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॥ श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः ॥

5. श्री दक्षिणामूर्त्यष्टकम्/Dakṣiṇāmūrty Aṣṭakam

Introduction:

In *Ganesha Pancharatnam*, *Subrahmanya Bhujangam* and *Shivāparādha Kshamāpana Stotra* - human life and details associated with human life are emphasized.

Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra is highly *Vedantic* and is the essence of *Advaita Vedānta*. *Sri Ādi Shankara* established the *Advaita Vedānta* on a strong footing. *Āchārya* debated and defeated many systems of philosophy and finally brought out the essence of *Advaita Vedānta* as the only reality. Just by studying the *Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra*, people with no knowledge of *Advaita* will gain a good knowledge of *Advaita Vedānta*.

Advaita Vedānta refers to the relationship amongst the three entities, viz, *Parabrahman*, *Jagat* - the world which we see and experience, and *Jīva* - whom we consider ourselves as. The relationship amongst these three entities is the subject of all the systems of philosophy. Other systems of darshanas - philosophy - are *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vaisheshika*, *Yōga*, *Nyāya*, and *Sāṅkhya*. Sub-systems of *Vedānta* are *Advaita*, *Dvaita* and *Vishishtādvaita*.

Āchāryahas crystallized the very essence of *Advaita Vedānta* in one popular Shloka, and he has described this in the second half of this shloka.

श्लोकार्धेन प्रवक्ष्यामि किमर्थं ग्रंथकोटिभिः । ब्रह्मसत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवोब्रह्मैवनापरः॥

Shlokārdhena Pravakshyāmi Kimartham Grantha Kotibhiḥ | Brahma-satyam Jagan-mithyā Jīvo Brahmaiva Nāparaḥ ||

श्लोकार्धेन -Shlokārdhena - In half shloka; प्रवक्ष्यामि -Pravakshyāmi -(I) will tell you; किमर्थं-Kimartham-what for; ग्रंथ- grantha-books; कोटिभिः -Kotibhiḥ - Crores of ("What's the need of crores of books");

ब्रह्मसत्यं- Brahma satyam - Parabrahman is the ONLY reality; जगत्-Jagat-world which we see; मिथ्या-mithyā - (is) unreal; जीव- Jīva - Jīvātma; ब्रह्मैव - Brahmaiva-from Parabrahman; नापरः - Nāparaḥ - non-different;

Jagat, the world which we see and where we live, is unreal. *Āchārya* does not use the word *asatyam* (Opposite of *Satyam*), but uses the word *mithya* - something that appears very real but is not real (unreal). *Jagat* appears very real, where we do *loukika vyavahāra* (transactions) every minute. Without *Jagat* we cannot sustain ourselves and from that perspective, *Jagat* is very real. But it is *mithya*.

जीवोब्रह्मैवनापरः- *Jīvo Brahmaiva Nāparaḥ* - *Jīva* is non-different from *Parabrahman*. It is not a separate entity but is *Brahman* himself. This is the essence of *Advaita Vedānta*.

There are many scholarly commentaries/writings on *Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra*, some of them are listed below.

1. *Mānasa Ullāsa*, an extensive scholarly commentary by *Sri Sureshwarācharya*. He revels in *Advaita* and titles the book as "*Mānasa Ullāsa*" which means "Joy of *Manas* (Mind)". For each of the 10 Shlokas, he has written 30 to 40 explanatory Shlokas in *Mānasa Ullāsa*, and there are subsequent explanatory texts on this commentary.

2. *Swami Harshānanda's* Commentary, in English which is very nicely presented and lucidly written.

3. *Tatva Sudha*, book in Sanskrit Prose by *Sri Swayamprakāsha Yati*.

The very fact that scholars had to write detailed scholarly commentaries emphasizes the depth of this stotra.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra structure:

There are 10 Shlokas in *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra* and popularly known as *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Aṣṭakam* (Eight). There is also another *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra*, and so it may be possible that this Stotra is called *Aṣṭakam* to differentiate from *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra*.

There are 13 Shlokas in this version, in addition to *Prārthana* Shloka. Apart from 10 shlokas, there are many other Shlokas cited traditionally which are not part of the original Stotra by *Sri Ādi Shankara*. There are six to seven such traditional shlokas, and three of them have been adopted in this version. This version starts with the *dhyāna* shloka, followed by 10 Shlokas of *Sri Ādi Shankara*, and last three are again from the traditional group.

Throughout the commentary notes, an active reference ("You") is made to imply that the reader gets the essence of the concepts.

Prārthana Shloka for Dakṣiṇāmūrti:

मौनव्याख्या प्रकटित परब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं वर्षिष्ठांते वसद् ऋषिगणैः आवृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ।
आचार्येन्द्रं करकलित चिन्मुद्रमानंदरूपम् स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

Mauna-vyākhyā prakāṭita para-brahma-tatvaṃyuvānaṃ varśiṣṭhāntē vasad ṛṣigaṇaiḥāvṛtaṃ
brahma-niṣṭhaiḥ ।

ācāryēndraṃ kara-kalita chinmudram-ānanda-rūpaṃ svātmarāmaṃ mudita-vadanaṃ

Dakṣiṇāmūrti-mīḍē ॥

This is the prayer to *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. Typically, in *Shiva* temples the *Shiva (Lingam)* always faces either east or west. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is the form of *Shiva* facing south. South is the direction of *Yama* (God of death), and as per *Shāstra*, the greatest fear that humans have is the fear of death. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is facing south to assure us that we do not have to fear death. *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is *Jnānamurthy* and is hailed as *Ādi-Guru*. We always chant,

सदाशिव समारम्भाम् शंकराचार्य मध्यमाम्- Sadāshiva Samārambhām Shankarāchārya Madhyamām
Our *Guru Parampara* starts with *Sadāshiva*, and that *Sadāshiva* is *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. There is one more shloka that signifies the *Ādi-Guru*.

ज्ञानामिच्छेत् महेश्वरात् - *Jnāna michchet Maheshwarāt.*

If one wants to acquire the *Jnāna* - knowledge, the real knowledge of the three entities, then they have to get the blessings of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* (Maheshwara). *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* is the *Ādi-Guru*(teacher), seated under the foot of a banyan tree and he is teaching the disciples who are qualified to understand the *Advaita Jnāna*. We are praying to that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, who stands for knowledge, reality and Advaita. This *Prārthana* shloka highlights various attributes and qualifiers while praying to *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty*.

Meaning & explanation:

मौनव्याख्या प्रकटित परब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं - Mauna-vyākhyā prakāṭita para-brahma-tatvaṃ yuvānaṃ

मौन-Mauna - Silence (tool for explanation); व्याख्या-vyākhyā - explanation; प्रकटित-prakāṭita - explained; परब्रह्म-parabrahma -Supreme brahman; तत्त्वं - tatvaṃ - principle; युवानं - yuvānaṃ - very young;

Parameshwara as *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, seated as young boy (16 years old), is explaining the *Parabrahma tatvaṃ* - principles of Supreme *Brahman*, using *mauna* (silence) as a tool.

Notes:

We, humans, use multiple methods and/or tools for explaining a concept, viz, words, speech, visuals, books etc. *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* is using *mauna*, (silence), as the tool for explaining the *Parabrahma tatvaṃ*. *Parameshwara* is seated as *yuvānaṃ* - young boy, and as *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* for explaining the *parabrahma-tatvaṃ*.

The state of disciples is explained in the next line of the shloka.

वर्षिष्ठांते वसद् ऋषिगणैः आवृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः I- Varśiṣṭhāntē vasad ṛṣigaṇaiḥ āvṛtaṃ brahma-niṣṭhaiḥ I

वर्षिष्ठ-Varśiṣṭha - very old; अंतेवसत् -āntēvasat - Shishyas/disciples; ऋषिगणैः-ṛṣigaṇaiḥ - group of Rishis; आवृतं -āvṛtaṃ - surrounded; ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः-brahma- niṣṭhaiḥ - established in Supreme Brahman (niṣṭhaiḥ - dedication);

Dakṣiṇāmūrty is surrounded by groups of disciples who are very old *Rishis* (in shishya bhāva), who are seated at his feet and who are already established in *Brahman* (*Brahma-niṣṭhaiḥ*)

Notes:

These *Rishis* are capable of teaching *Brahma Vidya* to the qualified disciples. They do not need further teaching or new knowledge of *Parabrahman* but they are here to get the grace of *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*. Even if they are established in *Brahman*, these *Rishis* fear that, due to their human form there is a chance that they may be misled by this attractive *Jagat*, which may take them off the track of their dedication to *Parabrahman*. These *Rishis* have come to *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* since they want to get their *brahma-niṣṭha* on a stronger footing.

आचार्येन्द्रं करकलित चिन्मुद्रमानंदरूपम् - ācāryēndraṃ kara-kalita chinmudram-ānanda- rūpaṃ

आचार्येन्द्रं-ācārya indram-best of ācāryas; कर-kara - hand; कलित-kalita - shown; चित् -chit - Jnāna ; मुद्रं- mudram - sign shown by hand; आनंद-ānanda - bliss; रूपम्-rūpaṃ- embodiment;

To that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who is the best of *ācāryas*, gesturing with *Chinmudra* in his hand and is himself the embodiment of bliss.

Notes:

Chit means Consciousness, *Mudra* is a symbolic hand gesture. *Chinmudra* is known as *Jnāna -mudra*, holding thumb and index finger together. Index finger represents *Jīvātma*, thumb represents *Paramātma*, and other three fingers represent *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahankāra* and are separated from the index finger. When the *shishya* (disciple) is qualified and humble (index finger in it is in bent state), even the *Guru* (thumb) will bend a little to bless the disciple with *Jnāna*.

स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे II-svātmarāmaṃ mudita-vadanaṃ Dakṣiṇāmūrtim-īḍē

स्व - sva - self; आत्मारामं-ātmārāmaṃ- reveling in *Ātma*; मुदित-mudita - joyful/merry; वदनं-vadanaṃ - face; दक्षिणामूर्तिम्-to the form of *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*; ईडे-īḍē- I pray to him with love;

To that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who is the very form of bliss, who is immersed in bliss, who is reveling in his own *Ātma* (because he knows his *Ātma* is not different from the *Parabrahman*), with a joyful face that reflects he is enjoying the bliss, I pray to him.

1. विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।
यः साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयं तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

1. Viśvamdarpaṇa dṛśyamāna nagarī tulyaṃ nijāntargataṃ
paśyannātmani māyayā bahirivōdbhūtaṃ yathānidrayā ।
yassākṣātkurutē prabhōdhasamayē svātmānamē vādvayaṃ
tasmai śrīgurumūrtayē namaḥ idaṃ Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrtayē ॥

Summary: May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, who is also *Sri Gurumūrthy*. It is this *Sri Gurumūrthy* who shows to the *Jīvātma* at the time of awakening/ realization that one's own *ātma* is non-different from *Paramātma*; and with this the *Jīvātma* experiences the *Paramātma* in his heart without any obstruction. *Sri Ādi Shankara* states how the *Jīvātma* experiences the *Paramātma* in the other two lines. By the power of *Jnāna*, one can see inside the *Ātma*, everything (including the whole universe - suggestive meaning) created inside, which was seen all along outside owing to *Māya*; this is similar to a dream state conjuring up different things in your mind. Because you have attained the

Jnāna, you will start seeing *Paramātma* inside your *Ātma*, in a manner similar to the world which you can see also. In other words, everything is inside you and you will experience the vision of *Paramātma* in everything.

Meaning & Explanation:

1.1. विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं- Viśvamdarpaṇa dṛśyamāna nagarī tulyaṃ nijāntargataṃ

विश्वं - Viśvam - Universe; दर्पण - darpaṇa-mirror; दृश्यमाननगरी - dṛśyamāna nagarī - whole city that can be seen - तुल्यं-tulyaṃ-similar to; निज- nija- your own; अंतर्गतं-antargataṃ- inside you;

When you are awakened/have attained the *Jnāna*, then you will start seeing the majesty of *Paramātma* in your *Ātma* (*ātmani paśyan*), like a mirror that shows the entire universe, when the mirror is held against it.

Notes:

Nijāntargataṃ ātmani paśyan - Because of this *Jnāna* inside you in your *Ātma* you'll see (experience) the entire universe. To see the universe, you need the (inner) eye, and with this eye you will now start seeing entire universe inside your *Ātma*. This is the basic *Advaita* concept.

What you see outside is only an image projected by *Paramātma*. There is no reality in what you see outside. What you see outside is not a material substance, it is a dream, imagination of *Paramātma*. *Paramātma* imagined and created this universe out of the dream. *Paramātma* is not thinking that this universe is real. He knows it is a dream, imagination, creation (*Kalpana*). As a *Jīvātma*, you should know this too!

So, when will a *Jīvātma* get to know this? You will know this at *prabhōdhasamayē*, when you awaken from the sleep of *ajnāna* to *jnāna* (when you get the *Jnāna*). Until that point of time, you will need external eyes to see this world, and you think what you see is totally different and substantial. This arises out of *ajnāna* - ignorance.

Sri Ādi Shankara gives an example to explain this concept - *darpaṇa dṛśyamāna nagarī tulyaṃ* - a whole city that you can see inside the mirror (similar to a three-dimensional view/experience of places we could see virtually ex. the three-dimensional imagery of Google Earth). As in the reflection of the mirror you will see the entire city, similarly inside the mirror of your heart you will see this entire universe. *Sri Sureshwarācharya* also emphasized this - In the case of mirror, what you see outside the mirror is real and inside the mirror is the image but you can see the entire image very clearly as if the object is real. Similarly, inside the *Ātma* (which is inside your heart) you can see the entire universe, which is the image. In that case what you will conclude is what you see outside is real and what you see inside your *Ātma* is image, which is not true. In reality what you see outside is the image and inside

your *Ātma* is also image. This is because, the original universe that was created by *Paramātma* is out of the power of his *māya*, delusion.

1.2. पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया paśyannātmani māyayā bahirivōdbhūtaṃ yathānidrayā I

पश्यन् - paśyan - seeing ; आत्मनि - ātmani - in your *Ātma*; मायया- māyayā - power of imagination ; बहिरिव - bahiriva-as if it is outside; उद्भूतं - udbhūtaṃ - created; यथानिद्रया - yathā nidrayā - when sleeping (dream state);

As in the reflection of the mirror you will see the entire city, similarly inside the mirror of your heart you will see this entire universe. It is Māya which projects it outside, like in dream.

