

# Rāmānuja, World Savior

Śrī Rāmānujāchārya, who is Ādi-śeṣha (Lord Viṣṇu's serpent bed) previously incarnated as Lakshmaṇa and Balarāmā, is a **Savior** that descended to this planet in this Kālī yuga, to rescue jīvās (living entities) from the birth-death cycle (called *samsāra*) and deliver them into eternal loving service of Śrīman Nārāyaṇa (God) in Vaikuntham (called Moksha). Not content with showing a path (Bhakti Yoga, Prapatti/Saranagati) to His followers, He Himself became their deliverer. He is thus an *Uttāraka* (takes us across *samsāra*) and *Uddhāraka* (uplifter of *jīvā*) Āchārya. Thus, a **Jagath Uttāraka/Uddhāraka Āchārya**, in English, a **World Savior/Saviour**. Śrīmath Paramahansa Ithyādi Śrī Kālīyan Vānamāmalai Rāmānuja Jeeyar Swamy (30th pontiff of the venerable Vānamāmalai Mutt) ordered that Achāryābhīmāna (**Savior's** grace)/Achāryanishta (self, dedicated to service of **savior**) as the quintessence of Śrīvaishṇavam be propagated worldwide, by all Śrīvaishṇavas. A few of the many instances in the life of Śrī Rāmānujāchārya that establish His **saviorship** will now be briefly recollected.

## Emperumānār (More merciful than God Himself)

Śrī Goshtipurṇa, one of the Gurus of Śrī Rāmānujāchārya, bestowed the title **Emperumānār** (more compassionate than God Himself) after Śrī Rāmānujāchārya disclosed the truths/meaning of one of the *Rahasya traya* (3 esoteric mantras/sloka in *Śrīvaishṇavam*), to all, even accepting the possibility of Himself going to hell for unauthorizedly disclosing the truths, if all others would be saved from the birth-death cycle by receiving the same.

"Here are two Holy Names", Kūrēśa often said, "namely, Nā-rā-ya-ṇa and Rā-mā-nu-ja, each is made up of foul syllables. But Nārāyaṇa as denoting God, can both save [from the birth-death cycle] and damn [punish for our sins], but Rāmānuja as **Saviour**, can only save. In this consists our stay, strength and safety".[1]

## Udayavar (Owner of both spiritual and material universes)

The name **Udayavar** (owner) was bestowed by Śrī Ranganātha (God) after Śrī Ranganātha bestowed ownership of the Nithya (spiritual) and Leela (material) universes on Śrī Rāmānujāchārya. Only those that own/control both the material and spiritual universes can deliver jīvās (living entities) from the material universe (leela vibhuti) to the spiritual universe (nithya vibhuti). Per ChaRāmā upāya nirṇayam (Establishing the ultimate path for salvation) only God Himself, His dear devotee Nammāzhar and Śrī Rāmānujāchārya possess that power by virtue of owning/controlling both the material and spiritual universes.

## Moksha for Tumbaiyur Kondi

Lord Śrīnivasa confirmed this grant by His holy word also and to prove that this was not mere flattery, it is written that a milkmaid by name Tumbaiyur Kondi, was supplying curds to Rāmānuja. When he was once on his way to Tirupati, the woman appeared and presented her bill for payment. Rāmānuja commanded Kidāmbi-Acchan to give her food in the Math. She ate and coming to Rāmānuja, prostrated to him and submitted to him that she had a favour to ask. He bade her ask it. She said: "Holy sire, desire not payment in coin for my curds, but grant me Moksha [eternal loving service to God in Vaikuntha (spiritual universe)] instead." "But that power I possess not," replied Rāmānuja, "Lord Śrīnivasa alone can grant your prayer." Then give me written permit, sire, to take to the Lord" asked she. Rāmānuja, over-come by her faith, gave her one. She forthwith ascended the Sacred Mount, but she had hardly reached the summit, before the Lord Himself met her on the way, and receiving the permit, gave her Moksha on the spot. [1]

## Securing Moksha for His sambandhis (followers)

On a Panguni Uthiram day in Śrī Rangam, when both universal mother Mahālakshmi and Śrī Ranganātha were seated together, Śrī Rāmānujāchārya first performed Śaraṇāgati to mother Mahālakshmi and then to Namperumāḷ (Śrī Ranganātha). Not satisfied with liberation from *samsāra* and eternal loving service in Vaikuntham just for Himself, Śrī Rāmānujāchārya pleaded for the same for all of His followers to come forever. Namperumal was stunned by Rāmānuja's magnanimity and said "Granted!" [2]. Lord further asserts Śrī Rāmānujāchārya's **saviorship** in [this episode of prapatti/saranāgati \(loving surrender\) directly to Him](#): On another occassion, Kidāmbi-acchan repeated before the Lord the verse: *Aparādha ....(Sthotra Rathna)*, in which the expression *agatim*: 'wayless' occurs. "How dare you utter this," interrupted the Lord, "when you have Rāmānuja for your 'way'"?.[1]

## Assertion of Moksha for His sambandhis (followers)

Rāmānuja was one day conducting his ministry in his congregation, taking up the Doctrine of God's Free Grace to frail humanity, as illustrated by Rāmāyaṇa. Vibhīṣhaṇa, though born among the demons (Rākshasās), was angelic in nature. He tried to dissuade his brother Rāvaṇa from his evil ways, but he would not listen so he severed himself swiftly from all connection with him, and soaring into the sky, crossed the ocean with four attendants and coming to Lord Rāmā, who was encamped with his army on the other shore, cried thus:-

'O Rāmā,' thus he cried, 'in me, Vibhīshaṇ, Rāvaṇ's brother, see. By him disgraced your aid I seek, Sure refuge of the poor and weak. From Lanka, friends, and wealth fly. And reft of all on You rely. On You, the wretch's firmest friend, My kingdom, joys and life depend'. [Rāmāyaṇa, VI, 19.]

