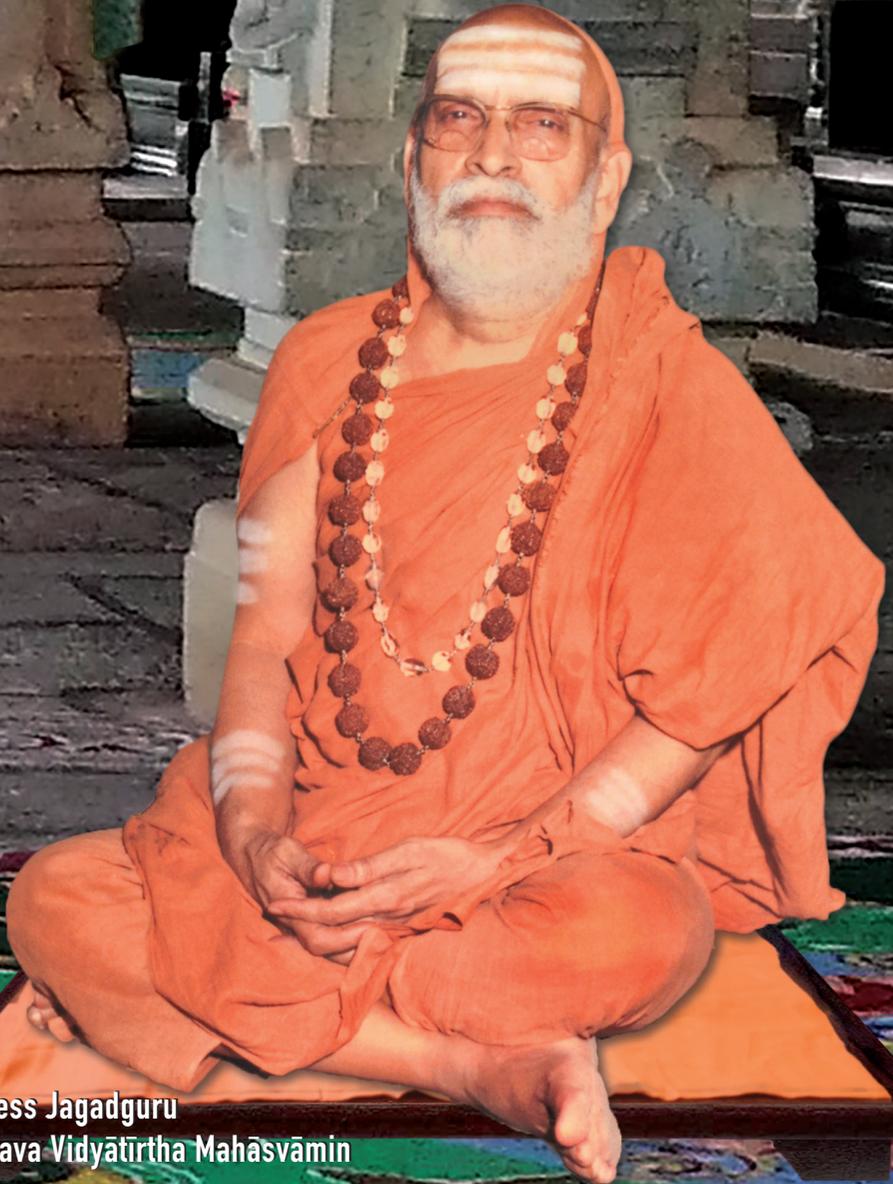


# 108 Facets of the Inimitable *Guru*



His Holiness Jagadguru  
Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin

# **108 Facets of the Inimitable *Guru***

An exposition of the 108 *nāmas* of

**His Holiness Jagadguru**

**Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin**

Dr. Meenakshi Lakshmanan

Dr. H. N. Shankar

Centre for Brahmavidya

Chennai 600 032

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**Authors:**

Dr. Meenakshi Lakshmanan

Dr. H. N. Shankar

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## Dedication



His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin

भवन्नामभाववलीपद्ममालाम् ।  
प्रणम्यार्पयावो भवच्छ्रीपदाब्जे ॥

*(Having paid obeisance we submit at Your glorious lotus feet, this garland of lotuses, which is the series of meanings of Your very nāmas.)*



# Salutations to the Jagadgurus



Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin,  
the 36th Shankaracharya and the present pontiff  
of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham along with His disciple  
Jagadguru Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī Svāmin



## Preface

His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyāīrtha Mahāsvāmin, an exceptional sage who had renounced the world by the age of thirteen and attained *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living) at the tender age of eighteen, a *yogin* nonpareil, a scholar par excellence in the *Śāstras*, an intellectual genius, One with a thorough grasp of science as well as the minds of people, a brilliant visionary and administrator, the epitome of devotion to God and the *Guru*, the embodiment of simplicity and the personification of compassion, was the 35<sup>th</sup> Jagadguru Shankaracharya of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham between 1954 and 1989. Coming in the sacred line of preceptors starting with Śrī Ādi-śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda, He exemplified all that Bhagavatpāda, the incarnation of Lord Śiva, stood for. In His lifetime, His Holiness touched and transformed, in multifarious ways, the lives of thousands of people from the most diverse of backgrounds. He continues to do so to this day.

