



# Voice of Jagadguru

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## ANUGRAHA BHASHANAM

### GURU IN SANATANA DHARMA

The Guru is given a high pedestal in our Sanatana Dharma. Everyone chants the shloka:

“गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः । (gururbrahmā gururviṣṇurgururdēvō mahēśvaraḥ)

गुरुः साक्षात्परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरुवे नमः ॥ (guruḥ sāksātparaṁ brahma tasmai śrī guravē namaḥ)



The Guru is given such a high pedestal because He removes our ignorance and blesses us with Jnana or knowledge. Bhagavan Himself says that there is no equivalent to Jnana: न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते (na hi jñānēna sadṛśaṁ pavitramiha vidyatē). Jnana or Knowledge is of paramount importance to us because we it is Jnana that leads to Mukti: ज्ञानादेव तु कैवल्यं प्राप्यते येन मुच्यते (jñānādēva tu kaivalyaṁ prāpyatē yēna mucyatē). This Jnana can be

obtained from us only from the Guru. Bhagavan says in the Bhagavad Gita that the Guru who has realized the Truth will teach a disciple engaged in Guru Seva:

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया । (tadviddhi praṇipātēna paripraśnēna sēvayā)

उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ (upadēkṣyanti tē jñānaṁ jñāninastattvadarśinaḥ)

Who can be termed a Guru? These days, many call themselves a Guru. The Gurus seem to be more in number than Shishyas! However, Sri Adi Shankaracharya says: को गुरुः ? अधिगततत्त्वः शिष्यहितायोद्यततः सततम् । (kō guruḥ? adhigatatattvaḥ śiṣyahitāyōdyatataḥ satatam). Only he can be called a Guru who has imbibed the Tattva expounded in the Shastras, is capable of clarifying the doubts of a disciple and is ever intent on uplifting the disciple. The knowledge and compassion of Sri Adi Shankaracharya Himself, are boundless. Even if we study the Bhashyas of the Acharya today, there are new aspects to learn. He completed writing these Bhashyas at the age of 16. He had a debate with Bhagavan Veda Vyasa Himself who had come to the Acharya in the guise of an elderly Brahmana.

The Brahmana said to the Acharya, “I hear that you have written a Bhashya on the Brahma Sutras, Will you provide an answer to a question and explain a Sutra?” The Acharya replied:



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सूत्रज्ञताऽहंकृतिरस्ति नो मे सूत्रार्थविद्भ्योऽस्तु नमो गुरुभ्यः, तथापि यत्प्रच्छसि तद्ब्रवीमि ।  
 (sūtrajñatāhaṅkṛtirasti nō mē sūtrārthavidbhyōstu namō gurubhyaḥ, tathāpi yatpṛcchasi tadbravīmi) - “There are many who know the meaning of Bhagavan Veda Vyasa’s Brahma Sutras, and I salute them all. Hence, I do not claim to be the sole person to know the meaning of the Sutras of Veda Vyasa. Yet I shall answer whatever be your question.”

Such was the humility exhibited by Sri Bhagavatpada. The Brahmana asked a question from the 3rd Adhyaya of the Brahma Sutras. The debate raged over for seven days. Finally, Padmapada, the Acharya’s disciple realized that the elderly Brahmana was Bhagavan Veda Vyasa Himself:

शङ्करः शङ्करः साक्षात् व्यासो नारायणो हरिः । (śaṅkaraḥ śaṅkaraḥ sāksāt vyāsō nārāyaṇō hariḥ)  
 तयोर्विवादे संप्राप्ते किंकरः किं करोम्यहम् ॥ (tayōrvivādē samprāptē kiṅkaraḥ kiṁ karōmyaham)

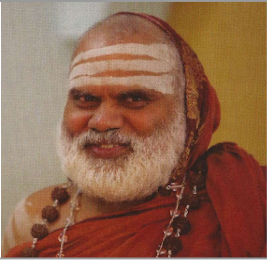
Sri Adi Shankara is Lord Shankara Himself while Veda Vyasa is Sriman Narayana Himself. What can be done if these two get engaged in a debate? Then, Bhagavan Veda Vyasa revealed Himself and praising the Acharya for His commentary on the Brahma Sutras, said: गोविन्दशिष्यस्य कथं दुरुक्तम् (gōvindaśiṣyasya katham duruktam) - How can the Shishya of Govinda Bhagavatpada misinterpret?”

