

శ్రీపంచరత్నమ్ - వరదరాజస్తవః

{॥ శ్రీపంచరత్నమ్ - వరదరాజస్తవః ॥}

॥ అథ వరదరాజస్తవః ॥

శ్రీదేవరాజమనిశం నిగమాస్తవేద్యం యజ్ఞేశ్వరం విధి-మహేష్ట-హితైక-లక్ష్మమ్ ।

నవ్యామ్బువాహ-సుషమా-తను-శోభమానం శ్రీహస్తీ-శైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౧॥

పంకేరుహసన-కృతామల-వాజియజ్ఞే వైతానకే హుతభుజి త్వరయా-ఽఽవిరాసీత్ ॥

మన్దస్మితాఞ్చిత-ముఖేన వపాం దశన్ యస్తం నాగ-శైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౨॥

చణ్డాంశు-శీతకిరణాయిత-నేత్రయుగ్మం పద్మా-నివాస-రమణీయ-భుజాస్తరం తమ్ ।

ఆజానుబాహు-మురరీకృత-సప్తతన్త్రం మాతఙ్గ-శైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౩॥

రత్న-ప్రకాణ్డ-రచితం లసదూర్ధ్వ-పుణ్డం బిభ్రాణ-మన్తక-రిపు-ప్రియ-మిత్రవర్యమ్ ।

శంఖం చ చక్ర-మభయాఙ్క-గదే దధానం నాగేష్ట-శైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౪॥

నన్దాత్మజం హలధరం దశకణ్డ-కాలం క్షత్ర-ద్విషం కలి-రిపుం నరసింహ-వేషమ్ ।

కోలాత్మకం కమర-రూప-ధరం చ మత్స్యం వేతణ్డ-శైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౫॥

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.

నేత్ర-ద్వయం మహేశస్య కాశీ-కాఞ్చీపురద్వయమ్ ।

విఖాయాతం వైష్ణవం క్షేత్రం శివసాన్నిధ్య-కారకమ్ ॥

The Purana also makes a mention about Kamakoti .

శ్రీకామగిరి-పీఠం సాక్షాత్ శ్రీపురమధ్యమమ్ ।

Shrimad Bhagavatam also talks about Kanchi city. కామకోటిపురీం కాశ్చీం (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

(హస్తగిరి). 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 (ఏకామ్రేశ్వరః). 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.

పీటేష్వష్టాదశాశు మహితం కామకోటిం శ్రయేథాః। The city is

mentioned as one of the seven cities where austerities performed will lead

to liberation. Thus it is renowned as a మోక్షపురీ।

అయోధ్యా మధురా మాయా కాశీ కాఞ్చీ అవంతికా।

పురీ ద్వారవతీ చైవ సప్తైతా మోక్షదాయకాః ॥

Kanchi was also a seat of higher learning in Sanskrit studies during the 4th and 5th centuries AD. So it was known as ఘటికా స్థలమ్ । 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 నగరీమ కాఞ్చీ- 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, (శ్రీపంచరత్నమ్ ।), the name of the poem. The letter శ్రీ is used as an honorific prefix to

deities (శ్రీ కృష్ణ), distinguished persons (శ్రీ వ్యాస) and great literary works (శ్రీ భగవద్గీత) to indicate their glory. స్తోత్రం 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. లోకాధ్యక్షం స్తువన్నిత్యం సర్వదుఃఖాతిగో భవేత్. Since the stotras are so potent they deserve the honorific prefix శ్రీ 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.

శ్రీదేవరాజమనిశం నిగమాస్తవేద్యం యజ్ఞేశ్వరం విధి-మహేష్ట-హితైక-లక్ష్మమ్ ।
నవ్యామ్బువాహ-సుషమా-తను-శోభమానం శ్రీహస్తిశైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౧॥

శ్రీహస్తిశైలసదనమ్ = having Hastigiri as residence; నిగమాస్తవేద్యమ్
= One who can be known with the help of the upanishads, the end portion
of the vedas; యజ్ఞేశ్వరమ్ = One who is the Lord of sacrifices;
విధిమహేష్టహితైకలక్ష్మమ్ One who has the welfare of gods such as
Brahma and Indra prominently in His mind; నవ్యామ్బువాహసుషమాతను-
శోభమానమ్ = having a shining body resembling fresh water bearing cloud;
శ్రీదేవరాజం వరదమ్ = Shri Varadaraja also known as Shri Devaraja;
అనిశమ్ = always; ప్రపద్యే = 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: నిగమాంత-వేద్యమ్ = 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.

