

A PILGRIMS DIARY TO VADA NADU DIVYADESAMS

NAMO NARAYANAYA
SRIMAN NARAYANAYA CHARANAU SARANAM PRAPATHYE
SRIMATHEY NARAYANAYA NAMAH
SRIMATHEY RAMANUJAYA NAMAH
ACHARYAR MUDALIAANDAN SWAMY THIRUVADIGALEY SARANAM

With Lord Thiruvengadamudayan's grace, Acharyar's and our Parent's blessings, we had planned to visit Vadanaadu divya desams The places covered in this trip **were Mathura, Brindavan, Gokulam, Goverdhanam, Naimisaaranyam, Ayodhya, Varanasi, Puri and Tirumalai**

SCHEDULE:

Date	Particulars	Night Halt
07/10/2000	Hyderabad- Mathura	Train
08/10/2000	Mathura, Goverdhanam, Vrindavan	Vrindavan
09/10/2000	Vrindavan, Gokulam, Mathura	Vrindavan
10/10/2000	Delhi, Lucknow	Lucknow
11/10/2000	Naimisaaranyam, Ayodhya	Train
12/10/2000	Ayodhya	Ayodhya
13/10/2000	Ayodhya-Varanasi	Train
14/10/2000	Varanasi-Puri	Puri
15/10/2000	Puri, To Tirupati	Train
16/10/2000	Train, Tirumala	Tirumala
17/10/2000	Tirumala	Tirumala
18/10/2000	Archana seva, Train	Train
19/10/2000	Returned home	

JOURNEY PARTICULARS:

CIRCULAR TICKET NO. 281282

TRAIN NO.	TRAIN NAME	D.O.J.	TIME	COACH	FROM	TO
2023	A.P.Exp.	07/10	7.10	AC	SEC	MATH
	BUS	10/10	8.00		MATH	DEL
4258	Kashi Var.Exp	10/10	13.30	AS-1	DEL	LUCKNOW
	Passenger	11/10	0.00	FC	LUCKNOW	FAIZABAD
4854	Muradhar Exp.	13/10	12.00	FC	AYODHYA	VARANASI
8476	Neelachal Exp.	13/10	20.00	AC	VARANASI	PURI
	Puri-Okha Exp.	15/10	8.00	AC	PURI	KHURDA ROAD
7479	Howrah-Tpty Exp.	15/10	11.35	FC	KHURDA RD.	TIRUPATI
7423	Narayanadri Exp.	18/10	18.30	AC	TIRUPATI	SEC'BAD

Pl. Note: 1)Went to Naimisaaranyam by bus from Lucknow via Shidoli
2) Went by passenger from Faizabad to Ayodhya (20 minutes)

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3) Boarded Puri-Okha Port Express from Puri and got down at Khurda Road to catch Howrah-Tirupati Express.

MATHURA, GOKULAM, VRINDAVAN: Out of these, Thirumathura and Ayyarpaadi(Gokulam) are divya desams. Vindavan, Mathura, Goverdhanam are treated as one divya desam.

IMPORTANT PLACES TO VISIT IN AND AROUND THIRUAAYARPAADI:

(The thirst to feel the presence of the Lord Krishna in and around these Divyadesam made us visit the places connected to his family members like Nand maharajs residence, Radharanis birth place, Radhakund Shyam kund and all other related places.(Its devotees bhagyam to vist all these places having come to Lords world.)

MATHURA: Sri Lord Krishna Janmasthan, Sri Kesava Deo Temple, Gita Mandir, Potara Kund, Dwarakadish temple, Visram Ghat and other ghats. There are more than 25 ghats here.

GOKULAM: 1.6 kms from Mahaban, 15 kms South east of Mathura, Lord SriLord Krishna was exchanged with Yogamaya here and was brought up here.

Sri Lord Krishna Mandir (residence of Nanda), Puthana vath, butter stealing etc. Every house is a temple. In every house, we can see Lord Krishna's idol. Every house in Vrindavan, Gokulam is sacred because it was sanctified by Lord Sri Lord Krishna.

MAHAVAN: 18 kms from Mathura - can go from Vrindavan in tourist bus- famous for Chaurasi (84 pillars)- Maharaja Nanda's palace.

BARSANA: Birth place of Smt. Radha Rani- 50 kms NW of Mathura-19 kms from Goverdhan- named after Brahma - to visit Mor Kutir,Radha Rani & Lalaji Temple, Dargar etc.

NANDGAON: 8.5 kms north of Barsana. - residence of Nanda Maharaja

GOVERDHAN: 26 kms west of Mathura.- one hour drive from Mathura. Located on sandstone hill known as Giriraj. The circumference of the hill may be app. 8 kms. Famous temples near Goverdhan are Haridev temple, Giriraj temple, Kusum Sarovar- It takes nearly 8 hours to do parikrama. The lake Manasi Ganga is very sacred. All the accumulated sins gets wiped off if one has bath in Manasi Ganga. It is customary to have bath in Manasi Ganga and visit Goverdhana giri.

RADHA KUND AND SHYAM KUND: 5 kms north of Goverdhan- 26 kms west of Mathura.

VRINDAVAN: Sri Govind Deo Temple, Rangaji Temple, Meera Bhajan Kutir, Yamuna River, Vastraabhaharam, Kaaling Narthanam, Sethji Mandir, ISKCON Temple, Raja Surajmal's chatrri, Banke Bihari Temple, Radha Vallabh temple, Jaipur Temple etc. ISKCON has its base here.

MATHURA, GOVERDHANAM, AND VRINDAVAN

SRI SATYABHAMA SAMETHA SRI BALALORD KRISHNA PARABRAHMANE NAMAH:

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MOOLAVAR : BALALORD KRISHNA

THAYAR : SATYABHAMA

THEERTHAM : GOVERDHANA

VIMANAM : GOVERDHANA

MANGALASAASANAM

Periazhwar(16,277,399,264-74,341,430),
Andal(478,538,539,560,569,617,624,637-646,634,638), Thondaradipodiazhwar (916), Thirumangai
Azhwar (1512,1527,1833,2673(74), Nammazhwar (3439,3499,3559-66)-Total 50 pasurams

2) GOKULAM (THIRUAAYARPAADI)

SRI RUKIMIN, SATYABHAMA NAYIKA SAMETHA SRI NAVA MOHANA LORD KRISHNA
PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

MOOLAVAR : NAVAMOHANA LORD KRISHNAR

THAYAR : SATYABHAMA, RUKMINI

THEERTHAM : YAMUNA NADHI

VIMANAM : GOVERDHANAM

MANGALASAASANAM: by Periazhwar (14,16,132,145,231,235,237,239,263,281),
Andal(474,618,630,636,638), Thirumangai Azhwar (1021,1392,1435,1993,1994,1995,2673)-Total 22
pasurams

It may be noted that neither the temple nor the idols as referred to by our Azhwars in Naaliyara Divyaprabhandham are present. What we find today was built later and in all the temples, we find the vigrahams of Lord Sri Lord Krishna alongwith Radha Rani (The gopi who depicted Prema-Bhakthi and she is considered as an amsam of Thayar) The pujas are conducted by North Indian archakas. They have a slab system of performing pooja (like for example, if you pay Rs.501/-, they offer "Bhogam" to Perumal on our name and they give us some dry fruits etc as prasadam immediately.. If you pay Rs.1001/-, then your name will be engraved on a slab which is fixed to the walls of the temple)

HOW TO APPROACH: Mathura is between Agra and New Delhi and is well connected by road and rail. All the trains stop at Mathura for atleast 2 to 3 minutes. Just outside the railway station, we can find numerous tempo drivers, autowallahs, buses who are prepared to show all the places around Mathura, including Gokulam, Goverdhan, Vrindavan. The best thing is

1) to engage an auto and visit all the important places in and around Mathura, go to Gokulam and come back to Mathura.

