

HrudKamala Vaibhavam: The Temple of the Heart

Sai Venkatesh Balasubramanian, Bengaluru, India, saivenkateshbalasubramanian@gmail.com

There is a temple, far more powerful than Srirangam, Chidambaram, Badrinath, Kasi or Tirupati. That is the Hrud-Kamalam, or the lotus of the heart. The Absolute Brahman, the one that plays (Lalitha) manifests as the young playful Baalaa, taking the form of Venkatesha, for the sole purpose of Kali Yuga Varada, and is manifest in the Hrud Kamalam. The form of Venkatesha itself is a huge temple, enshrining no less than 300 deities. [Om Sri Sai Venkateshaya Namah]

India is known, among many things, for the system of Spirituality termed 'Hinduism', in the West. Known in Sanskrit, its native language as 'Sanaatana Dharma', this spirituality has been in existence for thousands of years, standing the test of time, reaching the highest heights of thinking and philosophy, with many other belief systems arising from it as well.

The spirituality is so profound that the whole life of the Indian, both at the individual and societal level, revolves around it. This can perhaps best be seen in the temples of ancient India, or as UNESCO calls it "The Great Living Temples". Even today, in the southern state of Tamilnadu, particularly in the Thanjavur and Tiruvarur districts, one can find temples, more than 1000 years old, scattered all around the region. Most of these temples aren't in cities, they are in small 'temple-villages', where the temple is the centre of the village, there are four to six small streets surrounding it, a small group of houses, petty shops, a bus stop and the occasional railway station. Thus, it is easy to see that the Hindu temple is the centre of life of the entire village. When the temple celebrates a festival ('Ratham'), such as the chariot festival, or a float festival ('Theppam') or the divine marriage ('Kalyaanam'), the entire village celebrates. Such temple-villages are found all over India, standing testimony to the central role Sanaatana Dharma plays in the way of life in the country.

Among the thousands of temples scattered all over the subcontinent, a select few, by virtue of their potency and popularity have risen to prominence. Kailash in Tibet, is believed to be the abode of the Lord Shiva, and thus has remained unclimbed even today. Badrinath, nestled in the high Himalayas, is where Lord Narayana initiated Sage Narada and thus the rest of humanity into the most supreme Ashtakshari Mantra. Kashi or Varanasi, along the Ganga river and aptly termed the 'Eternal City', is the city Lord Shiva protects even from the Great Deluge (Pralaya), since it is believed to be His capital. Ayodhya, Mathura and Dwaraka have all been graced by Lord Vishnu in His incarnations (Avataras) as Rama and Krishna. The Chariot festival of Lord Jagannatha in Puri is so well-known that it has given a word to the English language – 'juggernaut'. The temple of Lord Venkatesha in Tirupati sees an average of around 60,000 pilgrims everyday – a number exceeding the combined total of the Vatican City and Mecca. Arguably, no temple has an architecture more exquisite than that of the Goddess Meenakshi in Madurai. The temple of Tiruvannamalai is famous for the worship of the Lord Shiva as pure light. The huge, sprawling temples of Srirangam and Chidambaram are considered the heart of all temples by followers of Vishnu and Shiva respectively. Among the southern sea coast is the Vishnu temple of Trivandrum, Shiva temple of Rameshwaram, Devi temple of Kanyakumari and Murugan temple of Tiruchendur. Among the saints that have graced this land, no temple is more popular than that of Sai Baba in Shirdi. Finally, no festival in India

comes close to the pomp and splendour of the Dussehra/Durga Puja in Kolkata and Mysore, both Durga Kshetras, or the Ganesha Chaturthi in Mumbai, dedicated to the Elephant headed God.

However, from a purely spiritual perspective, a lot of Hindu texts, such as Upanishads and Puranas speak in length about a temple far exceeding the ones mentioned above in greatness, power, potency, sanctity and spirituality. Paradoxically, while physically, this temple the least effort to be reached, spiritually, reaching this temple requires the highest amount of effort among all temples imaginable. This temple is the temple of the heart, termed the 'Hrud Kamalam' (literally, Lotus of the Heart). It is said that viewing the Divine ('Brahman') as the very life, the consciousness underlying the self, is the highest form of spirituality, far exceeding the greatness of any physical temple.

