

NAMO NARAYANAYA
SRIMAN NARAYANAYA CHARANAU SARANAM PRAPATHYE
SRIMATHE NARAYANAYA NAMAHA
SRIMATHE RAMANUJAYA NAMAHA
SRI MUDALIAANDAN SWAMY THIRUVADIGALEY SARANAM

SRI AMRITHAVALLI NAYIKA SAMETHA SRI LAKSHMI NARASIMHA PARABRAHMANE
NAMAHA

Prostrating at His Holy feet, Adiyen wishes to share the anubhavam of my yaathirai to Ahobilam Divya desam. Adiyen had the bhagyam to visit this divya desam twice. My first yaatrai to this divya desam dates back to August'1998 along with my family and the second was after a gap of 5 years i.e.in July'2003. Adiyen undertook the first yaatrai along with my wife and daughters (younger one was just 2 and a half years old and the elder one was 4 years old). During my first pilgrimage to this divya desam, there was neither any infrastructure nor any development. Most of the temples were not approachable and didn't have any temple structures. Even Nitya Thiruvaaradhanai was not done to most of the Perumals. But when Adiyen visited this kshetram with my brother and ISKCON devotees in July,2003, Adiyen was very happy to see the all-round development. The present 45 th Ahobila Mutt Jeeyar has definitely taken the holy initiative to develop this kshetram on war footing and made it convenient for the pilgrims to visit the temple.We salute him for the great efforts undertaken. Presently nine archakas have been appointed who perform Nityathiruvaaradhanai to all the Nava Narasimhars .They travel by Cycles to the temples and are very cooperative with the pilgrims.

My sincere acknowledgements to Ms.Ramesh, the author of "108 DIVYA DESAMS" and members of Sri Rangasri group, whom we treat as our spiritual guide. But for her, it would have been impossible for us to gather so much information about Srivaishnava divya desams.

Out of the 108 Sri Vaishnava divya desams, two are in Andhra Pradesh, Tirumala and Ahobilam. Both the divya desams are situated in the Nallamalai Hills in Chittoor and Kurnool districts respectively. It is about 68 KM from Nandyal Station (Ex Prime Minister Shri P.V.Narasimha Raos constiency) As per the Puranas, Nallamalai Hills is the personification of Adisesha, the great serpent bed of Perumal. Srisailam, one of the famous Shiva sthalams is the tail end, Ahobilam is the middle portion, Tirumala is the head and Srikalahasti, another Shiva kshetram is the mouth of Adisesha. Thus, the sacred hills houses two Vishnu and two Shiva kshetrams.

Ahobilam, the great Narasimha kshetram is also known as Ahobalam, Singavel Kundram, Vedachalam, Garudachalam, Veera kshetram, pancha kosa kshetram etc. for the following reasons.

- § AHOBALAM :- means "great strength". Since Lord manifested Himself here for rescuing His devotee by killing the asura, Hiranyakasapu, the devas praised Him saying "AHO BALAM" (Oh! What a strength)
- § VEDACHALAM :-Perumal restored the Vedas to Brahma by killing Somuka, an asura.
- § GARUDACHALAM:-Perumal blessed Garuda who was doing penance here.
- § VEERA KSHETRAM :- Lord exercised one of His gunas "VEERYAM"
- § NAVA NARASIMHA KSHETRAM: There are nine temples dedicated to Narasimhar

§ PANCHA KROSA KSHETRAM: All the nine temples are situated within a radius of 5 krosas or 10 miles or 16 kilometres.

As stated earlier, Ahobilam is situated 25 Km from Arlagadda in Kurnool district can also be approached via Cuddapah district. It is situated on hills amidst thick jungles. The local tribals are usually hostile. Compared to Tirumala yaatrai, this is strenuous because there is neither motorable road (except to two or three temples) nor well laid pathway like that in Tirumala. Added to this, almost all the temples are scattered on the hills with no direct route. One is forced to walk back the way he came and then go to the next temple. Aged people and children will find it difficult to trek in these hills. The pathway which is full of thorns and stones is slippery. Great care has to be taken while trekking. Added to this, the place is inhabited by wild animals and monkeys. Due to monkey's menace, even eatables have to be taken with utmost care. It is always advised to take help of local guide. This made us recollect Thirumangai Azhwar's mangalasaasanam comprising of 10 pasurams describing the divya desam beautifully. He describes Perumal's ugra swaroopam and the scenic beauty of this place. In the first 8 pasurams, he describes how difficult it is to reach this place which is inhabited by wild elephants, tigers, lions and local tribals who attack the visitors. He says that even tigers and lions offer their prey to Perumal before eating them. But in the 9th pasuram Azhwar says that these difficulties would be faced only by the enemies and demons and the bhaktas need not have any fear because here Perumal residing along with Thayar would always protect the devotees. This pasuram boosted our confidence level and made us loose all the fear as we had taken refuge in Him. Every nucleus in Ahobilam reverberates Lord Narasimha's holy name.