Thus, Sri Adi Shankaracharya Himself was the exemplary for the first characteristic of the Guru – अधिगततत्त्वः (adhigatatattvaḥ) – one who has imbibed the Tattva. All His works, Dharma Prachara, and the establishment of the Chaturamnaya Peethams demonstrate His consideration for the welfare of disciples across generations. Thus Sri Adi Shankaracharya has to be revered with great Shraddha and Bhakti. That is why our Parameshti Guru, Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Narasimha Bharati Mahaswamiji rediscovered Sri Adi Shankaracharya’s birthplace at Kalady and directed everyone to observe Shankara Jayanti.

The Upanishads say: आचार्यदेवो भव (ācāryadēvō bhava) Be one who reveres Acharya as God. Apastamba Maharshi echoed this statement when he said: देवमिव आचार्यमुपासीत (dēvamiva ācāryamupāsīta) – Revere your Acharya as God. An Acharya is defined thus:

आचिनोति च शास्त्रार्थम् आचारे स्थापयित्यपि । (ācinōti ca śāstrārtham ācārē sthāpayityapi)  
 स्वयमाचरते यस्मात् तस्मादाचार्य उच्यते ॥ (svayamācaratē yasmāt tasmādācārya ucyatē)

One who knows the import of the Shastras, adheres to the Shastras and also inspires others to follow the Shastras can be termed an Acharya. We belong to the Parampara of our Acharya, Sri Adi Shankaracharya. It is our duty to follow in His footsteps and make our lives fruitful.

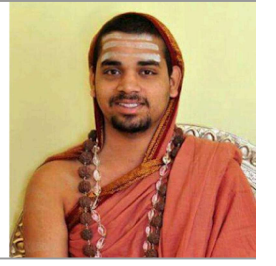


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## SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA<sup>1</sup>

**प्रथमोध्यायः - अर्जुनविषादयोगः**

**अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।**

**पर्याप्तं त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥**

aparyāptam tad asmākaṃ balaṃ bhīṣmābhirakṣitam |

parayāptam tvidam eteṣāṃ balaṃ bhīmābhirakṣitam ||10 ||

(अन्वयः) भीष्माभिरक्षितं तत् अस्माकं बलम् अपर्याप्तम् । भीमाभिरक्षितम् एतेषाम् इदं बलं तु पर्याप्तम् ।

(anvaya:) bhīṣmābhirakṣitam tat asmākaṃ balaṃ aparyāptam | bhīmābhirakṣitam eteṣāṃ balaṃ tu paryāptam |

(Duryodhana says) Therefore, our army which is protected by Bhishma is insufficient. On the other hand, this army of the Pandavas which is protected by Bhima is more than sufficient (to defeat us).

**अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।**

**भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तः सर्व एव हि ॥ ११ ॥**

ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu yathābhāgam avasthitāḥ |

bhīṣmam evābhirakṣantu, bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi ||11||

(अन्वयः) सर्वेषु अयनेषु च यथा भागम् अवस्थिताः । भवन्तः सर्वे एव हि भीष्मम् एव अभिरक्षन्तु ।

(anvaya:) sarveṣu ayaneṣu ca yathā bhāgam avasthitāḥ | bhavantaḥ eve va hi bhīṣmam eva abhirakṣantu|

(Duryodhana says to all in his army) Remaining in various strategic points as allocated, all of you, indeed, should closely protect Bhishma alone.

