

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA-YEDĀNTA

The VOICE of ŚĀNKAARA

śaṅkara-bhāratī

Editor

T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Volume FIVE

Number TWO



AUGUST

1980

eṣā śaṅkara-bhāratī vijayate
nirvāṇa-saṁdāyini

victorious is the voice of śaṅkara,
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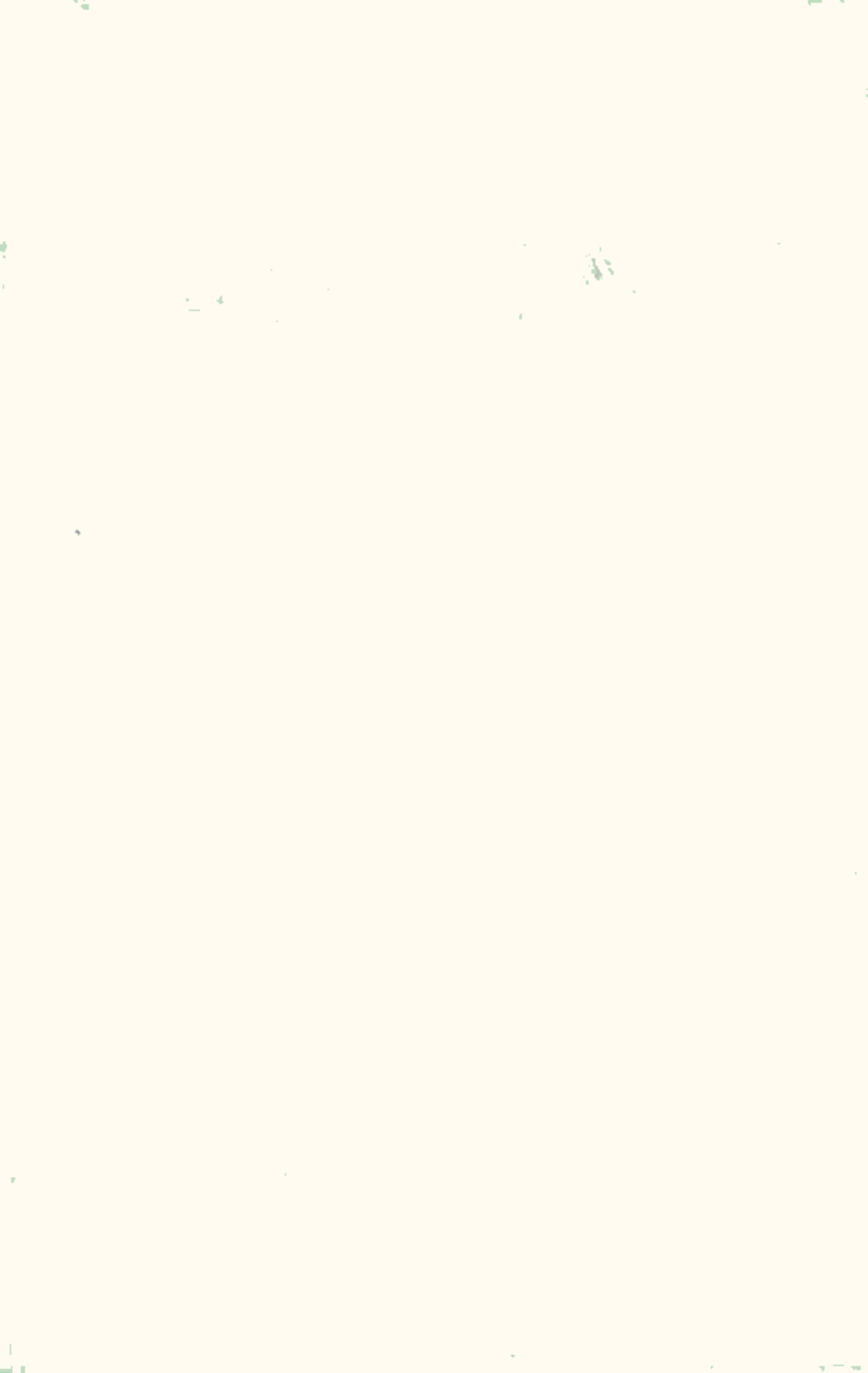
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HOMAGE TO SANKARA

[61]

श्रीमच्छङ्करपादपद्मयुगलं संसेव्य लब्ध्वोचितान्
ज्ञानं परमहंस्येतदमलं स्वान्तान्धकारापनुत् ।
या भूदत्र विरोधिनीमतिरतः सद्भिः परीक्ष्य बुधैः
सर्वत्रैव विशुद्धये मतमिदं सन्तः परं कारणम् ॥

*Śrīmacchaṅkara-pāda padma yugalam
saṁsevya labdhvocivān
Jñānam parama-haṁsyetad-amalam
svāntāndha-kārā panut,
Yā bhūdatra virodhinīm-atirataḥ
sadbhiḥ parīkṣyam budhaiḥ
Sarvatraiva viśuddhaye matamidam
santaḥ-param kāraṇam*

Having served with reverence the feet of the blessed Saṅkara, and obtaining from him this pure knowledge pertaining to the highest ascetics and capable of destroying the inner darkness in oneself,

I have spoken. Let there be no contrary spirit. Let this be examined by good and wise men. This theory is for purification all-round. The exalted ones are the ultimate authority.

—*Sureśvarācārya's Naiṣkarmya Siddhi*
Chapter-IV-Verse-74.

[62]

विष्णोः पादानुगं यां निखिलभवनुदं शंकरोऽवापयोगात्
सर्वज्ञं ब्रह्मसंस्थं मुनिगणसहितं सम्यग्भ्यर्च्य भक्त्या ।
विद्यां गङ्गामिवाहं प्रवरगुणनिधेः प्राप्य वेदान्तदीप्तां
कारुण्यात्तामवोचं जनिमृतिनिवहध्वस्तये दुःखितेभ्यः ॥

*Viṣṇoḥ pādānugam yām nikhila-
bhavanudam śaṅkaro' vāpayogāt
Sarvajñam brahma-saṁstham munigaṇa-
sahitam samyagabhyarcya bhaktyā
Vidyām gaṅgāmivāham pravara-guṇanidheḥ
prāpya vedānta dīptām
Kāruṇyāt-tām-avocam jani-mṛti-nivaha-
dhvastaye duḥkhitebhyaḥ*

The great Śaṅkara acquired through his yoga, this science, which destroys bondage and which emanates from the foot of the all-pervading Viṣṇu. I worshipped with great devotion that omniscient preceptor established in Brahman in the company

of sages. From him, a treasure of exalted qualities, I obtained the science illumined by Vedānta, even as Bhagīratha obtained the sacred Gaṅgā from Śiva. I have declared it out of compassion towards creatures lost in misery, so that their transmigratory existence may be terminated.

—*Sureśvarācārya's Naiṣkarmya Siddhi*
Chapter-IV—Verse-76.

THE FINAL GOAL *

Jagadguru Śrī Chandrasekharendra Sarasvatī

The term *Vedānta* strikes our ears quite often. When anyone utters whatever truth in the course of his talk, we tell him: 'what is this, you are talking *Vedānta*!' Thus, this word is made use of even in jokes. In the *Gītā* too, this term occurs in the Lord's teaching to Arjuna. He says about Himself thus:

वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ।

Vedānta kṛd-veda-videva cāham [XV-15]

The meaning of the word *anta* is end. The term *Vedāntam* therefore signifies the end of *Veda*. What is stated at the end is the conclusive view. If in a newspaper or journal there is the report of the lecture given by a person or an

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T. M. P. Mahadevan.



His Holiness Jagadguru

SRI CHANDRASEKHARENDRASARASWATHI

Sri Sankaracharya Swamikal of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

article contributed by him, we desire to know what is his view. The report or the writing may be long, there may not be time for us to read it entirely. Therefore we read the last paragraph. After the first few sentences, it is enough if we read what is stated at the end. In this way it will be known what he has stated in that lecture or article. By reading the beginning and the end we can conclude what theme is expounded therein.

In that manner the beginning of the *Veda* should be seen; so also its end. Even though the beginning may appear to be a little circuitous there will be adequate indication as to what topic is going to be stated. If we look at the end we shall get to know it clearly. The beginning is called *upakrama* and the end *upasamhāra*. If we look at the beginning and end of a book we shall know what the conclusive thesis of that book is. In between there will be many topics which will serve as grounds, examples and explanations for that conclusion. If the *upakrama* and *upasamhāra* relate to one and the same topic, we may conclude that in the middle also it is the same topic that is extensively discussed.

The government enacts several laws but when there arise several difficulties in regard to the intentions of those laws, they will make a law in order to interpret those laws. This latter is called the law of interpretation.

The Veda is the law that is common to all of us. It has come down beginninglessly. It has also no limit. It is the eternal law, without beginning and end. To it there are no limitations of place and time. God also is of the same nature. He has neither beginning nor end; He is not governed by place and time. Just as there are no limitations for God, even so there are no limitations for His law which is the *Veda*. The statement of the *Veda* never gets changed by time or place. That is why if a person says something, we ask: 'Is what you say a Vedic statement?' Vedic statement means a statement that does not change. This is what we hold.

While speaking about Mahā Viṣṇu, the Tamil poet Pugalendi says :

*"vedattin mun ninṛān; vēlam mudale ena
alaiippa en enṛān engatkiṛai"*

The Veda is beginningless; therefore the poet says that He stood at the beginning of the *Veda*. Velam means elephant. The *Veda*, which is at the beginning, has for its source Viṣṇu. The elephant called Viṣṇu 'O, the source of the Veda!'. At once He came to its rescue. Therefore it is God that is the source of all things. He is the source of the Veda too. He is the first Person. He who is the first Person will naturally be the source of the law.

What is stated in the Vedānta?

यो वेदादौस्वरः प्रोक्तो वेदान्ते च प्रतिष्ठितः ।

yo vedādaḥ svarāḥ prokto vedānte ca pratiṣṭhitaḥ

Scripture both at the beginning and at the end confirms the supreme Reality. It is this *mantra* that we utter when we see the Ācārya and offer him *pūrṇa-kumbha*.

There is a statement in the Veda, there is a chapter in it. How are we to know what view is, set forth therein? If we want to know for determining which conclusion that (i. e. statement or chapter) has been set forth, how should we go about it? If we wish to know which is the conclusion stressed by it what should we do? There are certain rules for determining the purport of the Veda. These are stated in the Mīmāṃsā texts. For the Law which is the Veda, the law of interpretation is Mīmāṃsā. In it there are certain ways devised for interpreting the purport of the Veda.

उपक्रम-उपसंहार, अभ्यास, अपूर्वता, फल, अर्थवाद, उपपत्ति

'upakrama-upasamhāra, abhyāsa, apūrvatā, phala arthavāda, upapatti'

These are the rules devised.

The beginning and end of the Veda relate to one and the same topic. If the beginning speaks of one thing and the end of another there would arise doubt regarding the conclusive view of the Veda. The word which is at the beginning of the

Veda is itself found at the end of the Veda. Therefore although in between a thousand topics may be expounded we must understand that these are for the sake of determining that one topic. Thus we may conclude without any doubt. This is called *upakrama-upasamhāra*.

If in a discourse or in an article a topic is repeatedly mentioned then we may conclude that it is for determining that topic that the discourse or article is intended. We may not know in advance the subject of the discourse. We might not have seen the invitation. There might not have been issued a notice regarding the discourse. We might have gone to hear the discourse fifteen minutes after it had begun. In the middle of that discourse the lecturer speaks of many things yet if a topic is repeatedly mentioned then we may conclude that that is the purport of the discourse. Repeatedly saying a thing is what is known as *abhyāsa*. If we want to memorize anything we repeatedly say it by rote. This is *abhyāsa*. In a gymnasium one repeats a physical exercise. That is *abhyāsa*. Thus *abhyāsa* helps in determining the purport. We may understand that what is repeatedly stated is the conclusive view.

Another mark of determining purport is *apūrvatā*. We might have heard a discourse on a particular day. We hear the person's discourse

the next day. Today also we hear. He may say the things that he said yesterday and the day before yesterday, yet if he says something today which he has not said so far, then that should be the purport of today's discourse. If something is stated which is more than what has been said so far then that new topic should be taken as the special purport of today's discourse. Whatever else is expounded in the middle, all that should be understood as ancillary to the special purport. The mark by which this determination of purport is made is called *apūrvatā* (novelty).

In the same way, in a book many things might have been stated. But if in that book whatever is stated to lead to a fruit thus: "If this be done the appropriate fruit will be gained" then we must know that that statement indicates the purport of the book. This is called *phala*.

We speak about many things in sequence. In the middle we relate a story in order to praise some topic. That which we praise should be the principal topic. It is for indicating this that the story has been told. Thus we can determine the purport. Praising some topic on the ground of relating stories is *arthavāda*. Through this we can discover the purport.

After stating something one may set forth the ground for it, its proof and fitness etc. If these have been explained then the topic to which these

relate should be regarded as the chief purport of the article or discourse concerned. This is known as *upapatti*.

उपक्रमोपसंहारं अभ्यासोऽपूर्वता फलम् । अर्थवादोपपत्ति च
लिङ्गं तात्पर्यनिर्णये ॥

*upakramopasāṅhāram abhyāso'pūrvatā phalam
arthavādupapatti ca liṅgam tātparyā nirṇaye*

Thus the six marks help in the determination of purport. Thus it is stated in the Mīmāṃsā texts. This is known as *tātparyā-liṅga*. In Sanskrit *liṅga* means sign. We may also render the word as characteristic. With the help of these six characteristics we may decide the purport of a book or a discourse.

The Mīmāṃsā rule says: You have to decide the purport of a text or chapter of the Veda with the help of these six *liṅgas* or characteristic marks.

If these six characteristic marks are found in one then we may determine without doubt what its purport is. Of these characteristic marks even if there is one it will do. But in the same topic if all the six characteristic marks are there then without any room for doubt we can determine clearly what the purport is.

If we look at the Veda in the light of the law of interpretation, what is in its beginning is also at the end.

Because the *Svara* which is in the beginning of the Veda is at the end also we can conclude that that is the purport of the Veda.

In Sanskrit '*idam*' means 'this'; '*adaḥ*' means 'that'. There is a word '*tat*' which means 'that'. In order to indicate 'this' there is a word *etat*. *Idam, adaḥ, etat, tat* — the meaning of these four words is stated in the book *Sabda*.

इदमस्तु सन्निकृष्टम्

idam astu sannikṛṣṭam.

Idam means 'what is near us', 'what is in front of us', 'what is before us'.

In Tamil also '*idu*' is what is near, '*adu*' is what is at a distance. In the same way, in Sanskrit also *idam* refers to a thing which is near and *adaḥ* what is at a distance.

Although after every five-hundred miles there is a different language, and thus there are many languages, if we examine carefully all these languages a little—Tamil, Malayālam, Kannaḍam, Saṁskṛtam, Latin, Greek, English—we shall find that there is a kinship among all the languages.

I said that the word '*tat*' means 'that'. What is at a great distance is referred to as that *atidūre vijānīyāḥ*. What is at a great distance is God-head. This is the meaning of the statement. That is *tattvam*. This is stated in the Veda and at the end in Vedānta.

There are many terms such as *puruṣatvam*, *mahatvam* etc. The suffix 'tvam' which is attached to all these terms means 'nature'. The nature of greatness is *mahatvam*. The meaning of *tattvam* is 'the nature of that'. *Tattva vicāram*, *tattva upadeśam* - these expressions mean respectively, 'enquiring into the nature of that,' and 'instruction regarding the nature of that'.

That which is at a great distance is 'that'. A person who is very far is indicated as 'over there' by the fore-finger which in Tamil is called '*āl kāṭṭi viral*' which means the finger which indicates the great person i. e. the supreme Lord.

