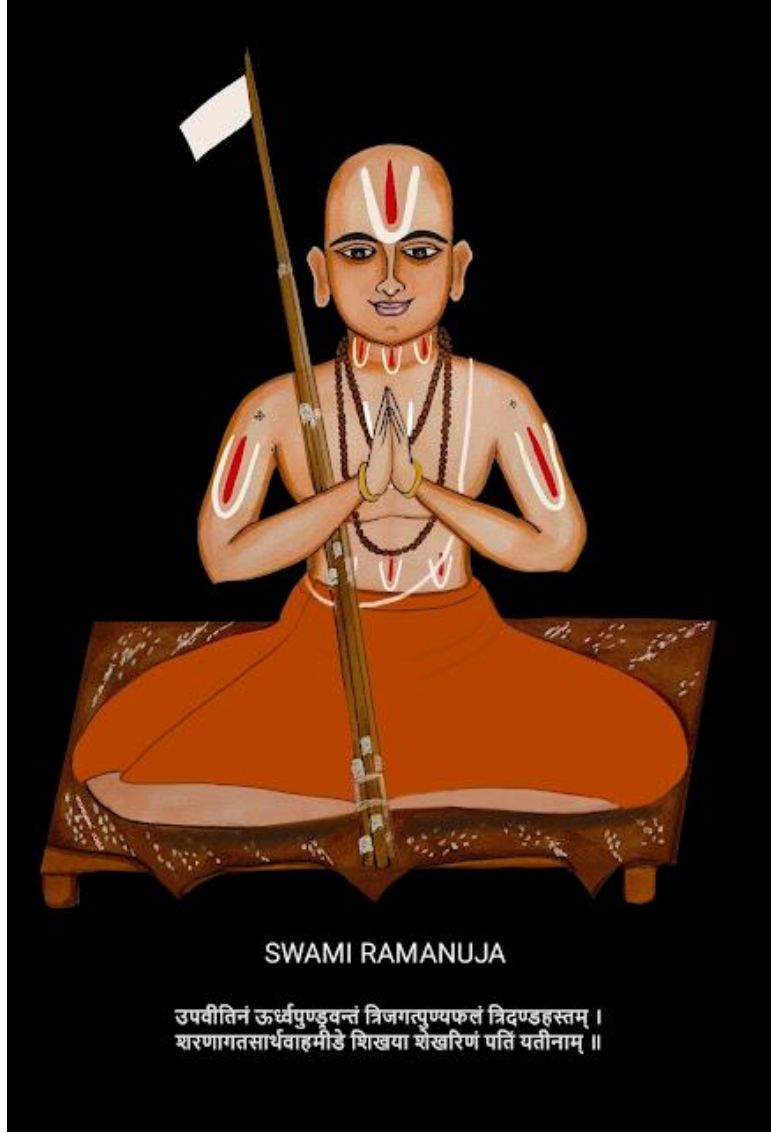


SWAMI RAMANUJA

Smt. Malathi Balaji



TANIYANS

(By Shri koorattAzhvAn)

यो नित्यमच्युत पदाम्बुजयुग्मरुक्म व्यामोहतस्तदितराणि तृणायमेने /

अस्मद्गुरोर् भगवतोस्य दयैक सिन्धोः रामानुजस्य चरणौ शरणम् प्रपद्ये ॥

yO nityamachyuta padAmbujayugmarukma vyAmohatastaditarANi tRuNAyamEnE |

asmadgurOr bhagavatOsyaya dayaika sindhO: rAmAnujasya charaNau sharaNam
prapadyE ||

I take refuge under the feet of swAmi rAmAnuja who is always obsessed with golden, twin lotus feet of Lord achyuta and shuns everything else as a blade of grass, who is our Guru complete in all auspicious qualities, and who is the ocean of mercy.

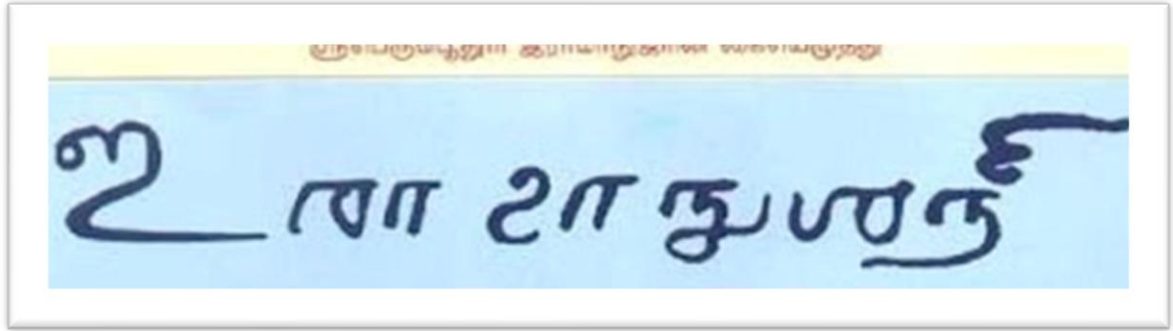
वन्दे वेदान्त कर्पूर चामीकर करण्डकम्

रामानुजार्यमार्याणां चूडामणिं अहर्निशम् ॥

vandE vEdAnta karpUra chAmlkara karanDakam
rAmAnujAryamAryANAm chUdAmaNim aharnisham

Day and night, I prostrate the venerable rAmAnuja, the crest jewel of the noble/Aryas, and the golden casket containing the camphor called vEdAntas. (Arya means one who is focused only on the good and shuns all other things.)

SWAMI RAMANUJA'S SIGNATURE IN GRANTHA LIPI



RAMANUJA'S BIRTH AND CLOSE RELATIVES

चैत्रार्द्रासम्भवं विष्णोः दर्शनस्थापनोत्सुकम् ।

तुण्डीरमण्डले शेषमूर्तिं रामानुजं भजे॥

chaitrArdrAsambhavaM viShNO: darshanasthApanOtsukam |
tuNDIramaNDalE shEShamoortiM rAmAnujaM bhajE||

I worship Ramanuja, who was born in Ardra Nakshatra in the month of Chaitra, who was eager to establish the VaishNava SiddAnta, and who is an incarnation of Adi Shesha in the toNDaimaNDalam region."

SwAmi rAmAnuja was born in ShrIperumbUdUr in 1017 A.D in PingaLa Samvatsaram, Chittirai mAsam, on Shukla Paksha Panchami tithi, guruvAram, on tiruvAdirai (ArdrA) nakshatram to parents Asuri Keshava sOMayAji deekshitar and KAntimati ammaL. ShrIsailEshapUrna alias Periya tirumalai nambi (kAntimati's brother) who was doing kainkaryam in tirumala, was his uncle. Govinda bhaTTar

alias embAr (kAntimati's sister's son) was his cousin brother. dAsarathi alias MudaliyANDAn was rAmAnuja's younger sister BhoomA's son.

AVATAARA VISHESHAM OF RAMANUAJA

1. SwAmi rAmAnuja is widely revered as the incarnation of the serpent AdisEshan. (SESHAVATARA).

yAdavAchala mAhAtmyam

अनन्तः प्रथमं रूपं लक्ष्मणश्च ततः परः ।

भलभद्रं त्रितीयस्तु कलौ कश्चित् भविष्यति ॥

ananta: prathamaM roopaM lakShmaNashcha tata: para: |

bhalabhadraM tritlyastu kalou kashchit bhavishyati ||

This old poem reads: The first form of AdisEsha was called 'ananta' who appeared in the kRuta yuga in which he served Lord VishNu. In tretA yuga, AdisEshan incarnated as Lakshmana and served Lord rAma. In dvApara yuga, AdiseSha incarnated as BalarAma and served Lord krishNa. In kali yuga, AdisEsha will take on a special avatAra called rAmAnuja (represented by the term kashchit) to redeem the whole world.

**Another proof that rAmAnuja was the incarnation of AdisEshan is the real life incident that took place in toNDanoor, melukOTE. Once, 12000 Jain monks advanced towards rAmAnuja and demanded that rAmAnuja debate with them on religion and philosophy. rAmAnuja asked a curtain to be dropped between him and the monks. He spontaneously answered every question posed by them. When one of them peeped into the curtain, he saw that AdisEshan with a thousand heads was actually answering their questions.

