

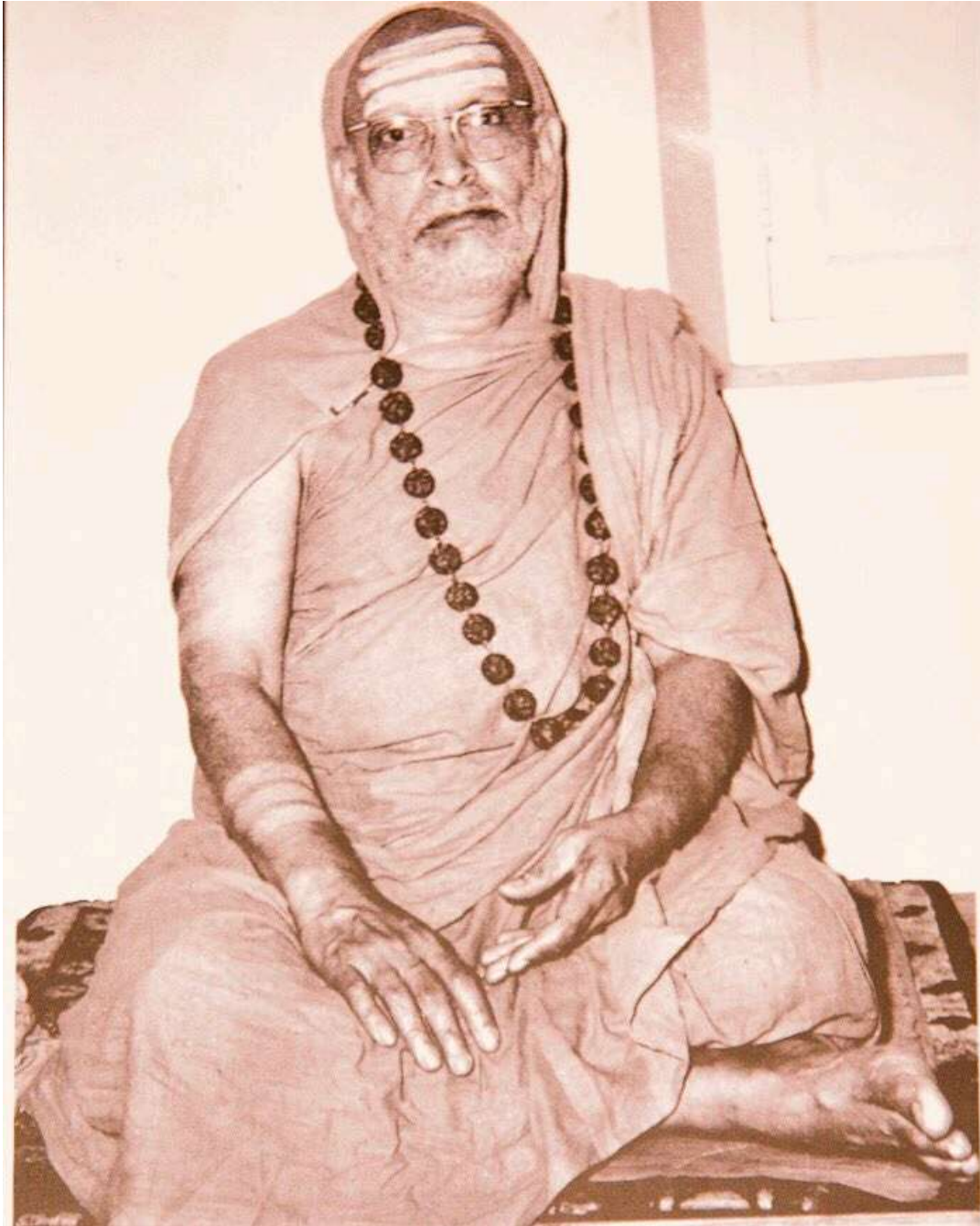


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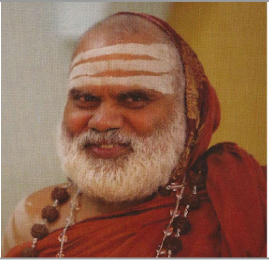
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Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji (1917-2017)

## **SPECIAL SOUVENIR - PEERLESS YOGIN OF PAR EXCELLENCE.**

We submit our efforts at the Lotus feet of Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāswāmiji and Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Sannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī Mahāswāmiji

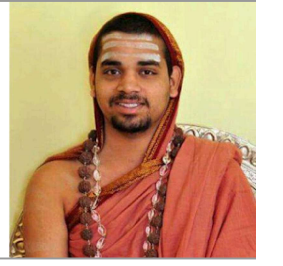


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## ॥ श्रीगुरुवन्दनम् ॥

श्रीगुरुभ्यो नमः

शङ्कररूपेण मच्चित्तं पङ्कीकृतमभूद्यया ।  
 किङ्करी यस्य सा माया शङ्कराचार्यमाश्रये ॥  
 प्रह्लादवरदो देवो यो नृसिंहः परो हरिः ।  
 नृसिंहोपासकं नित्यं तं नृसिंहगुरुं भजे ॥  
 श्रीसच्चिदानन्दशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारत्यभिधान् यतीन्द्रान् ।  
 विद्यानिधीन् मन्त्रनिधीन् सदात्मनिष्ठान् भजे मानवशम्भुरूपान् ॥  
 सदात्मध्याननिरतं विषयेभ्यः पराङ्मुखम् ।  
 नौमि शास्त्रेषु निष्णातं चन्द्रशेखरभारतीम् ॥  
 विवेकिनं महाप्रज्ञं धैर्यौदार्यक्षमानिधिम् ।  
 सदाभिनवपूर्वं तं विद्यातीर्थगुरुं भजे ॥  
 अज्ञानां जाह्नवीतीर्थं विद्यातीर्थं विवेकिनाम् ।  
 सर्वेषां सुखदं तीर्थं भारतीतीर्थमाश्रये ॥  
 विद्याविनयसम्पन्नं वीतरागं विवेकिनम् ।  
 वन्दे वेदान्ततत्त्वज्ञं विधुशेखरभारतीम् ॥  
 पञ्चाशल्लिपिभिर्विभक्तमुखदोः पन्मध्यवक्षस्थलां  
 भास्वन्मौलिनिबद्धचन्द्रशकलामापीनतुङ्गस्तनीम् ।  
 मुद्रामक्षगुणं सुधाढ्यकलशं विद्याञ्च हस्ताम्बुजैः  
 बिभ्राणां विशदप्रभां त्रिनयनां वाग्देवतामाश्रये ॥

