

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA-VEDĀNTA

# *The VOICE of* ŚAṆKARA

śaṅkara-bhāratī

*Editor*  
T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

*Volume FOUR*  
*Number FOUR*



FEBRUARY

1980

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

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[ ५ ]

॥ भवति कच्चित् किल शंकराचलः ॥

“ *Bhavati kaccit kila śaṅkarācalaḥ* ”

अटाना रागे आदितालेन गीयते *Aṭānā Rāge Ādi tālena gīyate*

पल्लवी

भवति कच्चित् किल शंकराचलः ।

तुहिनाचलादपि उन्नतशैलः ॥

(भवति)

*Pallavi*

*Bhavati kaccit kila Śaṅkarācalaḥ*

*Tuhinācalādapi unnataśailaḥ*

(*bhavati*)

अनुपल्लवी

*Anupallavī*

भवति किल तत्र ज्ञानशिखरं ।  
एकमेवाद्वयमिति विश्रुतम् ॥

(भवति)

*Bhavati kila tatra jñāna Śikharam  
Ekamevādvayam iti viśrutam*

(bhavati)

चरणम्

*Caranam*

[ 1 ]

त्यक्तदर्शैः कर्मिभिरीप्सितं

ऐक्यभावनभक्तोपसेवितम् ।

श्रेणाभ्यस्तयोगसुलभ्यं

गुरोर्लब्धात्मबोधसुगमम् ॥ १ ॥

(भवति)

*Tyaktadarśaiḥ karmibhirīpsitam  
Aikyabhāvana bhaktopasevitam  
Śreṇābhyasta yoga sulabhyam  
Gurorlabdhātma bodha sugamam.*

(bhavati)



[ 2 ]

तस्मात् निःसृतज्ञानजाह्नवी  
प्रस्तानत्रयभाष्यस्वरूपिणी ।

तस्यामवगाह्य तप्तजीवाः  
तापमपोह्यतनुतात्मश्रेयः ॥ २ ॥

(भवति)

*Tasmāt ni'sṛtajñāna jānhavi*  
*Prastānatraya bhāṣya svarūpiṇi*  
*Tasyām avagāhya taptajīvāḥ*  
*Tāpam apohya tanutātma śreyah*

(bhavati)

## Pallavi

There stands the great mountain (the Ācārya) that is more exalted than even the Himālayas, the mountain of snow.

## Anupallavi

There stands the pinnacle of wisdom which is well known as the One only Non-dual Reality.

## Caraṇam

[ 1 ]

It is longed for by those seers who have renounced action; and it is worshipped by devotees who

meditate on Unity. It is easily accessible to those who have practised the graded yoga through the grace of the *guru*.

[ 2 ]

Let those afflicted by the fire of misery, bathe in the *Gaṅgā* which is the supreme Knowledge in the form of the commentaries on the three basic texts, *prastānatraya bhāṣya*, which have emerged therefrom and get rid of the heat of miseries and gain the supreme good which is the Self.

## Mother Worship

*Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati*

[ 1 ]

### OUR TEMPLES

*Bhruvau bhugne kincidbhuvana-bhaya-  
bhaṅga-vyasanini  
tvadīye netrābhyām madhukara-ruci-  
bhyām dhṛtaguṇam,  
dhanur-manye savyatarakara-gṛhītām  
ratipateḥ  
prakoṣṭhe muṣṭau ca sthagayati  
nigūḍhāntaram ume*

“O Umā ! In Thy slightly knit eyebrows, intent on dispelling the world's fears, I imagine the bow of Rati's Lord (Manmatha), strung with the string of Thy shining bee-like pair of eyes, held in his left hand, with the middle parts of both concealed by the forearm and the clenched fist covering them”.

—*Saundaryalaharī*, verse 47.

In this verse of the *Saundaryalaharī* composed by our Ācārya, the eyebrows of the Divine Mother are described. Śrī Ācārya went to Kailāsa and by the grace of Īśvara obtained along with the five Liṅgas the *Saundaryalaharī* consisting of a hundred verses containing *mantras* and a description of the Mother's form from the crown to the feet; as he was bringing the script of the poem, Nandikesvara obstructed him and succeeded in seizing fifty-nine verses. Śrī Ācārya was able to retrieve forty-one verses which contain the *mantras*, and completed the poem by adding his own composition of fifty-nine verses describing the divine form from the crown to the feet. In these fifty-nine also there are *mantras* embedded. Of these, the present verse praises that aspect of the Mother's form which dispels the fears of all the worlds.

For removing fear, it is usual to knit the eyebrows slightly. Therefore, in the verse the Mother is described as being 'intent on dispelling the world's fears'. When the brows are knit for the sake of removing fear, they bend like a bow. Hence, the Ācārya says that the Mother's brows are like a bow. Out of anger if the brows are knit, the brows will be raised. Then, they will not resemble a bow. Because the Mother knits the brows slightly for the sake of removing fear, they bend like a bow. They are seen to resemble a bow. So, the Ācārya says, '*bhruvau bhugne kiñcit*'. '*Bhugnā*' means 'slightly knit'. The two eyes extend upto the ears. The black pupils shine like the black-bees. If it be asked whose bow is this, the reply is that it is the bow of the Lord of Rati (Manmatha). Because he is the lord of beauty,

his bow also is beautiful. The poets describe that bow as *ikṣu* (sugar-cane). The string for that bow is constituted by bees. Thus, the pupils of the eyes that extend upto the ears are said to be like the bees that constitute the bow-string of Manmatha. In another verse of the *Saundaryalaharī*, Śrī Ācārya says, '*maurvī madhukaramayī*' (bow-string made of black-bees, v.6). If the knit brows and the pupils of the eyes are compared to the bow and bowstring respectively, there is some difficulty, so thinks the Ācārya. There is a region in between the two eye-brows. And between the two eyes there is the nose. These two partially hide the bow and the string. The Ācārya thought about this.

There are ten names of Arjuna :

*arjunah phalgunah pārthah kirītī sveta-vāhanah  
bībhatsur-vijayah kṛṣṇah savyasācī dhananjayah*

It is usual to recite these ten names when it thunders. This is because thunder is Indra's bow, and Arjuna was Indra's son. Of these ten names, *Savyasācī* is one. The meaning of this name is, 'one who can shoot arrows even with the left hand'. Ordinarily, one holds the bow with the left hand and shoots the arrow with the right hand. But Arjuna's distinctive greatness was that he could hold the bow with the right hand and shoot with the left hand also. In the same way, Manmatha too is *Savyasācī*. If the bow is held with the right hand and the arrow with the left we know how it would be. So, are the Mother's eyebrows and eyes. Thus says the Ācārya. *Muṣṭi* is closed fist. *Prakoṣṭha* is the fore-arm near the

wrist; *Savyetaragr̥hītam* means 'held with the hand other than the left'. Here the description is : 'like the bow held by Manmatha with the right hand.' It is when the bow is held with the right hand that the closed fist and the fore-arm will hide respectively the middle-part of the bow and of the string. This will not be so if the bow is held with the left hand. Therefore it is that the Ācārya says '*savyetaragr̥hītam*'. The region between the eye-brows and the part of the nose between the two eyes are like the fist and the wrist.

There is a place of pilgrimage called Madhuvana. In Tamil it is known as Nannilam. The legend in regard to this holy place is that there the bees offer worship to the Mahāliṅga. Till today there is seen a honey-comb in the temple there. That is why the place is called Madhuvana.

There was a Chola king by name Kochengat Chola. 'Ko' means a king who wears a crown. 'Chengan' means 'red eyes'. In Samskrit, he is referred to as 'Raktākṣa Chola'. That Chola king was a great devotee of Śiva. He undertook renovation works in regard to several temples. For such works the name is 'yānai-erāt-tiruppaṇi'. This means 'reconstructing the temple-disposition such a way that elephants will not be able to enter'. From this it can be inferred that in former days the elephants could go in. In ancient times, great sages were worshipping the Mahāliṅga for their own sake on the banks of rivers, in forest regions, and underneath trees. In those times, other people did not go near. But, in the Kali-age, in order to make available the worship of Śiva to others also, the kings arranged to build

temples in accordance with Āgamic rules. The kings made provision for the Brahmins performing *sandhyā-japa* and *Śiva-pūjā* everyday. Thus, in places where the sages had been worshipping by themselves the *Mahāliṅga*, the kings built temples and appointed for the worship those priests who had received the necessary initiation (*dīkṣā*). Because in the *Dharma-śāstras* it is laid down that Brahmins should not worship for monetary emoluments, the arrangement for a section to receive initiation was made. Thus, in all of these regions, the Śiva-temples were constructed by the kings later on for the *Mahāliṅgas* which were being worshipped in the early days by the sages for their own sake according to the Vedic traditions; now worship is being offered in those temples according to the Āgamic rules. In each of the temples even today, there is to be seen a *sthalavṛkṣa* (a sacred tree). There are also such names as Tillai-vanam and Tejani-vanam. In Tiruvānaikka there is the jambu tree; in Kānchi there is the mango-tree; in Mallikārjuna, Putārjuna, and Madhyārjuna the tree is Arjuna: these are the *sthalavṛkṣas* in the places mentioned.

When the renovation work was done for the Tiruvānaikka temple, there was only a bark left of the jambu tree. The Chettiyārs of Kānāḍukāthān, who did the renovation were afraid that that bark too might go, and so they had the *ekādaśa rudrābhiṣekam* performed for it. By the power of *mantra* that bark began to sprout and has become a tree again. Even now, there is a place called Vennāval near Tiruvānaikka. Nāval is the Tamil name for the jambu tree.

Why did Kochengat Chola undertake the renovation work referred to as 'yānai-erāt-tiruppaṇi? He began to hate the elephant. In those days, if there was hatred for some one, it used to be said that that one should forego devotion to Śiva. That, they thought, was the greatest harm that could befall one. Why did this king hate the elephant? In regard to this, there is a legend. We should believe the *sthala purāṇas* (legends about holy places). Just because some *sthala-purāṇas* might have been fabrications, we should not think all the legends are so.