Notes:

Māya is the power where one creates objects out of one's imagination. These creations (objects) are not real. *Pujyasri Jayendra Saraswathi Swāmigal* used to quote this very frequently - '**ya ma**' - that which does not exist. In *Ashtamāha-siddi*, where objects are created out of nothing (creating objects out of thin air - garland, gold chain etc.), the power is real but objects created are not.

Parabrahman created this imaginary universe out of the power which he always has, power of *māya*. *Māya* is the subservient power of *Parabrahman* which is inseparable from him. With that power he establishes the universe, *bahirivod bhūtaṃ*, created, as if it is outside. Factually, it is inside *Parabrahman*.

Sri Ādi Shankara gives another example to explain this concept, *yathā nidrayā* - we all experience dream while we sleep. In the dream, you are the person who sees and there are objects different from you, which you are experiencing through talking or interacting. You are different from this experience, from that entity which undergoes experience in your dreams. When you wake up from the dream, you will realize this experience is not real. It was dream conjured by your mind and the corresponding experience of it.

When you can conjure such in your dreams, *Parabrahman* can create/conjure an entire universe out of his *māya*. He lives inside that universe. He not only conjures the universe; it is part of him. In the dream you are different from the object. In the Universe, *Paramātma* does not have that feeling, because he is the *Jnāni*. That is the difference between a *Jnāni* and ordinary human beings like us.

An ignorant man goes through the dream as if these are two different objects - person who sees and the objects in the dream. A *Jnāni* when he sees this universe, he does not see it as a real object but as imaginary. He can also see it inside himself and he knows it is a dream object. That is why *yathā nidrayā!*

Bahiriva udbhūtaṃ - The universe that *Parabrahman* has created by the power of *māya* is as if it is outside. This is similar to, a city whose image is seen inside a mirror. Similarly, the whole universe you can see inside your *Ātma* but the universe itself is not real, *Ātma* is the only reality.

1.3. यः साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयं Yaḥsākṣātkurutē prabhōdhasamayē svātmānamē vādvayaṃ

यः-yaḥ-one (refers to *Jīva*); साक्षात्कुरुते-sākṣhātkurutē-who directly sees (experiencing in his heart); प्रबोध-prabhōdha-awakening ;समये-samayē-at the time of; स्वात्मानं-svātmānam-sva ātmānam-one's own ātma ;एव-eva-just as;अद्वयं-ādvayaṃ-non different;

To that *Gurumūrthy* , who at the time of awakening, (directly) sees/experiences *Parabrahman* in his heart, and realizing that (*Jīva*) *Ātma* and *Paramātma* are one and the same.

Notes:

The word 'yaḥ' refers to *Jīva*. To that *Gurumūrthy* whose description is provided in the three lines that follows. *Sri Ādi Shankara* implies here that *Sri Gurumūrthy* has taken the form of *Jīva*, and *Jīva* in its ignorance (*ajnāna*) does not recognize the fact that he is *Gurumūrthy*. *Sri Ādi Shankara* is not making the distinction (between *Jīvātma* and *Paramātma*), and is presenting *Gurumūrthy* as in the form of *Jīva*.

One will understand this at the time of awakening - when the knowledge arises in him. Until then one will think there are many entities outside of him. The whole universe consists of so many names and forms - *nāma roopa*, which is a dream.

Prabōdha generally means morning time (awakening from sleep). But *prabhōdha* here refers to the state of awakening from the sleep of *ajnāna* to *jnāna*. Seeing directly from your external eyes, without any obstruction is called *sākṣāt karana*. The moment *jnāna* arises in the heart, you will see/experience *Parabrahman* in your heart. That is that experience of *Sākṣātkurutē!*

Whom do you see - We see our own (*sva ātmānam*) *Ātma*, whom we are considering as *Jīvātma*. Because you have attained that *Jnāna*, one's own *Ātma* which is considered as *Jīvātma* is being experienced.

You are not seeing someone different from your *Ātma*, with a subtle meaning that the *Jīvātma* and *Paramātma* are one and the same. That *Ātma* you are experiencing is *Paramātma*, hence it is *ādvayaṃ*, non-different from *Paramātma*.

Because of our *ajnāna*, ignorance, we feel that we are different from *Paramātma* and that, we are limited by time and space dimensions, limited by this body and mind. Factually we are not limited by any of these, these are just the *upādhi's* (adjuncts) which will go away once we attain the *Jnāna*.

1.4 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये tasmai śrīgurumūrtayē namaḥ idaṃ śrī dakṣiṇāmūrtayē

तस्मै-tasmai-that;श्रीगुरुमूर्तये-śrīgurumūrtayē- to Sri Gurumūrthy ; नमः-namaḥ-prostration;इदं-idaṃ-may;

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, who is also *Sri Gurumūrthy*.

An adjective (*Visheshana*) is given to *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* here, as *Gurumūrthy*. He is not just *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* but is the form of *Guru* with a gesture of *Chinmudra*, for the sake of us the disciples. Here very profound *Advaita* has been taught.

**2. बीजस्यान्तरिवाङ्कुरो जगदिदं प्राङ्निर्विकल्पं पुनः मायाकल्पितदेशकाल कलनावैचित्र्यचित्रीकृतम् ।
मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यः स्वेच्छया तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥**

**2. bījasyāntarivāṅkurō jagaditaṃ prāṅnirvikalpaṃ punaḥmāyākalpita dēśakālakalanā
vaichitryachitrīkṛtaṃ |
māyāvīva vijṛmbhayatyapi mahāyōgīva yaḥ svēchchayā tasmai śrīgurumūrtayē nama idaṃ Sri
Dakṣiṇāmūrtayē ॥**

Now in this Shloka, *Sri Ādi Shankara* is explaining the process of creation.

Summary:

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who has taken the form of *Sri Gurumūrthy* out of compassion. *Sri Ādi Shankara* emphasizes the fact that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* is going through all these experiences, to bring out the fact that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* is non-different from *Jīva*. That *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* out of his freewill (*sva ichhaya*), not compelled by any external forces/elements, creates and expands this universe, like a *Mahāyōgī*. This whole universe is painted by *Paramātma* out of his imagination using the tools of space and time with the power of imagination. This universe is compared to a painting with various colors. His creation is so fascinating. This universe is so beautiful, so interesting that we are enticed by the sites we see, by the sounds that we hear and we think that this universe is real, but that is not real. This *jagat* (universe) that you are experiencing every moment of your life, was undifferentiated (single/one) before the process of creation. After it was created, the (one) universe became many, with the grace and power of *Paramātma*.

Meaning & Explanation:

**2.1. बीजस्यान्तरिवाङ्कुरो जगदिदं प्राङ्निर्विकल्पं पुनः- bījasyāntarivāṅkurō jagaditaṃ
prāṅnirvikalpaṃ punaḥ**

बीजस्य - bījasya - of the seed; अंत-anta - inside; अंकुरः-इव -āṅkurḥ iva - like this sprout;

जगत्- jagat -universe;इदं-idam - this (what's at hand);प्राक्-prāk-before;निर्विकल्पं -nirvikalpaṃ - undifferentiated, single; पुनः - punaḥ - again (afterwards);

This *jagat* (universe) that you are experiencing every moment of your life, was undifferentiated (single/one) before the process of creation. After it was created, the universe became many (The one became many).

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara explains this process with an example - *bījasya antaḥ iva āṅkuraḥ* - The sprout inside the seed. The seed is so small and if we break the seed, we do not see the sprout.

Vikalpaṃ has multiple meanings - variety of objects, various alternative objects, many etc. *Nirvikalpaṃ*, according to *Vedānta*, *Parabrahman* is single, without variety, undifferentiated. *Prāk* means before the process of creation it was undifferentiated (single). After the creation it became many (*Vikalpaṃ*). There's a story in one of the *Upanishads* - the *Guru* asks the disciple to bring the seed of the banyan tree and break it. After breaking the seed, the *Guru* asks the disciple "what is inside the seed", to which the disciple responds "nothing, it's hollow". So, if it's hollow, how did such a big banyan tree come out/grow out of the hollow? The disciple was speechless and did not know the answer. That is the power of *māya*, which creates something out of nothing.

Like this sprout that you do not see inside the seed, this entire *jagat* (universe) was with *Parabrahman* in the undifferentiated/unified form. One cannot deny its existence, similar to the hollowness inside the seed. That unseen power is called *māya*, and is possessed by the *Paramātma*. Before the process of creation, that unseen power has everything in a single/unified form.

Some versions of the Shloka have it as प्राङ्निर्विकल्पंशनैः -Here *shanaiḥ* means gradually, slowly. The whole universe was not created in one moment but was gradually created. There is a process for creation that is explained in *Shāstra*. Similar to the analogy of the creation of the tree from a seed where the process of creation involves multiple stages - sprout, sapling, small plant and then the tree, this universe does not get established in a moment - it starts with *Ākāsha*, *Pancha-bhūta*'s are created, then this whole universe comes in to existence.

The process of creation is repetitive (*punaḥ*) and gradual (*shanaiḥ*).

2.2. मायाकल्पितदेशकाल कलनावैचित्र्यचित्रीकृतम् māyākalpita dēśakālakalanā vaichitryachitrīkṛtaṃ

मायाकल्पित - māyā kalpita - created through imagination; देश-dēśa- space;काल- kāla- time; कलना- kalanā- creation; वैचित्र्य- vaichitrya - variety; चित्रीकृतम् - chitrīkṛtaṃ - like a painting (with various colors);

This whole universe is painted by *Paramātma* out of his imagination using the tools of space and time, and with the power of imagination.

Notes:

Kalpna means imagination, *māyā* is a power. *Māyā kalpita* means imagined/created through *māya*. The time and space, that are imaginary, are created through *māyā*. The basis of creation is space and time. Human beings live for certain period, usually for 100 years- That is time (*kāla*). Humans live in one place at a time - That is space (*dēśa*). *Paramātma* does not have this limitation, and he is using this limitation, through the power of *māya*, for expanding/projecting this universe.

This universe is compared to a painting with various colors. *Paramātma's* creation is so fascinating! This universe is so beautiful, so interesting that we are enticed by the sights we see, by the sounds that we hear and we think that this universe is real, but that is not real!

We should understand that it is all the imagination of *Paramātma* and we should see this entire universe in your heart (*Ātma*).

2.3. मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यः स्वेच्छया māyāvīva vijṛmbhayatyapi mahāyōgīva yaḥ svēchChayā

मायावि इव - māyāvi iva - like a māyāvi (one who wields *māya* - magician); विजृम्भयति - expands (projects/manifests); अपि - api - (emphasis) even as; महायोगी इव - mahāyōgī iva - like a mahāyōgī; यः - yaḥ - that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*; स्वेच्छया - svēchchayā - out of his freewill;

That *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* out of his freewill, not compelled by any external forces/elements but out of his will (*sva ichhayā*), creates and expands this universe, like a *Mahāyōgī*.

Notes:

How does he create? Like a *māyāvi* - like one who wields *māya* out of his free-will. *Māyāvi* is interpreted as a magician by many commentators. A magician brings out many objects out of thin air (from nowhere). Similarly, *Sri Gurumūrthy* brings out this entire universe out of his power of *māya* (like a *māyāvi*).

Like a *Mahāyōgī* - *Sri Ādi Shankara* is comparing the creator and this act of creation to *yōgis* who have acquired *astā-māhā siddhis*, and who can produce any objects at their will.

Like a *Mahāyōgī*, *Parabrahman* expands (projects/manifests) his creation - *Sri Ādi Shankara* is bringing the concept of *bīja* (seed) here. What is being expanded/projected is being explained with an example. The example given by commentators to signify this is of sage *Vishwāmitra*. Sage *Vishwāmitra* created *Trishanku-Swarga*, parallel heaven, as if it is real and out of thin air for King *Trishanku*. The real *swarga* is under the leadership of *Devendra*. *Devendra* had to come to Sage *Vishwāmitra* praying to him to stop this process. *Vishwāmitra* created this *swarga*, while being at this earth, and by not using any

objects / material. For creating a pot, you need clay, a potter and a tool. Here the potter is sage *Vishwāmitra*, pot is *swarga* and the tool he used is his power. Similarly, *Parabrahman* creates this universe out of his power of *māya*, like a *Mahā-yōgī*.

2.4. तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये तस्माि श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये

तस्मै-tasmai-that; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये-śrīgurumūrtayē- Gurumūrthy ; नमः-namaḥ-prostration;इदं—idaṃ-may;

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who has taken the form of *Sri Gurumūrthy* out of compassion.

3. यस्यैव स्फुरणं सदात्मकमसत्कल्पार्थकं भासते साक्षात्त्वमसीति वेदवचसा यो बोधयत्याश्रितान् । यत्साक्षात्करणाद्भवेन्न पुनरावृत्तिर्भवाम्भोनिधौ तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

3.vasvaiva sphuraṇaṃ sadātmakamasatkalpārthakaṃ bhāsatē sāksāttatvamasīti vēdavachasā yō
bōdhayatyāśritān |
yassāksātkaraṇādbhavēna puranāvṛttirbhavāmbhōnidhau tasmai śrīgurumūrtayē namaḥ idaṃ
Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrtayē ||

Summary: May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who is in the form of *Guru*. By seeing *Parabrahman/Gurumūrthy*, *sāksātkaraṇāt*, experiencing in the heart as non-different from you (having the feeling that “I am that *Gurumūrthy*”), the repeated births of coming back to this ocean of *samsāra* will not happen. *Sri Ādi Shankara* explains why we need the *Guru*, in the following lines. The universe looks real because it has the basis of *Paramātma* (*sat ātmakam*- the ever present/ eternal core), and it shines (*bhāsatē*) as though it is real. The very fact that it pulsates with light indicates that *Paramātma* is residing inside, otherwise one will not be experiencing this universe. Unless a *Guru* explains this to us, we will not understand this truth. The *Guru* teaches the true knowledge to those who have taken shelter in him, he initiates them into the *Jnāna*, true knowledge, by quoting the words of *Veda*. *Guru* is using *sāksāt tatvamasī iti* - you are not different from *tat* – that; *Jīvātma* (*tvam*), which is ‘you’, is not different from *Paramātma* (*tat*). One will experience this once he is blessed with the teaching from the *Guru*. You will need the *Guru* for attaining this *Jnāna*.

