

GOVINDA PADHAM

(Once upon a time - Divine stories of Tirumala)



Written By

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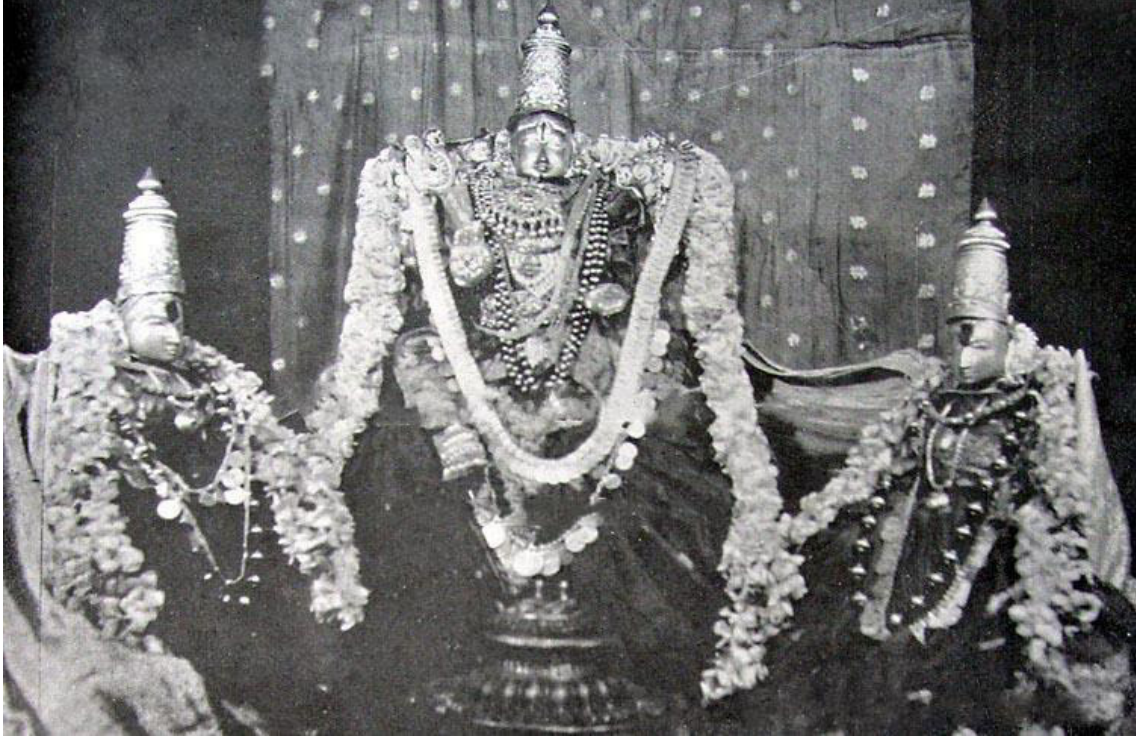
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Govinda Padham

(Once upon a time - Divine stories of Tirumala)



Viswapathi

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Foreword

‘Venkatadri Samam Sthaanam Brahmande Naasthi Kinchana Venkatesa Samo Devo Na Bhutho Na Bhavishyathi’

In this whole Universe, there is no other place equivalent to Venkatadri or any divine power comparable to Sri Venkateswara, neither in the past nor in the future. With the blessings of Sri Srinivasa, I have written twenty-four religious books. Importantly of which, fourteen are about Sri Varu. All this is nothing but Lord’s blessings. Else who am I a mere mortal, writing all these books that are read and enjoyed by so many devotees all over the world?

Sri Srinivasa loves his devotees. If we leave our ego and materialistic desires and bow down to Him, He will take care of us. There is no God greater than Him in this Kaliyuga. That is the reason thousands of devotees throng to Tirumala to have His darshan.

Tirumala is a divine and magnificent place. If we sit in any place on Tirumala, close our eyes and meditate singularly on Him, then we can hear the sound of ‘OM’. We can feel it reverberating in our hearts. We can also hear passages from Vedas, Upanishads and Astadasa Puranas. Even now all Celestial beings and Maha Munis (sages) roam around the sacred hills in divine forms. One can visit Tirumala only if one is destined to visit and have darshan of Lord, solely based on his or her good deeds.

Through the ages many devotees worshipped Sri Srinivasa and attained salvation and still attaining. Lakhs of devotees make the tedious journey to Tirumala, overcoming many obstacles. That is the power and attraction of the Lord. People from far and near come to take his darshan. Many of us don’t know a lot of things about Tirumala: When did the Lord made the mountain range his abode? How was the Tirumala temple in the initial days? When did he bless ordinary devotees with his darshan? When was the road laid to approach the temple? So many questions, which are unanswered. We don’t have answers to these. Many of us go into raptures listening to any information regarding Tirumala and the presiding deity, Lord Sri Venkateswara. Even I used to think about these things a lot.

One night, a wonderful Celestial being came into my dream and told me a lot of things about how Lord made this His abode and how the temple was in its initial days. This dream continued for around ten days. This Celestial being appeared in my dream every day and used to explain so many things that happened on these divine mountains in those days. I feel ecstasy thinking of it. All this is only due to Lord Srinivasa blessings and nothing else. I wanted to share these divine happenings as well as experiences with all His devotees. The result is ‘**Govinda Padham**’.

I truly believe devotees will be very happy to read this book. It is always a pleasure to hear or read anything about Lord Srinivasa, devotees feel ecstasy to listen to them. He is so heavenly and divine.

This book was published with the contribution of Dr. Rakesh Kalapala, Dr. Akila and so many other devotees. I am thankful for their help. I pray to Sri Lakshmi Srinivasa to bless each and every devotee with health, wealth and prosperity.

**Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam
Sri Venkata Nivaasaaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam**

**Samastha Sanmangalani Bhavanthu
Sarve Janaa Sukhino Bhavanthu**

Thimmaraju Viswapathi Rama Krishna Murthy
Hyderabad

How to read this book?

I have a strong conviction that there are no hard and fast rules to read a religious book. There is no barrier of age, caste or creed. The only requirement is to have a peaceful mind and clean body. Anyone, anytime, any day, any place can read them. To read about Sri Maha Vishnu one needs only pure devotion and nothing else. There is no need to follow any difficult rituals or do fasting.

However, there are some auspicious days that are important for reading Stothras, Paaraayanams etc. Reading on the auspicious days like Vaikunta Ekadasi etc will double the results of the outcome. There is no doubt about that.

Ekadasi is very dear to Lord Sri Srinivasa. If you read this book on every Ekadasi, Lord will bless with prosperity. They will not have any ill health. Likewise, reading on Sravana Nakshathram day of every month will lead to umpteen blessings. If age and health permits, one should read this book at least once a year on any Ekadasi to avoid rebirth. One will live happily and attain moksha. It is very auspicious to read on Vaikunta Ekadasi day. Similarly, it can be read on any auspicious day that is dear to Sri Maha Vishnu to get maximum benefits.

Every day, after bath, if one reads at least one chapter, their day will go smoothly and successfully. All their works will be completed without any hurdles or delay.

If people with ill health, read this book, they will be cured of their health issues. If your mind is not peaceful, reading this book will help calm it.

Reading this book as a one week Paaraayanam, will help devotees overcome all their troubles, and will be blessed with prosperity. If anyone is facing any problem, open the book on any chapter, the chapter will provide an answer to their problem.

Devotees can read this book in any of the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temples to receive blessings of Lord Sriman Narayana. The result of reading it in Tirumala is equivalent to performing one thousand Ashwa Medha Yaagas.

As I said before, there is no need to follow any strict rules and regulations. Sit with a peaceful and calm mind in whichever place that is convenient to you and read the book. One can read it even when travelling. Keep this book with you always and opening any chapter, read it whenever you feel like. There is no need to read the whole book at one go if you don't have the time.

You can read it any day any time, any way you want, to receive the blessings of Sri Venkateswara. May Lord bless all his devotees with health, wealth and prosperity!

'SRI LAKSHMI SRINIVASA KATAKSHA SIDDHIRASTHU'

Thimmaraju Viswapathi Rama Krishna Murthy

Dedication

This divine book '**Govinda Padham**' is dedicated to the holy feet of Tirumala **Sri Srinivasa** in memory of my father Late Sri. Brahmasri Thimmaraju Laxmi Narasimha Rao and mother Late Smt. Nagarathnamba.

Thimmaraju Viswapathi Rama Krishna Murthy

Govinda Padham

Chapter 1

There lives Sri Srinivasa.....

Tirumala.... One gets goose bumps thinking of this holy place. Sri Srinivasa... Thinking of His name fills our heart with unknown happiness. First happiness... followed by devotion... For devotees it is unexplainable experience! The thoughts of Sri Venkateswara fills us with happiness that cannot be described by mere words. We can visualise all the seven hills in front of us. Our body will be ecstatic. At once we will remember all the experiences that are associated with Sri Srinivasa. That is His blissful attraction.

Sri Srinivasa, who took form on Tirumala hills is divine, auspicious and enchantingly beautiful. That is the reason devotees from all walks of life and faraway places are drawn to His abode. They want to visit Him at the earliest. Vaishnava tatvam considers all living beings as women! The only male in this Universe is Sriman Narayana. That may be the reason all are immensely attracted to the Lord residing on the Tirumala Hills. Not only humans, all insects and animals are enticed towards the Tirumala.... In addition, all living creatures, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Kinnaras, Kimpurushas, Gods and Goddess yearn to visit His abode and stay there for as long as possible.

