

॥ श्रीपंचरत्नम् - वरदराजस्तवः ॥

.. shrIpa.ncharatnam - varadarAjastavaH ..

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॥ अथ वरदराजस्तवः ॥

श्रीदेवराजमनिशं निगमान्तवेद्यं यज्ञेश्वरं विधि-महेन्द्र-हितैक-लक्ष्यम् ।
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कोलात्मकं कमठ-रूप-धरं च मत्स्यं वेतण्ड-शैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ५ ॥

VARADARAJA STOTRAM.

These five verses are in praise of Shri Varadaraja -
the presiding deity of the temple in Vishnu Kanchi in
Kanchipuram. The city of Kanchipuram, also known as Kanchi, is
an old historic city. It is mentioned in Puranas and literature
too. The Brahmanda Puranam compares the cities of Kasi and
Kanchi to the two eyes of Lord Shiva that can confer Lord's
blessings on the devotee.

नेत्र-द्वयं महेशस्य काशी-काञ्चीपुरद्वयम् ।
विखायातं वैष्णवं क्षेत्रं शिवसान्निध्य-कारकम् ॥

The Purana also makes a mention about Kamakoti .

श्रीकामगिरि-पीठं साक्षात् श्रीपुरमध्यमम् ।

Shrimad Bhagavatam also talks about Kanchi city. कामकोटिपुरी काञ्ची। (BG-10-79-14).

Kanchi is known as the city of temples. There are numerous
temples, but the most famous ones are those of Varadaraja,
Ekamreshwara and KamakShi.

Great devotees have lost themselves in the etherial beauty and qualities of Varadaraja and composed many paeans about Him. Vaishnavite saints known as Alwars have visited Kanchi and sung verses in praise of His enchanting form and qualities. The puranas say that the Creator Brahma himself came to earth and worshipped the Lord by performing a great sacrifice. Airavata, the divine elephant, is said to have worshipped Him and borne Him on his back. Today the temple of Shri Varadaraja is to be seen on a hillock in the shape of a kneeling elephant.

So, the hillock is called Hastigiri (हस्तिगिरि). Hasti means an elephant. Twenty four steps, representing the twenty four letters of the Gayatri mantra lead to the temple on the top of the mound. This signifies that the Lord is the true import of the Gayatri mantra. The next important temple is that of Siva. He is seated under a mango tree. So He is known as Ekamreshwara (एकाम्रेश्वरः।). Amra means a mango tree. There is a puranic story that says that Devi wanted to demonstrate the power of devotion (bhakti) to the Lord. She came down to the earth and worshipped Him under the mango tree. Near this temple is that of KamakShi. Shri Shankaracharys had established a Shreechakra in the temple. The records say that he spent his last days here and established a math here.

The Mookhapanchasati, a poem consisting of 500 verses sung in praise of KamakShi is a famous work. The verses are soaked in devotion and known for the literary merit. The temple is known as Kamakoti. There are many temples of Shiva around Kanchi. A significant fact is that none of these temples will have a shrine for Devi. KamakShi represents all of them. So, one is advised to worship KamakShi at Kamakoti and get fulfilment.

पीटेष्वष्टादशाशु महितं कामकोटि श्रयेथाः।

The city is mentioned as one of the seven cities where austerities

performed will lead to liberation. Thus it is renowned as a मोक्षपुरी।

अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी काञ्ची अवन्तिका।

पुरी द्वारवती चैव सप्तैता मोक्षदायकाः ॥

Kanchi was also a seat of higher learning in Sanskrit studies during the 4th and 5th centuries AD. So it was known as घटिका स्थलम् । Ghatika means a college where the vedas and the auxiliary sciences were taught in a systematic manner. Records show that some princes from neighbouring states studied here. Some princes from other states were also imported to teach some subjects. For all these reasons the city's fame has led to the saying नगरीषु काञ्ची। - that Kanchi is the pearl among the cities.

Among the numerous poems in praise of Lord Varadaraja three in Sanskrit are outstanding and popular. They are the Varadaraja stavam (having 102 verses) of Sri Srivatsankhamisra (also known as Kuresha), a prime disciple of Shri Ramanuja, Varadaraja panchashat (having 52 verses) of Shri Vedanta Deshika and the Varadaraja stavam (having 105 verses) by Shri Appayya Dikshita. They are renowned for the profusion of devotion and literary merit. And they are exegetic in their content. Shri Appayya Dikshita has himself provided a commentary in Sanskrit for his Varadaraja stavam. He quotes liberally from various scriptures to substantiate his statements.

