

**SWAMI DESIKAN'S
VEGASETU STOTRAM**



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॥ श्रीः ॥
॥ श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः ॥
॥ श्रीमते निगमान्त महादेशिकाय नमः ॥

वेगासेतु स्तोत्रम्

VEGASETU STOTRAM

INTRODUCTION

The name Vegaa-setu meaning a dam across the river Vegaa (Vegavati) for the Perumal (Lord) indicates the part He played in protecting the Aswamedhayaga performed by Brahma to visualize the Lord ; Brahma dEvan sought the protection of that yaga at Hasthi Giri from being washed away by the irate Saraswati who desired to wreck that yaga by taking the form of a river in spate. This is to be found in the Sthalapurana.

The Lord, however, attained greater fame and name by packing up His Adishesha couch and following Tirumazhisai Alvar at his behest and later re-spreading that Adishesha couch and lying on it once again (now using as pillow His left hand instead of the right hand). For this fine gesture of walking away from His AasTAnam,



‘painnAgap pAi’





inconsistent with the state of archa, this Lord is popularly known as Yathoktakari or, as Desika has put it, bhagavath-bhakthi-mathaam Yathokthakaari (5) -- one who acts as dictated to by His Devotees.

Slokas 2 to 4 and 7 refer to the Lord's puranic greatness as Vegaasetu.

Slokas 5 and 7 refer to both aspects.

Slokas 6 and 8 deal with His subservience to His devotees.

SLOKAS - COMMENTARY

श्रीमान् वेङ्कट नाथार्यः कवितार्किक केसरी ।

वेदान्ताचार्य वर्योमे सन्निधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

shrImaan.h ve~NkaTa naathaaryaH kavitaarkika kesarI.
vedaantaachaarya varyo me sannidhattaaM sadaa hR^idi.

Swami Desikan chose Anushtub metre for the beginning verse of this slokam. It is traditional to use the short metre of Anushtub for aphoristic statement of theological truth. Saardhoola- vikriditham metre is generally used for elaboration of the theological truth. In view of our Acharyaa's interest to celebrate the Puranic story here and the centrality of one of the Vaishnava principles -- Bhaktha DaakshiNyam of the Lord -- Swami elected not to use too many lengthy metres in this short stotram. He deliberately chose Anushtub for the first verse to point out the UPAAYA --PhALA BHAAVAM -- of the Lord of Thiruvehhaa. This stotram has 10 verses set in seven different poetic meters in accordance with the rules of Alankaara saasthram. Swami Desikan uses anushtub metre for the second and tenth verse as well.

The other metres used by Swami with specific purpose in mind are: Aaryaa (verse 3), Upajaathi (verse 4) that is used for imparting Puraanic flavor, Oupacchandasicam (Verse 5), Vasanta Tilakam (Verse 6) for poetic fancy, Maalini (Verses 7 and 8) and Mandaakraanthea (verse 9). Thus Swami Desikan used 7 metres in a stotram consisting of 10 verses. His skills as a poet are abundantly evident here.





VERSE 1

एकं वेगवती मध्ये हस्तिशैले च दृश्यते ।

उपाय फल भावेन स्वयम व्यक्तम् परम् महः ॥ १ ॥

Yekam Vegathee-madhyE HasthiSailE cha dhruyathE
upAya-phala-bhAvEna svayam vyaktham Param maha:

In the first verse, he refers to the Svayam vyaktha svarupam of the Lord as “SVAYAM VYAKTHAM PARAM EKAM MAHA:” This mighty effulgence that manifested itself out of His own Sankalpam to neutralize the anger of His daughter in law is saluted here. He states that this Mahaa Tejas at Thiruvehhaa and the other illustrious Tejas that arose from Brahma's sacrificial fire on Hasthi giri have the complimentary relationship of means (Upaayam) and fruit (Palan). One is in the middle of river Vegavathi (Saraswathi) and the other is on the top of the sacred hillock known as Hasthi Giri.