What is the nature of this Divine Brahman? Upanishads and various other texts proclaim that the Self (Aatma) is itself the Brahman. The Self is not limited to this physical body, mind or the emotions within. Rather, a broader perspective is called for, where the Self is infinite without beginning or end, and which transcends the limitations of space, time and concept. In fact, the Self, as Brahman, even transcends existence – it is neither existent nor non-existent. Thus, Brahman is beyond intellectual comprehension. But, what one does know of Brahman, are the following attributes:

1. Aatma: The Brahman is the Self and is not distinct from it.
2. Sat: The Brahman is eternal. Sat is the root of 'Satya' – Truth, since, everything that is not truth fades away at some point in time.
3. Chit: The Brahman is pure Consciousness, and thus, is the most fundamental reality.
4. Aanandam: The Brahman is pure bliss. All emotions and thoughts arise from a limited perspective of the self, and vanish away when the true nature of Brahman is understood. Thus, in the absence of any thought or emotion, the only feeling that remains is pure bliss, eternally.

Further to the above attributes, one also understands that whatever be its nature, Brahman is the very basis from which all existence and all life originates in the very beginning and in which all that is created merges at the very end. Thus, being the originator of existence, Brahman is seen as the Universal Mother, or 'Ambika'.

Finally, one also understands that it is by the very nature of Brahman to play ('Leela') that existence and all the worlds are created. Thus, due to possessing a playful nature, Brahman is termed 'Lalitha' or the One who plays.

Understanding the Brahman as the "Lalitha Ambika" lies at the core of a spiritual tradition known as 'Sri Vidya', and this highly esoteric tradition is considered among the highest and most powerful forms of spirituality, since it gets the closest possible to understanding the Brahman.

Thus, whatever deity one might view as primary, be it Ganesha, Murugan, Shiva, Narayana, Devi or Surya, when one steadily progresses spiritually, one recognizes at the highest level, that deity to be the very source and basis of all existence. At this point, the deity has acquired the nature of the Universal Mother, and worshipping this deity becomes non-different to

worshipping Lalitha. From there, the aspirant (Upaasaka) proceeds to view the Brahman as devoid of all attributes (Nirguna), which is the highest spiritual state.

Within Hrud Kamalam, is enshrined the Universal Mother Lalitha. What is the nature of this Hrud Kamalam?

Hindu texts say that being born as a human is only possible with acquiring of merit from thousands of previous births. This is because the human self, with its body, mind and soul is the most supreme portal through which one can make steady spiritual progress and reach Brahman. At the heart of this wonderful portal is the temple of the heart, the Hrud Kamalam.

Thus, one understands that the form Lalitha takes in the Hrud Kamalam is one conducive to the nature of this human portal, as well as to the current times and circumstances. According to Hindu texts, the current age is the age of the Kali, or 'Kali Yuga', and for this age, the most suitable form of Lalitha is as Baalaa, where the Mother appears as a young playful girl. It is said that among all Mantras, Baalaa Mantra is the most potent and powerful in the Kali Yuga.

As an 'Archa Roopa' or deity to be enshrined, Baalaa assumes a unique form, termed 'Venkatesha' or the Lord who destroys sins. This is a very unique form with the appearance of Vishnu, the functionality of Shiva, the nature of Devi and attributes of Ganesha, Murugan and Surya. Venkatesha is thus called 'Kali Yuga Varada' or the salvation for the age of Kali.

The form of Venkatesha in the Hrud Kamalam is a very powerful form since, it comprises within itself, all imaginable deities mentioned in the vast collection of Hindu texts. For this reason, Venkatesha is called 'Vishwaroopa'. The deity in the temple of Tirupati is a physical manifestation of this Venkatesha, and bears the closest appearance to the Hrud Kamalam Venkatesha.

As one could assume, the deity in Tirupati had in sometime in the past, been the subject of mired controversy, regarding its identity as Vishnu, Shiva, Devi or other Gods. From a pure temple and Agama basis, this had been resolved and the deity is seen as a form of Vishnu, and Tirupati occupies a prime place among the 108 Divya Desam temples of Vaishnavas.

However, the present narrative looks beyond what just meets the eyes, and understands the nature of Venkatesha from a spiritual perspective – as the Kali Yuga Varada or Baalaa. As such, the deity is viewed in the Hrud Kamalam as Lalitha or Brahman itself, and thus calling it a Shiva, Vishnu or Devi deity makes absolutely no difference at all.

