

# धर्मसन्देश Dharma Sandesh

a quarterly newsletter of Bharatiya Mandir, Middletown, NY

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः। Let noble thoughts come to us from everywhere. RigVeda 1.89.1

## नमस्ते Namaste

ॐ – OM. With the blessings and grace of the Supreme Lord (परमात्मा), we are pleased to bring you another issue of Dharma Sandesh.

Summer is winding down and autumn (the fall season) is about to make its advent among us. Many of us are finishing up our vacations and waiting for the school year to begin.

As the academic year begins for all students, we will be worshipping Lord Ganapati, the remover of obstacles and the grantor of knowledge and wisdom, on Sri Ganesh Chaturthi (श्री गणेश चतुर्थि), coming this year on September 19.

Sri Devi Navaratri (श्री देवी नवरात्रि) will be celebrated in October this year. We will worship the Supreme Goddess Durga (दुर्गा) in all her nine magnificent forms. In addition to the devout Puja, devotees can also sing, dance, and immerse themselves in the mesmerizing music and rhythms of Raas Garba. A few days after Sri Devi Navaratri arrives Deepavali (दीपावली), the festival of lights. The highlight of this Deepavali will be Sri Lakshmi Puja (श्री लक्ष्मी पूजा).

In this issue, I present, with meanings, Sri Lakshmi Ashtottara Shatanama– the 108 names of Sri Lakshmi. Dr. Padma Sundaram writes about Devi Parvathi, who is Adi Shakti (आदिशक्ति), the primeval energy.

We hope that readers will continue to enjoy reading these articles and gain some insight into our Sanatana Dharma. Let us all pray to the Paramaatma (परमात्मा) to shower His blessings upon all His children!!

Sincerely,

Your Editorial Board

Web: [www.bharatiyamandir.org](http://www.bharatiyamandir.org)

## सुभाषिता Subhaashitaa

*In this section, we present a Sanskrit quotation and its interpretation/meaning.*

नास्ति विद्यासमो बन्धुः नास्ति विद्यासमः सहृत् ।  
नास्ति विद्यासमं वित्तं नास्ति विद्यासमं सुखम् ॥

naasti-vidyaa-samo-bandhuh-naasti-vidyaa-samah-sahrut |  
naasti-vidyaa-samam-vittam-naasti-vidyaa-samam-sukham

There is no relative or friend equivalent to knowledge. There is no kindred equivalent to knowledge. There is no wealth equivalent to knowledge. There is no happiness equivalent to knowledge.

Knowledge reigns supreme. A learned man can always depend on his knowledge to survive, surmount obstacles, come up in the world, and achieve things in life. A knowledgeable man is always highly respected and adored the world over. Knowledge is wealth; using one's knowledge one can achieve much in this world and lead a happy and peaceful life. We should always respect knowledge and learning, and always strive to achieve more of the same.

*Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara*

## साई प्रेरणा Baba's Teachings

*In this section, we present a teaching of Sri Sai Baba.*

Sri Satya Sai Baba spoke thus – “Bad thoughts and habits, bad company, and bad food are hostile grounds where disease thrives. “Arogya” and “Ananda” go hand in hand. A sense of elation and exultation keeps the body free from ill health. Evil habits, in which men indulge, are the chief cause of disease in the physical as well as the mental state. Greed affects the

mind; disappointment makes man depressed. Man can justify his existence as man only by the cultivation of virtues. Then he becomes a worthy candidate for Godhood.”

*Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara*

## ज्ञानविहार JnanaVihara

*In this section, we present articles on Hinduism, Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and related philosophy.*

### Sri Lakshmi Ashtottara Shatanama Stotram श्री लक्ष्मी अष्टोत्तर शतनाम स्तोत्रम्

Sri Lakshmi Ashtottara Shatanama Stotram is a very essential component in the worship of Sri Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth and fortune. Ashtottara Shatanama means one hundred and eight (108) names. Here I present meanings of each of Devi's 108 names in simple terms without going into any philosophical interpretations of any name. In a few places, I provide a simple explanation of a particular name.