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VERSE 2:

ईष्टे गमयितुम् पारमेष सेतुरभङ्गुरः ।
यत्र सारस्वतं स्रोतो विश्राम्यति विश्रुङ्खलम् ॥ २ ॥

yeeshteh gamayithum paaramesha sethurabhangura : I
yatra saarasvatham srothO visraamyathi visrungalam II



'HasthiSailESan'



Here Swami Desikan describes the Lord, who took the form of a dam to obstruct the intent of Saraswathi to destroy her consort's Yajnam. Swami describes that indestructible and immovable dam (Sethu) as “Abhangura: Yesha Sethu” . He points out that dam has the power to serve as an unfailing bridge to get one across the dangerous and turbulent ocean of SamsArA to the other side recognized as Moksham or Parama Padam. Swami Desikan pays tribute to this Maha Tejas beyond description by humans as the dam where the power of human speech finds its halting place. “Saarasvatham Visrungalm Srotha:” refers to both the halting of the floods of Saraswathi as well as the end to the flow of words that one uses in an attempt to praise the Lord through eulogies. “Yatho Vaachaa Nivartanteh, Apraapya manasaa saha:” is the mood of our Acharya here.





VERSE 3:

जयति जगदेक सेतुः
वेगवतीमध्यलक्षितो देवः ।
प्रशमयति यः प्रजानाम्
प्रथितान् संसार जलधिकल्लोलान् ॥ ३ ॥

Jayathi jagadekha sethu:
VegavathimadhyalakshithO Deva: I
prasamayathi Ya: prajaanaam
prathithaan samsArjaladhikallOlan II

Here Swami Desikan recommends that we perform Prapatthi and cross the dangerous floods of SamsAram by traveling over the safe bridge of the Lord, who took the form of the Dam in the middle of the swift flowing river Vegavathi. He salutes the Lord of Thiruvehha as “Jagadekha Sethu:” (The unmatched, one and only Sethu). Swami Desikan salutes the Lord’s kalyana gunam of Jagath Rakshakthvam and supreme power by pointing out that He saves the people of the world from the dangers associated with the tall and ferocious waves of the ocean of SamsArA by subjugating them.

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VERSE 4:

विभातु मे चेतसि विष्णु सेतुः
वेगापगा वेग विघात हेतुः ।
अम्भोजयोनेः यदुपज्ञमासीत्
अभङ्ग रक्षा हयमेघ दीक्षा ॥ ४ ॥

vibhAthu meh chatesai Vishnusetu:
vegaapagaa vega vigAtha hetu : I
Ambhoja YOnehr yadhupaj~nmaaseeth
Abhanga Rakshaa hayamedha Dheekshaa II

The salutation here is to the Vishnu Sethu, which is Vishnu in the form of a dam (Sethu) in the middle of Vegavathi river (Vega Aapagaa) to serve as the means to arrest the fast flowing floods (Vega Vigaatha Hetu:). Swami wants that Vishnu Sethu to shine in his mind. In the second half of verse set in UpajAthi metre to hint at the Sthala PurANam, he salutes the special route that the Lord took to protect his lotus-born Son's (Ambhoja YOneh:) Aswamedha Yaagam (Hayamedha DeekshA) to an uninterrupted conclusion through His protective intervention (Abhanga Rakshaa). There was hence no Bhangam (risk/danger) to that Yaj~nam. Swami salutes the means taken by the Lord as Yadh Upaj~nam to resonate with the word Yajnam.

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VERSE 5: OUPACCHANDASIKAM METRE

चतुरानन सप्ततन्तु गोप्ता
सरितं वेगवतीम् असौनिरुन्धन् ।
परिपुष्यति मङ्गलानि पुंसां
भगवान् भक्तिमतां यथोक्तकारी ॥ ५ ॥

chaturaanana saptha tanthu gopthA
saritham Vegavatheemasou nirundhan
Paripushayathi mangaLaani pumsAm
bhagavaan bhakthimataam Yathokthakaaree

Here at this Divya desam, the Lord stood as a divine dam to arrest the furious flow of Saraswathi in the form of a river and saved the Yajnam of Brahma. When his Bhaktha (Thirumazhisai AzhwAr) commanded Him to roll up his bed of Adishesha and accompany him, He did so; afterwards, when the Azhwar requested Him to return to His divya Desam and spread his bed back again to rest there, he did obey the instructions of the Azhwaar and earned therefore the name “Sonna VaNNam Seytha PerumAL / YathoktakAri”. This Lord of ThiruvehhA blesses all those, who worship Him at His divya desam with devotion.