**तस्य संजनयन्हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।**

**सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥**

tasya sañjanayan harṣam, kuruvṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ |

siṃhanādaṃ vinadyoccaiḥ, śaṅkhaṃ dadhmau pratāpavān ||12||

(अन्वयः) प्रतापवान् कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः तस्य हर्षं सञ्जनयन् उच्चैः सिंहनादं विनद्य शङ्खं दध्मौ ।

(anvaya:) pratāpavān kuriṛuddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ tasya harṣam sañjanayan uccaiḥ siṃhanādaṃ vinadya śaṅkhaṃ dadhmau |

Generating enthusiasm in him, the powerful grandsire, the oldest among the Kurus, roared aloud like a lion and blew the conch.

**ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखः ।**

**सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमलोऽभवत् ॥ १३ ॥**

<sup>1</sup> The translation is in general based on the Bhashya of Adi Shankaracharya (which commences from the 2nd Chapter).

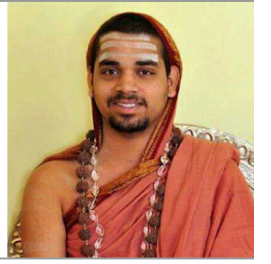


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tataḥ śaṅkhāśca bheryāśca, paṇavānakagomukhāḥ |  
sahasāivābhyahanyanta, sa śabdastumuloḥbhavat ||13||

(अन्वयः) ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यः च पणवानकगोमुखाः सहसा एव अभ्यहन्यन्त सः शब्दः तुमुलः अभवत्।

(anvaya:) tataḥ śaṅkhāśca bhēryaḥ ca paṇavānakagomukhāḥ sahasā eva abhyahanyanta saḥ śabdaḥ tumulaḥ abhavat |

*Thereafter conches, kettle-drums, trumpets, cow-horns and various instruments were blewed at a time made a tremendous high noise(heart-sacking, frightening, something unimaginable).*

**ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।**

**माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥१४॥**

tataḥ śvetairhayairyukte, mahati syandane sthitau |

mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaścaiva, divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ ||14||

(अन्वयः) ततः श्वेतैः हयैः युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौमाधवः पाण्डवः च एव दिव्यौशङ्खौप्रदध्मतुः ।

(anvaya) tataḥ śvetaiḥ hayoḥ yukte mahati syandane sthitaumādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaḥ ca eva divyauśṅkhaupradadhmatuḥ

*Then, hearing the sound that was created by the Kauravas, Sri Madhava (Sri Krishna) and Arjuna seated in their chariot with white horses, blew their divine conches.*



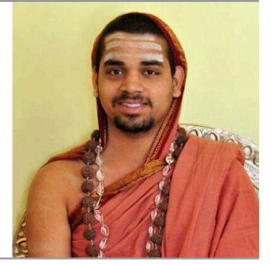


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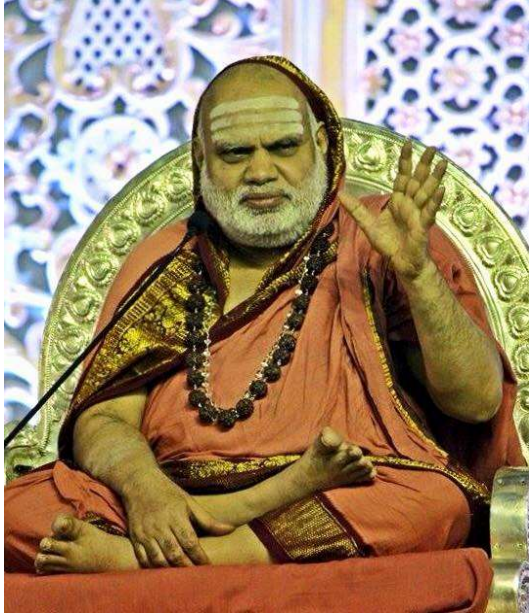


## VIVEKACHUDAMANI

### 8. SELF-EFFORT ESSENTIAL

The Guru is praising the Shishya for asking such great questions towards him, before he starts answering the shishya.

