

Lord Venkateswara – Part 2

(Sri Srinivasa Kalyanam)



The area surrounding by the Seshadri hills is called Varaha Kshetra, the abode of Varahaswamy, who was the third incarnation of Vishnu as a boar. Srinivasa, decided to stay in Varaha Kshetra, and requested Sri Varahaswamy to grant Him a site for His stay. His request being readily granted, Srinivasa ordained that a pilgrimage to His shrine would not be complete unless it is preceded by a bath in the Pushkarini and darshan of Sri Varahaswamy, and that puja and naivedyam should be offered to Sri Varaha swami first. Vishnu built a hermitage and lived there, attended by Vakuladevi who looked after him like a mother.

Sometime later, a King named Akasa Raja who belonged to the Lunar race was ruling over Thondamandalam. Akasa Raja had no heirs, and therefore, he wanted to perform a sacrifice. As part of the sacrifice, he was ploughing the fields when his plough turned up a lotus in the ground. On examining the lotus, the King found a female child in it. The king was happy to find a child even before he performed a sacrifice and carried it to his place and gave it to his Queen to tend it. At that time he heard an aerial voice which said "O King, tend it as your child and fortune will befall you". As she was found in a lotus, the king named her Padmavati. Princess Padmavati grew up into a beautiful maiden and was attended by a host of maids.

Padmavathi's origin: In olden times, Lakshmi, in the form of Vedavati, was staying in an ashram in the forests. At that time, Ravana, the lord of Lanka tried to tempt her. In anger, Vedavati cursed him saying that she would bring about his death. To show how true her words were, Vedavati walked into the fire, but Agni, the Fire God rescued her. He took Vedavati to his house and entrusted her to his wife's care. When Ravana was about to carry away Sita from Panchavati, in the absence of Rama and Lakshmana, Agni appeared and offered Vedavati to Ravana as the real Sita who was kept with him by Rama to evade Ravana. Ravana was tricked into thinking that Vedavati was the real Sita.

Ravana took Vedavati to Lanka thinking she was the real Sita, while Agni took Sita to his house and asked his wife Swahadevi to look after her. After the destruction of Ravana, Vedavati entered the fire when rejected by Rama. Then, Agni, offered the real Sita to Rama. Rama then questioned her as to who the other lady by her side was, Sita informed Rama that the lady was Vedavati who endured Ravana's torture for ten months in Lanka for her sake. Sita requested Rama to accept Vedavati also as his spouse. But Rama declined her request saying that he believed in having only one wife during his life time. However, He promised to wed her in her next birth as Padmavati, born as the daughter of Akasa Raja, when Rama himself would take the form of Srinivasa.

One day, Lord Srinivasa, who was hunting, chased a wild elephant in the forests surrounding the hills. In the elephant's pursuit, the Lord was led into a garden, where Princess Padmavati and her maids were picking flowers. The sight of the elephant frightened the Princess and her maids. But the elephant immediately turned around, saluted the Lord and disappeared into the forest. Lord Srinivasa, who was following on horseback, and saw the frightened maidens and the princess. However, he was repulsed with stones thrown at him by the maids. He returned to the hills in haste, leaving his horse behind. Vakuladevi found him lying on his bed, not interested in anything. The Lord informed her that unless he married Princess Padmavati, he would not be happy. The Lord then narrated the story of her (Padmavati's) previous birth and his promise to wed her. After listening to Srinivasa's story, Vakuladevi realized that Srinivasa would not be happy unless he married Padmavati. She offered to go to Akasa Raja and his Queen and arrange for the marriage. On the way she met the maid-servants of Padmavati returning from a Siva Temple. She learnt from them that Padmavati was also pining for Srinivasa. Vakuladevi went along with the maid servants to the Queen.

Meanwhile, Akasa Raja and his queen Dharanidevi were anxious about the health of their daughter, Padmavati. They learnt about Padmavati's love for Srinivasa of Venkata Hill. Akasa Raja consulted Brihaspati about the marriage and was informed that the marriage was in the best interest of both the parties. Kubera lent money to Lord Srinivasa to meet the expenses of the marriage. Lord Srinivasa, along with his consorts and Lord Brahma and Lord Siva started the journey to the residence of Akasa Raja with his vehicle Garuda. At the palace entrance, Lord Srinivasa was received by Akasa Raja with full honors and taken in procession on a mounted elephant to the palace for the marriage. In the presence of all the Devas, Lord Srinivasa wed princess Padmavati, thus releasing Akasa Raja of his curse from his previous birth. Together, Srinivasa and Padmavati lived for all eternity while Goddess Lakshmi, understanding the commitments of Lord Vishnu, chose to live in his heart forever.

GOVINDA, the Most Popular Name of Lord Sri Venkateswara:

Lord Sri Venkateswara is popularly known to His devotees as Govinda. However, there is an interesting story behind this popular name GOVINDA. Lord Srinivasa once went to the hermitage of Sage Agastya and said, "Munindra, I have come to Bhooloka (earth) on a particular mission and going to stay here till the end of the Kali Yuga. I Am very fond of Cow milk and need one for my daily needs. I know you have a large Gosaala with many Cows. Can you offer me one Cow for my needs? Sage Agastya smiled and said "Swamy! I know very well that you are Lord Sri Vishnu in the human form of Srinivasa. I am so happy that the creator and the ruler of this universe came to my hermitage and seeking a favor from me. But I also know your Maya, and know that you have come all the way to test my devotion."