श्रीमत्परमहंस-परिव्राजकाचार्यवर्य-पदवाक्यप्रमाणपारावारपारीण-यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधार  
 णाध्यानसमाध्यष्टाङ्गयोगानुष्ठाननिष्ठ-तपश्चक्रवर्ति-अनाद्यविच्छिन्नश्रीशङ्कराचार्यगुरुपरंपराप्राप्त-षड्दर्शन  
 स्थापनाचार्य-व्याख्यानसिंहासनाधीश्वर-सकलनिगमागमसारहृदय-सांख्यत्रयप्रतिपादक-वैदिकमार्गप्रवर्त  
 क-सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्र-आदिराजधानी-विद्यानगरमहाराजधानी-कर्णाटकसिंहासनप्रतिष्ठापनाचार्य-श्रीमद्राजा  
 धिराजगुरु-भूमण्डलाचार्य-ऋष्यशृङ्गपुरवराधीश्वर-तुङ्गभद्रातीरवासि-श्रीमद्विद्याशङ्करपादपद्माराधक-

श्रीमज्जगद्गुरु-श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थमहास्वामिगुरुकरकमलसञ्जात-

श्रीमज्जगद्गुरु-श्रीभारतीतीर्थमहास्वामिनां-

तत्करकमलसञ्जात-श्रीमज्जगद्गुरु-श्रीविधुशेखरभारतीमहास्वामिनां च

चरणारविन्दयोः साष्टाङ्गप्रणामान् समर्पयामः ॥

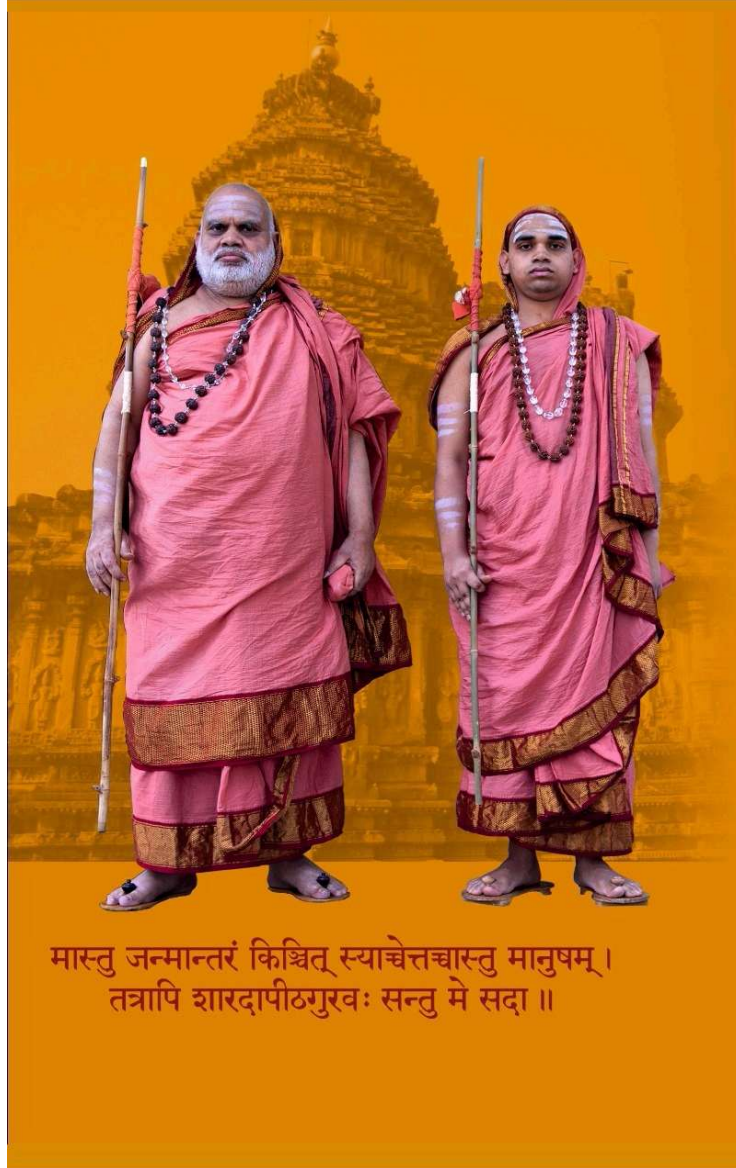
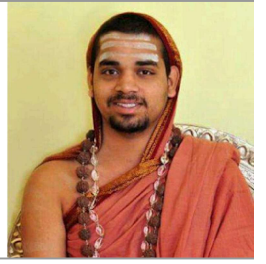


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मास्तु जन्मान्तरं किञ्चित् स्याच्चेत्तच्चास्तु मानुषम् ।  
तत्रापि शारदापीठगुरवः सन्तु मे सदा ॥

**A Souvenir most respectfully laid at the Holy Paduka of  
His Holiness**

**Sri Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya Mahasannidhanam  
Sri Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamigal**

