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श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

Teachings of

Swami Tadatmananda Saraswati

Written by

Mangesh Dhruva Bhise

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्



Shri Dakshinamurti

Swami Tadatmananda Saraswati Ashram

Arsha Bodha Center

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Shri Dakshinamurti

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Foreword

The Dakshinamurti Stotram of Shri Shankaracharya contains some of the most profound teachings of Advaita Vedanta. The wisdom conveyed by its verses can bring about a radical transformation of one's world view by removing ignorance about the world, about Bhagavan, and about oneself. This transformative knowledge is capable of destroying the *mula avidya* (fundamental ignorance) that is the ultimate cause for all suffering. Thus the Daskhinamurti Stotram is *moksha shastra*, a scriptural teaching that can lead to one's liberation.

This stotra is also a superb work of poetry set in a meter known as *shardula vikridita*. In its verses, Shri Shankara deftly employs poetic imagery and vivid metaphors to extend the power of the Sanskrit language beyond what is possible in mere prose. Among all of Shri Shankara's works, this stotra stands out as a dazzling, colorful gem.

I am delighted that Shri Mangesh Bhise, the author of this book, could so deeply appreciate the importance and beauty of this stotra. He has invested a great deal of time and effort in preparing the text which includes copious word-by-word explanations of both the stotra and its dhyana shlokas. He has distilled the content of my discourses on this stotra with great skill, presenting those teachings in an exceptionally clear and accessible manner.

Mangesh is to be congratulated for this fine work. I am grateful for his dedication and for graciously making this book available for all seekers of spiritual truth.

Swami Tadatmananda
Arsha Bodha Center
Somerset, NJ

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सदाशिव समारंभां शङ्कराचार्य मध्यमां ।
अस्मदाचार्य पर्यन्तां वन्दे गुरुपरम्परां ॥

“Not only did Shri Shankara teach his disciples who were with him, but he also made sure that the teaching came down to posterity through his writings.”

– **Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

Preface

The blessed lord, Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Pujya Swami Tadatmananda Saraswati and Pujya Swami Guhatmananda Saraswati have inspired the efforts of writing the commentary for the spiritual seekers.

The great teacher of the ancient time – Shri Adi Shankara has written this very profound Vedanta text called *Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram*. The great teachers of the current age from Saraswati lineage have made it available to the seekers in simplistic and understandable way.

Pujya Swami Tadatmananda – disciple of Pujya Swami Dayananda, has taught this *stotram* in his Ashram in Somerset, New Jersey, USA during summer 2011. This book is solely the compilation of Swami Tadatmananda’s teachings in the written form. He is the true author of this book.

Pujya Swami Guhatmananda in August 2010 visited my home in Thane, India for Vedanta camp. He instructed me to study *Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram*. He then left for his teachings in Trichi. However, he put the zeal in my mind to study this very profound stotram. His blessings led me further.

I was eagerly looking for the opportunity to learn this *stotram*. In July 2011, I came to know that Swami Tadatmananda has made the audio of this teaching available. I do not have enough words to explain his greatness in teaching.

Swami Tadatmanandaji not only reaches the highest intellectual level but most importantly, helps seekers to transform spiritually with the help of his teachings. He is so skillful in teaching that in my opinion, it is appropriate to call him *Dakshina Murti* (दक्षिण मूर्ति). While teaching any Sanskrit scriptures, Swamiji first goes to the right word in each verse. That yields most appropriate meaning of the verse. Then he skillfully shuffles the words and put it in appropriate sequence. Thus any complex verse sounds simple and effective to get the right meaning. He translates each word. Then he explains it in the given context of the verse. Finally he relates the teaching appropriately to our typical experience. Thus, he helps the teachings to penetrate in the seeker's mind. His teachings have no parallel.

Swami Tadatmananda in his teaching, has explained the knowledge revealed by the form (deity) Dakshinamurti – as the eight fold manifestation – अष्ट मूर्ति भृत् (*Ashta murti bhrit*). This knowledge makes *darshan* (दर्शन) in the temple much more meaningful and helps seekers remove the ignorance that is commonly associated with “Murti Puja”.

Swamiji's explanation of this “*Murtyashtakam*” (मूर्त्यष्टकम्) triggered another zeal for me to visit his Ashram. On Wednesday, August 3, 2011, I was blessed to visit the Ashram in New Jersey to meet Pujya Swami Tadatmananda and also have *Darshan* of *Shri Dakshinamurti* in his wonderful ashram temple. I had this opportunity multiple times before as well. However, this time it had different spiritual significance for me.

Swami Tadatmananda also explained the glory of *Shri Dakshinamurti* deity in Swami Dayananda's ashram in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania, USA. The very next day, I was blessed to visit this beautiful ashram in Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania and had *darshan* in Dayananda ashram temple.

I have included the photographs of *Shri Dakshinamurti* from both the ashram temples in this book.

Swami Tadatmananda has taught *Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram* at the end of his series of Shri Shankaracharya's Vedanta texts. Prior to that Swamiji has taught numerous scriptures such as Bhagavad Gita, Upanishad, Narada Bhakti Sutra, Yoga Sutra, as well as profound techniques of Meditations. This book in no way replaces the need for those spiritual studies and practices. *Sadhana* (साधना) prepares the seeker to receive the knowledge imparted in this stotram. This stotram contains profound and very complicated Vedanta. To understand this stotram in its true sense requires Vedantic understanding and spiritual preparation.

In Swami Tadatmananda's words, "To gain the knowledge of absolute reality (ब्रह्मविद्या) requires eligibility (अधिकारीत्व). It is an extra ordinary knowledge that requires extra ordinary preparation."

Writing this book was part of my own spiritual study and practice. At the same time, I hope this book can serve a good purpose for readers.

This book begins with the profound meaning of the word "Dakshinamurti" itself. It also contains text and short translation of both Dhyan shlokas and Stotram. This translation is reproduced from Swamiji's website. This is helpful for chanting and quick review of the meaning.

Rest of the book is organized in three parts.

Part I Shri Dakshinamurti as Deity

This part presents knowledge revealed by Shri Dakshinamurti as a deity (form). It helps to remove the ignorance that is commonly associated with the form worship.

Part II Shri Dakshinamurti as Guru

This second part provides the imagery as described using the symbolic story. It contains Dhyan shlokas with the detailed meaning and commentary.

Part III Shri Dakshinamurti as Brahman

The final part unfolds the profound knowledge contained in Dakshinamurti Stotram. Each verse is explained first with the word by word meaning. It is followed by detailed unfoldment as taught by Swamiji.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

Pujya Swami Tadatmananda's profound teachings and Pujya Swami Guhatmananda's inspirations helped this wonderful commentary to manifest in the written form. Their blessings are invaluable.

I revere my mother Smt. Usha and father late Shri Dhruva who himself was a yogi. Both shaped my spiritual up bringing right from the childhood. My wife Kanchan's continuous support was encouraging. Our 7 years old son Sumant, who is spiritual seeker at his tender age, always enquired about the progress of this book. He did numerous chanting of the Stotram. That helped me to stay focused on writing this book. Our younger daughter Yukta was a natural inspiration for me. Merely through her presence around, she helped me to keep my mind bright to manifest this writing.

Saying "Thank you" to all is a complete expression of gratitude.

I am blessed to be a son of a Yogi. I dedicate the efforts of writing this book to my father late Shri Dhruva Hari Bhise.

With reverence,

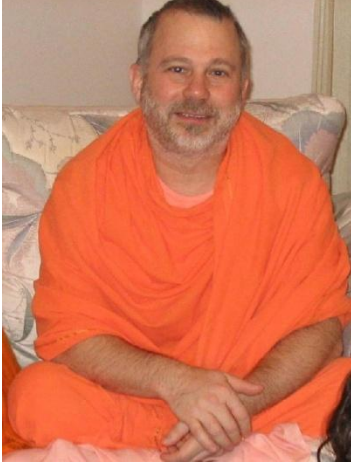
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Friday, January 13, 2012

Burbank, California, USA

About Swami Tadatmananda



Swami Tadatmananda is the founder and resident teacher of Arsha Bodha Center in Somerset, New Jersey, USA. From 1981 onwards, he studied in the USA and India under Pujya Swami Dayananda, who initiated him into a traditional Hindu monastic order on the banks of the Ganges in Rishikesh in 1993.

Swami Tadatmananda is also a Sanskrit scholar and former computer engineer. His background allows him to draw upon contemporary scientific and psychological insights while unfolding sacred Sanskrit scriptures. He thus endows the spiritual teachings of ancient India with a new relevance.

Swamiji has established Arsha Bodha Center in 2000 to give spiritual seekers an access to the wisdom (bodha) of the sages of ancient India (arsha).

Swamiji has been conducting various classes in his ashram. He has taught various Upanishads, Advaita Texts of Adi Shankara, Bhagavad Gita, Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Narada Bhakti Sutra, Padma Purana and various parts of Mahabharata. He conducts classes to teach Sanskrit. He also conducts guided Meditation sessions.

His teachings are full of warmth and humor. His style is informal and personal. He relates easily to all, including teens and children who love to sing bhajans to his guitar accompaniment.

Further details about Swamiji's teachings and about the center is available on his website: www.arshabodha.org.

Quotes from Swami Dayananda Saraswati



“The word ‘guru’ really can be used only for a person who imparts spiritual knowledge. A *guru* is the one who unfolds the knowledge that you are the whole, non-separate from the Lord.”

“OM represents the underlying order that sustains all creation, and to one who understands the true significance of the word, it is indeed the name of the Lord.”

“Nothing except knowledge can purify your heart.”

“There is no failure in life. There are only varieties of experiences. We learn from experiences and not from failure which does not exist.”

“Let the understanding be not vague, but brilliant like the Sun that is not obscured by the clouds.”

“Any one form is good enough to invoke *Isvara*. Everything is *Isvara*. This is not ordinary culture. You have to have some *punya* even to come to know about this, let alone be born into this culture.”

“It takes a certain heart, a certain way of looking at things, to worship books and tools. The concept of *Isvara* makes it unique. Nothing is separate from *Isvara*.”

“The Lord is in the form of knowledge, which is unsullied by ignorance.

“Meditation is a mental action, and becomes a means for bringing space within oneself; with reference to the ways of one’s thinking.”

“If external world is the cause for your sadness, you cannot get rid of that sadness, even if you create a new situation or go to a new place.”

“The problem is “YOU”. The solution is “YOU”.”

“Sannyasi is the one who is completely Non-Competitive.”

“Renunciation is recognizing your own nature, full and complete, never changing. The ignorance and error that cause you to be estranged from this truth can be removed only by knowledge gained through the teaching of Vedanta.”

“Any ‘*Vidya*’ is good, but if you are able to give self-knowledge to a person, that is the greatest contribution. This is exactly what Vedanta does.”

Introduction श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति

Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram is written by Adi Shankaracharya. It is most profound Advaita Vedanta (अद्वैत वेदान्त) and extra ordinarily beautiful poetry. Verses in this *stotra* are rich in Vedantic teachings. At the same time, they are presented in very elegant poetic manner. It is a wonderful prayer. It is the prayer to the Lord Shiva. It is filled with pious Vedantic teachings.

This stotram is addressed to a form of Lord Shiva known as “Dakshinamurti”. It is important to understand the meaning of *Dakshinamurti*.

The word “Dakshinamurti” is a *samasa* (composition). It has two ways to break the composition:

1. *Dakshina Murti* (दक्षिणा मूर्ति) – *Yasya murti Dakshina abhimukha* (यस्य मूर्ति दक्षिणा अभिमुख). One whose *murti* (form) is facing South. This is *Bahuvhrihi Samasa* (बहुव्रीहि समास). Here *Dakshina* means south.
2. *Dakshin Amurti* (दक्षिण अमूर्ति) – *Dakshinascha asau amurtischa iti saha Dakshinamurti* (दक्षिणश्च असौ अमूर्तिश्च इति सः दक्षिणामूर्ति). One who is *Dakshin* and also *Amurti* (both adjectives). One who is skillful and formless. This is *Karma dharaya samasa* (कर्म धारय समास). Here *Dakshina* means Skillful. Skillful in removing the ignorance.

Traditionally, south direction is considered inauspicious direction as it is associated with death, ignorance and all the things that are undesirable in life. That is why; in some tradition people are cautious of directions while sleeping. They keep head towards south. It symbolically represents that ignorance needs to be removed through knowledge.

Why does *Dakshinamurti* face south? Well, why would the Lord be afraid of anything? He can face everything without worrying about any problems.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

So the students sit facing north while *Dakshinamurti* sits facing south.

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati has specifically chosen *Dakshinamurti* Shiva as the main deity in his Ashrams. This is the main deity in his Saylorsburg, USA ashram established in 1990. About 6 years later, his ashram in Coimbatore, India also has *Dakshinamurti* as main deity. In Swami Tadatmananda's ashram at Somerset, USA also has *Dakshinamurti* as main deity.

Why did Swami Dayananda choose *Dakshinamurti* as main deity for his ashram temples even though it is not a common deity for temples? The reason is, in ashram where *Advait Vedanta* is taught, there could not be more appropriate deity. This is in reference to the second meaning above of *Dakshinamurti* – skillful in removing ignorance. *Dakshinamurti* is Lord Shiva in the form of a teacher – not merely south facing.

Shri Dakshinamurti Mantra (श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति मन्त्र)

ॐ नमो भगवते दक्षिणामूर्तये ।
मह्यं मेधां प्रज्ञां प्रयच्छ स्वाहा ॥

नमः – salutation

भगवते – unto *Bhagavan* (God)

दक्षिणामूर्तये – unto Dakshinamurti (God in the form of Dakshinamurti)

मह्यं – unto me, for my sake

मेधां – intelligence

प्रज्ञां – spiritual wisdom

प्रयच्छ – please give, please bestow, please bless

स्वाहा – Mantra for offering

This is a prayer.

Please bestow (प्रयच्छ) on me (मह्यं) the mental capacity to understand (मेधां) these teachings and to undergo the process of *Shravana* (श्रवण), *Manana* (मनन), and *Nididhyaasana* (निदिध्यासना). Please give me the spiritual wisdom (प्रज्ञां) that results in enlightenment.

Swaha (स्वाहा) is a *mantra* (मन्त्र) of offering. If you are performing a spiritual fire – *Yajna* (यज्ञ), with each offering to the fire you chant *swaha* (स्वाहा). Here *swaha*

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

comes at the end of the *mantra*. You are not performing any *Yajna* (यज्ञ). You are not offering anything to a sacrificial fire. Then what are you offering? You are offering yourself.

You offer yourself to *Bhagavan* and pray – please bless me with intelligence and spiritual wisdom to gain enlightenment by discovering the highest TRUTH.

Text - श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति ध्यानश्लोक

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मौनव्याख्याप्रकटितपरब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं

वर्षिष्ठान्ते वसद्रुषिगणैरावृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ।

A young guru, imparting knowledge of Brahman through silence, surrounded by *rishis* who are firmly established in wisdom...

आचार्येन्द्रं करकलितचिन्मुद्रमानन्दरूपं

स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥ १ ॥

...teacher of teachers, whose gesture signifies wisdom, whose nature is fullness, smiling, reveling in himself, I worship that Lord Dakshinamurti.

वटवटपिसमीपे भूमिभागे निषण्णं

सकलमुनिजनानां ज्ञानदातारमारात् ।

Seated on the ground under the banyan tree, bestowing knowledge to all the *rishis* who have assembled near him...

त्रिभुवनगुरुमीशं दक्षिणामूर्तिदेवं

जननमरणदुःखच्छेददक्षं नमामि ॥२॥

... teacher of the three worlds, destroyer of the miseries of birth and death, I bow to that Lord.