In the *Tevāram* hymns, the incidents connected with the holy places have been referred to. These incidents are related in the *purāṇas*. The age of the *Tevāram* is more than one thousand and five hundred years. Relying on the evidence which is much more ancient, the saints who sang the *Tevāram* hymns recorded those incidents. Those who followed in the post-*Tevāram* period have also alluded to the same incidents. Even now there are corroborative indications. In Tiruvānaikka there is still a jambu tree. Beneath the tree, there is a *Liṅga*, and figures, by the side of it, of an elephant in the pose of performing *abhiṣeka*, and of a spider and the seals of copper plate inscriptions. Similarly, in Madhuvana there is to be seen a honey-comb. The symbolic representations at Tiruvānaikka indicate the legend connected with that place, which is as follows: In those ancient times there was a sage by name Jambu who was performing austerities at that place. Because he was performing austerities lost in meditation for a very long time, an anthill covered his body, and plants and creepers grew as also a jambu tree. The *Mahā-liṅga*, which he had been worshipping, a spider was



now worshipping. Since the *Mahāliṅga* was in the open, the spider was weaving constantly a web over it so that the sun would not fall on it. An elephant was performing *abhiṣeka* to the *Mahāliṅga* everyday with the water from the Kāveri brought with the trunk. By the spilling of the water, the spider's web was getting destroyed. The spider got annoyed at this; it entered into the elephant's trunk and bit it. In Ayurveda it is said that the poison of *luta* is the most harmful. *Luta* means spider. The elephant killed the spider by racing it to the ground, and it also died on account of the poison. That spider was reborn as Kochengat Chola. Because the spider's eyes were red with anger at the time of death, it was reborn as the Chola king with red eyes. Hence, the king was angry at the sight of elephants. And, he had *yānai-erāt-tiruppani* done for seventy temples. He was a great devotee of Śiva. His devotion to Śiva has been praised even by Ālwārs in the *Periya-Tirumoli*. While mentioning that Kochengan built the Viṣṇu temple at Nācciyār koil, it has been stated that he was the builder of many Śiva temples.

“Place (with devotion) on your head the sacred Feet of the Lord Who is the consort of Nappinai with roseate lips and Who, in the past (at the time of His incarnation as Parasurāma) destroyed all the kings and, overcoming the might of the enemy king (kārta-Vīryārjunan) in the battle field, cut off his head. Go to the temple at Tirunaraiyur which was visited (for worship) by the Chola king of noble lineage who built seventy temples for the Lord with eight shoulders whose lips repeat the puruṣa sūkta of the Veda.”

—*Periya-tirumoli*, 6, 6, 8.

[ 2 ]

**SRI CHANDRAMAULISVARI**

*aiśvaryam indumauler-  
aikātmypṛakṛti Kāñcimadhyagatām  
aindava-kiśora-śekharam  
aidamparyam chakāsti nigamānām*

This verse on the Divine Mother was sung by Mūkakavi. Being a mute, he received the grace of the Mother, the supreme wisdom dawned and swelled in him, and he composed five hundred verses. In every verse that he composed he mentions either Kāñcī or Kāmakoṭi.

In the present verse it is stated that the Mother is the lordly power (*aiśvarya*) of Chandramaulīśvara. It is the mother that imparts lordliness to the supreme Lord. To him the Mother remains as the undiminishing lordliness. She is all auspiciousness. The truth of the all pervading supreme Lord will be revealed only through her grace.

Prakṛti stays in the middle of Kāñcī. In What manner does it stay? It has on its crest the crescent moon. There is the crescent for the Mother too. The Mother is of the nature of the supreme Self. It is She that is the non-dual reality which is the final purport of the Veda. She shines as Chandramaulīśvarī.

There is a verse in the *Saundaryalaharī*:

*ahaṣṣūte savyam tava nayanam arkātmakatayā  
triyāmām vāmam te sṛjati rajanīnāyakatayā  
tṛtīyā te dr̥ṣṭir—dara dalita hemāmbujaruciḥ  
samādhatte sandhyām divasa niśayorantaracarim.*

(verse-48)

In this verse it is mentioned that for the Mother also there is the (third) eye in the forehead. She has the sun, the moon, and the fire as her eyes. One eye creates the day; another the night. Between the two (day and night) there is the *sandhyā*. The right eye produces the day; the left produces the night. The third eye remains slightly open. It is red like a lotus made of gold. It produces the *sandhyā* that is between day and night.

*tvayā hṛtvā vāmam vapur aparitṛptena manasā  
sarirārdham sambhor-aparam api śanke hṛtam abhūt  
yadetat tvatrūpam sakalam aruṇābham trinayanam  
kucābhyām ānamram kuṣila śaśi cūḍālamakuṣam.*  
(verse-23)

This verse refers to the fact that the Mother has the crescent moon and three eyes. By virtue of the chastity the Mother possesses, She occupied one half of the body of the supreme Lord and became that herself. Having some aim in view at first, she became one half (of the Lord's body). This verse says (addressing the Mother): "You thought that if you seized the left half you would be satisfied. But there was no satisfaction. Probably you wanted to become the right half also." The entire form is red. On the head of the Mother there is the crescent moon. When one looks at it, the form of the Lord appears. But the form is that of the Mother also. There is the third eye. "You have slowly eaten up the whole. As the marks of that, you have come to bear the crescent moon and the eye in the forehead." I have cited these *ślokas* in order to show that for the Mother there are crescent moon and three eyes. In some of the ancient sculptures of the Mother's form we see these features. Our

Ācārya also has referred to these. Today is *pradoṣa*, Friday. I do not want to speak differently of the divine Mother and the supreme Lord. Therefore, I spoke of the truth that the two are one. The three forms of the Godhead (*Trimūrti*) are manifestations from the *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. "The worship offered at your (the Mother's) feet becomes the worship offered to the three Gods." How? "Near the jewel-set seat whereon you place your feet, they stand always folding their hands like buds over their heads and thus adorning them." The hands are folded resembling buds; these folded hands they raise over their heads. They look like crown-ornaments. Then, the flowers that are offered to the Mother's feet as *arcana* will fall on their heads. When the feet are ceremonially bathed, when the lamps are waved, when prayers are made, when any other act of worship is performed—all of them will in effect be for the Gods also. Whatever is done in worship for the feet will go to the Gods too.

[ 3 ]

### FRUIT OF MOTHER-WORSHIP

Among the sages who were recipients in full measure of the grace of the Divine Mother, Durvāsa was the foremost. He composed two hundred *ślokas* on the Mother: the work is called *Āryā-dviśatī*, *Āryāvṛtta* is one type of metrical verse. *Āryā-dviśatī* contains two hundred of such verses. It was after this, that the compositions of other poets came into existence. To those who are able to appreciate that work, it will be evident that the Mother Herself is manifest therein as it were.

The *Śrī-cakra* consists of forty triangles. In that there are many *āvaraṇa devatas*. In the place of the *Bindu* at the top, there is the Mother in the *Kāmeśvarī* on the left side of *Kāmeśvara*. *Durvāsa* has sung in praise of Her. This hymn is a most excellent composition. If it is recited, one would be blessed; one would gain mastery over speech. The power of poesy results from praising the Mother. By worshipping the Mother, one who was dumb gained the power of speech and sang hundred *ślokas*. This work is known as *Mūka-pañcaśatī*. The *Mūka-pañcaśatī* consists of five *śatakas*. *Āryaśataka*, *Pādāra-vinda śataka*, *Stuṭīśataka*, *Kaṭākṣa-śataka*, and *Mandasmita śataka*. *Durvāsa* composed two hundred *ārya-vṛttas*. In the *Mūka-pañcaśatī* there are a hundred *ārya-vṛttas* in each of the *śatakas*. Both these works depict clearly the Mother's nature, even as the painting of an expert artist would do. They would appear to make manifest the Divinity that transcends the reach of the eye and the mind.

Besides these works, there is the hymn on the Mother sung by our *Ācārya* i.e., the *Saundarya-laharī*. One may see there as much depth as is conceivable. The *Mūkapañcaśatī* is replete with softness.

There is a verse in the *Saundarya-laharī* which says that worshipping the Mother is equivalent to worshipping all the gods.

*trayānam devānām triguṇajanitānām tavaśive*  
*bhavet pūjā tava-caraṇayor-yā viracitā*  
*tathāhi tāt pādodvahana — maṇipīṭhasya nikaṭe*  
*sthitā hyete śaśvan mukulita karottamsa-makuṭāḥ*  
 (verse-25)

(O Consort of Śiva! the obeisance offered unto Thy feet becomes by itself the obeisance offered to the three Gods born of Thy *guṇas*. It is, therefore, but proper that these (Gods) ever stand near Thy jewelled seat whereon Thy feet rest, with their folded hands adorning their crowns.)

The Mother is of the nature of consciousness.

*Citśaktiḥ paramēśvarasya vimalam caitanyamevocyate,  
satyavasyā jaṭādarābhagavataḥ* ८  
*śaktiḥ avidyāyocyate*

(Pure consciousness alone is said to be the sentient power (*cit-śakti*) of God, and it is real. There is another power that belongs to God and it is insentient and termed *avidyā*.)

The *Sahasranāmāvalī* contains the expression *cidekarasarūpiṇe* (She who is of the nature of the one essence of consciousness.) ॥

*Sat* is being that is real. *Cit* is being that is consciousness (intelligence). All that is real (*satya*) is of the nature of God. In order to know this, intelligence is required. That intelligence is the nature of the Mother. *Sat* is stated to be God (*Īsvara*) and *Cit* the Divine Mother. If there is no intelligence, there is no value for the real. The two are but one.

All the *śāstras* teach at the end about gaining wisdom.

*jñānād-eva tu kaivalyam prāpyate yena mucyate*

(Upaniṣad)

(It is through knowledge alone that perfection is gained whereby one is released. )

It is knowledge that is the direct means to release. The supreme Mother is of the nature of knowledge. If her grace is received, we shall be liberated from birth and gain perfection. At the top of one's crown in the *Brahmarandhra* there is the one-thousand petalled lotus. In the Moon's disc which is there, the Mother resides. The crown is the place of knowledge. The stream of ambrosia that flows from there generates the supreme bliss. The Mother who is *Śrī Vidyā* is there. If She is worshipped, knowledge will become manifest, and ignorance will disappear. This has been stated in the *Saundaryalaharī*. In the *Āryā-dviśatī* and the *Mūkapañcasatī* also, it has been declared that knowledge arises as a result of worshipping the Mother.

