



**BHAGAVAT RAMANUJAR**  
(Sriperumbudur-Thirumeni)

**1000th Birth celebrations**  
**2017(Monday, 01- May)**

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TO BE READ ALOUD:  
children upto age 9 years  
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*Sree:*

Get to know

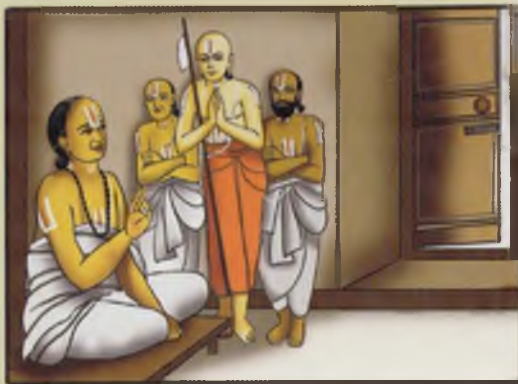
# Great Acharya Ramanuja

and his 4 Maha-Walks

YOU little ones!



**First Maha Walk (turned the walk for welfare of all) Ramanuja walked 18 times up and down to Thirukkottiyur from Srirangam, with out losing his heart to learn a mantra.**



What did he do with the gain he made, for welfare of those interested, never minding the consequences? See page 27 for details.



**Second Maha Walk( to 'keep the word' and to firmly establish Sree sampradaya )**

Ramanuja walked to Himalayan cold Kashmir to get a holy book from Maharaja of Kashmir to write a detailed commentary on the original text. Why did he undertake such an arduous journey? What did he do with the gain he made? See page 31 for details.

|| Sri: ||

Get to know  
Great Acharya Ramanuja  
and his 4 Maha-Walks:  
YOU little ones!

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Enjoy, All the best!



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first edition : 3000 nos – 2014

Designed and printed by  
Sri Vaikunta Enterprises, Chennai–600 073  
[www.srivaikuntaenterprises.com](http://www.srivaikuntaenterprises.com)

*Sri:*  
**Get to know**  
**Great**  
**Acharya Ramanuja**  
**and his 4 Maha-Walks:**  
**YOU little ones!**



Children's book

## 1

## A scintilating Star called Ramanuja born under 'Arudhra' constellation

Long, long ago but not so long ago, only one thousand years ago, there lived Sree Vaishnavite<sup>1</sup> Brahmin couple in a village called Sriperumbudur, near Chennai-Tamil Nadu. They were childless. So they prayed to Sri Parthasarathy Perumal at Tiruvallekeni in Chennai.

Who is Lord Parthasarathy? HE is none other than Sri Krishna who drove the chariot for Arjuna in Mahabharata war and Spoke Baghavat Gita for the benefit of all.

Lord Parthasarathy/Sri Krishna listened to the sincere prayers of the couple of Sriperumbudur. Sri Krishna decided to send Balarama, his brother in Krishna Avatar, as the baby to be born to the couple. As you would know Balarama was an incarnation of Adi Sesa in Krishna Avatar. In other words, Lord Parthasarathy/Sri Krishna decided to send Adi Sesa as the baby to be born to the couple of Sriperumbudur.

In short, as the result of the prayer to Lord Parthasarathy, a son was born to the couple in the year 1017<sup>2</sup> in the Tamil month of Chitirai, under Arudhra (Thiruvadhirai) star at Sriperumbudur.

<sup>1</sup> he who considers Maha Vishnu/ Sreeman Narayanan as the Supreme One with all Kalyana gunas/attributes, as mentioned as Supreme Truth in Vedas and Sastras and; follows that as the philosophy contained in Vedas and Sastras.

<sup>2</sup> Ramanuja's 1000<sup>th</sup> year of birth is 2017. That particular year the birthday is falling on Monday May , 01.



Parents of Ramanuja praying before Lord Parthasarathy (Sri Krishna) at Thiruvallikeni, Chennai.





The family noted that the new born had divine appearance and the face had a special glow. The family on their own decided, seeing the special glow on the face, to name the child after Adi Sesha but as Lakshmana, the younger brother of Sri Rama in Rama Avatar. Yes, the family did not know that the new-born was an incarnation of Adi Sesha!

The child was named Lakshmana but in a different fashion. He was called Ramanuja. (Rama+anuja mean younger brother of Rama).

We can observe that Adi Sesha was born as Lakshmana in Rama Avatar, Balarama in Krishna Avatar and now as Ramanuja, in Kali Yuga, as a messiah of Sri Krishna/Sreeman Narayanan, to firmly establish the Message of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna in this planet to last forever.



That means the child was born with a special duty to discharge in this world. We will come to know of the details as we proceed here or elsewhere.

## The Star rises

Ramanuja slowly and steadily grew up as a good boy in all the ways. There was no teacher or guru in Sriperumbudur area better than his own father. So Ramanuja studied under his father, a great scholar and practitioner of Vedas and Sastras. Ramanuja learnt all the lessons very easily and with speed. His brilliance and intelligence stunned everyone in the village and of the surrounding area.

When Ramanuja was 16 years old, he was married to Thanjammal, a well-behaved girl hailing from a good family. Everyone in the family was happy with that marriage event.

But that happiness did not last for long time to come since Ramanuja's father, the only earning member of the family passed away, a month or so, after Ramanuja's marriage. The family was left in a state of financial distress.

To find some means for living, the family shifted to near-by holy-town of Kanchipuram. However, Ramanuja wanted to continue with his studies. So he was on the lookout for a new teacher/guru in and around Kanchipuram. In fact, he was well conversant with Vedas and Sastras and did not require a guru. Yet he opted to learn under a guru like Sri Krishna did to learn from Sandipini.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> It was in this asrama Sri Krishna met Sudama (Kuchela).

## The Star joins a Guru to continue his study

Ramanuja came to know Yadava Prakasa, a well known scholar of Vedas and Sastras and an advaitic<sup>4</sup> sanyasi, living in a village near Kanchipuram, was holding classes in Vedas and Sastras.

Coming to know that Guru Yadava Prakasa was offering lessons on Upanishads, Ramanuja wanted to join the classes/school. He approached the Guru and he welcomed Ramanuja to his classes despite the ideological differences in their outlook on details of Vedas and Sastras.

Little later, Ramanuja's cousin Govinda also joined Guru Yadava Prakasa.

The Guru took a great liking to Ramanuja because of his brilliance and knowledge. Ramanuja was considered as his best student. Ramanuja revered his teacher to a great extent. However, every now and then, serious differences did come up, between the Guru and Ramanuja, with Ramanuja not agreeing with the meanings/explanations as rendered by the Guru on some portions of the text. Ramanuja felt that the Guru's explanations were incomplete; or his explanations lowered the sanctity of fair statements contained in the holy-verse. And Ramanuja was able to give more appropriate detailed explanations on the same portions of the text.

