CHAPTER V

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The foregoing study of the IS. shows what important position the IS. occupies in the Tantric literature. The reasons why the IS. is considered to be the best Sahasranāma among other important Sakti Sahasranāmas are as follows:

The thousand names of the Goddess Lalitā do not have singular meaning but most of them have many different multiple meanings. They are manipulated in a skilful manner as to include many other meanings such as those of cakra, mantra, yoga and also many a time of the rituals. Again, the secret aspects of the mantras are also revealed in the thousand names and that is why they are called 'rahasyanāmas'. Thus they are pregnant with the mystic powers. Hence each name of the thousand names can independently be a mantra.

Further, as the epilogue stanzas of the IS. state, the IS. has its divine origin. Unlike the other Sahasranāmas it is composed by the authoresses Vasini and others by the grace of the Goddess Lalitā, who are the goddesses of speech. Many of the thousand names describe the Śrīcakra in detail, which is considered to be the 'Vāsanā' body (Paraform) i.e. original form of the Goddess Lalitā.

Again, in other Sahasranāmas many redundant words or particles such as 'eva, ca' etc. are found. But in the IS. there is not a single letter which can be counted as futile. Again in
other Sahasranāmas many names are repeated twice, thrice or
four times and though they are interpreted to give different
meanings by the commentators and by erudite scholars. Yet the
fault of repetition is quite visible. The IS. is free from
all such blames as each one of the thousand names has its
special importance from the various points of view of Tantra,
Yoga, rituals and others.

Above all, the IS. also implies the philosophical wisdom.
As it has been discussed in the foregoing chapters, the IS. is
not only an eulogy but the unique treatise as it summarises
the fundamental tenets of the Tantrashastra as well as the
various aspects of the Mother Goddess in which She is identified
either with Nirguna Brahman, or Saguna Brahman or Kundalinī
or with primordial energy (Prakṛti). In this way it implies
the philosophical wisdom.

Hence the importance of its study for the proper grasp
of the fundamentals of Śaṅkta philosophy and spiritual advancement
of a follower can hardly be over estimated.

Further, the IS. has its importance for its lucidity,
clarity and poetic excellences. The verses in the IS. have one
common metre viz. Anuṣṭup like the Purāṇas. The IS. has its own
charm as far as the imaginaries are concerned. The names
describing the physical beauty of the Goddess Lalitā, are
enriched with the striking Similes and Metaphors e.g.
'Mukhacandrakalākabhamgaṇābhivisesākā'. This is an instance
of one of the varieties of Metaphor viz. Paramaparita Rūpaka
(The consequential Metaphor). In present instance the
superimposition of a spot (in the moon) upon the 'Tilak' mark. Also an excellent instance of same imagery is 'Vadanasmarmāṅga-\textit{lyagrhotarānacillīkā}'. Here the face of the Goddess is the auspicious abode of the love-god and Her well-shaped eye-brows are the gate-arches of that palatial abode. The author has frequently used such metaphors and similes during the physical description of the Goddess. Again, in the description of the Kundalinī excellent and befitting similies have been used to show delicacy and brilliance of it. To show delicacy of the Kundalinī it is compared with the fibre of the lotustalk (\textit{bisātāntutānīyāsī}). Again in 'tadīlattāsamarucīh' it is compared with the brightness of lighting. The striking Consequential Metaphors are again found in the names from 742 to 749. The ('Parivṛtiḥ' is found only once under the topic of physical description in the name 'Kāmesvarapremaratnāmanipratipanastānī'. Here Her breast is described as a stake offered in exchange for the love-gem of Kāmesvara. Some other imaginaries like Kāvyaliṅga, Atiśayokti, etc., are found twice or thrice. Thus, mainly the description of the physical beauty of Lalitā and some other topics described above are aptly followed by long and ornate Metaphors.

Again, the alliterations and the repetitive expressions employed in the IS. are in consonance with the rhythm of a verse and therefore embellish the language. The rhythm created by the repetition of some syllable breaks the monotony of a verse and brings about a rhythmic appeal to the language and style. For example, the names beginning with the same syllable generally occur in a sequence just as:
There are many instances of such expression in the IS. Moreover, the arrangement of the names in this manner enhance the power of concentration of the repeator while reciting the IS.

Popularity of the IS.:

The IS. is very popular especially in South India (now a days it has become popular in Gujarat and Maharashtra also). Almost all the brahmins are initiated in this art of worshipping the Goddess Lalitā who is known as 'Sri'. The Goddess Lalitā is worshipped either on the idol or on the Śrīyantra. The different types of worship of the Śrīyantra by offering saffrom, different flowers and bilva leaves after reciting each name, are also very popular. Though in North India the worship of the Goddess Lalitā is not so popular yet at many centres in U.P., Bihar, Orissa and Kashmir there are many devotees who practise the worship as prescribed in the IS. After the most popular Viṣṇuṣahasranāma, the IS. stands second throughout India. In the Śakta worshippers, however, it stands unparalleled.

Commentaries on the IS.:

Numerous commentaries written on the IS. affirm its attractiveness and popularity. More than five commentaries are written on the IS.
(1) The first is by Nṛsiṁha⁴. But unfortunately it is not available. However Bh.Makhīndra states that he has availed himself of this commentary.

(2) The commentary by Saṅkarācārya⁵.

(3) The commentary called 'Saubhāgya-bhāskara' by Bhāskararāya.

(4) The commentary called 'Jayamaṅgala',⁶ by Nārāyan, the son of Venkaṭarāṇī.

(5) The commentary by Vimarsanānandanātha⁷ the pupil of Vimalānandanātha. It is a brief commentary. The MS was lately found in the conjeevaram and it was much injured by worms and was given to the Adyar Library.

(6) The commentary by Vidyāranya Maṇiśvara⁸. A complete copy of this work has not been secured yet.

(7) The commentary by Kalyānānanda Bhārti⁹.

Thus fairly good numbers of commentaries on such a small poem bespeaks its popularity.

In the end I would like to close this study with a prayer to the Goddess Lalitā to fulfill the desires of Her devotees like a devine tree as is promised by Her in the Is. itself.

I have tried to do justice to this poem with all my limitations. Whenever Gods cannot do full justice to this mystic poem it is beyond the ken of a mortal being. I would only say that I have praised the Goddess Lalitā with the powers given to me by Her.

“Iśvādiyāraṇīyābhisekāṇa Anjane māyām Śūnāntaṁ”¹¹
REFERENCES

1. Cf. Devināmasahasraṇī koṭīśaḥ santi kumbhaja tesu
   mukhyām dasavidhām nāmasahasramucyate /
   Rahasyanamasahasramidam sastāṃ dasasvapi //
   - IS. 303b, 304.

2. In the Viṣṇu-sahasranāma in 'pūtātmāparamātmā ca' and 'ksetra-
   jñōksara eva ca' we find the useless particles like eva, ca etc.

3. The anecdote mentioned in the appendix-III shows that Bhāskara-
   rāya was initiated in Śrīvidyā when he was mere a bay of
   seven years.


7. Vide Introduction, IS with Bh.'s commentary (Translation),
   Ananantakrishna Shastri.

8. Dr. P. G. Dalye, 'Some remarks on Bh.'s commentary on the IS.

   He refers to this commentary and says that "other commen-
   tors, especially Bhattacharṇya and Kalyanamand折 Bharati
   have given only the plain meanings, taking resort to etymology
   and semantics."