

# നവനീതം

NAVANEETHAM



“വസുദേവ സുതം ദേവം കംസ ചാണൂര മർദ്ദനം  
ദേവകീ പരമാനന്ദം കൃഷ്ണം വന്ദേ ജഗദ് ഗുതം”

*On-line magazine of the devotees of*

**Guruvayoorappan**

Volume 1. 2006

ഓം നമോ നാരായണായ

ശ്രീ ഗുരുഭ്യോ നമഃ



*On the cover page –  
Lord Guruvayoorappan and the  
Ten Incarnations of Lord Vishnu*

Mathsya

Kurmma

Varaaha

Narasimha

Vamana

Bharggava Rama

Sri Rama

Bala Rama

Sri Krishna

Kali

# നവനീതം

## വിഷുക്കുണി



*Submitted at the lotus feet of Sri Guruvayoorappan by the devotees.  
Navaneetham - Vishu Edition*

Om Namo Narayanaya. Sri Gurubhyo namaH

We have great pleasure to present you with our new online magazine "**Navaneetham**" on the Vishu day. "Navaneetham" means newly churned butter that Krishna is so fond of, and He Himself pervades the whole universe as butter pervades the milk.

Navaneetham is a humble attempt by Guruvayur Devotees Forum to create a monthly news letter for our group. Each issue shall carry devotee experiences, thought provoking articles on the Vedas, Itihasas, Puranas, and Darshanas and beautiful poems from our members. We request all your blessings for this new project and encourage all of you to write Guruvayoorappan related articles, stories, poems and other creative material for our future editions. Please send your comments, suggestions and any materials that you wish to publish to [navaneetham@yahoogroups.com](mailto:navaneetham@yahoogroups.com)

Lay out: A. P. Sukumar, Vancouver Canada.

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## നവനീതം – നറുവെണ്ണ

എ.പി സുകുമാർ

വെണ്ണയല്ലേ ഉണ്ണിക്കണ്ണനല്ലേ  
കായാമ്പുവർണ്ണനെൻ പുണ്യമല്ലേ

നൽനറും പാലതിൽ വെണ്ണയീ മട്ടിൽ  
കണ്ണൻലാവുന്നുണ്ടെല്ലാടവും  
പൈക്കളെ മേക്കുന്ന ഭാവത്തിലീ വിശ്വം  
കാക്കുന്നതും കണ്ണനെൻമെന്നും

ഗോപികാനാരിമാരെല്ലാരുമമ്മമാർ  
കണ്ണൻ പീയൂഷമേകിയവർ  
ഗോകളുമമ്മമാർ ശ്യാമളവർണ്ണൻ  
പാലമൃതൂതിയും ധന്യരായി

വേദവേദാന്തിക്കുമീശ്വരനാം കണ്ണൻ  
വേദാന്തസാരസർവ്വസ്വം ഭവാനു  
നാദനിരാമയമോങ്കാരമാണല്ലോ  
ഗീതാമനോഹര ദുഗ്ധ ധാര





## VISHU

Keralites celebrate their New Year on the first day of the Malayalam month of Medam according to the Kollam calendar. This usually falls on 14 April. A festival of gaiety and renewal, this day is celebrated with great fun in Kerala.

Ritual: The main ritual on this day is Vishukkani and Vishu Kaineettam . It is believed that the first objects which one sees on the morning of Vishu determine the prosperity experienced in the coming year.

As a result, people make it a point to see all the auspicious things as soon as they wake up. This is called Vishukkani . A special ritual arrangement of auspicious articles like rice grains, fresh linen, golden cucumber, betel leaves, arecanut, metal mirror, yellow flowers, a holy text and coins is made in a bell metal vessel called uruli . A bell metal lamp called nilavilakku is lighted near it.

When the day begins, people behold this ritualistic arrangement. A puja is performed and sweets offered to the gods. Older members of the family give kaineettam (token amount of money) to the youngsters, as part of the celebrations. The Kanippoo (flower of cassia) is considered especially auspicious for both the kani and puja on this day.

Legend: The Kollam era is said to have begun on the day Parashurama, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, created Kerala by making the waters of the Arabian Sea recede. Parashurama had vowed to exterminate the Kshatriya caste from the face of the earth. In keeping with this oath, he went to war with Rama, who was a Kshatriya.

During the battle, he realised that Rama was none other than the seventh incarnation of Vishnu. He realised that the purpose of his own life had come to an end and decided to spend the rest of his life in meditation. For this, he wanted a place where he could meditate in total peace. The gods granted him a boon according to which, he was to throw his battle axe into the sea and land would rise along the distance it covered. This is how Kerala was created.

## Ganesa Stuti



ശുക്ലാംബരധരം വിഷ്ണും ശശിവർണ്ണം ചതുർഭുജം  
പ്രസന്നവദനം ധ്യായേത് സർവ്വവിഘ്നോപശാന്തയേ

Suklaam\_baradharam vishNum SaSivar\_NNam chathur\_bhujam  
prasannavadanam dhyaayEth~ sar\_vvavighnOpaSaanthayE

***We meditate on the all pervading Lord Ganesha who is clad  
in a white cloth, whose complexion is like that of moon and  
has four hands. We pray to Him, who has a placid  
expression to eradicate all the obstacles***

## GURUVAYOORAPPAN THE HEALER AND PROTECTOR

*"Mind is very restless, forceful and strong, O Krishna; it is more difficult to control the mind than to control the wind" - Arjuna to Sri Krishna.*

Srimad Narayaneeyam is a devotional hymn consisting of 1036 verses written in the 16th century by a scholar-devotee-poet by name Melpathur Narayana Bhattatiri, as an epitome of Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana. The immediate need for him to write this hymn, was his suffering from his ailment of paralysis, for the alleviation of which, he prayed to the Lord of Guruvayoor. He wrote one hundred chapters at the rate of one chapter (dasakam--a bunch of 10 verses) per day, sitting in front of the deity. As the story goes, the author, Melpathur Narayana Bhattatiri voluntarily transferred onto himself, the ailment of paralysis from his Guru and relative, Trikandiyur Achuta Pisharoti ritualistically, in order to save him. In the process, he himself became a paralytic. He then got himself carried to the shrine at Guruvayoor where he could take shelter at the feet of Lord Krishna and get divine intervention.

As he was continuing to suffer from excruciating pain due to his malady, he sought advice from the celebrated contemporary poet, Thunjath Ezhuthachan, who suggested that Bhattatiri should "start with the fish". Bhattatiri, being quick to understand the implication of this suggestion, viz., that he should compose a hymn in praise of Lord Guruvayoorappan giving an account of all His sportive incarnations beginning with the incarnation as fish (Matsya-avatara), he sat at the feet of the Lord and composed this great work, a dasakam a day, with ardent devotion. At the end of the hundredth day, when he

had completed all the one hundred dasakams, it is said that he had a glorious vision of the Lord and he was completely cured of his ailment. Bhattatiri composed Narayaneeyam when he was twenty-seven, completing it on November 27, 1587.

It is said that on the hundredth day, when he completed writing the hymn, he had the coveted vision of the Lord and he also got cured of his ailment. Devotees believe that this hymn to Lord Krishna, the presiding deity of Guruvayoor is a panacea for all ailments, arthritic paralysis in particular, and chant the hymn with all earnestness, sincerity and devotion. They come all the way to Guruvayoor, offer worship and get cured.

