

# THE SPIRITUAL PATH FROM SAMSARA TO MOKSHA

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## INTRODUCTION

There is an inherent curiosity to know about the world – how it is created, and the true nature of reality. There is also constant struggle to achieve a life as comfortable as possible, free from sorrows, miseries and difficulties. This suffering is endless cycle of births, deaths and rebirths, with every action or Karma leading to consequences, and to more Karma, and this ocean of misery is called Samsara. Surprisingly, answer to knowing reality as well as escaping Karma is the same – solution is called Moksha or Liberation. Moksha is losing one's sense of individuality or ego, as well as sense of doership, and merging or attaining oneness with the Supreme Absolute, called Parabrahman, who is the origin of the universe, thus called Mother or Ambika - Universe seen as play or Leela of Parabrahman, thus called playful or “Lalitha”.

Parabrahman, out of playfulness, manifests in various degrees of illusion and delusion, called Maaya, creating a sense of descent from Moksha to Samsara. The person striving to attain Moksha does an upward journey, reversing this Maaya induced descent, and finally transcends Maaya. This can be visualized in stages, understanding the mindset and circumstances in each stage - one views the Atman manifesting in a particular aspect suitable to that stage, and these also deified as different deities. However in reality, these are not multiple Gods, but merely manifestations of the single Atman, suitable for different stages.

The tradition of viewing the Atman as Ambika is termed Sri Vidya. The playful Mother is also called Maha Tripurasundari, translating to the most beautiful of the three worlds - an allusion to the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep, and the Mother as fundamental bliss transcends these. An essential component of Sri Vidya, Sri Yantra is a cosmic geometric pattern of interlocking triangles that is a map of the entire universe, its evolution and the spiritual path. This is best understood as the nine Avaranas, a series of 9 enclosures, each inner enclosure more subtle than the outer ones.

In Yoga tradition, Chakras are wheels of energy. In the fully manifest state, these Chakras represent various points in the body, forming the pathway through which the energy of Consciousness as, represented as a serpent Kundalini, journeys from the base or root Chakra, called Mooladhara with its destination being the Seventh or crown Chakra, Sahasraara, it ends the apparent delusions and one achieves Moksha.

The first and highest stage is the singularity, the Parabrahman itself, or the Atman. It is pure truth, eternal called 'Sat' and unbounded by time, space and finiteness. It is fundamental consciousness and awareness called 'Chith' undisturbed by thoughts and distractions (such as ego, and sensations of the mind, body, world and feelings, thoughts, memories, senses, people, things etc, which are delusions induced by Maaya).

In the absence of all unrealities of Maaya, the Atman is forever in a state of pure unalloyed bliss called 'Aanandam', free from any misery or sorrow. This state is like what one experiences in deep, dreamless sleep called Sushupti, - no awareness of one's mind, body, Ahankaara and its

paraphernalia, and thus one is free from misery. While one does not have awareness of what state one is in, upon waking up, one always describes this state as blissful, sound sleep.

How can one be aware of this experience while experiencing it? With Atma Jnaana or supreme wisdom, one can discard the influence of Maaya and its delusions by understanding them to be unreal, and not getting deluded by or associating with Maaya. One can, in full awareness, attain that pure bliss, where one always abides in and identifies oneself with the Atman, free from the clutches of Maaya and its miseries.

The Atman transcends and controls Maaya, and it is known as the Master or Shaasta, as per Taittiriya Aranyaka 3.11.2 of the Yajur Veda. The Self manifests as various aspects in various stages of spiritual progress. In each stage it guides one towards Aanandam, one step at a time. Thus, the Self, who is Shaasta is also known as the Guru or preceptor, and is thus completely identical to and non different from Sat Chith Aanandam Parabrahman itself.

To achieve Aanandam one needs not just a superficial feeling but a deep, firm, unconditional, uncompromising and unshakeable conviction, called Nishtha. Sensations of mind, body, world etc are indeed the delusions of Maaya, are unreal, and not any more valid or useful than mind, body or world that one sees in dream. The Atman, manifest as bliss, is accessible naturally in deep sleep, as well as through Jnaana in wakeful states. The body, mind, world and other such entities, along with Ahankaara do not manifest in deep sleep. Something that does not have a continuous existence cannot be considered real.

To cultivate abidance in the Self, one might follow a simple procedure. At the onset of each and every thought one thinks, or each person or thing one encounters, and each feeling one experiences, one must constantly ask the question “was this encountered during deep sleep?”. If the answer is no, it is not a continuous existence and thus is not real. Consequently, the thought, feeling or sensation encountered is only as valid as something that occurs in a dream. The unreal entity is a creation of the mind called Chitta Vritti, and is not separate from it. Thus one must ignore the unreal, and instead visualize with full devotion within oneself the blissful smile of the Lord, recognizing that this bliss alone remains in deep sleep, and is the one and only reality. Thus, one experiences that blissful state even while awake in the midst of all the Maaya. This is the state of Jaagrata Sushupti or blissfully asleep while awake.

Prerequisite to Nishtha is a first hand, and not merely textual experience of the blissful state while fully awake and aware – this is trance or Samaadhi. Essential to achieving Samaadhi though, is the losing of all sense of doership and feelings of 'I' and 'mine', since these feelings arise on identifying the self with the mind and body, which are neither permanent nor real. Samadhi is only possible when one has developed mental strength such that one can gather information about the nature of Reality from various sources such as Vedas and Upanishads, the process called Shravana, and then attempt contemplation of reality, termed Manana and Selfenquiry or Vichaara with focus, determination and a onepointed mind, free from other distractions and thoughts.

Spiritual Progress is possible only when one has freed oneself from all attachments and desires to

materialistic, worldly and unreal things. Such a detachment from worldly entities is termed renunciation or Vairagya, and forms an essential basis for achieving Moksha. Thus, while a benign form, called Dakshinachara of different deities appears in various stages of spiritual path, wrathful manifestations, called Vamachara appear at entrance to the spiritual path, as necessary component to remove a person's harmful afflictions, and drive him towards Vairagya. Also, two essential components to achieving Moksha is Jnana or Wisdom and Bhakthi or Devotion. Both are equally essential and important, and are inseparable from each other, in the spiritual path, and represent the fundamental thinking-feeling duality.

The singularity assumes a polarization – the fundamental duality underlying the world, called Purusha and Prakrithi or the fundamental masculine and feminine principles. These are also known sometimes as Shiva and Shakthi the Tattvas, not to be confused with Shiva and Shakthi the deities. It is this duality that manifests in various orientations, and gives rise to further evolution.

## **THIRUVARUR**

This is as per Puranas, the only place untouched by the evils of Kali Yuga, or Kali Raahitya Nagara, enshrining all deities of the spiritual path. At 35 acres in size, with the holy tank Kamalaalayam of another 35 acres; 300 shrines, built by Vishwakarma, the Skanda Puraana dedicates the entire sixth of seven cantos, titled Naagara Khaandam, to describing the glory of Thiruvarur.

The city is the Capital of Thiruvarur District, in NH67 running through Coimbatore till Nagapattinam. Thyagaraja temple is 2km from bus stand and railway station with Six daily rituals everyday from 5:30AM to 10:00PM, and #88 among the 275 eulogized temples (Paadal Petra Sthalas) of the Tamil saints Naayanmaars.

It is only fully planned Sri Vidya Kshetra, combining both Vamachara and Dakshinachara. Lord Shaasta is seen enshrined in the position of Guru. Tall, colourful Gopurams, and the Chariot or Aazhi Ther is world famous at a height of 100 metres and 300 tonnes in weight.

## **SRINIVAASA**

Spiritual path pertains to 'Sri Vidya' in 'Sri Nagaram' Thiruvarur, and 'Sri Yantra', so too one finds same stages in the honored deity – 'Srinivaasa', praised as Parabrahman itself. Enshrined in Thirumala or Tirupathi as Lord Venkatesha, whose very name means the Lord (Eesha) who destroys (Kata) sins (Ven) Srinivaasa, also called Govinda or 'the one attained by the Vedas' is the Lord of the Kali Yuga – Kali Yuga Varadha, and thus Thirumala is called Kali Yuga Vaikuntham; so too Thiruvarur, as the only place unaffected by Kali offers salvation in the present Yuga.

The Lord is non different from the Atman as Lalitha Maha Tripurasundari, and this one sees in the temple of Thirukodikaval, where Goddess Tripurasundari gives Darshan as Venkatesha to certain Alwars coming from Tirupathi, enshrined as “Kaatchi Koduttha Ambaal”. In the Mantra Yuga Bheda, “Dvaapare Shiva Bhedam Cha Trethaayaam Vaamanam Harim Atha Kaliyuge Shasthaa Yaa Baaleti Nigadyate” - one finds that for the present Kali Yuga, the most potent among

Mantras is the Baalaa Mantra, Baalaa being the Mother Lalitha Ambika manifest as a playful child. So too, the very name of Venkatesha is considered very powerful in this Kali Yuga – 'Govinda Naama Smaranam Sarva Paapa Haranam'.

People visiting Thirumala, daily around 60,000 peaking to 1,00,000 during festivals prove the Kali Yuga Kshetra, surpassing, Vaishno Devi, Shirdi and Kashi, as also Vatican City, Mecca, Jerusalem and Bodh Gaya. Shila Thoranam ancient Pre Cambrian geology and the Eparchean Unconformity atleast 2.5 million years old, seen elsewhere only in the Canadian Northern Shield; also unique species of flora and fauna not found anywhere else. Temperature of 110 fahrenheit, sweating despite ablutions early at 4:30AM.

Inside sanctum, devotee forgets everything momentarily, including prayers due to immense power of Lord concentrated; aspects of Shiva seen such as the Jata Mudi or matted hair; Bilva Archana during Dhanur Maasa, Kshetrapaala Pooja performed as per Shaiva Agama. Aadi Shankara established a crystal Lingam, addressing it as Venkateshwara and Chandramauleeshwara; stayed for a few days and gave lectures on non difference between Shiva and Vishnu and how both are to be seen as the exact same deity, a fact already established in Rudra Hridaya and Skanda Upanishads.

Vinaayaka Chaturthi is celebrated offering Modakas; Lord also seen resembling Skanda whose favorite abodes are hills; left hand in Katya Vilambita seen among Murugan statues of Swamimalai, Tiruchendur, Pazhani; Muthuswami Dikshitar's Krithi Subrahmanyena Rakshitoham emphasizes this similarity as “Venkateshwara Naamarupena Vichitra Vishakha Mahotsavena”.

Also, Vimaanam has in corners the Simha Lalaatam motif, feature of Shakthi temples; Brahmotsavam coincides with Navaraatri celebrated honoring Shakthi; Fridays see Abishekams with turmeric; gestures as Varada as well as the Katya Vilambita seen in Devi temples such as Cherpu and Malayalapuzha in Kerala, as well as Kanyakumari; Aadi Shankara installed Meru in Thirumala as well. The temple administrative unit TTD reports that there is a Sri Yantra below the Hundi of the temple, a reason for its prosperity and also not moving its position even in spite of changing temple queue arrangements many times.

The Lord sports Srivatsa, a mark on right chest, symbolizing Lakshmi residing in the Lord; Many miracles, including opening the sanctum doors for Annamacharya and Thyaagaraaja, serving as a tea boy in Thakkolam to alleviate the sufferings of a certain British officer, ringing the temple bells at night, causing chaos and commotion when the priests decided to reduce the width of Lord's Thirunaamam, and many more performed over many years.

As per Puranas, Vishnu approaches Earth performing penance to get back an enraged Lakshmi, staying in the residence of Yashoda incarnate Vakulamaatha and marrying Padmavathi before transforming into an idol in Thirumala gracing till the end of Kali Yuga, when, the Lord's marriage expense debt to Kubera is paid fully. A stage of controversies surrounding the worship of the Lord, in spite of Shankara's Shaiva Vaishnava unity teachings; to resolve this Ramanuja Acharya placed weapons of Lord Shiva and Vishnu near the Lord overnight and closed the sanctum doors and let the Lord Himself choose His weapons, which resulted in the Shankha and Chakra retained

in the Lord's hands the next morning.

In “Entha Mathramuna Evari Talachina”, Annamacarya states that Venkatesha is Supreme Para Tattva worshipped in various ways – as Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti, Bhairava, and also for mere monetary as well as lofty spiritual purposes, by various people, and graces them all. On one hand, the Lord Himself seems particular that He be worshipped formally as a temple idol in Vaishnava custom, on the other hand the Lord as Parabrahman itself has features of every deity imaginable and it makes absolutely no difference in what form or aspect a devotee worships the Lord, inside or outside the temple, as long there is pure Bhakthi and surrender to the Lord. It is this fact that one sees proved, as the Lord being Lalitha Maha Tripura Sundari Herself, in Thirukodikkaval. Thus, as embodiment of Sri Vidya, one finds all deities of the spiritual path in the form of Venkatesha.

