

SWAMI DESIKAN'S GARUDA DANDAKAM



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CONTENTS

Introduction to Garuda Dandakam	3
Shlokam 1	8
Dhandakam Padam 1	8
Dhandakam Padam 2	9
Dhandakam Padam 3	11
Dhandakam Padam 4	13
Shloka 2	13
Shloka 3	14
Nigamanam	15





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॥ श्रीः ॥

श्री गरुड दण्डकः

श्रीमते रामानुजाय नमः

श्रीमते निगमान्त महादेशिकाय नमः

INTRODUCTION:

Swami Desikan was initiated into Garuda mantram by his Acharya, Sri AppuLLar. Incidentally, the Tamil word PuL stands for a bird. Here the reference is to the divine bird, Garuda, who is also known as Pakshi Raja (the king of Birds). Garuda Mantram includes therefore among its five syllables the two syllables constituted by the word Pakshi. The Garuda Mantram was a Mantram of AppuLLar's family. After instructing Sri Desikan on all relevant Sri Vaishnava granthas, Rahasyas, Tarka and Vyaakarna, Sri AppuLLar initiated him into the recitation of Garuda Mantram.

After his Acharya's passing away, Sri Desikan settled at Thiruvahindrapuram and



Sri Devanayaka Perumal

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worshipped Sri Devanayaka Perumal and Hemabujavalli Thaayar. While residing there, he ascended the hillock near the Lord's temple known as Oushadhadri and sat under an Aswattha tree and recited Garuda Mantram for a considerable time in intense concentration. Garuda Bhagavaan was pleased with the devotion of Sri Desikan and appeared before him and blessed Sri Desikan. Sri Garuda Bhagavan also gave an archa murthy of Yogaasika Hayagrivan to Sri Desikan to use in his daily Aaraadhanam. Sri Garuda also initiated Swami Desikan into the recitation of Sri Hayagreeva Mantram. The enormous achievements of Swami Desikan came out of the Anugraham of Sri Garuda Bhagavaan, who is generally recognized in Sri Vaishnava Sampradhaya as Veda Swaroopi. Swami Desikan Composed Garuda Panchasat to record his gratefulness to Sri Garuda Bhagavaan and incorporated the Garuda Mantram in one of the 50 slokas of that Panchasat. He then recited Sri Hayagreeva mantram and had the good fortune of seeing Sri Hayagreevan and received His blessings as well. Swami composed the Hayagreeva Stotram and incorporated the Mantra of Sri Hayagreevan in this stotram.

All the achievements of Swami Desikan as a Great Acharya arose from the blessings conferred by Both Garuda Bhagavaan and His Lord Sri Hayagreevan at Thiruvahindrapuram. The archa murthy of the Yogaasika Hayagreeva presented by Garuda Bhagavaan can be seen even today, next to the Vighraha of Swami Desikan sculpted by his own hands, when he was challenged by a sculptor, who wanted to defeat Swami in a vighraha nirmAnam contest.



Sri Yogaasika Hayagriva





Sri Garuda Dhandakam was composed on a later occasion, when a Snake charmer challenged Swami Desikan's title as Sarvatantra Swatantrar and sent some poisonous snakes towards Swami to test his power in handling those poisonous snakes. Swami Desikan recited the Garuda Mantra and the snakes were carried away by Garuda Bhagavaan. The snake charmer lost thus his snakes and his livelihood. He fell at the feet of Swami and asked for forgiveness. Swami forgave him and requested Sri Garuda Bhagavaan to return the snakes and composed the Garuda Dhandakam to thank Sri Garuda Bhagavaan for his intervention. This stotra was composed at Kanchipuram.

Thus, the Stotras associated with Garuda Bhagavaan and Sri Hayageevan, the Lord of Learning occupies a special place among the 28 stotras of Swami Desikan. Sri Garuda Dhandakam, is a marvelous composition as seen from its Dhandakam structure.

