

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA - VEDĀNTA

The VOICE of ŚĀṆKARA

śaṅkara-bhāratī

Chairman, Advisory Board
V. R. Kalyanasundara Sastri

Editor
N. C. Krishnan

Volume NINE
Number THREE



NOVEMBER

1984

esā śaṅkara-bhārati vijagate
nirvāṇa-sandāyini

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

The Voice of Śaṅkara

is published under the guidance of

His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakoti Pīṭha

by Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre

Registered Office:

26, College Road,
Nungambakkam,
Madras-600 006.

Subscriptions are to be sent to:

The Administrative Officer,
Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre,
26, College Road, Nungambakkam,
Madras-600 006.

Subscription Rates:

	Indian	Foreign
Annual	Rs. 30/-	US Dollars 10
For two years	Rs. 50/-	US Dollars 18
Life	Rs. 250/-	US Dollars 100
Single copy	Rs. 10/-	US Dollars 3

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF ADVAITA - VEDĀNTA

The VOICE of
ŚĀṆKARA

śaṅkara-bhāratī

Chairman, Advisory Board
V. R. Kalyanasundara Sastri

Editor
N. C. Krishnan

Volume NINE
Number THREE

NOVEMBER

1984

ADVISORY BOARD

Chairman

Sri V. R. Kalyanasundara Sastri

Members

Sri V. S. V. Gurusvami Sastri

Dr. R. Balasubramanian

Dr. P. K. Sundaram

Dr. N. Gangadharan

Dr. V. K. S. N. Raghavan

Sri J. R. S. Vasana Ramanan

Editor

Sri N. C. Krishnan

CONTENTS

	187	<i>Homage to Śaṅkara</i>
<i>JAGADGURU</i>		
<i>ŚRI CANDRAŚEKHARENDRA SARASVATĪ</i>	189	<i>Śāktam</i>
<i>JAGADGURU</i>		
<i>ŚRI JAYENDRA SARASVATĪ</i>	200	<i>The Characteristics of Bhakti</i>
<i>ŚAṅKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA</i>		
	215	<i>Haristuti</i>
	225	<i>Vivekacūḍāmaṇi</i>
	235	<i>Śri Viṣṇubhujāṅga- prayāntastotra</i>
	253	<i>Subrahmanya-bhujāṅgam</i>
<i>ĀTMAVIDYĀBHŪṢAṆAM</i>		
<i>V. S. V. GURUSVĀMI ŚĀSTRĪ</i>	267	<i>Laghuśataślokī</i> (in Sanskrit)
	275	<i>Laghuśataślokī</i>
<i>BHĀṢYABHĀVAJÑĀ</i>		
<i>V. R. KALYĀNASUNDARA ŚĀSTRĪ</i>	287	<i>Jīvo Brahmaiva Nāparaḥ</i> (in Sanskrit)
	291	<i>Jīva is Brahman Itself, Not Different from It</i>

HOMAGE TO ŚAṄKARA

[99]

स्वाहाऽभावादस्मि-
न्स्वाहानाथो निवृत्तो यत् ।
तस्मान्नेत्रद्वन्द्वं
शिष्टं यतिरूपशङ्करे नूनम् ॥

svāhābhāvād-asmin-
svāhānātho nivṛtto yat
tasmān-netradvandvain
śiṣṭam yatirūpaśaṅkare nūnam.

Is it, because of the absence of the Goddess Svāhādevi, the fire god has left him (Śrī Śaṅkara)? Perhaps, on that account, indeed, there remains only a pair of eyes in this preceptor, Śrī Śaṅkara who has become a *Yati* (ascetic).

Lord Śiva made his advent in this world in the form of Śrī Ādiśaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. Śrī Ādiśaṅkara took to *sannyāsaśrama* and so did not offer oblation to fire, with the chanting

of Vedic hymns ending in *svāhā*. The author fancies that the third eye (*viz.*, fire) of Lord Śiva is absent in Śrī Śaṅkara, the Yati, because he has forsaken *gṛhasthāśrama* (householder's stage).

[100]

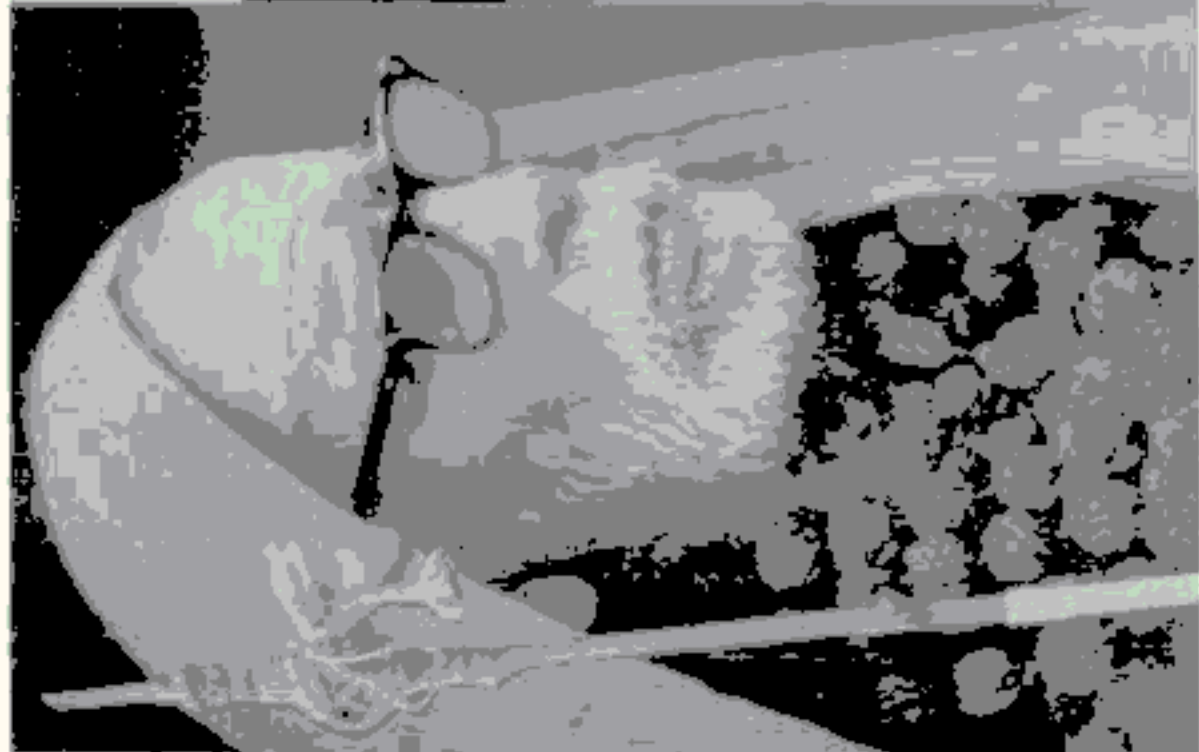
अज्ञानतिमिरसंवृत-
जनततये बोधनेत्रदानेन ।
अवशिष्टा किमु चास्मि-
न्नवतारे द्विनेत्रता शम्भो ॥

*ajñāna-timira-saṁvṛta-
janatataye bodhanetra-dānena
avaśiṣṭā kimu cāsminn-
avatāre dvinetratā śambho!*

O Lord Śaṅkara (Śambhu)! does there remain only a pair of eyes in this advent of yours as Śaṅkar-ācārya because you yield the eye of wisdom to the multitude of people who are covered by the dense darkness of ignorance?

Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānandaśivābhinava Nṛsiṃhabhārati
in *Śrīdvinetraśambhustūti*





ŚĀKTAM

The Faith of Sakti*

Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī

I

The Absolute is *pūrṇa* (full and limitless). The *prapañca* (universe) which is infinitely varied is also limitless. Even if the limitless *prapañca* is taken away from the limitless Supreme, the limitless Supreme will remain intact. This truth is stated in the following *Upaniṣad-mantra*:

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

*pūrṇamadah pūrṇamidam-
pūrṇāt-pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam-ādāya
pūrṇam evāvaśisyate.*

*Courtesy: Souvenir "Śaṅkara and Śaṅmata" (pp. 1-4 in the introduction to the section "Śāktam") published in connection with the conference on *Śaṅkara and Śaṅmata*, held in Madras from June 1 to June 9, 1969.

If *two* (2) is divided by *two* (2), the quotient is *one* (1). With *two* (2) as the dividend, if the divisor is progressively reduced as *one* (1), or *half* ($\frac{1}{2}$) or *quarter* ($\frac{1}{4}$), etc., the quotient will be respectively *two* (2), or *four* (4) or *eight* (8), etc. Thus as the divisor becomes less and less, the quotient will become more and more. When the divisor is the least, that is infinitesimal, approximating to *zero* (0), the quotient will be infinity.

We multiply the quotient with the divisor and check up whether the resulting is equivalent to the dividend. In this division of any number by *zero* (0), the number that is divided stands for the *prapañca* (the pluralistic universe of infinite variety), the divisor *zero* (0) stands for *māyā* (or the creative power of the Absolute which causes this pluralistic appearance), and the quotient, Infinite, is the absolute Brahman. For the purpose of creating the *prapañca* which is the dividend, Brahman which is the quotient multiplies itself, by *māyā* which is the divisor. Even as *one* (1) divided by *zero* (0), or *two* (2) divided by *zero* (0), or *three* (3) divided by *zero* (0) will give the same quotient, when the Infinite is multiplied by *zero* (0), it is indeterminate, and therefore, it can take the values, 1, 2, 3, etc., numbers connoting difference and therefore, standing for the plurality of the world. The *Upaniṣad* says that —

सोऽकामयत बहु स्याम्प्रजायेयेति

“so’kāmayata bahu syām-prajāyeyeti”

— the One, Absolute determined to become many, and for that purpose, it associated itself with *māyā*, and became many.

When any number is multiplied by zero, the product is also zero. This is the significance of the saying that the *prapañca* which is the product of Brahman and *Māyā* is also *māyā*.

The Divine Mother is the creative principle of the universe, the *Māyā* or *Śakti* aspect of Brahman, which makes the Infinite One appear as the Infinite Many. She presents the formless Supreme in finite forms. It is only by Her grace that one can transcend the *māyā* and obtain the advaitic realisation of "the One without a second" (*ekameva advitīyam* — एकमेवाद्वितीयम्).

II

There are ten main *Upaniṣads* and one of them is the *Kenopaniṣad*. In this *Upaniṣad* a truth expounded by the *Vedas* is explained by means of a story. According to this story, the gods (celestial beings, *devas*) once decided to celebrate their victory over the demons (*asuras*). At this festival, all the gods were filled with a feeling of self-importance and pride in their own prowess. To cure them of their egoism, the Lord (God) appeared in the form of a *Yakṣa*, a bright apparition, which touched the earth below and the heavens above. The identity of this phenomenon, the gods were unable to comprehend. Agni (Fire) was sent to find what it was. To a question from the *Yakṣa*, Agni said that he was *Jātavedas*, having the power to reduce anything and everything to ashes. Thereupon the

Yakṣa threw in front of Agni a blade of grass and asked him to consume it. Even though Agni concentrated all his powers, he was unable to burn it. He came back humbled. Similarly Vāyu or Mātarisvā (Wind) also failed to move the blade of grass, even though he concentrated all his fury to blow it off. Finally, Indra, the Lord of gods, approached the Yakṣa. The apparition vanished, and before the crest-fallen Indra stood the form of a damsel whose lustre illuminated the entire place. She was no other than the divine Mother Umā or Haimavatī from whom everyone and everything derive sustenance. This *Īyotiḥsvarūpa* informed Indra that the Yakṣa, who was present a while back, was no other than the Paramātmā, the source of all energy and life, and that if the gods had succeeded in conquering the *asuras* (demons), it was due to the grace of that Paramātmā who infused the gods with their respective powers. Indra became enlightened and he communicated this knowledge to the other gods. This knowledge destroyed the demon of egoism from their hearts, which then became pure.

Umā, the Divine Mother, is the personification of the Sound Manifestation (*śabda-brahmamayī*) of the Absolute which is called *praṇava* or *Om (aum)*. She is brightness in light and fragrance in flowers. She has the illumination of a thousand suns and yet has the soothing coolness of a thousand moons. Along with Brahman, She is the supreme Self or *Paramātmāsvārūpa* sung by the *Vedas*. Let us surrender ourselves at the Mother's feet which the *Vedas* praise, get purified of heart, and attain lasting bliss.

III

The Divine Mother is the soul of the *varṇa* or alphabet. The *Śāstras* (Scriptures) which are based on *śabda* (sound) are, therefore, forms of the Divine Mother or *Paradevatī*. *Śabda* gives rise to the forms (*rūpa*), visible shapes. It is observed that when particular musical notes are played near a pond, the resultant vibrations induce particles of light dust, floating on the water, to arrange themselves into specific shapes. Thus *śabda* and *rūpa* (sound and form) have close affinity. This also accounts for the sanctity of *mantras* which are words and letters combined and arranged in specific forms. The repetition of a *mantra*, with devotion, earns for us the grace of the particular manifestation of God to whom that *mantra* is dedicated. The Divine Mother is the soul of all *mantras*.

The conception of Divinity as Mother is unique and inspiring. In human relationship the affection of a mother for her child is unsurpassed. Similarly, the depth of the Divine Mother's love for her devotees is unfathomable. The grace that flows from Her is spontaneous and irresistible. That is why the Divine Mother as Śrī Annapūrṇā is depicted as carrying a vessel containing rice mixed with milk in one hand and a ladle in the other. She is ready to distribute this food to them who pray for it. In the abundance of Her mercy, She gives us not only food that sustains our body, but also *jñāna* (knowledge) that nourishes the soul. When Śrī Ādisaṅkara prayed to Mother Annapūrṇā to give him alms, he prayed

not only for himself but for all mankind. We are all members of one family, being the children of the divine parents, Pārvati and Paramesvara. It is our duty to love, help and serve one another.

In this world, we, mortals, are so overwhelmed with *ajñāna* (ignorance) that though we know a thing to be wrong, we are helplessly impelled to do it. *Ajñāna* is a disease for which *jñāna* (enlightenment) is the only cure. The Divine Mother alone is capable of bestowing this milk of *jñāna*, remove our ignorance, satiate the hunger of our *ātman* (soul). Like a hungry child we must yearn for the grace of the Divine Mother so that we can obtain from Her the milk of enlightenment.

If we think of Her, we will not only be avoiding doing wrong, but will also be fed by Her with the milk of *jñāna*. As a result, we will be endowed with the grace of Sarasvatī (the Goddess of Learning) and of Lakṣmī (the Goddess of Wealth). Not only that, physically we will be healthy and radiant with charm (*tejas*) that flows from health. We will also be blessed with long life.

Jñāna will sever attachment (*pāśa*) which binds the soul to this world. When the bond is severed, the liberated soul merges into the limitless and all-pervasive Bliss, and is no longer afflicted by fear, sorrow or pain. Thus, the effect of worshipping the Divine Mother is the fulfilment of the purpose of life: the merger of the individual soul with the supreme Soul. This is the significance of the *phalaśruti* for the hundred verses of Śrī Śaṅkara's *Saundaryalaharī*.

IV

In the *Mūkapañcaśatī*,* Śrī Kāmākṣī Kāmakotī, the Divine Mother is referred to as darkish blue in colour in the 'stutiśataka', and as saffron in colour in the 'āryāśataka'. The *Saundaryalaharī* describes Her (Ambikā's) colour as *aruna*, splendrous red of the rising sun. Why is the colour of the same Goddess described as dark-blue in one place and red in another? According to the *Mantra Śāstras*, Śrī Kāmesvara who transcends the Trinity — Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva — is actionless and unattached. Śrī Kāmesvarī, His consort who is the supreme Parāśakti, seated on the left of Śrī Kāmesvara, is described to be red in colour. The sameness of Pārvatī (consort of Śiva) who is dark, and Parāśakti (the power of the Absolute) who is red, is indicated in the *Mūkapañcaśatī* by attributing both these colours to the supreme Goddess.

Śrī Kāmesvara's form is like that of a pure colourless crystal which becomes invisible when immersed in water. He is thereby conceived as formless even though He has a form. Viṣṇu and Pārvatī, both dark-blue, are twin manifestations, as also Śiva and Sarasvatī, both white, and Brahmā and Lakṣmī, both golden yellow. Daylight is colourless, and yet it contains all the primary colours. If one of the colours is separated from the colourless light, the rest of the colours reveal themselves. Red is the least disturbing colour as is evident from the fact that red light is used to develop photographic negatives. It is called infra-red as opposed to ultra-violet. Under the influence of red Parāśakti, the colourless Kāmes-

* a hymn to Goddess Kāmākṣī

vara manifests Himself as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and their respective consorts, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and Pārvatī and starts the activities of the world-process.

In the *Saundaryalaharī*, Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavat-pāda says that these three Divinities, Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, started their cosmic process when the supreme Śakti knitted Her eye-brow for a fraction of a second. She stood beyond them all and Her red splendour stimulated them to perform their respective functions of creation, preservation and destruction, by Her very presence.

The lesson to be drawn from the foregoing is that the same Supreme Being appears in diverse forms as we conceive. It is ready to shower Its grace in the manner we invoke it. We do it by *mantra* and *japa* which are sound waves having the power to transform themselves into the forms whose *mantras* they are. If we continuously chant the *mantra* into which we are initiated the supreme Parāśakti will shower Her grace on us by taking the form signified by that *mantra*.

She is meditated in the moon which gives soothing light and also assuages heat. Thus She sheds Her nectarine rays all around. The *Paradevatā* whom we worship and the Full Moon we see in the sky are related in this life. It behoves us to constantly meditate on any chosen *mantra* on an *iṣṭa-devatā* (Divinity of our choice) so that our soul may be enveloped by that *Devatā*, and our thoughts by that *mantra* even at the time when the soul departs from the body. That is the path shown to us by our sages.

