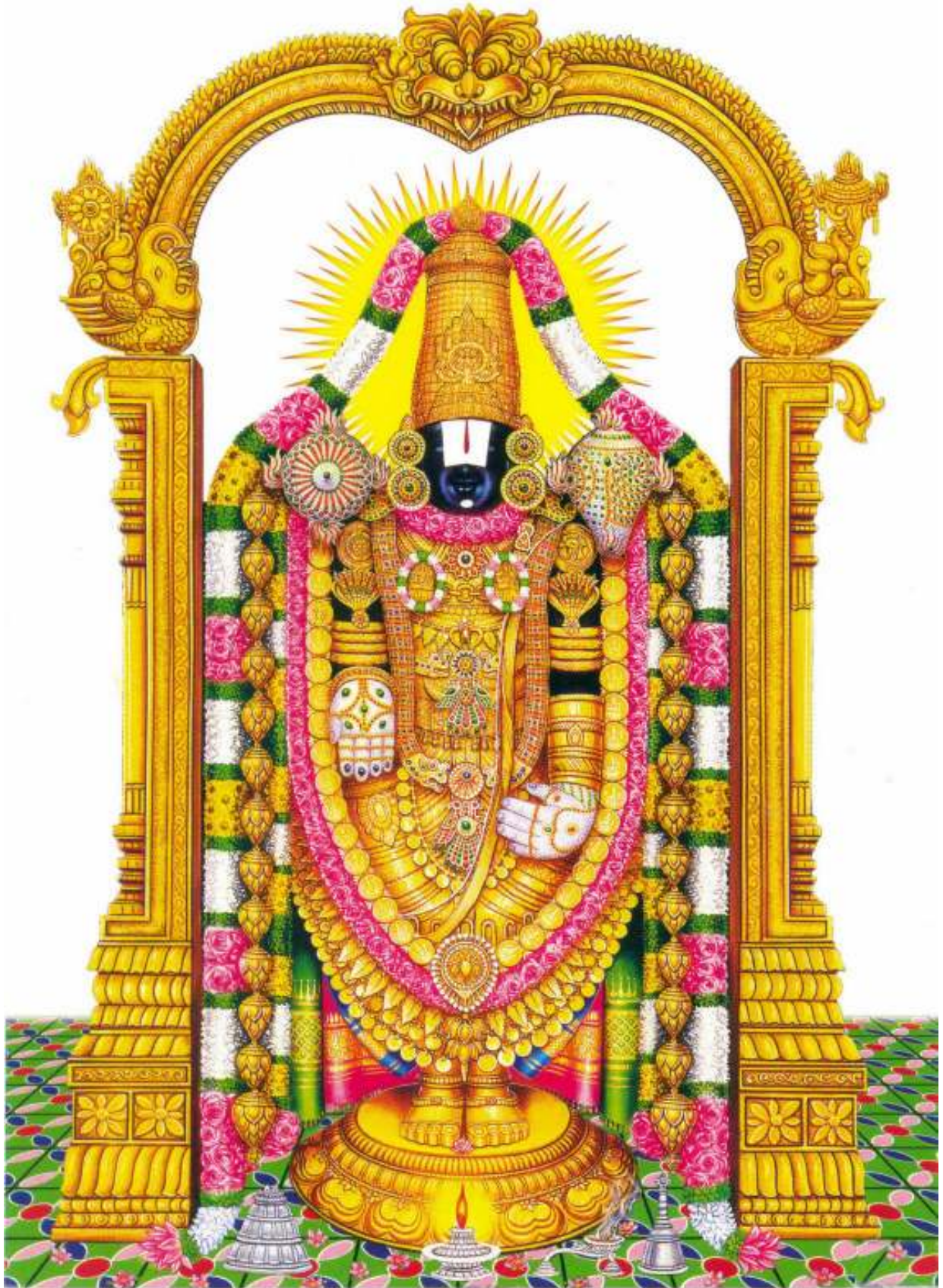


Lord Venkateswara – Part 1



According to the Hindu scriptures, Lord Vishnu, out of love towards his devotees, incarnated as Venkateswara for the salvation of humanity in this Kali Yuga (Age of ignorance).

More than 5,000 years ago, before the starting of Kaliyuga, 10,000 sages (wise men) started to perform a 10 year sacrifice (Yagna) on the banks of the river Ganga (“Ganges”). The yagna, or sacrifice, was for the welfare of people in the coming Kaliyuga. They knew Kaliyuga would be a bad time, and wanted to do something to help the people during Kaliyuga. Sage Kashyap was the head of these sages. One day, Rishi Narada visited the yagna, and asked all of them the purpose of the Yagna. He asked whom among the three Gods – Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu, and Lord Shiva would the prayers of the Yagna be dedicated to. Unable to answer Narada’s question, the sages approached Sage Bhrigu to find an answer. Sage Brighu was one of the seven great sages called Sapta Rishis created by Lord Brahma. According to the Vedas, Sage Bhrighu had an extra eye in the sole of his foot.

