

# LIFE & TEACHINGS

OF

**SRI RĀMĀNUJĀ CHĀRYA.**



BEING

THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED ON THE 5TH MAY 1908

BY

**M. B. SRINIVASAIENGAR, M. A.,**

*(Mysore Educational Service)*

*Author of the "Aryan Prayer-Book" &  
Editor of the "Nithiyānusandānum" Series),  
&c. &c.*

on the occasion of the Celebration of the

*Twenty-Fifth Anniversary*

of

*Sri Rāmanujachārya's Birthday-Festivities*

*conducted in connection with  
[the Srinivasa Mandiram & Charities  
in Bangalore City.*



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THE BRAHMAVADIN PRESS.

1910.

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# LIFE & TEACHINGS OF "SRI RĀMĀNUJĀCHĀRYA"

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A LECTURE DELIVERED AT BANGALORE.

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Under the auspices of the Srinivasa Mandiram, the twenty-fifth anniversary in connection with Sri Ramanujacharya's Tirunakshatram was celebrated on Tuesday evening (5th May 1908) in Doddanna's Hall, Bangalore City. Flags and foliage had been employed to make the hall look specially attractive, but the weather was cloudy and threaten heavy rain, and a slight drizzle probably kept some people away. The Hall was however full, being occupied mostly by Vaishnava followers and Students. The chair was occupied by Rajamantrapravina Mr. C. Srinivasiengar, an ex-Councillor of the Mysore State.

The Chairman introduced Mr. M. B. Srinivasa Iyengar, M.A. of the Mysore Educational Service, who read an interesting address on the life and teachings of Ramanujacharya, and explained several technical points of the Visishtadvaita faith.

A peculiar feature of the Lecture was that for the first time in the History of Bangalore, native ladies attended a public lecture in English. The members of the Hindu Ladies' Association were accommodated in the rooms to the right of the dais; and on the dais itself were seen, besides the Lecturer and the Chairman, Messrs. Kumarasami Naik, L. Krishna Rao, N. S. Tirumaliengar, C. B. Sheshagiri Rao, N. Venkatesiengar, S. Krishnasami Iyengar, K. Ramasami Iyengar and several Officers of the Mysore state and non-officials.

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Soon after the Introduction, the Lecturer spoke as follows :



## THE INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

### LIFE & TEACHINGS OF "SRI RĀMĀNUJĀCHĀRYA"

Before commencing my brief address to this learned audience, I wish to say a few words regarding the unique position in which I find myself placed this evening, which is due entirely to the kindness of Mr. Gopala Charlu, to whose untiring efforts the Srinivasa-Mandiram and Charities owe their existence and continuance. His kind letter, sent to me a month ago, requesting me to deliver this Inaugural address, took me entirely by surprise ; but having regard to his earnest appeal, I could not say "nay" to his request, though I knew full well that more competent and worthy persons than myself could have been thought of and requested to perform this important function, which I am now called upon to do on this auspicious occasion ; and my acceptance of such a duty has to be regarded more as a DIVINE CALL. since every one of us, worldlings, who have the interests of humanity at heart, has to put his shoulders to the wheel to contribute his quota of service to the development and evolution of mankind.

2. In these days of general awakening, only organized work, and not individual efforts, will achieve permanent or enduring results. These are not the days of individual greatness—such as was achieved, in former days, by great personages like Buddha, Sankaracharyar, or Jesus, or Mahomed, or Ramanjacharyar, or Madhva Charyar, with a large following of disciples. If any measure of success falls to the lot of any of us, we have only to take shelter in these days under the well-known adage

“ Sanghé saktih KalauYugé (सद्यः शक्तिः कलौ युगे) *power is vested in a multitude (an organisation)*”; and act accordingly.

3. A word or two, I wish to say, with your kind permission, regarding what potentialities for good lie in Institutions like the “ Srinivasa Mandiram and Charities,” under whose auspices this influential and remarkable gathering is invited this evening. The sphere of usefulness in which socio-religious Institutions like our “ Mandiram,” or the Branches of the Theosophical Society, established all over India, may engage themselves, is briefly indicated in the remarkable speech delivered at Calcutta by His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Minto, on the occasion of the Jubilee celebration of the Calcutta University. His Excellency, while commenting upon the entire absence of religious teaching in our Government Schools and Colleges as a defect in our present system of Education, was pleased to remark thus—“ Before the advent of Western Learning, secular and religious instruction went hand in hand. The Teacher was also the Spiritual Guide; and we cannot disguise from ourselves that this system, for which we are answerable, has to a large extent deprived the student of instruction in his own faith. It would be useless now to speculate as to what proportion of the causes for any untoward results may be allotted to this system, or to the want of religious teachers, or to the students themselves; but I would ask the latter to assist, as far as it is in their power, to neutralize the evil. They and the University authorities can justly look to the RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS throughout India for assistance,” and concluded his speech in these memorable words :—“ Though the Government of India must, as I have recently said, hold the balance evenly between all religions and sects, I cannot but feel that a System of Education which aims at the



training of youth, with no regard for *religious truths*, ignores the very foundations upon which all that is noble in a people should be built."

