

॥ श्रीविष्णुपादादिकेशान्तस्तोत्रम् ॥

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August 3, 2016

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Document Information

Text title : VishnupAdAdikesAntastotram
File name : viShNupAdAdikeshAntastotra.itx
Location : doc_vishhnu
Author : Adi Shankaracharya
Language : Sanskrit
Subject : philosophy/hinduism/religion
Transliterated by : GSS Murthy murthygss at gmail.com
Proofread by : GSS Murthy murthygss at gmail.com
Translated by : GSS Murthy murthygss at gmail.com
Latest update : May 22, 2012
Send corrections to : Sanskrit@cheerful.com
Site access : <http://sanskritdocuments.org>

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॥ श्रीः ॥

Commentary and translation by GSS. Murthy
Adi Shankaracharya, also reverentially called as Shankarabha-
gavatpada, has
composed this exquisite hymn in praise of Lord Vishnu. Lord
Vishnu, with his bow
SArnga slinging over the shoulder holds in his four hands
Panchajanya the
conch, Sudarsana the disc, Nandaka the sword, and Koumodaki,
the mace. He has
as his vehicle Garuda, the chief of the feathered race and as his
seat Ananta,
the chief of snakes. He has as his consorts Shridevi and
Bhudevi. After praying
to Vishnu's weapons, his vehicle, his seat and his consorts Shri
Shankara prays
to each of the parts of Vishnu's divine form starting from his
feet [pAdAdi] and
ending in the hair[keShAnta] on his head.

The rendering in English which is not a word by word transla-
tion only conveys
the gist of a verse and is based on a Sanskrit commentary,
'Bhakti mandakini' of
Shri. Purnasaraswati.

Shri Shankara first prays to Panchajanya, the conch.

लक्ष्मीभर्तुर्भुजाग्रे कृतवसति सितं यस्य रूपं विशालम्
नीलाद्रेस्तुङ्गश्चस्थितमिव रजनीनाथविंबं विभाति ।
पायान्नः पाञ्चजन्यः स दितिसुतकुलत्रासनैः पूरयन् स्वैः
निध्वानैर्नीरदौघध्वनिपरिभवदैरम्बरं कम्बुराजः ॥ १ ॥

अन्वयः – यस्य विशालं सितं रूपं लक्ष्मीभर्तुः भुजाग्रे कृतवसति
नीलाद्रेः तुङ्गश्चस्थितं रजनीनाथविम्बम् इव विभाति सः कंबुराजः
पाञ्चजन्यः नीरदौघध्वनिपरिभवदैः दितिसुतकुलत्रासनैः स्वैः
निध्वानैः अम्बरं पूरयन् नः पायात् ।

May Panchajanya the king of conches, whose sound surpasses the sound of thunder and which terrifies the clan of the Daityas protect us. Positioned in the hand of Vishnu, LakShmi's protector, the broad white Panchajanya resembles the moon at the peak of the Niladri, the blue mountain.

Note: Shri Shankara starts the hymn uttering the auspicious name of LakShmi, who bestows things auspicious to her devotees. The sound of the conch is 'OM', the sacred chant. Panchajanya also signifies Shabdabrahma. Niladri, blue in colour, is a mythical mountain to the North of Meru. As Vishnu is blue or dark in colour the comparison of the conch in his hand to that of moon at the peak of Niladri is apt.

Having first prayed to PAncajanya, the conch which is a representation of Shabdabrahma, Shri Shankara now prays to the most important weapon of ViShnu, namely the disc, Sudarsana, which represents the kAlachakra, the wheel of time:

आहुर्यस्य स्वरूपं क्षणमुखमखिलं सूरयः कालमेतम्
ध्वान्तस्यैकान्तमन्तं यदपि च परमं सर्वधाम्नां च धाम ।
चक्रं तच्चक्रपाणेर्दितिजतनुगलद्रक्तधाराक्तधारम्
शश्वन्नो विश्ववन्द्यं वितरतु विपुलं शर्म घर्मांशुशोभम् ॥ २ ॥

अन्वयः – सूरयः यस्य स्वरूपम् क्षणमुखम् अखिलम् एतम् कालम् आहुः, यत् अपि

ध्वान्तस्य एकान्तम् अन्तम् (यत्) सर्वधाम्नाम् परमम् धाम च , चक्रपाणेः तत् घर्मांशुशोभम् विश्ववन्द्यम् दितिजतनुगलद्रक्तधाराक्तधारम् चक्रं विपुलं शर्म शश्वत् नो वितरतु ।

Let the disc of Chakrapani, whose edge is red with the flow of blood from the bodies of Daityas, which has the lustre of sun and which is worshipped by all, which is the ultimate end of all darkness, which is the ultimate abode of all energy and which sages consider as the form of Entire Time starting from the shortest instance of a kShana, for ever dispense to us bounteous happiness.

Note: The concept of Sudarsana chakra as a representation of kAlachakra is indeed very apt. There is nothing which is not annihilated by Time and nothing can survive its onslaught. Time only proves that Truth prevails over untruth.

One twelfth part of a muhoorta is Kshana. One thirtieth of a full day is muhoorta.

Shri Shankara prays to sArnga, ViShNu's bow:

अव्यान्निर्घातघोरो हरिभुजपवनामर्शनाध्मातमूर्तेः
अस्मान् विस्मेरनेत्रत्रिदशानुतिवचःसाधुकारैः सुतारः ।
सर्वं संहर्तुमिच्छोररिकुलभुवनं स्फारविस्फारनादः
संयत्कल्पान्तसिन्धौ शरसलिलघटावार्मुचः कार्मुकस्य ॥ ३ ॥

अन्वयः – संयत्कल्पान्तसिन्धौ हरिभुजपवनामर्शनाध्मातमूर्तेः
शरसलिलघटावार्मुचः, सर्वम् अरिकुलभवनं संहर्तुम् इच्छोः, कार्मुकस्य
निर्घातघोरः, त्रिदशानुतिवचःसाधुकारैः सुतारः, स्फारविस्फारनादः अस्मान्
अव्यात् ।

May the sound of the expanding twanging of the bow, whose high pitch is accompanied by the 'well done' exclamations of the praising devas protect us.

The twanging sound is like that of thunder in the pralaya-like battle emanating

from clouds made of streams of arrows, which are like water and the arm of

Narayana acts as the wind which drives the clouds.

Note: The construction of the verse and the metaphor are both complex and the

commentator says so. Shankaracharya imagines the battle scene where Narayana is

using his bow continuously against the asuras. During the battle, devas are

exclaiming, 'sAdhu, sAdhu' and the twang of the bow is heard as high pitched

sound amidst the din. The sound is like that of thunder during the deluge at the

end of a kalpa. The stream of arrows is like the cloud and the arm of Narayana

is the wind which is driving the cloud.

ShankarAchArya now meditates on the sword Nandaka :

जीमूतश्यामभासा मुहुरपि भगवद्बाहुना मोहयन्ती

युद्धेषूद्धूयमाना झटिति तटिदिवालक्ष्यते यस्य मूर्तिः ।

सोऽसिस्त्रासाकुलाक्षत्रिदशरिपुवपुःशोणितास्वादतृप्तो

नित्यानन्दाय भूयान्मधुमथनमनोनन्दनो नन्दको नः ॥ ४ ॥

अन्वयः – युद्धेषु जीमूतश्यामभासा भगवद्बाहुना झटिति उद्धूयमाना यस्य

मूर्तिः मुहुरपि तटित् इव मोहयन्ती लक्ष्यते सः

त्रासाकुलाक्षत्रिदशरिपुवपुःशोणितास्वादतृप्तः मधुमथनमनोनन्दनः

नन्दकः नः नित्यानन्दाय भूयात् ।

May the sword Nandaka which is satiated with the taste of the blood from the

bodies of daityas who have eyes full of fear and which (thus) pleases the slayer

of Madhu (Lord Vishnu) be for our eternal bliss. The sword while being swiftly

moved in the battles by the Lord's arm which has the blue luster of a cloud

causes confusion like lightening.

Note : Nandaka signifies the sword of Supreme Knowledge by which a devotee cuts

asunder Avidya. The flashes of the moving sword against the blue hue of the

Lord are compared to that of lightening in the blue clouds.

Now the poet prays to Kaumodaki, the mace which represents buddhi, intellect:

कम्राकारा मुरारेः करकमलतलेनानुरागाद्गृहीता

सम्यग्वृत्ता स्थिताग्रे सपदि न सहते दर्शनं या परेषाम् ।

राजन्ती दैत्यजीवासवमदमुदिता लोहितालेपनाद्रा

कामं दीप्तांशुकान्ता प्रदिशतु दयितेवास्य कौमोदकी नः ॥ ५ ॥

अन्वयः – मुरारेः करकमलतलेन अनुरागात् गृहीता, कम्राकारा सम्यग्वृत्ता

अग्रे स्थिता, या परेषाम् दर्शनम् सपदि न सहते, दैत्यजीवासवमदमुदिता

लोहितालेपनाद्रा राजन्ती, दीप्तांशुकान्ता अस्य कौमोदकी दयिता इव नः कामम् प्रदिशतु ।

May Koumodaki (the mace) of Mura's foe (Murari) which he holds tenderly in the

palm of his lotus-like hand, which is perfectly spherical and has an appealing

shape, which stays in front and which does not at once tolerate the sight of

enemies, which rejoices by (drinking) the liquor of daityas' blood, which is wet

by the smear of blood, which is shining, which appears pleasing because of the

brilliance of its rays bestow us our wish like a beloved who bestows amorous

favour : a beloved who has a shapely figure and is held tenderly by hand, who

has right character, who is ever present in front, who does not tolerate the

presence of others, who is enjoying the intoxication arising out of liquor, who

is moistened with a red ointment and the border of whose dress is glowing .

Note : The translation is woefully inadequate to bring out the flavour of double entendre employed by the Acharya. The literary embellishment called SleShAlankAra consists in using appropriate words having double meanings which are applicable to upamAna, the object to which a thing or action is compared as well as the thing or action itself, upameya. To explain:- kam-rAkArA= of fine shape, having a shapely figure; samyagvRuttA= nicely spherical, has right character ; pareShAm= of enemies, of others; daityajIvAsava-madamuditA= enjoying the intoxication caused by the liquor-like blood of Daityas, enjoying the intoxication caused by 'daityajIvAsava'; lohitAlepanArdrA = wet with the smear of blood, moistened by red ointment; dIptAMShukAntA= (deepta,aMShu,kAntA) pleasing by the brilliant rays, (deepta, aMShuka, antA) the border of whose dress is glowing. KAmam = wish, amorous desire.