Meaning & Explanation:

3.1.यस्यैवस्फुरणंसदात्मकमसत्कल्पार्थकंभासते yasyaiva sphuraṇaṃ sadātmakamasatkalpārthakaṃ bhāsatē

यस्यैव - yasyaiva - who is; स्फुरणं- sphuraṇaṃ - throbbing, pulsating, light; सत् - sat - ever present, eternal ;आत्मकं- ātmakam-core;असत्-asat - unreal ; कल्प - kalpā - as though;

अर्थकं - arthakam - meaning; भासते - bhāsatē - shines;

The universe, though, looking like real, because it has the basis of *Paramātma* (*sat ātmakam* - the ever present/ eternal core), it shines (*bhāsatē*) as though it is real.

Notes:

Whatever *Paramātma* brings out to this universe is actually having the reality as the core (*Sat ātmakam*). Though this universe is not real, there is an element of truth that is *Paramātma* (who is present everywhere). *Paramātma* has expanded himself and he is showing himself in different forms. *Sat* means ever present, not limited by time and space, ever present. Eternal core is present in the throbbing, light, expansion.

Asat kalpā ārthakam - It gives a meaning of *asat* (unreality). Because nothing is constant in this universe, including our body, mind and objects that we see around us. Nothing is eternal on this universe. Hence this universe is as though unreal. Is it really unreal? No. It has basis of *Sat*, i.e., *Paramātma*

The very fact that it pulsates light and shines indicates that the *Paramātma* is residing inside, otherwise one will not be experiencing this universe. He is present everywhere so you are able to see him. The same *Paramātma* resides inside you, and he is the light, which throws light on the outside object. The object outside itself is lighted by *Paramātma* - so the light emitted from inside you (by the *Paramātma*) match with the outside object (that is lighted by the same *Paramātma*), and hence you are able to see the outside object, which is an image as created by the *Paramātma*.

Because same *Paramātma* is sitting there showing a different color, you will see this as an image inside you; when you close your eyes, you see the entire universe inside you because it's an image. Unless a *Guru* explains this to us, we will not understand!

3.2. साक्षात्त्वमसीति वेदवचसा यो बोधयत्याश्रितान् sākṣāttatvamasīti vēdavachasā yō bōdhayatyāśritān

साक्षात् - sākṣāt - you are not different; तत्वमसि - tatvamasī - tat-tvam- asi - that- thou- are; इति - iti - thus; वेदवचसा - vēdavachasā - by quoting words of Veda; यः-ya - those; बोधयति - bōdhayati - he teaches (bōdha - true knowledge); आश्रितान् - āśritān - those who have taken shelter in him;

The *Guru* teaches the true knowledge to those who have taken shelter in him, he initiates them in to the *Jnāna*, true knowledge, by quoting the words of *Veda* - *sākṣāt tatvamasī iti*.

Notes:

Unless a *Guru* explains, we will not understand this truth. The *Guru* teaches the true knowledge to those who have taken shelter in him, he initiates them in to the *Jnāna*, true knowledge, by quoting the words of *Veda*. *Guru* is using *sākṣāt tatvamasī iti* - you are not different; *tat* that-*tvam* you-*asi* are; *Jīvātma (tvam)*, which is 'you', is not different from *Paramātma (tat)*. This you will experience after the teaching from *Guru*.

Tatvamasī is one of the four *mahā-vākyas*, which a qualified *Guru* uses for imparting that *Jnāna* to a qualified disciple. All our *Shankarāchāryas* at our peetam undergo this training when they are given *Sanyāsa-deeksha* by the *Guru*, *Guru* teaches them the *Mahāvākya tatvamasī*. The *shishya*, who is the next *Āchārya*, will become a *Jnāni* that very moment (*sākṣāt*).

The four *Mahāvākyas* are as listed below

1. प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म - *Prajñānam Brahma (Aitareya Upanishad 3.3 of the Rig Veda)*
2. अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म - *Ayam Ātmā Brahma (Mandukya Upanishad 1-2 of the Atharva Veda)*
3. तत् त्वम् असि - *Tat Tvam Asi (Chandogya Upanishad 6.8.7 of the Sama Veda)*
4. अहम् ब्रह्मास्मि - *Aham Brahmāsmi (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.10 of the Yajur Veda)*

3.3. यत्साक्षात्करणाद्भवेन्न पुनरावृत्तिर्भवाम्भोनिधौ yassākṣātkaraṇādbhavēna punarāvṛttirbhavāmbhōnidhau

यः - *yaḥ* - that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*; साक्षात्करणात्-*sākṣātkaraṇāt* -seeing/experiencing parabrahman in your heart (as non-different from you); नभवेत्- *na bhavēt*-will not happen; पुनः - *punaḥ* - again; आवृत्ति-*āvṛtti* - repeating again; भव- *bhava* - samsara, cycle of repeated birth and death ; अम्भोनिधौ - *āmbhōnidhau* -ocean; (In this ocean)

By seeing *Parabrahman/Gurumūrthy*, *sākṣātkaraṇāt*, experiencing in the heart as non-different from you (having the feeling that "I am that *Gurumūrthy*"), the repeated births and coming back to this ocean of *samsāra*, will not happen.

Notes:

Ambas means ocean, *nidhi* means wealth - *āmbhōnidhi* meaning wealth of water, which is the ocean. *Bhava* is *Samsāra* - cycle of repeated birth and death, coming again and again to this world. *Sri Ādi Shankara* is giving the assurance that the repeated coming back to this ocean of *Samsāra* will not happen if you experience *Paramātma* in your heart (*sākṣātkaraṇā*).

3.4. तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये tasmai śrīgurumūrtayē namaḥ idaṃ śrī dakṣiṇāmūrtayē

तस्मै-tasmai - that;श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - śrīgurumūrtayē- Gurumūrthy; नमः-namaḥ-prostration; इदं-idaṃ-may;

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who is in the form of *Guru*.

Sri Ādi Shankara uses *tasmai* and *yaḥ* - the *yaḥ* here is the description of *tasmai*.

4. नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिः स्पन्दते ।
जानामीति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत् तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

4.Nānācchidra ghaṭōdara sthita mahādīpa prabhābhāsvaraṃ jñānaṃ yasya tu chakṣurādikaraṇa
dvārā bahiḥ spandatē ।

jānāmīti tamēva bhāntamanubhātyētatsamastaṃ jagat tasmai Sri Gurumūrtayē nama idaṃ Sri
Dakṣiṇāmūrtayē ॥

Summary: May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who has compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru*. A big lamp inside the pot which has several openings, spreads the light outside through the holes. The light does not spread outside the pot if there are no holes. If there are holes, you may not see the lamp (from outside) but will experience that light coming out of the lamp through the holes. (Similarly) The awareness of *Ātma* being present inside the body is revealed/experienced outside. This experience is revealed outside through eye and other sensory organs. But we have at least this limited *Jnāna* which says that, I have an *Ātma* which is a part of *Paramātma* that, without the *Ātma* being present, we cannot use these sense organs. When I see an object, I know that this is a material object because that object is shining. If that object does not shine, it does not exist. An object exists and it shines because of the fact that *Paramātma* is present in that object, in a latent (inert) form. Without *Paramātma* nothing can exist, even a blade of grass cannot exist. This *Jagat* is shining after borrowed shining, similar to the fact that - moon shines on the borrowed shining of Sun. Similarly, this entire world is, *anu bhāti*, shining after the *Paramātma* (who shines forever).

Meaning & Explanation:

This Shloka is commented upon as a refutation of what *Chārvākas* say. *Chārvākas* are materialists who do not believe in the concept of *Paramātma* or *Eshwara*. They hold the direct perception; they believe in that “we see this world and hence it exists”. *Sri Ādi Shankara* refutes this by mentioning that “world cannot exist without *Paramātma*”.

The summary was spelt by *Āchārya* himself in this half shloka - ‘*Bramha-satyam Jagan-mithya Jīvo Brahmaiva Nāparaḥ*’ in detail in the beginning of this Stotra. This *Jagat* is a form of *Parabrahman*, which he has created out of the power of *māya*. This is explained in various examples, and through various concepts. When we wake up from the sleep of ignorance, when we rise at the dawn of *Jnāna*, then we will know that this universe is unreal (just like a dream). But it does not mean that when we are ignorant, when we have not reached that state of *Jnāna*, we can do as we like because this whole

world is unreal. It means that we have to follow *Dharma-Shāstra*. While following *Dharma-Shāstra*, if we dedicate ourselves to *Bhagavān* through various *yoga's*, we will get the *Jnāna*.

If one is a qualified disciple, a *Guru* comes to that person. If one cannot find a *Guru*, and if one has really qualified himself, the *Guru* will come to that person and will teach him *tatvamasī*. Once the *Guru* teaches this, one's ignorance will disappear and one will rise to *Jnāna*.

This is the essence of what we have seen so far (Shloka 1 to 3). It will take time for *Advaita Vedānta* to sink in, will need many years of study etc. many commentaries have been written; many intricate arguments have been brought out, *vyākaraṇa* arguments, philosophical arguments etc. These are for scholars, who revel in debate. It is not necessary for us to understand all that, it is enough if we understand this essence - '*Sarvam Brahmamayaṃ Jagat*'. The whole world which we experience, what we see through our eyes, what we hear through our ears, what we experience through our *indriyas* is nothing but, *mithya*, unreal. It's only the manifestation of *Parabrahman* in different forms.

4.1. नानाच्छिद्रघटोदरस्थितमहादीपप्रभाभास्वरं Nānācchidra ghaṭōdara sthita mahādīpa prabhābhāsvaram

नाना - Nānā - many; छिद्र - cchidra - openings; घट - ghaṭa - pot; उदर - udara - inside; स्थित - sthita - situated; महादीप - mahādīpa - a big lamp; प्रभा - prabhā - light ; भास्वरं - bhāsvaram - shining;

A big lamp inside the pot which has several openings, spreads the light outside through the holes. The light does not spread outside the pot if there are no holes. If there are holes, you may not see the lamp (from outside) but will experience that light coming of the lamp through the holes.

4.2. ज्ञानं यस्य तु चक्षुरादिकरणद्वारा बहिः स्पन्दते jñānaṃ yasya tu chakṣurādikaraṇa dvārā bahiḥ spandatē

ज्ञानं - jñānaṃ - awareness; यस्य - yasya - this; चक्षु - chakṣu - eye; आदि - ādi - etc ; करण- karaṇa - various sense organs; बहिः - bahiḥ - outside; स्पन्दते - spandatē - experienced/revealed;

(Similarly) The awareness of *Ātma* being present inside the body is revealed/experienced outside through eye and other sensory organs.

Notes:

We, the humans, have five *jñānedriyas* and five *karmendriyas*. The five *jñānedriyas* - the sight, the hearing, the smell, the touch and the taste - gather information from the outside. These five *indriyas* are able to function with the outside world through a power, which is given by the *Ātma*.

How do we know this -The *jñānedriyas* are *jada* or inert, and, they function as long as there is life in the body. These organs are functioning satisfactorily because of the fact that *Ātma* is present in the body. This *Ātma* is no different from *Paramātmā*. Because of the *ajnāna* (lack of knowledge), we think that

Paramātma is different from *Ātma*, because we are associating *Ātma* with this body. We fail to realize the fact that there is only one *Ātma* that is present in so many bodies, presenting himself in so many forms. The names and forms are different while the essence is the same, which we do not realize because we do not have the *Jnāna* .

But we have at least this limited *Jnāna* which says that, at least I have *Ātma* which is a part of *Paramātma* that, without the *Ātma* being present, we cannot use these sense organs.

We could experience the light of the big lamp, *mahā dīpa*. It is called *mahā dīpa*, because this light which is present inside our body is actually the same light that is present inside all other bodies. *Sri Ādi Shankara* brings-out the fact of *Paramātma* by an indirect reference of *mahā dīpa*. We do not see this great light because of the *ajnāna*.

4.3. जानामीति तमेव भान्तमनुभात्येतत्समस्तं जगत् jānāmīti tamēva bhāntamanubhātyētatsamastam jagat

जानामीति -jānāmīti - that I know; तमेव - tamēva - that *Paramātma* (only); भान्तं- bhāntam - shining; अनुभाति - anubhāti - shining after; एतत् -ētat - this; समस्तं - samastam - entire; जगत् - jagat - world;

This entire world is shining after that ever-shining *Paramātma*; I know this.

Notes:

Tamēva - Only the *Paramātma* shines and this *Jagat* is not shining (by itself). This *Jagat* is shining after borrowed shining, similar to the fact that - moon shines on the borrowed shining of Sun. Similarly, this entire world is, *anu bhāti*, shining after the *Paramātma* (who shines forever).

How this *Jagat* shines? *Jānāmīti*, is a separate phrase and not connected with this line. *Sri Ādi Shankara* is bringing this reference here to make us understand the deep concept of '*jānāmi īti*', that 'I know'. I know that this is a material object because that object is shining. If that object does not shine, it does not exist. अस्तिभाति - *Asti baati* -An object exists and it shines; because of the fact that *Paramātma* is present in that object, in a latent (inert) form. Without *Paramātma* nothing can exist, even a blade of grass cannot exist. How do I know if this *Jagat* shines, because I know it exists because I am able to do *Vyavahāra* with it (transaction).

The same light which is inside me is inside every other object. That object is a dream, because the body itself is a dream. 'I' am only the real existence, and that object also got the real existence. That real existence, *mahā dīpa*, is common among all the objects. The light is common but the objects are false and they are different. My entity as this body is as unreal as any material object (table, computer etc.). This is the greatest *Jnāna*, which the *Advaita* teaches us.

Tasmaishree - That *Gurumūrty* who is ever shining and because he shines, the entire world is shining. *Jānāmi iti, Paramātma* only is blessing us with this knowledge. He is shining inside me and he is telling me "I know", this knowledge comes from him.

Jānāmi iti bhāntam - I am shining, I am thinking that I know, that thought itself is a shine. That shine, thought comes from *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*.

