



తెలుగు సారస్వత సాంస్కృతిక సంఘము

Telugu Literary And Cultural Association

Bhajagovindam Part 1

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Dear Friends,

It is my great please to put forward you, Bhajagovindam, one of the Great works of THE GREAT SAINT ADI SANKARA. I thought this kind of work is necessary, so that the meaning of the great saint's song in Sanskrit can be understood by everybody. The original work of mine is in Telugu in a very simple language so that every body can understand and sing for them selves and follow the great Saints teaching in their daily walks of live. This is an extract from my Telugu book.

Jagadguru Sri Adi Sankaracharya was the greatest exponent of the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta and a savior of Vedic Dharma. The existence of Vedic Dharma in India today is due to Sankara. The forces opposed to Vedic religion were more numerous and powerful at the time of Sankara than they are today. Still, single-handed, within a very short time, Sankara overpowered them all and restored the Vedic Dharma and Advaita Vedanta to its pristine purity in the land pure knowledge and spirituality. Sankaracharya occupies a very important position in the history of Indian philosophy. It can be affirmed, without any fear of contradiction, that Bharata Varsha would have ceased to be Bharata Varsha several centuries ago and would never have survived the murderous sword, the devastating fire and the religious intolerance of the successive invaders, if Sankara had not lived the life he lived and taught the lessons he taught. Adi Shankaracharya is one of immortals of India's cultural history. As the propounder of Advaitavada in Vedanta philosophy, his contribution to Indian philosophy is without any parallel.

Shankara was born in Kalady, a small village in Kerala, India, to a Namboothiri brahmin couple, Shivaguru and Aryamba. Shivaguru died while Shankara was very young. The child showed remarkable scholarship, and is said to have mastered the four Vedas by the age of eight. Following the common practice of that era, Shankara lived and studied at the home of his teacher. It was customary for students and men of learning to receive Bhiksha or alms from the laity; on one occasion, while accepting Bhiksha, Shankara came upon a woman who had nothing to eat in her house except a single dried amlaka fruit. Rather than consume this last bit of food herself, the pious lady gave away the fruit to Sankara as Bhiksha. Moved by her piety, Shankara composed the Kanakadhara Stotram on the spot. Legend has it that on completion of the stotram, golden amlaka fruits were showered upon the woman by the goddess Lakshmi. In due course, Shankara left Kerala and traveled throughout India. When

he reached the banks of the river Narmada, he met Govinda Bhagavatpada, the disciple of the Advaitin Gaudapada. Shankara was initiated as his disciple. Shankara traveled extensively, while writing commentaries on the Upanishads, Vishnu sahasranama, Brahma Sutras, and the Bhagavad Gita. He engaged in a series of debates with Buddhist scholars, and with scholars of the Purva Mimamsa school, which helped in cementing his spiritual ascendancy. One of the most famous of these debates was with the famed ritualist Mandana Mishra. Once he was saved by Sri Narasimha from being sacrificed to goddess Kali by a Kapalika. He then composed the Laksmi-Nrsimha stotra. Another famous composition of Sri Adi Shankara is his Bhaja Govindam, in praise of Vishnu.

It is a traditional belief that Adi Sankara installed at Srirangam a yantra called janakarshana to attract pilgrims to this sacred temple, just as at Tirupati he installed the dhanakarshana yantra. Indeed, Srirangam is the most visited Hindu temple in the world, and Tirupati is the richest. Shankara is believed to have visited the Sarvajnapitha in Kashmir before he withdrew to Kedarnath and attained samadhi. The Kanchi followers believe he achieved the same in Kanchi. He died only at thirty-two years of age. At the time of Shankara's life, Hinduism had lost some of its appeal because of the influence of Buddhism and Jainism. Shankara stressed the importance of the Vedas, and his work helped Hinduism regain strength and popularity. Although he did not live long, he had traveled on foot to various parts of India to restore the study of the Vedas. His philosophy is known as Advaita Vedanta. Adi Shankara has authored many works of stotras, and bhashyas, many of these are debated and questioned but below is a list of books certainly written by Adi Shankara:

- Viveka Chudamani, one of his most famous works, which summarizes his ideas of non-dual Vedanta
- The commentary Bhashya on the Brahma Sutra
- The commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
- The commentary on the Taittiriya Upanishad
- The Thousand Teachings or Upadesasahasri
- Bhaja Govindam
- Shivanandalahari and Saundaryalahari respectively
- Commentary on Vishnu Sahasranama
- The commentary on Gaudapada's Karika to the Mandukya Upanishad
- The commentary on the Bhagavad Gita

Shankara is said to have founded four mathas (a matha is a monastery or religious order), which are important to this day, to guide the Hindu religion in the future. These are at Sringeri in Karnataka, in the south, Dwaraka in Gujarat in the west, Puri in Orissa in the east, and Jyotirmath (Joshimath) in Uttaranchal in the north. The tradition states that he put in charge of these mathas his four main disciples: Sureshwaracharya, Hastamalaka, Padmapada, and Trotakacharya respectively. The heads of the mathas trace their authority back to them. Each of the heads of these four mathas takes the title of Shankaracharya (the learned Shankara) after the first Shankara. However, there is no concrete evidence for the existence of these mathas before the 14th century. The matha at Kanchipuram or Kanchi in Tamil Nadu claims that it was also founded by Shankara. According to this matha, it was where he settled in his last days and attained mahāsamādhi (i.e., left his body), but there are other, accounts which claim that he attained mahāsamādhi at Kedarnath.

