
shrIVishnupAdAdikesAntastotram

श्रीविष्णुपादादिदेशान्तस्तोत्रम्

Document Information

Text title : VishnupAdAdikesAntastotram

File name : viShNupAdAdikeshAntastotra.itx

Category : vishhnu, stotra, shankarAchArya, vishnu

Location : doc_vishhnu

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Latest update : May 22, 2012

Send corrections to : sanskrit at cheerful dot c om

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September 4, 2024

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श्रीविष्णुपादादिकेशान्तस्तोत्रम्

॥ श्रीः ॥

Commentary and translation by GSS. Murthy

Adi Shankaracharya, also reverentially called as Shankarabagavatpada, 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 translation 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
नीलाद्रेस्तुङ्गशङ्कुस्थितमिव रजनीनाथबिम्बं विभाति ।
पायात्रः पाञ्चजन्यः स दितिसुतकुलत्रासनैः पूर्यन् स्वैः
निध्वानैर्नीरदौघध्वनिपरिभवदैरम्बरं कम्बुराजः ॥ १ ॥

अन्वयः - यस्य विशालं सितं रूपं लक्ष्मीभर्तुः भुजाग्रे कृतवसति
नीलाद्रेः तुङ्गशङ्कुस्थितं रजनीनाथबिम्बम् एव विभाति सः कंबुराजः
पाञ्चजन्यः नीरदौघध्वनिपरिभवदैः दितिसुतकुलत्रासनैः स्वैः
निध्वानैः अम्बरं पूर्यन् 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:

आढुर्यस्य स्वरूपं क्षणमुभमभिलं सूरयः कालमेतम्
ध्वान्तस्यैकान्तमन्तं यदपि य परमं सर्वधाम्नां य धाम ।
यङ्कं तथ्यङ्कपाणोर्दितिजतनुगलद्रक्तधाराक्तधारम्
शश्वत्रो विश्ववन्धं वितरतु विपुलं शर्म धर्माशुशोभम् ॥ २ ॥

अन्वयः – सूरयः यस्य स्वरूपम् क्षणमुभम् अभिलम् ऐतम् कालम् आढुः, यत् अपि
ध्वान्तस्य ऐकान्तम् अन्तम् (यत्) सर्वधाम्नाम् परमम् धाम य , यङ्कपाणोः तत्
धर्माशुशोभम् विश्ववन्धम् दितिजतनुगलद्रक्तधाराक्तधारम् यङ्कं
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 ङरिभुजपवनामर्शनाघातमूर्तेः
अस्मान् विस्मेरनेत्रदिशनुविवयःसाधुकारैः सुतारः ।

सर्वं संतुर्मुभिच्छोररिडुलभुवनं स्फुरविस्फुरनादः
संयत्त्वान्तसिन्धौ शरसलिलघटावार्मुयः कार्मुकस्य ॥ ३ ॥

अन्वयः - संयत्त्वान्तसिन्धौ उरिभुजपवनामर्शनाध्मातमूर्तेः
शरसलिलघटावार्मुयः, सर्वम् अरिडुलभुवनं संतुर्मुं ष्योः, कार्मुकस्य
निर्घातघोरः, त्रिदशनुतिवयःसाधुकारैः सुतारः, स्फुरविस्फुरनादः 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 :

श्रुमूतश्यामभासा मुडुरपि भगवद्भाडुना मोडयन्ती
युद्धेषुद्धूयमाना ञटिति तटिदिवालक्ष्यते यस्य मूर्तिः ।
सोऽसिस्त्रासाकुलाक्षत्रिदशरिपुवपुःशोऽशितास्वादतृभो
नित्यानन्दाय भूयान्मधुमथनमनोनन्दनो नन्दको नः ॥ ४ ॥

अन्वयः - युद्धेषु श्रुमूतश्यामभासा भगवद्भाडुना ञटिति उद्धूयमाना यस्य
मूर्तिः मुडुरपि तटित् षव मोडयन्ती लक्ष्यते सः
त्रासाकुलाक्षत्रिदशरिपुवपुःशोऽशितास्वादतृभः 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 lightning.

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:

कम्पाकारा मुरारेः करकमलतलेनानुरागाद्गृहीता
सम्यग्वृत्ता स्थिताग्रे सपदि न सडते दर्शनं या परेषाम् ।
राजन्ती दैत्यज्जुवासवमदमुदिता लोडितालेपनाद्रा
कामं दीसांशुकान्ता प्रदिशतु दयितेवास्य कौमोदकी नः ॥ ५ ॥

अन्वयः – मुरारेः करकमलतलेन अनुरागात् गृहीता, कम्पाकारा सम्यग्वृत्ता
अग्रे स्थिता, या परेषाम् दर्शनम् सपदि न सडते, दैत्यज्जुवासवमदमुदिता
लोडितालेपनाद्रा राजन्ती, दीसांशुकान्ता अस्य कौमोदकी दयिता एव 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:- kamrAkArA= of fine shape, having a shapely figure; samyagvRuttA= nicely spherical, has right character ; pareShAm= of enemies, of others; daityajIvAsavamadamuditA= enjoying the intoxication caused by the liquor-like blood of Daityas, enjoying the intoxication caused by 'daityajIvAsava'; lohitalAlepanArDrA = 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 य उरेर्यानकेतुस्वरूपो
यं सञ्चिन्त्यैव सद्यः स्वयमुरगवधूर्वागर्भाः पतन्ति ।
यञ्चय्याद्गोरुतुण्डत्रुटितकृण्विण्वसारक्तपङ्कुकुितास्यम्
वन्दे छन्दोमयं तं भगपतिममलस्वर्णवर्णं सुपर्णम् ॥ ६ ॥

अन्वयः - यः तनुरपि विश्वप्राणभूतः उरेः यानकेतुस्वरूपः य, यम्
सञ्चिन्त्य ऐव सद्यः उरगवधूर्वागर्भाः स्वयम् पतन्ति,
यञ्चय्याद्गोरुतुण्डत्रुटितकृण्विण्वसारक्तपङ्कुकुितास्यम् (यञ्चय्यत्+याद्
+उरु+तुण्ड+त्रुटित+कृण्विण्वसारक्त+पङ्कुकुितास्यम्), छन्दोमयम्
अमलस्वर्णवर्णम् तम् भगपतिम् 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 ViSvaprAna.