2) Then, go to Vrindavan which is about 1 hour journey from Mathura.

Hire a rickshaw and with the help of a guide who charges a meagre fee of Rs.25/- visit all the places in Vrindavan like Kesav Deo Temple, Meera Kutir, Rangaji mandir, Yamuna river, main temple of Radha Lord Krishna, Kalinga Narthanam place, vastraabharam etc. and stay there in the night.

3) Next day early in the morning, to get up around 4.00 A.M., have bath etc., hire a rickshaw and go to Shri Krishna Temple Or (ISKCON temple) which is a famous temple in Vrindavan and as most of the westerners are glorifying the Lord it's a scene to watch.(Try to be there sharp around 4.30 A.M.) Morning Aarathi starts at 5.00 A.M. It is worth seeing this aarathi. Once the aarathi is over, you may visit nearby temples and return to Vrindavan around 7.00 A.M. Then, after finishing breakfast etc., go on a sight seeing tour and visit other important places like Mahaban, Nandagaon, Barsana, Goverdhan etc. There are number of buses which takes you to these places and the fare they charge is around Rs.35 to Rs.40/-. Usually, the bus leaves Vrindavan around 8.00 in the morning and comes back around 15.00 hours.

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4) If anyone is interested in doing Pradakshina around Goverdhana giri, which they locally call us "PARIKRAMA", then they will have to leave early in the morning. We were told that it takes 8 to 10 hours to do parikrama. There are more than 5,000 temples in Vrindavan. There are also innumerable ashrams here. There are nearly 12 forests in and around Vrindavan. We were told that every year during the month of "DAMODAR", i.e. Karthigai month, most devotees make it a point to visit Vrindavan and they go by foot in and around Vrindavan covering all the 12 forests. We are also informed by one of the Prabhujis (Swamiji) that during that month, they recollect Sri Lord Krishna's Bala lila when Mother Yasoda due to her devotion bound Sri Lord Krishna, the Lord of the Universe with a rope. The story is too well known to bear repetition. It is suffice to know that during this month they keep reciting "Damodara Mantram" and the parikrama takes nearly one month for them to complete.

If one intends to go to Delhi, there are buses plying to Delhi from Mathura every 10 minutes. There are also various trains but one has to find out the train timings in advance. We were told that one should not board U.P.State buses as it takes more time to reach Delhi and that Jaipur/ Rajasthan buses are faster.

Now I would like to brief our experience at Mathura, Vrindavan.

**HARE KRISHNA HARE KRISHNA KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE.**

OUR EXPERIENCE:

With the blessings of Thiruvengadamudaiyan and our Acharya, we left our home to catch the train at 6.00 A.M. Chi Ranga, Chi Srinivasan and Chi Narayanan had come to see us off. Boarded A.P.Express at 6.30 a.m. Ac-III tier- Spent the whole day in the train itself.. Next day, we reached Mathura around 6.10 A.M. Dumped luggages in cloak room, and went to Booking office to enquire about status of Varanasi Reservation. Though we had planned the tour well in advance, our reservation from Varanasi to Puri was not confirmed. It was wait listed. Had to wait for more than 45 minutes due to the inefficiency of the railway staff. As the tickets were not confirmed, we left Mathura station with a heavy heart. Outside the railway station, there were many auto drivers who were willing to take us for sight seeing. I think we should have visited Mathura temples first. Since we were keen on taking bath in Manasi Ganga, we decided to go to Goverdhana giri first. Went by mini bus to Goverdhana giri. Fare Rs.8/- per head. Goverdhana giri is one hour drive from Mathura.. Got down at Manasi Ganga stop and walked towards Manasi Ganga for nearly 5 minutes. The way to Manasi Gange is narrow. Reached Manasi Ganga around 11.00 A.M. Manasi Ganga encircles Goverdhana giri. This is considered as Ganges itself. There is a story that Mother Yasodha and Nanda along with other gopis were planning to have a holy dip in the Ganges and were planning to make a trip. When Lord Krishna came to know of this, he prevented them from making further arrangements and with his toe he created a hole on the ground from which emerged Ganges. Lord Krishna blessed the gopis and said that this was equivalent to Ganges and it bestows the same benefit. But unfortunately, the waters of Manasi Ganga are so dirty that we could not even have bath. We just sprinkled water on our head. Then, we went to Giriraj temple which is on the banks of Manasi Ganga. Hope U.P.Government takes up some steps to purify the waters as they did for Ganges.

GIRIRAJ TEMPLE: This is a small temple. There are 2 small rocks and pooja is performed to these rocks. We were told that the bigger rock which is in the shape of a mount is Goverdhana giri and the other rock to its right is Lord Sri Krishna. We could find Lord Sri Krishna's footprints on the stone.

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We were told that If one does pradakshina 3 times around this mount in the temple, it is equivalent to one pradakshina around the Goverdhana giri. This custom is followed by all the devotees who throng to this temple. The temple was overcrowded. We did 7 pradakshinas, lit a lamp, poured milk on the small mount and the rectangular stone (Giriraj and Lord Krishna resp.) and partook prasaadam. From there, we went to Goverdhana giri which is on the opposite side of the road. It takes nearly 5 to 10 minutes to reach the entrance of the hill. It is one furlong from Manasi Ganga.

GOVERDHANA GIRI : There is a small entrance to the giri and the entrance is safeguarded by 2 watchmen. The entrance looks more like a garden. Though we wished to do parikrama, we could not do due to lack of time. We were told by the residents there that it takes 8 hours to do parikrama. We stood before the mountain and offered our prannams. Though the mount is not very high, the circumference is more. Lord Sri Krishna's life is closely intertwined with Goverdhana giri. Lord Krishna was very fond of the hill. Lord Krishna spent most of his childhood days in the goverdhana giri. Everyday, he used to take the calves for gazing to the hill. He used to play his flute, enjoyed with his friends. It was here that Lord Krishna gave darshan to Brahma as SUPREME PERSONALITY by giving him viswaroopa darsanam and removing Brahma's illusion. This incident took place in Goverdhana giri.