The expression "Hantha! Bhagyam Jananaam!" comprising the last words of the opening sloka of this great work, Srimad Narayaneeyam, has become the watch-word of Guruvayoor, because devotees of Guruvayoorappan believe that Narayaneeyam, known as the "Gospel of Guruvayoor" is identical with the Lord. They consider themselves extremely fortunate and blessed even to have been able to have a Darsanam of the Lord, who is the same as Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness. One can find the above-cited words inscribed right at the entrance of the shrine.

This work, composed in praise of Lord Krishna, and which is said to have received divine intervention at different stages, is considered to be a short and sweet substitute for Srimad Bhagavata Mahapurana (cream of all Hindu sacred texts) and is recited by devotees all over the world as a general prayer



and also as a panacea for all ailments causing impairment or loss of motor function of nerves. Innumerable devotees flock to the Guruvayoor temple

and offer worship to the Lord, reciting this hymn of prayer in the firm hope, belief and trust that they would be cured of their ailments.



## The Best ....

1. Which is the best shastra?
2. Which is the best deity?
3. Which is the best mantra?
4. Which is the best duty?

One sloka gives the answer for all these questions.

**Ekam shashtram devaki putra gitam;  
Eko devo devakiputra eva;  
Mantropyekas tasya namani yani,  
Karmopyekam tasya devasy seva.**

The meaning is:

1. Gita sung by Sri Krishna, son of Devaki, is the best shastra.
2. Sri Krishna, son of Devaki, is the best deity.
3. Names of Sri Krishna are the best Mantra.
4. Service of Sri Krishna is the best duty.



## ശ്രീ ഗുരുവായൂർ പൂരം

എ. പി. സുകുമാർ

ശ്രീ ഗുരുവായൂർ പൂരമതി രമണീയം  
ഭൂലോകവൈകുണ്ഠം ശ്രീകൃഷ്ണ സാന്നിധ്യം  
ഭക്തപരായണം നാരായണനാമം  
നിത്യം മുഴങ്ങും ഗേഹമിതതിപുണ്യം

തംബൂര ശ്രുതിയൊത്ത സ്വരമൊന്നിടറിയപ്പോൾ  
തുമ്പമകറ്റി ചെമ്പയ്ക്കു സ്വരമായി  
ഏകാദശീ പുണ്യ സാന്നിധ്യമായിന്നും  
ചെമ്പൈസംഗീത സദിരുമിന്നതി പുണ്യം

അദ്വൈതസാരസർവ്വം ജ്ഞാനപ്പാനയായി  
പുന്താനഭക്തിയേവം മുക്തിനിദാനമായി  
ഭക്തി വിഭക്തി സർവ്വം നര നാരായണീയം  
വന്ദിത ചരണയുഗം അതിരചിരാഭലോലം

ചന്ദന ചർച്ചിതം രൂപമതിമംഗളം  
തുമ്പസീദള പരിവേഷിതം അംഗോപാംഗം  
പുഞ്ചിരി കളിയാടും കൃഷ്ണശില മോഹനം  
കൃഷ്ണനാമം മുഴങ്ങും നഭസ്സുമിന്നദിരാമം

## śrī guruvāyūr puramati ramaṇīyam

by: A. P. Sukumar, Canada

śrī guruvāyūr puramati ramaṇīyam  
bhūlokavaikuṇṭham śrī kṛṣṇa sānniddhyam  
bhaktaparāyaṇam nārāyaṇanāmaṁ  
nityam muzṇum gehamitatipuṇyam

*Sri guruvayoor puram is the abode of beauty that captivates hearts; it is the VaikunTham (abode of VishNu) in this world, because, here, the presence of Sri KrishNa is felt always by the devotees. This is the sacred home of the Lord as it is always resonating with the chanting of the name of Narayana who takes the devotee across the ocean of 'samsara'.*

tamburu śrutiyotta svaramonniṭariyappol  
tumpamakatti cempaykku svaramāyi  
ekādaśī puṇya sānniddhyamāyinnuṁ  
cempai saṅgita sadiruminnati puṇyam

*One day, at the peak of his career, the great carnatic musician Chembai Swamy's voice was affected badly and he could no longer sing. It is well known that Guruvayoorappan restored his voice by removing his afflictions. The Ekadasi music festival-Chembai Sangeetha Ulsavam- in Guruvayoor is celebrated by all in memory of the maestro and his unwavering devotion to the Lord Guruvayoorappan.*

advaitasārasarvvaṁ jñānappānayāyi  
pūntānbhakṭiyevaṁ muktinidānamāyi  
bhakṭi vibhakṭi sarvvaṁ nara nārāyaṇīyam  
vandita caraṇayugam atirucirābhalolaṁ

*Poonthaanam, a great poet of Kerala wrote his devotional poems in pure Malayalam unlike other scholars of the time who wrote poetry only in Sanscrit. Poothaanam's masterpiece – Jnanappana (the wisdom song) is a great work singing the glory of the Lord and the essence of advaita philosophy, understood even by uneducated people. Legend has it that Guruvayoorappan declared "I revel in Poonthaanam's pure 'bhakṭi' rather than in the 'vibhakṭi' (roughly to mean grammatical & scholarly prowess) expressed by some of the other poets'. With that level of devotion, Poothaanam was given salavation by his Lord. Bhakṭi and vibhathi, both are very well combined in the Narayaneeyam (a great work by Melppatthoor Narayaa Bhattathiri extolling the incarnations of the*

*Lord, with an obvious bias towards Krishna). Great devotees have thus given salutations to Guruvayoorappan's holy feet which are extremely beautiful, soft and resplendant with light.*

candana carccitam rūpamatimaṅgaḷam  
tuḷasīdaḷa pariveṣitam aṅgopāṅgam  
punciri kaliyāṭum kṛṣṇasīla mohanam  
kṛṣṇanāmaṁ muzhaṅguṁ nabhassuminnabhirāmaṁ

*Sree Krishna's Idol in Guruvayoor temple is at its best form when the Lord is given a massage and covered with sandelwood paste. The priest also decorates Him using tulasi leaves. As if contented with the treatment, Krishna, the naughty boy who has the krishna sila (dark blue stone) as his body- doles out a smile that would captivate anyone. The whole space around the SriKovil (Sanctum sanctorum) resonates with the chants of Sri Krishna's name, indeed, that is a great treat to a devotee's heart.*

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## BHOOLOKA VAIKUNTAM

### *Heaven on Earth*

GURUVAYUR SREE KRISHNA SWAMY TEMPLE

!!!Om Namo Narayanaya!!!



### LEGEND OF GURUVAYOOR SRI KRISHNA TEMPLE

Guruvayoor Sri Krishna Temple is the fourth biggest temple in India after Badari, Puri and Thirupathi in terms of number of devotees visiting the temple per day. The presiding deity Guruvayoorappan is Lord Maha Vishnu with four arms, even though the devotees worship him as Lord Sri Krishna-the complete man incarnation of Lord Maha Vishnu. Located 29 km north-west of Thrissur District in Kerala, Guruvayoor



is among India's most important pilgrimage centres and the place is also glorified in divinity with the nearby Shiva – Parvathi Temple.

