

# THOTAKASHTAKAM

**Lecture by Swami Paramarthananda**

**Transcribed by Sri VLN Prasad**

NOTE: Swami Paramarthananda has not verified the transcription of talks. The transcriptions have been done with Swamiji's blessings by his disciple.



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## Thōtakāshatakam

*sadāsiva samārambhām sankarāchārya madhyamām  
asmad āchārya paryantām vande guru paramparām*

*viditAkhilasAstrasudhAjaladhE  
mahitOpanishatkathitArthanidhE |  
hridayE kalayE vimalam charaNam  
bhava sankara dEsika mE saraNam //*

*karuNAvaruNAlaya pAlaya mAm  
bhavasAgara dukkha vidUnahridam |  
rachayAkhiladarsanatattvavidam  
bhava sankara dEsika mE saraNam //*

*bhavatA janatA suhitA bhavitA  
nijabOdhavichAraNa chArumatE |  
kalyEsvara jIvavivEkavidam  
bhava sankara dEsika mE saraNam //*

*bhava Eva bhavA niti mE nitarAm  
samajAyata chEtasi kowtukitA |  
mama vAraya mOhamahAjaladhim  
bhava sankara dEsika mE saranam //*

*sukritE(a)dhikritE bahudhA bhavatO  
bhavitA samadarsanalAlasatA |  
atidInamimam paripAlaya mAm  
bhava sankara dEsika mE saraNam //*

*jagatImavitum kalitAkritayO  
vicharanti mahAmahasachalata: |  
ahimAmsurivAtra vibhAsi gurO  
bhavasankara dEsika mE saraNam //*

*guru pungava pungava kEtanatE  
samatAmayatAm nahi kOpi sudhIhi |  
saraNAgatavatsala tattvanidhE*

*bhavasankara dEsikamE saraNam //*

*viditA na mayA visadaikakalA  
na cha kinchana kAnchana masti gurO /  
drutamEva vidhEhi krupAm sahajAm  
bhava sankara dEsika mE saraNam//*

This work is called *Thōtakāshatakam* because it consists of eight verses and it is written by *Thōtakāchārya*, one of the famous disciples of *Ādi Sankarāchārya*. Thōtakāchārya is given as an ideal example for a disciple who gets everything merely by the grace of the teacher.

According to the story, Thōtakāchārya was a dull disciple of Sankarāchārya. The other disciples like Padmapāda, Surēshwara, Hasthāmalaka etc were great in scholarship. It seems that they looked down upon Thōtakāchārya because he could not grasp the Shāstras well.

According to the story, one day Sankara was about to start the class and Thōtakā had not come and Sankarāchārya was waiting for him. Then other people sarcastically asked Sankara to start the class because there is no difference whether Thōtakā is in the class or he does not come to the class.

It seems that Sankarāchārya wanted to humble them and also Sankarāchārya was pleased with the devotion of Thōtakā who was serving Sankara and who had gone to wash Sankarāchārya's clothes. Sankarāchārya did not say anything but he was waiting.

Then it seems that Thōtakā came bringing the clothes and drying them. At that time, he was singing this song glorifying the greatness of his teacher Sankara. They thought Thōtakā is an illiterate person not knowing Sanskrit and incapable of composing anything. Hearing this verse, all other disciples were wonderstruck.

By mere Sankalpa, it is said that Sankarāchārya gave all knowledge to him. This verse happens to be in a special Sanskrit metre known as

Thōtaka Vruttam. So this particular metre is called Thōtaka metre. Thōtakāchārya got the name Thōtaka only after the metre.

His Pūrvāshrama name was something else and he got the name Thōtaka after this metre. Therefore, this work is called Thōtakāshtakam due to two reasons. One reason is that it is in Thōtakā metre and the other reason being that it is composed by Thōtakāchārya.

Thōtakāchārya has not written many works or many are not available for us. There is another work by Thōtaka. It is an advanced treatise on Vēdanta known as Shruti Sāra Samuddharanam which literally means extracting the essence of the Vedas.

It is a work consisting of 174 or 178 verses in which Thōtakā analyzes the Mahāvākyam ‘Tatvamasi’ and he establishes Jīvātma Paramātma Aikyam logically and he refutes all other systems of philosophy. This Shruti Sāra Samuddharanam also is in Thōtaka metre.