STHALAPURANAM: Jaya and Vijaya, the dwarapaalakas of Vaikuntam who were puffed up with ego because of their proximity to Perumal were cursed by Sanathakumara brothers who were the Manasaputras of Brahma to get separated from Perumal. The repentant dwarapaalakas were given the option of either living a pious life for 100 births or become demons for 3 janmas, develop enmity towards the Lord and finally get killed by Perumal. They opted for the latter and hence were born thrice. In their first janma, they were born as Hiranyaaksha and Hiranyakasipu, they took their second birth as Ravana and Kumbakarna and in their third birth, they were born as Kamsa and Sisupaala.

Bhagavan declares in Bhagavad Gita that He will appear to protect His devotees and destroy His enemies. So whenever the earth becomes overburdened with sinners, the Lord manifests Himself to protect His devotees. Narasimha Avataaram is one such avataaram where the Lord appeared to protect the great child-devotee, Prahalada by killing his father, Hiranyakasipu.

In Matsya, Kurma and Varaha avatarams, Lord appeared as an animal and in other avatarams like Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, the Lord appeared as a human and protected everyone. The Narasimha avataaram is the only avataaram where the Lord appeared as "half beast half man" a rare combination.

It is only in this avataaram that Lord depicts contrasting feelings of "sowlabhyam" and "krodham" i.e. love and hatred with the same organ, "eyes" at the same time. The Lord was full of compassion and love to the child devotee, Prahalada and at the same time was fierce and angry with Hiranyakasipu.

Hiranyakasipu with his severe austerities had wittingly acquired a boon from Brahma that he should not get killed by any of Brahma's creation, he shouldn't die either during day or night, he shouldn't die either on earth or in the sky, he shouldn't be killed by using any weapon or astram. Puffed up with the confidence that he couldn't be killed as fulfilling as the above conditions would be impossible, he had become notorious and tortured pious people. He developed hatred towards Lord Vishnu. But his son, Prahalada was a born Vishnu Bhakta. All his advises to realise the soul and seek Narayanan's Holy feet became invain. The wicked rakshasa started torturing his son by throwing him from top of hill, administering poison, throwing him in sea, fire etc. All the efforts of the rakshasa became futile as his son was protected by Lord. He realised the purpose of birth and had absolute faith on the Ultimate. *Sri Mukkur Swamy gives a wonderful explanation to the incident when Prahalada was thrown from top of the hill. He says that when Prahalada was thrown by the asuras from top of the hill, he held his hands close to his heart to ensure that Perumal who was residing in his heart as "ANTARYAAMI" shouldn't get hurt. Seeing this act of Prahalada, Bhoomidevi overwhelmed with pity protected the child by taking him in her alms on a bed of flowers. When Prahalada was thrown in the fire, Agni deva protected the child and it was his aunt, Holika, who got burnt. This incident is celebrated even today as "Holi" festival in India.*

The asura could not accept the concept of "OMNIPRESENCE OF THE LORD" propagated by Prahalada and as a challenge, he kicked a nearby pillar in his palace and asked the boy to show him the Lord. The asura was fully confident that as he himself had constructed the palace, he was sure that the Lord could not be present. Even before he could complete his sentence, an extraordinary being emerged out of the pillar. The being had a body like a human and a face like that of a lion's. He had sharp nails like the paws of a lion. This was the most prominent avataaram of the Lord "NARA-SIMHA" avataaram. The Lord with His wonderful form of half-beast and half-man (he was neither a man nor a beast but at the same time, he was the combination of the two) and 10 hands placed the asura on His lap (it was neither earth nor sky), he was holding the asura with two of his hands; pierced the asura's intestine with his nails, (thus not using any astram or weapon), it was evening when the incident occurred, (thus fulfilling the condition that he should neither be killed in the morning nor night). Thus the Lord killed the asura and lessened the burden of the earth. Even after the samhaaram, the Lord was furious. Thayar and the demigods were afraid to go near him and pacify. It was Prahalada who sang the praise of the Lord known as "PRAHALADA STHUTHI" and pleased the Lord. This sthuthi comprising of 43 slokas contains the essence of Vedanta philosophy difficult to grasp even by mature minds. Prahalada was able to recite this slokam only due to the grace and touch of the Lord. This incident is mentioned in the seventh chapter of Srimad Bhagavatham. The Lord took him on His lap and blessed him to rule the kingdom and finally reach His abode. He also granted the boon that no one belonging to his dynasty would be killed by Him. (This was the reason why Perumal didn't kill Bali Chakravarthy, the demon-king who was Prahalada's grandson when Perumal assumed Vamana avataaram, Dhenukaasuran and Banaasuran during his Krishnaavataaram. With His touch, the sins of Hiranyakasipu got wiped off. The Lord conceded the request of the devas to stay back in earth and protect His devotees. He later married Chenchulakshmi, a partial manifestation of Thayar and continues to reside in this holy place even today. To this day, this tribe enjoys special privileges and they get offerings for Perumal's Thirukalyaanam which is celebrated in a grand way.

