
Atma Bodha

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ಅತ್ಮಭೋಧಃ

ನಮಃ ಶ್ರೀಶಂಕರಾನಂದಗುರುಪಾದಾಂಬುಜನ್ತನೇ .
ಸವಿಲಾಸಮಹಾವೇಹಗಾಹಗ್ರಸ್ಯಕರ್ಮಣೇ ..

namaH shrIsha NkarAnandagurupAdAmbujanmane .

savilAsamahAmohagrAhagrAsaikakarmaNe ..

- panchadashi

'I bow at the lotus feet of the Guru, Shankara, whose function
is to eliminate the alligator of delusion (moha) with all its branches.'

Atma Bodha, meaning self knowledge, was composed by Adi Shankara
sometime in the 8th century.

To quote Sri Radhakrishnan 'The Advaitism of Shankara is a system
of great speculative daring and logical subtlety . Its austere
intellectualism, its remorseless logic, which marches on indifferent to
the hopes and beliefs of man, its relative freedom from theological
obsessions, make it a great example of a purely philosophical scheme . It
is impossible to read Shankara's writings, packed as they are with serious
and subtle thinking, without being conscious that one is in contact with a
mind of a very fine penetration and profound spirituality . With his acute
feeling of the immeasurable world, his stirring gaze into the abysmal
mysteries of the spirit, his unswerving resolve to say neither more nor
less than what could be proved, Shankara stands out as a heroic figure of
the first rank in the somewhat motley crowd of the religious thinkers of
medieval India

Shankara taught us to love Truth, respect reason and realize the
purpose of life . Twelve centuries have passed, and yet his influence is
visible.'

His influence on Indian philosophy is so enormous that most of the

later philosophies that evolved in India had either to agree with him or disagree with him, quoting him nevertheless.

Shankara, in his indisputable style, allows a place for Karma and Bhakti while emphasising the prime necessity of jnAna for the realization of the Self . For example, while commenting on Bhagvadgita 18.45, he takes Bhakti to be identical to jnAna by quoting 7.16-18 of the gItA where Krishna says that a jnAni is one of His Bhaktas. In Vivekachudamani, he goes on to say that Bhakti is one of the most conducive causes for liberation . Similarly, in the third verse of atma bodha, he says that karma is not opposed to ignorance, though it can not destroy ignorance . Undoubtedly a great religious reformer and philosopher, Shankara embraces within his fold all pantheism while maintaining the principle of non-duality.

Though Shankara is famous for his commentaries (bhAShya-s) on the three major texts considered as ‘launching pad’ for liberation (prasthAnatrayI, the triple cannon),

namely bhagvad gItA, brahmaSutra-s, and upaniShad-s, he has composed a large number of stotra-s (hymns in praise of various gods) and also brief expositions in prose and verse (prakaraNa-s). Atma Bodha falls into the last category . A rare but an excellent commentary of this work in Sanskrit has been provided by Swami kRishNAnandAshramI and has been translated in to english by Vidyaratna Menon . Other noteworthy translations of the text are by Swami Chinmayananda, Swami Nikhilananda, TMP Mahadevan, and Parthasarathy, to name a few.

The text of Atmabodha avoids the technicalities found in the vedas, but conveys the message of jnana yoga (the path of knowledge) to the layman . In a short compendium of sixty eight stanzas, the knowledge of the Self is described in an unique and simple style . Shankara starts with the requirements of the aspirant, and goes on to explain the nature of world -Samsara, the embodiments of the soul, the influence of mAyA and the superimposition of Atman . He describes the meditation technique based on aphorism ‘I am Brahman,’ the supreme being,

'Aham Brahmasmi', and elucidates the fruits of Self-realization and the state of the jivanmukta (liberated soul).