At the end of Shruti Sāra Samuddharanam work, there is a Mangala Slōka on Lord Vishnu. That Mangala Slōka alone is the famous Dhyāna Slōka used in Vishnu Sahasra Nāma which is *‘bhooḥ pādau yasya nābhirviyadasuranilash chandra sūryau cha nētre’*. This is also in the same metre.

However, we do not find the Vēdāntic teaching here, but it is the glorification of his Guru Ādi Sankara. This is the background of this work. And in all the eight verses, the fourth line is the same which is bhava sankara dēsika mē saranam

Dēsikaha means Āchāryaha. A guru is called Dēsikaha. *Shāstra Tatvam Upadishati iti dēsikaha*. The one who teaches the Shāstram, the one who imparts the Shāstric knowledge is called dēsika or Āchāryaha. So Sankara dēsika means Sankarāchārya.

Sankarāchārya got the name because he did Mangalam, he did good to the entire world or the society. The word ‘Sam’ means Mangalam, ‘Karahā’ means the one who brings about. Therefore, ‘Samkarahā’ means Mangalakarta. Mangalakāri is meaning of the word Sankara. The word Sankara originally belongs to Lord Shiva.

Since Sankarāchārya is considered to be the incarnation of Lord Shiva, the Ācharya also got this name ‘Sankara’. *Sankaram Sankarāchāryam Keshavam Bādarāyanam* – Vyāsachārya is supposed to be an incarnation Vishnu and Sankara is supposed to be an incarnation of Shiva.

Therefore, here Thōtakā addresses - hey *sankara dēsikaha* – Hey Sankarāchārya, Bho Sankarāchārya or Bhagavan Sankarāchārya. Mē Saranam Bhava – May you become my refuge, my shelter, my savior. This is at the end of every verse.

Now, we will go to the first three lines.

*viditākhilasāstrasudhājalahē* – here, Thōtaka points out that Sankarāchārya is a treasure house of all scriptural knowledge. He is a walking encyclopedia of scriptural literature. Akhila Shāstram means all the scriptures consisting of Shruti, Smruti and the Purānās.

*Shruti Smruti Purānānām Ālayam*. Shruti means the Vedas, the primary scriptures. Smruti, Purānās and Itihasas come under secondary scriptures. Sankarāchārya is an abode of all these which we can find out from his commentaries. He quotes from Mahabharata etc.

If we have to quote from Mahabharata, it is extremely difficult because out of one lakh verses, we have to find out which verse is apt for a particular context. Now we have wonderful dictionaries, various books and computers available with us which we can easily scan and find out.

Even at the end of work, there is an alphabetical index. But just imagine that out of one lakh verses, he culls out the apt verse. And Mahabharata is only one of the scriptures. He quotes all the Upanishads, all the Vedas. That means, he did not refer to any book but all of them were in his mind.

Therefore, *Akhila Shāstra Nidhihi* – he is the treasure house, abode, the reservoir of all the scriptures. *What type of Scriptures? Sudha* - here scriptures are compared to nectar or Amrutham. Sudha means Amrutham.

The Scriptures are compared to *Amrutam* because they give us immortality. *Amrutha Hētutvāt Amrutham itityutyate*. And Jaladhihi means Ocean or reservoir. So you are the reservoir of the nectar in the form of all the scriptures. And *Viditam* means you have grasped, you have known.

It is a beautiful Bahuvrihi Samāsa- *viditaha, akhila shāstra sudhā jaladhihi Ēnasaha viditākhila shāstra sudhā Jaladhihi*. The one by whom the reservoir of the nectar of the scriptures has been drunk. Here, it is *Sambōdhana* or Addressing. So, O Sankara, who is the reservoir of all this wisdom.

*Eventhough, Sankarāchārya is the knower of all the Shāstras, what is his special subject?* That is said in the second line. *Mahita Upanishad Kathitha Artha Nidhe* – you are the reservoir of the teachings (Artha) which has been propounded, presented, revealed (Kathitam) in the Upanishad.

So hey Sankarāchārya, who is the reservoir of all the teachings presented in all the Upanishads; so in the first line, when Akhila Shāstram was mentioned, Upanishad is also included. Still, Upanishad is separately mentioned in the second line because Sankarāchārya has specifically dealt with the Upanishad and he is a champion of that.

Therefore, Upanishad is separately mentioned. *What type of Upanishads are they? Mahita Upanishad.* Mahitam means that which is worshipped, that which is sacred, that which is honored and that which is respected. So Mahitābdhihi, Upanishadbhihi, kathitāh ē arthāh tēshām nidhihi – that is you are the embodiment of Brahma Vidya.

