

“Tirumala Kshetra Darsini” Series

**UTSAVAS OF  
LORD SRI VENKATESWARA**

*Telugu Version*

**Julakanti Balasubrahmanyam**

*English Translation*

**Prof. M. Raja Gopalacharya**



*Published by*

**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati.**

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## FOREWORD

*Venkatadri samam sthanam*

*Brahmande Nasti Kinchana*

*Venkatesa samo devo*

*na bhuto na bhavishyati*

“There is no place equivalent to Venkatadri in this entire universe. There is no God so far who can equal Lord Sri Venkateswara. Nor shall there be any in future.” This is the meaning of the above verse.

Sri Venkateswara, the supreme Lord of the universe, has manifested Himself on Sri Venkatadri, known as the Vaikuntham of this Kali Yuga. He gives a glimpse of his vision everyday to his devotees and redeems them. Thousands of devotees throng this shrine to have a glimpse of the divinely auspicious idol of Lord Sri Venkateswara even for a moment.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam has launched a series of books under the title “Tirumala Kshetra Darsini” Series commissioning scholarly writings. Aimed at enlightening the devotees about the gracious idol of the Lord, these writings highlight the unique features of the shrine, His ‘*pushkarini*’, ‘*punya teerthas*’, the daily services offered with regal grandeur to the Lord, *Brahmotsavas etc.* It is on this Venkatadri Sri Venkateswara manifested Himself as a visible Lord to respond to our prayers and fulfil our desires as a master boon-giver.

We present this book to the devotees entitled 'Utsavas of Lord Sri Venkateswara' by Julakanti Balasubrahmanyam, originally written in Telugu (శ్రీ వేంకటేశ్వర స్వామి ఉత్సవాలు) which is rendered into English by Prof. M. Rajagopalachary. We hope that this book serves the purpose of enlightening the devotees about the details of Lord's 'utsavas' and other unique features.

In the Service of Lord Venkateswara

  
**Executive Officer,**

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,  
Tirupati.

## UTSAVAS OF LORD SRI VENKATESWARA

*Sheshaachale yanmahaathmya manyakshetre  
na tath kvachit  
Thadgathasreenivaasasya mahimaa  
nanyagaha shubhah*

Sheshachala shrine is renowned all over the world as a holy place. No other shrine in the world has such glory. Similarly, there is no other God who is so great as Lord Sri Venkateswara, who made this holiest of holy places as His abode. That is why, the Vedas sing in His praise thus, "Yo si sosi," i.e. "Thou art what thou art!" He is none else than Lord Srinivasa who is worshipped as a peerless Lord in all yugas, whatever be the place or time.

Wherefrom has descended such a wonderful Lord? Why? When? What is the nature of the shrine where the Lord resides? Is the shrine also endowed with any specialty as the Lord Himself? Does it have any miraculous charms? If so, how many are they? What are they? Of what nature? Who knows them? If anybody knows them, it must be the Lord of Tirumala alone. That is all! That is all!!

*Vaikuntham vaa parithyakshye na  
bhakthaamsthyakthumuthsahe  
Methipriyaa hi madbhakthaa ithi sankalpa  
vaanasi //*

Lord Srimannarayana Himself has descended on this earth straight from Sri Vaikuntham with the firm

determination that “He would rather leave Sri Vaikuntha than His devotees for even a split second.” He has come down to the holy shrine of Venkatachala on this earth with Sri Lakshmi on his chest in His self-manifestation as an idol of salagrama stone to bless the devotees with his *darshan*.

Renowned as “*Kalou Venkata nayakah*,” He is the only refuge to all in the Kaliyuga. Devotees flock to Tirumala shrine day in and day out to have a glimpse of this great Lord of the hills for redemption.

The Tirumala which attracts thousands of devotees every day is a wonderful hill! A hill endowed with many miracles, and mysteries!! The rocks, boulders and hills that you see in the shrine are not what they innocently appear to be. They are the boon-givers laden with endless lore. They are the *salagrama* stones symbolic of Lord Himself. They are not in ones or twos. Wherever you go on the hill, what you see is nothing but *salagrama*. Not just that! Even the Lord Srinivasa Himself, according to the Puranas, is a self-manifestation in the form of a huge *salagrama* idol.

That is why Tallapaka Annamayya, incarnation of an aspect of Nandaka, sword of Lord Srinivasa, scaled the Tirumala hills barefoot. Long before him, Bhagavad Ramanujacharya who considered Tirumala as God Himself, ascended it on his knees. Later Vyasaraya of Madhva tradition, as per the historical records, also chose to travel to the Tirumala hills on his knees.

It is impossible to limit the charming miracles of Tirumala hills, the heaven on the earth. Just ascend the

hill and you will be free of all your lapses and grave sins committed though unwittingly. The cool breezes of the hill cure you of all your diseases of the body and past karma.

Again it is impossible to delimit the charms of holy waters gushing forth from the springs and water falls and the gliding brooks on the hill.

This is a forest haunted once by the Creator Brahma and other angels, Kumara Swamy, Anjana Devi, Sri Ramachandra, Lakshmana, the Seven Sages, Tumbura, Narada, the Pandavas, the Alwars, Tallapaka Annamacharya, Kannada Haridasas, Matrusri Tarigonda Vengamamba and many other great personalities, yogis, saints, devotees in different times in different yugas. They did penance in their own way. They took holy bath in these waters. They sang in praise of the Lord of the Seven Hills. They performed *yagnas* and *yagas*. They adopted different practices to attain consecration and redemption. Besides, they redeemed others as well. They continue to do so even now. These noble personalities enhanced the limitless charming miracles of Venkatachala shrine in different ways.

Examples are galore testifying to the glory and greatness of this shrine, the appellation of the Lord, the auspiciously divine idol of the Lord, His worship and utsavas.

\* \* \*

### WONDERFUL IS THIS HILL

Venkatachala shrine is a wonderful hill. An amazing hill! Annamayya has visualized its greatness directly in this padam.

*Kattedura Vaikuntamu kaanaachayina konda!  
Thettelaya mahimale Tirumala konda!*

*Vedamule shilalai velasina dee konda!  
Ye desa punyarasule erulainadee konda!  
Gaadili Brahmaadilokamula konala konda!  
Sree Devudundeti Seshadri yee konda!!*

What is this hill if not Vaikuntham right before you?  
This Tirumala Hill, full of miracles like beehives!  
The stones here are the disguised Vedas!  
Heaps of good deeds have flowed down here  
As brooks wherever you go!  
On the edge of this hill are the worlds  
Of Brahma and other angels with love!  
This Seshadri is but the abode of the Lord!!

Annamacharya's son Peda Tirumalayya also describes it thus:

*Kondaa! Choothamu raaro! Kondoka  
Tirumala Kondaa!  
Kondani yadigina varamulosagu maa  
kondala Timmayakondaa!  
Idiye ksheeraambudhi yanuchu mari idiye  
dwaaraka yanuchu  
Idiye nandavraja manuchunu mari idi daa  
nayodhya yanuchoo*

*Idiye Vaikuntham banuchunu idi  
paratatvambanuchu  
Yidiye paramapadam banuchu Vedamula  
yennagagala maa kondaa!*

Let us all go to see the hill! The Tirumala hill!  
This hill of our Timmaya  
Which showers boons whatever you ask for,  
This is the Ocean of Milk, Dwaraka,  
Nandavraja and the Ayodhya,  
Vaikuntham and the quintessence of ultimate truth,  
The last place of refuge  
Thus the Vedas count this great hill!

The way the greatness of the hill is described is simply marvellous and wonderful!

### STRANGE ARE THE DIVINE NAMES OF THE LORD

Lord Sri Venkateshwara has innumerable names! Are they the actual names of the Lord? We are not sure. What is true is the devotees call Him by the names they like most. The Lord, however, responds to them whichever way they call Him. All these names appear very strange and wonderful. They surprise as well as delight us.

Some devotees passionately address Him as "The Lord of the Seven Hills" since the Lord resides on the seven hills known as Sheshachalam, Venkatachalam, Narayanachalam, Garudachalam, Vrishachalam, Vrishabhachalam, and Anjanachalam. Let us try to know the story behind these names.

### SHESHACHALAM

Once upon a time, there was a heated argument between Adishesha and Vayudeva. When tempers ran high, each of them started claiming his superiority over the other. Angry Adishesha coiled round Lord's Kreedachala and challenged Vayudeva to move him a little. Gathering all his force, Vayudeva blew him out alongwith the hill. And Lo! Adishesha alongwith the hill was tossed down to the earth and got very much depressed at the insult. Srimannarayana patted him with love and asked him not to worry as He would wear him as an ornament on his shoulders. He also assured that the hill from that day onwards will assume his name as Sheshachalam. He assuaged him further that "I would also be known hereafter as Sheshachalapathi, the Lord of Sheshachala." Thus, the first hill is known as Sheshachalam or Sheshadri.

### VENKATACHALAM

The second one is Venkatachalam! The root '*Vem*' means sins and '*kataha*' means burns. So, the word Venkatah means that which burns the heaps of sins. Just touch the Venkatachala and all your sins perish like the cotton flakes in the raging fire! That is why, it is called Venkatachala. Further, it is said in *Venkachala Purana*:

*Venkaaromritha beejasthu katamaishwarya  
muchyathe  
Amrithaishwarya sanghatvat Venkatadririthi  
smrithaha*

'*Vem*' means immortality; and '*kataha*' means riches; Thus the hill is said to impart mundane wealth as well as the other worldly redemption. Hence, it is called Venkatah or Venkatachala.

### NARAYANACHALAM

The third one is Narayanachalam or Narayanadri!

In the old days, there was a devotee named Narayana who reached Venkatachala shrine wandering through the forests. He was attracted to the natural beauty of the hill and the forests. He was immensely delighted to watch the water falls and bathe in the gliding brooks.

He used to bathe in the holy spring on the hill. He bathed in the holy waters of Swami *Pushkarini*, and intensely meditated upon the Vyuha Lakshmi resting on the chest of the Lord. When Lord Srinivasa appeared before him Narayana implored him thus: "Oh Lord! Venkatapathi! This is my desire! Let this hill be known with my name as Narayanadri. Also may you descend on this hill to protect the devotees with your *darshan*." Conceding his request immediately, Sri Venkateshwara liberated his soul. The hill is thus known as Narayanadri from that day onwards.

### GARUDACHALAM

The fourth of the seven hills is Garudachalam or Garudadri!

Sri Maha Vishnu manifests Himself on the earth in every yuga to punish the wicked and save the virtuous

as it is said in the Gita: “*Parithranaaya Saadhoonam Vinashayacha Dushkrutham! Dharma Samsthapanaarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge!!*”

Once upon a time, a demon known as Hiranyaksha started torturing the people of different worlds in different ways. Unable to bear his cruelty, the saints pleaded with Lord Sri Hari to come to their rescue.

As if it is not enough, Hiranyaksha rolled the entire earth like a mat and took it to the Underworld. He took delight in kicking it like a foot-ball. Goddess Bhudevi prayed to the Lord of Vaikuntha to save her. Then Sri Maha Vishnu assumed the form of Shwetha Varaha Swamy and killed Hiranyaksha with his sharp, terrifying tusks and retrieved the earth on his tusks.

Greatly delighted at the stupendous act of the Lord, Brahma and other angels, kinneras, gandharvas, saints and yogis praised Adi Varaha Swamy in different ways. They requested him to stay put there in the same form in which he saved Bhudevi, and bless the people. Adi Varaha Swamy conceded their request and ordered Garuthmantha: “Oh Garuthmantha! Go back to Sri Vaikuntham and get the Kreedadri hill there in which I used to flirt with Sri Maha Lakshmi and also the Kreedavapi spring and place them here.” Immediately, Garuda said, “Yes,” flew to Sri Vaikuntham and did as commanded. At the instance of Garuda, it came to be known as Garudachalam. That is Garudadri!

### VRISHACHALAM

The fifth one is Vrishachalam. ‘*Vrisham*’ means dharma. Once upon a time, it is said the Goddess of

Dharma did penance for the sake of the Lord of Tirumala. She wanted God to empower her to dispense dharma dispassionately and flourish. Srinivasa conceded her desire. From then on, it came to be known as Vrishachalam or Vishadri.

