

श्रीपंचरत्नम् - वरदराजस्तवः

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अथ वरदराजस्तवः

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

पंकेरुहासन-कृतामल-वाजियज्ञे वैतानके हृतभुवि त्वरया-ऽऽविरासीत् ॥

मन्दस्मिताञ्जित-मुषेन वपां दशान् यस्तं नाग-शैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ २ ॥

चण्डांशु-शीतकिरणायित-नेत्रयुग्मं पद्मा-निवास-रमणीय-भुजान्तरं तम् ॥
आजानुभाहु-मुररीकृत-सप्ततन्तुं मातङ्ग-शैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ३ ॥

रत्न-प्रकाण्ड-रचितं लसदूर्ध्व-पुण्ड्रं भिन्नाण-मन्तक-रिपु-प्रिय-मित्रवर्यम् ॥
शंभं च चक्र-मभयाङ्ग-गदं दधानं नागेन्द्र-शैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ४ ॥

नन्द्यत्मजं हलधरं दशकण्ठ-कालं क्षत्र-द्विषं कलि-रिपुं नरसिंह-वेषम् ॥
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 ॥

विभायातं वैष्णवं क्षेत्रं शिवसाञ्छिध्य-कारकम् ॥

The Purana also makes a mention about Kamakoti .

श्रीकामगिरि-पीठं साक्षात् श्रीपुरमध्यमम् ॥

Shrimad Bhagavatam also talks about Kanchi city. कामकोटिपुरीं काञ्चीं ॥ (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 ethereal beauty and qualities of Varadaraja and composed many paeans about Him. Vaishnavite saints known as Alvars 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.

पीठेष्वष्टादशांशु महितं कामकोटिं 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 द्वावती येव 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 lead 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-महेंद्र-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 वरुणम् = 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 ॥

यक्षुषश्चक्षुःरतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्मात्लोकामृता भवन्ति ॥ २ ॥

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

Shri Krishna says this clearly वेदैश्च सर्वै-रहमेव वेद्यः

वेदन्तकृत् ॥ 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 ८-२४) इति भगवद्भयनात् ॥ "I am the Enjoyer,

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

= समस्तदेवतोद्देशेन प्रवृत्तेष्वपि कर्मसु हुतं भुङ्क्ते इति

हुतभुङ्क्ते ॥ = He is the One who accepts the oblations offered in sacrifices

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

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

देवेशः- प्राधान्येन देवानामीशो देवेशः ॥ देवान् विभर्तीति देवभृत्

शक्तः, तस्यापि शासितेति देवभृत् ॥ VS(492,493) ..

वरदः = अभिमतान्वरान्ददातीति, वरं गां दक्षिणां ददाति

यजमानश्चेति वा वरदः, "गौर्वे 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 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 (सत्त्वगुण) is really white- the colour

of the moon as is said in the popular verse शुक्लांबरधरं विषुं

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 भवाञ्शशिवर्णं भवे

निष्कृष्टसत्वगुणमात्रविवर्तमूर्तिः ॥

धत्ते कृपाम्बु भरतस्त्वषमैन्द्रनीली

शुभ्रोऽपि साम्भुरसितः भलु दृश्यतेऽब्धः ॥

पंकेरुहासन-कृतामल-वाणियज्ञे वैतानके हुतभुवि त्वरयाऽऽविरासीत् ॥

मन्दस्मिताञ्चित-मुभेन वपां दशनं यस्तं नागशैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ २ ॥

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

पंकेरुहासन-कृतामल-वाणियज्ञे = in the sacred Aswamedha

yagna performed by Brahma; वैतानके हुतभुवि = in the sacrificial

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

मन्दस्मिताञ्चित-मुभेन वपां दशनं = 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-मुभेन वपां दशनं = with a smiling face

and biting the oblation offered in the sacrifice; Here, दशनं 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 भक्त्युपहतं 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 दशन - "biting" said above.

अङ्गशु-शीतकिरणायित-नेत्रयुग्मं पद्मा-निवास-रमणीय-भुजान्तरं तम् ॥
आभानुबाहु-मुररीकृत-सप्ततन्तुं मातङ्ग-शैल-सदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ३ ॥

मातङ्ग-शैल-सदनम् = The Lord who has His residence in Hastigiri;
अङ्गशु-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; आभानु-बाहुम् = who has long arms that reach upto the knees; मुररीकृत-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 Aswamedha 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.

रत्नप्रकाशरचितं लसद्दूर्ध्वपुण्ड्रं भिभ्राणमन्तकरिपुप्रियमित्रवर्यम् ॥
शंभं च चक्रमभयाङ्कुगद्रे 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; रत्नप्रकाशरचितं लसद्दूर्ध्वपुण्ड्रं भिभ्राणम्
= who wears a mark made of precious diamonds on His forehead; शंभं
चक्रं अभयाङ्कु-गद्रे 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 अलिरिपुं नरसिंहवेषम् ॥
कोलात्मकं कमठरूपधरं च मत्स्यं वेतलशैलसदनं वरदं प्रपद्ये ॥ ५ ॥

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

मत्स्यं, कमठ-रूप-धरं, कोलात्मकं, नरसिंह-वेषं,

अलिरिपुं, 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 लोकानामुपकारिणीर्बह्वीर्भूतीर्भवत 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 ध्यातुः पुरा

धानामुष्णिमुये कुयेलमुनये 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 इदं

तेषां तद्भवत्यल्पमेधसाम् ॥ देवान्देवयज्ञे यान्ति महत्ता 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 द्वातरि 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 यञ्छति ॥ 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 चिन्तापदमाभिश्यम् ॥
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 भवन्तममितः स्थितद्गुधसिन्धौ
मन्ये त्रयीमयमहारविमण्डलस्य ॥
पश्यन्नघः कृतयतुर्भुविषपायां
धामत्रयेऽपि कुतुङ्कं 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-सार्ध-सामीप्य-साङ्गैकत्व-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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