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

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

अन्वयः - विश्वेश्वरस्य विष्णोः प्रवरशयनकृत् सर्वलोकेकधर्ता सः
सर्वभूतः पृथुविमलयशाः सर्ववेदैश्च वेधः 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:

वाग्भूगौर्यादिभेदैर्विदुश्चिड मुनयो यां यदीयैश्च पुंसाम्
 कारुण्यार्द्रैः कटाक्षैः सकृदपि पतितैः सम्पदः स्युः समग्राः ।
 कुन्देन्दुस्वच्छमन्दस्मितमधुरमुष्णाम्भोरुहां सुन्दराङ्गीम्
 वन्दे वन्द्यामसौषैरपि मुरभिदुरोमन्दिरामन्दिरां ताम् ॥ ८ ॥

अन्वयः - याम् षड् मुनयः वाग्+भू+गौरी+आदि+भेदैः विदुः, यदीयैः सकृदपि
 पतितैः कारुण्यार्द्रैः कटाक्षैः पुंसां समग्राः सम्पदः स्युः य,
 कुन्द्+एन्दु+स्वच्छ+मन्दस्मित+मधुर+मुष्ण+अम्भोरुहाम् सुन्दराङ्गीम्,
 मुरभिद्व+उरो+मन्दिराम् अशेषैः अपि वन्द्याम् ताम् षण्डिराम् 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 विडरते देवि दृष्टिस्त्वदीया तस्यां तस्यामलमलमिकां तन्वते सम्पदोषाः 'Oh Goddess, In whichever direction your glances are cast, in that direction torrents of wealth accumulate'.

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

अन्वयः – या पुंसः सन्निधानेन सकलम् अपि सत्त्वजालम् सदा सूते, या तत्त्वयोगात् षट् 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 योनिर्मलद्वन्द्वम् तस्मिन् गर्भे दधाम्यहम् । संभवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥’ ‘मम योनिर्मलद्वन्द्वम् तस्मिन् गर्भे दधाम्यहम् । सम्भवः सर्वभूतानाम् ततो भवति भारत ॥’

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

येभ्योऽसूयदृभिरुख्यैः सपदि पदमुरु त्यज्यते दैत्यवर्गैः
येभ्यो धर्तुं य मूर्ध्ना स्पृश्यति सततं सर्वगीर्वाणवर्गः ।
नित्यं निर्मूलयेयुर्नियिततरममी भक्तिनिष्ठात्मनां नः
पद्माक्षस्याऽङ्घ्रिपद्मद्वयतलनिलयाः पांसवः पापपङ्कम् ॥ १० ॥

अन्वयः – येभ्यः असूयदृभिः दैत्यवर्गैः उख्यैः उरु पदम् सपदि त्यज्यते,
येभ्यः सर्वगीर्वाणवर्गः मूर्ध्ना धर्तुम् सततम् स्पृश्यति य, अमी
पद्माक्षस्य अङ्घ्रि-पद्म-द्वय-तल-निलयाः पांसवः भक्तिनिष्ठात्मनाम् नः
पापपङ्कम् नित्यम् नियिततरम् 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:

रेषा लेभादिवन्धाश्चरत्तलगताश्चक्रमत्स्यादितृपाः
स्निग्धाः सूक्ष्माः सुजाता मृदुलविततरक्षौमसूत्रायमाणाः ।
दधुर्नो मङ्गलानि भ्रमरभरजुषा कोमलेनाब्धिजायाः
कम्रेणाम्रेज्यमानाः किसलयमृदुना पाणिना चक्रपाणोः ॥ ११ ॥

अन्वयः – अब्धिजायाः भ्रमरभरजुषा कोमलेन कम्रेण किसलयमृदुना पाणिना
आम्रेज्यमानाः, चक्रपाणोः चरत्तलगताः चक्रमत्स्यादितृपाः स्निग्धाः सूक्ष्माः
सुजाताः मृदुलविततरक्षौमसूत्रायमाणाः रेषाः नः मङ्गलानि दधुः ।

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:

यस्मादाकामतो धां गरुडमण्डिशिलाकेतुदण्डायमानात्
आश्च्योतन्ती बभासे सुरसरिदमला वैजयन्तीव कान्ता ।
भूमिष्ठो यस्तथान्यो भुवनगृहबृहत्स्तम्भशोभां दधौ नः
पातामेतौ पयोजोदरललिततलौ पङ्कजाक्षस्य पादौ ॥ १२ ॥

अन्वयः – धाम् आकामतः गरुडमण्डिशिलाकेतुदण्डायमानात् यस्मात् आश्च्योतन्ती
अमला सुरसरित् कान्ता वैजयन्ती एव बभासे, तथा भूमिष्ठः यः अन्यः
भुवनगृहबृहत्स्थम्भशोभाम् दधौ, अतौ 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.