Since the realization of the Self can not be had from books or scriptures, Shankara insists on the necessity of instruction by a Self-realized Guru (teacher). The intense desire to liberate and the effort required by the sAdhaka (aspirant) is emphasized . If there is no effort, there can not be a result . As Sri Radhakrishnan says 'People in our society have resolved to renounce nothing, but wish to enjoy the fruit of renunciation.' The vedanta kesari puts it 'The goal we desire (should be) to reach the ideal society of the prophets, a society of just, peaceful, morally and intellectually progressive community of non attached and responsible individuals, the means we adopt therefore must be worthy of the ends . Then only the real age of millennium will dawn wherein one feels that the whole world is one's family of kith and kin, a place for nothing but love and fellow feeling, in short a vasudhaivakuTumbakam (universe as a family)'.

Commenting on the first verse of Atma Bodha, the sanskrit commentator, Swami kRiShNAnandAshramI, remarks that Sri Shankaracharya composed the three great bhashyas (of the upaniShads, gItA, and brahma sUtra) for the guidance of people qualified by birth, environment, circumstances, and mental, moral and spiritual development . Out of great compassion for the rest of the masses, Shankara composed Atmabodha for explaining the knowledge of the Self.

The treatise of the knowledge of self, Atmabodha, is meant for those whose sins have been destroyed by religious austerities, who are calm, devoid of attachment and are persons desirous of liberation (i.e . mumukShu-s desirous of mokSha).

The qualified are those who have the four fold requisites, 1. discrimination between real and unreal (viveka) 2. non-attachment (i.e indifferent to the results of one's action) 3. desire for emancipation (mumukShu-s) and 4. the six fold qualities, a . sAma (restraint of internal senses)

- b . dAma (restraint of external senses)
- c . uparati (control of senses, without jumping from one object to another)
- d . samAdhAna (mind constantly on the Self)
- e . titIkShA (indifferent endurance)
- f . shraddhA (faith).

The rest of the sixty seven verses may be roughly classified in to the following subjects, means for emancipation (2-5), sa.nsAra (6-12), various sharIra-s (embodiments) (13-19), adhyAsa (15-19), aha.nkAra (26-30), doctrine of neti-neti (31-36), sAdhanA (37-39), self-realization (40-46), vision of a jnAnI and characteristics of a jivanmukta (47-53), and finally the nature of Brahman (54-68).

May the great AchArya, one of the greatest persons to grace this planet, Shankara, make us aware of His grace.

.. ಅತ್ಯಂಚೋದಃ ..

.. AtmabodhaH ..

ತಪೋಭಿಃ ದ್ವೀಣಪಾಪಾನಾಂ ಶಾಂತಾನಾಂ ವೀರತಾಗಿಷಾಂ .
 ಮುಮುಕ್ಷುಣಾಮಹೇಷ್ಠೋ ರ್ಯಾಯಮಾತ್ರಂಭೋದೋ ವಿಧಿಯತೇ .. 1..
 ಭೋದೋರನ್ಯಸಾಧನೇಭೋರ್ ಹಿ ಸಾಕ್ಷಾನ್ಮೋಷ್ಠೈ ಕಸಾಧನಂ .
 ಪಾರಸ್ಯ ವಹ್ನಿವಜ್ಞಾನಂ ವಿನಾ ಮೋಷ್ಠೋ ನ ಸಿಧ್ಯತಿ .. 2..
 ಅವಿರೋಧಿತಯಾ ಕರ್ಮ ನಾವಿದ್ಯಾಂ ವಿನಿವರ್ತಯೇತ್ .
 ವಿದ್ಯಾವಿದ್ಯಾಂ ನಿಹಂತ್ಯೇವ ತೇಜಸ್ಸಿಮಿರಸಂಘವತ್ .. 3..
 ಪರಿಷ್ಟಿನ್ ಇವಾಙ್ಮಾನಾತ್ನಾಶೇ ಸತಿ ಕೇವಲಃ . var ಅವಜ್ಞಿನ್
 ಸ್ವಯಂ ಪ್ರಕಾಶತೇ ಹೃತ್ಯಾ ಮೇಘಾಪಾಯೀಂತಶುಮಾನಿವ .. 4..
 ಅಜ್ಞಾನಕಲುಷಂ ಜೀವಂ ಜ್ಞಾನಾಭ್ಯಾಸಾದ್ವಿನಿಮುಲಂ .
 ಕೃತ್ಯಾ ಜ್ಞಾನಂ ಸ್ವಯಂ ನಶ್ಯೇಜ್ಞಲಂ ಕತಕರೀಣವತ್ .. 5..
 ನಂಸಾರಃ ಸ್ವಪ್ನಪುಲೋರ್ ಹಿ ರಾಗದ್ವೇಷಾದಿಸಂಕುಲಃ .
 ಸ್ವಕಾಲೇ ಸತ್ಯವದ್ವಾತಿ ಪ್ರಬೋದ್ಹಿ ಸತ್ಯಸದ್ಧವೇತ್ .. 6..
 ತಾವತ್ಸತ್ಯಂ ಜಗದ್ವಾತಿ ಶುಕ್ತಿಕಾರಜತಂ ಯಥಾ .
 ಯಾವನ್ ಜ್ಞಾಯತೇ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮ ಸರ್ವಾಧಿಷ್ಠಾನಮದ್ವಯಂ .. 7..
 ಉಪಾದಾನೇಂವಿಲಾಧಾರೇ ಜಗಂತಿ ಪರಮೇಶ್ವರೇ .