V

In the *Kenopaniṣad*, of the *Sāma Veda* the Supreme Goddess Kāmākṣī Kāmakoṭī is described as the Daughter of the Himalayas. She is Umā shining with golden jewels; She is of the form of the mystic syllable of *Oṅkāra* embodying the component syllables of 'a' 'u' and 'm'. She is the supreme spiritual Wisdom. When the gods were beset with the pride of victory in battle, She appeared and gave them the teaching of freedom from false-pride and egotism. We shall first pray to Her for ridding ourselves of the sense of complacent egotism.

"What should be done in an emergency? The feet of our Mother Divine should be remembered," say those whose words we respect.

आपदि किं करणीयम् ?

स्मरणीयं चरणयुगलमम्बायाः ।

"āpadi kiṁ karaṇīyam?

smaraṇīyam caraṇayugalam-ambāyāḥ."

She is that supreme Mother Goddess adored everywhere in our *Bhāratavarṣa* (India), as Tulajā Bhavānī in Maharashtra, as Kṣīra Bhavānī in Kashmir, as Jvālāmukhī in Punjab, as Ambājī in Gujarat, as Vindhyavarsīṇī in Uttar Pradesh, as Kālī in Bengal, as Kāmākhyā in Assam, as Cāmuṇḍī in Karnataka, as Kāmākṣī in Kāñcī and as Kanyākumārī in the Southern end of the country. Adored thus in hundreds of forms at different centres in the land, She is ever vigilant protecting us, as Her own beloved children.

Among the many marks of those who have been blessed by the Goddess, is the mark of friendliness

even to those who have evil designs on us, as also the mark of brotherly attitude towards all women. It is said by Poet Mūka in the *Mūkapañcaśati*:

शिव शिव पश्यन्ति समं
 श्रीकामाक्षीकटाक्षिताः पुरुषाः ।
 विपिनम्भवनममित्रं मित्रं
 लोष्टञ्च युवतिबिम्बोष्टम् ॥

“*śiva śiva paśyanti samam*
śrīkāmākṣī-kaṭākṣitāḥ puruṣāḥ
vīpinam-bhavanam-amitram mitram
loṣṭañca yuvati-bimboṣṭam.”

i.e., “Those who have been blessed by the glance of the Goddess take even the forest as a mansion, foe as friend and the lip of maiden a clod of earth.”

The Divine Mother, Śrī Kāmākṣī is depicted as holding the bow and the arrow. Kāmadeva, the God of Love also bears them. But Śrī Kāmākṣī is controlling *kāma* or lust with Her glance. Hence *Kāmākṣī*. She holds the sweet sugarcane bow representing the minds of human beings, and the five floral arrows representing the five senses through which the mind is influenced and is functioning.

If we surrender ourselves at the feet of the Divine Mother, She will help us to keep the mind and the senses under control and purify our heart, so that we may attain perfection.

Ambikā, the Mother Divine, is all important to me. I consider religion to be nothing but meditation upon Her lotus feet. In the presence of our human mother lust is quelled. Meditation upon the Divine Mother quells all evil propensities. It purifies us to Perfection. Let us dedicate every one of our thoughts, words and actions to Her.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF BHAKTI*

Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī

The goal of human life is to realise God, which is the true nature of one's own self. There are many methods to get that awareness. And the path of *bhakti* is one such.

Now, what are the characteristics of true *bhakti*? What is the state of a *bhakta*? What are the stages through which he passes before he becomes aware of his own true nature? What is the core of *bhakti*? Ordinarily, we would say that *bhakti* means doing some *bhajans* or reciting God's name, or doing *pūjā* and so on. Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda gives a beautiful description of all this in the *Śivānandalahari* and says that *bhakti* is that state of mind which withdraws itself from all other things and fixes itself constantly at the feet of *Paśupati*, the Lord of all creatures, namely *Parameśvara*. Ādi Śaṅkara says:

*Courtesy: *Our Heritage* by H. H. Jagadguru Śrī Jayendra Sarasvatī, M/s. Rajan & Co., Madras, 1976, pp. 72-83.

अङ्गोलं निजबीजसन्ततिरयस्कान्तोपलं सूचिका
 साध्वी नैजविभुं लता क्षितिरुहं सिन्धुः सरिद्वल्लभम् ।
 प्राप्नोतीह यथा तथापशुपतेः पादारविन्दद्वय-
 च्चेतोवृत्तिरूपेत्य तिष्ठति सदा सा भक्तिरित्युच्यते ॥

*āṅkolam nijabīja-santatir-ayaskāntopalam sūcikā
 sādhvī naijavibhum latā kṣitiruham sindhuḥ saridvallabham
 prāpnotīha yathā tathā paśupateḥ pādāravindadvayañ-
 ceto vṛttir-upetya tiṣṭhati sadā sā bhaktir-ity-ucyate.*

(i) The first stage of *bhakti* which we, ordinary people, are having is symbolised by the attachment between the *Āṅkola* tree and its seeds. It is said that the seeds of the *Āṅkola* tree (*ēreḷiñjil** in Tamil) fall down from the tree when it becomes dark and again they go and attach themselves to the tree when there is sunrise and in course of time become part of the tree once again. We have tried to verify the existence of this tree but we have not been successful so far. But foresters have confirmed that the seeds do move towards the tree but very imperceptibly.

Just like the seeds of the *Āṅkola* tree, we are all *aiśas* or parts of the *Paramātman* only. The *Jīvātman* comes from the *Paramātman* which is the root cause of everything. We have come from the *Paramātman*; we fall down from Him when there is ignorance. Again, when knowledge comes of our oneness, we get up and attach ourselves again to God. Here, it is significant that darkness is compared to ignorance and knowledge

*ஏரெழிஞ்சில்

to sunrise. During darkness, the seeds fall down from the tree, and similarly, during ignorance, we fall down from the *Paramātmān*. During sunrise or after sunrise, the seeds go back to the tree, and similarly when there is knowledge, we attach ourselves to God once again.

Normally, we think of God and seek knowledge only at times of difficulty. When we are having a comfortable life, we feel happy and we feel that we have done everything, and we do not think of God at all. It is only when we are in difficulties that we start thinking of God. When we are in adversity, we realise that we are in darkness and that is the state of ignorance. At that time, we feel the need for God and the need for knowledge. So, we try to remember God. At the time of difficulty, we pray to the Lord "Oh Lord, I am in difficulty, please do something for me." When there is darkness, there is need for light, and similarly, when we are in difficulty we think of the Lord. This is the first stage of *bhakti*.

(ii) Ādi Śaṅkara describes the next state of *bhakti* as:

अयस्कान्तोपलं सूचिका

ayaskāntopalaṁ sūcikā.

First, we have to think of God, and then God Himself comes and attracts us towards Himself. (Vallabhācārya and others have developed this as their main *siddhānta* and woven a philosophy around it based on *Īśvara-bhakti*.) The attraction between a magnet or lode-stone and an iron needle symbolises the second stage of *bhakti*. During our younger days, we used to play with magnets and iron filings or iron needles.

Magnet has got the property of attracting iron pieces to itself. If we bring the iron pieces very close to the magnet, they cling to the magnet and the magnet attracts them to itself. For sometime, the pieces keep on clinging and after sometime they fall down. Again, the magnet draws the iron pieces to itself. In this way, we used to play with iron pieces and magnet. This illustrates many important philosophical truths to us. Just as a magnet has got the property of attracting iron pieces, even so the Lord also takes us towards Himself by attraction and leads us forward in life.

During times of difficulty, when we fall down, we are just like the iron needle which has fallen down from the magnet. But the iron piece is an inert object, and still the magnet attracts it to itself. But we, human beings, have more *śakti* within ourselves, and we are not so inert, and therefore, the Lord can lift us up again more easily towards Himself.

The moment the Lord comes in our mind, immediately we get His grace. Just like the magnet, God attracts us towards himself and bestows on us His grace. Therefore, all of us should make efforts to install the Lord in our minds. Then just like the iron needle, our minds will also be attracted by God and held fast to Him. The needle gets drawn to the magnet and it also remains magnetised as long as it is in contact with the magnet. In the same way, so long as we have our mind diverted and attracted towards the Lord and our mind remains fixed in God, we also enjoy a state of bliss.

(iii) The third example given for *bhakti* is:

साध्वी नैजविभुम्

sādhvī naijavibhum.

A *pativrata* woman or a chaste wife is doing ever so many things in the household, attending to the children, doing cooking and other household work and so on, and yet all the time her mind is thinking only of her husband. She does not do anything without the thought of her husband. Similarly, a true devotee does not do anything without the thought of God. In the same way, our minds should also be merged in God. Our actions may go on as before, but our minds should be immersed in God all the time. We should pray to God and do our work as before. If we have the grace of God with us all the time, then our actions also will become more successful and we can do them better and more efficiently as well.

Here, in addition to *bhakti*, *strīdharmā** is also indicated. A chaste wife remembers only her husband all the time and does all the work. She does not think of other persons. We are reminded of great *dharmas* here. If we remember God and do our work, we shall get all prosperity and all good things in life.

(iv) Then, Ādi Śaṅkara gives the example of a creeper entwined round a tree. He says:

लता क्षितिरुहम्

latā kṣitiruham.

A creeper which is meandering on the ground ultimately searches for a tree to serve as its support

*The code of conduct for women.

and it starts twining itself round it in such a criss-cross manner that it is difficult to separate it from the tree. The creeper looks for the support of a tree and twines itself round it and the tree becomes its support. The creeper cannot remain and survive, separated from the tree. If the creeper does not have the support of the tree, it will perish. In the same way, without the support and sustenance of God, we shall come to grief. If the creeper is forcibly removed from the tree, very often we find that there is a scar on the tree also. Similarly, we attach ourselves to God and carry on our lives with His support. When we fall down from God or we are separated from God, not only do we suffer and get into difficulties, but even God also experiences some sense of sorrow for us. Just like the creeper, we should also have our support and base in God and then live. We all come from the Lord only and ultimately we go back to Him only. Until somebody separates the creeper from the tree, the creeper cannot by itself be separated from the tree. Similarly, unless a third person separates us from God, we cannot be separated from Him. Like the creeper, we should attach ourselves very closely to God. This is the fourth example of *bhakti*, which Ādi Śaṅkara has given.

Everyone experiences some sorrow or some suffering or some difficulties in life. We find even *Mahāpuruṣas* experiencing such difficulties and sorrows. Difficulties are there for all. But if we attach ourselves to God then our sufferings will become less. Just like the creeper which is attached to the tree, the mind should be attached to the *Paramātmān*. The creeper can live only if it is attached to the tree. In the same way,

the *jīvātman* cannot live by itself, separated from the *Paramātman*.

(v) Then, Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda says:

सिन्धुः सरिद्वल्लभम्

sindhuh saridvallabham

There are many rivers flowing, like the Gaṅgā, the Śoṇā, the Godāvarī, the Kāverī, the Kṛṣṇā and so on. These rivers have different names, but they flow in torrents and cascades, roaring with fury through diverse routes, and in diverse directions and pass through diverse places; their waters also taste differently because they pass through different types of land; their colours are also different; for instance the river Śoṇā is supposed to have red water, the Kṛṣṇā is supposed to have black water, the Gaṅgā is supposed to have white water and so on, the colour of the water depending on the terrain through which the river passes. But finally, all these rivers get merged in the ocean, and they lose their individual names and colours and they just become the ocean only; they then have only one taste, or *rasa* namely the saltish taste. They lose their individual names and acquire one common name, namely, the ocean, and they then have only one form and one shape, one colour and one taste. When they get mixed up with the ocean, they are called the ocean only.

Just like all the different rivers approach towards the ocean, so also we worship God and are

approaching Him in various ways and in various forms, but ultimately our aim is to get merged in God. The paths that the devotees follow are different and yet the goal is the same for all, namely God. Thus, we have *Rāmabhakti*, *Kṛṣṇabhakti* and so on. They are all different paths, but yet when they are related to the *Paramātman*, they get the same form. There are many roads leading to a temple, but the goal is the temple only.

Similarly, God's grace is our final goal, but we get it by going through diverse paths, such as *Rāma-bhakti*, *Kṛṣṇabhakti* and so on. There are many methods to attain God, such as the path of *Bhakti*, the path of *Jñāna*, the path of *Karma*, the path of *Yoga*, the path of *Ātmavicāra* or thinking about the *Ātman*, etc., including *bhajan*, recitation of the Lord's name and so on. But the final goal of all these paths is merger in *Brahman* only. Just as the rivers merge in the ocean, likewise we merge ourselves in *Brahman*; our individualities then disappear completely, and we just become *Ānandasvarūpa*, i.e., become of the nature of Bliss and Happiness only. Each person takes the road which is best suited to him to get God's grace which is the final goal of all. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* (IV, 11):

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

ye yathā mām-prapadyante tānstathaiva bhajāmyaham.

Whatever paths men may follow, the Lord gives His grace unto them by that very path.

(vi) Once we have awareness of God and we merge ourselves in Him all our sufferings and sorrows will vanish. How do we attach ourselves to God in the *bhaktimārga*? Ādi Śaṅkara says:

प्राप्नोतीह यथा तथा पशुपतेः पादारविन्दद्वयम्

prāpnotīha yathā tathā paśupateḥ

pādāravindadvayam

Two examples are usually given in this behalf, telling us how to fix our mind at the lotus feet of God. Ādi Śaṅkara says that only if we fix our minds on the lotus feet of God, our *bhakti* is meaningful.

(vii) The first example that is given is of the baby monkey and its mother. The mother monkey jumps from one tree to another or from one branch to another and all the time the baby monkey is holding itself so firmly to its mother's belly that it never falls down. It is clasping its mother and so tightly clinging to it that it never falls down and it has no fear of falling down also. In the same way, if we firmly attach ourselves to God, wherever we may be moving in the world, we shall not be subjected to any suffering.

The example of the monkey is significant from another point of view also. Our mind is also like monkey which is jumping from one object to another all the time and it is wandering all the time just like the monkey. If the mind can be got fixed on the lotus feet of Rāma or Kṛṣṇa or Paramesvara, then the mind becomes steady, and as Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā* (IX, 22):

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ।

teṣāṃ nityābhīyuktānām yogakṣemam vāhamyaḥam.

If we think of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa or Rāma and we hold on to them steadfastly, just as the baby monkey holds on to its mother, then in spite of the difficulties and sufferings like diseases, etc., we shall be able to overcome all the difficulties, and we shall get prosperity thereby. Once we attach ourselves to God, there need be no fear in regard to our welfare at all.

(viii) The next example given is that of a cat and its kitten. A cat which has given birth to kitten keeps such a close watch on its kitten that none can dare to snatch even one kitten away from its presence. It would not allow any visitor to come anywhere near its kitten at all. In the same way, God takes care of His devotees so keenly that He would not allow anyone to come and give any trouble to them.

In case the cat smells or apprehends any danger to its kitten at the place where it is staying, immediately it will lift its kitten by its mouth and carry it away to some safer place. In the same way, if a devotee is likely to get into difficulty, the Lord takes full care of him and takes him away to a safer place. If a devotee thinks of the lotus feet of the Lord all the time, then the responsibility for the devotee's welfare is taken fully by God. In this way, the moment we have steadfast *bhakti* towards God, the Lord takes full responsibility for our welfare and gives us His protection, just as a cat gives its protection to its kitten.

Today, we are thinking that it is we who are doing everything and God does not do anything at all. That is why there is so much of shortage of water, food scarcity, absence of rains, diseases and so on. When something good happens, we do not say that it is because of God, but it is because of our efforts. When something bad happens, then immediately we start blaming God for all this. This is the natural tendency of the human mind.

Ādi Śaṅkara says that we have to fix our mind at the feet of God. But we know that our mind is always in a wandering state, as Arjuna says in the *Gītā* (VI, 34):

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण

cañcalam hi manah kṛṣṇa.

The nature of the mind is to wander all the time. But we have to bring it back again and again and get fixed at the feet of God. It is in this manner that we have to do *Īśvarabhakti* and think of the Lord's real form and His lotus feet all the time.

(ix) Then, the last example is that of the wasp and the worm. It is called *Bhramara-kīṭanyāya*. The wasp catches hold of a small worm and puts it inside a mud cell and goes on stinging it frequently. After some time, out of a sense of fear, the worm itself becomes a wasp or *Bhramara*. In this way, if we get God's grace frequently, ultimately we shall also get the *svarūpa* of God Himself, just as the worm by getting stings frequently from the wasp itself becomes a wasp after sometime.

If we do recitation of the Lord's name and think of Him all the time, we shall be able to realise Him. It is not necessary that we should do this for all the 24 hours of the day, but even half an hour or fifteen minutes for this purpose would do, provided it is done with *Trikaranaśuddhi*, that is, with purity of mind, speech and body.

Often our mind is wandering here and there. We hear with our ears something, but our mind is not there and it is wandering elsewhere; similarly, our eyes also are wandering somewhere. Our ears also start hearing something else. If only all the five sense organs could be concentrated at the lotus feet of God, even for one minute, even that would produce great results. So, it is not expected of a devotee, that he should spend the whole day in *bhakti*. Even a small part of time devoted to God with *Trikaranaśuddhi* is enough to ward off all our difficulties and sufferings.