It was here that Lord Krishna lifted the hill to protect his people and cattle from the calamity created by Indra. It may be recalled that, at the behest of Lord Krishna, when Nanda and others offered prayers to Goverdhana giri and offered prasaadams, Lord Krishna himself assumed the form of the Goverdhana giri and consumed all the offerings. We were told that the feast was spread over a distance of 8 kms and our Lord once again proved his Deivatvam by assuming the form of the hill. This feast is known as "ANNAKOOTA" and Lord assumed 2 forms, one that of the hill and another of a small boy (Nandalaala). The Lord in the form of the mountain was asking for more food saying "ANIYORA" which means "some more". Even today, near Vrindavan, there is a village called Aniyora. (The incident when Goverdhanagiri was lifted by Lord needs no repetition) As the Lord protected the cows and the people in Goverdhan, He got the name "GOVINDA". Adiyen was told that the Lord comes rushing to the devotee who calls Him by His favourite Thirunaamam "GOVINDA: This can be felt when one visits Thirumalai

From there we went to Haridev temple which is just opposite to Goverdhana giri. In this temple there are idols of Radha and Lord Krishna, Lord Krishna's friend, Shrinathji's idol etc. There are very lovely paintings on the walls of the temple depicting Lord Krishna's activities. Took some photographs and spent around 30 minutes inside the temple. We were all totally tired. Went to a roadside hotel. Had thick and delicious curds with Khachoris and boarded bus. In all these places, it may be observed that milk and buttermilk are offered in mud pots. We were planning to go to Vrindavan directly from Goverdhan. But we were advised by the local people to go to Mathura and from there take a bus to Vrindavan. We acted accordingly. Boarded bus around 13.30. Reached Mathura around 14.15 from there took a tempo to Vrindavan Rs.5/- per head. Reached Vrindavan around 14.30. There were guides who were very eager to show us all the places in Vrindavan. The guide himself arranged a rickshaw. He said that he would charge Rs.25/- as his fee and that we will have to pay Rs.125/- to rickshaw puller. (Actually, he had asked Rs.50/- but since he took us to Rangaji mandir and to hotel we had to pay him extra) They showed us a dharmashaala PALIAWALLA DHARMASHALA (Rent Rs.25/- plus bed charges @ Rs.2/- per bed etc.) Landed in the dharmashaala. Had bath etc., refreshed ourselves and left for sight seeing around 16.00

GOVIND DEO TEMPLE : First, we went to Govind Deo Temple. Actually, the temple was a 7 storey structure but was demolished to 3 storeys by Aurangazeb. The temple was built in 1590. All the

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carvings and figures on the walls of the temple were disfigured by muslims. We were told that this temple was the tallest and one could clearly have a glimpse of Delhi and Agra by climbing to the top of the temple. We were also told that on diwali day, they light lanterns by pouring more than 50 kgs of cow ghee. This used to illuminate the whole city. Aurangzeb who could not bear this, came with his army to invade the temple. That night, Lord appeared in the temple priest's dream and ordered him to take Him to Jaipur for fear of desecration. Accordingly, the priest left the temple immediately with the idol.. When the muslims invaded, they could not find the idol. Instead they disfigured all the carvings on the walls of the temple and demolished 4 storeys. We were told that till date the idol is kept just outside Jaipur Maharaja's palace and the old idol was replaced with a new one which is at present seen in the garbagriham. Beside the idol of Lord Krishna, there is an idol of Radha Rani. Besides this, there are idols of Ram, Lakshman and Puri jagannath. We were told that one month before Janmaashtami, oonjal utsavam starts. Took a photograph. It may be noted that Mathura, Vrindavan, Ayodhya are full of monkeys. One has to take care of his belongings as the monkeys have the habit of snatching away things. Next, we went to Meera Bhajan Kutir.

MEERA BHAJAN KUTIR: We were taken to Meera Bhajan Kutir through very narrow streets. This is an ashram which gives shelter to the destitute women/ devotees who have left everything. We were told that more than 2,000 widows are being taken care of. They always keep chanting HARE KRISHNA MAHA MANTRA 24 hours a day and they are fed by the main temple which gives them 1/5th share of all the offerings made.

Thirdly, we went to Sethji temple. Here also, Lord Krishna alongwith Radharani is worshipped. We were told that it was built by a rich "SETH". Hence, it is known as Sethji temple.

YAMUNA RIVER: From there, we went to the banks of Yamuna. There is a sannidhi for Lord Krishna dancing on Kalinga, the serpent. Took two photos.

KADAMBA VRUKSHAM : This Kadamba Vruksham is also on the banks of Yamuna. It was here that Lord Krishna performed VASTRAABHAHARAM episode. It was here Lord Krishna gave the thathvam to gopis and to the whole world that when one asks for saranagathi, they have to leave their ego etc. Took a snap near the Kadamba Vruksham. We were told that pilgrims usually offer cloth here. But as we were unaware, we did not. The guide showed us narrow streets on the way to Yamuna and told us that Lord Krishna used to play with his friends in those streets. Then, from there we went to Vrindavan gardens more popularly known as MADHUVAN.

MADHUVAN : This garden is full of tulasi plants. The leaves of the tulasi plants are not like the leaves which we see here. They are similar to the leaves of rose plant. This place is full of monkeys and we were told that if any monkey sees us taking photos, it will immediately snatch away the camera. We were asked to be more careful. It is here that Lord performs "RASALEELA". We were told that the pujari shouts thrice and orders everyone to leave the place immediately. Even the monkeys leave the place. Took theertha prasaadam and left the place. We took two photos in Madhuvan. Then, we left for the main temple of Radha Krishna.

BANKE BIHARI TEMPLE: This is the main temple in Vrindavan. This is a temple dedicated to Radha Krishna. Lord Sri Krishna is seen with Radha Rani, Balarama and His family. Here, we were asked to make a sankalp. We offered Rs.560 + Rs.132/- towards bhog, dhaan for Meeras and abhishekam to the Lord. Then, we were offered prasaadam. It may be noted that in these temples (Ayodhya, Vrindavan, Mathura) they have a practice of laying a stone with our name inscribed on it if

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we give "dhaan" They maintain a slab system wherein if you donate Rs.1000/- or more then your name will be inscribed on the stone. For dhaan less than Rs.1,000/- , this practice is not there.

RANGAJI TEMPLE: From Banke Bihari temple, we went to Rangaji temple around 7 in the evening. This is the only temple in Vrindavan which is built in South Indian style. This is one of the old temples here. It was built by a South Indian. All South Indian rituals like Saatumarai etc. are followed. This temple is dedicated to Lord Sri Ranganath, Andal and Srinivasar. Being PURATAASI SRAVANAM our Srinivasa Perumal was brought out in procession. We prostrated ourselves in front of the Lord . We were very fortunate to have Perumal's darshan with Ubhaya Naachiyars. Took photograph of Perumal. Then, we did pradakshinam around the temple and went inside. Here, like in Srivilliputtur, Lord Ranganathar, Andal and Garuda are in SAMA AASANAM. The temple is very big. Just outside the garbagriham, to the right is the sannidhi of Srinivasa Perumal. Had darshan of Perumal and left the place. We were told by one of the devotees that every morning THIRUPPAVAI SAATRUMARAI takes place at 7.30 A.M. We decided to attend the Saatumarai next day and left the place.