**And**

**His Holiness Sri Jagadguru Sri Shankaracharya Sannidhanam  
Sri Sri Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamigal.**



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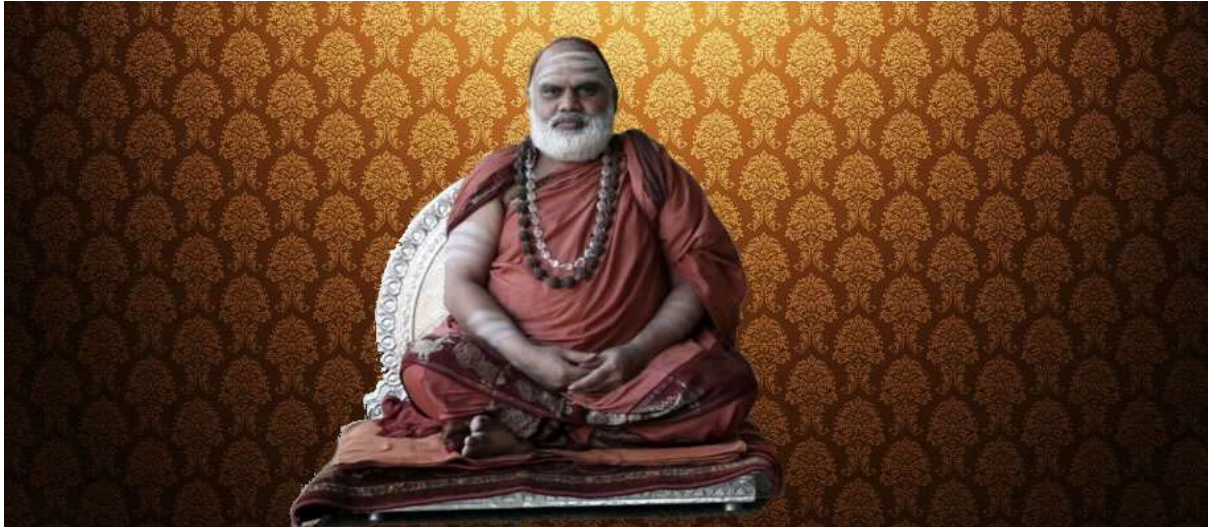
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## ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM

### NEVER TAKE AWAY WHAT IS GIVEN

It is generally a sin to take back something given to a person. More so, to deprive a Brahmana of what is given, is a greater sin. There is a story in Srimad Bhagavatam concerning this.



Once there was a king named Nruga. He was a stickler to Dharma. He used to gift a number of cows to Brahmanas. At one time, a cow he gifted to a Brahmana happened to be the same given to another Brahmana on an earlier occasion. It had somehow got mixed up with the new lot. However, the king did not know this.

After the gift was made, the Brahmana to whom the cow had originally been given claimed that it belonged to him. The other Brahmana, who received the gift just then, also started claiming equally that now it belonged to him.

The king told the Brahmanas that he would give more cows to both and requested them to give up quarrelling. But they did not heed this.

A few days later, the king died. In view of the sin of his taking away a Brahmana's property, though unknowingly, he was born as a large python in a big well.

One day, Lord Krishna's children, who had come to play there, saw the snake and tried to bring it out. They could not. They told their father about this. Krishna pulled out the snake in no time. On account of Krishna's touch, the snake was redeemed from the curse and regained the original form of a man. Asked how he had become a snake, he narrated his story to Krishna.

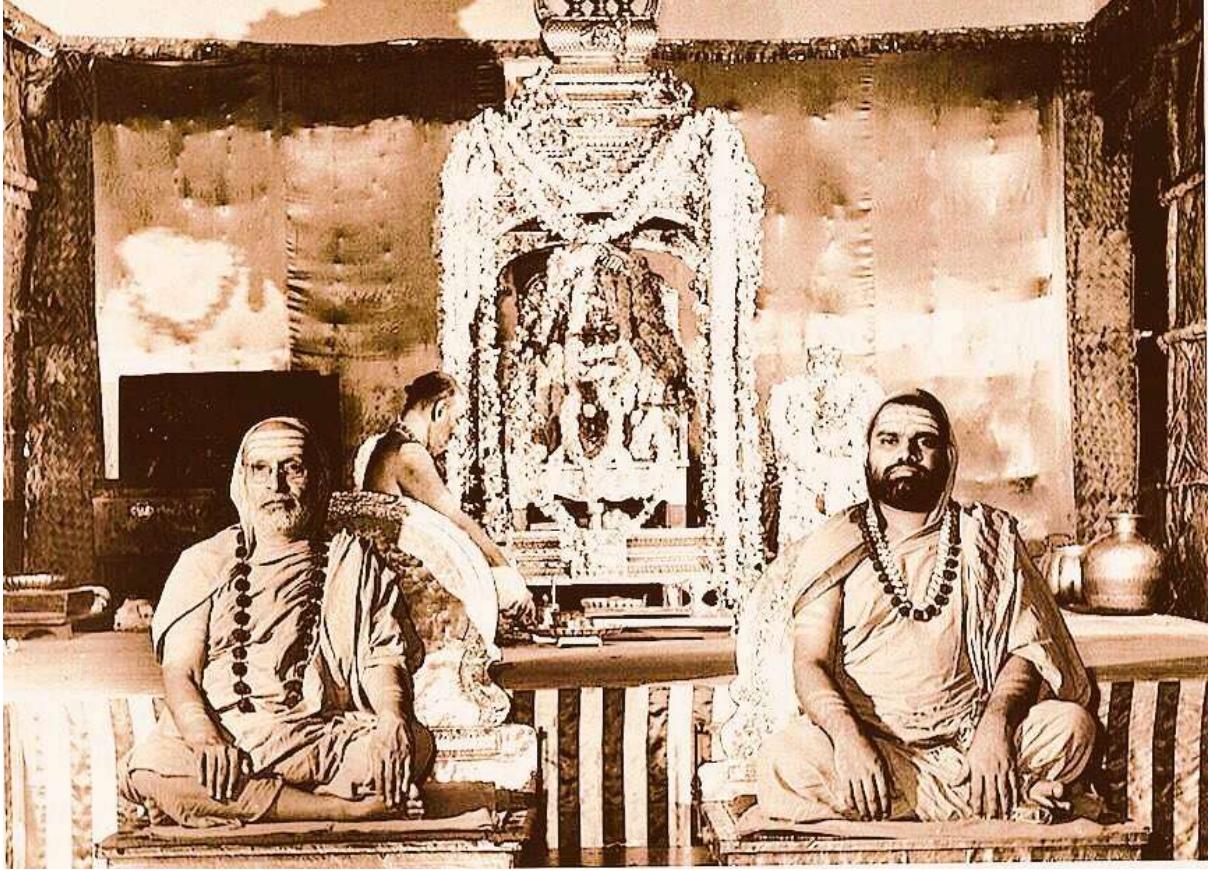
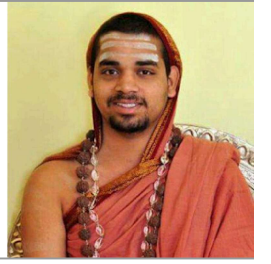