2. Raamaanuja is the incarnation of Lord PARthasArathi (KrishNa) of TiruvallikENI.

In his work 'Ramanujarya Divya Charitai', Shrl PiLLai LokAchArya narrates that the couple Sri Asuri kEshava sOmayAji and kAntimati ammAL from Sriperumbudoor worshipped Sri PARthasArathy temple in tiruvallikENi, Madras, and performed putrakAmEShTi yAgam on the advice of tirukachchi nambi. Lord PARthasArathi (krishNa) appeared in their dream and blessed them that He would Himself be born as their son in order to explain the import of His bhagavat gltA. Hence rAmAnuja is also considered Lord krishNa incarnate.

Tiruvarangattu amudanAr also mentions this in his Prabandham No.36 of Raamaanuja NooRRandAdi:

அடல் கொண்ட நேமியன் ஆர் உயிர் நாதன் அன்று ஆரணச் சொல்
கடல் கொண்ட ஒண் பொருள் கண்டு அளிப்ப பின்னும் காசினியோர்
இடரின்கண் வீழ்ந்திடத் தானும் அவ்வொண்பொருள் கொண்டு அவர் பின்
படரும் குணன் எம் இராமாநுசன் தன் படி இதுவே.

aDal koNDa nEmiyan Aruyir nAtan * anRAraNach sol

kaDal koNDa oNporuL kaNDaLippa ** pinnum kAsiniyOr

iDarin kaN vlzhndiDat tAnum avvoNporuL koNDu * avar pin

paDarum guNan * em irAmAnusan tan paDi iduvE (36)

Shrlman nArAyaNan who holds resplendent sudharshana chakram which eliminates the enemies, is indeed the Lord of all AtmAs (Aruyir nAthan). He preached the intrinsic, valuable messages (oNporuL) of the vedas (AraNachol) to Arjuna through the Bhagavad Gita. Yet, the people of the earth got trapped in the miseries of samsAra. BhagavAn could not bear the downfall of his devotees and so out of brimming compassion, decided to follow them upto the earth again by incarnating as rAmAnuja and preaching the sharanAgati shAstra.

3. Raamaanuja is the incarnation of panchAyudams (five divine weapons of VishNu).

Tiruvarangattu amudanAr, who became a staunch devotee of Raamaanuja due to his abundant grace mentions in his Prabandham No. 33 of "Raamaanuja NooRRandAdi" as follows: *"aDaiyAr....paDaiyODu....bhootalam kAppadaRku enRu iDaiyE irAmAnusa muni Ayina !"* If a human has so much power to ward off evils, quash untrue philosophies and at the same time establish, protect, preserve and spread the vaishNava dharma around the earth, it is possible only if the most powerful panchAyudas came together to become rAmAnuja.

அடை ஆர் கமலத்து அலர்மகள் கேள்வன் கை ஆழி என்னும்
படையோடு நாந்தகமும் படர் தண்டும் ஒண் சார்ங்க வில்லும்
புடை ஆர் புரி சங்கமும் இந்தப் புதலம் காப்பதற்கு என்று
இடையே இராமாநுசமுனி ஆயின இந் நிலத்தே.

aDaiyAr kamalattu alarmagaL kELvan * kai Azhi ennum
paDaiyODu nAndakamum paDar taNDum ** oN sArnga villum
puDaiyAr purisangamum inda bootalam kAppadaRku * enRu
iDaiyE * irAmAnusa muni Ayina innilattE (RN 33)

Shrlman nArAyaNan, the beloved of periya pirATTi who was born on the densely petalled lotus, holds the weapon called sudharshana chakram in His hand. He also has the sword -nandakam, the strong mace taNDu or the gadA, the beautiful bow - sArngam, and the beautiful, coiled conch- sangu, all of which serve as ornaments as well as weapons. All these five weapons (panchAyudas) themselves incarnated as emperumAnAr to protect and save this world.

4. Raamaanuja is the incarnation of Lord Vishvaksena.

SwAmi dEshikan opines that BhagavAn ordered Vishwaksena to make sure that the holy and the pious do not downgrade themselves due to the evil influences of anyamathams. Hence Vishvaksena incarnated as uDaiyavar to save the world. In his hurry he forgot to get his staff/ daNDam/sengOl along with him. The staff realized that nothing may be done without itself and hence incarnated as the uDaiyavar's tridaNDam.

YatirAja Saptati - 32

विश्वं त्रातुं विशयनियतं व्यञ्जितानुग्रहः सन् विश्वक्सेनो यतिपति अभूद् वेत्र-सारः त्रिदाण्डः

vishvam trAtuM vishayaniyataM vyanjitAnugraha: san vishvaksEnOr yatipati abhood
vEtra sAra: tridANDa:

THE NAME RAMANUJA

1. RAMANUJA is also considered as the incarnation of LakshmaNa since Lakshmana was an incarnation of AdisEshan. LakshmaNa is also called rAmAnuja = rAma + anuja = "anuja" younger brother of rAma), hence the name.
2. Lord krishNa was called "rAmAnuja" meaning younger brother of balarAma. Hence rAmAnuja is also considered to be the incarnation of KrishNa. Even tiruvarangattu amudanAr, his ardent shishya, says in verse 33 of his prabandham 'rAmAnuja nooRRandAdi" that rAmAnuja is verily the incarnation of krishNa with all His five weapons.
3. NammAzhvAr was considered as Lord rAma. Hence yatirAja who was devoted to nammAzhvAr is like his younger brother (anuja), and so, referred as rAmAnuja.
4. "rAmA" in sanskrit also means goddess or Lakshmi. Lakshmi dEvi is the mediatrix between the jIvAtmA and paramAtmA. She recommends to her husband VishNu to grant mOksha to mankind. Since rAmAnuja also supports the jIvAtmAs and prays to bhagavAn to liberate us, he is like Lakshmi's younger brother. Hence the name rAmAnuja.

RAMANUJA'S PANCHACHARYA-S

Raamaanuja's first Guru was Shrl yAdavaprakAsha, an advaiti philosopher. After few years of tutelage under him, rAmAnuja was unable to reconcile with the faulty interpretations of his guru. Hence, he decided to approach vaishNava AchArya Shrl ALavandAr's five disciples for clarifications. There were five main vaishNava AchAryas for rAmAnuja –

1. periya nambi (samAshrayaNam, 4000 divya prabandhams),
2. tirukOShTiyoor nambi (ashTAKsharam),
3. tirumalai nambi (rAmAyaNam),
4. tirumAlai ANDAn (bhagavat vishayam),
5. tiruvarangaperumAL araiyar (AlavandAr's hymns).

* tirukachchi nambi (cleared the six doubts of rAmAnuja with six answers uttered by Lord PeraruLAlan of kAnchIpuram).

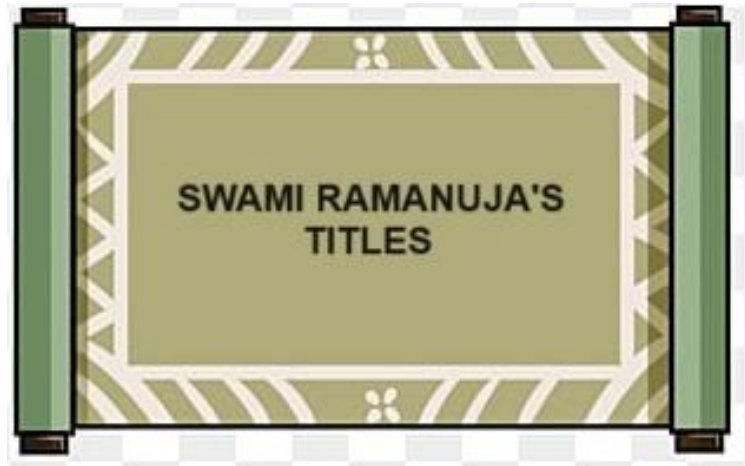
* ALavandAr was rAmAnuja's mAnasika AchArya and prAchArya too.

RAMANUJA'S TWO MAIN DISCIPLES

1. MudaliyANDAN alias dAsharathi was rAmAnuja's nephew. He shared a very close relationship with rAmAnuja. He is considered as rAmAnuja's tridANDam, the triple staff held by sanyAsis. He is also revered as "rAmAnuja pAduka" or "yatirAja pAduka" because he is considered as the sacred mount that bears the footwear of rAmAnuja. He is also hailed as "rAmAnujan ponnaDi" - rAmAnuja's golden feet. As he ruled the temple staff like Senai Mudaliyaar (Vishvaksena), he was given the name MudaliyANDAn.