It was only after obtaining the grace of Narasimhar, Sri Ramar got the information that Ravana had kidnapped Sita Devi. It was after having darshan of Narasimhar, Lord Srinivasar met Padmavathi Thayar and married Her.

The presence of the Lord can be experienced even today. To quote few instances, it may be mentioned that Perumal appeared as a sanyasi to Srinivasachariyar around 500 years ago to the first Jeeyar of Ahobila Mutt and initiated him into Sanyasam and prompted him to propogate Srivaishnavism. The Lord gave the Jeeyar the utsava vigraham of Malola Narasimhar and this vigraham is in the custody of the Ahobila Mutt Jeeyars for Nityathiruvaadhanai. The Lord also protected the 33rd Jeeyar of Ahobila Mutt from wayside dacoits. The Lord saved Annamacharyar , the great saint who attained the Lotus feet of the Lord by singing His praises, from the harassment of the local king and he got initiated into Srivaishnavism by the then Ahobila Mutt Jeeyar. The Lord blessed King Pratapa rudra by enlightening him about true knowledge. This king contributed to a great extent for the welfare of this place. The present Ahobila Mutt Jeeyar has contributed to a great extent by spending few lakhs of rupees for the renovation of old temples and constructed new temples. The way to these temples has become accessible.

As mentioned earlier, there are 9 shrines dedicated to nine forms of Narasimhar. Out of this Prahalada varada Narasimhar is in Lower Ahobilam, Ugra Narasimhar, who is a swayambhu and is treated as the divya desa Perumal is seen in Upper Ahobilam. The other shrines are scattered all over the hills. Apart from the nava Narasimha shrines, "Prahalada padi" where Prahalada studied and "Ugra Sthambam" from where Perumal emerged are usually visited by pilgrims. There are number of Theerthas in this shrine. A few like Lanjekonneru near Bhargava Narasimhar , Ramatheertha near Lower Ahobilam and Raktha Kundam near Jwala Narasimhar , Bhavanaasini near Ugra Narasimhar which flows through both the mountains are a few to name.

MOOLAVAR : SRI LAKSHMI NARASIMHA SWAMY
THAYAR : SRI AMRITHAVALLI THAYAR
VIMANAM : Gugai (Cave)
THEERTHAM : BHAVANAASINI
PRATHYEKSHAM : PRAHALADA, GARUDAR ,HANUMAR
MANGALASAASANAM: THIRUMANGAI AZHWAR (1008-1017)

I am briefly giving the details of the nava narasimhars.

- 1) **PRAHALADA VARADA NARASIMHA SWAMY**: Situated at the foot of the hills known as Lower Ahobilam, this temple can be visited by one and all. Usually all homams and yagams are performed here. Here Perumal is seen along with Thayar blessing Prahalada. Hence, Perumal is known as "Prahalada Varadar". The utsava vighrams of all the Narasimhars except Malola Narasimhar are offered nitya thiruvaadhanai here. To the left of Perumal, utsava vigraham of Pavana Narasimhar can be seen majestically . In front of the Lord, the utsava iodls of Prahalada varada Narasimhar along with Sridevi and Bhoodevi grace us . The processional deity of Jwala Narasimhar along with His consorts is also seen in the garbagriham . The vigraham is superbly carved and on request , the archakar removes the alankaranam and performs Aarathi to the idol. This idol has 10 arms and Hiranya vadham (killing) is beautifully depicted. There is also a small vigraham of the first Ahobila Mutt Jeeyar facing south. The temple is a huge

one and many monkeys can be seen here. The walls of the temple depict the sthala puranam briefly. There is a Thayar Sannidhi to the right of the temple.

- 2) **BHARGAVA NARASIMHA SWAMI**: This temple is situated two kilometres from Lower Ahobilam on a small hillock and can be approached by foot. As Bhargava (Parasurama) did penance here, the Lord is thus known. It is easily approachable.
- 3) **YOGANANDA NARASIMHA SWAMI**: Situated at a distance of 3 kilometres from Lower Ahobilam, this can be approached by foot. It was here that Prahalada mastered the art of yoga from Perumal Himself. The divya mangala swaroopam of the Lord is eye captivating. Perumal is seen alone in Yogaasanam.
- 4) **CHATRAVATA NARASIMHA SWAMI**:- This is situated at a distance of nearly 3 kms from Ahobilam on a different route also reachable on foot . As Perumal is seated alone under a peepul tree which protects Perumal like an umbrella, He is known as Chatravata Narasimhar. This Perumal is fond of music played by Gandharvas. It looks as if the Lord is deeply engrossed in music by clasping His hands. We were told that He is fond of Adi Thalam. Reptiles keep moving in this place but they don't harm the devotees. One has to take care of these.
- 5) **UGRA NARASIMHAR SANNIDHI**:- This is in Upper Ahobilam. There is a narrow bus route and it takes about 40 minutes to reach this place from Lower Ahobilam. This is considered as the divya desa temple. Usually, pilgrims have bath in Bhavanaasini or Paavanaasini (a spring which flows from the top of the hill) and then have Perumal's darsanam. A dip in Paavanaasini absolves all the sins committed. Though there are no proper bathing ghats, still we can see hundreds of devotees having holy dip unmindful of their surroundings. The sannidhi is located inside a cave . Perumal along with Thayar is seen in Veetruirundha Thirukkolam . Opposite to Perumal, there is an idol of Prahalada. There is a dark room on the other side of the cave which is believed to be the place where Chenchulakshmi resides . Recently, under the supervision of Jeer, a bridge across Paavanasini river has been constructed which facilitates the pilgrims to go to Varahanarasimhar temple (Krodha Narasimhar)

