

An overview of Dakshinamurti Stotram

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.

Verse 1

- **आत्मा प्रत्यक्स्वरूपं** – The nature of the self, as 'I' is 'inner'- that is, always non-manifest
- The I alone manifests itself as 'me', the individual (जीवात्मा) that I think I am

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