Guruvayoor Temple is thought to be more than 5,100 years old, having been installed after Lord Krishna ascended to Vaikuntha. Legend has it that, at the beginning of the Brahmakalpam, Mahavishnu gave Brahma an idol and the first book of Bhagavatham. Brahma, later gave this idol to Prajapathi Sutapassu and his wife Prishni. Sutapassu and Prishni worshipped the idol with such devotion that Mahavishnu Himself appeared before them for granting boon. In their over enthusiasm, since they asked thrice "We need a son equivalent to You" Lord Maha Vishnu blessed them with He Himself being born as their son in three different *janmas* (re-births). In all the three *janmas* they will get the *vighraha* given to them by Brahma. Prishnigarba, was born to Sutapassu & Prishni. This couple in their next birth were known as Kashyapa and Aditi. They got possession of this idol in that birth also, and Lord Maha Vishnu was again born as their child, the Vamana. Then Lord Sri Krishna was born to Vasudeva-Devaki as the incarnation of Lord Maha Vishnu. Lord Sri Krishna himself was worshipping the idol given by Brahma at a Temple in Dwaraka. Before ascending to Vaikuntha, Lord Krishna entrusted his disciple Udhava with this idol and asked him to meet Brihaspathy, the Guru of gods. Lord Sri Krishna promised Udhava that a true devotee can feel his presence in the idol.



The Guru along with his desciple Vayudeva(god of air), went around the world in search of an ideal place. During their journey they were directed by Parasuraman to a sacred lotus pond where they felt the presence of Shiva & Parvathi. This lotus pond was 'Rudratheertham' where Lord Shiva revealed to Prachethas, the 'Rudra Geetham' to worship Lord Mahavishnu which he did for ten thousand years. Shiva permitted Guru and Vayu to install the idol there, to perform the consecration rites and blessed them that henceforth this place would be known as 'Guru-Vayu-oor' meaning the place of Guru and Vayu; Lord Shiva and Parvathi moved to the opposite bank of Rudratheertham - now Mammiyoor. A temple was built there by Vishwakarma the divine architect. He made the temple in such a way that on the day of Vishu (Summer equinox), the sun himself makes his obeisance-his first rays on that day fall straight on the Lord's feet. As the idol was once worshiped by the Lord Maha Vishnu himself before leaving to Vaikuntha, Guruvayur is considered to be "Bhooloka Vaikunta" - the heaven on earth.

The present pooja routines are laid down by Sri Adi Sankaracharya. Once Sankaracharya was on his aerial journey to Shringeri. While above Guruvayoor he smiled at the pompness and vividity of the procession of Sreebhootha Bali (feeding celestial attendants) and tried to pass the temple without making any obeisance to the Lord. Suddenly he came crashing down and the procession stopped there at the northwest corner. He soon recovered and saw the Lord in all his royalty. Realizing the cause of his fall, Sankaracharya prostrated before the Lord and tried to win the Lord's favour by chanting 8 slokas in praise of Govinda, known as Govinda Ashtakam. The small opening in the roof over the North- West courtyard is in commemoration of this event.

Sankaracharya is believed to have instituted the Mandala Vilakku (lighting of lamps for 41days). The pooja routines laid down by Adi Sankaracharya are later written in to the Tantrasamuchaya by Chennas Narayanan Namboodiri (born in 1427). The Chennas Namboodiris are the hereditary Tantri of Guruvayur temple and the decision of the Tantri is the final word in all matters concerning the Guruvayur temple. Only Hindus are allowed inside the Temple.

The four armed idol carrying Conch (Sankha), Discuss (Chakra), Mace (Gadha), Lotus(Padmam) niched out of a stone called "Pathala Anjanam" stand gracefully at the Sreekovil(Sanctum Sanctorum) as a manifestation of Almighty himself ever so merciful to ignorant multitudes. The Sreekovil is designed in 2 layers with copper sheet roofing plated with gold. There is a repletion of traditional mural paintings on all the three sides, depicting sequences from puranic tales and Krishnaleela. There are 101 bells, all made of silver and plated with gold. Sopanam, the steps leading to the Sreekovil, are made of stone with carvings and designs of attractive craftsmanship. The upa-devas(sub-diety) include Ganapathi, Sastha & Edatharikathu Bhagavathi.

Vrischika(Suklapaksha) Ekadasi & Utsavam are the important festivals of Guruvayoor Temple. The Utsavam lasts for ten days. Beginning on the day of Pushya (the 8th asterism) in the month of Kumbham ( February-March), it ends after the Aarattu on the 10th day. The legends of Melpathur Narayana Bhattathiri(who wrote Narayaneeyam), Poonthanam(who wrote Njanappana), Kururamma, and Villwamangalam brought more and more devotees to Guruvayoor.



**ശ്രീ ഗുരുവായുപുരേശ്വരസ്തോത്രം.**  
(നവകം)

late വിദ്വാൻ വട്ടോളി കൊച്ചുകുണ്ണൻ നായർ.  
ഗുരുവായൂർ ഏകാദശി സപ്തിമെന്റ് 1966

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ശ്രീവാസുദേവനു, നന്ദനു, ദേവകീ ദേവി, യശോദയ്ക്കും (1)  
ഭൂവിലോ, രത്നതു നന്ദനനായ് വിളയാടിയ, വിശ്വേവ,  
ആവിലമഖില, മകന്നിടാൻ തവപാദാബ്ജം ശരണം.  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

മധുരാനാഥ, മാധവ, യാദവ ഗോകുല പരിപാല (2)  
വിധുമുഖി ഗോപി ജ്ഞാമലമാനസ വാസവിലോലാ  
എതിരാളികളാമാർക്കും കാല, സേവക ഭക്തകൃപാലോ  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

തുംഗാനന്ദ സുധാകര, സകലാധാരാ ഹരദൂരിതം (3)  
മംഗളമരുളുക, നിൻ കൃപയല്ലാതില്ല മമ അവലംബം  
ഏങ്ങും തിങ്ങിയും മെവിടെയു, മേതിലും, മങ്ങുലസിക്കുന്നു  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

ദിനമണി, യകസത്തിൽ തുടുതുട, നിന്നുജ്ജ്വലിക്കുമ്പോൾ (4)  
കനിവിൻ കടലാം തവമുഖവിദ്യുതിയത്രേ ഞാൻ കാണൂ!  
പനിമതി, വാനിലുദിച്ചാൽ, നിൻ മൃദുമന്ദസ്ഥിതമോർപ്പ്:  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

കനകപ്രഭമായ് ഗഗനതലത്തിൽ മിന്നൽ ചലിക്കുമ്പോൾ (5)  
വിനകൾ വരുത്തും ദൃഷ്ടപ്പരിശിയെ നിഹനം ചെയ്യാൻ നീ  
നിനവാൽ നന്ദക നാമക ഖട്ട, മിളക്കും പടികാണൂ  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

ശീത ഗഗനത്തിൻ, കോണിൽ, കരിമുകിൽ കൂട്ടംകൂട്ടുമ്പോൾ (6)  
സതതം ജ്ഞാനദിവാകര, നിന്നെ മറച്ചു ലസിച്ഛീടും  
മതിമുന്തര പരിപൂർണ്ണജ്ഞതയിൽ ഞാനോർമ്മിപ്പ  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

മധുരംഫലതതി വേനൽക്കാലം, മാന്തര ചൊരിയുമ്പോൾ (7)  
മധുസൂദന, നീ, ഭക്തർക്കരുളും, വരരീതിനീനപ്പ!  
വിധുരതസർവം, തീർക്കൂ, മഖണ്ഠപരം പൊരുളേ കൃഷ്ണ!  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

നിറകതിർപോൽ പരിശോഭിതനാം തവ, സാന്നിദ്ധ്യം മൂലം (8)  
മരിമായങ്ങൾ, വിമോഹിനിമായ, നടത്തി, ലസിക്കുന്നു  
ഹരിനിൻ തിരുപദശ്ശരണം മായാതരണതിൽപ്പോരാം  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.