Your thirst in the truth and to attain Brahmanhood makes your whole family a sacred one. Your



desire to remove the ignorance of bondage is due to your good deeds performed in the past. It is the duty of one's son and other well-wishers to release a father from debts (both materialistic and scriptural). But there is no one in this world to release the father, other than himself, from the bondage of samsara.

Just as the pain caused by a heavy load placed on one's head can be removed by others taking off the load from the head, while the pain caused by hunger etc cannot be removed by anybody else except himself.

A diseased person gets back his health by following the taking medicine prescribed by doctors and following guidelines set by them strictly, and not by the efforts of others.

The true nature of Brahman (Atman) should be seen through the eye of clear knowledge. It cannot be through any other indirect means, even if one may be a scholar; just as the nature of moon should be known by seeing it with one own's eyes and not through the eyes of others.

Even after the lapse of hundreds of millions of eras, the bondage of samsara caused by ignorance (avidya), desire (kama) and action (karma) can be removed by oneself alone.

Sri Adi Shankaracharya thus explains how the Guru (as described in Vivekachudamani) instructs on the responsibility of one who wishes to cross the samsara bandha. The aspirant himself has to work for that. The Guru then starts explaining that Self Knowledge (Atma tattvam) alone helps to cross this very big and dangerous ocean of samsara.

Liberation (Moksha) can be achieved only by understanding the oneness of the Brahman and Atman (Self) and not by the knowledge derived from Yoga, Sankhya Shastra, not by the action of doing Karma alone or by upasana-s alone. Realizing the Self is Moksha. Except atma-vichara, nothing will help to come out from the ignorance of bondage in samsara. As the principles of Yoga Shastra and Sankhya Shastra teach there are multiple atman-s and that there is no oneness, the knowledge obtained through such Shastras will not help us in realizing the Truth.



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Performance of Karmas as per Vedas and Upasanas will give a feeling that the God and “I” are different. The results of such karmas will be of any one of the following four types, producing/creating (utpaadyam), searching/attaining (aapyam), purifying (samkaryam) and changeable (vikaryam). While karmas help in purification of the mind, they also will not help us in knowing Brahman that is our Essence. As the nature of Atman (Atma Swaropa) is of permanent existence, there is no need for producing / creating anything. As the Atman is present everywhere, there is no need for searching any special place and attaining it. As the Atman is ever pure, there is never a need for purifying it. As the Atman is eternal, it does not undergo any changes at any stage. Jnana (knowledge) alone will help us to realize this Truth. This again is possible through the removal of Ajnana (ignorance).

Further the Guru explains that Jnana should be earned only by self-effort and practice, and not by mere reading out to others or hearing from others. The beauty of the form of a Veena and the nada (sweet sound) arising out of stringing the instrument is for pleasing the people. It does not fetch any other benefit beyond appreciation and material riches. In the 60th sloka of Vivekachudamani, Sri Adi Shankaracharya specifically states that even the torrential flow of



speech and the ability to lucidly explain the Shastras even by highly knowledgeable persons cannot release from bondage unless Self-knowledge is had.

Until Self-knowledge is had, no amount of learning the Shastras would be of use. And when Self-knowledge is had by the rarest of rare persons, the study of Shastras would be of no use for such a person. Thue does Sri Adi Shankaracharya underline the importance of Atma-Saakshaatkaara or Self-Knowledge.



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## SRI MADHAVEEYA SHANKARA DIGVIJAYA

### SECOND SARGA

In the March issue, we have seen upto 25th sloka from 2nd sarga. Shivaguru answered all questions from various scholars most aptly. His father, Vidyadhiraja was very happy for the



knowledgeable replies that Shivaguru was giving to scholars humbly and calmly. Hearing the qualities of Shivaguru, many scholars came forward to give their daughters in marriage to Shivaguru. Although many came with offerings of a lot of wealth in seeking Shivaguru as a son-in-law, his father Vidyadhiraja desired a daughter-in-law for the household from a traditional vedic family.