KRODHA NARASIMHAR: One kilometer further from Upper Ahobilam leads to the shrine of Krodha Narasimhar. He is also known as Varaha Narasimhar as His Thirumukam resembles a varaham (a boar). Any japam done here elevates one spiritually. Especially, Narayana Sadakshara Japam from Varaha Kanda bestows manifold benefits as told by Archakar Swamin

KARANJA NARASIMHAR SHRINE : This temple is situated between Upper Ahobilam and Lower Ahobilam.. As the divya mangala moorthi is installed under Karanja vruksham, the deity has been named so. Perumal is seen in Veetruirundha Kolam and is holding Sarngam (bow), dhanus (arrow) and chakram . As usual, Adishesha acts as "Kudai"(refer Irundhal Kudaiyam...) and is protecting. The theertham here is known as Bhairava kundam. Hanumar who visited this place was a staunch Rama bhakta . Lord Narasimhar appeared to Hanumar, who was a staunch Ramabhakta, with bow and arrow thus showing that He is Rama Himself. This Lord is in Padmasaanam pose. One can have darshan of Hanumar also. We are reminded of Sholangur .

- 6) **MALOLA NARASIMHAR**: This shrine is situated two kilometres away from Upper Ahobilam. Perumal came in search of Mahalakshmi Thayar who was doing

penance here and placed Her on His lap. Hence, Perumal seen along with Thayar has a somya (graceful) form. Due to Thayar's presence, Perumal graces even the worst sinner. Azhwar refers to this Perumal in pasuram no. 1016 (Peria Thirumozhi) when he says that bhaktas are always protected by Perumal and only the wicked have to fear. This Lord gives abhayam to His devotees and Thayar bestows Asthaaiswaryam and grants the wishes of the devotees. There is a vigraham of Thirumangai Azhwar in the sanctum. Outside the temple, there is a small pillar with murthis. Those who are not able to go to Ugra sthambam can prostrate this pillar.

- 7) **JWALA NARASIMHAR**:- This temple is located at a higher altitude may be around 2800 feet. And can be approached from Malola Narasimhar shrine. It takes about 2 hours to reach this temple from Upper Ahobilam. The path is slippery and as mentioned care has to be taken. It was here that Perumal killed Hiranyakasipu by tearing his stomach with his spear like nails. The idol with 10 hands which is approximately 3 feet high and is scaring to look at. Beside this shrine, there is a small pond known as "Raktha Kundam" where the Lord is believed to have washed His blood-stained hands. The water is reddish in colour and this was the explanation given by the guide to us. Recently, a temple has been constructed for this Lord and a archakar is appointed to perform Nitya Thiruvaaradhanai.
- 8) **PAVANA NARASIMHAR**: It is situated six kilometres away from Upper Ahobilam towards north east on the banks of River Pavana. It is difficult to approach this temple as wild animals keep roaming. If one wishes to visit this temple, he must do so during daytime with the help of a guide. The path is too narrow, the trek amidst cluster of rocks is strenuous. It takes about 45 minutes for trekking. One can view Malola Narasimhar shrine and few water falls on the way on the other side of the mountain. Forest fire is very common in this place and this helps in one way to ward off wild animals. It is believed that devas offer worship to this Lord. The Lord is seen along with Thayar. The local tribals usually observe fast on Saturdays and offer flowers, honey, fruits, rice, jaggery etc. to the Lord. The general notion that "bali" (sacrifice) is done here was rebuked by the priest. He said that the sacrifice would be done elsewhere in the jungles. He also added that wild animals do not roam near the temple and only during severe summer, they come to the river bank to quench their thirst. They usually do not hurt any one.

Besides the above shrines, other places of interest are Prahalada Padi or Prahalada Mettu (Mettu in Telugu and Padi in Tamil means "step") and Ukku sthambam.