### VRISHABHACHALAM

The sixth is known as Vrishabhachalam. There is a wonderful story behind it.

There used to be a demon called Vrishabhasura. He was a great devotee of Lord Siva. But he was equally cruel and wicked. At the instance of devotees, Sri Hari assumed the form of a hunter. There was a fierce fight between them. At last, Srinivasa released his sudarshana disc. Realising the inevitability of his death, Vrishabha prostrated before the lotus feet of the Lord and sought his refuge. “Oh, Lord Srinivasa! Please forgive me. I feel it my past good fortune to be killed by your great disc. I seek a favour from you and I am sure you are kind enough to concede the same. That is, this hilly area of mine should assume my name and be known as Vrishabhachala. I also implore upon you to stay put here as Vrishabhadripathi, the Lord of Vrishabhadri and save the devotees.” Granting his prayers Srinivasa said, “Amen!” and put an end to the demon. Thus, the hill came to be known as Vrishabhachala.

There is also another story of a different period in the myth and history of the place. In the holy spring of Tumbura on this hill, there used to be a demon known

as Vrishabhasura. He was, nevertheless, a great devotee of Lord Narasimha Swamy. He was also very cruel. He used to hound the saints, yogis, and others out, and torture them to death. Unable to bear his torture, all the people went to Lord Srinivasa and prayed to save them from his cruelty.

Ironically Vrishabhasura, though cruel, used to be quite soft at the time of worship. He used to perform daily a yaga for the sake of Lord Narasimha and offer his head at the end in the sacrificial fire of *puṇahuthi*. Miraculously, the head used to re-appear on his neck. There was no end to his yagas and torture.

At the instance of devotees, Srinivasa once appeared before Vrishabhasura all of a sudden. Overwhelmed by the sight, he bowed to him and foolishly pleaded with the Lord to fight with him. He considered it a boon to be fulfilled by the Lord who is very compassionate. There was a fierce fight between them. As usual, Srinivasa released his *chakra* at last to cut his head off his neck. Just at that moment, Vrishabhasura prayed to God: “Oh Lord! Please grant me this last request of mine. Let this hill and thou assume my name!” and he became a prey to the *chakra*.

Thus, this hill came to be known as Vrishabhachala or Vrishabhadri. From that day onwards, Sri Venkateshwara has been regarded as Vrishabhachalapathi or Vrishabhadreshwara, the Lord of the hill for ages now in order to save the devotees.

## ANJANACHALAM

The seventh hill is known as Anjanachalam. There is a divine story behind this dating back to Tretha Yuga.

There used to be a monkey-god known as Kesari in the olden days. His wife was Anjana Devi. They had no issues. Anjana Devi went to Saint Mathanga and revealed her anguish. After meditation, Mathanga suggested a way out. “Dear Mother! There is a Narasimha Swamy shrine at a distance of five hundred yojanas to the east of Pampa river. To the south of this is a highly influential divine shrine known as “Narayanagiri”. There you will find an auspicious, divine spring known as Swami Pushkarini, which cleanses all the sins. There is a water fall by name “Akasha Ganga” to its north at a distance of about two miles. You bathe in it everyday and make penance for twelve long years. You will certainly have children. You will beget a son who is virtuous, noble-minded, highly valorous, and reverent.”

Following the dictates of Saint Matanga, Anjana Devi went to Venkatachala shrine and bathed in Sri Swamy Pushkarini. She circumambulated the peepal tree and visited Lord Sri Adi Varaha Swamy in the vicinity. Then she left for the Akasha Ganga water falls to perform a *vratha* and do penance fasting for a year. Later, she ate a fruit offered by Vayudeva everyday and continued her penance. All her sins vanished with this austere ordeal. An aura of effulgence radiated around her. One day Vayudeva offered her a fruit



embedded with his semen and Anjana Devi ate it as usual considering it just a fruit. As a result, she conceived and gave birth to a son after ten months. He was Anjaneya well-known as Hanumantha or Vayuputra. On account of this, the hill came to be known as Anjanachala or Anjanadri. Lord Srinivasa got the name of Anjanadreeshwara.

Thus, the Tirumala shrine has got seven appellations and Lord Srinivasa is known as the Lord of the Seven Hills.

Do you think that there are only seven hills in this mountain range and just seven names for this hill? No. These are the only important names given by devotees with love based on the stories pertaining to different yugas. No one knows how many names it has since times immemorial. You may count the stars in the sky or the water drops in the sea. You may also calculate the dust particles on the earth. But, it is impossible to count the names of Tirumala hill or its miracles and mysteries of its Lord. Let us try to learn at least some of them to the best of our knowledge.

In the good old days, Brahma and all other angels went to Venkatachala, the heaven on the earth. There Srinivasa in the mysterious form of a persona was moving about with his consorts - Sri Devi and Bhudevi. He was invisible always, but at times appeared before a few saints, angels and devotees out of compassion. One day, all these angels prayed to the Lord in different ways. "Oh Lord! There is the advent

of Kali yuga now. Men of this yuga will be very weak and short-lived. In this short life also they will have many troubles and travails, desires and anxieties. Hence, we request you to manifest in the form of a salagrama idol in this divine shrine and save all the devotees of this Kali yuga with your healing touch!"

Conceding their request Sri Maha Vishnu started residing on this hill alongwith Sri Devi and Bhudevi. He has become a living God readily responding to the call of his devotees in tune with the adage, "*Kalou Venkata Nayakah.*" Thus, this Tirumala hill is known with different names in different yugas.

If you pray for riches and fortune, this hill like a Wishing Stone (Chintamani) gives you all the fortunes. Hence, it is called "Chintamani hill."

If you practice and pray for permanent wisdom that is complete, and not the mundane pleasures and wealth, this hill immediately gives you the same. Hence, it is called Jnanaadri or Jnanachalam. There is more to it than meets the eye.

There are countless holy springs on the slopes of the hill. Lord Venkatesha alone knows its number. They are not the ordinary springs of water. The moment you bathe in them, you will be cleansed of all your sins. The moment you see some of them, you get whatever you want. Just think of them and you get the result of bathing in them and all your wishes are fulfilled. As the Tirumala hill is endowed with such wonderful, holy springs of water, it has been known as Teerthadri or Teerthachalam since times immemorial.

Similarly, there are many springs or pushkarinis on this divine shrine purging the devotees of all their sins. Hence, the hill gets the name of Pushkaradri or Pushkaraachalam or Pushkara shailam.

Vaikunthadri is another name of the hill. As Garuthmantha got Sri Vaikuntha direct from heaven at the instance of Lord Srinivasa and erected it here on the hill, it has become Vaikunthadri or Vaikunthachalam.

Once upon a time, this shrine was also called Adi Varaha or Swetha Varaha shrine. The following are the reasons for the same.

Sri Maha Vishnu, it appears, assumed the terrible form of Swetha Varaha in order to protect the inhabitants of the earth and Bhu Devi from the tortures of Hiranyaksha. Later, he relented and palliated his terrible form into Adi Varaha Swamy and killed Hiranyaksha with his sharp tusks. He retrieved Bhu Devi on them. Then he stayed there itself in the form of Adi Varaha along with Bhu Devi imparting it the name Adi Varaha shrine. As the Swamy was white in colour, it is called Shwetha Varaha shrine; and since he is with his consort Bhu Devi, it is also known as Sri Bhu Varaha shrine. Once upon a time, a devotee named Neela did his penance and attained realization in this place and hence it assumed the name Neeladri or Neelachalam.

Further, as Srinivasa used to play with His consorts in this place, it got the name Kreedadri or Kreedachalam.

Srinivasa stays here in the wonderful golden towered palace known as Ananda Nilayam with Sri Maha Lakshmi on his chest and appears to the devotees in the form of Ananda or Bliss. Hence, it is called Anandachalam. Since Srinivasa along with Sri Maha Lakshmi moves about this holy place, it is called Sri Shailam. Thus, Tirumala hill is popular with different names.

*Bahooni chaasya naamaani  
kalpabhedaadbhavanthi hi  
Yaavaduktaa bhagavathaha  
kalyaanagunaraashayah  
Thaavanthosya giressanthi gunaah  
paramapaavanaaha  
Asya Venkatasailasya maahaatmyam  
yaavadasthi hi  
Thaavadvakthum cha karthnyena na  
samarthaschathurmukhah  
Shanmukhashcha sahasraasyaha phanee  
devaah parekamu?*

Who can count and guess the series of auspicious virtues of the Lord of Tirumala, the supreme Lord of the worlds created by Brahma? Who knows them? The names of this shrine have great significance and virtue. We lose count of them in different kalpas or yugas. It is impossible for anybody - even for the four-headed Brahma, or six-faced Kumara Swamy or thousand-hooded Adi Shesha or multitudes of other angels - to talk about the significance of Venkatachala hill or explain its countless names.

### VENKATAPATHI

Devotees bow down to the Lord of Seven Hills at every step and He readily goes to their rescue. Some people regard Him with great love as Venkatapathi, because He dispels all their sins and imparts immortality and redemption. *Vem* means sins and *katah* means destroy; according to another interpretation, *Vem* means immortality and *katah* means imparting redemption. Quite justifiably, He is named after these dual duties as Venkatapathi. Who can guess the original name of this Lord.

### SRINIVASA

Some call Him “Srinivasa” endearingly. This appears to be a strange name, because he is referred to with the name of his consort, as if He has no name of his own. "What a great Lord he is!"

Sri means Lakshmi Devi. Lord Venkateshwara has Lakshmi on his chest. He is known as Srinivasa after his consort's name. It is alright. But what then this Lakshmi Devi does on his heart? How does she stay there?

*Eeshaanaam jagatho sya Venkatapathe  
rvishnoh paraam Preyaseem  
Tadvakshahsthalanityavaasarasikaam  
ta kshaanthisamvardhineem  
Padmaalankritha paani pallavayugaam  
padmaasanasthaam shriyam  
Vaatsalyaadigunojjwalaam Bhagavatheem  
Vande Jaganmaatharam*

This mother of us is there steadily on the chest of Lord Sri Venkateshwara as if embossed on it. In tune with the saying “*Dwibhujaa Vyooaha Lakshmee*”, Sri Maha Lakshmi is stationed there on a lotus holding in her two hands two other lotuses. “*Vatsalyadi Gunojjwalaam*” can be explained thus: the cow cleanses the calf just delivered with her tongue; Similarly, the Mother Goddess cleanses the devotees of their sins and lapses and grants them the boons through her Lord! Further,

*Sree Vathsavakshasam Sreesham Sreelolam  
Sreekaragraham  
Sreemantham Sreenidhim Seeidyam  
Sreenivasam Bhajenisham*

The Lord has on his chest a mole named “*Srivatsam*”. This Lord of Lords is Himself the husband of Lakshmi. He flirts with her. He has accepted her hand. He is completely educated in all fields of studies. At the same time, he has all the riches in his hand. He is called Srinivasa as Vyooaha Maha Lakshmi on his chest meditates and sings in his praise continuously.

When asked about His actual name, the Lord with numerous names seems to say: “What difference does it make if you know my name or not? Why do you require it?”

Whatever be the way of your address, am I not responding to you and fulfilling you desires?” Thus Sri Venkateshwara gets Himself addressed wonderfully

by many names. Just call Him “Ko!” and you will get the immediate response, “O!” Thus flourishes the Lord as a living God in these hills of Tirumala.