आकामद्भ्यां त्रिलोकीमसुरसुरपती तत्क्षणादेव नीतौ
याभ्यां वैरोचनीन्द्रौ युगपदपि विपत्सम्पदोरेकधाम ।
ताभ्याम् ताम्रोदराभ्यां मुद्गुरलमजितस्याञ्जिताभ्यामुभाभ्याम्
प्राजयैश्वर्यप्रदाभ्यां प्रणतिमुपगतः पादपङ्केरुडाभ्याम् ॥ १३ ॥

अन्वयः – त्रिलोकीम् आकामद्भ्याम् याभ्याम् असुरसुरपती वैरोचनीन्द्रौ तत्क्षणात्
देव युगपत् अपि विपत्सम्पदोः ऐकधाम नीतौ, ताभ्याम् प्राजयैश्वर्यप्रदाभ्याम्
अञ्जिताभ्याम् उभाभ्याम् अजितस्य पादपङ्केरुडाभ्याम् अलम् 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 translated 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 वर्णश्रुतुर्थश्चरमत उदभूदादिसर्गे प्रजानाम्
साडश्री यापि संध्या प्रकटमभिडिता सर्ववेदेषु येषाम् ।
व्यासा विश्वंभरा यैरतिवितततनोर्विश्वमूर्तर्विराजो
विष्णोस्तेभ्यो मडद्भ्यः सततमपि नमोऽस्त्वंघ्नपङ्केरुडेभ्यः ॥ १४ ॥

अन्वयः – आदिसर्गे प्रजानां यतुर्थः वर्णः येभ्यः उदभूत्, अपि येषाम्
साडरी संख्या सर्ववेदेषु प्रकटम् अभिहिता, अतिवितततनोः विश्वमूर्तेः
विष्णोः यैः विश्वंभरा व्यासा तेभ्यः मउद्भ्यः अग्निपङ्कुरुडेभ्यः
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 पादद्भयात्रे विमलनभमणिभ्राजिता रजते या
राज्जुवस्येव रम्या डिमजलकणिकावङ्कृताया दलाली ।
अस्माकं विस्मयार्डाण्यभिलज्जनमनःप्रार्थनीयानि सेयम्
दधाद्यानवधा ततिरतिरुचिरा मङ्गलान्यङ्गुलीनाम् ॥ १५ ॥

अन्वयः – विष्णोः पादद्भयात्रे विमलनभमणिभ्राजिता, या राज्जुवस्य
डिमजलकणिकावङ्कृता रम्या दलाली एव रजते, सा एयम् आधा अनवधा
अतिरुचिरा अङ्गुलीनाम् ततिः अस्माकम् अभिलज्जनमनःप्रार्थनीयानि विस्मयार्डाणि
मङ्गलानि दधात् ।

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 सान्द्रीकृतेर्थास्त्वपरसुरकुलाशंकयातंकवन्तः ।
सा सधः सातिरेकां सकलसुभङ्गरीं सम्पदं साधयेन्नः
यञ्चय्यार्वावशुचका चरणनलिनयोश्चङ्कपाणोर्नभाली ॥ १६ ॥

अन्वयः – सेन्द्राः अमराः आनमन्तः यस्याम् अमलायाम् प्रतिकृतिम् दृष्ट्वा
अपरसुरकुलाशंकया सान्द्रीकृतेर्थाः संभवन्ति सा
यञ्चयत्-चारु-अंशु-चङ्का यङ्कपाणोः चरणनलिनयोः नभाली 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:

पादाभोजन्मसेवासमवन्तसुरव्रातभास्वत्किरीट-

-प्रत्युसोख्यावयाश्मप्रवरकरगणैश्चित्रितं यद्विभाति ।

नम्राङ्गानां उदरेर्नो उरिदुपलमडाकूर्मसौन्दर्यहारि-

-श्यायं श्रेयःप्रदायि प्रपद्युगमिदं प्रापयेत् पापमन्तम् ॥ १७ ॥

अन्वयः - यत्

पाद-अभोजन्म-सेवा-समवन्त-सुर-व्रात-भास्वत्-किरीट-प्रत्युस-

उख्यावय-अश्म-प्रवर-कर-गणैः

चित्रितम् विभाति उरित्-उपल-मडाकूर्म-सौन्दर्य-हारि-श्यायम् श्रेयःप्रदायि

उदरेः षडम् प्रपद्युगम् 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: Shankarabhadragavatpada employs an unusually long compound 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:

श्रीमत्सौ चारुवृत्ते करपरिमलनानन्दलृष्टे रमायाः
सौन्दर्याढ्येन्द्रनीलोपलरचितमडादण्डयोः कान्तिचोरे ।
सूरीन्द्रैः स्तूयमाने सुरकुलसुषुप्ते सूदितारातिसंधे
जङ्घे नारायणीये मुदुरपि जयतामस्मदंडो हरन्त्यौ ॥ १८ ॥

अन्वयः – श्रीमत्सौ, चारुवृत्ते,
सौन्दर्य-आढ्य-एन्द्रनीलोपल-रचित-मडादण्डयोः कान्तिचोरे, रमायाः
कर-परिमलन-आनन्द-लृष्टे, सूरीन्द्रैः स्तूयमाने, सुरकुलसुषुप्ते,
सूदितारातिसंधे, नारायणीये जङ्घे मुदुः अपि अस्मदंडः 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:

संयङ्गसाख्यं विधातुं सममिव सततं जङ्घयोर्भिन्नयोरे
भासीभूतोरुदण्डयभरणकृतोत्तम्भभावं भजेते ।
चित्तादर्शं निधातुं मळितमिव सतां ते समुद्रायमाने
वृत्ताकारे विधत्तां लृष्टि मुदमजितस्यानिशं जनुनी नः ॥ १९ ॥

अन्वयः – भिन्नयोः जङ्घयोः ये सम्यक् सततम् साख्यं समं विधातुम् एव
भासीभूत-उरु-दण्ड-यभरण-कृत-उत्तम्भ-भावम् भजेते, सतां मळितम्
चित्तादर्शं निधातुं एव वृत्ताकारे समुद्रायमाने ते अजितस्य जनुनी नः
लृष्टि 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:

