
Dashashloki (with introduction and translation)

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दशश्लोकी निर्वाणदशकं च
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Author : Shankaracharya

Transliterated by : M. Giridhar (giridhar at chemeng.iisc.ernet.in)

Proofread by : M. Giridhar, Sunder Hattagadi

Translated by : Vaidya N. Sundaram

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Ten Stanzas (on Atman)

by shrImad sha.nkarAchArya

Introduction:

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

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

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

The birth of this Dasasloki is an interesting event. Sri Sankara in imminent danger of death in the jaws of a crocodile in the river Purna in his village Kaladi, takes Sannyasa informally by pronouncing the prescribed formula. But when the crocodile immediately frees him from its grip, Sri Sankara is faced with the necessity of seeking a competent teacher who can regularise the Sannyasa and initiate him in the Upanishadic passages. He travelled north and ultimately found such a teacher in Sri Govindapadacharya, who was in deep meditation

in a cave on the banks of the Narmada. When fervently implored by Sri Sankara, the Saint woke up and asked Sri Sankara who he was. It was in reponse to this simple question that Sri Sankara burst out in a set of ten pregnant stanzas explaining the real nature of the Self which alone he was. The Saint realising that Sri Sanakara was a realised soul, who had come to him for initiation only to conform to the normal method of entering the Sannyasa Order, immediately accepted him as a disciple.

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

OM tat sat.

भुजङ्गप्रयात ।

॥ अथ दशश्लोकी ॥

न भूमिर्न तोयं न तेजो न वायुः

न खं नेन्द्रियं वा न तेषां समूहः ।

अनेकान्तिकत्वात् सुषुप्त्येकसिद्धः (अनैकान्तिकत्वात्)

तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ १ ॥

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

न वर्णा न वर्णाश्रमाचारधर्मा

न मे धारणाध्यानयोगादयोऽपि ।

अनात्माश्रयाहंममाध्यासहानात्

तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ २ ॥

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

न माता पिता वा न देवा न लोका

न वेदा न यज्ञा न तीर्थं ब्रुवन्ति ।

सुषुप्तौ निरस्तातिशून्यात्मकत्वात्

तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ३ ॥

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

न साङ्ख्यं न शैवं न तत्पाञ्चरात्रं
न जैनं न मीमांसकादेर्मतं वा ।
विशिष्टानुभूत्या विशुद्धात्मकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ४ ॥

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

न चोर्ध्वं न चाधो न चान्तर्न बाह्यं
न मध्यं न तिर्यङ् न पूर्वाऽपरा दिक् ।
वियद्व्यापकत्वादखण्डैकरूपः
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ५ ॥

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

न शुक्लं न कृष्णं न रक्तं न पीतं
न कुब्जं न पीनं न ह्रस्वं न दीर्घम् ।
अरूपं तथा ज्योतिराकारकत्वात्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ६ ॥

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

न शास्ता न शास्त्रं न शिष्यो न शिक्षा
न च त्वं न चाहं न चायं प्रपञ्चः ।
स्वरूपावबोधो विकल्पासहिष्णुः
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ७ ॥

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

न जाग्रन् न मे स्वप्नको वा सुषुप्तिः
न विश्वो न वा तैजसः प्राज्ञको वा ।
अविद्यात्मकत्वात् त्रयाणां तुरीयः
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ८ ॥

There is no waking state for me nor dream or deep sleep. I am not Visva[the Self identified with the experiencer of the waking state], nor Taijasa[identified with dream state], nor Prajna[identified with deep sleep]. I am really the Fourth(Turiya). That One, the Residue, the Auspicious, the Alone, am I.

अपि व्यापकत्वात् हितत्त्वप्रयोगात् (व्यापकत्वाद्धितत्त्व)
स्वतः सिद्धभावादनन्याश्रयत्वात् ।
जगत् तुच्छमेतत् समस्तं तदन्यत्
तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ ९ ॥

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


न चैकं तदन्यद् द्वितीयं कुतः स्यात्
न केवलत्वं न चाकेवलत्वम् ।
न शून्यं न चाशून्यमद्वैतकत्वात्
कथं सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धं ब्रवीमि ॥ १० ॥

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


॥ इति श्रीमद् शंकराचार्यविरचितं दशश्लोकी अथवा
निर्वाणदशकस्तोत्रं समाप्तं ॥

Encoding by M. Giridhar (giridhar at chemeng.Isc.ernet.in)

Translation from Vaidya N. Sundaram

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