At the moment, most people do not have that type of *bhakti* with triple purity. Normally, people take their bath and think that they have acquired purity. As a result of bath, it is true that the body becomes pure and it becomes healthy. But for remembering God's name, we need mental purity also. For this, merely taking bath is not enough. Mental purity cannot be had by washing ourselves with water. We may clean our clothes with soap in our houses or in a laundry, but for cleansing the mind there is no soap and there is no laundry available; only the thought of God can purify our mind. There is no other method for this. Money cannot purify our

mind; the laundry cannot purify our mind. Even the water of the Ganges cannot purify our mind and clean it. It is only when we start thinking of God that we shall be able to clean it. It is only when we have devotion towards God we shall be able to clean our mind and then only our mind becomes pure.

Along with cleaning of the teeth and cleaning of the face, etc., we should also clean our mind. If we do any work with mental purity, then whatever work we do will be good; otherwise, nothing will be good. Mental purity is thus absolutely necessary to attain God.

(x) So, to sum up, we find that Ādi Śaṅkara has defined *bhakti* as that tendency of the mind which goes in an one-pointed way towards the lotus feet of God and gets merged in God, that God who is our friend at all times, who pardons us all the time for our sins, to whom we should be grateful for all the good things that He has given us, and who is always ready to bestow His grace on us if only we start thinking of Him. This *bhakti* is *ahaitukī* and it should be done without expectation of any reward, and not motivated by any personal gain or expectation of anything by way of return. Such is the highest state of *bhakti*.

A true devotee pines all the time for union with God and, places his mind at the lotus feet of *Paśupati*, and any separation from Him keeps the devotee in a state of anguish and suffering. The consummation of *bhakti* is reached when the devotee realises his true Self which is God. All the attractions

described in the examples given by Ādi Śaṅkara in his *śloka* are natural and spontaneous and not artificial or calculated ones. The Aṅkola seed, the chaste wife, the creeper, the river, the monkey and kitten cannot subsist in separation; they find fulfilment of their being only in their union and identity with that which alone makes for their true fulfilment.

There is another thing also to be noted here. We have all come from God, and ultimately we go back to God only. *Bhakti* is the easiest means, though only one of the means, to reach God. The Aṅkola seed is born out of the tree, it falls down, but again it goes back to the tree. Similarly, the rivers rise from the mountain tops where clouds pour out rain which is nothing but the water that had collected in them as a result of evaporation of water from the ocean, and when these rivers merge in the ocean, the waters of the rivers again go back to their source. Similarly, a *pativrata* *strī* finds perfect happiness only when she is in union with her husband all the time. Further, as one approaches God, one gets the radiation of peace and calmness from God. For instance, the rivers which are turbulent and noisy and flow roaring fury become subdued and stilled when they reach the ocean and merge peacefully in the ocean which itself offers a welcome towards the rivers in a loving way.

So, the consummation of *bhakti* is to be oneself, to realise one's own true nature, and this is precisely what is achieved in the highest state of *bhakti*, and this is what one true devotee says, when he says:

मदीयं एव स्वरूपं देहि

madīyam eva svarūpaṁ dehi

“Give me what is my own, that is Yourself which is my true nature.” *Bhakti* is a means or *sādhana* for reaching the final goal of awareness of one’s true nature. It is *svasvarūpa-anusandhāna*, and the goal is *svasvarūpa-avabodha*.

So, let everyone get up in the morning and after cleaning his teeth develop *bhakti* towards God, and follow the *Sanmārga* or the right path and follow the *Sanātana Dharma*. *Bhakti* should be developed towards some *saguṇa* form of the Lord, whether it be Rāma or Kṛṣṇa; think of the Lord all the time and do everything with His thought and with His memory only. This will definitely give everyone prosperity and ensure his well-being also.

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's

HARISTUTI

(Contd. from Vol. IX, No. 2)

Translation with notes

by

Dr N. Gangadharan

I worship that lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. He is non-different (from the world) resembling the ocean and its waves as the world had its origin from Him. Those that are well-versed in the scriptures have interpreted under the scriptural statement, "all these are verily..." that the greatness of that God is not dependent on anything and is beyond the pale of reasoning.

The Supreme Being is capable of manifesting in different forms without depending on any other thing. The scriptures declare that "All these are verily Brahman." The world had its origin from Him. The world is not different from Him, just like the waves of the ocean are not different from the ocean.

An objection may be raised that the *Kapilasmṛiti* and other similar texts expounding the philosophy of Sāṅkhya state that *pradhāna*, the first evolver, is the cause of the world and that there is difference between the individual soul and the Supreme Being. It has to be set aside because the scriptures are always said to be authoritative whenever there is contradiction with the *smṛiti* texts.

The verse (26) points out that the doctrine of non-dualism is the purport of the *Bhagavadgītā* also.

[26]

दृष्ट्वा गीतास्वक्षरतत्त्वं विधिनाजं
 भक्त्या गुर्व्यालभ्य हृदिस्थं दृशिमात्रम् ।
 ध्यात्वा तस्मिन्नस्म्यहमित्यत्र विदुर्यं
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

dr̥ṣṭvā gītāsvakṣaratattvam vidhinājam
bhaktyā gurvyālabhya hṛdistham dṛśimātram
dhyātvā tasminnasmyahamityatra vidūryam
taṁ samsāradhvāntavināśam harimīde.

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. One that perceives the indestructible entity (Brahman) by means of the statements laid down in the *Bhagavadgītā* and other works and that contemplates on the unborn that remains in the heart and that which could be known through the scriptures by resorting to extreme devotion, knows that "I am in that" here (in that indestructible entity).

The *Bhagavadgītā* and other similar texts declare that the indestructible Brahman is the supreme. It is all-pervasive and unborn. One should be initiated by the preceptor to gain the perception of Brahman. One has to discard the feeling of 'I-ness' to gain the realisation of Brahman resting in one's heart. The main purport of this verse is that the all-pervasive Supreme Being and the individual soul are identical.

[27]

क्षेत्रज्ञत्वं प्राप्य विभुः पञ्चमुखैर्यो
 भुङ्क्तेऽजस्रं भोग्यपदार्थान् प्रकृतिस्थः ।
 क्षेत्रे क्षेत्रेऽप्स्विन्दुवदेको बहुधास्ते
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*kṣetrajñatvam-prāpya vibhuḥ pañcamukhairyo
 bhunkte'jasraṁ-bhogyapadārthān prakṛtisthaḥ
 kṣetre kṣetre'psvinduvadeko bahudhāste
 taṁ saṁsāradhvāntavināśaṁ harimīḍe.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. That Supreme Being having taken the position of the individual soul and remaining in the *prakṛti* always partakes the worldly

pleasures by means of the five faces (namely the sense organs). That single Being remains in every individual soul like the moon (reflected) in the waters (kept in several vessels).

It is pointed out here that Lord Viṣṇu described in the Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite Purāṇas is not different from the individual soul. He remains in the individual soul just like the reflection. The scriptures declare that "the only Supreme Soul remains in all the individuals. He is seen as one as well as many similar to the moon seen in the reflection in the water kept in different vessels."

[28]

युक्त्यालोड्य व्यासवचांस्यत्र हि लभ्यः
 क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञान्तरविद्धिः पुरुषाख्यः ।
 योऽहं सोऽसौ सोऽस्म्यहमेवेति विदुर्यं
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*yuktyāloḍya vyāsavacāmsyatra hi labhyaḥ
 kṣetrakṣetrajñāntaravidbhiḥ puruṣākhyāḥ
 yo'ham so'sau so'smyahameveti viduryaṁ
 taṁ saṁsāradhvāntavināśaṁ harimīde.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. The *puruṣa* (the Supreme soul) could be attained in this (body and life itself) by those that know the difference between the body and the individual soul after having made inquiry in the words of Vyāsa by means of reasoning. He is known as "I am that" and "That is I".

We have here a refutation of the argument that many have seen only dualist's purport in the scriptural statements and the

author of this hymn alone has taken the view of monism and shows that the monistic view is supported by many valid reasoning.

The *Brahmasūtras* (*Vedāntasūtras*) ascribed to Vyāsa (Bādarāyaṇa) begin with the statement (*sūtra*), "Then therefore the desire to know Brahman." One is able to get at the *puruṣa* (the Supreme Soul that dwells within one's body) by means of irrefutable reasoning. The *puruṣa* has that appellation because He is free from the three kinds of distinctions such as place, time and object and is full.

The body, senses and principles such as ego and the like are known as the *kṣetra*. One that resides in that, namely, the individual soul, is the *kṣetrajña*.

The subsequent three aphorisms of the *Vedāntasūtras* describe Brahman, provide the reasoning and establish the supremacy of Brahman after having rejected the other actions. The subsequent aphorisms step by step establish the difference between the body and the individual soul and the identity between the individual soul and Supreme soul and explain the course to be followed for realising this identity.

[29]

एकीकृत्यानेकशरीरस्थमिमं ज्ञं
 यं विज्ञायेहैव स एवाशु भवन्ति ।
 यस्मिन् लीना नेह पुनर्जन्म लभन्ते
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*ekīkr̥tyānekaśarīrasthamimam̐ jñam̐
 yam̐ vijñāyehaiva sa evāśu bhavanti
 yasmin̐ līnā neha punarjanma labhante
 tam̐ samsāradhvāntavināśam̐ harimīde.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. All those that realise

all the individual Souls in different bodies as not different from the Supreme Soul would become the Supreme Soul at once. Those that become one with that Supreme Being are not born again.

This verse sets at nought the doubt whether the seeker knows only the Supreme Soul remaining as a witness in one's own body or that remains in the bodies of others as well. Then the question would arise whether the Supreme Soul in the bodies of others is real or imaginary. It could not be the former as it would lead to duality. Although such flaw would not arise in the latter, one would get cessation of birth and death when he realises the Supreme Soul in the bodies of others as well.

The scriptures declare that the supreme Brahman is the great repository of all the beings. It is subtler than the subtle. One that knows Brahman becomes Brahman itself. Just as the knower of Brahman perceives the Supreme soul in one's own body as Supreme Brahman, he realises the Supreme Soul in the bodies of others also similarly. The *Brahma-gītā* declares that "those that have the firm determination that the Supreme Soul in one's body as well as in the bodies of others, become immortal and are hence not born again."

[30]

द्वन्द्वैकत्वं यच्च मधुब्राह्मणवाक्यैः
 कृत्वा शक्रोपासनमासाद्य विभूत्या ।
 योऽसौ सोऽहं सोऽस्म्यहमेवेति विदुर्यं
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*dvandvaikatvam yacca madhubrahmanavākyaish
 kṛtvā śakropāsanam-āsādyā vibhūtyā
 yo'sau so'ham so'smyahameveti viduryam
 tam saṁsāradhvāntavināśam harimīḍe.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. After having known the identity of the dual objects by means of the statements of the *Madhubrāhmaṇa* and obtained the service of Indra on account of one's greatness, one would know Him verily as "I am He", and "He is I".

After pointing out the unity of the dual objects in the world such as the earth, human body, fire, speech, etc., this verse praises Lord Viṣṇu as the Supreme Brahman that resides in all the beings.

The *Madhubrāhmaṇa* statements occur in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakoṇiṣad* (II. v. 1 ff.) They describe the earth, water, fire, wind, sun, directions, moon, lightning, thunder, sky, righteousness, truth, human beings and the soul as honey for all the beings. It means that these are to be enjoyed by the beings as honey. It amounts to that the Lord who is the substratum of these objects and the beings is one. The *Madhubrāhmaṇa* statements have been referred to here as a support of the view-point expressed above.

Indra is the Lord of the celestials. On account of the greatness of that person having the realisation that the Lord is the substratum of all the things, Indra would serve him.

[31]

योऽयं देहे चेष्टयितान्तः करणस्थः
 सूर्ये चासौ तापयिता सोऽस्म्यहमेव ।
 इत्यात्मैक्योपसनया यं विदुरीशं
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

yo'yam dehe ceṣṭayitāntaḥ karaṇasthaḥ
sūrye cāsau tāpayitā so'smy-ahameva
ityātmaikyopāsanayā yaṁ vidurīśam
tam saṁsāradhvāntavināśam harimīḍe.

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. That Supreme Brahman remains in the body as the cause of one's effort. He remains in the soul. It is He who makes the Sun glow. The aspirant knows Him by means of meditation, identifying one's soul (with Him) "I am verily He."

Lord Viṣṇu is praised here. It is pointed out that He is to be meditated by means of reciprocal attitudes such as "I am He," "He is I", "I am You," "You are I" etc.

[32]

विज्ञानांशो यस्य सतः शक्त्यधिरूढो
 बुद्धिर्बुध्यत्यत्र बहिर्बोध्यपदार्थान् ।
 नैवान्तःस्थं बुध्यति यं बोधयितारं
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*viññānāṃśo yasya sataḥ śaktyadhirūḍho
 buddhirbudhyatyatra bahirbodhyapadārthān
 naivāntaḥstham budhyati yaṁ-bodhayitāraṁ
 taṁ saṁsāradhvāntavināśaṁ harimīde.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. The intellect of the form of worldly experience is able to know the external objects to be known by means of the power of the the Supreme Brahman. It is not able to know that that Being remains within one's body and makes one know.

This verse dispels the doubt relating to the knowability as the previous verse has spoken about the Being to be meditated upon.

[33]

कोऽयं देहे देव इतीत्थं सुविचार्य
 ज्ञाता श्रोता मन्तयिता चैष हि देवः ।
 इत्यालोच्य ज्ञांश इहास्मीति विदुर्य
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*ko'yaṁ dehe deva itīttḥam suvicārya
 jñātā śrotā mantayitā caiṣa hi devaḥ
 ityālocya jñāṁśa ihāsmīti viduryam
 taṁ saṁsāradhvāntavināśaṁ harimīde.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundance existence. One realises Him here as "I am that supreme Soul" by means of inquiries such as "Who is this Lord within the body?" and "That Lord is the knower, listener, and thinker, that makes one rejoice."

One has to realise that the body is not the listener and the Lord who is self-luminous is the knower etc. He is the seer, but not the seen. He is the listener, but not the heard. He is the thinker, but not the one who is thought. He is the knower but not known. The scriptures declare thus. Hence one has to engage himself in inquiries to gain such a realisation.

[34]

को ह्येवान्यादात्मनि न स्यादयमेष
 ह्येवानन्दः प्राणिति चापानिति चेति ।
 इत्यस्तित्वं वक्त्युपपत्त्या श्रुतिरेषा
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*ko hyevānyadātmani na syādayameṣa
hyevānandaḥ prāṇiti cāpāniti ceti
ityastitvam vakyupapattyā śrutireṣā
tam saṁsāradhvāntavināśam harimīde.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. Who could breathe if this one is not present is one's soul. This Supreme Bliss is the one that makes (the beings) breathe in and breathe out. This scriptural text declares thus about such existence by way of reasoning.

The *Taittirīyopaniṣad* (III. 6) declares that the Supreme Bliss is Brahman. Because of the presence of this conscious form in the beings, the beings act and thus become the cause for a happy life. The *Aitareyopaniṣad* (5th khaṇḍa) also explains the same idea.

[35]

प्राणो वाहं वाक्छ्रवणादीनि मनो वा
बुद्धिर्वाहं व्यस्त उताहोऽपि समस्तः ।
इत्यालोच्य ज्ञप्तिरिहास्मीति विदुर्यं
तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*prāṇo vāhaṁ vākchravaṇādīni mano vā
buddhirvāhaṁ vyasta utāho'pi samastah
ityālocya jñaptirihāsmīti viduryaṁ
tam saṁsāradhvāntavināśaṁ harimīde.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. One knows Him as

“I am that knower,” after having reflected whether “I am the breath or speech or ear, etc. or mind or intellect,” and whether “I am a part or the whole.”

One reflects whether this gross body is that which feels hungry or thirsty or it is that speaks, hears, thinks, etc. Are these individual acts, or is a collection of these acts due to the work of the body? After these reflections one knows that “I am the witness” of these acts and I am different from the senses, etc.

[36]

नाहम्प्राणो नैव शरीरं न मनोऽहं
 नाहम्बुद्धिर्नाहमहङ्कारधियौ च ।
 योऽत्र ज्ञांशः सोऽस्म्यहमेवेति विदुर्यं
 तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥

*nāham-prāṇo naiva śarīraṁ na mano'ham
 nāham-buddhir-nāhamahaṅkāradhiyau ca
 yo'tra jñāṁśaḥ so'smyahameveti viduryam
 taṁ samsāradhvāntavināśaṁ harimīḍe.*

I worship that Lord Hari, the destroyer of the darkness of mundane existence. He is known as “I am neither the life-breath, nor the body, nor the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego, nor the wisdom. He is that part of the knower (that knows). I am Himself.”

(to be continued)

Saṅkara Bhagavatpāda's
VIVEKACŪḌAMAṆI

(Contd. from Vol. LX, No. 1)

Translation
by
Dr R. Balasubramanian

*karmendrinyaiḥ pañcabhir-añcito'yam-
prāno bhavet-prāṇamayastu koṣaḥ
yenātmavān-annamayo'nupūrṇaḥ
pravartate'sau sakalakriyāsu.*

The *prāṇa*, in combination with the five organs of action, forms the sheath of vitality (*prāṇamaya-koṣa*), permeated by which the sheath of food engages itself in all activities as if it were living.

[168]

नैवात्मापि प्राणमयो वायुविकारो
गन्तागन्ता वायुवदन्तर्बहिरेषः ।
यस्मात्किञ्चित्क्वापि न वेत्तीष्टमनिष्टं
स्वं वान्यं वा किञ्चन नित्यं परतन्त्रः ॥

*naivātmāpi prāṇamayo vāyuvikāro
gantāgantā vāyuvad-antar-bahir-eṣaḥ
yasmāt-kiñcit-kvāpi na vettiṣṭam-añiṣṭam
svam vānyam vā kiñcana nityam-paratantraḥ.*

The sheath of vitality, too, is not the Self, because it is a modification of *vāyu*; because, like *vāyu*, it enters into and comes out of the body; and because it is not aware of good or evil, anywhere or at any time, either of itself or of others, being always dependent (on the Self).

