

Dakshinamurti Stotram – ongoing class notes

Introduction

- The text is called In Praise of Isvara – Siva in the form of a teacher
- There is a unique beauty of the text. This is so because in it, both devotion and knowledge (भक्ति, ज्ञानं) are intertwined. Knowing the glory in detail is the best form of devotion to a person
- The text follows the method of convincing students that our sense of limitation is unwarranted, and we should clearly see that our nature is limitless. To do that Adi Sankara gives us a step by step advice:
 1. The vision of our true nature, and the nature of our mistake – श्रुति
 2. Advice to think logically and clear our doubts about the vision – युक्ति
 3. Methods for gaining the fruits of this vision in this life itself – निदिध्यासनं
- Verse 1 through 3 explains श्रुति
- Verses 4 through 6 explains युक्ति
- Verses 7-8 goes over the means of achieving (साधना) the vision
- Verse 9 explains the importance of meditation निदिध्यासनं
- Verse 10 explains the results of achieving the vision
- The text also follows the structure of effective communication: Tell what is to be told, tell the details, and wrap up with a summary of what has been told. In that manner, the first verse introduces the elements of the vision, which are then taken up in detail in subsequent verses, before the summary toward the end.
- The essence of each verse is presented at the start of each verse (from Swami Maheshanandaji's book)
- Some key notes from Sri Sureshwaracarya's मानसोल्लास are referenced (ex: 1-2 refers to verse #2 of the first मानसोल्लास – each verse of Dakshinamurti Stotram is also called मानसोल्लास, meaning that which delights the mind.)

Verse 1

- **आत्मा प्रत्यक्स्वरूपं** – The nature of the self, as 'I' is 'inner'- that is, always non-manifest

- 1-2 gives the subject and the purpose of the text (विषय, प्रयोजन).
 - the subject is to understand that Isvara, who is non-different from me – i.e. understanding the falsity of my limited individuality
 - this gain is the only real gain. All other gains of life have to be returned (Swami Maheshanandaji calls them loans only. But the gain of the self is not a loan. It is not something that I have, it is something that I am.
- 1-3 points out that Isvara is to be searched in my mind alone (मनसि स्थित), not outside
 - Swami M (abbreviated from now on as Swami Maheshanandaji) points out that the praise (स्तुति) is very profound because it combines from knowledge and devotion (भक्ति)
 - praise is always in comparison to something better. Here there is nothing better than Isvara. So the praise is only in terms of my better understanding of him.
- Verses 4-7 explain the qualities of an eligible student (like saying who can take this course). Basically one who has an inquiring mind – a thinker. Starting with pondering the question: when I see an object, is the presence and knowingness of that object a part of the object, or is it merely reflecting a common source, such as light falling on an object. In the latter case, an object simply reflects the light – the light is not part of an object.
- **Verse 1** सान्त्वयार्थ (word meaning - as reordered prose)

यः – that (Paramatma) निद्रया इव – like (the powerful effect of) sleep मायया - by maya (which has the power of making seemingly impossible possible) आत्मनि निजान्तर्गतं – happening inside oneself विश्वं – the experienced world (or the living being, the experiencer) बहिः – outside oneself उद्भूतं – is born/appears as यथा – just like दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं - a city scene seen in a mirror पश्यन् – while seeing प्रबोधसमये – on waking up (once knowledge takes place) अद्वयं – devoid of any parts or differences एव – indeed स्वात्मानं - one's own साक्षात्कुरुते directly sees/experiences तस्मै – to that श्रिगुरुमुर्तये – in the form of a Vedantic teacher श्रिदक्षिणामूर्तये – Siva, the first teacher इदं - this prostration of mine नमः – may it be accepted
- वाक्यार्थ (sentence meaning)

That Paramatma, who through the powerful power of Maya, which has the incredible ability to make seemingly impossible possible, like the power of sleep, makes the worldly experiences including me the experiencer, which is all inside, appear as though it is happening outside, like a city reflected in a mirror, and while seeing this, upon waking up (by understanding this phenomenon) directly sees/experiences oneself as being totally devoid of any parts or differences (homogenous), to that Siva as the original teacher who appears as the Vedantic teacher, may my prostrations be accepted.

Verse 2

- **आत्मा मूलकारणं** - The self is the ultimate source of all manifestation
- The I alone manifests as this creation
- It refutes the many arguments that there is some truth in things outside of me

Verse 3

- **आत्माद्वयं**- The self in nondual
- In the first verse, the I consciousness is the one that manifests as the individual 'knower'; in the second verse the I consciousness is the one (Isvara) in which the entire world arises out of, is sustained and dissolves
- This verse explains the essential identity between the two

Overview of verses 4-6

- In verses 1-3, the essence of Vedas (श्रुति) was presented – that the individual and the total are essentially the same.
- In the next 3 verses, the falsity of the conclusion, both by our own senses, as well by the philosophical conclusions of other schools of thought is presented, in order to strengthen/solidify the Vedic view.

Verse 4

- **आत्मा सच्चिद्रूपं** – The nature of I is isness and knowingness
- In this verse the individual's conclusion, based one's own experiences is refuted

Verse 5

- **आत्मा अविशिष्टः** - I as the remaining (after all other views are refuted)
- In this verse, the similar falsity of conclusion theorized by well skilled alternate schools of thought are taken up and refuted

Verse 6

- **आत्मा सद्रूपं- I is always there**
- In this verse the Buddhist view is specifically taken up for analysis and refutation. This is so, because the Buddhist view appears very similar to Vedantic knowledge, yet it is far from the truth. To dispel the popular belief, the verse devoted to it.

Verse 7

- **आत्मा प्रत्यभिज्ञा- I as a recognition**
- The teaching of Vedanta is tied to recognition as a concept. In this verse the concept of recognition, including the nature of it and its role as a proof is analyzed

Verse 8

- **आत्मा आवृत्तिः – recapping the nature of I**
- In this verse, after summarizing the teaching of the Vedas, the foundation of the need for साधना, the means of achieving the vision, is laid out

Verse 9

- **आत्मा ध्येयः - I should be meditated upon**
- This verse is to examine on the method (साधना) of achieving the enduring vision of the I

Verse 10

- **आत्मा पुर्णकामः- Knowing the I fulfills all desires**
- This verse is to examine the results of knowing the I