Following are slides exploring this Hrud Kamalam Venkatesha where one can find all deities of the Hindu texts. Arranged in groups, each of these deities encompasses considerable detail, including the spiritual aspect, significance, and presence in Venkatesha.

Hrud-Kamala Vaibhavam

*Glory of the most
sacred of Temples*



Sai Venkatesh

Sheshaadri Nilaya Venkatesha



Kaliyuga Varada Venkatesha



Shri Baalaa Tripura Sundari

Shiva Shakti Aikya Roopa Venkatesha

Kriya

Iccha



Jnana

Shiva

Shakti

Vinayaka

Subramanya



Guru



Pancha Bhootesha Venkatesha

Kalabhairava



Eeshana



Kshetrapala



Tatpurusha



Vishwanath
Rameswaram



Aghora



Vamadeva



Sadyojata



Maheshwara Roopa Venkatesha

Somnath
Chandrasekhara

Kiraata

Kamari
Omkareswar

Neelakantha
Nageshwar

Sundara
Mallikarjuna

Virabhadra
Bhimashankar

Ekapaada
Triambaka
Tripurantaka

Mahakaleshwar
Kankala

Kaalaari
Grushneshwar

Chandesha
Vaidyanath

Jalandharari

Gaja Samhara



Narayana Hari Venkatesha

Narasimha

Narayana

Varaha

Kalki

Rama

Krishna

Jagannath

Trivikrama

Varadaraja

Vitthala

Padmanabha

Koorma

Matsya

Parashurama

Hayagriva



Tri Devi Roopa Venkatesha



Gayatri

Neela

Sarasvati

Lakshmi

Maha Kali

Tulasi

MahaDurga

Ganga

Sridevi,
Bhudevi

Dasha Maha Vidya Venkatesha

Taaraa

Bagalamukhi

Bhairavi

Maatangi

Chhinamasta

Bhuvaneshwari

Dhumavathi

Shodashi

Kaali

Kamatmika



in Blate

Navadurga Roopa Venkatesha

Kaalaratri

Katyayani

Chandraghanta



Kushmanda



Shailaputri

Skandamata



Brahmcharini

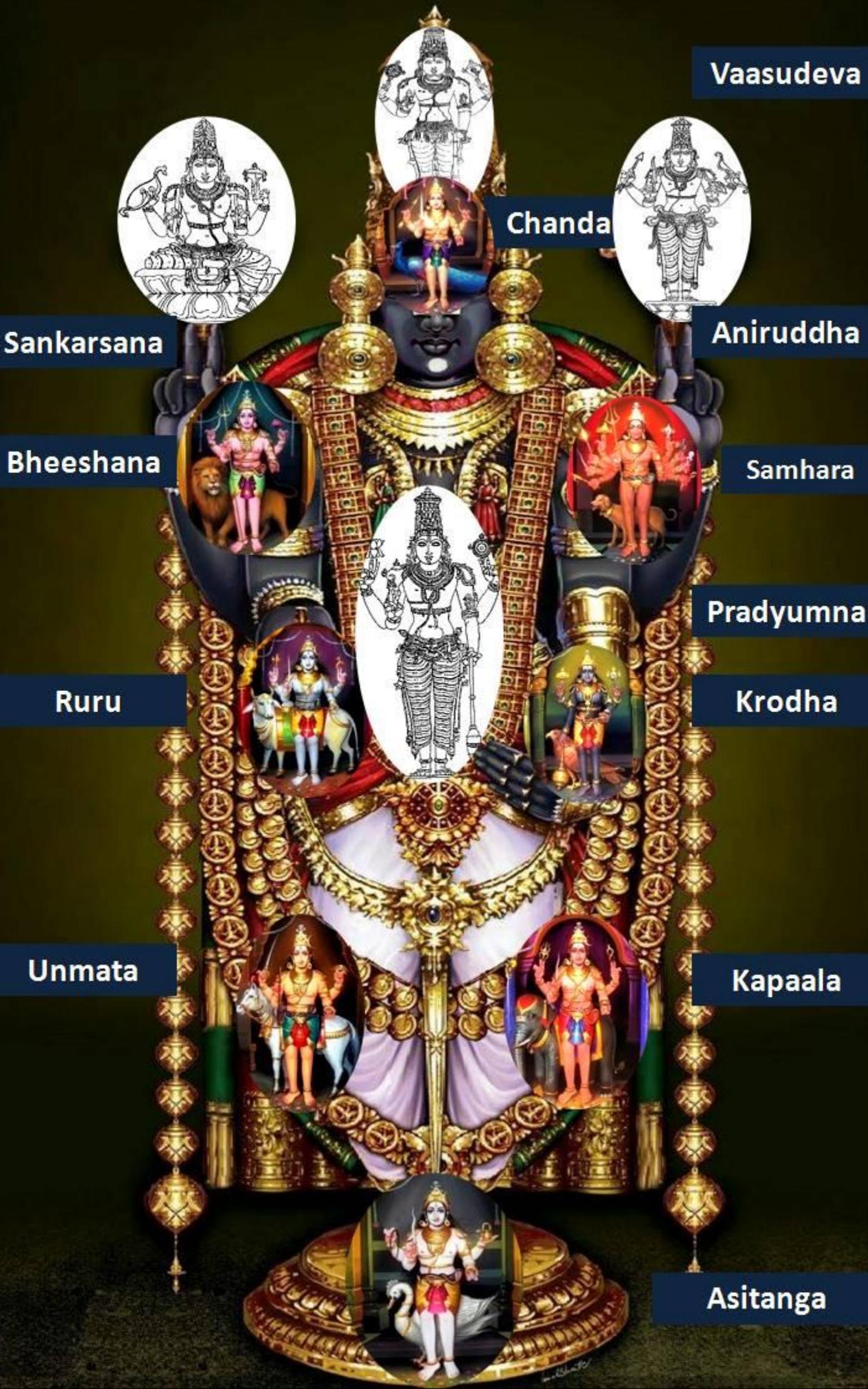