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्न संशयाः ॥ ३ ॥

Amazing! Under the banyan tree aged disciples sat around a youthful guru. He taught them in silence, yet their doubts were dispelled.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

निधये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम्

गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ ४ ॥

Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, the abode of all wisdom, teacher of the whole world, healing those who suffer from the disease of *samsara*.

ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय शुद्ध ज्ञानैकमूर्तये

निर्मलाय प्रशान्ताय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ ५ ॥

Salutations to Lord Dakshinamurti, who is the meaning of "Om", whose form is pure knowledge, who is taintless and utterly silent.

Text – श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

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विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं

पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरीवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।

To Him who sees the universe like a dream existing within oneself or like a city seen in a mirror but appearing externally due to *maya*...

यस्साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयम्

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ १ ॥

...who upon enlightenment, beholds the universe directly as his own non-dual self – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own guru.

बीजस्यान्तरिवान्कुरो जगदिदं प्राङ् निर्विकल्पं पुनः

मायाकल्पितदेशकालकलना वैचित्र्यचित्रीकृतम् ।

This universe, undifferentiated at first like a sprout within the seed, becoming manifold through maya's aspects of time and space...

मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यःस्वेच्छया

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ २ ॥

...that universe he projects by his own desire like a magician or a great yogi – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own teacher.

यस्यैव स्फुरणं सदात्मकमसत्कल्पार्थकं भासते

साक्षात्त्वमसीति वेदवचसा यो बोधयत्याश्रितान् ।

Whose reality appears as the unreal creation, who imparts immediate knowledge through the Vedic saying, “That thou art” to those who seek his refuge...

यत्साक्षात्करणाद् भवेन्न पुनरावृत्तिर्भवाम्भोनिधौ

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ३ ॥

...because of whose direct knowledge one never returns to the ocean of birth and death – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own teacher.

नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं

ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिस्पन्दते ।

Whose knowledge is like the light of a shining lamp placed inside a pot with many holes, shining forth through the sense organs like sight ...

जानामिति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत्

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ४ ॥

...who shines as consciousness, as “I know” because of which this entire creation appears – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own teacher.

देहं प्राणमपीन्द्रियाण्यपि चलां बुद्धिं च शून्यं विदुः

स्त्रीबालान्धजडोपमास्त्वहमिति भ्रान्ता भृशं वादिनः ।

Philosophers who are misguided, childish, blind, or dull, always teach falsely that the body, life, senses, active intellect, and nonexistence is the self...

मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहाव्यामोहसंहारिणे

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ५ ॥

...who destroys their great delusion born of maya's power – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own teacher.

राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशो मायासमाच्छादनात्

सन्मात्रः करणोपसंहरणतो योऽभूत्सुषुप्तः पुमान् ।

Who remains as pure existence in the deep sleep caused by maya's power, withdrawing the senses like the sun or moon covered during an eclipse ...

प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिजायते

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ६ ॥

...who upon waking remembers "I slept" – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti

in the form of my own teacher.

बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि

व्यावृत्तास्वनुवर्तमानमहमित्यन्तस्स्फुरन्तं सदा ।

The self manifest within as the ever present sense of “I” ever-that remains in every state of life and experience...

स्वात्मानं प्रकटीकरोति भजतां यो मुद्रया भद्रया

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ७ ॥

...who reveals this self to his devotees by his auspicious gesture of wisdom – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own teacher.

विश्वं पश्यति कार्यकारणतया स्वस्वामिसंबन्धतः

शिष्याचार्यतया तथैव पितृ पुत्राद्यात्मना भेदतः ।

Who sees the universe as cause and effect, master and servant, teacher and disciple, father and son, and so on ...

स्वप्ने जाग्रति वा य एष पुरुषो मायापरिभ्रामितः

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ८ ॥

...who sees all this in the waking and dream states due to maya – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own teacher.

भूर्म्भांस्यनलोऽनिलोऽम्बरमहर् नाथो हिमांशुः पुमान्

इत्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकं ।

Whose eight-fold manifestation is this sentient and insentient world of earth, water, fire, air, space, sun, moon, and conscious being...

नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोः

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ९ ॥

...beyond whose all-pervasive nature there exists nothing else for wise persons – Salutations unto him, Shri Dakshinamurti in the form of my own teacher.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

सर्वात्मत्वमिति स्फुटीकृतमिदं यस्मादमुष्मिन्स्त्व
तेनास्य श्रवणात्तदर्थमननाद्ध्ययानाच्च संकीर्तनात् ।

Because the self's all-pervasiveness is clearly revealed in this hymn,
by listening to it, reflecting upon it, meditating on its meaning, and reciting it...

सर्वात्मत्वमहाविभूतिसहितं स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः

सिद्धयेत्तत्पुनरष्टधापरिणतं चैश्वर्यमव्याहृतम् ॥१०॥

...one can gain enlightenment, effortlessly and without impediments, with its great
glory of being the self of all with eightfold blessings.

Part I

Shri Dakshinamurti as Deity

Shri Dakshinamurti reveals the knowledge (शुद्ध ज्ञानैक मूर्ति)

Shri Dakshinamurti as a form (deity) in the temple reveals the profound knowledge of Vedanta. This knowledge makes *darshan* (दर्शन) in the temple much more meaningful. It helps seekers to remove the ignorance that is commonly associated with “Murti Puja”. Swamiji’s explanation of this “*Murtyashtakam*” (मूर्त्यष्टकम्) is unparalleled. Following topics describes different aspects of deity.

Ashta murti bhrit (अष्ट मूर्ति भूत)

The form encompasses the eight fold manifestation of *Ishvara* (God) – *Ashta murti bhrit* (अष्ट मूर्ति भूत). It includes five basic elements (पञ्च महाभूत) as well as the Sun, the Moon and the Consciousness. The representation is as follows:

1. **Earth** – (भूः, पृथ्वी) represented by the whole *murti*.
2. **Water** – (अम्भांसि, आप) represented by Ganga.
3. **Fire** – (अनल, तेज) represented fire held in his upper left hand.
4. **Air** – (अनिल, वायु) represented by dreadlocks to keep hair from blowing.
5. **Space** – (अम्बर, आकाश) represented by *damaru* (डमरु). There is space inside *damaru*. Also in ancient time, it was considered that sound travels through space. Since *damaru* creates sound, it symbolically represents space.
6. **Sun** – (सूर्य, दिवाकर) represented on the crown above his head.
7. **Moon** – (हिमांशु, चन्द्र) represented on the crown above his head.
8. **Consciousness** – (पुमान्, आत्मा) represented by silence (मौनम्) – all forms and beyond.

The Sun & the Moon

At the top of the head the Sun and Moon are clearly carved. Most Dakshinamurti deities only include Moon. However, presence of the Sun is due to the reference in the stotra as 'Ashta murti bhrit' – the one who has eight forms.

Ganga

The figure over the head represents Ganga (the river Ganges). There is mythological story associated with this representation. The Ganga when it arrived on the earth, its force would have destroyed the earth. So Shiva receives the water of the Ganga in his dreadlocks to absorb that tremendous force.

Ardha narishvara (अर्धनारीश्वर)

Something that is little hard to make out are his ear rings. The right ear ring is a simple hoop. The left one is dangling. The symbolism of Ardha narishvara (अर्धनारीश्वर) is represented here in subtle way. Hoop is a male ear ring while dangling is female. So the right side of the deity represents the male – Shiva (शिव). While left side of the deity represents the female – Parvati known as Shakti (शक्ति).

Shiva (शिव) without Shakti (शक्ति) is Shava (शव – corpse). It represents that Shiva gets his energy (*shakti*) from Parvati. That is why Parvati is always associated with Shiva.

Symbol of Creation

Damaru (डमरु) is in Dakshinamurti's back right hand. It is an instrument that makes sound beats. So *Damaru* is used to represent the source of Sound. Mythologically speaking every beat of *Damaru* represents a cycle of creation called *Kalpa* (कल्प). Just as sound comes and fades away, universe comes and goes. Since *Damaru* creates a sound, it is a symbol of creation.

Another interesting fact of the sound of *Damaru* is, it creates sound beats rapidly. Mythologically each beat is a *Kalpa*. It demonstrates the fact that, from the standpoint of *Ishvara*, universe come and go as quickly as beats of the *Damaru*.

Symbol of Destruction

The Fire is in Dakshinamurti's back left hand. Fire is an agent of destruction or change.

Symbol of Sustenance

Everything in between *Damaru* (Creation) and Fire (Destruction) implies sustenance.

One God with many aspects

This symbolism is to reveal the fact that *Ishvara* (God) is all – source of creation, sustenance and destruction.

One of the silly ideas about Hindu religion is that Hinduism is polytheist. The misconception is one God called *Brahma* (ब्रह्मा) creates the universe. Second God called *Vishnu* (विष्णु) sustains the universe. The third God called *Shiva* (शिव) destroys the universe.

In reality, these are not three different Gods. These are three different aspects of ONE *Ishvara*. This TRUTH is represented very clearly in the form of Shri Dakshinamurti.

This truth is revealed in various Vedic scriptures.

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita – Kshetra Kshetradnya Vibhag Yog Ch13 – v16

अविभक्तं च भूतेषु विभक्तमिव च स्थितम् ।
भूतभर्तृ च तज्ज्ञेयं ग्रसिष्णु प्रभविष्णु च ॥ १६ ॥

The *jneyam* (Brahman) remains undivided in the beings and is seemingly divided, is the sustainer of the beings and elements (as *Vishnu* विष्णु), and is the devourer (as *Shiva* शिव) and the creator (as *Brahma* ब्रह्मा).

Atharva Veda – Ganapati Atharva Upanishad v6

त्वं ब्रह्मा त्वं विष्णुस्त्वं रुद्रस्त्वमिन्द्रस्त्वमग्निस्त्वं वायुस्त्वं सूर्यस्त्वं चन्द्रमास्त्वं ब्रह्म
भूर्भुवः स्वरोम् ॥ ६ ॥

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

You (*Ishvara*) are *Brahma* (ब्रह्मा). You are *Vishnu* (विष्णु). You are Rudra (रुद्र) / *Shiva* (शिव). You are *Indra* (इन्द्र). You are *Agni* (Fire – अग्नि). You are *Vayu* (Air – वायु). You are *Surya* (Sun – सूर्य). You are *Chandrama* (Moon – चन्द्रमा). You are *Brahm* (ब्रह्म – body of Vedas). You are *BhurBhuvahSuvah* (भूर्भुवःस्वः – three-fold worlds). You are *Om* (ॐ).

The **Rig Veda** declares: एकम् सत् विप्रः बहुधा वदन्ति | (*Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti*). That which exists is one, sages call it differently. The GOD is ONE. One here does not represent the count but the totality. The understanding of this ‘WHOLE’ is developed in a very profound way in this *stotram*.

The creation is shown symbolically in back right hand as *Damaru*. The destruction is shown symbolically in the back left hand as fire. The sustenance of the world is in between all of this, is implied.

Power

Snake is holding *Damaru* in the back right hand. Snake is represented as power called *Shakti* (शक्ति).

Swami Dayananda quite humorously explains the reasoning behind why snake as power? If you don't have arms and legs, how fast could you move? Yet snake moves very fast without arms and legs.

Source of Knowledge

Dakshinamurti's lower (front) left hand has a palm leaf book. It represents Veda – the source scriptures for Hindus. It also signifies that Shri Dakshinamurti is a teacher. In ancient days, however, there were no books, no palm leaf manuscripts. This is symbolic representation that signifies the *Ishvara* is the source of the knowledge. He is the originator of the Vedas.

The teachings of Vedanta

Dakshinamurti's lower (front) right hand gestures *Chinmudra* (चिन्मुद्रा). The index finger represents YOU as *atma* together with body, mind and senses. Thumb

represents *Brahman* (ब्रह्मन्). The teachings of Vedanta can be summarized in *Chinmudra* as the TRUTH of YOU is separate from body, mind and senses. The THUTH of YOU is non separate from *Ishvara* (ब्रह्मन्).

Strength

Shri Dakshinamurti sits with his left leg up and right leg down. This is called *Veerasan* (वीरासन). It is a position of strength, might, power and glory.

This position is very different from *Dhyaanamurti* (ध्यानमूर्ति) seating and meditating with his legs folded.

Eternal

The figure on his face shows that Dakshinamurti is young. He has no beard or no mustache. It symbolically represents the *Ishvara* is eternal (ageless).

He also has smile on the face representing that God is not affected with any situation. Hence is ever free from suffering.

Remover of Ignorance

Under the foot of Shri Dakshinamurti, there is a demon called Apasmara (अपस्मर). Apasmara literally means forgetfulness. However, here it represents ignorance. Shiva Nataraj (शिव नटराज) also has his foot on Apasmara. How appropriate that the ignorance is under *Bhagavan's* (*Ishvara's*) foot.

Ignorance is nothing to be toyed with. He has big knife in his hand. It reveals that ignorance is very powerful. Ignorance has power to make us suffer incredibly.

Ignorance is not an ordinary foe. Ignorance is a well armed foe.

Thus the big knife in the hand of Apasmara shows the dangerous nature of ignorance.

Shri Dakshinamurti as Guru

Four elderly *rishis* Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatsujata are carved in the base of the *murti*. Different *shilpies* (sculptors) sometimes carve them separately in

front of the Lord Shiva. The four disciples represent each of the four Vedas – Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Veda. It also points out the fact that Vedas are *Apaurusheya* (अपौरुषेय) – not created by human being. God is the source of knowledge that constitutes Veda. Thus Shri Dakshinamurti represents teacher (*guru*), imparting Vedic wisdom to the disciples.

Eye of Wisdom

Tilak (तीलक) represents third eye. Lord Shiva is known to have the third eye that emits fire and is capable to burn. The fire represents knowledge. Knowledge removes the ignorance. So when Lord Shiva opens up his third eye, it burns. When Lord Shiva imparts the knowledge (fire) it burns your ignorance.

Nandi (नन्दी)

Lord Shiva's *vahan* (वाहन – vehicle) is Nandi (नन्दी – bull). In the sculpture, Shiva sits on *Nandi*. It is a bull. Bull also represents power.

Mala (माला)

Lord Shiva holds *mala* (माला). *Mala* is a symbol for *sadhana* (साधना – spiritual practice). Prayers and meditation are spiritual practices in Vedic tradition. Dakshinamurti wearing *mala* represents spiritual practices are required to gain spiritual wisdom represented by *Chinmudra* (चिन्मुद्रा) – the knowledge revealed by Veda.

Rudraksha (रुद्राक्ष)

Rudraksha (रुद्राक्ष) is specifically associated with Lord Shiva. The beads in his *mala* represent *Rudraksha*. Rudra Aksha (रुद्र अक्ष) literally means eyes (अक्ष) of Shiva (रुद्र). But more likely, symbolically tears of Shiva. They are considered sacred especially for *Shaiva* (शैव) – the devotees who worship Shiva.

Shivalinga (शिवलिङ्ग)

In most traditional Shiva temples, main deity is *Shivalinga*. This is more fundamental form of Lord Shiva.

The word *linga* (लिङ्ग) is commonly misunderstood. Especially lot of sexual misunderstanding and connotations are superimposed on it.

Its real meaning is as follows:

Lingate anena (लिङ्गते अनेन) – that by which something is indicated is *linga* (लिङ्ग).

Which means *linga* is a sign or indicator. It could be sign of many things not just gender. That which indicates anything is a *linga*. Here *linga* means that which indicates presence of *Ishvara*.

