



Discover Ramanuja Question Bank Part 1

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About JET USA

Who are We?

- JET USA, INC. was incorporated in 1994, in the State of Illinois as, a Non Profit Organization that is organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now in effect or as may hereafter be amended, or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.
- In furtherance of the purposes set forth in Section 1.02 hereof, the Organization shall foster learning in Ancient Vedic Scriptures (Sanathana Dharma), including Vedas and Upanishads, under the guidance of the Founder and Chief Executive Officer HH Tridandi Chinna Srimannarayana Ramanuja Jeeyar Swamiji.
- No part of the net earnings or revenues of the Organization will insure to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.
- No part of the activities of the Organization will be carrying on propaganda or to otherwise influence legislation.
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Vision

Serve All beings As Service to GOD
Worship Your Own and Respect All

Mission

- Foster vedic learning in ancient vedic scriptures ("Sanathana Dharma").
- Follow the teachings of the inspiring Acharya, HH Tridandi Srimannaryana Ramanuja Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji.
- Establish places of worship and priest services adhering to the tradition endorsed by the Acharya.
- Provide guidance and tools necessary to practice various samskaras (good living practices) required for individuals and families.
- Propagate the sacred sampradaya (divine methods) among individuals raised or living in the United States and prepare them to pass on this Sampradaya to future generations.
- Conduct lectures, discussion groups, scriptural study groups, and satsangs to the community.
- Provide charitable and philanthropic services locally, nationally, and internationally.

About Discover Ramanuja Contest

Welcome to this unique contest.

Sri Ramanujacharya Swamy, a phenomenal philosopher, reformer, leader, and altruist, was born in India in AD 1017. Against all odds, he institutionalized the concept of "equality for all" – equality in opportunity and access to the Lord.

In 2017, we will be celebrating the 1000th anniversary of the birth of Sri Ramanujacharya Swamy and are conducting a National-Level Competition themed around his life and teachings to promote awareness.

1.0 Pronunciation

The vowel is short by default in vernacular languages. The colon ':' is used after a vowel to indicate that it is a long vowel. The vowel sounds are as follows:

a: the long sound of 'a' in 'calm'; Ra:ma

e: the long sound of 'a' in 'lane'; Me:gha

i: the long sound of 'ee' in 'meek'; Si:tha;

o: the long sound of 'o' in 'Rome'; Go:vinda

u: the long sound of 'oo' in 'root'; Ku:rma

Bold letters are used to indicate hard sounds as given below:

t sound of 't' in 'toy'

d sound of 'd' in 'disk'

s sound of 's' in 'Sam'

To help the reader pronounce the proper names correctly, the colons and bolds are used as described above. However, the following proper nouns are left untouched:

Jeeyar

Swamy

Swamiji

Tamil

Tamil Nadu

'z' is traditionally used to depict the sound of a letter that is unique to Tamil. Perhaps, a close sound is 'la.' For example, this is used for 'a:zwa:r,' & *Thiruvaimozi*



Telugu	Hindi	English	Telugu	Hindi	English
అ	अ	a	ట	ट	ta
ఆ	आ	a:	ట ట్	त्त	tta
ఇ	इ	i	ఠ ఠ్	त्त	tta
ఈ	ई	i:	డ	ड	da
ఉ	उ	u	డ డ్	डड	dda
ఊ	ऊ	u:	ణ	ण	dha
ఋ	ऋ	ru	ణ	ण	dha
ౠ	ऌ	ru:	ణ	ण	dha
అలు	अलु	lu	త	त	tha
అలు	अलू	lu:	త త్	त्त	ththa
ఎ		e	త త్	त्त	ttha
ఏ	ए	e:	ద	द	da
ఐ	ऐ	ai	డ డ్	डड	dda
ఓ		o	ధ	ध	dha
ఔ	ओ	o:	న	न	na
ఋ	औ	au/ow	ప	प	pa
అం	अं	am	ఫ	फ	pha
అః	अः	aha	బ	ब	ba
క	क	ka	భ	भ	bha
ఖ	ख	kha	మ	म	ma
గ	ग	ga	య	य	ya
ఘ	घ	gha	ర	र	ra
ఙ	ङ	nga	ల	ल	la
చ	च	cha	వ	व	va
ఛ	च	chcha	శ	श	sa
ఞ	छ	} chha	ష	ष	sha
జ	ज		స	स	sa
ఝ	झ	ja	హ	ह	ha
ఞ్	ञ	jha	ల	ळ	la
ఇని		ini	ర్ర		rra
			క్ష	क्ष	ksha
			జ్ఞ		Jna

