

SRI RAMANUJA VAIBHAVAM

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In the last edition we read about Sri Ra:ma:nuja receiving the secret mantras from the great a:cha:rya Go:shtipu:rna. After Ku:re:sa and Da:sarathi learnt the meanings of these mantras, Sri Ra:ma:nuja continued learning various works of the A:lwa:rs and great preceptors.

Go:shtipu:rna once visited Srirangam to meet his college friend Tiruma:lai A:nda:n. They both went to meet Sri Ra:ma:nuja. Go:shtipu:rna then instructed Sri Ra:ma:nuja to learn the meaning of the great work of Namma:lwa:r (Sattako:pa) namely the Tiruva:imozhi from Tiruma:lai A:nda:n. Based on the teacher's acceptance they began the classes. Although Tiruma:lai A:nda:n was a student of the great Ya:muna:cha:rya, during the sessions Sri Ra:ma:nuja elaborated and discovered deeper meanings to the pa:surams (poems) stated by A:nda:n. This bothered A:nda:n and made him leave Srirangam to inquire with Go:shtipu:rna. The latter explained to A:ndan that what ever Sri Ra:ma:nuja talked about in his expansions was a result of Sri Ya:muna:cha:rya's grace alone. The only difference being that Sri Ya:muna taught A:nda:n and Go:shtipu:rna in person, where as he transferred all his knowledge to Sri Ra:ma:nuja through the grace of his divine eyes when he first saw him in the Ka:nchipuram temple.

Thus continued the discussions about the Tiruva:imozhi pa:surams



between A:nda:n and Sri Ra:ma:nuja. Many times A:nda:n used to be astonished by Sri Ra:ma:nuja's lucid meanings and deep explanations. Sri Ra:ma:nuja was very shrewd. Hearing the great expansions of the Pa:surams by Sri Ra:ma:nuja, A:nda:n was convinced that Sri Ra:ma:nuja was an avatha:ra purusha (one who has incarnated for a great cause i.e. uplifting mankind).

Upon completion of the Tiruva:imozhi, A:ndan suggested to Sri Ra:ma:nuja that He learn some more hidden secrets from the great Tiruvaranga Peruma:l Araiya. Thus began the classes about the greatness of a Guru (A:cha:rya). Araiya explained to Sri Ra:ma:nuja that the Guru was the visible God, the Guru was God's mouthpiece, through the Guru God selects the souls, the Guru is the link between the devotee and the Lord, etc. He explained the relationship between the great Madhurakavi and his a:cha:rya Namma:lwa:r and instructed that everyone follow these principles.

It is important to note that Sri Ra:ma:nuja learnt all these hidden meanings from different a:cha:ryas. He is known as Pancha:cha:rya sama:srithaha. Although he obtained his manthra di:ksha and accepted sama:srayana from Maha:pu:rna, he was instructed to learn the meanings from five great a:cha:rya:s. With this Sri Ra:ma:nuja became the Na:yaka Mani (the central jewel pendant in the great



lineage of a:cha:ryas). There were great a:cha:ryas who preceded Sri Ra:ma:nuja and great a:cha:rya:s who succeeded him. But Sri Ra:ma:nuja stood out as the main gem in this grand necklace of a:cha:ryas known as the Guru Parampara Ha:ra (the picture which is shown on the cover page of Sri Pati Stuti Ma:la book) with Sriman Narayana being the first a:cha:rya and Sri Manava:la Ma:muni as the last teacher.

Thus, by learning the great works, Sri Ra:ma:nuja became famous as a great preceptor in the Holy Land of Srirangam. With the grace of his gurus and all the spiritual and intellectual knowledge he possessed, He began to compose a few spectacular sanskrit works that were embedded with the principles of the A:lvars and his great a:cha:ryas. Here it is important to note that Sri Ra:ma:nuja did not start anything new. He only spoke the great words of his revered a:cha:ryas. Some people have the misconception today that Sri Ra:ma:nuja started a new faith. He did not do so, He only propagated and established texts and procedures and generously bestowed them upon all interested souls to uplift them.

At this time Sri Ra:ma:nuja composed the famous Gadya Thraya (the 3 prose works) namely the Sarana:gathi Gadya, Sri Ranga Gadya

and Sri Vaikunta Gadya. In these he packed the principles of surrender to the Lord and also described the great countless attributes (anantha kalya:na guna:s) of the Lord and His great celestial abode. This work was based on the great work of Sri Ya:muna:cha:rya, namely the Stho:thra Rathna. The next work Sri Ra:ma:nuja formalized was the Nithyanu sandha:nam (that is followed even today as a guide to perform the thiru-a:ra:dhana – daily worship to the Lord and His Consort in temples and homes).

Sri Ra:ma:nuja continued his life at Srirangam living a life of a Yathi (sannyasi, an ascetic) and began to be well known by the locals and outsiders. His greatness and knowledge began to spread and many accepted Him as their spiritual teacher (acha:rya). He would walk on the streets of Srirangam chanting the divine poems of the a:lva:rs and used to live on alms.



Answers for Mar 2005 Issue Puzzle

Can You Answer ? Try the Answer and Send it to us by mail or email to ebhaktinivedana@yahoo.com

When asked this riddle, 80% of kindergarten kids got the answer, compared to 17% of Stanford University seniors.

" What is greater than God, More evil than the devil, The poor have it, The rich need it, And if you eat it, you'll die ?

- From Dinesh

