

## Śrī Dakṣiṇāmūrtistotram with Mānasollāsa

### दक्षिणामूर्ति स्तोत्रम् मानसोल्लास सहित

*Śiva (Īśvara)* as a *parama guru*, the ultimate teacher is called *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* - one who teaches facing south; south being a symbol of *saṁsāra*, all problems in life. In the *Vedic* tradition, only the ultimate teacher is called *guru*. All other teachers stay within a life in terms of limitations. Only one who can teach knowledge which frees one from all limitations deserves to be called *parama guru*.

*Stotram* means praise. *Swami Maheshanandaji* says that to praise *Īśvara* is impossible, because a praise is done by comparing the subject with something superior (as in "your young son is as brave as a lion"). But *Īśvara* has no one who is superior. So a praise of *Īśvara* has to be done in terms of removing the obstacles that cloud one's non-understanding of the glory of *Īśvara*.

This is what *Ādi Śaṅkarā* helps us do in this text. *Śaṅkarā*'s eminent position as the best enunciator of the *Vedic* spiritual knowledge that the modern era has known is secure. In clarity of thought, mastery of the subject matter and the simplicity of expression, there is no equal to *Śaṅkarā*. In 10 verses, *Śaṅkarā* has distilled the entire doctrine of *Advaita Vedānta* for a clear understanding of a serious students. In doing so, it also points out the defects of other schools of thought. Our *ācāryas* have said that this, instead of being critical of others is purely meant for the thought-purification of our own students.

Each of the ten verses are deliberate and structured; such is the greatness of our spiritual masters. The ten verses highlight a different aspect of *ātma* : (1) *ātma* as the inner self. (2) *ātma* as the ultimate cause, (3) *ātma* as non-dual, (4) *ātma* 's nature as *sat* and *cit*, (5) *ātma* as the ultimate, (6) *ātma* as the basis of truth, (7) *ātma* as consciousness, (8) *ātma* as ever free, (9) *ātma* to be worshiped, and (10) *ātma* as *Śiva (Īśvara)*.

Generally students are not able to open the inner sanctum of the temple of truth on their own. There, one needs priests that have the keys to lead one to get a glimpse. Here the first 'priest' is *Śrī Sureshvaracharya* himself, in the form of composer of *Mānasollāsa* (which translates as 'delights of the heart'). As one of the four direct disciples of *Ādi Śaṅkarā*, who else can be better qualified in explaining the work of his master?

Thereafter, *Swami Maheshanandaji* has written a masterful commentary on both texts, in highly sanskritized Hindi. I found it very revealing. I did not gain a clearer insight until I had studied Swamiji's book a couple of times. I am grateful to *Īśvara* that after years of trying to study Sanskrit, I am able to better grasp the subtleties of *Swami Maheshanandaji's* commentary/translation of both texts, partially because my mother tongue happens to be Hindi. I look forward to present the thoughts of the *mahātmas* in a live, classroom setting

With *Īśvara's* blessings, I will attempt to teach the 10 verses of the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram* in a newer, slower, more deliberate manner. I plan to pause after each *stotram*, revise the material, lead meditation on it's essence, and discuss it in the class in the form of *satsaṅgas*, before moving to the next verse. It is also likely that we will not cover every verse of *Mānasollāsa*. As the verses proceed, the arguments become technical, more for the scholars than for householders like us. So I may speed through them, or even skip them altogether. Our emphasis will be on comprehension.