Eventually, Vidyadhiraja approached Maghapandita and asked his daughter's Aryamba's hand for Shivaguru. Maghapandita consented. With the blessings of elders, the marriage of Shivaguru and Aryamba took place. The newly married couple led a Dharmic life, and made their parents and elders happy.

(His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji and His Holiness Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji)

The devout Shivaguru performed many yagas to please the devas (gods) and pitrus (ancestors). He engaged in many acts of charity. Jagadguru Sri Vidyaranya (the author of the Digvijaya) portrays the sincerity of Shivaguru and states that the devas were so pleased by the offerings (havis offered into the sacrificial fire) of Shivaguru that they even forgot to take amrita, the nectar that confers immortality. Sri Vidyaranya even compares Shivaguru to a Kalpa-vriksha (wishfulling tree) in satisfying devas, pitrus and all those around him.

Many years passed with Shivaguru and Aryamba leading a life of piety and austerity. Shivaguru and Aryamba engaged themselves joyfully in doing services to people in need. Shivaguru taught the Vedas to his disciples. The couple led an exemplary life, in accordance to the Grihastha-ashrama Dharma as prescribed in the Dharma Shastras. However, they were still not blessed with a child. Shivaguru and Aryamba longed for a child.



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## THE MAHIMA OF SANDHYAA VANDHANA

### BENEFITS OF SANDHYAAVANDANA

What are the benefits of performing the karma of Sandhyaavandana? Taittireeya Shruti says thus: It is our duty; it removes our sins and gives peace of mind - धर्मेण पापमपनुदति (तैत्तिरीय - आरण्यक १०.७२) - “Through dharma, the papa karma (sins) are removed”. The primary benefit that we get is purity in our mind and thoughts. When it is done as per Shastraic rules then,

सन्ध्यामुपासते ये तु सततं शंसितव्रताः ।

विधूतपापास्ते यान्ति ब्रह्मलोकं सनातनम् ॥

(इति पराशरमाधवीये आचारकाण्डे सन्ध्याविधौ)

- “One attains to the Brahma loka, when he follows the procedures correctly while doing sandhyaavandana as per Shastras”.

Hence, our sins are reduced, we go along the path of Self-enquiry and eventually attain Mukti. Such is the efficacy of Sandhyavandanaa, that confers the ultimate benefit eventually.

### BEAUTY OF THE MANTRAS:

य उदगान्महतोऽर्णवाद्धिभ्राजमानः सरिरस्य मध्यात्समा वृषभो लोहिताक्षः सूर्यो विपश्चिन्मनसा पुनातु । (तैत्तिरीय - आरण्यक ४.४२) - ‘Lord Surya, rising in east with his reddish rays from the middle of the ocean with a special beauty, will fulfill my wishes. May the all-knowing Lord purify me.’

पश्येम शरदः शतं, जीवेम शरदः शतं, नन्दाम शरदः शतं, मोदाम शरदः शतं, भवाम शरदः शतं, शृणवाम शरदः शतं, प्रब्रवाम शरदः शतमजीताः स्याम शरदः शतं, ज्योक् च सूर्यं दृशे । (तैत्तिरीय - आरण्यक ४.४२) - “O Lord Surya! Let me live for hundred years to do my duties without any fail; let that hundred years get benefited by the wealth I have; let me enjoy all the benefits and joys in this life with full satisfaction; bless me to learn from Guru Veda sastras and its secrets; let me teach my shishyas; bless me not to be won by any of my enemies and grace me to have darshan of you for a very long period with good health and mind, and make me an eligible person to have all the above said qualifications”

- Such great prayers are also part of the Sandhyaavandana.

Thus the karma of Sandhyavandanaa that is laid down in the Shastras and passed on to us by our ancestors is the most benefiting karma. The performance of Sandhyaavandana does not require any expenditure. It only needs sincere effort.