శ్రోతస్య శ్రోత్రం మనసో మనో యద్ వాచో హ వాచం స ఉ ప్రాణస్య ప్రాణః।
చక్షుషశ్చక్షుఃరతిముచ్య ధీరాః ప్రేత్యాస్మాల్లోకాదమృతా భవన్తి ॥ ౨॥

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

Shri Krishna says this clearly వేదైశ్చ సర్వైః-రహమేవ వేద్యః

వేదాంతకృత్ ॥ 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. యజ్ఞేశ్వరమ్

= One who is the Lord of sacrifices This is said as యజ్ఞపతిః,

యజ్ఞానాం పాతా, స్వామీ వా యజ్ఞపతిః, అహం హి సర్వయజ్ఞానాం భోక్తా

ప్రభురేవ చ। (గీతా ౯.౧౪) ఇతి భగవద్వచనాత్। "I am the Enjoyer,

as also the Lord of all sacrifices". says BG(9-24). Also హుతభుక్

= సమస్తదేవతోద్దేశేన ప్రవృత్తేష్యపి కర్మసు హుతం భుజ్తే ఇతి

హుతభుక్। = He is the One who accepts the oblations offered in sacrifices

which may be meant for any deity. VS(871). దేవరాజం = He is foremost

among the celestials. He also rules over and protects them, including Indra.

దేవేశః- ప్రాధాన్యేన దేవానామీశో దేవేశః। దేవాన్ బిభర్షీతి దేవభృత్

శక్తః, తస్యాపి శాసితేతి దేవభృత్।VS(492,493) ..

వరదః = అభిమతాన్వరాన్వదాతీతి, వరం గాం దక్షిణాం దదాతి

యజమానరూపేణేతి వా వరదః, "గౌర్వై వరః" ఇతి శ్రుతేః = giver

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

నవ్యామ్బువాహ-సుషమాతను-శోభమానమ్ = having a shining body resesembling

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 (సత్వగుణ) is really white- the colour

of the moon as is said in the popular verse శుక్లాంబరధరం విష్ణుం

శశివర్ణం చతుర్భుజమ్ 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.

యుక్త్యాగమేన చ భవాఞ్శశివర్ణ ఏవ

నిష్కృష్టసత్వగుణమాత్రవివర్తమూర్తిః

ధత్తే కృపామ్బు భరతస్త్రిషమైస్త్రానీలీ

శుభ్రోఽపి సామ్పూరనితః ఖలు దృశ్యతేఽబ్జః ॥

పంకేరుహసన-కృతామల-వాజియజ్ఞే వైతానకే హుతభుజి త్వరయాఽఽవిరాసీత్ ॥

మన్దస్మితాఞ్చిత-ముఖేన వపాం దశన్ యస్తం నాగశైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౨॥

శ్రీనాగశైల-సదనమ్ = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri;

పంకేరుహసన-కృతామల-వాజియజ్ఞే = in the sacred Aswamedha

yagna performed by Brahma; వైతానకే హుతభుజి = in the sacrificial

fire; త్వరయా = in a hurry - in order to bless the devotee;

మన్దస్మితాఞ్చిత-ముఖేన వపాం దశన్ = with a smiling face and

biting the oblation offered in the sacrifice; ఆవిరాసీత్ = appeared;

తం వరదమ్ = that Shri Varada; ప్రపద్యే = 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; మన్దస్మితాశ్చిత-ముఖేన వపాం దశన్ = with a smiling face and biting the oblation offered in the sacrifice; Here, దశన్ literally means biting. It should not be taken in this sense. As a parallel we may cite the following popular verse -BG(9-26); పత్రం పుష్పం ఫలం తోయం యో మే భక్త్యా ప్రయచ్ఛతి తదహం భక్త్యుపహృతం అశ్నామి ప్రయతాత్మనః ॥

In the second line the word అశ్నామి literally means "I eat." Shri Shankaracharya takes the word to mean గృహ్లామి - that is, I accept with pleasure. The same meaning should be applied to the word దశన్ - "biting" said above.

చణ్డాంశు-శీతకిరణాయిత-నేత్రయుగ్మం పద్మా-నివాస-రమణీయ-భుజాస్తరం తమ్ ।
ఆజానుబాహు-మురరీకృత-సప్తతన్తుం మాతఙ్గ-శైల-సదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ 3॥

మాతఙ్గ-శైల-సదనమ్ = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri;
చణ్డాంశు-శీతకిరణాయిత-నేత్రయుగ్మమ్ = who has the sun and the moon as His two eyes; పద్మా-నివాస-రమణీయ-భుజాస్తరమ్ = who has a chest made beautiful by Shri Laxmi Devi residing there; ఆజాను-బాహుమ్ = who has long arms that reach upto the knees; ఉరరీకృత-సప్తతన్తుమ్ = who accepted the sacrifice offered by Brahma; తం వరదమ్ that Lord Varada; ప్రపద్యే = 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 Aswamedha sacrifice offered by Brahma.