Thought is a reflection of *Paramātma* - light, consciousness. This is called *chidābhāsa* in *Vedantic* language. Chit means knowledge/awareness, *Ābhāsa* - reflection. Because consciousness reflects itself in the mind, otherwise mind is also inert. Mind is a thought, and that thought will become active with *chaitanya* because of the reflected consciousness. That reflected consciousness gives *chaitanya* to the thought. And once the thought becomes *chaitanya* (aware), then the whole world is seen by me. Otherwise, I have no ability to see the world. Everything stems from the *Paramātma*.

This mantra from *Kathopanishad* (2.2.15) that we chant while at the time of *deepārādana* also signifies the *Paramātma*.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः।
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥

na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratāraḥ nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto'yamagniḥ
tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti

Na tatra sūryo bhāti na chandratarakam - The Sun shines not, nor the Moon, nor the Stars
nemā vidyuto bhānti - nor the lightning streaks can shine
kuto'yamagniḥ - where is the question of *Agni*, fire, shining?
tamēva bhāntam anubhāti sarvaṁ - everything else shines after you
Tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti - After that *prakāsha*, light, everything else shines

4.4. तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये tasmai śrīgurumūrtayē namaḥ idaṁ śrī dakṣiṇāmūrtayē

तस्मै - tasmai - that; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये-śrīgurumūrtayē - Gurumūrthy ; नमः-namaḥ-prostration; इदं-idaṁ-may;

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who has compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru*.

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara does not mention अहंनमामि - I am prostrating. He says 'may this prostration be' - this prostration that is occurring through this body, body being inert, is activated by mind, shining from borrowed light of *Ātma*. *Sri Ādi Shankara* brings out the concept of *Ātma* being different from body, the concept of *Advaita*, even in this expression.

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

5. dehaṃ prāṇamapīndriyāṅyapi calāṃ buddhiṃ ca śūnyam viduḥ
strībālāndhajaḍopamāstvahamiti bhrāntā bhṛśaṃ vādinaḥ |
māyāśaktivilāsakalpitamahāvvyāmohasamhāriṇe tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye namaḥ idaṃ
śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye | |

Summary: May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru*, and who destroys that illusion. This whole *Jagat* - universe is like a dream. We do not realize this fact because of the delusion. This *samsāra* is like a greatest of delusion (*mahā vyāmoha*), a delusion which cannot be overcome at all.

This great delusion comes out of power of *māya*, a great show that the *Paramātma* is enacting. That show is immersing me into this great illusion. The supreme entity, *Paramātma*, who created this illusion can only help destroy this delusion. And hence the *Paramātma* is referred to as the *vyāmoha samhāri* - destroyer of the delusion. *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, by giving *Jnāna*, destroys the great delusion of the *samsāra*. These are the people (other schools of philosophy) who are in delusion and, *viduḥ*, they talk and they claim they know. *Sri Ādi Shankara* describes these people as those who talk a lot and who are deluded. These people who mention that I am *deha* (body); *Prāna* (life breath); *Indriya* (sense organ); *Buddhi* (Intellect); I am *shoonya* (emptiness); are all talking with delusion. *Sri Ādi Shankara* described that they don't understand there is a *Paramātma* who is behind this great delusion. This *Paramātma* will bless and destroy this delusion once you take refuge in him. There's something called you, inside your body; that "you" is permanent. You recognize that and you accept that and that is the *Paramātma*.

Meaning & Explanation:

5.1. देहंप्राणमपीन्द्रियाण्यपि चलां बुद्धिं च शून्यं विदुः dehaṃ prāṇamapīndriyāṅyapi calāṃ buddhiṃ ca śūnyam viduḥ

देहं - dehaṃ - This body ; प्राण - prāṇa - life breath; अपि - apī - as well ; इंद्रिय - indriyā - sense organs;
चलां - calāṃ - unsteady ; बुद्धि - buddhi - intellect; च - ca - and ; शून्यं - śūnyam - emptiness; विदुः - viduḥ
- (they) know;

5.2. स्त्रीबालान्धजडोपमास्त्वहमिति भ्रान्ता भृशं वादिनः strībālāndhajaḍopamāstvahamiti bhrāntā
bhṛśaṃ vādinaḥ;

स्त्री - Strī - women; बाल - bāla - child; अंध - āndha - one who is blind; जड - jaḍa - inert; उपम- upamā -
similar to; अहं - aham - I am; इति - iti - thus; भ्रान्ता - bhrāntā - deluded; भृशं - bhṛśaṃ - enormous, a lot;
वादिनः - vādinaḥ - talk;

Notes:

Sri Adi Shankara describes these people as those who talk a lot and who are deluded. So, what do they talk on? They talk about the delusion.

aham deham iti - I am this body.

aham prāṇam api - Some other set of people say that “I cannot be the body; this body is inert. I am *prāṇa* because the *prāṇa* looks very lively and active”. Hence, they say that “I am *prāṇa*”

But this *prāṇa* is also inert. *Prāṇa* also gains strength only from *Paramātma*. They say I am *prāṇa*, the life breath. In reality they are not.

Īndriyāṇyapi - Some people say, I am neither *deha* nor *prāṇa* but I am *Indriyas*. Because *Indriyas*, sense organs, are very powerful. They argue that because of these *indriyas* we are able to conduct our affairs. So, they must be the real existence.

Calām buddhiṃ ca - Some people say *Indriyas* are also not so powerful. What is powerful is *buddhi* - the intellect. The intellect is powerful so the *indriyas* are acting, so the *prāṇa* is acting and hence the body is acting. The driving factor is intellect.

Sri Ādi Shankara has very nicely destroyed the argument of the opponent - You say that I am powerful, I am the intellect. Is the intellect constant? What you said yesterday you are refuting today, what you said today you will be refuting tomorrow. Your intellect, which is nothing but a series of thoughts, is ever-changing. If your intellect is constantly changing (*Calām*), how can that be *Paramātma*. How can it be you, since you are constant? You are constant, since from the time of birth to the time of death you have not changed. What’s changed is your body, your ideas but you have not changed. That is how you are conducting your affairs, and transacting with others. You refer to multiple events that occurred in your life with that “something” inside you, that constant person/entity. That constant person is having inconstant thoughts. How can it be?

There is something called you, inside you, which is permanent. You recognize that and you accept that and that is the *Paramātma*.

The previously listed philosophical thoughts were propounded by various philosophies in India, which did not recognize *Ātma* or *Eshwara*. These are *Nireeshwaravādis*.

Śūnyam viduḥ - Some other set of people believe that - there is nothing at all. This is all a dream; I don’t exist hence the whole thing does not exist. This is nothing but an extreme negativity. That is the Buddhist philosophy.

Sri Ādi Shankara is refuting the Buddhist philosophy here. Buddhists said there is nothing at all. If there is nothing - can you deny yourself? No one can deny himself. If a person says “I am *Shoonya*”, who is that “I” here then. This is the argument! If you understand *Ramana Maharishi’s* philosophy as well, you will be exposed to the same argument.

These are the people (other school of philosophy) who are in delusion and, they talk and they claim they know. *Sri Adi Shankara* compares these people to *Strī* - Women, *bāla* -Child, *āndha* - one who is blind, *jada* -inert objects.

Strī -Women - This comparison should not be taken at face value. There are phrases in *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* as well referring to *Strī*, *Shoodra* etc. There is a tradition in Indian literature that women do not have the knowledge of *Vedas*, because they have been exempted/prohibited from the study of *Vedas*. *Veda* is the only source of this *ādhyātmic* knowledge that's being discussed. They can only have an indirect knowledge taught to them through somebody else. *Sri Ādi Shankara* and others of his school of thought, considered that the men of three *Varnas*, who are experts in *Vedas*, have understood this whole concept of *ādhyātma* directly by the study of *Vedas*, which is not available to women. This was the logic behind including women here. This no longer applies to the current world situation. Women have advanced. Though they don't study *Vedas*, they are as good as men when it comes to pursuit of *ādhyātma* (spiritual pursuit). This is not stopping them from learning *Advaita Vedānta*.

Bāla - Child, it is obvious that a child cannot understand this *ādhyātmic* knowledge.

Andha - one who is blind, has lost the faculty of proper thinking, the ability to think is impaired.

Jada - inert, inert objects do not have brain, they cannot think.

These people who mention that I am *deha*, *prāṇa*, *indriya*, Intellect, I am *shoonya*, are all talking with delusion. *Sri Ādi Shankara* says that they don't understand there is a *Paramātmā* who is behind this great delusion. This *Paramātmā* will bless and destroy this delusion once you take refuge in him.

5.3. मायाशक्तिविलासकल्पितमहाव्यामोहसंहारिणे māyāśaktivilāsakalpitamahāvvyāmohasamhāriṇe

मायाशक्ति - māyā śakti- With the power of māyā; विलास - vilāsa- the great show; कल्पित - kalpita - enacting ; महाव्यामोह - mahā vyāmoha - great delusion; संहारिणे- samhāriṇe - to the destroyer;

Dakṣiṇāmūrti, by blessing us with the *Jnāna*, destroys the great delusion of the *samsāra*.

Notes:

This whole *Jagat* (universe) is like a dream. We do not realize this fact because of the delusion. This *samsāra* is like a greatest of delusion (*mahā vyāmoha*), a delusion which cannot be overcome at all.

This great delusion comes out of power of *māyā*, a great show that the *Paramātmā* is enacting. That show is immersing me into this great illusion. The supreme entity, *Paramātmā*, who created this illusion can only help destroy this delusion. And hence the *Paramātmā* is referred to as the *Mahāvvyāmoha samhāri* - destroyer of the delusion.

5.4. तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - tasmai Sri Gurumūrtayē namaḥ idaṃ Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrtayē

तस्मै - tasmai - that; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - śrīgurumūrtayē - Gurumūrthy; नमः - namaḥ - prostration; इदं - idaṃ - may;

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru*, and who destroys that illusion.

**6. राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशो मायासमाच्छादनात् सन्मात्रः करणोपसंहरणतो योऽभूत्सुषुप्तः पुमान् ।
प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिज्ञायते तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥**

**6.rāhugrastadivākarendusadr̥śo māyāsamācchādanāt sanmātraḥ karaṇopasaṃharaṇato
yo'bhūtsusuptaḥ pumān |
prāgasvāpsamiti prabhōdhasamayē yaḥ pratyabhijñāyate tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye namaḥ idaṃ
śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||**

Summary: May my prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru*. Repeatedly I am recognizing that it is 'I' who slept earlier at the time of awakening. This awakening is referring to physical waking up. This awakening also has indirect reference to the dawn of knowledge, dawn of real *Jnāna*. Now, who is recognizing this fact? This has been described in line 2. The sense organs not being functional, the one who is resting inside this body (*Pumān/Purusha*), alone was present. He is *Paramātma*. Because *māya* is covering your knowledge, you are not able to recognize that *Paramātma* inside you.

Similar to *Surya* and *Chandra* caught by *Rāhu*. In a full *grahana* (eclipse), we do not get to see *Surya* and *Chandra* because of the fact that *Rāhu* covers them in their entirety. But because of your scientific knowledge, you know that *Surya* and *Chandra* cannot disappear, and because of your knowledge of *Shāstra*, you know that it is *Rāhu* who is covering them. They will again shine once *Rāhu* disappears.

Similarly, once ignorance disappears from you, you will recognize that the *Paramātma* is present and you will also recognize that the same *Paramātma* is present in every object. That ignorance is cleared by none other than *Gurumūrthy*.

Meaning & Explanation:

**6.1. राहुग्रस्तदिवाकरेन्दुसदृशो मायासमाच्छादनात् - rāhugrastadivākarendusadr̥śo
māyāsamācchādanāt**

राहु - rāhu-rāhu; ग्रस्त - grasta - caught by; दिवाकर - divākara - Surya; इन्दु - indu - chandra, moon; सदृशः - sadr̥śaḥ - similar to; माया - māyā - ignorance ; समाच्छादनात् - samācchādanāt - covering so well;

Like the *Rāhu* is covering the sun and moon during the *grahana* (eclipse), the ignorance is covering so well!

Notes:

You are not able to recognize the fact that *Paramātma* is constantly within you, that *Paramātma* who enables you to recognize, due to the ignorance that is covering so well. That ignorance is *māya*.

An example for this *māya* is given here - similar to *Surya* and *Chandra* caught by *Rāhu*. In a full *grahana* (eclipse), we do not get to see *Surya* and *Chandra*. *Surya* and *Chandra* do exist but we cannot see them because of the fact that *Rāhu* covers them in their entirety. They will again shine once *Rāhu* disappears.

Similarly, once ignorance disappears from you, you will recognize that the *Paramātma* is present and you will also recognize that the same *Paramātma* is present in every object.

The one, who was present when the sense organs were withdrawn during sleep, was awareness alone, he was existence alone, and he recognizes that. That is why he is able to say “I” slept well. If you mention that “I” slept well, that means you have recognized indirectly the existence of the constant presence in you of *Paramātma*. You are no different from *Paramātma*. If you are different than *Paramātma*, you do not have the power to express that continuity during the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

This is the greatest proof of *Ātma* being present and as cited by all schools of *Vedānta*. All schools of *Vedānta* agree that there is a *Paramātma* inside the body, and that continuity is given by *Paramātma*. This continuity has also been interpreted as not just during the time of awakening, but even when you are born as a new human being - from birth-to-birth. This is a great extension by the scholarly commentators. They extend this concept to inter-birth-continuity.

“I” am the same person who was born as somebody else in my previous birth, and who will be born as somebody else in the next birth. “I” know this because, when a child is born - nobody is telling the child to drink milk from its mother. The child recognizes and immediately drinks the milk from its mother. This is true with all animals. When you take a calf to the mother cow, the calf recognizes and starts drinking the milk immediately. Nobody can train a child to drink the milk. The same child was present in its previous birth, at that time child knew this. So, child knows in this *Janma* as well as to what the child should do. This is the continuity among various *Janmas*.

So, there is only one *Paramātma*, just that your body has changed. Like you change your clothes, you have changed your body from birth-to-birth. But you are the same person.

It is mentioned in *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita* (Ch II, Verse 22) that, वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय - *vāsānsi jīrnāni yathā vihāya* - like you are changing your clothes - you are changing your body. But you remain the same.