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Yogi Yajnavalkya says,

गवां सर्पिः शरीरस्थं न करोत्यङ्गपोषणम्।

निःसृतं कर्मसंयुक्तं पुनस्तासां तदौषधम्॥

एवं सति शरीरस्थः सर्पिर्वत्परमेश्वरः ।

विना चोपासनादेव न करोति हितं नृषु॥

(योगियाज्ञवल्क्य १.३०-३२)



“The Ghee (which is latent in milk) when in the body of a cow will not give strength for the cow. However, once the cow’s milk is processed, the same ghee is used as medicine even for the cow. Likewise, Lord Parameshwara is within us. We can realize Him by performing upasana (worship; in this particular context, Sandhyaavandana). If we fail to do upasana, our situation will be like that of the cow having milk and the latent-ghee in itself, but obtaining no use out of it, i.e The Lord’s presence cannot be realized within us (unless we do upasana)”. Thus does the above verse underline the importance of Upasana (in this context, Sandhyaavandana) to help realize the Lord. Hence it is essential to perform the Sandhya-Upasana and attain Shreyas.

**(His Holiness Sri Sri Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji)**

*{This was the blessing given to all, by His Holiness, Jagdguru Sri Sri Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamiji, the 35th Peetadhipathi of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham. This article is based on the Mahaswamiji’s article on the greatness of Sandhyaavandana. From the next issue, we will present the greatness of Gayatri Mantra as explained by the Mahaswamiji}*

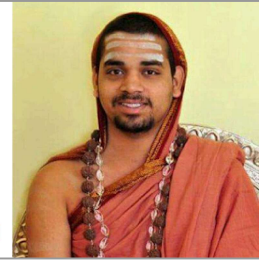


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## LIFE HISTORY OF ACHARYAS OF SRINGERI

### BIOGRAPHY OF SRI VIDYARANYA - THE JAGADGURU'S GREATNESS

#### WORKS OF SRI VIDYARANYA

Sri Vidyaranya's literary contributions comprise works on Vyakarana, Mimamsa, Smriti, Purana, Jyotisha, Mantra Shastra, music, Darsana and Vedanta (Advaita). Some important works include Jaimineeya Nyayamala, Parasara-smriti Vyakhyana, Smriti Sangraha, Vyavahara-Madhava, Sri Vidyatirtha-Dipika, Vivaranaprameya Sangraha, Panchadashi,

Jivanmukti Viveka, Drig Drisya Viveka, Aparokshanubhuti-Tika, and sub-commentaries on Upanishads.



Of these, Panchadasi is an important work in Vedanta. It is so called because of its division into fifteen chapters, dealing with topics of metaphysical and spiritual importance. In the Brihadaranyaka-vartika-sara, Sri Vidyaranya summarises Sri Sureshwaracharya's work (the Brihadaranyak-vartika).

Dipikas on Aitareya and Taittiriya Upanishads and Sri Shankara's summary of the twelve principal Upanishads,

are also attributed to Sri Vidyaranya. Sri Adi Shankaracharya's biography, Madhaviya Shankara Vijaya, is a splendid work of Sri Vidyaranya. Because of its high poetic merit and objectivity, it is considered the best for recitation during Shankara Jayanti.

Drgdrsyaviveka is considered a combined work of Sri Vidyaranya and His predecessor, Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha. The works of the two Jagadgurus are among the greatest treatises in post-Shankara Advaita literature and both of them occupy a unique place in the history of religion.