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(Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Jeṣṭha Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji and Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Bhāratī Tirtha Mahāswāmiji)

On hearing this, Krishna called His people and ordered that under no circumstance, one should take back what is gifted to a Brahmana.

Hence, it is clear that no one should take back what is once given to someone.

ब्राह्मणार्थो ह्यपहतो हर्तारं पातयत्यधः ।

अजानन्तमपि ह्येनं नृगं ब्राह्मणगौरिव ॥

brāhmaṇārthō hyapahr̥tō hartāraṃ pātayatyadhah |

ajānantamapi hyēnaṃ nṛgaṃ brāhmaṇagauriva ||

--- Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Mahāsannidhānam Śrī Śrī Śrī Bhāratī Tirtha Mahāswāmiji



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## WORSHIP OF ĪŚVARA

People desire to escape death. But experience shows that this desire is not fulfilled. The Lord has said: "For anyone who is born, death is definite and for the one who dies, rebirth is certain. Hence, with regard to what is unavoidable, you ought not to grieve."



We have been born now. The Lord speaks of rebirth. If there is to be a rebirth in future, death must occur first. The exit of the prāṇas (life-breaths) from the body is said to be death. While we do not want our prāṇas to leave the body, in whose case will there actually be no departure of the prāṇas from the present body and entry into another body? The Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad says: "The enlightened one's prāṇas do not depart from the body," and "They dissolve into him alone."

In the case of a jñānin, the one who has realized the Supreme, the subtle body comprising the mind, organs and the prāṇas does not depart from the gross body and proceed to another body. Instead, the earth, water, fire, air and ākāśa that constitute the body dissolve into their respective universal forms. The Veda asserts that there is no death for a jñānin : "It is only on knowing Him that one transcends death". He who is without death cannot have any rebirth. Statements such as, "Birth, death and dwelling in the mother's womb occur again and again," are not applicable to a jñānin. So, if people are to

fulfill their desire for freedom from death, it is imperative that they acquire jñāna, the realization of the Truth. For this, it is necessary that they secure the means for the dawn of realization.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad teaches: "The Ātman, my dear, should be realized, heard of, reflected on and firmly meditated upon." Thus, the proximate means to realize the Ātman, which is none other than Brahman, are śravaṇa - the hearing of the Truth from the Guru and the scripture, manana - reasoning in accordance with what has been taught to resolve all doubts and nididhyāsana - steadfast, one-pointed concentration of the mind on the Ātman. A tetrad of qualifications is needed for one to engage in śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana. These are viveka, discrimination, vairāgya, dispassion, śamādiṣaṭka sampatti, a valuable set of six beginning with mind control, and mumukṣutva, the desire for freedom from transmigratory existence. The hexad referred to comprises śama (the control of mind), dama (the control of the senses), uparati (withdrawal from activities), titikṣā (forbearance) and samādhāna (focus). If the four qualifications



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are not present in a person, his attempt at śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana will not bear fruit in the form of the dawn of the realization of the Supreme. Just as upanayana (investiture with the sacred thread) is a prerequisite for a person to perform a Vedic-yāga, these four qualifications are needed here. However, they are uncommon.

What is one who is not yet qualified to engage in śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana to do? It is said: "Since our mind has not withdrawn from the world in its entirety, we cannot practice śravaṇa and manana. However, the anguish caused by sense objects is unbearable. To end it, we practice the worship of God's feet." Bhakti is what should be resorted to.

## THE NATURE OF DEVOTION.

By nature, we are emotionally involved with something or the other. It is said: "A child is engrossed with play. A lad dotes on a maiden. An aged one is given to worrying. But none is attached to the Supreme Brahman." It is patent that we are not free from attachments at any time and that it would be well-nigh impossible for us to give up fondness altogether. However, what we can do is to turn our fondness towards the Lord; if we do so, we will benefit greatly. Fondness is a vṛtti of the mind; it needs an object and cannot subsist without one. The emotional pull towards children is called 'vātsalya', that towards the wife is named 'rati' and that towards the revered is termed 'bhakti'.



Nārada has defined bhakti thus in his Bhakti-sūtras: "Bhakti is of the nature of supreme love for God." A devotee with this 'parama-prema, supreme love' just cannot exist without God; he who can manage for even a moment without love for God does not have this parama-prema. Such is the characteristic of consummate bhakti. A devotee with this bhakti attains God and transcends dotage and death.