6.2. सन्मात्रः करणोपसंहरणतो योऽभूत्सुषुप्तः पुमान् - sanmātraḥ karaṇopasaṃharaṇato yo'bhūtsuṣuptaḥ pumān

सत् - sat -*Paramātma*; मात्रः-*mātraḥ*- alone ; करण -*karaṇa* - sense organs; उपसंहरणत् - *upasaṃharaṇat* - withdrawn; यः - *yaḥ* -when ; अभूत् - *abhūt* -was ; सुषुप्तः - *suṣuptaḥ* - sleeping; पुमान् - *pumān* - *puruṣa*;

The one, who is resting inside this body (*Pumān/Puruṣa*), was alone present during sleep, the sense organs having been withdrawn. He is *Paramātma*. Because *māya* is covering your knowledge, you are not able to recognize that *Paramātma* inside you.

Notes:

Who is recognizing - *Puruṣa* does not mean this body, or as in man v/s woman. *Pumān* means *Puruṣa* and as per *Shāstra* - पुरि शेते इति पुरुषः - *puri she'te iti puruṣaḥ* - One who is resting inside this body. *Puri* means city. This body is compared to a city with nine holes. The great light, *mahā dīpa*, is emitted through these nine holes. There is a *Puruṣa* who is resting inside this city (body). He is making us work by his reflected consciousness (*ābhāsa*), the thought which makes us work. It is the mind that makes us work.

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः - *mana eva manushyāṇam kāraṇam bandhamokshayoḥ* - It is the mind that is the real cause for our *bandha* and *mōksha*. We are not really bound; we think we are bound and we think we are liberated. The concept of being bound and getting liberated is still false. You will know this once you have that *Jnāna*. Till then we have to strive for *mōksha* (liberation) because we are thinking we are bound. That is *Pumān* - *Puruṣa*.

During the sleep state, all the sense organs are withdrawn - eye does not see, ear does not hear etc., But he, *Sat* - ever existing - the *Paramātma*, the one and only- was present. Because of that you are now able to recognize that you slept well; as that *Paramātma* is constantly with you.

6.3. प्रागस्वाप्समिति प्रबोधसमये यः प्रत्यभिज्ञायते - prāgasvāpsamiti prabhōdhasamayē yaḥ pratyabhijñāyate

प्राक् - *prāk* - earlier, before; अस्वाप्सं - *asvāpsam* - I slept; इति - *iti* - thus; प्रबोधसमये-*prabhōdhasamayē* - when he is waking up; यः - *yaḥ* - who (that Guru); प्रत्यभिज्ञायते - *pratyabhijñāyate* - repeated recognition;

Repeatedly I am recognizing that it is 'I' who slept earlier at the time of awakening.

Notes:

This awakening refers to the physical waking up. This awakening also has indirect reference to the dawn of knowledge, dawn of real *Jnāna*.

Any individual waking up from sleep recognizes that he slept earlier. This is because of the phenomenon *pratyabhijñānam*, repeated recognition. *Jnāna* is knowledge, *abhijnāna* is recognition, and *pratyabhijñānam* means repeated recognition. When you are introduced to a person for the first time, that is *Jnāna* (cognition). When you meet the same person for the second time, you will recognize him. Now that is *abhijnāna*- recognition. If you meet the same person very often, that's termed as *pratyabhijñānam* - repeated recognition.

Similarly, when I wake up from the sleep every time - no one has to tell me that I have woken up from the sleep. It is "I" who has woken up from the sleep yesterday, the same "I" who has woken up from the sleep today, and the same "I" who will be waking up from the sleep tomorrow. How do I know "I" woke from the sleep? As the sense organs were not functional, how does he know he slept? *Sri Adi Shankara* is bringing in here the essence of that constant factor, that continuity who is none other than *Paramātma*.

In the previous Shloka, we saw this *Śūnyam viduḥ*, I am nothing. If you are nothing, and you have lost everything during sleep, how do you know you have slept very well?

There has to be some constant factor across all the three states - sleep state, dream state and waking state. That constant factor is *Paramātma*, who has been misinterpreted as *Jīvātma* (that is a separate confusion!). But you have to at least understand that there is a *Jīvātma* who is constantly with you, who was never changing and you have constantly recognized him. Because you recognize him - you connect him as "I" with various events happening with you - "I" slept, "I" was present etc. That is *pratyabhijñāna*- repeated recognition of that "I", at that time of awakening.

6.4. तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये - tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye namaḥ idaṃ śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye

तस्मै - tasmai - that; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - śrīgurumūrtayē - Gurumūrthy; नमः - namaḥ-prostration; इदं - idaṃ - may;

May my prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru* - that *Gurumūrty*.

7.बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि स्वात्मानं प्रकटीकरोति भजतां यो मुद्रया भद्रया
व्यावृत्तास्वनुवर्तमानमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्तं सदा । तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

7.bālyādiṣvapi jāgradādiṣu tathā sarvāsvavasthāsvapi vyāvṛttāsvanuvartamānamahamityantaḥ sphurantaṃ sadā ;

svātmānaṃ prakāṭikaroti bhajatāṃ yō mudrayā bhadrāyātasmai śrīgurumūrtaye namaḥ idaṃ
śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||

Summary: May this prostration be to that Sri *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, who compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru* who (*yaḥ*) through this auspicious *mudra*, *Chinmudra*, teaches the *Jnāna* to those who go to him in search of the knowledge. The *Jnāna* that is taught is: The *Paramātmā* was always throbbing / revealing himself inside, as *aham iti*, as in, the “I” that one refers to in conversation (‘I woke up from sleep, I went to school, and I am going to eat’ etc.) refers to the *Paramātmā* and not the body. The *Paramātmā* is *sarvāsu avavasthāsvapi*, is present in all stages of life (childhood, youth, old age as well as awakened state, sleep state, and dream state). These stages are, *vyāvṛttā*, mutually exclusive.

Meaning & Explanation:

7.1 बाल्यादिष्वपि जाग्रदादिषु तथा सर्वास्ववस्थास्वपि bālyādiṣvapi jāgradādiṣu tathā sarvāsvavasthāsvapi

बाल्यादिष्वपि - bālyādiṣu api - Childhood (and other stages - youth, middle age, old age); जाग्रदादिषु - jāgradādiṣu - being awake etc. (other stages- sleep, dream); तथा - tathā - and; सर्वासु sarvāsu - all, various; अववस्थास्वपि -avavasthāsvapi - stages;

The Paramātmā was always present inside you, in various (all) stages of you in this life of yours. These stages are mutually exclusive.

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara explains this with an example - *bālyādiṣu api-bālyā ādi* - childhood, youth, middle age and the old age. These stages are different and mutually exclusive because the body that is present in these stages is with changed forms. Though the body has been changing its form through these stages, you claim that you are the same person, *aham iti*, who was continuously present during these stages. That is that “I”.

Jāgrati adi- being awake, sleeping and dreaming; these stages are different, yet again. In all three stages you are claiming that you are the same person. In fact, it is the same person. You cannot get that knowledge of *Ātmā* unless you go to a *Guru*, who will teach you through a *Chinmudra*. That is why *Guru* is praised as the remover of darkness.

This shloka from *Guru Gīta* describes what a *Guru* is. *Guru Gīta* is from the *Skanda purāna*, where Lord *Shiva* explains the nature and significance of a *Guru* to Goddess *Pārvati*. *Guru* is our guide in the spiritual path. Reciting these shlokas would help us seek the blessings of the *Guru*, without which it is impossible to progress in the spiritual path.

गुकारश्चा-न्धकारस्तु रुकारस्-तन्-निरोध-कृत् ।
अन्धकार-विनाशित्वाद्-गुरुरित्य्-अभिधीयते ॥ (१:३३)

“The letter ‘Gu’ means darkness and ‘Ru’ stands for its remover. Guru is so called because he destroys darkness (of ignorance).” (1:33)

This continuity in various stages like *bālya*, *Jāgrati* establishes in mutually exclusive stages. You also claim that *aham iti*, I am that “I” all through these stages. That *Paramātma* is always shining inside and you need a Guru to explain this.

7.2 व्यावृत्तास्वनुवर्तमानमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्तं सदा व्यāvṛttāsvanuvartamānamahamityantaḥ sphurantam sadā

व्यावृत्तासु - vyāvṛttāsu -in different stages (mutually exclusive) ; अनुवर्तमानम् - anuvartamānam - present continuously (never absent); अहम्-aham - I (that Paramātma) ; इति - iti - thus ; अन्तः - antaḥ - inside ; स्फुरन्तं - sphurantam - revealing himself ; सदा - sadā - always;

That Ātma who is always revealing himself inside, Paramātma, was always present in different stages

Notes:

Sadā antaḥ sphurantam svātmānam - That Ātma who is always throbbing/revealing himself inside. It is not as if the Ātma was not present within you all these days, nor that it required a Guru to show *Chinmudra* and then only he came to existence. He was always there all along. Because of your *ajnāna*, you failed to recognize him.

The *Paramātma* was always revealing himself inside, as *aham iti*, as in the “I” that one refers to in the conversation (‘I woke up from sleep, I went to school, I am going to eat’ etc.) refers to the *Paramātma* and not the body. You have failed to recognize this *Satya* (truth). Now, the Guru explains this to you through *mauna* (silence).

7.3 स्वात्मानं प्रकटीकरोति भजतां यो मुद्रया भद्रया svātmānam prakāṭīkaroti bhajatām yō mudrayā bhadrayā

स्वात्मानं -svātmānam - your own Ātma; प्रकटीकरोति - prakāṭīkaroti - manifests, shows;
भजतां - bhajatām- those who go to him; मुद्रया - mudrayā - symbolic hand gesture; भद्रया - bhadrayā – auspicious;

Through this auspicious mudra, Chinmudra, he teaches the Jnāna to those who go to him in search of the knowledge.

Notes:

Chinmudra is the symbolic hand gesture formed by the union of the thumb and the index finger. The other three fingers represent *manas*- mind, *buddhi*- intellect, and *ahankāra*, and are separate. As long as one is tied to *manas*, *buddhi*, and *ahankāra* - they cannot get this *Jnāna*. You have to separate them from you. The separation of three fingers in *Chinmudra* signifies this. The index finger which represents *Jīvātma* has to bend with *vinaya*, has to adopt humility to a *Guru*. Thumb represents the *Guru*. Once you approach him with *vinaya*, with humility, the *Guru* comes down to you. In *Chinmudra*, the thumb which represents the *Guru* bends a little and the index finger which represents the *Jīvātma* bends a lot while the other three fingers are separated. If you bend a lot with humility to a *Guru* - the *Guru*, out of his grace and compassion, also bends a little and teaches you that *Jnāna*. Here, the *Guru* does not have any compulsion to teach but since he recognizes the disciple as being qualified, he teaches that *Jnāna* with grace and great compassion.

Who goes to a *Guru* and how?

Srimad Bhagavad Gita explains this very well (Chapter 4, Verse 34) -

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया । उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśhnena sevayā
upadekṣhyanti te jñānaṃ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

तद्विद्धि - *tad viddhi* -know that *Paramātma*; प्रणिपातेन - *praṇipātena* -by falling at his feet (surrender); परिप्रश्नेन - *paripraśhnena* -question him with humility; सेवया - *sevayā* -serve the *Guru*(physically); उपदेक्ष्यन्ति - *upadekṣhyanti* -they will teach you; ते ज्ञानिनः- *te jñāninaḥ*-those great *Jnānis*; ज्ञानं-*jñānaṃ*-*jñāna*(knowledge); *tattva-darśinaḥ* - who know the *tatva* (truth, reality);

You will get to know that *Paramātma* by falling at the feet of a *Guru*. Falling at his feet signifies that you completely surrendered yourself to the *Guru*. And, then you question him - how should one question the *Guru*? Not by sitting on an equal seat and then questioning him with an attitude to check if he knows something (that is to test his knowledge). A *Guru* should be asked your question with humility, only with the intent to clear your doubts, and not to test his knowledge.

It is not enough if one just falls at his feet, and question with great humility but he should also serve the *Guru*. In the olden days, serving the *Guru* was given a lot of importance. Physically serving - the disciples performed *Guru Seva* by carrying out his household chores, seeking alms and dedicating that *bhiksha* to the *Guru*, etc. Unless one does these three - *praṇipāta*, *paripraśhna* and *seva*, he cannot get the *Jnāna*. Those great *Jnānis* who know the *tatva* (truth reality) will then teach you with great compassion.

If you have approached the *Guru* with humility, he manifests/shows your own *Ātma* to you. He is teaching this through the *Chinmudra*, he doesn't have to use words but teaches through *mauna*(silence). So how it is possible for one to explain through silence, which only the *Guru* will know. That is the great power of *sānnidhya*, the presence of *Guru* itself can give you the knowledge. In

addition to *sānnidya*, *Guru* is showing the Chinmudra, which signifies the additional means of getting you into that *Jnāna*.

7.4 तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये तस्माि श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये

तस्मै - *tasmai* - that; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - *śrīgurumūrtayē* - *Gurumūrthy* ; नमः - *namaḥ* - prostration; इदं - *idaṃ* - may;

May my prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who compassionately manifested himself in the form of *Guru* who (*yaḥ*).

8. विश्वं पश्यति कार्यकारणतया स्वस्वामिसम्बन्धतः शिष्याचार्यतया तथैव पितृपुत्राद्यात्मना भेदतः । स्वप्ने जाग्रति वा य एष पुरुषो मायापरिभ्रामितः तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

8. *viśvaṃ paśyati kāryakāraṇatayā svasvāmisambandhataḥ śiṣyācāryatayā tathaiva pitṛputrādyaātmanā bhedataḥ; svapne jāgrati vā ya eṣa puruṣo māyāparibhrāmitaḥ tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye namaḥ idaṃ śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||*

Summary: May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who out of great compassion has manifested himself in the form of *Guru*. *Puruṣa* is the link between *Jīvātma* and *Paramātma*& when the *Gurumūrty* assumes the form of *Jīvātma*, it is through the form of the *Puruṣa*. This *Puruṣa* is always deluded by *māya* in both the awakened and dream state - मायापरिभ्रामितः *māyāparibhrāmitaḥ*. *Sri Ādi Shankara* describes the circumstances in which the *māya* acts. The *Jīvātma* sees the universe as a series of causes and effects. Similarly, everyone has a relationship, the servant and his master, disciple and *Guru*, father and son, husband and wife, likewise various relationships that exist in this universe. There is only one *Ātma*, which is *Paramātma* who is residing in every object in this universe. There is nothing other than *Paramātma*. The *Ātma* is the only reality. The *Jīvātma* doesn't recognize this reality, because this *Puruṣa* is always deluded by *māya*, whether he is awake or in dream state (*svapne jāgrati vā*). At our level we are in this transactional world, we have to respect the *kārya-karana* relationship but with the principle of *Advaita* in mind.