In Sanskrit the finger is not called *āl kāṭṭi viral*. Its name is *tarjanī*. *Tarjanam* means threatening. When we threaten saying 'Look here—hum!' we use the fore-finger, do we not do so? Therefore the fore-finger is called *tarjanī*. The name, however, which is more appropriate is the Tamil expression *āl kāṭṭi viral*.

God is more distant than all things. The finger which indicates Him as 'That' is the fore-finger. The Veda refers to the supreme Reality as 'That'.

If it is said that God is more distant than all distant things what is the use to us? The Veda says "It is not so, He who is at a great distance is very near us'".

दूराद्दूरे अन्तिके च

dūrād dūre-antike ca

There is a girl who is to be married. Her parents have seen a boy and decided to give their daughter in marriage to him. But that girl stubbornly says "I shall marry only him who is superior to all men". The parents told her "You can do as you like".

That girl thought: 'the superior one among men is the king. If I am to marry anyone, I shall marry him alone'. Having decided thus, she was pursuing the king of that place wherever he went. If at some time the king were to ask "Why do you follow me?", she thought that she would say thus: "I have decided to marry that person who is superior to all men. My view is you are that superior person. So marry me". 'If he marries it is all right. If not I shall not marry at all'. Thus, with this determination she was following the king.

One day, when the king was in a palanquin, there came a *sannyāsin*. The king descended from the palanquin, paid obeisance to the *sannyāsin*, and thereafter got into the palanquin and continued his journey.

That girl saw this. She now changed her earlier view. She thought 'What a mistake I have done! I thought that it is only the king that is the superior person over all men, thinking thus I have

been disappointed. Superior to the king, it seems is the *sannyāsin*. If I marry, it would be this *sannyāsin*. Then she began to follow the *sannyāsin*.

As she was following the *sannyāsin* one day she saw him paying obeisance to the image of Gaṇeśa which was beneath a banyan-tree at the end of a street. On seeing this she thought 'Greater than the *sannyāsin*, it seems, is this Gaṇeśa. Well I shall marry Gaṇeśa'. This was her determination now. Without following the *sannyāsin* she started sitting near Gaṇeśa. Who would go to that Gaṇeśa often other than this girl? Where the figure of Gaṇeśa was, there was not even a temple. Gaṇeśa was beneath the tree. A dog which was going along the street came there and lifting a leg made nuisance there. When she saw this she thought 'What! This dog is greater than this Gaṇeśa', and she began to follow the dog.

A boy threw stones at the dog which was going along the street. It barked at him and ran away.

A man catching hold of the boy scolded him saying "Why did you throw stones at the dog?"

The girl came now to the conclusion "I thought that greater than the dog was the one who threw stones at it, but now the other person had reprimanded the boy. So this other person must be superior to the boy".

At the end it so happened that this other person was the one to whom her father and mother had decided to give her in marriage. She thought "Someone is there at a long distance who is superior to all men" and she was wondering all this time in order to find him but it so happened at the end that that person was no other than the one who was very near her.

Scripture says addressing us 'You think that God is somewhere at a great distance and you wander from place to place in order to find him. As long as you do not know, He certainly remains at a distance. You cannot see Him even if you wander extensively. He is the one who is near you.

दूराद्दूरे अन्तिकेच

Dūrād dūre antike ca

What is called the horizon is where the sky touches the earth. If we look at it from where we are, it would seem that the two meet there. Let us say there is a palmyrah - tree there. We think that if we reach that place we would find the sky and the earth meeting there. But if we go there the horizon will recede and go to a great distance; as we go further and further it will be found to recede more and more. If we keep on going, thinking we came to the palmyrah - tree desiring to catch the horizon but it has now receded, we should go still further in order to reach it; If we thus keep on

going, can we catch it? When we were at a great distance from the palmyrah - tree, the horizon appeared to be there. As soon as we came to the place where the palmyrah stands the horizon receded from us to a great distance. So where is it? It is where you are. The place where you are is it. In this manner God who is referred to as "that", as if He is at a great distance is really with you, He is within you. *Tattvam*. That you are. Thus the *Veda* instructs us. The two words *tat - tvam* when combined, become *tattvam* in our usage.

That which we think is "I" is That, that Consciousness, God. If that Light were not in you, you cannot even think of God. I know myself as 'I', I think of myself as 'I' the consciousness which knows or thinks thus is that. You imagine that 'That' is at a very great distance, it is That which you are.

This is what is stated at the end of the *Veda*. We are going further and further away in search of that *tattva*. The power which knows in the form 'I am in search of it' — that power is seated within you. That you are. God who is referred to as 'That', 'That' is you yourself. Thus the *Veda* declares.

The concluding sections of the *Veda* are called Upaniṣads. What the Upaniṣads refer to by the term 'this' (*idam*) cannot be without a source. There cannot be a 'this' without its origin.

Without a seed a tree will not grow. All this universe consisting of mountains, oceans, sky, earth, cattle, human-beings, anger, fear, love, sense-organs, power etc., is indicated by the word 'this'. There is a source for all things. There are things seen, thought about, there are heat and cold which are felt by touch, there are investigations through the mind and the sense-organs they are all experienced—all these are referred to by the term *idam*. Intelligence, wondrous occurrences, discoveries of science, scientific discoveries that are yet to come, these and others which are understood through the sense-organs should have a source. If there is no source there will be nothing which can be referred to as "this". Without a cause there cannot be anything. There is a cause for all things. If we consider the body of a human being, there is a seed for it. If we take a tree for instance there is a cause for it. Without a cause there can be nothing. You may call it by any name. Whatever power there is, all that must be included in that original cause.

When we observe a tamarind seed sprouting we shall understand. As soon as the sprout is seen, if we split the seed into two we shall see in it a tree (in a diminutive form). There is the power in it of growing into a big tree. This will be the case in all seeds. But it is only in the tamarind seed that this can be seen clearly. Whatever power there is

in the world whatever intelligence and whatever ability, all this should be in the source which is God. Without a source nothing will appear.

What the *Veda* declares emphatically is this : 'Whatever appears as 'this', 'this' has not come into being without a source'. The power which is in the source—it is that which pervades the entire world. Where is that source ? That which is within all which is seen as "this", is the source.

Placing a large mirror before us we see in it our own form: If we place four mirrors in a line and look into them we shall see a thousand forms. He who sees the thousand forms is only one. Thus he who is within and sees as 'this, this,' is God. It is the Reality, that sees all things that are seen, that is the source. That source is consciousness. It is consciousness that is the cause of the entire world. Where is that consciousness. It is in you yourself. That which is impartite may appear to be in you as limited.

This is a small bulb. That is a blue lamp. This lamp is green. Thus there are many forms among lamps. Yet the power that is the electricity is one and the same in them all. The power of electricity pervades everywhere. Here it is within this lamp and makes it shine. Remaining in the fan it makes it rotate. The source of all these effects is one power. When it passes through a wire it gets limit-

ed. When there is lightning with brilliance, when there is water falling from a height, the power which pervades them is electricity. In the same way the nature of being 'that' (*tat*) which is declared at the end of the *Veda*, is 'you' (*tvam*) alone. It is the source which is in you that is omniscient and omnipotent, it pervades through all things.

Gathering all this together the Lord has stated this in the Bhagavad-Gītā in a single verse. Why a single verse? In all the seven-hundred *ślokas* which are there it is the same purport that is taught. If one single verse is mentioned that itself is enough. There is no need for elaboration. Yet all these verses constituting the Bhagavad-Gītā were taught by the Lord with a view that in the minds of those who read them, at least one would stick.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्यु प्रभविष्यु च ॥

avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktamiva ca sthitam
Bhūta bhartṛ ca tajjñeyam grasiṣyū prabhaviṣyū ca

[XIII-16]

In the Bhagavad Gītā there are some verses which would appear to have fallen into our ears. If they are uttered we might remember that we have heard them.

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

*ananyāścintayanto mām ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṃ nityābhi-yuktānām yogakṣemam vahāmyaham*

[IX-22]

This verse may be remembered by all because the Lord Himself says that He would bear all our welfare (acquiring what we want and preserving it).

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmy-
aham [IV-7]*

This verse also, all will remember. Thus some verses are familiar. If we hear some other verses it may appear as if we have not heard them before.

The verses which I quoted at first--have you heard them at any time before? Do you at least recognise as having heard them? Will not the doubt arise in you whether that verse is in the Bhagavad-Gītā or not? It is in the Bhagavad-Gītā. Even the words, we shall find them difficult to utter. Because they are so difficult I have stated them twice or thrice.

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयम् ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥

*avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam
bhūta bhartṛ ca tajjñeyam grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca*

[XIII 16]

Jñeyam means 'what is fit to be known'. What is fit to be known? 'That' (*tat*) is what is fit to be known. For that (*tat*) the Lord has stated certain specific qualities: *bhūta bhartṛ*, *grasiṣṇu*, *prabhaviṣṇu*.

The first quality is *bhūta bhartṛ*. *Bhartṛ* means 'what supports'. *Bhartā* is 'he who supports'. If a man marries a woman, then he has the duty of supporting her. Only then the name *bhartā* will be true. He must become *Bhartā* for all her happiness and sorrow. It is he that has the responsibility of supporting her— *bhartā*.

Bhūta bhartṛ means 'he who supports all beings'. *Bhūta* signifies all living beings as well as all inert things. *Bhūtam* is ether, earth, fire, air, water. These five elements are indicated by this word. All entities collectively constitute *bhūtas*. In a different sense the term *bhūta* means 'all living beings'. It includes trees, plants, creepers, animals, human-beings and so on. Even dogs are included in this category. Trees may live for hundreds of years. But mushrooms get

destroyed after a few days of their appearance. On the earth we roam about. Birds fly in the sky. It is only when they come down to the earth that they use their two legs. There are certain birds which do not come down to the earth at all. Some of them live in water. Thus there are some beings which fly, some that crawl, some that walk, some that swim and some that are stationary. Whatever they may be, all of them are called *bhūtas*.

Trees remain in one place and grow. All vegetation belongs to this category. But what is known as coral is in between the things that are stationary and those that move. The coral will have its roots in one place but it will spread to many distant places. Including that, all living beings, all that grow we refer to as *bhūtam*.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

Īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām hṛddese'arjuna tiṣṭhati

[XVIII-61]

Thus the Lord says in another place in the *Gītā*. If there is sentience there must be a heart. Therefore all that has a heart is referred to as *bhūtam*. For all these types of *bhūta* there is a Reality which serves as the support and protector. That reality is *tat*. Then there is the qualifying term *grasiṣṇuḥ*. If all these things have been digested, that which eats them, after digesting, is that (*tat*). Our body

digests many things vegetables etc. All living beings do the same. If all these beings get digested and fall,—what is it that which swallows them? That (*tat*) is *grasiṣṇuḥ*,—that which eats everything.

Tree grows out of the earth. What supports the tree and protects it is the earth. At the end, after the tree is destroyed what eats it is also the earth.

In a similar way That which supports all beings — living and non - living, stationary and moving — is *bhūta bhartṛ*; That itself is *grasiṣṇuḥ*, what swallows all of them after they get destroyed. After eating them, it is That itself which re-produces them.

prabha viṣṇu ca

What produces them is That alone.

Bhuta bhartṛ ca tat jñeyam

grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca

It is that which supports all beings; after they get destroyed it is that which eats them and it is That alone which re-produces them. That is to be known. Thus it is stated in the latter half of this verse in the Bhagavad-Gītā. The first half of this verse is the following:

Avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam

That is what is to be known. *Tat jñeyam*. After saying thus the verse says:

bhūta bharty ca grasiṣṇu ca prabhaviṣṇu ca
does it not? If so where does it remain?

bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam

In all beings it remains divided, as it were. Eventhough the different beings seem to be separate and different from one another is That One different? Not at all.

That is undivided one only. The beings that are in the world—those that have life, those that have feelings, those that are conscious, those that have none of these—in whatever manner they may be, for all of them the Reality which is the source is One alone. That is *avibhaktam*; without division.

Eventhough that one Reality is undivided, is non-separate, and without difference, it appears as though divided in things that are divided thus—that person is different, this person is different, tree is different, fish is different and so on.

avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam

By the division among things, It does not become divided. That is *avibhaktam* alone, i. e. undivided. Yet because the things are different, It appears as different. In truth, that Reality is one alone. Because it is in different places, it seems to be divided. That too, we think, is different in each. This is what all people think. You say 'I, I'; that is that Reality. It is That which is in all places.

If one knows oneself, it is That.

'The Reality which is in you is in all persons. Because these latter appear to be different, That does not vary. That is One alone. That is to be known. It is that Reality which supports all beings. It is the same Reality which eats all things. It is also that which creates all things. That is one only'.

avibhaktam ca bhūteṣu vibhaktam iva ca sthitam.

Thus the Lord has stated in the Gītā. I imagine that this verse may not be known to everyone. It is to be found in some obscure corner (of the Gītā.)

Without a source there is nothing like *idam*. That source, 'tat' are you. If we make a statement thus then it is *vibhaktam*. But its true nature is *avibhaktam*. It is the one Reality which is of such nature that is in all bodies and seen as 'this, this'. It is that Reality which sees that is the ground for the entire world which is seen. It protects everything. It eats everything. It creates everything. Although it may appear to be scattered at different places; That is One alone.

There is only one sun. If we take a little water in our hand and sprinkle it on the floor which is smooth, there will be seen a reflection of the sun in each of the drops. But because they are seen as different, there will be not many suns. The sun is one alone. It is this fact that is explained by our

Ācārya in his commentary on the Brahma-Sūtra thus :

atha eva ca upamā sūryakādiva.

The power which is the source of all things — i. e. consciousness which transcends all limits, That appears in each of us as if limited. It is that single Reality which is referred to by *tat* which is found at the end of the Veda. *Tat* means 'what is at a distance, what is above all things'. It is That which is all, it is That alone which sees all. That you are, The truth of the expression *tat - tvam* is this alone.

Now we feel as if we have understood. If we can remain for all time as we are, there will be no sorrow. There will be no difficulty caused by what is false. In order to remain as true we must always catch hold of Him who is the Truth. He who is the Truth is only God. We who are persons should catch hold of that God. When all that is limited becomes at the end One with the unlimited, then all become unlimited.

He who is unlimited that One alone is Existence. All that is limited is mere imagination. Imagination, dream—these are not true. Truth, Existence is One alone. If after meditating on the limited forms of the One that is unlimited, we begin to meditate on what is without qualities towards the concluding stage, then there will be no quarrel,

no confusion at all. This is the fruit which our Ācārya has given us, plucking it from the Upaniṣad tree.

Before we reach this state of fruition we must pass through the stages of bud, flower, early unripe fruit and then we should become mature. We must be patient till we reach the stage of becoming the fruit. There is no use of falling down prematurely without ripening.

Saint Rāmaliṅga says in Tamil: “*Vembi vilundiḍumo?*” Till one becomes the ripe fruit one should follow all the disciplines such as worship *japa*, austerity etc. Until we come to the stage of *tattvam* which is at the end of the *Veda*, all these are necessary. Only then the fruit will ripen without getting spoiled. Finally where is the source which is *tattvam*? It is in you yourself. It is in the consciousness that sees. This we can realize in experience.

What is limited is *sādhana*; what is unlimited is the end. In the *sādhana*-period there must be division. At the end when there is identity with the unlimited Reality there will be no separation. There will be realized one - ness of its own accord. This is the teaching of our Ācārya.

Our Holy Motherland, Its Culture and Civilization.

Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī.

There are many countries in the world. Among them, India, this Motherland of ours is a very sacred country. There are many reasons why it is regarded as sacred.