According to the Taittiriya-upaniṣad, the intrinsic nature of God is as follows: "Bhraman is absolute existence, pure consciousness and unlimited by space, time and objects." The supreme is, thus, nirguṇa, bereft of qualities. The good qualities of an entity engender fondness for that entity. As God is without qualities, how is one to love Him? The supreme, though intrinsically devoid of qualities, appears with wonderful qualities that thoroughly facilitate devotion. The Lord

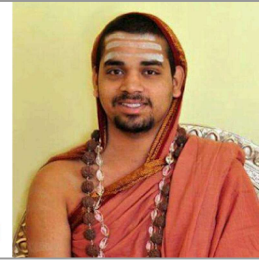


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has said: "Though I am without birth, have, any nature, a power of knowledge that never wanes and am the Lord of beings, by subjugating My Prakṛi, I take birth by My own Māyā." The veda teaches, "He that is unborn manifests in many ways." Thus, it must be accepted that God



incarnates. His incarnations are His captivating sorts. Why does the Lord incarnate? He does so far the sake of benefitting beings. It is said: "Having compared the weights of helpfulness to others and abidance in absoluteness and concluded that helping others is the weightier of the two, the Lord incarnated ten times." It is also said, "Fie upon the life of one who helps none. May animals live; even their skins are useful." The life of the person who helps none is a sheer waste; an animal is much better than him for it is useful even after its death. As for the Lord, He is the embodiment of kindness.

Here is an example from the Mahābhārata of His kindness. Kṛṣṇa was in His palace at Dvārakā. At that time, in Hastināpura, in keeping with Duryodhana's instruction, Duśśāsana dragged Draupadī from her private quarters to the hall and started disrobing her to shame her. Being greatly devoted to Kṛṣṇa, she devoted to kṛṣṇa, she cried out to Him for succor: "Alas! O Kṛṣṇa! O Resident of Dvārakā! O Delighter of the Yādavas! Where are you? Why are You ignoring me, who have attained this state, with nobody to protect me?" The Lord's heart melted. He did not give thought to any possible inconvenience. He

did wait to inform anybody. He immediately went to Draupadī and saved her honour in an extraordinary manner. Yet, such was His compassion that He did for her and later stated: "Sobbing, 'O Govinda', Draupadī invoked Me, who was afar. So, My debt to her is great and does not leave My heart."

Referring to the captivating qualities of the Lord, the Bhāgavata-purāṇa points out, "Even sages who revel only in the Ātman and are free from all bonds (or, have given up even the study of texts) are devoted to God without any expectation whatsoever. Such are the excellent qualities of God." A prayer of Bhagavatpāda is, "What am I to make known to You, who are skilled in giving devotees with what they lack and preserving what they have, who are intent of bestowing all good on devotees, who impart knowledge about the means to desired seen and unseen ends, who pervade everything from within and without, who are omniscient and are merciful? O Śambhu! I constantly bear in mind that You are my inmost self." The Lord's lovely nature is indeed of the kind portrayed in the verses referred to. Intense, steady love for God is the bhakti specified earlier. A name for it is 'sādhya bhakti, accomplished devotion'. There are nine devotional practices that lead to it. We

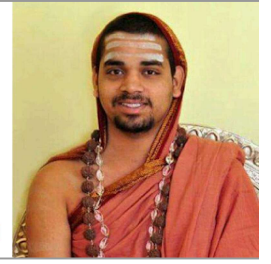


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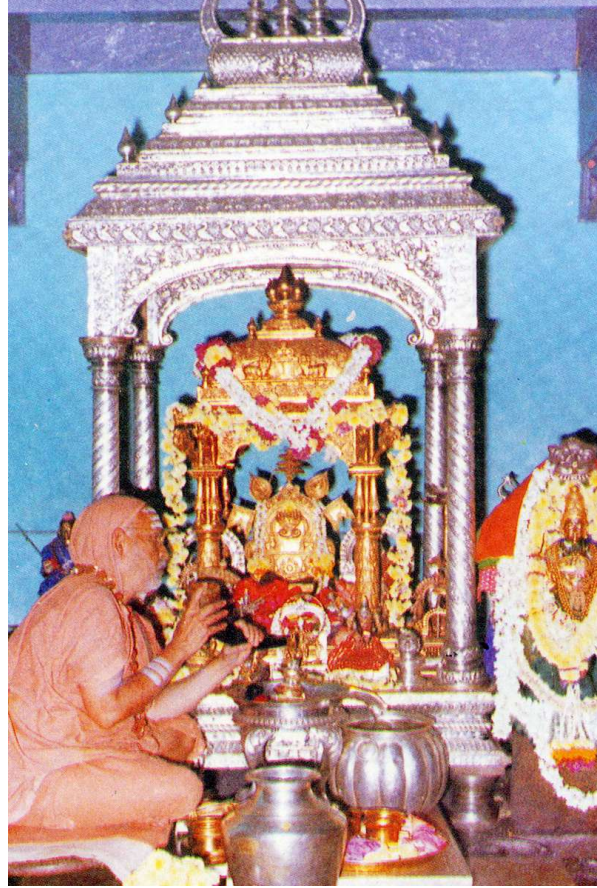
call even these as bhakti; this term is used in the scripture to refer to accomplished devotion and, secondarily, to the means to it. Prahlada said, according to Bhāgavata-purāṇa, “Hearing about the greatness of the Lord, praising Him, thinking of Him, waiting upon Him, worshipping Him, paying obeisance to Him, being His servant, looking upon oneself as His friend and dedicating oneself to Him-if devotion to God, which has these nine forms, is practiced by a person without any expectation right from the moment he is taught about it, that I deem to be the best learning.”

Faithfully listening to the exposition of works, such as the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, that highlight the greatness of God is called ‘śravaṇa’ (the first of the nine means). Such hearing engenders affection towards God. We, however, squander our precious time now on worthless matters. By doing so, we are not going to attain any good in this world or the next. On the contrary, if we turn to works about God such as the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, we would not only develop devotion to the Lord but also learn lives meaningfully and about the actual insipidity of worldly pleasures.