4. Hence it will be seen that the most pressing need of the hour is the hearty co-operation of these Religious Associations to supplement the work of Government Educational Institutions with their philanthropic efforts with a view to remedy the evils of the purely secular system of education now imparted therein. Such a noble example of philanthropy and unselfish devotion to duty is to be seen in the Life of Ramanujachârya, whose birthday festivities are being celebrated to-day all over India and Burma, and wherever Vaishnava followers of Ramanuja, bearing on their foreheads the three distinguishing perpendicular marks of the community, are found. In referring to a few principal features of his noble career of usefulness, extending over a period of more than a century, (for he lived over and above the full period of the patriarchal age of our ancestors, viz., one hundred and twenty years) it may pertinently be asked what was there anything special in this noble personage that calls forth that pious and faithful devotion of his followers and the unstinted admiration of the world, even after the lapse of nearly a thousand years.

5. His Biography may be advantageously studied with a view to elicit information regarding the following principal points :—

(1) His Special Mission to the world.

(2) The History of the development of the powerful Vaishnava organisation that he consolidated for continuing the moral and spiritual work after him down to posterity on altruistic lines.

(3) His great message of peace and goodwill to mankind.

(4) His universal love of mankind, irrespective of caste, creed or colour.

(5) His scientific exposition of the Vedantic doctrine and plan of salvation in conformity with the traditional teachings handed over from the time of sage Bôdhâyana, and his successful reconciliation of apparently conflicting Vedic texts of equal authority.

(6) His special reform in the temples on orthodox lines.

(7) His unbounded sympathy with the masses—especially the Panchamas.

(8) His successful attempt at bringing to prominence the EMOTIONAL ASPECT of the Vaishnava Faith, and thus reviving the popular religion of the venerable Ālvârs (who preceded him) by scientifically propogating the doctrine of Love भक्ति and absolute renunciation शरणागति (पूपात्ति) according to the needs and frame of mind of the devotee.

6. *Value of Biographical Study*:—One of the most interesting studies of literature in any language is the Biography of great men. Those that are written with scrupulous care for accuracy and truth will be still more instructive and interesting. Such Biographies are found in modern Literature; those of former days have to be studied with great caution, and with an eye for historical research and accuracy, and with due respect for Truth and Probabilities; for, in these Biographical writings, mythology, and sometimes, supernatural agency, do come into play, giving rise to legendary tales introduced by later writers, with a view to enhance the importance of the incidents connected with the career of such saints or sages.

Very often the so-called "pious frauds" have also to be therein detected; hence these writings have to be gone through with extreme care and with a great deal of unbiassed critical acumen. Bearing the above remarks in mind, the following works may be consulted with advantage, with a view to find out the most important incidents in the life of Ramanujacharya.

1. Sri Guru paramparâ Prabhâvam (Glorious Lives of the Ancient Āchâryâs) in Tamil prose, stayed मणिप्रवालम् MANIPRAVALAM. Unfortunately, there are now two versions of this, belonging to the "Tenkalai" and "Vada-kalai" sections of the Srivaishnavas (Southern and Northern sections)

2. Prapanâmritam—प्रपञ्चामृतम् in Sanskrit.

3. Visistâdvaita Catechism (by Pandit Bhâshyâchâr of the Theosophical Society, Adyar) in English.

4. Palanadai Vilakkan பழை நிலை விழக்கம். In Tamil prose.

5. Life of Ramânujâchârya (by A. Govindacharlu, Mysore) in English.

6. Life of Ramanuja (by the late S. Rangacharlu, Delta Superintendent, Rajamundry) in English\*

From the above, a few principal incidents of Ramanujacharya's life, which are borne out by facts, and regarding which most of us are agreed, are noted below :--

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\* Subsequent to the delivery of this address, I had occasion to peruse the following, which may also be read by the readers with much advantage :--

(1) Life and teachings of Ramanujacharya by C. R. Srinvasiengar B.A. (R. Venkateswar & Co, Madras.)

(2) A paper on Ramanuja, contributed to the "Wednesday Review" by Mr. S. Krishnasami Iyengar M.A. Central College, Bangalore.

