

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA-VEDĀNTA

The VOICE of ŚĀṆKARA

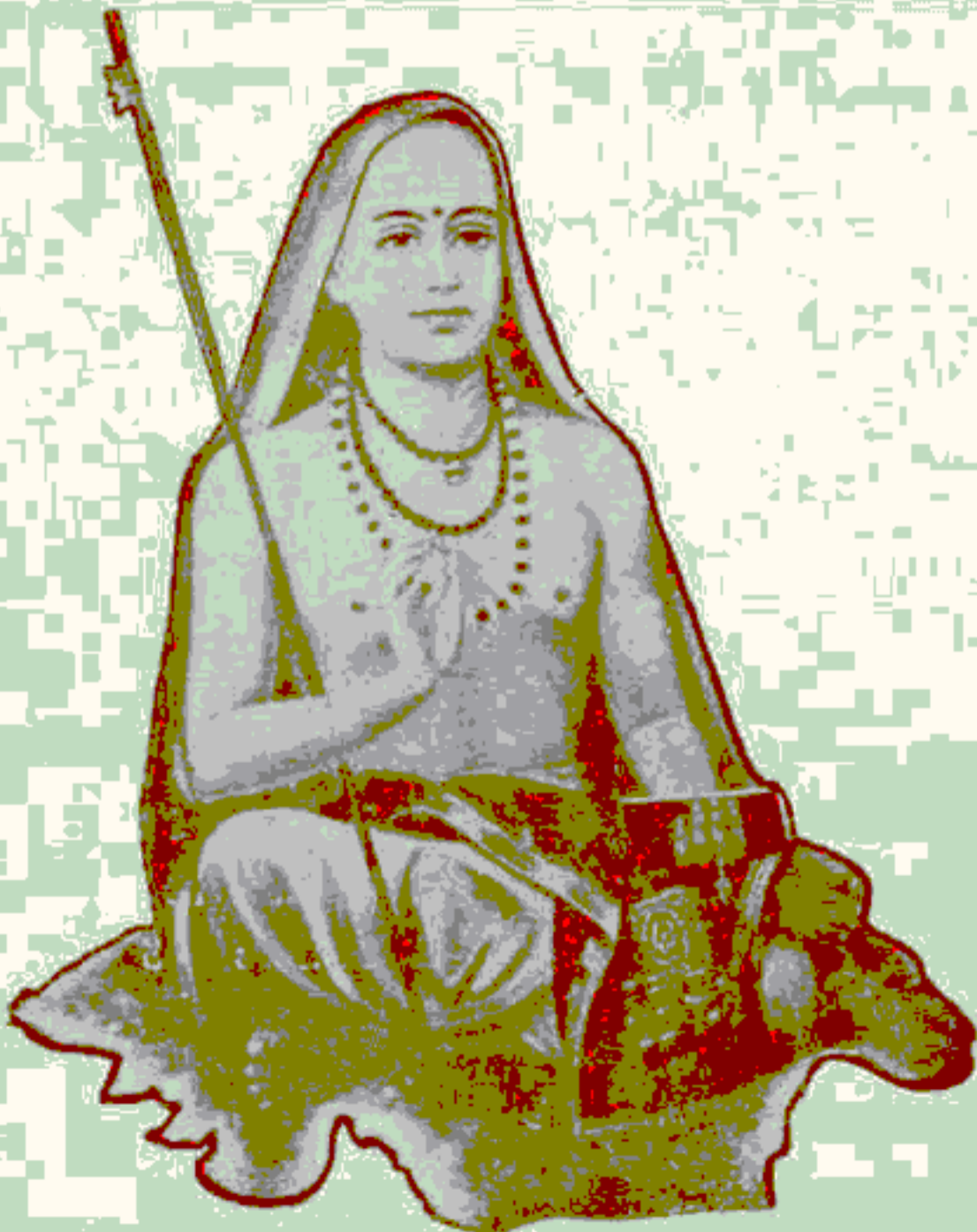
śaṅkara-bhāratī

Editor

T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Volume FOUR

Number THREE



NOVEMBER

1979

esā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijayate
nirvāṇa-saṁdāyini

victorious is the voice of śaṅkara,
leading, as it does, to liberation.

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Homage to Sankara

[55]

॥ वन्दे शङ्करपदपङ्कजम् ॥

शङ्कराभरण रागे गीयते

आदिताळः

पल्लवी

वन्दे शङ्करपदपङ्कजं
वाञ्छितफलदायकम् ॥

॥ वन्दे ॥

“*Vande Śaṅkara padapaṅkajam*”

Sung in the Rāga “Śaṅkarābharaṇa” set to Ādi tāla

Pallavi

Vande Śaṅkara pada paṅkajam
Vāñcitaphaladāyakam.

(*Vande*)

अनुपल्लवी

मायामोहितभ्रामितमानव-
जन्मनिमज्जनखेदविघातम् ॥

॥ वन्दे ॥

Anupallavi

*Māyāmohita-bhrāmita-mānava
janma-nimajjana-kheda-vighātam.*

(vande)

चरणम्

(i)

शङ्करं शिवशङ्करं अज्ञान-
ध्वान्त-दिवाकरं शिवगुरुतनयम् ।
आर्यालालित-शैशवभावं
पूर्णानद्यायास्तीर-विहारम् ॥

॥ वन्दे ॥

Caranam

(i)

*Śaṅkaram śivaśaṅkaram ajñāna
dhvānta-divākaram śivagurutanayam
Āryā-lālita-śaiśavabhāvam
pūrṇā-nadyāyāstīra-vihāram.*

(vande)

दन्याशि रणे गीयते

(ii)

विवाद-खण्डित-मण्डनं
तरुमै कल्पित-मुण्डनं ।

मिथ्याचार-वितारकं

सोऽहं-हंसोपदेशकम् ॥

॥ वन्दे ॥

(ii)

Danyaśi Rāga

*Vivāda-khaṇḍita-maṇḍanam
tasmai kalpita-muṇḍanam
mithyācāra-vitārakam
So' haṁ-haṁsopadeśakam.*

(vande)

(iii)

कानडा रागे गीयते

हरति किल्बिषं शङ्करनाम

दिशतु सत्पदं शङ्करसेवा ।

तरतु पुनर्भवान्शङ्करनौका

लसतु मम हृदि शङ्करदीपः ॥

॥ वन्दे ॥

(iii)

Kānaḍā Rāga :

*Harati kilbiṣam Śaṅkaranāma
diśatu satpadam Śaṅkara-sevā
taratu punarbhavān-Śaṅkara-naukā
lasatu mama hr̥di Śaṅkara-dīpaḥ*

(vande)

Pallavi

I offer my obeisance to the lotus-feet of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pāda, which are proficient in bestowing the desired rewards.

Anupallavī

Obeisance to the lotus-feet of Śrī Śaṅkara which destroys the sorrows of those immersed in the ocean of *saṃsāra*, being born as human beings and shrouded in the delusion by *māyā*.

Caraṇam

(i)

Obeisance to the lotus-feet of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pāda who, as incarnation of Śiva, shone like the sun in dispelling the darkness of nescience - who took his *avatāra* as the son of Śivaguru and was fondled in his infancy by his mother Āryāmbā and who played about on the banks of the sacred river Pūrṇā.

(ii)

Obeisance to the lotus-feet of Śrī Bhagavat-pāda who triumphed over Maṇḍana Misra in the arguments (on Advaita philosophy) and made him attire the robes of a Sannyasin (and took him as his disciple), who is the Saviour (of people) from the false doctrines and practices and who is the great Instructor (expounder) of the Upaniṣad-*mantra*- "So⁹ *ham-Hamsaḥ*".

(iii)

The utterance of the Name of Śrī Śaṅkara itself removes the impurities (of our mind). Let our devotion to Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pāda direct us in the auspicious path to *mokṣa*. Let the boat (viz.) Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pāda enable us to cross the ocean of re-births. Let the Illustrious lamp (viz.) Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pāda illumine for ever my heart.



Self Control

Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati

When at nightfall it gets dark, there arises a sort of luminosity. Hence, luminosity is occasioned by darkness alone. For luminosity to arise, darkness is the cause. Now, in the sky there are luminaries ; but they are not seen. Therefore, the light we see now (it should be said) has the attribute of darkness. When the night comes and it gets dark, the stars and other luminaries appear. Similarly, the *Vedānta* tells us when the nature of Śiva is manifest, the world becomes unmanifest; and when the world is manifest the nature of Śiva becomes unmanifest. Śrī Kṛṣṇa expresses this truth in a verse of the Gītā.

*yā niśā sarva bhūtānām
tasyām jāgati Samyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni
sā niśā paśyato muneh.*

(Gītā-II-69)

Niśā means 'night' ; *Jāgati* means 'being awake' ; *Bhūtāni* are 'living beings' and not ghosts and disem-

bodied spirits. The purport of the passage is : 'What is darkness for all beings - in that the one who has self-control is awake. The term *sanyāsin* means 'One who has controlled himself (*yamī*) well (*san*)'. In the word *Yama* also, the part *yam* means 'he who controls.' Yama is the one who keeps everyone under control. Thus *Samyamī* means 'One who keeps himself under complete control.' He is the one who exercises complete control over desire and anger. Controlling anger is very difficult. It is easy to say 'anger should be controlled.' But when the occasion arises it is realised how difficult the task is. There is a story illustrating the difficulty in controlling anger. A certain man possessed all the virtues with one exception; he had an extremely irritable temper. One day two of his friends were discussing about him, sitting on the *pīal* of his house, not knowing that he was in. One of the friends observed, 'He is endowed with great virtues; but he has not renounced anger. The person who was inside the house heard this, and immediately came out and shouted, 'Who said so? Which person said so?' The other friend who was sitting on the *pīal* said, 'There is no need for the evidence of any one else; even from the manner in which you are shouting now it is evident that what our friend said is true.' There is an episode about anger in the story of Naḷa. After relating this, I shall return to the present topic about '*samyamī*'. The story of Naḷa is known to all. In former times the mother in every household used to get up at 4 A.M., and while doing so, her chores sing to ballads about ancient legends relating to virtuous people. Children would listen to those ballads and get to know the Purāṇic stories. When they become adults

they would learn the purāṇas from expositions by scholars. These are the old traditions. They are now disappearing. Yet, through the theatre, people acquire some knowledge of the purāṇas. The bad thing about the theatre, however, is that those who go there get to know about the character etc., of the *dramatis personae*. If one hears the exposition of the purāṇas by great scholars, one would imbibe the virtues taught in those texts. In theatres, the theme of the story would be secondary, and the prominence would be given to cheap and captivating songs. There does not seem to be much use also in the exposition of the purāṇas by the Bhāgavatas. These scholars aim at pleasing the audience. In former times it was not so; *Kālakṣepams* produced salutary effect. But now Bhāgavatas also have begun to move with the times. It is very necessary to listen to the purāṇas as expounded by great scholars. Some people say the purāṇas are all myths, fabrications. But what if they are myths? Do not the purāṇas give peace, quietude? One goes to a shop for buying things; what does it matter how the shopkeeper is? We invite a *brāhmaṇa* for *Śrāddha*; what does it matter if he has no knowledge of geography or astronomy? What does it matter if the dates mentioned in the Purāṇas are correct or not correct? How are the dates important? What does it matter when the temple of Skanda (in Park Town, Madras) was built? If the Divine Presence there removes our sorrow and showers grace, will that not do? What the Purāṇas do is to make the mind one-pointed. Now we shall return to the story of Naḷa.

The name of Naḷa is mentioned as the first of those which should be remembered as soon as one

gets up from sleep. It has been said: '*punya-śloko naḷo rājā* (king Naḷa is of good repute). One would acquire merit even by uttering the name of Naḷa. Naḷa was such a great man.

All this I have said as a prelude to pointing out what is stated about 'anger' in the story of Naḷa. Of the enemies that oppose us 'desire' is the first. Sin is the wages of desire. A greater enemy than even this is 'anger'. For Damayantī's *svayamvara*, four gods including Indra came. Coming to know that Damayantī was in love with Naḷa, they sent Naḷa himself as their messenger to Damayantī. Naḷa advised Damayantī to marry the gods. Damayantī was not prepared to accept his advice. Thereupon the gods went to the *svayamvara* disguised as Naḷa. By the grace of Sarasvatī, Damayantī was able to know who the real Naḷa was and garlanded him. The gods praised Damayantī for her excellent virtues, blessed her and went back. After this, Kali and Dvāpara were on their way to the *svayamvara*. In the meanwhile the marriage had taken place. The gods informed Kali of this fact. Kali got angry, hid himself in a *vibhitika* tree (*terminalia felerica*), one of the three Myrobalans and caught hold of Naḷa for venial mistake.

So goes the story. A poet who made use of this story as his theme has given a description of the praise of Kali by his army commanders, and in this connection he characterises vividly the nature of desire, anger etc. The army-commanders of Kali are the six great vices—Desire, Anger, Greed, Delusion, Pride and Jealousy. These army-commanders expatriate on their respective prowess. Desire says that

he has the ability to send people to Hell. He can make them behave in a way which will excel even the beasts. The second commander is Anger. While expatriating on his prowess, he says that he has captured a *durga*, and that Desire's arrow (*āsuga*) cannot pierce it. '*Durga*' means 'fortress'; 'dur' means 'difficult', and 'ga' means 'to enter.' So, '*durga*' is a place which it is difficult to enter. i.e. fortress. '*Āsuga*' is arrow. '*Āsu*' means 'quickly'. You might have heard that in Bengal there was a person by name 'Asutosh Mukerji'. The correct form of the name is 'Āsutoṣa Mukerji'. 'Āsutoṣa' is a name of Paramasiva. It means 'the one who is pleased quickly.' Thus, '*āsuga*' is arrow (that which goes quickly). Anger says: 'I have captured a fortress which cannot be pierced by the Desire's arrow. That is Durvāsa's heart. Desire cannot go near Durvāsa's heart. But Anger has been given lodgement by him in his heart. *Sanyāsini* (the self controlled one) is he who does not give redress for both desire and anger. What is darkness to us is light to *Sanyāsini*, the one who has controlled desire and anger.

*Yasyām jāgarti bhūtāni
sā niśā paśyato muneh*

The state in which living beings are awake is that which is darkness to the wise ones. That is, what we regard as the world is not regarded as the world by the wise one. We can read a book remaining in shade. If we try to read in bright sun-light, the eyes will not stand the glare. Then, light will become darkness. Tirumūlar has stated this in a beautiful and easy manner. He was a great *yogeśvara*. Of the

twelve Śaiva-siddhānta sāstras, Tirumūlar's *Tirumantram* takes the first place, i.e. it was the first to appear. Tirumūlar did *tapas* for nine crores of years. Waking up once in a thousand years, he would compose one verse. This is what he says: A carpenter was commissioned to make an elephant for a temple. Another carpenter went to see the elephant. The elephant had not yet been painted. Along with this other carpenter, his child also went. Seeing the elephant, it was afraid. It said to its father, "The elephant will bite you; don't go near". But the carpenter went near and examined the kind of wood out of which the elephant was made.

Was that an elephant or wood? To one it appeared as an elephant, and to the other as wood. To one the wood was not manifest, the elephant was. "The great elephant hid in the wood; in the wood the elephant disappeared." There are no two things; there is only one. If the elephant and wood were different, there should be two things. But, it is one and the same thing that appears as wood to one person and as elephant to another person. Similarly, "The elements earth, (*pār*) etc., hide the supreme Reality, the elements, earth etc., disappear." *Pār* is earth. Heavy things are called *pār*. The elements *pār* etc., are the five elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth. Air is different; ether is different. The supreme consciousness-ether (*chitponaveḷi*) is Chidambaram.

Tirumūlar said: "The elements, earth etc., hide the supreme Reality. Where is the supreme Reality? Where should one search for it? What hides it? The supreme Self and the elements are not different.

They are one. If the entire world is realised as the supreme Self, world will disappear.

In the concluding portions of the Veda, the nature of the supreme Reality is taught. These are Upaniṣads. The Ācārya (Śaṅkara) came for the purpose of expounding them. He was the first commentator. Ten are the principal Upaniṣads. Of these ten, the first is *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*. In that it is stated that the world should be enveloped by God. It says that in the Supreme, the elements earth etc., should disappear. If the elephant disappears, the wood will appear. If the wood is seen, the elephant will not be seen. First there is duality (*Dvaita*); then the non-duality of Śiva i.e. God (*Śivādvaita*), all of the nature of Śiva (*Śivamaya*). To us the supreme self is in darkness, and the entire universe is in the light. If all this becomes dark, the self i.e. God, will become manifest. The Veda declares: *Īśānah sarva bhūtānām*". This is Advaita, Vedānta. It says that there are not two. What is the use of such teachings? Let the supreme Ether (i.e. the Self) take care of itself. What is it to us? We want food, wealth etc. Why unnecessary trouble? Rejecting trouble, we should gain peace. Why then, this speculation?

Let us assume that without trouble all become wealthy. (This, of course, is impossible). The world's treasury is like the *tīrtha* distributed in the *maṭha*. The world's wealth is limited. The living beings are too many. Everyone has excessive desire. Therefore, even when wealth is acquired, there will be no peace. Let us assume that this is possible. When independence comes (to our country) and all

sufferings have been removed, what to do afterwards? Since we now have difficulties, we imagine that if we get political power, the difficulties of all people will be removed.