It was in our country that Viṣṇu who lives in Vaikuṅṭha and Śiva who lives in Kailāsa had taken *avatāras*. Although the whole world is fit for *avatāras*, it is only India which has been chosen by God as eminently suited for taking *avatāras*. The *līlās* of the *avatāras* and their glory are being sung even today. God had incarnated only in our country in the form of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and so on. So it is only in our sacred country that even the divine beings desire to be born. This alone is a sufficient reason for our country being regarded as Holy.



Likewise, there are many sacred rivers in our country. Lakhs of people come to bathe in these rivers at the time of Kumbhamela and Ardha-kumbhamela. Among them, the most important are mentioned in the following śloka which is recited at the time of taking a bath and also at the time of doing pūjā.

गङ्गे च यमुने चैव गोदावरि सरस्वति ।
नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरि जलेऽस्मिन् सन्निधि कुरु ॥

*Gaṅge ca yamune caiva godāvari sarasvatī
Narmade sindhu kāveri jale'smin sannidhim kuru*

The Gaṅgā, the Yamunā, the Godāvari, the Sarasvatī, the Narmadā, the Sindhu, the Kāveri are all very sacred and important rivers. In other countries also there are many rivers, but they are not considered sacred. Their waters are used mainly for irrigating lands and for cleansing the body. But by bathing in our rivers, our sins get washed away, our minds get purified, and we begin to have pure thoughts. This is the special significance of the sacred rivers of India.

There are many mountains in the world. The mountains and mountain peaks of other countries are noted for their scenic and natural beauty and are mainly places of tourist attraction. But in our country, the mountains and mountain peaks are regarded as sacred. They are considered sacred

not because one can organise an expedition to climb them, but because they have been the abodes of Gods and Goddesses. For instance, the Himālayas themselves are considered to be *devatātmā*, divine in nature. As Kālidāsa says in his *Kumārasambhavam*:

अस्त्युत्तरस्यां दिशि देवतात्मा हिमालयो नाम नगाधिराजः ।
पूर्वापरौ वारिनिधि विगाह्य स्थितः पृथिव्या इव मानदण्डः ॥

*Astyuttarasyaṁ diśi devatātmā himālayo nāma
nagādhirājah
Pūrvāparau vārinidhi vigāhya sthītaḥ pṛthivyā iva
mānadandaḥ*

Similarly, there are other sacred mountains like the Vindhyaś, the Sahyādri and so on. These mountains are not just huge masses of inanimate rocks but they are living beings for us; they are high and they beckon us also to think higher.

Similarly, the cities of our country are also considered sacred. There are many important places all over the world; but all of them are not considered sacred. They may be great in other respects, but they are not regarded as sacred, in the sense in which some of our important cities are regarded as sacred, as for instance:

अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी कांची अवन्तिका ।
पुरो द्वारवती चैव सप्तैता मोक्षदायिकाः ॥

*Ayodhyā mathurā māyā kāśī kāñcī avantikā,
Purī dvāravatī coiva saptaitā mokṣadāyikāḥ*

In other countries, only places where great souls have been born, are regarded as sacred, and not the whole country. This is true of Christianity, Islam and other religions. In our country, because of association with God, because God has taken *avatāras* and performed his *līlās*, the whole country is regarded as sacred. Also, there are many places where Ṛṣis had had done great penance and God had appeared before them. Thus, these places also have become sacred for us over the corridors of time.

So, in our country, cities like Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Māyāpurī, Banāras or Kāśī, Kāñcī, Avantikāpurī, Dvārakā etc., are all considered sacred and are also considered as places of *mokṣa*. Especially, Kāśī is said to be a centre of *mokṣa* or liberation for one and all. It is said:

अन्यक्षेत्रकृतं पापं पुण्यक्षेत्रे विनश्यति ।
पुण्यक्षेत्रकृतं पापं वाराणस्यां विनश्यति ॥

*Anyakṣetra-kṛtam pāpam puṇyakṣetre vinaśyati
Puṇyakṣetrakṛtam pāpam vārāṇasyām vinaśyati*

When sins are committed at other places, they vanish by visiting other sacred places, but sins committed at those sacred places also vanish at Vārāṇasī.

There are twelve holy places in our country especially dedicated to Lord Śiva, and these are called the *dvādaśa-linga-kṣetras*. It is said:

सौराष्ट्रे सोमनाथं च श्रीशैले मल्लिकार्जुनम् ।
 उज्जयिन्यां महाकालमोङ्कारममलेश्वरम् ।
 परल्यां वैद्यनाथं च डाकिन्यां भीमशंकरम् ।
 सेतुबन्धे तु रामेशं नागेशं दारुकावने ।
 वाराणस्यां तु विश्वेशं त्रयम्बकं गौतमीतटे ।
 हिमालये तु केदारं घुश्मेशं च शिवालये ॥

*Saurāṣṭre somanātham ca śrīśaile mallikārjunam,
 Ujjayinyām mahākālam oṃkāram amaleśvaram
 Paralyām vaidyanātham ca ḍākinnyām bhīma-
 śaṅkaram
 Setubandhe tu rāmeśam nāgeśam dārukāvane
 Vārāṇasyām tu viśveśam trayambakam gautamītaṭe
 Himālaye tu kedāram ghuśmeśam ca śivālaye*

Similarly, there are 52 *śaktipīṭhas* or places dedicated to the Divine Mother. Therefore, our country is regarded as holy and sacred.

There are many religions existing in the world, and even in India to-day, many of them had been founded by great souls at certain periods of history. Prior to those periods, they were non-existent, nor were their religious scriptures existing prior to those periods. But our religion is an ancient religion, and it was not founded by any

great saint. This has come down right from the days of creation. The Creator of the whole world himself has given this religion to us. The other religions can be traced to some great saint who founded them and hence their age, also can be determined; but our religion has no age because it had no founder as such. Since it has no beginning, it has also no end. When a thing is not born, how can there be any end to it? Thus, our religion is also an ancient and sacred one. Just as God has no beginning, our religion also has no beginning.

In other countries, only Messengers of God had come, but in our country, God Himself has incarnated in the form of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa and so on, lived amidst us like ordinary mortals and performed His *līlās*. While in other countries just one Messenger had come, in our country, these *avatāras* come, again and again. In fact, as the Gītā says:

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥

*yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati bhārata
Abhyuttānam adharmasya tadātmānam sṛjāmyaham*

Whenever there is a decline of *dharma*, the Lord comes to rescue it and He redeems it and restores it to its original glory. This has been our Indian

tradition. Thus, God has chosen our country for taking His *avatāras*, and has sanctified our country by His *līlās* and the dust of His Holy feet.

It is indeed our good fortune to have been born in this country. Let us all strive to make the best use of our human birth in this country. Human life itself is something rare, and human birth in this country is something very sacred and holy. So let us make the best use of this human life for the realisation of the highest goals of human life.

Our country is not only an ancient country with an ancient religion but has also an ancient civilisation. To-day, it is a free country once again and has a place of honour in the comity of nations. What is this greatness and honour of our country due to? It is not because of advance in industry that our country is being honoured but because as compared to other countries, our country has had a very ancient civilisation and culture which can give peace of mind and stability to every individual. In the spiritual sphere India is so much advanced that one can get peace of mind very easily here. Peace of mind is something which cannot be purchased by anyone by just paying a few rupees, but it has to be secured by each individual through his own effort, and internal transformation. Such an internal transformation can take place in our country because ours is a sacred country. That is why even

foreigners come to our country. Not being able to get peace of mind in their own countries, they come to our country to achieve mental peace and spiritual transformation.

Similarly, foreigners come to our country also to study our ancient language Sanskrit; and they try to imbibe our culture and civilisation and get peace of mind, because they have *śraddhā* for it. But what do we find in our country? Our people are being attracted by the customs and manners and dress habits of other countries. In fact, there is a craze or *moha* for foreign customs and manners. The foreigners have *śraddhā* or faith in our customs and manners, while our people just try to ape their habits blindly. That is why there is some kind of unrest and agitation going on in our country. If we do not have peace of mind, how can we give peace to others or radiate peace to them?

We have a national flag and a national bird and there is an agitation going on in regard to a national language also. In the same way, we have to struggle to preserve our own ancient culture and civilisation as well. This is a task which devolves on all of us. Since politicians are not doing it, we ourselves have to do it. All the people of our country have to do it. It is the bounden duty of everyone to preserve our culture and civili-

sation. Everyone should take this solemn pledge; in fact, not merely take this pledge but see that it is implemented as well.

In this task of preservation of our culture and civilisation, first we have to concentrate on the children, because they are going to be the protectors of these in the future.

Sometimes, when we see our children these days, we begin to wonder whether they have been born in our country or elsewhere. By all means, let them study in any school they like, and wear whatever dresses are prescribed for these schools and read whatever they like. But at least when they come back to their houses, let them wear the Indian dress and let them do everything according to our tradition and culture. Outside, they may wear whatever dress they like, but at least in the temple they should wear their traditional dress. Similarly at the time of taking meals also, let them wear their traditional dress. This should be taught to our children from infancy. Otherwise, they will suffer very much in this *Kaliyuga* whether they remain in our country or go elsewhere.

The house-holders have a great duty to perform in this connection; particularly, the parents have a special duty towards their children. An earnest attempt should be made by them to teach their children Indian culture and Indian civilisa-

tion. Our *dharma* and our civilisation have to be protected by us.

Often, the complaint is heard that enough time is not available for this purpose. That is not true. Actually, for playing games, for reading newspapers, and for doing ever so many other things people get plenty of time. It is only when it comes to the question of practising *dharma* or practising religion that it is said that they have no time. Out of the 24 hours of the day, even if about 20 minutes could be spared for this purpose, that would be more than sufficient. That itself will start making a great difference in their lives, and it will protect them in their present life and in their future lives as well.

The first thing that everyone has to realise is what exactly is our *dharma*, and what exactly our civilisation is, and what exactly our culture is. If the mother behaves like a daughter, and the father behaves like a son, then the daughter will start behaving like a mother, and the son will start behaving like a father, and there will be an utter inversion of values and this will result in the transgression of their respective limits by everyone. So, first of all, it is the parents who have to develop *śraddhā* or faith in our culture and civilisation. The mother should remember that she is a mother first, and similarly the father should remember that

he is a father, and so on. Both should realise that they have a duty as parents to their children. Similarly a *guru* should behave like a *guru* and a disciple should behave like a disciple and not *vice versa*. It is only in this way that we can maintain some respect and discipline in our country, and then only the restlessness of our minds will go.

At present, what we find is that many people have some *pārāyaṇa* in their houses, do some *pūjā*, and worship some deities. But merely doing these things without a deep-seated faith in the living culture of India would be useless. If we leave off our *dharma* and do worship etc., then all that worship would be thoroughly useless. Therefore, the first thing we have to do is to preserve our culture and our civilisation, our *ācāra* and our behaviour and conduct, our *dharma*, our *bhakti* and our traditions. These have to be protected in their own form and not in any other form.

These are like flowing rivers. Unless we take care of them and preserve their flow, they will become like rivers which may start flowing fast initially with great gush of water but which later on dry up into just a huge mass of sand only. It is only when we preserve our civilisation, culture and tradition that we can keep the river of *dharma* flowing perennially without its getting dried up in the desert sand of dead habit.

The first thing that has to be done in this regard is to cast off our craze for the customs and manners and dress forms of other countries. If we do not do so our life will be full of miseries and difficulties.

From early infancy our children must be taught our *dharma*, and they must be put on the right path. We cannot expect this to be done by Government, nor can anyone expect this to be done even by the schools. Therefore, naturally, this duty devolves on the parents. The parents have to initiate their children into the path of *dharma*, and the right path has to be taught to them. Often, private tuitions are arranged for various subjects like physics, chemistry, mathematics etc., for the children. But nobody bothers about arranging tuitions in culture and civilisation and *dharma* for children. We would suggest that some tuition should be given to the children in the subject of Indian culture, Indian civilisation and Indian religion and *dharma*. First, the parents themselves have to undergo this tuition and then they should undertake this tuition for their children as well. If we do this in order to protect this *dharma* then that *dharma* itself will protect us. If we do not protect *dharma*, how can *dharma* protect us? Some people bring up a dog in their houses in order to get protection from thieves. But unless they take care of the dog and feed it properly how can the

dog give them protection? In the same manner, we have to take care of our *dharma*, so that *dharma* can take care of us. So it is said:

“धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः”

Dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ

If the parents do not take care of their children, then the children also will not take care of them in later life and the moment they get some money they will just run away from the family, and in his old age, the father may have to go on working for earning his livelihood throughout his life, and undergo the miseries of it. If only the parents take interest and teach their children properly today, then surely the children will take care of them during their old age and feed them.

We have a very ancient heritage of great literature in our country. We have *bhakti* literature, *jnāna* literature and so on. Our children should be taught a little bit about the lives of the great saints and great thinkers. People from the west are coming to our country to learn about these things, but we are not doing anything to preserve our culture and tradition in our own country.

Not only should our children learn at least one song by each of these saints, or *bhajans* by each one of them, but they should also be able to speak

about them. This will be their greatest treasure as in a bank, and this will be their greatest capital for their future.

Often, it is said that the atmosphere for practising our *dharma* is not there. It is said that the atmosphere for following our cultural traditions is not congenial and therefore we cannot be virtuous and good, and, therefore, we tend to become bad and we become corrupt and we become unrighteous.

In the previous *yugas*, God had incarnated in the form of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and others. But in *Kaliyuga* there is no scope for an incarnation yet. Out of the four quarters of the *Kaliyuga*, only the first quarter is still going on. It is only at the end of the fourth quarter that God will incarnate in the form of *Kutki*. But are things really so bad? It is said that corruption is increasing, indiscipline is increasing and is becoming rampant in all spheres of life and people say that *adharma* is increasing and people are suffering from various maladies, physical and otherwise; thus we are told that the world is full of misery. And people often come to me and ask "Svāmiji, what is the way out? What is the solution for all these problems?"

In my opinion, things are not really so bad. It is only when *adharma* increases to unmanageable proportions and the evil forces raise their ugly

heads to an intolerable height that *Kalki* will incarnate and not till then. After all, we are not so bad or unrighteous at the present moment. It is because of the atmosphere or environment that we behave in a bad way. If only we can create a congenial atmosphere around ourselves, we can still remain good. By being in the company of good and virtuous and holy people, and by going to temples and spending time there, we can still see that we remain good and virtuous. It is only when we are in bad company or bad environment or bad atmosphere that we tend to become bad. So, we should attempt all the time to be in the company of good people; only then can we continue to be good and virtuous.

Following the tradition of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, who prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the teacher of the whole world, the *Jagadguru*, let us also pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa to shower his blessings on all of us. Lord Kṛṣṇa has taught us so many things in the *Gītā*. But merely doing *pārāyaṇa* or reading of the *Gītā* is not enough. We have to imbibe the message of the *Gītā* in its true spirit, and make it a practical reality in our daily life by practising its teachings as a true *sādhaka*.

May Candramaulīśvara's Blessings be showered on all and May He lead everyone to greater prosperity and well-being !

DEVIBHUJANGA STOTRAM*

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda

[1]

विरिञ्च्यादिभिः पञ्चभिलोकपालैः

समूढे महानन्दपीठे निषण्णम् ।

धनुर्बाणपाशाङ्कुशप्रोतहस्तं

महस्त्रैपुरं शङ्कराद्वैतमव्यात् ॥ १ ॥

Virinçyādibhiḥ pañcabhīrlokapālaiḥ

Samūḍhe mahānanda - pīṭhe niṣaṇṇam

Dhanurbāṇa - pāśāṅkuśa - protahastam

Mahāstraipuram Śaṅkarādvaitam avyāt.

