

Śrī Rudram Mantra 01

Rṣi - Ātreya; Chandas - Anuṣṭubh; Devatā - Śrī Rudrah

Dhyāna-Śloka

आकर्णकृष्टे धनुषि ज्वलन्तीं देवीमिषुं भास्वति सन्दधानम् ।
ध्यान्महेशं महनीयवेषं देव्या युतं योधतनुं युवानम् ॥

ākarnakṛṣṭe dhanuṣi jvalantīm devīmīṣuṁ bhāsvati sandadhānam ।
dhyānmaheśaṁ mahanīyaveṣaṁ devyā yutaṁ yodhatanuṁ yuvānam ।



May one meditate upon Lord Śiva, who has fixed the radiant arrow that is pulled up to the ear on the shining bow, who has a beautiful form, who has body like that of a warrior, who is young and who is united with Goddess Pārvatī.

A *dhyāna-śloka* always describes a form of the Lord. Keeping *dhyāna-śloka* in mind, the sculptors visualise the form and then begin sculpting a given image. They have rules pertaining to the measurements of the face, shoulders and so on, in proportion to the height of the image. Here, too, one visualises the form of the Lord in keeping with the *dhyāna-śloka* and offers the prayer.

Result for chanting the first *mantra*: One who chants this *mantra* while circumambulating, gains the grace of the Lord, the *pāpas* are destroyed and one gains leadership qualities.

नमस्ते रुद्र मन्यव उतो त् इषवे नमः ।
नमस्ते अस्तु धन्वने बहुभ्यामुत ते नमः ॥ १ ॥
namaste rūdra m̄nyavā ūto t̄ iṣave namaḥ ।
namaste astu dhanvane bahubhyāmuta te namaḥ ॥ 1 ॥

namaḥ – salutation; *te* – to you; *Rudra* – O Lord Rudra!; *manyave* – to (your) anger; *uto* – and also; *te iṣave* – unto your arrow; *namaḥ* – salutation; - *te* – to you; *astu* – let it be; *dhanvane* – unto the bow; *bāhubhyām* – for both hands (holding the bow and arrow); *uta* – and also; *te* – to you; *namaḥ* – salutation.

O Lord Rudra! Salutations to you, to your anger and also to your arrow. Salutations to (your) bow and also to both your hands (holding the bow and arrow). Salutations to you (again).

This is the first *mantra* of the *Rudrādhyāya*. Īśvara, the Lord, is visualised for *upāsanā* as one who has bow and arrow in his hands. As Rudra, his anger, his bow and arrows, are all saluted. The *jīva*, who is aware of his or her omissions and commissions looks upon the Lord as a chastiser, being the giver of the fruits of actions, *karma-phala-dātā*. Even though the Lord, as the giver of the fruits of actions, is viewed as a source of all-knowledge, wealth, progeny, intelligence, memory, brilliance and so on, the prayer is for grace which will neutralise the ordained undesirable results for one's own omissions and commissions.

One sows the *karma-bīja*, seed of action, and reaps its fruits. The *pāpa* can express at the level of the body, or through tragedies around, making one's life sad. It can even stand against one's spiritual pursuit. *Karma phala* being *avaśyam bhāvi*, a happening with certainty, one has to go through the *bhoga*, experience.

Namaskāra, salutation, can be physical or even vocal. Both are *kriyā*. For this *kriyā*, the result is neutralisation of the *pāpa*. The Lord then appears as *saumya-mūrti*, benevolent form. That is how one wishes to relate to Īśvara. Even though he is relentless, one would like a form in which he is a blessing to the person. The angry form, by prayer, is transformed into one of blessing. Thus, *manyave namaḥ*, unto the one who has *manyu*, anger, my salutation. The Lord is as though angry because his laws give me unpleasant results too. They seem to come from an angry person, even though they are results of my past actions. Suppose he is subject to anger then he is bound to have an unconscious with core issues! O Rudra! May this act of salutation produce the desired result! *Namaḥ manyave*, for your anger one more salutation, unto your arrow my salutation. Unto the hands that use them, my salutation. Let these arrows and bow become a blessing for me. May you be my protector, *rakṣaka*!

Rudra can be a *bādhaka*, punisher or a *rakṣaka*, protector and therefore, the *āyudhās* are for both. The same Rudra who was a punisher is now going to be a protector. In this *mantra*, the Lord appears as if he is going to get me. So I first surrender to him;. In the *Mahābhārata*, when Aśvatthāma sent the Nārayanāstra to destroy the Pāṇḍavās, Pāṇḍavās bowed down; the act being one of surrender without opposing it, they were not harmed by the *astra*, missile.

Furthermore, I also offer my salutation to the hands that send the arrows, since they have *karma phala dātṛtva*. They are the hands that shape the results in accordance with the laws. But I cannot handle these results. Because of my salutation to the hands, the bow and the arrows of the Lord, they become protective.

To be continued..