Ishvara is ultimately formless. However, when you see the deity, it is a complex form. Suppose sculptor wants to show formless *Ishvara*, he still has to carve something. He has to carve a relatively formless form. The form that is without specific features. Most significantly form without human features. That is what represented by *linga* as all pervasive God.

Shaligram (शालिग्राम)

Shaligram is fossil found in some river beds. It is particular kind of fossil of ancient creature that has circular form. It appears as a *chakra* (चक्र) of Shri Vishnu. So that *Shaligram* stone marked with Lord Vishnu's *chakra* becomes a sacred object appropriate for worship.

Rudra Abhisheka (रुद्र अभिषेक)

A tradition has evolved where Lord Shiva is considered as *abhisheka priya* (अभिषेक प्रिय) – the one who is most fond of receiving ritual bathing. That is why at the time of *shiva ratri*, we bathe Lord Shiva very elaborately. In many temples रुद्र अभिषेक is done every morning. In some cases, अभिषेक is done continuously.

Trishul (त्रिशूल)

Trishul (त्रिशूल) is associated with Lord Shiva. It is a symbol of his power. He holds the trishul – the three pointers represent the three *gunas*. So he is the bearer or the wielder of the three *gunas* (सत्त्व, रजस, तमस).

Other representations

There are several different representations of Shri Dakshinamurti. Veena Dakshinamurti (वीणा दक्षिणामूर्ति) is the one who is holding *Veena* (a musical instrument), just like goddess Saraswati. Medha Dakshinamurti (मेधा दक्षिणामूर्ति) has *Chinmudra* (चिन्मुद्रा).

Sometimes Banyan tree is also shown rising above his head. Many times it is not shown.

Sometimes lower right hand is shown as *abhay hasta* (अभय हस्त). It means don't be afraid. The lower left hand is pointing down. Shri Dakshinamurti is pointing at his own foot. If you go to the feet of *Ishvara*, you need not be afraid. If you surrender to the Lord, you are protected.

Part II

Shri Dakshinamurti as Guru

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति ध्यानश्लोक

Introduction to *Dhyan Shlokas*

Shri Dakshinamurti stotra has 10 versus. The preceding *stotra* are several other verses called *Dhyan Shlokas*. These meditation versus are recited first to get an image in one's mind for the sake of prayer and meditation. It describes Shri *Dakshinamurti* in mythological and symbolic way – as the source of all spiritual wisdom, Vedic / Upanishadic wisdom, wisdom of the ancient *Rishis*. It also helps paint a picture in one's mind (iconography).

These versus are taken from various scriptures. Some may come from *Skandha Purana*.

Background on Poetry

Poetry has the ability to convey sophisticated ideas in a more highly elevated poetic sense.

It adds drama and profundity.

Poetry typically has suggestive language (analogy).

The words in poetry have multiple meanings.

To understand the poetry, one has to jumble around the words to yield proper meaning.

Mythological Story

There is a mythological story associated with Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram.

Brahmaji had four *manas putra* (mind born sons). Their names were: Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatsujata. These four *manas purta* of Brahmaji were unusually precocious. At a young age they wanted to pursue spiritual wisdom. So they left their father behind. Apparently the search went on for very long time. When they found their Guru, they were old. They literally searched for lifetime.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

They finally went to Mount Kailash to meet Lord Shiva. He appears as a young teacher. He sits at the foot of Banyan tree. These elderly *shishyas* sits near him. He proceeds to teach them in silence.

This is symbolic. The four disciples represent each of the four Vedas – Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Veda. It also points out the fact that Vedas are *Apaurusheya* (अपौरुषेय) – not created by human being. God is the source of knowledge that constitutes Veda.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

Image of Shri Dakshinamurti teaching four *Rishis*



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Verse 1 - मौनव्याख्याप्रकटित - The reality Brahman (ब्रह्मन्) is beyond words

मौनव्याख्याप्रकटितपरब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं
वर्षिष्ठान्ते वसदृषिगणैरावृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ।
आचार्येन्द्रं करकलितचिन्मुद्रमानन्दरूपं
स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥ १ ॥

इडे – I worship

दक्षिणामूर्ति – The form of lord *Shiva*

आवृतं – surrounded

ऋषिगण – group of *rishis*

अन्ते वसद – one who lived with (students)

वर्षिष्ठ – elderly

ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः – established in the knowledge of *Brahman*

युवानं – young (ageless, eternal)

तत्त्वं – The Truth (of परब्रह्म)

परब्रह्म – The ultimate reality, *Brahman* (GOD)

प्रकटित – revealed, made evident

व्याख्या – exposition, lecture (प्रवचन)

मौन – silent

करकलित – apparent (visible) in hand

चिन्मुद्रम् – a type of *mudra* (gesture)

आचार्येन्द्रं – the king (इन्द्रं) of teachers (आचार्य), the greatest teacher

आनन्दरूपं – in the form of *ananda* (Happiness, Limitless)

मुदितवदनं – whose face is pleased (smiling face)

स्वात्मारामं – one who revels in one's own self

I worship (इडे) *Dakshinamurti*. Who is *Dakshinamurti*? The one who is surrounded (आवृतं). Surrounded by whom? Surrounded by the group of four *rishis* (ऋषिगण). What kind of *rishis*? Who is living with guru (अन्ते वसद) – meaning students. In ancient time, students always lived with teacher in the ashram. These *rishis* were elderly (वर्षिष्ठ). They, because of *Dakshinamurti*'s teaching, became established in the knowledge of *Brahman* (ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः). *Dakshinamurti* himself was young (युवानं).

How did *Dakshinamurti* teach to these four *rishis*? How did *rishis* become established in *Brahman*? How did they become enlightened?

The ultimate reality (the truth of GOD) is revealed through a silent exposition (मौनव्याख्या). This is symbolic. What could silent teaching mean?

Is it possible to express the reality of *Brahman* in one or two sentences?

Is it possible to express the reality of *Brahman* in one or two books?

Any amount of teachings is not adequate to define what is *para Brahma* (पर ब्रह्म). No number of words could ever define the reality; we call God (*Ishvara* – ईश्वर). Whatever words we use, God (*Brahman* – ब्रह्मन्) is more than that. We truly have to admit that the reality that is *para Brahma* is beyond words.

There is a famous quotation from “Taittiriya Upanishad”.

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते | अप्राप्य मनसा सह |

The reality we seek is that from which words fall back, failing to grasp that reality.

This is very profound Vedantic teaching.

Does that mean words are useless? No. Words help to remove the misunderstanding. The words of Vedanta (the teachings) can not reveal *Brahman*. Ultimately they don't need to reveal *Brahman*. However, the words are useful to remove the ignorance.

So any words uttered by *Dakshinamurti* would be inadequate, insufficient and even incorrect. So what is the solution? If anything you are going say is going to be wrong, don't say anything.

मौनव्याख्या – An exposition of silence is a poetic way of saying that the TRUTH being conveyed is beyond words, beyond the reach of language.

If there is only silence, then how does the teaching take place in silence? There must be some methodology (प्रक्रिया) of teaching?

The methodology employed by *Dakshinamurti*, is *Chinmudra* – चिन्मुद्रा (also called – *Jnana mudra* ज्ञान मुद्रा). *Dakshinamurti* is described as the one who has *Chinmudra* visible in his hand. It explains how *Dakshinamurti* taught in silence.

चिन्मुद्रा (Chinmudra)

This *mudra*, in general indicates teaching. But it also yields much more profound Vedantic teachings. This *mudra* has a lot of symbolism associated with it.

The middle, ring and small fingers represent Body, Mind and Senses. They also represent Waking, Dreaming and Deep sleep states. It could also represent *Sthula Shareera* (Physical Body), *Sukshma Shareera* (Subtle Body) and *Karan Shareera* (Causal Body). It can have many such representations. In general it represents part of you which is *Kshara* (क्षर – that decays over time). The part that you experience. But there is another aspect of you in addition to those. That is YOU – the conscious observer, YOU – the awareful witness, YOU – the *sat chit ananda atma*. It represents the part of you that is *Akshara* (अक्षर – that never decays). You are not just a body, mind, sense complex. You are also a conscious being. The index finger represents that YOU, the true self – *atma*. Who are you? You are an assemblage of all four of these aspects. You are *sat chit ananda atma* accompanied by body, mind and senses. This is what makes you a *Jeeva* – an individual person.

The hand function depends upon thumb. The thumb represents that upon which everything depends. Thumb hence represents ***Brahman* – the reality because of which everything exists.**

So you, the *Jeeva*, is represented by the four fingers. The *Brahman* upon which everything depends for its existence is represented by the thumb. They seem to be very separate – distinct from each other. Where does the teaching come in? *Dakshinamurti* Shiva sits in *Chinmudra*. When he makes the *Chinmudra* he is demonstrating the Vedic teaching. In *Chinmudra*, two things have to occur.

First, the index finger has to be separated from the other three fingers. That signifies Vedantic teaching called *Atma anatma vivek* (आत्मा अनात्मा विवेक). The distinction between the self and non self. Who you are as a conscious person is utterly independent of body, mind and senses. Who you are as a conscious person is utterly independent of your waking state, dreaming state and deep sleep state. Who you are as a conscious person is utterly independent of *Sthula Shareera*, *Sukshma Shareera* and *Karan Shareera*. That you, the true YOU, the conscious self, the *sat chit ananda atma* is distinguished from the other three.

Secondly, in making the *Chinmudra*, index finger and thumb are brought together. The index finger represents *sat, chit, ananda – atman* (सत् चित् आनन्द – आत्मन्). The thumb represents *Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam – Brahman* (सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं – ब्रह्मन् – Taittiriya Upanishad II.1.1). When both are brought together in *Chinmudra*, where does one end and other begin? It is a circle. Circle has no beginning and no end. You don't distinguish one part of the circle from the other. The circle formed by the index finger and the thumb represents the non separateness of *Atma* from *Brahman*.

This is the entire teaching of Vedanta.

तत् त्वम् असि |

This is symbolically represented by *Chinmudra*. *Chit* – चित् means consciousness. As per Sanskrit grammar rules, when *Chit* (चित्) is followed by *Mudra* (मुद्रा), it becomes *Chinmudra* (चिन्मुद्रा). *Mudra* of consciousness. Also called *Jnanamudra* (ज्ञानमुद्रा) – *Mudra* of knowledge.

This is how *Dakshinamurti* taught the *rishis* in silence. He was teaching them through *mudra*.

This *mudra* symbolically represents the highest teachings of Vedanta. What could not be expressed in words was conveyed through this beautiful symbol of *Chinmudra*.

आचार्येन्द्रं

Who is teaching? – The one who is the king (इन्द्रं) of teachers (आचार्य). Shri Dakshinamurti would be the first of the teachers of Vedanta. All that we call Hinduism had its origin in Vedas. The Vedas were revealed to the ancient *rishis*. That's what the mythological story represents. The Vedas were first revealed to these four *rishis* by Shri *Dakshinamurti* Shiva. So *Dakshinamurti* becomes the first of the teachers. The teacher of all the teachers. This is symbolic. Because *Dakshinamurti* is not a historical being or *Avatar* as Shri Rama or Shri Krishna is. Shri *Dakshinamurti* is rather a symbolic teacher.

Though this is mythological story, it has a great symbolic meaning. We all know that the ancient *rishis* are the one from whom we received the Vedas. Where did the *rishis* receive it from? Ultimately all the knowledge comes from *Ishvara*. *Rishis* could only have received that Vedic wisdom from *Ishvara*. Wouldn't it be nice to have mythological story that explains how that transmission of knowledge took place? That is exactly what the story is about. The *rishis* are historic. They received the wisdom from *Ishvara*. And we have this wonderful mythological symbolic story that represents how they received this wisdom from *Ishvara*.

Dakshinamurti is also said to be in the form of *ananda* – an embodiment of happiness (आनन्दरूपं). That is connected with term (मुदितवदनं) whose face is pleased – smiling face. These verses are guidance for *Shilpi* (Sculptor) to carve appropriate form of the deity.

मुदितवदनं - Why smiling?

Why should *Bhagavan* have little hint of smile? HE is embodiment of happiness. He is beyond any worldly suffering. At the same time, he is not laughing at us.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

In Bhagavad gita also Bhagavan Shri Krishna begins to respond to Arjuna's dilemma. HE responds with a light smile – *prahasanniva* (प्रहसन्निव – Ch2, v10). Because Bhagavan knows that situation is not as bad as Arjuna thinks it is. This is the perspective. Vedanta helps us shift perspective. We get caught up in day to day struggles. These struggles / situations can be miserable and cause a lot of suffering. But there is another perspective from which these problems and difficulties are not as bad as they seem. The cause for suffering is ignorance. Shri Krishna knew that the cause for Arjuna's suffering is ignorance. And therefore, with a slight smile Shri Krishna began giving spiritual instructions to Arjuna.

In the same way Shri Dakshinamurti is pleased face (मुदितवदनं). He has a slight smile not only because he is an embodiment of happiness, not only because he is fullness (आनन्दरूपं). But because as Guru, he understands that we (his students) are suffering. However, he also knows that the cause of our suffering is not real. From stand point of *Sat Chit Anand Atma*; atma is utterly unaffected by the worst possible worldly problems. Ignorance hides the fullness of atma which renders people afraid and suffering due to ignorance. Arjuna suffered due to ignorance. Mankind suffers due to ignorance. *Shri Dakshinamurti* knows our suffering is merely due to ignorance. Therefore, he has a slight smile on his face.

स्वात्मरामं

Dakshinamurti is स्वात्मरामं – one who revels in one's own self.

Usually we look outside for sources of contentment, comfort, peace, joy and happiness. For example, to feel happy some people will watch a movie, eat or drink, visit some places.

True source for peace, love, happiness is however, not outside but lies within. *Dakshinamurti* as a teacher already knows that. Therefore, he is स्वात्मरामं. Reveling within suggests not looking outside for peace, happiness and contentment.

दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे – I worship that *Dakshinamurti*.

Verse 2 – वटवितपिसमीपे – Shri Dakshinamurti as teacher (गुरु) of the entire world

वटवितपिसमीपे भूमिभागे निषण्णं
सकलमुनिजनानां ज्ञानदातारमारात् ।
त्रिभुवनगुरुमीशं दक्षिणामूर्तिदेवं
जननमरणदुःखच्छेददक्षं नमामि ॥२॥

निषण्णं – seated

भूमिभागे – on the ground

समीपे – near

वट – Banyan tree

वितपि – that which has many branches (e.g. banyan tree, fig tree)

आरात् – right in front

मुनिजन – *Rishis*

सकल – all

आरात् – in front of

ज्ञान दातारम् – giver of the knowledge

ईशम् – Lord

गुरु – teacher

त्रिभुवन – The three worlds (entire universe)

देवं – God

दक्षं – skillful

छेद – destroy, remove

दुःख – sorrow, suffering

जनन – birth

मरण – death

नमामि – I worship, I salute, I bow

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

Shri Dakshinamurti is seated (निषण्णं) on the ground (भूमिभागे) near (समीपे) the Banyan tree (वट विटपि). He is not seating on the throne. This was the ancient tradition of teaching in India. Even today “Shantiniketan” – the school founded by Rabindranath Tagore, follows this tradition.

He is seated in front of (आरात्) all (सकल) *rishis* (मुनिजन). He is the one who gives the knowledge (ज्ञान दातृ).

Shri Dakshinamurti is the source of all spiritual knowledge. He is the Lord (ईशम्) as teacher (गुरु) of all the three worlds (त्रिभुवन). The three worlds is a common mythological expression for the whole universe. It includes the earth (भूः), the heavens (सुवः) and the space (अन्तरिक्ष) in between (भुवः) – typically refers to the entire universe. He is the God (देवं) in the form of *Dakshinamurti* (दक्षिणामूर्ति).