If there is plenty of wealth, there will be the tendency to harm others, to gather sin, to fall in. Therefore whatever be the composition of the government, we need this medicine. And that, the Ācārya gives. To the wealthy person, he says: "Give in charity;" to the man of poverty he says: "Do not feel distressed." This is the medicine. This medicine is "Śivādvaita, Śivamaya." If this be forgotten, the world will be caught in dense darkness. It does not matter even if the light of the sun is lost. But this light should not be lost.



Saguna Worship

Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Sarasvati

According to our *Sanātana dharma* or ancient Hindu religion, God can be worshipped in two forms. In other religions, there is only one form of God, namely that He is the one omnipresent being. But in Hinduism, God is not only omnipresent and is the root cause of everything and is the creator, protector and destroyer of the universe, but He also takes forms and can be worshipped in the *Saguṇa* mode or the form with attributes. Thus, we have many forms of God such as Gaṇeśa, Kārtikeya, Pārvatī, Durga, Śiva, the ten avatāras or 21 avatāras of Viṣṇu like Rāma and Kṛṣṇa. God takes each form for some definite purpose. He thus came in the form of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa and has lived amidst human beings as a mortal. He also appears in the form of *mahāpuruṣas*. God incarnates himself to bless us and give His grace. No other religion has got such a concept. The other religions speak of only one omnipresent being. This is the special characteristic of the Hindu religion that

we can worship God either in the *Nirguṇa* form or in the *saguna* form, i.e. we can have *Uruvavazhipāḍu* as we say in Tamil.

While meditating or worshipping in the *Nirguṇa* form, there is not much scope for *arcana*, *abhiṣeka*, *kīrtana*, etc. But while worshipping in the *Saguna* form, there is a lot of scope for *abhiṣeka*, *arcana*, *bhajans*, *kīrtana* etc., and there is lot of scope for singing the glories of the *avatāras* or *līlāvibhūtis*. In other religions while they worship some small gods and goddesses for the sake of getting some benefits, they have not accepted the concept of *Saguna* form of worship.

So, in the Hindu religion, we have the concept of idol worship. We assume in our minds a particular form of God and then pray to God in that particular form. So we instal an idol in a temple, create divinity in it, then worship and thus get the blessings of that deity. It is difficult for the ordinary householders to worship the omnipresent form of God or the *Nirguṇa* form. Even if they start closing their eyes in order to meditate on the omnipresent being, their eyes, ears and mind start wandering somewhere else. Therefore, ordinary householders have to think of God only in the *Saguna* form or the form with attributes, or in the form of a special deity.

In fact, there are as many forms of *Īśvara* as there are human beings in this world. We worship that form of *Īśvara* which we like, suited to our individual capacity and the fruits that we aspire for.

As Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā devotees can be classified into four main categories :

आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

Ārto jigñāsuh arthārthī jñānī ca Bharatarṣabha

[VII - 16]

namely, people who are suffering from some ailment or otherwise, those who want money or those who want to get certain things done, those who desire to know and those who know the Lord. All of them worship God according to their different tastes and according to their needs.

What generally happens is that somebody advises them, let us say to worship Lakṣmī or Satyanārāyaṇa and immediately they start worshipping that deity. Then if somebody tells them that it is Vināyaka who would remove all obstacles, then they start switching over to Vināyaka. But all that is required is that every devotee should steadfastly concentrate on one particular form and through that itself he will attain the *Paramātman*. There is no need to shift from one form to another every now and then. All the forms are representations of the same *Paramātman* only.

For instance, we have the electric fan, the electric bulb, the radio, the mike, tape-recorder and so on. They have different forms and shapes and perform also different functions. But the motive power in all of them is the same, namely electric current. In the same way, *Paramātman* is one, but He takes different forms and different shapes just for our benefit.

I can illustrate this by another example also. Our country today is being ruled by a Prime Minister,

and there are various Ministers working under her, who are in charge of various departments which are manned by various officers. In the same way, right from Indra to Viṣṇu, Śiva and other deities there is just one single current of electrical power flowing through them, namely the *Paramātman*.

Again, we are all very familiar with the way in which maida and sugar, or wheat and sugar, are used to make different types of sweets. The sweets prepared have many names and shapes and with varying tastes also, but they are all basically sweets. The same thing is true of the *Saguna* form of God. Though the sweets bear different names and forms with varying tastes, ultimately the taste of sweetness only is left. In the same way, the various forms of worship and devotion to God enable us to have the taste of the *Paramātman*. We may be having *darśan* of a particular deity or worshipping a particular deity at any time, but all the time, we should think of the *Paramātman* only. Some forms of God may be big with peculiar vehicles and so on. But everything has got a history behind it and illustrates some divine truth. But they are all forms of the *Paramātman* only.

The question can be asked why there should be so many myriads of forms of God? Again, this can be illustrated by an example. All of us take food while we are hungry. After all, the stomach has to be filled, and so one may ask why the stomach should not be filled with rice only every day, and why there should be so many types of dishes. The reason is this. Not only do we just take food, but we have also to satisfy the taste of the tongue. We also like to eat

things which are pleasing to the eyes and having nice smell. It is said :

लोको भिन्नरुचिः *loko bhinnaruciḥ*

“The world consists of people with different tastes.” Simply because the stomach has to be filled, we cannot and we do not take just one dish only all the time. Similarly, although God is one and his grace is one, as we have different tastes, we worship different deities. The Lord receives us in that very form and blesses us through that very path followed by us. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Gītā:

“यो यो यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुं इच्छति ।
तस्य तस्याचलां श्रद्धां तामेव विदधाम्यहम् ॥”

*yo yo yām yām tanuṁ bhaktaḥ
śraddhayārcitum icchati
tasya tasyācalām śraddhām
tāmeva vidadhāmyaham*

If a devotee desires to worship God in a particular form then God gives him unwavering faith in that particular form itself.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa also says in the Gītā :

“ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते
तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ॥”

*ye yathā maṁ prapadyante
tāmstathaiva bhajāmyaham*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says "I welcome devotees by whatever path they come unto me, and I give them firm faith in that path itself."

There is also another reason for *Saguṇa* form of worship. The mind of the ordinary person is wandering all the time. The minds of the different people are also not of the same type. In some, *sattva guṇa* predominates, and in some *rajoguṇa* predominates and in some *tamoguṇa* predominates. So, the chosen form of worship depends on the mind of the person concerned. Thus, each one chooses a God or Goddess according to his mental capacity and state.

The *saguṇa* form of worship is also necessary from another point of view. For instance, suppose we want to know what is sweetness, we must first have an awareness of sweetness. For this purpose, we take a little sugar candy or a mango fruit or some halwa or some other sweet. We enjoy the sweet item by taking it and then only we can have some concept of sweetness. If we are asked merely to think of sweetness without taking anything, it would be difficult for us indeed! In the same way, it is difficult to concentrate and contemplete on *Nirguṇa* form directly without having a taste of the *Saguṇa* form first. Further, to enable the fickle-minded to concentrate at one spot, we have to resort to the *saguṇa* form of worship, because when there is *abhiṣeka*, *arcana*, *dīpa-hāraṭi*, *karpūra-hāraṭi*, etc., the mind is enabled to concentrate on the form of the deity.

We have many *saguṇa* forms of God in our religion. For instance, we have the form of God,

in the shape of Vināyaka. Vināyaka is worshipped because He removes obstacles. But this does not mean that He is capable only of that much and nothing more. Actually, He is also capable of giving *mokṣa*. He just demonstrates his powers like a specialist doctor, though He has all the powers.

There are many doctors who are specialists. They specialise in the treatment of particular diseases. But this does not mean that they have no general knowledge of medicine. They have that general knowledge and they have passed the general examination, but they have specialised in something and are now working as specialists. Similarly, Vināyaka also has all the powers, but just for creating faith in the people and for attracting them towards God, He is demonstrating His powers in a special way. *Īśvara* has got all the *śaktis* or powers, but just to attract the individual towards Himself He displays one particular aspect of that power. Similarly, Lakṣmī gives us money and She will give us all other blessings also. In fact, according to the *Vaiṣṇavas*, without the grace of Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu will not give His grace. Unless the Mother tells the Lord to have compassion on a devotee, the Lord will not give His blessings.

Though *Īśvara* displays one particular power in one special form, all the forms of *Īśvara* have got all the powers. Just to induce *bhakti* in the individuals, each form displays only one particular power.

Each of the 18 *Purāṇas* written by Vedavyāsa, such as the *Skandapurāṇa*, the *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, the *Śivapurāṇa*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Devī Bhāgavata* and so on,

speaks about particular deities. Each *Purāṇa* will extol one particular deity only as being supreme as compared to others. For instance, while *Skandapurāṇa* is devoted to Lord Subrahmaṇya *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is devoted to Viṣṇu and *Śivapurāṇa* is devoted to Śiva and so on. In each *Purāṇa*, one particular deity is given the supremacy over others. This is just to emphasise one particular aspect of *Īśvara*.

But *Īśvara* has got all the powers, in whatever form He may be. All forms are of the *Paramātman* only and all *śaktis* or powers inhere in every form.

Often, the question arises in people's minds as to whom to worship. Others may ask why we should have so many deities. Actually, this creates confusion also in the minds of many people and they start wondering, whom they should worship. The result is that they switch over their worship from one deity to another without steadily worshipping Him in one particular form. For instance, suppose somebody says that *Ambāl* has to be worshipped and Her worship is the best, he will start worshipping Her. After some time, if his problems still remain, and if somebody else tells him that it is *Vināyaka* who has to be worshipped because he is the remover of all obstacles, then the next day he will start worshipping Him. Finally, if a third man says that *Viṣṇu* is the best deity who would give him all that he needs, then he would switch over to worship *Viṣṇu*.

In this way, every month he would go on changing his *mantra* and *japa* and worship accordingly. This is absolutely wrong. It is no use changing our worship from one deity to another. This is bad. It means that in one particular form *Īśvara* has no

powers and therefore we should switch over to another form. We have to realise that even if we worship God in only one form but steadfastly, He is surely bound to give us His grace and blessings. There is no need to shift from one form to another. Each one should have one *Iṣṭadevatā*, and concentrate on Him or Her and worship steadfastly with full *bhakti*. Any form of God can be worshipped. Concentrating on one deity does not mean that the other deity should not be worshipped at all. All forms can be worshipped, but one of them should be concentrated upon in a steadfast manner. Among the *Vaiṣṇavas*, in order to remove this jumping and flickering tendency of the mind, they always insist on only one form namely *Viṣṇu* and no other. Hence there is no confusion as such in their minds as to which deity to worship. It is only among the *Smārtas* that sometimes we find this sort of confusion and therefore, the phenomenon of people switching over from one deity to another.

The reason for there being so many *Saguṇa* forms is that every individual will be attracted towards one particular form only ; secondly, each form has got a particular story behind it in our religion. For instance, the story of Vināyaka's birth is described in one *Purāṇa*. Similarly, there are other *Purāṇas* to describe the *avatāras* and *līlāvibhūtis* of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and so on. We have also the stories of the great *Ācāryas* who have appeared, from time to time, and their *Upadeśas*. These are all described in order to teach us some great morals and to provide us guidance to conduct our daily life. This is the *saguṇa* form of worship.

Each particular form of God has a special significance. In fact, even the very shape of each deity is significant and tells us many great truths and many great principles of daily conduct. For instance, the form of Vināyaka represents *Pranava*, the symbol of *Brahman*, and similarly His broken tusk, His pot-belly shape, etc., have all something to tell us. Similarly, the six faces of Lord Subrahmanya with his peacock *vāhana*, etc., also remind us of many great moral principles.

But Vināyaka, Subrahmanya and others are all *svarūpas* of *Paramātma* only. They have taken these forms for fulfilling certain boons given to certain devotees. Sometimes doubts do arise in our minds in regard to the physical form of a particular deity or his *vāhana* and so on. In fact, we sometimes suffer from ignorance when people ask us to explain these things. Sometimes, we just become indifferent and do not bother to find out the answer. But in the case of other religions, this kind of tendency is not there. Nobody glosses over the doubts, but there is a serious attempt to understand the whole truth behind the whole thing, so that nobody is allowed to laugh at these things, and a serious attempt is made to remove the doubts.

Vināyaka is also *Paramātmāsvarūpa*, and similarly Subrahmanya or any other form. It is to worship such *Saguṇa* forms that we have the institution of temples in our country. There are various temples devoted to various deities where all the rituals like *abhiṣeka*, *arcana*, *nāmāvali*, *naivedyam*, etc, are performed in a regulated manner. Devotees go and worship before such deities, offer prayers, pouring out

their whole tale of suffering and then return home with peace of mind.

Saguṇa upāsanā establishes an intimate connection between the devotee and the Lord. If we share our grievances with any one, the other man will listen to us only for some time but his patience will be exhausted after that. But if we place our grievances before God, He will listen to them quietly and after some time we do get peace of mind.

Thus, Saguṇa worship has got this capacity to give peace of mind. There is *caitanya* in the idol, and, therefore, we establish communion with God.

Bhavani-Bhujanga-Stotra*

Sri Sankara Bhagavat pada

[1]

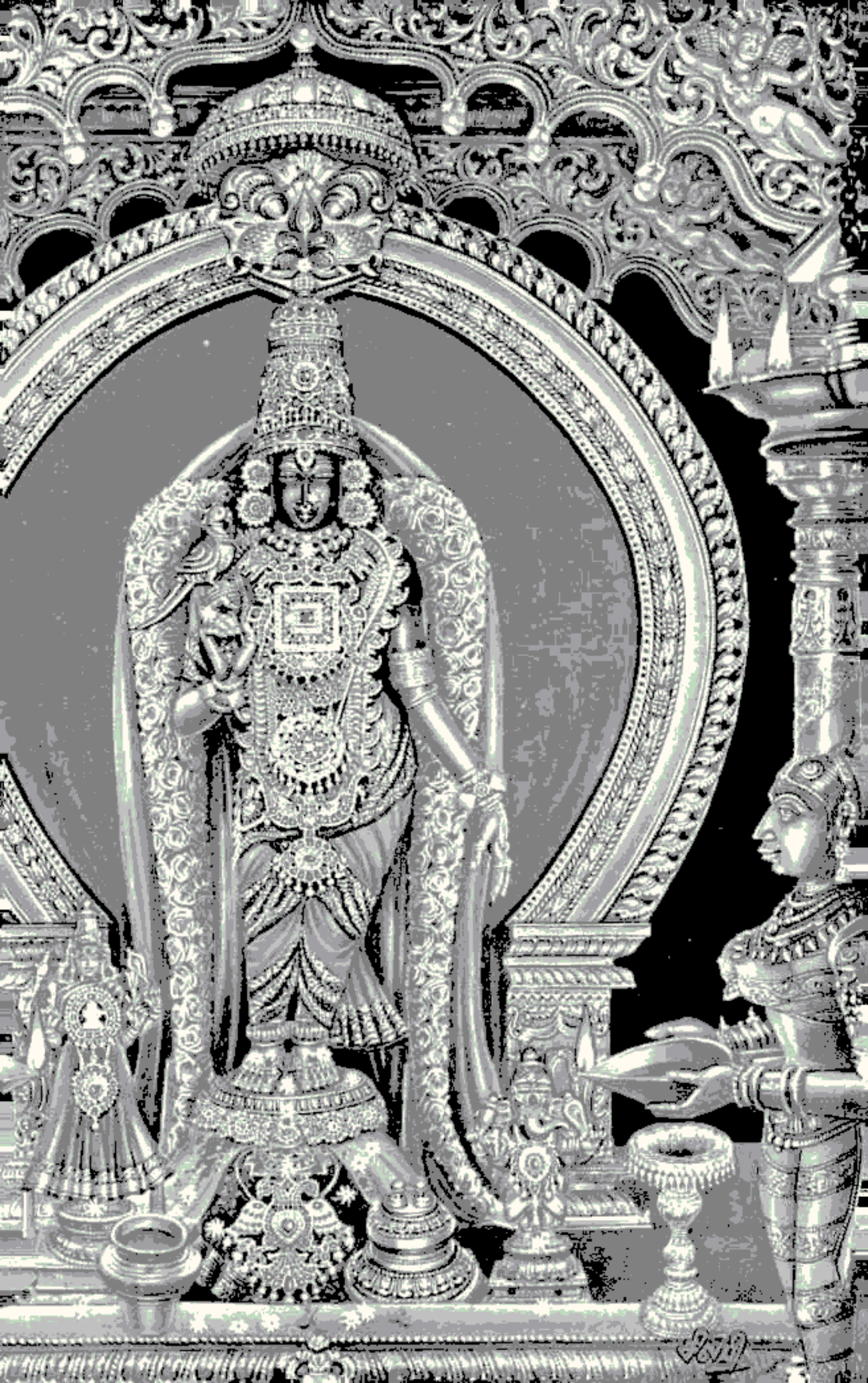
षडाधारपङ्केरुहान्तर्विराजत्-
सुषुम्नान्तरालेऽतितेजोलसन्तीम् ।
सुधामण्डलं द्रावयन्तीं पिबन्तीं
सुधामूर्तिमीडे चिदानन्दरूपाम् ॥ १ ॥

*ṣaḍādhāra-paṅkeruhāntar-virājat-
suṣumnāntarāle'ti-tejo-lasantīm
sudhāmaṇḍalam drāvayantīm pibantīm
sudhāmūrtimīḍe cidānandarūpām*

I bow to that embodiment of ambrosia which is Consciousness and Bliss incarnate. It melts the orb of the moon and drinks (the moon-light). It shines with its profuse lustre inside the *suṣumnā* located in the lotus of *ṣaḍādhāra*.