Now he prays to Garuda, ViShNu's vehicle and banner

यो विश्वप्राणभूतस्तनुरपि च हरेर्यानकेतुस्वरूपो
यं सञ्चिन्त्यैव सद्यः स्वयमुरगवधूर्गर्गर्भाः पतन्ति ।
चञ्चच्चण्डोरुतुण्डत्रुटितफणिवसारक्तपङ्काङ्कितस्यम्
वन्दे छन्दोमयं तं खगपतिममलस्वर्णवर्णं सुपर्णम् ॥ ६ ॥

अन्वयः – यः तनुरपि विश्वप्राणभूतः हरेः यानकेतुस्वरूपः च, यम् सञ्चिन्त्य एव सद्यः उरगवधूर्गर्भाः स्वयम् पतन्ति,
चञ्चच्चण्डोरुतुण्डत्रुटितफणिवसारक्तपङ्काङ्कितस्यम् (चञ्चत्+चण्ड +उरु+तुण्ड+त्रुटित+फणि+वसा+रक्त+पङ्क+अङ्कित+आस्यम्), छन्दोमयम् अमलस्वर्णवर्णम् तम् खगपतिम् सुपर्णम् वन्दे ।

I bow to SuparNa, the king of birds who is the Vedas personified and who is stainless and golden in colour, who is the breath of Pranava(OM), and who though small in size is the vehicle as well as the banner of Hari. The very thought of him causes snake maids to abort the foetuses. His face is smeared with the slush of blood and marrow of snakes as he snaps them asunder with his wide open violently shaking beak.
Note: Garuda is considered vedAtmA. Visva can be interpreted as omkAra and therefore he is ViSvapraAna.

Now the prayer is to Ananta, the king of serpents, who is the seat of Vishnu:

विष्णोर्विश्वेश्वरस्य प्रवरशयनकृत्सर्वलोकैकधर्ता
सोऽनन्तः सर्वभूतः पृथुविमलयशाः सर्ववेदैश्च वेद्यः ।
पाता विश्वस्य शश्वत्सकलसुररिपुध्वंसनः पापहन्ता
सर्वज्ञः सर्वसाक्षी सकलविषभयात् पातु भोगीश्वरो नः ॥ ७ ॥

अन्वयः – विश्वेश्वरस्य विष्णोः प्रवरशयनकृत् सर्वलोकैकधर्ता सः
सर्वभूतः पृथुविमलयशाः सर्ववेदैश्च वेद्यः विश्वस्य शश्वत् पाता
सकलरिपुध्वंसनः पापहन्ता सर्वज्ञः सर्वसाक्षी सकलविषभयात्
भोगीश्वरः अनन्तः नः पातु ।

May the Lord of serpents, Anantha, who acts as an exalted bed for Vishnu, the Lord of the universe, protect us from the fear of all types of poison. He is the sole bearer of all the worlds, and has become everything. His glory is vast and unsullied. He is the one who has to be known through all the Vedas. He is the eternal protector of the universe. He is the destroyer of all enemies and all sins. He is omniscient and omnipresent.

Notes: Anantha is the sole bearer of the universe as Vishnu holds the universe in his belly. It is not very clear how some of the epithets which are more appropriate to Vishnu himself are applicable to Anantha. The commentator is not much of a help. Scholars could explain perhaps.

In the next two verses the sage meditates on LakShmi, the consort of Vishnu:

वाग्भूगौर्यादिभेदैर्विदुरिह मुनयो यां यदीयैश्च पुंसाम्
कारुण्याद्रैः कटाक्षैः सकृदपि पतितैः सम्पदः स्युः समग्राः ।
कुन्देन्दुस्वच्छमन्दस्मितमधुरमुखाम्भोरुहां सुन्दराङ्गीम्
वन्दे वन्द्यामसेषैरपि मुरभिदुरोमन्दिरामिन्दिरां ताम् ॥ ८ ॥

अन्वयः – याम् इह मुनयः वाग्+भू+गौरी+आदि+भेदैः विदुः, यदीयैः सकृदपि पतितैः कारुण्याद्रैः कटाक्षैः पुंसां समग्राः सम्पदः स्युः च, कुन्द+इन्दु+स्वच्छ+मन्दस्मित+मधुर+मुख+अम्भोरुहाम् सुन्दराङ्गीम्, मुरभिद्+उरो+मन्दिराम् अशेषैः अपि वन्द्याम् ताम् इन्दिराम् वन्दे ।

I bow to Indira (LakShmi), the beautiful-limbed, who is known by the sages as VAgdevi, Bhudevi, Gauri etc, who is to be revered by everyone, who has the chest of the slayer of Mura as her abode, and whose lotus-like face is made pleasant by her smile as white as moon and Kunda flower. When her glances which are moist with compassion are cast on persons even once, they bring all the wealth.

Notes: Shankarabhagavatpada quite clearly perceives LakShmi, Bhudevi, Gauri, Sarasvati as different facets of the same Mother Goddess. The idea of LakShmi's glances bestowing riches is amplified by Vedantadesika in his Shristuti, यस्यां दिशि विहरते देवि दृष्टिस्त्वदीया तस्यां तस्यामहमहमिकां तन्वते

सम्पदोद्याः ‘Oh Goddess, In whichever direction your glances are cast, in that direction torrents of wealth accumulate’.

या सूते सत्त्वजालं सकलमपि सदा संनिधानेन पुंसः
धत्ते या तत्त्वयोगाच्चरमचरमिदं भूतये भूतजातम् ।
धात्रीं स्थात्रीं जनित्रीं प्रकृतिमविकृतिं विश्वशक्तिं विधात्रीम्
विष्णोर्विश्वात्मनस्तां विपुलगुणमयीं प्राणनाथां प्रणौमि ॥ ९ ॥

अन्वयः – या पुंसः सन्निधानेन सकलम् अपि सत्त्वजालम् सदा सूते, या तत्त्वयोगात् इदम् चरम् अचरम् भूतजातम् भूतये धत्ते, ताम् जनित्रीम् धात्रीम् स्थात्रीम् प्रकृतिम् अविकृतिम् विश्वशक्तिम् विधात्रीम् विपुलगुणमयीम् विश्वात्मनः विष्णोः प्राणनाथाम् प्रणौमि ।

She forever gives birth to all the sat (living and the non-living) due to the presence of Purusha (Narayana). As a consequence of the union with Him (Narayana), she holds all this moveable and the immoveable beings for (their) prosperity. She is the creator, the nurse and the supporter; she is the nature, the unchanging, the energy of the universe, the bestower. I bow to her of abundant qualities who is the beloved of Vishnu, the life-force of the universe.

Notes: LakShmi is prakruti and Narayana is Purusha. Prakruti and Purusha together cause and sustain the universe and all it contains. The oft-quoted verse of Gita could be recalled, ‘मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधाम्यहम् । संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥’ ‘मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन् गर्भं दधाम्यहम् । सम्भवः सर्वभूतानाम् ततो भवति भारत ॥’

Now the sage meditates on the particles of dust under the feet of Vishnu:

येभ्योऽसूयद्भिरुच्चैः सपदि पदमुरु त्यज्यते दैत्यवर्गैः

येभ्यो धर्तुं च मूर्धा स्पृहयति सततं सर्वगीर्वाणवर्गः ।
नित्यं निर्मूलयेयुर्निचिततरममी भक्तिनिघ्नात्मनां नः
पद्माक्षस्याङ्घ्रिपद्मद्वयतलनिलयाः पांसवः पापपङ्कम् ॥ १० ॥

अन्वयः – येभ्यः असूयद्भिः दैत्यवर्गैः उच्चैः उरु पदम् सपदि त्यज्यते,
येभ्यः सर्वगीर्वाणवर्गः मूर्धा धर्तुम् सततम् स्पृहयति च, अमी
पद्माक्षस्य अङ्घ्रि-पद्म-द्वय-तल-निलयाः पांसवः भक्तिनिघ्नात्मनाम् नः
पापपङ्कम् नित्यम् निचिततरम् निर्मूलयेयुः ।

May the dust particles present under the lotus-like feet of
Vishnu, the
lotus-eyed thoroughly and continuously remove the slough of
sin of ours who are
subservient to him through devotion. The daityas jealous of
(the power of) those
dust particles quickly leave the exalted and wide place (of the
sacred dust)
while all the devas all the time desire to carry them on their
head.

Notes: Daityas represent those who are evil in their behaviour
while Devas
represent the good and the devoted. The commentator raises a
doubt how there
could be dust particles under the Lord's feet and answers that
they are the
pollen of flowers worn by the Devas on their crowns. That mud
is a good remover
of slough is of course an observed fact.

Now the prayer is directed to the lines under the feet of Vishnu:
रेखा लेखादिवन्द्याश्चरणतलगताश्चक्रमत्स्यादिरूपाः
स्निग्धाः सूक्ष्माः सुजाता मृदुललिततरक्षौमसूत्रायमाणाः ।
दद्युर्नो मङ्गलानि भ्रमरभरजुषा कोमलेनाव्धिजायाः
कम्रेणाम्नेड्यमानाः किसलयमृदुना पाणिना चक्रपाणेः ॥ ११ ॥

अन्वयः – अन्धिजायाः भ्रमरभरजुषा कोमलेन कम्रेण किसलयमृदुना पाणिना
आम्नेड्यमानाः, चक्रपाणेः चरणतलगताः चक्रमत्स्यादिरूपाः स्निग्धाः सूक्ष्माः
सुजाताः मृदुललिततरक्षौमसूत्रायमाणाः रेखाः नः मङ्गलानि दद्युः ।

May the fine soft and well formed lines under the feet of ChakrapANI, which are in the shapes of wheel, fish etc. and which look like soft and graceful silk threads and which are being repeatedly massaged by LakShmi's lovely hand which is soft as sprout and is accompanied by swarms of bees, bestow on us all that are auspicious.

Notes: As the hands of LakShmi are fragrant, red and soft as tender sprout, bees crowd around them thinking that they are indeed tender sprouts! AmreDyamAna has to be contextually interpreted as repeated touching or massaging, although lexicon-meaning of AmreDana is ' a repeated word'.

ShankarAcArya now worships the feet of Vishnu, when he straddled the universe

as Vamana, the dwarf in vamanavatara:

यस्मादाक्रामतो द्यां गरुडमणिशिलाकेतुदण्डायमानात्
आश्च्योतन्ती बभासे सुरसरिदमला वैजयन्तीव कान्ता ।
भूमिष्ठो यस्तथान्यो भुवनगृहबृहत्स्तम्भशोभां दधौ नः
पातामेतौ पयोजोदरललिततलौ पङ्कजाक्षस्य पादौ ॥ १२ ॥

अन्वयः – द्याम् आक्रामतः गरुडमणिशिलाकेतुदण्डायमानात् यस्मात् आश्च्योतन्ती

अमला सुरसरित कान्ता वैजयन्ती इव बभासे, तथा भूमिष्ठः यः अन्यः
भुवनगृहबृहत्स्तम्भशोभाम् दधौ, एतौ पयोजोदरललिततलौ
पङ्कजाक्षस्य पादौ नः पाताम् ।

May the feet of Vishnu, the lotus-eyed which are as soft as the inside of the

lotus protect us. (During Vamana incarnation) when one of the feet was

straddling the skies looking like a giant flag-staff made of emerald, the pure

Ganga, the river of Gods, flowing from it looked like the flag.
The other foot
placed on the ground looked like a giant pillar of the house-like
earth.

Notes: In this verse the sage visualizes the scene when Vamana
occupied the
skies with one foot while his other foot was firmly placed on
the earth.

