhagavān, is it a role? I am a devotee, an individual related to the total. To relate to Bhagavān, I do not drop another role. As an individual, I am fundamentally related to Bhagavān, whether I recognise it or not, whether I choose to acknowledge it or not. It is a basic, fundamental relationship based on being an individual, a basic person. A tree is related to the forest and the ecosystem of the forest sustains the tree.

Being a bhakta, a devotee is not being weak or impractical or emotionally driven. In fact being a devotee is essential to my wellbeing as it involves being practical. Being practical involves getting things done. Getting things done means recognising the forces that shape me, my situations and the influences in my life and that of others. I recognise that there is really nothing that is haphazard or random in my life. I recognise the order and I also recognise that there is nothing about me that is out of order. In recognition of the laws, I recognise that I am in order.
If there are things I wish to change about myself or about others,that is in order. If there are things I find difficult to accept and it seems I am resisting some facts about myself or others, that too is in order. Being in order means that every person has a background and can't help act in a particular way.

A beautiful serenity prayer to include in one 's daily schedule is – O Lord, give me the courage to change the things I can, accept the things I cannot and the wisdom to know the difference.

69. Prajāpatiḥ (also word 197)
प्रजापतिः
The Lord of all the beings.

He is the pati, the Lord of all the prajās, beings from Brahmāji to a blade of grass. This word includes being the Lord of individuals as well as exalted beings, devas. Knowing about one's source or connecting to a source is universally desired. The child, whose umbilical cord has been cut, is gifted with the ability to totally trust his/her caregivers and hence be connected. That gets him by, atleast for the first few years of life, until his ability to trust starts getting eroded.
This is because the child's parents, despite their best efforts, cannot be totally consistent with the child. As the child grows up, he keeps looking for someone to trust completely and a sense of connection. Trust in another person validates and makes him/her feel totally accepted, loved and significant.

This connectedness with situations and people grows over a period of time and varies from person to person. A certain sense of connectedness and sense of well being comes from finding more about one's cultural roots and one's family roots. When adopted children grow up, most of them don't feel at home, unless they have found or made contact with their biological parents. These adopted persons are seeking a connection with their parents or atleast seek to know more about them. In the discovery about the connection, their sense of isolation and alienation diminishes.

We discover our connection with Isvara, in what we do on a daily basis.
We discover our connection with Īśvara in who we are.
We discover our connection with Īśvara in the opportunities we have been given.

We discover our connection with Īśvara in the capacities we have been given.
We discover our connection with Īśvara as the order of actions and consequences.
The more we discover our sense of connection, we find that our sense of disconnectedness was notional and starts to wither away. Please note, I am not saying we make a connection with Īśvara, we discover a connection that IS.

Our victim identities that manifest as 'Why me?' also gets shaken, because of our recognition that whatever we experience – good, bad or ugly is a result of our own punya, papa. Continuing to blame myself or the people around me, will spiral me into cycles of despair. The only sane way out is to take responsibility for one's own life and actions and do what is to be done, while offering one's actions to Bhagavān. He is the Lord of all beings because He is the one who gives the fruits of action to the people.

70. Hiraṇyagarbhaḥ (also word 411)
हिरण्यगर्भः

The ātmā of Brahmājī.

Hiraṇyagarbha means Brahmājī and he is not other than Viṣṇu, not separate from Him. So, Brahmājī, Hiraṇyagarbha is Viṣṇu alone. Again He is the ātmā of Hiraṇyagarbha.

Or else hiraṇya means gold. Knowledge is likened to gold which is ever shining. It does need to be created in a laboratory. Only the impurities of gold need to be removed. Knowledge, when once gained always shines. Since gold is ever shining, hiraṇya is used to indicate knowledge. This whole universe is in the form of knowledge.

When one opens the seed of a banyan tree, none of the parts of the tree are visible in that tiny seed. Neither the branches nor the roots, nor the trunk nor the leaves. None of these forms is visible in the seed and if one had never seen a tree, it would be difficult to even imagine that the primary factor was a small seed. But, we do know that the seed is the only way, the only source from which the huge banyan tree will manifest. When we really look at it, the seed is pure knowledge of how to manifest plus a name and form. It is as if the software code gives rise to the hardware of the tree form. Likewise, the human zygote that has its coding to manifest into a foetus, grow with all organs of the body in the womb and then once delivered, the capacity of the baby to grow to a full fledged adult. The parents may be gynecologists but have no idea how this entire works. We take any other natural phenomenon and we find amazing intelligence at work.
So, the one in whom this hiraṇya, the world in the form of knowledge is placed like in a garbha, is called Hiraṇyagarbha.

Īśvara is the one who has all knowledge and hence is the ātmā, truth of even Hiraṇyagarbha.

71. Bhūgarbhaḥ
भूगर्भः
The one with the earth in His womb.

Following on from the previous word, Īśvara has the 'bhū,' the earth in His garbha, womb and hence He is called Bhūgarbha. The earth is the upalakṣaṇa for the cosmos; it indicates that the

whole cosmos is in Him – the universe, as we know it and all that remains to be discovered. The whole cosmos includes my body-mind-sense-complex (bmsc).

The word 'bhū,' can also mean existence, that is, reality. Therefore, He is Bhūgarbha, because He has the reality within Himself. What sets apart the study of Vedanta which is really an enquiry into oneself with the greatest mother of all, the Sruti, is the study of our reality or what we consider to be real. Reality or sat सत्यं is that which is not subject to negation, dismissal or any condition. This being so, anything that is subject to change, let's say the body-mind-sense-complex (bmsc), is not sat.

What ? But whatever I have done in life is because of this BMSC. True. All the experiences in life are because of this BMSC. True. All my accomplishments and my most fulfilling relationships are because of this BMSC. True, relatively speaking.

All of this existed in time and space which is conditional. So what? All of the experiences and fulfillments, achievements and relationships are not absolutely real. So? The despair, the anguish, the feeling insignificant is also not absolutely real. Just like in a dream, the devastation experienced seeing one 's family members shot dead is not real, after one wakes up in great relief from the dream/ nightmare. Infact, one will say " Thank God, it was not real."

When I wake up to the absolute reality of myself, this BMSC and all that it goes through acquires a dependent reality. We do not say the BMSC is false. It gets things done. We do not superimpose or imagine a value on it that does not exist. Neither do we say that we need to ignore the body nor do we say that we pamper the body with overindulgence. It 's not going to last anyway. It has been given by Īśvara and as a trustee, one takes care of it. How much should one take care of it? To the extent that it allows me to accomplish my pursuits, about which I need to be clear about.

All the realities, whether it is the subjective reality or transactional reality, are within Him, because they are nothing but the reality of Īśvara.

72. Mādhavaḥ

माधवः

The Lord of Śrī.

Mā is Śrī, that is, Laksmī. Dhava means pati, husband, So, Mādhava means Laksmīpati, the Lord of Laksmī or Śrī. Wealth and all resources, material cause is required for the manifestation to come about.

As He is the one to be known through the madhuvidyā talked about in the Chandogyopaniṣad (3.1), He is called Mādhava. It is sweet music to our ears, to be told that 'You are the ananda you seek and you were never bound, all your sorrow is not absolutely real.' Our families and friends may love us deeply, still nobody is going to say that you are the limitless!

In fact, after Arjuna asks to be taught, as it occurs in the Gīta, Bhagavān Kṛsna starts his teaching with a bang. 'You have no valid reason to grieve' No advice, no technique, no

emotional validation, no molly-codding, no convincing, no cajoling, no emotional manipulation, no tips on war strategy, just the plain truth! In the subsequent verses, he goes on to explain why so.

The Mahābhārata says that He is the one known through mauna, silence; dhyāna, meditation and yoga (MB.Ud. Pa.69.4).

73. Madhusūdanaḥ

मधुसूदन:

The destroyer of Madhu.

Lord Viṣṇu killed the asura, the demon, called Madhu and so He is called Madhūsudanah. This asura is supposed to be born from the ear of Lord Viṣṇu along with another asura called Kaiṭabha. Both of them stole the Vedas and caused a lot of problems and were finally killed by the Lord.

The ahaṅkāra is given the name madhu because it is madhuvat iṣṭa, very much liked like honey by an ignorant person. Here, we have to understand clearly that ahaṅkāra in Sanskrit refers to the I – sense. It is not pride as is often referred to in Indian regional languages. Perhaps there it may mean so, not in Sanskrit. This I-sense is understood differently by people depending on what they identify the I with.

Yesterday, while travelling, in the rains I saw a person whose umbrella got overturned because of strong winds. A few people who were standing nearby smiled and started laughing. It was a funny sight because he kept trying to turn around the umbrella, against the winds and naturally it was not happening. The person was very offended and started muttering at the ones who were laughing. Clearly, his I – sense, was identified with his overturned umbrella! He managed a weak smile, when I mentioned in passing," They are laughing at the umbrella, not you. See it, you too will feel like laughing"

Anything is loved by a person only because it is pleasing to oneself, is a true and bold statement by the Upanisad. That is why the ahaṅkāra, I , that is, oneself is the most loved object in the world. Even people who are involved in seva and various kinds of volunteerism work, do it because it matters to their happiness that there is less injustice in the world and the suffering of others is alleviated. Their I sense has expanded to not only include I, me, myself but also their community, neighbourhood, country as the case may be.

Tam ahaṅkāram sūdayati – He destroys the ahaṅkāra by revealing Himself or paves the way for the destruction of ahaṅkāra by providing the grace and hence is known as Madhusūdana. The moment people hear the word destruction, they think that spirituality is annihilation and nobody wants that. After spending his first time ever in a tent in a national reserve park in Africa, Michael Crichton, the author of Jurassic park, and many other successful books, writes in one of his book, " I realised that I had defined myself too narrowly." This is true not only of him but also of all of us.

The destruction of the ahaṅkāra that is spoken of, is destruction of notions and wrong conclusions of what the I is. Since the I was variously taken to be one 's body, mind, car, property or even one's umbrella, the truth is revealed by Madhusūdana. The I is nothing but Parameśvara and with His grace, the ahaṅkāra, the ego bubble (of what I have taken myself to be) bursts and one gets enlightened. This is an allegorical meaning.

74. Īśvaraḥ (also word 36)
ईश्वरः
The omnipotent.

Lord Viṣṇu is called Īśvara, sarva–śaktimattvāt, because He possesses infinite power. He is the one who is qualified to be called 'the Lord' because of His omnipotence, limitless power, because He has the overlordship.

For how long is this lordship? The Lord is always Īśvara by nature, possessing all power. His tenure does not change and he need not stand for election nor does his lordship depend on opinion polls. Because we are connected to him and are pervaded by this power, we are also endowed with iccha śakti – the power to desire, kriya śakti- the power to act and jñāna śakti-the power to know. What a privilege to have these powers, in every single situation!

Our response in every single situation is a combination of all these powers. It is our response that frees us from the limitations of every situation.

75. Vikramī (also word 909)
विक्रमी
The valiant.

The one who has vikrama, that is, valour, courage, and bravery is called Vikramī. All these qualities are required only by ordinary people. The Lord does not have any enemies to fight against. So why should He have Vikrama? Why should He be called Vikramī? This is only to show that wherever there is any valour, whoever has any courage, all these belong only to the Lord. Wherever there is any glory, that glory belongs to Īśvara alone.

One of my most moving patriotic moments was at Port Blair, Kaala Paani, seeing the pictures of the many unsung freedom fighters of our great nation. The courage and fearlessness on their faces despite having no material resources, no army, just their indomitable spirit for the country was just so deeply inspiring.

People think that courage is the absence of fear. That is not true. Courage is doing what needs to be done inspite of fear. Courage comes from focusing on what needs to be done and doing it. There is a soft drink commercial in India which shows some youth in an adventure sport and has a tag line as 'dar ke aage jeet hai.'(Victory lies ahead of fear). What is nice and true about this tagline is the acknowledgement of fear. Fear is a universal human emotion and we need not be afraid of it. The youth in the advertisement don't wallow in fear, build excuses and get paralysed by it. They are afraid. They have the support of their friends. Inspite of fear they go ahead and cross over to the other side.

In everyday situations, doing what needs to be done (facing an errant boss, confronting a partner on his/her behavior, standing upto unjust behavior amongst in-laws, disciplining and taking tough measures with teenage children, dispelling myths about Sanatana dharma, facing peer pressure among friends, resisting social pressure to have the latest gadgets, confronting emotional manipulation of a family member, deciding to adopt a child, being a sadhu etc) require and contribute to courage. Every single person has moments of courage in his or her life, which required the person to go against odds. One needs to recall this from time to time, to recognise one's own courage in situations, as that will pole vault one into further situations that require firm, decisive, courageous actions.

Recognising our own courage is recognisng Īśvara 's valiance. If Indra, the Lord of the devas, has some glory, he should not think 'I have this valour,' because, even that glory belongs to the Lord. The Kenopaniṣad mentions this story. There was a fight between the devas and the asuras and due to the grace of Īśvara, the devas won. They got all the praise and they became very proud since they had won the war. Īśvara then thought that the devas had to be taught a lesson. The Lord assumed a celestial form and appeared before the devas. Indra and the other devas did not know who this effulgent being was. So Agni went to find out about this effulgent form and he failed. Similarly all the other devas also tried to find out and failed. Finally Indra prayed and then in the place of the celestial being, Brahma-vidyā appeared as Uma. She taught Indra and the others that, 'He is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech and the life of life. Intelligent men, by knowing Him and the reality of this world, become immortal.'

Thus, Indra and the other devas, who are great Vikramīs, learnt that wherever there is Vikrama, it belongs only to Īśvara. So He is the God of all gods and all the glories belong only to Him. He is the real Vikramī. Recognsing this, keeps us objective and seeking refuge in the Vikramī helps us focus on what needs to be done.

Further, in His avatāras as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Paraśurāma, Balara¯ma and others, He manifests great Vikrama.

76. Dhanvī

धन्वी

The wielder of the bow.

Dhanvī is one who has a dhanus, a bow. It is not just possessing a bow but having the competence, skill and focus to wield the bow. In His avatāra as Śrī Rāma, He is famed as a great archer. Archery is not an ordinary thing. It calls for a lot of practice, precision in target, physical endurance, focus, concentration in the din of the battlefield while arrows and other mantra powered missiles are flying all over the place. Due to our dependence on electronic gadgets and the growing attitude of instant gratification in everything, we are losing the ability to apply dedicated focus in our pursuits.

For an archer, the bow is the main weapon that is a reflection of his competence, skill and attitude. For us, what are the main weapons? In our area of endeavour, there may be different skills and competences that are required. Overall, if we develop life competence, in being able to handle anything in life, picking up a skill based competence, be it handling tough projects or bringing up a child, is really no big deal. This competence does not come automatically. It requires a relaxed disposition, some exposure to the shastra and a recognition of Isvara.
That is why Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'I am (to be meditated upon as) Śrī Rāma among all those who wield weapons' (10.31). Although I may not be an archer, when I visualize Śrī Rāma with his bow, I invoke the focus, dedication and the will to practice, required in my pursuits.

Lord Viṣṇu is pictured as having the bow called Śārṅga and Śrī Rāma is shown with the bow called Kodaṇḍa.

Again, the glory of any dhanvī, any archer, anywhere is the glory of the Lord. Therefore, the archer's attitude should be, 'that I could do this, is the glory of Īśvara given to me.' Since any glory in any archer belongs only to the Lord, He alone is the Dhanvī.

77. Medhāvī

मेधावी

The one with the power of retention and recollection.

Medhāvī is one who has medhā. Medhā is more than memory; It is not like the amount of memory space on the hard disk of a laptop. Medhā is the capacity to analyze and grasp, retain and recollect not just a few things but many texts, many disciplines of knowledge.

The capacity to analyse and grasp go hand in hand. We know that the more one has looked at a situation from many perspectives, the learning/s from the situation is easy to grasp. To be able to retain the learning, requires a mind that can handle distractions, that does not run away with the first distracting thought. If one is able to retain the learning, it is easier to recollect too.

We are going through the teaching of the Viṣṇu sahasranāma, word by word. Each word is complete to reveal the Lord in and of itself and at the same time it is also connected to the other words. If we look at the last few words – they were Vikrami (the valiant), Dhanvī (the wielder of the bow) and Īśvara (the omnipotent). To be able to recognise the glory of the Lord, when I connect the dots, in this case the words, they reveal to me a certain understanding. I can connect the dots in a better way, if I am able to retain the words and their meaning. If I am not able to retain it, I have to look back at the previous posts or the file section. Because of retention of many of the words and meanings, there is a dertain depth in my understanding, making it easier for me to seek refuge in the Lord. Where things or situations are to be changed, I seek the courage to change, where things or situations cannot be changed, I seek to accept and the wisdom to know the difference. When I see what is, I stop resisting facts. And that makes a huge difference to my life! And this is only here, medhā refers to the capacity for many disciplines of knowledge.

If anyone has this capacity of medhā, that is also the glory of Parameśvara. In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, 'I am the intelligence of the intelligent' (7.10).

78. Vikramaḥ

विक्रमः

The one who measured the entire universe.

Being Viśva, He is all. Being Viṣṇu, He is all-pervasive, pervades all the three worlds.
Being Īśvara, He is all-powerful and hence the overlordship.

The Bhagvatam talks about the fifth avatara of Viṣṇu as Vāmana. King Mahābali, a valiant asura, was a generous king who engaged in severe austerities and conquered the whole world. Even though he became benevolent, he became pompous of his accomplishments. Indra and other devatas, thinking that the Asuras would conquer all the worlds went to Viṣṇu for help. Vāmana, in the guise of a short Brahmin, went to the king to request three paces of land, measured by his feet.

Mahābali, being a generous king consented, against the warning of his guru,Sukracharya. Vāmana then revealed his identity and grew and grew and enlarged to gigantic proportions to stride over the three worlds. He stepped from heaven to earth with the first step, from earth to the other world with the second. There was still one more step to take but no place that remained uncovered. King Mahabali unable to fulfill his promise, offered his head for the third, as he was not someone who went against his own word. Vāmana then placed his foot and pushed the king to Pātala and said that he would rule that world. Indra and the other devatas were now happy that their position was restored.

The Lord as Vāmana measured the entire world with His three steps. As the one who traversed the entire jagat, He is called Vikrama.

'Vi' means Garuda. Vinā kramati–also as one who moves around on Garuda, the king of the birds as His vehicle, He is known as Vikrama.

79. Kramaḥ

क्रमः

The cause of movement.

Lord Viṣṇu is the adhiṣṭhāna-devatā for the feet and hence movement. Thus He is the cause of movement and He is also the motion. Hence He is known as Krama. Again, being caitanya, consciousness which makes movement possible, He is the cause of movement. Every step we take is because of that capacity for the legs to walk, given by Viṣṇu.

Krama means order. He alone is in the form of krama, order that makes the movement of this world possible. In everything in the creation, there is a basic order and there is a sequence also. Every sequence is krama. There is a sequence of cause and effect, action and reaction and so on. There is a sequence in the subtlety of the five elements–ākāśa, vāyu, āgni, āpaḥ and prthivī. That each of them is subtler than the next is a krama. Even in cooking there is krama, order. In a ritual, there is krama, as to what has to be done first and what has to be done next and so on. Thus, there is an order. So the Lord is Krama, in the form of order.

80. Anuttamaḥ

अनुत्तमः

The one who has none superior to Him.

He has none uttama, superior to Him and hence He is Anuttama. He is the most exalted. He is unparalled. The Mahānārayaṇopaniṣad says, 'yasmāt paraṃ na aparam asti kiñcit – there is nothing superior or inferior to Him'(12).

As individuals, we swing between feelings of inferiority and feelings of superiority many moments of the day. An old Indian TV commercial advertising for a washing powder captures it well. The lady who sees another one in the market wearing bright, white clothes, says in Hindi, " bhalaa uski safedi meri safedi se badkar kaise (How come the whiteness (of her sari) is better than mine?). It was a popular commercial as people could identify with this usual tendency of comparion and the ensuing jealousy among individuals.

We assure ourselves that we are better than others because we feel inferior to others in terms of looks, possessions, quality of our relationships. Also as passive consumers of media messages, we can't but help feel inferior. Nothing is right with who we are, what we are and what we have. If we feel inferior, we are not comfortable with it. We struggle against it and we do it in many ways, by excelling in what we do (which is good for developing competence) and also by putting other people down.

What some have n't figured out, is this swinging between feeling inferior or superior is the universal human struggle to feel significant. Whatever we do, whatever we have is not enough to take care of the conclusion that ' I am insignificant or not good enough." All attempts to take care of this sense of insignificance, work for some time, in a limited way but don't sustain. We carry forward this orientation to even the learning of Vedanta, and say, 'my understanding is better than the other people' and lull ourselves into a false sense of contentment.

The sense of insignificance comes from our conclusions in different areas : at an emotional level, the conclusion is 'I am inadequate and incomplete as I am (apurnah)', at an intellectual level, the conclusion is 'I don't know enough' (ajnah), Our physical difficulties comes from the conclusion that I am this body which is matter and subject to death(martyah). So, what is the way out? I need to recognise that my difficulties at all these levels come from my conclusions that are not based on the absolute reality. These conclusions are based on the main conclusion, that I don't know who I am, . Since I don't know who I am, I have taken what I am associated with, to be me. The only lasting solution is self knowledge, discovering my reality to be the fulfillment, that I seek.

We admire and look upto people who are self assured and who are not affected by these feelings of comparison. Then, when we see that there is nothing else other than the manifestation of the Lord, can anything be superior to it? Can anything be inferior to it? Things start to shift for us.
In the Gītā, Arjuna tells Bhagavān, 'there is none sama, equal to you. Where is the question of having somebody being superior to you?' (11.43).

81. Durādharṣaḥ
दुराधर्षः
The unassailable.

The one who is unassailable, who cannot be defeated by the asuras or rākṣasas. This is the traditional meaning.

Having said that the Lord is almighty, why is it said that He cannot be over-powered? You cannot say He is almighty and then say that no one can defeat Him!

Īśvara is very much with us. Much the same sentiment is expressed by the boxer when he says to Īśvara, " You better be on my side in the boxing ring." But, His grace cannot be tapped without śraddhā and bhakti. Specifically, prayer attracts a result called punya, what helps to rearrange and reorganize the hidden variables that unfold every single day. This punya may neutralize some of the pāpa standing in a person's account, whereby the intensity of the unpleasant situation is reduced or one develops greater strength to deal with difficult situations or the fog of doubt clears and one sees the situation more clearly. The punya may also exceeed the pāpa that is unfolding on that particular day, such that one finds oneself hearing a lot of good news and has much progress in one's pursuits. The only way one knows about punya and pāpa is through the Veda and that requires śraddhā.

He cannot be won over by those who have asura like tendencies. The grace of Īśvara is like water which is very much available in the sub-soil, but still not available to the thirsty person. One has to tap that water by a special effort. Similarly the anugraha, grace of the Lord has to be tapped with śraddhā and bhakti. Lest it become a business transaction, (I 'll pray and you answer my prayers), bhakti changes the person because of the unique developing relationship with Īśvara. The angst and frustration with people around us, situations around us and even what we wanted to be and how we have turned out is an expression of resisting facts. When one sees the order pervading all of these, in terms of the psychological, genetic and karma laws of cause and effect, then there is greater clarity in how things are and what needs to be done.

If you have śraddhā and devotion you can tie Īśvara down; otherwise, He is invincible. A gopi tells Śrī Kṛṣṇa, 'hastaṃ nikṣipya yāto' si balāt kṛṣṇa kim abdhutam–what is the wonder if you wriggled out of my hold by sheer physical strength? Hrdayād yadi niryāsi gaṇayāmi te pauruṣam–I can reckon with your physical strength, if you can get out of my heart.'

Here tying down Īśvara is not trying to control or dominate but an expression of bhakti, in many ways, saying, ' My bhakti for you runs do deep that even you can't change it.' It is not Isvara 's responsibility to prove that he is worthy of bhakti. If I discover bhakti, it is good for me as I stop resisting facts in life and discover an abiding acceptance of what is.

82. Kṛtajñaḥ (532)
कृतज्ञः
The knower of all actions.

The Lord knows whatever is kṛta, done by all prāṇis, living beings, be it puṇya or pāpa, good or otherwise.(Prāṇināṃ kṛtaṃ jānāti iti krtajñaḥ).

Anything done is generally remembered with gratitude. Keeping in mind all the small and big things done, we try to return them, whenever there is an opportunity Even if we are not in a position to return it, we try never to forget the good deed and always think good of and wish good for the person. On the other hand, a thief is not like that. A thief who takes away the valuables of a house, knows that the valuables are not his and still will not even acknowledge the master of the house leave alone have gratitude for what he has taken. Ofcourse, none of us are thieves. Still, Bhagavan makes a reference to the one who enjoys all that has been given to him, yet does not acknowledge the many forces and beings operating in his life as a thief.
All the forces operating in our lives, are because of devas. The Rsis have passed on the knowledge of the Vedas (the knowledge of means and ends for all pursuits – artha, kām, dharma and moksa) from generation to generation. The knowledge of punya, pāpa, svarga, moksa would not have been possible has it not been for these Ṛṣis. We would not be here, were it not for our Pitr, ancestors, what they have passed down as family traditions and blessings. The many fellow human beings, manushyah, family, friends, teachers, who contribute to our lives in so many ways. Other beings, bhutaḥ, plants also contribute to our sustenance. These five set of beings: Devas, Ṛṣis, Pitr, Manuśyaḥ, Bhutaḥ give to us every day. To what extent do we acknowledge it, recognise it ? Every day really is a Thanksgiving day, to the extent that we acknowledge these beings and contribute to these forces with a prayer if nothing else.

Kṛtaṃ jānāti iti kṛtajñah. One who remembers the good deed done is a kṛtajña. Tasya bhāvaḥ is kṛtajñatā. Kṛtajñatā is more than gratitude. The coconut tree may get only dirty water. Still it gives us clean, sweet, nutritious water in its fruits. Thus, the coconut tree is cited as an example for kṛtajñata.

But here, we are talking of Īśvara. What is it that He remembers and is grateful about? He is the giver of results of action. Even if a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water is offered, it is all remembered along with the attitude with which it is done and the result, which is puṇya, is given. The wrong actions that are done are also remembered and the results are given accordingly. Please note, we do not say good or bad action, we say right and wrong actions. In a recent conversation, someone said, ‘Who are we to say what is right and wrong?’This is pseudo-accommodation. Actions which harm oneself or others are wrong actions. Period. The refusal to take a stand and making excuses for one’s wrong actions and htat of others definitely contributed to the Wall Street fiasco.

The results of the action are given at the right time and place. He is in the form of the Law of karma. The sarvajñatva, omniscience of the Lord includes the kṛtajñatā, knowing and remembering the actions done by all living beings.

83. Kṛtiḥ
कृतिः
The one in the form of effort.

Īśvara in the form of action, is called Kṛti. Not only is He the knower of the karma-phala, the results of action; He is also in the form of kṛti, action, because He is in the form of sādhya-sādhana-sambandha, the law that determines the connection between the result and the action.
Who determines that this is the means to achieve this end? If both the hands are brought together to clap, with a certain momentum, a sound is produced. If both the hands are brought together gently, then there is 'namaste'. The action is the same, still there is a big difference. A one year child, who has just started to discover the range of his energy and movements, will find it difficult to put his hands for a Namaste as compared to the same child, a year later. Who determines that there should be a sound when there is a clap? Who determines which action is right and which is wrong? Where there is the given in terms of all the actions possible, there is a giver of the result and He gives it according to the law or mandate. So the Lord is the very mandate itself and that is the nature of Īśvara. Dharma is the nature of Īśvara and hence one cannot go against dharma.

Someone asked Alice (in wonderland) for directions. Alice posed a question, " But, where do you want to go?". Shrugging his shoulders, the creature said, "I don't know". Alice sighed, "Oh, then it does not matter." Clarity of where I am headed, clarity in my priorities is non negotiable, if I want to have a fulfilling life. There are means and ends, causes and effects, actions and reactions. For every achievement there is a right means and a wrong means. All these are given. If, in choosing means and ends, I follow what we call dharma, ethical norms which are commonly accepted by all of us then there is no problem. By common sense, everyone knows dharma, everyone has a value structure. Thus, there is a universal value structure. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, 'I am manifest in the form of dharma. I am the giver of the results of action. I am the karma-phala and I am in the form of kṛti, that is, in the form of sādhya-sādhana-sambandha,' All this is possible only when we understand that where there is the given, there is the giver in the form of the material cause. The Lord is everything. Every sambandha, every relationship, every sequence is the structure. The whole thing is Īśvara and He is untouched by anything. Therefore, the Lord is Kṛti.

Many people helplessly say, 'they have no choice'. How is that possible? Clearly, they have not discovered their relative freedom that comes from exercising the many powers given to them. Due to the grace of Īśvara, every individual is endowed with an icchā-śakti, a power to desire. With his jñāna-śakti, he plans to attain what he desires and with his kriyā-śakti, he acts accordingly. Therefore, this gain is preceded by effort and right action which is in keeping with dharma. There can be no individual who is completely helpless. And due to his effort, he gains the desired results. Even a person who is in coma has icchā-śakti. That is why, we hear of so many people recovering from a situation of coma, when everyone else had given up hope. This puruṣa-prayatna, effort and the kriyā, the action is called kṛti.

Everything is Īśvara. Sarvātmatvāt, as He is the reality of everything, everything is nothing but the Lord alone. He is the ādhāra, basis of everything beginning with desire till the desired end is got. That is pointed out by the name Kṛti.

Question from facebook:
Bhagavan being sarvajna, should logically know the choice we will make..And hence the question is, is our free will really free? I will look at this from two standpoints:

From Bhagavan ‘s standpoint, Bhagavan knows the choice we will make. How? Just like a satellite looking at the flow of Ganga, from Gomukh to Gangasagar, sees things at once. The journey of the river may have a past, present and future. Not so, for the satellite.
From the standpoint of the individual, free will can be understood when we look at its seeming opposite, ‘Absence of free will/ choice, in other words, being programmed, as we see in animals. Free will manifests in human beings, in every situation, in the choice ‘to do, not to do or do differently. To be or nor to be, is not the question. How to be, where to be determines our choice of haircuts, jobs and even the color of our passport. What about destiny then? The effects of our actions manifesting as situations and patterns in our life. Life is a dynamic balance of free will and destiny.
Free will is not absolute. It is relative and has a certain scope of operation. Yet, it is free enough to help me discover that I am that absolute reality.

One of my favourite statements of Pujya Swamiji, is “ To come to me, was your prārabdha. What you do with it is your free will.” And if we really look at it, there are hundreds and thousands who have come in contact with him. Yet some people continued to be devotees, some chose to be long distance students, some chose to be full time students and some chose to read his books.
The one way I have found it helpful to resolve this free will issue, is to have an idea of the patterns my own horoscope indicated, and the reality as I see today, which was a combination of free will and destiny. Otherwise the discussions just go on and on.

84. Ātmavān

आत्मवान्

The one who rests in His own glory.

Dhanavān is the one who has wealth. Balavan is the one who has bala, strength. Then what about the word, Atmavān? In the Gīta, Bhagavān tells Arjuna to be the one who is free from the pairs of opposites (such as pain and pleasure), to be free from the anxieties of acquiring and protecting, tō be the one who is Atmavān, a master of oneself (2.45). In the verses, he teaches him, how. Here, the Atma is the kārya-karaṇa-saṅghāta – the body-mind-sense-complex and not satcitānanda ātma which is already you.

A person whose thinking has a predominance of sattva guṇa, shows love for knowledge, a certain composure, clarity in thinking and goodness. One who is not taken for a ride by one’s own fancies, is called ātmavān. He/she focuses on what he/she knows and what can be done and hence frees himself/herself from the seeming limitations of the situation. Perhaps, there can be mistakes due to lack of knowledge, because a human being is of limited knowledge. But inspite of knowledge, one may not be an ātmavān; one may not be in control of oneself and is often driven by impulse, habit and mechanical thinking. In every action, there are three aspects involved: the thinker, the feeler and the doer. They are three aspect of the same person, not three entities. If they are not in alignment, then I experience myself in friction and not together as a person.

All of us have one or two areas in our life (health, family or finances) where we feel dictated by people or circumstances, where we feel helpless by force of habit. Rather than fight ourselves and berate ourselves, it is helpful to start implementing the change. In the context of trying to

change a particular behavior, Pujya Swamiji often says, 'Fake it and make it.". This statement has a strong basis in biochemical changes that take place when one acts in a different way as repeated actions lead to neural pathways in the brain. Where the river flows over stones and pebbles that are there on the river bank, we see striations and patterns on the stones. Some people even pick them and keep them as mementos. It seems strange that on something as hard as a stone, the flowing water can make a difference. But it does! The patterns on these hard stones arise because of the force of the repeated flow of the waters. On the other hand, if we write on sand on the shore in the finest calligraphy, in a short time, the waters will wash away what we have written. Repetiton, abhyāsa helps when one is seeking to act in a desirable manner and give up an unhealthy habit. This is the situation of an individual. The attempt is to bring and discover harmony in the one who thinks, feels and does, the one who is together.

But, we cannot say that Bhagavān has ātmā and that He is together! If He is Īśvara there is no need to point out that He is together! Therefore, the meaning should be something else. Here it means that He is with Himself and not dependent on anything else. The jagat, world has its ātmā, its being, in the sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā. Jīva, the individual is ātmavān, because he is sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā (From the standpoint of the absolute reality) Every sense organ is a sense organ because of ātmā. On what does Īśvara depend to be ātmavān? He is ātmavān, being established in His own svarūpa, own mahimā, glory. He exists in His own glory.

85. Sureśaḥ
सुरेश:
The Lord of all the devas.

He is the Īśa, the Lord of all the suras, devas. Sura need not always mean deva, in the sense of a denizen of the svargaloka. An asura need not necessarily be a demon. Asuṣu ramate iti asuraḥ– the one who revels in the sense pursuits or pleasures is an asura. From the standpoint of this definition, a lot of us who delight in pursuing the finer pleasures of life, be it gourmet cuisine, fine perfumes, more and more travel experiences etc, guess what we would be called? Asuras!

No problem with that except that such a person is bound to go against dharma, because the pressure of fulfilling the sense pleasure is so strong. Majority of the people will justify an extra-marital affair also with adequate reasons to justify sense pleasures. I hear some people arguing that an extra marital affair is not just physical. Whatever be the nature or level of intimacy, if you would not want to be treated that way, then, it is time to think about one's svadharma. When pleasure, power and position are the only priorities for a person, then Īśvara is only at the end of his list of pursuits and not a priority.

As opposed to that, a sura or a deva is an effulgent person. He would be a viveki, a discriminative person, who lives a life in keeping with dharma. Thus, He is Sureśa, the Lord of the people who live a life of dharma backed by viveka. Dharma is a valid puruṣārtha, a human goal. Īśvara manifests as dharma. Universal ethics and values manifest in everyone having an innate understanding of 'I don't want to be hurt, cheated or manipulated.' Likewise, the other does not want to be hurt, cheated or manipulated. It is seemingly straightforward, then where does the slip between the cup and lip happen?

The slip happens when dharma becomes a matter of convenience. If we follow dharma only when we are not inconvenienced, that is not the true understanding of dharma. Dharma is not merely not robbing, not cheating, etc. There are different levels of hurt, different sorts of hurting. You can hurt a person by a look or you can hurt a person by a word and you can even hurt a person by deliberately entertaining a certain type of thinking. There are some tantrics who cause harm to people by certain upāsanas, too. We can hurt people in so many different ways, and we do so all the time. We suitably justify it too by saying that the other person deserves it and needs to change. Following dharma is not ordinary, it is really for my own sanity and well being. Not hurting another person, not yielding to my own binding cravings and aversions and, on the other hand, conforming to what is right and wrong is the bedrock of our human society. For a sura, a life of dharma is his/her living reality consistently.

The word 'sura' can be taken as a word derived from the verbal root 'rā' in the meaning of giving, with the prefix 'su.' So He is surāṇām, the Lord of all those who bestow good on others. The devas are there to do good to all the living beings. We seek their grace, we acknowledge their roles in our lives. The Lord of all the devas is Indra. Īśvara is the Lord of Indra also. All of them function because of the laws of Īśvara.

86. Śaraṇam

शरणं

The ultimate refuge.

The Lord is Śaraṇa, the final refuge. We take refuge in people as if people were destinations in themselves. Some of us prepare so much for the wedding day but not enough for marriage. We seek refuge in the dream job which encompasses a supportive boss and work environment, a decent remuneration +perks and our contribution to the company. We seek refuge in the idea of a 'soulmate', who will set everything right. We seek refuge in that perfect child, who will make our dreams come true and who would be the perfect person to take forward our legacy. We seek refuge in the expert hands of the salon staff member/local barber, when he gives a smooth shave. It is a close shave. Our neck is on the line, yet we rely on his expertise. All of these have their valid place in life's scheme of things. With some viveka, we do recognise that people and situations are mortal, finite, limited and conditional and cannot serve as a lasting refuge.

So, who is the ultimate refuge? Parameśvara alone is the ultimate refuge. The Lord removes the troubles of all those who are in distress. He is the refuge. In Mahabharata and Bhagvatam, we see examples of Draupadī, Gajendra, Vibhīṣaṇa and others, taking refuge in the Lord. He is the altar of surrender both for those who seek freedom from distress within saṃsāra and for those who seek freedom from the distress of saṃsāra itself. Even the devatās are empowered only by Īśvara and they too have to surrender to Him when they are in distress. Thus, the Lord is the ultimate altar of surrender, because every altar of surrender is empowered by Īśvara.

To say that one must seek refuge in the Lord or surrender is far too simplistic. Surrender is a mature attitude born out of an understanding of Īśvara. There is no surrender without it. I can learn to appreciate that there is nothing in this creation that is authored by me, that everything is given to me, including my physical body, mind, and senses. Everything including my support

systems and many powers are given to me. If something was truly mine, I could check for baggage allowance and accordingly pack before I depart from this world.

What is given to me is not mine. I recognise that 'I am just a trustee, O Lord, You are the giver. Where there is the given, the giver is not separate,' I stand altered as I surrender at the altar. My notion of I is no longer a notion subject to negation. My notion of I expands to include Isvara. If 'I' includes Īśvara in the many manifestations of the various physiological, psychological and other processes of the body-mind-sense complex, then who has to surrender or take refuge in what?

Therefore, Īśvara being the ultimate refuge, it is His grace that one has to tap. Even the doctor to whom we surrender, in turn has to turn to Īśvara alone, because the final doctor is the Lord. Lord Śiva is called Bhiṣak, which means a doctor.

The capacity of the individual to tap the grace of the Lord is limited. Sometimes it looks as if the grace of Īśvara is not available and that He ceases to be our refuge. At such times perhaps our prārabdha-karma is more powerful than our capacity to tap His grace. But still, the ultimate and only refuge is the Lord.

87. Śarma

शर्म

The one in the form of ānanda.

He is Śarma because His very svarūpa is paramānanda, limitless happiness. Nowhere is the enquiry into the nature of happiness as sophisticated and deep as in Vedanta.

Some of us may experience pointlessness in our lives, sometimes. A new day, yet the same routine. People are born and they die and do something in between. And another new day but the same thing..And six months of the year have flown by. What breaks the monotony of the routine or my lukewarm experience of life, is a moment of happiness. It may have come from some slapstick or subtle humour, discovery of new shoots in a plant that you had considered beyond survival, somebody's welcoming warm smile. In this moment of ananda, I experience myself as adequate, for a while. There is freedom from being inadequate, despite so many of my anxieties, concerns and unfulfilled desires. This is important to recognise.

When we look into it, happiness did not really lie in the humour, smile or the plant because it that was the case, these should always have the ability to make me happy. What these really did, is to invoke the happiness, ananda that is my nature. This is the unspoken norm for all of us. Suppose I ask a Finnish friend who has never heard or tasted about the best laddoos (Indian sweet) in Mumbai, she will not be able to say much. Since she has not tasted or even seen a foodie recommendation, she has no norm, to say which laddoos are better than the other.

On the other hand, happiness is the norm, against which I measure all my experiences – "I am delighted by what you said,' I have happy memories of the time spent. Oh that makes me sad.." Whatever be the nature of the happy experience, there is a finality in it, atleast for a few moments. No more seeking. The wanting, inadequate mind is suspended for a few moments. We

don't struggle against happiness. We don't say, "I have had enough happiness for today, no more." We wish people 'Happy Birthday,' Happy Anniversary' and so on because we know that there is a possibility of the person being unhappy and everyone without an exception wants to be happy. Happiness is the universal norm and never out of style.

Whenever we pick up a moment of happiness, the degree of happiness that is experienced is only a leśa, a fraction of the ānanda of Īśvara. Someone could well argue that if one is sad, maybe it is a person 's true nature, as everything around the person evokes sadness. That is not true. What we struggle against, is not us. It is the nature of the fire to burn. If a burning log of wood is washed over with water, the fire in the wood becomes dormant but could still be ignited. The fire does not become cold at anytime, anywhere in the world. There is a veil that covers the person which contributes to the experience of sadness and that is removed by seeking refuge in the Lord which contributes to the discovery of the ānanda that I am.

88. Viśvaretāḥ

विश्वरेताः

The seed of the universe.

He is the seed for the entire jagat, He is viśvaretas. Parameśvara is the nimitta-kāraṇa, the efficient or the intelligent cause for this world – all that is known and unknown. When we say that Īśvara is the intelligent cause, it includes the material cause also. He is both the maker and the material.

Let 's consider the human zygote formed by the ovum and sperm, which goes onto become a full human body, sometimes even 7 ft tall. Can we categorically say that the zygote is the intelligent cause for the material product? Or can we say that the zygote is mini material cause for the big material product? None would be totally true. In the zygote is both the material cause and the intelligent cause which manifests as the human body. It does not just randomly assemble itself. Even a random assemblage will still have a method of being put together which will still demand some intelligence, even if it is rudimentary. Intelligence can rest only in a conscious being.

Because of the orientation to localize Īśvara and consider the maker and material separate, it is important to highlight that where there is the material, any material, the intelligent cause is right there.In this word, Viśvaretāḥ, the maker, the nimitta-kāraṇa, is pointed out. The seed for all living beings is called retas and for the seed to germinate, a womb is required. The Lord himself is the seed as well as the womb and this is indicated by the name Viśvaretas.

89. Prajābhavaḥ

प्रजाभवः

The source of all beings.

He is Prajābhava because all the prajas are born from Him. He is the source of all beings. All the jīvas are born with different bodies. What is the basis for this difference? According to our own karmas, we have different bodies, parentage, and also different place and time of birth and different horoscopes (sometimes experienced as horrorscopes). Because of this understanding

that has been nurtured in this culture, that we are responsible for our own karma we could have been the most proactive people on earth. Unfortunately, acceptance of the situations I am currently in, is taken as resignation. If karma is understood correctly, there is no reason in my life to blame anybody, to hold somebody entirely responsible for the outcome of any situation – neither others or myself.

In the middle of the night, the wife woke up the quietly sleeping husband and slapped him. The husband exclaimed, " I am not responsible for what I did in your dream". Likewise we have no idea what we have done in our previous lifetimes, to blame ourselves for the unpleasant situations one finds oneself in. We do not know what the people around us have done in their previous lifetimes and this lifetime to be how they are today and really worthy of blame. Yes, both me and the people around me have played contributory roles in the situations that we find ourselves in today. Oh, if nobody is to be blamed, then what is to be done?

One takes responsibility for one's life without being a victim of one's circumstances, seeks clarity in priorities and does what needs to be done in line with dharma. One continues to be prayerful and seeks punya as well. Which karma of which lifetime fructifies in this lifetime, we will never know. Despite being exposed to past life regression therapy, we don't need to know, if we live a proactive, prayerful life.

As the law of karma alone, Īśvara helps all the jīvas assume different bodies, in different worlds. The Lord is the womb for the entire viśva and He himself is the retas, the seed. Starting from Brahmāji to a blade of grass, the Lord has created this variegated universe of beings.

90. Ahaḥ

अहः

The one who is in the form of the day.

He is called Ahaḥ–day, because He is luminous like the day. He is the day of days; He lends existence to the day. What makes a day a day? The arrival of the Sun. Ahaḥ is in the form of the Sun, the devatā of the day and He alone is in the form of the day.

Which part of the day is Bhagavan? Is it some auspicious time? Auspicious or inauspicious is according to planetary positions which only indicate influence of planets. Is it that Bhagavan is absent during certain times and present other times? He is the one who is in the form of the day, All of it, every nano second of it.

Our experience of time is subjective. Time spent with a loved one and waiting for an exam result is experienced differently. How long or short a minute is, depends on which side of the bathroom door you are on? For functional transactions, we have divided the day into some units. For further transactional purposes, we have divided our lives into our past, present, future.

The past is the previous minute extending many years ago and the future is from this minute onwards to many years later. They are relative but we give it an absolute status. We rarely live in the present moment. We are either recalling our past memories which were wonderful or disappointing and we find repeated recordings of situations – people involved, what each said,

visuals, emotions etc stuck in our head. Certain incidents plays on loop, without us having pressed the 'play' button. We are trying to complete the situation in some way or the other, as few things were left unsaid or undone either by oneself or the other.

If we are not living in the past, then some of us live in the future not with the help of a time machine, but fantasizing about a suitable partner, a suitable condition, a suitable job, a suitable remuneration, a suitable emotional life etc. "Once I have this….I will be fine, once this person changes, I will be fine." The only place where people are ushered in quickly without prior appointment is the emergency ward of a hospital.
It is really worth it for everyone to just watch during the course of one hour, how much time do we really spend in the present? The present is all we have been given. That Present (pun intended) is in the form of this day.

Day is a part of time and the rays of the sun are an indication of day. Bhagavān is in the form of the rays of the sun, that is, He is in the form of time. Just as how the daylight removes darkness, similarly He helps to remove the darkness of avidyā and thus the Lord helps those who surrender unto Him.

And so we live one day at a time! One step at a time! There is no other way.

91. Saṃvatsaraḥ (also word 422)
संवत्सरः
The one in the form of the year (time).

We may have heard this word when the pandit or puja priest articulates the resolve and intention for doing the puja. The current year or Saṃvatsaraḥ is Manmatha. There are 60 Samvatsaras, each of which has a name. Once all 60 samvatsaras are over, the cycle starts over again.

It is Lord Viṣṇu who is Kālātmā, in the form of time and hence He is called Saṃvatsara, year. He alone marks time in the form of the year.

When one is identified with the body, limited by time, then there is birth, growth and death. This is a continuous cycle which repeats itself. When birth is there, death must also be there. Death is the beginning of something else and that is birth. Thus it is a cycle, year after year.

92. Vyālaḥ
व्यालः
The one who cannot be caught hold of.

A tiger, a rogue elephant, venomous snakes and also wicked people are indicated by the word vyāla. All these cannot be easily caught and tamed. That this nāma occurs after ahaḥ and saṃvatsara, which also imply time, is significant.The Lord too is difficult to catch like a vyāla, He is known as Vyāla.

What may strike unexpectedly and cannot be easily caught and tamed is time. We often say that Time does not wait for anyone. For each person in this world, a day is of 24 hours. The duration of the day and night may be different. Still, Time has its dance and ebbs away.

If we want to live a life with minimum regrets, then we recognise the role of time in our lives, relatively speaking. Most of us resist the manifestation of time and the effects of time. We resist ageing, the end of a vacation, the changes that happen in our lives as time goes by. Children want to grow up quickly and are waiting for time to zip by. Adults wish they could rewind to their childhood and wonder what was the hurry in trying to grow up and wish that time moved slowly.

Some of us take time for granted; time will always be available to pursue the things I want, spend time with the people I like, enjoy myself. What 's wrong with today? Why can 't I do what can be done today? Doing what needs to be done, implies being responsible for my actions, not blaming myself or others and that feels difficult. I am not used to it. Does not matter. I can get used to what needs to get done. Why? Because it is important. Because I am important, in my life.

If the present moment is all I have and I am clear about my priorities in life, then no day is a waste. If I am clear about my priorities, (the need behind the need) in the following areas of my life: physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual, then I work towards it every day, in the way it is possible. Every day is a successful day because it contributes to my priorities and my identified priorities are what makes me happy and fulfilled. All days contribute to my emotional maturity and objectivity, if that is what I really want. And if Yama knocks on my door, I need not be dragged screaming and resisting. Each day is complete in and of itself.

Although Bhagavān, who is in the form of time cannot be easily held or grasped or stopped by anybody, I call the bluff my first utilsing my time well in line with priorities, in line with dharma, and in the vision of Vedanta, discover the reality of time which is me.

93. Pratyayaḥ

प्रत्ययः

The one who is in the form of consciousness.

He is pratyaya because He is in the form of every pratīti, knowledge. What we call knowledge of a subject is a collection of cognitions, thoughts related to that subject. Each cognition is a unit of knowledge. Each thought IS. Thoughts of rats also? Yes. Knowledge of cats and cat like human beings? Yes.

The Lord is that because of which every thought is, because of which every thought is known. He is the pratyaya. Pratibhodha-viditam matam–in every pratyaya, cognition, He is understood (Ke.Up.2.4). He is the pratyaya. At a workshop on 'harmony in relationships' yesterday, a lot of the participants said that they struggle with their thoughts. We will continue to struggle if we do not discover Isvara. It is almost as if thoughts are some sort of aliens that descend on us and we have to conquer them. However, if the reality of the thought is understood no thought is a

problem. The glory of the human mind is that there are thoughts. Knowledge takes place because there is a flow of thoughts, whatever be the nature of thoughts.

A flower is understood by flower-cognition/thought and so on. But, God is not understood by God-cognition. If God were to be understood by God-cognition, then God will become an object like a pot. The moment God becomes an object for me, he is distant, out there and I will always struggle to connect with him. But every thought or cognition is Bhagavān.

He is in the form of pratyaya, cognition and therefore, He is Pratyaya.
Isness is the common denominator of all thoughts. Only what IS is real, as it is, in all periods of time. Thoughts come and go, What stays IS. That Isness, existence is consciousness which is you, the content of the conscious being.

Or the word pratyaya may refer to prajñā, consciousness. And as He is the consciousness, He is Pratyaya. The Aitareyopaniṣad says, 'prajñānaṃ brahma–consciousness is Brahman' (3.3).

94. Sarvadarśanaḥ
सर्वदर्शनः
The one with all eyes.

Darśana here refers to the eyes that are meant for seeing. All eyes of all beings belong to Him. Therefore, He has eyes everywhere and He is all-seeing. The eyes are a sense organ, that helps to see and there is a beautifully revealing word for sense organs in Sanskrit – jnānendriyaṇi - organs of knowledge. The eyes help us see and know our world. Based on what the eyes see, we make a lot of conclusions about ourself, people around us and the world at large. This extends to the various Sciences – Botany, Zoology, Neurophysiology etc, as they exist today. The various instruments such as the Electron microscope, the MRI, the hubble telescope, only help to refine our visual perception, the basis of it being the eyes.

The Puruṣa sūkta says, 'sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt–one who has countless eyes and feet.' Sahasra, one thousand, may be used in the shastra, not necessarily being a thousand only. It is like saying, 'thousands of people go to the Kumbh Melā.' Does it mean a thousand, literally? It means that seemingly countless people go. What the eyes do, the ears cannot. The eyes see and sometimes they don't. The extensive field of opthalmology researches the laws that makes the eyes see as well as the corrective measures that will enable eyes to see better. These principles are universal and in the commonality there is a law. Every law indicates the presence of Isvara.

The eyes are the upalakṣaṇa to say that all indriyas are His alone as he is all knowing. The Gītā says, 'sarvataḥ pāṇipādaṃ tat sarvato' kṣiśromukham–the one that has hands and feet everywhere and heads, eyes and mouths everywhere' (13.13).

The Taittirīya-āraṇyaka says, 'viśvataścakṣuḥ' and 'viśvākṣam'(10.1,13), He has eyes everywhere. A recent TV commercial advertising a particular brand of CCTV(closed circuit television), has the tagline 'uparwala dekh raha hai', suggesting that the one who lives on top i.e. God is watching you. Here, it does not mean that Isvara is watching and stalking us. It is just highlighting that all eyes are his.

Or else, He is the one whom the various darśanas of the śāstras try to reveal. He is in the form of sarva-darśanas and also their subject matter. But at the same time, He can be properly understood only through Vedānta-śāstra.

95. Ajaḥ (also words 204, 521)

अजः

The unborn.

The one who is not born is aja. One may think, that what is not born cannot exist. It should be non-existent like the vandhyā-putra, the son of a barren woman. Bhagavān makes it clear in the Mahābhārata by saying, 'I was not born, nor am I born, nor will be born'. One may immediately assume that God is nothingness because we have not come across any such object or person. We know that even our bodies are subject to death. Then does it mean that, perhaps the Lord is unborn but can certainly die. No.

Aja means unborn and hence, He does not have death nor changes like growth, modifications and decay. In short, the Lord is not bound by time.

Further, it negates the idea that it may be a non-existent thing by further saying. 'I am the ksetrajña (knower of all the fields, bodies) in all beings and hence I am known as Aja' (MB.Śān.342.74).

The Gītā (2.20) and the Kaṭhopaniṣhad (1.2.18) also makes this clear by saying, He is aja, unborn; nitya, not subject to death, śāśvata, not subject to change or decay, purāṇa, not subject to growth. Aja refers to the svarūpalakṣaṇa, the very nature of Īśvara and also the nature of ourselves. Bhagavān says that there is no valid reason to grieve as the being can and will never be killed. Then what is subject to death? The body. Is it absolutely real? No. Beingness that is aja, never born is what lends its reality to the body-mind.

96. Sarveśvaraḥ

सर्वेश्वरः

The Lord of all.

He is the Īśvara, the Lord of the entire jagat. Brahmāji, Indra, Varuṇa and such others, attained the īśvaratvam, the lordship of the various worlds, due to their severe tapas and due to their karma-phala from Him alone. He is the overlord of all the devas also and so has absolute overlordship. He is the lord of the prajas too, as mentioned earlier.

As the material cause, He is sarva, all and as the maker, He is Īśvara, the Lord, the intelligent cause. The Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad says, 'eṣa sarveśvaraḥ' (4.4.22).

97. Siddhaḥ (also word 819)

सिद्धः

Ever accomplished.

A sādhaka is one who seeks to accomplish something; he is the seeker. Sādhana is the means of accomplishing a particular goal. What is to be accomplished is sādhya. What is to be accomplished gives meaning and determines the means or sadhana. When the sādhaka has accomplished the sādhya, employing the sādhana, he is called a siddha. Now in all this, which is Īśvara?

Everyone is Brahman. The seeker is told 'you are Brahman', the limitless reality because he does not know that he is Brahman. 'You are Brahman' means you are the whole. The whole, the limitless, cannot be separate from you. When you say that you are a sādhaka, seeker, there must be a sādhya, something to be accomplished. There are many seekers who enjoy mysticism and enjoy seeking, hoping that one day they will gain completeness. For them it is one guru after another, one technique after another, one ashram after another. The seeker identity is well entrenched until he/she enquires into what the siddha, already accomplished fact is, with the help of a traditional guru.

If the whole, the sādhya is to be accomplished but it is already accomplished then what is to be done? What is to be gained is exactly what is to be known. The desire for moksha has to convert itself to jignyāsa, the desire to know. you are that whole, which is Brahman.

A lot of us have an achievement orientation, because of the many accomplishments in life. This is healthy as it helps us discover our competence in life to be able to handle anything. Yet, when we bring this achiever orientation to the study of Vedanta, the understanding eludes us. Seemingly, there is nothing to do. And so the achiever identity feels restless and converts much of the teaching into should and should nots, trying to achieve.

There is nothing to accomplish as 'I' am already accomplished. We need to learn to relax. In relating to Isvara, we learn how to relax, how to trust the order. That I deserve to be taught, I have the right guru and I am committed to this knowledge, which is me, I am willing to do what it takes regarding my adhikaritvam, preparedness are statements which help us relax without the unnecessary build up of anxiety of 'Will I understand in this lifetime?'

What is to be accomplished is 'satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma.' The means of accomplishing is also not separate from Brahman. The siddha-puruṣa, the one who has accomplished, is also not separate from Brahman. Nothing is separate from Brahman. That is what is said in the Gītā as, 'brahmārpaṇam…brahmaiva tena gantavyaṃ brahma-karma-samādhinā' (4.24). So, Brahman is never sādhya but always siddha.

We think that we have to reach Brahman; but it is already reached. It is like saying 'I have to reach space in two hours.' But space being all-pervasive, is already siddha. Therefore, you need not reach space. If space is siddha, then the very truth of space, the consciousness, because of which you are conscious of space, that very concept of space, is not separate from consciousness. That consciousness which is paraṃ brahma is also siddha. Īśvara being that paraṃ brahma is always siddha. Again, as a jīva, until we know 'I am Brahman,' we are still sādhakas. The Lord having no ignorance about Himself, is nitya-niṣpanna-rūpa, is always siddha, one who has accomplished.

A pot that was not there before, is now born. Then it is said to be siddha, having now got its existence from clay. The pot may go. But, from the standpoint of the pot, the clay is always there. Īśvara is the cause of everything and He is manifest in the form of the jagat. The jagat gains its existence from Īśvara. But essentially, there is neither manifestation nor unmanifestation. In His essential nature, He is always satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma, whether the world is manifest or not. This being His nature, He is nitya-niṣpanna-rūpa, always existent. Therefore, He is Siddha, ever accomplished.

98. Siddhiḥ
सिद्धिः
The accomplishment, success.

An autorickshaw driver I met recently, was talking about how he managed to make his life in Mumbai, is married and his children go to English medium school. That was a matter of pride for him and he finally said," Sab Bhagavan ki kripa hai'. (All of this is the Lord 's grace). We hear this often in India. He attributed his accomplishments to Isvara. This is not easy to do. Our identities are so based on our abilities, successes, efforts, relationships and we falsely believe that we call all the shots.

Not only is the Lord siddha, accomplished, but also the siddhi, the accomplishment or success. In every siddhi or success there is Īśvara, because in every success there is joy. That joy is Īśvara. In every action, the possible results are only of four types: a. Result is equal to what is expected, b. Result is less than expected, c. Result is more than expected and d. Result is different than what is expected.

In any action there are hidden variables that we cannot control. Further, we do not have the power to control every factor. Without expectation, we cannot perform any action and so, we do expect. But at the same time, we have to be aware of the fact that our expectations are based only on what we know and therefore may not always come true. Expectation ≠ Prediction. Therefore, we do what we can and when the result comes, whatever be the four types of results we get, we take it as the prasāda of Īśvara.

Siddhi is Īśvara. When I set up goals without setting myself up, that is karma-yoga.
What about asiddhi? When the results don't match the expectations, that is also Parameśvara, because we learn from it. If I conclude that I am a failure, my mind shuts down and I can wallow in self pity and blame myself and the whole world because there is pain. Constant failure gives a personality. All my subsequent actions are based on the statement 'I am a failure', which is a judgment. There is really no failure, there is only a result. This is being objective because there is something to learn from every experience.

Even if I fail, the failure is accepted as prasāda and instead of calling myself a failure, I try to learn from the experience. It is painful. So what? An emotion is not a person. But we give overwhelming importance to emotion that it overwhelms us, our learning, our experiences and our other accomplishments. We need to focus on what we can learn, because that learning mind

is all we carry forward in our different stages of life. We may move to different cities, jobs, relationships may change, possessions are acquired and given away. But the learning and knowledge that I have about life, I carry with me in every situation. That I can learn from an experience is also a siddhi, an accomplishment and that is also within the order of Īśvara. Hence, Bhagavān is called Siddhi. If I achieve success or siddhi and say that it has been given to me. This is a good attitude.

Again, every siddhi, success is a concept, a judgement, which involves consciousness. Even svarga, heaven, which can be accomplished, is temporary and perishable. But the consciousness, in the concept of heaven and in the concept of heaven-accomplishment, is the only imperishable thing. He is the one who obtains as consciousness in all, He is Siddhi. He is the consciousness in all the forms and yet free of forms.

He is paramānanda-svarūpa, that is, mokṣa, an accomplishment that is nitya and cannot be surpassed. Anything that is caused, even if it is svarga, heaven, is limited. It was not there before and then it came into being. Hence it is anitya. So, gain of these cannot be really called a phala-siddhi, accomplishment. But, Bhagavān is not created by anyone. He is self-existent and hence He is nitya. Hence, Bhagavān is called Siddhi.

99. Sarvādiḥ

सर्वादि

The beginning of all.

The cause precedes the effect. He is sarva-bhūtānāṃ kāraṇa, the cause of all beings. Naturally He is Sarvādi, the beginning of all.

100. Acyutaḥ (also word 318)

अच्युतः

The one who never moves away.

Already, the Lord has been said as Aja and now He is said to be Acyuta. Heat and brilliance are the svarūpa, the nature of fire. Can fire move away from heat and brilliance? If it could, fire would stop being fire. Heat is its nature, intrinsic to fire. If it can move away, then it cannot be called its svarūpa, nature.

The Lord is of the nature of sat-cit-ānanda. He is the creator, sustainer and also the one who resolves the entire jagat unto Himself and that is His sāmarthya. From these the Lord na cyutaḥ– has never deviated, na cyavate–does not deviate, na cyaviṣyate–will never deviate. Because He has no cyuti, fall or decline at any time. He is known as Acyuta. There is no fall from grace, no fall from position, no fall from any path, no fall from the higher to the lower, no fall at all.

101. Vṛṣākapiḥ

वृषाकपिः

The one in the form of dharma and varāha.

Dharma is called vṛṣa, since it rains all the desires of the good people. Nowhere in the shastra is it said that you must not have desire. But people who approach the shastra like a buffet spread, pick and select verses to justify what they are doing. At a buffet spread, there is such a wide array, these days, of different kinds of cuisines. It makes perfect sense even for the stomach to pick and choose. We stand to lose if we have this 'pick and choose approach' to the shastra.
The Lord is in the form of the desires that is not opposed to dharma. So there is no point berating oneself, if one has a desire. What might need to be examined is : is the desire in line with dharma? and how binding is it? Has the desire transformed itself into a craving or yearning that one 's happiness is totally dependent on fulfillment of the desire? If so, it is time to be more objective to examine what is the value that I have superimposed on this object of desire.

What are the desires of the good people? Desires that are in line with dharma – desire for wealth, progeny, property, food, reaching out are all wonderful. What a wonderful privilege to desire and also act on it! Both iccha śakti and kriya śakti are given. However, it is difficult to follow dharma when one is relationship centred, work centred or child centred. 'Centred on' means that all my security and happiness comes from that source. If I am work centred, then it is the only source of self worth for me and I may be willing to cut corners, fire staff indiscriminately, be unable to delegate as only I have the vision and the ability to work. If I am struggling at work, I am so depressed because I am not able to lift my head up and look at any other aspect of my life. In such a case, I will look at time with family as a waste of time, because it takes me away from work. Even in my free time, I am preoccupied with work and how to better it and excel and excel. My dharma, responsibilities towards family is not even on my radar, because I am work centred. With a little viveka, I will come to discover that work cannot give me moksa.

Relationships, children, work are all important. We don't deny it. But they do not and cannot subserve dharma. The Lord is in the form of dharma and fulfills the desires of those who follow dharma. That which pours is varṣa, rain. It is the rainwater which protects, nourishes and makes life possible. Yajñāt bhavati parjanyaḥ–the pouring rain is a blessing of Īśvara. When people do their duty and live a life of dharma, Īśvara blesses in the form of the devatā of the natural phenomena like rain. The devatā does his job. When everyone does their duty with an awareness of Īśvara, then all the devatās, as the phenomena, will also do their duties. People who are dharma centred, will bring in the principles and values of justice, compassion, kindness, accommodation, peace, productivity etc to all their areas of life – work, children, relationships, relaxation etc.

Bhagavān in the form of varāha rescued the earth by bringing it out of the water and hence, he is called Kapi. Being vṛṣa and kapi, He is called Vṛṣākapi. Here the name is based on the avatāra-līlā of the Lord.

102. Ameyātmā (also word 179)

अमेयात्मा

The one whose nature cannot be measured.

Mā means to measure. That which is used for measuring is called māna. A weighing balance is māna. What is measured is called meya. We are able to measure the distance between the earth and the stars. This distance is meya but the number of stars in a galaxy is ameya, countless. All

the varieties of beings are also ameya, all of them are Bhagavān. Bhagavān's manifestations are ameya, countless and the phenomena are also ameya. The means and ends are also ameya. The devatās are also ameya. Every phenomenon is a devatā and therefore, ameya. Thus, as His manifestations are ameya, countless, in His manifest form He is ameya, immeasurable. This is a wonder that invokes awe and wonder, at the countless manifestations.

Essentially also the Lord is ameya. The nature of the Lord cannot be measured and pinpointed that this is how it is because, He is free from qualities and attributes that can be measured. Further, He cannot be conceptualised or objectified through the sense organs or by any means of knowledge. Relating to the Lord through a picture or a murti is the starting point as we discover Bhagavān to pervade us and others. But when we insist on relating to Bhagavān in a particular way only , we are limiting Bhagavān due to our perception.

Bhagavān is not an object of knowledge, because He cannot be objectified nor is He the subject of knowledge. As the ātmā of all, He is Ameya–neither the subject nor the object. We find that the subject can be objectified and the subject also undergoes change. When you say 'I do not know' this is with reference to the subject. Then there is an opinion about the subject. 'I am ignorant' is a judgement about the subject. That means that the subject is available for your objectification. But the ātmā I, can never be objectified.

Atma is I. That I am, I know. I knew this even before language was picked up. Am I a belief? I am aware of my body-mind-sense-complex and the world around me. I am a conscious being who happens to have many identities as I transact in this world. Do I, Atma have a gender? No. Can Atma be seen in the mirror? The person can be seen in the mirror. I, Atma is neither the subject nor the object and at the same time there is no subject or object without the ātmā. Therefore, it is Ameyātmā. It is that which cannot be objectified, and therefore cannot be measured. At the same time, it is the content of every subject, of every piece of knowledge and also of the object.

103. Sarvayogavinissṛtaḥ

सर्वयोगविनि: सृत:

i. The one devoid of all connections.
ii. The one revealed through all the yogas.

Yoga means sambandha, connection. Even though the Lord is everything, He remains unconnected. It sounds contradictory but it is not. He is everything and sustains everything and at the same time absolutely unconnected to anything, like space. One of my favourite words in Sanskrit, आकाश: space, not sky. The definition of space is that which accommodates. When we look at it, what is it that space does not accommodate? Our bodies, plants and animals, huge oceans, the countless stars, our planet, the Milky way, other Suns and galaxies that have not yet been discovered. Space is in and through everything, but at the same time, remains unconnected to them. It transcends everything.

As human beings, we feel a sense of difference from the other, contributed in a large measure to the sense organ of touch, which is present all over the body. It is a blessing because we can come back in one piece after going out, and not wonder if we left one hand, back in the market!

Because we see ourselves as different from the other, even close people, we seek a connection to bridge the gap. When the connection is fractured or is not there, we don't feel understood and again seek to build the connection by complaining, nagging and occasionally sharing what we need and want from the other person.

Jill Bolte Taylor, a brain scientist suffered a brain stroke and has captured her journey, from the observation of her own brain deterioration to the eight years of recovery, in her book – A Stroke of Insight. In the parts of her brain that were damaged, one miniscule part was that which is responsible for us sensing difference between oneself and the other, and so she found herself having a sense of connectedness with everything and her own body, what we try to achieve by being in nature and with some people or in our happy moments. In her book she says 'Knowing that I am a part of the cosmic flow makes me feel innately safe and experience my life as heaven on earth. How can I feel vulnerable when I cannot be separated from the greater whole? How I wish you could lose your emotional baggage, just like I did, and shift back into your natural state of joy! The secret to hooking into any of these peaceful states is the willingness to stop the cognitive loops of thought, worry, and any ideas that distract us from the kinesthetic and sensory experience of being in the here and now. Most important, however, our desire for peace must be stronger than our attachment to our misery, our ego, or our need to be right." She also highlights the power of meditation and prayer to feel the sense of connectedness which is born of an understanding based on reality. And the refreshing news is that we don't need to suffer a brain stroke to recognise and experience these things!

We recognise our undeniable presence as I am.
'I am' and hence I can think
'I am' is not a technique
'I am' is not a result of introspection
'I am' is not a result of meditation
'I am' is not a belief
'I am' inspite of my past
'I am' and hence my education and accomplishments
'I am' despite my less than satisfactory accomplishments
'I am' and hence my emotions
'I am' and hence the memories – good, bad or ugly
'I am' and hence I recognise connections
'I am' and hence I can have relationships

Really speaking, 'I am', the sense of presence is unconnected to all that I am associated with and at the same time is connected. Everything else depends on I. That I am is self evident, I don't need any means of knowledge to say that I am. What I am, is discovered in Vedanta.

There are different types of sambandha, connections, like the connection of cause and effect, the connection of means and ends, the connection by relationship, the connection by time and place and so on. In spite of His being everything and all-pervasive, Parameśvara is free from all sambandha, connections. This is the nirguṇa aspect and shows His transcendental nature.
He is known through the yogas, disciplines told in the various śāstras, He is known as Sarvayogavinissṛta.

104. Vasuḥ (also words 270, 696)

वसुः

i. The indweller. ii. The one in the form of the eight vasus.

There are eight vasus mentioned in the śāstras. They are a category of celestials beings who are exalted jīvas. Some of them are Agni, Vayu, Apa and Prithvi. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā, 'among the vasus I am pāvaka, fire' (10.23). So He is the one, who is in the form of these eight vasus and among them in the form of Agni,fire. Agni is the great purifier and also the presiding deity of speech. That which makes any kind of speech possible. Speech in the form of knowledge can illumine what is not known, in different disciplines of knowledge. We have seen that our speech can make or break relationships. The Gita talks about vak tapas, discipline of speech. It is not enough for the person to speak the truth. For speech to qualify as tapas, a discipline it needs to meet four requirements: 1. Speech needs to be true, satyam, 2. Speech needs to be pleasing, priyam 3. It needs to be beneficial to the person, hitam and 4. It need not cause agitation, anudvegakaram. 5. Recitation of our Veda or studying the Shastra.

In the name of being truthful, a lot of us can be blunt and blurt out things because of inner pressure. That is not vak tapas, that is speech that creates a lot of heat and bruised egos! Some of us can be very pleasant and beat around the bush, not getting to the point of speaking the truth. That also is not vak tapas. We pay attention to what we say as we want to live an awareful life, practising ahimsa to the extent we can. If we find that people hurt us, we want to find a way to express our hurt in a way that takes responsibility for our own emotions and share with the person what we require. A good template with respect to a disturbing situation for conversation, is I observe you doing this……(observation is different from a judgment – You are so stupid)… I feel…My needs and thoughts related to this are these …..I request you to ….. And to check with the other person as well about his/her needs/thoughts/feelings. This kind of a template keeps the conversation going and mutual expectations can be worked out. If one's speech only has fire but no light, then we know what happens.

Agni definitely has special glory. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that wherever there is any special glory 'may you recognize me there.' Therefore, one of the vasus alone cannot be Parameśvara. All the vasus are not separate from Parameśvara and their glory is His. Therefore, He is Vasu.

The Lord is called Vasu, because everything, all beings, elements and elementals, exists in Him; and also because He too exists in everything as the truth of everything.

105. Vasumanāh

वसुमनाः

The one with an excellent mind.

The Lord being the one with an excellent mind is called Vasumanā. What is this excellence of mind? A mind that is not subject to any frailties,–a mind that is not polluted by likes and dislikes, mada, kāma and krodha–pride, desire, anger and other emotions. Such a mind is

excellent and the one with such a mind is called Vasumanā. Here emotions are not being condemned.

A recent movie I recommend watching is 'Inside out' a 3D animated film set in the mind of a young girl, Riley, where five personified and animated emotions- Joy, Anger, Disgust, Fear and Sadness try to lead her through life as she moves with her parents to a new city. It is a light hearted look at how core memories and emotions can 'press our buttons' and lead us to react in ways that are unpleasant as well as make us act in ways that are helpful. Advice that is regularly doled out 'One should not have pride, anger', are honestly quite hopeless as they don't work. Most of us don't understand emotions and hence can be afraid of the intensity and what emotions can make us do. Emotions are a part of the order of the psychological order that is Īśvara.
Recognising Isvara as the very order of the emotions, as a result of cause and effect helps us understand them better. For instance, all of us struggle with anger as we feel helpless. We want a significant other to behave in a particular way, that does not happen and we get angry. Seeing the connection between our expectations of the person (realistic or unrealistic), and the actual behavior of the person is seeing a cause and effect connection. Every cause and effect, every emotion is Isvara. The more we dwell on this, we stop condemning ourselves and focus on doing what is needed in a required situation. We can then focus on constructive self expression and truly listening and accepting the other person's expression.

If God were subject to emotions like anger, then He becomes fallible. Īśvara is dispassionate and is in the form of laws and He goes by laws. He is ānandasvarūpa, pūrna-svarūpa, ever full. From the standpoint of our own human emotions, we say God is compassionate. Being in the form of law and order, God is infallible, not capable of any defect. Infallibility is not an attribute of Īśvara nor is it a judgment, because there is no question of His failing. What is infallible is Īśvara. Therefore, not being subject to these emotions, He has a praiseworthy mind and therefore, is Vasumanā.

106. Satyaḥ (also words 212, 869)

सत्यः

i. The Truth. ii. The one who is both the formed and the formless.

The definition of Satya is, that which cannot be negated. That which always IS. That which is the truth of everything and That which cannot be dismissed by anything in all the three periods of time, that alone is satya.

What is the truth of water? It is life sustaining from the practical standpoint and H20 from a chemistry standpoint. Still, what is the true nature of water. Is it Hydrogen? Is it Oxygen? No. If we look at the basic unit of water, the atoms, molecules, what is it that sustains it? What is it that makes water existent? What is its reality? When we look into its constituents, we find that the Isness or consciousness that sustains the atoms, the molecules etc., is real and that alone is real. So सद (sad) eva satyam. That which is the basis of everything, the truth of everything and that which cannot be negated at any time is satya.

We take any form in the universe, it is Isness + form. Even our own bodies are born in time, will die in time. The Isness that we are, the conscious being cannot be negated. The conscious being always is. We are conditioned so much by the conclusion that we are this limited mind-body only that we find it difficult to see the Isness, consciousness, satyam underlying everything. In ' an existent object', the use of the word 'existent' sounds like an adjective. But what is always here is, Isness or satyam. So what difference does that make to my life? Let Isness be there. So what? That Isness is you which is limitless, anantah. This is the whole purport of the shastra which has to be understood well.

A lump of gold is made into a chain, a coin, a necklace and so on. Even though there are many ornaments, what is there is only gold. Here gold is satya, independent of the ornaments. With reference to the chain, the gold buddhi, the understanding that this is gold, never goes away. When I buy a golden chain, the shopkeeper sells mainly based on the weight of gold, (plus the making charges). When I sell a chain, the shopkeeper sees only the gold. He does not see the sentimental value or the exclusive design and hence does not account for additional charges. The gold buddhi or cognition does not go away. The gold is the truth of the ornaments. But the truth of gold itself is consciousness. So, that which is always there is satya.

Space 'is,' Air 'is,' fire 'is,' water 'is,' earth 'is,' anything born of earth 'is.' Thus, the 'IS' never goes away and the "IS' is the consciousness which never goes away in all the three situations is satya. Time changes and it can be further divided. So, time vyabhicarati, goes away, but consciousness never goes away. Consciousness is satya. Sat eva satyam–existence alone is satya. That which is existence and consciousness is satya. Here the word Satya refers to Īśvara (in masculine gender), and so Īśvara is Satya.

What is mūrta, manifest with forms as fire, water, earth and other elementals is sat. What is amūrta, does not have a tangible form as air and space, are tyat. Both these are nothing but Īśvara. The Lord who is in the form of sat and tyat, that is, the formed and formless, is Satya.

Again, He is known as Satya because He is compassionate towards His bhaktas, who live a life of dharma.

107. Samātmā

समात्मा

i. The Self which is the same in all. ii. The one with an unchanging mind.

The Lord as the ātmā, does not undergo any change. It is always sama, always the same. But we see so many differences in people and situations. In fact, even in one person we see differences in moods, thoughts, body composition over days and years. We conclude we are different from each others because our focus is on the differences. Even in school examinations, one of the type of questions routinely asked was – Differentiate between two objects. Rarely do we develop an orientation to see the sameness in people. Differences means there is another different from me and the experience of difference increases our sense of duality. From the experience of duality comes much fear, anxiety of being overwhelmed, fear of not being good enough as compared to the other etc.

From the relative standpoint, any two people, say siblings of the same parents go through different set of experiences, perceive the same experience differently, still are basically human, have similar sets of emotions and abilities.

Atma is only one and that is 'I'. Suppose I say, I am Mr Iyer working in Bangalore in a software company and have two children. The moment I say I, all these identities came up because I know no better - My identity as a male, professional, identity based on location, nature of work, marital status and identity as a father. Atma I, when associated with one body becomes ahankara, the I notion which further is the jiva, individual. Recognising the jiva, the individual as a conscious being first, and then as satyam, as pure consciousness which is one without a second is the recognition of the Atma being the same in all. Does Consciousness have a particular location? Wherever there is a mind, consciousness is manifest. Manifest consciousness is seen as though it is a conscious being. The Atma is the basis for all beings.

What about the changes we see? Every change is a superimposition, a seeming attribute to the ātmā, while the ātmā itself does not undergo any change. It is nirvikāra. Therefore, the Lord is Samātmā. Since the ātmā is one and the same in all beings, there is no real difference between all the beings. Only attributes, forms and so on, bring about differences in the beings. Bangle, chain or ring, all of them are but gold. As the pratyagātmā, He is one and therefore, the same in all beings. Hence, He is Samātmā.

The word ātmā can also mean the mind. The Lord's atma, mind is not affected by rāga-dveṣas, like and dislikes. Hence, He has the sameness towards all beings. There is no question of partiality. So, He is known as Samātmā. There is a lot that is said in the Gita about cultivating samatvam, which we will see in later posts.

108. Asammitaḥ or Sammitaḥ

असम्मित or सम्मित

The immeasurable or the indeterminable or the determined.

After the previous name samātmā, the word compound, sandhi lends itself to split as samātmā and asammita or samātmā and sammita. The former reading is more popular.

Mita means that which is measured, limited. Those that have a form can be measured in terms of shape, length, height, weight and so on. What is measured is limited. Again things can be measured with reference to time and place. The Lord, being all pervasive with no form, cannot be measured in any way. He is Asammita, one who cannot be measured, whose limit cannot be shown in terms of time and space, or in any other way.

Our minds are accustomed to think in terms of images and this is how most learning takes place, which is wonderful. And hence when we say there is no location for Lord, we feel a bit lost. Because the mind cannot visualize, we tend to just drop further thinking on the matter. Let 's take joy as an emotion. It cannot really be seen. Its effects on people's faces, smiles and laughter, the way they approach their tasks can be seen. Just because it cannot be visualized, it certainly does not mean that joy does not exist. The ways of the mind are important to recognise so that we know we are not conditioned by it but it is always an object of my awareness.

The Lord is time and space. Where is the Lord? Which is His house? As the Lord is not in a particular time and place, there is no location for Him. If the Lord is in svarga only, then we limit the Lord by our understanding. Nothing else. While time, place and object, all of them are Parameśvara, He is Asammita, not being any one of them.

Further, He cannot even be compared to anything, measured against anything. The various means of knowledge can objectify only what is limited. But the Lord being all pervasive and limitless, cannot be objectified by any of the known means of knowledge. And so all attempts by Science to the find the God particle can never be conclusive as Science is based on perception and inference. Hence He is Asammita, immeasurable, indeterminable.

The other reading is sammita. The entire world of objects which has been created by Īśvara, reveals the existence of Īśvara all the time. As one whose presence is well revealed, well determined, through all things in the entire creation, He is Sammita.

109. Samaḥ

समः

i.The same. ii. The one ever associated with mā.

He is the same at all times, because He is free from all changes. All changes are brought about by prakṛti, the material cause. Since He is not limited by prakṛti, He is not subject to change. The Gītā points out that Brahman is nirdoṣa and sama, free from any change or defect and ever the same (5.19).

Atma is the truth of everything and always the same. It does not wax and wane like the moon. Despite changes in stages of life – childhood, youth, middle age and middle age (no old age) I am.
Despite changes in my lifestyle over time, I am (aham asmi).
Despite changes in my relationships, I am.
Despite changes in my emotions, I am.
Despite changes in the knowledge of different disciplines that have been acquired, I am.
Despite the changes in jobs and companies, I am.
Despite changes in my place of residence, I am
Despite changes in appearance and body structure, I am
Despite fitness or occasional ill health, I am
Despite all my experiences, I am
I am that invariable being, that is conscious of all the variations, changes in myself and my life.

Only if I were the same, unaffected by the changes, can I truly recognise something as a change. Through the many disciplines such as Ashtanga Yoga, Karma yoga as a lifestyle, meditative methods, adventure sport and many others we prepare our minds to be with the teaching of that invariable I, Atma that is free from all changes. Atma is not affected by any of these methods. Atma is ever free and ever the same. To be able to discover what IS, the mind has to have relative clarity. The mirror that is free of dust can reflect the brilliance of the sun.

Being always associated with Mā, Lakṣmī, the Lord is known as Sama.

110. Amoghaḥ (also word 154)
अमोघः
The one whose worship is never in vain.

Mogha means in vain, useless. Amogha means not in vain or useless. The Lord when worshipped, praised or remembered, gives all the results desired by us. He never lets our prayers go mogha, vṛthā, in vain. I hear a 'but'. We may make many saṅkalpas. But, when they do not work, we think it is a failure. Actually we are set on a particular result, not fully appreciating that the results are never in our hands.

Let 's say, we are expecting a job promotion. I prayed for it. It did not happen. See, Lord does not answer my prayers. A job promotion depends on so many factors – my annual performance which includes my relationships with the bosses and peers, performance of the company, current policies and guidelines for promotion, comparative performance of my peers, current economy position etc. Answer to the prayers does not always come in the way we want, when we want and how we want. There may be a change in timing, decrease/intensity in result, new variables entering the picture or even my desire for the promotion no longer as intense as before.

Every saṅkalpa of Īśvara, is a satya-saṅkalpa; it is converted into a reality. This entire jagat is the saṅkalpa of Īśvara. But, for Īśvara there is no saṅkalpa, which becomes a failure. Whatever is Īśvara's saṅkalpa, that becomes a reality. This is often extended to wise people in our tradition. We believe that what is uttered by them comes true.

Any kind of karma done to invoke the grace of Īśvara, will definitely produce a karma-phala. If you remember Īśvara and recognize his glories, for that recognition, there is a dṛṣṭa-phala, visible result and also an adṛṣṭa-phala. When you see a flower, there is a flower thought. At the same time there is another thought that recognizes that the flower is nothing but the glory of Īśvara. This is Īśvara-smaraṇa. You are immediately connected to Īśvara, and this is the dṛṣṭa-phala.

When you are appreciative of Īśvara, that thought of Īśvara, connects you to Him and not to saṃsāra. This connection is permanent, because it is the devotee who is the basic person. It is the devotee who plays the different roles. So, it is a connection between the Lord and the devotee. It is the devotee who plays the various roles as father, son, brother, businessman, and so on, then there will be no problem. As the devotee, the responsibilities carried forward in the respective roles becomes an offering to Īśvara. And if it is to be an offering, there is no half heartedness or 'chalta hai' attitude.

In a forest, the individual tree is a part of the forest. It is connected to the forest and is interrelated with other trees in the forest. Basically, you are a devotee, who is connected to Īśvara. Your father, mother, uncle and so on, are also related to Īśvara in the same way. If the awareness of the basic person in retained, then role-playing becomes very easy, because there is space between the person and the role that he assumes. And, where there is space, there is also leisure. This space is not a physical space, but it is a space born of awareness. In a play, when a

person plays the role of a suffering hero, there is space between the suffering hero and the actor. This is not physical space.

So, the basic person is a devotee and until the awareness of the basic person is there, one will have to think of Īśvara every now and then. You see a flower and then, with another thought, you voluntarily invoke the thought of Īśvara. Even for the thought of Īśvara, there is a dṛṣṭa-phala. You are basically connected with Īśvara, never unconnected. If that connection goes, because of your non-recognition, then you are alienated from the total. Thereby you become an isolated individual.

Thus, for every thought of Īśvara, there will always be a dṛṣṭa-phala, a feeling of connectedness and security. There is also an adṛṣṭa-phala. Therefore, na vṛthā karoti, na moghaṃ karoti–He never makes our prayer or remembering Him ever go waste. That is why the Chāndogyopaniṣad speaks of Him as 'satyakāma' and 'satya-saṅkalpa'(8.1.5).

111. Puṇḍarīkākṣaḥ

पुण्डरीकाक्षः

i. The one who pervades the lotus of the heart. ii. The one with lotus-like eyes.

Puṇḍarīka is the lotus of the heart. He pervades, fills up the lotus of your heart, buddhi. This Lord is recognized in one's own heart, that is, in one's own buddhi. When a child referring to the mess of toys, sheepishly says that 'I did it', or a corporate professional thumps his chest in victory over the latest sales figures, saying 'I did it', both of them point to the region of the heart. Nobody points to the top of their head saying, 'I did it.' Athough the recognition of 'I' is all over the body, it is identified in the region of the heart.

There He manifests as the ātmā, 'I', giving sattā and sphūrti, existence and consciousness, to the ahaṅkāra, and also to every thought that is there. Thus, the hṛdaya-puṇḍarīka, the buddhi, is pervaded by Parameśvara as is everything else. But this is where He is recognized as both sat and cit, existence and consciousness. Hence, He is known as Puṇḍarikākṣa.

Also because His akṣiṇī, eyes are like the puṇḍarika, lotus, He is known as Puṇḍarīkākṣa. This form is given for upāsana, meditation.

112. Vṛṣakarmā

वृषकर्मा

The one whose action is of the nature of dharma.

Earlier the meaning of vṛṣa was pointed out as dharma. Therefore, Vṛṣakarmā is one whose karma is puṇya-karma or dharma-karma.

In a small kingdom, the King was fed up of the constant in fighting between his people. There was constant blame and accusations amongst his many departments and nothing got done. Not much has changed given the current political scenario. Anyway, the King asked the Minister to do something. The Minister, assured the king that he would and got a tank constructed at the top of a hill. The height was such that one could put stuff into it but not see what was in the tank.

The Minister then suggested to the King that a member of each family, pour a glass of milk in the tank, by going up a ladder, leaning against the tank. On the assigned day, the various members from each family with their covered glasses proceeded to the tank, and just as they climbed the ladder, removed the glass covers and poured the contents of the glass in the tank. Soon after the minister called the King and suggested that the King climb the taller ladder by which he could look into the tank.

The King trusted the Minister and climbed the ladder. When he reached the top he saw that the tank was full of water. The subjects had been asked to pour milk and it looked like all had poured water. He was shocked and when he came down the ladder, told the people that there was only water in the tank. He asked them to repeat the instructions they had received. All of them staring down sheepishly said that they had been asked to pour milk. The King then said,' If that was so, then how come all that is there in the tank is water.' Unable to bear the silence of all gathered, one child shouted aloud, "My father said that we need not pour milk as no one will notice. Why should we contribute? The others will contribute anyway."

We are often busy pointing out who follows dharma and who does not in different situations, sometimes trying to duck responsibility in doing our karma in line with dharma. Then we also have excuses about why we need not contribute to our families, societies and even our country, totally forgetting about our role as a citizen of the country. Some of our excuses are – 'What difference will my contribution make?, it is just a drop in the ocean, Somebody or the other will contribute, Nobody contributed to my life; Nothing is going to change anyway' etc etc. Whatever it is, what is our contribution in the many roles we play, is something to really think about and act upon.

The Lord is not stingy nor holds back in his contribution to us at all. If our parents, caregivers and teachers held back in their giving with the above excuses, we would not be where we are today. We recognise that all that we have is given. We give because we have been blessed. Every result of punya karma helps us to recognize him. As the result of puṇya-karma experienced, there is sukha, ānanda; there is pūrṇatva. In that ānanda, it is the pūrṇa-ātmā that is experienced, and recognized by the wise people.

As if to set an example, in His avatarās, all His karma is dharma-lakṣaṇa, based on dharma. Hence He is Vṛṣakarmā.

113. Vṛṣākṛtiḥ

वृषाकृतिः

The one who takes a form for dharma, or whose form is dharma.

His ākṛti, form, is for vṛṣa, for the sake of dharma. Hence He is known as Vṛṣākṛti. The Lord says in the Gītā, 'dharma-saṃsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge–for the sake of protection of dharma, I am born in every yuga' (4.8). The śarīra that He takes, is in keeping with the way in which dharma has to be protected.

Perhaps only in the Hindu culture is the understanding and presentation of dharma to such a great depth that it is a purushārtha, a human goal. Wearing a Raymonds suit does not make a person a

complete man or a complete person. One grows into a complete person where acts of dharma are spontaneous. If dharma is a purushartha, it does not sub-serve our pursuits of security and pleasure, artha kama. Dharma is not a matter of convenience or comfort. It, in itself, is an end to be achieved. One has to, by one's own initiative, grow into that person for whom dharma is an accomplished end.

One begins loving what one has got to do, and not what one loves to do. If one loves what is to be done, not whining and complaining, the growth is complete. Initially there could be murmured whining and lamenting, still one tries to fulfill one's responsibilities. Sometimes in the new found love for dharma, we may do a good job in fulfilling our duties towards others, but not towards ourself. Basic nurturing and care for oneself in thought, word and deed is a very important part of svadharma.

If one does only what one loves to do, irrespective of its implications on others, that is not an accomplishment at all; even the animals do that. Further, if one goes with one's fancy, much like the child at the toy shop, it does not take time to grow out of what, one once loved. Our life is full of these situations. Therefore, growth lies only in loving what I do in a given situation. As a father, as a mother, as a husband, as a wife, as a son, as a daughter, as a citizen, as an employee, there is so much to grow into. That is what the challenge is. One has to have that kind of challenge. With that, one can be quite alive and fresh. There is no retirement here. This is the initial growth that one has to accomplish before self discovery. We seek the grace of the Lord for this.

The Lord is Vṛṣākṛti because vṛṣa that is, dharma itself is His ākṛti, form. He alone is in the form of karma, karma-phala, which is puṇya and pāpa and also the connection between the karma and its phala. He alone is in the form of the sādhana and sādhya. Puṇya and pāpa translate themselves into all situations. If the result of good karma is ānanda, then in that ānanda, Parameśvara is there. Therefore, you can experience Him at all levels. By chanting the thousand names of the Lord, you are not allowed to go away from Parameśvara at any time. As you see the meaning, you can never be alienated from Him.

114. Rudraḥ

रुद्रः

i. The one who causes tears. ii. The one who removes the tears.

He is Rudra because He makes people cry when He withdraws them at the time of pralaya, total dissolution.

Rud is sorrow. Because He gives grief, He is Rudra. As the very karma phala, giver of the fruits of actions, He gives unpleasant situations for pāpa-karma. Through these, He gives grief and makes people cry. In certain regions, God is presented as only love, compassion and the one having only wonderful qualities. Anything that is evil, terrible and bad is the Devil. God and the Devil are separated to such an extent that it almost seems that both have equal power. But what is interesting to note, is that the Devil is a fallen angel.

Even in modern psychology, that a saintly person is capable of murder is a known fact. It is another thing that the person will not do so unless in exceptional circumstances. Every person has, what we call a shadow personality, which refers to all the negative things the person is capable of doing. Despite our many wonderful qualities, all of us have the ability to be nasty, rude, selfish and mean to others. A lot of the times we may be unaware. Sometimes we are aware yet the power of the unconscious mind takes over and we find ourselves saying, 'Control nahi hota hai'(I can't control my desire for this), much like the actor in the TV commercial for Lays chips. In each person, both the set of opposites exist and understanding this contributes to our sanity. We become less judgmental of others, because we know that once we cross what is our tipping point, we are equally capable of something violent. Carl Jung, a famous psychologist included both good and evil in his understanding of God but he could not trust in God because God who could do good could also do bad.

We have no such problem. God is self existent consciousness which is the basis of everything, including time and space and hence there are two orders of reality: that which is absolutely real which cannot be negated and that which is functional reality, which depends on the absolute reality. Our relationships are dependent on our relative roles which are further dependent on the person.

What is the reality of the person? That invariable conscious being which can relate or not relate in relationships, who is above both likes and dislikes. Likes and dislikes are with reference to a person, situation or object. It is only a standpoint. Some people love karela, bitter gourd and some people cannot stand it. Despite being a person who has likes and dislikes I see myself, as a conscious being above and free from likes and dislikes. Being the infallible law of karma, Isvara is above right and wrong, which means that he can be both right and wrong. In fact, right and wrong are part of the order that is Isvara.

We say if God was almighty, how come there is so much suffering? The suffering that we see is due to the abuse of human will. The laws are infallible, not subject to defect. If I put my finger in the fire and complain, 'It burns me, Lord is so unfair,' people will think I need to be in a special place. Wrong doing by whoever will lead to consequences, which are ugly and painful because of the principles that are based on cause and effect. Because we are interconnected, somebody else 's mistake could lead to my suffering and vice versa. Because of this recognition, I use my will well.

Ru is sorrow or its cause. He removes our sorrow, our tears and their cause and so, He is Rudra. Rudra-abhiṣeka and chanting of the Śrīrudram (11 verses that reveal the Lord as Rudra asS all) occurs in the Śukla and Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda. It is also the greatest prāyaścitta, atonement that anyone can do. Even great pāpas can be removed by chanting the Śrīrudram with śraddhā. The name Rudra generally refers to Lord Śiva, but is used here for Lord Viṣṇu. The Lord is one and here He is invoked as Rudra.

115. Bahuśirāḥ

बहुशिरा

The one who has many heads.

Lord Viṣṇu has many heads and is called Bahuśirā. The Puruṣa-sūkta talks of Him as Saharsa-śirṣā puruṣaḥ–that puruṣa is thousand-headed. The word thousand really stands for countless. This is much like saying, thousands have assembled at Nasik for the Kumbh mela

Each human body is a perfect chemical factory. Most things are ingested and digested with the help of so many chemicals, converted to energy, and for some of us fat and more fat. There is no further evidence than the body to say thought produces matter. A thought produces sweat, another kind of thought produces endorphins or what are referred to as feel good hormones, a worrying thought produces cortisol, which adds to the stress. A calming thought leads to an overall sense of well being. Such is the power of thought, that it can also produce matter. The head is the most important part of the body and hence the head is nothing but Parameśvara. Every limb or part is Parameśvara, but here the head is specially mentioned as the uttama-aṇga, the important part of the body.

Our puja ritual is deeply symbolic. There is a section called Atma Puja or worship of the self. while chanting a mantra which says –

deho devālayaḥ proktaḥ jīvo devassānātanah
tyajedajñānaanirmālyam so' ham bhāvena pūjayet

The body is the temple. The jiva is the deity of this temple since beginningless time. May one remove wilted flowers that are looked upon as ignorance and worship the Lord with an understanding that he is non-separate from himself. Even if people do not have a habit of doing puja, I would really suggest that you commit this beautiful verse to memory.

This culture had a verse chanted at the time of puja every day, which is not referring to one as a sinner or a good–for- nothing nor the poor fellow who has to become worthy of something. When one dwells on the above meaning, where is the scope to have poor self esteem? Where is the scope to abuse the powers of one 's body? Where is the scope to think of oneself as hopeless and worthless?

The Lord alone is manifest as the various bodies and everybody has a head. With thousand heads and thousand feet, how can He be lodged in your heart? Because puruṣa eva idaṃ sarvam–all that is here is puruṣa alone. This is not puruṣa, the person but the conscious being. What was before, what will be in the future and what is now, everything is puruṣa, who is here, and who obtains in the heart.

116. Babhruḥ
बभ्रुः
The supporter.

He supports and sustains everything, all the lokas and hence, He is Babhru. The Śrīrudram also refers to the Lord as Babhru.

To discover our support system in this world. I want to suggest a quick paper-pencil/pen exercise. This is only for yourself and there are no right or wrong answers. Draw yourself in the centre. Around yourself, try and draw a symbol in reply to the following questions asked:

Who are the people I depend on for finances
Who are the people I depend on for emotional support?
What are my strengths as a person?
What are my daily practices that contribute to my overall well being ?
What are the principles of dharma that I follow unscrupulously in my actions?
Which are the places in this whole wide world that I feel safe, cared for and protected?
Which are the positive memories from the past that I carry forward with me?
Which are the situations that I feel totally accepted and understood?
While dealing with difficult situations what can you tell yourself that helps your move forward?
What about myself, am I really proud of?
What is my relationship with Isvara like?

If done, this exercise is a great support to recognise how the Lord is available to us as himself as well as the many, many supportive factors in our life. Much of the reason we feel alienated and not understood is because we have not discovered our dynamic, support system. We move forward with these supportive factors in our life, despite the varied and many constraining conditions. That is the only way to move ahead!

If I feel that the world is too much to handle, it helps to visualise oneself in a bubble, not a bubble that will burst but a protective bubble that is the support that is Isvara.

A hugely respected and wealthy king, on a sudden impulse, asked the people present in the assembly to grab what they thought was most valuable in the palace. The quicker they did that, that valuable was with them for life. Trying to make the most of their sudden, unexpected fortune, people rushed to grab. A young girl quietly went and held the King's hand. People were shocked. The King asked her, what made her do this. She replied " All the treasures of our kingdom are present and sustained because of the order that you have established and the powers you have. The other valuable objects in the assembly may sustain me for a short time. I recognise your power that comes from knowledge and competence. You are with me for life and I hope to learn from you. " The King had found his Queen, while the others rued their short term focus.
He alone supports this world in the form of the many Avatars - Ādi-varāha, as Kūrma, as Ananta and others.

117. Viśvayoniḥ (149)
विश्वयोनिः
The cause of the entire jagat.

Most religions acknowledge God as the intelligent, almighty, all knowing God. That sounds okay. But what about the world? The world, they say, is some other stuff and God exists out of it. This requires some basic thought and not swallowing of beliefs. If God was almighty and created the world, where did he get the material? Either from himself or from outside. If he got

the material from outside itself, there must be another God that is governing the use of the material. That makes our God quite incompetent and subservient to the other God.

But God is all knowing and almighty and hence necessarily, he got the material from within himself. We see Parameśvara as both the intelligent cause and the material cause. What does that mean? Former President of India and a deeply inspirational leader, AP.J.Kalam who left us with a rich legacy of dreams and actions of building India, said "Thinking should become your capital asset, no matter whatever ups and downs you come across in your life." Let ‘s do that.

To help assimilate the Lord as the cause, we have a mundane, web-like example of the spider. The spider weaves his web in small nooks and crannies. Where did the spider go shopping for the material for his house? Well, actually he did not need to. He had the material himself. Had he stocked the material from his parents? Was it a legacy that Mummy and Daddy Spider left behind? No. The spider itself produces the material. Then which University did the spider go to, to study Architecture of building in precarious conditions? The spider did not need to. He was blessed with the intelligence to create a web, generally symmetrical, making the most of the available space. The spider is both the material and intelligent cause of his creation.
The reason we consider everything sacred is because even the material cause is a manifestation of God. In our vision, Parameśvara is the undivided cause, both material and intelligent cause of this jagat. Hence for us there is no sacred –secular divide, nor a matter-spirit divide nor a sentient-inert divide. These divides exist for functional reality purposes and we recognise it to be so.

Īśvara is both the intelligent and material cause of the entire jagat. Yoni means womb. The world is born of Īśvara and hence, He is called Viśvayoni.

118. Śuciśravāḥ
शुचिश्रवाः
The one with pleasant and purifying names.

The Lord has śravāṃsi, names that are pleasing and worthy of hearing. When we hear the various names, words revealing the Lord, we find that all the words are very pleasant to hear and we want to keep hearing them.

Any name is word and meaning. The word and meaning go hand in hand. Suppose I say table, most people will have an image of a table based on their concept of a table depending on the kind of tables they have seen. These could be 4 legged, 3 legged or 2 legged. The minimum requirement for a table will be a surface that is mounted on atleast 1 leg. Each word reveals a certain meaning.

Endearments we often use for each other in different languages – my dear, sweetheart, love etc, make us feel loved and accepted. But if any of these words were to be used for many other people, then God forbid. It dents our need to feel significant and special. However, any word for Bhagavān includes me. I am never away. The isolation and alienation I experience is purely that – experience. It is not the absolute reality. I experience a blue sky like ceiling but I know that the

sky is not really blue. What I experience and what I know about the experience are two different things – what I know is more enduring than the experience of it. Suddenly if I see the sky with a riot of colors – orange and yellow, near the setting sun, I won't think that the earth is in danger because the blueness of the sky went away. Despite my experience of a differently colored sky, I know a little about refraction of light and how that contributes to us seeing colors. Despite my experience of isolation from Bhagavān or people around me, if I discover the Lord as pervading me through all the orders and prinicples, I understand myself better. These names of Viṣṇu Sahasranamā reveal the nature of Bhagavān and in so doing, also reveal our reality.

The names for Bhagavān are pleasant and also sucīni, pure, and capable of purifying us when we hear or chant them. For suddhi, purification we take a bath. We also go on pilgrimage and take a holy dip for punya as well as engage in tapas, religious austerities to enable inner purification. This means growing out of binding likes and dislikes that color the mind. Now, without any travel, we can take a bath, snāna in the lake of our mind.

Mahabharata has something beautiful to say about this – One whose atma is the river, which is filled with the water of controlled living, fed by the lake of truthfulness, with a life of dharma as its banks, and with compassion for its wave, take a dip there, O son of Pāndu because the mind is not purified by water.

119. Amṛtaḥ
अमृतः
The Immortal.

He is one who has no death. He has no decay or death or old age; nor does He have any modifications. The śrutis talk of Him as 'ajaro'maraḥ–He is not subject to old age and is immortal' (Bṛ.Up.4.4.25, Kau.Up.3.8). This shows the essential nature of Īśvara.

120. Śāśvatasthāṇuḥ
शाश्वतस्थाणुः
The Imperishable and firm.

He is Śāśvata, one who is always existent, one who does not undergo change. In v. 2.20 of the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavān uses the same word Śāśvata for the Atma. Because the body has a form, the shape of the body is subject to change. Qualities of a person can be nurtured and cultivated. We experience change in intensity of emotion, from mild irritation to rage. Form and characteristic is subject to change but I, Atma am able to see that I am other than the body and mind. True, no one is denying the close association.

There is no beginning or end for Him is shown by this. He is also Sthāṇu, firm with no change at any time. There is no growth or decay. These two together constitute one nāma. He is imperishable and firm, kūṭastha, one who does not undergo change.

121. Varārohaḥ

वरारोहः

The best ascent.

Pujya Swamiji says - Ārohaṇa means mounting. Mounting a horse implies that you will have to dismount from the horse. Whenever you get into a car, then you will have to get out of the car. Thus, every ārohaṇa will have an avarohaṇa, every ascent will have a descent, as in music.

But Bhagavān is called Varāroha because ārohaṇa unto Him is vara, the best and ultimate. Having reached Him, one does not want to return and one does not return. He is the ultimate end, the ultimate goal, because there is no possibility whatsoever for return, for rebirth for those who have gained this end.

The Chāndogyopaniṣad says, 'na ca punaravartate–having reached it, one does not come back' (8.15.1). In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, 'yaṃ prāpya na nivartante, tat dhāma paramaṃ mama–by achieving whom there is no return, that end is My abode' (8.21). This achieving is by understanding His essential nature through knowledge. This is called ārohana, because one who thought himself as limited, now finds that he is the limitless Lord. When you understand that you are Īśvara, there is nothing more to accomplish. You become the altar of worship. Therefore, He is Varāroha.

The āroha, climbing on to which there is no getting down, is the lap of Bhagavān. Hence, He is Varāroha. Or else, He has the best āroha, the reclining place in the form of Ādiśeṣa.

122. Mahātapāḥ

महातपः

The one with great knowledge.

What a wonderful day to look at this word as we honor Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa on Guru Purnima.

Pujya Swamiji says - Generally, tapas means religious disciplines which involve a lot of will and effort and a lot of self-denial. One does tapas for fulfilling some desire and achieving some result. Bhagavān is the very end, the ultimate goal and He is pūrna and so, there is no need for Him to do this sort of tapas. Hence, tapas must have a different meaning here.

Here tapas means knowledge derived from the verbal root 'tapa ālocane.' It is said, 'sa tapo' tapyata. Sa tapastaptvā, idaṃ sarvam asṛjata' (Tai.Up 2.6). Before the creation of the jagat, Bhagavān did tapas and then created all this. Elsewhere it is said, 'tad aikṣata–before creation He saw' (Chā.Up.6.2.3). The word tapas is used again in the Taittirīyopaniṣad.

Bhṛgu, the son of Varuṇa wanted to know what is Brahman. He went to his father and said 'please teach me what is Brahman.' The father gave him a definition and asked him to work on it with the help of tapas, enquiry. Having heard that, it is said that Bhrgu contemplated on it and came to a conclusion. But, he found his conclusion to be wrong and was taught again. Thus, he went again and again to his father and finally understood Brahman. Thus the word tapas is

repeatedly used here in the meaning of contemplation. Hence tapas is nothing but knowledge (3.1).

Therefore, tapas is knowledge and the means, that is, the enquiry is also tapas, because it is finally in the form of knowledge alone. The Muṇḍakopaniṣad says, 'yasya jñānamayaṃ tapaḥ– His tapas is in the form of knowledge' (1.1.9).

Again, at the level of Īśvara, what is this tapas, that is in the form of knowledge? It is the knowledge with reference to what is to be created. Īśvara visualizes what was there before creation. The knowledge about what is going to be created is the tapas here and it is mahat jñānam. Whatever was resolved at the time of pralaya of the previous kalpa, that alone has to be brought out now in the form of the present creation, in keeping with the karma-phala of all the jīvas to be created.

So creation presupposes knowledge and unless knowledge is there, there cannot be a creation. Īśvara, who is sarvajña, has the knowledge of the entire creation and this is the tapas that is talked about here. Therefore, this tapas, contemplation, as though, on the previous creation by Īśvara is mahat, great, because what is to be created is mahat. Because of His mahat tapas. He is Mahātapā.

The word tapas is also derived from the verbal root 'tapa aiśvarye,' and 'tapa santāpe.' Then, the Lord is Mahātapā, because His tapas is mahat–His aiśvarya, lordship is great and uninhibited and His pratāpa, strength and power, are so great that the adharmīs cannot stand against Him.

123. Sarvagaḥ

सर्वगः

The one who is all-pervasive.

The only thing that we are familiar with, which is seemingly all pervasive is space. Space is not air but accommodates air. Space accommodates the earth and all the galaxies. Space is also in the stomach when one is hungry, An interior designer and architect may say that they work with spaces, design spaces. Space is present in and through all experiences and events.

Wikipedia defines Space as 'the boundless three-dimensional extent in which objects and events have relative position and direction. Physical space is often conceived in three liner dimensions (length, breadth and depth) although modern physicists consider it, with time to be a part of a boundless four-dimensional continuum known as spacetime. The concept of space is considered to be of fundamental importance to an understanding of the physical universe. However, disagreement continues between Western philosophers whether it is itself an entity, a relationship between entities, or part of a conceptual framework.

The Taittiriya Upanishad clearly states that space is born from Brahman, the absolute reality. We consider space as an effect. Where there is an effect, the cause is not far away. Our minds generally think in terms of three dimensional realities. For us to fathom anything without space, seems difficult.

Here, Īśvara is the material cause of the entire jagat, which includes space and in that way He is all pervasive. Therefore, He goes everywhere and hence is Sarvagah. Being all-pervasive, He is not limited by space. He is not only in the heart of everyone as the pratyagātmā but also outside.

124. Sarvavidbhānuḥ

सर्वविद्भानु:

The one who knows all and lights up everything.

There are two words used in the Śāstra, sarvajña and sarvavit. Even though grammatically, both these words have the same meaning, they are technically used in different senses. Sarvaṃ brahma–everything is Brahman and if you know Brahman, then the 'I' is Brahman; there is no other Brahman. Brahman cannot be known indirectly because Brahman is you. Therefore, the one who knows himself as Brahman is called a sarvajña, because Brahman is sarva.

The Lord is sarvajña because He knows 'I am Brahman.' The jīva who knows 'I am Brahman' is also a sarvajña. Then, what is the difference between Īśvara and the jīva? Īśvara knows everything in detail; He knows every name and form with all the minute details. This makes Him a sarvavit. Thus, Īśvara is not only sarvajña, but also sarvavit. But the jīva only knows that everything is Brahman, but does not know all names and forms. Even of the things he knows, he does not know all the details. Therefore, the jīva can only be sarvajña but not a sarvavit; he only knows the 'sarva' in general, but not in detail.

Thus, the Lord is sarvavit, because He knows 'all' in general and in detail.

That which shines is bhānu. The Lord as Brahman, is self-shining like the sun. Generally, bhānu refers to the sun. In a relative sense, the sun does not require anything else to make it shine. So, it is self-shining and because of its shine, everything else like the moon shines. The moon is not luminous by itself, but shines after the sun. The sun not only shines but makes the moon and everything else shine after it. If we can appreciate this much about the sun, what to talk of the very cause of the sun?

Brahman lights up everything. The śrutis highlight this by saying, 'na tatra sūryo bhati na candratārakaṃ nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto' yamagniḥ–there, the sun, moon, stars, lightening and the various other sources of light do not shine, that is, do not light up that vastu. How will this agni, fire, light it up? Tameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṃ tasya bhāsā sarvaṃ idaṃ vibhāti–while all these sources of light do not light up the parātmā, ātmā lights up everything because it is self-effulgent and self-shining.

This mantra is chanted while doing ārati or dipārādhanā. While waving the camphor light, we say, 'how am I going to light up Bhagavān with this camphor light, when even the sun and so on cannot illuminate Him? This is really not to light up Bhagavān, but it is to light up our own buddhi. Our buddhi is steeped in ignorance and therefore, it needs the light of knowledge.

The mind and the senses shine after the light of consciousness. Light is an illustration because only in the presence of light, the eyes can see. Eyes can see the objects only when they reflect

light. But, light itself is lighted up by the eyes. Everything is picked up by the eyes. If the eyes are closed, the sun cannot reveal itself. The eyes perceive all forms and colours. Therefore, the light in the eyes light up everything. So too, the ears light up sounds, the nose lights up smells, the tongue lights up taste and the skin lights up touch. Perception, is possible for these sense organs because the light of the mind is behind them. The mind shines after the ātmā. What does the ātmā shine after? Ātmā is in the form of consciousness, which is self-shining, self-revealing. It lights up the mind and the senses and the entire world. This is the light of all lights which is self-effulgent.

In the Gītā also Bhagavān says, yat ādityagatam tejah jagat bhasayate' khilam… tat tejo viddhi māmakam–know that light that is there in the sun, illumining the whole world as Mine' (15.12). As the one who lights up even the sun, He is the real Bhānu.
So, He is Sarvavit, the one who knows all that is there in detail and He is Bhānu, self-shining and illumining everything like the sun. Both the words together as a word compound constitute one nāma.

125. Viṣvaksenaḥ

विष्वक्सेन:

The one surrounded on all sides by armies.

Viṣvak means everywhere, on all sides. So, the armies of Bhagavān are everywhere, on all sides. Looking at it from the Purāna standpoint, the senas, the armies of the asuras flee in all directions being frightened of Bhagavān and hence, He is Viṣvaksena. But we can look at this nāma with a deeper meaning.

All that is here is Īśvara. How does one account for the results of one's actions? The results of any action is subject to what is person centred, what is other centred (other people and situations) and centred on the devatas. To help understand this, we look at Īśvara from three standpoints. What is centred on the ātmā, the individual, is adhyātmā. When looked at from this standpoint it is ādhyātmika aspect. Here the word ātmā means the body-mind-sense-complex with the hands, legs, feet, eyes, ears, mind, heart, lungs, stomach and so on. All the laws and principles that are responsible for the functioning of the body-mind-sense-compex – one's breathing, digestion, assimilation, reasoning, sensing, dancing, singing, memories etc

What is centred on the external world of people and things is adhibhūta and when looked at from this standpoint, it is the ādhibhautika aspect. My eyes see and all other eyes see too. There is a basic order behind this. It is the same with the ears hearing, with the tongue tasting, the skin feeling and so on. These are governed by a total order. If there was no order or similar governing principles, we could never have had disciplines of opthalmology or even any Ear-Nose-throat specialist. These specialists may study some sample specimens and some people's eyes. They don't need to study all the eyes in the world. The theory studied applies to all. The ādhyātmika function of the eyes, is meant to see the external forms and colours which are ādhibhautika, born of the elements. Thus the ādhyātmika and ādhibhautika are connected.

With Īśvara being the upādāna-kārana, material cause, everything is His manifestation. And everything is governed by the laws of Īśvara, who is the nimitta-kāraṇa. If we look at Īśvara as the nimitta-kāraṇa, the intelligent cause then Īśvara becomes the adhisthāna-devatā of all the laws. This is the ādhidaivika aspect, centred on the devatās.

Thus we look at Īśvara as ādhyātmika, ādhibhautika and also ādhidaivika. The laws are many and hence, the adhisthāna-devatās of the laws are also many. These devatās constitute adhidaiva. For a particular problem, a specific devatā can be invoked; this is invoking the ādhidaivika aspect of Īśvara. These deities are countless and all of them function by the mandate of the commander, Īśvara.

The results of every single action of ours are subject to laws and principles governing all these three aspects. And hence, there can be no success or failure, really speaking. If this is understood there may be minor disappointments initially, until even that glides into a real appreciation of Īśvara. There is only a result of action born of these laws, wherein my effort is a contribution to the total result. Then, I can discovering what it means to be in harmony with myself, others and the whole.

Put in a different way these devatās are like the armies of Īśvara spread in all directions and hence Īśvara is called Viṣvaksena.

126. Janārdanaḥ

जनार्दनः

i. The tormenter of people. ii. The one sought after by people.

Some of us who have felt tormented and tortured by situations in our life and not known who else to blame, have zeroed in on who else, but the Lord. We have made him 'bali ka bakra'(idiomatic expression for sacrificial lamb in Hindi). Some will privately say, 'I always suspected that God was a sadist, deriving pleasure out of other people's pain. ' This stand is sought to be understood here. He is called Janārdana, because He chastises, inflicts suffering on the people. Does he do this to all? No, Only to those who follow adharma, by giving them the result of their pāpa-karma. Which pāpa karma? Of this lifetime? Well, of this lifetime as well as some of previous lifetimes. Janārdana does not mean that He goes about punishing and destroying everyone. Those who do pāpa-karma ask for it and they get it.

A person put his finger into the fire and got burnt. It is the fire that burnt because nothing other than fire can burn and it is its dharma, nature. But the fire did not burn, in the sense that the fire did not go after him, begging him to touch the fire. The person asked for it and he got it.

Our approach to actions that are not helpful are based on some of these justifications:

1. I don't have the habit of thinking from the standpoint of actions and consequences. I don't think, I just do' and then justify this unthinking stand.
2. I may focus more on the actions and not care about the consequences of actions. The inner pressure of experiencing 'what it feels like' takes over.
3. I may focus so much on the consequences (good, bad, ugly)of the actions that I am seized with inertia and thought paralysis that I just don't take any action

3. Or, I may not have considered the consequences of my actions. This accounts for the many impulsive actions or actions which I end up regretting later.

A really sustainable approach in many parenting situations or even coaching adults, is to focus on actions and consequences. This is one of the greatest gifts we can give our children and ourselves. Some people may argue that one will only be thinking, if we consider the possible consequences. Establishing the link between actions and consequences (both visible and invisible – adrsta) becomes very spontaneous after the initial deliberation and one is not afraid of action. The thinking about dharma, the laws and principles of actions and consequences, seamlessly walks in. It is extremely logical and contributes to our objectivity. We are actually being centred on dharma without being too moralistic about it, without coming up with an endless list of 'dos and donts'. This is better than trying to cajole, persuade, emotionally blackmail, taunt or make the child/adult submissive,

So too, as the karma-phala-dātā, it seems that Bhagavān inflicts sorrow when necessary, according to the laws of karma. However, the laws of karma are infallible. The fire burns whether a saint touches it or a person given to crime. He is the kartā of that action. But, because it is not His desire to do so, He is akartā too.

The verbal root 'ard' has also the meaning of yācana, imploring. The Lord is prayed to, sought after by devotees, He is Janārdana. They may seek Him as their purusārtha, which is seeking niśśreyas, mokṣa. Or they may seek from Him the abhyudaya-puruṣārthas, such as artha, kāma, and dharma–security, pleasure and the results of puṇya.

127. Vedaḥ

वेदः

i. The one in the form of the Veda. ii. The one who makes us know.

Bhagavān is in the form of the Veda and hence, He is Veda. As the Vedas are said to be His breath, they are not different from Him.

The Mahābhārata says, 'all Vedas, all disciplines of knowledge, all yajñas are nothing but Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone. Those brāhmaṇas who know Him thus, have (as though) completed all yajñas.'

Because He is the one who makes us know, He is Veda. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'I am the Veda itself. I am the author of the Vedas and I am the one to be known through the Vedas' (15.15). There is no way of knowing Īśvara, other than His introducing Himself through the Vedas, because any other means of knowledge is incapable of revealing Him. The means of knowledge like perception, inference and so on, can only reveal the objects in the world. Maybe I can look within. I can use the method of introspection. Whatever I look at, is colored by my subjective framework of seeing. It may be okay for me. Still, introspection is not a valid means of knowledge.

How does one arrive at the cause of the world? The pot is a created object and being a creation, it requires a creator. The clay itself cannot create the pot. It has to place itself in the hands of an intelligent, skillful and knowledgeable being to shape it into a pot. Whatever is created, whatever

is a product, should have a creator. The pot, a created object, implies a creator. Why? because it is a product like the cloth. Now we want to arrive at the cause of the entire world, which includes our body-mind-sense-complex and it implies a creation. Why? Kāryatvāt–because it is put together and hence, it is created. Therefore, this jagat should have a creator. Now in this reasoning, there is a defect. When you say it is created, should it have one creator or many?

Even though a single pot may have many creators, let us take the pot as eka-kartṛka, made by one creator. But we see that kāryas, products, like a palace, a mansion and so on, are aneka-kartṛka, having many creators – architects, masons, plumbers, electricians working. So too, we may say this jagat implies many kartās, because it has many, many parts. Even to make a car we require many people. Each part is made by someone and then they are all assembled together. So the only resort is what the Vedas say and what is said in the Vedas cannot be dismissed. So Īśvara has to introduce Himself and that is what He does through the Vedas. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'vedaiḥ sarvaiḥ ahameva vedyaḥ'–I am the one to be known through all the Vedas' (15.15). All the Vedas reveal the Lord alone. All the means and ends are the Lord alone.

The jagat implies a creator since it is created, and that creator, is Īśvara, as revealed by the śāstra. What the śāstra says, that alone is valid because it happens to be the self-evident me, Īśvara being self-evident. The nature of Īśvara is self-evident, self-revealing. Existence and consciousness is the truth of Īśvara. Everything else draws its being from that parātmā but at the same time, parātmā is transcendental. The connecting factor between parātmā and jagat is a power called māyā. These cannot be arrived at by us. Therefore, Īśvara, who is sarvajña, has to introduce Himself through the Veda. The words that introduce Īśvara in the Veda are the words of Īśvara.

Īśvara being manifest in the form of jagat, every discipline of knowledge is Īśvara, including the Veda. Therefore, the Veda is an upalakṣana, that is, it stands as the representative for all disciplines of knowledge. Veda means knowledge. Every knowledge is nothing but Īśvara. The entire knowledge, whether it is the knowledge of psychology or geology or about the heaven and so on, is Īśvara. Īśvara is the entire body of knowledge, being sarvajña.

128. Vedavit (also word 131)

वेदवित

The knower of the Vedas.

If the Lord is the Veda, then who is the vedavit, the knower of the Vedas? He alone is the Vedavit, because He knows the Veda and its meaning in the proper way; He has no doubt or misunderstanding.

Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'vedāntakṛt vedavidevacāham–I am the vedavit. I am the vedakṛt. I am also the vedāntakrt' (15.15). Here, vedāntakṛt means the guru, who is the vedānta-mahāvākya-upadeśakṛt–the one who teaches the mahāvākya. He is not the creator of the great equation that reveals oneness. If the guru thinks that the students sitting before him are fools and if he continues to teach them, then the question that begs to be asked is, who is a greater fool? The guru is Bhagavān and the student is also Bhagavān and the one, who is to be understood by all the Vedas, is also Bhagavān.

The Veda says ‘tattvamasi, you are that’ and the one who knows this, is vedavit. Why is self knowledge being highlighted? Because the human problem is one of self ignorance. So Bhagavān is both the guru and also the enlightened śisya. Every guru was a śiṣya before.

Thus, the Lord is the very Veda; He is the vedavit and also the guru. He is the śiṣya because ‘ahaṃ brahma’ is the subject matter of the Veda. Bhagavān says, jñāni tu ātmaiva me matam’ (7.18). ‘Not only am I all Knowledge, but I am also the vedya, the one, knowing which everything is known. The knower of the Veda is also me.’

129. Avyaṅgaḥ

अव्यङ्गः

The one without any deficiencies.

That which is devoid of an aṅga, a part, is vyaṅga. What is not vyaṅga, not devoid, deficient, of anything is avyaṅga. Bhagavān is avyaṅga because of He is full. Bhagavan is not wanting in any of the 6 fold bhaga - full with jñāna, aiśvarya, śakti, vairāgya, vīrya and yashas–absolute knowledge, absolute overlordship, absolute abilities, absolute objectivity, absolute strength, absolute valour, and absolute splendour.

Because all of us value the above qualities, we turn to people who have them. Yet, we know that while one may have these qualities, we know that they are not total; there maybe deficiencies. We experience much friction with ourselves and with others because we thought people had certain qualities and then we discover our disappointment. Not because people don’t have these qualities but because we were searching for the infallible, the one without any deficiencies.

We thought our parents were infallible, until one’s mother shouted out ‘lizard ’ looking towards the father, that he may do something. We thought one’s father was infallible until we heard him talk to his boss, hesitant and a little scared. We thought the teacher was infallible, until she kept quiet in front of the principal. We thought our friends were infallible until the next fight. We thought our boss was infallible until we saw him buckling under stress. We thought that our partner was infallible until the next misunderstanding. And this search for infallibility, the search for that one perfect person, one perfect situation when all will be well, continues. Until when? Until one discovers that what we were really searching for, was that infallible being, that being which is not capable of any deficiency, that being which is Bhagavān. All people including myself have wonderful qualities in relative measure and one can learn to appreciate and celebrate them objectively. I stop expecting the absolute from what is relative. When I am objective I learn to relax. As I discover the glory of Bhagavān, his qualities in absolute measure, with no lack or deficiency, manifesting in me and the world, I can’t help but relax.

Vyaṅga also means vyakti, manifestation. He is avyaṅga, not manifest, not available to the sense organs for objectification. The Gītā talks of Him as ‘avyakto’yam, He is unmanifest’ (2.25). Unmanifest does not mean nonexistent. The tree is not non-existent but unmanifest in the seed. He is of the nature of the self-evident consciousness, the very nature of oneself. This is a word that reveals the essential nature of Īśvara.

130. Vedāṅgaḥ

वेदाङ्गः

The one for whom the Veda is the aṅga, a part.

Bhagavān is also the Vedaṅga. To understand Bhagavān completely, the Vedas are required. Until I understand Bhagavān, I cannot accept myself. Universally we crave acceptance and fear rejection. Is n't it? In all our close relationships, we find a great deal of acceptance and in the not-so-pleasant relationships, we find that either we or others do not fully accept, but reject one part of us or we reject a part of them.

Identified with this human condition, we find that we struggle against every limitation. I am not happy being here, in one place. I would like to go there too, but having one body only, I reconcile with this situation. I find that I want to know so much, but my knowledge is limited. All children are waiting to grow up into adults and adults are wondering what was the hurry to grow up, they then look for ways to have fun, to return to the child-like state. I don't like the effects of time. So, we experience limitations in terms of place, time and knowledge.

The limitations of place and time are managed by understanding the order of Bhagavān. We recognise that the human body is subject to change, despite our best medical advancements, despite stem cell therapy and so on. We recognise that the wonders of the human body are sustained by the physical, physiological and psychological orders of Bhagavān? That I experience sorrow, disappointment, excitement are subject to laws of cause and effect. And all laws are the manifestation of Bhagavān.

I pray to the Lord to grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

How does the limitation of ignorance go? If I wish to know what is in front of me, I need to open my eyes. Unless I open my eyes, I cannot see. I can certainly imagine. I can have someone describe it to me. I have no doubt that I will see only when I open my eyes. When I open the eyes, I surrender to what the eyes show me. I don't doubt the eyes, unless there is something extraordinary in front of me. Even then, I say that I saw an unbelievable thing, in front of my very eyes. I have sought refuge in my eyes to see. This is easy to do as the eyes are a part of the body, my body. The Vedas are seemingly external to me and are wielded by a guru. I need to have shraddha that if I look into the Vedas with the help of the guru, I will see the truth of myself. This shraddha grows with time, because one explores all avenues and does not find anything as sophisticated and deep in clarity as the Vedas. The same attitude, I have with my eyes, I can transfer that attitude of surrender to the Vedas.

Through an aṅga, a part, the aṅgī, the whole can be understood. Therefore, the Lord is one for whom the Veda is aṅga and through this aṅga, the Lord who is the aṅgī, the subject-matter, is reached. Even the word aṣṭānga yoga, or what is referred to as the 8 limbed yoga, is for the angi, the person. Each anga is a means to an end. And so, in traditional understanding, neither pranāayama nor āsanas nor dhyāna is the goal, they are a means to an end.

The purāṇas give an imagery of Lord Viṣṇu, as the one who has the śabda, that is, the Vedas as His feet.

131. Vedavit (also word 128)

वेदवित्

The one who enquires into the Veda.

In the Bhagavad Gitā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the jagatguru, presents the entire essence of the Upaniṣads and hence, He is the Vedavit. The dhyana slokas say that if all the Upaniṣads are the cows, then the milkman is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The cows will not yield their milk to any passing person. Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone as Gopāla, the protector of the cows, can make them yield milk to the fullest extent. The calf gets the first drops of milk and in this case, Arjuna got the few drops of the essence of the Veda. Thanks to Arjuna for realizing the fundamental human problem and asking the questions, the ones who have been enquiring into the Veda, have also been blessed with the knowledge. Śrī Kṛṣṇa enquires into and analyses the entire Veda and presents the amṛta, the essence of the Veda, in the entire Gītā and therefore, He is called Vedavit.

If the Lord is Vedakṛt, the maker of the Vedas, He must also be the Vedavit, the knower of the Vedas. At the beginning of each kalpa, before creation, He enquires into, thinks over how the Vedas were in the previous kalpa and makes them. Therefore, He is Vedavit.

Because He is the one who enquires into the Vedas, in the form of Vedavyāsa and others, through the disciplines of phonetics, grammar, hermeneutics (śikṣā, prātiśākhya, mīmāmsā and so on, and arrives at the meaning of the Vedas, hence also, He is Vedavit.

132. Kaviḥ

कविः

The one who sees beyond everything.

A kavi is one who is able to see something more than what an ordinary person can see. So a poet is also called kavi.

Here when the Lord is called Kavi, He is a krānta-darśī, sees far, sees what our eyes cannot see and our ears cannot hear. He is a trikālajña, having knowledge of all the three periods of time; He knows not only what is, but also what was and what will be.

Īśvara, who is sarvajña, all-knowing, is the real kavi, because He is sarvadṛk, sees everything in all detail and depth. ‘Na anyaḥ ataḥ asti draṣṭā–there is no seer other than Him’(Bṛ.Up.3.7.23). The Īśāvāsyopanisad talks of Him as, ‘kavir-maniṣī’ (8) and the Gītā as ‘kaviṃ purāṇam aṇuśāsitāram’.

While most of us may not have the ability to look into the future, honestly, it does not matter. Most people who have the siddhih of looking into the future, that I have met, are scared of it as they cannot deal with scary details.

Still, as a human being, as a conscious being, I am the seer. We recognise our experiences to change, to be variable because I, the conscious being am in and through all of these experiences. When we say 'I am the seer, there is something to be seen.' And the seer is aware of or conscious of it.

I am the seer of all my experiences – from childhood to youth to adulthood.
I am the seer of all my emotions – irritation, boredom, anger, excitement, joy, pain, sorrow, anticipation, curiosity, jealousy, kindness, confusion, compassion, gratitude etc
I am the seer of all kinds of thoughts that lead to confusion, clarity, resolve, determination, logic and reason
I am the seer of all my desires – binding or non binding.
I am the seer of all my values – education, justice, efficiency, money, compassion, generosity,
I am the seer of all my pursuits in all areas – education, career, family, retirement
As the seer, I am the invariable reality while all else around me changes.
The reality of this seer is the same as that of Isvara.

133. Lokādhyakṣaḥ

लोकाध्यक्षः

The Lord of all the worlds.

Adhyakṣa is someone who presides, supervises. The president is called the adhyakṣa of the meeting. The Lord is the lokādhyakṣa because He presides over all the lokas, the worlds. The world loka has slightly different meanings depending on its derivation.

What is experienced by everyone is called loka. So, the one who presides over all the worlds and is also the witness of all the experiences is called Lokādhyakṣa, which is the Parātmā. Īśvara is also presented here as the pratyagātmā, the inner ātmā, and the antaryāmi, the one who resides within the individual. Īśvara, in His essential nature, is ksetrajña (Bhagavad Gita, Ch 13) and therefore, He becomes loka ādhyakṣa, presiding over our lokas, our own experiences.

I am present in all moments of my life. Maybe I am engrossed in something and may not recognise that I am present. Maybe I am too caught up with being in relation to my partner, my child, my boss that I forget, I am very much present. Maybe I am so disturbed by situations and people, that I want to forget myself. I may want to explore different ways and means to forget myself as I associate myself with deep hurt and pain. This must be understood as the identification with the thoughts of pain. In our lifetimes, we have had millions of thoughts. The nature of every thought is to come and go. Even if I try to hold onto a thought, something happens to distract or I just get plain bored. Who is present due to which all thoughts take place? I, the conscious being.

Our own experiences, which include the individual subjective experiences, constitute the ādhyātmika-loka. The fourteen worlds are the ādhibhautika-lokas. These are the different spheres wherein we can have desirable and undesirable experiences in different degrees. Īśvara is the presiding deity of both the ādhibhautika-lokas and ādhyātmika-lokas–the spheres of objective and subjective experiences. Even though each loka will have its own devatā as the adhyakṣa, He is the adhyakṣa for all the lokas. Hence, Parameśvara is Lokādhyakṣa.

We have an extraordinary ability to convert teaching into advice or criticism or feeling miserable about oneself. Some of us may think that the Lord may be the Lokādhyakṣa. But my life is still miserable. How do I recognise that I am in charge of my life? That I am not a helpless victim of fate, buffeted by the winds of destiny. To recognise that I am in charge of my life, I am the adhyakṣa, is quite simple. It involves identifying my priorities, the need behind the many pursuits of life in the areas: physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual and working towards these. For this, all of us have been endowed with iccha śakti (the power to desire), kriya śakti (the power to act) and jnana śakti (the power to know). What stops us from claiming our own powers? But…We become aware of our mechanical thinking in the form of 'But…I can t..I don't feel like..I don't want to etc. We need not feed the invalid 'But'. We focus on what we need to do to be in charge of our life with a recognition of Isvara. Being in charge means I can handle whatever happens with kausalam in karma and samatvam in my response to situations and people.

Or else, that by which one experiences is loka. The senses and mind through which we perceive, experience, are lokas. For all of them, He is the one who primarily presides. The Kenopaniṣad talks of Him as 'śrotrasya śrotraṃ cakṣuṣah cakṣuḥ manaso manaḥ–He is the ear of the ear, the eye of the eye, mind of the mind' (1.2). Without Him there is no eye; without Him there is no ear; without Him there is no mind. At the same time, He is neither the ear, nor eye, nor the mind. He is the one who lends sat and cit, existence and consciousness, to all of them and makes them function. Thus, He is the Lokādhyakṣa, presiding over the lokas of the mind and sense organs.

134. Surādhyakṣaḥ

सुराध्यक्षः

The Lord of all the devatās.

The suras, that is, the devas are the protectors of the world. They are the lokapālas, both as heads of the various worlds and also as adhiṣṭhāna-devatās of the various organs and functions of our body. And He is the Lord of these devas also.

In 1998, when Mrs M.S.Subbulaxmi, a highly revered Carnatic music vocalist was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India 's highest civilian honor by the then President, he did not clutch her throat in an attempt to congratulate her, because it is her vocal chords after all that create such divine sounds! He congratulated her and appreciated her service to the nation. The voice belongs to her. Her voice is a part and function of her, the whole person. Can we separate her from her voice? Each devata has a distinct function and at the same time He is the protector of protectors. These devatās are nothing but Īśvara and not separate from, Īśvara

While travelling in a speeding car with the windows down, when the weather is pleasant, an appreciation of the breeze, open sky, clear roads and other passing sights is an appreciation of a some forms, some manifestations. Many devatas are the protectors of all of these and the least we can do is pay attention and contribute to caring for ourselves, others and our surroundings.

135. Dharmādhyakṣaḥ

धर्माध्यक्षः

The Lord of dharma.

He is the ultimate giver of the result of action through the law of karma. In order to give the results in accordance with the actions, He directly sees what the actions are, whether they are in keeping with dharma or adharma, how much puṇya and pāpa have been accumulated.

When one's life is based on dharma, then all decisions in all areas of one's life – money, work, relationships, family, children, and possessions are likely to be based on dharma. On the other hand, if one is partner centred, meaning that the partner matters most to the exclusion of other areas of life then I am willing to go against dharma to keep the partner with me, which may include lying, cheating or continuing to be humiliated. Please note we are saying that all these areas are very important. Centred on means that we are obsessed with them and we don't care about the other areas of life. If I am work centred then my work consumes me and everything else – spending time with family, rest and relaxation is a total waste of time. If I am facebook centred, then unless I log on for a few hours every day, everything else is a distraction and irritation - people coming to meet me, going to work, doing my other chores If our life is not dharma based and we are not awareful enough, we will find that any of these or other areas can easily take over our life.

Being dharma based involves upholding universal values (kindness, empathy, productivity, compassion, justice, equality, love, inter-independence etc) in thought, word and action. By being dharma based, we consistently derive a high degree of wisdom, guidance and power, becoming more proactive and clear headed in our perspective and interactions regarding work, money, family, children, possessions etc. Our security comes from knowing that unlike other centres based on people or things subject to change, universal principles do not change. We can depend on them.

Dharma does not react to anything. Dharma does not get angry and treat us differently. These principles are not out to get us. Principles do not die. They are not here one day and gone the next, cannot be destroyed. Even in the midst of people or circumstances that seem to ignore the principles, we can be secure in the knowledge that principles are bigger than people or circumstances. Thousands of years of history have seen them triumph, time and time again.

And the best part is that Bhagavan manifests in every body as dharma, the insight, the recognition of the infallible law of cause and effect, law of actions and consequences, the voice that says what is the most helpful thing to do in every situation. Even a two year child shows this as she tries to wipe the tears of the doll that got hurt. Because of her empathy, she knows that when she falls down, it hurts and she cries. The doll is also likely to feel the same. She wipes away the tears (although imaginary) of the doll. The universal values of empathy and kindness are evident here. She did not learn about dharma in any university. It does not matter which culture she belongs to.

The Lord manifests in us as dharma and also is the dharmādhyakṣa, giving the results of our innumerable actions, that are based on dharma or adharma.

136. Kṛtākṛtaḥ

कृताकृत:

The one who is both the cause and effect.

What is done is kṛti or kārya, the product. The pot is a product of clay. Without clay, the cause, there is no possibility of a clay pot. Akṛta is the kāraṇa, the cause. That which is the ultimate cause is not created and hence akṛta. The causeless cause is Parameśvara. The Lord, as the ultimate cause, is not created and He is akṛta. Then what about the world that is kṛta? What is kṛta, done, created, is also Parameśvara. Therefore, Parameśvara alone is in the form of cause and effect.

If we take any cause-effect relationship, Parameśvara pervades it. One ‘s feelings of disconnectedness with some people is due to hurt, misunderstanding or just physical distance. Feeling disconnected is the effect and the cause could be one among several causes. Making an effort in connecting either through word or action, contributing to lessening of the disconnectedness again establishes another cause-effect relationship. Another cause-effect relationship is in the form of eating nutritious food and adequate exercise which contribute to good health parameters.

Hence it is said, when the para-avara-brahma, Brahman which is para as the cause and avara as the effect is known, then there is no more any ignorance of confusion. This is called darśana, knowledge. In this knowledge, all doubts disappear. By this knowledge, the knot or bondage of samsāra dissolves (Mu.Up. 2.2.8). So, Parameśvara is Kṛtākṛta–both the effect and cause.

137. Caturātmā (also word 769)

चतुरात्मा

The one who is fourfold in His nature.

At quite a few gatherings of world religious leaders where leaders are trying to prove their supremacy of their understanding of God, Pujya Swamiji has clearly outlined the fact. ‘There is no one God. One is subject to fraction. There is ONLY God. All that is here is only God’

So far we have heard of the Lord or Atma as one without a second. Then, where has this fourfold atma come from? We get this word from a presentation of the Atma in the Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad. There it is said that the ātmā has four quarters. The Upanisad points out first, that sarvaṃ oṃkāra eva–everything that is here is Om. Om is the name for Brahman and it is a
sound symbol.