In the stotram given here one may notice that the first letter in these five verses put together read as Sripancharatnam, (श्रीपञ्चरत्नम् ।), the name of the poem. The letter श्री is used as an honorific prefix to deities (श्री कृष्ण), distinguished persons (श्री व्यास) and great literary works (श्री भगवद्गीता) to indicate their glory. स्तवः means a hymn or stotra. A stotra narrates

the qualities. By chanting these stotras regularly one can free himself from sorrows. Bhishma says this in his introduction to Vishnusahasranamam. लोकाध्यक्षं स्तुवन्नित्यं सर्वदुःखातिगो भवेत्। Since the stotras are so potent they deserve the honorific prefix श्री Shri. The verses are given with the meaning. The meaning is not exact, but general enough to make one understand the purport.

The following abbreviations are used in the comments.

- 1- VS - Vishnusahasranama with the commentary of Shri Sankaracharya.
- 2 - BG - Srimad Bhagavad Gita with the commentary of Shri Sankaracharya.
- 3 - BH - Srimad Bhagavatam.

श्रीदेवराजमनिशं निगमान्तवेद्यं यज्ञेश्वरं विधि-महेन्द्र-हितैक-लक्ष्यम् ।
नव्याम्बुवाह-सुषमा-तनु-शोभमानं श्रीहस्तिशैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ १ ।

श्रीहस्तिशैलसदनम् = having Hastigiri as residence;
निगमान्तवेद्यम् = One who can be known with the help of the upanishads, the end portion of the vedas;
यज्ञेश्वरम् = One who is the Lord of sacrifices;
विधिमहेन्द्रहितैकलक्ष्यम् One who has the welfare of gods such as Brahma and Indra prominently in His mind;
नव्याम्बुवाहसुषमातनु- शोभमानम् = having a shining body resembling fresh water bearing cloud; श्रीदेवराजं
वरदम् = Shri Varadaraja also known as Shri Devaraja;
अनिशम् = always; प्रपद्ये = I surrender.

Meaning: I always surrender to Shri Varadaraja also known as Shri Devaraja, who has Hastigiri as His residence, who may be known with the help of the upanishads, One who is the Lord of sacrifices, One who has the welfare of gods such as Brahma and Indra prominently in His mind and Who has a body shining like a new water bearing cloud.

COMMENTS: निगमान्त-वेद्यम् = One who can be known with the help of the upanishads, the end portion of the vedas.

The Lord cannot be known with the equipments like sense organs that we have or the instruments like the microscope that extend the power of the organs. This is because of the fact that He is behind the organs. For example it is with His blessings that the eyes see, the ears hear etc. The Kena Upanishad says this clearly.

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद् वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।
चक्षुषश्चक्षुःरतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥ २ ॥

One has necessarily to depend on the vedas to know about Him.

Shri Krishna says this clearly वेदैश्च सर्वै-रहमेव

वेद्यः वेदान्तकृत् ॥ BG(15-15). He says that He is

to be known by all vedas. He is the author of the vedas

too. He has, out of immense mercy, made them available to us

to enable us to reach Him. यज्ञेश्वरम् = One who is the

Lord of sacrifices This is said as यज्ञपतिः, यज्ञानां

पाता, स्वामी वा यज्ञपतिः, अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता

प्रभुरेव च। (गीता ९।२४) इति भगवद्वचनात्। I

am the Enjoyer, as also the Lord of all sacrifices. says

BG(9-24). Also हुतभुक् = समस्तदेवतोद्देशेन

प्रवृत्तेष्वपि कर्मसु हुतं भुङ्क्ते इति हुतभुक्। =

He is the One who accepts the oblations offered in sacrifices

which may be meant for any deity. VS(871). देवराजं =

He is foremost among the celestials. He also rules over and

protects them, including Indra. देवेशः- प्राधान्येन

देवानामीशो देवेशः। देवान् विभर्तीति देवभृत् शक्रः,

तस्यापि शासितेति देवभृत्। VS(492,493) ..

वरदः = अभिमतान्वरान्ददातीति, वरं गां दक्षिणां

ददाति यजमानरूपेणोति वा वरदः, “गौर्वै वरः” इति

श्रुतेः। = giver of boons. Also means the one who, as the one who performs sacrifices, offers gifts. VS(330).

नव्याम्बुवाह-सुषमातनु-शोभमानम् = having a shining body reseembling fresh water bearing cloud. Why, one may ask, is His body having the colour of the water bearing cloud? Shri Appayya Dixitar gives an ingenious reason in his Shri Varadaraja stavam. (27).He says that the cloud is white. But when it is laden with water it turns black. So also, Shri Varadaraja, because of His sattvic nature (सत्वगुण) is really white- the colour of the moon as is said in the popular verse शुक्लांबरधरं विष्णुं शशिवर्णं चतुर्भुजम्।

Sattva guna is represented by white colour. But He is charged with (the water of) compassion and because of this He appears to have a dark complexion.