ത്വൽപദവിദ്വൽക്കിരണം, മാമക ഹൃദയചകോരത്തി- (9)  
നെപ്പൊഴുമിന്നുകണക്കുലസിക്കണ, മാമയമറ്റീടാൻ  
താപത്രയപരിഹാരക ശ്രീധര! ശരണം തിരുപാദം  
വാതപുരാലയവാസ, ഹരേ! പരമാത്മൻ!! പരിപാഹി!!!.





## SRI RAMA BHAKTI



Sri Rama is an embodiment of Truth, Righteousness, Love, Compassion, a great warrior etc. Indirajith, son of Ravana was doing great penance in a secluded place under a tree which has the potential to protect him from anybody. He was doing lot of human sacrifice and other rituals to obtain powers to kill Rama. Vibhishana knowing this secret took Rama and Lakshmana to the place and told Hanuman to keep Indirajith away from that tree while doing his penance. At this point Indirajith became angry and abused Vibhishana as a traitor who revealed the secrets of him and that of Lanka to the enemy. For this Vibhishana replied "Indirajith, you are not only ignorant but also arrogant in using such abuses against me. I know what is right and what is wrong, what is truth and what is untruth. Rama is an embodiment of love, God in human form and he came

here to get back Sita and not to take the kingdom of Lanka. He is the person who renounced Ayodhya and why should He want to take Lanka? I have advised your father many times about the course he was embarking on and pleaded with him several times to return Sita. He never heard my words and in the process brought the downfall of his kingdom and clan. It is the right of a person to speak the truth and dharma and should not be a spectator if some damage is done to others. That was what I did. I knew Ravana will have to face the consequences but who will hear good words when the mind is occupied by pollution, lust and arrogance?"

Before that when Vibhishana met Hanuman he pleaded when he will get the Mercy of Rama the embodiment of Divinity as he is like a tongue surrounded by wicked teeth of

rakshasas. Hanuman in his wisdom advised Vibhishana not to worry about himself only as there are so many persons facing the same dilemma and advised him to continue to have faith in Rama and never stop that faith in the middle. The tongue came first and teeth afterwards and will fall away in course and so the rakshasas will be killed by Sri Rama. For getting His Grace he advised Vibhishana to continue his perseverance and it is possible he may get the Grace of Sri Rama or will merge in Him in due course. For that it is not sufficient just by uttering the words of Rama mechanically unless he inculcates him in his heart with pure devotion.

From the above one can understand bhava and devotion in uttering the name of the Lord is essential and simply reciting His name as a routine will not lead the sadhak anywhere. One has to cling the lotus feet of the Lord in devotion and the very Nama recital must have the force to bring tears in his/her eyes. Of course in the modern higgledy-piggledy world of confusion and competition and the burdens one has to undergo much can't be expected. But spending at least some time in the night if morning hour is not possible before going to bed deeply immersing the mind towards Godward for at least 15 minutes even in bed completely concentrating on Him and mentally doing pada seva, leaving all problems to Him will surely lift one to great heights in course of time

and solutions will be found for all the problems by His Grace even in this age. Only thing required is systematic observation and it is a must and never should be compromised at any cost. During those 15 minutes or whatever time one can spend one should completely immersed in His thoughts leaving aside all the other things and making the mind pure and putting Godliness in it will do wonders in the material and spiritual world as the Laws of Nature are such that the same will start working sometimes even bypassing one's Karmic effects There be no doubt about that. Such is the efficacy of Rama Nama or any nama and the devotee will not go disappointed. It will take time but surely the devotee will be victorious in his/her effort as whatever be the problems he/she is facing will vanish automatically by the Grace of the Lord when the devotee once reaches certain stage after practice. This is a time tested factor and there need be no confusion over that. When we get time for ever so many things can't we spend some time to the Creator as a mark of gratitude and love as He is everything for anybody and without Him nothing is possible and if one feels he has done such and such thing due to his intelligence is in the Utopian island as the very intelligence is the one that is given by the Creator. Remembering this always is good for every aspirant for only to them the gates of higher realms are opened and not to any other person.

# Avataram

Avataram is the Atmashakti (*power of the supreme soul*) that has put on the raiment of kriya shakti and yoga shakti (*power of action and power of Divine communion*). Generally, Avatarana (*the process of incarnation*) is described as 'coming down' from a higher status to a lower one. An Avatar has four qualities and it is only when you cultivate them, that you can understand Him. They are, **Divine Love** (*prema*), **Beauty** (*soundarya*), **Sweetness** (*madhurya*) and **Splendour** (*shobha*).

It is said that there are some manifestations that are partial and some others that are full, and some that are temporary and some that are lasting. But all these are called Avatars only by courtesy. Narada,

Sanatkumara and other similar sages are also referred to, in some texts as Avatars. As they do not have all the Divine characteristics, they are not worshipped.

Avatarams are based on the different aspects of the Divine. The first is, '**Nityavataram**'; the second, '**Viseshavataram**'; the third, '**Aviseshavataram**'; the fourth, '**Leelavataram**' and the fifth, '**Poornavataram**'. '**Leelavataram**' is also known as '**Amsavataram**'. Nityavatara, Viseshavatara and 'Aviseshavatara' have only five to nine aspects (*kalas*) of the Lord. Only in the '**Poornavatara**' all the sixteen aspects (*kalas*) of the Divine are present. Only that is the full manifestation of God.

There are the seven unfailing characteristics of Avatars of the Mahashakthi, which persists fully when it has apparently modified itself with Mayashakthi. Wherever these seven characteristics are found, you can identify Godhead:

- |                                |                                     |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <b>AISVARYA</b> : Splendour | 2. <b>KEERTHI</b> :fame             |
| 3. <b>JNANA</b> : Wisdom       | 4. <b>VAIRAGYA</b> : Non-attachment |
| 5. <b>SRISHTHI</b> : Creation  | 6. <b>STHITHI</b> : Preservation    |
| 7. <b>LAYA</b> : Destruction   |                                     |

The Lord incarnates in countless ways. He comes as an Incarnation of a Kala (fragment) of His, or as an Amsa (part) of His; He comes as an Inner Inspirer for some Definite Purpose; He comes to close an epoch and inaugurate another (Yugavatar). The narrative of these incarnations is in Srimad Bhagavatham.

The Sastra mentioned seven types of Avatar(s):

## 1. AMSA-AVATAR

A partial manifestation of an Avatar. An Amsa-Avatar will have mainly Tejas (radiance) and Ojas (brilliance). He will show great devotion towards God and inspire many others to follow him. The common people who cannot approach God will find an Avatar approachable and comprehensible. By imbibing, imitating and meditating on the qualities of an Avatar, one can ascend to great spiritual heights and even achieve Self-realization. Such Avatars incarnate from time to time, not only in India, but also in all other countries. aka. ARCHA-AVATAR.