- 1 Birth at Sriperumbudur. . . A.D. or A.C. 1017 (Salivahana saka 939) the naming-ceremony, he was styled "Lakshmaṇa" which was gradually changed to Lakshmaṇachar and Lakshmaṇamuni.
- 2 His early education under Yâdavaprakâsa between 8 and 16 years . . . . . Cir. 1033
- 3 First entry into Srirangam to see Ālavandâr (Yâmunâchârya), age 25. . . . . ,, 1042
- 4 Taking holy orders (his married life being a disappointment), age 32 . . . . . ,, 1049
- 5 Conversion of Yagyamurti, an Advaitic Teacher ,, 1086
- 6 King's Persecution of Vaishnavas (Karikala Chola, Kulothunga Chola I), age 78 . . ,, 1095
- 7 Flight to Mysore Territory, age 79. . . ,, 1096
- 8 Conversion of Bittideva, King of the Hoysala Country (Maisur) into the Vaishnava faith, and naming him Vaishnuvardhana . . ,, 1099
- 9 Consecration and restoration of the Temple at Melkote (Tirunârâyanapuram) . . . . ,, 1098
- 10 Building and consecration of the Temple at Belur . . . . . ,, 1117
- 11 Concessions granted to the Panchamas during the period of Car-festivals at Melkote and Belur (Mysore and Hassan Districts.) for services rendered, which are continued even to this day . . . . . ,, 1118
- 12 The establishment of a Mutt at Melkote, styled "Yatiraja Mutt," in charge of his trusted disciples, for the management of Temple worship and the propagation of the faith . . ,, 1119

- 13 Return to Srirangam . . . . .Cir. 1120  
 14 His last days at Srirangam; his powerful  
 organisation for the future work of the  
 Mission . . . . . ,, 1137

7. As regards the date of the birth of Râmânujâchâr-ya, there has been no difference of opinion, unlike that of Sri Sankaracharya, which is wrapped up in obscurity even to this day. This is easily accounted for, since from the earliest days of his earthly career, Ramanuja's contemporaries and admirers began to associate the periods of the incidents of his life with specific noble thoughts of some significance. Hence the traditional date of Salivahana Saka 939 (corresponding to  $939 + 78 = 1017$  A.D.) has been taken advantage of by his Biographers, and has accordingly been made synonymous with the noble thought धीर्लब्धा\*

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\*The system of computation by which the consonants of the Hindu Alphabet represent numerical values from one to nine digits is a very old Aryan method, mainly resorted to by authors and poets, when they wish to insert in their own works the year of composition of their own productions. This system is also seen in Inscriptions, recording grants of land on auspicious or holy or special occasions, or in monuments raised in commemoration of great deeds, by Sovereigns and other high personages, This computation is known by the name of "कतपयादिसंख्य" KATAPAYADI SANKHYA, and is regulated by the following principle :—

(1) कादिनव. (Letters from क in the order of the 1st & 2nd Vargas denote the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 5, 6 7, 8, 9 respectively, the last in the 2nd Varga denoting zero.)

(2) टादिनव (Similarly, letters from ट in the order of the 3rd and 4th Vargas denote the first nine digits respectively, the last in the 4th Varga denoting zero).

(3) पादिपंच (Letters from प denote respectively the first five digits in प Varga)

(4) याद्यष्टौ (Letters from य to ह is the usual order denote the first eight digits respectively).

Dhir Labdhâ = Real knowledge attained), as if this year was particularly designed by Providence for the spread of REAL KNOWLEDGE on earth through Ramanujacharya. So also is the saka year "1059" corresponding to A. D. 1137, designated as the धर्मोन्मत्तः year (Dharmo Nastah = Law of the Lord lost to the world), when the earthly career of Sri Râmânujâchâryar closed. Hence these two important dates became fixed in the ancient chronicles of the land, and could not be changed.

8. His works which have attained an immortal fame are mostly philosophical; but the "Gadyatraya" (Three gadyâs or Prose-pieces) is a very popular and highly-patetic prose composition—especially the Saraṇāgati Gadya (on "Renunciation").

The Philosophical works are—

1. The Sribhāshyā (श्रीभाष्या). This is a flowing and natural Commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras of Bādārāyaṇa. This beautiful work is, in the words of the unbiassed and distinguished German Scholar, Dr. Thibaut "The oldest Commentary extant next to Sankara. . . . . The intrinsic value of the "Sri-Bhashya", moreover, is a very high one; it strikes one throughout as a solid performance, due to a writer of extensive learning and great power of argumentation, and in its polemic parts, directed against the Adwaita School of Thought represented by Śankara; it not unfrequently deserves to be called brilliant even. And, in addition to all this, it shows evident traces of being not the mere outcome of Ramanuja's individual views, but of resting on an old and weighty tradition. This latter point is clearly of the greatest importance."

2. Vedântasâra (Essence of Vedânta)-summary of Sri Bhâshya.

3. Vedânta Dîpa (Lamp of Vedanta)-an Elementary Treatise on the Vedanta sutras.

4. Vedârtha Sangraha (An Elementary Exposition of the Texts of the Vedas and the Upanishads)

5. Gitâbhâshyâ (Commentary on the Bhagavadgita.)

His attainments in Tamil Literature were not known to be very high. Excepting a few special interpretations ascribed to his name in the " Bhagavadvishayam " (Commentary on the Tiruvoymoli), and one stray Tamil stanza amongst the invocatory verses to " Periya Tirumoli " of Tirumangai Alvar, he is not credited with any works in Tamil.