Suṣumnā : a vein of the body supposed to be one of the passages for the breath.

Ṣaḍādhāra : one of the mystical circles in the body.





[2]

ज्वलत्कोटिबालार्कभासारुणाङ्गी
 सुलावण्य-शृङ्गारशोभाभिरामाम् ।
 महापद्मकिञ्जल्कमध्ये विराजत्-
 त्रिकोणे निषण्णां भजे श्रीभवानीम् ॥ २ ॥

jvalatkoṭibālārka-bhāsāruṅgīm
sulāvanya-śṅgāra śobhābhirāmām
mahā padma kinjalkamadhya virājat
trikoṇe niṣaṅṅām bhaje śrī Bhavānīm.

I worship that Goddess Bhavānī who is seated on the triangle which shines in the midst of the filaments of the white lotus. She is extremely beautiful with lovely and charming grace. She has a shining red body similar to that of innumerable rising suns.

[3]

क्वणत्किङ्किणी-नूपुरोद्भासिरत्न-
 प्रभालीढलाक्षार्द्रपादाब्जयुग्मम् ।
 अजेशाच्युताद्यैः सुरैः सेव्यमानं
 महादेवि मन्मूर्ध्नि ते भावयामि ॥ ३ ॥

kvanatkiṅkiṅī nūpurod bhāsiratna-
prabhālīḍha lākṣārdra pādābjayugmam
ajeśācyutādyaiḥ suraiḥ sevyamānam
mahādevi manmūrdhni te bhāvayāmi

Oh ! Great Goddess ! I contemplate your lotus feet on my head as being served by the celestials such as Brahmā, Acyuta (Viṣṇu) and others. These feet

are wet due to red dye and dazzling with the gems of the anklets jingling with bells.

[4]

सुशोणाम्बरावद्धनीवी-विराज-
 न्महारत्नकाञ्चीकलापं नितम्बम् ।
 स्फुरदक्षिणावर्तनाभीं च तिस्रो
 वलीरम्ब ते रोमराजिं भजेऽहम् ॥ ४ ॥

*suṣoṇāambarābaddha-nīvī-virājan-
 mahāratna-kāñcīkalāpam nitambam
 sphuraddakṣiṇāvarta-nābhim ca tisro
 valīramba te romarājim bhaje'ham.*

Oh ! Mother ! I worship your streak of hair on the three folds on the belly, as also the shining naval circling to the right. (I also worship your) hip having the red garment tied around the waist, adorned by the girdle studded with gems and tinkling bells.

[5]

लसद्वृत्तमुत्तुङ्गमाणिक्यकुम्भो-
 पमश्रि स्तनद्वन्द्वमम्बाम्बुजाक्षि ।
 भजे दुग्धपूर्णाभिरामं तवेदं
 महाहारदीप्तं सदा प्रस्नुतास्यम् ॥ ५ ॥

*lasadvṛtta-muttuṅga-māṇikyā-kumbho-
 pamaśri stanadvanda-mambāmbujākṣi
 bhaje dugdha-pūrṇābhirāmam tavedam
 mahā-hāra-dīptam sadā prasnutāsyam.*

Oh! Lotus-eyed Mother! I worship your two radiant breasts, round in shape, comparable to lofty gem-studded pitchers. They are beautiful and are full with milk. Shining with a breast-lace and oozing at the top, they are beautiful and are full of milk.

[6]

शिरीषप्रसूनोल्लसद्बाहुदण्डैर्-
ज्वलद्बाणकोदण्डपाशाङ्कुशैश्च ।
चलत्कङ्कणोदारकेयूरभूषो-
ज्वलद्भिरलसन्ती भजे श्रीभवानीम् ॥ ६ ॥

*sirīṣa-prasūnollasad-bāhu-daṇḍair-
jvaladbāṇa-kodaṇḍa-paśāṅkuśaiśca
calat-kaṅkanodāra-keyūra-bhūṣo-
jjvaladbhirlasantīm bhaje śrī-Bhavānīm*

I worship Goddess Bhavānī who glitters with (four) arms delicate like the *śirīṣa* flowers, and which carry arrow, bow, noose and goad and which shine with bangles and bracelets.

[7]

शरत्पूर्णचन्द्र-प्रभापूर्ण-बिम्बा-
धरस्मेरवक्त्रारविन्दां सुशान्ताम् ।
सुरत्नावलीहार-ताटङ्कशोभां
महासुप्रसन्नां भजे श्रीभवानीम् ॥ ७ ॥

*śarat-pūrṇacandra-prabhā-pūrṇabimbā-
dharasmera-vaktrāravindām suśāntām
suratnāvalīhāra-taṭaṅka-śobhām
mahāsuprasannām bhaje śrī Bhavānīm.*

I worship Goddess Bhavānī who is extremely graceful and tranquil, who has Her lotus-face shining like the autumnal full-moon smiling with red *bimbha*-like lips. She is lustrous with ear-ornaments studded with gems.

[8]

सुनासापुटं सुन्दरभ्रूललाटं
तवौष्ठश्रियं, दानदक्षं कटाक्षम् ।
ललाटे लसद्गण्डकस्तूरिभूषं
स्फुरच्छीमुखाम्भोजमीडेऽहमम्ब ॥ ८ ॥

sunāsāpuṭam sundara-bhrū-lalāṭam
tavauṣṭaśriyam dānadakṣam kaṭākṣam
lalāṭe lasadgaṇḍa kastūri-bhūṣam
sphuracchrī-mukhāmbhojamīḍe'ha-mamba

Oh! Mother! I praise your lotus-face which bears musk on the cheeks and fore-head, and the nostrils, the beautiful eye-brows and fore-head, the lips and the graceful side-glances capable of conferring rewards.

[9]

चलत्कुन्तलान्त-भ्रमद्भृङ्गवृन्दं
घनस्निग्धधम्मिल्लभूषोज्ज्वलं ते ।
स्फुरन्मौलिमाणिक्य-बद्धेन्दुरेखा-
विलासोल्लसद्दीप्यमूर्धानमीडे ॥ ९ ॥

calatkuntalāntar-bhramād-bhṛṅga-vṛndam
ghana-sniigdha-dhammilla-bhūṣojjvalam te

*sphuran-mauli-māṇikya-baddhendu-rekhā-
vilāsollasaddīpya-mūrdhānamīḍe.*

I praise your head which is radiant with the crest-jewel and the digit of the moon. It has the swarms of bees swinging inside the moving braids and is shining with the densely set white jasmine flowers.

[10]

इति श्रीभवानि ! स्वरूपं तवेदं
प्रपञ्चात् परं चातिसूक्ष्मं प्रसन्नम् ।
स्फुरत्वम्ब डिम्भस्य मे हृत्सरोजे
सदा वाङ्मयं सर्वतेजोमयं च ॥ १० ॥

*iti śrī Bhavāni ! svarūpam tavedam
prapañcāt param cātisūkṣmam prasannam
sphuratvamba ḍimbhasya me hṛtsaroje
sadā vāṅmayam sarvatejomayam ca*

May this smiling form of yours, Oh! Bhavānī! which is beyond the Universe, very subtle and peaceful shine forth the lotus heart of mine, your child! May the literature in the form of all effulgence also dawn upon me!

[11]

गणेशाभिमुख्याखिलैः शक्तिवृन्दै-
र्वृतां वै स्फुरच्चक्रराजोल्लसन्तीम् ।
परां राजराजेश्वरि त्रैपुरि त्वां
शिवाङ्गोपरिस्थां शिवां भावयामि ॥ ११ ॥

*gaṇeśābhi-mukhyākhilaiḥ śaktibṛndair-
vṛtām vai sphuraccakra-rājollasantīm
parām rājarājeśvari traipuri tvām
śivāṅkoparisthām śivām bhāvayāmi*

I contemplate on you Oh ! Rājarājeśvarī ! Trai-
purī !, who are seated on the lap of Lord Śiva. You
are the highest, are shining in the radiant *cakra* and
are surrounded by all groups of *śaktis* led by Lord
Gaṇeśā.

[12]

त्वमर्कस्त्वमिन्दुस्त्वमग्निस्त्वमाप-
स्त्वमाकाशभू-वायवस्त्वं महत्त्वम् ।
त्वदन्यो न कश्चित् प्रपञ्चोऽस्ति सर्वं
त्वमानन्दसंवित्स्वरूपां भजेऽहम् ॥ १२ ॥

*tvamarkastvamindustvam-agnistvam-āpa-
stvam ākāśa-bhū-vāyavastvam mahattvam
tvadanyo na kaścit prapañco'sti sarvam
tvam ānanda-samvit-svarūpām bhaje'ham*

I worship you. You are of the form of blissful
knowledge. There is none else in the universe supe-
rior to you. You are the sun, the moon, the fire,
the water, the sky, the earth, the wind and the *mahat*.

Here the Goddess is conceived as *aṣṭamūrti*-eight
forms as the Lord of the principles.

[13]

श्रुतीनामगम्ये सुवेदागमज्ञे
महिम्नो न जानन्ति पारं तवास्त्र ।

स्तुतिं कर्तुमिच्छामि ते त्वं भवानि
क्षमस्वेदमत्र प्रमुग्धः किलाहम् ॥ १३ ॥

*śrutināmagamyē suvedāgamajñe
mahimno na jānanti pāram tavāmba
stutim kartumiccāmi te tvam Bhavāni
kṣamasvedam atra pramugdhaḥ kilāham*

Oh! Mother Bhavāni! I wish to praise you; Oh! Knower of the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*! You are unattainable through scriptures. (People) do not know the extent of your greatness. You please forgive this act of mine! I am indeed foolish.

[14]

गुरुस्त्वं शिवस्त्वं च शक्तिस्त्वमेव
त्वमेवासि माता पिता च त्वमेव ।
त्वमेवासि विद्या त्वमेवासि बन्धु-
र्गतिर्मे मतिर्देवि सर्वं त्वमेव ॥ १४ ॥

*gurustvam śivastvam ca śaktistvameva
tvamevāsi mātā pitā ca tvameva
tvamevāsi vidyā tvamevāsi bandhur-
gatirme matirdevi sarvam tvameva*

Oh! Goddess! You are my preceptor. You are Lord Śiva. You are the Śakti. You are my mother and father. You are the knowledge. You are my kith and kin. You are my only refuge, thinking and indeed all in all.

[15]

शरण्ये वरेण्ये सुकारुण्यमूर्ते
 हिरण्योदराद्यैरगण्ये सुपुण्ये ।
 भवारण्यभीतेश्च मां पाहि भद्रे
 नमस्ते नमस्ते नमस्ते भवानि ॥ १५ ॥

śaranye vareṇye sukāruṇyamūrte
hiranyodarādyairaganye supuṇye
bhavāraṇya bhīteśca mām pāhi bhadre
namaste, namaste, namaste, Bhavāni

Oh! Bhavāni! Salutations to you again and again. Oh! Auspicious one! Oh! my Refuge! Oh! Meritorious one! Oh! Compassion-incarnate! One who cannot be understood by Brahmā and others! Protect me from the fear of the forest of mundane existence.

[16]

इतीमां महच्छीभवानीभुजङ्ग-
 स्तुतिं यः पठेद्भक्तियुक्तश्च तस्मै ।
 स्वकीयं पदं शाश्वतं वेदसारं
 श्रियं चाष्टसिद्धिं भवानी ददाति ॥ १६ ॥

itīmām mahacchrībhavānī bhujāṅga-
stutim yaḥ paṭhedbhaktiyuktaśca tasmai
svakīyam padam śāśvatam vedasāram
śriyam caṣṭasiddhim Bhavānī dadāti.

Whoever reads this meritorius hymn on Bhavānī set in *bhujāṅga-prayāta* metre with devotion, Goddess Bhavānī confers on him the eight perfections (*siddhis*),

prosperity and Her own external abode which is the essence of the *Vedas*.

[17]

भवानी भवानी भवानी त्रिवार-

मुदारं मुदा सर्वदा ये जपन्ति ।

न शोको न मोहो न पापं न भीतिः

कदाचित् कथञ्चित् कुतश्चिज्जनानाम् ॥ १७ ॥

*Bhavānī, Bhavānī, Bhavānī, trivāram
udāram mudā sarvadā ye japanti
na śoko na moho na pāpam na bhītiḥ
kadācit kathañcit kutaścijjanānām.*

Whoever joyfully repeats the name "Bhavānī" thrice will have no grief, no confusion, no sin, no fear anytime or anyway or from any quarter.

Vedasarasivastotram*

Sankara Bhagavatpada

[1]

पशूनां पतिं पापनाशं परेशं
गजेन्द्रस्य कृत्तिं वसानं वरेण्यम् ।
जटाजूटमध्ये स्फुरद्गाङ्गवारिं
महादेवमेकं स्मरामि स्मरारिम् ॥ १ ॥

*Paśūnām patim pāpanāśam pareśam
Gajendrasya kṛttim vasānam vareṇyam
Jatājūṭamadhya sphuradgāṅgavārim
Mahādevam ekam smarāmi smarārim.*

I dwell in my mind on the Overlord of Gods, the lord of all souls, the destroyer of sins, the supreme Lord, the wearer of the elephant's hide, one who is sought after, one in whose thicket of matted hair the stream of Ganges shines and one who is the enemy of Cupid.

*Translation and comments by Prof. P. Thirugnanasambandhan

This devotional lyric is addressed to Śiva who is extolled in the Vedas and Upaniṣads and purāṇas too that draw their sustenance from the Vedas. The term 'Paśupati' occurs in the central part of the central Veda viz. Yajurveda in the Śatarudriyam. In this context Śiva can be considered as 'vedasāra' the essence of vedic lore. The souls are identified with 'paśu, the cattle which act as guided by the herdsman and rightly so as we are guided by the will of God in every one of our thoughts and actions. It is said that Śiva, after killing Gajāsura danced with his body covered with the skin stripped off from the body of the demon and that he retained it as a trophy. The celestial river Ganges brought down by Bhagīratha flowed down with such mighty force that Śiva made her rest on his matted hair lest that force might work havoc in the world below. Śiva whose yoga was sought to be disturbed by Cupid, the god of love, burnt him to ashes. Śaṅkara recalls these heroic exploits of the Lord celebrated in the purāṇas which were directed towards the annihilation of evil and amelioration of the good.

[2]

महेशं सुरेशं सुरारातिनाशं
 त्रिभुं विश्वनाथं विभूत्यङ्गभूषम् ।
 वरूपाक्षमिन्द्रवर्कवह्नित्रिनेत्रं
 सदानन्दमीडे प्रभुं पञ्चवक्त्रम् ॥ २ ॥

*Maheśam sureśam surārātīnāśam
 vibhum viśvanātham vibhūtyaṅgabhūṣam
 Virūpākṣam indvarka-vahni-trinetram
 Sadānandam īde prabhum pañcavaktram.*

I adore the great Lord, the lord of gods, the destroyer of the foes of gods, the all pervasive god of the Universe whose body is adorned with the holy ash, and who has an odd number of eyes viz. the three eyes represented by moon, sun and fire. (I adore) the Lord of five faces who is ever blissful.

He is called 'surārāti' since he killed the evil forces like the Tripura demons; the ash that he smears over his body represents the impermanence of the things in the world that are reduced to ashes at the time of samhāra and the sole surviving supreme Reality being Lord Śiva. His three eyes indicate that he is the source of all light. His five faces are Iśāna, Tatpuruṣa, Aghora, Vāmadeva and Sadyojāta. They represent according to Mṛgendrāgama the five cosmic actions of creation, sustenance, destruction, obscuration and bestowal of grace. The Ānandatāṇḍava of Naṭarāja also represents these five cosmic acts; the drum that produces 'nāda' standing for creation, the lifted palm for sustenance, the fire for destruction, the foot resting on the demon the obscuration and the lifted foot the grace. The terms 'sadānandam' and 'pañcavaktram' are therefore suggestive.

[3]

गिरीशं गणेशं गले नीलवर्णं
 गवेन्द्राधिरूढं गुणातीतरूपम् ।
 भवं भास्वरं भस्मना भूषिताङ्गं
 भवानीकलत्रं भजे पञ्चवक्त्रम् ॥ ३ ॥

Girīśam gaṇeśam gaḷe nīlavarṇam
Gavendrādhirūḍham guṇātītarūpam
Bhavam bhāsvaram bhasmanā bhūṣitāṅgam
Bhavānīkalatram bhaje pañcavaktram.

I worship the lord of mountains, the leader of the *pramathagaṇas* in Kailāsa, whose neck is dark in colour. He is mounted on a lordly bull and his form is beyond the pale of the three guṇas (sattva, rajas and tamas). (I worship) that source of all, the lustrous one whose limbs are decked with holy ash and who has 'Bhavānī' as his consort, and is possessed of five faces.

The allusion to the black colour on his throat is to that universally benevolent action of Śiva who put in his mouth the deadly poison that arose from the ocean when it was churned by the gods and demons. These latter ran after the ambrosia but ran away from the poison. This supreme act of grace of taking upon himself the suffering so that his creation may survive is referred to here. It is the same spirit of self abnegation that explains his choice of the bull for his vehicle when others chose the garuḍa, the hamsa, the mayūra and so on. He is called 'bhava' because he is the source of everything. c.f. 'yo devānām prabhavaśca udbhavaśca' Śvet. up. 3.4. The consort of 'Bhava' is 'Bhavānī.'