The sage continues his contemplation of Vamana Avatara in
this verse.

आक्रामद्भ्यां त्रिलोकीमसुरसुरपती तत्क्षणादेव नीतौ
याभ्यां वैरोचनीन्द्रौ युगपदपि विपत्सम्पदोरेकधाम ।
ताभ्याम् ताम्रोदराभ्यां मुहुरहमजितस्याञ्चिताभ्यामुभाभ्याम्
प्राज्यैश्वर्यप्रदाभ्यां प्रणतिमुपगतः पादपङ्केरुहाभ्याम् ॥ १३ ॥

अन्वयः – त्रिलोकीम् आक्रामद्भ्याम् याभ्याम् असुरसुरपती वैरोचनीन्द्रौ तत्क्ष-
णात्

एव युगपत् अपि विपत्सम्पदोः एकधाम नीतौ, ताभ्याम् प्राज्यैश्वर्यप्रदाभ्याम्
अञ्चिताभ्याम् उभाभ्याम् अजितस्य पादपङ्केरुहाभ्याम् अहम् मुहुः प्रणतिम्
उपगतः ।

I repeatedly surrender to the unconquered Vishnu's graceful
two pink-soled
lotus-like feet, which bestow immense affluence and which
while straddling the
three worlds brought to Vairochani , the king of Asuras and to
Indra, the king
of Suras the pinAcle of misfortune and fortune simultaneously
and together.

Note: During Vamana avatara, Bali the king of Asuras suffered
utter humiliation
and Indra regained his affluence. The commentator explains
ekadhAma (ekadhAma)
as parAkAShThA (parA kAShThA), which has been trans-
lated as 'pinnacle'. In
this hymn Vishnu is often referred to as Ajita.

Adi Shankara now contemplates on the infinite feet of virat purusha, extolled in

Purushasukta

येभ्यो वर्णश्चतुर्थश्चरमत उदभूदादिसर्गे प्रजानाम्

साहस्री चापि संख्या प्रकटमभिहिता सर्ववेदेषु येषाम् ।

व्याप्ता विश्वंभरा यैरतिवितततनोर्विश्वमूर्तेर्विराजो

विष्णोस्तेभ्यो महद्भ्यः सततमपि नमोऽस्त्विन्द्रपङ्केरुहेभ्यः ॥ १४ ॥

अन्वयः – आदिसर्गे प्रजानां चतुर्थः वर्णः येभ्यः उदभूत्, अपि च येषाम्

साहस्री संख्या सर्ववेदेषु प्रकटम् अभिहिता, अतिवितततनोः विश्वमूर्तेः

विष्णोः यैः विश्वंभरा व्याप्ता तेभ्यः महद्भ्यः अंघ्रिपङ्केरुहेभ्यः

सततम् अपि नमः अस्तु ।

All the time let there be salutations to Vishnu's innumerable great lotus-like

feet which occupied the whole of the earth, while Vishnu as Viratpurusha spanned

the whole universe. All the Vedas have indeed clearly proclaimed the infinitude

of those feet and from those feet were born the fourth varna of the peoples at

the time of Primeval Creation.

Notes: The sage visualizes the virat purusha of purushasukta and prays to the

infinite feet of that Viratpurusha. 'Sahasra' although means one thousand really

denotes the Innumerable.

विष्णोः पादद्वयाग्रे विमलनखमणिभ्राजिता राजते या

राजीवस्येव रम्या हिमजलकणिकालंकृताग्रा दलाली ।

अस्माकं विस्मयार्हाण्यखिलजनमनःप्रार्थनीयानि सेयम्

दद्यादाद्यानवद्या ततिरतिरुचिरा मङ्गलान्यङ्गुलीनाम् ॥ १५ ॥

अन्वयः – विष्णोः पादद्वयाग्रे विमलनखमणिभ्राजिता, या राजीवस्य

हिमजलकणिकालङ्कृता रम्या दलाली इव राजते, सा इयम् आद्या अनवद्या

अतिरुचिरा अङ्गुलीनाम् ततिः अस्माकम् अखिलजनमनःप्रार्थनीयानि विस्मा-

यार्हाणि

मङ्गलानि दद्यात् ।

May the faultless pre-eminent enchanting line of toes, at the tip of Vishnu's feet, give us amazing good luck worthy of being prayed for by all. The line of toes looks resplendent with the spotless gem-like nails resembling a string of lotus petals resplendent with dew drops (at their tips).

Now the prayer is directed to the row of toe-nails of Vishnu :
यस्यां दृष्ट्वामलायां प्रतिकृतिममराः संभवन्त्यानमन्तः
सेन्द्राः सान्द्रीकृतेर्ष्यास्त्वपरसुरकुलाशंकयातंकवन्तः ।
सा सद्यः सातिरेकां सकलसुखकरीं सम्पदं साधयेन्नः
चञ्चच्चर्विशुचक्रा चरणनलिनयोश्चक्रपाणेर्नखाली ॥ १६ ॥

अन्वयः – सेन्द्राः अमराः आनमन्तः यस्याम् अमलायाम् प्रतिकृतिम् दृष्ट्वा
अपरसुरकुलाशंकया सान्द्रीकृतेर्ष्याः संभवन्ति सा
चञ्चत्-चारु-अंशु-चक्रा चक्रपाणेः चरणनलिनयोः नखाली सातिरेकाम्
सकलसुखकरीम् सम्पदम्
नः साधयेत् ।

May the row of toe-nails of lotus-like feet of Vishnu, the wielder of the disc, provide us the all-transcending wealth which leads to every type of happiness.

An expanding wheel of beautiful rays emanates from the row of nails. The Devas bending low while prostrating to the Lord look at their own reflection in the spotless row of nails and have an apprehension that it is another group of Devas and feel jealous of them.

Notes: Quite clearly the type of wealth that the sage is seeking is salvation

which transcends everything else. The row of nails is spotless and has a natural

shine in which the Devas who have come to seek audience of Vishnu see their own

reflection and mistake the reflection to be another real group of
Devas and they
feel jealous of them as they have already been given protection
by Vishnu! A
nice exaggeration indeed!

The sage meditates on the front part of the feet of Vishnu:
पादाम्भोजन्मसेवासमवनतसुरव्रातभास्वत्किरीट-
-प्रत्युसोच्चावचाश्मप्रवरकरगणैश्चित्रितं यद्विभाति ।
नम्राङ्गानां हरेर्नो हरिदुपलमहाकूर्मसौन्दर्यहारि-
-च्छायं श्रेयःप्रदायि प्रपदयुगमिदं प्रापयेत् पापमन्तम् ॥ १७ ॥

अन्वयः – यत्

पाद-अम्भोजन्म-सेवा-समवनत-सुर-व्रात-भास्वत्-किरीट-प्रत्युप्त-
उच्चावच-अश्म-प्रवर-कर-गणैः

चित्रितम् विभाति हरित्-उपल-महाकूर्म-सौन्दर्य-हारि-छायम् श्रेयःप्रदायि
हरेः इदम् प्रपदयुगम् नम्राङ्गानाम् नः पापम् अन्तम् प्रापयेत् ।

May Vishnu's front part of the feet, which bestows all round
well-being,
terminate the sins of ours who are bent low before him. His
front of the feet,
the elegance of which beats that of the shell of a tortoise made
of emerald,
looks colorful with the myriad hues of the gems on the Deva's
crowns as they
bend low placing their crowned heads at His feet.

Notes: Shankarabhadgatpada employs an unusually long com-
pound word, which is

contrary to his style of simple lilting words. Perhaps he wanted
to indicate to

his contemporary pundits, that his normal style of simple words
was not because

of his inability to compose verses with long and complex words
and constructs!

[There appears to be no suitable word in common(non-medical)
English to denote

the front portion of the feet.]

Next Shankaracharya meditates on the elegant legs of Narayana:
 श्रीमत्यौ चारुवृत्ते करपरिमलनानन्दहृष्टे रमायाः
 सौन्दर्याढ्येन्द्रनीलोपलरचितमहादण्डयोः कान्तिचोरे ।
 सूरीन्द्रैः स्तूयमाने सुरकुलसुखदे सूदितारातिसंघे
 जङ्घे नारायणीये मुहुरपि जयतामस्मदंहो हरन्त्यौ ॥ १८ ॥

अन्वयः – श्रीमत्यौ, चारुवृत्ते,
 सौन्दर्य-आढ्य-इन्द्रनीलोपल-रचित-महादण्डयोः कान्तिचोरे, रमायाः
 कर-परिमलन-आनन्द-हृष्टे, सूरीन्द्रैः स्तूयमाने, सुरकुलसुखदे,
 सूदितारातिसंघे, नारायणीये जङ्घे मुहुः अपि अस्मदंहः हरन्त्यौ जयताम् ।

May the well-rounded lustrous legs(shanks) of Narayana, which
 rob the beauty of
 elegant staffs made of sapphire, which experience horripilation
 as LakShmi
 gently massages them with her hands, which destroy the groups
 of enemies(of
 Devas), which give happiness to the Devas and which are being
 praised by the
 great devotees ever flourish while removing all our sins.
 Notes: As in earlier verses Devas represent the virtuous while
 their enemies
 represent the vicious.

Now Shankara concentrates on the knees of Vishnu:
 संयक्साह्यं विधातुं सममिव सततं जङ्घयोर्खिन्नयोर्ये
 भारीभूतोरुदण्डद्वयभरणकृतोत्तम्भभावं भजेते ।
 चित्तादर्शं निधातुं महितमिव सतां ते समुद्गायमाने
 वृत्ताकारे विधत्तां हृदि मुदमजितस्यानिशं जानुनी नः ॥ १९ ॥

अन्वयः – खिन्नयोः जङ्घयोः ये सम्यक् सततम् साह्यं समं विधातुम् इव
 भारीभूत-ऊरु-दण्ड-द्वय-भरण-कृत-उत्तम्भ-भावम् भजेते, सतां महितम्
 चित्तादर्शं निधातुं इव वृत्ताकारे समुद्गायमाने ते अजितस्य जानुनी नः
 हृदि मुदं विधत्ताम् ।

May the unconquered Vishnu's knees which look as though
 they were the round
 jewel caskets meant for keeping the respected mirror of the
 minds of the

virtuous bestow happiness in our hearts. The knees look as if they are stay-beams to support continuously in the right manner, the shanks which are under strain due to the weight of the thighs.
Notes: Here utprekShA, a well known figure of speech is employed to convey two different images. Vishnu's knee looks like a round jewel-casket for keeping a mirror. The mirror is the polished clean mind of the virtuous. It implies that the minds of the virtuous meditate on Vishnu's knees. The knee also looks as if it is a support-beam for the shank which is under strain due to the weight of the thigh!