Words reveal a meaning and so the word has to be understood. The approach to the word is from the standpoint of language. Om is derived from the dhātu, verbal root ‘ava rakṣaṇe’ which has the meaning of protecting. The one who is a source of blessing is Om. The one who is the sustainer, protector of everything is Om. We saw this word meaning in detail, in the beginning of these teachings. Please refer to the compilation document of the word meanings of the sahasranama, in the file section of this group.

Om is a sound symbol and it has three mātrās. The Upaniṣad further says, whatever was in the past, is in the present and will be in the future, that is Om alone; and whatever is beyond the three periods of time, that is also Om'(Mā.Up.1.1). So, at first it is said that Om is everything, and then, that Brahman is everything. In fact, Om is the abhidhāna, the name and Brahman is the abhidheya, the one pointed by the name. Pappu or Mr Ponnnepali Iyer, the name stands for a person. The name and meaning go together.

Brahman is everything. Now, what is this Brahman? The self-evident ātmā is Brahman. Again, who is the ātmā? The ātmā has four quarters. There is no quarter without one. So the 'one' alone is the quarter. From one standpoint it is the quarter. Then, from another standpoint, experientially, you have another quarter. But if you take any one of the quarters, it is incomplete. When this entire physical world is experienced by you in the waking state as the waker, you are called viśva, the waker ātmā. This whole world that obtains in the waking is adhibhūta and it also includes the adhyātma, that is, the body-mind-sense-complex. With reference to the individual, the ātmā is called viśva, the waker. The same ātmā with reference to the total is called virāṭ, the cosmic person.

In dream, a physical world which is only a world of thought is distinctly experienced and this is called the dream world or the sūkṣma-prapañca. (Even when you are awake you are aware of the sūkṣma-prapañca as when you are lost in day dream). With reference to the subtle body–prāṇa, indriyas and mind–the ātmā is called taijasa. At the total level, the same ātmā is called Hiraṇyagarbha. In sleep, the waking and dream worlds become unmanifest. This is a third sphere. With reference to this at the individual level the ātmā is called prājña and at the total level it is called Īśvara.

Now who are you? You are not the sleeper or the waker or the dreamer. The sleeper is not the waker or the dreamer. The waker is neither the sleeper nor the dreamer. The dreamer is neither the waker nor the sleeper. Therefore, in all this, there is a common entity, because in a quarter the 'ONE' is present. Ātmā is present in all the three states of experiences but ātmā is none of them. With reference to these three it is called the turiya, the fourth. But, it is THE ONE, because there is only one ātmā that is there.

At the total level it is called Virāṭ, Hiraṇyagarbha and Īśvara. What is the svarūpa of these three? It is Ātmā alone. And ātmā as the limitless consciousness is the fourth.
Ātmā is not any of these, whereas all these are ātmā. From its own standpoint, ātmā is satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma. Therefore, these are the four quarters mentioned in the śāstra. And from this standpoint, He is called Caturātma.

138. Caturvyūhaḥ (also word 767)
चतुर्व्युः
The one who has four manifestations.

According to Vyāsa 'Viṣṇu who is of great fame, manifests in four forms, Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, and carries on creation, sustenance and resolution.'

The four-fold vyūhas can be seen as the four-fold upādhis or the four fold-layers, which are sthūla-prapañca, the gross world, sūkṣma-prapañca, the subtle world and kāraṇa-prapañca, the causal world and the fourth which is not a layer. But, since three have been counted, we say that this is the fourth. In the Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad, it is said chaturtham iti manyante, it is considered as the fourth. Meaning it is not the fourth, but with respect to the three worlds, it is different and other than the three, that is Atma. May you know that.

It is like an actor who appears on the stage as a beggar, as a king and as a soldier. Who is the actor who played all these three roles? The actor is not anyone of the roles that he played. He can be all the three, because he is none of the three and all the three others, he is called the fourth. He pervades each of the three roles. He manifests in each of these roles. A state is that which you enter into and come out. So if it is said that the fourth is also a state, then you will come out of that state just as you come out of sleep. So ātmā is not a state. The states of experiences are variable and ātmā is invariable and ātmā is Caturvyūha.

139. Caturdaṃṣṭraḥ

चतुर्दंष्ट्रः

One who has four projecting teeth.

This is the form of the Lord in His avatāra as Naṛsiṃha. This form describes as aspect of the form of his avatāra as Naṛsiṃha; with the face of a lion and four daṃṣṭras, projecting canine teeth. Hence, He is Caturdaṃṣṭra.

It is worth recalling the explanation posted for the word - Nārasiṁhavapuḥ, Prahlāda is the son of Hiraṇyakśipu an asura, who won all the worlds and took himself to be the Lord. In his kingdom, everybody had to repeat only his name and nobody was to repeat the name of Lord Nārāyaṇa. His son Prahlāda, along with few other people went on repeating the name of Hari and singing the glories of the Lord. The father came to know about this, chastised him and forbade him to utter the name of the Lord. Prahlāda refused to listen to him and went on repeating the name of the Lord. The father tried many ways to punish and also to kill his son, but he could not do so. One day, the father confronted his son, asking him, 'where is the Lord Hari that you sing of?' Prahlāda replied that He is all-pervasive, He is everywhere. He is even in the pillar.

Hiraṇyakaśipu had a special boon granted to him. It was, that he should die neither inside nor outside the house, neither during the day nor in the night, neither on the earth nor in space, neither at the hands of a human being nor an animal, neither by a wet nor a dry weapon. These were all his conditions and when the boon was granted to him, he thought he was invincible.

Now, Hiraṇyakaśipu asked his son, 'Is your Lord Hari in this pillar?' and thus asking, he kicked the pillar. The pillar burst open and the Lord came out in the form which was neither that of an animal nor that of a human being. He had the head of a lion and the body of a human being. The time was neither day nor night, but twilight, just before night sets in. He sat on the threshold of the door, which was neither inside nor outside, and placed Hiraṇyakaśipu on his lap because he should not die in space or on the ground. He should not use any weapons, and therefore He used His nails to kill him. Again the finger-nails cannot be said as wet or dry. This is an avatāra. This story just tells us that with or without a form, the Lord blesses His devotees.

140. Caturbhujaḥ
चतुर्भुजः
The one with four arms.

This form is given as the devatā for upāsana, as an altar of worship. We invoke the Lord as Caturbhuja, as one with four hands. One hand has a śaṅkha, a conch, which is the call of the śāstra. The cakra in another hand is used for destroying the asuras. Asuras need not be outside. They can be kāma, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and mātsarya–desire, anger, greed, confusion and jealousy–which are born of one's ahaṅkāra.

Generally it is said that that if one is able to deal with desire and anger, the others are easier to deal with. Let 's look at Anger for now. Anger is a reaction born out of helplessness, pain and expectation. We expect certain things to happen and there is an obstruction between what is to happen and ourselves. In other words, between the desirer and desired, there is an obstruction. This blocks the fulfilment of what is desirable. Because of this obstruction, this desire is not fulfilled in the way we wanted or how we wanted and there is anger.

The easiest thing to say in response which is rather simplistic and innocent is 'don't have expectations'. This advice does not work. Not only am I upset about being angry. I am angry because I don't have control over my anger, This is a reaction to the first reaction. So, you can well imagine the amount of misery experienced. Reactivity and objectivity do not go hand in hand. Being objective to myself, my situations and people around me is the only way, whereby anger is not really an issue to be dealt with. Very often, we do not include obstructions in our expectations because we do not want them. But, life is full of obstructions. Even breathing has obstructions. Thinking definitely has obstructions, which is what "writer's block" is all about. The writer cannot get started but, once he or she has begun, it becomes easier and, eventually, the words begin to flow. Every road has speed breakers which will be seen as obstructions for fast cars. Similarly, there are obstructions in everything. But, because we cannot tolerate them, we end up with anger. Sometimes we are our own obstruction, in fact. There is an ideal self, something that we want to be, and there is an actual self, which is quite different. Because we split ourselves in this way, we become angry with ourselves. Here, too, we see that anger is nothing but an expression of expectation.

Expectations trouble me and I should live without expectation. This is like saying if I have a headache, I must cut off my head because it creates problems. Pragmatically we can live with our expectations. The only additional things is that, let the expectations include obstructions too. There are some things that will go wrong - including this in one's expectations means being objective. This does not mean that we hope or work for things to go wrong. It is, in fact, a totally positive statement. Things can go wrong—and if they do, 'I take it in my stride'. Then the likelihood of anger being there is less. If there is a lot of friction which needs to be addressed, I look into what will help fulfil my needs and the other's needs (such as need for independence, needs for connectedness, need for achievement, need for respect etc) based on dharma. I find ways to express my helplessness and not attack myself or the other person.

Because there is a possibility of things going wrong, we need to certainly take precautions. To be cautious, to avoid all known pitfalls, is to be objective. This is an important part of planning and doing what is to be done. In spite of all our planning and precautions, however, we need to know that things can go wrong. Then we can be truly objective when we take such possibilities into account.

It is very reassuring then to visualize the other hand of the one with four arms, Caturbhujaḥ. This hand is the abhaya-hasta–which says 'there is nothing for you to be afraid of.' Another hand points to the feet, as if to say 'come to my feet, you will have no fear.' All this is symbolic. We learn to surrender our emotions to the Lord and seek grace.

Wherever there is a weapon it is to say 'do not be afraid. I will take care of all your problems.' This is the form of Viṣṇu as Caturbhuja. In a TV commercial, a cute little girl with great pride and strength asserts 'My Daddy strongest' almost implying that no harm would come to her because she is ever protected. She has no reason to fear because in case things don't go well, her strong Daddy is always there. When we visualize the form of the Lord, we are rest assured that we are ever protected, we have nothing to fear and our external/internal enemies are all taken care of.

141. Bhrājiṣṇuḥ
भ्राजिष्णुः
The one who is radiant.

Even a tiny flame in a large room dispels darkness. When the place is dark, one cannot see things clearly and that can be frustrating. Except for an owl, in darkness, one can easily stumble and fall. If there is a dull light, then one can easily mistake one thing for another. In childhood, we would often imagine shapes of trees, bushes to look like some animal. Nor can one see oneself in darkness. The tiny flame in the room being a source of light, one does not need another external source of light to see it.

Bhrājiṣṇu is derived from the verbal root 'bhrāj' in the meaning of shining and so it means the one who is self-shining, in the form of light, that is, the shining pure consciousness. That shining consciousness which is the nature of ātmā, that does not need anything else to reveal it. That I am is evident to me, is obvious to me. I don't have to check with my neighbor, 'do I exist?' nor do I infer that 'I exist' because I see myself in a photograph. I am and only then, can I use different ways to know things.

It is that which makes everything known, and that which makes the mind and senses conscious. Being in the form of consciousness it reveals everything. This is the essential nature of Parameśvara. Much like how the sun comes out every morning and lights up what appeared as silhouettes during the morning walk. In the light of the sun, everything is lit up. All the trees and bushes that appeared to be something else, the possibility that there may be some snakes lurking in the bushes causing much anxiety and fear, are all lit up and one sees things clearly. The sights during the morning walk have been there for a long time, the sun has not displaced their location. Yet in that light, everything is seen clearly.

142. Bhojanam

भोजनं

The food, that is, what is enjoyed.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā, 'I am the sun and the tejas, the shine and energy in the sun and also the tejas, that is, the reflected light in the moon. All these enter into the earth with ojas, all the nourishing factors.' All these energy and nourishing factors from the sun and the moon are received by the earth. Plants and trees absorb them from the earth and convert them into food. Thus the Lord is in the form of anna, food and that is bhojana.

Based on the mode of eating, food can be divided into four kinds, bhakṣya–solids which are chewed and eaten; bhojya–liquids; lehya–semi-solids like honey which is licked; and cos´ya–which is sucked like the mango.

This is a beautiful word to reveal Bhagavān as the respect for food, what is eaten, shared and offered to all acquires a whole new dimension. Thus, it is Bhagavān who is in the form of the four-fold food. If Bhagavān is food, then who eats this food?

143. Bhoktā (also words 500, 888)

भोक्ता

The enjoyer.

What is eaten is bhojana, food and this is the Lord. If what is eaten is the Lord, then who is the eater? What is eaten is Īśvara and the one who eats is also Īśvara.

Bhagavān is the bhoktā, eater too. Bhagavān says, 'I am Vaiśvānara, the digestive fire. Along with the prāṇa and apāna, I digest the food being the samāna, the digestive fire'(BG.15.14). So food is Bhagavān and the eater is also Bhagavān.

Bhojana can also mean food for all the sense organs. We take in so much through our eyes, nose, ears, mouth and through the skin. We consume so much in terms of sights what we wish to see again and again, the music or the sweet words of someone, again and again. With the lifestyle of karma yoga, whatever is offered to the sense organs is enhanced by a sense of worship. What is offered to the sense organs is done with respect and care. And therefore we are conscious about the nature of the sights, sounds, smells and food.

It is the māyā or prakṛti that has modified into this world and is eaten, enjoyed by the sense organs. As prakṛti is non-separate from Bhagavān, it is Bhagavān alone who is bhojana, the enjoyed sense objects.

Again it is Bhagavān alone who is the bhoktā, enjoying the sense objects as the puruṣa, the individual jīva. And again as prakṛti resolves into Brahman. The Lord is the bhoktā, and prakṛti is the bhojana.

144. Sahiṣṇuḥ (also word 565)

सहिष्णुः
The one who has absolute tolerance.

Sahiṣṇu is the one who has the capacity to endure, tolerate something.

A few weeks ago, Pujya Swamiji, aware of the collective prayers of his students and devotees, said 'the body is yours but the pain is mine'. That is sahishnutvam.

The quality of titikṣā – endurance of the polar opposites of heat-cold, sukha-dukha etc including an ability to cheerfully accept difficult situations, is a necessary qualification for the study of Vedanta.

When summer season in India begins, people will say ‘it ‘s so hot, it’s so hot’. While this is a fact, excessive complaining only increases the discomfort. It is summer season after all, what else will it be, but hot?. It is better to say,’ Yes, this is how it is. Period.’ We learn to put a full stop to the sentence, and not commas and exaggerate the role of summer in our lives. Again, when others harm us physically or verbally, we tolerate it. Everybody has this capacity of forbearance and we can put up with certain discomfort. Till when must one have forbearance? Dharma is definitely a determining factor. There is no need to put up with adharma.

When certain things are inevitable what can be we do? We accept it. We acknowledge this is how it is and do what we can. Karma yoga, if not understood is fatalism or resignation. We find that when we truly accept situations there is a certain cheerfulness – we accept the things we cannot change, change the things we can and pray for grace and wisdom to know the difference. Once commitment is there to any goal, it is not difficult to cultivate titikṣā.

When dharma is anyway the framework for one's life, then one is clear about the goal one is trying to accomplish. When one is in the process of accomplishing an end, the process implies certain pain, effort and discomfort. The beautiful, stunning landscape from the top of a mountain is so compelling that people undergo much discomfort during their trek to get there. The professional degree for a dream job motivates one to study subjects and topics, some of which, one may not be interested in. Meeting other sadhus in Rishikesh is always nice. Many of them put up with the extreme climate of Rishikesh, walk long distances to attend a traditional Vedanta class, eat what is offered, all because they are committed to a lifestyle and their goal of clarity.

The conveniences of online shopping, from books to shoes to apparel helps to save time and effort. But the time and effort saved, what is that used for, is a good question. If the time and effort saved is used only in watching more TV, some more browsing, some more shopping, then clearly the commitment is comfort and pleasure. Nothing wrong with it but the question that begs to be asked is - If self growth, emotional maturity is a goal, then will my comfort orientation get me there? If all my activities are centred on physical comfort and emotional comfort (situations to my liking only) then that is my goal. And if that is so, then I won’t be willing to do what it takes, for emotional maturity.

Commitment is different than shubhecha – a generally good desire. Some people say generally ‘it would be nice to listen to the Gita’. if you ask them, what they are doing about it?, some will

say, ‘my time has not come’ or ‘the class is too far away’ and a whole host of reasons. These people don’t have a commitment, just a vague wishy-washy preference that can be blown away by the next gust of distraction.

All of us are sahiṣṇus to a certain extent because we endure certain things depending on the clarity of our goals and our commitment. This is in a relative measure. But the sahiṣṇutvam of Bhagavān is absolute. Bhagavān being nirvikārī, nothing disturbs Him.

This is shown in the Purānas, as to how the Lord is tolerant towards the atrocities done by asuras like Hiraṇyākṣa, Hiraṇyakśipu and others.

145. Jagadādijaḥ

जगदादिजः

The one who manifests at the beginning of the jagat.

Hiraṇyagarbha is Brahmāji and is often said to be the first born. Here Hiranyagarbha, simply put as the cosmic mind manifests in a highly subtle form. This is not to be confused with a jiva, who is defined as the one who is identified with the gross physical body but is a reflection of Brahman, who further, without enquiry thinks of Īśvara as different from itself. We go with a simple etymological meaning, Jivati iti jivah. The one who lives, exists as a manifestation, although very subtle and this is preceding panchikaranam, grossification .

The Purāṇas even speak of Him as the son of Viṣṇu. Is it that Īśvara was lonely and so he got sons and a family similar to us? No. Brahman from the standpoint of the kārana-upādhi, the unmanifest world is called Īśvara. The same Brahman from the standpoint of the sūkṣma-upādhi, the subtle world is called Hiraṇyagarbha and from the standpoint of the sthūla-upādhi, the gross world is called Virāṭ. Our individual bodies (gross-subtle-causal) are a part of the total world (gross-subtle-causal). When we speak of Īśvara as the order - the intelligence of all the principles and laws, in many ways we are talking of Hiranyagarbha.

Creation is the manifestation of what was in an unmanifest condition. When the unmanifest starts manifesting, what manifests first is the subtle universe and then from that comes the gross universe. Because the subtle universe is born before the gross and at every level Brahman inheres in the creation, it is said that the Lord is (as if) born at the beginning of the jagat as Hiraṇyagarbha and hence is Jagadādija. This ‘as if’ is the key to understanding the subtle manifestation.

146. Anaghaḥ (also word 831)

अनघः

The one free from pāpa.

Agha is pāpa. Bhagavān is Anagha, the one who is free from pāpa. This is refreshingly different from other theologies who refer to the person as a sinner and put that person on a guilt trip for life. Bhagavān refers to Arjuna as anagha (B.Gita 3.3) when he teaches him that there are only two niṣthas, committed lifestyles and ways of living in this world, jñāna yoga for the sanyāsis

and karma yoga for all others, the yogis. By addressing him as Anaghaḥ, the sinless one which is a svarupa word, he is pointing to the goal of both the karma yogi and the sanyāsi. In the recognition of oneself as akarta, a non doer, where does the question of pāpa or for that matter, even punya arise?

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā, 'Even if you are papākṛttama, the most exalted among those who commit papākarma, wrong actions, you will cross everything by the boat of knowledge'(4.36). The śrutis talk of Him as apahatapāpma, free from pāpa (Chā.Up.8.1.5). Is that an excuse to commit the goriest of crimes. ? Certainly not. The infallible law of actions and consequences cannot be avoided and karma is upheld by dharma. Only after living a life of spontaneous dharma guiding all actions, in all roles are we truly ready to receive the teachings of our svarupa. Otherwise the guru may be giving upadeśa and I am distracted by my acts of omission and commission, concluded by me on the basis of dharma. If the body-mind commits a wrong action that hurts another, there are consequences for that body-mind. To the extent that one is identified with the body-mind-sense complex, the pāpa karma and its manifestation as seemingly unpleasant situations, it will cause sorrow and suffering. Our effort needs to be to see the value of values very clearly so that acts of dharma become so spontaneous that there arehardly any dharma – related conflicts in life. Only then by understanding Bhagavān as oneself, one becomes anagha, free from pāpa.

Does that mean that Bhagavān is subject to puṇya because all His karmas are puṇya-karmas? No. The extended meaning of agha would be anything that causes birth and so includes puṇya also. The Lord is neither a doer nor an enjoyer and therefore, ever free not only from pāpa but also from puṇya. The understanding that 'I am free from doership and enjoyership,' and that 'I am satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma' will make one anagha. Please note that a few words earlier Bhagavan was referred to as bhokta(post 122). It is important to hold the seeming paradox as the standpoints are different. So by gaining the knowledge of Bhagavān, one is free not only from pāpa but from puṇya also. Till then, one is under the spell of puṇya and pāpa.

147. Vijayaḥ

विजयः

The one who is ever victorious.

The Lord being free from pāpa, and also through the excellence of His guṇas of jñāna, vairagya, aiśvarya, yaśas, śrī, – all knowledge, all dispassion, all overlordship, all glory, all wealth and in absolute measure and so on. He is ever victorious. There is nothing called failure for the Lord. Any success or victory gained by anybody is the victory of Bhagavān alone.

In Kenopaniṣad, the glory of Brahman is highlighted beautifully. The story begins by saying that in a war between devas and asuras, Brahman won victory for the devas. The devas, however, praised themselves for the victory, They thought, 'This victory is ours only. This glory is ours only." The word 'Only', eva in Sanskrit shows that they negated the role of anyone else in their victory. In order to bless them by correcting their thinking, Brahman assumed the form of yakśa, a celestial form. The devas being celestials themselves, knew of many forms but this form intrigued and captivated them. The devas said, "who is this wonderful being?" They delegated Agni devata to go discover more about him.

Agni rushed to the being. The Yakśa asked, "who are you?". Agni replied, "I am Agni,the bestower of wealth". Yakśa asked, "if so, what is that special strength you have? ". Agni replied, "I am able to burn whatever is on earth." The Yakśa then laid a piece of grass before Agni, and said, "Burn this, then." Agni rushed to the grass and tried his best to burn it. Surely must have huffed and puffed. He failed. He retreated to the devatas and told them that he was unable to discover what this wonderful being is". The gods then nominated god Vayu to go, and explore.

Vayu rushed to the Yakśa who asked, "who are you?". Vayu replied, "I am Vayu, I am Matarisvan, who freely moves in space. The Yakśa asked, "if so, what is what is that special strength you have ". Vayu replied, "I can lift all this which is upon this earth. " The Yakśa then laid a piece of grass before Vayu, and said, "Carry this, then." Vayu rushed to the grass and tried his best to lift and carry it away. Surely must have huffed and puffed. He failed. He retreated and returned to the devas also admitting his inability to discover more about that wonderful being. The devatas then turned to Indra to go ahead and find out.. "So be it", said Indra.

As Indra approached the Yakśa, the Yakśa disappeared and in its pace stood a beautiful woman, Uma who was brilliantly effulgent. With folded hands he asked her,' Who was this? Uma in the form of brahmavidya replied that the Yakśa was Brahman itself. Indra then knew. All the glories, valour, honours and praises showered for you on this fight between devas and asuras is because of that Brahman alone. Brahman as Isvara provides you with all the power and Brahman as the absolute reality provides existence,, consciousness and the abilities to the senses and the mind, making them what they are. Really speaking, any glory is of Brahman alone. Brahman as vijayah alone gained victory for the devas'

148. Jetā

जेता

The one who excels all beings naturally.

By His natural glories, He always excels, stands above everyone. Thus, He is ever victorious. This does not indicate a comparison. Much like extolling the glory of the vast expanse of the ocean. The expanse is so vast that amongst all water bodies, it stands as the biggest. Still, for the ocean there are water bodies that can be seemingly compared. What about space? Can space be compared to anything? Space is vast and accommodates everything. Like what? Like space itself. There is no example to compare space with as it stands above every other element.

Bhagavān is vijaya, victory and jetā, the victorious. If victory is Bhagavān, then the victorious is also Bhagavān. What we aspire for, is the end to be gained. If we aspire for Bhagavān, He becomes the end. By knowing Him, you gain victory, because He is the ultimate success, ultimate victory. Understanding Īśvara makes me appreciate the order that pervades me, my situations, my world. This further helps me in appreciating that I as a person, am in order. When we use the word 'in order', we don't mean it in the sense of 'it is okay for things to be like this'. When we say that 'my angst is in order', what we mean is, this is how 'it is' and there is a background for this.

Recognising facts, recognising reality for what IT IS, not what 'it could be' or 'should be', frees me from my resistance to facts. When I stop resisting, I can relax. Much of the conflict I experience is because of my resistance to facts, either about myself or about others. I don't want to see the reality, let alone face it. This could be about my own behavior when I get angry, other people 's restrained inability to express care towards me or just how my boss speaks. In the understanding of Īśvara, my resistance to some things about myself, other people slips away, and I find a relaxed, abiding acceptance of what IS. If there is something that needs changing to be in alignment with dharma, I do so. But before any change, I see what is. Seeing what is objectively, is accepting what is.

The knowledge of Īśvara makes us gain Him. There is no more success or victory to be gained. You recognize the fact, the reality and this knowledge makes you Jetā. The one who was seeking, the seeker and sought are discovered to be one and the same. Brahmavit brahmaiva bhavati – the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman. Therefore, the victorious is also Bhagavān alone.

149. Viśvayoniḥ (also word 117)
विश्वयोनिः
The one whose womb is the universe.

After Om, Viśvam is the first word in the Viṣṇusahasranāma, a compilation of names and also 1000 ways of looking and appreciating the Lord. As Viśvam, he is cause of the creation, sustenance and resolution of this world, being both the maker and the material cause of the world. We don't have to look any further than the next cobweb or spider web to appreciate this.

Scientists say that spiders produce silk from glands located at the tip of their abdomen. They don't go shopping to Ikea or the latest furniture store for their web. They don't need to read the latest magazines to what 's in and what's not. Each gland of the spider itself, produces a thread for a special purpose – for example a trailed safety line, sticky silk for trapping prey or fine silk for wrapping it. Webs allow a spider to catch prey without having to expend energy by running it down. Thus it is an efficient method of gathering food.

It is common for spiders to eat their own web daily to recoup some of the energy used in spinning. The material for the spider 's web comes from the spider, is sustained by the spider as it makes changes and interestingly also resolves in the spider. Quite brilliant recycling. No garbage dump required for the debris of the web. The spider did not go to any world famous university to study architecture either. The spider itself is the source of intelligence for the kind of web to be made. The tensile strength of spider silk is said to be greater than the same weight of steel and has much greater elasticity. Quite a marvel that the spider is both, the material cause and the intelligent cause of the web.

The world is called visva. All plants, all animals, all living beings, the stuff that this universe is made up of – this entire world is viva and it definitely includes your body-mind-complex. In other words, it is everything which is known and unknown.

The viśva, universe, is His yoni, womb. The womb is the place where something manifests and the Lord manifests Himself through this universe. Therefore, He is Viśvayoni.

Or, He is known as Viśvayoni, because the Lord Himself is the viśva and its yoni, the universe and its cause.

150. Punarvasuḥ

पुनर्वसुः

The one who repeatedly dwells in the bodies.

Since He resides in the bodies again and again as the kṣetrajña, the knower of the body, He is called Punarvasu.

Healthy bacteria also reside in the stomachs of many people, who have probiotic food or just our good old curd. Can the bacteria declare ,' I am punarvasuh, as I dwell in the bodies of so many people?

'In the body', is in a manner of speaking and does not mean localized in the body. It actually means that one Atma, one without a second that which is, which lends its existence and consciousness to the body. Bhagavan says in the Gita, 13.2, 'You are me. Every person is Isvara.' One kṣetrajña is seemingly divided into countless forms beginning from a highly subtle form like Brahma ji to a clump of grass. The kṣetrajña appears divided because our attention is obsessed with forms only such as Brahma ji, Indra, humans, animals, trees, microbes etc.

When it is said that the Lord is the cause of this universe, it does not mean that the creation begins at the particular time. It is a cycle. This world comes into being again and again along with time and space and then goes back into unmanifestation. As the various śarīras come into being depending on the fructification of their karma phala, the results of actions, He alone resides in them as the kṣetrajña.

Again and again, in this Brahman alone, this entire world exists. Therefore also, He is Punarvasu.

151. Upendraḥ

उपेन्द्रः

The younger brother of Indra or the one who is above Indra.

Indra is the Lord of the heaven. To help him, the Lord was born to Aditi and Kaśyapa. In His Vāmana-avatāra, He is the anuja, younger brother, of Indra. Indram upagataḥ - as one who followed Indra, the Lord is known as Upendra.

In the Kṛṣṇāvatāra, the Lord taught Indra a lesson and showed that He is upari indrah, above, superior to Indra and hence, He is Upendra.

We can see a deeper meaning also for this. Each of the sense organs is presided over by a deva. Again, because each of the sense organs throws light on its own particular sphere, it is a deva.

But the senses cannot function without the mind behind them. Mind is also a means of perception and cannot perceive without a seer, a pramātā behind. The eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear, the mind cannot think without the knower, who makes the perception possible. Therefore, the pramātā, the knower, is the indriyāṇāṃ rājā, the king of the sense organs. As the indriyas are like devas, the pramātā is Indra, the king of the indriyas. The pramātā is the ahaṅkāra; but; its svarūpa is the ātmā, which lends sat and cit, existence and consciousness, to the knower. As the ātmā of all, pramātuḥ indrasya api upari vartate - the Lord is above Indra, the pramātā and hence, is Upendra. This is an ādhyātmika meaning, that is, centred on oneself.

152. Vāmanaḥ

वामनः

i. The one in the form of a dwarf. ii. The adorable.

In the Vāmana-avatāra, the Lord was born as upendra and assumed the form of a Vāmana, a dwarf, and requested Mahābali for three steps of land. Mahābali was a benevolent, asura king and was threatening the authority of Indra, which had to be restored. The praise from people, led him to think of himself as the greatest person in the world. When the Lord wanted to teach him a lesson, He became small, like a dwarf. Once the promise was given, He became big and measured the three worlds in two strides. When asked, where to put the third step, Mahābali offered his step. In his offering this, he stood surrendered and the Lord blessed him with the undisputed rule of Pātala. Mahābali is supposed to return every year to the land of his people, to ensure that they are prosperous. Just before King Mahābali was pushed out of this earth, he was given permission by Vāmana to visit his people once a year. The Onam festival, generally celebrated in Kerala is a celebration of welcoming Mahabali home to his lost kingdom.

The Lord as Vāmana is seated in the middle of the heart, that is, He is the one who obtains in the buddhi. Vāmana also means the one who is the most sought after, the one who is to be recognized, understood and in whose gain everything is gained. The Kathopanisad says, even the devas worship whom and because of whose grace they are devas, that vāmana is there in the heart, that is, the buddhi' (2.2.3).

The one who receives all forms of worship is sambhajanīya, pūjya. Ātmā is that pūjya-vastu. If ātmā is the altar obtaining in the buddhi, then, what are the offerings of flowers and so on, that is used in the worship? Any sound that you hear, any form or colour that you see, any smell, taste or touch that you get, all of them go to the mind and then go to the pramātā, the knower. Finally they fall like flowers at the feet of the ātmā alone, because ātmā is the eye of the eye, ear of the ear and so on. All the indriyas do upāsanā, worship to the ātmā, by presenting all these objects. Thus, the ātmā is sambhajanīya, therefore known as Vāmana.

The Śiva-mānasa-pūja says, 'O! Śambho, ātmā is you, the altar of worship; my mind is Girijā; my prāṇas are your attendants; my body is your abode; the experience of the various sense objects is pūjā to you; my sleep is the state of samādhi of dhyāna; wherever I walk is pradakṣiṇa done to you; all the words I utter are your praises. In short, whatever I do, that is ara¯dhana, worship done to you.'

Or, Vāmana is the one who is worshipped by all the Gods. The meaning here is in the ādhyātmika and ādhibhautika aspect. Vāmana, as the avatāra, is the ādhidaivika aspect.

153. Prāṃśuḥ
प्रांशुः
The one who is tall.

The three names Upendra, Vāmana and Prāṃśu are related. The Lord, who took avatāra as Vāmana and Upendra, Himself became tall to measure the three worlds and became Prāṃśu. The earth was His feet, the sky was his Head, and the moon and the sun were His eyes. Then as He grew still taller, the moon and the sun rested on His chest. When He rose further to the world of the gods, the sun and the moon came only up to His knees. Thus His tallness is explained in Harivaṃśa. Hence He is Prāṃśu.

The Lord is big, you cannot find out where His head is. This is ādhidaivika. You cannot see the head and feet because all that is here is only the Lord. The Lord inside the heart is Vāmana and everything outside is Prāṃśu.

154. Amoghaḥ (also word 110)
अमोघः
The one whose actions are always fruitful.
All the activities of Bhagavān are never in vain; they are fulfilled. He is satya-saṅkalpavān, His thoughts are fulfilled and at the execution level also, He is satya-kriyāvan, hence, Amogha. The Upaniṣad says, 'whatever is created by Him, done by Him is well done' (Tai.Up.2.7).

Even in His avatāras, none of His actions are amogha, purposeless. Everything has a meaning even if we do not see it.

155. Śuciḥ (also word 251)
शुचिः
The pure and the purifier.

He is Suci, because He purifies those who remember, praise and worship Him. This purification one gets as the karma-phala from Bhagavān. At the same time, He is the one who does not require to be purified, because He is ever pure.

Generally, when we clean something, it means that it was dirty before. Anything that is cleaned will again become dirty and has to be cleaned again. Though it is all-pervasive, the ātmā is always pure, that is, you are eternally pure. With insufficient understanding, there are a lot of spiritual teachers who say that Atma is impure and by doing good actions, you will become pure. This is wrong and it is worth asking them where in the sastra, is it mentioned so?

The impurity, if at all, is at the level of the body-mind. Body definitely needs to be clean otherwise very soon, one will have no friends. At the level of the mind, the only purity possible

is the neutralisation of rāga-dvesas, binding desires and aversions. When a desire or an aversion becomes overwhelming, I the person am not in charge. I become the reaction which is usually one of anger, because more often than not my desires are not fulfilled. A person who just reacts impulsively or mechanically is really his/her reaction. The independent, thinking person is not there. Only the reaction is present. For a person who is reactive, anything can trigger off the person. It could be a raised eyebrow and the person may interpret it as 'this person is being disrespectful to me. How dare…etc etc…

On the other hand, for the one who has befriended one 's mind, is familiar with the ways of the mind and can be kind to oneself, in time develops what we call antah-karana-shuddhi. A mind that is pure is together, alert, relaxed and is fully available for the teaching of brahmavidya. That is possible through adopting the lifestyle and attitude of karma yoga – actions done in line with dharma and a glad acceptance of the results of the actions as all the results come from none other than the Lord.

Understanding the ātmā purifies you, ultimately. How? The ātmā-svarūpa is ever pure, untainted by karma and hence punya-pāpa and the one who understands the svarūpa, is also ever pure. This is bathing in jñāna-gaṅgā. Gaṅgā is a devata, a symbol of knowledge, a great purifier. You are not dipping in the water, but you are invoking the grace of the Lord as Gaṅgā, the purifier. It is an attitude because everything is Īśvara.

156. Ūrjitaḥ
ऊर्जितः
The one who is endowed with strength.

Bala, strength, is one of the six bhagas, the absolute virtues of Bhagavān. The strength or the vibhūti in every devatā belongs to Īśvara alone. The Lord says in the Gītā, 'balaṃ balavatām asmi – I am the strength in the strong' that is free from desire and attachment(7.11). 'Pumping iron' in the gym or any way in which one develops physical strength requires dedication. The existing muscles develop bulk, strength and endurance by exercise. This is possible because strength is a potential which can be brought to manifestation. And what is potential is Bhagavān. People are not born with large biceps, they work for them. Therefore the strength which is latent in people, and is manifest in the balavān, the strong person, Bhagavān says, 'that strength I am'. The person who is strong cannot say, 'I am strong unless that 'I am' is Bhagavān.

Strength can also be misused. The brute strength of an extortionist who also happens to be a builder in a city or the military might of nations both point to cultivated strength. The Lord clarifies that if the person has strength but Bhagavān is not appreciated, he becomes a source of fear and hatred. If he has strength and also rāga and kāma, he is no longer Bhagavān but a ruffian because the desires and attachments being what they are, dharma will not be a consideration for its fulfillment. Rāga is attachment to objects and situations gained by us and kāma is a desire to accomplish what we don't have. Rāga and Kāma signify ahankāra, a misappropriated recognition of strength attributed to oneself with no acknowledgement of dharma or Bhagavān. All the strength that one has, one acknowledges Bhagavan not because one is being sugar-syrupy religious but only and only because one is objective. In that recognition, one grows in strength of character and commitment to dharma.

Vāyu is the adhiṣṭhāna-devatā of strength and he provides us with energy and strength. This is the ādhidaivika aspect.

157. Atīndraḥ

अतीन्द्रः

The one who is greater than Indra.

He is the strength in Vāyu and even the strength in Indra. Indra is the Lord of all the devatās and he surpasses all of them by his strength, valour and lordship. But Parameśvara stands surpassing even Indra who borrows his strength from the Lord. Because of Him alone, Indra is appointed as the Lord of the heavens. Indra is also the adhiṣṭhāna-devatā of strength and energy and he derives his strength from the Lord.

At this time (Sept 2015), of the hundreds gathered in Rishikesh at the feet of our beloved Pujya Pujya Swami ji, many continue to offer their tears of gratitude, loss, anguish and much more mirroring Ganga ji 's turbulence and calmness as the day unfolds. Despite the anguish, we find some strength from our own reserves, and we have to draw from those reserves. Perhaps this is the most challenging moment for his śishyas who have lived in the gurukulam over years, over courses and for us sanyaasis, whom he has blessed with a name and a working identity, the identity to the previous onē having been given up. I draw strength from Pujya Swamiji 's words which are an excerpt from an anugraha bhaṣaṇam he gave, following the Tsunami in 2006.

Though the fuel tank meter indicates that the tank is almost empty, still, we can go a few more kilometres. There is always something in reserve. We have to draw from the reserve of inner strength. This inner strength is called Atma bala.

A human being is helpless, balahīna , in this world. We need not consult anybody to find out whether one is helpless. That is why when we meet someone we ask, "How are you?" You ask because you expect something to be wrong. We don't expect anyone to answer in detail, relating all his or her problems. But still, we need to ask. This indicates that there is a common acceptance of helplessness.

Yet, in spite of this helplessness, there is a certain bala, strength. We call it Atma bala. What is this strength and where does it come from? Really speaking, the strength comes from inside. We need to face situations for which we don't have immediate answers, solutions and explanations. Death, for instance. People die; in fact, the dead form the majority. In English there is an expression for this. If one says, "He has joined the majority," it means he is no more—not that he has jumped from one political party to another. Generations have gone, so death is not anything new. The Upanisad says, "Death, the fifth, runs." Lord Death does not move systematically from person to person, one after another as though they are in a queue. He jumps around from one to another, now an old person, and now a young person.

When Pujya Swamiji was a boy he saw a bereaved woman, crying constantly; crying she lights the stove, crying she boils water, crying she makes a decoction for coffee, crying she waits for it, crying she heats up the milk, crying she makes coffee and mixes it up, crying she tastes it and

adds a little more sugar. That was very revealing to him. In between crying she saw that there was not enough sugar. That is possible only when you are purely cognitive.

At that moment there is freshness. Crying she offered it to another person also. That is a human heart. It is alive to the moment. The moment calls for action. However unpleasant it is, it is only a fact that calls for action. The calamitous fact calls for action. We can learn from all this. When calamity strikes we can feel devastated, we do feel devastated. Then there should be a time, a moment when I can ask a fresh question. When I am alive to the moment I can ask a question. That is what the fresh mind does. A question—"What do I learn from this?" However calamitous it is, however tragic it is, we should ask a question in the fresh moment— "What do I learn from it?"

When I ask a question I will discover something. There need not be a final answer. Maybe today I will learn something from this, or maybe I will not even find an answer. What do I learn from it? That question is more important than finding an answer. What do I learn from it? If I don't see anything that I can learn from it, then what do I learn from that? We learn one thing—we need to ask the question "What do I learn from this situation?" When it is a happy situation, then we need not ask a question, but even then it is good to ask the question, "What do I learn from it?" That is discrimination, viveka. In a sad situation I definitely need to ask the question, "What do I learn from this?"

In the vastness of the universe, a lot of adjustments take place. Systems and planets adjust themselves. Within a given planet some adjustments are always taking place. At the core of this planet there is activity going on. Certain things happen; certain people are there at the wrong place, or right place at the wrong time. The beach is a right place, but this was the wrong time to be there. Maybe for somebody who is very old, living with a painful body, this was a great relief. It is God-sent relief. God took him away in one sweep, painlessly. For somebody it was good.

What we learn from this is that there is constant change taking place. As human beings we see ourselves as helpless. It is wrong to think that we call all the shots; it is more wrong to think that we call none of the shots. It is not true that somebody else is calling all the shots. At this moment what I can do is what I need to do.

The breath in your nostrils tells you how you should live. The sunrise and sunset tell you how you should live. The seasons tell you how you should live. All the reserve is in the freshness, and the freshness is there when you are with what is. What is, is God. What is, is Isvara. What you make out of it, is you.

If you miss what is, then you have no Atma bala. You become dina, weak or helpless. As long as you don't make anything out of it, you don't distort it, but just take it as it is, you have freshness, you are alive to what is. What is, is Isvara. The more you are with what is, the more you have strength, you have is freshness, you have Atma bala.

158. Saṅgrahaḥ

संग्रहः

The withdrawer of everything.

At the time of pralaya, total dissolution of the jagat which includes the universe and everything in it, Bhagavān draws into Himself, everything. Withdrawal or making unmanifest what was manifest is different from destruction. In fact, total destruction is just an idea. There is nothing that is completely destroyed. It only changes form. The food we eat transforms itself in different ways and becomes energy. The pot, when breaks into innumerable pieces still exists in the form of these pieces.

When we go to sleep, where do our aches and pains, worries and anxieties, celebrations and victories, go? They are withdrawn into us. They are present, but in dormant state and we may recall them when we wake up. The fact that they are able to be recalled means that they are present but just temporarily withdrawn during sleep. Still, this is just one life and a lifetime.
For Bhagavān as Saṅgrahaḥ, the whole world becomes unmanifest in Him. He is one and the many are also sustained by the one. 'Sadeva saumya idamagra āsīt, ekameva advitīyam–before creation what was there was only one'(Chā.Up.6.2.1). Then it became manifest into many. The key word here is 'manifestation'. The popular meaning of the word 'Creation' implies that the creator is different from the creation. Our experiential orientation has solidified the notion that the creator is different from the creation. For most matters, this is the case. If we buy any product say a washing machine or a bar of soap, the one who put it together does not come along with the product. Buy one and get the maker free! This does not apply and we thank God for that!
But this glorious jagat is existence manifested into name and form. The entire jagat along with time and space was one non-dual Brahman. Now also it is one non-dual Brahman. What will happen after resolution? Then too, it will be one non dual reality, one without a second, one without a fraction, that which can never be negated. And that happens to be you!

159. Sargaḥ
सर्गः
The creation and the cause of creation.

Creation is the manifestation of what was in an unmanifest condition. What is created is Sarga. So after creation, the Lord is in the sarga-rūpa, in the form of the creation and hence He is Sarga.

Many years ago, while travelling in a local train in Kolkata, I chanced upon an old woman, with a weather beaten face, wearing tattered clothes with no footwear and having a japa mala in her hand. With my broken Bengali, I managed to say to her, 'It was rare to see someone do japa in a train. Can I ask what kind of japa you are doing?'. She seemed annoyed with me and said, 'Don't you know, what we see here (gesticulating to all around her) is the Thakur (The Lord). It does not matter whose name I take in japa.' This is the beauty of our cultural heritage - the profound wisdom that the cause of the creation is not different from the creation, finds its way into the wisdom of people's hearts.

Because He is the sarga-hetu, the cause of creation, He is known as Sarga.

160. Dhṛtātmā
धृतात्मा
The one whose svarūpa is ever the same.

If we are beginning to assimilate that this jagat including my body-mind-sense-complex is a manifestation, we may have some other questions. When milk becomes curd, it cannot return to the milk state. The curd/yoghurt may still be a milk product and have similar properties, but it cannot change back to milk. In this case, curd is not strictly a manifestation of only milk, healthy bacteria have a role to play in it as well.

So, if Bhagavān has become the manifold creation, has he changed? No. While becoming the world, He still retains His svarūpa; He does not undergo any change. Can existence ever undergo a change? Any object including the earth, galaxies are forms and have different material compositions. We need to really look into the defining property of any of these forms.

Let's take an ordinary book. What is its defining attribute? A book is a collection of pages. Are pages the book? No. Maybe wood pulp from which the pages have been made? No. Wood pulp comes from the trees. Trees are nothing but hydrocarbons. What is the reality of the hydrocarbons? Atoms and Particles. Suppose we break down the particles to its minutest form , what is it that endures? A form that has miniscule dimensions, a particle that is seemingly formless. What is that ? Formless existence. Every form is Existence and a form, be it an ant or elephant. Without existence, no form is possible.

Without giving up His svarūpa, He has become this world. The example of a rope mistaken to be a snake is given to understand this better. What is present on the ground is the rope. But I see a snake. Because of my creative power, stemming from the ignorance of the rope, I project it to be a snake. Did the rope change to become the snake? No. Only in my mind. Nowhere else. What was there was the rope. A clothesline, a crack in the ground, a garland – any of these is what I made of the rope, in my mind only. The rope did not transform. It is true that it appeared as a snake. And that error can only be corrected by knowledge.

This jagat appeared to be real and hence my sorrow, my identities were all real, until I discover the jagat to have a dependent identity. Dependent on that Ātmā which is of the nature of sat, cit and ānanda. The ātmā, the svarūpa, is sustained by Him as ever the same, without any change. It continues to be 'satyaṃ jñānam anantaṃ brahma.' All changes take place only for the name and form, the jagat, and not for the ātmā. Therefore, He is known as Dhṛtātmā.

161. Niyamaḥ (also word 865)

नियम:

The one who is in the form of order.

Īśvara is in the form of order. There is a physical order, a biological order, a physiological order, a psychological order, an order of right and wrong in knowing, an order of values and so on. It has also the meaning of one who makes people follow the order. By the very order of dharma, He makes people do whatever is to be done by them. Niyama has the meaning of order, control, and the Lord, being in the form of order, is Niyama.

That one experiences himself/ herself to be wanting, dissatisfied and inadequate is a reality for the person. This is not related to a topical or a specific situation, it is the fundamental experience of every human being, discerned or not. For that reason everyone is looking for a connection. We all want to be connected and hence 3G is now upgraded to 4G. The only sustainable way this unconnectedness that we experience can be resolved is to 'bring' Isvara into our lives by understanding that the entire universe or jagat is governed by knowledge or order (niyati).

When you sit, that you do not fly away, like a ball of fluffy cotton, is order. That planets are not banging against each order, held as they are, by a certain gravitational force, is physical order. Water finds its own level, for example is order. The world is connected to Īśvara through a physical order. All living beings are connected through a biological order. Because of the commonness of the human form, specialised disciplines such as nephrology, neurophysiology and much more are being developed. Dis –ease is the body not at ease. These disciplines study the order of the human physiology, the supportive as well as constraining factors for health and accordingly offer insight and medication to restore good health. All life or prana is governed by a physiological order. Where there is an order there can be a disturbance within an order.

Our emotions too are governed by a psychological order and our feelings including anger, loneliness and dejection are a part of it. So when are we disconnected from Īśvara ? The infallible is Īśvara. If a confusion takes place, that is an order, that is psychological order. This is where our understanding of Isvara manifesting in the form of order, a psychological order, validates us. Bringing Īśvara into our life is purely in terms of recognition of what IS. All our pain and dissatisfaction has a background and we have to 'Isvarize' our emotions for there is always a connection. We are never away from Īśvara.

The fact that we have free will requires two critical orders to govern our actions. One is dharma and the other is karma. Bhagavan is manifest as order in the form of dharma. It is an order by which you understand what is right and what is wrong in thinking, in conclusions so that one can do what is right and avoid what is wrong. On the one side is the order of dharma and on the other side is the order of karma, punya and papa, when you go against order of dharma, you rub the order therefore you get papa which translates itself into unpleasant situations. Some people say, 'Who knows what is right or wrong? The truth is somewhere in between.' They think that one is being moralistic and overtly religious. Actually, one is just operating by common sense. That I don't want to get hurt or be cheated and others too don't want to be hurt or cheated is a universal fact. To live by this fact is dharma. One value is enough to determine dharma - ahimsa paramo dharma.

If we go along with dharma and do things, which we want others to do to us, reaching out, then we earn punya. The order of karma based upon the order of dharma, all of these are Īśvara 's orders or the orders that is Īśvara.

And when we say Īśvara is all-pervasive, that is because of satyam jñānam anantam brahma. Without satyam jñānam anantam brahma there is no all-pervasiveness, there is no total manifestation because brahma is satyam jnanam anantam (and) sarvajñabrahma is manifest in the form of jagat, the critical order of dharma and karma and the psychological order - this is Īśvara. I am an individual never alienated from Īśvara, the total.

We have a tendency to convert all teaching to a 'should' which is to be avoided. I might say I should connect to Īśvara. Instead, try to be away from Īśvara ... contemplate whether you can be away from Isvara, try to be away from Īśvara (you cannot be because) at any level at every level you are connected. You are satyam jñānam anantam brahma and therefore you are always connected. The connection comes from the recognition of what IS.

162. Yamaḥ (also word 866)

यमः

The controller.

The Lord is the controller, in the sense that He is in the form of the giver of results. If one puts one's little finger in the fire, it is an action. Can I choose that only the fingernail should be burnt, the rest of it should be untouched ? Can I wish the fire to suddenly become cold? Can I wish that the fire won't burn me but it can burn everybody else? As ridiculous as all of this sounds, when it comes to the consequences of our actions, particularly actions based on dharma, my logic also goes for a toss.

Some of our arguments to justify adharma: I can be as rude as I wish to the people around me because they deserve it; Nobody else should be rude to me. I can choose to blame people and situations all the time for my life without taking accountability for my actions. Constantly criticizing family members is okay because I feel if I don't correct them, who will? And then, when they too start being critical of me, I protest, not seeing the play of actions and consequences. Performing in a mediocre manner, with no attention on the bigger picture, I may expect my overrated efforts to be rewarded, during the performance appraisal. All of this only points to a deliberate, conscious effort to perform karma that is in line with dharma and to keep in mind the likely consequences or the results of the actions. I may even have an argument, I have prayed to the Lord all my life, so I am sure that my finger won't burn, if in the fire. When one goes against dharma, then there is a result and the giver of that result is Yama, the controller. Lord Death is also called Yama. The Lord is in the form of the sense of dharma, the universal order, in every human being. Niyama is order and it is from the total standpoint; from the individual standpoint He is Yama.

Books on management or for that matter, biographies of achievers, all point to the level of control or mastery in their lives in specific areas. Whether a sports person, a scientist, a farmer, a media planner, a teacher, a software engineer, a surgeon - the level of discipline, tenacity, hard work and effort in practice is evident. Tenacity, persistence and endurance does not come from doing what one likes only but comes from 'what needs to be done' to excel. He is the one who obtains in everyone as the antaryāmī and makes the mind, buddhi, senses–organs of perception and action do their respective functions.

163. Vedyaḥ

वेद्यः

The one who is to be known.

He is Vedya, the one to be known by all the seekers of niśśreyas, the ultimate end. Anything that is known has a certain purpose. We do something with the knowledge. If it is the knowledge of how to cook pasta, the knowledge has to be translated into action. Just knowing how to cook will not magically transform to the well garnished pasta on the plate. On the other hand, if Parameśvara is said to be the one to be known, how will that help me? Can I quote that I have influence in high places and get special favours in some offices? No. Even the Brhadāranyakopanisad says, 'ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ–ātmā, Parameśvara, is the one who has to be known'(2.4.5, 4.5.6).

Arjuna wants to know what is jñeya and jñāna. Jñāna is the list of qualifications like amānitva, adambhitva and so on, which are required to gain this jñāna. Having gained all these, one can gain what is to be known and that is Parameśvara. Ātmā which is Parameśvara is not known as such and so this is jñeya, that which has to be known. One can still persist and say, whatever I want is available at the click of Google. When I need it, I will access it. I don't want to clutter my head with one more being, to be known.

Why the emphasis on knowing? Really speaking, our struggles in life and emotional difficulties are not because we have emotional problems. The fundamental nature of our problem is a spiritual one not a psychological one. Because I have taken myself to be a finite being, I cannot stand any limitation. I want more and more. 'Yeh dil maange more' so said a reigning Hindi film industry star advertising for a soft drink. This resonates with all of us, when it comes to our possessions, situations in life and definitely how we want people around us to change, just a little more. Taking myself to be a finite human being is born of not knowing who I really am, and hence the only solution is to know who I am, i.e. knowledge.

The Lord says in the Gītā, 'jñeyaṃ yat tat pravakṣyāmi yajjñātvāmrtam aśnute–I will tell you that which is to be known, and knowing which, one gains amṛtatva, freedom from death'(13.12). Knowing Him, one becomes a kṛtakṛtya, gains fulfillment and achieves the ultimate goal. Gaining which one does not look for any better gain to be gained, because there is none, that is the real vedya and jñeya, that which is to be known'(6.22).

What is to be known is only Parameśvara as He is of the nature of sat-cit-ānanda. In knowing Parameśvara I recognise my very being. And the Lord says again, I am the one to be known through all the Vedas'(15.15). Here, the Vedas do not merely mean the Vedas but also all the Purāṇās and the Itihāsas and other disciplines of knowledge.

164. Vaidyaḥ

वैद्यः

The one who knows all the vidyās.

He is the one who knows all the vidyās, all disciplines of knowledge, since He is sarvajña. Vaidya also means one skilled in knowledge of medicine and healing. The real vaidya is Parameśvara.

In traditional massages done by an Ayurveda practitioner, the masseur will chant Dhanvantari mantra, invoke the grace of the Lord of health before he/she begins. Even when the doctor gives you medicine, the medicine will work only when prayers are offered to the real Vaidya, the Lord.

165. Sadāyogi

सदायोगी

The one for whom everything is accomplished.

Universally, we have a need for achievement and accomplishment. Our areas of endeavour are definitely different. Yoga is aprāptasya prāptiḥ, gaining, accomplishing, that which is not already gained. The means of accomplishing is also called yoga. Even if you want to achieve health or alertness, it is yoga. If you want to achieve money, the means of achieving it is also called yoga. One who is given to yoga is a yogi, that is, one who undertakes the means to accomplish something as well as the one who accomplishes it is called a yogi. The one who undertakes the measures to prepare the mind for self-knowledge and also the measures for gaining that knowledge is a yogī. All of these achievements are within the realm of human limitation. Still, 'yeh dil maange more' (this heart desires more) echo persists in the human heart.
Pujya Swamiji recently said in Rishikesh, "When you call puriwallah, you do not want puriwallah but you want puri. So when you call Bhagavan, you do not want Bhagavan but you want bhaga (all six aisvaryas in absolute measure)".

The six aisvaryas are knowledge, objectivity, glory, power, resources/wealth and overlordship and many of our prayers are asking for these in some measure. That I may have the guts to face upto a bullying mother in law, or daughter-in-law…That I may get the next promotion… That the bosses acknowledge my hard work and give me a fancy designation. Most of us are interested in our own accomplishments and what Bhagavan has to offer, not necessarily Bhagavan!

Bhagavān is Sadāyogī, because everything that is to be accomplished is already accomplished by Him and there is nothing more to be accomplished for Him. He has no ignorance of Himself, because His svarūpa is always evident to Him.

When the doctor treats a person with a contagious disease, the doctor should not fall ill. He has to protect himself against the disease. Bhagavān is the vaidya and being sadāyogī, He is ever protected from bhavaroga, the diseases within saṃsāra and also of saṃsāra.

166. Vīrahā (also words 741, 927)

वीरहा

The destroyer of enemies.

In answer to the prayers of the devotees, the Lord manifests as the avatāras like Nṛsiṃha, Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on, wherein He destroys the asuras who indulge in adharma and establishes dharma by protecting the people who are given to dharma. Therefore, He is called Vīrahā, because He destroys the enemies of His devotees.

The grace of the Lord helps you take care of all your enemies. Who is an enemy? An enemy is the one who is inimical to you, who does not want your welfare or wellbeing and tries to affect it in some way or another. He is one, who throws obstacles in your pursuit, who does not let you live in peace, for example, one who competes unfairly in the market using unfair methods. So, the one who does not let you have what you want is an enemy.

What we want is freedom from inadequacy, freedom from low self-esteem, freedom from fear, dissatisfaction, sorrow and so on. Whatever contributes to a low self-esteem is an enemy. Who contributes to our low self-esteem? Is it our in-laws? Is it our neighbours? The enemies need not be outside. They can be inside your mind.

A popular native American tale goes like this: A little child is sitting on his grandfather's lap. He asks, "Grandfather, there are two wolves fighting in my heart. One is insecure, angry and jealous and the other wolf is kind, constructive and peace loving. Who do you think will win?" The Grandfather smiles and says, 'The one you feed."

Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'ātmā eva hi ātmānaḥ bandhuḥ, ātmā eva ripuḥ ātmanaḥ–one can be one's own friend or one can be one's own enemy'(6.5). Our own opinions about ourselves, our own frustrations, our own guilt, anger and jealousies–these are the real enemies. What was just a thought of guilt or anger was fed and built up, till it became all consuming such that the person is no longer present. We need to pay attention to the constant chatter that goes on in one 's mind and examine the nature of the chatter – which thoughts are we feeding or adding fodder to?

If it is one's thoughts, surely I must have a say in it. More often than not, we are not able to get rid of these enemies because we are overwhelmed by their power as they make us do things that we are not happy about. We are helpless and hence we require support. We require support from someone and that support should be total and benign. That kind of total support can be had only by surrendering to Īśvara.

Īśvara as sadāyogī has accomplished everything. We need the support of Īśvara to banish all our inner enemies because He is Vīrahā, the destroyer of asuras. The enemies like passion, anger, frustration and so on, are powerful and they are all acting against us. We surrender to Parameśvara. His grace will help us get rid of the āntara-śatrus, the inner enemies, which are more difficult to overcome than the external enemies.

Hence one has to pay attention to these inimical tendencies. There are no magical solutions to dealing with these tendencies but something quite simple. It is said, 'dānena adānaṃ tara–by giving, overcome the tendency to receive and hoard; akrodhena krodhaṃ tara–by being calm and cheerful, overcome anger; satyena anṛtam tara–by speaking the truth, overcome the tendency to lie; dharmeṇa adharmaṃ tara–by the practice of dharma, give up adharma. Learn with the help of Parameśvara. Learn to accept situations, both internal and external cheerfully, and He will destroy your inner enemies.' Each of these responses proactively overcomes the limitations one experiences and also recognises that we are much more than we had defined ourselves to be.

167. Mādhavaḥ (also words 72, 735)
माधवः

The Lord of knowledge.

Mā is any knowledge, but particularly that of Hari, that is brahma-vidyā. He is the dhava, the Lord of mā and therefore called Mādhava. Being sarvajña, naturally He is the Lord of all vidyās. It is by His grace alone that one gains vidyā or knowledge.

168. Madhuḥ
मधुः
The one who is desirable like honey.

He gives great joy and satisfaction like madhu, honey and hence, He is called Madhu. Honey is always liked by everyone. Only the ātmā is the most loved. The Brhadāranyakopanisad says, 'ātmanastu kāmāya sarvaṃ priyaṃ bhavati–whatever is desirable for the sake of the ātmā'(4.5.6). Yäjnavalkya explains to his wife that love for anything is for your own sake, ätmanastu kämäya, and not for the sake of the other. You love an object, person or situation because it evokes the pleased you. Love is, therefore, the emotion that connects the pleased person and an external object.

If an object evokes the displeased person, love turns to dislike. Suppose one's partner or child says something uncomplimentary, we are not happy. If this continues over time, then we are hurt and angry and in the presence of that person, the displeased person comes up. This is the reason for so many divorces and continued misunderstandings in relationships.

We love somebody because that person accepts us as we are and therefore, in the presence of that person we feel accepted and acceptable. An object of love is that, which invokes ānanda, the pleased Self and in the pleased person, we discover the joy which is the nature of ātmā. When someone says, 'I love you', we accept ourself for the time being through the eyes of the other, because he or she totally accepts us. That is why love seems to produce happiness. At that time there is complete suspension of the wanting self. The dissatisfied, wanting person is given up for the moment. The unique thing about that happy experience is that we don't wish for anything to be different. This is also what happens because of an overwhelming experience, either of music, of a joke, of something beautiful, or of something profound. It captures you, and you find that you are the whole. This is what is called happiness, and we experience this happiness in different degrees. Wherever there is love, there is wholeness. We love the wholeness through another object that makes us discover wholeness about ourself. Therefore, that object becomes an object of love.

Anything that you love will lead you ultimately to Īśvara and hence, we say God is love. What is that makes you love something? It is ānanda alone and that is the nature of Īśvara.
You discover fullness, that is, acceptability. In the eyes of the Lord, the parātmā, in your understanding of Parātmā, you feel accepted as you are.

169. Atīndriyaḥ
अतीन्द्रियः
The one who is beyond the reach of the senses.

Since Bhagavān as the ātmā is devoid of the qualities like sound, touch, form and colour, taste and smell, He is atīndriya, beyond the reach of the sense organs. The senses cannot objectify Him.

At one level, the exposure to the images of various devatas and characterizations in popular television serials in India on Ramayana and Mahabharata has been good as it educates people about their own culture and heritage while teaching them about dharma. On the other hand, because of the image associated with the word, when one utters the word 'Rama' it is likely that people will remember the one who acted as Rama, and not necessarily the various qualities associated with Rama. Reading Amar Chitra Katha, the very popular comic series largely meant for children is wonderful as it educates, telling the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata in brief while not forcing you to visualize a certain actor.

The svarūpa of ātmā cannot be touched, seen, heard, tasted or smelt. The manifestation of atma, let's say the image of Ganapati can certainly be seen and meditated upon.

The ātmā cannot be objectified and it need not be objectified because it is self-evident and self-revealing. It does not need any sense organ to reveal itself. It is because of the ātmā that everything is objectified or known.

170. Mahāmāyaḥ

महामायः

The one who is the greatest magician.

The next few names show the greatness of Bhagavān. The Upaniṣhad describes Him as 'mahato mahīyān aṇoraṇīyān–it is bigger than the biggest and smaller than the smallest'(Ka.Up.1.2.20). It reveals His essential nature. Bhagavān is one who is bigger than whatever you think is big. It is like the number 'infinite'. Take any big number that you can think of, that number plus one is infinity. Similarly here also, 'big' is a concept. However big it is, it is still a concept in your buddhi. The reality, which sustains the concept, is definitely bigger than the biggest–being bigger than the biggest that you can think of. Then, immediately the mind concludes that it is big and that it may not be small. That conclusion is negated by saying, it is also smaller than the smallest.

How can there be something big and also small? The conclusion would be, that it is non-existent. It is not non-existent but the reality, the truth of non-existence also. When you think of something that is non-existent, like a square circle, you say that the square circle does not exist. When you say this, it is a concept; it is a piece of knowledge. Non-existence exists as a concept. What exists is only that knowledge. When we say that it is a knowledge, we mean that consciousness exists.

We are looking at Īśvara from the standpoint of an attribute that we have. Whatever may be the greatness of the attribute that anyone may have, Īśvara has that in a much greater, unimaginable amount. This and the next few nāmas point out that alone.

Magicians perform magic by creating some delusions. Bhagavān is a great mayāvī, magician, because in the creation everything is magic. Time is magic because it seems to be there; but when you enquire into it, it is not there. Space is magic, for it seems to be there and yet when you enquire into it, it is not there.

Objects are also magic. You see a pot. It is nothing but clay; there is really no pot apart from clay. You cannot say that pot is on clay or in clay or under clay or above clay, because what is there is only clay. Clay is not pot. So what is pot? Even as you are seeing the pot, the pot is gone and this is the great magic. Every object, every concept is like this. The entire world, when you enquire into it, dissolves into its reality. And when you understand this, you enjoy it. Bhagavān is the greatest magician. Bhagavān says, 'mama māyā duratyayā–it is very difficult to overcome my māyā'(BG.7.14).

171. Mahotsāhaḥ

महोत्साहः

The one who has great enthusiasm.

The utsāha, enthusiasm of Bhagavān is mahān, great because it is consistent and continuous. Creation of the universe, sustenance and resolution of the universe are carried out enthusiastically.

Watching a one year old who is trying to walk can be very inspiring. He tries to get up, falls. Again tries to get up by propping himself with something, falls down. With the same enthusiasm he keeps trying. Despite having limited power as a one year old child, he does not consider himself helpless. He keeps trying and trying until he gets tired perhaps or the mother tells him to stop trying. This is important to note, the child does not feel helpless, despite his highly limited power and dependencies on his caregivers. Most people are enthusiastic when they start something, but don't have staying power and their enthusiasm and alertness generally wanes; people get intellectually tired.

But Bhagavān never tires and His enthusiasm is continuous and consistent with no variation.

172. Mahābalaḥ

महाबलः

The one who has great strength.

The Lord is Mahābala, because He has great strength, being stronger than the strongest. He is almighty, all strength.

When I need help or strength, I seek help from any person I can. The strength that I seek may be to

a. accomplish something, b. change a harmful habit, c. complete what I started, d. let go of the hold of the past, e. plan for the future without anxiety, f. endure a difficult phase where a lot of things seem to be going wrong,

When the helplessness is in terms of my incapacity to let go of my past or to let the future happen without my being apprehensive, then a person like myself cannot help me. I have to go to the source from where such help is possible. That source is the Lord, all strength, whom I can invoke through prayer.

Some people dismiss prayer as the 'refuge of the weak hearted'. Nothing could be further from the truth. A prayerful person is an objective person as he or she recognises the different forces that are involved in any given situation. The basis for any form of prayer is the acknowledgement of our helplessness and then seeking help. Prayer is born naturally when I realise my helplessness and recognise the source of all power, all knowledge. If both of these are acknowledged, prayer is very natural. If everything is in order I need not pray. All prayers have their fulfilment in keeping everything in order.

173. Mahābuddhiḥ

महाबुद्धिः

The one who is highly intelligent.

Across cultures, people who have good retentive power, are able to apply their knowledge to practical situations, who respond to situations in a constructive way are generally seen to be intelligent. Performing well academically is also considered to be a sign of intelligence although academics does not guarantee knowledge. The way a person's life pans out depends on the decisions taken either by the person or when others take the decision for that person. Decisions in the heat of a moment or deliberated upon for weeks are based on the buddhi of the person. Buddhi is meant for knowledge.

Pujya Swamiji would talk about a sadhu in Rishikesh who would stand on his head for two hours on a rock. It is definitely an accomplishment that the head is used to do the inverted head stand or sirsasana. Many yoga practitioners correctly say that the blood circulation to the head region is better, which is all true. Even if this is the case, what is the purpose of this extra blood circulation to the head if one is not living in line with dharma? The buddhi must primarily be used for the purpose for which it was given, to live intelligently by making intelligent decisions based on reality.

Since we are endowed with a buddhi, from that standpoint we try to imagine the buddhi of Īśvara. This is our thinking. When we look at the Lord from the standpoint of our own buddhi, the buddhi is His glory. The intellect and the intelligence of the most brilliant people, is the buddhi of Bhagavān. So the buddhi of Bhagavān is mahatī, great. It does not have any limitation. and the knowledge is complete in Parameśvara.

Any buddhi that is there in the jagat is the vibhūti, glory, of Īśvara. If one has an intellect that is capable of understanding, it is the glory of Īśvara. If one has a durbuddhi, an intellect with negative qualities, then, that is the vibhūti of Īśvara plus the ego of the individual. Thus, there are a lot of possibilities in the world, which are all the glories of Īśvara. That one has actualized the possibility of a durbuddhi or wrong thinking is our glory. This wrong thinking is a possibility and one has accomplished it. This is our contribution. So let our notion of our presence in the scheme of things be reduced and let the presence of Bhagavān increase!

This is the purpose of reading the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma. Let all our glories be seen as the glories of Īśvara, not through positive thinking but an objective appreciation of facts. In the beginning, we do it deliberately; later it will become spontaneous. That can be accomplished only by understanding the fact that this is also the glory of Bhagavān. When we go on recognizing the fact, finally we will find that what is there, is only the glory of Bhagavān and our presence would be minimal. Our presence is in anger, insecurity, frustration, fear and so on, while the presence of Īśvara is seen in love, compassion, caring, consistency and so on. This is the outcome of studying the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma.

174. Mahāvīryaḥ

महावीर्यः

The one who has great vīrya, power.

In this world, the power enjoyed by people comes from four sources: 1. Power of position, 2. Power of age and authority, 3. Power of association and 4. Power of knowledge. Very simply, power is the ability to get things done. Some political leaders or even leaders in corporate offices may have titles and the power of position to demand that masses follow them but may not have the knowledge required to get the job done. Some elders in the family may have age on their side but they may not be emotionally mature to take right decisions as they still are ruled by their emotions. Because some people have the whos'who on their speed dial, they think they are powerful but in the absence of friends in high places, the power falls apart. The power that one commands due to position (social or financial), age and association are subject to decline. On the other hand, old or young, if one has knowledge of a given subject matter, it bestows power to the person to get things done objectively. If one truly has some knowledge of a given subject matter, it also makes one humble as one recognises what one does not know as well. That is true power as then one leads change in one's life first, before trying to contribute to another person's life.

And then there is the power of a bhakta who recognises the order of Isvara and that he/she is in order. This bestows phenomenal power to handle anything that life brings. Something to think about - Where does our sense of power come from?

The jagat is a creation. Brahman, the limitless consciousness, is advaya, one without a second and of the nature of sat-cit-ānanda. Such a Brahman cannot create anything. But, we see a created world and it cannot be dismissed as non-existent. Now, what is a circle? A circle is a closed line and does not have a beginning or end. What is a line? A line is that which is made up of a series of points. What is a point? A point is that which occupies no space. We say that a series of points make a length, but at the same time that point occupies no space. If a circle is made up of a series of points which occupy no space, the circle cannot really exist. Still, it appears to exist. This is māyā. The circle is not completely non-existent, like the circular square. But, it exists as long as we do not enquire into it.

A line is a myth and therefore a circle is a myth and thus the whole creation if analyzed, is a myth. This is called māyā. This is the creation of Īśvara and so cannot be dismissed as non-existent. At the same time it cannot pass as existent also. To create this māyā creation, mahāvīrya, great power is required–a power as good as the creation. That māyā itself is the

mahāvīrya, great power and skill of Parameśvara. Because of possessing this, He is called Mahāvīrya.

175. Mahāśaktiḥ

महाशक्तिः

The one who has immense skill and power.

We are endowed with three types of śaktiḥ. Iccha śaktiḥ is the power to desire and as they say the sky is the limit. On its own Iccha śaktiḥ without the power to act, kriya śaktiḥ will lead us to becoming frustrated and angry. Some of us have honed iccha śaktiḥ but expect a Santa Claus to rescue us from a situation. There are adults who behave like 'Daddy's little girls' and 'Mamma's little boys', who expect things to be done for them, as per their desire, without using their own power to act. Iccha śaktiḥ needs to be backed with jñāna śaktiḥ, the power to know and understand a given subject matter. For any kriya, action, all three powers are required: the power of the desire to act(for some goal), the power to act and the power to know. Some people may have cultivated jñāna śaktiḥ but may be armchair activists or philosophers, the power to act has been inhibited by inertia or laziness or plain excuses. To do the right thing, with the right knowledge with the desire that is in line with dharma is not simple. How glorious that we all (without exception of age, stage in life) are endowed with all three types of śaktiḥ – iccha, kriya and jñāna With objectivity we know what we need in our lives. We seek grace from Bhagavān as Mahāśakti.

Bhagavān is one who has immense power. Mahāvīrya has been told with reference to creation and for resolution, Mahāśakti is required. Some people can create but cannot withdraw. One can create problems but cannot solve them. Once there is a problem, then there is no śakti, skill, to solve the problem that is created. So, by not taking the right step at the right time, one creates bigger problems. It is like creating a fire which becomes a huge conflagration, and then it cannot be put out. This is our lot. We invoke grace through the power of our prayer. He is Mahābalaḥ, the one who has great strength, Mahābuddhiḥ, the one who is highly intelligent and Mahāvīryaḥ, the one who has great vīrya, power.

The Lord has created the world. And to take it back into Himself, He requires immense power. He takes it back at His own will. Thus, He has mahatī-śakti, great power to create and also withdraw this world. But, it does not mean that He requires a great length of time for this. He is called Mahāśakti.

176. Mahādyutiḥ

महाद्युतिः

The one who has great brilliance.

He is the creator of the universe and He is the one who sustains it. The brilliance required to run the whole universe is obviously very great.

Just to put a house together is a huge project: the finances required, the materials required, the skilled people required – architects, masons, plumbers electricians etc and once the structure is created, the residents of the house keep it going by maintaining the condition of the house in

terms of cleanliness, ventilation, attending to leakages if any. And we are talking about only one house here.

The resources and intelligence required to just keep the earth going and not get lost in space, spinning out of its axis is immense. When the houses are the 14 lokas, seven up and seven down the three śaktis required –the capacity to create, sustain and resolve–are just mindboggling. These śaktis are with Him in limitless measure. To be in awe and reverence is then just natural.
Bhagavān is self-effulgent, being of the nature of consciousness. Self effulgent means no other light is required to light it up. Even when a small lamp with a lit flame is kept in a large room, we do not need the tubelight to be switched on in the room to see the flame. That flame has its own light, and can turn into a raging fire.

The self effulgence of Bhagavan gives reality to everything, manifest or unmanifest. This consciousness of us and Bhagavān is all-pervasive and limitless. Because He is limitless dyuti, consciousness, and because He has the mahatī dyuti, the great brilliance needed for this creation, He is Mahādyuti.

177. Anirdeśyavapuḥ (also word 656)
अनिर्देश्यवपुः
The one who cannot be defined categorically.

Who is this Bhagavān, who has all the above qualities? He is Anirdeśyavapu, one whose form cannot be pointed out as only this or that.

Any category of knowledge – let's say, Science requires the mind to know things distinctly or categorically as either 'this' or 'that' or some category. People thrive on certainty. Hence our orientation of categorization extends to how we think about people, situations and definitely about God. Most of us feel certain and comfortable when we have categorically concluded about a situation or people – "this was terrible", "He is so emotional etc..." We conclude because we want to protect ourselves from any harm or threat. Nothing wrong with that. But when it becomes the driving force, then I am not awake to reality. With some exposure to Vedanta, we also start to see that Vedanta is the only knowledge where our methods of categorising stop working for us. People try to categorise Atma and Anatma and struggle because the approach is categorical, without understanding satyam and mithya. We learn to relax as we see that the realities of life are just what they are, without definite categorisations. All judgments are categorizations and that is why when somebody judges us, we resist it. Once we understand that the mind has a tendency to categorise, we call the bluff of that orientation. We begin to appreciate the times in our lives that we can hold paradoxes. An example of holding a paradox is in appreciating poetry.

Virāṭ, is the form of Bhagavān. He has the whole world as His śarira. What is the truth of this śarira? The truth of this form is non-form, that is, the formless reality which is limitless. The formless and limitless cannot have a form and hence it is magic again. This particular form cannot be a quality or an attribute of a form that is already there.

To say that it is already a form and that form belongs to something which has a form, which belongs to something else that has a form …, will be a defect of infinite regression. Hence, we may be constrained to say that the form is an attribute of the formless. To say that the formless has a form, is also a contradiction. All that we can say is that, the formless having a form is māyā–magic. This is the truth.

Again, reducing the Lord to any particular form is to limit Him. Forms are helpful for contemplation and upaasana, though.

Or the word vapus means svarūpa, nature. So the one whose svarūpa cannot be pointed out categorically as 'this' or 'that,' is Anirdeśyavapu. His svarūpa cannot be captured by words, objectified as the direct meaning of the words. His svarūpa is limitless and infinite in everyway. Therefore, as the limitless cannot be captured by words, He is Anirdeśyavapu. With the world as His śarira, Bhagavān is Anirdeśyavapu and without the world also, He is Anirdeśyavapu.

178. Śrimān (also words 22,220, 613)

श्रीमान

The Lord of all wealth and prosperity.

This nāma occurs four times and each time, the meaning is taken differently. He is Śrimān, because He has śrī, aiśvarya-lakṣaṇā samagrā śrīḥ–absolute overlordship, lording over all the worlds and their lords.

The CEO may report to a board of directors. But there is no other Lord for Śrimān.

179. Ameyātmā (also word 102)

अमेयात्मा

The one whose knowledge cannot be measured.

When an author writes his/her magnum opus, it is evident that what he/she knows is much more than what he/she writes. Perhaps years of living and reflecting on life and situations find its way into the book. The standard length of most fiction or non fiction books that make it to bestseller's lists may run into 250-300 pages, but the author 's experiences of his/her lifetime go into putting together the book. One of the joys of reading is that all of this is available to the reader in a book form and one is in touch quite intimately with the author's thoughts. Even the one who teaches any subject matter, be it geometry, botany knows more than he/she teaches.

The more we learn, the more we find that our capacity to assimilate new subjects is immense. Memory is an important aspect of knowledge and even for critical reasoning or looking at different possibilities we need to rely on memory. While the speed of the processor as well as the capacity of the external hard drive keeps getting upgraded in the computer world, we are delegating our memory and capacity to hold knowledge, to our mobile phones and other electronic devices. Hence when we hear young children in the Veda pāthasāla, we can't help but marvel at how they can remember 20000 - 40000 verses of a single Veda. Having said that, the knowledge of a person, however immense it is, is still limited.

In the word Ameyātmā, the word ātmā means buddhi, knowledge, intelligence. So, Bhagavān is one whose buddhi is ameya, whose knowledge and intelligence cannot be measured by anyone at anytime.

While attempts have been made to measure the intelligence quotient of human beings, with regard to those around us, we may be able to say that this person knows this much at this time. Still it is not possible to know fully all that the person knows. If that is so with reference to human beings, what can we say about the buddhi of the Lord? The knowledge is in absolute measure. He has no ignorance of anything–its detail or depth–at anytime. We seek his grace.

180. Mahādridhṛk

महादिधृक्

The one who held the great mountains.

During His avatāra as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He lifted the Govardhana mountain to protect Gokula from the torrential rains. Indra, angry that the Indra-pūja that was annually done to him was denied that year, caused incessant, torrential rains as though to destroy Gokula. The Lord could have stopped it by a mere saṅkalpa. But, He chose to reveal Himself as an avatāra, by lifting the Govardhana-giri with His little finger and holding it continuously for a week, protected all the people and cattle of Gokula. Hence He is Mahādridhṛk.

When the devas and asuras churned the milky ocean with the Mandara mountain as the churning rod, the mountain began sinking by its own weight. He took an avatāra as a Kūrma, tortoise, and once again lifted up the Mandara mountain from the bottom of the ocean. Therefore also, He is Mahādridhṛk.

The sun rising every day, the earth orbiting its axis, a seed growing into a huge tree, the tides changing according to the phases of the moon, although can evoke a lot of awe when we examine it, seem too commonplace for us to consider them miracles. The foetus growing in the womb from a single zygote is nothing short of miraculous. But this won't do for most of us. We need to see something superhuman. Our attention is so focused on the forms around us that a person lifting 300 kgs of weight will get more attention than a guru pointing out your limitless reality. Such is the amusing irony of this day and age.

What Bhagavan does as an avatāra helps us to have śraddha. But, śraddha, trust in the words of the sastra and the guru is neither the responsibility of the teacher nor the śastra. It is primarily the responsibility of the student as he/she recognises that with adequate exposure to the teaching, the self dissatisfaction that I had taken to be real, starts to disintegrate. The more the clarity in the knowledge grows, the more anxieties and doubts are addressed, sraddha is inevitable. As they say, the proof of the pudding lies in the eating. As long as there is working trust to listen to the teaching, it is fine. Initially we may have working trust; the trust grows in time as one cannot help but be dazzled by the sophistication and depth of the śastra, as it unravels what we thought was real and leads us by the hand to our own absolute limitless reality. That is miraculous.

This entire brahmāṇḍa, cosmos is like a mahādri, a great mountain, whose peak cannot be seen. He sustains and upholds the truth of this brahmāṇḍa, the cosmos.

181. Maheṣvāsaḥ

महेष्वास:

The one who has the capacity to strike the arrows.

Īṣvāra can mean the capacity to shoot arrows or the bow from which the arrow is shot. The one who has mahān isvāsa, a great bow or one who has a distinguished capacity in archery is Mahesvāsa. This is the Lord as Śrī Rāma. Śrī Rāma was a great archer and with just one arrow, He could put a hole through seven trees. In fact, Śrī Rāma is praised as one who does not need more than one arrow to hit the target. This nāma is with reference to the lilā of the Lord in the form of an avatāra.

In the beginning of Ramayana it is said that Valmiki asked Sage Narada "Is there a person in this present world, who is endowed with good qualities (guṇavān) and also a powerful one (vīryavān), a knower of Dharma and accomplished in Dharma (Dharma jñah cha krita), who speaks only truth and accomplishes whatever he has determined in his mind (satya vākya dhRiDha vrataḥ)."

In response, one of the things Nārada said was, 'From the Ikśvaku dynasty and known to people (janaih śrutaḥ) by the name of Rāma (raamo nāma) , and he is conscientious (niyata ātma), highly valorous (mahāvīryo), steadfast and a controller of his own senses (dyutimān dhritimān vashī)

He is intellectual (buddhimān), just (nītimān), learned, owner of wealth (śrimān), and a destroyer of enemies (shatru nibarhaṇah). His arms are lengthy (mahābāhu), and his neck is like a conch-shell, with high cheek bones (kambu grīvo mahāhanuḥ)

He is lion-chested (mahorasko), thick-shouldered and who handles a long bow (maheshvāso), thick shouldered with concealed collar bones (guuDha jatruH), an enemy-subjugator (arindamaḥ), whose arms extend upto his knee (ajānu bāhuḥ),and is with a pleasing head (sushirāḥ), with a perfect forehead (su lalāṭaḥ), and whose walk is like that of a lion (suvikramaḥ)...

What we value, we appreciate, revel in and enjoy and get inspired. What we value we want to emulate. What we value we invoke in ourselves. Much more is said about Lord Rama which we will leave for another time when another nāma about him comes up.

182. Mahībhartā

महीभर्ता

The supporter of the earth.

When the wind blows hard across a tree, the roots stretch, hold on and grow stronger. When the winds of change blow, when the storm of transition blows, when the winds of difficulties blow, what helps us hold on and grow stronger? We hold onto something. We seek support (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, financial and professional) in other people, possessions, structure of daily habits, ideas and sometimes even in drugs. People also seek support from their memories

and their achievements. Many people who are retired seek to live out the rest of their life by reflecting on past glory. Even a sanyāsi living in Uttarkaśi relies on the local grocer for essentials. It is not possible to be absolutely independent physically, free of all support. The body being made of the five elements needs permutations and combinations of the five elements to sustain it. Seeking support is not a sign of weakness. It is recognising the interconnectedness of everything and doing what is required for one's self growth.

Extreme emotional dependence ensures that one 's emotional life swings between extremes leading to emotional exhaustion. What is the way out? Emotional independence whereby one objectively sees the objective value of people, situations and things in one's life. But what until then? Until then , it is realistic is to seek support because the goal is self growth. We need to fulfill our needs until we grow out of the need for many kinds of support. If one has suffered a fracture and is temporarily using a crutch, one uses a crutch for as long as it is required. Not any longer. The crutch is recognised for what it is. Whatever it is, the ability and capacity to go through the many storms of life without being weather beaten but stronger, is possible because of the many sources of support that help in the person's resilience. Each person figures out what works for oneself. People ask, how much self growth? Just enough while discovering the self through the teaching mirror of the sastra. Discovering one's connection to the whole that is Īśvara is indeed the support that pervades all other support.

At the time of pralaya, cosmic resolution which includes this earth and all the galaxies, there will be water everywhere. When everything goes into the unmanifest condition during pralaya, how can there be water? This is only a relative pralaya. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as the supporter of the earth is depicted as a baby, sucking His toe and lying on a banyan leaf floating on the vast expanse of water.

As Varāha-avatāra, He plunges into the water and brings up the mahī, the earth, for the creation to start again. Or, He is the one who always supports the earth.

183. Śrīnivāsaḥ (also word 607)
श्रीनिवासः
The dwelling place of Śrī.

Our relationship with wealth indicates our maturity. On the face of it, any wealth, specifically money, is inert and not sentient. How can one have a relationship with money? But we do. The amount of money we have can evoke greed, need, insecurity, security, adequacy and even the level of our self esteem. Simply put, money is what money does. Any wealth cannot be an end in itself. It establishes its value for us depending on what it is used for – children's education and subsequent marriage in adulthood, an extravagant lifestyle of luxury, philanthropic foundation, property, retirement plan, investment for a business or basic necessities. The value that I put on money depends on the value that I put on different things and conditions in life that make me happy.

Mahatma Gandhi ji once said, ' In this world there is enough for man's needs, not enough for man's greed.' Currently, there is a flurry of print advertisements in the newspapers due to the

advent of festivals, in India all aiming to establish why various products cannot be done without and why they are needed. It seems that modernization is a process of converting all luxuries into necessities. Mobile phone is a case in point. Some sadhus don't touch money and present it as a virtue. But for their lifestyle, someone has to spend money, buy their tickets etc. Maturity lies in money being neither a raga, a binding, uncontrollable, desire nor a dvesa an object of contempt, to be shunned. Either attitude to money is subjective. We want to grow into recognising that money is what money does. Period. To the extent our life priorities are clear, we have a view of how much money we realistically we need and take necessary steps. Life is not just about going to work, paying our bills and then finally dying!

In our culture all wealth and natural resources is worshipped as Śrī. Our attitude to Śrī comes from our understanding of Śrī. As an altar of worship, we don't look down on Śrī nor do we consider Śrī as everything in life. The goddess of wealth, Śrī always dwells on His chest without ever leaving Him. Śrī is māyā-ṣakti. He is the nivāsa, the abode of the blessing, śakti of māyā, that is śrī, and hence He is Śrīnivāsa. Lakṣmī is always with the Lord. We seek the Lord 's grace for the wisdom to utilize Śrī meaningfully at an individual level. At the total level, due to our respect for all Śrī, all resources we do not indulge in acts of waste or neglect of natural resources such as electricity, power, water etc.

184. Satāṃ gatiḥ (also word 450)

सतां गतिः

The destination of all the good people.

The means by which one reaches the destination, that is, the road is called gati. The destination that is reached, achieved is also called gati. The means and the end are both called gati. Bhagavān is presented here as both the means and the end. 'I am the way and I am the goal.' This is a biblical statement which can be understood only through Vedānta. The means and the end are one and the same. This is different from saying, 'Life is a journey to be enjoyed not a goal to be reached'. This saying highlights the many facets and experiences of life, urging us to not postpone living vis-à-vis surviving, and enjoying.

Let us explore the understanding of means and ends. The end, the destination, is always for somebody who is seeking. There is a separation, real or perceived between the seeker and the sought and the seeking aims to bridge the gap. What may be 'sought' could range from the latest mobile phone to rest on the weekend to understanding the Lord. Those who are sat-puruṣas, who follow the dharmas prescribed by the Vedas, see the Lord as the gati, the means for attaining the puruṣārtha they want to attain, be it artha, kāma or dharma. Sri Krsna in the Bhagavad Gita goes on to say that, the way and the purpose for which people invoke and worship me, I bless them (4.11). A person is free to invoke the Lord as the Lord of his pancreas and pray for smooth management of his blood sugar levels or as Varuna asking or more rain. If I have diabetes and don't pay adequate attention to food, exercise, rest or sleep but pray, it is not the Lord 's fault that my blood sugar levels soar. We need to understand well that prayer is not a substitute for action. Prayer being a karma, enhances the results. And the Lord becomes the gati, by blessing people who are seeking various things in life.

But, in course of time, they come to understand that any end that is sought after is Īśvara and therefore, the real gati, the end is Īśvara. Seeking a house in Mumbai is not for the sake of the house, it is not to go and hug the walls. The house is for safety, security and some comfort and happiness. But the nature of Īśvara is happiness. As the seeker is not separate from Īśvara, there is really no end and hence no means is necessary. Really speaking the seeker discovers his identity with Īśvara. There is no end, because all that is here is only Īśvara.

The fact is brought out in the Gītā with an analogy of a fire-ritual. Arpaṇa is the means, the instrument by which something is offered and that is Brahman. What is being offered, the havis, is also Brahman. The fire unto which it is offered is also Brahman. That person who does the offering is also Brahman. What is to be achieved through the fire-ritual is Brahman and the one who achieves the result, is also Brahman. The one who has this vision is referred to as brahma-karma-samādhi and he achieves the result of this vision, that everything is nothing but Brahman.

In fact everything is Brahman. To gain Parameśvara, the Lord Himself is the means. Parameśvara is not understood by any other means. You are Parameśvara and hence Parameśvara, Brahman, is understood only in this way. Brahman cannot be known as an object. Knowledge of a microbe does not make you a microbe. But in the discovery of what always IS, what always was, one is Brahman. The knowledge here is pending discovery. It is like the tenth man understanding the tenth man by being the tenth man not becoming the tenth man. How? Because he is the tenth man. The knowledge that 'I am Brahman' is the means and 'I am Brahman', the absolute reality that is limitless and nature of the fullness is also the end.

185. Aniruddhaḥ (also word 638)

अनिरुद्धः

The one who is unobstructed.

Niruddha means to be stopped or obstructed. We consider obstructions as those things, people or situations that block or stop or prevent us from the achievement of our goals. And hence Goddess Durga or even Ganapati, are worshipped fervently as they are those aspects of Isvara that will help us sail through any storm, ride any weather. In many ways what we consider as obstructions are largely based on our perception colored by our background.

A 10 km trek because the car broke down in the Himalayan valleys is an obstruction for the one not used to walking much. But, that is routine for someone who lives in the valleys because homes and utilities are situated at considerable distances from each other. A couple I was counseling had divergent views on misunderstandings and arguments in their relationship. One thought that 'relationship means misunderstanding has to be there, we work through it, you win some, you lose some.' Hence this person was more relaxed and took their differences in his stride. The woman on the other hand thought that every misunderstanding is a sign of them growing apart and the relationship was under threat. All a matter of perception! One thought that misunderstanding only proved that they are different and hence need more communication while the other thought that misunderstanding means they don't understand each other. Our perception largely determines what we consider as obstacles in our life. This is important for us to reflect

on. What we consider as obstacles – are these obstacles or us resisting facts about ourselves, other people or situations ?

Howard Roark, the architect protagonist of the landmark book 'Fountainhead' by Ayn Rand had something interesting to say which has stayed with me and inspired me to do the things I ended up doing in life. When one of the most successful architects at that time, Toohey asks Roark, an upcoming architect ' Who will allow you to build what you want'? , Roark turns around and answers in a steely voice, 'Who will stop me?' When one's focus and life priorities based on dharma are clear, so called obstacles don't really matter. The obstacle stops being an obstacle either because one's perception changes or one discovers one's resilience or develops a better understanding of the issue and background of the people and factors involved.

Can there be any obstruction for the Lord? The Lord is never stopped or obstructed in His functions of creation, sustenance or resolution by anyone or anything, since He is satyasaṅkalpa. Even in His manifestations as various avatāras, He never faces any obstruction to what He sets out to do. Just like water works around a seemingly large boulder, there are enough stories of how Sri Krsna worked around some situations (which we consider obstacles). Therefore, He is Aniruddha.

186. Surānandaḥ

सुरानन्दः

The one who gives ānanda to the devas.

We pray to various deities like Indra, Agni, Prajāpati and other devas for the various ends we seek, our happiness and welfare. Each deva has a purpose and serves a function of the total that is Iśvara. But, these devas themselves get their happiness from Parameśvara. As He is the one who causes ānanda to the suras, He is Surānanda.

Parameśvara is the source of all ānanda. On the basis of our experiences, we understand happiness to be conditioned by a person (who is present with us), a situation (weekend or a vacation of one's choice) or acquisition of a thing (purchase of the latest electronic gadget that too at a throwaway discount). This happiness is experiential, based on an experience which is really some sense data and my emotional response to it based on the value I give the person, situation or thing. Experiential happiness is subject to gradation – happy, happier, happiest. No traffic jam as one cruises along to one's destination is a happy moment. Depending on the stage of life, we indicate our happiest moment to be getting admission into a dream university, getting a dream job, finding a partner, getting married, birth of our child, so on and so forth. Many of these are milestones in most people's lives and give us hope and renewed sense of purpose to keep going. Still, that dream job, dream partner, dream marriage, dream child after a while, does not keep us as happy as earlier. That happiness then proves to be elusive and illusive.

With exposure to the śastra, I discover that in my true nature there is no situation that really limits me, no thing that limits me, no person that can limit me in terms of position, knowledge, status, talents etc. A person can feel limited and insignificant and inadequate and wanting when it comes to talents, status, knowledge, position etc. But how can presence, beingness that is my true nature, that which is the basis of every person be conditioned or limited? I begin to discover

the limitless that is me, that was always me, that that limitless seems to be have a limited experience of being in the body. But this limited experience is not real. It depends on the presence or beingness. Presence or Beingness or Isness is not dependent on time, place or situation. Isness that is ānanda at all times, in all places in all situations that is You.

187. Govindaḥ (also word 539)
गोविन्दः
The rescuer of the earth and the Vedas.

In the Mahābhārata, Bhagavān introduces His various names and their meanings. There He says, 'because I found the earth that was hidden in the lower regions at the beginning of creation, I am praised by the devas and the scriptures as Govinda' (Śā.342.70).

The pride of Indra was crushed by the Lord, when He lifted the Govardhana-giri and protected the cows, cowherds, milkmaids and residents of Vrindavan as Kṛṣṇāvatāra. At the same time, when Indra asked for forgiveness for his audacity from Kṛṣṇā, the queen of the Cows, Surabhi showered the rain of milk on Krishna to show her gratitude. Indra praised Him saying, 'I am the Indra, the lord of the devas and you are the Indra of the cows. As the lord of the cows, people will praise you forever as Govinda.'

According to another story in the Brahma and Visnu Puranas, the asuras Madhu and Kaitabha stole the Vedas from Brahma. Visnu then took the form of Hayagrīva, as He found and rescued the Vedas, He is known as Govinda.

188. Govindāṃ patiḥ
गोविन्दां पतिः
The lord of those who know Veda.

Some people think that there are books and books in this world of which one is the Veda. This is not correct. Vedas are the revealed knowledge of none other than Bhagavan and hence they occupy a sacred place in our hearts. Revealed knowledge about what? The knowledge of means and ends; the knowledge of means for artha, security, kama, pleasure, dharma, universal ethics and moksa, freedom from a sense of bondage. All goals of individuals will find its way in the above classification.

The Vedas reveal that which is not known to the individual, which cannot be known by the individual through the means of knowledge available to him, mainly perception and inference. That performing a certain yajna will result in rains, only the Veda reveals. A certain law of cause and effect is being presented, that generations have seen and passed on. That 's all. There is no way I can figure out that chanting some specific mantras and certain processes will result in rains. The Veda reveals it.

People are very eager to dismiss what they don't understand, as superstition. Can a child who has not understood 7+6 =13, say 'Maths does not exist because I don't understand it.' The simple solution is that if we don't understand it, then we don't dismiss it, but make an attempt to understand. In a fight with a friend, because the friend presents a different view point of your

behavior, you don't dismiss and disregard what the friend is saying. You examine it and try and see what the friend's view point is. Why? Because the friendship is important to you.

But someone may argue that the Vedas are not important to me. If I were to tell you that in the vision of the Vedanta (the last portion of the Veda), you the person is complete and whole. You are the very happiness that you seek through limited pursuits. Even one's own partner, parents or children despite their love for us, will not tell us – you are limitless and hence whole. As the limitless reality, you are the very basis for all ananda. This presentation which has nothing to do with any system or religion is contrary to the many ideas and notions I have about myself. If the Veda tells me something I don't know, but something I desperately want to know and be – whole, complete and adequate, then it is worth looking into. We need not dismiss it before looking into it, like the child who dismissed Maths because he did not understand it.

One who knows and understands 'go', the words of the Veda, is a govid. Bhagavān is Govidāṃ pati, the Lord of all those who know the Veda; He is their protector.

He is the subject-matter of the Vedas and once He is known and understood, then the Lord becomes the ruler of the heart. Previously, it was the ahaṅkāra, the ego, which was ruling the heart. The wave felt the pangs of individuality and tried hard to excel. That individuality which was his pride also became the reason for his sense of isolation from the ocean. In the understanding that he as the wave, is pervaded by the ocean, the sense of loneliness and alienation from the rest of the waves started to dissolve.

Now, Bhagavān gets back to the heart. I is seen as pervaded by Bhagavan. There is no more a place for the ahaṅkāra because it is the Lord who rules. Some people worry that there will be destruction of the ego. In the wave recognising itself to be water, what destruction takes place? There is only recognition of a fact. When the truth of the ahaṅkāra is recognised, the ahaṅkāra can only exist as the shadow of Bhagavān. The ego is falsified in recognising that it is not absolutely real. The ahankara, what I took myself to be is then a mithya ego or an enlightened ego.

189. Marīciḥ
मरीचिः
The one who outshines even the most effulgent.

The Lord is called Marīci because He is of the nature of light or effulgence. In the presence of light all is known. In the presence of light there are no dark corners of vagueness. It looks as though the light that we see is constant. But our school physics will remind us that it travels at a certain speed, and when faced with a black hole, it seemingly dies. So, the light keeps dying and coming back, but it looks as though it is constantly present. The Lord is jyotir-jyotiḥ– the light of all lights. In the Gītā He says, 'tejas tejasvinām aham–I am the brilliance in the brilliant people'(10.36). This is a glory.

The aim of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma is to take away the ego, that is, the thinking that all this glory belongs to me, I have this brilliance and so on. It is good to have an insight into one's capabilities, but at the same time there should be the awareness that all these capacities are given

by the Lord. When this humility and appreciation is there, then there is the presence of Īśvara. Even sight, hearing and other faculties are given by Īśvara. Hence we can only look after what has been given, not create what has been given. If eyes grow weaker with age and use and abuse, there are surgeries that will help to rectify eyesight. But the capacity to see is given. It cannot be created. Despite the eye being so small, the capacity to see huge panoramas is given. The capacity to blink to manage the dryness and light in the environment, is given. The capacity of the eyes to be continuously hydrated by retinal fluid, despite the surrounding dryness is given. The capacity to close one's eyes at will, is also given.

The presence of Īśvara is brought in by the awareness of what is given. Awareness is not a matter of belief. That 2+2 =4 is not a belief. It is to be understood. Belief does not require much thinking. All that is here is Isvara is a matter of understanding as one appreciates the intelligence in all the orders that govern the universe including dharma. That intelligence, that brilliance in all beings and in all things is Marīciḥ.

190. Damanaḥ

दमनः

The one who subdues.

Bhagavān makes all these three spheres–ādhidaivika, ādhibhautika and ādhyātmika–function all the time.

Ādhidaivika forces act on the individual in the form of forces of nature – weather patterns, El Nino effect, tsunami, floods etc. People are not directly responsible for these forces.

Ādhibhautika forces refers to elements – bhuta and that born of elements, elementals. This includes the bugs around us as well as the people who bug us.

Ādhyātmika forces include things centred on oneself, changes in the body and mind. Aches and pains in the body, disturbances in the mind are all due to ādhyātmika forces. At the end of every Vedic prayer, we say Om shantih shantih shantih. Repetition of shantih three times is a prayer for the subdued effect of the three sets of forces - ādhidaivika, ādhibhautika and ādhyātmika. Each force is presided by several devatās. The Lord has the power to make every devatā do his job.

Our commitment in life helps to define the goals and general direction of our life. It is commitment to a series of actions, a life style that helps one to ride over all possible discomfort or obstacles. In a workshop with children, one of them said 'I do only what I feel like doing'. So, we started exploring whether that approach will help us get what we want in life. I asked him to ask his father, whether he liked to go to work everyday, especially on Mondays after a long leisurely weekend. This young ten year old boy returned to me the next week and with some surprise and sheepishness shared his father 's reply. The father said that he was committed to the security and happiness of the family and it was his responsibility to go to work. It was a commitment and he went despite not feeling like going at times. It did n't matter what he felt like doing. He went to work anyway. That boy had learnt his lesson on commitment, perhaps for life.
If the people assigned to duties, responsibilities do their jobs, duties, delegated to them, then there is more order in the world. Our Vedic culture is a culture of commitment. Living is a

commitment, Marriage is a commitment, an appointment is a commitment, a word given is a commitment. Taking care of the body and mind is a commitment. If moksha is the ascertained goal of one's life, then exposing oneself to the teachings of the sastra through a guru is a commitment. It does not depend on 'what one feels like doing'. Likes come and go, Interests also come and go. Moods change. But, commitment is different from a passing fancy or 'it would be nice to do this'.

If a person makes a commitment then that person is ready to go through difficult times, to honor the series of actions involved in the achievement of the goal. The Lord subdues or punishes those who swerve from their ordained duties, especially due to indifference or neglect, in the form of Lord Yama and so on. Hence He is Damana. It does not mean that the Lord is all out to punish people. He is present in the form of law of karma and hence grace.

191. Haṃsaḥ

हंसः

The one who destroys the fear of saṃsāra.

Here, haṃsa is not the mythological bird. 'Han' is the verbal root, Hanti ti haṃsaḥ–one who destroys. Paramātmā is haṃsa, who destroys the fear of saṃsāra, when He is understood as 'ahaṃ saḥ–I and He are one.'

One of my friends was told by his colleague at work, ' Aapka sansaar aaj bhaga raha tha. ' (Today your samsara was running,) Further enquiry revealed that the colleague was talking about his wife referring to her as samsara. Obviously we don't mean saṃsāra in that sense at all. The word 'saṃsāra', that which keep moving, the process of becoming needs to be understood well. In many situations we finds ourselves wanting and inadequate. Whatever the circumstances may be, I do not feel truly at home. Something more is needed. And I try to achieve completeness by changing the situation. The attempts to change are many and varied : Getting a new haircut, changing the furniture at home, buying the latest car model, making time for family, focusing more at work, trying to be an available partner, spending more time with children, upgrading one's professional skill set, learning āsanas and prānayāma of yoga for fitness and flexibility, eating regularly etc etc All these changes we make so that the changed circumstance allows us to feel complete in ourselves.

Really speaking, my attempt to change the situation is an attempt to change myself. Interestingly I don't try to change the situation where I am at home with myself. Some people are at home with the mess on their table as well. But when I SEE myself as inadequate I add new things to my situation so that I may feel better. There is no problem with change. Change cannot be avoided as life is a process of constant change. Circumstances demanding change are not a problem at all. But when change is made because I want to feel adequate, it requires further enquiry. On enquiry and analysis of the best available data – my own life experiences, my efforts and actions, my gains and losses, I find that I still see myself as an inadequate person. This is different from seeing oneself inadequate or wanting in a specific role. At the same time, one has the experience of the 'adequate self' free from limitations and lurking imperfections. And that is what one seeks through all the pursuits and through a life of becoming called saṃsāra. And hence this process of becoming becomes a bondage because it brings with it, its own children

and grandchildren – fear, anxiety, greed, jealousy, anger, and cravings who need constant attention.

Analysis of my life experiences also suggests that there are times when one sees oneself as an adequate being and there are times when one sees oneself as inadequate. Both these sets of experiences need to be reconciled. Maturity lies in discovering that self adequacy will not come with better set of experiences but a solution to the basic human problem of inadequacy because of the conclusions that one has made in life. With the help of the sastra, one begins to see that the adequacy I seek is the adequate self I already am. It is not be achieved through a process of the limited becoming limitless. The discovery is much like the absent minded person who was looking for his reading glasses all over the house until his wife points out that they have been perched on his head all along. What he was seeking was with him all along. What the so called inadequate person was seeking was himself alone.

The knowledge and grace of the limitless Paramātmā will destroy the bondage of samsāra. Also Bhagavān moves in all bodies and hence He is called Haṃsa.

192. Suparṇaḥ (also word 855)
सुपर्णः
The one who has beautiful wings.

From this word onwards, Bhisma is giving the names of a few animal forms. The one who has śobhana-parṇas, beautiful, shining feathers and wings is Suparṇa. All birds are also Bhagavān.
To indicate different degrees of happiness and what sustains it, the Upanishad gives a poetic imagery of a bird for the parātmā. The extent to which we experience happiness depends on what inhibits us. It is usually our raga dvesas. I am happiest when…..(if you complete this statement with the first thought that comes to your mind, whatever it is) it will indicate your preference for a certain condition or a person. If there are more inhibiting factors in life, if I have enough reasons to complain, then these inhibit me from experiencing happiness. We also find that people who appear happy are happy despite the situations in their life not necessarily because of the situations in their life.

Our experience is that certain situations make us happy. When happiness is present what is there? Despite the many problems in life, despite the taunts I have heard from loved ones, despite problems at work, in that happy moment, the particular notion of being a limited person is resolved. Something absorbing has happened in which I seemed to have forgotten myself? But really speaking the I is very much manifest. The state is that of fullness and there is no seeker of happiness and the happiness that is sought division. This state is possible because happiness or its synonym, ananta is one's very nature – limitlessness where there are no inhibiting factors.

The following mantra refers to the parātmā bird: 'Tasya priyameva śiraḥ, modo dakṣiṇaḥ pakṣaḥ, pramoda uttaraḥ pakṣaḥ, ānanda ātmā, brahma puccham pratiṣṭhā.' The head of this bird is priya, love. The ātmā, the body of the bird, is ānanda-svarūpa. If the body is ānanda, then the two wings will be moda and pramoda–joy and ecstasy. Priya, moda and pramoda are the different degrees of ānanda, happiness, enjoyed in the upādhi of the jīvas. These are only vṛiti-viśeṣas, thought modifications. They are all the laharīs, waves of ānanda.

By whom is all this sustained? It is sustained by the 'as though' tail which is param brahma, and that is constant (Tai.Up.2.5.1). This is Suparṇa.

193. Bhujagottamaḥ
भुजगोत्तमः
The best among the snakes.

Bhuja means curved. A snake is called bhujaga, because it moves in a curved path.

Lord is ananta, that is, one who has limitless power. The snake is a symbol of power. Lying down He does everything; Without ears, He listens to everything; The part of the body in direct contact with the ground is very sensitive to vibration; thus, a snake can sense other animals approaching by detecting faint vibrations in the air and on the ground. Without eyes, He sees everything; Without hands and legs, He moves about everywhere.

Bhujagottama refers to Ananta, Adiśeṣa, who is uttama, the best among the snakes. Adiśeṣa was born to sage Kashyapa and his wife Kadru. Kadru gave birth to a thousand snakes, of which Sesha was the eldest. After Sesha were born Vasuki,Airavata and Takshaka, in order.

A lot of Śeṣa's brothers were cruel in nature and were bent upon inflicting harm on others. They were even unkind to Garuda, who was Kashyapa's son through Vinatha, sister of Kadru. (Kadru and Vinatha were daughters of Daksha) Śeṣa, disgusted by the cruel acts of his brothers, left his mother and the rest of the family and took to austere penances. He lived on air, and meditated in various places including Gandhamadhana, Badrikāshrama, Gokarna, Pushkara and Himalayas. His penances were so severe that his flesh, skin and muscles dried up and merged with his frame.

Brahma, satisfied with his penances, asked Śeṣa to request a boon. Śeṣa asked that he be able to keep his mind under control so that he could continue to perform ascetic penances. Brahma gladly accepted the request. Brahma then asked a favour of Śeṣa – to go beneath the unstable earth and stabilize it. Śeṣa agreed and went below the earth and stabilized her with his hood. He is known to support her even today, thus making Pātala his perennial residence. (Mbh, Adi Parva)

Śeṣa is also depicted as floating in the ocean, forming the bed of Vishnu. He is also known as AdiŚeṣa (the foremost of snakes) and Ananthaśeṣa or just Ananta (limitless, as he is known to remain in existence even after the end of the Kalpa, when the whole world is destroyed)

The Lord lying down does everything. He does not have any motion. Without having to move, He conducts and runs the whole show. This shows the almighty nature of the Lord.

194. Hiraṇyanābhaḥ
हिरण्यनाभः
The one who is the golden axle of the entire world.

The centre of the wheel is referred to as the axle. Nābhi is axle. The entire world is like a wheel in motion and its nābhi is hiraṇyarūpa, shining. If the world is the wheel, then its nābhi, centre will be the caitanya, consciousness. As caitanya is self-shining, effulgent, it is likened to hiraṇya, gold. So the Lord is the shining centre of this whole universe.

Pujya Swamiji presents a beautiful imagery - The world is the wheel which keeps constantly moving and the jīva is like a bird perched on the rim of the wheel. This bird, the jīva, seems to go up and up when the situations in life are manageable; then he seems to come down and down, when things are out of hand and then he feels crushed. Even after managing all kinds of situations and emerging a person to reckon with, one's achievements, one's contributions to family, society and company are not remembered. Then the wheel goes up again as there is some acknowledgement, some appreciation. It is only then, that the jīva starts thinking. 'I am caught in the samsāra-cakra. Is there a way out?' The bird is told by the guru to fly and perch on the hiranyanābhi, the shining axle. It is told to sit on the axle and enjoy the moving wheel.
In the connection with the total that is Hiraṇyanābhaḥ, that which is the centre of all movement, the jiva starts to relax.

195. Sutapāḥ

सुतपाः

The one who performs great tapas.

For the individual, Tapas always implies a certain denial of what one is comfortable with, what one loves and more, what one is conditioned by. Tapas is giving up what you love and adapting to something which is not comfortable and easy, and this is done for achieving something big. Tapas is deliberate and conscious. Just because one missed eating because one was busy at work does not qualify as tapas. Just because one walks 10000 steps every day, that is not tapas. In tapas, there is a commitment involved to a particular goal. If the commitment is self growth, then all conditions that make me feel limited are grounds for my tapas. Please note what is being said here are the conditions that make me 'feel' limited and insignificant as no condition can limit I the consciousness.

Speaking with people one cannot stand is getting out of my comfort zone. A seasoned trekker who goes on a trek may not have a comfortable bed to sleep on, but denies the comfort for something greater – the joy of the trek as well as reaching the summit. The denial is deliberate, otherwise there is only suffering. These different ways to get out of our comfort zone are just so that I discover that I am more than what I thoughts myself to be. The smṛti says, it is considered to be great tapas when the mind and the senses are able to stay with only one occupation and that disposition of the mind is called aikāgriyam, one-pointedness.' All acts of tapas then have fulfilled their purpose in the one pointedness reached.

When the same word tapas is used for Īśvara, the meaning changes. Jñāna is also tapas and the creation is also tapas. Every creation presupposes knowledge. Even for a painter of modern art, what goes in the name of art, he has to conceive of first before he puts the brush to paint and canvas. When the whole world, is to be conceived of and we see the world as a manifestation of an intelligent order, surely it presupposes knowledge. The Lord is called Sutapā, the one whose

tapas is śobhana, special, distinguished. The whole creation is the tapas of Īśvara. So this creation is the result of tapas and the very creation is a tapas.

This world has come out of the jñāna-tapas. When we see the stars, the blue sky that is not there, the mountains, the rivers, the beautiful flowers and so on, we see the tapas of Bhagavān. Seeing this, we revel in the glory that is Bhagavān who pervades us.

196. Padmanābhaḥ (also words 48, 346)

पद्मनाभः

The one who shines in the centre of the lotus of the heart.

He is Padmanābha, because His nābhi is padmam iva, His navel is beautiful like the lotus. This is with reference to the form.

The heart is likened to a lotus and the one who obtains in the nabhi, middle of the heart is Padmanābha. How? Prakāśamānaḥ, shining. Bhagavān is the one who stays in the nābhi, the centre of the lotus of the heart. He is the one who stays in the heart of everybody. The Lord says in the Gītā, 'sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ–I am in every heart'(15.15). Even the terrorist? Yes. Even the murderer? Yes. But I don't feel it. For that we open the heart with the keys of love, devotion and compassion.

We get a glimpse of this when we see a saintly person. What makes a person saintly is not some great achievements but just uninhibited love and compassion for all. There is nothing heavenly about that. Love and compassion are common to every heart. In a saintly person, only the inhibiting factors that could possibly condition one's love are taken away. The saintly person does not wish you to be any different than you. There is total acceptance of you. We were blessed to have Pujya Swamiji be like this for us. When we saw ourselves in the light of his vision of us, we discovered love and compassion for ourselves which naturally extended to others.

Every breath, every heartbeat, every vein, every artery, the blood circulating and energizing the entire body, the food (organic or not) being converted to energy is a tiny part of the physiological order of Isvara. The Lord is in my heart, ever present irrespective of my recognition. With recognition, I can 't help but feel an expansiveness that comes from accommodating everything and rejecting nothing. Even disorder I see as a part of the order.

Isvara goes beyond being local and pervades not only me, the person and the whole manifest and unmanifest world. Isvara as the light of consciousness is the adhisthāna of everything and does not require any other light to reveal it. He lights up every thought, every concept, every emotion and every object of thought. Light is not partial. Light is not judgmental. Light illumines, not as an act of will, as its very nature.

Since all these take place in the hṛdaya, Bhagavān remains shining, as the consciousness in the nābhi of the hṛdaya-padma, in the middle of the lotus of the heart and hence, He is Padmanābha.

197. Prajāpatiḥ (also word 69)

प्रजापतिः
The Lord or the father of all beings.

Those who are well born, born according to the law of karma are prajās. He is the pati, the father of all the prajās, including Brahmāji.

This word includes being the Lord of individuals as well as exalted beings, devas. Knowing about one's source or connecting to a source is universally desired. The child, whose umbilical cord has been cut, is gifted with the ability to totally trust his/her caregivers and hence be connected. That gets him by, atleast for the first few years of life, until his ability to trust starts getting eroded.

This is because the child's parents, despite their best efforts, cannot be totally consistent with the child. As the child grows up, he keeps looking for someone to trust completely and a sense of connection. Trust in another person validates and makes him/her feel totally accepted, loved and significant.

This connectedness with situations and people grows over a period of time and varies from person to person. A certain sense of connectedness and sense of well being comes from finding more about one's cultural roots and one's family roots. When adopted children grow up, most of them don't feel at home, unless they have found or made contact with their biological parents. These adopted persons are seeking a connection with their parents or atleast seek to know more about them. In the discovery about the connection, their sense of isolation and alienation diminishes.

We discover our connection with Isvara, in what we do on a daily basis.
We discover our connection with Īśvara in who we are.
We discover our connection with Īśvara in the opportunities we have been given.
We discover our connection with Īśvara in the capacities we have been given.
We discover our connection with Īśvara as the order of actions and consequences.

The more we discover our sense of connection, we find that our sense of disconnectedness was notional and starts to wither away. Please note, I am not saying we make a connection with Īśvara as प्रजापतिः, we discover a connection that IS.

198. Amṛtyuḥ
अमृत्युः
The one who has no death or cause of death.

This is a svarupa word. The one who is not subject to death or the cause of death is Amṛtyu.

Srī Kṛṣṇa teaches us, in the Gita 'For that which is born, death is certain and for that which is dead, birth is certain. Therefore you ought not to grieve over that which cannot be altered.' (2.27). We are in distress because we have not assimilated this fact although we see the logic of it – atleast the first part, that whatever is born has to die. This applies to events as well. Many

people say that they don't have a fear of death but they fear being physically dependent on others during old age, they fear being lonely, they fear that their close ones will die before them etc. These other fears are, really speaking, a manifestation of the same fear of death, although not understood or admitted. Death implies loss. And we do fear losing our youth, financially favourable conditions, ageing and disease. This is the human condition.

How can one be completely free from the fear of death? At a relative level, this is managed by living a life of with clear priorities such that there are minimal regrets in life. There is minimal unfinished business with people – whatever needs to be said and done with the different people and different situations in our lives, is taken care of, with karma yoga buddhi. For that one has to live proactively and focus on what one can do rather than get overwhelmed by what one cannot do. Living courageously despite difficult in laws, work conditions, disease implies doing what needs to be done despite fear. Very often we don't do because we are scared. Courage is not the absence of fear, it is doing what needs to be done, despite fear. One's proactive response and Īśvara arpana buddhi helps one grow out of the limitations of the situation, every single time.

In the last month, besides Pujya Swamji's mahāsamādhi, it was really uncanny that three of my students faced the death of one parent. Facing death is not easy. Yet, what helps is coming to terms with the fact that whatever needed to be done was done for the person and oneself. There may be lingering doubts about this. During such times, a lot of allegations tend to be get made about the correctness of the decisions taken. People are bound to be hurt. Anger against oneself and others is a part of the grieving process and we pray for grace. Still, in time one learns to be at peace with the fact that with one's kausalam, competence in dharma based actions, one can only contribute and not control a situation.

At an absolute level, the question that begs to be asked is – for whom is death? For the one who has a limited body-mind which was brought about by the matrix of karma. The exhaustion of that particular set of karma is the cause of death. Disease and so on are all causes of death. In astrology, there is generally a parihāra, a remedy for the malefic effects of different planets in the astrological chart. But there is no remedy for death.

Is the body-mind absolutely real, that which cannot be negated ? No. The body-mind is a manifestation of the absolute reality and has birth and death. After death, what will be there? The body will be left behind but the person in the form of the sukśma sarira, the subtle body will move on to another lokā, field of experience or be born again or remain unmanifest. However, if the person has recognised his/her reality, there is no further birth.

Bhagavān is the one who does not have the problem of death; He is Amṛtyu. Why? He does not have karma nor karma-phala that brings about a body. tmā being formless and attribute free, and also not being bound by time, is not subject to any modification or change. Īśvara, as the ātmā, is Amṛtyu, because He is not subject to time or the causes of death. We seek his grace.

199. Sarvadṛk

सर्वद्रक

The one who sees everything.

Bhagavān is Sarvadṛk because He sees everything. What has gone before and what will come later and what is now, all are known to Him. Puṇya and pāpa are adṛṣṭa, not visible and hence not seen by anyone. Only the effects of puṇya and pāpa are seen. Even Indra and the other devatās cannot see it. It is adṛṣṭa for everybody else, but for Īśvara it is dṛṣṭa, it is seen, known.

He sees all, what is kṛta and akṛta, what is done and not done by all beings. Depending on our understanding of Bhagavān, our response could be one of fear or one of reassurance. If one is not aligned to dharma and there is guilt about one's actions, then one is not comfortable with Bhagavān seeing everything. The actions could range from bribing the policeman, being rude and demeaning to one's family members, stealing stationery from one's office, lying to one's partner about finances, cheating on one's partner etc. The response of a person who is not given to dharma will be of constant fear and guilt and will seek to'bribe' Bhagavān or always seek his forgiveness. The person finds it difficult to align to dharma as the consequences of adharma in the form of fragmentation are not clear yet. The person does not see the split created in the personality between the thinker, knower and feeler. The knower knows that stealing is not healthy, but does steal stationery from the office supplies and feels a temporary thrill at getting it but subsequent guilt and fear about being found out. He/she may rest in the belief that no other person has found out the extent of the adharmic actions but there is constant suffering for such a person. Of course, the person will find many ways of distraction to deal with this fragmentation of personality but in time will become mentally and emotionally exhausted. It does not work until the person aligns with dharma or seeks help for the same.

On the other hand, when a little child is playing with her toys, she knows that her mother is watching her and is reassured by that. She has no fear but just reassurance that if she needs anything, her mother is present and available. She also knows that if she is mean to her little brother, her mother will take some action. The little girl is comforted by the mother's sense of justice and care. Interesting how our response to Bhagavān differs depending on our alignment to dharma.

The human being is endowed with the capacity to perceive various things only through the sense organs and the mind. To see what is happening in the mind - the nature of thoughts, emotions, memories are some refined, technological advancements required? Some 3d vision? No. We can see what happens in the mind, because we are independent of the mind. I sakshi is able to see because I is the witness that is consciousness. This is possible without sense organs. Bhagavān does not need the indriyas for His knowledge, being all knowing and all seeing.

200. Siṃhaḥ (also word 488)
सिंह:
The destroyer of our pāpas.

In the language, Siṃhaḥ is used for a lion. But the meaning here is different. Even when we use the word siṃhaḥ for a person, 'this person is a lion.' we imply that the person is courageous. The lion stands for the guna of courage and hence it is a gauṇa, figurative, expression. It is the king of the jungle and is fearless. Here Bhagavān is called Siṃhaḥ. In the world which is the forest, Parameśvara is the lion, the one who is the fearless king of all human beings.

Etymologically, siṃhaḥ means that which destroys. If the Lord is Siṃhaḥ, a destroyer, what does He destroy? He removes, destroys all the pāpas of beings, who merely remember Him sincerely. Doesn't that make Bhagavān narcissistic as he wants to be remembered and hear praise all the time? No. Smaraṇam or bringing to mind or chanting are types of karma and every karma has a result. If there is a lot of pāpa standing in one's account, much of it keeps getting neutralised due to Bhagavat related activities or any kind of helpful, reaching out actions. These dharmic actions generate punya along with the visible result and pāpa keeps getting destroyed bit by bit.

201. Sandhātā

सन्धाता

The one who connects people to their fruits of action.

The one who connects is called sandhātā. Every person is given the capacity to see and make connections. A stock broker sees connections between certain times of the year, the economy and the performance of stocks. A medical professional sees the connection between diabetes and the likely medical effects on the heart and kidneys. A psychologist sees the connection between a certain behavioural pattern and the background of the person. An art conservationist sees the connection between the effects of weather and the capacity of the chemicals to deal with wear and tear. A cook sees the connection of flavours of different spices added to the dishes cooked. Irrespective of our profession and qualification, we are able to see connections all the time in the form of cause and effect. That accounts for our effective functioning.

When a jīva is to be connected with a particular set of karma-phala, he cannot go through them unless he gets a particular body, with a particular parentage and a particular set-up. We recall that a jiva is the one who is identified with the gross physical body but is a reflection of Brahman and sees Isvara as different from himself. If certain conditions are not there, then that set of karma-phala cannot be fulfilled. Karma cannot by itself bring about the result, as it is inert. Again, there are infinite number of karmas standing in one's account. Which karma-phala has to fructify when and in what way, is determined by an intelligent being.

Therefore, it is more than mere connection between karma and karma-phala. The time, place, body, parentage–all these need to be conducive for the karmas to fulfill themselves. This kind of connection can be given only by Bhagavān. Therefore, He is the great connector, Sandhātā. He is the one who establishes the sandhi, the connection, between a jīva and his karma in an appropriate way.

202. Sandhimān

संधीमान

The enjoyer of the fruits of action.

The one who has got the sandhi, the connection, is Sandhimān. If it is Bhagavān who brings about the connections, what can we say about the connection itself and the one who enjoys the connection? The jīva, who is the bhoktā, the experiencer of the sandhi, the connection, between his karma and karma-phala is also Bhagavān. Therefore, Bhagavān is the Sandhimān.

Again, it is Bhagavān, who is manifest in the form of sandhi, in the form of various connections. When one opens the mouth and makes a sound, the sound is 'a.' So between the voice and sound there is a connection. If I can modulate and make the sound come from a certain sthāna, place, then 'a' can become 'a' or 'ka' (sounds like a crow) and so on. So between the sthāna and sound, and between the prayatna, effort and sound there is connection.

The universe is full of connections or else it will collapse. The entire body is nothing but connections. Even if the salt level in the body goes up or down, especially for patients with hyerptension, there will be problems. If the phosphorus level in the body goes up, there is itching. The minerals balance in the body and health have connections. Thus, everything is connected. Everything being put together is nothing but sandhis, connections in an orderly way. As the author of this sandhi, Bhagavān is called Sandhimān.

203. Sthiraḥ

स्थिरः

The changeless and constant.

A decade ago there used to be a TV commercial for a brand of sarees and a deep, husky voice would declare that the woman who wore those sarees was 'Changing yet never changing'. Women who related with this saw themselves as keeping up with the times but something about her that never changed. If you see a friend especially during a school or college reunion perhaps after 20-30 years, the moment someone says," You have changed a lot.", you shrug our shoulders and say, 'Not really'.

What has changed and what has not? Definitely the body has changed shape, one has had a lot of life experiences but something that has not changed. We can't seem to put our finger on it.

Actually, 'I' has been constant.
I am still there despite my story, my history of events in life.
I am still there despite living in a different continent and having travelled to several places.
I am despite my political views and positions.

For me to know any change in the body and mind, I has to be constant. If ātmā, I were to change, we will not be able to know anything. Who will record any change, if 'I' is also changing and the body-mind is also changing? Even as you try to understand it, it would be gone and therefore, there will be no way of knowing the ātmā. All of us have no doubt that 'I am'. But there are different views on what I am. My partner or child may think, 'I am a loser', my boss may think 'I could do better', my in laws may think,' this person should try harder', whatever their opinions, there is no doubt about the fact that 'I am'.

Ātmā is kūtastha and it does not undergo any change what so ever. It lends itself for changes to take place on it, but itself does not undergo any change. Please note that there is no ghostlike, third entity called Ātmā floating around when somebody dies. Ātmā is I. In the 'I am' + (identities, roles, qualities), the plus is subject to change. This is possible because ātmā is sthira, changeless. That is why ātmā, I can be known and that self knowledge is not subject to negation. As per perception, one may say that these clothes don't fit the body because the body has put on

weight. As per the sastra, another means of knowledge, the I that happens to have the mind-body temporarily is limitless, no dimensions. Which one is true? There seems to be a contradiction, but to refute what the sastra says, what evidence do I have? I feel limited. Feelings change and are not evidence. Self knowledge of the irrefutable I that is limitless, is not subject to opinion or negation.

What Īśvara knows about Himself is exactly what you know about yourself. It is not any different. Therefore, there is only one knowledge and that is self-knowledge. Then what about all the other knowledge? All other knowledge is vyavahāra-yogya-jñāna–it is a knowledge which is useful for transaction in the world and which is used daily. It is not pāramārthika, absolute reality.

Īśvara as the ātmā, is Sthira, constant and changeless, because He is always of the same nature. Everything in the universe is in motion, but the core is constant and because of this, sandhi can take place. All the connections can take place only when the fulcrum, the kūtastha, gives stability.

204. Ajaḥ (also words 95, 521)

अजः

The one who moves.

When we saw the meaning of the word 'aja' as it occurred earlier, 'aja' means unborn. The word 'aja' is derived here in the sense of gamana, moving. In Sanskrit, each word lends itself to many meanings depending on the context. How will one know? One has to learn this from a traditional teacher who has been through the tradition of learning.

The Lord is Aja, because He moves. That sounds like a paradox. If the Lord is limitless, can he really move? Where does He move? He enters into every jīva. After creating, He enters into every heart as the ātmā (Tai-Up.2.6). Bhagavān says, 'sarvasya cāhaṃ hṛdi sanniviṣṭaḥ–I obtain in the heart of everyone as the ātmā' (BG.15.15). He obtains as the sthira ātmā in the buddhi.

A location is seemingly given for the ahankāra, the 'I,' and it is said that the heart is where it is located. This is the same as when we say 'he has given his heart to you.' If you want to own up an action of which you are proud, then, you touch the chest and say 'I did this.' Interestingly this is the same with people in all cultures. When they want to point to themselves, they don't point to their head nor knees saying, 'I did it'. This expression is based on experience. The truth of 'I' and Bhagavān is the same.

The meaning and the truth of 'I' is consciousness, chaitanya. When a house is put together, the space in the house, is it a new space, other than the space outside? No. The all pervasive space is as though divided, because of the construction of the walls. Did space enter the house? Seemingly it did, because of the enclosure called the house. Really speaking, it did not as space pervades.

The Lord is Aja, because He enters the heart of bhaktas, devotees and reveals Himself.

205. Durmarṣaṇaḥ

दुर्मर्षणः

The one who cannot be contained.

Being all pervasive and all knowing, can Bhagavān be stopped by anything or anybody? In childhood some people may have grown up with the idea that God lives in heaven and the devil in hell. This concept implies that both God and the so called devil have equal power. And if that is so, God could not be all powerful because there will always be rivalry. These are just concepts with no equivalent in the pramana and hence subject to negation in our understanding.

Being all powerful, Bhagavān cannot be stopped by anybody, when He wants to start the creation. If the Lord takes back the creation, nobody can stop him from doing that also. Since the Lord's saṅkalpa is satyasaṅkalpa, if He makes a saṅkalpa, the creation takes place and the world is born. When the time comes from withdrawing the entire creation unto Himself, He makes a saṅkalpa, and the creation is withdrawn. People may hesitantly ask,' Who will let me do what I need to do? and Bhagavān could very well say, 'Who will stop me?" not as a matter of dare, but because everything is included in Bhagavān. The powers of the Lord cannot be contained by anything or anybody.

206. Śāstā

शास्ता

The instructor or preceptor.

Bhagavān is the one who maintains the cosmic law and order. He is the one who is the author of all the śāsanas, that is, all the mandates, especially dharma. Everyone has enough knowledge and enough common sense, to sense sāmānya-dharma, to sense what is right and wrong without being taught. So the knowledge is already there. The knowledge is that 'I do not want to get hurt. I do not want to be robbed. Just as I do not want to get cheated, others also do not want to be cheated.' Even Chota Rajan, a wanted criminal, who is in the news these days following his arrest, did not want to be cheated by his henchmen. Dharma is universal irrespective of age, caste, creed, gender or nationality.

Dharma is the basic framework for our interaction. When human beings interact with the world, there must be some inner mechanism to control and direct the person's actions, because the person has a free will which can be abused. This structure is the dharma structure and is meant for holding the society within its framework. Īśvara is manifest in the buddhi in the form of dharma. Īśvara is manifest as dharma in every Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and so on. One may go against this knowledge due to the pressure born of desires, due to one's background, due to the unconscious and so on. But, still, this knowledge is untouched by anything, in the sense, that nobody can say, 'I do not know dharma,' though they may transgress it. The human weaknesses and frailities do not touch this knowledge. Hence, this knowledge, this inner sensing of dharma, itself is Īśvara. This knowledge is possible because Īśvara is manifest in the form of order which includes the order of dharma.

Rather than Hinduism, for our religious tradition, we use the term ‘Sanātana dharma’ including this eternal order that upholds the society. It exists irrespective of our religious practices and understanding.

The word śāstra is derived from the root 'śās', meaning 'teach'. It refers to teaching literature within the vaidika tradition. Śāstra encompasses a wide variety of literature on many different topics, however the ultimate purpose of all śāstra is mokṣa.

Śāstra is divided into three main branches: śruti, smṛti, and purāṇa.
Śruti refers to veda, which is revealed knowledge and the ultimate pramāṇa for the teachings contained within all śāstra. Smṛti includes all secondary explanatory works based on śruti, Bhagavad Gita being an example. Smṛti is pauruṣeya, author born and therefore is considered valid only as long as its teachings are consistent with śruti.

Purāṇa (including itihāsa) provides the same teachings as śruti and smṛti but in story form suitable for a wide audience. The śrutis and smṛtis confirm this universal dharma by telling us about adṛṣṭa-phala. If one goes against dharma, one picks up not only guilt but also pāpa which will manifest as unpleasant, painful experiences. The law of dharma, the law of karma can never be bypassed. Again the śrutis point out viśeṣa-dharmas, which are restated by the smṛtis, purānas and itihāsas. Īśvara being the author of the laws of dharma, whether known by our common sense or through the śāstra, is invoked here as the Śāstā, the instructor.

207. Viśrutātmā
विश्रुतात्मा
The one who is specially known.

The one whose ātmā, that is, svarūpa is specially known by words of the śruti, such as ‘satyaṃ jñānam anantam’ is Viśrutātmā.

As a human being, identified with my mind-body-sense-complex I make many conclusions about myself as I don’t know any better. All my conclusions are based on perception and inference which even Science relies on.
I think I am tainted by pāpa. Śruti says I was never tainted and ever pure.
I think I am insignificant. Śruti says I am all that there IS.
I think I am ignorant of the ways of the world and about myself and I will die one day. Śruti says I am consciousness that is limitless and hence will never die nor was I born.
I have sorrow because of my limitations – limited knowledge, limited skills, limited or no people who love me and definitely limited money. Śruti says I am of the nature of ananda.
I am always disturbed as my mind has many conflicts that remain unresolved. Śruti says I am of the nature of santi, abiding peace.

Despite what I have and what I do, it is never enough – I am always dissatisfied. Śruti says that I am the very meaning of satisfaction.

Śruti is like a word mirror that is other than perception or inference, that helps me see how I really am. Śruti helps to discover the pure being pervading and underlying the human being, the consciousness behind the personality, the gender and identities.
Śruti does not hold out a future promise of how I will become or of some reward in the hereafter but how I always was, am and will be.
Śruti does not expect blind belief but a questioning, thinking mind which has working trust and enough desire to discover that reality, which cannot be negated. For argument sake, if our Śāstra was just a bunch of beliefs there is no need for such a voluminous literature. If the Gita was just a bunch of beliefs, Śri Kṛṣṇa could have just told Arjuna to 'Shut up', believe him and get on with the battle. Of all the possible places, right in the battlefield, Arjuna had questions and Śri Kṛṣṇa taught not once, not twice but until Arjuna understood. This is the commitment of a guru.

What the great sages like Vyasa, Vasiṣiṭha and others understood is exactly what you understand, when you understand. There is no difference in the knowledge.

That I am the fullness I seek and by the way Śruti confirms it. That I am the very meaning of satisfaction and adequacy, this is the truth and Śruti reveals it. Finite words are handled through a sampradāya, the teaching tradition and teaching methodology to reveal the infinite awareness that you are. Depending on which conclusion is more entrenched, the guru uses the words of the Śruti.

Since different words like nitya-śuddha-buddha-mukta-svarūpaḥ–as being ever pure, effulgent and free are used to reveal the one, He is Viśrutātmā.

208. Surārihā

सुरारिहा

The destroyer of the enemies of the devas.

The people who are given to dharma are suras. Asuras are people who are given to adharma. They cannot tolerate dharma and they do not allow people to follow dharma. These are the enemies of the suras.

In the Mahabharata, we see Duryodhana making a statement – I know what is dharma, but I am not inclined to follow it. I know what is adharma, but I can 't stop myself from following it. It seems like some external force compels me, and hence I do, as this force compels me. Arjuna makes a similar statement, which occurs in the Gita, 'Impelled by what force, does one do a wrong action, although not desiring to do it?. The difference between Duryodhana and Arjuna was their approach to the problem. Duryodhana thought that the problem was always out there, the enemy was external, and the Pandavas must be killed. Nothing short of this would do. Arjuna on the other hand, seeks knowledge from Śri Kṛṣṇa as a guru, to better understand his own dharma as well as the solution that will end all sorrow. Duryodhana was dismissive of all help, support, guidance that came his way and by his own thinking fed his own thoughts and actions of 'adharma'. Arjuna was different as he sought help from none other than Bhagavān. He was helped and how!

In acknowledgement of their helplessness, the devotees who have tried many other ways to deal with the asuras, pray to Bhagavān. As a result of prayer, there is some kind of respite that is brought about in different ways : a. through clarity of dharma and adharma in a given situation, b. increase in willpower to deal with one's situation when earlier all seemed hopeless and helpless, c. discovery of supportive people –friend, philosopher and guide who could help in following the path, d. one's own growing conviction and increase in acts of dharma.

When all else fails, in time. through prayers, the adharma is destroyed in people given to adharma or like in Duryodhana's case, he is destroyed. Hence Bhagavān is called Surārihā as he is the one who gives the karma-phala for their adharma.. His grace helps and finally dharma always gets established.

209. Guruḥ
गुरुः
The knower of all the disciplines of knowledge.

In life, we have two types of teachers. The mother and the father or other caregivers (if the parents are not there)tare the first teachers. Then, the one who teaches the wordly disciplines of knowledge becomes the guru. Nowadays the word 'guru' is used for all teachers – Business guru, music guru, Bollywood dance guru etc. Compared to them, the one who teaches dharma-svarūpa, the nature of dharma, is a greater guru. The Guru or the father may initiate the person into a mantra. But a mantra signals just the beginning of one's Vedic studies. Really speaking, the mahāvākya-upadeśa-kartā, the one who teaches the mahāvākya the statement that talks of oneness of the person with Īśvara, alone is the real Guru as he/she removes ignorance of the self which is the cause of lifetime after lifetime of some suffering and a little bit of pleasure.

In Sanskrit, the word guru means heavy :-) as well as the one who knows and teaches any discipline of knowledge. Whether the guru is heavy, he /she has knowledge that is unshakable and free from doubts. The place of learning in earlier times was called gurukulam, the family of the guru, not vidyarthi kulam. Students came and went, it was the guru that made teaching happen, that made the gurukulam.

As the initiator of all knowledge, Īśvara is the first Guru. The Lord, being the knower of all the disciplines of knowledge, is the initiator of all the various disciplines of knowledge. We seek the grace of the guru for learning and knowledge because that is all we carry forward in our lives. We may change jobs, relationships, houses and sometimes continents, but our learning of life lessons is what holds us in good stead. We need a lot of punya and objectivity to invite a Guru into our life and not resist the Guru's presence or teachings.

I reproduce excerpts from the article below written for Guru Purnima this year, slightly long but relevant.

We need a guru for the same reasons we resist one

http://www.elephantjournal.com/2015/08/we-need-a-guru-for-the-same-reasons-we-resist-one/
……

Sage Veda Vyasa is symbolic of the Guru shishya parampara (the teacher-student tradition). The word Guru in Sanskrit etymologically stands for the one who removes ignorance. Ignorance about what? Ignorance about oneself. It is therefore not without reason that India, year after year, age after age, honors and celebrates anew this ancient concept of the Guru. Followers adore it and pay homage to it again and again, and thereby re-affirm their commitment to it.
But, many amongst us resist a Guru. Really speaking, the five reasons we resist a Guru are the very reasons we need one.