[4]

शिवाकान्त शंभो शशाङ्गार्धमौले
महेशान शूलिन् जटाजूटधारिन् ।
त्वमेको जगद्व्यापको विश्वरूपः
प्रसीद प्रसीद प्रभो पूर्णरूप ॥ ४ ॥

Sivākānta śambho śaśāṅkārdhamaule
Maheśāna śūlin jaṭājūṭadhārin
Tvam eko jagad-vyāpako viśvarūpaḥ
Prasīda prasīda prabho pūrṇarūpa

Please, be pleased, O lord of Śivā (Pārvatī), O Śambhu, with the crescent moon on his head, O the great Īśāna, the trident bearer with matted hair, Thou alone art omnipresent and Thou art seen in manifold forms in all plenitude.

Śivā, the source of all auspiciousness is the consort of Śiva. Īśāna is one of the attributes of Śiva that occurs in the Vedas and upaniṣads (cf. 'Īśānaḥ sarvavidyānām ādikartā kaviḥ sākṣāt śūlapāṇiḥ' iti śrutiḥ. Tam Īśānam varadam devam iḍyam... (Śv. up. 4.11) The Ṛgvedic mantra 'Sahasraśīrṣāḥ, Puruṣaḥ sahasrākṣas sahasrapāt...' in the Puruṣasūkta of the Ṛgveda underlines

the all-pervasiveness of the Supreme Spirit that is identified here with Śiva in his 'viśvarūpa.' The epithet 'pūrṇarūpa' is reminiscent of the vedic text 'pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidam pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate. Pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam eva avaśiṣyate,' (Iśāvāsya up.) which drives home the truth of the unchanging plenitude of Brahman while the multiform universe, the manifestation of Brahman, undergoes constant change.

[5]

परात्मानमेकं जगद्बीजमाद्यं
 निरीहं निराकारमोकारवेद्यम् ।
 यतो जायते पाल्यते येन विश्वं
 तमीशं भजे लीयते यत्र विश्वम् ॥ ५ ॥

*Parātmānam ekam jagadbījam ādyam
 Nirīham nirākāram omkāravedyam
 Yato jāyate pālyate yena viśvam
 Tam īśam bhaje liyate yatra viśvam*

I worship that One Supreme Spirit, the Īśa the first source of the Universe who is free from desire, void of form and is knowable by meditating on Omkāra (praṇava). He is the One whence the Universe comes into being, by whom it is protected and in whom it gets back.

The reference to the triple cosmic deed here may recall to one's mind what Śaṅkara himself says while commenting on the Brahmasūtra 'Janmādyasya yataḥ — Asyajagataḥ .. janma-sthitibhangam yataḥ sarvajñāt — sarvaśakteḥ kāraṇāt bhavati tad brahma'. The Omkāropasanā is commended in the Taittirīya and other upaniṣads for an understanding of the nature of Brahman, here identified with Śiva.

[6]

न भूमिर्न चापो न वह्निर्न वायु-
 न् चाकाशमास्ते न तन्द्रा न निद्रा ।
 न चोष्णं न शीतं न देशो न वेषो
 न यस्यास्ति मूर्तिस्त्रिमूर्तिं तमीडे ॥ ६ ॥

Na bhūmir na cāpo na vahniṛ na vāyur
Na cākāśam āste na tandrā na nidrā
Na coṣṇam na śitam na deśo na veṣo
Na yasyāsti mūrtis-trimūrtim tam īḍe.

I adore that Triad (in the form of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra) but who in fact has no form, who is not the earth or water or fire or wind or space, who is neither indolence nor sleep, neither heat nor cold nor any make-believe.

The denial of identification with the various elements and other evolutes of the universe is reminiscent of the 'Neti, Neti' texts of the Upaniṣads. We may also recall in this context what Saint Thirunāvukkarasar said when he addressed the Lord of Thiruvorriyūr in the true Vedic tradition in the following Thiruttāṇḍakam in the 6th Thirumuṟai:

மண்ணல்லை விண்ணல்லை வலயமல்லை கடலல்லை வாயு-
 வல்லை
 எண்ணல்லை எழுத்தல்லை எரியுமல்லை இரவல்லை பகலல்லை
 யாவுமல்லை
 பெண்ணல்லை ஆணல்லை பேடுமல்லை பிறிதல்லை யானாயும்
 பெரியாய் நீயே
 உண்ணல்லை நல்லார்க்குத் தீயை யல்லை உணர்வரிய
 வெற்றியுருடைய கோவே,

Maṇṇallai viṇṇallai valayamallai
kaḍalallai vāyu-vallai

enṇallai ezuttallai eriyumallai
iravallai, pahalallai yāvumallai
Peṇṇallai āṇallai peḍumallai
piṭitallai yānāyum periyāy nīye
uṇṇallai nallārkkut tīyai yallai
uṇarvariya vorṭiyūruḍaya kove

The concept of Triumūrti is as old as the days of Kālidāsa. Here is his concept of this Triune god- 'Namas trimūrtaye tubh-yam prāk sṛṣṭeḥ kevalātmane, guṇatrayavibhāgāya paścāt bhedam upeyuṣe'. - 'Salutation to Thee of three forms, the One Supreme Spirit that existed before creation and who afterwards divided himself into three in association with the sattva, rajas and tamas and manifested various forms'.

[7]

अजं शाश्वतं कारणं कारणानां
 शिवं केवलं भासकं भासकानाम् ।
 तुरीयं तमः पारमाद्यन्तहीनं
 प्रपद्ये परं पावनं द्वैतहीनम् ॥ ७ ॥

Ajam śāśvatam kāraṇam kāraṇānām
Śivam kevalam bhāsakam bhāsakānām
Turīyam tamaḥ pāram ādyantahīnam
Prapadye param pāvanam dvaitahīnam.

I seek refuge under the Supreme Śiva, who was not caused by anything else, eternal, the primal cause of all causes, the matchless, illuminer of all luminaries, one who is beyond the three states of existence (the wakeful, dream and deep sleep), who is beyond the pale of ignorance, who has no beginning or end and who is the pure one without a second.

The words 'bhāsakam bhāsakānām' is an echo of the Upaniṣadic description of the Supreme Spirit. Śvetāśvatara says - 'The sun does not shine yonder, nor the moon nor the stars. The lightning does not shine there. And how does this fire shine? Everything shines as he shines. By his light all these shine' (Śv. up VI. 14). Indeed he is the source of all enlightenment.

[8]

நமஸ்தே நமஸ்தே விபு விஸ்வமूर्தே
 நமஸ்தே நமஸ்தே சிதானந்தமூர்தே ।
 நமஸ்தே நமஸ்தே தபுயுடுகுடு
 நமஸ்தே நமஸ்தே ஶ்ருதிஞ்ஞானகுடு ॥ ௧ ॥

Namaste Namaste Vibho Viśvamūrte
Namaste Namaste Cidānandamūrte
Namaste Namaste Tapoyogagamya
Namaste Namaste śrutijñānagamya

Obeisance to Thee, Obeisance to Thee, O Lord whose form is the whole universe ; Obeisance to Thee, Obeisance to Thee, the very embodiment of Consciousness-bliss; Obeisance to Thee, Obeisance to Thee, who is knowable by means of penance and meditation; Obeisance to Thee, Obeisance to Thee, who is knowable by the path of knowledge outlined in the Vedic scripture.

Passages from the śruti such as 'Īśāvāsyaṃ idam sarvaṃ' and from the Tiruvācakam such as வானுகி மண்ணுகி வளியாகி ஓளியாகி ஊனுகி உயிராகி உண்மையுமாய் இன்மையுமாய் vānāhi maṇṇāhi vaḷiyāhi oḷiyāhi, ūnāhi uyirāhi, uṇmayumāy inmayumāy (Tiruccatakam, 15) (He is the sky, earth, air, fire, body, soul, truth, untruth.....) and the *antaryāmi brāhmaṇa* in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣad confirms His nature as *viśvamūrte*.

[9]

प्रभो शूलपाणे विभो विश्वनाथ
 महादेव शंभो महेश त्रिनेत्र ।
 शिवाकान्त शान्त स्मरारे पुरारे
 त्वदन्यो वरेण्यो न मान्यो न गण्यः ॥ ९ ॥

Prabho śūlapāṇe vibho viśvanātha
Mahādeva śambho maheśa trinetra
Śivākānta śānta smarāre purāre
Tvadanyo vareṇyo na mānyo na ganyaḥ.

O Lord, the Trident bearer, lord of the universe, God of all gods, source of auspiciousness, supreme Lord with three eyes, Consort of Goddess Śivā, One who is tranquil, enemy of Cupid and of the three demons, there is none equal to Thee to be sought, to be honoured or to be counted as support.

The Śatarudrīyam describes the several aspects of Śiva such as Viśvadeva, Viśvarūpa, Viśvādhika by names like Śiva, Śaṅkara, Śambhu, Īśāna, Bhagavān, Bhava, śarva, Ugra, Soma, Paśupati, Nilagrīva, Giriśa, Mahādeva and Maheśvara. The eight mūrtis of Śiva viz. Śarva, the destroyer, Bhava, the source of all, Rudra, the remover of afflictions, Ugra, the ferocious, Bhīma, the frightful, Paśupati, the lord of souls, Īśāna, the all powerful and Mahādeva, the greatest among the gods represent according to Vāyusamhitā, the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and space), the Sun and the Moon and the Soul. Śaṅkara uses many of these epithets in this stotra.

[10]

शंभो महेश करुणामय शूलपाणे
 गौरीपते पशुपते पशुपाशनाशिन् ।

काशोपते करुणया जगदेतदेक-

स्त्वं हंसि पासि विदधासि महेश्वरोऽसि ॥ १० ॥

Śambho maheśa karuṇāmaya sūlapāṇe

Gaurīpate paśupate paśupāśanāśin

Kāśīpate karuṇayā jagadetadekas

tvam hamsi pāsi vidadhāsi maheśvaro'si.

O God of auspiciousness, great lord, Compassionate though wielder of the trident, lord of Gaurī, lord of all souls, destroyer of the bonds of souls, lord of Benares, Thou art the one Mahes'vara, the Supreme God who out of abundant grace destroys, protects and creates this entire universe.

Every one of his cosmic acts is an act of 'grace'. Without his grace the bonds of soul cannot be severed. As Bhoja says in his *Tatvaprakāśikā* (v. 40) Śambhu activises Māyā by means of his śaktis and creates bodies, sense organs and other objects in the world, in accordance with the karmas of individual souls to enable each one to work out his karma by experience of things. Even his act of destruction is an act of grace because it provides the much needed rest for the souls that take a series of births and wallows in the 'saṁsāra'. The *Pauṣkarāgama* says: 'Never does a man attain mukti by his own skill; by no means other than the grace of Śiva, the dispeller of everything that is evil, is such an attainment possible'.

[11]

त्वत्तो जगद्भवति देव भव स्मरारे

त्वय्येव तिष्ठति जगन्मृड विश्वनाथ ।

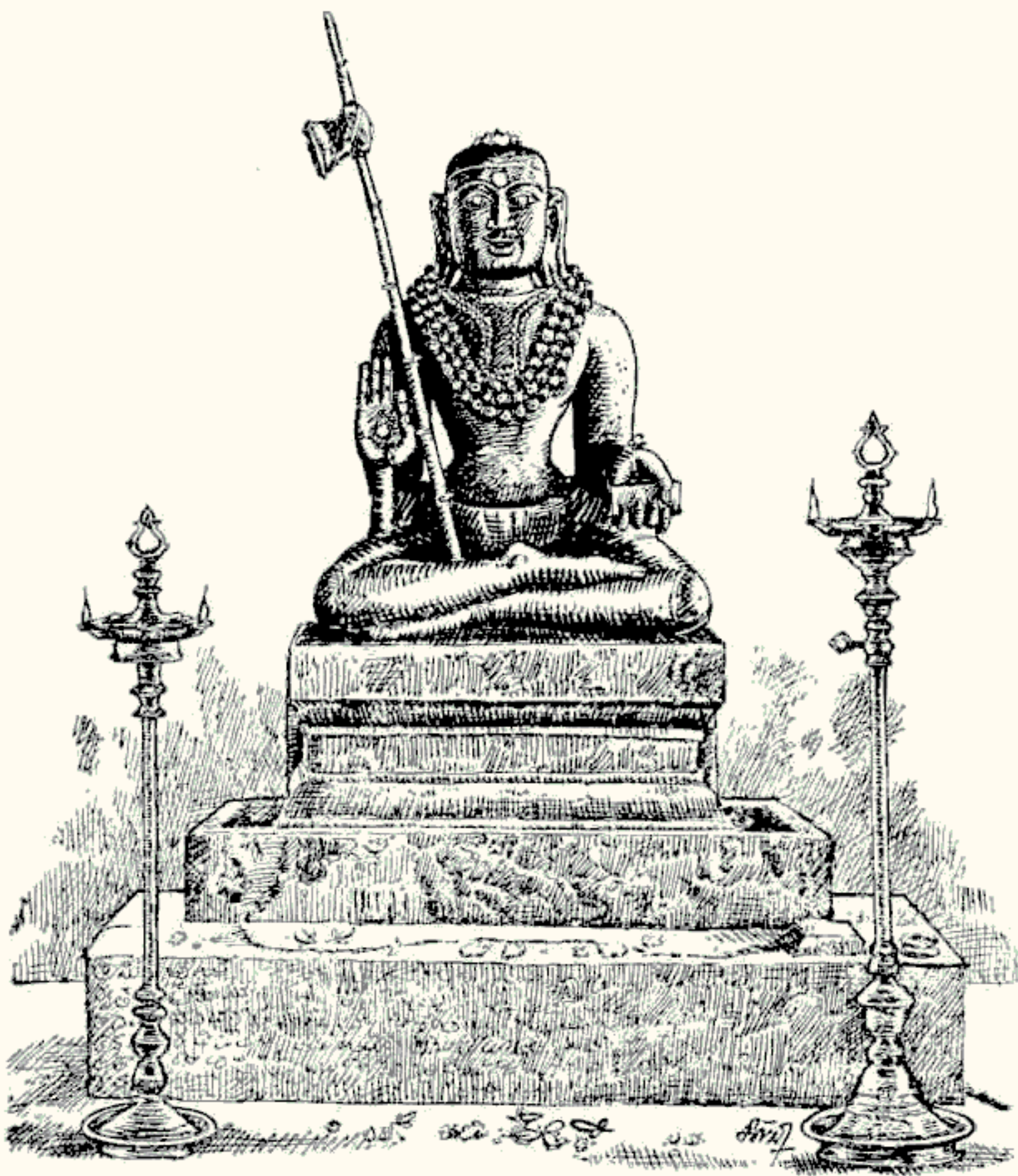
त्वय्येव गच्छति लयं जगदेतदीश

लिङ्गात्मके हर चराचरविश्वरूपिन् ॥ ११ ॥

*Tvatto jagadbhavati deva bhava smarāre
 Tvayyeva tiṣṭhati jagannṛda viśvanātha
 Tvayyeva gacchati layam jagadetad īśa
 Lingātmake Hara carācaraviśvarūpin.*

O Lord, source of all, enemy of Cupid, Lord of Universe, O Compassionate one, this world springs from Thee, gets its sustenance from thee and gets back to Thee, in the form of Linga. Thou art in the form of this universe of movables and immovables.

Lord Śiva who has no corporeal form appears at His will with rūpa in the form of the universe (viśvarūpī) and at times is rūpārūpa (partial form). The rūpārūpa is the 'linga' form which is symbolic of his being the source from which the universe comes (gamana) and the place to which it gets back (laya), the initial syllables of the two words 'gamana' and 'laya' being the constituents of the word 'linga'.



ŚRĪ SUREŚVARĀCĀRYA

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The Naiṣkarmya-Siddhi of Suresvaracarya-An Introduction

T. M. P. Mahadevan

The *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* of Suresvarācārya is a manual of Advaita. Advaita is the name of the metaphysical school associated with Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara was not the founder of this school; he was but its greatest consolidator. Advaita may be traced to the Upaniṣads which constitute the end-portion of the Veda. In one of the principal Upaniṣads, the largest and the greatest, the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad*, we come across the name of a great sage, Yājñavalkya who, beyond doubt, was a teacher of Advaita. In his discourses recorded in the *Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad* Yājñavalkya sets forth clearly the doctrines of Advaita. So Advaita was not founded by Śaṅkara. It has a long tradition, and is traceable to the Upaniṣads. Śaṅkara was its greatest teacher. He helped to popularise and consolidate it.

At least of one pre-eminent teacher of Advaita in the times before Śaṅkara we know. Gauḍapāda

who, according to tradition, was Śaṅkara's preceptor's preceptor, *paramaguru*. *Paramaguru* means grand-preceptor, that is, preceptor of one's preceptor. Gauḍapāda in his verse-commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* (the verse-commentary is called the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*) expounds in a systematic manner the teachings of Advaita. The *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* has a commentary by Śaṅkara himself. And so, it is clear that even before Śaṅkara there were teachers of Advaita. What Śaṅkara did was to build a grand super-structure on the foundations that had been already laid.