The great merit of his works is his noble and successful attempt at the reconciliation of the various apparently-contradictory Texts of the Vedas and Upanishads, relied upon by the various Schools of Thought as of supreme importance, and giving each of them equal authority in their philosophic interpretation. While the Adwaitic as well as the Dwaitic Theologian finds it necessary, with a view to maintain his special doctrine or school or thought, to treat certain Scriptural Texts as of PRIMARY (प्रधान Pradhâna) importance, and certain others as OF SECONDARY (गौण Gauna) CONSIDERATION, the Visistadwaitic Teacher Ramanuja regards NO such artificial distinctions necessary in a Divine Work like the Vedas or Upanishads (अपौरुषेय); and interprets each set of them as of equal authority and of necessary importance, and reconciles both the interpretations as being in conformity with the traditional and hoary teachings of the Ancient Rishis and Aryan Teachers, for his wording on this point is

(पूर्वाचार्यसुरक्षितां Purvâchârya Surakshitâm = The interpretation that has been carefully guarded or maintained and handed down to posterity by Ancient Teachers.) This fits in very well with his doctrine and teachings, as is occasionally pointed out by Dr. Thibaut in the course of his Translations of the Commentaries on the Vedânta Sûtras. (Vide Sacred Books of the East—Vols. XXXIV Introduction; and XXXVIII).

9. The Visistâdwaita School of thought has been a recognised Vedantic doctrine held by Aryan Rishis and Teachers from time immemorial, as is evident from Ramanuja's reference to a number of Âchâryâs or preceptors who maintained this doctrine from Bodhayana downwards, and what Ramanuja did was only to give this system of thought an impetus to its spread by his lucid exposition of its salient points in a popular and easily understandable way. Its chief doctrines may be briefly summarised in the following terms:—

(1) The Eternal Essence, styled the Parabrahman, is the One Truth or Verity—Infinite, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient. To this Substance or Reality are attached, in an inseparable union, the two other verities—CHIT (individual soul), and ACHIT (Prakriti). These three Verities co-exist in all conditions—either in the स्थूल *Sthûla*, or manifested form, or in the सूक्ष्म *Sûkshma*, or unmanifested form. They are generally expressed by the compound word चिदचिदक्षिर CHIDACHIDĪSHVARA (CHIT + ACHIT + ISVARA = Spirit, Matter (Non-spirit) and Lord); and the relationship that subsists between the Lord and the other two verities is similar to that subsisting between substance and attributes, the sun and the ray of light; Metal and its lustre &c).



(2). The Lord (Paramatman) is endowed with all essential auspicious (कल्याणगुण) attributes, and is free from inauspicious (हेयगुण) ones.

(3) THE ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER, who wields this huge and complicated Universe, is a Being, sufficient unto Himself, and capable of its Creation, Preservation and Transformation. He is the SAVIOUR of its innates. He is styled "Nârâyana."

(4) That the highest duty of man as a son of God, is to fear the Lord, the Great Father, and walk righteously, with an unceasing desire to reach the highest stage of existence, from which there will be no reversion to the physical or material planes. This last point establishes the grand principle of Visistâdvaitic Faith, viz. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

As this system of Thought recognises "Vishnu" or "Nârâyana" as the Supreme Essence, this is known as "Vaishnava Visistadwaitism."

There is another system, known sometimes as the "Saiva Visistadwaita," promulgated by "Nilakanta Siva-charya, a later Theologian than Ramanuja, in which the name of "Siva" is substituted in place of Vishnu as the Supreme Lord. In other respects the treatment of the subject appears to be the same.

10. Now, let me briefly recount a few incidents in the Life of Ramanuja within the short space of time available for us, and see how far we can follow in his footsteps so as to deserve his discipleship.

11. Our sage Ramanujacharyar the propounder of qualified Monism, was born in 1017 A.D. nearly nine hundred years ago in Sriperumbudur, 10 miles from Trivellore. His father was Kesava Asuri, a respectable Brahman, who

had performed several Yâgâs, and his mother was known as Kantimati. His career was full of vicissitudes. In his time the Vaishnava faith was at a low ebb; and except in certain Vaishnava centres—such as Srirangam and Kanchi, it was not much in evidence. It is this circumstance probably that gave rise to an erroneous impression, even to the Tamil scholar of high attainments I mean Dr. Caldwell, who wrote that Ramanujacharya propounded a *new* doctrine styled “Visistadvaita philosophy”. Monier Williams, who had a personal knowledge of India, also deplore in his “Indian Wisdom” that he could not come in contact with Indian scholars who could well explain to him the noble tenets of this system of Philosophy. Even to this day the tenets of the Visistadvaita School of Thought are not so well known as the Advaita system of philosophy. The apathy and indifference of such of our Vaishnavafollowers as would command leisure and convenience to enlighten the public, is mainly responsible for this state of things. What is wanted is an organised effort to give publicity to the embedded truths of this system of philosophy, chiefly written in Tamil not to speak of the Voluminous writings found in Sanskrit written by the predecessors as well as by the successors of Sri Ramanuja. Those works which are written in Tamil are styled Prabandha Literature,\* which is, in the words of the

