

SRI RAMANUJA VAIBHAVAM

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In our previous issue, we learned about how Sri Ra:ma:nuja came before the mortal remains of the great Ya:muna:cha:rya, and promised to fulfill three great wishes that this great scholar had not been able to fulfill. In this issue, we will learn about what happened to Ra:ma:nuja after this life-changing event.

After his return to Ka:nchipu:ram, Sri Ra:ma:nuja spent most of his time with Sri Ka:nchipu:rna, discussing the A:lwar pa:surams and the kalya:na guna:s (virtuous qualities) of Sriman Na:ra:yana at length. Within a short time, Sri Ra:ma:nuja requested Sri Ka:nchipu:rna to formally initiate him into the Sri: Vai:shnava spiritual path through the ritual of pancha samska:ram or sama:sra:yanam. Sri Ka:nchipu:rna refused to accept the status of being Sri Ra:ma:nuja's guru as he thought himself unfit for this special role. He consoled Sri Ra:ma:nuja by telling him that Lord Sri Varada:ra:ja would soon send the right a:cha:rya for him.

Although Sri Ra:ma:nuja was disappointed, he accepted this as the wish of Lord. One day he humbly approached Sri Ka:nchipu:rna to invite the maha:thma to his house to partake prasa:dam. He was hoping to eat the food that was remaining after Sri Ka:nchipu:rna had eaten, what is traditionally called 'bha:gavatha se:sha prasa:dam'. Sri Ka:nchipu:rna accepted the invitation, but visited Sri

Ra:ma:nuja's house to accept the prasa:d when Sri Ra:ma:nuja was still at the temple. Sri Ra:ma:nuja's wife was a person who believed in adhering to very stringent orthodox principles. So, she was rather surprised to see this man of a different caste coming to her home for lunch. To please her husband, though, she served the prasa:d to the Maha:thma. But, immediately after he left, she cleared up the area and gave away whatever food was leftover not knowing why her husband invited this pious person to their house. She then bathed to regain her ritualistic purity and began to cook again for Ra:ma:nuja.

When Sri Ra:ma:nuja returned he was surprised to see his wife cooking, and was rather concerned that his important guest had not arrived yet. When he learned that Ka:nchipu:rna had already come and left, and that the leftover food had been given away, he felt extremely disheartened and blamed himself for not having the good fortune of being able to partake the bha:gavatha se:sha prasa:dam.

Many doubts and concerns came to Ra:ma:nuja's mind, which he openly shared with his mentor and friend. Hearing these, Sri Ka:nchipu:rna approached Lord Varada:ra:ja to clear Sri Ra:ma:nuja's concerns. The Lord's Six Responses that were conveyed to Sri: Ra:ma:nuja through Sri: Ka:nchipu:rna became the the turning point in Ra:ma:nuja's life. The Lord said:

1. I am the The Supreme, Para



Brahman, Parathathva, the cause and reason for all that you see around you.

1) I am the Supreme Lord, Srimanna:ra:yana, Who is glorified in the Vedas.

2) There is a definite difference (bhe:da) among the soul, matter, and Me.

3) Surrendering to Me Alone and accepting Me as the Means and the Goal is the only way to release yourself from the bondage of samsa:ra, the false ego that causes the soul to become trapped in the endless cycle of birth and rebirth.

4) For one who has surrendered to me, striving to remember me during the last moments of his life is not essential, as I will make sure that final thought will be done by some one, or I do the same for him.

5) Those who have surrendered to Me will certainly achieve Me at the end of this life.

6) Your A:cha:rya is Sri: Maha:pu:rna

On hearing these spectacular statements, all the doubts in Sri Ramanuja's mind vanished. He prostrated to the great Ka:nchipurna and proceeded immediately towards Srirangam to surrender to Sri Maha:pu:rna. In the meantime, Sri Maha:pu:rna and his wife decided to travel towards Ka:nchipuram to meet the radiant Sri Ra:ma:nuja. On their way they decided to visit the beautiful temple to Sri: Ra:ma at Madhura: nthakam, where, to their surprise, they met with Sri: Ra:manuja who had decided to visit the same temple on his way to meet with the scholar and his wife.



On seeing the great couple Sri Ra:ma:nuja was extremely joyous, and requested that Sri: Maha:pu:rna accept him as a disciple. Sri: Maha:purna instantly agreed and suggested that they make their way back to Ka:nchipu:ram to perform this holy ritual. But, Sri Ra:ma:nuja pleaded to the a:charya to accept him at that very moment. He reminded the a:charya of how, despite his desire to see Ra:ma:nuja, even the great Ya:muna:cha:rya did not wait when he was summoned to the Lord's Abode. This was a warning that any moment could be our last on this earth, so there is no question of waiting to surrender when one is given such a blessed opportunity !

Sri Ra:ma:nuja's words made Sri Maha:purna very happy, and he immediately proceeded with the performance of Sama:sra:yanam on the banks of the lake at Madhura: nthakam, in the Presence of Sri: Sitara:machandra. After accepting the marks of the divine Sanka and Chakra and receiving the three great secret manthras, Sri Ra:ma:nuja requested Sri Maha:pu:rna and his wife to accompany him to Ka:nchipuram and stay with him so that he could directly learn from his a:cha:rya.

Sri Maha:pu:rna and his wife accepted the humble invitation and stayed at Sri Ra:ma:nuja's home. For many months, Sri: Maha:pu:rna taught Sri: Ra:manuja the subtle meanings the Hymns of the Al:wa:rs, the Divya Prabandham.

Jai Srimannarayana !