
.. kandukastutiH ..

॥ कन्दुकस्तुतिः ॥

श्रीमदानन्दतीर्थ-भगवत्पादाचार्य विनिर्मिता ॥

कन्दुकः= a ball. This hymn - in praise of Lord Vishnu - is worded cleverly so that one can find a rhythm while reading it. It sounds like a ball is being tapped on the ground. It bounces back, only to be hit again. It bounces back and this is repeated.

अंबरगंगा-चुंबित-पादः पदतल-विदलित-गुरुतर-शकटः ।

कालियनाग-क्ष्वेल-निहन्ता सरसिज-नवदल-विकसित-नयनः ॥१॥

अंबरगंगा-चुंबित-पादः ।

अंबरं= sky. So, अंबरगंगा will mean the river Ganga flowing in the sky or heavens.

चुंबित= kissed or gently touched or caressed.

पादः= foot.

The Lord's feet are caressed by the waters of the river Ganges that flows in the heavens. The Ganges took its birth from the feet of the Lord.

It is this association with His feet that makes its waters sacred.

पदतल-विदलित-गुरुतर-शकटः ।

पदतल= surface of the foot or sole of the foot;

विदलित= split into pieces, गुरुतर= very large, violent,

शकटः= the demon Shakata.

The demon Shakata was sent by Kamsa to kill Krishna who was then a child.

The demon hid himself in the wheel of a cart waiting for an opportunity to kill Krishna. But, the child Krishna went near the cart and kicked the wheel of the cart. Shakata was killed. The incident is described

in Bhagavata - Book No.10 (part 1).

कालियनाग-क्ष्वेल-निहन्ता

कालियनाग= the serpent Kaliya, (who was staying with his family in a meadow near Gokulam and was a terror to the residents.)

क्ष्वेल= playfully निहन्ता= one who subdued.

This refers to the incident (again to be seen in Bhagavata -

Book No.10 (part 1).

सरसिज-नवदल-विकसित-नयनः ।

सरसिज = lotus, नवदल= fresh petal, विकसित= opened or blown, नयनः= having eyes.

Krishna's eyes are like the petal of a lotus that has just opened up.

Thus they are very beautiful. Not only they are beautiful to look at,

they are very auspicious and can fulfill all the desires of a devotee (including moksha or liberation from the cycle of birth and death.) One of His names (No:393 in Vishnusahasranama) is शुभेक्षणः । "one with auspicious looks". Sri Sankaracharya in his commentary explains in detail the significance of the name as follows.

ईक्षणं दर्शनं यस्य शुभं शुभकरं, मुमुक्षुणां मोक्षदं,
भोगार्थिनां भोगदं, सर्वसन्देहविच्छेदकारणं, पापिनां
पावनं, हृदग्रन्देर्विच्छेदकरं, सर्वकर्माणां क्षपणं,
अविद्यायाश्च निवर्तकं स शुभेक्षणः । " भिद्यते
हृदयग्रन्तिः" इत्यादि श्रुतेः ॥His auspicious looks grant
liberation (moksha) to those who seek liberation, grant pleasures to
those who seek pleasures, destroy the sins of the sinners, remove
all doubts, remove the knot of ignorance that ties up the mind and
destroy all remnants of karma and also ignorance.

The first line describes the glory of Lord's feet. Even Ganges that was born of His feet is reputed to be holy and capable of wiping out the sins of those who take bath in it. Then, what to say about the sins of the devotees who worship His feet? The feet also offer total protection from all enemies. The proof is lies in the fact that they could playfully destroy a fearful demon like Shakata . An additional proof is seen in the episode of Kaliya that says that Krishna subdued the terrible serpent Kaliya and ensured total security to His followers. Thus the Lord is the source of complete and most superior protection. A devotee need not seek any other protector. Any other source will be fragile and inferior only. The great Vaishnavite acharya Shri Vedanta Desika says this

त्वयि रक्षति रक्षकैः किमन्यैः
त्वयि चारक्षति रक्षकैः किमन्यैः ।
इति निश्चित धीः श्रयामि नित्यं
नृहरे वेगवती तटाश्रयं त्वाम् ॥

Sri Leelasukha says the same thing in his Krishnakarnamritam.

मयि प्रसादं मधुरैः कटाक्षैः
वंशीनिनादानुचरैर्विदेहि ।
त्वयि प्रसन्ने किमिहापरैर्-र्नः
त्वय्यप्रसन्ने किमिहापरैर्-र्नः ॥

कालघनाली-कर्बुर-कायः शरशत-शकलित-रिपुशत-निवहः ।
संतत-मस्मान् पातु मुरारिः सततग-समजव-खगपति-निरतः ॥२॥
कालघनाली-कर्बुर-कायः ।
काल= of black or dark blue colour, घन= cloud, अलि:= a black
bee, कर्बुर= of colour of pigeon, grey or of vareigated colour, काय:= body.

Krishna's body has the colour of a bee or cloud or gray like that of a pigeon.

सततग-समजव-खगपति-निरतः ।

सततगः= wind, समजव= equal in speed,

खगपतिः= the king of birds or Garuda,

निरतः= fond of or rested. The Lord is always resting on Garuda, who is fast as the wind.

The poets say that wind and the mind are the fastest things. Thus, Hanuman is also described to be as fast as these two. मनोजवं मारुततुल्य-वेगम् ।

The Lord rests on Garuda so that He can respond to the calls from His devotee, either to bless him or rescue him from trouble without any delay.

He came on Garuda to bless the child Dhruva .

सहस्रशीर्षाणि ततो गरुत्मता मधोर्वनं भृत्यदिदृक्षया गतः ।

(Bhagavatam 4-9-1).

He also flew on Garuda to save Gajendra who was fighting for his life.

छन्दोमयेन गरुडेन समुह्यमानश्चक्रायुधोऽभ्यगम-दाशु यतो गजेन्द्रः ।

(Bhagavatam 8-3-31).

Incidentally we may note from this line that Garuda is not a bird but he represents the vedas. The vedas are divided into two sections.

The first part is called the Karma Kanda and tells us how we should conduct ourselves, what to do and what to avoid. It also describes the rituals to be performed to get various material benefits. By diligently following the injunctions in this section one's mind gets purified and calm. He, thus, becomes qualified for the study of the second part known as Jnana Kanda or Vedanta. This part consists of upanishads and are meant to be studied under a qualified guru because the teachings contained in them are very subtle and difficult to grasp without the guidance of a teacher. The study points the way to liberation.

Garuda's two wings represent the two sections of the vedas.

शरशत-शकलित-रिपुशत-निवहः ।

शरशत= hundred(s) of arrows, शकलित= reduced to pieces,

रिपुशत निवहः= multitudes of enemies.

This refers to His incarnation as Rama when He reduced a great armies of enemies to nothing with His arrows. One of His names to be seen in the Sahasranama is

धनुर्धरः - श्रीमान् रामो महद्दनुर्धारयामासेति धनुर्धरः ॥

संतत-मस्मान् पातु मुरारिः ।

मुरारिः= Lord , the enemy of the demon Mura, अस्मान्= us,

संततं= always, पातु= let Him protect.

Let such a Lord Vishnu, who rides Garuda, the king of birds and who is as fast as the wind and the vanquisher of the demon Mura protect us.

॥ इति श्रीमदानन्दतीर्थभगवत्पादाचार्य विरचिता कन्दुकस्तुतिः संपूर्णा ॥

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