In this stotram, Swami Desikan covers the FOLLOWING topics to illustrate the glory, power and status of Garuda as one of the foremost Nitya Sooris serving Sriman NaarayaNan in Sri Vaikuntam:

1. Vedas praising Garuda Bhagavaan.
2. Garuda's service to Sriman NaarayaNa as His Vehicle and Flag
3. His matrimonial status with his two wives (Rudrai and Sukeerthi)
4. His adornment of great serpents as his jewellery on his limbs.
5. His heroic deed in bringing nectar from Indra Loka
6. His other heroic deeds in battles on behalf of his Lord
7. His splendour as the Amsa (aspect) of Para Vasudeva (i-e) his Sankarshana Swaroopam.
8. His manifestation in five individual forms
9. His conferral of Vedhanta Vidya to his aspiring devotees (i-e) his status as an Acharya.
10. The worship of Lord Garuda by learned scholars and saints
11. His power as the Garuda Mantra Moorthy
12. His power to bless one with the 4 Purusharthas (goals) of Life
13. His incarnation as Garuda as a result of the prayers of the Vaalakilya sages.
14. His power to bless one with the true knowledge or Brahma Vidya

It is generally believed that the recitation of this Dhandakam daily would protect one from the harms caused by poisonous animals such as snakes, scorpions et al.





POETIC STRUCTURE OF THIS DHANDAKAM

In sanskrit poetry, each of the 4 Paadas of a sloka can have 26 letters. If the letters of each Paadas increase to 27,30,33,36 (other multiples of 3 beyond 27), then this slokam is recognized as a Dhandakam. The 3 lettered units are known as a GaNa. Thus a 27 lettered Paada will have 9 GaNaas. There is generally no restriction on the length of the Paada in a Dhandakam. Swami Desikan chose Paadas with 36 GaNaas or 108 = (32X4) letters for the four Paadas of Garuda Dhandakam.

The poetic genius of Swami Desikan is abundantly evident in this Composition. The Paadas of this Dhandakam parsed by its 144 GaNaas make intricate swoops in the air and make sharp turns like the high soaring Pakshi Raja (Garuda). The grammar of the flight movement of this Dhandakam is defined by NagaNaas and RagaNaas. At the beginning of each Paada, the first two GaNaas are made up of NagaNaas and the remaining 34 are made up of RagaNaas. NagaNaas are those GaNas or triads of Aksharas/Syllables, which are laghu in character; RagaNaas are those, where the middle Akshara is Laghu and the remaining two are Guru. The genius of Swami Desikan as a poet is revealed from the study of this Dhandakam, where he scrupulously adheres to the rules of the Dhandakam construction, including the nuances of meter and GaNaas constituting them.



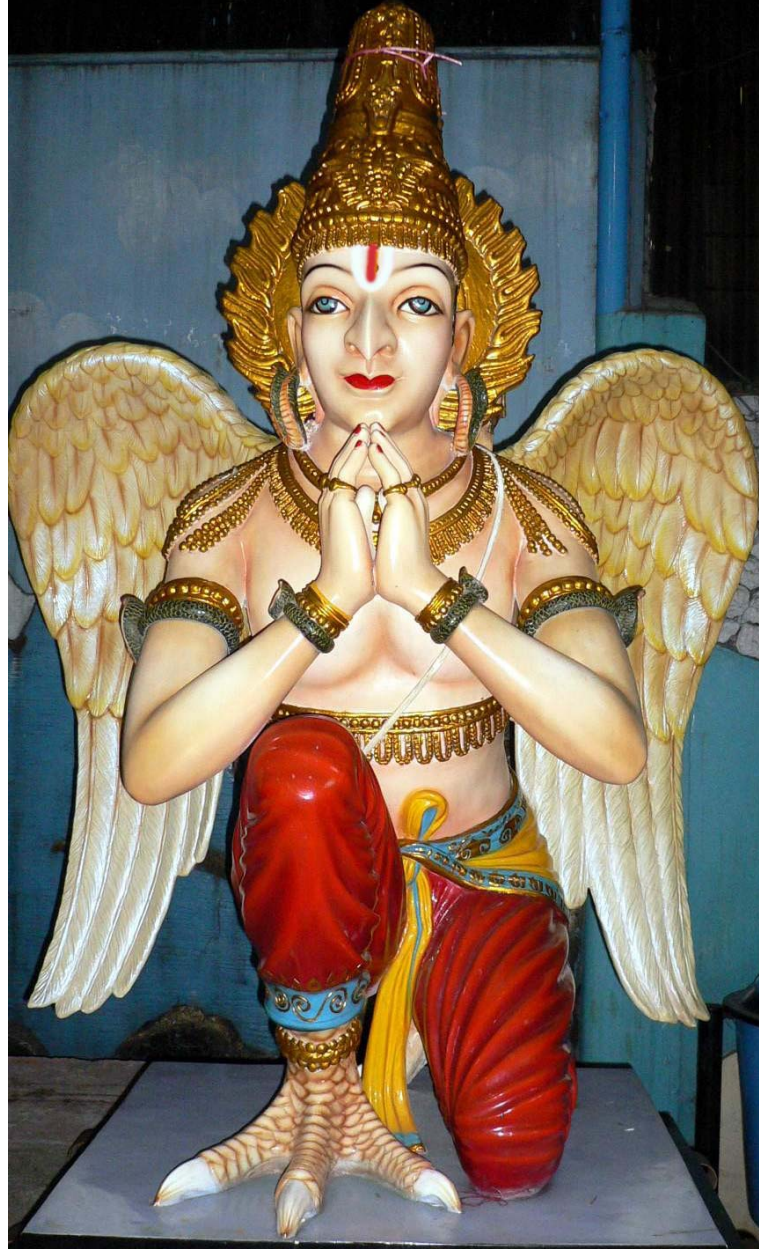
“ Kanchi Garudan”