ನಗರಸ್ಥಿತಿಲಯನಾ ಯಾಂತಿ ಬುದ್ಧಿದಾನೀವ ವಾರಿಣಿ .. 8.. var not in some editions
 ಸಚ್ಚಿದಾತ್ಮನ್ಯನುಸ್ಯಾತೇ ನಿತ್ಯೇ ವಿಷ್ಣು ಪ್ರಕಲ್ಪಿತಾಃ .
 ವ್ಯಕ್ತಯೋ ವಿವಿಧಾಃ ಸರಾಂ ಹಾಟಕೇ ಕಟಕಾದಿವತ್ .. 9..
 ಯಥಾಕಾಶೋ ಹೃಷಿಕೇಶೋ ನಾನೋಪಾಧಿಗತೋ ವಿಭುಃ .
 ತದ್ವೇದಾಧಿಸ್ವವದ್ವಾತಿ ತನ್ನಾಶೇ ಕೇವಲೋ ಭವೇತ್ .. 10..
 ನಾನೋಪಾಧಿವಶಾದೇವ ಜಾತಿವಣಾಶ್ರಮಾದಯಃ . var ಜಾತಿನಾಮಾಶ್ರಮಾದಯಃ
 ಆತ್ಮನ್ಯರೋಪಿತಾಸ್ಯೋಯೇ ರಸವಣಾದಿ ಭೀದವತ್ .. 11..
 ಪಂಚಿಕೃತಮಹಾಭಾತಸಂಭವಂ ಕರ್ಮಸಂಚಿತಂ .
 ಶರೀರಂ ಸುಖದುಃಖಾನಾಂ ಭೋಗಾಯತನಮುಜ್ಞತೇ .. 12..
 ಪಂಚಪ್ರಾಣಮನೋಭುದ್ಧಿದಶೀಂದ್ರಿಯಸಮನ್ವಿತಂ .
 ಅಪಂಚಿಕೃತಭಾಶೋತ್ಸಂ ಸೂಕ್ಷ್ಮಾಂಗಂ ಭೋಗಸಾಧನಂ .. 13..
 ಅನಾದ್ವೀದಾಂತನಿವಾರಜ್ಯಾ ಕಾರಣೋಪಾಧಿರುಜ್ಞತೇ .
 ಉಪಾಧಿತ್ಯಾದನ್ಯಮಾತ್ಮಾನಮವದಾರಯೇತ್ .. 14..
 ಪಂಚಕೋಶಾದಿಯೋಗೇನ ತತ್ತನ್ಯಯ ಇವ ಸ್ಥಿತಃ .
 ಶುದ್ಧಾತ್ಮಾ ನೀಲವಸ್ತಾದಿಯೋಗೇನ ಸ್ಥಟಿಕೋ ಯಥಾ .. 15..
 ವಪ್ತಸ್ತಂಷಾದಿಭಿಃ ಕೋಶ್ಯಾಯುಂಕ್ತಂ ಯುತ್ಕ್ವವಫಾತತಃ . (ಯುಕ್ತಾವಫಾತತಃ)
 ಆತ್ಮನಮಂತರಂ ಶುದ್ಧಂ ವಿವಿಜ್ಯಾತ್ತಂಡುಲಂ ಯಥಾ .. 16..