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\*In this direction, an attempt is being made since 1898, under my editorship, to publish the “Nityânusadhâna series in three Languages—Tamil, Telugu and Kannada, in separate Parts, for the benefit of all Sri Vaishnavas of Southern India and Burmah. The first Six Parts (Tiruppallandu, Tiruppalli Yeluchchi, Tiruppâvai, Amalanâdipirân, Kappinun Siruttambu, and Tirumâlai are now available, either, as one bound volume (linen), or as separate Parts. The Anglo-Vernacular editions contain not only the word-for-word meaning and paraphrase for each stanza in each language, but also a biography of the author, a Critical review of the work, and a Translation

late lamented Dewan Bahadur V. Krishnamacharyar of Madras "a perfect treasure-trove of pious and philosophic thoughts, and of household hints on moral conduct and purity of life." The same learned scholar adds:—"A faithful presentation of the contents of such sacred Literature in English is therefore an effort of no ordinary interest to all who are concerned in the diffusion of such Literature all over Upper India as well as in Europe and America, where the Adwaitic utterances of Swami Vivekananda are the only things known. Our countrymen in the North admittedly understand little or nothing of the Visistadvaita philosophy, and the scientific thoughts of South Indian authors (like Ramanuja and Vedanta Desikar), their logical conception of Religion and plan of Salvation, and our youths in the Tamil, Telugu and Kannada lands know even less than foreigners, and therefore need a stimulus to study the Hymns and Lyrics in praise of God, and the morality taught by religious leaders in the Tamil region."

12. *His personality and example:—*

That he was born a genius, and a person of extraordinary ability, is evident from the fact that, before he was five-and-twenty, he was able to make an impression upon all with whom he came in contact, that he was cut out for a noble mission. When he went from Kanchi, (Conjeevaram) one great seat of learning, to Srirangam, another great centre of Vaishnavism, to confer with the great sage, Yamunacharya, who was on his death-bed, and

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of each stanza in English for the use of all those gentlemen who are conversant with the latter language; whereas pure Vernacular editors issued separately, also contain similar facilities as well as explanatory footnotes in place of the English Translation for the benefit of all Sri Vaishnavas (ladies especially), who may be ignorant of English.

who waited for him sufficiently long, it was found too late; for on the day on which he reached the northern banks of the Cauvery overlooking Srirangam, he saw the rising streams of smoke emanating from the funeral pyre of the great Teacher with a large concourse of Vaishnava Brahmins and others around the spot. This upset all his plans, and he was greatly disappointed at this unfortunate crisis. He returned to Kanchi, and he repaired to Srirangam under the orders of the Almighty, which he duly ascertained from a consultation with the intimate devotees of God, (for in those golden days the temple servants were holy men of devotion and piety, bent upon contemplation and spiritual advancement; and they did not resort to such holy places merely for the sake of paltry lucre, as is the case in the present degenerate days).

13. To give you only one instance of his universal Love for mankind, the story of his initiation into the import of the sacred eight-syllabled Mantram called the "*Astākshara*" by one of his teachers may be mentioned:—

His five Teachers were:—

Sanskrit name.	Tamil name.	Remarks.
1. Srisaila Purna ...	Tirumali Nambi ...	Initiator into the esoteric Mysteries of the Ramayana.
2. Mahā Purna ...	Periya Nambi ...	First Teacher and Guide.
3. Gosthi Purna ...	Tirukkottiyur Nambi ...	Initiator into the eight, syllabled Holy Mantra styled <i>Astākshara</i> .
4. Kanchi Purna ...	Tirukkatchi Nambi ...	His Teacher and Friend.
5. Mālādharma ...	Tirumālaiyândān ...	Initiator into the Mysteries of Tiruvoymoli (Prabandha Literature).

He went to Tirukkottiyur (near Pudukota) from Srirangam not less than eighteen times to receive the due initiation into the Mysteries of the Holy Mantra; each time

he went there, he got disappointed, for the sage Gôsthî-purna would not part with it for any thing in the world. Under various pretexts he delayed the INITIATION, testing the recipient's patience, forbearance, and temper in many ways. On all occasions of disappointment, Ramanuja used to blame himself and his Karmic bonds; and never reflected upon the unseemly conduct of his Guru, for such a procedure would be regarded as blasphemy. At last, at the intercession of the Almighty Himself, he is said to have divulged the special import of the MANTRA to Ramanuja under a special solemn promise of not revealing it to any body else, under pain of suffering eternal torments in the Hellish Regions for any undeserved divulgation of the Mysteries. Only the very next day after this Initiation, he made up his mind to proclaim such a holy mantra to mankind in general, from the top of a gopuram hard by, on the plea that, though he may become guilty of a serious sin by such a revelation he was sure of securing salvation for a number of deserving and persistent souls, and that his personal sacrifice in the interests of humanity was a worthy act. Such was his love of mankind, irrespective of caste, creed, or colour. Hence the story that he encouraged the persecution of Jains and others of different persuasion should be regarded as a "Myth." On the other hand, many joined his faith out of conviction. For want of time now, I cannot dwell upon the other incidents of his life, which are already briefly indicated.