As we decided to attend Morning Aarathi at ISKCON temple, we requested the rickshaw puller to come to chathiram around 4.00 A.M. the next morning. Went to bed around 20.40 hours and woke up at 4.00 A.M. on 09/10/2000. Had bath etc. and went to Lord Krishna s temple Reached the temple at 5.40 A.M.. The morning aarathi had already started and we participated in it. Along with other devotees, we also did pradakshina to Tulasi Maharani(as devotees affectionately call) The Tulasi Aarathi and bhajans on Lord Narasimha and Lord Srinivasa were sung and it is very very enchanting and Adiyen requests the reader to listen to the bhajans . Even stone-hearted persons like Hiranyakasapu will melt to recite Hari naamam immediately. Then,we went to Rangaji temple to participate in Thiruppavai Saatumarai. It was Ekadasi. Recited Thirupallandu, Thirupalliezhichi, Thiruppavai. Had darshan. We were asked to leave the temple because they were going to offer "neivedyam" to the Lord. In North India, at the time of neivedyam, no one is allowed to be even in temple premises. As we were told that it would take 45 minutes for the sannidhi to reopen for darshan, we left the temple. Had breakfast etc. and boarded a bus to go on sight seeing. The bus left at 8.30 A.M.The fare charged was Rs.55/- . The places covered were 1) Nandgaon 2) Sona 3) Barsana, 4)Mahaban,5) Goverdhan and 6)Radha Kund and Shyam Kund.

NANDGAON: It took more than one hour for us to reach this place, This was the residence of Nanda Maharaja. The palace of Nanda Maharaja is situated on a hill top. We had to climb few steep steps to reach the temple. The path to the temple is very narrow. As Kamsa and his friends could not enter the region because of a curse by a rishi that they would turn into stone, Nanda's brother and other elderly gopis felt that this was the safest place for Lord Krishna. Hence, all the gopis along with Nanda's family moved to this village. In the garbagriham, we can find Lord Krishna and Balarama standing in the middle. To Lord Krishna's right, Mother Yasoda is seen along with Radha Rani. To Lord Krishna's left, Nanda Maharaja and two of his friends are seen..

MAHABAN: Mahaban is 30 minutes drive from Nandgaon. While Nandgaon was the residence of Nanda, Mahaban was the seat of Nanda. He used to take care of his subjects from this place.

RADHA RAMAN TEMPLE: From there, we went to Radha Raman Temple at a place known as Sona..... We were told by the priest that Lord Krishna used to meet Radha in this place and that Lord Krishna got married to Radha Rani secretly(Gandharva vivaham) in this place. But this incident is not recorded in any of the stories of Lord Krishna.

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BARSANA : This is the birth place of Radha Rani. The temple is situated on hill top. Had darshan and returned to bus. We were not taken to Mor Kutir. This is the place where Radha Rani used to offer laddus to Lord Krishna. Adiyen was told that on Radha Rani's birth anniversary, laddus are offered to peacocks to commemorate Radha's offering to Lord Krishna. We did not visit Man mewari, Dargar.

GOVERDHANA GIRI : From Barsana, we were taken to Goverdhana giri. It was already 13.30 As we had already visited the place the previous day, we did not go . Instead , we sat in a nearby hotel. The bus left for Shyam Kund and Radha Kund at 14.15 hours.

RADHA KUND AND SHYAM KUND: This is 5 kms from Goverdhan and 26 kms away from Mathura. After travelling for 10-15 minutes by bus, we were asked to get down. We were told that as the road was very narrow, we could not proceed further. The two ponds are on either sides and in the middle, Thiruvadi of Lord Krishna and Radha Rani are inscribed. Lord Krishna declared that whoever had bath in that tank would develop same amount of love towards Lord Krishna like Radha Rani. Immediately, Radha Rani declared that whoever has bath in Shyam Kund (tank dug by Lord Krishna) will be shown the same amount of affection by Lord Krishna as was showered on her. So, these two tanks are considered to be very sacred.

From there, we came back to Vrindavan around 15.15 hours. Refreshed ourselves and left for Gokulam. On enquiry, we were told by the local people there that it would not be possible to go to Mathura and return as it would become very dark. We were disturbed by this as were very keen to visit Gokulam (Thiruaayarpaadi) which is the divya desam. But once again, our saviour, Lord Sri Parthasarathi Perumal came to our rescue. We found an auto driver who was willing to take us to Gokulam, Mathura and return to Vrindavan for Rs.250/- Thanking Perumal for showering His grace on us , we got into the auto at 16.30 hours. We purchased a camera roll on the way. The auto driver drove at a breezing speed and we reached Gokulam around 17.45 hours. We had to cross Yamuna River. A bridge is being constructed on the river and we went via the brigde. There was not much water in the river. There was a small boy who took us to all the shrines. We were first taken to Nanda's house. It was here that Lord Krishna was exchanged with Yogamaya by His father, Vasudeva. Here, we find idols of Lord Krishna, Radha Rani, Yasodha, Nanda Maharaja and Balarama. These idols are made of wood. In front of these idols, just near the entrance to the garbagriham, there is a small cradle with BalaKrishna . We were asked to do sankalp and offer Rs.155/- for Perumal's bhog. Here, the "bhog" is butter . Then, we were asked to go inside the garbagriham and touch Lord's Thiruvadi. It is only in this shrine that the devotees are allowed to touch Perumal's feet. Inside the garbagriham, we were asked to sit and placing our hands on Lord's feet, we were asked to do sankalp by a pujari. The pujari uttered some phrases in Hindi and we were asked to repeat it. We were then taken to other houses in Gokulam. All the houses are on the way to Nanda's house and each house is considered as a temple because it was sanctified by Lord Krishna. First, we were shown "Putana vath". There is an image of Puthana in her (beautiful turned into rakshasi form)when Lord Krishna pulled out her life. Baby Krishna is seen on her heart. In another house, we could find the image of Vasudeva bringing Lord Krishna to Gokulam. In another house, we could see Lord Krishna stealing butter along with His friends. We were shown places where Lord Krishna used to crawl and play. WE also saw the banks of Yamuna where Lord Krishna spent most of his time playing with His friends. We had to hurry as we were running short of time. (It is very sad to note that the pujaris who are blessed to be in the places associated with Sri Lord Krishna like Gokulam, Vrindavan have the habit of plundering money from devotees. They openly ask us to give dakshina and in case we do not concede to their request, they abuse us. May be, in this Kali kaalam, the position of the Brahmins is like this. We were told that the UP government does not cater to their needs and hence out of frustration, they act in this way. I