That is why worshipping the Mother is equivalent to worshipping all the Gods. Even if it is not possible for us to worship by ourselves, we may go to the temples etc., where the sages and great persons have worshipped the Mother and offer our obeisance; then, we shall receive the grace of the Mother, and be able to remain whole for all time.

## SRI ADI SANKARA\*

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*Jagadguru Sri Jayendra Sarasvati*

The ages of the world are reckoned in terms of four *Yugas*, known as *Kṛta*, *Tretā*, *Dvāpara* and *Kali*. During *Kṛtayuga*, *dharma* was observed by people almost to the fullest extent even though there were a few instances of *adharma* or evil-doings here and there. To counteract *adharma* Śrī Mahā Viṣṇu descended down to this earth from his heavenly abode, *Vaikuntha-loka* and incarnated Himself five times as *Matsyāvatāra*, *Kūrmāvatāra*, *Varāhāvatāra*, *Nṛsimhāvatāra* and *Vāmanāvatāra*. In the case of all these incarnations, the Lord's descent was spontaneous and not through parents. The Lord made His appearance for a specific emergency on each occasion and disappeared after accomplishing each of those aims. The incarnations of the Lord as Śrī Rāma as well as Parasu-rāma took place in the *tretāyuga* and these *avatāras* were taken as children of parents just as the birth of any other human being. They lived each

\* Translated from original in Tamil.







for hundreds of years. Even during the *tretāyuga* in a certain period unrighteousness gained strength in some areas. Śrī Rāma and Śrī Parasurāma endeavoured throughout their life to counteract this. Thereafter the Lord incarnated Himself as Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Balarāma in the *dvāparayuga* when unrighteousness gained strength and became equal in measure to righteousness. This necessitated the slaying of crores of evil-minded people. The great battle of Mahābhārata was fought for this purpose.

The next and final incarnation of the Lord is *Kalkiyavatāra* which is yet to take place at the close of this *Yuga*.

In the meantime, in view of the circumstances that prevailed in the world in the period after about 2000 years after the commencement of the *Kaliyuga*, Paramesvara, usually residing in Kailāsa, took an incarnation as Śrī Śaṅkara at the village Kālaḍi in Kerala.

The *avatāras* of Lord Viṣṇu took place specifically to punish and slay particular individuals who were the chief cause of unrighteousness and thereby re-establish *dharma*. But even though the *Kaliyuga* is known as *adharmayuga* (i.e. characteristic of its unrighteousness), basically individuals were deeply evil-minded. Therefore infliction of punishment on them was not warranted. Their mind or *buddhi* only had been filled with *adharma* tendencies which could be corrected by imparting true Knowledge. For this purpose and to kindle the light of righteous consciousness *Īśvara* who shines as *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, as the bestower of True Knowledge took *avatāra* as Śaṅkara in this world, lived for only 32 years and

rendered many a great service to the people. He was invested with the sacred thread at the age of five and he not only became proficient in all Śāstras even at such an early age of eight years but also worked miracles such as making the Pūrṇā river alter its course and flow by the side of his house for the convenience of his aged mother, and acquired great fame by blessing a poor house-wife who offered him a dry myrobalan with a shower of gold coins. At that age he renounced the earthly pleasures and took to the order of *Sannyāsi*. Before he was sixteen, he had completed his three important *bhāṣyas* (commentaries) on *Brahasūtra*, *Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Upaniṣads*. He had discussions on Śāstras and *Vedānta* with the great pundits of his days and it is said that his views and arguments were accepted by the Lord of *Kāśī* Śrī Viśvanātha Himself. With the blessings of the great and ancient sage Veda-Vyāsa, Śrī Śaṅkara firmly established Advaita, the Truth of Non-duality. Several times he travelled the length and breadth of the country, visited many *kṣetras* (sacred places) and established *yantras* in the shrines there. The last *yantra-sthāpana* made by him was in the Śrī Kāmākṣī temple at Kancheepuram. Thereafter he ascended the *Sarvajña pīṭha*. He re-organised the method of worship and stream-lined the procedures therefor in several temples.

His approach to Hindu Religion came to stand as its basic tenets. We may enumerate them briefly as follows:—

(1) Acceptance of *saguṇa - avatāra - mūrtis* for worship at the same time accepting the *nirguṇa Brahman*.

(2) Making the *karma khāṇḍa* prescribed in the *Vedas* as a tool to attain the objectives of the *jñāna khāṇḍa*.

(3) Regarding not only our country, the *Bhārata deśa* but also the rivers, the tanks and the mountains thereon as sacred things worthy of great respect and worship.

(4) Establishment of mutual love, sense of service and *bhakti* (devotion to the Almighty) amongst the people and making them live in peace.

(5) Integration of the people in various parts of the country as an unified nation through the system of thought of the higher Self.

In order to cultivate these aims in the hearts of the children in the impressionable age, Śrī Śaṅkara has composed hymns to the various forms of Godhead commencing from *Vināyaka* and ending with *Ānjaneya*. He has also written great books like (1) "prapañca sāraṁ" which abounds in various *mantras* and *tantras* covering a wide range of subjects from the everyday problems of people of the mundane world upto discussions on Self-Realisation, (2) "The Bhaja Govindam" stotra with a view to teach the people the mode of proper living and (3) the "Prasnottara mālika" which is in the form of questions and answers for clarification of our various doubts. In order that these schemes are continually preached and spread amongst the people he established several institutions or *piṭhas*.

The avatāra of Śrī Śaṅkara and the various services he rendered, served as fore-runner to the later religious Heads and social workers and insti-

tutions to serve the people, by providing guidelines for continuing the service. Consequently Śrī Śaṅkara is held in great esteem everywhere as *Jagadguru*, The world Teacher, and his birthday which falls on the *Vaiśākha śuddha pañcami* (the fifth day after the New Moon day in the month of Vaisākha or April-May) is celebrated throughout India as Śrī Śaṅkara Jayanti Festival.

## Ourselves

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With this issue the "Voice of Śaṅkara" completes the fourth year of its publication by the Grace of Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara and with the blessings of Their Holinesses. The plan of the journal should by now be known to the readers. Each issue starts with verses or songs paying obeisance to the Great Ācārya. Then follow discourses by Their Holinesses. We have so far published several hymns of Ādi Śaṅkara with translations as also some of the Prakaraṇas. In some of the issues we have included articles on Advaita contributed by competent scholars. Future issues will follow the same pattern.

An index to the first four volumes by Sri Y. Sambamurti is appended to this number so that it will be helpful to interested readers for ready reference.

We offer our devoted prayers to the Bhagavatpāda and to Their Holinesses so that the *Voice of Śaṅkara* will continue the devoted service it has been rendering.

## Anatma Sri Vigarhana\*

॥ अनात्मश्रीविगर्हणप्रकरणम् ॥

### *Anatma Sri Vigarhana Prakaranam*

(Section dealing with the censure of all acquisitions except of the Knowledge of the Self.)

The above Prakaraṇa (section dealing with the vanity of all acquisitions), consists of eighteen verses including the last two which deal with the fruit of mastering and thinking on it. The style is simple in diction and sublime in ideas, and accords well with the style of Śrī Śaṅkara's *Mohamudgara*. The necessity for knowledge of the Self (Ātmabodha) through direct Self-realisation (Aparokṣa-anubhūti) is emphasized here. The best possession is the knowledge of the Self. The *Mohamudgara* exhorts thus :—“Think about the Self” (ātmānam bhāvaya); “Who am I?” (Ko'ham?). The body is only a temporary abode for the Soul. It is only an instrument meant for doing good deeds. It is a Temple which has worth only so long as the God or Soul exists therein.

The refrain “Tataḥ kim? (what then?) signifies the vanity and futility of what has been stated before.

\* Translation and notes by Dr C. S. Venkateswaran



[ 1 ]

लब्धाविद्या राजमान्या ततः किं  
 प्राप्ता संपत्प्राभवाढ्या ततः किम् ।  
 भुक्ता नारी सुन्दराङ्गी ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ १ ॥

*Labdhā vidyā rājamānyā tataḥ kim*  
*Prāptā sampat prābhavāḍhyā tataḥ kim*  
*Bhuktā nārī sundarāṅgī tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

Learning, honoured by kings, has been acquired, supreme wealth has been obtained, the fair one's company has been enjoyed—all these verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 2 ]

केयूराद्यैर्भूषितो वा ततः किं  
 कौशेयाद्यैरावृतो वा ततः किम् ।  
 तृप्तो मृष्टान्नादिना वा ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ २ ॥

*Keyūrādyair bhūṣito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Kouṣeyādyai - rāvṛto vā tataḥ kim*  
*Tṛpto mṛṣṭānnādinā vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

The body has been adorned with bracelets (and other ornaments), it has been clad in silken (and other rich) robes, it has been pampered with dainty food—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 3 ]

दृष्टा नाना चारुदेशास्ततः किं  
 पुष्टाश्चेष्टा बन्धुवर्गास्ततः किम् ।  
 नष्टं दारिद्र्यादिदुःखं ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ ३ ॥

*Dṛṣṭā nānā cārudeśās tataḥ kim*  
*Puṣṭāśceṣṭā bhandhu vargās tataḥ kim*  
*Naṣṭam dāridryādi duḥkham tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sāksātkṛto'bhūt.*

Many a charming country has been traversed and seen, many a dear relative has been nourished well, the pain of poverty, etc., has gone—all these are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 4 ]

स्नातं तीर्थे जह्नुजादौ ततः किं  
 दानं दत्तं द्व्यष्टसंख्यं ततः किम् ।  
 जप्ता मन्त्राः कोटिशो वा ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ४ ॥

*Snātam tīrthe jahnujādau tataḥ kim*  
*Dānam dattam dvyasṭa samkhyam*  
*tataḥ kim*  
*Japtā mantrāḥ koṭiśo vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sāksātkṛto'bhūt.*

Holy baths have been taken in sacred rivers like the Ganges, the sixteen kinds of gifts have been given, sacred mantras (potent spells) have been

muttered by the crores—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

Gift of precious stones, metals, cows and sweet things are prescribed, in general. Sixteen is a sacred number associated with forms of divine worship and gifts.