Shri Dakshinamurti is also described as skillful (दक्षं). He is capable of destroying or removing (छेद) sorrows / sufferings (दुःख) due to birth (जनन) and death (मरण).

I worship (नमामि) that *Dakshinamurti*.

Verse 3 – चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले – Teaching in silence yet destroying the doubts

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्न संशयाः ॥ ३ ॥

चित्रं – Amazing!

वटतरोः – of the Banyan tree

मूले – at the root

वृद्धाः – old / elderly

शिष्या – students

गुरुः – teacher

युवा – young (ageless, eternal)

गुरोस्तु – of the teacher

मौनं – silence

व्याख्यानं – exposition, teaching

शिष्यास्तु – of the students

छिन्न – to destroy, remove

संशयाः – doubts

It is amazing (चित्रं) that at the root (मूले) of the Banyan tree (वटतरोः) students (शिष्या) are old (वृद्धाः) and teacher (गुरुः) is young (युवा).

Typically teacher is expected to be elderly. This is a conventional idea, not only in the modern times but in the ancient times as well. It is however based on logical reason. We acquire wisdom as we grow older – at least we hope to acquire. So we give the benefit of doubt to seniors that they must have gained wisdom over the time. The longer and wider the beard grows the more evidence of wisdom. This is where the origin of the idea is, that the teacher would have white beard.

However, that is not the picture painted here in this *mantra*. Here teacher is young. But students are old.

That is not the only amazing thing. Another amazing thing is that the teaching (व्याख्यानं) of the *guru* (गुरोस्तु) take place in silence (मौनं).

Interestingly if we sit and teach in silence, what would be the result? Nothing. But when Shri Dakshinamurti is teaching in silence, surprisingly, the doubts (संशयाः) of the students (शिष्यास्तु) are destroyed (छिन्न). Therefore, this is astonishing (चित्रं).

Symbolism of Dhyan Mantras

The picture painted in mind through these verses is a poetic representation. What is being taught is beyond words, beyond language, beyond concepts, beyond ideas.

To represent this truth poetically or symbolically, the best way is through silence (मौनं व्याख्यानं). The *guru* teaches in silence. The teachings still take place. The teaching of Vedanta is present in *Chinmudra* (चिन्मुद्रा) – also called *Jnanamudra* (ज्ञानमुद्रा). This is the symbol Shri Dakshinamurti signifies through his hand gesture (मुद्रा).

The symbolism is provided in these initial three *mantras*. The remaining two versus of Dhyan Mantras praise Shri Dakshinamurti. It is a prayer / worship.

Verse 4 – निधये सर्वविद्यानां – Medicine for illness of worldly life

निधये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम्
गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ ४ ॥

निधि – treasure, wealth

सर्व – all

विद्यानां – among knowledge (of all knowledge)

भिषज – medicine

रोग – illness, disease

भवरोग – illness of worldly life

गुरवे – unto the *guru* (teacher)

लोक – world or people

सर्वलोकानां – of all the worlds (or people)

दक्षिणामूर्तये – to Shri Dakshinamurti

नमः – Salutations

Salutations (नमः) to the one who is the treasure (निधि) of all (सर्व) knowledge (विद्यानां). The treasure is not with reference to the material wealth such as Gold, Platinum or Diamonds. Rather, treasure among all forms of knowledge.

Is it possible for you to have a vast treasure of Gold or Diamonds and still be absolutely miserable in life? Many people are. Having material wealth is no guarantee for happiness in life. In fact it is not hard to make an argument that too much wealth will make you miserable. Obviously not enough wealth will make you suffer. But similarly, too much wealth also leads to suffering.

Since material wealth cannot guarantee peace, happiness and contentment in life, what can guarantee is spiritual wisdom. Therefore Shri Dakshinamurti is worshipped here as निधये सर्वविद्यानां – most valuable treasure among all knowledge.

Shri Dakshinamurti is also worshipped as medicine (भिषज) for illness of worldly life (भवरोग).

भवरोग - illness of worldly life

रोग means illness or disease. What is the nature of this disease called भवरोग? Good way of describing it is; we exhaust or wear ourselves out or make ourselves sick, by seeking / chasing happiness, peace and contentment in all the wrong places. Typically this wrong search takes place outside in the external world. The true source of happiness is found within one self. Shri Dakshinamurti himself is the one who revels in one's own self (स्वात्मारामं).

That is why Shri Dakshinamurti is worshipped as the medicine for this illness. He cures the भवरोग by removing the ignorance to reveal the knowledge.

Salutations are unto the teacher (गुरवे) of all the worlds or people (सर्वलोकानां) in the form of Shri Dakshinamurti.

Salutations (नमः) unto the form (मूर्ति) that is facing south – *Yasya murti Dakshina abhimukha* (यस्य मूर्ति दक्षिणा अभिमुख).

Verse 5 – ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय – Shri Dakshinamurti as one's own consciousness

ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय शुद्ध ज्ञानैकमूर्तये
निर्मलाय प्रशान्ताय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥ ५ ॥

ॐ – *Ishvara* (God)

नमः – salutations

प्रणव – name for ॐ

अर्थ – meaning

शुद्ध – pure

ज्ञान – knowledge

एक – one (only)

मूर्तये – unto the form

निर्मल – untainted

प्रशान्त – utterly peaceful

Salutations (नमः) unto that Shri Dakshinamurti who is the meaning (अर्थ) of “Om” (प्रणव). Salutations to the one who is described by the word ॐ whose form (मूर्ति) is only (एक) pure (शुद्ध) knowledge (ज्ञान). In other words, salutations to the one who is an embodiment of the knowledge.

“OM represents the underlying order that sustains all creation, and to one who understands the true significance of the word, it is indeed the name of the Lord.”

– **Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

Shri Dakshinamurti is described as taintless, free, and unaffected by anything – whatsoever.

Consciousness

This reveals that the consciousness remains unaffected by your thoughts even when you are angry, sad, depressed or frustrated. Whatever your thoughts / emotions are, your consciousness remains unaffected (निर्मल). Shri Dakshinamurti is thus understood as one's own consciousness.

Shri Dakshinamurti is also described as complete peace (प्रशान्त).

Salutations (नमः) unto Shri Dakshinamurti (दक्षिणामूर्तये).

These *Dhyan Shlokas* are technically not part of the *Stotram*. But they are traditionally chanted before the *Stotram*. It is helpful to develop an image in one's mind for the sake of prayer and meditation.

Part III

Shri Dakshinamurti as Brahman

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram written by Shri Shankaracharya is very profound Vedanta. It is a wonderful poetry as well.

Background on poetic form used in this *Stotram*

This *stotram* is written in relatively longer poetic form (छन्दस) called *shardula vikridita* (शार्दूल विक्रिडित). It has 19 syllables in each sentence. It is chanted as two separate words of 12 and 7 syllables.

In this stotram, there is at least one double meaning in each verse.

The word *maya* (माया) is used with multiple meanings in this *stotram*. As ignorance, in the first and fifth verse; as power of creation, in the second verse – first part; as magic in the second verse – second part.

The word *Jnanam* (ज्ञानं) means knowledge. This same word is also used as consciousness.

One of the beauties of this stotram is it takes the very profound teachings of Vedanta and puts it in a wonderful poetic form.

Introduction to *Stotram*

Shri Dakshinamurti Stotram is the basis for listening (श्रवण), meditating on its meaning (मनन), and contemplating (निदिध्यासना).

This is a prayer to *Ishvara* (ईश्वर) as teacher. It includes both teachers – the one on the altar in the form of Shri Dakshinamurti and the one who is teaching (an enlightened *Guru*).

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

This *stotram* is a prayer ostensibly for the sake of worshiping Shri Dakshinamurti and secondarily for worshiping any teacher as the form of God. However, Shri Shankara being the great scholarly teacher, uses his hymns wherever possible, to teach Vedanta. So this *stotram* is not merely a hymn to praise and worship Shri Dakshinamurti. But in essence it is another opportunity for Shri Shankara to teach Advaita Vedanta.

Shri Shankara takes all of the profound and complicated Vedanta and unfolds it in this poem in a delightful fashion. To understand this *stotram* in its true sense requires a Vedantic understanding and spiritual preparation – *sadhana* (साधना). Therefore this *stotram* is recommended to be studied after the study of Shri Shankara's all other Vedantic texts.

Shri Shankara uses very suggestive language to try to appeal to our feelings and emotions. This helps to convey profound teachings that ordinary words don't convey nicely.

Guru Bhakti (गुरुभक्ति)

Worshiping guru is often misunderstood. Hindus worship *Ishvara* in many forms. It can be *Murti* (idol) or in any other forms such as deity, cow, Sun, stone, river, *Guru*. Gurubhakti is NOT worship of a person. It is the worship of *Ishvara* in the form of *Guru*.

This stotram is a prayer for *Ishvara* (ईश्वर) in the following different forms:

1. Lord *Shiva* (शिव) as *Dakshinamurti* (दक्षिणामूर्ति)
2. As teacher (*Guru*)
3. As one's own consciousness

Shri Shankara uses this stotram as prayer for all the meanings using profound Vedantic teachings and incredible poetry.

Verse 1 – विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरी – Experiencing the world is Consciousness

विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं
पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरीवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।
यस्साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयम्
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ १ ॥

विश्वं – world (refers to the entire creation)

तुल्यं – similar to (equivalent of)

नगरी – a city

दृश्यमान – being seen

दर्पण – mirror

अन्तर्गतं – abiding within

निज – oneself

The entire world (विश्वं) is similar to (तुल्यं) a city (नगरी) which is being seen (दृश्यमान) in a mirror (दर्पण), but it is located within (अन्तर्गतं) oneself (निज).

The external world is experienced through the 5 basic senses of knowledge called – sense organs (ज्ञानेन्द्रिय). These senses are Eye, Ear, Skin, Tongue, and Nose. Their functioning is seeing, hearing, touch, taste and smell respectively. These senses metaphorically project its experience on the screen of the mind. This projection on mind is illumined by the CONSCIOUSNESS. Thus the external experience conveyed through the senses is known to you.

Understanding how the physiology of our senses works would help analyze this experience. Let us take an example of how does the hearing work. You hear Swamiji's words. Swamiji's mouth, tongue and vocal cords are making pressure waves in the air. It hits your ears. These pressure waves travel across the funnel on both sides of your head which captures some of those pressure waves. They funnel it inside. What's inside is very bizarre; it seems like the most unlikely contraption you can ever imagine. The sound falls on the membrane called eardrum. The membrane vibrates. There are some tiny little bones connected to those eardrums. When eardrum vibrates, the bones vibrate. These bones put the pressure on the

semi-circular canal inside your ears filled with fluid. So when eardrum vibrates you get waves in the fluid inside the inner ear in the semi-circular canal. As you hear sound, you are getting little ripples in the fluid in your ear.

So far what we have described is just the beginning, because there is no sound yet. First we had pressure waves in the air. Now you get little ripples in the fluid in the semi-circular canal. Inside the canal the walls of the canal are lined with little hairs. When the ripples come, the hairs vibrate.

It is similar to a pond having lots of plants grown inside. When there is a wave in the pond that goes through the pond, all the plants move.

In the same way when there are ripples in the fluid of your ear, all those little hairs move. Some of those hairs are little thicker. Some of them are little thinner. The thicker ones move more when you get low sound. The thinner ones move more when you get high sound. Each one of those hairs is connected to a nerve. Each nerve is connected to a certain portion of your brain. When those hairs wiggle, it stimulates the nerves which then create some activity in your brain.

Where is the sound? We now have nerves activity in your auditory nerves, creating some activity in your auditory part of the brain.

There is no sound anywhere. But somehow, as a result of this complicated process you hear sound. This hearing does not take place in your ear, not in the nerves not even in your brain. What you experience while hearing a sound is a result of ripples wiggling the hairs in you semi-circular canal that stimulates your auditory nerves. But the perception of your experience is sound.

This sound is present in your mind. There is big difference in brain and mind. Brain is physical (स्थूल), mind is subtle (सूक्ष्म). Mind is neither physical nor tangible.

The end result of this very complicated physiological process is that sound is metaphorically projected on the screen of your mind. Whatever is projected on the screen of your mind is illumined by consciousness and thus known to you.

This is true of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. All our five senses pick up their experience of the respective objects this way and project on the screen of the mind.

Everything you know about the world comes to you in the form of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell (through five senses). It creates the perception on the screen of your mind.

Entire world (विश्वं) is functionally projected only on the screen of your mind. Nothing is experienced directly. For example, you look at Swamiji in the lecture

hall and Swamiji looking at you. In your experience, nothing takes place in the lecture hall, but is the projection in your own mind (निज अन्तर्गतं).

पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरीवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया

पश्यन् – seen

आत्मनि – within oneself

बहिः – outside

इव – as though

उद्भूतं – arises

मायया – due to *maya* (माया)

यथा – just like

निद्रया – in sleep (in this context it means in dream)

The experience conveyed through the senses is actually chopped up in parts. Some part is seen, some part is heard. But you don't experience it categorically. The mind is so powerful that it creates ONE seamless experience. This one seamless experience is illusion. It is called *Maya* (माया).

The world is not an illusion. But our experience is illusion.

For example, when you watch a movie, you are seeing various lights on the silver screen. But your perception is entirely different.

You think, what you perceive is REAL. But in reality, it is complicated illusion of all things brought in by your senses and projected on your mind, creating a sense of real experience. This illusion is due to *maya*.

Maya (माया) has different meanings in different context. In this context, it means the capacity to delude you from recognizing the true experience (ignorance).

This illusion due to *maya* is in a way blessing. It allows us to interact in the world in simple uncomplicated way. For example, you don't see a person in front of you as some light form seen through your eyes or hear that person talking as some

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sound waves captured by your ears and projected on your mind. But you go through a seamless experience of seeing a person and hearing him in a meaningful way. However, this experience is still an illusion. It is not REAL.

When you are watching a movie, there is seamless illusion. You actually watch 24 still pictures in a succession every second. But you have a perfect illusion of seeing action. This illusion is due to *Maya* (माया).

One has to wake up to this reality.

The first line of this verse presented first metaphor of a city seen in a mirror.

The second line presents second metaphor – यथा निद्रया.

When you dream, your dream world seems external. But actually it only exists within your mind. This dream world seems as though exists outside (बहिः इव उद्भूतं). But in reality, it is seen (पश्यन्) within oneself (आत्मनि). Everything that is experienced in dream exists within (निज अन्तर्गतं).

यस्साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयम्

यः – One (the one who)

साक्षात् – directly

कुरुते – gets it (understands)

प्रबोधसमये – at the time of waking up

स्वात्मानम् – one's own self

एव – alone

अद्वयम् – non dual (without second, nothing else)

1. Everything that is experienced in this world is an illusion just as a city seen in a mirror.

Things that take place outside are known to us only through our experience projected on our own mind. We really don't know what is actually happening outside. In other words, our experience is our own perception. It is our own image of the world. It is our own interpretation of our experience.

2. You experience the dream. It truly is inside the mind. But when you dream, you don't know that it is all inside your mind. The moment you wake up, you realize that the world that seemed external was actually in your own mind.

If you always assumed the experience of your life is external to you, it is the dream of ignorance. When you wake up from this dream, you realize that everything you experienced has existed only in your mind and not outside. You understand that the experience of your life that you always assumed to be external was an illusion.

Also, when you wake up from the dream, you recognize that everything you experienced in the dream was YOU. For example, your dream tree is not made up of wood. It is made up of YOU – your thoughts. Sun, Moon, People, Car, House all that you see in your dream, you experience them as distinct separate external objects. When you wake up from the dream, you recognize that they were not distinct separate external objects at all. Those were all forms superimposed upon your own consciousness. It was all you. The only thing present in dream is YOU.