2. KoorattAzhvAn alias ShrlvatsAngam hailed from a zamindAr family. He gave up his riches to serve rAmAnuja. He was like rAmAnuja's pavitram (the darbha ring worn on the finger). He was also called as "koorEsha". (Some scholars interpret that 'yagyopavltam' is paramam pavitram – 'most sacred' and hence, koorattazhvAn is like the yagyOpaveetam).

Both ANDAN AND AZHVAN, as fondly called by rAmAnuja, assisted rAmAnuja in the administration of shrIrangam temple. They always flanked rAmAnuja wherever He went, and they were the two pillars of strength for him.



RAMANUJA'S NAMES: SwAmi rAmAnuja was conferred with many special titles during his illustrious life. They are:

1.iLaiyAzhvAr / iLaya perumAL/lakshmaNa - The name was given on birth by Periya tirumalai Nambi (rAmAnuja's uncle).

2.rAmAnuja – Periya Nambi gave the name during rAmAnuja's pancha-samskAram at MadhurAntakam.

3.EmperumAnAr: This name was conferred by His AchAryan tirukOShTiyoor nambi. RAmAnuja approached AchArya tirukOShTiyoor nambi for ashTAKshara mantrOpadEsam. After making rAmAnuja come to TirukOShTiyoor from shrIrangam 18 times, He finally taught him the tirumantrArthams which were supposed to be kept secret and taught only to a qualified student. But rAmAnuja invited interested people to learn from him and revealed the secrets of tirumantram. Nambi came to know of this and taunted him saying that he will reach hell for letting the rahasya out. Raamaanuja sought his pardon and said: "If crores of people can benefit after hearing the meanings of the aShTAKshara mantra, I am prepared to go to hell". Moved by rAmAnuja's unconditional compassion for humanity, Nambi embraced him and exclaimed, "ivar emperumAnArO?". Is He my master? TirukOTTiyoor Nambi also declared that the shrIvaiShNava tradition would henceforth be known as "rAmAnuja darshaNam" or "emperumAnAr darshaNam".

3.yatirAjA - yatirAjA means king of yatis or sanyAsi-s – The name was given by kAnchi varadarAjA perumAL when rAmAnuja took sannyAsa.

4.uDaiyavar: This name was given by namperumAL on Raamaanuja's arrival at Srirangam. After swAmi had darshan of ranganaAtha, namperumAL conferred the name "uDaiyavar" to rAmAnuja and declared that swAmi rAmAnuja will be the owner of the "ubhaya vibhootis" - He will possess leadership of both vibhootis (realms/properties) – nitya vibhooti and leelA vibhooti.

5.bhAshyakAra – The name was given by Goddess Saraswati to accredit rAmAnuja's work called "shri bhAShyam", a commentary on the Brahmasootras.

6.kOvil aNNan / gOdAgraja – nam kOvil aNNan means 'my brother in the temple', gOdA-agraja means – elder brother of gOdA/ANDAL. SwAmi rAmAnuja offered 100 vessels of sweet pongal and 100 vessels of butter to Azhagar perumAL of tirumAlirunchOlai to fulfil ANDAL'S wish that she expressed in her poem nAchchiyAr tirumozhi 9.6 (NOORU TADA VENNAI). When he came back to Shrivilliputthoor to thank ANDAL, she acknowledged his kainkaryam saying "nam kOvil aNNanO!" – my brother in the temple. This is also the reason why ANDAL is referred as rAmAnuja's younger sister in her vAzhi tirunAmam as "perumbUdUr mAmunikku pinnAnAl vAzhiyE!".

7.appanukku sangaazhi ALitta PerumAL – When there was a dispute as to whether the deity in Tirumala was Shiva or VishNu, Raamaanuja told the panDits to place two sets of weapons - "trishoola and Damaruka" and "shankh and chakra" in front of the Lord before closing the door of the sanctum sanctorum at night. Next morning VenkaTEsa Perumal had the shankh and chakra on his shoulders signaling that He intended to give darshan as Vishnu. By doing this act, rAmanuja almost performed samAshrayanam to the Lord, and hence he is known as 'appanukku sangaazhi aLitta perumAL".

8.tiruppAvai jeeyar – Once, swAmi rAmAnuja was seeking alms and singing tiruppAvai in shrirangam. When he reached swAmi mahApoorna's (periya nambi) house, he was singing 18th pAsuram 'undumadagaliRRan'. in which ANDAL awakens Nappinnai PirATTi. As he was uttering the words "slrAr vaLai olippa vandu tiravAy", the door opened, periya nambi's little daughter "attuzhAy" came out. Thinking that nappinnai pirATTi herself had opened the door, uDaiyavar fainted. Due to his engrossment in tiruppAvai divya prabandham, He was named 'tiruppAvai jeeyar'.

9.lakshmaNa muni- Name given by TirumAlai ANDAN and Tiruvaranga PerumAL Araiyaar to signify that rAmAnuja served bhagavAn just like LakshmaNa.

10. panchAchArya seeDar - 'Disciple of Five AchAryas' - rAmAnuja had five AchAryas: tirumalai nambi, tirukOShTiyoor nambi, periya nambi, tirumalai ANDAN, and tiruvarangaperumAL araiyaar.

11.dEsikEndra – The king of AchAryas. This name was given by TiruvEnkaTamuDaiyaan.

12.shaThakOpan ponnaDi – This name was given by tirumAlai ANDAN after he taught rAmAnuja the essence of tiruvAymozhi.

13. Bhootapurlsha, perumbUdUr mAmuni – The leader of Bhootapuri alias ShriperumbUdUr, the birthplace of rAmAnuja – This title was given by Shrl Adi kEsava PerumAL of ShrlperumpUdUr.

14. Am mudalvan ivan – He is the future leader – These words of blessing were given by saint yAmunAchArya (ALavandAr) when He saw a spark in young rAmAnuja while he was learning from his advaita Guru yAdavaprakAsha.

GREATNESS OF SWAMI RAMANUJA

The eminence of our jagadAchArya rAmAnuja is truly indescribable in words (pORRa aRuseelattu irAmAnusa). A proficient leader, he dedicated his entire life towards human upliftment and brought in cultural and social cohesion through vaishNava philosophy. Let us peek into his main contributions to the society.

1. The king of ascetics, rAmAnuja was an outstanding proponent of shrlvaishNava philosophy.
2. Literary works of swAmi rAmAnuja - He authored nine sanskrit vEdAntic treatises collectively named as “NAVARATNAM” – They are ShrlbhAShyam (elaborate commentary on the brahmasootras), gltA bhAShyam (commentary on the bhagavat gltA), vEdArtha sangraham (a prose on the Upanishads), vEdAnta sAram (a very concise commentary on the brahmasootras), vEdAnta dIpam (a short commentary on the nature and relationship of brahman, chit and achit), nityam (a manual of nitya tiruvArAdhanam), sharaNAGati gadyam (a prose on prapatti), shrlranga gadyam (a prose on lord Ranganatha), and shrl vaikuNTha gadyam (a prose on the supreme abode vaikuNTha).
3. This is the essence of rAmAnuja's teachings - “VishNu who has for his body all the sentient (chit) and non-sentient (achit) beings, is the immanent self (antarAtmA) of everything. He is ever associated with Goddess ShrlIdEvi. He is the ocean of unblemished and unlimited bliss. The Lord is possessed of a host of auspicious qualities. He is the principal cause of creation and redemption of the universe. He is the highest goal. He can be attained by bhakti or prapatti, prapatti being the easiest means. Once the soul reaches the highest abode vaikuNTham, it never comes back to samsAra.
4. SwAmi rAmAnuja rose to be a mass spiritual leader with noble intentions. He honestly wished that everyone in the world should surrender to Lord Shrlman NArAyaNa and attain mOksha.
5. He travelled to many pilgrimage centres from rAmasEtu to HimAlayas and reformed temples like Shrlrangam, MelukOTe, Tirumala, etc., and established vaishNava shrines with his effective leadership and governance skills.
6. RAmAnuja appointed 74 simhAsanAdhipatis as his successors and ordained them to propagate the vaishNava siddhAntam and sharaNAGati shAStra all over the world.
7. Endowed with sharp intellect and logical acumen, rAmAnuja refuted adversaries in philosophical debates with unbelievable self-confidence. When great philosophers

misinterpreted the Bhagavat gltA verse 18.66 - “sarvadharmAn parityajya सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य” to mean “All nitya karmas should be abandoned”, swAmi rAmanuja quoted chapter 18.9 - “sangam tyaktvA phalaM chaiva sa tyAgA sAttvikO mata: सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं चैव स त्यागः सात्त्विको मतः” and clarified that “NityakarmA should not be abandoned at all. It should be duly performed but the attachment to the rewards of nityakarma should be relinquished. This is called “sAttvika tyAgam”. True to his words, swAmi performed his nityAnuShThAna-s sincerely until his last, notwithstanding the tApa-trayams that afflict humans, and left his mortal coils at the age of 120.