The image central to this discussion embodies this concept and the stages or deities starting clockwise from bottom right are listed briefly here, while also discussing given that each Akshara of Sanskrit alphabet has its own meaning, how the Aksharas making up the name of these deities reveal their role and significance in the spiritual path:

Firstly, on either side of lord Venkatesha's feet one sees Ganesha and Guru prayed for removing obstacles and guidance before starting spiritual path. Kshetra of Thiruvarur temple along with Teertha Kamalalayam seen as base or peetham of Venkatesha.

#### **VAMACHARA DEITIES:**

The start of spiritual path is seen as destruction of various bad qualities and afflictions, seen as the Vamachara deities.

Nagaraja represents rise of kundalini seen in root chakra, as aspect of Indrani Matraka destroying envy. Na is fertility, where root Chakra or Mooladhara represents earth. Aa is about fascination and control of life force, viewed as a dormant coiled serpent Kundalini, arousing it. Ga is clarity and regulation of life force, rising it towards spiritual progress. In Thiruvarur: Kamalamba Praharam.

Katyayani or Kathayee correcting bad actions seen in limbs, as Vamachara aspect of Durga and aspect of Maheshwari matraka destroying wrath. Ka is concentration of resources, while Aa is control over these resources. Ta and Ya represents inertness and simplicity respectively, and Aa is control over these. Finally, reversing sophistication and achieving simplicity Ya, one is able to use resources of earth seen as fertility Na in adaptable way seen as I, to achieve correctness of actions. Goddess is seen sometimes as 18 armed representing various weapons as resources utilized. But She is also seen as holding infant Skanda, the warrior God who destroys all afflictions. In Thiruvarur: Kathayee temple in Vasan Nagar, also standing next to Neelotpalamba holding Skanda.

Jyeshtha in heart seen correcting bad thoughts and cultivating selflessness, as Vamachara Lakshmi and Vaishnavi Matraka destroying delusion. Ja is seen as victory in manipulating resources, here referring to conditioning mindset towards correctness, resulting in Ya or aspect of sophistication, seen through variety E. Shha represents value of scriptures as well as elderly aspect Shhanda giving birth to others as well as selfless quality supportive of younger sibling progress. Finally Tha tends towards sophistication or advanced mental abilities, while Aa is seen as control of such

sophistication. In Thiruvarur: Pidari Temple, also within Anandeshwara shrine.

Bagalamukhi known as Pechi or Vakdevi in throat correcting bad speech and communication, as Vamachara Saraswathi and Brahmi Matraka destroying lust. Ba is formulation of what is correct etc, where Ga is regulation of formulations giving clarity, and thus right communication. Lla is liberation from problems and debts, possibly futuristic arising due to wrong speech. Ma is enlightenment while U is effort seen towards it. Kha is distinction of various elements, while I is adaptability and flexibility in using these elements, these features forming the 'face' or value of a person in the world and his spiritual progress. In Thiruvarur: Seen in Angalamman temple, but also as Mahishamardhini in Thyagaraja Praharam, where Goddess does not actually kill Mahishasura but paralyzes the demon preventing his speech and actions.

Ucchishta Ganapathi in right hand giving obstacles to reinforce learning seen along with Aarya Thara or Neela Saraswathi in left hand as guiding light to choose correctly, both are Vamachara Ganesha and Skanda respectively as aspects of Varahi and Kaumari Matrukas destroying pride and greed. Ucchishta is derived from Utkrishta meaning drawn inward. Ucchishta means leftovers, since as Jnana, all unreal Maya is burn and whatever is leftover is pure bliss. U is effort towards spiritual progress, Ca is intensity of such effort, whereas Cha is cleansing of one's sins in the process. I is adaptability and agility as a virtue during the effort, Shha is supportive role of scriptures while Ta is moving towards desophistication or spiritual elevation. Aa is control and fascination of intellectual facilities, Ra is energy used for Ya, reversal of sophistication. Ta is inertness referring to non-involvement in Maya induced world, attaining control seen as Aa and Ra again with Aa is seen as mastery of energy and resources. Together, Ucchishta and Thaaraa represent fundamental Purusha and Prakriti seen as Kameshwara-Kameshwari in manifest or Moola Viraat form, and thus represent the concept of Kaamakalaa. In Thiruvarur: Entrance to Kamalamba temple.

Kalki in sword or Karuppasamy rewards good and punishes bad upholding righteousness, seen as Vamachara Vishnu and aspect of Chandi or Mahalakshmi destroying sins. Ka is concentration of energy and resources in the realm of materialistic world or La, with such concentration or Ka leading to agility in spiritual path, seen as I. In Thiruvarur: Seen as Karuppaswami in Angalamman temple, but also in West and East Gopuram.

Bhadrakali or Angala Amman seen in procreative organ who exposes unpleasant transient aspect of the world of maaya, along with Veerabhadra giving courage to go beyond temptations and false Appearances, both seen as dormant Purusha and expressive Prakriti of Vamachara Shakti and aspect of Chamunda who destroys evil and black magic. Bha is forceful destruction of the apparent inequality which leads to illusion or Maaya, while Da is dexterity of operating Energy Ra for the same. Ka is concentration of energy leading to its control Aa, leading to agility I in liberation from bondages Lla, making Kaali. Va is control of desires and temptations leading to perfection Ee in utilizing energy Ra, thus effectively building confidence and courage Veera. In Thiruvarur: Bhadrakali is seen as main deity in Angala Amman temple and also in north bank of Kamalalayam, but also in Gopuram with dancing Shiva. Veerabhadra seen in Pidari temple, and as Kalyana Veerabhadra temple near East Gopuram, but also in wall of Vishwakarmeshwara shrine.

Bhairava in Gandabherunda ornament causing fear and panic to those indulged in worldly affairs,

with Bhairavi Chandika also known as Pidari destroying all distortions and exposing reality. These are Purusha and Prakriti of the Vamachara Shiva, combining powers of all Vamachara deities seen earlier, and controlling time itself. Bha is force in removing apparent inequalities generating Maaya, whereas Ai is relief and clarity as result of removing the inequalities. Ra is energy used in Va, control and upholding righteousness by punishing wrong. This represents Bhairava, while Bhairavi with I represents agility in actually performing the destroying and cleansing actions. In Thiruvarur: Bhairava-Bhairavi seen in Pidari temple near north Gopuram, but Bhairava also as Kala Bhairava in Thyagaraja Praharam, while Bhairavi Utsavar seen in Thyagaraja Praharam and also in Alagu Gopuram at entrance to Thyagaraja shrine.

Aanjaneya who gives strength and support to progress in spiritual path, combining powers of all deities, leading a person towards spiritual progress protecting from harmful elements in the way. Aa represents control and fascination, while Am denotes spiritual effort, and Ja denotes result of control as manipulation of resources. Na is fertility, along with E as variety representing condition of earthly world as Samsara, and Ya is reversal of sophistication as simplicity leading to loss of Ahankara, marking spiritual accomplishment. In Thiruvarur: Seen in wall of Western Gopuram.

#### **ASHTA DIKPALAS:**

Here various deities are seen controlling various aspects of nature, and ruling the directions. These are aspects of the modes of universal radiation Aum, and are seen as stage of understanding the universe through science.

Indra as embodiment of rain, fertility and prosperity ruling over east as Iccha aspect, I is agility and adaptability used as spiritual effort Am, while result of this is dexterity Da in utilizing energy Ra. In Thiruvarur: Southern Entrance to Thyagaraja sanctum.

Agni rules southeast and is fire and its transformative power as Prakriti aspect, representing the brahma yajna or sacrifice of senses and ego towards spiritual progress. A is creativity and also ruling over death as Amruta, representing spiritual progress, Ga is clarity resulting therein, while Na is earth fertility, and I is adaptability in use of earthly resources towards spiritual progress. In Thiruvarur: Vimana of Thyagaraja sanctum.

Yama giving death, ruling over south and aspect of Bindu, and is auspicious conclusion as well as jnana or wisdom. Ya is simplicity as reversal of sophistication, usually seen as physical death, or loss of individuality or Ahankara. Ma is enlightenment leading to merging with Parabrahman in Samadhi. Interestingly, Aksharas in Yama is reversal or Maayaa or illusion. In Thiruvarur: As Yama Chandikeshwara in Thyagaraja sanctum.

Nirruithi causing turbulence and variety in nature, ruling over southwest and aspect of Kundalini. Ru is order as seen as stages of spiritual path. Ta is inertness signifying order as a property. Ni negates the order, leading to disorder, where Na is fertility and earth and I is agility in utilizing earthly resources to bring about negation. In Thiruvarur: South face of inner wall in east Gopuram.

Varuna as waters and maintaining dharma, rules over west as Kriya aspect. Va is controlling and establishing righteousness, while Ra is energy and U is spiritual effort in utilizing resources towards

actions and Dharma. Na represents supportive role of Kriya in spiritual progress. In Thiruvarur: inner wall of east gopuram.

Vayu representing wind and life force prana rising towards sahasrara, rules over northwest and is aspect of rising Kundalini. Va is controlling aspect along with Aa signifies control of life force or Prana, while U refers to rising it up as spiritual progress, and Ya is reversal of sophistication and Ahankara as a result. In Thiruvarur: north face of inner wall in east gopuram.

Kubera representing expansion of worth and wisdom ruling over North and Jnana aspect. Ka is concentration and consolidation leading to wealth and knowledge, U is spiritual effort, Ba is formulations and E is variety both as factors indicating worth and value, along with Ra as energy. In Thiruvarur: west gopuram wall.

Eeshana as perfection through smartness, ruling over Northeast, and aspect of Naada. Ee is perfection, while Sha is auspiciousness, with Aa as control and mastery. Na is fertility or earth aspect, which is a by-result. In Thiruvarur: As Chandrashekhara in Thyagaraja praharam.

These eight deities are seen as eight directions in Lord Venkatesha's Peetham and in centre are rising and setting sun seen as the fast healing Gods called Ashvini devas, Also seen as Jwarahara representing destroying ailments of three kinds, His three legs seen as Vaata, Pitta, Kapha, the three kinds of Doshas or bodily humors creating illness through imbalances. Ja is manipulation of resources, here the bodily humors, using it as a tool to punish wrong, seen as Va. Ra is use of energy in the process, giving Jvara. Ha is origin and beginning, while Ra is energy, signifying use of energy to revert to original state, destroying the Jvara. In Thiruvarur: In East end of Rajanarayana Mantapam.

As Purusha and Prakriti aspects of Jwarahara, one sees Vaidyanatha representing cure and Annapurna as nourishment, both seen in kaustubha gem. Va is control of bodily humors, while Ai is clarity from destroying the variety of ailments. Da is dexterity in doing so, and Ya is sophistication. A is creativity and prosperity, while Na is fertility and earth as source of food. Pa is materialization with Oo as vastness and Ra as energy playing supportive role Na, all leading to completion. In Thiruvarur: Vaidyanatha is in southwest end of Praharam, while Annapurna is in Thyagaraja Praharam Southwest end.

## **NAVAGRAHAS**

The universal wavefunction of physics refers to the universal radiation as Pranava or Aum spread throughout the universe. By virtue of its function, these can be seen in nine different modes, called Navagrahas, mapped locally to nine celestial bodies of solar system. These Grahas are also mapped to various constellations or Raashis, as well as controlled by Nakshatras or asterisms. In Thiruvarur: The Navagrahas are seen in straight line facing south in Thyagaraja Praharam.

First is serpent head Kethu in right knee as aspect of Kundalini in rise of prana towards spiritual progress. Ka is concentration of resources and variety E, towards achieving inertness Tha as spiritual effort U.



Raahu as serpent body in left knee is coiling aspect of Kundalini causes confusion leading to analysis and clarity. Ra is energy and Aa is its control, seen as principal effort towards attaining the state of origin Ha through spiritual intensity and effort U.

Shani in Sudarshana Chakra of right upper arm, as aspect of Kriya expiating karma through rewards and punishments. Sha is auspiciousness through successful Karma, and Na is fertility, which is seen through adaptability I.

Shukra in Shankha as Iccha aspect for wealth and harmony. Sha is auspiciousness and prosperity, while U is spiritual effort, leading to consolidation Ka and increase of energy Ra.

Brihaspati in crown as Jnana aspect, as experiential learning and progeny. Ba is formulations and Ru is order, while Ha is origin state of creation, thus Brah leading to expansion of world-view in Jnana aspect or expansion in creative state. Sa is Siddhi or accomplishment in such expansion. Pa is materialization and Ta is inertness, together as Pathi or Lord or Master creating materialization yet inert and above it.

Budha in right hand as knowledge and smartness, as Naada aspect. Ba is formulation and reversal of such rules and regulations as transcendence, while U is spiritual effort. Dha is purity or state of transcending various formulations, leading to smartness.