The first line - you are the embodiment of Sarva Vidya, in the second line - you are the embodiment of Brahma Vidya. *What do I want to do? Hrudaye vimalam charanam kalaye. Vimalam Charanam* means your holy feet, your sacred feet.

So *Hrudaye Kalaye* – I meditate upon in my heart. I meditate upon your holy feet in my heart and my request is that you should become my refuge, you should become my savior. This is the essence of the first verse.

I will give you the meaning of the second stanza -

*Karunā Varunālaya Pālayamām - Varunālayaha* means *Samudraha*, ocean, a reservoir. Varuna means water and Alayaha means abode. Varunālayaha means abode of water that is - ocean or reservoir. So here, Sankarāchārya is addressed as an ocean or reservoir of compassion, kindness, mercy.

So *Karunā Samudraha, Dayā Sāgaraha* etc are the words used. In the Meenakshi Pancharatnam, we hear the words -*Mīnākshīm pranatōsmi santatamaham kārunya vārāmnidhim*. The same is here paraphrased as Karunā Varunālaya. Here it is addressed – Hey Karunā Varunālaya Sankara.

*Mām Pālaya* – may you protect me, may you save me from Samsāra. *Why should you protect me?* It is because my condition is pathetic. *Bhava Sāgara Dukha Vidūna Hrudam* - Bhava means Samsāra, Sāgara means ocean, Dukha means pain, Vidūna means afflicted, Hrudam means mind.



The final meaning is – my mind is afflicted with the pain of Samsāra Sāgara. My mind is tormented with the pain of Samsāra Samudra. Such a me (Mām) – So may you protect me whose mind is afflicted by the pain of Samsāra Sāgara. *How should you protect me?* Thōtakāchārya gives the method also.

*Rachayākhila Darsana Tatva Vidam* – akhila darshanam means all Shāstrams, sciences or the disciplines of knowledge. Tatva means the essence. So, *akhila darsana tattva* means the essence of all the disciplines of knowledge which is nothing but Brahma Vidya or self-knowledge.

Self-Knowledge is supposed to be the essence of all sciences because all sciences are valid only if they lead us to self-knowledge. Any science is invalid if it doesn't help me in coming to Brahma Vidya. That is why in Mundakōpanishad, *Brahma Vidya* is called *Sarva Vidya Pratisṭha*.

All sciences are validated; they get their validity only through this. Therefore, *akhila darsana tattvam* means Brahma Vidya. *Tatva Vidam* means the knower of. So akhila darsana tattva vidam means the one who is the knower of Brahma Vidya. *Rachaya* – Rachaya means make me.

Make me one who has grasped the Brahma Vidya. It is poetically presented. Simply said, it means make me wise, make me a Gnyāni. You protect me by making me a Gnyāni. *How can you make me a Gnyāni?* *Bhava Sankara Dēsika Mē Saranam* – you can make me a Gnyāni only in one way and that is by becoming my Achārya;

So, hey Sankarāchārya, may you become my refuge, my shelter, my savior, my Guru. By becoming my Guru, you make me wise. By making me wise, free me from Samsāra Samudra. This is the meaning of the second stanza.

I will give you the meaning of the third stanza.



*janatā bhavitā suhitā* - *Janatā* means the people, the humanity. *Bhavitā* means 'will be'. The people will be well protected, well taken care of. In some books, there is another reading for 'Suhitā' which is better – *Sukhitā*. *Sukhitā* means pleased, made happy. *Made happy by whom?* – *Bhavatā*, by you.

The entire humanity will be made happy, joyous by you. It is not said how the entire humanity will be made happy. We have to understand that it is made happy by your teaching the world will get benefit and they all will get *Brahmānanda*. *Why is it so?*

*Nijabōdha Vichārana Chārumatē* - *Nijabōdhaha* means *Ātma Chaitanyam* which is one's own *Swarūpam*. *Nija* means one's own. *Bōdha* means *Chaitanyam*. *Vichārana* means enquiry or analysis. *Chārumatē* means the one who has skilled intellect, sharp intellect– *Tīkshna Budhihi*.

In-fact, they are not three words, all the three put together is one word. Therefore, there should not be gap in between. It is a printing mistake. All the three words must be joined together – *nijabōdhavichāranachārumatē*. It is addressing Sankarāchārya – Oh Ācharya, the one who has got a sharp intellect in analyzing the true nature of *Ātma Chaitanyam*.