An important concept is brought out in this shloka.

Ātma, by the virtue of the attachment to this body and with the outside world, thinks he is *Jīvātma*. This *ajñāna*, *avidya* (ignorance) has to go, and that can go ONLY by resorting to *Paramātma*'s grace and compassion. *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* Stotra explains to us that *Paramātma* is always gracious and compassionate, and the *Jīvātma* is ignorant. *Jīvātma* has to strive to remove that *māya* - that *avidya*. *Paramātma* with the power of *māya* projects himself which appears like an outside world. Once *Jīvātma* attains the *Jnāna*, he is no different from *Paramātma* though he may be bound by this body. He can be *Jīvanmukta* - liberated while in the body.

When the *Jīvātma* attains the *Jnāna*, he can see the whole of the outside world inside himself, inside his heart, even when he closes his eyes. You can always recollect what you have created within your own heart. Since you become similar to *Paramātma*, you can always see the outside world inside you. And there will be no difference between you and *Paramātma*. *Jīvātma* and *Paramātma* are one and the same. This is the broad outline of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti* Stotra.

Meaning & Explanation:

8.1. विश्वं पश्यति कार्यकारणतया स्वस्वामिसम्बन्धतः viśvaṃ paśyati kāryakāraṇatayā svasvāmisambandhataḥ

विश्वं - viśvaṃ - Jagat, universe; पश्यति - paśyati- sees; कार्य - kārya - the effect; कारणतया - kāraṇa tayā - by way of cause; स्व - sva - his own; स्वामि - svāmi - master; सम्बन्ध - sambandha - relation;

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara describes the circumstances in which the *māya* acts.

In this universe, we look at everything as *kāraṇa* - cause and *kārya*- effect. We associate every happening in this world to a certain cause (“everything happens for a reason”). The *Jīvātma* perceives this universe as an outcome of cause-and-effect only. In *Paramātma*, there is no cause and effect. Cause and effect occur because of *māya*. We have to understand this subtle concept because the whole universe is built on cause and effect. All of our *karma* is based on *kārya* and *kāraṇa*, and there’s nothing wrong with it. We have to work out our *karma* as long as we are in the scope of *māya* (ignorance). *Kārya* and *kāraṇa* are very much acting, and we have to get out of that cycle. But we have to understand now we are talking about the highest reality, that is *Paramātma*, as well as what is happening to us. These two are simultaneously being looked at.

When it comes to *Paramātma*, there is no *kārya* and *kāraṇa*. *Paramātma* is unitary, there is no second entity, he is the *kārya* and *kāraṇa*. The *Jīvātma* sees the universe as a series of causes and effects.

Now, *Sri Ādi Shankara* is bringing up various relationships under which this *māya* is acting.

Svasvāmi sambandhataḥ - his own master. Everybody has a master. Here the master is in reference to within this *Jagat* and as a superior and as a part of the hierarchy (boss). The relation between *sva*-self and his *svāmi*-master. There is a *kārya* and *karana*.

8.2 शिष्याचार्यतया तथैव पितृपुत्राद्यात्मना भेदतः śiṣyācāryatayā tathaiva pitṛputrādyaātmanā bhedataḥ

शिष्य - Śiṣya - disciple; अचार्य तया - ācārya tayā - by way of Guru; तथैव - tathaiva - similarly; पितृ- pitru - father; पुत्र - putrā - and son; अदि - adi - similar likewise various other relationships; आत्म ना - ātma – by *Ātma*; भेदतः - bhedataḥ - by way of difference;

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara explains the concept of relationship within the *māya*. Similarly, there is a relation between disciple and *Guru*, father and son, husband and wife. Likewise, various relationships exist in this universe.

All these relations are differences between the one and the same *Ātma*. This is the crux of this shloka. This difference is apparent, but not real. There is only one *Ātma*, which is *Paramātma* who is residing in every object in this universe. There's nothing other than *Paramātma*. But we see all these differences - master and servant, *Guru* and *Śiṣya*, father and son and so on, because of the cause and effect. This universe is functioning because of the cause and effect, and this is how we look at it.

This is **not** the reality. The *Ātma* is the **only** reality. The *Jīvātma* doesn't recognize this reality because this *Puruṣa* is always deluded by *māya*, whether he is in awakened or dream state (*svapne jāgrati vā*).

Sri Ādi Shankara is not including the deep sleep state here, because in deep sleep one is almost close to the state of *Paramātma*. The subtle, thin screen of ignorance is what separates you from *Paramātma* in this state. The screen of ignorance is very dense in the other two states (dream and awakened). In the deep sleep state, you are almost there but not yet there because of the ignorance. Because, after waking up from the sleep - you are able to recollect everything from the past including the fact that you have slept well. You will still think that you are a different entity. You have not yet realized the unitary nature of *Paramātma*. In the deep sleep state, you don't see the differences, while in other two states you would. These differences are apparent but are not real.

There is only one *Paramātma* and that is *Gurumūrty*. This is the tatva that *Sri Ādi Shankara* is teaching us here. However, we need the differences to function in this world.

Māya is *anādi* and *anirvachaneeya* - it has no beginning and is indescribable. It is the power that *Paramātma* has and so he keeps everybody on this wheel of delusion. You can come out of this wheel of delusion only through the *Sādhana*, by your own effort and by the grace of *Sri Gurumūrty*. *Sri Ādi Shankara* brings out how these differences are misleading.

It is also important to understand that, all these differences are required for our functioning in this universe. There are two levels of truth - *Paramārthika* and *Vyāvahārika*. *Paramārthika* is the supreme truth; there is only one *Paramātma*. In *Vyāvahārika* reality - *Jagat* is a reality for the purpose of transaction. While doing transactions we will have to maintain these differences - *sva svāmi*, *śiṣya ācārya*, *pitru putrā* etc. We cannot function otherwise in this universe.

While *Sri Ādi Shankara* emphasizes that these differences should be maintained only for the purpose of transactions, and they should not be taken any further beyond those bounds, he cautions even the *Jīvanmuktas*, *Jnānis* in another context/shloka. Among the three examples he has given here - *sva svāmi*, *śiṣya ācārya*, *pitru putrādi*, he is taking out *śiṣya ācārya* separately and talks about it in a different context. He mentions that even a *Jnāni*, even a *Jīvanmukta* who is liberated while in body should not practice *Advaita* with his *Guru*.

Sri Ādi Shankara mentions this in *Tattvopadeśa*: Quote from *Tattvopadeśa*.

भावाद्वैतं सदा कुर्यात् क्रियाद्वैतं न कुत्रचित्। अद्वैतं त्रिषु लोकेषु न अद्वैतं गुरुणा सह ॥

Bhāvadvaitam sadā kuryāt kriyādvaitam na kutrachit। advaitam trishu lokeshu, na advaitam Gurunā saha ॥

bhāvadvaitam is true in all three worlds - earth, *pātala*, *swarga*, higher world, lower world etc, in all these worlds *Advaita* is true. *Advaita* should be practiced in all these worlds, there is no second thought about that. But irrespective of which world you belong to, when you meet your *Guru*, do not practice *Advaita*. The *Guru-shishya* relationship can never change. The *Guru* who has led you into this *Jnāna* cannot be the same as *shishya*. *Mahā Periyava* has quoted this and explained this in one of his speeches.

At our level, we are in this transactional world and we have to respect the *kārya-karana* relationship but with the principle of *Advaita* in mind.

8.3. स्वप्ने जाग्रति वा य एष पुरुषो मायापरिभ्रामितः *svapne jāgrati vā ya eṣa puruṣo māyāparibhrāmitaḥ*

स्वप्ने - *svapne*- dream; जाग्रति - *jāgrati* -waking state; वा - *vā* - either; यः - *yaḥ* - the one; एष - *eṣa* - this; पुरुषः - *Puruṣa-Paramātma* (*Gurumūrty*); माया - *māyā* - illusion; परिभ्रामितः- *paribhrāmitaḥ* - always deluded (because of *avidya*);

Notes:

Puruṣa is the link between *Jīvātma* and *Paramātma*. *yaḥ* - the one - referring to *Gurumūrty*. *Gurumūrty* is the *Puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* also refers to *Jīva* because *Jīva* is always deluded.

मायापरिभ्रामितः *māyāparibhrāmitaḥ* - This *Puruṣa* is deluded by *māya* in both the awakened and dream state.

As per *Shāstra*, *Puruṣa* is defined as – पुरि शेते इति पुरुषः - *puri she'te iti puruṣaḥ*.

Puri means city of body with nine openings with in which *Paramātma* is resting, hence he is the *Puruṣa*. It does not refer to the 'Man' as in Man vs. woman.

When that *Gurumūrthy* assumes the form of the *Jīvātma*, what happens?

The *Jīvātma*, who actually is *Paramātma*, who unfortunately because of *māya* thinks he is different and is deluded. That *Puruṣa* is the link - that is that *Gurumūrthy*.

Because of the *avidya* which this *Jīva* has inherited over so many crores of births, this *puruṣa* (एष पुरुषः) is deluded. He is deluded by *māya* not only during the waking state but also during the dream state. In the waking state we think this *Jagat* and this body is real. In the dream state we experience many situations which we think are real. We are always deluded by *māya*.

Now, what are the various circumstances under which this *māya* is acting? This is described in Line one.

8.4. तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye namaḥ idaṃ śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye

तस्मै - tasmai - that; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये - śrīgurumūrtayē- Gurumūrty ; नमः - namaḥ -prostration; इदं-idaṃ - may;

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who out of great compassion has manifested himself in the form of *Guru*.

Shloka 9

9. भूरम्भांस्यनलोऽनिलोऽम्बरमहर्नाथो हिमांशुः पुमान् इत्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकम् ।
नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोः तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमःइदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

9. bhūrambhāṃsyanalo'nilo'mbaramaharnātho himāṃśuḥ pumān ityābhāti carācarātmakamidaṃ
yasyaiva mūrtyaṣṭakam;
nānyatkiñcana vidyate vimṛśatāṃ yasmātparasmādvibhoḥ tasmai śrīgurumūrtaye namaḥ idaṃ
śrīdakṣiṇāmūrtaye ||

Summary: May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who out of great compassion has revealed himself in the form of *Guru*. *Sri Ādi Shankara* is describing *Paramēshwara* as *Ashtamūrty* (eight forms), one of the well-known names of *Paramēshwara*. *Gurumūrty* alone is shining in eightfold forms, and that has resulted in the creation of this world consisting of moving and non-moving objects. There is nothing other than *Paramēshwara* who is revealing himself in eight forms. These eight forms are earth, waters (plural of water), *agni* (fire), *vāyu* (wind), *ambara* (sky, space), *aharnātha*- lord of the day time which is *Surya* (sun), *himāṃśuḥ*- one who has rays as cool as snow which is *Chandra* (moon), *pumān*- in this context means the one who is a *sādaka* (aspirant), in general a *Jīvātma*. Those eight basic units have combined among themselves to make, to reveal so many objects in this universe. Nothing else exists in this universe other than *Parameshwara*. Those who analyze, those who use their intellect and think deep, it is very clear for them that there's nothing else that's existing other than *Parameshwara*.

Meaning & Explanation:

9.1. भूरम्भांस्यनलोऽनिलोऽम्बरमहर्नाथो हिमांशुः पुमान् bhūrambhāṃsyanalo'nilo'mbaramaharnātho
himāṃśuḥ pumān

भुः - bhū - earth; अम्भांसि - ambhāṃsi - waters (plural of water - ambha); अनलः - analaḥ - agni, fire;
अनिलः - anilaḥ - wind; अम्बर - ambara - sky, space; अहर्नाथः - aharnāthaḥ - Surya (Sun); हिमांशुः -
himāṃśuḥ - Chandra (moon); पुमान् - pumān - puruṣa (*Jīvātma*), the one who is a *sādaka* (aspirant);

Notes:

The eight forms of *Parameshwara* are

1. Earth
2. Waters (plural of water)
3. *Agni* (fire)
4. *Vayu* (wind)
5. *Ambara* (sky, space)
6. *Aharnatha* – *ahas* means daytime, *nathaḥ* means lord of – lord of daytime, which is *Sūrya* (sun)
7. *Himāṃśuḥ* - *hima* means snow, *aṃśu* means ray – one who has rays as cool as snow, which is *Chandra* (moon)
8. *Pumān* – in this context means the one who is a *sādaka*(aspirant), in general a *Jīvātma*.

9.2.इत्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकम् ityābhāti carācarātmakamidaṃ yasyaiva mūrtyaṣṭakam

इति- iti - eight forms (described in the first line); आभाति - ābhāti - he is shining; चर - cara - moving; अचर - acara – non-moving; आत्मकं - ātmakam - having ; इदं- idaṃ - this (Jagat, world); यस्यैव - yasyaiva - whose (*Gurumūrty*) alone; मूर्तिअष्टकम्- mūrtyaṣṭakam - in eight fold forms;

Notes:

Gurumūrty alone is shining in eightfold forms, and that has resulted in the creation of this world consisting of moving and non-moving objects. There is nothing other than *Parameshwara* who is revealing himself in eight forms, and those eight forms have resulted in the creation of moving and non-moving objects.

This world, called *Prapancha*, is made of *Pancha-bhūtas*. These *Pancha-bhūtas* are part of eight forms of *Parameshwara*. In this universe, everything that we see through our eyes, which we experience - our own body, other bodies, every other object, etc., are all made of *Pancha-bhūtas*. *Sri Ādi Shankara* is referring to *Pancha-bhūtas* when he mentions *carācarātmakamidaṃ*.

These *Pancha-bhūtas*(earth, water, fire, air, and space) are the five building blocks out of which this whole universe is constructed.

In addition to the *Pancha-bhūtas*, *Aharnātha*, *Himāṃśuḥ*, and *Pumān* are the three externals outside this system who are making this system function. This system is lighted and can reveal itself because of *Sūrya*, *Chandra*, and *Paramātma* who is residing inside everything.