- This letter comes only in the middle of the word
- • This letter comes in the beginning/middle of the word

☞ Pronunciation of both these letters is almost similar

2.0 Philosophy—Basics

1. What is meant by the term *thathwam*?

The term *thathwam* is a unique, fundamental, and eternal reality

2. How many *thathwams* do the *Ve:das* declare?

3 *thathwams*

3. What is *thathwa thryam* or the *thathwams* declared by the *Ve:das*?

- i. *ji:va:thmas* or individual souls or the sentient,
- ii. *prakruthi* or Nature or the insentient,
- iii. *parama:thma* or *bramha* or God or the Lord or **Sri:manna:ra:ya**na

4. When did the *thathwams* originate?

According to the *Ve:das*, all the three *thathwams* have neither a beginning nor an ending. They have always been there and continue to be there.

3.0 Parama:thma

5. Does God have any qualities?

Yes, *parama:thma* or Lord **Sri:manna:ra:yana** has infinite qualities called *kalya:na gunas*.

6. Why does God need any qualities?

Being the originator of this universe, the Lord needs flawless, auspicious qualities called *kalya:na gunas* to manage the universe.

7. What does the term *kalya:na gunas* mean?

Kalya:na gunas are flawless, auspicious qualities found in *parama:thma* alone. For example, He is boundlessly compassionate, accessible to all, and untouched by impurities despite being with them. These are just a few examples. Lord **Sri:manna:ra:yana**'s *kalya:na gunas* or qualities are innumerable.

8. In some portion of the *Ve:das*, there is a mention that *bramha* is *nirguna*. What does it mean?

bramha does not (*nir*) have any qualities (*gunas*) that are similar to those of *ji:vas* or *prakruthi*. However, He does have infinite *kalya:na gunas* that are unique to Him.

9. Are the *kalya:na gunas* of *parama:thma* inherent or imposed?

They are inherent—*swa:bha:vikas*

10. What are the essential qualities that define God or the Supreme?

- i. He must be *jagath ka:ranam*—the cause of the entire universe, which is a combination of the sentient and the insentient. He is the Changeless Essence from Whom all emerge, draw sustenance from, and go back to rest.
- ii. He must be *sarwa rakshaka*—He is the protector of all. Therefore, He eliminates the undesirable and grants the desirable.
- iii. He must be the treasure-house of *kalya:na gunas*—He is the source of benevolent qualities that uplift and nurture all
- iv. He must be **Sriyahpathi** or the Spouse of *Mother Lakshmi*

11. Why cannot God be an abstract concept and still be the Cause of all—sentient and insentient entities?

An abstract entity cannot have a will of its own. Something abstract that has no will cannot bring forth, take care of, and withdraw the universe and thus perfectly carry on the affairs of this cosmos.

12. When *ji:va* and *prakruthi* have no beginning, how can *parama:thma* be their cause?

That entity is the Cause out of Whom something or someone emerges and goes back to. Since *ji:va:thmas* and *prakruthi* come out of *parama:thma* during *srusthi* or the cosmic manifestation and return to *parama:thma* during *pralaya* or the cosmic dissolution, *parama:thma* is considered to be their cause.

13. How can *bramha* or *parama:thma* be differentiated from *prakruthi* and *ji:vatha:mas*?

The *Ve:das* give 3 qualities that differentiate *bramha* from *prakruthi* and *ji:va:thmas*. He is *sathyam* or never-changing, *jna:nam* or omniscient, and *anantham* or illimitable by time, space, and object (*thrividha parichche:da rahitha*).