The Guru was absolutely conscious that Ramanuja's explanations were more acceptable and more appropriate than his own.

<sup>4</sup> he who considers that only Supreme Truth is mentioned in Vedas and Sastras and follows that as the philosophy contained in Vedas and Sastras.



But would not like to say so or accept those interpretations. That was because the Guru desired to stand by the explanations given, down the ages, by the teachers of his school of thought.

### Guru trying to wipe out the Star!

The Guru feared that his philosophy and his school might become unpopular with people and students would start deserting his school. Fearing the loss of popularity, he wanted to suppress the recognition that might naturally come to Ramanuja as a better scholar than him. The Guru desired put an end to the problem he was facing. Therefore, he secretly decided to drown Ramanuja in the river Ganga by taking him along with other disciples in the pre-text of a holy trip to Varanasi and silence him, and his explanations, forever. He thought that the episode of drowning could be explained later to others as an unfortunate accident.

### Yes, the Guru desired to wipe out the Star but the Star escapes!

On the appointed day, the Guru along with all his disciples, including Ramanuja and his cousin Govinda, started their holy trip to Varanasi from Kanchipuram. They travelled for days and months over the mountains and rivers halting at different sites during their travel.

When they were 700 miles away from Kanchipuram in Vindhya Mountains they halted for rest. Govinda, Ramanuja's cousin, who became aware of the Ganga Drowning Plan during that camp, alerted Ramanuja and; asked Ramanuja to leave company of the Guru and escape from the spot. Ramanuja, without telling anybody,

immediately left the company of the Guru and his team. Govinda did not also tell anyone of the escape of Ramanuja from the camp. So, for all purposes Ramanuja was considered by the group as 'lost in the forest'.

When the Guru came to know that Ramanuja was missing from the group, he thought Ramanuja would have lost his way in the forest and become a prey to the wild animals of the forest. The Guru thought by the grace of God, Ramanuja had been finished with no sin falling onto the Guru. Was he happy?

## 2

### The Star "flies" to travel long distance!

Ramanuja, having parted from the group, found himself in midst of a deep thick forest amongst wild animals and he feared them. He also did not know the way to proceed to Kanchipuram. He was awe struck and entered into a state of distress. So, he prayed to Sreeman Narayanan for help and guidance.

The prayer was answered by Sreeman Narayanan. A fowler-couple (veduvar couple) appeared on the scene and guided Ramanuja to safety. They travelled through the forest till midnight and rested in the thick forest waiting for the day to break to continue with their journey.

In the meanwhile, the lady-fowler felt thirsty after the travel and wanted water to drink. Since, it was totally dark they decided for the day to break to find a water source. The male-fowler



said that he was aware of a water source in the nearby area and would let Ramanuja know of its location next morning. They slept without having water to drink.

Next morning, Ramanuja went to bring water from nearby water source, indicated by the male fowler. But on his return found the couple had vanished from the scene without leaving a trace as to where the couple had gone. Ramanuja was left to wonder with what was happening. All that he could guess was that some Divine-couple had helped him to travel such a long distance in such a short time and the couple had indicated that they needed water.

In fact, Ramanuja was helped by Lord Varadaraja and Goddess Perumdevi Thaayar to return to Kanchipuram over night, covering a long distance through rivers and mountains, which had taken Ramanuja days and months to walk when he went along with the Guru travelling up North from Kanchipuram<sup>5</sup>.

In any case Ramanuja returned to Kanchipuram safely, well ahead of the expected time of arrival and did not tell anybody, other than his mother, as to what had happened.

**The Star starts service to Lord Varadaraja;  
rejoins the Guru for academic studies and;  
thereafter leaves the Guru's school for ever.**

Ramanuja, having reached Kanchipuram with the help of Lord Varadaraja much earlier than others, did not know what to do. He guessed that Lord Varadaraja and Goddess Perum Devi of Kanchipuram must have transported him from Vindhya. He recalled that the male fowler had indicated the water source for quenching lady fowler's thirst but the couple did not wait for the water to be fetched.

In other words, that could only mean that the water was not required by the lady fowler for drinking. But then she had indicated that she needs water. That could only mean that she required water for a purpose other than drinking. What could that

<sup>5</sup> This event could remind us of Sri Rama returning to Ayodhya from Lanka after winning the war with Ravana and; also of Sri Krishna being carried over from Mathura to Gokula just after His birth.



mean? Ramanuja after careful thinking concluded that 'water for drinking' must have been used as an indicator by the Lady to say that water was required for the abishekam of Lord Varadaraja, and not for drinking per se. Taking the clue that it is natural for a lady to take care of her husband's needs, Ramanuja started serving Lord Varadaraja by carrying holy-water, on his shoulders, for daily abishekam to the temple from the source that was indicated to him by the male-fowler. In that manner Ramanuja was continuously engaged in the service of the Lord Varadaraja and Thaayar for months together.

How long? Till he became a student under Yadava Prakasa once again!

In the mean while, Guru Yadava Prakasa completed his trip to Varanasi with other disciples and returned to Kanchipuram. However, Govinda did not return to Kanchipuram, he settled down at Kalahasti, a nearby town.

When the Guru arrived at Kanchipuram found, to his surprise and amazement that Ramanuja was serving Lord Varadaraja at Kanchipuram. The Guru was not aware that Ramanuja had escaped from the camp site at Vindhya Mountains and had arrived at Kanchipuram safely. All the while the Guru was under the impression that some wild animals would have eaten up Ramanuja, when he had lost his way in the forest and; Ramanuja was gone forever.

But, the guru quickly overcame his shock and composed himself. Thereafter, the Guru asked Ramanuja to rejoin the classes, as



if nothing had happened between them earlier on. Ramanuja too behaved in the same manner and rejoined the classes. However, the differences did come up, now and then, between the teacher and student (Ramanuja) in the matter of interpretation of the holy Upanishadic texts.

One day, the Guru could not contain his anger and chastised Ramanuja that he should keep accepting the explanations, offered by the Guru on the Upanishadic texts, in total obedience without any murmur or protest; or else Ramanuja was free to leave the school. Ramanuja readily accepted the second choice and left the school once for all.

### The Star starts re-serving Lord Varadaraja

Having left the school Ramanuja was now a free person. He had no classes to attend. So, on the advice of a sincere devoted servant of Lord Varadaraja of Kanchipuram, Ramanuja re-started his service of bringing holy-water for abishekam to Lord Varadaraja. Though Ramanuja was quite a learned person he did not hesitate to do this duty of bringing water. We can see that he was humble and un-assuming although learned.

These are some of the essential qualities expected in a true Sree Vaishnavite and Ramanuja had them without any shortage. Besides that, he did not mind doing hard manual work of carrying water over a long distance. That means he must have been a very strong and healthy person full of humility. All these basic traits helped him to become the top-most leader on a later date.