Now the sage prays to the thighs of Vishnu:
देवो भीतिं विधातुः सपदि विदधतौ कैटभाख्यं मधुं चा-
प्यारोप्यारूढगर्वावधिजलधि ययोरादिदैत्यौ जघान ।
वृतावन्योन्यतुल्यौ चतुरमुपचयं विभ्रतावभ्रनीलौ
ऊरू चारू हरेस्तौ मुदमतिशयिनीं मानसे नो विधत्ताम् ॥ २० ॥

अन्वयः – देवः विधातुः भीतिं विदधतौ आरूढगर्वौ आदिदैत्यौ कैटभाख्यं मधुं अपि च ययोः आरोप्य अधिजलधि सपदि जघान, वृत्तौ अन्योन्यतुल्यौ, चतुरम् उपचयम् विभ्रतौ, अभ्रनीलौ हरेः तौ चारू ऊरू नः मानसे अतिशयिनीम् मुदम् विधत्ताम् ।

May Hari's rounded, robust, charming and symmetrical cloud-blue thighs instill bounteous joy in our minds. Vishnu instantly killed the first of Daityas, haughty Madhu and Kaitabha by placing them on those thighs amidst the ocean when they were frightening Brahma.

Notes: The reference is to the Puranic story which narrates that the demons,

Madhu and Kaitabha born from the excretion of Vishnu's ears started harassing Brahma and that Vishnu killed them by placing them on his thighs. Madhu and Kaitabha are strictly not Daityas as Daityas are those born of Diti. Commentator explains that here Daitya has to be taken as a generic name for RakShasa's.

The sage meditates on the loins of Vishnu:

पीतेन द्योतते यच्चतुरपरिहितेनाम्बरेणात्युदारम्
जातालंकारयोगं जलमिव जलधेर्वाडवाग्निप्रभाभिः ।
एतत्पातित्यदान्नो जघनमतिघनादेनसो माननीयम्
सातत्येनैव चेतोविषयमवतरत्यातु पीतांबरस्य ॥ २१ ॥

अन्वयः – चतुरपरिहितेन पीतेन अम्बरेण जातालंकारयोगम्,
वाडवाग्निप्रभाभिः जलधेः जलमिव, यत् उदारम् द्योतते (तत्) पीताम्बरस्य
माननीयम् जघनम् पातित्यदात् अतिघनात् एनसः नः एतत् अवतरत् एव
चेतोविषयम् सातत्येन पातु ।

May the revered loins of Vishnu of the golden-yellow robe continuously save our minds, even by a mere descent into prayer, from the severe sins that cause us a degraded state. The loins skillfully covered by the (lower) garment look enchanting like the oceanic water made enchanting by the flames of vadava fire (submarine fire).

Notes: 1.pAtitya has been translated as 'degraded state'. pati-tasya bhAvaH pAtityam- the state one falls to when one cannot adhere to the commands of Do's and Don'ts given by Sruti's and Smriti's. 2. Shankara uses a very significant word avatarat qualifying chetoviShayam. avatarat denotes the process of

descending. As the commentator explains, it denotes the mind which has just started to descend into a state of meditation or prayer. A mere attempt to pray or meditate should be enough to clear ones sins!

The salutations are now directed to the girdle of Vishnu:
यस्या दाम्ना त्रिधाम्नो जघनकलितया भ्राजतेऽङ्गं यथाब्धेः
मध्यस्थो मन्दराद्रिर्भुजगपतिमहाभोगसंनद्धमध्यः ।
काञ्ची सा काञ्चनाभा मणिवरकिरणैरुल्लसद्भिः प्रदीप्ता
कल्यां कल्याणदात्री मम मतिमनिशं कम्पूरुपा करोतु ॥ २२ ॥

अन्वयः – यस्याः जघनकलितया दाम्ना त्रिधाम्नः अङ्गम् यथा अब्धेः
मध्यस्थः भुजगपति-महाभोग-संनद्ध-मध्यः मन्दराद्रिः भ्राजते, सा
काञ्चनाभा कम्पूरुपा कल्याणदात्री उल्लसद्भिः मणिवरकिरणैः प्रदीप्ता
काञ्ची मम मतिम् अनिशम् कल्यां करोतु ।

May Vishnu's gold-hued elegant girdle which bestows auspiciousness and which is glowing by the radiating rays of precious gems make my mind clever and agreeable always. The waist of Vishnu, of three abodes, with the strings of the girdle tied around the loins looks like the Mandara mountain in the center of the ocean with the hoods of Vasuki tied around it.

Notes: The allusion is to the churning of ocean by Sura's and Asura's. Vishnu is called 'tridhAman', one who has three abodes. The three abodes, as per the commentator, could be construed as a) states of wakefulness, dream and sleep; b)

Rik, yajus, Sama Veda's; c) bhuloka, bhuvraloka and suvarloka; d) sun, moon, and

fire the three forms of Tejas. In passing, the commentator quotes this

interesting verse without indicating the source: 'न देवा यष्टिमादाय रक्षन्ति

पशुपालवत् । यं यं रक्षितुमिच्छन्ति बुद्ध्या संयोजयन्ति तम् ॥' Gods do not provide protection in the manner of a cow-herd with a stick in hand.

Whomsoever they want to protect, they endow him with the right reasoning.

Shri Shankara takes us along to meditate on the navel of Vishnu:

उन्नम्रं कम्प्रमुच्चैरुपचितमुदभूद्यत्र पत्रैर्विचित्रैः

पूर्वं गीर्वाणपूज्यं कमलजमधुपस्यास्पदं तत्पयोजम् ।

यस्मिन्नीलाश्मनीलैस्तरलरुचिजलैः पूरिते केलिबुद्ध्या

नालीकाक्षस्य नाभीसरसि वसतुनश्चित्तहंसश्चिराय ॥ २३ ॥

अन्वयः – उन्नम्रम् कम्प्ररूपम् विचित्रैः पत्रैः उपचितम् यत्र पूर्वम्

कमलजमधुपस्य आस्पदम् तत् गीर्वाणपूज्यम् पयोजम् उदभूत्, यस्मिन् नीलाश्मनीलैः तरलरुचिजलैः पूरिते, (तस्मिन्) नालीकाक्षस्य नाभीसरसि नः चित्तहंसः चिराय वसतु ।

May the swan-like mind of ours live eternally in the lotus-eyed Vishnu's

lake-like navel filled with the emerald-blue water-like tremulous lustre. In

that lake-like navel long back the lofty, beautiful lotus grew which was revered

by Deva's and which became the seat of bee-like Brahma.

Notes: Shankara uses a fine metaphor (rUpaka) to describe the navel of Vishnu. The

navel is a lake, with lustrous blue water, in which a lotus grew which became an

abode for a bee called Brahma! Our mind is a swan which should eternally dwell

in that lake.

Now the salutations are to the actual lotus coming out of the navel of Vishnu:

पातालं यस्य नालं वलयमपि दिशां पत्रपङ्कीर्णगेन्द्रान्

विद्वांसः केसरालीर्विदुरिह विपुलां कर्णिकां स्वर्णशैलम् ।

भूयात्गायत्स्वयंभूमधुकरभवनं भूमयं कामदं नो

नालीकं नाभिपद्माकरभवमुरु तन्नागशय्यस्य शौरैः ॥ २४ ॥

अन्वयः – विद्वांसः इह यस्य नालम् पातालम्, दिशाम् वलयम् पत्रपङ्कीः, नगेन्द्रान् केसरालीः, स्वर्णशैलम् विपुलाम् कर्णिकाम् विदुः, नागशय्यस्य शौरैः तत् नाभिपद्माकरभवम् गायत्स्वयंभूमधुकरभवनं भूमयम् उरु नालीकम् नः कामदम् भूयात् ।

May the lotus, in which is seated Brahma singing (praises of the Lord) like a humming bee, and which is growing out of the lake-like navel of Sauri, who has a serpent as his bed, be the fulfiller of all our wishes. The learned consider the netherworlds as the stalk of that earthly lotus, the directions as its petals, the great mountains as its filament-rows and the mountain Meru as its pericarp.

Notes: The commentator points out that calling Vishnu as Sauri, which is essentially an epithet of Krishna [belonging to Shoora dynasty], clearly brings out that Krishna is a complete avatara of Vishnu. [pericarp- A botanical word-vessel containing seed formed from wall of ripened ovary-The translator humbly leaves it at that!]

Now in the next two verses, the salutations are to the abdominal part of Vishnu's form.

आदौ कल्पस्य यस्मात्प्रभवति विततं विश्वमेतद्विकल्पैः
कल्यान्ते यस्य चान्तः प्रविशति सकलं स्थावरं जङ्गमं च ।
अत्यन्ताचिन्त्यमूर्तेश्चिरतरमजितस्यान्तरिक्षस्वरूपे
तस्मिन्नस्माकमन्तःकरणमतिमुदा क्रीडतात् क्रोडभागे ॥ २५ ॥

अन्वयः – कल्पस्य आदौ एतत् विततम् विश्वम् विकल्पैः यस्मात् प्रभवति, कल्यान्ते सकलम् स्थावरम् जङ्गमम् च यस्य अन्तः च प्रविशति, अत्यन्ताचिन्त्यमूर्तेः अजितस्य तस्मिन् अन्तरिक्षस्वरूपे क्रोडभागे अस्माकम् अन्तःकरणम् अतिमुदा चिरतरम् क्रीडतात् ।

May our mind joyously play for long in the abdominal part, which manifests itself as the sky, of Vishnu, the unconquered, whose form is extremely beyond imagination. All this expanded universe came into being from that abdomen at the beginning of the Kalpa(period of four yuga's) and all the immovable and the movable enter into that abdomen at the end of the Kalpa. Notes: As per dictionary, kroDa means the chest, the portion between the shoulders. Commentator has interpreted it as the abdominal portion contextually.

कान्त्यंभःपूरपूर्णं लसदसितवलीभङ्गभास्वत्तरङ्गे
गम्भीराकारनाभीचतुरतरमहावर्तशोभिन्नुदारे ।
क्रीडत्वानद्धहेमोदरनहनमहावाडवाग्निप्रभाढ्ये
कामं दामोदरीयोदरसलिलनिधौ चित्तमत्स्यश्चिरं नः ॥ २६ ॥

अन्वयः – कान्ति-अम्भः-पूर-पूर्णे लसत्-असित-वली-भङ्ग-भास्वत्-तरङ्गे
गंभीर-आकार-नाभी-चतुरतर-महावर्त-शोभिनि उदारे
आनद्ध-हेम-उदर-नहन-महा-वाडवाग्नि-प्रभा-आढ्ये
दामोदरीय-उदर-सलिलनिधौ नः चित्तमत्स्यः चिरं क्रीडतु ।

May our fish-like mind play for long in the ocean-like abdomen of Damodara. The lustre of Vishnu is the water; The abdominal folds are the dark waves; The deep navel is the whirl-pool; the lustre of the golden girdle around the waist of Damodara is the sub-oceanic fire, VadavAgni. Notes: The commentator elucidates: ‘The import of the Acharya is that just as a fish cannot exist out of water, may our minds reach a stage when they cannot live away from meditating on the form of Vishnu.’ The metaphor is complete in

all respects as a one to one correspondence has been beautifully brought out.

Shri Shankara's attention travels up the navel of Vishnu along the line of hair on the abdomen.