May that Effulgence of Tripurasundarī, who is in non-dual relation with Śiva protect us. She is

* Translated with comments by Prof. P. Thirugnana-sambandhan.

seated on the Blissful seat supported by the five protectors of the world, Brahmā etc. In Her hands are held the bow, arrow, noose and the goad.

The five 'protectors' of the world are Brahmā Viṣṇu, Rudra, Maheśa and Sadāśiva. To say that her seat is borne by these is to indicate that the cosmic deeds of creation sustenance destruction etc. are being carried out at her behest. This idea is expressed in the opening verse of Saundaryalahari thus—*Hari-hara-virīṇcyādibhir api ūrūahyām.* She is the source of mahānanda or supreme Bliss which stands in bold contrast with other types of ānanda of a mundane nature arising from wealth, children and other possessions. She is wielding the weapons bow etc. to destroy the evil and to guide the souls on the right tract. This Śakti of Tripurasundarī is not, however, to be considered as distinct from Śiva. As Tirumūlar says in Tamil :

Aliyār tiripuraiyām aval tānē aliyār Sadāśivam ākē amaiṅvāl.

[2]

यदन्नादिभिः पञ्चभिः कोशजालैः

शिः पक्षपुच्छात्मकैरन्तरन्तः ।

निगूढे महायोगपीठे निषण्णं

पुरारेरथान्तः पुरं नौमि नित्यम् ॥ २ ॥

Yadannādibhiḥ pañcabhiḥ kośajālaiḥ

Śiraḥ - pakṣa - pucchātmakair - antarantaḥ

Nigūḍhe mahāyoga pīṭhe niṣaṇṇam

Purāreḥ - athāntaḥ puram naumi nityam.

I salute for ever that Divine consort of Śiva (Purāri) seated on that venerable seat of yoga in a subtle form in the innermost recess far deep behind the five sheaths, the outer gross body etc. that are seen as the head, wings, tail, body and so on.

The five sheaths viz *annamaya*, *prāṇamaya*, *manomaya*, *Vijñānamaya* and *ānandamaya* in the ascending order of gross to subtle and the figurative treatment of head, wings etc. at each stage culminating in the Highest essence of Brahmānanda are dealt with in detail in the Śāṅkara bhāṣya of Brahmānandavallī in Taittirīyopaniṣad to which the attention of the readers is invited. 'Purāri' is the name of Śiva that carries the legend of Śiva destroying the three demons dwelling in the cities of gold, silver and iron. According to the legend Śiva mounted a chariot drawn by four horses viz the four Vedas with the Sun and Moon as its two wheels. Mount Meru was the bow and Viṣṇu the arrow and Brahmā the charioteer. Wind carried the arrows swiftly and fire helped them to burn the cities. This is an oft-repeated legend that finds a place in both Sanskr̥t and Tamil works. Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra says that the first play to be enacted was Tripuradāha (Burning of the triple cities). This is referred to also in the Tamil Sangam classics (Puṛaṇānūru v. 55 Kalittokai v. 1) and devotional songs of Jñānasambandha (I, 11) sung at Thiruvizhimizhalai and in several other texts. The destruction of the three cities is allegorically explained as illustrative of the need to subdue and transcend the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

[3]

विरिञ्चादिरूपैः प्रपञ्चे विहृत्य

स्वतन्त्रा यदा स्वात्मविश्रान्तिरेषा ।

तदा मानमातृप्रमेयातिरिक्त

परानन्दमीडे भवानि त्वदीयम् ॥ ३ ॥

*Virincādirūpaiḥ prapañce viḥṛtya
Svatantrā yadā svātmaviśrāntī eṣā
Tadā māna-māṭṛ - prameyātiriktaṁ
Parānandam īde bhavāni tvadīyam.*

O Bhavāni, Thou rest in Thyself and be wholly free after completing Thy sport (of creation etc.) in this Universe in the form of Brahmā and others. I praise that Blissful form of Thee that stands transcendent beyond the means of knowledge, the knower and the object of knowledge.

It is a mere sport for the Devi to engage herself in the cosmic deeds in the form of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra. She ever remains free from any constraint. She is beyond the multiplicity of this Universe which appears under one or other category of knowledge; though Sakti in its absolute aspect is free and formless, yet it assumes several forms and plays several roles for extending grace to the devotees. But intrinsically it is identical with Brahman.

[4]

विनोदाय चैतन्यमेकं विभज्य

द्विधा देवि जीवः शिवश्चेति नाम्ना ।

शिवस्यापि जीवत्वमापादयन्ती

पुनर्जीवमेनं शिवं वा करोषि ॥ ४ ॥

*Vinodāya Caitanyam ekam vibhajya
Dvidhā devi jīvaḥ śivaśceti nāmnā
Śivasyāpi jīvutvam āpādayuntī
Punarjīvam enām Śivam vā karosi.*

O Devi, just for sport Thou divide the One Consciousness into two entities, Śiva and soul. Thou give soulness to Śiva and possibly Śivahood to the soul (the soul, however, being allowed to remain a soul in case of spiritual immaturity).

Devi the Supreme Consciousness is glorified in this verse. The reference to the division into Śiva and Jiva of the One Consciousness is to stress the fact of the entire series of souls right upto Śiva being grounded in Brahman. To say that Śiva is imparted soulness is a rhetorical way of extolling the reigning supremacy of Parāśakti. It is on a par with the statement in the Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa (8. 89-90) that 'even Śiva himself surrenders before her' by saying that she is an independent sovereign power.

[5]

समाकुंच्य मूलं हृदि न्यस्य वायुं
मनो भ्रूविलं प्रापयित्वा निवृत्ताः ।
ततः सच्चिदानन्दरूपे पदे ते
भवन्त्यम्ब जीवाः शिवत्वेन केचित् ॥ ५ ॥

*Samākuñcya mūlam hṛdi nyasya vāyum
Mano bhrūvilam prāpayitvā nivṛttāḥ
Tataḥ Saccidānandarūpe pade te
Bhavantyaṃba jīvāḥ Śivatvena kecit.*

O Mother, some people manipulate the *mūlādhāra*, stabilise the vital air in the heart (the centre of *anāhata*) negotiate the mind in the centre between the eyebrows and get back. Ultimately they reach Thee in the form of Truth-Consciousness-bliss and attain Śivahood.

There are six bodily *cakras* or centres the lowest being *mūlādhāra* situated in the perineum. Proceeding upwards one finds *svādhiṣṭhāna* controlling genitals, *manipūraka* controlling the navel region *anāhata* the heart, *viśuddha* the throat larynx and *ājñā* the space between the eyebrows. Beyond these all is the *śaśrāra* a thousand petalled lotus like region, the highest centre of manifestation of the Consciousness in the body. It is believed that by practising the yogic process in the manner prescribed one can realise the true Consciousness or Śivahood.

[6]

शरीरेऽतिकष्टे रिपौ पुत्रवर्गे
 सदाभीतिमूले कलत्रे धने वा ।
 न कश्चिद्विरज्यत्यहो देवि चित्रं
 कथं त्वत्कटाक्षं विना तत्त्वबोधः ॥ ६ ॥

*‘Śarīre’ tikaṣṭe ripau putravarge
 Sadā bhītimūle kalatre dhane vā
 Na kaścīd virajyatyaḥo devi citram
 Katham tvatkaṭākṣam vinā tattvabodhaḥ.*

In spite of the physical body being the source of suffering, in spite of the enemy, children, wife

and wealth being the source of fear, it is astonishing that none is averse to this worldly life! How indeed can any one attain true knowledge without Thy grace ?

It is only 'tattvajñāna' that is capable of liberating a person from the miseries of life born of ignorance of the Reality cf. '*Brahmavid āpnoti param*' (Tait. Up. Br. Valli, Anu 1.) A man of true knowledge has none to fear as the śrutī proclaims—'*Vidvān na bibhēti kutaścana*' (Taitt-2. 9.) 'This cycle of birth and death is no more for one who has gained the knowledge about Brahman' says Saṅkara Bhagavatpāda in his Taittirīyopaniṣad bhāṣya—'*Asmāt Vijñānāt sarvātma brahma-viṣayād ātyantikaḥ saṃsārābhāvaḥ.*' It is only the Divine grace of Devī that is capable of ushering in the '*Kaivalya*' for the devotees. This is expressed by the Mahākavi Mūka in his Pañcaśatī—'*Kaivalyam eva kimu kalpayate natānām. Kīmākṣi citram api te karuṇākaṭākṣaḥ*' (Kaṭākṣaśatakam V. 14).

[7]

शरीरे धनेऽपत्यवर्गे कलत्रे

विरक्तस्य सदृशिक्षादिष्टबुद्धेः ।

यदाकस्मिन् ज्योतिरानन्दरूपं

समाधौ भवेत्तत्त्वमस्यम्ब सत्यम् ॥ ७ ॥

Sarīre dhane apatyavarge kalatre

Viraktasya sad - deśikādiṣṭa - buddheḥ

Yadākasmikam jyotir ānandarūpam

Samādhau bhavet tat-tvam-asi amba satyam.

A person has no longer any attachment to his body wealth, children and wife on being made

aware of the Truth by a really great preceptor. Such a person engages himself in deep meditation when a flash of light crosses his mind, blissful in nature. That indeed is truly Thyself.

Here is a synthesis of Vairāgya, jñāna and yoga. According to Sāktism the highest stage of detachment is also knowledge and knowledge is aided by devotion and yoga. (Devi bhāgavata VII - 37. 28). Śaṅkarabhagavatpāda in his Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi elaborates this idea. The first cause for liberation is detachment towards the ephemeral things of the world— '*Mokṣasya hetuḥ prāthamo nigadyate vairūgyam atyantam anityavastuḥ*' (V.71) 'Secondly the attainment of the goal of liberation is facilitated by the spiritual instruction of the preceptor supplemented by one's own ratiocination — '*Hita-sujanagurūktiyū gacchataḥ svasya yuktyā prabhavati phala-siddhiḥ ...*' (V.83). In the state of deep meditation on the Self (*Samādhi*) there occurs a flash of what is oneself viz. Brahman (identified here with Devi)— '*Samādhinā anena ... svarūpa visphūrtiliḥ ayatnataḥ syāt.*' (v. 365).

[8]

मृषान्योऽमृषान्यः परो मिश्रमेनं

परः प्राकृतं चापरो बुद्धिमात्रम् ।

प्रपञ्चं मीमांते मुनीनां गणोऽयं

तदेतत्त्वमेवेति न त्वां जहीमः ॥ ८ ॥

Mṛṣānyo' mṛṣānyaḥ paro miśram enam

Paraḥ prākṛtam cāparo buddimātram

Prapañcam mīmānte munīnām gaṇo'yam

Tadetat tvameveti na tvām jahīmaḥ.

Sages assess the nature of the Universe in diverse ways. One holds that it is unreal, another that it is real, yet another that it is partly real and partly unreal, still another holds that it is but an evolute of prakṛti, and another that it is mere intellection. But we, to be sure, understand it as Thyself and hence cling to Thee.

To the Advaitin the Universe is non-real from the transcendent standpoint. To the Dvaitins it is real. While the Dvaitins assume the existence of independent reals, the Viśiṣṭādvaitin opts for Brahman being the only real with the universe of soul and matter forming its 'modes'. The Sāṅkhya hold that Prakṛti with its triple strand of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* is the basis of the Universe. The Buddhists hold that the phenomenal world is nothing but an exercise of the intellect. The author, however, avers here that it is non-different from Devī. The *Saptaśatī* text in *Mīrkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* refers to her as the homogeneous and undifferentiated ground of the Universe.

[9]

निवृत्तिः प्रतिष्ठा च विद्या च शान्तिः-

स्तथा शान्त्यतीतेति पञ्चीकृताभिः ।

कलाभिः परे पञ्चविंशतिमकाभिः

त्वमेकैव सेव्या शिवाभिन्नरूपा ॥ ९ ॥

Nivṛtṭiḥ pratiṣṭhā ca vidyā ca śāntiḥ

Tathā śāntyatīteṭi pañcīkṛtābhiḥ

Kalābhiḥ pare pañcaviṁśātmikābhiḥ

Tvam ekaiva sevya Śivābhinnarūpā.

The five fold 'kala' viz. *nivṛtti*, *pratiṣṭhā*, *vidyā*, *śānti* and *śāntyatītā* and the subsequent twenty-five *tattvas* serve only Thee, O Supreme Devī, the aspect that is non-different from Śiva.

According to Śaivism which postulates thirty six 'tattvas' or principles of existence under subgroups such as *Śiva tattvas*, *Vidyā tattvas*, *Ātma tattvas* etc., *kalā* plays a crucial role. The function of 'kalā' *tattva* (having its own subdivision into *Nivṛtti*, *pratiṣṭhā*, *Vidyā*, *śānti* and *śāntyatītā*) is to de-obscure the spiritual impurity of the soul and re-activate its obstructed power of action (*kriyā śakti*) so that the soul may experience the fruit of *karma* and get rid of the impurity gradually. The evolutes of 'kala *tattva*' are in order *Prakṛti* (1), *Guṇas* (2), *buddhi* (3), *ahaṅkāra* (4), *manas* (5), *jñānendriyas* (6-10), *karmendriyas* (11-15), *Bhūtatanmātras* (16-20) and *mahābhūtas* (21-25). These twenty five 'ātma *tattvas*' relate to the emergence of the phenomenal world (*bhogyā*) and accomplishment of experience (*bhoktrtvā*) of the soul. The above five fold *kalā* and twenty five *tattvas* function at the direction of Devī who stands non-differentiated from Śiva. The Sāṅkhya deals only with the *ātmatattvas*.

[10]

अगाधेऽत्र संसारपङ्के निमग्नं

कलत्रादिभारेण खिन्नं नितान्तम् ।

महामोहपाशौघवद्धं चिरान्मां

समुद्धर्तुमश्व त्वमेकैव शक्ता ॥ १० ॥

Agādhe ' tra samsārapaṅke nimagnam
Kalatrādibhāreṇa khinnam nitāntam

*Mahāmohapāśaughabaddham cirānmām
Samuddhartum amba tvam ekaiva śaktā.*

O Divine Mother, Thou alone are capable of redeeming me who is bound by the bonds such as the powerful delusion for a long period and extremely broken by the weight of mundane life in the company of wife and others, and thus remaining submerged in the fathomless depth of marshy land of the cycle of transmigration existence.

Moha or delusion is only one among the several strands of bonds that lead a person away from the Reality. *Mada* (pride), *mātsarya* (envy) etc. cloud the vision of the soul. As another rushes to rescue the child that is bound hand and foot by someone, Devī out of innate compassion is sure to provide succour to the tormented soul that appeals to her help. She is indeed ‘*Śaraṇāgata dīnārta paritrāṇa - parāyaṇā*’ as the *Durgā saptaśloki* puts it.

[11]

समारभ्य मूलं गते ब्रह्मचक्रं
भवद्दिव्यचक्रेश्वरीधामभाजः ।
महासिद्धिसंघातकल्पद्रुमाभा-
नवाप्याम्ब नादानुपास्ते च योगी ॥ ११ ॥

*Samārabhya mūlam gate brahmacakram
Bhavaddivya - cakreśvarī - dhāmabhājah
Mahāsiddhi-saṅghāta-kalpadrūmābhān
Avāpyāmba nādān upāste ca yogī.*

O Divine Mother, the Yogī worships the manifestations of 'Nāda' that are like the celestial tree that grants the great 'siddhis' and which identify themselves with the abodes of the goddesses presiding over the various divine centres of Thee beginning with *mūlādhāra* and culminating in the *Brahmacakra*.

Reference has already been made to the various meditative centres situated in the cerebro-spinal axis in verse 5 above. Similar references can be noticed in v. 5 of 'Gaurīdaśaka' of Śaṅkara and other stotras. The yogī worships the 'Nāda', the source of the speech - world or *śabda prapāñca* and the Devi is *nādasvarūpiṇī*.

