

Narayaneeyam: Sacred Stories & Divine Incarnations

Narayaneeyam Collection

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 **Description:** A comprehensive journey through the Narayaneeyam's narratives - from the sanctity of Guruvayoor to Krishna's divine exploits and Bhattathiri's miraculous cure

 **Tags:** narayaneeyam, krishna, avatara, bhattathiri, guruvayoor, bhagavatam, devotional-literature, divine-stories

The stories described trace the history of the deity, the composition of the Narayaneeyam, and a summary of various divine incarnations (Avatāras), culminating in the expansive narrative of Lord Krishna's exploits.

The discourse structures the presentation of these stories across three parts (days), beginning with the prerequisite background, known as **Pūrva Charitram**, which sets the context for the Narayaneeyam's composition and the greatness of Guruvayoor.

Part 1: Pūrva Charitram and Early Avatāras (Up to Dasakam 36)

The initial narratives focus on the sanctity of the temple location (Sthala Vailakshanyam), the reason for the text's composition (Bhaktru Vailakshanyam), and the lineage of the deity.

I. The History and Sanctity of Guruvayoor

Janamejaya's Curse and Cure

King Janamejaya, son of Parikshit, learned that his father died from a snake bite. He performed a Sarpa Satram (snake sacrifice) intending to destroy all snakes. Although the sacrifice was stopped, Janamejaya incurred the sin of Nāga Hatyā, which manifested as a severe skin disease (Tva(t)cha rogam). Mahārishis instructed him to worship the deity at Guruvayoor for relief. This event proves the deity has been present there for at least 5,000 years.

The Prachetasas and Shiva

The kshetram predates the installation of the Krishna idol. The Prachetasas (sons of Prachina Barhish), seeking spiritual progress, performed penance on the banks of the sacred pond (Sarovaram Manoharam). Lord Shiva, who originally resided nearby (Ambikapuram), appeared and instructed them in the Rudra Geetam.

The Deity's Lineage and Arrival

The specific idol was originally worshipped by Brahma, then passed down to Prishni and Sutapas, then to Aditi and Kashyapa, and eventually to Devaki and Vasudeva. Lord Krishna himself worshipped this idol in Dwaraka. Before Dwaraka submerged, Krishna entrusted the idol to his friend Uddhava. Uddhava, guided by Guru (Brihaspati), arranged for Vāyu (the Wind God) to airlift the idol. Shiva ceded his location (Ambikapuram) so that the idol could be consecrated there by Guru and Vayu, giving the place its name, Guruvayoor.

II. The Reason for the Narayaneeyam

Narayana Bhattathiri, the author of the text, contracted Vāta rogam (rheumatism), having taken the disease upon himself from his Acharyan, Achyuta Pisharody. Seeking a cure, he was advised by Thunchathu Ramanuja Ezhuthachan to **"start with the fish"** (Meenai thottu kootuka), referring to the Matsya Avatar, the first incarnation. This prompted Bhattathiri to summarize the Srimad Bhagavatam in 100 chapters (Dasakams).

III. Summary of Early Incarnations

The discourse reviews several Avatāras summarized by Bhattathiri:

Varaha Avatarā

To save the Earth Goddess (Bhūmadevi) from the demon Hiranyakṣa, Lord Varaha (a boar, Kiḍi) emerged miraculously from Brahma's nostril, growing to the size of a mountain (Śaila Mātrā). Hiranyakṣa, led by the instruction of Narada, confronted Varaha and was slain.

Dhruva Charitram

Dhruva, a young boy (about five years old), was insulted by his stepmother, Suruchi. He left the city with immense self-respect (Mānī) and was initiated by Narada in Madhuvana (Mathura).