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request all the bhagavathas to forgive me for saying so but I feel that one must be well prepared and carry lots of cash with them when they visit these places to please the pujaris. I once again request all the bhakthas to forgive this sinner who has taken the guts to inform this)

Coming back, we left Gokulam around 18.30 hours and went to Mathura. Reached Mathura around 19.00 hours. First, we went to Sri Lord Krishna Janmasthan. As we were not allowed to take cameras etc., we left all our belongings in the auto itself. From there, it took nearly 3 minutes for us to reach Sri Lord Krishna Janmasthan. This place is well protected by police. Amidst tight security, we went inside the gate. There is separate entrance for ladies and gents and there were ladies and gents security who allowed us to enter only after they checked us thoroughly. There is a flight of steps leading to the temple. Here, we can find idols of Radha Rani and Sri Lord Krishna. They were dressed in white. The idols look very attractive. The temple is a big one with sannidhis for Durga Devi, Sita, Lakshmana sametha Sri Rama, Puri Jaggannath etc. On the walls, Dasavathars and incidents from Sri Lord Krishna's lives alongwith Acharyas are depicted. Everything is made of marble. To go to Lord Krishna Janmasthan, (jail), we have to come down and on the right side, there is a way which leads to the prison. There are shops which sell pooja items etc. on one side of the way. We could find armed gunmen everywhere. We were really blessed to go into the prison. There is a stone platform may be 5 feet in width and 3 feet in height on which they were photos of Sri Lord Krishna. We were told that Lord Krishna was born on that stone platform. Lord Narayana's feet are imbedded on it. On the wall, the images of Lord Vishnu along with Devaki and Vasudeva praying to the Almighty are carved. The wall of the prison are made of red granite stone.

The Lord who swallowed the whole Universe and kept it safely in His stomach at the time of deluge, the Lord of Seven Hills who measured the 14 worlds with His three steps, the Lord who took various avatars to protect the good was born in that prison. God was kind enough to allow us to touch His Lotus Feet. From there we went to the terrace. It may be noted that a mosque is built on the premises of the temple and the mosque is just behind the prison. The original temple of Sri Lord Krishna at this place known as Keshav Deo temple was demolished by muslim during 16th/17th century and a mosque was built. There is only a wall which separates the mosque and the temple. We Could not visit other places like Potara Kund (Where Lord Krishna's nappies were washed), Gita Mandir, Dwarakadish temple, Visram Ghat and other ghats due to lack of time. We hurried back to Vrindavan by the same auto as it was already half past seven in the evening. On the way, we saw Gita Mandir and one Paagal Bhabha Mandir (the name sounds peculiar but we were told that the person who constructed the temple was called as "Paagal" by the local people there. Reached Vrindavan at 20.30 hours. Had milk and slept.

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JAI SRIMAN NARAYANA

10/10/2000 : Left Vrindavan at 7.00 A.M. in the morning with a prayer to Lord to allow us to come there once again. Went by tempo to Mathura and from there, took a rickshaw to Mathura station to collect our baggages from cloak room. Paid Rs.21/ to cloak room and Rs15/- to rickshaw puller. Boarded Jaipur- Rajasthan bus at 8.30 A.M. Reached New Delhi at 12.00 noon. Went by auto from bus stop to railway station. Boarded Kashi Vishwanath Express (Delhi to Varanasi) train at 13.25 hours. We wanted to go to NIAMISAARANYAM from Balmau. Accordingly, we had booked the ticket from Delhi to Balmau at Secunderabad terminal. Then, when we had downloaded information from Internet, it was clearly mentioned that to go to Naimisaaranyam and Ayodhya, one has to keep the base as Lucknow. We were regretting for having booked the ticket to Balmau because we were not sure whether any stay facility was available as the train was supposed to reach around 22 hours . Actually, Naimisaaranyam is between Balmau and Sitapur and one has to get down at Balmau, take another train to Sitapur. This is like "Chord line" But our Perumal once again graced us . We were surprised when we saw the reservation chart because our tickets ware reserved upto LUCKNOW and not upto BALMAU. We thanked God wholeheartedly. This incident proves that God is ever ready to protect His devotees and guide them properly. Spent the rest of the afternoon in the train. Reached Lucknow at 23.40 hours. We wanted to dump our luggages in the cloak room and then go to retiring room. As there was change in shifts, we were asked to wait for 20 minutes. We waited in the platform and at 0.00 hours, we kept our luggages in the cloak room. The cloak room incharge (who was a Bengali) was very kind enough to guide us. He advised us to take a bus to Shidoli and from there he said there would be plenty of buses plying to Naimisaaranyam. He also added that if we go by train we would not be able to come back to Lucknow that night . hence, he advised us to go by bus. Thanking him, we left to waiting room. We hardly had 4 hours sleep. Our children Aishwariya and Soundariya (Anu) cooperated. Thanked God retired for the night.

NAIMISAARANYAM

NAIMISAARANYAM: Here, Perumal is in Aaranya swaroopam. This is a swayam vyaktha kshethram.

Moolavar - Deivapiran.

Thayar - Harilakshmi and also as Pundarikavalli.

Theertham Chakra Theertham.

Vimanam Srihari

Mangalaasaasanam : Pasuram No. 998 to 1007-10 pasurams by Thirumangai Alwar (one of the best)- Alwar repents for his misdeeds and asks Perumal to forgive him.. In all the 10 pasurams , he addresses Perumal as NAIMISAARANYATHUL EN THAAI"

Travel base Lucknow

It is believed that 60,000 sages are doing penance in the form of trees. Every leaf in this forest is considered very sacred.

PLACES TO VISIT: Chakra Theertham, Gomathi River, Ahobila Mutt, Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple, Ram, Lakshman mandir, Ganesh mandir, Lalitha devi mandir, Puran Mandir, Suka Brahma's temple, Dadichi Kund,108 Devi temple, , Hatyahaarana theertham at Misrikh, Sri Ramanuja Koodam.

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STHALA PURANAM : Once all the rishis approached Brahma to find out as which was the best place to perform penance. Brahma took a nemi (grass) , made it round in shape (in the form of a wheel) and rolled it . He said that wherever the wheel stopped, that would be the best place for doing penance. The wheel rolled by Brahma reached this place. The rishis followed the wheel and arrived here. To clean the place, Lord Vishnu sent his Sudarshana Chakram to clean the place. The place where the Chakram landed became a deep pit and came to be known as Chakra Theertha. Whoever has bath in Chakra Theertham will be redeemed of all their sins. Perumal blessed the rishis that hereafter this place would be the best place for the rishis to do penance and attain the Lotus feet of the Lord. At the behest of the rishis, Perumal decided to stay there in Aaranya swaroopam. The rishis in due course got transformed into trees and are still doing penance. The vighrams of Perumal and Thayar as described in Divya Prabhandham is not to be seen.