### STRANGE POSTURE

We have learnt that Venkatachalam is a wonderful hill and the names of Sri Venkateshwara of the hill are also marvellous. The posture of Srinivasa who resides in the Ananda Nilayam on the hill is also very strange, surprising, and delightful. He is praised thus:

*Bhavaabdhithaaram kativarthihastham  
Swarnaambaram Rathnakireetakundalam  
Aalambisootrotthama maalyabooshitham  
Namaamyaham Venkata shailanasyakam*

He has disc in his upper right hand and conch shell in his upper left hand. The lower right hand is in the protective symbol of *varada hastha mudra*, and points to his dual feet. Similarly, his lower left hand kept on his waist points to his knees. What can it be but Sri Vaikuntham where the Lord stands thus in this strange posture. He asks us to take refuge in his feet. “Whoever courts my feet as the last resort saying ‘*Anyadhaa sharanam naasthi tvameva sharanam mama,*’ I assure him of redemption.” As it is said “*Samsaara saagara samuttharanaika setho,*” He becomes a bridge for such people to cross the ocean of this world easily by turning it knee-deep. Besides, he seems to assure them through his graceful posture of *varada hastham* that He will grant you all your desires.

An anonymous devotee seems to ask the Lord about his strange, graceful posture:

*Kudihastham bitu choopuchanda midi  
vaikunthambane yandamo  
Jadadhivraata pareetha bhoobhavana rakshaa  
dakshinambaina nee  
Yadugul choodumanevo, kaaka yoka  
yoyyarambo? Sandehamai  
Yadige naanathi yimmu  
Venkatanagaadhyakshaa! Jagadrakshakaa!!*

It means:

Does the posture of your right hand indicate that this is nothing but *Vaikuntham*?

Or do you want us to see your feet committed to protect this entire universe?

Or is it just to exhibit your grace? Doubts we have many.

Oh Lord of Venkatanaga! Oh Protector of the worlds! Please clarify!”

The questions of the devotee contain the answers in themselves vindicating the Lord’s immense compassion for the devotees.

### AWESOME ORNAMENTS

Strange are the names of Sri Venkateshwara Swamy and his posture too. Stranger are the ornaments worn by the Lord. Devotees are awe-struck by the divine ornaments and diamond-decked chains adorned by the Lord from head to foot. They delight us with

their splendour. Annamacharya vividly describes the Lord's ornaments in mohana raga in the following padam.

*Chooda jooda maanikyaalu chukkalavale  
nunnavi  
Yeeduleni kannulave yinachandrulu //  
Kanti ganti vaade vaade ghanamaina  
mutyaala  
Kanthamaala lave padakamulu nave  
Minti podavainatti minchu kireetam bade  
Jantala velugu shankhachakraa lave //  
Mokku mokku vaade vaade mundarane  
vunnaadu  
Chekkulave nagavutho jigimomade  
Pukkita lokamu lave bhujakeerthulunu nave  
Chakkanamma Alamelu javaraalade //  
Mungaimuraalunu nave molakathaarunu  
nade  
Bangaaru niggulavanne pachhabattade  
Yingitha merigi Venkateshudide kannulaku  
Mungiti nidhaanamaina  
moolabhoothamade //*

Gaze upon the rubies of the Lord  
They look like stars!  
The ageless eyes of the Lord  
Are like the Sun and the Moon!!

I have seen those necklaces and pendants  
made of precious pearls,

The crown taller than the sky  
And the pair of the disc and conch shining bright!!  
Just bow to Him and He is there before you!  
Look at the smiling face  
And all the worlds enveloped in his mouth,  
The decorations of the shoulders  
And His charming beloved Alamelu!!  
Those bracelets and the dagger tied to the waist  
And the yellow dhoti shining like gold  
If only you open your inner eye and see Him  
None else than the primaeval source of all souls  
Standing at your doorstep!!

The Lord has the Lotus pedestal, golden armours of feet, golden dhoti, diamond-decked golden sword named Surya Kathari, Vaikuntha Hastam, Varada Hastham, (the diamond-decked golden armours of the Lord), the golden armours of the two hands, the twisted bangles called nagaabharanas (serpentine decorations) of the hands, the chains of the consorts on the chest, the golden salagrama chains engraved with thousand names of the Lord, Lakshmi chain, four-stringed chain of golden coins, the ornaments of the shoulders, the golden armours of the disc and conch, diamond-decked disc and conch, golden crowns, diamond crowns and the crocodile-shaped arch. These are the only few ornaments of the Lord mentioned. Besides, there are many nine-gemmed chains, pearl chains, and ornaments decorated on certain special days in the treasury of the Lord. Weighing in tonnes, it is impossible to assess the value of this wealth.

No one knows who gave these ornaments to the Lord and when. The Lord alone may be in the know of it. Devotees must have given them to the boon-giver Lord whenever their wishes are fulfilled. The Lord of Ananda Nilaya must be adorning them to the delight of his devotees.

But with or without ornaments, the Lord is handsome. On Thursday He appears to the devotees without ornaments giving a glimpse of his eyes in the Netradarshana. The same night He appears in the flower-service (Poolangi Seva). On Friday the sight of His ablutions provides immense delight to the devotees. Annamacharya describes the ritual of ablutions of the Lord thus in his padam.

*Kanti shukravaaramu gadiya ledinta  
Anti Alamelmanga andanunde Swaamini*

*Sommulannee kadabetti somputho gonamu  
gatti*

*Kammani kadambamu kappu panneeru  
Chemmathoda veshtuvalu rommu thalachutti  
Tummeda maichayatona nemmadinunde  
Swaamini*

*Pachchakappurame noori pasidi  
ginnelaninchi*

*Techchi shirasaadiga diganaladi  
Achcherapadi chooda andari kannulakimpai  
Nichchamallepoovu vale nitu taanunde  
Swaamini*

*Tattupunuge koorichi chattalu cherichi nippu  
Patti karaginchi vendi palyalaninchi*

*Dattamuga menunintha pattinchi diddi  
Bittu veduka muriyuchunde bittari Swaamini*

It can be rendered in English as follows:

Such a Lord I have seen  
On Friday at the seventh hour  
With his consort Alamelmanga  
Who is always glued to Him.

Stripped of all ornaments in heaps  
Showered with rose water all over  
The wet garment entwined round His head  
The Lord black as a bee remains quiet.

Smeared from head to foot  
With green camphor  
Ground smoothly and brought in golden bowls  
He appears to all in his bewitching charm  
Like a pure white jasmine

Smeared thickly all over his body  
With choice musk melted in fire and brought in  
silver plates

Exults in relief He with his unsteady looks.  
Such a Lord I have seen.

\*(Gadiya = 24 minutes)

What a good fortune it is for the devotees who watch the Lord just in loin cloth on Friday in the *Abhisheka darshana*.

Such is the specialty of the Lord that He appears to a single devotee in four different ways at four different times imparting four different experiences. Again at the same time, He imparts four different

experiences to four different devotees. That is the greatness of this original idol of the auspiciously divine Lord.

### TASTY OFFERINGS OF FOOD

The Lord of Ananda Nilaya loves to be well-adorned. He is a gourmet. He is a lover of his devotees, too. It is for them that he eats tasty offerings of different kinds of rice, puddings and flour-preparations.

The day starts with the offering of milk and butter and continues with sweet and hot preparations of food such as pongali (sweet rice), pulihora (rice dressed with acid sauce of tamarind), chakker pongali (a savoury mixture of rice, split pulse, spices and sugar), dadhyodanam (a pudding of curds, rice, spices with salt), ksheeraannam (boiled milk rice with sugar), kadambam (sambar rice), mulahora (a preparation of rice), pongali (Pongal with moongdal with pepper powder and ghee), sira (a kind of sweet made of wheat granules), kesari (sweet rice with spices), laddus (round sweet balls made of Bengal gram flour and sugar juice), vadas (cakes of green gram flour fried in oil), appams (a kind of sweet cake), dosas (a kind of cake), jilebies (sweet juicy preparation), tenetolalu (a sort of vermicelli), poleelu (cakes made of wheat, pulse and treacle), sukhiyalu, and guggillu (boiled gram). The Lord relishes these dishes with great satisfaction and delight. His glance consecrates them and the left-over food is offered as *prasadam* for the devotees. The devotees who taste them get satisfaction, delight and

strength. Their wishes are fulfilled, ailments cured and health restored.

Besides these *prasadaas*, there are special extra preparations of food offered to the Lord, such as Chalimidi pindi known as Amritha kalasham on Sunday, big vadas on Monday, ksheeraannam on wednesday, jilebis and tene tolalu on thursday, Purnam Bhakshyalu and sukhiyalu on Friday. Annamacharya exhorts the Lord to accept the offerings of food in one of his padams:

*Indira vaddincha impuganu  
Chindhaka itle bhujinchavo Swami !  
Akkalapaashaalu, appaalu, vadalu,  
Pekkaina sayidampu penulu  
Sakker raasulu, sadyoghrithamulu  
Kikkiriya naaraginchavo Swami //*

It may be rendered in English as

Accept O Lord! The food  
Served by Indira with great love.

Different preparations and puddings  
Like kaala pashalu, appalu, vadalu,  
Variety sweet penies\*  
Heaps of sugar and tins of fresh ghee  
Eat to the fill O Lord!!

(\*penies = cakes made of wheat and sugar)

In another padam Annamacharya describes the feast of the Lord thus:

*Ariselu noone booreyalu nougulu  
Jakkera mandagal vadal  
Burudalu, palamandega lapoopamu  
Layyalamelumanga nee  
Karuduga vinduvettu baramaanna  
Shathambula soopakotlatho  
Niratha vinirmalaannamulu  
Sonala Venkateshwaraa!!*

In English it may be rendered as:

Alamelu Manga feeds you  
Oh Venkateshwara!  
With rare puddings and soups diverse  
Pure and hygienic preparations of rice -  
Sweets such as arishelu, boorelu, nougulu,  
Sugar mandagas, besides vadas,  
Burudas, palamandega and apoopams many.

(arishelu, boorelu, apoopams = different sweet cakes; nougulu = sweet biscuits made of Bengal gram flour)

Another anonymous poet reveals Lord's taste for food listing out those puddings:

*"Paalu, venna, bakaalabaathu,  
dadhyodanam,  
Buvuli, yoremu vennabooriyalu  
Saradaala paashamul, chakkeru pulagamul,  
Nuvvumandigalu manoharamulu  
Appamu liddena lathi saaramul holigal  
Vadalu, doselu, gala vantakamulu*

*Shaakamul soopamul chaaru lamballu  
Shuddhodanamulunu, sadyoghrithammu  
Pandlu tene hobbatlu pachchadulunu"*

It may be rendered in English as:

Milk, butter, bakalabaatu, curd rice  
Buvuli, yoremu, butter boorelu,  
deelightful juices, sugared pulagams,  
Til mandigas beautiful

Appams, idlies, light liquids, holigal,  
Vadas, dosas, such puddings  
Vegetables, soups, tamarind liquid, ambalies  
Pure rice preparations, freesh ghee,  
Fruits, honey hobbatlu and pickles

These are the only few preparations offered to the Lord. Unable to count the number of puddings and rice preparations offered to the Lord, Tenali Ramakrishna humorously calls Him "Tindi Mendayya" meaning one who is fond of a variety of delicious dishes.

Such is the praise showered on the Lord. Such a great Lord, however, takes food in the plates which are not washed. Food is not offered in already used plates. They are thrown out and fresh plates are used! They are nothing but half-broken earthen pots called *Oti kundas* or *Odu*. Devotees can't but gape at such a peculiar mode of offerings to the illustrious Lord of Ananda Nilaya! Let us sing in praise of the Lord who eats in unwashed plates alongwith Annamayya.



*Vedukondaamaa! Venkatagiri Venkateshuni!  
Aamati mokkulavaade Aadidevude vaadu  
Thomani pallalavaade durithadoorude  
Vaddikaasulavaade Vanajanaabhude puttu-  
Goddurandraku biddala nichche Govindude  
Elami gorina varaalichche devude vaadu  
Alamelmgaa Sree Venkataadrinadhude*

The meaning of the padam is as follows:

Let us all pray to Venkateshwara of Venkatagiri!  
Several vows He receives from Devotees  
Whenever they are in danger  
The first primaeval Lord, Adideva  
Beyond the reach of sins,  
In unwashed plates He takes His food!  
The Lord of *vaddikaasulu*,  
He collects interest to pay off His debt!  
From His umbilical cord emerged Lord Brahma,  
the procreator  
He is Govinda who blesses the barren women with  
issues  
Fulfils fondly whatever you wish for  
He is none else than the Lord of Sri Venkatadri  
Belonging to Alamelmgaa!