PRAHALADA PADI is the place where Prahalada had his vidyabhyaasam from Sukracharya's sons. The way to Prahalada padi though tough is breathtakingly beautiful with river flowing on one side and with various water falls amidst a huge valley. This reminds me of the route to Badrinath. The temple is in a small cave and one has to crawl to enter inside the cave. Only 4 persons can be accommodated inside at a time. Mountain lizards and bats move freely here.

It was here that the child started propogating Lord's qualities. Prahalada used to resort to this place for meditating upon the Lord. There is a vigraham of Narasimhar in centre. to its right, there is an idol of Chakaratazhwar and to the left, there is a vigraham of Lord Vishnu.

UKKU STHAMBAM which is situated at a distance of 8 kms from Upper Ahobilam is the pillar from which the Lord emerged. The pillar which is situated at the edge of the cliff is split into two as a proof that Lord appeared from this pillar. Pilgrims

usually give their offerings here. It is very difficult to reach this place which is at a highest altitude .Doing pradakshinam around this pillar is even more difficult as it is in the cliff. Near the ukku sthambham (iron pillar) as the Telugus call, there is Perumal's Thiruvadi. The climb is very difficult . Only with His grace can one visit this place. One has to have a sharp vision and a flexible body to bend, crawl etc. This can be approached from Prahalada padi on the way to Jwala Narasimhar shrine. While describing this pillar, Sri Mukkur Swamy says that the entire world is still pregnant with Narasimhar inside except this because Perumal has come out of it. The symbols of Vishnu, namely, Sankhu, Chakram, Naamam are carved on the face of the hill.

One can have a bird's eyeview of the entire Ahobilam from this place. The atmosphere is calm and serene . Various waterfalls all around looking like thin streams makes us wonder and appreciate the nature and Lord's creation. It's a best place to meditate.

OUR EXPERIENCE :

After taking the blessings of my elders, Adiyen along with family left for Ahobilam on 13th August, 1998. It was a sudden decision and hence the journey was unplanned.

At 10 in the night, we boarded a bus from Hyderabad, Afzalgunj Bus depot to Arlagadda and reached Arlagadda via Kurnool at 5 A.M. There are many bus services available from Arlagadda to Ahobilam every 10 minutes and it is around 25 to 30 Km from Arlagadda . From Cuddapah it could be around 65 kms . Some of the buses go to Upper Ahobilam directly. As we wanted to have holy dip in Bhavanaasini theertham, we decided to go to Upper Ahobilam first and hence boarded the bus towards Upper Ahobilam.

We reached Upper Ahobilam at 7.30 A.M. After having bath in Bhavanaasini, the holy theertham of this place (a dip in this sacred river which has its source at the top near Jwala Narasimha shrine cleanses all the accumulated sins), we went to the shrine of Narasimhar. The shrine is located inside a cave and Perumal is seen with Thayar known as "CHENCHU LAKSHMI" and PRAHALADA, the great child devotee. We performed Archanai . The archakar suggested we take services of a guide to go to Jwala Narasimhar shrine which is on a higher altitude. As we have to cross thick forest and as the climb is difficult , we were advised so. Hence, a guide accompanied us for Rs.100/-. We had to cross the river and move up to another hillock. With thorns and stones on the way, the climb was really difficult and slippery. The guide offered to carry my elder daughter and Adiyen carried the younger one. The route was tough and one can easily get lost .Fortunately the guide was too kind. (Lords arrangements) On the way, we had darshan of Krodha Narasimhar . It took nearly 2 hours for us to reach the shrine. We performed Pooja and left upwards to move to Jwala Narasimhar Shrine. My daughters cooperated as Adiyen had to carefully ascend the hill carrying my daughter and once in a way the kid had to walk on her own. Lord graced the kid many times . The passers by were kind to encourage the little one who were reciting Ugram Veeryam Mahavishnum Jwalantham Sarvatomukham Narsimham bheeshanam badram vishnor vishnum Namamyaham. True Indeed Lord graced the little ones with a comfortable journey as the guide helped me several occassions to take the child. He carried a stick with him to trace the steps and guided us to follow. He referred that Lord is called as "Obelesudu" and they believe Lord is their brother - in -law as Chenchu lakshmi thayar was their sister. I was silently listening to the guides description and experiences of the Lord .I recollected the Annamaya Kirtana "Enta matramu everru

talachina antha matramey nuvvu .. This was proved .Lord bestows grace as per our faith . The sound similar to the roar of Lions was heard amidst the silent valleys. I was told wild animals move freely near the river . The Annual Brahmotsavam is celebrated during the first fortnight of Phalguna month that is after Maha Siva Ratri . A peculiar custom is followed by the tribes here which shows the deep love of the tribe to the Lord . They regard Lord as their personal property. They perform Kalyana Utsavam to the Lord . The Utsava Vighrams are brought and lots are drawn among the tribe to who shall perform the KalyanaUtsavam. The one whose name is selected is considered very lucky. The route was tough and Adiyen decided that We have to be contented with Jwala Narasimhars darshan and come back by 4PM so that we can leave the same day. We moved at the edge of the cliff and water pouring on us reached the shrine .Just outside the shrine, we saw a small pool known as "RAKTHA KUNDAM". We were told that after killing Hiranyakasapu, Perumal dipped His blood stained hands in this pool and hence it has been named so. Here, Perumal is seen in a fierce mood. The image of the Lord killing the asura with His eight hands(two hands holding the asura, tearing the intestines) and Prahalada seen with folded hands is a fiery sight. After performing Archanai and offering fruits as neivedyam, Adiyen spent some time in the cave itself and meditated on the Lord. But now , a temple has been constructed and a archakar has been employed to carry out the Nitya Kainkaryam who vists in the morning and leaves back.