Pl. Note : Neither the deity nor the temple as described in the Divya Prabhandham is in existence.

11/11/2000 : Got up at 5.15 A.M. Went to cloak room, took change of clothes etc., had bath and left the station around 7 A.M. We visited Naimisaaranyam. Naimisaaranyam is 120 kms away from Lucknow between Sitapur and Balmau. The temple is 3 kms away from the station. But as there is no proper connecting train, it is preferable to go by bus.

OUR EXPERIENCE :Took a rickshaw to Qaiser Bagh (this is the bus terminus) paid Rs.15/-. Then, boarded Sitapur bus at 7.20 A.M. and got down atShidoli. Reached Shidoli at 9.00 A.M. (Fare Rs.52 +Rs.26/- Aishu and Anoo walked without slippers.. We had to walk for 5 minutes to reach the bus stop to board Mishrik bus.We were told that we would get plenty of buses from Mishrik to Naimisaaranyam Naimisaraanyam is 42 kms away from Shidoli. Reached Mishrik around 12 noon. From there, we hired a tempo for Rs.300/- to go to Naimisaaranyam after visiting Dadichi Theerth and return to Sitapur.

DADICHI KUND: Dadichi Kund is 5 kms away from Mishrik. There is an interesting story connected with this place. The sage Dadichi,used to utter "NARAYANA KAVACHAM" here. This was the place where the rishi gave up his mortal coils and merged with the Lord by giving up his life for Lokak ksemam.(Any offering at this place equals millions) This is a big pond and we sprinkled water on our heads. Then, we proceeded to Naimisaranyam. We expected to see a dense forest but the place is just like any other village. There are trees on either sides of the roads and we were told that this was the forest. We went to the banks of Gomathi river. We were told that the sand on the banks of Gomathi river is of great significance but as I was not aware of it, I did not bring sand. Took snaps and then left for 108 Devi temple. Here there are 108 idols of various Goddesses like Parvathi, Jayanthi, Saraswathi, Lakshmi etc. The temple is a two storeyed structure. Went round the temple and from there we proceeded to a South Indian temple. It was already 2 P.M.when we reached the temple. We thought that it was Ahobila Mutt. But to our surprise, we were told that the temple was dedicated to Srinivasa Perumal and that Ahobila Mutt was a bit far from that place. On either sides of the Moolavar's sannidhi, there are shrines for Padmavathi Thayar and Andal. The temple is looked after by a Telugu speaking priest . This was the best temple we saw in Naimisaaranyam. On the way to the temple, we can find chariot etc. We felt very happy to see Telugu speaking people. The pujari offered us lunch. After 4 to 5 days, we had a sumptous meal (Rice, gongura, rasam,curd). After finishing lunch, we had darshan of Perumal at 3.00 P.M. Recited Venkatesa Prapathi,Thirumangai Alwar's pasurams on Naimisaaranyam(which make anyone weep before Lord for Moksham) and other few pasurams which we knew by heart. Then, we performed Archana and I was given the kainkaryam of fanning the Lord. We were overwhelmed with joy and we kept on thanking Perumal for gracing us by giving such a bhaagyam. After giving dakshina to the priest, we left the place. From there, we went to Chakra Theertham. . It is believed that whoever has bath in chakra theertham will get rid of all their

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sins and whoever does any “dhaan” will get manifold benefit. We sprinkled water from Chakra Theertham on our heads , made a sankalp and gave Rs.11/- as dakshina. From there, we proceeded to Vyaas Gaddi also known as Puran Mandir. This is the place where Maharishi Vyasa Bhagavan divided the Vedas into four and wrote 18 puranas. It was here that the famous epic Mahabharatham was written. We were told that Vyasa Bagavan’s son preserved all the works and covered it . This is in the shape of a pyramid. This Vyasa Gaddi was covered with a yellow cloth. After taking permission from the pujari, we took a photograph of Vyasa Gaddi along with the pujari. We were asked to do 3 pradakshinas. Around this sannidhi. To the right of this sannidhi, there is a sannidhi for Vyasa Bagavan’s son. Just outside the sannidhi, there is a tree under which Vyasa rishi sat and wrote Bhagavatham and Mahabharatham. We did pradakshina around the tree and prayed to the Lord to give us knowledge to realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As we were running short of time, we could not visit Sukabrahma’s temple. It may be mentioned here that Sukar has a parrot beak nose and it was he who narratedSrimad Bhagavatham to King Parikshit and through him to the whole world.

Around 16.30 hours, we left Naimisaaranyam. Went by tempo to Sitapur. The tempo driver stopped near Sitapur border and asked us to go to bus stop by rickshaw. We hired a rickshaw for Rs.10/- to go to bus stop. On the way, we purchased some medicines . It may be mentioned here that when we were proceeding towards bus stop, we met with a minor accident . A small boy who was cycling dashed us and all of us fell upside down and the rickshaw was on top of us. But luckily, due to Perumal’s mercy, none of us got hurt. We thanked Perumal wholeheartedly. Reached bus stop around 5.00 P.M. Boarded Sitapur-Lucknow bus . We were told that the bus would reach Lucknow at 7.00 P.M. While traveling both us recited Sri Vishnu Sahasranama,. As children were tired, they fell asleep. Waited patiently for the train. Boarded Train No. 136 (passenger train).

12/10/2000: As all the trains towards Varanasi would stop at Ayodhya we somehow reached Ayodhya Reached Ayodya station at 12.30 noon. Put the luggage in the cloak room. As we were all very tired, we decided to take rest and booked a railway retiring room for Rs.100/- for 24 hours. The railway retiring room is just outside the station and it took nearly 5 minutes for us to reach the place. It may be mentioned that in Ayodhya the population of monkeys is more than that of humans. Though the small town is not well developed, every inch of the place is considered very sacred because of its link with Sri Rama.

AYODHYA

SRI SEETHANAYIKA SAMETHA SRI RAGHUNATHA PARABRAHMANE NAMAH

MOOLAVAR : SRI RAMAR (CHAKRAVARTHY THIRUMAGAN)

THAYAR : SEETHA DEVI

VIMANAM : PUSHPAKA

THEERTHAM : SARAYU RIVER

PRATHYAKSHAM : BHARATHAZHWAR, SHATRUGUNAN,DEVAS,RISHIS

MANGALASAASANAM: Perialwar- Pasuram No.312,314,316,321,325, 399, Thondaradipodi Alwar Pasuram No. 920,Kulasekhara Azhwar –Pasuram Nos. 724,725,741,748, Thirumangai Alwar- Pasuram No. 1875

Total : 12 pasurams

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STHALA PURANAM: Ayodhya , the most sacred place where Sri Rama was born needs no introduction. This place was ruled by the most pious kings of the world. This is one of the seven “mukthi tharum” sthalams. Ayodhya was the capital of Ishvaku kings. To name a few, Bhagirathan, Dasaratha, Sri Rama, Harischandra etc Every inch of the ground is sacred because of its association with Sri Rama and Rama bhakthas. One can hear the chanting of “SEETHA RAMA SEETHA RAMA” everywhere. Though the town is occupied by muslims, we can still see many devout Hindus who always keep repeating “SEETHA RAMA SEETHA RAMA” 24 hours a day. I strongly feel that only due to our Acharya’s grace, Lord Hanuman’s grace and due to Divya Dampathigal’s paripoorna kataksham, we could visit Ayodhya. Hearing Sri Rama katha will bestow all benefits . There are about 35 Saivite temple and 63 Vishnu temples in Ayodhya.