*With your skilled intellect, what should you do? Kalaya Ēsvara jīva vivēka vidam*. You have to supply the word *mām*. *mām kalaya* - make me, convert me. *Make me what? Ēshwara jīva vivēka vidam* – the knower of the *Ēshwara Vivēka* and the *Jīva Vivēka*.

That is, may I have the discriminative knowledge of the *Ēswara* and the discriminative knowledge of the *Jīva*. *Why do we say the discriminative knowledge?* It is because according to *Vēdānta*, *Ēshwara* has got two natures – One is *Saguna Swarūpam* and the other is *Nirguna Swarūpam*.

Similarly, Jīva also has got two aspects, Saguna Swarūpam and Nirguna Swarūpam. If there is no discrimination, I will only take the Saguna Swarūpam as the ultimate nature of the Lord. Similarly, I will take the Saguna Swarūpam as the ultimate nature of Ēswara. That is wrong knowledge.

You should make me understand that *Saguna Swarūpam* is superficial and incidental. The *Nirguna Swarūpam* alone is real. You make me understand that. Similarly, Jīva also has got the primary Illuminator and the secondary Illuminator – *Aham Swarūpam* and *Ahankāra Swarūpam*.

Let me understand that *Alankāra* is superficial and incidental and let me understand that the *Sākshi Swarūpam* is real. Such knowledge is called Ēshwara Vivēka and Jīva Vivēka. Let me have that knowledge. *Vidam* means Knower. *Mām Ēsvara jIva vivēka vidam kalaya* – in short, make me wise. *Mām Gnyāninam Kalaya*.

*How can you make me wise?* Wisdom cannot be physically handed over, wisdom cannot be transferred by sight, and wisdom cannot be transferred by touch. Therefore, you should make me wise by being my Guru, the teacher. Therefore, hey Sankara Dēsika, Oh teacher Sankara, hey Sankarāchārya, me saranam bhava – may you become my savior, my refuge, my shelter.

I will give you the meaning of the fourth stanza.

Thōtakāchārya says here that I am already happy with you as teacher. Later I came to know that you are not an ordinary teacher but an Avatāra of Lord Shiva himself. When I came to know this additional fact, a great thrill came to my mind.

*Bhavaha Ēva Bhavān*. Bhavaha means Shivaha. *Sarvada Bhavati - Trikālē api bhavati iti bhavaha*. The word Bhavaha has the meaning of Samsāra also. *Bhava Rōga, Bhava Sāgara* - in such context, Bhavaha means Samsāraha. Here, Bhavān Bhavaha Shivaha ‘iti’.

Knowing this fact, *Kautukita mē chētasi samajāyata* – *Kautukita* means a thrill, great joy, *samajāyata* means arose. *Nitarām* means very much. *Chētasi* means mind. A great joy was very much born in my mind. I am lucky to have a great teacher. *Having now got such a great teacher/Avatāra, you should bless me for what?*

*Ma Ma Mōha Mahā Jaladhim Vāraya - Jaladhihi* means samudraha, mahājaladhi means vast ocean consisting of Mōhaha. Vāraya means remove. Therefore, may you remove; wipe out the vast ocean of Samsāra in which I am drowning.

*How should you remove the Mōha Samudra? - bhava sankara dēsika mē saranam.* Hey Sankarāchārya, may you become my savior, my Guru, my refuge and thus uplift me from the Samsāra Samudra. This is the essence of the fourth verse.

I will give you the meaning of the fifth stanza-

*Sukrute adhikrute samadarshana lālasata bhavita – smadarshanam* means *Ātma Darshanam, Ātma Vidya* or *Brahma Vidya*. The only thing that is samam in the creation is Ātma or Brahman alone. Everything is Vishamam only. *nirdōsham hi samam brahma* – so Samadarshanam means Brahma Darshanam.

*Lālasata* means Nishta, commitment, steadfastness. Here Thōtakāchārya is talking about Brahma Nishta or Brahma Gnyāna Nishta. Bhavita – will certainly take place. So *Gnyāna Nishta* will certainly take place. *What type of Gnyāna Nishta?*

*Bhavataha samadarshana lālasata* – The Gnyāna Nishta which is enjoyed by you, which belongs to you, and which is propagated by you. Bhavataha Gnyāna Nishta Bhavita – *Your Gnyāna Nishta will come to whom? Sukrutē Adhikrutē* – it will come to any person who is Sukrutaha.