8. SwAmi dEsikan's 11th verse from yatirAja saptati is enough to understand the austere life of rAmAnuja as a yati.

उपवीतिनं ऊर्ध्वपुण्ड्रवन्तं त्रिजगत्पुण्यफलं त्रिदण्डहस्तम् ।

शरणागतसार्थवाहमीडे शिखया शेखरिणं पतिं यतीनाम् ॥ ११ ॥

upavItinaM oordhvapuNDravantaM trijagatpuNyaphalaM tridaNDahastaM ||
sharaNAGata sArthavAha mIDE shikhayA shEkhariNam yatInAm || 11

Hail the king of ascetics! He wears the sacred thread yagyOpavItam hanging from the left shoulder, the resplendent tirumaN and shrIchoornam (oordhvapuNDram) on his forehead, carries the staff tridaNDa in his hand, the tuft shikhA on his crown. With a countenance of the sum of all penances of the three worlds, rAmAnuja flourishes as the leader of the sharaNAGatas.

9. Although rAmAnuja was orthodox, he made himself affable and approachable to all people without any discrimination. And this exceptional quality is what makes devotees call him by the name emperumAnAr (my Lord).

THE GLANCE OF ALAVANDAR

यत्पदाम्भोरुह-ध्यान विध्वस्ताशेष कल्मषः॥

वस्तुताम् उपयातोऽहं यामुनेयं नमामि तम् ॥

yatpadAmbhOruha-dhyAna vidhvastAshESha kalmaSha: |
vastutAm upayAtO ahaM yAmunEyaM namAmi tam ||

“I offer my obeisance to YaamunAchArya, by meditating on whose sacred feet, I have all my sins destroyed and been counted as a thing - By Raamaanuja in gltA bhAShyam”

-When the noted saint ALavandAr of Shrlrangam visited kAnchIpuram temple, rAmAnuja also visited the temple along with his fellow students. ALavandAr's eyes turned to rAmAnuja and was wonderstruck at His brightness. Casting his merciful glance on rAmAnuja, He remarked - *“Am mudalvan ivan - He is the future leader”*.

SALAI KINARU - THE GRACE OF KANCHI DIVYA DAMPATIS



As a young student, rAmAnuja used to attend Guru yAdavaprakAsha's advaita school in kAnchIpuram. As lessons advanced, rAmAnuja was unable to accept his Guru's interpretations on some of the Vedic verses. When he pointed out the wrong interpretations, Guru yAdavaprakAsha became annoyed. Many such occasions cropped up and created an unfriendly atmosphere between them.

YAdavaprakAsha once took his students to vAranAsi and decided to get rid of rAmAnuja there. His plan was to leave rAmAnuja on the way and tell the people that his student had drowned in the Ganges. While the group was amid the thick forests of Central India, vindhyA range, gOvindan, rAmAnuja's cousin, sensed the conspiracy and told rAmAnuja to run away immediately. That night, rAmAnuja disappeared from the group. His Guru and disciples thought that he might have lost his way somewhere and must have been devoured by wild animals.

Caught inside the dark, dense forests, rAmAnuja had no way to escape. Just then, a hunter couple passed by. They asked him where he was heading towards. When rAmanuja said 'KAnchi', they replied that they were also going there and asked him to follow them.

The next morning, the hunter's wife wanted water. The couple showed rAmAnuja the way to a well and asked him to bring some water. When Ramanuja returned with the water, the couple had disappeared. He turned back and was shocked to see the gOpuram of KAnchi temple at a short distance. He realised that the divyadampatis of kAnchi VaradarAja temple had come in the guise of hunters and helped him reach

kAnchIpuram in such a short time He also realised that the hunter's wife was none other than PerundEvi tAyAr, the consort of Shri VaradarAja PerumAL, and felt miserable that he could not bring water in time to quench the divine mother's thirst*. He reached home and reported the divine incident to his mother. His mother sought tirukachchi nambi's opinion. He advised rAmAnuja that since tAyAr requested water, it's a message that He should do teertha kainkaryam for Varadan. Raamaanuja obeyed so and carried pure water in a pitcher daily from that street well for Lord VaradarAja's ablutions (tirumanjanam). This well can be seen even today at SevilimEDu which is around 5 kms from KaanchIpuram. A shrine for rAmAnuja has also been built near the well. The well is called Saalaikkinaru, and the shrine is called "RAmAnuja Sannidhi". There is also a pond nearby which is called AnushThAna kuLam.

SwAmi Desikan recounts this incident in 'YatirAja Saptati' - 62 explaining how swAmi Raamaanuja's teertha kainkaryam to Lord VaradarAja done many years ago is being reciprocated to us by that merciful, cloud like dark Lord in the form of extra-ordinary rains/blessings at the proper time.

वन्दे तं यमिनां धुरन्धरमहं मानान्धकारद्रुहा
पन्थानं परिपन्थिनां निज दृशा रुन्धानमिन्ध्यानया ।
दत्तं येन दया सुधाम्बुनिधिना पीत्वा विशुद्धं पयः
काले नः करिशैलकृष्णजलदः काङ्क्षाधिकं वर्षति ॥

vandE taM yaminAM dhurandharamahaM mAnAndhakAradruHA
panthAnaM paripanthinAm nija dRushA rundhAnamindhyAnayA |
dattaM yEna dayA sudhAmbunidhinA pltvA vishuddhaM paya:
kAlE na: karishailakRushNa jalada: kAnkshAdhikaM varShati ||

* Another version of this story says that Goddess PerundEvi drank the water and then the divine couple vanished from the spot.





SIX COMMANDMENTS THROUGH ACHARYA TIRUKACHCHI NAMBI

श्री काञ्चीपूर्णमिश्रेण प्रीत्या सर्वाभिभाषिणे ।

अतीत अर्चा व्यवस्थाय हस्त्यद्रीशाय मङ्गलम् ॥

shrl kAnchIpUrNamishrENa prltyA sarvAbhibhAShiNE |

atIta archA vyavasthAya hastyadrIshAya mangalam ||

MangaLAshAsanam to Lord VaradarAja of Hastigiri, who out of great love towards tirukkachchi nambi, broke the boundary of his archA samAdhi and had detailed conversations with him.

१. अहम् ऐव परं तत्त्वम् ।

அஹம் ஏவ பரம் தத்வம்

२. दर्शनं भेद ऐव च ।

தர்சனம் பேத ஏவ ச

३. उपायेशु प्रपत्तिस्वात् ।

உபாயேசு ப்ரபத்திஸ்யாத்

४. अन्तिम स्मृति वर्जनम् ।

அந்திம ஸ்மருதி வர்ஜனம்

५. देहावसाने मुक्तिस्वात् ।

தேஹாவஸானே முக்திஸ்யாத்

६. पूर्णाचार्य समाश्रय ।

பூர்ணாசார்யம் ஸமாஸ்ரய



श्रीमत् काष्ठिमुनिं वन्दे कमलापतिनन्दनम् ।
वरदाङ्गि सदासङ्ग रसायन परायणम् ॥
देवराज दयापात्रं श्रीकाञ्चीपूर्णमुत्तमम् ।
रामानुजमुनेर्मान्यं वन्देहं सज्जनमाश्रयम् ॥

ஸ்ரீமத் காஸ்திமுனிம் வந்தே
கமலாபதிநந்தனம் |
வரதாங்க்ரி ஸதாஸங்க ரஸாயன
பராயணம் ||
தேவராஜ தயாபாத்ரம்
ஸ்ரீகாஞ்சேப்ரணமுத்தமம் |
ராமானுஜமுனேர்மான்யம் வந்தேஹம்
ஸஜ்ஜனமாஸ்ரயம் ||