METERS

The first sloka (nama: pannaganaddhaya) is set in the vedic meter known as anushtub with 32 syllables. The last sloka (vichitra siddha:) is also set in the same meter. The sloka prior to the last one is set in aarya vrittham. The remaining sloka forms the body of the dhandakam with its four paadas and each of the paadas containing 36 ganaas.



“Salutations to Sri Garuda with beautiful wings”



श्रीमते निगमान्त महादेशिकाय नमः

श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किक केसरी ।

वेदान्ताचार्य वर्योमे सन्निधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

Srimathe Nigamantha Maha Desikaaya Nama:
Sriman Venkatanaatharya: kavithaarkika Kesaree I
Vedanthaacharya Varyome Sannidhattaam sadha Hrudhi II



Kall Garudan

SLOKA 1:

नमः पन्नग नद्धाय वैकुण्ठ वशवर्तिने
श्रुतिसिन्धु सुधोत्पाद मन्दराय गरुत्मते ॥

Nama: pannaganaddhaaya vaikunta vasavardhineh I
Sruti-sindhu Sudhothpaada-mandaraaya Garutmathe II

My salutations to Garuda with the beautiful wings. His limbs are adorned by the mighty serpents that he has conquered in battle. They are his jewellery. He does all the intimate kankaryas to his Lord and is His Antharanga dhaasan. Garuda is devoted always to the Lord and His services. He is adept like the Mandara Mountain in churning the milky ocean of Vedas and to bring out the Brahma Vidyas. We can



get the benefits of these Brahma Vidyas by offering our worship to him. My salutations are to him.

DHANDAKAM: PAADA 1

गरुडमखिल वेद नीडाधिरूढं द्विषत् पीडनोत् कण्ठिताकुण्ठ वैकुण्ठ
पीठीकृत स्कन्धमीडे स्वनीडागति प्रीत रुद्रा सुकीर्त्ति स्तनाभोग गाढोप गूढ
स्फुरत्कण्टकव्रात वेधव्यथा वेपमान द्विजिह्वाधिपाकल्प विष्फार्यमाण स्फटा
वाटिका रत्न रोचिश्छटा राजिनीराजितं कान्ति कल्लोलिनी राजितम्

Garudamakhila Veda NeeDadhirooDam Dhvishath Peedanokantithaakunta
vaikuntapeetikrta skandhameedhe Svaneeda gatipreetha Rudraa Sukeerthi
sthanaabhoga-gaaDopakuDa sphuratkantakavraata veda vyataavepamaana
dhvijihavaadhikalpa vishppaaryamaana sphataavatikaa ratna rochischataa raaji-
neerajitham kaanti kallolinee raajitam I



“Sri Garudans wives Rudrai, Sukeerthi – Bindignavile”

Garuda Bhagavan has designed the Vedas as his cage and uses that cage as his seat. (This suggests that the Vedas sing his praise). His Lord Sriman Narayana is bent upon destroying the enemies of His devotees. No one can stop Sriman Narayana in these endeavors. When He sets about to destroy the enemies of His devotees, he uses the shoulders of Garuda as his transport. When Garuda transports his Lord on His missions, his wives-Rudrai and Sukeerthi-- miss his absence from home. When the





Lord's mission is successfully concluded, Garuda returns to his wives and they embrace him intimately with affection. In that ecstatic state, the hairs on the body of Garuda become stiff like thorns. This in turn hurts the serpents, which are covering his body. The serpents are overcome with fear and they raise their hoods. On those occasions, the ratnas positioned on their hoods radiate their brilliant red rays. That splendid group of red rays appear at that time as the mangala Aarathi to Garuda and he sparkles in that flood of red light.