According to the Advaita tradition, the first preceptor was the Lord Nārāyaṇa himself. There is a verse in which the line of succession of teachers, is mentioned. According to this verse, Nārāyaṇa taught Advaita to his own son, the four-faced Brahmā. Brahmā gave the teaching to his son Vasiṣṭha; Vasiṣṭha in his turn to his son Śakti; Śakti to Parāśara. Parāśara to Vyāsa, Vyāsa to Śuka. Up to this point the line of succession of teachers was familial in the sense that father transmitted the teaching to son. After Śuka, the succession is, not from father to son, but from teacher to pupil. The succession from Nārāyaṇa to Śuka is known as *Vamśarṣi-paramparā*; and the line of succession from Śuka comes to be known as *Śisya-paramparā*. Śuka imparted Advaita instruction to his disciple Gauḍapāda; Gauḍapāda gave the teaching to his disciple Govinda; and Śaṅkara became the disciple of Govinda. Śaṅkara had four principal disciples: Padmapāda, Hastāmalaka, Suresvara, and Toṭaka. And after Śaṅkara and his pupils, the tradition of Advaita has been

handed down by a number of teachers from generation to generation up to this day. The verse where this line of succession is mentioned is as follows :

*nārāyaṇam padma-bhuvam vasiṣṭham
 śaktim ca tat-putra-parāśaram ca,
 vyāsam sukam gauḍapādam mahāntam
 govinda-yogīndram athāsya śiṣyam,
 śrī-śaṅkarācāryam athāsya padmapādam ca
 hastāmalakam ca śiṣyam,
 tam toḷakam vārtikakāram anyēn
 asmad-gurūn santatam ānatosmi*

This verse in substance means : “I offer obeisance to the entire line of teachers from Nārāyaṇa up to Śaṅkara and his disciples and their disciples.” And so, I want to make this point clear, that Advaita has its origin, if origin it may be called, in the Upaniṣads, that is, in the Vedānta. The meaning of the term *Vedānta* is ‘the end or aim of the Veda.’ The word ‘Veda’ itself is a significant name ‘vid’ meaning ‘to know’. ‘Veda’ comes from the root ‘vid’ to know. The Sanskrit word is cognate with the old English expression *wit*, meaning wisdom. There are four Vedas, according to Hindu tradition, Ṛg-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sāma-veda, and Atharva-veda. And, each Veda has several sections or parts. Principally there are four sections for each Veda: *Mantra*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka*, and *Upaniṣad*. *Mantra* means, in this context, hymns; a collection of hymns constitutes the first part of each Veda, which is known as the *Saṁhitā* portion. *Saṁhitā* means a collection. In the hymns the Vedic Gods are adored. Prayers are offered to the deities such as Indra, and Varuṇa. The second part of each Veda is called *Brāhmaṇa* where

directions are given for the performance of sacrifices. The *Brāhmaṇas* are liturgical texts in prose, giving guidelines for the actual performance of sacrifices. The *Mantra* and the *Brāhmaṇa* together are known as the ritual section of the Veda, i.e., *karma-kāṇḍa*. *Karma* means ritual, *Kāṇḍa*, section. The third part of each Veda is called *Āraṇyaka*; *Āraṇyaka* means a forest-book, *araṇya*, forest. In the *Āraṇyaka* certain meditations are taught—certain modes of contemplation and worship. In the last section of the Veda, there are philosophical teachings, metaphysical instructions. These constitute the Upaniṣads. The term *Upaniṣad* means sitting close by a teacher devotedly. In those ancient days, in forest hermitages, competent pupils gathered round learned teachers; and to these disciples philosophical teachings were given. The term *Upaniṣad* means an intimate session of the teacher with his pupils. The root *sad* means 'to sit'; with the prefixes *upa* (near) and *ni* (devotedly) the term *Upaniṣad* means sitting-close-by-devotedly. From the manner in which these instructions were imparted, the name came to signify eventually what was imparted at those sessions. So, the Upaniṣads that are the concluding portions of the Veda contain the earliest metaphysical teachings known to man. According to Śaṅkara, the word may also be interpreted to mean the highest wisdom that leads one to liberation by destroying the bondage of *saṃsāra*. The Upaniṣads are called Vedānta, which term means the end or aim of Veda. The Sanskrit word *anta*, again is cognate with the English word **end**, which also has a double meaning: aim and also **termination, conclusion**. The expression *Vedānta* means the end of Veda, wherein the aim, the purport, is to

be found. Advaita is Vedānta; Advaita is what is taught in the Upaniṣads, which constitute Vedānta.

Several teachers have interpreted the Upaniṣads according to their own lights. There are some differences between any two of these interpretations. Usually Advaita is considered to be one of these interpretations, one of these Vedāntic schools. But my conviction is that Advaita is not to be regarded as one system among systems of thought. It is only loosely and without any precision that Advaita is referred to as monism or absolutism. But between Advaita and what we know as monism or absolutism in the West, there is not much in common. 'Non-dualism' is the nearest equivalent for Advaita. According to Advaita, the ultimate reality is non-dual, not-two. The final reality which is the whole reality is of the nature of spirit or Self; it is not matter, nor mind. The so-called individual soul is no other than the non-dual Self. In no other tradition, either of the East or of the West do we come across this truth — this notion of the ultimate reality. There are pluralism, there are monistic stand-points. There are theisms, there are absolutistic points of view. But in none of these systems of philosophy do we have the insistence on the experience of non-duality. So, Advaita is unique in this respect, that it does not stand for a school of thought, although it may be referred to as a 'school' sometimes by convention. In truth, however, Advaita is not a closed system of thought; it stands for the plenary experience of the non-dual Self. The English equivalent 'non-dualism' must be understood carefully. Advaita is not an *ism*; *ism* means school of thought. The negative particle *non* denies not only

duality but also *ism*. Advaita signifies the non-dual Self which is the plenary experience; and, according to the great teachers of Advaita, all systems of thought, all spiritual disciplines, are so designed as to culminate in Advaita experience. Gauḍapāda says in effect in his *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā*: "We have no quarrel with the pluralists; we have no dispute at all with those who differ from us. They imagine that they are opposed to us. But we do not consider them to be our opponents. For Advaita stands for non-quarrel, absence of disputes."

svasiddhānta-vyavasthāsu
dvaitino niścītā dṛḍham,
parasparam viruddhyante
tair-ayam na virudhyate
advaitam paramārtho hi
dvaitam tad-bheda ucyate,
teṣām ubhayathā dvaitam
tenāyam na virudhyate (iii, 17-18)

These are the relevant verses from Gauḍapāda's *Kārikā*. Advaita seeks to reconcile the extremes in philosophy, and lead all the different stand-points to one unitive experience. It is this experience that is called Advaita.

The *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* is a basic manual of Advaita. The author, Suresvarācārya, was one of the four principal disciples of Śaṅkarācārya. The work was composed by Suresvara at the behest of his own master. The name of the text, *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, means "the establishment or the accomplishment of actionlessness; the accomplishment of the state which is free from all actions," (*Naiṣkarmya*,

state of freedom from all actions; *siddhi*, attainment, accomplishment). This term describes the state of release, perfection, called *mokṣa*, *mukti*, *kaivalya*, *nirvāṇa* etc. *Mokṣa* is the state of freedom as contrasted with the state of bondage, which is *samsāra*. According to all the schools of Indian thought, bondage consists in the soul being caught in the stream of birth and death. *Samsāra* is transmigration, migration from one physical body into another. The soul is caught in this stream of repeated birth and death. It is because of this condition that the soul suffers, is afflicted, feels miserable. The Sanskrit for misery is *duḥkha*. The soul in bondage is steeped in sorrow. The Buddha realized that the entire empirical life is miserable. This was the first truth that the Buddha discovered under the Bodhi tree: *sarvaṃ duḥkham duḥkham* — all is misery, misery. This truth is not peculiar to Buddhism; it is recognised commonly by all the schools of Indian thought. Misery, here, does not mean relative misery that we experience, along with relative happiness or pleasure. In life we go through experiences some of which are miserable and the others pleasant. We contrast pleasure with pain. But metaphysically even the so-called pleasure is rooted in pain, because experience reveals that what appears to be pleasant at first turns out to be painful. So the entire life of the soul in the body and as conditioned by the mind is sorrowful, according to the schools of Indian thought. This is bondage, and the aim is to gain freedom from bondage. Freedom means a state where there will be no further embodiment for the soul, a state after reaching which the body will not condition the soul. Liberation, Freedom,

Perfection, — these are the words employed to indicate the nature of *mokṣa*. Here, the title of our work indicates this state — *naiṣkarmya*, absence of all activity. Activity is associated with the body and with the mind. Action implies the sense of agency in the form 'I act'; one is conditioned by one's actions. One can act only with the body and with the mind. Apart from body-mind complex there can be no action at all. If the state of freedom is one where there is no conditioning of the soul by body and mind, then there is no question of any action. That stage is called *naiṣkarmya-siddhi*. Thus from the very title of the present work it can be seen that its main purpose is to expound the way that leads to *mokṣa*, *naiṣkarmya*.

There are a few other works that also bear the term *siddhi* as part of their title. In Advaita there are at least four important or major texts which are called *siddhis*. Together they are referred to as the *siddhi* literature. The first of them is known as *Brahma-siddhi*; it was written by an elder contemporary of Śaṅkara, Maṇḍana Misra. The Advaita expounded by Maṇḍana Misra in this work differs from the Advaita taught by Śaṅkara in certain respects. Nevertheless, the *Brahma-siddhi* of Maṇḍana Misra is very valuable in so far it uses dialectic to show that ultimate reality is non-dual, the unconditional Brahman; and therefore the name of this work *Brahma-siddhi* is significant, the attainment of the non-dual Brahman. The second work belonging to this class of literature, is our present text the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, whose meaning I have already explained. There is a third work which

is known as *Iṣṭa-siddhi*; its author Vimuktātman came after Śaṅkara. *Iṣṭa-siddhi* means the attainment of what we desire as the most worthy end. *Iṣṭa*, means what is liked, what is desired. In this work Vimuktātman discusses the doctrines of Advaita, especially those pertaining to its epistemology. Of unique value is the discussion here of the different theories of error. The fourth work belonging to this group is the *Advaita-siddhi* of *Madhusūdana Sarasvatī*. Here, again the meaning of the title is evident. The title means the accomplishment of non-duality. This is a very acute polemical work. The author employs the technique of neo-logic (*navya-nyāya*) in order to show the soundness of Advaita. The *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* belongs to this group of *siddhi* literature, and it enjoys an honoured place among the texts on Advaita for the reason that its author was a direct disciple of Śaṅkara, and also because the text was written at the command of Śaṅkara himself.

Before proceeding to expound the text, I shall give you a brief account of the biography of the author. This would naturally involve reference to the life of Śaṅkara himself. The date of Śaṅkara is still a disputed question. Tradition places Śaṅkara to a period before the birth of Christ. But some of the modern scholars bring Śaṅkara's date as late as the eighth century A.D. Some scholars have suggested that the date of Śaṅkara is 788 to 820 A.D. Others are inclined to place him a little earlier. We are not very much concerned with the date. It makes no difference whether Śaṅkara was born in centuries before Christ or centuries after Christ.

There are several accounts of Śaṅkara's life; they are referred as *Śaṅkara-vijayas* or *Śaṅkara-dig-vijayas*. They differ among themselves in regard to some of the details; but in regard to the over-all picture of Śaṅkara's life and mission, there is general agreement. Śaṅkara was born in a village named Kālaḍi on the West Coast in Kerala. He was born in a Nambūdiri family. Śivaguru was his father, and Āryāmbā his mother. The pious couple was childless for a long time. They went to a sacred Śiva-shrine nearby at Trichur, and offered worship at the temple, according to rule. It is said that pleased with their worship, Lord Śiva appeared in a dream and told Śivaguru that He would himself be born as his son. Accordingly, Āryāmbā begot a son : he was given the name, Śaṅkara. The father died when Śaṅkara was a little boy; and so the responsibility of bringing up this boy fell entirely on the mother. At the proper time, the boy was invested with the sacred thread, and put to school. He was a precious child : the frontiers of knowledge were already within his grasp. When he was eight years old, he wanted to renounce the world. Śaṅkara who was born with a divine mission did not want to lead the ordinary life of a householder. And so something had to happen which made the mother give her permission for Śaṅkara to renounce the world. One day when the boy was bathing in the river a crocodile caught hold of his feet. Śaṅkara cried out to the mother and said that if she gave him permission to renounce, probably his life might be saved. The permission was given, and the crocodile disappeared as mysteriously as it had earlier appeared. He travelled northwards till he reached the banks of the river Narmadā. There he found

his *guru*. Govinda was a great yogin, almost all the time lost in *samādhi*. He was seated absorbed inside a cave. Śaṅkara stood at the approach to this cave. When Govinda came back to normal consciousness, he knew that Śaṅkara was waiting outside; and from inside he asked "Who are You?" In reply Śaṅkara composed ten verses setting forth the highest truth of Vedānta. The ten verses are known as *Daśaslokī*. In these ten verses Śaṅkara sets forth the Vedāntic truth that the Self is not the body, nor the mind, etc. The Self is not to be confused with anything that perishes; the Self is non-dual, absolute spirit. At once Govinda knew that it was not an ordinary boy that was standing outside, that the Lord Śiva Himself had come in disguise, wanting to accept Govinda as His *guru*, only in order to conform to the usual practice. After staying with Govinda for some time and as commanded by him, Śaṅkara proceeded to *Kāśī*. He was commissioned to write a commentary on the basic text of Vedānta, the *Brahma-sūtra*. The author of the *Brahma-sūtra* is Vyāsa or Bādarāyaṇa. Every school of philosophy in India has a basic *Sūtra*. *Sūtra* means an aphorism or a work of aphorisms, short sayings which require to be explained or interpreted. The *sūtras* are like paragraph-headings. The *Brahma-sūtra* had been explained earlier by several commentators. But Śaṅkara was commissioned to write an authentic commentary; and it was for this purpose that he went to *Kāśī*. There he wrote this commentary as also commentaries on the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. These three, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and the *Brahma-sūtra* constitute the triple canon of Vedānta. Śaṅkara expounded the

teachings of these texts in his *bhāṣyas*. His fame as a great teacher spread far and wide; and disciples came to him from far and near. A young man from Choḷadesa went to Kāsī, and became Śaṅkara's disciple; he came to be called Padma-pāda. Another disciple who came to be known as Toṭakācārya joined the Master. After writing the *Bhāṣyas*, Śaṅkara followed by his disciples, left Vārāṇasī on his *dig-vijaya*, tour of victory. At that time the most powerful school which was opposed to Vedānta was Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā. Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā means 'inquiry into the prior part of the Veda which constitutes *karma-kāṇḍa*, ritual section'. According to Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, Veda teaches only ritual and not any metaphysics. *Brahman* or *Ātman* is not the purport of the scripture, but sacrifice. And so, *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*, was thus opposed to Vedānta. If Vedānta had to be established, Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā should be shown its own place in the scheme of things. There was a great teacher of Mīmāṃsā in Prayāga, the place where *Gaṅgā* and *Yamunā* have their confluence, a place near the present Allahabad. The teacher's name was Kumārila. Śaṅkara sought him out and wanted to have a debate with him. But Kumārila was not in a fit condition for a philosophical debate, for he was on the point of immolating himself. So, Kumārila directed Śaṅkara to go to his disciple, Maṇḍana. This disciple was living in a town called Māhiṣmatī. Śaṅkara went there. Maṇḍana Misra was a house-holder. This Maṇḍana Misra is not to be confused with the author of the *Brahma-siddhi*. This Maṇḍana Misra was a great teacher of Mīmāṃsā and a strict adherent of the school. At the time when Śaṅkara went to his house, Maṇḍana was engaged

in the performance of the *śrāddha* ceremony. The doors were locked from inside, and Śaṅkara had to enter through the opening in the roof, through his yogic power. Maṇḍana Misra was thrown into a fury, because when a householder is engaged in performing a Vedic ritual the most unwelcome person is a *sannyāsin*. But the elders who were present there pacified Maṇḍana. Śaṅkara wanted a debate with Maṇḍana. The debate went on for several days. At the end, Maṇḍana admitted defeat, and according to the terms agreed upon earlier Maṇḍana became a *śiṣya*, a disciple of Śaṅkara. He was given the *sannyāsa* name Suresvara. Before referring to the works of Suresvara, let me relate briefly the circumstances under which the fourth of the chief disciples joined the Master. Śaṅkara was touring the West Coast. A boy was brought to him; he had been dumb from birth; the father took this boy to Śaṅkara's presence. Śaṅkara at once knew that this boy was a great soul; he asked him "Who are You?" Even as earlier Śaṅkara had replied to the same question put to him by Govinda, in the Vedāntic manner, so also now this boy when asked by Śaṅkara "Who are You?" replied saying 'I am the Self, I am the non-dual spirit'. So the dumb boy broke into Vedāntic song. The entire community that witnessed the miracle was astounded. This disciple was given the name Hastāmalaka, "One for whom the Vedāntic truth is as lucid as is an *āmalaka* fruit placed on the open palm". Thus, the Master came to have four great disciples : Padmapāda, Toṭaka, Suresvara, and Hastāmalaka.