[ 5 ]

गोत्रं सम्यग्भूषितं वा ततः किं  
गात्रं भस्माच्छादितं वा ततः किम् ।  
रुद्राक्षादिः सं(सु)धृतो वा ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ ५ ॥

*Gotram samyagbhūṣitam vā tataḥ kim*  
*Gātram bhasmāc chāditam vā tataḥ kim*  
*Rudrākṣādiḥ saṁdhrto vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sāksātkṛto'bhūt.*

The family has been well adorned, the body is well besmeared with holy ashes, the rudrākṣa-rosary etc. have been worn well—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 6 ]

अन्नैर्विप्रास्तर्पिता वा ततः किं  
यज्ञैर्देवास्तोषिता वा ततः किम् ।  
कीर्त्याव्याप्ताः सर्वलोकास्ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ ६ ॥

*Annair viprāstarpitā vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yajñair devāstoṣitā vā tataḥ kim*  
*Kīrtiyā vyāptāḥ sarva lokāś tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sāksātkṛto'bhūt.*

Learned Brahmins have been propitiated with food, the gods have been pleased with sacrificial oblations, fame has spread to all the worlds—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 7 ]

कायः क्लिष्टश्चोपवासैस्ततः किं  
 लब्धाः पुत्राः स्वीयपत्न्यास्ततः किम् ।  
 प्राणायामः साधितो वा ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ ७ ॥

*Kāyaḥ klišṭaścopavāsais tataḥ kim*  
*Labdhāḥ putrāḥ svīya patnyās tataḥ kim*  
*Prāṇāyāmaḥ sādhitō vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sāksātkṛto'bhūt.*

The body has been emaciated by fastings, good sons have been procured in one's wedded wife, control of the breath has been successfully practised—all these, verily, are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 8 ]

युद्धे शत्रुर्निर्जितो वा ततः किं  
 भूयो मित्रैः पूरितो वा ततः किम् ।  
 योगैः प्राप्ताः सिद्धयो वा ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ ८ ॥

*Yuddhe śatrur nirjito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Bhūyo mitraiḥ pūrīto vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yogaiḥ prāptāḥ siddhayo vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sāksātkṛto'bhūt.*

The enemy has been vanquished in battle, strength has been replenished through new allies, the *siddhis* have been attained through the process of Yoga—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

The Siddhis are eight: (1) Animā, (2) Mahimā, (3) Laghima, (4) Garimā, (5) Prākāmyam, (6) Prāpti, (7) Iśitvam, (8) Vaśitvam—superhuman powers becoming extremely small and big in size, of becoming extremely light and heavy, of obtaining anything, freedom of will, mastery over others and control over everything.

[ 9 ]

अब्धिः पद्भ्यां लङ्घितो वा ततः किं  
वायुः कुम्भे स्थापितो वा ततः किम् ।  
मेरुः पाणाबुद्धृतो वा ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ ९ ॥

*Abdhiḥ Padbhyāṃ laṅghito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Vāyuḥ kumbhe sthāpito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Meruḥ Pāṇāvuddhṛto vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

The ocean has been crossed on foot, the vital breath has been retained within (in the *kumbhaka* process of Prāṇāyāma), the great mountain *Meru* has been held in the palm—all these verily, are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 10 ]

ध्वेलः पीतो दुग्धवद्धा ततः किं  
वह्निर्जग्धोलाजवद्धा ततः किम् ।  
प्राप्तश्चारः पक्षिवत्त्वे ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ १० ॥

*Kṣvelaḥ pīto dugdhavadvā tataḥ kim  
 Vahnir jagdho lājavadvā tataḥ kim  
 Prāptaścāraḥ pakṣivatke tataḥ kim  
 Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

Poison has been drunk like milk, fire has been eaten like fried paddy, movement in the sky has been got like a bird—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 11 ]

बद्धाः सम्यक्पावकाद्यास्ततः किं  
 साक्षाद्विद्धा लोहवर्यास्ततः किम् ।  
 लब्धो निक्षेपोऽञ्जनाद्यैस्ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ ११ ॥

*Baddhāḥ samyak pāvakādyās tataḥ kim  
 Sākṣādvīddhā lohavaryās tataḥ kim  
 Labdho nikṣepo'ñjanādyaīs tataḥ kim  
 Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt*

The fire and other elements, have been controlled, metals like iron have been directly pierced, the treasure (inside the earth) has been detected with the help of collyrium, etc.—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 12 ]

भूपेन्द्रत्वं प्राप्तमुर्व्यां ततः किं  
 देवेन्द्रत्वं संभृतं वा ततः किम् ।  
 मुण्डीन्द्रत्वं चोपलब्धं ततः किं  
 येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ १२ ॥

*Bhūpendratvaṃ prāptamurovyāṃ tataḥ kim  
Devendratvaṃ sambhṛtam vā tataḥ kim  
Muṇḍīndratvaṃ copalabdham tataḥ kim  
Yena svātmā nāiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

Sovereignty over the earth has been obtained, lordship of the gods in Heaven has been secured, lordship over the ascetics (with shaven heads) has been attained—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 13 ]

मन्त्रैः सर्वैः स्तम्भितो वा ततः किं  
बाणैर्लक्ष्यो भेदितो वा ततः किम् ।  
कालज्ञानं चापिलब्धं ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ १३ ॥

*Mantraih sarvaih stambhito vā tataḥ kim  
Bāṇāirlakṣyo bhedito vā tataḥ kim  
Kālaññānam cāpi labdham tataḥ kim  
Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

Everything has been controlled through mantras (potent spells), the target has been unerringly pierced with arrows, knowledge of Time (past, present and future) has been acquired—all these, verily are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 14 ]

कामातङ्कः खण्डितो वा ततः किं  
कोपावेशः कुण्ठितो वा ततः किम् ।  
लोभाश्लेषो वर्जितो वा ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ १४ ॥

*Kāmātaṅkaḥ khaṇḍito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Kopāveśaḥ kuṅṭhito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Lobhāśleṣo varjito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

The malady of desire (kāma) has been cut (kept) off, the effect of anger has been blunted, the all-embracing evil of avarice has been kept away all these—verily, are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 15 ]

मोहध्वान्तः पोषितो वा ततः किं  
जातो भूमौ निर्मदो वा ततः किम् ।  
मात्सर्यातिमीलिता वा ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ १५ ॥

*Mohadhvāntaḥ Poṣito vā tataḥ kim*  
*Jāto bhūmau nirmado vā tataḥ kim*  
*Mātsaryārtir mīlitā vā tataḥ kim*  
*Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

The gloom of delusion has been crushed, all pride has been shed here, the disease of jealousy has been erased—all these, verily, are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 16 ]

धातुर्लोकः साधितो वा ततः किं  
विष्णोर्लोको वीक्षितो वा ततः किम् ।  
शम्भोर्लोकः शासितो वा ततः किं  
येन स्वात्मा नैव साक्षात्कृतोऽभूत् ॥ १६ ॥



*Dhāturlokaḥ sādrito vā tataḥ kim  
Viṣṇorloko vīkṣito vā tataḥ kim  
Sambhorlokaḥ sāsito vā tataḥ kim  
Yena svātmā naiva sākṣātkṛto'bhūt.*

The world of Brahmā has been acquired, the world of Viṣṇu has been seen and the world of Śiva has been ruled over—All these, verily, are in vain to him by whom the Self has not been realised.

[ 17 ]

यस्येदं हृदये सम्यगनात्म श्रीविगर्हणम् ।  
सदोदेति स एवात्मसाक्षात्कारस्य भाजनम् ॥ १७ ॥

*Yasyedaṁ hr̥daye samyaganātmaśrī vigarhaṇam  
Sadodeti sa evātma sākṣātkārasya  
bhājanam*

He is the only locus (place) for Self-realisation in whose heart always arises this thought relating to the topic dealt before (Anātmāśrī-vigarhaṇa).

[ 18 ]

अन्ये तु मायिक जगद्भ्रान्तिव्यामोहमोहिताः ।  
न तेषां जायते कापि स्वात्मसाक्षात्कृतिर्भुवि ॥ १८ ॥

*Anye tu māyikajagadbhrānti vyāmoha  
mohitāḥ  
Na teṣāṁ jāyate kvāpi svātma-  
sākṣātkṛtirbhuvī*

Others are infatuated by the delusion of this illusory world. Self-realisation is not for such people on this earth.

## Umamahesvara Stotram\*

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*Sankara Bhagavatpada*

This hymn of praise is devoted to Lord Mahes'vara who is the inseparable companion of Umā who represents his sakti. The nondifference between the sakti and saktimān is given an anthropomorphic form in the half male half female Ardhanārīsvara in temples. These two otherwise called Pārvatī and Paramesvara by Kālidāsa in his song of invocation in Raghuvamsa are rightly compared by him to that eternally inseparable pair the word and sense, *vāk* and *artha*, a truth which Kātyāyana, the grammarian states in his first vārttika viz. 'Siddhe sabdārthasambandhe...' (when word, its meaning and their relation are learnt to be eternal...). The beginning of every verse is marked by the pañcākṣara.

[ 1 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यां नवयौवनाभ्यां  
परस्पराश्लिष्टवपुर्धराभ्याम् ।  
नगेन्द्रकन्यावृषकेतनाभ्यां  
नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

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\*Translation and commentaries by prof. P. Thirugnanasambandan.

*Namaḥ śivābhyām navayauvanābhyām*  
*Parasparāśliṣṭa-vapurdharābhyām*  
*Nagendrakanyā-vṛṣaketanābhyām*  
*Namo namaḥ Śaṅkara pārvatībhyām*

Obeisance to Śiva and Śivā (Umā) the eternally young pair who hold each other's body in mutual embrace. I offer again and again my obeisance to Śaṅkara and Pārvatī, the one with the bull for his banner and the other the beloved daughter of the king of mountains (Himavān).

'Being ever young' indicates that they have no beginning or end. Pārvatī, the daughter of Himavān even by her hard penance 'tapaḥ samādhi' (vividly described by Kālidāsa in his Kumārasambhava), won the heart of Śiva and his hand too, nay, one half of his body. The word Śiva means the source of auspiciousness.