द्वेवो भीतिं विधातुः सपदि विदधतौ डैटभाष्यं मधुं या-
 प्यारोप्याडुडगर्वावधिजलधि यथोरादित्यौ जघान ।
 वृतावन्योन्यतुल्यौ यतुरमुपययं भिन्नतावलनीलौ
 ॐ यद् उरेस्तौ मुदमतिशयिनीं मानसे नो विधत्ताम् ॥ २० ॥

अन्वयः - देवः विधातुः भीतिं विदधतौ आडुडगर्वौ आदित्यौ डैटभाष्यं
 मधुं अपि य यथोः आरोप्य अधिजलधि सपदि जघान, वृत्तौ अ-न्योन्यतुल्यौ,
 यतुरम् उपययम् भिन्नतौ, अलनीलौ उरेः तौ यद् ॐ 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 धोतते यथ्यतुरपरिहितेनाम्भरेण्युदारम्
 जातालंकारयोगं जलमिव जलधेर्वाडवाग्निप्रभाभिः ।
 अेतत्यातित्यदानो जघनमतिघनादेनसो माननीयम्
 सातत्येनैव येतोविषयमवतरत्यातु पीतांबरस्य ॥ २१ ॥

अन्वयः - यतुरपरिहितेन पीतेन अम्भरेण जातालंकारयोगम्,

वाऽवाग्निप्रभाभिः जलधेः जलमिव, यत् उदारम् धोतते (तत्) पीताम्बरस्य
माननीयम् जघनम् पातित्येदात् अतिघनात् अनेनसः नः अेतत् अवतरत् अेव
येतोविषयम् 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'. patitasya 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 त्रिधाभ्रो जघनकलितया ब्राजतेऽङ्गं यथाब्धेः

मध्यस्थो मन्दराद्रिर्भुजगपतिमडाभोगसंनद्धमध्यः ।

काञ्ची सा काञ्चनाभा मणिवरकिरणैरुल्लसद्भिः प्रदीप्ता

कल्यां कल्याणदात्री मम मतिमनिशं कम्पुपा करोतु ॥ २२ ॥

अन्वयः – यस्याः जघनकलितया दाम्ना त्रिधाभ्रः अङ्गम् यथा अब्धेः

मध्यस्थः भुजगपति-मडाभोग-संनद्ध-मध्यः मन्दराद्रिः ब्राजते, सा

काञ्चनाभा कम्पुपा 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, bhuvarloka 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 कम्पुञ्चैरुपयितमुदभूधत्र पत्रैर्विचित्रैः

पूर्वं गीर्वाणपूज्यं कमलजमधुपस्यास्पदं तत्पयोजम् ।

यस्मिन्नीलाशमनीवैस्तरलरुचिजलैः पूरिते डेलिबुद्ध्या

नालीकाक्षस्य नाभीसरसि वसतुनश्चित्तसंशिराय ॥ २३ ॥

अन्वयः – उन्नम्रम् कम्पुञ्चम् विचित्रैः पत्रैः उपयितम् यत्र पूर्वम्

कमलजमधुपस्य आस्पदम् तत् गीर्वाणपूज्यम् पयोजम् उदभूत्, यस्मिन्

नीलाशमनीवैः तरलरुचिजलैः पूरिते, (तस्मिन्) नालीकाक्षस्य नाभीसरसि नः

श्चित्तसंशः शिराय 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 पत्रपङ्क्तीर्नगेन्द्रान्

विद्वांसः केसरालीर्विदुश्चि विपुलां कर्णिकां स्वर्णशैलम् ।

भूयात्गायत्स्वयंभूमधुकरभवनं भूमयं कामदं नो

नालीकं नाभिपद्माकरभवमुरु तन्नागशय्यस्य शौरेः ॥ २४ ॥

अन्वयः – विद्वांसः षड यस्य नालम् पातालम्, दिशाम् वलयम् पत्रपङ्क्तीः,

नगेन्द्रान् केसरालीः, स्वर्णशैलम् विपुलाम् कर्णिकाम् विदुः, नागशय्यस्य शौरेः

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 Shooru 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
कल्पान्ते यस्य यान्तः प्रविशति सकलं स्थावरं जङ्गमं च ।
अत्यन्तायिन्यमूर्तेश्चिरतरमजितस्यान्तरिक्षस्वरूपे
तस्मिन्नस्माकमन्तःकरणमतिमुदा क्रीडतात् क्रोडभागे ॥ २५ ॥

अन्वयः - कल्पस्य आदौ ऐतत् विततम् विश्वम् विकल्पैः यस्मात् प्रभवति,
कल्पान्ते सकलम् स्थावरम् जङ्गमम् च यस्य अन्तः य प्रविशति,
अत्यन्तायिन्यमूर्तेः 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.

कान्त्यंभःपूरपूर्णे लसदसितवलीभङ्गभास्वत्तरङ्गे
गम्भीराकारनाभीयतुरतरमडावर्तशोभिन्द्युदारे ।
क्रीडत्वानद्भ्रुभोदरनडनमडावाडवाग्निप्रभाढ्ये
कामं दामोदरीथोदरसविलनिधौ चित्तमत्स्यश्चिरं नः ॥ २६ ॥

अन्वयः - कान्ति-अम्भः-पूर-पूर्णे लसत्-असित-वली-भङ्ग-भास्वत्-तरङ्गे

गंभीर-आकार-नाभी-यतुरतर-महावर्त-शोभिनि उदारे
 आनङ्ग-डेम-उदर-नडन-महा-वाडवाग्नि-प्रभा-आढ्ये
 दामोदरीय-उदर-सलिलनिधौ नः चित्तमस्थः चिरं डीडतु ।

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 whirlpool; 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.