Mahagauri



Siddhidhatri



Kaala Purusha Venkatesha



Navagraha Naayaka Venkatesha

Shani

Guru

Sukra

Surya

Candra

Budha

Angaraka

Raahu

Kethu



Vishve Deva Venkatesha - 1



Prajapati

Agni



Soma



Rudra



Aditi



Naga



Brihaspati



Pitru



Tvashta
Vishwakarma



Vishve Deva Venkatesha - 2



Vaayu



Aryama



Dyau



Bhaga



Apa



Savitr



Mitra



Savitr



Indra



Kubera



Nirruti

Vishve Deva Venkatesha - 3

Vishnu

Varuna

Vasu

Ajaikapada

Ahimbudnya

Pusha

Ashvin

Yama



Tithi Nitya Roopa Venkatesha

Kameswari



Bhagamalini



Nityaklinna



Bherunda



Vajreswari



Vahnivasini



Nilapataka



Tvarita



Nitya

Shivaduti



Kulasundari



Chitra



Sarvamangala



Jwalamalini

Vijaya



Akshara Peetha Venkatesha - 1

Amrita



Aakarshini



Indrani



Eeshini



Oordvakesi



Uma



Ekapada



Rookara



Rttidayi



Lukara



Lookara

Om kara



Ambika



Aushada

Aishwaryatmika

Akshara



Akshara Peetha Venkatesha - 2

Kalaratri



Chamunda



Khandita



Chhayartha



Gayatri



Bandhini



Bhadrakali

Jaya

Ghanta



Phatkarini



Parvati



Mahamaya

Ngaarna



Jhankarini

Jnanarupa



Akshara Peetha Venkatesha - 3

Tankahasta



Tamasya



Thankarini



Sthaanvi



Damari



Dakshayani



Dhankarini



Dhatya



Naarni



Naarya



Akshara Peetha Venkatesha - 4



Rakta



Lamboshthi



Varada



Kshama



Shreedevi



Shhanda



Yashaswini



Bandhamocini



Saraswathi



Hamsavathi

Siddhi Daayaka Venkatesha



Anima

Iccha

Laghima

Bhukti

Praapti

Mahima

Prakamya

