

GLORY OF SRINIVASA*

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"Not only *Haridasas* but *Acharyas* and even King Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagar empire have composed *songs* in *Sanskrit* and *Kannada* singing the *glory* of '*Veṅkaṭēswar*' and highlighting the importance of devotion and surrender to God. These songs are very sublime and possess a blend of rhythm and meaning. They display a high order of musical excellence and literary graces. Sincere and passionate devotion of the poet-devotees are transperant throughout. They are the spontaneous outpourings of the emotional ecstasy of the ardent poets. It would be proper on this auspicious occasion (of Brahotsavam of *Lord Veṅkaṭēswara*) to consider some of the sample songs in Sanskrit, in Kannada and in Marathi by Karnataka King, Acharyas and Haridasas. We may take up the Sanskrit songs first one by king Krishnadevaraya and then by others both in Sanskrit and in Kannada and one in Marathi.

There is a palm-leaf manuscript (incomplete) in Madras Govt. Oriental Manuscripts Library (bearing No. 18299) which is titled 'Krishnadevaraya Kṛiti' (in Sanskrit) by Krishnadevaraya the famous ruler of Vijayanagar Kingdom. The manuscript records the biographical details of King's family and his great Guru, who advised him to worship Lord Venkateswara etc. In the first and third verses, Lord Venkateswara is saluted and His glory is described. He has dedicated his Kṛiti to the Lord. He says "*samarpayam Veṅkaṭshaila bhartre*" because he was counselled by Vyasaṭirṥ his teacher to sing the glory of Vishnu in all respects in view of the fact that there is no similarity between Hari and Hara and also that all Vedas, Puranas, Shastras, epics (itihāsas) proclaim 'Hari' as supreme (Sarvottama). "My guru saw my enthusiasm for devotion and he instructed me accordingly". His original words are

**"utsaham mama veekshya
madgurunatha shrivyasatirtho munih
paryalochya puranashastra
vividhamnayetihasadika
labdhahstatra kathah Hareh
pasupateh samyam nirasyadhikam
Vishnum kirtaya sarvathetyupadishan
mahyam muda dattavan".**

In the opening verse the king says, "Let that Lord who is designated as Venkatesh, make his abode in my heart. He is one, who is worshipped by waving ceremonial lights around him by none other than sea of milk (Kshirasagar)- a privilege he got as a result of his great penance. The Lord has sun and moon as his eyes. He is dark blue in complexion like a cloud. His glorious attributes are

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yond the description of Upanishadic words. He is lauded by all the Gods lead by their chief. To cite the original,

***"Kshirambodhi tapah phalena
mahata nirajitorasthalah
taradhisha-dinadhinatha nayano
dharadharshyamalah
yo vedantagiramalakshyamahima
deveshmukhyaih stutah
soyam tishtatu mamakina hrdaye
Shri Venkateshabhidhah"***

In the third verse also the king praises the Lord Venkateswara designating him as Mukunda in the following words. "Lord's true essence would have been confined to words alone had His form not pervaded all the worlds (universe) eternally. His attributes are described in detail in Upanishadic statements. He is the Lord of both Sridevi and Bhudevi. He is free from all blemishes. He is unborn and is eternal bliss. I salute such a Lord Mukund (Venkatesh). To quote,

***Brahmandanyakhilani chenna satatam
vyaptani tattadrga
Pyakaram sabadamatratamupagamam
yasyaiva satyatmanah
tam vedantavacah prapancitagunam
lakshminahivallabham
nityanandamajam nirastaduritam
vande mukundam vibhum ||***

From a sample of the couple of verses cited above it would be obvious that the king's poetic words reflect the glory of the Lord, as contained in the vedas and puranas. He says he could not get place in his heart by mere verbal praise (stuti) of the Lord. So his teacher advised him to perform puja daily and to become permanent devotee of Lord Venkateshwar. He says :

***evam ca cetasyanavapya trptim
vacapi pujam kalaye katham va;
Sri Venkateshadhishiturityudaram
citte vicaram kalayan avatsam***

Perhaps this refers to his stay in Chandragiri with his guru Vyasa-tirtha, when he was inspired by the latter to be an ardent devotee of Lord Venkatesh by actually performing His daily worship. The steps to the Hill from Chandragiri side were constructed for this purpose and this bespeaks of devotion of the king to the Lord". (p 3-5)