1. The fundamental human problem is not understood: The ancient Masters tell us that the reason we experience sorrow is not because we have psychological problems. The human problem and experience of self-dissatisfaction and of feeling, "I am not good enough," is based on the conclusion that I am a limited being, limited to the mind and body.

The limitations of the mind and body are our limitations and hence the long drawn struggle to overcome limitations through organic food and the varied feel-good pursuits. These Masters tells us that the fundamental human problem is born of ignorance, of that one spiritual being taking himself/herself to be limited. Finite. Knowledge of oneself is the solution. But then another wall of resistance comes up as the next reason.

2. Illusion of I-can-figure-out-anything phenomenon: Access to information at the click of a button has fostered the illusion of I-can-figure-out-anything. While much of it is empowering, in matters of spirituality, this paradigm just does not work. In the ancient Indian scriptures, we are instructed to seek refuge in a bonafide spiritual master. But we don't care. We want things on our own terms, when we want and how we want.

I have met several people who voraciously read books on spirituality but gained more confusion and less clarity and have sworn off anything to do with spirituality. Some insights are possible but to put the pieces of the puzzle together, one needs the vision of the reality of oneness, details of that vision of nonduality and the ability to resolve apparent contradictions. A radical statement in the tradition also says that when one enjoys the benefit of the teachings and does not acknowledge the source of blessing, he/she is no less than a thief. Only a teacher who has been a good student can do that. But, something else comes up.

3. Inability to trust: By the time one is an adult, the capacity to trust has diminished. A genuine guru-student relationship requires basic trust and understanding of the following: A. The teacher knows the truth because he/she had a guru who also had a guru and so on. B. The guru is committed to the student's self-growth and self-discovery. C. A traditional guru encourages questions and does not expect blind belief. D. Teachings on absolute reality are not a belief because a belief is subject to verification. Teaching is not a result of introspection, nor inference, nor a technique. E. A teacher-student relationship is much like the therapist-client relationship. It involves much validation, handling of transference, but, more importantly, working through one's issues which prevent one from seeing the truth of oneself as nothing but absolute happiness. Most spiritual texts are in the form of illuminating dialogues between the one who knows and the one who wants to know. A traditional guru does not expect subservience and does not seek to dominate the student. If you find a guru trying to do this, run.

4. Buffet approach to spirituality: The individualistic disposition of customised, made-to-order everything, from food to clothes to educational programmes has led us to have a pick-and-choose approach to everything. This only intensifies our likes and dislikes. The sages say that this colors our thinking, contributing to our subjectivity and us having a selective vision. We "choose" to look at what we understand and experience as reality and not reality, per se. The Guru may objectively think that certain spiritual practices are helpful for our growth and enough reason may be offered, but we cannot look beyond our binding likes and dislikes. This is much like the silkworm that loves the security and conditioning of its own cocoon and does not want to come out, losing out in the process.

5. Misunderstanding of surrender: Many new age books talk about surrender. Surrender really means giving up one's fears, suspending one's notions and being receptive to examine one's life in the light of clear vision. The Sun lights up everything. What was not seen and banged against in darkness is seen clearly. The vision ofAdvaita Vedanta is that we are complete and free as we are. Hence surrender or giving up really means old conditionings that limit one 's perception of oneself which cause struggle and sorrow.

The scriptures clearly state that, only the one who has a guru, can be enlightened. There is a lot of new agey spirituality out there that talks about finding the guru within. This comes from fear of vulnerability. Vulnerability is at the heart of being a spiritual warrior as Chogyam Trungpa rightly says. Where does that leave some of us, if one does not have a guru? The first step is to discover the student in us. That requires being okay with one's sense of vulnerability and a humble recognition that, "I don't know it all." Only when the student, the one who wants to know, is truly ready, the guru appears. If the fundamental human problem is understood, the student can be ready.

Even to find the guru within, one has to necessarily find the guru outside, until such a time that the teachings are well assimilated. In time the student disappears and the teacher appears in his/her place. And the teaching goes on, generation after generation, student after student.

In the Buddhist tradition, the stories of Milarepa, Marpa and Chogyam Trungpa inspiringly point to their unwavering commitment to know despite their vulnerabilities, struggles and severe austerities, while receiving teachings from gurus in India and Tibet. Luckily, we are not facing these kind of struggles. Our struggles are different. If one has not sought a guru, then it is worth looking into what one is resisting, if anything.

In this day and age, when vintage wine, antique furniture, family heirlooms and monuments are appreciated and praised for the number of years they have existed, we are indeed blessed to be a part of an oral timeless tradition of teaching. If I am the limitless, which can be discovered, why would I want to settle for less?

Prayers and wishes that all may be blessed by the teachings that have been transmitted by Gurus over the ages.

210. Gurutamaḥ

गुरुतम:

The most exalted teacher.

The suffix 'tama' added to the word 'guru' shows excellence. So gurutama means an exalted guru, a guru of gurus. Guru is a relational word, a person is a guru in relation to the shishya. Each guru was a śiṣya, a qualified student (śiṣya yogya) before he/she became a guru. How did this guru of ours become a guru, a teacher? Because of his guru. How did he become a guru? Because of his guru. Thus it goes on. Then, who is the first guru, who is gurutama? Īśvara is gurutama, the teacher of all teachers as He is the initiator of all knowledge.

Again as brahma-vidyā is the most exalted vidyā, Lord Nārāyaṇa, as the initiator of this exalted vidyā, is Gurutama. He is the one who teaches brahmavidyā even to Brahmāji and others. 'Yo brahmāṇaṃ vidadhāti pūrvaṃ yo vai vedāṃśca prahiṇoti tasmai – He is the one who created Brahmāji in the beginning and taught him the Vedas' (Svē. Up.6.18).

Brahma-vidyā is that which teaches the mahāvākya. The mahāvākya is an equation which says that the jīva is Īśvara. The jīva, who is a limited being, with limited knowledge and limited power is equated to Īśvara, who is the limitless total. This limited person is told he is Īśvara, the Lord. The Lord's power includes this person's power, His knowledge includes all the knowledge that this person possesses. When this is so, how can this person be equated to Īśvara? If the differences between Īśvara and jīva are real, then there is no equation. Again, if the differences do not exist at all, then also there is no necessity for the equation. 1=1 is no equation. Hence, the equation is possible only when the differences seem to be there but at the same time are not real. Like 5-4=3-2. If the differences are not real, only apparent, then essentially Īśvara and jīva are non-different. The differences are mithya.

It is like the wave and the ocean. There is a difference but at the same time there is no real difference, because the wave cannot exist independent of the water. The ocean also cannot exist independent of the water. Therefore, water is the truth of both the wave and the ocean. In that sense alone, wave is equated to the ocean. This has to be understood. All that which looks to be different has to be negated. Negation is purely in terms of understanding. The 'waveness' and 'oceanness' are to be negated, since they are the incidental properties of water, and by this the oneness, which is the water, is known. It is not that the wave will become the ocean. Bhagavān says, every mahāvākya-upadeśa-kartā is me alone.

The mahāvākya-upadeśa-kartā is the real guru. But none can have this knowledge without the grace of Īśvara. So the first guru is also Īśvara and our guru is also Īśvara. Thus, we salute the entire paramparā, lineage, starting from Lord Nārāyaṇa and Brahmāji, and ending with our guru, starting from Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti upto our teacher. So by these two words Guru and Gurutama, the whole paramparā, lineage, and vidyā are covered.

211. Dhāma

धाम

The one who is effulgent.

The Gita points this out, 'Na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śaśaṅko na pāvakaḥ yadgatvā na nivartante tad dhāmā paramaṃ mama' (15.6). Neither the sun nor moon nor fire, illumines that which, having gone to, they do not return. That is my limitless abode. Is it then so dark that nothing can illumine it? No. All other light is eclipsed because it is the nature of light and it is limitless, parama. Even though the Sun has the capacity to light up the whole world it does not light up the Lord's abode. When the Sun cannot illumine it, how can the moon or fire illumine it?

Bhagavān is of the nature of light of consciousness. What does light do? By its mere presence, dark corners are no more dark. Light is not partial. It lights up everything from the Ganga to a gutter nearby. Light is not judgmental nor selective. Those who wish to harness light use solar panels. Although Bhagavan's grace is ever present like light, our prayers channelize and invoke his grace. Being Bhagavān, He does not require any other light to light up. Without this light, the eyes are not eyes, the mind is not mind. It is jyotir-jyātiḥ–the light of all lights, whose nature is caitanya-svarūpa.

Dhāmā also means an abode, a resting place. Most religions promise a place you can go to after leaving this world. Heaven for most religions is the ultimate destination and hence dhama or padam, are common expressions used. These words are also used for mokśa. While heaven or svarga is a place that people can return from, after their punya runs out, there is no return from mokśa. The Lord is dhāmā, the abode gaining which sarva-kāmas, all desires are (as if) fulfilled and gaining which there is no more desire and no more return as the darkness of ignorance has been banished by light.

There is nowhere to go as one discovers that one was always free. What you are is consciousness.

212. Satyaḥ (also words 106, 869)

सत्यः

i. The one in the form of the value of speaking the truth.
ii. The truth of truths.

When there is alignment between what we think and what we speak and what is true to situation, this is satya-vacana. When we think of something and then speak something else, that is called anṛta-bhāṣaṇa. What we think should also be true and what we say should be what we know. This is satya. सत्यमेव जयते (Truth alone triumphs) is a mantra from the Mundaka Upanisad. It is the national motto of India and is present in all Indian currency below the Ashoka emblem.

In a commitment given and kept, between the action and the word, between the word and the thought, between the thought and the fact, there is alignment. So, you make sure what you think and what you know is more or less true. You take the effort to check up whether it is true or not, before saying it. When there is no certainty in your knowledge, that uncertainty should be expressed. This is satya-bhāṣaṇa. This is a dharma to be followed. So, the Lord is in the form of satya-vacana-dharma, in the form of the value of speaking the truth. Īśvara is in the form of dharma and one of those dharmas is satya.

In a recently popular Hindi film, the hero says a dialogue which became immensely popular, the rough translation of it is as follows: 'Once I have made a commitment, I don't listen even to myself. '(Ek baar maine commitment kar di, main apni bhi nahi suntaa). No guesses for why this dialogue became very popular – it taps into the universal need for all people to speak the truth and to be consistent in that. There is a unique happiness in abiding by dharma, in doing the right thing, as one rises above one 's likes and dislikes that limit oneself.

This world has a vyāvahārika-satyatva, an empirical reality, which allows various transactions to take place based on satyam.

Īśvara lends satyatva to this world. Being the satyasya satya, the truth of the reality of this universe, He is Satya. That which always prevails is not subject to negation at any time is satya. That Isness which is without an object is satyam.

213. Satyaparākramaḥ

सत्यपराक्रमः

The one whose capacity to remove obstacles is not wasted.

The capacity to face and remove obstacles is parākrama. Usually people we consider successful have achieved what they have because of the way they have dealt with obstacles. They have succeeded despite factors that could have stopped them in their tracks. When we look back at our lives, we see signs of emotional maturity and forbearance, when we have held on and not given up, although the going was tough. This may have been in the area of academics, work environment, relationships, family matters, social causes.

In our culture, dharma itself, is an end to be achieved. There is no use of any achievements if not based on dharma. One has to, by one's own initiative, grow into that person for whom dharma is an accomplished end. One begins loving what one has got to do, and not what one loves to do. If one loves what is to be done, the growth is complete. If one only does what one loves to do that is not an accomplishment at all; even the animals do that. Further, if we go with your own fancy, it does not take time to grow out of what we once loved. Is it not so? Our life is full of this. We can very easily grow out of what we love. Therefore, growth lies only in loving what I do in a given situation. As a professional, as a father, as a mother, as a husband, as a wife, as a son, as a daughter, as a citizen, as a neighbor, there is so much to grow into. That is what the challenge is. If self growth is the goal, then nothing is considered an obstacle. Everything is considered an opportunity.

We plan many things, but something else happens. In the achievement of our many pursuits we seek the grace of Īśvara, because the hidden variables also have to be taken into consideration. The hidden variables cannot be controlled, because they are hidden. The Lord is Satyaparākrama and there are no obstacles that He cannot cross. Therefore, we seek His help for the removal of our obstacles. Because we want to have parākrama, we tap the very source. We pray to Īśvara for parākrama and invoke Him with the name Satyaparākrama.

214. Nimiṣaḥ

निमिषः

The one whose eyes are closed.

215. Animiṣaḥ

अनिमिषः

He whose eyes are open.

When we do closed eye meditation in a relatively quiet place, the attempt is to withdraw the senses so to speak. Closing the eyes means withdrawal from the sensory world as it can be a source of distraction, in the initial stages of meditation. It does not mean that we stop functioning totally. We know the sight world through our eyes. He, whose eyes are closed, is Nimiṣa. At the time of pralaya, cosmic dissolution, Īśvara is 'as if' closing His eyes.

He is nitya-prabuddha-svarūpa, ever awake, therefore, ever aware as the ātma-caitanya and hence, He is Animiṣa. The Lord, in His matsya-avatāra, is called Animiṣa. It is said that a fish never blinks its eyes. We note that some words are presented from our standpoint for our understanding.

Nimiṣa is a unit of time and that unit of time is also Īśvara. He is timeless, not measurable, not bound by time and hence is Animiṣa. At the same time, without Īśvara there is no unit of time.

216. Sragvī

स्रग्वी

The one with the garland called Vaijayantī.

Srak is a garland in Sanskrit. Perhaps nowhere else but India, garland making has been elevated to such an art form. Places like Chennai, Bangalore and Coimbatore among many others have huge and beautiful flower markets and is much recommended if people have n't seen these already. Fragrant and non fragrant flowers and leaves have been used traditionally to weave garlands. Some of these flowers are jasmine, roses, hibiscus, lotuses, marigold and many others. Deities in temples are decorated with garlands. Important guests, dignitaries and gurus are also shown respect by garlanding them. Garlanding each other is an important part of a Hindu marriage ceremony. Sometimes in good humour the bride and the groom are lifted up by members of each other's families so that garlanding becomes a tease and a little difficult to do. Great moments of fun and revelrie all thanks to the humble garland.

Some of the temples in Tamil Nadu such as Chidambaram and Arunachaleshwar temple have flower gardens exclusively for supply of flowers for every day rituals. It is very interesting that stone Inscriptions of Raja Chola I at Thanjavur gives details of patronage of royals to the conservation of Nandavanams (flower gardens). In Srirangam Ranganathan temple, garland making is a family profession and there are strict rules followed about plucking the flower to making garlands. The flowers should be plucked in early morning after having bath. Namajapam or the repetition of holy names should be done while plucking flowers. While making garlands they keep flowers and other materials on a table because the garland for God should not touch the feet. What a culture that gives so much attention to a garland and everything to do with it, just because it is an important article of worship.

Bhagavān Visnu is pictured as wearing the garland called Vaijayantī. This is not an ordinary garland of flowers, leaves or even cardamom. This garland is made up of the pañca bhūta-tanmātrās or the five subtle elements and out of these, everything is created. We can say that the sthūla-bhūtas, the gross elements – space, air, fire, water and earth are the flowers and the sūkṣma-bhūtas, the subtle elements, are the fragrance. This is a beautiful visualization for contemplation.

217. Vācaspatirudāradhīḥ

वाचस्पतिरुदारधिः

The Lord of all the vidyās and the one with a great intellect.

He is the pati, the Lord of all vāk, speech. Speech stands for all vidyā, knowledge as it is communicated. A few months ago, Pujya Swamiji came to the lecture hall, and after sitting asked for a few topics for teaching. A voice from the audience said' Isvara'. Swamiji immediately responded, "Īśvara is not a topic. That I am able to speak, is Īśvara."

The process of speech is not ordinary, by any means. Even to utter a simple sound 'Aaa', it requires the coordination of the lungs, the vocal chords and the mouth. The lung needs to produce adequate airflow and air pressure to vibrate the vocal chords in very specific ways to adjust pitch and tone. All this in combination with the different parts of the mouth produce different sounds. One cannot say 'pa' without folding the lips, One can say 'ta' only if the tongue touches the upper teeth and a sound is made, which is different from saying 'tha'- here the tongue touches the front of the upper palate. One cannot help but wonder how all of this works! There is a certain order involved and that order is Vācaspati. Thus, He is the Lord and protector of all knowledge – branches of knowledge disciplines known and yet to known.

His dhī, intellect, can comprehend all knowledge and hence, He is Udāradhī. His knowledge is udāra, exalted as it does not lack anything. Traditionally, the two names are taken together.

218. Agraṇīḥ

अग्रणी:

The one who leads to the foremost goal.

What is to be achieved and what is achieved is pada. Agra means prakṛṣṭa, mukhya – that which is the foremost, the highest and most important. That end that is to be achieved, is the most exalted end, achieving which, there is no further end to be achieved.

Clarity in means and ends is non negotiable in one's life. If money is confused as an end or a goal in itself, then family, relationships, interests, even work suffers. Money has to be recognised as a means for physical security, necessities and some comfort. That's it. Is marriage an end in itself? Once a person is married, is the goal achieved? Many people think it is and their marriage ends. You cannot get mokṣa out of a marriage. A marriage is an important part of most people's lives and definitely provides for love, team work, emotional and physical companionship and sometimes children. Many life lessons are learnt. One learns to fight well and still stay together, like a good sparring partner in a boxing ring.

What is the end that is spoken of here? On achieving this end, all other ends come to an end, whereas this does not come to an end. On achieving this, there is kṛta-kṛtyatā, a sense of fulfillment. So this agra-pada is called mokṣa and it is to be achieved. Mokṣa can be had only if you choose to have it. There is no other way of getting mokṣa, the ultimate end, because you cannot stumble upon mokṣa. Mokṣa is also not the result of any karma. Through karma, you can only have situations which are conducive. You may stumble upon a teacher who can teach you the śāstra, but you cannot stumble upon yourself. Mokṣa can be gained only by knowledge, because it happens to be you. Firstly, there should be mumukṣā, the desire for liberation which everyone has but does not recognise. Once recognised it has to be converted to jijñāsā, the desire to know, because mokṣa is in terms of knowing. The seeker becomes a knower as seeking gets a direction. Even if a person says 'I am a saṃsāri,' still that person happens to be already liberated, because he is the limitless whole. When this is so, how are you going to stumble on this knowledge?

The person, who thinks that he is the problem, cannot know that he is the solution. He has to choose to know. Every individual is given the faculty of choice, that is, the buddhi and therefore he can choose to know. The human birth is got due to a lot of puṇya. The śāstra says that if the thinking faculty, the buddhi, is not used to know oneself, then it is equal to ātma-hanana, committing suicide. But, if the person does not see the problem, how will he make an attempt to solve it? Again, he has to know the appropriate solution and also the means for getting that solution. One needs the grace of the Lord for all these, for gaining mumukṣā–a desire for freedom, the knowledge that freedom is only through knowledge, a jijñāsā–a desire to know, an interest in the śāstra, gaining of a guru. Without grace all the way, all these are not possible.

The Lord is Agrani, because He leads those interested in moksa towards the ultimate goal in the form of grace.

219. Grāmanīḥ

ग्रामणी:

The one who is the leader of the beings.

There is a lot of talk about leadership in work circles. Different styles of leadership: authoritative (do as told), democratic (what can we do together?) and permissive (do whatever you want) styles are spoken about. Given the above leadership styles, more is spoken about the qualities of a leader – charisma, organizational abilities, people skills etc. I like this simple definition of a leader – A leader is the one who leads positive change. The change could be in oneself, in the surroundings, with people, in organizations or in groups. Leading change is irrespective of position, authority or title. Any kind of change is not easy be it change in job, change in stage of life, change in age, change required in skill set, change in the form of adjustment to the newest arrival in the family.

It is true that change is the only constant in life. Yet few of us are able to deal with change effectively. We may rave and rant and resist change in big ways and subtle ways too. Keeping focused on the big picture of my life, in terms of clarity of my life priorities and goals, when I do

what is required, it makes me a leader. Doing what is required is not simple. It involves doing what is required, despite my binding likes and dislikes. An effective leader would have been an effective follower and has an understanding of supportive and constraining factors for positive change. A person who is heading an organization and facing the problem of demotivated staff, if an effective leader, would understand the supportive and constraining factors of the organizations and the economy and take necessary steps to deal with it.

Grāma means samūha, a group. Bhūta can either mean beings or the elements. Bhagavān is the Lord, the leader of the groups of all beings. The glories and qualities of all leaders are Bhagavān 's glories. He is the Lord of the group of elements like the space, air and so on. He is the Lord of the group of all the senses. The sūrya-devatā, the Sun, is the leader of the group of planets and also the devatās, who are the leaders of the planets. But, the leader of all these devatās including the sūrya-devatā, is Parameśvara. Therefore, He is Grāmanī.

220. Śrīmān (also words 22, 178, 613)

श्रीमान

The one who is radiant.

Here the word śrī means kānti, radiance. Unfortunately, in today's day and age, radiance is associated more with the radiance of the skin and not much else. What is the radiance we talk about here? Bhagavān being endowed with śrī, one of the six bhagas, that qualify the word Bhagavān is, kānti, radiance which is Śrīmān. The radiance of Bhagavān excels that of everything else, because it is in the form of shining caitanya.

So called spiritual advice is given – 'you must surrender to the Lord, then everything will be fine.' How does one surrender to Bhagavān? The one who owns up to any activity is the ego or ahankāra including the activities of hearing, seeking, relating. Excerpts below from Bhagavad Gita Home Study Course 4.18. Pujya Swamiji 's explanation below radiates with such clarity that we are embraced in that radiance.

First of all, I do not know who or what the Lord is. And why should I surrender the only ego that I have to this Lord? As it is, I have only a few things and these things are owned by this ego. If I surrender it to the Lord, what will I get in return? 'Everything,' I am told. The question that would arise would be, 'If the ego is already surrendered, who will get everything?' Once I have surrendered my ego, I become totally decimated. Then who is there to get anything out of that surrender? Nobody. Therefore, that type of surrender is useless.

Also, the next question is 'Who is surrendering the ego?' Somebody has to do the surrendering. It is the ego that has to surrender itself. And that is not possible.

Again, if I am wearing a coat, I can surrender the coat but I cannot surrender my body because it does not belong to me. Similarly, I am told that the ahankaara, the ego, belongs to the Lord and that I must surrender it. How can I surrender what does not belong to me? I can only surrender what belongs to me. And if it belongs to the Lord, how is it that I do not know this?

In fact, I think that everything belongs to me, including the Lord. Why else would I address him as 'My Lord'? To address the Lord, I must be there; because I am here, he is the Lord. If I am not here, where is the Lord? He is the Lord because I call him 'Lord'!
And if there is a Lord, and this Lord includes everything, then I have nothing to surrender. I have only to know.

Furthermore, if I have to surrender to a Lord who is separate from me, then I am the ego. Who, then, is to surrender this ego? The ego alone has to surrender. How can the ego surrender? The one who surrenders is the ego. And being the one who surrenders, the ego can only surrender what it owns. The owner cannot be surrendered. If the ego has to surrender to the Lord, something else must be there to surrender it, which can only be another ego. Thus, we find ourselves in infinite regression. How, then, are we going to surrender our ego to the Lord?

Surrender is an attitude, a mature attitude. There is no other surrender than this. Surrender as such is not possible for the ego because it cannot surrender itself. But, with an attitude of surrender, I can deflate the ego. I can appreciate that there is nothing in this creation that is authored by me, that everything is given to me, including my physical body, mind, and senses. What is given to me is not mine. When I say, 'I am just a trustee, O Lord, and you are the giver,' the ego is what tells me all this. Thus, surrender can be only in terms of attitude.

In the name of getting rid of everything else, the ego remains in one form or the other because it cannot get rid of itself. Even a person who does not talk about his or her good actions, may think of himself or herself as a humble person and say, 'I never mention all of the charities I have done. I don't boast about them. Because the ego, the karta, is always there in one form or the other, it cannot be defeated — except by the one who undertakes an inquiry into 'Who am I.' A person can study every philosophy there is and the ego will remain, saying, 'I am a philosopher.' Only when the question, 'Who am I,' is asked, is the ego in trouble.

The ego is not removed, it need not be removed but the fact that it has no independent existence is understood. And what does the ego that everyone has, depend upon? What is it that exists independently without depending on the ego upon which everything else depends? The ego depends for its existence on the Atma, which is not the ego. Therefore, the self is the truth of every ego.

There is one truth for every ego and everything that is done by the ego, and that truth, satya, is called Atma or the self. Atma that is limitless is the very content of the ego, without which there is no ego.

221. Nyāyaḥ
न्याय:
The one who is in the form of reasoning.

Nyāya is reasoning. Reasoning is the ability of the mind to think and understand things in a logical way. All of us have the ability to connect the dots. How we connect it is our reasoning. A child sees the correlation of the mother’s smiling face to getting good grades in school. Most of us see the connection between the rising air pollution and the increase in use of personal vehicles

on the road. We find, that in our day to day living, reasoning is involved every step of the way from brushing one's teeth in the morning contributing to gum health and going to bed in favourable conditions (amount of light in the room, height of the pillow and so on) at night. While we have emotions we are primarily cognitive beings and we assimilate the how, what and why of living well in this world primarily through our reasoning. This being the case, the way in which the various names of the Lord have been unfolded is also with the help of reasoning.

In the language we use expressions like 'a golden chain, a golden bangle, a golden ring and so on' and this is based on nyāya assumptions, logic. There is a substance and it has a quality–the substance is called a substantive and the quality is called an attribute or adjective. An adjective qualifies a noun. That gold is the adjective, and chain, bangle, ring and so on, are substantives, is an assumption.

Anybody who has gone to a gold souk, especially in Dubai, would have seen hundreds of ornaments made from one ton of gold. Every ornament is a golden ornament. 'Golden' is an adjective qualifying the noun and one thousand nouns or substantives are there. You visit the shop and decide to take one chain. Still, there would be 999 golden ornaments left. Instead, you visit the shop and take only one thing; you take the one (ton) gold. Will there be thousand ornaments left, because you took only the gold? No. There would be nothing left.

Therefore, which is the substance? The gold is the real substantive and chain etc. is the adjective. Hence, you should really say chainy gold, bangly gold, ringy gold. But language is different and that is the orientation we have. The ornament does not exist without the gold, but we are so focused on the name and form that we totally lose sight of the substance. Really there is only one substantive gold. Further, chainy-ness, bangle-ness, ringy-ness etc. are the attributes superimposed on gold. They are only incidental attributes and not intrinsic attributes and do not do anything to gold. Gold is the ātmā of the chain and it is neither chain, nor bangle nor ring. This is a reasoning that is used to explain the śruti which says 'neha nānāsti kiñcana – there is only one thing, there is no second thing'(Ka.Up.2.1.11, Br.UP.4.4.19). You ask, how can it be so? Some reasoning is provided: There is only one gold plus a thousand ornaments and that is equal to only one gold. It was one ton gold before and now also it is one ton gold after all the ornaments are made and after all the ornaments are melted also, it will still be one ton gold alone. Therefore, the plurality of the ornaments has no reality apart from the one gold.

Brahman was pūrṇa before the manifestation of this world, is pūrṇa even when manifest as this world and continues to be pūrṇa even after the world is resolved. This is called śruti-anukūla-nyāya or pramāṇa-anugrāhaka-tarka, a reasoning which is conducive to understand what the śruti-pramāṇa says. Does that mean I am being selective in my reasoning? It would mean so if I have not understood Vedanta as a pramāṇa. If I understand Vedanta as that means of knowledge which has a unique message about me, that cannot be inferred or arrived at by logic, then I make the attempts to understand pramāṇa vakya. . Any attempt to understand is through Nyāya alone. It is also bhedakāraka-tarka, a reasoning which shows the difference between proper and improper reasoning. Bhagavān is called Nyāya, because He is in the form of proper reasoning in the buddhi, which helps you understand the śāstra-pramāṇa that reveals the non-dual truth that you are.

222. Netā

नेता

The one in charge of the machinery called the world.

Bhagavān is the Netā, the leader, the maintenance person, in charge of the machinery called the jagat, making the whole machinery work in perfect unison and order.

How does one assimilate this? Irrespective of our academic background, we can understand that there is a physical order, a biological order, and an epistemological order, there is also a psychological order in this jagat, world. We need not study physics, biology or even psychology in depth to understand this. That electricity powers the appliances, nutritious food contributes to increased immunity, the chocolate icecream in the dream is not available on waking up are all simple everyday example of the orders operating in the jagat.

In the behavior of a person, there is a psychological order. We may know or not know why a person behaves the way he or she does. However, we can still understand that there is no other way possible for that person to behave at this time. Every individual has his or her own background, and at any given time, they are doing their very best. Every person has his/her own struggles, his/her own triumphs as well. We always worry and question, "Why did he/she do that? Why did he/she not do this?" But given the background, that person can behave only in the manner he does at this time and place. There is no other answer. We are not trying to justify the person's behaviour, just understanding it.

When we understand very intimately that all the significant people who bother us are behaving exactly as they can (there is no other way the person can behave), then there is no problem. And the fact is that anyone who bothers us is significant. Insignificant people do not bother us as much.

We experience a lot of pressure all the time, inner pressure and outer pressure. Outer pressure finally becomes inner pressure when somebody pressures you and you internalize that situation. If you refuse to get pressurized, there is no inner pressure; there is only outer pressure. The pressure is for the other person; it remains his/her agenda, not yours. When you internalize the other person's demands, it becomes your duty or your pressure; you feel you have to do it. Recognising this makes us objective as we recognise one aspect of our own psychological order. Recognising this makes us one in charge or one who has a say over the workings of the mind. And this is only one mind.

Bhagavān sustains the various orders of the jagat including the psychological order. We pray for greater strength to deal with our situations, we pray for clarity, we pray in praise, we offer our actions as our offering to Bhagavān. We pray from the position we are at.

223. Samīraṇaḥ

समीरण:

The one who sets in motion all beings in the form of breath.

Samīraṇa is that which induces action. How? In the form of breath, the Lord causes activity on the part of all living beings and is hence called Samīraṇa.

He alone is in the form of vāyu, air, at the total level. This same vāyu manifests in the form of prāṇa and apāṇa, that is, life. There would be no life as we know it were it not for air. So the Veda praises Him as, 'namo brahmaṇe–unto that Brahman, my salutations.' We have a childhood orientation of looking upwards, towards where we think God is. Vāyu as a manifestation of Bhagavān challenges that orientation. We need not look upwards only. Where is it that Bhagavān is not? Where is that Brahman? One of my favourite verses from a śānti mantra 'Namaste vāyo. Tvameva pratyakṣaṃ brahmasi – O! Vāyu, my salutations to you, because you are the pratyakṣa-brahma.' You are that pratyakṣa-brahma, the tangible manifestation of Brahman.

'You are the one who makes every life possible. I have heard that Brahman is the one who sustains everything. But I do not know that Brahman. The tree that stands there cannot live without breathing. Every living thing, every plant, every human-being depends on vayu, which sustains life. You are called sūtrātmā, because as a sūtra, as a golden string that runs through the beads, you hold them all together. O! Vāyu, you are the one whom I see, sustaining every form of life known and unknown to me.' So in the form of prāṇa, He is Samīraṇa, making all living organisms alive and active.

Every breath you take, Every move you make, Every song you say, every step you take, Bhagavan IS. Breathing in and breathing out, namah to Bhagavān as Samīraṇaḥ.

224. Sahasramūrdhā

सहस्रमूर्धा

The one who has countless heads.

From the standpoint of the physical form we are familiar with and deeply identified with, this name is given. Does Bhagavān have one physical body-mind-sense-complex? No. Is there any body that is not given by him? Every body-mind-sense-complex belongs to him alone. Then how many heads does he have? He has countless heads.

Sahasramūrdhā, having thousand heads is not literal here. It is like us saying that there are thousands gathered in the Kumbh mela. Here, thousand means countless.

225. Viśvātmā

विश्वात्मा

The truth of the universe.

That which is known through different cognitions is viśva. A cognition is nothing but a thought. Every object be it elephant, ant or the latest movie poster is known by a cognition. When you look at the galaxy, that is one cognition; then you look at the milky way consisting of many systems with suns and planets and this is another cognition. Our own sun and its system of planets is another cognition. You look at the earth and that is one cognition. The earth with so many continents, that is one more cognition. The continents consisting of so many countries,

that is one more cognition. The country as so many states, the states with so many districts, the districts with further divisions – each is a cognition. This entire universe, this viśva, is the object of different cognitions.

This viśva has its being in the ātmā. The Isness of all these objects and indeed the cognitions is the ātmā. The sixth chapter of the Chāndogyopaniṣad says, 'aitadātmyam idaṃ sarvam–all that is here has its reality in this sat-vastu alone.' It is like million ornaments having their being in only one gold. The substantive is only ātmā and that is Brahman. Thus, the Lord is Viśvātmā.

This universe is called viśva because it is cognized in a variety of ways. So, Bhagavān is the one who sustains every pratyaya, every cognition, by lending existence to it. When you say a flower 'is'–in this statement, the flower asti, bhāti – it is and it shines, that is, it shines in your awareness as an object. So everything, in the jagat, asti bhāti– exists and shines as an object of your awareness, consciousness. Any object in the jagat, can be reduced to 'asti, bhāti–exists and shines.' A flower is nothing but existence and consciousness plus name and form. So too, space is nothing but existence and consciousness plus name and form. So 'asti bhāti' are common to all objects, but name and form are uncommon; they differ from object to object. The variety of names and forms alone is viśva. Asti and bhāti, existence and consciousness sustain nāma and rūpa, names and forms. The one, who sustains this world of names and forms by lending sat and cit is the ātmā of this viśva and hence is called Viśvātmā and that is Parameśvara.

226. Sahasrākṣaḥ

सहस्राक्षः

The one who has countless sense organs.

Akṣi means an indriya, a sense organ. In every organism there are indriyas, sense organs for sight, sound, touch, smell and taste.

In addition to the human beings, the sensory capacities of birds and animals is truly fascinating. The bat for example has a sonar system for sensing. It produces a very loud, short sound and assesses the echo when it bounces back. The type of insect and how big it is can be determined by the quality of the echo and time it takes for the echo to rebound. The crocodile and the alligator are said to have thousands of tiny receptors - the size of the tip of a pencil -dotted mainly around their jaw line. These receptors enable them to sense the presence, movement and location of animals through vibrations in the water. For instance, they can pick up on the faintest change in their environment such as a when an animal stops to take a drink.

It is said that two-thirds of a shark's brain is dedicated to smell and it can detect the tiniest drop of blood from more than a mile away. Astonishingly even uninjured fish are not safe from a shark's surveillance. A nervous fish emits chemicals to warn others.

A small i6-inch catfish may have 250,000 taste buds. They cover its entire body inside and out including its fins, back, belly and tail - making it literally a swimming tongue. In comparison, we have around 10,000 taste buds. And all of this in spread over a few inches only. They are exceptional at detecting food. A catfish could easily be able to taste a single drop of a blood in an Olympic size swimming pool.

The eyesight of birds such as hawks and eagles in 3-4 times sharper than ours. Hawks can scan the earth from a height of 10-15,000 feet looking for rodents. And when they spot one, these birds can dive at over 100mph and still keep their target in complete focus.

All these sense organs belong to the Lord and hence, He is Sahasrākṣa, endowed with thousands, that is, countless sense organs.

227. Sahasrapāt

सहस्रपात्

The one who has countless feet.

The Lord is described here as having thousand pādas, countless feet. Feet stand for the organs of action.

When we look around at the other beings in this world, the elephant despite its massive size and weight has peculiar feet. The feet have a thick layer of padding to shield the bonal structure. At the same time because of their sensitivity, they may also feel vibrations in the ground, such as those of a storm or approaching animals.

Cheetahs have semi retractable claws that dig into the ground for a better grip, allowing them to run faster, as fast as seventy miles per hour, and at those speeds they need as much grip and stability as possible. Bird's feet on the other hand are adapted to the food they eat and the environment they live in. Ducks have webbed feet to help them swim.

It is fascinating that the human being, despite having all toes pointed in one direction, does not keel over and has physical balance. All the feet of all the beings are countless in number.

The Puruṣa-sūkta describes the Virāṭ-puruṣa as 'sahasra-śīrṣā puruṣaḥ, sahasrākṣaḥ sahasrapāt– The Puruṣa is thousand-headed, thousand-eyed and thousand-footed.' This is the pūrṇa-puruṣa who is manifest in the form of the world.

228. Āvartanaḥ

आवर्तनः

The one who causes the cycle of saṃsāra to turn.

Āvartana is repetition of the cycle. The one who has the power to keep the cycle of creation, sustenance and resolution turning is Āvartana. This is a cycle and being a cycle, it has no beginning or end and the Lord keeps it going.

The cycle of saṃsāra is experienced as bondage by the human being. We try to reconcile the unpleasant situations in our life by telling ourselves, 'You win some, you lose some'. We justify the pain and the gnawing dissatisfaction by also saying, 'No gain without some pain'. Still the heart yearns for more. Yeh dil maange more (as the famous tagline of a popular cola commercial). That people, situations, objects are not good enough is the common conclusion and

hence experience of most people. It is inevitable because of the error made, in concluding that 'I am this much only', limited to the body-mind. Nothing other than lasting happiness in all situations, all times and all place is enough.

As long as I take myself as a karta, a doer, I will keep doing karma, action lifetime after lifetime to better my situation. The punya and papa that are there in the account of the karta will keep fructifying into different lifetimes until the apparent status of the 'karta' is falsified by knowledge of the reality. It is said that a famous yester year actor in the Hindi film industry required psychiatric treatment because he could not step out of character, out of his films. There was confusion between the role and the real person.

That I was never a karta has to be understood and assimilated with the help of the teaching. What after I understand this? We still do what needs to be done, without any confusion in identity. Earlier the karta did things for happiness. Now the akarta Atma, playing the role of the karta, doer does things out of the fullness discovered as his/her own nature.

229. Nivṛttātmā (also word 597)

निवृत्तात्मा

The one who is essentially free from saṃsāra.

As Āvartana, Bhagavān is constantly engaged in creation, sustenance and resolution without any break or any respite.

Living in Bhagavān 's sristi, I experience different situations of my life – good, bad, ugly. Blaming, criticizing or attributing motives to Bhagavān is like putting your finger in the fire and when the fire burns it, asking the fire – "Did you burn my finger?", then the fire replies," Yes, I burned your finger." And when you ask,' Why me? What did I do wrong," the fire says, " I did not burn your finger." You say," But you told me you were the karta. You made this happen." The fire replies," But I am akarta, I did not burn."

You say, "this is all very confusing. You say you are the karta and then when you want to duck responsibility, you say you are akarta,." Then the fire explains," I did burn the finger. But I did not go after the finger to burn it. You stuck your finger into me. In whichever form you invoke me, I will bless you. I can warm up your hands in the cold of the winter. I can help boil water for you. I can cook all the meals for you. But don't blame me. From my standpoint, I am not the karta. From the standpoint of what you receive from me, I am the karta because you get the results of your own actions. I have no sukha-dukha, the experience of samsara. Just because I help feed lakhs of people every day because of my ability to burn, there is no sukha nor is there dukha because of the volcanoes erupting that have killed lives."

Is He therefore affected by this saṃsara? No. In His essential nature, Bhagavān is ever free, never bound at any time. This cycle is only from the standpoint of a saṃsārī and Bhagavān is the one who runs the cycle. But from His own standpoint, He is always actionless and free.

230. Saṃvṛtaḥ

संवृतः

The one who is covered by avidyā.

Bhagavān is covered with avidyā, making it thus impossible for the ignorant to know Him. In saṃsāra, the life of constant becoming and restlessness is absolutely real, then there is no freedom from it. But we do experience freedom when we are happy in different moments, when you see a pet dog wagging his tail looking at you, a baby gurgling while playing peek-a-boo, the trekker on seeing the beautiful valley, shared laughter at a joke among friends. These happy moments are despite all the struggles, despite my complexes, despite the political parties.
If Bhagavān is nivṛttātmā, the one who is free from saṃsara and He is the very ātmā of yourself also, then there is only one ātmā which is limitless and it is always free from saṃsāra. When this is so, you should also be a nivṛttātmā. How is it that you are a saṃsāri? This is because you are under the spell of māyā, whereas Bhagavān has māyā under His control.

Maya has two saktis, the power of veiling and the power of projecting. Because of the power of veiling, my own reality is not known to me, is 'as though' hidden. Since what I am is not known to me, I project/imagine a few things, I take myself to be something I am associated with. I must be a human being, because I am associated with this body-mind-sense-complex!
Bhagavān knows what He is doing. Every magician is aware of what he is doing and hence it is not magic for him. From the standpoint of the jīva, Īśvara is Saṃvṛta, covered by the avidyā, ignorance. The veiling power of māyā, as avidyā, as though covers Īśvara from your vision.

You do not understand that you are also nivṛttātmā. This non-understanding alone covers Bhagavān as it were. This is like, if you just cover your eyes, the whole universe becomes covered. The whole universe is then not known to me. The whole universe is not really covered. Ātmā is not recognized and that is enough to be a saṃsārī, because saṃsāritva on 'I' is a superimposition, a projection of my own powers and the 'I' is not known.

It is only by the grace of Īśvara that you can free yourself from the avidyā that covers you. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'mama māyā duratyayā, māmeva ye prapadyante māyāmetāṃ taranti te –Those who worship me cross over this māyā; otherwise my māyā is difficult to cross.'

231. Sampramardanaḥ
संप्रमर्दनः
The one who destroys.

He is Sampramardana, one who destroys through His vibhūtis in the form of Rudra, Kāla, Yama and so on. In these forms, He becomes the giver of the results of actions.

Our understanding of Bhagavān determines our overall psychological and emotional response to ourselves and life. If I look upon Bhagavān as judgmental and quick to anger, my response is constant fear and forced devotion. In reality, the Lord is the abode of fearlessness; He is the one who keeps you fearless. If such a Lord becomes a source of fear, then it is created only by you.

It is not easy to follow dharma. Yet, when recognised as a human need, I see that following dharma is very good for my wellbeing and to uphold the order of society. In following dharma,

one has to make a few sacrifices. There is one place in which there are no difficulties. Where is that? When one's body is in the crematorium or the cemetery, for the last journey. as the case may be. Living implies difficulties – lots of them. Due to the cover of māyā, people may not use their viveka to choose the path of dharma but instead they take the path of adharma. If adharma is done, then the Lord gives difficulties and conflicts, which are not conducive for the happiness and well-being of the jīvas. Is Bhagavān sitting and plotting about how people need to be taught a lesson? How to take revenge on this person? Not at all. These difficulties comes to us through kāla, time.

All our difficulties and conflicts are our own karma phala, manifesting as papa, the effects of adharmic action. This understanding can be quite a relief and makes us proactive. Then whom can I blame? I can continue to lament over my past and what I have done, but that does not help the situation. There may be guilt because of one's own omissions and commissions – What I wish I had not done/done. There may be hurt because of the other's omissions and commissions – What I wish the other had not done/done. If there is guilt or hurt about what was done either by myself or the other, I don't nurture it and make into a forest of guilt and hurt in my mind. I recognise this is not healthy for me, I learn to live consciously, awarefully and do what I can to resolve this. Expressing appropriately, talking to a friend, reading books, involvement in different hobbies, therapy sometimes all help in deal with the residue of left over reactions.

He is kāla, time. Most of us say' I am not afraid of death, but I am afraid of being physically dependent on another person'. Old age and disease are conditions that are likely to occur with a body subject to all forces. Infact, given the lifestyles we lead it is miraculous that the body does so well. If self growth has been deliberate with attention then as the years go by, one becomes more fulfilled with one's maturity and ability to deal with situations. All animals and birds grow. So do human beings. But, Self growth is not automatic, it needs to be initiated and is subject to choice. Even though ageing does not stop because it is a continuous process, you learn to age gracefully and enjoy the old age; then, old age or death is no problem.
He is also the destroyer of your avidyā, ignorance.

232. Ahassaṃvartakaḥ

अहस्संवर्तकः

The initiator of the day as the sun.

The greeting, 'Good morning' is there in many languages. So is the word 'Suprabhātam' in Sanskrit. Morning on earth is marked by a new day, all based upon the rotation of the earth. When there is day in one place, there is night on the opposite side of the earth. Professionals work across different time zones, the referential point being the day of 24 hours. All kinds of activities are initiated during the day, across continents.

Who initiates the day? Bhagavān is the initiator of time, day, seasons and so on. The sun is the one that makes the day, and based on the apparent rising and setting of the sun, the day is calculated.

Bhagavān is the one, who in the form of the physical sun and in the form of the sūrya-devatā, makes the day possible–day after day.

Arghyam, offering water to the Sun is an important ritual. The Devi Bhagawatam in Chapter XVI extols the necessity of arghyam in the section on Sandhya Upasana. In many parts of India, we still see people doing this every morning or as part of the sandhya vandanam. The 'Arghya' delivered skyward from the palms of the worshipper serve as missiles to destroy rakshasas known as 'Mandehas' attacking the sun. As Ahassaṃvartaka, Bhagavān is the initiator of the day.

233. Vahniḥ

वन्हि:

The one who carries as the fire.

The Lord is Vahni, both the physical fire and also the Agni-devatā. The karma kānda section of the Veda mentions many yajnās, different kinds of offerings to the devatās. Where are the offerings made? Into a small pit made on a vedi, a platform, oblations are offered into the fire. Why are offerings made to the Agni, fire and not devatas? Agni devatā is the most efficient courier service. Agni, fire is also called vahni, because it carries the oblations offered by us to the various devatās.

Jīvanaṃ vahati–The Lord is the one who carries on the life of all beings in the form of energy. As Jātar Agni, it is the fiery metabolic energy of digestion that allows assimilation of food while ridding the body of waste and toxins, and transforms dense physical matter into subtle forms of energy the body needs. Heat, combustion and energy is the realm of Agni which symbolizes the transformation of the gross to the subtle. In the form of energy, warm blooded animals are able to maintain a body temperature higher than that of the environment. hence also, Vahni.

234. Anilaḥ (also word 812)

अनिलः

The one who is constantly moving as air.

The external air, because of which plants, animals, human beings and all other beings live, is called Anila. Air exists not only as prana but also as that which creates the atmosphere because of which life is possible. Air is not partial. It does not decide that I am going to stop blowing in Syria and only move about in the temples and the mosques and the churches of the world. Air na nilīyate, does not stop at one place. Suppose Air had a mind of its own and decided that it really liked the lungs of an athlete and would not come out of the lungs. Or Air decided that these particular lungs that had been entered are smoker's lungs and he was not going to enter it again, we would be in trouble. It goes in and come out as prana and it does this uniformly and continuously. But the property of External air is that which does not stop at one place. It keeps moving and hence it is called anila. And it is Bhagavān who is in the form of Anila, the air.

Bhagavān is not only beginningless but does not perish and hence it is Anila. Anila as prāṇa takes all the karmendriyas into itself. In a lot of meditation practices the role of Air and hence

prana, breath is highlighted. While breath does keep life going, breath or air does not determine life. If only air determined life, then by pumping in oxygen into a dead person, the person must spring up alive. But that does not happen. The body stays dead. So too, Bhagavān takes everything into Himself like anila and is therefore known as Anila. Like anila, the air, Bhagavān does not take the pāpa or puṇya of anyone unto Himself and hence is Anila.

235. Dharaṇīdharaḥ

धरणीधरः

The one who supports the earth

It is being said here that the Lord is the sun. He is the fire, He is the air and so on. And as the adhiṣṭhāna of the earth, He is Dharaṇīdhara. Not only is He the support of the earth. He is the one who supports everything as the dharaṇī, the earth. He is the one who sustains life in the form of the earth, the sun, the air, the fire and so on. One may wonder, so what? What is the difference this makes to my life? Does my anxiety about outcomes, regrets about the future, conditionings of the present go away?

We generally think that Bhagavān is one among the many things. Fire is fire, sun is sun and god is god; thus, everything is separate. This is our thinking. But, in truth, it is not so because there is nothing separate from Bhagavān. We think that God is another person, like our uncle, sitting in a particular location separate from everything. This idea is knocked off by the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma.

In the idea being knocked off, what happens? I grow in the understanding that I am not an individual having to take a defensive Ninja stance to deal with everyone. It is not me against the order of Bhagavān. I grow in the understanding that there are certain weather patterns, family dynamics, seasonal patterns, physiological in the world that I experience. Every glow of warmth, every breath of air, the gravity that holds this earth, all support me. There is nothing in opposition to me. I grow in my ability to relax as all anxiety, regret, conditioning are seen as a part of the order. I grow in the confidence that if something needs to be changed, I am endowed with the capacity to do what I can. I grow in my heart as my ability to be compassionate and understanding of everyone stretches. I grow in my connectedness to everything because really speaking, what is there, that is separate from me?

236. Suprasādaḥ

सुप्रसादः

The one who blesses people with His grace.

The Lord is a source of prasāda, blessing. Śiśupāla wanted to marry Rukmiṇī, whereas Rukmiṇī wanted to marry Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Kṛṣṇa also wanted to marry her. On the eve of her wedding to Śiśupāla, Śrī Kṛṣṇa kidnapped Rukmiṇī at her request. Śiśupāla was angry and became inimical towards Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Because of his anger he thought of the Lord everyday, and by this Śiśupāla got mokṣa, that is svarga, which is an āpekṣika-mokṣa, a relative mokṣa. This is the traditional interpretation.

Another story highlights that the difference between success and failure is not merely effort but grace or what goes in the name of luck. Before the war, both Arjuna and Duryodhana went to the place where Kṛṣṇa was resting and walked in, to seek his help. Duryodhana arrived first and Arjuna came later. Kṛṣṇa was asleep and they did not want to disturb him, so Duryodhana sat by the side of his head and Arjuna stood at his feet. Kṛṣṇa woke up and saw Arjuna first.

Duryodhana was alarmed, and made his presence felt, saying, "I came first." There is a convention that if there is going to be a competition, the man who comes first should be given the first choice. Lord Kṛṣṇa was faced with a peculiar situation. He saw Arjuna first, but Duryodhana had arrived first. Who should be given the first choice, Arjuna or Duryodhana? Kṛṣṇa gave Arjuna the first choice because he saw him first. He specified what the choice would be, however. Kṛṣṇa said, "I will be with you but I will not fight. I won't touch my chakram or my gada. Do you want a nonfighting Kṛṣṇa or my fighting army?" Kṛṣṇa was a yādava and the yādavas were invincible. They had a boon that no non-yādava could defeat a yādava, so having the yādava army on one's side spelled certain victory. If Duryodhana could ever pray, this must have been the time that he prayed! Arjuna smiled and without hesitation said, "Kṛṣṇa, please be with me." Duryodhana was very happy that Arjuna had turned down the victory that had been offered to him on a platter. He had been afraid that Arjuna would ask for the army. Duryodhana was ecstatic. "What a sentimental fool Arjuna is! He wants Kṛṣṇa with him. One more mouth to feed during wartime. Sentiments never win wars," he must have thought.

With Arjuna having chosen Kṛṣṇa, Duryodhana got the entire Yādava army on his side in the war. Kṛṣṇa teased Arjuna "Hey, I offered you the entire army. Don't you think the army makes a difference?" Arjuna told Kṛṣṇa, "In you and in your grace, I see the factor that makes all the difference between success and failure." Duryodhana thought that the army made the difference between success and failure. Arjuna did not think any differently. He knew that in war an army is important, that armor is important and that missiles are important. But when it came to choosing between Kṛṣṇa and his army, he chose Kṛṣṇa.

What does Kṛṣṇa stand for? If Lord Rama was the dharma-vigraha, the embodiment of dharma, Lord Kṛṣṇa was an anugraha-vigraha, the vigraha, embodiment, of grace. The difference between success and failure is not only effort, but an additional factor called daiva or grace. Arjuna chose Lord Kṛṣṇa because, while prayatna or effort, and time, kala, as well as resources are necessary, this element of grace makes the difference between success and failure. There is something that we face which is not visible and can stand like a wall between us and what we want to accomplish. Our masters recognized this. This is not unique to the Vedic culture; in every culture there is a word for luck. Even primitive man understood the concept of luck when he went out for hunting and returned with either a squirrel or a deer. To be in the right place at the right time is not in our hands. This is the human experience that we face all the time.

Arjuna handed over the reins to Kṛṣṇa and knew that grace was not away from him. It was Kṛṣṇa who sat in front of Arjuna in the chariot and every arrow had to pass him first. He was putting himself in a dangerous situation (as though) to save Arjuna. So mere effort does not account for the difference between success and failure. Some call this unknown element God's grace or the grace of God.

The Lord is the one from whom you derive all the blessings. He need not give anything. The very thought of the Lord is a blessing and hence the Lord is called Suprasāda. Because the Lord is with all the glories, the very thought of Him makes you completely resolve all the thoughts about yourself. Even your low self-esteem is also within the psychological order of Īśvara. That you had a back-ground which gives you this low self-esteem is within the order of Īśvara. There is nothing wrong with you. So the very thought of Īśvara makes you feel connected to Him and relieves you from your own low self-esteem.

237. Prasannātmā

प्रसन्नात्मा

The one who is ever satisfied.

He is prasannātmā, ever satisfied and cheerful, because all His desires are fulfilled. As he thinks, so it happens. Or being ever compassionate, He is prasannātmā. Do note that the word 'He' for the Lord is used because each name (in Sanskrit) is classified as masculine or feminine or neuter, according to the rules of the language. So the pronoun that refers to the name is also masculine and hence 'he' is used.

Between prasannātmā and suprasāda, there is a relationship as cause and effect. Here there are two conditions, prasannatā and prasāda, where one condition is prior to the other. Prasannatā, cheerfulness or a graceful acceptance comes from the prasāda-buddhi, a recognition that all that is received – the good, the bad, the ugly is all from the Lord and hence prasad. This is true with reference to jīva, the individual.

Prasannātmā is the word for Īśvara. It has already said that the name of the Lord is Suprasāda. Because, He is Prasannātmā, He is Suprasāda, blesses you with His prasāda, grace. Therefore, with reference to Īśvara, His being Prasannātmā is the cause and His being Suprasāda is the effect.

Anything offered to the Lord comes back from Him as prasāda, grace, and this appreciation is called prasāda-buddhi. This gives us prasannatā, cheerfulness. The very thought of Īśvara is able to knock off the problems of one's ahaṅkāra or ego. An enlightened ego is not a problem. Suppose a person has a low self-esteem, that low self-esteem can destroy the person. While this is a problem centred on oneself (ādhyātmika) there are also problems stemming from others (ādhibhautika). We have to deal with the ādhyātmika problems first and then the ādhibhautika problems. Since this low self-esteem comes from one's own childhood and makes the person so unhappy, it cannot be by-passed. If you appreciate Īśvara as one manifest in the form of the jagat, which includes your body-mind-sense-complex, you can see that His manifestation is in the form of different orders, like physiological, biological, psychological, and so on. The low self-esteem comes under the psychological order. That means, that in your own awareness, you have a self-appointed therapist in the form of Īśvara. Any other therapist is fallible, subject to defect, whereas Īśvara is an infallible therapist because He is in the form of order.

By appreciating Īśvara as Suprasāda, as one who blesses in the form of various orders– here psychological order –your low self-esteem also falls within the order of Īśvara. Then, that you have self-esteem is in order. Given the background and the situations, that you cannot avoid a

low self-esteem is also in order. That means, there is no disorder in you. When you have the awareness of Īśvara, you are in order. But if you do not have it, then having a low self-esteem is not in order. This awareness of Īśvara in the form of order, makes you recognize that you are in order. Therefore, you can smile. This is discovering space within yourself. It is only the awareness of Īśvara that can bring about that space.

The very thought of Īśvara gives a freedom from your own frailities. Thus, Īśvara is called Suprasāda, a source of blessing. When you think of Īśvara, you gain prasannatā, cheerfulness and you smile. You give Īśvara a name to express this and that is Suprasāda. Because He is Suprasāda, you become prasannā.

He becomes Suprasanna. The more you bring Īśvara into your awareness, the more is the understanding that Īśvara is not another person but Īśvara is all. It is the awareness that makes Īśvara present in your life and you become prasanna and therefore the Lord is called Suprasanna.

238. Viśvadhṛk

विश्वधृक्

The one who surpasses the universe.

Bhagavān is called so because of his bhaga, that is in absolute measure. We use the word Bhagavan or Ishvara more than the word God. In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, there is a beautiful verse explaining the six fold virtues, bhaga of Bhagavan.

The one who has bhaga is Bhagavān just as the one who has dhan, wealth is dhanavān. These six fold virtues are jnāna, all knowledge; vairāgya, total dispassion; the capacity to create, sustain and resolve, vīrya; absolute fame, yaśas; all wealth, śrī; and over lordship, aiśvarya.
To have all knowledge, jnāna is to be free from all ignorance, Hence the being does not require a mind, perception or a means of knowledge with which to know, Knowledge at some time, is preceded by ignorance in a human mind. This is not required for Bhagavān All the sciences that we study are just a peek into the knowledge that is Bhagavān.

The one who has absolute dispassion, vairāgya has no longing, no insecurity as he or she is always full. Vīrya is absolute power or sakti to create, sustain and resolve.
Absolute fame, yaśas is all fame, including my own or anybody else's. One who speaks eloquently may gain some fame, but that is just a ray of glory of the Lord. To sustain the jagat, many resources are required. Any wealth and resources that anyone may have (including all the people on the Forbes list of the richest people all these years) really is a miniscule fraction of Bhagavān 's wealth and we are only trustees. If the wealth really belonged to us, we would take it with us even after death.

Finally, the one who is not supervised, ruled, coached or mentored by anyone, not subject to the laws of anyone, has aiśvarya, over lordship. We, as individuals, function according to the laws of our place, we cannot go against them. Even an engineer who is responsible for executing a project cannot touch a live wire without facing consequences. In fact, it is because of the laws that electricity was generated to be used in the first place. But it cannot be abused. Thus, the one who is not subject to the laws of anyone is Bhagavān.

We are naturally drawn to people who have qualities that we admire, desire and respect. Infact, we find that the more we discover their sterling qualities, our affection and fondness for these people grows. In many cases, dwelling on these desirable qualities of the person makes us love them. And if we are able to relate to these people, depend on them and know that we are totally acceptable in their eyes and they are responsible for our sustenance, then things start to change. In our recognition we are transformed. When we surrender to an altar that we understand as Bhagavān, we are altered.

The one who has these virtues in the fullest measure without any lack. He excels and surpasses everyone in this viśva, including Brahmāji.

239. Viśvabhuk
विश्वभुक्
The one who enjoys or protects the viśva.

The world is called viśva. That which is understood through various cognitions, cognized in a number of ways, is called viśva. All sounds, all touches, all forms, all tastes and all smells known and unknown, unknown to us, but known to someone else or knowable is viśva. So the entire world is viśva and it includes your body-mind-complex. In other words, it represents sarva, everything which is known and unknown.

Bhagavān is Viśvabhuk, the one who eats up, that is, devours the entire viśva at the time of resolution.

Every experience, be it deep sea diving, reaching the summit of a mountain, walking on the streets every day, laughter among friends, birthday celebration is really some sense data and one's emotional and cognitive response. This response makes one the experiencer of the experience. Bhagavān is also the enjoyer of this universe, being in the form of every bhoktā, experiencer.

He is Viśvabhuk also because He rules over the entire universe, protects, nourishes and blesses it.

240. Vibhuḥ (also word 880)
विभुः
The one who is manifest in many forms.

Vividha means many and varied. Lord Visnu is Vibhu because He is manifest in a variety of forms. There are varieties and varieties of living and non-living forms and in each variety, there are so many minute shades of differences. Even in one kind of form, let's say the human face and there is seven billion of us, there are minute differences. Each face has eyes, nose, mouth and ears and we see the difference in shape. The nose of a Chinese is different generally speaking from the nose of a Afghani. The shape of the eyes of a person from North East India let 's say Meghalaya is different from the shape of eyes of a person in Tamil Nadu. The shape may be different but the function of the eyes is not a problem. Sitting in an international airport lounge, the different manifestations of just the face is so clear as people from different

nationalities, different ethnicities zip across. Some varieties of living organisms have become extinct today.

Every individual or organism that has existed in all these ages and exists now does not have the same genetic code that you have. Each finger is different and your thumb-print and ear lobe are unique and different from what others have. So, what a variety! The Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra says, 'jagad idaṃ māyā-kalpita-deśa-kāla-kalanā-vaicitrya-citrīkṛtam-this world is made in a wondrous way with countless permutations and combinations of place, time and so on (2).'

The Lord as the sat and cit is the basis, the invariable in and through all the varieties of nāma-rūpas. Therefore, He is the Vibhu, manifesting as the many, even as Hiraṇyagarbha and other devatās. Vibhu therefore also means pūrṇa, all-pervasive. The Muṇḍakopaniṣad talks of Him as 'nityaṃ vibhum' (1.1.6)

241. Satkartā

सत्कर्ता

The doer of good actions.

Bhagavān is the doer, the author of sat-karma (सत् कर्म). What is the sat-karma for Īśvara? The creation of this empirical jagat that has a functional reality is the sat-karma. What exists is reality. Therefore, He cannot create reality because it already exists. So, sat-karma is the creation of this sadātmaka-jagat.

Why is this world said to be sadātmaka? Because, it has its ātmā, its being, in the sat-vastu. What is created is only nama and rupa, names and forms, which have their being in the sat-vastu. All golden ornaments have their being in gold. Without gold, they cannot exist. Living beings and all that we see around us, have their being in Isness that is limitlessness that is sat. The Lord as the sat-vastu, 'tad ātmanaṃ svayam akuruta–created this world out of Himself. Tasmāt tat sukṛtam ucyate–therefore, whatever is created is sukrta, well done' (Tai. Up.2.7). Everything is in order. There is no duṣkarma for Īśvara.

The prātibhāsika-jagat, that is, what is subjectively real, is your own creation. What you make out of the world is your own creation. The rope is empirically real because you can use it for various purposes. It is Īśvara-sṛṣṭi. But, the snake seen by you, superimposed on the rope, is your own projection. It is jīva-sṛṣṭi. What we see, taste, touch and so on, has a certain reality and that reality cannot be dismissed as false or as non-existent. It cannot be taken as absolutely real also. So, there is something in between which cannot be categorically said as sat or asat. Still, it is Īśvara-sṛṣṭi, which is functional and in order. Therefore, as the author of satkarma, He is Satkartā.

In His avatāras as Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and others, He sets examples of dharma by doing satkāra, offering due worship and honour to elders, brāhmaṇas, sādhus and learned people. Hence, He is Satkartā.

What's the difference between samsara (jiva-made duality of prātibhāsika-jagat) and prapancha (ishvara-made functional duality of Īśvara-sṛṣṭi) ?

On videha-mukti, samsara disappears, however prapancha continues despite many jnanis attaining videha-mukti. Perhaps, prapancha could be defined as something beyond the control of jiva. Both prapancha and samsara by definition are within the order of ishvara. In prapancha, jiva can engage in karma & purushartha vyavaharically, whereas dream (clearly pratibhasika) is only for bhoga of karmaphalas by jiva.

My question is particularly about position of sampradaya on similarities and differences in prapancha and samsara? Some yoga-vedantins hold that there is no difference in the two. Yoga vashishtha has many stories which suggest they are perhaps not different. What exactly, if any, is the difference in samsara and prapancha?

Reply: The Upanisads talk about Īśvara-sṛṣṭi starting from Brahman to space and so on, presenting a certain sequence, highlighting Īśvara-sṛṣṭi as a manifestation. The same Brahman when manifesting through the upadhi of a human body is called jiva, and when manifesting through the upadhi of an ant is called an ant. The separation between jiva and Isvara is like the separation between the necklace and gold, or between wave and water.

Brilliantly put by Śri Vidyāranya, in Pancadaśi (Ch IV), With Isvara as a cause, the jagat is a karyam, an effect. This jagat is experienced, bhogyam for the jiva. (Īśakāryam jīvabhogyam). Further explained through an example – A diamond or gem is created by Isvara but the same object is experienced differently by the jiva. If we were to believe Debeers, then diamonds are a girl's best friend and if we were to look at the movie 'Blood Diamond', we would know that people run mafias for this business. Whereas a viraktah, a dispassionate wise person sees the object as Isvara srsti and does not project or superimpose value on it (there is no jiva srstīi).
Because jiva srsti is taken to be real, samsāra, the life of becoming continues. Oneness is recognised despite duality. We have no problem with duality if duality is understood to have a dependent reality. The experience of duality need not go for us to understand oneness. The experience is understood as Isvara srsti and the reality of the experience is also understood. All the gold ornaments need not be melted for us to understand that gold is the only locus.

242. Satkṛtaḥ

सत्कृत:

The one who is worshipped by everyone.

As the creator of this jagat He is Satkartā. As He is also the upādana-kāraṇa, material cause, He is also the jagat that is kṛta, created and created well. Therefore, Īśvara is Satkṛta, as the jagat that is created well.

We are devoted to different things in life, at different stages. The object of our devotion could be our CVs which list all our accomplishments, the professional positions that we happen to have. We are also devoted to our partners, our children, our parents, our pets and even our house. We may not use the word 'worship' when it comes to our attachment to all the above things. But when we begin to examine this, we find that the attachment, adoration and dependence on all

these really is equal to worshipping these without even realizing it. In our devotion and worship to all these, what we are really worshipping is Īśvara, because all of this is the glory of Īśvara.

The people, whom we honour and worship, such as our elders, brāhmaṇas, sādhus and learned people, even they worship Īśvara. So, He is Satkṛta, worshipped and honoured by all.

243. Sādhuḥ

साधुः

The one who makes everything possible.

A sādhu is defined as the one who tries to help others accomplish what they want (Parakāryaṃ sādhnoti iti sādhuḥ). This is possible for a sadhu because he/she is a krtsna karmakrt, a person who has achieved all that was to be achieved in life, who has done what is to be done. At the time of receiving this cloth, which is given by one's teacher, a sādhu is asked to say the abhaya mantra, the primary vow of sanyāsa, wherein he promises not to cause injury to any part of the creation whatsoever. The vow is neither to hurt nor to be hurt as he lives in a world where it is so easy to hurt and to be hurt. The understanding that is involved in order to commit oneself to a life of not hurting is really what it takes to be a sādhu.

One's attitude to life is the basis of being a sādhu. These days, people use the term 'good sadhu' to distinguish from the other sadhus. Some of them are described in Bhaja Govindam, Śankaracharyā warns us of a person whose behavior is mithyācara, untrue to the nature of the robe he is wearing. "An ascetic with matted locks, one with a shaven head, or one whose hairs are pulled out one by one, or one wearing ochre robes, deluded they are, who though seeing, do not see. Truly these different disguises or clothing are merely for the sake of filling the belly."However, sadhu means the one who is good and in conversational Sanskrit, this word is used often.

In Rishikesh, we find so many sādhus because of the anna-kśetras, or the public feeding places. The sadhus have the privilege of going there and getting their bhiksa. During one of the satsangs in Rishikesh, Pujya Swamiji had said,' It does not matter to me, who the sadhu is, where the sadhu is from. That he is a sadhu is enough and deserves my respect." It was a great learning for all who tend to be judgmental of even sadhus. The house holders who live a life of activity and of pleasures, know how difficult it is to renounce the pleasures, understand the value of renunciation, and consider it their privilege to support sādhus because there is a value for knowledge, there is a value for austerity, and there is a value for renunciation. There is great respect for the one who has renounced which is reflected in Mahatma Gandhi ji being recognised as a role model for the earlier generations.

Another word for a sanyāsi is sādhu or "a good person"; that is, a person who can be trusted, whose mind causes no one any consternation, a simple person whose life is one of values; of gentleness and of honesty. Being a sādhu really means being a person whose mind is resolved about his life, who lives a simple life and a mind with no conflict . This person can be from any walk of life – a parent, a businessperson, a monk, etc.

Bhagavān is the one who makes it possible for us to accomplish the various puruṣārthas, by providing all the means, the infrastructure and so on, that are required and also by removing the obstacles that stand in the way. How do the obstacles come? The phala of one's own wrong karma creates obstacles. When good karma is done, Bhagavān gives the result and that removes all the obstacles. Since the a specified result, is not mentioned, He helps us accomplish whatever we want.

One who follows the nyāya-mārga, the norms laid down by the Vedas, and also accepted in the world by elders is called a sādhu. Bhagavān is called Sādhu because He always goes according to the nyāya as shown by the Veda-marga and also what is accepted in the world. Here nyāya is not justice but a certain order. There is no need for Him to ever transgress His own nyāya-mārga.

244. Jahnuḥ

जाहनु:

The one who takes away people at the time of resolution.

The one who takes away all the jivas at the time of resolution is called Jahnu. The human beings are of different kinds and they worship Īśvara to gain different ends. the people, given to good actions who worship me are four-fold (BG 7-16). Among those who recognize and worship Īśvara, there are four types. All of them have sufficient recognition of Īśvara to be devotees but among them there is a gradation. The degree of recognition, their attitude, approach, prayers, etc., all determine the four types: There are those who want the Lord to help them in their pursuits. There are others who want Him to help them to overcome their distress. There are very few people who are interested in knowing Īśvara. There are some who are one with Isvara born of their recognition. But all are devotees.

He gives each person what he/she wants to accomplish. With reference to those ignorant people who are not interested in mokṣa, He jahāti, as though abandons them by not giving mokṣa; whereas those devotees who are interested in it, leads them to their goal. So He is known as Jahnu.

245. Nārāyaṇaḥ

नारायण:

The ultimate goal of all beings.

As all the naras, jīvas, merge into the Lord during pralaya, He is their abode and hence, Nārāyaṇa. The name Nārāyaṇa is considered very sacred and comes in the aṣṭākṣara-mantra. Om Namo Nārāyaṇaya. This mantra like many other mantras, is sacred as it was discovered by a seer, a rsi, as a source of blessing. One invokes Bhagavan by this mantra, with one's salutations and surrender.

|| ॐ नमो नारायणाय ||

The jīva, a human being is called nara because na rīyate, he never dies. If the jīva knows himself as the limitless unborn ātmā, then he is timeless. If he does not know, then he continues in some

form or other until he knows. And so, he never perishes. That which is the ayana, the ultimate end of every nara is Nārāyaṇa. Lord Nārāyaṇa is the ultimate end of every jīva because He is you. You are Nārāyaṇa, the nara is Nārāyana.

Nara means the ātmā. Those that are born of, that is, the products of nara, such as ākāṣa, vāyu and so on, are called nāra. In the form of their cause, the Lord pervades all of them. Therefore, they are His ayana, abode as it were. Hence He is called Nārāyaṇa.
Śaṅkara, on the basis of few verses from the śruti, smṛti, purāṇa and Mahābhārata shows that the subtle elements are referred to as nāra and the Lord is their ayana.

246. Naraḥ

नरः

The one who leads.

According to Vyāsa, Paramātmā is known as Nara because He leads, directs the jīva to do karma and gain the results. Because He is imperishable, He is also Nara.

247. Asaṅkhyeyaḥ

असंख्येयः

The one in whom there is nothing to count.

Sankhya means count. Bhagavān is called Asaṅkhyeya, because He is the one who has no saṅkhyā, count. His glories cannot be counted. All that which constitutes His glory, such as names, forms, guṇās, are not a finite number; they are countless.

As nirguṇa-brahma, He has no name, form or guṇa that can be pointed out and counted and therefore, He is Asaṅkhyeya. Number, name, form or attribute is not applicable to Him. This is to be understood not imagined. The moment we try to imagine we try and visualise. All we can visualise is a form. And it has just been pointed out that he is the one in whom there is nothing to count. In some spiritual traditions, it is said that words are finite, then how can finite words point to the infinite? Although words are finite, because of the way they are used by traditional teachers, a finite word can reveal the infinite because a part of the meaning is retained and a part of the word meaning is given up. The moment one tries to objectify Bhagavān, we have made him finite, subject to limitation. We recognise that our world view is largely dependent on what we see and perceive. We recognise our dependence on perception and inference for verifying truth and shift to the shastra to discover the truth of Bhagavān.

248. Aprameyātmā

अप्रमेयात्मा

The one of immeasurable nature.

The entire jagat is the manifestation of Bhagavān. And hence, everything in the creation is the glory of Bhagavān and it is innumerable. If we take colours, the colours are manifold like red,

green, blue, violet and so on, with so many shades in between such as lavender, turquoise, mauve etc. Similarly, taste is also manifold as sweet, sour, bitter etc. So too, flavours, textures and sounds are innumerable. Name and form are the manifestations of the Lord and they are countless, but His ātmā or svarūpa, nature, is only one and it is aprameya.

The ātmā, nature, of Bhagavān is aprameya, not available for objectification. What can be objectified is prameya and what cannot be objectified is aprameya. His ātmā cannot be objectified and hence, He is Aprameyātmā.

When a person dies, in Indian languages, we generally say, 'May his Atma gain peace' (Uski atma ko shanti miley - Hindi). What is really meant by the word 'Atma'is the subtle body, that which survives death and goes onward, on its journey. The word 'Atma' has to be understood as revealed in the sastra, not the colloquial understanding that we might have. Atma is I. That I has to be discovered.

You don't have to become Atma. In fact, you cannot become Atma because you are Atma.

If Atma, I is totally unknown, there is no possibility of knowing it.
If Atma, I is totally known, there is no need to enquire into it.
Gita 2.18, refers to the Atma as aprameya, that which cannot be known as an object, as other than oneself.
That 'I am' is evident to me, known to me.
'What I am' is not clear to me.
And hence I take myself to be that, with which I am associated. Atma is partially known, known as the very subject to whom all objects including people, situations and things become evident. The sastra has the status of pramana, a means of knowledge not to reveal the Atma, but to remove the wrong notions I have about myself, the Atma. Atma is already self evident and it is this self evident Atma that is mistaken for the karta, doer, bhokta, enjoyer and jiva, this body-mind-sense-complex. This assumed status (not my facebook status) is seen as a superimposition on Atma.

The ātmā of Bhagavān being self-evident as the ātmā of oneself, need not be objectified, It can be understood only by an adhikārī, being taught by a teacher.

249. Viśiṣṭaḥ
विशिष्टः
The one who excels all.

The Lord is Viśiṣṭa, because He excels all, transcends all.

Any comparison is between similars. The potatoes in Nairobi are bigger than the ones in Phillipines. Person A is taller than B. Who can we compare Bhagavān to?

Some juxtaposition is possible between two dissimilar. The function of the heart and the function of the liver while different, belong to the same body. Who can we juxtapose Bhagavān with?

We cannot give an example for Bhagavān. This is not because there are no examples. When all that is here is Bhagavān, then what can we juxtapose him with or compare him to or illustrate him with?

Bhagavān is like Bhagavān, just as space is like space and the ocean is like the ocean.

Or, He is Viśiṣṭa, being endowed with ananta-kalyāna-guṇas, countless auspicious attributes.

250. Śiṣṭakṛt
शिष्टकृत्
i. The maker of the laws.
ii. The maker of protector of good people.

Śiṣṭa can mean laws or good people. Bhagavān is the maker of the laws. Making any law means drawing boundaries for everything. The ocean does not cross and swallow the land mass. Fire is there as a potential and it manifests only under certain conditions. The core of the earth is nothing but molten fire, lava; so much of heat is under the earth, but it is kept inside and comes out only under certain conditions. So, everything is controlled.

Water boils only at 100ºC. It is amazing that while some river surfaces may get frozen during winter, the ocean does not get frozen completely, because of the salt. The planets move in their own orbit and have been doing so for years and years. They do not change their course of movement. Thus, there are boundaries everywhere and we live within these boundaries. You make boundaries for yourself, your behavior towards others and also make boundaries for the behavior of others towards you. The moment some rebellious people read the word 'control' they don't like it. But really when you look at it, there is a boundary for all limited experiences, in terms of time, place and condition. Even the free spirited backpacker finds out that either money runs out in some time or the person gets bored being on the road or health requires attention or visa needs renewal.

Dharma has boundaries, as what is to be done and what is not to be done. Thus, Bhagavān makes laws and draws boundaries for the welfare of the world and therefore, is Śiṣṭakṛt. Just because Bhagavān draws boundaries, we need not extend the logic of the giver of punishment to Bhagavān. We have seen before that the laws of karma and its results as well as the understanding of dharma is given by Bhagavān who is not a sadist.

By making boundaries, He makes people dhārmika and cultured and hence is Śiṣṭakṛt.

251. Śuciḥ (also word 155)
शुचिः
The one who is pure.

Bhagavān is Śuci, because He purifies those who remember, praise and worship Him and is himself free from rāga- dveśa, puṇya –pāpa and so on.. This purification one gets as the karma-phala from Bhagavān. At the same time, He is the one who does not require to be purified, because He is ever pure.

Generally, when we clean something, it means that it was dirty before. Anything that is cleaned will again become dirty and has to be cleaned again. A typical teenager's room is a case in point. Though it is all-pervasive, the ātmā is always pure, that is, you are eternally pure. With insufficient understanding, there are a lot of spiritual teachers who say that Atma is impure and by doing good actions, you will become pure. This is wrong and it is worth asking them where in the sastra, is it mentioned so? The impurity, if at all, is at the level of the body-mind.

Body definitely needs to be clean otherwise very soon, one will have no friends. At the level of the mind, the only purity possible is the neutralisation of rāga-dvesas, binding desires and aversions. When a desire or an aversion becomes overwhelming, I the person am not in charge. I become the reaction which is usually one of anger, because more often than not my desires are not fulfilled. A person who just reacts impulsively or mechanically is really his/her reaction. The independent, thinking person is not there. Only the reaction is present. For a person who is reactive, anything can trigger off the person. It could be a raised eyebrow and the person may interpret it as this person is being disrespectful to me. How dare…etc etc…

On the other hand, for the one who has befriended one s mind, is familiar with the ways of the mind and can be kind to oneself, in time develops what we call antah-karana-shuddhi. A mind that is pure is together, alert, relaxed and is fully available for the teaching of brahmavidya. That is possible through adopting the lifestyle and attitude of karma yoga – actions done in line with dharma and a glad acceptance of the results of the actions as all the results come from none other than the Lord.

Understanding the ātmā purifies you, ultimately. How? The ātmā-svarūpa is ever pure, untainted by karma and hence punya-pāpa and the one who understands the svarūpa, is also ever pure. This is bathing in jñāna-gaṅgā. Gaṅgā is a devata, a symbol of knowledge, a great purifier. You are not dipping in the water, but you are invoking the grace of the Lord as Gaṅgā, the purifier. It is an attitude because everything is Īśvara.

252. Siddhārthaḥ

सिद्धार्थः

The one who obtains what He desires.

Whatever is desired, by a person is artha, like wealth and security. Other things desired are different types of pleasures in the form of experimenting with food, travelling to different places, listening to different kinds of music, engaging with different kinds of people and so on. Further what is desired is puṇya and the attempt at neutralizing the effects of wrong actions in life. Freedom from a sense of bondage, moksa is also desired by very few people who have objectively enquired into what is optimally possible to obtain through wealth, pleasure and reaching out actions as well as what is not possible to obtain.

A jīva seeks to accomplish these one by one from childhood to youth to middle age to old age, for he seeks them only because he does not have them. One who has accomplished all the puruṣārthas is a Siddhārtha. This is not easy for a jīva and it is possible only by the grace of the Lord. One who has gained the knowledge of the Lord and thereby attained only worthwhile

puruṣārtha of mokṣa is also said to be a siddhārtha. But even here, he seeks it because he does not know that he is already mukta, liberated. The seeker starts out the enquiry and when the enquiry has culminated into knowledge, the seeker is not there anymore. The knowledge is not about a book or some metaphysical theory. The discovery is that s/he was already muktah. The gain of jñāna is also through His grace. So, in the case of the jīva, the arthas are at first the means and then become the end, when accomplished.

Siddhartha, before he became the Buddha, left his palace despite his father's best attempts to shield him from the realities of life. On seeing an old man, a diseased person, a decaying corpse and an ascetic in different trips, he recognised that material wealth and the comforts of the palace could not prevent the inevitable misery of human life. There had to be a way out and he walked away to discover that, by becoming a sadhu. We are in a slightly different position than this, but we still find excuses to commit ourselves to discovering our own reality. They range from, 'I don't have any suffering in life, spiritual teachings are not for me. I will wait until retirement, 'Gurus are frauds, there is nobody one can trust these days', etc.

But, Bhagavān, being pūrṇa, all His desires are ever fulfilled. He does not have to achieve any of them. Even at the beginning of the creation, if he thinks of something. It is there. He is Siddhārtha, because His puruṣārthas are already accomplished. In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, 'nānavāptaṃ avāptavyam triṣu lokeṣu kiñcana–in all the three worlds there is nothing to be achieved by me, being unachieved' (3.22).

253. Siddhasaṅkalpaḥ

सिद्धसंकल्प:

The one whose intentions are fulfilled.

If the Lord has a saṅkalpa, an intention, an idea, that very saṅkalpa is already siddha, accomplished–like even in our dream we think of a mountain and the mountain is there. Not only the mountain, the space that accommodates it, the air that surrounds it and whatever is on the surface of the mountain is there, in that very instant. There is no time gap between the thought of the mountain and the arrival of the mountain. The very thought is the mountain. Luckily for us, in our waking state whatever we think of, does not always come true. Otherwise, it would be a problem. Our thinking is not always clear and objective. There are times that our wishes emerge from a reactive mind, not a proactive mind. Wishes for somebody to be hurt, destroyed, punished just because they hurt us.

Every successful venture is first conceived of in the mind and then implemented with the help of many able people, adequate resources, optimizing supportive factors and reducing constraining factors. A project of building additional public toilets in a village has to take into account all of the above as much as a teenager studying for his/her exams. There is a gap in the sankalpa, intention of the human being and the achievement of the sankalpa. The gap is in the form of time, effort, resources and people.

But for Bhagavān, all His saṅkalpas come true and therefore He is Siddhasaṅkalpa. The Chāndogyopaniṣad speaks of Him as satyasaṅkalpa (8.1.5).

254. Siddhidaḥ

सिद्धिदः

The one who gives success.

Imaginary conversation between a self made successful person (SMP) and Bhagavan:
SMP (standing on his yacht after celebrations of his 50th birthday, gazing into a starlit night) and thinking aloud: What do I not have? I have everything that money can buy. I have a beautiful wife, children, great homes in different parts of the world and of course my Fortune 500 companies. I have my mother too (smiles, as he recalls a vintage Hindi film dialogue) It is all because of my intelligence and hard work. Everybody is given intelligence and people around. But I made the most of it and have only myself to thank. Despite detractors, I have always risen.

Bhagavan: It 's wonderful that you made the most of what you have. Many people in the world make excuses for their greatness and don't claim it. But you on the other hand have claimed it and I am happy for you. Just wondering who endowed you with that intelligence? Wonder who ensured you had teachers and professors even in the Ivy League college from whom you learnt? Wonder who gave you the capacity to work hard, the capacities to speak, listen, reason, debate and argue, the capacities to feel, emote, express, the capacities to sing, dance, walk and run, the capacities of the body to breathe, eat, smell, taste, touch and see? Wonder who endowed you with the right people and the right resources all at the right time?

Isn't success just what you consider a positive result in your undertakings? Just as you give your senior management team, their remuneration and perks based on their work performance, who gives you the results in keeping with your karma? The success that you claim is solely yours, is it really yours? Think about it."

The self made person started to think about what he had heard, as the stars shone brightly and the yacht bobbed gently into the night.

For any pursuit, particularly pursuit of self knowledge, three kinds of grace are required:
Īśvara kṛpa: The grace of Īśvara is required to increase the supportive factors and reduce the restraining factors in the pursuit such as situations to pursue Vedanta classes or courses, sufficient finances such that it does not stand in the way of basic survival needs etc. What can I do to earn Īśvara 's grace to recognise my life 's priorities ? Can I see myself as blessed with Īśvara kṛpa in my life or is my grievance list against Īśvara a really endless one?

Śāstra kṛpa/Guru kṛpa: Recognising the nature of the basic human problem and the uniqueness of the sastra as the only means of knowledge to reveal my own reality is truly grace. Finding a live guru who brings the śāstra alive is added grace. Do I have the humility to discover the student in me as only that person can discover a guru? Do I make the effort to clarify my doubts, vagueness or just leave it to chance, or procrastinate it to another day? Sometimes, when the guru challenges a strongly held idea of mine, do I dismiss the guru or give the guru, benefit of doubt and atleast examine my notions? Īśvara kṛpa may be there for me but śāstra kṛpa in me discovering it, also needs to be there to discover oneness.

Atma kṛpa: Śri Kṛṣṇa speaks about oneself being one's best friend and also being one's worst enemy. Īśvara kṛpa and śāstra kṛpa may be there for me but am I my best friend or am I my worst critic? Can I make the most of the opportunities that come my way in understanding myself ? Or should I escape these? How can I bless myself?

May we be continue to be blessed with Īśvara kṛpa, Śāstra kṛpa and Atma kṛpa for the wisdom of the Gita to flow through us as yoga śāstra and brahmavidya. Prayers and wishes on this auspicious occasion of Gita Jayanti.

255. Siddhisādhanaḥ

सिद्धिसाधनः

The one who facilitates achievements.

For achieving any end, all the manifest means that are there is Parameśvara. Again, He is the one who facilitates the siddhi, the achievement, by removing the obstacles. The means is Parameśvara and the end is also Parameśvara. Therefore, He is Siddhisādhana.

256. Vṛṣāhī

वृषाही

The one who shines as dharma.

Puṇya is also called vṛṣa because it rains all the good things, because of which one becomes happy. We experience the effects of puṇya. The clouds are always a blessing, because they bless us with rain. The puṇya, which is a result of good actions, is like the clouds, because it gives good, comfortable and happy situations. Supportive and encouraging parents, teachers, talented and encouraging group of friends, loving and caring partner, healthy children, children getting into a an acclaimed academic set up, be it school or university, the capacity to have a receptive, open, learning mind and recognise blessings etc are all examples of some effects of puṇya. We don't mean that the above are static entities. For instance, 'loving and caring partner' means more or less, loving and caring. It is difficult but not impossible for human beings to be consistent in their behavior.

Vṛṣa means punya, dharma. Actions in keeping with dharma result in puṇya and therefore, puṇya is also referred to as dharma. Dharma is not a lofty concept, or just a book or sitting in some library or an institution. Dharma is alive in each and every person and the one who upholds dharma is a dharmi. Demonstration of loyalty and commitment in a marriage is dharma. Caring actions for the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual development of one's children is dharma. Taking care of one's aging parents or making alternative arrangements for the same is dharma. Performing your job responsibilities at work or seeking clarity in the same and giving it your best shot is dharma.

Puṇya is the means for sukha, in that, it can give us the situations and atmosphere which can make us happy. But in spite of comfortable situations, people are capable of making themselves unhappy. This is because, that is how they are. You give them anything, they can mess it up and make it unhappy. That is why puṇya is said to be a means for gaining situations conducive for

happiness and not a sukha-sādhana, not a direct means for happiness. Advances in technology have truly liberated women more than movements. The gadgets available from washing machines to mixers to microwave ovens to dishwashers, vaccum cleaners etc have cut down the time for household chores. That is a form of punya. So time being available is great punya but if the woman is not clear about what to do with her time and spends her valuable time endlessly on watching TV or aimlessly on facebook, then she is not making the most of her punya.

So, dharma through puṇya is considered to be like the clouds which is a means for sukha and hence, vṛṣa. That vṛṣa is like aha, a bright day. He shines bright as dharma and hence, He is Vṛṣāhī, capable of blessing us with plenty of sukha-sādhana. If one invokes him as Vṛṣāhī, one can have good and happy days.

He is also known as Vṛṣāhī, being the Lord of a twelve-day yajña known as vṛṣāha.

257. Vṛṣabhaḥ
वृषभ:
The one who showers desires.

Since He showers all the desired objects on His devotees, He is called Vṛṣabha.
When I need help, I seek help from any person I can. This could be for certain desired objects, situations conducive conditions for my pursuits etc. When the helplessness is in terms of my incapacity to let go of my past or to let the future happen without my being apprehensive, then a person like myself cannot help me.

All of our problems are because we refuse to accept facts and very often we worry about things we cannot change. We do not know what can be changed and what cannot be. If we knew that, we could spare our efforts and divert our energy. Our efforts can gain a direction.

I have to go to the source from where such help is possible. That source is the Lord whom I can invoke through prayer.

As people look back on this year and look forward to the new year while making their wish list, we invoke the grace of Vṛṣabhaḥ, the one who showers all our desires. But, where is He available, to ask? Because He is Viṣṇu, all pervasive, you can ask from wherever you are.

258. Viṣṇuḥ (also words 2, 657)
विष्णु:
The one who is all pervasive.

Any creation requires two causes: material cause and an intelligent cause – the material and the maker. The creation or 'putting together' maybe a gourmet meal, a smart city or the jagat, the world. The jagat requires the knowledge to make it as well as the material for the same. The question is, where is the material? There is no material that is separate from Īśvara. If the material were to be separate from Īśvara there should be space. The follow up question then is

who created the material and who created the separating space? The Vedas are very clear. The Taittiriya Upanisad defines Īśvara as – That from which all these have come, that by which all these exist and unto which all these are resolved, that is Īśvara. The material is Isvara and the space (which is also a manifestation, subtlest as it is) also is Isvara. Manifestation means it is not separate from the material.

In one's dream, all the animate as well as inanimate objects – water, mountains, trees, stones, animals and people – all of them without exception are pervaded by the intelligence of the dreamer. The material for the dream has also come from the dreamer and not from outside himself. As the material cause and the intelligent cause the Lord pervades everything.

Try and think of one object, one situation, one person, one emotion which Īśvara does not pervade. Try and think of one object, one situation, one person, one emotion which is outside Īśvara.

The Lord is Viṣṇu, because He strides through all the worlds, that is, He is all pervasive.

259. Vṛṣaparvā

वृषपर्वा

The giver of the steps of dharma, to reach Him.

An earlier nāma pointed out that He is the giver of the sukha-sādhana, the means for gaining happiness. The very source of happiness is Lord Viṣṇu and that is called viṣṇu-pada. Having reached it, there is no losing it; there is no return from it. Hence, it is called paraṃdhāma.

To reach Viṣṇu is to become Viṣṇu. The Lord, being all pervasive and limitless, cannot be separate from you. Therefore, you can ask Him, 'give me the knowledge of Viṣṇu.' Even for this, puṇya is required. Reaching that paraṃdhāma is only by the understanding, that 'I am Viṣṇu' and the sādhana, the main means required for the understanding, is teaching. If there is teaching, and still knowledge does not take place, then it means that more puṇya is required.

Puṇya can be gained in two ways. Prayers and rituals produce puṇya and reaching out actions also produce puṇya. These are called iṣṭa and pūrta karmas respectively. There is no other way to gain puṇya. Rituals are kāyika-karma; they can be done by you or you can get them done by someone else. Recitation of various mantras and stotras as prayers is vācika-karma and meditation is mānasa-karma. This is the three-fold karma by which puṇya is gained.

Again, to gain the knowledge of Viṣṇu one needs to do śravaṇa of the śāstra, followed by manana and nididhyāsana. Sopāna means a ladder and parva means a step. So the Lord is Vṛṣaparvā, because as the sopāna-parva, the steps of the ladder. He has given us vṛṣa, that is, dharma, the various means of gaining puṇya; and He has again given vṛṣa, that is, the dharma of śravaṇa and so on, as the further steps to reach the paraṃdhāma.

260. Vṛṣodaraḥ

वृषोदरः

The one who rains beings from His womb.

The Lord has udara, a big stomach which varṣati–as though rains, produces all the prajās, beings from it. Hence, He is called Vṛṣodaraḥ. He is the source of all the jīvas.

A zen master had a horse in his stable. The neighbouring family looking after their own horses died and so the master had to also start looking after the mare, the she-horse. His son, said 'It is our bad luck, father as we barely have enough to eat,'. The father just said, "Good luck, bad luck, who knows?" and got back to his work. In a few years time, the son was very happy that they could sell some horses as the horses had started breeding. And he wanted his father to acknowledge their good luck. But his father again said, 'Good luck, bad luck, who knows?." In training some of the horses, the son fractures a leg and is lamenting his bad luck. Surely his father must know now, that it is all his bad luck, the Father again says, 'Good luck, bad luck, who knows?.'In a few days, there is a drive to enroll young male members of each family into the army but the son is not able and fit enough to join and secretly he thinks. 'It is my good luck, that I got a fracture as I cannot join, in this mandatory drive for the army enrollment.' As if reading his mind, the master again says. 'Good luck, bad luck, who knows?

Can we categorically say, which is punya and papa, good luck and bad luck? Not really. All we can do is really focus on our priorities and goals and seeks the grace to be able to have a fulfilling life. The Lord is not showering grace whimsically. He is in the form of potential grace and we have to tap it by our action.

The Lord is the potential of puṇya and you have to tap it to get the grace. Grace is called puṇya and you have to earn the grace because the Lord is impartial. The Lord is dharma, He is law. To earn the grace, you have to do karmas in keeping with dharma. Why do you call it anugraha or grace? Why is it not just called puṇya? Because puṇya is a definite result of one action or a series of actions. Grace is intangible and we do not know which karma brought this blessing or grace for us.

Grace is puṇya. Which particular karma was done and when to earn this, we do not know; but, we can recognize the grace. Also which particular punya fructified in this lifetime to give us a human birth, we don't know and perhaps will never know. Which papa fructified for us to have a human birth, also we will never know and honestly, it does not matter.

So the Lord, who has vṛṣa in His udara, puṇya in His stomach in a potential form, is Vṛṣodara and his grace is tapped by our prayers.

261. Vardhanaḥ

वर्धन:

The one who nourishes or multiplies.

He nourishes our health and hence He is Vardhana. The right level of pressure in the blood vessels despite gravity, the capacity of the body to fight infection itself through the presence of white blood corpuscles, the capacity of the blood to carry oxygen to the various parts of the body

and enliven every cell, the capacity to carry all assimilated nutrients (from the food we eat) to all the cells speaks of the intelligence of Īśvara.

The air, composition of which is just right to keep all life forms going, the weather patterns, the presence of fresh water despite large parts of the globe being oceans, the presence of flora and fauna, and within it, the plants that nourish us with vital minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins and fats – all of it nourish. Anything that nourishes us is the Lord alone.

Ennobling thoughts and emotions of justice, patriotism, hope, compassion, joy and love keep us going. Recent research studies suggest that loneliness and depression are proving to be bigger killers than diseases in the world. Īśvara is also in the form of the people in our lives who nurture and care for us whereby loneliness and depression are kept at bay. People who have pets receive a lot of nurturing and emotional nourishment and a great neutralisation of stress. We are surrounded by so much nourishment and strength through people, objects and situations but sometimes we don't see it. That's ok. We need to just be aware of it and start to see what IS.

He accepts whatever is offered with sincere devotion, be it a leaf, flower, fruit or water. He makes it grow, multiplies it and returns it as His grace.

262. Vardhamānaḥ

वर्धमान:

The one who is growing in the form of the universe.

Everything changes. New things are born, new seconds and a new year will come in the next few days. New planets and new stars are born all the time and therefore, the universe is expanding continuously. Recent scientific discoveries also vouch for the expanding universe. Irrespective of the many discoveries of modern science, the understanding that it is all Bhagavan's manifestation does not change. In fact, newer discoveries might just add to our wonder of the many manifestations.

Since it is Īśvara who is in the form of this universe, it is as though He is always growing, expanding with the expansion and growth of the universe. Hence, He is Vardhamāna. The whole universe is enlivened by Him.

263. Viviktaḥ

विविक्त:

The one who is distinct.

If the Lord is Vardhamāna, growing in the form of the universe, is He not undergoing changes along with it? Then would He not become anitya?

Gold is transformed into different ornaments – necklace, choker, bangles, earrings, amulets etc. With reference to the form, it acquires a name and a meaning. According to the form, the function differs. The earring will be worn on the ear, even if it is, as large as a bangle. Still, all the ornaments derive their existence from something that is distinct than the form. That is gold.

In gold ornaments, a small percentage of other metals are mixed to make sturdy ornaments. What about the jagat, the universe?

Bhagavān is Vivikta, distinct and completely independent of the changing universe and does not undergo any change. He is essentially nitya. He is the unchanging adhiṣṭhāna, the very basis of all changes and completely independent of the changing world. He does not undergo any change. This is the vision.

It is the kind of vision that you have when you dart across the room, to touch a wooden object and say 'touch wood', when something auspicious is stated. There are many pieces of furniture in the room – the wooden cabinet, the teak dining table, the ornately carved corner table, the upright chairs. You have no confusion. You just reach out for the wood because that is distinct in your vision, irrespective of the different names and forms.

264. Śrutisāgaraḥ
श्रुतिसागरः
The ocean of śrutis.

Śruti, the Vedas is the only means of knowledge to understand nondual Brahman - I am the limitless reality I seek. Science is primarily based on three other means of knowledge – perception, inference and two step inference. The other two means of knowledge, to understand our world, comparison and cognition of absence also do not reveal the absolute truth as revealed in the Vedas. We need to understand that the knowledge given by any means of knowledge is unique and cannot be replaced by another. For instance, my eyes tell me that the leaves of the tree are green in color. The knowledge given by my eyes is unique to the eyes. I could refine my hearing with audio visual gadgets but irrespective of how sharp my hearing is, my ears can never tell me the color of the leaves. Ears can only give me knowledge in the sphere of sound. It does not make our sensory perception any inferior or superior. An X-ray is able to give information that direct perception cannot or we would have to cut open the body to see what is happening. A certain inference is made on the basis of the X ray. The knowledge that inference can give me is unique to it. The five means of knowledge are enough for me to deal with the world or empirical reality, in other words.

The knowledge given by Śruti does not contradict the knowledge given by any other means of knowledge. It is not opposed to reason or logic. Śruti is talking about my absolute reality, that reality which cannot be negated at any time, place or condition. Our reverence for the Śruti comes from the fact that it is directly revealed knowledge by Bhagavān about oneself and beneficial for all human pursuits – artha, kāma, dharma and mokśa.

All rivers flow towards the ocean as their end and merge in it. So too, all the rivers of the śrutis, the Vedas, flow towards the sāgara, the ocean of the Lord. They have Him as their tātparya, subject matter, and exhaust themselves in revealing Him. 'Sarve vedāḥ yat padam āmananti'(Ka.Up.1.2.15). Hence, He is Śrutisāgara. He is Śrutisāgara, also because the śrutis, having come from Him, are placed back in Him at pralaya, as even the rivers that come from the ocean go back to the ocean.

With reference to the individual, all words and sounds constantly rise and resolve back into the consciousness. This is the ādhyātmika aspect, which is, viewed All the words and sounds including those of the śruti resolve, as waves do, in one waveless ocean of consciousness and hence, He is called Śrutisāgara.

265. Subhujaḥ

सुभुजः

The one with mighty and unruffled arms.

It is said that the 'future is in your hands'. Bhagavan has given us different hands. How we use them is upto us. These are some of the several quotes highlighting the importance of hands as a metaphor for action in our lives.

Although simplistically put, every action does require Head, Heart and Hands meaning emotion, thinking and action. We tend to compensate one by the other but it does not work. When a situation requires action, we procrastinate with our justifications. When a situation requires us to respond empathetically, we escape the situation. When a situation requires us to look at facts, we react and then regret later. It is no surprise that this word comes to us a gentle reminder to make the most of the new year 2016 by integrating all three – Head, Heart and Hands.

When someone works hard like a mechanic, his hands are rough and hard. This shows that he is a hard-worker. Since Bhagavān is running the entire show of this jagat, His hands should then be very rough. But it is not so. His bhujas, arma, are śobhana, very majestic and mighty, and at the same time very soft like the hands of a baby, because He does not do anything. He is almighty, to run the whole show.

When Bhagavān has to uphold and sustain the entire jagat He must have many hands, that is, He must have lots of people. In fact, He does not require hands. His own hands are enough since He is Subhuja. He is almighty and has unruffled hands. He does not do anything, but at the same time is able to run the whole show.

For visualization, the Lord is depicted as having majestic and handsome arms. A famous novelist said, 'When you take your life in your hands, what happens? A terrible thing. No one to blame.'

266. Durdharaḥ (also word 715)

दुर्धरः

The one who cannot be held easily.

Īśvara is not an object and hence cannot be held. All objects are pervaded by the physical, chemical, mechanical laws and principles of Īśvara.

Nor is Īśvara a condition that can be mastered. All conditions are pervaded by Īśvara.

Maybe Īśvara is a person. Īśvara can't be just a person as then Īśvara becomes limited. It is only with difficulty that Īśvara can be held and so He is Durdhara. Any attempt to objectify or limit Īśvara does not help. He cannot be easily held in the heart by any mumukṣu, at the time of

meditation. If He is to be visualized in a form, which part of Him can you hold? Again if it is any one part that you try to hold, the mind wanders away. At any given time there is only one thought. So, the only way of holding Him is to understand that the thought itself if Īśvara. Wherever the mind goes, it is Īśvara. Then where is the struggle with the mind? There is no other way of holding Īśvara.

The elements such as the earth and so on, join together to hold the world and they in turn are held by Īśvara. He cannot be held by anyone or anything and therefore, He is Durdhara.

267. Vāgmī

वाग्मी

The one from whom the words of the Veda have come.

Vāgmī is one who has the capacity to communicate well through words.

The circle of communication is complete when,
Intention (of speaker)= Expression (of speaker)= Understanding (of listener)

Assuming a person has fluency even in one language, if the person has clarity of thought then the person is clear in expression. Alignment between thought and word leads to clarity. One may be clear in one's expression but if it does not translate into understanding of the listener, then communication has not taken place. Most husbands and wives are familiar with the phrase, 'Did n't I tell you?', this phrase is hurled especially at the right time when one of them has made a mistake in a decision or forgotten something. The partner surely expressed himself/herself correctly but the other one was too distracted or dismissive and just shut the other person out mentally and was not listening. This is communication in everyday life! On the other hand, when we feel and know we are understood, what has really happened is our intentions through our thoughts, emotions, motivations etc were expressed with some clarity and the other person listened and understood. Even to analyse or offer an opinion, this understanding is a minimum.

Bhagavān is called Vāgmī, because He has the great capacity to communicate which cannot be easily communicated and which cannot be understood through other pramanas, means of knowledge. The Vedas are not authored by any one as they are directly revealed to us through Bhagavān. He communicates Himself, reveals Himself as Paraṃ brahma through the words. Brahman is communicated not by experience, because all kinds of experiences are already there and whatever is experienced is Brahman.

Limited words have no access to Brahman but still it is to be revealed through words alone. Brahman is revealed as the implied meaning of the words and by this, what cannot be achieved by words, is achieved by words because they are handled in a unique way. Even though our senses and other pramanas have no access to Brahman, it is revealed through the śabda-pramāṇa which is the Veda. That is how the impossible is achieved. It is a method; the Upanisad itself gives the method and the teaching tradition as to how it has to be understood and taught. The Upanisad says, Brahman is the mind of the mind, the ear of the ear and so on; paradoxes are used to reveal the vastu by words. Because this brahmamayī, vedamayī vak–words in the form of the Veda–comes from Him, He is Vāgmī.

268. Mahendraḥ

महेन्द्रः

The one who is the Lord of the Lords.

Though the word Indra generally refers to the lord of the devas, it means in general Īśvara, the lord. Each loka, sphere of experience has an Indra, a lord, like Brahmāji is the lord of Brahmaloka, Yama is the lord of Yamaloka and so on.

But Lord Viṣṇu is Mahān Indra, the great Lord, who is the Lord of all Lords and Lorded over by none, who has power in absolute measure. He is limitless. Hence, He is Mahendra.

If Bhagavān was sitting in a corner somewhere in some galaxy, I have nothing to do with him nor do I care about his existence. But this Bhagavān who is limitless, pervades my body and mind in the form of the intelligence of the way the body and mind work. Knowing this, the way I relate to Bhagavān changes – from indifference to reverence, from alienation to connectedness, from low self esteem to appreciation of oneself and so much more. With reference to the mind-body, I am a part of the creation. With reference to the consciousness that enlivens the mind-body and that which is the basis of Lord Viṣṇu, there is only one, without a second.

269. Vasudaḥ

वसुदः

The giver of wealth.

He is the giver of all forms of vasu, wealth, as karma-phala. He is the giver of the fruits of action and this is one of the important aspects of Īśvara. The ahaṅkāra exists only when you say 'I have failed' or 'I am a failure.' In all these conclusions, there is an assumption, that I am the author of the result of action. Author means I am solely responsible. Since I am the author, I am supposed to produce the result; but I did not produce the result and therefore, I am a failure. Therefore, constantly and consistently, we have to remind ourselves, that we are not the authors of the results of action. We are only authors of the action and since we have the free will, we have a choice over our actions. We are only responsible for our action, the results are taken care of by Īśvara.

'I am a failure' is a destructive attitude and that is because, I take myself to be the author of the results of action. This is ignorance and arrogance and śāstra tries to remove it. Every arrogance is born of ignorance. I am only a contributor to the results not the controller. Īśvara has the status of being the giver of the results of action, taking into account, not only current actions but also the past actions. So He is the one who gives wealth, power, security, status and so on, as the karma-phala and therefore, He is Vasuda.

270. Vasuḥ (also words 104, 696)

वसुः

The one who is all forms of wealth.

Bhagavān is the one who is in the form of all vasu, all forms of wealth and hence Lakṣmī is also Nārāyaṇa. So what is given is wealth and it is given as the karma-phala by Īśvara and that is also Īśvara, Lord Nārāyaṇa. Somebody was complaining to me the other day, "Life is so uncertain. Given the inflation and cost of living, the money I am making is just not enough. I am always thinking about how to make more money. There is no time for puja or prayers or meditation." I said to him, " Wealth is Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa is very much there. Wherever your mind goes, and looks like it keeps going to Lakṣmī, Bhagavān is very much there. Don't think of Bhagavan as other than wealth. Bhagavān is in the form of wealth. If your wealth is also contributing in employment for others, some giving to the needy in your family, community, then that is your puja. " Your whole life can be a puja without you knowing the shodasha upachar, 16 step puja if you offer your actions to Bhagavān with commitment and sincerity and seek his grace for what you need.

All wealth that is there is the jagat, is Vasu, Īśvara. The Lord is not only in the form of wealth of the individual, but the entire wealth that obtains anywhere, is Lord Nārāyaṇa and therefore, He is Vasu.

The word vasu can also be derived from the verbal root 'vas' which has the meaning of covering and dwelling. Or He is Vasu because He covers Himself, as though, by māyā. We have to say 'as though' because māyā does not cover Him but it only covers our vision.
Air is known as vasu because it has a special place in the antariksa, a residence in the interspace. And it is the Lord alone who is in the form of air and hence, He is Vasu. The Kaṭhopaniṣad talks of Brahman as, 'vasuḥ antarikṣasat' (2.2.2).

271. Naikarūpaḥ
नैकरुपः
The one who has many forms.

Many people say that they are against rituals. They say it because they don't understand rituals. It is quite alright for a person to say I understand rituals and I choose to not practise it. But to dismiss and criticise rituals because one does not understand it is like saying I cannot stand Maths because I don't understand it. A ritual is a set of activities which could involve gestures, words, and objects, performed in a particular place, and performed according to set sequence. To relate to each other, which are different types of forms we need rituals. All human societies have rituals as an important feature of everyday life.

Graduation ceremony is a ritual. The way marriages and funerals are performed are rituals. Greetings to one other in different languages and with gestures is a ritual. Taking an oath or a vow is a ritual. Celebrating the 18th or the 21 st birthday is a ritual. Proposing an engagement through an engagement ring is a ritual. Receiving heads of state in any country follows a certain specific protocol. Any activity that has a set sequence and has a certain commonness to it is a ritual. Of course, relating to Bhagavan through a puja also has a certain protocol to it and goes in the name of a ritual.

We relate to each other through different form, different activities and performing certain gestures. Even though Bhagavān is essentially one, He has many forms. As the material cause of

this universe, all forms are His forms alone. Hence Bhagavān can be invoked as the earth for bhumī puja, as Ganga and other sacred rivers even if one is having a bath in a decrepit bathroom from a bucket of water (in India), as Gaṇapati in the turmeric pod, as Kailas mountain, as Vayū, the wind, through Agni in all fire ritual offerings. Every morning in India, thousands of people look upwards towards the Sun, invoking Bhagavān. When that is so, how can eka-rupa, any one form, be said to be His form?

He is in the form of time and hence He brings about changes. Again, any one form is really many, since it is all put together. So being in various forms, He has 'as though' become many. So, He is Naikarūpa. And hence the forms through which one relates to Bhagavān can be so many, through recognition, prayer, conversation, kirtanam, offerings of different kinds, listening to the sastra etc.

272. Brhadrupah

बृहद्रूपः

The one whose form is big.

Amongst its clan a mosquito can be called big, the Himalayas mountain amongst all the mountains of the world, is the biggest. Here, 'big' is being used as an adjective to qualify the noun. Most of you would have seen the picture of the milky way, where earth appears as just a dot. The magnitude of the whole brahmāṇḍa, the entire cosmos, its magnitude is mind-boggling. Being in the form of the total huge expanding cosmos, He is called Brhadrūpa. He is the one who is limitlessly big and He is called Brahman.

In His avataras like the Varāha, Matsya, Kūrma, He is said to have carried the earth and in the Vāmana-avatāra, He measured the three worlds with His feet. In all these, His form was unimaginably big and hence, He is Bṛhadrūpa.

273. Śipiviṣṭaḥ

शिपिविष्टः

The one who has entered into the rays of the sun.

The Lord is called Śipiviṣṭa because He has entered the rays of the sun. The word śipi means the ray of the sun. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'tapāmyaham ahaṃ varṣaṃ nigṛhṇāmyutsṛjāmi ca–I am the one who as (rays of) the sun scorch and evaporate the water and I am the one who holds back the waters and again pours them as rain' (9.19). When the earth gets parched water vaporizes. As the one who heats up the earth, I release the rain as the law governing the rain. It is a continuous cycle.

Again, the rays of the sun are important for nourishing and energizing the earth and providing the plants with energy. Bhagavān says, 'gāmāviśya ca bhūtāni dhārayāmyaham ojasā –as the rays of the sun, I enter into the earth and support all life with energy' (BG.15.13). Even Lord Śiva is praised with this name in the Srīrudram.

We find that everything in nature functions in the form of give and take; which means everything is a cyclic process. That means nothing in the creation, whether it is a plant or animal or inert thing, nothing in the creation keeps anything with itself; it receives and immediately it gives. It is a constant flow of receiving and giving; the rivers get water from the mountains and they give to the ocean. Ocean receives the water, and during summer, the water from the different water bodies evaporates. The clouds do not keep the water for themselves, 'saving for a rainy day'; in the form of rains, it gives to the mountains; the mountains again give to the river. This is a beautiful water-cycle; And this is just once cycle of the innumerable cycles of creation. It is possible because of give and take. Otherwise there will be stagnation and no growth. The one who makes this give and take possible is Śipiviṣṭa.

Since I am an integrated part of the creation, I think of how I can maintain the cyclic patterns. What I receive, I need to return to the creation in some way or the other. Only then, I will be maintaining cyclical patterns and harmony.

274. Prakāśanaḥ

प्रकाशनः

The one who illumines everything.

Since He has the capacity to illumine everything, He is called Prakāśana. He is the jyotirjyoti– the light of all lights.

All objects have to reflect light for the eyes to see. In the form of the sun, moon, stars and fire, He alone lights up everything that needs to be lighted up, so that the eyes can see.

Civilisations have been built because the world is illuminated. In the physical light of the sun, we recognise distinctness of objects, things and people. Otherwise it would just be a blanket of darkness. It is true that artificial lighting prolongs our day. People work longer hours. There are day and night cricket matches. TV can be watched late into the light and the web can be surfed at all odd hours. Still there are many activities that come to a halt as the 'sun sets' and its entire illumination is not available until the next day. Trekking in the hills stops in the evening and in exceptional cases, there is trekking during the night. While this is merely the physical light but that also is nothing but Bhagavan.

275. Ojastejodyutidharaḥ

ओजस्तेजोद्युतिधरः

The one who sustains the shine of health, knowledge and valour.

Ojas is prāṇa-bala, the strength of prana. When you see a healthy person, there is a certain look, a shine and that is ojas and this is a strength born of good functioning of the prāṇa, the physiological system. It has nothing to do with the colour of the person. This is not the shine that is necessarily born of going to a salon. It has to do with the sparkling health of the person.
Tejas refers to qualities like valour, courage, confidence and so on. We have seen earlier that courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is doing what needs to be done inspite of fear. The young father who takes his baby in his hands for the first time is afraid of hurting the new born baby. He still does it. The young professional is apprehensive before his job performance

appraisal. He/she still goes through it. The married son is afraid of confronting his mother about how she is treating his wife, the daughter-in-law. He still confronts her. All of us are afraid of something or the other. Tejas or qualities such as courage, confidence exude a vigour, an energetic look in the person and so on, as against the look of a person who is dull, ever complaining and does not have these qualities. These qualities are not magical but in everyone and subject to cultivating when one focuses on 'the right thing' to do in a situation which is in line with dharma..

Dyuti is the brightness that radiates from a person because of being intelligent and learned. Since Bhagavān has all these, He is called Ojastejodyutidhara. He is the one who sustains all these in whoever has them.

All these belong to Bhagavān and not to the individual. It is the glory of Bhagavān. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'balaṃ balavatāṃ cāham–I am the strength in the strong; tejas-tejasvināmaham–the brilliance in the brilliant'(7.11,10). Therefore, the recognition that the ojas, tejas and dyuti that one enjoys, is given by Bhagavan, will help to keep us humble and help to keep our dear triplets 'I, me and mine' in check.

276. Prakāśātmā

प्रकाशात्मा

The one who is self-evident

The Lord is Prakāśātmā because His nature is prakāśā, effulgent. He is svayaṃ-prakāśa, self-evident. The Upaniṣads describe His effulgence in this way, 'there neither the sun nor the moon nor the stars shine; nor these lightnings. How can this little light shine? Everything shines after Him, who is self-effulgent; because of His effulgence, everything is lighted.'

The sun, moon, stars, lightning, fire and other sources of light, all of them shine because our eyes have light. This is not physical light. If the eyes are closed, then, where is the sun-light? All lights are gone. So it is the eyes that have to light up the sun, moon, stars etc. and everything that shines in the reflected light of all these sources of light. Therefore, the light in my eyes lights up everything.

The light in my ears lights up sounds. The light behind the other senses, lights up their respective objects like smell, taste and touch. What lights up the sense organs? It is the mind that is behind the sense organs and so, maybe the mind is that light! No, because the mind itself is lighted up. Every thought is lighted by one light and that light is the light is all lights and it lights up everything. It is the antarjyoti. With that light can we light up that light, because of which the mind, senses and all other sources of light and all objects shine?

In the South Indian temples, the garbhagrha, the main sanctum, is always kept dark–as even there is no light in the womb. The Lord is there. But to see Him a camphor light is waved, chanting this mantra. When He is the light of all lights, how are we going to light up with this small camphor light? In fact, the light is not to light up the Lord, but it is to light up our ignorance, our incapacity to see. Our ignorance alone is taken care of. To eliminate our inadequate and wrong

knowledge, we require the light of the śāstra. So the svarūpa of the Lord is one of prakāśa, the light of consciousness, which is the truth of everything.

277. Pratāpanah

प्रतापनः

The energizer.

He is Pratāpana, the one who energizes the universe. The sun, fire, stars and other luminaries, all of them are but His manifestations, His vibhūtis, glories. In a day's time, we will be celebrating Makar Sankranti, festival of harvest and offering our puja to Surya devata. This is the beauty of our culture. We are krtajnah – krtam janati iti. We remember what is done for us and we cannot but be grateful.

Science shows that the universe has a certain temperature which is important for the mutable forces to function. The forces like the gravitational force and the electro-magnetic force are considered strong, and the weak forces are called the mutable forces. They were all non-functional in the unmanifest state. Then when the temperature cooled down, the strong force started creating the first basic particles, then the electro-magnetic force took care of all the clusters and the gravitational force took care of them. All these forces started working. The temperature should be maintained. If it is reduced further, then there will be no life. Only if the temperature is maintained, the life on this earth is possible. Or else, life will collapse. The stars are there for maintaining the temperature. Nothing is redundant in the creation, because everything is Īśvara. So, the Lord who maintains the heat and temperature in the form of the sun, stars and such others, is Pratāpana.

278. Ṛddhaḥ (also word 351)

ऋद्धः

The one who is prosperous.

The common understanding of wealth is money, cross-culturally. When we explore all the factors that go into the concept of money, it is associated with 'buying' power and a 'freedom' to do what one wants to do. We further look at all the sources of power (which is the capacity to do) and recognise that making money comes from a certain knowledge, skill or expertise in a specific area. People who have lost their wealth, property in different calamities are able to again make money on the strength of their hard work, knowledge and punya. On the other hand, people who are exclusively money centred can never make enough money as they are too insecure and afraid of risks and compromise their hobbies, their family time, health as all these are considered distractions to making money. The world's richest billionaires in their later lives initiate philanthropy funds as they want to leave a legacy and use the power of their wealth to do good or make up for all the wrongs they have done! Backed with knowledge, dharma and knowledge, huge changes can take place in society and we see glimpses of that in several initiatives. For the one who is centred on dharma, there is a certain perspective in life in all areas: wealth, family, work, spirituality etc.

Bhagavān is Ṛddha because there is nothing lacking in Him. He is Rddha, prosperous and wealthy, being endowed with dharma, jñāna, vairāgya– dharma, knowledge, dispassion and so

on. In terms of knowledge, He is sarvajña, all-knowing. In terms of power, He is sarvaśaktimān, almighty. There is nothing lacking in Īśvara. He has infinite virtues. Anything that one wants like water, food, wealth, work-force, man-power and so on, is prosperity.

279. Spaṣṭāksaraḥ

स्पष्टाक्षरः

He is the one syllabled 'Om.'

The word 'Om' is made of three letters 'A' 'U' and 'M' together forming the single syllable 'Om,' said with a clear pitch so that no one can commit a mistake.

Phonetically, 'A' is the basic sound that is produced by human being anywhere in the world, when he tries to make a sound by opening the mouth. In most languages 'A' is also the first letter of the alphabet. When a sound is produced by closing the mouth, what comes out is the sound 'M'. In between, when there is a rounding off of the mouth, the sound 'U' is produced. Since everything is the Lord, all names in all languages and in all dialects are the names of the Lord, and the names are nothing but the Lord.

Now, what can be the best name for the Lord, a name that would include everything? All objects are but names and all names are words. Words, being made of letters, are nothing but letters, and letters are sounds. Since sounds are produced by opening and closing the mouth, all sounds are phonetically between A' and 'M'. The Lord being everything, his name should include every name. The letter 'U' is inserted in between to indicate all sounds in between. Thus, Ōm that is made of the letters 'A', 'U', and 'M' includes, phonetically all sounds and therefore, all letters and all words of all languages and dialects. Therefore, it becomes a word which indicates all objects. In this way, Ōm becomes the name of Īśvara, the Lord.

This spaṣṭa-akṣara, clear syllable, is the name of the Lord. Hence, Bhagavān is Spaṣṭākṣara.

280. Mantraḥ

मन्त्रः

The one in the form of and known through mantras.

What is a mantra? Mananāt trāyate – that which protects you, by being turned over again and again in your mind is a mantra. Mantras occur in the Vedas, which has been revealed by Bhagavan and hence every sound is sacred. Certain people in society, Brahmins are entrusted with the duty of chanting mantras again and again to preserve the Veda as it was earlier in the oral form mainly.

We know that even plants when spoken to nicely grow faster. There have been many experiments done to see the effect of mantras on people and plants and unanimously these speak about the positive effects of mantras. Sounds of mantras are known to produce beneficial effects in terms of curing illnesses, contributing to different mental states and actually create an impact on the nadis, energy channels of the body. Unfortunately much of this knowledge is not available today. Only the ones who chant discover its efficacy in time. For those of us who have been blessed to be initiated by a guru into mantras, we know the power of it and its deep significance.

At the time of chanting a mantra we usually mention the ṛṣi associated with it, the chandas or the metre which includes the number of syllables and the name of the deity invoked. Mantras revealed themselves to the sages and these constitute the Vedas that are our heritage. Einstein, when asked how he worked out the theory of relativity, is known to have said that it occurred to him in a flash. Most scientists and creative people speak of an epiphany, a sudden flash of insight. If we can accept this, we cannot dismiss that ṛṣis with all their austerities were revealed mantras.

Bhagavān is in form of the mantras–such as the Ṛg, Yajus and Sāma. And He is mantra-bodhya, the one who is understood through the mantras of the Vedas. Therefore, He is called Mantra.

281. Candrāṃśuḥ
चन्द्रांशुः
The one who in the form of the rays of the moon.

The rays of the moon while giving light offer cooling. Bhagavān is like the candrāṃśu, the ray of the moon, which is cooling to those, whose minds are scorched by the tāpa, heat, of saṃsāra.

The jīvas experience being roasted by the tāpatraya, the pains and difficulties of saṃsāra, which scorches like the sun. They are the ādhyātmika-tāpa–the pains and problems centered on oneself; the ādhibhautika-tāpa–the pains and problems caused by the people around, by animals, plants, bacteria and so on; the ādhidaivika-tāpa–the pains and problems caused by the devatās like the earth-quake, floods, hurricanes and so on. All our problems can be fitted into these three categories. This is all the reason to chant shāntih thrice, that there may be freedom from difficulties in these three categories. The one afflicted by these tāpas, needs some cooling rays like those of the moon and the Lord is that Candrāṃśu.

The understanding of the names of the Lord eliminates completely the tāpatraya, the afflictions that 'I am afflicted. I am persecuted by the world. Everyone is out to get me.' These notions are gone in the recognition of the order that is Bhagavān and what is there is one ānanda, that is, Īśvara alone. Like the cool rays of the moon, the names of the Lord are able to bring about a freedom from the three-fold tāpas of the individual.

282. Bhāskaradyutiḥ
भास्करद्युतिः
The one brilliant like the sun.

The light of the sun lights up the whole world, but itself does not require any other light to light it up. Similarly, Bhagavān does not require any other light to light Him up.

The theme of light and brilliance occurs all over the śastra. It is a figurative expression. It does not mean that one will start seeing all kinds of lights in meditation. It points to many things. What makes me 'see' in a dark room? That I can't see is known by me.

Despite shutting my eyes and the room being pitch dark, what makes me see my dream? In the dream, there is blazing sunlight and in that light all the incidents are seen. For want of a better word, through the light of the mind, I see the dream.

If I don't know the language Swahili, a beautiful language in Tanzania, I know that I don't know. Different things may or may not be known by me. But what is it that illumines, that makes known all of this? Consciousness illumines everything. Perhaps it is just the capacity of the mind to know. If that was so, I would not know what is happening in my mind. But if somebody asks me, 'How are you today?', I can reply depending on what I see as my thoughts and emotions. This 'I' that is of the nature of consciousness illumines even the mind and hence the word brilliance is associated.

Being brilliant like the sun, He is called Bhāskaradyuti. The Lord is all-knowledge, self-shining, with no spot of ignorance. When ignorance or avidya is spoken of, it is from the standpoint of the individual, not Bhagavān.

283. Amṛtāṃśūdbhavaḥ

अमृतांशुद्धभव:

The source of the moon.

Amṛtāṃśu is the moon. According to the purāṇas, during the churning of the milky ocean, the moon came out with its aṃśus, rays, drenched in amṛta. Therefore, Lord Viṣṇu, being the initiator of the churning and thereby the source of the moon, is called Amṛtāṃśūdbhava.

The moon is born of Īśvara. Not only is the moon born of Īśvara, but the moon is also Īśvara. The moon was born of the earth and the earth was born of the sun and the sun was born of some other sun in the galaxy or milky way and the milky way is born of some other galaxy. But since everything is born of Īśvara, the moon is also born of Īśvara alone. Even if there is a karma, an order in this, still everything is born of Īśvara and hence, being the source of the moon, He is Amṛtāṃśūdbhava.

You do not need the karma, order, at all to say that the moon is Parameśvara because, if you say 'the moon is,' there is Īśvara in it. The moon exists and it is an object of knowledge, that is, moon asti, bhāti, that is, it is sat and cit with a name and form. The sat, existence and cit,consciousness belong to Īśvara. The karma is only for the name and form. So, wherever there is name and form, it is mithyā, a dependent reality and that mithyā is sustained by satya. The 'is'ness is the satya. So Īśvara by lending sat and cit to the moon is the source of the moon.

284. Bhānuḥ

भानु:

The one who shines.

The Lord bhāti, shines, and is hence Bhānu. He is the one who shines of His own accord while everything else shines with borrowed light.

Bhānu, the sun, lights up all objects but is lighted up by the eyes. Without the eyes the sun cannot be seen. The eyes are lighted up by the mind and the mind by the ātmā. The ātmā is not lighted up by anything but svayaṃ bhāti, is self-shining and also self-revealing. The Lord as the ātmā, is Bhānu.

285. Śaśabinduḥ

शशबिन्दुः

The one who nourishes like the moon.

The moon has some dark spots which are considered to be shaped like a rabbit. So the moon is called a śaśabindu because it has a bindu, a mark, like the śaśa, the rabbit.

The Lord is not only the one from whom the moon is born and He is also the moon. The moon is said to nourish us by giving the sap to the plants. So far, scientific discoveries have been able to definitively state that the high tides and low tides of the ocean are related to the waxing and waning of the moon. It is quite remarkable when one thinks about it. Traditional agricultural practices, much of which is lost today, depended on the phase of the moon for when seeds are sown. There is still a lot more to be known about the impact of the moon on our lives.

Bhagavān nourishes us like the moon and is the moon. Therefore, He is Śaśabindu. Bhagavān says, 'puṣṇāmi cauṣadhīḥ sarvāḥ somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ –as the rays of the moon, I nourish all the plants in the form of the sap' (15.13).

286. Sureśvaraḥ

सुरेश्वरः

The Lord of the Suras.

Bhagavān is Sureśvara, the Lord of the suras, that is, the devas. Since the 85th nāma Sureśa has the same meaning, here it is taken in a different way.

Those who give gracefully are suras. Bhagavān is their Īśvara and therefore Sureśvara. In any act of giving both the giver and the receiver are blessed. The one who gives is grateful, because he has an opportunity to give and also in a position to give and hence feels blessed. The receiver is also very grateful, because He needs help and gets it and hence, he also feels blessed. So both the giver and the receiver are grateful and feel blessed.

The śāstra says with reference to giving, 'śraddhayā deyam, aśraddhayā' deyam, śriyā deyam, hṛiyā deyam, bhiyā deyam, saṃvidā deyam' (Tai.Up.1.11.3). Whatever is given, let it be given with śraddhā on your part. Do not give without śraddhā. Śraddhā means the attitude, 'I am in a position to give and hence by the other person's receiving what I give, I am blessed.' If the giver does not have śraddhā, one should not receive it.

There are innumerable forces and people in my life who have given me so much – the devatas, the pitrs, the rishis, the manushyas-people around me and other living forms – plants and animals. We are so used to consuming that we don't spare a thought about contributing. Pujya Swamiji says – You have to change from being a consumer to a contributor – consume the least

and give the most. This is not to prove a point to someone but just in recognition of how rich we truly are. When one has śrī, money, time, resources of any kind, it needs to be given. When one gives, it needs to given with humility and with a sense of embarrassment that more cannot be given. One should not think that one is doing charity or doing somebody a favour. That belittles the giving and the receiver. It should be given with some fear, that what is given may not even be received by the other person. The giving should be with the knowledge about the receiver and also the cause for which it is given. The Veda enjoins these.

So, what is to be given should be given properly and gracefully with benefit to the receiver. Such a giver is a śobhana-dātā, that is, a sura. To earn money, one requires puṇya and also effort. To give, one needs a lot of puṇya or else one cannot give, one can only grab. If one has the money and also the heart to give, then the grace of Bhagavān must definitely be there. Īśvara makes him the graceful giver and hence is Sureśvara, the Lord of graceful givers.

287. Auṣadham
औषधं
The medicine.

When it comes to the word, medicine, we think of tablets and syrups, primarily Allopathy. This is so because of its popularity due to quick results and some aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies. There are so many paradigms and perspectives to heal the body-mind: Acupuncture, Acupressure, Homeopathy, Ayurveda etc. Some of them like Ayurveda, the knowledge about Ayuh, life are as old as a few thousand years old. The irony is that we refer to them as alternative medicine and allopathy which is about a hundred years old is considered mainstream. Traditionally speaking, oṣadhis, plants and herbs, and what is born of them is auṣadha. It means medicine. Bhagavān is the auṣadha, the medicine for the disease of saṃsāra. The very chanting of His name is a medicine. Understanding the names of Īśvara is understanding Īśvara. Every word if understood properly, leads to the understanding of Īśvara.

The names of Bhagavān become the auṣadha for the saṃsāra-roga, the disease which is a life of becoming. Even if one goes to svarga, heaven, when the puṇya is over, one will have to come back and hence, even in heaven it is a life of 'becoming.' What is disease? When one does not feel at home with oneself and feels ill at ease, that is disease. This life of saṃsāra is a life of struggle and not being happy with oneself is the bhavaroga. This is a disease which is common to all human-beings. The medicine for this is only Bhagavān; only the understanding of the true nature of Bhagavān can cure it. There is no other medicine. Understanding Bhagavān means understanding that essentially 'I am Bhagavān.' The understanding that the individual jīva, in spite of all his limitations, is Īśvara, is the only medicine. This has to be properly understood.

Though Bhagavān, is specially an auṣada for the disease of saṃsāra, He is the one who is in the form of auṣada for all the rogas, diseases within saṃsāra. That a disease can be diagnosed, that there is a medicine that can cure that disease and that it works–is all because of the grace of Bhagavān.

288. Jagataḥ śetuḥ
जगतः सेतु:

The bridge or the boundary of the world.

The word setu has the meanings of bridge, bank and boundary.

Universally, we have a need to be understood and accepted. But, this need is not met for many people, despite there being billions of people on the planet! Or, this need to be understood may be met at different times in their life, by different people. It is not a constant. Still, for many people because of the sense of isolation and alienation, we experience at different times in our life or in our day, our seeking expresses itself variously. We seek a connection with a person, a hobby, a book, a place. When we 'feel' connected, we feel understood and accepted. Even mobile phone networks, understanding this fundamental human need to connect, promise that their network will help you 'stay connected'. All the connections we seek and have, work for a limited time. If I recognise that, it is not for want of connection, I feel disconnected. I feel disconnected because of my struggle against my limited mind-body sense complex and what I have mistaken to be real, then my seeking can gain a direction. Which connection will help me discover that I was always connected? For the entire jagat, that is, for all the jīvas, Bhagavān is like the setu, the bridge, to cross the river of saṃsāra, to reach the bank of mokṣa, which is also Bhagavān. Hence, He is Jagataḥ setu.

The Lord is also the setu, the boundary in the form of dharma, to make people function without transgressing their respective dharmas, according to their various age and stage in life. Boundaries are necessary in our lives. They add structure to the day and our life in different ways. This far and no more! We may find ourselves being hurt deeply by the behavior of some people. We don't do anything about it because the people may be in a position of authority or power or out of our misplaced sense of respect. In the name of being understanding and accommodating, are we supporting adharma? Adharma towards oneself? Accommodation does not mean accommodating adharma. What is our sense of boundary, then? Sometimes if we are living in the same physical space with difficult people and all attempts to resolve misunderstanding has failed, then it becomes important to create emotional boundaries. This means that we make the effort to protect ourselves, by not internalizing harsh behavior. We function in line with dharma. It is not always easy and requires some courage. It definitely leads to our well being and a deep sense of contentment in knowing that, 'This was the right thing to do.' We seek grace from the jagataḥ śetuḥ, the one who helps everyone cross over, everything that is unwanted.

289. Satyadharmaparākramaḥ

सत्यधर्मपराक्रमः

The one of unfailing dharma and courage.

A dear friend recommended that I watch 'Amazing Indians', a television programme of an awards ceremony. The programme identified ordinary people, ordinary Indians, achievers who had overcome the odds in different fields, quietly did their work away from the media glare and truly were amazing. The nominees and some of the winners ranged from a 13 year old girl who had managed to scale Mt Everest, another young person who despite having no arms holds a world record for painting the maximum number of paintings in an hour with her toes, a senior citizen who despite a paralytic stroke, on wheel chair managed to educate hundreds of children

across villages where education is not readily available, an expatriate who left his investment banker job to look after homeless children and youth in Kolkata and train them in football and rugby, some of them going on to make careers in the field. Seemingly ordinary people, coming from disadvantaged economic, social and physical backgrounds. However their courage, their capacity to fight the odds, their hard work, their tenacity is truly extraordinary, exemplary and truly inspiring. Where did they get this courage from? Was it genetic? Any tonic?

Parākrama, courage, as a capacity is seen in all people. The degrees differ but certainly more of it is cultivated. It is not genetic. It comes from a sense of purpose. The purpose may be an immediate rescuing of an injured dog or the purpose may have been freedom for Bharat amongst our freedom fighters or the purpose may be dealing with abuse from a partner or the purpose may be the determination to follow an unusual profession. Finding our sense of purpose is life is not negotiable and is not worth postponing. If our purpose or even values are not clear then dharma is followed only if it is convenient and easy. As our life priorities start to become clear, it becomes easy to follow dharma and values in our actions.

Values such as justice, equality, compassion, kindness, empathy, courage, which were deliberate and took effort start to become more spontaneous in our actions. This is not a moral mandate. It is common sense wisdom that no one wants to be cheated, humiliated or hurt. Conformity to dharma becomes very challenging if the purpose of life is only money or pleasure, artha or kama or one's moods. We don't do what is to be done, because 'I don't feel like it.' The many people featured in the 'Amazing Indians' were not a victim of their feelings, were not a victim of their moods, were not a victim of their circumstances. They focused on what they could do. The capacity to know, to desire and to execute–the jñāna, icchā and kriyā-saktis are limited and a lot can be achieved with these glories. However they are not in full measure. So, the jīva is not satyadharmaparākrama.

Dharma refers here to the various guṇas that the Lord has such as dharma, jñāna, icchā, kriya and so on, in full measure. Parākrama is the capacity and courage to face challenges. The jñāna-śakti, icchā-śakti and kriyā-śakti and, the parākrama of Bhagavān are satya, in the sense, that they never fail at any time. They are in full measure and sustained. Hence, Bhagavān is Satyadharmaparākrama.

When can we be satyadharmaparākrama? Only when Īśvara who is Satyadharmaparākrama is very much with us. The more of Īśvara there is in our life, the less is the fear, insecurity and so on, and in turn, even in the midst of challenges and trials, there is more courage to conform to dharma. So, we invoke the Lord as Satyadharmaparākrama, as the one who has unfailing śakti and courage.

290. Bhūtabhavyabhavannāthaḥ

भूतभव्यभवन्नाथ:

The Lord of the beings of the past, future and present.

The word nātha comes from the verbal root 'nāth' which has many meanings and based on that, this nāma can be interpreted in many ways. Bhagavān is bhūta-bhavya-bhavatām bhūta-grāmāṇāṃ nātaḥ–the lord of all beings of the past, future and present. As a manifestation of

Kāla, time and its effects we see the changing seasons, the changing landscapes, new stars being born, old stars dying. It is a bit startling to look at the website on world population as it is ticking away every second reporting the new births taking place. The only certain thing in every person's life is his/her own death. Bhagavān is the Lord of all the beings, manifest or unmanifest, at all times.

He is the one to be prayed to, for gaining all ends at all times. Bhagavān as Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the Gita says that 'those who worship me, in whatever way, I bless them in the same way.'(4.11) This statement applies both to the form in which Bhagavān is invoked as well as the purpose for which he is prayed to. When people are in distress, they want relief from distress ranging from disturbing in laws, grades in an exam, a performance appraisal or cure from a disease.

He is the one sought after by all beings of all times, at all times, whether they know it or not. Everyone wants to be free from being small which is why everyone is a seeker. Someone seeks money for fulfillment, the other seeks sensual pleasures, Some other person has a drink, someone buys only branded clothes, some other person seeks to be involved in social causes. All these pursuits are considered to put an end to freedom from smallness. Freedom from being small is what is what we call fullness, sought by everyone. Really speaking, what is sought is Bhagavān, but most have not yet discovered it.

By giving the results in the form of pain to those who do not follow dharma, He as though, torments and disciplines them and makes the jīvas turn towards Him. He bestows blessings on the jīvas, He rules over them and śāsti–He alone teaches and guides people to the path of dharma and jñāna. The beauty about this guidance is the understanding of dharma that is intrinsic to all of us, if only we care to listen. Every day, different situations unfold in front of me in the form of Īśvara. These situations are the results of my own karma, some pleasant, some unpleasant begging a response from me. Responding in line with dharma frees me from my sense of smallness and makes me a proactive individual. When I focus on my dharma and what is to be done irrespective of 'what I feel like doing', I am in harmony with Īśvara.

291. Pavanaḥ

पवनः

The one who purifies, sanctifies.

He is Pavana because it is His grace that purifies a person. Daily the physical body picks up dirt and is cleansed by taking a bath. But what about the antarātmā? Every day one gets hurt and there is some sadness. Every day one picks up guilt and hurt. The person becomes a personality with a lot of angularities. There is anger and frustration. All these pile up and one becomes an unmanageable personality, who cannot manage himself/herself or be managed by others. These are the dirt that the antarātmā–the mind cannot be cleansed with water (MB). It can only be cleansed with the names of Bhagavān.

Īśvara-smaraṇa is to understand and repeat the names of Bhagavān and by this the ego is removed and Bhagavān is brought inside. This is the daily bath for the mind and it is very healing bath. There is nothing like the name of Īśvara to heal oneself. It is a balm for all the daily hurt, for all the aches and pains of life.