14. Why is the Lord called *sathyam*?

Sathyam is He whose *swaru:pam* or form and *swabhava* or qualities do not undergo any change unless He wills it so. This quality is called *sathyathwam*. Since the Lord has this quality, He is *sathyam*.

15. What is the purpose of *sathyathwam* of the Lord?

The quality *sathyathwam* differentiates the Lord from *prakruthi*.

16. How does the Lord's quality, *sathyathwam*, distinguish Him from *prakruthi*?

prakruthi changes her *swaru:pam* or form and *swabha:va* or her qualities continually with time. The changes, however, are not under her control. On the other hand, the Lord's *swaru:pam* and *swabha:va* never change unless He wishes otherwise.

17. Since *ji:vas* too do not change their *swaru:pam*, can they be called *sathyam* too?

To be *sathyam*, there should be no change in *swaru:pam* and *swabh:ava*. Since the *swabha:va* of *ji:vas* undergoes constant change under the influence of their *karmas*, they cannot be called *sathyam*. The word *sathyam* thus is not applicable to them.

18. Why is the Lord called *jna:nam*?

Jna:nam is He who knows everything, both collectively and individually, at all times and in all respects and with all details without any external aid. This quality is called *jna:nathwam*. Since the Lord has this quality, He is *jna:nam*.

19. What is the purpose of *jna:nathwam* of the Lord?

The quality *jna:nathwam* differentiates the Lord from *mukthas* or liberated *ji:vas*.

20. Since *jna:nam* is inherent to all *ji:vas*, can they all be called *jna:nam*?

No, all *ji:vas* cannot be called *jna:nam* because their *jna:nam* depends on the will of the Lord. It is so for *ji:vas* in all three states—*baddha*, *muktha*, and *nithya*. The Lord's *jna:nam* alone is independent.

21. Since *mukthas* too have this quality of *jna:nathwam*, can they be called *jna:nam* too?

No, *mukthas* cannot be called *jna:nam* because they did not have this quality before their liberation. Since their *jna:nam* became fully fledged only after their liberation from karmic bondage, they do not meet the condition of having it all the time. Thus, the word is not applicable to *mukthas*

22. Why is the Lord called *anantham*?

Anantham is He who is *thridaya pariccheda rahitha*. That is, He is not physically limited by time or space or object. This quality is called *ananthathwam*. Since the Lord has this quality, He is *anantham*.

23. What is the purpose of *anthathawam* of the Lord?

ananthathwam differentiates the Lord from *nithyas* or eternally free *ji:vas*.

24. Since *nithyas* too are illimitable by time and space, can they be called *anthatham* too?

No, they cannot be called *anantham*. Though they are illimitable by time and space by virtue of *jna:nam*, their form still is *anu* or tiny. Therefore, they cannot physically be present in all places and objects at once. On the other hand, the Lord is *vibhu* or all-pervasive physically. Thus, the definition is applicable only to Him.

25. What is the single most significant sign by which the *parama:thma* or the Supreme is identified as per the *Ve:das*?

Sriyahpathithwam—Spouse with **Sri:** or Mother Lakshmi.

26. Why is the Lord's connection with *Sri:* so significant?

Sri:'s connection with the Lord is significant because she intercedes on behalf of *ji:vas* with Him. Her intercession is called *purushaka:ram*. Because of this, her name too has become *purushaka:ram*.

27. What are the roles *Sri:* plays as *purushaka:ram*?

Sri: as *purushaka:ram* plays 6 major roles. They are

- i. *sri:yathe:* or be ever accessible to anyone who wishes to approach her
- ii. *srayathe:* or access the Lord for the sake of *ji:vas* who approach her
- iii. *sruno:thi* or listens to the prayers of those who approach her
- iv. *sra:vayathi* or relays those prayers at the right time to the Lord
- v. *sru:na:thi* or removes the flaws of those who approach her
- vi. *sri:na:thi* or makes the Lord happy with her auspicious qualities to save *ji:vas*

28. Why is *Sri:* called as *purushaka:ram*?

Sri: is called *purushaka:ram* for 3 reasons given below.