[169]

ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि च मनश्च मनोमयः स्या-
त्काशा ममाहमिति वस्तुविकल्पहेतुः ।

संज्ञादिभेदकलनाकलितो बलीयां-
स्तत्पूर्वकोशमनुपूर्य विजृम्भते यः ॥

*jñānendriyāṇi ca manaśca manomayah syāt-
kośo mamāhamiti vastuvikalpahetuḥ
samjñādi-bhedakalanākalito balīyāms-
tatpūrvakośam-anupūrya vijṛmbhate yaḥ.*

The organs of knowledge together with the mind form the sheath of mind (*manomaya-kośa*) which is the cause of the diversity of things such as "I" and "mine". It creates differences of name, etc. It is powerful. It manifests itself permeating the preceding sheath (*i.e.* the sheath of vitality).

[170]

पञ्चेन्द्रियैः पञ्चभिरेव होतृभिः
प्रचीयमानो विषयाज्यधारया ।
जाज्वल्यमानो बहुवासनेन्धनै-
र्मनोमयोऽग्निर्दहति प्रपञ्चम् ॥

*pañcendriyaiḥ pañcabhir-eva hotṛbhiḥ
pracīyamāno viṣayājyadhārayā
jājvalyamāno bahuvāsanendhanair-
manomayo'gnir-dahati prapañcam.*

The sheath of vitality is the sacrificial fire which is fed with the fuel of the various *vāsanās* offered by the five sense-organs which serve as priests, and is set ablaze by the sense objects which act as the stream of oblations. With these it burns the world.

[171]

न ह्यस्त्यविद्या मनसोऽतिरिक्ता
 मनो ह्यविद्या भवबन्धहेतुः ।
 तस्मिन्विनष्टे सकलं विनष्टं
 विजृम्भतेऽस्मिन्सकलं विजृम्भते ॥

*na hyastyavidyā manaso'tiriktā
 mano hyavidyā bhavabandhahetuḥ
 tasmin-vinaṣṭe sakalam vinaṣṭam
 vijṛmbhite'smin-sakalam vijṛmbhate.*

There is no *avidyā* outside the mind. The mind alone is *avidyā*, the cause of the bondage of transmigration. When the mind is destroyed, all else is destroyed; and when it manifests, everything else manifests.

[172]

स्वप्नेऽर्थशून्ये सृजति स्वशक्त्या
 भोक्त्रादि विश्वं मन एव सर्वम् ।
 तथैव जाग्रत्यपि नो विशेष-
 स्तत्सर्वमेतन्मनसो विजृम्भणम् ॥

*svapne'rthasūnye sṛjati svaśaktyā
 bhoktrādi viśvam mana eva sarvam
 tathaiḥv jāgratyapi no viśeṣas-
 tat-sarvam-etan-manaso vijṛmbhaṇam.*

In the absence of external objects in the dream, the mind alone creates the whole universe consisting of

the enjoyer, etc. And in the same way it does in the waking state also. So all this (world) is the projection of the mind.

[173]

सुषुप्तिकाले मनसि प्रलीने
 नैवास्ति किञ्चित्सकलप्रसिद्धेः ।
 अतो मनःकल्पित एव पुंसः
 संसार एतस्य न वस्तुतोऽस्ति ॥

*susupti-kāle manasi pralīne
 naivāsti kiñcit-sakala-prasiddheḥ
 ato manaḥ kalpita eva puṁsaḥ
 saṁsāra etasya na vastuto'sti.*

It is well-known that there exists nothing in deep sleep when the mind is reduced (to its causal state). Hence, man's bondage is simply the creation of his mind; it does not exist in reality.

[174]

वायुनानीयते मेघः पुनस्तेनैव लीयते ।
 मनसा कल्प्यते बन्धो मोक्षस्तेनैव कल्प्यते ॥

*vāyunāniyate meghaḥ punas-tenaiva liyate
 manasū kalpyate bandho mokṣas-tenaiva kalpyate.*

The clouds are gathered by the wind; they are again dispersed by it. In the same way, man's bondage is caused by the mind; and liberation, too, is caused by that (mind) alone.

[175]

देहादिसर्वविषये परिकल्प्य राग-
 म्बन्धाति तेन पुरुषं पशुवद्गुणेन ।
 वैरस्यमत्र विषवत्सुविधाय पश्चा-
 देनं विमोचयति तन्मन एव बन्धात् ॥

*dehādi-sarva-viṣaye parikalpya rāgam-
 badhnāti tena puruṣam-paśuvad-guṇena
 vairasyamatra viṣavat-suvidhāya paścād-
 enam vimocayati tan-mana eva bandhāt.*

Creating attachment for the body and other sense objects, it binds the man through that (attachment) in the same way as an animal is bound by the rope. Later, the same mind creates in him aversion for them as if they were poison, and liberates him from the bondage.

[176]

तस्मान्मनः कारणमस्य जन्तो-
 र्बन्धस्य मोक्षस्य च वा विधाने ।
 बन्धस्य हेतुर्मलिनं रजोगुणै-
 र्मोक्षस्य शुद्धं विरजस्तमस्कम् ॥

*tasmān-manah kāraṇam-asya jantor-
 bandhasya mokṣasya ca vā vidhāne
 bandhasya hetur-malinam rajoguṇair-
 mokṣasya śuddham virajastamaskam.*

Hence, the mind is the only cause that brings about man's bondage or liberation. When it is defiled by the actions of *rajoguna*, it leads to bondage; and when it is pure, being divested of *rajas* and *tamas*, it leads to liberation.

[177]

विवेकवैराग्यगुणातिरेका-
 च्छुद्धत्वमासाद्य मनो विमुक्त्यै ।
 भवत्यतो बुद्धिमतो मुमुक्षो-
 स्ताभ्यां दृढाभ्यां भवितव्यमग्रे ॥

*viveka-vairāgya-guṇātirekāc-
 chuddhatvam-āsādya mano vimuktyai
 bhavatyato buddhimato mumukṣos-
 tābhyām dr̥ḍhābhyām-bhavitavyam-agre.*

By attaining purity through the cultivation of firm discrimination (between the Self and the not-Self) and dispassion, the mind is conducive to liberation. So the wise seeker after liberation must first strengthen these two.

[178]

मनो नाम महाव्याघ्रो विषयारण्यभूमिषु ।
 चरत्यत्र न गच्छन्तु साधवो ये मुमुक्षवः ॥

*mano nāma mahāvyaāghro viṣayāranya-bhūmiṣu
 caratyatra na gacchantu sādhave ye mumukṣavaḥ.*

A terrible tiger called the mind wanders in the forest land of sense objects. Let good people who have a longing for liberation never go there.

[179]

मनः प्रसूते विषयानशेषा-
 न्स्थूलात्मना सूक्ष्मतया च भोक्तुः ।
 शरीरवर्णाश्रमजातिभेदा-
 न्गुणक्रियाहेतुफलानि नित्यम् ॥

*manah prasūte viṣayān-aśeṣān-
 sthūlātmanā sūkṣmatayā ca bhoktuḥ
 śarīra-varṇāśrama-jātibhedān-
 guṇakriyā-hetuphalāni nityam.*

The mind always produces for the experiencer (*i.e.* the *jīva*) all sense objects, both gross and subtle, the distinctions of body, *varṇa* and *āśrama*, *jāti*, as well as the varieties of qualifications, actions, means, and results.

[180]

असङ्गचिद्रूपममुं विमोह्य
 देहेन्द्रियप्राणगुणैर्निबध्य ।
 अहं ममेति भ्रमयत्यजस्रं
 मनः स्वकृत्येषु फलोपभुक्तिषु ॥

*asaṅga-cidrūpaṁ-amuṁ vimohya
dehendriya-prāṇa-guṇair-nibadhya
ahaṁ mameti bhramayaty-ajasram
manaḥ svakṛtyeṣu phalopabhuktiṣu.*

Deluding the Self which is pure consciousness unattached to anything, and binding it by the cords of body, organs, and vital airs, the mind causes it to wander, with the notions of "I" and "mine", among the objects produced by its actions.

[181]

अध्यासदोषात्पुरुषस्य संसृति-
रध्यासबन्धस्त्वमुनैव कल्पितः ।
रजस्तमोदोषवतोऽविवेकिनो
जन्मादिदुःखस्य निदानमेतत् ॥

*adhyāsa-doṣāt-puruṣasya saṁsṛtir-
adhyāsa-bandhastv-amunaiva kalpitaḥ
rajas-tamo-doṣavato'vivekino
janmādi-duḥkhasya nidānam-etat.*

Man's transmigration is due to superimposition; and the bondage of superimposition is caused by the mind alone. It (*i.e.* the mind) is the cause of the misery of birth, etc., for the man of non-discrimination who is defiled by *rajas* and *tamas*.

[182]

अतः प्राहुर्मनोऽविद्यां पण्डितास्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ।
येनैव भ्राम्यते विश्वं वायुनेवाभ्रमण्डलम् ॥

*ataḥ prāhur-mano'vidyām paṇḍitāstattvadarśinaḥ
yenaiva bhrāmyate viśvam vāyunevābhra-maṇḍalam.*

So the wise who know the truth say that the mind itself is *avidyā* by which alone the universe is tossed like the clouds by the wind.

[183]

तन्मनःशोधनं कार्यं प्रयत्नेन मुमुक्षुणा ।
विशुद्धे सति चैतस्मिन्मुक्तिः करफलायते ॥

*tan-manaḥ śodhanam kāryam-prayatnena mumukṣuṇā
viśuddhe sati caitasmin-muktiḥ karaphalāyate.*

Therefore, the seeker after liberation must carefully purify the mind. When this is purified, liberation is easily attained like the fruit on the palm of one's hand.

[184]

मोक्षैकसक्त्या विषयेषु रागं
निर्मूल्य संन्यस्य च सर्वकर्म ।
सच्छ्रद्धया यः श्रवणादिनिष्ठो
रजः स्वभावं स धुनोति बुद्धेः ॥

*mokṣaika-saktyā viṣayeṣu rāgam
nirmūlyā sannyasya ca sarvākarma
sacchraddhayā yaḥ śravaṇādi-niṣṭho
rajaḥ svabhāvam sa dhunoti buddheḥ.*

If a person, by means of one-pointed devotion to liberation, gets rid of attachment to sense objects, renounces all actions, and with faith in Brahman regularly practises hearing (*śravaṇa*), etc., he destroys the *rājasika* nature of the intellect.

[185]

मनोमयो नापि भवेत्परात्मा
ह्याद्यन्तवत्त्वात्परिणामिभावात् ।
दुःखात्मकत्वाद्विषयत्वहेतो-
द्रष्टा हि दृश्यात्मतया न दृष्टः ॥

*manomayo nāpi bhavet-parātmā
hyādyantavattvāt-pariṇāmibhāvāt
duḥkhātmakatvād-viṣayatvahetor-
draṣṭā hi drśyātmatayā na drṣṭaḥ.*

The sheath of mind, too, cannot be the Self, because it has a beginning and an end, is subject to modification, is characterized by suffering, and is an object. The seer is not at all an object which is seen.

(to be continued)

ŚRĪ VIṢṆUBHUJAṄGAPRAYĀTASTOTRA*

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda

[1]

चिदंशं विभुं निर्मलं निर्विकल्पं
निरीहं निराकारमोङ्कारगम्यम् ।
गुणातीतमव्यक्तमेकं तुरीयं
परं ब्रह्म यं वेद तस्मै नमस्ते ॥

*cidamśaṁ vibhuṁ nirmalam nirvikalpaṁ
nirīhaṁ nirākāra-moṅkāra-gamyam
guṇātītam-avyaktam-ekam turīyaṁ
param brahma yaṁ veda tasmai namaste.*

I bow to you, O Lord, the Supreme Being. The *Vedas* hold that you are the all-pervasive Lord; you are knowledge, pure, and *nirvikalpa* (unchanging); you are desireless, formless and known through *praṇava* (the supreme syllable *om*); you are beyond attri-

* Translated with notes by Dr. V. K. S. N. Raghavan

butes, *avyakta* (unmanifest), one, and *turiya* (fourth — untainted by the three *guṇas*).

The *Viṣṇubhujāṅgaprayāṭastotra* of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda consists of fourteen verses in *bhujāṅgaprayāṭa* metre. According to Sanskrit poetics, this metre comprises four *yagaṇas*. (One short syllable and two long syllables constitute one *yagaṇa*.) Verses (4) to (7) give a graphic description of the divine form of Lord Viṣṇu. The author's innate devotion to Lord Viṣṇu is quite distinct throughout this devotional lyric.

Among the five lyrics in *bhujāṅgaprayāṭa* metre on the five Deities, *viz.*, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Devī (Umā), Subrahmaṇya, and Śrirāma, this lyric on Viṣṇu is found in the beginning in the edition of *Bhujāṅgaprayāṭastotraṇcaka* (Sanskrit Bhaskara Press, Trivandrum, 1901), pp. 1-4.

Śrī Śaṅkara's explanations on some names of Lord Viṣṇu (found in the *Viṣṇusahasranāmabhāṣya*) are cited below.

Cidamśam: *cf.* *Jñānamuttamam* (454) — Supreme knowledge; the uncreated, unlimited divine knowledge.

Vibhum: *cf.* *Vibuh* (880) — The all-pervader, Lord of the three worlds.

Nirvikalpam: *cf.* *Śāntaḥ* (582) — The tranquil, because He is not involved in material pleasures. (*Śve. Up.* 6, 19): He who is without parts, without action, is tranquil. Also *Śāntiḥ* (584) — (peace): Brahman is beyond every form of nescience.

Nirākāram: *cf.* *Amūrti* (830) (the formless) — The *mūrti* or form consists of mobile and immobile things. Viṣṇu is *amūrti* (formless), *i.e.* devoid of organs and limbs constituting the body.

Refer also *Amūrtimān* (formless) (720): Without any form brought on by *karman*. He is the unmanifest Puruṣa.

Oṅkāragamyam: *cf.* *Praṇavaḥ* (409) (praise or salutation) — He who is praised;... Sanatkumāra says: "As the *Vedas* pay obeisance

to Him, He is named as *praṇava*." He causes everyone to praise Him.

See also *Praṇavaḥ* (957) — The supreme syllable is the monosyllable *Om* denoting Paramātman.

Guṇātītam: cf. *Nirgunaḥ* (840) — He who transcends all constituents; He is in truth devoid of constituents. (Ś.U. 6, 11): He is the witness as pure consciousness and devoid of constituents. Āpastamba says (ADS 1, 22, 7): "He is devoid of sound, body, and touch, and He is eternally pure."

Avyaktam: see *Avyaktaḥ* (722) — unmanifest; though He has various forms in his *Avatāras*, still He cannot be defined precisely in his true state.

Ekam: see *Ekaḥ* (725) — One devoid of any distinction; *CU*. (6, 2) says: "There is only one without a second." He has none equal or superior to Him.

Turīyam: see *Caturmūrtiḥ* (765) — of four forms, namely *Virāj*, *Sūtrātman*, *Avyākṛta*, and *Turīya*.

Param: see *Paramātmā* (11): The supreme Soul is He who is beyond cause and effect, and who is eternal, pure, absolute consciousness and free.

Brahma (664) (Reality): The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* (6, 7, 53) says, "That knowledge which sets at rest all *bhedas*, is existence alone, is beyond the purview of words, and is experienced in one's own self is called Brahman."

‘*pratyastamita-bhedam yat
sattāmātram-agocaram
vacasūm-ātmasamvedyam
taj-jñānam-brahmasamjñitam.*’

Yam veda tasmi namaḥ te (The *Vedas* refer to you as the supreme Reality; I bow to you): The words ‘*yah*’ ‘*vedaḥ*’ ‘*sah*’

also are found in the thousand names of Lord Viṣṇu. Śrī Saṅkara explains the name 'yat' as cited below. The term 'yat' (730) or "Which" is Brahman for this pronoun denotes an already existing Reality. Even the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* (III, 1) declares, "That, from which all these beings come out ..." (*yato vā imāni bhūtāni jayante ...*)

Ekam: St. Nammālvār refers to 'ēkamūrti' in the *Tiruvāymoḷi* (VI, iii, 2) —

பூசும் சாந்தென் னெஞ்சமே;
 புனையும் கண்ணி எனதுடைய,
 வாச கம்செய் மாலையே;
 வான்பட் டாடையுமேதே;
 தேச மான அணிகலனும்
 என்கை கூப்புச் செய்கையே
 ஈசன் ஞால முண்டுமிழ்ந்த
 எந்தை யேக மூர்த்திக்கே.

Nirmalam (chaste and pure): compare the *Amalanāḍipirāṇ* (1) of Śrī Tiruppāṇālvār —

அமல னாதிபிரா னடியார்க் கென்னை யாட்படுத்த
 விமலன், வீண்ணவர் கோன்விரை யார்பொழில்
வேங்கடவன்,
 நிமலன் நின்மலன் நீதி வானவன்
 நீள்மதி ளரங்கத் தம்மான், திருக்
 கமல பாதம், வந் தென்கண்ணி னுள்ளன வெக்கின்றதே.

[2]

विशुद्धं शिवं शान्तमाद्यन्तशून्यं
 जगज्जीवनं ज्योतिरानन्दरूपम् ।
 अदिग्देशकालव्यवच्छेदनीयं
 त्रयी वक्ति यं वेद तस्मै नमस्ते ॥

viśuddham śivam śāntam-ādyantaśūnyam
jagajjīvanam jyotir-ānandarūpam
adig-deśa-kāla-vyavacchedanīyam
trayī vakti yam veda tasmai namaste.