The beauty of the Tirumala Hills is indescribable. Once Sriman Narayana wanted to take avatar on earth in Kaliyuga to bless His devotees. He conveyed the same message to His devotee Lord Garuda. Immediately, Garuda came to earth with lightning speed and started surveying for a suitable place. How sanctified should the place be when the Lord Himself is going to reside there? How wonderful it should be? Lord Garuda searched hills, mountains, river beds, places near seas and oceans etc for a beautiful place. Though he found a number of places which were attractive and beautiful, he felt there was something lacking. Dissatisfied, he continued his search.

He searched every nook and corner. He could not find anything that would be an appropriate place for the Lord to take residence. Nothing met his approval. Is there no place on earth that is blessed to serve Sriman Narayana as his abode? In which corner of this earth does this place exist? Thinking so Garuda continued his search. He saw a beautiful place and landed over there thinking this could be the location, but after a few minutes he did not feel peace and started his flight. He searched and searched so many places. He could not find any place suitable for the Lord. Saddened with his futile search, he decided to turn back to Vaikuntam.

While glancing around his eyes fell on an amazing mountain range. Immediately he flew there. WOW!!! What a divine and celestial place!!! The mountain range was full of trees that bore varieties of fruits and different coloured and fragrant flowers. Ha!!! What a wonderful nature bounty!! On one side, multitude of birds chirping, colourful parrots, mynas, doves, peacocks on trees and on the other side many cranes.... It was a sight to see. In addition so many divine pilgrim centres, one better than the other. Lord Garuda saw many animals roaming around the mountain range without inhibition. Seeing all this, he felt

this was an ideal place for Sriman Narayana to make His abode in Kaliyuga. Although he had seen umpteen place that were beautiful, he felt that this place had divinity. He could not find any other place equivalent to it. He thought, with nature's bounty, waterfalls and lakes, the mountain range, was a perfect place for Lord Sriman Narayana to reside. Feeling happy and satisfied, Garuda flew back to Vaikunta to report to his Lord.

All the hills of Tirumala are golden. Although we see them as rocks in this Kaliyug they are actually gold. That is why they are called 'Kanakadri' (Golden Mountain). We can step on to the Tirumala hills and take His darshan only due to the good deeds of our previous births. Devotees who always chant his name and worship Him, will be blessed to be visit, spend time and attain blissfulness. Those who reach ultimate bliss state will attain salvation and there will be no rebirth.

There used to be a King Gajapathi in the olden days. He was a very great Vishnu devotee. He constructed a number of Vaishnava temples. He was an able administrator. Even after a number of attempts he was unable to make the journey to Tirumala. Once he made all arrangements to visit Tirumala. He was about to step into a beautiful chariot drawn by horses. Suddenly, one of the horses sprained its leg and fell down. The chariot tilted to one side and the King fell down and broke his leg. With no other choice, he had to postpone his trip. It took six months for him to recover. After one year he again made plans to visit Tirumala. Just before starting he got the news from his spies that the neighbouring king was planning to attack his kingdom in a few days. Left with no other option he cancelled the journey. Every time he planned due to some or other reason he had to cancel his plans. His Prime Minister wondered why such a devote King was not able to make the journey to have darshan of Lord Srinivasa.

One night Lord Sri Srinivasa appeared in the dream of the Prime Minister and told him the reason for the King's powerlessness to go to Tirumala hills. He said that the King had bad karmas in his previous birth and hence he was unable to take the pilgrimage. However, due to his good deeds in this birth, he will have the privilege to have darshan of the Lord many times in the next birth. When the Prime Minister explained the same to the king, he understood the reason. He felt very unhappy that he could not see Lord in this birth. He however, continued his devotion towards Lord Srinivasa and built a number of Vaishnav temples in his life time and attained moksha.

In the whole universe, Tirumala is the most sacred place. Even now a number of celestial beings wander around the Hills. They take human form and mingle among the ordinary devotees. They take pleasure in listening to the stories these the devotees share in regard to Lord Srinivasa. In the olden days the Tirumala hills were completely occupied by dense forests. Wild animals used to roam around the temple. For a long time only Lord Srinivasa lived there. Tribals used to worship Him as their God. There was no proper temple for a long time. Even after that Archakas from Tiruchanur used to go up the hill early in the morning perform the required puja and would return back by afternoon. By evening all the wild animals like lions, tigers, wild boars and elephants would be roaming around the temple.

It is surprisingly to think of these things in the present era. In those days it was tedious and dangerous journey to undertake. The town of Tirupati was not developed. In one of the temples of Tiruchanur, there used to be an Uthsav Vighram (statue) of the Lord. Devotees would worship this Vighram in Tiruchanur itself. For a long time, the first day of Brahmotsavams was celebrated on Tirumala and the rest in Tiruchanur. In those days, the number of devotees climbing the hills would not be more than a hundred per day.

For years a number of Kings used to visit Tirumala for Lord's darshan. Among them Sri Krishna Devarayulu was foremost. In his life time he visited the hills seven times and offered a lot of gifts to the Lord. Similarly a number of Kings and rich merchants also presented a number of gifts to Him. A lot of devotees spent their entire life in His service. Their whole life was dedicated to Him. Sri Srinivasa takes care of those who have absolute belief in Him and He is the whole and soul for His devotees.

Due to his blessings, I could write sixteen books on His leelas. These books are read by thousands of devotees across the world every day (Nithya Paaraayana Grandham). By his benediction, I am able to put together all the information that I know. Recently, a Celestial being came into my dream and took me to Tirumala Hills. I saw that the temple there was not as it is today. It was completely different. The Celestial being explained to me how the temple was once upon a time. I was amazed to listen to the information. I was filled with ecstasy. I was transformed to another world when the Celestial being described the place which is so dear to Sriman Narayana. It is nothing but His blessings bestowed on me. The Celestial being came into my dream for ten days explaining the Leelas of Sri Srinivasa and the significance of the Venkatadri Hills. It is my pleasure to share these things with his dear devotees. What more would I need? In my dream the Celestial being took me hundreds of years back. Wandering on the hills at that time period was such a wonderful experience. After getting up from sleep, I could not overcome the feeling of elation and remembered all those things that I saw. I will share all the experiences and information, the Celestial being showed me in the next chapters. I believe, it will give you a lot of pleasure reading them.

When devotees call, Sri Srinivasa is bound to respond. Those who believe are blessed with everything in the world. Anyone asking for His protection will be taken care of. Even sinners are pardoned if they call His name once, He is that soft hearted. He is Athma Swaroopa. He protects those who seek his security and fulfils all their wishes. Sriman Narayana who is formless, pure, spotless, ever happy, ever glowing and truthful has taken the form of Sri Venkateswara on the sacred Venkatadri hills.

|| End of First Chapter ||

**Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam
Sri Venkata Nivaasaaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam**

Govinda Padham

Chapter 2

Vedas took the form of Venkatadri

It was end of Dwapara yuga and start of Kaliyuga. In a few more hours, Sri Krishna avatar would come to an end. All the Celestial beings of the fourteen lokas (worlds) were sad and worried that Sriman Narayana would end His Sri Krishna Avatar. They were apprehensive of the next phase i.e., Kaliyuga. They were aware that in Kaliyuga, humans would commit a number of sins and face lot of sufferings. In Dwapara yuga also the following of dharma had decreased. So in Kaliyuga, adharma will rule. Sinners would increase. Only, the first hundred years of Kaliyuga will follow according to dharma, after that dharma will slowly wane. Subsequently, after one thousand years, the situation of this earth would be unimaginable and would become worse. Seeing all these with their third eye, the Celestial beings were unhappy. In the Kaliyuga, due to the sinners, even the pious would have to face innumerable problems. Who will protect these pious people?

These were the thoughts that were going on in the minds of the Heavenly beings. All of them collectively went to Sriman Narayana and posed the same doubt to Him. Then Bhagawan asked them not to be apprehensive and said that as soon as the Kaliyug starts He would take avatar on earth. At the end of Dwapara yug and start of Kaliyug He would take form on Venkatadri to protect His devotees. Hearing these soothing words they were satisfied. In a few hours, there was PRALAYAM and the earth went under water and that was the end of Sri Krishna avatar. Beautiful places like Dwaraka etc were submerged under water. Floating on the water, Sri Krishna's body reached Tirumala hills and suddenly disappeared. Immediately, there was a celestial light which moulded into a divine statue. In due course, this statue came to be known as the divine Sri Venkateswara Swamy.

This was witnessed by the Heavenly beings from fourteen worlds. They were very happy. The statue was magnificent with luminescence of Vishnu tatva. All the oceans returned to their original state. They became calm once again. Celestial beings from different lokas gathered on Venkatadri. They realised that Sriman Narayana as promised took form on earth. They were surprised to see the wonderful mountain range and nature's beauty. The whole place was pleasant with trees that had colourful flowers and variety of fruits.

All the Heavenly beings were very thrilled that Sriman Narayana, in this Kaliyug, took the form of Sri Venkateswara to bless His devotees. Then Brahma Deva celebrated a big festival in which all the Celestial beings participated with a lot of fervour. After the festival everyone left for their places. However, some of them did not want to leave Bhagawan alone and wanted to stay back for a few days more. One hundred and sixteen of them made Venkatadri Hills their permanent residence. Every morning they used to go to the divine form and used to praise the Lord with a number of sthothras. They would collect wonderful fruits from the Seshachala forests and offer as naivedhyam. Each day different fruits-pomegranate, guavas, bananas etc. After the naivedhyam they used to give aarathi.