[12]

गणेशैर्ग्रहैरम्ब नक्षत्रपङ्क्त्या

तथा योगिनीराशिपीठैरभिन्नम् ।

महा कालमात्मानमामृश्य लोकं

विधत्से कृतिं वा स्थितिं वा महेशि ॥ १२ ॥

Gaṇeśairgrahair amba nakṣatra - paṅktyā

Tathā yoginī - rāśi - pīṭhāir - abhinnaṃ

Mahākālam - ātmānām - āmṛśya lokam

Vidhatse kṛtim vā sthitim vā mahēśi

O Maheśvari, Thou in whom Gaṇeśas, planets, stars, yoginis, zodiac and *Pīṭhadevatas* are found inseparable, assume the role of *Mahākāla* and protect the Universe by creating and sustaining it.

Devi is worshipped in *Śrīcakra* with 157 deities comprising of 15 lords of *gaṇas*, 7 planets, 27 stars, 7 *yoginīs*, 12 signs of zodiac and 51 *pīṭha devatās*. This is to show that she is the source of the entire terrestrial and celestial regions; cf. the Tamil text '*Aṇḍamudalāy avani pariyaṅtam kaṇḍatonrillaik kanaṅkulaiyallatu*' ... (Tirumantiram 1210).

The number given above may vary in the several purāṇas. In the same purāṇa itself, as in the Skanda purāṇa, the number of *Yoginīs* is given as 48 and 64 in two different places. According to Devi Bhāgavata purāṇa the *Śaktipīṭhas* are 108. These *pīṭhas* are found distributed throughout the country. The Matsya purāṇa gives 108 *Śakti tīrthas (pīṭhas)* along with the respective names of goddesses. The cult of *Śakti* is an offshoot of the universal worship of the cosmic Energy visualised as the Divine Mother. *Mahāśakti* herself assumes the two forms of Śiva and Sakti, the Mahākāla and Mahākālī. According to the Mahānirvāṇa tantra (4. 30-32) at the will of Mahākāla, she creates the Universe preserves it and destroys it. Śiva and Sakti are thus the same.

[13]

लसत्तारहारामतिस्वच्छचेलां

वहन्तीं करे पुस्तकं चाक्षमालाम् ।

शरच्चन्द्रकोटिप्रभाभासुरां त्वां

सकृद्भावायन्भारतीवल्लभः स्यात् ॥ १३ ॥

Lasat - tārahārām atisvacchacelām

Vahantīm kare pustakam cākṣumālām

Śoraccandra-koṭi-prabhā-bhāsurām tvām

Sakṛd-bhāvayan bhāratīvallabhaḥ syāt.

One who meditates even once, the Holy Mother shining with the lustre equal to that of a hundred autumnal moons, wearing a bright sparkling necklace and extremely pure garment, holding in her hands a book and a string of rosary, will become dear to the goddess of learning.

Durgā, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī are manifestations of the same Parāśakti. The author here meditates on the *sāttvika* aspect of Devī as Sarasvatī.

[14]

समुद्यत्सहस्रार्कबिम्बाभवक्त्रां
 स्वभासैव सिन्दूरिताजाण्डकोटिम ।
 धनुर्बाणपाशाङ्कुशान्धारयन्तीं
 स्मरन्तः स्मरं वापि संमोहवेयुः ॥ १४ ॥

Samudyat-sahasrārka-bimbābha-vaktrām
Svabhāsaiva sindūritājāṇḍa-koṭim
Dhanurbāṇa-pāśāṅkuśān dhārayantīm
Smarantuḥ smaram vāpi sammohayeyuḥ

Those who reflect on Thee with the face that is lustrous like a thousand rising suns, who by her effulgence reddens the countless *Brahmāṇḍas*, and who holds in her hands bow, arrow, chord and goad will stupefy even the god of Love.

We find an echo of this verse describing the crimson colour and the weapons in Mantramātīkā puṣpamālā stava of Śrī Sankara— *‘bālārkaadyuti - bhāsurām karatalaiḥ pāśāṅkuśau*

*bibhratīm cūpam bhāṣam api prasannavādanām kauśumbha
vastrānvitām*'(v. 2.)

[15]

मणिस्युतताटङ्कशोणास्यविम्बां

हरित्पट्टवस्त्रां त्वगुल्लासिभृषाम् ।

हृदा भावयंस्तप्तहेमप्रभां त्वां

श्रियो नाशयत्यम्ब चाञ्चल्यभावम् ॥ १५ ॥

Maṇisyūta-tāṭaṅka-ṣoṇāsyabimbām

Haritpaṭṭavastrām tvagullāsibhūṣām

Hṛdā bhāvayaṁs taptā-hemoprabhām tvām

Śriyo nāśayatyamba cāncalyabhāvam

One who meditates in his heart, on Thee, whose face is reddened with the gem studded ear ornament, who wears a green garment, whose jewels are illumined by the lustre of her own body that is sparkling like molten gold, will no longer be associated with the fleeting goddess of fortune

Soundarya or beauty is one aspect of God as the epithets '*śāntam, śivam, sundaram*' would indicate. Devotees dwell on this in numerous stotras and sahasranāmas such as '*Dyutimatyaī namaḥ, Trailokyasundaryaī namaḥ, aruṇāyaī namaḥ, mahābhāsāyaī namaḥ, taruṇārkāyaī namaḥ* etc'. One who meditates on this form will be blessed with the grace of Lakṣmī, the Goddess of fortune uninterruptedly contrary to the common belief that she never stays long with any person.

[16]

महामन्त्रराजान्तबीजं पराख्यं
 स्वतो न्यस्तबिन्दु स्वयं न्यस्तहार्दम् ।
 भवद्वक्त्रवक्षोजगुह्याभिधानं
 स्वरूपं सकृद्भावयेत्स त्वमेव ॥ १६ ॥

*Mahāmantrarājāntabījam parākhyam
 Svato nyastabindu svayam nyastahārdam
 Bhavadvakt ravakṣoja-guhyābhīdhānam
 Svarūpam sakṛd-bhāvayet sa tvam eva.*

This verse is not translated as it is esoteric in character intended to be initiated to the competent few by a genuine, śākta preceptor. 'Mantrarāja' is the *Devī mantra* with fifteen akṣaras. In the *Yantrarāja Śrīcakra* Śiva is 'bindu' and 'Devī' is *trikoṇa*. Attention is invited to relevant 'Tāntric texts' which prescribe several modes of *upāsana* and use of *mantras*.

[17]

तथान्ये विकल्पेषु निर्विण्णचित्ता-
 स्तदेवं समाधाय बिन्दुत्रयं ते ।
 परानन्दसंधानसिन्धौ निमग्नाः
 पुनर्गर्भरन्ध्रे न पश्यन्ति धीराः ॥ १७ ॥

*Tathānye vikalpeṣu nirvinṇacittās
 Tad evam samādhāya bindu-trayam te
 Parānanda-sandhāna-sīndhau nimagnāḥ
 Punargarbharandhram na paśyanti dhīrāḥ.*

Others who pursue various paths get depressed in spirits; they then meditate on Thy 'bindu traya' and get immersed in the ocean of extraordinary bliss. They never encounter again birth in the mother's womb.

The details of the *upāsana* referred to are to be seen in the Tāntric texts. Śakti saṅgama tantra, Mahānirvāṇa tantra Jñānāṅgava tantra, Yoginī hṛdaya are some of the Tāntric texts.

[18]

त्वदुन्मेषलीलानुबन्धाधिकार-

न्विरिञ्चयादिकांस्त्वद्गुणाभोधिविन्दुन् ।

भजन्तस्तिर्षन्ति संसारसिन्धुं

शिवे तावकीना सुसंभावनेयम् ॥ १८ ॥

Tvadunmeṣa - līlānubandhādhikārān

Virinçyādikāms-tvadguṇām bhodhibīndūn

Bhajantas tīrṣanti saṁsārasindhum

Sive tāvakīnā susambhāvaneyam.

O Consort of Śiva, even those who worship Brahmā and others who are but drops in the ocean of Thy noble qualities and who derive their authority by the mere sportive looks of Thee, cross the ocean of the circle of birth and death. This indeed is a great honour to Thee.

The benign graceful look of Devi is the purport of several devotional songs of Vyāsa, Śankara, Mūka etc. In his

Kaṭākṣa śataka Mūka kavi declares that the glances of Kāmākṣī are very soothing that remove the unbearable afflictions of mundane life of men and usher in liberation (v. 77).

[19]

कदा वा भवत्पादपोतेन तूर्णं
भवाम्भोधिमुत्तीर्य पूर्णान्तरङ्गः ।
निमज्जन्तमेनं दुराशाविषाब्धौ
समालोक्य लोकं कथं पर्युदास्से ॥ १९ ॥

*Kadā vā bhavatpādapotena tūrṇam
Bhavāmbhodhim - uttīrya pūrṇāntaraṅgaḥ.
Nimajjantam enam durāśāviṣābdhau
Samālokya lokam katham paryudāsse.*

When shall Thou take me expeditiously across this ocean of mundane existence with thy feet as boat so that my mind will be filled with Thee? How can Thou remain unconcerned in regard to this humble soul that Thou see before thy eyes drowning in the ocean of unseemly avarice ?

The imagery of the feet of the Goddess serving as a bridge (analogous to the boat imagery) is seen in one of the impassioned songs of Mūka kavi. He appeals to Kāmākṣī, 'O Kāmākṣī, I earnestly desire to cross this ocean of 'karma' galore. When shall I reach the beautiful bridge of Thee, O daughter of Himavan ?—'Titīrṣuḥ Kāmākṣī pracuratarakarmāmbudhim amum, kadūham lapsye te carāṇamaṇi setum Girisute' (Pādāravinda śatakam v. 77).

[20]

कदा वा हृषीकाणि साम्यं भजेद्युः

कदा वा न शत्रुर्न मित्रं भवानि ।

कदा वा दुराशाविषूचीविलोपः

कदा वा मनो मे समूलं विनश्येत् ॥ २० ॥

Kadā vā hṛṣīkāṇi sāmīyam bhajeyuh

Kadā vā na śatrur na mitram bhavāni

Kadā vā durāśāviṣūcī-vilopah

Kadā vā mano me samūlam vīnaśyet.

When shall my sense organs attain the state of equipoise? When shall I cease to look upon another as either a foe or a friend? When shall I be rid of the disease of wicked avarice? When shall my mind completely cease to function (in the manner it does)?

Here is an impassioned plea on the part of the devotee for the attainment of mastery of senses and tranquility of mind as these are some of the prior requisites for the attainment of liberation or *sādhana catuṣṭaya*.

[21]

नमोवाकमाशास्महे देवि युष्म-

त्पदाम्भोजयुग्माय तिग्माय गौरि ।

विरिञ्चयादिभास्वत्करीटप्रतीलो-

प्रदीपायमानप्रभाभास्वराय ॥ २१ ॥

*Namovākam āśāsmāhe devī yuṣmat
Padāmbhoja - yugmāya tīgmāya gaurī
Virīncyādi bhāsvat - kirīṭa - pratolī
Pradīpāyamāna - prabhā - bhāsvarāya.*

O Devi Gauri, I yearn to offer my word of obeisance to Thy pair of lustrous lotus-like feet that shine like radiance of a lamp placed on the row of gleaming crowns of the Creator and other Gods.

The glory and majesty of Gaurī are presented in figurative words. Such eulogies projecting her majestic grace and superiority over all other Gods abound in Purāṇas such as Kūrma, Mārkaṇḍeya, Devī Bhāgavata, Viṣṇu and Nārada. In Kūrma purāṇa for instance she is said to rule over the five principal deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śvara and Sadāśiva. (VIII. 29.7).

[22]

कचे चन्द्ररेखं कुचे तारहारं
करे स्वादुचापं शरे षट्पदौघम् ।
स्मरामि स्मरारेरभिप्रायमेकं
मदाघूर्णनेत्रं मदीयं निधानम् ॥ २२ ॥

*Kace candrarekham kuce tārahāram
Kare svāducāpam śure ṣaṭpadaugham
Smarāmi smarārer abhiprāyam ekam
Mudāghūrṇanetram madīyam nidhānam*

I reflect on the Divine Mother who bears on her tresses the disc of the moon, wears on her

bosom excellent necklace, holds in her hands the sweet (sugarcane) bow and an arrow (of flowers) around which bees hover and whose eyes swirl excitedly. She is the sole object of love of the victor of Cupid (Śiva)

Cupid who wanted to vanquish Śiva with the object of making Pārvatī the object of His love was himself reduced to ashes by Śiva. At the same time Pārvatī won Śiva's heart by her unflinching devotion in a manner that Śiva Himself declared 'Tava'smi dāsaḥ'—'I am your servant'. This fascinating account is given in the 'Kumārasambhava' of Kālidāsa.

[23]

शरेष्वेव नासा धनुष्वेव जिह्वा
जपापाटले लोचने ते स्वरूपे ।
त्वग्देशा भवच्चन्द्रखण्डे श्रवो मे
गुणे ते मनोवृत्तिरम्ब त्वयि स्यात् ॥ २३ ॥

Śareṣveva nāsā dhnuṣveva jihvā
Japāpāṭale locane te svarūpe
Tvaḡ eṣā bhavaccandrakhaṇḍe śravo me
Guṇe te manovṛttir amba tvayi syāt.

I pray that my nose smell only Thy (flowery) arrows, tongue taste only Thy (sugarcane) bow, eyes perceive only Thy form that is purple like 'Japā' flower, skin feel only Thy camphor, ears hear only Thy qualities and mind be engaged only about Thee.

Such entreaties are the mark of a true devotee. He will have no concern for what ordinary mortals consider to be the pleasant things of worldly life. St. Thirunāvukkarasar sings in a similar strain in the Tamil verse beginning with the words 'Talaiyē nī vaṅṅāy... (4th Tirumuṟai, P. 472 Tiruppānandal Edn.) He exhorts his head to bow to Lord Śiva, his eyes to behold His dance, his ears to listen to His glory, his tongue to praise His exploits, his mind to meditate on the Lord of Devī, his hands to bow folding them together and his legs to circumambulate the temple.

[24]

जगत्कर्मधीरान् वचोधृतकीरान्

कुचन्यस्तहारान् कृपासिन्धुपूरान् ।

भवाम्भोधिपारान् महापापदूरान्

भजे वेदसारान् शिवप्रेमदारान् ॥ २४ ॥

Jagatkarmadhīrān vacodhūtākīrān

Kucanyastahārān kṛpāsindhupūrān

Bhāvāmbhodhipārān mahāpāpadūrān

Bhaje vedasārān śivapremadārān

I adore the Holy Mother who is an adept in the cosmic acts, who excels the parrot in her speech, who wears necklaces on her bosom, who is the vast ocean of compassion, who is beyond the shores of the ocean of transmigratory existence, who is far away from the power of sins, who is the very essence of the Vedas and who is the dear consort of Śiva.

Devī's cosmic acts are glorified in stotras such as Sri Lalitā stavarāja which reads— '*yatrodeti jagat kṛtsnam, yatra tiṣṭhati nirbharam, yatrāntam eti kāle tu tasyai devyai namo namaḥ*' — 'Salutation to Sri Lalitā from whom springs the world, in whom it is securely grounded and in whom it merges at the proper time'. Her compassion for devotees is the theme of many a song. St. Thāyumanavar declares that the Devī has taken the vow to grant the eight great '*siddhis*' to her devotees — '*Aṭṭa siddhiyum nal anbarukku aruḷa virudu kaṭṭiya pon anname*' (Tamil song on Akhilāṇḍanāyaki).

