

Haridasas of Karnatak

Shri Guru Jagannath Das : Shri Laxmi Hridaya

- Prof. D. V. Potdar

Shri Shreepad Raj, anticipating the rapid growth of the *daskoota*, wrote works like Madhwanama, Shri Laxmi Narasimha Pradurbhav Dandaka, the contents of which can be found in Hari Vayustuti and Bhagavata. The tradition was continued and resulted in the creation of such a masterpiece like Harikathamrutasara, a compendium of Dwaita philosophy.

The glory of goddess Laxmi has been sung in the Ambhrani Sookta of the Rigveda and also in the Laxmi Hridaya in Atharvana Rahasya. Both are to be recited daily by those who wish for prosperity of all sorts. The texts are in Sanskrit, therefore, for the benefit of the common man, the poet Guru Jagannath das has put the latter into Kannada. When a hymn is written for a subordinate god or goddess, the chief must be first praised (cf. Hari Vayustuti). So Guru Jagannath Das wrote the Shri Venkatesh Stavaraj. The time for reciting this hymn and the fruits accruing from it are mentioned in detail in the text. The benefits are manifold and sometimes flabbergasting, like when he says, if a person reads it for a year he will surpass even Indra!

The style of the work is highly ornate, and mellifluous, fit for singing. Repetition of ideas is frequent, so pruning becomes necessary to make the writing compact.

1. Shri Venkatesh Stavaraj:

1.

Consort of Shree, Lord of all, all-pervasive,
Enjoyer of essence*, independent, All-giver,
Of immense fame, generous, solemn
You drive away the sorrows of your wards,
bring them joy,
Dheervenkat Raman, merciful, protect me.

* *sara bhokta*

2.

Of great reknown, Protector of wards,
I won't repeat any name except Yours
even though hurt,
While You protect, why fear worldly sorrow,
ChennaVenkat Raman, merciful one, protect me.

3.

Lakumi, Bomma, Bhava, Amaresha,
Worship You with devotion,
And rule all worlds, ever,
Protector of all,
Make me Your devotee, lest You be blamed,
Shreeniketana.

4.

Why hard on me?
Why not take me under Your wing?
Won't rejection*, bring You a bad name?
Tender me with care,
You my only Lord,
Venkat Shesha Giri Vas.

* of a devotee

5.

Lotus-eyed, I trust Your feet,
Let me not down, make me not poor.
Or I, Your shadow, will be forlorn
The world's Your family.
Let me join it, Shesha Giri Vas.

6.

Departing from glorious heaven, You came to the earth,
A cowherd, You had to pinch food,
But I'll sing Your praise, that's limitless,
Protect me Dheervenkat Ramana.

7.

Diving in water, buoying up a mountain,
Digging up the earth, in anger
Tearing up the tummy of the tyrant
You made a garland of his guts,
In the guise of a brahmin kid You went to a king,
to beg,
You wielded a chopper,
Wandered in the forests, a cowherd,
Even if You ride away on a bare horse now*,

I'll give chase, Venkatgiri Vas.

* the ten incarnations

8.

Lord of Laxmi, Sovereign,
Bird-vehicle, supreme being,
Release-granter, Sire of Prana, All-pervasive,
When Draupadi's sari was undraped,
You made it endless*,
Partisan of Partha, You charioted his car,
And finished the Kauravas
Sheshagiri Vas.

* akshayambara

9.

When the five-year old Dhruva,
Proceeded to forest, abandoning parents,
You favored and protected him, Sheshagiri Vas.

10.

When grabbed by the feet in the lake by the crocodile, the elephant prayed, "Lord of the three worlds, please protect me ". You rushed to his help*. Heeding his wife's words, when the poor brahmin met You and offered pounded rice, You showered wealth on him+, Sheshagiri Vas.

* gajendra moksha + Sudhama

11.

So many Your past good deeds, it's difficult to recount. Just grant my wishes, let both of us be happy. Reside in my heart, keep me active, Sheshagiri Vas.

12.

Protector of devotees, the learned and the poor, fulfill my wishes. Grant me rare knowledge, wealth, make me remember You in life after life. Bring not forgetfulness, Sheshagirivas.

13.

Drive away pride, jealousy, greed, infatuation

from my mind,
Grant me knowledge, devotion, non-attachment,
Let Your form be in my heart, Your name on my lips,
I beseech You, Sheshagiri Vas.

14.

Let my words come true,
My wealth be retained,
Your blessings multiply day by day.
Keep me away from slanderers,
I pray You, Sheshagiri Vas.

15.

I know not what to ask,
Grant me happiness of all sorts
worldly, other worldly.
Shrinivas, see Your servant lacks not anything,
That's my prayer, Sheshagiri Vas,

16.