The way back was even more difficult as there was no proper steps and one has to carefully put his foot for a better grip. After returning from Jwala Narasimhar shrine, we had thadiaraadhanai in the temple itself and proceeded to visit Prahalada varada Narasimhar. As we decided to leave the same day we quickly proceeded to Lower Ahobilam and we went to Prahalada varada Narasimhar shrine . Here, Lord is seen with Thayar on His lap and Prahaladan. The utsava vighrams of all the Nava Narasimhars except Malola Narasimhar which is in the custody of Ahobila mutt Jeeyar are kept in this shrine. The archakar was happy to learn that we have undertaken divya desa yaatrai and was pleased to narrate the vaibhavams of the Lord, the kshetra mahatyam, etc.

We couldn't visit Prahalada padi, Ukku sthambham(the pillar from where the Lord emerged), Karanji Narasimhar which is amidst a forest due to lack of time. If one wishes to visit all the 9 sannidhis, one must be prepared to stay for 2 days and one night. As we had to rush back to Hyderabad, Adiyen could visit only 4 temples during my first trip with family. I prayed Lord to grace us to vist the Nava Narasimha Kshetrams at the earliest.

My second trip was well planned. Adiyen had the bhaagyam to have satsang with Hare Krishna devotees who had organised this trip during July'03 and could cover all the nine temples, Ukku sthambham and Prahalada Padi. I was fortunate to have my brother's company (settled in U.S.)who is well versed in Divya prabhandham and my nephew, Narayanan an Engineering student and a Hare Krishna devotee. Adiyen gives briefly the trip details.

OUR SECOND TRIP WHICH COVERED ALL NAVANARASIMHAR KSHETRAMS :

On 18th July,03, we left Secunderabad by a bus at 10 o'clock in the night. We were a group of 12 people and throughout the night, we were chanting Lord's names. We reached Lower Ahobilam or Diguva Tirupathi on 19th morning at 5 A.M. We quickly checked into Ahobila Mutt and after refreshing ourselves, all of us proceeded to "Pralhada Varadar Narasimhar" temple. This is the first of the nine temples.

Looking at my Srivaishnavite marks, the archakar allowed Adiyen inside the garbagriham for Saatrumarai seva at 7.30 A.M. Luckily, the neivedyam (huge quantity) was brought and partaken with other co-devotees. We recited some pasurams and then joined the satsang with chanting of Bhajans . With continuous recitation of Jai Narasimha dev chants , we straightaway left to Upper ahobilam by bus which is around 10 kms. ascending. A natural scenic spot with a number of water falls the Divyadesam invites Pilgrims attention to appreciate the nature. We can see two crests of the hill called Vedhadri and Garudadhri. Bhavanasini theertha , an antharvahini flows inside the hills during a part of its course and one can see natural springs all around. The route was tough, on the way we were able to see greenery and huge mountains all around . Rare species of birds, huge trees randomly grown, grass uncut ,logs of wood around thick bushes were seen. All around was a overgrown jungle with every inch thick vegetation allowing all chance of wild animals and reptiles to plunge at the visitors who disturb their peace . Luckily such things don't happen. We reached Upper Ahobilam within half an hour .The moment we saw the temple we recollected the Prapatti sloka

"Aho Veryam aho sowryam aho bahu parakramaha
Naarasimham param deivam Ahobalam Ahobalam"

The cab was parked near to the temple and as we had to trek for the rest of the day, we packed our requirements . Adiyen sincerely prayed Lord that my austerity of trekking the holy hills without slippers may be graced without any bruises. We proceeded and had darshan of Ahobila Narasimhar also known as "Ugra Narasimhar" located inside a cave. Here , Perumal is seen along with Thayar . This vigraham is Swayambhu and is considered as the divya desa Perumal. As Adiyen wished to visit all the nine temples, I prayed for Perumal's grace. We were glad to find a overbridge across Bhavanaasini river to approach Krotha Narasimha swamy temple. After trekking for about a kilometer, we reached this temple. The temple has been renovated and after reciting Lakshmi Narasimha Kalavarambam stotram (we decided to recite this along with Jai Narasimha Dev song in all the shrines to the accompaniment of music), we proceeded to "Malola Narasimhar" temple which is 2 kilometres away from Ugra Narasimha swamy temple. The temple which is situated at an altitude of 3000 feet app. has also been renovated. The presiding deity here has a graceful sowmya form. The Lord is seen with Mahalakshmi Thayar. The priest said that Perumal came here in search of Thayar who was doing penance and pacified and consoled Her. Hence, He is known as "MAA-LOLAN" (maa refers to Lakshmi and Lolan refers to pacifying). The priest said that Lord gives abhayam and Thayar gives Her kataksham to the devotees who visit this temple. We did pradakshinam around the pillar which is situated in front of the temple and after offering obeisance to Thirumangai Azhwar, we proceeded to Prahlada Padi. The Archakar was very kind to accompany us to take us to the temple and proceeded along with us to Prahlada Padi.