Angaraka is aspect of Bindu in left hand as auspiciousness and health. Am represents spiritual effort, while Ga is clarity achieved in doing so. Aa is control, of Ra or energy, and Ka is concentration and consolidation, giving strength and skill for acquiring Jnana.

Chandra in left eye is Prakriti aspect ruling mind and imaginations. Cha is intensity and effort, while Am is such effort oriented spiritually. Da is dexterity and Ra is energy, both refer to fire, and Chandra is called Soma, who is the result of the Brahma Yajna offered, sacrificing one's senses and ego, the Yajna mediated by fire or Agni. Sa is Siddhi or accomplishment, while O is Omkara or Jnana, and Ma is enlightenment, these are the results of the Brahma Yajna.

Surya in right eye representing physique and administration is aspect of Purusha, seen as Paramapurusha or Suryanarayana. Sa is accomplishment, whereas Oo is greatness and vastness. Ra is energy, yielding life, seen as Ya or sophistication and honor.

As the universal radiation Pranava manifesting in abovesaid modes, one sees Aditya as form of Lord Venkatesha seen as His feet, and represents entire universe as universal radiation, forming its contents. Aa represents control of universe, and fascination of all worlds, while Da is dexterity and I is adaptability and agility in doing so. Ta is inertness, signifying He is the Master, while Ya is sophistication or life generated by Pranava. In Thiruvavur: Aaditya is seen as Pushpa Aaditya in western wall of Thyagaraja Praharam.

Brahma as platform under feet of Venkatesha, and is four dimensional space time as container of universe, as popular relativity saying “spacetime tells matter how to move and matter tells spacetime how to curve”. Ba is formulation or various rules governing charges, particles and

interactions, while Ra represents universal radiation and energy, Ha is origin state of creation, and Ma is enlightenment, referring to understanding of science behind universe mechanism as step towards acquiring enlightenment. In Thiruvarur: Seen in Vishwakarmeshwara Shrine.

### **PANCHA BHOOTHAS:**

All constituents of the universe seen to be made of five fundamental elements of matter, created by three aspects of Pranava and seen as various density levels of the universal radiation.

Vishwakarma in left finger tips represents five elements in created functional aspect. Va is controlling aspect in world, with I as agility. Sha is auspiciousness ensuring through all actions, while Va is bestowing boons as controller of world. This is universe or Vishwa. Ka is consolidation of energy Ra, with actions such performed as step towards Karma Mochaka leading to enlightenment or Ma. Thus operating or Karma in Vishwa is Vishwakarma. In Thiruvarur: In Vishwakarmeshwara shrine, seen as five faced ten armed Lord.

Prithvi in left little finger are solids with fixed volume and space. Pa is materialization and Ru is order, seen as end of materialization. Tha is spreading aspect while Va is controlling aspect in manifest world, and I is agility. In Thiruvarur: Anthill Lingam seen as Prithvi as Valmeekantha Lingam in Moolavar position at centre of entire temple.

Jala in left ring finger as liquids, with fixed volume and varying space. Ja is manipulation of resources capable using water, while La is its materialistic manifestation. In Thiruvarur: As Varuneshwara in Southern Praharam.

Theja as left middle finger as plasma, gases with electrically charged atoms or ions creating various electric phenomena as well as flames and fire. Tha is inertness, while E is variety of charges, and Ja is manipulation of vaarious resources that can be done using fire, such as cooking food. In Thiruvarur: As Arunachaleshwara in Southern Praharam.

Prana as left index finger as gases with variable space and volume. Pa is materialization, while Ra is energy, signifying most active and least dense state of matter, and Aa as control, while Na as supportive role as life force in achieving spiritual progress. In Thiruvarur: Praneshwara in Northern Praharam.

Akasha in left thumb is ether or mysterious dark matter, which is least dense of five states, is inert to all kinds of charges except interacting with gravity, and forms support framework for other states of matter. Aa is control while Ka is consolidation or leas sophisticated state, and Sha is auspiciousness, devoid of properties. In Thiruvarur: As Nataraja in Achaleshwara Shrine.

Vyoma in right palm as Goddess Bhuvaneshwari represents dark energy, where potential energy greated than kinetic energy is the inflating energy making 70% of the universe, as its expanding and accelerating nature. Va is controlling aspect of universe, whereas Ya is giving rise to sophistication, represented by five states of matter. O is Jnana or Veda from where Vyoma is derived, while Ma is enlightenment, as a result of understanding Vyoma's role. In Thiruvarur: As Bhramarambika in Achaleshwara shrine.

Veda in right palm base as horse faced Lord Hayagriva represents information as charge space and various signals of Pranava, which lead to localized inhomogeneities and matter creation. Va is controlling nature while E is variety which arises out of inhomogeneities. Da is dexterity in manipulating the charges. In Thiruvarur: Aadi Hayagreeva with Vishnu's head resting on bow, seen in North Gopuram.

Gayatri in right wrist represents five elements being created from three aspects of pranava Aum. Ga is clarity in knowing nature of the five elements while Ya is sophistication due to their creation. Ta is inertness shows mastery while Ra is energy as kinetic, potential and information in creating the elements. Finally Ee is perfection. In Thiruvarur: Seen in Vishwakarmeshwara shrine as five faced Goddess.

### **PRANAVA DEITIES:**

Durga in limbs, seen as Lord Venkatesha's legs as Kriya or kinetic energy creating matter through its balance with potential energy; and blessing correct action with success, strength and auspiciousness. Da is dexterity while U is effort as action. Ra is energy, and Ga is clarity obtained through correct action. In Thiruvarur: Raja Durga seen near south Gopuram, also as Raudra Durga seen in South Praharam.

Lakshmi in heart as iccha or potential energy creates inflation or vyoma due to expansive nature, represented by desire or will, and blesses correct thought with wealth and fortune. La is materialization of Vyoma leading to creation of matter, while Ksha is tolerance and forbearance as aspects of desire and love. Ma is enlightenment or creation illusion through expansive nature, and Ee is perfection. In Thiruvarur: Kamala Mahalakshmi seen behind Valmeekanatha shrine in Thyagaraja Praharam.

Saraswathi in throat as Jnana creates charges and information space as Veda. One of which as spin or mass gives rise to kinetic energy; and also blesses correct speech with wisdom, artistic talent and skill. Sa is Siddhi or accomplishment, in utilizing energy Ra, and such Siddhi leading to various Va as boons in manifest world, and finally inertness Ta seen as mastery and perfection Ee. In Thiruvarur: Seen as Jnana Saraswathi in Kamalamba praharam.

Ganesha in right hand facing outward is primordial vibration or Naada as pranava or Aum; and transcends all qualifications and gunas as preference and removes obstacles, giving wisdom and full clarity of the world. Ga is clarity while Na is supportive role played in spiritual progress, thus Ganas are various modes or qualifications from which one obtains clarity. Ee is perfection and Sha is auspiciousness or removal of any deficiency when one transcends all modes and qualifications. In Thiruvarur: Over 40 shrines of Ganesha, most important and oldest as dancing Mooladhara Vinayaka seen in Anandeshwara shrine, Vallabha Ganapathi in entrance to Thyagaraja shrine and five faced Heramba Ganapathi in Thyagaraja Praharam.

Skanda in left hand looking inward is primordial seed or bindu and as secret teacher Guruguha shows path inward towards moksha. Sa is Siddhi or accomplishment, while Ka is consolidation of all resources into primordial seed, and Am is such consolidation as spiritual effort. Da is dexterity

in doing so. In Thiruvarur: As Balasubrahmanya in Thyagaraja praharam, and also Singara Velan in Neelotpalamba shrine, and six faced Shanmukha in Kamalamba praharam.

Chhinnamasta in crown as Renuka represents severing bodily bondages and transition to out of body perspective. The entire spine as path of Kundalini is seen as Vajra or thunderbolt, and transcending of this makes Chhinnamasta as Vajreshi or Vajra Vairochani. Chha is intense effort towards cleansing and Na is fertility or earth aspect which is transcended with effort and agility I. Thus Chhinna breaks apart materialistic coherence. Ma is enlightenment and Sa is accomplishment or Siddhi and Tha is inertness, all three represented figuratively in the head, representing result of severing bodily bondages. Representing Kundalini as Prakriti finally merging with Purusha in Sahasrara, Chhinnamasta is also known as Kalaa. In Thiruvarur: As Renuka Ellaiamman in Vijayapuram near bus stand, also Utsavar as Mariamman in Thyagaraja Praharam.

### **PURUSHA-PRAKRITI MANIFESTATIONS:**

Varaaha is space and expansion as aspect of shankha or Paasha as Ashvarudha represents love and desire transformed as bhakti or devotion. A is creativity whereas Sha is auspiciousness and Va is controlling nature Aa of Lord. Thus Ashva figuratively represents auspiciousness through focusing creative energy towards recognizing controlling Lord in heart, and attaining auspiciousness. Ra is energy and Oo is vastness while Dha is normalcy, thus signifying riding or mastering the Ashva. In Thiruvarur: In Lingodbhavar idol in Vishwakarmeshwara shrine.

Narasimha is time and entropy as aspect of chakra or ankusha as Sampatkari is Vairagya or dispassion transforming to jnana. Sa is accomplishment while Am is spiritual effort, and Pa is materialization of Jnana while Ta is inertness as result of Jnana. Thus Jnana is seen as the real treasure or Sampath, Ka is consolidation and Ra is energy with Ee as perfection, leading to handling of the Sampath. In Thiruvarur: In wall of western Gopuram.

Combining these aspects is Shankaranarayani or Mohini representing seen in nose of Lord Venkatesha immortality or Amruta, since through Jnana and Bhakti one can transcend the fear of death or Mruta. Ma is enlightenment, while O is Jnana or wisdom. Ha is the resulting origin state of creation, while I is agility. Na is supportive role in spiritual progress and Ee is perfection. In Thiruvarur: Shankaranarayani in Kamalamba Praharam, and also Mohini in pillar in entrance of Kamalamba shrine.

Vishnu in Thilak is top-down aspect of Purusha-Prakriti as God-Man or Narayana and Nara and resides in Nara or person's heart using his mind and body as instruments to control world, and develops intimate feeling of love towards Lord cultivating Bhakthi. Va is controlling nature of Lord in upholding Dharma, and I is agility in doing so. Shha is scriptural role in spiritual progress, while Na is supportive role, both directed towards spiritual effort and expansion of world-view as U. In Thiruvarur: As Jalashayana Mahavishnu in Kamalamba praharam.

Shakti in procreative organ is front-back with dormant Purusha and expressive Prakriti symbolising evolution of Prakriti as Maaya as various concepts around the core of existence as Purusha, and thus forming tattvas underlying creation and operation of universe. Sha is auspiciousness with Ka as consolidation of resources prior to creation, and Ta is inertness as mastery over all concepts, and

finally I as agility. Also, Ja is manipulation of resources while Ga is clarity obtained on transcendence, and Da is dexterity in doing so. Together this makes up Jagad or the universe, and the Purusha-Prakriti of Shakthi are seen as Jagadeesha and Jagadamba. In Thiruvarur: As Neelotpalamba in separate shrine within temple.

Shiva in topmost tip of Thomaal garland resembling shivalingam is left-right showing equality of Purusha as resplendent Prakasha or pure attributeless existence and prakriti as vimarsha or attributes of existence and also revealing whole world as made up of these, this leading to development of Jnana. Sha is auspiciousness or removal of deficiencies by obtaining broad world view, whereas I is agility in doing so. Va is controlling nature symbolizing its transcendence over the world. The Purusha-Prakriti of Shiva are called Bhava and Bhavaani, with Bha signifying reversal of illusion and Va as control of world, together representing transcending existence, while Aa is control and Na as fertility and Ee is perfection, are all Aksharas corresponding to the Prakriti as reflector Vimarsha.

### **THE 51 AKSHARAS:**

In most evolved state purusha prakriti manifests as 51 concepts or aksharas as follows with all seen within single shrine in Thiruvarur as Akshara Peetha in Kamalamba Praharam southwest side.

From A to Ksha in order, the 16 vowels A to Ah seen in throat or Visuddhi Chakra are understood as aspects of information which later manifest as various charges in information space, as also the various properties of the 8 Dikpaalas, starting with East and going counter-clockwise ending in Southeast. Thus, the 16 are viewed as 8 pairs of properties, with each pair signifying a short or Purusha and long or Prakriti Akshara representing cause and consequence of that property respectively.

Amritha or Ajamukhi in head as creativity; Akarshini or Atharvani in face as fascination, control and bliss. A is negation of death Mrutha seen as property or inertness Ta of illusion Ma as the end of order Ru. Aa is control and consolidation Ka of energy Ra with agility I seen by scriptural standards I in supportive role Na leading to perfection Ee.

Indrani or Ilaa in right eye as adaptability, Eeshini or Eeshwari of left eye as perfection. I is adaptability as spiritual effort Am leading to dexterity Da of energy Ra and control Aa, all in supportive role Na towards perfection Ee. Ee is perfection leading to auspiciousness Sha and agility I leading to both materialistic fertility Na and Spiritual perfection Ee.