- i. *puru sano:thi ithi purushaha* = One who gives abundantly is called *purushaha*. **Sri:** gives generously, so she is called *purushaka:ram*
- ii. *purusham karo:thi ithi purushaka:ram* = *purushaka:ram* is one who motivates the Lord to give abundantly. Since She does that, she is called *purushaka:ram*
- iii. It is **Sri:** who makes Him to lovingly protect us and to confer bliss upon us with her inseparable companionship. So, her name became *purushaka:ram*.

29. Since Mother Lakshmi is not visible to us in this world, how do we benefit from her *purushaka:ram*?

Under the guidance of Mother Lakshmi, *bhaktas* intercede with *bha:gavathas*; *bha:gavathas* intercede with *a:cha:ryas*, and *a:cha:ryas* intercede with Her and she intercedes with the Lord. Thus, through this system, we can benefit from *purushaka:ram* by approaching the *bhaktas*, *bha:gavathas*, and *a:cha:rya* who are accessible in our world.

30. In how many distinct states/forms does *parama:thma* exist?

He exists in five states called *parathwa:di panchakam*

31. What are the forms of *parama:thma*?

- i. *para* or the Supreme Abode
- ii. *vyu:ha* or the Planning Abode for cosmic creation or *srushti*, cosmic sustenance or *stthithi*, cosmic dissolution or *pralaya*
- iii. *vibhava* or *avatha:ra* or the innumerable appearances which display His qualities as needed to take care of His creation
- iv. *antharya:mi* or the Indwelling Controller of all the souls
- v. *archa* or the deity in a worshipping form

32. How does the Lord govern the universe?

He governs the universe by being in 5 forms. They are:

- i. *para* or the Supreme Abode
- ii. *vyu:ha* or the Planning Abode for cosmic creation or *srushti*, cosmic sustenance or *stthithi*, cosmic dissolution or *pralaya*
- iii. *vibhava* or *avatha:ra* or the innumerable appearances which display His qualities as needed to take care of His creation
- iv. *antharya:mi* or the indwelling controller of all
- v. *archa* or the deity in a worshipping form

All these five are collectively called *parathwa:di panchakam*

33. What are the purposes of the different states of *parama:thma*?

- i. As *para*, He bestows bliss on *mukthas* and *nithyas* in *paramapadam* or Supreme Abode
- ii. As *vyu:ha*, He manages worlds—*srushti* or cosmic manifestation, *stthithi* or cosmic sustenance, *pralaya* or cosmic dissolution
- iii. As *vibhava*, He descends and fulfills the desires of the devotees
- iv. As *antharya:mi*, He supports and controls the existence of all
- v. As *archa*, He becomes accessible to all

34. If the Lord has not 'created' or brought into existence *ji:vas* or *prakruthi*, why does He get to dwell inside all and rule all?

To make their existence possible—*saththa: prada:nam*—He dwells in all and rules them because neither *ji:vas* nor *prakruthi* can exist without Him.

35. How does the Lord support *ji:vas* and *prakruthi*?

The Lord supports *ji:vas* and *prakruthi* by making them His *sari:ram* and by being their *sari:ri*.

36. Define the words *sari:ri* and *sari:ram*.

Yasya che:thanasya yad dravyam sarva:thmana: swa:rtthe: niyanthum, dha:rayithum cha sakyam thath se:shathaika swaru:pam thath thasya sari:ram, paras sari:ri:

This means, *sari:ri* is the sentient one who supports, controls, and uses another entity, sentient or insentient, exclusively for his own sake. The supported, controlled, and dependent one is called *sari:ram*. The Lord is the *sari:ri* and *ji:va* and *prakruthi* are His *sari:ram*.