नाभीनालीकमूलादधिकपरिमलोन्मोहितानामलीनाम्
माला नीलेव यान्ती स्फुरति रुचिमती वक्रपद्मोन्मुखी या ।
रम्या सा रोमराजिर्महितरुचिकरी मध्यभागस्य विष्णोः
चित्तस्था मा विरंसीच्चिरतरमुचितां साधयन्ती श्रियं नः ॥ २७ ॥

अन्वयः – या अधिकपरिमलोन्मोहितानाम् अलीनाम् नाभीनालीकमूलात् व-
क्रपद्मोन्मुखी
यान्ती रुचिमती नीला माला इव स्फुरति, सा महितरुचिकरी रम्या विष्णोः
मध्यभागस्य रोमराजिः नः चित्तस्था चिरतरम् उचिताम् श्रियम् साधयन्ती मा
विरंसीत् ।

May the line of hair on Vishnu's abdomen residing in our minds always continue to bestow us deserved riches. The line of hair, the beauty of which is relished by the revered, looks like a lustrous string of blue bumble-bees traveling from the bottom of lotus-like navel towards the lotus-like face captivated by the strong fragrance (of the face).

Notes: Describing the streak of hair on the abdomen above the navel is not uncommon in Sanskrit literature. To cite an example, Kalidasa who most probably preceded Shankaracharya, indulges in such description in Kumarasambhavam.

The sage beholds the soothing chest of Vishnu:
संस्तीर्णं कौस्तुभांशुप्रसरकिसलयैर्मुग्धमुक्ताफलाढ्यम्
श्रीवासोल्लासि फुल्लप्रतिनववनमालाङ्कि राजद्भुजान्तम् ।
वक्षः श्रीवत्सकान्तं मधुकरनिकरश्यामलं शार्ङ्गपाणेः
संसाराध्वश्रमार्तेरुपवनमिव यत्सेवितं तत्प्रपद्ये ॥ २८ ॥

अन्वयः – कौस्तुभांशुप्रसरकिसलयैः संस्तीर्णम् मुग्धमुक्ताफलाढ्यम्
श्रीवासोल्लासि फुल्ल-प्रतिनव-वनमाला-अङ्कि राजत्भुजान्तम्
मधुकरनिकरश्यामलम् श्रीवत्सकान्तम् शार्ङ्गपाणेः वक्षः, यत्
संसारध्वश्रमार्तैः उपवनमिव सेवितम्, तत् प्रपद्ये ।

I surrender to the Sarngapani (Vishnu)'s chest which acts as a
garden-resort to
those who are weary of the journey of samsara. The radiating
rays of Kaustubha
gem are like new shoots; It is having an abundance of pearls(muktaphala)
like
custard apples(muktaphala); The presence of LakShmi (Shri-
vasa) is like the
splendour of lotus(Shrivasa); It is marked by the blossoms of
ever-fresh garland
of forest-flowers(vanamala); glittering ends of shoulder(bhujanta)
are like
Bhurja trees(bhujanta); It is having the hue of swarm of bumble-
bees; It is
embellished by the Shrivatsa mark(ShrivrikSha=Aswatha tree).
Notes: The beauty of this verse can hardly be brought out in
English as the
similarity brought out between a garden and the chest of Vishnu
is dependant on
the particular choice of words which convey two meanings. It
is a case of
upamA-alankAra fortified by shlesha(pun). Just as a weary
traveler rests in a
garden, full of blossoms and new shoots a virakta weary of
samsara takes refuge
in the chest of Vishnu. The commentator interprets Shrivatsa
as ShrivrikSha.

Shankara hails the grandeur of Shrivatsa mark on Vishnu's
chest:

कान्तं वक्षो नितान्तं विदधदिव गलं कालिमा कालशत्रोः
इन्दोर्विम्बं यथाङ्को मधुप इव तरोर्मञ्जरीं राजते यः ।

श्रीमान्नित्यं विधेयादविरलमिलितः कौस्तुभश्रीप्रतानैः
श्रीवत्सः श्रीपतेः स श्रिय इव दयितो वत्स उच्चैःश्रियं नः ॥ २९ ॥

अन्वयः – कालशत्रोः गलं कालिमा इव, इन्दोः बिम्बम् अङ्कः यथा, तरोः
मञ्जरीम् मधुप इव, यः वक्षः नितान्तम् कान्तम् विदधत्,
कौस्तुभश्रीप्रतानैः अविरलमिलितः, श्रियः वत्स इव दयितः, सः श्रीमान्
श्रीपतेः श्रीवत्सः नः उच्चैः श्रियम् नित्यम् विधेयात् ।

May the lustrous Shrivatsa mark of Shripati, which is dear to
LakShmi like a child
and which is densely mixed with the radiating lustre of Kaus-
tubha gem, bestow
upon us the highest of riches. The Shrivatsa mark heightens the
brilliance of
Vishnu's chest like the blackness on the neck of Shiva, like the
mark on the moon
and like a bumble-bee on the sprout of a tree.

Notes: Shrivatsa is a swirl of hair on the right side of the chest
of Vishnu.

Shankara explains the origin of the name by saying that it is
dear to

Shri(LakShmi) like a child Kaustubha is a gem which came up
from the ocean of
milk when it was being churned by deva's and daitya's and
which became an
ornament to adorn Vishnu's chest. The highest of riches which
the sage prays for
is clearly salvation.

Now Shankara's attention is drawn towards the brilliant Kaus-
tubha gem.

संभूयाम्भोधिमध्यात्सपदि सहजया यः श्रिया संनिधत्ते
नीले नारायणोरःस्थलगगनतले हारतारोपसेव्ये ।
आशाः सर्वाः प्रकाशा विदधदपिदधच्चात्मभासान्यतेजां-
स्याश्चर्यस्याकरो नो द्युमणिरिव मणिः कौस्तुभः सोऽस्तु भूत्यै ॥ ३० ॥

अन्वयः – अम्भोधिमध्यात् सपदि संभूय नीले हारतारोपसेव्ये
नारायणोरःस्थलगगनतले सहजया श्रिया सन्निधत्ते, सर्वाः आशाः प्रकाशाः
विदधत्, आत्मभासा अन्यतेजान् च अपिदधत्, आश्चर्यस्य आकरः सः

कौस्तुभमणिः द्युमणिः इव नः भूत्यै अस्तु ।

May the awe-inspiring Kaustubha gem which adorns the chest of Vishnu along with LakShmi and which illuminates all the directions, bring us prosperity like sun does. Narayana's chest is blue like the sky. There are garlands on the chest like stars in the sky. Kaustubha gem is along with Shri(LakShmi), who was sahajA,(sister), [both having been born in the ocean of milk] like the sun which has a Shri(brilliance) which is sahajA(all its own). Kautubha gem's brilliance masks other lustres [the garlands] like sun's masks that of stars.

Notes: Shankara cleverly uses again pun at places to bring out similarity between Kaustubha gem and the sun. As the commentator has brought out, there is a clear suggestion to the birth of an outstanding luminary, an avatara-purusha, in this samsara-sagara who offers hopes to all.

Shankara prays to Jayanti, the garland worn by Vishnu: The garland is supposed

to represent the five elements: pancha bhuta's.

या वायावानुकूल्यात्सरति मणिरुचा भासमानाऽसमाना

साकं साकम्पमंसे वसति विदधती वासुभद्रं सुभद्रम् ।

साऽरं सारङ्गसंघैर्मुखरितकुसुमा मेचकान्ता च कान्ता

माला मालालितास्मान्न विरमतु सुखैर्योजयन्ती जयन्ती ॥ ३१ ॥

अन्वयः – वायौ आनुकूल्यात् सरति, या मणिरुचा साकम् अ-समाना भास-माना, (या)

वासुभद्रम् सुभद्रम् विदधती साकम्पम् अम्से वसति, सा सारङ्गसंघैः

मुखरितकुसुमा मेचक-अन्ता कान्ता मा-लालिता जयन्ती माला अस्मान् सुखैः अरम्

योजयन्ती न विरमतु ।

May the garland Jayanti, tended dearly by LakShmi, never cease to quickly unite us with happiness. While the wind blows comfortably, the garland shining incomparably by the brilliance of the gem, rests on the shoulders of Vishnu gently vibrating. The garland looking beautiful with dark blue tips (of flowers) and humming swarms of bees around the flowers keeps Vishnu happy.

Notes : The most striking feature of this verse as one recites it is the repetition of groups of letters endowing it with a unique sonorous quality. At the beginning and end of each pada(quarter of a verse) we can see this repetition. vAvA yAyA, bhAsamAnA samAnA etc. This is an acrobatics in versifying which became popular among later poets. We need to note that although there is a repetition of syllables, words themselves are not repeated. This comes under the category of 'Shabdalkara', word-ornamentation and is called 'yamaka' (yamaka). Suffice it to say that let alone endowing the verses with lyrical meaning, even to construct such verses with some relevant meaning is itself very difficult.

Shankara looks at the top end of the shoulder of Vishnu:
हारस्योरुप्रभाभिः प्रतिनववनमालांशुभिः प्रांशुरूपैः
श्रीभिश्चाप्यङ्गदानां शबलितरुचि यन्निष्कभाभिश्च भाति ।
बाहुल्येनैव बद्धाञ्जलिपुटमजितस्याभियाचामहे तत्
बन्धार्तिं बाधतां नो बहुविहतिकरीं बन्धुरं बाहुमूलम् ॥ ३२ ॥
अन्वयः – प्रांशुरूपैः उरुप्रभाभिः प्रतिनववनमालांशुभिः अङ्गदानाम्

श्रीभिः च, निष्कभाभिः च यत् शबलितरुचि भाति, तत् अजितस्य बन्धुरम्
बाहुमूलम् बद्धाञ्जलिपुटम् अभियाचामहे । नः बाहुल्येन बहुविहितकरीम्
बन्धार्तिम् बाधताम् ।

We pray to the elegant top end of the shoulder of Vishnu, the
unconquered, 'May
it come in the way of the grief of bondage which greatly and
repeatedly torments
(us)'. The top end of the shoulder has acquired varied hues
because of the long
and brilliant rays from the ever-fresh garland of forest flowers,
the lustre of
the bracelet and the ornament on the chest.

Notes: The printed text uses 'kabalitaruchi' while the commen-
tator uses
'shabalitaruchi'. Here the version of the commentator has been
adopted.

The sage contemplates on the innumerable arms of Vishnu:

विश्वत्राणैकदीक्षास्तदनुगुणगुणक्षत्रनिर्माणदक्षाः
कर्तारो दुर्निरूपाः स्फुटगुरुयशसां कर्मणामद्भुतानाम् ।
शाङ्गं बाणं कृपाणं फलकमरिगदे पद्मशंखौ सहस्रम्
बिभ्राणाः शस्त्रजालं मम दधतु हरेर्बाहवो मोहहानिम् ॥ ३३ ॥

अन्वयः – विश्वत्राणैकदीक्षाः, तदनुगुणगुणक्षत्रनिर्माणदक्षाः,
स्फुटगुरुयशसाम् अद्भुतानाम् कर्मणाम् कर्तारः, दिर्निरूपाः, शाङ्गम् बाणम्
कृपाणम् फलकम् अरिगदे पद्मशंखौ सहस्रम् शस्त्रजालौ बिभ्राणाः हरेः
बाहवः मम मोहहानिम् दधतु ।

May the (many) shoulders of Hari nourish the destruction of
Maya in me. The
shoulders carry thousands of weapons such as Sarnga bow,
sword, shield, disc,
mace, lotus and conch, which are indescribable, which accom-
plish astonishing
acts of evident great fame and which are dedicated to solely
protecting the
universe and accordingly efficient in creating dynamic warrior

folk(Kshatriya's),.