Without the *Paramātma* residing inside all the moving and non-moving objects in this universe, we will not be able to see and experience anything. Because of the consciousness of his presence, we are able to see and transact in this *Jagat*. That *pumān* is most important.

For making this whole system, *Jagat* function, *Sūrya* and *Chandra* provide the physical light and energy.

These are the basic eight forms that make this whole universe function. This is another way of making it clear to us that whenever we see, hear and/or experience anything We are experiencing only the *Parameshwara* and nothing else. *Parameshwara* has taken eight forms, and these eight forms have resulted in a multitude of forms. *Parameshwara* is the basic unit of these multitudes of forms. These eight forms are described beautifully in *Shiva Purāna*. The *Śatarudra-saṃhitā in Shiva-Purāna* very nicely explains these aṣṭa mūrtyas, and these eight forms are identified with *Shiva's* eight names. Those who perform *Shiva Pūja* chant

bhavāya devāya namaḥ
 śarvāya devāya namaḥ
 eeshānaya devāya namaḥ
 paśupater devāya namaḥ
 rudrāya devāya namaḥ
 ugrāya devāya namaḥ
 bheemāya devāya namaḥ
 mahate devāya namaḥ

These eight names of *Shiva* are infact the eight forms of *mūrty aṣṭakam*. Each of these eight names is associated with these eight forms.

Name	Form	Description
Śarvā	Prithivi	One of the names of Shiva – he is the destroyer
Bhava	Jala (water)	
Rudra	Agni (fire)	
Ugra	Vayu (air)	
Bheema	Ākāsha (space)	
Paśupathi	Ātma, Kshetrajña (Pumān)	Ātma is known as Kshetrajña in the language of Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Ātma is the one who knows the body, who experiences this body.
Eeshāna	Sūrya (sun)	
Māhadeva	Chandra (moon)	

Shiva Purāna makes it very clear these eight forms are indeed *Shiva* himself, and hence the eight names of *Shiva* are associated with eight forms.

9.3. नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोः nānyatkiñcana vidyate vimṛśatām yasmātparasmādvibhoḥ

न -na - nothing; अन्यत् - anyat - else, other than; किञ्चन - kiñcana - anything; विद्यते -vidyate - exists; विमृशतां - vimṛśatām - those who analyze; यस्मात् - yasmāt - other than *Gurumūrty*; परस्मात् - parasmāt - supreme Ātma; विभोः - vibhoḥ - who is omnipresent (present everywhere);

Notes:

Here, the higher-lower concept comes only because of the relationship (*kārya-karana*) in this universe. Since we are talking about this universe, which is made of a multitude of forms of *Parameshwara*, that consists of higher and lower forms of life (similar to higher and lower animals), so to say that he is not connected with this. *Parameshwara* is far above all this and hence the word *parasmāt* is used. Otherwise in the *Advaita* context *parasmāt* is not required because there is only one *Ātma* (there is no higher and lower). The higher and lower concept is in relation to this universe.

9.4. तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नमः इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये-śrīgurumūrtayē- Gurumūrty ; नमः-namaḥ-prostration; इदं-idam - may;

तस्मै - *tasmai* - that; श्रीगुरुमूर्तये-*śrīgurumūrtayē*- *Gurumūrty* ; नमः-*namaḥ*-prostration; इदं-*idam* - may;

May this prostration be to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who out of great compassion has revealed himself in the form of *Guru*.

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara is describing *Parameshwara* as *Ashtamūrty*, one of the well-known names of *Parameshwara*. The eight forms in which *Parameshwara* reveals himself is described in Line 1 and 2.

10. सर्वात्मत्वमिति स्फुटीकृतमिदं यस्मादमुष्मिंस्तवे तेनास्य श्रवणात्तदर्थमननाद्भ्यानाच्च सङ्कीर्तनात् । सर्वात्मत्वमहाविभूतिसहितं स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः सिध्येत्तत्पुनरष्टधा परिणतं चैश्वर्यमव्याहृतम् ॥ १० ॥

sarvātmavamiti sphuṭīkṛtamidaṃ yasmādamuṣmimṣtave tenāsya śravaṇāttadarthamananāddhyānācca saṅkīrtanāt ; sarvātmavamahāvibhūtisahitaṃ syādīśvaratvaṃ svataḥ sidhyettatpunaraṣṭadhā pariṇataṃ caīśvāryamavyāhatam ||10 ||

Summary: *Sri Ādi Shankara* is bringing out the essence of *Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra* and also describing the *Phalaśruti*, benefits of chanting this stotra. *Paramātmā* is the essence of everything and residing in everything. He is the *Ātma* of all. This matter has been explained clearly. Now that you have understood and realized the truth that there is nothing other than *Parameshwara*, you should listen to *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra*, going over it again and again.

Meaning & Explanation:

10.1. सर्वात्मत्वमिति स्फुटीकृतमिदं यस्मादमुष्मिंस्तवे sarvātmavamiti sphuṭīkṛtamidaṃ yasmādamuṣmimṣtave

सर्वआत्मत्वं - sarva ātmatvam - he is the Ātma of all; इति - iti - thus, like this ; स्फुटीकृतं - sphuṭīkṛtam - clarified, revealed; इदं - idaṃ - this matter; यस्मात् - yasmāt - for this reason; अमुष्मिन् - amuṣmin - in this; स्तवे- stave - stotra;

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara brings out the essence of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra* here and in one word – *sarvātmatvam*. *Parameshwara* is the Ātma of everything, he is the essence of everything, and *Paramātma* resides in everything. He is the Ātma of all, and there's nothing other than him. This truth has been explained clearly here.

10.2.तेनास्य श्रवणात्तदर्थमननाद्भ्यानाच्च सङ्कीर्तनात् tenāsya śravaṇāttadarthamananāddhyānācca saṅkīrtanāt

तेन - tena - for that reason; अस्य- asya - this Stotra; श्रवणात् - śravaṇat - listening to; तत् - tat - that stotra; अर्थ - artha - meaning; मननात् - mananāt - going over again and again, reflecting in your mind; ध्यानात् - dhyānāt - focusing your mind on this concept; च - ca - and; सङ्कीर्तनात् - saṅkīrtanāt - chanting;

Notes:

Sri Ādi Shankara prescribes how one should be associated with *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra* here.

Now that you have understood and realized the truth that there's nothing other than *Parameshwara*, you should listen to *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty Stotra*, going over it again and again. It is not enough if you just listen to the stotra multiple times, you will have to reflect the meaning in your mind again and again. It is not just enough if one chants this *Stotra*, it is subtle.

Sri Ādi Shankara realizes that fact and hence he mentions that - one should go over the meaning again & again in the mind. One should listen first from a *Guru*, who will be able to explain the meaning. After listening to the *Guru*, one should go over the meaning by themselves, by sitting in one place they should go over this in the mind. That is when one will understand the truth that there is nothing other than *Parameshwara* and that he is the Ātma of everything. This is called *artha manana*, the reflection of the meaning.

While doing the *artha manana*, not thinking of anything else and focusing the mind on this concept, one may still have other thoughts on the mind. With continuous and consistent practice, and then when one graduates to the stage of *dhyāna*, he should not have any other thoughts. He should be bound to the concept of *Paramātma*.

And, *Saṅkīrtanāt*, once you have assimilated this concept in yourself, then you start chanting it in yourself again and again for reinforcing it.

Hence, there are four stages of how one should be associated with *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty Aṣṭakam*.

1. *Shravana* - listening to the Stotra.

2. *Manana - artha mananāt-* don't reflect on just the words of the Stotra, but on the meaning of the Stotra. Understand the truth that *Paramātmā* is *Sarvātmā*.
3. *Nidhi-dhyāsana- Dhyāna-* Thinking of only one at a time, that *Parameshwara* at a time, and nothing else. By doing that, you will get into a state of *Samādhi* where you are one with him. Once you reach that stage, your experience is complete.
4. *Saṅkīrtanā -* Once you have reached that state of complete experience, you will then come down to the level of a normal human being and you will start chanting. This is because you still have your body, and hence you still have to do transactions in this world. While doing these transactions, you may lose this concept that you have realized. To avoid that possibility, you should keep chanting this stotra again and again.

10.3.सर्वात्मत्वमहाविभूतिसहितं स्यादीश्वरत्वं स्वतः sarvātmatvamahāvibhūtisahitaṃ syādīśvaratvaṃ svataḥ

सर्वआत्मत्वं - sarva ātmatvam - he is the *Ātma* (of everything); महा - mahā - entire, all; विभूति - vibhūti - wealth, power; सहितं - sahitaṃ - along with that; स्यात् - syāt - let it be ; eśvaratvaṃ - ईश्वरत्वं - eśvaratvaṃ ; स्वतः - svataḥ - your own;

Notes:

The crux is *svataḥ eśvaratvaṃ syāt* - By realizing the truth that *Parameshwara* is the *Ātma* of everything, and then practicing the *Stotra* through the four stages, you will experience that you have become *eśvara* yourself.

Now, what kind of *Eśvaratvaṃ* is this - *Sri Ādi Shankara* is explaining the *Eśvaratvaṃ* out of compassion, out of creating awareness, out of creating affection for this Stotra and this concept. For human beings, to develop a greater interest in this concept, affection for *eśvara* is not so easy. He is making it attractive by describing all these benefits.

What are these attractions - *Parameshwara* is the *aṣṭa mūrty*, He is revealing himself in eight forms, and those eight forms have resulted in this universe. Because he is the *Ātma* of everything, when you realize that you have attained *eśvaratvaṃ*, the wealth and power that goes with *eśvara*, all the *vibhūti* that *eśvara* commands are also yours. You will also realize that you are the *Ātma* of everything.

10.4.सिध्येत्तत्पुनरष्टधा परिणतं चैश्वर्यमव्याहतम् sidhyettatpunaraṣṭadhā pariṇataṃ caīśvāryamavyāhatam

सिध्येत्- sidhyet - will attain; तत्पुनः - tatpunaḥ - furthermore; अष्टधा - aṣṭadhā - eight fold; परिणतं - pariṇataṃ - it will result, you will get; च - ca - and; ऐश्वर्यम् - aiśvāryam - wealth; अव्याहतम् - avyāhatam - indestructible;

Notes:

Furthermore, this is only an enticement to ordinary human beings, that you will get indestructible eight-fold wealth. Here eight-fold wealth can be considered synonymous to *aṣṭa lakshmis*. It can also be considered to, *sidhyet*, as *aṣṭa -siddhis*.

Siddhis are attainments that are difficult and abnormal for human beings. According to *Shāstrās* these *siddhis* (abnormal accomplishments) are considered eight in number. They are called *aṣṭa-mahā-siddhis* and are listed below.

Devanāgarī	English	Meaning
अणिमा	Aṇimā	Becoming very small, like <i>Aṇu</i> (atom)
महिमा	Mahima	Becoming very large, like the <i>Mēru</i> mountain
लघिमा	Laghima	Becoming very light, like cotton
घरिमा	Gharima	Becoming very heavy, like the <i>Mēru</i> mountain
प्राप्ति	Prāpti	Ability to acquire anything anywhere (If you want to touch the moon, you can extend your hand and touch)
प्राकाम्य	Prākāmya	Ability to attain unusual desires (Fly in the air). <i>Sadāshiva Brahmendra</i> displayed some of these <i>Siddhis</i> during his lifetime. When he was at Nerur he traveled to Madurai along with few children. He flew in the air and in a moment, he landed at Madurai along with the children. This was possible because of the <i>Siddhi</i> .
ईशित्व	Eṣiṭva	Lordship of <i>Pancha-Bhūtas</i> (five elements), they will obey you. If you want the heavy wind to blow in a particular place, it will blow. If you want the sun to shine, it will shine likewise. In fact, <i>Rāvana</i> , <i>Shoorapadma</i> all these <i>asuras</i> managed this <i>Eṣiṭva</i> . They had powers and control over the five elements.
वशित्व	Vaśitva	Influencing people and elements. You can influence anything and anybody to act your way

These are the *mahā-siddhi's* that one will get if he is blessed by *Parameshwara*. These *siddhis* are only an enticement, allurement for an ordinary human being and should not be taken seriously here. Time and again, *Vidwāns* have cautioned that one will be automatically getting these *siddhis* but he should not go after these *siddhis*. And, that is because they are nothing but an impediment in attaining the higher *Jnāna*.

Sarvātmatvam is the highest *Jnāna*, and the *mahā vibhūti* - wealth, various accomplishments, and the power that goes with it is also secondary. One should not go after that. And, one should definitely NOT go after these *aṣṭa-mahā-siddhis*.

Sarvātmatvam is what one should be aiming at, and hence *Sri Ādi Shankara* started the *Shloka* with *Sarvātmatvam*. *Sarvātmatvam* is the aim, all these *siddhis* are nothing but an impediment. He is mentioning them as an enticement so that we will at least get into this for the sake of *Siddhis*. And,

after getting into this, we will be so engrossed with this highest *Jnāna* that we will forget about the *mahā vibhūti* and *Siddhis*. That is the objective!

The next two shlokas are not part of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti Aṣṭakam*, but these are normally chanted as a hymn in praise of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. We started the *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti Aṣṭakam* with *dhyāna shloka* in the beginning, we are ending with additional hymns and praises of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti*.

11. वटवितपिसमीपेभूमिभागे निषण्णं सकलमुनिजनानां ज्ञानदातारमारात् ।
त्रिभुवनगुरुमीशं दक्षिणामूर्तिदेवं जननमरणदःखच्छेद दक्षं नमामि ॥

vaṭaviṭapisamīpē bhūmibhāgē niṣaṇṇaṃ sakalamunijanānāṃ jñānadātāramārāt ।
tribhuvanagurumīśaṃ dakṣiṇāmūrtidēvaṃ jananamaraṇaduḥkhaḥchēda dakṣaṃ namāmi | |

Summary: *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is seated at the foot of a banyan tree in that part of the land. And, though he is seated in *Chinmudra* posture and with *mauna*(silence), he is teaching the *Jnāna* to all the great saints who are seated close by. He is the *Guru* of the three worlds, and that *Gurumūrti* who is shining/revealing himself in the form of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. He is the only one who can destroy with great expertise, the misery that arises from birth and death, and I prostrate to him.

