



## Rameshwaram, The Anchor of Indian Renaissance - 8

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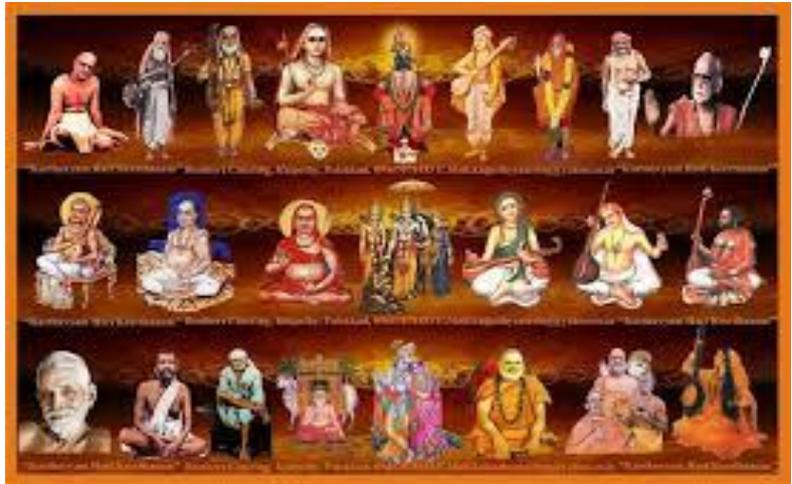
### Visits to Rameshwaram by Namdeo, Chaitanya and Nanak

Pilgrimage was almost mandatory in the sadhana of almost all sages. We have examples of some sages who went barefoot all over the land more than once in their lives. Pilgrimage was a way of learning life and culture of this vast land having unity in diversity, of meeting other like-minded people, sharing and at times debating with them on Vedanta. Quoting Swami Vivekananda, (Sages of India, vol 3 CW: Colombo to Almora)

‘This is a peculiarity which we have to understand — that our religion preached an Impersonal Personal God. It preaches any amount of impersonal laws *plus* any amount of personality, but the very fountain-head of our religion is in the Shrutis, the Vedas, which are perfectly impersonal; the persons all come in the Smritis and Puranas — the great Avatars, Incarnations of God, Prophets, and so forth. And this ought also to be observed that except our religion every other religion in the world depends upon the life or lives of some personal founder or founders.’ ‘Religious knowledge became complete when Tat Twam Asi (Thou art That) was discovered, and that was in the Vedas. What remained was the guidance of people from time to time according to different times and places, according to different circumstances and environments; people had to be guided along the old path, and for this these great teachers came, these great sages.....’

We can get some further clues from life of Madhwa parampara:

‘After leaving Thiruvananthapuram, Swamiji went to Kanyakumari, Rameswaram, Dhanushkoti, Madurai, SriRangam, Thiruchirapalli, Kanchi etc and went to Sri Pampa kshethra, where he did his Chaturmasya.



After returning to Shringeri, Swamiji again started Dharma prachara and when he was again in Rameswaram, Ananda Tirtha came to him for debate. Though Sri Swamiji again said that he does not find much use in the debate, at the other’s insistence, there was a debate in the temple of Sri Ramanatheshwara for several days. ...

Two Marathi saints Jnaneshwara and Namdeo were contemporaries of Madhva. The interaction of Namdeo with Madhvas needs to be studied, especially as he resided in Pandharapur after 1320 AD and would have been well acquainted with the Madhva Parampara. A study of Namdeo’s literature with a view to compare it with Tatvavada may be rewarding, as his influence has been noticed even in North India – including Punjab, where Sikhs consider him as one of their Gurus and some of his compositions have been included in

their holy Guru Grantha Sahib.’ (Historical Antecedents Regarding the Periods of the first five great Madhva saints Sri Padmanabha, Narahari, Madhava, Akshobhya and Jaya Tirthas Parts IV and V)



Sri Chaitanya visited the ‘Darbhasayana’. It is the place of Saranagati. Vibhisana surrendered to Lord Ramchandra at this place. It was here that Vibhisana gave Rama the idea that He should approach the ocean god Samudradeva and ask him the means to cross the ocean. Lord Rama sat on ‘darbha’ or kusha grass and meditated for three days but Samudradeva did not come. This enraged Him and He angrily glanced on the ocean. By the mere glance of the Lord, the ocean became agitated. Samudradeva came out with folded hands and surrendered to Lord Rama at Dhanush Tirtha or Dhanushkodi: Then Sri Chaitanya came to Dhanush Tirtha which is a very holy place. It is 12km walk from the Rameswaram temple. (Sri Chaitanya in Rameswaram: Holy Dham)



According to Sri Guru Nanak Sat Sangh Sabha and Educational Society, which maintains the Gurudwara at Rameshwaram, Sri Guru Nanak visited Rameswaram in 1511 and stayed for 19 days on his return journey from Sri Lanka, where he preached to break the barriers of passion and prejudice. He made significant contribution in solving the problems of Shivrabh, King of Sri Lanka, and 18 others.

During his stay in Rameswaram, Guru Nanak found the water in the island saline. But the spring that Guru Nanak created by digging the soil produced sweet water.

Devotees still have preserved the small ‘Mandapam,’ where Sri Guru Nanak stayed as well as well with sweet water.