COMMENTS; పద్మా-నివాస-రమణీయ-భుజాస్తరమ్ = who has a chest made

beautiful by Shri Laxmi Devi residing there; Sri Vedanta Desika puts

this beautifully in his Sri stuti (1) as వక్షః పీఠీం మధువిజయినో

భూషయన్తిం స్వకాన్త్యాః = Shri Devi adorns the throne of the chest of

Shri Vishnu by Her radiance.

రత్నప్రకాణ్డరచితం లసదూర్ధ్వపుష్టం బిభ్రాణమన్తకరిపుప్రియమిత్రవర్యమ్ ।

శంఖం చ చక్రమభయాఙ్కగదే దధానం నాగేస్త్రశైలసదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౪॥

నాగేస్త్ర శైల-సదనమ్ = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri;

అన్తక-రిపు-ప్రియ-మిత్రవర్యమ్ = who is very dear to Lord Shiva -

the enemy of Yama; రత్నప్రకాణ్డరచితం లసదూర్ధ్వపుష్టం బిభ్రాణమ్

= who wears a mark made of precious diamonds on His forehead; శంకం

చక్రం అభయాఙ్క-గదే చ దధానమ్ = who is holding the conch, discus,

the mudra that assures protection; వరదమ్ = that Varada; ప్రపద్యే

= 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

భయకృత్ = భక్తానం భయం కృన్తతి కృణోతీతి భయకృత్। VS(833).

నన్దాత్మజం హలధరం దశకణ్ఠకాలం క్షత్రద్విషం బలిరిపుం నరసింహవేషమ్ ।

కోలాత్మకం కమరూపధరం చ మత్స్యం వేతణ్ణశైలసదనం వరదం ప్రపద్యే ॥ ౫॥

వేతణ్ణ-శైల-సదనమ్ = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri;

మత్స్యం, కమరూప-ధరం, కోలాత్మకం, నరసింహ-వేషం,

బలిరిపుం, క్షత్రద్విషం, దశకణ్ఠ-కాలం, హల-ధరం,

నన్దాత్మజమ్ = who incarnated as Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana,

Parasurama, Rama, Balarama and Krishna for the benefit of all; వరదమ్

= that Varada; ప్రపద్యే = 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 Lord incarnated Himself from time to time for the welfare of all. So He has the name అనేకమూర్తిః = అవతారేశు

స్వేచ్ఛయా లోకానాముపకారిణీర్భవీష్వరూర్తీర్భజత ఇతి అనేకమూర్తిః (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.

దేవం సేవితుమేవ నిశ్చినుమహే యోఽసౌ దయాలుః పురా

ధానాముష్టిముచే కుచేలమునయే దత్తే స్మ విత్తేశతామ్ ।

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. అన్తవన్తు ఫలం తేషాం తద్భవత్యల్పమేధసామ్। దేవాన్దేవయజ్ఞో యాన్తి మద్భక్తా యాన్తి మామపి। 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?

నాథే నః పురుషోత్తమే త్రిజగతామేకాధిపే చేతసా
సేవ్యే స్వస్య పదస్య దాతరి సురే నారాయణే తిష్ఠతి
యం కఞ్చిత్పురుషాధమం కతిపయ-గ్రామేశమల్పార్థదం
సేవాయై మృగయామహే నరమహో! మూఢా వరాకా వయమ్ ||

Please note the statement that He will give up even His position to His devotee. This idea is said in Srimad Bhagavatam also.

స్మరతః పాదకమలం ఆత్మానమపి యచ్ఛతి 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.

నిరస్తరం నిర్విశతస్త్యదీయం
అస్మష్ట చింతాపదమాభిరూఢ్యమ్ ।

సత్యం శపే వారణ శైలనాథ
వైకుంఠ వాసోఽపి న మేఽభిలాషః ॥

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.

అస్యాం భవంతమభితః స్థితదుగ్ధసిన్ధౌ
మన్యే త్రయీమయమహారవిమణ్ణలస్యః
పశ్యన్నధఃకృతచతుర్ముఖవిష్టపాయాం
ధామత్రయేఽపి కుతుకం విజహతి విద్వాన్ ॥

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

సాలోక్య-సార్వీ-సామీప్య-సారూప్యైకత్వ-మప్యతః
దీయమానం న గృహ్లాన్తి వినా మత్సేవనం జనాః॥

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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