IMPORTANT PLACES TO VISIT: Nageshwarnath, Hanuman tekhi, Darshan Singh, Janmabhoomi, Hanuman Gaddi (Ramkot), Kanak Bhawan or Sone Ka Dwar, Swarg Dhwar, Lakshman Ghat, Sita Ghat, Mani Parbath, Sugriv Parbath.

OUR EXPERIENCE: Got into tanga at 4.00 P.M. First, we went to Mani Parbath. This is a small hillock . As there were many monkeys, we didn’t climb the hill. We were told that on top of the Parbath, there is a palace. According to the tanga waala, after marrying Sita Devi, Lord Rama stayed here for few months. From there, we went to Hanuman Gaddi. There is a big temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman . The temple is on top of a hill. The temple was crowded. We had darshan of Lord Hanuman and left the place. On the way, we purchased some sweets. From there, we went to Dasaratha Maharaja’s palace . On the way to Dasaratha maharaja’s palace, the tanga stopped near a tent and said that these people feed deotees who are engaged in the construction of Sri Rama’s temple. Gave dakshina and from there we went to palace. Due to Janmabhoomis dispute, all the idols of Perumal are kept here. In the sannidhi, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, Shatruguna are seen with their consorts. King Dasaratha is also present. Below the moolavar vigrahams, golden icons of Sita, Lakshmana, Hanumath sametha Sri Raghurama’s are kept. We were told that before Babri Masjid was demolished , these idols were kept in its original place and were worshipped. Now, due to the dispute, these idols are kept here. It is worth mentioning here that when the Masjid was demolished, a large idol of Hanuman was found (This was told by the Poojaris). The idol may be about 10 feet high. This idol is kept beside the main sannidhi on the left side. As the height of the vigraham is more, the vigraham is laid down. . Took a photograph of the vigraham. We were asked to make a sankalp Paid Rs.116/- for construction of Ramjanmabhoomi. In front of the main shirine, there is a yaaga kundam which is hexagonal in shape. We were told that King Dasaratha performed “PUTHRAKAAMESHTI YAAGAM” at that place. But we were told by our “mama”(who is the present archakar in Ammaji temple in Ayodhya, that the place were yaagam was conducted was different from this) Did pradakshinam and from there we went to Ram Janmabhoomi. Ramjhanmabhoomi is fully protected by police force on all the sides . Under tight security and after we were thoroughly checked thrice , we were allowed to go inside. We have to walk for more than a mile to reach the spot. We are allowed to take only prasaadam and money purse with us. There were thousands of gunmen along the way. The vigrahams of Lord Rama along with Sita , Lakshmana and Hanuman are kept in a small room. There is a fencing around the sannidhi and we could have darshan of Perumal standing at a distance of 10 feet away. The pujari who sits near the fencing took two packets and showed it to Perumal from there itself and gave us back one packet. We could see the ruins of the Masjid . We purchased some photos, Sripaadam etc. from a nearby shop and proceeded to Kanak Bhavan. Kanak Bhavan is Lord Rama’s antapuram. Here there are 3 sets of vigrahams of Seetha and Rama. One set is the moolavar which is not taken out., the second set is taken for Jhoola and the 3rd set is taken out for processions. When we went “SEETHA RAMA SEETHA RAMA “ bhajan was going on. It seems that this bhajan goes on the entire day. We also participated in the

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bhajan for some time, had theertha prasaadam and then left. On the way , we saw “Seetha Koop”. This is on the left side on the way to Kanak Bhavan. We were told that Seetha Maatha used to fetch water from this well. From there, we went to Swarg Dhwaar. This is on the banks of Sarayu River and it was here that the mortal coils of Lord Rama was cremated. (Once again, we were corrected by our “Mama” of Ammaji temple, that this was not the place where Lord Rama’s mortal coils were cremated) As it was already dark, we did not go inside. There is a very big white statue of Sri Rama . Had a glimpse from outside and from there we went to Darbasayana Ramar temple locally known as Ammaji Temple. The temple was already closed. Luckily, we saw the Bhattar ,Srinivasa.Ramanuja Dasan (our “mama”/uncle) just outside the temple. We introduced ourselves as Aravamudan Periappa’s relatives. The Bhattar was very pleased and he gave us a warm welcome. We spent some time recollecting Periappa’s memories. Mama who had become very close to us by then, advised us to get our baggages and stay there in the night so that we could have darshan of Perumal in the early morning and board Muraddar Express at 5.45 A.M. Accordingly, we left our children with mama and his nephew in the temple itself and went to railway station to collect our luggages. Paid Rs.100/- towards retiring room rental charges . On the way , there was a mela going on and we saw a Bommalattam in a big pond wherein Lord Vishnu was seen seated on Adishesha and Goddess Mahalakshmi was pressing Perumal’s Thiruvadi. Regretted for not bringing camera. Reached Ammaji mandir at 8.30 P.M. Had dinner (delicious Upma, Puris etc.).... I can’t find words to thank mama for the hospitality he extended . Washed clothes and thanked Thirumangai alwar and Perumal for His kataksham.

13/10/2000 : Got up at 4.30 A.M. Had bath and by 5.0 A.M. , we were inside the temple. We were inside the temple for more than 20 minutes. This temple is known as “**DARBASAYANA DIVYA DESA EMPERUMAN SRI RAMASWAMY TEMPLE**” . It may be recalled that neither the original temple referred to by the Alwars nor the Perumal is in existence. But , this temple is considered as Divya Desam because this temple is built in the same place where the original temple referred to in the Divya Prabhandham was mentioned . Hence, this is considered as the “Divya Desa thirukovil”.