Vāyu, air, purifies by blowing, by moving all the time without any laziness. It is Bhagavān alone who purifies in the form of vāyu. Bhagavān says in the Gita, 'pavanaḥ pavatāmasmi – I am air among the purifying agents'(10.31).

292. Pāvanaḥ (811)

पावनः

The one who makes everything move.

The pavana, air, purifies by blowing and moving. Science we studied in school, talks to us about the properties of air, subtle as it is. It tells us about the composition of the gases that make up the air. Some study of physics tells us about sound waves. Without air as a medium, it is not possible for us to hear any sound. So far, so good. If one actually questions how the composition of air came to be so, how come the sound waves can travel through the air? How come all of this points to deeply intelligent order that makes it all possible? Science does not have and perhaps will never have an answer because it is only based on perception and inference. It does say that it is an intelligent and aware universe.

There is no intelligence without a conscious being. While the air may be inert, still the intelligence pervading it makes it move. Everything functions according to intelligence, law and order, because of the mandate of Īśvara. The wind blows and the air moves because of His mandate and therefore He is called Pāvana. The Taittirīyopaniṣad, says, 'bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate–It is out of fear of His manate that the wind blows.' It says further, that the sun rises, Agni, Indra and Yama do their respective jobs out of fear of His mandate (2.8). This is not fear exactly. It is out of respect and a wanting to do things right that all the devatas function.

293. Analaḥ (also word 711)

अनलः

The one who is never satiated.

Agni, fire, is called anala because he does not have the word alam, 'enough,' in his vocabulary. In the rituals, plenty of ghee is poured into the fire, but the fire will never say enough. Whatever is offered is consumed. The Lord alone is manifest as agni and is therefore, Anala. The one who does not say enough is Agni. He is also called pāvaka. He is the one who purifies – Pāvana. Fire purifies as in sterilization. Earlier hot, boiling water was used to sterilise instruments. Now the same function is being replicated by sterilizing machines. In the adhibhūta aspect, fire is a great purifier. When the golden ore is put into the fire, the gold is purified. So, as agni, the Lord is Anala and Pāvana.

Or, He is Anala, because being the limitless, there is no alam, limit for Him.

The jīva is called anala because he takes the prāṇas as himself. As the Lord alone manifests as the jīva, He is Anala.

The word nala means smell, odour. Being free of nala, smell, He is Anala. The Upaniṣad speaks of the Atma as 'agandham arasam…..free of smell, taste and so on'(Br.Up.3.8.8). Smell or fragrance is known only through the nose. In saying that Atma is that which cannot be tasted or smelt, what is being highlighted? Atma cannot be perceived by the sense organs because it is not external to you.

294. Kāmahā

कामहा

The destroyer of desires.

The Lord is Kāmahā, the one who destroys the desires. Whose desires does He destroy? If the mumukṣus, those interested in mokṣa, have any desires tending towards adharma. He destroys them. He also destroys the intensity of the other desires and strengthens their vairāgya supporting them in their pursuits.

If someone has a desire whose fulfillment implies adharma, one can fortify the will power, with the help of Īśvara. Then it is easy to destroy kāma, desire, whose fulfillment involves adharma, as in desiring someone else's money. The focus here is on desires born of adharma. If one holds on to Īśvara, then one will follow dharma, because Īśvara is dharma. Thus, He destroys the desires born of adharma in His devotees. Again, when people taken to adharma, try to cause hiṃsā to His devotees, He destroys their desires by obstructing their fulfillment.

295. Kāmakṛt

कामकृत

The creator of desire in good people.

Any desire is due to the icchā-śakti of the Lord. It is a blessing that one can have desire and that is the manifestation of the śakti of Īśvara. Kāmān karoti–Īśvara is the creator of all the desires and hence, He is Kāmakṛt. He is the one who creates a desire for dharma, and then the desire for mokṣa, in those who follow dharma.

Kāmān karoti–Īśvara fulfills, makes possible the gain of desirable objects for the good people. As the father of kāma, that is, Pradyumna or Manmatha, He is Kāmakṛt.

296. Kāntaḥ (also word 654)

कान्तः

The one who is beautiful and attractive.

Why do you desire an object? Because one is attracted and fascinated by the object. This is called kānta or the capacity to attract. The beauty in the object, that attracts is Īśvara alone because that is the work of māyā. Any glory that is there, which is attractive, is the glory of the Lord. Therefore, one should recognize that vibhūti as Īśvara. Afterwards that recognition will turn into Īśvara-bhakti. Or else it will only be love for that object and then, in order to obtain that object, there will be no hesitation to take to adharma. It is only in Īśvara-bhakti, that dharma

will grow. Therefore He is the one who is the fascinating factor in any object of desire and therefore, Kānta.

When the Lord is visualized in the forms that are given by the śāstra, those forms are very attractive and pleasing, hence He is Kānta.

297. Kāmaḥ

कामः

The desireable.

The word kāma has the meaning of desire, as well as the desirable object. He is in the form of the desire to accomplish what one wants and hence, Kāma.

Or kāmyate iti kāmaḥ–He is the one desired by everyone, no matter what puruṣārtha they seek, because in and through all puruṣārthas, everyone seeks only limitless ānanda. And, that is the svarūpa of the Lord.

298. Kāmapradaḥ

कामप्रदः

The one who gives the object of desire.

He is the Kāmaprada, the giver of the object of desire as karma-phala, especially to those bhaktas, who pray with śraddhā. The 'giving' is not similar as from one person to another. The giving is in the very form of the order of karma that makes karma phala possible.

299. Prabhuḥ (also word 35)

प्रभुः

The one who exists with eminence.

In word 35, the one who has unsurpassed skill in all actions is called a prabhu. Īśvara is that Prabhuḥ. What is the sāmarthya, the capacity for? The capacity in absolute measure to create, sustain and resolve this jagat, without requiring the help of anything else or anyone else is the sāmarthya of the Lord. If the Lord had to create the jagat, he necessarily had to find material from within himself to do so. This is important to note, otherwise we will still localize Īśvara in only temples, our puja corners or svarga.

How does He give all this? Since He is the Prabhu, He is able to give all the objects of desire, because everything, all capacities is with Him. He exists surpassing all and hence, is Prabhu.

Thus, Bhagavān is the Kāma–desire and the object of desire; He alone is Kāmakṛt–the inducer of desire, Kāmaprada–the giver of the desirables, Kāmahā–the destroyer of desires. The whole order of desires is pervaded by Bhagavān. When this is understood, where is the struggle to fight any desire? If artha, kāma, dharma is one's goal, then the effort is to align these with dharma. These, then are the human goals. If mokśa is the goal, then the attempt is self growth and antahkarana śuddhi and the desires become a means to an end. Either way, one tries to fulfill the

desire, knowing that whatever result is obtained for one's action could be more, less, equal or different to expectation. All results are from Bhagavān. One can then relax in the embrace of that understanding.

300. Yugādikṛt

युगादिकृत

The one who creates the yuga, kalpa and so on.

We treat time as absolute. We fear the effects of time on us in terms of old age, disease and death. We feel we have no control over time. Really speaking, the more you try to understand time, the more elusive and illusive it is. If you say a second, there is really no second, because it is made of microseconds. This microsecond can be further reduced. So there is no definitive unit of time. What we know as time is mutually agreed concepts. When a unit of time cannot be established, then a period of time also cannot be established. It is like geometry which is based on lines. A line is defined as a series of points and what is a point? A point is that which occupies no space. So when a point has no length, nor dimension, how can a series of points make a line? So, just as a line is a myth, time also is a myth. In the mithyā jagat, time or kāla is important. It cannot be dismissed as non-existent nor can it be accepted as an existent reality. It is mithyā, because it is sad-asadbhyām anirvacanīya.

Īśvara is kālakṛt, the maker of time. By His power of māyā, time is made as though existent. The truth of time is only the timeless ātmā. Timelessness alone is the adhiṣṭhāna of time. Bhagavān gives His own existence to time and hence, time appears to be an existent factor. Therefore, as the creator of time, He is the kartā, the creator of yugādi, that is, yuga, kalpa, varṣa māsa and so on. We are currently in Kali yuga, one of the four yugas – Satya, Dvāpar, Treta. These form a chaturyuga ie.4.32 million human years. Mind boggling!

There are differences between the various yugas with an ādi, beginning and anta, end. But the change from one yuga to another is not abrupt but a smooth flow. It is the Lord who is responsible for the start of the different yugās. Hence, He is Yugādikṛt.

301. Yugāvartaḥ

युगावर्तः

The one who keeps the cycle of time running

A caturyuga is made of the 4 yugas of satya, tretā, dvāpara and kali, each following the other in proper order and totally amounting to 4.32 million human years. One thousand caturyugas amount to a kalpa which corresponds to the span of a day of Brahmaji. Then comes the dissolution which is the night having the same duration as that of a kalpa. In the Gita we find that a day of Brahma is one thousand yugas.

The Lord, in the form of time, sets this cycle of yugas in motion, so that it keeps turning. The one who sets the cycle of time in motion is Yugāvarta. There are some who think that this rotation is not really a rotation but it is like the movement of a pendulum.

In any case, when we recognise Īśvara in the form of time, we learn to value the time we have. We discover the value of this life we have. Time is a luxury, a privilege, a blessing. Depending on the age and stage of life, the meaning that we give time and what we can do in that time changes. For a terminally ill patient of cancer, time is running out. A young college student, senses that he/she has all the time in the world to pursue what he/she pursues. For a person who has lived a full life and does not have anything more to accomplish in life, it is about time to go, if it has to be so. What we do with our time, determines what we prioritise in life. When we identify our priorities, our life goals then we are able to find the time we need to pursue it. People generally think that they cannot do certain things because they don't have time, including attending Vedanta classes. That person is the ideal student for the Gita! Learning the Gita is not about doing more but about doing less and with a certain attitude of karma yoga.

If one were to just monitor a regular day, there are many slots in the day which even by one's own standards are just time wasters. One of my Vedanta course batch mates from a South American country, in his late forties, said to me, ' Over time, I have realised how precious time is. I wish I had not wasted time in experimenting with all the things before coming to Vedanta.' While many of us may feel like that, the important thing is what we do with our time, now.

302. Naikamāyaḥ

नैकमाय:

The one who does not have one māya, but many.

To the onlooker who looks at the magician performing tricks, there is wonder and disbelief about the feats which are unimaginable – a bird emerging from a hat, people being cut to size and being joined, figuring out the card number in the hands of the participant, concealed to the magician etc. However for the magician, the acts are not magic, there is a method to it all. The māya, magic of Bhagavān is not one, but manifold. He has got not one māyā, one magic, but many. This whole jagat, which is manifold, is Bhagavān's magic.

Without time, there is hour and day; day is not there, but there is week; week is not there, but there is month and so on. So time is not there, yet it is there. It is the same with space also. A point is not there, but a series of points constitute a length. If you want to reach a particular place, there is a distance involved and a certain time is required to cover that distance. Ātmā is limitless consciousness with no timewise or spacewise limitations. So there is really no distance because a second thing is not there. But still there are 2 points and between the 2 points there is a distance and a certain time is required to reach the point. All this is within the māyā of Īśvara alone.

If a flower is analysed to figure out what is its most intrinsic defining feature, the petal, sepal, stem – any one of them is not a flower. They are all non-flower. Put together somehow they make a flower. If any object is taken, it is nothing but matter. Matter, if analysed, is nothing but particles in motion. That we see them as different objects is also the māyā of Īśvara. That all our transactions take place based on time, space and object is a māyā. Colourless drops of water together can become a blue sea. A sky that is not there can appear clue and dome-shaped. Based on this we can talk of a sea-blue and sky-blue colour; all this is māyā. Every discipline of science is His magic.

Within this māyā world, that we can spin out dreams with different time-space frames and see a world as if outside, when there is none, and again within the dream, that we can spin out further dreams is all māyā.

Each one is māya. Hence, He is Naikamāya, because He has not one magic, but many. Here māyā is magic, wonder and does not mean śakti. Even the best of magicians present today or talked of in the Purāṇas, are no comparison to Him.

303. Mahāśanaḥ

महाशनः

The greatest consumer.

Every day, people living in Mumbai or any other metropolitan city consume a whopping 100-150 litres in their daily activities (bathing, cooking, washing clothes, washing utensils, drinking, flushing the toilet etc). Multiply that by 365 days of the year and you have another unimaginable sum and we are talking about 7 billion people on the planet! Not only water, we consume other natural resources all the time.

Some people believe that the world is purely for our consumption. We need to see the effect of such a belief. If everyone only consumes and does not contribute to sustaining and contributing to the betterment of natural resources, there won't be a planet (as we know it) very soon. If we are only rights oriented, then everything that I get and should get is all a 'matter of right'. If, on the other hand, I am duty oriented, I see how I can contribute to society – to my family, to my friends, to my neighborhood, to the rivers, to the forests, to my country. More than anything, it is a sustainable model and perspective for businesses, voluntary sector, for communities. One of the most fulfilling pursuits for most people in the world is wanting to leave a legacy in the form of children, their work or making a difference in the world. It stems from a need to give which is as valid as the need to receive.

Pujya Swamiji defines 'a mature person as the one who consumes the least and contributes the most. 'A significant statement that inspires us to change from being a consumer to a contributor. It is not either or, both giving and receiving are equally important, and one's maturity determines which side of the balance is more tilted.
What about Bhagavān? From our limited perspective, he can afford to be the greatest devourer as he is also the greatest giver in terms of the laws and prinicples that sustain us.

If the Lord is the eater, then the whole universe is His food. At the time of pralaya, He withdraws everything unto Himself. This is like His swallowing the entire jagat unto Himself. What is taken in is food and since Bhagavān takes in the whole jagat, at the time of resolution, He is Mahāśana, the greatest consumer.

304. Adṛśyḥ

अदृश्यः

The one who cannot be known through any sense organ.

Interesting conversations happen over a haircut. One such conversation with the barber went like this: Man having the haircut: There is so much suffering in this world. I wonder if God really exists. Hair stylist (commiserating in his misery): Definitely, God does not exist. The man goes out and brings back a man with long hair, pointing out to the barber – Barbers don't exist.
The long haired guy did not seek a haircut not because there were no barbers. For different reasons he did not seek. Barbers existed whether he sought to cut his hair or style it. What I choose to subjectively believe is not a fact.

For the purpose of empirical/ functional reality we rely on perception all the time - driving the car, reading a book, talking to people, tasting different foods, smelling the wafting fragrance of fresh flowers and incense sticks, watching a movie, listening to music etc. We do get information about our world through our senses and we make an unthinking conclusion that our perception is the only way to know reality. Yet, we are able to know our own thoughts, emotions, desires without the senses.

People around me, political affairs, my family, time, space and even my own thoughts, emotions, desires are all objects of consciousness. How do I know I have a desire for hot chocolate? Did I smell it in the mind? The desire is known without the need for an internal nose that smells out the desire? How do I know I feel love for somebody? Did I touch/ see this with my eyes, in the mind? It is known without the sense of touch or the sense of smell. I am aware of images without sight. I am aware of the memory of Pujya Swamiji singing a Ganapati bhajan. I am aware of the fact that I don't know the language French. I am aware of doubts regarding some Hindus being able to uphold their heritage. I am aware of decisions about new classes on Vedanta. I am aware of my enthusiasm for life. All this I am aware of, I 'see' without a sense organ. How is this possible?

Anything that is objectified is always jada, insentient and inert. Īśvara is not an object of consciousness as I am pervaded by Īśvara. Bhagavān is not an object, but the ātma-svarūpa. He is the form of dṛk, the subject, which is consciousness. Everything else is an object of consciousness. I am aware of it. The subject, which is consciousness, can never be objectified by a thought. Dṛk-svarūpa is Parameśvara. The object is only the manifestation of nāma and rūpa, another name and form.

If Bhagavān is adṛśya, then how are we going to know Him?

305. Vyaktarūpaḥ
व्यक्तरुपः
The one who is self-evident.

When it is said that Bhagavān is not subject to objectification, it does not mean that He cannot be known. What is being highlighted is that he cannot be known as other than you. Localising Bhagavān only in temples or svarga is objectifying Bhagavān. It is limiting Bhagavān. Perhaps, initially there is some level of objectification as one discovers the many bhagas, the many virtues of Bhagavān that are present in absolute measure. But, then another question arises. So what if Bhagavān is all power, all knowledge, all resources? What difference does it make to my life? If

he is other than me, I can choose how to relate to him? And we do. Relating needs to find its fulfillment in the discovery of oneness. The most ardent bhakta wants to be one with Bhagavān.

Really speaking, when do I stop creating distance between me and Bhagavān? In the recognition that He is vyakta, manifest as the svayam-prakāśa-ātmā, as the self-evident ātmā.
He is vyakta, as 'I,' the witness of everything, lighting up everything. He has to be recognized in this way. In every piece of knowledge, He is evident as the consciousness that lights up that knowledge' (Ke. Up. 2.4)
Again the whole jagat being His manifestation, His form is vyakta in the form of this world.

306. Sahasrajit
सहस्रजित्
The conqueror of thousands.

He conquers thousands and hence, He is Sahasrajit. Whenever there is a battle between the devas and the asuras, Bhagavān helps the devas to defeat thousands of asuras in the battle. This is the līla of Bhagavān. It is because of the help of Bhagavān, that the devas are able to defeat the asuras. The conquest is not about domination or subordinating the other. Because the devas prevailed, the asuras are defeated. Our minds are often likened to the battlefield of – doing what I want vs doing what needs to be done in the situation for the benefit of all including myself? Guess, which want wins? The one we feed. Ultimately our will backs the desire to do the right thing or the desire to do what I want. Sometimes there is no difference in the two and that is when we know that dharma has become spontaneous in our lives.

The idea is that dharma wins over adharma and finally it is only dharma that prevails, because Bhagavān is in the form of dharma. Dharma upholds the values, principles and structure of society. Even if there are thousands of obstacles, it is dharma alone that will win. We have had an experience of the contentment that comes from doing the right thing despite many obstacles. In the whole Mahābhārata, it is shown that dharma alone wins and adharma is finally destroyed. That is why it is called jaya.

307. Anantajit
अनन्तजित
The one who is victorious over every being everywhere.

Bhagavān is endowed with ananta-śakti, limitless power and skills which is acintya, unimaginable. In the universe there are limitless varieties of beings and each has some special capacity by which it excels other beings. A Cheetah is definitely faster than a bull which is faster than a tortoise. Again in the same species also, some excel over others. We find that even in human beings, due to certain skills, one excels another in combats, sports, competitions and so on. Since it is Bhagavān alone who excels, who wins by the manifestation of ananta-śakti, He is Anantajit.

Anantaṃ brahma is gained with the help of dharma. Therefore He is Anantajit. It is dharma that paves the way for gaining the knowledge that 'I am the limitless' which is the brahma-pada.

In the performing of our responsibilities, we cannot avoid conflicts initially. Conflict will remain as long as our assimilation of values is incomplete. It is natural to have a conflict in the beginning. If we act upon your desires which are against dharma and adharma, there will be conflict before, during, and after the action. And every conflict, every compromise, will add up in our psyche so that by the time we are thirty or forty, some of us are personalities with varieties of angularities.

If you are to have some peace in life, and look back and say I have lived a life of learning and growth, I need to polish off these angularities. This implies assimilation of values. As a human being, we have got to fall back upon dharma and then see that our actions carry the approval of dharma. Svadharma is svakarma. What is to be done in a given situation becomes svakarma. I am not born as a simple witness. If I were born with only sense organs and no hands or legs I could be purely be an observer and not participate in the world's activity. But fortunately or unfortunately, I am born with hands and legs and the power to create. I am endowed with a threefold śakti, power: a power to know and to remember, jñāna śakti; a power to will and to desire, icchā śakti; and a power to do, kriyā śakti. With these, every human being is a participant in the creation and Bhagavān as Anantajit is invoked as the one who is victorious over every being.

The one who is in the form of dharma and who is Anantajit is Parameśvara alone. So Sahasrajit and Anantajit go together. All obstacles go away and finally only dharma wins.

308. Iṣṭaḥ

इष्टः

The most desirable.

The word iṣṭa has this meaning of 'desired' as derived from the verbal root 'iṣ'. It can also be derived from the root 'yaj' to worship. It is Lord Viṣṇu alone who is iṣṭa, worshipped through various yajñas and other forms of worship. When it comes to worship we generally relate to Bhagavān through certain attributes that we desire in ourselves or attributes we admire. For instance, if I desire knowledge of the arts I relate to Devi Saraswati as my Iṣṭa devi. The Devata/Devi being worshipped in my family for generations called Kula Devata/Devi is a huge source of blessing and we keep up the tradition of worship. The region or community that we belong to, would also have a presiding deity, grama devata. Interesting that a place in Mumbai is called Gamdevi, referring to the goddess of the village, Gramdevi, the presiding deity. In recognition of all these sources of blessing, I have the freedom to relate to Bhagavān in the way I want. Alcoholics Anonymous a very successful recovery programme which has spirituality as its base, encourages people to surrender to the 'God of their understanding'.

Being of the nature of paramānanda, the Lord is Iṣṭa, the most desired. In the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, there is a dialogue between Sage Yājñavalkya and his wife. The sage wants to take to sannyāsa and so, wants to divide his property between his two wives, Kātyāyanī and Maitreyī. But Maitreyī asks him 'with all the wealth that you are giving us, will we get the amṛtatva, the moksa, that you are seeking?' He says 'No, you will not get amṛtatva with wealth.' Then there ensues a big discussion wherein Yājñavalkya tells Maitreyī that 'ātmanastu kāmāya sarvaṃ priyaṃ bhavati.' Anything that is iṣṭa, that attracts you, is because it evokes the pleased

self in you and what you love is the pleased self. You do not like the displeased self. One commits suicide because one is displeased with oneself. It is actually the pleased self that is iṣṭa, that one loves and hence, anything that evokes the pleased self, will become iṣṭa, an object of love.

An Archies card had this to say–' I love you not only for you who you are but for who I am when I am with you.' The second part of the line needs more attention here and is echoing what the Upanisad is saying, 'I love you for what I am when I am with you.' Being with a particular person or in the presence of any desirable condition evokes the pleased self. What is that pleased self? It is an attribute that comes now and then and, goes away? Is ānanda an attribute, added to the self, which wanes in time and then has to be added again? Or is it intrinsic to the self? Ānanda is not something extrinsic and added to the self. The self by nature is ānanda and it is the nature of oneself. That is why one feels at home whenever one is happy and not at home when unhappy. We don't complain that we are happy.

Ātmā, I is the only source of attraction because that is the only source of ānanda, which gets evoked in some form or the other.It is Parameśvara alone who is in the form of this paramānanda-svarūpa-ātmā. The ātmā is pūrna outside and also inside, 'antaḥ pūrṇaḥ bahiṣpūrṇaḥ pūrna kumbha ivārṇave – a pot immersed in water, is full inside; outside also, it is full.' So too Bhagavān being everything, is pūrṇa inside and outside. That pūrṇatva, fullness alone is what one loves. Therefore, that which is iṣṭa or priya is Bhagavān.

309. Aviśiṣṭaḥ
अविशिष्टः
The one who has no distinct attributes.

When the ātmā is pointed out as limitless ānanda, one can have a doubt, 'maybe your ātmā is limitless and ānanda-svarupa but my ātmā is not so.' This presupposes a doubt, that there are many ātmās. If this is so, then, each ātmā will be a viśiṣṭa, having distinct qualities of its own. But, being all-pervasive, a second ātmā is not available for it to be different from the other. All that is there, is the one limitless self and that is ānanda-svarūpa.

Further, it does not have any attributes. Anything qualified by attributes is viśiṣṭa, Parameśvara as the antaryāmī, the indweller of all, is Aviśiṣṭa, not limited by any attribute. He is the ātmā of all. Any attribute let's say, color red qualifies the cloth. The cloth could be red or blue or black. An attribute or quality is not intrinsic to the cloth but incidental. That which does not have attributes but that which has as its very nature, limitlessness that is ananda is you, the atma.

Anything that is desired is other than oneself and that is desired by the individual thinking that it will give him happiness. What is most loved by one is oneself alone, because the ātmā is not other than oneself; it is not separate from oneself. Therefore, the ātmā is that which is the most iṣṭa for everybody and it is Aviśiṣṭa, not peculiar to oneself. It is something that is universal, because a second ātmā is not available.

310. Śiṣṭeṣṭaḥ
शिष्टेष्टः

The one who is desired by the vivekis.

If the ātmā is ānanda-svarūpa, and if it is aviśiṣṭa, then everyone should desire the ātmā. But, we do not find everyone seeking the ātmā. They seem to be seeking something else all the time. Very rarely do we find someone who seeks it. But in fact, knowingly or unknowingly, everyone is seeking the ātmā alone. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā 'mama vartma anuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ – people follow My path alone in all ways'(3.23, 4.11).

Every human being is like a bloodhound, which somehow finds its way home. After her husband passed away, Maharani Gayatri Devi had said, 'I realised then, that home is not a place, it is what you come home to.' Everyone wants to go home as it is their refuge, their comfort zone and where they can just be. Bhagavān is the home. He is pūrṇa and everyone wants that pūrṇatva alone. Then, why do they not go to Him? Bhagavān says, that even though they are engaged in various pursuits, still, all of them are on His track alone. They think that perhaps this is the right pursuit and with this, one will be alright. Then, finding that it does not give them the pūrṇatva that they want, they go from one thing to another and this goes on constantly. Finally they have to come to Bhagavān alone. These people, who are thus engaged in various pursuits, lack the viveka. How then is viveka developed? It can be developed by constantly being in satsaṅg. When viveka is there, automatically the seeking is in the right direction, the seeking for Bhagavān will be there. If viveka is not there, then the seeking also will not be there.

Thus, those who have followed the path of dharma, been exposed to satsaṅg and thereby developed viveka, are the śiṣṭas. Because of their viveka, they come to know that Bhagavān alone is the source of pūrṇatva and therefore, He becomes iṣṭa, the most desirable to them. Thus Bhagavān is Śiṣṭeṣṭa. On the other hand those who have no viveka, not knowing Bhagavān as the source of pūrṇatva, think of other things as their iṣṭa. He is Śiṣṭeṣṭa, also because śiṣṭaiḥ iṣṭa, worshipped by the śiṣṭas.

These śiṣṭas who have the viveka, have come to know that it is the knowledge of Bhagavān alone and nothing short of it, will give them the pūrṇatva. Therefore, they become initially jijñāsus, devotees desirous of knowing Him and later jñānīs, devotees who have come to know themselves to be essentially one with Bhagavān. As these śiṣṭas alone know the true nature of Bhagavān, they are iṣṭa to Him and thus, He is Śiṣṭeṣṭa. Bhagavān says in the Gītā 'priyo hi jñānino' tyartham ahaṃ sa ca mama priyaḥ – I am totally beloved to the jñānī and he is absolutely dear to Me' (7.17).

311. Śikhaṇḍī

शिखण्डी

The one decorated with peacock feathers.

This name is with reference to the Kṛṣṇāvatāra. Śikhaṇḍa means a plume and the one who has a śikhaṇḍa is called śikhaṇḍī. Even a peacock is called a śikhaṇḍī because it has a plume. Here Bhagavān is called Śikhaṇḍī because as a cowherd boy, the Lord had His hair tied up in a tuft and decorated with peacock feathers.

As the story goes, once when Kṛṣṇa was playing his flute, the sweet melody that emanated made the peacocks dance in joy and excitement. At the end of a long dance, they spread their feathers and the king Peacock offered with great humility, its feathers as an offering as that was their only opulence . The lord lovingly accepted it and adorned himself with it.

312. Nahuṣaḥ
नहुषः
The one who binds.

The root 'nah' has the meaning of bandhana, bondage. The Lord binds all beings by His power of māyā and so, He is Nahuṣa.

If you do not seek Bhagavān, then you are bound and if you seek Him, you are released. How is it that you are bound? We feel that we are bound and held hostage by 'what will happen to me'? While this is a valid question we drive ourselves to worry by dwelling on it all the time and building up the worst case scenario. We feel that we are bound by what happened to us in our past. We feel bound by how people treated us. A nickname given to us, a jibe here, a taunt at some time have now become battle wounds not battle scars. We feel that we are bound by the anxieties of the present situation. We feel that we are bound by 'what will society say?' Please note, that all the above sentences say 'We feel we are bound'. We are not really bound but our behavior, thoughts and emotions indicate that we feel so.

If bondage was absolutely real, there is no chance of release from it.
If bondage was not there at all, there would be no sense of bondage that we experience.
But, if the 'sense' of bondage is there, then it must be understood. In the understanding of the nature of bondage, it no longer exists. The limiting conditions in terms of traffic jams, aches and pains in the body, people's unflattering opinions of us may still be there, but they no longer limit me.

If we want to be free from this sense of bondage, we recognise that Bhagavān is in the form of the ātmā and you must choose to know him. There is no other way. Since Bhagavān is the ātmā, you cannot stumble upon yourself. Even if Bhagavān comes in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He would be the one who comes and goes.

Darśana of the Lord is only by knowing Him as the ātmā, that is, as 'I'. He can be known only through the jñāna-cakṣu, the eye of knowledge. If He is already there as the ātmā and yet we do not know Him, it is because our vision is veiled by His power of māyā. Since this veil of ignorance alone is the bondage and there is no other physical bondage, only by seeking and knowing Bhagavān, one gets liberated.

313. Vṛṣaḥ
वृषः
The one who rains blessings.

As has been seen previously, the word vṛṣa means that which rains, pours.

People often say, ‘What can I do? It is my fate.’ One group of people who believe fate cannot be changed quote a well known Sanskrit sloka that says whatever is written on one's forehead cannot be changed even by Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma or other Gods. Then there is another group that believe fate can be changed and quote Markandeya ‘s story. This devotee of the Lord was given a life of only sixteen years but at the end of the allotted time span Shiva appeared and saved Markandeya from Yama. Markandeya went on to live to a ripeold age. Both groups vehemently emphasise their stand. Which is correct? Both are correct.

Fate is a loose term which really is karmaphalam meaning the fruit or result of one's(past) actions. Fate can be broadly classified into two categories: durbala vidhi meaning weak karma phalam and prabala vidhi meaning strong karma phalam. When the issue 'can fate be changed by prayer' is raised, we must first clarify what type of fate is meant - durbala or prabala. Durbala vidhi can be weakened or even totally eradicated by prayer while prabala vidhi cannot be changed by prayer. However prayer will give us the strength to face adversity. Since our karma or actions are not uniform, the results of our actions will also not be uniform.

Thus, prayer works in twofold manner. The purpose of discussing prabala or durbala vidhi is not for us to play the guessing game regarding our life. We could consult the best astrologers and other predictive sciences experts but there will never be a definitive answer about this. Instead, committing to a life of discovering dharma as Bhagavān while ensuring all our karma is in line with dharma, one discovers much śānti and happiness.

Dharma is vṛṣa because the path of dharma alone makes one attain one’s desires, through its phala of puṇya. The wealth, property, relationships, pleasures acquired through dharma allows us to sleep peacefully at night. Bhagavān alone is in the form of order that is dharma, and He alone gives the phala according to the order of dharma. Puṇya-phala is an anugraha, a blessing. Even pāpa-phala is a blessing because it helps to put us back in the path of dharma.

Thus, He is a maṅgala-mūrti, a body of blessing. Just as any part of the sugar crystal is sweet, so too, any aspect of Bhagavan is a blessing. We invoke Him as Vṛṣa, in the form of blessing, to gain His anugraha, grace.

314. Krodhahā

क्रोधहा

The destroyer of anger.

Generally when someone has anger, people say, ‘control the anger.’ And then you get more angry because you cannot control anger! How is one to control anger? Anger is there because it cannot be controlled. What one is holding, one can drop. But when that something is holding you, how can you drop it? It is anger that is holding you. Therefore, one has to understand, ‘I have no control over anger.’ Once you understand this, then you can seek help – help from someone who has no anger. Anger is just a symptom, an expression of inner pain, childhood pain, an expression of helplessness. One has no control over that, because it is a part of the unconscious, which means that one is not conscious of it. One can control only the conscious.

The unconscious is the other side of the ego. It is yourself and hence you are not aware of it. It is kept away from what you are conscious about and yet it controls you.

So now through the anger, the presence of an inner pain, which is the cause, is appreciated. I hear one of you say, 'The recent anti national comments in a part of the country make me so angry, it has nothing to do with my childhood.' While the anti-national comments are not directly related to the pain I have, patriotism and love for Bharat is a part of our identity. If someone attacks our country even by our words, we are hurt because I feel I am being attacked and that person being 'Indian' 'should' not be doing this. This adds to my anger and it looks like there is no way out!

We understand that all pain is a part of the psychological order, and the unconscious is also a part of the psychological order. In fact, other emotions like jealousy, hatred, sadness, loneliness, low self-esteem especially when intense are also born of the unconscious. It is an order because it is common to all. The psychological order is a manifestation of Īśvara and being a manifestation of Īśvara, your anger is not special. Therefore, you seek the help of Īśvara, 'You are Krodhahā, the remover of anger. So, please remove my anger.' Here you are not saying 'I do not want to be angry.' You are only seeking His help to manage your anger. 'O! Lord, give me the strength to manage my anger, so that I will not, in my anger, victimize anybody.' This is all that we can do.

When you are angry, you do not act, that is, you do not express your anger in action. This is called dama. Sometimes anger can be managed by seeking to modify the thoughts that contribute to it. Some people who declare how dharmika they are, end up being more angry than others because they become self righteous. A self righteous person will always feel superior to the other person and try to control or manipulate others. We don't even realise we do this because it is the unconscious at work!

You have to express your anger appropriately. If you do not express it, the bottled anger will make you end up with a heart attack or a stroke. So, give expression to your anger in writing, but afterwards, be sure to destroy the paper and please don't preserve it for posterity! Or talk it out to somebody, who knows what is right and wrong and can lend a sympathetic ear; then the anger will get destroyed.

You can also learn to modify your thoughts and see the connection between thoughts and emotions. E.g. If person X does not listen to me, I get very angry. 'Person X must listen to me', in other words. The key word is 'must' or 'should' which sound absolute. Here I see the connection between the person 'should' having to follow a condition to meet my approval and my resultant degree of anger. On the other hand, I replace the word 'should' with prefer and say I would 'prefer' that the person listens to me. The person is free to be who he/she is just as I am free to be who I am, then I find that the degree of anger reduces.

For all this, one requires the help of Bhagavān. So, the more one appreciates Īśvara, the more one will be able to control anger. One is not to blame oneself for the anger. One takes responsibility for doing something about it which includes prayer. In prayer, one seeks the help

of Īśvara, so that one does not act inappropriately. He alone can help to destroy our anger. Thus, as the one who destroys the krodha, the anger, of those who seek His help, He is Krodhahā.

315. Krodhakṛtkartā
क्रोधकृतकर्ता
The one who causes anger and the one who is the creator.

This name can be taken as a single word, or as two words taken together to constitute one nāma. Īśvara is manifest in the form of the psychological order, the order that brings the connection between inner pain, the situation and the anger. Thus, He is the Krodhakṛt, the one who causes the anger.

He is also the therapist, because, being in the form of order, He is infallible, not subject to any defect. We are always looking for that flawless person and that search comes to an end only in the discovery of Īśvara. We may not know any details of psychology and it does not matter. Even a child sees the connection between his father's anger and him not doing his homework. In the discovery of connections and the discovery of the psychological order we discover that we are okay. Infact, We are always validated in the eyes of Īśvara and validation is a therapy. So our own understanding of Īśvara, as being manifest in the form of the psychological order, validates our anger. This, in turn, makes us seek His help in managing the anger. Thus, we appreciate Him as both the Krodhakṛt and Krodhahā, that is, as the one who causes anger, as well as one who destroys anger.

What is created is karma and so the jagat is karma. Bhagavān being the nimitta-kāraṇa, is the kartā, the creator of this entire jagat.

By saying that Bhagavān is the kartā, the kartṛtva, the doership of the individual is negated. Even your free will is endowed by Bhagavān. It is your prārabdha that gives you the free will. It is the prārabdha that gave you the human body and in this body alone, there is this free will. Thus, without the prārabdha, there is no free will. Prārabdha is Īśvara and in the form of the law of karma, He has given you the free will. Therefore, you think that you are the kartā. If every component of an action which makes you a kartā is analyzed, then, we find that Bhagavān alone is the kartā. Then, where is any kartā apart from Bhagavān? If we know this, we can have no kartṛtva. Bhagavān says, 'I am the kartā and I am akarta too'. Since we are not the kartā of this jagat, then, we have to say that Īśvara is the kartā, but from His own standpoint, He is akartā.

Krodhakṛtkartā, can be taken as one nāma. Those asuras or asura-like people, who take to adharma, get angry with the people who are committed to dharma and therefore, refuse to come along with them. Hence, these people are krodhakṛts. The word kartā as derived from the verbal root 'kṛt' which means one who cuts, destroys. As krodhakṛtām kartā, the destroyer of the asura-like people, He is Krodhakṛtkartā.

316. Viśvabāhuḥ
विश्वबाहुः
The one who has hands everywhere.

In order to support the entire viśva, consisting of all beings and things, Parameśvara has as though a number of hands spread everywhere. Hence He is Viśvabāhu.

The hand of the human being has a delicate and complex structure. This allows the muscles and joints in the hand a great range of movement and precision – stitching intricate embroidery, doing complicated surgery or even pushing weights. Tendons, nerve fibers, blood vessels and very thin bones are all positioned right under the skin and are only protected by a thin layer of muscle and fat. Only the palm is protected for a powerful grip. And then again, the claws of the bird are designed differently for different functions.

In this entire viśva, universe, wherever there are hands, all of them are only the hands of Parameśvara as he is in the form of the physiological order that makes the all the hands in the world function the way they do.

317. Mahīdharaḥ (Also word 369)

महीधरः

The one who sustains the earth.

The earth is called mahī because it is very vast and it sustains countless number of beings. The International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources estimates that 10,000 species of animals are discovered each year, with over one and a half million species already described. This mindboggling number of species includes fishes, amphibians, reptiles, insects, mammals, plants, moss, algae, corals etc. Projections for the total number of species on Earth range from 2 million to 50 million. The way of life of the fish is sustained as much as the way of life of marine algae. By whom is it sustained? By the intelligence that rests in Bhagavān.

Without any GPS, Global positioning system (as we know it!) thousands of animals – zebras, gazelles, wildebeest migrate from Ngorongoro, Tanzania, This migration is a natural phenomenon determined by the availability of grazing. This phase lasts from approximately January to March, when the calving season begins – a time when there is plenty of rain-ripened grass available. What sustains their navigational abilities?

Bhagavān is the one who sustains the earth, that is, everything. Earth means life. So He supports life. Or, the word mahī can mean pūja. Bhagavān receives the mahī, the worship of the devotees and hence, is Mahīdhara.

318. Acyutaḥ (also word 100)

अच्युतः

The one who does not undergo any change.

Any living being undergoes change, be it an amoeba or a turtle that lives on for more than 200 years or a banyan tree. The six-fold modifications of existence, birth, growth, modification, decline and death are there for every living being, including human beings. For the one who always is, what change can the Lord undergo? The one for whom there is no cyuti, destruction is acyuta. This is the svarūpa of ātmā or Īśvara.

The Lord is timeless and since He is not bound by time, He does not change; He does not have any decimation. Thyagaraja sings, 'kathalevadu kade kathalenno kalavade – O! Rāma, you are changeless; but how many stories you have!'

Without change how can there be any story? The Lord does not have any modifications whereas, the jīva, from the stand-point of the body, is subject to changes and hence has an autobiography, published or not. All of us have our life defining moments: changes in the family composition, death of a family member, getting the first job, marrying the first partner, birth of children, meeting one's guru, making a breakthrough, buying a house, first meditative experience of oneness etc . These situations contribute to how we define ourselves, all based on identity with body-mind, including all spiritual experiences. What is the content of that conscious being, who is identified with the body-mind? The one who does not undergo any change. But you say how is that possible? I am changing all the time, my moods in the morning are different from that in the evening as evening onwards, happy hours approach. My thoughts are different. True. We are back to being identified with the body-mind. We can learn to use the body-mind and still drop the identity, in the recognition of I being acyuta.

319. Prathitaḥ

प्रथितः

The one who is renowned.

As a human being, I seek to get rid of my sense of insignificance in many ways. I act in ways that will meet the approval of society. I wear only those clothing brands that reveal my elevated status in society. I shun the company of people who are 'not my type'. I could even get an image makeover. There are agencies in cities that help you with tips on grooming, communication skills and how to make an impactful appearance. I could wait anxiously over how many 'likes' my posts get and rejoice if it exceeds a certain amount. I could casually name drop, or claim close association with famous people or even claim that Pujya Swamiji was very close to me. Many of these actions largely have to do with fulfilling the need for fame and renown. We have a need that people around us appreciate us and approve of us. Nothing wrong with it. We objectively recognise it so that we deal with it and prevent us from being hijacked by the need for fame. Many needs and fears are connected to the sense of insignificance we often feel. Universally, we crave acceptance and fear rejection. We need to understand this well, not fight it but actually enquire into who I have taken myself to be.

On the other hand, Bhagavān does not need an image makeover, does not need to be trendy or dressed in the latest designer wear or, even use the latest organic line of products to be in the who's who list. Bhagavān is Prathita, renowned, not through simple cosmetic changes but through His actions of creation, sustenance and resolution of this universe. Everything that is there, every permutation and combination, with all its varieties, in the form of the stars, galaxies, milky ways and planets, earthquakes and hurricanes, is the expression of the Lord. All of them speak of His renown.

He is Prathita, renowned also, because in His various avatāras, He performed special actions.

320. Prāṇaḥ (also words 66, 407)

प्राणः

The one who is in the form of prāṇa.

He is the one who enlivens everything, being in the form of the sūtrātmā, that is, as the one identified with the collective prana-sakti. 'I am the sutratma, the prana, the inner self in all the living beings'(Ait.Ār.2.2.3). Prana cannot be translated as merely breath. It is more than breath, more than energy and more than the entire respiratory system in a human being.

The different manifestations of vayu, air in the human body is five fold: the prāṇa vāyu, the prana that is inhaled; the second one is apānaḥ which means the evacuatory or excretory system which moves to give power for the removal of the waste from the body; next is vyānaḥ which is the prana that moves as the circulatory system for the energy that is manufactured out of food. Food is first converted into energy and that energy is supplied or distributed to every cell of the body; the fourth one is called samānaḥ which is the pranah of the digestive system, which alone converts the raw material called food into the subtle energy. And the fifth one is udānaḥ, which we can call the reversing function or the emergency function which operates rarely. This function also operates at the time of death when all the organs have to withdraw their respective functions.

Bhagavān is in the form of the order by which the five fold prana functions. Breathing in and breathing out happens. We lead such busy lives that if we had to remember to breathe, all of us would be dead by now. Clearly a certain order is at work herē. The prāṇa that goes out comes back again. Suppose the prāṇa had a mind of its own and liked to hangout in an athlete's lungs because it is more roomy or the prana concluded that a smoker's lungs were to be avoided, life would not be the way we know it to be.

Some people consider Bhagavān as a higher power, like he were some super battery. This is a vague term which does not explain much. Then, some others consider Bhagavān as prana. Here we note that prana is Bhagavān but Bhagavān is not only prana. All living beings including plants and bacteria have prana. He sustains everything with prana. So He is the Prana, the one that runs in all the living organisms.

321. Prāṇadaḥ (Also words 65, 408, 956)

प्राणदः

The one who gives prāṇa, life.

Prāṇa that is the life-energy of all living beings appears inert. Inert means it is not aware of itself and still prāṇa is life giving. What makes this beautiful paradox possible? Clearly none of the jivas create this entire system of prāṇa. While the prāṇa that we breathe is inert, who gave this to us? Who makes Prāṇa move and not be static? As Prāṇadaḥ, he is the giver of prāṇa, the strength, the life-energy, to all living beings, including the devas and the asuras. He is the one who breathes prāṇa, life, into all living beings.

Somebody could argue that bottled prāṇa in the form of oxygen cylinders is enough to keep life going. But in a dead body, try pumping in oxygen. It does not work!As human beings we are not the ones who can give prana. A person who has asthma or some symptom of breathlessness is better able to appreciate the power of prāṇa. Further, so much else besides prana is necessary to sustain life. Bhagavān is the one who is in the form of the earth, the atmosphere, the sun, the moon, light, air, water and so on, which are all necessary for life. When all these are available, you are sustained for life. This creates a life-chain. Therefore, Bhagavān in the form of the various phenomena that gives and sustains life, is Prāṇada.

This can be seen in the Purāṇas also. During the churning of the milky ocean, Lord Viṣṇu was the one who gave strength to both the devas and asuras for churning, especially when they were tired and also affected by the poisonous fumes of the snake Vāsuki. He was the one who came as Dhanvantari, with the life giving amṛta. He was the one who in the form of Mohini, gave the extra prāṇa-bala to the devas by distributing the amṛta to them and deprived the asuras of it. This is the līlā of Bhagavān.

322. Vāsavānujaḥ

वासवानुजः

The younger brother of Indra.

Lord Viṣṇu in the Vāmana-avatāra was born to Aditi and Kaśyapa. Being born as the younger brother of Vāsava, that is, Indra, He is called Vāsavānuja. This is the līlā of Bhagavān.

323. Apāṃ nidhiḥ

अपांनिधिः

The storehouse of water.

Water is such a blessing. We know this to be more true than ever, every time we are thirsty. Nothing can quench one's thirst like good old water. Water not only purifies, cleans, flows but is life giving. We can survive without food for some days but without water, life starts to ebb out. We studied in school science that the body is largely composed of water. How is water available to us?

Nidhi means a storehouse, a reservoir. Apāṃ nidhiḥ means a reservoir of water. It can be a pond, lake or an ocean. In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, 'sarasām asmi sāgaraḥ – among the reservoirs of water, I am (especially manifest in) the ocean'(10.24). It is not the claim of a multinational or a bunch of people who think that they have ownership over natural resources. Ownership is different from managing resources.

Any vastness that you see, there you can recognize Īśvara. The ocean is very important in nature because it creates the cycle of clouds, rain, streams, rivers and so on. The rivers flow into the ocean and the water cycle is created. The quantity of water on the earth is the same all the time; it does not deplete.

So Bhagavān is the apāṃ nidhi, the storehouse of water, which is not only the oceans but also the ponds, the lakes and the clouds and all that are involved in this water cycle which makes life possible. He is also that cycle. Bhagavān blesses us.

324. Adhiṣṭhānam
अधिष्ठानं
The reality of everything.

Many of us think that reality is what we perceive through our senses. Referring to a rumour about the neighbour, someone says thumping his chest, ‘ It is true. I saw it with my own eyes, I heard it with my own ears.’ The perspective of Science also adds to this. This perception of the world around us is refined by using instruments like Hubble telescope and at an individual level through spectacles, hearing aids, binoculars, etc.

How do we know the world? The world is available to me through names and forms - the news anchor on TV, the gurgling laughter of friends at a college reunion, the texture of the blanket, the taste of the first set of tomatoes picked up from the organic form, the fragrance of camphor during a puja. In all of this, what is common? I am able to perceive all these different names and forms. How am I able to perceive these? Because I exist and only then these perceptions - taste, touch, sound, sight, smell, come to light.

Taste of tomatoes is. It exists. Texture Is. It exists. Laughter of friends is. It exists. The sight on TV is. It exists. The fragrance of camphor is. It exists. What is common in all of these? Isness or Existence which cannot be conceptualised. There is no object or condition that is existence. When you say ‘space is,’ ‘time is’ that ‘is’ness is the adhiṣṭhāna of space and time. To put it mathematical language, it looks like Isness is the common denominator.

The basis, the locus of everything is existence.
Can Isness or existence be divided?
Can Isness or existence be separated according to perceptions?
Can Isness or existence be separated by majority or minority vote?
Can Isness or existence be conditioned by concepts and ideas?
Can Isness or existence ever be limited?

Even what I take myself to be through my association with body and mind Is. The locus of I is existence. The body and mind are names and forms. Existence always is. Even the memory of the past or plans for the future exist in my awareness, now. Brahman, as the material cause is the substratum, the svarūpa, the Isness or reality of everything.

Bhagavān is the truth of everything that is here. ‘Matsthāni sarvabhūtāni – all beings are in me’(BG.9.4)

325. Apramattaḥ
अप्रमत्तः
The one who is never indifferent.

In the Taittiriya Upanisad, as a part of the valedictory speech, the teacher tells the students to not be indifferent or to not deviate from the path of dharma or from truth. The teacher further says, 'May you not be indifferent to your own well being. May you not move away from the study and teaching of the scriptures'.

Living in today's times, we see a lot of indifference around us. Being indifferent manifests as a 'I don't care' attitude. It is different from being neutral. In fact it almost borders on apathy, an attitude of lack of interest or concern or enthusiasm towards oneself, others and even the state of the nation. This indifference arises as a response to protect oneself from hurt or just a focus on oneself and one's little world. When the attitude is indifferent, no action follows and that is not good for a society in the long run. When we are indifferent, we don't take responsibility and hence don't contribute to any change that could have been possible. This indifference could be towards one's job, family members, the status of socio-political issues or global warming. After some time, if this attitude becomes pervasive then we lose interest in most things. We want to be aware of the things that we are indifferent to and examine if we want to change our attitude as this indifferent response might have become mechanical.

On the other hand, Bhagavān is Apramatta, never indifferent or lazy in response. He does not delay in giving the fruits of action to the respective people. If we perceive a delay, it is just that – our perception, not the reality. Even if an electrical engineer touches a live wire, the result of shock is given without delay. Or, when fire is touched, it burns without delay.

Similarly, Bhagavān is the giver of the results of our actions, both dṛṣṭa and adṛṣṭa, at the appropriate time without any delay. We seek grace to not be indifferent but to be proactive and do what we can and can what we can't.

326. Pratiṣṭhitaḥ

प्रतिष्ठितः

The one who is well established.

Living implies relating to the world. Relating implies some level of interdependence because of interconnectedness. At the least, as human beings, we depend on plants for food and a good amount of oxygen. Both animals and plants depend on the sun, air, water, soil for their growth and sustenance. All living beings depend on one another for their survival.

Besides survival needs our social - emotional needs for affection, care, power, achievement, fun are met in different ways by different people and different conditions. A corporate executive fulfills her need for achievement by meeting company targets and the company rewards her with an increment or bonus. There too, there is a level of dependence and interdependence. Our emotional maturity lies in recognising our level of inter connectedness as we grow into becoming more independent of conditions or people for our happiness.

Absolute physical and emotional independence is not possible nor desirable as the body-mind, born of the five elements requires the same to sustain it. We try to discover the Atma that is aware of the body-mind-sense-complex and its true nature. We seek the grace of Bhagavān who is not supported by anything.

Everything has its being, its pratiṣṭhtā, support, in Bhagavān,he abides in Himself without any support. Anything that supports should itself be unshakable and well supported. Nārada asks Sanatkumāra, 'where is that bhūma-vastu supported?' Sanatkumāra replies, 'sve mahimni – in its own glory' meaning that it is firm on its own, without requiring any external support (Chā.Up.7.24.1)

327. Skandaḥ

स्कन्दः

The one who flows or dries.

While doing group sessions, I often request people to introduce themselves with a symbol that best represents them. Amongst the many unique ones that the participants choose, one of them is water as it stands for the one who flows over all obstacles. Water always keeps going cheerfully and does not stagnate.

Bhagavān obtains, flows in the heart of everyone in the form of ānanda and He is called Skanda. Bhagavān is the one who evaporates, dries up in the form of air. Every day we see the effect of this as we do our laundry. The washed clothes dry after a few hours. Pulses are available to us because of this property of drying them. Waters dried up after the recent Chennai floods.

Skanda is also the name of Lord Kārtikeya. He is the Commander-in-Chief of the army of the devas and the son of Shiva and Parvati.

328. Skandadharaḥ

स्कन्दधरः

The one who establishes the path of dharma.

The word skanda here has the meaning of the path of dharma. It is the path of dharma that takes you to ānanda. Skandaṃ dhārayati – Bhagavān is the one who establishes and maintains the path of dharma and also the relationship between the means and the end, that is, between ānanda and the means for ānanda, like the condition of the mind and so on. He protects dharma by destroying adharma and also by inducing people to follow dharma.

329. Dhuryaḥ

धुर्यः

The one who bears the load.

Lifting a safety pin is a big load for an ant but not for a human being. Lifting a glass of water is not considered as a load but for a person who is recovering from a paralytic stroke in his right arm, that glass of water is a load. What we consider a load depends on my understanding of a situation including the resources I have. What we consider a load depends on my objectivity.
To lift a glass is simple as I recognise that I have the strength for it.

Hostile work colleagues, a partner with a roving eye, a rebellious teenager child, financial debt can all be seen as a load as I have not yet found the resources to deal with these or I am bogged down by subjectivity and 'I want things my way' only. Whatever be the nature of difficulty, it is a situation that needs dealing with. With objectivity I see the resources I have to help me deal with the situation to either resolve it to the extent possible or accept it including my reactions to it. Any difficulty becomes less of a load when there is someone to share it with and I share the load with Bhagavān.

As the adhiṣṭhana, the basis of this entire universe, Bhagavān is the one who bears the load, the weight of this entire universe. What is the weight? It is like saying that the clay bears the weight, the load of all the pots, when the pots have really no weight by themselves. So too, how can we say that Īśvara bears the weight of the whole universe? The load is the responsibility of creating, sustaining and resolving. Even that is like child's play for Him.

If at all there is a load, it means only all our puṇya and pāpa; our rāga and dveṣa, likes and dislikes; our kāma and krodha, our desires and anger; our unconscious - all these are heavy and we load Īśvara with all these. Ultimately, it is only Īśvara who carries this heavy load. Thus He is Dhurya. If Īśvara is not almighty, He would have been a hunchback by now!

330. Varadaḥ

वरदः

The giver of boons.

When a baby is born, the baby is not born with an oxygen cylinder. The oxygen necessary for the baby is given in the form of the air we breathe. The water and the food required for sustenance is given. After the umbilical cord is cut, the baby starts to breathe on its own. As helpless as the human baby is, the capacity to suck its food, in the form of reflex is given. The capacity to cry, signaling to the caregiver that something is required, is also given. The capacity to completely trust its caregivers is also given. In such a helpless situation, the capacity to survive is given. The laws governing the principles of reflexes is given. The baby did not have to win any contest to earn this privilege. Even, without asking for a boon, where there is the given, there is the giver, Īśvara.

Parameśvara is Varada, the one who fulfills the desires of everyone, by giving the objects of desire as varas, boons. This is how the majority likes to invoke Īśvara, as the giver of boons. A yāga as well as a puja is complete only when dakṣiṇā is given. The dakṣiṇā given in yāgas is also called vara.So He is the one who in the form of the yajamāna, the performer of the yāga, and the giver of the various dakṣiṇās.

331. Vāyuvāhanaḥ (also word 856)

वायुवाहनः

The one who makes the vāyus blow.

The Purāṇas say that vāyu is of seven types, situated in different regions, just as even modern science divides the atmosphere as troposphere, stratosphere and so on. The seven are āvaha– between the earth and the clouds; pravaha–between the clouds and the sun; udvaha (also known

as anuvaha)–between the sun and the moon; saṃvaha–between the moon and the stars; vivaha–between the stars and the planets; parāvaha–between the planets and the saptarṣi-maṇḍala; parivaha–between the saptarṣi-maṇḍala and the dhruva-nakṣatra, the pole star. It is Īśvara alone who makes the vayu blow, move within their spheres and maintain their pressures and hence, He is called Vayuvahana.

All types of fragrance and perfumes use vāyu as the vahana, that is, the air as their vehicle for carrying the fragrance and hence are vāyuvāhanas. And Īśvara is that fragrance and hence is called Vāyuvāhana.

The one who blesses through vāyu is Īśvara. When we breathe in air, it is Bhagavān who enters us, riding on vāyu. We acknowledge this when we chant, Namaste vayo, tvameva pratyakśam brahmāsi, in a beautiful śanti mantra. When we exhale, it is air; but when we breathe in, it is prana. So, it is Īśvara who converts air into prāṇa.

332. Vāsudevaḥ (also words 695, 709)

वासुदेवः

The one who is the indweller of all and the one who shines.

The word Vāsudeva is made up of two words vāsu and deva and both have many meanings. By this one word, Īśvara is shown as both the material cause and the efficient cause.
Vasati – The Lord alone lives, exists in all as the sat, existence. The material cause exists in and pervades the effect. Īśvara as the material cause exists in and pervades everything.

It is the material cause that lends existence to the effect and sustains it. Īśvara lends existence to all and makes them live. All pots exist in clay. All ornaments exist in gold. All effects live, exist in the material cause. The whole creation lives, exists in Him. Even though He is all and all-pervasive, He veils, 'as though' everyone with His māyā, so that is is not easy for us to know Him. For all these reasons, as the material cause, He is Vāsu. The word 'deva' is derived from the verbal root 'dīv' which has many meanings.

Dīvyati, dyotate, krīdati – One who shines, one who is effulgent, is a deva. The Lord, as the all-knowing conscious being is Deva. Not only is He the upādāna-kāraṇa, the material cause, but He is also the nimitta-kāraṇa, the efficient cause. And creating is just a krīdā, a play, for the Lord. So as vāsu and deva, He is Vāsudeva.

333. Bṛhadbhānuḥ

बृहद्भानुः

The one who possesses abundant rays.

How is the light from the Sun available to us? In the form of rays. Just a few? No. Abundant rays of light which light up half the earth. These abundant rays of Sunlight are really a portion of the electromagnetic radiation given off by the Sun in particular infrared, visible and ultraviolet light. Sunlight gets filtered through the Earth's atmosphere and is daylight when the Sun is above the horizon.When the direct solar radiation is not blocked by clouds, it is experienced as sunshine, a combination of bright light and radiant heat. When it is blocked by the clouds it is experienced as

diffused light. Here, we are only talking about the Sun in the Milky way. Photosynthesis for the plants is possible only because of these abundant rays of light. Our food depends on this.

Īśvara is the one, to whom the, the abundant and great rays in the form of the rays of the sun, moon and others, belong. He lights up the whole universe with many suns and many moons and hence He is called Bṛhadbhānu. Every star is a sun.

So Bhagavān is the one who energizes and lights up the world through all these suns.

334. Ādidevaḥ (also word 490)

आदिदेवः

The effulgent being and cause of everything.

Ādi meaning cause is always at the beginning and the effect is always later. The one who is effulgent is a deva.

All religions agree on 'God' or the understanding of God presented in their tradition as almighty, all powerful and all knowing and hence in some ways, 'The cause of it all'. The unique thing about Sanatana dharma and the vedic vision is that we know Īśvara to also be the effect. The effect means every manifestation, this jagat – the sun, the moon, the stars, the plants, the animals, the human beings, civilisations, perspectives, beliefs, knowledge all of it, is Īśvara. Hence there is no sacred-secular divide for us as all is sacred. If all is sacred, we treat everything with honor and respect and ahimsa becomes a way of life. The cause of this jagat is sacred. The effect is sacred too and not meant for crass consumption.

Being self-effulgent, self-evident and all-knowing and being the cause of everything, He is called Ādideva. So, He is the nimitta-kāraṇa, the efficient or the intelligent cause of the entire jagat. He is the cause of all the devas also.

335. Purandaraḥ

पुरन्दरः

The destroyer of cities.

According to the Purānas, Indra is called Purandara, the destroyer of the cities of the enemies of the devas. It is Bhagavān alone who is in the form of Indra and He is Purandara.

The puras are the worlds which are above, below and in the middle, and also the three periods of time-past, present and future. Kāla, time, deśa, space and all the worlds are called pura. So the Lord, who withdraws all these three into Himself at the time of resolution, is called Purandara.

It is the grace of Bhagavān that is able to destroy all the regions of confusion (pura), which are born out of sheer ignorance. All puras are like the gandharva-nagaras, cities imagined in the clouds, and born of delusion. The saṃsārī goes to various lokas and it is the grace of Bhagavān that gives the knowledge which in turn burns up these cities. Or, the three śarīras-sthūla, sūkṣma and kāraṇa-that a jīva has, are the three puras. By giving us self-knowledge, He helps to destroy them. Hence, He is called Purandara.

336. Aśokaḥ

अशोकः

The one free of sorrow and so on.

Here the word śoka stands for the six-fold afflictions like śoka and moha – sorrow and confusion that afflict the mind, aśanāyā and pipāsā – hunger and thirst that afflict the prāṇas, jarā and maraṇa – ageing and death that afflict the physical body. Bhagavān is Aśoka, free from sorrow, meaning that He is free from these six-fold afflictions.

When someone is in sorrow, others come to console. Thus, all of us meet and live with a support system. In the process, everybody shares the sorrow and this is how sorrow is managed. Shared grief is less hurting. But, when we want to share our grief, sometimes we find that the other person has his/her own grief or picks up our grief and becomes sad. We tell all our troubles and sorrows to Bhagavān. If everyone cries and tells his or her sorrow to Bhagavān, will not Bhagavān pick up the grief of everyone? If so, He would be the saddest person. A person who wants to help drowning people out of the water, should be able to keep floating. So too, Bhagavān should be kūṭastha – unaffected, asaṅga – untouched by grief. Grief cannot touch Him. He is Aśoka. Only then Bhagavān is Bhagavān.

Ignorance and therefore, confusion and sorrow are the afflictions of a jīva. Not only is Bhagavān Aśoka, but the jīva, that is 'you,' is also essentially aśoka, free from grief because Bhagavān is the ātmā in all of us.

337. Tāraṇaḥ

तारणः

The one who helps to cross saṃsāra.

Nobody wants crutches however attractive the crutch is. The crutch may be gold plated and studded with jewels yet the person who is using the crutch wants to regain his health and stop using it as soon as possible. Most of us may not be using physical crutches but we have other crutches.

Finances are crutches, name is a crutch, fame is a crutch, power is a crutch, community is a crutch. All these are crutches to be secure. The more crutches we have, the more insecure we are. When we seek security, it means we feel insecure. There is nothing wrong or right here. Finances, relationships, power are all important to get things done but if my sense of security comes from something that is volatile then my sense of security will be equally volatile, if not more. We are only trying to understand and question what is going on and not dismiss these.

It is important to understand that in all the things we seek - the sea side property, the person who will make our life complete, the bonus etc, we are really not seeking security. What we are really seeking is freedom from being insecurity. Freedom from continuous struggle, freedom from becoming, freedom from exhaustion of trying and trying and still ' not being good enough'.

When this is recognized, our seeking gets a direction because this life of becoming is what characterizes a life of saṃsāra. A life of saṃsāra has nothing to do with whether one is married thrice, divorced, has many children or the size of one's family. It is the world view of life, of oneself and of others. One could well be a sannyāsi but still caught up with a life of saṃsāra. This life of becoming is relevant for some self growth. The crutches are useful until they give me a relative sense of security and I regain my health to now seek freedom from insecurity.

It is by self-knowledge alone that can truly discover freedom from insecurity as one crosses saṃsāra, because saṃsāra is born on self-ignorance. Īśvara is called Tāraṇa because He is the one who helps us cross the ocean of saṃsāra. He provides us with whatever is necessary to gain the knowledge, in the form of the śāstra and guru, and also the knowledge itself and thereby helps one to cross saṃsāra.

338. Tāraḥ (also word 968)

तारः

The one who saves from the fear of saṃsāra.

The jīva has to cross the river of saṃsāra, a river which has crocodiles, sharks and whales in the form of impediments and problems. These cause fears. In the river of saṃsāra, the fears are many and varied: fear of loneliness, fear of threat to life, fear of losing loved ones, fear of an ex relationship of partner being rekindled, fear of loss of reputation, fear of old age and impending physical dependence and so on.

If there is anything that can sap the enthusiasm for life, it is fear. Many of our fears are imagined and built up over time. And it all starts with an innocent game of 'what if (…happened)?' We keep building up scenarios and then it is all overwhelming and we cannot function because of the fear. All fear comes from helplessness and the only way out is to discover courage and also seek help if required. For relative fears, this is a good way out.

The jīvahas to be born again and again, go through life and suffer jarā, old age and finally die only to be born again. In each of these lifetimes, what about the fear of insecurity, the fear of insignificance, the fear of inadequacy that underlies so many of our fears? What is the way out? Seeking help from the one who can truly help.Lord Keśava will help us cross all the obstacles, if we choose Him as our boatman.

The dhyāna-śloka of the Gītā tells us how the Pāṇḍavas were able to cross the dangerous river of the war, with various personifications of adharma as the obstacles, only because Lord Keśava was their boatman.

Tāra also refers to Om, praṇava which is the name of Brahman. It is said that the very chanting of the tāra-mantra Om uplifts one and removes the fear of saṃsāra. In the Śrīrudram, Lord Śiva is also called Tāra, the one who guides us to mokṣa.

339. Śūraḥ

शूरः

The source of all courage.

The Lord is the source of all courage and therefore, is called Śūra.

What about us? When have we displayed courage in our lives? When we have surrendered to principles. The courage to stand up to injustice comes from a value for justice. The courage to go through labour pains is for the sake of bringing one's own child into the world. The courage to pursue an unconventional career is due to the love for that particular field and creativity. The courage for our freedom fighters to have fought the British with ahimsa was for freedom of this great land. The courage to walk out of a debilitating relationship is due to the value for mutual respect. The courage to stay in a relationship is made easier because of commitment and loyalty. We think displaying courage is extraordinary and only visible in extraordinary acts and acrobatics. Courage has little to do with physical strength, although strength helps. Courage is not the attribute of extraordinary personalities seen in the pages of a newspaper or magazine. Really speaking, when we surrender to principles in the form of dharma, we discover courage in ourselves.

All courage comes by surrendering to Īśvara. If one does not surrender to Īśvara, then one becomes a small person. Courage cannot be got, retaining the ego. Only when the ego is surrendered, can courage be got from Īśvara.

One needs courage and the capacity to face challenges and when the challenges come, one needs to be ready to face it fearlessly. There is a need to face it, even with fear. We may depend on different people for strength and courage which is fine. Strong people in our lives also seem to have some fears and they are fallible. What about Īśvara? There is no fear in Īśvara and therefore the Lord is called Śūra. So the Lord is the source of courage.

340. Śauriḥ (also word 644)
शौरिः
The descendant of Śūra.

This is an avatāra word. In His incarnation as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He was born of Vasudeva who was the son of Śūra, also belonging to the clan of Śūras. Hence, He is called Śauri.

341. Janeśvaraḥ
जनेश्वरः
The Lord of all the beings.

What determines the following: Being born into a particular family with particular parentage; having certain kind of siblings; being a natural citizen of a particular country, the socio-cultural influences in one's childhood, meeting one's guru, the people who play a big role in our lives: positively or negatively. It all comes down to one's karma.

The choices in my previous lifetimes as well as my current lifetime are the karma phala I undergo in this lifetime as some karma fructified. My choices in this lifetime i.e. my karma in this lifetime will contribute in determining some aspects of future lifetimes, if any. The beauty of our Sanātana dharma is the consistent theme of proactive, awareful living in line with dharma,

with a growing understanding of Īśvara. This is evident even in the classical arts, performing arts, be it music or dance or even performing anāsana. In all of the classical art forms, there is no mindless entertainment, as a performer or as the audience. The whole focus is awareful functioning and Īśvara. When one functions awarefully where is there room for blaming others or yourself, criticizing others or yourself or one's destiny? You focus on what you can do rather than on what you cannot do. There is no wallowing in helplessness. If we find ourselves feeling helpless, always blaming everyone for one's life then we are not taking responsibility.

For all the janas, people, to be born the Lord is the cause. For the cause of anything that is born, the Lord is the cause. Even after birth, He keeps giving karma-phala and so He is the Lord of all the beings. Therefore, He is Janeśvara.

342. Anukūlaḥ

अनुकूलः

The one who is favourable to all.

People including family members are nice and favourable to us provided some conditions are met. The conditions may vary. Everyone does what is favourable to oneself; no one does anything unfavourable to oneself. Bhagavān is Anukūla, favourable to all, because He is the self of all. This is unconditional. Conditions don't apply!There is no partiality involved nor does he stand against anybody, because He is essentially the self and also the one who is in the form of the entire jagat. He sustains every thought and also sustains every will.

Can you think a thought which is not sustained byBhagavān (in the form of the psychological order), however elevating or disgusting?

Can you go to a place where Bhagavān(in the form of physical order) is not?

Can you think of a time where Bhagavān(in the form of the physical order) is not present?

If one surrenders to Him, then, He is much more anukūla, favourable. He does not stand against anybody and one does not have to fight with Him.

But, we resist him a lot. How? By not seeing the order of our life. When I examine my life, am I able to see the patterns that have shaped me, the similar people I tend to meet or have problems with, my attitudes to men, my attitudes to women, my general approach to life? Am I able to see that the law of karma/dharma pervades every moment of my life? Am I able to see how Bhagavān pervades my life?

It is true that some things are difficult to accept than others. Still acceptance is a recognition of what IS, not approval. We resist Bhagavān when we cannot accept and come to peace with what has happened in our lives. We resist Him by not seeing things or situations clearly andhence we are not able to tap His anukūlatva, favourable nature. Anukūla is one who is upakāraka, favourable and not apakāraka, unfavourable. He is always favourable and conditions don't apply!.

343. Śatāvartaḥ

शतावर्तः

The one who incarnates hundreds of times (to protect dharma).

The Lord has incarnated hundreds of times, in order to protect dharma. Therefore, He is Śatāvarta. In all the different kalpas, He has taken countless avatāras for the protection of dharma. In every kalpa there are avatāras and avatāra can be all over the world, at all times and in all generations. So there are countless avataras.

All avatāras are not like Kṛṣṇāvatāra, which is said to be a pūrṇavatāra, where the glory of the Lord is said to be expressed fully. There are others which are aṃśāvatāras, wherein there is the expression of only an aṃśa, a little glory for establishing something good. Even through the jīva, who does a good deed, Bhagavān expresses Himself and does something good.

In the tradition, Sage Vyāsa and Śaṅkarācārya, the authors of the stupendous works of the Brahmasūtra and its bhāṣya, are praised as the avatāras of Lord Keśava and Lord Śiva respectively.

In India we have a tendency amongst some sections to deify gurus/astrologers/pujaris and put him/her on a pedestal and even call them avatāras and demand that others recognize him/her as one. The purpose of an incarnation of an avatāra is the re-establishment of dharma and teachings. If the focus is on self growth, then I will see what I can learn from this being because this being appears extraordinary to me. Different expressions of worship and bowing down without taking responsibility for my thoughts, words and actions is empty bhakti.

The human body is said to have hundred nādīs and it is Īśvara who traverses through them in the form of the prāṇa and hence He is Śatāvarta.

344. Padmī

पद्मी

The one who has the lotus in the hand.

As the one who has padma, the lotus in His hand, He is Padmī. The lotus in His hand signifies the six bhagas that also go to indicate Bhagavān.

They are, aiśvarya, dharma, yaśas, śrī, jñāna and vairāgya – overlordship, dharma, glory, wealth, knowledge and dispassion. These are present in Bhagavān in absolute measure.

345. Padmanibhekṣaṇaḥ

पद्मनिभेक्षणः

The one who has eyes like the lotus.

This is for upāsanā. The Lord is one whose īkṣaṇe, eyes, are padma-nibha, like the lotus, that is, He has pleasing eyes.

Human beings are wired in such a way that eye contact is so significant in our interactions. The frequency of eye contact, the duration of it, the expression the eyes evoke, the connectedness that it fosters, there is something magical about the connectedness experienced just through eye contact. It is interesting that the word is also 'eye contact' in that, you contact another through the eyes. There is no word like ear contact, speech contact etc.

When Śrī Kṛṣṇa is visualized as an object of meditation, then His eyes are not fierce but pleasing as they are like the lotus. His eyes shower grace and inspire peace in others.

346. Padmanābhaḥ (also words 48, 196)

पद्मनाभः

The one in the centre of the lotus.

The one who obtains in the navel, in the middle of the lotus is Padmanābha. Brahmāji is pictured as kamalāsanastha, sitting in the lotus. In the Purāṇas the earth is likened to a padma, lotus and its nābhi, is the meru-karṇikā where Brahmāji is sitting. It is Bhagavān alone who is manifest as Brahmāji.

In our culture, the lotus flower occupies an important place in literature and religious rites and it reveals Parameśvara. The lotus is a flower that is born in slush and it blooms only in sunlight. Even though it grows in the slush, the lotus is always pure. Even though it is in the water, water droplets don't wet the leaf. They look like well formed droplets. Even science confirms this fact that nothing can stick to the lotus petal. Poets and writers find the lotus very inspiring.

The heart is compared to the lotus. The Lord resides in everyone's heart as one's ātmā.

347. Aravindākṣaḥ

अरविन्दाक्षः

The one who is lotus-eyed.

This is for upāsanā. When you meditate upon the form of the Lord, you meditate upon Him as having eyes that are long and pleasing like the aravinda, the lotus petals.

The avatāra forms of Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa can be taken for meditation.

348. Padmagarbhaḥ

पद्मगर्भः

The one who is in the lotus of the heart.

This is for upāsanā. The Lord is to be meditated upon as obtaining in the middle of the hṛdaya-padma, the lotus of the heart. This meditation is spoken about in the daharākaśa-vidyā (Chā. Up.8.11).

The two names Padmanābha and Padmagarbha are connected. He obtains in the middle of the lotus of the heart. But He is not recognized because He is Padma-garba, the one who is within

the closed lotus of the heart. This lotus opens up only in the wake of knowledge. Unless the sun of knowledge is there, the lotus will not open and you will not be able to recognize Him.
When the sun of knowledge rises in the firmament of the buddhi, then you will recognize Him. The lotus of the buddhi is the upalabdhi sthāna, the place for recognizing Him.

349. Śarīrabhṛt
शरीरभृत्
The one who is the nourisher.

Once it is said that Bhagavān is in the heart, then immediately the conclusion is, that Bhagavān is the ādheya, the contained and the physical body with the heart is the ādhāra, the container. Then the body would become the location for Bhagavān. But in fact, everything is located in Bhagavān, including the physical body. It is said that Bhagavān is seated in the lotus of the heart, only to point out the upalabdhi-sthāna, the place where we recognize Īśvara. Recognisation takes place only in the buddhi and where recognition takes place, there alone non-recognition is also present. Buddhi is the place of recognition because ignorance and confusion are only there. So, enlightenment is only for the buddhi and this is the opening of the heart or the rising of the sun.

The misconception that may arise from the previous name that the Lord is like a tenant, who is accommodated in the body, is removed by this name Śarīrabhṛt. He alone accomodates all the śarīras; in Him alone everything is contained. He alone sustains all of them annarūpeṇa and prāṇarūpeṇa, in the form of food and air.

He is Śarīrabhṛt also because svamāyayā śarīrāṇi bibharti – with His māyā-śakti He takes up various bodies in various avatāras.

350. Maharddhiḥ
महाऋद्धि:
The one who has countless glories.

Ṛddhi means wealth, prosperity, glory. Parameśvara is one with mahatī ṛddhi, countless glories, immeasurable wealth and prosperity.

If you look at all the glories of Īśvara severally, it is countless. When we look at any minister, say, the railway minister, we see that his glory extends to wherever the railways exist. In that way it is countless. But then it is an earned glory in terms of position, accomplishments.
Suppose you say that the Lord is all power, all wealth, all prosperity, then that is His limitless glory.

351. Ṛddhaḥ (also word 278)
ऋद्धः
The one who has expanded in the form of the universe.

Our glories in the form of talents or riches are cultivated and earned. These could be cultivated because of the inherent potential that was present.

The ṛddhis, the glories and prosperity, that Bhagavān has, are not earned glories like ours. Bhagavān is Ṛddha, glorious, prosperous. He is ṛddha by nature. The entire prapañca, universe, is His glory.

Or, He is Ṛddha, because He has expanded in the form of this universe.

352. Vṛddhātmā

वृद्धात्मा

The one who is of full-grown nature.

Among work professionals there is much talk about career growth. In the relationship sphere, there is talk about personal growth. Whatever be the nature of growth, the bottom line is a cultivation of some qualities to a greater degree. Any growth is in time and space. This is subject to limitations. It is a matter of 'more' or 'less'. For instance, Compassion can certainly be cultivated. What about limitless compassion? It is not required or necessary. Even with a little compassion life for you and people around you becomes so much easier.

Any action spiritual or worldly, being limited in time and space cannot produce limitless result. Some one may say, repeated meditation will liberate me and I will become limitless. With a limited body mind, only limited results are possible in the functional realm. This must be understood well as otherwise we start expecting limitlessness, in other words moksa from work, relationships, family and hobbies.

The word vṛddha, as derived from the verbal root 'vṛdh' in the meaning of growth, can indicate one grown spatially or temporally. Īśvara is Vṛddhātmā, one of full-grown nature, because time-wise He is the oldest being. He is the cause of even Brahmāji and others. Space-wise also He is Vṛddātmā, because with the help of māyā, He is ṛddha, has expanded 'as though' to the maximum in the form of this entire universe. There is no further growth possible. As the cause of time and space, there is no further growth possible for Him. Thus the previous nāma and this nāma are connected.

353. Mahākṣaḥ

महाक्षः

The one who has big eyes.

Akṣi means eye and akṣa means senses. For the purpose of visualization, Bhagavān is pointed out as Mahākṣa, as having big, wide eyes or with all senses big and formed well.

Universally, eye contact is the way we connect to people. Some research studies have shown that just gazing and talking to each other for a few minutes was enough for people to feel connected enough to marry. This word pointing out to the Lord is from our standpoint.

He is one whose senses are limitless. Without the sense organs and therefore their limitations, the Lord can see, hear, smell, taste and touch everything. He is all knowledge. So, as one who has all knowledge, even without the senses, He is Mahākṣa.

354. Garuḍadhvajaḥ

गरुडध्वजः

The one who has Garuḍa on His flag.

Lord Viṣṇu has Garuḍa on His flag and hence, is Garuḍadhvaja. Garuḍa here stands for a devatā, who is also His vehicle. Garuḍa is a great devotee of the Lord. This indicates a devotee, who is one with or inseparable from Īśvara.

Throughout the Mahabharata, Garuda stands for power, force and martial prowess. Defeated warriors are like snakes that have been pounded upon by Garuda. The darśana of the Garuḍa is not easy; but when it happens, it is considered to be auspicious.

355. Atulaḥ

अतुलः

The one who has no equal and hence beyond comparison.

One of the ways we know about things in this world is upamāna, comparison. An upamāna, a comparison, helps to measure, to judge and understand. If one does not know what a bison is, we can say that the bison is like a buffalo. Although the person has never seen a bison in his life, the person will know that the animal is a bison because of the comparison presented. This is upamāna or illustration.

In the spirituality world, some people try and compare Bhagavān with all kinds of things. They may say that Bhagavān is pure like coconut water, vast like space or even fragrant like a rose. These examples may help to a tiny extent but to understand Bhagavān, comparison is not a means of knowledge.

Tulā is that with which something can be measured or compared. Tulā is also a balance. Bhagavān has no upamāna, no tulā, to measure Him. He cannot be compared with anything. What can you compare the limitless with? From the standpoint of His essential nature, He is limitless and has no form or attribute to be compared with. Further, He is the only one and a second thing is not available for comparison. Hence, He is Atula.

Even, from the standpoint of His being Īśvara with His māyā-śakti, there is none to equal Him. Arjuna tells Sri Krsna, ‘na tvatsamo’ styabhyadhikaḥ kuto’nyaḥ–there is none equal to you. Where is the possibility of one greater?’ (BG.11.43).

356. Śarabhaḥ

शरभः

The one who shines as the inner self.

Śara here refers to the śarīra, the body. The śarīra is so called because, it is subject to disintegration. There is no creation without putting things together. The body also manages with some spare parts such stents, plates, screws and various accessories such as spectacles, hearing

aids, walking stick as the case may be. The body is made up of parts and each part is again made of cells and hence, the body can fall apart.

The one, who shines as the inner self, as the ātmā in them–in every śarīra, is Śarabha. As the ātmā, it is self-revealing. I don't need any other person or condition or mirror to say that I exist. I exist and hence I can look into the mirror. I exist and hence I can relate with another person. I exist and hence can know many things. This existence, because of its shine, everything is revealed. Everything I become aware of is because of the Lord alone who shines as the pratyagātmā.

357. Bhīmaḥ (948) or Abhīmaḥ

भीमः or अभीमः

i. The one who is feared by all.
ii. The one who causes no fear.

According to grammer rules, this nāma can be taken as Bhīma or as Abhīma. Bhīma means one who is formidable, causes fear in all. Abhīma means one who causes no fear. How can the Lord be both?

We may be afraid of local godfathers. That is understandable. But, if even God is a source of fear, what will we do? God is one, to whom we can go without fear and relate more to Him than to one's mother. Even the mother may lay some conditions; but God is someone whom we can approach unconditionally. Therefore, Bhagavān is really Abhīma. That He is Bhīma, frightening, is said only as upacāra, because it is not that everyone is afraid of Him.

Fire is always hot. Water always flows finding its level. Vāyu blows all the time. Time always keeps moving–all these function as if they are afraid of Bhagavān. It is said in the Upaniṣhad, 'bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate, bhīṣodeti sūryaḥ, bhīṣāsmād agniścendraśca, mṛtyurdhāvati pañcama iti–Out of fear of Him, Vāyu does His work; the sun does its function out of fear; Agni is always hot and Indra does his work only out of fear of Him. Mṛtyu travels jumping from one place to another' (Tai.Up.2.8.1). Lord Vāyu does not say, 'Why should I blow? Why should I blow? Why should I move through your nostrils and keep you alive, when in all these years, you have achieved nothing?'Whether we get up to welcome him or not, Lord Sūrya rises every morning without fail. Lord Agni does not say, 'I am tired of being hot. Let me be cool for a while.' Lord Death does not go uniformly. He is not predictable because he moves all over in leaps and bounds. But still, he does his job, he never stops. All the devas and all the natural forces do their jobs without fail, as though they are afraid of transgressing His order. So figuratively, the Lord is said to be Bhīma, fearful.

But really, Bhagavān is Abhīma. He is one, knowing whom, one becomes fearless. Fear is there only because one does not understand Īśvara. When one is the doer of actions, he is the author of his actions, but the results of those actions are not in his hands, because many factors are involved in the result. Īśvara gives the results of action by His laws and among these laws, the law of karma is an important law. According to the law of karma, ones past actions come into the present picture to decide the result. Therefore, what one does now may not produce the desired

results. So one has to intelligently accept the results, because, the Lord is the giver of karma-phala, which is exactly in keeping with ones actions.

The Lord is in the form of law and the knowledge of the Lord, makes one free from fear and insecurity and hence, He is Abhīma. The one, who has even a little knowledge of Īśvara, that He is the unfailing giver of the results of action, does not look upon upon Īśvara as a source of fear. He is in the form of the order. It is for one to choose and do his actions. Afterwards, whatever comes, is taken as Īśvara-prasada. In this, there is no fear of doing any action, because one is not afraid of failure. One just does what he can do. Thus, even a little understanding of Īśvara, gives this fearlessness.

When you understand Īśvara as sat-chit-ānanda-ātmā, as one who is nondual, then, there is no more fear because there is no second thing to be afraid of. Only when there is a second thing there is fear, because it makes you small. Then, the whole jagat is different from you, because what you are not is inifinitely big and you become very small. This gives fear. Understanding Īśvara, releases you from fear and you come to know that you are no more small, isolated and alienated.

Therefore, the same Upaniṣad says, that the one who finds oneness with that Brahman gains fearlessness(Tai.Up.2.7.1).

So Bhagavān is Bhīma, 'as though' a source of fear in the form of His laws which cannot be violated and Abhima, not a source of fear to sanmārga-vartis, those who strive to know Him.

358. Samayajñaḥ

समयज्ञः

The one who knows the appropriate time.

The Lord is Samayajña, the knower of the time. It does not mean that Bhagavān knows the time without having to consult a watch, but means that He knows the ucita-samaya, the appropriate time for everything. When a seed is sown, it takes a certain time for it to sprout and the plant to grow. The Lord knows when exactly the seed has to sprout, when it has to flower, when it has to bear fruits and when it has to die. What has to happen at a particular time, will happen only at that time. He is giver of the karma-phala. When what has to be done is done, then the results will be taken care of. It will happen at the right time. When exactly the karma-phala has to fructify, what kind of body one should get, where and when all these have to be given–all these are known to Him.

You cannot say, 'the Lord knows and so, He will give it to me.' One has to ask the Lord what one wants and that is an action. Prayer is a karma, an action. One asks for what one wants and Bhagavān knows when it has to be given.Thus, He knows not only the exact time of the coming, staying and going of every being and every phala, but also of the creation as a whole. Therefore, He is Samayajña.

In warfare, knowing the right time to move forward or to retreat is called samaya. Six types are described. Sandhi is making friends with another to avoid a war. To be involved in a war if

necessary is called vigraha. Yāna is making the first move towards the war. Āsana is sitting still, waiting for the enemy to make the first move. Creating a discord between the enemies to reduce the strength is dvaidha. Seeking the help of another if the enemy is stronger, is āśrayaṇa. In His Kṛṣṇāvatāra, the Lord knew and followed all these tactics and therefore, He is samayajña.

Prahlāda says, 'samatvam ārādhanam acyutasya–looking upon all beings as equal is the best worship of Lord Acyuta'(Vi.Pu.1.17.90). He is Samayajña, because looking upon all beings as sama, equal, is the best yajña, worship, that is offered to Him. The bhāvana, attitude, is that it is the same Lord who obtains in all beings and that what is pleasant to me is pleasant to all and what is unpleasant and painful to me is unpleasant and painful to others also. Its expression is in treating all creatures with respect and causing no hiṃsā to them. This is the best worship that Lord Viṣṇu loves.

359. Havirhariḥ
हविर्हरिः
The receiver of the oblations.

The words havis and hari can be looked at together as one word or as two separate words making one nāma.

Havis is what is offered in the yajñas, as oblation. There is no English equivalent to yajna. It is not a sacrifice nor merely a fire ritual. It is more an offering, a karma where fire is involved, a worship for a purpose. It is offered to the devatās like Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Prajāpati and so on, saying, 'agnaye svāha, agnaye idaṃ na mama–this oblation is for agni, it is no more mine.' The offering is wholeheartedly given.

Many Indians are put off Sanatana dharma (what is referred to as Hinduism) because of the rituals involved. It is like saying 'I don't believe in Maths. Why? Because I don't understand it.'A karma as mentioned in the Veda which is a means of knowledge i.e. vaidika karma clearly outlines the means and the end – the action to be undertaken and the result to be expected. Only the one who seeks a certain result can choose to do the karma. The Veda does not hold anyone by the scruff of their neck to do karma. For the one who seeks the usual human pursuits, the Veda steps in and offers a helping hand. Yajñas are done for the achievement of human pursuits, broadly understood as artha, kama and dharma. They are not meant to replace worldly action but enhance the result of worldly action.

Yajñas could be unknown means for known ends. For instance, the result that is desired is the birth of a child and despite all other conditions being normal, the couple are not able to have a child. Then a specific yajña is done. Thus it is an unknown means for a known end.

In a yajña, if the offering is given, who takes it away? Is Bhagavān then like a head priest who sends the assistant priests to various places to officiate, but takes a good share of the dakṣiṇā given to them, for himself? No, all the devatās are nothing but Bhagavān alone and hence, all the oblations ultimately go to Him. He is the ultimate Havirbhuk. Hence, He is called Havirhari. All the oblations finally go to Lord Viṣṇu alone, as even all the rivers finally go and reach the

ocean. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'ahaṃ hi sarva-yajñānāṃ bhoktā ca prabhureva ca–I am the one who is the enjoyer of all yajñas and I am the prabhu, the giver of the results' (9.24).

Or else He is Havis because as the Virāt-puruṣa, He was the one offered in the form of havis when the devas performed a yajña merely as a saṅkalpa. Lord Viṣṇu is called Hari because, by merely remembering Him, He robs all the pāpas and problems from all the people. He also removes ignorance and ignorance-born saṃsāra. He is Hari also because He is of harita-varṇa, a greenish-blue colour.

360. Sarvalakṣaṇalakṣaṇyaḥ

सर्वलक्षणलक्षण्यः

The one who is indicated by all pramāṇas.

In this nāma, the first lakṣaṇa refers to prāmaṇa, the means of knowledge and the second lakṣaṇa to the jñāna, knowledge, which is obtained from it. All that we know in this world, we know through these means of knowledge –

Perception – What we perceive through our senses- all sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch.
Inference – Conclusions based on sense perceptions such as there must be a vehicle honking outside the house.
Two step inference –Conclusions based on perception and inference. A person puts on weight despite not eating during the day and not having thyroid or other hormonal issues. He must be eating at night, is the conclusion.
Comparison – Knowledge based on comparative knowledge. For instance recognizing a bison because you have seen a water buffalo and told that a bison is similar although you are seeing it for the first time
Cognition of absence – Knowledge of things that are not present in the room
Sabda – Knowledge of the Vedas which talk about things unknown to me by the above – nature of svarga, unknown means like yajnas leading to known or unknown ends, who and what Bhagavan is, who you are, what is your absolute reality.

Therefore, the knowledge that isobtained through all the various pramāṇas is sarva-lakṣaṇa-lakṣaṇa and the one indicated by that knowledge is Sarvalakṣaṇalakṣaṇya. Generally, when we know an object, we come to know about its lakṣaṇa, description or definition. What is space? Space is that which accommodates.' The attribute of space is śabdha, sound. The attribute of air is the sense of touch and sound. But, it has no form. Fire, besides having sound and touch, has the attribute of form. Besides all these attributes, water has the attribute of taste and in addition to all these, earth has also the attribute of smell.

What is the attribute of Bhagavān? All these attributes belong to Bhagavān. Any attribute, any description, any definition, that is known to belong to anything, through any pramāṇa, belongs to Bhagavān alone, because He is the paramārtha, the truth of everything. Therefore, He is Sarvalakṣaṇalakṣaṇya, the one indicated through all pramāṇas. All attributes belong to Bhagavān alone, at the same time He is essentially attributeless. If Bhagavān also has attributes of His own, He would then become yet another object different from and limited by other objects.

361. Lakṣmīvān

लक्ष्मीवान

The one who is always with Lakṣmī.

He has Lakṣmī always with him on His chest. He is always united with Lakṣmī, the goddess of prosperity.

Money alone is not wealth. Eight forms of Lakṣmī are recognized and worshipped.
Adi Lakṣmī: Adi Lakṣmī and Nārayana are not different. They are one and the same.

Dhanya Lakṣmī: Dhanya Lakṣmī is the goddess of nourishment as dhanya stands for grains. By manifesting in flowers, plants, fruits, seeds, she provides for survival.

Dhana Lakṣmī: Besides currency, the sun, moon, stars, rivers, are wealth.
Santāna Lakṣmī: Generations after generation of people are possible due to the grace of the Goddess in the form of children, santāna.

Gaja Lakṣmī: Srimad Bhāgavatam describes the emergence of Lakshmi when the devas and asuras were churning it. She came out of the ocean and two elephants appeared with a pot of milk and poured it on her. She is considered as a giver of animal wealth as well as the ones whom even elephants worship.

Vidya Lakṣmī: We know that knowledge is not merely information. Knowledge in all disciplines is true wealth as it is always with you and in fact is the only form of wealth which grows when you share it. One may be blessed with dhana, dhānya and santāna but the wisdom to nurture these requires vidya.

Vijaya Lakṣmī: Vijaya is victory and usually means victory in dharma by leading a dharmika life. Victory over kāma, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, mātsarya is the blessing of the Goddess.

Dhairya Lakṣmī: Courage, strength fortitude and endurance are all required to deal with the many situations in life. One may lose wealth and other resources but by seeking grace, one can sail through any situation.

When we say Lakṣmī, really speaking we are referring to these eight manifestations and we invoke the grace for what we need. All the manifestations of Lakṣmī are with him and blessings are showered by praying to Laksmīnārāyaṇa. When Laksmīnārāyaṇa is praised, Lakṣmī is also praised.

362. Samitiñjayaḥ

समितिञ्जयः

The victorious.

We love heroes. All genders. The ability of the hero to beat the odds, to deal with difficulties to emerge stronger, wiser, victorious – we totally revel in. Our story is no less than a hero's journey. We too have faced difficulties, have dealt with them or have ducked under them but

have emerged with some learning, some lessons which we take forward. When we look at Sri Rama's life, we enjoy hearing about how he vanquished Ravana in the battle of battles and unquestioningly he was the victor, so to speak. That Sri Rama went to the forest, not for a safari, not to do research on wild life, just to keep his father's word, would that be considered a victory? For most of us, if we use our value system as a framework, we would struggle to consider it a victory. But it was a victory of dharma, a victory of integrity.

Our battles, our conflicts, our struggles are different. Are we the hero in our story or is there some other hero in our story? Are we the sidekick that assists the hero but the hero is another person (maybe parents, partner or even one's own children) or pattern that run our life? A support system is different. Are we the villain in our story who sabotages our own efforts, our accomplishments by constantly criticizing and running ourselves down? We want to be aware of this as we reclaim our own power to be the hero of our journey, each journey being unique.

Samiti may mean a battle, a hostile encounter or an assembly, a gathering. In these places and situations one may have to face challenges and win. One may fight a battle or face a challenge and win, but finally, it is Bhagavān who is victorious. Any victory belongs only to Him. Whatever be the challenge that one faces, if one succeeds in upholding dharma, that success belongs only to the Lord. Therefore, He is Samitiñjaya.

By understanding that every success is the success of Bhagavān and that one has not gained any victory, ones ego does not bloat up and a certain maturity is also gained. This is there in the culture itself, because, when we have achieved something, we immediately say that is it because of the blessing of Bhagavān. He is the destroyer of all the pain in the people.

363. Vikṣaraḥ

विक्षरः

The undecaying.

Any object we are aware of, is subject to decline, is subject to destruction. A tree even in the Amazon forest has a few hundred years of life. A flower, however beautiful and however much we try to preserve, blooms and withers away. Human beings despite all the advances in medicine are able to prolong their life but the average human life is still about 75 years in India. Perhaps in Japan it is 90 or so. In our search for eternity we think we can live through our children and so we leave behind our children as our legacy. Our children are also subject to old age and death. Many of the Fortune 500 companies of two decades ago have wound up operations. Governments in power last for their tenure if all goes well. We are faced with change all the time and we know of nothing including our own bodies that last forever.

The one, who is not subject to any kṣara, destruction, is vikṣara. The one who always Is, is the essential nature of Īśvara.

364. Rohitaḥ

रोहितः

The one who has red colour.

Rohita means the one who is red in colour. It may refer to some of His forms which are red in colour, which He assumed by His own will. Any form that is red is Bhagavān, because all forms are His forms. It refers to the Matsya- avatāra of Bhagavān. There, Bhagavān took a form which was rohita, red in colour as well as rohita, growing quickly.

Considered the first avatar of Viṣṇu, the Matsya Purana consists of the story of a matsya form, fish who bestows teaching. Handing his throne to his son, King Manu goes away into the forest to perform tapas. Satisfied with his single minded tapas, Brahma grants his wish that Manu will be rescued at the time of pralaya, total dissolution of the universe. Once when Manu is offering oblations he sees a tiny fish. As the king is about to throw away the fish, the fish pleads to be not thrown in the water, where larger fishes would devour it. Assuring the fish protection, the king put it in a small jar and took it with him. But the fish grew larger and requested for more space, the king moved it in a small pond, but the fish soon outgrew it. As the fish outgrew water reservoirs, it had to be transferred to a lake, then to larger reservoirs and subsequently to the ocean. Astonished by the fish's growth, Manu realizes that the fish is none other than Viṣṇu himself. Viṣṇu as Matsya reveals his real identity and informs Manu that a pralaya would soon come as a yuga and a kalpa were to end. Brahma sleeps in his night and his creation dissolves, submerging the earth and all the other worlds. Viṣṇu promises to return to rescue Manu at the time of pralaya and orders him to bring all living creatures and seeds of all trees on a boat, which the gods would gift him. As pralaya came, Matsya came as the large fish form and pulled the boat to safety to the highest mountain. There, Manu asks Matsya questions and their dialogue constitutes the rest of the text.

Rohita can be taken to mean the red life-giving blood. So Bhagavān is there inside us as blood, which makes the body alive and function. There is an intricate network of roads, lanes, bylanes, highways for the blood to flow all over the body reaching the most remote places, away from the heart, is n't it flawless?.

365. Mārgaḥ (also word 397)
मार्गः

The goal and the path.

There are seekers and seekers of everything including the best deal in the supermarket, the best classes for all round development of their children, the best mutual funds to invest in, the best holiday package, the best organic ingredients and food. All this is fine if what is sought is understood as the means for the end that is happiness. If all these limited goals are understood as the end, then we will keep looking for things and people - better, more, higher, faster etc.

A seeker has to be focused to truly achieve and if the seeker has discerned that moksa – freedom from sense of inadequacy is the goal, then the search gets a direction. Bhagavān is the one whom seekers of moksa, seek as their goal and discover after enquiring into the Vedānta-śāstra. He is Mārga, the object of mārgaṇa, seeking.

Or He is the Mārga, the way that takes you to paramānanda, limitless ānanda, which is none other than the Lord.

People often give the example of a place being approached from many routes and try to draw logic from that example. They extend this to saying all religions lead to the same goal. This is not true. The goal of each of these religions must be stated here before one indulges in this feel-good but senseless talk. Our goal is the recognition of oneness while living and the goals of many other religions or paths is to go to their version of 'heaven'. The goals are different and the paths are also different. Let us not fight shy of recognizing differences while upholding universal values of justice, kindness and fairness. Differences in religion does not mean that one is superior or inferior to the other.

People also say that there are different paths for gaining the Lord depending on whether one is extrovert, emotional or intellectual. That is not so, because firstly everyone is a mixture of all these. All that is there is Īśvara. This fact has to be discovered. Therefore, He is the end that is sought. He is the way and He is the seeker too.

366. Hetuḥ

हेतुः

The material and the efficient cause.

After enquiry, the Īśvara who is sought as Mārga, the end, is understood as the Hetu. Īśvara is understood as the abhinna-nimitta-upādāna-kārana, as both the material cause and the efficient cause. This needs to be understood well. Most religions have no problem in accepting that God is almighty, all knowing, all powerful. They may even proclaim that God is limitless but will still give him an exclusive address of heaven.

The uniqueness of our understanding is that the material required for the creation of this world including the stars, galaxies, plants, animals, mountains, valleys, rivers, oceans, fire, volcanoes, winds, weather patterns and the very space that accommodates all of this, comes from Īśvara. All forms subtle and gross, visible and not visible and all the laws and principles that govern all the processes occurring here are a manifestation of none other than Īśvara.

If He is both the maker and the material cause, then the jagat and the individual body-mind-sense-complex are the effect. If one's body-mind-sense-complex is also included in Īśvara, then what is left out is only the 'I' and that is the 'I' of Īśvara.

367. Dāmodaraḥ

दामोदरः

i. The one known through a disciplined mind.
ii. The one who was tied with a rope around the abdomen.

Īśvara is one who is known through the mind which is disciplined, purified by means of dama and so on. One may have anger, jealousy and so on, arising in one's mind, but one tries to restrain their expression, so that one does not victimize anybody by one's actions. One does not victimize oneself by self blaming also in the process. So, dama is self-restraint at the level of the organs of action. This requires objectivity.

In course of time the person is endowed with self-restraint at the level of the mind which is śama. The mind thus becomes noble, becoming endowed with qualities such as dama, śama, uparati, titikṣā, śraddhā and samādhāna – self-restraint at the level of the organs and at the level of the mind, a certain resolution of the mind, an ability to bear changing conditions, trust and onepointedness of the mind. So the mind with all these qualities is called dāmodarā. All of us have these qualities in some measure. The Lord who is gained by such a mind is called Dāmodara.

The Lord gets the name Dāmodara, in the Kṛṣṇāvatāra. As a child Śrī Kṛṣṇa was very mischievous and hence, His mother Yaśodā tied Him to a mortar with a dama, a rope, around His udara, abdomen. This is a name based specially on an avatāra-līlā.

According to Vyāsa, dāma means the worlds. The Lord has all the worlds in His udara, abdomen and hence, He is known as Dāmodara. In the Kṛṣṇāvatāra again, Yaśodā suspecting that Śrī Kṛṣṇa had eaten mud, asked Him to open His mouth. There she saw all damas, the fourteen worlds inside Him.

368. Sahaḥ

सहः

The one who is tolerant.

No matter how many times people make mistakes by going against dharma and hurting themselves in the process, Īśvara is tolerant. Īśvara is able to withstand the wailings and the implorations of all the jivas. Hence, He is Saha. It is by His grace alone that we get sahana-śakti, the capacity to withstand difficult situations.

Our sahana-śakti, we discover in time because of the punches and kicks received in life. They are coming back to us in this life time as our papa karma fructifying from previous lifetimes. Just knowing this, puts so much in perspective and one can stop pitying oneself and taking the right action. For it to really be sahana-śakti, it needs to be backed by viveka, a discriminative knowledge about dharma and adharma. Dharma is very nuanced. It is not a simple case of right and wrong. For instance, If one is being ill-treated by somebody (especially someone in a higher position due to family, work or even a so called teacher) should we tolerate it? We make excuses for the person's adharmic behavior out of fear, our need for approval from that person or even kindness for the person. Some of our excuses are: It is okay. Because the person is in a higher position, he/she has the right to behave badly but overall the person is nice. The person feels close enough to me to show me that side. Maybe the person will realise someday. Maybe it is my fault.

Tolerating someone or accommodating someone is letting the person be, offering the person the freedom to be just as he/she is with no agenda from your side to be happy. We grow in our capacity to do this as we first learn to tolerate and accept ourselves, our life as a prasad. This is not ordinary. We increasingly understand that the person has a background – a set of formative influences in the person's life that have shaped the person. There are reasons why that person is the way he/she is and you are the way you are. Yes, there may be scope for change on both sides. However, in the name of accommodation, it is not right to tolerate wrong behavior over a period

of time, behavior that harms another in word and deed. One needs to learn firmness and drawing boundaries to say, 'this much …and no further'. Protection of oneself in all ways is a part of dharma. If sahana-śakti is not backed by viveka, we may open ourselves to exploitation. A mother encourages the one year child to stand up with support. In the name of accommodation, the mother does not just let the child be, all the time. She encourages and motivates the child. Why? Because she is committed to the child's growth and development. Accommodation and tolerance may include many actions such as letting the other person be, distancing oneself from adharmic actions, distancing oneself emotionally, taking a stand against adharmic actions, pushing oneself and the other towards greater emotional maturity. This is what I mean when I say Dharma is nuanced.

Irrespective of one's level of sahana sakti, Īśvara is never tired of hearing the sorrows of people and He is always cheerful. He is Saha, also because He surpasses everyone. We seek his grace.

369. Mahīdharaḥ (also word 317)

महीधरः

The one who supports the earth.

Mountains fly or go for a walk only in stories and fairy tales. On the earth, the mountains are kept in their respective place. Even the ocean is kept in its place. It does not encroach on land territory hoping to get bigger. People proudly buy homes on the beach front to enjoy the ocean, knowing that the ocean will maintain its boundary.

Science tells us that the earth moves around the sun at a speed of 30 km/second and rotates around its own axis at about 800-100 km/hour. This is almost twice the speed of the fastest Jumbo jet we know. Although the earth is constantly moving, the ocean does not spill over into space, the mountains do not fall down. The earth is suspended in space by its gravitational force.

So the Lord as Mahīdhara, keeps the earth in its place.

370. Mahābhāgaḥ

महाभाग:

The one who has great glory or is fortunate.

Bhāga means bhāgya, glory, blessing, capacity and so on. Sādhus are addressed as mahābhāga, meaning that they are fortunate, great souls. Bhagavān is the one who is able to do this great work of creating the jagat, sustaining it and resolving it and this, He does without any effort. Hence, He is Mahābhāga.

Because in His avatāras, great bhāga, blessing and welfare, is done for the world, He is Mahābhāga. As Maryāda Purusottama, Sri Rama was the embodiment of dharma. He respected, honored and followed the ethics, principles and values of the times he lived in and was a role model to all in terms of being the ideal son, ideal brother, ideal husband, ideal friend and of course the ideal king. Ram rajya, the rule of Rama over the entire earth was said to have lasted for eleven thousand years as people lived in peace and harmony. Perhaps more in Valmiki 's presentation of Rama than in Tulsidas or even Kamban, Rama is presented as a human being

who went through many difficulties, from the very beginning. If he was presented as an avatar, perhaps we may make excuses – He is God after all. In his Ram avatār, not only did he rule well but even now in Kali Yuga we seek to discover and learn from Rama 's life as we celebrate his birthday today – The Mahābhāga.

Or, in His Kṛṣṇāvatāra, since He took a great share of food that was offered to the Govardhana mountain, He is Mahābhāga.

371. Vegavān

वेगवान्

The one who has great speed.

The Porsches and the BMWs of the world are no match for the speed of the fighter jet. These are human made.

Bhagavān is Vegavān, the one who has great speed. In the form of light, He is Vegavān. Is there any match for the speed of light? Yes. In the form of thought, He is even faster than light. If we have a thought regarding a place, it is instantaneous. If we have a thought regarding anything, it is instantaneous. The name of the person is said and immediately the person has a corresponding thought. Of course, when we are thinking through an elaborate project, it may seemingly take time, because there are innumerable thoughts involved. What is it that makes the mind move the way it does? Modern science will talk about formation of brain, cognition etc but cannot talk about the consciousness that underlies and is in and through it all.

From the standpoint of the upādhis like the mind, ejati, Bhagavān moves, but at the same time from His own standpoint, naijati, He does not move at all. Sounds contradictory? It is not. From the standpoint of body, we may move seats, houses and even continents. Can the limitless relocate? Where will the limitless move to?

The Īśāvāsyopaniṣad says– the one, unmoving, is faster than the mind'. (4)

372. Amitāśanaḥ

अमिताशनः

The consumer of immeasurable food.

Mita means measured and aśana means food. In the Gītā, the Lord advises us on one of the yajnas being appropriate intake of food. We should be mitāśana, take only moderate, measured quantity of food. Folk wisdom has built on this and it is said that Half of the stomach may be filled with solid food, 1/4th with liquids and 1/4th for vayu to move around to help digest the food.

But Bhagavān is Amitasana. He is the one who exists as the whole universe, and at the same time of resolution, He swallows the entire universe consisting of the planets, galaxies, space, time and so on, as though swallowing food, leaving behind nothing. But what is left behind is not a 'black hole' but 'one shining whole.' At the time of resolution, what the Lord swallows is amita, immeasurable, He is Amitāśana.

373. Udbhavaḥ (also word 790)

उद्भवः

The origin.

As the material cause, He is the origin of the universe and everything has come out of Him. Everything? Yes, the stars, the sun, the moon, the galaxies, the five elements and its varied combinations. Does that include human beings? The form of the human being are born of the five elements anyway. All gross and subtle material have all come from Bhagavān. Hence, He is Udbhava. Being above bhava, that is, saṃsāra He is Udbhava.

374. Kṣobhaṇaḥ

क्षोभण:

The one who is the stirrer.

This does not mean that he is a spoon. Bhagavān is the one who stirs up everything at the time of creation and hence, He is called Kṣobhaṇa.

375. Devaḥ

देवः

The one who is effulgent.

The word 'deva' is derived from the verbal root 'div' which has many meanings.
The Lord, shining as consciousness, is effulgent, self-revealing and all-knowing and hence, Deva. As the intelligent cause when He creates, it is as effortless as krīdā, playing. Hence, He is Deva, the one who revels in Himself.

He wishes to win over the asuras, the enemies of the devas. He obtains as the ātmā in all beings. He shines in the heart of everyone. He alone does all vyavahāras, activities, that any jīva does at any time.

He is Deva because he is the one praised by all through the stutis, songs of praise; is desired by all and he is all-pervasive.

376. Śrīgarbhaḥ

श्रीगर्भः

The one who has śrī within Himself.

He is the one in whom śrī, that is, all the glories exist. To speak the truth pleasantly is a glory, to discover harmony in relationships is a glory, to conceptualise and implement large scale projects is a glory, to get the winning shot in the cricket team is a glory, to just being able to walk is a glory, to get a child one always desired is a glory, to reach out to people with what one can offer is a glory. Whatever vibhūti one wants, one can therefore tap from Him.

This jagat itself is the glory of the Lord and it is in His garbha, that is, within Him. Hence, He is Śrīgarbha.

377. Parameśvaraḥ
परमेश्वर:
The limitless Lord.

The child seeks security and comfort in the mother and other caregivers as she knows she is taken care of. While engaging in sport, the child looks around from time to time to ensure the presence of the parents as that offers strength. For the child who then grows up and learns to also trust other beings, in time discovers that not all can be trusted. This individual person has to start to discover the individual relationship with the total. The person thinks that he or she is fighting the odds and has to deal with the world. The perception that I am one against the whole world determines the attitude and approach that one develops. One develops a permanent ninja stance, as one has to be defended and people have to be put down and attacked so that one can feel secure.

On the other hand, if one recognizes that I am connected to the limitless Lord, not a being located in a particular place, but a being that pervades my very form, something magically real happens. I am no longer am that isolated individual struggling to become significant in life. While there may be difficulties I still experience, I am taken care of by the laws and principles that is Īśvara, because He is capable of ruling, having overlordship.

Brahmāji and other devas also have enormous powers. But, He is also parama, limitless and superior to all of them and hence, Parameśvara.

378. Karaṇam
करणं
The instrument.

Bhagavān is the Karaṇa, the means for the creation of the jagat. He does not require any other means to manifest Himself.

379. Kāraṇam
कारणं
The material cause.

The word jagat or the ‘Creation’ only means that it is intelligently put together. It does not mean that God dropped it down from somewhere else. The fact that it is intelligently arranged implies an intelligent being, a conscious being. Not even a safety pin can assemble itself. It needs an intelligent being to put it together, what to talk of this variegated jagat. That conscious being must have the knowledge of what is going to be created because creation presupposes knowledge. Knowledge has to rest in a conscious being. When we talk about the total creation, then that conscious being must have the knowledge of all; he must be sarvajna, all knowing and also sarvavit, the one who knows everything (in detail).

Then we may ask where God found the material to make this world? He could not have borrowed from anybody, because there was nobody else to borrow it from—everybody had yet to be created. He has to find the material only in himself. Therefore, in keeping with the nature of the reality of the world, there must be a material cause and it comes from nowhere else but God. As to the question of where God abides, there is no 'where' for God. The question of 'where' doesn't come into the picture, because space and time have not yet been created.

Since the Lord himself is the material, He becomes the upādāna-kāraṇa, the material cause for the creation of the jagat. He is also the nimitta-kāraṇa, the efficient cause.

The fact that the Lord is the one who is the maker as well as the material cause opens up a new vision for me. Anything created from a material is not going to be independent of that material, like the shirt that you wear. If your shirt is made of cotton fabric, you cannot remove the cotton fabric and still be wearing a shirt. Only emperor's clothes may be there. This world is a manifestation of God. The Veda does not say there is one God. It says there is only God.

380. Kartā

कर्ता

The independent maker.

As human beings, we are kartās, the ones who are involved in action with a sense of doership. Our karma, as long as we are identified with our limitations and hence limited identities and think it to be real will keep generating punya and pāpa. That will keep us going, from lifetime to lifetime. Our karma is dependent on the laws and principles of Bhagavān.

Is Bhagavān also a karta just like us? No. He is the Kartā, the maker of the jagat and in making this, He is svatantra, independent.

381. Vikartā

विकर्ता

The creator of the variegated world.

To understand these four names - Karaṇam, Kāraṇam, Kartā, Vikartā (the instrument, the material cause, the independednt maker and the creator of the variegated world), we should see how we function in the world and then see how the Lord is different from us.

In the world, with reference to the creation of a pot, the potter is the kartā, the intelligent cause and he makes use of the clay as the upādāna-kārana, the material cause, which is different from him. Further, the pot maker needs the help of various karaṇas, instruments, like the wheel, the stick to move the wheel and so on. The things that he makes are also more or less the same without much variation, like an assembly line. Even if he makes exclusive designer pieces he is dependent on many laws and principles. This holds good for anything that is created by human beings.

But, the creation of the Lord is different. He is the intelligent and independent maker, as well as the material and the means. He does not depend on anything other than Himself. At the same time, He is Vikartā creating a wondrous universe consisting of many and varied things. In His creation, there are no two things alike and hence, this jagat is vicitra. As the creator of this vicitra-jagat with its manifold forms, He is Vikartā.

382. Gahanaḥ (also word 544)

गहनः

The one who is not easily known.

This is the 382nd word of the 1000 words for Visnu. Each word so far has revealed an aspect of Īśvara. How close are we to understanding Īśvara? Certainly better than before. Still, his nature, capabilities, power and actions cannot be easily known and so, He is Gahana.

Since Īśvara's sāmarthya, glories and capabilities are countless, it is difficult to understand them. We can only know His glories in a general way; they cannot be known in detail – just as we may know the woods, but we cannot know the botanical names of all the trees therein.

His svarūpa, nature, being unlike anything else, is also gahana, difficult to understand. The point of this is not for the name to daunt us, but to inspire us to know the Gahanaḥ, because he is not easily known. We are not aiming for just a word meaning understanding. For that we can look at the dictionary for most words. In understanding Īśvara, we are also seeking to understand ourselves, pervaded by Īśvara. All that is here is oneness. Then how come I see two, despite not having a drink or cataract? Oneness exists despite duality. Through all the words, we are aiming for this understanding as this transforms us and our lives.

383. Guhaḥ

गुहः

The one whose nature is covered by ignorance.

Īśvara lives in the cave of the buddhi, intellect and His svarūpa is covered with the darkness of avidyā. One can argue, let Īśvara be covered, so what? It is like Īśvara living in your house and you don't know it. The one, who is the source of all blessing is in your house and you don't know it. The one, who is the source of all love, compassion peace and completeness and who bestows it on all, and you don't know it. The one who is the very laws and principles that make everything function, including your body-mind-sense-complex and you don't know it. The one who is in the form of the very psychological order that governs the varied patterns of your thoughts, your emotions, your memory and you don't know it. If you knew he was in your house and you have access to Īśvara then you will discover that you are in order. You are not that inadequate person you have taken yourself to be. You are much more than that. The dark clouds of ignorance can cover even the mighty, blazing sun. The confusions regarding myself and my notions can cover the true nature of who I am.

This darkness can only be removed by the light of knowledge, which will reveal the svarūpa of Bhagavān. Till then, He is Guha. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'nāhaṃ prakāśaḥ sarvasya yogamāyā-samāvṛtah – I am not recognizable by all, being covered by my yogamāyā.

384. Vyavasāyaḥ

व्यवसायः

The one who is of the nature of consciousness.

In regional languages, vyavasāya may mean employment or work. Here, in Sanskrit the meaning is different. Vyavasāya generally means determination, a knowledge free from doubts. Doubt and confusion could be about a career decision, disciplining children, choosing a life partner, choosing a guru, purpose of life etc. We need to understand how much doubt disables. Doubt does not allow us to take decisions. Doubt encourages procrastination and avoiding responsibility. Doubt saps one of energy as one keeps turning over the possibilities again and again and again in one's mind. Doubt ensures that you don't allow yourself to act decisively. Doubt ensures that you don't discover your own strength. We have to really understand how much doubt and confusion can disable oneself to then appreciate how much knowledge frees oneself. While doubt is natural, staying in doubt is a choice. Staying in doubt has not helped anyone. The capacity to think through and address doubts to arrive at clarity is a given capacity. It is the Lord who is in the form of determination and knowledge and hence, He is Vyavasāya. Knowing Him one can also get rid of doubts.

Vyavasāya also means the saṃvit, the consciousness. All cognitions and determinations are possible only because of the blessing of the consciousness. Being that saṃvit, He is Vyavasāya.

385. Vyavasthānaḥ

व्यवस्थानः

The basis of everything.

Because everything is properly placed in Him, He is Vyavasthāna.

Vyavasthā means a clear division and an order based on those divisions. The whole creation is regulated according to the karma-phala of each jīva so that there are opportunities to exhaust the karma-phala.

In this world there are varieties of creatures as jarāyuja – born from wombs like the human beings and various animals; aṇḍaja – born of eggs like the birds and reptiles; śvedaja – born of sweat, that is, moisture and warmth like the various small insects and bacteria; udbhijja – the plant kingdom which seems, as though, to break the earth and come out. Each of these again has many, many subdivisions with different behaviours. Bacteria and insects, depending on their life span have enough opportunities to survive as much as the innumerable animals, fishes and reptiles that live in the sea. Anyone who has done snorkeling can only be struck with total amazement about the entire marine ecosystem that sustains whales as well as tiny fishes as well as corals.

Again, among human beings, there are various varṇāśrama divisions, gender divisions and other divisions. He does all this vyavasthā, clear divisions, so that each one has a sphere to function in, a distinct behavioural pattern, different from the others and He makes them function

accordingly. The divisions allow for complementarity in function. Divisions in the body functions or the different shapes of animals are not meant to prove superiority or inferiority.

Within the body of the human being (and other living beings) each organ has its vyavasthā, specially demarked function. The liver functions differently than the lungs. Thank God it is different! There is no mix up whatsoever. This is according to the law and order of Bhagavān and hence, He is Vyavasthāna.

386. Saṃsthānaḥ

संस्थानः

The excellent abode.

Every person has a favourite spot in their own homes - the view from a particular room, the view of the paintings on the wall, the seating arrangement, the ambience when the lights come on, the plants in a corner, the puja corner, the lazy chair, the bed, the dining area etc. This favourite spot which differs from person to person happens to be the favourite spot because of the joy, comfort, security, activities and memories associated with the spot. It is where you feel totally 'at home', where you are yourself, there is no effort to become. You just are.

While physically and emotionally we live in a home, where we feel at home, really speaking, where do we live? The universe manifests as the physical, psychological, physiological, chemical orders of laws and principles that we benefit from on a moment-to-moment basis. This manifestation is because Bhagavān is the maker and also the material cause. Having done the vyavasthā, He remains there as that which is already done.

It is in this vyavasthā, this abode that we really live, ever embraced, nurtured and supported by all the orders. He is the kartā and also the karma. Generally, when 'sam' is added as a prefix to a word it means well done or that which is excellent. Bhagavān is saṃsthāna.

While everything comes and goes, being the only satya-vastu, He is Saṃsthāna, well placed. Again, it is in Him that all beings stay, at the time of pralaya, He is Saṃsthāna.

387. Sthānadaḥ

स्थानदः

The one who gives statuṣ

As human beings most of us are status conscious. We seek to elevate our status and our position through the people we associate with (It is good to be seen with these people), the people we avoid (Those people are just not my type). We seek to enhance our status also by the possessions we own. We seek a property where there are no slums and the area is a respectable one. A car is a functional way to get from one place to another, subject to our own conditions of time and convenience. However, we seek a car that reflects our personality and status. Because of the need for approval, which is universal, many of our actions are determined by 'looking good in people's eyes'.

Despite all our efforts, we find that our status and position within the family, at work, amongst one's peers, amongst one's relatives, in society may not always be what we want it to be. How does this happen? Bhagavān is the one who delegates sthāna, position and power, according to one's own karma-phala and is therefore Sthānada. Our status is determined by our own efforts and the results thereof.

He gave the status of the pole star to Dhruva, the respective status to Indra, Yama, Varuṇa and so on.

388. Dhruvaḥ

ध्रुवः

The one who is constant and indestructible.

The Lord is like the axle of everything. He does not undergo any change or destruction but always remains the same. The world consisting of changes cannot exist without Him, but He Himself is Dhruva, firm, never changing.

Bhagavatam Purana speaks of Dhruva, who was born a son of the King Uttānapāda (the son of Manu) and his wife Suniti. The king also had another son Uttama, born to his second queen Suruchi, who he was more partial to. As most children of that age, Dhruva, when a child of five years of age, was trying to sit on his father's lap at the King's throne. Suruchi, who was jealous of the older son, Dhruva from the first wife rebukes him for this and forcefully removes Dhruva from his father's lap. When Dhruva protested and asked why he could not be allowed to sit on his father's lap, Suruchi berated him saying, 'To sit on your father 's lap you need to perform tapas. Pray to the Lord."

Suniti, Dhruva's mother, the lesser favorite wife tried to console the distraught child, but Dhruv was determined to hear of his fate from the Lord himself! Seeing his firm resolve, his mother bade him farewell as he set out on a lonely journey to the forest. Dhruva was determined to seek for himself his rightful place, and noticing this resolve, the divine sage Narada appeared before him and tried to desist him from assuming a severe austerity upon himself at such an early age. But, Dhruva's fierce determination knew no bounds, and the astonished sage guided him towards his goal by teaching him the rituals to meditate on when seeking lord Visnu. The one mantra which Narada taught and which was chanted by Dhruv was Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

On the banks of the Yamuna, Dhruva started his meditation, and progressively went without food and water for almost five months, his mind fixed on the Lord. The austerity of his tapasya shook the devas and the Lord appeared before him, but the child would not open his eyes because he was still absorbed in his inner vision of Visnu's form described to him by Narada. Lord Vishnu had to adopt a strategy of causing that inner vision to disappear. Immediately Dhruva opened his eyes, and, seeing outside what he had been seeing all along in his mental vision, prostrated himself before the Lord. But he could not utter a single word . The Lord touched his right cheek by his divine conch and that sparked off his speech. Out poured forth a beautiful poem of praise of the Lord in 12 powerful verses, which together are called Dhruva-stuti.

Lord Visnu grants Dhruva what he wanted then, his father embraced him after his return to the kingdom from the forest. Dhruva went on to rule the kingdom for thirty thousand years, ever devoted to Lord Visnu. After the fall of his body, Dhruva was placed such that the sun and the moon, the stars and sapta rsis would revolve around Dhruva, doing a pradakshina in honour of his devotion, while Dhruva would ever be constant, never swerving from his place. Dhruva is now considered the pole star.

389. Pararddhiḥ

परर्द्धिः

The one with great glories.

To really understand this word, it is worth thinking about the glories, capacities that seemingly belong to living beings and non living objects. Try and think of any ten glories belonging to anybody.

That all of us have some special talents is a glory.
That some of us have extraordinary capacity in sports or performing arts is a glory
That some people through asanas, gymnastics or even dance show the flexibility and strength of the human body is a glory
That the human body can fall sick and heal is a glory
That the countless animals in the world fall sick and can heal without the help of doctors or specialists is a glory.
That some people are committed and innovate low cost medical care to millions through innovative solutions is a glory
That voluntary or even paid caregivers have an enormous capacity who consistently offer loving care to ailing, terminally ill patients, is a glory.
That prarabdha is given along with purushartha, free will is a glory.
That one's sense of insignificance is there due to avidya and it can be removed for good with self knowledge is a glory.
That there are teachers present in this time and age who walk with you on the journey of self growth and the journey of self discovery is a glory.
Is any of these the glory, the special attribute of the person or object independent in and of itself?
Is there any glory that you can identify, that ultimately does not belong to Bhagavān?

The ṛiddhi, vibhūti of the Lord is parā. Any and every glory that you can identify is the glory of Bhagavān. His glories are countless and unmatched.

390. Paramaspaṣṭaḥ

परमस्पष्टः

The one who is completely evident.
Bhagavān is Parama, limitless, superior to all and hence is the go-to being for everything.
Or, He is Parama because He has parā mā, limitless knowledge, supreme glory.

Spaṣṭa means clear, clear like crystal. So Īśvara is Paramaspaṣṭa, being of the nature of pure and limitless consciousness. If you keep a red cloth near a crystal it appears red, if you keep a green cloth it appears green. Itself pure and clear, it appears differently. When one is seeing the

red/green crystal, one can easily miss the crystal because of which the apparent red/green crystal was being seen.

Being the self-effulgent samvit, consciousness, it is self-evident, not dependent on anything else for revealing itself and uninhibited at any time. Thus, there is nothing more clear than the svarūpa, nature of Īśvara. While the mind and senses that gain clarity because of the consciousness, tend to get clouded at times, the svarūpa of Īśvara is in fact the very content of clarity, with no ignorance or confusion at all.

So what? Let Īśvara be self evident. How does that make a difference in my life? The svarūpa of Īśvara is the same as mine. That 's why it matters and that 's why it needs to be discovered.

391. Tuṣṭaḥ
तुष्टः
The one who is satisfied

Being of the nature of limitless ānanda, Bhagavān is Tuṣṭaḥ, ever satisfied.

In response to Arjuna 's question about the qualities of a sthitaprajna, one who is established in prajna, wisdom, Bhagavan responds by saying, " The one who is happy with oneself, in oneself". How does one understand this statement, as there are hardly any precedents?

A two year child who is busy playing will laugh to himself or a person who is on psychiatric medication, lives in his/her own world is seen to laugh and be happy with himself/herself. Surely Bhagavān is not suggesting becoming childish or becoming crazy. Then what is being indicated? If we meet a friend or a relative who looks happy, we tend to ask," How come you look happy? Got a raise or went to the spa or children have done well in their exams?". And if the person continues to smile beatifically, we will say," So what are you hiding? You can't be happy without a reason. Come on, tell me. I promise, Mum's the word or to be precise, dumb 's the word" We think that there must be a reason for happiness: legitimate or illegitimate! This entrenched orientation fuels the wanting mind's projections. If I have the object of desire (whatever it is) I will be happy. If I get rid of the object of aversion, (whatever it is), I will be happy. And yet, in moments of happiness, we find that the wanting mind is not there. You are happy. There is no separate subject and object of desire. In those moments, you don't want anything to be different. Despite all the difficulties in life and the complex about one's missing teeth in the front, you laugh heartily. In those moments, the subject and the object appear to be fused. There is no separation.

Does that mean that one can force oneself to be happy? Lasting contentment and satisfaction come from discovering one's own true nature to be the very content of satisfaction. There is no binding dependence on a person, a desirable condition or an object to be satisfied. Certain things and conditions may be required for the journey of the human body. Nothing else. A sugar crystal is trying very hard to have the experience of sweet satisfaction. When will its quest end? Only by recognizing that all of it is sweet, as sweetness is its very nature. What make a person wise, is wisdom? Nothing else. Being tusthah is just a characteristic of the satisfaction, fullness that has been discovered.

392. Puṣṭah

पुष्टः

The one who is full.

Building on the previous word तुष्टः, this word further builds on our understanding of happiness. For most of us, happiness is experiential – there is a feeling of being happy, a sense of overall wellbeing, some physiological responses of smiling, laughter, release of endorphins etc. We seek this feeling of happiness, all the time.

Bhagavān is not subject to the yo-yo of experiential happiness. You offer one ton of gold at some altar or you offer nothing and live in blissful ignorance. Bhagavān 's experience of happiness does not keep changing. How come? The word puṣṭah talks about the nature of Bhagavān. Happiness is to be understood as fullness, purnatvam, taking away the experiential meaning of the word because of our experience orientation.

Being limitless, anantah means nothing can add to it. Nothing can take away from it. Even if something is added to it, it is still full. Even if something is spirited away from it, it is ever full.

Being pūrna, full, endowed with everything, He is Puṣṭa.

393. Śubhekṣaṇaḥ

शुभेक्षणः

The one whose glance is auspicious.

A glance can be an expression of any emotion, ranging from acknowledgement, liking, love, appreciation or even disgust. It has been famously said,: the eyes are the windows of your soul', suggesting how eyes clearly reflect one's own image and condition. Eyes also serve to be mirrors of reflection for the other. This is evident when the child plays a prank and looks up to see the reaction on the mother's face.

Since eye contact is such an integral part of what we consider closeness or connectedness with another, our orientation extends to how we relate to Bhagavān. With respect to all images of Hindu deities or even murtis in temples, darsana of the Lord, seeing the Lord which is seen as making direct contact with the Lord is considered the primary purpose of the visit. People even elbow and shove everyone else just because they want to get a 'glimpse' of the eyes of the murti. People proudly proclaim the amount of time they got for darshan in temples visited. That glimpse, that sight, that vision, that darsan is so important to the devotee.

Bhagavān's īkṣaṇa, seeing us, is śubha, auspicious. Our īkṣaṇa, seeing Him, is śubha, auspicious. Hence, He is Śubhekṣaṇa. The Lord is all the time looking at us from inside and from outside. But we do not look at Him. Ironically, only when we start looking at Him and catch a glimpse of Him, we say that we got a glimpse from Bhagavān.

All that one requires, is only a glance from Īśvara. His glance gives śubha, auspiciousness. His grace alone is His glance. His grace is narāṇāṃ subhakaram – brings auspiciousness to all human beings. How? His glance gives mokṣa to those who desire mokṣa; His glance and thus grace provides objects of enjoyment to those who desire them; The grace purifies those who have acquired pāpa due to actions not in line with dharma.

Further, His grace blesses one with the īkṣaṇa, the knowledge of Īśvara and that in turn is totally removes self-ignorance; brings about the removal of all doubts and confusions; breaks asunder the knots of the heart and destroys all karmas.

Thus, He is Śubhekṣaṇa, blessing those who seek artha-kāmas, with artha and kāma and blessing those who seek mokṣa with jñāna and mokṣa.

394. Ramaḥ

रामः

The one who gives happiness.

Who is Rama? Some image may come to our minds. Some qualities also, we may be reminded of. Very important to understand that even before Rāmāvatāra, the word Rāma was there.

Ramante asmin iti rāmaḥ – The one in whom people discover their fulfillment or joy, is Rāma. One can discover joy only in the vastu (not 'thing' as in Indian languages), reality, and in the avastu, unreal, there is no joy, it does not last. Whenever one discovers joy, one is in touch with the vastu, the reality. One goes after avastu, unreal things, searching for the reality, but the vastu happens to be oneself alone.

Whenever you are happy, you are with the vastu, which is the truth of yourself, because the seeker is resolved for the time being. There is no division between the seeker and sought. If one has been seeking for a long time, an entrenched 'seeker' or 'student' identity develops and even when you begin to discover insights, you deny yourself that because you reason, 'I am a seeker, I need to know more, I don't know enough." Without realising that one is the absolute reality, the vastu, one goes after the avastu to get back to the vastu, experientially. Such a person is a mūdhamati. 'Yesterday I had joy; even if I don't get it today, I will get it tomorrow.' This is the general thinking. Going after experiences is being in saṃsāra, while understanding the experience, is the truth.

The Lord is nityānanda – lakṣaṇa, of the nature of limitless happiness. By the knowledge of the Lord, ānanda is gained and there is fulfillment. Even a deluded person, whenever he is happy, experiences rāma, the source of joy, whether he knows or not. At that time, it is the nityānanda-ātmā alone, which manifests. But the yogīs, those who understand the nature of the ātmā, know that, that is the only source of joy and revel in the Lord and hence, He is Rāma.

Parameśvara alone is that Śrī Rāma. He alone assumes a body, in order to fulfill the prayers of the righteous people. By keeping the māyā under His control, He assumes by His own will, a human body and that is what is called avatāra. In that particular embodiment of personifying dharma Parameśvara took a charming form and was born as the son of Daśaratha and the name

that was given to Him then was Rāma. So in this avatāra as Dāśarathi-Rāma, He was charming even to His enemies.

395. Virāmaḥ
विरामः
The ultimate end.

The one in whom all beings rest is Virāma.

He is Virāma either because all beings resolve, rest, in Him at the time of pralaya.

In Hindi, the word means 'putting a stop to' or ending something. In popular usage among sadhus, one of them may say(mere vaani ko main viraama deta hoon – I put an end to my words). In other words the person has concluded and hence by extension, viramah is a (.) full stop.

A full stop is a seemingly insignificant dot but has deep significance in our lives. We need to use it well. We need to know when to stop speaking, when to stop seeking in the wrong direction, when to stop self harm through one's habits. We need to stop holding on to the past rather than playing the recording over and over again on loop without having any control. We need to stop obsessively thinking like a beggar," What can this one or that one or God or life or society give me? and move to a mindset of abundance." What can I give?"

We need to put a full stop to 'Why does this happen with me?" wallowing in self pity because it does not help anyone. We need to put a stop to continuous unwarranted criticism of the other. We need to stop trying to control another person for our happiness. We need to stop losing control over our tongues and then regretting it later. This is neither easy nor difficult. Putting a full stop to certain unhelpful patterns comes from some self enquiry and recognizing how one sabotages one's self growth while finding a support system to help you break the pattern. Truly seeing the value of putting a full stop motivates one to do so. Each person has some unique patterns moulded by family, society, cultural, peer or even previous lifetime influences. Whatever be the source, we need to take responsibility for the endless commas (,) in our life where we continue to go on and on and on prolonging the misery of some specific situation and learn the power of a relative viramah. The question that we need to ask ourselves is, "Where and in which area of my life, do I need to put a full stop?" and follow through with actions if any? All of this is in the area of self mastery and self growth.

Īśvara the ultimate end, He is the one in whom the real respite from saṃsāra can be got.

396. Virataḥ
विरतः
The one free from desires.

Every binding desire is an indication of the separation experienced in that I am different from the object of desire. Hence I must be one with it or control it so that the separation is no longer there. When all that is here is Īśvara, where is the desirer and the object of desire? Being pūrṇa, He has

no rata, desire and therefore, does not require any enjoyment of objects or special situations, for His happiness.

Being ānanda-svarūpa, He is ātmārata, revels in Himself. As Rāma, he does not require the external sources for His ānanda. He is Virata, free from desires. He is the one in whom everyone finds their ānanda and therefore, Virāma.

Now how do we reach this Rāma? Through Rāma we can reach Rama. The way is Rāma and the end is also Rāma. The limitless is not reached by any other way. You are the limitless. Therefore, the knowledge that 'I am the limitless,' is the Mārga by which you come to know that you are non separate from Rāma. Knowledge is different from familiarity with words. By that knowledge, the notion of separateness from Rāma, from Īśvara is given up forever.

This knowledge is nothing but consciousness. The object of consciousness is limitless and when you understand the limitless consciousness, you 'become' the limitless. This becoming is a discovery. Understanding the limitless consciousness is to be the limitless consciousness as that is the absolute truth. Limitless is not another word you call yourself in addition to the many names that you have. The meaning envelopes all the names and forms – manifest and unmanifest. Rāma is that limitless consciousness. Therefore, the way is Rāma and the end is also Rāma. Bhagavān is the way and also the end.

397. Mārgaḥ (also word 365)
मार्गः
The way.

The end is Rāma, the source of happiness; the means is Rāma and having reached the end, there is nothing more to be gained, nothing else to revel in, and therefore, the end is Virāma, the ultimate end.

Now, how do we reach that amṛtatva, that ultimate end? That end is reached only by knowing Īśvara. If amṛtatva, freedom from limitations, is not already with one and it is to be gained in time, then it would be limited. A donkey cannot become a horse. If you are really a limited jiva, you can never become the limitless. If you are already limitless, then you need not become limitless. But, you do not know this fact. It is only by knowing yourself as the limitless Lord, that you gain amṛtatva. Therefore, He is the mārga, the way, because through the knowledge of Him alone, the seeker attains the ultimate end. Here, the very knowledge of the Lord is pointed out as the Lord.

The Puruṣa-sūkta says, 'tam etaṃ vidvān amṛta iha bhavati – the one who knows Him becomes limitless here. Na anyaḥ panthāḥ ayanāya vidyate – there is no other path for gaining the amṛtatva.'

398. Neyaḥ
नेयः
The one who is led.

If the Lord is the ultimate end,
If the Lord is also the way to gain it, then,
Who is the one that gains the ultimate end? Who takes him along the path?
Are they separate from the Lord? No.
The jīva, in whom is invoked mokṣa-icchā , the desire to become the limitless, is also Bhagavān.
The jīva, who is led through the knowledge that he is really the paramātmā, is also Bhagavān.

The limitations that are experienced with reference to body-mind, when seen for what they are – conditions that seemingly exist but which don't really touch the Atma that the jiva is, then we are free enough to have 'apparent' limitations.
The enlightened jiva is also Bhagavān.

399. Nayaḥ
नयः
The one who leads.

How does the jīva, who is a mumukṣu, the one desirous of moksa discover Bhagavān?
How does the jīva discover the reality of the world?
How does the jīva discover the reality of oneself, the world and Bhagavān to be limitless?
By the guru and that guru, who leads him, is also Bhagavān. The words of the Veda are from none other than Bhagavān.

The Lord is referred to in a three-fold way, as mārga–the path, the means for mokṣa, neya–the jīva who is led and naya–the guru who leads. He is the way, He is the goal and He is the one who leads the jīva to the goal.

400. Anayaḥ
अनयः
The one who is not led by anyone.

Some people like to pride themselves on being 'lone rangers' and revel in statements such as 'I am my own boss, nobody can influence me' etc. All these statements are an expression of a sense of independence but some of these views come from the arrogance of ignorance. What does that mean? The person thinks, 'I don't know many things and I am proud of what I don't know as I don't care to know, I am an independent thinker etc." That some one does not choose to know anything is okay. But, to be arrogant about it, assuming that nothing has been responsible for one 's thinking, one's life, then one is only leading oneself up the path of subjectivity and subsequent sorrow.

If Bhagavān is the guru who leads, is He also led to mokṣa by someone else? Does He also need a guru? No. He is Anaya, not led anywhere, by anyone. He has no netā, leader, guru, to lead Him. Everyone has to reach Him. But He does not have to reach anywhere because, He was not a jīva before to become Īśvara. So He has no leader; He has no guru. He is the first guru.

401. Vīraḥ(also words 643,658)

वीरः

The valorous.

Vīra means one who is valorous and capable of subduing his enemies. Do note that the word here is 'subdue' which means disarm or transform the inimical tendencies. It does not mean kill although it could include killing.

