

dashashlokI (with introduction and translation)

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दशश्लोकी निरवाणदशकं च

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దశశ్లోకీ నిర్వాణదశకం చ



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 Atmavit).

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 superfluous, 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 prescribe 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.

భుజ్జప్రయాత ।

॥ అథ దశశ్లోకీ ॥

న భూమిర్న తోయం న తేజో న వాయుః
 న ఖం నేన్ద్రియం వా న తేషాం సమూహః ।
 అనేకాన్తైకత్వాత్ సుషుప్త్యైకసిద్ధః (అనైకాన్తైకత్వాత్)
 తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ ॥ ౧ ॥

“ 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.

న వర్ణా న వర్ణాశ్రమాచారధర్మా
 న మే ధారణాధ్యానయోగాదయోఽపి ।
 అనాత్మాశ్రయాహంమమాధ్యాసహానాత్
 తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ ॥ ౨ ॥

" 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."

న మాతా పితా వా న దేవా న లోకా
 న వేదా న యజ్ఞా న తీర్థం బ్రువన్తి ।
 సుషుప్తౌ నిరస్తాతిశూన్యాత్మకత్వాత్
 తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ ॥ ౩॥

" 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 negatived and that state is completely devoid(of any object of perception) That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I."

న సాంఖ్యం న శైవం న తత్పాఞ్చరాత్రం
 న జైనం న మీమాంసకాదేర్మతం వా ।
 విశిష్టానుభూత్యా విశుద్ధాత్మకత్వాత్
 తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ ॥ ౪॥

" 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."

న చోర్ధ్వం న చాధో న చాస్తర్న బాహ్యం
 న మధ్యం న తిర్యజ్ న పూర్వాఽపరా దిక్ ।
 వియద్యావ్యపకత్వాదఖణ్డైకరూపః

తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ || ౫ ||

"

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.

న శుక్లం న కృష్ణం న రక్తం న పీతం
 న కుబ్జం న పీనం న హ్రాస్వం న దీర్ఘమ్ |
 అరూపం తథా జ్యోతిరాకారకత్వాత్
 తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ || ౬ ||

"

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.

న శాస్తా న శాస్త్రం న శిష్యో న శిషా
 న చ త్వం న చాహం న చాయం ప్రపఞ్చః |
 స్వరూపావబోధో వికల్పాసహిష్టుః
 తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ || ౭ ||

"

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.

న జాగ్రన్ న మే స్వప్నకో వా సుషుప్తిః
 న విశోవో న వా తైజసః ప్రాజ్ఞకో వా |
 అవిద్యాత్మకత్వాత్ త్రయాణాం తురీయః
 తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ || ౮ ||

"

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 Tajjasa[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.

అపి వ్యాపకత్వాత్ హితత్వప్రయోగాత్ (వ్యాపకత్వాద్ధితత్వ)
స్వతః సిద్ధభావాదనన్యాశ్రయత్వాత్ ।
జగత్ తుచ్ఛమేతత్ సమస్తం తదన్యత్
తదేకోఽవశిష్టః శివః కేవలోఽహమ్ ॥ ౯ ॥

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.


న చైకం తదన్యద్ ద్వితీయం కుతః స్యాత్
న కేవలత్వం న చాకేవలత్వమ్ ।
న శూన్యం న చాశూన్యమద్వైతకత్వాత్
కథం సర్వవేదాంతసిద్ధం బ్రవీమి ॥ ౧౦ ॥

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.?


॥ ఇతి శ్రీమద్ శంకరాచార్యవిరచితం దశశ్లోకీ అథవా
నిర్వాణదశకస్తోత్రం సమాప్తం ॥

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