Adoration unto you O Lord; you are spoken of in the *Vedas* (the triple texts of *R̥k*, *Yajus* and *Sāman*) as pure, auspicious, devoid of beginning and end, the life-principle of the world (*jagat*), lustre, the form of bliss, unconditioned by direction, place and time.

Quotations of the explanations of the names of Lord Viṣṇu as pointed out by Śrī Śaṅkara in the *Viṣṇusahasranāmahāṣya* are cited below.

Viśuddham: see *Viśuddhātmā* (636) — the pure Ātman, being free from the three qualities. See also *Śuciḥ* (251) — stainless, being unaffected by *māyā*.

Śivam: compare *Śivaḥ* (27) — the Good, free from three qualities. Viṣṇu alone is praised by the name Śiva and others, because there is no difference between Him and others. The *Taittirīyāranyaka* (X, xi.12) says, "He is Brahmā, He is Śiva, ..."

See also *Śivaḥ* (600) — the purifier of those who merely remember His name, "*suanāma-smṛti-mātreṇa pāvayan śivaḥ.*"

Ādyantaśūnyam: compare *Anādiḥ* (941) — the beginningless, as He is the cause of all, "*sarvakāraṇatvād-anādiḥ.*"

See also *Anantātmā* (518) — the infinite Self, being unlimited by space, time and substance. "*deśataḥ kālataḥ vastutaśca aparicchinnavat.*" Refer also *Anādinidhanaḥ* (43) — devoid of beginning and end. "*janmavināśadvayam yasya nā vidyate.*"

Jagataḥ setuḥ (288) — the bridge of the world as He is the means of crossing the ocean of worldly life; or as He preserves castes and the orders of life from going into confusion. The

Bṛahadāraṇyakopaniṣad (VI, iv, 22) says: "He is the dam, the upholder of the worlds, so that they may not fall into ruin." Compare also "*Jivanaḥ*" (930) — the sustainer of life, of all beings through the shape of vital airs — *prāṇa*. "*sarvāḥ prajāḥ prāṇarūpeṇa jivayan jivanaḥ.*"

Jyotir-ānandarūpam: compare *Jyotiḥ* (877) — the Light; He who shines of His own accord; the *Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad* (XI, 6) says, "*Nārāyaṇaḥ param jyotiḥ*" — Nārāyaṇa is supreme Light.

See also *Jyotirādityaḥ* — the Deity residing within the orb of the Sun; or He is *Āditya*, the brilliant luminary. "*Jyotiṣi savitrmaṇḍale sthitaḥ; jyotiṣōṣau ādityaśceti vā.*"

Refer to also '*Jyotirgaṇeśvaraḥ*' (619) — the Lord of the luminaries.

Jyotirānandarūpam (Lord of the form of supreme lustre and bliss): compare the *Tiruccandaviruttam* (120) of St. Tirumaḷisai Ālvār —

இயக்கருத பல்பிறப்பி லென்னைமாற்றி யின்றுவந்து,
உயக்கொள்மேக வண்ணன்நண்ணி யென்னிலாய தன்னுளே
மயக்கினான் தன் மன்னுசோதி; ஆதலாலென் னாவிதான்
இயக்கெலா மறுத்தருத இன்பவிடு பெற்றதே.

Viśuddham (exceedingly clean, clear and serene): cf. the *Periya-tirumolī* (VII, i, 9) of St Tirumaṅgai Ālvār —

தாயாய்! சுடர்மா மதிபோல் உயிர்க்கெல்லாம்
தாயாய் அளிக்கின்ற தண்தா மரைக்கண்ணை!
ஆயா! அலைநீ ருலகேழும் முன்னுண்ட
வாயா! உன்னையெங் றுனம்நான் மறக்கேனே.

[3]

महायोगपीठे परिभ्राजमाने
धरण्यादितत्त्वात्मके शक्तियुक्ते ।
गुणाहस्करे वह्निबिम्बार्धमध्ये
समासीनमोङ्कारिकेऽष्टाक्षराब्जे ॥

*mahāyogapīṭhe paribhrājamāne
dharanyādi-tattvātmake śaktiyukte
guṇāhaskare vahni-bimbārdha-madhye
samāsinām-oṅkarnike'ṣṭākṣarābje.*

(You are spoken of in the scriptures) as seated on the lotus of *aṣṭākṣara* (eight-syllabled *mantra*) which has *praṇava* (*oṅkāra*) as its *karnika* (pericarp); this lotus is on the pedestal of *mahāyoga* that shines brilliantly; it is made up of the five gross elements, earth, etc; it is powerful, lustrous like the sun-beam, and found in the middle of the orb of Fire.

Aṣṭākṣarābje (Lord Viṣṇu enshrined in the lotus of eight-syllabled *mantra* — *namo nārāyaṇāya* prefixed with *praṇava* or *aum*): On the significance of *Nārāyaṇamantra* or *Tirumantra*, mention may be made of the following two verses of Tirumaṅgai Āḷvār (*Periya-tirumōḷi*, VI, x, 6 and 9) —

கான எண்கும் குரங்கும் முகவும் படையா, அடலரக்கர்
மானம் அழித்து நின்ற வென்றி அம்மான், எனக்கென்றும்
தேனும் பாலும் அமுதுமாய திருமால் திருநாமம்,
நானும் சொன்னேன்; நமரும் உரைமின் — நமோநாராயணமே.

பொங்கு புணரிக் கடல்தும் ஆடைநிலமா மகள், மலர்மா
மங்கை, பிரமன், சிவன், இந்திரன், வானவர்நாயகராய
எங்கள் அடிகள் இமையோர் தலைவருடைய திருநாமம்,
நங்கள் வினைகள் தவிர உரைமின் — நமோநாராயணமே.

Compare also the *Raghuvamśa* (I, 11) of Poet Kālidāsa —

“*ādyah praṇavaḥ chandasām*”

— The mystic letter *Om* is the first word in the *Vedas*. Refer also to the following extract from the *notes* by G. R. Nandargikar on the above verse of Kālidāsa — “*Praṇava* is the mystic syllable *Om*, so called from its being first sung in the beginning of Vedic verses (*pra* - before; and *nu* - to chant, to praise). ... The mystical

praṇava was the source of all the *Vedas*. Compare the *Manusmṛiti*, II, 76; and the *Aitareyabrāhmaṇa*, V, 32 — *akāra ukāra makāra iti, tūn-ekadhā samabharat tadetat omīti ...* He heated these luminaries again, and three sounds came out of them, *a*, *u*, and *m*. By putting them together he made the syllable *om*. Therefore the *priest* repeats 'om', *om* for *om* is the heaven and also 'one who burns' — *ādityah*." (See p. 7 of the second part—*Notes* in Nandargikar's ed. of the *Raghuvaṃśa*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1971.)

Oṅkarṇike-aṣṭākṣarābje: On *Aṣṭākṣara*, refer to the *Tirucandaviruttam* (77-78) of Śrī Bhaktisāra (Tirumaliśai Ālvār) —

எட்டுமெட்டு மெட்டுமாய்ஓ ரேழுமேழு மேழுமாய்
எட்டுமூன்று மொன்றுமாகி நின்றஆதி தேவனை
எட்டினாய் பேதமோ டிறைஞ்சிநின் றவன்பெயர்
எட்டெழுத்து மோதுவார்கள் வல்லர்வான மானவே.

சோர்விலாத் காதலால் தொடக்கரு மனத்தராய்
நீரரா வனைக்கிடந்த நின்மலன் நலங்கழல்
ஆர்வமோ டிறைஞ்சிநின் றவன்பெயர் எட்டெழுத்தும்
வாரமாக ஓதுவார்கள் வல்லர்வான மானவே.

[4]

समानोदितनेकसूर्येन्दुकोटि-

प्रभापूरतुल्यद्युतिं दुर्निरीक्ष्यम् ।

न शीतं न चोष्णं सुवर्णावदात-

प्रसन्नं सदानन्दसंवित्स्वरूपम् ॥

samānoditāneka-sūryendukoti-

prabhāpūratulyadyutiṃ durnirīksyam

na śītaṃ na coṣṇaṃ suvarṇāvadāta-

prasannaṃ sadānanda-saṃvit-svarūpam.

(Adorations to you, O Lord; you are said to be) shining like the glowing beam of light (*prabhāpūra*)

emanating from crores of a host of suns and moons as they rise simultaneously; and so, you are imperceivable (*durnirīkṣya*); you are neither cool nor hot; you are highly serene and of bright golden hue; you are real, bliss and knowledge as such.

Durnirīkṣyam: Śrī Kulaśekharāḷvār refers to Lord Viṣṇu as 'Ameya' ('beyond measure' or 'not an object of knowledge') in the *Mukundamālā* (17) — "*antarjyotiḥ ameyam-ekam-amṛtam kṛṣṇākhyam ... paramauṣadham.*"

Durnirīkṣyam na śitaṁ na caṣṭham (the unknown Principle, neither cold nor hot): Mention may be made of Śrī Śaṭhakopa's (Nammāḷvār's) holy hymn, the *Tiruvāymoḷi* (VI, iii, 2) —

கண்டலீன்பம் துன்பம் கலக்கங்கனும் தேற்றமுமாய்
தண்டமும் தண்மையும் தழலும் நிழலுமாய்
கண்டுகோ டற்கரிய பெருமான் என்னை யாள்வானூர்
தெண்டிரைப் புனல்துழ் தீருவிண்ணகர் நன்னகரே.

[5 - 7]

सुनासापुटं सुन्दरभ्रूललाटं
किरीटोचिताकुञ्चितस्निग्धकेशम् ।
स्फुरत्पुण्डरीकाभिरामायताक्षं
समुत्फुल्लरत्नप्रसूनावतंसम् ॥

लसत्कुन्तलामृष्टगण्डस्थलान्तं
जपारागचोराधरं चारुहासम् ।
अल्लिव्याकुलामोदिमन्दारमालं
महोरस्फुरत्कौस्तुभोदारहारम् ॥

सुखाङ्गदैरन्वितम्बाहुदण्डै-
 श्वतुभिश्चलत्कङ्कणालङ्कृताग्रैः ।
 उदारोदरालङ्कृतम्पीतवस्त्र-
 म्पदद्वन्द्वनिर्घृतपद्माभिरामम् ॥

*sunāsāpuṭam sundara-bhrūlalāṭṭaiṅ
 kirītoṣitākuñcita-sniḡdhakeśam
 sphurat-puṇḍarikābhirāmāyatākṣaiṅ
 samutphulla-ratna-prasūnāvataṃsam.*

*lasat-kuntalāmr̥ṣṭa-gaṇḍasthalāntam
 japārūga-corādharaiṅ cūruhāsam
 aṣṭivyākulāmodi-maṇḍāramūlaiṅ
 mahoraṣphurat-kaustubhodūra-hāram.*

*suratnāṅgadair anvitam-bāhudaṇḍaiś-
 caturbhiś-calat-kaṅkaṇālaiṅkṛtāgraiḥ
 udārodarālaiṅkṛtam-pītavastram-
 padadvandvanir̥dhūta-padmābhirāmam.*

(O Lord Viṣṇu! the scriptures describe your blissful form) with beautiful nostrils; charming eyebrows and forehead; well-braided curly and dense tresses which befit the gem-set crown; enchanting eyes, attractive like lotuses; (ears) adorned by well blown and gem-like flowers.

Your shining ear-rings touch (and illumine) your charming cheeks; your lips outshine red *japākusuma* (China-rose); your smile is enchanting; you are adorned with the *Mandāra* garland in which bees bustle due to good fragrance; your chest is bright with Kaustubha, the attractive jewel and beautiful necklace.

Your four shoulders glitter with good gem-set shoulderlets and your four hands shine with attractive golden bangles; your waist shines with the yellow silken garment; your pair of feet is very beautiful like lotuses.

Śrī Rāmānuja, in his *Vedārthasaṅgraha* gives a detailed description of the Lord's (Viṣṇu's) *divyamaṅgaḷavighraha* — "His lovely feet are like full blown lotus; ... He is adorned by pure, divine, and infinitely marvellous ornaments like *kirīṭa*, crown, etc. ... (see pp. 172-173, *The Vedārthasaṅgraha*, ed. & tr. by Prof. S. S. Raghavachar, Mysore, 1968).

For a vivid description of the Lord's *pararūpa*, see also the *Yatīndramatadīpikā* of Śrīnivāsadāsa, pp. 134-35 (ch. 9, para 11), Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1978.

[8]

स्वभक्तेषु सन्दर्शिताकारमेवं

सदा भावयन् सन्निरुद्धेन्द्रियाश्रवः ।

दुरापं नरो याति संसारपार-

म्परस्मै परेभ्योऽपि तस्मै नमस्ते ॥

svabhakteṣu sandarśitākāram-evam

sadā bhāvayan sanniruddhendriyāśraḥ

durāpaṁ naro yāti saṁsārapāram-

parasmai parebhyo'pi tasmai namaste.

I bow to you O Lord; you are greater than all great divinities; you give such a vision of yourself to all your devotees. The man, who has controlled his sense organs that move swiftly like horses and who contemplates on you always as described above (verses 3-7)

crosses the unfathomable ocean of *saṁsāra*, the cycle of birth and death.

Svabhakteṣu: St. Nammālvār refers to the ardent devotees of the Lord as '*Tamarhal*'; compare the *Tiruvāymolī* (X, iv, 10)—

வகையால் மனமொன்றி மாதவனை, நாளும்
புகையால் விளக்கால் புதுமலரால் நீரால்,
திசைதோ றமரர்கள் சென்றிறைஞ்ச நின்ற,
தகையான் சரணம் தமர்கட் கோர் பற்றே.

Ākāram-evaṁ sadā bhūvayan (contemplating upon the divine form of the Lord ever thus): St. Tiruppāṇālvār got devoutly immersed in the divine beauty of the Lord Raṅganātha, as he says (the *Amalanāḍipirāḍi*, 9) —

ஆலமா மரத்தின் இலைமே லொரு பால கனாய்,
ஞால மேழு முண்டா னரங்கத் தரவி னணையான்,
கோல மாமணியாரமும் முத்துத் தாமமும் முடிவில்ல
தோரெழில்,
நீல மேனி, ஐயோ! நிறை கொண்டதென் நெஞ்சினையே!

[9]

श्रिया शतकुम्भद्युतिस्निग्धकान्त्या
धरण्या च दूर्वादलश्यामलाङ्ग्या ।
कलत्रद्वयेनामुना तोषिताय
त्रिलोकीगृहस्थाय विष्णो ! नमस्ते ॥

śriyā śātakumbhadyuti-sniḡdha-kāntyā
dharanyā ca dūrvādalaśyāmalāṅgyā
kaḷatra-dvayenāmunā toṣitāya
trilokī-grhasthāya viṣṇo! namaste.

O Lord Viṣṇu! I bow to you. All the three worlds belong to you. You are always pleased with

your two consorts — Goddess Mahālakṣmī and Mother Earth, the former glittering with the enchanting golden hue and the latter (Dharaṇī) bright with the dark green colour of *Dūrvā* grass.

Śrīyā ... dharanyā ca ... kalātradvayena amunā toṣitāya (Lord Viṣṇu who is pleased with His two consorts Lakṣmī and Bhūdevī): compare the *Periya-tirumolī* (III, x, 1) of Śrī Tirumaṅgaiyālvār —

திருமடந்தை மண்மடந்தை யிருபாலும் திகழத்
 தீவினைகள் போயகல அடியவர்கட் கென்றும்
 அருள் நடந்து, இவ் வேழுலகத் தவர்பணிய வானோர்
 அமர்ந்தேத்த இருந்தவிடம், பெரும்புகழ்வே தியர்வாழ்
 தருமிடங்கள் மலர்கள்மிகு கைதைகள்செங் கழுநீர்
 தாமரைகள் தடங்கடொறு மிடங்கடொறும் திகழ,
 அருவிடங்கள் பொழில்தழுவி யெழில்திகழு நாங்கூர்
 அரிமேய விண்ணகரம் வணங்குமட தெஞ்சே!

On Lord Viṣṇu, there is an important verse, viz.,

*jale viṣṇuḥ sthale viṣṇuḥ viṣṇuḥ parvatamastake
 jvalāmūlīkule viṣṇuḥ sarvaṁ viṣṇumayaṁ jagat.*

Trilokīgṛhasthīya (One who has all the three worlds as His abode; the master of all worlds) — compare the *Vairāgya-sataka* (84) of Poet Bhartṛhari, “*Janūrdane vā jagadantarātmani*” — (Viṣṇu is the in-most Self of the universe). According to Swami Madhavananda, “In the word *janūrdana*, the verb ‘*arda*’ also means to protect.” While explaining ‘*jagadantarātman*,’ Swami holds that it means (a) ‘One who is the knower of all inner things in the universe,’ (b) ‘One who is the Self of all in the universe’ and (c) ‘in whose Self is the whole universe.’ (See pp. 48-49, the *Vairāgyasataka*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta 1981).

Śrīyā ... : cf. the Tiruvēymolī (VIII, iii, 1) of Śrī Śāṭhā-kopa —

அங்கும் இங்கும், வானவர் தானவர், யாவரும்
 எங்கும் இனையெயன் றுன்னை யறியகிலாது, அலற்றி

அங்கம் சேரும் பூமகள். மண்மகள். ஆய்மகள்,
சங்கு சக்கரக் கையவன் என்பர் சுரணமே.