For a long time only Devatas worshipped Sri Venkateswara on Venkatadri hills. Humans did not have an inkling of His existence. Celestial beings used to play, sing, dance and eat their

choicest fruits. They used to bathe in the beautiful ponds and roam in the gardens and take rest in the night. In the morning they worshipped the Lord with sthothras. There used to be a celestial tower (gopuram) on top of Holy Abode of Sri Varu. It still exists on Tirumala now, but cannot be seen by mere mortals like us. We can only see what is constructed by humans. This tower is only visible to great souls who do penance. It shines with the brilliance of thousands of Suns. This celestial tower is much bigger, taller and brighter than the current tower of Tirumala temple. That is why devotees have such a good feeling when they visit Tirumala. The brilliance from this tower spreads across the whole of Venkatadri hills. This is reason why devotees experience a wonderful positive energy. It is more significant for those who meditate regularly.

As the divine resident of Vaikunta, Sriman Narayana dwells on the Tirumala hills in the form of Sri Venkateswara, the hills radiate divine light. One can overcome desires with the darshan of the Heavenly form. We would be bound by an unknown maya. We would be so mesmerised. Although we go with an intention to ask boons, we come out without requesting for anything. Such is the attractiveness of Bhagawan.

Sri Venkateswara is happiness and truth personified. He is always happy. We have five koshas (sheaths around self). They are Anandamayi, Vignanamayi, Manomayi, Praanamayi and Annamayi. Bhagawan lives in the Anandamayi kosa of our body. The Parameswara swarupam (Lord's form) that occupies the universe is none other than Him. This Parabrahma Murthy is whole and soul before and after the birth of the universe and also when it is existing.

In the early stages only Devatas worshipped Sriman Narayana on Venkatadri hills. Every one used to sing praises of the Lord through stotras. Some of them used to play instruments. Some others used to dance. At that time, Brahma, Saraswathi, Maheswara and Parvathi Devi with other Celestial beings came and stayed there for a week. The Heavenly beings already residing there celebrated this event with magnificent festivals. It is very difficult for mere mortals like us to even imagine the wonderful sights. The whole hills were occupied by Celestial beings. One could see, on one side Brahma and Saraswathi, on another side Shiva and Parvati, to one side Indra and Asta Dikpaalakas, other side Aditya and Navagrahas, on another side Ganapathi, in another place Hanuman and there Subramanya Swamy with Valli Devasena... all of them on the hills. Each one was dressed in splendour with beautiful clothes and sparkling jewellery. It was a sight to see with all these beings roaming around the flower gardens. Some Apsarasaas were dancing on side, seeing them peacocks climbed down from the trees and joined them in dancing. Some Devatas were playing musical instruments. Some women were playing veena. Birds on the trees were mesmerised listening to the music around them. Elephants trumpeted with their trunks.

The only though going on in the minds of Devatas was that only because Sriman Narayana took residence on these hills all Celestial beings had gathered there. The accommodation requirements were taken care of Maya (Mayudu). Arrangements for food was looked after by some Devatas. All of them lived on the Venkatadri hills for seven days. Every two to three months all the Celestial beings would descend on the Tirumala Hills. Those seven days the whole place would be gorgeously lit with divine light. Interestingly, even now, unknown to humans all the Celestial beings attend the Brahmotsavams every year. That is the reason

this period has special significance for devotees. And the whole place would shine with special brilliance.

Due to the presence of Celestial beings during Brahmotsavams, devotees experience an unknown bliss. We tend to forget our problems. Mind becomes peaceful. In olden days Brahmotsavams were celebrated every month. It was worth seeing the festivities where in Sri Srinivasa with His consorts Sridevi and Bhudevi would go around the Mada streets. It is indescribable feeling and happiness.

Devatas performed the worship for a very long time to Sri Srinivasa. In Kaliyuga, one Yadava devotee was the first human to have darshan of the Lord. However, for some years no one performed any veneration to Him. Later, tribals would roam around the hills once in a while. Even then no one was aware of the divinity of the Tirumala hills. They considered Sun and Moon as Gods and were happily living in the midst of nature. Their world was only the mountains and surrounding places. After some years they reached Sheshachala Mountains. In those days, these mountains were covered with thick dense forests. It was home to a number of wild animals like lions, tigers, cheetahs, and poisonous snakes. There used to be beautiful scenic lakes all around. The forest dwellers (tribals) would drink water from these lakes which was also a source of water for the wild creatures in the night. These people used to stay away from the water bodies in the night.

One day, a youngster was chasing a rabbit and ran behind it. Surprisingly, the rabbit was very fast and jumped into a bush. He went searching for and it jumped into another. When he approached that bush it jumped into a different bush. The youngster was surprised how such a small rabbit could be so agile and jump from one bush to another. He decided he would catch it, at any cost. Following the rabbit he went deep into the forest. Even after trying very hard he was unable to catch it. By then he was very tired but was adamant. He did not understand why he was unable to catch the rabbit which normally was a very easy task for him.

Running behind it, the youngster then reached a spot where a number of trees were growing together. Thinking the rabbit might be hiding somewhere in these bushes, he separated them and entered. WOW! He was astonished to see the magnificent scene in front of him. He was lost for words. He saw a big tamarind tree in front of him. It was a very big tree with its branches spread over a large area. A number of Champaka (Sampangi) plants were growing grown nearby. Among these plants he saw a beautiful statue. The statue was gorgeous and shining with divine energy. Seeing the divine statue, the youngster felt a strong positive energy in his body. All his tiredness vanished. He was dumb stuck and sat there for a long time staring at the divine statue.

After sometime, he gained conscious and ran back to his people to inform them. He explained to his tribe what he had seen. However, no one believed him because in their life and small world they had neither seen nor heard about these things. The leader of the tribe said that he wanted to go and see this miracle. So the leader and the youngster along with others went to the place where the statue was situated.

Once they reached there, even they were dumb stuck. By the time all of them reached there, a peacock was dancing exquisitely in front of the statue. Cuckoos on the trees were singing melodiously. Suddenly, two big tigers came there roaring. As the tribals were not carrying any weapons they got very scared. However, wonder of wonders, as they approached the statue, the roaring tigers became like domestic animals and calmly went and sat next to the feet of the statue. Elephants brought water in their trunks and did Abhishekam to Bhagawan. Some beautiful birds were flying with abundance around the Lord. Different coloured parrots brought various kinds of fruits and kept them at the feet of the Lord. Seeing all these the tribals were shocked beyond words.

The tribal leader lifted his head and looked at the sky and nodded as if he had received a message. Immediately he started jumping and dancing with joy. On seeing him, the other members also started dancing. Surprisingly, the two tigers did not move an inch and watched the tribals dance. The tribal leader said 'This statue is a divine being who has come to protect us. Lords Surya (Sun) and Chandra (Moon God) to whom we pray every day have sent this Celestial being. From now on, every day we have to come and worship this Lord. He is our protector. Some of the youth said they would like to shift the statue to the place where they live. As soon as they said that, both the tigers roared loudly. The tribal head shouted at them for suggesting the shifting. He said 'There is no question of shifting the statue. Lord has come to this place from the sky. We will all come here every day. Lord is one among us. Our God, our leader. And we have to take care of Him carefully. Every day someone has to come from our dwelling and offer naivedhyam to the Lord. As He has come to protect us, we have to celebrate with a big festival'.

All of them returned to their dwelling and explained all that they saw to others. Everyone was happy and thrilled that God had come to protect them and that they have someone, who they can approach and share all their sorrows. They happily discussed the day's happening amongst themselves. They thought about the festivities that they were going to have the next day. The tribal head allocated the jobs to everyone, who has to go out and bring fruits, what type of fruits to be brought, who has to bring flowers, who has to bring palm wine etc.

Next day, all the members of the dwelling reached the place where the Lord was found. Who ever saw His divine form for the first time was mesmerised. They watched Him with astonishment and wonder. As they had never seen such a divine form till then, everyone was shocked as well as happy. They cleared the place around the statue by cutting down the plants and shrubs. They offered the animals that were hunted the previous night as naivedhyam. They also offered various kinds of fruits. They don't know the concept of naivedhyam. Their only thought was that from now on God will take care of us. He has come all the way from sky for our sake. That is why whatever we are eating we have to offer it to him first and then only eat it. Some people brought the palm wine. They danced merrily, ate the meat of the offered animals and drank the wine. They spent the night there itself and happily returned to their dwelling the next day.

From then onwards, Bhagawan had become a part of their lives. They used to narrate all their sorrows as well as happiness to Him. When a child was born all of them would bring the child with a lot of celebration to the God and show the child to Him. After marriage the

new couple would come and offer fruits to the Lord. Bhagawan used to take care of these people. He used to adore their innocent reverence.

On every Pournami (full moon day) they used to celebrate the festivities in a large way. On that day every one used to wear multicolour clothes, decorate their hair with various bird feathers and used to come to Bhagawan. Women would decorate Swamy with various kinds of flowers. They never differentiated among the flowers that this good and that is not good. Whatever flowers were available were all brought as an offering to Bhagawan. They used to make garlands with the forest twines. They would make garlands of different flowers with competition. They would keep all of them at the feet of the Lord. Some were decorated on His neck, hands, shoulders etc. They would take pleasure in decorating Him in various ways. To see the festivities, from the forest, all animals, lions, tigers, elephants, bears, monkeys, deer, wild buffalos etc would come there. Interestingly none of them harmed the tribals. They would behave as if humans were not present there. The tribals used to be surprised with this behaviour of animals. How come these wild animals are so calm and domesticated like? In fact they were more surprised when monkeys used to jump and dance on the backs lions and tigers who in turn appeared to enjoy the monkeys playing on their back. The tribals understood that these are nothing but leelas of Bhagawan.