Suppose you wake up from dream of *samsar* (संसार) – worldly life, you realize that everything you experienced is only projected on the screen of your mind. Everything projected on the screen of your mind is ultimately CONSCIOUSNESS. Just the way everything projected on the screen of a movie theater is nothing but light.

When you come out of the dream of *samsar* (संसार) that is when you come out of ignorance, your experience is *स्वात्मानम् एव अद्वयम्* – yourself only and nothing else. Everything in your mind is in the form of thoughts, memories and emotions. All of it is revealed to you due to consciousness.

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Upon enlightenment (प्रबोधसमये) you wake up. You come out of worldly life. Everything you experience is yourself only and nothing else. It is all CONSCIOUSNESS (you).

यः is referred to दक्षिणामूर्ति. It also refers to the one who gets it directly (understand) or the one who is enlightened (referring to the guru).

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ १ ॥

तस्मै – unto that

मूर्ति – form / मूर्तये – to that form

श्रीगुरुमूर्तये – unto the one who is in the form of *guru* (गुरु)

नमः – salutations

इदं – this

श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये – unto *Dakshinamurti* (दक्षिणामूर्ति)

The one who (यः) understands it directly (who is enlightened), this (इदं) salutation (नमः) is unto that (तस्मै) form – the one on the altar, the one who is teaching and the consciousness, who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

This prayer is to श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति. But it is also to the enlightened *guru* who recognizes all this experience is oneself. If *guru* recognizes it, disciples can also recognize. Guru's vision or understanding is conveyed to disciples.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति represents enlightened *guru*. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana and Sanatsujata – these four *rishis* are metaphoric representation of disciples in the class.

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति also represents the consciousness due to which everything is known to you.

Drishti srushti vada (दृष्टि सृष्टि वाद)

In this first verse, from the experiential standpoint you discover that the world exists in your mind. The world exists because you experience it. Usually we think the other way around.

The conventional perspective is world exists therefore you experience it. This is called *srushti drishti vada* (सृष्टि दृष्टि वाद). *Srushti* means creation. *Drishti* means seeing. *Vada* means doctrine or teaching. It means, you see the world because it has been created.

But the presentation in this first verse is opposite. The creation (सृष्टि) exists because you see (दृष्टि) it. The world in the mind exists because you are there to experience it. If you are not there to witness the world, the world in your mind would not exist. What you directly experience is only the contents of your mind.

So the vision conveyed by the first verse is *drishti srushti vada* (दृष्टि सृष्टि वाद). It is opposite to the conventional perspective.

The second verse flips to the conventional perspective.

Verse 2 – बीजस्यान्तरिवान्कुरो – Creator and Creation is Ishvara

बीजस्यान्तरिवान्कुरो जगदिदं प्राङ् निर्विकल्पं पुनः
मायाकल्पितदेशकालकलना वैचित्र्यचित्रीकृतम् ।
मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यःस्वेच्छया
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ २ ॥

जगत् – world

इदं – this

प्राङ् – at first, before

निर्विकल्पं – without any qualities, undifferentiated

बीज – seed

अन्तः – inside

ईव – just as

अङ्कुर – sprout

पुनः – then (again)

The previous verse refers to the ‘entire world’ (विश्वं). This verse refers to ‘this world’ (इदं जगत्). This verse metaphorically explains the creation as well as the cycles for creation and dissolutions.

Before (प्राङ्) the creation, this world was undifferentiated (निर्विकल्पं). But then (पुनः) just as (ईव) sprout (अङ्कुर) comes from inside the seed (बीजस्य अन्तः), this world (इदं जगत्) has come forth.

Ancient rishi’s vision of creation is not the same as the modern scientists. They knew that something existed before the big bang (explosion that started universe). Scientist calls it singularity. We probably don’t have the right language or scientific concept to describe it. However, the world comes from something. It did

not come from nothing. So it is more of a transformation rather than the creation. In the vision of Vedanta, the unmanifest becomes manifest. That is meant by creation.

प्राङ् (before) here means logically before this world manifested. It does not refer to the time. Time itself began with the manifestation of this world (big bang).

If you open a seed, you don't see the sprout. In fact, to your naked eyes, the seed seems undifferentiated (निर्विकल्पं). But from that undifferentiated seed, sprout comes forth (manifests). The seed is the cause for the sprout. This metaphor very appropriately explains the creation.

Knowledge (निमित्त कारण) and Material (उपादान कारण)

Any active creation requires two basic qualities – Knowledge (निमित्त कारण) and Material (उपादान कारण).

The seed is the material for the sprout. Interestingly, from the brown seed, light green sprout comes out. Similarly a brown cow eats green grass and produces white milk. This is the miracle of the creation.

From this brown featureless seed, comes a green sprout. The seed contains the material for the sprout (अङ्कुर). Also the seed must be intelligent enough to cause the creation. The intelligence of the seed is through genetics – through its DNA.

This metaphor is used for this world (इदं जगत्). The world is compared to sprout. Just as the sprout comes forth from the seed, this universe sprouted forth from its creator (ईश्वर).

Ishvara (ईश्वर) is both, the material for this universe and the knowledge for the creation. This world is like a sprout which is within the seed. This world was at first featureless. But then we have cycles of manifest – creation (सृष्टि) and

unmanifest (प्रलय). Just as the sprout comes forth from the seed, eventually that sprout will go away but will leave behind more seeds. There is cycle once again.

Similarly this universe, prior to (प्राङ्) this creation was unmanifest. Prior to that, manifest, thus there is cycle after cycle.

How does the universe become manifest? The answer is:

मायाकल्पितदेशकालकलना वैचित्र्यचित्रीकृतम्

चित्रीकृतम् – painted

वैचित्र्य – many colors

कलना – causing, giving rise

देश – space

काल – time

कल्पित – projected

माया – creative capacity

This universe was painted (चित्रीकृतम्) using many colors (वैचित्र्य), by giving rise (कलना) to time (काल) and space (देश). How did all this happen? The universe was projected (कल्पित) by creative capacity (माया) of *Ishvara*.

Maya (माया) has different meanings in different context. In the first verse, it meant the ignorance. Here it has different meaning. It is the POWER of CREATION also called creative capacity.

Ignorance is very powerful in creating. Ignorance can easily create a snake out of string. That is why *maya* also means ignorance.

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The first half part of this second verse above talked about the creation and the marvel of the active creation. The second half below further talks about the creation that pre suppose a creator.

मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यःस्वेच्छया

मायावी – magician

ईव – like

विजृम्भयति – the one who expanse (विजृम्भन means yawning, to open, to expand)

अपि – indeed

महायोगी – one who is endowed with unusual capacities and powers

ईव – like

यः – the one who

स्व – own

इच्छया – desire (*sankalpa* संकल्प)

The one who (यः) indeed (अपि) by one's self (स्व) *sankalpa* or desire (इच्छया) like a great yogi (महायोगी ईव) or like a magician (मायावी ईव), expanse the universe (विजृम्भयति).

Shri Dakshinamurti in this verse is referred to as the one who causes the expansion of this entire universe. How? Through his *maya* (माया).

Here *maya* has yet another meaning. In common parlance, *maya* here means magic. मायावी means magician. Just like the magician (मायावी ईव), HE expands the universe (विजृम्भयति). This is the metaphor used to impart the profound Vedanta. It does not mean *Ishvara* is magician. Rather it points out an interesting

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fact. Whatever magician creates is not as real as the magician. The magician is more real than his or her creation.

Same is true with reference to the first verse. YOU are more real than the world you create in the dream.

Ishvara is compared here to a magician because *Ishvara* is more real than the creation.

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ २ ॥

The one who (यः) creates this universe, unto that (तस्मै) *Ishvara* (श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति) this (इदं) salutation (नमः), who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Verse 3 – यस्यैव स्फुरणं – You are non-separate from the Lord

यस्यैव स्फुरणं सदात्मकमसत्कल्पार्थकं भासते
साक्षात्त्वमसीति वेदवचसा यो बोधयत्याश्रितान् ।
यत्साक्षात्करणाद् भवेन्न पुनरावृत्तिर्भवाम्भोनिधौ
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ३ ॥

यस्य – whose

एव – indeed

स्फुरणं – light, pulsation (refers to capacity of creation)

सत् – true

आत्मकं – real

असत् – unreal

कल्पार्थकं – as though

भासते – appears

Whose (यस्य) (*Ishvara* – the source of universe) pulsating power (स्फुरणं) is indeed (एव) truly (सत्) real (आत्मकं) (absolutely real), appears (भासते) as though (कल्पार्थकं) unreal (असत्).

When we look around, we see different forms e.g. cloth. The cloth seems real. But it is just the form. It is not real. The threads are more real. If we pull apart the threads, the cloth will disappear, threads would remain. So relative to the cloth, threads are real. Relative to the threads, fibers are real. However, fiber is also a form. They are made of cells.

This way, you can get down to the level of molecules, atoms and particles. Whatever level you come down to, you can break it further. Electrons and Protons have been broken down to quarks. The point is whatever you discover scientifically, can be broken down further.

From standpoint of reality, whatever form you see, appears real, but is unreal. We cannot find a real basis. We find all the forms. Forms are not real. The reality because of which the form exists is real. This applies to the entire universe.

Whatever we look at seems real, but upon analysis we discover that it is unreal.

The form cannot exist without the contents. There must be some underlying reality because of which the form exists. You cannot discover this underlying reality using a microscope. You need to discover through someone's help who has the knowledge of the reality, who has understood the TRUTH.

How that person would make you discover the TRUTH?

साक्षात्त्वमसीति वेदवचसा यो बोधयत्याश्रितान्

यः – the one who

बोधयति – teaches, makes you discover

वेदवचसा – through the teachings of the Veda

साक्षात् – directly, immediately

तत् – that

त्वम् – you

असि – are

इति – thus

आश्रितान् – who sought refuge

Shri Dakshinamurti (guru) is the one who (यः) thus (इति) leads to discover (बोधयति) directly (साक्षात्) 'you are that' (तत् त्वम् असि) through the teachings of the Veda (वेदवचसा) to those who seek his refuge (आश्रितान्).

The guru wields the teachings of the Veda. The guru uses the scriptures as a road map to lead you along a path of discovery. The teacher makes you discover the TRUTH (absolute reality) that he or she has discovered.

What do you finally discover? The irony is that the scientists are looking through the microscope. They are looking for the reality because of which the thread exists. But the reality cannot be found on that side of the lens. The reality can only be found on the other side of the lens. That is through a process of self enquiry, you have an opportunity to discover the reality of all. Brahman is the truth of everything. But where Brahman can be discovered? Ishvara pervades the universe. But where is the Ishvara's presence felt? It is within one's own self. This is the uniqueness of Vedantic perspective.

How would guru make you understand the reality? Through the Vedantic teachings 'you are that' (तत् त्वम् असि). 'That' here means the underlying reality because of which this world of forms exists. Ishvara's pulsating active creation giving existence (सत्ता) and appearance (स्फूर्ति), is discovered through the knowledge – 'you are that' by looking within.

The TRUTH of you is the TRUTH of everyone. This is discovered directly / immediately (साक्षात्). This is not a dogma or doctrine. This is not a matter of belief or faith. This is something you discover directly. The reason you discover directly is it is right within you. Anything that is remote is known indirectly. For example a temple in Gangotri in Himalayas is known to you indirectly. Suppose the temple is right in front of you, it is known to you directly. It is present in your experience. YOU are in your experience. You are not remote from your experience. Your true nature is not remote from your experience. That true nature 'Atma' happens to be identical with the reality because of which everything exists. Therefore, Brahman can be known directly as 'Atma' – the TRUTH of yourself being identical with the TRUTH of everything.

Whom is this taught to? To those who have sought refuge. The one who look up to the guru as the one who can solve the problem of suffering. Refuge is the place we go for safety, security, comfort, peace. The guru is the one who can teach you in

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such a way that you can find peace, comfort, safety and security. Guru can remove any fear, and can finally remove all your suffering.

Following is the result of Shri Dakshinamurti's teachings:

यत्साक्षात्करणाद् भवेन्न पुनरावृत्तिर्भवाम्भोनिधौ

यत् – when

साक्षात्करण – immediate recognition

भवेत् – suppose

न – no

पुनः – again

आवृत्तिः – return (rebirth)

भव – worldly life

अम्भस् – water

निधि – vast

When (यत्) you might (भवेत्) understand it due to immediate recognition (साक्षात्करण) then there is no (न) rebirth (पुनरावृत्ति) into the vast ocean (निधि) of the water (अम्भस्) of worldly life – the ocean of suffering (भव).

Your thoughts are known to you because of consciousness. You exist because of consciousness. Suppose you really understand that this consciousness is the same consciousness that is the reality of this universe. Then there is no return for you in this world. There is no rebirth. The concept of rebirth does not sound so bad. However, Swami Dayananda says that with rebirth, not just you get to born again and again but you have to die again and again. Dying once is very difficult. Dying again and again would be extremely grim.

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The knowledge of Brahman makes you free from suffering in this life. It also liberates you from rebirth in to this vast ocean of suffering (भवसागर). You get the knowledge when your guru instructs you using the teachings of the Veda. Guru imparts knowledge using the *mahavakya* such as तत् त्वम् असि to lead you to discover the truth which is not remote. The truth that is here and now, available for the discovery. The guru is the one who makes you recognize the truth. Guru is the one who wakes you up from the illusion of thinking this world is the ultimate reality. The guru wakes you up into the reality.

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ३ ॥

This (इदं) salutation (नमः) is unto that (तस्मै) who imparts the knowledge that you are non-separate from the Lord, who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Verse 4 – नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं – Consciousness alone shines

नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं
ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिस्पन्दते ।
जानामिति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत्
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ४ ॥

This verse stands out due to the metaphor (द्रष्टान्त) it uses. The metaphor used here is a lamp placed inside a pot (घट). The pot has been pierced with many holes. You see the beams of light streaming out of the pot through those holes. Shri Shankara uses this beautiful imagery as a very profound metaphor.

नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं

भास्वरं – shining

प्रभा – light

दीप – lamp

महादीप – great lamp (refers to Consciousness)

स्थित – placed

उदर – belly

घट – pot

छिद्र – holes, pierced

नाना – many

This whole sentence is one word. In Sanskrit language it is known as *samasa* (समास).

Jnanam typically means knowledge. But, it also means Consciousness.

For example in famous Vedantic term सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं, ज्ञानं means Consciousness (ब्रह्मन्).

Jnanam in this verse refers to Consciousness. This Consciousness is shining (भास्वरं) like the light (प्रभा) of a lamp (दीप). It is not an ordinary lamp, but a great lamp (महादीप). It is Consciousness. महा literally means big. But here it does not mean just big. It has a very different perspective that is explained ahead.

This lamp is placed (स्थित) in the belly (उदर) of a pot (घट) that is pierced (छिद्र) in many places (नाना).

This light of Consciousness is like the lamp placed in the belly of a pot. The pot is pierced with many holes. The light streams out from the pot. If something is near the pot, it is illumined. But it is illumined only if it is in the stream of the light coming out of the pot. In the same way, if something is in the way of your eye, it is illumined. If it is behind you, it would not get illumined. So it has to be within the scope of these beams of light.

The beams of light leaving our eyes, leaving our ears, leaving out of our senses going out in the world, contacting the sense objects and returning the knowledge of the sense objects to us. This is the concept of sense perception.