Prahlada Padi which is situated at a higher altitude of about 2000 feet at a separate peak is the place where Prahlada had his schooling. The trekking was definitely tough with no proper sign boards but the enchanting flow of river on one side and water falls all around was soothing to the mind and soul. The forest is overgrown and wild ants and creepers keep moving around in their own world. We had to cross a valley to reach this place. As we were tired by trekking continuously for 45 minutes, we had a holy dip in the cool waters before entering the temple. It may be noted, that one ascends and descends on the hillocks to reach this place . The steep steps towards the temple are very narrow. Inside, apart from the idol of

Yoga Narasimhar (to whom Prahalada used to perform Aaradhanai), there are idols of Sudarshana Chakram and Vishnu. The Archakar performed archanai and explained the vaibhavam of this place. We captured the entire place in our camcorder.

From here, we quickly left to Ukku Sthambham, the iron pillar from where Perumal emerged thus proving His omnipresence. We were told that as we had already trekked to an altitude of 2000 feet, this place was near and a short route was available. The trekking was really tough as we were ascending the hill by another 500 feet. We had to cross 2 small hillocks and cross a rivulet flowing between these hillocks. On the way we saw a couple of wooden boxes next to the path and am told were of the people who died making the climb .The terrain proved to be more difficult. Ascending a hillock , then getting down, climbing another hillock and reaching the sthambham was very strenuous. Reaching this pillar which is in the cliff of the mountain,(it looks as if the pillar is hanging on the air) is a difficult task as we had to literally crawl carefully amidst rough rocks .(One ends up getting bruised during this climb). Only 5 of us could make it. A glance from this spot is sure to raise chills in a person . I was bewildered to see the distance I had covered and I was sure that only due to His kataksham, I could make it. Prostrated at Lord's Thiruvadi which is imbedded near the pillar and thanked for His abundant grace and prayed for my safe return . Just imagining how the Lord could have appeared from the pillar and how the place could have been at that time. I was filled with ecstasy and burst into "jai Narasimha Dev..." Resolved that every Tuesday, I would offer special prayers to Him . (While having darshanam of Narasimhar, I could visualise the divya mangala swaroopam of my favourite Lord, Srinivasar which made me realise not to differentiate the two swaroopams of the Lord. Like Annamayya who sang in praise of "Venkata Narasimha", I too experienced similar feeling. I was told by devotees that even Srinivasar visited this place and obtained His blessings before His wedding.

Climbing down was even more difficult. Only due to the continuous recitation of Vishnu Sahasranaamam, Adiyen could make it. By the time Adiyen returned from Ukku Sthambham, my co-devotees had already left for Jwala Narasimhar shrine. Adiyen shared my experience with my brother and nephew and accompanied by them, I reached jwala Narasimhar. As Adiyen was tired and as the route was slippery climbing down , I had to carefully sit down and crawl which was breathtaking. My co devotees were very kind to wait for me at Jwala Narasimhar shrine .(As we wished to complete all the seven shrines on the first day and complete the yathirai the next day,the remaining temples had to be visited within the limited time schedule so as to reach Secunderabad in the late night) .Nestled on the side of a cliff is where actually is the spot where Lord killed the wicked demon. One gets drenched on the way to the temple because of a huge waterfall which is on the way. Passing Raktha kundam, we reached the shrine. I was very glad to see the development in this shrine. When I visited this shrine in 1998, there was no sannidhi or gopuram for the Lord. Also there were no proper supports to move into the cave. Now , there is a bridge which allows one to walk freely. The Lords vigraham is inside the cave. I recollected our last visit wherein I had the bhagyam of performing Archanai to the Lord. Now, a small temple has been built and archakar visits this temple everyday in the morning and on every Swathi ,Thirumanjanam is performed to the Lord. We were welcomed by monkeys and the serene atmosphere made us to meditate on the Lord for some time. All our exhaustion had vanished. I shared my past experience with my brother, told him about Raktha kundam etc. and returned back to Varaha Narasimhar sannidhi (from where we started). On the way, we once again refreshed ourselves in the cool waters of Bhavanaasini .