Suddenly one day, the tribal leader was bitten by a poisonous snake. His body was paralysed and completely swollen. He suffered from severe pain and was unable to speak. Normally if anyone in the dwelling was bitten by an insect or snake the tribal head used to treat them with plants and herbs. When it has happened to him, no one knew what to do. All the members gathered around him and brought all sorts of herbal medicines and tried to help him. But nothing seemed to work. He lost his speech completely. Everyone was panicking as no one knew what to do. The tribal head was trying to tell them something but no one understood what he was trying to say. They looked at each other's face to know if the other person understood. They were unable to see his suffering.

Everyone was surrounding him including the one who first saw Bhagawan. The tribal leader was looking at this youngster from time to time and trying to say something. The youngster suddenly felt something and immediately lifted the leader on his shoulder and started running. No one understood what he was doing and where he was going. But when they saw their leader a little calm, they thought the youngster must have understood what their leader wanted to convey. Everyone started following him. The youngster quickly brought their leader to the statue of Bhagawan and made him lie down in front of Him. By then their leader was frothing from the mouth and everyone was frightened. The youngster turned towards God and praying loudly requested that their leader should be saved.

A miracle happened! A flower from the feet of God flew and fell on the body of tribal leader. As soon as the flower touched his body the leader got up suddenly as if waking up from sleep. All the people were shell shocked to see this miracle. They were surprised to see their leader who they thought was going to die was standing in front of them. They realised it was a miracle of Bhagawan. Their joy knew no bounds. From then on their trust on Him doubled.

For a long time they were the only ones to worship Lord Srinivasa here. When the tribals moved away and started living with villagers, the Lord's worship was stopped. No one knew the existence of the temple on the hills. The whole of Tirumala was covered with dense forest and a number of wild animals would roam around. The town of Tirupathi was non-existent. Only Tiruchanur was present. Once people knew about the temple and Sri Srinivasa, devotees would climb the hills in groups. However, they had to undergo a lot of hardships as there was no proper path or way. Throughout the year, it used to be very cold. The devotees had to suffer from the bites of mosquitoes and honey bees. Sometimes they used to see tigers and bears on the path they used to take. It was very difficult to have darshan of the Lord. For many years the first day Brahmastavams were conducted on the Tirumala hills and the rest of the days in Tiruchanur.

In those days, devotees would take darshan of Lord in Tiruchanur itself and would return back to their villages or towns. In Tiruchanur, there used to be a temple for the Utsava Murthy of Lord Sri Srinivasa. Devotees would take His darshan in this temple and offer their hair (tonsuring) on the banks of river Kalyani. As tonsuring was conducted on the banks of Kalyani River, the place where tonsuring is done in Tirumala is named as Kalyana Katta.

In the olden days, there were twelve sthanarthulu (representatives) in Tiruchanur to take care of Tirumala temple activities. Among these twelve, there were representatives from Vaishnava sabha of Tiruchanur. During the rule of Pallavas, Cholas and Chandragiri Kings Tirumala temple enjoyed most grandeur. Even though East India Company ruled for a long time they never interfered with the activities of Tirumala temple. Interestingly, even though Muslim invaders invaded India and took away a lot of wealth, they never touched Tirumala or its wealth. It is nothing but Sri Srinivasa's grace.

Lord Sriman Narayana has taken residence on Venkatadri hills as Sri Srinivasa. The sound of 'OM' is very powerful. The circle of time, Celestial beings, Universe and Vedas are all situated in the golden light of 'OM'. Chanting of 'OM' on the Tirumala hills is equivalent to performing a thousand Ashwamedha Yagas. 'OM' is a form of Sriman Narayana. Chanting it once also will help in overcoming all diseases and will be blessed with prosperity.

Sri Srinivasa is 'OM'.

Sri Srinivasa is ultimate man, he is universal. He is the reason for creation, existence, movement, rules and regulations, knowledge, salvation, happiness for human beings. He is the only one who blesses ignorant with knowledge, Gnanis with salvation and those who attained salvation with absolute happiness.

Sriman Narayana is formless. This knowledge filled divine form is Universal. Although we think Sri Venkatesa lives in Ananda Nilayam on Venkatadri hills, he, in fact, is omnipresent and spread around seven hills as well as the whole universe.

|| End of Second Chapter ||

**Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam
Sri Venkata Nivasaaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam**

<http://achyuthan.com/spiritual-books.html>

Govinda Padham

Chapter 3

Oh Lord! Please don't leave us...

In the olden days in the town of Tirupati, there lived a Vaishnav pandit by name Govinda Chary. He was well versed with the vedas and was very knowledgeable. He was an expert in all Sastras. He used to perform regular worship (nithya anustanam). Without worshipping he would not step out of the house. He used to follow all rules and regulations. He and his wife were blessed with two sons. Every Saturday he used to get up at 3AM, finish his puja at home. By 5AM he along his wife and sons would climb the Tirumala hills in four hours. He would start again at 4PM and reach home by nightfall. In those days it was very difficult to climb the Tirumala hills. It used to be cold and there was no proper path way. As the path was filled with thorns and sharp stones it used to be very difficult.

Whatever the circumstances, Govinda Chary's family, without fail would go to Tirumala every Saturday to have darshan of the Lord. Their children were very cute. The couple would carry the kids and climb the hills very quickly. Whilst climbing, branches of the trees would come in their way. It would be dark with no proper light. On either side of the path twines would wind with tree branches. Sometimes they could see dangerous and poisonous snakes hanging from the branches. And at other times cheetahs or tigers would cross the path by jumping and roaring loudly. Devotees would chant 'Govinda' loudly. Chanting Bhagawan's name they would proceed ahead. They had a strong belief that Sri Srinivasa would take care of them. Sri Srinivasa is benevolence personified. He stands by those who believe in Him. The only thing we have to do is to have faith in Him. As soon as we call Him, He will come to help us.

Devotees, who climb the hills with utmost faith, despite the hardships believe that He would come to help them in any circumstances and would protect them from ill health and all types of dangers. The conviction of these devotees is very strong.

Humans do a lot of things for the sake of living happily. They run behind money which is the father of all evils like sorrow and death. They develop desire for their family, home, children and get sucked into life's swamp. They enjoy the repercussions of their good and bad deeds by bowing down to jealousy and enmity. They are covered by Vishnu maya (illusion). Those who realise Sriman Narayana's universality would overcome the materialistic requirements and enjoy both good and bad karmas. They would always reminisce on Sriman Narayana, would win over maya and ultimately attain salvation.

Govinda Chary would always ponder over Sri Varu. He would put all the responsibility on Him. For many years, his family without any fear would climb the hills every Saturday chanting Bhagawan's name and would take His darshan. People were amazed at this ritual. Is it so easy to climb the hills every week without fail? How much energy one needs to do this? What a courage? That too crossing a thick forest in very cold weather. It is not an easy

to climb when they were being bitten by mosquitoes and honey bees, not getting scared with wild animals crossing their path and hearing the sounds made by them.

Despite all these difficulties, with utmost faith, Govinda Chary used to climb the Tirumala hills every Saturday to have darshan of Lord. One day, the family started early in the morning and reached Tirumala. It was a very cold day and in addition raining very heavily. Despite that, the family had darshan of the Lord and started their journey back home. It started raining more heavily. The sky was completely covered with gray clouds and hence the light was very low. They could not see their way properly. They did not know where they were stepping. Due to the heavy rain, water was flowing around them and stones had become slippery. Any carelessness would result in tumbling and getting hurt. Along with children, Govinda Chary and his wife were trying to come down very fast. One son was seven years old and the other five years. The children were holding the hands of their parents and walking fast.

It became darker. At one place as the growth of the trees was more, they could not see the path clearly. Suddenly the elder son screamed. They saw that a poisonous had bit the child and slithered into the bushes nearby. Immediately Govinda Chary took out his upper cloth and tied above the snake bite to stop the poison spreading in the boy's body. He sucked out the poison from the wound. However, as the snake was very poisonous the venom spread very fast in the boy's body and he became unconscious. Govinda Chary carried his son on his shoulder and ran to the village doctor. Immediately the doctor gave some herbal medicine and tried to revive the child. But the boy died within an hour. Govinda Chary couple was devastated.

Even then he did not lose faith in Sri Srinivasa. He attributed the sudden death of his son to fate. After some days, he along with his wife and younger son started visiting Tirumala like before. All his friends and neighbours were surprised by his devotion. He would not stop going to Tirumala even if he was unwell. Everyone felt it is very rare to see this type of devotion to Lord.

A few months later, Govinda Chary's wife was afflicted with some disease. She started becoming weak and became feeble. She did not have the energy to climb the hills. Govinda Chary used to leave her at home and would carry on his regular Saturday darshan of Lord Srinivasa along with his younger son. His wife was very supportive of him and would not object to it. She used to encourage him saying that human life is momentary, and that he should not worry about her but should worship the Lord in any circumstances. Everyone was surprised at her words and devotion. Govinda Chary continued his trips to Tirumala. That is the attractiveness of Lord Balaji! So powerful! Devotees want to have his darshan again and again. We will forget all our worries with one darshan and would eagerly wait for his darshan again. The beauty of the whole creation is with Him! Every tree and rock appears beautiful on the Tirumala hills. The splendour of nature can be seen on the Seshachala mountain ranges. One can see rare and exotic flowering plants here. These divine plants are only visible to a few blessed devotees. There are so many celestial plants on these hills. We would be blessed to see these colourful and fragrant flowers and enjoy them.

