

# Voice of Jagadguru

advaitam paramanandam



an e-magazine on advaita



## ॥ तोटकाष्टकं ॥ ||tōṭakāṣṭakam̐ ||

Here is an article containing the *Śrī Toṭakāṣṭakam*, eight verses composed in honor of Adi Śankarācārya. A short description of the Advaita paramparā and a short account of Śankarā's disciple Śrī Toṭaka are included.

शंकरं शंकराचार्यं केशवं बादरायणम् ।  
सूत्रभाष्यकृतौ वन्दे भगवन्तौ पुनः पुनः ॥  
śaṅkaraṁ śaṅkarācāryaṁ kēśavaṁ bādarāyaṇam |  
sūtrabhāṣyakṛtau vandē bhagavantau punaḥ punaḥ ||

---I offer obeisance's again and again to Śrī Veda Vyāsa, the author of the Brahma sūtras, who is none other than Lord Viśṇu, and Śrī Śankarācārya, the commentator on those sūtras, who is none other than Lord Shiva.

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रपराशरं च ।  
व्यासं शुक्रं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रमथास्य शिष्यम् ॥  
श्री शंकराचार्यमथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम् ।  
तं तोटकं वार्तिककारमन्यानस्मद्गुरून् संततमानतोऽस्मि ॥

nārāyaṇaṁ padmabhuvaṁ vasiṣṭhaṁ śaktiṁ ca tatputraparāśaraṁ ca |  
vyāsaṁ śukraṁ gauḍapadaṁ mahāntaṁ govindayōgīन्द्रamathāsya śiṣyam ||  
śrī śaṅkarācāryamathāsya padmapādaṁ ca hastāmalakaṁ ca śiṣyam |  
taṁ tōṭakaṁ vārtikakāraṁan'yānasmadgurūn santatamānatō'smi ||

---These two verses honour the advaita paramparā. The names mentioned here, in order, are 1) Śrīman nārāyaṇa, 2) Brahmā, 3) Vasiṣṭha, 4) Śakti, 5) Parāśara, 6) Vyāsa, 7) Śuka, 8) Gauḍapāda, 9) Govindapāda, 10) Śrī (Ādi) Śankarācārya, and his four disciples, 11) Padmapāda, 12) Hastāmalaka, 13) Toṭaka, and 14) Sureśvarā, and other Gurus. Sureśvara is also known as Vārttikakāra because he wrote the famous vārttika's on the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Taittirīya Upaniṣads. Śrīmannārāyaṇa instructed the Vedas to Brahmā. The Vedas have no author, and are hence called 'apauruṣeya.' Veda Vyāsa authored the Brahma-sūtra and other texts, such as the Gītā, to expound the knowledge of the Vedas. Jagadguru Ādi Śankarācārya is a unique historical figure of India in that he combined within himself the characteristics of a poet, logician, an ardent devotee and a mystic and at the same time was the leading exponent of the system of philosophy called Advaita. In his commentaries on the Prasthanatraya, he exhibited a rare faculty of relentlessly logical and concatenated argument and refutation, and such subtlety of reasoning as has been unsurpassed in the philosophical works of the world. His main teachings may be summarized as the affirmation of Samsāra or succession of births and deaths due to Karma and its significance, the realization of the essential relativity of phenomena in comparison to the reality of the Supreme Self, the realization of that Self not being a mere theoretical exercise, but in the



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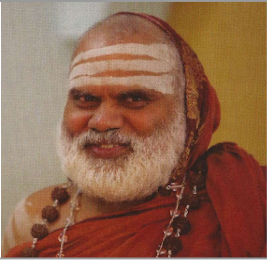


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nature of the direct realization and actual experience taught by the upaniṣadic saying, *Tat tvam asi*, "You are That."