Due to a small incident, happened recently I was terribly upset for a few days, as words are more powerful weapons than swords to inflict injuries. I was praying Lord Sri Venkataswara to give me peace of mind, and Swami Sri Venkataswara bestowed me the boon, HE gave me Bhajagovindam into my hands. It worked like a peace medicine for my heart, to heal the mental injury.

Bhajagovindam explains us the very truth of Human life, its vanity and emptiness, at the

same time it stresses the need for Human beings to best utilize their time, while living in the material world. It tells us that we should lead the life in such a way, just like a water drop on a lotus leaf, just look attached, but always mentally detached to the worldly things, and always lead a spiritual live. As lawyers, doctors, professionals, rulers and ruled, teachers, professors, occupying much bigger positions, we feel that we are very great, and tend to forget so many important things. The reason is all our education, intelligence, knowledge gets covered by Maya and we fall in the worldly affairs so deep that we forget our very existence and origin. Adding fuel to fire, the mental weaknesses like pride, anger, jealous, intolerance, short temper, make us behave like animals, forgetting our identity.

Sri Sankara wrote a number of Vedaantic works for imparting the knowledge of the Self. He composed a number of hymns to foster the sense of devotion in the hearts of men and this One of these hymns is the famous "Bhaja Govindam". Pre-eminent Hindu scholar, C. Raja Gopalachari has written a commentary on Bhaja Govindam. The following is excerpted from his introduction to Bhaja Govindam

Sri Sankara has packed into the "Bhaja Govindam" song the substance of all the Vedantic works that he wrote and he has set the truth of the union of devotion and knowledge to melodious music which delights the ear. Some critics of Indian philosophy believe and say that the way of devotion is different from the way of knowledge. When intelligence matures and lodges securely in the heart, it becomes wisdom.

When that wisdom is integrated with life and issues out in action, it becomes devotion. Knowledge which has become mature is spoken of as devotion. If it does not get transformed into devotion, such knowledge is useless tinsel. To hold and to say that jnaana and bhakti, knowledge and devotion, are as different from each other as gold is from baser metal is to expose one's ignorance. Sri Sankara has packed into the "Bhaja Govindam" song the substance of all the Vedantic works that he wrote and he has set the truth of the union of devotion and knowledge to melodious music which delights the ear.

Bhajagovindam shows a mirror to human frailties and provides a safe passage through life with the advice contained within. Primarily aimed at those who wish to take to a monk's life there are many verses that are useful for others. Bhajagovindam aids in understanding life's real purpose from the Vedantic viewpoint and thus improve the quality of living the life-divine. Bhajagovindam is that beckon of light that can show us the way, to over come our weaknesses. I must thank that Great person, who indirectly was responsible, to take up this small work of mine. I pray all GOD's to help me to complete this work, successfully. I request all readers to excuse me for any of my mistakes I committed in this.

Ramakantha Rao Chakalakonda

One day Sri Adi Sankara was walking on the streets of Kasi, asking for Bhiksha. They found near a home, one old Brahmin, so old that he may die at any time, was studying a Sanskrit grammar book called DUKRUNKARINI, and trying to mug it up. Seeing the situation HE was shocked and got pity on the old man, he wanted to correct him and put him on the right spiritual path and gave a lesson in the form of BHAJAGOVINDAM, he told a few verses to teach him and his students (we call them Sisya's hence forth) a few more verses to the old man.

He says " Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja, Mudha Mate, Samprapte Sannhite kale, Nahi Nahi Rakshate, Dukrunkarini" Hey! Old man Listen to me, Pray God Sri Vishnu, that is GOVINDA, don't waste your time like a fool, when you are in your last few days of your life, just when death about to

invade you, this Grammar book DUKRUNKARINI is not going to help you from the jaws of death.

For persons, of this modern life, like us, this teaching equally applies. So friends, understand the meaning of the great ACHARYA's teaching and remember it always, what ever you are doing, and follow what he said. Make your life spiritual, peaceful, successful, and pave the way to attain MOKSHA, the ultimate abode of spirituality..