Govinda Chary would enjoy this beautiful scenery while going up the hills. After some days his wife's health took a serious turn and she died. His relatives forced him to stop going up the hills every week and to take care of his son. He, however, continued with his devotion. As soon as his wife's first death anniversary was completed he started his routine. One day his son was suffering from fever and stayed back. As usual, Govinda chary went ahead to have darshan of the Lord. Although it was a regular route, that day he was mesmerised with the nature around him. A few devotees crossed him and went ahead. He was climbing slowly, removing the thorns that were poking into his feet. A small drizzle started but that did not deter him.

Suddenly a miracle happened. The result of his continuous and unfathomable devotion. Lord Srinivasa appeared in front of Govinda chary and showed him Vishwaroopam with four hands and Sankam and Chakram. Govinda Chary was lost for words. Sri Srinivasa said 'Oh Acharya! I am very pleased with your devotion. Ask for any wish, I will fulfil it'. Govinda Chary bowed reverently to the Lord and said 'Swamy! You have blessed me with your darshan. I don't have any wishes. Please bless me with salvation so that I will not have any rebirth'. The Lord replied 'Govinda Chary! I cannot grant you moksha in this birth, although you have done a number of good deeds. Due to the bad deeds in your previous births you would not get salvation immediately. You have to take twenty-four more births and then you would be blessed with salvation. However, in these twenty-four births, you would take birth as insect, bird or animal on these hills and would have my darshan regularly. After the twenty fourth birth, you would completely overcome all the karma of your bad deeds and would attain moksha and unite in me. Govinda Chary was extremely happy. He was pleased that the Lord had blessed him. Till his last breath he continued his worship by going up the Tirumala hills and having the Lord's darshan.

As blessed by Bhagawan, Govinda Chary took birth on the Tirumala hills as a parrot in his next birth. Every day he used to enter the temple and have darshan of the Lord. All the priests of the temple were surprised to see a parrot visiting the temple every day. The temple was not as big as it is now. Only one mandapam was present. Seeing the parrot's devotion, they realised that it must have been a very pious devotee in its previous birth. Govinda Chary took birth as different birds in his next twenty-three births on the Tirumala hills itself. He used to roam around the hills and have darshan of the Lord and completed his circle of births. He finally attained salvation.

|| End of Third Chapter ||

**Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam
Sri Venkata Nivasaaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam**

Govinda Padham

Chapter 4

Whom do Vedas seek...

Venkatadri resident, Sri Srinivasa has been residing here from the start of Kali yuga. He is not a recent form. He lives on the Seshachala mountain ranges. These ranges are abundant with nature's beauty. He is compassionate and saviour of humans. Praying to Him or taking having his darshan once in a life time is more than enough to overcome the bad deeds of all our previous birth. He does not show any difference between rich and poor, knowledgeable and ignorant. Not only humans, all living creatures i.e., plants, insects, birds and animals serve Him and attain salvation.

All birds and animals on the Tirumala hills were devotees of the Lord in their previous births. They could not stay away from Him and hence took rebirth on the Venkatadri hills in various forms of insects, birds and animals to stay close to Him. Whatever we know about the Tirumala hills and Bhagawan is very negligible. Even the saints who did penance for thousands of years were unable to grasp the significance of Sri Srinivasa. How can we normal human beings know?

When we humans did not know the existence of Sri Srinivasa, Celestial beings would worship Him every day. In those days even wild animals would worship the Lord regularly. A number of poisonous snakes would roam on hills and these too would come, open their hoods and dance before Him. He is known as Lord of Hills (Kondala Rayudu). All creatures were attracted to Him. Sometimes a group of lions would come to His statue. Tigers, bears used to follow them. However, in front of Him, they would never get scared of each other.

Once a group of chattering monkeys came there. They jumped from one tree to another near the statue of the Lord. Lions and their cubs enjoyed the playfulness of the monkeys. One of the monkey kids lost its grip and fell on a tiger. The tiger very affectionately licked the monkey baby without harming it. The mother of the kid was happy to see it. It came down the tree and took away its baby to the tree top. Four big bears also came to take darshan. They stood silently in front of the Lord's statue. Bhagawan was very pleased to see everything that was going around Him. All these are His creations! He was very delighted to see that His creations have come to see Him. He was enchanted to see them playing with one another.

Seeing all the fuss big pythons and cobras came. Rabbits from the bushes came hopping. Deer also joined them from different directions. From the tree top, peacocks flew down and danced to their hearts content. There was a slight drizzle. All the animals were enjoying being near the Lord. Suddenly there was a lightening. In that light Celestial beings saw this wonderful scene that was being enacted in front of the Lord. They were surprised to see all creatures coming together in front of Bhagawan as if they are in a King's court. They were so happy that they sprinkled flowers from the heavens. It was such a beautiful scene! Imagine the picture ... slight drizzle combined with a shower of flowers on Sri Srinivasa and the animals. So many different flowers – Jasmine, Chrysanthemum, Crossandra (Kanakambaram), Winter Jasmine (Jaaji), Chameli, Roses, Hibiscus, Oleander (Ganneru),

Lotus ... so many more types of flowers. One cannot describe the magnificence of what was happening there.

Sri Srinivasa, the Supreme Godhead, watches all this with a smile. Wow! What a wonderful scene! The rain drops with multiple hues combined with the fragrance of the flowers... They emit a divine radiance as soon as they touch the statue of the Lord. Watching this, all animals forgot their existence for a few hours. Slowly they came to senses and went back into the forest. This used to happen very often on the Tirumala hills. Humans did not know the existence of the Lord then. Even after, humans started visiting the Lord, these wild animals didn't harm the devotees. Everyone would be safe with him! We don't have to worry!

The weather on Tirumala hills in those days was very cold. It used to rain continuously. The hills would echo with the roaring of wild animals. One day some animals came to have darshan of the Lord. Among them one tiger went around the Lord's statue one hundred and eight times. It then sat in front of the Lord staring at Him. One hour passed. Other tigers went back into the jungle. The Lord has the power to attract all the creatures in the Universe. He is that magnificent. That is why we mere mortals stand in the queue for hours to have that one minute darshan of Him. As soon as we come out, we wait for the next darshan. The divine and magnificent form attracts hundreds and thousands of devotees from all corners of the world. Till recently devotees would throng to Tirumala on holidays and weekends. But nowadays it is like a sea of devotees. Throughout the year Tirumala is flooded by devotees. That is the allure of the Lord.

The tiger that sat near Bhagawan went back into forest after sometime. It used to come every day, do hundred and eight pradhakshinas (going around the statue) and would go back into jungle. Some of the Heavenly beings observed this. One day Lord Indra asked Bhagawan 'Swamy! Why is the tiger doing pradhakshina every day? It does not know any language, nor does it have any knowledge. This is very surprising to us'.

Sriman Narayana replied 'Lord Indra! I will tell you the reason for this. Listen carefully. These hills are very dear to me. In the whole universe there is no other place which is more precious to me. That is why, in this Kaliyuga, I took the form of Srinivasa on these hills. This is the start of Kaliyug. Humans do not know my existence yet. However, there are so many devotees who worship me in the form of Sriman Narayana. Some of them believe I am their whole and soul. They meditate on and dedicate every minute of their life to me. Some of them are dear to me and I love them. I now want to give darshan to these cherished devotees. All these wild animals which roam on the hills are my devotees. Some of them, in their next birth, would be born as humans and would come to take my darshan. The tiger that you see every day was a very dear devotee in his last birth. Due to few bad deeds in previous birth, he missed getting human form in this birth and he was born as tiger, however he has not lost his previous birth's memory. That is why everyday he does hundred and eight pradhakshinas. In one of his forthcoming births he would become a great devotee of mine. Once the temple is built, he would become one of the priests and would worship me every day'. Lord Indra and other Celestial beings were happy and wonder struck with the affection that Lord has for His devotees.

|| End of Fourth Chapter ||

**Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam
Sri Venkata Nivaasaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam**

Govinda Padham

Chapter 5

Vaikunta on Tirumala Hill

Tirumala hills are nothing but Vaikunta on earth. To bless the mere mortals like us Sriman Narayana took form as Sri Venkateswara on the sacred Tirumala hills. Throughout the year the place reflects nature's beauty as well as bounty.

In the olden times, in Tiruchanur, there lived a Brahmin called Venkatachalapathi. He was a great devotee of Vishnu. Throughout the day, he used to contemplate on Lord Srinivasa. In those days devotees would take darshan of Lord in Tiruchanur itself. Tirupati town was not developed. Tiruchanur was known with so many names like Tiruchakanoor, Tiruchoginoor, Tirusukanoor, Tirukadavur, Sri Sukhagramam, Kadhi Rajapuram, etc. As the pilgrimage to Tirumala was difficult, Brahmotsavams were conducted here itself.

Even after years of marriage, Venkatachalapathi and his wife did not have any children. Although, they used pray to Lord to bless them with kids, it was in vain. They were very sad because of this. One day Venkatachalapathi decided that for forty days and nights he would stay on Tirumala. He thought then Bhagawan would bless him with children. In those days no one would stay in Tirumala during nights. The priests would go up the hills early in the morning perform veneration and would return by afternoon. Priests also would climb the hills by rotation, this week one group and next week another group etc. In the evenings cheetahs and bears would roam near the temple. Wild boars would also come for hunting even during day time, then what to talk of nights. Monkeys and Langurs lived in hordes. Now in this situation, living there for forty days, is it not a very courageous thing to do? Venkatachalapathi had taken oath that he would spend forty days at a stretch on Tirumala. He thought God will take care of him. He had complete trust that Bhagawan would ensure his safety.