[10]

शरीरं कलत्रं सुतम्बन्धुवर्गं
वयस्यं धनं सद्म भृत्यम्भुवञ्च ।
समस्तम्परित्यज्य हा कष्टमेको
गमिष्यामि दुःखेन दूरं किलाहम् ॥

*śarīraṁ kalatram sutam-bandhuvargam
vayasyam dhanam sadma bhṛtyam-bhuvan̄ca
samastam-parityajya hā kaṣṭameko
gamisyāmi duḥkhena dūram kilāham.*

(O Lord) let me become freed from the entanglements (of the mortal coil) viz., the body, wife, son, host of relatives, friends, wealth, house, servant, and earth. Alas, all these are full of miseries. O Lord! let me be freed from all pains and get away from these things.

[11]

जरेयम्पिशाचीव हा जीवतो मे
वसामत्ति रक्तञ्च मांसम्बलञ्च ।
अहो देव! सीदामि दीनानुकम्पिन्!
किमद्यापि हन्त! त्वयोदासितव्यम् ॥

*jareyam-piśācīva hā jīvato me
vasūmatti raktañca māṁsam-balañca
aho deva! sīdāmi dīnānukampin!
kimadyāpi hanta! tvayodāsitavyam.*

O Lord! as I live (in this mortal world) this old age like a devil eats marrows, drinks blood and takes away my strength. O God! alas! I suffer very much. O the merciful Lord towards the destitutes! are you to be indifferent towards me even now?

Deval (O God): compare the highly mystical address made by St. Śaṅkapa (Nammālvār) in his *Tiruvāymolī* (VI, x. 4). -

ஆவா வென்னு துலகத்தை அலைக்கும் அசுரர் வாணுள்மேல்!
 தீவாய் வாளி மழைபொழிந்த சிலையா! திருமா மகள்கேள்வா!
 தேவா! சுரர்கள் முனிக்கணங்கள் விரும்பும் திருவேங்
கடத்தானே!
 பூவார் கழல்கள் அருவினையேன் பொருந்துமாறு புணராயே.

[12]

कफव्याहतोष्णोल्बणश्वासवेग-
 व्यथविष्फुरत्सर्वमर्मास्थिवन्धाम् ।
 विचिन्त्याहमन्त्यामसङ्ख्यामवस्था-
 भ्विभेमि प्रभो! किं करोमि प्रसीद ॥

*kapha-vyāhatoṣṇolbana-śvāsavega-
 vyathā-viṣphurat-sarvamarmāsthī-bandhām
 vicintyāham-antyaṁ asaṅkhyām-avasthām-
 bibhemi prabho! kiṅkaromi prasīda.*

O Lord! I fear very much as I think of the last bed-ridden state (on the eve of death) in which one suffers from untold miseries because of the splitting of the joints of bones together with the strained hot breath and sighs while the phlegms choke the throat. What can I do? O Lord! be pleased to help me.

Antyām-asaṅkhyām-avasthām: The last stage of life has been described in a decade by Śrī Periyālvār; compare the *Periyālvār-tirumolī* (IV, v, 1) —

ஆசை வாய்ச்சென்ற சிந்தைய ராகி
 அன்னை யத்தன்என் புத்திரர் பூமி,
 வாச வார்குழ லாளென்று மயங்கி
 மாளும் எல்லைக் கண், வாய் தீற வாதே,
 கேச வா! புரு டோத்தமா! என்றும்
 கேழ லாகிய கேடிலீ யென்றும்
 பேச வாரவர் எய்தும் பெருமை
 பேச வான்புகில் நம்பர மன்றே.

[13]

लपन्नच्युतानन्त गोविन्द विष्णो
 मुरारे हरे नाथ नारायणेति ।
 यथानुस्मरिष्यामि भक्त्या भवन्तं
 तथा मे दयाशील देव! प्रसीद ॥

lapann-acyutānanta govinda viṣṇo
murāre hare nātha nārāyaṇeti
yathānusmarisyāmi bhaktyā bhavantaṁ
tathā me dayāśīla! deva! prasīda.

O the Lord of unbounded mercy! be pleased to bless me so that I shall always remember you with utmost devotion uttering your glorious names as Acyuta, Ananta, Govinda, Viṣṇu, Murāri, Hari, Nātha, Nārāyaṇa.

Lapann-acyutānanta govinda ... (Reciting His names as Acyuta, Ananta, Govinda ...): compare Śrī Kulaśekharaḷvār's *Mukunda-mālā* (36-37) —

śrīnātha nārāyaṇa vāsudeva
śrīkṛṣṇa bhaktapriya cakrapāṇe
śrīpadmanābhācyuta kaiṭabhāre
śrīrāma padmākṣa hare murāre.

“*ananta vaikunṭha mukunda kṛṣṇa
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti ...*”

Nātha (O Lord): compare Śrī Śaṅkara's *Viṣṇusahasra-nāmahāṣya* on the name “*lokanātha*” (734) — “*lokair-nāthyate yācyate, tūn-upatapati, tebhyaḥ āśūste, teṣām-iṣṭe*” (He, the Lord of the world is sought after by the world; He shines in the world; He blesses the world; and, He rules the world).

Acyuta: cf. the oft-quoted *śloka* on Lord Viṣṇu —

*acyutaḥ kalpavṛkṣaśca
anantaḥ kāmāduḥ bhavet
cintāmaṇistu govindo
nāmatrayam-udāhṛtam.*

Ananta: cf. the following *śloka* for the greatness of Ananta --

*anantaḥ prathamam rūpam
lakṣmaṇastu tataḥ param
tṛtīyo balabhadraḥ
kalau kaścid-bhaviṣyati.*

Govinda: It is apt to quote the following verse addressed to Lord Kṛṣṇa —

*śaṅkha-cakra-gadā-pāṇe
dvārakānilayācyuta
govinda puṇḍarikākṣa
rakṣa mām śaraṇāgatam.*

Viṣṇo: cf. the following verse —

*tithirviṣṇuḥ tathā vāraḥ
nakṣatram viṣṇureva ca
yogaśca karaṇāṅcaiva
sarvam viṣṇumayam jagat.*

Nārāyaṇeti: Śrī Śaṅkara (Nammālvār) refers to the various aspects of Lord Nārāyaṇa indicating His all-comprehensive supreme form, in the *Tiruvāymolī* (IV, iii, 3) —

ஏக மூர்த்தி இருமூர்த்தி முன்று மூர்த்தி பலமூர்த்தி
ஆகி, ஐந்து பூதமாய் இரண்டு சுடராய் அருவாகி,
நாகம் ஏறி நடுக்கடலுள் துயின்ற நாரா யணனே! உன்
ஆகம் முற்றும் அகத்தடக்கி ஆவி யல்லல் மாய்த்ததே.

[14]

भुजङ्गप्रयातम्पठेद्यस्तु भक्त्या
 समाधाय चित्ते भवन्तं सुरारे ।
 स मोहं विहायाशु युष्मत्प्रसादात्
 समाश्रित्य योगं व्रजत्यच्युतं त्वाम् ॥

*bhujāṅgaprayōtam-ṣaṭhedyastu bhaktyā
 samādhāya citte bhavantam murāre!
 sa moham vihāyāśu yuṣmat-prasādāt-
 samāśritya yogam vrajatyacyutam tvām.*

O Lord Murāri! he who recites this hymn, *Viṣṇubhujāṅgaprayātaṣṭotra*, with earnest devotion to you and who also contemplates on you in his mind, obtains your grace and becomes rid of all delusions; he resorts to *Yoga* (the path of perfect meditation) and reaches you, O Lord Acyuta (who never leaves the devotees in the lurch).

Murāre (O the slayer of the demon Mura!): compare the *Tiruccandaviruttam* (104) of Śrī Tirumaliśaiyālvār —

கடுங்கவந்தன் வக்கரன் கரன் முரன் சீரம்மவை
 இடந்துகூறு செய்தபல் படைத்தடக்கை மாயனே!
 கிடந்தீருந்து நின்றியங்கு போதும்நின்ன, பொற்கழல்
 தொடந்துவீள்வி லாததோர் தொடர்ச்சிநல்க வேண்டுமே.

Acyutam tvām (The devotee reaches you, O Lord Acyuta): cf. the *Tiruvāymoli* (III, iv, 5) of Śrī Nammālvār —

அச்சுதன் அமலன் என்கோ, அடியவர் வீணைகெடுக்கும்
 நச்சுமா மருந்தம் என்கோ, நலங்கடல் அமுதம் என்கோ,
 அச்சுவைக் கட்டி என்கோ, அறுசுவை அடிசில் என்கோ,
 நெய்ச்சுவைத் தேறல் என்கோ, கனியென்கோ,
 பாலென் கெடு.

SUBRAHMAṆYA-BHUJAṄGAM*

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda

Introduction

Lord Subrahmaṇya, variously referred to as Skanda, Kārttikeya, Guha and so on is essentially a post-Vedic deity. There is a well-known and oft-repeated Vedic hymn occurring in the *Yajurveda* (the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, first *praśna*) where the word "*Subrahmaṇyo'ham*" occurs thrice and may be mistaken to refer to Lord Subrahmaṇya. This hymn beginning with the words "*agnir-vibhrāṣṭi vasaṇaḥ*" — "अग्निर्विभ्राष्टि वसनः" — occurs in the twelfth *anuvāka* and actually refers to Lord Indra and not to Lord Subrahmaṇya.

The earliest accounts of Skanda appear in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Śrī Vālmiki. In the *Bālakāṇḍa*, Sage Viśvāmitra recounts the the story of the birth of Lord Skanda to the young boys, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa while taking them to Mithilā after the demoness Tāṭakā was slain. It was the usual practice then for elders while taking youngsters out on a walk to recount the prevalent stories to make it more interesting and at the same time more educative. Among several stories recounted by Sage Viśvāmitra this is one. This occurs in the 37th *sarga* of *Bālakāṇḍa* as a brief

* A metrical English rendering. (Earlier the text was edited with English translation by Dr. R. Balasubramanian in *The Voice of Śaṅkara* Vol. I, Nos. 2-3 — Editor).

account and closes with the benediction that whoever hears this account of the birth of Lord Skanda attains salvation. This account of Lord Skanda is greatly elaborated and His further exploits are narrated in the *Skānda Purāṇa*. Poet Kālidāsa has immortalised this story in his famous epic, the *Kumārasambhava*.

To cite the story very briefly, it opens with an account of the tortures suffered by the *devas* (gods) due to the insolence and might of the demon Tāraka and his hordes. They pray to Lord Brahmā who predicts that the son born to Lord Śiva will destroy the demon and deliver them. Lord Śiva is doing penance and is in no mood to beget a son. Indra, the Lord of gods sends Manmatha (Cupid) to tempt Lord Śiva to marry Goddess Pārvatī and beget a son; but Lord Śiva is annoyed at the disturbance and burns Cupid (who regains his life after Lord Śiva is married to Goddess Pārvatī). Goddess Pārvatī performs penance with all austerities and Śiva is pleased and marries her. The creative principle of Lord Śiva is so powerful that even Goddess Pārvatī is unable to bear it and it is let down in the river Gaṅgā. But even the cold waters of the river Gaṅgā find it hot and it is left behind in a dense foliage of reeds when Lord Skanda is born. He assumes six bodily forms because the six celestial women Kṛttikā devis offer Him breast-milk. Goddess Pārvatī sees the six children and is delighted. She collects them all together in Her arms and the six babies are coalesced into one child with one body and six heads.

Various childhood exploits of Lord Skanda are then recounted. It is said that He taught the real significance of *Prāṇava-mantra* (*Om*) to Lord Śiva Himself. As a boy, He leads the armies of gods and, in a big battle, destroys the demon Tāraka and his hordes, including Śurapadma, Simhvaktra and others. As a reward, Lord Indra offers his daughter, Devasenā to Him. (Devasenā or Deyvānai is one of the consorts of Lord Skanda).

It is believed that this battle took place in Jayantīpura which corresponds to modern Tiruchendur in southern coast of Tamil Nadu. Śrī Adi Śaṅkara, the great saint, visited this place where

a temple for Lord Skanda has been built on a mound on the sea-shore. He composed this hymn, the *Subrahmaṇya-bhujāṅgam* in honour of this deity.

Lord Subrahmaṇya takes various forms according to the fancies of His devotees. As a child holding His *Śakti* (or '*Vēl*' as it is called in Tamil) which can be generally termed as a special type of spear, He is very popular. He rides a peacock and assumes a six-faced single-bodied form also. There is a cock adorning His flag. The story goes that when the demon Śurapadma was killed, his body split into two, one becoming a peacock and the other becoming the cock.

He is a very popular deity in South India and especially in Tamil Nadu where there are six temples situated on the hillocks, considered to be very holy. They are Tīruttaṇi to the north of Madras, Svāmimalai near Thanjavūr, Paḷani, Tirupparaṅkuṅgam, Paḷamutirśōlai (all in Madurai District) and Tiruchendūr. Of these, in Paḷamutirśōlai, the hillock itself is considered to be the God Subrahmaṇya and there is a very small temple on the top (of recent origin). At Tirupparaṅkuṅgam, the idol is cut on the rock-face itself.

In Tamil Nadu, He is more popularly known as Murugan and there are many popular hymns on Him in Tamil. The oldest of them is the *Tirumurukārruppadaḷai* by poet Nakkīrar and belongs to the classical Saṅgam age, more than 2000 years ago. Some scholars hold that Lord Murugan was a separate hill-deity worshipped by the tribes inhabiting the hillocks. When the tribes were absorbed in Hinduism by its tolerant and assimilative culture, Lord Murugan was identified with Lord Subrahmaṇya in view of the similarities like boy-god, warrior-like qualities, etc. A young maiden, Vallī, the beautiful daughter of a hunter-king, marries Lord Subrahmaṇya. Thus there are two consorts of the Lord, *viz.*, Devasenā and Vallī.

In this hymn Lord Śiva is referred to by His many epithets as Lord Mahādeva, Purāri (the Destroyer of three cities), Hara, and Śaṅkara.

According to the convention of Sanskrit literature when the physical form of God or man or woman is described, usually two modes are adopted, either from head to foot or from foot to head. In this hymn, the latter mode is adopted. *Śloka* 9 describes the feet of Lord Subrahmanya and *śloka* 16, the head of the Lord. In verses 10-15, the other parts of His body are described. In accordance with tradition, the penultimate *śloka* hails the Lord or proclaims victory to Him; and the hymn ends with a prayer that all those who read this hymn should be blessed in all respects during the life-time and attain salvation at the end.

This hymn is composed in the metre called '*Bhujāṅga-prayāta*' which means the movement of a serpent. The lines are musical with lilting curved movements and hence this metre is called *Bhujāṅgaprayāta*. No verse-translation can do adequate justice to the beauty of the highly onomatopie lines with internal rhymes and alliterative phrases of the original.

*A Verse-translation of the
Subrahmanya-bhujāṅgaprayātatotra*

Albeit a boy ever of form
Crushing yet mountains of obstacles:¹
Possessed of a huge elephantine face
And yet He is beloved of the lion (Śiva):²
Seeking you ever are deities down to Bramhā
and Indra
And you bear the appellation 'Gaṇeśa',
Such is your benign and benevolent form:
May you bestow all prosperity on me. (1)

I know not the word
Nor the meaning thereof;
I know not to write prose
Nor the art of composing poetry;

Even so a six-faced effulgence
Emerges within my mind,
And lo, what a surprise!
Words tumble out of my mouth. (2)

Astride a peacock are you,
You are the hidden meaning of the Upaniṣadic
sermons:

Possessing an enticing body,
You choose to dwell in the minds of seers,
The chosen God of the priestly class are you,
You are the essence of the great Vedic hymns,
You are the darling child of Lord Mahādeva,
I worship you, Oh Lord of all the worlds! (3)

“The moment people choose to come
In front of me
They shall then itself cross over
The sea of life”³
— As if, perhaps, to imply this maxim
You are standing right on the sea-shore:
I bow to your flawless form
Oh, child of the all-powerful Mother! (4)

“The mighty waves of the sea,
As they approach my temple, get absorbed;
Even so the dangers that assail
Devotees coming before me will vanish”
— Perhaps to illustrate this truth
You are showing them the billowing waves;
Deep in my lotus-heart I meditate
On you all the time, Oh Guha! (5)

“When people do climb up the hill
Where I reside,

At that moment they have also climbed
 The snow-clad steeps of Kailāsa:"
 As if to proclaim this to all the world
 You are seated in your abode in Gandhamādana;⁴
 So seated, may the six-faced Lord
 Grant me happiness for ever. (6)

I take refuge in Lord Guha
 Who removes the sufferings of people
 Who dazzles by His own effulgence
 And who abides in a cave
 Situate on the Sugandha hill⁵
 Which is congenial to the penance of seers
 And that which is located on the shores of the
 ocean
 That steals away the great sins of devotees. (7)

All the time I meditate upon
 Kārttikeya, the Lord of all the deities,
 Whose halo equals
 A thousand rising Suns;
 I see Him seated on a bed of rubies
 Overlaid with colourful flowers
 In a temple of resplendent gold
 Which grants the desires of men. (8)

Your lotus-like feet, Oh Skanda!
 Is resonant with the music of anklets;
 They are gracefully purple,
 And brimming with nectar,
 Which is charming and elegant;
 May my mind, hovering like a bee,
 Tortured by a thousand turmoils of life,
 Ever find solace and felicity in them. (9)

Oh Skanda! lustrous is your waist
 Adorned in lovely glittering golden robes;
 Resplendent is your hip with a waistband
 Fitted with twinkling tiny little bells,
 Shimmering indeed is your waist
 Clad in gleaming gold-like silks;
 On such a radiant waist
 I dwell in deep meditation. (10)

The tight embrace
 Of the heavy and tall breasts
 Of the daughter of the hunter-king
 Has tainted your chest crimson with saffron
 Oh, Slayer of demon Tāraka!
 I bow to this chest,
 Ever keenly desirous
 Of protecting your devotees. (11)

