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We Dedicate this Sacred Treasure at the holy lotus feet of

Sriranga Mahaguru and SriMata

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अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ	ऌ	ॡ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अः
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛ	ṝ	ḷ	ḹ	e	ai	o	au	am	ah
क	ख	ख	ग	ङ											
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa											
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ											
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña											
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण											
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa											
त	थ	द	ध	न											
ta	tha	da	dha	na											
प	फ	ब	भ	म											
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma											
य	र	ल	व	श	ष	स	ह								
ya	ra	la	va	śa	sha	sa	ha								

Example:

क	का	कि	की	कु	कू	कृ	कृ	क्लृ	के	कै	को	कौ	कं	कः
ka	kā	ki	kī	ku	kū	kṛ	kṛ	klṛ	ke	kai	ko	kau	kam	kah



Kṛttikā Dīpotsava (Śivadīpa Vishṇudīpa Mahotsavas)

1. Names of the *parvas*

We see many *Dīpotsava parvas* in the line of festivals of *Bhāratīyas* where rows of lamps are lighted in temples, homes, *maṭhas*, *Āśramas* and *Mandirs*, both inside and outside those places. The most famous *parvas* among these are the *Vishṇu dīpa* and *Śiva dīpa* (*Mahotsavas*).

These two fall either on the same day or one of them comes on the next day of the other, and thus they declare the deep relationship of *Śiva* and *Vishṇu*, to the sentimental devotees. These are also called by the name *laksha dīpotsava* in the temples. The *laksha dīpotsavas* of *Śiva* and *Vishṇu* and their *parivāra devatās* are observed on the full moon day of *kārtika māsa*, or *Kṛṣṇa caturdaśī* or on the day of *amāvāsyā tithi* of

kārtika māsa. However in most of the places, these *Śiva-Vishṇu Dīpotsavas* are celebrated only in the *vṛścika māsa* of the solar calendar. Though these festivals happen to fall some times in *kārtika māsa* and at other times in *mārgaśīra māsa* as per the lunar calendar, they are celebrated only in the month which is called '*kārtikai māsam*' in the Tamil country as per the solar calendar, and importance is given to *kṛttikā Nakshatra* also in the observance of this festival. Therefore these *Śiva-Vishṇu Dīpotsavas* are also called '*kṛttikā dīpotsava*' or '*tirukkārtikai*'.

2. The Day and Time of observance.

Though it is stipulated to be observed in the month of *Vṛścika*, the special day and time at which is should be observed in that month, needs to be known by discussion.

Śiva Dīpotsava should be observed in the month of *Vṛścika* on the day when there is the presence of *kṛttikā Nakshatra*. If it happens to be on a Monday, it is auspicious. It is best if there are no *doshas* such as eclipse or *saṅkramaṇa*. The worship with lighting of lamps is done in the evening or at night. The following facts are to be noted regarding the day and time of observance of *Vishṇu Dīpotsava*.

(1) The day of *Pūrṇimā* in the month of *Vṛścika* is important. It is auspicious if *kṛttikā Nakshatra* also happens to be there on that day. It is better if there is no *vedha* of *caturdaśī* and star *bharaṇi*, and the *yoga* of Tuesday. And the general rule is that the day should be free from *doshas* of *saṅkramaṇa* and eclipse. The festival worship should be done in *vṛshabha lagna*.

(2) Even if it is *śuddha Pūrṇimā* it should be given up, if there is *vedha* of star *bharaṇi*, and the festival should be observed on the following day (i.e. in *Prathamā*) when the *yoga* of *kṛttikā Nakshatra* prevails even to the extent of one *kalā*.

(3) Similarly, if there is *vedha* of *Caturdaśī* on the day of *Pūrṇimā*, it should be given up even if there the *yoga* of pure *Kṛttikā Nakshatra*, and it should be observed on the following day only, when the *yoga* of *Pūrṇimā* prevails even to the extent of one *kalā*.

(4) If, on the previous or the next day, there happens to be the *vedha* of *bharaṇi Nakshatra* on *kṛttikā* star, and the *vedha* of *caturdaśī* on *Pūrṇimā* respectively, then the festival should be celebrated either at the end of that month or in the beginning of the next month, when a *kalā* of pure *kṛttikā Nakshatra* or pure *Pūrṇimā* prevails.