युक्त्यागमेन च भवाञ्शशिवर्ण एव
निष्कृष्टसत्वगुणमात्रविवर्तमूर्तिः।
धत्ते कृपाम्बु भरतस्त्वषमैन्द्रनीली
शुभ्रोऽपि साम्बुरसितः खलु दृश्यतेऽब्दः ॥

पंकेरुहासन-कृतामल-वाजियज्ञे वैतानके हुतभुजि त्वरयाऽऽविरासीत् ॥
मन्दस्मिताञ्चित-मुखेन वपां दशन् यस्तं नागशैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ २।

श्रीनागशैल-सदनम् = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri; पंकेरुहासन-कृतामल-वाजियज्ञे = in the sacred Aswamedha yagna performed by Brahma; वैतानके हुतभुजि = in the sacrificial fire; त्वरया = in a hurry - in order to bless the devotee; मन्दस्मिताञ्चित-मुखेन वपां दशन् = with a smiling face and biting the oblation offered in the sacrifice; आविरासीत् = appeared; तं वरदम् = that Shri Varada; प्रपद्ये = I surrender.

Meaning: I surrender to that Shri Varada who resides in

Hastigiri and who appeared in haste with a smile and biting the sacrificial oblation in the sacred Aswamedha sacrifice performed by Brahma.

COMMENTS; मन्दस्मिताञ्चित-मुखेन वपां दशन् = with a smiling face and biting the oblation offered in the sacrifice; Here, दशन् literally means biting. It should not be taken in this sense. As a parallel we may cite the following popular verse -BG(9-26);

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति।

तदहं भक्त्युपहृतं अश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥

In the second line the word अश्नामि literally means I eat.

Shri Shankaracharya takes the word to mean गृह्णामि - that is,

I accept with pleasure. The same meaning should be applied to the word दशन् - biting said above.

चण्डांशु-शीतकिरणायित-नेत्रयुग्मं पद्मा-निवास-रमणीय-भुजान्तरं तम् ।

आजानुबाहु-मुररीकृत-सप्ततन्तुं मातङ्ग-शैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ३ ॥

मातङ्ग-शैल-सदनम् = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri;

चण्डांशु-शीतकिरणायित-नेत्रयुग्मम् = who has the sun and the

moon as His two eyes; पद्मा-निवास-रमणीय-भुजान्तरम् = who has a

chest made beautiful by Shri Laxmi Devi residing there; आजानु-बाहुम् =

who has long arms that reach upto the knees; उररीकृत-सप्ततन्तुम्

= who accepted the sacrifice offered by Brahma; तं वरदम् that

Lord Varada; प्रपद्ये = to Him I surrender.

Meaning: I surrender to the Lord Varada who has His residence in Hastigiri, who has for His eyes the sun and the moon, whose chest is made beautiful by Shri Laxmi Devi's residence, whose long arms reach upto His knees and who gracefully accepted the Aswameda sacrifice offered by Brahma.

COMMENTS; पद्मा-निवास-रमणीय-भुजान्तरम् = who has

a chest made beautiful by Shri Laxmi Devi residing there;
Sri Vedanta Desika puts this beautifully in his Sri stuti (1)
as वक्षः पीठीं मधुविजयिनो भूषयन्तीं स्वकान्त्या।
= Shri Devi adorns the throne of the chest of Shri Vishnu by
Her radiance.

रत्नप्रकाण्डरचितं लसदूर्ध्वपुण्ड्रं विभ्राणमन्तकरिपुप्रियमित्रवर्यम् ।
शंखं च चक्रमभयाङ्कगदे दधानं नागेन्द्रशैलसदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ४ ॥

नागेन्द्र शैल-सदनम् = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri;
अन्तक-रिपु-प्रिय-मित्रवर्यम् = who is very dear to Lord Shiva -
the enemy of Yama; रत्नप्रकाण्डरचितं लसदूर्ध्वपुण्ड्रं विभ्राणम्
= who wears a mark made of precious diamonds on His forehead; शंखं
चक्रं अभयाङ्क-गदे च दधानम् = who is holding the conch,
discus, the mudra that assures protection; वरदम् = that Varada;
प्रपद्ये = I surrender.

Meaning ; I surrender to the Lord Varada who resides in
Hastagiri, who is very dear to Lord Shiva, who wears a mark
made of precious diamonds on His forehead and holds the conch,
discus and a mudra that assures freedom from fear.

COMMENTS; He assures freedom from fear. So He has the name
भयकृत् = भक्तानं भयं कृन्तति कृणोतीति भयकृत्। VS(833).
नन्दात्मजं हलधरं दशकण्ठकालं क्षत्रद्विषं बलिरिपुं नरसिंहवेषम् ।
कोलात्मकं कमठरूपधरं च मत्स्यं वेतण्डशैलसदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ५ ॥

वेतण्ड-शैल-सदनम् = The Lord who has His residence in
Hastigiri; मत्स्यं, कमठ-रूप-धरं, कोलात्मकं,
नरसिंह-वेषं, बलिरिपुं, क्षत्रद्विषं,
दशकण्ठ-कालं, हल-धरं, नन्दात्मजम् =
who incarnated as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana,
Parasurama, Rama, Balarama and Krishna for the benefit of all;
वरदम् = that Varada; प्रपद्ये = I surrender.