नाभीनालीकमूलादधिकपरिमलोन्मोडितानामलीनाम्
 माला नीलेव यान्ती स्फुरति रुचिमती वङ्त्रपद्मोन्मुष्पी या ।
 रम्या सा रोमराजिर्भङ्गितरुचिकरी मध्यभागस्य विष्णोः
 चित्तस्था मा विरंसीश्चिरतरमुचितां साधयन्ती श्रियं नः ॥ २७ ॥

अन्वयः – या अधिकपरिमलोन्मोडितानाम् अलीनाम् नाभीनालीकमूलात् वङ्त्रपद्मोन्मुष्पी
 यान्ती रुचिमती नीला माला एव स्फुरति, सा मङ्गितरुचिकरी 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 कौस्तुभांशुप्रसरडिसलयैर्मुग्धमुक्ताङ्गुलाढ्यम्

श्रीवासोल्वासि कुलप्रतिनवनमालाङ्घ्रि राजद्भुजान्तम् ।

वक्षः श्रीवत्सकान्तं मधुकरनिकरश्यामलं शार्ङ्गपाणोः

संसारार्धश्रमार्तेरुपवनमिव यत्सेवितं तत्प्रपद्ये ॥ २८ ॥

अन्वयः – कौस्तुभांशुप्रसरडिसलयैः संस्तीर्णाम् मुग्धमुक्ताङ्गुलाढ्यम्

श्रीवासोल्वासि कुल-प्रतिनव-वनमाला-अङ्घ्रि राजद्भुजान्तम्

मधुकरनिकरश्यामलम् श्रीवत्सकान्तम् शार्ङ्गपाणोः वक्षः, यत्

संसारार्धश्रमार्तेः 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 (Shrivasa) 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 bumblebees; 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

धन्वोर्बिम्बं यथाङ्घ्रौ मधुप एव तरोर्मञ्जरीं राजते यः ।

श्रीमान्नित्यं विधेयादविरलमितः कौस्तुभश्रीप्रतानैः

श्रीवत्सः श्रीपतेः स श्रिय एव दयितो वत्स उच्यैःश्रियं नः ॥ २८ ॥

अन्वयः – कालशत्रोः गलं कालिमा एव, धन्वोः बिम्बम् अङ्घ्रुः यथा, तरोः

मञ्जरीम् मधुप एव, यः वक्षः नितान्तम् कान्तम् विदधत्,

कौस्तुभश्रीप्रतानैः अविरलमितः, श्रियः वत्स एव दयितः, सः श्रीमान्

श्रीपतेः श्रीवत्सः नः उच्यैः 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 Kaustubha 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 Kaustubha gem.

संभूयाम्भोधिमध्यात्सपदि सलजया यः श्रिया संनिधत्ते
नीले नारायणोःस्थलगगनतले डारतारोपसेव्ये ।

आशाः सर्वाः प्रकाशा विदधदपिदध्यात्मभासान्यतेज्ना-

स्याश्चर्यस्याकरो नो धुमणिरिव मणिः कौस्तुभः सोऽस्तु भूत्यै ॥ ३० ॥

अन्वयः - अम्भोधिमध्यात् सपदि संभूय नीले डारतारोपसेव्ये

नारायणोःस्थलगगनतले सलजया श्रिया सन्निधत्ते, सर्वाः आशाः प्रकाशाः

विदधत्, आत्मभासा अन्यतेजन् य अपिदधत्, आश्चर्यस्य आकरः सः

कौस्तुभमणिः धुमणिः षव 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 वायावानुकुल्यात्सरति मणिरुथा भासमानाऽसमाना
साकं साकम्भमंसे वसति विदधती वासुभद्रं सुभद्रम् ।
साऽरं सारऽगसंधैर्भुप्ररितकुसुमा मेयकान्ता य कान्ता
माला मालावितास्मान्न विरमतु सुप्रैर्योजयन्ती जयन्ती ॥ ३१ ॥

अन्वयः – वायौ आनुकूल्यात् सरति, या मणिरुथा साकम् अ-समाना भासमाना, (या)
वासुभद्रम् सुभद्रम् विदधती साकम्भम् अम्से वसति, सा सारऽगसंधैः
भुप्ररितकुसुमा मेयक-अन्ता कान्ता मा-लाविता जयन्ती माला अस्मान् सुप्रैः 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 'Shabdalanakara', 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:

डारस्थोरुप्रभाभिः प्रतिनववनमालांशुभिः प्रांशुऽपैः
श्रीभिश्चाप्यऽगदानां शबलितरुचि यन्निष्ठभाभिश्च भाति ।
आडुल्येनैव अद्दाऽजलिपुटमजितस्याभियायामडे तत्
अन्धार्तिं बाधतां नो अडुविडतिःकरीं अन्धुरं आडुमूलम् ॥ ३२ ॥

अन्वयः – प्रांशुऽपैः उरुप्रभाभिः प्रतिनववनमालांशुभिः अऽगदानाम्
श्रीभिः य, निष्ठभाभिः य यत् शबलितरुचि भाति, तत् अजितस्य अन्धुरम्

आडुमूलम् अद्गञ्जलिपुटम् अभियायामडे । नः आडुल्येन अडुविडतिकरीम्
अन्धार्तिम् आधताम् ।

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 commentator uses ‘shabalitaruchi’. Here the version of the commentator has been adopted.