'I left my children and my wife And fly to Raghu's son for life'. [Rāmāyaṇa, VI, 17.]

And yet the Vānar-chiefs of Lord Rāmā said to Him:-

'Rāmā! We wait your word: the order give And these your foes shall cease to live. Command us, mighty king, and all, Lifeless upon the earth shall fall. [Rāmāyaṇa, VI, 17.]

On hearing this, Dhanurdāsa stood up and cried:- "Godsire, if Vibhīshaṇa, who left wife, children and all in order to seek refuge with Rāmā, deserved to be stoned by Rāmā's Vānar-chiefs, how much more indeed do I deserve that treatment, - I, who have made no renunciation at all like Vibhīshaṇa!!".

"Peace," cried Rāmānuja, "Listen to me, my son, I will unfold to you the secrets of salvation. Śrī, the spouse of Lord Nārāyaṇa, ever stands by Him as our Mother-mediator. She is the personification of the most exalted attribute of God, viz., Grace or Mercy. When our Lord through Śrī is ever anxious to shower His mercy unstintingly on His erring children on earth, what fear is there for us? We have an unbroken chain of apostles, reaching down to us from God, of which the first link is God, and His Grace, Śrī, the next. St. Sathagopa (Nammāzhar) is the next important link and he has declared in unmistakable terms that he has obtained Heaven (Vaikunta). If he has won it, Nāthamuni has won; if Nāthamuni has won, Yāmuna has won; Yāmuna winning, my next guru above me, Mahāpūrṇa, has won. If Pūrṇa has won, I have surely won.

**When I have, you have all indeed won.** Take comfort then from this thought. Dvaya Mantra, which I have taught you, declares, as you are aware, the indissoluble unity of God with His Grace, Śrī and an unbroken chain binds God and His creatures in one bond, from which it is impossible to escape and stand aloof. **With me goes my flock. What I share it undoubtedly shares.** The areca tree is watered by the gardener, but the plantain trees around it take the moisture as well. **I and my church are linked together for one testing. My destiny shall invariably be its destiny.** When Vibhīshaṇa was after all allowed to approach Lord Rāmā, no separate invitation to the four Rākshasā-men, who companied with him, was needed, nor when the Vānar-chiefs wished to drive him away, did they think of driving those four persons separately. In other words, the four persons counted with Vibhīshaṇa as one, in gains or losses. **Even thus counts my flock with me.** Hence, son! **you may rest assured that if Heaven [Vaikunta] is mine, it is yours without question.** As St. Bhaktisāra has said; 'the flock has even more merit than the shepherd,' Śatrughna has more merit in following Bharatā, than Bharatā, Lord Rāmā; St. Madhurakavi than St. Sathagopa; St. Āṇḍaḷ than St. VishnuChitta, her father and so forth.[1]

## 74 Simhāsan-adhipatīs

Śrī Rāmānujāchārya chose 74 of His innumerable followers, and conferred on them the title 'Simhāsan-adhipati' (Āchārya). He ordained that they, and after their time their successors, could perform *panchasamskāram* (5 sacraments of Śrīvaishṇava faith). [2]. Anyone desirous of becoming a "Rāmānuja sambandhi" (spiritually related to Śrī Rāmānujāchārya) can approach anyone of these 74 Simhāsanādhipatis (Āchāryas) even today and undergo *panchasamskāram*. In becoming a "Rāmānuja sambandhi", one should acquire [Artha Panchaka](#) knowledge and must, under the guidance of Āchārya, strive to adhere to the conduct specified in Artha Panchaka, while avoiding the obstacles mentioned as [Virodhi Svarupa \(Anti or Hostile Principles\)](#) in Artha Panchaka, all the while conscious of the fact that it's solely Āchāryābhīmāna (Āchāryā's grace/love) that saves us from the birth-death cycle, not our ability to acquire knowledge of [Artha Panchaka](#) or any other work for that matter, nor the act of undergoing *panchasamskāram* itself. Āchāryās' instructions are to be followed to solely fulfill our own true nature (constitutional identity) of being an Āchārya abhīmāna nishtār (self, obliterated to the service of Āchārya/savior) and is not to be done as *upāyam* (means to an end). One should also spread Śrī Rāmānujāchārya's **Saviourship** far and wide, so more jīvās (living entities) can benefit.

## More Information

Pramēyam (goal) - <http://koyil.org/>

Pramāṇam (scriptures) - <http://granthams.koyil.org>

Pramāthā (preceptors) - <http://acharyas.koyil.org>

Śrīvaishṇava education/kids portal - <http://pillai.koyil.org>

"Rāmānuja, World Saviour" campaign - [worldsavior.org](http://worldsavior.org)

Alkondavilli Govindāchārya - [worldsavior.org/sri-alkondavilli-govindacharya](http://worldsavior.org/sri-alkondavilli-govindacharya)

## References

[1] Life of Rāmānujāchārya (1906) by Śrī Alkondavilli Govindāchārya Swamin

[2] [kinchit.org](http://kinchit.org) 2017 Sahasrābdi calendar

[3] Charama upāya nirṇayam (Establishing the ultimate path for salvation) by Śrī Nāyanārāchchan Pillai