Uma or Ugra in right ear as intensity and effort, Oordhvakeshi or Oorjasvala in left ear as greatness or vastness. U is intensity and spiritual effort leading to enlightenment Ma and bliss or Aanandam Aa. Oo is greatness leading to energy Ra, purity Dha and control Va, as well as consolidation Ka or variety E leading to auspiciousness Sha and perfection Ee.

Rittidayi or Rukaara in right nostril as order, Rookara or Renuka in left nostril as spiritual accomplishment. Ru is order as a property or inertness Ta with agility I, and dexterity Da and control Aa of order leading to honor Ya and perfection Ee. Roo is spiritual heights and Ka is consolidation and control Aa of energy Ra for that cause.

Lukara or Lutumbara in right cheek as punishment and reward, Lookara or Loonchika in left cheek as relief. Lu is punishment and Loo is relief, and controlling these aspects are Lukaara and Lookaara.

Ekapada or Revathi in upper lip as variety, Aishwaryatmika or Sushka Revathi of lower lip as clarity. E is variety and Ka is their consolidation resulting in solitude Eka, while Pa is materialization and Aa is control with Da dexterity. Ai is clarity and wealth, leading to auspiciousness Sha, control Va of energy Ra and simplicity Ya, and as embodiment is Aa or control, mastering this as inert Ta, leading to enlightenment Ma, agility I, consolidation Ka and control Aa.

Omkara or Ashvini of upper teeth as wisdom, Aushada or Aghora of lower teeth as healing and fearlessness. O is Jnana, with Am as spiritual effort, and handling this is Omkara. Au is healing while Shha is supportive role and Da is dexterity.

Ambika or Anjana in tongue as spiritual effort and Akshara or Ajaa in throat as immortality. Am is spiritual effort, while Ba is reversing formulations with agility I leading to consolidation Ka and control Aa. A is creativity and mastering death, while Ja is manipulating resources to do so, resulting in control Aa.

The next twelve Aksharas seen in heart or Anahata Chakra are aspects of desire, which later cause expansion of universe, sophistication, and distribution of energy levels, causing in overall decline of energy per area.

Kaalaratri or Bhoothavinyasini in right upper arm is concentration. Ka is consolidation leading to control Aa and materialization La, giving Kaala or time, while Ra is energy controlled as Aa, with mastery as Ta of energy Ra with perfection Ee, symbolizing withdrawal of energy and involvement. Khandita or Khatyodini in right lower arm as distinction. Kha is distinction, while Am is spiritual effort, and Da is extraordinary in agility I and mastery Ta of the same. Gayatri or Dhoomra in right wrist as regulation and clarity. Ga is clarity leading to control Aa, simplicity Ya, mastery Ta of energy Ra and perfection Ee. Ghanta or Ghantakarshini in right palm as smartness. Gha is smartness, while Am uses this as spiritual effort, and Ta is desophistication leading to spiritual elevation. Ngarna in right fingers as variety and growth.

In corresponding parts of left hand are Chamunda or Chandika as intensity and focus, Chayatha or Nirjara as cleansing, Jaya or Bhogadayini as victory and machinery, Jhankarini or Nirjara Nadi as devotion, Jnanarupa or Prabodhini as wisdom. Cha is intensity while Aa is control leading to enlightenment Ma as spiritual effort U, and supportive role Na leading to extraordinary results Da with control Aa. Chha is cleansing leading to simplicity Ya, control Aa, energy Ra and expansive Tha. Ja is manipulation of resources Ja as aspect of sophistication Ya. Jha is devotion seen as spiritual effort Am, and handling this is Jhankarini. Jna is wisdom, leading to control Aa and fertility Na.

Then there is Tankahasta or Takaarini in right thigh as desophistication and Thhankarini or Kriya Saraswathi in right knee as sophistication. Ta is desophistication, as spiritual effort Am, and

consolidation Ka leading to Tanka, the sword that cuts liberations. Tha is sophistication used as spiritual effort Am, and handling this is Thhankarini.

The next Aksharas seen in Manipura or navel Chakra pertain to action, and Tha to Na represent aspects of five states of matter from Akasha to Prithvi being created after sophistication.

Daamari or Dakarini in right calf is extraordinary, Dhankarini or Shridhana in right ankle as materialistic and Narna or Anantha Shakti in right toes is supportive. Da is extraordinary as aspect of heavens controlled as Aa, leading to enlightenment Ma and perfection Ee of energy Ra. Dhha is materializtic and normalcy, and as spiritual effort Am becomes Dham, handled by Dhankarini. Naa is supportive role as aspect of netherworld and Ra is energy used in supportive role Na.

Tamasya in left thigh is inert as aspect of Akasha. Ta is inertness, with Ma as enlightenment and Sa as accomplishment leading to simplicity Ya. Sthaanvi or Neelakantha Saraswathi in left knee as expansive. Sa is accomplishment of expansion Th leading to control Aa, all in supportive role Na to control world Va with perfection Ee. Dakshayani or Bhogada in left calf as dexterity. Da is dexterity with Aa control, Ksha as forbearance as a sign of control Aa, with Ya as sophistication, as supportive role Na with perfection Ee. Dhatya or Amala in left ankle as purity seen as purity Dha leading to inertness Ta and simplicity Ya. Naarya in left toes as fertility. Na is fertility leading to control Aa of energy Ra towards highest sophistication Ya.

Paarvati or Iccha Shakti of right hip as materialization. Pa is materialization caused by control Aa of energy Ra, controlling world Va as master Ta with perfection Ee. Phatkarini or Athaapa Komala of left hip as dematerialization. Pha represents dematerialization leading to desophistication Ta, and handling this is Phatkaarini.

The next six Aksharas seen in Svadishthana or Sacral Chakra form three pairs representing aspects of Jnana Iccha and Kriya.

Bandhini or Chit Shyamala in spine is formulation, Bhadrakali or Shyamala in navel is apparent inequality and bhakti. Ba is reversing formulations as spiritual effort Am, leading to purity Dha, with agility I, and resulting in fertility Na as well as perfection Ee. Bha is forceful removal of illusion, with dexterity Da over energy Ra, resulting in consolidation Ka of power Aa, and perfection Ee in release from bondages Lla.

Mahamaya or Vidya Shyamala in abdomen is illusion and enlightenment, Yashaswini or Deepini in heart is sophistication and simplicity. Ma as illusion and Ha as aspect of primordial with control Aa signifies greatness of Ma as illusion controlling Aa, and creating sophistication Ya, as illusion Mahamaya. Ya is sophistication as honor, removing which gives auspiciousness Sha, accomplishment Sa, control over world Va, agility I, all as aspects of fertility Na and perfection Ee.

Rakta or Rechika in right shoulder is energy and Lamboshti or Mohini of left shoulder is matter. Ra is energy whose consolidation Ka leads to inertness and mastery Ta. La is matter as sacrifice for spirituality Am, leading to reversing formulations Ba through Jnana O, leading to scriptural standard Shha in desophistication Ta with perfection Ee.

The next four Aksharas seen in Mooladhara Chakra represent aspects of the Jnana Iccha Kriya operating as creation preservation destruction Brahma Vishnu Rudra in the manifest world, as well as Ganesha or Maheshwara causing veiling and Skanda or Sadashiva causing grace together seen as the fourth or Thuriya.

Varadha or Narayani in right thorax is boon and controlling. Va is controlling world through energy Ra with dexterity Da. Shridevi or Mangalagauri in left thorax is auspiciousness. Sha is auspiciousness using energy Ra leading to perfection Ee, and Da is dexterity in operating with variety E, controlling world Va again with perfection Ee. Shhanda or Anukriya in right abdomen is scripture as support. Shha is supportive as spiritual effort Am, whereas Da is extraordinary result obtained therein. Saraswathi or Siddhikriya in left abdomen is accomplishment or Siddhi. Sa is accomplishment, while I is agility in doing so with dexterity Da, resulting in purity Dha and perfection Ee.

The last three Aksharas seen in third eye or Ajna Chakra pertain to the fundamental Purusha Prakriti orientations as Shiva, Shakti and Vishnu.

Hamsavathi or Aadyayini in head is origin, Llakara or bandhamochini in torso is liberation while Kshama or Mayamalini in root is endurance and tolerance in fully manifest world. Aa is control and dexterity Da in achieving simplicity Ya, with agility I, all as aspects of fertility Na and perfection Ee. Ba is reversal formulations and norms, as spiritual effort Am, and Dha is purity, and with Bandha as bondages, liberation is through enlightenment Ma through Jnana O, and intense effort Cha with agility I. Ksha represents forbearance and endurance while Ma is enlightenment leading to such broad-mindedness.

As much as most evolved state of Purusha Prakriti give rise to 51 Aksharas, least evolved state of Purusha Prakriti is as prakasha vimarsha together as upward downward triangles forming hamsa shatkona yantra seen in heart. Ha is primordial state representing Purusha, whereas Am as spiritual effort is Prakriti, and Sa is accomplishment seen as union of the two. In Thiruvarur: Seen as Shatkona Yantra, seen as Murugan's Vel or Shakti in shrine of Hatakeshwara in south Praharam.

### **JNAANA, BHAKTI AND AANANDAM:**

Following this there is Mantrini Rajashyamala seen as stretched left hand resembling bow, controlling mind and Dandanatha Maha Varahi seen as five fingers of right hand representing five arrows questioning reality of information encountered by senses. Sweetness of Mantrini seen in instruments such as Veena represents sweet love of Bhakti, whereas hog face of Varahi symbolizes consumption and thereby cleansing off of all impurities, which is a quality of Jnana. Ma is enlightenment as spiritual effort Am, leading to mastery Ta of energy Ra with agility I all as supportive role Na for perfection Ee. Da is dexterity as spiritual effort Am leading to extraordinary results Da with agility I, again as supportive role Na for perfection Ee. In Thiruvarur: Mantrini is seen in north side of Alagu Gopuram in entrance to Thyagaraja shrine. Dandanatha is seen as Mangala Varahi among Saptha Maathas in southern Praharam.

Rama seen in Lord Venkatesha's waist combines these aspects as bhakti and jnana, and is thus



Thaaraka bestowing salvation. Raa signifying complete control Aa or energy and efforts Ra is the essence of Vishnu or Bhakti aspect. Ma signifying enlightenment is the complete essence of Shiva or Jnana aspect. Both together give Raama, whose very name can bestow liberation. In Thiruvarur: Western Gopuram wall shows Raama using bow and arrow or Jnana and Bhakti to destroy seven trees in a row, representing transcendence of the seven Chakras.

Krishna seen as left cheek is self manifest in heart culminating in bhakti through complete surrender to Him. Ka is consolidation of all one's thoughts and focus towards the Lord in the heart while Ru is advancement through order of spiritual path, as seen by scriptural standards Shha in a supportive role Na.

Dakshinamurthi in right cheek is Jnana guru culminating jnana by constantly questioning reality until one kills ego and reaches blissful silence of deep sleep which alone is real. Da is dexterity, while Ksha is forbearance, and I is agility in questioning reality even while in the midst of the world of Maaya. Na is supportive role, finally making up Dakshina. Moorthi, as representative of the Dakshina path is made up of enlightenment Ma leading to greatness Oo, and agility of expansive Tha energy Ra.

Finally, Shaasta seen as blissful smile of Lord Venkatesha is Parama Guru as Atman itself, giving first hand experience of bliss as samadhi and building firm conviction of reality called Nishtha. Sha is auspiciousness obtained along with control Aa by completely transcending existence. Sa is accomplishment or Siddhi, and Ta is inertness or mastery over mundane existence, graced by Lord as Guru.

Finally completely abiding in blissful self one finds oneself as Atman itself, the origin of everything viewed as playful mother Lalitha Ambika who is Venkatesha itself. La is material manifestation and I is agility together implying the world of matter as play by Ambika who as Ta completely is inert to, and transcends these. Also, Aa represents control, as well as Aanandam or Bliss, and Ta as inert to the play of Maaya and completely mastering it, while attainable through enlightenment or Ma. These are the properties of the Aatman.

Finally, as Lalitha Ambika Herself, the name Venkatesha itself is seen to be extremely powerful, and destroys sins as per the saying "Govinda Naama Smaranam Sarva Paapa Haranam". Va represents the control over world through rewards, punishments and boons, while E is the variety of the world. Am as spiritual effort makes Vem the entirety of sins, punishments and Karma enveloping Samsaara. Ka is consolidation of resources with Ta as desophistication refers to destroying of the Vem. Finally Ee is perfection arising from Ven-Kata, yielding all auspiciousness Sha. Thus, while the name Venkatesha means one who destroys sins, here is how the name encompasses all the deities seen earlier.

Venkatesha is Atman

Venkatesha is Lalitha Ambika

Venkatesha is Parama Guru Shaasta.