Sarvakama

Eeshitva

Vashitva

Maatruka Roopa Venkatesha



Kaumari

Chamunda

Mahalakshmi

Maheshwari

Vaishnavi

Varahi

Mahendri

Brahmi

Dashamudra Samaradhya Venkatesha

Beeja



Khecari



Mahankusha



Unmaadini



Trikhanda



Vashankari



Akarshini



Vidraavini



Samkshobhini



Yoni



Sarvaashaaparipooraka Venkatesha



Aatma

Buddhi

Chitta

Smriti

Naama

Shabda

Roopa

Sparsha

Gandha

Rasa

Sharira

Kaama

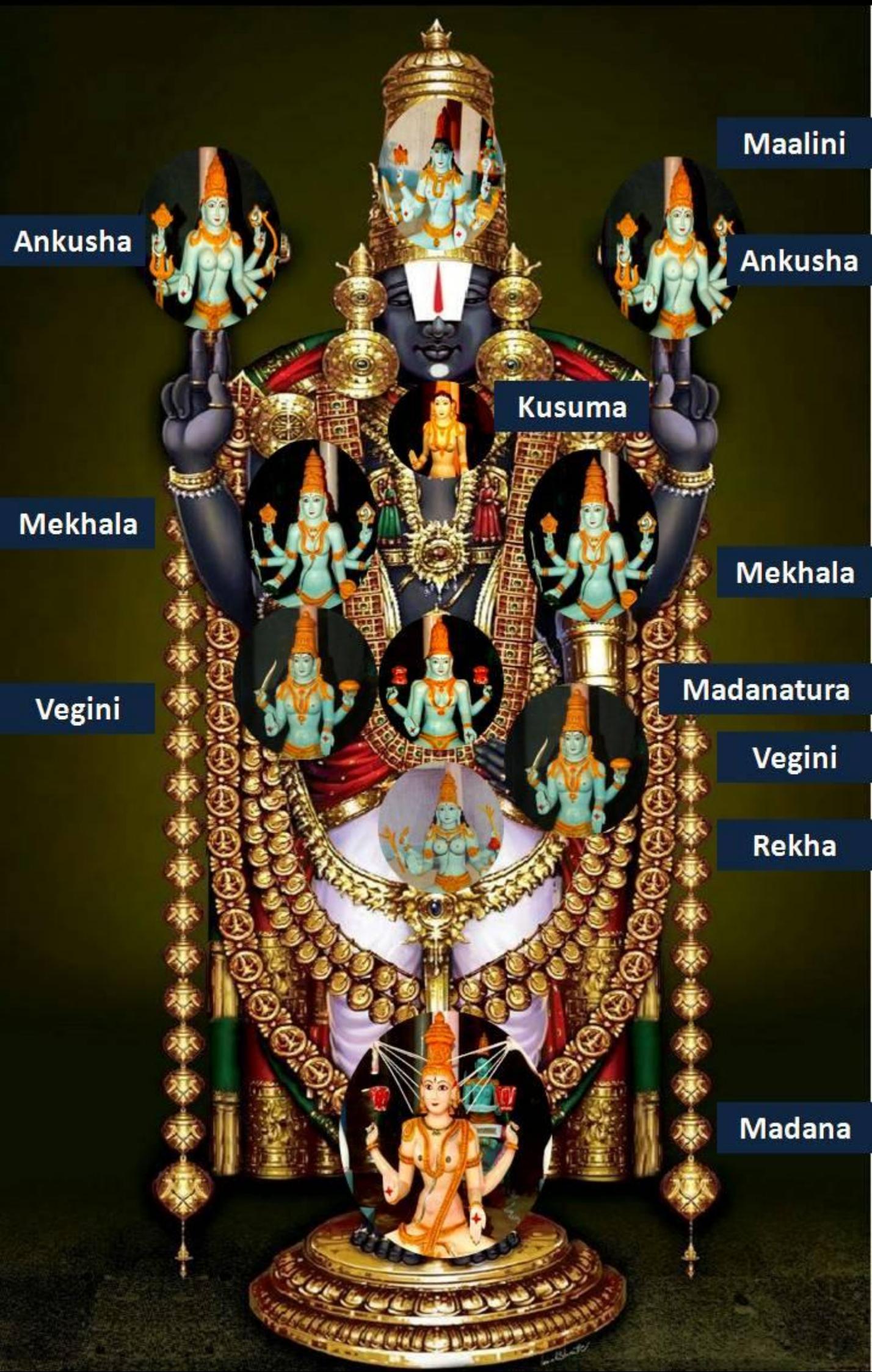
Ahankara

Amruta

Dhairya

Beeja

Sarva Samkshobhana Venkatesha



Maalini

Ankusha

Ankusha

Kusuma

Mekhala

Mekhala

Vegini

Madanatura

Vegini

Rekha

Madana

Sarva Saubhagya Dayaka Venkatesha

Dvandakshayankari

Jrumbhini

Mantramayi

Sampattipurni

Samkshobhini

Arthasadhini

Stambhini

Sammohini

Akarshini