Later we visited Yoga Narasimhar and Chatravata Narasimhar temples but unfortunately both the temples were closed. We recited bhajans outside the temple with passer bys joining the chanting group. The mood was to keep on chanting . As it was getting dark, we got back to our cab and decided we visit these temples the next day. After performing bhajan in the Mutt we retired for the day recollecting Prahalada Always staunch devotion and our Divyadesam yathirai to other shrines.

The next day , we started off early in the morning to Pavana Narasimhar temple which is 6 kms. away from Lower Ahobilam on top of the hill. This temple is situated amidst jungles and inhabited by wild animals. There is no proper route and one can easily get lost. On the way we saw a couple of wooden boxes next to the path and told of the people who died making the climb similar to the one we saw trekking to Ugra Stambam . It took 1 hour for us to reach this temple while reciting Vishnu Sahasranamam. We had to take care not to harm reptiles which keeps moving freely in these places. We could see the shrine of Malola Narasimhar situated on the other mountain far away and thin water falls all around. Here, Perumal is seen along with Thayar . This temple is situated on the banks of Pavana river and hence the Lord is known as Pavana Narasimhar. The temple is quiet big and a couple of families stay around the temple. Few tribal people are also seen around. We were told by the archakar that forest fires are very common here during summer. We recited Karavalambam Strotas and after thanking Lord, we left back to Lower Ahobilam.

We proceeded to Karanja Narasimhar temple which was renovated during April'01 as a mark of Platinum Jubilee celebrations by His Holiness Jeeyar. We were told that based on the dream the archakar had, he left his job as an Engineer in BHEL and joined Ahobila Mutt and is doing kainkaryam to this Lord. Here, Lord is seen alone. The archakar was kind to show us the Padmasanam posture of the Lord and explain the leelais of the Lord . My co-devotees had a spiritual treat with his quotes and We could see a true devotee of Lord there .

From there, we proceeded to Chatravata Narasimhar which is 20 minutes journey by motorable road. Here also, Perumal is seen as Ekamurthi, but there is a silver replica of Thayar on His Thirumaarbhu. We were told that this Perumal is fond of music and hence we quickly sang few devotional songs with our dholak and musical instruments . As usual the mood was set and many devotees joined the group to chant Lords holy names. From there , we visited Yoga Narasimhar shrine which hosts a beautiful Ekamurthi vighram and did bhajans. Then, we reached the shrine of Bhargava Narasimhar on foot , which is on a hillock and 2 kilometres from Lower Ahobilam. One has to climb 75 steps to reach the temple.

After thanking Perumal for showering His abundant grace and with a wish to visit this kshetram with my family, we left for Secunderabad in the afternoon and reached late night.

Amidst chanting of Lord Narasimha's Karavalamba stotram, we reached Secunderabad. I felt elated and blessed to be with Srivaishnavas for their satsang. This association made me recollect my Thirunangoor divya desa yaatrai . We prayed Lord that we visit all the Narasimha shrines which are listed below.

Adiyen is told that there are 30 important shrines dedicated to Lord Narasimhar which have to be visited, some sannidhis are in divya desa temple and some of them are Abhimaana sthalams which are as below: Any temple missed by me may please be added.

IN VARIOUS DIVYA DESAMS	ABHIMANA STHALAMS
METTAAHIGIYA SINGAR SRI RANGAM	THIRUNARAYANAPURAM (MELKOTE) MYSORE
KAATAAZHAGIYA SINGAR SRI RANGAM	
THANJHAI AALI THANJHAI MAA MANI KOVIL (TANJORE)	PAADALATHRI- SINGAPERUMAL KOVIL (CHENNAI)
THIRUPULLAMBOOTHANGUDI KUMBAKONNAM	NAMAKKAL
THIRUVAALI (THIRUNANGOOR)	VARAHA NARASIMHAR -SIMHACHALAM (A.P.NEAR VIZAG)
THIRUGOSHTIYUR MADURAI	PAANAKALA NARASIMHAR -MANGALAGIRI (A.P.NEAR VIJAYAWADA)
SRIVILLIPUTTUR MADURAI	JWALANARASIMHAR- YADAGIRIGUTTA (A.P.NEAR HYDERABAD)
AALAZHIGIYA SINGAR -THIRUVELLUKAI (KANCHI)	SINGIRI KOVIL (PONDICHERRY)
THIRUVALLUR (NEAR CHENNAI)	MATTAPALLI (A.P. NEAR NALGONDA)
THIRUKADALMALLAI (MAHABALIPURAM)	
THELLIASINGAR - THIRUVELLIKENI (CHENNAI)	
YOGA NARASIMHAR- THIRUAKDIGAI (SHOLINGUR)	
AHOBILAM (9 SANNIDHIS) ARLAGADDA, A.P	
KANDUM ENNUM KADINAGAR (DEVPRAYAG)	
TOTAL 22	TOTAL: 8

Acharaya Thiruvadigaley charanam

Dasan
varadan