While Ramanuja was studying under Guru Yadava Prakasa,

some developments took place in Srirangam, about 300 miles away from Kanchipuram. Let us see what was happening there.

### 3

## The Star attracts a Galaxy called Swami Alavandar in Srirangam

Swami Alavandar, a famous religious leader, was living in Srirangam. He was the top most authority of Srirangam temple affairs and a great scholar. He was respected by one and all. He was grandson of Sri Nathamuni.<sup>6</sup>

Swami Alavandar came to know from his devotees, who travelled from Srirangam to Kanchipuram about Ramanuja and his erudition, scholarship and knowledge. Swami Alavandar was keen to meet, this well-spoken scholar, Ramanuja because he had a feeling that Ramanuja could be 'the future leader' to take his position in due course of time. With that feeling in his mind, Swami Alavandar went to Kanchipuram to meet Ramanuja. However, at Kanchipuram he saw Ramanuja in the company of Guru Yadava Prakasa. (That means Swami Alavandar's visit was well before Ramanuja had left the school of the Guru). So, Swami Alavandar decided only to look up Ramanuja and not to meet or talk to him.

He saw Ramanuja only from a distance and blessed him silently and returned to Srirangam. In fact, Swami Alavandar did not

<sup>6</sup> Sri Nathamuni was responsible for resurfacing of holy 4000 verses of Azwars which were 'lost' and; when 'found' Sri Nathamuni was given the responsibility for its perpetuation and propagation also.



utter a word to anybody of the real reason of his visit. He made his trip appear as if it was only for darshan of Lord Varadaraja and nothing more.

Sometime later, when Swami Alavandar was back in Srirangam, he was informed by some devotees that Ramanuja had left the company of Guru Yadava Prakasa forever. This news was welcome news to Swami Alavandar. He desired to have Ramanuja in the service of Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam. So, he (Swami Alavandar) sent his chief disciple Peria Nambi to bring Ramanuja from Kanchipuram. To attract Ramanuja to Srirangam, Swami Alavandar gave a set of slokas to Peria Nambi and advised him to render it before Lord Varadaraja. As per that advice, Peria Nambi left for Kanchipuram with the slokas.

On arrival at Kanchipuram he rendered the slokas before Lord Varadaraja from a spot that he could get the attention of Ramanuja, who was then bringing water to Lord Varadaraja for abishekam. Ramanuja got attracted to the slokas. He wanted to know the inner meaning of the verses and was also keen in meeting the author. Peria Nambi informed Ramanuja that the poem was composed by Swami Alavandar who was living in Srirangam and he alone would know the intricate meaning of these slokas. Ramanuja desired to meet Swami Alavandar and expressed his desire to Peria Nambi. That was what Peria Nambi wanted. So, the task of winning over Ramanuja to take him to Srirangam became very easy for Peria Nambi. With due permission of Lord Varadaraja, Peria Nambi took Ramanuja along with him to Srirangam to meet Swami Alavandar.

## The real Galaxy disappears before the Star joins

Unfortunately Ramanuja could not meet Swami Alavandar alive. Swami Alavandar had passed away just before Ramanuja and Peria Nambi arrived at Srirangam. Both Ramanuja and Peria Nambi got dejected on hearing the news.

### 4

## But the real Galaxy becomes virtual Guru /Manaseeka Acharya

However, Peria Nambi consoled Ramanuja by saying he (Ramanuja) at least had the fortune of seeing the holy-thirumeni (holy-body) of Swami Alavandar. As per the custom, to pay his homage to the departed soul, Ramanuja went round the holy-thirumeni. He observed then that 3 fingers in the right hand of Alavandar were folded. On enquiry, he came to know Swami Alavandar had many spiritual desires and most of them had been fulfilled, however, 3 of them remained unfulfilled. Ramanuja after evoking the blessings of Sreeman Narayanan, took an oath that he would fulfill all the 3 left over desires of Swami Alavandar. Immediately all the 3 fingers straightened out! That meant Swami Alavandar had accepted Ramanuja's promise and Swami was confident that Ramanuja would fulfill the promise, now or later. In other words, Swami Alavandar became Ramanuja's manaseeka guru.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> On a later day Ramanuja fulfilled all the three desires of Swami Alavandar in 3 different ways.

## 5

## The Star's mind caught in a whirl-pool; but the confusion resolves soon

Ramanuja felt sorry for not having met Swami Alavandar alive. Ramanuja was so much grieved that he did not stay even for a day in Srirangam then. He returned to Kanchipuram without even having darshan of Lord Ranganatha!

Peria Nambi stayed back in Srirangam to carry on with ceremonies to be conducted for the departed soul.

Back in Kanchipuram, Ramanuja became a worried man with lot of confusion in his mind.

He was wondering what to do? Lord Varadaraja, whom he was serving, gave him indirectly "6 holy-words" of advice. One among them said Ramanuja should become a disciple of Peria Nambi. (You will recall that Peria Nambi had come earlier to Kanchipuram, to take Ramanuja to Srirangam to meet Swami Alavandar).

## 6

## The Star adopts a real time spiritual acharya

On hearing the advice of Lord Varadaraja, Ramanuja left for Srirangam to become a disciple of Peria Nambi. But when he reached a town called Madhuranthakam, on the way to Srirangam, to his surprise he saw Peria Nambi there. Peria Nambi

was actually in Madhuranthakam because he had been requested by people of Srirangam to go to Kanchipuram and bring along with him Ramanuja to Srirangam. While he was on his journey to Kanchipuram, he met Ramanuja at Madhuranthakam! Ramanuja came to know of this from Peria Nambi.

Ramanuja, who was looking forward to become a sishya of Peria Nambi, expressed his desire to become a disciple of Peria Nambi then and there, and almost at once. Initially Peria Nambi did not agree. But when Ramanuja convinced him as to why it should be done immediately, Peria Nambi agreed with the suggestion of Ramanuja. Peria Nambi adopted Ramanuja as his disciple after observing all the prescribed practices and rituals for that purpose.

Peria Nambi had been advised by the people of Srirangam that he should expose Ramanuja to holy-4000 verses of Azwars before he brought Ramanuja to Srirangam. Since that activity would take some time Peria Nambi brought his wife along with him.

## The Star starts real time learning of holy-4000 verses

To enable Ramanuja to receive lessons on holy-4000 verses, all of them travelled to Kanchipuram. The classes on holy-4000 started in due course and the lessons progressed at a good speed. However, well before the completion of the lessons, the classes abruptly came to an end. Why? Because of a quarrel that took place between two ladies. Not between the teacher and the student, but between their wives.