STHALA VARALAARU OF THIS TEMPLE: This temple is at a distance of 3 kms from Ayodhya Railway station. This temple was built in the year 1904 by Sri. Yogi Parthasarathy on the banks of Sarayu River. This temple is built in Dravadian style and Pancharaathra aagamam is followed. . Every year Brahmotsavam is performed for 5 days preceding Ram Navami festival. The founder of this temple Sri.Yogi Parthasarathy was a great scholar and was well versed in many languages like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Sanskrit and English. He had participated in the “Conference on World Religions “ held at Chicago in the year 1893 under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda. He spoke about Hindu religion in this conference. He donated his entire property to this temple by forming an organization called “SARASWATHI BANDAARAM COMMITTEE”. Regarding the Utsava murthis of this temple, there is an interesting story . Once, Smt. Yogi Parthasarathy popularly kaddressed as “Ammaji” dreamt of Lord Rama. (This is the reason why the temple is called as Ammaji Mandir.) In her dream, she saw that copper icons of Lord Rama along with Sita Devi and Lakshmana were found under a tree in a temple where the moolavar was seen lying on darbha. On enquiry, they came to know that the temple was Thiruppullani Darbasayana Ramar temple. Accordingly, they went to Thiruppullani and when they dug the earth, they found the vigrahams. The vigrahams were duly brought to Ayodhya and installed in Sri Ramaswamy temple with due temple honours. Hence, the utsavar is known as Darbha sayana Ramar. At present, renovation work is going on . coming back to the garba griham, we can see Lord Rama standing majestically with his bow along with Sita Piratti and Lakshmana on either sides. Beside Sita Devi ‘s vigraham, we can see Bharatalwan and beside Lakshmana , we can see Shatruguna. Bharathan and Shatruguna are standing

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facing each other. There is an idol of Hanuman also. To the right of Ramar sannidhi, there is a sannidhi for Lord Ranganathar . Perumal is with Godha Devi and Garuda. Opposite to this sannidhi, we can find our Alwars and Acharyars. Nammalwar, Tirumangai Alwar, Acharyar Ramanujar and Manavala Maamunigal are present. After reciting the prabhandhams on Ayodhya, and other known prabhandhams, we left the sannidhi.

Woke up children, dressed them up, had coffee , took the children to the temple and at 6.30 A.M. we left the temple. It may be mentioned that Mama had in the meantime arranged for an auto as the tanga did not turn up. But when we were about to board the auto, the tanga driver came . Reached station at 6.45 A.M. We had to wait for more than 3 hours. The train which was supposed to arrive at 5.45 A.M. arrived at only 9.30 A.M. Boarded Muraddar Express at 9.30 A.M. and reached Varanasi at 13 hours. On enquiry, we came to know that our reservations RAC 2,3,4 were not yet confirmed. It may be mentioned here that we had booked the ticket for Neelachal Express from Varanasi to Puri. Unfortunately, we did not know that the train starts from Delhi and via Lucknow, Varanasi it goes to Puri. Hence, we had to pay the price for not booking the tickets properly. Till the last minute, the reservation was not confirmed and we had an awful experience in the train. Meanwhile Went to have darshan of Ganges. It took 10 minutes for us to go by walk. We had to climb on top of building and from there we just had a view of Ganges. As it was already 7.30 P.M., we wanted to rush back to station. Boarded Neelachal Express at 8.00 P.M. This was the most horrible journey. We had booked our tickets in II A.C. but the co-passengers were not cooperative. Both of us did not even have place to sit. We didn't have place to keep our luggages. Hence, we were forced to keep our luggages near the door and made our children sit on it. Then, in the midnight, one attendant came forward to give his berth which is outside the AC cabin for Rs.100/-. Made children sleep. Then a T.T. was continuously forcing us to pay Rs.400/- and take a berth. He started threatening us that we have taken attendant's berth which is in Ist A.C. .Ultimately, around 3.30 A.M. he agreed to give us 2 berths for Rs. 250/\ and the berths were allotted at Bhopal at 4.00 A.M. The rest of our journey was very comfortable. Reached Puri station at 10 in the night. This is one of the well-planned stations . Kept our luggages in cloak room. Retired in the waiting room

PURI

NEELACHALA NIVASAYA NITYAYA PARAMATHMANE
SUBHADRAA PRAANANATHAYA JAGANNATHAYA MANGALAM

PRESIDING DIETY : JAGANNATHAN (LORD KRISHNA) ALONG WITH BALARAMA AND SUBHADRA DEVI. Here Perumal is seen along with His brother and sister

15/10/2000: Woke up at 5.00 A.M. Had bath and left for temple. Hired an auto to go to temple, beach and come back to station for Rs.60/- Reached temple around 6.45 A.M. . There are numerous sannidhis on the way to the main shrine. There is a sannidhi for Sathyanarayana Perumal. This temple is an example of Oriyan architecture. This temple is unique. There is a very big hall in front of the garbagriham and it was fully crowded. The garbagriham is also very big. WE can find Subhadra Devi, sister of Sri Lord Krishna in the center. To her left is Lord Jagannathan and to her right is Balarama. Paid dakshina Rs.51/- and Rs.51/- for prasadam . **Had very good darshan to our heart's content.** Came out of the sannidhi and had theertha prasadam. Boarded Howrah-Tirupati Express at 11.20 A.M. The worst First Class coach ever seen. Spent the whole day of 15th and 16th in the train.

Reached **Tirupati** at 5.30 P.M. (one hour late). Kept two of our luggages in cloak room and went by bus to Tirumala Hills, Kaliyuga Vaikuntam. . Thanked God for the mercy He had shown on us by

A PILGRIMS DIARY TO VADA NADU DIVYADESAMS

enabling us to visit all His sacred abodes. It may be noted that we had booked room in advance by paying Rs.100/- for 17/10/2000. Hence, we had to wait in queue to get accommodation on 16/10/2000. Luckily, we got Free room in Sudarshana Choultry. Refreshed ourselves, went round the temple . Could not have darshan on that day. Tied Sudarshana token (Rs.50/-) . Our darshan time was given as 8.00 P.M. on 17/10/2000. Had dinner, regretted that we couldn't have Perumal's darshan and slept.

17/10/2000 : Around 8.30 P.M., we went to have darshan of Lord. As bhogam was going on for Perumal, we had to wait for more than an hour. As usual, both of us were reciting Prapathi, Sahasranaamam, Govinda naamavali and some pasurams while moving in the queue. Had darshan of Perumal at 10.30 in the night. AS Brahmotsavam was just over, the lighting arrangements had not been removed.

18/10/2000:**The most memorable day in our lives** , we got up at 2.00 A.M. Thanked Perumal for uniting us. Had bath, woke up children and went to Vaikuntam Queue Complex to attend Archana Sevai of Perumal. As usual, there was heavy crowd. Luckily , we got place to sit in the room which is very near to Perumal's sanidhi and participated in Sahasranama Archana Sevai of Perumal. Had very good darshan and prayed to Perumal to bless us to visit His holy abode often. Prayed to Perumal to shower His grace on us and forgive all of our sins. With a prayer that we must visit all the divya desams and His thiruvuruvam must be in our mind always, we left the temple. Had theertha prasadam , laddus.

19/10/2000 : Back to Hyderabad and after taking blessings of our elders, came back to our home.

JAI SRIMAN NARAYANA

VINA VENKATESAM NANAATHO NANAATHO
SADA VENKATESAM SMARAAMI SMARRAMI
HARE VENKATESA PRASEEDHA PRASEEDHA
PRIYAM VENKATESA PRAYACHA PRAYACHA

LORD KRISHNAARPANAM