5) If either pure (*Pūrṇimā*) or *kṛttikā* star do not prevail in the previous day and the next day, then the festival should be observed on (*Pūrṇimā* itself) inspite of the *Vedha*.

6) Similarly, if there is the *dosha* of eclipse or *saṅkramaṇa*, the festival should not be observed on those days. It should be observed on a blemishless day, either at the beginning or that end of the month.

7) If an auspicious day is available in both the beginning of the month and at the end of the month, the festival should be observed on the latter day itself, as per the rule "*uttare deva kāryāṇi*".

8) If both the days have *saṅkramaṇa* or other *doshas*, the festival should be celebrated on the day which has *kṛttikā nakshatra* conjoined with *sampūrṇaPūrṇimā parva*

9) Even if the day does not have the *yoga* of *sampūrṇa Pūrṇimā tithi*, the *parva* should be observed on the latter day.

10) If, either the previous day or the following day of the festival happens to be a Tuesday, or if the beginning or the end of the month happens to be a Tuesday, then such days should be given up, and the festival should be observed on some other day which is pure.

11) If no other auspicious day is available, then it should be observed on the pure Tuesday itself.

12) Among the two days i.e. the day with *Vedha* and the day with *dosha* of *saṅkramaṇa* and eclipse, the second one is better than the first. *Sanḥkramaṇa doshas* are taken into consideration only if they prevail during the day time or before midnight in the night.

13) The *doshas* of eclipse and *saṅkramaṇas* are not taken into consideration if they prevail after midnight.

14) If pure *Pūrṇimā* occurs on either the beginning day or the ending day of the month and happens to be united with *Rohiṇi Nakshatra*, and, if *prathamā* is united with (pure) *kṛttikā Nakshatra*, then the festival should be observed on the latter day. But if eclipse, and/or *saṅkramaṇa* occur on that day, then the observance of the festival shall be on the former day only.

15) If on account of the extension of *Pūrṇimā tithi* and the *kṛttikā* star, the *yoga* of those two i.e. the pure *tithi* and *Nakshatra* extends from the previous day to a small extent on the following day, then the day of celebration shall be on that day, when the duration of *kṛttikā* star is more.

16) If that *yoga* happens to be equal on both the days, or, less on one day, then the festival should be observed on the previous day itself.

1. The festival of lights should be celebrated on the day of *Dīpotsava* during the time between 48 minutes to sunset (one *muhūrta*) and one half of a *yāma* (ninety minutes) after sunset. 2. As the *vrishabha lagna* is prescribed for the time of observance of festival, *Dīpotsava* should be observed after sunset on the beginning day of the month. If the festival day is in the middle of the month or at the end of the month, the festival should be observed before sunset. If the festival is to be observed like this before sunset, *sandhyāvandana* etc should be done after sunset. But if the festival of lights is to be observed after sunset, *sandhyāvandana* should be finished before sunset.

3. The method of observation of the festival:

Though *Dīpotsava* is celebrated either in the evening or at night, the whole day is indeed a festival day. On that day, God should be worshipped specially with purity and abundance of the *trikaraṇas* and materials, and the worship should be conducted in the afternoon also. If there is a shortage of materials externally speaking, the abundance of

the proper *manodharma* will make up for the shortage.

There is also a custom among some people, where women worship ‘*Gajalakshmi*’ at an auspicious time either early in the morning or in the afternoon. Worship is performed to the idol of an elephant made of either clay or gold, silver and other metals, with *dīpa*, *dhūpa* and the *naivedya* of rice, jaggery, *dūrvā* grass, and *ārati*. After offering worship to the invoked deity in the idol of the elephant on the day of festival, the next day at morning and night, and the following day in the morning, the idol of the elephant in clay is given a send off on the afternoon of the last day by bidding good bye with devotion and faith in some garden, with the sentiment “शोभनार्थं पुनरागमनाय च” (“O great Mother, auspicious form, please arrive again for the worship of the next year”). All the family members, relatives and friends join together and partake the *prasāda* of various cooked rice items mixed with different ingredients which have been offered as *naivedya* to God. If the third day happens to be a Tuesday or a Friday, then the send off worship is performed on Wednesday or Saturday. (Some people perform the special worship of ‘*mahālakshmi*’ on Thursdays and the worship of ‘*gajagauri*’ on *ashṭami tithi* of the dark half of *bhādrapada*).