## 2. VIBHUTHI-AVATAR

An incarnation of the power or 'the Glory of God'. This glory can manifest anywhere, creating awe and wonder at the unfathomable and indescribable Avatar.

## 3. MAHATMY-AVATAR



**Matsyavatar**



**Kurmavatar**

A sudden manifestation of God for a specific purpose which may come in any form and at any place. For example:

- a) **Matsyavatar** came to save the Vedas from Shanhasura
- b) **Kurmavatar** came to support Mount Mandara.
- c) **Varahavatar** came to destroy the demon Hiranyaksha.
- d) **Narasimhavatar** came to destroy the demon Hiranyakasipu.
- e) **Vamanavatar** came to punish Bali.

## 4. YUGAVATAR

One who descends with a message for a particular age or creates a new age. He appeals to the heart of His Devotees. A Yugavatar, who descends from the bosom of God, enters into physical vesture without the need of a womb. Such an Avatar selects a humble and pious couple to achieve a Virgin Birth.



## 5. MAHAVATAR

One who gives a completely new interpretation of the scriptures and whose message is for all times. Mahavatar is a great soul who manifests an infinite love and compassion for mankind. He incarnates to teach and to show man the way to attain Mukti or Nirvana. He appeals to the mind of devotees.

## 6. LEELAVATAR

An incarnation of God in a supra-physical body, human in appearance, but completely divine. As a Leela Avatar is beyond the Trigunas, He cannot be born in the womb of an earth mother. She may feel that she is carrying an ordinary child when in fact she is carrying a supra-physical body. According to the Gita, such an Avatar incarnates for the restoration of Dharma. He is unfathomable, for He knows the past, present and future of everyone and all evolution.

e.g. In the Gita, Krishna said, '*Arjuna, you and I have passed through many births. I know them all while you do not.*' and again, '*Though unborn (Pravesa) and immortal and the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My Own Yogamaya, keeping My Nature under perfect control.*'

## 7. POORNAVATAR aka. VIBHAVA-AVATAR

An incarnation, which is the fullest manifestation of God. He is the culmination, for He embodies all the divine characteristics of all the other types of Avatars.



## ഭഗവദ് ഗീതാ സാരം

ശ്രീ വാസുദേവാ മുകുന്ദാ കൃഷ്ണാ  
ദേവകീ നന്ദനാ വാസുദേവാ  
ചേലിലാമൗലിയിൽ പീലി ചാർത്തി  
കോലുന്ന നെറ്റിയിൽ ഗോപി ചാർത്തി

ചെന്താമരയിതൾ കണ്ണിനേറ്റം  
ചന്തം കലർത്തും മഷി എഴുതി  
ഉൾപൂവിനാനന്ദമേകിവാഴും  
എൾപൂവിനൊത്തൊരു നാസികയും

തൊണ്ടിപ്പഴത്തിനു നാണമേകും  
ചുണ്ടിന്റെ മാധുര്യമെങ്ങും വീശി  
കർണ്ണങ്ങളിലുള്ള കുണ്ഡലങ്ങൾ  
ഗന്ധതലങ്ങളിൽ മിന്നലാർന്നും

ഹാരാദി ആഭരണങ്ങളേന്തി  
മാറിന്നു ശോഭ ഇരട്ടിയാക്കി  
ചമ്മട്ടികോലു വലതുകയ്യിൽ  
ചെമ്മേ കടിഞ്ഞാണിടതു കൈയ്യിൽ

മഞ്ഞപ്പട്ടങ്ങു തൊറിത്തുടുത്തും  
ശിഞ്ജിതനാദത്തിൽ നിന്നു കൃഷ്ണൻ  
തേരിൽ വികാരമിയന്നിരുന്ന  
വീരനാം അർജ്ജുനനേവമോതി

ഭക്തപ്രിയ കരുണാംബുരാശേ  
വക്തവ്യമല്ലാത്ത വൈഭവമേ  
യുദ്ധക്കളത്തിൽ ഒരുങ്ങി നിൽക്കും  
ബന്ധുക്കളെ ഒന്നു കാട്ടിടേണം

എന്നതു കേട്ടുടൻ കൃഷ്ണനപ്പോൾ  
മുന്നോട്ടു തേരങ്ങു കൊണ്ടു നിർത്തി  
അയ്യോ ഭഗവാനേ എന്റെ കൃഷ്ണാ  
വയ്യേ ബന്ധുക്കളെ കൊല്ലുവാനോ

ബന്ധുക്കളെ കൊന്നു രാജ്യമാളു  
നെന്നതിനു സൗഖ്യമിയന്നിടാനോ  
ഏവം കഥിച്ചു ധനഞ്ജയനും  
ഭവം പകർന്നതു കണ്ടനേരം

ഭാവജ്ഞനാം ഭഗവാൻ മുകുന്ദൻ  
ഈവണ്ണമോതിനാൻ സാവധാനം  
ഇല്ലാത്തതുണ്ടാകയില്ലയല്ലോ  
ഇല്ലാതെ പോകയില്ലാത്തതൊന്നും

ദേഹിക്കു നാശമുണ്ടാകയില്ല  
ദേഹം നശിച്ചീടും എന്നെന്നാലും  
ആരേയും ആത്മാവു കൊല്ലുകില്ല  
ആരാലും കൊല്ലപ്പെടുകയില്ല

വസ്ത്രം പഴയതുപേക്ഷിച്ചിട്ട്  
പുത്തൻ ധരിപ്പതു പോലയത്രേ  
ജീർണ്ണിച്ച ദേഹം ത്യജിച്ചു ദേഹി  
തൂർണ്ണം ധരിക്കുന്നു വേദേ ദേഹം

ആത്മാവിനെയഗ്നി ദഹിപ്പിക്കില്ല  
ആത്മാവലിഞ്ഞു പോകുന്നുമില്ല

ആത്മാജനിച്ചു മരിക്കുമെന്നാ-  
ണാത്മാവിൽ നീ കരുതുന്നതെങ്കിൽ

തിണ്ണം ജനിച്ചവൻ ചാകുമെന്നും  
തിണ്ണം മരിച്ചവൻ ജാതനെന്നും  
നന്നായറിഞ്ഞു നീ ദുഃഖിയാതെ  
നന്നായ് സ്വധർമ്മമറിഞ്ഞുചെയ്ക

സംശയം ഒന്നിനും വെച്ചിടാതേ  
സംശയം കൂടാതെ ചെയ്കയെല്ലാം  
കർമ്മം ചെയ്യാനധികാരി നീയാം  
കർമ്മഫലമതിലോർത്തിടൊല്ലാ

കർമ്മഫലത്തിനു ഹേതുവായോ  
കർമ്മം ചെയ്യാതയോ വാണിടൊല്ലാ  
പുണ്യപാപങ്ങളുപേക്ഷിച്ചിട്ടു  
തുല്യ ബുദ്ധിയോടെ വാണിടേണം

പത്തിന്ദ്രിയങ്ങളും കീഴടക്കി  
ഒത്തമനസ്സുമേകാഗ്രമാക്കി  
കർമ്മഫലങ്ങളിൽമോഹിയാതെ  
കർമ്മങ്ങൾ ചെയ്ക ഈശ്വരീപണമായ്