Gnyāna Nishta will come to any person who has done Punya Karma, who has done noble Karmas. That is, to one who has followed Karma Yoga and who has followed Upāsana. Because of that reason only, *Adhikrutē* – and who has become a qualified student (*Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampanne*).

So the Gnyāna Nishta which is enjoyed by you will definitely arise in a person who has done noble activities and therefore who is qualified. *How did he get the qualification? Bahudha* – it means through many fold methods. Bahu Prakārena, Aneka Prakārena.

For Mōksha there is only one Mārga whereas for getting the qualification we have got several methods. Through pilgrimage also we can get Chittashudhi, through Japa also, through Guru Susrusha also. Many Mārgas are there.

Therefore, Bahudha – through manifold ways the one who has become qualified will get the Gnyāna Nishta. *Atidīnam imam paripālayamām* – Therefore, hey Sankarāchārya, you should bless me also to become qualified and also to get the Gnyāna Nishta.

*Why do I require your assistance?* Because, *Ati Dīnam* – I am extremely helpless. As in Swamiji's song –

*hey govinda, hey gopala, vēdam na jāne, vēdyam na jāne, dhyanam na jāne, dhyēyam na jāne, mantram na jāne, tantram na jāne...* I do not know anything.

*ku karmi, ku sangi, ku budhih, ku dāsah, kulāchāra hīnah, sadāchāra līnah, ku drushtih, ku vākyah, prabandhah sadāham gati stvam gati stvam tvamēkā bhavani.*

I do not know anything. I am ignoramous. Therefore, you should alone help me. *ati dīnam imam mām paripālaya* – May you save. Normally a

qualified student will go to a teacher. Here Thōtakā says, I don't have the qualification.

Therefore, first make me qualified and there afterwards give me knowledge. Everything is your responsibility. Therefore, Hey Sankara dēsika mē saranam bhava- May you become my savior. I will give you the meaning of the sixth stanza

*Jagatīm avitum kalita krutayah vicharanti mahā maha sachalataha -*  
There is a small correction in the second line. Mahā maha sachalataha is there but it should be *mahā maha saschalataha*. Mahā mahasaha + chalataha = mahā mahasaschaltaha.

Here Thōtakāchārya is looking at Sankarāchārya as an Avatāra who has come down to the earth for saving people. This is the difference between the Jīva's birth and the birth of an Avatāra. Jīva helplessly comes down because of the force of Karma. And the purpose is the exhaustion of *Punya-Pāpa Karma*.

But in the case of Avatāra, it is not helpless arrival and it is not meant to exhaust Punya-Pāpa because they are free from Punya-Pāpa being Bhagawan himself.

*yadā yadā hi dharmasyaglānir bhavati bharata  
abhyutthanam adharmasyatadātmānam srjāmyaham*

*paritrānāya sādḥūnāmvināsāya cha duskrām  
dharma-samsthāpanārthāyasambhavāmi yugē yugē*

So that idea is brought in here. Thōtakāchārya address Sankarāchārya and says great Mahātmas like you move about in the world in the disguise of human beings for the sake of protecting the world. That is the idea in the first two lines.

*Mahā Mahasaha* means the brilliant ones, the *Sarvagnyās*. Mahā means great and Mahas means light. So the people of great light, means

Sarvagnyās like you (that is understood). So Mahātmas, the omniscient ones like you, vicharanti – move about in the world, *Chalataha* - in disguise.

*How do they move about in disguise? Kalita Ākrutayaha* – assuming various forms like Rama form, Krishna form, Matsya form, Kūrma form and here Ādi Sankara form. *shambho mūrṭiḥi charati bhuvane sankarāchārya rūpā*.

*Kalitākrutayaha* is one word and there should not be a gap in between. *Kalitā ākrutiḥi yaiḥi te kalitākrutayaha*. *Kalitam* means assumed, *Ākruti* means forms. Having assumed various forms, Mahātmas like you move about in the world in disguise.

*What is the purpose of doing this? Jagatim avitum* – *Jagati* means the world and *avitum* means to protect. It is purely for protecting the world.

*How does the Lord protect the world?* It is not said here. The answer is in the Gita – *dharma-samsthāpanārthāya*. By establishing Dharma, Bhagawan protects the world.