### Om MahaLakshmyai Namah ॐ महालक्ष्म्यै नमः

1. Prakruti (प्रकृति) – Nature
2. Vikruti (विकृति) – Multi-faceted and changing aspect of nature
3. Vidya (विद्या) – Learning and scholarship
4. Sarvabhootahitaprada (सर्वभूतहितप्रदा) – One who grants universal pleasures; One who looks after the welfare of all creatures in the world
5. Shraddha (श्रद्धा) – One who is devoutly worshipped
6. Vibhuti (विभूति) – Goddess of greatness and fortune
7. Surabhi (सुरभि) – Celestial; Virtuous
8. Paramaatmika (परमात्मिका) – Greatest; Exalted

9. Vacha (वाच) – Goddess of speech
10. Padmalaya (पद्मालया) – One who resides on a lotus
11. Padma (पद्मा) – Lotus
12. Shuchi (शुचि) – Goddess of purity



13. Swaha (स्वाहा) – Auspicious
14. Swadha (स्वधा) – Self-power
15. Sudha (सुधा) – Goddess of nectar
16. Dhanya (धन्या) – Nurse; One who takes care of others; Personification of gratitude
17. Hiranmayi (हिरण्मयी) – Golden in appearance
18. Lakshmi (लक्ष्मी) – Goddess of grace, wealth, royal power, success, and prosperity
19. Nityapushta (नित्यपुष्टा) – Well-supplied; Gaining strength day by day
20. Vibhavari (विभावरी) – One who is radiant-faced
21. Aditi (अदिति) – Limitless; Cosmic creatrix; Mother of the Suras (Gods)
22. Diti (दिति) – Brilliance; Mother of the Maruts and the Asuras
23. Deepta (दीप्ता) – Flame-like; Blazing; Brilliant
24. Vasudha (वसुधा) – Goddess Earth (BhuDevi भूदेवी)

25. Vasudharini (वसुधारिणी) – Protector of the Earth
26. Kamala (कमला) – Lotus
27. Kantha (कान्ता) – Consort of Lord Vishnu
28. Kamakshi (कामाक्षी) – Goddess with attractive eyes
29. Kamalasambhava (कमलसम्भवा) – One who emerges from the lotus

**Note:** in some versions of the Stotram, Sri Lakshmi is referred to as Krodhasambhava (क्रोधसम्भवा) – one who emerged from anger – this refers to Mahishasura Mardini (महिषासुरमर्दिनी), where Devi manifested from the combined anger energies of all the Gods in order to vanquish the demon Mahishasura.



30. Anugrahaprada (अनुग्रहप्रदा) – One who grants good wishes
31. Buddhi (बुद्धि) – Goddess of intellect
32. Anagha (अनघा) – Sinless; Pure
33. Harivallabha (हरिवल्लभा) – Consort of Lord Hari (Vishnu)
34. Ashoka (अशोका) – One who dispels sorrows
35. Amrutha (अमृता) – Goddess of nectar (of immortality)
36. Deepta (दीप्ता) – Radiant; Flame-like; Blazing
37. Lokashokavinashini (लोकशोकविनाशिनी) – One who removes the troubles of the world
38. Dharmanilaya (धर्मनिलया) – One who establishes eternal law (Dharma)
39. Karuna (करुणा) – Compassionate Goddess
40. Lokamata (लोकमाता) – Universal Mother
41. Padmapriya (पद्मप्रिया) – One who loves the lotus
42. Padmahasta (पद्महस्ता) – One who has lotus-like hands

43. Padmakshi (पद्माक्षी) – One who has lotus-like eyes
44. Padmasundari (पद्मसुन्दरी) – One who is beautiful like the lotus
45. Padmodbhava (पद्मोद्भवा) – One who emerges from the lotus
46. Padmamukhi (पद्ममुखी) – Lotus-faced Goddess
47. Padmanabhapriya (पद्मनाभप्रिया) – Beloved of Lord Padmanabha (Lord Vishnu)
48. Ramaa (रमा) – Pleaser of Lord Vishnu
49. Padmamaladhara (पद्ममालाधरा) – One who wears a garland of lotuses
50. Devi (देवी) – Goddess
51. Padmini (पद्मिनी) – Lotus-like
52. Padmagandhini (पद्मगन्धिनी) – One who has a fragrance like the lotus
53. Punyagandha (पुण्यगन्धा) – Divine-perfumed Goddess
54. Suprasanna (सुप्रसन्ना) – Serene, ever-happy, and compassionate Goddess
55. Prasadabhimukhi (प्रसादाभिमुखी) – One who grants boons and wishes
56. Prabha (प्रभा) – Goddess with radiance like the Sun
57. Chandravadana (चन्द्रवदना) – Goddess with a Moon-like face
58. Chandra (चन्द्रा) – One who emerged after the Moon



