

# SHRIMAN NĀRĀYANEYYAM

## Introduction

Narayaneeyam is a highly devotional text. The author, Sri Meppattur Narayana Bhattathiri, was cured of his Vatha Roga (rheumatism), attained great devotion and the vision of the Lord, by composing and singing Narayaneeyam in front of the Lord at the temple of Guruvayur.

There are eighteen main Puranas, in the Hindu scriptures. The most important is Sreemad Bhagavatham. It has 18000 slokas. Narayaneeyam is a condensation of this vast Purana, and contains only 1036 slokas, with its philosophical and devotional contents intact.

Narayan Bhattathiri was born in 1560 AD and mastered the scriptures at the age of 16. However, he was not very devoted at that age. Once when he was rebuked by his Guru Achutha Pisharodi, he became very repentant and devoted to his Guru.

He became an ardent scholar. About ten years later his Guru was affected by rheumatism and Narayan Bhattathiri prayed to the Lord to relieve his Guru of the disease and transfer it to him. His prayer was heard. His Guru regained health and instead the disease came to Narayan Bhattathiri. He had the deep faith that his prayer will be heard and he will be relieved of the disease. Hence he decided to surrender himself at the feet of Lord Krishna in the temple of Guruvayur, and seek His Grace.

Bhattathiri requested the guidance of the philosopher and devotee of that time 'Thunchant (Thunjath Ramanuja) Ezhuthachan'. The mahatma instructed him to 'Start with fish'. Bhattathiri was quick to take the indication of glorifying the Lord with the various avatars starting with Matsyavatara (the incarnation as fish). The 10 avatars (10 incarnations) of Lord Vishnu are extolled in the Bhaagavata Purana. This prompted him to compose the abridged version of the Purana in the form of Shriman Naarayaneyam Stotram.

In his acute rheumatism Bhattathiri somehow reached the temple of Guruvayur and fully surrendered himself at the feet of the Lord. He prostrated in deep devotion and started to pray, singing His glory and worship him everyday. He composed and rendered one Dashakam each day to the Lord. Thus, in 100 days of sincere worship, Narayaneeyam consisting of 100 Dashakam was composed.

These verses written in pain and agony of the author invoiced the sympathy and grace of the Lord. At the end of each Dasakam, each day, he would pray for the mercy and kindness of the Lord to cure his disease. Soon the Lord's grace showered on him and on the 100th day the Lord blessed him with His vision. Bhattathiri was overwhelmed with ecstasy and in the 100th Daskakam he cries out – 'Agre Pashyami' – here I see him in front of me – and he gives a vivid description of the most enchanting form of the Lord he saw – from head to foot – Keshhaadi Paadam. From that day his ailments vanished and he got totally cured.

Narayaneeyam Bhattathiri composed Narayaneeyam at the age of 27 years. With the Lord's grace

showering on him, he lived as a respected philosopher, poet and saint to the age of 96 years. He has to his credit many masterly compositions of poetry, essays and books on philosophy and Sanskrit grammar.

The unique features of Narayananeeyam, which endear it to devotees, are – firstly it has been written in great pain and agony and so echoes the poet's heart felt prayer and high devotion. Secondly it is written in first person singular as a direct conversation with the Lord. So anybody reading it would also be addressing the Lord directly in person. This has a magnetic effect of the devotee's nearness to the Lord. Thirdly, since this hymn has practically demonstrated the cure of the poet's disease, tonic for – Aayu, Aarogya, Sauchyam – longevity, health and happiness, for all those who approach it with sincerity of faith and devotion.