VERSE 6: VASANTHA TILAKAA METRE

श्रीमान् पितामह वधू परिचर्यमाणः
शेते भुजङ्ग शयने स महाभुजङ्गः ।
प्रत्यादि शन्ति भव सञ्चरणं प्रजानां
भक्तानुगन्तुरिह यस्य गतागतानि ॥ ६ ॥

SrimAn pitAmaha vadhU paricharyamANa:
Setheh bhujanga sayaneh sa mahAbhujanga : I
pratyAdisanthi bhava samcharaNam prajAnAm
bhakthAnuganthuriha yasya gatAgatAni II



'yathOkthakAri'





In this Divya Desam, the humbled Saraswathi Devi is seen at the foot of the resting Lord (Vishnu Sethu) with folded hands. She has a pose that suggests her readiness to serve her father-in-law in a chastened mood. Swami Desikan also uses a pun (sledai) on the word Bhujanga in this verse. The two meanings are: (1) the Lord resting on a snake (Adi Seshan) as Bhujanga Sayanan (2) One who has intense desire for those devoted to Him such as the Gopis of Brindavanam and Azhwaars like Thirumozhisai. At this Divya desam, the Lord with His consort receives the Kaimkaryam of Saraswathi and protects His devotees in many ways. Those devotees, who meditate and reflect upon the comings and goings (gathaagathaani) of the Lord at the request of Thirumazhisai Azhwaar here, would be blessed fully to be saved from the terrors of Samsaaraa. His attitude as he rests on his serpent bed seems to be like that of an intensely desirous one, who wants to associate with similar minded bhakthaas, who have intense desire for Him.

BHUJANGA AND OTHER SAYANAMS OF THE LORD

Incidentally, the Bhujanga Sayana Sevai at this Divya Desam is one of the 8 sayana poses that we have the Darsanam of the Lord in Archa form at the 27 divya Desams. The Bhujanga Sayanam has been chosen by the Lord in the following 19 Divya Desams:

1. Thiruvehha
2. Thiruvananthapuram
3. Srirangam
4. Thiru Anbil
5. Thiru Aadhanoor
6. Thiru YevvuL
7. Thirukkarambanur
8. Thiru Kabisthala
9. Thirukkoshthiyur
10. ThirukkoLur
11. Thirucchirupuliyur
12. Thiru Terriambalam
13. Thiruppaarkadal (Apraakrutham)
14. Thiruppirithi (Jyoshi mutt)
15. ThiruppuLingudi
16. ThirupuLLam Bhoothamgudi
17. Thirupper Nagar
18. Thiruvaataaru





19. ThiruveLLiangudi

THE OTHER SAYANA KSHETRAMS AND THE TYPES OF SAYANAMS ARE:

1. Bhoga Sayanam/Tillai Thirucchitrakootam
2. Maanikka sayanam/Thiruneermalai
3. Vata Patra sayanam Srivilliputthur
4. Veera sayanam/Thiru IndaLUr
5. UdyOga sayanam/Thirukkudanthai
6. Darba Sayanam/ThirupullaaNi
7. Sthala Sayanm/Thirukkadanmallai .





VERSE 7: MAALINI METRE

प्रशमित ह्यमेध व्यापदं पद्म योनेः

श्रित जन परतन्त्रं शेष भोगे शयानम् ।

शरणमुपगताः स्मः शान्त निःशेष दोषम्

शतमख मणिसेतुम् शाश्वतं वेगवत्याः ॥ ७ ॥

prasamitha hayamedha vyaapadam padma Yoneh:
sritha jana paratantram sesha bhogeh sayaanam I
saraNamupagathaa: sma: saantha: Nisseshadhosham
satamaNisethum saasvatham vegavatya: II

The Archa murthy at Thiruvehhaa is under the control of those, who approach Him and surrender unto Him. No Dhosham or imperfection can approach Him. He is blemishless. On the middle of the river Vegavathi, he rests on Adisheshaa like a dam constituted by blue gem stones with his beautiful bluish hue. Resting thus, He saved the yajnam of Brahma from the impending danger. May we approach this Lord of many kalyANa gunams and offer our SaraNagathi and be saved!