ഇങ്ങനെ ഓരോരോ തത്വമോതി  
ഭംഗിയിൽ പാർത്ഥനെ ബുദ്ധനാക്കി  
വിശ്വാസം കൂട്ടുവാൻ ദേവദേവൻ  
വിശ്വരൂപം കാട്ടി നിന്നു തേരിൽ

എല്ലാത്തിലുമെല്ലാം ഞാനാണെന്നും  
എല്ലാം എന്നിലാണെന്നും കണ്ടിടേണം  
നൂലിൽ മണികൾപോലൊന്നിലെല്ലാം  
ചേലിൽ കോർത്തുള്ളതാണോർത്തിടേണം

സാക്ഷാൽ പരമാർത്ഥ തത്വമേവം  
പാർത്ഥൻ ഭഗവാങ്കൽ നിന്നറിഞ്ഞു  
ഏറ്റം ഉണർവ്വോടെ ഭാരതൻ താൻ  
ഏറ്റു സ്വധർമ്മം നടത്തികൊണ്ടാൻ

ദുര്യോധനാദി ശത്രുക്കളെയും  
നിരൂണം ചെയ്തു ജയിച്ചുകൊണ്ടാൻ  
ഒന്നുശ്രമം ചെയ്തനേരം ദൈവം  
നന്നായി സഹായിച്ചു പൂർണ്ണനാക്കി

എങ്ങു യോഗേശ്വരൻ കൃഷ്ണനുണ്ടോ  
എങ്ങു ധനുർധരൻ പാർത്ഥനുണ്ടോ  
അങ്ങു വിജയശ്രീ മംഗളങ്ങൾ  
തങ്ങുന്നിമന്ത്രം ഗ്രഹിച്ചുകൊള്ളിൻ

ശ്രീശൻ ഭഗവാന്റെ ഗീത വേഗം  
ലേശം വിടാതെ പഠിച്ചുകൊൾവിൻ  
ഗീത പഠിക്കുന്ന വീട്ടിലെല്ലാം  
ശ്രീദേവി വന്നു വിളങ്ങി കാണും

ഗീതാപാഠം ചൊല്ലികേട്ടു വെന്നാൽ  
ബോധമുണ്ടായിടും വൃക്ഷങ്ങൾക്കും  
സർവചരാചരങ്ങൾക്കതിനാൽ  
സർവ്വത്രമംഗളം വന്നിടട്ടേ

## Why do we worship?

*Temple (kshEtram) is an image of the human body*

### Translation of the Article by Swami Aswathi TirunaL

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*Translation from Malayalam by Dr. A.P.Sukumar, Canada.*



The word meaning of '*kshEtram*' is body as explained by Lord *Sri Krishna* in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Our temples are constructed based on the structure of our body. This methodology in the construction of temples has been adopted to emphasize and realize the basic profound statement ('mahavakya') of Hindu philosophy – *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman*)– that is 'I' and the 'Lord' are one and the same.

For a Hindu, the concept of God is as an omniscient presence of energy ('*chaithanya*') that is all encompassing. 'That' is present everywhere. In every

life form 'it' fills and prevails as the living entity. In each individual who is in the human form, 'it' is present as the life force. For each life form, the ultimate goal of life is to find 'it' and realize the truth that 'me' and God are one. When a living entity realizes this goal, the profound statements such as '*thathvamasi*' (that thou art); *raamOham* (I am Rama); *SivOham* (I am Siva); *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman) etc. will also become Real. The easiest way of realizing this 'truth' is to seek and find the presence of God in our 'self'. For this, a living being must

meditate and worship the notion of God within and temples are schools that help him in this pursuit. That is why temples are constructed in the structure of a body.

Temples are built in the style of a man lying on his back. The temple entrance (*'gopuram'*) is the feet of the man. For every temple, there will be an entrance door and the shoes are to be kept outside this door. When one enters a temple, it is as if he is entering into his own body. The mind that has been wandering all over the world is being controlled by own will and brought within. When you get inside the body, there is no need for shoes and that is why in temples we do not wear shoes. Also, in temples there are rules that we should not walk in pairs or groups. If a family of father, mother and kids, once entered a temple, should walk on their own, not as a group. Each one is entering the temple with an aim to find and enliven the godliness inside his body. That is why we shouldn't take very small children to a temple. They will not be able to behave inside the temple with the proper attitude knowing the philosophical concepts of temple structure and have *'darsan'* (seeing the deity). Once you enter a temple, friends must walk separately, however close they are. When each one is searching the God within, where is the need for relationship or a company? What is the need for chitchat? By being alone, one would be able to enjoy the temple visit without distractions and concentrate on godly thoughts.

When we go further inside the temple, at the navel area we see a stone called *'nabhi'*. The flag post (*'dwaja'*) is placed close to this stone. The flag post represents the back bone of a human body. The vertical alignment of the flag post is merely for convenience during daily rituals. In front of the sanctum sanctorum (*sree kovil*), we see a podium to do prostrations (*'namaskara mandapam'*), that is in place of human

chest. Then there are steps to ascend to the sanctum sanctorum representing neck (*'gaLasthan'*). The priest uses these steps to reach the sanctorum which is the human head. On the forehead, the deity is installed at the centre of the two eye brows (*'brhUmadhya'*). Above and around the deity there are mirrors producing effulgent halo representing the lotus with thousand petals (*'sahasrapadma'*). On either side of the sanctorum there are fake doors representing ears and above it there is a steeple tower representing tied hair (*'sikhi'*).

The devotee who is standing in front of the sanctum sanctorum with folded hands is actually worshipping himself. When we fold our hands (*'namasthe'*), the thumbs are pointed towards our own body and in front of sanctorum, a devotee closes his eyes. When trying to see the self within one should close his eyes. *Ayyappa* devotees reach the 18 steps in front of the *Sabarimala* sanctum sanctorum after passing through difficult mountainous paths such as *karimala* and *neelimala* and experiencing all kinds of discomforts, standing in the queue for hours. Once in front of the deity, upon seeing the lord the devotee calls out *"Swamiye Saranamayyappa"* and folds his hands in reverence. Immediately he ends up closing his eyes automatically. He is trying to see his own inner god energy in the form of *Ayyappa's* image. Even the sages who are engaged in severe austerities sitting in forest caves in the icy Himalayan Mountains are also doing the same thing. They try to realize God through intense penance and meditation without any worries of worldly responsibilities. But for ordinary people with responsibilities to look after their families it is not practical to go to the caves for meditation. That is why temple visits and idol worship have been prescribed for their benefit. A house holder standing in front of the deity with folded hands and closed eyes with a heart filled with devotion will be able to experience the same spiritual ecstasy as



a sage who is involved in sever austerities in forest caves.

According to the science of Yoga, there are three realms of intelligence in all living beings. He experiences these realms of the world through three different 'bodies'. In the waking state, it is by the gross body; in the dream state, it is through the subtle body and in the sleep state, it is through the causal body. All living beings have three such bodies. When we are awake, we understand and experience the physical world. When we sleep, the physical body is asleep, but we can see, hear and touch. What is the body that enables us to do so? That is the subtle body. In dream, we travel through the subtle body. Deep sleep state is where the gross body and the subtle body are absent. When a person is sleeping well, he experiences that in the causal body. Only when one gets rid of all the three bodies can he become one with the universal reality. The coconut we break in front of the temple is symbolic of these three bodies. The hard shell of the coconut represents gross body, the coconut meat represents subtle body and the coconut water, the causal body. When a devotee breaks a coconut, he assumes that the three bodies are destroyed and his self ("*atman*") gets absorbed in the universal self ("*paramathma*").