[25]

सुधासिन्धुसारे चिदानन्दनीरे
 समुत्फुल्लनीपे सुरत्नान्तरीपे ।
 मणिव्यूहसाले स्थिते हैमशाले
 मनोजारिवामे निषण्णं मनो मे ॥ २५ ॥

Sudhāsindhusāre cidānandanīre
Samutphullanīpe suratnāntarīpe
Maṇivyūhasāle sthite haimaśāle
Manojārivāme niṣannam mano me.

My mind sticks fast to Thee, O mother, who is the essence so to say of the ocean of ambrosia, the stream of supra knowledge and bliss and who is on the left side of the foe of cupid (Śiva). She is seen in the golden hall supported by gem-studded pillars made of 'sāla' trees, in the midst of fully blossomed 'nīpa' trees situated in the island of precious gems.

The Sūtasamhitā describes her omniscient and blissful nature in the early part of Yājñavalkya section (4. 103).

[26]

दृगन्ते विलोला सुगन्धीषुमाला

प्रपञ्चेन्द्रजाला विपत्सिन्धुकूला ।

मुनिस्वान्तशाला नमल्लोकपाला

हृदि प्रेमलोलामृतस्वादुलीला ॥ २६ ॥

Dṛgante vilolā sugandhīṣumālā

Prapancendrajālā vipatsindhukūlā

Munisvāntaśālā namallokapālā

Hṛdi premalolāmṛtasvādulīlā.

The Holy Mother is pleasing with her tremulous glances and a row of fragrant flowery arrows; the Universe is her magic work; she is on the yonder shore of the ocean of misery; she has her abode in the heart of sages; she is saluted by the guardian deities; her heart throbs with love; her sportive acts are sweet like nectar.

Devi bhāgavata describes her as *Mahāmāyā* whose beginnings and ends are not known to an ordinary mortal. But to the devout she reveals her benign form, nature and powers. To such a person she is *Brahma Vidya*. The Devi Bhāgavata describes this lotus - faced smiling lady adorned with all the beauties of Nature. She is known as *Bhuvaneśvari*, the dweller in the *Maṇḍivīpa* surrounded by divine damsels and Gods (xii 10-12).

[27]

जगज्जालमेतच्चयैवाम्ब्र सृष्टं
 त्वमेवाद्य यासीन्द्रियैरर्थजालम् ।
 त्वमेकैव कर्त्री त्वमेकैव भोक्त्री
 न मे पुण्यपापे न मे बन्धमोक्षौ ॥ २७ ॥

Jagajjālam etat tvayaiivāmbra sṛṣṭam
Tvamevādyo yāsīndriyair arthajālam
Tvam ekaiva kartrī tvam ekaiva bhoktrī
Na me puṇyapāpe na me bandhamokṣau.

This magic show of the world is put up, O Mother by Thee; Thyself art moving with the sense organs (of souls) among the various objects of experience; Thou alone art the doer and enjoyer. Neither merit nor sin cling to me, neither bondage nor release is there for me.

This verse is illustrative of the spirit of self-surrender that marks a devotee who is aware of the omnipresence and omnipotence of Devi and his being a mere instrument with no real share either in the act or in the fruit of action. The Gītā says 'Though ever performing actions, taking refuge in me, by My grace he obtains the eternal indestructible abode.' The devotee here follows this precept given by Kṛṣṇa (Bh. G. XVIII, v. 56).

[28]

इति प्रेमभारेण किञ्चिन्मयोक्तं
 न बुध्वैव तत्त्वं मदीयं त्वदीयम् ।

विनोदाय बालस्य मौख्यं हि मात-

स्तदेतत्प्रलापस्तुतिं मे गृहाण ॥ २८ ॥

*Iti premabhāreṇa kincin mayoktam
Na budhvaiva tattvam madīyam tvadīyam
Vīnodāya bālasya maurkhyam hi mātāḥ
Tadetat pralāpa - stutim me gṛhāṇa.*

Without realising the truth about either me or Thee I have, out of sheer exuberance of love towards Thee said something of no consequence; O Mother, this audacity of this young lad may amuse you. Be pleased, however, to accept this prattling of praise of this humble self.

Sri Sankara is a picture of humility here in spite of his vast erudition and spiritual experience. We find in him a truly great 'vidyā-vinaya sampanna brāhmaṇa' referred to in the Gītā and a true bhakta.

Pratah - Smarana - Stotram*

(A Morning Prayer)

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda

This is a prayer consisting of three stanzas in which the mind (*manas*) speech (*vāk*), and body (*kāya*) of the individual are sought to be dedicated to the supreme Spirit. The first thoughts, words and actions of everyday exert a great influence on the life of the individual. If they are consecrated and made divine, they will pave the way for spiritual illumination. The prayer at dawn is profoundly significant in that the dawn is the outer symbol of the inner awakening.

In these stanzas, Śaṅkara sets forth also the quintessence of Advaita-Vedānta. The ultimate Reality is *Saccidānanda* (existence-consciousness-bliss). It is *turīya*, that which is the reality of the

* Notes and translation by Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan

three states of experience and is beyond them. These expressions, however, ought not to be taken literally as descriptive or definitive of Reality. Hence it is that *Brahman* is indicated by the negative way, as 'not this', 'not this'. *Brahman* eludes categorisation; it is not within the limits of ideas and words. The so-called individual soul is non-different from it. The soul is not to be confused with the body-mind complex. The elements that constitute the world are but illusory appearances on the basic Reality, even as a snake, a garland, etc., are projections on a rope. As the sun of wisdom rises, these illusions disappear, and the goal of life is reached.

[1]

प्रातः स्मरामि हृदि संस्फुरदात्मतत्त्वं
 सच्चित्सुखं परमहंसगतिं तुरीयम् ।
 यत्स्वप्नजागरसुषुप्तमवैति नित्यं
 तद्ब्रह्म निष्कलमहं न च भूतसङ्घः ॥ १ ॥

*Prātaḥ smarāmi hṛdi saṁsphuradātmatattvaṁ
 saccitsukham paramahamsagatim turīyam
 yatsvapna jāgarasusuptamavaiti nityam
 tadbrahma niṣkalamaham na ca bhutasanghaḥ.*

At dawn I remember the Reality which is the Self, shining brilliantly in the heart, existence-Consciousness-happiness, the goal of *Paramahansa-sannyāsins* (sages), the Fourth; That which knows

always the states of dream, waking and deep-sleep, that *Brahman* which is partless I am, not the cluster of elements.

[2]

प्रातर्भजामि मनसां वचसाभगम्यं
 वाचो विभान्ति निखिला यदनुग्रहेण ।
 यन्नतिनेति वचनैर्निगमा अवोचं
 स्तं देवदेवमजमच्युतमाहुरग्यम् ॥ २ ॥

*Prātarbhajāmi manasām vacasāmagamyam
 vāco vibhānti nikhilā yadanugraheṇa
 yanneti neti vacanair nigamā avocam-
 stam devudevamajam acyutam āhur agryam.*

At dawn I sing the praise of That which is unattainable by mind and speech, but by the grace of which all words shine. That which the scriptures declare through the words 'not this', 'not this'—That God of gods, they say, is unborn and unchanging.

[3]

प्रातर्नमामि तमसः परमर्कवर्णं
 पूर्णं सनातनपदं पुरुषोत्तमाख्यम् ।
 यस्मिन्निदं जगदशेषमशेषमूर्तेः
 रज्ज्वां भुजङ्गम इव प्रतिभासितं वै ॥ ३ ॥

*Prātarnamāmi tamasah paramarkavarṇam
 pūrṇam sanātanapadam puruṣottamākhyam*

*yasmīnnidam jagadaśeṣam aśeṣamūrtam
rajivām bhujamgama iva pratibhāsitam vai.*

At dawn I bow to that which is called the Highest Self which is beyond darkness, of the hue of the Sun, the ancient goal which is the plenum—That, the residueless form (i. e. the whole) in which the entire universe is made manifest like a serpent in a rope.

[4]

श्लोकत्रयमिदं पुण्यं लोकत्रयविभूषणम् ।
प्रातः काले पठेद्यस्तु स गच्छेत्परमं पदम् ॥ ४ ॥

*Ślokatrayamidam puṇyam
lokatrayavibhūṣaṇam
prātaḥkāle paṭhedyastu
sa gacchetparamam padam.*

This meritorious triad of verses, the ornament of the three worlds - he who reads at the time of dawn goes to the supreme goal.

This is the *pāhala-śruti* (description of the fruit) of this Vedāntic prayer. It is an eulogy of the prayer whose purpose is to consecrate the thoughts, words, and deeds of the individual so that the final goal may eventually be gained.

E K A B H A K T I *

(*The place of devotion in Advaita*)

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

It is interesting to note that, according to a tradition connected with the life of Śaṅkara, the first composition of his was a devotional hymn—the hymn to the Goddess of wealth, Lakṣmī, praying for a shower of gold. Śaṅkara had just then been initiated as a boy of five into the student's mode of life. He went one day for begging alms to the house of an indigent brahmin. The brahmin had gone out in quest of the means of sustenance for the day, for he was literally living from hand to mouth. On seeing Śaṅkara, the brahmin's wife came out, and felt extremely distressed that there was no food in the house to be offered as alms. After a thorough search she discovered a small *āmalaka* (myrobalan) fruit. She placed the fruit in Śaṅkara's

* Chakravarti Rajagopalachari Memorial Lecture delivered at the Gokale Institute, Bangalore.

alms-bowl, expressing her inability to give anything better. The compassionate Śaṅkara was greatly moved by the lady's devotion; and he uttered a prayer to the Goddess of Wealth, imploring her to bless the Brahmin couple with prosperity. This was the very first hymn composed by Śaṅkara, and is known as the *Kanakadhāra-stava* (Prayer for a shower of gold). In response to Śaṅkara's prayer, there was a shower of gold *āmalaka* (myrobalan) fruits. The pious lady and her husband who had by then returned, were wonder-struck, and worshipped the divine child. Thus Śaṅkara's first act of ministry was the removal of poverty in the household which even now is called *Svarnattu mana* (the house of gold); and this he effected through fervent prayer to Lakṣmī.

In the hymns that Śaṅkara sang later, in the course of tours of victory (*dig vijaya*) at the different shrines in the country, we have priceless gems of inspired poetry charged with the purest devotion. He sang, not as a sectarian cult-worshipper but as one whose mission it was to bring harmony into the various cults, and to show that all of them led to the same goal, the one supreme Godhead. In the *Hymn to Hari*, the Master declares: 'Praise Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of transmigration, the one Reality who, on account of the diversity of intellects, is spoken of in many ways, as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Agni, Sūrya, Candra, Indra,

Vāyu and Sacrifice'. The substance of religion is the same, though its expressions vary. Without any sense of difference, Śaṅkara had paid, in the hymns, obeisance to God in His various forms. The cults of Hinduism were purified and consolidated by Śaṅkara.

The need for devotion is stressed not only in the hymns, but also in the commentaries and in the manuals on Advaita, where the nature of devotion and its purpose are clearly explained by Śaṅkara. We shall see how, mainly, in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* the Ācārya explains the different grades of devotion and their place in the soul's journey to Supreme Being, lucidly and unambiguously.

In the seventh chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa refers to four types of devotees:

- (i) the one in distress (*ārtah*) — the one seized with suffering on account of robbers tigers, diseases etc.;
- (ii) the one who longs for gaining knowledge (*jijñāsuḥ*) — knowledge of the true nature of God;
- (iii) the one who seeks wealth (*arthārthī*); and
- (iv) the one who knows the true nature of God (*jñānī*).

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

*Catur-vidhā bhajante mām
janāḥ sukṛtino' rjuna
ārto jijñāsur • arthārthī
jñānī ca bharatarṣabha* [vii-16]

Of these four types, adds the Lord, the fourth, i.e., the knower of the truth, *jñānī*, is the best and the most excellent, for he is ever-united with the ultimate Reality, the supreme Godhead, which is non-dual. For the sage, there is no other reality; so, he is one with devotion (*ekabhaktiḥ*), and not a devotee in the usual sense of the term. The sage and God are not different; they are not two; they are one. The Lord expresses this truth: "I am supremely dear to the wise one (*jñānī*;) and he is supremely dear to me."

तेषां ज्ञानी नित्ययुक्त एकभक्तिर्विशिष्यते ।
प्रियो हि ज्ञानिनोऽत्यर्थमहं स च मम प्रियः ॥

*Teṣāṁ jñānī nithayukta
ekabhaktir-viśiṣyate,
Priyo hi jñānino'tyartham
ahaṁ sa ca mama priyaḥ* [vii-17]

What is supremely dear is the Self; the Self is the supreme Reality. This is made clear in a striking statement which, the Lord declares, expresses His conclusive view: "The wise one is myself.

ज्ञानी तु आत्मैव मे मतम्

Jñānī tu ātmaiva me matam

Even before the final realization is gained, the one who has entered upon the path of *Jñāna-Bhakti* (knowledge - devotion) is very dear to the Lord, because he will eventually discover the truth of non-duality. The path of knowledge, however, is not easy. One becomes eligible for it only at the end of many lives. When the proper eligibility has been acquired "at the end of several lives," says the Lord, "one gains knowledge, and reaches me : his knowledge is of the form 'God (*Vāsudeva*) is all': he is a great soul, he is difficult to come by."

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

Bahūnām janmanāmante

jñānavān mām prapadyate

Vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa

mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ

[vii-19]

Devotion (*bhakti*), worship (*upāsanā*), and meditation (*dhyāna*) are synonyms. Devotion is worship. *Bhakti* is bhajanam, says Saṅkara. (Vide his commentaries on ślokas vii. 10 and xiv-26 of Bhagavat Gītā). *Upāsanā* is divine service (*sevā*),

नित्ययुक्ताः - सन्तः, उपासते-सेवन्ते ।

Nityayuktāḥ: santah; upāsate: sevante

[Commentary on Gītā śloka ix-14]

The term literally means 'sitting close by'. The Ācārya defines it thus : *Upāsanā* consists in getting near the object of worship by way of meditating on it in accordance with the sacred teaching, and dwelling there for a long time by directing towards it an even current of thought, like a flow of oil.

उपासनं नाम यथा शास्त्रं उपास्य
अर्थस्य विषयीकरणेन सामीप्यं उपगम्य
तैलधारावत् समान-प्रत्ययप्रवाहेण दीर्घकालं
यदासनं तदुपासनं आचक्षते ॥

*Upāsanam nāma yatha-śāstram upāsya
arthasya-viṣayīkaraṇena sāmīpyam upagamya
tailadhārāvāt samāna-pratyaya-pravāheṇa
dīrghakālam yad āsanam tad upāsanam-
ācakṣate*

[Śāṅkara's Commentary on Bhagavad-gītā-xii-3]

Similarly, *dhyāna* (meditation) is defined in the same way : Meditation consists in withdrawing the sense-organs like hearing, etc., from their respective objects, sound, etc., into the mind, and then after drawing the mind into the inner Self, placing it there with one-pointed attention.