Special *dīpārādhana* is offered of God in the

evenings and nights, in temples, homes, *maṭhas* and *āśramas*.

Rows of lamps are lighted, beginning from the *pūja* room in many places, ie both inside and outside the house, on thresholds, on the upper and lower levels of the house, on walls and on the top of the wells and niches in the walls. And lamps are lighted the following day on the top of a heap of dirt also. (Tamils call this day “*Kuppai kārtikai*”). We see the custom of chanting *Sahasranāma* of God and preparing wick lamps simultaneously, and lighting them in a row, especially in the temples in Kerala.

After having a bath in the evening and entering the *pūja* room, and making a *saṅkalpa* that worship of God which is a part of *Dīpotsava* shall be done, and after the service of *Dhūpa* and *dīpa*, special *naivedya* of puffed rice, flattened rice etc should be offered. A lamp should be lighted from the lighted lamp in the *pūja* room, and from that other lamps should be lighted in a row. The *Mahānirājana* should be performed to God with different *dīpa pātras* such as *Ekārathi*, *Pañcārati*, *Pañcāśadārati*, *Catushtasṭyārati*, *Cakrārati*, and *Kumbhārathi* etc, chanting *Rudrasūkta*, *rudragāyatri*, *Vishṇusūkta* and *Vishṇu Gāyatri* etc related to the respective deities. There is a custom of chanting the following *mantra* from

‘*nakshatreshṭi*’ related to ‘*Agni Devatā*’ at the time of *Mahāmaṅgalārati*

अग्निर्नः पातु कृत्तिकाः । नक्षत्रं देवमिन्द्रियम् । इदमासां विचक्षणम् ।
हविरासञ्जुहोतन । यस्य भान्ति रश्मयो यस्य केतवः । यस्येमा विश्वा भुवनानि सर्वा
। स कृत्तिकाभिरभिसंवसानः । अग्निर्नो देवस्सविते दधातु ॥

After the offering of *mahā maṅgalārati* with the chanting of this *mantra* which sings the praise of *Agnideva* who is the reigning deity of *kṛttikā Nakshatra*, and also the praise of the *paramātman* who is the form of effulgent light, who is *antaryāmī* in *Agni*, and who exists within the *agnimaṇḍala* and who is referred to as *Agni*, one more special rite is observed in temples on that day. The rite is - A piece of white cloth is soaked in ghee and wrapped around the end of a (wooden) stick and lighted from the burning flame of either the *Nīrājana* or the fire from the burning flame of the lamp lighted in front of God, and is burnt. Its *masi* (ash-soot) considered as a *Rakshā* is first applied to the forehead of God, and then its *Prasāda* is taken by all the devotees and is applied to their foreheads.

4. The significance of the time of observance:-

As we have noted before, *kṛttikā dīpotsava* (*Śiva dīpa* and *Vishṇu dīpa* festivals) come in the month of *Kārtika* or *mārgaśira*. Both these months are best for the development of divine

knowledge and accomplishment of auspiciousness. “कार्तिके ज्ञानवृद्धिस्स्यात् मार्गशीर्षे शुभोदयः.” Among these two, the month of *kārtika* is a very dear month to Lord *Śiva*, the one who grants divine knowledge, as is evident from “ज्ञानं महेश्वरादिच्छेत्”. We have already described in the chapter on the festivals of the month of *Kārtika*, that Mondays of the *kārtika māsa* are very best for the worship of *Śiva*. So, there is no doubt that a Monday occurring in *Kārtika* is best for the observance of *Śiva dīpa Utsava*. This period of time is called the time of *Jnānavṛddhi*, and the time dear to *Mahādeva* the dispenser of divine knowledge, as it is conducive to the blossoming of the centers of *Ātmajñāna* by the grace of Mother Nature. As evident from the words “ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते” declared in the *Gīta*, even though it is a month dear to *Nārāyaṇa* the dispenser of (divine) knowledge, it is most dear to Lord *Śiva* also. (The *śrāvaṇa māsa* is exceptionally dear to Lord *Vishṇu*).