His wife and relatives tried to dissuade him. They told him it was very dangerous to stay for so many days on the hills all alone. However, Venkatachalapathi was adamant. His argument was, when Bhagawan can safe guard the whole universe, would he not take care of me? On an auspicious day, he packed some clothes and started his journey on Tirumala hills. On the way he met two devotees. Further on, they met two more devotees. All of them continued their journey. After a few miles, suddenly a cheetah jumped on them. Everyone was scared and started chanting loudly Govinda! Govinda! The cheetah ran away into the forest as if someone did a miracle. They took a deep breath and continued their climb.

Sri Srinivasa lives in the souls of all creatures. Sriman Narayana is time personified and is represented as the twelve months of the year. He is worshipped with twenty-four Kesava namams (names) which are the combination of twelve pournamis (full moon days) and twelve Amavaysas (new moon days). These twenty-four forms are represented in the Parabrahma (Supreme Godhead) form (body) on the four shoulders, Shanka, Chakra, Mace, Lotus etc in an order. Sri Varu in the form of Sri Srinivasa would roam around the Tirumala hills in any of these twenty-four forms. Only those who have done severe penance and

those who are blessed can only realise this fact. Ordinary devotees can only feel and become happy through the divine waves that emanate from the body of the Lord.

As it was rain season, Tirumala hills were flooded with water. When they were walking up the hill, cold water would flow under their feet. Sometimes big snakes would slither fast in these water puddles. In between groups of wild honey bees, any disturbance they would sting. The devotees carefully climbed the hills avoiding all the hurdles and reached the temple. All of them had a good darshan of the Lord. They happily praised Sri Srinivasa with lot of stotras. It was time to close the temple. All the priests and devotees were getting ready to go down the hills, but Venkatachalapathi declared that he would stay back and explained to them about his forty days vow. Everyone told him that it was not safe to stay there for the night. However he was adamant and insisted that he would not leave the place, even if he loses his life. With no other choice, they left him and returned. Venkatachalapathi sat next to the Lord's statue and started singing hymns looking at His divine form.

It was five o'clock in the evening and was becoming dark. Venkatachalapathi went to a guava tree near the temple and plucked some of its fruits as his dinner. He came back to the temple and sat near the Lord. It became completely dark. He could hear the sounds made by the wild animals in the forest. He offered the fruits as naivedyam to the Lord and then ate them. From a faraway place a tiger roared.... Monkeys screeched..... Elephants trumpeted..... as the night went the sounds of the wild animals became more. They were roaming around the temple premises. Praying to the Lord, Venkatachalapathi slept near the Lord's statue. There is no fear near the King of the lakes (Koneti Rayudu). One can sleep to heart's content.

Venkatachalapathi had a dream. He saw a number of Celestial beings in the dream. All of them came to the Tirumala Hills and were worshipping the Lord with a variety of flowers. Some were singing soulful songs. Some Apsaras were dancing in front of the Lord. It was almost morning and Venkatachalapathi was awake by four AM. He bowed down to the Lord and went into the forest completed his ablutions and took bath in the Swami Pushkarni (pond). He plucked flowers and fruits from the wonderful garden nearby and returned to the temple.

The rays of the sun were slowly creeping into the temple. As soon as he reached the temple Venkatachalapathi could see wonderful flowers all around. He understood the situation. What he saw in his dream was a reality. He cleared all the flowers from the temple and cleaned the place. He offered the fruits to the Lord. By then it was ten o'clock in the morning. The priests reached the temple. And he narrated his dream to them. Everyone was happy to hear his blessing and praised the good deeds of his previous births. Following the routine, Venkatachalapathi spent forty days on the hills. The next day he was supposed to leave after the worship, with thoughts of sadness about leaving the Lord he slept.

Around two AM, he woke up feeling a big ray of light falling on him. He was wonder struck seeing the scene before him. A smiling four shouldered Sri Srinivasa was in front of him. On His forehead was a White Namam and Shank (conch) and Chakra (discus) in His hands. In the other two hands, he was holding mace and lotus, on his neck wonderful necklaces... a

beautiful smile on his lips.... Seeing this divine form Venkatachalapathi was lost for words. He was mesmerised seeing the stunning form of the Lord. With tears in eyes he said 'Oh Jagannadha! Husband of Janaki! You have taken pity on this poor soul and blessed me with Your darshan. It is only feasible to see Your divine form after thousands of years of penance. But You have blessed me. I know, I had not done any good deeds in this birth. I had not performed any yagnas or yagas. I had neither offered expensive jewellery to You nor read any divine sthothras. Even then You have blessed this poor soul! Please accept my humble pranamams'.

Sriman Narayana who gave darshan as Sri Venkateswara said 'Dear Venkatachalapathi! I am pleased with your persistent devotion. Your heart is pure without any malice. And you have worshipped with a pure heart. I am happy with this pure devotion. I always take care of those who worship Me with pure heart. In the future, this Tirumala hills would become a well-known sacred pilgrim place. Everyday lakhs of people from far and near would come to have My darshan overcoming all sorts of difficulties. I will bless all these devotees. Due to the good deeds of your previous birth You could have My darshan today. You will be blessed with a baby boy soon'. Saying so the Lord disappeared. Venkatachalapathi was very happy with his good fortune.

In the morning he praised the Lord with a number of hymns and returned back to his house. He narrated what all incidents happened to everyone. His wife and relatives were extremely happy with the blessing of the Lord. As specified by the Lord, they were blessed with a son who was named as Seshachary. Once in a while they used to take Seshachary and visit Tirumala to have darshan of the Lord. The son was five years old. His fifth birthday came on a Saturday so they thought they would celebrate the day in the presence of the Lord on Tirumala. Seshachary was very cute and he could recite a number of slokas at this age itself.

Venkatachalapathi thought that he would leave on Friday afternoon to reach the hill top by evening. Along with some friends they slowly started climbing the hills. They wanted to stay near the temple in the night and have the Lord's darshan early in the morning. They were discussing the miracles of the Lord and climbing. A light drizzle started moistening them. They continued their journey. The weather was very pleasant. The child Seshachary was enjoying it. He was watching the monkeys jumping from tree to another. He was wonder stuck watching parrots and different birds that were flying around them. He was very happy to see the beautiful nature. The group was climbing the hills slowly.

Suddenly black clouds gathered. There was darkness around them. Normally due to the trees on both side of the path the brightness of sun rays would be less. Hence the light on the path would be low. They have to walk carefully. Else a tree branch can come suddenly in the way or they can be bitten by snakes. Due to the black clouds the light was very low and it was very dark. Drizzle turned into very heavy rain. There was no way they could take a step further. Everyone was drenched. They looked for a big tree for shelter. A few steps later they saw an old dilapidated mandap. Everyone ran into that for shelter and squeezed out the water from their clothes. The extra clothes were all wet and hence they tried to dry them. There was no respite from the rain.

They realised that it was not feasible to complete their journey in the night and decided to rest there for the night. They ate the pulihora (rice) and fruits that they brought with them and slept with the child amongst them. As everyone was tired they slept off immediately.

In the morning one after the other started waking up. Suddenly Venkatachalapathi shouted loudly. He was unable to find his son Seshachary. Everyone was worried. They searched all over the place. They were worried about his whereabouts. His mother Mahalakshmi started crying loudly. In the night some wild animal might have taken him! The thought itself was unimaginable. Venkatachalapathi in a loud voice prayed to Sri Srinivasa saying 'Oh Srinivasa! Saviour of the Devotees! Lord You help the misfortunes! You save the people who believe in You. You have to save my child, Oh Father! There is no one else who can help. Please save the child and bring him to us'.

Wonder! Lord who always helps the misfortune immediately heard the wailing of the couple. From the forest, Seshachary came running towards them. Everyone was happy. His mother covered the child with kisses. The child said 'I got up from sleep in the midnight. I saw some cute rabbits in the bushes nearby. While playing with them I went deep into the forest. I did not know how to return. So I started crying loudly. Then Sri Hanuman came and picked me up, kissed me and told me not to be scared and to stop crying. He said he would bring me back to you all. He carried me and dropped me at that point. I came walking from there'. Venkatachalapathi couple was very happy hearing about Sri Hanuman's darshan and blessing on their son birthday. Everyone prostrated to Hanuman and quickly completed the rest of the journey. They visited the temple and had darshan of the Lord and returned home. Venkatachalapathi couple continued their worship of the Lord and lived happily till their end of life.

|| End of Fifth Chapter ||

**Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam
Sri Venkata Nivasaaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam**

Govinda Padham

Chapter 6

Divine Presence in Maada Streets

In the olden days innumerable ascetics (Sadhus) and Hermits (Yogis) used to visit Tirumala. Hermits used to do penance in the forest caves and pilgrimage centres on the Tirumala hills. Some of them would visit the temple to have darshan of the Lord. In those days not more than hundred devotees would visit Tirumala. On the hills four to five families of priests used to live. Devotees would only stay back in the night during festivals. Else they would return to Tirupati by evening.

In those days Brahmotsavams were conducted every month. During this time Srivaru along with His Consorts would travel in the Maada streets. This was a sight to see for the devotees, they would be very happy and take great pleasure. Even today all Celestial beings stay at Tirumala during Brahmotsavams. Those ten days they wander on the Hills in invisible form. Some of them take human form and walk along with regular devotees. That is the reason Tirumala hills will have a special illumination during the Brahmotsavams.