Various spiritual practices have been specified in the scriptures for us to attain what is truly good. While it is difficult in the kali-yuga, the present age, for people duly resort to these, one of them, ‘kīrtana’ (the second of the nine means), is indeed easy and effective. Chanting the names of the Lord is included in this. The Viṣṇu-purāṇa points out, “What a person attains in the kṛta-yuga by meditation, in the tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices and in the dvāpara-yuga by worship, he attains in the kali-yuga by chanting the names of the Lord.”

As the yugas passed, human ability kept decreasing and, so, people resorted to simpler and simpler means. However, what has to be finally achieved has not changed and we must never lose sight of it.

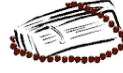
‘Kīrtana’ refers not only to the singing of bhajans but also to the performance of the japa of a mantra into which one has been initiated. According to the Manu-smṛti, “A brāhmaṇa attains perfection through japa itself. There is no doubt regarding this. He may or may not engage in tites and such else. He who is the friend of beings (as japa does not involve causing injury to anyone) is said to be connected with the Supreme.” It is said in the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, “There is, O king, a great merit in the kali-yuga, a store house of defects. One gets freed from attachment and reaches the Supreme just by praising God.” From this it is apparent that if we keep engaging in kīrtana, we will become freed from worldly bonds. However, though engaging in kīrtana, we should never be





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negligent of our scripturally-ordained duties. If we do not do our duties, our chanting of the Lord's names and mantra-japa will not duly fructify.

Dereliction of duties is regarded as a 'nāmāparādha', an offence relating to the chanting of the Lord's names. It is said: "(i) Finding fault with noble persons. (ii) Preaching the greatness of God's name to the wicked. (iii) Regarding Śiva and Viṣṇu as distinct from one another. (iv-vi) Lack of faith in the words of the Vedas, śāstras and the Guru. (vii) Having the delusion that we have been taught about the greatness of God is not factual. (viii-ix) Indulging in what is forbidden and giving up what prescribed as obligatory by the scriptures under the belief that as the divine name is there, these acts of commission and omission do not matter. (x) Equating the chanting of the names of



Śiva and Viṣṇu with other dharmas. These are the ten nāmāparādhas, offences relating to the chanting of the Lord's names." It is said, "The Lord should be constantly praised (by the chanting of His names) by one who is humbler than a blade of grass, is more patient than a tree, gives respect to others and is free from egoism."

The third means spoken of is 'smaraṇa - keeping God in mind'. A teaching contained in the Yoga-sūtras is: "Repetition of Om (the name of God) and meditation on what it signifies (result in the practitioner's mind becoming one-pointed)." Lord Kṛṣṇa has averred: "To those persons who are ever attached to Me and meditative, worship Me everywhere, I provide what they lack and preserve what they have." According to the Bhāgavata-purāṇa, "With peacock feathers as a diadem and karṇikāra flowers behind his ears, wearing a yellow vestment and donning the vaijayanṭī garland, Kṛṣṇa, who had the form of an expert dancer, whose praises were sung by the gopis and who was filling the stops of His flute with the nectar of His lips, entered Vṛndāvana, rendering it lovely with His footprints." One could contemplate thus on Íśvara; the term 'smaraṇa'

covers contemplation on God.

The next form of bhakti that is spoken of is 'pāda-sevana - serving the lotus feet of the Lord'. Waiting upon the Lord's manifestations and bathing in holy rivers such as Gangā, which is said to have come from the feet of God, and the Yamunā, in which Kṛṣṇa sported, are included in this form of devotion.

'Arcana - worship' is the next form of bhakti. Íśvara's idols should be worshipped as specified in the scriptures. Pūjā should not be performed to those idols in which 'prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā, the invocation of the presence of God' has not been done. It is said: "Idols in which prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā has not been performed remain without sanctity. There is no godhood in just gold and the like." A person fondly



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identifies with his picture. God is especially present in an idol of His in which 'prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā has been performed.

A question may arise: Why should pūjā be done to an idol even though God is omnipresent? A veterinarian may prescribe that something be mixed with ghee and given to an ailing cow. It will not do if it is given to the cow unmixed with ghee on the ground that ghee is only a product of milk and plentiful milk is already present within the cow. Likewise, though God is present everywhere; He confers special blessings when He is worshipped in a duly consecrated idol. What is to be



done if there is no idol with us or we lack the capacity to do idol-worship ourselves? My Guru (Jagadguru Śrī Chandraśekhara Bharatī Mahāsvāmin) has said that one could well go to a temple and worship God there.

Worshipping the Lord is actually very easy. The Lord has said, "Whoever offers a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water to Me with devotion – that devout offering made by the pure-minded person, I accept." The Mṛtyuñjaya mānasapūjā-stotra (Hymn on the Mental Worship of Śiva), Devī-mānasapūjā-stotra (Hymn on the Mental Worship of Devī), etc., have been composed to bless us with guidance on worshipping God mentally, even without any physical item of worship.

'Vandana – prostration' is spoken of next. It does form a part of pūjā. Nonetheless, nothing that Ívara is present everywhere, prostrations can be submitted to Him at any-time, physically, verbally or mentally. This is admitted as 'vandana' in devotional literature. Seeing the cosmic form of the Lord, Arjuna offered his prostrations to God, saying, "Prostration to you in the eastern direction and in the western direction. O All! Prostrations to You on all sides."