 var ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥ ವಿವಿಂಜ್ಯಾತ್, ಆಶೀರ್ವಂಗ benedictive ವಿವಿಜ್ಯಾತ್
 ಸದಾ ಸರ್ವಗತೋರಪ್ಯಾತ್ಮಾ ನ ಸರ್ವತ್ರಾವಭಾಸತೇ .
 ಬುದ್ಧಾವೇವಾವಭಾಸೇತ ಸ್ವಷ್ಟಿಂಷು ಪ್ರತಿಬಿಂಬವತ್ .. 17..
 ದೇಹೇಂದ್ರಿಯಮನೋಭುದ್ಧಿಪ್ರಕೃತಿಭೋ ವಿಲಕ್ಷಣಂ .
 ತದ್ವಾತಿಸಾಕ್ಷಿಣಂ ವಿದ್ಯಾದಾತ್ಮಾನಂ ರಾಜವತ್ಸದಾ .. 18..
 ವ್ಯಾಪ್ತತೇಷ್ಣಿಂದ್ರಿಯೇಷ್ಣಾತ್ಮಾ ವ್ಯಾಪಾರೀವಾವಿವೇಕಿನಾಂ .
 ದೃಷ್ಟಿತೇಷ್ಣಿಂ ಧಾವತ್ಪು ಧಾವನ್ವಿತ ಯಥಾ ಶಶೀ .. 19..
 ಆತ್ಮಜ್ಯಾತನ್ಯಮಾಶ್ರಿತ್ಯ ದೇಹೇಂದ್ರಿಯಮನೋಧಿಯಃ .
 ಸ್ವಕ್ರಿಯಾಧೀಷಂ ವರ್ತಣಂತೇ ಸೂರ್ಯಾಲೋಕಂ ಯಥಾ ಜನಾಃ . 20..
 ದೇಹೇಂದ್ರಿಯಗುಣಾನ್ಯಮಾರ್ಥಾಮಲೇ ಸಚ್ಚಿದಾತ್ಮನಿ .
 ಅಧ್ಯಸ್ಯಂತ್ಯವಿವೇಕೇನ ಗಗನೇ ನೀಲತಾದಿವತ್ .. 21..
 ಅಜ್ಞಾನಾನಾತ್ಮಾನಸೋಪಾಧೀಃ ಕರ್ತೃತ್ವಾದಿನಿ ಚಾತ್ಮನಿ .
 ಕಲ್ಪಂತೇರಮ್ಮಾಗತೇ ಚಂದ್ರೇ ಚಲನಾದಿ ಯಥಾಂಭನಃ . 22..
 ರಾಗೀಷ್ವಾಸುಖದುಃಖಾದಿ ಬುದ್ಧಾಂತಾಂ ಪ್ರವರ್ತತೇ .
 ಸುಷುಪ್ತಾನಾಸ್ತಿ ತನ್ನಾಶೇ ತನ್ನಾದ್ಬ್ರಧೇಸ್ತ ನಾತ್ಮನಃ .. 23..