Meaning & Explanation:

11.1. वटवितपिसमीपेभूमिभागे निषण्णं vaṭaviṭapisamīpē bhūmibhāgē niṣaṇṇaṃ

वट - vaṭa- banyan; वितपि - viṭapi - tree ; समीपे - samīpē - near ; भूमि - bhūmi - land; भागे - bhāgē - that part of ; निषण्णं - niṣaṇṇaṃ - sitting;

Dakṣiṇāmūrti is seated at the foot of banyan tree in that part of the land.

Notes:

Bhūmi bhāgē has got an indirect connotation. He has come down from *Kailāsa*, his natural place of residence, to this earth out of compassion, and he has taken shelter under the banyan tree only for teaching us.

11.2. सकलमुनिजनानां ज्ञानदातारमारात् sakalamunijanānāṃ jñānadātāramārāt

सकल - sakala - all; मुनिजनानां - muni janānāṃ- great saints; ज्ञान - jñāna- knowledge; दातारम - dātāram- teaching; आरात् - ārāt - who are sitting nearby;

And, though he is seated in *Chinmudra* posture and with *mauna*(silence), he is teaching the *Jnāna* to all the great saints who are seated close by.

11.3. त्रिभुवनगुरुमीशं दक्षिणामूर्तिदेवं tribhuvanaGurumīśaṃ dakṣiṇāmūrtidēvaṃ

त्रिभुवन - tribhuvana - three worlds; गुरुं - Gurum -Guru of; ईशं - eśam - eśvara, lord; दक्षिणामूर्ति - dakṣiṇāmūrti - Dakṣiṇāmūrti; देवं - dēvam- one who is shining;

Notes:

He is the *Guru* of the three worlds, and that *Gurumūrti* who is shining. That deva who has revealed himself in the form of *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*

Here, the three worlds are referred to the below listed three entities

- Bhoomi - earth on which we are living,
- The seven *nether* worlds (*pātala* and others), and
- The six higher worlds (*Bhoorbuvasvah* up to *Satyam*)

He is the *Guru* for the entire universe, he is the lord - there is nobody higher than him. He is that *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* deva. All the devas shine because of the *Satva guṇa* that they have. That halo of light around their head comes out of *Satva guṇa*.

11.4. जननमरणदुःखच्छेद दक्षं नमामि jananamaraṇaduḥkacchēda dakṣam namāmi

जनन - janana - birth; मरण - maraṇa - death; दुःख - duḥkha - misery, grief; छेद - cchēda - breaking, destroying; दक्षं - dakṣam - master, expert in ; नमामि - namāmi - I prostrate to him;

The misery that arises from birth and death, he destroys that misery with great expertise. He is the only one who can end that misery, nobody else can, and I prostrate to him.

12. चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्यवा । गुरोस्त मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तच्छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

citraṃ vaṭatarōrmūlē vṛddhāḥ śiṣyāḥ gururyuvā | gurōstu maunavyākhyānaṃ śiṣyāstucchinnaśaṃśayāḥ ||

The concept of *mauna vyākhyānaṃ* that was signified in *Prārthana shloka* is explained again here.

Summary: At the foot of the banyan tree, there's something wonderful that's happening. The disciples are very old, the Guru is young. Usually, the Guru will be old and disciples will be young. Further, the Guru is teaching though silence and the disciples are relieved of all of their doubts.

Meaning & Explanation:

12.1. चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्यवा citraṃ vaṭatarōrmūlē vṛddhāḥ śiṣyāḥ Gururyuvā

चित्रं - citraṃ - there is something wonder; वट - vaṭa - banyan; तरु - taru - tree; मूले - mūlē - foot of; वृद्धाः - vṛddhāḥ - old; शिष्या - śiṣyāḥ - disciples; गुरु - Guru - Guru, master;

युवा - yuvā -young;

12.2. गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तुच्छिन्नसंशयाः gurōstu maunavyākhyānaṃ
śiṣyāstucchinnaśaṃśayāḥ

गुरोः - gurōḥ - of the Guru; तु - tu - not only that; मौन - mauna - silence ; व्याख्यानं - vyākhyānaṃ - explanation; शिष्याः - śiṣyāḥ - disciples; छिन्न - cchinna - broken, destroyed ; संशयाः - śaṃśayāḥ - doubts;

Shloka 13

13. ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय शुद्धज्ञानैकमूर्तये । निर्मलाय प्रशान्ताय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥
निधये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम् । गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः ॥

Om namaḥ praṇavārthāya śuddhajñānaikamūrtayē Inirmalāya praśāntāya dakṣiṇāmūrtayē namaḥ ॥
nidhayē sarvavidyānāṃ bhiṣajē bhavarōgiṇām | guravē sarvalōkānāṃ dakṣiṇāmūrtayē namaḥ ॥

This is the last Shloka of the *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty Aṣṭakam*. The essence of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty Aṣṭakam* has been discussed over quite a few earlier shlokas. This shloka summarizes the glory of *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, and we praise his glory here.

Summary: Prostrating to *Om* and then, prostrating to the meaning of *Om* - प्रणवार्थाय - praṇava arthāya, where *Om* is the essence of the *Vedās* and starting point of the creation. Prostrating to the only form which represents pure *Jnāna*. (शुद्ध- śuddha - pure; ज्ञान- jñāna - knowledge). *Gurumūrty* is a form that's representing the *śuddha jñāna* because in this form he is teaching the *śuddha jñāna* to all of us through the gesture of *Chinmudra* and through silence. Prostration to that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who is blemishless (stainless), who has no defect and he is ever pure. *Shānti* is the quality of *Jnāna*, knowledge. *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* is of the form of superlative *shānti* that can never be disturbed, he never falls down from that state of *shānti*. He is the treasure of all schools of knowledge, education. All knowledge emanates from him.

We are all suffering from the *bhava-rōga*, disease of the cycle of birth and death. *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* is that Vaidya (doctor) who can cure this disease of *Samsāra* of all. This liberation is to be attained by the people in all the 14 worlds, they are all looking for liberation to *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty*. To that *Guru* who is the *Guru* of all the worlds, to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty*, I prostrate to him.

Meaning & Explanation:

13.1. ॐ नमः प्रणवार्थाय शुद्धज्ञानैकमूर्तये Ōṃ namaḥ praṇavārhāya śuddhajñānaikamūrtayē
 ॐ - Ōṃ - praṇava; नमः - namaḥ - prostrating to Ōṃ; प्रणवार्थाय - praṇava arthāya - (prostrating to) meaning of Ōṃ; शुद्ध - śuddha - pure; ज्ञान- jñāna - knowledge; एक - eka - only; मूर्तये - mūrtayē - form;

Notes:

Prostrating to Ōṃ and then, prostrating to the meaning of Ōṃ(*praṇava arthāya*), where Ōṃ is the essence of the *Vedās* and starting point of the creation. (It is the word used by Brahma for setting upon the creation of this world/universe.) Prostrating to the only form which represents pure *Jnāna*. (शुद्ध-*śuddha* - pure; ज्ञान-*jñāna*- knowledge). *Gurumūrti* is a form that is representing the *śuddha jñāna*, because in this form he is teaching the *śuddha jñāna* to all of us through the gesture of *Chinmudra* and through silence.

Several attributes of Sri *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* are being highlighted and recollected in this shloka.

Ōṃ itself is the essence of all the *Vedās*. It is said that *Brahma* extracted the essence of three *Vedās* and found Ōṃ. There are three letters within Ōṃ- Ā, Ū, Ma and a *bindu (ardha mātra)*. These three letters represent the three *Vedās -Rig, Yajus and Sāma Veda*. Ōṃ is the essence of the *Vedās*, is the starting point of the creation. There is no creation without Ōṃ. It is the mantra that *Brahma* uses for creation. So, all creation is pervaded by *Vedās*, and essence of *Vedās* which is Ōṃ.

praṇava arthāya - Ōṃ is the meaning of *praṇava*. There are many interpretations given to *praṇava*. One such is प्रकर्षेण नवम् - *prakarṣheṇa navam* - which means it is always, ever new.

Ōṃ is one of the *beejāksharas*. According to Shastra, even *gruhastas* are not encouraged to chant Ōṃ by itself but to be chanted along with a name of *Bhagāwan*. It is only the *Sanyāsis* who can chant Ōṃ eternally, that is the *dheeksha* (teaching) given to them.

Śuddha jñānaika mūrtayē - The only *mūrti*, form that represents pure *Jnāna*.

Pure *Jnāna* is what we have seen so far and that is *Advaita. Nirguṇa Brahma, the parabrahma* who is *nirguṇa*, is the starting point of our discussion. When *parabrahma* assumed the *guṇa*, he assumed the powers of *māya* and created the world. At that point of time, he becomes *saguṇa brahman* from *nirguṇa brahman*. *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti* is also a form of *saguṇa brahman*.

It is said that *saguṇa brahman* has got *ananta kalyāna guṇas* which are mainly centered around compassion towards *Jīvas*. That is the main *kalyāna guṇa* that the *Bhagavān* has. In fact, he is known as *Bhagāwan, Eshwara* only when he becomes *saguṇa brahman*.

Śuddha jñāna is the state of *nirguṇa brahman* where he has no *guṇas* and he is in a pure *sachidānanda swaroopa*. *Sat* - he is ever existing, *chit* - he is of the form of consciousness, *ānanda* - he is of the form of bliss. *Gurumūrti* is a form that's representing the *śuddha jñāna*, because in this form he is teaching the *śuddha jñāna* to all of us through the gesture of *Chinmudra*, and through silence.

Other *mūrtys* have different purposes, and of *Bhakti*. *Bhakti* itself is a devotion towards *saguṇa brahmam*.

13.2. निर्मलाय प्रशान्ताय दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः nirmalāya praśāntāya dakṣiṇāmūrtayē namaḥ

निर्मलाय - nirmalāya - who is stainless, who has no defect; प्रशान्ताय - praśāntāya - special *shānti*, *shānti* that never be disturbed; दक्षिणामूर्तये - dakṣiṇāmūrtayē - that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty*; नमः - namaḥ - prostration to;

Notes:

Prostration to that *Dakṣiṇāmūrty* who is blemishless (stainless), who has no defect and he is ever pure. *Shānti* is the quality of *Jnāna*, knowledge.

Shānti means peace. *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* emphasizes *shānti* in many *shlokas*.

Bhagāwan says शान्तिमृच्छति - *śhāntim ṛichchhati*- he attains *shānti*. He equates *shānti* to “attains *mōksha*”. *Shānti* is the state of *mōksha*, liberation and freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

Praśānti, प्रकर्षेण शान्ति, means special *shānti*, superlative *shānti*. The *shānti* that can never be disturbed. This state of *shānti* can be attained only by the *Jnanis*. All other people attain *shānti* like when we chant a stotra or when we stand in front of *Bhagavān*. This *shānti* is temporary, and is a transient *shānti*. *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrty* is of the form of superlative *shānti* that can never be disturbed, he never falls down from that state of *shānti*.

13.3. निधये सर्वविद्यानां भिषजे भवरोगिणाम् nidhayē sarvavidyānām bhiṣajē bhavarōgiṇām

निधये - nidhayē - he is the treasure; सर्व - sarva - all; विद्यानां - vidyānām - knowledge, schools of education; भिषजे - bhiṣajē - a doctor ; भव-bhava - samsara, cycle of birth-and-death; रोगिणाम् - rōgiṇām - patient;

Notes:

nidhayē sarva vidyānām - He is the treasure of all schools of knowledge, education. All knowledge emanates from him. The *chit* in *sat-chit-ānandam* means consciousness. From consciousness comes all the knowledge.

All *Vidya* includes secular and mundane knowledge (material knowledge that we learn such as physics, chemistry, mathematics etc.). Whereas in our *ādhyātmic* literature, *Vidya* always refers to *ādhyātma Vidya* or *Brahma Vidya*. According to *Vedās*, *Vidya* is referred as साविद्याया विमुक्तये - *sā Vidyā yā vimuktaye* -that is called *Vidya* which leads to *mōksha* (liberation).

Sarva Vidyānām here refers to the knowledge of all *Vidyas* of lower category. *Brahma Vidya* is the only *Vidya* which a man should attain that is the higher category.

bhiṣajē bhava rōgiṇām - *bhiṣak* means a *Vaidya*(doctor). *Rōgi* means patient, one who is suffering from a disease.

We are all suffering from the *bhava-rōga*, disease of the cycle of birth and death. That disease is constantly with us and is accompanying us all through many births. And we do not know how to get rid of this disease. Who is the *Vaidya* (doctor) who can cure us of this disease? That doctor is none other than *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti*.

13.4. गुरवे सर्वलोकानां दक्षिणामूर्तये नमः guravē sarvalōkānāṃ dakṣiṇāmūrtayē namaḥ

गुरवे - Guravē - he is the *Guru* (of); सर्व-all; लोकानां - sarvalōkānāṃ - (for) all the lokās; दक्षिणामूर्तये - dakṣiṇāmūrtayē - that *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*; नमः - namaḥ - prostration to;

To that *Guru* who is the *Guru* of all the worlds, to that *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, I prostrate to him.

Notes:

He is the *Guru* of all the worlds. The word *lōka* is translated as the world. There are 14 worlds. The origin of the world (*loka*) is what we see with our eyes. It was then extended to what we experience with our sense-organs.

The original meaning is what we can see and experience in the world. In the sleep state, we don't see and experience the world and hence the world does not exist for us.

He is the *Guru* for all the lokās, for those who inhabit all the 14 worlds and he is the one who teaches *Brahma-Vidya*. Because even in the *Brahma-loka*, which is referred to as the highest of the 14 worlds, there are *Jīvātma*'s who are waiting to be liberated. They leave the *bhū-loka*, earth through the अर्चिरादिमार्ग - *archirārdi mārga* - the path of light. There is one another path called धूम्रादिमार्ग - *dhoomrādi mārga* - which many people take, and they come back to this earth. Those who take *archirārdi mārga* do not come back to this earth, they go to the *Brahma-loka*. There, they stay with *Brahma* until they get liberated. When *Brahma* gets liberated at the end of his several *kalpā*, his 100 years, that is when these people also get liberated.

This liberation is to be attained by the people in all the 14 worlds, they are all looking for liberation to *Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti*. He is the *Guru* for all, and, I prostrate to that *Gurumūrti*.

॥श्रीदक्षिणामूर्त्यष्टकं संपूर्णम्॥