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The next form of bhakti is 'dāsya – viewing oneself as God's servant'. The Lord has declared, "The Veda and the smṛti are My commands." Hence, we should treat the śruti and the smṛti as His commands and carry out with faith what is prescribed for us. Further, we should dedicate everything to God in keeping with His instruction, "O son of Kuntī! Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give and whatever penance you perform – do all that as an offering to Me." A prayer for dāsya is, " O Paramaśiva! You may roam about in the crematorium or in a place beyond the world or in Kailāsa or on the peak of the Meru Mountain. But please keep Me near You and make me a servant of Your servitors."



The next form of bhakti that has been spoken of is 'sakhya – viewing oneself as God's friend'. When we persist with such devotion, our attachment to Ívara becomes stronger and stronger. We do not fear a close friend; for his part, he wants and helps us to be happy. This is seen even in the relationship of friendship between a devotee and God.

Lastly, we have 'ātma-nivedana – the complete offering up of oneself to God': it culminates in the knowledge that we are not separate entities but are none other than the Supreme. After a river merges with the ocean, it has no distinct identity of its own; that which was the river becomes the ocean and the ocean alone remains. One who attains absolute merger with the Supreme thereafter remains as just the Supreme.

The Lord has emphatically said in the Bhagavadgītā, "O scion of the Bharata dynasty! Seek refuge in Him with all your being. By His grace you will attain supreme peace and the eternal anode." Moreover, the view of the sages is: "Always thinking about It, talking about It, teaching each other about It, and being completely intent upon It – the wise

regard this as the practice of the knowledge of the Supreme."

We should dedicate everything to God and be without any worry. If we do so, the Lord Himself will fully take care of us; He will provide us what we lack and preserve what we have. He will give the realization of the Supreme too. The deathlessness that we desire would then be ours. Attaining God is alone the ultimate and the highest good.

{This essay was written by Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Śrī Abhinava Vidyatīrta Mahāswāmiji to His Holiness setting out on His first tour, in March 1956 in Kannada.}

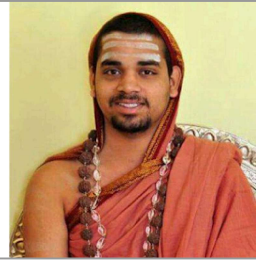


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## HARMFULNESS OF ANGER

Śankara and Hari were resident students of Sanskrit literature at a pāṭhaśālā. They shared a room along with two others. It was paurṇamī. There were no classes that day and the students were in their rooms. Śankara was seated in his corner reading the portion of Kālidasa's Raghuvamśa that his preceptor had taught a couple of days earlier. Hari and his two roommates were chatting.

**Hari** : Have you heard of any elephant that is terrified of rats and which jumps, runs and creates an earthquake on seeing one.

**Companions** : No.

**Hari** : I know of one. Śankara is that elephant. He is so fat that he weighs as much as a pachyderm. He is mortally scared of rats.



Yesterday evening, when he was seated under the aśvattha tree, a rat passed by. Our elephant jumped up and ran. He tripped on a banana peel and fell. There was a minor earthquake. Poor Mother Earth! What a blow she received!

Hari burst out laughing and so did his friends. Śankara, who heard all that was said, lost his temper. His face red and his breathing shallow, he vituperate Hari and called his names. Hari turned and walked out of the room. After a few minutes, Śankara's other two room-mates went out to attend some work.

The moment they left, Śankara tiptoed to Hari's corner, picked up Hari's Raghuvamśa book, hid it and resumed his seat. Hari entered. He appeared upset on not finding his book but did not say anything. He automatically assumed that Śankara was the culprit. So, when Śankara went to answer the call of nature, Hari brought a vessel of water and threw it on Śankara's bedding. Śankara did not realize what had happened when he returned.

A teacher who taught Hari and Śankara had observed from the hall all that had transpired. He entered the room. The two boys prostrated before him. He sat down and asked them also to do so. Then he told them a story.

**Teacher** : On a wintry night, a person was sleeping with a blanket pulled over him for warmth. He woke up when he felt something moving on the blanket, near his ankles. In the dim light, he was able to make out the figure of a rat. Without a second thought, he picked up a bottle containing water that was by his side and hurled it towards the rodent. The bottle grazed the rat's tail, struck

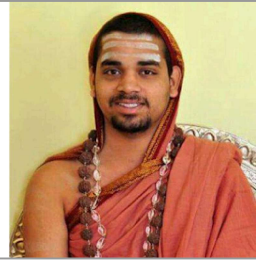


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the man's feet and broke. He yelled in pain; his bedding became wet. He cursed the rat and looked around for it. He found that it was hiding in a corner, not far from him. Wanting to terminate the rat's life, he swung his arm swiftly and succeeded in catching the rodent by its tail. Desperate to escape, the rat bit him. Feeling sharp pain, he relaxed his grip. The rat scurried away. Well, Śankara, what do you think of the man?

**Śankara** : He was a thorough fool.

**Teacher** : Why do you say so?

**Śankara** : The man tried to kill the rat with a bottle, which was certainly not appropriate for the purpose. He did not realize that he would be hurting himself by his action and that he would be unable to sleep comfortably thereafter because his bedding would get wet. Catching the rat by its tail was a stupid thing to do, for he virtually forced the rat to bite him.

**Teacher**: When Hari made fun of you, you could have laughed at yourself. Alternatively, you could have let the matter rest, thinking, "I am fat. It is also true that I am scared of rats and that, yesterday on seeing a rat, I jumped up, ran and fell. Sarcastic embellishments apart, Hari's narrative is not false." Instead, you lost your temper. Just as the rat disturbed the man and wet his bedding. Your anger too affected you in two ways.



**Śankara** : How?

**Teacher** : Did you mean all the things that you told Hari in anger?

**Śankara** : No, I was so excited that I could not think rationally and choose my words then.

**Teacher** : The ability to think logically and act sensibly is a very valuable asset of humans. You temporarily lost that ability. Did you not?