(vaddikaasulu=coins paid towards interest)

### UNIQUE WISHES AND VOWS

It is said “variety is the spice of life.” But here is the Lord Venkanna of Tirumala who meets all the diverse tastes and attitudes of His devotees. That is why, Tallapaka Annamayya remarks:

*"Enthamaathramuna nevvaru dalachina  
antha maatrame neevu  
Antharaanthamu lenchi chooda bindanthe  
nippati yannatlu"*

If only you unfold your inner soul  
He appears to you as much as you think of Him  
Just as you get as much of cake as the pan  
Neither more nor less.

Though the devotees may belong to different traditions, languages and offer their vows to the Lord in unique ways, He accepts and fulfils all their wishes without any discrimination. He draws devotees to His place on the pretext of their vows. That is why, He is regarded as the Lord of vows offered by the devotees in times of stress.

### OFFERING OF TONSURE

The primary vow of all the devotees who visit Tirumala is tonsure. Irrespective of their age and sex, all men and women, young and old, married women or widows, saints and ascetics offer their tonsure to the Lord. While some offer their tonsure completely, some offer three cuts of their hair. Though it is not clear when this practice started, it is said it was there since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Lord takes your twisted locks of hair and clears all the tangles of your woes. Don't you think He is the real saviour?

Some devotees conduct utsavas for the Lord; some offer services; some offer flowers, while some others ornaments and jewellery.

Sri Krishna Devaraya, the emperor of Vijayanagara visited Tirumala seven times during 1513 and 1521. He offered different kinds of vows to the Lord to mark his victories by the grace of God. He presented to the Lord the nine-gemmed crown (kireetam), 25 silver plates, invaluable diamond ornaments, crowns as well as the crocodile-shaped arch (makara toranam) for the processional deities, and golden bowls for ablutions. In addition, he arranged for gold-plating of the tower of Ananda Nilayam. Later, many emperors like Achyutha Raya, Venkatapathi Raya offered several vows to the Lord of the Seven Hills, the Emperor of Emperors.

Some devotees offer different kinds of food to fulfil their vows. To keep their vows, some take a walking tour to the hill. They beg for alms and come to Tirumala. Some offer all the ornaments on their bodies (*Niluvu dopidi*). Some offer the money promised as a vow. Some undergo tulaabhara and offer valuable material equivalent to them in weight. Some circumambulate the temple; some do it rolling their bodies on the floor. Some light the lamps uninterruptedly (*akhanda deeparaadhana*). Some break coconuts. Some offer raw flours (*chali pindlu*). Some offer tamarind rice and sweet rice. Those, who beget children by the grace of the Lord, offer gold or silver swings (*ooyala*).

Some offer elephants, horses and oxen that lead the procession of the Lord in different utsavas. The King of Mysore offered elephants to the Lord in the

past and the Karnataka government continues to offer the same now. Some manufacturers offer their first products like lorries, cars and scooters to the Lord.

Don't you think Tirumalesha is a charismatic God who takes all these offerings from the devotees and in turn purges them of their sins and diseases and fulfils their wishes?

### PLEASANT MIRACLES

Tirumala shrine is full of wonders and miracles at each and every step. Wherever you see, you will find such wonders either in the past or future. It is *sui generis* and such a miraculous shrine that none can equal it in the entire universe. Not to speak of the greatness of Venkatachalapathi who resides on such a miraculous hill.

***Kaamadhenuhu Kalpavrikshah  
Chinthaamanirithi trayam  
Venkatesha thvamevaasi  
Sheshaage sarvadaanatah***

Tirumalesha shines on this shrine as a triple combination of *Kalpavriksha*, *Kaamadhenu* and *Chintamani* on our palm fulfilling all our wishes. They are, as you know, wish-fulfilling divine tree, cow and diamond of the heaven respectively. Besides fulfilling your wishes like them, the Lord of the Hills also grants you redemption! That is why, Tallapaka Annamacharya lauds Venkateshwara's parental love for the devotees and readiness to grant their wishes.

*Emi valasina ichchu neppudainanu*  
*Emaraka kolichina neethade daivamu*  
*//Pallavi//*

*Ghanamugaa nindariki gannulichchu*  
*gaallichchu*

*Paniseya jethulichchu baliyudai*  
*Thanu goluvumani chitthamulichchu*  
*karuninchi*

*Vonara lokaanakella nokkade daivamu*  
*//Emivalasina//*

*Machchika thanugoluva manasichchu*  
*maatalichchu*

*Kuchchitamu leni kodukula nichchunu*  
*Chochchinachote chochchi shubhamichchu*  
*sukhamichchu*

*Nichchalu lokaanakella nijamaina Daivamu*  
*//Emivalasina//*

*Panthamaadi kolichina praanamichchu*  
*praayamichchu*

*Yenthati padavulaina nitte yichchu*  
*Vintha vibhavaala Venkateshudide maa*  
*Yantarangamuna nunde arachethidaivamu*  
*//Emivalasina//*

It can be rendered into English as follows:

If only you worship Him without forgetting,  
He always gives you whatever you want!

Greatly He gives you eyes, legs  
And hands to work with and grow strong

With great compassion He gives you  
The heart to worship Him.  
For the entire universe He is the suitable God alone!

He gives you the heart and speech  
To serve Him fondly.  
He gives you sons who are fair and frank.  
He comes to you again and again  
To grant you wealth, wishes and well-being.

Stubbornly if you worship Him  
And quarrel for His grace  
He is ready to give you life and youth  
And positions however lofty they might be  
Such a great miraculous God is Sri Venkatesha  
Always within your fold  
Right in your inner being.

If you worship the Lord without forgetting, He  
gives you eyes, legs and hands to work with. He  
inspires your entire being to worship Him and fulfils  
your wishes. He is the only God of such generosity in  
this world. None else is like Him.

If you worship him with affection, he gives you  
the ability to talk. The dumb can speak. He gives you  
frank-hearted sons. He gives you auspicious things  
time and again. He gives you luxuries. Where is such a  
truthful God like Him in this world?

If you worship Him stubbornly without any let  
up, He is ready to give you even life and youth. He  
gives you easily power and positions however lofty

they may be. Annamayya is sure that there is no such an accessible God in the entire universe.

The miracles of the Lord of Anand Nilaya are unlimited. It is impossible even to the ten thousand-hooded Adishesha to learn and understand these miracles. Let us browse a story.

Five people were going on a road. One was dumb and another deaf right from birth. Third one was without hands, the fourth one completely blind and the fifth one lame. Holding one another's hands they were crying hoarse and groping for the way. Their cries were heart-rending. A virtuous man saw them. Giving alms he advised: "How long will you travel like this without any direction? When will your miseries come to an end this way? Look here! I will give you a piece of advice. Turn to that direction and go ahead without any delay. You will find Venkatachala hill there which purges you of all your sins." Thus saying, the good-hearted traveller left the place. All of them complied with his instructions and took a few steps towards the pointed direction. Do you know what happened?

*"Mookaarabdam kamapi badhirah  
Shloka maakarnayanthi  
Shradhdhalustham vilikhathi kuni  
Shlaaghayaa veekshathendhah*

*Adhyaarohathyahaha! Sahasaa  
Pangurapyadrishringam  
Saandraalasyaa shishubharanatho  
Mandamaayaathi vandhyaa"  
(Venkataadhvari, Vishwagunaadarsham)*

The cool breezes of Venkatachala touched them. The compassionate glances of Venkateshwara fell on them. What else do you want?

The dumb fellow got the voice and started reciting the shloka clearly. The deaf fellow was able to hear him. The fellow without hands started writing the shloka in a beautiful hand. Seeing everything, the blind fellow began praising it as marvellous. The lame fellow got back his legs and started climbing the Tirumala hills faster.

There was a barren woman cursed by all. She pleaded with the Lord for His grace. She was blessed by the Lord with a son. She wanted to show her child to the Lord for He gave it to her. So she was climbing the hill slowly. Don't you think that His ways are strange?

Instead of praising the Lord time and again that He fulfils wishes of all, shall we pray to him in one sentence as follows?

*"Srinivasa! Bahookhya kim?  
Bhakthasarvarthinaashane  
Sarvaarthapoorane chaapi  
Thvathsamonde na kuthrachit"*

There is no other God in the entire universe who can compete with Thee in mitigating the miseries of the devotees and fulfilling all the wishes!

\* \* \*

So far we have learnt, to the extent possible, about the miraculous hill of the great Lord Venkateshwara, His names and their significance, His peculiar posture, His ornaments, different kinds of puddings and preparations of food offered to Him, and the vows He owes from the devotees. Let us try to know about the five images of the Lord before we switch over to his utsavas.

### **FIVE IDOLS OF THE LORD (PANCHA BERAMS)**

Lord Srinivasa is the heavenly Wishing Tree (*kalpa taruvu*) to those who yearn for Him, gold to those who hold his hand, advance honorarium to those who worship Him, a diamond on hand to those who serve Him, the Ultimate God to those who conceive of Him, fulfiller of desires and an unforgettable God, a form of ananda to those who are lost in his praise, a miraculous doctor who gives issues even to the barren, a resident of Ananda Nilaya and a saviour to the grief-stricken.

That is why, the devotees continuously stream to Tirumala hills for a glimpse of the Lord who is like gold in the fist. Some choose to participate in the early morning 'Waking up Service' (*Suprabhata Seva*) of the Lord, offer worship (*archana*) and *naivedyam* (food). Some participate in the daily ritual of Lord's marriage to witness the glory. Some participate in *Poolangi Seva* (Garlanding Service) and *Tiruppavada Seva* (offering of huge heaps of tamarind rice and other

*prasadas* to the main deity as a veil between the deity and the devotees on Thursday), while some others participate in *Abhisheka Darshan* (ablutions) of the Lord on Friday and go into raptures. Thus devotees participate in *kalyaanotsavas*, *Brahmotsavas*, *Vasanthotsavas* and other ceremonies to receive the grace of the Lord.

In this context, the devotees, however, get a genuine doubt. Is the deity of Lord Srinivasa the same in all these utsavas or different? If different, how many deities are there? How distinctly are the services offered to each of them? Let us look into the details to dispel these doubts, to some extent.

The self-manifested deity of Lord Sri Venkateshwara in Tirumala shrine receives rituals of worship and offerings as per the most ancient *Vaikhanasa Agama*. Devotees attribute to God whatever is relevant to them and follow a prescribed method of worship (*Upasana*). That is why, we conduct services of bathing (*abhishekam*), worship (*archana*), feeding (*naivedyam*), procession (*ooregimpu*), going to bed (*Panpu seva*), etc. to God. Since the presiding deity is stationary, it is not possible for us to offer all the services, especially taking it in a procession or laying it in bed. Hence, the Agama science has allowed five kinds deities (*Pancha Beras*) for this purpose. They are (i) *Dhriva Beram* (Presiding Deity), (ii) *Kautuka Beram* (Sri Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy used for daily worship), (iii) *Snapana Beram* (Sri Ugra Srinivasa Murthy used for ablutions), (iv)

*Bali Beram* (Sri Koluvu Srinivasa Murthy, the supervising deity for offering oblation to the secondary gods and goddesses of the temple, and (v) *Utsava Beram* (Sri Malayappa Swamy, the Processional Deity). *Beram* means an idol or deity. The five-idol system of the *Vaikhanasa Agama* is followed in Tirumala shrine. *Utsavas* are performed for different idols here.

### 1. DHRUVA BERAM

The presiding deity or main deity is also termed *mula virat*, *dhruva murthy*, or *mula beram*. This idol of salagrama stone is a self-manifestation of the Lord wearing disc and conch in the *sanctum sanctorum* of Ananda Nilayam. It is about 8 feet high. There will be mainly *tomala seva* (garlanding service) twice and *archana* (brief worship) and *naivedyam* (food) thrice for this deity. Devotees queue up to see this deity everyday. Every Tuesday as part of the second *archana*, this main deity with Sri Maha Lakshmi on his chest is offered *Ashtadala Pada Padmaaraadhana* with 108 gold lotuses. Every Thursday there will be *Tiruppavada* seva and *Netra darshana* (glimpse of Lord's eyes) in the morning, and *Poolangi seva* (garlanding service) in the evening. In the early hours of every Friday, there will be *Abhishekam* (bathing with holy waters) to this deity with spices.