When one dies, the subtle body comes out of the physical body, i.e., the '*sa*' goes out of the body. (All rituals after the death of a person are aimed at facilitating in the journey of his subtle body to its next world of experience without major difficulties and anxieties.) Just before lighting the funeral pyre, we break the mud pot to indicate the journey taken by the *atman* after breaking the gross-subtle-causal bodies. The clay of the pot represents physical body and the water inside the pot, the subtle body and the space inside the pot, the causal body.

As explained earlier, a temple is an image of the human body. The sculpture

of the deity inside the sanctorum (the head) represents subtle body. The deity is installed at the centre of the eye brows (*brUmadhya*). This centre is considered by sages as the centre of mind. The plate that holds camphor lamp represents the causal body which is knowable only through experience and is beyond both the waking and dream states of awareness.

In order to understand the relevance and secret of the installation of a deity, one must learn about the six the centre points known as six chakras ("*shad chakra*"). In our subtle body, there is a divine nerve that starts from the bottom of the spine ending at the top of the head, called *sushumna* (spinal cord). By examining physical body, you will not see it, as it is in the subtle body that is beyond observation by physical equipment. This nerve passes through chakras. The spiritual power of a living being is hidden at the bottom of the spine, ("*moolaadhaara*"). It is akin to a she-snake lying coiled around an egg. This power is known as "*kundalini*" and thorough regular practice of yoga this power can be raised in stages. *SasdhisTaanam* (genitals), *maNipoorakam* (navel), *anaahatham* (heart), *visuddhi* (throat), *Ajnaachakram* (forehead, in the middle of eye brow) are the stages before the *kundalini* reaches *Siva*, the head, the abode of the lotus with thousand petals. There the Devi, the embodiment of power (*kundalini sakthi*) and the Siva become one. There the self realizes the Brahman (truth). All living beings take life in a physical body to reach this state of Siva-Sakthi unification. It is the longing to taste the eternal happiness of this unification that forces living beings to engage in sexual intercourse. They engage in sex thinking that it is the epitome of happiness. But the happiness that comes out of sex lasts only a limited time. Knowing this fact, people with discretion abstain from it. It is like some one who never gets distracted by a water pond when his goal is to enjoy

the sea itself. But the power of illusion (*maya*) forces our body and mind to run after sex and other physical pleasures of life. This is called *vasana* (innate tendency). It is to go beyond this *vasana* that a seeker is ordered to observe celibacy. Not because there is anything sinful about sex. That is why in older temples, you will see pictures of explicit sexual acts. An aspirant should go beyond these distractions and get inside the temple to get the happiness eternal that is real. When *Siva* and *Sakthi* unites in ones self, the yogi experiences the total happiness known as *brahmanandam*. A seeker should go beyond the physical urges understating the fact that the sexual pleasures will not come close to even one-thousands of this happiness that is eternal and real.

#### **Temple Visits, a blind folded game ?**

*We should dissuade any attempt to make Hinduism indulge in blind faith*

In the science of Yoga (*yogasasthra*), the power of *kunDalini* (*kuNDalini Sakthi*) has the foremost place. The energy that is lying in the "*moolaadhara*" must reach the top of one's head through regular practice (*sadhana*). For animals, *kuNDalini* power seldom goes beyond the navel area. So they have only two main activities in their life- eat food and procreate by engaging in sex. But for a human being, this energy will raise beyond the navel area. That is why man thinks about birth & death as well as truth behind life. Through the process of evolution caused by the activity of the *kuNDalini* power, the four-legged animals developed into the two-legged orangutans (man-monkey). When this power rose beyond the navel area and started spreading the vital energy, orangutans underwent further changes. They developed the ability to think and grow themselves intellectually and spiritually. In the intellectual journey, he found the truth that is science and in the spiritual journey he found the truth that is god.

Those who have found truth in science, we call them scientists. Those who have found truth in god, we call them sages or seers (*rishis*). Scientists find truth using telescopes and microscopes, while sages find the truth by intense practice of meditation and austerity in their own self. *KuNDalini* power of those men who are purely materialistic and live based on the belief that the essential meaning of life is to have sex and eat food will decline progressively. This will cause him to be reborn as an animal or a bird. But those who undertake the practice and path of spirituality to realize god will be born as sages and yogis, finally merging with god. In short, *kuNDalini* power is the basic inspiring force of evolution.

The word meaning of *kuNDalini* is she-snake. It is interesting to note that the Malayalees who misunderstood the word meaning became worshippers of snakes (*sarppa pooja*). We install a banyan tree and a statue of a snake at a corner of the temple to represent *kuNDalini* power. There is no connection between this and the snake, the animal. Banyan tree represents the nerves of the subtle body. The banyan tree has been chosen aptly to represent this as it is known to spread ozone to clean the air outside world. *KunDalini* of a seeker reaches the thousand petal lotus by cleansing his nerves through regular practice of austerities and yoga. For the people who follow the path of knowledge (*jnana yoga*) and those who follow the path of devotion (*bhakthi yoga*) ascend of *kuNDalini* happens automatically. For a *hatha yogi*, it is achieved through intense practice of physical yogic exercise.

#### **Subtle body**

If we know this much, we should be able to get the gist of idol worship. An idol represents the subtle body and we worship in front of it. The priest who performs the worship is only a conductor. The disciples are present in front of the sanctum to seek god who is

within themselves. The priest is just a demonstrator who shows the people how to achieve this and to show how to practice paths of spirituality by employing suitable imagery. He is not an agent of the god or some one who is close to Him or a wholesale dealer. If some one shows you the map of America in an atlas, he need not have visited America to show you the same. Even if he has been to America, he may not have the ability to explain the experience to you. Even if he is an excellent narrator, he will not be able to impart you the unique experience of a traveler who is actually visiting that country. Why temple priests are not realized souls? Why are they not able to renounce their greed towards money and physical comforts? The answer is evident here. You cannot insist that all midwives who help with deliveries must have the demonstrated experience of having had a smooth delivery in their own cases.

Human body is made of five elements: air, fire, water, earth and space. The body has been created as a composition of these elements in their gross and subtle molecular components. When one dies, the air leaves the body first. Then the body heat (fire) vanishes and then the water. When the body is burnt in a pyre, the earthly component also disintegrates. At last, the space that occupied the body also will lose its identity.

In a ritualistic worship (*pooja*), mainly five materials are utilized. Representing earth, there is eatable (*naivEdyam or prasadam*), air is represented by incense (*dhoop*), fire by lit lamp, water, and the space by flower. If we return the five elements that constitute our body to the nature, we can realize our self. But by one's death this will not happen. When a body is burnt completely, only gross body gets destroyed.

This is because of the fact that only the gross components of the five elements will be lost by cremation. A priest who

conducts the ritualistic worship assuming that the three bodies (gross, subtle and causal bodies; subtle and causal bodies are made up of subtle components of the five elements) are being returned to the nature. That is why the priest keeps the five items in front of the idol. Once he submits water, fire, air and food, what is left to be submitted is only space. Submission of space is the done by the worship (*archana*) with flowers.