Śrī Kṛshṇa paramātma himself has proclaimed the glory of *mārgaśiramāsa*. “*māsanām mārgaśīrshoham*.” He has declared that it is his superior most glory.

1) The *śāstras* say " This is a part of the time that comes in between the *dakṣiṇāyana* which is the night of the *devatās* and *uttarāyana* which is the day of *devatās*, and being in the

‘*brāhmīmuḥūrta*’ it happens to be a limb of time which is *sattvonmeshaka*. It is also the of meeting time of the *devatās* and the *pitṛs*. One should be awake and do meditation and worship of God".

ब्राह्मे मुहूर्ते देवानां पितॄणां च समागमः ।

जागरस्तत्र कर्तव्यो देवसंमाननं हि तत् ॥

Just as *devatās* are pleased with worship during this period of time, the *pitṛs* also are pleased by the performance of the *navāgrayaṇa* worship.

2) This is the period of time abundant with cow’s milk and rich with flush vegetation and others and is highly conducive to both the inner path and the outer path to God.

3) There is no doubt in the fact that the new year would start from *Mārgaśīrshā* itself, which is evident from the words

“आदाय मार्गशीर्षादि द्वौ द्वौ मासौ ऋतुर्मतः” (कात्यायन)
“मार्गादीनां युगैः क्रमात्”, (*amarakosha*),— as quoted by elders.

3) The *Pūrṇimā* of this month during which the star ‘*mṛgaśīrsha*’ which is called the *yajñaśīras* is near the full moon, is indeed most auspicious for the worship of *Nārāyaṇa Parañjyoti* who is *Yajnarūpi* and the dispenser of the fruits of *Yajnas*.

Paramātma is *Parañjyotisvarūpa*. By lighting the lamp which represents HIM, the *Sanātana Ārya Maharshis* who had the divine sentiment of lighting

the entire world, brought forth an auspicious tradition to the world, where, from the lamp that was lighted first, they have lighted other lamps which represent the fourteen *vidyās* and the sixty four arts. It is indeed natural that they celebrated this great festival where a thousands of lamps are lighted. This *parañjyoti* is renowned as *Nārāyaṇa* in the *Vedas*.

“नारायण परोज्योतिरात्मा नारायणः परः

स हि देवः परं ज्योतिः तमसः परमुच्यते”

This saying praises *Śiva* as the *Parañjyoti*.

As evident from the words

हृदयकमलमध्ये दीपवद्वेदसारम्

हरिगुरुशिवयोगं सर्वभूतस्थमेकम्,

the origin of both *Nārāyaṇa* and *SadāŚiva*, is from the form of *parañjyothi* only, (and so), it is proper indeed to worship both of them by the names *Śiva dīpa* and *Vishṇu dīpa* during these months, which encourages the urge for divine knowledge. The worship of both of them on the same day or the next day, proclaims their unique relationship. *kṛttikā nakshatra* is also best for the worship of Lord *Kārtikeya*.

Why should a lighted lamp be placed on the heap of garbage? The answer is, the whole universe is filled with the effulgence of *Nārāyaṇa* and the same light is shining behind the heap of garbage

also. This custom reminds the *tattva* “नारायण एवेदं सर्वम्”

(5) Why do they worship ‘Gajalakshmi’?

The tradition of women worshipping the idol of an elephant on the morning of *Vishṇu dīpotsava* has been mentioned earlier. "Why should the idol of an elephant be worshipped? Instead, giving rice, jaggery and coconut to a live elephant makes it and happy, and it may even serve us. Why should the clay idol of it be worshipped? Perhaps long ago people were very much troubled by the elephants. So, the custom arose from a blind faith that by worshipping its earthen image, they may escape from their menace."—This is the guess of some. Even though this guesswork appears correct superficially, in reality it is not correct. This custom of worship was brought by *Yogis* who were *jnānis*. They call that elephant by the name ‘Gajalakshmi’. And some say—"Like *Dhanalakshmi*, *Dhānyalakshmi* and *Ashṭalakshmi*, elephants are also a wealth that are useful for the worldly life. So *Gajalakshmi* means the wealth of elephants, and a large number of superior elephants". But comment also is not correct. Because not everyone will have the capacity to get elephants and bring them up and obtain service from them. It is