### 2. KAUTUKA BERAM

This deity is called Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy or Manavalapperumal. The deity with four hands and disc

and conch is a small replica of the main deity by all means. It appears this silver idol of 1.5 feet high was presented by Pallava Queen Samavai in 614 AD. It is always kept at the feet of the main deity of Lord Venkateshwara. It is bathed with the holy waters of Akasha Ganga every day and with one thousand and eight silver vessels (*Sahsra Kalashabhishekam*) before the golden entrance every Wednesday morning. There will be *Ekantha Seva* or *Pavalimpu Seva* (Going to bed in privacy) every night for the deity. During Dhanurmasa (period of *Tiruppavai vratham of Andaal*), however, the deity is replaced with that of Lord Krishna with butter in his hand for this seva.

### 3. BALI BERAM

This idol is known as Koluvu Srinivasa Murthy or Lekhana Srinivasa Murthy. It is made of five precious metals and resembles the silver idol of Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy.

A court (*Koluvu*) is held in the Snapana Mandapam on the golden throne supported by sculptured lions every day after *Tomala Seva* before the *Archana*. In this court, Koluvu Srinivasa Murthy is offered royal felicitations with *chatra* (the royal umbrella) and *chamara* (a fly-flap) befitting an emperor. The particulars of *tithi* (the number of the day in a month), *vaara* (weekday) and *nakshatra* (the presiding star) of the day are read from the Hindu Calendar (*Panchanga Shravanam*) alongwith the income and expenditure statement of the earlier day to

this deity. Obviously, Koluvu Srinivasa Murthy is regarded as the supervising authority of the temple's income and expenditure.

#### 4. SNAPANA BERAM

The *Snapana Beram* is also known as Ugra Srinivasa Murthy, Venkatatturaivar or Snapana Murthy. It is 25 inches high. The idols of Ugra Srinivasa Murthy along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi are made of five precious metals. They were used for the *utsavas* in the past. This practice was dispensed with in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as some untoward incidents occurred in one of the *Brahmotsavas*. On Kaisika Dwadasi however, the procession of this deity is taken out from the temple early in the morning which ends much before the sunrise.

#### 5. UTSAVA BERAM

It is known as Malayappa Swamy or Utsava Srinivasa Murthy. There is a reference to it in 1339 AD. This deity appears to the devotees in all the *utsavas* held outside the temple such as *Nityotsavas* (daily ceremonies), *Varotsavas* (weekly ceremonies), *Masotsavas* (monthly ceremonies) and *Varshikotsavas* (annual ceremonies). It is also made of five precious metals and its height is about 30 inches. Since the idol was found in the *Malayappa kona* (a recess of Malayappa hill), it is called Malayappa Swami.

Besides the above idols, there are many other idols in the *Ananda Nilayam* such as - (i) Sri Sudarshana

Chakrattalwar, (ii) Sri Sita, Rama and Laxmana, (iii) Sri Rukmini and Sri Krishna, (iv) the retinue of Sri Venkateshwara Swamy such as (a) Anantha, (b) Vishwaksena (c) Garuthmantha, and (v) the retinue of Sri Rama, viz - (a) Sugreeva, (b) Angada, (c) Ajnapalaka Anjaneya Swami, etc. A few *utsavas* are conducted for these idols also.

Thus, *utsavas* and *sevas* are held for Lord Sri Venkateshwara along with the above deities on specified days on a grand scale. Let us now try to know about the daily *utsavas* held for the Lord.

### THE FESTIVITIES OF UTSAVAS

The *utsavas* of the Lord held throughout the year can be divided into (i) *Nityotsavas* (daily ceremonies), (ii) *Varotsavas* (weekly ceremonies), (iii) *Masotsavas* (monthly ceremonies) and (iv) *Varshikotsavas* (annual ceremonies). Let us try to know about them briefly.

#### NITYOTSAVAS

Every day several *sevas* and *utsavas* are held for the Lord in Tirumala right from early morning till night. Let us discuss them in brief.

#### 1. SUPRABHATHAM (WAKING UP THE LORD)

The first service offered to the Lord in Tirumala is *Suprabhatam* (Waking up the Lord). Waking up Srinivasa Prabhu lying down in the silken bed in *Shayana Mantapa* (Bed Room) is called *Suprabhatam*.

Every day early in the morning the Acharyas sing at the Golden Entrance the verses from the *Suprabhatam* such as “Kousalya Supraja Rama...” just as one of descendents of the Annamacharya family sing “Meluko Shringara raya” to wake up the Lord. At that time, the priests, jiyangars, officers of the temple, and those devotees who paid for the *Suprabhata Seva* will be waiting eagerly at the Golden Entrance for the doors of the temple to be opened.

The doors of the Golden Entrance are opened after completion of *Suprabhatam* recital by the Acharyas. All the people go there one by one to have a glimpse of the Lord and to receive haarathi (camphor lit), teertham (holy water) and shathari (the symbolic feet of the Lord). The devotees of the *Aarjitha Seva* also go to see the Lord. The vision of the Lord from head to feet in this seva is called “*Visvarupa Sandarshanam*”. It cleanses you of all your sins. Hence, it is said, “*Padadarshanam papa vimochanam*,” that is, the sight of the Lord’s feet redeems you of all your sins.

## 2. TOMALA SEVA (GARLANDING SERVICE)

Garlanding the main deity and utsava deities of Lord Sri Venkateshwara along with other idols with flowers and sacred basil is called *Tomala Seva*. The way the garlands are hung down from the shoulders of the Lord is called *Tolmalai*. This, in turn, changed to *Tomala*. *Tol* means shoulder. While those who paid for the seva can participate in this, there is no entry for any one in the evening *Tomala Seva*.

The priests decorate the main deity with the garlands brought by the *Ekangi* (a recluse) or Jiyangars from the flower room. The seva takes place for about half an hour.

## 3. KOLUVU (COURT)

After the *Tomala Seva*, there will be *Koluvu* (Court) for *Koluvu Srinivasa Murthy* who is placed on the throne in the *Snapana Mandapa* of the Golden Entrance. The particulars of tithi (the number of the day in a month), vaara (weekday) and nakshatra (the presiding star) of the day are read from the Hindu Calendar (*Panchanga Shravanam*) alongwith the income and expenditure statement of the earlier day to this deity. Later the Lord is offered the mixture of jaggery and sesamum flour as *naivedyam*. On the *Dhvajaarohan* day (Flag Hoisting of Garuda), the first day, however, the *Koluvu* takes place before the Golden Entrance.

Every day in the *Koluvu*, *Srinivasa* gives rice along with betel leaves and honorarium (*dakshina*) in charity (*Tandula Daanam*) to the priests. The priests bless Lord *Srinivasa* to be wealthy every day (*Nityaishvaryo bhava*). This takes place in complete solitude.

## 4. SAHASRA NAMAARCHANA (WORSHIP WITH THOUSAND DIVINE NAMES OF THE LORD)

After *Tomala Seva*, *Sahasra Namaarchana* is done to the main deity every morning. Reciting the



thousand divine names of the Lord, the holy feet of the Lord are worshipped with the basil leaves offered by the Jiyyangars. Later the basil at the feet is taken out to worship Sri Maha Lakshmi reciting her 24 divine names. It takes place for about half an hour. The devotees can participate in this on payment of required fees.

In addition to the above, the Lord is worshipped twice reciting his 108 divine names (*Ashtottara Shata Namaarchana*) after the second and third bells. They are done in solitude. The paid devotees, however, can participate in the *Ashta Dala Pada Padmaraadhana* as part of the second *archana* on Tuesdays on payment of required fees.

### 5. OFFERING OF FOOD (NIVEDANA)

Immediately after the *Sahasra Namaarchana*, Laddus, Vadas, Tamarind Rice, Pongal, Curd Rice, etc are offered to the main deity and other images of the Lord in the *sanctum sanctorum* every morning. The first food offering is called the first bell. The second one in the after noon is called the second bell. The third one at night is called the third bell.

Sweet Pongal called “*Tiru Veeram*” bell is offered to the Lord just before *Ekantha Seva* (Laying the Deity to sleep). Later, it is offered to Sannidhi Bhashyakara. All these foods are offered by the priests alone.

### 6. SHATTUMORA

*Prasadams* like Curd Rice, Sweet Pongal already offered to the main deity are again offered to Ramanuja.

Later, Sri Vaishnava Acharyas recite Divya Prabandhas. It is called *Shattumora*. The Acharyas receive the *prasadams* after the *nivedana*.

### 7. KALYANOTSAVAM (MARRIAGE CEREMONY)

In the Sri Venkata Ramana Swamy Marriage Pandal of the Sampangi circumambulation, the marriage ceremony (*Kalyanotsavam*) takes place for Sri Malayappa Swami with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi every noon at 12 O’ clock.

Devotees can participate in this utsava on payment of prescribed fees.

Kalyanotsava is generally conducted as part of special utsavas or on significant occasions. It was Tallapaka Annamacharya who conducted it as *Nitya Kalyanotsava* (Daily Marriage Ceremony). That is the reason why the descendents of Tallapaka Annamacharya have the privilege of being *kanyaadaatas* (those who offer daughter in marriage) in these ceremonies even today.

This *Nitya Kalyanotsavam* is performed every day without fail except during special Utsavas like *Brahmotsava*, *Pushpa Yaga*, and *Pavitrotsava*.

The devotees who participate in this ceremony get *prasadams* of the Lord.

### 8. DOLOTSAVA (SWING CEREMONY)

There will be *Dolotsavam* or swing ceremony for the Malayappa Swami alongwith his consorts at 2 p.m.

every day in the Mirror House (*Addala Mantapam*) at the instance of the devotees who pay for it only. This service will not be available if there are no paid takers.

### 9. ARJITHA BRAHMOTSAVA

There will be paid Brahmotsavam for Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith Sri Devi and Bhu Devi in the Vaibhava Mantapa situated in front of the temple at the instance of the devotees who pay for it. It will be conducted after the *Kalyanotsava*.

### 10. VAAHANA SEVALU (CARRIAGE SERVICE)

Devotees can offer carriage service for Lord Sri Venkateshwara if they so desire on payment of prescribed fees. It will not be held in the absence of paid requisitions. There will be mainly *Garuda Vahana*, *Hanumantha Vahana*, *Pedda Shesha Vahana*, etc. every day at 2 pm in the *Vaibhava Mantapa* situated in front of the temple at the instance of the devotees only who pay for it.

### 11. ARJITHA VASANTOTSAVA

*Arjitha Vasantotsava* will be held again at 3 pm everyday for the paid devotees only in the *Vaibhava Mantapa* situated in front of the temple for Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith Sri Devi and Bhu Devi.

### 12. SAHASRA DEEPALANKARANA SEVA (SERVICE WITH THOUSAND LAMPS)

Every evening at 6 O'Clock there will be *Unjal Seva* (Swing ceremony) known as *Sahasra*

*Deepalankarana Seva* in the *Koluvu Mantapa* (Court) situated on the south east side of the temple outside.

Malayappa Swami alongwith Sri Devi and Bhu Devi is taken in procession to the Pandal where a thousand lamps are lit for the *Unjal Seva*. Those who paid for the Seva can also participate in this. It is conducted every evening without fail. After the *Sahasra Deepalankarana Seva*, the Lord is taken in procession in the wider circumambulation path. *Sahasra Deepalankarana Seva*, however, is offered to Rukmini and Sri Krishna on the day of Rohini star and to Sita, Rama and Lakshmana on the day of Punarvasu star every month. On the day of Arudra star, there will be procession of Sri Ramanuja idol in a palanquin opposite to that of Sri Malayappa Swamy.