Notes: The vision contemplated here is that of Vishnu of innumerable arms

holding innumerable weapons like the Viswarupa of Gita. In Vishnusahasranama he

has a name, 'sarvapracharaNAyudha'[sarvapracharanayudha]. Anything can be a weapon

in his hands even a blade of grass. The printed text has 'sphuTaguNayashasAm'

while the commentator has adopted 'spuTaguruyashasAm', which is the one chosen

here.

Now the neck of Vishnu is worshipped:

कण्ठाकल्पोद्गतैर्यः कनकमयलसत्कुण्डलोत्थैरुदारैः

उद्योतैः कौस्तुभस्याप्युरुभिरुपचितश्चित्रवर्णो विभाति ।

कण्ठाश्लेषे रमायाः करवलयपदैर्मुद्रिते भद्ररूपे

वैकुण्ठीयेऽत्र कण्ठे वसतु मम मतिः कुण्ठभावं विहाय ॥ ३४ ॥

अन्वयः – कण्ठाकल्पोद्गतैः कनकमय-लसत्-कुण्डल-उत्थैः उदारैः उद्योतैः,

कौस्तुभस्य अपि उरुभिः (उद्योतैः) उपचितः यः चित्रवर्णः विभाति, रमायाः

कण्ठाश्लेषे करवलयपदैः मुद्रिते भद्ररूपे वैकुण्ठीये अत्र कण्ठे मम

मतिः कुण्ठभावम् विहाय वसतु ।

Casting off dullness, may my mind dwell on the beautiful neck of Vishnu, who has

his abode at Vaikuntha. There are marks of bangles of Lak-Shmi on the neck due to

LakShmi's embrace around the neck. The neck has variegated hues arising out of

the scintillations of the jewels around the neck, the swinging golden ear-rings

and the brilliance of Kaustubha gem.

The sage visualizes the lip of Vishnu likening it to sun:

पद्मानन्दप्रदाता परिलसदरुणश्रीपरीताग्रभागः

काले काले च कम्बुप्रवरशशधरापूरणे यः प्रवीणः ।

वक्त्राकाशान्तरस्थस्तिरयति नितरां दन्ततारौघशोभाम्

श्रीभर्तुर्दन्तवासोद्युमणिरघतमोनाशनायास्त्वसौ नः ॥ ३५ ॥

अन्वयः – पद्मा-आनन्दप्रदाता परिलसत्-अरुणश्री-परीत-अग्रभागः यः काले काले कम्बु-प्रवर-शशधर-आपूरणे प्रवीणः (यः) वक्र-आकाश-अन्तर-स्थः दन्त-तारा-ओघ-शोभाम् नितराम् तिरयति, असौ श्रीभर्तुः दन्तवासो-द्युमणिः नः अघ-तमो-नाशनाय अस्तु ।

May the sun-like lip of Vishnu, the husband of LakShmi, destroy our

darkness-like sins.

Vishnu's lip provides pleasure to padmA(LakShmi) in the manner sun provides

pleasure to padma(lotus). In the front portion of the lip, there is the lustre

of aruna(redness) similar to the lustre of Aruna being at the fore-front of the

sun. Regularly Vishnu's lip expertly fills the moon-white conch with breath

similar to sun filling up the conch-white moon. Being at the front of the

sky-like mouth it masks the sparkling teeth in a manner that sun at the morning

horizon masks the twinkling stars.

Notes : this verse demonstrates Shankaracharya's skill and imagination in weaving

a beautiful tapestry of simile and pun, which can truly be enjoyed in Sanskrit

only. The reference is to lotus blooming on sunrise. Vishnu blows the conch

when he has to fight the evil forces. Sun causes the growth of moon's face

during the light-half of the month. Aruna is the charioteer of Sun, who perhaps

is a personification of the red-glow that precedes the sunrise.

The sage looks at the star-like teeth of Vishnu:

नित्यं स्नेहातिरेकान्निजकमितुरलं विप्रयोगाक्षमा या
वक्त्रेन्दोरन्तराले कृतवसतिरिवाभाति नक्षत्रराजिः ।

लक्ष्मीकान्तस्य कान्ताकृतिरतिविलसन्मुग्धमुक्तावलिश्रीः
दन्ताली सन्ततं सा नतिनुतिनिरतानक्षतान् रक्षतान्नः ॥ ३६ ॥

अन्वयः – स्नेह-अतिरेकात् या निजकमितुः अलम् विप्रयोग-अक्षमा, वक्र-
इन्दोः

अन्तराले कृतवसतिः नक्षत्र-राजिः इव
आभाति, अति-विलसन्-मुग्ध-मुतावलि-श्रीः कान्त-आकृतिः सा लक्ष्मीकान्त-
स्य

दन्ताली नति-नुति-निरतान् नः अक्षतान् रक्षतात् ।

May Vishnu's row of teeth which shines like a line of stars(feminine)
right

inside the moon-like mouth(masculine) as if she cannot feel
separated from her
beloved because of excessive love towards him and which has
the lustre of

sparkling row of pearls and which has an endearing shape
protect us who are
engaged in prostrating to him and praising him.

Notes : This is an elegant example of exaggeration (utprekShA)
where in the poet

imagines that the teeth being inside the mouth is as if the stars
were inside

the moon! And he sees a motive behind that. Stars which are
traditionally

considered as wives of the moon have taken residence right
inside the moon to

avoid separation from him!

The sage imagines the assembly of Deva's presided over by
Vishnu:

ब्रह्मन्ब्रह्मण्यजिह्वां मतिमपि कुरुषे देव संभावये त्वाम्

शंभो शक्र त्रिलोकीमवसि किममरैर्नारदाद्याः सुखं वः ।

इत्थं सेवावनम्रं सुरमुनिनिकरं वीक्ष्य विष्णोः प्रसन्न-

स्यास्येन्दोरास्रवन्ती वरवचनसुधा ह्लादयेन्मानसं नः ॥ ३७ ॥

अन्वयः – ब्रह्मन्, ब्रह्मणि अजिह्वाम् मतिम् अपि कुरुषे? ; शंभो, देव, त्वां
संभावये । ; शक्र, अमरैः त्रिलोकीम् अवसि किम्? ; नारदाद्याः, सुखम् वह्
(किम्)? ; इत्थम् सेवावनम्रम् सुरमुनिनिकरम् वीक्ष्य प्रसन्नस्य विष्णोः

वरवचनसुधा नः मानसम् ह्लादयेत् ।

Looking at the assembly of Deva's and sages who are bent with
humility Vishnu
enquires of them with delight, 'Oh! Brahma, I hope your mind
is steadfast in
concentrating on Brahman; Oh! Shambho, I respect you; Oh!
Indra, are you taking
care of the three worlds along with Deva's? Oh! Narada and
other sages, Are you
all well?' May the ambrosia of Vishnu's such precious speech
bring joy to our
minds.

Notes: Commentator explains that even Brahma has to medi-
tate on Brahman in order
to do his duty of creation.

The sage experiences the pleasure of looking at Vishnu's
cheeks:

कर्णस्थस्वर्णकम्रोज्ज्वलमकरमहाकुण्डलप्रोतदीप्यन्-
माणिक्यश्रीप्रतानैः परिमिलितमलिश्यामलं कोमलं यत् ।
प्रोद्यत्सूर्याशुराजन्मरकतमुकुराकारचोरं मुरारेः
गाढामागामिनीं नः शमयतु विपदं गण्डयोर्मण्डलं तत् ॥ ३८ ॥

अन्वयः – यत्

कर्णस्थ-स्वर्ण-कम्र-उज्ज्वल-मकर-महा-कुण्डल-प्रोत-दीप्यत्-माणिक्य-श्री-प्रतानैः
परिमिलितम् तत् कोमलम् अलिश्यामलम्
प्रोद्यत्-सूर्याशु-राजत्-मरकत-मुकुर-आकार-चोरम् मुरारेः गण्डयोः मण्डलम्
नः गाढाम् आगामिनीम् विपदम् शमयतु ।

May the soft bee-blue cheeks of Vishnu, the foe of Mura,
destroy our impending
severe adversities. The lustre of the cheeks illumined by the
scintillations of
the ear rings in the shape of a shark made of rubies inset in
Gold rivals that
of an emerald mirror illumined by the rising sun.

वक्रांभोजे लसन्तं मुहुर्धरमणिं पक्वंबिंबाभिरामम्

दृष्ट्वा ददृष्टं शुकस्य स्फुटमवतरतस्तुण्डदण्डायते यः ।
घोणः शोणीकृतात्मा श्रवणयुगलसत्कुण्डलोस्त्रैर्मुरारैः
प्राणाख्यस्यानिलस्य प्रसरणसरणिः प्राणदानाय नः स्यात् ॥ ३९ ॥
अन्वयः – यः वक्राम्भोजे मुहुः लसन्तम् पक्वबिम्बाभिरामम् अधरमणिम्
दृष्ट्वा ददृष्टं स्फुटम् अवतरतः शुकस्य तुण्डदण्डायते,
श्रवणयुग-लसत्-कुण्डल-उस्त्रैः शोणीकृतात्मा प्राणाख्यस्य अनिलस्य
प्रसरणसरणिः मुरारैः घोणः नः प्राणदानाय स्यात् ।

May the nose of Murari which acts as the spreading path for
his Prana vayu grant
us the breath of life The nose which appears red because of the
rays from the
pair of glittering ear-rings looks like the beak of a parrot
descending to bite
the gem-like lip, which is as charming as a ripe Bimba fruit,
glittering in the
lotus-like face.

Notes: The commentator remarks that as devotion to Lord is
verily the
Life-breath for a devotee, the sage is seeking that only. Bimba
fruit gets red
when it is ripe and comparing the lip to a Bimba fruit is a
standard simile in
Sanskrit literature. ghoNA as a feminine noun is the standard
usage, but ghoNa
is also encountered in literature as the commentator points out.
usra is a
rarely occurring word which means ray.
दिक्कालौ वेदयन्तौ जगति मुहुरिमौ संचरन्तौ रवीन्दू
त्रैलोक्यालोकदीपावभिदधति ययोरेव रूपं मुनीन्द्राः ।
अस्मान्ब्रह्मणे ते प्रचुरतरकृपानिर्भरं प्रेक्षमाणे
पातामाताम्रशुक्लासितरुचिरुचिरे पद्मनेत्रस्य नेत्रे ॥ ४० ॥
अन्वयः – मुनीन्द्राः ययोः एव रूपम् दिक्कालौ वेदयन्तौ जगति मुहुः
संचरन्तौ त्रैलोक्यालोकदीपौ रवीन्दू (इति) अभिदधति,
आताम्र-शुक्ल-असित-रुचि-रुचिरे अन्वयः प्रचुरतर-कृपा-निर्भरम्

(अस्मान्) प्रेक्षमाणे पद्मनेत्रस्य ते नेत्रे अस्मान् पाताम् ।

May those two lotus-like eyes of Padmanetra, which are charmingly coloured with redness, whiteness, and blackness and which are looking at us full of compassion protect us. The great sages consider the two eyes as the sun and the moon which are incessantly moving around the world like two lustrous lamps to indicate direction and time.