After much debate it was agreed that Sage Bhrigu undertake the difficult task of finding out the supreme God of the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva). That God would enjoy the honor of becoming the presiding deity of the Yagna.

Sage Bhrigu first went to Satyaloka to meet Lord Brahma. At Satyaloka, Brahma was immersed in music being played by Goddess Saraswati, his wife. Bhrigu called out to Brahma many a times, but Brahma did not respond. Bhrigu was very angry about being shown no respect, and at last concluded that Brahma was unfit for worship. Bhrigu cursed Brahma that He would never receive prayers in a temple. Hence, Brahma has almost no temples today.

Then Bhrigu set off to Kailasa, the adobe of Lord Shiva. Bhrigu saw Lord Shiva and his wife Goddess Parvati engaged in the Tandav (divine dance). The bull Nandi, Shiva’s vehicle, and other disciples were absorbed in witnessing this great dance. Bhrigu paid his salutations to Shiva and Parvati, and called out to Shiva. Shiva and Parvati were very much enjoying the dance, and they did not notice Bhrigu’s presence. Offended that he received no respect, Bhrigu cursed Shiva that he will never get idol worship in temples. Thus came into existence the custom of worshipping Lord Shiva as a linga.

Bhrigu left for Vaikuntam, the home of Lord Vishnu and Goddess Mahalakshmi. When Bhrigu entered Vaikuntam, Vishnu was resting on his bed of Adishesha (the thousand headed serpent). Goddess Mahalakshmi was massaging his feet. Bhrigu did his salutations to Vishnu and Lakshmi, but he was ignored. That made Brighu furious. He kicked Lord Vishnu on His chest.

At once, Lord Vishnu woke up and hastened to apologize for being asleep when the sage came. Lord Vishnu said “Let me massage your feet and leg, which must be hurting from kicking me.” In so doing the Lord poked and removed the eye in the foot of the sage. You see, in the eye in his foot was the source of his big ego, which was always making him angry, making him think he deserved big respect.

Without his big ego, the sage soon realized his fault. He apologized to Lord Vishnu. Bhrgu revealed the purpose of his visit, and concluded that Lord Vishnu was the supreme of the Trimurthi. Lord Vishnu had done two wonderful things! First, he had not even gotten angry when Sage Brighu kicked him. Second, he had removed the sage’s egoism. Brighu returned to the rishis to inform him that the sacrificial results should be given to Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu was certainly the embodiment of love, not getting angry even when he was abused.

Unlike Lord Vishnu, Mahalakshmi Devi was angered. Lord Vishnu had not punished the sage for kicking him in the chest. Mahalakshmi lives in Vishnu’s heart, so he had also attacked her when kicking Vishnu. That act irked Goddess Lakshmi. Vishnu tried to keep Mahalakshmi happy, but she was still angry. She could not stand to see the Lord and herself insulted that way. Out of anger and anguish, she left Vaikuntam and set off to Karavirapur, now known as Kolhapur, and began penance. After the departure of Mahalakshmi, a forlorn Lord Vishnu could not continue living in Vaikuntham. He left Vaikuntam and came to Earth. He took abode in an ant-hill under a tamarind tree, beside a Pushkarini on the Venkata Hill. He meditated without food or sleep, doing “tapas” (austerity) for the return of Mahalakshmi. He was tormented by lack of sleep and food. Narada, Vishnu’s great devotee, told all this to Parvati, who then told it to Brahma and Shiva.

On Parvati’s request, Brahma and Shiva assumed the form of a cow and calf. They wanted to serve Vishnu with nourishment. Parvati Devi disguised herself as a cow herdess and sold the cow and calf to the king of Chola. The King bought the cow and its calf, and sent them to graze along with his herd of cattle to Venkata Hill. Discovering Lord Vishnu on the ant-hill, the cow provided its milk, and thus fed the Lord. This continued each day. Due to this act of the cow, it was not able to yield milk when they tried to milk it at the Palace. The Chola Queen was furious and chastised the cowherd severely. The cowherd wanted to find out the reason the cow was not able to yield milk and hence followed the cow only to find it emptying its udder over the ant-hill. Furious, the cowherd aimed a blow with his axe on the cow’s head. Just then, Lord Vishnu rose from the ant-hill and took the blow on His head, saving the cow. The cowherd was utterly shocked to see the Lord bleed profusely, and died on the spot.