His Holiness's foremost disciple and successor to the Peetham, Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, composed the *aṣṭottara-śata-nāmāvalī* (series of 108 *nāmas*) on His Holiness, after the latter's *Mahāsamādhi* in 1989. The Centre for Brahmavidya had published, in January 2020, an explanation of these *nāmas* in a book in Tamil, 'Arulmigu Guruvin Porulmigu Naamangal', and is now publishing this exposition in English. This has been written with an acute awareness of the inadequacy of any exposition on His Holiness's glories. Also, the scholarliness of Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, who has composed these *nāmas*, is legendary. Yet an attempt is made to interpret the *nāmas*, only with the intent of having a glimpse of His Holiness's magnificence.

The aspects of His Holiness brought out in this book as relevant to each *nāma*, are in the form of episodes from His life as reminisced by devotees or by Him, accounts of His spiritual practices, His writings and His teachings in the form of expositions or public discourses. These have been extensively taken from books on His Holiness published earlier, namely 'The Multifaceted Jīvanmukta', 'Yoga, Enlightenment and Perfection', 'Didactic Treatises' and our recent publication, 'From Sorrows to Bliss'.

It is out of deep devotion for His Holiness that Sri Suresh Krishnamoorthy has come forward to sponsor this publication. Our sincere gratitude to him. Our thanks to Sri K. Parthasarathy for preparing the cover page. Our heartfelt thanks to Sri N. Subramanian of Sudarshan Graphics for the high-quality printing.

It is our sincere belief that this book will make interesting and useful reading, not only since it contains possible explanations of the *nāmas* that describe His Holiness, but also because it has His ambrosial teachings and gripping anecdotes from His life, which are sure to appeal to both the intellect and the heart.

Vidyashankar Krishnan  
Dr. H. N. Shankar

K. Suresh Chandar  
Dr. Meenakshi Lakshmanan  
Trustees, Centre for Brahmavidya

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## Prelude

The teachings of *Bhagavān* constituting the second and third chapters of the *Bhagavad-gītā* cover the entire contents of the fifteen chapters that follow them; the first four aphorisms of the *Brahma-sūtras* and Ādi-śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda's commentary thereon themselves convey comprehensively, the tenets of *Advaita Vedānta*. In a similar manner, this *aṣṭottara-śata-nāmāvali* (series of 108 *nāmas*) on His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin, composed by His direct disciple and present Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, has the significant characteristic that the first three *nāmas* themselves express, in a nutshell, all the glorious facets of His Holiness.

As will be apparent from the sequel, the first three *nāmas* compellingly convey a synopsis of the entire *aṣṭottara-śata-nāmāvali*. They shine the spotlight on the fact that His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin - hereinafter referred to as 'His Holiness' - was a glorious sage who was ever firmly established in the Supreme. They underscore His infinite compassion towards all. They further highlight that throughout His earthly sojourn, He considered worldly joys useless, conducted His life according to the dictates of the *Vedas* and taught the path through which everyone may attain the knowledge of the non-dual Supreme. Finally, they reveal that His life itself was a divine sport.

The essential teaching of His Holiness was, "It is only the realization of the non-dual Supreme *Brahman* as the Self of all, that can free us from all fears, grant us absolute bliss and liberate us from the great misery that is *samsāra* (transmigratory existence). We who have the innate power of discrimination, should, without wasting this rare human birth of ours, develop intense *vairāgya* (dispassion) towards all worldly enjoyments, develop devotion towards the Supreme, engage ourselves in *ātma-vicāra* (enquiry about the Self), and strive to become established in our true nature."



## 1. अद्वैतविद्यारसिकः Advaita-vidyā-rasikāḥ

One who delighted in the knowledge of Advaita

To the question, ‘Who is that *Sadguru* whom a disciple desirous of knowing the Truth should seek?’ the *Vedas* categorically answer, “One who is learned in the *Śāstras* (*śrotriya*) and is established in *Brahman* (*brahma-niṣṭha*).”<sup>1</sup>

His Holiness is described in this *nāma* as *rasika*, One who delighted in, the *vidyā*, knowledge, of *advaita*, that is the *advaita-vedānta-śāstra*. That His Holiness delighted in the *Vedānta-śāstra* automatically affirms that He had, in the first place, learnt and understood it thoroughly. Therefore, the *nāma* asserts that His Holiness was a *śrotriya*.