*How does Bhagawan establish Dharma (as Dharma is not a physical thing)?* Protection of Dharma is done in two fold ways. One is supporting the Dhārmic people and the other is removing or correcting Adhārmic people. By supporting Dhārmic people and removing or correcting Adhārmic people, Dharma is protected.

Once Dharma is protected, the world is protected. Therefore, with that noble intention, Mahātmas like you come down. *How brilliant are you?* Mahā mahasaha – brilliant ones. *The Achārya is brilliant like what?* An example is given in the third line – hey *Gurō ahimāmsuhu iva atra vibhāti*.

*Ahimāmsuhu* means Suryaha. You shine like the radiant sun, brilliant sun, glaring sun. Himaha means cool and Amshuhu means rays.



Ahimaha means not cool. The one with scorching and glaring rays; *What is that which has got the scorching rays?* It is the Suryaha.

Therefore, *Ahimāh amshavaha yasya saha ahimānshuhu*. Like the radiant sun you shine here right in front of me. That means you are Tejasvi. Having got such a rare opportunity to be a contemporary of such an Avatāra, I don't want to miss. Therefore, hey Sankarāchārya, me saranam bhava - May you become my savior, my shelter, my refuge. Seventh Stanza –

*guru pungava pungava kētanatē  
samatām ayatām nahi kōpi sudhīhi*

The first two words are addressing the Achārya. Hey Guru Pungava – Pungavaha literally means a bull. But in Sanskrit, when the word pungavaha is added at the end of a word, it conveys the meaning of 'the best'. So, *Guru Pungavaha* means *Guru Shrēshtaha*, Uttama Guruhu, the best teacher.

*Nara Pungavaha* means the best human being. Rushi pungavaha means the best sage. Similarly, Guru pungavaha means, oh teacher who is the greatest. Hey pungava kētana – that is also addressing the Achārya. Here the word pungava should be taken as 'bull' and *kētana* means the flag.

*Pungava Kētana* means the one in whose flag there is the picture of the bull. *pungava kētanē yasya saha pungava kētanaha* – the one who has got the insignia of a bull in his flag. In the Bhagvadgita, Arjuna was addressed by a word – Kapi Dhvajaha.

There kapi means monkey, Dhvajaha means flag. Kapi Dhvajaha means the one in whose flag there is the picture of the monkey. For Lord Shiva, bull is the mark in the flag. Therefore, Pungava kētanaha is the name of Lord Shiva.



Therefore, hey Pungava Kētana means oh Lord Shiva. *Why does Thōtakāchārya address in this form?* It is because Sankarāchārya happens to be the Avatāra of Lord Shiva. Nahi Kopi Sudhih – There is no one as brilliant as you. Sudhihi means brilliant, intelligent, wise, sharp witted. So there is no one as intelligent as you.

*tēshuna tava samānaha tvayā sadrushaha–tvayā sadrushaha sudhihi kōpi nāsti* – there is no one as brilliant as you. Sankarāchārya’s brilliance is known throughout his Bhāshyams. His brilliance in *Brihadāranyaka Bhāshyam* and *Brahmasūtra Bhāshyam* is very evident. Therefore, he says there is none equal to you.

*In what field or among whom? Samatām ayatām* - means *Samadarshinām madhye* – Among the sama darshis. *samatāmayatām madhyeh kōpi sudhīhi nāsti*. Sama darshi means Brahma Darshi. The only thing which is Samam in the world, uniform in the world, changeless in the world is Brahman.

*nirdōsham hi samam brahma tasmāt brahmani te sthitāh  
samam sarvēshu bhūtēshu tishtanti paramēshwaram  
samam pashyanhi sarvatra samavasthitam ēshwaram*

Anātma is always vishama. Opposite of sama is vishama. Visham means not uniform. The only thing which is uniform is Brahman. Therefore, samata means Ātma or Brahman. *Ayatām* means the knowers, *jānatām*. Gramatically the verb ayati means to go (Gachati).

But in Sanskrit grammar, there is a general rule. Any verb which has the meaning of going will automatically will have the meaning of knowing also. Whichever verb conveys the sense of going, all those verbs will convey the sense of knowing.

In Sanskrit there are many verbs in the meaning of going. Ayati is one verb, Gachati is another verb, Yeti is another verb. All these verbs will

have the meaning of knowing also. Therefore, *ayatām* means *Gachātām madhye*. In this context, it is *jānatām madhye*.