difficult even for the kings. So, how can it be possible for ordinary people then? *Yogis* visualise elephants in the inner spiritual center of the body called ‘gajakundā’. Not only this. *Yogasādhakas* visualize the divine elephants in the retinue of *Śrīdevi* which they behold just before the attainment of the divine ambrosia, in their *Dhyānamanthana* for the attainment of *Brahmānanda*. As they are great powers that carry (bear) the universe on their backs, they are called ‘*Diggajas*’ by the sages, in the wordly language. (In reality, if the earth is dug no such elephants can be found. One should not be deluded by interpreting things pertaining to the inner vision of the sages in the physical plane.) *Purāṇās* and *Śrī Sūktis* of the *ācāryas* proclaim that these divine great elephants perform the *Divyānandāmṛta*—*Abhisheka* to the *Jaganmāta*.

दिग्गजा हेमपात्रस्थमादाय विमलं जलम् ।

स्नापयाञ्चक्रिरे देवीं सर्वलोकमहेश्वरीम् ॥

(विष्णुपुराण 19-103)

पुष्पासारस्थगितभुवनैः पुष्कलावर्तकाद्यैः

क्लृप्तारम्भाः कनककलशैरभ्यषिञ्चन् गजेन्द्राः

(श्रीवेदान्तदेशिक-श्रीस्तुति, श्लोक 13)

These elephants are divine powers that belong to the retinue of *Lakshmiḍevī* and are *amśas* of *Lakshmi*. They are *Tattva Viśeshās*. *Yogis* visualize them in the form of divine elephants. They are also

called '*Lakshmi*', as they are divine *amśas* of *Lakshmi devī*. One should clearly understand that their worship is a part of the worship of *Lakshmi* herself.

In Sanskrit language an elephant is also called "*Sāmaja*" (born of *Sāma Veda*)

हस्ताभ्यां परिगृह्णाथ सप्त सामान्यगायत ।

गायतो ब्रह्मणस्तस्मात् समुत्पेतुर्मतङ्गजाः (पालकाख्य)

These divine elephants emerged when *Prajāpati Brahmadeva* sang the *sapta sāmās*. The elephants seen in the external world have some similarities in shape with those of the divine elephants visualized by *jnānis*, and so the elephants came to be called '*sāmaja*' in the wordly parlance. There is similarity in the shape of the divine elephants with the elephants seen in the external world. Also, when the external elephants trumpet, the roar will be in harmony with the *Nishāḍa Śruti* of the *Sāmaveda*.

Though women worship the clay idol of an external elephant, the objective of that worship is the divine elephants i.e. the *sāmajas*, which are *amśas* of *Mahālakshmi*. It is not the worship of a mere elephant; It is the worship of *Gajalakshmi*. For example, the salutation to the Indian flag is not a salutation to the cloth. It is the salutation to the goddess of the nation indicated by the cloth. The

worship of the idol of *Gajalakshmi* at distinct times will help in the inner vision of *Gajalakshmi* (*tāttvika Gajalakshmi*) and *Mahālakshmi*, the proprietress of those *Gajalakshmis*.

One should not make a narrow minded criticism such as—"This worship of *Gajalakshmi* is of recent origin. It belongs only to a certain tradition." In the *purāṇas* we come across the story that queen *Gāndhari* worshipped a clay idol of *Gajalakshmi*. But *Kuntī devī* had the good fortune of worshipping *Airāvata* itself by making it descend from the heavens, which became possible by the valour and devotion to God of her great sons *Bhīma* and *Arjuna*. Worshipping of *Gajarāja* is also there and there is worship to *Gajalakshmi* also, who is the form of his feminine *śakti*.

Since there exists a sentiment that the idols of elephants which are worshipped are the form of *Lakshmi*, their *Visarjana* is not done on Tuesdays and Fridays. Isn't it that the female members of the family are not sent (to another place) on those days? Then how can it be acceptable to perform the send off of *Gajalakshmi* on those days?

4) Why should a cloth be burnt on the *Dīpotsava* at night?