This means the source of Consciousness is within us. If I am aware of the things outside, there must be some means for my Consciousness to contact the external object and return with the knowledge of that object. This is completely in conformance of our experience. Our Consciousness does in a very real sense pick up the knowledge of external objects and brings it back to us. The light of Consciousness not only illumines your mind but travels out to bring the knowledge.

This light of Consciousness is extra ordinary because it is present simultaneously in every living being – every pot so to speak. What makes it extra ordinary is that the same light of Consciousness is present behind thoughts of every one. That is why it is called *mahadeep* (महादीप).

To understand this clearly, please note that my thoughts are known to me and your thoughts are known to you. There is no difference in the way thoughts are known.

Let us introduce the concept of “knownness”. The objects have knownness. Your thoughts have knownness. My thoughts have knownness. But the “knownness” (the way thoughts are known) of your thoughts is no different than the knownness of my thoughts.

Consciousness does not have any particular qualities. For example, there is no male Consciousness and female Consciousness. There is no short Consciousness and tall Consciousness. There is no Indian Consciousness and American Consciousness. There is no black Consciousness and white Consciousness. Consciousness is featureless (निर्गुण).

You cannot distinguish between your Consciousness and my Consciousness. They appear to be identical. That is why Consciousness is called *mahadeep* (महादीप).

One Consciousness is simultaneously present in every pot, simultaneously illumining every mind (omnipresent).

There is a common question that if my Consciousness is the same as your Consciousness, then why don't I know your thoughts?

First of all, thank God for having this natural law. It is God's blessings that we do not know other's thoughts. It is difficult to deal with even one's own thoughts. What to speak about dealing with other's thoughts?

It is important to address this question. If my Consciousness and your Consciousness is identical, why don't I know your thoughts? The one who is asking the question is not the Consciousness. The one who is asking this question is mind. And my mind is separate from your mind. Everyone's mind is in their own pot. Therefore, even though it is the same Consciousness that illumines your thoughts and my thoughts, the thoughts belong to the mind. Mind is absolutely distinct. Hence, the thoughts that belong to one mind are not known to the other mind.

Nonetheless, one Consciousness illumines all. Not only the thoughts, but your Consciousness also streams out from your eyes, streams out through your ears, through your nose, through your mouth, through your skin and contact everything around it. This is how we come to know the world around us. This knowledge (ज्ञानं) is known as Consciousness.

ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिस्पन्दते

ज्ञानं – Consciousness

स्पन्दते – throbs, streams out

बहिः – outside

द्वारा – by means of

करण – sense organs

चक्षुः – eyes

आदि – et cetera (etc.)

यस्य – whose, for whom

This Consciousness (ज्ञानं) streams (स्पन्दते) out (बहिः) through (द्वारा) sense organs (करण) such as eye (चक्षुः) etc (आदि). E.g. ears (श्रोत्रं), nose (घ्राण), tongue (जिह्वा), and skin (त्वक्).

‘यस्य’ connects back to the guru.

जानामिति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत्

जानामि – I know

इति – thus

तम् – that

एव – alone

भान्तं – shines

अनुभाति – shines after (reflects)

एतत् – this

समस्तं – entire

जगत् – world

Consciousness is the one because of whom (यस्य) one can thus (इति) say “I know” (जानामि). You can’t say “I know” in the absence of Consciousness.

That (तम्) alone (एव) shines (भान्तं) and this (एतत्) entire (समस्तं) world (जगत्) shines (भाति) after (अनु). ‘That’ refers to Consciousness in the form of Shri Dakshinamurti as well as the Guru who imparts this knowledge to the seekers.

Anu (अनु) means after. *Bhati* (भाति) means shines. What is meant by ‘shines after’?

The Sun shines and the Moon also shines. But the Moon shines differently. The Sun has its own source of illumination. The Moon does not have its own source of illumination. But it shines after the Sun. It reflects the light received from the Sun.

सूर्यः भाति चन्द्रमस् अनुभाति ।

The Moon is known to you because of the Sun. If there was no Sun, you would not know the Moon.

Similarly, this entire world is known because of the Consciousness. The Consciousness shines upon the entire world. The entire world is illumined by Consciousness. Therefore the world is available for perception – available to be known.

Illumining the world would be understood in two ways.

One is through our own sense organs. We illumine little portion of the world (दीप).

Secondly the Consciousness that pervades the universe illumining everything (महादीप).

This is very profound teaching. The reference to this teaching is found in many Vedic source scriptures such as Katha & Mundak Upanishad and Bhagavad Gita as mentioned below.

Katha Upanishad 2.2.15

Mundak Upanishad II-ii-10

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।
तमेव भान्तं अनुभाति सर्वं
तस्य भासा सर्वं इदं विभाति ॥

There the Sun does not shine, nor do the Moon or Stars. There this lighting does not shine; what to speak about this Fire?

That alone (Consciousness) shines, everything shines after it; by the light of that awareness (Consciousness), entire universe is illumined (made manifest).

Shrimad Bhagavad Gita – Purushottam Yog Ch15 – v6

न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः
यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥

Neither the Sun, nor the Moon, nor Fire, illumines that (Consciousness) having gone to which (gaining the knowledge), they do not return (ignorance is destroyed). That is my limitless abode (That liberates for ever).

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ४ ॥

This (इदं) salutation (नमः) is unto that (तस्मै) Consciousness – that (तम्) alone (एव) shines (भान्तं) illumining the entire cosmos, who is in the form of guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Verse 5 – देहं प्राणमपीन्द्रियाण्यपि चलां – Remover of the Ignorance

देहं प्राणमपीन्द्रियाण्यपि चलां बुद्धिं च शून्यं विदुः
स्त्रीबालान्धजडोपमास्त्वहमिति भ्रान्ता भृशं वादिनः ।
मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहाव्यामोहसंहारिणे
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ५ ॥

वादिनः – anyone having opinion

अहं – I

इति – thus

विदुः – they know

देहं – body

प्राणः – life-force, energy

अपि – also

इन्द्रियाणि – senses

चलां – active

बुद्धिं – intellect (in this context mind)

च – also, and

शून्यं – non existence

भृशं – all the time

भ्रान्ता – deluded

Everyone has opinion (वादिनः). However, this verse is specifically refers to opinion on the self – opinion about who am I. Interestingly when someone has opinion, they do not say it is their opinion. They say it is what it is. They claim what they know (विदुः) is the absolute truth. They also express their opinion or

teach others all the times (भृशं). People having opinion on spiritual matters are referred to as philosophers here. In reality, opinions are typically based on individual's orientation.

This verse refers to different opinions about 'I am this' (अहं इति).

Some people have opinion about body (देहं). They opine 'I am this body'.

देहं अहं इति |

Materialistic people have the opinion that the 'real' in this world is stuff (matter). Therefore they think what is real about 'me' is this body (देहं).

Similar to modern materialists, there were ancient materialists. They were called Cārvāka (चार्वाक). It is a philosophical school of materialism. Their philosophy about this world is 'what you see is what you get'. They opine the world is real. These philosophers (वादिनः) say the body is real 'I'.

There are other philosophers who say 'I am the life-force' (प्राणः).

प्राणः अहं इति |

Also (अपि) some others say 'I am the senses' (इन्द्रिय).

इन्द्रियाणि अहं इति |

Hedonists are such people, who just want to enjoy. They seek pleasure and happiness through senses. They just want to eat, drink, watch Television / movies etc.

Many others say 'I am the active intellect'.

चलां बुद्धिं अहं इति |

Lot of scientists / modern people thinks that they are the powerful mind or intellect.

Others say 'I am the non existence'.

शून्यं अहं इति ।

On the surface it sounds ridiculous to say that I am non existence. However, the people who say that are not ridiculous. They are sophisticated philosophers. Many happen to be Buddhists. They have a doctrine called ‘Emptiness’ (शून्यवाद). This doctrine says there is no *atma* (आत्मा). That is a living being is an assemblage of body, mind, senses, intellect etc. This assemblage without soul is a sentient being. This is *shoonyavada* (शून्यवाद) also called *nairatmavada* (नैरात्मवाद).

These different types of philosophers mentioned above expresses their opinion all the time (भृशं). The reason behind their marketing about their opinion is that they are deluded (भ्रान्ता). They are confused. Not surprisingly, their opinions are based on their own personal experience. It is based on their own perspective. And almost invariably it is not the full truth.

You can have the opinion about the politics, about economics, about anything. And your opinion probably expresses some truth. Your opinion probably does not express the whole truth. Every opinion would probably have its limitation and have some errors. According to Shri Shankara all of such people having opinions (वाद) or doctrines are confused (भ्रान्ता:).

Vedas are the means of knowledge (प्रमाणम्). They represent the complete truth. The truth is not expressed by opinions of deluded people.

Shri Shankara describes type of confused people having all these different opinions.

स्त्रीबालान्धजडोपमास्त्वहमिति भ्रान्ता भृशं वादिनः

स्त्री – women

बाला – children

अन्ध – blind

जड – dull

उपमा: – similar

Types of people mentioned above (उपमा:) are deluded (भ्रान्ता). They have opinion (वादिनः) all the time (भृशं) about who I am (अहं इति).

Shri Shankara includes women. Let us understand the background for that. This *stotram* was written in ancient time. We have to admit that most cultures are andro centric up until modern times. So this is just a statement that happens to be andro centric.

Shri Shankara lived 1200 years ago. He was born in Kerala. He lived in very traditional settings in India. His world was andro centric. His world was of *Sanyasis* who were all men. So that was his orientation. That was his perspective. This statement should simply be taken as the product of his time and culture.

Also during that time, women were mostly living household life due to safety and security reasons. The Vedantic teachings were accessible only to those who go out and lived with *guru* in *gurukul*. Without these teachings, a person is not generally able to get this supreme knowledge. So naturally women in those days were deprived from having access to this knowledge. So this statement also represents those people who have not gained this knowledge, thus are deluded.

Other type of people who are considered deluded are children (बालाः) or those who are childish such as some narrow minded philosophers.

Blind (अन्ध) is also included for the people that are not in physical sense but knowledge wise blind to the reality. Those people who can't see the TRUTH.

Stupid (जड) are the people who can't think properly.

All these people are deluded. The problem is they are not just deluded (भ्रान्ता). But they have their strong opinion (वादिनः). And they share or teach that to others. It

impacts others. If you are in the presence of negative people who are always miserable, complaining, negative, pessimistic; it does impact you negatively.

The world is full of such deluded people. So almost everyone will tell you that this body is me or life-form is me or senses are me. These are common perspectives. As a Vedantin, you live in a world of non Vedantin. You live surrounded by people who don't share Vedantic perspective. Their conclusions are very different from yours. Their influence can cause confusion. So we need help to remove those wrong conclusions. We find that in the last part of the verse.

मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहाव्यामोहसंहारिणे

संहारिणे – removes

मोह – delusion

व्यामोह – complete delusion

महा – the great

कल्पित – projected

विलास – play (in this context jumbled)

शक्ति – power, capacity

माया – *maya*, ignorance

This is another single long compound – *samasa* (समास). Shri Dakshinamurti removes (संहारिणे) the great (महा) complete delusion (व्यामोह) (extreme ignorance). The wrong conclusions are particularly problematic because it gets projected (कल्पित) on the mind. That causes thoughts to get jumbled (विलास). विलास literally means play. विलासित means that which is played with or disturbed or turned upside down. This great confusion gets projected into our lives. It causes complete jumble. The impact of the jumble is so strong that we wrongly conclude this body is real and *satchidananda atma* (सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा) is not.

It is a wrong conclusion that *Satchidananda atma* is not real but a concept. Such conclusion is based on complete ignorance. The reality is completely opposite. *Satchidananda atma* is real; everything else such as body, mind, and senses is unreal.

People say existence of unborn, uncreated, unchanging Self is not real. This is विलास. Understanding of real and unreal is jumbled. What could cause this jumble? The capacity (शक्ति) of *maya* (माया – ignorance). While referring to an individual, *maya* means ignorance.

The whole expression मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहाव्यामोह means ignorance.

Ignorance - the only evil

Why Shri Shankara is using so many adjectives for ignorance? Why is he describing ignorance as something so horrible? The reason, ignorance is so horrible.

Why are there so many wars? Why would one person kill another? Why there are so many dirty politics at work? Why there are indifferences in community? Why there are strained relationships within families? Look at the social problems in the world – not just today but throughout the history. Problems of discrimination, problems like unfairness built into the society, caste distinction, terrorism – the sole cause for all these problems is nothing but IGNORANCE.

One of the most profound but incredibly underappreciated aspects of the Hindu Vedic tradition is the understanding of evil as one's own ignorance. Many theologies consider evil as external power or other people.

From Vedantic perspective of ancient *rishis*, there is no evil person. Every person is innately divine. However, divine people seem to be capable of doing horrible action because of ignorance.

All the horrors of life at worldly level such as war; are due to ignorance – considering others as evil. At individual level all the human suffering is due to ignorance, but a different kind of ignorance. This personal ignorance is the failure

to recognize your own divinity. The non recognition of the Self that you are *satchidananda atma* (सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा), leads to individual suffering.

Guru – the remover of the ignorance

Ignorance can be removed. Who can remove the ignorance? Knowledge. But the knowledge does not generally come from nowhere. Knowledge generally comes from a source. This source could be a teacher (*guru*).

Just as in the presence of light, darkness goes away, the knowledge of the true self removes the ignorance (the cause for all human suffering).

गुकारस्त्वन्धरो वै रुकारस्तन्निवर्तकः ।
अन्धकारनिरोधित्वाद् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ॥

The syllable ‘gu’ (गु) stands for darkness (of ignorance) and ‘ru’ (रु) represents its remover. A *guru* (गुरु) is so called because he removes the ignorance.

That is why in Hindu tradition all the teachers – whether spiritual or academic, are revered. Every teacher is empowered to remove the ignorance. In more simple sense, it is with the help of the teachers that we come up in life. The quality of our lives is determined largely by our education. Therefore in Hindu tradition there is tremendous respect given to the teachers.

Pujya Swami Dayananda says, “Any ‘Vidya’ (knowledge) is good, but if you are able to give self-knowledge to a person, that is the greatest contribution. This is exactly what Vedanta does.”

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ५ ॥

This (इदं) salutation (नमः) is unto that (तस्मै) who removes (संहारिणे) the ignorance, who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Verse 6 – राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशो – Consciousness is present in deep sleep

राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशो मायासमाच्छादनात्
सन्मात्रः करणोपसंहरणतो योऽभूत्सुषुप्तः पुमान् ।
प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिजायते
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ६ ॥

राहु – *Rahu* (name of the planet)

ग्रस्त – grasped

दिवाकर – Sun

इन्दु – Moon

सदृशः – just like

समाच्छादनात् – completely covered

माया – ignorance at total (समष्टि) level

यः – the one who

अभूत् – remains

पुमान् – person

सुषुप्तः – sleeping (in deep sleep)

करण – sense organs (five sense organs and inner sense organ – अन्तःकरण)

उपसंहरणतः – because of withdrawal

उपसंहार – withdrawing

सन्मात्रः – pure existence (सत् मात्रः)

This verse describes one of the three states of mind called deep sleep (सुषुप्तिः). The verse that follows after this (seventh verse) refers to the remaining two states – dream (स्वप्न) and waking (जागृति).

The metaphor used here is eclipse of the Sun and the Moon. In ancient time, *Rishis* knew that the Sun never moves. The earth revolves around the Sun. The phenomenon of eclipse was however, described in an interesting way. They had a concept of hidden planet called Rahu (राहु). It was envisioned as a cosmic snake, in mythological way. Rahu was the head of this cosmic snake and Ketu (another planet) was its tail. This cosmic snake would sneak up on the Sun and devour it temporarily.

राहुग्रस्त – An eclipse of the Sun and the Moon is the metaphor used here for the deep sleep.