### 13. EKANTHA SEVA

*Ekantha Seva* (Leaving in Solitude) is also called *Panpu Seva* (Going to Bed) or *Pavvalimpu Seva* (Putting to Sleep). This last seva is quite important in the daily programmes of Tirumala Lord's temple. *Sarva Darshanam* (free entrance for all) is stopped at the time of *Ekantha Seva*. In this seva Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy is placed in the golden swing cot hung in the *Shayana Mantapam* (Bed Room) by silver chains.

One of the descendents of Tallapaka family will be ready in the Ramulavari path to sing a lullaby for the lord. There will be camphor plate (*haarathi*) sent

on behalf of Tarigonda Vengamamba. As the paid devotees sit and watch in rows, Annamayya descendents sing the lullaby, “*Jo Achyuthananda Jo Jo Mukunda...*” and the pearl *haarathi* of Tarigonda Vengamamba is offered to the Lord. Lukewarm milk and the *panchamritha prasadam* prepared with several fruits called “*Meva*” is distributed to the paid visitors. At the end of this, doors of the Golden Entrance are closed.

### **VAAROTSAVAS (WEEKLY SERVICES)**

There are a few services rendered to Lord Sri Venkateshwara as *Vaarotsavas* once in a week without fail. Let us try to know about some of the *sevas* conducted on different days of a week.

#### **1. MONDAY : VISESHA PUJA (SPECIAL WORSHIP)**

There is mainly a *Vishesha Puja* (Special worship) on every Monday at 6 am. It is conducted for Sri Malayappa Swamy along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi in the *Kalyana Mantapam* (Marriage Pandal) of *Sampangi* Circumambulation. This *seva* offered on every Monday commenced on April 8, 1991 and later became an *arjitha seva* (paid service).

After the second archana and second *naivedyam* in the Lord’s temple, Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith His consorts is taken to the *Kalyana Mantapam*. After completion of *Homas* as per the *Vaikhanasa Shastra*, *Tirumanjanam/Snapana* (Oblution) is conducted for

the Lord. The participants are given tirtha (holy water of the Lord) and *prasadams*.

#### **2. TUESDAY: ASHTADALA PAADA PADMAARAADHANA**

#### **(WORSHIP OF THE LORD’S FEET WITH GOLDEN LOTUSES)**

The main deity is offered the service named *Ashtadala Paada Padmaaraadhana* as the second archana every Tuesday at 6 am with 108 golden lotuses. This takes place for about 20 minutes. It is interesting to note that a muslim devotee from Hyderabad donated the required 108 golden lotuses to the Lord. It is now offered as the paid service. It is a feast to the eyes of the devotees.

#### **3. WEDNESDAY: SAHASRA KALASHABHISHEKAM**

#### **(OBLUTION WITH THOUSAND VESSELS)**

*Sahasra Kalashabhishekam* is an important *seva* that takes place every Wednesday before the Golden Entrance. This is done to Sri Malayappa Swamy along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi and Vishwaksena, the Chief Commander of the Lord. There is evidence to suggest that this has been taking place since 1511 AD or even earlier.

Only paid visitors can participate in the *seva* which takes place before the Golden Entrance. Later, they will be offered the *darshan* of the main deity and

prasadams. It is believed that the participants will be cleansed of all the thousand types of sins.

#### 4. THURSDAY : *TIRUPPAVADA SEVA*

##### Netra Darshanam (Sight of Lord's Eyes)

The food offered every Thursday after the second *archana* is called *Tiruppavada Seva* or *Annakoototsavam*.

At 6 O' Clock in the morning every Thursday the main deity is stripped of all the ornaments. The *namam* (upright mark) of the Lord on His forehead is reduced in size to have a clear vision of the Lord's Eyes. Later, a big heap of tamarind rice (*pulihora*), *jilebies* and *murukus* is laid before the Lord at the Golden Entrance. It is decorated with flowers and offered direct to the main deity in the *sanctum sanctorum*. Vedic scholars recite the Vedas as well as Srinivasa Gadya (prose). Only paid visitors can participate in this seva.

Later, all the devotees get the opportunity to see *Tiruppavada Seva* as well as *Netra Darshana* (the sight of Lord's Eyes).

It is said that those who pay for the seva are purged of all their lapses related to food and get plenty of food down the generations.

#### 5. *POOLANGI SEVA* (GARLANDING SERVICE)

*Tomala Seva* that takes place every Thursday in the evening is called *Poolangi Seva* (Garlanding

Service). This takes place completely in solitude. Priests adorn the main deity from head to feet with the flowers brought by the Jiyangars. The Lord appears as though he has worn flower dress. The visitors are enraptured by the sight of the Lord in *Poolangi Seva* emitting fragrance. The sight, it is said, burns all your sins and scents of the past lives.

#### 6. FRIDAY: *ABHISHEKAM* (ABLUTIONS)

The ablutions that take place to the main deity of Lord Sri Venkateshwara Swamy at 5 O' Clock early in the morning on Friday is called *Shukravarabhishekam*. It is said that this practice has been there since 614 AD. Bhagavad Ramanuja, it appears, offered *Abhisheka* on the occasion of instituting the golden Alamelu Manga image on the chest of the Lord.

*Abhishekam* is done with the sacred waters of Akasha Ganga along with spices like civet, saffron and camphor for about an hour. Later, *Abhishekam* is done with turmeric for Maha Lakshmi situated on the chest of the Lord. It is only during the *Abhishekam* that the devotees can see the original figure of Lord Srinivasa who manifested Himself for the sake of people in Kali Yuga at the instance of Brahma and other angels.

Later, *Abhishekam* is conducted for the golden Alamelu Manga clinging to the neck of the Lord. The devotees are greatly attracted to the seva. The

*Abhisheka Darshana* comes to an end with the sprinkling of holy *abhisheka* water on the devotees which cleanses them from all sins and endows them with health and wealth.

### **7. NIJA PADA DARSHANAM (VISION OF THE HOLY FEET)**

After the couples have a glimpse of the Lord at the end of *Abhisheka* starts the *Nija Pada Darshanam* (sight of the feet of the Lord).

The paid devotees can participate in this seva and see the Holy Feet of the Lord without any covering. This is the only seva in which one can see the feet of the Lord. At all other times, the feet of the Lord shine with golden coverings. According to the Puranas, the sight of the Lord's feet purges the devotees of all their sins.

### **PAKSHOTSAVAS (FORTNIGHTLY CEREMONIES)**

*Pakshotsava* (Fortnightly Ceremony) is conducted during every Ekadashi (the eleventh day of the Full Moon). Though there may not be any special utsavas or processions in this, the preparations of rice are reduced and dosas and sondelu (baked Bengal gram) are specially offered to the Lord.

### **MASOTSAVAS OR NAKSHATROTSAVAS (MONTHLY CEREMONIES)**

There are a few ceremonies in the Tirumala Lord's temple every month on certain days of special stars.

These stars come only once in a month, and hence they are also called *Masotsavas*.

### **1. ROHINI NAKSHATROTSAVAM**

There will be *Abhisheka* to Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy alongwith Rukmini and Srikrishna in the morning on the day of Rohini star every month after *Suprabhatam*.

The same evening Lord Sri Krishna alongwith Rukmini is brought out of the temple to participate in the *Sahasra Deepalankarana Seva* of the Court Hall (*Koluvu Mantapam*). After the procession, Rukmini and Sri Krishna enter the temple through the greater circumambulation path (*Maha Pradakshina Marga*). The visitors of the seva are purged of all the evil effects associated with stars, especially that of Rohini star.

### **2. ARDRA NAKSHATROTSAVAM**

Ardra is the ruling birth star of Sri Bhagavad Ramanuja. On the evening of Ardra star every month Sri Malayappa Swami participates in the *Sahasra Deepalankarana Seva*. Sri Bhagavad Ramanuja placed on another pedestal before the Lord is also taken out in procession in the streets of Tirumala.

The utsavas of Sri Bhashyakara commence on a grand scale ten days before Ardra star especially in the Mesha masa. The procession of Sri Ramanuja during these ten days takes place face to face with the Lord. The *Asthanam* of the Lord (Court meeting) is held in the premises of Sri Bhashyakara of the temple.

After the *Nivedana*, the garlands and the *Shesha harathi* (lit camphor) of the Lord are offered to Ramanuja. The defects of 27 stars and especially of Ardra are pacified through the seva.

### 3. PUNARVASU NAKSHATROTSAVAM

Punarvasu is the ruling birth star of Sri Rama. There will be *abhishekam* for Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana alongwith Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy after *Suprabhatam* on the day of Punarvasu star every month. There will be *asthanam* (court meeting) for Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana on Sri Rama Navami and the next day, i. e. dashami before the Golden Entrance.

The same evening Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana and Ajnapalaka Anjaneya Swami participate in the *Sahasra Deepalankarana Seva*. After the procession in the Tirumala streets, Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana come to Sri Bedi Anjaneya Swami to offer the garland and *shesha haarathi* of Sri Rama to him.

Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana later enter the temple. The defects of 27 stars and especially of Punarvasu are pacified through the seva.

### 4. SHRAVANA NAKSHATROTSAVAM

Shravana is the ruling birth star of Lord Sri Venkateshwara. On that day of the star in the morning, there will be *abhishekam* for Sri Malayappa Swami and His consorts alongwith Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy. After all sevas and participation in the *Sahasra*

*Deepaalankarana Seva* and procession in the evening, Sri Malayappa Swami will enter the temple.

There will be special utsavas for the star shravana in certain months in Tirumala.

*Brahmotsavas* always end on the day of shravana in every Kanya Masa. There will be Pushpa Yagotsavam for the Lord on the day of shravana star in Karthika Masa.

### 5. PUNNAMI GARUDA SEVA

Besides *nakshatrotsavas*, there will be *Punnami Garuda Seva* at night for Tirumalesha on Full Moon day every month. That day around 7pm, Sri Malayappa Swami is adorned with diamond armour, crown and other ornaments. Mounting Him on the golden Garuda vahana, a procession is taken in the Tirumala streets with the servants holding the *chatra* and *chamara* while elephants, horses and oxen participate in it.

### SAMVATSAROTSAVAS (ANNUAL CEREMONIES)

There will be utsavas for the Lord of the Seven Hills on certain special days in a year. They are called *Samvatsarotsavas*. Let us try to know about them in brief.

#### 1. KOIL ALWAR TIRUMANJANAM

*Koil* means temple. Alwar is a devotee who identified himself with God. Just as God keeps His

devotee firmly in his heart, God is consecrated in the temple. That is why, temple is called *Koil Alwar*. *Tirumajjana* has become *Tirumanjana*. *Tiru* means Sri and *majjana* means bath or an auspicious bath. That is cleansing and consecrating the temple. There will be *Tirumanjana* for Tirumala temple four times a year. The entire temple is completely cleaned on Tuesdays before *Ugadi*, *Anivara Asthana*, *Brahmotsavas*, and *Vaikuntha Ekadashi* in *Koil Alwar Tirumanjana*. This is performed like a big *yagnya*.

All the utsava idols and golden and silver vessels of the *sanctum sanctorum* are brought out to the Golden Entrance. All the roofs and walls inside are washed and cleaned. The temples around are also cleaned thus. Later, the walls of the temple are daubed with *Parimalam*, a mixture of *namam kopu*, *sri churnam*, solid camphor, sandal powder, *kumkuma*, *khichili gadda*. This fragrant mixture is smeared all over.

Paid devotees can also participate in this. Those who participate in the seva get the beneficial virtue of having cleansed the temple.

## 2. UGADI ASTHANAM

On the Telugu Ugadi festival, there will be *Ugadi Asthanam* (court) for Lord Sri Venkateshwara who is the most worshipped Family God of Telugus (*ilavelpu*). That day after the first bell, Sri Malayappa Swami comes to the Golden Entrance alongwith His

consorts in the *Sarva Bhupala Vahanam*. His Commander Vishwaksena is placed on another pedestal facing south.

There will be *Panchanga Shravanam* after presenting to the Lord special silk clothes, food and *akshataropana* (auspicious turmeric rice). All the details of *Panchanga* (Hindu Calendar) like tithi, vara and nakshatra besides the results for the year and other affairs related to the country and times are reported to Lord Srinivasa.