## The Star faces end of the classes

That quarrel took place between, the wife of Ramanuja and the wife of Peria Nambi, when both Ramanuja and Peria Nambi were away. When Peria Nambi returned home he came to know of this skirmish and he decided to leave for Srirangam, with his family, immediately. They left for Srirangam without even waiting for Ramanuja to return home. Thus, the classes came to a sudden end. And with that event Ramanuja's life took a new turn.

### 7

## The Star becomes a King among Sanyasis\* (\*those who serve Him 24 hours of the day with no other aim in life)

Ramanuja found the married life to be a huge hurdle in serving the Lord and His devotees as per his way. So he decided desert the family life to become a sanyasi.

With the blessings of Lord Varadaraja, he adopted Sanyasa-asrama wearing orange-colored clothes holding a thri-dhandam. Lord Varadaraja addressed him as Yati-Raja; the King among sanyasis. Ramanuja/ Yati-Raja's appearance was in full glow, like the sun. His name and fame reached everywhere. People came from far and near to listen to his spiritual lectures and many became his disciples. Two among them were appointed as his chief disciples. One was Ramanuja's nephew Dasarathi and another one was Kuresar, a rich landlord of neighboring village who had



given every bit of his wealth to charities before joining Ramanuja. Kuresar's wife also became a disciple of Ramanuja.

### 8

## The Star becomes real time Acharya to the "old" Guru!

In the mean while, after hearing Yati Raja's popular lectures, the mother of Yadava Prakasa advised her son to become a disciple of Ramanuja and adopt Ramanuja's interpretation of Vedas

and Sastras. Yadava Prakasa too had been thinking on those lines. After some thinking of his own, decided to adopt Ramanuja as his acharya and become a Sri Vaishnava Sanyasi. Yadava Prakasa was nearing the age of 80. But he was required to go around the world to seek the prior-apology of Sreeman Narayanan, for having left His ways earlier on and leading the life of an advaitic sanyasi. Instead of going round the world, Yadava Prakasa chose to go round Ramanuja as the most appropriate alternative to offer the required apology. That was approved and accepted by the Lord.

Note that the alternative choice of going around Ramanuja, instead of going round the world, carried the same effect in obtaining the desired apology of Sreeman Narayanan! Such was the purity and nobility of Ramanuja.

After the offer of apology to Sreeman Narayanan, Ramanuja took Yadava Prakasa with due respect to his fold as a Sree Vaishnavite sanyasi. Ramanuja made him a jeer (a leader with a right to have his own followers). He was given the title of Govinda Jeer.

## 9

### The Star moves to Srirangam

In the mean while, people of Srirangam wanted Ramanuja to go over to Srirangam and serve Lord Ranganatha and; occupy the Seat vacated by Swami Alavandar. So they now sent Lord Ranganatha's Arayar-Swami to Kanchipuram.

Arayar-Swami reached Kanchipuram and obtained necessary permission from Lord Varadaraja to take Ramanuja to Srirangam

to continue the service to the Lord there. With the permission of Lord Varadaraja, Ramanuja left for Srirangam with his two chief disciples and a few more.

## 10

### The Star gets a new name 'Udaiyavar' to denote his duties assigned by Lord Ranganatha

Ramanuja/Yati-Raja was given warm welcome in Srirangam. Everyone was happy to see him among them. He mixed freely with all as behooves a sanyasi. When he went to have darshan of Lord Ranganatha, HE addressed him with a new title 'Udaiyavar' and directed Ramanuja to take care of all His wealth down here and; up above. That meant (a) to do all things necessary to put the temple affairs in a proper place and; (b) to take care of His devotees here and at the same time guide them as to how reach Vaikuntam - the abode of Sreeman Narayanan at the end of their life. That meant Ramanuja was expected to show His devotees a way to adopt a simple life-style and train them to live for each other, with love and compassion, with the God over-head.

## 11

### The Star starts the discharge of his duties

Ramanuja took the orders of Lord Ranganatha with due seriousness and immediately started attending to the temple needs. He made changes wherever necessary, for example in the worship timings with preference given to suit out-station devotees. He supervised the temple-kitchen to see good quality prasadam (holy-food offered to God) were neatly and properly prepared.



One can say, in short, that Ramanuja made sure that devotees of Lord Ranganatha, especially those who came from out-stations, were not put to any discomfort in the matters of offering prayers and worship, food and stay.

However, not all temple-servants welcomed the changes that were made. Some of them disliked the changes for their own reasons. Some among them even planned to kill Ramanuja, for bringing about the changes, by poisoning his food.

### The Star again escapes attempt on his life

Fortunately Ramanuja detected the mixing of the poison in the food and escaped the hunt for his life.<sup>8</sup>

## 12

### The Star selects a successor called “Embar”: a new glow

Ramanuja missed his cousin Govinda who had gone away to a place called Kalahasti after saving Ramanuja from Ganga Drowning Plan. Ramanuja asked his uncle living in Tirupati to bring Govinda back to his uncle's fold. His uncle did so and took Govinda along with him to Tirumala-Tirupati.

Much later when Ramanuja went to Tirumala-Tirupati, he brought Govinda to Srirangam.

Govinda became another chief disciple of Ramanuja. Govinda

<sup>8</sup> This was his second time life escape. First time, much earlier, Ramanuja's cousin Govinda helped Ramanuja from Ganga Drowning Plan.

was a great scholar and was full of compassion. Govinda too did not like family life and became a sanyasi. He was given a new title Embar. He was selected to succeed Ramanuja.

Ramanuja and his team won name and fame in and around the region. Lot of people became Ramanuja's followers. Ramanuja, as ordered by Lord Ranganatha, guided people to lead a simple life. He asked them to love and help each other and live believing totally in Sreeman Narayanan and serve Him through His devotees.