Everybody thinks that he is a Vīra until challenges arise. The challenge and the related actions in everyone's life could be varied – financing one's son/daughter's education, moving out of an unethical job etc. In this inter religious dialogue and training that I am currently attending in Sri Lanka, one of my co fellows is a Reverend in a Lutheran church. In childhood he was made to believe that Christianity was the only way to God. In college years he had a friend who was agnostic but exuded goodness and always did the appropriate thing. That made the now Reverend, think that "With all my religious orientation, I am nowhere as good and kind hearted as my friend. Surely religion (as he knew it) was not the only way to make a person be good. " That was a turning point in his life. He mustered the courage to discover more about other religions, have exposure to other cultures, totally against the wishes of his parents. Surely it was not easy then. He is now an unconventional Reverend who truly has mutual respect for other religions and condemns religious conversions.

To have the skill and courage to face challenges in life one should be a vīra. We require Bhagavān to be a vīra, because it is from Him that we can get, vīrya, śaurya-valour, bravery and so on to face our daily challenges. His vīrya is creation, sustenance and resolution. The one who has the vīrya, that is, the capacity to create, to sustain and to take it back, is Vīra. We invoke the Lord as vīra, so that we can get some vīrya.

402. Śaktimatāṁ śreṣṭhaḥ

शक्तिमतां श्रेष्ठः

The most powerful among the powerful.

In the community of ants, there is one who is more powerful than the others. In the home, there may be one person more powerful than the others in terms of decision making for the family. In the company, the CEO. But the same CEO may not be as powerful at home. Our power changes in different situations as it is dependent on position, knowledge and authority. But none of them are ṣreṣṭha, because in many situations, when they have problems, they have to seek the help of Bhagavān alone.

Among all those who are powerful, He is the most powerful. He is almighty and there is no one like Him. Any power that anyone and there is one like Him. Any power that anyone has, is because of the Lord. All the devas like Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Vāyu and others are śaktimanta and they have tremendous power. Even the devas, when they are troubled by the asuras, have to seek His help. Therefore, He alone is Śaktimatāṁ śreṣṭhaḥ, the most powerful among those who are powerful.

403. Dharmaḥ

धर्मः

i. The one who supports in the form of order.
ii. The one adored through dharmas.

Dhārayati sarva-bhūtāni iti dharmaḥ - Dharma is that which supports and sustains.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita, "I am desire, which is unopposed to dharma, in all beings," (BG 7.11). Lord Krishna says here that he is the desire that you fulfill conforming to *dharma*. That means it is a privilege to have a desire. And to fulfill a desire is also a privilege—as long as one is able to conform to what is valuable to oneself, and to others also. That is called a universal value, and here, that is called *dharma*.

Dharma is not merely not robbing, not cheating, etc. There are different levels of hurt, different sorts of hurting. You can hurt a person by a look, you can hurt a person by a word and you can even hurt a person by deliberately entertaining a certain type of thinking. Do not think that there is only one type of hurt. You can hurt a person in so many different ways, and you do so all the time. Therefore, not hurting another person, not yielding to my own likes and dislikes, and, on the other hand, conforming to what is right and wrong is the bedrock of our human society.

Bhagavān is also known as Dharma because He is propitiated through the dharmas spoken about in the śrutis, smr̥tis and āgamas. We have innumerable stories highlighting the nuances of dharma. Sri Rama's devotion to his father is exemplary and to uphold the promise given by his father to his step mother, he went to the forest for fourteen years. He could have refused as even his own father pointed out to him, as he had not given the promise. But the new king in waiting went to the forest with no complaint. Then we have the incident of Prahlad who was Hiranyakaśipu's son. After attaining the boon about practically being invincible, Hiranyakaśipu ordered that he should be worshipped as God in his kingdom. He started a reign of terror, hurting and killing everyone. He threatened everyone including his own son who was deeply devoted to Lord Viṣṇu but to no avail. His son 'disobeyed' him and eventually none other than Narsimha avatār had to manifest and Hiranyakaśipu met his end. On the face of it Prahlad disobeyed him but really a father who tries to jeopardise his own child's life, is not really living up to the role of a father. In our culture, both these stories are told. Can we say that one is more right than the other? Or do we use each of the stories to justify our actions ?

The ātmā is called dharma, because that alone lends existence and support to all beings. In the Kaṭhopaniṣad Lord Yama says, 'aṇureṣa dharmaḥ - the self that you ask for is very subtle'. (1.1.21).

404. Dharmaviduttamaḥ

धर्मविदुत्तमः

The greatest among those who know dharma.

Our thinking gets conditioned by several reasons and then mechanical thinking takes over. A default mode of reaction takes over irrespective of the situation. All members of a particular community are …… and then we view those members in that light. We may deny help to them especially when we are the ones who could help them just because they are the 'other'. We

forget our dharma because of our deep conditioning about some people, some communities, some situations.

On the other hand, those, who have studied the śruti and smr̥ti, know dharma and are called dharmavits. So these dharmavits, the knowers of dharma, are only śāstravits, the knowers of the śastra. They have to gain the knowledge of dharma by studying the śāstra and their knowledge may not be complete. But Bhagavān is the śāstrakr̥t, the author of the śāstra.

Bhagavān does not study, need not study the śāstra, because He is the very giver of the śāstra, the source of all dharma; hence, His knowledge of dharma has no error or vagueness. He is therefore dharmavidāmapi uttamaḥ, greater than those who know dharma.

405. Vaikuṇṭhaḥ
वैकुण्ठः

i. The one who has no obstacles.
ii. The cause of obstacles.

Kuṇṭhā means an obstacle. This jagat is the saṅkalpa, knowledge, of Bhagavān. Since He never has any obstacles in His way, the Lord is Vaikuṇṭhaḥ.

Various forms of obstacles are called vikuṇṭhā. When one goes to Badri, one finds various obstacles on the road like potholes, boulders, speed-breakers and landslides; sometimes even the road is not there, having been washed away. This is just with reference to travel on the road. When we take into account other things we may have a number of obstacles. Bhagavān is the cause of all the obstacles. He creates so many obstacles for you, that finally you have to turn to Him for help. In order to turn the attention of the devotee towards himself, He gives all these obstacles and therefore, He is called Vaikuṇṭha.

Because of the punya, the person turns to the Lord, at first for removing the obstacles and later for knowing Him. If a person has a heavy unconscious, the obstacles may make one very angry and as the person grows older, the person may even take to crime. But, if one has good saṃskāras, punya, then, the obstacles would take him/her to a spiritual pursuit. The Lord blocks all other roads – marriage, children, life with the family, business and so on, so that the person has no other go, other than to turn to the spiritual pursuit.

At the beginning of the creation, the elements were as though inclined to fly away from each other and Bhagavān obstructed their independent movement by uniting them and hence also, He is Vaikuṇṭha.

406. Puruṣaḥ (also word 14)
पुरुषः

i. The destroyer of papa.
ii. The one who resides in the body.

He is Puruṣa, because He was there before everything and also because He destroys all the papas.

In the Mahabharata, Bhiṣma tells Yuddhisthira, 'This physical body is a city with nine gates. It is endowed with the pranas, the indriyas and the antahkarana, all put together as an assemblage, because of previous punya. That mahatma, the Lord, pervading the entire body, remains there without getting affected. Therefore, He is called Puruṣa' (MB.Sa. 210.37). As He is the pratyagātmā, the innermost self in all, He resides in the puri, the city of this body and hence, Puruṣa. At the same time, He is pūrṇa, that is limitless.

407. Prāṇaḥ

प्राणः

The one in the form of life.

He is the one who breathes in the form of kṣetrajña and hence, He is Prāṇa. As the breath, He makes all the organs function. He is also in the form of ātmabala and gives spiritual strength.

408. Prāṇadaḥ

प्राणदः

The giver of prāṇa.

At the time of sṛṣṭi, Bhagavān as the antaryāmi, gives life to all beings and hence is Prāṇada. No scientist will ever be able to give prāṇa.

Even in 'In vitro fertilisation' which is a process of taking the egg from the woman's body and fertilising it with a sperm outside the body in conducive laboratory conditions, it is a given that the cells are alive. If all goes well, then a human being is born. What is that makes the cells alive? Prāṇa given by Bhagavān.

And then, when the prāṇa has to go, any amount of life support is not enough. The best doctors are not enough to save a life, if the breath has to stop, for good. At the same time, He alone cuts away the prāṇa of all beings at the time of pralaya and therefore is Prāṇada. May we value this and make our moments count.

409. Praṇavaḥ (also word 957)

प्रणवः

The one saluted by everyone.

Praṇava is oṃkāra. Because the praṇava is used to praise the Lord, He is Praṇava.

Because He is worshipped, He is Praṇava. The name of the Lord is Om. How come? Om is a pratīka or a sound symbol for Īśvara. Though it can be written, it is not a pratimā, a form symbol, popularly written as ॐ. Unfortunately these days when Om is stated, we only remember the symbol not what Om stands for. What does Om stand for?

Ōm is a word symbol, which is loaded with meaning. Phonetically, 'A' is the basic sound that is produced by human being anywhere in the world, when he tries to make a sound by opening the mouth. In most languages 'A' is also the first letter of the alphabet. When a sound is produced by

closing the mouth, what comes out is the sound 'M'. In between, when there is a rounding off of the mouth, the sound 'U' is produced.

Now, what can be the best name for the Lord, a name that would include everything? All objects are but names and all names are words. Words, being made of letters, are nothing but letters, and letters are sounds. Since sounds are produced by opening and closing the mouth, all sounds are phonetically between A' and 'M'. The Lord being everything, his name should include every name. Thus, Ōm that is made of the letters 'A', 'U', and 'M' includes, phonetically all sounds and therefore, all letters and all words of all languages and dialects. It is not pronounced as A-U-M. It is Om. Om becomes a word which indicates all objects. In this way, Ōm becomes the name of Īśvara, the Lord.

Om is Bhagavān. Everyone who salutes Him, or chants in praise of the Lord, always starts with Om. No matter in which language you pray to Bhagavān, salute Him or surrender to him, all those are included in Om, the Praṇava.

410. Pṛthuḥ

पृथुः

The one who is expanded as the universe.

Bhagavān did not sit in an exotic place called heaven and create the world. There was never a separation between Bhagavān and the world. Nor did Bhagavān find the material for this variegated jagat from outside of himself. How could he have, being all sakti, all powerful? Nor was Bhagavān feeling lonely. These are some beliefs that are propagated which increase our distance and hence sense of alienation and disconnectedness with ourselves, the world and hence Bhagavān. Hence our life long project to feel connected to people, things, nature and situations because we cannot help but see ourselves as separate. Our śāstra helps us question this sense of isolation. If it was real, it could never go away. If it is not real, but still felt, then it can be changed.

This variegated jagat has deep intelligence imbedded in it. Let's just take the homeostasis maintained in the human body. The temperature maintained of the human body is 37 degree Celsius. The capacity of the body to maintain the ratios of minerals, salts and even the water volume is more or less constant. Sometimes when infection strikes, the body may go into overdrive and the temperature increases. But, the overall effort is to return to a dynamic balance all the time. There is so much intelligence in these different equations and the many exchanges within the human body which are all so dynamic. The intelligence that guides it is clearly not born of the human mind. It may be studied and discovered and now goes in the name of Biology and all its sub branches. Intelligence cannot rest anywhere else but in a conscious being and that unitary source of intelligence and material is Bhagavān.

Bhagavān alone is manifest as this expansive universe including me and my mind-body-sense complex and hence is Pṛthu. There is never a place nor a moment that Bhagavān is away. He is very well known.

411. Hiraṇyagarbhaḥ (also word 70)

हिरण्यगर्भः

The one who has the gold-like knowledge within Him.

Hiranya is gold like and garbhah is the womb. Somebody who has some familiarity with regional languages in India or even Sanskrit will translate this as golden womb. This is not right. First of all, every word will come from a root in Sanskrit and secondly the root can have a few meanings. The meaning is determined from the context and clearly ascertaining the main message. Hence teaching of the śāstra is better learned with a teacher.

It is the season for mangoes in India in summer. Some of you who like mangoes (ok, make that love mangoes) will find the mouth salivating. What happened? A thought was introduced in your mind by some words and the words in the form of knowledge created matter – saliva. Thoughts are known to produce sweat(matter), increase heart rate (changes in matter). Our everyday experience suggests that thought can produce matter. Just a simple thought, as subtle as it is !

Before the gross universe came into being, it was in a subtle form and before that, it was in the form of knowledge alone. Because of our own body's experience we can see how knowledge can produce material. Knowledge is compared to hiraṇya, gold, as it is shining and throws light on everything. It is the knowledge of Brahman alone that manifests as this universe.

Therefore the Lord, who has the gold-like knowledge within Him, as a child is in the womb before coming out, is called Hiraṇyagarbha. This is the Lord looked at from the standpoint of the total sūkṣma-prapanca, subtle universe which includes prāna.

412. Śatrughnaḥ

शत्रुघ्नः

The destroyer of the enemies.

An interesting film made in 1995 called 'Seven' was a thriller based on the murderer killing people who had committed some key sins. The murderer would leave behind a word at the site of the killing and in each of the gory killings, each of these words were written – gluttony, greed, sloth, lust, pride. The detective who is assigned to investigate these crimes sees the connection and is on the chase for the suspected murder. In a face off, when the murderer meets the detective, who is idealistic and short tempered, he starts to tell him how envious he is of the detective and the life he has with his wife and verbally provokes him to get angry. The detective succumbs to the seventh sin, Anger and himself shoots the murderer who was seemingly guilty of envy, instead of arresting him. The murder of the seven people who had committed the seven sins is now complete.

The detective knew that the right thing to do in that situation was to arrest the murderer. But he is blinded by rage. Here is a detective who is supposed to be better off than criminals, is investigating acts of crimes, some of which can be classified as sins according to a Christian paradigm. In investigating the sin of another, he commits a sin himself. In being idealistic and self righteous and telling others to be so, we can end up hurting a lot of people.

(Please note that in Hinduism, we don't use the word sin, because of its Christian connotations and its link with eternal damnation and Judgement day. A wrong action is papa, and there are results which are unpleasant which one faces. It is not linked with damnation etc)

The reason I am sharing this is that we think that all our enemies are outside. But different situations, different people, especially people we are close to trigger reactions in us. These reactions come from us and we need to take responsibility for them.

Because the Lord destroys our enemies, He is Śatrughna. The enemies outside are due to the inner enemies, which are anger, hatred, jealousy, prejudice and they can only be destroyed with the grace of Bhagavān. Outside there are only people and the major enemies we need to deal with are only inside. The reason they are enemies or the villains is that they don't let me progress, they pull me down, they are not concerned about my welfare. We need to be able to have emotions and to not let emotions get the better of us. Emotions are a glory and we feed emotions such as gratitude, justice, love, compassion, inspiration, motivation with objective thinking. Muscle power may be enough to destroy outside enemies, but to destroy the inner enemies we need the grace of Bhagavān.

Hence we invoke the Lord as Śatrughna, to destroy our inner enemies that are inimical to our spiritual growth.

413. Vyāptaḥ
व्याप्तः
The all-pervasive.

Generally, we deal with people on the basis of different categories for people and situations. This is good, That is bad. This helpful, that is useless. I love this. I cannot stand that. I enjoy this hobby. I wonder how anyone can have such a hobby. I only eat this. I avoid eating that. I like these kind of people. I hate those kind of people. This is the place I enjoy the most. I feel totally uneasy when I go to that place. I only buy these brands. I detest these cheap brands. My children have been brought up well. I wonder how those children were brought up.

Our world view is categorised into what we find desirable and what we find avoidable and we find ourselves drawn towards what is desirable and obviously move away from what is undesirable. Not so for Bhagavān.

He is Vyāpta, pervading both inside and outside. Being the cause He pervades everything, both as the material cause and as the order. Bhagavān pervades you and everything, in the form of varieties of order at all times and in all places.

414. Vāyuḥ
वायुः
The carrier of fragrance.

In school, we learnt that air is composed of different gases like oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and air is inert. Look at the paradox. By itself it is inert but it aids life. Hair or nails are inert and

hence we can cut them, style them and shape them. Although inert they come from a body that is conscious. Air though inert, is a manifestation of Bhagavān.

Because of air, we can breathe and have life, as we know it. In high altitudes where air is thin, some people experience high altitude sickness and may even lose their life. In fires, due to no air available, people die.

Because of air we can smell the many fragrances: fresh pages of a new book, different flowers and food. People who have a cold cannot fully enjoy the food as their power to smell is diminished.

Because of air we can smell the earth after the first rains, enjoy the wafting perfume as someone walks by (the power of the perfume in advertisements as the Axe effect ☺ is exaggerated of course). Because the Lord carries, wafts the fragrance in the form of vāyu, air, he is called Vāyu.

Because of air we can smell odours too: decaying food and hence we can dispose of it, gas leak from the gas cylinder which can be rectified.
Because of air, we can listen to each other. What a glory.
Because of air we can enjoy the sound of music be it heavy metal, Carnatic or Hindustani classical music or any other genre.
Because of air we can enjoy the sounds of a baby gurgling with laughter, sounds through conversation with loved ones, sound of infectious laughter, sounds of waves, sounds of birds,
|| Namaste vāyo! Tvam eva pratyaksham brahmāsi ||

415. Adhokṣajaḥ
अधोक्षजः

i. The one whose nature does not decline.
ii. The one who is known when the senses are turned inward.

Adhas means downward. Because He never swerves, comes down from His true nature, He is Adhokṣaja.

Generally the akṣagaṇa, the group of the sense organs, are turned outwards. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin receive stimuli from the environment. When they are adhobhūta, turned inwards towards the pratyagātmā, then the mind becomes conducive for gaining the knowledge of Parameśvara. This is the reason why in the initial stages of meditation we close our eyes and move to a quieter place. We are withdrawing attention from the externally focused sense organs , deliberately and consciously. Such a mind is adhokṣa. Because only in such mind, the knowledge of Parameśvara is born, He is called Adhokṣaja.

Adhokṣa is the navel, from which the lotus arises and born of this Brahmāji. Brahmāji is called adhokṣaja. As Brahmāji, He is Adhokṣaja.

416. Ṛtuḥ
ऋतुः
Ṛtu means season and season indicates time.

Bhagavān is in the form of the seasons and the six seasons – Vasanta(Spring) , Grīṣma (Blazing summer ending with the summer solstice), Varṣa (Monsoon), śarad(Autumn marked by cooling of the earth more than shedding of the leaves) , Hemanta (Prewinter) and śiśira(winter) – constitute one unit of time called saṃvatsara, year. The time taken by the earth to go round the sun is a saṃvatsara.

In every season of the year, some of us complain – "It is so hot..I wish it would rain", When it rains, " " It is raining too much. I wish it becomes dry." And then when it becomes dry, we want the weather to cool down. Bhagavān removes all the difficulties of people by the timely seasons.

417. Sudarśanaḥ

सुदर्शनः

The one who is easily seen.

Places of worship of different religions vary. In one religion, the place of worship is just a collective prayer room, in another a place of prayer and sermons. In Sanatana dharma, the highlight of a temple visit is darśana, the vision of the deity. While most foreigners to the culture call it a multi-sensory experience, which it is, what with all the sounds, different colors, taste of Prasad and the jostling of crowds, the highlight still remains the arati and seeing the Lord. Darśana, seeing is immediate. Seeing is direct. There is no intermediary step or process. It is as direct as recognising I. I that is self evident and does not need a 2 step process to be inferred. Recognising I is direct and immediate. There is no time lag.

To have the darśana of the politicians and the ministers is very difficult. One has to wait for a very long time. If that is so, how long should one wait for the darśana of the Lord who is the King of kings? Will it take many births? No. The darśana of the Lord is the easiest, because He is the ātmā, oneself. Anything that you see or hear is Bhagavān. The eyes that see and ears that hear, are Bhagavān. The one who is behind the ears and the eyes is Bhagavān. The one who is the eye of the eye, ear of the ear is Bhagavān. That which is heard by the ears, that which is seen by the eyes is also Bhagavān. Thus, Bhagavān is Sudarśana, the easiest to see, if one's mind is well prepared.

As the darśana, knowledge, of Him is śobhana, auspicious, by giving the result of mokṣa, He is Sudarśana. He is Sudarśana, as the lord of the sudarśana-cakra. In His various avatars, He has forms that are pleasing to the eyes and hence, He is Sudarśana.

418. Kālaḥ

कालः

The who as time counts everything.

Kalā is a fraction. Every fraction, every form, that is there in this world, resolves into Him and hence, He is kāla.

Or He is Kāla as He counts everything, because everything has a measured time. Nothing remains eternal and everything is within a certain period of time. We say lifetime to indicate a

life in a certain time span. We say that times have changed. Really speaking, people have changed as the times have gone by. The greatest misnomer is the word 'time management' that goes around in management circles. While conducting workshops for corporates, we emphasise that nobody can manage time. We can only manage what we do in the time available. That one hour can be used to watch a TV serial, go for a walk, meet friends, cook for the family, schedule meetings, attend a Vedanta class, plan one's finances. It all depends on the age and stage of your life and one's life priorities. How you manage time is really a reflection of how you manage your life. Time is an important manifestation of Īśvara and it is also the greatest myth.

When we analyze time, we find that there is no defining aspect of time. Time is purely notional. We want to hold on to the idea of time. There is nothing to hold onto. Past was present, future will be present and present is present. What is the length of the present? Scientists have come up with pico seconds, a unit of a second. How much ever we try to divide the second, in the present, the length of time is zero. Is everything absent? No. Only consciousness is there. I am the one who is conscious of time. Time and space finally merge together. What is present is only one caitanya and that is the present, timeless and eternal. Timelessness is always you. You do not become timeless.

Timelessness is the content of time and that is the nature of 'I' which is the consciousness which is spaceless and timeless. Space is spaceless consciousness and time is timeless consciousness, object is objectless consciousness.

Bhagavān is both time and space. He says, 'Kālaḥ kalayatāmaham – I am time among those that count' (BG. 10.30).

May we utilize our time well on Earth by doing the things that count as we discover our nature to be the timeless.

419. Parameṣṭhī

परमेष्ठी

The one who is in the cave of the heart.

Parama here refers to the heart or the buddhi. The one, who stays in the heart or the buddhi as pratyagātmā, is called Parameṣṭhī. This does not mean that one is possessed by another being. There is only one without a second. Despite the innumerable bodies and minds, that one conscious being is ever present and how is it recognised? Recognised as I.

Even if one does not like it or one has doubts about it, Parameśvara happens to be pratyagātmā and hence, He is Parameṣṭhī.

420. Parigrahaḥ

परिग्रहः

The receiver of the prayers of the devotes.

Parigraha is collecting and hoarding whatever comes in one's way. One does parigraha because there is a feeling of insecurity that later on, one may not get them. While working with street children, we would observe that 8-10 year old children had the capacity to eat almost 2-3 times the portion sizes of an adult. The child wasn't really as hungry to consume so much. Because a lot of them did not know where their next meal was coming from, they had a tendency to consume huge amounts of food because of insecurity. One person loves to collect books, another revels in collecting professional accolades, the householder loves to collect different accessories for the house. The thriving success of online portals like olx for selling used goods, show that we have much that we have collected. We also have much more than what we need and hence want to dispose of. The jīva has to avoid this habit.

Then, how it is that the Lord is praised Parigraha? There is no need for the Lord to collect or hoard things, because everything belongs to Him. In fact, because the Lord does not take anything for Himself and leaves them wherever they are, we boldly offer whatever we cook to Him. In India all the new gadgets that are brought into the house are also offered to the Lord first. Then, what is it that He takes to be called Parigraha? If anyone offers prayers to Him, or offers anything to Him with devotion – be it a leaf, flower, fruit or even a spoon of water, He receives all the prayers and the devotion; hance he is called Parigraha.

As He is all-pervasive – He can be invoked and appreciated anywhere, in any form,by those who want to take refuge in Him and hence, he is Parigraha.

421. Ugraḥ

उग्रः

The terrible.

Depending on the stories we heard as a child about the different devatas or God if we belonged to another religion, our ideas of God are different. Most of us have an idea that God is kind, forgiving and all goodness. Some may think that one has to please God all the time or else he will become angry. Some have a very sanitised version of God. All these are view points.

We have an interesting word here. How can we call the Lord terrible? When rains do not stop, then the rain god becomes ugra, as though wrathful. Whe the sun is very hot, the sun god is ugra, that is frightening. If anything is extreme, it is called ugra.

How is it that the Lord is said to be ugra, that is frighteningly severe? This is because, He is the ugratva of the ugra, the one who endows this power to the sun, to the fire, to the wind and so on. Hence, he has the name Ugra.

It is as though the forces of nature or the various devatās behind them like the sun and other function very systematically because of a fear of Him and hence, He is Ugra. Here fear is more in the sense of awe and respect.

422. Saṃvatsaraḥ (also word 91)

संवत्सरः

The one in whom all beings reside.

Earlier the meaning of saṃvatsara was sēn as a unit of time.

Now, the Lord is called Saṃvatsara because all beings reside in Him. How is that possible? Being limitless, all beings, their very forms from the tortoise to the elephant, from the child to the 90 year old person all reside in him as that is our home.

If somebody asks us where we live? We mutter some address. Where is that location? In the town/city What about that town/ city? In the country. Where is the country? In the continent? What about the continent? On earth? Where is earth? In the Milky way galaxy, amongst the other galaxies? Where are all the galaxies, discovered and not discovered ? In the limitless and the home that is Saṃvatsaraḥ.

423. Dakṣaḥ

दक्षः

The one who is efficient, capable.

Everyone is efficient and capable with reference to something or the other – cooking a meal, working on spreadsheets, plucking eyebrows, memorizing information, managing responsibilities at home and work, managing one 's finances, teaching children, writing creatively etc. Each of these abilities manifests because the person in question does not give up and tries to be better and more competent at the skill. Even the pick-pocketeer is dakṣa, efficient. The verbal root 'dakṣ' has the meaning of growing and being capable. The Lord manifesting as the jagat as though grows and He is Dakṣa. He is Dakṣa also because He has the sāmarthya, the capacity to do all actions efficiently.

What is Īśvara efficient in? The efficiency of Īśvara is with reference to creation, sustenance and resolution of this whole universe, which does not take any time, and hence, He is called Dakṣa.

424. Viśrāmaḥ

विश्रामः

The who gives respite.

The cloud was always getting fizzled out and tossed about when it was below. It travelled to the heights and now, it seems to sit peacefully on the peak of the mountains without the fear of being fizzled out. Seeing that, one wonders when one would get that viśrānti, like that cloud, without being tossed about in saṃsāra.

Bhagavān is the place to relax. This is tranquility. He gives quietude to the mind of those who have been caught in the ocean of saṃsāra, tossed about by the waves of hunger, thirst, grief, confusion, old age and death and, seek respite from it. Understanding, that I am the solution is the real viśrāma. By knowing Bhagavān and understanding Him as yourself, you are at rest and then there is no more any struggle. Hence, He is called Viśrāma.

Till the knowledge takes place, the very attitude of doing whatever has to do, offering it to Him and accepting what comes as prasāda, gives a respite, a relaxation. This prasada buddhi is not

necessarily after having done the actions. It is an attitude that precedes performing the actions. It is a readiness to accept that comes from trust, that comes from a certain relaxation even before performing an action.

425. Viśvadakṣinaḥ
विश्वदक्षिणः
The most skillful.

One of the team managers was complaining to her boss, 'With all our skill development programmes, younger managers come in, get trained, contribute a little and leave the company. Maybe it is better we don't train them at all. At least they won't leave so quickly to go onto higher paying jobs. The boss said to her, 'Atleast they come in and contribute. Imagine if these people continued to be in the company with no training and you are stuck with an inefficient work force? Which would you prefer? The team manager understood the value of skill development programmes wherever the work force chooses to implement it.

There is one group of people who hires people already having some skills. There is another group which somehow manages with the people already present even though they do not have the necessary skills. And then there are others who focus on moulding and training people who are able and willing. If anyone has talents like singing, painting, writing, implementing tasks and so on, all these are sāmarthya, or skills. The devas and the lokapālakas have their sāmarthya.

Bhagavān is the one, who endows everyone with the skills. He gives the capacity to the jīvas to perform various actions. He appoints the various lokapālakas and also gives them sāmarthya to do their jobs. He is more skillful than everyone else and skillful in all actions with no exception and hence, Viśvadakṣina.

May we recognise the presence of Bhagavān in the many skills we possess as we try to hone them in our pursuits. In sharing the skills we have, we are sharing our gifts with the world.

426. Vistāraḥ
विस्तारः
The one in whom everything is spread.

In a typical clay pot the clay is spread all over the pot. There is no part of the pot which does not have clay. When we look at the jagat, the world and enquire into its cause, we are onsidering the jagat as an effect. Since Bhagavān is the material cause of the jagat, He is spread in the form of entire jagat. There is no place or time where Bhagavān is not.
In the limitless Brahman, which is the ātmā, which is in the form of limitless consciousness, is spread this entire jagat, which is made of space, time and everything therein. Therefore, as the adhiṣṭhāna –kārāṇa, Bhagavān is called Vistāra.

427. Sthāvarasthāṇuḥ
स्थावरस्थाणुः
The firm support of all the constant elements.

Plants and mountains don't go for a walk. They do not move from their base and stay without moving. So they are called sthāvara. The Lord is called Sthāvara because He does not move, having no place to move.

The earth and other elements and so on, are also called sthāvara (relatively) as they do not move and stay constant throughout creation. That in which the sthāvaras like the elements, mountains, plants and so on, have their stay is called sthāṇu and Bhagavān is that Sthāṇu. So the Lord is called Sthāvarasthāṇu, because He is by himself sthāvara and as the one who gives support to all the sthāvaras, He is Sthāṇu. It refers to Brahman which is kūṭastha, firm and does not undergo any change as the adhiṣṭhāna, supports everything.

428. Pramāṇam

प्रमाणम्

The one in the form of knowledge.

Pramāṇa means jñāna, knowledge and also the jñāna-sādhana, the means of knowledge. Both these are nothing but Parameśvara. Pratyakṣa-pramāṇa is direct perception, like seeing an object. For knowledge to take place, three factors are involved: the knower, the object of knowledge and the knowledge thought. To know that this is a computer screen or a mobile screen that you are looking at right now, what needs to be present is the knower, the computer or the mobile screen and knowledge in the form that 'this is a screen'. When these three become one, then knowledge takes place and this is called pratyakṣa or direct perception. The knower is a conscious being. The object that is the mobile screen or the laptop screen is Isness plus name and form. The thought is again consciousness i.e. existence in a subtle form. What is common in the knower, the object of knowledge and the knowledge itself is consciousness, isness. So, the prāmaṇa-lakṣya, which is indicated by the pramāṇa, is the Lord.

But ātmā is neither pratyakṣa nor parokṣa, perception not indirectly known. When there is emotion, you see what is happening in the mind and this is also pratyakṣa. Do we need special eyes or ears to see what is happening in the mind? No. It is directly perceived without the use of sense organs. So, when the sense organ is involved it is indriya-pratyakṣa and even without the sense organs, when you directly perceive what is happening in the mind, it is called sākṣi-pratyakṣa. Both are pratyakṣa, perception, a means of knowledge.

When there is no pratyakṣa, no direct perception, but still, there is the recognition of an object, it is called parokṣa or inference. You see the smoke that is pratyakṣa and conclude that there is fire. Concluding that 'there is fire' is inference and it is parokṣa. Is ātmā pratyakṣa or parokṣa, direct or indirect ?Is it directly perceived as an object or inferred?Ātmā is neither pratyakṣa, object of perception nor parokṣa, object of inference. It is nitya-aparokṣa, ever evident because, it is that because of which there is pratyakṣa as well as parokṣa. It is self-revealing and self-evident consciousness. As the ātmā, He is Pramāṇa.

429. Bījamavyayam

बीजमव्ययम्

The immutable cause.

Suppose you had a dream last night that you were in Switzerland amidst the beautiful snowcapped mountains sitting by a gurgling brook and inhaling the crisp mountain air. The fragrance of the flowers is wafting by and you can see the cable car at a distance with enthusiastic tourists. To be able to see the dream, what preparation did you do? From where did you get the mountains that were so high? From where did you create the brook? What about the light and space and time in which all of this happened? And seeing the tourists? Did you have to shop for any of the materials in the dream? Even the sensations in the dream including the mountain air and the chill was experienced. For an elaborate dream, all that is required is knowledge. Knowledge is in the form of words, in the form of thoughts. You thought and so it was !!!

Bīja means seed, cause, What is the cause of this jagat?Īśvara is the cause- the maker. Then what is the material used by Īśvara to make the jagat? The knowledge of Īśvara itself is manifest in the form of jagat. The dream example is available for you to understand. When one keeps looking at it, it keeps disappearing, that is, the names and forms keep disappearing. In creating the dream world, one does not undergo any change. In dream one is in the form of consciousness. All that is there is only the caitanya-jyoti.

So too, it is the knowledge of Īśvara that is manifest in the form of jagat. Īśvara, without undergoing any change, is the cause of this universe and hence He is the Bīja, which is Avyaya, that which does not change.So, He has not undergone any change and at the same time, He is the cause of everything.

430. Arthaḥ

अर्थः

The one sought after by all.

Whatever arthyate, is sought after by human beings is called puruṣārtha or simply artha. They fall into these four categories: artha, kāma, dharma and mokṣa – security, pleasures, puṇya and freedom. We need to pause for a moment and ask why. Why is money and lots of it sought? So that I am secure. Why is the property sought? Because I want to be secure. Why is marriage and children sought? Because I want to be secure and happy. Why is life insurance and medical insurance bought? Because I want to be secure in my old age or in the wake of illnesses. Why do I want to reach out to people and help others? Because I feel for them and want to significantly contribute and gain some punya. If we look through all of them, the property is not sought for the property's sake. Once you buy your dream property, you are not holding onto the walls for dear life. The partner is not wanted for what the partner is, the partner is wanted for what you gain from the partner in terms of security, happiness etc. What is common in all of the pursuits is 'I want to be secure, fulfilled and significant'. In other words I want to be free from feeling insecure, unfulfilled and worthless. This is the norm against which we unconsciously or consciously measure all our experiences. Very important to recognise this.

The only security is Bhagavān, in the form of ātmā which is kūṭastha, not subject to change. In and through all these pursuits, what one really seeks is ānanda, happiness. The Lord being

sukharūpa, of the nature of ānanda, is the only source of happiness. Therefore, knowingly or unknowingly He is the only one sought by all, hence He is Artha.

431. Anarthaḥ

अनर्थः

The one without any end to fulfill.

In all our pursuits what we are really seeking is lasting fulfilment. In other words what we are seeking is the Lord, arthah. If everyone has Bhagavān as their artha, the end to be accomplished, what is the artha, the end that He wants to accomplish?

Being pūrṇa, ever full, for Bhagavān all His desires are fulfilled. Having no artha, no end to achieve, He is Anartha. Here anartha does not mean misfortune or bad luck as in some Indian regional languages. With nothing to achieve then, Bhagavān has no purpose, right? All that is done is done out of fullness not out of neediness or dependence. A wise person is similar in many ways.

432. Mahākośaḥ

महाकोशः

i. The one with a big treasury.
ii. The one with great coverings.

The Lord is called Mahākośaḥ, because His kośa, treasury never gets exhausted. Anything that you seek, that is Bhagavān. He himself does not have any end to accomplish, because his treasury is inexhaustible. Every person, however rich he may be, will always have some request to which he has to say 'no' and which would make him feel small. But the treasures of the Lord are immeasurable and there is no lack whatsoever in Him.

Because one has the notion of 'I' in the gross body, the prāṇas, the mind and so on, it is as if these cover the sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā from one's vision. So the gross body, the prāṇas, the mind and so on are spoken of as kośas, cover for the ātmā. It is important that we don't think of these as physical coverings like the layers of onion. Atma that is the limitless does not get localized to being 'deep within'. The word kośa is understood as the locus of a mistaken idea about myself which covers the vision of myself. The Lord being the ātmā, has these mahāntaḥ kosāḥ, big coverings and hence, is Mahākośa.

433. Mahābhogaḥ

महाभोगः

The one who is an ocean of ānanda.

At first, one strives to gain artha, wealth. Artha, security may be in the form of wealth, real estate, stocks, resources, influence, name, power etc. Some of them depend on each other and feed each other. One 's financial retirement plan is also artha. Seeking wealth is a valid pursuit. Even though artha is an end, a goal sought after by all, it is not the ultimate end. Pursuit of artha is common to animals too. The fishes will look for worms, the birds will look for nuts, the dog

will look for its food so too a python. But they don't make such a big deal about it as humans. Even a dog may bury an extra bone but certainly won't do so for the next three generations!

Then one seeks kāma, pleasures, and for the sake of getting them one spends some artha. Seeking various pleasures, aesthetic experiences like music, dance, art, beauty, holiday, recognition, approval are all kama because they bring satisfaction. Some have sacrificed wealth and kingdoms for the sake of kāma, love. Then there is another group of people who are committed to a comfortable and pleasurable life in the hereafter, in svarga and hence they are involved in many vedic karma and rituals to secure their place, which is referred to as dharma. Dharma being a multi faceted word, also refers to the universal values of love, justice, compassion etc and our pursuits of artha and kama gain greater validity when they are backed by ethical choices. Still, artha, kāma and dharma are not the ultimate end. In all of these what is being sought is ānanda.

Bhagavān being Mahākśa, does not need to seek artha. But what about kāma? Will He not seek pleasures? He is one ocean of bhoga, one ocean of ānanda. He is Mahābhoga, the source of all pleasures and the source of all joy.

434. Mahādhanaḥ

महाधनः

The one who has great wealth.

Bhagavān is the one who has the greatest wealth and that is mokṣa. People want more and more wealth because that would be a sukha-sādhana, a means for gaining sukha. After gaining some wealth, it stops to matter. What started off as 'seeking of wealth' for a comfortable lifestyle for the family and one's retirement fund then transforms into a never ending cycle of earn-spend-save-earn-spend-save. Or for the Warren Buffets of the world, it is about creating value or the next challenge and so on. Research studies show that rich people are not necessarily happy or people at peace, they certainly are comfortable. The riches with human beings are limited and will end one day. It takes one tsunami or an earthquake or a stock market crash to wipe it off, as fragile as the sense of security it is.

Really speaking all that is sought is Bhagavān.
In understanding the order of Bhagavān in your life, you recognise how much you have been given.
In understanding the order of Bhagavān you recognise your own riches of iccha śakti, kriya śakti and jnana śakti, the power to desire, the power to do and the power to know in all situations.
In understanding the order of Bhagavān you learn to value what you have because you recognise the fragility of situations as we hear more news about disasters – human made and natural.
In understanding the order of Bhagavān you recognise that you are in order.

You recognise that he is the very means for gaining sukha. You recognise he is the very means of attaining the ultimate end or happiness called mokṣa. Thus, He is Mahādhana.

435. Anirviṇṇaḥ

अनिर्विण्णः

The one who is never tired.

Bhagavān gets a lot of names because we try to understand Him from our standpoint. We, the jīvas, very often lose enthusiasm, become disinterested, waiting for weekends, holidays, the day of retirement and so on, because we are nirviṇṇa, tired. Physical fatigue is easy to recover with adequate sleep and rest. But due to so many reasons including our mechanical, repetitive, self debilitating thinking patterns we feel burnt out, mentally exhausted sometimes. One is fed up and dejected, because in spite of struggling, one does not get what one wants. Sometimes, we even take retirement voluntarily.

To manage mental exhaustion, different things may help: a different clearer perspective to life, discovering simple pleasures, adequate rest, connecting with people, and a renewed focus on dharma and Bhagavan. Sometimes holidays or going away to another place helps with a wider perspective. But Bhagavān needs no holiday, has continuous work with no holidays or voluntary retirement schemes. Unlike us, Bhagavān is Anirviṇṇa, never loses His enthusiasm or interest in what He does. We expect the situation in front of us or a person to make us enthusiastic. But, a certain attitudinal cheerfulness contributes to enthusiasm that you bring to a situation. Being the one with all his desires fulfilled, He has no expectations and therefore, no dejections. At the same time, He is asaṅga, untouched by what He does.

Would Lakṣmi make Him nirviṇṇa, complaining that He has no time for Her. No! Because she is not another entity separate from Him, clamouring for attention. As Lakṣmināārāyaṇa, She is one with Him. Both are inseparable and at the same time being asaṅga, uninvolved, keep the jagat going.

436. Sthaviṣṭhaḥ
स्थविष्ठः
The one manifest as the gross physical universe.

Sthūla means bulky and Sthaviṣṭha means the most bulky. Bhagavān is in the form of Virāṭ, in the form of the cosmos, the physical universe with its order and hence, Sthaviṣṭha.

When we want to refer to Bhagavān we generally look up towards the sky. It is a very strong orientation. This orientation of looking up, ingrained since childhood, suggests that Bhagavān is most definitely not here, where we are. We behave as if Bhagavān does not exist, perhaps he is dead in our earthly plane. The word स्थविष्ठः and many other words address this orientation of localising and limiting all pervasive Bhagavān only to svarga, somewhere remote and up there. This word is encouraging us to see that right now, right here, right where we are all forms that we perceive including our own bodies is really a manifestation of Bhagavān.

The Muṇḍakopaniṣad describes His virāṭ form as- the fire is His head, the sun and moon His eyes, the quarters His ears, the Vedas His speech, the air His breath, the universe is His heart, the earth His feet…’(2.14).

437. Abhūḥ or Bhūḥ.

अभूः or भूः
The unborn or, i. Existence. ii. The Earth.

The sandhi rules allow this nāma to be taken both as Abhūḥ or Bhūḥ.

Even though He is Sthaviṣṭha and therefore is continuously born as one thing or the other, He is really never born. Viruses are born. Viruses die. Plants are born. Plants die. Animals are born. Animals die. Human beings are born. And yes, they die too although we struggle to accept this. But Bhagavān, He is Abhū, one who has no janma, no birth.

Or he is in the form of existence, pure undivided, undifferentiated and always is. He is Bhū. Again, He is Bhū, the one who is in the form of the earth and so on. Among the five elements, Parameśvara is bhū, the earth. The earth is the upalakṣaṇa standing for the other four elements ākāśa, vāyu, agni and ap, that is, space, air, fire and water also.

438.Dharmayupaḥ
धर्मयूपः
The sacrificial post for the dharmas.

Yūpa is the sacrificial post that is used in ritual offerings. It is made of wood and is octagonal in shape and the sacrificial animals are bound to this sacrificial post. Similarly, the Lord is Yūpa, the resting place of all the dharmas, and hence, Dharmayupa. All dharmas are centered on Him.

Every dharma, every good quality like compassion, sevā, ānanda, dāna, tyāga, peace, discipline and so on, is connected to Īśvara. Whereas, the qualities like greed and so on are all connected only to the jīva. What does the jīva do? If not working on emotional growth and maturity, the jīva serves and feeds selfishness, concerns, fear, anger, jealousy, aggressiveness, competitiveness, indifference, unmindfulness and so on. All of these tend to make one cut the corners of dharma. What gets sacrificed is adharma not the qualities that one is trying to grow out of. Very often we tend to justify our insecurities and adharmic behaviour by saying, " What else could I have done?" I was so helpless, "Anybody in my situation would have also done the same, " After all, it is a competitive world! If I am not so aggressive, I won't survive in the market place".

Thus, there seem to be two yūpas, one the yūpa of the jīva and the other the yūpa of Īśvara. The jīva, if he wants to live a life of dharma, should try to hold on to Īśvara, who is the dharma-yūpa.

439. Mahāmakhaḥ
महामखहः
The one who makes a sacrifice great.

Makha means a yajña, a ritualistic offering or what is commonly called sacrifice. Yajña is a karma and hence always performed for a result. For a karma yogi what is the result that is desired? Mokṣa, recognition of the limitlessness of oneself. Is it possible that karma can give mokṣa? Mokṣa is not the result of any action, however exalted the action, however great the

yajna may be. Mokṣa is you, already self established, self evident. What already IS cannot be given. Then? If what IS is not known, then it has to be discovered.

What is the greatest result that Bhagavān can give you for your yajñas? The greatest result that can be given is mokṣa, that is, limitlessness. That means Bhagavān gives Himself. If the yajña is performed properly and the very yajña is arpita, offered unto Him, one gains citta-śuddhi, a purification of the mind in the form of neutralization of cravings and aversions. With sufficient preparation, the karma yogi in course of time gains jñāna and thereby, one gets Bhagavān Himself, that is, mokṣa. All the yajñas are ultimately meant only for gaining the knowledge of Bhagavān. So, by giving Himself, that is, limitlessness as the result, He makes the makha mahān, the ritual great, and hence, He is Mahāmakha.

440. Nakṣatranemiḥ

नक्षत्रनेमिः

The centre of the nakṣatras.

We have a strong orientation of seeing all objects including planets as inert in and of themselves and their cause too as inert. How come planets move, if they are inert? Oh, there are many forces including gravitational force. What is responsible for gravitational force? Oh, it is a product of matter and a few other things because matter and energy are two sides of the same coin. What is it that makes matter and energy two sides of the same coin? Oh, that ‘s the way it is. When we press deeper for questions we are at a loss to answer.

Our solar system is considered to be in one end of the nakṣatra-samūha or in the milky way. Bhagavān is the nemi or the centre around which, all the nakṣatras, all the systems and planets revolve. This centre does not move.

Nakṣatra, here refers to all the constellations and heavenly bodies. Even the moon is considered to be a nakṣatra. The planets, the sun, the moon and other stars, which are moving, are in the form of a wheel in the galaxy. They all seem to be in their respective orbits and don’t collide and have accidents! The Dhruva-nakṣatra is said to regulate the motions of the systems. At the centre of the wheel of the luminaries is Viṣṇu. He is the one who makes the wheel rotate and exists as the axle.

441. Nakṣatri

नक्षत्री

The Lord of the stars

Nakṣatra, refers to all the constellations and heavenly bodies. Mentioned in the Atharveda and the Vedānga- Jyotisha, Jyotisha is a body of knowledge which reveals astronomy and astrology based on the positions of planets, time of the year etc. There are 27 nakṣatras. Each of the nakshatras is governed as 'lord' by nine planets. For instance we may have heard that Brihaspati is the ruling lord for Jupiter, Shani devata is for Saturn. The lord of each nakṣatra determines the planetary period known as the dasha which is considered of major importance in indicating life patterns in in Hindu astrology.

If the Lord is the Nakṣatranemi and all the nakṣatras are around Him, the Lord, are they separate from Him? Bhagavān is manifest in the form of nakṣatras. Not only does every nakṣatra have a Lord, Bhagavan is the lord of all the nakṣatras. Like the dehī, who is the indweller in the deha, Bhagavān is the Nakṣatri. As the moon, He is the Lord of nakṣatras. The Lord says- 'among the stars, I am the moon'.

442. Kṣamaḥ

क्षमः

i. The one who is patient.
ii. The efficient.

Waiting for a bud to bloom is patience. Waiting for a child to grow up is patience. Allowing yourself time to heal from hurt and pain is patience. Allowing others to express themselves and not rushing to complete their sentences is patience. Allowing time for a business deal to come through is patience. Accommodating, making room in your heart for others is patience. Patience is not tolerance.

In the Vālmīki-rāmāyaṇa, Srī Rāmā is said to be 'kṣamayā pṛrhivīsamaḥ - in patience, He is like the earth' (Bāla.1.18). The earth puts up with all our various atrocities like mining, brick-making, pollution and other such activities. For generations, people trample on the earth, jump on it, without thinking and she puts up with all this. What patience!

Acknowledging this burden we put on the earth, for generations every morning after waking up, we say the following prayer:

समुद्रवसने देवि पर्वतस्तनमण्डले ।
विष्णुपत्नि नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्शं क्षमस्वमे ॥

Samudra-Vasane Devi Parvata-Stana-Mannddale |
Visnu-Patni Namas-Tubhyam Paada-Sparsham Kssamasva-Me ||

(Oh Mother Earth) The Devi who dwells in the ocean! The one who has the mountains as her breasts, Who is the Consort of Sri Vishnu, I Bow to You; Please Forgive me for Touching You with my Feet.

Whatever we may do, the Lord is full of patience. He is the one from whom we have to draw patience and hence, He is called Kṣama, the patient one. He is Kṣama, because He is efficient in all actions like the creation of this wondrous universe.

May we discover and cultivate patience in our lives, for ourselves and others. May we not confuse patience with tolerating adharma. May we use the many saktis given to us to be more efficient and skillful in our ways, make efficient use of resources and use our time efficiently on meaningful pursuits.

443. Kṣāmaḥ

क्षामः

The emaciated

At the time of pralaya everything is resolved. What does that mean? All modifications of matter, all permutations and combinations – subtle and gross no longer exist in that form. The beings go into unmanifest state.

What about the Lord? Only the Lord as the ātmā is left behind. Hence, while manifest as the universe, He is said to be Sthavṣṭha, bulky and when the world is withdrawn, He is said to be Kṣāma, emaciated, devoid of any form.

444. Samīhanaḥ

समीहनः

The one who functions well.

To accomplish an end or a goal, you have to perform an action. The desire and the effort that is to be put is called īhana. If a lot of resources are used more than any other real estate builder in the same locality, let's say for the construction of a house, then we might say it is a waste of money. If much time is used in excess of the stipulated time given then we will say that it has been a waste of time. There is a saying, 'Too many cooks spoil the broth.' This refers to excessive manpower that is not required to make a simple dish. Efficient functioning has to do with the right amount of time, resources, effort and manpower. Advertisements about some motorbikes or cars talk about fuel efficiency, maximum mileage in the least amount of fuel.

Samyak īhana - optimum and efficient functioning is when one uses the minimum time, minimum resources, minimum manpower and minimum effort but at the same time the amount is adequate and appropriate to achieve whatever is to be achieved. Bhagavān does all His actions, like creation and so on, well and at the right time but with minimum effort needed for achieving what He has to achieve. Therefore, He is called Samīhanā.

May we continue to discover our three fold saktis, of desiring, knowing and doing in the many spheres of life. May we learn to perform our karma in minimum time in a relaxed way. May we perform our karma by taking the assistance of other people without becoming over responsible or being under responsible in the outcome. May we learn to use all our resources including our minds and bodies well with cheerfulness and enthusiasm as we invoke the Lord as Samīhanā.

445. Yajñaḥ

यज्ञः

The one who exists as all rituals.

Bhagavān is Yajña, because He alone is in the form of all yajñas. In the Veda, the word yajña is used in the sense of a fire ritual offering, in the sense of a yagā, like soma-yāga and so on. Yajña is a comprehensive word. For those who say that they are not ritualistic, wait a minute. In your life you may never conduct a fire ritual but that does not stop you from converting all your actions into an offering to Īśvara i.e. yajña.

There are different kinds of yajña. Even charity, doing one's duty and so on is considered to be yajña. It has to be done with proper attitude. If oblations are offered daily to the dieties, it is

deva-yajña and if they are offered to the ancestors it is pitṛ-yajña. If food and other help are offered to fellow human beings with a proper attitude, it is manuṣya-yajña. If help is extended to plants and animals in the form of planting more trees, not using animal products for our consumption, sheltering animals who need help, minimising pollution to the environment it is bhūta-yajña.

In the Gīta, the word jñāna-yajña is used in the sense of study of the śāstra and this is a yajña in itself. Teaching becomes a yajña on the part of the teacher and study is a yajña on the part of the student. Daily recitation of the Veda is called svādhyāya-yajña. Japa, repetition of the names of the Lord, becomes japa-yajña. When Swami Chinmayananda ji called his public talk series as jñāna-yajña, people would walk in, expecting to see a homa kunda, and all preparations for a fire ritual offering. There would be no such thing there. In jñāna-yajña, you are purified by knowledge. All that is not you and what was taken to be you is burnt away metaphorically.

Anything that is offered unto Īśvara, should be done with an awareness of Īśvara. If it is done with an attitude Īśvarārpaṇa, as an offering to Īśvara, then it becomes a yajña. Or else, with an awareness of Īśvara, when something is done, because it is to be done, then that is your dharma. Īśvara is to be propitiated in the form of dharma. So Īśvara in the form of dharma creates for you a certain svadharma. At a given time and place, you have to do something and that becomes the mandate of Īśvara, as though, because dharma is very rigorous. If you do not do it, then there will dereliction of duty. So, the awareness of Īśvara, in the form of dharma, is required to live a life in the form of yajña.

Whole life becomes one yajña. When you perform all your duties, at the correct time and place, with an awareness of Īśvara who is in the form of dharma, then svakarma, or one's own karma, becomes very evident and it becomes an offering to Īśvara. So actions which are in conformity to Īśvara, are also yajña. The Lord Himself is in the form of yajña. Therefore, Bhagavān becomes yajña in the form of dharma.

Bhagavān says, 'nityaṁ kuru karma- do the actions that are to be done, yajñārtham- as an offering to Bhagavān'(BG.3.8). With the awareness of Īśvara, if your daily duties are done, then, those daily duties become yajña, because He is in the form of yajña. 'Yajño vai viṣṇuḥ' is a Vedic statement (Tai.Sam.2.5.5) and in the Viṣṇusahasranāma, the statement that Viṣṇu is in the form of yajña, is presented as a nāma for the Lord.

As the Lord pleases the devas in the form of yajña, He is called Yajña.

446. Ijyaḥ

इज्यः

The one worshipped through the yajña

If you are a very busy person then you have the right eligibility to perform a yajña. What? But, I don't even have time to read this post in leisure. Does n't matter. Every action of yours can be converted to a yajña because none other than the Lord is worshipped. In a fire ritual oblations are offered into the fire. Agni devata is the greatest courier service ever as it carries the subtle essence of the oblations offered to the devata for whom it was intended. All the devatas are also

functions of one Lord himself. If the Lord is in the form of yajña, who is the one propitiated by the yajña? The one who is Ijya, to be worshipped through the yajña is also Lord Viṣṇu alone.

He is the one who is worshipped in the form of the devas and pitṛs and accepts the offerings. In fact to highlight that all the oblations stand offered completely, we say 'idam na mama'. It is no more mine. One of my dear friends has an art page titled 'Idam na mama', to reflect that while the art work has come through her, it is no longer hers. It is available to the world. This is a very beautiful attitude to have not just while one does puja, if one does it at all. It is an attitude that makes you a giving person. It is an attitude that makes you larger than any situation because you always have something to give, something to offer. Even a seemingly helpless child offers her smile. To see that smile, adults will go down on their knees and indulge in all sorts of antics. Everyone has something to give, something to offer and we all have a need to give/offer. It is one of those fundamental needs that cannot be wished away. In converting all my actions to a yajña, I express my bhakti to the Lord. It is an attitude that reduces the perceived separation from myself and Bhagavan.

The Harivaṃśa says, ' whether people worship the devatās or pitrs, through the various rituals that give punya, or they contemplate on the ātmā, all of them worship Lord Viṣṇu alone'.

447. Mahejyaḥ

महेज्यः

The greatest object of worship

With reference to the various results that one wants to get through karma, Lord Viṣṇu is Ijya, the one to be worshipped. If one wants mokṣa, freedom from the sense of insignificance even then, He is Ijya. One may continue to perform rituals. One may continue to perform the many actions but what one desires is mokṣa. Even though mokṣa is not the result of a ritual, still, paramparayā, by succession, it is connected to the ritual. By rituals, prayers and prayerful actions, you gain citta-śuddhi which further helps you have a tremendous sense of objectivity and an abiding acceptance of yourself, situations and people. You see, even the disorder as a part of the order and by this, you prepare yourself for jñāna. This is in the form of self discovery.

All the karma done takes you to the teacher and the teaching. Now, with the rise in books, videos and a lot of teachers living all across the world, the exposure to teaching is very high.
Still, to convert an exposure to the teacher into a commitment to learning takes time and a lot of grace.

To convert being a casual listener of some spiritual talk to discovering the student in you willing to examine notions about oneself and willing to look into the mirror of the shastra takes a lot of grace.

To convert skepticism and cynicism of gurus and their teaching to a working trust and continuing commitment to one's own reason takes a lot of grace.

To have the luxury of time to pursue jñāna along with other pursuits in life takes a lot of grace.

To see one's own life in the light of the sastra takes some clarity and a lot of grace.

If you decide to bless yourself in the form of atma krpa, in time the teaching also becomes clear. Even as you study the śāstra, if you continue to do rituals, the daily rituals and prayers help you gain mokṣa. This is a particular way of saying, because depending on your attitude and your priorities, everything gets connected to mokṣa. The karma is initially done for citta-śuddhi, that same karma gives mokṣa as the result, because that karma is done for the sake of mokṣa alone.

Bhagavān may give all other phalas, through the various devatās; but, mokṣa is given directly. But I thought mokṣa was not something to be given. It is me. Yes, but the obstacles to the understanding of the truth are cleared. Since He gives mokṣa, Bhagavān is higher than all other dieties. Hence, He is Mahejya. He is to be worshipped through yajña, with care and devotion.

May we earn grace by our prayers and prayerful actions by worshipping the Mahejya.

448. Kratuḥ

क्रतुः

The one in the form of Vedic ritual kratu.

Since a Vedic ritual offering is the most exalted karma, by saying that he is in the form of the Vedic ritual, kratu, every other kind of karma is included. He alone is in the form of the Kratu, the Vedic ritual which involves a yūpa, the post to which the sacrificial animal is tied. By doing this Vaidika ritual, he alone is invoked.

In Gita 9.16, Bhagavān says," अहं क्रतुः अहं यज्ञः (I am the ritual, I am the worship). By understanding that all that is here is Bhagavān, all karmas are also included. When we say," All that I do is offered to you." Yat yat karma karomi tat tat akhilam sambho tava āradhanam. This can be an attitude or a vision. If it is an attitude it is bhakti, an expression of devotion to the Lord. If it is a vision then it is jnanam, the discovery that all that is here is Bhagavān.

May we discover that all our actions are sanctified by our attitude and vision.

May we discover the freedom that comes from offering all our actions to Bhagavān.

449. Satram

सत्रम्

The one in the form of the Vedic ritual, satra.

Satra is a ritual wherein a group of learned people get together to perform a ritual, according to the injunctions in the Veda. This ritual is done for the benefit of the society or the world, without expecting any personal benefit. In this ritual a lot of food is distributed. Therefore, a place where food is distributed free, is also called satra.
Bhagavān alone is in the form of all these activities of dharma, wherein good and righteous people are benefitted here on this earth as well as hereafter. The currency used here is not helpful in the hereafter. The only currency that will get a good exchange rate in the hereafter, post death

of the body is dharma – one's own punya and pāpa. He is called Satra. He is Satra, because He protects the sat-puruṣas, the righteous people.

450. Satām gatiḥ
सतां गतिः
The only end of sat-puruṣas.

Sat-puruṣas are mumukṣus, the seekers of mokṣa.

All are seekers of mokṣa as everyone looks for fulfillment in different things, people and situations. But, the seekers themselves have not understood that they are seekers. The nagging sense of dissatisfaction and insignificance just does not go away despite so much. Being a committed seeker of mokṣa is not an ordinary thing. It means that one is leading a relatively fulfilled life and that relative fulfillment has come from committed pursuits of dharma, artha and kāma.

We need to experience the freedom and the glory of a human being and that can only come from our sphere of operation and influence. For such a person who is achieving his priorities in life, there is great joy that is derived from being objective and living a life of priorities. Only with that objectivity will it be further discerned that 'all this is just not good enough'. Yeh dil maange more (The heart wants more).

A seeker of Bhagavān is Satām gati as Bhagavān Himself is the only end or goal. When will the seeking come to an end? Is it one of those romanticized journeys of endless seeking and endless travel. The seeker 's journey will come to an end when the sought is gained. These seekers are not ready to settle for anything less than attaining Bhagavān, as he Himself is the end.

451. Sarvadarśī
सर्वदर्शी
The one who sees everything.

Sarvadarśī means the one who sees everything. A tagline for a CCTV brand said, 'Uparwaala sab dekh raha hai.' (The one who lives above (pun intended) is seeing everything) Certain governments and even facebook pry into the records of all people. With the touch of a few buttons of the computer, the government becomes a sarvadarśī, sees the records of anyone it chooses, regarding birth, origin, family background, marriage, education, jobs held, financial and business transactions, phone, e-mail and other correspondence, medical and dental records, commissions and omissions and what not. There is no more privacy. But if the computer is infected with a virus or tampered with, it cannot give the necessary information. Nor can any government know the punya and papa accrued by the people. We know of so many people falsely implicated in crimes as well as the many people who have committed crimes but go scot free. There are many things that CCTV and even the government may miss.

But the Lord is Sarvadarśī, sees everything, without the help of any computer. How? Svābhāvikena bodhena, by His all-knowing nature, which is innate to Him. He does not even need eyes to see, much less a computer. Still, He knows all the actions of every jīva, the kṛta, and

akṛta, the actions done in keeping with dharma or adharma and therefore, the puṇya and papa of all jīvas. He is Sarvadarśī, all-seeing, all-knowing. Knowing this is not meant to create fear in our minds. It is about alertness on our part to uphold dharma.

452. Vimuktātmā

विमुक्तात्मा

The one who is ever liberated.

He is one whose ātmā is always vimukta, whose self is always free by nature and hence, He is Vimuktātm. Free means there is no sense of bondage, no constriction, no limitation. This is the svarūpa of Īśvara.

Was he bound earlier and then became free? No. Maybe he is free now but will become bound again. No. Where there is knowledge, ignorance cannot arise. He was ever free. Being the creator of the jagat, He has no sense of doership. He knows that He is actionless. Since He is all-knowing, He knows himself also and hence, Vimukta, free. He is not only vimukta, but is also ātmā of all and hence, Vimuktātma.

453. Sarvajñaḥ

सर्वज्ञः

The one who is all and who is the knower.

He is Sarva, all and He is jña, the knower. Knower of one or two disciplines like us? No, Infact all the disciplines of knowledge that exist such as Astronomy, Linguistics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Maths and the many areas that are still to be discovered. The creation being so intelligently put together, intelligence implies an order and that very intelligence, the very knowledge that makes everything about this jagat, manifest and unmanifest. function is sarvajñaḥ.

The Upaniṣad says, 'idaṁ sarvaṁ yada yam ātmā – all that is here is ātmā alone'.
May we invoke the grace to know what we need to know to function well.
May we act on what we know. May we remember what we know at the right time and not allow ourselves to be hijacked by our emotions, habitual unsuitable patterns.
May we not resist learning what we need to learn.
May we allow the all encompassing knowledge embrace of Bhagavān to happen.

454. Jñānamuttamam

ज्ञानमुत्तमम्

The supreme knowledge.

Both the words are taken together as one name. Sarvajñatava implies jñāna, knowledge of things, objects. But, His svarūpa is jñāna, pure consciousness. Pure consciousness is neither a quality, nor an action nor a group nor a relation. It is uttama because it is ajanya, not born; it is not vṛtti-jñāna, a knowledge that is in the form of a thought modification that is born. Thoughts are subject to coming and going in human beings

Being pure consciousness, it is free from limitations of time, space and object and therefore, uttama, superior. When the object is there also, it maintains its freedom, like a clay pot, which maintains its clayness, even though the pot is a superimposed attribute. This is parameśvara's svarūpa, which is satyaṃ jñānam anantam – existence, knowledge and limitlessness. That is Brahman.

455. Suvrataḥ

सुव्रतः

The one with an admirable commitment.

Any commitment is not casual by any means. In our day to day living, it may be a commitment to a job /company which involves showing up and performing well. It maybe a commitment to raising a child and hence building a conducive environment for the child's all round development, not just in academics. The commitment may be towards learning classical music, which may take atleast twelve years. Any commitment as we know, is not haphazard or actions that are performed in fits and starts. There is a clarity in the goal to be achieved, an understanding of the steps to be taken and most importantly sustained effort and actions that need to be taken to achieving the goal. There is effort also in ensuring that the constraining factors in achieving the goal (let's say – mindless TV watching for a child) is offset by supportive factors (involving the child in interesting sports or other stimulating activities while allowing for rest).

The vrata, vow, that is commitment of Bhagavān, is śobhana, great and admirable. It is consistent and not casual or episodic. In His avatāra as Śrī Rāma, Bhagavān says, 'I give abhaya, protection from all dangers to the one who takes refuge in Me.' What about those who do not seek His refuge? Does He not have a vrata or commitment to them? Is He indifferent to such people?

No. Bhagavān is available for anyone to claim. He is always available in the form of laws, in a potential form. Therefore, one has to tap Bhagavān. If we take one step, then, Bhagavān will take a step towards us. But the step of Bhagavān is always bigger than our step, as in the case of Vāmana-avatāra. In taking the step, Bhagavān cannot make any omission and therefore, He is Suvrata. Being the giver of karma-phala, there is no question of His not giving the result of action. From our standpoint we call Īśvara as Suvrata, one of admirable commitment.

May we discover clarity in our goals. May we know that moving towards goals is rarely ever linear. May we continue to seek grace to develop our will and commitment as we are inspired by none other than Bhagavān as Suvrata.

456. Sumukhaḥ

सुमुखः

The one with a beautiful face.

The word mukha can mean both face and mouth. Sumukha is the one with beautiful face. There is a lot said about 'beauty lying in the eyes of a beholder', implying that the perception of beauty

is subjective. As we grow up, we agonise so much about how our face could have been, should have been! Even now despite some exposure to Vedanta we resist accepting our face, our bodies. We look into the mirror and often some comments pop up - The nose could have been longer, the teeth could have been more even, the color could have been fairer, the cheeks could have been less rounded etc etc. Sure, we can enhance with make up or even cosmetic surgery. But the bottom line is that our face has been given to us. Sure, a combination of the genes contributed to it. But that too was given. Across cultures, a beautiful face with lasting beauty is recognised as the face by looking at which we feel happy because of the happiness and smiles and kindness that the face exudes. The face could belong to anyone.

Bhagavān has many faces, because every face is the face of Bhagavān. Then, which is a beautiful face? That face, by just looking at which, we should be able to calm down and relax, we should feel that all our obstacles have vanished, that face alone is sumukha. We invoke the Lord as Sumukha, in the face that one likes and that is the face of Bhagavān. As everything is Bhagavān, we invoke Him with a face that we like. The face of Śrī Rāma or Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on is Sumukha. Lord Ganeśa is invoked specially with the name Sumukha. Because the upadeśa, the teaching, of all disciplines of knowledge come from the Lord, He is Sumukha.

May we discover an abiding acceptance of our faces and bodies in the recognition that this too is the face of Bhagavān. Through a physical expression of bhakti, puja everyday or at times, may we allow ourselves to rest on the face of Bhagavān to seek what we need.

457. Sūkṣmaḥ

सूक्ष्मः

The one who is subtle.

He is Sūkṣma, subtle, without any form or quality.

On a day to day basis, we are able to appreciate subtlety in communication especially poetry where something is pointed out but not spelt out. We are able to appreciate subtlety in delicate flavours and tastes of food. Musicians or people whose ears are trained are able to pick up subtle notes and see numerous variations of just one note. This is the development of subtlety with respect to sense perception.

We go one step further. Subtlety means that it is increasingly not readily available for sense perception. Let's look at Space. It is the subtlest of all the elements. Why? Because it cannot be seen, heard or touched. If that is so, how can it be a form? Subtle as it is, it is still a form that accommodates everything – all the galaxies, known and unknown. We confuse space with air. What can be felt is air and also heard especially strong winds.

What about Bhagavān? Any form that you want, is His form. But, He Himself is free from any form. He is smaller than an atom, subtler than even space as space is born from him. Anything that you think as small, He is smaller than that. Anything that you think as subtle, He is subtler than that. Therefore, He has no particular form. Since He is formless, every form is His form.

That is why Sumukha and Sūkṣma go together. If this is understood, there is no harm, in fact delight in invoking Him in any form and there should be no misunderstanding and fight over the form of God.

458. Sughoṣaḥ
सुघोषः
He is the auspicious sound.

What would be the ghoṣa, the voice of Bhagavān? Is it a kind, deep, booming male voice? Is it a kind, female, nurturing voice? All these could well be our imagination or fantasy.

The chanting of the Vedas is the ghoṣa of Bhagavān, because the Vedas have come from Bhagavān. The mantras all over the Vedas are meant to help us achieve our many pursuits of dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. The word Ṛṣi means mantra draṣṭa, the seer of the mantra not mantra karta, creator of the mantra. And hence, if anybody says that a mantra can be translated and chanted, that is wrong. Mantra can be translated for understanding but in chanting it must be chanted not sung. When we say that a certain ṛṣi is associated with a mantra, we refer to the ṛṣi discovering an existing mantra which existed without a beginning and now is revealed to the world.

All mantras are highly powerful and potent sounds. The mantras of the Vedas brings blessings to the world in the form of sounds. They also confer blessings on us by taking the form of the deities appropriate to the different sounds. A mantra being sacred, we treat it with sacredness and reverence by chanting it daily or regularly if we have been given a mantra. One cannot take a casual approach to a mantra. Although mantras are potent by themselves, we make it ours and more potent by honoring it. You don't honor a mantra by keeping it one corner of the mind but chanting it as one revels in the sound and hopefully passing it on to the next generation.
The object of Veda-ghoṣa is also Bhagavān.

459. Sukhadaḥ
सुखदः
The one who gives (cuts) happiness.

Whenever you have happiness, there is Īśvara. That sukha that you enjoy is the svarūpa of Īśvara. Being the source of sukha, Īśvara is Sukhada, the giver of happiness. If music makes you happy, it is not the music that gives you sukha, but it is Bhagavān who gives sukha. So, through music and in many other ways, He gives sukha and whatever sukha you get, it is always from Īśvara. Even when you think of Īśvara, there is happiness. The distance if at all, is just a thought away .

But the manifestation of that sukha depends on our mental condition. When one follows sat-vṛtti, the path of dharma, then according to one's puṇya, the Lord is Sukhada, gives situations that are conducive to sukha. And a mind that is sātvik is able to enjoy sukha.

On the other hand, when one follows asat-vṛtti, the path of adharma, then according to one's papa, the Lord is Sukhada. The happiness that is due to me is denied. We don't realise that we have a need to follow dharma although dharma (doing the appropriate thing in a given situation

which is beneficial to most), seems like a choice. If we don't follow dharma guilt is a constant companion. Also the consequences of doing wrong actions causes situations that are unpleasant, duḥkha and as though cuts away the sukha and so he is also the one who cuts away happiness. This is important to know because of the impartiality of the laws of karma. Otherwise we may think childishly in that God is either out to get me or I am God's favourite child and the others are not.

460. Suhṛt

सूहृत्

The one who helps without any expectation.

The one who helps without any introduction or expectation is suhṛt. Usually, a friend helps you, a family member helps you because of family identity, or a person belonging to the community may help you, because of community identity. Then, there is a group identity because of belonging to various organizations and clubs such as Rotary, Lion, and so on, where one helps the other. In all these, you know the person who helps and there is an expectation of returning the help and thus, there is an obligation.

One of my friends was travelling in a sensitive zone in Kashmir. She was stopped by a soldier from the Indian army as there were reports of some terrorist presence. She was asked to return as he said that her life might be in danger. She asked him,' If I return, then your life is in danger'. So he said,' My job is to protect you." She was puzzled," But, you don't know me." And he reassuringly replied," I don't need to know you, Ma'am." She returned in the same car, crying all the way as she was deeply moved by the soldier 's statement. She still shudders to think a young man, almost her son's age was willing to die for her without even knowing her. That soldier was a Suhṛt.

Who is a suhṛt? Suhṛt is one, who without any kind of prior introduction helps you, just because you need help. There is no motive whatsoever behind this help. You need help and the person happens to be in that place and capable of helping and therefore, he helps. He helps without expecting anything in return.

Bhagavān is also Suhṛt, because when you pray for help, it is a karma and for this karma, He gives a result. As an intelligent being, you seek help. Bhagavān is a source of help as He is Suhṛt and there is no obligation involved. In fact, there is no way in which we can ever help Bhagavān in return. So we invoke Bhagavān as Suhṛt. The Gītā talks of Him as sarvabhūtānaṃ suhṛt.

May we be sensitive to what people around us need and pitch in to help. May we discover the joy of extending help as a suhṛt. That the person has been helped itself is a joy. That people around us are in a better off position than where they were, is also a joy.

461. Manoharaḥ

मनोहरः

The one who robs the mind.

He robs away your mind as the Suhṛt and hence, He is called Manohara.

Very often people ask, ‘How am I to think of the Lord? It is very dry and dull. I don’t feel anything’ ’Ok, what is it that you like to think of with interest?’ ‘I like the mountains and blue skies and the deep blue ocean; I like to enjoy parties and clubbing.’ Whatever holds your interest, that is the Lord.

Whatever robs the mind of people, takes away their attention to something else, that is Īśvara. Whether it is clubbing or mountains or any other experience, it is only to Īśvara that you are attracted. You should be able to see all the experiences you are seeking, with family or friends, spiritual experience or ordinary experience, you are seeking oneness. Yeh dil maange more (The heart desires more) could be for an aerated drink or it could be for a spiritual experience. It does not matter! That I want more and hence my many endless pursuits to seek fulfillment and oneness is the fundamental condition of the human being based on the conclusion that ‘I am this limited being’. That is called viveka, discrimination.

When this viveka is there, then vairagya, dispassion will naturally be there. What attracts is Īśvara because Īśvara is joy. Joy means ātmā and therefore it is never available outside or inside. It is you. Joy is you and what attracts is your pleased self. So, Parameśvara is Manohara, being the ānanda-svarūpa-ātmā, which is limitless.

462. Jitakrodhaḥ
जितक्रोधः
The one who has conquered anger.

This is a wonderful word for Bhagavān as some of us may have an idea born in childhood, of an angry God, the God who gets angry with me if I don’t pray enough or do something wrong.

Most people complain that they don’t have control over their anger and hordes sign up for anger management classes. The Bhagavad Gita presents a very systematic presentation of how anger takes place in the second chapter. We are perpetually given to likes and dislikes. The intensity of the likes and dislikes increases when we dwell on it. ‘If I had this person/condition/object in my life(what I desired) things would be dramatically different. If I got rid of this condition in my life, things would be dramatically different.‘ Naturally when anything obstructs the achievement of these binding likes or dislikes then there is anger. We cannot have our way and we cannot accept it. The anger in turn overwhelms us making us unable to master it. The most unsuccessful way to deal with anger is by saying ‘I will not get angry’. You cannot deal with the symptom, anger. The root cause is not desire but the intensity of the desire (like or dislike) and your dependence on the fulfillment of it. But we need to see that our happiness is not dependent on fulfillment of desires. Right now, if you experience yourself as happy it is not that all your problems in life are solved. It is not that all your desires are fulfilled. Still you have the capacity to see yourself happy. This is wonderful.

Bhagavān does not have any desires or expectations nor does He have anybody to obstruct His desires and make Him angry. When the Lord has no anger, where is the necessity for Him to master it? This again is a name given to Lord from our own standpoint. We invoke Bhagavān as Jitakrodha, so that we can have mastery over our anger.

In His avatāras again, He is jitakrodha, even when there are instances that can trigger anger. May we discover the dynamics of anger and not victimise ourselves or others by our anger. May we recognise that anger is a part of the psychological order and seek grace to manage our helplessness. May we have the courage to change the things we can, acceptance for the things we cannot and the wisdom to know the difference.

463. Vīrabāhuḥ

वीरबाहुः

The one whose arms have got valour and skill.

The Lord is Vīrabāhu because His arms have vikrama, valour and strength. The Lord In His avatāra as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kr̥ṣṇa, was a Vīrabāhu.

We may not be involved in work that requires great strength and skill of the arms unless one is into rock climbing or fine arts or cooking or some performing art as a musician. Still, we need a lot of strength for any work that we do with our hands. It is possible that we may have the requisite strength but we don't care, there is not much motivation in life. With reduced motivation we feel we don't have any strength or skill, which is not true. For somebody who has temporarily sprained the arm, every movement becomes painful. We painfully realise how we even take a flick of the fingers for granted. It is also possible that for some of the work we find that our arms are not enough to face our daily challenges and battles.

May we invoke the Lord as Vīrabāhu, to help us face our difficulties with courage and discover and hone the skills we possess.

464. Vidārṇaḥ

विदारणः

The one who tears apart the unrighteous.

The unique thing about Sanātana dharma is that the dharma is a manifestation of the Lord. Dharma gets wrongly translated as religion or a set of dos and donts. Dharma encompasses values, ethics, principles and so much more and is the very fabric of a society. Dharma lives in society as dharmis, people who practise dharma. Dharma is not just a book kept away in the libraries of the world but ever present in the heart of every person, as an awareness of doing the right thing and a need to do the right thing. Western psychology does not talk much about the need to do the right thing. We recognise it clearly, as it is not a need that can be dismissed or wished away or reduced. The satisfaction and peace that comes from doing the right thing in a given situation is different from the satisfaction that comes from getting the prized job or grades of your child. Both are valid and hence it is a major life goal, purusārtha for a human being.

Dharma also refers to the nature of something. It is the dharma of the fire to burn. A two year child tries to puts his finger in the bright thing that is fire, (flame of the lamp in the puja corner). The fire burns. The fire is impartial and not cognizant of the little child's finger and hence continues to burn. The two year old painfully, experientially learns that if he wants to avoid pain he should not put his finger in the flame. By giving us the glorious capacity to see actions and

their likely consequences, He maintains dharma and nobody can escape the law of dharma. Anyone who goes against dharma cannot escape from Paramśvara, because, He gives the results for the adhārmic actions thereby disciplining them.

It is not that the Lord punishes or tears apart the adhārmic people, but they themselves face the consequences of their actions, according to the law of karma of the Lord. Since He is the karma-phala-dātā, He is called Vidārṇa.

465. Svāpanaḥ

स्वापनः

The one who makes everyone go to sleep.

Does the Lord drug people so that they may go to sleep? No. Just as a mother makes a child fall asleep, it is because of the grace of Īśvara that one goes to sleep and hence, He is Svāpana. One should have some puṇya to be able to sleep, because in sleep there is sukha. Sleep is such a beautiful experienceless experience. In deep sleep you don't know anything, the body is functioning minimally, the mind is resolved and you wake up feeling refreshed. It is an experience all of us look forward to. A time when all identities, all troubles, all problems get dropped. Does the Lord go to sleep; He is awake at all times and at all places. When everybody is asleep, Bhagavān never goes to sleep. He is aluptadṛk. He has no eyelids to close. He is awake in all three states of experiences.

He makes everyone fall asleep by His māyā. This is due to the puṇya which is got as the result of karma. That people are asleep to the true nature of oneself, is also due to the āvaraṇa-śakti, the veiling power of His māyā and hence He is Svāpana.

466. Svavaśaḥ

स्ववशः

The one who is independent.

Some of us have strong emotional dependencies. These range from the first cup of tea/coffee/hot water in the morning to our mobile phones to family members in our lives. We cannot do without them, or so we think. We feel that we are at the mercy of a limiting idea, a person or even our past. Some of us are okay with our dependencies as we justify it saying that ultimately this is what life is all about. Really speaking, all our struggles are to be free from dependencies. The need for freedom, the need for independence asserts itself when that little crawling child leaves the hand of the caregiver and tries to walk by himself/herself. As one grows up, the need for a particular person in one's life is to be totally acceptable to oneself. The need for the professional achievement is to prove that one 'can do it' even if one does not wear the T-shirt. The need for moksa is again to be free from the sense of bondage.

As a human being, can I be completely free from all dependencies? Emotional dependencies, yes. Physical dependencies, probably not. The body-mind-sense-complex is born of the five elements and sustained by the five elements. The body has to be sustained by food and water. Even some yogis who claim that they need only sunlight, still need agni. We recognise that we live in an inter dependent world and that is fine. We need not worry too much about our

dependencies. We focus on being objective and see that our dependencies are conditions that we will eventually grow out of. All the dependencies are for the mind-body not the I that objectifies all of this. That I has been ever independent.

Īśvara is not dependent on anyone or anything. Where did the material and intelligence come from? Īśvara is independent as the cause of the creation, sustenance and resolution of this jagat, Thus, He is Svavaśa, independent, not controlled by or at the mercy of anyone, but everything is under His control.

May we discover greater objectivity in the spheres of family, work and every other sphere. In invoking the grace of the Lord, may we discover that we are always independent despite our dependencies.

467. Vyāpī

व्यापी

The one who is all-pervasive.

I am writing this from here, in Mumbai. One of you who reads this, is there in Portugal. 'Here' and 'there' are relative words. What was once here is no more here and what was once there is now here. The status of these words keeps shifting based on our standpoint. Is there a here or there to space? The space in the room is as much as the space in the house as much as the space in the neighbourhood as much as the space in the country as much as the space in the continent as much as the space in the galaxy. We can impose the idea of functional living spaces and refer to it as the space 'here' or 'there', but really speaking space is everywhere. This is not to be confused with the air that is accommodated by space.

Parameśvara is not located in a given place. Parameśvara is not present only in holy places or in temples or in puja corners but is Vyāpī, all-pervasive, like ākāśa, space. There is no place that is 'here' or 'there' or wherever that Parameśvara is not.

Being the cause of everything including space, He is all-pervasive. He pervades all the three states of experience and thus, the entire waking world, dream world and the sleep world. There is nothing which is not pervaded by Him.

May we give up the orientation of limiting Parameśvara and discover his all pervasiveness. In that understanding we relax as we are just a thought away. But, then each and every thought is also pervaded by Parameśvara. No escape then ☺

468. Naikātmā

नैकात्मा

The one who has many forms.

Our sense organs report forms to us all the time. The eyes faithfully report the different objects like apple, house, favourite person, trees, friend, mall. Because we are used to identifying objects, when we hear the word Īśvara, he also becomes another object. There are all these different objects of my perception and then there is Īśvara. Therefore, we feel that when we

think of the house or a monkey or some mundane errand, we are distracted from Īśvara. All spiritual advice also cater to this by saying, 'Everytime your mind wanders, bring back to Īśvara, to Bhagavat-carana.' Instead of elevating me, this kind of spirituality leaves me more guilty as we feel we are continually distracted.

Now, 'think of an object which is not Īśvara. Think of a thought that is not pervaded by Īśvara. Feel an emotion that is not pervaded by Īśvara'. One must be an ingenious person to do all of this. Every object is only the manifestation of Īśvara. So, He is every form. The study of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma is only to understand this, that you can never escape from Īśvara. Here, ātmā means rūpa, form. He is the one who does not have one form alone. The word naikātmā is to say that He is not ekarūpa, but He is every rūpa. This is the significance of saying 'not one rūpa'.

All the devatās mentioned in the śastras as carrying out various functions with reference to creation, sustenance and resolution, are all the forms of the Lord. All vibhūtis are nothing but His manifestations.

469. Naikakarmakṛt

नैककर्मकृत्

The one who performs many actions.

We say that Subbu cooks food and hence he is a cook; Ramu drives and so he is a driver; so and so is an engineer – civil, chemical, mechanical; so and so is a doctor – general physician, cardiologist, pulmonologist and so on. Thus everyone does some job or the other.

What does Bhagavān do? He does not do eka karma, any one action, but performs many actions. He does the karma of utpatti – creation, sampatti – sustenance and vipatti – resolution of the jagat continuously, without a coffee break and hence, He is Anekakarmakṛt. A spaceship takes years to put together and here we are talking about the entire jagat. Governance of a country takes a lot to keep it going and ensuring its growth and here we are talking about Bhagavān performing the action of sustenance of the whole multiverse. Every new beginning be it a season, a day, a phase, a pattern has to allow the old to give way to the new and here we are talking about Bhagavān performing the action of continuous resolution.

Anybody who has gone to a club or discotheque will know that when the multi colored strobe lights are flashing you may be standing still, but because of the rapid change in light, you appear to be moving. Even though, He performs many actions, at the same time He does not do any action; essentially, He is actionless.

Any action that anyone does is because of Bhagavān. Thus you can attribute all your actions to Bhagavān and by this you can knock off your doership.

470. Vatsaraḥ

वत्सरः

The one in whom everything resides.

If someone asks you, where do you reside? You will give the details of the block, the street, the region and the country. If I go deeper in the questioning,

Where is the country? In a particular continent.
Where is the continent? Besides another continent. On planet earth.
Where is earth? In the milky way.
Where is the galaxy? In the universe?
Where is the universe? In the multiverse still expanding?
Where is the multiverse including space ?
The entire universe resides in him because He is the adhiṣṭhāna of everything.
Oh, so that means that ultimately I reside in Bhagavān. Yes, from the body-mind standpoint.
You who are self evident, where does your existence come from? What makes you conscious? If you say breath, where does that come from? From cosmic breath. That comes from Bhagavān which is pure existence which is formless and indeed the very basis of all forms and functions.
Can pure existence be divided into here and there?
Can pure existence which is consciousness have any limits?
Can pure existence have any real boundaries? You as pure existence then are the basis for the entire universe.

471. Vatsalaḥ

वत्सलः

The one who is affectionate.

Bhagavān is Vatsala, affectionate towards the devotees. The Lord is invoked as mother and father, because we want affection. All that we miss from our parents, we can get from Bhagavān. He can also be our therapist. He is invoked as Vatsala, as the one who cares for us. It is because there is care, that food is provided, air is provided, water is provided, gravity is provided. Imagine if there was no gravity at all! All this is care. When one sees that the whole jagat is nothing but the manifestation of His care, then Bhagavān because Vatsala.

We can see this care in our own body too, where we are provided with more capacity of the organs than generally needed. Instead of one kidney there are two. The pancreas have not gone to university to learn how to produce insulin. Blood has not been tutored to reach out to all the parts of the body even to its seemingly remote corners. To break down the kind of varied food we eat into the subtler forms so that these may be assimilated by the body and what is not required needs to be evacuated, where has the body learnt this from? It is all provided for. So, the more we understand Īśvara the more we find that He is the personification of care. He is absolute care and it is the caring that is manifest. Care is Bhagavān. We get blessed in the way in which we invoke the Lord. When we invoke Him as Vatsala, we get cared for.

472. Vatsī

वत्सी

The protector.

He is Vatsī, because all the jīvas are His vatsas, children.

Very often we invoke God in the way we perceive the world. Many of us may not know even one move of martial arts, still we have a ninja stance. A stance that is protective and sometimes

defensive. This stance or position is because we think that the world is a dangerous place. We think we are not safe physically or emotionally. We may be attacked anytime by hostile people with their actions or their words. We feel the need for protection. We feel the need for a cocoon where we can be safe and protected from harm or hurt. Some of us can go through lifetimes feeling a strong need for protection while others require this for a certain phase. This phase may involve recovering from a difficult phase, feeling fragile and tender and in need of protection.

Whether it is a hundred year old or a newborn, all are His children. The devas are also His children. The people in our lives who care for us may not be there for the entire duration of our lives. But, Bhagavān is there to protect us for our entire lifetime. From the standpoint of what is timeless, all are His children and He has so many to care for. Because He cares for the whole jagat, He is Vatsī.

473. Ratnagarbhaḥ

रत्नगर्भः

The one who has valuable gems

All living beings have to be taken care of by Bhagavān. How does He take care? Where does He find the resources? He is a wealthy being and hence He can look after everything.

He has very valuable ratnas or precious gems. That which has ratnas within its garbha, womb, is called ratnagarbha. These are not jewels that can be contained in the hand. Jewels enhance the beauty of the wearer. When the jewels themselves have come from the wearer, the matter is quite different. Both the ocean and the earth are the manifestations of Bhagavān. All the valuable gems belong to Bhagavān, as everything belongs to Him alone. He has everything with Him to keep the world going.

474. Dhaneśvaraḥ

धनेश्वरः

The Lord of wealth.

He is Dhaneśvara, the Lord of all forms of wealth. All resources. Money as we know it is a progression of the barter system. It is just a means of exchange. You exchange what you have for a service or a product. Earlier people exchanged some pounds of paddy for few vegetables or milk and vice versa. Any form of wealth that is here is the manifestation of Bhagavān. Wealth is Dhanalakṣmī. Children are Sanatānalakṣmī. Victory is Jayalakṣmī. Food or Grains is Dhanyalakṣmī.

Who really owns wealth? Nobody is a permanent owner. Nobody owns anything, because He has already taken away the ownership from everybody. At the same time, Bhagavān, does not touch the wealth of anybody, because He does not require it. All the accounts that you have are His accounts, because He is you. We forget we are trustees of the wealth, all the resources we have inherited.

Then who am I? You are the trustee of Bhagavān. As a trustee you take care of the resources given to you. You maintain it. You nurture it. You allow it to grow. Again, Kubera is said to be Dhaneśvara and it is Bhagavān alone who is manifest as Kubera.

475. Dharmagup

धर्मगुप्

The one who protects dharma.

Bhagavān protects dharma whenever adharma overwhelms and overpowers dharma; He also protects those who follow dharma. In the Gita He says, 'dharma-saṃsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge – I take an avatāra for establishing dharma' (4.8). How? By protecting those who follow dharma and by destroying those who take to extreme adharma, that is, not only do they do adharma but do not allow others to follow dharma. Thereby, He protects dharma. This is avatāra-karma.

How does He protect dharma at other times? Through the laws of karma, He protects dharma. Dharma is not a religion. It is the need and goal of a human being to live by universal values. The tiger is not sent to jail for killing the deer. The tiger is not remorseful for the same. But we human beings are not programmed. By just being a human being, you are given the knowledge of dharma. We must understand that to do the right thing is a need that is integral to being a human being. We cannot dismiss this need or wish it away.

When dharma is followed, there is an immediate result in the form of satisfaction, which is conflict-free and everyone, wants it. This is the dṛṣṭa-phala, visible result which is immediate. If dharma is not followed, then there is the feeling of guilt of omission and commission. This is also a dṛṣṭa-phala. Bhagavān, in the form of order of dharma, gives rise to this feeling of guilt which may help as a deterrent from adharma and thereby, He makes one do dharma and protects dharma.

The path of dharma alone is the straight, short and clean path. Only when the pressure of desire is great, one goes against dharma. In spite of dṛṣṭa-phala, visible results of guilt and remorse, if a person takes to adharma, the adṛṣṭa-phala of puṇya and the resulting sukha becomes the incentive for following dharma; the adṛṣṭa-phala of pāpa and the resulting duḥkha becomes the deterrent from adharma. Thus Bhagavān is the Dharmagup, the protector of dharma, through the laws of karma.

476. Dharmakṛt

धर्मकृत्

The one who follows dharma.

If Bhagavān is the protector of dharma, then who is the author of dharma? Bhagavān alone is the Dharmakṛt, the author of dharma. The rules of dharma and adharma apply only to those who have the sense of doership. They do not apply to Bhagavān and therefore, His actions cannot be judged as keeping with dharma or going against dharma.

Still, in His avatāras, when He appears as a human being in the form of Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, dharmaṃ karoti – He follows dharma and dharmaṃ kārayati – makes people follow dharma and hence, is Dharmakṛt.

In Gītā He says, ‘ I have nothing to achieve in all the three worlds. Stll, I do my dharma because I have to set an example. If I set a wrong example, I would be destroying the people.’ (BG 3.22-24).

477. Dharmī

धर्मी

The supporter of dharma.

Not only is Bhagavān the dharmakṛt and dharmagup, but He is also Dharmī because all dharmas belong to Him. Dharma also means ‘the qualities of something’, for instance, the nature of water is to flow. All dharmas are from Him and supported by Him. One cannot think of dharma without thinking of Īśvara. It is like thinking about a quality of the person without thinking of the person.

So one has to think of the dharmī when one thinks of dharma. So here the dharma and the dharmī are one and the same. Dharma includes all the prinicples of karma. As the nimitta-kāraṇa, the intelligent cause he is Dharmakṛt, Dharmagup and as the upādana-kāraṇa,He is manifest in the form of dharma.

Therefore, He is Dharmī, all the dharma belongs to Him.

478. Sat

सत्

The one who is existent in all the three periods of time.

Many of the stories we enjoyed in childhood ended with a ‘They lived happily ever after’. However, the stories never stated ‘till when’. We did not like stories or movies that ended with things unsaid or which did not end with a happily ever after. And then, when we grow up and look at the reality of our lives we find that nothing really lasts. Home appliances don’t last forever. Furniture does not last forever and that is why we have online portals for used goods. Heritage buildings don’t last forever. The varying list of the richest 100 people in the world shows that this changes every year. Relationships with family members and friends don’t last. Relationships undergo changes in time or end due to separation or death.

Then, what is it that exists in all three periods of time: past, present and future? I. The body and mind associated with I, surely undergoes changes. The skin sags, the hair changes color etc but I is constant. What we call as past or future is a concept. The last second is also now the past and the previous century is the past. The next second is the future which has now become the past, by the time I typed this. Twenty years later is also the future. There is nothing tangible about time. What is unchanging about time be it past, present or future is really the awareness of it. Our everyday experience is that I am aware or conscious of time. For all lengths of time, time consciousness is there.

I am aware of my past- whatever I remember including some regrets.
I am aware of my future and anxieties or excitement surrounding it.
I am aware of my present, to the extent that I can divide it, into nano seconds.
I know that each length of time is there because I am there. I am aware of it.
I am aware of the present only if I have presence.
Really speaking, I am presence.
I am sat, pure existence in all three periods of time.
Bhagavān is sat, the one who is existent in all three periods of time

479. Asat

असत्

The one who is in the form of the creation.

Sat generally means that which is existent. But, when we analyze the things that exist, we find that their existence seems to be time-bound also seems to belong really to something else. The pot, for example, was not existent before it was made and also ceases to exist when it is broken and therefore, has a time bound existence. Even when it exists, its existence belongs to clay. Therefore, pot cannot really be called sat and only clay, its cause, can be called sat, existent. But, the clay also on analysis seems to have a time-bound existence and depends for its existence on something else, that is, its cause. So, what can be really called sat should always be existent without being subject to time, and its existence should be independent of anything else.

Pot cannot be said to be totally asat, non-existent, because it is available for perception and use. The pot holds water. It is also not sat, because its existence is time-bound and borrowed from clay. Therefore, what cannot be categorically classified as sat or asat, sad-asadbhyām anirvachanīya is referred to as mithyā, while what lends existence to it is called satya, the truth of it.

The whole jagat when analyzed is found to be mithyā, depending on Brahman for its sattā, existence. Therefore, param brahma is sat, the satya, the unnegatable truth of this world. As the jagat is not sat, it is referred to as asat, in the meaning of mithyā, dependent existence and not in the meaning of total non-existence. Mithyā does not mean false.

The world is but the manifestation of Brahman. From His own standpoint, the Lord, as Brahman, is called param brahma and sat, and as the manifested world, is called aparam brahma and asat.

The Upaniṣad says, ‘sadeva somya idam agre āsīt – in the beginning this world was nothing but one sat-vastu alone’ and vācārambhṇaṃ vikāro nāmadheyam – all this is nothing but name and form centered on the vāk,speech’ (Chā.Up.6.2.1, 6.1.4)

480. Kṣaram

क्षरम्

The one who is present in all that which is perishable.

Bacteria perishes after a few days or months depending on the strain or they mutate. Some viruses perish after exposure to air. Some insects have a short life of a few days. Plants may

perish if they are eaten away by herbivorous animals or even human beings. Animals definitely perish when eaten by other animals or when human beings discover the animal in themselves! Some processed goods are termed perishable. Meaning that they can no longer be consumed after a certain date.

In all beings that are no more there, does complete destruction take place? No. The form and hence the function may perish. It is no longer available in that form. Bhagavān is present in all that which is perishable.

481. Akṣaram

अक्षरम्

The one who is changeless.

The huge, glorious banyan tree which includes its roots, branches, leaves, trunk, flowers and fruits is the manifest, differentiated form from the undifferentiated seed. The tiny seed had the coding for the huge tree. Before the tree was born it was unmanifest, present in potential condition in the seed. If you tell a four year old child that the tree came from the little seed, he/she will not be able to believe this. That is why in school, we had some of the most enjoyable Science experiments. We were asked to allow seeds to germinate, see and report their progress over a few days. To see a tiny root emerging and then in a few days a tender plant emerging was such a moment of wonder and continues to be so!

The world, which is manifest in the form of various things and beings, is kārya, effect and it is kṣara, time-bound. The five elements excepts for space are subject to change and what is on the earth – mountains, rivers, valleys, vegetation, living beings are all changing as we speak. Surely this manifest world came from its kāraṇa, cause. What is the nature of the cause? This causal, unmanifest state, being timeless and relatively changeless is called akṣara. Mundaka Upanisad beautifully reveals this word in the first khanda and the rest of the sections are devoted to understanding akṣara to be myself.

Kūta means māyā, vañcanā, deceit. In the kāraṇa state, it looks as though gone, but having been only in the unmanifest state, it comes back again and so it is called kūtastha. Māyā in the causal state is the kāraṇa or akṣara-upādhi for Brahman and in its manifest state as the effect is the kārya or kṣara-upādhi for Brahman.

As the upādhi cannot exist separate from Brahman, the Lord, from both the standpoints of two upādhis is called Kṣara and Akṣara.
How are we able to observe changes in our photographs over time?
How come we can observe changes in our moods over the day?
How come we can recall memories of the past, where past could mean yesterday or even twenty years ago?
How can I review my learning or understanding from life, the thirty + years that one has lived?
Surely there needs to be something that registers the changes. To understand the changes, that entity has to be changeless. But even the body and mind are subject to change.

’ I ‘ that is aware of the body and mind is changeless. The I that is aware of the mind is not different from the I that is aware of the body.’ I ‘ that is aware does not change and is not subject to any conditions.

482. Avijñātā

अविज्ञाता

The one who is not the knower, but the truth of the knower.

The jīva is vijñātā, because he considers himself to be the knower. For me to know the book, I must have some ignorance of the subject matter and I who is different from it seek to know it. To be the knower of anything there is a perceived difference between myself as the knower and the object to be known. It is functionally valid. Our only question is - This perceived difference, is it absolutely true? The sense of knowership is because of the kartṛtva, the sense of doership that is superimposed on the ātmā, I, due to ignorance.

On the contrary, Bhagavān is Avijñātā, not the knower. But I thought Bhagavān was all knowing? Bhagavān is the reality of the knower. He has no self-ignorance. He knows that while the vijñātā, the knower, cannot exist without Him, He is not the knower. Then who is he? The consciousness, which is the essential nature of the knower and this is the svarūpa of Bhagavān. Hence, He is Avijñātā.

483. Sahasrāṃśuḥ

सहस्रांशुः

The one who has thousand rays.

The luminaries, especially the sun, can be called sahasrāṃṣu, as they are radiant with thousands of rays. But they are all His manifestations and so, Bhagavān alone is the real Sahasrāṃṣu, the thousand-rayed sun and other luminaries. The śruti says, ‘yena sūryas-tapati tejasā iddhaḥ - lighted by whose tejas, the sun shines’ (Tai.Br.3.12.9).

You are about to wake up from sleep and as you open your eyes, you see a bouquet of flowers. Because of your sight and the mind behind your eyes, you are able to see the flowers. When your eyes were closed, the flowers were not known to you at all. When the eyes opened, what was in front was known, was illuminated. The thoughts that illumine things can also be called rays. What makes the thoughts move, one after another? Bhagavān, in the form of consciousness, is manifest in the form of thousand rays of thoughts and hence is Sahasrāṃṣu.

The Gītā says, ‘yadādityagataṃ tejaḥ jagad bhāsayate’khilam yaccandramasi yaccāgnau tat tejo vidhi māmakam – that light in the sun which illumines the entire world and that light in the moon and fire, is my light alone’ (15.12).

484. Vidhātā (also word 44)

विधाता

The one who sustains everything.

In word 44, the meaning of the word was the giver of the fruit of actions, in other words, results experienced by us.

Here the meaning is different. Let me share a famous riddle. If a massive banyan tree fell in the forest and you were not present, how would you know? Someone needs to know that it fell and inform you. That someone needs to be a conscious being to whom everything becomes evident. For you to be informed, you too need to be a conscious being. Hence there are no newspapers for the stones of the world because they are not conscious. We think that things exist and hence they are known. To know a thing, that thing needs to exist. Actually it is the other way around. Things exist because they are known. The existence of anything (black hole, some memories, person in front of me) is known only because you exist. If you did not exist these things would never be known by you. If you did not know these things did it really exist?

The doctor may routinely ask you, 'How are you?'. And you may respond in different ways, 'I am tired', or 'I am confused with the symptoms' etc. In a commonplace expression of how you feel, there is the knower of the physical or mental state, the specific state – confusion or fatigue is known to you and the knowledge in the form of the thought, I am tired or confused or both. In every form of knowledge there are things involved, jñātā, jñeyam, jñāna – the knower, known and knowledge in the form of the thought.

Everything that exists is sustained by knowledge. As the caitanya, the consciousness, He sustains all the three and therefore, He is Vidhātā.

485. Kr̥talakṣaṇaḥ

कृतलक्षणः

i. The one who has a clear definition.
ii. The one who has made clear definitions.
iii. The one who has a clear mark.

Most of us claim to be scientific and also claim that we can define things clearly and precisely. Let 's examine that by taking a simple flower. Wikipedia says that a flower is a reproductive structure found in plants. Is the flower the petals then? No. Is the flower the stamen? No. Surely it must be the fragrance. No. Not that either. All we can say is that it is more than the sum of the parts together, it has a form and has a function. Botanists continue to research this as there is no final word on how a flower can truly be defined. Everything else in the world is like this. Try defining yourself☺

Lakṣaṇa is a definition that helps one identify, understand an object very clearly. The Lord is the one who lakṣaṇa, definition is kr̥tam eva, already done, because He is ever available as the consciousness without which one cannot set out to identify or define anything.

Further, the clear definition by which one understands Bhagavān is already kr̥tameva, well done. Where? It is already done and given in the vedānta-śāstras.

The svarūpa-lakṣaṇa, definition referring to the Lord's nature is given as 'satyaṃ jnānam anantaṃ brahma'. That which is pure existence, consciousness, limitlessness. Each word reveals the Nature of the Lord.

Taṭastha-lakṣaṇa, incidental definition in Tai.Up.2.1,3.1 is 'yato va imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvani, yat prayanti abhisaṃviśanti' . That from which everything has come, that by which everything is sustained and that into which everything resolves is the Lord. You will not come across a more complete definition of the Lord than this. Hence, He is Kṛtalakṣaṇa, the one who has a clear definition.

In the world, we are able to understand and identify things because they have been created by īśvara with clear demarcating features, distinguishing one from the other of the same class, sajāti, as well as from vijāti, a different class.The Veda can be called laskṣaṇa because all the means and ends are pointed out by the Veda and we cannot know about them by any other means. The Vedaśāstra is revealed by Him alone and therefore, the Lord is called Kṛtalakṣaṇa. It will be said later that the Vedas and all the śāstras are from Janārdana, that is, Lord Viṣṇu alone.

For visualizing Lord Viṣṇu, certain lakṣaṇas are given and one of them is that He has the mole called Srīvatsa on His chest. This is also the reason why He is Kṛtalakṣaṇa.

486. Gabhastinemiḥ
गभस्तिनेमिः
The one who is the centre of the solar system.

Gabhasti is an aura of rays. Nemi is the axle which is in the middle, like the axle of the wheel.

In the solar system, the one who is in the middle, in the form of the sun, is Gabhastinemi. That which is in the centre gives meaning to our lives. In fact, makes life possible on earth. Modern science tells us that life as we know it, cannot survive beyond earth although some traces are stil being discovered on Mars. Living cannot be sustained in planets like Mercury and Venus. So it is Bhagavān who remains as the sun in the centre of the wheel of luminaries.
May we discover Bhagavān to be the Gabhastinemi of our lives.

487. Sattvasthaḥ
सत्त्वस्थः

i. The one who obtains with a sattva-upādhi.
ii. The one who obtains in all the beings.

The word sattva can mean a guṇa or a living being. The Lord is Sattvastha because His māyā-upādhi consists predominantly of sattva-guṇa, especially in the protecting aspect. That is why the lord has no ignorance.

He obtains in all beings as the pratyagātmā and hence Sattvastha.

Gabhasthinemi, is the one who obtains in the form of the sun. That which exists as the pratyagātmā in the individual is Sattvastha. We have glorious verses referring to the body being the temple and the Atma manifest in the sanctum sanctorum while being the presence of it all. The śruti says, the one who is in this physical body, which is nothing but the essence of food and the one who is in āditya, the sun, that is ,the total, is one and the same'(Tai.Up.2.8.5). The body is made of five elements and the jagat also consists of five elements. There is a lovely poem which has been shared earlier saying that "dust if you must', understand that you too will turn to dust." Some of us can be obsessed with the state of their house more than the state of their mind. For all the dusting that one does or makes others do, let us understand that the body will return to the elements

Īśvara manifests in the total. The virāṭ-abhimāni-ātmā is Īśvara. The total includes this individual physical body, the jīva also. In the total the individual is also included. Even though the body is included in the total, still there is an individual jīva.

The self that obtains in every living organism as the pratyagātmā, the conscious being, is Sattvastha. That which exists in all, the total is Īśvara. Both of them are Paramśvara alone, who is the Sattvastha and Gabhastinemi. That means sa ekaḥ, there is no difference between the two.

488. Siṃhaḥ

सिंहः

i. The one who is like a lion.
ii. The Lord as Naṛsiṃha.

Because of His valour like the lion, the Lion is Siṃha. Just as the lion is the king of the forest, Īśvara is the Lord of all. Or Siṃha stands as the shortened form of Nṛsiṃha, indicating His avatāra.

Hiraṇyakaśipu is furious at the devotion of his son to Viṣṇu, as the in another avatāra Viṣṇu had killed his brother. Each time Hiraṇyakaśipu attempts to kill the boy, Prahlāda is protected by Viṣṇu's powers. When asked, Prahlāda refuses to acknowledge his father as the supreme lord of the universe and claims that Viṣṇu is all-pervading. Then, Hiraṇyakaśipu points to a nearby pillar and asks if 'his Viṣṇu' is in it and says to his son Prahlāda:

O most unfortunate Prahlāda, you have always described a supreme being other than me, a supreme being who is above everything, who is the controller of everyone, and who is all-pervading. But where is He? If He is everywhere, then why is He not present before me in this pillar?

Prahlāda *replies, "He is in the pillars, and he is in the smallest twig*."

Hiraṇyakaśipu, unable to control his anger, smashes the pillar with his mace, and following a tumultuous sound, Viṣṇu in the form of Narasiṁha appears from it and moves to attack Hiraṇyakaśipu in defense of Prahlāda. In order to kill Hiraṇyakaśipu and not upset the boon given by Brahma the form of Narasiṁha is chosen.

As per the boon, Hiraṇyakaśipu cannot be killed by human, deva or animal. Narasiṁha is neither one of these as he is a form of Viṣṇu incarnate as a part-human, part-animal. He comes upon Hiraṇyakaśipu at twilight (when it is neither day nor night) on the threshold of a courtyard

(neither indoors nor out), and puts the demon on his thighs (neither earth nor space). Using his sharp fingernails (neither animate or inanimate), he disembowels and kills the demon.

489. Bhūtamaheśvaraḥ

भूतमहेश्वरः

i. The great Lord of all beings.
ii. The truth of all.

Any particular deity can be bhūteśvara, the Lord of beings, or bhūta-gaṇas.

Our tradition is so sophisticated that the devotee can relate to the Lord in so many ways. Initially the devotee relates to the Lord as a specific deity only, the one who resonates with him/her and may be his/her Ista devata. This devotion, bhakti is ekarupa, is focused on a form that is loved and adored and from whom something is sought. The devotee sees the Lord only in that way. The deity could be Ganapati, Krsna, Devi, Kāli, Siva, Skanda etc. On the basis of the stories we have heard about their glories, we relate to one aspect of them and revel in the Lord as eka rupa.

As the devotion grows, one is able to appreciate that 'my personal God' is not the only God. There are other deities too and one begins to relate to them too. The ekarupa bhakti, devotion directed towards only one form has now matured and the other forms are also seen as none other than manifestations of the Lord itself, aneka rupa bhakti. For somebody who is not from this culture, it is a struggle to understand our puja corners or puja rooms. Some murtis made of stone, some made of metal, some frames of pictures of deity, all of them, coexist in that personal altar of worship. Then as family members and friends return from pilgrimages, they bring back yet another murti or frame to add to your altar.

All the forms in the altar look different but they are unified by our vision of oneness, by our understanding of the Lord and his different glories. Is it possible to relate to the Lord though these different forms? We do and generations have been doing so for thousands of years. If one enquires into the reality of this Aneka rupa bhakti, bhakti towards so many forms, one recognises that the reality of all the forms is pure existence which is formlessness. The bhakti matures into arupa bhakti, bhakti towards the formless Lord.

He is the ultimate Lord of all beings and hence, Bhūtamaheśvara. The word Īśvara and Maheśvara are often used to denote Lord Śiva, but here it stands for Parameśvara, (even though this is Viṣṇu- sahasranāma). He is bhūta, the satya, the truth of all beings and for this reason also, He is mahān, Īśvara, the ultimate Lord.

490. Ādidevaḥ

आदिदेवः

The Lord who takes back all.

When we hear Ādi we may think it is first. Here, the meaning is not the first. Because all the beings and the elements are all withdrawn by Him, He is Ādideva.

Also because all beings and elements are placed in Him, arāḥ iva nābhau – like the spokes in the hub of a wheel, He is Ādideva (Mu.Up.2.2.6). The hub of the wheel is constant but the spokes move in some directions. All the beings in the entire jagat have their being in Him, strung in Him and taken back to Him.

491. Mahādevaḥ

महादेवः

i. The one who is the great deity.
ii. The one who revels in Himself.

Deva means an effulgent being; here, Bhagavān is called Mahādeva, the great deva because He is caitanya-rūpa, the very consciousness, effulgence which makes any one effulgent. This makes us conscious and aware of what we know and what we don't know. In the thought 'I don't know Russian', even my ignorance is illuminated by awareness. All emotions are illuminated by awareness that is consciousness.

The atharva-śira-upaniṣad says, 'giving up everything, He revels in His great glory that ātma-jñāna, self-knowledge and hence Mahādeva'. But Bhagavān need not give up anything. So, as one, who does not require anything other than Himself to be happy, He is mahān and also deva, hence Mahādeva.

Or, it can be taken to mean 'the Lord who is worshipped by ātma-jñāna, the recognition that I am He, by the yogis, giving up everything else, is Mahādeva'.

492. Deveśaḥ

देवेशः

The Lord of the devas.

Most of us admire people who wield power or who are at the top of their game. CEOs are just doing their job like anyone else. Still we look up to them as they head their set ups. From the king of the jungle to the CEO of the company we admire and are inspired by power. People assume a sense of power because of the designation given to them or a certain hierarchy or sometimes even moral authority or a certain ideology. The power from knowledge and action is what really lasts. The titles go away, the designations go away, the authority bestowed also goes away, the strength of the body also goes away in time. The undaunted power of the person continues in the recognition of the saktis given and well exercised in one's lifetime in recognition of the Lord's order. All is in harmony.

Here we are not talking about local Lords or warlords. Who is the Lord of all the devas, the denizens of heaven? He is the Īśa, Deva can also mean the sense organs including the mind because they light up objects. As the ātma-caitanya which blesses the sense organs, He is Deveśa.

493. Devabhṛdguruḥ

देवभृद्गुरुः

i. The ruler of the Lord of the devas.
ii. The protector of devas and the possessor of all disciplines of knowledge.

Indra is called devabhṛt as he is the lord and supporter of the devas. But, The Lord is the guru of even Indra, because He protects and rules over Indra. Hence, He is Devabhṛt – guru.

Or else, He is Devabhrt, the protector of all the vidyās, all disciplines of knowledge, discovered and yet-to-be discovered. He continues to be the locus of all this at the time of pralaya and brings them out or allows them to manifest again during creation.

494. Uttaraḥ
उत्तरः

i. The uplifter.
ii. The one superior to all.

When this person was working professionally, people would be swarming around him, available at his beck and call. Now that the person is retired, nobody even bothers to enquire about him. Earlier he had people waiting to just see him nod so that they could immediately act on what he required. There is no one now to even talk to, about how lonely he is. All the power that he thought was his is no more his, as it was the power of position, transient in nature. An acknowledgement of helplessness in different situations in our lives is very important. Not necessarily a cowering, wriggling in the worm kind of helplessness. Just a recognition that I have come this far and I need help. One becomes open to possibilities then. In that helplessness we acknowledge a possibility of things working out as we seek refuge in and surrender to Bhagavan.

He lifts up and makes us cross the bondage of saṃsāra characterized by repeated births and therefore is Uttara. Or, He is Uttara, because He is superior to all from all standpoints.

495. Gopatiḥ
गोपतिः

i. The Lord of the cows.
ii. The Lord of the earth.

As Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He protected the cows and so, He is the Gopati, the Lord of the cows.
Mother earth is called ‘go’, and hence He is Gopati, the Lord of earth.

A recent best seller spoke about releasing your intention in the Universe and it all manifesting in the form of fulfillment of desires. Surely the Universe is not this inert wall like structure from where desires will bounce back like boomerangs. What was being referred to in a ‘secular’, ‘safe’ and ‘non religious’ way is the intelligence pervading the earth. Popular culture does not consider recognizing God as hip/cool/ ‘with it’. We avoid these topics because we will be considered ‘retro’ and old fashioned and not modern enough. When the power of a ‘sankalpa’ is repackaged to us because we did not care to know about it through our culture as it was too old fashioned, we lap it up in the name of ‘power of intention’.

'Go' is also the śabda-rāśi, a group of words and here it refers to the Veda. As the body of knowledge called Veda is revealed by Bhagavān, He is Gopati, the Lord of the Vedas. The subject matter of the Veda is Lord alone. The rituals, the devatās, the sādhanas and the sādhyas, the mantras, in short that which is revealed by the Vedas, are all nothing but Īśvara. Each of the rituals in the form of pujas, homas starts with making a powerful sankalpa, an intention and yes, one offers what is required not to an inanimate Universe but to Īśvara, the Lord of the Earth.
The Veda talks about dharma and that is also Īśvara.

496. Goptā
गोप्ता
The protector.

Bhagavān is the protector of the entire jagat, which is in the form of the knower, known and knowledge. From the standpoint of the ādhidaivika, ādhibhautika and adhyātmika aspects, Bhagavān is the Goptā, the protector and the sustainer of the jagat.

497. Jñānagamyaḥ
ज्ञानगम्यः
The one who is to be attained by knowledge.

If He is the sustainer of the jagat and if He is everything, then how will we know Him? Bhagavān is already siddha, attained as one's ātmā and inspite of it, if we think that we have to reach Him, it is only because of ignorance.

He can be reached, attained, ONLY by the knowledge got through the words of Vedānta. He is the content of the knower and the content of anything that is known. Hence, He can be reached only by jñāna and not by actions or actions combined with jñāna. Pure knowledge is the recognition of what 'is'. Īśvara is Jñānagamya, reached, that is recognized only by knowledge because Īśvara is everything. He is you.

498. Purātanaḥ
पुरातनः
The ancient.

Since He is not limited by time, he is Purātana, has always been there. He is more ancient than the ancient but always the same. Therefore, even in the past, He was new, even now He is new. Bhagavān is always new.

499. Śarīrabhūtabhṛt
शरीरभूतभृत्
The nourisher of the body.

Organic food produce, clean mountain air, spring water, yoga āsanas, spending time with loved ones are all considered nurturing for oneself. If we go one level deeper and start to think about what it is that makes the body the body. What keeps this deep intelligence that pervades every

cell going? We think that one's father and mother are the cause but He is the cause of even the father and mother. Parameśvara is the ultimate cause. Himself being the prāṇa, He is the nourisher of the body. So He is Śarīrabhūtabhṛt.

To have a body, there must be a cause. All those causes that are necessary for the beginning of the individual body or the total body, are called śarīra-ārambhakāni bhūtāni. To create a body, all these bhūtas must be put together and enlivened. And this cause is only Parameśvara. All the causes are nothing but Bhagavān.

500. Bhoktā (also words 143, 888)

भोक्ता

i. The protector.
ii. The real enjoyer.

He is Bhoktā, because He is the one who protects all.

The physical body is the bhogāyatana, the counter of enjoyment and the subtle body with the mind and the prāṇa is the bhoga-sādhana, the means of enjoyment.

Many laboratories are trying to discover that fundamental unit of life to be able to infuse life in a dead body. But to no avail! He is the one who sustains and puts together all the causes of the physical body and the subtle body, because these are meant for the enjoyment of the karma-phala.

Then, who is the bhoktā, the enjoyer? Bhagavān is not only the physical body which is the counter of enjoyment, and the subtle body which is the means of enjoyment, but He is also the Bhoktā, the enjoyer. In every bhoga or enjoyment, there is sukha, joy and He is the Bhoktā of that. By recognizing this, ones doership and enjoyership is removed. This is enlightenment.

In many spiritual traditions, there is a cultivation of guilt if one enjoys something. Immediately, a list of 'shoulds' and 'should nots' pop up. While discipline is important, in our rejection of enjoyments that are in line with dharma, we constrain the 'bhokta'. Surely no situation however pleasant can take you for a ride! Surely no situation is bigger than you are as you are a constant in each and every situation that you have been through.

Again Bhagavān is the real Bhoktā, because He does not have any self-ignorance and hence, always enjoys the paramānanda, limitless joy.

501. Kapīndraḥ

कपीन्द्रः

The Lord of the monkeys

In His Rāmavatāra, Bhagavān was Kapīndra, the Lord of the monkeys. Kapi can also mean the varāha, boar. As the Varāha-avatāra also, He is Kapīndra.

There is also a deeper meaning. Our citta, mind, is considered to be a monkey because it does not stay with a given job but keeps wandering. He is the Lord of the mind, manasaḥ manaḥ, and it is because of Him that the mind functions. He is also understood by the mind. 'Yatra yatra mano yāti tatra tatra tava pāda-paṅkajam' – O! Lord, wherever the mind goes, there I see your lotus feet. I find that I cannot move away from you. You are the Lord of the mind.' So we need not tame the mind. The mind has only to be enlightened that wherever the mind goes, it lands on Īśvara alone. Whatever the mind thinks of, that is Īśvara. Therefore, there is no question of taming the mind. So as the Lord of the monkey-like mind, He is Kapīndra.

502. Bhūridakṣiṇaḥ

भूरिदक्षिणः

The one associated with plenty of dakṣiṇās.

Bhūri means plenty and bhūri-dakṣiṇā means dakṣiṇā that is given in plenty or given to plenty of people. Dakṣiṇā could be in the form of money, cattle, gold and even land. This is not charity. In this culture, dakṣiṇā is an offering, an acknowledgement and gratitude of what has been received by the person. At the time of marriage the guests who come to the marriage get a dakṣiṇā and that is called bhūridakṣiṇā. When dakṣiṇā is given in any yajña or śrāddha or marriage or any ritual, the person is invoked as Lord Viṣṇu and then the dakṣiṇā is given to him. A ritual is complete only when dakṣiṇā is offered. Bhagavān is the chief guest in all the functions and He is installed first and pūjā is done to Him.

Brahmacharis living in an ashram, who don't have a livelihood and are dependent on the guru and the ashram offer their dakṣiṇā in the form of contributing to the guru and the parampara through their time, effort and skills. Offering of dakṣiṇā comes from the recognition that one has been blessed and is grateful for what has been received. Often, we get into a beggarly mentality, a mindset of lack, desperately looking at 'What I can get from this person, that person? What can I get from this situation or that situation?'. We make excuses for the other person like 'this person does not need anything from me' or take what they give for granted. It takes a lot of maturity to consider 'What can I give in this situation which is most appropriate? What can I contribute to this situation? The thinking is 'That I can give, can add some value to the situation, I am blessed'. This attitude has nothing to do with riches. In the times of working with street children, one morning some food was being given. One bright fellow, probably eight years old, promptly tore away half of the vada-pav (like an Indian vegetarian burger) and extended it towards me. I knew he had been hungry. He lived on the streets and the only belongings he had was what he wore on his body. He did not know where his next meal was coming from. I said to him, 'This is for you, beta (child). I am not hungry.' And he said matter of factly,' Didi (sister) I can share what I have, for sure.' Seeing my eyes well up, trying to make light of the situation he added, 'You might as well take it or these fellows will pounce on it.' That day I discovered what it meant to be really 'rich'.

While the above is about the attitude of giving this extends to dakṣiṇā too. Any dakṣiṇā given to anyone goes to Lord Viṣṇu alone. So, Lord Viṣṇu is Bhūridakṣiṇā. He is all the guests; He is all the ṛtviks, priests. Whenever extra respect is to be given to any guest that has come to a ritual, extra dakṣiṇā is given to that person.

Bhagavān alone is the Yajña and He is the dakṣiṇā also; He alone is the yajñakartā who does the ritual and in keeping with dharma, gives the maximum dakṣiṇā that he can; He alone is in the form of those who receive the dakṣiṇā. Hence He is Bhūridakṣiṇā.

'Brahmārpaṇam brahmahavir brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam' (Gita 4.24) So every aspect of the yajña being Brahman, bhūridakṣiṇā is brahmadakṣiṇā.

In His avatāras as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He gave a lot of dakṣiṇā, while performing yajñas and hence He is Bhūridakṣiṇā.

503. Somapaḥ

सोमपः

The one who drinks Soma.

The one who performs the Soma-yāga is called Somayājī. In this Vedic ritual, the juice of the soma plant is extracted and offered as oblation to the devatā that is invoked. There continues to be debate about what exactly the soma plant is. In some rare places where this ritual of fire offering is performed, it is meant to heal, remove toxins from the environment and for overall well being of people. Whoever be the devatā invoked, Bhagavān alone is the ultimate altar of the ritual and He alone receives the soma that is offered and therefore, He is called Somapa, the one who drinks soma.

Since the one, who performs the soma-yāga ritual, drinks the soma juice as prasāda, he is called somapa. For this reason, the one who performs this ritual is also called somapa. Again, it is Bhagavān alone who is the yajamāna of the soma-yāga and is therefore also known as Somapa.

Because the details of the soma plant is not well known and there is much debate about what exactly it is, some people justify their drinking alcohol or consuming marijuana. The Vedas clearly state that drinking alcohol is prohibited. The underlying principle is that it stunts and compromises the functioning of the buddhi, intellect that glorious faculty given only to human beings. When the thinking faculty is not available, our problem solving skills and other resources are not available to us. Phrases such as 'Drunk with anger', 'Consumed by passion', indicate our susceptibility to any influence and hence be given to acts of crime. The same Vedas that give us the Gayatri mantra which is a prayer for the illumination and brilliance of the human mind does not sanction anything that interferes with the functioning of the mind.

504. Amṛtapaḥ

अमृतपः

The one who drinks amṛta.

The jīva wants karma-phala and therefore does the ritual, and becomes somapa.

Amṛta refers to nectar or the drink that bestows immortality. Many stories in the Puranas refer to the fight for amṛta between the devas and asuras. As the legend goes a few drops of amṛta were

dropped in these places - Haridwar, Ujjain, Allahabad and Nasik. These places then became the locations of the Kumbh mela (the world's largest religious gathering near a river confluence).

What phala does Bhagavān want, to be a somapa? Nothing. He does not need anything because He is Amṛtapa.

Bhagavān revels in His own svarūpa-ānanda and that is figuratively told here by referring to Him as Amṛtapa, as one who drinks the amṛta, the nectar, that is His self.

Wishes on Janmāshtami

ll वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंस चाणुरमर्दनं
देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगदगुरुं ll

I salute Krsna, the Lord, the world teacher, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of Kamsa and Cānura and the greatest joy of Devaki.

Once upon a time there was a wise master. People from far and near would seek his counsel and ask for his wisdom. Many would come and ask him to teach them, enlighten them in the way of living. He spoke to all.

One day an important man, a man used to obedience from others came to visit the master. "I have come today to ask you to teach me. Open my mind to enlightenment." The tone of the important man's voice was one used to getting his own way.

The master smiled and said that they should discuss the matter over a cup of tea. When the tea was served the master poured his visitor a cup. He poured and he poured and the tea rose to the rim and began to spill over the table and finally onto the robes of the wealthy man. Finally the visitor shouted, "Enough. You are spilling the tea all over. Can't you see the cup is full?"

The master stopped pouring and smiled at his guest. "You are like this tea cup, so full of notions and ideas about yourself and others that nothing more can be added. Come back to me when the cup is empty. Come back to me when you are ready to receive."

Lord Krsna has been giving and still is giving. Are we willing to receive?

505. Somaḥ

सोमः

i. The one in the form of the moon.
ii. Lord Śhiva with Umā.

The Lord alone nourishes the plants, in the form of the moon and is therefore Soma. It seems so small from a distance yet is powerful enough to be responsible for ocean tides on earth.

Or, somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ – He nourishes the plants with the nourishing sap by being soma.

Soma can be the sap which is the food for the plants. So, that which is in the form of sap is the food and that soma is Bhagavān alone. Traditional sowing and harvesting practices are linked to the different phases of the moon. Modern science is still to unravel the mysteries of how the moon light impacts the growth of the plants.

Or, Soma, can be taken as one who is with Umā. He alone is Lord Śiva who is with Umā all the time. Umā is brahma-vidyā and He is Soma, being ever endowed with brahma-vidyā.

506. Purujit
पुरुजित्
The one who vanquishes many.

Bhagavān is called Purujit, the vanquisher of many. The grace of Bhagavān helps one win over many enemies, that is, enemies both inside and outside.

Who is an enemy? The one who is inimical to your well-being is called enemy. In fact, there are really no enemies. Internal enemies create what you do not want. Desire, anger, greed, etc are called enemies because they create confusion. These do not allow you to have the poise and composure necessary to gain self-knowledge. Otherwise, there are no enemies.

By themselves they have no power. We give power to the desire, anger, greed, jealousy, delusion, egoism by dwelling on it, by building on it. Our insecurities are fed by all these emotions. Then, when it gets out of hand, we are overwhelmed. Our buddhi is not available to us anymore. The desire or anger or jealousy is in charge, as though. We have phrases that suggest this – blinded by rage, consumed with envy, crime of passion etc.

What we need to remember is that all these emotions are natural and are within the order that is Bhagavān. That we feel jealous is natural. That we are enraged is natural. That we need not victimize ourselves or others due to jealousy is also natural. That we need not victimize another person due to our anger is also natural. We deliberately, consciously make choices and the effort to walk the path of dharma.

A pratikūlakāri, one who creates disturbance, is called an enemy and an anukūlakāri, a well-wisher, is called a bandhu. Externally also there are people who create disturbances and to be not affected by those disturbances, one requires the grace of Bhagavān. So Bhagavān is called Purujit, the vanquisher of many. We seek grace.

507. Purusattamaḥ
पुरुसत्तमः
The one who is many and the best.

The one who has become many and is in the form of everything is Puru. Bahu syāṃ prajāyeya – He desired, ‘let me become many and create many’ and He created. Being in the form of the jagat, He is Puru, many.

At the same time He is Sattama, the best. How? It is the material cause also the intelligent cause. The humble spider is the cause of the web. The material for the web comes from the spider and the intelligence to weave the web in high corners also comes from the spider itself.
Purusattama is both the material cause and the intelligent cause.
We don't say there is one God. We say there is ONLY God.

508. Vinayaḥ
विनयः

i. the one who has humility.
ii. the one who disciplines.

Vinaya is the one who has humility and does not boast. People endowed with knowledge naturally have humility. Having gone into the subject matter (could be botany, quantum physics, maths, art conservation, anything at all) in depth, they know they are one step away from the question, 'I don't know'. They are grateful for the knowledge they have and are well aware of what they don't know yet. Such a person is vidyā-vinaya-sampanna. Nobody has a copyright on knowledge. Different disciplines of knowledge are just discovered by different people at different points in time.

Bhagavān is limitless and hence does not require to boast. So the more knowledge that one has, and the more adequate one is, there is less boastfulness. Bhagavān cannot be flattered by our praise either. We say that Bhagavān is all-knowing, even without knowing what that all-knowingness is. Bhagavān is vinaya-svarupa, that is, He is absolute humility, with absolute absence of any kind of boasting.

He is Vinaya, because He brings about vinaya, humility, to those who are puffed up with pride. He brings about situations where they have a fall and then recognize that everything has been given by Bhagavān and so there is nothing to be proud about.

One does not try to be humble. One just recognises what is given in one's life.
One just enquires into what it is that we can truly claim to be ours. Humility follows.

The Kenopaniṣad gives a story of how the devas were proud of their victory over the asuras and forgot the Lord. Bhagavān appeared before them as a yakṣa and made them realize that all their glories belong to Īśvara.

509. Jayaḥ
जयः

The victorious.

Bhagavān is victorious over all beings. He is Jaya, absolute victory. That is why we can pray for success and invoke Īśvara as absolute success.

That most days we come back home alive, amidst the traffic, despite the close shave on the road, whether we go in our vehicle or amidst other vehicles, that we come back alive is a victory.

That we confidently set our alarms for the next morning in the supreme confidence that we will wake up and we do wake up the next morning, is a victory.
That we continue to live and get our food is a victory.
That our bodies digest all that we put into it is a victory.
That our immunity helps us to fight most of the infections on a daily basis is a victory.
That our kidneys filter the body's blood more than 150 times a day is a victory.
That, despite trauma, people rise and rise again from devastation to have hope is a victory.
Our victories are innumerable to speak of.
But still, there are many instances where we are not victorious and so our victory is relative. He is absolute victory. Hence we can pray to Him for our success.

510. Satyasandhaḥ
सत्यसन्धः
The one whose resolve always comes true.

He is absolute jaya, victory because He is Satyasandha, that is, all His saṅkalpas always come true.

In the waking world, we are not able to produce big things just by a thought. Some effort is required. We start with a sankalpa, a clear intention and work for the goal.

However, in the dream we think of a mountain or any other object and that object is immediately there. So only in dream we are satyasandhas.

The Lord is Satyasandha. He thinks, therefore it is.

511. Dāśārhaḥ
दाशार्हः
i. the one who deserves gifts.
ii. Born in the family of Dāśārha.

Whenever we give anything, we would like to know about the pātra, the receiver, whether the person deserves it and whether it will be received properly and appreciated. An entire gift management industry has come up with this principle in mind. Ofcourse, the industry also looks at gifting as an investment of goodwill and showing appreciation. A good pātra would be one, from whom it would come back again to you.

Which is the most deserving altar of our gifts? Bhagavān is the most deserving altar of our dāśa, gifts because anything that you give to Him is received and given back to you in manifold ways. Therefore, Bhagavān is Dāśārha.

He has no limitations like kāma, krodha and so on. He is above rāga and dveṣa and therefore, not judgemental about the gift. Infact Bhagavān in the Gita 9.26 says he who offers me with devotion – a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water – I recieve that offering imbued with the devotion of that person whose mind is pure. It is better we don't extend this to people.
Hence, Bhagavān is dāna-yogya, fully worthy of receiving gifts.

Or, He is Dāśārha, being born in the family of Dāśārhas of the Yadu dynasty.

512. Sātvatāṃ Patiḥ

सात्वतां पतिः

The one who is the Lord of Sātvatas.

He is Sātvatāṃ pati, the Lord of the Sātvats. The Sātvats are those who follow a book called Sātvata. This śāstra talks about surrender to Īśvara in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It also talks about the various actions or rituals of how to propitiate and invoke the grace of Srī Kṛṣṇa.
So Parameśvara, in the form of Srī Kṛṣṇa, is Sātvatāṃ pati, their Lord who blesses them with their yoga and kṣema, by making them get what they want to get and also safeguarding whatever they get.

513. Jīvaḥ

जीवः

The one who is the jīva.

The one who has the śarīra and breathes is called jīva. A living being is called a jīva. Even when not manifest in a śarīra, the person is still called a jīva, because he is a potential and will be taking a body depending on punya and pāpa that fructifies. So, even in the unmanifest condition, he is called a jīva.

I as the person can play the role (of mother, father, sister, brother, friend, husband, wife, teacher, employer, employee) and still drop the identity. The identity is not absolutely real as the role comes and goes depending on the requirements of the situation. The way you interact with your boss at work will surely be different than the way you interact with your child at home. Each role comes with a script of dharma wherein we do what is required to show our care, support and commitment to the life goals of the other person.

I, the simple conscious being can play the role of being the doer and the experiencer

I, the simple conscious being can play the role of a human being and still drop the identity of being a human being only, the one who is associated with the body-mind-sense-complex.

When it is said, ‘you are a jīva’ the ‘you’ is the jiva. The ‘you’ is not the parent, not the employer, not the hurt and guilty person. The ‘you’ is the one who is conscious of them all. Finally we say, ‘tat tvam asi – you are that’. The meaning of the word ‘tvam’ is jīva and the meaning of the word ‘tat’ is Īśvara. This jīva is told, ‘you are that Īśvara.’ When understood, the jīva is Īśvara. This is possible only because Īśvara alone obtains as the jīva, the kśetrajña, the knower, the ‘I’ in everyone. therefore, He is Jīva.

514. Vinayitāsākśi

विनयितासाक्षी

i. The witness of humility
ii. The one who is all pervasive and sees nothing other than the self.

The name Vinayitāsākśī is one nāma and it can be looked at in two ways as the sākśī of vinayitā or as vinayitā and asākśī.

The one who has vinaya, humility, is vinayī, and his disposition is called vinayitā. This is the condition of the mind and Bhagavān is Vinayitāsākśī, the direct perceiver, the recognizer of that disposition of humility. When you are proud, you do not recognize Īśvara. But when you have vinayitā, you recognize Īśvara and Īśvara also recognizes you.

The Gītā says, 'sa ca me priyaḥ – He is beloved to Me' (12.15) and 'ahaṃ tasya priyaḥ – I am beloved to the devotee.' The śāntipāṭha of the Sāmaveda says, 'mā'haṃ brahma nirākuryāṃ mā mā brahma nirākarot, anirākaraṇamastu anirākaraṇaṃ me astu – May that Brahman not reject me and may I not reject Him.' This is a prayer. When you have humility, you are accepting more Īśvara in your life. You are seeing all the glories in you as the glories of Bhagavān. You see the glories in others also as Bhagavān, otherwise, there will only be jealousy. To recognize the glory in oneself as the glory of Īśvara, is itself a glory. This is vanayitā. So, the Lord is Vinayitāsākśī. And as the Sākśī, He blesses you with the knowledge of Himself. So this is the dṛṣṭa-phala and there is adṛṣṭa-phala also.

Vinayitā also means 'going.' So the Lord is Vinayitā, goes everywhere, is all-pervasive and Asākśī the one who does not see anything other than Himself.

515. Mukundaḥ

मुकुन्दः

The one who gives mokṣa.

He, whose grace gives mukti, freedom from samsara or a life of becoming, is Mukunda.

We often think that grace comes to us, asked or unasked. Perhaps Bhagavan is sitting there with chits of paper in a glass bowl and playing lucky dip. Really speaking, grace is a result of karma, actions done by us exercising our will. We don't know which karma played a role in the form of the grace that operates in our life in the form of all that is given to us. It may have been karma of this lifetime or previous lifetimes. We don't know and perhaps will never know. Nor do we need to know. We can be graceful and gracious to ourselves by making the most of the grace in our life and by continuing to act in line with dharma, thereby earning more grace.

We need to recognise grace i.e. all that is given to us in life – all the śaktis – iccha, jnana and kriya. (powers to desire, know and do) and we use them well in line with our priorities. We allow grace to flow in our lives when we use our capacities well. Most of the problems in this world are because we either misuse or don't use our powers well.

Bhagavān is the one, by whose knowledge one gets liberation and by whose grace alone one finds everything necessary to gain that liberation.

In living a complete life, it is grace that leads you to cultural forms be it folk art, music, dance, theatre suggesting Bhagavān in one's life.

It is grace that leads you to discover your desire for the infinite.

It is grace that leads you to discover that the desire for the infinite can only be met for good, by the knowledge that the infinite is not out there in a grain of sand. It is you.
It is grace that leads you to discover a shishya in yourself, a student willing to learn.
It is grace that leads you to discover a guru.
It is grace that leads you to make a commitment to learning about yourself through the light of the sastra.
It is grace that keeps you committed despite the many obstacles and distractions.
It is grace that the śastra's vision of you becomes your vision.

516. Amitavikramaḥ (also word 641)
अमितविक्रमः

i. The one of immeasurable strides.
ii. The one with limitless powers.

As Trivikrama, when the Lord strode the universe by taking 3 steps, His vikrama, strides were amita, immeasurable. Hence He is known as Amitavikrama.

He is Amitavikrama also because His vikrama, valour and power are limitless. We can take three steps in our understanding when we understand that Bhagavān is that from which all has come, all is sustained and all is resolved into.

517. Ambhonidhiḥ
अम्भोनिधिः

i. The abode of waters.
ii. The abode of devas and others

Planktons, fishes – big and small, sea animals, corals and so many undiscovered beings live in the ocean. Where does the ocean live? Bhagavān as the ocean, is the abode where the waters are stored and hence is called Ambhonidhi.

Also the Taittiriya refers to the the devas, gods; manuṣyas, human beings; pitṛs, ancestors; and asuras, demons as Ambhāṃsi. All of them have come from and have their being in Parameśvara and therefore, He is called Ambhonidhi.

518. Anantātmā
अनन्तात्मा

The one who is limitless.

The ātmā, nature, of Bhagavān is ananta, limitless.

In a gratitude exercise we conducted with a group of children recently, the children took turns, reluctantly to call up their parents and share what they were grateful about. One eleven year old boy called up his parents and said that he was most grateful to them for the freedom they gave him, that they did not impose too many dos and don't's on him. They did not limit his freedom

like other parents did. It‘s a wonderful gift to give children: a sense of freedom with a sense of responsibility.

When is that we experience our freedom?

When we don’t experience limitations – limitations in what we say, what we do, how much money can buy, where we can travel. We can experience relative freedom when our choices in different situations empower us – help us get over the helplessness experienced. Despite the body and the mind being limited we can still achieve incredibly powerful things with it. Still being limited, there are boundaries. The truth is we cannot stand boundaries. We need not stand them either because of the limitless truth. This statement is not contradictory. The standpoint has shifted from the form to the basis of the locus of the form that is consciousness.