(Jnana Bhakti duality has destructive-creative aspect)

Venkata is Jnaana, Eesha is Bhakti.  
Venkata is Sampatkari, Eesha is Ashvarudha.  
Together Venkatesha is Mohini.

Venkata is Dakshinamurthi, Eesha is Krishna.  
Venkata is Hamsa Roopa, Eesha is Akshara Roopa.  
Venkata is Dandanaatha, Eesha is Mantrini.  
Together Venkatesha is Raama.

(Navagraha derived from Purusha Prakriti)  
Venkata is Soorya, Eesha is Chandra.  
Venkata is Kethu, Eesha is Raahu.  
(Dikpaala derived from Purusha Prakriti)  
Venkata is Vaidyanatha, Eesha is Annapurna.  
Venkata is Jwarahara, Eesha is Agni.  
Venkata is Vaayu, Eesha is Nirruthi.

(Naada Bindu Duality seen in Venkatesha)  
Venkata is Bindu, Eesha is Naada.  
Venkata is Skanda, Eesha is Ganesha.  
Together Venkatesha becomes Kalaa Chhinnamasta.  
Venkata is Aarya Tharaa, Eesha is Uchchishta Ganapathi.  
Together Venkatesha becomes Naagaraaja.

(Panchabhootha derived from duality:)  
Venkata is Akasha, Eesha is Praana  
Venkata is Hayagriva, Eesha is Bhuvaneshwari  
(Navagraha derived from duality)  
Venkata is Angaaraka, Eesha is Budha.  
(Dikpaala derived from duality)  
Venkata is Yama, Eesha is Eeshaana.

(Container-Contained property of duality)  
Venkata is Aaditya, Eesha is Brahma.  
Venkata is Gaayatri, Eesha is Vishwakarma.

(Three components of Venkatesha.)  
Ven is Iccha, Kata is Kriya and Eesha is Jnaana.  
Ven is Shakti, Kata is Vishnu and Eesha is Shiva.  
Ven is Veerabhadra-Bhadrakali, Kata is Kalki, Eesha is Bhairava-Bhairavi.  
Ven is Lakshmi, Kata is Durga and Eesha is Saraswathi.  
Ven is Jyeshtha, Kata is Katyayani and Eesha is Bagalamukhi.  
Ven is Brahma, Kata is Vishnu and Eesha is Rudra.  
Together Venkatesha is Aanjaneya.

(Panchabhootha derived from Triality)

Ven is Prithvi, Kata is Jala, Eesha is Theja.

(Navagraha derived from Triality)

Ven is Shukra, Kata is Shani, Eesha is Brihaspathi.

(Dikpaala derived from Triality)

Ven is Indra, Kata is Varuna, Eesha is Kubera.

Finally, the various stages are grouped broadly into nine. These are the nine enclosures of the mystic geometrical diagram called Sri Yantra, the symbol of Lalitha Ambika, which is formed by interlocking upward and downward triangles representing Purusha and Prakriti, and best understood as nine enclosures from outer to innermost, called Avaranas, each more subtle than the previous, each bestowing certain effects and ruled by form of Mother called Yogini.

1. Trailokyamohana bestowing fascination of three worlds, ruled by Prakata Yogini, maps to Aanjaneya and Vamachara deities.
2. Sarvasharipuraka bestowing fulfilment of all desires, ruled by Gupta Yogini, maps to Navagrahas and Dikpaalas, as well as Pancha Bhootas.
3. Sarvasamkshobhana bestowing stimulation and activity, ruled by Guptatara Yogini, maps to Durga.
4. Sarvasaubhagyadayaka bestowing auspiciousness, ruled by Sampradaya Yogini, maps to Lakshmi.
5. Sarvarthasadhaka bestowing all accomplishments, ruled by Kullotteerna Yogini, maps to Saraswathi.
6. Sarvarakshakara bestowing all protection, ruled by Nigarbha Yogini, maps to Ganesha.
7. Sarvarogahara bestowing all healing, ruled by Rahasya Yogini, maps to Skanda.
8. Sarvasiddhiprada bestowing all accomplishment, ruled by Atirahasya Yogini, maps to Purusha-Prakriti as Shiva-Shakti-Vishnu.
9. Sarva Aanandamaya bestowing all bliss, ruled by Parapara Ati Rahasya Yogini, maps to Jnana Bhakti, Guru and Lalitha Ambika Herself as Atman.

## APPENDIX

Following are major shrines of Thiruvavur outlined with their significance

**Kamalaamba:** Lalitha Ambika enshrined as Kamalaamba; in Yogic posture Kutikaasana or Swastikaasana. Installed as sacred Chitreshwari Peetha by sage Agastya before swallowing up an ocean to expose hidden demons. Agastya brought together the power of all the Yoginis and all the Shakti Peethas into one - yields Siddhi of any desired Mantra, without any impediment. Later, Kamalaamba as Parvathi, established hermitage here, faced Northeast towards Kailash, performing a severe penance refusing even single leaf (Aparna), in constant Dhyaanam of Lord Shiva, to win the hand of the Lord in marriage.

Aadi Shankara expounded, highlighted and established Advaita in every nook and corner of the country. After successful debates in places as Kollur, reforming and removing violent Vaamaachaara and in journey to Kanchipuram, Shankara visited Thiruvavur, worshipped the Mother and other shrines within the temple. However, the presence of Vaamaachaara deities such as Bhadrakali, Chandika, Veerabhadra and Bhairava along with associated sacrifices and

practices disturbed him, and in an attempt to reform the temple, challenged the priests to a debate. Chief priest of Kamalaamba shrine was sent to debate Aadi Shankara. Though not well versed in scriptures and Jnaana, the priest was immersed in Bhakthi towards the Mother, so much that She would converse with him. Mother instructed priest to ask Shankara about a certain “Shrikantha Bhaashya”, which latter confessed lack of knowledge, accepting defeat; Later Reading this seriously, Shankara realized the equal importance of both Jnaana and Bhakthi, symbolized by two pillars of Dakshinamurthi and Raajagopaala; importance of Vaamaachaara as necessary to impart Vairaagya was realized, as was its inevitability. Thus, Shankara understood Thiruvarur Vaamaachaara differing from other Shaktha shrines, and fully on Advaitic lines, and thus no more felt the compulsion to reform. Convinced this is the only temple of Advaitic Sri Vidya in its entirety, Shankara composed Tripurasundari Maanasa Pooja Stotram, to help anybody perform a virtual visit and worship to Thiruvarur.

Verse 5: Paatala flowers, unique to Thiruvarur cover entire garden; Verse 11: Vishwakarma probably built the temple out of mountain Vaidoorya gem; Verse 16: Lotus of Heart, or Hrudkamala or Kamalanagaram, also mentioning Shankhanidhi and Padmanidhi as gifted by Goddess Lakshmi, seen in entrance to Kamalaamba; Verses 17-19 extol Saraswathi and Mantrini, leaving out Vaaraahi and Lakshmi, just as one finds in the temple; Verse 20 - 'female retinue', with dark forms, wielding Kapaala and Shoola – the Vaamaachaara forms as Bhairava, Chandika, Bhadrakali etc. Also, Acharya addresses the Mother as Chandika, Durga and Katyayini. Verse 87: Gurus from the physical to Parama Guru Shaasta, placing them in the heart; Verses 89-98: Yogini deities of the nine Avaranas, established by Agastya, but non-existent today; Verse 103: Kaamakalaa form, to be learnt through Guru, and seen as Uchchishta Ganapathi; Verse 114: Constantly seeing lotus like face and hearing the self resonating Anahata in Hrudaya Kamala; Verse 115-116: Unmani state of one pointedness and concentration, with five senses be closed to seeing, hearing, touching, tasting or smelling anything, and that the mind should forever be immersed in the eyes filled with bliss, such UnMana of the mind is represented as the Goddess Manonmani, who is the principal Utsavar form of Kamalaamba in Thiruvarur. Verse 118-119: Acharya offers Bali or Sacrifice, as prescribed by scriptures to various deities such as Ganapathi, Vatuka Bhairava, Yogini Bhairavi and Kshetrapaala, remnants offered to the wife of Aadishesha or the Naaga Raani, who is seen in Thiruvarur among the Naaga shrines in Kamalaamba temple. Verses 123-127: Circumambulation or Pradakshina of Kamalaamba yields all benefits, and as effective as performing various kinds of Archanas and incantations, a fact also mentioned in Skanda Puraana about Chitreshwari Peetha. So too, the Acharya prays that the vision of the Mother and concentration never be distracted.

**Shaasta:** Right leg hanging down in Veerasana, and right hand of the Lord holding a red lily flower with a long stem. “Phulla Kalhaara Danda Dharakaram”, exhibits pure Jnaana aspect as non-difference between Him as the Guru, and Kamalamba. Dikshitar highlights this aspect “Pushpa Sharekshu Kaarmuka Dharam”. Left hand points to foot of raised left leg, reminding one to surrender, as aspect of Bhakti.

**Raajagopaala:** King Muchukunda, after aiding the Devas defeating demons, obtained a boon from Indra, of long periods of sleep uninterrupted; in a cave, slept through the Satya, Treta and Dvaapara Yugas. Demon Kalavayana, was tormenting the world; challenged by Krishna to battle. Asura

prepared to attack; Krishna began running, with Asura chasing Him. Krishna entered the cave of Muchukunda; Hiding Himself in the cave, the Asura was tricked into thinking the Muchukunda as Krishna, and on attacking him, king enraged, burnt the Asura to death

**Vamachara:** Bhadrakaali, and Bhairavi manifest as Amba and Vriddha invoked by pair of widows from Varanasi, to seek revenge for their husband king killed in battle. Goddess invoked hordes of ghosts and spirits, to devour the miscreants, set up worship of their Paadukas using Vaamaachaara procedures; later reformed by Lord Shiva towards Mantra based worship. Kaala Bhairava is seen manifest in Thiruvarur, in the episode involving slaying the demon Andhaka Asura, and is also seen in the Gopuram or tower as Akasha Bhairava. Also, In the Prahaaram of Kamalaamba Shrine within the temple complex, one finds a lot of 'Mantapas' in the wall niches with decorations, where one can clearly see evidence of some idol having been present there sometime in the past. From oral traditions, one understands that these eight Mantapas once housed certain shrines, belonging to the Vamachara tradition of Sri Vidya, such as Bhadrakaali, Pidaari, Veerabhadra etc, and were sometime in history removed due to presence of violent sacrifices and other such activities. Today, these idols are found in a handful of small temples around the main temple complex, within a 2-3 kilometer radius.

**Hataakeshwara:** Shiva subdues the arrogance of certain sages in Daaruka Vanam; Gold Svayambhu Lingam drilling its way to Paathaala Loka through a serpent cavern later closed by Indra using the Raktashringa mountain. Shiva Himself mentions 68 sacred Peethas, the Lord highlights eight significant sites (Naimisharanyam, Kedarnath, Pushkar, Kurujangala, Varanasi, Kurukshetra, Somnath and Thiruvarur), and asserts Haataakeshwara as the single most important among all 68. Indra prayed prior to defeating Vritra Asura, and later covered the cavern with the Raktashringa mountain in fear of others like Trishanku praying here and usurping Indra's position.

**Thyagaraja:** Utsava Moorthi of the Prithvi Lingam Vanmeekanaatha, seen with Uma and Skanda; worshipped by Lord Vishnu placing Him on chest, dancing to breath rhythmically as the Hamsa-Soham Ajapa Natanam. Later, the idol was given to Indra, who then presented it to King Muchukunda as gratitude for helping defeat a demon. Not willing to part with the Vighraha, Indra created six images of Thyagaraja, asking Muchukunda to identify the real one. Each of the seven denote a particular dance. These are Ajapa (Unuttered) in Thiruvarur, Unmatha (Intoxicated) in Thirunallar, Vilathi (Sea Wave like) in Naagapattinam, Kukkuta (Rooster) in Thirukkuravasal, Bhringa (Bee like) in Thirukkuvalai, Kamala (Lotus) in Thiruvaimur and Hamsaapta (Swan) in Vedaranyam.