[ 2 ]

नमःशिवाभ्यां सरसोत्सवाभ्यां  
 नमस्कृताभीष्टवरप्रदाभ्याम् ।  
 नारायणेनार्चितपादुकाभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ śivābhyām sarasotsavābhyām*  
*Namaskṛtābhīṣṭa-varapradābhyām*  
*Nārāyaṇenārcita-pādukābhyām*  
*Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām.*

Obeisance to Śiva and Śivā to whom gay festivals are performed, who grant the things desired by the suppliants and whose feet are worshipped by

Nārāyaṇa. Obeisance to Śaṅkara and Pārvatī ever and anon.

Their grace extends to anyone with sincere devotion. Kaṅṅappar and Mānikkavācakar and there are legions besides who attained their cherished goal by the grace of this Divine pair.

To say that 'Nārāyaṇa worshipped Śiva' and vice versa is a Purāṇic convention intended to highlight the supremacy of the Iṣṭadevatā cf. 'Tikožhum Tirumāloṭu Nānmuhanum puhazhum Perumān'—St. Jñānasambandha (II. 158,1). He himself establishes the identity of the Trimūrti in another hymn thus — 'Viraimalarōn ceṅkaṇmāl Īṣan eṅṅu mūvarāya mutal oruvan' - 'the One Supreme who combines the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.' Śaṅkara is one who confers auspiciousness.

[ 3 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यां वृषवाहनाभ्यां  
 विरिञ्चिविष्णुवन्द्रसुपूजिताभ्याम् ।  
 विभूतिपाटीरविलेपनाभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām vṛṣavāhanābhyām*  
*Viriñciviṣṇuvindra-supūjitābhyām*  
*Vibhūti-pāṭīra-vilepanābhyām*  
*Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām.*

Obeisance to Śiva and Śivā mounted on the sacred bull who are worshipped with devotion by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra. More and more of obeisance to Śaṅkara and Pārvatī who are smeared with the holy ash and saffron.

Viṣa or the holy bull is said to represent 'dharma'. The divine pair being mounted on the bull signifies that 'dharma' is the base of wisdom and love. 'Vibhūti' smeared over 'Śiva's body signifies the destructability of this impermanent world as well as the powers of the supereminent Śiva. The two together stand for the perfection of Bliss and beauty.

[ 4 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यां जगदीश्वराभ्यां  
जगत्पतिभ्यां जयविग्रहाभ्याम् ।  
जम्भारिमुख्यैरभिवन्दिताभ्यां  
नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām jagadīśvarābhyām  
Jagatpatibhyām jayavīgrahābhyām  
Jambhārimukhyair abhivanditābhyām  
Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām*

Obeisance to Śiva and his consort, the God and Goddess of the Universe, the Overlords of the worlds, the embodiment of success. Obeisance for ever to Śaṅkara and Pārvatī who are saluted by Indra and others.

The word 'jagat' is called so because it is always in a state of flux, ever moving. Indra is called 'Jambhāri,' the enemy of the demon Jambha. Śrīkanṭha in his Brahmasūtrabhāṣya 1. 1. 2 says 'Nikhilamaṅgalādhāratayā Śivatattvam avagam-yate' — the Śivatattva is to be understood as the locus of everything auspicious.

[ 5 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यां परमौषधाभ्यां  
पञ्चाक्षरीपञ्जररञ्जिताभ्याम् ।

प्रपञ्चसृष्टिस्थितिसंहताभ्यां  
नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām Paramauśadhābhyām  
Pañcākṣari pañjararañjitābhyām  
Prapañcasṛṣṭi-sthiti-saṁhṛtābhyām  
Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām*

Obeisance to Śiva and His consort, than whom there is no other medicine (to cure the ills of the spirit). They delight in the cage of the pentad of holy syllables. They are the authors of the cosmic deeds of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe. To them I offer my repeated salutations.

Rudra is described in the Ṛg Veda as the greatest among the physicians, the bhiṣaktama who cures the ills of 'saṁsāra. Mūka kavi in his 'Stutiśatakam' (v. 95,98) refers to Devī Kāmākṣī as one who with her hand destroys the bonds of the soul (pāśacchedahasta) and also performs the cosmic deeds. He adores her thus - 'Tvayaiva jagadambayā bhuvanamaṇḍalī sūyate (By Thee the Mother of the Universe, the worlds are brought into existence)' 'Tvayaiva karuṇārdrayā tad api rakṣaṇam niyate, (By Thee the Compassionate, the same is protected) 'Tvayaiva kharakopayā nayanapāvake hūyate' (By Thee, in extreme wrath they are made oblations in the fire of your eyes). The pentad of holy syllables, when uttered by a devotee, are enough to captivate them.

[ 6 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यामतिसुन्दराभ्यां  
अत्यन्तमासक्तहृदम्बुजाभ्याम् ।  
अशेषलोकैकहितङ्कराभ्यां  
नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām atisundarābhyām  
 Atyantam āsakta-hṛdambujābhyām  
 Aśeṣalokaikahitaṁkarābhyām  
 Namō Namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām*

Obeisance to Śiva and His consort in whom one finds the acme of beauty, and whose lotus-like hearts are closely drawn to each other. I salute ever and anon Śaṅkara and Pārvatī who ever do good to all the worlds.

The Vedas speak about Śiva as 'Sundara', and He is called 'Cokkan' in Tamil. The earnestness and compassion displayed by the Divine pair towards devotees is the theme of many poems and purāṇas. When the entire world was convulsed in the grip of fear on the upsurge of poison from the ocean that was churned in days of yore by the gods and demons, when everyone took to his heels to protect his skin, it was Lord Śiva who is ever motivated in his action by the good of the whole cosmos, that put in his mouth that deadly poison. This act of supreme grace is eulogised by Puṣpadanta in 'Śivamahimnaḥ Stotra'. 'Sa kalmāṣaḥ kaṅṭhe tava na kurute naśriyam aho, vikāro'pi ślāghyo bhuvanabhayaabhaṅgavyasaninaḥ'. "Ah, that black spot on your neck indeed lends beauty to you ! In the case of one who devotes himself to the task of annihilating the fear of the world, any abnormality becomes laudable' (v.14).

[ 7 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यां कलिनाशनाभ्यां  
 कङ्कालकल्याणवपुर्धराभ्याम् ।  
 कैलासशैलस्थितदेवताभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām kalināśanābhyām*  
*Kaṅkāla-kalyāṇa-vapurdharābhyām*  
*Kailāśasailasthita-devatābhyām*  
*Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām.*

Obeisance to Śiva and Śivā who destroy the evils of this dark age. They assume a form marked at once by skeletal frame and auspicious things. I offer repeated salutations to the divine pair, the denizens of Kailāsa.

The sufferings of the souls in this Kali age are mitigated by this benign Divinity if one surrenders himself to Him as Mārkaṇḍeya did. He is above and beyond the system of values that we have of what is beautiful and ugly, auspicious and inauspicious. He is both Kankāla-Rudra and Kalyāṇasundara. The awe-inspiring Mahiṣāsūramardī is at the same time Sundaranāyikī. In fact as Kālidāsa says— 'He may be decked with jewels or entwined by serpents; He may be clad in elephant's hide or superfine silk; He may hold the skull in his hand or moon on his head. None can say with certainty what his real form is (Kum. Sambh. V,78).

[ 8 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यामशुभापहाभ्यां  
 अशेषलोकैकविशेषिताभ्याम् ।  
 अकुण्ठिताभ्यां स्मृतिसंभृताभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām aśubhāpahābhyām*  
*Aśeṣalokaika-viśeṣitābhyām*  
*Akuṅṭhitābhyām smṛtisambhṛtābhyām*  
*Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām.*



Obeisance to Śiva and His consort who dispel all evils, who constitute the Supreme Being of all the worlds, whose power is unimpeded and who are reached by following the Smṛtis. I offer my salutations to Śaṅkara and Pārvatī.

St. Jñānasambandha assures the people that those who worship the Lord of the 'Karavīra kṣetra' will not be afflicted by sorrows of mundane existence (I.58-6). The Devī Māhātmyam similarly affirms: "Those who meditate on the Caṇḍikā persistently will be free from all fear and illness, reap everlasting glory and ultimately liberation"—Devīdhyānam 29-30.

[ 9 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यां रथवाहनाभ्यां  
 रवीन्दुवैश्वानरलोचनाभ्याम् ।  
 राकाशशाङ्काभमुखाम्बुजाभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām rathavāhanābhyām  
 Ravīnduvaiśvānaralocanābhyām  
 Rākāśaśāṅkābha-mukhāmbujābhyām  
 Namo namaḥ Śaṅkara-pārvatībhyām.*

Obeisance to Śiva and his spouse mounted on the chariot; they have the sun, moon and fire for their eyes; their lotus-like face resembles the full moon. Let me offer my stream of salutations to Śaṅkara and Pārvatī.

That the Sun, moon and fire are the three eyes of Śiva indicates that He is the source of all lights—jyotiṣām jyotiḥ; and that He is the witness of every thing in the world at all times and that He is the illuminer of jñāna by dispelling the darkness of ignorance or avidyā.

[ 10 ]

नमः शिवाभ्यां जटिलन्धराभ्यां  
 जरामृतिभ्यां च विवर्जिताभ्याम् ।  
 जनार्दनाब्जोद्भवपूजिताभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām jaṭilandharābhyām  
 Jarāmṛtibhyām ca vivarjitābhyām  
 Janārdanābjodbhava pūjitābhyām  
 Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām.*

Obeisance to Śiva and His Consort with matted locks of hair. They are free from old age and mortality. I salute incessantly Śaṅkara and Pārvatī who are worshipped by Janārdana and lotus-born Creator.

Śiva and Pārvatī have been described as engaged in meditation on one's own self and as a 'yogī' and 'yogini'; it is natural that they are associated with matted locks.

The Śīvetāśvatara Upaniṣad describes Rudra as 'amṛtatv-asya Īśānaḥ;' the lord of immortality (III. 15) and as such it follows that He is not subject to decay and mortality.

(11)

नमः शिवाभ्यां विषमेक्षणाभ्यां  
 बिल्वच्छदामल्लिकदामभृद्भ्याम् ।  
 शोभावतीशान्तवतीश्वराभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām Viṣamekṣaṇāhhyām  
 Bilvacchadā-mallikadāmabhr̥dbhyām  
 Śobhāvātī-śāntavātīśvarābhyām  
 Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām.*

Obeisance to Śiva and His spouse with three eyes and who wear a garland wreathed with 'bilva' and jasmine. I offer again and again salutations to Śaṅkara and Pārvatī, the Divine pair marked by beauty and serenity.