59. Chandrasahodari (चन्द्रसहोदरी) – Sister of the Moon

**Note:** After SamudraManthana (समुद्रमन्थन) – the churning of the ocean – by the Devas and Asuras seeking Amrutha (अमृत nectar of immortality), Chandra the Moon arose from the ocean first. Then Sri Lakshmi emerged. Therefore She is

referred to as the Sister of Chandra as well as the Daughter of the Ocean.

60. Chaturbhuj (चतुर्भुजा) – Four-armed Goddess

61. Chandrarupa (चन्द्ररूपा) – Beautiful like the Moon

62. Indira (इन्दिरा) – Beautiful; Radiant



63. Indusheetala (इन्दुशीतला) – Calm like the Moon

64. Ahladajanani (आह्लादजननी) –

Mother bestowing happiness

65. Pushti (पुष्टि) – Goddess of health and nourishment

66. Shivaa (शिवा) – Goddess of auspiciousness

67. Shivakari (शिवकरी) – Embodiment of

auspiciousness; One who confers auspiciousness

68. Sati (सती) – Devoted wife (of Lord Vishnu)

69. Vimala (विमला) – Pure

70. Vishwajanani (विश्वजननी) – Universal Mother

71. Tushti (तुष्टि) – Goddess of contentment

72. Daridryanashini (दारिद्र्यनाशिनी) – Remover of poverty

73. Preeti Pushkarini (प्रीतिपुष्करिणी) – Ocean of love and affection

74. Shanta (शान्ता) – Peaceful Goddess

75. Shuklamalyambara (शुक्लमाल्याम्बरा) – One who wears white (pure) clothes

76. Sri (श्री) – Goddess of fortune

77. Bhaskari (भास्करी) – Dazzling like the Sun

78. Bilvanilaya (बिल्वनिलया) – One who resides under the Bilva tree

79. Vararooha (वाररोहा) – Goddess who bestows wishes and boons

80. Yashaswini (यशस्विनी) – Goddess of fame and fortune

81. Vasundhara (वसुन्धरा) – Mother Earth (Bhudevi)

82. Udaranga (उदाराङ्गा) – One who has a beautiful body

83. Harini (हरिणी) – One who is deer-like

84. Hemamalini (हेममालिनी) – One who wears golden garlands

85. Dhanadhanyakari (धनधान्यकरी) – One who bestows wealth and grains

86. Siddhi (सिद्धि) – Divine energy

87. Straina-Soumya (स्त्रैणसौम्या) – One who displays feminine composure and serenity

88. Shubhaprada (शुभप्रदा) – One who grants auspicious things

89. Nrupaveshmagathananda (नृपवेशमगतानन्दा) – One who happily goes to live in royal palaces

90. Varalakshmi (वरलक्ष्मी) – One who grants boons (of prosperity)

91. Vasuprada (वसुप्रदा) – One who bestows boons of wealth and property (land)

92. Shubha (शुभा) – Symbol of auspiciousness

93. Hiranyaprakara (हिरण्यप्राकारा) – One who is surrounded by gold

94. Samudratanaya (समुद्रतनया) – Daughter of the ocean

95. Jaya (जया) – Goddess of victory



96. MangalaDevi (मङ्गलादेवी) – Most auspicious Goddess

97. Vishnuvakshasthalasthita (विष्णुवक्षस्थलस्थिता) – One who resides in Lord Vishnu's chest

98. Vishnupatni (विष्णुपत्नी) – Consort of Lord Vishnu



## DEVI PARVATHI (देवी पार्वती)

Parvathi is Shakti (शक्ति), the consort of Lord Shiva. Parvathi is considered as the complete incarnation or manifestation of Adi Parashakti (आदिपराशक्ति), and other related Goddesses are her incarnations or manifestations. Parvathi is generally a benevolent incarnation, but she also has wrathful incarnations such as Durga, Kali, Sheetaladevi, Chamundi, and Tara. Her benevolent incarnations are Katyayani, Bhuvaneshwari, Kamalaathmika, and Lalitha.