(We will publish Sree Ramakaantharao gari translation and commentary on the Bhajagovindam in several installments. He has translated this work into poetic Telugu, as well as easy to understand English. Please be sure to look for them in the upcoming months .. Editor)

1. bhajagovindaM bhajagovindaM
govindaM bhajamuuDhamate .
saMpraapte sannihite kaale
nahi nahi rakshati DukRiJNkaraNe

1. భజగోవిందం భజగోవిందం
గోవిందం భజ మూఢమతే .
సంప్రాప్తే సన్నిహితే కాలే
నహి నహి రక్షతి దుక్కుఞ్కరణే

స్మరించు హరిని, స్మరించు హరిని,
స్మరించు హరిని, సుగుణ మతీ,
భజించు హరిని, భజించు హరిని,
భజించు హరిని, బుద్ధిమతీ. || స్మరించు||

కాలము చెల్లిన కడపటి వేళ,
కాలుని గాలము తగిలిన వేళ,
రావు రావు రక్షింపను నిన్ను
భువి సంపదలు భోగములు ||స్మరించు||

పరమాత్మ స్వరూపా! ఓ బుద్ధిమతీ! ప్రాపంచిక విషయ వాసనా జాలములోపడి భగవంతుని

విస్మరించకుము. మనకున్న ధన, ధాన్యాది సంపదలు, పదవులు, భౌతిక విద్యలు, నైపుణ్యాలు, అంత్య కాలములో మనలను రక్షింపలేవు, అవసాన దశలో మనలను ఆదుకొనేది, శ్రీహరి ధ్యానము ఒక్కటే!. కనుక శ్రీహరిని స్మరింపుము, ఏమాత్రము ఆలస్యము చేయకుము. చివరి క్షణముల వరకు వేచిన, ఆ చివరి దశలో మనకు హరి నామకీర్తన అవకాశము దొరకునో లేదో తెలియదు. పొట్టకూటికి పనికి వచ్చే యీ విద్యలేవియు, చివరి దశలో మనకు అక్కరకు రావు, మనలను రక్షింపలేవు. కనుక తక్షణమే హరి నామ స్మరణ ప్రారంభించుము. హరి నామ స్మరణకు ఒక సమయము, పద్ధతి, నియమాల్వియు లేవు. సర్వకాల, సర్వావస్థలయందు భజింప దగినది హరి నామం. ప్రతి క్షణము, ఏ పనిలోనున్ననూ శ్రీహరి స్మరణను మరువకుము. కాలుని జాలము నుండి అదే నిన్ను కాపాడ గలదు. యీ కాయము విడనాడు సమయమున, మరణాన్ని సుఖమయము, నిర్భయము చేసి, సంతోషముగా యీ శరీరాన్ని విసర్జింప జేసి, శ్రీహరి సన్నిధిని చేర్చగలిగిన ఆ శుభ నామాన్ని నిరతము ధ్యానింపుము. తినుచున్నా, త్రాగుచున్నా, పనిలో వున్నా, నిదురించు చున్నా, క్రీడించుచున్నా, మనసున హరి ధ్యానమును మరువకుడు.

Oh poor soul! Old Brahmin ! don't be foolish. Don't waste your time in reading this grammar book, DUKRUNKARINI, when your life is going to be over, when death knock's your door, this book what you are reading, is not going to help you Pray lord Sri GOVINDA, take HIS name and sing, that is going to help you through out your life, at the time of your death and after death. For that matter, not any worldly education is going to help us. That may be helpful to the extent of making our lively hood, but not beyond. Where as spiritual education is going to help you through out live and even in death. Spirituality makes a person, perfect, make him realize the importance of his life, how one should plan it, how he should live, what he should do, and what he should not. That is what is called GNANA, when one gets GNANA, his thinking towards live changes totally, he realizes the vanity of life, its emptiness. He realizes that the worldly comforts and pleasures are temporary and momentary, where as spiritual comforts are ever lasting. That makes him a perfect man, and such people become examples to others, One who acquires GNANA is well equipped with all the power, now if he prays LORD OF THE UNIVERSE, he obviously realizes that VISWA TATWA and easily attains the abode of happiness.

So don't waste time in the world matters and take spiritual education, pray LORD GOVINDA, once you surrender HE will help you, through life and death. Every body on this earth, who is born, must die, nobody can escape death, but that death becomes an easy task for us, when we attain BHAKTI and GNANA, We get mentally prepared for death, spirituality makes us bold to face death. Then death is not any more a devil, it is a relief, we can get rid of all kinds of problems, of body and mind, and we can attain MOKASHAM, (Birth-less-ness) once we fall on the lotus feet of GOVINDA. So dear friends, take the name of GOVINDA, the universal lord, and take his SARANAM (Refuge), he will give us relief from all problems of BHAVASAGARAM, the day to day life related problems.

What ever money we have, what ever great assets we have, what kind of house or palace we live, and the amount of assets like currency, Gold, diamonds, etc, the power and position, the worldly knowledge, how many friends, servants, relatives, we have, none of these are going to help us in the last minutes of death, except surrender on the feet of LORD GOVINDA. So, soon take up the path of spirituality.

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