14. In all popular religions, which have largely influenced mankind, there will generally be found two aspects (1) The *Intellectual*, which is the most philosophic, suitable to the highly-cultured development of the educated classes, and (2) The *EMOTIONAL*, which strongly appeals to the feelings and emotions of the masses. This latter aspect is prominently brought out in his temple-re-

form, while in his philosophical writings such as the Commentaries on the so-called प्रस्थानत्रय Prasthānatraya (Upanishads, Vedānta-sūtras, and Gīta), his polemical excellence and superiority of argumentation are patent even to the casual reader. He accordingly revived the ancient Vaishnava doctrine, in accordance with the Pāncharāthra Agama worship, the popular side of which represents the Almighty as occupying a Divine seat in Paradise with his Consort, surrounded by myriads of celestials, as immortal as Himself, who minister to Him in all manner of ways, and whose sole duty consists in chanting halleluias in praise of the Supreme Being, and in the perfect enjoyment of eternal bliss. This view is in conformity with that which has been held by the Venerable Ālvārs or Vaishnava Saints who preceded him, as well as by the Holy Acharyas who followed him. The special belief which swayed these inspired Beings in this connection was that on this mundane universe, the same prototype of the paraphernalia and glory as characterised the illimitable and indescribable Celestial Regions which are no doubt beyond the comprehension of poor worldlings like us, of limited sense is to be seen in a miniature scale, in these holy spots, such as Srirangam and Tirupati; and in that view the construction of temples (Vaishnava) has been effected. Similarly the Saiva Temples of Chidambaram, Madura, have been built in accordance with the Agamas of the Saiva cult. For all along, from the early prehistoric times, two streams of religious thought—the Vaishnava and the Saiva, have been flowing parallel to each other in the Indian soil prior to the advent of Buddhism, and have swayed their respective votaries who happened to be powerful sovereigns, and who, as such, commanded much influence; and with the support and patronage of such potentates, the religious aspect of each

stream of thought progressed, putting down its brother stream or streams for the time being; but the Indian Sovereigns, when left to themselves, were more inclined to tolerate the existence, continuance in their dominions, of different systems of religion as suited the tastes and feelings their subjects, though they would naturally show a slight leaning towards their own faith by special favours or grants to such Institutions. But special persecutions, like the one to which our sage Ramanujacharyar was subject, was the exception rather than the rule. Toleration in religion and domestic concerns appears to have been a well-recognised cardinal Principle of Hindu Faith, in accordance with the celebrated Teaching of Lord Sri Krishna in the Celestial Song, Bhagavadgita : —

यो यथामांप्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।  
 ममवर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते ममुष्माः पार्थसर्वशः ।  
 यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुमिच्छति ।  
 ततस्याच्छलां श्रद्धां तामेवविदधाम्यहम् ॥

“In whatever manner men worship Me, in the self-same manner do I accept them; whatever (righteous path) men follow, O Arjuna, that path leads them to Me in every way.

Whosoever wishes to worship, with entire devotion, whatsoever Form (of God), in that Form of God I render his devotion steady.”

It is this SPIRIT, it will be seen, that pervades the mind of the Indian community, and it is this SPIRIT of tion and Universality of Faith that accounts for the existence of so many varieties, or shades of belief, in Religion, or in different systems of Thought.

15. *The ideal of a Vaishnava.* The ideal to which a Vaishnava follower of Ramanuja is expected to reach is

beautifully illustrated in the sacred writings. Once it happened that a Vaishnava devotee wished to know how he should conduct himself, and he approached his revered teacher for instruction in the matter. He referred him to Saint Anandalwar of Tirupati Hill for advice, to which he proceeded. This model teacher thereupon desired him to stay with him for sometime. One day while meals were to be served after worship to all, he was asked to take his place in a corner at a spot far below his rank to which he would be entitled by virtue of his learning and social status; but he never got offended at the arrangement; and he immediately sat at the place allotted to him. The next occasion he was pointed out a seat in the front ranks of Vaishnavas at the time of serving meals. He was in no way elated with joy at this procedure. Everyday he used to bathe, and have his clothes well cleaned, and kept neat and white; and in his conduct he was exemplary, being the same in thought, word, and deed. After noticing his behaviour for sometime, the teacher at Tirupati exclaimed in terse Tamil thus "Kokkuppôl irukkam; Kôlipôl irukkam, uppuppôl irukkam, ummaippôl irukkan" = கொக்குப்போலிருக்கும்; கோழிபோலிருக்கும்; உப்புப்போலிருக்கும்; உம்மைப்போலிருக்கும். "A Vaishnava will be like a swan (in his dress and neatness), he will be like a fowl (in picking up the valuable substance from amidst a heap of rubbish); he will be like salt (being of the same quality, externally or internally); and he will be like yourself." With these remarks, he wished him God-speed. He brought this news to his own teacher; and great was the joy of all in the assembly, when they heard of this beautiful illustration. How much do we fall far short of this standard of a Vaishnava! How altruistic, sympathetic, noble, and exemplary is the ideal! It is hoped that we shall, hereafter at least, regulate our lives so as to