The name Parvathi is derived from the word Parvatha (पर्वत) which means mountain in Sanskrit. Parvathi means “She of the Mountain,” which refers to her being born to Himavan (हिमवान्), Lord of the mountain – the personification of the Himalayas (हिमालय). Her other names associated with the mountains are Girija (गिरिजा daughter of the

mountain), Shailaputri (शैलपुत्री daughter of the mountain). Parvathi is also sometimes considered as a form of Pavitra (पवित्र), which means sinless or holy in Sanskrit.



Parvathi is the second wife of Lord Shiva. Sati (सती) was his

first wife. Sati was the daughter of King Daksha; so she is also called Daakshayani (दाक्षायणी). In Shiva Purana it is stated that Sati married Lord Shiva against the wishes of her father. Once when King Daksha performed a great yajna he did not invite Lord Shiva. But still, Sati went to her father’s house to attend the yajna. Daksha did not acknowledge Sati and offer her the Prasad, nor did he give Prasad for Lord Shiva. Instead he humiliated her and Lord Shiva in front of all people assembled at the yajna. Sati became very hurt and desolate and she ended her life in the fire of the yajna.

99. Prasannakshi (प्रसन्नाक्षी) – Lively-eyed
100. Narayana-Samashrita (नारायणसमाश्रिता) – One who seeks refuge in Lord Narayana (Vishnu)
101. Daridryadhwamsini (दारिद्र्यध्वंसिनी) – One who eliminates (destroys) poverty
102. Devi (देवी) – Goddess
103. Sarvopadravanivarini (सर्वोपद्रवनिवारिणी) – One who dispels all forms of unhappiness and troubles
104. Navadurga (नवदुर्गा) – Manifestation of all nine forms of Durga
105. Mahakali (महाकाली) – Goddess Kali
106. Brahma-Vishnu-Shivaatmika (ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मिका) – Embodying the energies of Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva
107. Trikalajnanasampanna (त्रिकालज्ञानसंपन्ना) – One who possesses knowledge of the past, the present and the future
108. Bhuvaneshwari (भुवनेश्वरी) – Supreme Goddess of the Universe

*Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara*

After the death of Sati, Lord Shiva became very depressed and he went into deep meditation in the snow covered peaks of the Himalayas.



At about the same time, the Rakshasas, led by Taraka, became very active and drove the Gods (Devas) out of Heaven. The Devas pleaded with Lord Brahma to help them. Lord Brahma told them that a warrior that could kill Taraka could only be born to Lord Shiva.

But Lord Shiva was oblivious to all this and continued his deep meditation. He had renounced all the worldly affairs and had turned a deaf ear to the Devas' plight and their request for him to get married again.

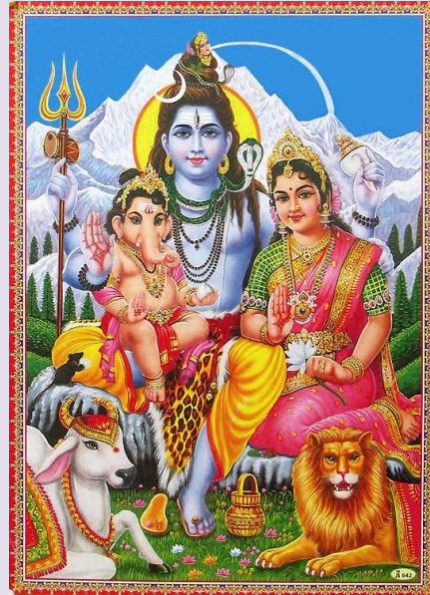
In the Brahma Vaivarata Purana (ब्रह्मवैवर्त पुराण) it is stated that Sati appeared before Lord Shiva in her divine form and assured him that she would incarnate as Parvathi.