The sage contemplates on the innumerable arms of Vishnu:

विश्वत्राणैकदीक्षास्तदनुगुणगुणक्षत्रनिर्माणदक्षाः
कर्तारो दूर्निर्गुणाः स्फुटगुर्यशसां कर्मणामद्भुतानाम् ।
शार्ङ्ग आणं कृपाणं क्लकमरिगटे पद्मशंभौ सडस्रम्
बिभ्राणाः शस्त्रजालं मम दधतु डरेर्बाडवो मोडडानिम् ॥ 33 ॥

अन्वयः – विश्वत्राणैकदीक्षाः, तदनुगुणगुणक्षत्रनिर्माणदक्षाः,
स्फुटगुर्यशसाम् अद्भुतानाम् कर्मणाम् कर्तारः, दूर्निर्गुणाः, शार्ङ्गम् आणम्
कृपाणम् क्लकम् अरिगटे पद्मशंभौ सडस्रम् शस्त्रजालौ बिभ्राणाः डरेः
आडवः मम मोडडानिम् 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 accomplish 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:

कण्डकल्पोद्गतैर्यः कनकमयवसत्सुडडवोत्थैरुदरैः

उद्योतैः कौस्तुभस्याप्युरुभिरुपचितश्चित्रवर्णो विभाति ।

कण्ठाश्लेषे रमायाः करवलयपटैर्मुद्रिते भद्ररूपे

वैकुण्ठीयेऽत्र कण्ठे वसतु मम मतिः कुण्ठभावं विहाय ॥ ३४ ॥

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

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

कण्ठाश्लेषे करवलयपटैः 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 LakShmi 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) वक्त्र-आकाश-अन्तर-स्थः

दन्त-तारा-ओघ-शोभाम् नितराम् तिरयति, असौ श्रीभर्तुः दन्तवासो-द्युमणिः

नः अध-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
 वक्त्रेन्दोस्तन्नावे कृतवसतिरिवाभाति नक्षत्रराशिः ।
 लक्ष्मीकान्तस्य कान्ताकृतिरतिविलसन्मुग्धमुक्तावलिश्रीः
 दन्ताली सन्ततं सा नतिनूतिनिरतानक्षतान् रक्षतात्रः ॥ ३६ ॥

अन्वयः - स्नेह-अतिरेकात् या निजकमितुः अलम् विप्रयोग-अक्षमा, वक्त्र-एन्दोः
 अन्तरावे कृतवसतिः नक्षत्र-राशिः एव
 आभाति, अति-विलसन्-मुग्ध-मुक्तावलि-श्रीः कान्त-आकृतिः सा लक्ष्मीकान्तस्य
 दन्ताली नति-नूति-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:

ब्रह्मन्ब्रह्मार्ण्यजिह्वां मतिमपि कुरुषे देव संभावये त्वाम्
 शंभो शङ्क त्रिलोकीभवसि डिममरैर्नारदाद्याः सुभं वः ।
 एत्थं सेवावनम्रं सुरमुनिनिकरं वीक्ष्य विष्णोः प्रसन्न-
 स्यास्येन्दोरास्रवन्ती वरवचनसुधा ह्लादयेन्मानसं नः ॥ ३७ ॥

अन्वयः - ब्रह्मन्, ब्रह्मणि अजिह्वाम् मतिम् अपि कुरुषे? ; शंभो, देव, त्वां
 संभावये । ; शङ्क, अमरैः त्रिलोकीम् अवसि डिम्? ; नारदाद्याः, सुभम् वः
 (डिम्)? ; एत्थम् 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 meditate on Brahman in order to do his duty of creation.

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

कर्णस्थस्वर्णकम्रोज्ज्वलमकरमडाकुण्डलप्रोतदीप्यन्-
माण्डिक्यश्रीप्रतानैः परिमिलितमलिश्यामलं कोमलं यत् ।
प्रोद्यत्सूर्याशुराजन्मरकतमुकुराकारयोरं मुरारेः
गाढामागामिनीं नः शमयतु विपदं गण्डयोर्मण्डलं तत् ॥ ३८ ॥

अन्वयः – यत्

कर्णस्थ-स्वर्ण-कम्र-उज्ज्वल-मकर-मडा-कुण्डल-प्रोत-दीप्यत्-माण्डिक्य-श्री-प्रतानैः
परिमिलितम् तत् कोमलम् अलिश्यामलम्
प्रोद्यत्-सूर्याशु-राजत्-मरकत-मुकुर-आकार-योरम् 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.

वक्त्रांभोजे लसन्तं मुदुरधरमणिं पक्वबिम्बाभिरामम्
दृष्ट्वा दृष्टुं शुकस्य स्फुटमवतरतस्तुण्डण्डण्डायते यः ।
धोणः शोणीकृतात्मा श्रवणयुगलसत्कुण्डलोलोस्रैर्मुरारेः
प्राणायस्यथानिलस्य प्रसरणसरणिः प्राणदानाय नः स्यात् ॥ ३९ ॥

अन्वयः – यः वक्त्रांभोजे मुदुः लसन्तम् पक्वबिम्बाभिरामम् अधरमणिम्
दृष्ट्वा दृष्टुं स्फुटम् अवतरतः शुकस्य तुण्डण्डण्डायते,
श्रवणयुगलसत्-कुण्डल-उस्रैः शोणीकृतात्मा प्राणायस्यथ अनिलस्य
प्रसरणसरणिः मुरारेः धोणः 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.

द्विक्कालौ वेद्यन्तौ जगति मुहुर्भिभौ संयन्तौ रवीन्दू
त्रैलोक्यालोकदीपावभिधति यथोरेव रुपं मुनीन्द्राः ।
अस्मान्जप्रभे ते प्रचुरतरङ्गुपानिर्भरं प्रेक्षमाणे
पातामाताम्रशुकलासितरुचिरुचिरे पद्मनेत्रस्य नेत्रे ॥ ४० ॥

अन्वयः - मुनीन्द्राः यथोः अत्र रुपम् द्विक्कालौ वेद्यन्तौ जगति मुहुः
संयन्तौ त्रैलोक्यालोकदीपाव रवीन्दू (एति) अभिधति,
आताम्र-शुकल-असित-रुचि-रुचिरे अज्जप्रभे प्रचुरतर-ङ्गुपा-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:

पातात्पातालपातात्पतगपतिगतेर्भ्रूयुगं भुञ्जमध्यम्
येनेषव्यालितेन स्वपदनियमिताः सासुरा देवसंधाः ।
नृत्यत्वालाटरङ्गे रञ्जनिकरतनोरर्धभाङ्गावदाते
कालव्यालद्भयं वा विलसति समया वालिकाभातरं नः ॥ ४१ ॥

अन्वयः – येन षत् चालितेन सासुरा देवसंघाः स्वपदनियमिताः,
 रञ्जनिकर-तनोः अर्ध-भाण्ड-अवदाते लालाट-रङ्गे नृत्यत् (यत्)
 वालिका-मातरं समया कालव्यालङ्घ्यं वा (षति) विलसति (तत्) भुग्नमध्यं
 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 karNabhUShaNavisheShaH quoting Vaijayanti Lexicon. The ornament is perhaps shaped like a big snake.

