

Sri Venkateswara Swamy / Balaji

*VENKATADRI SAMAM STHANAM BRAHMANDEY NAASTHIKINCHANA
VENKATESA SAMO DEVO NA BHUTO NA BHAVISHYATHI*

It says neither in the past nor in future will there be an equivalent place in the Brahmanda (the universe) like Venkataadri (Tirumala) and Lord like SRI VENKATESWARA !!

Sri Venkateswara Swamy, also known as BALAJI, GOVINDA, SRINIVASA, NARAYANA, VENKATESHA and VEKATA RAMANA is none other than Lord Vishnu. Following is a brief story of Lord Venkateshwara.

According to our scriptures, we have four Yugas and they are DWAPARA YUGA (lasting 864,000 years), THRETA YUGA (lasting 1,296,000 years), KRUTHA YUGA (lasting 1,728,000 years) and KALI YUGA (lasting 432,000 years).

According to Holy texts, Lord Vishnu remained on earth during Krutha, Threta and Dwapara yugas. At the beginning of Kali Yuga, he decided to leave for Vaikuntham. Lord Brahma knew that Dharma (truth) prevailed on earth when Vishnu resided on earth. So he wanted to get Vishnu back to earth. He then solicited Narada's help to get Vishnu to Tirumala. Narada needed help to accomplish this and he approached Sage Bhrgu.

Sage Bhrgu visited Vaikuntham, the abode of Lord Vishnu and found the Lord reclining on Adishesha and completely engrossed with His consort, Goddess Mahalakshmi. Enraged at being ignored, Bhrgu kicked Lord on His chest, the place of Lakshmi Devi. Lord Vishnu immediately got up and apologized to Bhrgu for ignoring the great sage.

However Lakshmidivi felt humiliated and departed Vaikuntham and came to earth. Unable to bear separation from Lakshmidivi, Lord came to earth in search of Mahalakshmi but could not find Her. After searching endlessly, Lord reached Tirumala and settled there. Vakula Devi, incarnation of Sri Krishna's mother Yosodha, again started taking care of Vishnu as her son.

Lord Vishnu, one day while roaming in the forests sees Padmavathi Devi, daughter of Akasaraaja and falls in love with Her. He then explains to Vakuladevi that Padmavathi is none other than Vedavathi.

He also explains that when He was in RAMA avatara, He made a promise to Vedavathi that He will marry Her in the next birth and so He wanted to fulfill that promise. However since they did not have any money to cover the wedding expenses, they approached KUBERA for a loan and KUBERA gave a loan with interest. It is believed that till today all the money that comes to Lord Venkateshwara goes to cover the interest on this loan.

Sage Narada conveyed the news of Vishnu's wedding to Padmavathi to Mahalakshmi and she became furious and immediately rushed to Tirumala and was stunned to see them together. In a fit of rage, She argued with Padmavathi. While the quarrel between the Goddesses continued, Lord Vishnu silently moved back seven steps and converted Himself into an idol. When Goddesses turned around and saw the idol of Vishnu, they started weeping. Then Lord Vishnu explained the entire story to them and then both of them took their places right on His chest, Goddess Mahalakshmi on right side and Goddess Padmavathi on left side.



Tirumala Temple is on top of Seven Hills (representing the seven hoods of ADISESHA) called ANJANADRI, VRISHABADRI, NEELADRI, SESHADRI, GARUDADRI, NARAYANADRI and VENKATADRI. If one likes to climb these Hills, there are 3500 steps to the top.

The majestic idol stands 7 feet tall on a lotus directly beneath dome called Ananda Nilaya Divya Vimana. On his forehead, the Lord has thick double patch of Namam drawn with refined camphor. It is believed that the diamond studded crown on the head of Lord was presented to Lord by Akasaraaja at the wedding time. Lord Venkateshwara is covered with ornaments full of precious jewels including many diamonds and it is believed that he has more diamonds on him than any other place in the entire world (according to National Geographic Magazine). Tirumala Temple if not the richest, is one of the richest Hindu Temple in the world and on average 50,000 people visit this Temple everyday to get a glance at Lord Venkateshwara.

*VINA VENKATESAM NA NATHO NA NATHAH
SADA VENKATESAM SMARAMI SMARAMI*

*SRI VENKATACHALADHESAM SRIYADHYASITA VAKSHASAM
SRITACHETANA MANDARAM SRINIVASA MAHAM BHAJE*