364 Thyagaraja Leelas: establishing the Thiruvarur city (2), establishing the Aadi Chola king (8), restoring power to Brihaspathi and Kubera (11,13), saving Navagrahas (19) and bringing the Ganga to Kamalaalayam (21), Restoring offspring killed due to Guru's curse (55), restoring sight to Vaishya (60), saving yaaga by preventing rains (64), changing face from wolf (68), saving and gracing parrot and hunter (72), saving from famine and drought (75), honoring Guru Upadesha (81), inflicting the Vaidya with disease (82), walking on water (83), lighting lamps with water (85), restoring life (86), accepting jail imprisonment for sake of Bhakta (87), protecting the king by disguising as a blind man (94), saving Bhakta from fire (98), ability to fly (101), bestowing progeny (108), restoring sight to the blind(109), speech to the dumb (110), sound to the deaf (111),

movement to the crippled (112), drinking molten metal like water (118), roaming in the streets as a Vaidya doctor (120), bending a coconut tree (124), saving life by providing water in the middle of forest (126) and bearing sand for building tank (127), converting honey to water (132), disappearance of wealth (133), removing of poison (137), protecting an orphan boy (139), walking of stone elephant (140), displaying His form to lady who served three mouthfuls of rice (142), displaying the truthfulness of GuruPatni (144), growing a stumped tree (146), sounding the musical instrument (150), lighting lamp (151), obtaining golden parrot (155), drying up of Hamsa Teertha (157), Granting Guru Dakshina (160), protecting a cow (170), curing insanity (171), rising the sun at night (179), losing eyes (180), preventing marriage by offering Jada hair (182), protecting chastity (187), turning snakes into flowers (192), sand into Pooja items (193), crowning Sannyasi (196), turning sand into gold (211), granting kingdom to boy (212), removal of serpent curses (222), making of rope from sand (223), creating eyes in legs (238), writing Beeja Akshara in tongue (240), withering of fruit (250), exposing a robber through pearl necklace (252), protecting boy through lion (253), preventing flower from withering (258), granting wealth to the poor (260), opening the doors through Vedas (269), providing food (271), floating of stone (277), closing of door (283), curing of skin disorder (287), bestowing of auspiciousness (289), inflicting fever on one who rebuked Bhakta (292), talking of sand doll (295), providing fruit (298), appearing as son (302), drying up of water using fire (303), turning iron into gold (310), Darshan in forest (317), hearing of Veena music (322), joining of head and body (329), appearing as snake charmer (326), digestion of poison as food (341), waking of 3000 people (346), eating of food fed by boy (352), teaching (353), singing in dream (354), feeding milk through finger (356) and saving the knife from falling (358).

On Aarudra Darshan and Panguni Utthiram, the Paada Darshan of Lord along with Lord Skanda. Shakti's left foot rests on a lotus, representing the Mooladhara Chakra while Shiva's right foot resting on a serpent, which signifies Kundalini Shakti reaching Sahasraara, at which point Self Realization is said to have been achieved. For Ajapa Mantra of Hamsa, Haatakeshwara shrine is the Yantra (Sookshma) form, whereas the Lord Thyagaraja is the manifest (Sthoola) form. Though the Lord Thyagaraja is three deities as Somaskanda, the back side of the idol reveals just a single plait of hair (Pinnal), signifying the Lord as the Universal Mother. This understanding of the form of the Lord, is the "Ajapa Rahasyam" (Un-uttered Secret) of Thiruvavur. Naivedyas corresponding to the Kundalini: Sunrise, Mooladhara, green gram rice; Svadishtana, curd rice, morning; Manipoora, ghee rice, afternoon; Anaahata, jaggery rice, evening; Visuddhi, Paayasa, night; Aajna, variety rice, midnight. 2 swords on either side, Veera and Jnaana Khadga. Abhishekham is performed to the Maragatha Lingam made of emerald thrice a day and to Thyagaraja six times a year. Both Thyagaraja and emerald Lingam are referred to as the Vitanka (untouched by sculptor).

**Nandi:** Foremost of the 63 Naayanmars, Sundarar was a Shiva Gana cursed to be born on Earth; married Paravai in Thiruvavur; but fell in love with Sangiliyar in Thiruvotriyur; Lord advised Sangiliyar through dream to get a promise of nondesertion. However, at a later instant, Sundarar longing to visit Tiruvavur violated the oath; lost eyesight and later, restored in Kanchipuram and Thiruvavur. To Convince Paravai Lord, disguised as a Brahmin, failed; then appeared in real form; succeeded in re-uniting them. Observing this entire incident, and feeling sad for having seen the Lord walk the streets barefoot, the Lord's mount Nandi vowed to remain standing, alert and ready to carry the Lord, should another such incident arise.

**Shakthi:** Akshara Peetha consisting of Prakrithi manifesting as the 51 Aksharas surrounding a central core as Purusha. Neelotpalaamba is form of Bhuvaneshwari, mythologically none other than Kamalaamba Herself, seen here as married to Lord Shiva, standing next to Kriya Shakthi as Katyayani, holding the infant Skanda.

**Jalashayana Vishnu:** On the prayers of Indra, for protection from demon Bhaskali, brought Shveta Dvipa to protect from Kali Yuga. Thiruvavur sole residence during the Chaturmaasa period known as Vishnu's Yoga Nidra, as well as an ideal time for observing penances. Assures Lord's abode in Vaikuntha and attainment of every desire on worship; Lord Jalashaayina combines the powers of 8 Svayam Vyakta Kshetras of Srirangam, Tirupati, Badrinath, Naimisharanyam, Pushkar, Shaligram, Srimushnam and Vaanamaamalai. Skanda Purana mentions absence of Lord even in Vaikuntham, Ksheera Sagara, Badri during Chaturmasa

**Renuka Devi:** Renuka, wife of Jamadagni, once distracted by sight of Gandharvas, afraid of Jamadagni, left ashram; stayed with woman Mathangi; atonement penance towards Shiva by begging for rice, placing it on the stomach, cooking it under hot sun; after grace of Shiva Renuka returned to Ashram with Mathangi; still furious Jamadagni ordered son Parashurama to behead Renuka; later revived Renuka on request of Parashurama. In beheading Renuka, Parashurama is role of Vishnu in liberating one from Karma; Parashu, Shiva's weapon is role of Jnaana to cut asunder the bondages. Renuka enshrined as Ellai Amman or Guardian of temple and city, in Vijayapuram, near bus stand.

**Durga:** Durga vanquishing the demon Mahishasura enshrined as Mahishamardhini. Also enshrined as Raudra Durga; removing marriage obstacles; and special worship for relief from Raahu Doshas, as well as in, tuesdays, fridays, sundays and particularly on all fridays of the Ashada month. Original and possibly oldest of Durga shrines enshrined in Thiruvavur is the Raaja Durga, now seen near the southern entrance of the temple. The Goddess is seen majestically seated on a lion, and it is believed that Lord Raama worshipped the Goddess prior to slaying Raavana. Sapta Maathas seen Next to the Raudra Durga Shrine, along with Bhoothanaatha. Serve as protector deities, gracing devotees with relief from various problems. Created to aid Durga in slaying the Mahisha Asura; Visited Thiruvavur to witness a grand Yajna conducted by Lord Brahma. Also, when certain Asura installed Lingas installed during the time of Vibheeshana were destroyed at the instance of Lava and Kusha, these Maatrus were commanded by Lord Shiva to guard this Kshetra, and protect it from any mishappenings, gracing the devotees, which They continue to perform to this date.

**Mahalakshmi:** Manifest here as due to a curse by chaste woman Madhavi, resulting in Lakshmi born with elephant face. After performing severe penance here, the Goddess not only overcame the curse, but also attained Mahattva or greatness, transforming as Mahalakshmi, and resulting in the place, Teertha and Goddess to be named after Her respectively as Kamalanagaram, Kamalaalayam, and Kamalaamba. The Goddess then entered into Dhyaanam of the Lord Thyagaraja, and is seen even to this day in such a pose inside the temple. Chanting of Sri Suktam in the shrine during Dvitiya (Lunar second) never meets with poverty in seven successive births.

**Saraswathi:** Enshrined by sage Vasishta on a Mantra Peetha, in prayer to cure a certain Ambuvici

of his dumbness, since, he was the ruling king, and on account of his impediment, the entire town was engulfed in injustice. Answering the prayers, Goddess Saraswathi is manifest in the fourarmed form similar to the famed Sringeri Sharada temple, as well as the very powerful but now destroyed Saraswathi Peetha in Sharda, Kashmir. Ashtami and Chaturdashi (eighth, fourteenth) worship is special, and anyone reciting the Vedas in front of this shrine would receive the same benefit of an arduous Agnishtoma Yajna.

**Vishwakarmeshwara:** In His form as Vishwakarma, one also finds Brahma in constant meditation of Lord Shiva, who manifests as Vishwakarmeshwara, and Vishwakarma is also the one who constructed the temple and city of Thiruvarur, as per Lord Thyagaraaja's orders. Special prayers are performed to Vishwakarma before building houses, by offering an odd number of bricks to the Lord, since this is believed to remove the Vaastu Doshas.

**Pushpa Aadithya:** Pushpa Aaditya was installed as Aaditya by sage Yajnavalkya encompassing within Himself, the power of each letter of the Gaayatri Mantra – regarded as Veda Maata and the most supreme among Mantras. In a later episode, Aaditya is invoked by a certain Pushpa, who was a brahmin deceived, tricked and humiliated by a miser and evil merchant Manibhadra from Vidisha. Praying for achieving vengeance, Pushpa then successfully guised himself as the merchant, and claimed the real merchant an imposter, getting him punished and eventually hanged to death.

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**Navagrahas:** As per 19 Leela of Thyagaraja, demon where an Asura, Shatakupya, with a boon of invincibility, tormented the Devas, sages and people alike. His only weak point were the Navagrahas, and having known from an astrologer that bad times were about to approach him due to planetary transits, he set off to attack the nine planets in full fledged war. Terrified, the deities of the nine planets sought refuge in Lord Thyagaraja of Thiruvarur. The Lord granted them fearlessness and assured the planets of protection, provided they promised not to unduly trouble anyone who visits the Kshetra of Thiruvarur and surrenders to the Lord. Honoring their promise, the Navagrahas appear standing, all in a straight line, facing the Lord, and thus are known as Anugraha Naavagrahas.

**Aanjaneya:** Raama along with Seetha, Lakshmana and Hanumaan, after vanquishing Raavana, on the way back from Lanka in Pushpaka Vimaana which stopped above Thiruvarur and wouldn't move. Raama asked Hanumaan to descend the vehicle and survey the area; Hanumaan perched high near the west tower, surveyed the temple and tank, reporting to Raama about certain shrines of Shiva and Shani and Teertha installed by Raama's Dasharatha. Hanumaan is enshrined till this day here in the same position while surveying the temple, and is popularly prayed to for retrieving lost things.

**Swarnakarshana Ganapathi:** Popular for worship before buying jewellery. Sundarar, on a trip to Vriddhachalam sang a Pathigam extolling the Lord and expressing a desire for gold coins to help the local folk out of calamity. When the Lord blessed him with gold coins, they were to be appraised for quality. It is in this instance that Lord Ganapathi arrived in the guise of a goldsmith to ascertain the quality of the coins.



**Valmeekanatha:** Anthill Lingam viewed as Prithvi Tattva; horse faced demon Hayagreeva stole the Vedas; obtained a boon of being killed only by another Hayagreeva. Devas with Brahma and Vishnu performed Yajna in Kurukshetra, fruits to be offered to fastest; Vishnu emerged victorious; bow of Shiva emerged in the Thiruvarur as reward; With pride, Vishnu rested His head on the bow; as per advise of Brihaspati Devas as termites gnawed at the bow string which snapped, splitting Vishnu's head away. Shiva emerged from Hatakeshwara; explained the incident of Hayagreeva, and merged into the anthill, as Valmeekanaatha or Putridam Kondaar. Fitted with the head of a horse, Vishnu as Hayagreeva slew the demon

**Chandrashekhara:** Soma, moon God married to the 27 stars; but partiality Rohini alone earned the curse of father Prajaapathi, causing lustre to fade. After long penance installing Lingas in 68 Shiva Kshetras, Chandra got redemption with Lord promising phases of wax and wane. Thus was established the Somnath in Gujarat, which while prime Moolavar among 68 Soma Lingas, Chandrashekhara in Thiruvarur is the principal Utsavar. Only three temples where the deity of Soma was installed and honored, namely Thiruvarur, Prabhaasa (Somnath) and Dhundhumaara; During the destruction of many Rakshasa Lingas, the shrine of Soma was destroyed, leaving Chandrashekhara shrine as only remnant.

**Nataraja:** Representative of the Aananda Thaandavam of the Lord in Chidambaram; Damaru in right upper hand signifies creation (Brahma); Abhaya Mudra in right hand represents preservation (Vishnu); fire in the Lord's left hand symbolizes destruction (Rudra); right foot, on the ground symbolizes hiding (Thirodaana Eeshwara); raised left foot (Kunjithapadham) is grace (Anugraha or Sadaashiva). Mere Darshan of Chidambaram yields Mukti; In the Puraanas, Lord appears in the Aananda Thandavam (dance of bliss) posture, honoring the prayer and penance of two sages Vyaaghrapaada (tiger clawed) and Patanjali (incarnation of the serpent Aadishesha).