It was the third eye of Lord Śiva that burnt to ashes Cupid, the egoistic God of love who used flowers as weapons against the Yogi Śiva. He is extremely pleased with the flowers offered in wreaths with devotion and humility.

(12)

नमः शिवाभ्यां पशुपालकाभ्यां  
 जगत्त्रयीरक्षणबद्धहृदयाम् ।  
 समस्तदेवासुरपूजिताभ्यां  
 नमो नमः शङ्करपार्वतीभ्याम् ॥

*Namaḥ Śivābhyām Paśupālakābhyām  
 Jagattrayīrakṣaṇa baddhahṛdbhyām  
 Samastadevāsura-pūjitābhyām  
 Namo namaḥ Śaṅkarapārvatībhyām.*

Obeisance to Śiva and His Consort who protect the souls. Their heart is ever set in protecting all the three worlds. My obeisance goes to them for ever, Śaṅkara and Pārvatī who are adored by all the gods and demons alike.

'Paśupati' is the appellation of Śiva that occurs in the famous Śrī Rudram. It proclaims the fostering care that Śiva bestows on the souls in redeeming them from the shackles of 'Saṁsāra' by extending His Grace which in other words is called 'Aruḥ śakti' and Śivā, the Devī is that śakti inseparable from him.

ॐ  
[ 16 ]

स्तोत्रं त्रिसन्ध्यं शिवपार्वतीभ्यां  
भक्त्या पठेद्द्वादशकं नरो यः ।  
स सर्वसौभाग्यफलानि भुङ्क्ते  
शतायुरन्ते शिवलोकमेति ॥

*Stotram trisandhyam Śivapārvatībhyām  
Bhaktyā paṭhed dvādaśakam naro yaḥ  
Sa sarvasaubhāgyaphalāni bhun̄kte  
Śatāyur ante Śivalokam eti.*

One who recites with devotion this hymn of praise of twelve verses on Śiva and Pārvatī in the morning, noon and evening, shall enjoy the fruits of prosperity in full, lives for one hundred years and finally reach Śivaloka.

This verse in the form of 'phalaśruti' stresses the effect of 'saṁkīrtana', a means of liberation far simpler than others like the method of yoga and jñāna. We may recall what Śrīdhara Venkateśa popularly known as Ayyāvāl says in *Ābhyāśaṣṭī*, 'Hundreds of Vedic śākhās, purāṇas and āgamas are not capable of removing the ills of worldly existence which however can be removed only by "Śivanāmabhajana" (V. 7) This hymn of Śaṅkara demonstrates this truth.

# Vedantic Meditation and Its Relation to Action

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*T. M. P. Mahadevan*

*Editor's Introduction:* There are two traditions in Hinduism, one theistic and the other supra- or transtheistic. Theistic schools in Vedānta include *Viśiṣṭādvaita* and *Dvaita*. The *Viśiṣṭādvaita* believes that the soul is a part of God, and that in samsāra it has broken away; thus spiritual discipline is designed to restore the whole: the soul has to again become part of God. *Dvaita*, the pluralistic school, believes that the soul is related to God as servant to master. Through devotion the soul has to become the servant of God and thereby regain its right relation to Him. Here again "becoming" is relevant. In the *Advaita* school of Vedānta, which is supra- or transtheistic, the soul is a reflection of the Absolute, only apparently conditioned by the body-mind complex. Here we do not speak of becoming, i.e., the reflection becoming the prototype, but rather of recognizing what one already is.

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Paper presented at the Colloquium on "Traditional Modes of Contemplation and Action" at the Rothko Chapel, Houston Texas, U.S.A. in February 1973.

The tradition of *Advaita Vedānta* is presented in this paper with a particular reference to the theme of this colloquium, contemplation and action. What place do action, meditation, and contemplation have in guiding the soul to its goal of freedom and liberation? According to *Advaita*, release or *mokṣa* is the eternal nature of the self, the natural state of the non-dual Self. Situated as we are in the temporal process, ignorance prevents us from realizing that our true nature is the eternal non-dual Brahman or *Ātman*. Realization in *Advaita* is the removal of this ignorance, so it is the direct means to release. Action cannot be the direct means, for *karma* or action, born of ignorance, does not merely mean the movement of the body or the operation of the mind; it implies the false identification of the Self with the ego. Meditation is mental action, and meditation and contemplation too are not the direct means of release. Do action and meditation have no place at all in the discipline that leads to release? They do indeed have a place, but a distinction is made between direct means and auxiliaries, and among auxiliaries a distinction is made between the remote auxiliary and the proximate one. Action is a remote auxiliary and meditation is a proximate one, but knowledge alone is the means of release.

The Vedānta is not only a view of reality but also a way of life. The Upaniṣads which constitute Vedānta (literally, the Veda-end) not only teach about the ultimate reality which is referred to by such terms as *Brahman* and *Ātman*, they also detail the methods by means of which the reality is to be realized. Here, the expression "realized" does not

mean "to be made real," but "to be experienced as the sole reality." According to the Upaniṣads, as expounded by Śaṅkara (the outstanding philosopher of *Advaita Vedānta*, "the Absolute Spirit is the sole reality; the world of phenomena is an illusion; the so-called individual soul is the Absolute itself, and no other." The world appears to be real, and the soul as different from the Absolute, because of nescience or ignorance. It is ignorance that causes the bondage of the soul which consists in its involvement in the recurring cycle of birth and death. What can remove ignorance is knowledge — knowledge of the non-dual Self; knowledge effects the release of the soul by removing ignorance. When ignorance is removed, there is release (*mokṣa*). Release is only another name for the eternal Self (Brahman, Ātman). The Self which is to be realized is not the object of an act. It is ever existent, or is existence per se; it does not depend on human activity. This is the position of Vedānta, according to Śaṅkara: knowledge (*jñāna*) is the means to release, and not action.

The goal of Vedānta as taught in the Upaniṣads is release, which is *not* what-is-to-be-accomplished. It is rather the eternal nature of the Self. Release is not a new acquisition; it is the realization of what eternally is. Anything that is caused by action is bound to perish. Through action one of four results may be obtained: origination, attainment, purification, and modification. Of these, origination, attainment, and modification are not possible in respect to the eternally attained, unchanging Absolute. Nor may we suppose the possibility of

purification (removing unrighteousness, etc.), for the Absolute is ever pure, flawless, and undefiled. In reaching a place or in curing a disease, there is required action in the form of movement or taking medicine. But, in the case of the Absolute Self which is "attained" from eternity (the word "attained" is used only figuratively), what need is there for activity? What should be removed is ignorance; and for the removal of ignorance knowledge alone is potent. A person not knowing what is already attained, such as the gold ornament round his neck, wants to attain it again, and not knowing that what is perceived as a snake in near-darkness is only a rope, wants to avoid it. What he desires is accomplished, however, not by any act, but by mere knowledge. Similarly, in the attainment of the eternally attained Self and in the remedying of eternal transmigration, the means is the knowledge of truth.

That the attainment of the Self (Brahman) is figurative becomes evident from such scriptural texts as "and being (already) released, he is released," "being (already) Brahman, he attains Brahman."<sup>2</sup> Release has neither a beginning nor an end. If release had a beginning, it would also have an end. And if it had an end, it would be a misnomer to call it release. Further, if release be attainable by an act, then its relation to body, senses, etc., would have to be predicated, and there would be for it the capacity to increase and decrease. And that which is subject to growth and decay is not imperishable. There is no embodiment for the self in release. Release, as we have noted, is the natural and eternal



state of the self. It comes to be clouded by nescience, and as a consequence, the nonembodied appears as if embodied, the pure appears as if impure, the eternally attained appears as if unattained. When ignorance is removed by knowledge, Brahman, as it were, is attained.

Action which is a product of ignorance cannot destroy its parent. The delusive cognition of the rope-snake is not removed by the darkness which is its cause. Pain is the result of being embodied; the body has its root in the previously acquired merit and demerit; merit and demerit are the fruit of prescribed and prohibited acts; these acts are dependent on appetite and aversion; appetite and aversion are conditioned by attractiveness and unattractiveness which are superimposed on sense objects; superimposition is caused by the world of duality which appears to be real on account of noninquiry; the world of duality, however, is illusory, like nacre-silver, and it is the result of this ignorance which obscures the non-dual self. Hence ignorance of the self is the sole cause of all evil; and it is only knowledge that can remove ignorance. Delusion which is brought about by nescience is dispelled by the cognition of the true. Darkness is destroyed by light alone. The removal of nescience can be by knowledge alone, not by any act.

Is not knowledge, it may be asked, an act of the mind? The reply is that knowledge is not an act. Action is dependent on the will of the agent; knowledge should conform to the nature of reality. To go to a distant town, for instance, action is necessary.

The action of going, however, is determined by the will of the agent. One may go, or not go, or go by alternative modes of transport. But the case of knowledge is otherwise. In the matter of perceiving a green parrot perching on a tree, for example, the perceiver has no option. He cannot "will" to perceive it as a leaf. Knowledge must conform to the object. It is true that action may precede knowledge but knowledge itself is not an act.

In order to understand what knowledge is, we should contrast it with action. Although both action and knowledge relate to the mind, action is what the agent does and is dependent on his will, as we have seen, whereas knowledge must be conditioned by its object. Action is *kartri-tantra*; it depends on the agent. Knowledge is *vastu-tantra*; it depends on the content of its object. For instance, it is within the sphere of a man's will to decide to go to a place or not to go, and if to go how to get there. Such is not the case with knowledge. If what is in front of me is a post and I mistake it for a ghost, that would not be knowledge. Knowledge should conform to its object; it cannot be arbitrarily constituted by an act of will. Will is not Idea. Opinion and belief, in so far as they are conditioned by will, do not constitute knowledge. If one worships an image believing it to be Viṣṇu, one may obtain the appropriate meritorious results; but this is not a case of knowledge. Acts may precede knowledge such as, in visual perception, the act of turning the face in the direction of the object and opening the eyes, etc. But perception itself consists in the revelation of its content.