Śaṅkara thought that Suresvara was the fittest person to write an exposition of his commentary on

the *Vedānta-sūtra*. But the other disciples were rather jealous. They were all bachelors who had joined the Master as his disciples. But Suresvara had been a house-holder and a follower of the ritualistic tradition; and therefore the other disciples felt that Suresvara, because of his old *vāsanā*, might not interpret Śaṅkara in the proper manner. And so, they raised mild objections to the proposal that Suresvara should write an exposition of Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*. There could be no greater example of a perfect democrat than Śaṅkara. Although he was convinced that Suresvara was thoroughly competent, he yielded to the opinion of the majority of the disciples. But Suresvara's mettle had to be proved. So, Śaṅkara asked him to write an independent manual on Advaita. In obedience to this command, Suresvara composed the present work, *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*. Śaṅkara toured the rest of the country, followed by his great disciples. He established great monastic-institutions, and when his mission was fulfilled, Śaṅkara departed from this world. Suresvara continued the work of his Master. Besides the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, he wrote verse-commentaries on Śaṅkara's commentary on two of the Upaniṣads, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Taittirīya*. They are called *Vārtikas*. Another work of Suresvara is *Manasollāsa*, which is a commentary on Śaṅkara's *Hymn to Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. *Vārtika* is the name given to a commentary written in verse. Since Suresvara wrote these *Vārtikas* he is called *Vārtika-kāra*, the author of the *Vārtikas*.

(2)

The title, *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, probably, is borrowed from a passage in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In

the *Bhagavad-gītā* there is the following passage occurring in Chapter xviii verse 49 :

*naiṣkarmya-siddhim paramāṁ
sannyāsenā adhigacchati*

“One attains the state *naiṣkarmya* through *sannyāsa*”. *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* is the end, *sannyāsa* is the means. *Naiṣkarmya* is the state where there is no action at all; the state of actionlessness, *naiṣkarmya-siddhi*, is the attainment of the perfect state of non-duality where no action is possible. Action implies duality : agent and patient. Activity implies an agent who acts and an object which is acted upon. Without duality there can be no action. Since, according to Vedānta, ultimate reality is non-dual, not-two, *Advaita*, when one realizes it, no action is possible. This is the state of *mokṣa*, according to Advaita Vedānta, perfection, liberation from ignorance which is the cause of bondage, imperfection. When ignorance is gone, there is no action.

The goal is *naiṣkarmya*, the state of actionlessness ; and the *Gītā* says that this goal is to be gained through *sannyāsa*. *Sannyāsa* means renunciation, giving up. Giving up what ? Giving up all actions. There is a dispute over this question, whether the *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches renunciation of all action, *karma-sannyāsa*, or only the giving up of the desire, for the fruit of actions *phala-tyāga*. The *Gītā* does not advocate renunciation of all actions, say some. According to them, what the *Gītā* teaches is the giving up of selfish desire for the fruit of actions. But Śaṅkara disagrees with this view. He maintains that, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā* renunciation of the desire

for the fruit of actions must lead one to the giving up of all actions. One must go on to the higher state of actionlessness. It is *karma-sannyāsa* the direct means to release, and not merely the giving up of the desire for fruit of actions. In support of Śaṅkara's view, one may cite the passage quoted above; its meaning is clear. Here the *Gītācārya* declares that the end is the state of actionlessness; and it is to be gained through *sannyāsa*, renunciation. What does renouncing all actions mean? Is physical inaction the same as renouncing all actions? When a person sits still without moving, can he be described as one who has renounced all actions? The answer is, no. One may physically be still but mentally very active; and so renunciation of actions does not mean physical immobility. That is why in another place the *Bhagavad-gītā* says: "What is work and what is no work, even the learned are deluded in understanding".

Even the learned go wrong in determining what is work and what is no work. And the *Gītā* goes on to say: "He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction sees truly." He is the wisest among men who sees action in inaction and inaction in action. One may be externally active but internally inactive. One may be externally inactive but internally active. Physical immobility is not non-action. Action involves a sense of agency, the feeling that 'I do this' when the body and mind are active. If the soul has conceit in the activities of body and mind, and imagines, 'I am active', that is really action. The soul which is pure and perfect has no action at all. Action appears only when the soul wrongly identifies itself with the physical body and the mind. It is this identification of the soul with the body-mind complex that is

bondage. In order to get rid of this bondage, it is evident, the soul must dissociate itself from body and mind, and realise its eternal and non-dual nature. That is called *mokṣa* or release. This state of perfection or freedom can be gained only through renunciation of all actions, in other words, through the self realizing that it has nothing to do with the movements of the body and the imaginations of the mind.

Our author, Suresvarācārya, we have suggested, probably took the expression *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* from the *Bhagavad-gītā*. He has adopted this expression as the title of his work, because the central theme thereof is that *mokṣa* can be gained only through knowledge, that the means to release is *jñāna* and not *karma*. *Jñāna* means knowledge. *Karma* means action. Action is not the path to release. It is knowledge that is the means to release. This is the central theme of Suresvara's work. That this is the central theme is indicated in the very title of the work, *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi*.

A philosopher in this country adopts the method of dialectic while expounding his view. The dialectical method consists in examining rival views, showing their defects, and thereby establishing one's own view. This is the dialectical method followed in philosophical expositions in this country. It is known as the *pūrvapakṣa-siddhānta* method. *Pūrvapakṣa* means *prima facie* view, a view that is refuted, a view that is not accepted. *Siddhānta* means one's settled conclusion, the view that one wishes to maintain. The method consists in setting forth the *prima facie* views, criticising them thereby showing their defective

character, and thus exhibiting the excellence of one's own view. So far as the view that *jñāna* is the means to release is concerned, all those views which regard *karma* or action as a means to release, are the *prima facie* views, *pūrva-pakṣas*. By examining such views and showing them to be wrong, our author seeks to maintain that the Advaita teaching regarding *mokṣa* and the means to *mokṣa* are free from any defect. The Advaita teaching is that the direct means to release is: *jñāna*, knowledge, and not *karma*, action. There are several *prima-facie* views which oppose this teaching. The most important of these is *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*.

There are six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy. The Sanskrit for 'orthodox' is *āstika*. Those schools which are opposed to the orthodox tradition are called 'heterodox', *nāstika-darśanas*. *Āstika*, means, that which affirms, that which says 'it is'. *Nāstika* means 'that which denies', that which says: 'it is not'. *Asti* means 'it is'; *nāsti* means 'it is not'. The orthodox schools are those which say 'it is'. The heterodox schools are those that proclaim, 'it is not'. What is the meaning of these expressions 'it is', 'it is not'? Sometimes the orthodox schools are described as theistic systems and the heterodox schools are characterised as being atheistic. But this description is not correct, because among the orthodox schools there are some that do not accept a God. They are not theistic; schools like *Sāṅkhya*, and even *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* do not believe in the existence of a personal deity. Yet they are orthodox, they are *āstika*. So the term *āstika*, does not refer to belief in God's existence. The term *āstika* may be taken to mean

belief in after-life, life after death. Those who believe that there is life after death may be regarded as *āstikas*. But this again is not relevant to the present context, because among the so-called heterodox schools which are three, two believe in life after death: Buddhism and Jainism. The orthodox schools are not to be divided either on the ground of acceptance or non-acceptance of God, or on the ground of acceptance or non-acceptance of life after death. What then, is the meaning to be assigned to the expression 'it is', 'it is not'? Those schools which believe in the authority of the Vedas are orthodox. Those which do not believe are heterodox. *Āstika*, means belief in the authority of the Veda, and *nāstika* lack of belief in the authority of the Veda. *Āstika-darśanas* are vedic schools; *Nāstika-darśanas* are non-vedic or anti-vedic schools: *vaidika* and *avaidika*, respectively. There are three *avaidika* schools: They are Cārvāka, Buddhism and Jainism; materialistic philosophy, the philosophical tradition started by Buddha, and Jaina Philosophy. The *vaidika* (orthodox) schools are said to be six: *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*, and *Vedānta*. The last two are Vedic schools in the strict sense of the term. *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Sāṅkhya*, and *Yoga*, although they accept the authority of the Veda, are not dependent on the Veda for their respective philosophical constructions. They expound their philosophical doctrines without referring to the Veda. It is only *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta* that are Vedic schools strictly speaking. The former attaches primary importance to the *karma-kāṇḍa*, while the Vedāntic schools regard the Upaniṣads as containing the purport of the Veda. *Mīmāṃsā* means inquiry;

Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā means enquiry into the earlier sections of the Veda. By contrast, Vedānta is described as *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā* (*uttara*, later, subsequent; *mīmāṃsā*, inquiry). Since the term *Vedānta* has become the widely used expression, the other term *Uttara-Mīmāṃsā* is not ordinarily used; and, therefore, *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* is simply referred to as *Mīmāṃsā*.

Of all the views that maintain that *karma* is the means to mokṣa, the most prominent is that of *Mīmāṃsā*. According to *Mīmāṃsā*, ritual-action is the means to *mokṣa*. According to Vedānta, as interpreted by Śaṅkara and his followers, action is not the direct means, but knowledge, *jñāna*. Suresvara, while setting forth the view of *Advaita-Vedānta* in regard to this question, takes up for examination and criticism the principal *prima facie* view which is that of *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*. The first systematic work of this school is the *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sūtra* of Jaimini. Jaimini formulated the principles of interpreting the meaning of the Vedānta in its ritual sections. After Jaimini, there appeared several scholars who explained the meaning of these *sūtras* in their commentaries. Two sub-schools arose after Jaimini and his commentator Śabara. One of them is called the *Prabhākara* school and the other the *Bhaṭṭa* school. *Prabhākara* was a great exponent of *Mīmāṃsā*. He interpreted Jaimini in a particular way and the school which follows him bears his name. The other *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* school was founded by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, and the school came to be named after him. There are only minor differences between these schools; on fundamentals they agree.

In the early phase of the developments of *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*, the ultimate goal of man's endeavour was considered to be heavenly happiness (*svarga*). If one has qualified oneself for it, one may go to heaven after death and enjoy happiness there. The merit that one has gathered is the instrument to gain this end. How should one get merit in this life in order to deserve heavenly happiness after death? That used to be the primary question asked by the *Mīmāṃsaka*. The teachers of *Mīmāṃsā* said that if one performed the rituals prescribed in the Vedas, according to rule, then one would gather merit thereby, and as a consequence, one would go to heaven after death and enjoy happiness there. Thus, at first, *Mīmāṃsā* recognised heavenly happiness as the goal of man. But very soon, the *Mīmāṃsā* teachers realized that going to heaven and enjoying happiness there could not be the final goal, because the sacred texts say that after the stock of merit is exhausted, the denizen of heaven should come back to the world of mortals. So, perfect freedom from embodiment could not be gained by going to heaven. Heaven can give us happiness for a longer time, and of a more intense kind, than what becomes possible in this world; but this happiness cannot be lasting, or eternal. A well-known passage in the Upaniṣads says "Even as here in this world what is gained through work perishes, so also in the heavenly world, what is enjoyed through merit perishes". "When *punya* is exhausted, declares the *Bhagavad-gītā*, "one enters again into the world of mortals". And so, the *Mīmāṃsā* teachers discovered that heavenly happiness could not be the final goal. The final goal is freedom from the cycle of birth and death, *saṃsāra*. It is the state after attaining which,

the soul will never more be reborn. That this is the final goal, *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* teachers came to admit very soon. But even after this admission, the *Mīmāṃsakas* maintained that *karma* is the means to gaining this goal.

What is the prescription of the *Mīmāṃsā* school for gaining release? *Karma* is of different types. One type of *karma* is called *kāmya*, optional. 'Optional' means that the performance of this type of *karma* is left to the will of the individual concerned. If one wants one may do this *karma*; if one does not want, one may not do it. In the Veda certain optional rites are prescribed. These prescriptions are called *kāmya-vidhis*, injunctions of optional rites, e.g., there is the injunction, "He who desires heaven is to offer the *Jyotiṣṭoma* sacrifice" (*svargakāmaḥ jyotiṣṭomena yajeta*). The performance of this sacrifice has no obligatoriness about it; it is optional. If one desires heaven, then one should perform the *Jyotiṣṭoma*; if one does not desire heaven, one need not perform the *Jyotiṣṭoma*; Such injunctions are hypothetical imperatives as contrasted with categorical imperatives. Students of Kant will remember the distinction between the hypothetical imperative and the categorical imperative. The hypothetical imperative is of the form: "If you desire this, you should do this". But the categorical imperative is of the form: "You ought to do this because you ought to do this". Here, there is no question of any condition; the categorical imperative is an unconditional imperative.

Kāmya-karmas are hypothetical in character; one may perform them, or one may not. These constitute the first kind of ritual-actions mentioned in the

Vedas. These actions are called *kāmya-karma*. A second type of ritual-actions are called *nitya-karma*, obligatory rites. They are to be performed obligatorily; unconditionally. There is the well-known vedic text: *aharahaḥ sandhyām upāsita*; perform the *sandhyā*-worship everyday." One ought to perform the *sandhyā* worship whether one likes it or not. There is no condition attached to the performance of this act. Acts such as this are called *nitya-karma*, obligatory duties; and the texts which enjoin such *karmas* are called *nitya-vidhis*, obligatory injunctions. A third type of ritual actions are called *naimittika-karmas*; occasioned rites, rituals that are to be performed on certain special occasions; rituals, for instance, which are connected with the birth of a child, or the name-giving ceremony, or marriage rites. These are *naimittika-karmas*, occasioned rites; they are also obligatory in the sense that the performance of such acts is not left to the sweet will of the individual, but should be performed obligatorily on appropriate occasions. A fourth type of actions is called *prati-ṣiddha-karmas*, prohibited acts. Certain actions are forbidden, and these actions are not to be performed. Thus are four types of actions which are mentioned in the *Veda*. Now, for gaining release, perfection, what are the actions that should be performed and what are the actions that should not be performed? This is the question which the *Mīmāṃsā* teachers have to consider. What is the state of perfection? The *Mīmāṃsakas* admit that the state of perfection is such that after realizing it one is not reborn. What is the cause of birth? *Karma*: *Karma*, here, means the result of previous actions. For reaping the results of past *karma* one is reborn. If one wishes to gain

mokṣa, one should see to it that one does not accumulate further *karma*. The result of actions are of two kinds: *merit* and *demerit*; *puṇya* and *pāpa*. *Puṇya* means merit *pāpa*, demerit. If there is *puṇya* one is born in good families or in good species of living beings; if one has demerit, then one is born in bad circumstances, in the lower species of living beings. Birth is evil, whether in good circumstances or in bad circumstances. Whether one is born as a god, a man, a beast, or a plant, one has to suffer. So, in the state of perfection there should be not residue of *karma* at all. One has to gain freedom from what serves as the instrument of rebirth. This is admitted by all schools of thought including *Vedānta* and *Mīmāṃsā*. But the *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* says that this state can be gained by a judicious programme of obeying the Vedic prohibitions and prescriptions. The aim should be not to gather merit nor to accumulate demerit. What is the result of performing optional rites? When a person obeys some *kāmya-vidhi* and performs an optional rite, one gathers merit. If there is merit then one must be reborn, and, so, the *Mīmāṃsaka* says, 'Do not perform optional rites, if you want *mokṣa*. If you want something else, by all means, perform these rituals. If you want heaven, then perform the appropriate rituals. Or if you want even lesser goals, then you perform the respective rites. For instance, there is a sacrifice called *Kāriri*; the result of performing this ritual is rain. The aim, of performing the *putra-kāmeṣṭi* is the birth of a son. The *Aśva-medha* has for its aim conquest of kingdom. All these are optional rites; as a result of performing optional rites one gathers merit which yields the appropriate reward. The seeker after release should not aim at such lower

gains, and therefore he should refrain from performing optional rites. By not performing such rites one gains nothing. Therefore, he who desires *mokṣa* must keep away from optional rites; thereby he does not gain any new merit; which would lead to further involvement in the empirical cycle called *samsāra*. We can take the next two types of rites together, obligatory rites and occasioned rites. The only difference between these two is that while the obligatory rites are to be performed everyday, the occasioned rites are to be performed only on the prescribed occasions. The *Mīmāṃsaka* says that by performing these rites one does not gain any merit and that by their non-performance one gains demerit. So, in order to avoid demerit one must perform obligatory and occasioned rites. As regards the last type of actions, prohibited deeds, if one performs those deeds one would gain demerit, and therefore one ought not to perform them; one must keep away from prohibited acts by keeping away one does not gain anything. But by performing such deeds one incurs sin or demerit, and therefore prohibited deeds should not be performed. We now, have a full picture of the recipe given by the *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsaka* for a seeker after release. The seeker after release must avoid optional rites, *kāmya-karma* and also prohibited deeds; and he must perform unconditionally obligatory rites and occasioned rites till the end of his life. And, at the end of the present life, he will be in a state which will not lead to a fresh birth. This is what the *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* says in regard to the path to *mokṣa*; *karma* is the means of release.

Suresvara, following the Advaita tradition, especially the teachings of his Master, says that this

is wrong. One cannot gain *mokṣa* through performing obligatory and occasioned rites, and by keeping away from *kāmya-karma* and *pratiṣiddha-karma*. It is true that *karma* consisting of merit and demerit is responsible for *samsāra*, the cycle of birth and death. But we must pursue our analysis still further and not stop with *karma*. There is a cause for *karma*; unless the cause is removed *karma* will not be obliterated. What is the cause of *karma*? In the last analysis, according to Advaita, ignorance, nescience, is the cause of *karma*. Unless ignorance is destroyed *karma* will not be effaced. It is by destroying the cause that the effect can be removed. *Karma* is the effect of ignorance; it is removed only when one is rid of consequence, *samsāra*. If this truth is understood, it will be easy to see why the path of *karma* cannot be the means to release. If ignorance is to be removed, then one needs to acquire knowledge. It is knowledge and knowledge alone that can destroy its opposite, ignorance. Even as for removing darkness you require light, so for destroying ignorance you are in need of knowledge. Knowledge of what? Knowledge of the non-dual Self. Knowledge of *Brahman*, which is the same as *Ātman*. It is this knowledge alone which can destroy ignorance; and when the destruction of ignorance takes place there is realization of the final truth, there is freedom. Actions would involve the perpetuation of ignorance. Actions require the sense of agency, that is, the mis-identification of the Self with the body-mind complex. Without this wrong identification, action is impossible. It is through action that one gets more and more involved in *samsāra*; and therefore, how can action be the liberating means for the soul?