---On the occasion of Śrī Śankara Jayanti, we decided to post the popular stotra on Śankara known as *Śrī Toṭakāṣṭaka*. The hymn is so called because it has been composed in the difficult but beautiful metre called Śrī Toṭaka. There is an interesting history associated with this stotra. Ānandagiri was one of the less scholarly disciples living with Śankarā at Sringeri. But Giri, as he was called, was extremely devoted to the Ācārya. Giri would always engage himself in the service of his Guru. Once it so happened that Śankara was about to begin his usual morning discourse on the upaniṣads and the other disciples started reciting the śānti pāṭha. But Giri was absent because he had gone to the river to wash his Guru's clothes. So Śankara asked the other disciples to wait for Giri's return. But Padmapāda, who was obviously proud of his erudition, said, "Giri is a dull fellow. He really does not deserve to learn the śāstras. What is the point in waiting for him to join us?" Śankarā decided to humble the pride of Padmapāda and other disciples. Out of sheer compassion for Giri, the Ācārya blessed him with the knowledge of the śāstras, making use of supernatural powers to do so. As a result, Giri became a learned scholar instantaneously. Returning from the river, he composed the Toṭakāṣṭaka, eight verses in praise of his Guru. The other disciples were struck with wonder to hear him extemporaneously compose the aṣṭaka in the difficult metre. Giri also composed another work, again in the Toṭaka metre, called *Śrutisārasamuddharaṇa*. Due to the grace of the Guru, Giri became a knower of all scriptures, and he earned the respect of Padmapāda and other disciples. He came to be known as Śrī Toṭakācārya, because he was an adept in composing verses in the Toṭaka metre. He became one of Śankarā's four most important disciples, and was later entrusted with running the Jyotirmath at Badari. The above story is from the *Śankara digvijaya* of Madhava-Vidyāranyā.

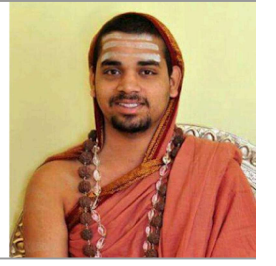


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॥ तोटकाष्टकं ॥

॥ tōṭakāṣṭakaṁ ॥

विदिताखिलशास्त्रसुधाजलधे महितोपनिषत् कथितार्थनिधे ।  
हृदये कलये विमलं चरणं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ १ ॥

viditākhilāśāstrasudhājadhē mahitōpaniṣat kathitārthanidhē |

hṛdayē kalayē vimalaṁ caraṇaṁ bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam || 1||

---O knower of the nectar-ocean of the scriptures, the expounder of the knowledge of the great upanishadic treasure! I meditate on Your pure lotus feet in my heart. O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

करुणावरुणालय पालय मां भवसागरदुःखविदूनहृदम् ।

रचयाखिलदर्शनतत्त्वविदं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ २ ॥

karuṇāvaruṇālaya pālaya mām bhavasāgaraduḥkhaavidūnahṛdam |

racayākhiladarśanatattvavidāṁ bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam ||2||

---Save me whose heart is afflicted by the misery of the ocean of births, O (You who are) the ocean of compassion! (By Your grace) make me the knower of the truths of all the systems of philosophy. O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

भवता जनता सुहिता भविता निजबोधविचारण चारुमते ।

कलयेश्वरजीवविवेकविदं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ३ ॥

bhavatā janatā suhitā bhavitā nijabōdhavicāraṇa cārumatē |

kalayēśvarajīvavivēkavidāṁ bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam || 3||

---People have found happiness due to You, who have the intellect adept in the inquiry into Self-knowledge. Make me understand the knowledge of God and the soul. O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

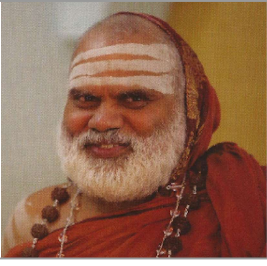
भव एव भवानिति मे नितरां समजायत चेतसि कौतुकिता ।

मम वारय मोहमहाजलधिं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ४ ॥

bhava ēva bhavāniti mē nitarām samajāyata cētasi kautukitā |

mama vāraya mōhamahājaladhīṁ bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam || 4||

---You are Lord Śiva Himself. Knowing this my mind is filled with an abundance of joy. Put an end to my sea of delusion. O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

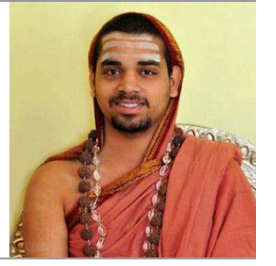


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सुकृतेऽधिकृते बहुधा भवतो भविता समदर्शनलालसता ।  
 अतिदीनमिमं परिपालय मां भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ५॥  
 sukṛtēdhikṛtē bahudhā bhavatō bhavitā samadarśanalālasatā |  
 atidīnamimam̄ paripālaya māṁ bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam ||5||

---Only after numerous virtuous deeds have been performed in many ways, does a keen desire for the experience of Brahman through You arise. Protect (me who am) extremely helpless. O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

जगतीमवितुं कलिताकृतयो विचरन्ति महामहसश्छलतः ।  
 अहिमांशुरिवात्र विभासि गुरो भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ६॥  
 jagatīmavitum̄ kalitākṛtayō vicaranti mahāmahasaśchalataḥ |  
 ahimānśurivātra vibhāsi gurō bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam ||6||