ప్రకాశోకస్య తోయస్య శ్రీత్యమగ్నియంధోష్టా .
 స్వభావః సజ్జిదానందనిత్యనిమంలతాత్మనః .. 24..
 ఆత్మనః సజ్జిదంతశ్చ బుద్ధేవ్యత్తిరితి ద్వయం .
 నంయోజ్య జావిహేశేన జానామీతి ప్రవత్తాతీ .. 25..
 ఆత్మనో విక్రియా నాస్తి బుద్ధేచోకంధో న జాత్మితి . var జాత్మి
 జీవః సవమలం జ్ఞాత్వా జ్ఞాతా దృష్టేతి ముహ్యతి .. 26..
 రజ్జుసప్యవదాత్మానం జీవం జ్ఞాత్వా భయం వహేత్ .
 నాహం జీవః పరాత్మేతి జ్ఞాతం జేన్నిభిరయో భవేత్ .. 27..
 ఆత్మావభాసయత్యేకో బుద్ధా దీనీంద్రియాణ్యపి .
 దీపో ఘటాదివత్స్తాత్మా జత్తేస్తేనామభాస్యతీ .. 28..
 స్వచోదే నాన్యచోదేచ్ఛా చోదయం పతయాత్మనః .
 న దీపస్యాన్యదీపేచ్ఛా యథా స్యాత్మప్రకాశనే .. 29..
 నిషిద్ధ నివిలోపాధిస్యేతి నేతీతి వాక్యతః .
 విద్యాద్వేక్యం మహావాక్యాజీవవాత్మపరమాత్మనోః .. 30..
 ఆవిద్యకం శరీరాది దృశ్యం బుద్ధుదవత్తురం .
 పతద్విలశ్శం విద్యాదహం బ్రಹ్మేతి నిమంలం .. 31..
 దేహాన్యత్వాన్ మే జన్మజరాకాశ్చలయాదయః .
 అబ్బాదివిషయ్యః సంగో నిరింద్రియతయా న జే .. 32..
 అమనస్యాన్య మే దుఃఖాగద్వేషభయాదయః .
 అప్రాణో క్షుమనాః శుభ్ర ఇత్యాది శుతిథాసనాత్ .. 33..
 (ఇతస్యాజ్ఞాయితే ప్రాణో మనః సవేఽంద్రియాశి జే .
 ఖం వాయుజోకితిరాపః ష్ట్రధివి విశ్వస్య ధారిణిః ..) doubtful addition
 నిగుణపో నిష్టియో నితో నివికటిష్ఠో నిరంజనః .
 నివికారో నిరాకారో నిత్యముక్షోఽస్మి నిమంలః .. 34..
 అహమాకాశవత్సవం బహిరంతగ్రథోఽచ్యతః .
 సదా సవమః సిద్ధో నిఃసంగో నిమంలోకజలః .. 35..
 నిత్యశుద్ధిముక్షైకమలండానందమద్వయం .
 సత్యం జ్ఞానమనంతం యత్తరం బ్రహ్మహమీవ తత్ .. 36..
 పవం నిరంతరాభ్యస్తా బ్రహ్మవాస్మితి వాసనా .
 కరత్యవిద్యావిశ్ిష్టపాన్ రోగానివ రసాయనం .. 37..
 వివిక్తదేశ ఆసినో విరాగో విజితేంద్రియః .