For example, in the case of an engineer controlling the satellite, the engineer is to a great extent the *sari:ri* and the satellite is the *sari:ram* because he controls it to a large extent. Thus, this concept can be applied in various degrees to various relationships. The *sari:ri* does not necessarily have to be dwell inside the *sari:ram*.

37. When I have control over my body, why can't I be called the *sari:ri* just like the Lord?

You, the *ji:va*, have control over your body to some extent. For that, you can be called as *sari:ri*, but your control over your body is limited. Even this limited control is under the will of the Lord. You are not *sari:ri* in the same way the Lord is since the prerequisite of "*sarwa:thmana:*" is not met.

38. Why are *prakruthi* and *ji:va:thmas* considered to be *sari:ram* or the bodies of the Lord?

Lord *Sri:manna:ra:yana* dwells in *prakruthi* through *ji:vas*, making both as His body

- i. To make their existence possible
- ii. To make them functional
- iii. To give an opportunity to *ji:vas* to come out of their karmic bondage

39. Is the Lord visible in any form?

Yes, He is visible in *vibhava* or incarnation and *archa* or deity

40. Is it possible talk, walk and play with the Lord as though he were another living being?

Yes, it is possible to interact with the Lord like that in two of His forms—*vibhava* and *archa*. People present at the time and place of *vibhava* can interact with Him as with any other living being. Great devotees who realize that the *archa* is indeed the Lord can do it anytime and at any place.

41. In which form is the Supremely Independent Lord the most subservient and accessible to all across time and place?

archa or deity

42. What is the form of the Lord in which opposite qualities like supremacy and accessibility meet?

archa or deity

43. What is the uniqueness of *archa*?

As *archa*, He is subservient and accessible even to the ignorant while still remaining supreme.

44. When the Lord is all-pervasive, why should one worship *archa* or the deity form?

We should worship *archa* because

- i. Scriptures like *a:gamas* recommend that we worship Him in *archa* form only.
- ii. *ji:va:thma* and *parama:thma*, being a form of knowledge, can be perceived only through a body made of *prakruthi*. Different names and forms of *prakruthi* block our connection with the Lord Who is *antharya:mi* or Indwelling Controller. The deity form, on the other hand, allows us to connect with the Lord directly. Therefore, it makes sense to worship Him only in the deity form.

45. The *archa* is inert, helpless, and at the mercy of others. How can it be the Omniscient, Omnipotent, Supreme Lord?

Though *archa* is seemingly inert, helpless, and at the mercy of others, He is still the Omniscient, Omnipotent, and Supreme Lord

- i. because in *a:gamas*, He Himself declared that He, the Supreme, would be subservient like that without losing His supremacy
- ii. because of His indisputable supremacy, He can choose to be as subservient and seemingly inert as He wants
- iii. because of His supreme will, He chooses to remain true to the characteristics of the material that He accepts as His body such as metal, wood, clay, paper, stone etc. Therefore, He seems inert despite being the core of action, seems powerless despite being omnipotent, seems at the mercy of others despite being in control. Because of His accessibility, He accepts the form and material the devotees give Him. He gives the devotees an opportunity to lovingly care for Him and to focus their thought on Him. As long as devotees care for Him in the *archa* form, He does whatever is needed to protect them. When people see only the external material (stone, clay etc.) then He too remains like that only for them.

46. What helps in cultivating faith in the *archa* or deity form?

Having some relationship (parent, friend, beloved, child etc.) with the Lord in the *archa* form and accordingly serving Him with love helps in cultivating faith in the *archa*.

47. What obstructs our faith in the *archa*?

Seeing *archa* as mere inert material and having business mindset of, "I do this for You, so You do this for me" obstructs our faith in the *archa*.

48. What is the purpose of *vibhava* form of the Lord?

The primary purpose of the *vibhava* is to associate with genuine devotees and support their righteous practices, *dharma*, and give them good experiences which are later recounted as purifying *li:las*. The secondary purpose of the *vibhava* is to eliminate evil.

49. If as *vibhava*, the Lord eliminates evil, why does evil still exist today as though the previous *vibhava* form was ineffective?