Although rAmAnuja continued learning from yAdavaprakAsha despite the unpleasant incident, his Guru YaadavaprakAsha told him to discontinue on another instance of difference of opinion between them. Hence rAmAnuja decided to leave and dedicate himself entirely to the service of Lord VaradarAja of kAnchIpuram. (It is to be noted that years later after rAmAnuja took sanyAsa, yAdavaprakAsha approached rAmAnuja. He took interest in rAmAnuja's interpretations, was convinced with his explanations, and became his disciple. YaadavaprakAsha later took to sanyAsa and was given the title 'gOVinda jeeyar' - He also authored the work "yati dharma samuchchaya" - The compendium of rules for ascetics").

kAnchipUrNa or tirukkachchi nambi who was born in "poovirundavalli" was doing fanning service ("tiruvAlavaTTa kainkaryam / visiri kainkaryam") for Lord VaradarAja. He was born on mAsi mRugashIrshaM star. KAnchipUrNa's devotion was so high that the deities dEvaperumAL and perundEvi tAyAr used to converse with him. RAmAnuja who was doing teertha kainkaryam for varadarAja was searching for an AchArya to surrender. On seeing tirukkacchi's nambi's serenity, He sought answers for six philosophical questions from Varada's confidante kachchi nambi. The

Lord gave tirukachchi nambi six answers (aru vArtaigaL) which turned out to be the **six assertions or six commandments (Aru vArtaigaL) of vishiShThAdvaita**. They are:

1. अहम् ऐव परं तत्त्वम् । "aham Eva param tatvam" - I (VaradarAja/ShrIman nArAyaNa) am the supreme truth.
2. दर्शनं भेद ऐव च । "darshanam bhEda Eva cha" - The supreme entity (Ishwara tattva) is the inner controller inside all chetanas (sentient) and achEtanas (insentient) but is different entity from them. This statement is the assertion of vishiShThAdvaita philosophy.
3. उपायेशु प्रपत्तिस्यात् । "upAyEshu prapattisyAt" - prapatti/sharanAgati is the best means (upAya) to attain mOksha.
4. अन्तिम स्मृति वर्जनम् । "antima smRuti varjanam" - Remembering the Lord during our final journey is not mandatory.
5. देहावसाने मुक्तिःस्यात् । "dEhAvasAnE muktisyAt" - The AtmA shall attain mukti at the fall of the body.
6. पूर्णाचार्य / सदाचार्यम् समाश्रय । "sadAchAryam/ poorNAchAryam samAshraya" - Accept the virtuous MahApoorNa/Periya Nambi as AchArya (or) Approach a qualified Acharya and receive samAshrayaNam samskaaram from him.

Raamaanuja was instrumental in getting the six truths from the Lord's mouth, hence rAmAnuja became tirukachchi nambi's abhimAna shishya (favorite student). RAmAnuja requested Nambi to initiate him with pancha samskaaram but Nambi refused quoting his ineligibility on account of his vaishya caste.



THE THREE WISHES OF ALAVANDAR

After some time, when ALavandAr fell ill, he asked Periya Nambi to go and bring rAmAnuja to Shrlrangam in order to make him his successor for the shrIvaishNava guru paramparA. RAmAnuja left kAnchIpuram with Periya Nambi and hurried towards Shrlrangam to meet ALavandAr. Unfortunately, ALavandAr had shed his mortal coils before he reached. RAmAnuja noticed that three fingers of ALavandAr's right hand were folded. When he enquired if it was normal, the shishyas replied that ALavandAr had three wishes which were left unfulfilled. They were:

1. A commentary on the Brahma Sootras must be written.
2. The names of the great seers ParAshara BhaTTar and vEda vyAsa must be given to children born in the vaishNAva kula, to honor the authors of VishNu purANam and Brahma sootram respectively.
3. A commentary on NammAzhvAr's TiruvAymozhi must be written.

RAmAnuja resolved to carry out all the three tasks and to everyone's surprise, ALavandAr's three fingers opened. After ALavandAr's antima samskAram, rAmAnuja returned to kAnchIpuram with a heavy heart.

INITIATION OF RAMANUJA BY PERIYA NAMBI



RAmAnuja was craving to have Acharya Sambandham. A few days later, he proceeded towards Shrirangam to meet Periya Nambi for panchasamskAram. Periya Nambi was also coming to meet rAmAnuja. They met in a place called madurAntakam. RAmAnuja prostrated him and requested to be initiated immediately. When periya nambi suggested that shrIrangam would be the right place, rAmAnuja quoted a verse from tiruvAymozhi 1.2.1

மின்னின் நிலையில் மன்னுயிராக்கைகள் என்னு மிடத்து இறை-உன்னுமின் நீரே !
minnin nilaiyila * mannuyir Akkaigal ennum iDattu * iRai unnumin nIrE!

Meaning: *"The bodies occupied by a jeevAtmA as per its desire last shorter than the flash of lightning. Think for a while, you yourself can analyse and understand the truth behind this continuous delusion (ennum iDattu iRai unnumin nIrE).*

Periya Nambi was overwhelmed with rAmAnuja's vairAgya and immediately performed PanchasamskAram for rAmAnuja under a magizha tree near 'Eri kAtta rAmar sannidhi', MadurAntakam, on Avani Shukla Paksha Panchami tithi. He also gave him the name 'rAmAnuja' there.

The event is celebrated every year as the Pancha Samskara Utsavam at Madurantakam. This is the only place where Sri Ramanujar can be seen as a Grihastha (family man). Bhaktas can see for themselves the Mandapam (which is within the precinct of the temple madil suvar) where the Pancha Samskaram was performed.



RAMANUJA ACCEPTS SANNYAASA

Few months later, rAmAnuja took to sanyAsa Ashrama and was appointed as the head of the shrIvaishNava paramparA at shrIrangam. VaradarAja PerumAL at kAnchl conferred rAmAnuja with the title "yatirAjA - king of yatis/sannyAsis".

When rAmAnuja took over the management of ShrIrangam temple, NamperumAL awarded rAmAnuja the title 'uDaiyavar' - meaning the one who has the wealth of the leelA vibhooti (bhoolOkA) and nitya vibhooti (vaikuNTha IOka). He played two major roles - 1. reformation of daily rituals and management of shrIrangam temple (leelAvibhUti), 2. Initiating devotees into the "sharanAgati mArga- the path of surrender to Lord Naaraayana" so that they get relieved from samsAra and reach the supreme abode shrIvaikuNTham (nitya vibhUti).

शरणं इति आगतिः शरणागती sharaNam iti Agati: sharaNAgati - To approach seeking refuge is sharaNAgati.

TIRUKOSHTIYOOR NAMBI'S TOUGH TEST

A great AchArya by the name 'ghOShThi pUrNa' lived in the divyadesam called 'tirukOShTiyUr'. He was also called tirukOShTiyUr nambi. He was one of SwAmi ALavandar's prime disciples who was entrusted with the responsibility of teaching the meanings of the three secret mantras namely ashTAKsharam, dvayam and charama shIOkam. TirukOShTiyUr Nambi kept the mantras and their meanings confidential as they must be taught only to qualified shiShyas who were well versed in the vedas.

In Srlrangam, SwAmi rAmAnuja yearned to learn the true meaning of the eight-syllable mantra, the ashTAKshara mantram. The ashTAKshara mantram is also called 'moola mantram' or 'tirumantram'. It is the greatest of all mantrams and the mantram that protects us and leads us to the supreme abode Paramapadam