The wrath of others, I don't mind,
Nor care I, for favors of
friends, enemies or the indifferent.
Punish the wicked, protect the meek,
Let me be always attached to You,
Sheshagiri Vas.

17.

Let me serve You, worship Your feet,
Enlighten me, let me sing Your praise,
Reside in my heart, make me do noble deeds,
Bring me contentment,
Sheshagiri Vas.

18.

Victory to You in Tortoise form*,
Victory to You in Man-lion, Vaman forms
Victory to You Rama, Son of Bhrigu,
And Rama, the light of Raghu Kula.
Victory to You, the star among the yadavas,
Victory to You, Buddha, deluder of the people,

Victory to You, Kalki, Destroyer of sins of the Kali age.

* cf. stanza 7 (above)

19.

Ocean of mercy, protector of devotees,
Everlasting, wish-fulfiller of wards, Kamalakant,
Victorious, I sing Your praise,
Granter of boons, Guru Jagannath Vithal,
With all affection protect me, Sheshagiri Vas..

2. Shri Laxmi Hridaya

1.

Shree, Manohare, Lakumi,
Your lotus feet I worship every day
Sister of moon*, auspicious, molten gold hued,
Lustrous as the sun, moon,
Donning clothes, white, gold hued,
Decked in all gold ornaments.
I worship you daily.

* Laxmi and the moon were born during the churning of the ocean.

2.

Holding a golden pot with spells*,
And a charming golden lotus
in each hand, to bless devotees,
Worshipped by Mahat and others,
Lustrous-faced, Mother of three worlds,
You are seated on Hari's left lap,

* cast on it.

3-4-5.

Lakumi,

Bestower of all kinds of wealth,
all kinds of fortune
all auspicious things,
Spouse of the king of gods,

being learned, You grant knowledge,
A mother, You grant me happiness,
I worship You, help me achieve the four goals*.

* purusharthas

6.

I bow to You,
Grant me higher knowledge, clear speech,
You, possessor of all virtues,
You're reputed for favoring Your wards,
Hence my request.

7.

To remove the pangs of poverty,
to dispel my ignorance,
Dip Your lotus feet in the lake of my mind.
Cast Your merciful glances on me,
That destroy the misery of Your followers.

8.

Mother be pleased with me,
With Your glances full of nectar,
Fill my house with cash and kind,
I touch Your lotus feet.

9.

Peace incarnate, Protector of wards,
Lustre incarnate, Mine of virtues
Forgiveness incarnate, Destroyer of evil,
Mother I bow to You,
Destroyer of illusions,
fatigued with worldly tasks,
I pray, grant me cash and corn, provide for me.

10.

Victory to You Laxmi, charming-bodied,
Victory to You Padma, worshpped by Padma*.
Victory to You, called Vidya, seated on Vishnu's left lap
Bringer of victory, honoured by the world,

Victory to You, grant me wealth, success.

* aletics

11.

Victory to You, goddess, honoured by the gods,
Victory to You, Bhargavi, charming-bodied,
Victory to You, grasped* by spiritual knowledge,
Victory to You, residing in truth, prosperity,
Victory to You, dwelling in Ramya Raman,
Victory to You, ever present in precious gems.

* comprehended

12,

Victory to You, shining like pure gold,
Victory to You, with the lustrous body,
Victory to You, possessed of peace,
Victory to You, mother of victories,
Protect me always,
Victory to You, goddess, grant me victory

13.

Your glances keep Brahma, Rudra and Indra alive at all times. They (gods) have no strength of their own. It is Your prowess that empowers them.

14.

Creation, maintenance, such work You get done (by other gods), nobody equal to You. Dweller in water, guardian of the world, I pray You to protect me.

15.

Whatever Brahma has jotted on my forehead, please wipe out, write it anew. Change it so I can bask in the light of Your mercy.

16.

Mother, Creator of fortune, bring me a pot full of gold coins. Let me even not dream of poverty. Make me enjoy all the fruits of fortune.

17-24.

Your glances keep the world alive. They are long-lasting like the sun, the moon and Hari. You reside in Hari's heart always, may Your glances be cast on me. Mother, dispel my ignorance, grant me knowledge, wealth.

25.

As the sun and the moon drive away darkness, remove my ignorance, poverty. Grant me fortune of all kinds and make me triumph in all ways.

26-29

Your glances embody great wealth, even the shrutis can't grasp You, how can I, a dullard? Let Your mercy be my armour, Bhargavi, come and stay with me.

30.

Lakumi, dweller in satyaloka,
Bing Your divine presence to my home,
Extend Your grace to the world around,
Make me, the best among my fellowmen,
triumphant,
And dally here* with Hari.

* on this earth

31-33.

Lakumi, daughter of the storehouse of gems*
Bring me a potful of precious stones,
And a gold necklace gem-studded,
Stand before me,
Protect me, dear one.