The Lord in the previous *vibhava* form did root out evil. However, evil is like a weed. Though uprooted and destroyed, another might come in the future. That does not mean that the previous weed was not eradicated or not destroyed. Thus, though the Lord eradicated evil that was present then, it came up again, so we still see evil. It needs constant vigilance, so He appears time and again to address that.

50. Why are there so many *vibhava* forms as though the Lord has not been effective in protecting the good and destroying the evil?

Different problems at different times require different forms that are most effective to protect the good and destroy the evil. Hence, the Lord takes on different *vibhava* forms as He deems appropriate.

51. What is evil?

Evil is that which provokes a man against the Lord's wish, i.e. the *Ve:das*. The man mistakenly thinks that he is independent of the Lord and becomes disrespectful of elders and others. This ignorance leads to his arrogance, possessiveness, covetousness, and so on. All of this distances him from the Lord and makes him go against His instructions. This is evil.

52. When the Lord pervades all and His presence purifies everything, how can anything become evil?

There is no object that is evil per se in this world because of the purifying presence of the Lord in all. Except for man, no other living creature commits evil. Misusing his intelligence, and discontent with what he has, man becomes greedy. As a result, he does not rightly discern how to properly use what is at his disposal. Anything that comes out of such perverted thought becomes evil. Thus, despite the Lord's presence, the man arrogates independence to himself and becomes responsible for evil.

53. Some say Krushna is Supreme. Some others say Rama or Na:ra:yana or Ve:nkate:swara and so on is Supreme. Among these Gods, Who is the Supreme?

All these are various *avatha:ras* of the single God. According to the *Ve:das*, God is Lord **Sriyahpathi Sri:manna:ra:ya:na** alone. He takes various *avatha:ras* from His *vyu:ha* form called Aniruddha. Hence, this Aniruddha form is called *avatha:ri*. Depending upon the necessity and the time, the Lord takes on *avatha:ras*, that are innumerable. Some are moving *avatha:ras* and some are non-moving *avatha:ras*. Non-moving *avatha:ras* are *archa avatha:ras*. Moving *avatha:ras* are *vibhava avatha:ras*. Ra:ma, Krushna and so on fall in this category. Since the *thatthwam* of the Lord is the same, there is no question of inferiority or superiority among His *avatha:ras*, for they come for different purposes. Though they are all equal, individual preferences lead people to consider one as being more important than the other.

54. Are there any differences among *archa avatha:ras*?

Yes, there are. Based on how they have come to be, they can be divided into two—1. *swayam vyaktha* or Self-Manifest 2. *Prathishtitha* or Consecrated by someone like *de:vathas* or *rushis* or *a:cha:ryas*

55. List the *swayam vyaktha* or Self-Manifest forms.

Swayam vyaktha are 8

- i. Rangana:ttha in **Sri**: Rangam
- ii. Ve:nkate:swara in Thirumala
- iii. Tho:thadrina:ttha in Va:nama:malai
- iv. Bhu:vara:haswamy in **Sri**:mu:shnam

The above are in South India

- i. NaraNara:yana in Badarina:th
- ii. Sa:lagrama in Mukthina:th
- iii. Jala Na:ra:yana in Pushkar
- iv. Vana Na:ra:yana in Naimisa:ranyam

The above are in North India

56. Name a *de:va prathishtitha* or a deity form of the Lord consecrated by a *de:vatha*.

Lord Varadara:jaswamy in Kanchi is *de:va prathishtitha* since He was consecrated by Chathurmukha Bramha:

57. Name a *rushi prathishtitha* or a deity form of the Lord consecrated by a *rushi*.

Lord Ka:lame:ghaswamy in Thanja Ma:mani Koyil is *rushi prathishtitha* since He was consecrated by *rushi* Para:sara

58. Name an *a:cha:rya prathishtitha* or a deity form of the Lord consecrated by an *a:cha:rya*.

Lord Thiruna:raya:maswamy in Me:lkote is *a:cha:rya prathishtitha* since He was consecrated by *a:cha:rya* Ra:ma:nuja