approach this ideal. It is clear from the given illustration that a genuine Vaishnava should be a living example for purity of conduct, and should be a mirror of greatness, nobility of character, like a swan. The comparison of a FOWL in relation to his daily life is intended to illustrate his attitude towards the Shastras and standard works of authority amidst the vast store of religious Literature. He is expected to use his best discrimination to select the essentials from the non-essentials like the FOWL, which is wont to take out the SUBSTANCE from amidst a heap of RUBBISH. The illustration that he should act the part of 'salt' in his dealings with the world, indicates his genuineness of character in relation to the external world, as well as to the internal, with a view to show that what was aimed at as the ideal was NO IMAGINARY BEING, but that living examples could be had in those days. The teacher points out to him that the person addressed was himself one of such examples, though rare to find.

Any how, with such noble examples before us for our guidance, we should not despair. This being a period of transition, we have occasions to notice many an instance of deviations from the righteous course, many a course of conduct undeserving of the former social dignity and status of the delinquents.

#### 16. *The need of the hour.*

As a measure of practical reform along the line of least resistance, I would strongly advocate the entire union of the two important sections of Sri Vaishnava Brahmins which is partially carried out, and would earnestly appeal to them to sink their minor differences, and really follow the footsteps of Ramanujacharya, and approach the ideal already referred to. To the thoughtful and unbiassed Vaishnava follower of Saint Ramanuja, I

would appeal for his consideration, and ask him to ponder over these so-called differences. In his learned Introduction to the Mysore Census Report of 1891, Mr. V. N. Narasimhaiengar incidentally refers to these eighteen differences between the Vadakalai and Tenkalai section of Sri Vaishnavas. They are mostly philosophical, and two or three of them appear to be very puerile, and based upon mere sentiment.\* With a spirit of broad-minded and sympathetic toleration with which our educated classes ought to be credited, (else our boasted education on western lines is not worth much), we should not despair of effecting a compromise, and work as a united band in common brotherhood as Ramanuja's true followers, who are expected to be alike in word, thought, and deed LIKE COMMON SALT. To carry out this desirable reform, let Aryan Lodges be established in different centres with the main object of effecting this compromise, so that all Ramanuja's followers may stand upon a common platform, and work out our salvation. To these institutions, Hostel arrangements can be attached, where the rising generation of Vaishnava students may be taken care of with regard to their spiritual advancement.

The differences referred to are:—

(1) Whether Laxmi, the consort of Vishnu, is, omnipresent and coillimitable with Vishnu.

(2) Whether Laksmi is only the mediatrix or the co-bestower of "Moksham" or final beatitude.

(3) Whether there is any graduated Moksham attainable by the good and blessed according to their respective multifarious merits.

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\* These differences are noted below for easy reference.

(4) Whether PRAPATTI, or unconditional surrender of the soul to God, should be performed once for all.

(5) Whether it (Prapatti) is open to all, or is prescribed only for those, specially prepared and apprenticed.

(6) Whether the indivisibly atomic human soul is entered into or permeated or not by the Omnipresent Creator.

(7) Whether God's mercy is exerted with or without cause.

(8) Whether the same (Divine mercy) means the overlooking (doshādarsanam), or the enjoyment (dosha-bhogyatvam) of the soul's delinquencies.

(9) Whether works (karma) and knowledge (guāna) are in themselves Salvation-giving, or only lead to faith (Bhakti), by which final emancipation is attained.

(10) Whether the good of other (unregenerate) castes should be tolerated according to their graduated social statuses, or should be venerated without reference to caste inequalities.

(11) Whether Karma (works, ritual) or should not be bodily and wholly abandoned by those who have adopted *prapatti*.

Besides these, there are minor differences regarding (1) Performance of "Srāddha" on "Ekadasi" day, or the next day (2) The bell should be rung with the left hand, or it should be done away with, during worship, (3) whether Hastōdakam (purifying the hand with water after "Prāṇāyamam") should, or should not be resorted to).

17. In conclusion, Ladies and gentlemen, I beg to thank you for the kind patience with which you listened to my poor performance, for I am fully conscious of my

inability to do justice to the great "Hero" of to-day's address. I am glad to find that signs are not wanting which indicated that several native scholars, imbued with Western scholarship and with an eye for historical research, will soon come into the field to explore the unknown regions of Visistadvaitic school of thought, and give the benefit of their researches to the world.