DHANDAKAM: PAADA 2

जय गरुड सुपर्ण दर्वीकराहार देवाधिपाहार हारिन् दिवौकस्पति क्षिप्त दम्भोलि
धारा किणाकल्प कल्पान्त वातूल कल्पोदयानल्प वीरायितोध्यच्चमत्कार
दैत्यारिजैत्र ध्वजारोह निर्धारितोत्कर्ष संकर्षणात्मन् गरुत्मन् मरुत्पञ्चकाधीश
सत्यादिमूर्ते न कश्चित् समस्ते नमस्ते पुनस्ते नमः ॥

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“Sri ananthan & Sri Garudan – Thiruvallikkeni”





Jaya Garuda Suparna Darveekaraahaara Devaadhipaahaaraahaarin diwowkaspati
Kshipta Dambholi Dhaaraa kinaakalpa Kalpaantha Vatoola Kalpodhayaanalpa
Veerayithoodhyacchamatkaara Dhaityaari Jaitra Dhwajaarohanirdhaaritothkarsha
Sankarshanaatman Garutman Marutpanchakaadheesa Sathyaathimurthe na Kaschit
samas te namaste punaste nama: II

O Garuda Bhagavan! You have been named Suparna, because of the beauty of your wings. Serpents of immense size serve as your food. You brought Nectar, the food of the Devas- from Indra Loka to release your mother from the bonds of servitude. Indra got angry at you during that time and threw his Vajra weapon at you. The sharp edge of that powerful weapon caused wounds on your wings and rest of the body. The welts from those wounds look today as pieces of jewellery on your body and attest to your heroic deed in defeating Indra. Your other heroic deeds stand out like the mighty winds that sweep the universe during the time of the great deluge. You are sitting on the flag of your Lord, which denotes His victory over His enemies; from your position on the flag of your Lord, we are able to infer your glories. You have incarnated as Sankarshana among the four Vyuha Murthys of Sriman Narayana, which are Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradhumna and Aniruddha.

You have divided yourself into five forms-- Satyar, Suparnar, Garudar, Taarkshyar and VihagEswarar-- and matched those five forms with the five Vayus (Praanan, Apaanan, Samaanan, Udhaanan and Vyaanan) and shine thereafter as a supreme Devan. O Lord with the most exquisitely beautiful golden Wings! There is none, who is equal to you. I offer my salutations to you first and then again repeat my salutations.

DHANDAKAM PAADA 3

नम इदमजहत् सपर्याय पर्याय निर्यात पक्षानिलास्फालनोद्वेल पाथोधि वीची
चपेटाहतागाध पाताल भांकार संक्रुद्ध नागनेद्र पीडास्रुणीभाव भास्वन्नखश्रेणये
चण्डतुण्डाय नृत्यद् भुजङ्गभ्रुवे वज्रिणे दंष्ट्रया तुभ्यम् अध्यात्मविध्या विधेया
विधेया भवद्दास्यमापादयेथा दयेथाश्च मे ॥

Nama Idhamajahath-saparyaaya Paryaaya-niryaata- pakshaanilaasppalanodhvela
PaToti Veechi- chapetaahataagaadha paatala Bhankara sankruttha nagendra
peetaasrunee bhaava bhasvannakhasreNayE chandatundaaya nrtyat bhujanga
bhruve vajrine dhamshtayaa thubhyam Adhyaatmavidyaa vidheyaa vidheyaa
bhavath dhasyamaapaadhayeta dhayaTaasccha meh I





O Garuda Bhagavan! Learned scholars offer their uninterrupted worships to you. Your wings in flight generate mighty winds that stir up all the oceans and make them flow over their boundaries. The waves that rise and fall from those powerful winds reach down to the netherworld (Paatalam) and the effect is like a violent blow given by the palm of one's hand.

A frightening sound heard as "Bhaam" reverberates around the world at that time. The mighty elephants guarding the quarters are shaken up by this mighty sound of "Bhaam" and run to attack you, the generator of that sound. Your rows of sharp nails acting as the elephant goad attack those angry elephants of the quarters and repulse them. Your mighty beak raises terror in the minds of your enemies. When you knot your brows, it looks like the movement of the hood of a Cobra. Your canine teeth look like the Vajra weapon of Indra and strikes terror in the hearts of your enemies. My salutations to you of such limitless glory! May thou bless me so that Brahma Vidyas become easy to be possessed by me! Please bless me out of your infinite compassion so that I can have the good fortune to offer kankaryams to you.