Once when the Brahmotsavams were taking place Ascetics and Hermits also participated. They along with other devotees took part in the Srivari procession. These individuals had a special glow as they continuously ponder on Bhagawan. By then two three mattams (monasteries) had come up on Tirumala. All these saints would sleep in the Monasteries. One Saint was very distinct from others in the sense that he had a divine glow. He used to have a smile on his lips. In the evenings instead of staying in the Monastery he used to go into the forest and would return by morning. Devotees were surprised to see his radiance. He used to sing melodious songs while accompanying Bhagawan's various vehicles which would go around the Maada Streets. His voice used to have some divinity. He never used to talk to anyone. If someone talks to him he would just lift his hand and bless them. That's it.

Five days passed. One of the devotee named Chandraiah was curious to know the name of the Saint. He followed the Saint everyday asking him various questions. The Saint however would give him a smile but never uttered a word. Day by day Chandraiah's curiosity increased. 'Who is this Saint? Why doesn't he talk? Where does he stay in the forest? Is he not scared to stay alone in the forest during the night?' So many questions in his mind. He decided to follow the Saint into the forest. Next day as usual the Saint came from the forest and joined the Srivari procession, Chandraiah started following him. After the procession ended, the Saint roamed around the temple premises singing divine songs.

Chandraiah was observing the Saint from a distance. At around 4pm the Saint slowly started walking towards the forest. Chandraiah followed him from a distance. The Saint entered the forest. Hiding behind the trees Chandraiah followed him. Suddenly there was a bright light on the path of the Saint. In that light, the Saint took the form of a big ape (monkey) with a divine glow. In a second the divine Ape disappeared into the forest. Around the same time Chandraiah lost his eyesight.

Chandraiah started crying loudly. He understood what must have happened. The Saint who used to come from the forest and participate in Bhagawan's procession is none other than Sri Hanuman. Anjaneya Swamy used to come in the form of a Saint to serve the Lord. Chandraiah cursed his stupidity. He understood that he lost his eyes due to the darshan of Sri Hanuman. Now his eyes cannot see the materialistic world. On one side Chandraiah was happy to have the darshan of Lord Hanuman and on the other side he was unhappy that he lost his eye sight. By then his relatives reached him while searching for him. Chandraiah explained to them what had happened. Everyone was surprised. They decided that they would never repeat the same mistake. They realised that any Saint who roams around the Tirumala hills may be a Celestial being who come to have darshan of the Lord. They also realised that they have to treat everyone with respect and divinity and not with suspicion.

Many Celestial beings roam around the Tirumala hills taking different forms. Even today we can see so many Ascetics and Hermits on the hills. We cannot differentiate who is a Celestial being and who is an ordinary human. We just need to offer our pranamams to them and move forward. Tirumala hills are very dear to Celestial beings. They wander in divine as well as invisible forms among the devotees to take note to their stories. They listen to the devotees praises of the Lord with a lot of enthusiasm and happiness. Sometimes we observe a stranger listening to us with a smile on his face when we explain to our friends and relatives our experiences of Tirumala pilgrimage. Many devotees have experienced this phenomenon. The stranger with the smile could be Lord Indra or Lord Chandra or any other Celestial being. We have to feel blessed if we see or meet anyone like that.

Annamacharya says 'the presence and grace of God depends on how well a person thinks of him irrespective of the various ways of worship. When observed in depth, it is just like the size and quality of a pan-cake depending on the amount of batter.' Sri Srinivasa is a pillar of strength for those who have absolute faith in him. Call Him with any name, the Lord of Hills will answer. One can think and pray to Him in any form and He will appear in that form and bless His devotees. He is Amrita Murthy. There will be no dearth for those who worship Him. No harm will come to them. They will be blessed with wealth and prosperity. They will have a peaceful life. Bhagawan loves His devotees very much. He will be a friend to those who consider Him as a friend. He will do penance for those who perform penance for him. He will give darshan to the devotees who crave to see Him. He is such a wonderful God. He is such a unique and magnificent who empathises with His devotees' feelings.

In the olden days, a group of devotees started to climb the hills to have darshan of the Lord. There were eleven devotees in the group. They were praising the Lord and signing songs while climbing. They were also sharing their experiences of His leelas among themselves. What a beautiful and thrilling experience to hear Lord's leelas! All the eleven members were completely in trance while hearing the leelas of Bhagawan. Each one's experience was unique. From olden days devotees worshipped the Lord in their own way. And He has blessed them with His leelas. His name itself gives happiness. Remembering His form is a pleasant experience. Everybody will experience a divine joy by just recollecting His Thirunaamam. Reminiscing about His divine form with conch and disc will give immense happiness. We will not get this happiness with any materialistic things. That is the reason many Saints crave for His blessing. All living creatures have a strong desire to have His darshan.

The group of devotees were going ahead chatting and discussing about His leelas. They were so involved that they did not realise that they took a wrong path into the forest. After walking some distance some of them noticed that they lost their way as they saw big trees in front of them. There was no indication that other devotees had travelled on that path. Everyone was apprehensive as they could hear tiger's roar from the forest. They all got scared. Immediately all of them in a loud voice prayed to the Lord saying 'Oh Srinivasa! You are only the saviour. Govinda! Please show us a proper way to your divine darshan'. They immediately saw a big Snake in front of them. The Snake which was much bigger than a Python was looking at them. (They all got more scared after seeing that. Bhagawan entered into one of the group members and said 'follow this snake. You will reach me very fast and easily'.

As told by Bhagawan through one of the devotee, the snake turned back and started slithering. The devotee group followed the snake chanting Govinda. The divine snake made way through the thick bushes, breaking the branches that were in the path. It was as if it making way for the devotees. The group walked fast on the path created by the slithering snake. After they walked for around two hours the divine snake suddenly disappeared. They took a few steps and realised that they had reached the hill top. They saw Sri Srinivasa temple which was glowing with a divine light equivalent to one thousand Suns. They immediately comprehended what had happened. The divine snake that showed them the way is none other than Sri Adi Sesha! Sriman Narayana's very dear devotee! They realised that their beloved Lord had sent Adi Sesha to show them the path. They thought that due to their previous births good deeds they could have darshan of Adi Sesha. They happily went to the Ananda Nilayam and had a satisfying darshan of the Lord. They stayed back on the hills that night, had darshan of the Lord in the morning and returned back to their homes.

|| End of Sixth Chapter ||

**Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam
Sri Venkata Nivasaaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam**

Govinda Padham

Chapter 7

O Rama, Son of Kausalya

**'Kousalyaa Supraja Rama Poorvaa Sandhyaa Pravarthathe
Uttishta Narasaardulaa Karthavyam Dhaivamaanhikam'**

Priests sing the Suprabhatam everyday praising the Lord. Sri Srinivasa wakes up with a smile from Yoga nidra (to the human world) listening to this divine suprabhatam. His smile is an armour for the universe. The calm gaze sanctifies His devotees throughout the day. With His blessings the devotees can go on with their work with confidence. They carry on with a strong belief that Bhagawan is always there with them.

Through the ages devotees worshipped Lord Srinivasa and attained salvation. Among these devotees who worshipped the Lord as his whole and soul was a King called Vikramasimha. He was an ardent worshipper of Sri Srinivasa. Every year he would climb the Tirumala hills with his followers. He would stay there for ten days and worship Srivaru. He used to go to the hills from his kingdom with horses and elephants crossing all the villages. It was a wonderful sight to see his procession going to Tirumala. Vikramasimha would be accompanied by his army which would ride on horses, elephants and camels. He would climb the hills through the forest route with some of the army piloting him and some following him. In the midst of the group, Vikramasimha, his ministers, priests and learned men would ride their horses. On every visit Vikramasimha would offer many gifts to the Lord. After reaching the hills they would put up their tents. Early in the morning Vikramasimha along with his ministers and priests would take bath in the holy Pushkarini and visit the temple to have darshan of Sri Srinivasa. The priests and learned men would sing slokas of Sri Srinivasa. Some would sing songs praising the glory of the Lord. In the evening the King would listen to the stories and miracles of Sriman Narayana that were told by the learned men. Vikramasimha would forget the world when these learned men described the divine characteristics and leelas of Lord Srinivasa.

Once, like all other years, Vikramasimha visited Tirumala. There were ten learned men in his troop. Among them there was a very learned person by the name Thiru Venkatanadha Charyulu. Although he was very young, he had great knowledge of all the sastras. It was his first visit to Tirumala. Thiru Venkatanadha Achary had great devotion towards Sri Srinivasa. He had a long-standing desire to visit Tirumala to get the darshan of Lord Sri Srinivasa. At last his wish was fulfilled. On arrival to Tirumala, he accompanied Vikramasimha to the temple and had darshan of the Lord. He was very happy with this opportunity. Seeing the divine form of the Lord he was mesmerised. He praised Bhagawan in a number of ways. Vikramasimha was very pleased listening to Achary's kirtans. He felt blessed that such a great singer was a part of his court. The next day Vikramasimha along with his followers went to the temple to have darshan of the Lord. It was pournami (full moon night). Sri Srinivasa was glowing with a divine brilliance. It was impossible for humans to describe the magnificence of the Lord.

Seeing the splendour of Bhagawan, Thiru Venkatanadha Achary was lost for words. Tears of joy rolled down from his eyes. He humbly prayed 'Oh Srinivasa! You are the Ruler of all

worlds. There is no other God above you. You are the saviour of those who believe in You. If You are with us, we don't need anything else. Even if a person has all the materialistic things without Your blessings they are nothing.' The king was extremely happy listening to his prayers. Vikramasimha's belief in the Lord increased multiple folds. The way Thiru Venkatanadha Achary praised the Lord was so wonderful. King forgot everything else seeing the divine form of the Lord and listening to the slokas of Achary.