So Among the wise people who know the uniform Brahman, you are the greatest one. There is none to equal you. *natvat samōstyā bhyadhika kutōnyaha* – we see this in the Gita. Therefore, you are the greatest.

Remember that this is the glorification of Achārya. We should not take it literally because we had very many giants in our tradition who were as great as Sankarāchārya. Whether you take Vyāsāchārya, whether you take Gaudapādāchārya, they were all great.

But in this context, to glorify Sankara he says there is none equal to you. Hey Saranāgata vatsala, hey Tatvanidhe – again addressing the Achārya. You can understand the meaning of both the words. It is simple. It means the one who is affectionate to those people who have surrendered unto him.

*Prapanna Pārijātāya – Saranāgata Vatsalaha* means the one who is compassionate to the student. *Does that mean that he does not have compassion to others?* It does not mean so. Because, *advēshta sarva bhūtānām maitrah karuna ēvacha*. He is compassionate to all.

The difference is that the students come to receive the compassion. The other people, he is ready to give but they are not ready to receive. That is the only difference. He is compassionate to all. *Tatva Nidhē* – the one who is the abode of all the Tatvams.

In this context, *Tatva Gnyāna Nidhē*; The abode of Tatava Gnyānam, the abode of Brahma Gnyānam. Hey Sankara Dēsika – hey Sankarāchārya, *mē saranam bhava* – may you become my savior. Then comes the last stanza –

*viditā na mayā visadā ēkakalā* – Here, Thōtakāchārya shows his humility. He says, I am not worthy of your teaching or grace because

there are other students who are really deserving ones like Padmapādāchārya or Surēswarāchārya. They are all great people who deserve to be your students.

But I do not really deserve to be your student. But, still if you have accepted me it is only out of your compassion. He says *maya ēka kalā na vīditā*, I do not know even a single science or art. Because to study the Veda, a person should have the knowledge of many subsidiary sciences called Veda Angāni.

In-fact, the very name Veda Anga has come because they are all the pillars or supporters to study the Veda (Auxiliary sciences). Just as to be a great Physicist one has to know Mathematics very well. Similarly, Veda requires the knowledge of Veda Anga and Veda Upānga also.

That is why we use the expression *Sānga Upānga Veda Adhyāyī*. Here Thōtakā says, I have come through back doors without really having any qualification. It is like that BC, OC, SC, ST. I have come something like that.

Visada means clearly, properly I have not studied anything. As they say, Jack of all trades but master of none. I belong to that category. If I don't have the intellectual caliber to be a student near you, at least if I had enough wealth, I can try to be closer to you by supporting your Āshrama.

At least through material gifts I could help you but I don't have wealth also. He says, *kinchana kānchanam* – even a little bit of gold, or even a little bit of wealth is not there with me to be of any assistance. I can neither be a student to you nor can I be an assistant to you because I don't have the qualifications for both.

Therefore, in spite of all these deficiencies, you have to accept me. Thōtakāchārya traps Sankarāchārya by saying, I know that you will accept me because compassion is natural to you. It is like Nachiketa told

Yamadharma raja; after Nachiketa got the three boons he says, when you send me back my father should recognize me because sending back is definite.

Like that he says, you are all *ahētuka dayā sindhō* – for you compassion is not an artificial one but it is Sahajā karuna. Sahaja means natural, intrinsic, and innate. Therefore, you are not going to see whether I am qualified or not.

As Sankarāchārya himself tells in his Soundarya Lahari –

*drishā drāghīyasya dara dalita nīlōtpala ruchā davīyām sam dīnam  
snapaya krupayā māmapi shivē anēnāyam dhanyō bhavati nachatē hāni  
riyatā vanēva harmyēva samakara nipātō himakaraha*

The rays of the moon fall all over without discrimination. Just because it is a dirty place, moon does not withdraw the rays and just because it is a palace, it does not give more rays also. Similarly, whether it is a qualified Padmapādāchārya or deficient me, your Karuna is bound to come.

Therefore, *Dhrutam ēva* – immediately, instantaneously; *Vidhēhi* – may you shower, may you impart, may you bestow; *sahajāṁ krupā* – your *Karuna* which is choice less for you, which is natural to you. Hey Sankara Dēsika – hey Sankarāchārya, *mē saranam bhava* – may you become my shelter, my savior.

*Poornamadah Poornamidam Poornaath Poornam Udachyathe  
Poornasya Poornamaadaaya Poornameva Vasishyathe*

*Om shanti shanti shantihi*



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