59. Are there any differences among *vibhava avatharas*?

Yes. There are 6 types of *vibhava avatharas*

1. *Paripu:rna*. E.g. Krushna
2. *Pu:rna* E.g. Ra:ma
3. *A:ve:sa*—e.g. Parasura:ma; Ve:davya:sa
4. *Kala:*—e.g. Hamsa
5. *Amsa*—e.g. King Prutthu
6. *Amsamasa*—e.g. Sage Marichi and Rushabha De:va

60. Does anyone other than Lord Vishnu take *avatharas*?

No. According to authentic scriptures, only Lord Vishnu takes *avatharas*, none else.

61. If the Lord is all-pervasive and all-powerful, why does He need to take an *avathara* at all?

The main purpose of the Lord's *avathara* is to fulfill the desires of the devotees. They never want anything materialistic from Him. All they seek is to serve Him physically, like Sabari and Gaje:ndra did. The Lord cannot fulfill that desire of His devotees in His universal form, so He takes *avatharas*. He appears for them so that they could serve Him. Having come for them, He also eliminates evil. Good practices, *dharma*, will be established by them. *sa:dhu parithra:nam* is the main purpose of His *avatharas* (BG 4.8).

62. What is *parathwam*?

Indisputable Supremacy beyond imagination

63. What is *saulabhyam*?

Accessibility or approachability to even the lowest of the low

64. What is *sausilyam*?

The affability with which the superior associates with an inferior without any reservation.

65. What is *sarwa se:shithwam*?

It is the supreme lordship over all

66. What are some of the qualities of the Lord that encourage us to approach Him?

There are 4 qualities called *asrayana saukarya a:pa:daka gunas* that encourage us to approach Him easily.

67. What are *a:srayana saukarya a:pa:daka gunas*?

- i. *swa:mithwam* = ownership of us all
- ii. *saulabhyam* = accessibility
- iii. *va:thsalyam* = lovingly purifying souls from all sins
- iv. *sausilyam* = the affability with which the superior associates with an inferior without any reservation.

68. What are the qualities of the Lord that give us confidence that He will protect us?

There are 4 qualities called *a:sritha ka:rya a:pa:daka gunas* that give us confidence that He protects us.

69. What are His *a:sritha ka:rya a:pa:daka gunas*?

- i. *sarwajnathwam* = knowledge of all
 - ii. *sarwa sakthithwam* = capability of eliminating any kind of hurdle
 - iii. *pra:pthi* = unbreakable relationship with us
 - iv. *pu:rthi* = complete omnipotence
- He has all the knowledge necessary to diagnose and cure our distress and unquestionable supremacy to protect us. He has an unbreakable relationship with us and is completely omnipotent to aid us in every way. These make us confident that He will rescue us.

70. What does the name of the Lord, 'Sri:manna:ra:yana,' mean?

The name 'Sri:manna:ra:yana' is a compound of 3 words = Sri:man + Na:ra + Ayana

Sri:man = With causeless mercy and love (inspired by Sri:)

Na:ra = all, insentient and sentient entities

Ayanam = i. He supports from inside. As a result, He is our closest relative who always cares for us.

ii. He supports from outside. As a result, He is indisputably Supreme.

iii. He is the infallible means; all other means like *dhya:na* or meditation, yoga, etc. come to fruition only due to His Grace; on the other hand, if we take Him as our means, we don't have to depend on any other means

iv. He is the ultimate goal; all other goals are finite and perishable

71. Does the Lord have any desires?

No, the Lord is called *ava:ptha samastha ka:ma*. That means, He has no desires to be fulfilled. When one has *ka:ma* or a desire and fulfills it, one is called *a:pthaka:ma*.

72. If the Lord is *ava:pthaka:ma*, what is the purpose of *kainkaryam*?

kainkaryam is to express our own *swaru:pam* or our innate nature of gratefully and lovingly serving the Lord. The Lord mercifully accepts the service so that we could retain our *swaru:pam*.