When you can't see the Sun or the Moon during an eclipse does it stop shining? You can't see it shining, but it still shines.

In deep sleep, there is a total eclipse, in the sense that there is absolute darkness on the screen of your mind. Yet the shining continues. The illumination of the mind continues. Consciousness shines – unabated, unimpeded, unchanged.

The Consciousness shines during your waking state of mind, during dream state and it shines identically during deep sleep; illumining the absence of activities of your mind,

Just like (सदृशः) the Sun (दिवाकर) and the Moon (इन्दु) which is grasped (ग्रस्त) by Rahu (राहु) still shines during eclipse (राहुग्रस्त). Similarly a person (पुमान्) who (यः) is in deep sleep (सुषुप्तः), because of the withdrawal (उपसंहरणतः) of the senses (करण), his mind is turned off. The screen of the mind goes dark, so to speak.

The senses here refer to the five *Jnanendriya* (ज्ञानेन्द्रिय): eyes (चक्षुः), ears (श्रोत्र), nose (घ्राण), tongue (जिह्वा), and skin (त्वक्). It also includes the inner sense organ

called *antahkaran* (अन्तःकरण). *Antahkaran* has four faculties. That includes Mind (मन), Intellect (बुद्धि), Memory (चित्त), Ego (अहङ्कार). However, in general *antahkaran* refers to mind.

This withdrawal of mind and senses is caused by *maya* (माया). *Maya* here requires another lofty understanding.

There are two standpoints – individual (यष्टि) and whole or total (समष्टि).

There are two perspectives as well. One is at physical elements perspective (स्थूलभूत) – both individual and whole (aggregate). Second is at subtle elements perspective (सूक्ष्मभूत) – both individual and whole.

The ignorance (अज्ञान or अविद्या) is also seen from the standpoint of individual and whole.

From the standpoint of the individual, it is individual's ignorance – just called ignorance (यष्टि अविद्या).

From the standpoint of the all sentient being of the cosmos, it is aggregate ignorance – called *maya* (समष्टि अविद्या).

At individual level (microcosm) it is called ignorance (अविद्या). At total level (macrocosm) it is called *maya* (माया).

When you are awake, you observe variety of activities in your mind. During dream you experience different kind of activities in your mind. Then in deep sleep your mind is absolutely silent.

When you are awake, do you have ignorance? In Vedantic term this ignorance is non recognition of the Self as सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा. This is अविद्या. Most likely this ignorance is present during your waking state, if you are not enlightened. If you have ignorance during waking state (जागृत अवस्था), you will have ignorance

during dream state (स्वप्न अवस्था) as well. When you go in deep sleep (सुषुप्ति अवस्था), the ignorance is still present.

In the deep sleep, in the absence of thoughts, emotions, perceptions, what you experience is perfect ignorance.

Knowledge is represented by light. Ignorance is represented by darkness. In deep sleep you have the perfect experience of the darkness of ignorance. If you throw a thick blanket over your head covering your eyes, you wouldn't see anything. However, you are not blind. You see perfect darkness. Similarly in deep sleep, ignorance is still present. But ignorance is not something with any characteristics and qualities. So you don't perceive anything about the ignorance. You are covered (समाच्छादनात्) over by the blanket of ignorance.

Consciousness still shines in deep sleep. But Consciousness illumines that blanket of perfect ignorance. Therefore, your experience in deep sleep is experience of nothing.

In that condition of withdrawal (उपसंहार) of senses including mind (करण), screen of the mind is covered (समाच्छादनात्) by ignorance (माया). But the person (पुमान्) who is in deep sleep (सुषुप्तः) still remains (अभूत्) as pure existence (सन्मात्रः). Consciousness remains as a reality that it is (सत् मात्रः).

In waking state you are सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा plus body, mind, senses, plus all these experiences in your mind, plus ignorance.

In dream state, you are सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा without body, mind, senses, but with dream experiences in your mind, plus ignorance.

In deep sleep, you are सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा without body, mind, senses, without any experiences in your mind, plus ignorance.

But Consciousness remains (अभूत्) through all these states.

प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिज्ञायते

यः – the one who

प्रत्यभिज्ञायते – recognizes

प्रबोधसमये – at the time of waking up

प्राङ् –before

अवाप्सम् – I slept

इति – thus

The one who (यः) thus (इति) recognizes (प्रत्यभिज्ञायते) at the time of waking up (प्रबोधसमये) that before (प्राङ्) I slept (अवाप्सम्). But Consciousness remains present throughout. Consciousness did not sleep.

Consciousness is not like the light bulb in the refrigerator. The bulb in the refrigerator is ON when the door is open. The bulb is OFF when it is closed. In deep sleep, you don't know that Consciousness is present. To know anything, you need mind. But mind is not present in the deep sleep. So only at the time of waking up you recognize that you were conscious about your deep sleep.

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ६ ॥

The one who remains as pure Consciousness in deep sleep unto that (तस्मै), this (इदं) salutation (नमः), who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Verse 7 – बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु – You are Consciousness (सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा)

बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि
व्यावृत्तास्वनुवर्तमानमहमित्यन्तस्स्फुरन्तं सदा ।
स्वात्मानं प्रकटीकरोति भजतां यो मुद्रया भद्रया
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ७ ॥

अवस्था – state of experience

बाल्यादिषु – childhood etc.

अपि – also

सर्वासु – in all

अवस्थासु – states (of experience)

अपि – also

जाग्रत – waking state

आदिषु – et cetera

व्यावृत्तासु – in all different state of experiences

अनुवर्तमानम् – persists, always present

अहम् – I

इति – thus

अन्तस्फुरन्तम् – shining within

सदा – continually

In the previous verse (sixth), Shri Shankara explained the presence of Consciousness in deep sleep (सुषुप्त) state (अवस्था) and the recognition of

Consciousness upon waking up (प्रबोधसमये) from the deep sleep. There are two more states of mind – waking state (जागृत अवस्था) and dream state (स्वप्न अवस्था). There are many other states of life as well.

In Sanskrit grammar, when ‘उ’ is followed by ‘अ’, it becomes ‘व’. For example, सर्वासु अवस्थासु अपि becomes सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि when joined together.

There are various states of experiences (सर्वासु अवस्थासु) – waking state etc (जाग्रदादिषु). It includes dream and deep sleep states as well. There are other types of experiences throughout life – childhood etc (बाल्यादिषु). It includes youth, adult, old age.

In all of these different states of experiences (सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि) there is one thing which persists, which is unchanging (अनुवर्तमानम्). It is continually (सदा) shining within (अन्तस्फुरन्तम्) as “I” (अहम्).

This “I” is not the ego (अहङ्कार). It is referring to the true self – Consciousness. It refers to the conscious being (चित् सत्).

The one who knows your mind, your experiences now and the one who knew when you were one month old is same. However, there seems to be discontinuity in life. Your picture at the time of one month old and now are quite different. Not just the body, but your mind, emotions are all different. Yet you say that was you at the time of one month old.

Body is not the same. Mind is not the same. But you are the same person. What is it that persists between one month old and who you are today?

The Consciousness by which your one month old experience was known and the Consciousness by which today’s experience is known, is exactly the same.

There is experience even in pre-natal state. It is still the same Consciousness due to which you know the experience before and after the birth. Your memory would not recollect your experience. But experience is absolutely present and because of Consciousness it is known to you.

Therefore, Shri Shankara says in all these states childhood etc (बाल्यादिषु) there is something shining within (अन्तस्फुरन्तम्) that is always (सदा) present (अनुवर्तमानम्) thus (इति) known as “I” (अहम्) – true Self (Consciousness). That Consciousness which is real YOU persists throughout all the states.

The Consciousness is always present through all these stages in life (pre-natal, childhood, young hood, adulthood), in all the states of mind (waking, dreaming, deep sleep). How do we come to understand this?

स्वात्मानं प्रकटीकरोति भजतां यो मुद्रया भद्रया

प्रकटीकरोति – reveal, to make evident

स्वात्मानं – own self

भजतां – devoted

यः – the one who

भद्र – auspicious

मुद्र – symbol, gesture

There are two meanings here for the revelation (प्रकटीकरोति) of this teaching.

One meaning is one’s own self (स्वात्मानं) is self evident (प्रकटीकरोति). You don’t need anyone to tell you that you are a conscious being. You don’t need to read in a book that you are aware of your experiences. Your Consciousness is self established (स्वतः सिद्ध). It is self revealing (स्वप्रकाश). That you exist is self evident. That you are conscious is self evident. It is not arrived at logically. It is not

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

the product of thinking. It is a FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH of who you are. Therefore your Consciousness reveals itself (प्रकटीकरोति).

Secondly, someone reveals that you are *sat, chit, ananda – atman* (सत् चित् आनन्द – आत्मन्) that is same as *Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam – Brahman* (सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं – ब्रह्मन्). Your Consciousness is identical (non separate) with the reality because of which everything exists. This is not self evident. That has to be revealed. This TRUTH is revealed (प्रकटीकरोति) to those who are devoted (भजतां) – devoted to the guru, devoted to the Vedantic teaching, devoted to the life of spiritual growth.

This teaching is revealed by means of an auspicious (भद्र) symbol (मुद्र) through *Chinmudra* (चिन्मुद्रा).

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ७ ॥

The one who reveals your own true nature (स्वात्मानं) as conscious being (सत् चित् आनन्द – आत्मन्) and as non separate from the absolute reality (ब्रह्मन्); unto that (तस्मै), this (इदं) salutation (नमः), who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Verse 8 – विश्वम् पश्यति कार्यकारणतया – Vision of *Brahma Jnani* (ब्रह्मज्ञानी)

विश्वं पश्यति कार्यकारणतया स्वस्वामिसंबन्धतः
शिष्याचार्यतया तथैव पितृ पुत्राद्यात्मना भेदतः ।
स्वप्ने जाग्रति वा य एष पुरुषो मायापरिभ्रामितः
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ८ ॥

विश्वं – world

पश्यति – see

भेदतः – differently

आत्मना – as oneself

कार्य – effect

कारण – cause

स्व – own

स्वामि – master

संबन्धतः – connection

शिष्य – student

आचार्य – teacher

तथैव – and, also

पितृ – father

पुत्र – son

आदि – et cetera

This verse explains Brahman (ब्रह्मन्) and the vision of a *Brahma Jnani* (ब्रह्मज्ञानी) – the one who has gained the knowledge of ब्रह्मन्.

Shri Shankara here continues to describe that Shri Dakshinamurti is the source of all knowledge. Shri Dakshinamurti is described here as the one who sees (पश्यति) the world (विश्वं) in a particular way.

What distinguishes an enlightened person is their world view or vision. How they see the world around them? How they relate to the world? How they see other people? How they see themselves?

What is enlightened person's world view? The one who sees everything differently, but as oneself (आत्मना). The one who sees all these differences in the world as one's own self.

This is the highest teachings of Vedanta.

Profound Teaching of Vedanta

Everything you experience is in your mind. Everything in your mind is form plus Consciousness. Form is not real. So everything is Consciousness. This Consciousness (सत्चिदानन्द आत्मा) happens to be identical to *Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam – Brahman* (सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं – ब्रह्मन्). This ब्रह्मन् is the reality because of which everything exists. It is the underlying existence because of which everything in the Cosmos such as the stars and planets exists; everything on the earth such as rocks and trees exists.

Every experience is a form of Consciousness. This Consciousness is not an ordinary Consciousness. This Consciousness is extra ordinary, because it is identical with ब्रह्मन्.

This is how you can connect to *Mahavakya* (महावाक्य) – Highest statement of the TRUTH. Let us understand the following two *mahavakyas*:

तत् त्वम् असि | (*tat tvam asi*). It means your Consciousness is that reality because of which everything exists.

अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि | (*aham brahmasmi*). I am ब्रह्मन् because of which everything exists. This is very profound teachings of Vedanta.

Vision of Brahma Jnani (ब्रह्मज्ञानी)

What would it be to have a mind at that highest level of understanding? This verse gives you an insight. If you have that world view of a Brahma Jnani (ब्रह्मज्ञानी), you realize that your Consciousness is a reality because of which everything exists. You will see everything in the world as yourself (आत्मना). Everything in the world such as cause and effect is seen as nothing but the manifestation of your own Consciousness. This is the vision of a ब्रह्मज्ञानी – the one who has discovered the highest truth.

ब्रह्मज्ञानी sees (पश्यति) everything in the world (विश्वं) as oneself (आत्मना) including cause (कारण) and effect (कार्य), your (स्व) master (स्वामि) and your connection (संबन्ध) to your master. Your master could be your boss at work, your spouse, your parent or children – whosoever is directing you. Thus you see your master and yourself as another manifestation of yourself – an expression of your own Consciousness.

You see student (शिष्य) and teacher (आचार्य) as a manifestation of yourself. And also (तथैव) father (पितृ) and son (पुत्र) etc (आदि).

Whatever you see in life is all seen as a natural manifestation of one's own Consciousness. In simple words, it is all manifestation of the same divinity. The divinity is present in yourself as yourself, the same divinity manifests as the entire world, as every person, as every tree, as every rock. The same divinity manifests as your Consciousness. The same divinity manifests in all forms.

स्वप्ने जाग्रति वा य एष पुरुषो मायापरिभ्रामितः

एष पुरुषः – that person

जाग्रति – while awake

स्वप्ने – while dreaming

माया – creative capacity, power of creation

परिभ्रामितः – all projected

That person (एष पुरुषः) sees all of these differences (such as cause & effect, master and connection, teacher & student, father & son) while awake (जाग्रति) and while dreaming (स्वप्ने) projected (परिभ्रामितः) due to *maya* (माया).

The deep sleep state is not mentioned here. The reason is in deep sleep, there is no experience.

How is it that one non dual ब्रह्मन् (एकं अद्वितीयम्) can be manifest as your Consciousness, my Consciousness, also as your body & mind, my body & mind, every body & mind, as this planet, all other stars and planets in the Cosmos?

One non dual ब्रह्मन् manifests in all of these due to माया – its power of creation.

This verse is an expression of महावाक्य. One who has fully assimilated that ultimate TRUTH, this oneness is their vision. Everything is seen as one's own self – as a projection (परिभ्रामितः) of the self (आत्मना), due to *maya* (माया).

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ८ ॥

श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम्

The one who is Brahma Jnani (ब्रह्मज्ञानी), who sees the oneness of all; unto that (तस्मै), this (इदं) salutation (नमः), who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Pujya Swami Dayananda says *“The word ‘guru’ really can be used only for a person who imparts spiritual knowledge. A guru is the one who unfolds the knowledge that you are the whole, non-separate from the Lord.”*

Verse 9 – भूर्म्भांस्यनलोऽनिलोऽम्बरमहर् – There is ONLY *Brahman* (सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म)

भूर्म्भांस्यनलोऽनिलोऽम्बरमहर् नाथो हिमांशुः पुमान्
इत्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकं ।
नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोः
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ९॥

भूः – earth

अम्भांसि – waters

अनल – fire

अनिल – air, wind

अम्बरम् – space

अहर् – day

नाथ – master

हिमांशु – Moon

पुमान् – person (in this context Consciousness)

मूर्ति – form

अष्टकम् – eight fold

इदं – this

चर – that moves

अचर – that does not move

इति – thus

आभाति – appears

This verse and the previous (eighth) verse explain ब्रह्मन्. Both present the vision of a ब्रह्मज्ञानी.

In this verse, we have description of Shri Dakshinamurti as ब्रह्मन्. It is described in very delightful poetic style.