**Narasimha:** In Western Gopuram is relief sculpture of Ugra Narasimha, depicted slaying Hiranyakashipu and witnessed by the devout Prahlada. Related to the shrine of Narasimha is the Lord Shiva as Sharabheshwara, also found as a relief sculpture. After slaying Hiranyakashipu Narasimha's wrath continued; Sharabheshwara was taken to calm down. Depending on sources cited, either one subdued the other, or both got slain. As Kshama Moorthis, these are special and sacred to Sri Vidya, as they are believed to be extremely powerful and potent in destroying the evil spirits and spells, ghosts, black magic, witchcraft and malefic aspects of planets, thus enabling a positive, healthy path for the aspirant (Saadhaka) to cultivate pure Bhakti and attain Moksha.

**Mooladhara Vinayaka:** 3 shrines of Vinayaka established during Satya Yuga: Five faced Heramba, Ucchishta and Mooladhara Ganapathis, established as creator of obstacles and giver of liberation respectively, all installed by Goddess Parvathi; Far before 4 incarnations of Ganesha for the four Yugas – Mahotkata, Mayuresha, Gajaanana and Dhoomakethu. Mooladhara Vinaayaka in a very unique posture tilted sideways-- the Lord is supposedly seen dancing on a coiled five hooded serpent, which in turn is seen within a four-petalled lotus. Ucchishta is seen as variation of the word "Ut-Krishta", translates to Being Drawn Inward.

**Pathala Loka:** Residence of Naagas containing golden Hatakeshwara also known as the

Hiranyapuram and origin of demons Hiranyaksha, Hiranyakashipu; Clue from sources such as Kanchi MahaPeriyava points location as modern day Central America, consisting of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador and southern USA, the entire region being the homeland of the famous Aztec and Maya Civilizations. One observes with respect to Indian subcontinent that this region of Central America is almost on the diametrically opposite side of the globe, with longitude difference being very close to 180 degrees.

While securing nectar Amrita to redeeming mother, Eagle God Garuda entered into bitter rivalry with Naagas and transported the Naagas to the Paathaala Loka; legends of O'odhams of Arizona, USA, describe arrival through 'sky-born ship', called NahBig; In east coast of Mexico languages word 'Patal' translates to 'abandoned land'. National flag of Mexico depicts imagery of Garuda the eagle, holding Naaga in its beak; Aztec deity Quetzalcoatl, translates to 'Feathered Serpent'. Hanuman is seen in Ramayana to defeat Mahiravana, King of Paathaala and establishing Makaradhwaja as the King. In Honduras, we find the monkey God worshipped under the name 'Wilka Huemana' in La Ciudad Blanca. Sivapuri, Sivabhu, Sivapuni, and Shivulba (The Origin or Cave of Shiva); has parallels among Pueblo Indians as Sibapu or Sibapuni; Shibalba, Xibalba. Hindu astro geographical map with four petals pointing in cardinal directions, around Meru had left petal on a seaport called Ketumala or Chetumala; Chetumal is even now a sea port in what is presently Belize, Central America. Just to the left of the Chetumal petal there is a body of water called the Kashyapa Sea, translated as 'sea turtle; tortoise' and corresponding to the Caribbean Sea. It is commonly known that more sea turtles of different species inhabit Meso-America and Eastern Central America than any other place in the world. 'Aztec' possibly derived from 'Haataka'; Central temple of the civilization was the capital city of Tenochtitlan, situated in the area of modern Mexico City; Called 'Great Temple' or Templo Mayor and now in ruins, at the centre of the city was a temple with two shrines side by side dedicated to the Gods Huitzlopochtli and Tlaloc. The former is seen as the deity of war, sun, fire and the patron deity of the city, whereas Tlaloc is seen as the deity of rain, water and earthly fertility. By nature of the equivalence as well as complementary fire water relationship, one understands these deities to be the equivalents of Shiva and Shakti, representing physical active fire like and mental passive water like qualities.

Large snake sculpture seen today, testimony to the role of Naagas of Paathaala Loka. Further, one also finds in Tenochtitlan a sculpture of stacked skulls called Tzompantli, which are described as belonging to sacrificial victims and those lost in wars or sentenced to punishments. These skulls bear direct resemblance to the concept of Runda Maala or garland of skulls adorning Lord Shiva as Bhairavi and Shakti as Kaali, owing to their roles as destroyers of evil. As per Purana, from Hatakeshwara in Paathaala, water gushed forth, called Rasatala Ganga; Tenochtitlan and Mexico City lies on the banks of Lake Texcoco, a large natural lake artificially drained after Spanish Conquests; originally situated in the Valley of Mexico, along with the thick forests surrounding it, provided much needed relief and respite for the Mexica people, who were wandering in the hot desert for nearly a hundred years. Tenochtitlan is almost seen as an island within this lake, with one possibly inferring that Lake Texcoco is indeed the Rasatala Ganga.

**Kshetra Lingas:** Lingas corresponding to various Kshetras; Kailashanatha of mount Kailash, Parvatheshwara for Kedarnath, where the Lord resides for the four winter months; Amareshwara installed by sage Kashyapa for Amarnath, granting longevity, Vishwanaatha for Kashi,

Mahakaleshwara for Ujjain worshipped using Ratri Jaagara; Raamanatha of Rameshwaram; Gautameshwara installed by Gautama for Ghrushneshwar.

**Rudra Lingas:** 11 sages in Kashi eager for Darshan of Haatakeshwara hastened to Thiruvarur, with the agreement that last one to reach would be recipient of the sins of all others; Shiva manifested as Lingam to each one, as eleven Rudra Lingas; chanting of Rudram Namakam Chamakam are said to grant fulfillment of all desires, with the attainment of Shiva Saayujya. So too, one finds Lingas installed by the Sapta Rishis – Jamadagni, Vishwamitra, Gauthama, Vasishta, Bharadwaja, Atri and Kashyapa, as well as by other sages, kings and Devas.

List of ghats around Kamalalayam, counter-clockwise from the northwestern corner

<b>Location</b>	<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Daanam/Ritual</b>	<b>Ghat Name</b>
northwest	Sakala Veda Siddhi	Krishnaarjeenam	Pulastya
west	Darshan of Paranjyothi	Mirror Daanam	Niroopa
west	Equal to Ashwamedha Yaaga	Goat Daanam	Yajneshwara
west	Maatru Shaapa Vimochanam	Paanaka Daanam	Naarada
west	Dosha Nivartti	Horse Daanam	Ashvatthama
west	Sarpa Dosha Nivartti	Sarpa	Nakula
west	Putra Paapa Nivartti	Honey Daanam	Mahakala
west	Roga Nivartti	Paayasa Daanam	Aaditya
west	Shatru Dosha Nivartti	Buffalo Daanam	Durga
west	Vibachara Dosha Nivartti	Kannika Daanam	Indra
west	Equal to many Go Daanam	Umbrella Daanam	Bhringi
west	Kaarya Siddhi	Gold Lotus Danam	Lakshmi
southwest	Equal to Ashwamedha Yaga	Shaligrama Danam	Vishnu
south	Kusha Roga Nivartti	Silver Daanam	Chandra
south	Equal to Koti Tirtha Snana	Pancharatnam	Ganga
south	Aayur Vritti	Vastra Daanam	Romasa
south	Maha Paapa Vimochanam	Modaka Daanam	Vainateya
south	Guruhatti Dosha Nivartti	Go Daanam	Parashurama
south	Putra Laabha, Sethu Snanam	Many seeds	Dasharatha
south	Navagraha Peeda Nivartti	Navadhanyam	Navagraha
south	Bhoo Praapti	Flowers, Gold	Dhruva
south	Vaata Roga Nivartti	Clove Daanam	Vyaghrapada
south	Bahishta Dosha	Red Saree Danam	Saptarishi
south	21 Generation Pitru Truption	Kannika Daanam	Agastya
south	Sarpa Bhaya Nivartti	Yajnopavitha	Pathanjali
south	Brahmahatti Nivartti	Sovereign Gold	Veerabhadra
south	Gaarhapatya Dosha Nivartti	Surul Gold	Nandikesvara
south	Mantra Siddhi	Decorated Blanket	Durvaasa
south	Asatya Dosha Nivartti	Gold Daanam	Harischandra
south	Equal to Ganga Snaanam	Fruit Daanam	Bhagiratha
south	Aatma Jnaana	Wheat Daanam	Vyaasa
south	Ishta Siddhi Praapti	Raw Rice Danam	Veda
southeast	Shatru Dosha Nivartti	Lemon Daanam	Indraani

east	Dur Marana Paapa Mochana	Puffed Rice Balls	Panchanatha
east	Saahitya Siddhi	Sugarcane	Vaalmiki
east	Roga Nivartti	Sugar Daanam	Varuna
east	Pitru Trupti	Sesame/Water	Pitru
east	Pashu Vritti	Amaranthus Stalks	Upamanyu
east	Shiva Ninda Praayachittam	Shiva Linga	Daksha
east	Saayujya Praapti	Banana Types	Muchukunda
east	Siva Aparaadha Nivartti	Flowers Daanam	Pushpa
east	Guru Droha Nivartti	Bhaadrasahitam	Trishanku
east	Mukti or Liberation	Butter Daanam	Mukti
east	Daaridrya Nivartti	Curd Rice	Deva Teertha
northeast	Overcoming Obstacles	Coconut Daanam	Vighneshwara
north	Manobeeshta Siddhi	Kandamoolam	Poorna
north	Brahmaloka Praapti	Sesame Seeds	Catusarakara
north	Saayujya Siddhi	Thinai Daanam	Kumaara
north	Alapya Paapa Nivartti	Rudraksha Maala	Omkaara
north	Sakala Vidya Siddhi	Book Daanam	Brihaspathi
north	Kaarya Siddhi	Silver Gooseberry	Mangala
north	Mahad Aishwarya Praapti	1 Varaham Gold	Kubera
north	Ajnaana Nivartti	Ash, Rudraksha, Tutuvilanga	Sundaramurti
north	Ishta Karya Siddhi	Tavitu Varna Pashu	Himavat
north	Durdaana Vimochanam	Coral Daanam	Dhwashakala
north	Sat Putra Praapti	Jackfruit Daanam	Vanitha
north	Ishta Purusha Praapti	Gold Jewellery	Gandharva
north	Jura Roga Nivartti	Chamara Seva	Ahalya
north	Yoni Roga Nivartti	Shankha Daanam	Gauthama
north	Aatma Jnaanam	Gold Gooseberry	Jnaana
north	Beeja Roga Nivartti	All Seeds Daanam	Pippilaada
north	Svapnendiriya Skalita Nivartti	Blanket Daanam	Kamsaari
north	Brahmana Janma Siddhi	Kapila Pashu	Gaayatri
north	Vaayu Roga Nivartti	Deer Daanam	Vaayu

#### Other Teerthas within the Temple Complex

Rid of Sins Accrued	Agni	Agni Teertha
Beauty by Maagha Tritiya Snana	Gauri	Roopa/Apsara Kunda
Benefit of Horse Sacrifice	Ruchika Rishi	Ashva Teertha
Rid of Ungratefulness	Indra	Balamandana Teertha
Children Welfare from distress	Mrikanda	Balasakhya Teertha
Siddhis in Chaturmasa Ekadashi	Bhattika	Bhattika Teertha
BrahmaLoka by Bhishma Vrata	Markanda	Brahma Kunda
Long life rid of sins	Ratnavati	BrahmaniShudri Teertha
Conjugal Felicity and Progeny	Vasishtha	Dhara/Putrada Teertha
Ideal Shraddha for ancestors	Viduratha	Pitrukupika/GayaShiras
Destruction of Ailments	Madhusudhana	Gomukha Teertha
Handsome, Benefit of Prayag	Karnotpala	Karnotpala Teertha

**Rid of sins, lower creature births** Trshanku.      **Deer Mriga Teertha**  
**Remove Serpent fear**                      **Naagas**              **Naaga Hrada**  
**Great Siddhi; Effect of Pushkar**      **Brahma**              **Pushkara Teertha**  
**Pitru redemption, Ashwamedha**      **Parashurama**      **Raama Hrada**  
**Rid of Disease, Handicap, Deforms**      **Shankha**              **Shankha Teertha**  
**All Desires and Wisdom**                      **Vasishta**              **Saraswatha Teertha**  
**Longevity, Destroys Sins**                      **Sarmishta, Uma**      **Sarmishta Teertha**  
**Effect of Gaya and Ashwamedha**      **Vishnu**              **ShuklaTeertha/Shveta Dvipa**  
**Destroy illness, sins**                      **Vishwamitra**      **Vishwamitra Teertha**  
**Rid of Tuberculosis**                      **Brahma**              **Yakshma Teertha**  
**Destroy Sins, Attain Vaikuntha**      **Vaamana**              **Vishnupadi Teertha**

**Naleshwara:** Once Great king with culinary abilities, Nala experienced the malefic aspect of Shani, was mistaken in own kingdom, lost everything through gambling, was banished to the forest. After marrying Damayanthi earlier, Shani afflicted Nala on the latter not washing feet fully before Pooja. Working as a chariot driver for the King of Ayodhya, and after visiting many temples including Thiruvarur, Nala got redemption in the of Thirunallar. In Thiruvarur is Naleshwara Lingam installed by Nala, as well as the Navagraha Vinaayaka, monitoring planets, near the Navagraha shrine. Performing worship on Maagha month Ashtami (eighth), as well as Mondays in the Naleshwara shrine is very special, said to destroy ailments, bestowing strength.

