
dashashlokI (with introduction and translation)

த³ஸஸ்லோகீ நிர்வாணத³ஸகம் ச

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Ten Stanzas (on Atman)

by shrImad sha.nkarAchArya

Introduction:

ShrI Shankara sums up the essence of Vedanta in dasashlokI . He states that Only Atman Is while the world of names, form and various manifestations are just maya . He goes on to say that Atman is same as the supreme Brahman . Shankara also emphasises, as do upaniShads that the man who realizes Atma ALONE transcends worldly sorrow (tarati shokaM Atnavit).

After writing a wonderful commentary on Gaudapada's karika on mANDukya upaniShad, and upadesahasri in my humble opinion, the best philosophical work of Shankara, many scholars consider dashashlokI to be the last pronouncement of Shankara on the non-dual nature of Atman . In a very simple way using just 10 verses, Shankara expounds on the nature of Atman – the attributeless Truth, indestructible, and the very basis of supreme bliss and purity.

The words of Swami Gambhirananda sums up the significance of the sloka, 'This text deals with the nature of Atman in the clearest and simplest language . There is not a single word which is superflous, and the teacher [Shankara] is at this best; the arrow of knowledge is aimed at ignorance and it hits the target directly, destroying the enemy.'

The birth of this Dasasloki is an interesting event. Sri Sankara in imminent danger of death in the jaws of a crocodile in the river Purna in his village Kaladi, takes Sannyasa informally by pronouncing the prescinebd formula. But when the crocodile immediately frees him from its grip, Sri Sankara is

faced with the necessity of seeking a competent teacher who can regularise the Sannyasa and initiate him in the Upanishadic passages. He travelled north and ultimately found such a teacher in Sri Govindapadacharya, who was in deep meditation in a cave on the banks of the Narmada. When fervently implored by Sri Sankara, the Saint woke up and asked Sri Sankara who he was. It was in reponse to this simple question that Sri Sankara burst out in a set of ten pregnant stanzas explaining the real nature of the Self which alone he was. The Saint realising that Sri Sanakara was a realised soul, who had come to him for initiation only to conform to the normal method of entering the Sannyasa Order, immediately accepted him as a disciple.

May Shri Shankara leads us from ignorance to Truth by helping us realize the Atman.

OM tat sat.

பு⁴ஜங்க³ப்ரயாத |

|| அத² த³ஸஸ்லோகீ ||

ந பூ⁴மிர்ந தோயம் ந தேஜோ ந வாயு:

ந க²ம் நேந்த³ரியம் வா ந தேஷாம் ஸமூஹ: |

அநேகாந்திகத்வாத் ஸுஷுப்த்யேகஸித்³த:⁴ (அநேகாந்திகத்வாத்)

ததே³கோ஽வஸிஷ்ட: ஸிவ: கேவலோ஽ஹம் || 1 ||

"

I am not the Earth nor Water, neither Fire nor Air, I am not space. Neither am I any of the Faculties nor am I their aggregate. [I am not any of these] as they are all uncertain. I am proved however in the sole experience of deep sleep. That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Only One, am I.

ந வர்ணா ந வர்ணஸ்ரமாசாரத⁴ர்மா

ந மே தா⁴ரணாத⁴யாநயோகா³த³யோ஽பி |

அநாத்மாஸ்ரயாஹம்மமாத⁴யாஸஹாநாத்

ததே³கோ஽வஸிஷ்ட: ஸிவ: கேவலோ஽ஹம் || 2 ||

"
The castes are not for me, nor the observances and duties attached to the castes and the stages of life. Even the steadying of the mind, concentration, self-communion and other courses are not for me. For the mistaken senses of I and MINE which rested on the Non-Self have been abandoned. That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I."

ந மாதா பிதா வா ந தே³வா ந லோகா
ந வேதா³ ந யஜ்ஞா ந தீர்த²ம் ப்³ருவந்தி |
ஸுஷுப்தௌ நிரஸ்தாதிஸூந்யாத்மகத்வாத்
ததே³கோ஽வஸிஷ்ட: ஸிவ: கேவலோ஽ஹம் || 3 ||

"
There is no mother nor father; no gods nor regions of experience; no scriptures nor sacrificial sites; and no sacred place-so say the Sages. For, in the state of deep sleep, all these are negated and that state is completely devoid(of any object of perception) That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I."