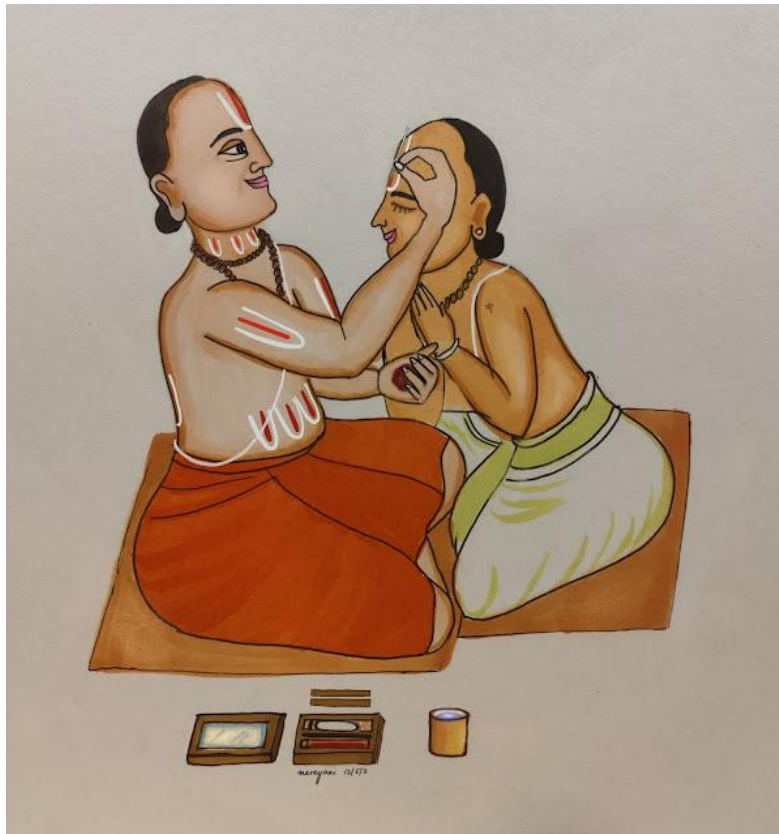
rAmAnuja travelled 17 times to tirukOShTiyUr from shreerangam to learn the esoteric meanings of the ashTAKshara mantram from Nambi. Every time he introduced himself saying "I am Raamaanuja", Nambi would reply: "Come later". The 18th time, rAmAnuja introduced himself as "aDiyEn dAsan" meaning "a servant ready to serve", and Nambi was happy about consistent interest and humility. He taught him the rahasyas of the ashTAKshara mantram. rAmAnuja was always flanked by his shishyas MudaliyANDan and KoorattAzhvAn wherever he went. TirukOShTiyoor Nambi said that He would give the rashasyArthams only to rAmAnuja in person, and not to the shishyas accompanying him. But rAmAnuja insisted that they also be given upadEsham along with him because MudaliyANDan is his "tridaNDam" and KoorattAzhvAn is his "pavitram". Since these are two requisites of yati dharma, tirukOShTiyoor nambi had to give instructions to all three of them.

After receiving the rahasyArthams which were to be kept a secret according to tradition, and revealed only to the qualified shishyas, rAmAnuja felt that everyone

should have access to such supreme knowledge. RAmAnuja invited all desirous devotees who wished to learn the way to liberation. Many interested devotees approached him. He made them his shishyas and taught them the secret knowledge hidden inside the ashTAKshara mantram. Nambi was upset that rAmAnuja revealed the secrets in a liberal manner to everyone. He warned rAmAnuja that He will enter hell for doing such a wrong act. But rAmAnuja was calmly composed and replied that he was ready to go to hell if the whole world was going to get mOksha because of his act. TirukOshTiyUr Nambi was touched by his unconditional compassion for devotees and exclaimed: "emperumAnArO? meaning - Is He the Lord Himself? or "The one who is more merciful than BhagavAn". He also declared that shreevaishNavam would be recognized as "emberumAnAr darshanam" or "rAmAnuja darshanam". NamperumAL also acknowledged this title for rAmAnuja. TirukOTTiyUr Nambi then recommended that SwAmi rAmAnuja learn the TiruvAymozhi meanings from AchArya tirumAlai ANDAn.

Nambi made sure that rAmAnuja was safe and healthy in order to establish and spread the VaishNava dharma successfully. When He came to know that Raamaanuja was given poisoned food while seeking alms (unjChavRutti), He ordered the most loyal kiDAmbi AchchAn to cook food for rAmAnuja and do maDapaLLi kainkaryam. With no ego at all, Nambi ordained that his son 'terkAzhvAn' and his daughter 'dEvaki pirATTiyAr' learn the tenets of Vaishnavism from his shishya SwAmi rAmAnuja instead of himself, their own father. Nambi lived for 105 years and attained VishNu's abode.

TIRUKKURUNGUDI NAMBI BECOMES RAMANUJA'S SHISYA



RAMANUJA DRAWS TIRUMAN ON VADUGU NAMBI

When swAmi rAmAnuja was spreading Vaishnavism along with His ardent shishya VaDugu Nambi in PadmanAbhaswAmy kshEtram (Tiruvananthapuram), TirukurunguDi perumAL wanted to hear His teachings. Hence, He told GaruDa to airlift him and bring him to kurunguDi. Next morning, when rAmAnuja opened his eyes, he was on a rock called TiruvaTTapArai. Surprised at being in the new place, He called out for his dear shishya, vaDugu Nambi. But vaDugu Nambi was to come later. The Lord Himself appeared in front of swAmi as VaDugu Nambi. Following his morning routine, swAmi rAmAnuja bathed in the river, wore the 12 tirumaNs, and adorned the Lord's forehead with the remaining tirumaN as per his usual practice, thinking that He was vaDugu nambi.

When rAmAnuja visited the temple for darshanam, he saw that the Lord's tirumaN was wet and fresh and vaDugu nambi was missing. He understood that it was kurunguDi nambi who played the mischief. The Lord NinRa Nambi then blessed him and acknowledged swAmi rAmAnuja's great contribution to vaishNavism and expressed His desire to be rAmAnuja's shisya. SwAmi was stunned and asked the Lord how he, a small being was eligible to preach PerumAL who is so huge in form. Nambi immediately shrunk himself into a handsome young boy, folded his hands in front of swAmi rAmAnuja and humbly requested him to be His AchArya. Impelled by His lAvaNyam (charisma) and saulabhyam (simplicity), swAmi rAmAnuja took the position of an AchArya and gave aShTAKshara mantrOpadesam to the Lord. KurunguDi Nambi, having become a disciple of swAmi, became a Vaishnava and was called VaishNava Nambi. To mark this beautiful event, there is a seat (pITham) placed near the garbha graham of NinRa Nambi PerumAL.



RAMANUJA'S SHIFT TO MELKOTE (TIRUNARAYANAPURAM)



CHELLAPILLAI PERUMAL OF MELUKOTE COMES TO RAMANUJA

Around 1100 A.D., it so happened that a chOLA king detested swAmi rAmAnuja's ideals and sent him out of ShrIrangam. Traversing through the tough forests, rAmAnuja reached yAdugiri /mElukOTE. He rested in a place called toNDanoor which was ruled by the Jain hoysAla king Bitti Deva (ViThThala Devaraaya). The king's daughter was suffering from an incurable disease. Hearing of rAmAnuja's arrival, the king invited him and apprised him of his daughter's illness. The moment rAmAnuja glanced at her, she got up and felt healthy. In gratitude, the king adopted shrIvaishNava sampradAya. Many jains followed suit. He was renamed as VishNu Vardhana. Few months later, rAmAnuja was short of 'tirumaN (white clay) for wearing

his '12 UrdhvapuNDrams". That night, Lord narAyaNa appeared in his dream and said that He and the white clay is nearby in the yAdugiri hill; between champaka and vakula tree, and inside anthill covered with tulasi. With the support of VishNu Vardhana, rAmAnuja and his disciples traced the place near the kalyAni pond and retrieved the moolavar idol Lord tirunArAyaNa which was buried in the earth ages ago. He also made a furrow nearby and got white clay for his tirumaN kAppu. The moolavar was installed with veda mantras and the temple was consecrated.

With a beautiful temple installed by swAmi rAmAnuja, there was a need for utsava moorti for TirunArAyaNa's monthly and annual utsavams. When rAmAnuja was contemplating on the idea, he had a vision of that idol lying with the Sultan at Delhi. RAmAnujA set out to Delhi and requested the Sultan to return the idol. He said that it was with his daughter and she was very much attached to it. He challenged rAmAnuja's bhakti and said that he could call out to the idol and see if it comes running to him. With great love, rAmAnuja called out, "Chella PiLLai !" - Dear child please come". The idol came and sat on rAmAnuja's lap to the astonishment of the Sultan and his daughter. Thus, rAmAnuja retrieved the chella piLLai vigraham and installed it as the utsava moorti -cheluva nArAyaNa in melukOTE temple and organized the utsavams in a grand manner. This moorti is also called Raamapriya because it was worshiped by Lord rAmA in the trEta yuga and by Lord KrishNa in the dwApara yuga. The daughter of the Sultan could not bear the separation from Raamapriya idol. She came running to melukOTE. When she entered the temple, the doors closed and she merged into her Lord. RAmAnuja installed an idol called 'bibi nAchchiAr" in memory of her true bhakti for Raamapriya perumAL.