We have discerned earlier that the religious rite of soaking a piece of cloth in ghee and burning it

is a part of the worship of the *Dīpotsava* of the night. What is the spirit behind this ?

Some may ask-"can't that piece of cloth be given to the poor instead of burning like that? Instead of wasting so much ghee for soaking the cloth, can't it not be used as food? Can't it be given to the poor"? It is really appreciable if they have a genuine concern in gifting cloth and ghee to the poor. It would indeed be a matter of great happiness, if they give such great gifts to the deserving persons and also inspire others for doing the same.

But, the problem of the poor in the world will not be solved (just by saving) a piece of cloth and a small (measure) of ghee. Instead, it will be commendable to think of religious and monetary schemes to provide solution to that problem.

According to tradition, the burning of a piece of cloth in the above ritual is symbolic of the destruction of *tripurāsura* by Lord *Śiva* for the welfare of the world, and, it is good if the cloth has three colors viz. black, red and white. It has been described in scriptures that *Tripurāsuras* are the embodiments of *triguṇas-tamas, rajas* and *sattva*, from the *tāttvik* point of view. The *tamas, rajas* and *sattva* (*guṇas*) are associated with the colors of black, red and white respectively. These are three cities which are always in

constant motion. These are the three *guṇas* which always roam in the *samsāra* and make (other beings also) to roam without peace or refuge.

In the worldly life these three (*guṇas*) will never come to harmony. But when a *mahāyogi* achieves the harmony of those during *Samādhi*, they perish. All the *purāṇas* describe the (*tāttvika*) story that the great Lord of *yoga*, *Mahādeva SadāŚiva*, who is beyond the three *guṇas* attained that state and destroyed the three cities. The above ritual of burning the cloth is a delightful way to proclaim this divine *tattva* to the world. As God burnt the three demons of the three *guṇas*, the *śeṣha prasāda* (remains of the sacred ash as consecrated *prasāda*) is a protection to the world. So, wearing the mark of that as *prasāda* first, is indeed most proper.

The *Śivapurāṇa* describes the chariot and other materials used in that destruction of the three demons as follows- The divine chariot which was mounted by *Śiva*, was full of all the *devatās*. It was constructed for the (welfare) of the world.

सर्वदेवमयं दिव्यं रथं परमशोभनम् ।

रचयामास विश्वार्थे विश्वकर्मा तदास्थया ॥

It is a divine chariot consisting of all the worlds and all the creatures. It's right wheel is the sun, and

the moon is the left wheel. The twelve spokes of the right wheel are the twelve *ādityas*. The sixteen spokes of the left wheel are the sixteen *kalās* of the moon. The twenty seven stars are the embellishments of that wheel. The six seasons are the rims of the two wheels. The sky is the blade of the sword and the *mandara* mountain is its shed. The year is its speed. The *uttarāyaṇa* and *dakṣiṇāyaṇa* are the meeting place of the two wheels. The *muhūrta* is the pole or the shaft of the chariot. The *kalās* are the stakes or pointed wooden pegs of the yoke. The subtle divisions of time like *kalā* and *kāshṭhā* are the nose of the chariot. *Ahaṅkāra* is the corners of the chariot. *Bhūtas* form its strength. The senses are the embellishments of the chariot. The fourteen places of knowledge (*vidyā sthānas*) and the rules of observances are the ornaments of the chariot. The *Gaṅgā* and other sacred rivers served the Lord of the chariot by fanning with *cāmaras*. Goddess *Sarasvati* was the bell of the bow. *Ādiśeṣa* was the ropes of the chariot. Lord *Vishṇu*, was the arrow of the bow. *Agni* was the sharp tip of the arrow. The four *Vedas* were the horses of the chariot. *Brahma deva* was the charioteer. Whatever was present in the cosmos was there in that chariot. (*Śiva purāṇa Rudra samhitā*, 8 th chapter). Who else can the *tripurāsūras* be other than the three

guṇas, who were slain by *Maheśvara* the *mahāttvasārvabhauma*, sitting in this chariot which was *tattvamaya*?