Kūrma Avatarā and Samudra Manthana

Indra was cursed by Durvāsā Rishi to lose all his wealth (Lakshmi) because he disrespected a divine garland. Devas and Asuras churned the Milk Ocean (Pārakadal) using Mount Mandara, which was stabilized by Vishnu as the Kūrma (Tortoise). When poison (Karalam) emerged, Shiva consumed it to please Vishnu (Bhavat Priyārtham). Lakshmi emerged, whom Vishnu accepted.

Dhanvantari and Amrita

The divine physician Dhanvantari emerged from the churning carrying the pot of Amrita (nectar).

Vāmana Avatarā

Vāmana was born on Tiruvōṇam (Śravaṇa) Nakshatra. He went to the Yāgaśālā of the great king Bali Chakravarti. Though Śukra intervened, Bali granted Vāmana's request for three paces of land. Vāmana expanded into Trivikrama, covering the universe in two steps, and placed the third step on Bali's head.

Rāmāvatāra

Rāma, born to Kauśalya, pursued the golden deer (Mārīca), leading to Sītā's abduction. Hanumān brought Sītā's ring (ring of Karayāzhi) and returned with her hair jewel (Mouli Ratnam / Cūḍāmaṇi). Bhattathiri was reassured by the Lord himself to write that Hanumān gave the jewel to you (datou te) rather than naming Rāma to maintain the meter.

Paraśurāma Avatāra

Paraśurāma, an Amśāvatāra, killed many Kṣatriyas. He reclaimed land from the sea by throwing his axe, creating the region known as Kerala.

Part 2: Detailed Stories (Krishna Avatāra)

The central focus shifts to the detailed exploits of Lord Krishna (Dasakam 37 onwards), highlighting the profound divine interplay in his childhood.

Ajamila Upākhyānam

At the moment of death, Ajamila accidentally called his son, Nārāyaṇa. Vishnu Dūtas appeared, arguing that uttering the divine name, even unknowingly (Abuddhyā), destroys all sins (dahati agha aughān), comparing it to fire burning wood or medicine working without the patient's comprehension.

Nṛsimha Avatara (Hiraṇyakaśipu Vadam)

Hiraṇyakaśipu's brother, Hiraṇyākṣa, was killed. Hiraṇyakaśipu subjected his son, Prahlāda, to various tortures (poison, elephants, snakes, falling off a mountain), but Prahlāda survived due to his deep devotion. When Hiraṇyakaśipu questioned Vishnu's omnipresence and struck a pillar, the Nṛsimha form (half-man, half-lion, unique in Brahma's creation) emerged with a terrifying roar.

Gajendra Moksha (Indradyumna's Karma)

King Indradyumna was cursed by Agastya to be born as an elephant (Hasti Bhūyam). While in the pond, the elephant recalled its past devotion and was saved by Vishnu, who rushed there on Garuḍa.

Krishna's Birth and Exchange

Krishna was born to Devaki in the prison. An aśarīrī (disembodied voice) warned Kamsa that the eighth child would kill him. Vasudeva exchanged Krishna for Yogamāyā (born to Yaśodā in Gokulam). The doors opened, and the Yamunā parted, flowing uphill (contrary to physics).

Yogamāyā's Escape

Kamsa seized Yogamāyā, intending to smash her on a stone. She slipped from his grasp (just as an emancipated devotee escapes Yama's noose: mr̥tyu pāśādiva) and appeared as the eight-armed Durgā, announcing that Kamsa's killer was already born.

Pūtanā Vadam

Pūtanā, having killed many children, came disguised as a wet nurse. Krishna suckled her breast, pulling out her vital life force (Jīvātmā). Her huge corpse, when cremated, gave off the fragrance of sandalwood and agaru.

Śakaṭāsura and Tṛṇāvarta Vadam

Śakaṭāsura (demon in a cart) was destroyed when Krishna struck the cart with his tiny foot, sending parts of the cart (that attained the touch of the Lord) to Moksha. Tṛṇāvarta (demon in a whirlwind) was killed when Krishna, though small, became too heavy for the demon to carry, crushing him. Bhattathiri relates Tṛṇāvarta's death (caused by air/wind) to his own Vāta rogam (a disease of the wind/air) in Vātapura (Guru Vāyū).