RAMANUJA'S RETURN TO SHREERANGAM

RAmAnuja came back to Shrirangam after 12 years in MelukOTE. When rAmAnuja embarked on writing a commentary on the brahma sootras, he wanted the "bOdhaYana vRutti" for reference. Lord Saraswati came in his dream and asked him to visit Saraswati BhaNDaram, an enormous library in Kashmir. RAmAnuja and koorattAzhvAn travelled to the library and went through the book. When they were returning with the book, it was lost. They returned to Shrirangam and koorattAzhvAn reproduced the entire vRtti as he had an extra-ordinary memory. With the help of koorattAzhvAn, rAmAnuja completed his brahma sootra commentary called "shrlbhAShyam", for which Lord Saraswati blessed him with the title "bhAShyakAra".

RAMANUJA BECOMES ANDAL'S BROTHER (TIRUMALIRUNCHOLAI)

SwAmi rAmAnuja offered 100 vessels of sweet pongal and 100 vessels of ghee to azhagar perumAL of tirumAlirunchOlai to fulfil ANDAL'S wish which she expressed in nAchchiAr tirumozhi 9.6 (NOORU TADA VENNAI). When he visited Shrivilliputtoor to thank ANDAL, she acknowledged his kainkaryam saying "nam kOvil aNNanO!" – Oh, my brother in the temple. The sanskrit variant of the term is called gOdAgraja गौदाग्रज (gOdA + agraja).

RAMANUJA VISITS TIRUMALA

When there was a dispute as to whether the deity in Tirumala was Shiva or VishNu, Raamaanuja told the panDiTs to place two sets of weapons "trishoola and Damaruka" and "shankh and chakra" in front of the Lord before closing the door of the sanctum sanctorum at night. Next morning VenkaTEsa PerumAL had the shankha and chakra on his shoulders signalling that He intends to give darshan as Vishnu. By doing this act, rAmanuja almost performed samAshrayanam for the Lord, and hence is known as 'appanukku sangaazhi aLitta perumAL - the one who embossed tirupati balaji's shoulders with the shankh and chakra". The Lord also awarded him the title "dEsikEndra देशिकेन्द्र - the king of AchAryas".

RAMANUJA BECOMES TIRUPPAVAI JEEYAR

Once in shrIrangam, swAmi rAmAnuja was seeking alms and singing tiruppAvai. When he reached swAmi mahApoorna's (periya nambi's) house, he was singing 18th pAsuram 'undumadagaliRRan' in which nappinai pirATTi is awakened by ANDAL. As he was uttering the words "seerAr vaLai olippa vandu tiravAy", the door opened, and periyannambi's little daughter "attuzhAy" came out. Thinking that nappinnai pirATTi herself opened the door, rAmAnuja fainted. Periya Nambi remarked "undumadagaliRRan pAsuram anusandhanamO! "உந்துமதகளிற்றன் பாஸூரம் அனுஸந்தானமோ?. Awed by rAmAnuja's engrossment in tiruppAvai divya prabandham, Periya Nambi named him 'tiruppAvai jeeayar'.

FIVE COMMANDMENTS OF RAMANUJA

1. Learn the "ShrI BhAShyam" and teach it to disciples.
2. If you find the above difficult, then learn the "divya prabandhams" and propagate it.
3. If not possible, visit divya dEsams and contribute towards the prasAdam, alankAram, dIpam, or pushpa hAram for the Lord.
4. If you cannot afford that also, learn the dvaya mantram and its meanings, and keep reciting and meditating on it.
5. If you are unable to recite dyayam also, take refuge under a shrIvaishNava who cares for you and serve him.

PLACES TRAVELLED BY SWAMI RAMANUJA

ஸ்ரீ இராமாநுஜ விஜயம்

ஸ்ரீ இராமாநுஜர் விஜயம்
செய்த தலங்கள்

இராமாநுஜர் விஜயம் செய்ததாகக் குருபரம்பரைகள்
குறிக்கும் தலங்கள்.

திருவரங்கம்
கும்பகோணம்
(குடந்தை)
திருவாலி திருநகரி
திருமாலிருஞ்சோலை
ஸ்ரீவில்லிபுத்தூர்
திருப்பல்லாணி
சேது
திருப்பள்ளிங்குடி
ஆழ்வார் திருநகரி
(திருக்குருகூர்)
திருக்கோளூர்
திருக்குறுங்குடி
திருப்பதிசாரம்
(திருவண்பரிசாரம்)
திருவாட்டாறு
திருவனந்தபுரம்
வேறு மலையாளத்
திருப்பதிகள்
மேலைக் கடற்கரை
வழியாக வடநாடு
வட மதுரை
கோகுலம் (ஆய்ப்பாடி)
கோவர்த்தனகிரி
பிருந்தாவனம்
சாளக்கிராமம்

அயோத்தி
பிரயாகை
குருசேஷத்திரம்
ஹரித்வாரம்
காசி
கயை
கண்டம் என்ற கடிநகர்
நைமிசாரணியம்
பதரிகாச்ரமம்
காஷ்மீரம்—ஸ்ரீநகர்
ஜகந்நாதம் (பூரி)
ஸ்ரீ கூர்மம்
ஸ்ரீகாகுளம்
வாரங்கல்
அஹோபிலம்
திருமலை (திருப்பதி)
திருவல்லிக்கேணி
திருநீர்மலை
மதுராந்தகம்
காஞ்சிபுரம்
திருவயிந்திரபுரம்
ஸ்ரீநாராயணபுரம்
(காட்டுமன்னூர் கோவில்)
திருவரங்கம்
(ஸ்ரீரங்கம்)

SwAmi RAMAnuja's vijaya yAtrA includes the following places of India.

1. tiruvarangam
2. kumbakonam (tirukudandai)
3. tiruvAlI tirunagari
4. tirumAlirunchOlai
5. shrivilliputthoor
6. tirupullAni
7. sEtur
8. tiruppuLLinguDi

9. tirukkurugoor (AzhvAr tirunagari)
10. tirukOLoor
11. tirukkRunguDi
12. tiruppatisAram (tiruvaNparisAram)
13. tiruvaTTAru
14. tiruvanantapuram
15. a few more malayALa divyadEsams (kerala)
16. mathurA
17. gOkulam (AypADi)
18. gOvardhanagiri
19. brindAvanam
20. tirusAlagrAmam
21. tiru ayOddhi
22. prayAg
23. kurukshEtram
24. haridwAr
25. kAsi
26. gayA
27. tirukanDankaDinagar
28. naimishAraNyam
29. tirubadarikAshramam
30. shrInagar (kashmir)
31. pUri JagannAth
32. shrIkoormam (Andhra)
33. shrIkAkuLam (Andhra)
34. vArAngal (Andhra now telangana)
35. ahObilam (Andhra)
36. tirumala (Andhra)
37. tiruvallikENi
38. tirunIrmalai

- 39. madurAntakam
- 40. kAnchIpuram
- 41. tiruvahIndrapuram
- 42. vIraNArAyaNapuram (kATTumannArkOyil)
- 43. tiruvarangam

RAMANUJA'S DEMISE – ATTAINMENT OF PARAMAPADAM

SwAmi rAmAnuja attained tirunADu on a Saturday, dashami tithi, mAsi mAsam, shukla paksha, in the pingaLa year, the same year when he was born. It means he lived for two complete samvatsara cycles of 60 years each, thereby completing 120 illustrious years on earth.

FOUR FAMOUS IDOLS/VIGRAHAMS OF SWAMI RAMANUJA

SwAmi rAmAnuja's vighraha moorti finds its sanctum in almost every VishNu temple. But four vighrahams are of paramount importance. They are:

1. MelukOTE (tirunArAyaNapuram) - tamar uganda tirumEni

When rAmAnuja was leaving melukOTE after 12 years, his shishyas couldn't bear his separation. He told them to make an idol of himself with folded hands. He then passed on his divine energy onto the idol and advised them to worship the vighraha. Since the idol was made by the wishes of the shishyas (tamar), the idol is called "tamar uganda tirumEni".



2.. ShrlperumbUdUr - tAn uganda tirumEni

When rAmAnuja was 120 years old, his shishyas in shrIperumbUdUr made a copper idol that looked like swAmi rAmanuja. On tai month pushya nakshatra, SwAmi hugged the idol and passed on his powers to the idol. Hence the day is called "Guru Pushyam" and this idol of rAmAnuja came to be called "tAn uganda tirumEni".