**Nava Yoginis:** Agastya established Kamalaamba temple in exact arrangement and order of deities as an initiate would follow while doing Srividya worship, and as part of such an arrangement, there were also, the shrines pertaining to the Nine Yoginis presiding over the nine Avaranas. However, over time, these idols have been damaged, removed or misplaced, and they are no longer in existence within the temple today, although one sees empty Mantapas or niches where These Goddesses were enshrined.

**Pancha Lingas:** Representing the Pancha Lingas of Kanchipuram, Thiruvanaikaval, Thiruvannamalai, Kalahasti and Chidambaram. Once with jealousy towards Ganga, Gauri created five lumps of the five elements with Shakti; worshipping them; unconvinced even after Shiva consoling Gauri that Ganga in His head only to check the flow. Finally, Lord Himself started to meditate, and visualizing as well as manifesting as the Atman within Goddess Gauri, the Lord made Her understand Their true nature as Shiva and Shakti, as essentially non different. These shrines exist to this date as the five Lingas with Gauri, in the Praharam around Thyagaraja's shrine.

**Aazhi Ther:** Thiruvarur is well known for the famous chariot festival, called Aazhi Ther, Asia's biggest chariot at nearly 100 feet high and weighing nearly 300 tons. Aazhi in ancient Tamil as 'Ocean', and the chariot aptly represents the holy mountain Mahameru surrounded by the a sea of devotees. The Ther festival or Rathotsavam finds reference in the fourth Anuvaakam of the famous and powerful Rudram Namakam chant.

**Vallabha Ganapathi:** In the temple complex of Thiruvarur, one observes the shrine of Vallabha Ganapathi at the entrance to the Valmeekanaatha-Thyagaraja sanctum, and is thus worshipped prior to seeing the two main deities (Moolavar). The Shakti as Vallabha seated on the left lap of Ganesha represents the power of the Lord, and in some representations such as Siddhi Vinaayaka is expanded into two deities – Siddhi (Accomplishment) and Buddhi (Wisdom, Enlightenment), which are the two fruits obtained on worshipping

Ganesha.

**Durvasanatha:** Sundarar restored right eye here. Originally established by sage Durvaasa along with a tank in the northeast corner, to subside the high tides bursting from the sea. Symbol of an eye in the right part of the Lingam; Goddess Panjin Mennadiyaal, feet softer than cotton. Also known as Dusshileshwara, where Durvaasa, visiting the Chitreshwari Peetha was not greeted properly by the sages worship; decided to establish separate temple, with land granted by Sushila, a merchant. Durvaasa is one of the 12 Mantra Drishtas of Sri Vidya, as well as the originator of various schools and traditions such as Guhaananda Mandali, Chidaananda Mandali etc. within the Sri Vidya worship.

**Naganatha:** Mischievous dweller of Thiruvavur once hurt and killed the serpent crown prince, and in vengeance, the entire horde of serpents invaded, infested and devastated the city, and had to be ultimately subdued by residents who were initiated by Lord Shiva Himself to utter the 'Na-Gara' Mantra as an antidote for the venom. It is in this same incident that Shiva was enshrined as Naaganaatha by a thrice-born or Trijaatha. Outside the main temple, in the middle of the huge Kamalaalayam tank, one finds the temple known as Naduvanam, in which is enshrined the Shiva-Shakti as Naaganaatha and Yogaamba .

**Heramba Ganapathi:** Installed as Svargadvaaraprada, and Mokshada and Martyada (Preventing the ones fallen from heaven from slipping away into Naraka); Worship in the Shukla Chaturthi of Maagha month will remove obstacles for a period of one year; Lord is five faced, facing east, west, north, south and skyward. The five faces of the Lord represent the five sheaths (Kosha) of anatomy, namely Annamaya (flesh sheath made of matter), Praanamaya (breath or energy sheath), Manomaya (mental sheath with emotions), Vijnaanamaya (intellect sheath or wisdom) and Aanandamaya (sheath of cosmic bliss).

**Vathapi Ganapathi:** The shrine has historical value, since the idol of this deity, originally in Vatapi town of the Badami Chalukya Kingdom (present day Bagalkot district, Karnataka) was brought back by the Pallavas as a war trophy in the 7th century, and installed in the temple of Thiruvavur. The unique form and style of Vathapi Ganapathi, owing to its Chalukyan features, stand out as the most conspicuous aspect one observes in the shrine. The Lord is also viewed as the four (Chatvaari) forms of speech (Vaak), namely Paraa, Pashyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari. As such, the bent trunk (Vakra Thunda) is also the form of Aum (Pranava Svaroop).

**Yajneshwara-Uttaravedi:** Installed by Dasharatha while performing Putrakameshti Yajnas to beget sons; blessed with a bowl of pudding distributed to Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra; Yajnapurusha Narayana was born as Raama, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna. Later, knowing terrible imminent drought due to transit of Shani across Rohini, Dasharatha set out to battle Shani and broke His cart; after long dialogue, Shani agreed that worship with gingelly oil bath on a saturday and Shantika rites and Homa with gingelly seeds will assure protection during its seven and half year period; Dasharatha installed a shrine of Lord Shani along with His Father Lord Soorya (sun) and His Guru Lord Kaala Bhairava.

**Medha Dakshinamurthi:** Enshrined in the northern Praharam, near Siddhishwara. Seated under a banyan tree, and surrounded by His prime Shishyas-Sanaka, Sanaatana, Sanandana and Sanatkumaara. Unique by the presence of only one earring, in the left ear alone of the Lord, as well as the presence of snakes coiled around the Lord's body in various places. The ear-ring in one ear denotes that Dakshinamurthi is Ardhanaari Svaroop (right and left halves are Shiva and Shakti). As such, He is almost always

shown as a Kevala Moorthi – without an accompanying consort.

**Anandeshwara:** Brahma consecrated 'Chitra Shila' for performing Yajna; later Mankana, negated the guarding snakes; taking the Kusha grass for worship accidentally pricked his finger, sees vegetable juice, rather than blood flow out of the wound. Taking this as sign of attained Siddhi, began dancing, making whole world sway. Shiva manifested before Mankana, guised as a sage, pricked His hand and showed how ash and not blood flowed from the wound, advising Mankana to stop. Shiva graced staying here as (Eeshwara) of Bliss (Aananda), preserving the bliss of Mankana's dance. Worshipping on Maagha Shukla Chaturdashi even a sinner is promised the stay in Shiva Loka.

**Siddhishwara:** Hamsa Siddhi prayed to Shiva as Siddhishwara for progeny; Later instant, sage Devaratha in distress after losing his wife to a serpent, vowed to kill every serpent in sight. Thus, he encountered a water snake, which it narrated how, as a mischievous fellow, he hurled a snake at a meditating Brahmin and subsequently the person was cursed to be born as a water snake and being ordered to perform the Shadakshara Mantra Japa continuously, and promised redemption through Devaratha. Sage then adopted Deeksha; chanting 10000 times, thrice a day, and seated beside the Lingam in the South side as advised by the serpent. By the boon granted by Lord Shiva to Hamsa Siddhi, the sage Devaratha attained complete Mantra Siddhi.

**Achaleshwara:** King Chamatkaara, left for renunciation. After hundreds of years of severe penance, Lord appeared and honored the King's request to stay as Achaleshwara. When the king expressed anxiety of the Lord possibly moving away from this place, the Lord pointed towards the shadow of the Lingam and declared that it always shall fall on the east (behind the Lingam), irrespective of the sun's direction, as a proof. Further, standing in the sanctum, if one is not able to see his own shadow on the Lingam, one is surely destined to die within next six months. The Lord's consort is seen as Vandaar Kuzhali or Bhramaraambika whose hair is always surrounded by buzzing bees. It is this Goddess as a bee that helped Muchukunda choose the original Thyagaraja idol. Ghee Abhishekham to Achaleshwara on the Maagha Shukla Chaturdashi destroys all sins; Once Naminandhi Adigal he found the lamp about to extinguish. Realizing that bringing fresh ghee from home be too late, he approached the neighbors for ghee. The neighbours not only refused ghee, but also rebuked Adigal, saying that if the Lord was indeed as powerful as claimed, then the lamps would light even with water. Lord graced began to fill the lamps with water. In a miraculous incident, the lakhs of lamps all around Thiruvavur all lit up with water, as promised by the Lord. Naminandhi Adigal was elevated to the status of the 63 Naayanmaars.

**Kapaleeshwara:** Indra, threatened by demon Vritra, worshipped Haatakeshwara and emerged victorious. However, Indra incurred the Brahmahatti Dosha; afflicted with terrible leprosy. Indra visited the 68 Teerthas and upon completion, the skull fell off from the hand of Indra, installed as a Lingam Kapaaleeshwara. Gifting a Purusha form made of gold, called Paapa Purusha to a brahmin is relieved of the Brahmahatti Dosha. Kapaaleeshwara also shines as a honored shrine for performing last rites (Shraaddha) or even visiting during the Shraaddha Paksha. The shrine has the powers and efficacy of Thiruvaidaimarudhur or Kumbakonam shrines in destroying sins (Mahaa Paathaka), and destroying the Brahmahatti Dosha.

**Runahreshwara:** As the remover (Hara) of bondages (Runa), graces relief from long standing debts or chronic ailments. Prescribed worship procedure is by using salt and pepper as offering to the Lord on (Amavaasya), or on eleven consecutive sundays, mondays or fridays. Facing South Lord performs

the duties of Yama; Yama prays to Shiva with severe Bhakti; reaches a stage, where He has given up the ego and merged into oneness with the Lord. Thus Lord Yama, who is Kaala, having destroyed his identity becomes the Kaala-Kaala, merging with Lord Shiva. Pleased with the devotion of Yama, Lord grants Him the exalted and honorable position of Chandikeshwara - as keeping the accounts of Lord Shiva's properties as well as records of temple visits

**Patanjali Manohara:** Even after the Aananda Natanam Darshan of Chidambaram, the sages were not entirely satiated, and desired the Ajapa Natanam of the Lord. Answering the prayers, the Lord graced them at Thiruvarur on the sacred Thiruvathirai or Arudra Darshan day, with Darshan of His Lotus Feet in what stands today as the temple of Vilamal. The Lord is known as Patanjali Manoharar, and the Rudra Paadam of the Lord is seen in front of the Lingam. The Goddess is known as sweet voiced Madhurabhaashini, one whose voice has been extolled by Aadi Shankara in Saundaryalahari as even more melodious than the Veena music of Saraswathi.

**Trinetranatha:** Raama performed Tharpana of Dasharatha in Teertha, "Gaya Shira" or Kekkarai, having equal powers of Gaya, Bihar. Called "Thiruppalli Mukkoodal"; originally dug by Lord Ganesha bringing together Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi and later pointed to by Shiva as 16 times more powerful than Kashi and Rameshwaram, when Jataayu was desirous of sacred baths in the latter. Shiva installed as Trinetranatha by king Vijayaalaya, when he refused to have dinner without performing Shiva Pooja and fashioned a bag of horsegram into a Lingam shape, and after Poojaa, the bag refused to budge and stayed as the temple. Goddess is lotus eyed Anjanaakshi, graced queen Tapovadahani, by protection from marriage delays and welfare of children.

**Veda Lingas:** Veda Vinaayaka beside the Shankha Teertham in the outermost Praharam; installed by a brahmin Shankha offering his own limbs, in repentance of stealing fruits offered for worship, Teertha cures ailments and heal wounds, however severe they may be. Rig Veda Lingam of Maha Vaakya 'Prajnaanam Brahma' of the Aitareya Upanishad. Yajur Veda Lingam of Maha Vaakya 'Aham Brahmaasmi' of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Saama Veda Lingam of Maha Vaakya 'Tat Tvam Asi' of the Chandogya Upanishad. Atharvana Veda Lingam of Maha Vaakya 'Ayam Aatma Brahma' of the Mandukya Upanishad.

**Kamalamuni:** As one of the 18 great and powerful Siddhas, Kamalamuni Siddhar, believed by many to be the Kalanginaatha, was born in Varanasi, into the Kuravar community. As the disciple of Thirumoolar, author of the highly mystic Thirumanthiram, Kamalamuni is the Guru of the renown Bhogar Siddha of Pazhani, sharing a unique Guru Shishya relationship akin to father and son. Believed by some to also incarnate as the Chinese philosopher Confucius, the Siddha lived for a total of sixty eight generations and attained Samaadhi in Thiruvarur, in the Aanandeshwara temple, where the shrine still stands. The Siddha also installed a Lingam, Kamalanaatha inside the Kamalaamba sanctum.