The cow returned to the Chola king with blood stains all over. The King was disturbed and followed the cow to find out the cause of its terror. On reaching the spot, the King found the cowherd lying dead. Lord Vishnu, who was there, cursed the King saying that he would become an Asura (demon) because of the fault of his servant. The King begged for mercy. The Lord then blessed him saying that he would be reborn as Akasa Raja, and get salvation when Vishnu got married to Lakshmi again.

With the pain of the wound made by the cowherd, Vishnu looked for help. He heard a woman chanting the name of Sri Krishna from a nearby cloister. He met her, and her name was Vakula Malika. She applied some medicine on the wound and comforted Lord Vishnu.

Vakula Devi had an interesting background since her previous births. In the preceding Dwapara Yuga when the Lord incarnated as Sri Krishna, Vakula was his mother, Yashoda. She died in that life before Lord Krishna was married. This incomplete wish of his mother, to see her son married, was fulfilled in the succeeding Kali Yuga, when she incarnated as Vakula Devi.

After comforting the Lord with her care, she enquired about him. Lord Vishnu told her that he had no home in which to live. He said that he doesn't have one particular name. Then Vakula named Him Srinivasa, and Srinivasa started living with Vakula Devi as her son.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is "Kaliyuga"?
2. Why did Lord Vishnu incarnate as Lord Venkateswara?
3. Brighu visited all three gods – Brahma, Mahesh (Shiva) and Vishnu. Describe what happened each time.
4. What did Rishi Brighu have in his foot? Who removed it, and why?
5. Who did Brighu say to dedicate the Yagna to?
6. How many sages were there at the Yagna and how long did it last? Where was it conducted?
7. What is Vaikuntham?
8. Why was Mahalakshmi angry? What did she do?
9. What did Lord Vishnu do? What is penance?
10. Where did Vishnu go to live?
11. Who came to take care of him?
12. What happened when the cowherd came to hurt the cow?

13. What happened to king who employed the cowherd?
14. Who was Vakula Devi?
15. What were the 10,000 sages praying for? Do you think Lord Vishnu coming to Earth was the result of their yagna?
16. Do you think having a big ego is a good or a bad thing? Does it cause problems?
17. Do you think Mahalakshmi really got angry, or was it all just a big “play”?

Sri Venkateswara Stotram

kamalAkucha choochuka kunkumatO — niyatAruNitAtula neelatanO
 kamalAyata IOchana IOkapatE — vijayeebhava vEnkaTa SailapatE (1)
 sachaturmukha shaNmukha panchamukha — pramukhAkhila daivata mouLimaNE
 SaraNAgata vatsala sAranidhE — paripAlayamAm vRushaSailapatE (2)
 ativElatayA tava durvishahai: — anuvElakRutai raparAdha Satai:
 bharitam tvaritam vRushaSailapatE — parayA kRupayA paripAhi harE (3)
 adhivEnkaTaSailamudAra matEr — janatAbhi matAdhi kadAnaratAt
 paradEvatayA gaditAnnigamai: — kamalAdayitA nnaparam kalayE (4)
 kalavENuravA vaSagOpa vadhoo — SarakOTi vRutAt smara kOTi samAt
 prativalla vikAbhimatA tsukhadAt — vasudEvasutAnnaparam kalayE (5)
 abhirAma guNAkara dASarathE — jagadEka dhanurdhara dheeramatE
 raghunAyaka rAma ramESa vibhO — varadO bhava dEva dayA jaladhE (6)
 avaneetanayA kamaneeyakaram — rajaneekara chAru mukhAmburuham
 rajaneechara rAja tamO mihiram — mahaneeyamaham raghurAmamayE (7)
 sumukham suhRudam sulabham sukhadam — swanujam cha sukAya mamOghaSaram
 apahAya raghoodwaha manya maham — na kathanchana kanchana jAtu bhajE (8)
 vinA vEnkaTESam nanAthO nanAtha: — sadA vEnkaTESam smarAmi smarAmi
 harE vEnkaTESa praseeda praseeda — priyam vEnkaTESa prayacCa prayacCa (9)
 aham dooratastvE padAmbhOjayugma — praNAmeccayAAgatya sEvAm karOmi
 sakRutsEvayA nityasEvA phalam tvam — prayacCa prayacCa prabhO vEnkaTESa (10)
 aj~nAninA mayA dOsha naSEshaan vihitan harE: — kshamasvatvam kshamasvatvam
 SesaSailasikhAmaNE (11)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7VhEfEud88>

Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

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