Shri Dakshinamurti as ब्रह्मन् with a particular expression as मूर्ति अष्टकम् – an eight fold form. Also called अष्ट मूर्ति भृत् (*Ashta murti bhrit*) – one who bears (encompasses) eight aspects (forms). There are five elements (पञ्चमहाभूत) as part of this eight fold manifestation. It includes earth (भूः), waters (अम्भांसि), fire (अनल), air (अनिल) and space (अम्बरम्). The sixth is the Sun – poetically referred to as the master (नाथ) of the day (अहर्). Seventh form is Moon (हिमांशु – the one whose rays – अंशु are cold – हिम). This presentation is part of the form (मूर्ति). The eighth is Consciousness (पुमान्). पुमान् literally means person. But Consciousness is required to create a person. So पुमान् here refers to Consciousness.

Atharva Veda – Ganapati Atharva Upanishad v5

त्वं भूमिरापोऽनलोऽनिलो नभः।

You (*Ishvara*) are earth (भूः), water (आप), fire (अनल), air (अनिल) and space (नभः).

Typically five elements are enough to represent God of the Cosmos. However, poetic representations usually include the Sun and the Moon. There are many hymns in the Vedas that commonly expresses *Ishvara* as the one who has the Sun as his right eye and the Moon as his left eye. So this representation gives you that vision of *Ishvara* having not just five elements but the Sun and the Moon. It poetically represents the cosmic perspective. The universe is also a conscious,

intelligent living thing. So the Consciousness is the eight element presented here with the word *puman* (पुमान्).

Due to these eight aspects, Shri Dakshinamurti is अष्टमूर्तिभृत् or मूर्त्यष्टकं. Everything in this Cosmos is included in the eight fold representation. There is nothing left out. So this is absolute, fully encompassing expression.

इत्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकं

This (इदं) eightfold form (मूर्त्यष्टकं) includes all the forms that appears (आभाति) to move (चर) and that don't move (अचर). For example, you move, so you are चर; chair doesn't move, so it is अचर.

नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोः

विमृशतां – those who understands

यस्मात् – other than that

परस्मात् – supreme

विभुः – all pervasive being

न – no

अन्यत् – anything

किञ्चन – else

विद्यते – exists

***Brahman* (ब्रह्मन्)**

All that exists is ब्रह्मन्. ब्रह्मन् is the reality because of which material things exists.

ब्रह्मन् is also the reality because of which Consciousness itself exists. Even

experience exists due to ब्रह्मन्. So ब्रह्मन् manifests not only as material inert things,

but ब्रह्मन् manifests as sentient things and sentiency itself, Consciousness itself, experience itself.

Other than that (यस्मात्) supreme (परस्मात्) all pervasive being (विभुः), nothing else (नान्यत्किञ्चन) exists (विद्यते).

This is a poetic way stating the same fact that ancient *rishis* declared as:

सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म | All this indeed is nothing but *Brahman*.

This is understood by those (विमृशतां) who are wise, who can discern this TRUTH.

They discern that ब्रह्मन् as मूर्त्यष्टकं.

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥ ९ ॥

ब्रह्मन् who is manifested as मूर्त्यष्टकं, and the one who recognizes it; unto that (तस्मै), this (इदं) salutation (नमः), who is in the form of my guru (श्रीगुरुमूर्तये) as well as in the form of श्री दक्षिणामूर्ति.

Phala Shruti (फलश्रुति)

The last verse is markedly different than the other nine verses. All the previous nine verses teach the ultimate reality that is ब्रह्मन्. Each of the nine verses concludes with the refrain “तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये”. This tenth verse does not conclude with the same refrain.

This tenth verse is called a *phala shruti* (फलश्रुति). *Shruti* (श्रुति) here means verse. *Phala* (फल) literally means fruit. It refers to the result of studying this stotram. This verse praises the very hymn.

Verse 10 – सर्वात्मत्वमिति स्फुटीकृतमिदं – Benefit of Study (फलश्रुति)

सर्वात्मत्वमिति स्फुटीकृतमिदं यस्मादमुष्मिन्स्तवे
तेनास्य श्रवणात्तदर्थमननाद्ध्ययानाच्च संकीर्तनात् ।
सर्वात्मत्वमहाविभूतिसहितं स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः
सिध्येत्तत्पुनरष्टधापरिणतं चैश्वर्यमव्याहृतम् ॥१०॥

अमुष्मिन् – in this

स्तवे – praise (hymn)

इदं – this

स्फुटीकृतं – made clear

इति – thus

सर्वात्मत्वं – state of being the Self of all (ब्रह्मन्)

यस्मात् – because

तेन – by that

अस्य – of this

श्रवणात् – listening (learning)

तत् – that

अर्थ – meaning

मननात् – intellectual enquiry

च – also

ध्यान – meditation (here refers to contemplation – निदिध्यासना)

संकीर्तनात् – recitation (also teaching)

Sarvaatmatvam (सर्वात्मत्वं) is very important Vedic terminology. *Atma* (आत्मा) is Self. *Sarvaatmaa* (सर्वात्मा) means the Self of all. *Sarvaatmatvam* (सर्वात्मत्वं) means the state of being the Self of all, means being ब्रह्मन्.

In this (अमुष्मिन्) hymn (स्तवे) this (इदं) state of being the Self of all (सर्वात्मत्वं) is thus (इति) made clear (स्फुटीकृतं).

Because (यस्मात्) it is made clear, by that (तेन) – by this hymn, through (अस्य) *Shravana* (श्रवण), *Manana* (मनन), *Dhyaan* (ध्यान) and Sankirtana (संकीर्तन) one can gain *sarvaatmatvam* (सर्वात्मत्वं).

The whole teaching of Vedanta is present in this Shri Dakshinamurti hymn. Because ultimate teaching of Vedanta is,

तत् त्वम् असि | (*tat tvam asi*).

That is present in almost every verse.

Shravana (श्रवण), *Manana* (मनन), *Nididhyaasanaa* (निदिध्यासना) are spiritual practices that are extremely important to realize this Vedantic teaching.

Spiritual practices for Vedantic study

Shravana (श्रवण)

It literally means listening. However, it implies much more than just listening. It actually means to use these teachings (that you hear) for the sake of discovering the TRUTH of yourself. It means to use these teachings to guide your own process of self enquiry.

Manana (मनन)

Manana means meditation. In general meditation is about putting your mind into a particular state or condition. It is intellectual enquiry for the very specific reason.

In our mind many doubts arise. Doubts are born of confusion. We need help to deal with those doubts / confusion. मनन is the process of removing those doubts and confusion.

Nididhyaasanaa (निदिध्यासना)

Nididhyaasanaa (निदिध्यासना) means contemplation. The purpose of contemplation is to address a gap between what we understood and how we behave. It is the process of seeing the TRUTH over and over again to remove wrong way of thinking. It is a process of assimilation, having the spiritual teachings go in deeply, having these teachings penetrate all of our thinking, having these teachings finally become our world view. When these teachings become your world view, you see everything as manifestation of ब्रह्मन्.

Shravana (श्रवण), *Manana* (मनन) and *Nididhyaasanaa* (निदिध्यासना) are absolutely necessary practices in spiritual growth. Merely studying this hymn without these spiritual practices might not be useful. In fact all the Vedanta might become useless without श्रवण, मनन and निदिध्यासना – just like all the books in a bookshelf sit there unopened are useless. You have to use those books to get any benefit out of them. You have to use the teachings of Vedanta to get any benefit out of that. Using them does not mean just reading them. Reading any other book is fine. Reading Vedanta book is not enough. श्रवण is a process of learning. It has to be followed by मनन and निदिध्यासना.

Sankirtana (संकीर्तन)

It is important to recite the hymn. Sankirtana (संकीर्तन) also means teaching. Some people might learn it thoroughly and would teach others. However, teaching is optional. But reciting for your own spiritual growth is important.

By doing this – *Shravana* (श्रवण), *Manana* (मनन), *Nididhyaasanaa* (निदिध्यासना) and *Sankirtana* (संकीर्तन), what would you get?

Sarvaatmatvam (सर्वात्मत्वं) – means ब्रह्मन् being the TRUTH of all. It is revealed clearly in this hymn that if you practice श्रवण, मनन and निदिध्यासना, you gain सर्वात्मत्वं.

श्रवण makes you discover the fact about सर्वात्मत्वं.

मनन removes any doubts about सर्वात्मत्वं.

निदिध्यासना allows you to fully assimilate that reality.

सर्वात्मत्वमहाविभूतिसहितं स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः

स्यात् – what would come

स्वतः – your own

ईश्वरत्वम् – state of being Ishvara

सहितं – along with

महाविभूति – great glory

सर्वात्मत्वं – state of being the Self of all (ब्रह्मन्)

Because सर्वात्मत्वं revealed in this hymn, together with your efforts of श्रवण, मनन and निदिध्यासना, what would come (स्यात्) is you discover your own (स्वतः) state of being *Ishvara* (ईश्वरत्वम्).

Ishvaratvam (ईश्वरत्वम्)

This *Ishvaratvam* (ईश्वरत्वम्) is very misunderstood concept. This 'I am God' is horribly misunderstood statement. This is terribly mistaken interpretation of Advaita (Non dual) Vedanta (अद्वैत वेदान्त). If statement like this – your own Godliness (स्वतः ईश्वरत्वम्), is not understood correctly; people make mistake of incorrect interpretation.

Let us understand this statement in its true sense.

The reality because of which you (जीव) exists and the reality because of which *Ishvara* (ईश्वर) exists and reality because of which everything else (जगत्) exists; is the same reality. Nothing is separate.

न अन्यत् किञ्चन विद्यते |

So *Ishvaratvam* (ईश्वरत्वम्) here reveals that you are non separate from *Ishvara* in that fundamental sense. You are still a human being. *Ishvara* as an individual being has certain powers (but limited).

ब्रह्मन् as ईश्वर उपाधि – as a creator, sustainer & destroyer of the universe takes on certain capacity. Same ब्रह्मन् as जीव उपाधि – as an individual with individual body and mind takes on different set of qualities and capacity.

जीव उपाधि is what makes you an individual. ईश्वर उपाधि is what makes *Ishvara* as creator, sustainer & destroyer. However उपाधि is a conditioning factor. What is being conditioned by उपाधि is the same ब्रह्मन्.

For example, clay is used for a very tiny pot or a very big pot. The tiny pot is जीव उपाधि. The mammoth / humongous pot is ईश्वर उपाधि. But it is the same clay as

underlying reality. The difference is only in उपाधि, because उपाधि has different qualities.

So going back to the statement ईश्वरत्वम् स्वतः स्यात्, with your efforts of श्रवण, मनन and निदिध्यासना, you can discover your **non separation from Ishvara**. The reason is you share the same underlying reality that is ब्रह्मन्.

Not only you will gain ईश्वरत्वम्, but along with (सहितं) that you will get great glory (महाविभूति). This great glory is सर्वात्मत्वं.

The Consciousness that you are, is the same Consciousness because of which the universe exists.

The whole teachings of Vedanta culminate in a single word 'सर्वात्मत्वं'.

सिद्धयेत्तत्पुनरष्टधापरिणतं चैश्वर्यमव्याहृतम् ॥१०॥

सिद्धयेत् – create

तत् पुनः – then again

अष्टधा – eightfold

परिणतं – transformations, blessings, powers

च – and

ऐश्वर्य – lordship

अव्याहृतम् – without any impediments

Then again (तत् पुनः), this teaching create (सिद्धयेत्) eightfold (अष्टधा) blessings (परिणतं) and (च) lordship (ऐश्वर्य) without any impediments (अव्याहतम्).

The eightfold blessings (अष्टधा परिणतं) here refers to eightfold powers – *ashta siddhi* (अष्ट सिद्धि). There are many yogic texts those talk about ‘अष्ट सिद्धि’ – eight spiritual powers as follows:

1. अणिमा – *Anima* – An ability to shrink infinitely small
2. महिमा – *Mahima* – Ability to expand infinitely large
3. गरिमा – *Garima* – Capacity to become extra ordinarily heavy
4. लघिमा – *Laghima* – Power to become incredibly light.
5. प्राप्ति – *Prapti* – Ability of translocation – instantaneously appear wherever you want.
6. प्राकाम्य – *Prakamyā* – Ability to fulfill your desires, just by wanting to be so.
7. ईशित्व – *Ishitva* – Sovereignty, ability to be utterly free so no one has control over you.
8. वशित्व – *Vashitva* – Ability to have control over everyone else.

What these अष्ट सिद्धि has to do with Advaita (Non dual) Vedanta (अद्वैत वेदान्त)?
Nothing.

If you are ‘सर्वात्म’, you don’t need these powers (सिद्धि). If you know ‘I am Brahman’, I am full, I am limitless, I am complete; then there is no use of having these powers.

It is like a multi billionaire person winning a lottery. If the person is already one of the richest persons on the earth and if he adds few thousands to his possessions, it does not make any difference.

If you know yourself to be ‘सर्वात्म’, these powers do not add any value to you.

Then why is this discussion included here at the very end of this text?

This is *phala shruti* (फलश्रुति). It is probably added to the text later. It is not written by the original author – Adi Shankaracharya.

If a person is enlightened, he or she does not need to study this text. Those who are going to study this hymn are those who want enlightenment, those who are still struggling with worldly affairs, and those who are still living in the world and struggling to cope up with the challenges of life. Such people would definitely be interested to have these powers for meeting the challenges of life. So these eight powers would have tremendous value to someone living a worldly life.

But then we recognize no matter how powerful we become in worldly life, we are still not going to be happy and content. There would still be problems. There would still be sense of lack. No matter how many powers you gain, you would still be incomplete.

Then what is the point of gaining ‘अष्ट सिद्धि’?

This *phala shruti* (फलश्रुति) is advertising the hymn. At the end of many hymns there is फलश्रुति. It declares some kind of worldly gains, if the hymn is chanted for certain number of times.

There is something hidden in the advertising. It is bait and switch. It is an advertising strategy where advertisers hold up something appealing to you, but what you get eventually is something different. Usually bait and switch is used in very negative context. However, फलश्रुति is bait and switch but in very positive context.

Benefit of phala shruti (फलश्रुति)

Suppose, I am a very worldly person and I pick up this Dakshinamurti Stotra. I read through all Dakshinamurti is this and that, and I am thinking what all this means to me, this is all boring. Then I get to this last part that talk about ‘अष्ट सिद्धि’. That seems interesting to me. I didn’t get all of the Dakshinamurti stuff, but I like the powers. The text however says that this power is a result of studying this hymn. So that leads me to go back to the beginning and see what this text is really about.

It is bait and switch in a positive way. It lures materialists in a worldly manner and then redirects their attention to a spiritual truth.

Typically our concept of advertisement is very negative. This is because modern advertisement manipulates you for the benefit of the advertiser. *Phala shruti* (फलश्रुति) is a kind of advertisement that manipulates you for your own benefit.

So at the very end of the hymn *phala shruti* says, if you study this Dakshinamurti Stotra you will get these eight powers. Suppose you start studying the stotra and you study it properly with a teacher and through your efforts of श्रवण, मनन and निदिध्यासना. After a long period of time, you may discover that you don’t have these eight powers; but you have something infinitely more valuable that is ‘सर्वात्मत्वं’. So it is bait and switch in a very positive way. All *phala shruti* are really like that.

***Phala shruti* (फलश्रुति) uses a worldly approach to draw you in, but then the very content of the hymn will redirect you to a higher goal.**

ॐ पूर्णमदः - The Whole

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

– **Ishavasya Upanishad, Yajur Veda v1**

That is whole; this is whole;
From that whole this whole came;
From that whole, this whole removed,
What remains is whole.

– **Swami Dayananda Saraswati**

ॐ तत् सत् ॥