18. I am particularly glad to congratulate Mr. Gopalachari on the success that has attended his efforts to open a "Ladies" section for the delivery of lectures in Kanarese, in connection with the Srinivasa Mandiram Library; and may there be many more occasions of such gatherings, as years roll on, in commemoration of Birthday festivities, anniversaries of our noble sage Sri Bhagavan Ramanujacharya is my fervent prayer, the prayer of one of his humble and unworthy disciples and followers.



## CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH.

The Chairman then spoke as follows :—

Ladies and gentlemen,—In accordance with the time-honoured custom and with the programme before me, I rise to say a few words before the close of this evening's proceedings. But if you expect a speech from me, you must be prepared for a disappointment. When a few days ago Mr. A. Gopalacharlu asked me to preside at this important function, I begged hard to be excused ; for I felt that there was nothing in me adequate to the obligation which the acceptance of this high honour involved. But he was inexorable. Under no circumstances would he spare me and take a refusal. I had accordingly to submit, lest I should be considered hostile or indifferent to a movement which had my entire sympathy, and into which Mr. Gopalacharlu had thrown himself, heart and soul, with phenomenal enthusiasm. (Hear, hear.)

It was at first my intention to give you a brief summary of the address, when my turn came to speak. I accordingly took some notes when the address was in course of delivery. But I soon found that this was a hopeless task, and therefore abandoned it. I shall now content myself with making a few general remarks, as any attempt to do anything more might take me beyond my depth, and make me flounder.

The Srinivasa Mandiram and Charties is an Institution with many-sided activities, not the least important of which is a Free Library, which is a storehouse of useful knowledge, and in connection with which lectures are occasionally delivered on subjects, chiefly religious. The Anniversary of the propounder of the Visistadwaita

faith is also being celebrated in the Mandiram with much *eclat*. This is what has hitherto been done. But this year there is a new departure, as evidenced by the present gathering. I congratulate Mr. Gopalacharlu on his happy idea, and on its successful accomplishment. I also congratulate Mr. M. B. Srinivasa Iyengar on his masterly handling of the subject. For a thorough grasp of the subject, clear marshalling of points, lucidity of exposition, and choiceness of diction, his address leaves nothing to be desired. Lastly, I congratulate the audience on the able, interesting and instructive address to which they have had the privilege of listening. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar has told us who Sri Ramanujacharya was, and what he did for us. We have in the life, teachings and work of this revered saint a glorious heritage—moral, spiritual, and intellectual—a heritage, of which we have every reason to be proud. He was the chosen instrument of God, charged with a divine mission. How well he fulfilled that mission has been fully brought home to you by Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's address. He travelled far and wide, preached indefatigably the gospel of Visistadwaita faith, propagated, consolidated, re-affirmed and re-established that faith, and placed it on a permanent stable and intelligible basis. He was cosmopolitan in his views, as evidenced by the fact prominently mentioned in the Address; he opened the portals of our temples to all people alike, irrespective of caste or creed. (Hear, hear). In his time there was unity among his followers. Schisms, however, have since arisen for some reason or other. The fact nevertheless remains, that notwithstanding sectarian differences, his followers continue to admire, adore, and venerate and worship him in every Vaishnava Temple. Such then was the remarkable personage who has formed

the subject of to-night's Address. The life and doings of a deified Saint like him are well worth our study. But to be able to appreciate him properly, you must understand him aright. Such an understanding requires effort, which in its turn presupposes "will." If to-night's Address has stimulated such "will," and aroused a spirit of enquiry, Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar's labours will have been amply repaid. (Hear, hear.) This inauguration ceremony is, as I have already said, the first of its kind here; but with a sponsor like Mr. Gopalacharlu, I am sure it will not be the last. I wish it continued success and ever-increasing usefulness. It only remains for me, before resuming my seat, to propose a hearty vote of thanks to our learned Lecturer, and I have no doubt that this will be carried with acclamation. (Continued applause.)

Mr. Gopalacharlu then rose, and spoke in a few felicitous words, expressing his great obligation to the Lecturer; and, in doing so, he observed that Mr. M. B. Srinivasaiyengar, had to come all the way from Hassan for the occasion. It was a matter of great inconvenience for him to come; but he knew how great and deserving was the cause; and, as such, it was natural that all other considerations did not prevail on him. Mr. Gopalacharlu also paid a high tribute to Mr. C. Srinivasaiyengar, retired Councillor of the Mysore State, who presided at this important function. Further, a happy reference was made to the President of the City Municipal Council, Bangalore, for the Municipal aid rendered on the occasion. Janopakari Doddannah Chetty was also thanked for giving the use of his Hall for that day.

Thus the Inauguration-day came to a close.

Copies can be had of (1) Mr. A. Gopalachariu, Founder and Manager, Srinivasa-Mandiram and Charities, Bangalore City. (2) The Manager, Granthasala Buildings, Ramvilasa Street, Mysore City, and (3) The Manager, Brahmavadin Press, Madras, E.