Parvathi is said to have been very keenly interested in Lord Shiva even as a small child. As she grew up to become a beautiful woman, she tried to please Lord Shiva by serving him constantly. But Lord Shiva was so engrossed in his meditation that he did not notice Parvathi. In desperation Parvathi invoked Riti and Priti (Goddesses of love and longing). They entered into Lord Shiva's cave and transformed it into a pleasure garden. Then Kama (काम God of desire) shot his arrows dripping with desire into Lord Shiva. The Lord became very angry and opened his third eye and burnt Kama to ashes.

Parvathi then went into the forest to perform severe penance (Tapas तपस्). She did not eat anything, not

even a leaf!! Thus she came to be called Aparna (अपर्ण). Even after her severe penance, Lord Shiva was not convinced of her affections. He wanted to test her. So he came in disguise of an old man and started talking ill of Shiva and criticizing him. But Parvathi was steadfast in her feelings for Lord Shiva and still wanted to marry Him. Lord Shiva was pleased and consented to the marriage.

After the wedding, Lord Shiva took Parvathi to Kailas. Kama was reborn again as the Lord and Parvathi become one. The divine couple had two sons, Lord Ganesha (गणेश) and Lord Subramanya (सुब्रह्मण्य), also known as Karthikeyan (कार्तिकेय) or Murugan (मुरुग). Parvathi gave a Shula (शूल spear) to Murugan and taught him to be a warrior. Murugan then killed the Rakshasa Taraka and won the Heavens back for the Devas.



Devi Parvathi is usually represented as a fair and beautiful woman sitting beside Lord Shiva, holding a fully blossomed blue lotus in one hand and showing the Abhaya Mudra (अभयमुद्रा granting protection to her devotees) in the other hand. The divine couple has one of the sons on their lap. Devi has

a languid appearance to her eyes as if she has just emerged from deep meditation. Her vahana (वाहन vehicle) is the mountain lion which is native to the Himalayas.

Parvathi has many incarnations or manifestations (अवतार). Generally she is very benign, but she has a violent side as well. When the Gods approached her to vanquish the demoness Daruka, she got angry and Kali (काली) emerged from her to destroy the demoness. This is described in Linga Purana. In Skanda Purana, Parvathi assumes the form of the warrior Goddess Durga (दुर्गा) to vanquish the demons Shumbha and Nishumbha.

Parvathi is also called Gauri (Gowri गौरी) – meaning fair complexioned. Parvathi is generally described to be dark-complexioned. Lord Shiva once made fun of her dark complexion. She became enraged and, with



her yogic powers, pulled off all her black skin and thus emerged fair-skinned Gauri.

Devi Parvathi is also Annapurna

(अन्नपूर्णा). In Sanskrit annam (अन्न) means food and purna (पूर्णा) means full. That is, Devi Annapurna is the giver of food. She is Annapurneshwari (अन्नपूर्णेश्वरी the Goddess of food).

The story goes that Lord Shiva and Parvathi were playing dice and started betting. In the process, Lord Shiva lost everything, including his trident. He became desolate and started roaming in the forest. Lord Vishnu came there and asked him why he was roaming thus. Lord Shiva told him what had happened. Then Lord Vishnu urged him to go back and play so that he could win everything back. Lord Shiva did as he was told and won everything back. Parvathi did not believe this and said that Lord Shiva had cheated. She got angry and withheld nourishment



to all creatures. Seeing this, Lord Vishnu went to Kailas and told Parvathi that he was responsible for her defeat.

Then Lord Shiva brought a bowl and stood in front of Parvathi and begged for food. Parvathi was so moved that she filled his bowl so

that each and every one of God's creation could be fed. There is a shloka for Devi Annapurna which is recited before eating food. This shloka is easy to learn and, if recited daily, no one will be without food.