If knowledge is the means to release, and not action, it may be asked if there is no place at all for action in the scheme of Vedāntic discipline. The answer is that there is indeed a place. The competence to tread the path of knowledge is gained only when one's mind has become pure. For the purification of the mind, the means is *karma-yoga*, the performance of one's duties without attachment to results.

It is not action that binds us so much as our attachment to the fruit of action. So, desirelessness or freedom from attachment is what we should first achieve. By mere inaction it is not possible to achieve this. We may be inactive outside, but intensely active inside. Action does not mean mere bodily movement. Action is conditioned by the soul's sense of agency through the wrong identification with its body, etc. Freedom from the sense of agency cannot be gained by making the body motionless. The desire for inactivity is as much harmful as that for the fruit of action. So, the principle of *karma-yoga* is this: Let not the desire for fruit be the motive for your actions, and, too, let not there be a longing for inaction.

Is it possible to act without motive? It is true that there cannot be endeavor without motive. But instead of having a different motive for each action, one should have one and the same motive for all actions. That motive should be inner purification, which is essential for following the path of knowledge that leads to Brahman-realization. Unless the mind is thoroughly cleansed, it will not receive the ray of

wisdom, that illumination which reveals the non-dual Self.

The path of knowledge consists of three phases: study or "hearing" (*śravaṇa*) reflection (*manana*), and contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). Study stands for the proper understanding of the Vedāntic texts. The texts fall into two categories; intermediary and major. The intermediary texts relate to the nature of the world, the nature of the individual soul, the nature of the non-dual Self, etc. The major texts impart the supreme knowledge of identity. From the intermediary texts, only mediate knowledge of the truth is gained. From the major texts, the direct experience of the plenary reality may be obtained. In the case of the eminently competent seeker, even a single hearing of the major text "that thou art" (*tat tvam asi*) will be enough to effect release. But for others, impediments arise in the form of long-established false beliefs, the belief that the Vedānta teaches what is impossible (*asambhāvanā*), and the belief in what is contrary to the truth (*viparīta-bhāvanā*). The first of these beliefs should be countermanded through rational reflection (*manana*); and the second should be removed through the practice of contemplation (*nididhyāsana*). When the impediments have been destroyed, there arises the intuitive experience of the non-dual Self. The intuition which is the final mental mode is technically called *akhaṇḍākāra-vṛtti*, the mode which has taken the form of the impartite Self. Although it is a mode of the mind, it is not like the other modes. It destroys the other modes and finally destroys itself, with the result that the self-luminous non-dual Brahman

alone remains. The final mental mode destroys ignorance or nescience; when nescience is destroyed, bondage disappears, and there is gained self-realization which is release.

To follow the path of knowledge which is the path of inquiry, Śaṅkara lays down certain qualifications as being necessary: the discrimination of the eternal from the noneternal phenomena; nonattachment to the enjoyment of fruit here or in a hereafter; the possession in abundance of virtues such as calmness, equanimity; and the longing for release. Of these four qualifications, each that is earlier than another is the cause for acquiring the subsequent one. He who is endowed with these qualifications is the one who is eligible for pursuing the path of knowledge.

It should be obvious that the qualifications of eligibility are difficult to obtain. What one should basically achieve is perfect mind control. The method of mind control through concentration and meditation, which is known as *rāja-yoga*, is an auxiliary discipline to the path of knowledge. This method which is generally referred to as *yoga* is very ancient. In the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavadgītā, the yogic technique of controlling the mind is taught. The basic text of the classical Yoga school, however, is the *Yoga-sūtra* of Patañjali. The most important concept of the Yoga school is that of *citta* (mind). By itself the *citta* is all-pervading and is called the *kāraṇa-citta* (the cause-mind). But when it is associated with a body it contracts and is called the *kārya-citta* (the effect-mind). The object of yoga is to make the

*citta* assume its original, pure, unmodified status and thus release the *puruṣa* (soul) from its travail.

It is through the functioning of the *citta* that the *puruṣa* acts, enjoys, and suffers. The functionings produce also latent tendencies which, in turn, give rise to other tendencies; and thus the cycle of *saṃsāra* revolves. Tossed by the surge of desires and passions, the individual ego is restless and knows no peace; it is subject to the five afflictions of *avidyā* (ignorance), *asmitā* (erroneous identification of the self with the mind, body, etc.), *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversions), and *abhiniveśa* (the instinctive clinging to life and dread of death). In order to free the self from the stranglehold of *prakṛti* (primal nature), the modifications of the mind must be quelled. The modifications are *pramāṇa* (valid knowledge), *viparyaya* (false knowledge), *vikalpa* (verbal knowledge), *nidrā* (sleep and dream), and *smṛti* (memory). These must be abolished by removing the afflictions.

How are the afflictions to be removed and the mental modifications suppressed? Through continued endeavor (*abhyāsa*) and dispassion (*vairāgya*). It is only by long practice that a person acquires the habit of detachment which will impart to him the discriminative knowledge of the self and ~~and~~ the not-self. The details of this practice are set forth in the form of eight steps which are called the limbs of yoga (*aṣṭāṅga-yoga*). The eight steps are: *yama* (abstentions) *niyama* (observances), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of senses from their objects), *dhāraṇa* (fixed attention), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (concentration).

The first two, *yama* and *niyama* constitute the ethical basis of yoga. The third, fourth, and fifth members of yoga viz., *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, and *pratyāhāra*, govern respectively the disciplining of body, vital force, and sense organs, and are necessary to mind control. The last three limbs of yoga, viz., *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* mark the different stages of concentration. As such they constitute yoga proper and together they are called *samyama* (constraint). A perfectly controlled and concentrated mind is essential for a fruitful inquiry into the nature of Brahman.

Meditation, however, should be distinguished from inquiry, which is the path of knowledge. Meditation is a mental act which is different from knowledge. It is prescribed for those who are not fit for the path of knowledge. It arrests the current of the mind which courses its way to objects of sense, and causes it to contemplate Brahman. Meditation on Brahman may be compared to a delusion that becomes fruitful. A delusion which yields a fruitful result is called *samvādi-brahma*. *Visamvādi-brahma*, its opposite, is a delusion which does not lead to any fruitful consequence. Both the light of a lamp and the light of a gem may be mistaken for a gem. Both are cases of delusion. But the man who mistakes the lamplight for a gem and approaches it gains nothing, whereas the man who mistakes the light of a gem for the gem itself gets the gem. Meditation on Brahman is like the latter. There is meditation on Brahman with attributes (*saguṇa*); there is also meditation on Brahman without attributes, without qualifications (*nirguṇa*). It is the same reality as endowed with

attributes (*saguna*) that is called God when viewed in relation to the empirical world and the empirical souls. Brahman is the same as *nirguna* (attributeless) and as *saguna* (with attributes). There are not two Brahman, as wrongly alleged by some critics. Even when God is referred to as the lower (*apara*) Brahman, what is meant is not that Brahman has become lower in status as God, but that God is Brahman looked at from the lower level of relative experience. These are two forms (*dvirupa*) of Brahman and not two Brahman: Brahman as-it-is-in-itself, and Brahman as-it-is-in-relation-to-the-world. The former is the unconditioned Brahman; the latter is Brahman conditioned by nomenclature, configuration, and change.

Meditation on Brahman with attributes is the same as the worship of God. The object of being devoted to God is to gain His grace and to achieve one-pointedness of mind. It is to be noted that Hinduism in general—and Vedānta in particular—does not take any narrow view of devotion to God. Foremost among the particular characteristics of Indian theism is that it is not fanatical in its outlook and provides for a variety of conceptions regarding the Godhead. No one has a right to claim that his view of God is the only view. As early as the time of the Ṛg-veda it was discovered that, though the Truth is one, it is variously given by different sages. According to the *Mahābhārata*, there is no *muni* (sage) without a view of his own. This is as it should be. As no two minds are identical, the form of faith that suits one may not suit another. Śrī Kṛṣṇa expressly declares that there are different ways to



God, and that even those who worship other gods reach Him alone. What one finds in Hinduism is, thus, a philosophical theism, which is often mistaken for polytheism. The Hindu is prepared to bow before many gods, because he knows that the principle of Divinity is the same in all.

Devotion to any of the forms of God is called *bhakti*. The external accessories of worship are not important. What is essential is that we should offer ourselves to Him. The offering of a flower or a fruit is only symbolic. The ideal devotee is one who leads a dedicated life. "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever obligation you place in the sacred fire, whatever you bestow as a gift, whatever you do by way of penance, offer it to Me," says the Lord. When one's love of God becomes constant and complete, one attains wisdom through His grace, the wisdom which liberates the soul from the bonds.

Superior to meditation on Brahman with attributes is meditation on Brahman without attributes. The criterion by which the superiority of a particular method is determined is its relative proximity to Brahman-knowledge. Judged by this standard, meditation on the attributeless Brahman is superior to the remoter methods such as the performance of rites and rituals and formal worship. Just as a delusion that turns out to be fruitful becomes very much like valid knowledge at the time of yielding fruit, meditation on Brahman, when it matures, becomes like knowledge at the time of release.