I take refuge again and again in your long
stick-like arms
 Which have punished Brahmā:⁷
 They have borne the universe in play:
 Bigger are they by far than elephant trunks:
 They are like the club of Yama to enemies:
 Hordes of demons have they slain:
 Able are they in protecting the worlds,
 And tremendous is their power. (12)

If ever six moons
 Are all the time autumnal
 And arise in all the directions
 And at all times of day and night:
 And if they are ever full-moons
 Without any stains

Then, and then only shall I say,
They equal your faces. (13)

Like blooming lotuses are your six faces
And I behold them:
By radiating gleaming smiles
They look verily a parade of swans:
With their rows of glances
They resemble a swarm of hovering bees:
Your nectar-dripping lips
Resemble the *bimba* fruits, Oh Son of Śiva! (14)

Broad are your eyes
Stretching upto your ears:
Dripping with compassion
Are the gracious glances of your eyes, a dozen:
If one such glance of one such eye
Falls on me even for a moment,
Pray, Oh Merciful Lord!
What is your loss? (15)

'Oh Child, you are born of my limbs,
May you live long'
— Mumbling the hymn' six times
Śiva fondly bends and kisses your six heads;
These heads carry the weight of the worlds:
Resplendent are they with shining diadems,
Oh Lord of all the worlds!
I bow to these heads. (16)

Oh Son of Śiva, the Slayer of the three cities!
Adorned in glittering gem-set arm-bands
And charming pearl necklaces,
Your cheeks radiant
With swinging ear-drops,
Arrayed in a silken robe,

And with a lovely spear in your hand,
Do appear, please, before me. (17)

“Come hither, my Darling Child!”
— Thus calls out Śiva endearingly
Stretching His hands:
And You jumping off Your mother’s lap,
Toddle along towards Your father,
And Śiva catches You in a tight embrace:
I bow to this
Tender child-form of You. (18)

Oh Kumāra! Oh Son of Lord Śiva!
Oh Guha! Skanda! Commander-in-chief!
Oh Holder of the spear in hand!
Oh Rider of the peacock!
Oh Beloved of the daughter of the hunter-king!
Oh Remover of the distress of devotees!
Oh Lord! Sworn enemy of Tāraka!
Pray, do protect me ever. (19)

When crippled are my senses,
I become unconscious, all movement ceases:
— My mouth lined with phlegm,
My limbs and body trembling in fear,
When, in short, I am on my last journey,
Totally helpless,
Oh Most compassionate Guha!
Rush before me, Oh quickly. (20)

When the minions of the God of Death,
Ever awesome, full of anger
Shouting “Burn him, rend him, pierce him,”
Approach me threatening in this manner,
At that time, pray, ascend Your peacock
And appear before me quickly

Brandishing Your hand holding the spear,
Uttering the words "Have no fear." (21)

Falling at Your feet again and again,
And making obeisance to You,
I entreat You to forgive me
And make this prayer constantly:
Oh Lord! Ocean of compassion!
At that time I shall not be able to say anything:
When the end approaches,
Pray do not neglect me. (22)

You were able to slay demons
Such as Śūra, Tāraka and Simhavaktra
Who, in their prime, were holding sway
Over countless universes.
But there is one, deep in my mind,
Which is causing me great anguish
And You are not killing it:
Oh Lord! What shall I do? Where shall I go? (23)

Ever am I tormented and teased
With the unbearable burden of sorrow.
You are the saviour of the blighted,
And so I shall beg of none else:
An impediment to my devotion to You,
And all the time pestering me,
Is this agony of mine:
Oh Son of Umā! pray destroy this. (24)

Epilepsy, leprosy, consumption,
Piles, diabetes,
Fever, insanity, stomach-aches,
And all other such dreaded diseases
As well as all types of ghosts
— All these flee out of fear

At the mere sight of the sacred ash
From Your feet packed in a leaf.¹⁰ (25)

The image of Skanda before my eyes,
Accounts of His valorous deeds in my ears,
My mouth uttering for ever
His holy life, His holier deeds,
My hands serving Him in a myriad ways,
My body pressed into His service,
— In this manner, may my entire thoughts
Get merged in Guha. (26)

A number of deities indeed there are
Who grant the boons and desires
Of great sages at penance,
As well as of very devoted men;
But granting the desired objects
Of even the lowest of the lowly
Another deity apart from Guha
— I know not, I know not! (27)

May my wife, children,
Kinsmen all and kine
And all those other men and women
Who happen to be in my house or who belong
to me,
Be engaged in worshipping You,
Bowling to You and praising You;
Oh Kumāra! this is my yet another prayer. (28)

All threatening animals
And birds and flies
And in the same manner, all the diseases
Which torment my body
— May all these be pierced
By the sharp point of your spear

And get destroyed far away,
Oh Lord who pulverised the Krauñca hill.¹¹ (29)

Do not mother and father
Forgive the faults committed
By their son,
Oh Chief Commander of the divine army!
Even so a mere child am I
And You are the father of all the worlds;
Forgive my faults in full,
Oh Great Lord! (30)

Oh Peacock, the vehicle of Skanda! I bow to you.
As also to you, Oh Spear!
Oh Goat,¹² once the vehicle of Skanda! I bow to
you.

As also to you, Oh Cock!
Oh the Ocean! I bow to you.
As also to the shore of the ocean.
Oh, Skanda in Personification,
I bow to You again and again. (31)

Hail to Thee, Oh Abundance of Bliss;
Hail to Thee, Oh Effulgent one!
Hail to Thee, Oh Lord of unequalled fame!
Hail to Thee, Oh Embodiment of Bliss!
Hail to Thee, Oh Ocean of joy!
Hail to Thee, Oh Kinsman to all!
Oh Son of the Lord, who grants salvation,
Hail to Thee all the time! (32)

Whoever reads again and again,
With deep devotion, after bowing to Guha,
This hymn composed
In the metre known as '*Bhujāṅga*',

Shall be blessed with
 Good children, wife, wealth and longevity,
 And at the end of his earthly life
 Shall sure merge with Skanda. (33)

Notes

1. The hymn opens with a benedictory verse on Gaṇeśa who is traditionally the remover of all obstacles. In all rituals, such as marriages, etc. and other efforts indulging literary works, it is usual to begin with a short prayer to Lord Gaṇeśa.

2. Here the poet in Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara plays a pun on the Sanskrit word '*Pañcāśya*' which means both Śiva and a lion. In the meaning of a lion, there is an obvious contradiction in a lion loving an elephant, whereas Śrī Śaṅkara actually means that Lord Śiva loves His elder son Gaṇeśa, which is natural. Sanskrit literature abounds in such instances of pun which in Sanskrit is 'Śleṣa'. It is obviously difficult to render justice to such puns in a translation.

3. Life in this world is deemed an ocean and the cycle of births and deaths is never-ending. Once a devotee takes the trouble of coming to the temple in Tiruchendur and stands before the deity, there shall be no more birth and he attains salvation.

4. The hillock in Tiruchendūr on which the temple is situated is called Gandhamādana.

5. *Sugandha* is another name for Gandhamādana, the hillock in Tiruchendūr on top of which the temple of the Lord is located.

6. In poetic fancy, affection is red in colour. Due to the tight embrace of Vajī, Skanda's chest is red in colour. What does it denote? Affection. For whom? Of course, for His devotees! So runs the fancy of the poet Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara.

7. According to the *Skandapurāṇa*, when Lord Skanda once asked the creator Brahmā the real significance of 'Om', the latter replied that He himself was its meaning, which was not correct. Lord Skanda imprisoned Brahmā as punishment. At the intervention of Lord Śiva, Brahmā was released.

8. In Sanskrit literary tradition, it is usual for poets to compare the lower lips of charming young ladies to the *bimba* fruit which is the most crimson in colour and an appropriate object of comparison. Lord Skanda, being a young boy, has also a reddish lower lip which Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara, the poet, compares to the *bimba* fruit.

9. There is a Vedic hymn; it means that the son is born of the father limb to limb, and verily, he is the father himself and let him live a hundred years—

अङ्गादङ्गात् सम्भवसि हृदयादधि जायसे ।

आत्मा वै पुत्रनामासि त्वं जीव शरदः शतम् ॥

10. While in almost all other temples, sacred ash is distributed as *prasāda* by hand, there is a tradition in Tiruchendur to pack it in leaves and the packed ash is given by the priest to devotees. The reason is that the Kerala priests who officiate there are so orthodox that they do not want to get polluted by accidentally coming into contact with the devotees while distributing the sacred ash; they stand at a distance and throw the packed leaf so that it falls on the stretched palms of the devotees.

11. According to the *Skandapurāṇa*, Krauñca was a demon and brother of Tāraka who took the shape of a mountain and used to devour seers and sages by misleading and confusing them. Sage Agastya cursed him to become a mountain. Lord Skanda, at a later date, reduced the mountain to bits and pieces and the demon was released from the curse.

12. According to the *Skandapurāṇa*, due to mistakes committed in a sacrifice by sages, a demoniac goat sprang up which threatened to devour everyone around. Lord Skanda was appealed for help. He sent Virabāhu to tame and bring the goat. When the goat was brought, Skanda made it his vehicle till the battle with Tāraka; then He switched over to the peacock.

LAGHUŚĀTASĪOKĪ

of

Ātmavidyābhāṣā

V. S. V. Gurusvāmi Śāstri

(Contd. from Vol. IX, No. 2)

[32]

द्रष्टुर्हि मेघः पिदधाति चक्षु-
 र्न छादयेद्भानुमसौ महान्तम् ।
 तद्वज्जगच्छादयतीन्द्रियौघं
 न चित्प्रकाशं परमार्थवस्तु ॥

[33]

स्वप्ने तु भूपत्वमथाधकृत्त्वं
 स्वीयं मृषेति प्रतिबुध्यमानः ।
 हर्षं विषादं न भजेन्मनुष्य-
 स्तथैव जाग्रत्यपि तेन भाव्यम् ॥

[34]

जाग्रत्यसत्यं खलु स्वप्नदृष्टं
 स्वप्ने मृषा जागरसम्प्रवृत्ताम् ।
 इत्थं मृषात्वे ह्युभयोश्च सिद्धे
 भजेद्विवेकी परमार्थसत्यम् ॥

[35]

स्वप्ने मृतो जाग्रति जीवतीत्थं
 स्वप्नेऽसुमान् जाग्रति यो मृतश्च ।
 तद्वस्तुसत्यत्वमृषात्ववादो
 भूयोऽल्पकालत्वकृतो न युक्तः ॥

[36]

स्वप्ने तु सत्यः पुरुषो मृषा स्त्री
 सत्यस्तु तद्योगजशुक्लधातुः ।
 सत्यश्चिदात्मा च मृषा त्वविद्या
 तद्योगजं भाति जगच्च सत्यम् ॥

[37]

आत्मा स्वयं स्वप्नचरः सहाक्षै-
 र्जाग्रच्चरः सुप्तिगतः सुखात्मा ।
 न कोऽपि तं पश्यति तत्प्रपञ्चं
 ह्यारामवत् पश्यति सर्वं एव ॥

[38]

मन्त्रोपदेशान्महतां प्रसादात्
 स्वप्नादसत्यात् फलमस्ति सत्यम् ।
 तद्वद्द्वयसत्याच्च गुरूपदेशाद्
 बोधोऽथ मोक्षः परमार्थसत्यः ॥

प्राणायामस्य महिमा

[39]

वागादिकम्प्रत्यहमेति सुप्तौ
 प्राणं लये वायुमथान्निमुख्यम् ।
 तत्प्राणवाय्वायमनं ह्युपायः
 स्वात्मावबोधे न परोऽस्ति कश्चित् ॥

वैराग्यस्य महिमा

[40]

कर्मप्रजार्थाश्रितरागसार्द्रं

चित्तं न बोधाभिरलं प्रदग्धुम् ।

वैराग्यशुष्कन्तु दहेद्यथाग्निः

सुशुष्कमेधः प्रदहेन्न चार्द्रम् ॥

[41]

असत्यमाभात्यखिलं च येन

तेनैव वास्यं जगदीश्वरेण ।

यद्वद्विजिह्वः परमार्थरज्ज्वा

त्याज्यं धनाद्यं त्वमृतत्वकामैः ॥

[42]

जीवद्विमुक्तिः प्रथमं मुमुक्षो-

रात्यन्तिकी मुक्तिरतः परं स्यात् ।

ते दैहिकान्मानसिकाद्भवेता-

मभ्यासयोगाद्गुरुलब्धबोधात् ॥

मुक्तेः स्वरूपम्

[43]

उन्मूल्य कामान् हृदि सम्प्ररूढा-

नात्मैकचित्तो गतदेहमानः ।

अचापलोऽत्रैव विमुक्तिमेति

न ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं त्विह ब्रह्मनाड्या ॥

[44]

आत्मैव विश्वं निखिलं प्रपश्यन्
 जीवन्विमुक्तो गतशोकमोहः ।
 विस्मृत्य देहादि विकल्पशून्यः
 प्राप्तः परं ब्रह्म विपुण्यपापः ॥

[45]

देहस्थितो नाञ्चति देहधर्मा-
 नात्मा शिवः प्राणयुतस्तु जीवः ।
 तं मुक्तियोग्यं कवयोऽग्रयबुद्ध्या
 नयन्ति तद्विष्णुपदं यदूर्ध्वम् ॥

[46]

यस्त्वाप्तकामः स किलाप्तकामो-
 ऽप्यात्माप्तिसम्प्राप्तसमस्तकामः ।
 प्राणा न यान्त्यस्य बहिः प्रयाणे
 तत्कारणेष्वेव लयं प्रयान्ति ॥

[47]

क्षीराब्धिपाथः क्वथितं सुपिण्डं
 तत् सैन्धवाख्यां लभते पुनस्तत् ।
 निक्षिप्तमब्धौ तदनामरूपं
 प्राज्ञः परे ब्रह्मणि तद्वदेव ॥

विज्ञानमयकोशविवेकः

[48]

क्षीरान्तराज्यं मधुरं ततोऽन्यद्-
भूतेषु भूमामृतमेवमन्यत् ।
विश्रान्तिबीजं विभयं यदन्तः
स्फुरत्सुखं ब्रह्म ततोऽन्यदार्तम् ॥

[49]

प्रोतः पटस्तन्तुषु तद्वदोतो
निरूपितस्तन्तुचयो न चान्यः ।
तथाक्षरेऽव्याकृतमत्र सूत्रं
सूत्रे विराट् तत्र जगद्विचित्रम् ॥

[50]

यद्व्यापकं ब्रह्म तदेव बुद्धौ
जीवत्वमेति प्रतिबिम्बितं सत् ।
एकोऽप्यनेको मनुजः स्वकीय-
रूपेण नीरप्रतिबिम्बितेन ॥

[51]

ये दर्पणस्था ऋजुवक्रताद्या
धर्माच्च तद्विम्बितवस्तुनिष्ठाः ।
विचित्रनानाविधबुद्धिधर्मा-
स्तथैव तद्विम्बितजीवनिष्ठाः ॥

[52]

कल्लोललोलाः प्रतिबिम्बसूर्याः
 न बिम्बभानुर्गगने विलोलः ।
 चलत्सु वस्तुष्वचलस्तथात्मा
 नोपाधिधर्मः खलु बिम्बगामी ॥

[53]

सूर्याशुसन्दीपितमिन्दुबिम्बं
 कांस्यं च पात्रं तम आच्छिनत्ति ।
 तद्वच्चिदात्मान्वितबुद्धियुक्ता-
 न्यक्षाणि वस्तून्यवभासयन्ति ॥

[54]

अबन्वितं तत्प्रतिबिम्बितं तद-
 न्तर्बहिः खं त्रिविधं तथात्मा ।
 बुद्धयन्वितस्तत्प्रतिबिम्बितश्च
 पूर्णस्तदैक्ये लयमेत्यविद्या ॥

[55]

सङ्गीतकर्यः खलु दारुनार्यः
 स्तम्भस्थसूत्रेण यथा चरन्ति ।
 सूत्रात्मनैवं कुरुते स्वकार्यं
 भूरादिकं लोकचतुष्टयं च ॥

[56]

यत्प्राणदिग्ब्योममुखं च सत्यं
 तल्लीयते ब्रह्मणि सत्यसत्ये ।
 ब्रह्मापरं सत्यमुपाधियुक्तं
 तस्यापि सत्यं निरुपाधिकं तत् ॥

[57]

शुकत्यादिसत्याश्रयणेन मिथ्या
 रूप्यादि सत्याभमिदं भ्रमे हि ।
 ब्रह्मात्मसत्याश्रयणाज्जगच्च
 मिथ्यापि सत्यं व्यवहारकाले ॥

[58]

सूत्रं विराट् दिग् गगनं च कालः
 सर्वेऽर्णवाभा यत आविरासन् ।
 तद् ब्रह्म पूर्णप्रलयार्णवाभं
 पूर्णाच्च पूर्णं महतो महच्च ॥

[59]

सर्वौषधीनां जलदाम्बु चैकं
 करोति नानारसगन्धपाकान् ।
 रूपैस्तथाब्दानलभूमिमुख्यै-
 रेकोऽन्तरात्मा सुविचित्रकार्यः ॥

[60]

भूतानि चात्मन्यथ तेषु चात्मा
 पाथस्तरङ्गान्वयवत् तदस्ति ।
 तत् सर्वमात्मेति बुधः प्रपश्ये-
 ज्ञाना तु पश्यन्निह मृत्युमेति ॥

[61]

खमस्ति पूर्वं कलशात् परं च
 जाते विनष्टे कलशे तथापि ।
 जातं विनष्टं खमिति प्रतीति-
 मिथ्या तथात्मा प्रतिभासते च ॥

[62]

गुडस्य पिण्डो मधुरः समग्रः
 कर्पूरखण्डो निखिलः सुगन्धिः ।
 चैतन्यमेकं सकलं च विश्वं
 ह्यात्मावशेषं भवतीति सिद्धम् ॥

[63]

आघातगम्यं त्विह नादभानं
 वाद्याद् भवत्ताद्ग्रहणानुविद्धम् ।
 ब्रह्मान्वितं मायिकविश्वभानं
 प्रत्यक्प्रतीतौ त्वितरन्न भाति ॥

(to be continued)

LAGHUŚATAŚLOKĪ

of

Ātmaidyābhūṣaṇam

V. S. V. Gurusvāmi Śāstri

(Contd. from Vol. IX, No. 2)

Free rendering in English

by

J. R. S. Vasani Ramanan

CHAPTER 1

Section 1.1

Problem 1

Let $f(x) = x^2 + 3x - 4$.