* sea - (poetic fancy)

34-40.

Shri Lakumi, dweller of rasatala*,
Sister of the moon, rush to my township,
let people have a glimpse of Your divine form
Fragrant-bodied, Your grace,
coming as a a windfall,
will be welcomed by the people.
Lakumi, with the serpent-braid,

Place Your hand on my head
Dispel my poverty, say 'fear not',
You are the divine cow+,
The wish-fulfilling tree, protect me always.

* nether world + Kamadhenu

41-44

Daughter of the Earth-goddess,
Consort of the father of Kama,
Embodiment of gems, gold
Your servant, I seek You.
Bring me hidden wealth
Have pity, reassure me.

45-48.

Make Yourself comfortable in my home,
as in Indraloka,
Being a debtor, I'm oppressed,
Have become dull
Reassure me.
Consort of Upendra.

49.

Mother, with all grace You came to Ayodhya, and drove away the fear of the people,
brought them victory. Come to my home bring me victory, fortune.

50-53.

Primal wealth, Mahalakumi, You rest on Vishnu's left lap, a place suitable for You,
Primal deity show me Your form, free from wrath.

54.

As long as the delightful vedas sing the praise of Vishnu, so long will You be with the
Lotus-eyed, and He with You.

55-59.

Till then may Your glances bring me and others happiness. Abandon me not.

60.

Primal nature, the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of brahmanda, joy-consciousness-bodied, (but having no physical body), grasped by the vedas, what wonder is there if You have borne the creation of Brahma on Your back, in the form of a tortoise, right from the beginning?

61-64.

The vedas and all gods together, cannot recount Your qualities. How can a dolt do it? The distressed on the earth appeal to You and have happiness granted to them, May I receive your grace.

65-68.

Your devotees, because of Your merciful glance, suffer no losses, I surrender myself to You. Grant me devotion, knowledge, renunciation so that I can perform mind-worship*. I care not for temporal benefits. Without Your grace I can't even breathe for a moment. Nothing untrue about You, I swear!

* manas pooja

69-72.

During all the kalpas (ages), You'll be my mother and I Your son, no doubt about it! I'm a repository of all vices, the worst among the sinners. I crave Your forgiveness.

73-76.

Consort of Bird-vehicle*, of what use medicines, if pains in stomach, hand, head and waist did not exist? Of what use Your mercy, if one deserving it like me were not created by Brahma? Here's a conundrum-- Which had precedence—my birth or Your mercy? You are my father, mother, my all, grant me boons.

* garuda vahana

77-80

Father, mothered thus, why should I suffer? Presiding-deity of speech, You rest on my tongue—all times-- loosen it, make words flow. Let my works be popular. You are all-knowing, no need on my part to make an appeal.

81-84.

You help humans to achieve all goals*. You, the Mother of us all, Destroyer of all fears,

Uplifter of all devotees, rest in my heart, bring me all kinds of happiness.

* purusharthas

85-88.

Your glances are like the wish-yielding cow to the people, Your hands like the Divine tree,

89-92

Indira, You are wealth of nine kinds, and as alchemy changes base metal into gold, Your merciful glance destroys the sufferings of the people of the earth, makes all auspicious things befall them. Fearing my prayers will be turned down by my fellowmen, I appeal to You.

93-101.

Benefits of reading this work--

He who recites this mantra will enjoy kingly pleasures, and a beggar will become a millionaire. For mysterious is the working of the Devi's will. This hymn should be repeated and re-repeated five thousand times. This will please the Goddess and She will make the devotee one of Her retinue, grant him all kinds of fortune. Recited three times a day it helps a person achieve the four goals of life. Even the listener has the same benefit. During Friday nights, this great work, dedicated to a great Goddess, recited for five weeks, will bring all desire fulfillment to the reader. If in a household, men and women eat food or drink water, incanted with this mantra, in that house the Lord himself will be born. In the month of Ashwayuja, during the bright half, if it is recited with a pure heart, increasing the number by one every day, by the blessings of the Devi, there will be a shower of gold on the house!

A devotee, reciting this with a pure heart for a year, will excel even Indra, be a millionaire on the earth!

102-108.

Grant me devotion to the feet of Shreeshha, submissiveness to the dasas, and correct knowledge. Make me the ruler of the earth, the best among men. Grant me immense wealth, fame, pleasures. Protect me, Shreedevi.

Adi Bhargavi, grant me life after life, capacity to argue, faith in the tenets of Madhwa, sons, wealth and knowledge without study!

Goddess, shining like a thousand suns, I bow to you. Place Your hand on my head, look upon me as Your son, and grant me all sorts of wealth, knowledge and devotion.

OM TAT SAT

I am indebted to the Mutaliks for lending me a copy of the book.