

SRI RAMANUJA VAIBHAVAM

The reason for His descent

The texts that bring out the inner message of the *Ve:das* and *Upanishads* are called the *Ithi:has* and *Pura:nas*. They explain and bring out the practical knowledge about the *Ve:das* and *Upanishads* to provide knowledge about the Infinite, Unconditional Grace of the Lord *Sri:man Na:ra:yana*.

These great scriptures tell us that the Lord, in His Ever Constant Desire to save all the souls, incarnated in different *Yugas* in various forms. At first, He came in very mysterious forms to save the *Ve:das* and spread their message to the world. Later, He incarnated among humans as *Sri: Ra:ma* and *Sri: Krishna* to mete out justice, protect His devotees, spread the true message of the *Ve:das*, and become the example of good and righteous living.

Lord *Sri: Krishna* preached the *Bhagavad Gi:tha* and declared that He was the Supreme Being and surrenderance to Him was the ultimate path. But, because the common man failed to understand and follow His message, He believed that His mission failed. He began to think that His message would be more powerful if it were to be passed on by someone other than Himself. So, He showered His Boundless Grace on a few select souls, the *A:lwa:rs*, expecting them to preach the message of the *Ve:das* to the entire world in such a way that all souls could be redeemed. But instead, these *A:lwa:rs* were carried away by His Love and Charm, as well as His

countless auspicious qualities, and they experienced the Almighty in a higher plane. They rendered outpourings of their pure love for the Lord, and these were recorded as the 4000 sacred *Tamil* verses, also known by the name, *Na:la:yira Divya Prabandham*. These verses are the essence of the *Ve:das*, but not quite understandable by the common man because of the elevated level of devotion in them. Thus, once again, the Lord was unsuccessful in bringing the message to the people.

Now, it was a challenge for the Lord to pick up the right person who could spread His message. He began to shower His grace on certain selected souls who were later termed as the *A:cha:ryas* (the spiritual preceptors) to carry on this message. They appeared on the Earth much after the period of *A:lwa:rs*. The first among such spiritual masters was *Sri: Na:tthamuni* who was born during 900 AD.

Sri: Na:tthamuni, his disciples *Sri: Pundari:ka:ksha* and *Sri: Ra:ma Misra*, his grandson *Sri: Ya:muna:cha:rya*, were the first few *A:cha:ryas* to carry on the message of the Lord via the commander-in-chief, *Vishwaks:ena* and *Sri: Namma:lwar*, the only one among the *A:lwa:rs* to be regarded as an *A:cha:rya* himself. They soon started spreading a philosophy that was solely based on the *Ve:das* and which was supported by the outpourings of the *A:lwa:rs*.

Although the Lord's aim was to spread this knowledge to all, the *A:cha:ryas* began to pass on this divine knowledge on a one-to-one basis. Again, it did not reach the masses. With the advent of the dark-age of *Kali Yuga* and the failure of His many



attempts, He thought it was time to order one of His favorite *Nithya Suris*, one of the celestial beings who serve Him in His Eternal Abode of **Sri: Vaikunttam**, as they were the closest to Him, to appear on this earth and preach His message of true knowledge and universal love.

The Lord selected and instructed *A:di Se:sha*, the thousand-headed snake who is His favorite servant, to accomplish this challenging task of spreading the divine message to one and all. His mission was to spread the message and knowledge of the *Ve:das* that were already established by the earlier *A:cha:ryas*, using His own messages, as well as those of the *A:Iwa:rs*.

Although the sending of His favorite servant to spread the message may seem unusual, it is revealed in our scriptures that *A:di Se:sha*, also called as *Anantha*, had done this before. Our scriptures say:

*ananthah pratthamam ru:pam,
lakshmanas cha thathah param |
bala bhadras thruthi:yasthu, kalov
kaschith bhavishyathi ||*

‘*Anantha* being the first form, became *Lakshmana* in *Thre:tha Yuga* for **Sri: Ra:ma**, followed by *Balara:ma* in *Dwa:para Yuga* for **Sri: Krishna**, followed by the successive form in *Kali Yuga*.’

This *Kali Yuga* incarnation of *A:di Se:sha* is none other than *Bhagavad Sri: Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya*. This series will focus on this amazing soul and his remarkable life, beginning with his birth in the next issue.

Jai Srimannarayana !