“Bindignavile Garudan ”





DHANDAKAM PAADA 4

मनुरनुगत पक्षिवक्त्र स्फुरत्तारकस् तावकश्चित्रभानु प्रिया शेखरस्त्रायतां
 नस्त्रिवर्गापवर्ग प्रसूतिः परव्योम धामन् वलद्वेषिदर्पज्वलद्वालखिल्य प्रतिज्ञा वती
 र्ण स्थिरांतत्वबुद्धिंपरांभक्ति धेनुं जगन्मूलकन्दे मुकुन्दे महानन्द दोग्ध्रीं
 दधीथा मुधाकामहीनाम् अहीनामहीनान्तक ॥

Manuranugata Pakshi-vaktra sphurattharakas taavakaschitrabhanupriyaa
 sekharastthrayathaam nasthrivargaapavarga prasuthi: paravyoma dhaaman
 valadhveshidharpajjalath Vaalakilya PratigynaavatheerNa sTiraam tatvabuddhim
 paraam bhaktidhenum jaganmoolakandhe Mukundhe mahaanandadhogdhreem
 dhatiTaa mudhaakaamaheenaamaheenaanthaka II

O Garuda Bhagavan residing permanently in Sri Vaikuntam! Your mantram confers to the reciters the four fold (Dharma-Artha-Kama -Moksha) goals of Life. That mantram of yours made up of 5 syllables, has the Pranavam as its first syllable. At the end, it carries the syllable associated with the wife of Agni. May the mantram of that structure protect us! Once, Devendran became arrogant over his powers and insulted the Sages with the name of VaalakilyAs. (The sages got angry and cursed Indra. They cursed that Indra's arrogance be destroyed by an incarnation of Sankarshana (Garuda) on a future date). You were born from the vow made by the VaalakilyAs that you destroy the mighty arrogance of Indra and you made their words come true. You serve as the lord of Death for mighty serpents that challenged you.

Please bless me with the discriminating knowledge to distinguish between true (superior) and false (inferior) knowledge. Your Lord is the fundamental and principal cause of all the universes. Please bless me to have the cow representing the limitless devotion to your Lord, so that it can yield for me its delectable milk. May that devotion of mine be free from the distractions of the insignificant and evanescent pleasures of life! May thou confer on me the boon of possessing such a superior devotion to your Lord and True Knowledge about Him!

SLOKA IN AARYA METER OUTLINING THE STRUCTURE OF GARUDA DHANDAKAM

षट्त्रिंशद्गणचरणो नर परिपाटी नवीन गुम्भगणः ।
 विष्णुरथ दण्डकोऽयं विघटयतु विपक्ष वाहिनी व्यूहम् ॥





**Shat-thrhimsathgaNa-charanoh nara paripaati naveena GhumbhagaNa: I
VishnuraTa-dhaNdakoyam Vigatayathu vipaksha Vaahini Vyuham II**

This entire Garuda Dhandakam is of the form of one slokam. This has four Paadas. Each of the Paadas has 36 GaNaas. Each Gana has three syllables. This Dhandakam follows strictly the rules of composing Dhandakams and has the NagaNaas and RagaNaas in each of the Paadas and yields novel word constructions. When one recites this Garuda Dhandakam, it will destroy the formations of the enemies, who have assembled to do battle with us and scatter them to the winds.

CONCLUDING SLOKA IN THE ANUSHTUB METER

**विचित्र सिद्धिदः सोऽयं वेङ्कटेश विपश्चिता ।
गरुडध्वजतोषाय गीतोगरुडदण्डकः ॥**



“Bless us with the superior devotion to your Lord – Garudan, Pomona”





Vichitra siddhidada: sOyam Venkatesa Vipascchitaa I
Garudadhwaja-thoshaaya Gheetho Garudadhandaka: II

This Garuda Dhandakam was composed and sung by adiyEn, the Vidwan known as Venkatesa to please the Lord, who has Garuda on his flagstaff. The recitation of this Garuda Dhandakam will confer on the reciter multifold blessings and fulfill their heartfelt wishes of every kind.



कवितार्किक सिंहाय कल्याण गुणशालिने ।

श्रीमतेवङ्कटशोय वेदान्त गुरवे नमः ॥

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

Dasan

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