# Voice of Jagadguru

advaitam paramanandam



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## SOUNDARYALAHARI

नरं वर्षीयांसं नयनविरसं नर्मसु जडं  
 तवापाङ्गलोके पतितं अनुधावन्ति शतशः।  
 गलद्वेणीबन्धाः कुचकलश-विस्रस्त-सिचया  
 हठात् त्रुट्यत्काञ्च्यो विगलितदुकूला युवतयः ॥१३॥  
 naram varṣīyānsaṁ nayanavirasaṁ narṁmasu jaḍam  
 tavāpāṅgālōkē patitaṁ anudhāvanti śataśaḥ ।  
 galadvēṇībāndhāḥ kucakalaśa-visrasta-sicayā  
 haṭhāt trutyatkāñcyō vīgalitadukūlā yuvatayaḥ ॥ 13 ॥

“O Mother, when Your gracious glance falls on a very old person, diseased and completely bereft of beauty, he would be transformed (by Your grace) to such a handsome man that all women unmindful of their shyness will get attracted towards him.”



i.e. Goddess Parashakti will make him the most handsome person - equivalent to Lord Kameshwara, that even women possessing beauty like that of the heavenly damsels Rambha, Urvashi etc, will forget everything and get attracted to him. They would even be unmindful of their own beauty, of the need to protect their own honour and of the ornaments that fall by as they run towards the the man graced by the sight of the Divine Mother.

In this verse, the women referred to are the Upanishads. The person who has become as handsome as Manmatha (cupid) is a reference to the Supreme Brahman manifest as Lord Kameswara i.e. Lord Sadashiva.

As a result of the good deeds done in the past and the worship of the Divine Mother in the present, he who becomes a recipient of the grace of the Divine Mother realize the Truth (Self i.e Brahman) shining in him. He will be Shiva Himself! The very vision of the Divine Mother, Maa Kameshwari, will bestow the fruit of Brahma

Upadesha on him. Such is the greatness of the Darshan of the Divine Mother.

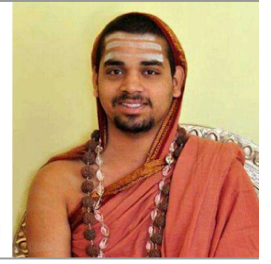


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## UPASANA DEVATA

### DEVI UPASANA (SHAKTHAM)

Devi Upasana is considered as the greatest of upasanas. In this, Shree Chakra pooja occupies a central position. During Navaratri, we celebrate the Divine Mother in three main forms of Maa Durga, Maa Lakshmi and Maa Saraswati. Maa Durga is for Power and Strength; Maa Lakshmi for Wealth and Maa Saraswati for Knowledge and Wisdom. To have a healthy and happy worldly life we need all these three powers. The Nava Durga worshipped normally are: Śailaputrī शैलपुत्री, Brahmachārīṇī ब्रह्मचारिणी, Candraghaṇṭā चन्द्रघण्टा, Kūṣmāṇḍā कूष्माण्डा, Skandamātā स्कन्दमाता, Kātyāyanī कात्यायनी, Kālarātrī कालरात्री, Mahāgaurī महागौरी, and Siddhidātrī सिद्धिदात्री. These nine forms are worshipped together during the Navratri (Nine Divine Nights) celebrations, that occur four times throughout the year, namely: Chaitra Navratri, Sharad Navratri (most significant and widely celebrated), Maha Gupta Navratri, and Ashadha Gupta Navratri. Durga is known by numerous names - including Amba, Ambika, Jagadamba, Parvati, Shakti etc. Sri Lalita Sahasranama extols the Divine Mother with a 1000 namas. Maa Durga is the root cause of creation, sustenance and annihilation. She is pure energy, called as Shakti. She rules this universe through her various manifestations. She also protects this world from evil powers. She takes various avatars and destroys them and brings about the welfare of the devout. When Mahishasura terrorised the Universe, she took the avatar to protect the world. Hence, Durga is also known as Mahishasura Mardini. Devi Bhagavata purana, Devi Mahatmyam, Shiva purana all explain briefly Maa Durga and her various forms. They also describe the significance of being a Devi Bhakta. Numerous hymns like Soundarya Lahari, Lalita Pancharatnam, Mahishasura mardini stotram, Lalita Sahasranama, Meenakshi Stotram, Kamakshi stotrametc are available and can be chanted by us as part of our daily prayers.

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