---For the sake of saving the world, (Your) great (disciples) wander assuming various forms and guises. O Guru, You shine like the sun (among them). O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

गुरुपुंगव पुंगवकेतन ते समतामयतां नहि कोऽपि सुधीः ।  
 शरणागतवत्सल तत्त्वनिधे भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ७॥  
 gurupuṅgava puṅgavakētana tē samatāmayatām nahi kōpi sudhīḥ |  
 śaraṇāgatavatsala tattvanidhē bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam || 7||

---O Best among the Gurus! The Lord whose flag bears the emblem of the bull! You have no equal among the wise. You who are affectionate to those who seek refuge! The treasure of truth! O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

विदिता न मया विशदैककला न च किंचन काञ्चनमस्ति गुरो ।  
 द्रुतमेव विधेहि कृपां सहजां भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ॥ ८॥  
 viditā na mayā viśadaikakalā na ca kiñcana kāñcanamasti gurō |  
 drutamēva vidhēhi kṛpām sahajām bhava śaṅkara dēśika mē śaraṇam || 8||

---I have neither understood even one branch of knowledge clearly, nor do I possess any wealth, O Guru. Quickly bestow on me the compassion which is natural to You. O Preceptor Śankarā, be my refuge.

इति श्रीमत्तोटाचार्यविरचितं श्रीशङ्करदेशिकाष्टकं सम्पूर्णम् ।  
 iti śrīmattōṭākācāryaviracitaṁ śrīśaṅkaradēśikāṣṭakaṁ sampūrṇam |



## Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā-bhāṣyam of Śrī Ādi Śankarācārya

---Śrī Ādi Śankarācārya wrote a bhāṣyam (commentary) on Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā. The Ācārya begins his bhāṣyam with a detailed Upōdghāta (Introduction), and his bhāṣyam to the text begins much later from the 11<sup>th</sup> śloka of the Second chapter. On this special occasion of Śankara Jayanti, we will see the Ācārya's introduction to the 11<sup>th</sup> śloka of Chapter Two. From the upcoming issues,

we will enjoy the bhāṣyam which will be attached separately in the śloka link.



---The verses beginning with the words “दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकम्” (Ch. 1 v.2) and ending with “न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभुव ह” (Ch. 2 v. 9) show that the root cause for saṃsāra (cycle of birth and death) is śōka (grief), rāga (attachment) and mōhā (delusion). This grantha starts with the

question regarding the grounds on which such things happen. Arjuna's śōka and mōhā have arisen from his illusory thinking that “अहम् एषां, मम एते” (I am theirs; they are mine). Therefore his love for and separation from rājya (kingdom), guru-putra (guru's son), mitra (friend) etc.is displayed through his words: “कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये?” --- “How I will fight against Bhīṣmā in the battle field?”

---Due to śōka and mōhā Arjuna was not ready to fight, although he arrived at the battle field for the war as warranted by his kṣatriya dharma. He was even ready to live the rest of his life by begging. It is natural for all human beings to abandon their own duties and resort to performing niṣiddha karmā (the karma that is not allowed by the dharma śāstra) when overcome by grief and delusion.

---Even if they perform their duty, every function done so through the mind, words and action is with an expectation on the benefit or results and with ahaṃkāra (with the feeling of “I”). On account of the resultant puṇya and pāpa, saṃsāra (birth and death cycle) which is the cause of both good and bad, births, pleasure and pain, becomes endless. Therefore, grief and delusion are the seeds for saṃsāra.



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---These two cannot be eradicated through any means other than ātmajñāna preceded by sarvakarma-sannyāsa. Hence, Lord Kṛṣṇa, desiring to impart His teaching on this by making Arjuna a tool, said by benediction to the entire humanity “अशोच्यान्”, etc.

---Here, some say that ātmajñāna alone will not give mukti but a combination of ātmajñāna preceded by agnihōtra, śrauta and smārta karmas alone will give mukti. and not the. On this, they quote “अथ चेत्वमिमं धर्म्यं सङ्ग्रामं न करिष्यसि” (“If you fail to fight this war”), “कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते” (“You have rights only to do your duty), “कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात्त्वम्” (“So, you should to the karma alone) as pramāṇas.