अन्नपूर्णे सदापूर्णे शङ्करःप्राणवल्लभे ।  
ज्ञानवैराग्य सिद्ध्यर्थं भिक्षां देहि च पार्वती ॥  
माता च पार्वती देवी पिता देवो महेश्वरः ।  
बान्धवाः शिवभक्ताश्च स्वदेशो भुवनत्रयम् ॥



anna-poorne-sada-poorne-shankarah-prana-vallabhe  
jnanavairagya-siddhyartham-bhikshan-dehica-parvathi  
mata-ca-parvathi-devi-pita-devo-maheshvarah  
bandhavah-shiva-bhaktascha-svadesho-bhuvana-  
trayam

Parvathi's other forms are Meenakshi (मीनाक्षी) in Madurai, Kamakshi (कामाक्षी) in Kanchipuram, Vishalakshi (विशालाक्षी) in Varanasi, Vaishnavi Devi (वैष्णवीदेवी Vaishno Devi) in Jammu, and Chamundeshwari (चामुण्डेश्वरी) in Mysore. Her most talked about incarnation is Sri Lalitha Maha Tripura Sundari (श्री ललिता महात्रिपुरसुन्दरी), which merits a separate write-up in a future issue of Dharma Sandesh.

There are several temples in India where forms of Devi Parvathi are predominantly worshipped. Some of them are:

Chamundeshwari temple in Mysore, Karnataka  
Annapurneshwari temple in Horanadu, Karnataka  
Mookambika temple in Kollur, Karnataka  
Annapurneshwari temple in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh  
Vishalakshi temple in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh  
Ambaji temple in Ambaji, Gujarat  
Parvati temple in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh  
Dakshineswar Kali temple in Kolkata, West Bengal  
Naina Devi temple in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh

Chandi Devi temple in Haridwar, Uttarakhand  
 Vaishno Devi temple in Katra, Jammu&Kashmir  
 Attukal temple in Tiruvananthapuram, Kerala  
 Chottanikkara temple near Cochin, Kerala  
 Akhilandeswari temple in Tiruvanikkaval,  
 Tamil Nadu  
 Kamakshi temple in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu



Meenakshi temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu  
 Abhirami temple in Tanjavur district, Tamil Nadu.

In conclusion, it is said that Devi Parvathi represents parts of ourselves where creativity brings forth nourishment even in the midst of rejection and disapproval. She is a wonderful affirmation that there are no limits to what a woman can do when she uses her spiritual energy to attain any goal she chooses.

References: Wikipedia – [www.hindugoddess.com](http://www.hindugoddess.com)  
 Hinduwebsite.com, Linga Purana

Contributed by Dr. Padma Sundaram.

### Some Upcoming Special Mandir Events

Sri Ganesh Chaturthee	Wednesday, Sep 19
Sri Ganesh Chaturthee Celebrations at Mandir	Saturday, Sep 22
Mahalaya (Shraadh) Paksh	Sunday, Sep 30 until Monday, Oct 15
Sri Devi Navaratri begins	Tuesday, Oct 16
Raas Garba	Friday, Oct 19
Mata ki Chowki	Saturday, Oct 20
Sri Durga Puja	Sunday, Oct 21
Nav Chandi Yajna	Monday, Oct 22
Vijaya Dashami (Dussehra)	Wednesday, Oct 24
Sharad Purnima	Monday, Oct 29
Karva Chowth	Friday, Nov 2
Deepavali (Sri Maha Lakshmi Puja)	Tuesday, Nov 13
Nav Varsh (New Year)	Wednesday, Nov 14
Annakut	Sunday, Nov 18
Sri Tulasi Vivah	Saturday, Nov 24
Dev Deepavali (Purnima)	Wednesday, Nov 28

Mrs. Mallika and Dr. Nambi Salgunan have generously sponsored the printing of copies of this issue of Dharma Sandesh. Devotees may note that all the writing of the content and the editing of the newsletter are strictly voluntary.

Our quarterly newsletter is called “**Dharma Sandesh**” (धर्मसन्देश). “Dharma”, in simple terms, refers to righteousness, conduct, a sense of duty, virtue, and the ultimate truth. “Sandesh” means a message or news. So, Dharma Sandesh refers to a message of Dharma.

**Dharma Sandesh Newsletter Editorial Board:**

Mr. Om Arora                      Dr. Narasim Banavara  
 Dr. K.N. Sundaram              Dr. Padma Sundaram