ಭಾವಯೀದೇಕಮಾತ್ರಾನಂ ತಮನಂತಮನನ್ಯಧಿಃ .. 38..
 ಆತ್ಮನ್ಯೇವಾಶೀಲಂ ದೃಶ್ಯಂ ಪ್ರಪಿಲಾಪ್ಯ ಧಿಯಾ ಸುಧಿಃ .
 ಭಾವಯೀದೇಕಮಾತ್ರಾನಂ ನಿರ್ಮಲಾಕಾಶವತ್ತದಾ .. 39..
 ರೂಪವಣಾದಿಕಂ ಸರ್ವಂ ವಿಹಾಯ ಪರಮಾರ್ಥವಿತ್ರ್ .
 ಪರಿಪೂರ್ಣಚಿದಾನಂದಸ್ವರೂಪೇಣಾವತಿಷ್ಠತೇ .. 40..
 ಜ್ಞಾತ್ಮಜ್ಞಾನಜ್ಞೀಯಭೀದಃ ಪರೇ ನಾತ್ಮನಿ ವಿದ್ಯತೇ .
 ಜೀದಾನಂದೈಕರೂಪತ್ವದ್ವಿಷ್ಯತೇ ಸ್ವಯಮೇವ ತತ್ .. 41.. var ಹಿ ..
 ಪವಮಾತ್ಮಾರಣೌ ಧ್ಯಾನಮಧನೇ ಸತತಂ ಕೃತೇ .
 ಉದಿತಾವಗತಿಜ್ಞಾಲಾ ಸರ್ವಾಜ್ಞಾನೇಂದನಂ ದಹೀತ್ .. 42..
 ಅರುಣೇನೇವ ಬೋಧೀನ ಪೂರ್ವಂ ಸಂತಮನೇ ಹೃತೇ .
 ತತ ಆವಿಭವವೇದಾತ್ಮಾ ಸ್ವಯಮೇವಾಂಶಮಾನಿವ .. 43..
 ಆತ್ಮಾ ಶು ಸತತಂ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ತೋಽಪ್ಯಪ್ರಾಪ್ತವದವಿದ್ಯಯಾ .
 ತನ್ನಾಶೇ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ತವದ್ವಾತ್ಮಿ ಸ್ವಕಂತಾಭರಣಂ ಯಥಾ .. 44..
 ನಾಥಣೌ ಪುರುಷವದ್ವಾಂತಾ ಕೃತಾ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣಿ ಜೀವತಾ .
 ಜೀವಸ್ಯ ತಾತ್ತ್ವಿಕೇ ದೂರಾತ್ಮೇ ತಸ್ಮಿಂದೃಷ್ಟಿ ನಿವರ್ತತೇ .. 45..
 ತತ್ತ್ವಸ್ವರೂಪಾನುಭವಾದುತ್ತನ್ಯಂ ಜ್ಞಾನಮಂಜಸಾ .
 ಅಹಂ ಮಮೇತಿ ಜಾಜ್ಞಾನಂ ಭಾಧತೇ ದಿಗ್ಭಾದಿವತ್ .. 46..
 ಸಮ್ಮಿಗ್ರಜ್ಞಾನವಾನ್ ಯೋಗಿ ಸ್ವಾತ್ಮನ್ಯೇವಾಶೀಲಂ ಜಗತ್ ..
 ಪರಂ ಚ ಸರ್ವಮಾತ್ಮಾನಮೀಕ್ಷತೇ ಜ್ಞಾನಚಕ್ರಣಾ .. 47..
 ಆತ್ಮವೇದಂ ಜಗತ್ವರ್ವಮಾತ್ಮನೋಽನ್ಯನ್ ವಿದ್ಯತೇ .
 ಮೃದೋ ಯದ್ವಾದ್ವಾಟಾದಿನಿ ಸ್ವಾತ್ಮಾನಂ ಸರ್ವಮೀಕ್ಷತೇ .. 48..
 ಜೀವನ್ಮೃತ್ಯಸ್ತ ತದ್ವಾದ್ವಾನ್ಮಾಪೋರಾಪಾಧಿಗುಣಾಂಸ್ತ ಜೀತ್ ..
 ಸಚ್ಚಿದಾನಂದರೂಪತ್ವತ್ ಭವೇದ್ವ ಮರಕೀಟವತ್ .. 49..
 ಶೀತ್ವಾರ್ಥ ಮೋಹಣಾವಂ ಹತ್ವಾ ರಾಗದ್ವೇಷಾದಿರಾಕ್ಷಸಾನ್ ..
 ಯೋಗಿ ಶಾಂತಿಸಮಾಯುಕ್ತ ಆತ್ಮಾರಾಮೋ ವಿರಾಜತೇ .. 50..
 ಭಾಹ್ಯನಿತ್ಯಸುಖಾಸಕ್ತಿಂ ಹಿತ್ವಾತ್ಮಸುಖನಿವೃತಃ .
 ಘಟಸ್ಥದಿಪವತ್ತಸ್ಥಃ ಸ್ವಾಂತರೇವ ಪ್ರಕಾಶತೇ .. 51..
 var ದೀಪವಚ್ಯಾಶದಂತರೇವ, also var ಸ್ವಚ್ಚಃ:
 ಉಪಾಧಿಸೋಽಪಿ ತದ್ವಮೈರಲಿಪ್ಯೋ ವೈಶ್ಯಾಮವನ್ಮನಿಃ .
 ಸರ್ವವಿನೂಡಿವತ್ತಿಷ್ಠಿದಸಕ್ತಾ ವಾಯುವಚ್ಚರೀತ್ .. 52..
 ಉಪಾಧಿವಿಲಯಾದ್ವಿಷ್ಠಾ ನಿವಿಶೀಷಂ ವಿಶೇಷನ್ಮನಿಃ .