Notes: There are many references to sun and moon as the eyes of the Lord in Sruti's and Smriti's. Eyes are just like lotuses which have a black central portion, surrounded by a white portion and then the red petals, notes the commentator. It is a remarkable observation that both reckoning of time and direction are dependant on the sun and the moon.

The sage beholds the elegance of Vishnu's eye-brows in the next two verses:

पातात्पातालपातात्पतगपतिगतेभ्रूयुगं भुग्मध्यम्
येनेषच्चालितेन स्वपदनियमिताः सासुरा देवसंघाः ।

नृत्यल्लालाटरङ्गे रजनिकरतनोरर्धखण्डावदाते
कालव्यालद्वयं वा विलसति समया वालिकामातरं नः ॥ ४१ ॥

अन्वयः – येन ईषत् चालितेन सासुरा देवसंघाः स्वपदनियमिताः,
रजनिकर-तनोः अर्ध-खण्ड-अवदाते लालाट-रङ्गे नृत्यत् (यत्)
वालिका-मातरं समया कालव्यालद्वयं वा (इति) विलसति (तत्) भुग्मध्यं
भ्रूयुगं नः पाताल-पातात् पातात् ।

May the eye-brows, bowed at centre, of Vishnu, who has the chief of the feathered as his transport, save us from falling to the nether-world (Naraka).

Just by a little movement of the eye-brows of Vishnu, Deva's along with Asura's are controlled at their places of duty. The eye-brows dancing in the stage-like forehead which is elegantly shaped as a half-moon are sportive and look as though like a pair of black serpents near their mother in the form of the ear-ornament,.

Notes: The prayer is to make the devotee tread the path of virtue so that he may not fall into Naraka, the equivalent of hell. There is a mix up of rUpaka and utprekShA. The discerning may find it contrived. Word vAlika is not listed in standard dictionaries. The commentator interprets it as karN-abhUShaNavisheShaH quoting Vaijayanti Lexicon. The ornament is perhaps shaped like a big snake.

लक्ष्माकारालकालिस्फुरदलिकशशाङ्कार्धसंदर्शमीलन्-
नेत्राम्भोजप्रबोधोत्सुकनिभूततरालीनभृङ्गच्छटाभे ।
लक्ष्मीनाथस्य लक्ष्मीकृतविबुधगणापाङ्गबाणासनार्ध-
-च्छाये नो भूरिभूतिप्रसवकुशलते भ्रूलते पालयेताम् ॥ ४२ ॥

अन्वयः –

लक्ष्म-आकार-अलक-अलि-स्फुरत्-अलिक-शशाङ्कार्ध-संदर्श-मीलत्-
नेत्र-अम्भोज-प्रबोध-उत्सुक-निभूततर-आलीन-भृङ्ग-च्छटा-
आभे लक्ष्मी-कृत-विबुधगण-अपाङ्ग-बाणासन-अर्ध-
-च्छाये भूरि-भूति-प्रसव-कुशलते भ्रू-लते नः पालयेताम् ।

May LakShminatha's creeper-like eye-brows which are capable of generating bountiful wealth protect us. They look like the half-bent bow, the seat of Vishnu's arrow-like glances at the assembly of Deva's. They look like a line of

bumble-bees engaged in waking up the lotus-like eyes which are half closed due to the moon-like forehead containing the hair-curls looking like the mark on the moon.

Notes: Glances are traditionally likened to arrows or darts. The eye-brows look like the bows from which the arrows of glances dart in the direction of assembled Deva's. The forehead looks like the half-moon. The curls of hair on the forehead look like the mark on the moon. Looking at the moon the lotus-like eyes are half closed. (Lotuses close as the moon rises). The eye-brows look like a line of bumble bees close to the lotus eagerly engaged in opening the half closed lotuses!

Now the sage looks at the Tilaka mark on Vishnu's forehead:

रूक्षस्मारेक्षुचापच्युतशरनिकरक्षीणलक्ष्मीकटाक्ष-
प्रोत्फुल्लत्पद्ममालाविकसितमहितस्फाटिकैशानलिङ्गम् ।
भूयात् भूयो विभूत्यै मम भुवनपतेर्भ्रूलताद्वन्द्वमध्या-
-तुत्थं तत्पुण्ड्रमूर्ध्वं जनिमरणतमःखण्डनं मण्डनं च ॥ ४३ ॥

अन्वयः –

रूक्ष-स्मार-इक्षु-चाप-च्युत-शर-निकर-क्षीण-लक्ष्मी-कटाक्ष-
प्रोत्फुल्लत्-पद्म-माला-विकसित-महित-स्फाटिक-ऐशान-लिङ्गम्
भुवनपतेः भ्रूलता-द्वन्द्व-मध्यात् उत्थम् जनि-मरण-तमः-खण्डनम् च तत्
ऊर्ध्वम् पुण्ड्रम् मम विभूत्यै भूयः भूयात् ।

May the 'oordhvapundra' mark of the Vishnu, Lord of the universe, arising in between the creeper-like brows, which dispels the darkness of birth and death be for my prosperity. The mark looks like a crystal-white symbol of Siva to which

LakShmi, weakened by the group of arrows released from the sugarcane-bow of

Manmatha is offering lotus-garlands in the form of her glances.

Notes: Manmatha (cupid) is supposed to be having a bow of sugarcane. LakShmi is

tormented by Manmatha and is constantly looking at the mark on Vishnu's

forehead. Her glances are like offerings of lotus garland to symbol of Siva in

the form of the mark entreating him to lessen the harshness of Manmatha's

arrows, as he is the conqueror of Manmatha!

पीठीभूतालकान्तं कृतमकुटमहादेवलिङ्गप्रतिष्ठे

लालाटे नाट्यरङ्गे विकटतरतटे कैटभारेश्चिराय ।

प्रोद्धाट्यैवात्मतन्द्रीप्रकटपटकुटीं प्रस्फुरन्ती स्फुटाङ्गम्

पद्मिंयं भावनाख्यां चटुलमतिनटी नाटिकां नाटयेन्नः ॥ ४४ ॥

अन्वयः – पीठीभूत-अलक-अन्तम् कृत-मकुट-महादेव-लिङ्ग-प्रतिष्ठे

कैटभ-अरेः विकटतर-तटे लालाटे नाट्यरङ्गे आत्म-तन्द्री-प्रकट-पटकुटीम्

प्रोद्धाट्य स्फुटाङ्गम् प्रस्फुरन्ती इयम् नः पद्मी चटुल-मति-नटी

भावनाख्याम् नाटिकाम् नाटयेत् ।

May our wavering mind like an expert actress glittering and displaying her limbs

play the drama of concentration on the broad stage of forehead of Vishnu, the

foe of Kaitabha, after removing the screen of lassitude. On that broad stage of

Vishnu's forehead, the crown of Vishnu looks like the linga symbolizing Shiva

seated on the ends of curls of hair on the forehead.

Notes: The poet In Shankara visualizes a play called 'concentration' played by

his mind on the stage of Vishnu's forehead. In other words, he prays that he may

be able to concentrate on the forehead of Vishnu. The metaphor is further elaborated. When a play begins the screen is pulled aside. In a like manner before concentration begins, lassitude is removed. On the stage there will be a symbol of God placed for worship. The crown of Vishnu on his forehead looks like the linga, symbol of Shiva.

Shankara looks at the curls of hair around Vishnu's face:

मालालीवाल्लिधाम्नः कुवलयकलिता श्रीपतेः कुन्तलाली
कालिन्धारुह्य मूर्ध्नो गलति हरशिरःस्वर्धुनीस्पर्धया नु ।
राहुर्वा याति वक्रं सकलशशिकलाभ्रान्तिलोलान्तरात्मा
लोकैरालोक्यते या प्रदिशतु सततं साखिलं मङ्गलं नः ॥ ४५ ॥

अन्वयः – या कुवलय-कलिता मालाली वा, कालिन्दी हर-शिरः-स्वर्धुनी-
स्पर्धया
मूर्ध्नि आरुह्य गलति नु, सकल-शशि-कला-भ्रान्ति-लोल-अन्तरात्मा राहुः
वक्रम् याति वा इति लोकैः आलोक्यते सा श्रीपतेः कुन्तलाली नः अखिलम्
मङ्गलम्
प्रदिशतु ।

May the curls of hair of Shripathi bestow us all the time alround prosperity.

People look upon it as a garland made of black lotuses or perhaps that river

Yamuna is trickling down Vishnu's face to compete with the Ganga over the head

of Shiva, or Rahu is attacking the face under the delusion that it is the full moon.

Notes : River Yamuna is traditionally considered dark as perhaps its water is mildly turbid, which can be observed where Yamuna and Ganga meet.

Now he looks at the hair on Vishnu's head in its entirety:

सुप्ताकाराः प्रसुप्ते भगवति विबुधैरप्यदृष्टस्वरूपा
व्याप्तव्योमान्तरालास्तरलमणिरुचा रञ्जिताः स्पष्टभासः ।
देहच्छायोद्गमाभा रिपुवपुरगरुग्लोषरोषाग्निधूम्याः
केशाः केशिद्विषो नो विदधतु विपुलक्लेशपाशप्रणाशम् ॥ ४६ ॥

अन्वयः – भगवति सुप्ते विबुधैः अपि अदृष्टस्वरूपाः सुप्ताकाराः
व्याप्त-व्योम-अन्तरालाः तरल-मणि-रुचा स्पष्टभासः रञ्जिताः
देहच्छाया-उद्गम-आभाः रिपु-वपुः-अगरु-ग्लोष-रोष-अग्नि-धूम्याः केशिद्विषः
केशाः नः विपुल-क्लेश-पाश-प्रणाशम् विदधतु ।

May the locks of hair, which are illumined and colored by the
sparkling gem on
the fore head of Vishnu, the foe of Kesi, destroy entirely our
bundle of
sufferings. When Vishnu sleeps, even the Deva's cannot fully
perceive the form
of the matted hair which occupies all the skies, They look as if
they are the
aura emanating from Vishnu's body. They look as if they are
clusters of smoke
from the fire of anger arising out of burning the incense of
bodies of foes.

Notes: The commentator explains that when Vishnu goes into
Yoganidra, his matted
hair occupies the whole of the skies. supta is interpreted as
'matted hair' by
the commentator quoting Vaijayanti lexicon, although standard
dictionaries do
not list it. There is a hint of matted locks of hair being
compared to dark
clouds too although it is not fully brought out. The sage prays
for cutting
asunder of all wordly bondages.

