

Statue of Equality

February 5, 2022

In news- Recently, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a 216-foot tall “statue of equality” in **Hyderabad**, which commemorates the 1,000th birth anniversary of 11th-century bhakti saint Sri Ramanujacharya.

About the statue of equality-

- The statue is **made of ‘panchaloha’**, a combination of five metals: gold, silver, copper, brass, and zinc
- It is the second tallest metallic statue in sitting position in the world.
- The structure was erected in 2017, but it took four years for the completion of works on the other constructions.
- The statue has been positioned on a huge lotus built over a three-storied 54-ft structure called **Bhadravedi**.
- Outside the Bhadravedi, the statue will be surrounded by 108 Divya Desa Kshetras (Vaishnavite temples located across the country) built in stone in a 34-acre land around the statue.
- It has floors devoted for a vedic digital library and research center, ancient Indian texts, a theater, an educational gallery detailing many works of Sri Ramanujacharya.
- The statue was conceptualized by Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swami of Sri Ramanujacharya Ashram.

A brief note on Sri Ramanujacharya-

- He was an Indian philosopher, Hindu theologian, social reformer, and one of the most important **exponents of the Sri Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism**.
- The saint was **born in 1017 CE at Sriperumbudur village in Tamil Nadu**.
- Sri Ramanuja was **named Lakshmana at the time of his**

birth.

- He was also **referred to as Ilaya Perumal** which means the radiant one.
- His philosophical foundations for devotionalism were **influential to the Bhakti movement.**
- He worked tirelessly for the upliftment of people with the spirit of every human being equal regardless of nationality, gender, race, caste or creed.
- His philosophy, **Vishishtadvaita (qualified non-dualism) philosophy** has **competed with the Dvaita** (theistic dualism) philosophy of Madhvāchārya, and **Advaita** (non-dualism) philosophy of Ādi Shankara, together the three most influential Vedantic philosophies of the 2nd millennium.
- **Ramanuja presented the epistemic importance of bhakti, or the devotion to a personal God** (Vishnu in Ramanuja's case) as a means to spiritual liberation.
- **His theories assert that there exists a plurality and distinction between Ātman (soul) and Brahman** (metaphysical, ultimate reality), while he also affirmed that there is unity of all souls and that the individual soul has the potential to realize identity with the Brahman.
- Like many Hindu thinkers, he made an extended pilgrimage, circumambulating India from Rameswaram (part of Adam's Bridge), along the west coast to Badrinath, the source of the holy river Ganges, and returning along the east coast.
- Tradition has it that later he suffered from the zeal of King Kulottunga of the Chola dynasty, who adhered to the god Shiva, and withdrew to Mysore, in the west.
- There he converted numbers of Jains, as well as King Bitti Deva of the Hoysala dynasty which led to the founding in 1099 of the town Milukote (Melcote, present Karnataka state).
- After a life of 120 years, according to the tradition, he passed away in 1137.

His works-

He wrote following 9 scriptures, the Navrathnas:

- **Vedantha-Sangraha** – A treatise presenting the tenets of Visishtadvaita, a reconciliation of different conflicting srutis.
- **Sri Bhashya** –
 - A detailed commentary on the Vedanta Sutras. Sri Bhashyam is Sri Ramanuja's magnum opus, which is the greatest commentary on Bramha Sutras.
 - This monumental contribution was part of the 3 wishes Sri Ramanujacharya fulfilled for His revered master and Guru Sri Yamunacharya, who breathed his last even before meeting Sri Ramanuja in person.
- **Gita-Bhasya** – A detailed commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita.
- **Vedanta-Dipa** – A brief commentary on the Vedanta Sutras.
- **Vedanta-Sara** – Another brief commentary on the Vedanta Sutras meant for beginners.
- **Saranagati-Gadya** – A prayer of complete surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Srimannarayana.
- **Sriranga-Gadya** – Manuals of self surrender to Lord Vishnu.
- **Sri Vaikuntha-Gadya** – Describes Sri Vaikuntha-loka and the position of the liberated souls.
- **Nitya-Grantha** – A short manual intended to guide the devotees about day to day worship and activities.