Mṛd Bhakṣaṇam (Eating Earth)

When Yaśodā caught Krishna eating mud and asked him to open his mouth, Krishna displayed the entire cosmos (Bhuvanān api Akhilān). Yaśodā, by the power of Vishnu's māyā, immediately forgot the vision.

Dāmodara Līlā (Tying to the Mortar)

Yaśodā tried to tie Krishna to a heavy mortar for breaking the butter pots. The rope was always two fingers short. Krishna allowed himself to be bound. While tied, he dragged the mortar between two Yamalārjuna trees, breaking them and releasing the cursed sons of Kubera. Bhattathiri was worried he incorrectly mentioned a stick instead of a stone, but the Lord showed him a vision that he used both.

Brahma's Illusion

Brahmā, testing Krishna, stole the cowherd boys and calves. Krishna instantly replicated them, sustaining the illusion for one year. Brahmā, upon returning, saw the replicated children and realized his error, immediately praying to Krishna.

Kāliya Nardhanam

Krishna jumped into the Kālindī river to subdue the serpent Kāliya. Bhattathiri described the dance on the hoods using words with a hissing sound (Śa Kāra) to capture the essence of the dance.

Rāsa Krīḍā

Krishna played the flute, attracting the Gopīs. He danced the Rāsa circle, mesmerizing them. Bhattathiri had a vision of the dance, noting how an elderly Gopī feigned fainting to lean on Krishna's chest.

Part 3: Conclusion and the Concluding Number

The final portion of the discourse covers the eventual relief of Bhattathiri's disease and the numerical scope of the completed text.

Bhattathiri's Reflection

When reflecting on the many who welcomed Krishna to Mathura (an event Bhattathiri felt he missed), he realized his suffering was due to his own past offense.

Disease Relieved

After completing the 98th Dasakam (known as Namaskāra Daśakam), Bhattathiri was relieved of his Vāta rogām.

The Final Vision

In the 100th Dasakam, Bhattathiri describes a comprehensive vision of Vishnu, including the four-armed deity, the Kālayava puṣpa (blue flower) garland, and the adolescent form (Divya Kaiśora Veśam) radiating bliss.

The Concluding Prayer

Bhattathiri concludes with a request for mercy, acknowledging that his work, though a failure compared to the Lord's glory (Agnjātvā te Mahatvam), was composed through divine grace. He asks the Lord (Vātalayādīśa) that all who listen to this work (Śrutishu) receive long life, health, and happiness (Āyur Ārogya Saukhyam).

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The Concluding Number

The text composed by Bhattathiri, the Śrīman Nārāyaṇīyam, is defined by the following numbers:

- It contains **100 Dasakams** (chapters).
- The work consists of **1,034 ślokas**. The number 1,034 is the popular version, as some scholars believe the two extra ślokas sometimes found are insertions.
- The final chapter (Dasakam 100) concludes with the prayer that whoever reads or hears this text will attain **Āyuh Ārogya Saukhyam** (Long life, health, and happiness).



Reference

This blog post is based on notes taken from the following video :

Video Sources: - [Watch on YouTube](#) - [Watch on YouTube](#)

For a more detailed explanation, I highly recommend watching the original videos.



Acknowledgment & Disclaimer

These articles are based on discourses by **Sri Dushyanth Sridhar**, who renders discourses in English & Tamil on Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, Bhāgavata, Vishnu Purāna, Bhagavad Gitā, Vishnu Sahasranāma, and Divya Prabanda in the upanyāsam, pravachanam, or kālakshepam style. Visit <https://desikadaya.org> for more information. These notes are presented solely for educational purposes to help viewers download and benefit from these teachings. Any incorrect interpretations or inaccuracies are mine and unintentional—please forgive me. For any feedback, please send an [email](#).