## 13

### The Star's First great Walk; hailed as “Embperumanar” (as compassionate as Sreeman Narayanan)

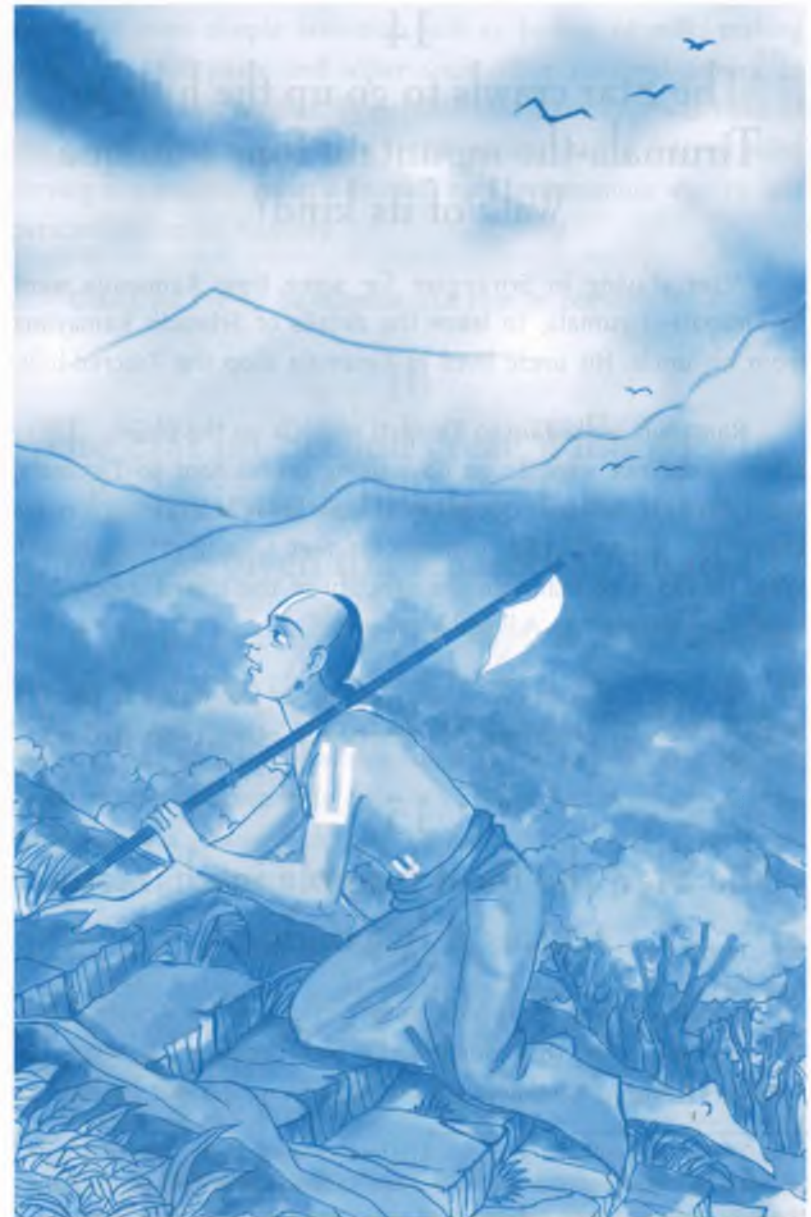
Ramanuja, after starting his assigned duties at Srirangam, went to a holy- place called Thirukottiyur, about 100 miles away from Srirangam, on foot, to learn a holy-secret mantra from one great Acharya there.

The Acharya did not tell the mantra to Ramanuja at the first meeting. The Acharya asked Ramanuja to come again. He said so, for 18 times. But Ramanuja was very keen to learn the mantra so he went up and down 18 times without any concern to the problems he had to face. Finally, the Acharya told him the mantra in a closed room and took a promise from Ramanuja that he will not share the mantra with anyone.

But Ramanuja got so much excited, with the power of the mantra to heal the hardship faced by the people, that he went atop nearby temple tower and shared the mantra (Ashtakshra mantra-Om Namō Narayana Mantra) with all those who desired to know it. When the Acharya came to know of what Ramanuja did, he got terribly upset with the behavior of Ramanuja. He sent for Ramanuja. He asked Ramanuja as to why he broke the promise given to him and made public the holy-secret mantra? Ramanuja said, with all humility, that instead of he alone knowing the mantra and getting the benefit, he wanted many people to get the benefit of the mantra to live the Godly-way (for Salvation). With that larger consideration in view, he said that he did not mind committing the sin of breaking the promise given to the Acharya of not making the mantra public. Ramanuja also said that he was aware that the sin he had committed would lead him to hell. The angry Acharya, instead of scolding Ramanuja, cooled down and admired Ramanuja's broadmindedness and; his love and compassion for all. He embraced Ramanuja with total affection, addressed him with a new title "Emperumanar" to signify Ramanuja's concern for welfare of Sreeman Narayanan's devotees.

Look at the compassion Ramanuja had for all. We too should have that quality of compassion for all in us. Also look at his unrelenting efforts to walk up and down 18 times; his physical fitness and self-driven motivation. Why did he do it? For us to try to imbibe those qualities.

Ramanuja returned to Srirangam winning the admiration of all.





## 14

## The Star crawls to go up the hills to Tirumala-the mountain top: a unique Walk of its kind?

After staying in Srirangam for some time Ramanuja went to Tirupati- Tirumala, to learn the details of Srimadh Ramayana from his uncle. His uncle lived in Tirumala atop the 7sacred-hills.

Ramanuja walked up to Tirupati which is on the plains. There after he did not want to go up walking on his foot to Tirumala, the sacred 7- hill top. So he went up the hills crawling on his knees, like a small child, without his feet touching the ground. Why? He did it to maintain the sanctity of the sacred 7-holy hills which are deemed as Adi-sesha on-earth!

We should also do everything possible to maintain the sanctity of the 7-Hills by observing cleanliness and other connected acts.<sup>9</sup>

## 15

## The Star, the most humble in character, reveals it by conduct!

Ramanuja was to receive some lessons from Arayar-Swami of Srirangam. For that purpose he was required to serve the acharya (Acharya Kainkaryam). And Ramanuja did not hesitate to

<sup>9</sup> By lifting Govardhana Giri Sri Krishna showed that the hills could protect cows, cowherds and others; here Ramanuja has told us to protect the hills in turn they may protect us in the long run (Eco-balance).

carry out even simple activities such as boiling of milk, making of sandal-wood paste and other such other personal service to Arayar swami, his teacher. Remember that Ramanuja was head of the Jeer mutt at Srirangam and 'Udaiyavar, yet he did not mind serving the teacher! What a humble person Ramanuja was! He was personification of humility.

Could we try to be humble like him in our life?

## 16

## The Star on Second great Walk; goes to Kashmir; to fulfill one of the three promise given to Manaseeka Acharya

One of the 3 promises given to Swami Alavandar was writing detailed explanations on a holy-text of Vedas (Brahma sutras). The original text was not available anywhere; only a simple commentary on that text was available, of which only one copy existed. And that too was available only in Kashmir and nowhere else. So Ramanuja was required to go to Kashmir to obtain the book from the library of Maharaja there.

He went to Kashmir along with Kuresar and others. He obtained the book, but some robbers stole the book away from him on the next day. Ramanuja felt that he would not be able to write the explanations as desired by Swami Alavandar and would fail to keep up one promise given to him.

But, in between the gain and loss of the book, really a wonderful thing happened. Kuresar overnight, before the robbers took

the book from Ramanuja, had totally memorized the whole book with all connected details. He had the wonderful capacity to reproduce the total contents when required to do so. Hence, no problem was caused by the loss of the book!

When Ramanuja returned to Srirangam, he was able to write the detailed explanations, as desired by Swami Alavandar, without any difficulty and could keep one of the 3 promises given to Swami Alavandar. The new explanations he had written on the holy-text won accolades from Goddess Saradadevi, who is none other than Saraswati Devi—the Goddess of learning. Ramanuja was given a new title of “Sree Bashyakara”. The compilation of detailed explanations was called “Sree Bashyam”.