VERSE 8: MAALINI METRE

शरणम् उपगतानां सोऽयमादेशकारी
शमयति परितापं सम्मुखः सर्वं जन्तोः ।
शतगुण परिणामः सन्निधौ यस्य नित्यम्
वर वितरण भूमा वारणाद्रीश्वरस्य ॥ ८ ॥

saraNamupagathaanaam soyamaadesakAri
samayathi parithaapam sammukha : sarva janthO: I
sataguna pariNama: samnidhaou yasya nityam
vara vitaraNa bhuma VarAnAdhreesvarasya II

The Lord of Thiruvehha is the one, who follows the wishes of those doing prapatti to Him. He banishes the sorrow of His devotees and all of those associated with them. He appears before them for that purpose. Only because of His appearance first to protect Brahma's Yajnam, Sri Varadaraja came out of the sacrificial fire and stayed on the top of Atthigiri to give boons to all who worship Him. He is indeed the cause of Varadan, the boon giver's appearance on this earth.

There are two ways in which Bhagavan protects the chetanas. In one way, He removes the obstacles that they face; in the other way, He gives them the fruits of their penance through His boon-granting power. As YathokthakAri, He responds to those who offer Prapatti to Him by the first way. Varadarajan responds in the complimentary, second way and concentrates on the boon-giving activity. Varadarajan's work is made lighter thanks to YathokthakAri's taking the load off Varadaraja by destroying the sufferings of the Prapannaas first. As a result of that special activity of YathokthakAri, Varadarajan becomes one hundred percent more effective in His area of specialty (viz). Boon-giving to those, who perform SaraNagathi to Him. Varadaraja's glory thus gets multiplied thanks to YathokthakAri.

Here Swami Desikan says that YathokthakAri is "SaraNam upagathAnAm AadEsakAri" (i-e), He follows the orders of those, who perform Saranagathi at His holy feet. He comes in front of them (sammukha:) and destroys their sufferings (ParithApam Samayathi). Because of YathokthakAri's proximity, Varadaraja's (VaaraNadhri Iswarasya) glory as a boon-granting Lord (Vara vitharaNa bhUma:) multiplies a hundred fold always .





VERSE 9: MANDAAKRANTHAA METRE

काञ्ची भाग्यं कमल निलया चेतसोऽभीष्ट सिद्धिः
कल्याणानां निधिरविकलः कोऽपि कारुण्यराशिः ।
पुण्यानां नः परिणतिरसौ भूषयन् भोगिशय्यां
वेगासेतुर् जयति विपुलो विश्व रक्षैकहेतुः ॥ ९ ॥

Kanchee Bhagyam kamala nilayA chetasO abhishta siddhi:
kalyAnAnAm nidhiravikala: kopi kArunyarAsi : I
puNyAnAm na: pariNathirasou bhooshayan bhogisayAm
vegaasethurjayathi vipulO viswarakshaikahetu : II

The description of the Lord of Thiruvehha as the embodiment of the fortune of the district of Kaanchipuram is given by Swami Desikan here. He states that the Lord took archaa form here is to fulfill the wishes of His consort, who is concerned about the erring chetanAs and is keen on directing them to the right way to get the boon of Moksham from Her Lord. The Lord of Thiruvehha appears like the ripened fruit of the chetana's punyam. YatokthakAri is the house of all auspicious guNAs. He is the ocean of mercy intent on saving the suffering chetanAs. Such a magnanimous and merciful Lord rests on His bed of Adishesha at Thiruvehhaa and beautifies Adishesha through his association.





VERSE 10: ANUSHTUB METRE

वेगासेतोरिदम् स्तोत्रम् वेङ्कटेशेन निर्मितम् ।
ये पठन्ति जनास्तेषां यथोक्तं कुरुते हरिः ॥ १ ०

vegasethOridam stotram Venkatesaena nirmitham I
yeh patanteh janAstheshAm yathoktham kuruteh Hari : II



‘Sriperumbhudur Swamy Desikan’

This Vegaa Sethu stotram was composed by poet Venkatesa. Those, who recite it with devotion, will get their wishes fulfilled by the Lord of Thiruvehha. True to His words “I will protect the Prapannas, who seek refuge in me” as Rama and “I will relieve you of all sins” as KrishNa, the Lord of Thiruvehha will protect the Chetanas, who offer Prapatthi unto Him.

कवितार्किक सिंहाय कल्याण गुणशालिने ।

श्रीमते वेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्त गुरवे नमः ॥

kavitaarkika siMhaaya kalyaaNa guNa shaaline.
shrImate ve~NkaTesdaaya vedaanta gurave namaH