---They also hold that the vaidika karma which involves himsā (cruelty) as a part of it is not to be considered adharma, because the very act of fighting is enjoined in the kṣatriya dharma although cruel to one’s guru, brothers and sons, etc. in the battle field, and hence not an offence. Moreover “ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि”- (You will incur sin (pāpa) by abandoning your swadharma and kīrti. You should do your karma throughout life, thus says śruti. So doing sacrifice of animals in the vaidika karma is not at all adharma.

---This [view] is wrong, because there are distinct paths of jñāna (knowledge) and karma (action) based on two distinct two types of thinking (buddhi).

---The analysis of Ātma-tattva (absolute principles of the Self) done by Lord Kṛṣṇa from “अशोच्यान्” to “स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य” is known as sāṅkhya buddhi. Those jñānis (enlightened people) who share this view are known as ‘sāṅkhyas’.

---Before the dawn of this sāṅkhya buddhī, the Self is regarded as distinct from the body, and as kartā (doer) and bhōktā (enjoyer). Resorting to spiritual practices conducive to attaining mokṣa (liberation), through viveka (discrimination) between dharma and adharma, is known as ‘yoga’. The conviction so developed is known as ‘Yoga buddhi’. Those who do their karma with yoga buddhī are known as yogis.

---With regard to the two types of thinking (buddhi) that was defined by Bhagavān, He said: ‘एषा तेऽभिहिता सांख्ये बुद्धिर्योगो त्विमां शृणु’ (I have instructed you about sāṅkhya (the path of knowledge); hereafter, hear about yoga).

---Of these two, those who practise jñāna-yoga with sāṅkhya buddhī are known as ‘Sāṅkhyas’ as will be seen from ‘पुरा वेदात्मना मया प्रोक्ता’ (This was taught by Me, who am the Vedātman, long ago). Similarly, the practice of karma-yoga based on ‘Yoga buddhi’, will be explained later by such words as ‘कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम्’ (“Karma-yoga to yogis”).

---Thus, the two paths based on the two buddhī’s are differentiated clearly by the Lord, making it clear that it is impossible for a person to be a jñāna-karma niṣṭhā, i.e. a person can not possess both these characteristics simultaneously. at a time cannot follow the ‘.

---This distinction has been explained in the Śatapathya brāhmaṇa also as ‘एतमेव प्रव्राजिनो लोकमिच्छन्तो ब्राह्मणाः प्रव्रजन्ति (बृ० ४/४/२२)’ (“Those who aspire for this ātmattava, through vairagyā, should become sannyāsis.”). They follow sarvakarma sanyasa. Further it says: ‘किं





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प्रजया करिष्यामो येषां नोऽयमात्मायं लिङ्गः (बृ० ४/४/२२)' ("When this ātmā itself is our world, what we are going to get from [having] progeny?").

[Prākṛta ātmā = one who is having ignorance, in the other words 'ajñāni'].

---There again it is said: 'प्राग्दारपरिग्रहात्पुरुष आत्मा प्राकृतो धर्मजिज्ञासोत्तरकालं लोकत्रयसाधनं पुत्रं द्विप्रकारं च वित्तं मानुषं दैवं च तत्र मानुषं वित्तं कर्मरूपं पितृलोकप्राप्तिसाधनं विद्यां च दैवं वित्तं देवलोकप्राप्तिसाधनं सोऽकामयत (बृ० १/४/१७)' (An ajñāni, before marriage and after satisfying his desire to know what is dharma, desired to have a son and also the two-fold wealth of māṇuṣa-vitta and the daiva-vitta so that he may attain the three lokās. Mānuṣa-vitta in the form of rites enjoined in the śāstras helps him to attain pitṛlōka, while daiva-vitta in the form of vidyā helps to attain devalōka. Thus, all karmas like śrauta are intended for those who have ignorance, kāma, etc.)

'तेभ्यो व्युत्थाय प्रव्रजन्ति (बृ० ४/४/२२)' ("Liberating from the shackles of karma, they take to sannyāsa") Liberation is intended only for him who has icchā in the ātma-tattva and is free from all [other] desires.

---If the intention of Bhagavān was that śrauta karma mārga and jñāna mārga should be followed simultaneously [by a seeker of liberation], then the above said statement by Him on the categories [jñāna and karma] will be meaningless. Moreover, the question that was raised by Arjuna will become meaningless: 'ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते' ("If you hold jñāna as superior to karma).

---Jñāna and karmā cannot be done at the same time by a person. If Bhagavān had not told earlier that jñāna is superior to karma, then how could Arjuna ask the question (ज्यायसी चेत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिः ("If You hold jñāna as superior to karma then how..?)).