3. Shrirangam - tAnAna tirumEni

The rAmAnuja vigraham present in the vasanta mandapam in Shrirangam temple is the exact look alike of swAmi rAmAnuja. Hence it is called "tAnAna tirumEni". It was installed right above swAmi rAmAnuja's samAdhi/ brindAvanam.



4. AzhvAr tirunagari - Bhavishyad AchArya tirumEni

Back in AzhvAr tirunagari, when NammAzhvAr was about to leave the material world, his close shiShya Madhurakavi AzhvAr was worried about how He would spend his life without his Guru. NammAzhvAr advised him to boil some water from the tAmraparaNi river to get an idol of Himself for his worship. AzhvAr did so and got an idol of an AchArya with anjali mudra and tridanDam but it did not resemble NammAzhvAr. When asked, nammAzhvAr said that it was the idol of 'bhavishyadAchArya rAmAnuja' who will be born in future to lead the vaishNavas. He again advised AzhvAr to boil the waters. An idol of nammAzhvAr with gyAna mudra came out the second time. NammAzhvAr presented his 'tAn uganda tirumEni.- the idol made by self' to Madurakavi AzhvAr and advised him to continue his service to the idol. The idol of BhavishyadAcharya which appeared even before NammAzhvAr's was consecrated and is still worshipped in AzhvAr Tirunagari.



POEM ON RAMANUJA'S BEAUTY BY SWAMI EMBAR

பற்பமெனத் திகழ் பைங்கழல் உந்தன் பல்லவமே விரலும்
பாவனமாகிய பைந்துவராடை பதிந்த மருங்கழகும்
முப்புரி நூலொடு முன்கையில் ஏந்திய முக்கோல் தன்னழகும்
முன்னவர் தந்திடு மொழிகள் நிறைந்திடு முறுவல் நிலாவழகும்
கற்பகமே விழி கருணை பொழிந்திடு கமலக் கண்ணழகும்
காரி சுதன் கழல் சூடிய முடியும் கன நற்சிகை முடியும்
எப்பொழுதும் எதிராசர் வடிவழகு என் இதயத்துளதால்
இல்லை எனக்கெதிர் இல்லை எனக்கெதிர் இல்லை எனக்கெதிரே.

paRpamenat tigazh paingkazhal undan pallavamE viralum

pAvanamAgiya paintuvarADai padinda marungazhagum
muppuru nUloDu munkaiyil Endiya mukkoI tannazhagum
munnavar tantiDu mozhiGaL niRaintiDu muRuval nilAvazhagum
kaRpakamE vizhi karuNai pozhintiDu kamalak kaNNazhagum
kAri sutan kazhal chUDiya muDiyum kana naRshikai muDiyum
epozhudum etirAsar vaDivazhagu en idayattuLadAl
illai enakkedir illai enakkedir illai enakkedirE.

QUOTES ON BHAGAVAD RAMANUJA

By tirukurugai pirAn piLLAn

सर्व देश दशा कालेशु अव्याहत पराक्रम ।
रामानुजार्य दिव्याज्ञा वर्धताम् अभिवर्धताम् ॥
sarva dEsha dashA kAlEshu avyAhata parAkrama |
rAmAnujArya divyAgyA vardhatAm abhivardhatAm ||
May the most magnanimous teachings of the noble Sri Ramanuja Acharya grow and pervade through all nations, at all times, without any hindrance.

By MudaliyANDAn

रामानुजार्य दिव्याज्ञा प्रतिवासरं उज्वला
दिगन्तः व्यापिनी भूयात् सा हि लोक हितैषिणी ॥
rAmAnujArya divyAgyA prativAsaraM ujvalA |
diganta: vyApini bhooyat sAhi loka hitaishiNI ||
May the commandments of rAmAnuja glow every day and spread in all directions far and wide to bring prosperity to the whole world.

SwAmi dEsikan's 11th verse from yatirAja saptati is enough to introduce the austere life of rAmAnuja as a yati.

उपवीतिनं ऊर्ध्वपुण्ड्रवन्तं त्रिजगत्पुण्यफलं त्रिदण्डहस्तम् ।
शरणागतसार्थवाहमीडे शिखया शेखरिणं पतिं यतीनाम् ॥ ११ ॥
upavItinaM oordhvapuNDravantaM trijagatpuNyaphalaM tridaNDahastaM ||
sharaNagata sArthavAha mIDE shikhaya shEkhariNam yatInAm || 11
Hail the king of ascetics! He wears the sacred thread yagyOpavItam hanging from the left shoulder, the resplendent tirumaN and shrIchoornam (oordhvapuNDram) on his forehead, carries the staff tridaNDa in his hand, the tuft shikhA on his crown. With a countenance of the sum of all penances of the three worlds, rAmAnuja flourishes as the leader of the sharaNagatas.

SwAmi MaNavAla mAmunigaL hails rAmAnuja as a unique teacher in upadEsa ratnamAlai 37

ஓராண் வழியாய் உபதேசித்தார் முன்னோர்
 ஏரார் எதிராசர் இன்னருளால் - பாருலகில்
 ஆசை உடையோர்க்கு எல்லாம் ஆரியர்காள் கூருமென்று
 பேசி வரம்பறுத்தார் பின்

OrAN vazhiyAy upadEsittAr munnoOr
 ErAr etirAsar innaruLAl – pArulagil
 Asai uDaiyOrkkellAm AriyargAL kURum enRu
 pEsi varambu aRuttAr pin."

AchAryas prior to rAmAnuja were "anuvritti prasanna AchAryas". They imparted knowledge only to those who complied with vedic studies, anuShThAnams and vairAgya. Divine knowledge passed only from one qualified AchArya to the other which is referred as 'OrAN vazhi'. But rAmAnuja broke this strict boundary of knowledge transfer. Our sweet yatirAjA, out of his unconditional mercy, directed AchAryas (Aryas) to impart knowledge to anyone who has the desire to know and follow the sharaNAgati shAstra. ('Asai uDaiyOrkkellAm kUrum'). Hence, rAmAnuja is hailed as "kripA mAtra prasanna AchArya" - The one who has mercy alone, towards mankind. So, it follows that the common man can be liberated only through the sambandham of 'uDaiyavar's redeeming feet - "uyya orE vazhi uDaiyavar tiruvaDi".

By Sudarshana Soori

तस्मै रामानुजार्याय नमः परमयोगिने।

यः श्रुतिस्मृतिसूत्राणाम् अन्तर्ज्वरमशीशमत्॥

tasmai rAmAnujAryAya nama: paramyOginE|

ya: shruti-smRuti-sootrANAm antarjvaram ashIshamat||

In the invocatory verse of his commentary on shrI bhAShyam, ShrI Sudarshanasoori states that he salutes the paramayOgi rAmAnuja who cured the disease/fever of the vEdas, smritis, and brahma sootrams. The word 'jvara' refers to the faulty interpretations of the vEdic texts. The 'bhEda shrutis' claim that AtmA and ParamAtmA are different. The 'abhEda shrutis' claim that AtmA and ParamAtmA are one. Raamaanuja supported the "ghaTaka shrutis" that made a bridge between both the shrutis and included both their statements as being true. Raamaanuja darshaNam asserts that "ParamAtmA is the supreme reality. All chEtAnas and achEtanas are the shareera for paramAtmA.

RAMANUJA NOORRANDADI TANIYAN BY TIRUKKURGAI PIRAN PILLAN

சொல்லின் தொகை கொண்டு உனதடிப் போதுக்குத் தொண்டு செய்யும் *
 நல்லன்பர் ஏத்தும் உன் நாமம் எல்லாம் எந்தன் நாவின் உள்ளே *
 அல்லும் பகலும் அமரும்படி நல்கு அறு ஸமயம்
 வெல்லும் பரம! * இராமானுச! இது என் விண்ணப்பமே.

sollin togai koNDu unadaDip pOdukkut toNDu seyyum *
 nallanbar Ettum un nAmam ellAm endan nAvin uLLE *
 allum pagalum amarumpaDi nalgu aRu samayam
 vellum parama! * irAmAnusa! idu en viNNappamE.

Oh, the great rAmAnujA who won over the six philosophies! I have just one request. Please bless me that my mouth ever sings your glorious names uttered by your supreme devotee tiruvarangattu amudanAr who offered his vAchA kainkaryam at your lotus feet by composing the rAmAnuja nooRRandAdi in the apt count of 108 verses.