Meaning; I surrender to the Lord Varada who resides in Hastigiri and who incarnated as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Balarama and Krishna for the benefit of all.

COMMENTS; The Loord incarnated Himself from time to time for the welfare of all. So He has the name अनेकमूर्तिः =

अवतारेषु स्वेच्छया लोकानामुपकारिणीर्बह्वीर्मूर्तीर्भजत
इति अनेकमूर्तिः।(VS 721).

The Lord is called in these verses as Varada. But He is better known as Varadaraja - the king or foremost among those who grant boons; firstly, because He grants them in great abundance. Sri Vedana Desika alludes to the episode of Kuchela, and says that the poor Kuchela could give Krishna only a handful of flattened rice and in return the Lord made him rich as Kubera - the god of wealth. He asks that when such a generous Lord is available, why should I go after anyone else? I am determined to worship Him alone.

देवं सेवितुमेव निश्चिनुमहे योऽसौ दयालुः पुरा
धानामुष्टिमुचे कुचेलमुनये दत्ते स्म वित्तेशताम् ।

The reason why one should not serve or worship any other deity is given by Shri Krishna . People and various gods are not permanent. So, whatever favours or riches they give cannot also be permanent. They will be ephemeral only. But the Lord is unlike anyone else. He alone is eternal and can confer boons that give benefits that last for ever. अन्तवन्तु फलं

तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम्। देवान्देवयजो यान्ति मद्भक्ता

यान्ति मामपि। BG(7-23). Note that Shri Krishna calls those who worship other gods as dullards, because the amount of exertion to be put in the case of both kinds of worship is the same. Still people go after other deities or kings and are bound to get finite results only.

The devotee Kuashekara puts across this idea forcefully in his poem Mukundamala. He says that the Lord is praised as the Supreme Being by the vedas. He is the Lord of the three worlds. He can be easily worshipped without much effort in the mind. He is so munificent that He will give up even His position to His devotee. But, sadly enough we do not take to worshipping Him. Instead we stand at the door steps of kings who rule over few villages and who can confer petty favours only. He asks what kind of wretched creatures are we who do so?

नाथे नः पुरुषोत्तमे त्रिजगतामेकाधिपे
चेतसा सेव्ये स्वस्य पदस्य दातरि सुरे नारायणे तिष्ठति।

यं कञ्चित्पुरुषाधमं कतिपय-ग्रामेशमल्पार्थदं

सेवायै मृगयामहे नरमहो! मूढा वराका वयम् ॥ Please

note the statement that He will give up even His position to His devotee. This idea is said in Srimad Bhagavatam also. स्मरतः पादकमलं आत्मानमपि यच्छति। BH(10-80-11). This says that He will give even Himself to His devotee.

These verses briefly describe the beauty and glory of Shri Varadaraja that are really beyond conceptualisation. Great devotees have asked that when such a bewitching form of the glorious Lord is available for one to feast his eyes on, what else one can desire? For example, Shri Vedanta Desika declares in his Varadaraja panchasat (49) that besides daily worshipping and savouring the entrancing beauty of Shri Varadaraja here in Kanchipuram, he indeed has no desire to go to even Vaikunta - the abode of the Lord.

निरन्तरं निर्विशतस्त्वदीयं

अस्पृष्ट चिन्तापदमाभिरूप्यम् ।

सत्यं शपे वारण शैलनाथ

वैकुण्ठ वासोऽपि न मेऽभिलाषः ॥

Shri Appayya dikShita also says so in his Varadaraja stava. (7). He says that an intelligent person who gets delight here in Kanchipuram by looking at the wonderful form of Shri Varadaraja will have no desire to go to any higher worlds including Vaikunta.

अस्यां भवन्तमभितः स्थितदुग्धसिन्धौ
मन्ये त्रयीमयमहारविमण्डलस्य।
पश्यन्नधःकृतचतुर्मुखविष्टपायां
धामत्रयेऽपि कुतुकं विजहाति विद्वान् ॥

This sentiment is in tune with what the Lord, incarnate as Kapila, told His mother Devahuti in His advice. (BH 3-29-13)

सालोक्य-सार्ष्टी-सामीप्य-सारूप्यैकत्व-मप्युत।
दीयमानं न गृह्णन्ति विना मत्सेवनं जनाः ॥

True devotees do not accept, even when offered, any of the five forms of liberation. They only want an opportunity to render service to Me.

.. OM tatsat..

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.. shrIpa.ncharatnam - varadarAjastavaH ..

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