There will be distribution of tirtha and prasada after offering *neerajanam* (lighted camphor) to the Lord.

## 3. SRIRAMA NAVAMI ASTHANAM

There will be *Asthanam* (Court) for Sri Rama in front of the Golden Entrance on *Chaitra Shuddha Navami* (ninth day of Chaitra month). There will be procession on the Hanumadvahana that evening. Later, there will be *Asthanam* at the Golden Entrance for Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana and Hanuman. After offering food and *akshataropana* (blessing with turmeric rice), the life story of Sri Rama is recited from the *Sri Ramayana*. The *Asthana* comes to an end with auspicious *mangala neerajanam* (offering lighted camphor).

## 4. SRI RAMA PATTABHISHEKAM (CORONATION OF SRI RAMA)

Every year on the evening of *Chaitra Shuddha Dashami* (tenth day of Chaitra), Anjaneya is taken in

procession on a pedestal opposite to Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana in the Tirumala streets.

Sugriva, Angada and Hanumantha are placed on pedestals by the side of Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana and *Asthanam* is conducted before the Golden Entrance. After *Akshataropana* and *nivedana*, the story of Sri Rama right from his birth to coronation is recited. The ceremony comes to an end with *mangala neerajanam* and distribution of Tirtha and prasada to the devotees.

#### 5. VASANTOTSAVAMS (SPRING FESTIVALS)

Every year there will be annual *Vasantotsavas* in Tirumala temple for three days ending on Chaitra Purnima.

On *Chaitra Shuddha Trayodashi* morning Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith Sri Devi and Bhudevi comes to the *Vasantha Mantapam* on the south east corner of the temple. There will be *vasantotsava abhishekas*, *nivedana* and *asthana* for them. Later, He goes back to the temple.

On the second day after *Bangaru Rathotsava* (Golden Chariot procession), there will be a similar *vasantotsava* again.

On the third day, Rukmini and Sri Krishna, Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana in different palanquins reach the *Vasantha Mantapa* besides Sri Malayappa Swami in procession and return to the temple the same evening after the festivities.

Devotees can participate in this on payment of prescribed fees. The participants, it is believed, will be cured of serious ailments and restored to health.

#### 6. PADMAVATHI PARINAYOTSAVAM (MARRIAGE CEREMONY OF PADMAVATHI)

*Vaishakha Shuddha Dashami* is the marriage day of Padmavathi and Srinivasa. In this connection, *Padmavathi Parinayotsavas* have been performed for three days every year in Tirumala since 1992.

On the previous day evening, i. e. *Vaishakha Shuddha Navami*, Sri Venkateshwara Swami mounts Gaja Vahana and Sri Devi and Bhudevi take to palanquins and a procession is taken to Narayanagiri garden where the marriage festivities take place on a grand scale. After music concerts and *Asthanam*, Swami alongwith His consorts returns to the temple.

The Lord comes to Narayanagiri on the second day, i.e. *Vaishakha Shuddha Dashami*, on Ashwa Vahana and the next day, i. e. *Vaishakha Shuddha Ekadashi*, on the Garuda Vahana while His consorts accompany Him in palanquins. The marriage festivities take place there on the second and third days as well. Marriages and other auspicious ceremonies take place on a large scale in the houses of those who witness these utsavas also. Devotees can participate in this seva on payment of the prescribed fee.



### 7. JYESHTABHISHEKAM

*Jyeshthabishekam* takes place to Lord of Tirumala every year for three days ending on Jyeshtha star in Jyeshtha month in the Marriage Pandal of Sampangi Circumambulation. It is called “*Abhidheyaka Abhishekam*”.

The utsava is conducted for three days with the aim of protecting the utsava idols from erosion due to the continuous *abhishekas* for generations together.

On the first day, Sri Malayappa is stripped of his golden armour. After *homas*, *abhishekas*, *panchamritha snapana tirumanjana*, etc., He wears the diamond armour and goes in procession in the streets of Tirumala.

Similarly on the second day, Sri Malayappa proceeds with pearl armour in procession. On the third day also after the *tirumanjana* and other formalities, He will be covered with golden armour and taken in procession. This armour will be removed again during *Jyeshthabisheka*. Till then the Lord shines with the golden armour throughout the year.

Devotees can participate in this paid service. It is assumed that God protects such devotees like the armour.

### 8. ANIVARA ASTHANAM

*Anivara Asthanam* takes place every year in Tirumala on Karkataka Sankranthi during the auspicious period of Dakshinayana on 16th July. Since it takes

place on the last day of Tamil Ani maasa, it is called *Anivara Asthanam*.

In the past, the annual accounting of the Lord’s income and expenditure, assets and liabilities, etc used to commence on the day of *Anivara Asthanam*. The budget is now shifted to April as per the modern practice. The utsava, however, continues to take place as usual.

On that day, Sri Malayappa Swami along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi is taken on Sarva Bhupala Vahana to the front yard of Golden Entrance. Vishvaksena comes in a different palanquin. They are offered clothes and food on a grand scale. After the blessing with turmeric rice, the Executive Officer is handed over the key bunch of the temple and offered *harathi* and *shathari*. Prasadam is distributed later.

This ceremony takes place before the Golden Entrance in which only priests, Jiyyengars, officers and employees of the temple participate.

### 9. PUSHPA PALLAKI (FLOWER PALANQUIN)

In connection with July 16<sup>th</sup> *Anivara Asthanam*, there will be a procession of Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith His consorts in a flower palanquin the same evening in the Tirumala streets. It offers an indescribable spectacle of the Lord along with His consorts in the palanquin adorned with different garlands. Devotees can participate in the paid service. It is said that the

participants in the seva will be divested of all the impressions of their past lives leaving scope for peaceful life.

### 10. PAVITROTSAVAS

As per the Vedic tradition, one is not supposed to enter the temple with *jatashoucham* (impurity due to birth of offspring) and *mrithashoucham* (impurity due to death of close relatives). But sometimes, this rule is violated knowingly or unknowingly by the tourists and staff. Purification ceremony that takes place in order to dispel the evil of such lapses is called *Pavitrotsavam*. It is different from the general purificatory programmes like temple cleansing, or *punyahavachanam* (purification through mantra).

There is evidence to suggest that *Pavitrotsavas* were conducted till 15-16 centuries in Tirumala. It stopped abruptly later. The temple has restored the practice since 1962. It takes place for three days.

It takes place every year in the Kalyana Mantapa during Shravana shuddha dashami, ekadashi and dwadashi.

On the first day, there will be consecration of *pavitras* (rings made of sacrificial grass), *homas* besides *abhishekas* for Sri Malayappa Swami and His consorts. On the second day, the *pavitras* are offered to the deities in the temple and the premises. On the third day, there will be *Purnahuti* ((Final offering to the sacrificial fire of a coconut, nine kinds of grains,

five precious metals, betel leaves, sandal wood sticks, etc. bundled in a silk cloth while chanting specified mantras). On these three days, there will be procession of Sri Malayappa Swami after the worship in the evening.

Devotees can participate in this seva on payment of required fees. The participants will be purged of the offences committed against the gods knowingly or unknowingly by any of their progeny. Peace and prosperity prevail in their lives.

### 11. SRIKRISHNAASHTAMI

There will be *Tirumanjanam* for Lord Sri Krishna at the Golden Entrance after *Tomala Seva* on *Srikrishnaashtami*. At the same time, *dvadasha tiruvaradhana* (12 kinds of worship) is offered to Ugra Srinivasa Murthy placed on another pedestal with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi. These *abhishekas* are performed in solitude. Ugra Srinivasa Murthy is later taken into Ananda Nilayam, while *Asthanam* is held for Sri Krishna Swami. After offering food to Balakrishna in sleeping posture, *Akshataropanam* is done.

Later, the story of Sri Krishna's birth is recited from *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The *Asthanam* ends with *harathi*.

The next day in the early hours Balakrishna is taken in procession and anointed (*tailakapu*). The oil is distributed to the devotees who anoint their heads with it and take auspicious bath.

In the afternoon there is *utla utsavam* (sling ceremony) as Sri Krishna with butter in hand goes in procession in a separate palanquin besides Sri Malayappa Swami. The festivities of breaking the milk and butter pots in the sling are carried out on a grand scale in Tirumala at every step. They come to an end as the Lord enters the temple.

## 12. BRAHMOTSAVAS

Although many utsavas are conducted for the Lord throughout the year, the *Brahmotsavas* which take place for nine days a year assume greatest prominence in the history of Tirumala.

At the instance of Brahma and other gods and goddesses, Sri Venkateshwara manifested Himself to protect the humanity in Kali Yuga on the day of Shravana star in Kanya Masam to give credence to the adage, “*Kalou Venkata Nayakah*”. Brahma Himself conducted utsavas for nine days ending on the day of Lord’s self-manifestation. Since Brahma Himself conducted these utsavas to Sri Venkateshwara, direct manifestation of *Para Brahma*, these acquired prominence as *Brahmotsavas*.

In the course of time later, several queens organized *Brahmotsavas* to Tirumalesha.

It is said that in 614 AD Pallava queen Samavai presented the idol of Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy to Tirumala and ordained for His procession before the *Brahmotsavas* in Kanya Masa.

Till 1583 *Brahmotsavas* were conducted almost every month, for example, in the name of Telugu Pallava king Vijaya Ganda Gopala Deva in the *Chaitra masa* in 1254 AD, in the name of “*Adi Tirunallu*” by Tribhuvana Chakravarthi Tiruvenkatanatha Yadava Rayalu in the Ashadha masa of 1328 AD, in the name of Veera Prathapa Rayalu in the Ashvayuja masa of 1429 AD, in the name of “*Masi Tirunallu*” by Harihara Rayalu in 1446 AD, and in the name of “*Achyutha Raya Brahmotsavas*” by Achyutha Raya in 1530 AD.

In due course, though the utsavas instituted by those kings and kingdoms stopped, but the utsavas commenced by Brahma continued to be conducted till now for nine days.

A day before in the evening, there will be *Ankuraarpana* (beginning), *mrutsangrahanam* (collection of soil) by the Lord’s Commander Vishwaksena. The next day happens to be the day of *Dhvajaarohana*. On this day, the flag of Garuda is hoisted on the golden *dhvaja sthambham* inviting the residents of all the worlds to the utsavas. There will be Pedda Shesha Vahana Seva for the Lord that night. Silk clothes are presented on this day on behalf of the government of Andhra Pradesh.

The next day, i. e. the second day there will be Chinna Shesha Vahanam and Hansa Vahanam both in the morning and evening, on the third day Simha Vahanam, Mutyapu Pandiri, on the fourth day Kalpa Vriksha Vahanam, Sarva Bhupala Vahanam, on the fifth

day *Mohini Avataram* in ivory palanquin in the morning and *Garudotsavam* at night. The garland worn by Goda Devi from Sri Villi Puttur and new umbrellas from Chennai reach Tirumala. Malayappa adorned with all these goes in procession on the golden Garuda. Lakhs of people witness the spectacle.

On the sixth day, there will be Hanumad Vahanam, Gaja Vahanam, on the seventh day Suryaprabha Vahanam, Chandraprabha Vahanam, on the eighth day Rathotsavam, Ashva Vahanam, and on the ninth day Chakra Snanam. The same night there will be Dhvajaavarohanam.

There will be two *Brahmotsavas* for Tirumalesha in a year with adhika masa, one in Kanya masa and another in sharannavaraatris.

### 13. DEEPAVALI ASTHANAM

There will be *Asthanam* (court) for Sri Malayappa Swami before the Golden Entrance on Deepavali.

After the first *nivedana* in the temple as usual, Sri Malayappa Swami along with Sri Devi and Bhu Devi are placed before the Golden Entrance. On another pedestal will be Vishvaksena. After presenting new clothes and *nivedanas*, there will be akshataropana. The *Asthanam* closes with the offering of tirtha, chandana, and shathari after harathi.