## 17

### The Star fulfils the other 2 promises given to Manaseeka Acharya

Ramanuja also fulfilled the other 2 promises given to Swami Alavandar. He fulfilled them in due course. Ramanuja had promised (1) that a commentary on Tamil Vedam (holy-4000 verses) would be written and; (2) He would perpetuate the names of 2 great Rishis Veda-vyasar and Parasarar.

Ramanuja advised the son of his uncle who lived in Tirumala to write the commentary on Tamil Vedam and; to perpetuate the memory of the two great rishis, Veda-vyasar and Parasarar, Ramanuja gave the said names to the two sons of Kuresar.

Note that Ramanuja walked the talk by keeping the three promises. Should we not also try to keep up our word?

## 18

### The Star travels All-over Bharatadesam; a combination of large number of long and short Walks under taken now and then

Ramanuja's name and his kindness to all especially his simple spiritual teachings attracted followers from all over Bharatadesam. People from all-over Bharatadesam wanted Ramanuja to go over to their region and talk to the people there and show them the path of salvation.

Ramanuja travelled all over Bharatadesam covering it part-by-part at different periods of time. He showed them simple way of living, that is, by serving Sreeman Narayanan through His devotees.

Everyone got attracted to him. His name and fame spread far and wide. He was welcomed everywhere. Maha Vishnu became the God loved by one and all. Everyone was united under this banner.

## 19

### The Star 'compelled' by circumstances to wear 'Off-White' clothes; with that he kick-starts the Third great Walk; to 'Mysore- State'!

However, some people did not like what was happening then. They did not want Ramanuja to become famous and; did not want Maha Vishnu to be called the Supreme One/God.



One among those people who disliked Ramanuja was a chola King in the neighborhood of Srirangam. He decided that Ramanuja should be asked, if necessary compelled, to sign a declaration that Lord Siva was greater than Maha Vishnu. The King thought once Ramanuja signs such a declaration, Lord Siva would become the Supreme god; and by such an acknowledgment Ramanuja's popularity would go down and his teachings would fade away.

So thinking, the King sent his men to get hold of Ramanuja and bring him to the court. The King's men came to Srirangam. But they had never seen Ramanuja so it became a problem for them to know who is who.

When Kuresar came to know that the King's men have come to Srirangam in search of Ramanuja, he understood the purpose behind the King's action. He decided, without talking with anybody, that Ramanuja should go far away from Srirangam escaping the eyes of the King's men. To enable Ramanuja to leave Srirangam without being caught by the King's men, Kuresar decided to pretend to be Ramanuja and go with the King's men. To masquerade as Ramanuja, Kuresar put on the orange-colored clothes of Ramanuja and carried Ramanuja's Tridhandam with him. Since everything was a matter of great rush and speed, and Ramanuja was to be protected by any means, with or without his approval, Kuresar did not tell Ramanuja of what he was doing. Ramanuja was bathing at that time.

## 20

After the bath Ramanuja called for his clothes from Dasarathi, one of the chief disciples. Dasarathi quickly informed Ramanuja of the arrival of the King's men in search of him and, all that

happened including Kuresar wearing Ramanuja's orange-colored clothes. He added that Kuresar, along with Peria Nambi and his daughter, had walked away from the mutt along with the King's men to go to the King's court.

Dasarathi further requested Ramanuja to leave Srirangam immediately without any delay to escape from the enemy King. Ramanuja, in distress, in the absence of his orange-colored robes, asked for Kuresar's clothes which was 'off-White' in color. There after Ramanuja took Lord Ranganatha's permission and rushed out of Srirangam. The strength of his team was 45. They were to go to old 'Mysore State' through Kongu Nadu.

## 21

### The Star gets a first-aid to escape starvation death

Ramanuja and his team moved along the river Kaveri in the direction of West. They reached Nilagiri Mountains in Kongu Nadu first, and from there they went to the old 'Mysore State'.

It took them about 8 days to reach the nearest foot-hill of Nilagiri Mountain because they had to play hide and seek game to escape from the enemy king and his friends spread all over the region. When they were nearing the foot hills there was heavy down pour of rain and all of them got fully drenched and the team was affected by cold and fever.

They had no food for 8 days till they reached the foot-hills. There they had received first-aid from veduvars, who were camping

down the foot-hill in the Nilagiri Mountains. The veduvars gave Ramanuja and his team hot-dry fomentation to save them from cold and wet weather. The veduvars also gave honey and some coarse grains to eat to save them from starvation. The team rested for a while in the veduvars camp.

One may note that Ramanuja was saved from the enemy King by Kuresar and now by the veduvars of Kongu Nadu. The first-aid was a timely help to save Ramanuja's life (and that of others). That was his third escape of life!

## 22

### The Star crosses Mt. Ekkarai to reach safer destination - Kollegal

Next day Ramanuja and his team left the camp early in the morning. Now they were led by a small group of veduvars who showed them the shortest route through the mountains to reach 'Mysore State'. They went atop Mt Ekkarai on Nilagiri hills to a place where the veduvars' group leader lived. The leader asked the veduvars to take Ramanuja and his team to a residence of a Brahmin lady in Kollegal and ask her to feed the team.

Ramanuja and his team reached Kollegal by late evening of that day. The veduvars asked the lady to feed Ramanuja and his men. She agreed to feed them. The veduvars, after having done a great job of leading Ramanuja to a safe and secure territory, happily returned back to their home.

The lady received all of them. In the past, she had been to Srirangam and had become a disciple of Ramanuja yet she was not able to identify Ramanuja now. Why? Because he was wearing non-orange colored clothes and was without Tridhandam.

Little later she identified him from looking at his lotus-feet. Ramanuja gave permission to the lady to prepare food and permission to his team to have the food.

She prepared food for all, offered it to her personal deity before serving the team. All the disciples had their food.

However, Ramanuja took only fruits and milk. In short, Ramanuja had gone without proper food for 9 days (Navarathri) Upavasam.

## 23

### The Star off with Off-whites!

Ramanuja and his team stayed in Kollegal for the next 4-5 days to collect appropriate orange-colored robe and Tridhandam for Ramanuja. Till then Ramanuja was in "off-whites". On the 6<sup>th</sup> day of their camp at Kollegal, Ramanuja put on his orange-colored robes and carried Tridhandam. So one can note that Ramanuja had put on "Off-whites" for 14 days under compelling circumstances and not of his own will. Also recall that Sri Rama wore 'Mara-udai' for 14 years when he went to forest!!