The Atma that is the nature of Bhagavān is the nature of the person. It is time-wise limitless, space-wise limitless and object-wise also limitless. Every object is Īśvara.
Time and space are also Īśvara. But, He is not bound by any of these. So, He is Anantātmā.

519. Mahodadhiśayaḥ
महोदाधिशयः
The one who reclines in the ocean.

At the time of pralaya, resolution, when everything becomes unmanifest, what is there is nothing but Bhagavān in the form of consciousness. The causal state is depicted as a mahodadhi, huge ocean and Bhagavān is depicted as reclining in the ocean of consciousness. This is the milky ocean. And from that consciousness alone, when the saṅkalpa takes place in Īśvara, everything comes into manifestation again.

Till then, He is Mahodadhiśaya, reclining as though, in the great ocean.

520. Antakaḥ
अन्तकः
The one who brings an end.

Lord Yama is called Antaka, because He brings an end to everything. Īśvara alone is manifest as Yama and He is antakasyāpi antakaḥ, puts an end to Lord Death also. Therefore, Īśvara is the real Antaka.

Most of us seem afraid of endings. We like our stories to have ‘happily ever after’. We like new beginnings. But no beginning is possible without something ending.
Pregnancy has to end for the baby to be born.
Childhood has to end for adulthood to begin.
Education (a certain kind) has to end for employment to begin.
Singlehood has to end before togetherness with a partner begins.
Days have to end for nights to begin.
Nights have to end for the day to begin.
Every season has to end for the next season to begin.

Life (as we know it) has to end before another lifetime begins.
Brightness begins as darkness ends. Was there really darkness?
For the one whose eyes were closed, everything appeared dark.

He is Antaka also because, He gives mokṣa and puts an end to a life of samsara.
Every being is subject to death and the Lord, who put and end to a life of death itself, is called Antaka.

521. Ajaḥ (also words 95, 204)

अजः

The one in the form of Manmatha.

'A' is Lord Viṣṇu and kāma, that is Manmatha, the Lord of love, is born of Lord Viṣṇu and hence is aja. The Lord is in the form of kāma, love and desire, and so Aja.
Bhagavān says, in the Gītā, I am the strength of all those who are strong and further 'dharmaviruddho bhūteṣu kāmo'smi - I am in the form of desire that is unopposed to dharma' (7.11).
Physical strength is potential in every being, and that potentiality is Īśvara. The little child that is learning to crawl will walk one day soon enough and will run and sprint also, all because of the potentiality of strength that exists. Strength is latent in all people.

Kāmā is desire to achieve what you don't have and rāga is an attachment to what you have. Bhagavān says that I am the strength in you which is without kāma and rāga. This has to be said, else there can be abuse of the strength. In short, Īśvara is that strength sans ahaṅkāra, the self concept. The same can be said of buddhi, tejas etc, that all of these have to be without claiming to call all the shots.

I am desire because kāma is śakti, as long as that kāma is unopposed to dharma. Suppose a person is free from ahaṅkāra and is endowed with a lot of talents and skills, but has no desire. Then it all just remains inside. So he can have desires, for desires do not bind. This is very important to understand.

And desire in keeping with dharma is the beauty of Bhagavān. It is the expression of Bhagavān. Anything beautiful has come out of such a desire. Without non binding desires, Vyāsa and Sankara would not have done what they did. That is why it is called icchā-śaktih, the power of desiring. If the desire is against dharma, then that belongs to the jīva and ofcourse faces the results.

522. Mahārhaḥ

महार्हः

The one who deserves worship.

Mahas is pūja and mahārha is one who deserves worship. Who is the most deserving altar of worship? The one, whose ego does not grow by being worshipped, becomes the deserving altar of worship. Bhagavān is Mahārha, the one who is absolutely worthy of worship. His ego is absolute and cannot bloat at all.

One can worship anybody, but by that worship, the ego of the person should not grow. Hence, everybody cannot be put on the altar because it will destroy the person. That is why, we generally use a stone or wood for worship. There are various rituals in which pūja is done to the guru, priest, parents, bride-groom, elders and so on. In all these, Bhagavān is invoked in them. They have to act as conduits and pass the puja to the Lord.

Otherwise, what you invoke is one thing and what the person is, is another because the person has notions about himself/herself. If the person takes the pūja as done to him and does not act as a conduit, it would destroy the person. Power being inert cannot and does not corrupt. But the notions of being above the law, above people just because of somebody devotion can affect the objectivity of a person.

Bhagavān is the one who is Mahārha, worthy of worship. Wherever worship is done, be it a devata or a guru, all that worship goes only to Īśvara.

523. Svābhāvyaḥ

स्वाभाव्यः

The one who is not objectified.

Sva is ātmā and it is abhāvya, that is, by its own nature, it is not available for bhāvanā, objectification.

Ātmā is always self-revealing and so, it need not be objectified.
Ātmā need not be contemplated upon, but it is that because of which you can contemplate. So it is not an object of bhāvanā.
Bhagavān as the ātmā, is Svābhāvya.

Atma is seen as I the conscious being, the content of which is limitless consciousness that is aware of the mind-body and all the stuff that it does or does not do.
Does I, Ātmā need to be freed? I was always free.
Does I have to be improved? I was always full and complete.
Does the status of I have to be elevated in society? I was always the highest. There is none other than me.
Does I, Atma need love and appreciation? I was always ananda svarupa, that limitlessness which when expressed in the mind, that expansiveness which accommodates everyone without finding faults.
Do I need to know myself? That which is every revealing was always known. The clouds of ignorance fade away.

524. Jitāmitraḥ

जितामित्रः

The one who wins over the enemies.

Mitra means a friend and amitra, an enemy. The Lord is Jitāmitra because the amitras, both internal and external, are jita, won over by Him. Bhagavān can really have no enemies inside or outside, because He is the only one that is there.

The internal enemies are desire, anger, greed, hatred, jealousy, pride and so on. They are inimical to us as they start to rule our lives instead of us mastering them. But then again it is not easy to master them. In a highly competitive corporate environment where sometimes there are many manipulations it is difficult to keep anger away. We remind ourselves of why we continue to be in that job, link it to our life goals and don't expect the world out of a job. It is true that we don't want to be manipulated and cheated. If the environment is still very tough we look for pleasant moments within the day to get us through the tough times.

The external enemies are those like Rāvaṇa, Kumbakarṇa, Śiśupāla and so on. In His avatāras, the Lord had won over the enemies both inside and outside.
Therefore, we invoke the Lord as Jitāmitra so that we can vanquish all our enemies.

525. Pramodanaḥ
प्रमोदनः
The one who is ever joyful.

He is Pramodana, ever joyful, as though enjoying His own self, that is, of the nature of ānandāmṛta.
He also makes one happy through the form in which He is meditated upon.

526. Ānandaḥ
आनन्दः
The one of the nature of joy.

He is Ānanda, because that is His svarupa, nature. Ananda is not a passing emotion.

For the person, that ananda is his nature, has to be discovered. The reality experienced by people is that happiness comes and goes. It does not stay.

The ananda of an icecream is experienced only by the one who enjoys icecream.
The ananda of being with a loved one is only for the one who loves the other specific person
The ananda of that achievement is because you valued that specific achievement.
The ananda of your child doing well is because he/she is your child
The ananda of classical music is because you enjoy classical music.
The ananda of heavy metal (a music genre) is because the person digs that music.
The ananda of learning something new is because you value it specifically.
The ananda of an icecream, loved one, music, one's child or some discipline of knowledge does not lie in them, but all these conditions manifest the joy and ananda that you are.

Any joy got by anyone is only a fraction of this svarūpa-ānanda for the Lord.

The less conditions we need to be happy and content, the happier we are. The more conditions we need to be happy (including the amount of sugar in the tea) the more sad we are. Generally our cravings and aversions inhibit our ananda, condition our ananda. The craving for a particular kind of an object by default creates an aversion for the opposite kinds of objects. The craving for a particular person creates a dependence of happiness on that person only. All our conditional ananda is based on the conclusion of me being a finite being.

How much heat does fire need to be hot? Fire is hot. It is its nature.
What conditions does Bhagavān need to be happy when ananda is his nature?

527. Nandanaḥ
नन्दनः
The source of happiness.

He the one in whom you discover pramoda, joy.

Even the happiness that is born of the sense-objects is also because of Bhagavān alone.
He is Nandana, because He is the one who makes us happy, even through we attribute our joy to various other things.

528. Nandaḥ
नन्दः
The one rich with all the means to be happy.

Bhagavān is Nanda because He is richly endowed with all the means and resources to be happy.
Nanda can stand for Nandagopa, the father of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and that is also Bhagavān alone.

529. Satyadharmā
सत्यधर्मा
The one who has the dharmas like satyaṃ jñānam anantam.

Bhagavān has these six bhagas or dharmas – like jñāna, knowledge; vairāgya, dispassion; vīrya, the capacity to create, sustain and resolve; yaśas, fame; śrī, wealth; and aiśvarya, overlordship. These dharmas are satya, true for Him, in the sense that they are always present in an absolute measure; never missing or lacking at any time in quantity or quality.

Or the nāma can be looked at as such. Satyadharmā then would mean the one who has satyam jnānam anantam as His dharma, nature. Here dharma is svarūpa-dharma.

Satya is that which exists in all three periods of time. Satya is not inert. That Satya is Jñāna.
Jñāna is that which is in the form of consciousness without the limitations of knower, known and knowledge. The words on the computer or mobile screen are known. The knower or the reader understands the words or does not understand the words. When the knower understands knowledge takes place. The knower becomes aware of the satellite ship and the knower also becomes aware of the bacteria by looking through the microscope. Does the

awareness/consciousness change shape/size because of the object in front? That consciousness because of which the knower knows, which is the very content of the knower is Jñāna.

Ananta is that which is limitless, not limited by time, space or object. Limitlessness is wholeness, fullness. Śuddha is that which is always pure, that is from the standpoint of our concept of purity. Mukta is that which is never bound and ever free.
So, the one who has all these dharmas, is called satyadharmā.

530. Trivikramaḥ
त्रिविक्रमः
The one whose three steps spanned the three worlds.

He is Trivikrama, because He spanned the three worlds by His three steps.

In the first avatar as a human being, Bhagavatam speaks of Vishnu descending as the Vamana avatar to restore the authority of Indra over the heavens as it had been taken by Mahabali, a benevolent Asura king. Vamana, in the guise of a short Brahmin carrying a wooden umbrella went to the king to request three paces of land. Mahabali consented, against the warning of his guru, Sukracharya. Vamana then revealed his identity and enlarged to gigantic proportions to stride over the three worlds. This form is known as Trivikrama.

He stepped from heaven to earth with the first step, from earth to the world below with the second. For his last step he asked Mahabli where he could put the third step. King Mahabali unable to fulfill his promise, offered his head for the third. Vamana then placed his foot and gave the king immortality for his humility.He was also allowed to return every year to see the citizens of his country. The festival of Onam recently celebrated is related to the return of Mahabali who is said to visit his people and see that they are doing well.

The three worlds can also be taken as bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ, suvaḥ – the earth and those below, the heavens and that in between. Or, it can be taken as the physical, subtle and causal worlds.

531. Maharṣiḥ Kapilacaryah
महर्षिः कपिलाचार्यः
The one who is the great sage Kapilācāryaḥ

Maharṣi is an adjective to Kapilācārya and together they make one nāma. Ṛṣati, jānāti mantrān iti ṛsih – the one who knows, sees the mantras, is called a ṛṣi. An ācārya is one who teaches the śāstra, follows what he teaches and makes others also follow by teaching them.

The Bhāgavata mentions Kapila who was the son of Sage Kardama and Devahūti and is considered an avatāra of Lord Viṣṇu. This was informed to them even before she became pregnant. He is called Kapila being golden brown in colour. His mother Devahuti approaches his son as he is sitting on the banks of the lake Bindusaras and says," I am tired of this life which I have spent in gratifying the senses. I have the great fortune to be the mother of the Lord. Teach me about mukti. Kapila's face was lit up and he teaches her," Mother it is the mind which is the cause of bondage as well as freedom. When it gets involved in the three gunas, especially when

there is an upset in the balance then the mind begins to be interested in other things and gets disturbed. However the same mind when reflecting on the glories of the Lord as it develops an abiding relationship with Bhagavān, becomes the cause for freedom. When the feelings of 'I' and 'Mine' slowly dissolve the mind becomes free of kāma, cravings, krodha, anger, lobha, greed etc. There is greater objectivity and vairāgya, dispassion and with knowledge one is able to see Brahman. Like this he taught the entire Vedānta to his mother, He became an ācārya. As there are certain original contributions in his work, he is ṛṣi. What he taught to His mother is called Sāṅkya, which is suddha-ātmā-tattva-vijñāna- the knowledge of the truth of the pure ātmā.

He is perhaps different from the Kapila, the propounder of the Sāṅkya-darśana, which talks of ātmās being many and also a prakṛti which has got a parallel reality. We do not know. The original Sāṅkya-darśana of Kapila is not available. But He had also made some special contributions like the concept of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas.

This Kapila is not separate from Īśvara, because he knew the truth, that the jīva is indeed Parameśvara. Hence, Bhagavān is called Maharṣi Kapilācārya.

532. Kṛtajñaḥ (also word 82)

कृतज्ञः

The one who is the creation and the knower.

In word 82 Kṛtajñaḥ means the one who knows (remembers) an action done. One cannot help but feel grateful when one remembers all that has been done for us. In fact research studies highlight that gratitude cannot coexist with sadness and anger. Either gratitude is present or the other is present. This is wonderful to think about. We don't try to be grateful. We just remember all that is given to us including this body-mind-complex, the capacities we have, the people in ourlives. What did we do to earn this complex artery network of blood vessels in our body with a heart that pumps 100,000 times a day?

Here, another meaning is given. Kṛta is the effect, the created universe. Jña is the knower, the ātmā. Bhagavān is the one in the form of the created jagat and He is also the knower, the ātmā, and hence, He is Kṛtajña.

If we try to think of how Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhāri could remember the names of all their hundred children, it is mind boggling. But, the Lord is Kṛtajña, He knows every aspect of the entire kṛtaṃ jagat, created universe. We may not know the details of the universe. Infact we leave things on the table and look all over for it. Still the knower is aware of what is known and what is not known. The knower is consciousness.

533. Medinīpatiḥ

मेदिनीपतिः

The Lord of the earth.

Bhagavān is Medinīpati, the Lord of the earth.

People think that they are owners of the earth and emperors. This has resulted to environmental degradation, gross misuse of natural resources, all kinds of pollution.
Following is from the Hindu Declaration On Climate change in the context of the Paris Meet in 2015: Hinduism and many other ancient cultures comprise living traditions that revere nature and its entire ecosystem. Nature in all its aspects, animate and inanimate is sacred. It is not the secular asset of man. Deep environmental and ecological awareness is not a fancy intellectual idea. It is a spiritual value. Humans are not the crowning glory of the biological hierarchy. Humans and nature are interdependent and Humans have a clear duty to protect and safeguard Nature as if it is a part of their own. The sense of duty and environmental awareness is imbibed in several rituals across Buddhism, Jainism Sikhism, Taoism and Shintoism. It goes on to appeal to religious leaders and political heads to see the wisdom of the religious and secular texts to view forest, animals, trees and plants, water, fire, earth, air ans sky as manifestations of the divine and not as secular assets for indiscriminate exploitation for human consumption, satisfaction and life.

What does this mean to us, at an individual level ? There is deliberation and care in the use of all our resources. We reduce, reuse and recycle resources to the extent possible and in so doing consume less and contribute more.
Even for so called emperors who rule the earth and think they will 'colonise Mars,' it is Bhagavān who empowers them to become emperors.

534. Tripadaḥ
त्रिपदः
The one who has three steps or states.

Bhagavān is called Tripada, because He has three padas, steps. But, a better meaning can be given. Padyate, gamyate iti padam – that which is gained is pada.

The three states of experience experienced by us, the walking, dream and deep sleep experiences, are the three padas. All our work and relationships, hopes and aspirations, fears and sorrows are present in the waking state primarily. None of this exists in the deep sleep state. In dreams some of these exist but there is no seeming continuity to them. With reference to the individual, they are called avasthās, states of experience not states of consciousness as is mis translated often. We define reality as that which cannot be negated, that which exists in all three periods of time. All the experiences of the waking state are not present in the dream state. All the experienes of the dream state are not present in the deep sleep state. How real are these? Each of this are distinct states, all held together by the individual, I.

If there is an individual, there must be the total. With reference to the total, these states are called prapañcas. So the sthūla-prapañca, the waking physical world, sūkṣma-prapañca, the subtle dream world and the kāraṇa-prapañca, the causal state, when the entire world is in an unmanifest condition, are the three padas and the one who has these three is Tripada. All the three are nothing but Parameśvara alone.

At the same time Parameśvara is distinct from all the three. Hence, He is called Tripada. This name is with reference to the total.

535. Tridaśādhyakṣaḥ

त्रिदशाध्यक्षः

The Lord of the three states of experiences.

The individual goes through these three daśās, states of experience, that is, jagrat, waking; svapna, dream and suṣupti, deep sleep, depending on the predominance of the three guṇas. The individual is present in each of these three states. But the waker is not present when the dreamer is there and the dreamer is not there when the person who sleeps deeply is there. Are there three entities? Waker, dreamer and deep sleeper. The 'er' is what is common to all three. Is the 'er' the mere individual? Bhagavān is the Sākṣī, the witness of and the Adhyakṣa, the one who presides over these three states.

He is the one who is the witness of all the three states of experience, but is not any one of them. All the three states of experience are tripada and all the three levels at the total levels at the total level, that is, the sthūla, sūkṣma and kāraṇa-prapañca are also tripada. If all the three are Bhagavān, He is also free from all the three and the ātmā is the witness of all the three states of experience. Adhyakṣa is Sākṣī, witness.

The devas are called as tridaśas because they have only three daśās, states and do not have jarā, old age. They are always youthful. He is their Adhyakṣa, the one who presides over them.

536. Mahāśṛṅgaḥ

महाशृङ्गः

The one who has a very big horn or peak.

The word Mahāśṛṅga means the one who has a great horn. In His avatāra as a matsya, fish,

The Bhāgavatam tells how at the end of a kalpa, a dānava called Hayagriva steals the sacred Vedas when they come out of Brahma's mouth when he yawns at the start of his night, fatigued by the creation of the universe. Meanwhile, King Satyavrata (also known as Vaivasvata Manu), who was the current Manu (there are multiple Manus in Puranic texts) was performing severe austerities, sustaining only on water. Once when he was offering water oblation in the river, a tiny fish was caught in his folded hands. As the king was about to throw away the fish, the fish pleaded to be not thrown in the water, where larger fishes would devour it. Assuring the fish protection, the king put it in a small jar and took it with him. But the fish grew larger and requested for more space, the king moved it in a small pond, but the fish soon outgrew it. As the fish outgrew water reservoirs, Satyavrata transferred it to a lake, then to larger reservoirs and subsequently to the ocean. But the fish requested Satyavrata that it was afraid of the dangerous marine predators of the ocean. Bewildered by these words, the king asked the fish to reveal his true identity, but soon deduced that this supernatural fish was none other than Vishu and surrendered to him.

Matsya-Visnu declared that a great flood would come seven days from then and engulf the universe. He ordered Satyavrata to assemble the seven great sages and with their counsel, gather all kinds of seeds, herbs and various beings to load them on a boat, that would be sent by Vishnu on the fateful day. He instructed that the serpent Vāsuki should be used as a rope to tie the boat to his fish-horn. Promising that he would sail the boat through the waters throughout the night of

Brahma, Matsya disappeared after his revelation and reappeared as a horned fish on the day of the Deluge, when torrential rains drenched the earth. Satyavrata did as Vishnu instructed and fastened the boat to the horned fish (Matsya). As Matsya swam through the flood waters, he taught the king on various topics and revealed to him knowledge of the Vedas, Puranas, Samhitas as well as the Supreme Truth. After the last wave of the flood ended, Matsya slew Hayagriva and rescued the Vedas and handed them over to Brahma, who woke after his night. The narrative ends with the narrator Sage Suka praying to Matsya and declaring that whoever listens to this tale is absolved of sin and remembering Matsya daily grants success to the devotee.

Matsya avatāra had a horn which was so big, that He could pull the boat containing the King Satyavrata and the saptarṣis. Again in His avatāra as a varāha, boar, He had a big horn with which He could lift the earth. So, the name Mahāśṛṅga, refers to the avatāra-līlā.
Or, the word śrnga can mean a peak. Having the mahasrnga, the peak of the Himalayas or the North Pole which indicates the Meru, as His abode, He is Mahasrnga. The mahasrnga is considered as the Nothe Pole, where the sun never sets. The Veda talks about the midnight sun.
Or the mahasrnga is like a mark, a pendant for Him.

537. Kṛtāntakṛt

कृतान्तकृत्

The one who withdraws the jagat.
The destroyer of death.

He is the antakṛt, the one who brings an anta, end, to the kṛta-jagat and hence, Kṛtāntakṛt. There are people who build things, but they need demolition squads to pull them down. There are others who cannot build things but they happily destroy things. Thus, people, cultures, libraries and temples have been destroyed.

Bhagavān created the jagat but He does not need anyone else to demolish it, He himself does it. In fact, He does not destroy, He only withdraws. He is the maker and so He projects it. Then He withdraws it, and the cycle begins again. He is the maker and He takes it back unto Himself.
Lord Yama is called kṛtānta, because he brings anta, death, to people. Bhagavān is the Kṛtạntakṛt, because He cuts, brings an end to Lord Yama also.

538. Mahāvarāhaḥ

महावराहः

The great Varāha.

The Lord is mahān, great and also in the form of a varāha, a boar, in a particular avatāra. The earth was lost in water, in an avāntara-pralaya. It might have been a global upheaval and then the earth was saved by the Lord who took the form of a boar.

In the Bhagavata Purāna, Hiranyaksa and his brother torment the inhabitants of earth as well as the gods and engage in war with the gods. Hiranyaksha takes the earth (personified as the goddess Bhudevi) and hides her in the primordial waters. The earth sinks on her own to the lower worlds due to the torture of the demons.

Varaha emerges as a tiny boar (a size of a thumb) from the nostrils of Brahma, but soon starts to grow. Varaha's size increases to that of an elephant and then to that of an enormous mountain. The scriptures emphasize his gigantic size. He is large as a mountain and blazing like the sun. Dark like a rain cloud in complexion, his tusks are white, sharp and fearsome. His body is the size of the space between the earth and the sky. His thunderous roar is frightening. In the ocean, Varaha encounters Hiranyaksha, who obstructs his path and challenges him for a duel.

In some versions, the demon also mocks Varaha as the beast and warns him not to touch earth. Ignoring the demon's threats, Varaha lifts the earth on his tusks. Hiranyaksa charges towards the boar in rage with a mace. The two fiercely fight with maces. Finally, Varaha slays the demon after a thousand-year duel. Varaha rises from the ocean with the earth in his tusks and places her gently above it in her original position, as the gods and the sages sing Varaha's praises.
So, as the restorer of the earth, He is Mahāvarāha.

539. Govindaḥ (also word 187)
गोविन्दः
The one known through the Vedas.

'Go' means śabda. Since Bhagavān is known through 'go' that is, the Vedas, He is called Govinda. He is known mainly through the words, the mahāvākyas of Vedānta. Any other means of knowledge such as perception or inference is subject to doubt and speculation. Some people can claim to have seen an image of Bhagavān in meditation or in sleep. Seeing an image does not prove Bhagavān's all pervasiveness. Further, any speculation is subject to human error. What else is available to us? The only way to know Bhagavān is if he introduces Himself.

He introduces himself through his own words, makes you see Him through His own words, which are the śruti. Veda is the śabda-pramāṇa, means of knowledge and through the ṛṣis, He reveals himself. The Viṣṇutilaka says, 'gobhireva yato vedyo govindaḥ samudāhṛtaḥ – as He is to be known through the words of the Veda, He is well known as Govinda.'

In the Gītā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes Himself known. He reveals Himself through His own words, which are the words of Īśvara and they are the words of the Veda. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, 'this is what I taught to Vivasvān, Lord Sun or the head of the solar dynasty. He taught it to his son Manu and Manu taught this to Ikṣvāku (in whose lineage, Śrī Rāma was born). Handed down from generation to generation, the kings who were sages knew it. Or else, the kings knew and the ṛṣis knew. Thus, this knowledge has been coming down through generations' (4.1.2).

540. Suṣeṇaḥ
सुषेणः
The one with a good army.

Bhagavān has a big army of devatās and these are the presiding deities of various phenomena. They are called senā, the army of gods. It means the one who is manifest in the form of various law and order. He is Suṣeṇa.

541. Kanakāṅgadī

कनकाङ्गदी

The one who wears golden armlets.

Bhagavān always wears golden armlets. It means that the Lord is always with Lakṣmī and Lakṣmī wears golden armlets. So wherever there is gold, it is the armlet of Bhagavān.
All the stars in the sky are His necklace.

542. Guhyaḥ

गुह्यः

The one who is a secret.

The Vedas, especially the Upaniṣads are known as rahasya. As Bhagavān can be known only through the Upaniṣads, He is said to be Guhya.

The Lord is all-knowing and all-powerful. He is the ākāśa and so on, but what is the truth of Him? He is you and that is the secret. He is secretively hidden in the hrdayākāśa, the cave of the buddhi, and hence, He is Guhya. He has to be recognized only in the buddhi, as the very adhiṣṭhāna, basis of the buddhi.

That you are He is a secret, because even when told, it is not understood. Therefore, this is the greatest secret. One has to study Vedānta and even then, it remains a secret. Unless it is thoroughly understood, it will always remain a secret and hence it is guhya. When this is said, one may immediately conclude, that He is something small in the heart or in the buddhi. This is the pratyagātmā, the inner-self. This is the secret.

543. Gabhīraḥ

गभीरः

The profound.

This is the secret and even if one knows the secret, again it may be understood as 'I am a small ātmā' like some other small organ in the body. Or as some people say, Atma is a divine spark. This is not so.

The ātmā is Parameśvara who is Gabhīra, that is, Gambhīra. Parameśvara is Gabhīra, very profound and unfathomable because He is endowed with all jñāna, knowledge; aiśvarya, overlordship; bala, strength; vīrya, prowess; and so on, in infinite measure. One can never really fathom these guṇas of the Lord.

544. Gahanaḥ (also word 382)

गहनः

The impenetrable.

In an inter religious event yesterday, one of the participants from the audience (belonging to another religion) remarked, that even a religious person can know only a part of God. Who can fathom all his glory?

Yes, He is Gahana, impenetrable, not easily gained. Mark the word – not easily gained, but gained for sure. The condition to understand God is being an adhikārī, qualified.

Knowing God is not going to some spiritual la-la land or floating around in space, or mumbling some mantras. It is based on the vision of reality. All of us are committed to what is real including the child who does not want to sleep at night to see if Santa really comes down to give his gifts.
Being objective to the reality of a situation is not coloring reality with our cravings and aversions.
Being objective to my past and not getting victimized by it means living in reality
Being objective to the people around me and not compulsively labeling them and dealing with the label is living in reality.
Being objective to what stays and what goes, in my life is living in reality.
Being objective to what is given to me (mind body sense complex onwards) and what I make of it is living in reality.
Being objective to all that is here is Bhagavān is living in reality.
Being objective is the main qualification. All other qualities follow suit.
The word gahana, impenetrable is not to discourage us but to encourage us to be objective and live in reality if we are committed to knowing God.
Or because, He is the witness of the presence and absence of the three states of walking, dream and sleep; at the same time is free from these three, He is Gahana.

545. Guptaḥ
गुप्तः
The hidden.

Relating to Bhagavān as the different manifestations in this world, I don't feel alienated any more. I begin to see that the difficult people and situations in my life are not out there' to get me'. They are just the play of karma. My karma. I then learn to take responsibility and also learn to accept situations.

Bhagavān cannot be objectified by the mind or the sense-organs. Objectification means there is me, the subject and Bhagavān the object. This is fine and necessary for a devotee to relate to and understand because a relationship implies two beings. However close I feel to Bhagavan the closeness finds its fulfillment only in the recognition that there was never any two, anyway. But for that, Bhagavān has to be understood.

When I say that Bhagavān is manifest in the physiological and psychological order that makes the that makes the body-mind-sense-complex gloriously function, then, what is it that is me or mine? Are there really two?

Bhagavān cannot be pointed out as the direct meaning of the words. Any attempt to define, limits. It is okay and necessary for defining things in our functional reality.
He can only be pointed out as the implied meaning of words.
As He is not available as the object of words and the mind, He is Gupta, hidden.

Not because he is playing hide and seek. We are the ones to hide and then seek.

546. Cakragadādharaḥ

चाक्रगदाधरः

The bearer of the cakra and gadā.

Lord Nārāyaṇa is Cakragadādhara, bearing in His two hands the cakra, the discus and the gadā, the mace. The other two hands are sometimes pictured as abhaya-varada, as if to say, 'do not be afraid. I am here' and the other saying, 'come to my feet.'
The cakra is meant to remove the enemies like kāma, krodha etc. and the gadā is meant for disciplining the thoughts of the mind. The gadā is all the yama and niyama disciplines and then you can live a life of dharma.

Yama includes what is to be avoided, given our inclinatons and the pressure of our desires. Yama includes ahimsa, non violence or least injury to beings for one's sustenance, satyam, truthfulness and commitment to truth in all dealings, asteya, not stealing, aparigraha, freeing oneself from a sense of possession and hence controlling the other, brahmacharya. walking the path of the highest reality.
Niyama includes observances such as saucham, external and internal cleanliness, tapas, prayerful religious disciplines from a facebook detox onwards (as one may not make time for one's priorities), svadhyaya, study of the scriptures, santosham, contentment with what is and what one has and Isvara pranidhanam, an understanding of life and hence surrender to Isvara.
Most of us struggle at the level of yama and niyama and we need all the help we can get. This form as Cakragadādhara is given as an upāsanā-mūrti, for invocation. If Bhagavān is with me then the enemies will go away. Some may take longer than the others. It 's okay. I continue to seek grace to practice dharma.
Or, the cakra stands for the manas-tattva, the principle of the mind and the gadā stands for the buddhi-tattva, the principle of the intellect which He wields, for the welfare of the world.

547. Vedhāḥ

वेधाः

The creator.

In the form of Brahmāji, He is the one who creates, making all the divisions, and bringing about law and order.

Water flows to find its level.
The wind blows – it should keep moving. The wind does not linger in an athlete's lungs longer than in a smoker's lungs. It is not partial.
Generally, what goes up comes down (due to gravity) and the stock market dynamics.
Eyes must see. Ears must hear.Since the human body cannot photosynthesise like the plants, food must be available that is nourishing. The sun must be hot and the moon should be cool and so on. The sun shines on Syria and shines on Antartica without being selective in terms of the sunlight it offers.
A black cow eats green grass and produces white milk.

The different seeds that are sown in the ground know just how much water, sunlight and minerals to be absorbed to grow into huge trees, unless human beings interfere.
Water when heated should boil. This is order and this is what Parameśvara does.
Thus, He is Vedhā.

548. Svāṅgaḥ
स्वाङ्गः
The one who does not depend on anybody.

Here, aṅga means as instrument, help.
In companies which employ a lot of women in the corporate sector, the heads of the company know that the productivity and stress levels of their women executives depends on the kind of support staff and maids they have at their home. These domestic support staff help to run the home, from cleaning, cooking to baby sitting the child onwards. People living overseas miss hiring support staff on a daily basis as it is relatively more expensive. And, we are just talking about one home here.

Even the auto rickshaw driver I was talking to recently, felt that despite having an able Prime Minister, he had to depend on the various departments and ministries working in coordination. Change had to percolate to all levels. Just one person however capable could not effect major positive change.

What kind of help does Bhagavān have, for doing the various kinds of jobs in the nirmāṇa, construction, of this jagat? Svayam eva aṅgam – He Himself is the helping hand, as well as the aṅgi.

He does not require any help; He helps Himself, because He is almighty. Thus, He is Svāṅga.

549. Ajitaḥ
अजितः
The one who is not conquered.

In all His avatāras, Bhagavān is never conquered. He is one who always wins for you, if His grace is with you.

At the end of the Gītā, Vyāsa says, in the words of Saṅjaya, ‘yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ tatra śrīvijayo bhūtirdhruvā nītirmatirmama – where Śrī Kṛṣṇa is, there is definitely victory, there is śrī, prosperity, and nīti, justice’ (18.78).
Partha being dhanurdhara shows that the jīva must be ready to do his part and also pray for the grace of Bhagavān; then there will be definite victory.

550. Kṛṣṇaḥ (also word 57)
कृष्णः
The one who is in the form of Vyāsa.

The name Kṛṣṇa was earlier said to indicate Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here, it stands for Vyāsa, known as Kṛṣṇa-dvaipāyana. Sage Vyāsa, being dark in complexion, is also known as Kṛṣṇa. Being born in a dvīpa, island, he is known as Dvaipāyana.

Sage Vyāsa, being the author of Mahābhārata, is naturally the author of this sahasranāma also. He is the one who collected all the Veda-mantras, and compiled them in the form of the four Vedas. Again, He is the author of the Brahmasūtras and the Purāṇas. Naturally, He is looked upon as one in whom the vibhūti of the Lord is manifest in a very great measure.
This kind of a special manifestation is known amśa-avatāra. The Viṣṇupurāṇa says, 'know Vyāsa to be Lord Nārāyaṇa because who else, other than Puṇḍarīkākṣa, could have written the Mahābhārata.'
We celebrate Sage Vyāsa 's birthday as Guru Purnima to honor and revere him and the parampara that he helped strengthen and re establish. It does not matter that he was the son of a fisherwoman and sage Parashara born of a gandharva relationship, not a formal solemnized wedding. It does not matter to us (some staunch vegetarians) that he might have eaten some fish in his childhood as well. And we still deeply revere him and honor him! A sage 's past does not really matter. Look at the glory of this land! There was such a time that the gunas of the person and not jati by birth, mattered to us.

551. Dṛḍhaḥ

दृढः

The one who is firm.

Bhagavān is Dṛḍha, firm, because there is no pracyuti, moving away from his svarūpa.

As Bhagavān, His svarūpa is satyam jñānam anantam and His sāmarthya is being endowed with all jñāna, aiśvarya, bala, vīrya and so on, in infinite measure. All these qualities will never get lost. Since pracyuti, loss or decline, is not there, Bhagavān is Dṛḍha.

We look upon Bhagavān as dṛḍha, because we want dārḍhya, firmness, and so we look upon Bhagavān as absolute firmness. Firmness is not rigid beliefs or rigid conditionings.
When Bhagavān is in our heart, then, there is strength to do the right thing despite inner pressures to do otherwise.
When Bhagavān is in our heart, then, there is strength to fulfill the responsibilities of most of our roles and not run away or compromise.
When Bhagavān is in our heart, then, there is strength to take difficult decisions not necessarily to keep the temporary peace but for long term security and peace for all concerned
When Bhagavān is in our heart, then, the fear reduces and courage increases to face anything that life has to offer
When Bhagavān is in our heart, then, there is a renewed sense of purpose to pursue life in line with one's priorities
When Bhagavān is in our heart, then, there is a discovery of kindness and compassion for oneself and others. Compassion comes from a position of strength and not weakness or scarcity of thought and emotion.
When Bhagavān is in our heart then life is a celebration.
Bhagavān is in our heart and that discovery is just a thought away

552. Saṅkarṣaṇo'cyutaḥ

संकर्षणोच्युतः

The one who attracts and is unswerving.

Saṅkarṣaṇa and Acyuta together constitute one nāma. At the time of pralaya, Bhagavān Saṅkarṣati, draws everything and everyone, at once into Himself and is hence called Saṅkarṣaṇa. He is Acyuta because He never swerves from His nature.

Or, He is Saṅkarṣaṇa because He attracts everybody, because whatever we want, Bhagavān is that.
If we want security and happiness, Bhagavān is security and firmness. If it is victory that we want, Bhagavān is jaya. If it is happiness, Bhagavān is ānanda. Therefore, everyone is naturally attracted to Him.

So, He is Saṅkarṣaṇa, attracting everyone to Himself. Generally, any attraction is only short-lived because it is time-bound. But the attraction to Bhagavān never wanes, because, there is no cyuti, waning, whatsoever in Him and so, He is Acyuta. It is an absolute and a never waning attraction.

553. Varuṇaḥ

वरुणः

The concealer.

The setting sun is called Varuna, because samvrnnoti, he withholds, conceals all his rays and the heat. The God of water and aquatic animals is also Varuna.

In the evening sandhyavandana, Lord Narayana is invoked in the setting sun as Varuna, as 'imam me varunasrudhi havam – O! Varuna, hear this praise of mine' (Tai.Sam.2.1.11). The Lord alone is Varuna.

554. Vāruṇaḥ

वारुणः

The son of Varuṇa.

The water is Bhagavān; Varuṇa is Bhagavān and Vāruṇa, the son of Varuṇa is also Bhagavān.
It refers to either sage Vasiṣṭha who saw the Gayatri mantra. As seen in Ramayana, Maharsi Vasiṣṭha was the royal priest of Ayodhya and was teacher of Rama and his brothers.

It could also refer to sage Agastya. Both were saptarishis and the partial incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu.

555. Vṛkṣaḥ

वृक्षः

The one who is stable like a tree.

He is sthira, stable, like the tree and hence, Vṛkṣa. The śruti says, 'vṛkṣa iva sthabdho divi tiṣṭhatyekaḥ – He stands firm as a tree' (Śve. Up.3.9).

In life one can be firm only when one stands up for dharma. One serves dharma. Let's take the lives of the most respected and appreciated people. The freedom figher is respected for courage and fighting all odds. The social worker is respected for embracing others as his/her own and fighting for the cause to ensure justice. The industrialist is respected for the wealth generated and generating employment.A musician is respected for the dedication to the art and what his/her art evokes in people. The defence forces are resepcted for what they give up for the sake of the country. Each of them upholds a particular value, a particular quality and upholds it. One can be firm when one stands for something higher than the personality, higher than the specifics of one's small situation, something that is universal which is dharma.
Something to think about: What is that you stand for ? What is it that contributes to your firmness and stability, as a person? What is it that you will stand up against?

Or these three nāmas can be looked at in this way. He is Varuṇa, the Lord of waters, Vāruṇa, the water that comes from Varuṇa and Vṛkṣa symbolizes the entire plant life that is water born. Further, this entire jagat is a vṛkṣa, tree, and Bhagavān is that Vṛkṣa.

556. Puṣkarākṣaḥ (also word 40)
पुष्कराक्षः
i. The all-pervasive.
ii. The one who shines in the lotus of the heart.

Puṣkarākṣa, as derived from the verbal root'akṣ' preceded by puṣkara (puṣkala), means all-pervasive. 'Here' and 'there' are relative locations. The body is at place 1, P1 and wants to go to place 2, P2. The body can only be in one place at one time. What is here is not there at this point in time. Surely the mind is faster than light. The mind can go to the galaxies too. Sure. Still It cannot go everywhere all at once. Then? All pervasive means Bhagavān pervades all. All? Yes. Even naraka? Yes. Svarga? Yes. No place limits Bhagavān.

He is also Puṣkarākṣa, because He obtains in everybody's heart, shining as consciousness.
Puṣkara is a lotus and here it refers to the lotus of the heart.

557. Mahāmanāḥ
महामनाः
The one with a great mind

Bhagavān has to create the whole universe, sustain it and then resolve it into Himself. For such a job what sort of a mind does He have? If He has a mind like the human mind, which has to think step by step and execute the jobs one by one, He cannot even create, let alone sustain and resolve. To indicate that Bhagavān does it effortlessly, it is said manasa eva karoti, He does it saṅkalpa-mātreṇa, by just thinking of it.

But it should not be concluded that He has an elaborate thinking process, which involves thinking, changing, rethinking and so on. He is all-knowing, Mahāmanā, and that knowledge itself manifests in the form of the jagat. All knowledge does not imply any thinking process, much less a faculty of thinking. So, He is Mahāmanā.

558. Bhagavān

भगवान्

The one with six-fold qualities called bhaga.

The one who has bhaga, the six-fold virtues(aiśvarya, vīrya, śrī, yaśas, jñāna, vairāgya) is Bhagavān. The Viṣṇu-purāṇa defines bhaga as the six-fold virtues. They are:

1. aiśvarya, overlordship; We may have some role in rescuing an ant who is struggling in the water but when that ant enters the ear, my supposed overlordship is no more there. This virtue of overlordship is being able to oversee and control the going ons of this jagat, the galaxies discovered and not yet discovered.
2. vīrya, the capacity to create, sustain and resolve; Nowadays there is so much focus on personalized interiors. In our times a chair was a chair! Now even the chair has to reflect your personality. Imagine trying to put together a room and its interiors, the rights furnishings, the right upholstery, the right ergonomic furniture, the right look! And then trying to sustain that look for some time in terms of maintenance of the room. If teenagers are in the house or adults who behave like teenagers are there then we know how a room is maintained. And then after a few years, if the look of the room has to be changed, then again a huge amount of effort is involved. And then, Bhagavān effortlessly has the capacity to create, sustain and resolve the entire jagat. Surely that requires
3. śrī, all wealth and resources;
4. jñāna, all knowledge which is there in absolute measure;
5. Generally someone becomes famous or infamous because of deeds done, something achieved, wealth earned or wealth distributed (whatever it is), all glory is that of Bhagavān. What to talk of his own glory in being able to do that which no one can else do? His is yaśas, absolute fame;
6. Is Bhagavan gloating about all these sterling virtues and updating his facebook status by the second with all that he does? Is he sitting in a corner distributing prasad to the ones who sing his glories? No. He has vairāgya, total dispassion. This manifests as karma and karma phala – its results. To deal with our difficulties we may say that Bhagavān is testing us or he is polishing us or I am the chosen one. It is ok if we feel better. The truth is that it is all our karma.

All the above virtues are with Him in absolute, limitless measure.

The same Purāṇa also gives another definition for Bhagavān. He is the one who knows about the creation and the resolution of the world; also of all the beings, about the exact time, type, and place of both birth and death of all beings; has complete knowledgeabout the puṇya-phala and pāpa-phala that they would be getting, and knows the knowledge and ignorance of all beings, the karma that is done and the phala that accrues to them.

559. Bhagahā

भगहा

The remover of bhaga.

The jīvas also have bhaga, six fold virtues (aiśvarya, vīrya, śrī, yaśas, jñāna, vairāgya – overlordship; capacity to create, sustain and resolve; wealth and other resources; glory; knowledge and all objectivity) that they have earned by their puṇya. The more we think about what we have been given the heart swells in gratitude. The more we think about what we have been given there is a renewed sense of motivation to live a life of meaning and purpose. These bhagas are present in 'small' measure with the jivas while these bhagas are in present in 'all' and absolute measure with the Lord. At the time of pralaya, He resolves, that is, takes back all the bhaga that the jīvas have and hence, He is Bhagahā.

Or, during the creation and sustenance, He manifests the bhagas that He has, and takes them back into Himself at the time of pralaya. Therefore, He is Bhagahā.

560. Ānandi

आनन्दी

The possessor of ānanda.

Bhagavān is ānanda-svarūpa, of the nature of ānanda and therefore, is Ānandī.
He is Ānandī also because He is abundantly endowed with all prosperity.

The ananda that we experience is experiential happiness. It is conditional. When I get a promotion, I will be happy. When my child gets good grades I will be happy. When my partner expresses their care and love for me I will be happy. When I will have the perfect body I will be happy. When my partner gets along with the family members I will be happy. When my son/daughter gets married I will be happy. The bhogi will look for happiness outside. The yogi will look inward for happiness. All kinds of conditions. And still, when these conditions occur, the ānanda that I am manifests as it is no longer inhibited by my ragas and dvesas. The only way to be happy at at times, at all places in all situations is to discover that you are Ānandi.

Bhagavān is of the nature of ānanda-rasa('Raso vai saḥ rasaṃ hi eva ayaṃ labdhvā ānandī bhavati'). The vidvān who comes to know the ātmā, by gaining the knowledge, gains that rasa, and becomes ānandī (Tai.Up.2.7.1).

561. Vanamālī

वनमाली

The one who wears a Vanamālā.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called Vanamālī because He wears a garland of leaves and flowers of the vana, forest. Vana can mean lotuses or any plants growing together in abundance. He is Vanamālī also, because He wears a garland of lotuses.

We offer a garland made of various leaves and flowers at the altar. But, for the all-pervasive Bhagavān, the trees in all the forests, with all types of leaves and flowers of all shades of colours, are His garlands. For Him, vanaṃ eva mālā, the forest itself is the garland and so He is, Vanamālī.

The vanamālā that He wears is said to represent the bhūta-tanmātrās, the subtle elements, that go to form the creation.

562. Halāyudhaḥ
हलायुधः
The one with a plough.

The one who has the hala as His āyudha, the plough as His weapon is Halāyudha. This refers to the Balarāma-avatāra, where the Lord is said to be born of Rohiṇi and Vasudeva.
In general, the plough stands for effort. The helpless, crawling child learnt to walk through effort. The illiterate child learnt to read and write through effort. The young person was able to get good grades through some effort. The one trying for clarity in pursuits and working for certain goals in life was also through some effort. If we think of ourselves as a victim of our circumstances, then getting out of bed can also be an effort and doing daily chores can also be a big effort.

Any effort is backed by motivation and clarity for our goals and the will involved. If we want to achieve the goal we do make the effort. To be able to earn money (in different ways), people across the world make the effort on a daily basis. To make the effort, we motivate ourselves constantly and are able to pull ourselves out of discouraging talk either by ourselves or by others. With practice we are able to drown out voices of negativity, criticism. When we focus on what can be done rather than on what cannot be done, we don't get mentally tired easily. How do you motivate yourself to make the efforts for your pursuits?
Bhagavān, He is one of absolute and continous effort, bringing about changes. He never gets tired.

563. Ādityaḥ (also word 39)
आदित्यः
The one born of Aditi.

This refers to the Vāmana-avatāra, where the Lord was born of Aditi and Kaśyapa. Therefore, He has got the name Āditya.

564. Jyotirādityaḥ
ज्योतिरादित्यः
The one who resides in the disc of the sun.

Bhagavān is the one which is manifest in the form of this brilliant sūryamaṇḍala. He is the devatā who presides over the sun and He is the antaryāmī, the ātmā, of that very Ādityadevatā. Hence, He is Jyotirāditya.

565. Sahiṣṇuḥ (also word 144)
सहिष्णुः
The one who endures.

He is Sahiṣṇu, the one who has the absolute capacity to endure, put up with all our doings. Or, in His various avatāras, He shows patience and a capacity to put up with all pairs of opposites.

When one invokes the Lord as Sahiṣṇu, one also gets some of that quality. With whichever quality one visualizes and invokes the Lord, that is the quality that one finds in oneself. In life, if one admires somebody, like father or teacher, then he gains their qualities. If Bhagavān is visualized in a particular form, with a particular quality, then he will be able to identify with that quality in Īśvara and this intimate understanding of Īśvara accounts for the individuals own growth. Since we invoke Him with all the different qualities that we require, Bhagavān is presented with all those qualities in the Viṣṇusahasranāma.

566. Gatisattamaḥ

गतिसत्तमः

The one who is the refuge and the best.

Being Sahiṣṇu, He is the most easily approachable, the Gati, the refuge. Gamyate anayā iti gatiḥ – He is the way by which the end is achieved. Gamyate iti gatiḥ – He is also the end which everyone wants to achieve, the one everyone wants to be, the sattama.

Sat has various meanings and the suffix ‘tamap’ added to it, gives the superlative degree of that. He is Sattama, because He is satyatama, the truest, that is the truth of everything; He is sādhutama, the best and the most compassionate; He is praśastatama, the most auspicious and He is abhyarhitatama, the most honoured. In short, He is all that one wants to be. He is the Gati, the way, because the avagati, the knowledge of Him as oneself, alone is the way.

If Bhagavān is said to be absolute compassion, then the way to achieve absolute compassion, is to be compassionate. One cannot be cruel and then hope to achive absolute compassion. So the way is almost like the end. That is why, dharma becomes very important. Bhagavān is the way and also the end. Relative accomplishment is the way and absolute accomplishment is the end.

567. Sudhanvā

सुधन्वा

The one with a great bow.

In His avatāra, as Śrī Rāma, He is sudhanvā, being endowed with the great bow called Kodaṇḍa. As Lord Viṣṇu, He has the great bow called Śarṅga. This bow stands for the principle of the indriyas, in which He strings the arrows of the indriyas.

568. Khaṇḍaparaśuḥ

खण्डपरशुः

The one with the punishing axe.

In His Paraśurāma-avatāra, as the son of Sage Jamadagni, He carried a paraśu, an axe, for the khaṇḍana, cutting of adharma and hence, He is Khaṇḍaparaśu. He is condemned those who did adharma. Or, He is Akhaṇḍaparaśu, because His paraśu never met a defeat or destruction.

569. Dāruṇaḥ

दारुणः

The one who is fierce.

The Lord is Dāruṇa, because He is fierce like Paraśurāma, towards those who follow adharma. There is somebody like Paraśurāma to take care of adharma.

These are great qualities of blessing. There is nothing frightening here. We can relax that Īśvara takes care of adharma and that nobody can get away with it. One cannot rub ones back against a tree without getting rubbed and hurt. This is the law. So too, one cannot rub against dharma, without getting rubbed. This, again, is the law. Adharma gets punished immediately. Punishment does not mean that somebody is out to get you, but it is something that you do not like. If you stick your finger into the fire, then the fire burns the finger. That is the law. When you get burnt, it looks as though the fire is fierce and merciless. But the fire burns ones fingers, because you asked for it. So too, when one faces the consequences of adharma, it looks as though Bhagavān is Dāruna, fierce and merciless.

570. Draviṇapradaḥ

द्रविणप्रदः

The one who gives wealth.

He is also Draviṇaprada, gives the desired objects to His devotees. Anything that one wants is draviṇa, wealth. He is the giver of the results of action. So, as the giver of the positive results of action, He is Draviṇaprada.

571. Divaḥspṛk

दिवःस्पृक्

The one who touches the heaven is Divaḥapṛk.

What is the size of Bhagavān? The śrutis describe Him as having His head touching the dyu, heaven and His feet touching the pātāla. This description is to show that He is all-pervasive. As His head touches the heaven, He is divaḥspṛk. He is the most effulgent-being, whose pervasiveness is limitless.

572. Sarvadṛgvyāsaḥ

सर्वदृग्व्यासः

The all-knowing Vyāsa.

Sarvadṛk and Vyāsa together make one nāma. Jñāna of all disciplines is called sarvadṛk. As Vyāsa, He dilated on all disciplines of knowledge and so Bhagavān is called Sarvadṛgvyāsa.
Sarvadṛk means sarvaṃ paśyati, one who sees everything, that is, sarvajña. Vyāsa is Veda-vyāsa, who compiled the four Vedas and also the Purāṇas. Bhagavān Himself is the all-knowing Vyāsa.

Or as Sarvadṛk, Bhagavān knows everything in general, in its essence and as Vyāsa, knows all details, with all particulars being clear to Him. He knows everything, with reference to the individual jīvas, with reference to the jagat and with reference to the devatās.

573. Vācaspatirayonijaḥ

वाचस्पतिरयोनिजः

The one who is the Lord of all the vidyās and unborn.

Vācaspati and Ayonija together make one nāma. Vāk is vidyā, knowledge, and He is the Lord of vāk, all vidyās. The name vācaspati can refer to Bṛhaspati, the guru of the devas or to Brahmāji. It is Parameśvara, who is ultimately the Lord of all knowledge.
Everyone is yonija, born from a womb, like the mammals. But Bhagavān is Ayonija, because He is not born, let alone being born of a womb. He is not bound by time and hence He is unborn. He is nitya, unborn and hence, He is Vācaspatirayonija.

574. Trisāmā

त्रिसामा

The one praised by the three-fold sāmans.

575. Sāmagaḥ

सामगः

The one who sings the Sāman.

576. Sāmaḥ

सामः

The one in the form of Sāma-veda.

These three nāmas 574, 575 & 576, go together. Sāma is a mantra cast in sāma tune and it is sung to music. The other Vedic mantras also have svaras, but their svaras are only three. Music is pentatonic; there must be at least five svaras to sound as music. The sāma is used specially to praise the devatas and the Lord.

As He is the one praised through the three types of sāma known as devavrata, He is called Trisāmā.

The one who sings the sāma, the mantras from the Sāma-veda is called Sāmaga. The Sāmaga is also Bhagavān.

The Lord says, 'Vedānām sāmavedo'smi – I am the sāma-veda among the vedas' (BG.10.22).
Thus, Bhagavān is the Sāmaveda; He is the singer of the sāma and the one praised through the sāma. All the musical notes are Īśvara. He is the one manifest in the form of notes, in every melody. In every melody one can appreciate Īśvara and when the human being is absorbed in it, the restless mind becomes quiet.

577. Nirvāṇam

निर्वाणम्
The one in the form of mokṣa.

The next few nāmas also go together as a set. Nirvāṇa means mokṣa, which is freedom from sorrow. Absolute happiness, which is the essential nature of Īśvara, is mokṣa. So Bhagavān is in the form of Nirvāṇa.

578. Bheṣajam
भेषजम्
The medicine.

It is Bhagavān who is the bheṣaja, the medicine, for the disease called saṃsāra. Samsara is a 'life of becoming' to be happy. It does not mean family although that is how it may be translated in regional Indian languages. Relationships are not a problem. But if I have taken relationships to be the absolute reality then the changes in them will cause disturbance.

The life of 'becoming' is like being on the treadmill without really going anywhere while expending effort, without results. What 's wrong with becoming? Surely one may need to upgrade one's skills at work or work on one's discipline regarding relationships with in laws or even the capacity to focus on tasks at hand. All efforts at becoming something 'to finally be happy' involve actions. All becoming involves a change and every change involves a loss and a gain of something. Then, how can I be complete without any actions? If I am to be complete without any actions, then it must be the gain of something already gained but not discovered.

The medicine that totally cures, that is, removes sorrow is Bhagavān.

579. Bhiṣak
भिषक्
The one who is the physician.

Who is then the doctor, who gives the medicine for the disease of becoming ?
No doctor however brilliant can offer a guarantee that the illness will not return. I saw this sign at a physician's clinic, 'Only God cures. We try to treat.' And the doctor was talking about common afflictions affecting the body and mind. All the associations of physicians of the world cannot put an end to the secret sorrow in the human heart, that unwept sorrow which is the human condition of a sense of insignificance. Even the psychologist or the New Age healer can only offer some existential solutions. All our attempts at self medication and trying to-do-it ourself to find some relief from existential angst will finally culminate in a sense of surrender. All that I have tried will take me this far and no further and one will eventually take refuge in the doctor who can cure all.

The Lord alone is the Bhiṣak, the doctor, who dispenses, teaches, brahma-vidyā, which is the only means of removing the disease of saṃsāra.

580. Sannyāsakṛt

संन्यासकृत्

The one who instituted sannyasa.

He is Sannyāsakṛt, the one who instituted sannyāsa, the fourth stage of life, which is taking to a life of renunciation.

Why should one take to sannyāsa? Sannyāsa is for the sake of mokṣa, a freedom from limitations, in other words, to gain limitlessness. A person gives up everything and takes to sannyāsa, only for Īśvara, because He is limitlessness. One gives up the desires for all the three worlds, bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ and svaḥ, the desires for wealth, children and lokas, and desires only Bhagavān and this is sannyāsa. As the founder of the sannyāsa-āśrama and as the nimitta, the cause for it, Bhagavān is Sannyāsakṛt.

Though Bhagavān alone initiated all the four āśramas, He is specially praised here as Sannyāsakṛt, because that is the āśrama most conducive for gaining Him because of the time available and a single minded commitment.

581. Śamaḥ

शमः

The one who ordains the control of the mind.

Śama is the control of the mind, or the calmness of the mind. There is no anger or frustration. Our different reactions to what is happening around us stem from a resistance and unwillingness to face ourselves, others and some situations. When the resistance is replaced with an abiding acceptance of the fact that - I accept I cannot accept certain situations, much of my resistance melts away. With the attitude of karma yoga, the constantly reacting mind is resolved to a great extent. There is upaśama and that is sannyāsa-lakṣaṇa. It is one of the most important qualities required for a sannyāsī.

The smṛtis say, that the most important quality to be practised by a sannyāsī is śama; for the vānaprasthas, the forest-dwellers, it is niyama – external restraint, a life of self-control, discipline and meditation, as a preparation for sannyāsa; for the gṛhasthas it is dāna, giving in charity and for the brahmacāris it is śuśrūṣā, service to the guru and listening to the scriptures.

It is Bhagavān who ordains sannyāsa and śama as an important dharma for it. It is He who is in the form of śama and also in the form of the sannyāsī who practices śama. Hence, He is Śama.

He is also the śamayitā, the extinguisher, of all beings at the time of pralaya, and hence He is Śama.

582. Śāntaḥ

शान्तः

The one who is tranquil.

When śama is prescribed as a dharma for the sannyāsī, it presupposes the presence of a mind that is subject to restlessness. One of the important reasons for restlessness is saṅga, an attachment to viṣayas, which itself is due to seeing them as different from oneself and as a source of joy.

Therefore, by practicing śama, one becomes śānta, relatively tranquil and then, by understanding oneself as the limitless ātmā, free from any division, one is śānta.

But, Bhagavān is svarūpeṇa śānta, of the nature of tranquility. His nature itself is tranquility and it is not by the practice of śama. He is free from all divisions. The knower, known and knowledge, all the three are Himself alone and He knows this. All the divisions are only apparent.

The sruti says, 'niṣkalaṃ, niṣkriyaṃ śāntam – free from parts and divisions, free from actions and tranquil'(Sve. Up.6.19). Therefore, Bhagavān is always Śānta, tranquil, free from any kind of division.

583. Niṣṭhā

निष्ठा

The residing place.

The state of staying continuously with something or the abode in which one can stay continuously, is niṣṭhā.

Sannyāsa gives jñāna-niṣṭhā, the ability to stay with the knowledge without any vagueness, ambiguity or confusion. Since the object of this jñāna is Bhagavān, He is the Niṣṭhā. Bhagavān has this jñāna-niṣṭhā always.

He is the Niṣṭhā, also because, that is where all beings reside at the time of pralaya.

584. Śāntiḥ

शान्तिः

The one who is in the form of peace.

Being Brahman who is beyond all avidyā. He is of the nature of śānti, peace.
We have to pray for our śānti, peace, respite from our ādhyātmika, ādhidaivika and ādhibhautika troubles. When all avidyā is gone, what is there is only śānti and that is Parmeśvara.

But, Bhagavān is innately free from these troubles. Neither the devatās disturb Him, nor the bugs or viruses, not even our continuous demands disturb Him. And He does not have any ādhyātmika trouble. He is never subject to any physical aches and pains.
He is of the nature of śānti and hence Śānti.

585. Parāyaṇam

परायणम्
The ultimate end.

He is Parāyaṇam, the greatest and the ultimate end to be gained by all. It is an end, gaining which, there is no return and nothing further to be gained. There is an alternate reading as Parāyaṇaḥ. Then, (it means that) He is one who has the highest abode.

In the above śloka, the first three nāmas form a set. The nāmas from nirvāṇam to parāyaṇam form another set and are connected to mokṣa, and therefore, especially to be chanted by a mumukṣu.

586. Śubhāṅgaḥ (also word 782)
शुभाङ्गः
The one who has a beautiful form.

Śubhāṅga is one whose aṅgāni, limbs, are śubha, auspicious, that is, they do not fail. The limbs are as sacred as the person. If we take the avatāra aspect, Śubhāṅga will apply to Śrī Rāma and to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They have a beautiful form. Human beings, in general, do not have symmetrical limbs. Symmetry of the limbs and face is considered to be a special sāmudrikā-lakṣaṇa that is generally found only in avatāras. Śrī Rāma is said to be ājānubāhu, having handsome long arms, with the tips of the fingers reaching upto the knees. So too Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Or, any limb or part of Parameśvara is auspicious. It is complete. Once it is said that Parameśvara is the total, the infinite, then every limb is as complete as everything else. The whole is Parameśvara and the wholeness is there in every limb. It is not that all the limbs together constitute the wholeness; that parts make the whole, but every part enjoys the wholeness, the limitlessness, that is the nature of the ātmā. The limbs are mithyā, apparent, and these limbs do not constitute the wholeness of Īśvara. The wholeness of Īśvara is the limitless consciousness. All the limbs are apparent, since they are only name and form. Every name and form of Parameśvara is auspicious. There is no defect in His form. The limbs or parts do not create the whole. The limitless consciousness is the whole and that is you and it has limbs which are apparent. In each limb the whole is present.

In upāsanā, one can visualize any of the aṅgas of the Lord, and for that prayer, the blessing of the Lord will be complete. So being Śubhāṅga, He will give śubha, auspiciousness.

587. Śāntidaḥ
शान्तिदः
The one who gives peace.

Parameśvara is Śubhāṅga and also Śāntida, one who gives peace, a peace that is free from all rāga and dveśa, likes and dislikes and so on. The very thought of Parameśvara will remove ones likes, dislikes and hatred. When one looks at himself or at the creation, there seems to be inadequacies and deficiencies. And since nothing is away from Parameśvara, all the inadequacies and deficiencies belong to Him alone. But, He is the total, and from the total

standpoint, that is, from the standpoint of Parameśvara, there is nothing lacking and therefore, no room for rāga and dveśa. So, one has to seek the total. The more one thinks of Parameśvara, the more is the santi, the peace. So He gives śānti, peace and tranquility, characterized by the absence of rāga and dveśa.

588. Sraṣṭā (also word 990)

स्रष्टा

The creator.

He is the Sraṣṭā, the one who created all the beings in the beginning. It is not that He created at the beginning and hence it is something of the past. He continues to create and the creation is a continuous process.

589. Kumudaḥ (also word 807)

कुमुदः

The one who enjoys the earth.

'Ku' means the earth and Bhagavān is the one who is in the form of the earth. He is Kumuda and seems to enjoy Himself in the form of earth. When we see the earth, there are beautiful colours in the form of the precious stones, the various types of red soil and black soil, mud, sand and sand-dunes; in the form of the rivers and mountains, the various trees, plants, shrubs and so on. Even the work of the wind on the sands of the desert is the handiwork of Bhagavān, an expression of His joy. The very topography contributes to the beauty of mother earth.

He is Kumuda, also because He takes various avatāras on earth and seems to enjoy Himself by His various līlās.

590. Kuvaleśayaḥ

कुवलेशयः

The one who reclines on the waters.

'Ku' is the earth and that which flows encompassing the earth is kuvala, water. Bhagavān is Kuvalesaya, because He is reclining in a relaxed manner on the water.

Reclining means, He abides in the water and expresses as joy in the form of the ocean, as the waves, froth, the undulating rivers, the lakes and the ripples and so on. As the ocean, now He is roaring in laughter, now he is noiselessly laughing, now just smiling, now quiet. But His fullness never wanes like the ocean. The ocean is always full and its oceanness does not depend on any water reaching the ocean. Even if the rains do not happen and the rivers dry up, the ocean is not affected; it does not ever dry up and its glory does not depend on anything else. The clouds depend on the ocean, but the ocean does not depend on the clouds. That is why in the Gītā, the fullness that is Parameśvara is compared to the ocean. The fullness is the svarūpa of Bhagavān, His essential nature.

591. Gohitaḥ

गोहितः

The one beneficial to the cows and to the earth.

In order to protect the cows, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, lifted the Govardhana hill. He is the Lord of the cows. He loved and took great care of the cows, So, being hita, beneficial, to the go, cows, He is Gohita.

The word 'go' also means the earth. He is also hita, beneficial to the earth. In His avatāras, He takes care of the earth by destroying the āsuras and all those who have āsura-like qualities.

592. Gopatih (also word 495)

गोपतिः

The Lord of the earth and cows.

As the Lord of the earth and also as the Lord of the cows, He is Gopati. Go can also mean the senses and He is the Lord of the senses also.

Every physical body is a go, like a cow and is called paśu and He is the Paśupati, that is, the Gopati, the Lord of the jīvas.

593. Goptā (also word 496)

गोप्ता

i. The protector.
ii. The one who hides.

He is the Goptā, the protector of the universe, the protector of life. He protects every human being, every animal, every plant, every bird, every aquatic being, every deva, and everything in creation. He is also the protector of life. He is the one who obtains in this body, enlivens it, nourishes it and makes the body function. There is such a fine tuning of the body; the whole networking of the body is perfectly done; there is a fine balance of the salt, water, acid, sugar, heat, harmones and so on. For the human beings to understand and reproduce the functions of any human beings to understand and reproduce the functions of any human organs, like the liver or kidney, is mind-boggling. So He is the Gopati and Goptā.

Also because He as though, hides Himself by His māyā, He is Goptā. The verbal root 'gup' has the meanings of both 'protecting' and 'hiding.'

594. Vṛṣabhākṣaḥ

वृषभाक्षः

i. The one who vision is dharma.
ii. The one whose eyes rain desired objects.

As seen earlier vṛṣabha means dharma. He has His akṣa, eye, on dharma all the time. Or dharma itself is His akṣa, dṛṣṭi, vision. Hence, He is Vṛṣabhākṣa. The expression of dharma is very

important for a human being. Dharma is like the eyes of Bhagavān. So, going against dharma is like damaging His eyes.

Or, He is Vṛṣabhākṣa because in all His avatāras, He has His eye all the time on dharma, keeping dharma as important as the eyes.

Or, He is Vṛṣabhākṣa because His aksi, mere look, is capable of raining all desirable things on us.

595. Vṛṣapriyaḥ
वृषप्रियः
The great lover of dharma.

Bhagavān is Vṛṣapriya, a great lover of dharma, because He wants you to love dharma. For a human being, dharma is very important thing. Bhagavān's love is dharma; Bhagavān is dharma. If you say, 'I want to look for Bhagavan' then you should look for dharma.
If a person is suspected of having done a crime, where will the police look for him? In his favourite haunts like a gambling place or a bar, because, the person is known to have a love for these. In the case of some other persons, one may have to look for them in temples or satsangs, because that is their love. So too, Bhagavān's love is dharma. Therefore, we have to conform to dharma.

Here we are describing Īśvara. Why is He said to be Vṛṣapriya, dharmapriya? This is to show that we have to conform to dharma. To be beloved to Him, we have to learn to love that which is beloved to Him.

He is vṛṣa, in the form of dharma and He is priya, beloved to all and therefore also Vrsapriya.

596. Anivartī
अनिवर्ती
The one who never turns away.

Normally in life we find that love for anything does not last long. People say, 'I love you' for a length of time and then say, 'I allow you' meaning, they do not want to have anything to do with that person thereafter. Is Bhagavān's love for dharma also like that? No. Bhagavān is Anivartī; being a lover of dharma, dharmāt na nivartate – He never deviates, turns away, from dharma, He is always busy in His work. We should be grateful for that because if suddenly Bhagavān retreats from dharma, then we may be flying in the air!

For the sake of establishing dharma, when the asuras have to be put down, He never retreats from the job till it is done and hence also, He is Anivartī.

597. Nivṛttātmā (also word 229)
निवृत्तात्मा
The one who is turned away by nature.

If He is always busy in His work, is He then a kartā, a doer? Is He attached to His job? No, He is Nivṛttātmā, ever turned away from the same pleasures. Again Bhagavān gets this name, because we look at Him from our own standpoint. To turn our mind away from things, we should have some blow in life. But, He is nivṛtta-svarūpa, by nature, He is always free from everything. He is asaṅga, unattached.

598. Saṅkṣeptā
संक्षेप्ता
The one who compresses everything.

He is Saṅkṣeptā, the one who compresses everything, makes if brief. He make life brief, happiness brief and so on. Everything that we want is brief. What we do not want seems to be long. So, He seems to be a Saṅkṣeptā.

He can project as well as withdraw. In the tree, He projects, He elaborates making the tree with so much foliage, flowers, fruits and adventitious roots. He can also collapse the whole tree into the seed and hence, He is Saṅkṣeptā. In the seed all the details are not seen. But in the tree they are all there. Bhagavān is both an elaborator and a compressor. He is like a Vyāsa who can elaborate with great details and He can also compress everything into a seed, where there is no differentiation of root, trunk, leaf and so on. This is with reference to a tree. Similarly, at the time of pralaya, resolution, He makes the expanded jagat compressed; He makes the entire universe into a subtle, unmanifest form, as though in the form of a seed.

599. Kṣemakṛt
क्षेमकृत्
The one who protects what has been acquired.

He protects the whole tree in the seed and when the time is right, the plant germinates. So kṣema is protection. It is protected in the unmanifest form. Then, later is is manifest and in the manifest form it is again protected. He is never a destroyer. He is always a Kṣemakṛt, protecting the whole world, either in the vyakta or in the avyakta form.

Yoga is aprāptasya prāpaṇam- acquiring what we do not have and kṣema is prāptasya rakṣaṇam- protecting what is acquired. So Bhagavān is the Kṣemakṛt, the protector of whatever has been acquired. We need His grace for yoga and kṣema, for gaining things and safeguarding them. The word Kṣemakṛt signifies both.

600. Śivaḥ (also word 27)
शिवः
The purifier.

He is essentially Śiva, auspicious. Not only is He auspicious, He makes us auspicious, He purifies us. If we remember and repeat the names of Bhagavān, He purifies and makes us free from conflicts and inadequacies that are centred on the ego. The ego is only apparent and it does

not really exist. If all the glories are given back to Īśvara, by understanding that all the glories belong to Him, where is the ego? The mere remembrance and repetition of His names itself is a great blessing. Understanding them is a greater blessing. The more we understand the meaning of these names, the more we are free from all the problems and inner conflicts.

601. Śrīvatasavakṣāḥ

श्रीवत्सवक्षाः

The one who has the Śrīvatsa on the chest.

This is a form given for upāsanā, a form given to create an altar and think of the Lord. And in the form there is Śrīvatsa, a mole-like mark which is permanently present in His vakṣas, chest. Hence, He is Śrīvatasavakṣā.

602. Śrīvāsaḥ

श्रीवासः

The abode of Śrī.
Goddess Śrī, that is Lakṣmī always dwells in His chest, without ever leaving Him. Hence, He is Śrīvāsa. When we say heart, it means that it is united with aham, 'I'. When He points out to His chest to say aham, it is His śakti, strength. So Śrī is His śakti, power.

603. Śrīpatiḥ

श्रीपतिः

The Lord of Śrī.

He is the Lord of Lakṣmī. And, He is also the Lord because of Lakṣmī. She is parāśakti, meaning all the śaktis put together. Without śakti, there is no Lord. Without the Lord, there is no śakti.
At any given moment we are endowed with three śaktis, powers – the power to desire, the power to know and the power to act. We may know that we value upholding the truth but we don't act on it. We may desire to say the appropriate things at the appropriate time but our aversions and cravings in the form of inner pressure inhibit our knowledge. We may act impulsively and then regret later.

We have been blessed with these three powers yet most of us function inhibiting our own powers in the form of 'I can't'. We all have 'I can't' statements in some areas of our life – I cannot do…..What will people say?. I cannot learn this….at this age. I cannot find peace because situations are so bad etc etc. And when we examine all the specific 'I cannot' statements we find that we can but we choose to inhibit or stunt our own growth. We deny the presence of our own śaktis. We deny what is given and in that we deny the giver of Śrī. In claiming our own powers we recognise and celebrate the Lord of Śrī

In our culture, there is no pati without patnī and no patnī without pati. The Lord is portrayed as the husband of Śrī, that is Lakṣmī. The Purāṇas say that Godess Lakṣmī came out of the milky ocean when it was churned and chose Him among others as her pati.

604. Śrīmatāṃ Varaḥ

श्रीमतां वरः

The best among those who have Ṣrī.

Among those people who have ṣrī, wealth, Bhagavān is varaḥ, the best, because the śrī of others comes and goes. People in India recently got a reality check because of the recent demonetization process. The money that everyone gave a value to, lost its subjective as well as objective value. However, śrī is always present with Bhagavān.

Or, śrī is the knowledge available in the Vedas. Among those people who have the knowledge of the Ṛg, Yajus, Sāma Vedas (and Atharva), He is the greatest, because He is the one who introduced all the vedas. Śrī is Veda. The amṛtāśrī, the most lasting wealth, for the noble people, is nothing but the body of knowledge contained in the four Vedas. Whatever they have learnt from the Vedas is their real wealth, not the bank balance.

Among the śrīmāns, people who have this wealth, Bhagavān is vara, because He is the one who introduced this wealth. If even Viriñci, that is Brahmājī got it from Him and became a śrīmān, then what to talk of others.

605. Śrīdaḥ

श्रीदः

The bestower of wealth.

He bestows śrī, gives all kind of wealth to His devotees, as karma-phala. Anything that gives us happiness is śrī, wealth.

Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of marital happiness, gṛha, home;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of santāna, children;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of dhana, wealth;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of dhānya, food grains;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of rājya, kingdom;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of dhairya, courage;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of vidyā, knowledge;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of jaya, victory and success;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of aiśvarya, the capacity to rule;
Bhagavān gives us śrī in the form of ārogya, health and so much more.
Where there is the given, there is the giver.

606. Śrīśaḥ

श्रीशः

The one who is the Lord of Śrī.

He is Śrīśa – the Lord of Śrī as wealth; the Lord of Śrī as knowledge; the lord of Śrī as the Vedas; the Lord of Śrī as lordship.

Wherever Śrī is – whether in the form of lordship among the devatās or anyone else, in the form of any type of wealth or resource, in the form of any branch of knowledge, in the form of the mantras and knowledge in the Vedas – she is under His control and management. That is why He can give and also withdraw śrī.

607. Śrīnivāsaḥ

श्रीनिवासः

The one who always resides where Śrī resides.

Śrī here refers to the śrīmāns, the people who have śrī, wealth.
Bhagavān always lives where śrī lives. Where lakṣmī lives, there alone Lord Nārāyaṇa also lives.

608. Śrīnidhiḥ

श्रीनिधिः

The one who is the treasure house of Śrī.

All Śrī, all vibhūtis, glories are vested in the Lord. All forms of wealth, all treasures are with the Lord and hence, He is Śrīnidhi.

609. Śrīvibhāvanaḥ

श्रीविभावनः

The one who gives wealth.

He alone makes all jīvas get śrī, various types of wealth, in keeping with their karma-phala and hence, He is Śrīvibhāvana.

610. Śrīdharaḥ

श्रीधरः

The one who has Śrī on His chest.

He is the onē, who has Śrī on His chest; Śrī, the mother of all, the entire universe. Śrī is His māyā-śakti.

611. Śrīkaraḥ

श्रीकरः

The one who brings about Śrī.

Bhagavān is Śrīkara, He is the one who makes those who remember, praise and worship Him, get varieties of śrī. Even the relaxation, the peace that comes to these devotees, is śrī given by him alone.

612. Śreyaḥ

श्रेयः

The one in the form of mokṣa.

He is in the form of Śreyas, that is, mokṣa. Mokṣa is in the form of knowledge of the parātma. He is the object of knowledge, which gives śreyas or mokśa. The śreyas, which is in the form of happiness that never wanes, is His svarūpa.

613. Śrīmān

श्रीमान्

The who possesses Śrī.

Here the word śrī means vibhūti, glory. Bhagavān possesses varieties of vibhūtis, glories, which as though add to His śobhā, and hence He is Śrīmān.
He possesses not only Lakṣmī, but all forms of Śrī like power, knowledge and so on. Hence He is Śrīmān.

614. Lokatrayāśrayaḥ

लोकत्रयाश्रयः

The basis of all the three worlds.
All the three worlds are dependent on Him. Being the aśraya, support, basis, of all the three lokas, He is Lokatrayāśraya

615. Svakṣaḥ

स्वक्षः

The one who has beautiful eyes.

Svakṣa means one who has beautiful eyes, like the petals of a lotus. For the purpose of upāsanā, Bhagavān can be visualized as having beautiful eyes.

Akṣa can also mean senses and the prāṇas. Our senses are defective and we can see only thus far and no further, that is, our perception is limited. If something is too small or too far we cannot see it. The stars are really very, very big, but what we see is very, very small and that is why we sing and also teach our children to sing ‘twinkle, twinkle little star.’ We see a blue sky which is not there. Again, we can hear only at a certain frequency; we cannot hear the sounds that some animals can hear. The sense of smell is also limited. Thus all our senses are limited. But Bhagavān being sarvajña, all His senses are śobhana, ever bright, defectless, and limitless; hence, He is Svakṣa.

616. Svaṅgaḥ

स्वङ्गः

The one who has beautiful limbs.

That we have limbs, hands and legs, organs of action is a blessing. Due to much of the advertising focusing on the perfect body we buy into the orientation of finding fault with the shape of our limbs. Much of the self criticism and condemnation is related to the weight and shape of our hands and legs. But, what would we do without our hands? It is these very hands

that help us to grasp, touch, feel objects. The hands help us to type, write, paint, build, sculpt, cook etc.

'Hand made' chocolates, shoes, clothes are generally charged a premium because we recognise the dexterity and fine motor function involved. Our legs help us to get to different places as well as stand. Our hands and legs were 'hand made' by Bhagavān as his laws pervade the form and function of our hands. As if to remind people that the hands are to be used for acts of dharma or 'God's work', one of my Sikh friends was telling me the reason for wearing a kada, an iron bangle on the right hand. The bangle serves as a reminder to the Sikh that this is 'God's hand' and hence must be involved only in acts of dharma.

Bhagavān is Svaṅgaḥ, one whose every aṅga, limb, is perfect. His form is not limited in any way, because He is perfect. His form is not limited in any way, because He is pūrṇa.
In His avatāras as Vāmana, ŚrīRāma, ŚrīKṛṣṇa and so on, Lord Viṣṇu is Svaṅga, very handsome.

617. Śatānandaḥ
शतानन्दः
The one who expresses as varieties of joy.

Bhagavān is paramānanda, that is, of the nature of infinite joy, which means that our true nature is also paramānanda, limitless happiness.
But the jīvas experience happiness in different degrees, depending on the upādhi, the type of body-mind-sense-complex. The satisfaction of eating a favourite meal, the joy of accomplishing a task, the joy of being with loved ones, the delight of discovering something new, the contentment of seeing one's children as successful, the joy of giving – all these experiences are experiences of joy and happiness. Depending on what you value, having that or acquiring that, gives joy. In every experience of happiness there is a fusion of the subject, the person and the object or the condition that seems to offer happiness. In being with a loved one, the separation that was earlier there is not there, there is an experience of oneness what we normally call happiness. As ānanda expresses only in the mind, it expresses in hundreds of types and degrees, depending on the type of mind, its conditions and moods.

Thus, Bhagavān, who is one non-dual limitless ānanda, expresses as hundreds of happiness, depending on the mind, not only in human beings but also in devas, animals and other jīvas and hence, He is Śatānanda.

The śruti says, of this limitless ānanda alone, all beings enjoy but a fraction' (Bṛ.Up.4.3.32), referring to experiential joy.

618. Nandiḥ
नन्दिः
The one who is in the form of ānanda.

Ananda manifests in different degrees in all beings. Even though He expresses as varieties of ānanda, what about Bhagavān himself? Bhagavān is Nandi, His vigraha, form itself being nanda, that is, ānanda, happiness.

Bhagavān is of the form of ānanda.

619. Jyotirgaṇeśvaraḥ
ज्योतिर्गणेश्वरः
The lord of all the effulgent things.

At the adhibhūta level, He is the Īśvara, the Lord of all the jyotirgaṇas, the suns, the moons, stars and all other luminaries.

At the adhidaiva level, He is the Lord of the presiding devatās of all the luminaries. All our organs of perception and the mind can be called jyotirgaṇas, because they illumine the objects. Therefore, at the adhyātma level again, He is the Lord of all the effulgent sense organs. Thus, He is Jyotirgaṇeśvara.

The śruti says, ‘everything shines after that self alone which is the light of all lights. By its light alone this shines.

’Bhagavān says in the Gīta, ‘ Know that light, which obtains in the sun and lights up the entire world, that which obtains in the moon and the fire, to be mine alone.’ (BG.15.12)

620. Vijitātmā
विजितात्मा
The master of the mind and the senses.

Here, ātmā means the mind and sense organs. Bhagavān’s ātmā, mind and senses (as though) are always vijita, under His control, without any effort or struggle, and so, He is Vijitātmā.

We invoke Him with this name because we want to be vijitātamā, to have mastery over our mind and senses. Mastery over our mind and senses is possible when we are guided by dharma, by doing what is appropriate in a given situation. The mother who has recently given birth to a child does not want to miss her sleep at night but wakes up very often at night when the baby is crying, to tend to it. This is what the situation demands. The daughter who has an important work project and has to meet some timelines but also has to take her ailing parents for health check-ups manages to do both. Her friends are calling her out to a party. She manages to do what is appropriate in the given situation.

We are free not to do what we like but we are free enough to do what we don’t like to do. That is real freedom. In doing what is to be done we discover that we have self mastery. We determine whether the mind needs to focus, think, be entertained or just be quiet. We determine how much we want our senses to be involved, not the other way around.

621. Avidheyātmā
अविधेयात्मा
The one whose nature is not subject to command.

The nature of Bhagavān is avidheya, cannot be commanded by anyone. He is not subject to the commands of anyone.

This can be looked at in a different way also. It is said in the śruti, 'ātmāvā are draṣṭavyaḥ - ātmā is to be understood by you' (Br.Up.2.4.5, 4.5.6). This amounts to saying, 'you MUST know the ātmā.' How can anyone be commanded to know the ātmā? I cannot even say, ' you must be compassionate;' 'you must love the world;' 'you must love the society;' 'you must never get angry.' A command can only make a person carry out physical actions like keeping the shoes outside in an orderly manner. But anger, love and other such emotions cannot be evoked or banished by any command. One just ends up feeling guilty because one is not able to carry out these commands.

Ātmā being oneself, is not vidheyā, not subject to commands such as, 'you should know the ātmā' and so on. Hence ātmā is avidheyātmā.

Parāmeśvara, being everything, is one's ātmā, and hence, avidheyātmā. When the śruti says, 'ātmādraṣṭavyaḥ' it means that, one has to correct one's notion about oneself.

622. Satkīrtiḥ
सत्कीर्तिः
The one whose fame is never belied or shown to be false.

Since He is the Lord of Lakṣmī, He is the one who has absolute kīrti, fame.

Some people are famous for their pioneering work in some field, but then after a period of time or after their demise, the popularity diminishes and is even lost. Most people even if they don't get much fame amongst society definitely want to be remembered after their death by their children. They have to reconcile with the fact that they will eventually just become a photograph on the wall who is occasionally looked at and who may be garlanded by their children with a plastic garland or a wooden shavings garland that is perfumed with sandalwood. Sometimes their grown up children may shift the photograph to another place in the house as 'it does not go with the décor'. This is a reality check for those who sacrifice their whole lives for children expecting to be remembered after their time.

But, the fame of Bhagavān is always there as the glory of Bhagavān is always there and it is in all directions and spheres. Because, His kīrti, fame, never diminishes or gets belied, He is Satkīrti.

623. Chinnasaṃśayaḥ
छिन्नसंशयः
One free from doubts.

Īśvara is sarvajña, all-knowing and hence, He is Chinnasaṃśaya, free from doubts with reference to everything.

Did I lock the house? Does he/she really love me? Will I be able to achieve this project? Will I get freedom from all this? All valid questions and generally answers are available for these kind of doubts. But despite answers if we still hold onto our doubts, then there is something else that we are seeking. If I am seeking absolute security, it is not available in things, relationships or conditions that have an expiry date.

Once we know Īśvara, we too become Chinnasaṃśaya. There are no more doubts with reference to what is true and what is not true. We are in harmony with what IS.
To be free from doubts, we invoke him with the name Chinnasaṃśaya.

624.Udīrṇaḥ
उदीर्णः
The one who stands out above everyone.

The human situation is a strange one. On the one hand we try to be unique and we try to stand out because we don't want to be another brick in the wall, another face in the crowd. We try to stand out by wearing exclusive clothes, changing our hairstyle, having unique art pieces in our home, getting a tattoo, travelling to places few have travelled before, learn things others have not yet learnt. All our attempts to be unique come from the sense of insignificance we feel that cannot be wished away. Yet, despite our best attempts to stand out and be unique, somebody else comes along who is equally unique. And so, we keep trying. It is a kind of a Catch 22 situation. We feel insignificant and we try to feel significant and unique. Yet the more unique we are, the more isolated we becomes because nobody understands us. Until this sense of insignificance is understood as a need for moksha and hence the pursuit of self knowledge, the struggle to be unique will continue to our funeral also as we will decide in advance how we should be buried or cremated, in a unique style! What about Bhagavān?

Bhagavān is taller than the tallest, bigger than the biggest, greater than the greatest. And all this, with no effort.
In every sphere, He is the greatest, the most exalted; He stands out apart from and above all and hence, Udīrṇa.

The śruti talks of Him as Viśvādhika (Śve.Up.4.12).

625. Sarvataścakṣuḥ
सर्वतश्चक्षुःi
The one who has eyes everywhere.

As the consciousness, He sees everything. He is the consciousness in every eye and hence, He is 'cakṣuṣaḥcakṣuḥ, the eye of the eye' in every being. Scientists have been trying to infuse consciousness in a dead body including dead eyes. It obviously has not worked because consciousness is not a product of matter. Consciousness is and hence all else is.

Every eye, be that of a human being, crow or beetle, is His eye alone and hence, He is Sarvataścakṣu.

The śruti talks of Him as, 'Viśvatascakṣuruta…..viśvataspāt – having eyes and feet everywhere'(Śve.Up.3.3).

626.Anīśaḥ

अनीशः

The one who does not have a Lord.

This word points out to the fact that he is all knowing and all power and hence can he have a boss? He is the Lord of all, and being the Lord of all, He has no Īśa, lord to lord over Him.
No one rules over Him (Mahā.Up.1.10).

627. Śāśvatasthiraḥ

शाश्वतस्थिरः

The one who is always existent without any change.

We fear that the good times are coming to an end. The fine black chocolate bar in the refrigerator is almost over. There are only a few more days left for the vacation to end. Day by day the body is ageing. All the activities we could do with our youthful energy and enthusiasm now takes longer. Clothes we enjoyed wearing are now past their prime. Some relationships are over while some relationships have moved to a new stage and phase. Autumn (in some parts of the world) is over. In a few years time our children will no longer be children with the end of their childhood. Although change is a constant, we struggle to deal with it. We want some semblance of certainty, surety, definiteness. We don't want all that is good in our life to come to an end. But it does as almost everything has an expiry date! Is there anything at all that does not have 'the end'?

Bhagavān is Śāśvata, exists in all three periods of time, and Sthira, without any change, since He is not bound by time. This is one nāmā.

He is always there in the form of the jagat, which is always changing, but Himself as consciousness does not undergo any change. This is the reality of the individual too. Everything around us changes including our body-mind-sense-complex. You are the changeless in the presence of which all changes take place. You are the presence that lends reality to the personality.

628. Bhūśayaḥ

भूशयः

The one who rests on the ground.

He is Bhūśaya, the entire earth is His bed. If the earth is His bed, the sheet is the grass, the fan is vāyu.
This also refers to Śrī Rāma, who rested on the shores of the ocean on His way to Laṅkā.

629. Bhūṣaṇaḥ

भूषणः

The one who adorns.

Bhagavān is adorned by ornaments and so He is Bhūsaṇa, the adorner.

In the form of all the stars and the planets, in the form of the milky way and expanding galaxies, in the form of oceans and rivers, in the form of forests, colourful flowers and so on, He adorns the whole universe. Bhagavān is therefore, Bhūṣaṇa.

In His avatāras, as ŚrīRāma and ŚrīKṛṣṇa, which He took by His own wish, by walking on this earth, He adorned the earth.

630. Bhūtiḥ
भूतिः
The source of existence and all glories.

The word bhūti has the meaning of bhavana or sattā, existence, and vibhūti, glory.

Being the sattā, existence in all beings, Bhagavān is Bhūti. Every glory is His glory. The spider beign able to weave his web, is the glory of Bhagavān. The human being growing in the mother's womb is the glory of Bhagavān. That everyone without exception, can be rested after a good night's sleep, is his glory.

Again, being the cause of all vibhūtis, He is Bhūti.

631. Viśokaḥ
विशोकः
The one free from sorrow.

Being of the nature of limitless ānanda, He is always free from sorrow and hence, He is called Viśoka.

Bhagavān has neither the fear of losing desirable things nor the moha, attachment to anything or anyone, to have sorrow. The Chāndogyopaniṣad describes Him as Viśoka (8.1.5).

In the Bhagavad Gita, he teaches us how to be free from sorrow. One perspective of managing our life is of having an attitude of equanamity, samatvam to all situations and that is gaining a relative freedom from sorrow. From the absolute perspective, he points out that the svarupa of the person is the one who is free from sorrow. Consciousness that is I was always free from sorrow. One fine day under some special tree, it did not 'become' free from sorrow. Nor by having some spiritual experience. This is just like the lotus leaf which lives in the water but remains untouched by the water.

632. Śokanāśanaḥ
शोकनाशनः
The destroyer of sorrow.

This nāma is connected to the previous one. The one who is free from sorrow, was always free from sorrow, is in a better position to help destroy our sorrow. All our other support systems – physical exercise, self help books, family members, friends, office colleagues, yoga, healing systems etc help us to manage our sorrow. That 'I' the individual is subject to sorrow, is considered as a given, an established fact. Further, we have so many sayings in all traditions to help manage this situation – 'Every rose has its thorn.' ' You win some, you lose some.'

The teachings of Vedanta dig deeper into more fundamental questions. That I am subject to sorrow is my conclusion. In the light of Vedanta, I was never subject to sorrow. Then how is it that I take myself to be sorrowful – so much sorrow that debilitates me? Bhagavan reveals that I have taken this mind and body to be real and hence the sorrow and all else is equally real. I don't weep buckets of tears after waking up from a dream wherein I went through a tragedy. There is just relief and a dismissal of "Thank God, it was just a dream." When I wake up from the sleep of ignorance of myself, I see that the sorrow experienced was not real, for the all pervading consciousness that I am.

We invoke the Lord as Viśoka, as one free from sorrow, and pray to Him to make us also viśoka, free from sorrow.

When we thus remember Him and repeat His names, He destroys our sorrow. And when we know Him as our very self, He totally destroys all our sorrows of saṃsāra. Thus He is Śokanāśana.

633. Arciṣmān

अर्चिष्मान्

The effulgent.

Arcis means a ray of light and arciṣmān means the one who has the rays of light and is effulgent.

As the adhibhūta aspect, that is, outside, He is in the form of the sun, moon, and stars which is arciṣmāns. All of them are effulgent and radiate light. He is the main luminary because of whose effulgence, the sun, moon and others shine.

As the adhyātma aspect, the rays of the senses and the mind come out to light up the entire world. He is the light of consciousness in the senses and in the mind. Because of this, one is conscious of a mosquito and even a black hole. So He is the main Arciṣmān, who is full of light and makes all the luminaries arciṣmāntaḥ, by lending light to them.

634. Arcitaḥ

अर्चितः

The one who is worshipped.

He is Arcita, worshipped all the time by everyone. He is worshipped even by Brahmāji and all the other devatās, who themselves are worshipped by all the worlds.

How can we say that He is worshipped by all, when there are so many atheists? They need not offer flowers or do namaskāra. Recent surveys show that the numbers of atheists and agnostics is on the rise as they have lost faith in their religion. This includes many Hindus too. We have no need to convert atheists to being Hindus. Bhagavān is untouched and does not lose or gain anything by atheists starting to pray. They are the ones who really lose out. In any case, as long as atheists and agnostics uphold dharma and some of them do it better than many religious people, it is fine. In them following dharma, Bhagavan is worshipped as dharma is his manifestation.

Every form that is seen falls at the altar of the ātma, not only in a human being, but also in every being. Whatever is perceived by any sense organ, goes and falls at the altar of consciousness. Therefore, He is Arcita, worshipped by all.

635. Kumbhaḥ

कुम्भः

The one who contains everything.

Everything is contained in Him. Just as a kumbha, a pot, holds the water inside it, so also, Bhagavān holds the entire jagat within Him and hence, He is Kumbha.

The Chāndogyopaniṣad says that both the heaven and the earth, that is, the worlds above and below, the fire and the air, the sun and the moon, the lightnings and the stars, whatever obtains now or does not obtain now, all are contained in Him (8.1.3).

What is it, that we contain in ourselves?
If we think of ourselves as the body as an enclosure then of course at the body level, we will say blood, tissues, fat, marrow, important organs of the body etc. If we are defined by our minds, then we will say I contain my thoughts, aspirations for the new year, some regrets of the past etc. If we are defined by what we do, then we will say that we have a list of achievements gained. If we are defined by what we experience, then we will say that we are a sum total of our experiences – good, bad and ugly. Each of these, is a standpoint of looking at ourselves, a selective standpoint that does not contain all that we are. Ok, maybe a sum total of all this is what we contain within ourselves. We know that to not be true as we move away from what causes us conflict. We run away from our reactions. We try to exclude and blame it on other people. When we begin to expand our minds and hearts, we accept our resistances. We begin to accommodate other people. We begin to accept situations. We begin to resist less and accept more. We accommodate the order that is Bhagavān.

636. Viśuddhātmā

विशुद्धात्मा

The one whose nature is very pure.

His ātmā is viśuddha. His nature is ever pure, being devoid of and unaffected by the three guṇas – sattva, rajas and tamas and their effects.

When we first hear of these gunas we are inclined to classify ourselves and others. We are unhappy if we think we have a lot of tamas in us or we are too dominated by rajas, especially in the context of our spiritual pursuits. Sattva standing for clarity, purity, knowledge is generally appreciated and we feel we need to cultivate more sattva. This is all fine as it applies to the body-mind-sense-complex. But, people go berserk when it comes to planning and cooking for sattvika food. Famous dictators were known to be vegetarian and many Buddhist monks are non vegetarian yet have a lot of discipline and compassion. If there is an exception to the rule it means that the rule is not absolute. Spirituality is not about the kitchen and that must be understood well. Yes, food is important and we give it the importance it deserves. Nothing more than it.

With a life of karma yoga which includes ahimsa, I aim to become more sattvika. I learn to be aware of the patterns of gunas operating in me. I am able to better see that in certain situations I could not help but behave in a particular way. I am conscious of it all. When I am conscious, I am not reacting. I just am. I am not judging. I just am. With continuous exposure to Vedanta, I discover that the nature of the conscious being that I am, is free from any guna and hence free from sattva, rajas, tamas.

637. Viśodhanaḥ
विशोधनः
The purifier.

This nāma is connected to the previous one. Not only is He pure but He makes others also pure. By thinking of the Lord, we are freed from papa in different ways. If we think of the Lord during any karma be it with the entire body, mind or through speech (prayers, chants, bhajans etc) then there is punya. Each of these acts of relating to the Lord is karma and every karma gives results. With karma yoga disposition, I recognise Bhagavān in all areas of my life.

By thinking of the Lord I see that dharma is a manifestation Bhagavān. When my likes and dislikes bordering on cravings and aversions are in charge of my actions, not dharma, then I might end up accumulating papa. By thinking of Bhagavān, we are freed from the hold of likes and dislikes, which give us the tendency to go against dharma. When we see Bhagavān pervading the intelligence that is inherent in every principle that operates in us, the way our body-mind-sense-complex functions, we learn to relax. We are no more fighting or resisting the order that is Bhagavān.
All our conflicts and notions of insignificance go away. Thus, He is Viśodhana, the great purifier.

638. Aniruddhaḥ
अनिरुद्दः
The unobstructed.

Aniruddha means the one who is unobstructed. The Lord cannot be stopped or obstructed by anyone.

One of the events in the book, 'Fountainhead' by Ayn Rand, had a lasting impact and inspired me to go onto do what I wanted in life. Howard Roark, a budding architect is challenged by an established architect," Who will let you do it? Build what you want?' And Roark replies," Who will stop me?".

There are many things that we wish to do but stop ourselves through our many beliefs, " 'I can't',' There is so much opposition', 'I don't have support' etc. We have to claim our freedom as a human being. The glory of the human being constitutes of all that we can desire, know and do. By doing what we need to do in line with dharma we need to claim our human freedom. We cannot discover the limitations of being human until we push ourselves, we push our boundaries by stepping outside our comfort zones. In time, we discover that the more we are on the side of dharma we really are or cannot be stopped by anyone. This does not mean that we become self righteous and arrogant but there is a natural humility that comes with following dharma.

According to Vyāsa, 'Viṣṇu who is of great fame, manifests in four forms, Vāsudeva, Saṅkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, and carries on the work of creation, sustenance and resolution.' Aniruddha is the one in charge of sustenance.

639. Apratirathaḥ

अप्रतिरथः

The one without adversary.

Pratiratha means an enemy, an equal adversary in a war.
Parameśvara has no pratiratha, adversaries.
There are some who don't care to know Bhagavān and totally ignore his presence. He blesses them.
There are some who deny his existence. He blesses them.
There are some who blame him for all that has gone wrong in their lives. He blesses them.
There are some who have a relationship of transaction and convenience with Bhagavān. He blesses them.
There are some who curse him. He blesses them.
There are some who totally misunderstand Bhagavān. He blesses them.
Some are just plain indifferent. He blesses them.
Some declare themselves as agnostic. It is like walking into a room and ignoring a very important person in the room, because of the stubborn insistence that one wants to keep an open mind. He blesses them.

The attitude of people towards the God of their understanding ranges from plain indifference to hatred to devotion to recognition. However, no one is an enemy or an adversary to Bhagavān. He blesses everyone without an exception. He blesses even those who are against Him, those. So he is Apratiratha. In my validation of him, I stand validated as a person.
As sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā, He lights up their thinking also.

640.Pradyumnaḥ

प्रद्युम्नः

The one who has abundant wealth.

Dyumna is wealth.
Any wealth that is here, known and unknown, belonging to anybody, belongs only to the Lord and hence, He is Pradyumna.

Pradyumna is also one of the four vyūhas, forms of the Lord.

Post 596:
641. Amitavikramaḥ
अमितविक्रमः

The one who unequalled powers.
The Lord, being almighty, has unabated, unchallenged, unequalled strength, and thus Amitavikrama. There is none who can measure up to Him.

642. Kālaneminihā
कालनेमिनिहा
The one who killed the demon Kālanemi.

Bhagavān gains the name Kālaneminihā, since He killed Kālanemi, an asura. The Purāṇas say, that it was Kālanemi who was born as Kaṃsa.

Kālanemi also means the rim of the wheel of kāla, time. The Kālanemi, the wheel of time, keeps all the jīvas, without any exception, under its spell. We are saṃsārīs in time. We change, age and are destroyed by time. Even while being alive, the wheel seems to move so fast, that we have no time for many things. So quickly a year passes away and we are in the new year. The one whose grace will take care of the Kālanemi, the spell of the spin of time, is Kālaneminihā.

643. Vīraḥ
वीरः
The courageous.

He is Vīra, because vīrayati, makes His enemies run away from Him or because īra, wavering or turning away from any situation, is never seen in Him.

We think that courage involves some extraordinary acts of bravery.
Courage is involved when we face a situation.
Courage is involved when we muster the resources to also walk away from a situation that is abusive.
Courage is involved when we face certain facts about ourselves and accept these.
Courage is involved when we acknowledge that we have made mistakes and try to make amends for it.
Courage is involved when we don't give into the blind pressure of conformity.
Courage is involved when we conform for the larger good.
Courage is involved when one has to give feedback to others.

Courage is involved to receive feedback from others and not become defensive.
Courage is involved when tough, unpopular decisions have to be taken as there is a risk of disapproval.

All of us, without an exception have been tremendously courageous in our lives. Just as we go to the bank to collect our money, if we are aware of the deposits of our courage - memory of ourselves being courageous in different situations, our understanding of God, famous sayings, words of our role models, encouraging statements to ourselves, support of others, then we can use these resources in our lives as needed. Muhammad Ali, the world famous boxer would call God, 'Shorty' and he would say 'Shorty is in my corner', in the boxing ring. I have nothing to fear. He drew courage from his understanding of God.

If one wants to be courageous, then one should visualize, meditate and understand Īśvara as Vīra, as one who is courageous and has no fear. All that is here is Īśvara.

644. Śauriḥ (also word 340)
शौरिः
The one born in the śūra clan.

Since ŚrīKṛṣṇa was born in the family of śura, as the son of Vasudeva, He is called Śauri.

645. Śūrajaneśvaraḥ
शूरजनेश्वरः
The Lord of the śuras.

Among the members of the Śura clan, He is the best.

Or, in the society, all the courageous people draw their courage from Īśvara and so, He is called Śūrajaneśvara. He excels even Indra and other devatās in valour.

646. Trilokātmā
त्रिलोकात्मा
The one in the form of the three worlds.

He is the one who is in the form of the three lokas, spheres of experience. The worlds can be counted as fourteen (seven up and seven below) or as three – the earth and below, that which is above and that which is in between.

Or, the three can be the sthūlaprapañca, the physical world; the sūkṣma-prapañca, the subtle world; the kāraṇa-prapañca, the causal world. The physical and the subtle worlds collapse into the causal world. The cause is always there, because the unmanifest becomes manifest and the manifest again becomes unmanifest. The entire physical order is constituted of the physiological, biological, psychological, epistemological and even ethical order. The physical world is meant for the sentinent, the conscious, the prāṇadhārī. If there is no conscious being, then who would see the world? The mountain cannot see the mountain or the river. All these

lokas are the manifestation of Īśvara, in the form of the various orders. He is antaryāmi, the one who pervades the three lokas and hence Trilokātmā.

Or, Īśvara, being the upādāna-kāraḷṇa, is the ātmā, the truth, of all the three worlds. In the case of the pot, there is only clay. Other than the clay, there is no pot. In all the three lokas, what is there is only the ātmā, which is the truth, which is 'satyaṃ jñānamanantaṃ brahma.' The three worlds cannot stand apart from Him, their ātmā, and hence, He is Trilokātmā.

647. Trilokeśaḥ
त्रिलोकेशः
The ruler of the three worlds.

Parameśvara, as the material cause, is in the form of the three lokas. He is also the maker, the efficient cause, of the three lokas. According to His law and order alone, all the three worlds function and hence, He is the Trilokeśa, the Lord of the three lokas.

648. Keśavaḥ
केशवः
The one manifest as the rays or energy.

The rays of the sun, moon, stars and other luminaries are like their hair and hence called keśa. It is the glory of Bhagavān alone that is manifest in the form of all these luminaries and so their keśa, rays, really belongs to Him. Possessing these keśas, He is Keśava.

He is the pratyagātmā of all and His nature is consciousness. Every thought is a ray of consciousness and every perception is also a ray of consciousness. The Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra gives the analogy of a pot. There is a pot with five holes and light is placed inside the pot. Pots like these are used during Diwali celebrations. The pumpkin carved out during Halloween can also be considered. Five beams of light emanate through these holes and each beam lights up the objects in its path. Similarly, for the living being, consciousness goes out, as though, through the senses likes the eyes, ears and so on, in the form of vṛtti, cognition. These are the rays and the one who has these rays is called Keśava.

Alternately, keśa here represents the śakti, power, of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. Because He has all these powers with Him for the sake of creation, sustenance and resolution, He is Keśava. The śruti uses the word keśa in the meaning of śakti as in 'trayaḥkeśinaḥ' (Rg.Sa. 1.164.44).

649. Keśihā
केशिहा
The one who killed the asurā, Keśin.

This is with reference to Kṛṣṇāvatāra.
Keśi was an asura, who was sent by Kaṃśa to kill ŚrīKṛṣṇa when He was a child. This asura was killed by ŚrīKṛṣṇa and hence, Bhagavān is called Keśihā.

A jīva has certain negative qualities and because of that, he can be an asura. These asura like ways of thinking and expression are destroyed by Bhagavān and hence, he is called Keśihā. So, with the grace of Bhagavān, a human being can destroy the asura Keśi within himself.

650. Hariḥ

हरिः

The one who removes saṃsārā.

Harati iti hariḥ - The Lord is called Hari because He removes. What does He remove? When invoked by proper actions, He removes all our papas. He also removes the saṃsāra along with its cause, that is, self-ignorance.

Saṃsāra gets translated as the world or even one's partner. That is not the meaning here. Look at these statements: I want to be better at my job so that I maximize my potential. I want to improve my relationships so that there is harmony. I want to be more calm and free from conflict. Who would n't want all of these? The more you identify with your body-mind-senses, the more improvements one seeks in the same. This process of becoming is endless. The endless process of 'becoming' to be happy with an endless cycle of karma is saṃsāra. I meet so many people who are exhausted with doing and some more doing, so that they can finally be happy When will it end? Only when you call the bluff of karma. All karma is limited and has limited results.

Limited actions will not help me discover the limitless that I am. Limitless is not a product of action. It is because of Hariḥ 's grace, that one is taken to the teacher and the teaching. The good news is that grace can be earned by prayers and reaching out actions. The Vedas make a seemingly ambitious claim. The one who has a teacher knows the truth. If one is committed to knowledge then one cannot but help see the truth due to the grace. If you have the grace and you make a choice to have a live guru, then very often the guru will say something which will throw light on a doubt or a conflict in your mind, without knowing about the doubt or conflict. You could attribute many reasons to it but really speaking it is the Lord's grace flowing through the guru. Thereby, one gains knowledge and this knowledge removes the ignorance and thereby totally removes the saṃsāra. Hence, Bhagavān is called Hari.

651. Kāmadevaḥ

कामदेवः

The God of love.

Whatever is desired by people, in the form of the puruṣārthas such as dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa, is kama. It is Bhagavān alone who is in the form of these puruṣārthas and the giver of these puruṣārthas and hence He is Kāma and Deva.

He is kāmasya deva, the god of love, and is called Kāmadeva. Kāma is that which attracts and that which is joyous. Generally, the god of love, Manmatha or Kāma, is depicted as having a bow of sugarcane and an arrow of flowers and people who are hit by it fall in love and then, never rise again. Bhagavān is in the form of Kāmadeva, the god of love, who is necessary for the propagation of all species of living beings. He is kāmadeva also, because He is the Lord of the god of kāma, and helps us to keep our love under check and use it as a means for inner growth.

Inherently, everyone is loving. But, in time, our love for the other is colored by conditions the person has to meet. If s/he really loves you then he should …..Then it is no more love but control. In love there is acceptance and freedom to the other person to be. If one has the grace of Bhagavān, then one grows in love and does not fall because of love.

Growing in love involves acceptance of what is and continuing to be committed to the care, happiness and growth of the other person as much as yours. Growing in love is not automatic. It involves exercising choice and lovingly accommodating the other person in your life without being obsessed with the other person's faults. This does not mean we tolerate adharma. The extent to which you give other people freedom to be, the more you discover yourself to be loving.

Coming to think of it, who am I to give anyone freedom? People are free anyway, a fact I need to recognise. I learn to value and respect people for what 'they are' not what I think they 'should be'. This is not easy. Love grows by seeing that all people are pervaded by the emotional and psychological order that is the Lord. All people are trying to be their best and I respect that. I discover myself as a loving being.

652. Kāmapālaḥ

कामपालः

The protector of desires.

For those adhikārīs, those who deserve, he is Kāmapāla, the protector of their kāmas, desirable things, that they have achieved.

Alternately, He is the protector of kāma, love. Love should express as ānanda; it cannot turn into pain. His grace protects that love with ānanda. A lot of grace is required for love to remain as happiness. Otherwise, love can evoke the unconscious, which can express as hatred and bitterness. One loves only the person that one trusts because all that one had missed from ones father or mother, one starts seeing in that loved person. Later, the same love evokes all the bitterness and causes negative transferences, which makes one blame the loved one. This trusted person does not know what is going on! Blame is always because the love is too much. This is transference. The very thing that one loves, one may destroy and strangulate. Love has not died. It has been vitiated by the need to control and fulfill unfinished business from the past. Therefore, a lot of grace is required to maintain the level of love and its expression as ānanda. So, Bhagavān is kāmapāla.

653. Kāmi

कामी

The one with all the desires fulfilled.

Bhagavān is Kāmapāla, because He is Kāmi. All the desires are fulfilled without any struggle, because He is pūrṇa-kāma-svabhāva. Ānanda is His essential nature and love is its dynamic form. God is limitless fullness and in a dynamic form, it is called love. Love is not God. Love is a human emotion, which can superimpose on Bhagavān. He is absolute fullness, ānanda-svarūpa

and hence, Kāmī. From our own standpoint of our endless struggle to fulfill our desires, we call Him Kāmī, one who has achieved all desires in full measure.

654. Kāntaḥ

कान्तः

The one who attracts.

He attracts like a kānta, a magnet, and hence, He is Kānta. Wherever there is attraction that is the attraction of Bhagavān alone. He is ānanda-svarūpa; what attracts you is what pleases you and what pleases you is ānanda, because it evokes the pleased self. So Bhagavān is the great magnet of attraction.

The form given for visualization and the form that He takes in His avatāras as ŚrīRāma and ŚrīKṛṣṇa and others, are all attractive forms and hence, He is Kānta.

Or, He brings about the anta, end, to ka, that is, Brahmā at the end of his life span and hence also, He is Kānta.

655. Kṛtāgamaḥ

कृतागमः

The author of the Vedas.

Āgama is the Veda. It is kṛta, authored, revealed by Īśvara who is all-knowing and hence, He is Kṛtāgama. No one can claim to be an editor or contributor to the revelation of Īśvara. The rsis don't even claim a copyright on the mantra that was seen by them. This revealed knowledge is untouched by human error and imagination and has been preserved by a teaching tradition - sampradāyah.

The word 'sampradāyah' is formed with the root ,'da' meaning 'to give' preceded by two prefixes, sam and pra. Sam means samyak, completely and thoroughly and pra means prakarsena, clearly. Thus Veda sampradaya is the teaching tradition by which the knowledge of Vedanta is handed over completely and clearly. There is no theory to be followed by practice.Revealed knowledge has been systematically handed down. Until when? Until it is received well.

Every discipline of knowledge is in fact from Īśvara. Where the veil is removed we see a little of the knowledge of Īśvara.

656. Anirdeśyavapuḥ

अनिर्देश्यवपुः

The one whose form cannot be described.

The manifestation of Bhagavān is physical, subtle and causal. Are all these real or unreal? His vapu is anirdeśya, His manifestation cannot be categorically said as real or unreal and hence, He is Anirdeśyavapu.

Generally, we understand objects and persons as having this name, this form and these attributes. If I say, 'Here is a black bag with two pockets on the outside', the description of the bag being black and with two pockets helps the bag to stand out amongst the world of bags, in the bag shop. It would be difficult to find the bag were it not for some description as there are many of them. When it comes to the description of the Lord, any word I use seems to limit him. Any form is his form. If I say he is here, does it mean he is not there? If I say Bhagavān is this, does it mean he is not that?

The Lord, being of the nature of satyaṃ jñānam anantam, and being free from any form and attribute, cannot be pointed out with any particular name, form and attribute. And hence, He is Anirdeśyavapu.

657. Viṣṇuḥ (also words 2, 258)

विष्णुः

The all-pervasive.

He is Viṣṇu. He is all-pervasive. He manifests in every sphere.

ŚrīKṛṣṇa Himself explains in the Mahābhārata, 'pervading the heaven and earth, my splendor goes still further. Also because I pervade, traverse the entire universe, I am known as Viṣṇu.'

658. Vīraḥ (also words 401, 643)

वीरः

The one who moves very fast.

This name is repeated three times and each time it is taken with different meanings. The root 'vī' has various meanings like 'motion, creation, shining, throwing and eating.' So, the Lord is the one who has the power of all these actions and is therefore, Virā.

Veti, gacchati bhakta-hṛdayam – He goes to the heart of the devotees, veti, kṣipatiastrān – throws arrows towards the asuras and is hence, Vīra.

659. Anantaḥ

अनन्तः

The limitless.

He is Ananta, because He has no anta, limitation.

Being sarvavyāpī, He has no space-wise limitation; being nitya, He has no time-wise limitation; being sarvātmā, He has no object-wise limitation. Every object is Īśvara. Time and space are also Īśvara. There is nothing to limit Him. The Taittirīyopaniṣad says, 'satyaṃ jñānamanataṃ brahma'(2.1).

Further, as Parameśvara, no one can find the anta of His countless attributes and hence, He is Ananta. Both ways, He is Ananta. The Viṣṇupurāṇa says that even the gandharvas, apsaras, siddhas, kinnaras, uragas and cāraṇas cannot know the extent of His guṇas (2.5.24).

660. Dhanañjayaḥ

धनञ्जयः

The conquerer of wealth.

Arjuna is called Dhanañjaya because He won a lot of wealth for the Rājasūya-yāga of Yudhiṣṭhira.

In the Gīta, Bhagavān says, 'pāṇḍavānāṃ dhanañjayaḥ - I am Arjuna among the Paṇḍavas' and shows that the glory of Arjuna as Dhanañjaya is really His glory alone (10.37).

Or the name can be seen as such. He is the one to whom all the wealth belongs and He is the one because of whose grace, one wins different forms of wealth. Health, children, home, marriage – all these are wealth and by His grace alone one gets all these. We invoke the Lord as Dhanañjaya so that we can gain all forms of wealth, from Him.

661. Brahmaṇyaḥ

ब्रह्मण्यः

The one to be known.

The next few names are all connected to the word brahma. The word brahmaṇya means what is hita, good, to brahma. The word brahma has many meanings, such as tapas, Veda, vipra or brāhmaṇa and jñānam.

The creator Brahmāji is called Brahman. All the four Vedas are called Brahman. The one who studies and teaches the Veda, The brāhmana, is also Brahman. The very subject matter, that is to be known through the Veda, is Brahman. Not only is He in the form of all these, but He blesses Brahmāji at the time of creation.

He blesses the Veda by validating it and protecting it from loss and blesses the vipras who study the Veda. He blesses the very knowledge by being the subject matter and is therefore Brahmaṇya.

662. Brahmakṛt

ब्रह्मकृत्

The author of the Vedas.

Īśvara is the Brahmakṛt, the author of the vedas. He is Brahmakṛt, the creator of Brahmāji also and gave him the Vedas.

663. Brahmā

ब्रह्मा

The creator.

Again, He alone is in the form of Brahmāji, the creator and creates everything.

664. Brahma

ब्रह्म

The truth of everything.

That which is big is Brahman. It is Brahman alone that, as though expands into this manifest world. How big is this Brahman? The śruti says, ‘satyaṃ jñānamanantaṃ brahma – Brahman is of the nature of existence, knowledge and limitlessness (Tai.Up.2.1).

The Viṣṇupurāṇa says, ‘that is known as Brahman which is knowledge, free of all differences (like knower, known and knowledge and sajātīya, vijātīya and svagata) which is pure existence, beyond the reach of words and understood as oneself.

One could well say, " Let Brahma be limitless', how does it matter? " It matters because it is you and hence the reality about you needs to be known to you

665. Brahmavivardhanaḥ

ब्रह्मविवर्धनः

The one who makes the Veda and such others grow.

Bhagavān is Brahmavivardhana, because His grace makes the knowledge of the Veda grow.

The purpose of having a life is definitely, not to die. The purpose of life is not survival either, which animals also do quite successfully until human beings interfere. The purpose of life is to grow so that you can grow no further. This growth and emotional maturity contributes to us saying, ‘I can create the life I want and I can handle anything that happens.’ Self growth is not automatic. It requires some attention and alertness in living and resonating with dharma. The knowledge of the Veda helps us to grow into a person who abides in the values of justice, compassion, kindness, non violence, straightforwardness, mutual respect etc. As one abides in these values, one recognises that one cannot really grow any bigger in one’s nature as one is the big, the limitless.

Similarly, He makes tapas and also the brāhmaṇas grow.

666. Brahmavit

ब्रह्मवित्

The one who knows the Vedā.

Not only does He know brahma, that is, the Vedas and their meaning, But He alone is in the form of the brahmavits, those who know the Vedas.

Again, the brahmavits, the one who knows himself as Brahman, is Brahman alone. ‘brahmavedabarahmaivabhavati – the knower of Brahman is Brahman itself’(Mu.Up.3.2.9).

Knowing yourself as Brahman is not a result of a process. Like, earlier I did not know about the parts of a flower and now I know. So now, I have some knowledge about the parts of a flower.

Knowing yourself as Brahman is not a process of becoming. Like, we ask children, 'What do you want to become, when you grow up?' and the child responds with some reply, where the child knows that education and some sort of a job or business will make the person successful in a chosen field. Likewise, if the person does a lot of meditation, undertakes a lot of pilgrimages, reaches out to people through a lot of giving, then perhaps the person can become Brahman? No. However exalted the action, Brahman is not the result of actions that are limited.

Knowing yourself as Brahman means knocking off the errors in our self judgment and understanding the reality of who I am. You cannot know Brahman without being Brahman, because Brahman is you.

Therefore, brahmavit is Parameśvara and Parameśvara is in the form of the Brahmavit.

667. Brāhmaṇah

ब्राह्मणः

The one in the form of Brāhmaṇa.

A brāhmaṇa is one who has studied the Vedas and teaches the Vedas. He plays a great role in handing down the Vedas given out by the Lord, both by teaching and by living a life centered on brahma, which is the Vedas.

The real brāhmana is one who has understood that, 'all that is here is Brahman alone and I am the Brahman.' That 'I', that is, the ahaṅkāra, is mithya, apparent and does not exist separate from Īśvara.
Parameśvara alone is that Brāhmana.

668. Brahmī

ब्राह्मी

The possessor of brahma.

All that is indicated by the word brahma, such as the Vedas, tapas and knowledge(refer to last few posts), belong only to Him and hence, He is Brahmī.

669. Brahmajñaḥ

ब्रह्मज्ञः

The knower of Brahman.

Bhagavān is Brahmajña.
He knows brahma, the entire Veda – both the karmakānda and jñānakānda – which is non – separate from Him. At the beginning of creation itself, He knew all the Vedas, which had resolved into Him at the time of pralaya.

The word brahmavit can mean a person who knows just a part of the Veda, or one who knows Brahman alone. But, brahmajña means the one who knows all the Vedas and their meaning. When he is sarvajña then of course he is brahmajña

670. Brāhmaṇapriyaḥ

ब्राह्मणप्रियः

The one who loves those committed to the Veda.

When a celebrity endorses a product, let' s say the watch, 'Tissot', if one likes and admires that celebrity, I start to look at the watch in a favourable light. Earlier it was just a watch. Now I view the watch favourably. What has changed? Just my perspective – Because it is used by my favourite actor. And then, if I admire the artist Monet's work, I look forward to some paintings that he has created. Because it is used by this person whom I deeply admire. How do we respond to Bhagavān and his painting – this painting that is the world? Whoever loves Bhagavān, to whomever Bhagavān is priya, dear, that person is also committed to the Vedas. Why? Because they have come from Bhagavān.

They are brāhmaṇas, learning and teaching the Vedas, and living a Vedic life committed to dharma. They hold the Veda and dharma dear to them, because both these are nothing but Bhagavān. Thus, the brāhmaṇas play a great part in keeping the Veda alive and therefore, are priya to the Lord. Thus, Bhagavān is Brāhmaṇapriya, being dear to the brāhmaṇas, and also having them dear to Him.

The Mahābhārata says that Devakī begot ŚrīKṛṣṇa from Vasudeva for the protection of the earthly brahman, that is, the brāhmaṇa. Śankara quotes the verse in his introductory bhāṣya of the Gītā and says that if the brāhmaṇa is protected, the Veda is protected.

671. Mahākramaḥ

महाक्रमः

The one with a wide step-span.

When a huge person walks, his step will definitely going to cover a bigger span than that of an ordinary person. But when Lord Viṣṇu, who is all-pervasive, walks, what is the span of His step? There is no place which is not covered by his step. Therefore, He is Mahākrama, the one with a huge step-span.

Every step the person takes is because of his glory. So much motor coordination and nerve impulses are involved in that one step.
Every step the person takes towards any goal is because of his grace.
Every step the person takes away from adharma is because of his grace.

Being everything, he is not located at one place. Nothing is away from Īśvara. This śāntipāṭha of the Taittirīyopaniṣad describes Him as Urukrama.

672. Mahākarmā (also word 787)

महाकर्मा

The one of great actions.

Bhagavān is Mahākarmā, because His actions of creation, sustenance and resolution of the entire universe are mahat, great.

The accomplishment of an action is centered on the doer, the subject. Every individual is self-conscious and has doership. The sense of doership, gives us the guilt of omissions and commissions expressed as 'I wish I had done this….I wish I had not done this…I wish I had said this…I wish I had not said this.

The sense of experiencing the results gives us hurt. I wish the other person had done this for me. I wish the other person had not done this to me. I wish the other person had said this to me. I wish the other person had not said this to me.

All the time we are doing and experiencing the results of our doing or undoing as the case may be. One of the sources of hurt may even be God, because we feel that even though we pray so much, our prayers are not answered. Thus, the individual, who takes himself to be a kartā and bhoktā, doer and enjoyer, has all kinds of hurt and guilt.

But, Bhagavān is free from guilt and hurt, because He has neither a sense of doership nor sense of being an experience. Hence, all His actions are mahat, free from any sense of guilt or hurt.

673. Mahātejāḥ

महातेजाः

The one of great effulgence and valour.

He is Mahāteja, the one of great effulgence. It is by His light alone that the sun and the other luminaries have come to possess light. Tejas, brilliance, can be in terms of knowledge, in terms of light and in terms of energy also. All this is true for Parameśvara.

He is light of all lights, the source of all lights and it is because of His presence alone that the luminaries are luminaries and the senses are senses.

You step out early for your morning walk. It is still dark. You manage to make your way because of some street lights. You are careful as you walk through the darkness but you cannot help have some fear. You cannot see or do much in darkness. You could bump and hurt yourself or even imagine the worst of what is lurking. Time passes. As it starts to become lighter with the sunrise, the street lights are switched off. The path is the same. The trees and shrubs on the path are the same. But what were silhouettes then and the worst was imagined, appears clearer. On your return from the walk, all is illumined in the light of the sun. There is no more fear or concern. We are able to recognize the sources of light like the sun, moon, stars and other lights, because of consciousness that blesses the mind and through it, the eyes.

In the recognition of this ātmā as consciousness, all is illumined and known. It is not separate from Īśvara. He alone, in the form of the sun, moon, stars fire and so on, warms, energizes and lights up the whole jagat. Hence, He is Mahāteja.

Or, as Parameśvara, He has mahat tejas, expressing as kraurya, sternness towards those who take to adharma and śaurya, an ability to overcome them.

674. Mahoragaḥ

महोरगः

The one in the form of a serpent.

The snake and other similar reptiles, which have no legs, move by the whole body, and hence are called uragas.

He is the one who is in the form of all uragas; the great uraga called Vāsuki especially expresses His vibhūti; as Bhagavān Himself says in the Gītā, ‘ among the serpents I am Vāsukī’ (10.28). Again the snake is an expression of power. As limitless power, He is Mahoraga.

675. Mahākratuḥ

महाक्रतुः

The one who is the great sacrifice called kratu.

Kratu is a great Vedic fire offering which involves a yūpa, an octagonal sacrificial post, to which the sacrificial cow is tied. Among all the kratus, the aśvamedha-kratu is considered mahān, the greatest. It is Bhagavān alone who is in the form of all the kratus. As the aśvamedha-kratu, He is Mahākratu.

Again, Bhagavān Himself is in the form of the great ritual, the ritual of creation, sustenance and withdrawal.

676. Mahāyajvā

महायज्वा

The great sacrificer.

The one who performs a yajña is called yajvā. If the creation of earth is a mahāyajñā, ritual, then who is the yajvā, the performer of this yajña? Bhagavān is the Yajvā and the ṛtvik, the priest, is also Bhagavān.

Thus, He is Mahāyajvā, the great sacrifice. He is the maker, the means and also the end and whatever that is made is also Īśvara.

In His avatāras also, He does various yajñas. Even though He has no necessity to do them, He does them for lokasaṅgraha, the good of the world and hence, He is Mahāyajvā.

677. Mahāyajñaḥ

महायज्ञः

The one who is the great yajñā.

There are five yajñās prescribed as daily karma, daily duties. These are deva-yajña, brahma yajña, pitṛ-yajña, manuṣya-yajña and bhūtayajña. These are called pañca-mahāyajñas.

Deva-yajña is the daily worship of the gods through rituals like sandhyā-vandana, agnihotra, puja and so on.

Brahma-yajña is the propagation of brahma, that is Veda and other scriptures and through svādhyāya, study of the Veda and adhyāpana, teaching the Veda. The daily chanting of the gāyatrī is also brahma-yajña.

Pitṛ-yajña consists of doing tarpaṇa and so on for the pitṛs.

Manuṣya-yajña consists of feeding and looking after the guests.

Bhūta-yajña is feeding the dogs, cows, birds, squirrels and other living beings. Bhagavān is invoked daily by these pañca-mahāyajñas.

It is He who is in the form of these mahāayajñas and hence, He is Mahāyajña. In performing these daily karmas one learns to give and offer time, effort, resources. One learns to give and contribute and is no more just a consumer. The one who enjoys and experiences this jagat without acknowledgement of the source or even acknowledgement of all the forces that make the experiences possible is no less than a thief. We grow when we give and contribute. When we give what we have we learn to give up notions that bind us and limit us.

Alternately, Bhagavān is in the form of the great yajña called japa-yajña, and hence, Mahāyajña. He Himself says in the Gītā, 'yajñānāmjapayajño'smi – I am japa-yajña among all the yajñas' (10.25). This yajña is the easiest to perform as it can be performed at any time and place. There is no need for any dravya. All it needs is oneself.

678. Mahāhaviḥ

महाहविः

The great oblation.
If Bhagavān is the yajña and the yajvā, the ritual and the performer, the havis, the oblation that is offered in the yajña cannot be separate from Him. He is the havis offered in every yajña.

The Puruṣa-sūkta talks of the puruṣa being offered as havis for the creation to take place and hence, He is Mahāhavi. Again, the entire jagat is offered as havis at the time of pralaya or resolution. The jagat is Parameśvara and it is offered to Parameśvara. Therefore, Bhagavān is the Mahāhavi, as the receiver of the great havis.

What is offered into the fire becomes one with fire. The perception of this jagat as nothing but Brahman is an offering of this jagat into brahmātmā.
What is the greatest havis that can be offered? The offering of ahaṅkāra unto that Brahman, with the knowledge that it is not separate from Brahman, is the greatest havis that can be offered. As the receiver of the great havis of the jagat and ahaṅkāra, He is Mahāhavi.

Thus, these four names indicate that all aspects of yajña are nothing but Bhagavān. He Himself indicates this īn the Gītā, 'every aspect of a yajna is Brahman.' ' I am the kratu and Yajña; I am the mantras chanted; I am the ghee, food and other things offered and I am the fire.'

679. Stavyah

स्तव्यः

The praiseworthy

The next five names go together. Paramesvara is Stavya, the only one worthy of being praised. He is praised by all, but he does not praise anyone else, because neither is there anyone worthy of his praisenor does he stand togain anything from anyone. The final praise is only for Paramesvara, because any praise anywhere for anyone or anything goes to him alone.

680. Stavapriyaḥ

स्तवप्रियः

The one who delights in praise.

He is Stavapriya, fond of our praise. Even though He delights in praise, He cannot be flattered, because in whatever way we may praise Him, all the praise falls short of what He actually is.

That Īśvara is limitless is a fact. Even if we say that Īśvara is limitless, still it does not become a praise because, we do not understand what limitlessness is. In terms of knowledge, in terms of power, in terms of pervasiveness, what it takes to be limitless is beyond our understanding. Therefore, any praise of Him falls flat.

Still, He blesses us with results for our praise, because the praise of Īśvara is a karma and the karma attracts a result. The Lord, being the giver of the results of actions, gives us the results. Because He gives us the results of the action of stave, praise, He seems to like it, and hence, He is Stavapriya.

681. Stotram

स्तोत्रम्

The one in the form of praise.

The meaning of the very stotra, prayer, is Īśvara and hence, He is the Stotra.

Īśvara Himself is in the form of the stotra, because He is the meaning of every word of praise.
It is really guṇa-kīrtana, the recognition of His glories and singing them in praise. What we see as his glories are a fact.

It takes a certain mind-set to do ‘guna darśanam’ or to appreciate guṇas of another person. Everyone has a need for praise and appreciation and yet everyone is very stingy in their appreciation of others. Part of the reason has to do with strange justifications of, ’Praise will go to that person’s head’, ‘I am not used to appreciating’, ‘That person does not appreciate me, why should I?’, ‘Maybe the person wants something from me’ etc. If I am not able to find anything praiseworthy in another person, it has nothing to do with that person and everything to do with my way of seeing the person, which is obviously very critical.

We learn to train ourselves to see guṇas in every person including ourselves. To be in harmony with people in the world, we learn to be objective. Being objective is to be able to be in touch

with reality, being able to do both guna and dosha darśanam. It is important to not confuse this with having vairagya born of dośa darśanam. The purpose of that is different where we see the limitations of everything that is limited. But I have seen many people pursuing Vedanta confusing this with seeing limitations in any and everybody. No wonder they cannot get along with anybody!

Vyavahara or functioning in this inter dependent world requires us to learn to appreciate the strengths and limitations of any person including ourselves. Try and think of any person you cannot stand. Try and think of a couple of qualities of the person that are worthy of praise. It will balance our perspective and also our interactions with that person. We may never get close to that person but at least the intense reaction to that person is neutralized. Whatever guṇa, qualities, you have or see anywhere as worthy of praise, is really the guṇa of Īśvara.

When we learn to see guṇas in the other person we see that these guṇas are really a glory of Īśvara. There is no difference between the word and its meaning and hence, He is the Stotra because He is the meaning of the stotra.

682. Stutiḥ
स्तुतिः
The one in the form of the act of praise.

Stuti is the act of praise and that is also the Lord Himself. Hence, He is Stuti.

683. Stotā
स्तोता
The one who does the action of praise.
If stuti is the act of praise then who is the stotā, who does the stuti? The stotā, who does the action of praise, is also Īśvara, as He is the self in all.

Thus, Lord Viṣṇu alone is Stavya, worthy of being praised by this Viṣṇu-sahasranāma-stotra; He is in the form of this Stotra and fond of this Stava;

He alone is in the form of the Stotā, the one who chants this sahasranāma-stotra and the very chanting of this sahasranāma is also He alone.

684. Raṇapriyaḥ
रणप्रियः
The one who delights in battles.

A form is created as the altar for worship, wherein the total is deliberately invoked. Only when it is deliberately invoked, it becomes an altar. A given form is the altar, in which the total is invoked. When Īśvara is invoked in a particular form, He can be invoked in a form that has weapons. When you take refuge in the Lord, He takes care of those who afflict and affect you. So, the form can be one that assures you, that He is ever ready to take care of you, when you are fighting your outer and inner enemies. The main enemies are your sorrow, your depression, your

confusion, your likes and dislikes, frustration, anger, guilt and so on. All these are the enemies inside and they have to be taken care of. Enemies outside can easily be taken care of.

Thus Īśvara can be invoked in different forms. Here, Lord Viṣṇu is invoked Raṇapriya, as one fond of fighting battles to protect the world and therefore, āyudha-priya, as one who likes weapons, because we do not like Him to come empty handed to protect us. He is generally depicted as having pañcāyudha,the five weapons, which are the conch, discus, mace, bow, arrow and sword; as though He is ever ready to protect us.

685. Pūrṇaḥ
पूर्णः
The one who is full.

Bhagavān is Pūrṇa, the whole. There is no lack whatsoever in Him. What is there that can add to him or take away from him?

Knowledge-wise, He is pūrṇa; there is no ignorance.
Power-wise, He is pūrṇa, endowed with all śaktis.
Desire-wise He is pūrṇa, endowed with everything, with nothing unattained. As a devotee, one seeks what one needs as one considers oneself apūrṇa, wanting in some way. Who else can one seek from but the one who is full? He is limitless in all ways and hence, Pūrṇa.

686. Pūrayitā
पूरयिता
The one who gives fulfilment.

Not only is Īśvara full in Himself, He is Pūrayitā also.
He fills one with all sampat, prosperity. He blesses by filling up ones heart. Only the one who has fullness, can give the fullness.

By invoking Him Pūrṇa, there is fullness and therefore, He is Pūrayitā. To the extent that one understands Īśvara, to that extent, one is cheerful and being all-pervasive, He is you.

687. Puṇyaḥ
पुण्यः
The very body of puṇya.

Every action has a visible result and an invisible result, adraśta. This result not available for perception but which translates into comfortable and happy situations for the person is puṇya. A non religious person will call it good luck. We see it as the play of karma. Puṇya accounts for sukha, and papa gives duḥkha, pain.

Pāpa also stands in the way of one gaining sukha. He is Puṇya, pure and He purifies us from pāpa that stands in our way of gaining happiness and allows the puṇya to give sukha. Any good

karma that one does results in puṇya, happiness. We can earn puṇya through our actions of prayer and reaching out.

688. Puṇyakīrtiḥ
पुण्यकीर्तिः
The one whose fame is auspicious.

He is most famous and His kīrti, fame, brings puṇya, auspiciousness and hence, He is Puṇyakīrti. The fame of Bhagavān is not by the destruction of a number of asurās like Rāvaṇa, but it is because of His absolute virtues. We are blessed by singing His glories that amount to His kīrti.

Again, Rāvaṇa is in you, and there is no other Rāvaṇa outside. All asuras are within oneself alone. With the grace of Bhagavān, we take care of the demons inside. How ? By not feeding them. By not dwelling on anger, greed, jealousy etc. How is it possible to vanquish these? We recognise the grace and authorship of Bhagavān in taking care of the demons. The real demon is the firm notion that 'I take care of everything.' This belief does not allow one to recognise anyone's contribution let alone Bhagavān.

Most of our stress and sadness is either because we believe we can control everything or we can control nothing. Both are extreme standpoints and are not based on reality. In seeing how anything and everything is really possible (including my actions and the results) because of the principles of Bhagavān, I become more objective. When this demon, 'I control everything' is taken care of, others are easily taken care of. So it is nothing but pure understanding and it is not any physical destruction. We are able to see his glories in the recognition of the physical and psychological principles that is the very manifestation of Bhagavān.

689. Anāmayaḥ
अनामयः
The one who is ever healthy.
Bhagavān is Anāmaya, free from āmaya, any kind of physical and mental affliction.

Afflictions or diseases could be external or internal or both. Much of our anxiety and concerns revolve around the body and disease especially lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension, cancer, osteoporosis, hypo/hyper thyroidism. We find that we allow these conditions to limit us. The more we get concerned about these current diseases we have or some family member has, what was a seemingly physical condition now affects us emotionally as we feel helpless.

The beautiful prayer, Sarve bhavantu sukhinah has a line which says 'Sarve santu nirāmayāh'- May all beings be free of disease.' It was recognised by the sages, that when a person is free of disease, he/she is at ease and has the energy and enthusiasm to live a life of priorities. When a person's health is compromised then much of the time, effort and energy is spent in managing the disease. Life is then all about disease or disaster management (as the case may be)!

All diseases are due to the influence of karma. Some choices made in this life (long hours, no rest, no exercise etc) do contribute to some diseases. Still, there are many people who make all the healthy choices regarding nutrition, exercise, rest but still find themselves having diseases.

This can only be explained by karma. We need grace and continued right actions to manage both bāhya and antah karana, our bodies and minds so that we are not afflicted by the conditions of our bodies and minds. We need grace which we invoke through prayer to do whatever is necessary to maintain what has been given to us.

Since Bhagavān is not under the influence of karma, He is always healthy. For the cure of all āmaya, we invoke the Lord as Anāmaya.

690. Manojavaḥ

मनोजवः

The one swift as the mind.

The mind is very fast; it can move in less than a minute to a distant place. As a result, while people sit in any educational class, their minds have gone for a world tour and returned. Soemtimes the mind can go to a distant memory or to the vision of the future. Here, Bhagavān is said to be Manojava, capable of moving as fast as the mind. This comparison is just to understand that the Lord is all-pervasive.

Elsewhere, it is said that He is 'manasojavīyaḥ - faster than even the mind (Īśa.Up.4). Even before the mind reaches any place, Īśvara is already there. That He is there, is not a question of Īśvara reaching a place at a time, the very place and time are Īśvara. Being sarvagata, all-pervasive, He neither needs to move anywhere nor does He require any speed to move. Reflected in the Kathopanisad too, while sitting he moves.

Further, the mind can move within the sphere of name and form. It has to think of an object. Even brahmaloka is only name and form. So, whatever one can think of is only name and form, and name and form exist in consciousness. They are limitless consciousness. Hence, wherever the mind goes, Bhagavān is already there. In fact, the mind itself moves in Bhagavān.
That we have this blessing that is the mind is such grace.

691. Tīrthakaraḥ

तीर्थकरः

The author and teacher of all the vidyās.

A sacred place, a place of pilgrimage is tīrtha. Any place – be it Mecca or Mathura, Jagannath or Jerusalem – is a tīrtha, a sacred place of pilgrimage because it is the Lord, who by His association with it, makes it sacred.

Tīrtha has also the meaning of vidyā. Any discipline of knowledge is tīrtha. Every discovery is a revelation. One of the Sanyasi orders is called Tirtha just like Saraswati. The one who reveals the knowledge is tīrthakara. Bhagavān is the praṇetā, the author, as well as the pravaktā, the teacher, of all disciplines of knowledge – Vedas and others. Hence, He is Tīrthakāra.

692. Vasuretaḥ

वसुरेताः

The one whose knowledge is the seed of creation.