Devotees who go to the temple carry the five items such as incense sticks, rose water, fruits, oil and flowers with the same assumption. The worship known as "*sahasra archana*" is to do worship by flower thousand times. Obviously it is not practical for all devotees to get inside a sanctorum to do worship and that is why a person is employed by the society to do it. This salaried employee is the priest. A spatula that is fully immersed in a sweet pudding need not know its taste. The priest need not know all the nuances and in-depth meanings behind all rituals he conducts. A temple priest is just a laboratory assistant who is in the lab that devotees use to experiment in pursuing spiritual realization. It is true that some laboratory assistants are much better than professors in demonstrating experiments to the aspirant.

Once the flower worship, showing of lamp, submission of water and food are over, the priest takes the camphor plate in his hand. The camphor plate represents the causal body that is the seat of innate tendencies (*vasana*) that force the gross and subtle bodies to go after worldly affairs. The plate has the shape of a sage sitting in lotus posture (*padmaasana*) with the locks of his hair tied around and above his head. The lamp that is lit in front of the idol represents the sacred Om mantra. Its base is the navel of Lord Vishnu and the mid portion is the lotus that is the abode of Lord Brahma, and the top portion is the phallus of Lord Siva (*Siva lingam*).

Brahman is the one that is the sum total of these three boundaries. Om mantra (*Om kara*) represents Brahman in an audible form. The lamp is lit in front of an idol to represent Om that is, the essence of Brahman appears to be split into three aspects. In the lamp, three wicks are lit to represent the consort of Siva- Parvathy – the goddess who sustains the world by protecting it; Brahma's consort -Saraswathy – the goddess of knowledge; and the consort of Vishnu- Lakshmi-devi- the goddess of prosperity. This completes the imagery and if these gods and goddesses are pleased with a devotee, his life is fulfilled.

### **The nature of the Self**

Only when the innate tendencies (*vasanas*) of the causal body also get annihilated, a living being would be able to realize its own self. That is being represented in burning camphor. Camphor is selected purposely for this because upon burning the camphor it does not leave any residue in the plate. When the *vasanas* of the causal body - that is the abode of non apprehension of reality- is burnt, the idol becomes effulgent. This effulgence is representative of the omniscient Self which is and beyond the limitations of time. A devotee who sees this with folded hands understands that the final goal of his life is to realize his own Self.

At the end of worshipping with lit camphor, the devotee sees the multiple reflections of the flame as the priest raises the camphor plate near the mirrors that are installed above the idol. The assumption is that the kuNDalini has reached the lotus of thousand petals and the unification of Siva and Sakthi has occurred. Thus the Self gets absorbed and the living entity gets freedom (*nirvana*) from the birth and death cycle. These lessons make deep impressions in the minds of devotees. They come to realize the truth that their bodies are only like clothing and a covering for the eternal Self. After the

worship, the priest brings the camphor plate to the midst of people. This is to give the devotee an opportunity to worship the flame and promise that I too am an aspirant who wants to follow the path of spirituality. Most people touch the flame and put their hands on their eyelids without knowing why they are doing it. It is the fate of modern Hindus that they end up taking part in a drama without knowing the actual story. In fact ninety percent of Hindu rituals are blindly being followed by people not just in the case of temple worship.

After the worship one should drink the sacred water (*theertham*). One should drink only a little of it as it is meant as a cleanser to the visuddhi chakra (throat). The sacred water gets below the vocal chord with the assumption that all words coming out of the throat will be clean as the water cleanses the throat area. Now one should eat some food offered to the lord (*prasadam*). Next in the ritual is to accept the sandal paste, ash or saffron given by the priest. Sandal paste is to remind one that there is no need to be proud of the physical body that is going to be cremated one day in a sandal wood pyre. Saffron powder is applied on the forehead in the shape of a flame to remind us the truth that one day the body is to be submitted to the flame. Finally we apply ash (*bhasmam*) on our body in the assumption that it is the ash from a funeral pyre, reminding us that the body is nothing but a handful of ash. Sages have given these ritualistic steps to inculcate in a devotee the attitude of humility and aversion towards worldly possessions in his individuality.

After the worship, one should sit down at a corner of the temple and meditate and realize the god energy within. The worship is basically to initiate this contemplation. When the idol is worshipped with lamp (*deeparadhana*) all the five senses of the devotees will be concentrated on the lord. Eyes will first concentrate on the idol and then the inner eyes will focus on the form of



god within. The chanting of Omkara and the ringing of bells will reverberate in the ears. The smell of camphor and sandal wood would occupy noses. Limbs are folded in reverence to the lord. Mind is focused in single pointed attention towards the Him. With this pleasant state of happiness, a house-holder devotee should go to a corner of the temple and chant lord's name and meditate just as a sage would do. Thus one should complete the process of worship before leaving the temple. It is indeed a great loss for our culture when we see that people spent some time in

not have worldly duties. Those who follow this with full understanding will get spiritual growth and along with that they will develop noble qualities such as simplicity in life, self confidence, devotion, cleanliness, diligence and compassion. Live life well, live happily and at the time of death, realize the truth that is god and leave the body with full spiritual energy. What more can a religion provide its followers? Daily visit and temple worship will definitely help one to take up this way of noble life. It is of great importance to know the value and meaning of all rituals we follow. If



front of the temple after the worship looking here and there chit chatting instead of following the noble procedure as taught by sages. For the temple worship to be fruitful, one should give donation and other possible helps to deserving people before leaving the temple. This is prescribed to ensure that one inculcates the habit of helping the poor and the needy as a principle in life. Idol worship and temple visits are simple, but beautiful rituals prescribed by the sages for the house-holders carrying many responsibilities in their head to achieve the same spiritual development as that of a monk who do

we continue the present way of temple worship without knowing the inner meanings of the rituals as practiced by the priests, temple authorities and the poor devotees, soon we will bring back the practice of caste discrimination and autocracy of priests which were matters of shame to Hindu culture in the past. This will lead the younger generations who are capable of assimilating modern ideas, to treat Hindu religion as one with blind beliefs and meaningless rituals. In order to get out of such a tragedy, India will need hundreds of Swami Vivekanandas and Sree Narayana Gurus.

# GURUVAYUR - FESTIVAL CALENDAR 2006



MAHASIVARATHRI മഹാശിവരാത്രി	26.02.2006
POONTHANAM DAY പുന്താന ദിനം	03.03.2006
VISHU വിഷു	14.04.2006
KARKITAKA VAVU കാർത്തിക വാവ്	24.07.2006
ASHTAMI ROHINI അഷ്ടമിരോഹിണി	14.09.2006
THIRUVONAM തിരുവോണം	05.09.2006
POOJA VAIPPU പൂജവയ്പ്പ്	30.09.2006
MAHANAVAMI മഹാനവമി	01.10.2006
VIJAYADASHAMI വിജയദശമി	02.10.2006
DEEPAVALI ദീപാവലി	21.10.2006
KRISHNAGEETHI DAY കൃഷ്ണഗീതി ദിനം	16.11.2006
GURUVAYUR EKADASI ഗുരുവായൂർ ഏകാദശി	01.12.2006
NARAYANEYAM DAY നാരായണീയ ദിനം	14.12.2006
KUCHELA DAY കുചേല ദിനം	20.12.2006
KALABHATTAM കളഭാട്ടം	27.12.2006

ശ്രീ ഗുരുവായൂർ ഉത്സവങ്ങൾ 2006