Moreover when jñāna yoga in combination with karma yoga is prescribed for all, it would be prescribed so for Arjuna also. If upadeśa is to pursue both yogas, how could Arjuna ask: यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चतम् (Which of these two is decidedly better? Tell me). If a doctor advises a patient to eat both sweet and cold food to cure bile, the question of which of the two kinds of food will cure bile does not arise.

---Or, if it be said that Arjuna did not grasp the words uttered by the Lord, and hence out of confusion asked which one is the best, Bhagavān would have replied: "A combination of both jñāna and karma was spoken by me. So, why are you confused?" If so, then the words said by Lord द्वे निष्ठे मया पुरा प्रोक्ते ' ("I have explained about two types of niṣṭha") will not be logical.

---More over, fighting a war being kṣatriya dharma, it being a smārta karma, it is improper for Arjuna to speak [tauntingly]: तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि? (Then, why do You engage me in fighting this terrible war?).

---Therefore, the combination of jñāna with at least a little of karma enjoined in the śruti or smṛti can not be shown by anyone in the Gītā śāstra.

---Due to ignorance or attachment, etc. one gets entangled in karma. Then, by performing yāga (sacrifice), dānā (charity), tapas (austerity), etc., should be his mind becomes pure. [In such a purified mind], wisdom dawns as "All this is Brahman which is One (ekam) and Non-doer (akartā)", which is the Supreme Reality.



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---Such a jñāni, though free from actions and the fruits of those actions, may continue to remain active for the welfare of mankind. Though he may be active, his activity is not actually karma, nor can his activity be regarded as being in combination with jñāna.

---Just as the activity of the Lord which is termed 'kṣatra karma' is not part of jñāna to attain any puruṣārtha (goal in human life), the activity of a jñāni also should not be considered as being in combination with his jñāna, because ego and the desire for fruits of the activity are absent in both.

---The jñāni does not think of what he is doing as "I am doing", nor does he desire for the fruits of his action.

---Again, suppose one intends to perform Agnihotra with a desire to attain his cherished goal like heaven, etc., and after completing the preliminary rites, if his desire for the intended goal ceases to exist, still he completes the Agnihotra sacrifice. But, such an action is not considered as a kāmya karma (action performed for some particular result). Accordingly, Bhagavān points out in several places in the Gītā: 'कुर्वन्नपि' ('Though doing [his karma]'), 'न करोति न लिप्यते' ('He neither does [any karma] nor is tainted by it.')

---Thus, in the passages like 'पूर्वेः पूर्वतरं कृतम्' ('As was done in the days of yore, so too you do action'), 'कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादयः' ("Indeed, through karma, kings like Janakā and others attained perfection."), the two categories (jñāna and karma) must be distinguished.

--- How to distinguish? Supposing Janaka and others had realized the Truth and still remained active for the benefit of mankind, it must have been with the awareness that गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्ते (the senses alone, and not the Self, participate in the sensory objects. Even though they had attained the stage of karma sannyasa (they were not attached to the karma with the feeling that "I am doing"), they did their karma (duties) without any fail without renouncing their duty.

---And, suppose they had not realized the truth already, then it must be interpreted that Janaka and others finally attained realization by performing their duties with the bhāva of Ívara-arpaṇa (dedication to God), which is instrumental in gaining citta-śuddhi (purification of mind), which is the basic requirement for the dawn of realization. Hence, the Lord will say: 'सत्त्वशुद्धये कर्म कुर्वन्ति' ([Yogis] perform karma to attain citta-śuddhi).

---Having said 'स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः' ('Man attains perfection by propitiating Him with his own karma'), the path of knowledge will be explained to him who has attained perfection, through such words as: 'सिद्धिं प्राप्तो यथा ब्रह्म' (How he who has attained perfection reached Brahman').

---Therefore, this is a settled fact in the Gītā that immortality is attained not by a combination of jñāna and karma, but by pure knowledge alone.

--- As is shown here, so shall we (Bhagavapāda) show separately in the relevant sections.

---Thus, finding no means other than Ātma-jñāna (Self-knowledge) to redeem Arjuna, who was perplexed regarding his duty and immersed in the ocean of grief, Lord Vāsudeva began to speak introducing the topic of Self-knowledge with a desire of lifting him [from the ocean of grief] ---

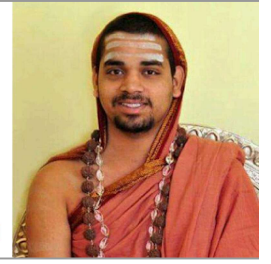


# Voice of Jagadguru

advaitam paramanandam



an e-magazine on advaita



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