Nine days passed. The next day King was supposed to leave for his Kingdom. His followers were getting ready to leave the following day. Everyone was busily moving around packing. All of them were unhappy that they would be going back from Bhagawan's abode. The King was sitting in his tent and pondering over the Lord, thinking that they would have to wait for one year to have darshan of the Lord again. At that time Thiru Venkatanadha Achary walked into the King's tent. Seeing him the King asked 'Why have you come Learned One? Do you want to ask anything?' In reply Thiru Venkatanadha Achary said 'Oh Maharaja! If you promise not to get angry I would request you something. The Lord's form here has enticed me. I was lost for words when I saw Him for the first time. I have a small request. Please don't get angry. I am unable to leave the Lord. With your permission I would like to stay here permanently to worship Him. I want to spend the rest of my life here to serve the Lord. I don't need any materialistic things. I just want to stay here. It would be a very great blessing. Kindly accept and grant my wish'.

Vikramasimha was very angry hearing Achary's request and said 'Oh Holy Man! All of us are also unhappy to leave Sri Srinivasa. Are we not leaving Him and returning? You are very young. Every year you can accompany us to have darshan of Sri Srinivasa. If you stay back here it will be a great loss for us. You have to entertain us with your knowledge and expertise. If you want I will make arrangements for you to visit Tirumala every six months. Don't entertain the thoughts of staying back here permanently. Please leave now'. Thiru Venkatanadha Achary was very upset after listening to King's words and returned to his tent.

He, however, was unable to sleep the whole night. He was very upset thinking 'How can I leave the Lord? How can I stay without seeing Him for one year? I feel very unhappy with the thought of leaving Him. It will be very painful for me to climb down the hill. It is agonising for me to leave the Lord'. In the morning, he went to the temple along with the King to have Srivari darshan. With tears in his eyes, he praised the Lord with a number of soulful sthothras. He took leave from Bhagawan and came out of the temple. His heart was filled with the divine form. The Lord's image was permanently fixed in his heart.

Everyone was getting ready for the return journey. The King mounted the horse that was ready for him. That horse was a powerful one. The King bowed down to the Lord and instructed the horse to move, however it refused to take a step. It did not move a single step even after a lot of efforts. The Commander in staff also tried his level best, even then it refused to budge even a little bit. Immediately the Commander arranged for another horse. King climbed that horse. Surprise of surprises! Even the second horse would not move. Everyone one tried hard to make it walk with no result. All those observing the proceeding were shocked. They tried seven different horses. As soon as the King mounted them they

refused to take a step. No one was able to understand the reason for this behaviour of the horses.

Everyone was agitated. Prime Minister did not know what to do. Vikramasimha was both angry and surprised. He was unable to understand why the horse he mounted would not take a step when all other horses were behaving normally. He was surprised that it was happening not with one but all the horses that he was using. He called the main priest and enquired why this was happening. He also asked the Prime Minister if he had any clue. The Prime Minister replied 'Oh King! We stayed on the Tirumala hills for ten days. In these ten days we might have committed some mistake or we must have done something which the Lord did not like. It could have been committed by anyone in our troop. That is why the horse that you mount is not moving'. When the Prime Minister was saying these words Srivaru entered the body of one of the temple priests who came to see off the King. He said 'Oh Vikramasimha! You made a small mistake. I am very angry with you for that. My dear devotee Thiru Venkatanadha Achary came and requested your permission to stay here permanently to serve Me. You did not grant him your consent. He is very pious person. He always meditates on me. He cannot stay without me even for a second. I was angry with you for refusing my very dear devotee's wish. That is why you are unable to leave the hills. Call him immediately and give your permission for him to stay here. Only then you and your followers would be able to leave for your kingdom'.

Immediately the King realised his foolishness. He understood his mistake. Lord's love for His devotees is that much strong. Sri Srinivasa might pardon if anyone says anything about Him, but He would not forgive if anyone hurts or says anything about His dear devotees. They could be anyone even the most influential, He will not exonerate them. The same thing happened in Vikramasimha's case. Vikramasimha immediately requested Bhagawan's pardon saying 'Swamy Srinivasa! Please pardon me for my mistake. I will call Acharya immediately and ask him to happily stay back in Tirumala'. Lord was satisfied with the reply and the Priest returned to his normal self.

Thiru Venkatanadha Achary came to see Vikramasimha when he sent word for him. Vikramasimha offered his pranamams to him and said 'Oh Learned One! I did not realise that in my court there is a great devotee of Sri Srinivasa. Please pardon me. You can stay on these hills safely and permanently. I am donating four villages to you so that you can peacefully serve the Lord. From now on stay here and worship the Lord as you wish'. Thiru Venkatanadha Achary was very happy and told the King that he would dedicate his life to the service of the Lord and would pray for the welfare of the people of Vikramasimha's kingdom.

The king mounted his horse. Surprisingly the horse started to move forward. Praying to the Lord, Vikramasimha's troop climbed down the hills. Thiru Venkatanadha Achary went to the temple and stood before the Lord. He prayed saying 'Oh Srinivasa! You have immense love for your devotees! There is no other God in this universe who has so much love towards their devotees. You have blessed this mortal soul. Please accept my pranamams. Even those who have mastered all the Vedas cannot understand You. You don't need elaborate yagnas. You only need pure devotion. Those who have Your blessing don't require anything else in this world. There is no other God who is so affectionate'. From then onwards Acharya

lived on the Tirumala hills. The temple priests would treat the Lord's devotee with a lot of affection. Everyday morning Thiru Venkatanadha Achary would go to the temple and praise the Lord singing stotras. Listening to these songs Bhagawan used to be happy. Thiru Venkatanadha Achary served Sri Srinivasa for a long time and ultimately attained salvation.

Sriman Narayana is whole and soul. All the Gods and demigods are a form of Him. That is why even if we pray to any God all the prayers will ultimately reach Him. All Vedas have taught this Universality. Narayana is ParaBrahma. He is all pervasive. All knowledge exists with Him. He lives in the souls of all creatures. We will be blessed if we recognise this Sri Venkata tatvam (philosophy). Brahma is able to create the universe successfully only by following and meditating on this tatvam. We will attain salvation if we can understand at least a little bit of this nectarine tatvam (philosophy). Narayana tatvam takes the form of Parabrahma and shine with the brilliance of millions of Suns. In this Kaliyug, this Parabrahma has taken the form of Sri Venkateswara on Venkatadri hills to bless His devotees. He is being worshipped by one and all. Those who put complete faith in Him are being blessed with prosperity and taken care of by Him.

Sri Srinivasa is compassion personified. He blesses all those who whole heartedly and lovingly worships Him with health, wealth and prosperity and always protects by being with them. In this Kaliyug, there is no other God superior to Him and there is no other place more sanctified than Tirumala.

Sri Venkateswara! Sri Srinivasa! Lord who helps to overcome misfortunes! Saviour of the orphans! Those who worship Him whole heartedly will not have any problems in life. They will not face untimely death. They will not be affected with financial and health problems. He is so kind hearted. If one reminisces His name at least once in a day, the person will be blessed with immense prosperity. Living in this world would only be knee deep for those who have complete faith in Him i.e., He makes life easy for those who have faith in Him.

It is extremely easy to receive the blessing of Tirumalesa Sri Srinivasa. There is no requirement of any yagnas or yaagas. No need of any powerful positions or wealth. The only prerequisite is pure devotion. Govinda! Calling Him once is enough, He comes running to our rescue. Sri Srinivasa is so kind hearted.

In our life time we have to visit Tirumala at least once to have darshan of Sri Srinivasa to attain salvation. Oh Srinivasa! Oh Venkateswara! Please grant us Your darshan. Please accept our Pranamams.

Please bless us that we should be able to concentrate our mind on You! Our millions of pranamams to You. Oh Kind hearted Lord! Our respectful pranamams (obeisance) to You!

|| End of Seventh Chapter ||

Sriyah Kaanthaaya Kalyaana Nidhaye Nidhayerthinam

Sri Venkata Nivasaaya Srinivasaaya Mangalam

Sri Lakshmi, Sri Padmavathi Sametha Sri Srinivasa Kataaksha

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Sri Venkateswara Vajra Kavacham

Mārkaṇḍeya uvāca

Nārāyaṇaṃ parabrahma sarvakāraṇa kārakaṃ
Prapadye veṅkaṭeśākhyāṃ tadeva kavacaṃ mama

Sahasraśīrṣā puruṣo veṅkaṭeśaśīro vatu
Prāṇeśaḥ prāṇanilayaḥ prāṇāṇ rakṣatu me hariḥ

Akāśarāṭ sutānātha ātmānaṃ me sadāvatu
Devadevottamopāyāddehaṃ me veṅkaṭeśvaraḥ

Sarvatra sarvakāleṣu maṅgāmbājāniśvaraḥ
Pālayenmāṃ sadā karmasāphalyaṃ naḥ prayacchatu

Ya etadvajrakavacamabhedyāṃ veṅkaṭeśītuḥ
Sāyaṃ prātaḥ paṭhennityaṃ mṛtyuṃ tarati nirbhayaḥ

Ithi Markandeya Kruta Venkateswara Vajra Kavacham



**Om Namo Venkateshaaya Kaamithaartha Pradhaayine
Pranathaha Klesha Naashaaya Govindaaya Namo Namaha**