ध्यानं नाम शब्दादिभ्यो विषयेभ्यः
 श्रोत्रादीनि करणानि मनसि उप-
 संहृत्य मनश्च प्रत्यक्चेतयितरि
 एकाग्रतया यत्चिन्तनं तद्ध्य्यानम्

*Dhyānam nāma śabdādibhyo viṣayebhyaḥ
 śrotrādīni karaṇāni manasi upasamhṛtya
 manaś ca pratyakcetayitari ekāgratayā
 yat cintanam tad dhyānam*

[Śaṅkara's Commentary on Gītā śloka xiii-24]

From these definitions, it becomes clear what, the nature and aim of devotion are. Ordinarily, our mental modes flow towards the objects of sense. On account of this out-going tendency, the mind gets distracted and suffers loss of peace. In order to regain peace the mind must be subjected to the reverse process; i. e., it must be withdrawn from the sense objects, and set on the inward Self, i. e. God. Then it becomes one-pointed and centred in the Self. This is effected by devotion or meditation, which is also referred to in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by the general term *yoga*. The one who is at the mercy of the sense - organs and their objects is an *ayukta*, one whose mind is not under control. Such a one goes to ruin. In the second chapter, the downward way to disaster is thus described :

“For a man who contemplates sense-objects, attachment to them arises; from attachment springs desires; from desire grows anger; from anger issues forth delusion; from delusion, confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of discrimination; and from the loss of discrimination, the man perishes ”

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
 सङ्गात्पञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
 क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
 स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥

*Dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsah saṅgas-teṣupajāyate
 Saṅgāt saṁjāyate kāmah kāmāt krodhobhijāyate
 krodhād bhavati sammohah sammohāt smṛti-
 vibhramah Smṛtibhramśād-buddhināśo buddhi-
 nāśāt pranaśyati*

[Bhagavadgītā - ii - 62-63]

This chain beginning with the contemplation of sense objects and ending with one's perishing in the sense of becoming unfit to gain the human goal is characterised by Śaṅkara as the root of evil (*sarvānarthamūlam*).

The way to overcome all this evil is, naturally, the reverse process of keeping the sense-organs and the mind under one's control, withdrawing

one's attention from the external world and fixing it on the inner Self, and having fixed the mind's attention thus, not allowing it to stray away from the Self. This reverse process, however, is not easy to accomplish, as we have already indicated. Arjuna complains to Śrī Kṛṣṇa at one point in the Dialogue that he finds it difficult to control the mind.

“Restless indeed, is the mind, O Kṛṣṇa, turbulent, strong and obstinate. Controlling that is as difficult, I deem, as containing the wind.”

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम् ।
तस्याऽहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥

*Cañcalam̐ hi manah̐ kṛṣṇa
pramāthi balavad dṛḍham
Tasyā'ham̐ nigraham̐ manye
vāyoriva suduṣkaram̐*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa agrees with Arjuna that mind-control is difficult, but adds that it can be done :

“There is no doubt, O mighty armed Arjuna, that the mind is hard to restrain and is restless, but by practice, O son of Kuntī, and by dispassion, it can be controlled.”

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥

*Asomśayam mahābāho mano durnigraham calam,
Abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa ca gṛhyate.*

'Practice' (*abhyāsa*), says Śaṅkara, is the repeated holding on to the same thought about one and the same object. And, 'dispassion' (*vairāgya*) means freedom from desire for pleasures, seen and unseen, gained through constant perception of defects in them.

अभ्यासो नाम चित्तभूमौ कस्यांचित् समान-
प्रत्ययावृत्तिः चित्तस्य । वैराग्यं नाम दृष्टा-
दृष्टेष्टभोगेषु दोषदर्शनाभ्यासात् वैतृष्ण्यम् ।

*Abhyāso nāma cīttabhūmau kasyāncit
samāna pratyayāvṛttiḥ, cittasya vairāgyam
nāma dṛṣṭā - dṛṣṭeṣṭa - bhogeṣu doṣadarśā-
nābhyāsāt vaitṛṣṇyam.*

The surest way of cultivating dispassion is the practice of directing all one's mental modes towards God, the supreme Self. This has to be done slowly and gradually, without exerting pressure on the mind, and suppressing it. When the mind is made to realize that the proper object of meditation is the eternal reality, God, and not the fleeting phenomenal world, it will of its own accord become quiescent, and cease from distraction and dissipation. The mind will then know that the Self alone is all, and that there is nothing else besides.

आत्मैव सर्वं न ततोऽन्यत् किञ्चिदस्ति ।

Ātmā eva sarvaṃ na tataḥ anyat kimcidasti

[Śaṅkara's Commentary on Bhagavad-gītā-vi-25]

This knowledge becomes easy through the consistent practice of devotion. Devotion is of two kinds : (i) devotion to God, *Īśvara*, as endowed with adjuncts, and (ii) devotion to the Absolute Self devoid of adjuncts. These may be called, respectively, *Īśvaropāśana* and *akṣaropāśanā*. The former is devotion as the means (*sādhana-bhakti*) and the latter devotion is the end (*sādhya-bhakti*). Of the four types of devotees mentioned earlier, the one in distress (*ārtah*) and the one who seeks wealth (*arthārthī*) practise devotion as the means; the one who longs for gaining knowledge (*jijñāsuḥ*) has come to appreciate the value of devotion as the end, after having practised it as the means; the last type is the wise one (*jñānī*) who has realised or is on the point of realizing the devotion that is the end, which is the same as knowledge. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī describes the devotion of the first three as *sakāma* (with desire) and of the fourth as *akāma* (without desire). And, of the first three, again, the one who desires knowledge (*jijñāsuḥ*) crosses *māyā* directly when there arises knowledge, while the other two, viz. the one who is in distress and the one who seeks wealth, can overcome *māyā* only through gaining the status of the seeker after knowledge.

ते च त्रयः सकामाः एकः अकामः इत्येवं चतुर्विधाः
 तत्र जिज्ञासुः ज्ञानोत्पत्त्या साक्षादेव मायां तरति
 आर्तः अर्थार्थी च जिज्ञासुत्वं प्राप्य इति विशेषः ।

*Te ca trayah sakāmāḥ, ekaḥ akāmaḥ ityevam
 caturvidhāḥ; tatra jijñāsuh jñānotpattyā
 sākṣādevu māyām tarati; ārtah,
 arthārthī ca jijñāsutvam prāpya iti viśeṣah.*

[Gūḍārthadīpikā of B.gītā-vii-16]

Devotion to the unconditioned *Brahman*, which is knowledge, is difficult to obtain. At the commencement of the twelfth chapter, Arjuna puts a question to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is typical of the intellectual who is interested in knowing what the best is even at the start, and who desires to realize the best, without counting the cost. This is the question he asks :

“Those devotees who, always united in will, thus contemplate Thee, and those who contemplate the Imperishable, the Unmanifest (*Brahman*)... which of them are the most versed in *yoga*?”

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।
 ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥

*Evam satatayuktā ye bhaktāstvām paryupāsate
 Ye cāpyakṣaramavyaktam teṣām ke yoga-vittamāḥ.*

[Bhagavad-gītā-xii-1]

Arjuna has heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa discourse on the two kinds of devotion : (i) devotion to the supreme Self, *Brahman*, the Imperishable, which is devoid of all qualifications; and (ii) devotion to God, *īśvara*, who is endowed with great virtues such as all-power and lordship and omniscience.

परमात्मनो ब्रह्मणः अक्षरस्य विध्वस्त-सर्व
विशेषणस्य उपासनं । सर्वयोगैश्वर्य-
सर्वज्ञानं उपासनं – शक्तिमत्सत्त्वोपाधेः
ईश्वरस्य उपासनम् ।

*Paramātmāno brahmaṇaḥ akṣarasya
vidhvasta-sarva-viśeṣaṇasya upāsanam;
sarva yogaiśvarya sarvajñānam upāsanam
śaktimat - satvopādeḥ Īśvarasya upāsanam.*

[Śaṅkara's Introduction to the twelfth chapter of the Bhagavad
gītā.]

He wants to know which of these two is the highest so that he may adopt it. The ideal *guru* that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is, he at once understands the motive behind Arjuna's question and answers telling him, in effect, what the best *for him* is. The implication of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's reply is explained by Śaṅkara thus : The Lord says :—

“They who are worshippers of the Imperishable *Brahman* who have the vision of the truth, and have abandoned all desires—let us not consider them now; for we shall speak about them later.

What we are now concerned with is the other type —those who are devoted to me, the supreme Lord, the omniformed Reality.”

ये तु अक्षरोपासकाः सम्यग्दर्शिनो निवृत्तैषणाः
 ते तावत् तिष्ठन्तुः ; तान्प्रति यद्वक्तव्यं तदुपरिष्ठात् वक्ष्यामः ।
 ये तु इतरे मयि विश्वरूपे परमेश्वरे . . . समाधाय मनः
 भक्ताः सन्तः उपासते, ते युक्ततमाः ।

*ye tu akṣaropāsakāḥ samyagdarśino
 nivṛttaīṣanāḥ te tāvat tiṣṭhantu, tān
 prati yad vaktavyam tad upariṣṭāt
 vakṣyāmaḥ. ye tu itare mayi
 viśvarūpe paramēśvare...samādhāya
 manaḥ bhaktāḥ santaḥ...upāsate,
 te yuktatamāḥ*

[Śaṅkara's Commentary on B gītā xii-2]

They are certainly great. But, what about those who are devoted to the unconditioned *Brahman*, the wise ones? Are they not great? The Lord's answer, in effect, is, "That they are supremely great goes without saying." He expressly declares: "Those, indeed, who ever contemplate the Imperishable, the Undesignatable, the Unmanifest, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Immutable, the Immovable, the Eternal,—having restrained all the senses, always equanimous intent on the welfare of all beings,—they reach me alone."

ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।
 सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥
 संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।
 ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥

ye tvakṣaram anirdeśyam avyaktam
paryupāsate
Sarvatragam acintyam ca kūṭastham acalam
dhruvam
Sanniyamyendriyagrāmam sarvatra sama-
buddhayaḥ
Te prāpnuvanti mām eva sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ.
 [Bhagavad-gītā:xii-3-4]

But the path which they, the wise ones, follow is extremely hard to tread. It is not accessible to those who have conceit in their bodies (*dehābhīmāna*). The way of knowledge is open only to those who are rid of false identifications with the things that perish. The Imperishable is not obtained by those who are attached to the perishable.

क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्त चेतसाम् ।
 अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥

Kleśo'dhikataras-teṣām avyāktāsakta cetasām,
Avayaktā hi gatiṛ-duḥkham dehavadbhir-
avāpyate.
 [Bhagavad-gītā: xii-5]

‘Among thousands of people’, says Śrī Kṛṣṇa, ‘one may strive for perfection; even among those who strive and have gained competence, only one knows me truly.

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु, कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।

यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

*manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu kaścīd-yatati siddhaye,
yatatām api siddhānām kaścīn-mām veti*

tattvataḥ,

[Bhagavad-gītā: vii-3]

The way to gaining competence for the path of knowledge, which is devotion in the plenary sense, is, as we have seen, the discipline of devotion to God, *Īsvara*. When God is described as the lower (*apara*) *Brahman*, it does not mean that *Brahman* has become lower or degraded, but only that we look at *Brahman* from our lower empirical standpoint. The worship of God itself will lift us up from phenomenality and make us fit to receive the wisdom of the Absolute.

Worship may be of different grades; and the form of God that is worshipped may also be different. Advaita teaches not only the non-duality of Brahman (*Brahmādvaita*) but also the non-duality of the Deity (*Devatā-advaita*). A devotee is free to choose whatever form of the Deity that pleases him. And, he may start his life of devotion

Selfish desires do not lead, it is true, to any lasting good. In fact, no desire does anyone any good.

न हि कामाः हिताः कस्यचित्

Na hi kāmāḥ hitāḥ kasyacit

[Śaṅkara's Commentary on B. gītā-vii-22]

Why then, it may be asked, should the Lord grant these desires? Governed by ignorance, most men think that their good lies in the fulfilment of their desires. Were they to ask for liberation, surely the Lord will show the way. But they do not; they want finite ends. And so, they have to be weaned by at first fulfilling their wishes. Says Śrī Kṛṣṇa :

“Howsoever men approach me, even so do I reward them; it is my path that men follow in all things.”

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्तमानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

*Ye yathā mām prapadyante tānstathaiva
bhajāmyaham,
Mama vartmānuvartante manuṣyāḥ pārtha
sarvaśaḥ*

[Bhagavad gītā iv-11]

Commenting on this verse, Śaṅkara observes that the Lord's teaching is this :

“I reward men by granting them the things they desire just in accordance with the way in which and the motive with which they seek me; for they do not ask for release (*mokṣa*). It is not possible for one and the same person to seek for release and to desire for selfish ends. Therefore, I reward those who desire selfish ends by granting them those ends; I reward those who are unselfish and do their allotted work, seeking release, by imparting to them knowledge; I reward those who are wise and have renounced the world and who seek release by granting them release; so also, I reward the people who are in distress by removing their suffering. Thus, I reward all, just in the way they seek me.”

In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, no fixed or rigid mode is taught for worshipping the Lord. What constitutes the core of worship is the act of offering as sacrifice at least a part of what one owns. It may be even an insignificant or trivial thing that one offers. What matters is the spirit in which it is offered. Not only do the devotees of God obtain eventually the supreme goal of liberation, but also they can worship him with ease and without any ostentation.

न केवलं मङ्गलानां अनावृत्तिलक्षणम् अनन्तफलं
सुखाराधनञ्च अहम् ।

*Nā kevalam mad-bhaktānām
anāvṛttilakṣaṇam ananta-phalam sukharādhanasca
aham.*

[Śāṅkara's Commentary on B. gītā ix-26]

The Lord declares :

“A leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water—whichever is offered with devotion by the one who is pure of mind—that I accept”.

“Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest, whatever austerity thou dost perform...do that as an offering unto me, O son of Kunti.”

पत्रं पुष्पं फलं तोयं यो मे भक्त्या प्रयच्छति ।
तदहं भक्त्युपहृतमश्नामि प्रयतात्मनः ॥
यत्करोषि यदाश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

*Patram puṣpaṁ phalam toyam yo me bhaktyā
prayacchati
Tadaham bhaktyupahṛtamāśnāmi prayatāt-
manah
Yat karoṣi yadaśnāsi yaj-juhoṣi dadāsi yat.
Yat tapasyasi kaunteya tat kuruṣva
madarpaṇam.*

[Bhagavad-gītā-ix 26-2]

The ideal *bhakta* (devotee) has nothing which he may call his own. He does not ask for anything. He offers his entire being up to God. His actions are not his; his will is not his. His thoughts and feelings are centred in the Supreme. He renounces all his actions in God. His deeds with their fruits are dedicated to God. What he practises is *ananyayoga*, the yoga which has no other end or support except God.

अविद्यमानं अन्यत् आलम्बनं विश्वरूपं
देवं आत्मानं मुक्त्वा यस्य सः अनन्यः ।

*Avidyamānaṁ anyat ālambanaṁ viśva-
rūpaṁ devam ātmānaṁ muktvaṁ yasya saḥ
ananyaḥ.*

[Śāṅkara's Commentary on B. gītā xii-6]

Having gained such virtues as sense-control, restraint of mind, calmness, non-violence, etc., he talks only of God, thinks only of Him, worships Him alone with love—Him who is his very Self residing in the heart (*hṛdayeṣam ātmānaṁ*).

[Śāṅkara's Commentary on Bhagavad-Gītā-ix- 4]

The summit of *sādhana-bhakti* (devotion as means) is reached when the devotee has the vision of the all-ness of God. In the tenth chapter Śrī Kṛṣṇa describes his manifold splendour (*vibhūti*), not exhaustively because that is not possible, but

illustratively. He concludes the account by saying: 'I stand sustaining the entire universe by one part (of myself).'

विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ।

Viṣṭabhyāhamidam kṛtsnamekāṁśena sthito jagat

[Bhagavad-gītā-x-42]

At the commencement of the eleventh chapter, Arjuna expresses a wish to behold the cosmic form, the primordial being (*jagadātmārūpam ādyam aiśvaram*). And, Srī Kṛṣṇa after granting him 'the eye divine', reveals to him the all-pervading, all-including, all-transcending form. In that cosmic form, the body of the God of Gods, Arjuna saw in one part the whole world divided in many ways.