Problem 2

Let $f(x) = x^2 + 3x - 4$.

Problem 3

Let $f(x) = x^2 + 3x - 4$.

Problem 4

Let $f(x) = x^2 + 3x - 4$.

[34]

The object which is seen in the dream state (*svāpna*) is considered to be illusory because it is not to be seen in the waking state (*jāgrat*). Similarly, the objects which are seen in the waking state are also considered to be illusory. When it becomes clear that illusoriness is the nature of the objects that are seen both in the dream state (*prātibhāsika*) and in the waking state (*vyāvahārika*), a reasonable person should seek for the absolute Reality.

[35]

A man sees another man in his waking state as alive. The same man is seen as dead in his dream state. Similarly, the man who was seen as dead in the dream state is seen as alive in the waking state. Many people think that the world seen in the dream state is illusory because it is seen only for sometime and that the world seen in the waking state is real because the world in that state is seen for a longer time. This is incorrect. That which has an end or that which ceases to exist alone is said to be illusory. When this is the case of all the objects seen in the waking state, such objects cannot be considered as real.

[36]

When a person is asleep he dreams of enjoying a woman. Here, the man involved is real, but the enjoyment and the woman involved are unreal. At the same time, the effect of the enjoyment in the dream is also real. Similarly, the Ātman is real. *Māyā* or nescience and the relationship between *māyā* and the Ātman

are unreal. But, as a result of this relationship, the world which is born out of *avidyā* becomes unreal; it has been established here that the world appears to be real empirically and that, too, until Self-realization.

[37]

In the dream state (*svapna*) the Ātman without the help of any of the senses, creates various objects. In the waking state (*jāgrat*), the Ātman is at work with the help of the body, senses, etc. In the deep-sleep state (*susupti*) the Ātman is in the nature of bliss. When this is the nature of Ātman, people do not realize the truth but they understand only the multifaceted world, like a garden which would be full of colourful flowers and which is the creation of the Ātman.

[38]

A person, in his dream, sees that he had received the initiation (*mantropadeśa*) and that he had received the blessings of venerable people. In the morning when he wakes up, he realizes that his dream has come true. (In the *Śaṅkaravijaya*, it has been said that the Lord Śiva Himself incarnated as the son of Śrī Śivaguru, who later came to be called as Śrī Śaṅkara. Śivaguru had been worshipping the Lord Śiva who appeared in his dream. Similarly, it has been said in the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki that Śrī Lakṣmaṇa, in his dream was blessed by Kubera with an arrow, with the help of which he could kill Indrajit in the battle). From this, it becomes clear that the dream, even though it is illusory, sometimes becomes a matter of fact. Similarly, the knowledge of Ātman and the liberation become absolute Reality, even though the teachings

and the preceptor are considered to be illusory like a dream. In accordance with the principles of Advaita philosophy, it has been established here by citing the example of dream state (*svapna*) that the knowledge of the supreme Brahman and liberation are real and that the world is unreal.

IX. *The Greatness of Controlling Breath (Prāṇāyāma)*

[39]

It has been said in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* that in the deep-sleep state, the speech, the eyes, the ears, the mind, etc. merge in the *vyāṣṭi-vāyu* and the presiding deities of these senses viz. the Fire, the Moon, the Sun, etc. merge in the *samaṣṭi-vāyu*. The senses like speech, eyes, etc. become weary. But the main breath (*mukhya-prāṇa*) does not get tired. The deities, Agni, etc. merge in the Vāyu (air) and then they cease to exist. The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* says, 'The deity, Vāyu, never perishes.' So the controlling of breath (*prāṇāyāma*) becomes imperative for Self-realization. There is no parallel to this means.

X. *The Greatness of Detachment (Vairāgya)*

[40]

A person's attachment towards his wife, children, and wealth makes his mind become wet. That is why the fire of *jñāna* is not able to burn the mind. Only when the wood of mind becomes dry, with the help of detachment, which is like the Sun's rays, it will start burning with the fire of *jñāna*. A wet piece of wood does not burn, but a dry piece of wood catches fire quickly. Here, the greatness of detachment has been described which is based on the *śruti* text, "na karmaṇā

na prajayā dhanena tyāgenaike amṛtatvamānaśuḥ.” (Mahā-nārāyaṇopaniṣad)

[41]

Because of the supreme Being, this illusory world shines; the knowledge of the world is covered by the knowledge of the ultimate Reality. It is like this; the false knowledge, ‘this is snake’ which arises at first on seeing a rope disappears when there arises the knowledge that this is only a rope. In other words, the false knowledge later becomes covered by the true knowledge. Similarly, the illusory world must be covered by the true knowledge of Brahman. That is why the aspirants for liberation should annihilate the desire for accumulation of wealth, etc. Here the greatness of sacrifice has been described based on the text of the *Īśāvāsyaopaniṣad*, (1) “*tena tyaktena bhūñjīthāḥ.*”

[42]

The worldly bondage is due to the *ajñāna* which is called *māyā* or *avidyā*. This has the powers called *āvaraṇa* and *vikṣepa* and it is indescribable. An aspirant for liberation should endeavour to get release from the worldly bondage by constantly contemplating on the illusory nature of this world. He should practise detachment, control of breath, sacrifice, etc. continuously. Such practices get him the grace of the preceptor. As a result, he attains Self-realization. Thus, he attains *jīvanmuktī* at first. After his death, he attains *videha-muktī*.

The Nature of Liberation (Mumukṣutva)

[43]

The nature of liberation is of two kinds. They are *tīvra* and *manda*. The sages, Śuka, Vāmadeva and

others who can be called *tīvramumukṣus* attained liberation in the same birth without practising the *sādhana* or means. Indra, Śvetaketu and others who can be called *mandamumukṣus* attained liberation only after performing the *sādhana* gradually. (The next five verses describe the liberation attained by *tīvramumukṣus*.) One who has realized the Self, annihilates all the desires that are present in his mind in the form of residual impressions. He abandons egotism and is engrossed in the thought of Self. It should be noted that attaining *brahmarandhra* through *brahmanāḥi* is not called liberation. *Jīvanmukti* has been described here, on the basis of the text of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, “*yadā sarve pramucyante.*”

[44]

He who has realized the Self in this birth itself, lives in this world seeing only the supreme Brahman everywhere. He neither gets infatuation nor he becomes sorrowful. He never thinks of his body, mind or senses. He severs all sorts of connections from this world. He is not touched by either the merits (*punya*) or demerits (*pāpa*). He identifies himself with the supreme Reality which is full of bliss. Here, *jīvanmukti* has been described based on the text of the *Īśāvāsyopanīṣad*, “*yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtāni.*”

[45]

Even though the Ātman has been surrounded by the body, it does not attain either boyhood or youth-hood like the body. The Ātman is auspiciousness itself. It appears to be a *jīva* while it is associated with the main breath (*mukhya-prāṇa*). The aspirants for liberation (*mumukṣu*) make their *jīvātman* become one with

Brahman through the sharp and all-pervasive intellect. Thus they attain liberation.

[46]

One who has attained liberation (*jīvanmukta*) does not get attached to any of the objects other than the Ātman. As the liberated person has attained the all-pervasive Brahman, he is considered to have attained the fulfilment of all the desires. After experiencing the results of all his past actions (*prārabdha*), he dies. In fact, his body dies. At that time, his main breath (*mukhya-prāṇa*) and others merge with their causes. They do not enter into some other body and thus the liberated person does not get rebirth.

[47]

When the saltish water of the ocean is allowed to evaporate and when it is dried up, the crystalline forms that remain get the name of salt. The salt when put into pure water gets mixed up with water and loses its shape and the name salt is also lost. Similarly, when Paramātman (the supreme Self) becomes associated with the gross elements (*mahābhūta*) and the like, it gets the name, *jīvātman*. When those elements merge with their causes, it (*jīva*) becomes identical with Brahman.

XII. *Discussion on the Sheath of Knowledge (Vijñānamayakośa)*

[48]

The ghee which is present in the milk in a subtle form remains different from milk. Similarly, Paramātman (the supreme Self) which is all-pervasive,

indestructible, which is fearless and which is the abode of peace in the state of deep sleep is different from all the objects that we see in this world. All the objects in this world which are different from Paramātman disappear like the illusory silver that appears in the shell.

[49]

A cloth is nothing but the composition of threads that are sewn lengthwise and crosswise. Likewise, the world, comprising the human beings, animals, mountains, cities, etc., is a part of the cosmic Man (*Virāṭ-puruṣa*). That cosmic Man is connected to the *Sūtrātman* (having the nature of thread), the *Sūtrātman* to the elementary substance, space (*ākāśa*), and that space is linked to the imperishable Brahman.

[50]

Brahman which is all-pervasive is called *jīva*, when it is reflected in the substratum, *buddhi* (intellect). Though there is only one person standing on the bank of a river, there seems to be more than one person due to the reflection of his image in water. Similarly, even though Brahman is only one, it is seen to be more than one *jīva* (many *jīvas*) due to its reflection in the substratum, *buddhi*.

[51]

The reflection of the face of a person in a mirror depends on the shape of the mirror. If the mirror has some stain, it appears as if the face of the person also has some stain. But the fact is that the face of the person or the image has no stain at all. Likewise virtues or blemishes appear only in the *jīva* which is

only a reflection of Paramātman in *buddhi*. Neither virtues nor blemishes appear in the image, Paramātman.

[52]

The Sun who is seen in the sky is only one. When he is seen in the water of a lake, full of ripples, there appear hundreds of Suns. When the ripples move, the reflection of the Sun also moves. But the Sun in the sky who is the image (*bimba*) does not move. The characteristics of the substratum affect only the reflection (*pratibimba*) and not the image (*bimba*). Here the difference between the *jīva* and the Ātman has been established adopting the illustration of image and reflection.

[53]

The reflection of the Sun's light in the Moon results in the dispelling of darkness in this world. During daytime, the reflection of the Sun's light on a vessel made of bronze dispels the darkness around the vessel. Similarly, the light emanating from the Ātman gets reflected in the intellect (*buddhi*). This reflected light goes out through the senses and makes all the objects in the external world perceptible.

[54]

The space (*ākāśa*) appears to be of three kinds. They are: (i) the space that is vast, (ii) the space that constitutes water particles, and (iii) the reflection of the space in the water. Similarly, the all-pervasive *Pūrṇātmā*, the *Avacchinnātmā* which is limited by the intellect, and the *Pratibimbātmā* which is the reflection of the Ātman in the intellect are the three kinds of

Ātman that are considered to exist. When the truth, "The Ātman is only one," is realized, the ignorance and all other doubts disappear. Here, the difference between the *jīva* and *Īsvara* has been described following the theory of *avacchedavāda*.

[55]

Just as the insentient and wooden puppets, which are connected to a number of strings, act and dance to the tune of the director, in the same way, Param-ātman also has linked all the beings in this world and in the other divine worlds to the Sūtrātman. Thus all the beings do their duties.

[56]

The vital air (*prāṇa*), directions (*dik*), the ether (*ākāśa*), the time (*kāla*), etc. exist for a longer time than the earth. That is why these are said to be real. Since these objects merge in the supreme Brahman ultimately, Brahman is called "*satyasya satyam*". When the earth, water and fire which are called *sat*, and the air, ether, etc. which are called *tyat*, are combined together, it is called *apara-brahman* and this is considered to be real (*satya*). The supreme Brahman which is limitless and which is the supporting principle of the *satya* has been described as *satyasatya*. The substance here is that there is no other greater all-pervading principle than the supreme Brahman.

[57]

The illusory object in this world shines only due to the existence of the real object, *viz.*, Brahman. The apprehension of the illusory silver and the illusory

snake on seeing the shell and the rope respectively, is due to the presence of the real shell and the real rope. Similarly, this illusory world is apprehended by us as real at the empirical level, and this is due to the existence of the world's substratum, the supreme Brahman.

[58]

The directions, ether, time, etc. (which have originated from *Virāt*) and the *Sūtrātmān* (which is the origin of this *Virāt*) are like a vast ocean. All these have originated from the very large Brahman. This is like an ocean, which would be smaller as compared to the vast sheet of water at the time of deluge. Likewise the supreme Brahman is the largest when compared to the *Virāt* and *Sūtrātmān* which are already huge in size.

[59]

The same rain water that emanates from the clouds reaches all sorts of plants and the result is that these plants serve different purposes, create different tastes and give out different kinds of fragrance. Similarly, the Ātman, who is omnipotent, taking the forms of cloud, fire, earth, etc. performs the duties of raining cooking food, bearing the burden of the earth and so on. The substance here is that the Ātman is all-pervasive.

[60]

The water in the ocean is full of waves and the waves are full of water. Likewise, there is the presence of the Ātman in all the objects in the world and all the objects in the world are present in the same Ātman. Therefore, a knowledgeable person

should realize that there is only one supreme Brahman, which is unique and which is called the Ātman. He who realizes that Brahman is multifarious, revolves in the cycle of birth and death.

[61]

Even though the people possess the knowledge that the space (*ākāśa*) exists before the manufacture of a pot and after its destruction, somehow, they develop the false-knowledge that the space comes into existence only when a pot is created and it is destroyed when the pot is destroyed. Likewise it appears that the Ātman comes into existence along with the body and disappears along with it, even though the truth is that the Ātman exists for ever.

[62]

Whatever may be the size of a piece of jaggery, even the last particle of it is sweet. Like this, the camphor emits fragrance even when it is very small in size. Similarly, the world as a whole is Consciousness itself. Since Consciousness alone exists even after the destruction of the entire world, it must be construed that Consciousness alone exists when the world exists.

[63]

Sound is produced by beating the drums like *dundubhi* and others. This sound, when heard is identified with the drum called *dundubhi*. Similarly, the world, which is the effect of *māyā* appears to be identical with Brahman. The supreme Brahman is the primary cause for the creation of this world. If the true nature of Brahman is understood, then the world which is illusory will disappear.

[64]

So far, it has been explained that Brahman is God of the entire world, that He is of the form of knowledge and that He is omnipotent. It has been explained that this world, which is different from Brahman is illusory. So every human being in this world should remain detached, and should always think, "I am Brahman."

XIII. *Discussion on the Sheath of Bliss (Ānandamayakośa)*

[65]

In the state of deep sleep, all the senses along with the intellect and the elements remain hidden. At that time, the Ātman which is of the nature of bliss alone shines. In this condition, the *jīva* does not experience anything other than bliss. No one should try to wake up the person forcibly who is in deep sleep. If such persons are woken up then the senses eye, ear, etc. which take rest in deep sleep may go berserk and as a result the person may become blind or deaf. Later he may become incurable.

[66]

All the people who are in the state of deep sleep experience happiness or bliss alone. During that period the differences like human beings, animals, birds, and creatures, rich, poor, etc. do not exist. This is only due to the association of *jīvas* with Paramātmān. But the same person when he is in the waking state does not think of deep sleep, goes in search of food to quench his hunger, becomes a slave to his senses, and at last experiences grief after committing sinful acts.

(to be continued)

ABOUT THE PUBLISHERS

The Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre was established in 1975 under the guidance and with the blessings of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of Kāñcī Kāmakōṭi Pīṭha. The main objectives of the Centre, among other things, are:

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

THE VOICE OF ŚAṅKARA (ŚAṅKARA BHARATĪ) is the quarterly journal published by the Centre in pursuance of its many objectives.

The following are its office-bearers:—

President:

Sri V. D. Swami

Vice-Presidents:

Sri V. Gauri Shankar

Sri S. V. S. Raghavan

Sri P. R. Ramasubrahmaniya Rajah

Sri S. V. Narasimhan

Secretary:

Sri N. C. Krishnan

Jt. Secretary-cum-Treasurer:

Sri S. Chandran

Editor: N. C. Krishnan. Published by: S. Chandran on behalf of Ādi Śaṅkara Advaita Research Centre, 1-E, Rosewood Offices, Nungambakkam High Road, Madras-600 034. Printed by: V. Seshachalam, Avvai Achukkoodam, Madras-600 013.

संसाराध्वनि तापभानुकिरणप्रोद्भूतदाहव्यथा-

खिन्नानां जलकांक्षया मरुभुवि भ्रान्त्या परिभ्राम्यताम् ।

अत्यासन्नसुधाम्बुधिं सुखकरं ब्रह्माद्वयं दर्शय-

त्पेषा शङ्करभारती विजयते निर्वाणसन्दायिनी ॥

*saṁsārādhvani tāpabhānukiraṇaprodhbhūtadāhavyathā-
khinnānām jalakāṅksayā marubhuvi bhrāntyā
paribhrāmyatām
atyāsannasudhāmbudhiṁ sukhakaraṁ brahmādvayaṁ
darśayaty-
eṣā śaṅkarabhārati vijayate nirvāṇasandāyini.*

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.