**Śankara** : I admit I did.

**Teacher** : That was a major, immediate setback for you just as the blow on the feet was for the man. After you snapped at Hari, you tried to continue with your studies. Were you concentrate as before?

**Śankara** : For some time, I could not. My mind was agitated and the thought that Hari had humiliated me in the presence of my friends kept recurring.

**Teacher** : Just as the man was unable to sleep in comfort that night because of the wetness of his bed, you were unable to attend to your studies for some time because of your mental agitation. The man did not realize the consequences of his hurling the bottle. He only thought he was going to get rid of the rat. You did not think of the consequences of your anger. You only thought of putting Hari in his place. Do you agree?

**Śankara** : Yes.

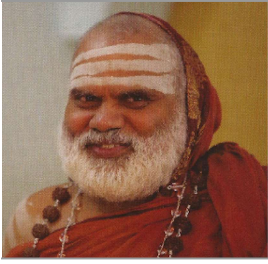
**Teacher**: Hari, tell Śankara what you did to his bedding and why.

**Hari** : Śankara, you hid my book. In retaliation, I threw water on your bedding.

**Teacher** : Irritated with the rat, the man caught it by its tail and it bit him. To punish Hari for having teased you, you hid his book. Because you did so, you have wet bedding.

**Śankara** : I now clearly see that there is much in common between the foolish man and myself.

**Teacher** : I know that you have a quick temper. Try to change yourself. Remember that anger harms the very person who gives room to it. It temporarily deprives him of his precious God-given

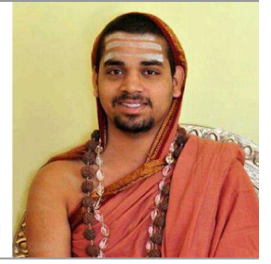


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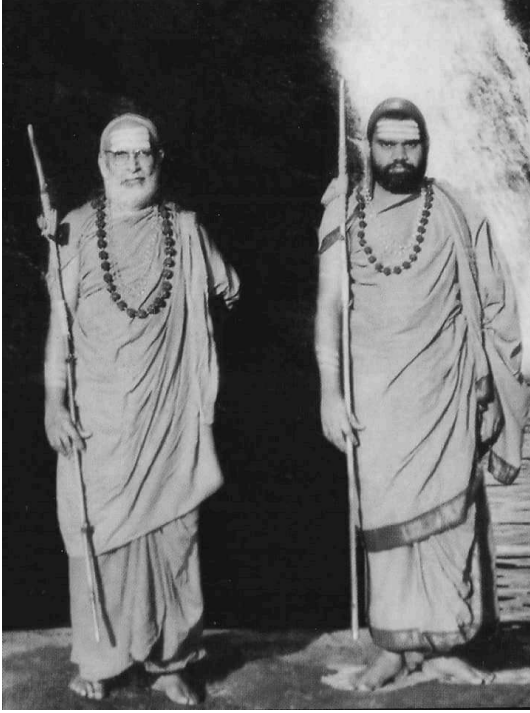
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gift of rational thinking and sensible behavior. It agitates the mind and destroys peace. It does not give the least happiness; no man feels jolly when he is in the grip of wrath. Lord Kṛṣṇa has spoken of anger as one of the gateways to hell.



**Śankara :** If I give up anger, will not people take advantage of my resulting docility?

**Teacher :** A person should be patient and should not give room to anger. This does not mean that he must allow people to ride roughshod over him. He can be firm and even give a strong verbal response when the situation necessitates it. A boss may have to reprimand and indolent subordinate who is not amenable to soft words. In such situations, anger may be feigned but mental composure must be retained.

**Śankara :** I understand the importance of conquering anger and shall do my best to reform myself.

**Teacher:** Hari, there was no need for you to tease or provoke Śankara. People normally resent censure and humiliation. Because of what you did, Śankara gave you a good dressing down. His rebuke hurt you, did it not?

**Hari :** Yes, that is why I left the room. For some time, I continued to feel ill at ease.

**Teacher :** Śankara foolishly hid your book but your retaliation too was unwise. Had Śankara found out later that you have wet his bedding, he would have hurt you for what you did. You are familiar with the Mahābhārata. You know that when Droṇa sought help from Drupada, the latter insulted him. So, after training the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, Droṇa got Arjuna to capture Drupada and took possession of half of Drupada's kingdom. Drupada, for his part, performed a sacrifice and obtained a son who would slay Droṇa. Dhṛṣṭadyumna killed Drona during the Mahābhārata war when the latter laid down arms on being told by Yudhisthira that Aśvatthāma had died. Latter, Aśvatthāma avenged his father's death by slaying Dhṛṣṭadyumna. What a chain of reactions!

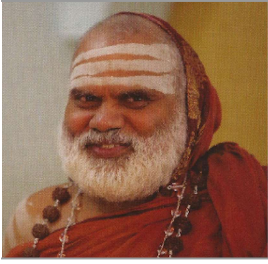
**Hari :** In future, I shall try to keep the feelings of others in mind and abstain from unwisely initiating retaliatory measures.

**Teacher :** Both of you should apologize to each other and be friends as before.

The boys did as told. Śankara then returned Hari's book; Hari put What a Śankara's bedding in the sun to dry.

**Moral :** Anger harms the one who gives room to it in more ways than one. It is, as declared by the Lord Himself, a gateway to hell. Hence, it is in the interest of everyone to give no quarter to anger. A person should be patient. However, if the situation necessitates it, he may simulate anger; even then, he should not become mentally agitated.

(This story was told by our Jagadguru Śankarācārya His Holiness Śrī Abhinava Vidyatirta Mahāswāmiji)

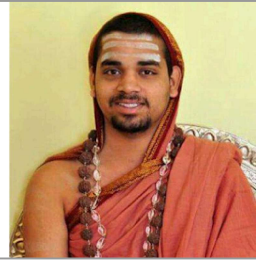


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