

THE GLORY OF SRI HARIKATHAMRUTA SARA

By Venkatesh Muthalik. U.S.A.

HarikathAmR'ita Sara GurugaLa KaruNadindApanitu PeLuve |
Parama bhagavatbhaktaridanAdaradi Keluvudu ||

So begins Sri Jagannatha Dasaru's Sri Harikathamruta Sara (HKS). This elegant work comprising 988 verses spread over 32 chapters is also an eloquent exposition of Madhva shashtra. Even a beginner, with a diligent study of the HKS at the feet of a master can very quickly gain a critical mass of understanding of the Madhva Shashtra and begin to connect dots in the far flung reaches of the vast universe of the Srimad Acharya's shashtra. In the present day, when even to approach the shashtras is intimidating, Sri HKS is a timely text that is a bridge to the timeless texts such as the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras.

What a pleasure it is to study the HKS! As an immediate secular benefit, such is the power of the HKS, that its study quickly improves one's ability in any other language! The entire HKS is written in the Bhamini Shatpadi style wherein, each verse has six lines and has a cumulative of 102 syllabic instants (mAtrAs). All gems of the Madhva shashtra are encrusted in the HKS, and the HKS takes each concept, lifts it up, holds it to light, illuminates the various facets, provides exquisite examples as it moves along and offers a conclusion while not losing steam through the whole presentations process. The way the HKS transcends the jumble of words and conveys meaning is a joy to behold.

The HKS is a great training ground for the beginning spiritual aspirant. While a straight forward reading of the main text is in and of itself uplifting, far more uplifting is the critical contemplation of the text. Under able guidance and within the walled garden of the HKS, the beginner is able to understand how to interpret verses that present a conundrum upon initial reading. The interpretations must be grammatically correct (vyAkarNa), not contradict preceding or succeeding verses (purva utara virodha parihAra), not be needlessly repetitive (punarukti dosha parihAra) and above all be faithful to the grand vision of the text (mahAtAtparya avirodha). Numerology (sankhya shashtra) is ever present in the HKS although most clearly visible in the Bhojana Rasa Vibhaga Sandhi. The HKS is a great place to encounter technical terms commonly used in the shastras and therefore to also to build up a great vocabulary. Ideas such as bhagavad svAtantrya, jiva pArantrya, bhagavad svagata bheda vivarjitatva, bhagavad vyApti-sannidhAna-vibhUti, jivAchchAdhika - paramAchchAdhika, bhagavad guNa pUrNatva - doshadUratva, nADi-chakra vivaraNa, tattvAbhimAni devataA tAratamya are thoroughly discussed with many examples.

There is a grand consistency in the text. The HKS begins, continues and concludes with the premise that the Lord is the only independent and therefore supreme entity, and all the actions of all the subservient jivas are by the Lord's Will only - "bhagavantanu mADi-mADisuva". While this is clear throughout the text, there are three chapters - datta-svagata-sarva svAtantrya sandhis - completely devoted to more clearly communicating this idea.

Another important idea is the svagata bheda vivarjitatva of the Lord, i.e., the Lord is completely undifferentiated in His being. Each attribute of the Lord has all other attributes of the Lord (Infinite attributes within one attribute, "ondu guNadolu ananta guNagaLu"). The Lord is independent - because of His independence He is Omnipotent, and because He is omnipotent, He is Omnipresent and in Omniscient. Such is the incomprehensible incomparable power (achintya-adbhuta shakti) of the Lord. The Omnipresence of the Lord is elaborately discussed in the vyApti sandhi. The Lord is eternally perfect and complete in all His attributes and is eternally without any defects (guNa purNa dosha dUra) , which is why the Lord is without partiality or mercilessness (vaishamya nairghriNya). His impartiality is the prime cause of the jivas getting their just desserts in samsara and His mercy is the prime cause for the jivas liberation from the bondage of the samsara. The Lord's mercy is elaborately discussed in the karnuNA sandhi.

The Lord is of infinite names and forms, each of which is non-different and complete in itself but separately mentioned for convenience (vishesha). The same ever complete Omnipresent Lord is also ever present in the jiva as the jiva's bimba murti. Contemplation and epiphany of the bimba murti is the quest of each spiritual aspirant. The HKS describes this spiritual process and along the way presents many names and forms of the Lord, the mere recitation of which is most meritorious. Most notably, across many chapters the five forms of the Lord, Viz, Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Sankarshana, Vasudeva and Narayana are very elaborately described. Several other uncommon names and forms useful for contemplation are described along with their numerology and significance.

The HKS is steadfast in its devotion to Sri Vayu deva across the text. In many verses and across many chapters, the greatness and glory of Sri Vayu are brought out. Especially in the shvAsa sandhi, Sri Vayu's great sAdhana (spiritual practice) and the great debt of gratitude that the jivas owe to Sri Vayu is described. By his very nature, Sri Vayu's will is entirely aligned with Sri Hari's will, which is why all attempts of Sri Vayu are always successful and he never suffers any sorrow in the samsara and after his stint as the next Brahma attains a very special place in the liberated pantheon. Sri Vayu's steadfast in his devotion to the Lord and his prowess is never diminished even when he incarnates at the Lord's command. In his incarnation as Sri Madhva, Sri Vayu deva himself created the sarva mula granthas which are commentaries of the timeless texts and also several independent works that delve into the nature of the Lord and His creation.