## 24 The Star travels further

Ramanuja went from Kollegal to Thondanur through Mithilapuri-salagramam. At Mithilapuri-salagramam he was not welcomed by all. But when they used the water of the village pond in which Dasarathi, one of the chief disciples of Ramanuja, had washed his holy- feet, they felt that the water in the pond had been purified. They changed their attitude towards Ramanuja and became his followers. They noted that even Ramanuja's disciples were holy as Ramanuja was.

From there Ramanuja went to Thondanur.

## 25 The Star cures mental-illness of Princess of Thondanur

But the King of Thondanur had a serious problem on hand. His daughter was mentally ill and she behaved in a manner a mad or possessed person would behave. Everyone in the family was worried about her mental sickness.

The holy-men of the kingdom could not cure her of this mental illness. By the way, the King heard about the arrival of Ramanuja in Thondanur state and his compassionate powers. Becoming aware of the powers of Ramanuja, the King approached and requested Ramanuja to cure the mental sickness of his daughter. Ramanuja, after great persuasion, agreed to the request made by the King and arrived at the King's palace. But the half-clad princess was

kept behind a screen out of view of Ramanuja and others. After arriving in the palace, the disciples of Ramanuja washed Ramanuja's holy- feet with water. And they passed on that holy-water to the Princess to sip and some water to be sprinkled on her head. The Princess became normal at once and she dressed herself fully and came to fell at Ramanuja's feet to obtain his blessings and grace. The King got convinced of the purity and compassion of Ramanuja and became his chief- follower of the region.

## The Star debates with 12000 holy-men of the kingdom at the same time!

But the holy- men in the King's court got upset with this development and they, 12000 in number, challenged Ramanuja and invited him for a debate with all of them at the same time. Ramanuja accepted the challenge and faced all of them at the same time without any fear or difficulty (by assuming his Adi-sesha form of 1000 hoods behind a screen). He won the hot debate convincingly. Seeing his high spiritual powers a large number of the King's holy-men, and others, became Ramanuja's followers.

## 26 The Star moves further as guided by Him-Sreeman Narayanan, as Thirunarayanan

Ramanuja stayed in Thondanur for some time and built a huge lake for the benefit of all. But by that time his stock of "White earth-Thirumann", which is used for wearing the holy-insignia<sup>10</sup> on

<sup>10</sup> The insignia represents Perumal and Thayar-they act as a shield to protect the wearer, from any evil.



his face and over top portion of his body, was going down. He was worried on that account.

That night Perumal (Lord Thirunarayanan) appeared in his dream to guide Ramanuja. Perumal told Ramanuja that all these years HE was waiting for Ramanuja to come. HE asked Ramanuja to look for HIM under a thick tulasi bush in a hill close by and also gave the clues to go over there. With the help of the King, and others, Ramanuja reached that site and found the shining idol of Lord Thirunarayanan under a thick tulasi bush, and the bush was covered with mud giving an ant-hill appearance to all from outside but with a halo around it. But for the clue provided by Thirunarayanan<sup>11</sup> nobody could have ever found it out.

Ramanuja was also given clues as to where Thirumann would be found and he followed the clues to find the holy-Thirumann also.

Ramanuja's joy was unlimited with the two new finds. He considered the whole hill to be the divine residence of Lord Thirunarayanan and decided to build a new temple for the idol atop the hill with the help of the King with a township around the temple.

## 27

### The Star builds a temple for Him at Melkote

Ramanuja built a temple for Lord Thirunarayanan at Melkote. He organized festivals for HIM but could not organize festivals with processions. Why? That was because there was no Utsava Murthy/ processional deity.

<sup>11</sup> Note that Lord Thirunarayanan had, hid himself even from Azwars to reveal Himself to Ramanuja the messiah of Sreeman Narayanan in Kali-yuga.



in between Ramanuja's flight from Srirangam and stay at Melkote.

One will recall that Kuresar had gone to enemy King's court wearing Ramanuja's orange-colored clothes. There he was harassed by the King. The King asked Kuresar to sign a document declaring Lord Siva to be the Supreme god. Kuresar refused to do so and the King became very angry. He ordered his men to pull out the eyes of Kuresar. But Kuresar sacrificed his own vision before the King's order was executed. How?

Before the King's men could move in to pull out the eyes of Kuresar, Kuresar quickly plucked out his own eyes with his own hands. He sacrificed his eyes lest he should suffer the punishment ordered by the King and; suffer loss of his own dignity.

And Kuresar said to the King that he was inflicting upon himself this irreparable damage to atone for the sin of seeing such a wicked King!

However, Peria Nambi who had accompanied Kuresar to the King's court could not escape the loss of his eyes through the King's order because he could not move swiftly as Kuresar did. And that was because of his advanced age.

There after they left the King's court with the help of others. And on his return to Srirangam, Peria Nambi died on the way. Kuresar with the help of Peria Nambi's daughter and a few good hearted people reached Srirangam. Everybody cursed the King for his cruel act when they came to know of everything that happened in the King's court and; as a result of such a curse the King suffered from a despicable disease and died some time later.

When the news of Kuresar's sacrifice and his current plight reached Ramanuja staying in Melkote, he was distressed by the news. He wanted to move over to Srirangam as early as possible.

### 30 The Star leaves behind a "speaking idol" of his own form and leaves Melkote to go to Srirangam

Whatsoever the cause of Ramanuja's desire be, to return to Srirangam at an early date, the people of Melkote would not let him go where he had lived for 12 long years and transformed their life. After discussion with Ramanuja, the people agreed that Ramanuja could go to Srirangam, if he would leave behind his "Speaking Thirumeni-idol" at Melkote. He agreed with the suggestion. His loving devotees installed Ramanuja's idol as early as possible and Ramanuja empowered the idol 'to be capable of speaking', when spoken to with deep devotion. After that Ramanuja left for Srirangam.

### 31 The star grieved by the loss of his Acharya by an act of cruelty by a king

On arrival at Srirangam Ramanuja saw Kuresar and heard from him what all happened at the enemy King's court. He learnt that Peria Nambi, who had gone with Kuresar, to the King's court

refused to sign the declaration and his eyes were plucked by the King's men. And later, Peria Nambi died because of the suffering and old age. Ramanuja was deeply disturbed to know that his Acharyan had to suffer and die because of the cruel act of a King. Ramanuja noted with gravity Acharyan's sacrifice.

## 32

## The Star in for more surprises by the good and kind hearted Kuresar

The loss of eyes of Kuresar made Ramanuja anxious. Ramanuja took Kuresar to personal God, Lord Varadaraja, and asked Kuresar to pray for return of his vision. Kuresar prayed but asked for vision limited only to see the God and Ramanuja!

Later he prayed to Lord Ranganatha that he should die well ahead of Ramanuja so that he could receive Ramanuja in Sreeman Narayanan's abode.

What a great sacrifice by Kuresar! His life and all his sacrifices call for a separate volume to be written on him.

## 33

## The star has a child-like heart and the heart throbs for them!

Ramanuja continued with his twin duties assigned by Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam and was becoming aged.