73. What is *nirhe:thuka krupa*?

nirhe:thuka krupa is causeless mercy—the mercy does not depend on any external circumstances. For instance, if one is merciful because one sees someone's poverty, then poverty is the cause of one's mercy. When one is inherently merciful, then one's mercy does not depend on any cause like poverty, prayer etc. and is *nirhe:thuka krupa*.

74. Who has *nirhe:thuka krupa*?

parama:thma alone has *nirhe:thuka krupa* because His compassion is inherent and does not depend upon anything external.

75. Is not our suffering *he:thu* or the reason for the *krupa* of the Lord?

No. The Lord always has *krupa* since it is His inherent quality. We sometimes notice its manifestation when He comes to the aid of the suffering individuals. The suffering does not cause His *krupa* to come as though it wasn't there before. It merely shows the *krupa* in a way we understand. Nothing but His own will is the reason for His *krupa*.

76. When the Lord's *nirhe:thuka krupa* does not depend on anything, what is the role of our good deeds or prayers?

It is His *nirhe:thuka krupa* that makes us do good deeds and offer prayers. Since we have inherent knowledge, we cannot help but act as a result of it. If we do not consciously choose to do good deeds, we will be impelled to commit wrong deeds by the force of *prakruthi*. Thus, the role of our good deeds and prayers is to prevent us from doing anything wrong. So, we need to do them.

77. If the Lord is benevolent and powerful as Sri: Ra:ma:nuja:cha:rya Swamy says, why is there so much suffering and injustice in this world?

Despite the Lord being benevolent and powerful, there is much suffering in this world because

- i. He does not want to impose His help on us unless we seek it.
- ii. We do not seek His aid because of our own ego.

78. If Lord Sri:manna:ra:ya:na is supremely independent, how can we say that He is under the will of His devotees?

Because He is supremely independent, He can choose whom to listen to if He wishes. No one can make Him do anything unless He chooses to do that. He wants to honor the will of His devotees, so He subordinates Himself to them. Moreover, the will of His devotees never clashes with the will of the Lord.

79. When the Lord is responsible for *srushti* and *pralaya* that are painful to *ji:vas*, how can one still say that the Lord is compassionate?

srushti and *pralaya* are indeed gestures of compassion. *Jivas* are not self-reliant and can't reduce their *karma* on their own. In their attempts to reduce their karmic load, they keep accumulating more *karma*. The Lord steps in and helps them by separating them from their current bodies and giving them new bodies and a better chance in the future. This stopping them from further karmic entanglements and separating them from their bodies is called death. Providing a better chance in the future is called birth. Thus, they are not cruel but are actually compassionate gestures on His part.

80. Are there multiple Gods or Demi-Gods?

No, there is only one God. Fundamentally God is *jagath ka:ranam* or the origin of the universe. He brings forth, sustains, and withdraws the entire universe. Since no one can see Him do these, the *Ve:das* have to step in to reveal this about Him and give His name, **Sriyahpathi**, to us. Hence, according to the *Ve:das*, God is only One, though He has many names based on His qualities and deeds. There is none equal to or higher than Him. The Lord too declares this in the *Gi:tha*, 7.7.

The Lord engages many *ji:vas*, called *de:vathas* or angels, in different roles in multiple activities in this cosmos. According to the *Ve:das*, there are 33 divisions of these innumerable *de:vathas*. These *de:vathas* discharge their duties perfectly and deserve our respect.

Because of the exalted positions of these *de:vathas* and the benefits that come from them as bestowed by the Lord, many people mistake them for Gods or Demi-Gods. Attributing supremacy to these *de:vathas* out of misplaced reverence, these people treat them as though they are equal to the Lord Himself.

On the other hand, some people believe in one God but refer to *de:vathas* contemptuously as demi-gods, thus belittling them. They might not realize that by doing so they are being disrespectful to the Lord Who placed these *de:vathas* in their respective positions based on their *karma*.

In short, there is only one God, **Sri:manna:raya:na**. He should be worshipped; the *de:vathas* should be respected.