జలే జలం వియద్వ్యోమ్మి తేజస్సేజసి వా యథా .. 53..
 యల్మాభాన్నపరో లాభో యత్పుమాన్నపరం సుఖం .
 యజ్ఞా నాన్నపరం జ్ఞానం తద్బ్రహ్మతేవధారయీత్ .. 54..
 యద్వష్ట్ప్రష్ట నాపరం దృశ్యం యద్వ్యత్ప్ర న పునభవః .
 యజ్ఞా త్ప్ర నాపరం జ్ఞీయం తద్బ్రహ్మతేవధారయీత్ .. 55..
 తియిగొద్దుఫమధః పూణం సజ్జిదానందమద్వయం .
 అనంతం నిత్యమేకం యత్తద్బ్రహ్మతేవధారయీత్ .. 56..
 అతద్వ్యవృత్తిరూపేణ వేదాంతీలఁడ్క్యతేఽద్వయం . var కవ్యయం
 అఖిండానందమేకం యత్తద్బ్రహ్మతేవధారయీత్ .. 57..
 అఖిండానందరూపస్య తస్యానందలవాత్రితాః .
 బ్రహ్మాద్యస్తురతమ్యేన భవంత్యానందినోఽవిలాః .. 58..
 తద్యక్తమవిలం వస్తు వ్యవహారస్తుదన్స్తితః . var వ్యవహారశ్చిదన్స్తితః
 తస్యాత్మవణగతం బ్రహ్మ క్షీరే సప్చరివాఖిలే .. 59..
 అనణ్ణస్తూలమహస్తమదీఘమజమవ్యయం .
 అరూపగుణవణాభ్యం తద్బ్రహ్మతేవధారయీత్ .. 60..
 యద్వాసా భాస్యతేఽకాది భాస్యే యింత్తు న భాస్యతే .
 యీన సవఁమిదం భాతి తద్బ్రహ్మతేవధారయీత్ .. 61..
 స్వయమంతబహివ్యాప్య భాసయన్విలం జగత్ ..
 బ్రహ్మ ప్రకాశతే వస్త్రప్రతప్తాయసపిండవత్ .. 62..
 జగద్వీలక్షణం బ్రహ్మ బ్రహ్మణోఽన్యన్న కింజన .
 బ్రహ్మాన్యద్వాతి జీన్మిద్వా యథా మరుమరీజికా .. 63..
 దృశ్యతే శూయతే యద్వద్బ్రహ్మణోఽన్యన్న తద్వేత్ ..
 తత్త్వజ్ఞానాశ్చ తద్బ్రహ్మ సజ్జిదానందమద్వయం .. 64..
 సవఁగం సజ్జిదాత్మానం జ్ఞానజక్షునిరీక్షతే .
 అజ్ఞానజక్షునేఽశ్చేత భాస్యంతం భానుమంధవత్ .. 65..
 శ్రవణాదిభిరుద్దీప్తజ్ఞానాగ్నిపరితాపితః .
 జీవః సవఁమలాన్మత్కః స్ప్రణవద్మైల్యేతతే స్వయం .. 66..
 హృదాకాశోదితో హ్యతా భోధభానుస్తమోఽపహ్యత్ ..
 సవఁవ్యాపీ సవఁధారి భాతి భాసయతేఽవిలం .. 67.. var సవఁ ప్రకాశతే
 దిగ్ంబరాలాద్యనపేశ్య సవఁగం
 శీతాదిక్షన్నిత్యసుఖం నిరంజనం .

ಯಃ ಸ್ವಾತ್ಮತ್ತಿರ್ಥಂ ಭಜತೇ ವಿನಿಷ್ಠಿಯಃ
ನ ಸರ್ವವಿಶ್ವವರಗತೋಽಮೃತೋ ಭವೇತ್ .. 68..
.. ಇತಿ ಶಂಕರಾಚಾರ್ಯರವಿರಚಿತ ಆತ್ಮಭೋದಃ ಸಮಾಪ್ತಃ ..

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