One day he was walking on the street wondering whether his teachings and methods have reached people and whether those would stand for ever. Then, he saw small little children playing



on the sides of a street building sand-castle and calling it as a temple. They had placed a little pebble as Lord Ranganatha and were doing pooja to it reciting verses from holy- 4000 verses, as if it was the real temple for Him. The children asked Ramanuja to hold on for a while to get the prasadam!

Ramanuja was happy to see children playing “Umaachi-Umaachi- god, god” and were learning to live the divine way co-operating with each other showing total affection and compassion towards each other by adopting the principle of give and take. Ramanuja further thought that the acceptance of the divine way by children means that ‘the principles’ would be perpetuated to live actively for generations to come.

Ramanuja became confident now that all his efforts put in throughout his life would not go waste and the principles he had taught would stand forever. So thinking, Ramanuja returned to the Jeer mutt as a very happy leader of Sree Vaishnavism who had sown the seeds to nurture and grow.

### 34

## The Star joins the Galaxy, after leaving behind an energized idol at Sriperumbudur, the place of his birth

When Ramanuja was nearing the age of 120 years, people of Sriperumbudur wanted to have his thirumeni-idol for installation at their place. When Ramanuja agreed, an idol was cast and Ramanuja embraced the idol to transfer his powers. It was installed in the Perumal Kovil at Sriperumbudur near his place of birth.

Ramanuja became very sick soon thereafter.

He prayed on one Panguni Uttram day to Srirangam Divine-Couple and obtained their grace and a promise of admission to Vaikuntam- Sreeman Narayanan’s Abode, for himself and his true followers for all times to come!!

### 35

## The star “returns” to monitor all temple affairs and events at Srirangam

Now that Ramanuja had done whatever Maha Vishnu had asked him to do, Ramanuja departed , after living for 120 years, from this Bhoolokam (the Earth) to reach Paramapadam( The Permanent Abode of Sreeman Narayanan) to serve HIM there.

But to continue with Lord Ranganatha’s assigned duties at Srirangam, he “came up”, after his body was laid to rest in the temple premises. He now exists in the sitting posture as “His own Thirumeni”. Till date he is said to be watching and monitoring the temple affairs. He continues to bless all his followers and shall continue to do so for all times to come.

### 36

## The Star says what?

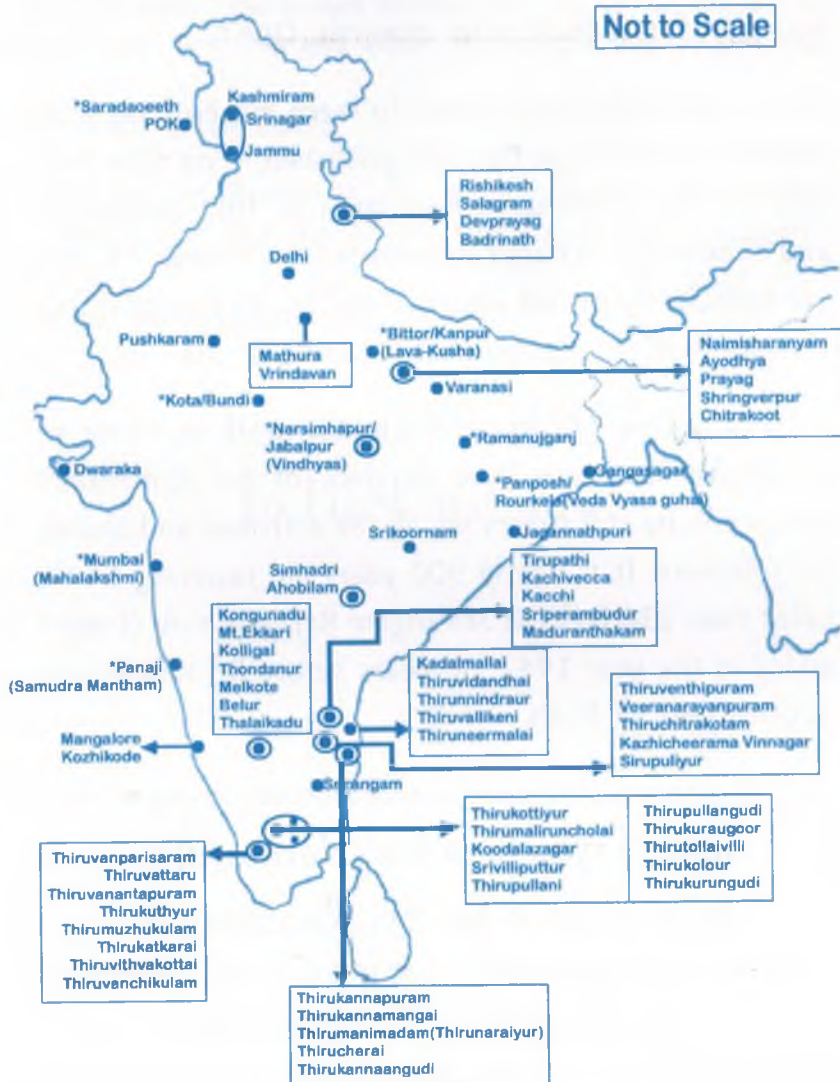
Ramanuja’s advice: Submit yourself to Sreeman Narayanan; serve Him and His devotees with love and compassion. Ramanuja added with that service, He will be happy hence you will automatically become happy. And any one, young or old; rich or poor, CAN DO IT.





### The holy foot-prints of Sri Ramanuja in Bharathadesam

Source: 6000 padi, 6000-12000 padi Guru Parampara Prabhavam Ramanujar-1000, and KVKS Vyuham\* (as of 2/4/2013)  
 (location indicative only)



### Third Maha Walk (to find and establish Mahavishnu, in Mysore state, whom Azhwars 'missed' seeing)

Ramanuja walked through Kongu Nadu via Mt Ekkarai to reach Kollegal, in the old Mysore state, wearing "Off- Whites" to 'find' an idol of Lord Mahavishnu hidden from view for ages and ages, observing 9 days of Upavasam and 14 days of wearing "Pavithram", as a self-imposed conditions, to find Him.

What did he do with the revelation he received that was 'missed' by Azhwars? See page 33 for details.



### Fourth Maha Walk (to show that Bhakti will lead to HIM; can be practiced by and one and all, where conditions do not apply)

Ramanuja walked to Delhi from Melkote to meet the Sultan, as advised by Lord Thirunarayanan, to find His utsava murthy.



What did he do after meeting with success of his mission, that is, what did he do to the little daughter of the Sultan on seeing her divine love to "Selva Pillai"? So also to those, who hailed from so called lower caste, who protected utsava murthy, from the robbers, out of divine love? All these happened 1000 years ago. See page 42 for details.