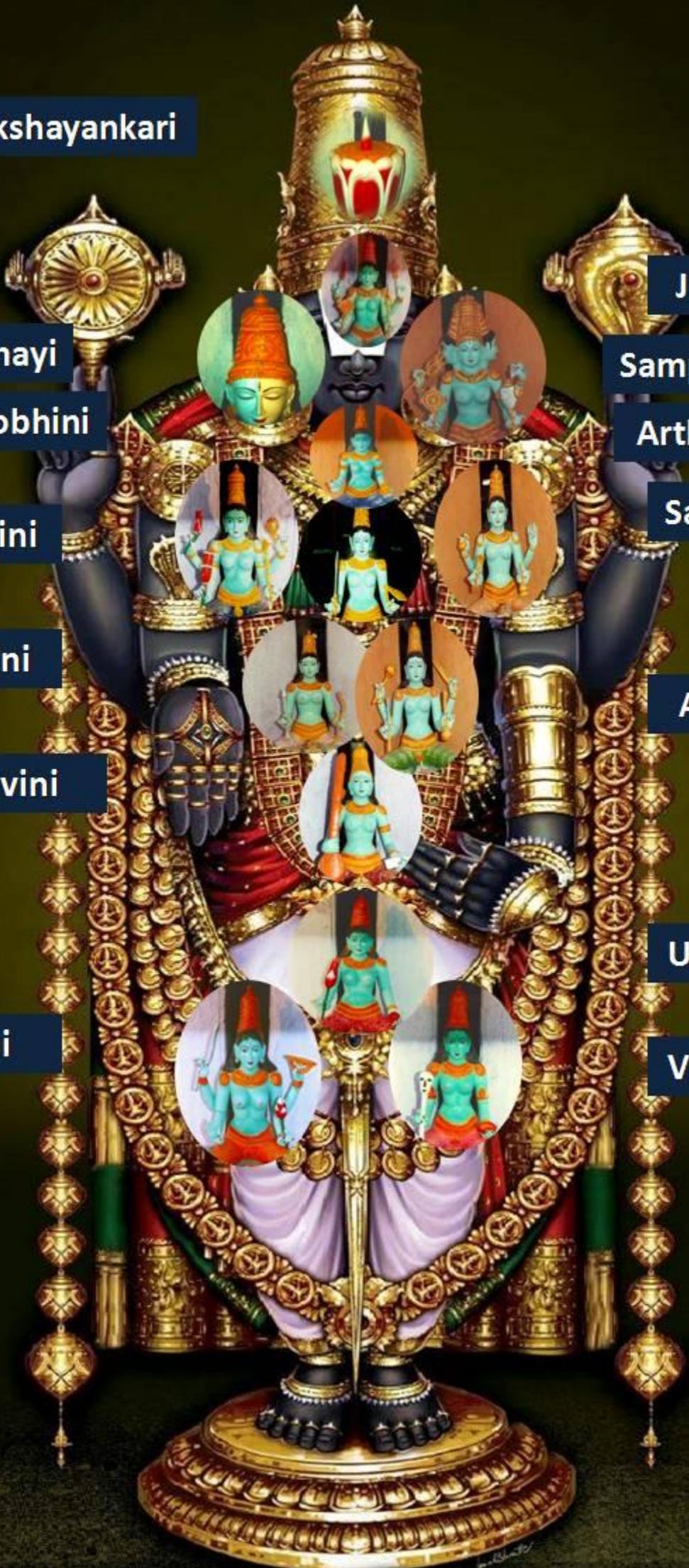
Ahlaadini

Vidraavini

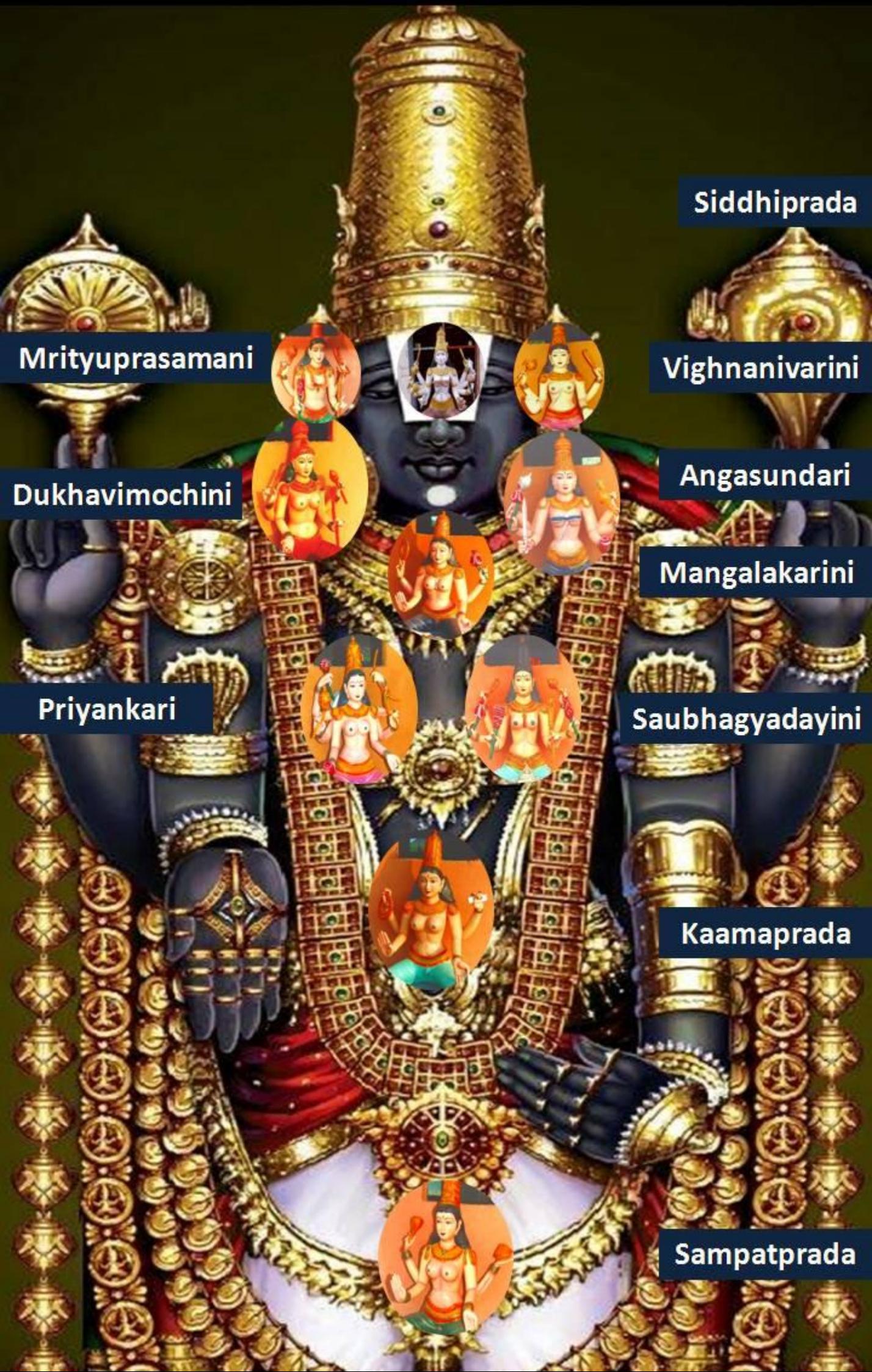
Unmaadini

Ranjini

Vashankari



Sarvaarthasaadhaka Venkatesha



Siddhiprada

Mrityuprasamani

Vighnanivarini

Dukhavimochini

Angasundari

Mangalakarini

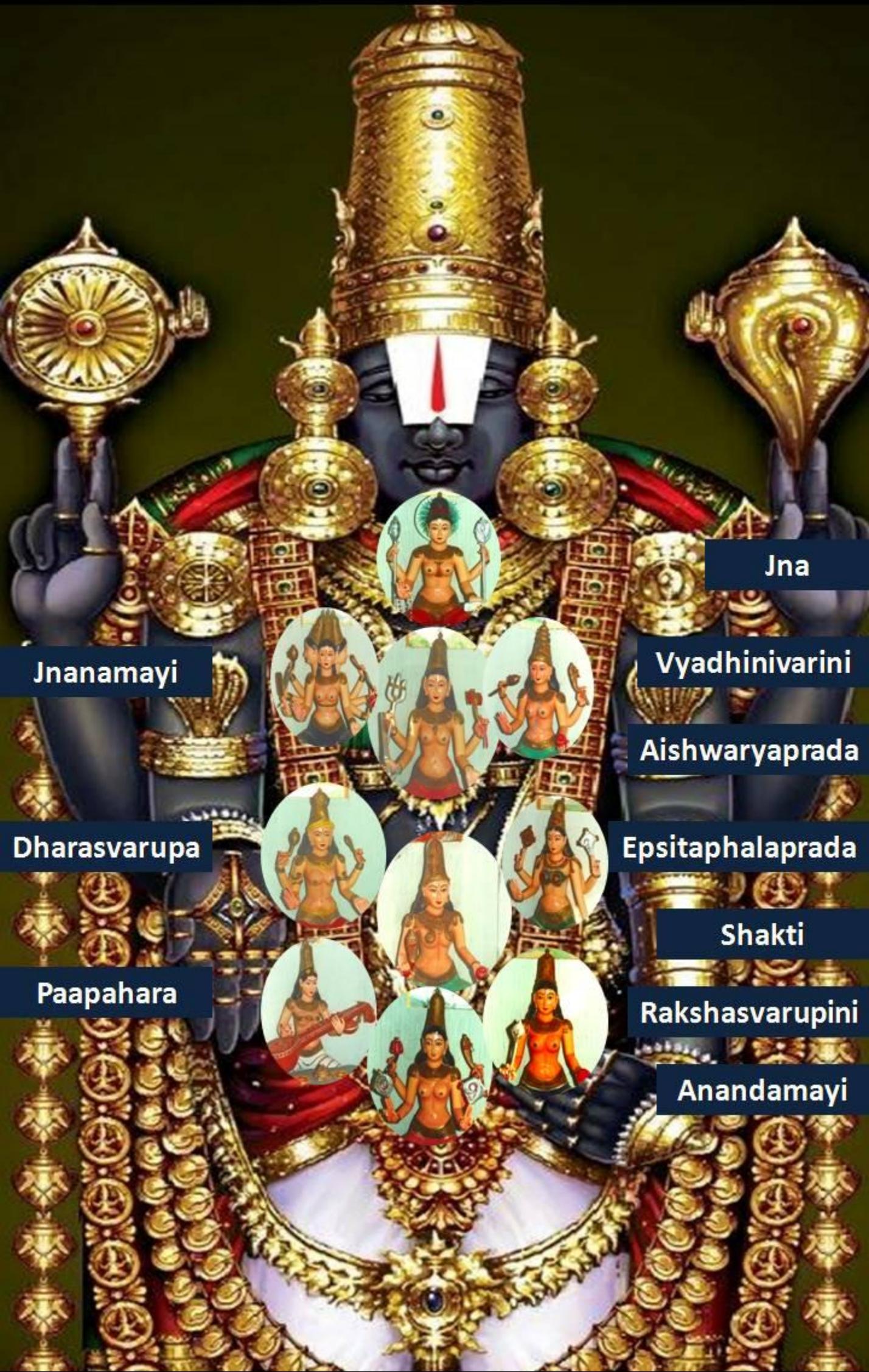
Priyankari

Saubhagyadayini

Kaamaprada

Sampatprada

Sarvarakshakara Venkatesha



Jna

Jnanamayi

Vyadhinivarini

Aishwaryaprada

Dharasvarupa

Epsitaphalaprada

Shakti

Paapahara

Rakshasvarupini

Anandamayi

Rogahara Siddhiprada Venkatesha



Vashini

Kaulini

Kameshi

Sarveshi

Vajreshwari

Bhagamalini

Modini

Jayini

Aruna

Kameshwari

Vimala

Sarvaanandamaya Venkatesha

Parabrahman

Sampatkari

Ashvarudha



Lalitha



Dandini
MahaVarahi

Mantrini
RajaShyamala