Vasu here means hiranya, gold and stands for knowledge. His knowledge is the retas, the seed for the creation of this jagat. Hence, He is called Vasuretā.

For a child to be born a mother and a father are required. Similarly, in the case of this entire world there is an intelligent cause and a material cause. The material cause is prakṛti or māyā. As the child is born of the mother, similarly prakṛti is the material out of which this creation is born. But the mother herself cannot produce a child without father and so too, the prakrti requires an efficient cause. As for a child, for this entire creation, two causes are necessary. But, prakṛti being jada, insentient, and also dependent on Brahman, cannot bring about the world. Initially, something is necessary for the creation to begin and once that occurs, Māyā is capable of undergoing all the necessary changes to become this world.

In the Gīta, Bhagavān says, 'garbhaṃ dadhāmyaham – I impregnate' 'ahaṃ bījapradaḥpitā- I am the father, the one who gives the seed' (BG.14.3,4). When Bhagavān invokes His knowledge, as a saṅkalpa, a desire, it becomes the retas, the seed, which brings about this creation and hence, He is Vasuretā.

693. Vasupradaḥ (also word 694)

वसुप्रदः

The giver of wealth.

Wealth is a security. Wealth is also necessary for achieving the other necessary puruṣārthas, dharma and kāma. He is the cause of that security and He is the giver of vasu, wealth and hence, He is Vasuprada.

Any other devatā, or person, like Kubera and others, who has the capacity to give wealth, gains that capacity only from Bhagavān. At the same time we remember that only the insecure need security and no security (artha, kama or dharma) is secure enough.
Then, what is that security, which is not subject to any insecurity? If we are really seeking security, we need to hold on to Bhagavān.

694. Vasupradaḥ (also word 693)

वसुप्रदः

The one who gives the absolute security, mokṣa.

He is Vasuprada, not only because He gives relative wealth and security, but also because He gives the real wealth, the absolute security called mokṣa. Every other relative security is subject to some loss. The value of wealth changes as inflation and cost of living go up. Every security is not considered secure enough. People who planned financially for life, post retirement are finding that, they had not adequately accounted for the cost of living. Is there any security that is subject to no change, no loss, no condition? Absolute security is by knowing that 'I am vasu'.
Bhagavān, by revealing Himself as the vasu that one seeks, becomes Vasuprada. It is by His grace that one gets access to the teaching and again it is by His grace alone, that the knowledge takes place.

Thus by holding on to Him which is based on choice, one will get relative security and absolute security as well. If one understands Īśvara to some extent, there will be abhyudaya-phala, relative security, in the form of wealth and so on. If one understands Īśvara as one's ātmā, there will be niśśrēyasa-phala, absolute security, in the form of mokṣa. Thus, Bhagavān is Vasuprada, the giver of all forms of wealth.

695. Vāsudevaḥ

वासुदेवः

The one who is the son of Vasudeva.

In the Kr̥ṣṇāvatāra, Bhagavān was born as the son of Vasudeva and hence, He is Vāsudeva.

696.Vasuḥ

वसुः

The abode of all.

Bhagavān is the one in whom everything – all beings, elements and elementals – exist. Even all the puruśārthas, relative and absolute, exist in Him alone and hence, He is Vasu.

Maharani Gayatri Devi, after her husband had passed away, said 'Earlier home was a place you came back to. After he died, I realised that home is the person you come back to'. Beautiful sentiment from the standpoint of relationships! It is true that we feel at home with some people. We feel at home because they give us the freedom to be ourselves. We feel at home with them because in that accommodation, there is love and acceptance. There is the freedom to express our craziest dreams, our unspoken fears and offer support towards goals.

What is that abode in which you are always 'at home'?
What is that abode resting in which, you see that you are always in order? There is nothing wrong with you.
What is that abode where there is absolute freedom to be?
What is that abode of pure being ?
He also exists in all beings as the ātmā and hence, is Vasu.

697. Vasumanāḥ

वसुमनाः

The one who has the mind to reside in all.

His presence in all objects, without exception and without any difference or distinction, is called vasu. Because He has a mind to be so, He is called Vasumanā.

Or, vasu is jagat and that is His mind and hence, He is Vasumanā. The pancreas releases different enzymes to help digest carbohydrates, proteins, fats. It also secretes insulin to regulate blood sugar. We may not even know where our pancreas are located, what it looks like. Yet, the pancreas without going to any university knows how much enzymes need to be released. How did the pancreas learn to function so efficiently? How come the pancreas has the intelligence to

release different enzymes according to the food eaten, without any mechanical engineer regulating the release?. This is just one example of the knowledge that pervades this jagat. From our standpoint, when we think about knowledge we think about the mind. It is the knowledge of Bhagavān alone, which is manifest in the form of jagat.

698. Haviḥ

हविः

The one in the form of oblations.

Bhagavān is called Havis. Havis is the oblation that is offered unto fire, to Bhagavān.
Bhagavān Himself says in the Gītā, 'The havis that is offered is Brahman. The means, with which it is offered, is also Brahman. Every aspect of a yajña is Brahman.'

Many of us don't perform yajnas and perhaps have no intention to. Then what is the oblation we offer the Lord? What might be our 'havis'? Every karma that is offered unto the fire of knowledge is our havis.

As a karma yogi, there is no karma that you do only for security or pleasure. Your goal is moksa and hence various karma are done to enjoy the different forms of security and pleasure and more importantly for antah karana suddhi. As a karma yogi, you don't just do karma. You turn every karma into yoga by offering your actions to Bhagavān. It is your contribution to the grand symphony of Bhagavān. If that is so, what kind of karma can be offered? All karma based on effectiveness that resonates with dharma.

The Vānaras who were carrying huge boulders to build the Ram Setu bridge were annoyed by a pesky squirrel and tried to shove him aside. Painstakingly, in his little mouth, the squirrel was going to and fro carrying the little pebbles that were essential for the bridge. Sri Rama picked up the squirrel and lovingly stroked his back on learning about the squirrel's effort in building the bridge. The three white stripes on the squirrel's back is said to be there because of Sri Rama's touch.
From the perspective of the Lord, no effort is too small and everyone's karma matters.
May your 'havis' of karma continue to be offered in the grand yajna of Bhagavān, every havis also being none other than Bhagavān.

699. Sadgatiḥ

सद्गतिः

i. The goal of good people.
ii. The one with a superior intellect.

He is Sadgati, the ultimate end of the sat-puruṣas. Who are the sat-puruṣas? The sat-puruṣas are those that have viveka, the discriminative capacity. He is the gati, the ultimate end for all people but, for the sat-puruṣas, He is the immediate end.

The Taittirīyopaniṣad says that those who accept Brahman 'is', are the sat-puruṣas, because they have the viveka to choose Brahman as the end and come to gain Brahman as their ātmā.

Or, the word gati may mean the buddhi. He is Sadgati, because His buddhi is satī, superior. Being all-knowing, it understands all things clearly as they are.

700. Satkṛtiḥ

सत्कृतिः

The one whose acts are noble.

The one whose kṛti, action is sat, noble, is satkṛti. Taking care of and protecting people is the noblest act. You might recall an incident I shared in one of the earlier posts. A soldier asked this lady to leave Kupwara as there was suspected terrorist activity and threat to life. She asks him,' What about you? If there is a threat to my life, surely there is a threat to yours. You don't know me, even'. ? She could not fathom why he would face danger so that she could get away. And he replied, 'Maam I don't need to know you to protect you. I am doing my job as a soldier'.
Parents care for their children. Children care for the parents. People care for their pets. Care givers care for patients. Some employers take care of their employees. Whoever cares and protects is doing a noble act.

The Lord does not leave it to anybody. He takes care of the creation. He provides oxygen, the water, the food and all that is necessary for the living beings. Therefore, He is Satkṛti, doing the noble act of protecting the world. He protects every planet in its own orbit, all the natural forces and resources and all the means and ends.

701. Sattā

सत्ता

That which is existent.

The wave became the water vapour which became the cloud which became the rain water which became the drop that quenched your thirst which became the drop that was in the form of sweat which became water vapour again! The name and form changed but water gave existence to its forms. It never went away. Water was the satta in all the water based forms.
Sattā is that which exists in all the three periods of time. It lends its existence to everything and it is because of that, that everything has a being. When we say, time 'is,' space 'is,' object 'is,' anything 'is,' that is-ness' is the sattā, the existence. Time is only name and form. Similarly, space is only name and form although very subtle; object is only name and form.

This existence is devoid of divisions like sajātīya, vijātīya, and svagata divisions. The difference between the members of the same class is sajātīya-bheda, like one mango tree being different from another mango tree. A mango tree being different from the banyan tree is vijātīya-bheda. It is the difference between members of different classes. A mango tree having parts which are different from each other is svagata-bheda. It is a difference among the different parts of the tree itself. Sattā, pure existence, which has no such differences, is the svarūpa, nature, of Bhagavān and hence, He is Sattā.

The Chāndogyopaniṣad says, 'that sat is one alone without a second' (6.2.1).

702. Sadbhūtiḥ

सद्भूतिः
The one who is existence and consciousness.

If Bhagavān is satta, maybe he is inert and not conscious like a super container. No. Bhagavān is Sadbhuti, of the nature of sat, existence, which cannot be ever negated, and bhuti, consciousness, that is self-revealing. Everything else that is perceived lives on borrowed existence and needs to be lighted up by the consciousness that is the svarūpa of Bhagavān. It gets negated even as we perceive it, or by our reasoning (based on common sense or science) or on the basis of the śruti. All negation is based on the understanding of what is independent and what is dependent on it.Like the wave or droplet is dependent on water for its existence. The wave or the droplet cannot exist without the water.

Bhūti can also mean wealth or glory. He is the Bhūti, wealth, He is everything to the sat-puruṣas. Again, any bhūti, glory, of any person is only the glory of Bhagavān. But, only the sat-puruṣas recognize this fact. Thus, He is Sadbhūti.

703. Satparāyaṇam
सत्परायणं
The ultimate end of the good people.

Sat can mean sattva, all living beings. He is the paramayanam, the highest goal, of all beings. But, only the satpuruṣas, those who know the truth, understand this fact and have Him as their immediate and only goal. Their goal in life is to achieve Bhagavān alone. The ultimate end does not mean the goal at the end of life. It means that this goal subserves all others. All other goals of life are in service and preparation of this goal. Others without recognizing this fact have so many goals in life, of which Bhagavān may or may not be one. Even when He is in the list, it is not the highest or immediate one. Hence, He is Satparāyana, the highest goal of the sat-puruṣas.
There is a more popular reading as 'satparāyanaḥ.' This is derived as santaḥ param ayanam asya, the one who has the sat-puruṣas as His ayanam; the important job for Bhagavān is the welfare of the sat-puruṣas.

704. Śūrasenaḥ
शूरसेनः
The one whose army consisted of śurās.

The Lord is Śūrasena because He has a mighty army. In the Rāmāvatāra, He had an army in which the śūras, mighty warriors, like Hanūmān, Sugrīvā and others were there. Even though Rāvaṇa had an extraordinary army, consisting of the rākṣasas, still in spite of it, the vānaras fought valiantly against them.

In the Kṛṣṇāvatāra, He had an army, consisting of śūras, mighty warriors, like the Yādavas, Pāṇḍavas and so on.

705. Yaduśreṣṭhaḥ
The best among the Yadus.

The descendents of King Yadu are called Yadus or Yādavas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa belonged to that clan and was the śreṣṭha, the best and most important among them.

706. Sannivāsaḥ
सन्निवासः
The refuge of the good people.

He is Sannivāsa, the refuge of the learned people, the thinking people. Thay do not have any other end in view.

707. Suyāmunaḥ
सुयामुनः
The one connected to the Yāmunas.

All those who are connected to the river Yamunā and Yāmunas like Devakī, Vasudeva, Nanda, Yaśodā, Balabhadra, Subhadrā and others, who lived on the banks of the river Yamunā.
Because He was surrounded by all these good Yāmunas, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Suyāmuna.

708. Bhūtāvāsaḥ
भूतावासः
The abode of all beings.

Bhūta can stand for the elements and elementals (made of elements) as well as all living beings. All the bhūtas, all the elements like space and others, elementals and living beings, have their being primarily in Bhagavān and hence, He is Bhūtāvāsa.

The whole world is nothing but bhautika, elementals born of the elements. The physical bodies as well as the subtle bodies of all living beings are also bhautika, born of the elements. The temperature of the body is maintained by Agnih, fire. The body is made of subtle matter and gross matter, maintained by prithvi, earth and what grows on earth i.e.plants. The body largely is composed of apa, water. The body breathes because of Vayu, air. The body occupies space and there are spaces within the body as well. All the elements operate in the body and at a larger level sustain the body. What is the abode of the body? The body came from the elements, is sustained by the elements and returns to the elements. Whatever be the mode of disposal of the body after death, burial in water/earth or cremation or even kept for the vultures, the body will return to the elements. Thankfully this body is biodegradable. What seemed to us as strictly physical is no more so when you see the inter connectedness of it all.

What is left out is the ātmā, which is not different from the parātmā. Everything has its being in the elements, which have their being in space. Where do these elements have their abode, their being? All elements, even space has its being in Bhagavān.

709. Vāsudevaḥ (also words 332, 695)
वासुदेवः

The one who covers the jagat.

That Bhagavān in whom everything abides, chose to become the son of Vasudeva. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as a young boy, was asked by His mother Yaśodā, to open His mouth. When He opened His mouth, to her awe and surprise, Yaśodā saw the entire universe in the mouth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Bhūtāvāsa. Soon, He veiled her perception and made her see Him as a child as usual.

Bhagavān covers everything with māyā and hence, He is Vāsu. Since He is in the form of consciousness, He is Deva also. Hence, He is Vāsudeva. With His māyā, He pervades everything. People, due to ignorance, do not know that Bhagavān is all-pervasive and obtains as their very ātmā. Until the ignorance is removed, this fact remains covered.

710. Sarvāsunilayaḥ

सर्वासुनिलयः

The abode of all the prāṇas.

Asu means prāṇa. What is outside as vāyu, air, becomes the prāṇa inside the body. We think that we live because we breathe and that we are dependent on prāṇa. But, it is just the opposite. Because we are alive, we breathe. If we are purely dependent on prāṇa, why is that a dead person cannot be brought back to life, despite pumping in oxygen through the cylinder?
The one who lives is a conscious being and is called jivātmā. It is Bhagavān, the parātmā, who appears as the jivātmā in the individual bodies, and in whom all the prāṇas have their abode. Again at the time of pralaya, they resolve into the parātmā. Hence, He is called Sarvāsunilaya.

711. Analaḥ (also word 293)

अनलः

The one who has no limit.

Alam means ‘enough.’ When we say ‘enough,’ it is a relative term, unless one specifies the terms. The adequacy varies from object to object depending on various factors. Again, when we say enough, we draw a line and limit it saying, ‘this much and no more.’ Therefore, alam also means limit.
The one who does not have any alam, any limit, is Parameśvara. He has no limit in terms of pervasiveness, no limit in terms of time and space, no limit in terms of knowledge and power also. Hence, He is Anala.

712. Darpahā

दर्पहा

The destroyer of pride.

Darpa means pride or arrogance. All arrogance comes from ignorance. One can be arrogant about one’s appearance not acknowledging genetics and God ’s grace. One can be arrogant about wealth one not fully acknowledging the role of grace in the form of opportunities in one’s life. One can be arrogant about anything that one has achieved or qualities one has, in ignorance of all the forces and prinicples that made it possible. Arrogance takes away a person’s objectivity and

people who are given to pride can get hurt and angry very easily. To maintain pride people could be given to adharma in the way they deal with other people.

The Lord is called Darpahā, because He destroys the pride and arrogance in the people who do not follow dharma. In the form of time, He destroys their pride and vanity, by destroying that which makes them proud and haughty. This is not out of any vengeance but our own karma phala which appropriately fructifies forcing us to grow up and grow out of our pride. Acknowledging and recognizing the forces, people, principles, opportunities in our lives that made us who we are or what we have achieved makes us more objective.

Even in those, who follow dharma, when they do not acknowledge the grace of the Lord in their achievements, He destroys their pride, in order to turn their attention towards Him.

713. Darpadaḥ

दर्पदः

The giver of righteous pride.

Here, darpa is a justified pride, a self-confidence born of name and fame. When people follow dharma, He gives them the karma-phala in the form of name and fame, so that their contribution is never forgotten. As a result of the contribution of the person, in the form of the karma-phala, Bhagavān does not let their name disappear. So He is Darpada, the giver of a righteous pride, the pride or the self confidence that comes from doing the right thing.

When we look at some of our heroes that fought in India's freedom struggle, they did not have any property or possessions, no job security, pretty much no security at all. Many of them were jailed. But they had strength of character that came from a commitment to a cause and that cause was freedom of the nation.

Again, when those, who live a righteous life, are opposed by people taken to adharma, He gives them the courage and confidence to oppose and stand against them.

714. Dṛptaḥ

द्रप्तः

The one who is happy for no reason.

A person who is extremely happy, as though drunk or intoxicated or because of any sense-pleasure, is called drpta. If we meet a person who looks happy, we almost always remark, "You look so happy. What is the reason?" And if the person says "No reason", we don't believe the person and assume that the person has a secret. We orient ourselves to believe that there must be a reason for somebody's happiness.

If Bhagavān is Drpta, extremely happy, then what is it that makes Him happy? There must be a cause! This is how our orientation is. He becomes happy not because of any sense pleasure, but because He is ānanda-svarūpa. He is always happy by Himself because of His nature being ānanda, as though drunk with His own ānanda.

715. Durdharaḥ (also word 266)

दुर्धरः

The one known with great difficulty.

Have n't we heard many people say, 'God does not exist.'? When you ask them why, they say with a smug smile, 'He can't be seen'. This is a rather childish and innocent argument. None of us have seen our great great grandparents? Did they exist or not? Just because something is not seen, does not mean it does not exist. We can only see what is other than us.

Since He is essentially sarvopādhi-vinirmukta, free of all limitations and attributes, it is not possible to grasp Bhagavān and retain Him in the buddhi. One can only see an object that is limited but if he is one with you, then how can you see him? Hence, He is Durdhara. It is then absolutely impossible? No. The idea is that it is very difficult. Even though the teaching is clear, to understand Bhagavān, one must have the adhikāritva, the preparedness, and also the antaḥ-karaṇa-śuddhi, the purity of the mind. It needs a certain maturity.

Bhagavān is the easiest to know for the one who is ready and most difficult for the one who is not ready. The readiness needs a certain preparation which comes down from many births. The mind, which is always moving in the realm of forms and attributes, with reference to our own body and also the world of objects, finds it difficult to conceive the formless.

The Gītā says, 'the affliction is greater still for those whose minds are committed to what cannot be objectified, being attributeless, because such an end is reached with difficulty by those who are identified with the body.'

716. Aparājitaḥ (also word 862)

अपराजितः

The one who is never defeated.

He is never defeated by enemies including all the Rāvaṇas. No Rāvaṇa could escape from Śrī Rāma. King Hiranyakāśipu was the king of Asuras and had earned a boon that gave him five special powers: he could be killed by neither a human being nor an animal, neither indoors nor outdoors, neither at day nor at night, neither by astra (projectile weapons) nor by any śastra (handheld weapons), and neither on land nor in water or air. Hiranyakāśipu grew arrogant demanded that everyone worship only him. It was a reign of terror.

Hiranyakāśipu 's own son, Prahlada disagreed. He was and remained devoted to Vishnu This infuriated Hiranyakāśipu and he subjected Prahlada to cruel punishments, none of which affected the boy or his resolve to do what he thought was right. Finally, Holika, Prahlada's aunt, tricked him into sitting on a pyre with her. Holika was wearing a cloak that made her immune to injury from fire, while Prahlada was not. As the fire roared, the cloak flew from Holika and encased Prahlada, who survived while Holika burned.

Vishnu appeared as Narasimha - half human and half lion, at dusk (when it was neither day nor night), took Hiranyakāśipu at a doorstep (which was neither indoors nor outdoors), placed him on his lap (which was neither land, water nor air), and then killed the king with his lion claws

(which were neither a handheld weapon nor a launched weapon). The Holika bonfire and Holi festival signifies the celebration of the symbolic victory of dharma over adharma of the fire that burned Holika.

Asuras are there even today. Any organized group, like the Mafia and others, that commit crime are all asuras. Thus, the fight between the asuras and the devas goes on even today. The fight between the asuras and the devas is to show that both inside us and outside in the world, there are forces that are out to transgress dharma. No matter how long adharma may seem to exist, finally it is dharma which will prevail. As the Lord, in the form of dharma, is never defeated, He is Aparājita. When we celebrate Holi we celebrate all that is dharmika in us and others and resolve to walk the path of dharma as we will always be victorious.

717. Viśvamūrtiḥ
विश्वमूर्तिः
The one whose form is the jagat.

Bhagavān is presented here with reference to form. Being all-pervasive, He has the entire viśva as His form and hence, Viśvamūrti. Bhagavān is essentially formless, but He is also in various forms due to māyā. Without māyā śakti, there is no Bhagavān. The formless is only consciousness, satyaṃ jñānaṃ anantaṃ brahma, the svarūpa of Bhagavān, And that is you. So, when we say Bhagavān, it is only in terms of form. We can only relate to and worship a form.

To worship a form, which form can we include and which form can we exclude? If the Lord created the world, is he inside it or outside it? If you say that the Lord is inside the world, that means someone else must have created the world? The Lord cannot be outside the creation (which includes space) as there cannot be anything outside the creation. Then where is the Lord? The creation is the Lord! As the entire viśva is His form, every form is His form alone.

The word bhakti comes from the root word 'bhaj' to worship/ do seva. Ramana in his beautiful work, Upadesa Sāram says that the best form for worship (sevanam) of the Lord is the the whole creation. Being related to the devatas, pitrs, rishis, bhutas and manushyas, we see what seva can be done in each of these sets of relationships. To worship this entire jagat, I focus on what and how I can contribute as the entire jagat is Bhagavān!
In our understanding, every form can be further reduced to another form, until there is no form at all. Every thought is a form and every form is understood as an object of our cognition. The truth of any cognition is only consciousness. This is what the Lord is. Therefore, Bhagavān means that which has a form and all forms are Bhagavān.

718. Mahāmūrtiḥ
महामूर्तिः
The one with a great form.

As Viśvamūrti, every form that comprises this viśva is His form. But if it is looked at as one great form, a form that contains all forms, He is Mahāmūrti. It is one great cosmic form which contains all the forms.

Individually, He is Viśvamūrti and severally, He is Mahāmūrti.

719. Dīptamūrtiḥ

दीप्तमूर्तिः

The one with an effulgent form.

The one, who is of cosmic form, is Dīptamūrti. Every form is nothing but the expression of the knowledge of Bhagavān and that knowledge is nothing but the effulgent consciousness. Therefore, Bhagavān is Dīptamūrti, one with an effulgent form. Knowledge alone is manifest in the form of the jagat.

Or, it refers to the Viśvarūpa, the form that He took of His own accord to show Arjuna and that was a Dīptamūrti. Sañjaya says in the Gītā, 'If, simultaneously, one thousand effulgent suns should appear in the sky, that effulgence might perhaps be equal to, or may even fall short of the effulgence of that great Lord.'

720. Amūrtimān

अमूर्तिमान

The one without a form

After the words Viśvamūrtiḥ, Mahāmūrtiḥ and Dīptamūrtiḥ, all to reveal his many splendored form and all forms, now he is being revealed as Amūrtimān, one who does not have a form, since there is no karma to give Him a form. For every living form, the seed is karma. But what karma has he performed to have a body? Therefore, He does not have a body of His own.

Every form is His form as it is a manifestation. But when He assumes an avatāra, He has His own form. Although He does not have any karma to give Him a particular form, the results of the prayers of the devotees become the material for Īśvara to assume a given form. This is called avatāramūrti, a form assumed by His own will.

721. Anekamūrtiḥ

अनेकमूर्तिः

The one with many forms.

In the various avatāras, like Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa and so on, the Lord assumes many forms according to His own will. Hence, He is Anekamūrti, one who assumes many forms.

There are two types of avatāras. One is the aṃśāvatāra, a partial manifestation of Himself in some form. These are many and can take place at all times and places and in all cultures. The other is the pūrṇāvatāra, wherein the manifestation is full. At the same time, He can manifest Himself in many forms as in the Kṛṣṇāvatāra, wherein He manifests Himself as many and also in the viśvarūpa. Thus Bhagavān is of many forms.

722. Avyaktaḥ

अव्यक्तः

The unmanifest.

When we say that Bhagavān is born due to the prayers of the people, does it mean that He is really born? No, Even though He manifests in many forms, He really has no form, no birth nor death. He appears to be seen. Bhagavān is essentially Avyakta, not vyakta, not available for objectification by the senses and not determinable as 'this is how He is.' His svarūpa is 'satyaṃ jñānaṃ anantaṃ' and that is to be understood.

That is why Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'Those who lack viveka, not knowing My limitless, changeless nature, look upon Me who is formless as one endowed with a manifest form.'They insisit on localising me and limiting me!

723. Śatamūrtiḥ

शतमूर्तिः

The one who has thousands of forms.

Though essentially He is of the nature of pure consciousness, He is Śatamūrti, one who sports hundreds of forms. Hundred here stands for ananta, countless. There are so many different forms in the jagat and every form is His form. Again, they are further multiplied because of the varying subjective perceptions.

So what if Bhagavān has thousands of forms?
Well, when you know the truth about something, your relationship with it undergoes a change. When you find out that a family member whom you were hostile with, had a very traumatic history, your attitude changes. When you really understand that you have a limited period of time on this earth, your attitude to life changes. When you find unexpected acts of kindness from strangers, your heart opens up.
What we see is how we be (are) towards that.
When I see that all forms (including the people and the environment) are manifestations of Bhagavān, will I continue to be indifferent to these people and misuse the environment?
When I see that all forms are manifestations of Bhagavān, will I continue to be hateful and vengeful to certain communities although they have wronged my community in the past?
When I see that all forms are manifestations of Bhagavān, will I continue to take people for granted and be disrespectful?
When I see that all forms are manifestations of Bhagavān, how will I now interact with them?

724. Śatānanaḥ

शताननः

The one who has many faces.

Ānana is face. Because He is Śatamūrti, He is also Śatānana, one with countless faces.
In South India, there is a custom, that on Vishu, the New Year's day, as soon as one gets up, one should see the face of Bhagavān, How and where does one see the face of Bhagavān? The person is asked to look at Himself in the mirror.

In the ashram during our course, at Vishu time, we would assemble in Pujya Swamiji 's kutiya. A lot of sweets, fruits and auspicious offerings would be laid out in front of the mirror and one by one we would look at ourself in the mirror. Some would do it quickly, some would look at

themselves self consciously, some would linger for a while, some would look at other faces in the mirror but we all looked into the mirror to see what is the most auspicious. Then we would receive prasad from Pujya Swamiji.

Many of us have complexes about our face. Either the nose is too long or too short, the jawline is a particular way, the lips are too thin or too thick, the color is not right etc. But all of these complexes start to fade away when we see that the entire face that we happen to be associated with, in this lifetime is really a combination of genetics and karma, which is really the laws and principles that are a manifestation of Bhagavān.

Every face in the entire universe is the face of Bhagavān; so He has many faces.

725. Ekaḥ
एकः
The one.

He is Eka, one. Generally, the number 'one' is an indefinite number. We say one universe, but that universe has millions of galaxies. Again, one galaxy has billions of stars. One solar system has many planets and satellites. One planet earth has many continents. One continent has many countries, one country has many states, one state has many districts, towns and villages, streets, houses and so on. All this can finally be reduced to atoms and particles. So what is one? We generally understand 'one' as a member of a set and so, when we hear the word 'one,' our mind wants to know what is the set.

There is one body and in that body there are many angas, parts. One arm means, it is different from the other parts of the body. It is one of the set of two, and has parts like the upper arm, elbow, forearm, wrist, hand and five fingers. Again, one finger can be further divided. Thus, our mind is always attuned to look at 'one' as a member of a set, with its own parts and divisions.
But here, when it is said that Bhagavān is one, it is in the sense that any kind of a second thing is not there. Bhagavān has essentially no parts; there is no second Bhagavān; there is nothing else other than Bhagavān. The śruti says, 'it is ekameva advitīyam, one alone without a second' (Chā.Up.6.2.1).

Here, His essential svarūpa is pointed out. Bhagavān is not an aṅgī with many aṅgas, a whole with parts. It is a partless one. Name and form are only mithyā. It is advitīya, one without a second and free from the three-fold divisions. There is a sajātīya-bheda, a difference between the members of the same species, as one tree being different from another tree. Again, there is a vijātīya-bheda, a difference between one speices and the other, as a tree being different from a cow. Then again, there is a svagata-bheda, a difference between the parts of the object, that is, in a tree there are different parts, like branches, leaves, flowers and so on. All these differences are possible, only when parts or a second thing is there. But the Lord is pūrṇa-eka, a partless one, without a second.

726. Naikaḥ
नैकः
The one who is not one.

Though essentially eka, at the same time, He is Naika, that is na eka, not one but many. How? In vyavahāra, He appears in many forms, by His power of māyā. The one has become many. The many-ness is not the intrinsic attribute of Īśvara, but only an incidental attribute.

It is like clay having potness, cupness and so on. But, clay is essentially free from all these attributes. There is only one clay. Pot is not a part of the clay. Clay is, as though, in the form of pots, cups and so on. But, all that is there is only one clay. Similarly, Bhagavān is essentially one, but from the standpoint of names and forms, He is Naika, as though many and this is due to māyā.

727. Savaḥ

सवः

The one in the form of the ritual Sava.

Sava is a ritual wherein the soma juice is offered in the sacrifice. Here, Bhagavān is the Sava ritual. By performing this ritual, one goes to svarga and experiences heavenly sukha, happiness and that sukha which is gained is also Bhagavān. So, Bhagavān is called Sava.

728. Kaḥ

कः

The one who is happiness.

The word 'ka' means sukha, happiness. The śruti praises Him as 'kaṃ brahma- happiness is Brahman'(Cha.Up.4.10.4). Whether one gains happiness in this world through various means or in heaven by means of rituals like sava, that happiness is Brahman alone. Elsewhere also, the śrutis praise Him as 'raso vai saḥ' and 'ānandaṃ brahma.' because He is ānanda-svarūpa.

729. Kim

किम्

The one to be enquired into.

Brahman alone is in the form of all puruṣārthas, pursuits, and all pursuits in life ultimately end in Brahman alone. Therefore, Brahman becomes vicārya, to be enquired into as 'kim brahma - what is Brahman? What is the Self?' So, that which is to be enquired into is Brahman, and the enquiry is also Brahman.

Still, some may wonder, 'There are so many things to be known and enquired into, in this vast, variegated planet. Why enquire into Brahman? Because the Upanisads unequivocally declare that you are Brahman. The Gītā presents the question, 'kim tat brahma' through the mouth of Arjuna(8.1). The Upaniṣad says, 'tapasā brahma vijijñāsasva, tapo brahmeti – enquiry is Brahman, hence enquire into Brahman' (Tai.Up.3.2).

730. Yat

यत्

The already existent, pointed by ‘that which.’

When enquiry is done, we get ‘yat brahma.’ ‘Yat,’ the pronoun, means, ‘that which’ and denotes an already existent object. The same Upaniṣad points out Brahman as ‘yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante….. that from which everything has come, by which everything is sustained and unto which everything goes back, that is Brahman’(Tai.Up.3.1). This is the taṭastha-lakṣaṇa of Brahman.

If one wants to know what is clay, one can define it as ‘that from which all these pots have come, by which all these pots are sustained and unto which all the pots go back, is clay.’ This definition is the taṭastha-lakṣaṇa, incidental definition of clay. Clay does not intrinsically have potness, jarness, lidness and so on as its attributes, but, at the same time, without the clay, these attrtibutes cannot exist. Thus, when it is said as ‘kaṃ brahma,’ that is, ‘ānandaṃ brahma’ that is the svarūpa-lakṣaṇa of Brahman.’

Therefore, when the question arises as ‘kiṃ brahma, what is Brahman?’ the answer is given through ‘yat, which’ and understood as ‘tat, that.’

731. Tat

तत्

That which pervades.

From which everything has come, by which everything is sustained and unto which everything goes back is Bhagavān. What a beautiful and complete definition of Bhagavān! No more localized to a place. That which is in the form of limitless ānanda, tat brahma, that is Brahman. The word ‘tat’ is a pronoun meaning ‘that’ and therefore, can refer to anything. But, when there is no reference mentioned, ‘tat’ indicates only param brahma, the cause of everything, as the ‘tat’ in the sentence ‘tat tvam asi.’

That Brahman is called ‘tat,’ because tanoti, it alone has spread itself, manifested itself as this world and pervades everything.

732. Padamanuttamam

पदमनुत्तमम्

The ultimate abode.

Padamanuttamam is one name, the second word being an adjective to the first. Pada is that which is attained by those who desire mokṣa. That pada beyond whom there is nothing uttama, equal to or greater than this, because there is nothing else, is anuttama. All accomplishments are also included in this one end, but that is not understood. This is the only end gaining which one can say, ‘I have accomplished and there is nothing else to be gained or done.’

Bhagavān is that ultimate end to be gained and it is gained in terms of knowledge as oneself. It is not gained by stilling the mind or by removing thoughts – as even, when the waves and the breakers are there, still, the ocean is not missed. So too, in spite of names and forms, in spite of thoughts, Bhagavān is not missed.

733. Lokabandhuḥ

लोकबन्धुः

The well-wisher of the world.

He is the ādhāra, the basis support, in which all the worlds are tied down and hence, He is Lokabandhu. Again, among all bandhus, relatives, a parent is the best relative, because he/she wishes what is best for the child.

The Lord being the janaka, the parent, of all the worlds, of all the beings in all the worlds, is the real Lokabandhu, the well-wisher, because there cannot be anyone who can care more about our welfare. Further, even when our parents wish well, their wishes may not be really beneficial, because they are not all-knowing. Sometimes our parents may also have their own internal pressures. But the Lord being all-knowing, is nitya-anukūlakārī, always our well-wisher.

Further, a bandhu must always point out to us, what is hita and ahita, what is beneficial and what is not beneficial. Bhagavān, who has given the śāstra in the form of the śruti and smṛti, to guide us about what is good and bad, is the real Lokabandhu. To the extent I see this, will I choose to be guided. He is the one of whom we need not be afraid. Being in the form of the infallible order, He is always a friend and never an enemy.

734. Lokanathaḥ

लोकनाथः

The Lord of the Universe.

The word nātha comes from the verbal word 'nāth' which means imploring, ruling, blessing and also afflicting. He is Lokanātha, the Lord of the world because He is implored, looked upto by people for gaining the various puruṣārthas that they seek.

Again, He is the one who rules the world and takes care of everyone. He blesses them or afflicts people according to their karma-phala. Even the afflictions caused are only to turn them towards dharma.

735. Mādhavaḥ (also words 72, 167)

माधवः

The one born in the lineage of Madhu.

As Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Lord Viṣṇu was born in the lineage of Madhu and hence, is Mādhava.
Earlier the meaning given was, the lord of mā, that is, māyā or vidyā.

736. Bhaktavatsalaḥ

भक्तवत्सलः

The one fond of the devotees.

The Lord is Bhaktavatsala, one who is fond of His devotees. The fondness is to be understood as caring. When one cares for someone, one does a few things to ensure that the person is well looked after and needs are met. When one cares for someone, one accepts the person and offers all support for the person's life goals.When one cares for someone, one tries to lessen the person's burden and offer help in all possible ways in person and in kind. The Lord is in the very form of caring and has to be discovered in that form. Our own body with the various physical systems – everything has been very caringly put together, with more than what is necessary for ordinary activity. This is Īśvara's vātsalya, His caring nature, at the adhyātma, individual level.

If one looks at the world, the symbiotic existence of different species and different forces, we can see that they are all interconnected. This is His care at the adhibūta level. Knowing that we are cared for at all levels, at all times and in all situations allows us to relax in the lap of Īśvara.

737. Suvarṇavarṇaḥ
सुवर्णवर्णः
The one of the colour of gold.

The Lord is in the form of the self-shining consciousness. What colour, would you say, is the colour of consciousness? If it had a form, however subtle, a color is possible. Consciousness has no colour. Even the brilliance of the sun does not have a colour.

Yet, for our understanding, to depict the brilliance, the śruti talks of Him as having a golden colour, the colour of the sun.

738. Hemāṅgaḥ
हेमाङ्गः
The one whose limbs are like gold.

Here, Hemā is Umā, that is, māyā and she is an aṅga, a part of Him. Since māyā is united with Him, He is Hemāṅga.

Or, He is Hemāṅga, because His aṅgas, limbs, are like gold. Everything that is here is His body. He is in the form of all the shining orbs, the orb of the stars, the orb of the sun and anything that is brilliant, that is His aṅga. Also, He is described as Hemāṅga, for visualization.

739. Varāṅgaḥ
वराङ्गः
The one with beautiful limbs.

All His aṅgas, limbs, are vara, beautiful and proportionate. Hence, He is Varāṅga.
In His avatāras as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He is Varāṅga.

740. Candanāṅgadī
चन्दनाङ्गदी

The one who has sandalwood armlets.

He is Candanāṅgadī, because His arms are smeared with sandal-paste which is like armlets.
Or, He has armlets that are pleasing like sandal paste. This is with reference to His avatāras as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

741. Vīrahā (also words 166, 927)
वीरहा
The one who kills the valiant enemies.

He is Vīrahā, one who in order to protect dharma, kills all the great asuras who cannot be easily chastised. This name is also with reference to His avatāras.

Oh, but Bhagavān was supposed to be kind and loving. How can he kill anybody however bad they are? Asuras by their very actions which are not in line with dharma at all, attract phala, results that ensure they will meet their end sooner rather than later. The killing of these highly accomplished people whether it was Kamsa or Ravana is to uphold and protect dharma. We see the value of dharma given in our culture and are better able to appreciate the value of dharma through these incidents.

742. Viṣamaḥ
विषमः
The one who has no equal.

Because He does not have a sama, an equal, a second thing not being there, He is Viṣama.
He is distinct from and unlike everything else and so, only like Himself. As a result, what example can one give to explain how Īśvara is? One can give an example if there are two things. Even if I say Īśvara is all pervasive like space, it helps to convey his all pervasiveness. That's all. But every example is limited. Space as we understand, is inert but Īśvara is consciousness. Space is a product or an effect while Īśvara is not, So, you see, any example can only highlight only one aspect. Hence comparison can never be a means of knowledge for knowing Īśvara.
Only Īśvara is all-knowing and all-powerful. There is no one else. There is no one equal to Īśvara.

743. Śūnyaḥ
शून्यः
The one free from all attributes.

Śūnyaḥ does not mean 'nothing' or emptiness in Vedanta. When we look at describing something or some person, we generally speak of qualities or attributes. If we are referring to the black pen on the table we mean only that black pen. Any pen other than black is not being referred to nor is any other object referred to. What we don't realise is that in describing the pen we have excluded it from all other objects. All descriptions have a practical value but are not defining the essential nature of the object or person. It is helpful to use x car with the most

mileage or y phone because of its many features. When we describe a person we exclude and limit the person from all other people.

When a person has one good quality, we can say that he is viśeṣa-guṇavān, that he has this special quality and be unmindful of his other limitations. What characteristics can we use to totally describe Bhagavān? Bhagavān being free of any limitation needs no viśeṣa-guṇa to distinguish Him. Only if there are more than two objects, it is possible to distinguish it from the other. Therefore, Bhagavān is Śūnya, free from attributes as any description will only limit and exclude him from the rest.

Through māyā, He is ananta-kalyāṇa-guṇa-sampanna, endowed with countless auspicious attributes. But, at the same time, being essentially free from any attribute, He is, as though Śūnya, void.

744. Ghṛtāśīḥ

घृतशीः

The one who has no requests.

He is Ghṛtāśī, one from whom all āśiṣa, requests, prayers are gone. Since we have a sense of lack, we have various requests and prayers which have to be fulfilled, in order to get rid of this sense of lack. But, Bhagavān has no prārthanā, prayer, because, firstly, there is no one to whom He can pray to and secondly, being ever fulfilled, He has no requests or needs to pray for.

745. Acalaḥ

अचलः

The one who does not move.

He is Acala, never moving from His svarūpa, nature.
Emotionally, He is always ānanda-svarūpa. Knowledge-wise, there is never a loss of knowledge. Skill-wise, power-wise, there is never a loss. Being all-pervasive, there is nowhere He can move to.

746. Calaḥ

चलः

The one who moves.
Even though, He is essentially Acala, He is also Cala, moving.
He moves in the form of the wind. He keeps moving all the time in the form of the mind.
Again, in the form of this universe, He moves. The whole universe is the dance of Lord Natarāja, the Lord in motion.

747. Amānī

अमानी

The one without any pride.

The body-mind-sense-complex, which is anātmā, is taken as the ātmā and then there is an abhimāna, identification, with it. This is called māna. Further, māna is also a pride, a notion of self-importance,that is based on one's accomplishments, possessions like wealth, knowledge, power and so on. There is also a feeling that one deserves worship and respect and based on that there is also a demand for respect. This scene itself is based on one's low self-esteem. The one who has this attitude is a mānī.

Since Bhagavān does not have this abhimāna, He is Amānī. Being of the nature of pure consciousness, Bhagavān has no self-ignorance and therefore, there is no abhimāna. Further, He is always with Laksmī, the power of māyā and hence, as Laksmīnārāyaṇa, everything belongs to Him. Therefore, He has never any doubt about His esteem, or a want to be respected and worshipped by others.Amānitva is a qualification necessary, for gaining the knowledge of Īśvara. Hence, Īśvara is invoked as Amānī.

If one wants to gain the knowledge of Īśvara, one should appreciate the fact that all pride belongs to Īśvara alone, because all glory belongs only to Him. Therefore, one develops amānitva, by removing the sense of demanding respect from others. This demand for respect itself is due to the hurt of the ego. Even if the feeling of hurt is legitimate, still one cannot afford to get hurt, because situations are always bound to be both pleasant and unpleasant. One has no control over these. One has to be objective about what is true with reference to oneself and one's life-situations. Hence, by developing amānitva, one can avoid a lot of hurt.

When one is hurt, one has to look at that hurt and see what is hurt. Is it sat-chit-ānanda-ātmā that is hurt or is it the body-mind-sense-complex? The ātmā can never be hurt and the anātmā, being jada, insentient, cannot be hurt. The mind is only an instrument. Thought comes and thought goes. Any thought is momentary and hence, it is not there to get hurt. The body cannot get hurt. Then one finds that there is nobody to get hurt. It is only the ahaṅkāra, the ego or the self concept, that gets hurt.

748. Mānadaḥ

मानदः

i. The one who gives māna.
ii. The one who removes māna.

Anyone who struts around saying,'I did this. It was all my efforts. I am a self made man', does not recognise the Lord 's forces and the many principles and laws that made something happen.
Mānaṃ dadāti – it is the Lord alone who gives us, through His power of māyā, the abhimāna with the anātmā, the identification with the body-mind-sense-complex. Hence, He is Mānada.
Again, it is He alone who dyati, cuts away, removes the abhimāna from those who know the truth. They are clear that 'All that is here is Bhagavān'. Then, what is it that I can claim to be me? What is it that I can claim to be truly mine?
Any māna, acts of respect or words of praise that we get from others, is given to us by Bhagavān alone. It is because of our devotion and puṇya that we are given by Bhagavān with whatever we have, that gets the attention of others and makes them show their māna, appreciation. On the other hand, if one should follow the path of adharma, Bhagavān , cuts away whatever respect one

can get from others and hence, is Mānada. This is not out of any vengeance or anger but just the laws of karma operating.

749. Mānyaḥ

मान्यः

The one who deserves worship.

Bhagavān is Mānya, the one to be respected by all.
When some people get prestigious awards, there can be much debate about how deserving the person was and there will be enough fans as well as detractors. The respect and adoration that accomplished people in their field, garner, can be very relative to time and phase of the person's career. Does the glory of the Lord wane? Bhagavān is the only altar of worship, because all glories, the cause for respect and worship, belong to Him. Because He is Mānya, He gives us māna.

750. Lokasvāmī

लोकस्वामी

The lord of the universe

He is the Lokasvāmī, the Lord, the ruler of all the fourteen worlds. Loka is a different plane of experience and there are six worlds above our loka, our world and seven below. Bhagavān governs all the principles and laws not only in our world but all these worlds.

751. Trilokadhṛk

त्रिलोकधृक्

The one who sustains the three worlds. He is Trilokahṛk, the one who sustains all the three worlds. It can also be taken as the earth, the seven worlds below the earth and the worlds above the earth.

752. Sumedhāḥ

सुमेधाः

The one who has good intelligence.

While listening or studying one needs to be able to receive the knowledge properly. What has been received needs to be retained properly and it should be recollected properly at the necessary time. All this is done without losing track. This capacity to look at a topic and hold it in the mind is called medhā-śakti. The capacity to dwell on it without getting distracted becomes very important. This capacity is very important, especially in the study of the śāstra.
To get this śakti, we invoke the Lord as Sumedhā, as one endowed with this śakti in absolute measure. If the Lord also, like us, has to store and recall the knowledge with the help of the mind, it would not be possible to remember about everything in the jagat and about all the jīvas. Because He is in the form of pure consciousness, His medhā-śakti is absolute in the form of the unfailing law and order. Thus, we invoke the Lord with this name to get the capacity to receive, retain and recall properly.

753. Medhajaḥ

मेधजः

The one who is born in sacrifice/fire ritual offering.

This is the name of the Lord with reference to His Rāmāvatāra. Medha means a sacrifice. Since He was born as a result of the putrakāmeṣṭi ritual (ritual to beget a child) and prayer, He is Medhaja.The yajamāna who undertakes the performance of a medha, a sacrifice, is called medhaja as he is said to take a new birth through the dīkṣā, the religious initiation. As the Lord alone is in the form of the yajamāna, He is Medhaja.

754. Dhanyaḥ

धन्यः

The one who has achieved all ends.

We admire people who have achieved and have accomplished a lot in life. We look upto them and are inspired by them. The Lord is called here Dhanya, one who has accomplished all wealth, that is, all ends that are to be accomplished. Īśvara does not really have to accomplish anything, because everything is already with Him. Since, His essential nature is limitlessness, all aiśvarya belongs to Him.

While we have everything to accomplish through prayer, He does not need to accomplish anything by our prayer. When we give an offering, it is given so that our prayer becomes more real; it becomes a physicalized prayer, in which there is sacrifice and giving. Such a prayer is effective. Even though the Lord cannot be bribed, still, we do all this through our prayers which are actions, so that we get the result. Bhagavān cannot be flattered by any amount of praise, because He is already full and does not require anything more to become full.

755. Satyamedhāḥ

सत्यमेधाः

The one with unfailing intelligence

He is Satyamedhā, one whose medhā, knowledge never fails, never goes wrong. There are situations when we don't remember some key facts. There are situations when we don't consider all factors in making decisions. There are situations when we cannot look at an issue from multiple perspectives. There are situations where our thinking is clouded by strong emotions and we distort the picture. Bhagavān has unfailing knowledge meaning that it is a complete knowledge which does not leave anything to be desired.

756. Dharādharaḥ

धराधरः

The sustainer of the earth.

The earth, which sustains life and upholds everything, is called dharā and the Lord sustains that earth and hence, is Dharādhara. How does the Lord sustatin the earth? Please write your responses on the basis of the previous words and your understanding.

757. Tejovṛṣaḥ
तेजोवृषः
The one who showers rain.

Everyday, as the sun, He showers His blessings in the form of His rays that give tejas, heat and light. Tejas is also water. Again, in the form of the sun, He evaporates the waters of the ocean. They become clouds and in turn, they shower rains. Thus, a cycle is created and life depends on this cycle. In the form of the sun, He is Tejovṛṣa. In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, 'Tapāmyahamahaṃ varṣaṃ nigṛhṇāmyutsṛjāmi ca – I heat up the world and I withhold and release the rain' (BG.9.19).

Ok, if Bhagavān is anyway going to give rain, why do I need to conserve water? Why do I need to plan to more trees? Why do I need to take any measures to use our resources well? Because I am a part of the cycle and by my actions I can contribute or destroy. But, what difference will my action make? We have to be able to see the results of our actions even though it is a miniscule contribution. The ant who helps to lift the big load of the sugar crystal together with the other ants is not evaluating or judging itself, 'But, how can I do it alone'? It just does and together they do.

758. Dyutidharaḥ
The one who is radiant.

On seeing a person, we say that the body is healthy, because the body enjoys a glow of health. That glow is called dyuti. The Lord glows outside in the sun and blesses us and within the body. He glows and blesses as the prāṇa. The glow within the body, as the prāṇa and the glow outside in the sun, is nothing but Īśvara. As this dyuti, the glow of health and the glow of life, belongs to Īśvara, He is Dyutidhara.

759. Sarvaśastrabhṛtāṃ Varaḥ
सर्वशस्त्रभृतां वरः
The best among the wielders of weapons.

Among the śastrabhṛts, the wielders of weapons, He is vara, the best. In His avatāra as Śrī Rāma, as the wielder of the bow Kodaṇḍa, He was the best among those who wielded weapons and hence, Sarvaśastrabhṛtāṃ Vara. But, He never used it unless it was absolutely necessary.
As Bhagavān, He only blesses; He does not use any weapons. He only wields it to bless you. It is only the karmaphala that everybody gets. Hence, the greatest weapon-wielder is the one who never uses it. This is the principle that also underlies the learning of all martial arts. You learn to deal with physical threat and hence fear and you learn to fight so that you never have to fight.
760. Pragrahaḥ
प्रग्रहः
i. The one who receives offerings.
ii. The one who reins our senses.

He is Pragraha, because pragṛhṇāti, He receives all the offerings from His devotees, be it a leaf, flower, fruit, a spoon of water or anything else. He is the one who receives all the karmas directed to Him. What is not directed to Him also goes to Him alone for producing the karmaphala. Thus, He is in the form of the means and ends. He gives results for all the actions. He is the altar for all actions.

Pragraha also means the reins that are used to control a horse. It is only because of the grace of the Lord, that we are able to rein, to control our mind and the senses, which are likely to run wild like wild horses. The control is not so much, that the horses just can't move. If there is direction in life then you can easily lead the horses. The horses need to move in the direction you want, not where the horses want to go. But, if we don't have reins with respect to our mind and sense organs, we are very harsh and rude with the people we love the most. If we don't have reins with respect to our mind and sense organs we don't know how we could get involved in an extra marital affair. If we don't have reins with respect to our mind and sense organs we have to visit the hospital sooner rather than later due to excesses. If we don't have reins with respect to our mind and sense organs then we gossip about our friends and family. Having mastery over the mind and sense organs is a daily practice. How committed are we to this practice? It is not easy but we continue to have this daily practice as our offering to the Lord. His grace is available as the reins as though, He is Pragraha.

761. Nigrahaḥ
निग्रहः
The one who controls.

He is Nigraha, as He keeps everything under His control, through His order and discipline.
It is because of the order of karma that certain desirable results will be got when what is done is proper, and certain undesirable results will be got when what is done is not proper.
Some people who think they are victims of their circumstances may wrongly think that the Lord is controlling them. They need to correct their thinking. Because of the law of karma, there is a discipline and harmony, because of which in turn, there is success and dharma. Thus, the Lord is Nigraha, keeps things under control.

762. Vyagraḥ
व्यग्रः
The one who does not have an end.

Agra means the tip, the end. Everything that has a name and form begins and ends, and also undergoes changes in the middle. The day begins and ends. Our experiences however pleasant or difficult begin and end. And hence atleast there should be 'happy end' at the end of a movie, a story or a play, or so we reason. The only guarantee and certainty in everyone's life is death. Everything else happens in between. Birth and death are the two ends, two events that take place in a jiva's life. All names and forms begin from and end in Bhagavān. But, He is Vyagrah, because He has no agra, that is, He does not have both the ends. He has neither a beginning nor an end; neither birth nor death.

763. Naikaśṛṅgaḥ

नैकश्रङ्गः

The one with four horns.

He does not have just ekaśṛṅga, one horn but has four horns and is hence, Naikaśṛṅga.
The four Vedas, which are in the form of śabda, words, are His horns.

764. Gadāgrajaḥ

गदाग्रजः

The one born before, through the mantra called nigada.

Nigada can mean the Veda or specific Vedamantras. These nigada-mantras were chanted during the sacrifice/fire ritual offering done by Daśaratha for the sake of getting a child. Among the four children that were born because of this sacrifice, Śrī Rāma was agraja, the first born. Therefore, as Śrī Rāma, He is Gadāgraja, born first because of the nigada. The 'ni' of the word nigada is dropped.

In the Kṛṣṇāvatara, He was born before Gada, another son of Vasudeva and hence, Gadāgraja.
Or as Bhagavān Himself is the first born in the form of Hiranṇyagarbha, along with the nigada, that is, the Vedas, He is Gadāgraha. (The 'ni' of the word nigada is dropped here also).

765. Caturmūrtiḥ

चतुर्मूर्तिः

The one who has four forms.

Because He obtains as four mūrtis, as four forms, He is Caturmūrti. The four forms are Virāṭ, Sūtrātmā or Hiraṇyagarbha, Avyakta and Turīya.

Virāṭ is the one who vividhaṃ rājate, manifests in various forms. With reference to the samaṣṭi-sthūla-prapañca, total physical universe, which is the physical expression of the Lord, He is called Virāṭ. With reference to the samaṣṭi-sūkṣma-prapañca, total subtle universe, He is called Hiraṇyagarbha. It is the total expression of His all knowledge.

With reference to the samaṣṭi-kāraṇa-prapañca, total causal universe, He is called the Avyakta, the unmanifest. (This is also referred to as Īśvara). Hiraṇyagarbha and Īśvara are included in the virāṭ, while the virāṭ is not included in Hiraṇyagarbha. Īśvara is there in all the three. The fourth is the Turīya. It is called fourth from the standpoint of the other three. It is not any of the above three and at the same time, it is the truth of the other three, without which the other three does not exist. It is pure caitanya, consciousness. So, the one, who has these four forms-three from the standpoint of the three prapañcas and one from the standpoint of His essential nature – is Caturmūrti.
Alternately, Īśvara is called Brahmāji, when you look at Him as the creator; Viṣṇu, when you look at Him as the sustainer of the creation; and as Rudra, when you look at Him as the one who takes back the entire creation. The fourth one is śuddhaṃ brahma, pure consciousness, who is in and through all the three, but not any of the three. And this is the Caturmūrti.

766. Caturbāhuḥ

चतुर्बाहुः

The one who has four hands.

When the Lord is to be visualized as an altar for worship, He is depicted as having four hands. One hand has the abhaya-mudrā, indicating abhaya, blessing and promising freedom from fear. The two upper hands carry the cakra and the śaṅkha, the discus and the conch. The discus is an assurance for destroying the enemies. The conch calls/beckons us to understand that everything is Īśvara. The fourth hand has the gadā and it is for discipline. His hands are as if saying, 'seek my feet as refuge. Do not carry any load because, I carry the load for you. Do not worry, I will take care of your obstacles and enemies.'

One has to surrender to Him, accepting that one does not have any power over enemies like anger, alcohol and so on, and hence, one seeks His help. Bhagavān says, 'I will take care of all these for you.' This is shown by the four hands of the Lord. This form is given for upāsanā. It serves as an altar for worship and meditation.

767. Caturvyūhaḥ (also word 138)

चतुर्व्यूहः

The one who has four spheres of manifestation.

Vyūha means a manifestation or orderly arrangement. The physical order, the biological and physiological order, the emotional and psychological order, and the order of the buddhi, intellect are the four important manifestations of Īśvara. These orders concerning living beings have some common order. The word 'order' includes priniciples and laws.

There is also an individual order, by which one species can be distinguished from another. Even animals have their own psychological order. And again, the order of the functioning of the intellect includes epistemology, the ways in which we obtain knowledge and also the order of dharma. Thus, Īśvara is in the form of one vast order and these are the four critical manifestations. The Aitareya-āraṇyaka mentions that the Lord is manifest in four ways as the Śarīrapuruṣa, one manifest in the body; the Chandaḥpuruṣa, one manifest in the metre of the Veda; the Vedapuruṣa, one manifest in the Vedas; the Mahāpuruṣa, one manifest in the form of time (3.2.9). Think about this, "Where is it that the Lord is not?"

768. Caturgatiḥ

चतुर्गतिः

The one who can be reached in a four-fold way.

Bhagavān is the gati; the one who is reached in a four-fold way, that is, by doing what is to be done according to the varṇa and āśrama dharma.
Varṇa is the four groups of people. Āśrama consists of the four stages of life – brahmacarya, the life of the student; gārhasthya, the life of the householder; vānaprasthya, a life of preparation for the next stage; and sannyāsa, the life of renunciation. The life of a sannyāsī is one of maturity. Each stage of life contributes to your learning and maturity. There are different lessons to be

learned in each stage and different contributions to be made. These fourfold ways are prescribed by the scriptures. The gati, end, of all these people who live according to the scriptures in every stage of life is Parameśvara.What lessons did you learn in each of these stages and how has that prepared you for moksa ? Do think about it.

769. Caturātmā (also word 137)

चतुरात्मा

i. The one with a quick mind.
ii. The one with four-fold manifestation.

Earlier this nāma was seen as meaning, the one who exists in the form of the Virāṭ, Hiraṇyagarbha, Avyakta and Turīyātmā. Here the word ātmā means the antaḥkaraṇa, He is Caturātma because His ātmā, mind, is catura, skillful and quick, being free from rāga, dveṣa, that is, desire, hatred and so on. So what happens if one is free from binding desires to go towards or to avoid? Our cravings and aversions confuse and slow down the mind. We know that it is not right to make a certain choice yet we feel impelled to do that because of inner pressure. At the same time when we are in charge and not our cravings and aversions then the mind moves fast. Decisions are quicker, choices are clearer, fatigue and confusion is much less.

Or, He is Caturātma, because He is manifest as the ātmā, that is, the antaḥkaraṇa consisting of the four divisions as manas, mind; buddhi, intellect; citta, memory and ahaṅkāra, the ego. Mind is concerned with emotions and doubt, while the intellect is concerned with decision and knowledge; the citta is concerned with memory, and the ahaṅkāra is the seat of the 'I' notion.
Most of the time we are fighting with ourselves. We resist and don't like some of the ways we think or respond. See your mind as the manifestation of Īśvara – all of it, your emotions and doubt, your intellect, your memories and your self concept. See it again and again.

770. Caturbhāvaḥ

चतुर्भावः

The source of the four puruṣārthas.

The various ends sought by human beings is called puruṣārtha. They are dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa. Anything sought for security is artha and searching for artha is due to a sense of insecurity. Once a certain security is ensured, then one goes for kāma, pleasure. Even trying to gain self-satisfaction and a good self-esteem comes under the pursuit of artha and kāma. These pursuits of artha and kāma cannot be avoided and infact, the tradition recognises them as valid pursuits. However, pursuing wealth or pleasure are not ends in themselves. The home is for freedom from homelessness. The weath is for freedom from poverty. The relationship is generally for freedom from insecurity and loneliness.

Dharma which determines the 'how' of acquiring wealth and pleasure upholds the structure and inter connectedness character of society. Upholding dharma requires us to be awareful of the consequences – positive and negative of our activities in pursuing wealth and pleasure and acting on it. If wealth or pleasure is acquired through methods that inflict suffering to others or are a misuse of community resources, or are acquired through unjust means, then it is a violation of dharma. On the other hand, conformity to dharma, while pursuing artha and kāma, helps to gain

puṇya and also helps one become free from conflicts. This helps one to grow into a mature person. All this is yoga. And finally mokṣa is total freedom gained by the understanding of one's true nature. He is Caturbhāva, because He is the bhāva, the source of the four-fold puruṣārthas, achievements. Not only are they from Him but they are also for His sake because all the puruṣārthas finally culminate in Him alone.

771. Caturvedavit

चतुर्वेदवित्

The knower of the four Vedas.

Bhagavān, being all-knowing, is the knower of the entire four Vedas and their meaning.

Having revealed the Veda, Bhagavān makes it possible for people to have a complete life. Life is not complete unless I learn to rise above the limitations of every situation and uphold dharma. Are there any guarantees that situations will work out well? The only guarantee is that you grow such that the situation no longer defines you. Is n't that great?

Life is not complete unless I understand the purpose of my life.
Life is not complete unless I achieve my priorities related to artha, kama based on dharma. One of the students in class asked, 'What if I have tried a lot but somehow not managed to achieve much?' The gist of my reply was, 'Our focus is on the achiever not the achievement.' The kausalam, competence in dharmika actions and samatvam, equanimity and gracious acceptance is what contributes to the growth of the achiever, not the achievement. We know enough instances of achievements never being enough for people. Despite many achievements many adults behave like unruly children in the way they throw temper tantrums, when things don t go their way.

The question is, 'Has the achiever learnt enough from all that life has taught? Or has the achiever become exhausted, bitter and cynical? Life is complete when the achiever transforms to being a seeker of the infinite. With the Veda as a means of knowledge, the pursuit of seeking the truth fulfills itself into discovering that everything is a manifestation of the infinity that one is.
The revealer of the Veda naturally is the knower of it all.

772. Ekapāt

एकपात्

The one in the form of a quarter.

This entire jagat that we see is only eka-pāda, one quarter of Īśvara, who is limitless and pūrṇa. We think that this universe of names and forms is very vast, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. The rest of the ice-berg is submerged.
The Puruṣasūkta says, 'pado'sya visvā bhūtāni – all the beings are only a quarter of Him.' 'Tripād asya amṛtaṃ divi – the other three quarters are beyond the world of names and forms.' The Gītā also echoes something similar.

773. Samāvartaḥ

समावर्तः

The one who keeps the cycle of saṃsara going well.

The cycle of creation, consisting of birth and death, day and night, happiness and sorrow, heat and cold, never comes to an end, because the cause of the jagat never comes to an end.
From the unmanifest, the jagat comes into manifestation and then again, it goes back into an unmanifest condition. Thus, the cycle of saṃsāra keeps on revolving and the Lord, as the cause of it, is Samāvarta.

774. Anivṛttātmā

अनिवृत्तात्मा (or Nivṛttātmā निवृत्तात्मा)

The one who never retreats (or the one whose mind is turned away).

Bhagavān is not located in one place. One, who is located in a particular place, can leave that place and go to another place. But, being all-pervasive, there is no place from which Bhagavān can withdraw and hence, He is Anivṛttātmā.

The rules of sandhi allow this word to be taken as nivṛttātmā also. His ātmā, mind, is always nivṛtta, turned away from the viṣayas, sense-objects and hence, He is Nivṛttātmā. This is a nāma given to Him from our own standpoint. We invoke the Lord as Nivṛttātmā, so that we can have mastery over our sense-organs and turn them away from sense objects when we want to.

Many of us don't have mastery when it comes to using whatsapp or Facebook or some of the other sites. Because we don't have mastery we blame our problems onto social media. We feel compelled to check or post without much thinking. Our drive to check or post, seems to force us to such an extent that we cannot delay or reduce our usage which then becomes an addiction. If one deliberately and consciously uses social media, it can be very helpful to oneself and others. All addiction to a substance or a particular behavior is because one has not invested enough time or effort to cultivate some mastery. One has not discoevered other ways to destress. One can definitely use the will and ones' support sytems and seek the grace of the Lord to cultivate some mastery. This is just one example of mastery of the mind over our sense organs. Which aspect of your life requires a better mastery over your sense organs? Think about it and do what is required including praying.

775. Durjayaḥ

दुर्जयः

The unconquerable.

Our language is very interesting, We talk about 'winning' a person's heart. We talk about conquering a mountain. We talk about celebrities conquering fans. We talk about dominating marketshare. We ask people 'All in control?'. We have not spared anything or anyone as an object of conquest or an object of control. What about winning or conquering the Lord?
For the same reason that Lord is all-pervasive, He is Durjaya, unconquerable. What can be objectified and grabbed alone can be overcome and conquered. But, the Lord being all-pervasive cannot be grabbed, let alone overcome.

776. Duratikramaḥ

दुरतिक्रमः

The one whose order cannot be transgressed.

No one can go against Bhagavān. He is Duratikrama; His laws cannot be transgressed by anybody. The Upaniṣads say, 'He is most frightful like an uplifted vajrāyudha, thunderbolt. From fear of Him, Lord Fire burns; from fear, Lord Sun shines; from fear of Him, Indra and Vayu, function; and Lord Death, the fifth, goes in leaps and bounds. These are all the protectors of the world, who themselves are powerful. But unless there is someone who rules over them, there will not be any regulated activity. Just as the servants tremble out of fear of their master, they too seem to tremble. This is not a paralyzing fear but more of an awe inspiring attitude.

But people seem to go against Īśvara! They too are governed by His mandates alone. Whoever tries to transgress His mandates, gets their karma-phala, according to their actions. Thus, that karma-phala itself acts as a deterrent. No one, including the devatās, is outside the rule of Īśvara, nor can anyone transgress His law and order. Nobody can escape His law, which is the law of karma.

I am reminded of the policemen on horseback trying to manage the swelling crowds during Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj (Allahabad). What is fascinating about this most effective mode of management is that the people regulate themselves. Why? Because they think that they will be trampled by the horse if they don't behave. Horses being very sensitive animals would ordinarily never trample but because of their size, people are fearful of the consequences if they don't follow order. So, the order of Īśvara is so awe inspiring and it can't be transgressed.

777. Durlabhaḥ

दुर्लभः

The one who is not gained easily.

Īśvara is Durlabha, cannot be gained easily. He can be gained only when one is ready and prepared to recognize Him; then, He is the most easily available. To recognise him, I need to be open to life. When I am open to life then I have freshness in my approach. I am not closed or cynical or bitter about my life experiences. I am able to see them as experiences and learn from them. Period.

In the Gītā, the Lord Himself says, 'bhaktyā labhyastu ananyayā – I am gained only through a devotion in which there is no other thing'(8.22). He must be chosen as the only object of love and commitment. Our experience in the world is of exclusive love and care. If I love my child, I cannot love any other child equally. If I love a particular profession, I cannot have love for any other. This is conditional love. If I choose the Lord as the only object of love then am I rejecting others in my life? This is the only choice where you include everyone and it is a choice born of enquiry and surrender. In choosing the Lord I am choosing the infinite. The infinite includes everything. There may be devotion to the Lord, but the commitment is to the gain of artha, kama and higher lokas. He then becomes a means to an end. This is anya-bhakti. But in ananya-bhakti, the commitment is to gain only the Lord. Without such a bhakti, He is difficult to gain.

Since Īśvara is all-pervasive, gaining Him is only by recognizing Him. Vyāsa says that such a bhakti is never gained without punya collected over many janmas, births.

778. Durgamaḥ
दुर्गमः
The one who is known with difficulty.

If Īśvara is all-pervasive, He should be the most easy to recognize and therefore the most easy to gain. But He is Durgama, very difficult to recognize and understand. Why is it then, that He is not recognized? That is because He is Durlabha. He is understood only when one is ready. It is like understanding an equation, hence He is Durgama. If He is other than oneself, one can stumble upon Him. But He is oneself. Therefore, He is well-hidden, because the person, who looks for Īśvara, is really looking for himself. So, all the seeking should be reduced to simple jijñāsā.

I want my family to live long and be happy and secure. I also want Īśvara. This is like saying I want to be the CEO of the company and also want to be in charge of the watchman. Or I want this entire bag of sweets. And I want the red colored candy. Where is that? Oh, it is in the same bag of sweets. Desire for your family or a promotion or children doing well in exams are specific and exclusive desires. If you want your family to do well, you may also want the neighbouring family to do well, but not at the cost of your family. There is an exclusiveness to all our desires. But desire for Īśvara, the one who sustains all is all encompassing. All desires are reduced to one dominant consuming desire, to know Īśvara. That is what is meant by ananya-bhakti here.

Again, He is śāstraikavedya, one can be known only by a committed enquiry into the śāstra, with the help of a guru. And many do not even have access to this enquiry. Even the ones who have access don't value what they have. Naturally, He is Durgama, very difficult to know.

779. Durgaḥ
दुर्गः
The one difficult to attain.

If one is ready, then He is easily known.
Or else, due to obstacles and difficulties, He is Durga, not easily realized and therefore, not easily attained.

The Katha Upanishad has the story of a very young Nachiketa who is seeking the knowledge of the Atma from Lord Yama, the lord of death. Nachiketa asks Yama for the teaching about that which survives death. Yama, not expecting a request of this kind from a boy less than ten years old tries to dissuade him saying that understanding this knowledge is very difficult. He further says that even the devatas had doubts about this matter. You would expect most people to say, 'Oh, then let it be. If the devatas can't do it, I don't stand a better chance than them and give up.' But our Nachiketa was different. He conceded that the subject matter was difficult. If the devatas had doubts then surely this subject matter was very important and what better teacher than lord Yama to teach about that which survives death. The difficulty did not discourage him but encouraged him, instead. What an inspiring attitude!

780. Durāvāsaḥ

दुरावासः

The one who is not easily retained in the mind.

A form is given to the Lord for the purpose of doing dhyana, meditation, on Īśvara.
Even then, if one is not ready, it becomes difficult to retain that form in the mind and meditate, because training becomes necessary. Hence, He is Durāvāsa, one who is not easily retained in the mind.

781. Durārihā

दुरारिहा

The one who removes the enemies.

When difficulties are there, and if you still hold on to Īśvara, then all the difficulties can be overcome, because Bhagavān is Durārihā. He is the remover of even the most difficult enemies, like emotional enemies, which are complex. If you hold on to Him, He will remove them.

782. Śubhāṅgaḥ (also word 586)

शुभाङ्गः

The one with beautiful limbs.

He is called Śubhāṅga, one whose aṅgas, limbs, are beautiful and auspicious. In an avatāra, every part of the body is a blessing. The avatāra of Īśvara is to re-establish dharma. Therefore, it is one of blessing.

In the pūrṇāvatāra, every aṅga, every aspect, is a blessing; whereas, in the aṃśāvatāra, only certain aṅgas are a blessing. In an aṃśāvatāra, in certain ways the buddhi is exalted, but there maybe an emotional want. In this, there is only a partial glory, extraordinary but with the limitations of mortals. Mind, buddhi, hands and legs and so on, are all aṅgas and a blessing. Further, He is to be meditated upon with a form in which every limb is beautiful and a source of śubha, blessing.

Nyāsa is a process of placing parts of a mantra in a sequential order before japa. In anga-nyāsa, different deities are seen to be placed in different parts of the body, rendering the entire body as shuddha, sanctified. In the chanting of the nyasa before Rudram, Indra is seen as residing in the arms. When that is so, what will my attitude be towards my arms, now? I see my limbs as a way of contributing to the world in creating good outcomes. We see an extension of this in the Sikh religion, in the wearing of the ‘kada’, a reminder that this hand is’God’s hand’ and to be mindful to work to contribute and do good karma.

783. Lokasāraṅgaḥ

लोकसारङ्गः

i. The one who takes the essence of the worlds.
ii. The one gained through the essence of the universe.

The lokasāra, or the essence of the universe, is oṃkāra. In the Upaniṣad, it is mentioned that Prajāpati meditated and he got the three Vedas as the essence of the lokas. He meditated upon the three Vedas and got the three vyahṛtis – bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ and suvaḥ. He further meditated upon them and got the praṇava, that is, the oṃkāra as the essence. Thus, the essence of all the worlds and the meanings of all the words is praṇava.

The bee is called sāraṅga, because it takes the essence of all the flowers and gives it as one honey. Here, Bhagavān is Lokasāraṅga, because lokasāraṃ gacchati – He is the one who, in the form of Prajāpati, has obtained the praṇava as the sāra, the one essence of all lokas. He is also Lokasāraṅga, because lokasāreṇa gamyate, He is attained through praṇava, the essence of all the worlds, that is, by the analysis of oṃkāra.

Or, He is Lokasāraṅga because He takes only the sara, the essence of what the lokas, the people offer Him, as even a sāraṅga, a bee, takes only the essence from the flowers. He takes only our śraddhā, bhakti and all the other good attitudes alone and overlooks all our omissions and commissions, like the mistakes in our pūjā, offerings, chanting, and so on. He takes only the essence, that is, the motive of the devotees.

784. Sutantuḥ

सुतन्तुः

The one who is beautifully expanded as the universe.

As even from the cotton, the tantu, thread, spreads out long, Bhagavān has spread out beautifully in the form of this universe and hence, Sutantu. If the entire jagat is looked upon as the fabric, then Bhagavān is the yarn, which is lasting, but as though changing from moment to moment. All different colors and different forms and different people and different situation! The yarn is the same through the entire jagat.

785. Tantuvardhanaḥ

तन्तुवर्धनः

The one who makes the universe grow.

Bhagavān makes the universe expand just like the long yarn. Or He cuts it. He makes the yarn to expand. The galaxies expand, that is, the space between the galaxies increases and the galaxies seem to move away from each other.

Every family expands. Thus, He is Tantuvardhana, the one who expands the fabric of this universe. Or, He is the one who cuts away, destroys, the thread of this universe during pralaya. The verb ‘vardh’ also means ‘to cut.’

786. Indrakarmā

इन्द्रकर्मा

The one whose actions are great and glorious.

Indra here means a ruler. Bhagavān is Indrakarmā, because His karma, actions are like that of Indra, the king. They are great and glorious.
Or, He is the one who rules the worlds, in the form of Indra.

787. Mahākarmā (also word 672)
महाकर्मा
The accomplisher of great deeds.

He is Mahākarmā, because His karma is mahat. Karma, here means the object created.
What is the object of the action of creation of Bhagavān? The jagat, consisting of the five great elements and the elementals, is the object.
Everything is complex; there is nothing elementary in creation. So it is mahat, great.
What are some of the great deeds that you have accomplished? Do think about it.

788. Kṛtakarmā
कृतकर्मा
The one who has done all that is to be done.

He is Kṛtakarmā, because He has done everything that is to be done. There is nothing left undone, nothing lacking in what has been done. The end that one wants to achieve is called puruṣārtha or shortly as artha. Generally, one has many arthas to be achieved and by the time one achieves a few of them, a few more get added to the list. The list seems unending. Thus, it is not possible for anyone to say, 'I have done all that is to be done, because I have achieved all that which has to be achieved.'

From our standpoint, when we look at the Lord, He is Kṛtārtha. He has achieved everything that is to be achieved and hence, He is Kṛtakarmā, done everything that is to be achieved and done. Put in a different way, He has everything with Him and therefore, there is nothing to be achieved by Him and therefore, there is nothing to be done by Him.

The purpose for which Bhagavān took an avatāra was for doing dharmātmakaṃ karma, actions that are in keeping with dharma. It was always a 'mission accomplished,' and therefore, He gains the name Kṛtakarmā.

789. Kṛtāgamaḥ (also word 655)
कृतागमः
The author of the Vedas.

Āgama means the Vedas because paramparayā āgacchanti, they come down through a paramparā, either of father and son or teacher and student. All the rituals and their know-how are given in the Vedas. As the āgamas (Vedas) are krta, authored by Him, given out by Him, Bhagavān is Kṛtāgama.

790. Udbhavaḥ (also word 373)
उद्भवः

i. The one of superior birth.
ii. The one who has no birth.

Bhagavān is Udbhava, because His bhava, birth, is taken of His free will, and not due to karma. It is therefore, utkṛṣṭa, superior and praise-worthy. He is born according to His will, by keeping māyā under His control and He is born where He likes. For whatever purpose that avatāra was assumed, that job is always well accomplished. There is no unaccomplished avatāra.

Or, udgataḥ bhavaḥ asmat – He is one from whom birth has gone away. Being the cause of all, He himself is uncaused and hence there can be no bhava, birth for Him. Bhagavān Himself says in the Gītā, 'I am unborn, changeless and the cause and Lord of all living beings. Still, wielding my own prakṛti, I, (as though) come into being by my māyā, my own creative power.'

791. Sundaraḥ
सुन्दरः
The handsome.

He is Sundara, very handsome, and this beauty is the wonder of the world. Whether is is avatāra or the jagat, in which the avatāra takes place, it is sundara, beautiful. Even in His Narasiṃha-avatāra, He is beautiful, especially when He became Lakṣmīnarasiṃha.

792. Sundaḥ
सुन्दः
The one who melts our heart.

Because His grace suṣṭhu unatti, melts the heart of even the most hardened person; sulabhena unatti, effortlessly melts everybody, He is Sundah. This takes grace.

When you hold your baby for the first time and are wonderstruck that all went okay; When you escape an accident; when your children express their love for you unexpectedly; when you reach the summit of a mountain after much struggle; when somebody accepts you completely when you are struggling to accept yourself; when you get work opportunities that earlier never came your way; when things start to change for the better when you gave up; when you make a last minute career related decision and it works out; when you finally feel at home on listening to the guru; it is all grace. His great compassion effortlessly melts people.

793. Ratnanābhaḥ
रत्ननाभः
The one whose centre has many jewels.

He is Ratnanābha, because His navel is beautiful like a jewel. But it can be looked at in another way. The Lord is in the form of the earth which has ratnas in its nābhi, has all the precious stones, gold and other precious things within and hence, He is Ratnanābha.
You will note that in our culture, words or a verse may be understood literally, symbolically or metaphorically. The literal meaning of a word or verse gives way to a symbolic meaning (the

Lord is in the form of the earth with treasures) very often. Sometimes the literal meaning of a word or a verse gently glides us into a more metaphorical meaning (the Lord is my treasure) and sometimes the word does its job and slips away and the understanding remains. Much like the pole vaulter who uses the pole to get onto the other side but does not need the pole any more!

794. Sulocanaḥ

सुलोचनः

The one who has beautiful eyes.

Sulocana means one who has beautiful eyes. Locana can also mean jñāña. He is the one who has superior knowledge, that is, all knowledge and hence, He is Sulocana. Further, knowledge of Him, or His svarūpa, is the knowledge of blessing. Every knowledge is a blessing. But the ultimate blessing is the jñāña that liberates one from saṃsāra, while living.

795. Arkaḥ

अर्कः

The one worthy of being worshipped.

The word arka is derived from the verbal root 'arc' to worship.
Bhagavān is Arka because He is worshipped by even Brahmāji and the other devatās, who themselves are worshipped. All worship goes and falls at His feet. What is seen, what is heard, everything falls at the feet, at the altar of consciousness.

796. Vājasanaḥ

वाजसनः

The giver of food.

Vāja is food, especially, rice. He is the great provider of Vāja, food, through the earth, to all beings. The food chains in the ecosystem is very interesting. A hawk eats a snake, which has eaten a frog, which has eaten a grasshopper, which has eaten grass. So many food chains make up the ecosystem. All beings get the food they need. Only the human being eats what it wants and not just what it needs. In any case, all the jīvas – be it human beings, animals, plants, insects or bacteria – are provided with the appropriate food. So, Bhagavān is called Vājasana.

797. Śṛṅgī

शृङ्गी

The one who has a horn or a peak.

Śṛṅgī is one who has a prominent, special śṛṅga; śṛṅga can mean a horn or a peak of a mountain. In His Matsyāvatāra, at the time of pralaya, He had a special horn by which He dragged the boat carrying King Satyavrata and others.

Another way of looking at it is, He alone is in the form of the great mountains which have special peaks and is therefore, Śṛṅgī. In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, 'sthāvarāṇāṃ himālayaḥ – I am the Himalayas among the mountains.'(10.25).

798. Jayantaḥ

जयन्तः

The cause of victory.

He is Jayanta, because He excels in conquering enemies. Any kind of jaya, success, requires His grace. What makes the difference between victory and failure is grace. Bhagavān is Jayanata, because He is the cause of our success.

In the Mahābhārata, Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the cause of the victory of the Pāṇḍavas. The Mahābhārata itself is called Jaya, to show that it is dharma and satya alone which wins ultimately. When everything is destroyed, the truth alone will prevail.

799. Sarvavijayī

सर्वविज्जयी

The all-knower and the victorious.

These two words together form one nāma. He is the Sarvavit, one who is the knower of everything and also the Jayī, one who is victorious. The śāstra uses the word sarvajña to refer to a jñāñi, who knows Brahman. Brahman is everything and he knows himself, the ātmā, as Brahman, the essence of everything and hence, is sarvajña. The word sarvavit refers to one who knows everything individually, with all the details. There can be many sarvajñas, but there can be only one sarvavit and that is Bhagavān.

He is jayī, because He has the nature of always being victorious. No internal or external enemy can stand against Him. He is Sarvavit and also Jayī.

800. Suvarṇabinduḥ

सुवर्णबिन्दुः

i. The one who has beautiful limbs.
ii. The one who is the auspicious mantra 'Om.'

Because His bindus, limbs, are shining like suvarṇa, gold. He is Suvarṇabindu.
'O' is varṇa, the letter, and the 'M' the anusvāra, is the bindu. Om itself is suvarṇabindu, the auspicious syllable. It is derived from the verbal root 'ava rakṣaṇe,' and means 'one who protects.' Being the name, the mantra of the Lord, it protects and blesses. Hence, Bhagavān, whose mantra has an auspicious varṇa and bindu, is Suvarṇabindu. Om being His name, He is to be known through this mantra.

801. Akṣobhyaḥ (also word 999)

अक्षोभ्यः

The undisturbed.

Bhagavān is Akṣobhya, because He is never afflicted, never disturbed by anything.

How can we understand this better? Let 's consider space. It is the most subtle of the five elements and accommodates all the other elements – air, fire, water and earth.
Is space affected if the air moves fast or very slowly?
Is space affected if fire ravages a forest?
Is space affected if a tsunami affects the coastal towns?
Is space affected if there are earthquakes?
Without being affected or disturbed, space accommodates everything. In it, all happens.
What or who is it that contains even this space? Bhagavān as Akṣobhya.
When you see yourself as that consciousness which is the basis of space, what can you get affected by? What can get to you?
For that which accommodates everything, can he ever be subject to any type of affliction, such as desire or hatred. He is not afflicted by the objects of the senses like sound and so on.

802. Sarvāvagīśvareśvaraḥ
सर्ववागीश्वरेश्वरः
The Lord of all the lords of speech.

Bṛhaspati is called Vāgīśvara because he is lord of vāk, knowledge and he is the guru of all the devatās, including Indra. In astrology, He is called guru, Brahmāji and Agni are also Vāgīśvara because they bless the speech.

Saraswatī is also the deity of vāk. Pujya Swamiji reminded us about this during the last month of our course. He said,'Devi Saraswati is sitting on your tongue. All that you say is your worship to her.' Not one to give advice unless asked, He did not want us to use abusive words and use the organ of speech well. He was saying this only to people who were graduating from the intensive course with him. If we truly understand that this sophisticated organ of speech is where Saraswati resides, then will we indulge in mindless gossip or say words to deliberately hurt people or helplessly abuse others?
What do we use this 'vak' for, in the whole day? Worth reflecting on.

While the above are deities, Bhagavān is the Īśvara, the Lord of all these Vāgīśvaras, the great deities of vāk, blessing them with that capacity and hence, He is called Sarvavāgīśvareśvara.

803. Mahāhradaḥ
महाह्रदः
The one who is like a big lake.

He is Mahāhrada, because He is like a big lake like the Mānasarovar. He is an ocean of ānanda, reaching which, people get themselves cooled from the heat of saṃsāra, a life of becoming.
You can be yourself when you relate to Bhagavān.
You don't need to wear anything special.
You need not put on a mask.
You need not be in a good mood.
You don't need to speak in a particular way only.
You don't need to know anybody who can give your references.
You don't need to prove your worth.

You don't need to wait until he is free to talk to you.
You don't need to be religious or spiritual in a particular way.
You don't need to wait for an appointment or schedule a time to engage with Bhagavān.
You don't need to go to a particular place to relate to him.
You can be yourself when you relate to Bhagavān.

804. Mahāgartaḥ

महागर्तः

The one who is like a great canyon.

Garta is something like a canyon. His māyā is difficult to cross like a great canyon and hence, He is Mahāgarta. In the Gītā, Bhagavān Himself says, 'mama māyā duratyayā – my māyā is very difficult to cross' (7.14). It can be crossed only with the grace of Bhagavān. For those who are not prepared, it is very difficult to cross. But, those, who surrender totally to the Lord, will be able to cross it easily. Hearing this, one could well say, 'I don't have grace. I don't know what it means to surrender totally. This is too overwhelming for me.' So what should we do? First, I recognise that I am overwhelmed. I feel swamped because I am not in touch with all the factors that shaped me to be the person I am.

Second, I pay some attention to these factors: the positive influences in my life, the stories that inspired me, the sayings that motivated me to achieve, the memories of good times, the times I have been proud of myself, the times I have been grateful for what I have, the moments that I have been saved from near death situations etc. When I think of all this I can't help but feel some contentment and some gratitude.

Third, I turn my attention to my commitment to self growth and self discovery through Vedanta. I remember Bhagavān 's promise and reassurance from the Gita of taking care of my yogakshema. In other words, I am always taken care of, more so because I am amongst the rare people who seeks to know Bhagavān. This is much like how all of us were as 1-2 year olds, completely trusting all the arms that lifted us and held us. The baby was just blessed with total trust. The baby does not really know the adult that holds him/her. But there is trust. Having grown up, our ability to trust has reduced. But through the names of the sahasranāma we are regaining our capacity to trust Bhagavān, not for his sake, for our sake.
The more I see all the principles and laws are governed and pervaded by Bhagavān the more I am able to trust and relax in his lap. In my understanding there is surrender.
The word garta has also the meaning of a chariot and therefore, mahāgarta means a mahāratha. He is Mahāgarta, as He has shown Himself as a great charioteer in His Kṛṣṇāvatāra.

805. Mahābhūtuḥ

महाभूतः

The great being.

Here the word bhūta means anything that 'is'. Generally, all the beings, bhutas, which can be referred to as existing, are subject to time, change and death.
But, Bhagavān, as the parātmā, exists in all the three periods of time – past, present and future and is always the same. Hence, He is Mahābhūta.

806. Mahānidhiḥ

महानिधिः

The big treasure-house.

Nidhi is a receptacle or storehouse where things are stored. Bhagavān is the Mahānidhi, where everything – all the beings, all the elements and elementals – are treasured, kept. He is the safe-keeper of the entire world.

If the treasure is locked away, it is of no use. If the treasure is accessible, and of use, then it serves its purpose. A seed is a treasure of the tree. In that little seed lies the potential and possibility of thousands of more seeds, fruits, leaves, branches etc.

A long time ago when I worked with street children, we struggled with their struggles! They found it very difficult to commit to anything – taking medication, attending school classes, contributing to their savings from what they earned, staying off risk behaviour etc. They rebelled against everything. And then, we took some of them on a difficult trek. After the trek we sat together, reflecting on our experiences. I asked them,' From where did you get the courage to deal with this near death situation? You could have easily fallen in the valley' Did your courage come from the trees, the valley or the sky?' They just laughed and tried to be dismissive. I persisted. One of them said, 'It came from us'. I asked "Did you know you had such perseverance and courage?". No,they said. Will this courage come out only in the mountains? Is it possible that it might emerge at other times? They said it is possible. One of them said,' I was scared to climb that steep path. I still did it. I could have died. Despite my fear, I could still push myself. Then saving money is not such a big mountain. If I could climb this mountain, the other mountains in my life are okay. We then went on to discuss their lifestyle. That day was the beginning of their discovery of the treasure they held within themselves.

You are a manifestation of the treasure that is Maha-nidhi. What is your treasure?

807. Kumudaḥ (also word 589)

कुमुदः

The one who makes the earth happy.

Ku means the earth. In His avatāras, He reduces the extra burden that the earth has to bear and kuṃ modayati – makes Bhūmādevī happy and hence, Kumuda.

The Purāṇas poetically talk of the earth being overburdened, when adharma overpowers dharma. Whenever there is overpopulation of any species, we find that there is always a readjustment taking place. Nature will adjust itself. This is a poetic expression. As Īśvara, He is the one who makes the people on earth happy, by bringing rains at the right time. Thus, He is Kumuda, making the flora and fauna happy and thereby, making mother earth happy.

808. Kundaraḥ

कुन्दरः

The one who gives results pleasant like the kunda flower.

Kunda is a fragrant, white flower like the jasmine. He is Kundara, because rāti, He gives the results for our prayerful karma, the results that are pure and fragrant like the white kunda flower.

Or, He is Kundara, because lāti, He accepts our offerings pure as kunda.
Or, He is Kundara, because He as though split the ku, the earth, in His Varāhāvatāra, while trying to kill Hiraṇyākṣa.

809. Kundaḥ
कुन्दः
The one who is beautiful like the kunda flower.

He is beautiful and pure like the kunda flower and so, Kunda.
In the Paraśurāmāvatāra, He performed a great yāga and gave away the earth to the Sage Kaśyapa. Also because, He as though, destroyed the earth by destroying the kṣatriyas. He is known as Kunda.

810. Parjanyaḥ
पर्जन्यः
The one who blesses like the clouds.

Parjanya is the rain bearing cloud. In the form of these clouds, He blesses the earth with rains and cools the earth and hence, Parjanya. In the prayer, 'svasti prajā..' we pray for timely rains.
Again, Īśvara is Parjanya, as He rains on us the various desirable karmaphalas, which are of the nature of sukha and fulfills the desires of people.

The rains bring down the heat. So too, Īśvara brings down the tāpas, the heat, of our threefold afflictions, – ādhyātmika (afflictions centred on our body-mind-sense-complex), ādhibhautika (afflictions centred on the elements and elementals including the bugs and the people that bug me) and ādhidaivika (afflictions centred on acts of nature over which we have no control such as storms, earthquakes etc). For peace from these afflictions, we also chant shāntih thrice, in many of our prayers.

811. Pāvanaḥ (also word 292)
पावनः
The one who purifies.

Bhagavān is Pāvana, because punāti, He purifies us. The very act of remembering Him and His name purifies us. The impurities are primarily binding likes and dislikes as these seem to have a power of their own when we act under their sway. By remembering Him, all binding likes and dislikes are neutralized. The fear of death and all other insecurities are removed.

That person, in whose awareness, the presence of Īśvara is never lost, is never alienated from Īśvara. This is what happens in prayer. Not only does prayer bring Īśvara into one's awareness,

but also, gives a life that involves dharma, straightforwardness, compassion, reaching out activities and so on. In all these, one is in harmony with Īśvara and this harmony removes the impurities in the antaḥkaraṇa. Thus, one is released from the hold of likes and dislikes and is purified.

812. Anilaḥ (also word 234)

अनिलः

The unimpelled.

The one who impels is ila. Na ilaḥ anilaḥ. Bhagavān, neither impels nor is impelled, and hence is Anila. As the ātmā, He just blesses.

The ātmā is one and the same in all and it does not think. Ātmā blesses the mind, there is the 'I' thought and the 'this' thought. With reference to the 'this' thought, the 'I' thought becomes the owner of the thought, and that is called 'thinking' and then, we say 'I am the thinker.' Both these thoughts are blessed by the ātmā. Now, when we think of mustard, the thought of the mustard occupies the whole mind. Because the mustard is very small, we cannot say that only a small part of the mind is occupied. The thought of the milky way, the galaxy, also occupies the whole mind. The thought of a chocolate also occupies the whole mind. The mustard thought, the galaxy thought and the chocolate thought – all these are nothing but consciousness and without consciousness, there can be no thought. But, (Bhagavān as) the ātmā is just a sākṣī, witness, and not the impeller of any thought or action. Again, Bhagavān is not impelled by anyone or anything.

A daydreamer or sleepwalker is also called ila. One, who is asleep to, ignorant of his true nature, is ila. Bhagavān neither sleeps nor daydreams because He is nitya-prabuddha-svarūpa, ever awake and alupta-dṛk, one who never ceases to be awake and aware. In the form of consciousness, which has no eyelids, He is ever awake. As the ātmā, He is the sākṣī of the three states of experience. As Bhagavān also, He has no ignorance of Himself, ever awake to His svarūpa, So, Bhagavān is called Anila, the one who never sleeps.

Nila means that which is difficult to comprehend. Na nilaḥ anilaḥ. For the prepared people, the devotees, Bhagavān is Anila, not difficult to understand and attain, but sulabha, easy, because they understand that He is ever present as their ātmā.

813. Amṛtāśaḥ

अमृताशः

The enjoyer of immortality.

We are bothered daily by hunger and thirst and we have to eat and drink in order to allay them. What is the aśana, food of Bhagavan? Bhagavān eats amṛta, nectar. His own ānanda-svarūpa is the amṛta. He 'as though' eats and drinks Himself. If one takes amṛta, there is no death. This is the nectar of knowledge.

Ātmā is not subject to time and mortality and hence, amṛta. The body does not think 'I am a mortal.' The mind does not think on its own, ' What will happen to me?', I associated with the

mind and body imagines the features of the body and mind and gets disturbed. The 'I' is not subject to time. The fear comes only from the notion that 'I am a mortal,' which is centred on the 'I'. This confusion is resolved, when there is the understanding that the 'I' is not bound of time, content of 'now'. Bhagavān is amṛta, not subject to time and He eats amṛta, sustains on His own swarūpa and hence, is Amṛtāśa.It can also be looked at from the standpoint of the Purana. When the milky ocean was churned, amṛta was obtained. Bhagavān, as mohinī, helped the devas to take the amṛta and He also took it and hence Amṛtāśa.

Alternately, His āśā is amṛta. His desires as hopes never die, never go waste and hence, He is Amṛtāśa.

814. Amṛtavapuḥ

अमृतवपुः

The one whose form is immortal.

Because He is Amṛtāśa, the enjoyer of amṛta, He is Amṛtavapu, one, whose vapus, body is nectar. Body here refers to the svarūpa, nature.

The svarūpa of Īśvara being sat-cit-ānanda, is amṛta and has no time-bound existence. As pure Isness, there never was a time that it was not there. There never will be a time that it will not be there. In fact, it is not subject to time. This Isness pervades you in such a way that there is no more inside or outside.

For the gold chain, is the gold inside the chain or outide the chain? Think about it. Is the gold sitting on top of the chain or it is deep below in the innermost part of the chain? A possible location can arise only if the chain's existence is independent of the gold. But the chain cannot exist even in imagination without a substance. What pervades the chain, is gold, What pervades my form is a form that is immortal. And because He is Amṛtavapu, He is Amṛtāśa.

815. Sarvajñaḥ (also word 453)

सर्वज्ञः

The omniscient.

He is Sarvajña, one who knows everything. When it is said, Bhagavān knows all, He has neither self-ignorance nor does He have any ignorance about any object. There is nothing that is unknown to Him, either generally or in detail. So, He is Sarvajña and Sarvavit.

816. Sarvatomukhaḥ

सर्वतोमुखः

The one whose faces are everywhere.

Bhagavān is multi-faced, that is, any face that is there, is the face of Bhagavān alone.
Starting from our face onwards, we resist Bhagavān. Who is genuinely happy with his/her face? We think that something could be better. The nose could have been sharper, the mouth could

have been wider, the color could have been lighter, the eyes could have been bigger etc. Well, your face is the face of Bhagavān. Now, how does one react to one's face?
He is the Virāṭ and being everything, He has many faces which can see everywhere and everything. Bhagavān Himself says in the Gītā, 'sarvato'kṣiśiromukham-He has eyes, heads and faces everywhere'(13.13).

817. Sulabhah
सुलभः
The one who is easily available.

Bhagavān is Sulabha, one who is easily attainable without any effort, because He is already siddha, accomplished, as the ātmā of oneself. Anything that is sādhya, to be accomplished, is not easy to attain, because a lot of effort has to be put in. But, if it is already siddha, existent, no effort is required to attain it; only knowing it is required.

Bhagavān, as sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā, is you and to know this, no effort is needed. One has to be exposed only to the teaching. There is no action involved, because there is no will.
Knowing is not doing and doing is not knowing. Once the eyes are opened with the mind behind it, seeing takes place automatically. There is no effort involved; the will is suspended. So, when one is exposed to the teaching of the śāstra, since the pramāṇa is available and the ātmā is also available, knowledge takes place. It is easy.

Do you want to know Īśvara? All that is seen is nothing but Īśvara. This fact alone has to be recognized. So, as Īśvara also, He is easy to know and as sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā also. He is easily attained. No matter how we express it, all that is required is our total commitment and bhakti. If that is there, He is Sulabha. He easily reveals Himself. It is said that He is Sulabha, being satisfied with any offering of a leaf, flower, fruit or water that can be obtained without any expenditure, because He is obtained through bhakti alone.

818. Suvrataḥ (also word 455)
सुव्रतः
The one who accepts all the offerings.

Because His vrata is śobhana, excellent, He is Suvrata. The word, 'vrata' can mean enjoyment, as well as a vow to desist from enjoyment. He has as though the vrata, the vow, of accepting and enjoying whatever is offered to Him.

As Lord Rāma, He accepted and enjoyed the fruits offered by Śabarī and Guha.
As Lord Kṛṣṇa, He accepted and enjoyed the beaten rice offered by Kucela and the simple food given by Vidura. In his avatāras, He took up vows such as desisting from food. He is Suvrata also because vratayati, He makes people take up vratas, vows, as a means of propitiating Him.

819. Siddhaḥ (also word 97)
सिद्धः
i. The ever existent.

ii. The one who accomplishes independently.

He is Siddha, who is ever existent, because He is self-existent, without depending on anything else. He is already accomplished.

The capacity to make oneself big, small, heavy or light and so on are called siddhis. The one who has these capacities is called a siddha. Generally people get them as the karmaphala of great tapas from the Lord. Their siddhis, accomplishments are not independent of the Lord. But Bhagavān has many of these siddhis by Himself, without depending on anybody and hence, Siddha.

820. Śatrujit
शत्रुजित्
The vanquisher of enemies.

He is Śatrujit, because He conquers all the enemies. Whenever it is said that Lord defeats, destroys, torments the asuras, who are the enemies of the devas, it should be understood properly. Bhagavān does not have a special like or dislike for anyone, that would make Him go out of the way to help one or destroy another.
Sura or deva stands for anyone who is sincerely trying to pursue dharma and mokṣa. There are enemies both inside and outside for such people. Whoever takes to adharma and disturbs the people who pursue dharma and mokṣa, is an asura. Whatever stands in the way of the deva-like qualities manifesting in the devotees, is an enemy. When His help is sought by prayers and prayerful deeds, Bhagavān will help to vanquish all the enemies. The asuras get destroyed by their own karma.

821. Śatrutāpanaḥ
शत्रुतापनः
The tormentor of enemies.

He is Śatrujit, one who torments and makes the enemies run away, that is, makes them non-existent. Anger, sadness, shame, insecurity, depression, self-condemnation and so on, are the enemies and they are all centred on the 'I'. They are enemies because they are inimical to you. They consume you to such an extent that you don't recognise yourself. Any person who has been enraged or deeply sad, will say,'I don't know what came over me'. They have a status of being, only when the ego-support is there and when that support is not there, they cannot exist.

When one is a devotee, the 'I' is with Īśvara and is not available to support these enemies.
What was a big issue earlier (dealing with anger etc) becomes a small issue and what was a small issue becomes a non issue. Losing the support of the aham, the ego, they cannot exist any more and they vanish. Again, once the enemies know, that a big power like Īśvara is with you, then they do not come.

822. Nyagrodhaḥ
न्यग्रोधः

The one who is above all.
The three names including Nyagrodha, Udumbara, and Aśvattha literally mean the banyan tree, the fig tree and the peepal tree respectively. These trees, belonging to the ficus family, are very big, in terms of height and span, thus giving a lot of shade. The banyan tree, nyagrodha, which grows downwards with adventitious roots, is worshipped as Bhagavān.

The Lord, sarveṣām upari-vartate –is above time, space and everything and yet, nyak rohati–He as though grows downwards, in the form of this universe, manifesting as time, space and everything therein. Therefore, this becomes a good imagery for invoking Īśvara.
The banyan tree also known as vatavriksa, is the national tree of India, due to its seemingly unending expansion symbolic of eternal life. Lord Daksinamurti, the first guru or Lord as the teacher is depicted as sitting near the banyan tree with the rishis at his feet.

Or, even though the jīvas are of the same nature as the Lord, He as though, veils them by His māyā, makes them nyak, by binding them to their own bodies, and causes rodha, a block to their understanding of their true nature. Therefore, He is Nyagrodha.

823. Udumbaraḥ
उदुम्बरः
The one beyond space and time.

Ambara is space. Everything is in space and in the pañcabhūta model, space is the first element from which all other elements and elementals have come. Bhagavān is not in space, but ambarāt udgata, above, that is, superior to space which is subtle and pervasive. Bhagavān is the cause of space itself, Udumbara. Space as an effect has come from Bhagavān. All the lokas are in space, too. The kāraṇa, cause, is above and the kārya, effect is below.

Or, based on the śruti, He is Udumbara, meaning He nourishes this universe in the form of ūrk, food.

824. Aśvatthaḥ
अश्वत्थः
The one who is as though impermanent.

The aśvattha tree is the tree of saṃsāra, the tree of jagat. It is a self-perpetuating tree. It is changing all the time. Even though this tree seems to be continuously there, śvaḥ na sthāsyati–it may not be there tomorrow, since it is time-bound. That is, the names and forms keep changing, but when everything is dissolved, it remains in an unmanifest form, returning and again resolving with every cycle. It is a tree, because it can be felled, cut.

It is Parameśvara alone who is manifest as this tree of saṃsara and so He is Aśvattha. This tree has its roots in Parameśvara. The roots are not seen and what is seen is the tree. We see only the effect and not the cause and infer the existence of the cause from the effect. What is not seen is you, the Parātmā and it need not be seen, because it is self-revealing. The Upaniṣads and the Gītā talk of this tree. The Gita points out that the one who knows this tree along with its root,

Brahman, knows that the entire saṃsāra has the status of mithyatvam (dependent reality) and the root is satyam that is you.

825. Cāṇūrāndhraniṣūdanaḥ
चाणूरान्ध्रनिषूदनः
The one who killed Cāṇūra.

An asura in the form of wrestler by name Cāṇūra, and belonging to the andhra community, was employed by Kaṃsa to kill Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But, the Lord effortlessly defeated and killed him and hence is called Cāṇūrāndhraniṣūdana. This is a word relating to the avatāra-līlā.

826. Sahasrārciḥ
सहस्रार्चिः
The one who radiates countless rays.

Through the word sahasra means thousand, it is used in the sense of countless.
Bhagavān is Sahasrārci, one who radiates countless rays. As the sun, He radiates countless rays of blessing, blessing the world in various ways.
That I was born as a human being, is a blessing.
That I have a unique combination of punya and papa that have contributed to the body-mind and all the unique experierinces in my life, is a blessing.
That I can make choices in life, is a blessing.
That I can master my mind and body (note: master is not control, mastery is where the body and mind serve me) is a blessing.
That I can use my mind and body, is a blessing. (note : word for mind in Sanskrit is antah-karana, inner instrument and word for body is bahya karana, external instreument)
That I can contribute to people around me in big ways and small, is a blessing.
That I can use all the saktis (iccha, jnana, kriya) given to me, in all my pursuits, is a blessing.
That I can recognise myself as other than the body and mind is a blessing.
That I can recognise that all that is here is one non dual reality, one without a second, is a blessing.
That I ……..
That I …..
(countless indeed are the blessings)

827. Saptajihvaḥ
सप्तजिह्वः
The one who has seven tongues of flames.

In any fire ritual offering, agni, fire, is the one that takes the oblations to the various devatas. If the offering is to Ganapati, then why offer to Agni, fire? Agni will take it to Ganapati. If the offering is to Mahalaxmi, then why offer to Agni, fire? Agni will take it to Mahalaxmi.

He is described as having sapta-jihvas, seven tongues. They are – kālī, the black one; karālī, the frightening one; manojavā, the swift one; sulohitā, the red one; sudhūmravarṇā, the smoky one;

sphuliṅginī, the sparkling one and viśvarupi, the one that moves around. These are the names of the seven tongues of fire. The Lord alone is in the form of agni and hence, Saptajihva.

828. Saptaidhāḥ

सप्तैधाः

The one who has seven flames.

Edhas can mean flame or fuel. Again, fuel can mean any fuel or special fuel used for rituals. Generally ghee, clarified butter is used. As agni, He has seven flames or seven types of fuel.
Or as the ātmā, He receives the sense perceptions in the form of the sapta-edhas, seven fuels offered into the seven holes of the body to the ātmā. Sights you see, are one type of fuel. Sounds you listen to, are another type of fuel. Taste is also yet another type of fuel. As we take in sights, sounds and tastes, all of these sense perceptions are offered to the Atma.

829. Saptavāhanaḥ

सप्तवाहनः

The one who has seven horses.

Lord Sun is depicted as travelling in the sky in a chariot drawn by seven horses or by one horse called sapta. The seven horses stand for the seven colours of the spectrum and the single horse stands for the spectrum. As it is Parameśvara who is in the form of the Sun, He is Saptavāhana.

Or, Bhagavān is seated in the Vedas, because the Vedas which are in the form of words, talk about Bhagavān. He is seen as sādhana-sādhya, as dharma, as devatās, as kāraṇa-kārya and also as His svarūpa. If the Veda is a chariot and Bhagavān is riding in it, then, the seven horses are the seven metres in the Veda. Gāyatrī is one of the famous metres, which consists of twenty-four syllables. The other six metres are brhatī, uṣṇik, jagatī, triṣṭubh, anuṣṭubh and paṅkti.

830. Amūrtiḥ

अमूर्तिः

The formless.

Does Bhagavān have a form? He is Amūrti, formless. That is why we cannot believe that the Lord is in heaven or svarga. The formless which is limitless, can it be located in a particular place however large? If every form is His form, then, He has no particular form. Form is mithyā. It is neither existent nor non-existent, So, Bhagavān is essentially formless.The entire jagat which is a form is entirely pervaded by Bhagavān who is formless existence. (Gita 9.4)

Mūrti can mean a solid form with limbs and parts; a body, through which one can say, ‘this is a human being,’ ‘this is a cow’ and so on. This body is got as a result of karma and since the Lord has no karma, He has no form.

The Aitareyopaniṣad refers to food as mūrti and says, the Lord after creating the living beings, created annam, food for them, in the form of cara, moving objects, such as mice for the cats and so on, and acara, immovable, in the form of the grains for others. As Bhagavān has neither hunger nor thirst, and He is not a bhoktā, an enjoyer, He does not need food and is therefore, Amūrti.

831. Anaghaḥ (also word 146)

अनघः

The one without any pāpa or sorrow.

Since Bhagavān is formless, it is natural that He has no agha, neither pāpa nor its manifestation in the form of duḥkha. Then, does He have puṇya and its manifestation in the form of sukha? No. He does not have that also.
While earlier this nāma negated mainly pāpa, here the effect of agha as duḥkha is also negated.
Ok. One can see that Bhagavān has no pāpa and hence no sorrow. What about us? Surely we have so much suffering because of our pāpa. Pāpa is not sin. Historically, the word 'sin' means disobedience of God, as in Abrahamic religions. Pāpa means the invisible results of our wrong actions which manifests as some sort of suffering (from a mosquito bite onwards to getting dengue). For whom are these results? Pāpa and punya are for the body-mind-sense-complex which is like a bodysuit the Atma seems to have worn.

In the Gita (3.3), Sri Krsna refers to Arjuna as 'anagha', the one who has no pāpa. How is that possible? Surely Arjuna has done wrong actions and definitely has some suffering. Then how can he be referred to as 'anagha'. Bhagavān is pointing to Atma svarupa as the one untouched by any pāpa or sorrow.

832. Acintyaḥ

अचिन्त्यः

The one who cannot be thought of.

How can one think of Bhagavān, who is essentially formless? He is Acintya, cannot be thought of, as He cannot be objectified by any pramāṇa, any of the known means of knowledge. Most words have images associated with it. Things are known if they can be perceived externally (like objects, smells, sounds and tastes and touch). Things are also known when we may not be able to perceive directly but infer the presence of something. (e.g. fire on the mountain because smoke is seen).

Further, the pramātā, the knower, who objectifies everything, cannot objectify Bhagavān who is the witness of even the pramātā. He is not even objectified through the words of the śāstra, which only point to Him through implication. Essentially, He is oneself and hence, self-revealing. Because he is, everything is revealed in the presence of what IS. So, He need not be an object of thought; every thought is Bhagavān. Bhagavān cannot be enclosed in a thought, because thought itself is Bhagavān.

Further, how can one even think of Bhagavān, as almighty and omniscient? What can one think of? He is sarva-prapañca-vilakṣaṇa –unlike and totally different from anything in the universe. Therefore, He is Acintya, cannot be thought of as 'this is how He is.'

833. Bhayakṛt

भयकृत्

i. The one who causes fear.
ii. The one who removes fear.

The word bhayakṛt can mean both a source of fear, as well as the remover of fear, depending on the verbal root from which it is formed. Bhagavān is never separate from oneself. One is not afraid of oneself. If He is not understood, then, He is away from you and becomes the bhayahetu, a source of fear.

He is the giver of the results of action. When one gets unpleasant results or obstacles, as a result of violating dharma, He seems to be a Bhayakṛt, cause of fear. On the other hand, when one gets pleasant and favourable results, as a result of following dharma, He seems to be a Bhayakṛt, the remover of fear.

834. Bhayanāśanaḥ

भयनाशनः

The destroyer of fear.

If Bhagavān is understood, then He destroys our fear and becomes the cause of fearlessness. So, the one who is the Bhayahetu becomes the Bhayanāśana. In fact, it is only ignorance that causes the fear. For those who follow dharma, pertaining to the varṇa and āśrama, Bhagavān becomes the destroyer of fear.

When Bhagavān is understood in the form of the psychological order, that understanding itself, helps us to get rid of fear. Every fear, every emotion, is valid and when the validity is understood, then one does not blame oneself or God.

One does not resist any emotion.

One accepts a certain universal order, accepts Īśvara in the form of that order and so, everything is within the order. Ignorance is the cause for the problem and knowledge is the solution.

835. Aṇuḥ

अणुः

The subtlest.

What is Bhagavān? Bhagavān is Aṇu. Aṇu literally means an atom, something infinitesimally small and very subtle. What is 'Subtle' cannot be understood easily or perceived easily because it does not have the dimensions that other objects have. Even the atom is an object of consciousness, but consciousness itself has no size and therefore the subtlest. Hence, as the ātmā, He is called Aṇu, to show that He is the subtlest.

Again even the atom can be seen with a very powerful microscope, but consciousness can only be understood. The moment you imagine something as consciousness (inside or outside you), there is you and your imagination. You have objectified and 'othered' consciousness. The Upaniṣad says, 'eṣo' ṇurātmā cetasā veditavyaḥ - this subtle ātmā is to be understood by the mind.' (Mu.Up.3.1.9).

836. Bṛhat

बृहत्

The biggest.

Bhagavān is Bṛhat, because He is infinitely big and also the cause for the growth of this jagat. He manifests as infinitely big. He is bigger than the biggest, that is, bigger than what you think is big. The śruti says, 'aṇoraṇīyān–subtler than the atom' and lest we conclude that He is infinitesimally small, it says immediately, 'mahato mahīyān – bigger than the biggest (Ka.Up1.2.20). This rules out any concept of size for the ātmā.

If it has no size, then, one may conclude that it does not exist. In fact, it is existent, and it is limitless. Being big, limitlessly big, it is pūrṇa, the whole.

837. Kṛśaḥ

कृशः

The one who is thin.

838. Sthūlaḥ

स्थूलः

The one who is gross.

These two nāmas, in fact, these four nāmas go together. What can be seen or objectified, that alone can be talked of as big, small, thin, thick and so on. But the svarūpa of Bhagavān is pointed out in the Upaniṣads as 'asthūlam, anaṇu, ahrasvam, adhīrgam …. not gross, not small, not short, not tall…' (Br.Up.3.8.8).

Thus, the word Kṛśa, emaciated and small, is used to show that He is not sthūla, gross. The word sthūla, fat and gross, is to show that He is not kṛśa, small and thin. At the same time, if Bhagavān has no size, then what about the small things and big things that we see? They are all Bhagavān and hence, in the form of all the small and emaciated things, He is Kṛśa, and in the form of all the fat and gross things, He is Sthūla, but from His own standpoint. He is neither sthūla, nor kṛśa.

839. Guṇabhṛt

गुणभृत्

The locus of all qualities.

He is Guṇabhṛt, the adhiṣṭhāna, the locus, of all the guṇas, qualities, but does not become a guṇī, one who possesses the guṇas.

Potness is a quality, an attribute. To whom does it belong? Potness cannot belong to the pot, because, there is no pot. There is only clay. Therefore, we have to say that it belongs to clay (which is not-pot). The clay is the guṇī having the guṇa, the attribute of potness. If this were so, then, wherever there is clay, then the clay should be with potness, that is, it should be a pot. But, we do not find it to be so. Clay can manifest in many forms or just be a lump of clay. So, even though clay does not possess the attribute of potness, still, we have to atttibute it to clay alone, since potness cannot exist anywhere else. Therefore, clay is the adhiṣṭhāna, the locus for the pot-the locus for this incidental attribute, called potness. As potness is only name and form, this attribute is apparent.

So too, Brahman lends its being, to all the attributes, since it is the locus for all the attributes. With reference to creation, sustenance and resolution of the universe, Bhagavān as though assumes the guṇas of rajas, sattva and tamas respectively and presides over them and hence, He is Guṇabhṛt.

840. Nirguṇaḥ
निर्गुणः
The one free from qualities.

From the standpoint of the pot, we say that the clay has the quality of potness. Similarly, from the standpoint of the creation, we say that Bhagavān is Gunabhrt, having the quality of guṇas. But from the standpoint of the clay, it has neither potness nor cupness nor any other atttibute. So too, from His own standpoint, Bhagavān is just limitless consciousness, essentially free from all guṇas. Bhagavān is essentially Nirguṇa, but, through māyā-śakti, has the attributes of all names and forms, which constitute the jagat, in which our body-mind-sense-complex are also included.

841. Mahān
महान्
The one who is great.

He is free from all guṇas and cannot be objectified. He is limitless, free from the limitations of time and so on, and hence not the object of words. Even for the sake of argument, He cannot be limited in anyway because He is free from śabda, sparśa, etc., the subtlest, ever pure and all-pervasive. Hence, He is Mahān, great.

Post 799:
842. Adhṛtaḥ
अधृतः
The one not supported by anyone.

He is mahān, supports everything. The earth supports all the beings on earth. The earth and other planets are all supported in their orbit by various natural forces. All these forces, and therefore, everything is supported by Him. But, He is Adhṛta, not supported by anything else.

843. Svadhṛtaḥ

स्वधृतः
The self-sustaining.

If He is not supported by anything else, how does He get support? There must be some form of support. If such a doubt arises, it is said, He is Svadhṛta, self-existent, self-sustaining, and self-supporting; not sustained by anything else.

In the Chāndogyopaniṣad, when Sanatkumāra talks about the truth as bhūman, Nārada asks him, 'sa bhagavaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhitaḥ - sir, where is it established, supported?' and Sanatkumāra replies, 'sve mahimni - in its own glory' (7.24.1).

844. Svāsyaḥ
स्वास्यः
The one who has a beautiful face.

Āsya means the face, mainly the mouth.
He is Svāsya, one with a beautiful face, beautiful mouth, because the entire Vedas have come from His mouth. The Vedas are made up of words which give the means for attaining all the puruṣārthas, human goals.

845. Prāgvamśaḥ
प्राग्वंशः
The one whose race started before the jagat.

The vaṃśa, the race, of others came into being after the world was created. When the human beings came into being on this earth, the ṛṣīs were already there and hence the vaṃśa starts from them. Belonging to a particular gotra implies that you can trace your lineage to that ṛṣī. Then came the famous vaṃśas like the Sūrya-vaṃśa, Candra-vaṃśa, Raghu-vaṃśa, Yadu-vaṃśa, and so on.

What about the race of Bhagavān? The race of Bhagavān, that is, the jagat, has been in existence before all that. As the vaṃśa of Bhagavān is prāg, before every vaṃśa, right from the beginning when the prapañca started, He is called Prāgvaṃśa. He is the one who existed before the prapañca, world itself.

846. Vaṃśavardhanaḥ
वंशवर्धनः
The one who expands the vaṃśa.

He is the cause of the entire jagat and hence called Vaṃśavardhana. He is the one who expands the jagat and the one who withdraws the jagat. It is because of Him, that the vṛddhi, the growth, of the jagat which is His vaṃśa, takes place.

847. Bhārabhṛt

भारभृत्

The one who carries the weight of the jagat.

Bhagavān is the Bhārabhṛt, because all the bhāra - different kinds of loads of everyone, including the emotional load - is carried by Bhagavān alone. People worry about the world being overpopulated, and always fight over some issue or the other. In a way, it is an expression of an inner emptiness.

The vegetable vendor was travelling in the luggage compartment of the train with a heavy basket of vegetables on his head. The copassengers asked him,' Why are you carrying this heavy basket on your head? Why don't you put it down?'. The vendor replied,' Then the train will have to bear the load of the basket'!
Many of us are like the vegetable vendor. In the journey of life, the train of Bhagavan is carrying and taking us forward. We insist on carrying the weight on our heads, getting worried, struggling to control our lives. We fight and resist most situations as we want to feel significant. In time, we realise, we cannot carry the weight of the world and all its worries. If at all we can do something, it is to be responsible enough not to contribute in any way to the load, and to surrender unto Him. He will carry the load. We need not even unload our burdens at His feet, because He is already carrying them. All that we can unload is to unload the idea that 'I am carrying the load.'

848. Kathitaḥ

कथितः

The one who is praised.

Bhagavān is Kathita, declared as the most exalted by all the Vedas. Not only is He Kathita, well talked about in the Vedas, but He is talked about by every śāstra, every vidyā, every science.
He is the one who is most popular; even the newspapers and media talk of Him. How? Because they seem to talk of murder and terrorism and so on. Even in the gossip that is exchanged, in response to 'what is the latest?' or 'what 's the buzz?', Bhagavān is spoken of.

He is there also, in and through all the events, in the form of the order of dharma, in the form of the psychological order, in the form of the inner pressure, which prompts one to commit murder and so on. Whatever is told about anyone, anywhere, it is His story and glory that is talked about.

849. Yogī

योगी

i. The one who is reached by yoga.
ii. The one given to yoga.

Bhagavān can be reached, is understood only through the yoga of jñāna and hence, He is called Yogī. Jñāna-yoga is a life of sannyāsa, wherein one pursues knowledge to the exclusion of everything else. Karma-yoga is a yoga of engaging onself in activity and doing one's duty with the right attitude and at the same time pursuing knowledge. The people, who pursue both these

paths, pursue knowledge alone and their lifestyle is called yoga. In one, one has certain duties to do, while in the other, the duties are absolved. Therefore, Bhagavān is achieved only by knowledge. Why is it that He is gained only by knowledge? Because, He is already you and there is no other way, other than knowing.

All yoga is to be able to see and understand one's true nature. People confuse the sense of calm and peace arising from the practice of asanas with freedom. The sense of calm is the nature state of an alert and relaxed mind and one just returns to it. The mastered mind that one develops through the practice of Ashtanga yoga is the right preparation to understand oneself. As He has no self-ignorance and is always aware of His true nature, He is Yogī, absorbed in Himself.

850. Yogīśaḥ
योगीशः
The Lord of all the yogīs.

Anyone who takes to yoga, to understand oneself, is a yogī. But, they have to face a lot of obstacles and have to struggle a lot, to reach the end. Whereas the Lord knows Himself naturally, without any struggle or obstacle and is therefore, Yogīśvara, the Lord of all yogīs.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gīta, 'I am the initiator of this yoga and I taught this yoga to Vivasvān, the Lord Sun'(4.1). Sañjaya refers to Lord Kṛṣṇa as Yogeśvara.

Thus, He is the very yoga; the yogī, one to be gained by yoga; Yogīśvara, the foremost of those who know their self; Yogavidāṃ netā, the one who has initiated and taught the yoga and also takes care of those who take to yoga with a commitment for knowing Him. (nāmas 18 and 19)

851. Sarvakāmadaḥ
सर्वकामदः
The fulfiller of all desires.

People pray to a variety of deities to fulfill varieties of desires. A prayer is centred on a self conscious and self-judging person relating to an altar. The mode employed by the person praying is never the same- it differs from person to person. Even for a given person it differs from time to time. And also, a prayer can be a simple mental or oral chant or a strict elaborate vedic ritual.

There can be three different forms of karma, action, in prayer: physical, kāyika, oral- vāchika, and mental, mānasa. Performing a ritual is a physical form of prayer. Singing in praise of the Lord is an oral form of a prayer while chanting a mantra silently is a mental form of a prayer. Prayer always has a purpose, just as any action has. You pray because you want something. Without an object of desire, there is no prayer. You may want something specific or you may want clarity of mind, antah-karana-shuddhi. You may also pray that the Lord be pleased with your prayer because you want to be in his good books; you want Him to glance at you now and then. He seems to cast his blessings on others all the time, but when it comes to you, something happens. Either he blinks or closes his eyes altogether.

Karma is a huge network of principles, which operates purely mechanically. From the standpoint of karma your stomach-ache may be a result of either past karma done long ago or more recently. It may be due to any number of reasons- over-eating, alcohol or the conditions of your mind- all of which can be viewed in terms of either the immediate or remote past.
The purpose of prayer is to eliminate or neutralize one's daily wrongdoings as much as it is for our several desires. Our prayer helps to tap some of the grace of the limitless that is the Lord. This is one of the reasons why we should pray at different times of the day, sunrise, noon, and again at sunset. Even though we may not have done anything wrong that day, there is always the past karma unfolding each day.

Bhagavān can fulfill all our desires and also some more because He is the ultimate giver of the karmaphala, the results of action. Hence, He is Sarvakamada, the fulfiller of all desires and the giver of all desirable objects.

852. Āśramah

आश्रमः

The resting place.

Bhagavān is like a resting place to all those who wander in the forest of saṃśara.
Āśrama is the place, the hermitage, where one can have rest and peace; where the tired and weary person can relax and get rid of the śrama, effort and struggle. The jīva, being born again and again, wandering in the forest of saṃśara, needs a place to relax. The Lord is that relaxing place, that āśrama. Īśvara is the only place where one can totally relax.

When one goes to an āśrama, one lives the lifestyle of the residents with time for listening, contemplation, puja, japa and discussion with others. This conducive environment allows you to focus all your attention on your pursuit of moksa. Distractions are kept to a minimum. An external, peaceful and conducive environment helps you to discover peace. It helps you discover that you can be happy with minimal requirements. If there is no teaching, the āśrama will have to be discovered in oneself alone. One has to read, contemplate, and do japa and so on. Very often, people complain that they can't spend enough time in an āśrama. They wish they could be there longer.

Ultimately, the āśrama is only Bhagavān. You rest in his lap all the time. Therefore, Bhagavān is called Āśrama.

853. Śramaṇaḥ

श्रमणः

The afflicter.

If one does not follow dharma and does not have the viveka, to know what one is doing, then Bhagavān will give śrama, that is, problems and obstacles, so that the person will come back to Him. This is the law. The Lord does not punish, but it is the law.

Bhagavān is certainly not plotting to make our lives miserable, as some people think nor is he sadistic. He allows some of our own karma to fructify in a way that our attention is turned

towards self growth. In fact, he is trying to make it possible for us to fulfill our purpose, on earth!
We mature more when the going is tough.
When the going is tough, we are called upon to discover our support system – role models, our values, our relationships, life lessons, memories etc.
When the going is tough, we discover a strength that we never thought we had.
When the going is tough, we are called upon to make important choices.
When the going is tough, we learn to manage ourselves.
When the going is tough, we learn to get going!

854. Kṣāmaḥ (also word 443)

क्षामः

The one who causes decline.

He is Kṣāma, the one who makes people age and decline and then finally pass away. The principles are such that every being who is born, dies and goes through a certain life span. The life span for a virus is different for a plant and is different from a dog. Then again, the life span of a turtle is different from a human being. However much the life span, be it about twenty years of a dog or about hundred years of a human being, the stages of childhood, adulthood, old age are common. As the source of creation, sustenanance and resolution, Bhagavān makes it possible for us to live out our karma and then pass away. But then, He also makes them come back again. This is Parameśvara. This repeated birth and death, makes the people weary.

As karmaphala, He also gives economical downfall or some great downfall to people. Really speaking, our own karma is coming back to us. Whom can I really blame? Myself or the world or Bhagavān? I can't blame myself because I don't really know the circumstances that caused me to act in a wrong manner, in previous lifetimes. In this lifetime, if I can correct some wrongs, I try to do it. I can't blame the people in my life as through my own karma, I have (unknowingly) requested for them in my life.

Maybe Bhagavān is the fall guy! I can't blame Bhagavān either as he can say,' My principles are impartial and flawless. You knew that if you put your finger in the fire, it will burn. If you do an action, you will get the result, sooner or later. Did you really think that only you will be spared if you put the finger in the fire or the fire will suddenly become cold?'
The only way out to face situations in life, good, bad or ugly is to face them!
The only way to be tough is to be tough!
The only way to deal with situation is to deal with situations!
The only way to be responsible is to be responsible, for our choices and actions!
We take responsibility to ensure that our actions conform to dharma while being prayerful. As the giver of the fruits of action, Bhagavān is called Kṣāma.

855. Suparṇaḥ (also word 192)

सुपर्णः

The one who is in the form of a tree with good foliage.

A tree with a good amount of foliage i.e. leaves, branches etc is suparṇa. The foliage helps in nourishing the tree. The Lord is Suparṇa, the tree of saṃsāra, whose foliage is in the form of the

chandas, the Vedas which give knowledge of the various means and ends, and of dharma and adharma.

With the knowledge of the various means and ends, one undertakes activities. These actions produce results and the results themselves are limited and wanting and hence, more actions are done, and these give more results. We just take the example of managing our health. So much of changing and tweaking is done in our habits related to food, exercise, rest and sleep. What to eat? How much to eat? When to eat? Why to eat certain foods? So many questions! The answers to these questions – Are these final and definitive? By no means. Some new research comes along and disproves the previous findings. Can we say we have achieved perfect health? No. It is an ongoing effort.

In the name of doing the right thing, we end up obsessing over health or any other subject matter in our lives. More and more actions need to be done and we find ourselves thinking about it all the time. Here in this example, we are only talking about health. Similar to this, for the different areas of our life – work, family, wealth etc, so many actions need to be done again and again as they are limited. More actions are done and so it goes on. Thus the cycle of births goes on. This is the self-perpetuating tree. Because of karma, there is result and because of result, there is birth and because of birth, there is activity and thus it goes on. The Lord being the root of this tree is called Suparṇa. The chanting and understanding of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma helps us to get out of this life of becoming.

856. Vāyuvānaḥ (also word 331)

वायुवाहनः

The one because of whom vāyu moves.

As He is the nimitta-kāraṇa, the maker, it is by His ājñā, the order, that air keeps moving.
Air is not partial to some people because of their gender, economic status or even facebook status. It does not withdraw or stop moving although we pollute it. Air goes into the lungs even if the person has tuberculosis and comes out as it is moving all the time. It is because of His manifestation, that vāyu has this particular form. If vāyu does not move, there will be no life. Since it is because of the Lord that vāyu keeps moving and sustains all life, He is called Vāyuvāhana.

857. Dhanurdharaḥ

धनुर्धरः

The one who wielded the bow.

As Śrī Rāma, in the Rāmāvatāra, He was the wielder of a great bow Kodaṇḍa and hence, He is Dhanurdhara.
As Viṣṇu He has the famous bow called Śārṅga.

858. Dhanurvedaḥ

धनुर्वेदः

The knower of the discipline of archery.

There are the four Vedas and besides them, there are many upavedas, secondary disciplines of knowledge, like dhanurveda, gāndharvaveda (knowledge of aesthetics and different art forms like music, dance, sculpture and sensual pleasure), āyurveda (knowledge of health and life) and so on. In His avatāra as Śrī Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, He was the knower of dhanurveda, the discipline of archery.

The arrows that are used have proper mantras to propel them. Bhagavān is in the form of the very dhanurveda and He is the one who has given out the dhanurveda and hence, He is called Dhanurveda. So, even the upavedas are not separate from the all-knowledge of Īśvara. This is an upalakṣaṇa and it stands for all disciplines of knowledge, because all the disciplines of knowledge are from the all-knowing Īśvara alone.

859. Daṇḍaḥ

दण्डः

The one in the form of justice.

Dhanurveda deals with war, which means that there is adharma, and so there should be justice. Again, when there is justice, there is also a system of punishment and penalties. This is also the law of karma. For every wrong action there is a penalty, that is, the law of karma gives a result. So this law is daṇḍa; it is a system of justice. Bhagavān is in the form of system of justice.

As much as we have a need for love, power, achievement, independence we have an immense need for dharma. We need and want our actions and others actions to align with justice. We want to do the right thing! The need to do the right thing in different circumstances cannot be wished away or dismissed or forgotten.

Think about any of your roles – mother/father, son/daughter, brother/sister, employer/employee, friend etc. You know there are certain actions related to each role that are ‘right’, that contribute to the happiness and growth of the other person and yourself. You know it because Bhagavān manifests as dharma in your heart and manifests as karma and karma phala in our lives. We may try to justify our wrong actions or explain them away as ‘an impulse of the moment’ or try to hide our wrong actions because we want to look good in others perspective. It does not work! We just keep ruminating and run the tape again and again in our heads.

It is a cosmic system of justice and it is based on dharma and adharma, puṇya and pāpa. Bhagavān being the upādāna-kāraṇa, material cause, is in the form of justice and is manifest as that order. So dharma is one side of the coin and karma is the other side of the coin.
Without dharma, there is no puṇya-pāpa and without puṇya-pāpa, there is no karma. So Bhagavān is manifest in the form of daṇḍa, the very law of justice, the power of punishing and the punishment. In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, ‘daṇḍo damayatām asmi-of those who inflict punishment, I am the daṇḍa’ (10.38)

860. Damayitā

दमयिता

The one who wields justice.

As the nimitta-kāraṇa, the Lord becomes Damayitā.
Not only is He in the form of justice, He is also the wielder of justice. Laws and principles don't run by themselves. Suppose you have a rule that in your home, no food will be wasted. Will that rule be implemented by itself? Only when there are rewards and consequences related to the rule, is it better understood. The reward is effective utilization of available resources. Wastage is disturbing especially when you realise how much all the people in the food distribution have worked for the food to be on the table.

A rule implementer is always required and it is all the more better when we have self discipline. As the wielder of justice in our heart, we do the 'right' thing because the value of dharma has been assimilated well. People often talk about 'surrendering to the universe', with a very vague or no idea of what that means. The universe and all its laws and principles with impeccable intelligence don't run on their own. The one who wields them, the one in whom this intelligence rests, is Bhagavān. Not only is He the ultimate wielder of justice, but He is the one who wields justice in the form of rulers, judges and Manus.

861. Damaḥ

दमः

The one who is in the form of punishment.

Daṇḍa is the system of justice which when wielded, gives a punishment, a penalty for wrong doing. The penalty, which acts as a deterrent preventing the person from taking to adharma in the future, is dama. The attitude of restraining oneself from adharma that comes as a result of punishment, is also dama. Restraining oneself, is when the reins of the senses are in your hands. This Dama is also Bhagavān.
Restraining oneself from using office hours to do personal work including spending time on social media is dama.
Restraining oneself from using harsh words because you are hurt, is dama.
Restraining oneself from binge eating or binge watching mindless movies or TV shows is dama.
Restraining oneself from advising others who have not asked for advice is dama.
Restraining oneself from gossiping and slandering people's reputation is dama.
Restraining from hiding your income from the government is dama.
If dama is Bhagavān then all my suffering is also Bhagavān as I am only experiencing the results of my actions.

862. Aparājitaḥ (also word 716)

अपराजितः

The one who is unconquered.

Bhagavān is Aparājita, never defeated by anyone, because there is nothing other than Bhagavān. Another person can defeat us in a game or a debate. We often feel defeated by people who tried to dominate us or our thoughts or certain situations in our life. To feel defeated, there has to be the other. The other may be a thought, person or situation. Then the struggle to prove oneself better starts. This play goes on. There being nothing other than Bhagavān, a second thing, para, is not available to defeat him.

863. Sarvasahaḥ

सर्वसहः

i. The one capable of everything.
ii. The one who can withstand all.

With reference to all karmas, He is saha, capable, and hence, is Sarvasaha. He has the capacity to create, sustain and withdraw the jagat. Bhagavān as Sarvasaha makes us capable of the many discoveries and to translate that knowledge into action. How often? On a daily basis, depending on the age and stage of life we are in, we learn– how to help burp a baby, how do cells talk to each other, how to negotiate a raise with the boss, how to sharpen my skill set, how to talk to my teenage children, how to have harmonious relations in the family, how to do the right thing despite fear and insecurity, how to find the right balance of food and exercise for my health goals. All of these questions that we ask ourselves or seek answers for, from friends or the internet, we find some answers. Bhagavān as Sarvasaha makes us capable of knowing and doing. He is also Sarvasaha, because He can withstand and overpower all the enemies, as an avatāra. None can stand against Him.

864. Niyantā

नियन्ता

The governor.

He is the Niyantā, the governor of all. He delegates duties to all. Each aspect of the creation has a devatā and all the devatās are nothing but Bhagavān Himself. From a particular manifest phenomenon, an exalted jīva becomes a devatā. Water is a phenomenon and so, there is the jala-devatā; air is a phenomenon and so, there is the vāyu-devatā; fire is a phenomenon and so there is, the agni-devatā. Īśvara is the Niyantā, the devatā in charge of the total and He governs by entrusting everyone with different functions as duty. This is a network.

865. Aniyamaḥ

अनियमः

The one not bound by any rule.

The rules of sandhi allow this nāma and the next nāma, to be taken as Aniyama and Ayama and also as Niyama and Yama. The former reading is taken for arcanā.

Īśvara is the Niyantā, the controller of everyone and everything. It is important to think of Īśvara as the controller of the laws and principles and not like some policing force, as promoted by certain ideologies.

Many of us say that we don't want to be controlled. But, we are controlled by the laws and principles of Īśvara. The control is not in the sense of how we understand control. The phenomenon of hunger is such that there is scope to feel hungry, there is scope to find resources to feed your hunger, there is scope to convert the food into energy for our daily activities. The body is subject to certain prinicples in order to survive and thrive. Do I complain about why

Īśvara created hunger in the first place? I accept it as a principle and don't see it as control. In fact, many of us enjoy and revel in different cuisines and planning more for meal plans than for our life priorities. Īśvara is the Niyantā as the laws and principles that sustain us. Thank God! Who controls him? He is self-controlled. He does not have a niyantā, a controller, to dictate rules such as, 'this is to be done by you and that is not to be done by you.' Therefore, He is Aniyama, not bound by, subject to any niyama, rule.

866. Ayamaḥ

अयमः

The one who does not have death.

Yama is the Lord of death. Parameśvara does not have Lord Yama knocking at His door. He is not subject to death and hence is Ayama.
Yama and niyama are the first two limbs of the yogaśāstra; niyama prescribes certain things which have to be done; while yama prescribes certain things which are not to be done. These niyamas and yamas do not apply to Bhagavān and hence, He is Aniyama and Ayama.

Yama consists in abstaining from causing injury to others, falsehood, theft, incontinence and greed. Niyama consists of cleanliness, contentment, austerities, study and devotion to God. Since these niyamas and yamas, prescribe a lifestyle for preparing the mind, which in turn helps in reaching Bhagavān, He is called Niyama and Yama.

867. Sattvavān

सत्त्ववान्

The one who is all courage.

Sattva has many meanings. Here it has the meaning of śaurya and vīrya, courage and valour. So the Lord is invoked as Sattvavān, as one who has all courage and skill to face the challenges.
Courage comes from being ourselves, being able to stand up for certain values that are so dear to us, they are a part of our identities. People who fought for our freedom struggle, may not have had much money or military strength but they rallied and protested and revolted, standing firm on the value of freedom for the nation. Their courage came from their commitment to the value of freedom.

The support staff (maids, cooks, cleaners etc) who work in our homes are powered by the value of education and a better future for their children and courageously soldier on, despite low wages and many disrespectful employers. Many people who immigrate to foreign countries for work or education are uncertain and scared about how they will be treated amidst all the fears of racism, discrimination etc. They still discover the courage to do it because of their commitment to a better future for themselves and their families.

Your courage comes from your values and your commitment to these values.
Which values do you stand for? Which values will you always defend in your life? Which values are non-negotiable in your life? You will discover an enormous unending source of courage in yourself only when you discover the values you stand for.

Having said that, courage without skill is foolhardiness. Skill without courage is useless. In order to get courage, we invoke Īśvara, with the quality of courage, since Īśvara has it in absolute measure.

868. Sāttvikaḥ

सात्त्विकः

The one who is predominantly sāttvika.

Even though Īśvara has the māyā-upādhi made up of the three guṇas, He does not come under the spell of these guṇas, especially rajas and tamas. Bhagavān can never afford to sleep or be lazy. All these serve Him as powers, because they are necessary to create the world of living beings and inert objects.
Since Bhagavān is all-knowing, sattva is predominant. Further, taking recourse to the sattva-guṇa, He does the job of protecting the world. Hence, He is Sāttvika.

Human beings are predominantly driven by rajas and tamas to situations of agitations, restlessness, depression, laziness, indifference and so on. While both rajas and tamas are necessary, any excess of one means one is dominated by these gunas.
Being dominated by tamas one will have thought patterns and actions that promote laziness, inertia and giving into impulses all the time. Being dominated by rajas, one will have thought patterns of restlessness, doing more and more, anxiety for not achieving and fear of losing what one has and actions related to the same. All of us go through the above but it may not be all the time.