Meditation on the attributeless Brahman usually takes the form of meditation on the sacred syllable *Om*, referred to as the *praṇava*. Gaudapāda, an illustrious predecessor of Śaṅkara, explains the method of meditating on the significance of *Om* in his verse commentary on one of the Upaniṣads, the *Māndūkya*. *Om* is the sound which is indicative of Brahman. It is inclusive of all sounds and hence it is the foundation of the world of speech (*vākprapañca*). And of all that is denoted by sound, the ground is Brahman. So, for the purposes of meditation, the sound *Om* is made to stand for the Self or Brahman. Of all the symbols, the sound *Om* has come to be regarded as the most important and fruitful. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says, "The word (or goal) which all the Vedas declare, that which all penances proclaim, and desiring which people lead an austere life, that word (or goal) I tell thee in brief: It is *Om*."<sup>4</sup> The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* compares the *praṇava* (the syllable *Om*) to the bow, the individual soul to the arrow, and Brahman to the target, and says the target is to be unerringly hit: thus is union with Brahman attained.<sup>5</sup> The fifth question of the *Praśna Upaniṣad* relates to the meditation on *Om* as a means to the realization of the higher and lower Brahman, i.e., the unconditioned Brahman and Brahman as conditioned. It is stated there that by means of *Omkāra* the wise one arrives at the Highest, which is quiescent and free from decay, death, and fear.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the use of *Praṇava-dhyāna* or meditation on *Om* is well-recognized in the Upaniṣads. In fact, the *Māndūkya* starts by saying that its object is to expound the significance of *Omkāra*, and sketches the

method of identifying the components of the sound *Om* with the aspects of the Self, and thereby realizing the truth of nonduality. There are four *mātras* or morae of *Om* corresponding to the four phases of the Self. The four *mātras* are *a*, *u*, *m*, and a fourth, which is really *amātra* or morales, represented by the point (*bindu*) of the *anusvāra*. The phases of the Self are *Viśva*, *Taijasa*, *Prājña*, and the *Turīya*; the first three stand for the self in waking, dream, and sleep, respectively, and the fourth is the self per se. The principle of the meditation on *Om* is to equate the *mātras* with the phases. Gaudapāda calls the knowledge of equation *mātrāsam-pratipatti* (i.e., knowing the *mātras* to be identical with the phases) and *omkārasya-pādaśo-vidyā* (knowledge of the morae of *Om* as the phases of the Self). Now, if two things are to be identified or compared, there must be some similarity between them. The *Māṇḍūkya* and, following it, the *Kārikā*, give reasons in each case for the identification of the phases of the Self with the *mātras*. And it is well to remember that the reasons are intended only for helping concentration on the significance of *Om*.

The first of the *mātras* is *a* and the first of the phases is *Viśva*. These two are to be regarded as identical because of the common quality of being the first (*ādi*) as well as that of pervading (*āpti*). Of the sound-components of *Om* *a* is the first; so also of the aspects of the Self, *Viśva* is the first. And just as *a* is pervasive of all speech, *Viśva* is pervasive of the universe. In the case of the second *mātra* *u*, and the second phase of the Self, *Taijasa*, the common qualities are exaltation (*utkarṣa*) and intermediateness (*ubhayatva*). The exaltation of *u* is due to its being

subsequent to *a*. Similarly, Taijasa is exalted over Vis'va, because of its superior order. *U* is intermediate between *a* and *m*, as Taijasa is between Vis'va and Prājña. The common features that constitute the basis for the identification of *m* and Prājña are being the measure (*miti* or *māna*) and the locus of mergence (*apīti* or *laya*). In pronouncing *Om* repeatedly, *a* and *u* merge into and emerge from *m*, as it were. Hence *m* is said to be the measure of the other two *mātras*. Prājña is the measure of Vis'va and Taijasa because these two evolve out of it in creation and enter into it in dissolution; the worlds of waking and dream get resolved in sleep, and from sleep they emerge again. The second common quality is *laya* or disappearance; just as *a* and *u* end in *m*, Vis'va and Taijasa disappear in Prājña. It will be clear that the letters, *a*, *u*, and *m* are employed in this meditation as mnemonics. Each letter stands for the first letter of the words signifying certain features of the Self in its manifestations as Vis'va, Taijasa and Prājña. The second quality of Prājña is the only exception. Thus *a* stands for *ādi* and *āpti*; *u* for *utkarṣa* and *ubhayatva*; *m* for *miti* or *māna*.

The fourth *mātra* is, as we said, really *amātra*. It is the silence into which the sound *Om* culminates. It is the *Om* without the distinction of parts. It has not even a name, and therefore it does not come under the purview of empirical usage. It is the Turīya Self or pure consciousness which transcends the distinctions involved in the forms of Vis'va and Taijasa, and the seed of plurality implicit in Prājña.

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* eulogizes the meditation on the identity of the *mātras* and the phases of the Self by specifying the fruit which each stage in the meditation yields. He who knows Vaisvānara (i.e., Vis'va) as *a*, says the Upaniṣad, obtains all desires and becomes first among the great. He who knows the identity of Taijasa with *u* exalts or increases the continuity of knowledge and becomes equal in or of the same attitude towards all, and in his family none who does not know Brahman is born. He who knows the oneness of Prājña and *m* measures the whole world (i.e., knows its true nature) and becomes the place of its mergence (i.e., he becomes the self which is the cause of the universe). He who knows the morales *Omkāra* in its fullness as signifying the Turīya realizes the Self and does not return to empirical life.

Meditation or *Upāsana* is defined thus by Śaṅkara: the process of taking hold of some stay or *ālambana*, established as such in the sacred texts, and directing a continuous flow of even modes of the mind towards it, without the intervention of any other cognition contrary to it. There must be some point of attention for concentration. This is the *ālambana* (support), which serves in steadying the thought-current and making it flow in one direction. The *pratīka* or images are useful in this way. The centrifugal tendency of the mind is arrested, and it becomes unflickering and one-pointed like the flame of the lamp kept in a still place. The images which are miscalled idols have a place in spiritual discipline because they help to turn the mind of the aspirant Godward.

We shall end this essay by summarizing a short composition ascribed to Śaṅkara, which consists of

five verses. In this composition, *Sādhana-pañcaka*, the disciplines required for gaining release are set forth in an ascending order. The traditional account regarding its composition is that on the eve of Śaṅkara's departure from this world, his disciples gathered round him and begged him for his final instruction. In response Śaṅkara composed this quintad known as *Upadeśa-pañcaka* (the Five Verses of Instruction): "(1) Let the Veda be studied everyday; let the *karma* taught there be performed well; through such performance let God be worshipped; let one reject all thought of desire-prompted action; let the stream of sin be shaken off; let one reflect on the defects in empirical pleasures; let one endeavor in the direction of inquiring into the nature of the Self; let one go out of one's home quickly; (2) let there be association with the good; let there be cultivated firm devotion to God; let virtues like calmness, etc., be practised; let *karma* with its stranglehold be given up soon; let a good teacher be approached; let everyday his *pādukās* (sandals) be worshipped; let him be entreated to teach the one-lettered Brahman, i.e., *Omkāra*; let the major texts of the Upaniṣads be listened to; (3) let the sense of the major texts be inquired into; let the view of the Upaniṣads be well adopted; let one retire from bad logic; let logic that is in conformity with scripture be explored; let there be meditation of the form "I am Brahman"; let day after day pride be eschewed; let debate with the wise be abandoned; (4) let hunger, as a disease, be treated; let everyday alms be eaten as medicine; let one not beg for delicious food; let there be contentment with what one is destined to obtain; let one bear with cold, heat, etc.; let no futile words be

uttered; let the attitude of indifference be cultivated; let favoritism and cruelty to people be discarded; (5) let one remain comfortably in solitude; let the mind be concentrated in what is superior; let the plenary self be easily intuited; let this world be seen as sublated thereby; let past *karma* be allowed to get destroyed; let the *karma* that has begun to fructify be enjoyed here; and then let one stay as the supreme Brahman-Ātman.”

<sup>1</sup>*Kaṣha Upaniṣad* v. 1

<sup>2</sup>*Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* IV. iv. 6.

<sup>3</sup>*Bhagavadgītā*, ix, 27.

<sup>4</sup>*Kaṣha Upaniṣad*, I, ii, 15.

<sup>5</sup>*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II, ii, 3.

<sup>6</sup>*Praśna Upaniṣad*, v, 7.





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वेदान्तार्थाभिधानेन Vedāntārthābhidhā- nena	From "Hariha- rādvaīta-bhūṣa- ṇa".	(17)	I	3	185
वेदान्तोदरवर्ति Vedāntodaravarti	Suresvarācār- ya's "Naiṣkar- myasiddhi"	(19)	I	4	279
व्याकुर्वन् व्याससूत्रार्थं Vyākurvan vyāsasū- trārtham		(54)	IV	1-2	1
शङ्करं अन्तरङ्ग भज रे Śaṅkaram Antaraṅga- bhaja re	Kīrtanam by Mahāmahopā- dhyāya Yajña- svamisāstrigal	(52)	III	4	311

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शङ्कराचार्य भक्तमनो- Śaṅkarācāryam bhak- tamaṇo	Kīrtanam by Subbarāma Dī- kṣitar	(51)	III	3	205
श्रीगुरुं भगवत्पादम् Śrīgurum bhagavat- pādam	“Gurvaṣṭakam”(12)		I	2	100
श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणानाम् Śrutismṛti purāṇānam		(6)	I	1	5
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सदाशिवसमारम्भम् Sadāsiva samāram- bhām		(42)	II	3	169
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(B) DISCOURSES OF HIS HOLINESSES  
 ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARACĀRYAS OF ŚRĪ KĀŅCĪ  
 KĀMAKOṬI PĪṬHA

(i) Jagadguru Śrī Chandrasekharendra Sarasvatī

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अन्नपूर्णास्तोत्रम् Annapūrṇā stotram	Dr. N. Gangadha- ran	II	1	40
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गोविन्दाष्टकम् Govindāṣṭakam	Dr. R. Balasubra- manian	I	4	361	
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श्रीदुर्गापञ्चरत्नस्तोत्रम् Śrī durgā Pañca- ratna Stotram	His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Chandrasekharendra Sarasvatī	Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan	IV	1-2	8



## (iii) Ślokānukramaṇikā

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अङ्गं हरेः Angam hareḥ	Kanakadhārāstot- ram	II	4	299
अजं शाश्वतं Ajam śāśvatam	Vedasārasivastot- ram	IV	3	250
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अज्ञानान्मानस Ajñānānmānasa	Ātmabodha	I	1	71
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अनेनस्तवेन Anena stavena	Śivabhujangam	II	2	137
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अपस्मारकुष्ठ Apasmāra kuṣṭa	Subrahmaṇyabhu- jāngam	I	3	229
अपि व्यापकत्वात् Api vyāpakatvāt	Dasaslokī	II	1	71
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अमितमुदमृतं Amitamudamr- tam	Śivānandalaharī	III	4	348
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अम्भोधरश्याम Ambhodharas'yā- ma	Ardhanārīsīvara- stotram	I	3	222

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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्धृतदाहव्यथा-

खिन्नानां जलकांक्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-

त्येषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसंदायिनी ॥

*saṁsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhūta-dāhavyathā-*  
*khinnānām jalakāṅkṣayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā .*

*paribhrāmyatām,*  
*atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaram brahmādvayaṁ*  
*darśayaty-*

*eṣā śaṅkarabhārati vijayate nirvāṇasaṁdāyini .*

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.