सर्वलोकमयो दिव्यो रथो यत्नेन सादरम् ।

सर्वभूतमयश्चैव सौवर्णस्सर्वसम्पतः ॥

रथाङ्गं दक्षिणं सूर्यस्तद्वामं सोम एव च।

अरेषु तेषु विप्रेन्द्र आदित्या द्वादशैव तु ॥

शशिन्धोडशारास्तु कला वामस्य सुव्रत।

यक्षाणि तु तथा तस्य वामस्यैव विभूषणम् ॥

वेगस्संवत्सरास्तस्य अयने चक्रसङ्गमौ ।

मुहूर्ता बन्धुरास्तस्य शम्याश्चैव कलाः स्मृताः ॥

इन्द्रियाणि च तस्यैव भूषणानि समेततः ॥

पुराणन्यायमीमांसाधर्मशास्त्राणि सुव्रताः॥

अधोबन्धो ह्यनन्तस्तु सहस्रफणभूषितः ।

गङ्गाद्यास्सरितः श्रेष्ठाः सर्वाभरणभूषिताः ॥

चामरासक्तहस्तास्ताः सर्वाः स्त्रीरूपशोभिताः ।

सारथिर्भगवान् ब्रह्मा देवा रश्मिधराः स्मृताः ॥

घण्टा सरस्वती देवी धनुषः श्रुतिरूपिणी ॥

इषुर्विष्णुर्महातेजाः अग्निश्शल्यं प्रकीर्तितम् ॥

हयास्तस्य तथा प्रोक्ताः चत्वारो निगमा मुने ।

ब्रह्माण्डे चैव यत्किञ्चित् वस्तु तद्वै रथे स्मृतम् ॥

Thus, the custom of burning the tricolored cloth and wearing its sacred ash over the forehead to remind oneself of the divine story of Lord *Mahādeva*, who, sitting in the divine chariot along with the

divine paraphernalia killed the *tripurāsuras* representing the *triguṇas*, is indeed a highly influential custom. It is appropriate for this custom to be performed on *Śiva Dīpotsava*, because *Śiva* is famously known as the slayer of the three cities. But the question raises as to why should this practice be observed during the *Vishṇu dīpotsava*? But if one studies the story of the *purāṇas* in full, the necessity of observing it on *Vishṇu dīpa pūja* also becomes clear. Because Lord *Vishṇu* has an important place in the *Tripurasamhāra* with that of *Śiva* also. *Śiva* destroyed the three demons (cities) by the weapon called *Nārāyaṇa* “नारायणेनास्त्रिणे” “स आशुगो विष्णुमयो वह्नितुल्यो महाज्वलन् । ददाह त्रिपुरान्तस्थान्... ॥” It was *Vishṇu* in the form of a great bull, who held (firm) the divine chariot that was sinking.

वृषेन्द्ररूपी चोत्थाय स्थापयामास वै क्षणम् ।

स्थापयामास देवस्य वचनाद्वै रथं वरम् ॥ (शिव-रुद्रसं 9-10)

Even though the *asuras* were killed in the battle, they were taking birth again and again by the touch of the *ambrosia* which was in the well of *Amṛtarasa*. Lord *MahāVishṇu* assumed the form of a cow and drank all the ambrosia in the well. Then it became impossible for the demons to regain their lives.

तदायं भगवान् विष्णुः तत्रोपायमकल्पयत् ।

प्रविश्य त्रिपुरं काले रसकूपामृतं पपौ ॥ (भागवत 7-10-62)

Thus, it is indeed proper to observe the ritual of the burning of the cloth which represents the *Tripuradahana* in *Vishṇu Dīpotsava*, as *Vishṇu* the god beyond the *triguṇas* also had a main role in the sport of *tripurasamhāra*, where (the *tripuras*) symbolize the three *guṇas*.

Thus, the *kṛttikā dīpotsava* which is a form of *Dīpotsava* of *Śiva* and *Vishṇu*, is the glorious form of the great worship of (*paramātmā*), who is the origin of all *jyotis*, the whole and soul of the all containing and omnipresent, as said in *ज्योतिषामपि तज्जोतिः*. While the morning *pūja* is the worship of the glory of *Śrīmahalakshmi* the divine consort of *parabrahma*, the evening and night worship prides itself in the form of a great festival which brings out the grandeur of the supreme *Purusha*.