To be sāttvika means to pursue clarity, wisdom, learning and reaching out and actions motivated by the same.
To be sāttvika means to follow dharma in all our roles and responsibilities.
To be sāttvika means to be free from the problems caused by these two guṇas, rajas and tamas.
To be sāttvika, one does actions with karma yoga buddhi. This is an attitude of kausalam, competence in our karma (aligned with dharma), an attitude of samatvam (equanimity or evenness of mind) with respect to situations unfolding in the day with the recognition of Isvara pervading one's life. One does not have to go to a quiet corner to be sattvika. If one is very busy then one is most eligible to be sāttvika as you can bring in this attitude to all your actions, daily.
Bhagavān is invoked as Sāttvika because we want to be more sāttvika.

869. Satyaḥ (also words 106, 212)

सत्यः

The one who is good to the good people.

Sat-puruṣas are those who follow the vaidika-mārga and have devotion and trust in the Lord. When we are born we have an amazing ability to trust, In time that ability to trust gets eroded. The more we understand the order of Īśvara the more we trust life. The more we understand the order that is Īśvara the more we have devotion. The more we understand the order that is Īśvara the more we see ourselves in harmony with all that IS. It is only because of the grace of Īśvara that the sat-puruṣas are able to be sat-puruṣas and hence, He is Satya.

870. Satyadharmaparāyaṇaḥ

सत्यधर्मपरायणः

The one committed to truthfulness and righteousness.

Satya here does not mean the vastu, but yathārtha, kathana. The capacity and care to sift material in order to find out the truth, without jumping to conclusions, is ṛtam and when what is known in this way is spoken, that is satya. This requires a certain capacity to keep what you feel about an issue aside for a few moments while you look at the facts of the issue.

Dharma is knowing what is kārya, to be done and what is akārya, not to be done; knowing what are the karmas to be done daily, what are to be done on special occasions and at which time and place, what is the appropriate karma to be done. He is Satyadharmaparāyaṇa, committed to satya and dharma, and in His avatāras as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He shows Himself to be so.

We invoke the Lord as Satyadharmaparāyaṇa, because we want to be satya-dharma-parāyaṇa, committed to the value of satya, speaking the truth and living a life of dharma. We want to live an authentic life and not a lie, deluding ourselves.

Our daily prayer should be that our mind be impelled to make right decisions and do the appropriate right actions. Everyone is what he is, because of his decisions. There are many situations which are unfolded, over which one has no control. Unknown factors are many and these are called the hidden variables. One has no control over all these. So, prayer is required to help us face situations properly and also to make the right decisions. So the Lord is invoked as the one who burns our confusions and ignorance. This helps us to set our mind in the proper track, which leads to proper and successful decisions; the decisions which will make us do right actions. Finally, we need to pray that in any situation, we should have His grace to understand what is true and what is not true, and when we have to speak, to help us speak the truth. This should be our prayer and this is what the Gāyatrī-mantra conveys.

871. Abhiprāyaḥ

अभिप्रायः

The one who is sought or approached.

He is Abhiprāya, the altar of prayer of people who want various ends or goals to be accomplished. There are endless things and situations that people want to achieve. We have to pray to the Lord for our desires to be fulfilled.

It is foolish to say that Bhagavān knows what to give and that we should not ask. In spite of His knowing, we are in this situation. If you truly believe that Bhagavān knows what to give and that we should not ask, then you will not resist any situation and face every situation and person with a deep acceptance. But for most of us, it is not like that. We want so many things in our lives and then comes this belief from another religious ethos that says ‘you must only thank the Lord and not ask.’ What is the basis of this belief? If you need something, even a pin, will you not ask someone who has it? To even buy something, you still have to ask. Suppose you go and stand in front of the shopkeeper. Do you think that without you asking, the shopkeeper will know because you have a sincere ‘intention’ of wanting a pin? The shopkeeper has been in the business for a

long time and knows what to give. You need not ask. If you keep standing there, he will just shoo you off ! Knowing that the unknown variables are far too many in our lives and we want certain goals, is it not most practical to reach out and ask for help from the one who is ever ready and ever capable of giving us everything? Prayer is a karma, like japa, meditation, rituals and others, and like any karma, it produces karma-phala, results. It can be both dṛṣṭa-phala and adṛṣṭa-phala. Since we approach the Lord for the fulfillment of our desires, He is called Abhiprāya. He is the altar of our asking and He has to be invoked properly.To ask there must be clarity of what I need.

As Pujya Swamiji would often joke,'If you ask Bhagavān for a head on your shoulders, what will he do?' Scratching his head, Bhagavān will think, 'But this fellow already has a head on his shoulders. Maybe he wants a double decker.' We ask for what we need based on recognising what we already have.

He is Abhiprāya also because jagat ābhimukhyena praiti-all the beings go towards Him at the time of pralaya.

872. Priyārhaḥ
प्रियार्हः
The one who deserves to be loved.

Priya is love. He is the altar of our love. When something makes us feel secure, makes us feel adequate and happy, that frame of mind is called priya, and that object becomes an object of our love. If this is so, then Bhagavān is security itself, adequacy itself and hence, He is the object deserving all love. Therefore, He is Priyārha, deserving our love and its expression in the form of worship and offering to Him.

The smṛtis say that whatever is most desirable in the world and most cherished in the house, like one's wealth, possessions and one's body-mind and sense organs, should be offered to the Lord by one, who desires welfare and prosperity.

873. Arhaḥ
अर्हः
The one who deserves worship.

Bhagavān is Arha, the only one worthy of pūjā, the only one worthy of praying to and asking for the fulfillment of our desires. The various devatās can also be prayed to, but they have their powers of fulfilling the desires, only because of Bhagavān. He has to be worshipped with the various steps of pūjā.

874. Priyakṛt
प्रियकृत्
The one who does pleasant things.

Not only is Bhagavān worthy of our love, but, He is Priyakṛt too.

What are the so called pleasant things done by Bhagavān? It seems like he has just given me some tough situations to deal with. Well, for starters, your body-mind-sense-complex has been given. It did not come as a DIY (do it yourself) kit to be assembled, with instructions. It came assembled with all the blood, tissues, bones, intestines which stay in place by an external protective cover called the skin. Not only do they all stay in place, they also function efficiently unless we tamper with these.

Our powers to want, to know and to do are all given. We have used these powers in so many spheres of life - in childhood, youth and middle age. On a daily basis as the advertisements pop up across the internet or TV, a desire arises for a particular product or to participate in an online class, you order the product or follow some instructions and it is delivered in some time. This is just one of the countless interactions we have that encompass our powers to want, to know and to do, so seamlessly and effortlessly. When we are not able to act on our desire to walk, let 's say because of a hairline fracture, we want to go back to being 'normal'. But what we think is normal or we take for granted, is given. We did not create the 'normal'.

The wonderful people that are brought into our life to love, accept us as well as the people who are brought into our life who challenge us and resist us, are opportunities for us to grow beyond the limits that we place on ourselves. ' I don't think I can handle her/him.' 'This is too much for me to take'. How often have we said these statements to find that after a few days/weeks/months the problematic issue is no longer problematic. The change in perspective, the change in ourselves, the greater strength to deal with the situation or the situation changing, are all given.
Where the given is (of all these pleasant things and more), the giver is!
If you take one step of love towards Bhagavān, He takes one big step towards you. Again, He is the one who makes you love something, not by force but just born of your own understanding.
The more there is understanding of Īśvara, there is more love for fellow beings;
The more there is understanding of Īśvara the less is the resistance to yourself or others.
The less the resistance and conflict, more the acceptance and harmony with yourself and others.
In fact, the love is for the entire world.
The heart opens up, because, what is there is only Īśvara.

875. Prītivardhanaḥ
प्रीतिवर्धनः

The one who increases the love.

How and when does the love for a person or a situation increase? When there is no resistance and when there is no inner pressure for the person to be any different than he or she is.
When there is no inner pressure for the other person to change for you to be happy, it seems like the love for the person increases. When the wanting mind is temporarily resolved, it seems like the love for the person increases. A mother tells me,' My love for my son increases when he listens to me'. That is not love. That is control. Her experience of increasing love for the son is because her love is conditional. If he listens to her (favoured condition) then there is nothing to inhibit her love and that is what she perceives as increasing love. We think that love is a verb.

Love is actually a noun. Non specific love in your heart is when there is joy, acceptance, wonder and gratitude for the very process of life. It does not take some extraordinary capacity to be

loving. When you do caring and supporting acts for others or the environment, you find yourself to be loving. Being loving is to care and commit to the happiness, security and growth of the other person as much as for yourself.

Not only does He makes you love, but makes the love that you have, grow into the limitless love, by the worship of the Lord. The highest form of worship is total identification, that there never were any two.
Hence, He is Prītivardhana.

876. Vihāyasagatiḥ
विहायसगतिः

The one who moves in space.
Vihāyasa is ākāśa, the space. Space is so called because it allows things to travel freely without any hindrance. That, which has its gati, movement, in the vihāyasa, is the sun. It is Bhagavān alone who is in the form of the sun, moving in space, to keep the world warm and bright; thus blessing the world.

Here the purpose is not to point out the gati, but to point out the care of Īśvara, in the form of the sun, a blessing in motion. That blessing is recognized in the motion of the sun.

877. Jyotiḥ
ज्योतिः

The one who is self-effulgent.

In the form of the sun, He blesses you outside and in the form of Jyoti, the self-effulgent ātmā, He blesses you inside. Self effulgent means another light is not required to illumine it. The sun does not require another sun to illumine it.

As the self-revealing consciousness, as the jyoti-svarūpa, He blesses the mind and the senses, being the eye of the eye, ear of the ear, and the mind of the mind. If I see an elephant, awareness of the elephant does not become big. If I see an ant, awareness of the ant does not become small. Awareness is and does not change with the dimensions or qualities of whatever is seen – sights, sounds, tastes, smells and even emotions. I can be aware of my many emotions and even use different emojis to indicate so. What is so beautiful about this self revealing awareness or consciousness is that – In awareness there is no identification. What you are aware of, you see that you are other than it. And you don't need another awareness to be aware!

Therefore, inside, He is a blessing as the pratyagātmā and outside, He is a blessing in the form of the sun. But both are one. 'Sa yaścāyaṃ puruṣe yaścāsavāditye sa ekaḥ – He, who is the pratyagātmā in the body, in the individual, He alone is in the form of the sun. And both are one.' (Tai. Up.2.8.5).

878. Suruciḥ
सुरुचिः

The one who has blessing desires.

Ruci can mean a desire, taste or splendor, lustre. What is the ruci, intention of Bhagavān? What is His idea? What is His desire? His ruci is śobhanā. Śobhanā here is one of blessing. Desire need not always be for fulfilling personal ambitions or intentions. It can also be pure, free from all these. The desire of the Lord is just one of blessing this world and therefore, He is Suruci. The very desire to create the sun, the five elements and so on, is merely one of blessing.

Or, He is Suruci, one with great lustre and spendour.

879. Hutabhuk (also word 887)

हुतभुक्

The consumer of oblations.

In the various rituals, all the oblations meant for the different devatās, like Indra, Soma, Varuna and so on, are huta, offered into the agni, fire. Fire is called hutabhuk, because he consumes the offering and takes it to the various devatās. Bhagavān, being the ātmā of all, is the one who consumes all the oblations. Even though they are offered to different devatās, finally all the oblations go to Him alone. He is the final Hutabhuk.

But, does He require our oblations? Whatever oblation is offered, that becomes a blessing for the offerer, because Bhagavān does not require anything. Hutam bhunakti-He is the one who protects the offering. Protection is, seeing that the offering does not go waste, but becomes fruitful. Whatever is offered, for that, definitely, there is a result, which will reach the offerer and bless him.

The coconut tree consumes small quantities of water that we offer, but it gives back, not just one fruit but bunches of them. So too, Bhagavān remembers what is offered to Him and then gives us the result which is multifold and even that is a blessing.

880. Vibhuḥ (also word 240)

विभुः

The all-pervasive.

Bhagavān is Vibhu, because vividham bhavati, He is manifest in manifold ways, as varieties of things and beings. Is there any object that we know which is present all over? Space is present between two objects and also present in each living cell. Space is present between the walls of the home as well as in and through the walls. There is no place that we can imagine where space is not. Yet, space is a product, having a cause and is the subtlest form of matter. That which is so all pervasive, that which contains even space is Vibhuḥ

He is in and through everything and also the Lord of all the worlds. His manifestation is not stereotyped. The whole universe, with its varieties of flora and fauna, is an amazing blessing.

881. Raviḥ

रविः

The one in the form of the sun.

As the sun, He is called Ravi. The word ravi can be derived as 'rasān ādate.' the one who takes the rasa, the water. The water is taken from the ocean and it goes back to the ocean in the form of rain. As the sun, He energizes the earth, takes the water and gives it back as the rain, which is necessary for life. No amount of watering the plants can equal what the rains can do.
The sun is located in the ideal place. If it was located a little further like say Mars, it will affect life. If it was located a little closer like Venus, there is no chance of life. Life on earth grows and thrives because of just the ideal distance between the earth and the sun.

882. Virocanaḥ
विरोचनः
The one who shines in many forms.

He is Virocana, because He shines in various ways. Bhagavān shines in the form of the sun. The recent solar eclipse visible in the US this week just brought home the fact that around noon, the entire area became dark because the sun was eclipsed for a few minutes. For me to say mid-day, implies the sun. Even the way we have conceptualized time revolves around the sun. Life as we know it would not be possible without the light of the sun.
Bhagavān shines in the form of the moon. The cool rays of the moonlight are also important for the nourishment of the plants. Traditional practices in agriculture take into account the different phases of the moon for sowing and harvesting. In the form of the various other luminaries, like the stars, fire etc, Bhagavān shines and illumines our world.

883. Sūryaḥ
सूर्यः
The one who creates the world.

He is Sūrya, because in the form of the sun, sarvam sūte, He produces, yields everything; śriyaṃ sūte, produces wealth. It is agriculture that brings wealth. The real wealth is only agricultural wealth as it sustains all the beings. Even people who eat meat as the animals feed on plants. To be able to live and be healthy, food is required. If this wealth alone is there, other forms of wealth can be produced. For this wealth to be there, the sun must be there, seasons must be there, rains also must be there. The blessing of Bhagavān as Surya is all the way!
Thus, as Sūrya, He energizes and makes it possible for all types of food, all forms of life, and all forms of wealth to be produced.

Suvati iti sūryah–He is the one who impels and makes all activities possible. The various external activities as well as the internal activities of all living beings are based on the external clock and the internal biological clock, which are dependent on the sun. When the sun is up, living beings wake up from sleep and when the sun sets, they also wind up and go to sleep. Thus, as the impeller of varieties of activities of all living beings, He is Sūrya, the main factor which provides energy, and creates the food cycle. This is a blessing.

884. Savitā (also word 969)
सविता

The one who has given birth to the entire jagat.

As the upādāna-kāraṇa, material cause of this jagat, Parameśvara is Savitā, the one who has given birth to all. Ofcourse, our parents have made our birth possible. But, even a gynaecologist or a cardiologist cannot make life happen. Plants are intelligent. They know just how much they need from the sunlight and the soil. This knowledge of the plants was not created by them. They have not done a crash course on how to do what they do. The cells of our body are intelligent. They just know how to assimilate the minerals and vitamins, how much to be sent to be disposed etc. Again, where did these tiny cells learn all this from? The planets move above in the perfect orbits. They don't have accidents.

You look around and find that intelligence pervades every object let alone another being. All intelligence logically implies a conscious being. All the forms required for this jagat, from the five elements onwards were put together by Parameśvara. Every form is intelligent or put together with a specific function. Where did the material come from? From nowhere else but himself. Parameśvara is the unitary source of the material and the intelligent cause of the jagat. These five elements and their many permutations and combinations then become the many causes of all that we see and experience in this world. All that is here is Parameśvara,
Or, in the form of the sun, in the form of the solar system, He has given birth to this jagat, the world of people, world of life. Therefore, He is Savitā.

885. Ravilocanaḥ
रविलोचनः
The one who has the sun as His eyes.

Everything is Bhagavān. When that is so, if Bhagavān has eyes, what would be the eye of Bhagavān? Looking from the earth, the sun appears as the eye of Bhagavān. Since, the ravi, sun, is His locana, eye, He is Ravilocana. Generally both the sun and the moon are taken as the eyes of Īśvara. The Upaniṣad describes Him as 'agnimūrdhā cakṣuṣī candrasūryau–fire is His head and the sun and moon are His eyes' (Mu. Up.2.1.4).

Alternately, it can also be looked at in another way. The body is made of food and this food is nothing but our ancestors, who have gone into the earth. Thus, the one who eats food now, becomes later the eaten. This body is food because it is born of food and goes back to become food. Food is only a recycled product. So too, water is taken back and recycled. But, Bhagavān, in the form of the sun, effortlessly distills any amount of water. Ravi is the one who takes all the essence back to himself and again gives back the essence to the earth. Forms undergo change and rasa is the essence of the form. Recycling is a continous process. Again energy is recycled in the form of solar energy, hydo-electricity and so on. Thus, the greatest recyclist is Īśvara. Ravi stands for the recycling and Bhagavān as one who focuses on the recycling, is Ravilocana.

886. Anantaḥ (also word 659)
अनन्तः
The limitless.

He is Ananta, limitless, in terms of His svarūpa as Brahman. If Brahman were limited by time, it would imply that it was not there before and it would not be there later. While it is there also, it would not be in the same form and it would keep on changing. Then, it would be anitya. Īśvara does not have such a limitation of time, because He is nitya.

Again, being the very cause of space, He is sarvagata, all-pervasive and not limited spatially. In fact, He is not located in time and place, but time and space are in Him, the limitless consciousness.

Further, object-wise limitation is also not there. Every object is Brahman but Brahman is not any particular object and therefore, the absence of limitation by any object, contributes to the limitlessness of Īśvara. Time, space and all objects are like the attributes of the limitless consciousness, not being separate from it. In its true nature, it is free from any of these attributes. Hence, Īśvara is Ananta, limitless.

If we shift attention to the conscious being that you are, does consciousness have boundaries?
Can consciousness that you are, be divided or compartmentalized?
The consciousness that you are, were you ever born or will you ever die?
Ananta, limitless that you are, can you be affected by your limited thoughts and emotions and limited situations?
Ananta, limitless that you are, can you be affected by the compliments or the criticisms of people around you?
Ananta, limitless that you are, can you be affected by the conditions of your mind and body?

887. Hutabhuk (also word 879)

हुतभुक्

The ultimate receiver of all the offerings.

Here, the word huta refers to the very act of offering. It is Īśvara, who protects the ritual done with sraddhā and bhakti, by making up for the omissions and commissions and making it fruitful. He receives the oblations and gives the result. Hence, He is Hutabhuk, the protector of our offering. That is why we say at the end of rituals, 'oṃ tat sat brahmārpaṇam astu' and request that He make our karma complete, in spite of its inadequacies.

Can one perform the best karma? Not possible. One does one's best. That 's all. Any karma being limited by nature, the results are limited. The results are available to us because of his principles and laws.

888. Bhoktā (also words 143, 500)

भोक्ता

i. The enjoyer
ii. The protector.

Bhagavān is the one who bhunkati, nourishes, the jagat and keeps the scheme of things going, that is, keeps all life forms going. So, He is the one who nourishes all these forms and hence, Bhoktā.

Or, because He is the hutabhuk, the consumer of oblations, He is Bhoktā. Even with reference to all those who do not offer prayers, He is the one who is the real bhoktā, the real enjoyer. Without Him, there is no bhoga, experience.

When someone says that 'The purpose of my life is to have new experiences,' it is important to deconstruct this. What is the nature of every experience? Laughing with family or scuba diving, involves some sensory data and an emotional response to it. When we try to repeat our enjoyable experiences we find that the same experiences lose their joy for us over a period of time. Then, what is it that really makes me enjoy?

When one says that 'I am the doer,' this implies that, one is a conscious being and what he enjoys is acetana, insentient. The seats in the world 's best auditorium for football or classical music cannot enjoy themselves although they are in the presence of the world's best. That consciousness, in the conscious being, is Parameśvara. The consciousness in the enjoyer is also Parameśvara. So He is the Bhoktā.

889. Sukhadaḥ (also word 459)

सुखदः

The one who gives (or cuts) sukha.

If He is the bhoktā, the enjoyer, what do we get? When one understands Him as the bhokta in everyone, one gets mokṣa-sukha, which is the ultimate knowledge. This sukha is not subject to change. It is important to not think that I have sukha when I have ice cream and I will have sukha when I have mokṣa. It is not about just a change in emotion or a change in situation. When ananta, the limitless is understood your heart expands to include all emotions. That expansiveness of the heart may be experienced as sukha.

'Raso vai sah – He is ānanda-rasa. Rasaṃ hyevā yaṃ labdhvā' nandī bhavati – Therefore, by knowing, gaining this Brahman, one becomes happy' (Tai.Up.2.7). For those who gain this knowledge, He is sukhada, the giver of sukha in the form of mokṣa.

What about those who do not have this knowledge? Whatever sukha they get, that is also from Īśvara. If Bhagavān gives sukha, then who gives the duḥkha? Is there a devil? No. That duḥkha is also from Him, in the sense that when one goes against dharma, there is pāpa and that gives unpleasant situations. As He alone is the karma-phala-datā, He is the one who cuts away the happiness, sukham dyati, and becomes asukhada. If one is a vivekī, even the unpleasant situations, can be taken cheerfully. If one is an avivekī, then there is duḥkha.

We don't have any set ways to relate to Īśvara. If you are angry you can express your anger and call him names (besides the Sahasranama). Sukha and dukha is the psychological order of Īśvara. Na sukha is asukha and that is duḥkha. So due to karma-phala, when there is duḥkha, He is the one who removes the duḥkha. Thus, He is both Sukhada and Asukhada.

890. Naikajaḥ

नैकजः

The one who has many births.

Bhagavān is called Dharmagoptā, the protector of dharma. In order to protect dharma He is born many times and hence, He is Naikaja. He has taken many avatāras. Bhagavān says, 'Bahūni me vyatītāni janmāni–Many births have gone by for me.' 'Dharma-saṃsthāpanārthāya sambhavāmi yuge yuge–I take birth in every yuga for establishing dharma' (BG.4.5, 8). As an answer to the prayers of the people, Bhagavān is born. In fact, it is the people who create Him.

Bhagavān did not come on His own. It was the karma-phala of the people that brought Bhagavān into a form. So, we cannot say really, whether Bhagavān, out of His own will, keeping māyā under His control, brought a body into being or the avatāra was created by the devotees, who prayed to the Lord, to protect them from adharma. As a result of their prayers, Bhagavān takes an embodiment. He was not born one time, But Naikaja, born many times.

891. Agrajaḥ

अग्रजः

The one who was born first.

Just in case there is any confusion about the births of Bhagavān, comes along a word to clarify the confusion. Who was born first? At the beginning of the creation, He alone first became Hiraṇyagarbha and then Virāṭ. Hiraṇyagarbha can be simply understood as the limitless taking the form of intelligence or the cosmic mind. Hiraṇyagarbha is called Agraja. So as the one who was born as Hiraṇyagarbha, He is Agraja.

892. Anirviṇṇaḥ (also word 435)

अनिर्विण्णः

The one who has no dejection.

In the Muṇḍakopaniṣad it is said, 'parīkṣya lokān karma-citān brāhmaṇaḥ nirvedamāyāt–a viveki, analyzing all forms of experiences gained through karma and understanding their limitations, discovers nirveda, dispassion'(1.2.12). This is so because, all the results that are gained are not pleasant and that which is pleasant is subject to time and variation. One loses interest in these pursuits, with a feeling of a sense of 'enough.' Further, when what is desired is not achieved and what is achieved is not according to one's expectation, then one becomes nirviṇṇa, dejected, frustrated.

But, Bhagavān is Anirviṇṇa, He never loses interest in enjoying His svarūpa, is never dejected and frustrated. Because He is limitless joy, pūrṇa, there is nothing for Him to gain and nothing that He cannot gain. He does not expect anything, any special joy, from His job. What a thankless job! Most unappreciated, unacknowledged and ignored being in this world is Bhagavān. He still keeps everything going and embraces us with all his prinicples and laws. He does this out of fullness. And so, He is Anirviṇṇa.

893. Sadāmarṣi

सदामर्षी

The one who bears with satpurusas.

Bhagavān is Sadāmarṣī. He understands and bears with people, because they are sat-puruṣas. He understands the limitations of people and bears with them patiently. This is the marṣaṇa. It is not forgiving, which has different connotations. It is more like accommodation.

Any person, who makes a small effort towards Īśvara, becomes a sat-puruṣa and it is natural, that he has some limitations and Bhagavān understands those limitations. So that step towards Īśvara, is what counts, to bring about all the changes in the person. If Bhagavān can be like this then who am I to bear with people and behave as I am doing a big favour by tolerating people? How can I be arrogant to think that I am doing anyone a favour? How can I be self indulgent to think that I have made so many sacrifices? Bhagavān not only bears with me but embraces me 24x7.

894. Lokādhiṣṭhānam

लोकाधिष्ठानम्

The adhiṣṭhāna of everything.

Clay is the adhiṣṭhāna for the pot. It is the basis for the pot.
Is clay on top of the pot? No.
Is clay below the pot? No.
Is clay giving support to the pot? No.
Is clay the essence of the pot?No. Is clay
Is clay the higher energy behind the pot? No.
Is clay the super power behind the pot? No.
Is clay the divine spark inside the pot? No
Is clay the outer layer of the pot? No.
Is clay sitting inside the pot?
Are there two things - clay and the pot?
Bhagavān is the adhiṣṭhāna, the locus of all the worlds.
Bhagavān is the locus of all spheres, all laws and forces, in other words, the locus of all the names and forms.

895. Adbutaḥ

अद्भुतः

The one who is a wonder.

He is the adhiṣṭhāna of everything and hence, is an active participant. At the same time, He is asaṅga, without being affected in anyway. Thus, He is Adbhuta; a wonder. When you look at Īśvara from any angle, He is a wonder. From the standpoint of His svarūpa, He is a wonder, because even though He is changeless, He seems to undergo changes. Even though non-dual, He seems to become many. Even though formless and attributeless, He seems to take on forms and attributes, in a variety of ways.

Anything that is possible is not a wonder. Only what is impossible but is made to look possible, is a wonder. His māyā-śakti, which makes the impossible possible, is a wonder. The magnitude

of this universe is, as yet, very little explored, and what is explored also evokes awe and wonder. That it can be created, sustained and resolved, by His mere saṅkalpa, is a wonder. When He has nothing to gain from it, that He goes on and on with this creation is a wonder.

He is the ātmā, the truth of everyone. That people should feel estranged from it and seek it, is a wonder. That it is unlike anything else, is a wonder. Though it is not available for words and thought, and that the śāstra tries to point to it, through words is a wonder. The Kathopaniṣad says that the self is not available for hearing for many; and even if heard, many do not understand it. The one who teaches is a wonder and the one who listens, being not separate from it, is also a wonder. The one who understands, being taught by a proficient teacher, is another wonder. And the Gītā says, that one looks upon the self as a wonder; another speaks of it as a wonder and another hears it as a wonder. Still another, even after hearing about the self, does not understand it at all, is another wonder.

896. Sanāt

सनात्

The ancient.

Sanāt is another name for Viṣṇu. It is a word that indicates time, which lasts forever. It was there and it will be there. So Parameśvara is here presented as kāla, time, which brings in space also. It is time that brings about the creation of the jagat. Without time and space, there cannot be motion. Jagat is motion. When one enquires into time, time disappears.

The past and future are nothing but the present; and the present is what obtains. Past was present and future also will be present and present is present. So the unit of time is only the present. The past or future are thought of only as 'now' and that is the present. But when the thought is of 'now', all thoughts stop and there is no thinking.

The 'now' is only when the length of time, experientially disappears. It does not enjoy any length of time. This is time. But mathematically, it will never disappear. The length of time is timeless. So, the timeless make the length of time. It is like a series of points which make a line. A point is that which occupies no space and has no dimension. Yet, a series of these points make a line. So time and space are the greatest magic of māyā. This is the māyā-śakti of Īśvara. So Īśvara is Sanāt, has always been there and hence, ancient.

897. Sanātanatamaḥ

सनातनतमः

The most ancient of the ancient.

'Tama' is a suffix added to words to indicate the superlative degree. Sanātanatama means the most ancient. Brahmāji and the prajāpatis, who are said to be creators, are also created by Parameśvara. Since He is the creator of the creators also, He is the most ancient. The most ancient can also be misconstrued as being within time.

Being the ultimate nimitta kāraṇa, intelligent cause and upādāna-kāraṇa, material cause, He is the cause of time and hence, is timeless.

898. Kapilaḥ

कपिलः

The one who is brownish red.

In the 531st nāma, it was pointed out that, He is Maharṣi Kapilācārya. Kapila also means a brownish red colour.

The Purāṇas talk of a great fire within the oceans, called the baḍavānala. It maybe the volcanoes in the ocean bed whose eruptions cause small and large islands. He is Kapila, brownish red in the form of the baḍavānala, the law and order, the principles that keeps the oceans and their islands what they are.
How come the oceans don't spill over and are contained? The tides come in all the time. There is high tide and low tide. But the waters don't swallow the islands except in rare instances like the tsunami or progressive global warming effects.

899. Kapiḥ

कपिः

The one who drinks the water.

The word kapi has many meanings as monkey, elephant, boar, sun and so on. When He took the avatāra of the varāha, boar, He is Kapi. The sun is called kapi because it drinks 'ka,' water, in a subtle way, evaporating it through its rays of heat. The surface water in the ponds and lakes evaporate and they become dry because of the sun. The Lord, in the form of the sun, from the standpoint of this function, is Kapi.

900. Apyayaḥ

अप्ययः

The place of resolution.

This is a new creation, before which there was a previous creation, a previous jagat, which got resolved into Parameśvara. This creation will also get resolved into Parameśvara. Not only is He Sanātana, ancient, but will be there, in the same way, in the future also.

Resolution is also Parameśvara. Where do our thoughts come from? We may say that our thoughts come from memory, but not all our thoughts are memory based. Where do our thoughts resolve? Our thoughts resolve into Parameśvara as the order is sustained by him.
The entire jagat, with all beings and objects along with time and space, goes back unto Parameśvara and hence, He is Apyaya, the locus of resolution.

901. Svastidaḥ

स्वस्तिदः

The one who gives maṅgala.

Because His grace will give svasti, auspiciousness, He is Svastida. The grade that you want when you are in school, which you get is svasti. The friend that becomes your 'best friend' is svasti. The encouragement and acceptance from your parents or care givers is svasti. The college of your choice is svasti. The difficulties that you get in your life are also svasti. They don't feel like svasti but they make us grow. They make us stronger and bigger than the situation.
The free will that is always available to us is svasti.
It is a life of svasti when you discover that you always have a choice in your response.
It is a life of svasti when you discover that you may not always have a choice in the situations that you have to face. You are confident that you can handle anything because Parameśvara is the one who gives what is auspicious to us.

The gain of any desired puruṣārtha is auspicious. But, the real svasti is mokṣa, the grand finale, beyond which there is nothing more to be gained.

902. Svastikṛt
स्वस्तिकृत्
The one who makes maṅgala.

Bhagavān is not only Svastida, but also Svastikṛt, the maker of svasti. Svasti can be the relative well-being and joy, as well as the absolute well-being and joy. The absolute well-being is only in the knowledge of Īśvara.

How does He create the svasti? By giving one the karma-phala. He gives the results for actions such as prayer and creates an atmosphere which is conducive for svasti, auspiciousness. When one appreciates Īśvara, He is the Svastikṛt, as the dṛṣṭa-phala, the immediate result.

The understanding, the awareness of Bhagavān itself creates svasti. Thus, he becomes svastikṛt. Adṛṣṭa is punya, grace. So, as the one who gives karma phala, in the form of punya, which is conducive for auspiciousness, He is Svastikṛt. To the extent that there is the understanding of Īśvara, to that extent there is svasti or well-being.

903. Svasti
स्वस्ति
The one whose nature is auspiciousness.

Who can give auspiciousness, mangalam in different forms? Only the one who has it.
Who can give auspiciousness, mangalam to everyone without preferences? Only the one who is impartial.
Who can give auspiciousness, mangalam at all times of the day? Only the one who is ever available.
Bhagavān Himself is Svasti, of the nature of auspiciousness. He is in the form of blessing alone. Being of the nature of limitless joy, He is Svasti, absolute auspiciousness. The declaration in Nirvana shatakam is Shivohum. I am Shiva, auspiciousness. This discovery that Bhagavān's nature is my nature is when one has received all that was really needed to be received.

904. Svastibhuk

स्वस्तिभुक्

The one who enjoys or protects the auspiciousness.

If Bhagavan is svastyātmaka, in the form of auspiciousness that is mokṣa, freedom, then, who enjoys that svasti? He alone is the Svastibhuk, the enjoyer of that also; there is no other bhoktā. If the enjoyer is other than Bhagavān, then that person would become the consumer of Bhagavān. He/she would objectify Bhagavān as we often do, reducing him to another being in a special place – someone other than us. But as the enjoyer, He alone is in the form of both Svasti and Svastibhuk.

Svasti bhunakti – He is also the protector of auspiciousness and hence also, Svastibhuk.

905. Svastidakṣiṇaḥ

स्वस्तिदक्षिणः

i. The one who grows as auspiciousness.
ii. The expert in giving auspiciousness.

As He is in the very form of svasti, in the beginning there is relative svasti, when there is a little awareness of Īśvara. As the awareness of Īśvara increases, as more of Īśvara comes into one's life, the svasti also increases. With the total understanding of Īśvara, there is absolute svasti. This is like the picture taken in a Polaroid camera. In the beginning there seems to be a very vague outline of a picture; but, as the exposure increases, the picture becomes more and more clear. So too, with greater awareness of Īśvara, there is greater svasti. Thus, all the way there is only svasti. Svastirūpeṇa dakṣate – as He alone increases in the form of svasti, He is Svastidaksina.

Again, though He is in the form of svasti, absolute joy, its appreciation may vary with the type of antaḥkaraṇa, mind, that one has and also the amount of punya that one has. The more developed the antaḥkaraṇa, the more puṇya one has, uninhibited by pāpa, there is more svasti enjoyed. Thus, He is Svastidaksina, one who seems to grow with the superiority of the antaḥkaraṇa and increase in puṇya.

He is Svastidakṣiṇa, also because svasti dātum dakṣiṇaḥ–capable of giving svasti. The word dakṣiṇa has also the meaning of one who has the capacity to do something very quickly. The Lord is not only capable of giving svasti, but also giving it quickly.

906. Araudraḥ

अरौद्रः

The one who does not have any violence.

He is Araudra, free from raudra. There are different types of raudra- wherein karma is violent, desire is violent and anger is also violent. So, the one who is free from these three kinds of raudra is araudra. People engage themselves in frightening activities like destruction, vandalism, rampage, terrorism and so on. This is because there is lot of buildup of hatred, fear, insecurity and anger. We may say that we are different from people given to crime. Still, we do build up a

lot of emotions that are not conducive to us. 'I lost my job,' is an objective fact. You are living in the world of Bhagavān. 'My life is over', 'I am ruined', 'Nobody will give me a job now,' Why did this happen to me? I am being punished. Life is so unfair– all these statements are a build up. A reaction to a reaction! We do this very often. No wonder the intensity of our emotions and hence related activities are too difficult to manage.

In anger and hatred, there is a lot of destruction. Again, it is the unfulfilled desires that cause pain and that turns into anger and hatred. It then becomes a vicious cycle. Bhagavān is avāpta-sarva-kāma, one who has all His desires fulfilled, in the sense, that being ever full, there is nothing unattained by Him; therefore, He does not need to have desires, let alone fulfill them. Hence, He has no likes or dislikes or an anger born of that, leading to raudra.

Everyone is given to different degrees of violent actions and similar conditions of the mind. Especially, when people get power, these tendencies seem to increase. Power corrupts and absolute power means absolute uncontrolled corruption. When power is there, there are no deterrents and one loses control of what one does and feels that one can get away with it.
Bhagavān is almighty, that is, He has absolute power. Does that mean that He has raudra in absolute measure? No. In spite of absolute power, Bhagavān has no raudra at all. Therefore, we invoke Bhagavān as Araudra for getting rid of our tendencies towards raudra-kāma, raudra-kopa and raudra-karma, that is, violent desires, violent anger and violent actions.

907. Kuṇḍalī
कुण्डली
i. The one who has ear-rings.
ii. The one in the form of ādiśeṣa.

This is for upāsanā. The Lord is pictured as Kuṇḍalī, having beautiful kuṇḍalas, shining ear-rings, in the form of the sun and the moon.

Or, He is Kuṇḍalī, being in the form of the serpent Ādiśeṣa, who has a kuṇḍala, a coil.

908. Cakrī (also word 995)
चक्री
The one who wields a discus.

He has the discus, the Sudarśana-cakra, in His hand for protecting the people and hence, He is called Cakrī. Protection is through destroying the enemy or forces that are inimical to the person. Krsna beheaded Siśupāla with the sudarśana cakra. Sudarshana is the vision of that which is auspicious while cakra is also a symbol of wheel of time. Because he wields the cakra, we allow inimical forces to be destroyed and all of it is auspicious.

The cakra stands for the manas-tattva, the mind principle, because it is as swift as the mind. Although you are sitting at your home or your office, you can instantly be in any country or even galaxy with your mind. You can be in the past or the future. The one who pervades the swiftness of the mind is Cakrī.

909. Vikramī (also word 75)
विक्रमी
The one who has valour.

Vikrama can mean the footstep of valour.

When we look at the history of Śrī Rāma, it does not look like an easy life. Themes of betrayal, loss, sorrow, separation are interwoven in his life, yet he never loses hope.

When we look at Śrī Krsṇa 's life, the themes are no different. Born in a prison, abandoned by his mother, surviving a death attempt by his uncle and not being understood by most people during his lifetime, it does not look like an easy life. With their human form, these avatars, through the many incidents of their life, teach us to never lose heart and have valour. It is easier to have valour when you follow dharma. If you try to have valour without following dharma, it is just foolhardiness.

As both His footstep and valour are in a measure which is totally distinct from all others, He is Vikramī.

910. Ūrjitaśāsanaḥ
ऊर्जितशासनः
The one whose mandates are powerful.

He is Ūrjitaśāsana, one whose mandates and laws are excellent and powerful. They are universal, but not absolute and at the same time not loose. They can be looked at in two ways, as laws of dharma and as laws governing all physical and other spheres.

When we look at fire, it is not that fire is hot for one person and cold for another person. It is universally hot. But, it is not absolute, in the sense that one can have fireproof protection. So too, the laws of all natural forces are ūrjita, an excellent and intelligent network that brings about harmony. That is why, it is possible to study and understand the laws. That the same thing behaves in a different way, in a different condition, is also His law. That is why, it is possible to use these laws to our advantange.

Again, the laws of dharma, in the form of śruti and smṛti, are also impartial and universal, and not loose. But, they are not absolute, in that, they can be interpreted in situations.
The surgeon and the thief, both use the knife. But the intention matters. People look for absolutes in dharma and are disappointed. But the beauty of dharma is that it applies differently in different situations. Much of our maturity lies in interpreting dharma. Should the doctor tell a patient who was admitted to the hospital in recovering from a heart attack that he has cancer too? Which value is more important? Saving a life from possible stress and shock or speaking the truth. All the laws of dharma need to be interpreted. Thus, the laws of Bhagavān are universal, impartial, excellent and powerful. Hence, He is Ūrjitaśāsana.

911. Śabdātigaḥ

शब्दातिगः

The one who is beyond words.

After 910 nāmas, Vyāsa says, that Bhagavān is Śabdātiga, one who is beyond words.
Does it mean that all these nāmas are useless? No. Bhagavān, from the standpoint of His svarūpa, can never be the object, the direct meaning of any śabda, word.

Bhagavān has no attribute in the sense that all attributes are his attributes but none is particularly his. When a thing is black, it means it is not red. The thing has one attribute of colour. Is there any quality or attribute in the world that is not pervaded by Bhagavān?
You may be talking while walking. You may be multi tasking. Still, all actions – eating, drinking, walking, sitting, standing, speaking, listening, reading, singing, dancing, jumping, running, thinking, contemplating, killing, shouting, screaming, destroying are possible. Is there any action that is not pervaded by Bhagavān?
The many groups are organised into different communities, different religions, different animals, different species, different functions, different departments according to function. Which group holy or unholy is not pervaded by Bhagavān?

We fill up many roles in our many relationships – work professional, father, mother, son, daughter, sister, brother, friend, mother in law, brother in law, sister in law.employer etc. Are only some relationships pervaded by Bhagavān while others are not? Words can function only within the range of attribute, action, species and relationships. Since, His svarūpa is unlike anything else, paradoxes have to be used. Thus only by using paradoxes, and implying through words, can Bhagavān be revealed. Since He cannot be described through any single word, He is Śabdātiga.

The śruti says, 'yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha – from whom words retreat along with the mind.' (Tai. Up.2.4).

912. Śabdasahaḥ

शब्दसहः

The one spoken of, by the words of the Vedas.

Even though He is Śabdātiga, He is Śabdasaha, the one spoken about by all the Vedas.
He is not only spoken of by the words of the Vedas but also by those of all disciplines of knowledge.

913. Śiśiraḥ

शिशिरः

The one in the form of the cool season.

Śiśira means the cool season. In the form of the cold season, He is Sisira. He is Sisira also because like the śiśira-ṛtu, the cold season, He is the refuge which cools one from the tāpatraya, the heat of the inner and the external afflictions, the ādhyātmika, the ādhibhautika and the ādhidaivika-tāpas.

Bhagavān is the only place where one can be free from the heat of these tāpas.

914. Śarvarīkaraḥ
शर्वरीकरः
The one who makes the night.

Śarvarī means night. He is Śarvarīkara, the one who makes the night so that all living beings can rest and relax. By resolving the notion of 'I' and 'mine' in sleep, the individual is able to relax and have a temporary respite from the day to day problems. What a blessing everyone has! Every night or whenever one sleeps, you are free from your problems.

Generally, in daylight one sees things clearly, and the darkness of night makes it difficult. Therefore, what is clearly perceived is said to be as clear as daylight and what is not clear is like night. While some are awake to the truth of the oneness of Īśvara, others are asleep to this fact. They are in the dark about this fact. Hence, there is confusion and conflict.
The majority of people seem to see duality as clearly as seeing things in daylight. Therefore, the threats and problems of duality, saṃsāra, are very real for them. But those who know the truth are as though in darkness with reference to saṃsāra; they do not see the threats and problems that others see.

Experiencing duality does not prove reality.
Experiencing the earth as flat ground does not prove that the earth is flat. Experiencing anger at the loss of the spectacles which are hidden under the pillow does not prove that the spectacles were lost.Although people experience duality, duality does not prove reality. In the Gītā, Bhagavān says, 'In that which is night for all beings, the one who is wise, who has mastery over oneself, is awake. That, in which beings are awake, is night for the wise one who sees.'

Who causes this knowledge and ignorance? Since Bhagavān alone is the cause of everything, He is not only the object of knowledge and ignorance, but also the cause of all knowledge and ignorance. Hence, He is Śarvarīkara.

915. Akrūraḥ
अक्रूरः
The one who is not cruel.

Kraurya, cruelty, is an emotion, a mental modification. It is a santāpa, a mental affliction born of anger, jealousy or frustration and all these are generally seen when there is some power or a delusion that one has power.

Absolute power is only the power of Īśvara. Absolute power is not power at all. It is not that there is a locus of absolute power, and elsewhere, there is limited power. All limited powers, belonging to various jīvas, are only delegated powers.

Parameśvara is one who is incapable of cruelty, because, fear, which is the cause of cruelty, is not there. A second thing is not there to threaten, to make Him feel insecure and hence, there is

no reason for fear. He has no anger, no cruelty. Hence Bhagavān is Akrūra, devoid of kraurya. One may say, 'I have no fear,' till something strong comes along, and then there is fear. But in the case of Bhagavān, there is absence of fear, because the cause of fear is not there. 'Na bibheti kutaścaneti.' He has no fear from anything, since a second thing is not there. He has no fear or insecurity and so, He has no need to be cruel.

916. Peśalaḥ

पेशलः

The one who is fascinating.

In whichever way Īśvara is looked at, He is Peśala, very handsome, gentle and fascinating.
In terms of knowledge, the magic of Īśvara in putting things together, is fascinating. His every manifestation is fascinating and inspiring. We clear our vision of cynicism, doubt and jadedness. Even our cynicism and jadedness or exhaustion with life is fascinating. Despite everything being given, we still want to take ownership of it all and get frustrated. When we live in a world of our own making we are generally frustrated. When we shift to the world where Īśvara's laws and principles operate, then there is only fascination and actions born of inspiration and contribution.
His deeds, mind, words, body are all beautiful.

917. Dakṣaḥ

दक्षः

The one who is skillful.

Īśvara is the most śakta, capable and hence, Dakṣa. Not only is He capable, but He is śīghrakārī, capable of doing things very fast. In anything that we do, there is so much of planning, gathering of resources and manpower, and execution involved, that it takes a lot of time. But, the jagat is created by the mere saṅkalpa of the Lord. He thinks and it is there. There is no time involved, because, time itself is yet to be created. The thought is creation. 'Tad aikṣata……asṛjata – it saw (in the mind)…it created'(Chā.Up.6.2.3).

In dream, you think of a mountain and mountain is there in place and time. Did you have to build the mountain layer by layer? No. Did you have to do mining in another mountain to shift it to this one? No. The space in which the mountain is, the air surrounding the mountain, did you have to get it from somewhere? It all came from you. He thinks and it is so. From our standpoint, that is the highest skill. This is not to be confused with siddhis that some people have. Every siddhi, accomplishment is possible because He is Dakṣa. Also, He is pravṛddha, most grown up because He has no limitations whatsoever.

918. Dakṣiṇaḥ

दक्षिणः

The one who is efficient.

The name Dakṣiṇa has the same meaning as Dakṣa. There is no defect of repetition, because the words are different. Dakṣa also means the one who destroys. Īśvara creates and what is created

has to be continuously resolved. A moment is born, and it is gone. Only what is, can go. So, Bhagavān continuously resolves that which is created.

As Dakṣa, He continuously creates and as Dakṣiṇa, He continuously destroys or resolves.

919. Kṣamiṇāṃ Varaḥ
क्षमिणां वरः
The one who has forbearance.

Kṣamī is one who is able to put up with all the omissions and commissions. Everyone has a certain level of patience. Sādhus are kṣamīs, with a lot of forbearance. The earth is given an example of forbearance. She tolerates all. Who has forbearance in absolute measure?
We ignore him. Bhagavān still gives.
We feel we don't have enough. Bhagavān tolerates our complaints.
We don't trust anyone including Bhagavān. Bhagavān still continues to be trustworthy through all the flawless laws and principles including the law of karma.
We don't acknowledge what we have. Bhagavān points out ways for us to discover.
We curse. Bhagavān makes the principles for me to even utter a curse, work.
We pray. Bhagavān blesses.
We don't pray. Bhagavān still blesses.
We may go about our whole life, not caring for who our source is? Bhagavān still blesses us with many successes.
Bhagavān has absolute forbearance and so, He is Kṣamiṇāṃ Vara. We seek his grace.
Kṣamī has also the meaning of one who is capable.
Bhagavān, having all the powers, is Kṣamiṇāṃ Vara, the ablest of all.

920. Vidvattamaḥ
विद्वत्तमः
The wisest.

Vidvān means a scholar. The scholarship is in a limited field. The person may be a Ph D in Ergonomics but may not know to swim. The scholar may be a pandit but may not know how to cook to save his life. As one specializes, one's field becomes narrowed. As one comes to know more and more, he comes to know about less and less. It is the people who know more in their respective fields that makes them humble because they also see what they don't know. Therefore, scholarship becomes narrow and there is always something more to know or someone who knows more.

Many so called secular people thank the universe, for things manifesting in their lives after they 'released' their intention into the universe. If the universe was intelligent like a wall, their intention should just boomerang back into them. But the universe is intelligent, not independently by itself. The universe is made intelligent by the many laws and principles pervaded by the one who is the wisest of them all. These so called secular people refuse to acknowledge that there is an intelligent being that pervades everything because they have problems with authority figures.

Īśvara is sarvajña and sarvavit, knowing all things with all their details. He also knows Himself and the Vedas. Therefore, His jñāna is sarvagocara, all encompassing and always free from atiṣaya, being excelled by someone else. Hence, He is Vidvattama, the wisest.

921. Vītabhayaḥ

वीतभयः

The one who is free from fear.

Vītabhaya means one from whom fear has gone away. When we say that fear has gone, it would mean that the fear was there before. This can be said for a jīva, an individual, because the jīva has sāṃsārika-bhaya, fear within saṃsāra of various things like losing the job, money, health and problems from the government and so on; or he has bhaya of the bondage of saṃsāra. If there are binding likes, fear follows like a shadow. All our attempts at dealing with our fears don't work because we don't try to lose the 'binding' nature of cravings. We are not objective to our binding likes. We want situations to be like how we want them. We fear losing what we find security in.

But, how can this compound be used for Bhagavān? Never does Bhagavān have any fear. Being sarveśvara, the Lord is in control of everything and so sāṃsārika-bhaya is not there or being nitya-mukta, ever liberated, and having no ignorance, the fear of saṃsāra is also not there. In fact, bhaya, fear in any form, is afraid to come near Bhagavān.

We say that He is Vītabhaya, because, we are frightened and want to be vītabhaya, free from fear. So, we invoke Him with the nāma which shows what we want to be and what we want from Him. When we are objective it means that our likes and cravings don't have a hold on us. We have the likes. They don't have us. When we are objective, we know we will be able to handle anything that life offers. When we are objective, we are able to see our fears. Being objective is seeing that Vītabhayaḥ is always with me.

922. Puṇyaśravaṇakīrtanaḥ

पुण्यश्रवणकीर्तनः

The one, the hearing and reciting of whose names give puṇya.

Śravaṇa, listening about Īśvara, and kīrtana, singing or reciting His names, give puṇya, which in turn gives sukha. So, Bhagavān is called Puṇyaśravaṇakīrtana. We want sukha and for this, we require puṇya. Sukha is only the dṛṣṭa-phala, visible result and puṇya includes both dṛṣṭa-phala and adṛṣṭa-phala. Listening about Īśvara, gives puṇya.

Bhagavān is the ear and also the ear of the ear. Hearing is Bhagavān, what is heard is also Bhagavān and it is about Bhagavān that we hear. This is called śravaṇa. Listening to Viṣṇu-sahasranāma, even with a vague understanding, will give puṇya. The study of the śāstra, by listening to it from a teacher (or reading the books) and understanding it, is all śravaṇa.

Kīrtana is talking to people about the glories of the Lord, chanting or singing them. Even teaching of the śāstra is kīrtana. Īśvara is everthing and if this is understood, any śravaṇa or kīrtana is only of Īśvara. Śravaṇa and kīrtana of Īśvara gives puṇya, sukha and finally it gives mokṣa sukha.

923. Uttāraṇaḥ

उत्तारणः

The one who helps to cross the ocean of saṃsāra.

Bhagavān is Uttārana, because He makes us cross the ocean of saṃsāra. Saṃsāra is the constant struggle to become something because one feels insignificant. You find that, no matter what you do, where you are or who you are with, you grow out of it or you lose interest in it or it does not evoke the same emotional response. The way out of this cycle is not necessarily by doing more but by seeing the connection between what one is doing and what one really wants, between what one is doing and what one needs for his/her self growth and self discovery. One can get out of saṃsāra only by the knowledge of Īśvara.

To understand Him, a lot of grace is required. Even to have a desire for getting out of saṃsāra, His grace is required. So, He is the one by whose grace alone one can cross and come out of this life of becoming.

924. Duṣkṛtihā

दुष्कृतिहा

The one who destroys all activities of adharma.

Duṣkṛti means activities of adharma. Bhagavān is Duṣkṛtihā, because He destroys all activities of adharma. All these pāpakarmas can be destroyed only by the grace of Bhagavān.

Bhagavān in His avatāra as Śrī Rāma destroyed Rāvaṇa; as Śrī Kṛṣṇa destroyed Kaṃsa, Śiśupāla and others and as Nṛsiṃha destroyed Hiraṇyakaśipu – all of whom had taken to adharma and hence, He is called Duṣkṛtihā.

925. Puṇyaḥ (also word 687)

पुण्यः

The giver of puṇya.

Bhagavān is Puṇya, that is, He is the giver of puṇya. Puṇya is a unique word in the śāstra to describe adraṣta phala, invisible result of an action.

Every karma, action has two results – what is visible to us and what is invisible. You contribute your time, money or other resources to somebody, other than your family. The visible result is, that person is helped and there is some improvement in the person's situation. Additionally the person may or may not be grateful. Does the matter end there? According to the sastra, the matter does not end there. Because you have helped someone, there is punya that is generated, according to the laws of karma. Puṇya is like having credit in your life karma account which to be encashed later. Every day some puṇya is manifesting in your life in the form of pleasant and favourable situations for your many pursuits. Likewise some papa is also manifesting in the form of unpleasant situations. Can I increase puṇya in my life?

Yes. Bhagavān gives puṇya to those who remember Him and express their devotion in various ways. Bhagavān gives puṇya to those who live a life of contribution. He is Puṇya, because He makes known the actions, which produce puṇya, through the śrutis and smṛtis. There is no other way you can stumble upon understanding punya because it is not a process of inference. All the puṇya itself is Īśvara.

926. Dussvapnanāśanaḥ

दुःस्वप्ननाशनः

The one who dispels bad dreams.

Īśvara is Dussvapnanāśana, the cause for destroying the dussvapna, frightening dreams and nightmares. Bad dreams can be the result of coming out of the unconscious, fear and insecurity. Some people believe that bad dreams can be the foretellers of the future, and so a bad dream causes fear.

When Īśvara is there, there can be no insecurity or fear . The unconscious is also taken care of by Him. Most of us struggle with our insecurities, insecurity of being a nobody, insecurity related to finances, insecurity related to relationships, insecurity related to the future.

As Pujya Swamiji would rightly say,
'Only the insecure need security.
And, no security is secure enough.'

No situation is certain and secure forever. Then, how do we deal with this? Īśvara is the greatest validator or therapist. We process our insecurities, our fears by processing the unconscious. All the fears can be removed along with bad dreams. For this, the grace of Īśvara is required. This is gained by meditation, singing His praise, and by worshpping Him. By making your life an act of prayer, you are secure in the understanding that all situations and your powers to deal with the situations are all his grace. There is nothing to fight or resist anymore.

927. Vīrahā (also words 166, 741)

वीरहा

The destroyer of the various courses of saṃsāra.

'Īra' means a course and vīra therefore means, vividha-gatis various courses, that one takes within saṃsāra.

All the courses and the routes we take involve our many pursuits. Most of our pursuits are to fulfill the many needs we have: the need to be powerful, the need to be significant, the need to be loved, the need to be appreciated, the need to be special etc. In fulfilling these needs we are always trying to become more significant. How much is too much? How much is too little? Is there an end in sight, besides death? All our karma, to fulfill these needs is for the karta, doer. All our pursuits are for the doer. Is the doer a real, independent entity? The reality of the doer is discovered by the pursuit of mokṣa which is different from all routes you take in life. The discovery of the reality of the karta is mokṣa. Since Bhagavān confers upon us mokṣa, by destroying all our karma that leads to various gatis, Bhagavān becomes Vīraha.

928. Rakṣaṇaḥ

रक्षणः

The one who protects.

He is the one who protects, taking recourse to the sattva-guṇa. He is the one who is a source of blessing and the one who can be sought for protection.

929. Santaḥ

सन्तः

The one in the form of the saintly person.

Those who are in the sanmārga, the path of dharma and have got vidyā and vinaya, that is, knowledge and humility, are santas, saintly persons. You cannot have knowledge and no humility. Whatever you know, you also see what you don't know many areas. You value what you know. You value that you have the capacity to know and retain and share what you know.
If there is any arrogance, it is born of ignorance. You fool yourself into believing that only you know or you are better than the others. All this dwelling on and a build up of 'being better' than someone in any area is just a way to deal with feeling insignificant. We have to call its bluff.
Even though, the knower goes about gathering knowledge about various things, he will still be self-ignorant. He could be an astrophysicist or a Nobel laureate. It does not matter. What is the use of that buddhi, intellect which was used to know everything else but oneself? It is because of His knowledge and grace, that the vidyā makes the ignorant person, wise. I am not ignorance, but, I am the consciousness, sat-cit-ānanda.

When the knowledge, that 'I am sat-cit-ānanda' which is the svarūpa of the knower is gained, the notion that 'I am ignorant' goes away. So the source of this knowledge is Īśvara and it is Īśvara alone who is in the form these santas, and hence, He is called Santa. Again it is Īśvara alone who blesses the world through these santas, by giving vidyā and vinaya.

930. Jīvanaḥ

जीवनः

The one who sustains life.

He is Jīvana, sustaining the life of all beings in the form of prāṇa.
Some people mistake consciousness to be prāṇa. But prāṇa is one of the five elements, an effect the cause of which is Bhagavān.

931. Paryavasthitaḥ

पर्यवस्थितः

The one who stands pervading the entire jagat.

Space is all-pervasive and every object in space is pervaded by space. Space has no other role, except to provide accommodation for everything and in this way alone it is all-pervasive. Space accommodates the earth and all that is on it and inside it. Space accommodates our Milky way.

Space accommodates all the galaxies that are yet to be discovered. Space does not fold up in case of any adharma nor does it stretch in the case of dharma.
No preferences.
No ifs and buts.
No partiality.
No conditions apply.
Space just accommodates. Period.
What accommodates space? Space is accommodated by Parameśvara. Being both the nimitta and upadāna-kāraṇa, intellifent and material cause, Paryavasthitaḥ is all-pervasive. Parameśvara pervades the entire macro and microworld.

The Nārāyaṇasūkta says, 'antarbahiśca tat sarvaṃ vyāpya nārāyaṇaḥ sthitaḥ - He stands pervading the entire jagat both inside and outside.'

932. Anantarūpah
अनन्तरूपः
The one of countless forms.

The name Paryavasthita is further explained by this name. He is Anantarūpa, the one with countless forms. The jagat is nothing but forms. Air is the subtlest form. Then there are large oceans, mountains, valleys, different forms of animals, birds, reptiles, aquatic life forms, human forms etc

Every form is the glory of Īśvara. Even a thought is a form that emerges from formless consciousenss that you are. Where does the thought come from? If you say, mind, mind is inert by itself. It cannot function on its own. It depends on consciousness to function. Where does the thought disappear? It resolves in consciousness that you are. What sustains a thought or dwelling on any situation? Is it another thought? That 's not possible. One thought cannot sustain another thought. All thoughts are forms that come from the formless cosnciosuness that you are.
He is of infinite forms, but in reality, formlessness is the truth of Īśvara.

933. Anantaśrīḥ
अनन्तश्री
The one with limitless power.

Śrī here means limitless power and resources. He is Anantaśrī, one who has limitless śakti, limitless power and limitless resources. All the resources have to be put together, so that the various forms can function, which in turn requires power. Bhagavān has these in limitless measure.

934. Jitamanyuḥ
जितमन्युः
The one who has conquered anger.

The Lord is Jitamanyu, the one who has mastered anger. Much of anger comes from helplessness and where does the question of helplessness arise for Bhagavān? Essentially, He is free from anger. Kopa, krodha and manyu are various stages of anger.

All our attempts to control anger don't work. Anger is not the problem, really. We have to see the principles surrounding anger. It is natural that we feel angry when justice is not done. In fact, it is very good if we feel angry. We may be moved to take some action. If the majority had not taken to the streets following Nirbhaya's rape and death, perhaps the judiciary may not have moved as fast in the new law and dispensation of justice. We see that we all get angry for different reasons and sometimes for no reason at all. Anger is to be channelized well.
Rather than victimising someone because of anger, it is better to think of 'How can I improve the situation?' that is causing me to be angry. 'What can I do differently?' Rather than slap the child because the boss at work was nasty to me, I don't victimise the child but look at constructive ways to improve my work or to share my perspective of my performance, if I am being misunderstood.
Anger about discrimination (gender, class, community) is good.
Anger about inequality is good.
Anger about corruption in our lives is good.
Anger about inefficiency is good.
The only thing that is not good is, victimizing someone because of our anger as we don't know how to express or channelize our anger. We need to learn how to express our anger and helplessness, have clarity about the change we want in the situation and work towards the change in the situation. Then, we too can be free of anger. Since we want to be free from anger, we invoke the Lord as Jitamanyu.

935. Bhayāpahaḥ
भयापहः
The destroyer of fear.

The Lord is Bhayāpaha, the one who destroys fear. It is only by understanding Īśvara, that one can get rid of fear. Since time always poses a threat, fear is innate in living beings. Death is a threat and there is a possibility of losing what one has. Falling from grace is a cause of fear. All that is there is only Īśvara and He is not a threat at all.

Īśvara is always a support and He is infallible. Therefore, once we know that Bhagavān pervades both inside and outside us, then the presence of Bhagavān is very much there in our awareness. Initially our awareness is that Īśvara is present in all situations and the complete understanding will be 'I am Īśvara.' That awareness, because of which we are aware of Īśvara, is itself Īśvara. Even a relative understanding of Īśvara removes fear.

936. Caturaśraḥ
चतुरश्रः
The one of infallible justice.

Caturaśra basically means that which has four uniform corners. The word is popularly used to indicate something very orderly and just. Bhagavān is Caturaśra, one who is endowed with

infallible, absolute justice. Bhagavān is never sadistic or partial. He never gives any karma-phala, sukha or duḥkha, unless the person deserves that. Ofcourse, all the sukha I experience is due to 'my efforts and talents', or so I think. All the dukha I experience are because of Bhagavān, or so I think.

The problems in my life are either due to my mother or my father or my partner or my children or my employer or my neighbor or the leader of the country (as people in the US will vouch) or my health or even my planets! We don't spare anyone. Just think about some difficulty you are experiencing and you will soon attribute it to something or someone. This orientation of blaming is a wellentrenched one and we have to learn to see how it prevents me from being happy and responsible.

The one who is infallible is Bhagavān.
Seeing that the principles of karma are infallible helps me to take responsibility for my life.
Seeing that the principles of karma are infallible helps me to take responsibility for my emotions and behavior.
Seeing that the principles of karma are infallible helps me to take responsibility for my present and future karma aligning it with dharma.
Seeing that the principles of karma are infallible helps me to take responsibility and fortifies me to accept the results of ALL my karmas. Despite all my good karmas, suppose I get a paralytic stroke. So be it! Despite all my good karmas, suppose I get cancer. So, be it!
Acceptance comes from the power of understanding!
Seeing that the principles of karma are infallible helps me to take responsibility for changing the things I can, accepting the things I cannot and the growing wisdom to know the difference.

937. Gabhīrātmā
गभीरात्मा
The one whose nature is unfathomable.

He is Gabhīratmā, one whose nature is profound and unfathomable. His nature cannot be described by words such as 'this is how He is; this much alone He is,' and therefore, He is difficult to know.

He is present in everything with the same profundity. Ātmā can also mean citta, the mind. His mind, His thinking, is gabhīra, profound.

938. Vidiśaḥ
विदिशः
The giver of different kinds of fruits of action.

Bhagavān is Vidiśa, because He confers specially on deserving people. What does he confer or give? Many and varied desirable things.
Are they the chosen people? Well, they have earned the various things and situations they have got, as karma-phala.
How is karma phala or grace earned? By acts of reaching out, by acts of dharma and by physicalising our devotion.

Just as the people of Ayodhya gathered with a row of lights (deepavali) to welcome Bhagavan Sri Rama, the embodiment of dharma into their hearts and lives, we welcome dharma into our hearts and lives.
We welcome dharma by doing acts of dharma!
We don't make excuses for offering what we can to the less privileged. We do it.
We don't make excuses for going to the temple. We do it.
We don't make excuses to do our daily puja, however long or short it is. We do it.
We don't make excuses to go on pilgrimages as we show our reverence for the history of our land. We do it.
We don't make excuses to read the history of our Avataaras. We do it.
We don't make excuses about time to do japa as it purifies us. We do it.
We don't make excuses about not having time to meditate. We do it.
We do it not because we have anything to prove to anybody. We do the above acts not because someone has forced us.
We do it because we understand that we are blessed beyond measure.
We do it because we are empowered by our understanding of our tradition..
We do it because only the fire of knowledge can burn away the impurities of our countless excuses, our doubts, denial, judgment and resentment.
We do it because our self growth and self discovery matter to us.
We do it because the tradition lives in us. We live the tradition.
We are our glorious living tradition.

939. Vyādiśaḥ
व्यादिशः
The giver of varieties of mandates.

He is Vyādiśa, gives varieties of mandates to all the devatās, like Indra and other. Every phenomenon has its own mandates and a devatā in charge. A mandate is like a job description. For example, water has to find its level. It is made of hydrogen and oxygen. The ocean does not overflow into the land mass. All these are varieties of mandates. Everyone has to maintain his or her boundaries; How do they know what the boundaries are? The boundaries are known because of the principles that are inherent in functioning. For example, water has its quality of flowing. Yet the ocean does not spill. In fact, people very confidently live in ocean facing homes. Why does the ocean not spill? For several reasons, the primary one, being the amount of water evaporation that happens from the surface, besides gravity and the depth of the water basin. As rivers are continuously flowing into the ocean, water evaporation is also constantly taking place. So the ocean levels are more or less maintained. Effective functioning depends on the interdependence and boundaries of all the factors involved.

When it comes to us, we become over responsible or under responsible in our functioning. The overresponsible mother who insists on doing everything for her son, out of motherly love, even when he is twenty five years old is overstepping her boundaries. By being over responsible she is teaching him to be under responsible and be a Mamma's boy. If it is a girl, then she is Daddy's little girl, wanting to be taken care of, all her life by everyone, particularly the male figures in her life. If we blame fate and destiny for all that has gone wrong in our life, then we are being under

responsible because we don't want to claim the glory of free will that we have been blessed with. Being under responsible or over responsible in our functioning comes from not fully recognising our mandates, our boundaries, our roles. Asking yourself (and answering), what is my purpose in life, given we have limited time, will help us to clarify our mandates.

Everything has to maintain its boundaries, following the mandates of Īśvara. When the mandates are followed the order is upheld. There is harmony. When there is harmony, life flows beautifully as life is just like pure liquid grace.

940. Diśaḥ
दिशः
The giver of the knowledge of right and wrong.

It is the Lord who shows and teaches the results of various actions, through the body of knowledge called the Vedas and hence, is Diśa.
Bhagavān is in the form of the Veda which talks about the means and ends, that 'this ritual will give this result.' I am aware of innumerable instances of Vedic rituals giving the result that was intended (birth of a child, rains, improved health of someone, improved wealth status, sanctifying land etc). This is not a placebo effect, as seen with patients given sugar coated medicines and they becoming okay. You will know that Vedic rituals work only when you do them or know of people who do them.

The Veda talks about what is good and what is not good. All the Smrtis, Puranas and Itihasas reflect the crisp teaching that is present in the Veda. Through the Veda, Bhagavān shows us how to follow what is good and reject what is not good.

941. Anādiḥ
अनादिः
The beginningless.

The Lord is Anādi, beginningless. While He is the cause of all, He does not have a cause; Avatāra-s like Sri Rama and Sri Krsna are manifestations of Bhagavān. From the standpoint of the form, they seem to have a birth and death. We celebrate their Jayanti, birthday. They are avatāra-s, who have a specific purpose to accomplish on earth, primarily of re-establishing dharma.

What about the birthday of Bhagavān? Every moment is his birthday because he always IS. You celebrate a person 's birthday because of his/her presence. When did Bhagavān come into being?As pure presence, there was never a moment that he was not there and there will never be a moment when he is not there. He does not depend on anything or anyone for his existence. Infact, all things and situations depend on him for their existence.
He is self-existent.

942. Bhūrbhuvaḥ
भूर्भुवः

The support of the earth.

The word bhū has the meaning of ādhāra, support. The ādhāra of everything is the earth and so, bhū usually refers to the earth. Bhagavān is Bhuvaḥ api bhūḥ, the ādhāra of the earth itself. Everything seems to be supported by this earth. What is the ādhāra of the earth? It seems to be suspended in space without any support. Its own movement with the gravitational force is the support, and that is Bhagavān. We are on firm ground because of this support. Even if we are moving, we don't get thrown off into space. He is the ādhāra of ādhāra, the earth of the earth. He is the basis on which everything is placed.

943. Lakṣmīḥ
लक्ष्मीः
The one in the form of Lakṣmi.

This nāma can be taken as Lakṣmī or also as Bhuva lakṣmī and Bhūrbhuva lakṣmī. All the three words are in feminine gender.
Lakṣmī is the śakti of Bhagavān. Nārāyaṇa does not exist without Lakṣmī, and without Nārāyaṇa, Lakṣmī does not exist. That is why Nārāyaṇa here is called Lakṣmī. Śakti alone is Parameśvara and this is the māyā-śakti.

Lakṣmī is beauty, fame, effulgence, wealth, fullness. She is never away from the Lord and she always resides in His chest. When Bhagavān took the avatāra as Śrī Rāma and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, she came as Sītā and Rukmiṇī. She is the power of Bhagavān. She is also nothing but Bhagavān.

Or else, He is not only Bhūrbhuva, the support of this earth, but also Bhuva lakṣmī – the beauty, the resplendence of this earth. As Bhūrbhuva lakṣmī, bhū refers to this world and bhuva to the bhuvarloka and lakṣmī to ātmavidyā.

Or they refer to this world, the sky and the splendor that lights up both, and the Lord is all these.

944. Suvīraḥ
सुवीरः
The one whose ways are endless.

Bhagavān is Suvīra, because His movements are many and auspicious. Or, He is understood in many ways.

He is Suvīra, also because He manifests in infinite ways, which are beautiful. If you just look at the wonders of the internet, it is fascinating. You can learn about things – mathematics, art, music, dance, culture, photography etc that you earlier had limited access to. You can communicate with friends and family in any part of the world. You can research more into your topic of interest, be it the side effects of medicines, electrical circuitry, how things work the way they work. You can exchange information on any topic be it recipes, travelogues, many uses of pepper etc.You can book tickets and have many financial transactions without actually going geographically to that place. You can have virtual business meetings with people in any part of the world. You can be updated in real time about happenings in the world including disasters or

the results of elections. The possibilities of what we do with this wonder of the internet seems endless. The virtual world becomes a reflection of the real world which again has endless possibilities.
When we look at the structure of this universe, His expressions seem to be so many.

945. Rucirāṅgadaḥ
रुचिराङ्गदः
The one who has brilliant bracelets.

He is Rucirāṅgada, because He has beautiful bracelets. What are the bracelets for Bhagavān? His bracelets are time and space. He embraces the jagat with His two hands. He is manifest in various ways, but, within the scope of these two embracing hands, that is, the all-pervasive hands of time and space.

946. Jananaḥ
जननः
The creator.

As the cause of the birth of all beings, that is, as the creator, He is Janana.

947. Janajanmādiḥ
जनजन्मादिः
The cause for the birth of all that is born.

That which is subject to birth is jana. Its manifestation, birth is janma. Whatever is born may have many immediate causes, as the seed for the sprout, as the egg for the birds. But all have ultimately only one ādi, cause, and that cause is Bhagavān. Hence, He is Janajanmādi.

The capacity of the seed to sprout, the capacity for the egg to become a chick, the capacity for the zygote to be a human being is Īśvara. The sprout and the chick and the human being that come out are also Īśvara.

948. Bhīmaḥ (also word 357)
भीमः
The source of fear.

Bhagavān is Bhīma, one who is a source of fear for everyone and at the same time nothing can cause fear in Him. Nobody can escape the result of one's action, and hence, He is as though the cause of fear.

If we take our relationship with fire, we are afraid of being burnt. But, without fire, we would not be able to eat cooked food. Are we afraid of fire? When it is a blazing fire, yes. Are we respectful of what it can do for us? Yes. Likewise, Bhagavān is Bhima not because we are God fearing people. We are God-understanding people and hence we see that we cannot escape the results of our actions. We are alert to this. But, if understood, He is not the cause of fear.

Or, Bhīma is one, who is admired for His strength and terrific deeds. There is nothing that he cannot do. The Lord is also Bhīma, because His deeds are great and terrific.

949. Bhīmaparākramaḥ
भीमपराक्रमः
The one of immense strength.

His parākrama, power, is admirable and Bhīma, awe-inspiring. In His avatāras, His strength causes great fear to the asuras and hence, He is Bhīmaparākrama.

950. Ādhāranilayaḥ
आधरनिलयः
The final abode of all supports.

The five elements like space, air, fire, water and earth support this elemental world. The place where even these five elements have their being, is Parameśvara.
So, He is the Ādhāranilaya, the basis of all basis, the final abode of all the supports.

951. Adhātā अधाता or Dhātā धाता (also word 43)
The one who requires no support (or the consumer of all beings).

The one who sustains is dhātā. Bhagavān is Ādhāranilaya and hence, He is the Dhātā, the sustainer of everything. He is the basis, the truth of all the elements. He is the 'Is'ness, the existence of all the elements and all the forces.

What is the basis of Īśvara? Who sustains Him? He exists by Himself, sustains Himself and does not need another dhātā to sustain Him. He does not need any physical support. He does not need any financial support. He does not need support when he is growing old. He does not need any emotional or moral support. He does not social security either. He does not need public support! He does not need a majority vote to be in power. Having no dhātā, He is Adhātā.

By the rules of sandhi, this nāma can also be taken as dhātā. He is Dhātā, because He drinks as though all the beings, that is, takes unto Himself all the beings, at the time of saṃhāra.

952. Puṣpahāsaḥ
पुष्पहासः
The one who has blossomed as this universe.

When the buds blossom into flowers, their vikāsa, blooming, looks like their hāsa, as though they are smiling. From the unmanifest state, when Bhagavān blossoms, manifests as the prapañca, universe, it looks like the smile of a flower. Hence, He is called Puṣpahāsa. A flower bud has no fragrance or nectar, nor does it attract the bees. It is in a kind of causal state. Then the bud blooms. In the unmanifest state, Bhagavān is the bud. In the manifest state, He is the flower.

He is also the sun, which makes the bud bloom. He is the bud, which is the cause and He is the flower, which is the effect. The flower was the bud. Now, the same bud is a manifest, attractive, fragrant and beautiful flower. When Bhagavān laughs, it is creation and when He is quiet it is pralaya, resolution.

953. Prajāgaraḥ

प्रजागरः

The one who is ever awake.

Being of the nature of consciousness, He is Prajāgara, eternally awake, and never sleeps. He never comes under the spell of māyā or sleep, because He keeps the māyā under His control.

954. Ūrdhvagaḥ

ऊर्ध्वगः

The uppermost.

Bhagavān is Ūrdhvaga, because He stands above all. He is always ahead of, and above everyone. He is the first guru who was never a śiṣya to another guru. That is Ūrdhvaga.
Others have been disciples to their guru.

955. Satpathācāraḥ

सत्पथाचारः

The one who walks the path of righteousness.

Satpatha is the way of the sat-puruṣas, the people who follow dharma; the way they live, the way they act, what they do and what they avoid. They set the path, by following the ācāra as shown in the śruti and smṛti, given out by Bhagavān.

Bhagavān is the one, who is manifest in the form of dharma of all the people who follow dharma and their actions. When that is so, what ācāra should Bhagavān follow? What ācāra should He avoid? As Bhagavān, He need not follow anything. All the laws and principles of Dharma are him, anyway. Still, when He takes avatāras, He follows the ācāra shown by the sat-puruṣas, for lokasaṅgraha, for the protection of the world, and for setting an example to others.

956. Prāṇadaḥ (also words 65, 321, 408)

प्राणदः

The giver of life.

This word occurs four times in this sahasranāma. Bhagavān is in the form of the pañca-prāṇas- prāṇa is the respiratory activities, apāna is excretion, vyāna is circulation, samāna is digestion, udāna is throwing out. All these together are called prāṇa. Since this prāṇa or physiological system is given by Īśvara, He is Prāṇada. This is the general meaning.

In His avatāras, as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He gave prāṇa to Parīkṣit, the son of Abhimanyu, and brought him back to life, thereby saving him from the effects of the astra of Asvatthāma. As Śrī Rāma, He brought back to life the vānaras.

957. Praṇavaḥ (also word 409)

प्रणवः

The one who is the oṃkāra.

Om is otherwise known as praṇava which means ever new. Īśvara is always nava, new and His name is Om.

Om is a pratīka or a sound symbol for Īśvara. Though it can be written, it is not a pratimā, a form symbol, popularly written as ॐ. Unfortunately these days when Om is stated, we only remember the symbol not what Om stands for. What does Om stand for?

Ōm is a word symbol, which is loaded with meaning. Phonetically, 'A' is the basic sound that is produced by human being anywhere in the world, when he tries to make a sound by opening the mouth. In most languages 'A' is also the first letter of the alphabet. When a sound is produced by closing the mouth, what comes out is the sound 'M'. In between, when there is a rounding off of the mouth, the sound 'U' is produced.

Now, what can be the best name for the Lord, a name that would include everything? All objects are but names and all names are words. Words, being made of letters, are nothing but letters, and letters are sounds. Since sounds are produced by opening and closing the mouth, all sounds are phonetically between A' and 'M'. The Lord being everything, his name should include every name. Thus, Ōm that is made of the letters 'A', 'U', and 'M' includes, phonetically all sounds and therefore, all letters and all words of all languages and dialects. It is not pronounced as A-U-M. It is Om. Om becomes a word which indicates all objects. In this way, Ōm becomes the name of Īśvara, the Lord.

Om is Bhagavān. Everyone who salutes Him, or chants in praise of the Lord, always starts with Om. In whichever language you pray to Bhagavān, salute Him or surrender to him, all those are included in Om, the Praṇava. So, He is the meaning of praṇava, that is, what is pointed out by the praṇava.

958. Paṇaḥ

पणः

The one who does daily transactions.

The word paṇa means empirical transactions, that is, day to day transactions. Bhagavān carries on everyday, the transactions of creation, sustenance and resolution and all other activities that are part of these and hence, is Paṇa.

The Puruṣasūkta says, ‘sarvāṇi rūpāṇi vicitya dhīraḥ nāmāni kṛtvābhivadan yadāste – the wise Lord having created the forms and having given them various names, remains transacting through them.’

The merchant takes the paṇa, the right amount of money, and gives the merchandise in return. So too, Bhagavān takes from us the various karmas that we have done like paṇa and gives in return the karma-phala and hence, Paṇa.

959. Pramāṇam (also word 428)

प्रमाणम्

The self-evident knowledge.

Pramāṇa generally refers to the means of knowing. There are five means of knowing the world. The first is pratyakṣa, direct perception. It can be sense perception or witness perception. The knowledge that is gained through the sense organs is called indriya-pratyakṣa. Knowledge can also be gained directly, without the help of the senses and that is called sākṣi-pratyakṣa, witness perception. All mental conditions, all emotions, all experiences gained through the senses, are known because of the witness that is present in all these perceptions. If I ask you, how are you today? And you respond, saying ‘I am tired/anxious/excited.’, I will ask you, how do you know? You will say, ‘I feel it, I see it in my mind’. Even without the need for internal sense organs, you directly see what is happening in your mind. You have just shifted attention by being the witness of what is happening in your mind, proving that you are other than the mind. Direct perception is possible with the help of the senses and also without the help of the senses.
Knowledge can also be gained through reasoning. This is indirect knowledge or inference. Inference is based on data gathered by pratyakṣa and it is also a pramāṇa. One step inference is called anumāna and more than one-step inference is called arthāpatti, presumption. Absence of things is also recognized and this is anupalabdhi-pramāṇa. Upamāna, illustration, is another pramāṇa. ‘The bison is like a buffalo’ is an illustration and through this also knowledge is got. This is an indirect knowledge and it is valid.

All the pramāṇas are a means of knowledge, depending on direct perception and therefore called the mūla-pramāṇa, the basic means of knowledge. Even Veda, the sixth pramāṇa depends on the mūla-pramāṇa. All these pramāṇas are known because of the sākṣī, witness consciousness. Every pramāṇa works because of the witness and that witness of Parameśvara. The means of knowledge is Parameśvara and anything that you know through the means of knowledge is also Parameśvara.

Pramāṇa also means pramiti, knowledge. It is the svayamprabhā saṃvit, the self-shining consciousness that is the basis of every pramāṇa, knowledge. Therefore, being the pramāṇa of all pramāṇas, the Lord Himself is called Pramāṇa.

960. Prananilayah

प्राणनिलयः

The resting place of all the pranas.

We think that the jīvas depend on the prāṇa. Here it is said, that the prāṇas depend on the jīva and the jīva is nothing but Bhagavān. Prāṇa here refers to both the indriyas, the sense organs and also the prāṇas, the physiological system. Therefore, He is Prāṇanilaya.

If the jīva is to stay alive in the body, it requires the help of the prāṇa. Prāṇa is that which enlivens the body. As the prāṇas merge in Him, He is called Prāṇanilaya. They have found their resting place.Because he breathes, the jīva himself is called prāṇa. In sleep, the jīva merges in the parātmā. As the merging place of prāṇa, that is the jīva, He is called Prāṇanilaya.
At the time of pralaya, He destroys the prāṇas and the jīvas. He is Prāṇanilaya.

961. Prāṇabhṛt

प्राणभृत्

The sustainer of the prāṇa.

Bhagavān is the Prāṇabhṛt, the one who sustains the prāṇa in the body through various forms of food and keeps them alive.

962. Prāṇajīvanaḥ

प्राणजीवनः

The one who enlivens all living beings.

Īśvara is the one who lives in all living beings which includes everything known and unknown, even in other planets. He keeps all alive. We think that the prāṇa makes us live. But, it is Īśvara who enlivens the very prāṇa that sustains us. The Kaṭhopaniṣad says, 'jīvas live not by prāṇa or apāna, but by something else on which these two depend.' And that is Īśvara, because air being inert, cannot function by itself, without intelligence or consciousness. Therefore, when the doctors are trying to pump in oxygen to a person who seems to have died, it does not work. The prana in the body of that person cannot be enlivened anymore.

Therefore, there is no life from outside Īśvara; the very life is Īśvara and hence, ahiṃsā paramo dharmaḥ – ahiṃsā is the greatest dharma. Hurting a living being is against dharma and causes pāpa. Even though life lives on life, we try our best to keep hiṃsā to the minimum. Still everyday we do some hiṃsā knowingly and unknowingly. Hence a lot of prayer and reaching out activity is necessary to neutralize all these pāpas.

963. Tattvam

तत्त्वम्

The truth of everything.

Tasya bhāvaḥ tattvam – the essence of reality of a thing is tattva. The tattva of the pot is clay. That gives 'as though' reality to the pot is clay. The clay can be reduced further to its tattva, the atoms which can again be reduced to their tattva, particles and finally it can be reduced to pure existence, sat. We don't need to destroy the pot to understand the tattva of clay.

What is the tattva of the observer of the pot or clay? Does the body lend reality to the observer? If the body parts are not functioning, the person is still conscious. Does the mind lend reality to the observer? The mind and its thoughts are changing all the time. How can the mind lend reality to the observer? It is the unchanging observer that lends reality to the changing mind. Hence we can change our mind often and we do! The tattva of the observer is consciousness. As the pot, clay, atoms and so on, are not outside consciousness, their tattva is also only consciousness. The reality of the observer and the observed is the same sat-cit, existence, consciousness. That tattva is ātmā, that is, Brahman and Brahman is Parameśvara. Hence, Parameśvara is the Tattva, the truth of everything. It is Brahman alone that is referred to by various words like tattva, amṛta, satya, paramārtha and so on, all of which have the same meaning.

964. Tattvavit

तत्त्ववित्

The knower of the truth or the reality.

Not only is Parameśvara the Tattva but He is also the Tattvavit, the knower of the tattva or the reality. He has never any ignorance about His tattva.

Brahman is the tattva. The Upanisad makes a bold statement - The knower of Brahman, the truth, is also Brahman. The knower of a microbe does not become a microbe. The knower of a dinosaur does not become a dinosaur. Then, how can the knower of Brahman be Brahman? Because the knower was always Brahman. He just did not know it. Once he knows, he is not ignorant of the fact, that he is Brahman. This is the knowledge of Brahman or self-knowledge.

When we use the word 'knowledge' here, understand that 'knowledge' is an ontological word, a word that points to the reality of things. It is not external knowledge of another object but a word to reveal the understanding of the reality of the object. Thus, any tattvavit, being the knower of Brahman, is Brahman alone. Since Parameśvara knows the tattva, the truth of Himself, He is Tattvavit. Every tattvavit is Parameśvara.

965. Ekātmā

एकात्मा

The one self.

Bhagavān is Ekātmā, the one self of all. He is one, but that one is not a member of a set. All that is there is non-dually one. That is the truth and it is the one limitless, self-existent, self-revealing consciousness, ātmā.

The Aitareyopaniṣad says, 'ātmā vā idam eka evāgra āsīt, nānyat kiñcana miṣat – in the beginning there was only the ātmā. There was nothing else that blinked' (1.1).
Ātmā means the swarūpa, the essential nature. The word ātmā has these meanings –
that which pervades everything;
that which withdraws everything into itself in sleep and pralaya;
that which eats all the visayas, that is, enjoys all experiences, and that which always exists.
You are the invariable while relationships are variable.
You are the invariable while your body and mind are variable.

You are the invariable while experiences are variable
You are the changeless while all else around you changes.
Ātma is the very essence of every experience, that is, the truth of the knower, known and knowledge. So, that which is in the form of consciousness, reveals itself all the time.

966. Janmamṛtyujarātigaḥ
जन्ममृत्युजरातिगः
The one who is not subject to birth, death and decay.

Janma and mṛtyu, birth and death, are the two sides of a coin. If an entity is born, then vardhate, it grows and becomes an adult. In adulthood, there is a total change; vipariṇamate, it metamorphoses; apakṣīyate, it declines and finally naśyati, it dies. Jarā is old age. If the person lives then he/she ages and that is shown by the word apakṣīyate. Bhagavān has none of these six-fold modifications. He is Janmamṛtyujarātiga, is above birth, death and old age, that is, not subject to these six-fold changes.

'The Self is neither born nor does it die. It does not originate from anything, nor did anything originate from it. It is birthless, eternal, undecaying and ancient. It is not injured even when the body is killed. (Ka.Up.1.2.18)

The reality, the svarūpa, of the ātmā is that it is janmamṛtyujarātiga. The one, who transcends all these six-fold changes, is the one who makes these changes possible, but Himself does not undergo any change. He is in the form of the formless consciousness, which is not subject to change.

967. Bhūrbhuvassvastaruḥ
भुर्भुवस्स्वस्तरुः
The one who is the tree that pervades all the three worlds.

Bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ and svaḥ are called the vyāhṛtis, the essence of the three Vedas. They are used as mantras in the homas and they have the capacity to cross the three worlds. That is, they make good the deficiencies in the karmas and make one gain the result. It is Bhagavān, who is in the form of the three vyāhṛtis, and makes one cross the three worlds and hence, He is Bhūrbhuvassvastaru.

Or Bhūrbhuvassvastaru stands for the tree of Vedas. Under this Veda tree alone all human beings grow, and they grow like the tree. They perform the various yajñas and yāgas, the rituals that are the means for the various ends, mentioned in the Vedas. Making use of this tree, they become a part of this saṃsāra tree.

Or, Bhagavān is Bhūrbhuvassvastaru, is the saṃsara tree. All the jīvās take shelter under this tree.

Or bhūḥ, bhuvaḥ and svaḥ are the jagat-traya, the three worlds, consisting of the earth, heaven which is above, and that which is beyond heaven. This is the saṃsāra tree or the jagat vṛkṣa. Parameśvara is this tree, because He is the seed out of which this tree has come. That is to say,

that Bhagavān is not sitting in one corner of the tree. He is the seed, the roots and also the tree. The jīvas are perched on the tree. So Bhagavān is in the form of Bhūrbhuvassvastaru, pervading the entire universe.

968. Tāraḥ (also word 338)

तारः

The one who helps to get out of saṃsāra.

To cross this ocean of saṃsāra or to get rid of the tree of saṃsāra, the life of becoming, then help is needed. Parameśvara is the Tāra, the one who helps us cross it. When His grace is there, then help in the form of knowledge, will be there and by that the saṃsāra, the life of becoming, will be got rid of. The only means necessary is jñāna and for this adhikāritva, preparedness, is required. This, again is provided by ones own attitude and understanding of Īśvara and by allowing Īśvara to rule ones life and keeping oneself under the grace of Īśvara. If there is more of dharma in ones life, there is more of Īśvara. So, Īśvara is brought into one's life by the discovery.

Tāra also refers to Om, praṇava which is the name of Brahman and which helps to cross this ocean of saṃsāra. Om is Īśvara and therefore, Īśvara is Tāra.

969. Savitā (also word 884)

सविथा

The father of all.

Savitā means one who has given birth. Bhagavān is the cause of all and therefore, Savitā, the father of all.

970. Prapitāmahaḥ

प्रपितामहः

The great grandfather.

We need a reference point to talk about relating to our relationship with Bhagavān because it is like no other. The reference point is provided by our current relations. Where did I come from? My mother and father. Going further to trace our source, what is the source of my father and mother? Grandparents? We keep going further to the source.

He is not only the father but Prapitāmaha, the father of the grandfather also. Brahmāji is pitāmaha, the grandfather and Bhagavān, being the father of Brahmāji, is the great grand father. The grandfather is also Bhagavān.

The nāmas 971 to 984 pertain to various aspects of yajña. We are basically vaidikas. A vaidika is one who follows the injunctions of the Vedas and performs nitya-agnihotra and so on. Many fire rituals are talked about and they have to be performed. All these yajñas mentioned in the Vedas involve a lot of mantras, priests, dravyas, dakṣiṇās and so on.

When the rituals are performed, certain desires are fulfilled. When yajñas are done, there is rain. When there is rain, there is food and money also. Yajña involves spending money. When there is money and food, people perform yajñas and that in turn brings in food and money. Thus, this is a continous process. So, the whole life is yajña-based and this is a particular mind set from which strict vaidikas find it difficult to come out.

Now, here, these vaidikas are asked to repeat, as a substitute, the names of Bhagavān with a certain understanding. The daily repetition of these names, like Viṣṇu-sahasranāma, can replace the fire rituals. It is difficult for a vaidika to accept this and hence, he is told that the repetition of the names of the Lord, is a yajña. Every aṅga, every limb of the yajña is Bhagavān.

971. Yajñaḥ (also word 445)

यज्ञः

The one in the form of yajña.

A ritual done to worship the Lord is called yajña. Though any act of worship can be called yajña, it mainly refers to a ritual, prescribed in the Vedas, where fire is involved and oblations are offered into the fire with chanting of mantras, invoking various devatās, for gaining various results.

Bhagavān is the very yajña-whether it is nitya-yajña, naimittika-yajña or kāmya-yajña-an obligatory ritual done regularly or on special occasions or rituals done for fulfilling specific desires. Thus, yajña can be done for fulfilling an individual desire as putrakāmeṣṭhi for progeny or for collective desires, as for rains. One may perform simple agnihotra or elaborate rituals like aśvamedha. All of them are Parameśvara alone, because 'yajño vai viṣṇuḥ, Yajña is Lord Viṣṇu.' He is called Yajña also because He is the saṅgantā, the one who unites the jīvas with their karma-phalas through the yajña.

972. Yajñapatiḥ

यज्ञपतिः

The Lord of the yajñas.

Bhagavān is the Lord of the yajña. In every yajña, be it simple or complicated, one or more devatās are invoked and different oblations are offered. That devatā is Parameśvara and hence, He is Yajñapati. He is also the protector of the yajña.

Think about it. The Visnu Sahasranama occurs in the Mahabharata, which was atleast more than 3000 years ago. There are atleast 14 words referring to different aspects of yajña. Seeing this we are able to sense the importance and value given to yajña those times. Nowadays grhasta-s rarely perfom yajna as they don't understand the value of it. Even when it comes to yajña for their own wedding or some important family event, people are busy negotiating with the priest to do the least minimum rituals so that the duration of their party can be longer. It need not be either/or. You do the complete yajña and you can also have the party. No problem. We are the protectors of the yajña in as much as we perform them and/or support the pundits who perform them.

973. Yajvā

यज्वा

The performer of the yajña.

Yajvā is the one who performs the yajña, that is, the kartā of the yajña. He is now the kartā, doer, to later become the bhoktā, the enjoyer of the karma-phala. The Yajvā is nothing but Parameśvara. There is no kartā without the sat-cit-ānanda-ātmā. The consciousness conditioned by the antaḥkaraṇa alone is the knower, the doer, the enjoyer and so on.

The mind-sense complex is a part of the total manifestation of Parameśvara, because the total includes the individual manifestation. Therefore, the kartā is not separate from Īśvara, and hence, He is Yajvā.

974. Yajñāṅgaḥ

यज्ञाङ्गः

The one for whom the yajña is a limb.

Parameśvara is pictured as having various aspects of the yajña as parts of His body and hence, He is Yajñāṅga.

The Harivaṃśa describes the Varāha-mūrti as having various aspects of the yajña as parts of His body such as – the Vedas as His feet, the sacrificial post as His tusks, the homakuṇḍa as His mouth, the fire as His tongue, the darbha grass as the hair on His body and so on.

975. Yajñavāhanaḥ

यज्ञवाहनः

The one who causes the yajña to take place.
He is Yajñavāhana, the one who presides over and makes all the yajñas possible, and these are the means for getting different results.

976. Yajñabhṛt

यज्ञभृत्

The protector of the yajña.

Bhagavān is the Yajñabhṛt, the one who upholds and protects the yajña. The yajña is a means for an end. By performing putrakāmeṣṭhī, one will be blessed with a child. Only if this result is got, the yajña becomes a means for an end. If it happens, then the sādhana-sādhya-sambandha, the connection between the means and end, is established. This is how all the yajñas are sustained. The Veda-s don't mention how the connection works nor do people recognise the Veda as a means of knowledge, for areas outside the scope of logic. Hence, so many people readily dismiss yajña because they don't understand.

If yajña-s are proved, then by extension, the other yajñas which are done for gaining heaven and so on, can be trusted. If we perform a yajña, and there is rain, then we accept adṛṣṭa-phala in the form of puṇya. Once puṇya is understood, pāpa is also understood. When puṇya and pāpa are

understood, then we understand dharma and adharma. So Bhagavān comes alive, Therefore, He is Yajñabhṛt.

977. Yajñakṛt

यज्ञकृत्

The creator of the yajñas.

Bhagavān also performs yajña. Yajña is a sacred karma, having an end in view. When Bhagavān created this jagat, He also performed yajña. 'Sa tapo'tapyata – He meditated and performed the yajña of creation.' He maintains the creation and then resolves the creation. This is a continuous process that is going on.

Because He does (karoti) the yajña of creation in the beginning which sets in motion the yajñas that people do and, in the end resolves (krntati) the yajña of creation, and thus ends the yajñas of people, He is Yajñakṛt.

978. Yajñī

यज्ञी

The goal of the yajña.

Any yajña is meant only for worshipping, propitiating the Lord. Hence, He is the Yajñi, the one to whom the yajña is mainly connected. He is the goal, the prime factor of the yajña. The yajña and all its other aspects are śeṣa, subservient to Him, the śeṣī.

979. Yajñabhuk

यज्ञभुक्

The enjoyer of the yajña.

When the Lord performs the yajña of creating, sustaining and resolving, He is the Yajñabhuk, the enjoyer of the yajña. Even when a yajña is performed within the created jagat, Bhagavān being the yajñabhuk, is the one who gets the result. In reality Bhagavān is the bhoktā or enjoyer. By all this, yajña is not criticized.

It is as if Bhagavān says, 'When I am the yajña, the yajñakarta, and the yajñabhoktā, why are you afraid of doing any yajña? If you perform the yajña, I am very much in it. If you do not do it, then at least repeat My names.' The name of Bhagavān can be repeated by anyone. It does not involve much effort.

980. Yajñāsadhanaḥ

यज्ञसाधनः

The one for whom the yajña is a means.

Whatever you may want to achieve through the yajña, it is only Bhagavān.
If you want security, Bhagavān is the most secure.
If you want ānanda, Bhagavān is ānanda.
If you want mokṣa, Bhagavan is mokṣa.

So yajña is a sādhana, a means, to reach Bhagavān and hence, He is Yajñasādhana.

981. Yajñāntakṛt
यज्ञान्तकृत्
The one who gives the results of yajña.

Yajñānta is the result that is got at the end of the yajña.
Bhagavān is the giver of the result of the yajña. So, He is the Yajñāntakṛt.

Or, by chanting the vaiṣṇavī ṛk, or by the pūrṇāhuti, He makes the yajña complete and fruitful and so, is Yajñāntakṛt.

There is no karma that is perfect. There can be many gradations in karma, in one's bhakti too. We try to follow all the stipulations of a yajña but still we may have missed a step or may have done something wrong. We need not worry about it. We do our best. Saying Om Tat sat (Gita 17.23) also renders a yajña, karma complete, a karma that is fraught with omissions and commissions.

982. Yajñaguhyam
यज्ञगुह्याम्
The one who is the secret of yajña.

Since Bhagavān is the secret of the yajña, He is Yajñaguhya. No matter what one wants to achieve through the yajñas, the ultimate result that one can gain is Bhagavān Himself.

This gain is possible only by the knowledge that every kāraka involved in a yajña, every aspect of the yajña, is Bhagavān Himself. The kārakas, factors of action such as the doer, the purpose of doing, the instrument of doing, etc are many and different.
All the duality that exists is only apparent, being only empirically true. Bhagavān says in the Gītā, 'The means of offering is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman, and it is offered by Brahman into the fire that is Brahman. Brahman indeed is to be reached by one who sees everything as Brahman.' The truth of the kārakas is Brahman alone.

When Pujya Swami Chinmayananda ji started organizing jñāna-yajña-s, people would walk into the hall looking for the homa-kunda, the place where the ritual offering into the fire would be made. They would be surprised because there was no trace of the homa kunda. Since the direct phala of this jñāna-yajña is Īśvara, He is also called Yajñaguhya. The Gītā says, 'This jñāna-yajña is superior to all yajñas performed with materials. All action in its entirety, is resolved in knowledge.' All that is not you is burned away in the fire of knowledge. In other words, all that you thought was you, is seen to be what it really is.

Yajñas done with an attitude of offering to Īśvara, without any result in view, but for ātma-śuddhi alone, is called yajñaguhya. Here also, since the ultimate purpose is to gain the knowledge of the Lord, He is, therefore called Yajñaguhya.

983. Annam

अन्नम्

The one who is food.

Īśvara manifests as the sun, moon, water and earth. The variety of plants and trees are dependent on the elements to sustain themselves. The plants are endowed with sufficient intelligence to know how much to receive from the sunlight, moonlight, water and earth. There is no land grabbing, no hogging the sunlight, no hoarding of resources. The plants survive really difficult conditions and their produce becomes food for us. Īśvara sustains us primarily through the food we eat. While the food is a product, Īśvara sustains all the processes and factors that made the long journey of the food from the farm to the plate, possible.

Adyate bhūtaiḥ – that which is eaten by beings, that is, food is, Anna, and that is Bhagavān.
Atti ca bhūtani – anna is not only eaten but the same food, when eaten in improper quality and quantity, eats us in the form of diseases. That anna is also the Lord.

The attitude of Īśvara as food leads to a certain respect for food. If I have this attitude, will I waste food? Will I not pray before eating? Will I not serve only what I can eat? Will I not have gratitude before every meal? Serving food to sadhus, brahmins particularly as well as anybody else including animals are acts of great punya.

984. Annādaḥ

अन्नादः

The one who eats food.

Bhagavān is not only the Anna, but also the Annāda, the eater of anna. He is Annāda, the one who eats and digests the food, in the form of various beings.

Or any bhogya, anything that is enjoyed through the sense-organs is anna.
Annāda is the bhoktā, the one who enjoys all the viṣayas, through the various senses. The eva denotes that the whole jagat is nothing but anna and annāda, that is, bhogya and bhoktā, the enjoyed and the enjoyer. The truth of the jagat, which is in the form of the enjoyer and the enjoyed, is Bhagavān alone.

The ‘ca’ denotes that all names and point only to Viṣṇu, the parama-puruṣa.

985. Ātmayoniḥ

आत्मयोनिः

The self that is the cause.

The word yoni generally refers to the material cause. What is the cause of the material cause? Bhagavān. Who or what caused Bhagavān? To be his cause, there must be something other than him.There is nothing other than him anyway. So, he Himself is the yoni, the material cause of the entire jagat, and hence, Ātmayoni.

986. Svayañjātaḥ

स्वयञ्जातः

The one who is self-born.

Bhagavān is also the nimitta-kāraṇa, intelligent cause of the jagat. He Himself is born as this world and so Svayañjāta.

Generally, one and the same thing, is not seen to be both the efficient and the material cause. Most of the religions talk of Īśvara only as an efficient cause, who exists in a different place. These two nāmas point out that Lord Viṣṇu is both the nimitta, the efficient cause as well as the upādāna, the material cause.

One conscious being, which is limitless consciousness, with the māyā-śakti, is both the material as well as the maker. Both the causes being one and the same, Īśvara is manifest in the form of the jagat and therefore, everything in the jagat is nothing but Īśvara.

This is analyzed in the Brahma-sūtra, 'prakṛtiśca pratijñādṛṣṭāntānuparodhāt.' Brahman is the prakṛti, the material cause and by saying 'ca', the sutra points out that it is the nimitta-karana, the efficient cause, also. How? Because both the pratijña and dṛṣṭānta, the proposition and illustration, are there to show this.

In the Chāndogyopaniṣad, Uddālaka asks his son Svetaketu, 'Did you ask for that teaching by which, what is not heard becomes (as if) heard; what is not thought of, becomes (as if) thought of; what is not known becomes (as if) known?' In the Muṇḍakopaniṣad, Śaunaka asks Aṅgiras, 'Bhagavān, what is it knowing which, all this is as well known?' These are the pratijñās, propositions, given in the upaniṣads. Only when Brahman is both the causes, can the knowledge of Brahman make everything known.

To establish this fact Uddālaka explains to Śvetaketu with the help of three illustrations. 'Just as by knowing clay, gold or iron – the material causes – all that which is made of clay, gold or iron become known respectively.' 'This (jagat) was sat alone, one without a second.' Thus he points out that Brahman is the material cause as well as the efficient cause by saying, 'That saw. Let me be many. Let me be born.' Seeing is possible only by an efficient cause.

The Muṇḍakopaniṣad gives the dṛṣṭānta, 'Just as the spider, is able to create out of itself, the thread for making the web..' The spider is both the maker and the material cause.

The Taittirīyopaniṣad points out Brahman as the efficient cause by saying, 'He desired, let me be many, let me create' and then, 'created all this.' Then it proceeds to say, 'having created….it became everything.' If Brahman thought, 'let me be many' and became everything, it has to be the material cause also. The same Upaniṣad confirms it by saying, 'from which everything has come, by which everything is sustained and unto which everything goes back, know that as Brahman.'

When it is said, 'by knowing which, everything is as well known, 'it means that, everything is known, nothing is left out, including me. 'I' should not be left out. If the Lord is only the maker, then, the material cause will be left out. Then, the entire jagat cannot be accounted for, and by

knowing the Lord, the jagat will not be known. Therefore, if by knowing one thing, everything is as well known, there can be only one thing and that happens to be me and it is satya. Everything else is mithyā. Only then, can everything be known, otherwise, it is not possible.

Īśvara is Ātmayoni and Svayañjāta, that is, He is both the maker and the material cause. Svayaṃ jagadrūpeṇa jataḥ, Īśvara Himself is born as this jagat. This entire jagat is the manifestation of Īśvara and non-separate from Him. So every nāma becomes His nāma.

987. Vaikhānaḥ

वैखानः

The one who digs.

This word basically means one connected to viśeṣa-khanana, special digging. It is usually interpreted as meaning the Varaha-avatāra.

But, it can be taken to mean that, He is the one who can be known by specially digging into the words of the śāstra, with the help of a teacher. Only then, can one understand that everything is Īśvara, Viśeṣeṇa khananāt śabdaiḥ.

Or else one would think that Bhagavān is somewhere else. Hence, He is called Vaikhāna. If the roots of the tree are not touched and only the trunk is cut, there is scope for the tree of saṃsāra to grow such that my life of struggle and becoming will never come to an end. It is His grace alone that digs out all our problems of saṃsāra along with its roots of avidya, and hence, He is Vaikhāna.

988. Sāmagāyanaḥ

सामगायनः

The one who sings Sāma Veda.

He is Sāmagāyana, the one who sings the Sāma Veda, revealing Himself. He reveals that everything has come from one cause, which is therefore, the truth of everything. That truth is the truth of Himself and you and that it is possible to say, 'tattvamasi – you are that.' It is not that Parameśvara reveals Himself in the Sāma Veda alone. Here, Sāma Veda is said, because being musical, it expresses the joyous singing of knowledge.

989. Devakīnandanaḥ

देवकीनन्दनः

The son of Devakī.

Lord Viṣṇu was born as the son of Devakī and He is the one, who gives joy to Devakī. This is an avatāra. As Bhīṣma is reciting the names of the Lord to Yudhiṣṭhira, He sees the Lord standing in front of him as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the son of Devakī and gives this name.

Every jīva is a Devakī and the Lord gives joy to the jīva. In devotion, one can be a mother, a friend, a child and so on to the Lord. Now that the Lord is known so well, the Lord can be

approached just as a mother would approach a child or as a friend approaching a friend. So one can have different relationships with Īśvara. One can relate to Īśvara in countless ways. In fact all relationships are Īśvara, because, it is an absolute relationship and every relationship is His relationship.

990. Sraṣṭā (also word 588)

स्रष्टा

The creator of all.

Bhagavān is the Sraṣṭā, the creator of all the worlds.

991. Kṣitīśaḥ

क्षितीशः

The ruler of the earth.

As the creator, Parameśvara is the Lord of all the worlds, which includes this kṣiti, the earth also. Here this nāma refers to the Lord as Śrī Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, in which avatāra, He was crowned as a king and ruled the earth. Hence, He is Kṣitīśa.

992. Pāpanāśanaḥ

पापनाशनः

The destroyer of papas.

Bhagavān is Pāpanāśana; the one who, when praised, worshipped, meditated on or remembered, destroys by His grace our pāpas. Still we may continue to gather pāpa. The only way of totally destroying all the pāpas is by the knowledge of Īśvara. Bhagavān Himself says in the Gītā, 'even if you happen to be the most exalted among those who have done pāpa, the entire ocean of pāpa can be crossed without any effort, by the raft of knowledge.'

What is the nimitta-kāraṇa and the upādāna-kāraṇa of this world? Who am I? What is this world? The answer to all these questions reveal the truth of everything. That truth is only one limitless consciousness, free from the limitations of time, place and objectivity. This knowledge takes you to the truth of yourself. The truth, that you are neither the doer nor the enjoyer, in turn frees you totally from all pāpa and puṇya together with their cause, self-ignorance.
Chanting these nāmas of the Lord, destroys the pāpas that stand in the way and creates an interest in understanding their meaning. Proper understanding of these namas frees one totally from saṃsāra, the life of becoming.

Now, Bhagavān is presented as an Upāsyamūrti with śaṅka, cakra, gadā and so on.

993. Śaṅkhabhṛt

शङ्खभृत्

The one who has the conch.

Bhagavān has the śaṅkha, the conch, called Pāñcajanya in His hand.

Śaṅkha is the call from Bhagavān, which says 'come to me. You are going somewhere. Understand me. Wherever you go, it is all me. There is only me.'

The sound of the conch keeps all the evil spirits away. The sound is a beckoning call of Īśvara and wherever people are, they hear this sound. The whole Veda is the call of Īśvara. Once you respond to that call, then, where can the evil spirits be? There can be no evil.

The śaṅkha also represents the bhūta and ahaṅkāra-tattva, the principle of the five elements and the ahaṅkāra.

994. Nandakī
नन्दकी
The one with the sword called Nandaka.

Bhagavān has the sword called Nandaka and is therefore, Nandakī. The sword is the sword of vidyā, the sword of knowledge, by which one can sever saṅga, attachments. Our aim is to not reduce attachments because we are not attached, physically like train compartments. Then, is our aim to reduce our emotional attachments? No. Our aim is objectivity and clarity in knowledge of what is independent reality and what is dependent reality. When you see the truth of all your relationships, that they depend on you, consciousness, what you call as 'attachment' drops off. You still relate to all of them in freedom and not out of insecurity and clinginess. Is n't this beautiful?

Nandaka also means that which gives ānanda. He removes all the sorrow, by removing ones wrong thinking and thereby making one happy. When you hold on to Īśvara, you will get a teacher, gain values, and then gain knowledge. Through this you gain security, gain a sense of fearlessness and thereby, you find that you need not go against Īśvara, go against dharma. Hence, there is fearlessness and that is the asaṅga-śastra. There is no more any adharma, due to the pressure of desires. There is a natural detachment from adharma. You withdraw from adharma.
Īśvara is asaṅga and the more you seek Īśvara, the more you are with Īśvara; the more you are with Īśvara, the more you are away from wrong commitments.

995. Cakrī (also word 908)
चक्री
The one who has the Sudarśana cakra.

Bhagavān is Cakrī because he has the cakra, the discus, called Sudarśana. Since enemies are there, Bhagavān has His cakra. It represents the manas-tattva, the mind principle.
Seeing things clearly is the cakra, wielded by Parameśvara.

We might want to look for some magical powers because of which people stop behaving like enemies towards us. Because we feel like a victim, we feel that people are out to get us. If not people , the planets are definitely out to get us, for those who believe in astrology. Duryodhana had a major problem with jealousy so much so that he was trying to kill the Pandavas since their childhood. Not once did he think that he had a problem and he should seek help. He justified his

inner enemy of jealousy by externalizing the enemy outside and thought that once the Pandavas were killed, he would be fine. We too, do this. It is most convenient to think that the enemy is outside. Once the enemy is away, we will be fine.

But, a student of Vedanta will focus on all internal forces that are inimical and know that the things outside are just a trigger to the hurt and anger that lies inside. The person is willing to change. Think about your enemies or inimical forces to you and say 'I am willing to change'.
Notice your resistance to saying it. You will say the problem is not me. The problem is that person. If that person did not behave like this, I would not be insanely angry etc. Willingness to change could include perspective, your ways of relating, your ways of behaving etc.
Bhagavān's cakra is in the form of clarity because of which the inner enemies of anger, jealousy, greed and so on, can be processed.

Because of the cakra, there is more of Īśvara in one's life. No technique can change a person. Viṣṇu-sahasranama can definitely change a person.

996. Śārṅgadhanvā
शार्ङ्गधन्वा
The one with the bow called Sarnga.

Bhagavān is Śārṅgadhanvā, having the bow called Śārṅga. This is used to deal with remote problems. Problems from the unconscious are remote and at the same time are core problems.

The fear of being abandoned, the fear of being rejected, the fear of being lonely are what most of us experience. There are enough grounds to feel this way. Yet, these fears are related to the helplessness one felt as a child and they must be seen as an emotional hangover. We think that these issues are related to our experiences as an adult. But, the adult experiences trigger the fear and the pain that was not resolved in childhood. Infact, it could not have been completely resolved in childhood.
Relatively, these fears can be managed by the adult who has grown up through some inner child work (a process). As an adult you have to talk to that part of you with much love, understanding and assurance. We recognise that the adult you is pervaded by Isvara. And the child you too!
The bow also represents the indriya-tattva, the principle of the sense-organs.

997. Gadādharaḥ
गदाधरः
The one who has the club.

Bhagavān has the gadā, the club, called Kaumodakī and hence, He is Gadādhara. Any kind of problem dealing with discipline is dealt with by His gadā.

I read somewhere that discipline means being a disciple unto yourself. Don't know if it is correct, but it is a meaning that makes sense to me. All discipline is to serve a purpose. It is a framework of actions that have to be repeated such that there is spontaneity. Any attitude you want to fully cultivate such as the attitude of samatvam, equanimity or a skill that you want to

practice such as speaking clearly and pleasantly or the habit of waking up early requires doing. There is no magical technique or mantra for it.

You don't wait for a shubha muhurtam, an auspicious time to do these things.
You do, despite your moods. You do with support from others. It requires some tough measures on your part and a lot of discomfort as you give up some comfortable but erroneous ways of thinking and doing. The approach is not mollycoddling or reassurance.
You get up and do. The gada, club of Bhagavān can beat out laziness, procrastination and all the tendencies that are not conducive to our growth. Just one wielding of the gada makes sure that all that we were avoiding, we now have to face. The choice is to face it, evenly and squarely because you have cultivated the strength of discipline. Your own discipline has served you well.

It represents the buddhi-tattva, the principle of the intellect.

998. Rathāṅgapāṇiḥ
रथाङ्गपाणिः
The one who has the wheel of the chariot in his hand.

This name Rathāṅgapāṇi refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. During the Bhārata war, the Lord jumped down from the chariot, took the rathāṅga, the wheel of the chariot in His hand and used it as His cakra, to save his devotee Arjuna from the mad frenzy that Bhīṣma exhibited and saved dharma.

999. Akṣobhyaḥ (also word 801)
अक्षोभ्यः
The one who cannot be shaken by anything.

He is Akṣobhya, one who cannot be shaken or disturbed. Having all these various weapons, He can never be shaken by anything or anybody. Or He is unassailed. Nobody can shake Him.
Nothing can stop him from giving results for the good karma. If you take refuge in Īśvara, immediately there is dṛṣṭa-phala, visible results in the form of peace, feeling protected etc and then, naturally, there will also be adṛṣṭa-phala, in the form of punya.

1000. Sarvapraharaṇāyudhaḥ
सर्वप्रहरणायुधः
The one who is armed with all striking weapons.

Does the Lord have only these weapons? No. There is no restriction, that He wields only particular weapons and not others. He has āyudhas, weapons, for the praharaṇa, removal, of every problem and obstacle. Hence, Bhagavān is Sarvapraharaṇāyudha, one who is armed with all kinds of weapons, in the various avatāras.

As Śrī Rāma, He used even grass as a weapon; as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He used His weight and His hands; as Lord Nṛsimha, He used His claws.

Āyudha is also that which will help to solve problems. The grace of Īśvara is sought, so that one can overcome the obstacles and control the known and the hidden variables. Sometimes, we are unable to control even the known variables. Then, what to say of controlling the hidden variables! Hence, we seek refuge in Īśvara.

The use of the phrase 'armed with all kinds of striking weapons' at the end of the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma, is to show that He is the Lord of all and in control of everything and that He is satyasaṅkalpa.

Sarvapraharaṇāyudha oṃ nama iti

Om! Salutations unto Him, who is armed with all striking weapons.
The repetition of the name Sarvapraharaṇāyudha is to show the completion of the thousand names.
Om, the monosyllable, is used for auspiciousness. All the names begin with Om and end with Om. That means it is śubha, auspicious, and it ends well.

It is said, 'Oṃkāraścāthaśabdaśca dvāvetau brahmaṇaḥ purā kaṇṭhaṃ bhittvā viniryātau tasmānmāṅgalikāvubhau–in the beginning, the sounds Om and atha came out of throat of Brahmāji and therefore, these two syllables are auspicious.'

By the word namaḥ, salutations, the author of the stotra pays obeisance to Lord Viṣṇu.
The śruti says, 'bhūyiṣṭhāṃ te nama uktiṃ vidhema–to you we offer our words of adoration in abundance' (Īśa. Up.18).
There is another verse which says, 'dhanyaṃ tadeva lagnaṃ tannakṣatraṃ tadeva puṇyam ahaḥ. Karaṇasya ca sā siddhiryatra hariḥ prāṅ-namaskriyate–where Lord Hari is the first to be saluted, that alone is the auspicious lagna and naksatra, that alone is the auspicious day, that alone is successful karaṇa.' Therefore, the wise people salute Īśvara not only at the beginning of an action, but also at its end.

Thus, Bhīṣma begins and ends the Sahasranāma with namaskāras to the Lord.
vanamālī gadī śārṅgī śaṅkhī cakrī ca nandakī |
śrīmānnārāyaṇo viṣṇurvāsudevo'bhirakṣatu || 108
vāsudevo'bhirakṣatu oṃ namaḥ iti

May that Nārāyaṇa, who is always associated with Śrī, that is Lakṣmī, who is all-pervasive, and existent in everything as the adhiṣṭhāna sat and cit, who always wears the Vanamāla, the garland made of wild flowers, who has the mace, the bow called Śārṅga, the wheel, and the sword called Nandaka, bless everyone.

CONCLUSION
From the explanation of these thousand names, it is clear that these are not just names to call Īśvara, so that He responds to our calls. It is not that He would not respond to any other name. If we understand Īśvara, He will respond to any name in which we invoke Him. Each word here has something to convey to us. It is for us to understand Īśvara as one conscious being. It is not because He is Īśvara, that He has thousand names while we, as individuals, have just four to five

names. These thousand names are thousand ways in which we look at Īśvara and try to understand Him.

Every name is a pada, a word. Padyate anena – pada is a means to understand Īśvara. If we consider them as just names to call Īśvara, then it becomes His responsibility to respond. But when we see them as padas, words, then the responsibility lies with us to understand Īśvara with the help of these words.

Every aṣṭottara-ṣatanāma or sahasranāma will have many names that seem to be common. Names such as Govinda, Śiva, Īśa, Īśvara, Satcidananda, Ananta will be seen, because they are applicable to any devatā. But words such as Rathāṅgapāṇi or Devakīnandana belong only to Lord Viṣṇu, based on His avatāra or a special form attributed to Him. In other namāvalis, such names will be replaced by another set of names applicable to that devatā.
Some feel that mere repetition of these thousand names is enough and that, is not essential to know their meaning. This attitude exists all over the country. It is true that repeating the names being vacika-karma, is capable of giving puṇya phala.

These thousand names constitute the stotra which can be used for chanting and for doing arcanā. If these names are taken just as mere names, then these names can be repeated without knowing their meaning. This is vacika-karma and that by itself will also give phala. Doing pūjā and arcanā is kāyika-karma. The Lord can be invoked in a picture, in a lamp or even a pot of water and arcanā can be performed to it.

The chanting of these names can also be just done as a japa. It can be either ucca-japa, which is loud; manda-japa or upāṃśu-japa, enough for one to hear or it can be mānasa-japa, which is done mentally. Even though, like most mantras, it is not a single name, but it is a series of names of the same Lord, still, it is equal to a mantra.

We can relate to these thousand names only when we understand its meaning and then the pūjā, arcanā and japa become more meaningful. Since many of the Indian languages have Sanskrit words in useage, one will already be familiar with some of the words and so one can relate to the Lord, while doing japa. But the ultimate aim should be to understand the meaning of all these names.

UTTARABHĀGA (PHALAŚRUTI)

The various *phalas*, results, that people would get, if they chant this *sahasranāma* with *śraddhā* and *bhakti* are enumerated below. By listening to and knowing the meaning of this *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma* or by reciting it, everyone gets the result that he or she desires.

इतीदं कीर्तनीयस्य केशवस्य महात्मनः।

नाम्नां सहस्रं दिव्यानामशेषेण प्रकीर्तितम ।।१।।

itīdaṃkīrtanīyasyakeśavasyamahātmanaḥ
nāmnāṃsahasraṃdivyānāmaśeṣeṇaprakīrtitam 1

Thus, this set of thousand divine names of the Lord *Keśava*, who is worthy of praise has been recited without any addition or any omission.

These names are called *divya*, because they are capable of giving us *dṛṣṭa* as well as *adṛṣṭa- phala*. They are *kīrtaniya*, meant to be repeated again and again.

यः इदं शृणुयान्नित्यं यश्चापि परिकीर्तयेत्।

नाशुभं प्राप्नुयात् किञ्चित् सोऽमुत्रेह च मानवः।।२।।

yaidaṃśṛṇuyānnityaṃyaścāpiparikīrtayet
nāśubhaṃprāpnuyātkiñcitso'mutrehacamānavaḥ 2

Whoever listens to this *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma*everyday, and whoever recites it everyday, that person does not attain anything inauspicious both here and in the hereafter.

वेदान्तगो ब्राह्मणः स्यात् क्षत्रियो विजयी भवेत्।

वैश्यो धनसमृद्धः स्यात् शूद्रः सुखमवाप्नुयात्।।३।।

vedāntagobrahmaṇaḥsyātkṣatriyovijayī̄bhavet
vaiśyodhanasamṛddhaḥsyātśūdraḥsukhamavāpnuyāt 3

A *brāhmaṇā* (a *mumukṣu*) will attain the ultimate end that is spoken of in the *Vedantā*. A *kṣatriya* will be victorious (in the battle). A *vaiśya* will be prosperous with wealth. A *śudra* will attain great happiness.

धर्मार्थी प्राप्नुयाद् धर्ममर्थार्थी चार्थमाप्नयात्।

कामानवाप्नुयात् कामी प्रजार्थी चाप्नूयात् प्रजाम्।।४।।

dharmārthī̄prāpnuyātdharmamarthārthicārthamāpnuyāt
kāmānavāpnuyātkāmī̄prajārthī̄cāpnuyātprajām 4

One who desires *dharma* (*puṇya*) would attain *puṇya*; one who desires *artha*, material benefits, would get all material benefits; one who desires *kāma*, the desired objects of pleasure, would get the objects of pleasure; one who desires progeny would get progeny.

भक्तिमान् यः सदोत्थाय शुचिस्तद्गतमानसः।

सहस्रं वासुदेवस्य नाम्नामेतत् प्रकीर्तयेत्।।५।।

bhaktimānyaḥsadotthāyaśucistadgatamānasaḥ
sahasraṃvāsudevasyanāmnāmetatprakī̄rtayet 5

यशः प्राप्नोति विपुलं याति प्राधान्यमेव च।

अचलां श्रियमाप्नोति श्रेयः प्राप्नोत्यनुत्तमम् ।।६।।

yaśaḥprāpnotivipulaṃyātiprādhānyamevaca
acalāṃśriyamāpnotiśreyaḥprāpnotyanuttamam 6

That devotee, who would chant the thousand names of *Vāsudeva*, being pure inside and outside and ever committed, with a mind absorbed in the Lord.....

.....acquires widespread fame, attains prominence in any group, gains lasting prosperity, and also the unexcelled good, that is, *mokṣa*.

न भयं क्वचिदाप्नोति वीर्यं तेजश्च विन्दति।

भवत्यरोगो द्युतिमान् बलरूपगुणान्वितः ।।७।।

nabhayaṃkvacidāpnoti vīryaṃtejaścavindati
bhavatyarogodyutimānbalarūpaguṇānvitaḥ 7

He (that devotee) is never subject to fear at any time and attains great valour and brilliance; he is never afflicted by disease; becomes majestic endowed with strength, beauty and good qualities.

रोगार्तो मुच्यते रोगाद् बद्धो मुच्येत बन्धनात्।
भयान्मुच्येत भीतस्तु मुच्येतापन्न आपदः।।८।।

rogārtomucyaterogādbaddhomucyetabandhanāt
bhayānmucyetabhītastumucyetāpannaāpadaḥ 8

One, who is afflicted by disease, gets freed from disease; one who is bound would be freed from bondage; one who has fear would be free from fear and the one who is plunged in calamity would be freed (from it).

दुर्गाण्यतितरत्याशु पुरुषः पुरषोत्तमम्।
स्तुवन्नामसहस्त्रेण नित्यं भक्तिसमन्वितः।।९।।

durgāṇyatitaratyāśupuruṣaḥpuruṣottamam
stuvann*āmasahasreṇanityaṃbhaktisamanvitaḥ* 9

That person, daily praising Puruṣottama, through these thousand names, crosses very quickly all the obstacles (that occur in his pursuit).

वासुदेवाश्रयो मर्त्यो वासुदेवपरायणः।
सर्वपापिशुद्धात्मा याति ब्रह्म सनातनम्।।१०।।

v*āsudevāśrayomartyovāsudevaparāyaṇaḥ*

sarvap*āpaviśuddhatmāyāti brahma sanātanam* 10

That person, who looks upon *Vāsudeva*as his refuge and for whom the ultimate goal to be attained is*Vāsudeva,* being purified of all the *papas*, will attain that *Brahman* which is *nitya.*

न वासुदेवभक्तानामशुभं विद्यते क्वचित्।
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिभयं नैवोपजायते।।११।।

navāsudevabhaktānāmaśubhaṃvidyatekvacit
janmamṛtyujarāvyādhibhayaṃnaivopajāyate 11

To the devotees of *Vāsudeva,* no evil will occur at any time. Fear of birth, death, old age and disease will never be there.

इमं स्तवमधीयानः श्रद्धाभक्तिसमन्वितः।

युज्येतात्मसुखक्षान्तिश्रीधृतिस्मृतिकीर्तिभिः।।१२।।

imaṃstavamadhīyānaḥśraddhābhaktisamanvitaḥ

yujyetātmasukhakṣāntiśrīdhṛtismṛtikīrtibhiḥ 12

The one, who recites this praise endowed with *śraddhā*anddevotion would acquire cheerfulness, patience, prosperity, courage, memory and fame.

न क्रोधो न च मात्सर्यं न लोभो नाशुभा मतिः।

भवन्ति कृतपुण्यानां भक्तानां पुरुषोत्तमे।।१३।।

nakrodhonacamātsaryaṃnalobhonāśubhāmatiḥ

*bhavantikṛ*tapu*ṇyānāṃbhaktānāṃpuruṣottame* 13

For those who have devotion to Puruṣottama, and who have done deeds that bring *puṇya,* there will be no anger, jealousy, greed, or any evil or wrong thinking.

द्यौः सचन्द्रार्कनक्षत्रा खं दिशो भूर्महोदधिः।

वासुदेवस्य वीर्येण विधृतानि महात्मनः।।१४।।

dyauḥsacandrārkanakastrākhaṃdiśobhūrmahodadhiḥ

vāsudevasyavīryeṇavidhṛtānimahātmanaḥ ||14

The heavens consisting of the moon, the sun and the stars, the space, the directions, the earth and the ocean – all these are held and supported by the laws of the great V*āsudeva.*

ससुरासुरगन्धर्वं सयक्षोरगराक्षसम्।

जगद्वशे वर्ततेदं कृष्णस्य सचराचरम्।।१५।।

sasurāsuragandharvaṃsayakṣoragarākṣasam |

jagadvaśevartatedaṃkṛṣṇasyasacarācaram||15

The entire *jagat*, consisting of the moveable and the immoveable, with the *devas, asuras, gandharvas, yak ṣas, uragas, rākṣas,* exist only under the control of *ŚriKṛṣṇa.*

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिः सत्त्वं तेजो बलं धृतिः।

वासुदेवात्मकान्याहुः क्षेत्रं क्षेत्रज्ञ एव च।।१६।।

indriyāṇimanobuddhiḥsattvaṃtejobalaṃdhṛtiḥ |

vāsudevātmakānyāhuḥkṣetraṃkṣetrajñaevaca||16

The senses, the mind, the *buddhiḥ*, goodness, valour, strength, resolve, courage, the*kṣetra*, that is, the body and the knower of the body are nothing but the manifestations of V*āsudeva.*

सर्वागमानामाचारः प्रथमं परिकल्पते।

आचारप्रभो धर्मो धर्मस्य प्रभुरच्युतः।।१७।।

sarvāgamānāmācāraḥprathamaṃparikalpate |

ācāraprabhavodharmodharmasyaprabhuracyutaḥ ||17

Ācāra, a disciplined living, is considered the foremost by all scriptures. *Dharma* is the basis of *ācāra* and Lord Acyuta is the Lord of dharma.

ऋषयः पितरो देवा महाभूतानि धातवः।

जङ्गमाजङ्गमं चेदं जगन्नारायणोद्भवम्।।१८।।

ṛṣayaḥpitarodevāmahābhūtānidhātavaḥ |

jaṅgamājaṅgamaṃcedaṃjagannārāyaṇodbhavam ||18

The *ṛiṣis*, the *pitṛs*, the *devas*, the five great elements, the various minerals and this *jagat*consisting of the immoveables and the moveables – all of them have come from *Nārāyaṇa.*

योगो ज्ञानं तथा साङ्ख्यं विद्याः शिल्पादि कर्म च।

वेदाः शास्त्राणि विज्ञानमेतत् सर्वं जनार्दनात्।।१९।।

yogojñānaṃtathāsāṅkhyaṃvidyāḥśilpādi karma ca |

vedāḥśāstrāṇivijñānametatsarvaṃjanārdanāt ||19

The knowledge of *yoga,* the knowledge of *sāṅkhya*, the various disciplines of knowledge like *sikṣā, kalpa*and so on, the various skills like sculpture and others, the *Vedas* and various other *śāstrās* – all this knowledge has come from *Janārdana.*

एको विष्णुर्महद्भूतं पृथग्भूतान्यनेकशः।

त्रीन्लोकान् व्याप्य भूतात्मा भुङ्क्ते विश्वभुगव्ययः।।२०।।

ekoviṣṇurmahadbhūtaṃpṛthagbhūtānyanekaśaḥ |

trīllokānvyāpyabhūtātmābhuṅkteviśvabhugavyayaḥ ||20

The Lord *Viṣṇu* is the one great being (and the cause of the entire universe). (He created) all the beings (to be) many and varied. Pervading all the three worlds as the *ātmā* of all beings and at the same time being changeless, He protects (experiences) and swallows the *viśva*, the entire world.

इमं स्तवं भगवतो विष्णोर्व्यासेन कीर्तितम्।

पठेद्य इच्छेत् पुरूषः श्रेयः प्राप्तुं सुखानि च।।२१।।

imaṃstavaṃbhagavatoviṣṇorvyāsenakīrtitam |

paṭhedyaicchetpuruṣaḥśreyaḥprāptuṃsukhānica ||21

That person, who desires to attain pleasures and also the ultimate goal of *mokṣa,* should recite this *stotra* of Lord *Viṣṇu,* composed by*Vyāsa.*

विश्वेश्वरमजं देवं जगतः प्रभवाप्ययम्।

भजन्ति ये पुष्कराक्षं न ते यान्ति पराभवम्।।२२।।

न ते यान्ति पराभवं ओं नम इति।।

viśveśvaramajaṃdevaṃjagataḥprabhumavyayam |
bhajanti ye puṣkarākṣaṃnateyāntiparābhavam ||22
nateyāntiparābhavamoṃnamaiti |

Those who worship the lotus-eyed Lord, who is the Lord of the universe unborn, the cause and the resolution of this *jagat*, never meet with failure in life.

There is a repetition of the last few words of this sloka to show that this is the last verse of the 149th*adhyāya* of the *Anuśāsana-parva* of the *Mahābhāratha.* The following verses, which are traditionally chanted, are from the *Padma-purāṇa, Gītā* and so on.

अर्जुन उवाच

पद्मपत्र विशालाक्ष पद्मनाभ सुरोत्तम।

भक्तानामनुरक्तानां त्राता भव जनार्दन।।२३।।

arjunauvāca
padmapatraviśālākṣapadmanābhasurottama |
bhaktānāmanuraktānāṃtrātābhavajanārdana||23

Arjuna said, 'O! *Janārdana,*O!You, who have wide eyes like the petals of a lotus, who have a lotus in the navel, who is the best among the *devas*, be the protector of those devotees, who are full of love for you.'

श्री भगवानुवाच

यो मां नामसहस्रेण स्तोतुमिच्छति पाण्डव।

सोऽहमेकेन श्लोकेन स्तुत एव न संशयः।।२४।।

स्तुत एव न संशय ओं नम इति।।

Śrībhagavān uvāca
yomāṃnāmasahasreṇastotumicchatipāṇḍava |
so'hamekenaślokenastutaevanasaṃśayaḥ||24

stutaevanasaṃśayaoṃnamaiti |

*Śrībhagavān*said, 'O P*āṇḍava*! (If) whoever wishes to worship me by these thousand names (is able to do so), I would be praised even with this one *śloka*(that follows). There is no doubt (about this)'.

व्यास उवाच

वासनाद्वासुदेवस्य वासितं भुवनत्रयम्।

सर्वेभूतनिवासोऽसि वासुदेव नमोऽस्तु ते।।२५।।

वासुदेव नमोऽस्तु त ओं नम इति।।

Vyāsa uvāca

vāsanādvāsudevasyavāsitaṃbhuvanatrayam |

sarvabhūtanivāso'sivāsudevanamo'stute||25

śrīvāsudevanamo'stutaoṃnamaiti |

Vyāsa said, 'Because of the (enlivening), suffusing of existence by *Vāsudeva,* the three worlds exist. You are the indweller of all beings. O! *Vāsudeva,* salutations to you!'

पार्वत्युवाच

केनोपायेन लघुना विष्णोर्नामसहस्रकम्।

पठ्यते पण्डितैर्नित्यं श्रोतुमिछाम्यहं प्रभो।।२६।।

Pārvatyuvāca

kenopāyenalaghunāviṣṇornāmasahasrakam |

paṭhyatepaṇḍitairnityaṃśrotumicchāmyahaṃprabho ||27

Pārvatī asked, 'O! Lord, I wish to hear the easy method by which these thousand names of Lord*Viṣṇu* are chanted daily, by the wise.'

ईश्वर उवाच

श्रीराम राम रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे।

सहस्रनाम तत्तुल्यं रामनाम वरानने।।२७।।

श्रीरामनाम वरानन ओं नम इति।

īśvarauvāca

śrīrāmarāmarāmetiramerāmemanorame |

sahasranāmatattulyaṃrāmanāmavarānane|| 27

śrīrāmanāmavarānanaoṃnamaiti |

Īśvara said, 'I revel in *Rāma* who has a beautiful face, who is the covetor of the heart (saying) *ŚrīRāma,Rāma,Rāma*. This name of *Rāma* is equal to these thousand names.' OR

*Īśvara*said, 'O! *Pārvatī*, my beloved wife, with a beautiful face, O! You, who have coveted my heart, (saying) *ŚrīRāma,Rāma,Rāma*(is the easiest method). This name of *Rāma* is equal to these thousand names.'

ब्रह्मोवाच

नमोऽस्त्वनन्ताय सहस्रमूर्तये सहस्रपादाक्षिशिरोरूबाहवे।

सहस्रनाम्ने षरूषाय शाश्वते सहस्रकोटियुगधारिणे नमः।।२८।।

सहस्रकोटियुगधारिणे ओं नम इति।।

Brahmovāca
namo'stvanantāyasahasramūrtaye
sahasrapādākṣiśirorubāhave |
sahasranāmnepuruṣāyaśāśvate
sahasrakoṭiyugadhāriṇenamaḥ ||28
sahasrakoṭiyugadhāriṇaoṃnamaiti |

Brahma said, 'Salutations to that timeless *Puruṣa*, who is limitless, who has thousands of forms, thousands of legs, eyes, heads, great arms; the one who has thousands of names; the one who is the basis of the continuity of time, as thousand crores of *yugas*.

सञ्जय उवाच

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः।

तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम।।२९।।

Sañjaya uvāca
yatrayogeśvaraḥkṛṣṇoyatrapārthodhanurdharaḥ |
tatraśrīrvijayobhūtirdhruvānītirmatirmama ||29

Sañjaya said, 'Where there is *Kṛṣṇa*, the Lord of yoga and where there is Arjuna wielding the bow, there will certainly be wealth, victory, prosperity and definite justice. This is my conviction!'

श्रीभगवानुवाच

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्।।३०।।

Śrībhagavān uvāca
ananyāścintayantomāṃ ye janāḥparyupāsate |

teṣāṃnityābhiyuktānāṃyogakṣemaṃvahāmyaham ||30

Śrī Bhagavān said, 'Those people, who do not think about anything else other than me and see themselves as non-separate from me, who are always one with me. I look after their yoga and *kṣema*, that is, what they want to acquire and protect it.

परित्रणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।

धर्मसंस्थपनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे।।३१।।

paritrāṇāyasādhūnāṃvināśāyacaduṣkṛtām |

dharmasaṃsthāpanārthāyasaṃbhavāmiyugeyuge ||31

For the protection of those who are committed to *dharma* and the destruction (conversion) of those who follow *adharma*, and for the establishment of dharma, I come into being in every *yuga*.

आर्ता विषण्णाः शिथिलाश्च भीताः घोरेषु च व्याधिषु वर्तमानाः।

सङ्कीर्त्य नारायणशब्दमात्रं विमुक्तदुःखाः सुखिनो भवन्तु।।३२।।

ārtāviṣaṇṇāḥśithilāścabhītāghoreṣucavyādhiṣuvartamānāḥ |

saṅkīrtyanārāyaṇaśabdamātraṃvimuktaduḥkhāḥsukhinobhavantu ||32

Those, who are afflicted by sorrow, who are overcome by grief, who are shaken and overcome by fear, who suffer from serious illness and disease, become free of sorrow and gain happiness, by merely chanting the name of *Nārāyaṇā.*

कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्याऽऽत्मना वा प्रकृतेः स्वभावात्।

करोमि यद्यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पयामि।।३३।।

kāyenavācāmanasendriyairvābuddhyātmanāvāprakṛteḥsvabhāvāt |

karomiyadyatsakalaṃparasmainārāyaṇāyetisamarpayāmi||33

Whatever I do by my body, mind, sense organs, or organs of action or through my intellect or mind, or impulsively, I offer all that to Lord *Nārāyaṇā* who is the highest.

ॐ तत्सत्

सहस्रनामसंबन्धिव्याख्या सर्वसुखावहा।

श्रुतिस्मृतिन्यायमूला रचिता हरिपदयोः।।

Oṃ tat sat

sahasranāmasambandhivyākhyāsarvasukhāvahā।

śrutismṛtinyāyamūlāracitāharipādayoḥ।।

This explanation of the thousand names, based on the *śruti*, *smṛti* and *nyāya*, and also very easy to understand and pleasant, is placed at the feet of Lord Hari.