तत्रैकस्थं जगत्कृत्स्नं प्रविभक्तमनेकधा ।

अपश्यद्देवदेवस्य शरीरे पाण्डवस्तदा ॥

*Tatraikastham jagat- kṛtsnaṁ pravi bhaktam
anekadhā*

Apasyad-deva-devasya śarīre pāṇḍavastadā

[Bhagavad gītā-xi-13]

He could not stand this magnificent sight for a long time; for he had still to evolve to reach the stage of what may be called consciousness. And so, after giving full-throated expression to his

sense of wonder and delight, he pleaded with Śrī Kṛṣṇa to withdraw his universal form and assume back his usual status as Arjuna's friend.

मम दर्शय रूपं यत् मत्सखम् ॥

Mama darśaya rūpam yat mat-sakham

[Śaṅkara's Commentary on B. gitā-xi-45]

The mature *bhakta*, however, revels in the experience of the cosmic form. He has only to take the last step to enter the Pure Land of knowledge-devotion (*jñāna-bhakti*). This last step consists in total self-surrender or self-naughting. In the last chapter, Śrī Kṛṣṇa teaches:

“The Lord dwells in the hearts of all being, O Arjuna, whirling all beings through *māyā*, as if mounted on a machine.

“Go unto Him for refuge with all thy being, O Bhārata; by His grace shalt thou obtain supreme peace, and the eternal resting place”.

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।

भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥

तमेव शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।

तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥

Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānām hṛd-dēśe'rjuna tiṣṭhati.

Bhrāmayan sarva-bhūtāni yantrārūḍhāni māyayā.

*Tam eva śaraṇam gaccha sarva-bhāvena bhārata,
Tat prasādāt parām śāntim sthānam prāpsyasi
śāśvatam.*

[Bhagavad-gītā-xviii-61-62]

Commenting on the *carama-śloka* (the last verse), Ācārya Śaṅkara interprets the Lord as saying thus:

‘Renouncing all works, seek refuge in Me alone, who am *Īśvara*, the Self of all, dwelling as the same in all, as the Lord who is constant and never-falling (*acyuta*), devoid of such conditions as being confined in the womb, being born, growing old, and dying, seek me as thy sole refuge contemplating that I am the sole reality and that there is nothing other than Me. I shall release thee from all sins, from all bonds of merit and demerit, by manifesting Myself as thy own Self *svātmabhāva-prakāśikaraṇena*’. [Śaṅkara’s Commentary on Bhagavad-gītā-xviii-66]

How does the Lord save the devotee who has sought him as the sole refuge? It is by granting him knowledge of the non-dual Self. As has already been stated, the path of devotion (*bhakti-yoga*) makes one eligible for adopting the knowledge-discipline (*jñāna-niṣṭhā*) which is the same as devotion as the end (*sādhyā-bhakti*). And, it is the latter that culminates in release. [Śaṅkara’s Commentary on Bhagavad-gītā sloka-xviii].

That he discloses to the mature devotees the wisdom's way by which they reach the end, is declared by the Lord Himself at several places in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In chapter ten, He says, as explained by Śaṅkara:

“To them who are ever devout, worshipping me with love, not for any purpose of their own, but out of love for Me — to them I give that devotion of true knowledge of My essential nature, by which they know Me, the supreme Lord, the Self, as their own Self.

“Out of sheer compassion, I dwell in their heart which is engaged in thinking exclusively of the Self and destroy the darkness of delusion — that which is characterised by illusory cognition which is occasioned by the absence of discrimination,—by the lamp of wisdom, the lamp of discriminatory knowledge, fed by the oil of pure devotion, fanned by the breeze of earnest meditation on Me, furnished with the wick of right intuition, purified by the cultivation of purity, chastity and other virtues, held in the internal organ which is completely detached from all worldly concerns, placed in the wind-sheltered enclosure of the mind which is withdrawn from the sense-objects and untarnished by attachment and aversion, and shining with the light of true knowledge engendered by constant practice of concentration and meditation.”

तेषां सततयुक्तानां भजतां प्रीतिपूर्वकम् ।
 ददामि बुद्धियोगं तं येन मामुपयान्ति ते ॥
 तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।
 नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

*Teṣāṃ satata - yuktānām bhajatām prīti pūrvakam
 Dadāmi buddhiyogam tam yena mām upayānti te
 Teṣāṃ evānukampārtham aham ajñānajaṃ tamah,
 Nāśayāmy - ātma - bhāvastho jñānadīpena bhāsvatā*

[Bhagavad - Gītā - x - 10-11]

What is the nature of this true knowledge which is the highest devotion? And what are the characteristics of those who have been granted this knowledge?

The plenary knowledge is described as *ananya-yoga*, *apṛthak-samādhi*, *ananya-bhakti*, *avyabhī-cāriṇī-bhaktī*, etc. It is the path of experiencing non-separateness or non-otherness (*ananyatva*). It reveals the truth that other than God, the supreme Self, there is nothing real, and that the Self is the supreme goal. When one has this revelation, the mind becomes steady and constant in the contemplation of that non-dual Reality. This is devotion that is non-inconstant; and that is knowledge.

न अन्यो भगवतो वासुदेवात् परः अस्ति, अतः स
 एव नो गतिः इत्येवं निश्चिता अव्यभिचारिणी

बुद्धिः अनन्ययोगः तेन भजनं भक्तिः न व्यभिचरणशीला
अव्यभिचारिणी । सा च ज्ञानं ॥

*Na anyo bhagavato vāsudevāt paraḥ asti
ataḥ sa eva no gatiḥ iti evaṁ niścitā
avyabhicāriṇī buddhiḥ ananya yogaḥ
tena bhajanam bhaktiḥ na vyabhi-
caraṇa - śilā avyabhicāriṇī; sā
ca jñānam.*

[Sāṅkara's Commentary on Bhagavad-Gītā - xiii - 10]

The supreme devotion, thus, is of the nature of knowledge whose content is the Self (*ātma-viṣaya*).

[Vide Sāṅkara's Commentary on Bhagavad-Gītā viii-22]

The one who has this devotion is the fourth type of devotee, i. e. *jñānī*.

एवं भूतः ज्ञाननिष्ठः मद्भक्तिं मयि परमेश्वरे भक्तिं भजनं
परामुत्तमां ज्ञानलक्षणां चतुर्थीं लभते

*Evam bhūto jñāna - niṣṭhaḥ
mad - bhaktim mayi paramēśvare
bhaktim bhajanam parām uttamām
jñānalakṣaṇām caturthīm labhate.*

[Sāṅkara's Commentary on Bhagavad-Gītā - xviii-54]

He realizes through devotion the supreme Self that is devoid of all adjuncts, that is limitless and non-dual like space, that is of the nature of pure conscious-

ness, unborn, undecaying, undying, fearless, and endless. This devotion of his is called *jñāna-niṣṭhā* (discipline of knowledge). It is referred to as the supreme or fourth type of devotion—supreme as compared with the other three types, viz. devotion of the one in distress etc. By this supreme devotion, the *jñānī* knows the Lord as he is, and consequently all cognition of difference as between *Īśvara* (God) and *Jīva* (soul, *kṣetrajñā*) disappears altogether. The resultant experience is release (*mokṣa*), for release is only another name for the non-dual Self that is without modification or change.

[Vide Śaṅkara's Commentary on Bhagavad - gītā - xviii-55]

That the sage and the fourth type of devotee are the same will become clear when we consider the descriptions of the *sthitaprajña* and the *bhakta* given in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. In the second chapter, there is a description of the man whose wisdom has become steady (*sthitaprajña*), i. e., the one who has attained sagehood. With the help of Śaṅkara's explanation, let us see who, according to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is a sage, or when one becomes a sage. When one completely abandons all the various desires that enter the heart and is satisfied with the true inner Self in himself, without longing for external gains, and being indifferent to everything else because he has gained the nectar of immortality i. e., the vision of the supreme truth, then one

is said to be a wise man. His knowledge has become steady because it has arisen from the discrimination between the Self and the not-self. His mind is not distressed when calamities come; he has no attachment to pleasure; he is free from passion, fear and wrath; such a one is called a sage, a man of steady knowledge. The sage has no attachment even to life in the body. He does not exult in pleasure, nor is he averse to pain that may befall him. When he is thus free from delight and depression, then his knowledge arising from discrimination becomes steady. His mind is centred in the Self; his experience has transcended all duality; he remains steady in wisdom, having brought the senses under complete control. While the ignorant man is awake in the world and asleep in the self, the wise one is awake in the Self and asleep in the world. "What is night to all beings, therein the self-controlled one is awake. Where all beings are awake that is night to the sage who sees." Desires of all sorts may enter from all sides, but the sage is not affected by them, even as the ocean is not affected by the waters that enter into it. They all disappear in him; he is not enslaved by them. The sage dwells in the state of perfect peace. Having attained *Brahman* he is no longer deluded.

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।

तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

*Yā niśā sarva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī,
Yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneh-
Āpūryamāṇam acalapratiṣṭham samudram āpaḥ
praviśanti yadvat,
Tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve sa śāntim āpnoti
na kāmakāmī.*

[Bhagavad-gītā - ii-69-70]

Exactly identical is the definition of a *bhakta* in the twelfth chapter with that of a *sthitaprajña* in the second chapter. Who is the devotee that is supremely dear to the Lord? He who hates nothing, not even that which causes him pain, for he sees all beings as the Self : he who is friendly and compassionate—compassionate since, as a *sannyāsin*, he has offered security of life to all beings; he who owns nothing as his, and is free from egoity; he who does not hate pain nor is attached to pleasure; he who is always contented, satisfied with whatever comes as means of bodily sustenance; he whose mind and intellect are placed totally in the Self : he is the devotee dear to the Lord. He by whom the world is not tormented and who is not tormented by the world, who is free from elation, envy, fear and sorrow; he who is free from wants, who is pure, quick-witted, unconcerned, untroubled, renouncing all undertakings; he who neither rejoices,

nor hates, nor grieves, nor desires, renouncing good and evil; he who is the same to foe and friend' and also in honour and dishonour, who is the same in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment, to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, steady-minded, and with complete devotion; that *bhakta* is dear to the Lord

अद्वेषा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

.....

श्रद्धधाना मत्परमा भक्तास्तेऽतीव मे प्रियाः ॥

Adveṣṭā sarva bhūtānam maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca,

.....

Śraddadhānā matparamā bhaktāste'tīva me priyāḥ,

[Bhagavad-Gītā - xii - 13-20]

The state of perfection which is that of the *jñāni-bhakti*, and which is release, is not a post-mortem state. It is the eternal nature of the Self and can be realized here and now, even before death overtakes the body. It is a unique insight of Advaita that it recognizes *mokṣa* as the essential nature of the Self. This insight is confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* by the Lord when he says :

“Even here birth has been overcome by them, the sages; their mind is established in sameness.

The defectless and the same, indeed, is *Brahman*; therefore, they are established in Brahman.”

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।

निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥

*Ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sām्यe sthitam manaḥ,
Nirdoṣam hi samam brahma tasmād-brahmaṇi te
sthitāḥ.*

[Bhagavad-gītā v - 19]

Commenting on this verse Śaṅkara observes: “Even while living here on the earth, birth has been conquered by those sages who see the One, and whose mind rests without swerving in *Brahman* which is the same in all beings.....Not in the slightest do the blemishes of body affect them, for they have no egoity and do not identify themselves with the aggregate of body, etc.”

The knower of *Brahman*, declares the Lord, is established in Brahman—“*brahmaivid brahmaṇi sthitah*”

[Vide Bhagavad - Gītā V - 20]

In order to indicate the place that *bhakti* occupies in Advaita, we choose as the main source of instruction Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, for it is there that the great Master makes his position, crystal-clear. The position, to repeat.

is this : devotion to the conditioned *Brahman*, i. e., *Īsvara*, is the means to gain *jñāna* (knowledge) which is devotion of the highest degree. The *jñānī* who is the fourth type of *bhakta* is the true devotee, devotee in the principal sense of the term. In the words of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, he is *prema-bhaktaḥ*, *mulhya-bhaktaḥ* — Vide preface to *Gūḍārtha-dīpikā*. From this supreme standpoint it is a matter of indifference whether we say as Rajaji does, that knowledge when it becomes fully mature is *bhakti*, or that *bhakti* when it becomes fully mature is knowledge.

Ādi Śaṅkara teaches the same doctrine of devotion, in his other works too. We shall here cite two passages, one from the commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra* and the other from one of the Advaita manuals, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*. The *sūtra-bhāṣya* passage reads thus : “The attainment of release becomes possible through knowledge which is, verily, caused by the grace of God.”

तदनुग्रहहेतुकेनैव विज्ञानेन मोक्षसिद्धिर्भवितुमर्हति

Tad-anugraha-hetukenaiva vijñānena mokṣa-siddhir bhavitum-arhati.

[*Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* II - iii-41]

In the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* devotion is defined thus: “contemplation of one’s true nature is called *bhakti*”, (*svasvarūpānusandhānam bhaktirity-abhidhīyate*).

That devotion to the Deity in its various forms has for its goal the realization of non-duality through the destruction of nescience is taught by Ādi Śaṅkara even in his hymns. We shall conclude by quoting two verses, one from the *Saundaryalaharī* and the other from the *Śivānandalaharī*.

In the hymn to the Mother Goddess, Śaṅkara sings :

भवानि त्वं दासे मयि वितर दृष्टिं सकरुणां
 इति स्तोतुं वाञ्छन् कथयति भवानि त्वमिति यः ।
 तदैव त्वं तस्मै दिशसि निजसायुज्यपदवीं
 मुकुन्द-ब्रह्मेन्द्र-स्फुटमकुट-नीराजितपदाम् ॥

Bhavāni tvam dāse mayi vitara dṛṣṭim sakaruṇām
Iti stotum vāncan kathayati bhavāni tvam iti yaḥ
Tadaiva tvam tasmai diśasi nijasāyujyapadavīm
Mukunda brahmendra sphuṭa makuṭa nīrājita
padām.

Saundarya laharī — 22

The devotee wants to say to the Goddess "O Bhavāni! Do thou cast thy compassion-filled glance on me who am thy servant." He has completed uttering the first two words : *Bhavāni tvam*. In the full sentence the devotee intends to speak, they would mean 'O Bhavani, thou'. But the mother takes the first word not as a noun but as a verb. Then the words would mean 'May I be Thou', i. e.,

“May I realize the state of identity with Thee.” At once the Goddess grants to the devotee the plenary experience of unity with Herself—the experience which even the Gods find difficult to obtain.

In the hymn to Śiva, there is the verse :

आद्याविद्या हृद्गता निर्गतासी -
 द्विद्या हृद्या हृद्गता त्वत्प्रसादात् ।
 सेवे नित्यं श्रीकरं त्वत्पदाब्जं ।
 भावे मुक्तेर्भाजनं राजमौले ॥

*Ādyā vidyā hṛdgatā nirgatāsīd vidyā
 hṛdyā hṛdgatā tvat prasādāt
 Seve nityam śrīkaram tvat padābjam bhāve
 mukter bhājanam rājamaule.*

Sivānanda-lahari — 91

“O Crescent-crested Lord! Through Thy grace the beginningless nescience resident in the heart has been removed; and the delectable (*Brahman*) knowledge has taken its seat in the heart. Thy lotus-feet, which bring auspiciousness and are the repositories of liberation, I meditate on and adore.”

The supreme end of devotion to God is *mokṣa*, liberation from bondage. Nescience is the cause of bondage. Wisdom is what removes nescience. It is God’s grace that grants wisdom.



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संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-

खिन्नानां जलकांक्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-

त्वेषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसंदायिनी ॥

samsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhbhūta-
dāhavyathā
khinnānām jalakāṅksayā marubhuvī bhrāntyā
paribhrāmyatām,
atyāsanṇasudhāmbudhim sukhakaram brahmād
vayam darśayaty-
eṣā-śaṅkarabhāratī vijayate nirvāṇasamdāyīnī.

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.