

Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti *Mūla-Mantra*¹

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*om namo bhagavate dakṣiṇāmūrtaye
mahyaṃ medhāṃ prajñāṃ prayacca svāhā*

Om. Salutations to Bhagavān Dakṣiṇāmūrti. Please bless me with *medhā*, memory and *prajñā*, wisdom.

Namaḥ, my salutations. To whom? Bhagavān Dakṣiṇāmūrti. *Bhaga* includes the six-fold virtues in full measure: it is *aiśvarya*, overlordship; it is *śrī*, wealth and health; it is *vīrya*, strength; it is *yaśas*, fame; it is *jñāna*, knowledge; it is *vairāgya*, freedom from a sense of want. All these virtues in full measure is *bhaga*; the one who has *bhaga* is *Bhagavān*. *Bhaga*, therefore, means all blessing. The word by which you invoke the Lord is the blessing that you also seek. Not only do you seek *mokṣa*, self-knowledge, you also seek blessings to achieve whatever one needs to achieve in life. Once you say *namo bhagavate*, salutations unto the one who has *bhaga*, *Bhagavān*, you are covering everything; we need a little more of everything. Therefore, in relating to the Lord as *Bhagavān*, you are invoking the grace of *bhaga*.

Amūrti is the one who is formless and who is the truth of everything. With *māyā-śakti*, he is *dakṣiṇa* meaning *samartha*, the one who has capacity—he is the creator and sustainer, and also, the one who can take back the whole thing into himself. Therefore, Īśvara who is *dakṣiṇa* as well as *amūrti* is Dakṣiṇāmūrti.

Dakṣiṇa has another meaning as well. *Dakṣiṇa* is *dik*, a quarter, the southerly direction. So, he is the one whose face is facing the southern direction, *dakṣiṇa-dig-abhi-mukhā-mūrtiḥ yasya dakṣiṇāmūrtiḥ*. What is the significance of the southerly direction? The north attracts, and it stands for *mokṣa*. The south stands for *saṃsāra*; it is Lord Yama's place. The Lord is everywhere, but the one who wants to get released from *saṃsāra* faces the Lord in the north. The Lord has to face you to teach; as the source of all knowledge, he faces the south. Salutations unto that Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti, or Īśvara, as the source of all knowledge and as the source of all blessing.

¹ Excerpt from the forthcoming book *Prayer and Prayerfulness* based on talks of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati translated and edited by Krishnakumar Davey and Jayshree Ramakrishnan.

Mahyam, to me. *Prayacca*, please give, please bring in, and please bless me with. Asking is important. Always ask for what you want. Never be shy. People say, “Don’t go asking *bhagavān*. He knows everything.” But no, you have to ask for it. His grace is always available, but you have to tap it. This grace is like ground water that has to be tapped. There is no other way. It is a potential and you have to tap it by praying.

To gain anything in terms of worldly or spiritual life, everything depends upon your making the right decisions. Life is a series of right decisions. For this you require two things, *prajñā* and *medhā*.

Prajñā does not only mean knowledge or clarity of knowledge. It includes clarity in the making of decisions. You are what you are because of your decisions. We need to have the clarity to make proper decisions in life. In understanding any topic, you require *prajñā*. It means alertness, clarity of vision. No matter what the topic is, whether it is a moral issue, a legal issue or an economic issue, to succeed, you require *prajñā*. So *prajñā* is spiritual knowledge along with clarity.

Medhā is thinking power and also memory. Memory is important. We always remember a person’s name only after he has left. When some learned people begin to talk, too many thoughts come to them or the right thing does not come at that time. The understanding must not only be there, it should be available at the time it is needed. That is grace. Your memory and wisdom should serve you at the right time. First we need the wisdom, and then, it should be available to us all the time. *Medhā* is not just memory. There are a lot of medicines that can increase your memory power, but *medhā* is the availability of the knowledge at the right time and the right place.

If *medhā* and *prajñā* are there, all successes will come to you. That is why we pray, “Oh Lord please bless with me with *medhā* and *prajñā*.”

Svāhā, I offer this chanting, this prayer to you.