Shankara prostrates to the crown of Vishnu:
यत्र प्रत्युत्तरत्नप्रवरपरिलसद्भूरिरोचिष्प्रतान-
स्फूर्त्या मूर्तिमुरारेद्युमणिशतचितव्योमवद्गुर्निरीक्ष्या ।

कुर्वत् पारेपयोधि ज्वलदकृशशिखाभास्वदौर्वाग्निशङ्कां
शश्वन्नः शर्म दिश्यात्कलिकलुषतमःपाटनं तत्किरीटम् ॥ ४७ ॥

अन्वयः – यत्र प्रत्युप्त-रत्न-प्रवर-परिलसत्-भूरि-रोचिः-प्रतान-स्फूर्त्या
मुरारेः मूर्तिः द्युमणि-शत-चित्त-व्योमवत् दुर्निरीक्ष्या, पारेपयोधि
ज्वलत्-अकृश-शिखा-भास्वत्-और्वाग्नि-शङ्काम् कुर्वत् तत् किरीटम् नः
कलि-कलुष-तमः-पाटनम् शर्म दिश्यात् ।

May the crown of Vishnu, which makes one fancy that they are
the glowing flames
of bright Vadava (Sub-oceanic fire) at the further bank of
ocean(of milk) endow
us with everlasting beatitude which destroys the darkness due
to the wicked
Kaliyuga. The piercing rays emanating from the priceless gems
set in the crown
render Vishnu's form extremely difficult to perceive like the sky
brightened by
hundreds of suns.

Notes: As per the commentator Vishnu's abode is on Northern
bank of milk of
ocean in Shaka island. One is reminded of Bhagavd Gita's
description of
Viswarupa, 'दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगापुत्थिता । यदि भ्हाः सदृशी सा
स्यात् भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥'.

Shankara beholds the entire form of Vishnu, after having had
the pleasure of
looking at parts of the form individually:
भ्रान्त्वा भ्रान्त्वा यदन्तस्त्रिभुवनगुरुरप्यब्दकोटीरनेकाः
गन्तुं नान्तं समर्थो भ्रमर इव पुनर्नाभिनालीकनालात् ।
उन्मज्जन्निर्जितश्रीस्त्रिभुवनमपरं निर्ममे तत्सदृक्षम्
देहाम्बोधिः स देयान्निरवधिरमृतं दैत्यविद्वेषिणो नः ॥ ४८ ॥

अन्वयः – त्रिभुवनगुरुः अपि अनेकाः अब्द-कोटीः यदन्तः भ्रान्त्वा भ्रान्त्वा
अन्तम् गन्तुम् भ्रमर इव न समर्थः (सन्), पुनः नाभि-नालीक-नालात् उन्मज्जन्
तत्-सदृक्षम् अपरम् त्रिभुवनम् निर्ममे सः दैत्य-विद्वेषिणः ऊर्जितश्रीः
निरवधिः देहाम्बोधिः नः अमृतम् देयात् ।

May the resplendent endless ocean-like form of Vishnu, the foe of Daitya's give us ambrosia (amrita). Brahma, the father of the three worlds, after not being able to reach the boundary in the abdomen of Vishnu even after roaming endlessly like a bumble-bee for millions of years, got out from the root of the lotus in Vishnu's navel and created a world outside similar to the one inside.

Notes: Evidently the ambrosia the sage seeks is that of Mok-Sha.

Proceeding to conclude the hymn Shankara prays to the ten incarnations of Vishnu:

मत्स्यः कूर्मो वराहो नरहरिणपतिर्वामनो जामदग्न्यः
काकुत्स्थः कंसघाती मनसिजविजयी यश्च कल्किर्भविष्यन् ।
विष्णोरंशावतारा भुवनहितकरा धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाः
पायासुर्मां त एते गुरुतरकरुणाभारखिन्नाशया ये ॥ ४९ ॥

अन्वयः – मत्स्यः कूर्मः वराहः नरहरिणपतिः वामनः जामदग्न्यः काकुत्स्थः
कंसघाती मनसिज-विजयी यः भविष्यन् कल्किः च एते ये
गुरुतर-करुणा-भार-खिन्न-आशया विष्णोः अंशावताराः भुवन-हितकराः
धर्म-संस्थापन-अर्थाः ते माम् पायासुः ।

May the partial incarnations of Vishnu, namely Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parashurama (son of Jamadagni), Rama (Scion of Kakutstha), Krishna(Slayer of Kamsa), Buddha(Conqueror of Manmatha) and Kalki(Of the future), who are the benefactors of the worlds and whose mission is to establish Dharma and who are weighed down by extreme compassion protect me.

Notes: It is significant that Shankara has recognized Buddha as one of the ten

incarnations. The word hariNa in narahariNapati does not seem to denote a lion as per standard lexicons. The commentator quotes Harsha where he seems to have used hariNa to denote a lion.

Shankara reflects on the twin facets of One Reality: Brahman, beyond reach of words and mind and Vishnu, who is ever accessible and provides immeasurable joy:

यस्माद्वाचो निवृत्ताः सममपि मनसा लक्षणामीक्षमाणाः
स्वार्थालाभात्परार्थव्यपगमकथनश्लाघिनो वेदवादाः ।
नित्यानन्दं स्वसंविन्निरवधिविमलस्वान्तसंक्रान्तबिम्ब-
च्छायापत्त्यापि नित्यं सुखयति यमिनो यत्तदव्यान्महो नः ॥ ५० ॥

अन्वयः – यस्मात् वाचः मनसा समम् लक्षणाम् ईक्षमाणाः स्वार्थालाभात् परार्थ-व्यपगम-कथन-श्लाघिनः वेदवादाः अपि निवृत्ताः यत् स्व-संवित्-निरवधि-विमल-स्वान्त-संक्रान्त-बिम्ब-च्छाया-आपत्त्या यमिनः अपि नित्यं सुखयति तत् नित्यानन्दम् महः नः अवतु ।

May that Lustre which provides joy even to those who practice self-control, in the guise of a reflection of its self luminous, unlimited, pure formlessness protect us. Words along with mind and even the Upanishads, which advocate its existence through indirect meaning having failed through direct meaning, return (having failed to reach it) from that lustre.

Notes: This is a verse endowed with subtle aspects of advaitic philosophy. The commentary is detailed and riddled with complex advaitic terminology. It is believed that the main import has been conveyed here. Brahman who is formless and is not accessible to words, mind or even the Upanishads in its infinite

mercy shows itself in the form of Vishnu and his incarnations as if through a reflexion in an accessible form. Even sages who seek the formless Brahman rejoice at that Lustre with form. The reference to the Upanishadic statement, 'yato vAcho nivartante aprApya manasA saha' is very evident. The verse refers to different modes through which a word is endowed with a meaning. If one says ga NgAyAM ghoShaH one refers to a village on the banks of Ganga although the words at first seem to convey that the village is inside the river. A word acquires a meaning different from what it normally conveys through a mode called lakShaNA, which becomes operative conveying a different meaning in place of the normal meaning. The verse refers to the fact that all modes through which a word acquires a meaning fail to reach Brahman.

As a mark of his own humility, Shankaracharya pays his obeisance to a Bhagavata-Vishnu's devotee:

आपादादा च शीर्षाद्वपुरिदमनघं वैष्णवं यः स्वचित्ते
धत्ते नित्यं निरस्ताखिलकलिकलुषे संततान्तःप्रमोदः ।
जुह्वजिह्वाकृशानौ हरिचरितहविः स्तोत्रमन्त्रानुपाठैः
तत्पादाम्भोरुहाभ्यां सततमपि नमस्कुर्महे निर्मलाभ्याम् ॥ ५१ ॥

अन्वयः – यः नित्यम्, जिह्वा-कृशानौ स्तोत्र-मन्त्रानुपाठैः हरि-चरित-हविः
जुह्वत्, इदम् अनघम् आपादात् आ च शीर्षात् वैष्णवम् वपुः
निरस्त-अखिल-कलि-कलुषे स्वचित्ते संतत-अन्तः-प्रमोदः धत्ते,
निर्मलाभ्याम् तत्-पादाम्भोरुहाभ्याम् सततम् अपि नमस्कुर्महे ।

Our obeisances are forever to the pure lotus-like feet of one, who holds in his mind, bereft of all the wickedness (characteristic) of Kaliyuga and having

uninterrupted internal happiness, the faultless form of Vishnu from head to foot, while offering oblations of Vishnu's deeds with the chantings of Mantra and Stotra in the fire of the tongue.

Notes: Quite characteristically Shankara stresses on the purity of mind while contemplating the divine form of Vishnu, as one chants the Mantras and the Stotras. Salutation is complete only when it has all the three anga's, namely vAchika(by word), kAyika(by body) and mAnasika(by mind). He uses a metaphor of oblations to the fire for the chantings of stotras and Mantras. The verse echoes sentiments expressed in several passages in the Gita. 'brahmArpaNaM brahmahaviH brahmAgnau brahmaNA hutam' etc.

As phalashruti, Shankaracharya bestows his benediction to one who recites this hymn with devotion:

मोदात्पादादिकेशस्तुतिमिति रचितां कीर्तयित्वा त्रिधाम्नः
पादाब्जद्वन्द्वसेवासमयनतमतिर्मस्तकेनानमेद्यः ।
उन्मुच्यैवात्मनैनोनिचयकवचकं पञ्चतामेत्य भानोः
बिम्बान्तर्गोचरं स प्रविशति परमानन्दमात्मस्वरूपम् ॥ ५२ ॥

अन्वयः – यः इति रचिताम् त्रिधाम्नः पादादिकेशस्तुतिम् मोदात् कीर्तयित्वा पाद-अब्ज-द्वन्द्व-सेवा-समय-नत-मतिः मस्तकेन आनमेत्, सः आत्मना एनः-निचय-कवचकम् उन्मुच्य पञ्चताम् एत्य भानोः बिम्ब-अन्तः-गोचरम् परमानन्दम् आत्मस्वरूपम् प्रविशति ।

One who, after reciting with joy Vishnu's Padadikesantastotra thus composed bows his head to (Vishnu) intent on serving his lotus feet, enters ultimate bliss of Brahman, who becomes visible through the solar orb, when he casts off his mortal

coil.

Notes: To point out that in this hymn he has all along prayed only for the ultimate realization of Brahman, the only wish worthwhile striving for, Shankarabhadgavatpada emphasises that aspect at the end.

इति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यस्य श्रीगोविन्दभगवत्पूज्यपादशिष्यस्य श्रीमच्छंकरभगवतः कृतौ विष्णुपादादिकेशान्तस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

Thus comes to completion Vishnupadadikesantastotra among the works of PramahamsaparivraAjakAcharya Shri Shankarabhadgavan, who is a disciple of the revered Govindabhadgavatpujyapada.

शंकराचार्यरचिता विष्णुस्तुतिरियं हरेः ।
कृपया तस्य सम्प्रीत्यै आंग्लवाण्यां कृतार्पिता ॥

Encoded, proofread, and translated with commentary by GSS.
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.. shrIVishnupAdAdikesAntastotram ..
was typeset on August 3, 2016

Please send corrections to sanskrit@cheerful.com

