



## OUR TEMPLES



### Part-2

Deity worship is one of the prescribed procedures of serving and propitiating the Supreme Lord. In-fact it is the recommended process of serving the Lord in this material world. The great sages have considered the deity form to be much greater than any other forms of the Lord. The greatness of the deity form of the Lord is established with the following symbolism in the scriptures.

The *Para:* form of the Lord is compared to the water in the outer layers of the cosmic egg. We know that there is water in the outer layers of the cosmic egg, yet we cannot quench our thirst with that water because it is not accessible to us. In fact nobody can access the water in the outer layers of the cosmic egg. In the same way we know the presence of the Lord in *Para:* form in *Vaikunta* through the scriptures and yet we cannot approach Him as long as we are bound in this material world.

The *Vyu:ha* forms of the Lord are compared to the water in the milky ocean. We all know, that the milky ocean is full of milk, through the scriptures. Yet we cannot quench our thirst with that milk because it is not accessible to us. Similarly we all know the presence of the Lord in

a magnificent *Vyuha* form in the ocean of milk. Yet He is not accessible to us. In-fact He was not visible even to the Demigods and great Sages, who went to the shores of the ocean of milk to see Him. They could only hear His voice.

*Vibhava* forms are equated to the water in small brooks. Only the people who live near the brooks can access the water in them during rainy seasons. As soon as the rains stop the small brooks dry up, leaving mere traces of its flow. Similarly only those people who live during His incarnations, at the place in which the Lord enacts His pastimes, can experience His grace. He is not accessible to rest of them. Once He disappears from this material world after enacting His pastimes, He is not accessible to the people of the subsequent generations. Only the memories of the pastimes that He enacted during His incarnations remain in the form of recorded history.

The *Antharya:mi* form of the Lord is equated to the water which is present everywhere underneath the ground. Water is present everywhere in the ground. We live and do all sorts of things on it. Yet we cannot access that water immediately when we are thirsty. We cannot even perceive it.

We have to either dig a well or drill a bore-well to access the water lying hidden beneath the ground. Similarly we all know the all pervasive nature of the Lord. We also know His presence in our hearts from the scriptures. In fact we live in Him. Yet we cannot perceive Him. One has to ardently practice the arduous process of *ASHTA:NGA YO:GA* for a very long time to see Him within ones heart. Hence, the Lord in *Antharya:mi* form is also not easily accessible to everyone.

The Supreme Lord in His *Archa* form is equated to the tap water. The tap water is accessible to everybody. One can immediately and easily quench his thirst with the tap water. One can easily go to the tap or bring the tap to him through a duct. One can also easily regulate the tap water. In the same way the deity form of the Lord is accessible to every person who is interested to serve Him in that form. One can access the deity form very easily. One can make the deity with any prescribed material, in a prescribed form and start worshipping Him. The Lord comes down to that form and accepts it as His body. One can approach the Lord in the deity form in the Temple or bring the Lord in the deity to his residence.

The Lord in His deity form is not different from the other forms. In one of the hymns of *Thiruvaymozhi*

saint *Namma:Iwa:r* also says "The Supreme Lord who resides in the transcendental realm (*Para*) is also residing in Tirumala hills (*Archa*), is also lying in the milky ocean (*Vyu:ha*), moves on the earth in different roles (*Vibhava*), is also present in all the beings (*Antharya:mi*) and is seated in everyone's heart (*Antharya:mi*)."

The Supreme Lord in His deity form abides in the place where we want Him to abide. In spite of being the Omnipotent Lord, He seems to helplessly depend on us for everything. In spite of being the Lord of everything He obediently listens to all our dictates, wears the clothes of our choice, eats when we want Him to eat, accepts all that we offer with devotion and sleeps when we want Him to sleep. In spite of being the sovereign of the entire universe He ignores all our offences. We should not be misled by His appearance and thereby consider His deity form to be inferior to the other forms, as He is not different from His deity. In fact He is Omnipotent even in His deity form and can grant all our needs in that form. He is very easily accessible; most condescend, loving, compassionate, merciful and friendly only in His deity form. Hence the deity form of the Lord is considered to be much greater than any other forms by the great sages.

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