ந ஸாங்க்யம் ந ஸைவம் ந தத்பாஞ்சராத்தரம்
ந ஜைநம் ந மீமாம்ஸகாதே³ர்மதம் வா |
விஸிஷ்டாநுபூ⁴த்யா விஸூத்³தா⁴த்மகத்வாத்
ததே³கோ஽வஸிஷ்ட: ஸிவ: கேவலோ஽ஹம் || 4 ||

"
There is no Sankhya nor Saiva, nor that Pancharatra nor Jaina. The conception of the Mimamsaka and others does not exist. For, through the direct realisation of what is qualified, the Self is known as of the nature of the Absolutely Pure. That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I."

ந சோர்த்⁴வம் ந சாதோ⁴ ந சாந்தர்ந பா³ஹ்யம்
ந மத்⁴யம் ந திர்யங் ந பூர்வா஽பரா தி³க் |
வியத்³வ்யாபகத்வாத்³க²ண்டை³கரூப:
ததே³கோ஽வஸிஷ்ட: ஸிவ: கேவலோ஽ஹம் || 5 ||

"
There is neither above nor below, neither inside nor outside, no middle nor crosswise, no direction, east or west. For it is all-pervasive like space. It is partless and homogeneous in its nature. That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I."

ந ஸூக்லம் ந க்ரு³ஷ்ணம் ந ரக்தம் ந பீதம்
ந குப்³ஜம் ந பீநம் ந ஹ்ரஸ்வம் ந தீ³ர்க⁴ம் |
அருபம் ததா² ஜ்யோதிராகாரகத்வாத்
ததே³கோ⁵வஸிஷ்ட: சரிவ: கேவலோ⁵ஹம் || 6 ||

"
It is neither white nor black, neither red nor yellow, neither dwarfish nor stout, neither short nor long. As it is of the nature of light, it is shapeless also. That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I."

ந ஸாஸ்தா ந ஸாஸ்த்ரம் ந ஸிஷ்யோ ந ஸிக்ஷா
ந ச த்வம் ந சாஹம் ந சாயம் ப்ரபஞ்ச: |
ஸ்வரூபாவபோ³தோ⁴ விகல்பாஸஹிஷ்ணு:
ததே³கோ⁵வஸிஷ்ட: சரிவ: கேவலோ⁵ஹம் || 7 ||

"
There is no ruler nor rule, no pupil nor training. There is no YOU nor I. This universe is not. For the realisation of the true nature of the Self does not tolerate any distinction. That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I."

ந ஜாக்³ரந் ந மே ஸ்வப்நகோ வா ஸுஷுப்தி:
ந விஸ்வோ ந வா தைஜஸ: ப்ராஜ்ஞகோ வா |
அவித்³யாத்மகத்வாத் த்ரயாணம் துரீய:
ததே³கோ⁵வஸிஷ்ட: சரிவ: கேவலோ⁵ஹம் || 8 ||

"
There is no waking state for me nor dream or deep sleep. I am not Visva[the Self identified with the experiencer of the waking state], nor Taijasa[identified with dream state],

nor Prajna[identified with deep sleep]. I am really the
Fourth(Turiya). That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone,
am I.

அபி வ்யாபகத்வாத் ஹிதத்த்வப்ரயோகா³த் (வ்யாபகத்வாத்³தி⁴தத்த்வ)
ஸ்வத: ஸித்³த⁴பா⁴வாத்³நந்யாஸ்ரயத்வாத் |
ஐக³த் துச்ச²மேதத் ஸமஸ்தம் தத³ந்யத்
ததே³கோ⁵வஸிஷ்ட: ஸிவ: கேவலோ⁵ஹம் || 9 ||


All this universe which is other than the Self is
worthless(having no existence of its own) for it is well known
that the Self is all pervasive, recognised as the reality and
that its existence is self-proven and does not depend upon
anything else. That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone,
am I.

ந சைகம் தத³ந்யத்³ த்³விதீயம் குத: ஸ்யாத்
ந கேவலத்வம் ந சாகேவலத்வம் |
ந ஸூந்யம் ந சாஸூந்யமத்³வைதகத்வாத்
கத²ம் ஸர்வவேதா³ந்தஸித்³த⁴ம் ப்³ரவீமி || 10 ||


It is not one, for how can there be a second distinct
from it? Aloneness cannot be attributed to it nor even
not-aloneness. It is neither a void nor a non-void. When it does
not admit of a second entity, in what manner can I speak about
it though it is established by all the Upanishads.?

|| இதி ஸ்ரீமத்³ ஸங்கராசார்யவிரசிதம் த³ஸஸ்லோகீ அத²வா
நிர்வாணத³ஸகஸ்தோத்ரம் ஸமாப்தம் ||

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