लक्ष्माकारालकालिस्फुरदलिकशशाङ्गार्धसंदर्शमीलन-
 नेत्राम्भोजप्रबोधोत्सुकनिभृततरालीनभृङ्गच्छटाभि ।
 लक्ष्मीनाथस्य लक्ष्मीकृतविभुधगणपाङ्गबाणसनाध-
 -च्छाये नो भूरिभूतिप्रसवकुशलते भ्रूलते पालयेताम् ॥ ४२ ॥

अन्वयः –
 लक्ष्म-आकार-अलक-अलि-स्फुरत्-अलिक-शशाङ्गार्ध-संदर्श-मीलत्-
 नेत्र-अम्भोज-प्रबोध-उत्सुक-निभृततर-आलीन-भृङ्ग-च्छटा-
 आभि लक्ष्मी-कृत-विभुधगण-अपाङ्ग-बाणस-अध-
 -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:

उक्षस्मारैक्षुयापय्युतशरनिकरक्षीणलक्ष्मीकटाक्ष-
 प्रोत्सुल्लत्पन्नमालाविकसितमडितस्फुटिकेशानलिङ्गम् ।
 भूयात् भूयो विभूत्यै मम भुवनपतेर्भूलताद्भ्रमध्या-
 -तुत्थं तत्पुण्ड्रमूर्ध्वं जनिमरणातमःप्राणं मण्डनं च ॥ ४३ ॥

अन्वयः -

उक्ष-स्मार-ईक्षु-याप-य्युत-शर-निकर-क्षीण-लक्ष्मी-कटाक्ष-
 प्रोत्सुल्लत्-पन्न-माला-विकसित-मडित-स्फुटिक-शैशान-लिङ्गम्
 भुवनपतेः भूलता-द्भ्रम-ध्यात् उत्थम् जनि-मरणा-तमः-प्राणम् च तत्
 उर्ध्वम् 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 कृतमकुटमडादेवलिङ्गप्रतिष्ठे
 लालाटे नाट्यरङ्गे विकटतरतटे डेटभारेच्चिराय ।
 प्रोद्धाट्यैवात्मन्दीप्रकटपटकुटीं प्रस्कुरन्ती स्फुटाङ्गम्
 पट्टीयं भावनाभ्यां यटुलमतिनटी नाटिकां नाटयेन्नः ॥ ४४ ॥

अन्वयः - पीठीभूत-अलक-अन्तम् कृत-मकुट-महादेव-विङ्ग-प्रतिष्ठे
 कैटभ-अरेः विकटतर-तटे लालाटे नाट्यरङ्गे आत्म-तन्त्री-प्रकट-पटकुटीम्
 प्रोद्धाट्य स्फुटाङ्गम् प्रस्फुरन्ती धयम् नः पट्टी यटुल-मति-नटी
 भावनाभ्याम् 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:

मालालीवालिधाम्नः कुवलयकलिता श्रीपतेः कुन्तलाली
 कालिन्धारुध्य मूर्ध्नी गलति हरशिरःस्वर्धुनीस्पर्धया नु ।
 राडुर्वा याति वङ्गं सकलशशिकलाभ्रान्तिवोलान्तरात्मा
 लोकेरालोक्यते या प्रदिशतु सततं साभिलं मङ्गलं नः ॥ ४५ ॥

अन्वयः - या कुवलय-कलिता मालाली वा, कालिन्दी हर-शिरः-स्वर्धुनी-स्पर्धया
 मूर्ध्नी आरुध्य गलति नु, सकल-शशि-कला-भ्रान्ति-वोल-अन्तरात्मा राडुः
 वङ्गम् याति वा षति लोकेः आलोक्यते सा श्रीपतेः कुन्तलाली नः अभिलम् मङ्गलम्
 प्रदिशतु ।

May the curls of hair of Shripathi bestow us all the time around 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:

सुमाकाराः प्रसुप्ते भगवति विबुधैर्यदृष्टस्वरूपा

व्याप्तव्योमान्तरालास्तरलमणिरुया रञ्जिताः स्पष्टभासः ।

दृढच्छायोद्गमाभा रिपुवपुस्तरुण्वोषरोषाग्निधूम्याः

केशाः केशिद्विषो नो विदधतु विपुलकलेशपाशप्रणशम् ॥ ४६ ॥

अन्वयः – भगवति सुप्ते विबुधैः अपि अदृष्टस्वरूपाः सुमाकाराः

व्याप्त-व्योम-अन्तरालाः तरल-मणि-रुया स्पष्टभासः रञ्जिताः

दृढच्छाया-उद्गम-आभाः रिपु-वपुः-अगरु-ण्वोष-रोष-अग्नि-धूम्याः केशिद्विषः

केशाः नः विपुल-कलेश-पाश-प्रणशम् 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 प्रत्युत्तरत्प्रवरपरिलसद्भूरिशिप्रतान-