### 14. PUSHPA YAGAM (YAGA WITH FLOWERS)

Every year after *Brahmotsavas*, there will be *Pushpa Yagam* for Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith

Sri Devi and Bhu Devi on the day of Shravana star in Karthika Masa. It was in vogue till 15<sup>th</sup> century itself, but later got stopped abruptly. It is restored by Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams since 14<sup>th</sup> November 1980.

On the day of *Pushpa Yaga*, after the usual two *archanas* and two *nivedanas*, Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith Sri Devi and Bhu Devi arrive at the Lord's *Kalyana Mantapa*. *Homas*, *Snapanam* *Tirumanjana* are conducted. Later the same evening, there will be *archana* with different varieties of flowers. As soon as these flowers reach the level of the Lord's heart, they are removed, and *Pushpaarchana* recurs. The *archana* will be carried out like this for twenty times. *Harathi* will be offered on a grand scale at the end.

The paid devotees can also participate in this *yaga*. It is said that the participants in the seva will be divested of all the impressions of their past lives and all the diseases, thus leaving scope for peaceful life with prosperity and happiness.

### 15. DHANURMASAM - TIRUPPAVAI

Though the *Suprabhatha* Seva is offered to the Lord throughout the year early in the morning, there will be recital of *Tiruppavai* in stead of *Suprabhatam* in Dhanurmasam for a month.

During Dhanurmasa, there will be recital of Goda Devi's 30 *pashuras* (songs) one each every day for thirty days. Imagining herself to be a *Gopika* of

*Dvapara Yuga*, Goda Devi, it appears, sang these *pashuras*. In this context, there will be *Ekantha Seva* for Sri Krishna with butter in his hand in stead of Bhoga Srinivasa Murthy. *Tiruppavai* is recited in complete solitude.

During Dhanurmasa, *Bilva* leaves instead of sacred *basil* are used for *Sahasra Namaarchana* for the Lord.

### 16. VAIKUNTHA EKADASHI

*Shuddha Ekadashi* in Dhanurmasa is called Vaikuntha Ekadashi. In the early hours of this day, the Vikuntha Dwaram (door) will be opened and again closed in the early hours of the next day, i.e. Vikuntha Dvadashi. There will be procession for the well-adorned Sri Malayappa Swami alongwith Sri Devi and Bhu Devi in the golden chariot, followed by *Asthanam* in the temple.

### 17. GODA PARINAYOTSAVAM

There will be *Goda Parinayotsavam* (marriage ceremony of Goda Devi) on the last day of Dhanurmasa, i.e. *kanuma* festival considering Lakshmi on the chest of the Lord as Goda Devi. That day the garland worn by Goda Devi in Govindaraja Temple will adorn the Lord of Tirumala.

### 18. PARUVETA UTSAVAM (HUNTING GAME)

There will be *Paruveta Utsavam* every year on *Kanuma* festival day. After the second *naivedya* that

day in the temple, the Lord adorned with his five weapons goes hunting. Sri Krishna accompanies on a different palanquin.

The Lord stays at *Paruveta Mantapam* situated a mile away to the northwest of the temple till the evening and participates in the hunting game. He obtains the services of Tallapaka Annamayya. Sri Krishna goes to the resort of the shepherds by the side to receive *archana* from them.

Thousands of people participate in the music and dance programmes arranged in connection with it. Those who witness the Lord in this utsavam will get the ability to control five senses.

### 19. RATHA SAPTAMI

There will be an utsava every year on *Magha Shuddha Saptami* (seventh day of Magha month according to Telugu Calendar), i. e. Ratha Saptami. That day, Sri Malayappa Swami will stroll into the city streets on as many as seven carriages, such as Suryaprabha Vahana, Chinna Shesha Vahana, Garuda Vahana, Hanumantha Vahana, Kalpavriksha Vahana, Sarvabhupla Vahana and Chandraprabha Vahana. There will be Chakra Snana (ablutions to the Disc) in the afternoon. Ratha Saptami festivities are called *Artha Brahmotsavas* or *Brahmotsavas* of the past.

### 20. TEPPOTSAVAS (BOAT FESTIVAL)

There will be *Teppotsavas* (Boat Festival) for the Lord in the Pushkarini (Holy Pond) for five days ending on the full moon day (Poornima) of Phalguna month.

These utsavas were in vogue as early as 1468 AD. Tallapaka Annamacharya describes *Teppotsavas* on a grand scale. Though they were stopped in the course of time, they were, however, restored in 1921.

*These utsavas* take place for five days. Sri Sita, Rama and Lakshmana participate in these *utsavas* on the first day, i.e. Phalguna Shuddha Ekadashi (eleventh day in Phalguna month) and Rukmini and Sri Krishna on the second day, i.e. dvadashi (12<sup>th</sup> day). Sri Malayappa Swami along with Sri Devi and Bhudevi participates in them for the remaining three days from Trayodashi (13<sup>th</sup> day) to Purnami (15<sup>th</sup> day).

Those who paid for the Seva can also participate in this.

### 21. PRANAYA KALAHOTSAVA (LOVERS' QUARREL)

There will be *Pranaya Kalahotsava* (Lovers' Quarrel Ceremony) every year for the Lord on the sixth day after *Vaikuntha Ekadashi*.

That day after the usual second bell *naivedyam*, Sri Malayappa Swami goes to the Pushkarini (Holy Pond) in a palanquin in *Maha Pradakshina Marga* (big circumambulation path), while His consorts on separate palanquins come there in an opposite direction face to face with the Lord. As the Puranas are recited, Jiyengar beats the Lord with flower balls on behalf of the Goddesses. The Lord pretends to be afraid and pleads with His consorts that He did not commit

any mistake. Pacified Goddesses join Him on either side and receive *Karupur Harathi* alongwith the Lord. *Asthanam* is held after they reach the temple.

### 22. ADHYAYANOTSAVAS

There will be *Divya Prabandha Parayana* (Recital of *Divya Prabandha*) especially in the *Adhyayanotsavas* which commence eleven days before Vaikuntha Ekadashi and continue for 25 days. On the last day, there will be *Tanneeramudu utsava* as a mark of Srinivasa drinking water in the guise of a huntsman addressing Tirumala Nambi as grandfather. Bhagavad Ramanuja established the tradition of reciting *Divya Prabandhas* not only in these utsavas but in many others.

Besides the above, several annual utsavas like *Narasimha Jayanthi*, *Sri Varaha Jayanthi*, *Ananta Padmanabha Chaturdashi*, *Chakratirtha Mukkoti*, *Kaishika Dvadashi*, *Karthika Deepotsava*, *Kshetrapalaka Utsava*, *Tiruvadipuram Utsava*, *Sri Vari Bagh Savari Utsava-Purushai tota Utsava* are conducted in the Tirumala Lord's temple.

Devotees right from Creator Brahma down to common men and women conduct utsavas, uregimpus (processions), archanas, aradhanas as per their wishes to their full content. There will be one festivity or the other any time in Tirumala. That is why, teeming with large crowds Tirumala shrine is flourishing like anything proving the adage "*Nitya Kalyanam Pachcha Toranam.*"

Throughout the year, there will be as many as more than 400 utsavas and sevas for the Lord of Seven Hills in the temple - small, big, open to all, or restricted to a few. Every day is a festival in Tirumala shrine.

Lord of Ananda Nilaya, it appears, is a lover of utsavas; and more than that lover of His devotees. It is not possible to measure the love He has for his devotees. He makes His visitors sponsor the utsavas, repay the vows and arrange for His processions. He rewards them in turn with endless series of auspicious things and good omens. Even if you are not able to pay for the utsavas, it does not matter. It is enough if you witness the grandeur of utsavas. If only you have a glimpse of the Lord of Ananda Nilaya, you are sure to get eternal bliss (*Brahmananda*).

What more do you want than this in this life? It is enough if you conduct or just see or cherish in memory these utsavas of the Lord of Seven Hills known as Venkateshwara of Utsavas. Blessed are your lives and your family tree.

### DEDICATORY NOTE

Let us dedicate this little book to the holy feet of the Great Lord Venkatesha and attain liberation from this world.

In the words of Annamayya, He is “*Chedaneeka bratikinche siddha mantramoo! Rogaladachee rakshinche divyoushadhamu! Badibayaka venta tirige prana bandhuvu!*” (He is the ready-made mantra

that prevents us from degeneration to live a virtuous life!/ He is the holy medicine that protects us by curing us of all diseases. He is the soul-relative who is always with us without letting us down.” Moreover, He is the family-God of the Telugu people.

The sublime protagonist of the book is the Lord of the Hills (*Kondala Raya*)! The information here is related to the great Lord Venkatesha! Everything here belongs to the Lord of Seven Hills! This child (author) is also at the service of the Lord. When everything belongs to the Lord, what is so great about dedicating this book to the Lord? Annamacharya sings thus:

*Keshava daasinaithi gelichithi vannitaanu  
Ee shareerapu neraalika nela vedaka?*

*//Pallavi//*

*Nichchalu korikaliyya nee naamame chaalu  
Thechchi puneethu cheya nee theerthame  
chaalu*

*Pachchi paapaalanacha nee prasaadame  
chaalu*

*Yechchukondu vupaayaalu ika nela*

*//Keshava//*

*Ghanuni cheyaganu nee kainkaryame chaalu  
Monasi rakshinchanu nee manthrame chaalu  
Manishi kaavaga thirumana laanchaname  
chaalu*

*Yenasenu dikkudesa ika nela vedaka*

*//Keshava//*

*Nelavaina sukhamiyya nee dhyaaname chaalu  
Ala daapudandaku nee yarchane chaalu  
Yilapai Sree Venkatesha! Yinnitaa maaku  
kalavu  
Yelami nitaramulu yika nela vedaka  
//Keshava//*

It can be rendered in English thus.

I have become the servant of Lord Keshava  
He has conquered me in all aspects.  
Why search for bodily crimes then?

For wish-fulfilment, thy name is enough!  
For consecration, thy holy water (*tirtha*) is enough!  
For suppressing crude sins, thy *prasadam* is  
enough!

Why other expediencies then?

To make us great thy service is enough!  
To salvage my soul thy *mantra* is enough  
To protect my body thy *Tirumani*\* is enough!  
When found direction and refuge why search fur  
ther?

For steady pleasure, thy meditation is enough.  
For a good prop thy worship is enough  
Oh Venkatesha of the earth! Thus Thou art with  
us in all these ways

Where is the need to search for others?

\*(*Tirumani*=sacred white clay used as a mark of  
Vaishnava)

**OM NAMO VENKATESHAYA!**

*Shankarabharana tune (ragaa)*

*Srihari paada teerthambe chedani mandu  
Mohapaashaalu gosi mokshamichche mandu  
//Pallavi//*

*Kaaramai Kantaginchani kadujallani mandu  
Noorani kaachani yatti nunnani mandu  
Korikatho velavetti koni thevallani mandu  
Veruvellankulu koorchanatti venduvoni  
mandu //Pallavi//*

*Guruthaina rogamulu gunamu chese mandu  
Durithamulu pedabape doddamandu  
Niratham Brahmadulu neruputho sevinche  
mandu  
Narakamu soranatti nayamayina mandu  
//Srihari//*

*Ponkamutho bhayamulu pondaniyyani  
mandu  
Manku buddhulu manpi manninche mandu  
Pankajaaksha Venkataramana prapannuni  
mandu  
Senkinchaka thana dasula jepatte mandu  
//Srihari//*

It can be rendered in English thus:

The ablution of Lord Srihari's feet  
Is the best medicine without expiry!



The medicine that cuts the ties of passion  
And redeems you.

A soothing, cool medicine  
Unlike the irritating chilly powder  
A smooth medicine which is neither ground nor  
heated

A choice medicine that can't be purchased  
For a price with all your desire  
A medicine not composed of root and all.

A medicine which cures  
All the diagnosed diseases  
Best medicine for all sins  
A medicine that is taken forever cleverly by Brahma  
and others.

A just medicine that keeps you off the hell

A suitable medicine that keeps you from all fears  
An approving medicine that cures you of your  
stubbornness

This is the medicine prescribed by  
Venkata Ramana, the Lotus-eyed  
Who comes to the rescue of his servants  
Without any hesitation.

\* \* \*