The HKS is very concerned with nudging the folks towards the Lord and offers various practical ways of implementing a Godly life even as one goes about the regular day-to-day activities. To those that need just a little nudge to turn their life towards the shashtras, the HKS entreats them to do so. To those that need something stronger, the HKS more brusquely instructs them to quit the bad and to move on towards the Lord. The HKS heaps scorn upon those with only a superficial understanding of the shastras and goads these dilettantes towards a more genuine devotion to the Lord. But the HKS fulminates with full force against an orthodoxy that attempts to belittle it for the sole reason that it is in Kannada rather than in the Sanskrit language, for, a text conveying knowledge of the Lord in whatever language is to be universally respected.

The HKS is a worry bead par excellence -

- a. When taking a bath, one can recite "anguTakgradijanisida amaratarangiNi" verse - indeed one of my most vivid memories is reciting this verse in praise of Ganga and Sri Haris' name while taking a dip along with the family in the Holy Ganga at Varanasi.
- b. When the news of an elderly relative's passing away after having lived a full life reaches one, the mind automatically goes to the nadi prakarNa sandhi, whence the HKS describes the mystical confluence of the ida pingala and the sushumna nadis even as one takes a bath at the Triveni sangam.
- c. When an auspicious event is begun at home, the mind automatically goes to the gaNapati stotra sandhi.
- d. As one partakes of the tirtha prasada, one can recite the bhojana rasa vibhaga sandhi, infact this is one of the traditions we have maintained over the years at our satsanga group as we partake of the prasada.
- e. As each Ekadashi approaches, one can make it a habit to recite the mangaLAacharaNa Sandhi and the nAmasmaraNa sandhi. As compositions go, the HKS is a complete package.

Here is an invitation for all to study the HKS in the New Year 2011, ideally under the guidance of a teacher. For those that would like to begin right away however,

- a. There are a number of complete recitations of the HKS, most notably by Sri Ananta Kulkarni and Sri Vidyabhushana.
- b. HH Sri Suvidyendra Swamiji has given a series of lectures on the entire HKS in Kannada which is comprehensive (produced by Arjun Audio). Sri Bannaje Govindacharya has given lectures for the first few chapters of the HKS in Kannada which is very detailed (<http://anandamala.org>).
- c. There are a number of commentaries on the HKS, most notably by HH Sri Sankarshana Odeyaru (published by Sri Mahacharya Prakashanam), a compilation of five commentaries called the Pancha Ratna Prakashika (published by Sri Varadendra Haridas Sahitya Mandala) and a commentary by Sri Kamalapati Dasar (published by Aitareya Prakashana Vyasanakere), all in Kannada
- d. Sri Purandara Ashrama (www.sripurandaraashrama.org) has published the HKS in various scripts (Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil) with work splits and pauses for ease of recitation. There is also a slow complete recitation of the HKS without music by Sri H. Narayana Rao as a recitation companion at the same site.
- e. The Late Sri SGP Char laboriously translated the entire HKS into English with word-by-word meanings on the Dvaita List concluding in March 2008 (<http://dvaita.info/pipermail/dvaita-list>, <http://dvaita.info/2008-March/003607.html>). This translation series is available at the Dvaita site for those that would like to approach this text in English.

On a personal note, I have been very fortunate to have begun the study of the HKS a few years back under our teacher, Sri Keshava Rao Tadipatri. Several years ago, Sri Keshava Rao had kindled my interest in this great text, by securing a devanAgari text for me (published by Parimala Prakashana Bijapur) and over the years very patiently going thru the text verse by

verse. Our study group is very diverse and some are familiar with devanagari, some with Telugu, some with Tamil and some with the Kannada script. None of us has had traditional training in the shashtras. All of us have benefited by his weekly telephone lectures on the HKS for the past several years. And at the conclusion of each chapter, we meet to revise and discuss the text thoroughly to really get at the "take home" message of the chapter. The end result has been that we are exposed to many of the concepts in the HKS and when we attempt a study of the Gita or Other timeless texts under able guidance of our teacher, even with our own modest faculties are able to appreciate their grandeur. My many namaskaras to Sri Keshava Rao.

Perhaps the best way to end this essay in praise of Sri Harikathamruta Sara is to quote the penultimate verse of the very poetic Phala Stuti Sandhi written by Sri Shrida Vithala Dasaru, a disciple of Sri Jagannatha Dasara.

maNikhachita harivANadali vAraNa
subhojyapadArtha kRishNArpaNavenuta
pasidavarigosuga nIduvaMadadali |
praNatarige pOMganaDa varavANmaNigaLiM
virachisida kritiyoLu
uNisi nODuva harikathAmRitasAravanudAra ||

As if serving delicious and nutritious food to the hungry in a jewel encrusted golden plate and with devotion offering that service to Lord Krishna, so also has the generous Sri Jagannatha Dasaru lovingly fed the multitude of the Lord's devotees the delicious nectar of Sri Hari's sagas, in this excellent work Sri Harikathamruta Sara which is a plate forged in the golden Kannada language and encrusted with glorious jeweled concepts.

My very Humble pranamas to Sri Jagannatha Dasaru, to his Magnum Opus Sri Harikathamruta Sara and to the long lineage of Dasas and Yatis all the way to Srimad Acharya and ultimately to the Lord Sri Hari.

Shri bharatiramaNa mukhyaprANa.ntargata shri krishnarpaNamastu