स्कृत्यां मूर्तिर्भुरारिर्धुमणिशतचित्तव्योमवद्गुर्निरीक्ष्या ।

कुर्वत् पारेपयोधि ज्वलदकृशशिभाभास्वदौर्वाग्निशङ्कुं

शम्भ्रः शर्म दिश्यात्कलिकलुषतमःपाटनं तत्किरीटम् ॥ ४७ ॥

अन्वयः – यत्र प्रत्युत्तरत्-प्रवर-परिलसत्-भूरि-रोशिः-प्रतान-स्कृत्यां

मुरारेः मूर्तिः धुमणि-शत-चित्त-व्योमवत्-गुर्निरीक्ष्या, पारेपयोधि

ज्वलत्-अकृश-शिभा-भास्वत्-दौर्वाग्नि-शङ्कुम् 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 सूर्यसदस्य भवेद्युगपदुच्यिता । यद्वि ललाः 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:

आन्त्वा आन्त्वा यदन्तस्त्रिभुवनगुरुरघ्यदकोटीरनेकाः

गन्तुं नान्तं समर्थो भ्रमर एव पुनर्नाभिनालीकनालात् ।

उन्मज्जन्नूर्जितश्रीस्त्रिभुवनमपरं निर्ममे तत्सदृक्षम्

देलाम्भोधिः स देयान्निरवधिरमृतं दैत्यविद्वेषिणो नः ॥ ४८ ॥

अन्वयः – त्रिभुवनगुरुः अपि अनेकाः अब्द-कोटीः यदन्तः आन्त्वा आन्त्वा

अन्तम् गन्तुम् भ्रमर एव न समर्थः (सन्), पुनः नाभि-नालीक-नालात् उन्मज्जन्

तत्-सदृक्षम् अपरम् त्रिभुवनम् निर्ममे सः दैत्य-विद्वेषिणः ॐर्जितश्रीः

निरवधिः देलाम्भोधिः 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 MokSha.

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

मत्स्थः कूर्मो वराहो नरहरिणपतिर्वाभनो जामदग्न्यः

काकुत्स्थः कंसघाती मनसिजविजयी यश्च कल्किर्भविष्यन् ।

विष्णोरेशावतारा भुवनहितकरा धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाः

पायासुर्मा त अते गुरुतरकरुणाभारपिन्नाशया ये ॥ ४९ ॥

अन्वयः – मत्स्थः कूर्मः वराहः नरहरिणपतिः वामनः जामदग्न्यः काकुत्स्थः

कंसघाती मनसिज-विजयी यः भविष्यन् कल्दिः य अते ये
गुरुतर-करुणा-भार-भिन्न-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:

यस्माद्वायो निवृत्ताः सममपि मनसा लक्षणाभीक्ष्माणाः
स्वार्थाभावात्परार्थव्यपगमकथनश्लाघिनो वेदवादाः ।
नित्यानन्दं स्वसंविन्निरवधिविमलस्वान्तसंक्रान्तबिम्ब-
श्यायापत्यापि नित्यं सुभयति यमिनो यत्तद्व्यामडो नः ॥ ५० ॥

अन्वयः - यस्मात् वायः मनसा समम् लक्षणां भीक्ष्माणाः स्वार्थाभावात्
परार्थ-व्यपगम-कथन-श्लाघिनः वेदवादाः अपि निवृत्ताः यत्
स्व-संवित्-निरवधि-विमल-स्वान्त-संक्रान्त-बिम्बश्याया-आपत्या यमिनः अपि
नित्यं सुभयति तत् नित्यानन्दम् मडः 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 य शीर्षाद्भ्रूपुरिदमनघं वैष्णवं यः स्वयित्ते
धत्ते नित्यं निरस्तापिलकलिकलुषे संततान्तःप्रमोदः ।
जुह्विजिह्वाकृशानौ हरिचरिततुविः स्तोत्रमन्त्रानुपाठैः
तत्पादाभोरुडाभ्यां सततमपि नमस्कुर्महे निर्मलाभ्याम् ॥ ५१ ॥

अन्वयः - यः नित्यम्, जिह्वा-कृशानौ स्तोत्र-मन्त्रानुपाठैः हरि-चरित-तुविः
जुह्वत्, ष्टम् अनघम् आपादात् आ य शीर्षात् वैष्णवम् वपुः
निरस्त-अपिल-कलि-कलुषे स्वयित्ते संतत-अन्तः-प्रमोदः धत्ते,
निर्मलाभ्याम् तत्-पादाभोरुडाभ्याम् 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:

मोदात्पादादिकेशस्तुतिमितरथितां कीर्तयित्वा त्रिधाम्नः
पादाब्जद्वन्द्वसेवासमयनतमतिर्मस्तकेनानभेधः ।
उन्मुख्यैवात्मनैर्नो निययकवयकं पञ्चतामेत्य भानोः
बिम्बान्तर्गौर्यं स प्रविशति परमानन्दमात्मस्वरूपम् ॥ पर ॥

अन्वयः - यः धृति रथिताम् त्रिधाम्नः पादादिकेशस्तुतिम् मोदात् कीर्तयित्वा
पाद-अब्ज-द्वन्द्व-सेवा-समय-नत-मतिः मस्तकेन आनमेत्, सः आत्मना
अनः-नियय-कवयकम् उन्मुख्य पञ्चताम् अत्य भानोः बिम्ब-अन्तः-गौर्यम्
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, Shankarabhagavatpada emphasises that aspect at the end.

धृति श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकार्यस्य श्रीगोविन्दभगवत्पूज्यपादशिष्यस्य
श्रीमच्छंकरभगवतः कृतौ विष्णुपादादिकेशान्तस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

Thus comes to completion Vishnupadadikesantastotra among the works of Pramahamsaparivrajak Acharya Shri Shankarabhagavan, who is a disciple of the revered Govindabhagavatpujyapada.

शंकराचार्यरथिता विष्णुस्तुतिरियं धरेः ।
कृपया तस्य सम्प्रीत्यै आंग्लवाण्यां कृतापिता ॥

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