Now, what is the nature of the ultimate state of perfection? It is not a state which is brought about anew. The state of perfection is not something which is accomplished afresh; because if it were to be acquired newly, then it would be a product, and therefore it will be destroyed later. What is acquired and what is liable to be lost cannot be release. *Mokṣa*, according to Advaita, is the eternal state of the Self. It is not something which is to be newly acquired. Nor is *samsāra* something real standing in need of destruction. *Samsāra* is false appearance, and the destruction thereof means only the realization that there is no *samsāra* at all. If release is gaining perfection and destroying *samsāra*, one must ask, what do these two expressions really mean: gaining and destroying? There are two senses in which each of these two terms may be used. Gaining in the regular sense would mean getting what we do not have already. But gaining in the figurative sense would mean realizing what we already have. If you want a new ornament made you must get the money required, you must go to a gold-smith, give him the specifications, and have the ornament made. This is gaining in the literal sense. But imagine a case where a lady forgets that she is wearing a necklace. Through forgetfulness, she believes that she has lost the necklace, and she goes about searching for it. A passer-by comes and asks what is the matter. He observes the necklace right round her neck. He says; your necklace is right there round your neck. Now the lady jumps up with joy and says, 'I have got back my necklace'. Did she ever lose it in order to gain it? All that has happened is that her ignorance has been destroyed. Her false imagination has been

driven away. This gaining is in a figurative sense ; it is gaining of what has been already gained. Similarly, destruction has two meanings : destruction of what is to be destroyed, and destruction of what has already been destroyed. If there is a real snake in front of you, what should you do ? You would take a big stick and beat it to death or throw stones at it and destroy it. This is destruction in the literal sense. But if what is in front of you is a rope-snake, how can you destroy it ? Any amount of beating will not destroy this snake. All that you require is to go near it, and with the help of a lamp, see what is there. The snake will disappear only when you know that it is a rope. The snake was not there even when you imagined that it was there. Now *mokṣa* means gaining plenary happiness by destroying *sam-sāra*, bondage. According to Advaita, this happiness was never lost because the very nature of the Self is happiness. All that has happened is a forgetting. The soul had forgotten its true nature as perfection. So, when this ignorance is removed, then the soul is made to realise that it has always been perfect. Similarly, there is no real bondage ; it is the result of ignorance. When the plenary wisdom dawns, bondage is removed as it were. If this is the nature of the goal, then it cannot be gained through action. What is required is only knowledge, and not action.

Action may lead to four kinds of results. Through action you may generate something which is not there already : *utpatti* ; it means generation, origination. If you want a plant to grow, you must lay the seed at the proper time, and in proper manner, and then take care of it putting in manure, by watering, etc ; and eventually the plant will come out. So, through

action you may generate something that was not already there. If you want to go from one place to another, you have to act. If you want to go from place A, to place B, you cannot imagine that you are already in place B. You must undertake the journey from A to B, by some mode of transport or by walk. This is *prāpti*, attainment, reaching. Action may also make for purification, *samskāra*. A thing that is impure, say for instance a mirror may be rendered pure by the act of wiping. A fourth result of action is modification, *vikāra* e.g., milk may be modified into curds. *Mokṣa* which is the non-dual Self does not fall into any of these four categories; and so, action cannot lead to its realization. Our present text will make this abundantly clear. In fact, this is its central theme.

The *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* is a work which is partly in verse and partly in prose. There are four chapters. In the first chapter there are 100 verses, in the second chapter 119, in the third 126, in the fourth 78. Altogether there are 423 verses. Connecting these verses there are prose passages which are referred to as *sambandhokti*, statements of the relation between the verses. The prose passages are of the nature of annotations. So, the author himself annotates the verses that he has composed. There is evidence to show that he composed the verses at first, and subsequently added the prose passages.

Suresvara begins his work with a prefatory note. In this prefatory note, he makes it clear that the aim of *Vedānta* is to remove sorrow through imparting the truth of the ultimate reality. Suresvara starts with an analysis of sorrow. No one can deny the fact of

misery. Sorrow is an everyday experience in life. And there is also the desire on the part of all beings for the removal of sorrow. Sorrow and desire for removing it are facts which are to be universally recognised. These are features that characterise all living beings from the highest to the lowest. According to our scale of evaluation, the highest being is Brahmā, the Creator, who is the first-born and who is vested with the power of creating the entire universe. Brahmā is the highest living being. The lowest species of living beings is the insignificant grass. From Brahmā down to a clump of grass, there are many types of species. Everyone of these living beings wants relief from sorrow, no one needs to prompt any living being to strive for liberation from sorrow. Every soul wants to be rid of sorrow of its own accord. But because there is no analysis of what sorrow is and what its causes are one does not know how to get rid of it. Although there is the desire for release from sorrow and there is also effort, success is not seen because the effort is not properly directed. And this is the case because the root cause of sorrow has not been traced. So, let us analyse the situation and see what the cause of sorrow is. Why is a soul sorrow-stricken? Why should the soul suffer? The answer is : because it has taken on a body, because of its embodiment. The soul has taken for itself a body and therefore it suffers. All suffering relates to the body ; the body here does not mean only the physical body but also the subtle body consisting of mind and other factors. In English the word 'body' refers only to the physical body, but in Sanskrit the term *deha* or the term *śarīra* refers not only to the physical body but also to the mind and other subtler envelopes of the soul. To the

question, why does the soul suffer?, the answer is, because it has a body-mind complex. Why is there a body for the soul? The answer to this question is, because the soul has gathered in its previous lives merit and demerit. Now, the question is why has it acquired merit and demerit? The answer is, because it performed in those previous lives prescribed and prohibited deeds. By performing prescribed deeds it acquired merit; and by acting contrary to the injunctions of scripture it acquired demerit. Why did it act in that manner? Why did the soul fail to perform prescribed actions, and why did it perform prohibited deeds? The answer is, because it was impelled by desire and aversion, desire for pleasure, aversion for pain. This was responsible for acting in that particular way, and acting in that way was responsible for acquiring merit and demerit. Acquisition of merit and demerit led the soul to fresh embodiment. Embodiment means sorrow. Why was the soul impelled by desire and aversion? The answer is, because it imagined that somethings were beautiful and somethings ugly. It was attached to what it imagined to be beautiful, and it had an aversion for what it imagined to be ugly. What is the cause for this? Why should the soul make the distinction between what it considers to be beautiful and what it considers to be ugly? The reason is that the soul does not properly inquire into the nature of things. It takes the world of duality to be real. The world of duality, on account of ignorance, appears to be real to the soul. Even as one may mistake a piece of shell for silver, the world of duality is mistaken for what is real; and therefore the soul distinguishes between beautiful and ugly things. But then the

question would be, why does the soul take the world of duality to be real? The answer is, because it is ignorant of the nature of the non-dual reality, the Self. It is not aware of the non-dual nature of the Self and so long as this ignorance is there, sorrow will not depart. As long as there is ignorance of the true nature of the non-dual Self, the world of duality will be taken to be real. As long as the world of duality is taken to be real, the distinction will be made between what is fine and what is not fine. As long as this distinction is made, there will be desire and aversion. As long as there are desires and aversions, certain actions will be performed, and certain other actions will be avoided. Performance of actions and non-performance of certain other actions would lead to merit and demerit. Merit and demerit will bring about fresh embodiment. Embodiment means continuing misery. If sorrow is to be removed, what is one to do? One should strive for gaining the final knowledge. It is ignorance that serves as a cover, as it were, preventing the soul from realizing its own innate nature. But how can this ignorance be removed? What is the knowledge, that one has to gain? This knowledge cannot be gained by any of the empirical *pramāṇas*, means of knowledge. None of the knowledge-disciplines of which we know will be able to take us to this goal. Because all this knowledge only confirms us in our ignorance. The other knowledge which is required for the destruction of ignorance can be gained only through *Vedānta*. It is *Vedānta*, the Upaniṣadic teaching, that can give us this knowledge of the true nature of Self, and therefore, says Suresvara, 'I commence to write this work expounding the teachings of *Vedānta*.'

The Text

The effort to remove sorrow is natural, since all beings, from the Creator Brahmā down to a clump of grass, naturally desire to avoid sorrow by all means. Sorrow is not removed because it is caused solely by taking on a body, and body has for its cause merit and demerit acquired earlier (in previous lives). And those (viz., merit and demerit) are not removed, because they have for their cause prescribed and prohibited deeds. And the deeds are not removed, because they are based on attachment and aversion, attachment and aversion are conditioned by the super-imposition of attraction and repulsion, the super-imposition is caused by duality which is the result of non-discrimination (i.e. ignorance), and like nacre-silver all duality has for its cause sheer ignorance of the self-established non-dual Self. Therefore, the cause of all evil (*anartha*) is ignorance of the Self. And of happiness (*sukha*) which neither comes nor goes and is unconditioned (*aparatantra*), the covering lid is the non-knowledge thereof, because that (happiness) is of the nature of the Self. Therefore, when that (cover) is completely removed, there is complete fulfilment of all human ends. And since for the removal of ignorance the sole means is true knowledge consisting in realizing one's nature, that is resorted to. The Self of which there is ignorance which is the cause of all evil, is not the content of empirical means of knowledge such as perception that is not (the result) of revelation; so, from the revealed text of the Vedānta alone is there true knowledge. Hence, this manual (*prakaraṇa*) which is a compendium of the essence of the entire Vedānta is commenced.

(3)

Suresvara commences his work with an invocation to God in the form of Hari. It is the usual practice with pious people to offer obeisance to God before starting to compose a work. The object of remembering God at the commencement of a work is to see that the work is completed successfully and also to set an example for others to follow. Conforming to this practice Suresvara offers obeisance to Hari in the first verse. Hari is Viṣṇu-Nārāyaṇa. There are various cults comprising Hinduism. The cult of Viṣṇu is Vaiṣṇavism. The cult of Śiva is Śaivism. The cult of the Mother-Goddess is Śāktism, and so on. Each cult adores its form of Deity. But, for those who follow Advaita it makes no difference as to which form of God is chosen for worship. The Vaiṣṇava would not pray to Śiva. And, the Śaiva would not accept Viṣṇu as the supreme Deity. But, the Advaitin regards all forms of Godhead as equally efficient, as equally helpful. It is in this spirit of catholicity that the Advaitin selects a particular form of Deity for offering obeisance or worship. Although this verse, the first in the *Naiṣkarmya-siddhi* is in the form of obeisance, the author indicates in it the central theme of his work. The theme of Advaita is that the Ultimate Reality which is the Self is non-dual. The distinction between the so-called individual soul and the universal Self is not real, according to Advaita. The so-called individual soul is non-different from the universal Self which is called *Brahman*. This truth is indicated by Suresvara in the invocatory verse when he puts in apposition Hari and the *witness of the intellect, buddhi-sākṣi*. Hari is the universal Godhead. *Buddhi-sākṣi* or the witness of the intellect

is the inner self of the individual. By putting in apposition these two expressions, the author teaches that they refer to one and the same reality. Sures'vara thus indicates the central teaching of Advaita, namely that the so-called individual soul is no other than *Brahman*, the universal Self. According to Advaita, the ultimate Reality, which is Brahman, is non-dual; it is distinctionless and unconditioned; it is free from any attribute, it is attributeless. This ultimate Reality is referred to as *nirguṇa-Brahman*, *Brahman* without attributes. It is the same *Brahman* which appears as if endowed with qualities when looked at as related to the world of plurality. The *nirguṇa-Brahman* becomes *sagūṇa-Brahman*, as it were when it gets into relation with world. Some critics maintain that, according to Advaita, there are two *Brahmans* - one *nirguṇa* and the other *sagūṇa*. They mockingly ask the Advaitin : "If there are two *Brahmans*, how can you champion the view of non-duality?" The pluralist and theist may say 'We seem to be better Advaitins than you are. At least we say that the individual soul is different from *Brahman*, but *Brahman* is one. But according to you, there are two *Brahmans*. You have introduced duality into the very nature of *Brahman*.' This would be the criticism of the pluralist and the theist as against the Advaitin. The Advaitin's reply would be: "You have misunderstood me. I do not hold the view that there are two *Brahmans*. *Sagūṇa-Brahman* is not different from *nirguṇa*. *Brahman* is attributeless, in itself; but when we relate *Brahman* to the world it appears as if it is *sagūṇa*. As *Sagūṇa Brahman* the supreme Self is called *Īśvara* or God. It is *Īśvara* or *Sagūṇa Brahman* that is the cause of the world *prapañca-kāraṇa*. In Indian

philosophy there are several views about the cause of the world; there are different theories of causation. The school of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* maintains that as between the material cause and its effect there is no identity at all. The effect is entirely different from the material cause. The weaver brings together threads and produces a piece of cloth; but his piece of cloth is a new emergence, different entirely from the threads. This is the view of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*. The view is called *ārambhavāda*, the theory of new beginnings; it is also known as *asat-kārya-vāda*, the theory which says that the effect is not pre-existent in the cause before it comes to be produced. The *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* believes that God is not the material cause of the world; he is only the efficient cause. The world is produced from atoms - atoms of earth, atoms of water, atoms of fire, atoms of air. It is these atoms that come together and form the finite things that constitute the world. But in order to make these atoms combine there is required some principle and that principle is known as *adṛṣṭa*, unseen potency. But there must be some one who guides this unseen potency, and that is God. Even as a potter produces pots out of clay, God makes the universe out of pre-existing atoms. This is the view of *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* in regard to God and his being the cause of the world. There are certain schools of Indian Philosophy which do not assign any place to God in their cosmology. The *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā*, for instance, says that there is no need for postulating a God as the cause of the universe. You have to seek for a cause of the world only if you believe that the world was produced at any particular time. The world has always been what it is; ^{ayam} there was

no *pralaya* at all. If there was no universal deluge at any time, if the universe has always been there, not very different from what it is now, the question as to who produced it becomes meaningless. The world as a whole is not a product, and therefore there is no need for saying that there should be a God as the cause of the world. A school like the *Sāṅkhya*, while admitting that creation and deluge take place alternatively insists that there is no need for a God. The cause of the world is *Prakṛti*, according to the *Sāṅkhya*. *Prakṛti* is the *primus* of creation; it is the *matrix* of the universe. *Prakṛti* consists of three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. These are not qualities but constituents of *Prakṛti*. It is from the *guṇas* that constitute *Prakṛti* that the various evolutes emerge. Both physical and pshychical factors evolve from *Prakṛti*; and from these the things and beings of the world are produced. As against the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* theory of causation, the *Sāṅkhya* holds the view that causation means transformation. The effect is not something different from the cause; it is the cause that gets transformed into the effect; this theory is known as *prariṇāmavāda*, the theory of transformation. According to this theory, the effect is not a new emergent; it is already contained in the cause even prior to its production. So the other term by which this theory is known is *sat-kāryavāda*, the view according to which the effect is pre-existent in the cause. According to the *Sāṅkhya*, *Prakṛti* is not a static entity: it is a dynamic force it does not stand in need of any dynamic agency for making it move or evolve. There is no need for a prime mover for making *Prakṛti* evolve into this universe. According to the *Sāṅkhya*, there is no need for a God; *Prakṛti* can evolve of itself and produce

the various ingredients that constitute the world. It is true that an intelligent Being or Beings are necessary, but that necessity is fulfilled by the individual souls; in their presence *prakṛti* evolves. God, therefore is not required. A school of *Vedānta* such as the one associated with Rāmānuja insists that God is the cause of the world. *Prakṛti* cannot, of its own accord, produce this variegated universe full of design and rich in content. There must be an intelligent ground of the universe. So, according to Rāmānuja, God is the cause of the world not only the efficient cause as in *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, but also the material cause. God is the ground of the universe; it is from God that the universe evolves. The universe is a transformation of God-head. The difference between the *Sāṅkhya* view and the view of Rāmānuja is this; while for the *Sāṅkhya* the universe is a *pariṇāma* (transformation) of *Prakṛti*, for Rāmānuja, the universe is a *pariṇāma* of God. Advaita would agree with Rāmānuja in holding that God is both the efficient and the material cause of the world. But it would point out that the world cannot be regarded as a transformation of God. If God is subject to transformation, there would be no eternity for him. That which is eternal cannot be subject to change; transformation is change. If God were to change into the world, then he would cease to be God. Even as when milk gets transformed into curd there is no longer any milk, similarly if the world is a transformation of God, then when there is the world there cannot be God, and also there cannot be a re-transformation of the world into God, even as curd cannot be changed back into milk. And so, according to Advaita, the world appears in *Brahman* or in

Godhead. Here we have the theory of appearance; the term in Sanskrit is *vivarta*. *Vivarta-vāda* is the theory of appearance or illusory manifestation, and the example that is usually given is that of a rope appearing as a snake. Even during the time that the snake appears there is no snake, there is only rope. Similarly, the world is an appearance of Brahman.