“So Swamy! Please allow me to follow the rules. The holy cow should only be gifted to a man who comes and seeks it along with his wife. I shall certainly be happy to gift a cow to you but will only be able to do so when you come to my hermitage along with my mother goddess Lakshmi and ask for it. Until then you will have to forgive me Swamy.”

Lord Srinivasa smiled and said “Munindra, I shall certainly do what you wanted me to do” and returned to his place. Lord Srinivasa after marrying goddess Padmavathi came to sage Agastya’s hermitage to seek the holy cow. But the sage was not there in the hermitage. His disciples did not know who Lord Srinivasa was, and asked Him about himself.

The lord replied, “My name is Srinivasa and she’s my wife Padmavati. I asked your Acharya to offer me a cow for my daily needs. But he wanted me to come along with my wife and take it. So I have come now with my wife. Will you please inform your Acharya that I have come?”

“Our acharya is not here in the ashram (hermitage) right now, so please come again later to collect your cow” said the humble disciples of Sage Agastya. Lord Srinivasa smiled and said, “I agree, but I am the supreme ruler of this entire place so you can trust me and offer me one cow. I cannot come again.” “May be you are the ruler of this place or may be the entire universe, but our divine Acharya is supreme to us and we shall not do anything that displeases him and also without his knowledge and permission.” replied the stubborn disciples.

Smiling gently, the holy Lord said, “I value your respect towards your Acharya. Please convey him when he returns that Srinivasa had come from Gnanadri hills along with his wife to seek the cow from him.” Saying so Lord Srinivasa turned back and started walking towards the seven hills of Tirumala.

A few minutes later, Sage Agastya returned to the hermitage and was extremely disappointed when he heard from his disciples about the arrival of Lord Srinivasa with Goddess Padmavati during his absence. Thinking how unfortunate he really was for not being there when Sriman Narayana Himself came with the divine mother Lakshmi, the holy sage immediately rushed into the Gosala (Cow barn); took a Govu (meaning Cow) and started running in the direction of Lord Srinivasa and Goddess Padmavati. After running a few paces He found at a long distance, Lord Srinivasa going along with his divine consort Padmavathi. Running behind them the holy sage started shouting loudly

“Swamy! Govu Inda (Govu means cow and Inda means take) Swamy! Govu Inda, Swamy! Govu Inda, Swamy! Govu Inda”

But the Lord didn't turn back. Increasing the speed of his running, the Sage Agastya started shouting further more loudly.... “Swamy! Govu Inda, Swamy! Govu Inda, Swamy! Govu Inda, Swamy! Govu Inda”

The Lord still didn't turn back. This time the holy sage not only increased the speed of his running but also the speed of his shouting..

“Swamy! Govu Inda (Govu means cow and Inda means take) Swamy! Govu Inda, Swamy! Govu Inda, Swamy! Govu Inda”

The Lord still didn't look back. Hurriedly increasing the speed of his shouting, the holy sage from here on started involuntarily saying the following sacred words. The noble sage thought he was saying 'Swamy Govu Inda' but see what it turned out to be...

Swamy! Govinda.. Swamy! Govindaa.. Swamy! Govindaa.. Swamy! Govinda.. Swamy! Govindaa.. Swamy! Govindaa.. Swamy! Govinda..Swamy! Govindaa.. Swamy! Govinda.. Govindaa.. Govinda.. Govindaaa..”

Unknowingly he climbed up all the seven hills calling out 108 times. Finally Lord Sri Venkateswara and Goddess Padmavathi turned back and accepted the holy cow from him. The lord said ... “Munindra, knowingly or unknowingly you have recited my most favorite name Govinda 108 times. I am going to reside in Eka Murthy idol form on this sacred GNANADRI hills until the end of the Kali Yuga. As long as I am residing here in Bhooloka in this idol form, I shall be called by this name by all my devotees.”

A Temple would be constructed here for me, on these sacred seven hills, and devotees would keep coming in large numbers to see me every day. The devotees either while climbing these hills or while they are in front of me in the Temple would be calling me by this name ... GOVINDA.

“Please remember Munindra, every time I'm called by this name you are remembered too. If any devotee for whatever reason is unable to come to my Temple I shall still grant him whatever he rightfully deserves if he recites just this name GOVINDA as many times as he's comfortable chanting ..”

“I shall also grant salvation (moksha) to all those devotees who recite this sacred name at least 108 times while climbing the seven hills”

QUESTIONS:

- What is the real identity of Lord Venkateswara?
- What is the real identity of Padmavati – who was she in a previous birth?
- Who found her and where?
- What happened with Agni and Sita?
- What is the most sacred name of Lord Venkateswara?
- How did Agastya start chanting Govinda?
- What did he mean?

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
SeshaSailasikhAmaNE (11)

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

Jumble Words – All words are from this lesson

D B A E O

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M E P T T

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S C R E U

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E T R C I E

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U B S B T R N O

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N S E O T

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D V E E A

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C G E A R

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N T G A R

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