So, in offering obeisance to Hari, Suresvara says that the world appears in Hari even as snake appears in a garland, to vary the simile. The usual simile is that of rope-snake, but here Suresvara varies the simile a little, the implication being the same. He says that the world appears in Hari even as a snake appears in a garland. The world consists of the five elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth. The world emerges, or appears to emerge from Hari, and so Hari is the cause of the world-appearance, and Hari, or Godhead is the sole reality. This appearance, being illusory, does not in any way introduce duality or division into the non-dual God-head. So, while paying obeisance to Hari, Suresvara points out the distinctive teaching of Advaita in regard to God-head. God-head is the ground of the universe but the universe is not a real product; it is an illusory appearance. And, Suresvara also says in this first verse that it is Hari or God that bestows grace upon the aspirant and enables him to gain freedom from nescience or ignorance. If God-head is mistaken for the world, if the universe appears in *Brahman*, it is because of the ignorance of the true nature of *Brahman*. It is this ignorance or nescience that binds the individual soul; ignorance is compared to darkness. This

darkness or ignorance can be removed by knowledge alone. But this knowledge can come only as a result of the grace of God. And so, Hari is the destroyer of the darkness of ignorance. Thus, in this very first verse, Suresvara has given us the truth that *Brahman* and the so-called individual soul are not different, that the world is an appearance in *Brahman*, that this appearance is due to ignorance, that ignorance can be removed only through knowledge, and that for gaining knowledge one has to deserve the grace of God.

This first verse is for the sake of safeguarding the intended end and for indicating the content of the work.

Verse : 1.

Obeisance to Hari, the witness of the intellect, from whom arose the world consisting of ether, air, fire, water and earth, like a garland-serpent, and who destroys the darkness (of ignorance).

In the second verse Suresvara offers obeisance to his *guru*, preceptor. Suresvara's *guru* was Śaṅkara. According to Advaita, the *guru* and God are not different; the preceptor is the visible form of Godhead. In a verse commentary (*Manasollāsa*) on a hymn composed by Śaṅkara (the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra*), Suresvara makes this observation: "Īśvara, *guru* and *ātman* are but different forms of one and the same reality." According to Advaita, thus, there is no distinction between God and *guru*. Having offered obeisance to God in the form of Hari, Suresvara proceeds to sing the praise of his *guru*, Śaṅkara in the second verse. He says that no one equals Śaṅkara in excellence. Śaṅkara is the

repository of all the attributes that are auspicious and excellent. These excellent attributes, the most worshipful attributes, do not find a basis anywhere else. The most superlative excellences are to be found only in Śaṅkara. He is the greatest of all preceptors. He is the destroyer of the knot of ignorance. To that preceptor I offer my obeisance, says Sures'vara.

In order to make known that tradition is to learn through the teacher, as declared (in the Upaniṣad), obeisance is made to the Teacher (*guru*), eulogising his association with excellent qualities.

Verse : 2.

Obeisance to the great (Teacher) who cuts the knot of nescience, and apart from whom superlative terms (expressive of excellence), have found no application to any one.

In this verse Sures'vara offers his obeisance to Śaṅkara, his teacher. Śaṅkara is the most excellent person, locus of all auspicious qualities in their highest degree; he is the greatest preceptor and he is the destroyer of the root-cause of all suffering which is *avidyā*, ignorance or nescience.

What is the reason for making this invocation to Hari and to Śaṅkara? What aim does Sures'vara have when he offers obeisance to God in the form of Hari, and to his own teacher, Śaṅkara, the greatest preceptor? Sures'vara invokes the grace and the blessings of Hari and of Śaṅkara in order that he may successfully complete this work on Vedānta. Why should Sures'vara undertake this task of expounding

Vedānta? The teaching of Vedānta is very difficult to understand. This teaching is hidden in the *Upaniṣads*. The teaching of the *Upaniṣads* will not be evident to all and sundry. It requires to be expounded by a competent person. But why should one study the *Upaniṣads*? Why *Vedānta*? The answer to this question is this: if you want to get rid of sorrow, and there is no one who does not want to get rid of sorrow, you have to go to the *Vedānta*. The teaching that the *Vedānta* gives is efficacious in removing *saṃsāra*, and making us understand and realize the ultimate reality which is the supreme Self. It is only knowledge of this supreme Self which the *Vedānta* conveys that can lead to the removal of *saṃsāra*. Therefore, the *Vedānta* has to be expounded. But Suresvara asks himself this question: Why should I expound *Vedānta*? And, the answer that Suresvara gives to this question is: I have been commanded by my teacher to expound *Vedānta* in this work.

The next verse is for expressing the author's aim which has occasioned the offering of obeisance.

Verse : 3

Commanded by the Teacher, I shall discourse on knowledge, which is hidden in the bowel of the *Vedānta*, which removes transmigration, and which leads to the real, although this has been explained by others.

Vedānta means the end of *Veda*; the end portions of the *Veda* are the *Upaniṣads*. The central teaching of the *Upaniṣads* is *Brahman-Ātman*, which is

the ultimate reality, the supreme Self. It is knowledge of this supreme Self that can liberate the individual soul from *samsāra*. This knowledge, by making one realize the supreme reality, serves to dispel ignorance, nescience, and thereby the soul gets liberated. Naturally, this teaching has to be expounded by a competent teacher. Others have expounded it. But Suresvara says that he has ventured on this task of expounding *Vedānta* because his preceptor has asked him to do it.

Next, Suresvara proceeds to set forth what it is that he is going to write about. What is the subject-matter of this work? When any enquiry is commenced one has to ask, is this enquiry worthwhile, is it necessary? One can enquire into something which is not fully known, but which is partly known; there can be no enquiry into the wholly unknown, and there is no need for enquiry into what is well known. This is the paradox of enquiry. The question is: is *Brahman* known or unknown? If *Brahman* is already known, then there is no need to enquire; if *Brahman* is not known at all, there is no possibility of enquiring into it. How to get over this paradox or dilemma? The solution to this dilemma is this: *Brahman* is not something which is completely known. We know that there is *Brahman*; but we do not know what it is. Therefore, enquiry is pertinent. We know that *Brahman* is there; otherwise no empirical usage is possible. We experience this world of objects. The world of objects is referred to by the term this, *idam*; anything that is a sense-datum is *idam*; anything that can be sense-perceived is *idam*; this. The entire world consists of such sense-data. Now, this world of objects is not

self-established; it cannot announce itself; it requires a basis, and this basis is *Brahman*. It is only when *Brahman* is established that the world will be established. If *Brahman* is not established, then the world will never be established. The nature of *Brahman* is such that it is the ground of all experience; without *Brahman* no experience is possible. But if that were the case, where is the need for inquiring into the nature of *Brahman*? The answer is, we know that there is *Brahman*; we know that *Brahman* is the ground of the universe; but we are not aware of the fact that *Brahman* is our very nature. So, it is in order to realise this identity of *Brahman* with the inner Self that we require to enquire into the *Vedāntic* teaching. This is the subject-matter or the theme of the present work:

What is the content of this work? If thus it be asked, the explanation is as follows.

Verse: 4

With the establishment of which the 'this' (the world) is established, and without the establishment of which nothing 'is established' — the true nature of that inner reality is set forth (here) clearly.

After having clearly indicated the theme of *Vedānta* which is the theme of the present work, Suresvara hastens to point out that he cannot excel his own Master in expounding *Vedānta*. The preceptor Śaṅkara has already written extensive commentaries on the *Vedāntic* texts, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma-sūtra* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. He has also

written independent manuals on Advaita, manuals like the *Upadeśasāhasrī*. Suresvara says that he cannot go beyond what Śaṅkara has already expounded. "In the presence of Śaṅkara who is like the sun", says Suresvara, "I am an insignificant glow-worm; therefore, I cannot hope to go beyond what Śaṅkara has already done in the matter of expounding *Vedānta*."

In order to arouse enthusiasm (in the minds of the readers) for what is intended to be taught in this work, and (also) for removing the doubt of non-authoritativeness (of the Teacher) caused by suspected non-statements and wrong statements, the authoritativeness of the Teacher is described in the next verse :

Verse : 5

The *Vedānta* was expounded by the Teacher. In regard to that, I do not say (anything new); because I have no competence. In (the sky) pervaded by the thousand-rayed (sun) how can the glow-worm shine?

It is evident that Suresvara feels humble before the magnificence of His Master and he does not want his readers to misunderstand his motive in writing the present work. But then one may ask, why do you write? If Śaṅkara has already expounded *Vedānta* in clear and extensive terms, what is the need for another work on *Vedānta*? The critic might ask point-blank: "Are you after name, and fame? Is it for these that you are writing this work? Then, you will not be a preceptor. Any teacher who is after name and fame has no title to be called a preceptor." Suresvara replies: "No, I am not after

any of these trinkets. I do not want to gain a name by writing this work. I do not want selfish advantage to be derived from this work. I do not want to play the role of a teacher". Suresvara does not want that he should be an object of worship. But then, he asks himself, why am I writing this treatise on *Vedānta*? His answer is "I want to know for myself whether I have understood *Vedānta* aright or not. It is only when I write, and competent scholars read what I write, they would point out defects in it, and thereby my understanding of *Vedānta* would get purified. Even as you rub a nugget of gold on the touchstone to see if it is genuine or not, so I want to rub my intellect or understanding against the intellects of those who are wise. That is the aim for my writing this work."

As even by the Teacher the sense of the *Veda* has been completely stated, there may be the doubt that this treatise is unauthoritative on account of causes like (desire for) fame etc. To remove such doubt it is said in the next verse :

Verse : 6

Not for the sake of fame, gain or honour is this work written by us; (but) for the sake of purifying our understanding on the touchstones of the knowers of *Brahman*.

After these preliminary clarifications, Suresvara proceeds to set forth the four points which should be indicated at the commencement of a work on *Vedānta*. What are these four points? (i) The nature of sorrow; (ii) the cause of sorrow; (iii) the destruction of sorrow; (iv) the way to the destruction of

sorrow. You may substitute the word 'evil' for 'sorrow', but only the expression 'evil' should not be understood in its usual sense. Those who are acquainted with the story of the Buddha know that on the full-moon night in the month of Vaisākha beneath the *bodhi* tree, in Gayā, the Buddha discovered the four noble truths, *ārya-satyas*, as they are called, in the four watches of the night. The first truth was in regard to the nature of sorrow, *duḥkha*. The second truth related to the cause of sorrow, *duḥkhasamudaya*. The third truth was about the destruction of sorrow, *duḥkha-nirodha*. And the fourth truth referred to the means to the destruction of sorrow *duḥkha-nirodha-mārga*. In *Vedānta* too, in fact in all schools of Indian philosophy, these four points are discussed: *anartha*, *anarthahetu*, *puruṣārtha*, *puruṣārtha-hetu* - *Anartha* means evils, sorrow; *anarthahetu*, cause of evil; *puruṣārtha*, the goal of man, *puruṣārtha-hetu*, the means for achieving the goal of man. *Saṃsāra* is evil, evil not in the ordinary ethical sense; the ethically 'good' and the ethically 'evil' are relative terms. But when *Vedānta* says that *saṃsāra* is evil, it is a truth that goes beyond the ethical relativities. *Saṃsāra* is evil because it makes for finitude, limitation. The infinite, undivided eternal Self becomes limited as it were, and gets caught in the cycle of birth and death called *saṃsāra*: therefore, it is described as evil or *duḥkha*. In the course of one's life one may enjoy pleasures and pains, but the metaphysical evil or sorrow is basic to both; pleasures and pains are included in the metaphysical sorrow or *duḥkha*; so *saṃsāra*, the tract of transmigration from birth to death and from death to birth is what is called *anartha*, evil. In the well-known *Bhaja-*

Govindam hymn, Śaṅkara says: 'Look upon the so-called *artha* as *anartha* (*artha* means wealth). When you analyse the nature of *artha*, wealth or property, you will find that it is a source of evil, *anartha*. There is no end to the amount of suffering involved in gathering wealth. But, thereafter, are you left in peace? No. Your worries increase all the more, you are worried about your bank-balance; you are worried about the future of your landed property, or urban property, or property in any form that you may possess. Therefore, how can *artha* or property be an object of your life's aim? So Śaṅkara asks us to meditate on *artha* as *anartha*. There is not the least happiness that you can derive from wealth. This is only an example. The same holds good with any empirical value. *Samsāra* is evil; *samsāra* is sorrow-ridden. Now, what is the cause of sorrow is *avidyā*, ignorance. It is because you do not know that your true self is the same as the non-dual reality, that you find yourself sorrow-stricken. But, if you realize that you are the non-dual spirit, then there will be no more sorrow. So, what is the cause of suffering? The cause of suffering is the mis-identification of the Self with the perishing body-mind complex, and the unawareness of the truth that one is non-different from the ultimate reality. *Avidyā*, nescience, is the root-cause of all sorrow. What is the destruction of sorrow? *Mokṣa* is the destruction of sorrow. And, what is the means to the destruction of sorrow? It is knowledge of the true Self, to be gained through *Vedānta*. Knowledge, *vidyā* of the true Self is the means to release. Negatively, *karma* is not the means. Now, in the next two verses, Śuresvara refers to these four points which constitute the cardinal tenets of *Vedānta*.

Evil, the cause of evil, the human end, the means thereto—these are the topics of this treatise. This is compendiously indicated.

Verse: 7 That which is of the nature of the non-cognition of the One Self and is located in the Self-Experience is nescience, the seed of transmigration. The destruction thereof is release for the Self.

Since the means to the human end remains to be stated, it is explained :

Verse: 8 The fire of true knowledge caused by the major text (*mahāvākya*) of the Upaniṣads burns up the delusion regarding the Self; not action (*karma*), because of not being what is opposed (to nescience).

Samsāra is the empirical existence, the empirical series of conditions that constitute what is called life. That is evil, sorrow. What is the cause or the seed of *samsāra*? It is *avidyā*; *avidyā* means nescience, ignorance. What is ignorance? What is it about? Ignorance is about the true nature of the Self which is one, non-dual, which is of the nature of being, consciousness, and bliss. But where does ignorance reside? Ignorance resides in that very Self. There is no other place for it. Residing in the Self, it veils the Self. And this is the cause of *samsāra*. The destruction of that ignorance is called *mukti* or release. What is the means to release? It is the fire of true knowledge. The fire of true knowledge will destroy the ignorance of the Self. How is knowledge to be gained? It is to be gained from the texts of the *Upaniṣads*; especially from the Major Texts "That thou art (*tat tvam asi*)". *Karma*, action, cannot destroy ignorance, because between

action and ignorance there is no opposition. In fact, action is caused by ignorance, and therefore it cannot remove ignorance. It is only the light of knowledge that can dispel the darkness of ignorance.

The first eight verses which we have explained above give us an indication of the theme that is expounded by Suresvara in his *Naiṣkarmya Siddhi*. Following closely his Master, he shows that *Jñāna* is the means to release and that the listening to the *Mahā-vākya* "*Tat Tvam Asi*" at the appropriate time liberates the aspirant from bondage by making him realize the truth of non-duality.

Questions : Answers

QUESTIONS MAY BE SENT TO THE OFFICE OF THE
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THEY WILL BE ANSWERED IN THIS COLUMN.

Question : What is the cause of our misery ?

Answer : The cause is our birth.

Question : What is the cause of our birth ?

Answer : Our past *karma*.

Question : What is the reason for the past *karma* ?

Answer : 'Desire' is the reason for the past *karma*.

Question : Wherefrom do 'desires' arise ?

Answer : From '*moha*'—delusion or infatuation.

Question : What is the cause of delusion ?

Answer : The cause is one's 'ignorance' of the true nature
of Reality.

Question : How are we to get rid of 'ignorance' ?

Answer : Ignorance is to be removed through True knowledge (i.e) realisation of the Reality of the supreme Self '*paramātman*'. One should have the experience that the Self is immutable, omni-present and eternal. In order to gain that experience, one must seek the association with the good. One must study the proper texts and must engage oneself on self-enquiry. We must have faith in what we do. There should be devotion and fear of what is evil. There should be constant endeavour to develop love for all beings. We should get rid of the concept in "I", and "Mine". Thus if we perform good deeds in series of lives, we shall acquire the grace of our Ācārya and through his grace the plenary Self-Knowledge. Only then we shall get release from births free from sorrow.

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- (1) to undertake the carrying on of scientific research for the extension of knowledge in the fields of Natural and Applied Sciences generally, and in particular in the fields of Physics and Metaphysics.
- (2) to undertake and carry on scientific study and analysis of the Advaita system of thoughts as expounded by Ādi Śaṅkara and to conduct research as regards the relevance of his teachings in solving present day ills of mankind.
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- (4) to undertake research for the purposes of establishing norms necessary for realising the divinity in man through moral, spiritual and cultural infra-structure.

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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-
 खिन्नानां जलकांक्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।
 अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-
 त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसंदायिनी ॥

*samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhbhūtadāhavyathā-
 khinnānām jalakāṅksayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā
 atyāsannasudhāmbudhim sukhakaram brahmādvayam
 darśayatya-
 eṣā śaṅkarabhārati vijayate nirvāṇasamdāyini.*

To those who are afflicted, in the way of the world, by the burning pain given rise to by the scorching sun-shafts of misery, and who through delusion wander about in the desert (of worldliness) seeking water—showing the felicitous ocean of nectar, which is very near, the non-dual *Brahman*, this—the Voice of Śaṅkara—is victorious, leading, as it does, to liberation.