The *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad* indicates that the word *advaita* means the *Ātman*, the Supreme that ought to be known.<sup>2</sup> The import of the term ‘*advaita-vidyā*’ is that *Advaita* or the Supreme *Brahman* Itself is of the nature of *vidyā*, Knowledge. The *Śruti* indicates this by saying, ‘*Brahman* is Truth, Knowledge and Infinite’.<sup>3</sup> Thus, this *nāma* has the deeper import that His Holiness was *rasika*, One who delighted in, *advaita-vidyā*, *Brahman* that is Knowledge Itself.

The *Śruti* reveals that *Brahman* is of the nature of bliss as well, through statements such as ‘*Brahman* is of the nature of Knowledge and Bliss’.<sup>4</sup> About reveling in the Bliss that is *Brahman*, Bhagavatpāda says, “When, having become ripened by incessant practice, the mind becomes absorbed in *Brahman*, *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (the acme of *yoga*) ensues, which by itself, effortlessly brings about the experience of non-dual Bliss,”<sup>5</sup> where *rasa* or enjoyment is verily (the Bliss that is) *Brahman*.<sup>6</sup> Now the term ‘*advaita-vidyā*’ meaning ‘*Brahma-vidyā*’ essentially refers to the mental *vṛtti* or modification that removes the ignorance about *Brahman*. Hence, the *nāma* conveys that His Holiness delighted in that *vṛtti*, which exists in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* and has as its basis the oneness of *Ātman-Brahman*. Bhagavatpāda says, “One who always has this *jñāna-vṛtti* that never undergoes modifications and is pure consciousness, is called a *jīvanmukta* (one liberated while living).”<sup>7</sup> The *nāma* thus indicates that His Holiness was a *brahma-niṣṭha* or in other words a *jīvanmukta*, who revelled in the *rasa* or Bliss that is *Brahman*, and that He particularly did so in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

It is the traditional practice to begin any text with a prayer to God or the *Guru*, or at least with an auspicious word. This *aṣṭottara-śata-nāmāvali* begins with the word ‘*advaita*’. It has already been seen that the word ‘*advaita*’ denotes *Brahman*. In the *mantra* of the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad* quoted above, it is also said that *advaita* is verily ‘*Śiva*’, meaning auspiciousness. It is significant that this *nāmāvali* on His Holiness begins

with a word that indicates the most auspicious among all auspicious entities, *Brahman*.



[The following forms His Holiness's reminiscence of His attainment of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1935. He was eighteen years old at that time. His Holiness had the practice of meditating atop a hill near Narasimhavana, Sringeri. His abode, Sacchidananda Vilasa, is situated in Narasimhavana.]

"I reached my place of meditation on the hill around one and a half hours before sunset. Sitting in the *siddhāsana*, I performed two cycles of *prāṇāyāma* together with the *jālandhara*, *uḍḍīyāna* and *mūla bandhas* to promote mental tranquillity. Then, as usual, I directed my gaze towards the centre of my brows and chanted the *Pranava (Om)*. That day, I beheld an unbounded expanse of blue, resembling the sky.

"The notion, 'I am the non-dual *Brahman* apart from which nothing whatsoever exists' that was prominent and naturally persistent since the previous evening had been intensified by my *savikalpa-samādhis* (the exalted stage of *yoga* preceding *nirvikalpa-samādhi*) of the morning and by my reading and reflection of the afternoon. So, I did not have to cultivate it. I had barely seen the soothing expanse of blue when it vanished. I felt Myself expanding and becoming like space. The sense of 'I' nearly vanished and my mind entered *savikalpa-samādhi*.

"The bliss was very great. However, with effort, I restrained Myself from being overwhelmed by it and thought, "I am not the one experiencing bliss but am bliss itself." In a trice, a sharp change occurred. Awareness of the distinction of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration completely disappeared. No more was there any sense of individuality or of space, time and objects. Only *Brahman*, of the nature of absolute existence, pure consciousness and ultimate bliss, shone bereft of the superimposition of even a trace of duality.

"After about two hours, the mind descended to the level of *savikalpa-samādhi* and mild awareness of the distinction of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration reappeared. Though the bliss of *savikalpa-samādhi* was by far greater than the joy of any worldly enjoyment, it was nothing compared to the absolute, non-dual bliss of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*."



[The following account forms the recollection of His Holiness about His attainment of *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living). This happened on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1935.]

“The conviction about the falsity of duality and of my being of the nature of changeless consciousness was so strong and steady that almost no notions of the non-*Ātman*, based on *avidyā* (ignorance), cropped up. Those few that did were neutralised swiftly. The knowledge that *Brahman* alone is all this had almost fully fructified. This was my state when I went in the evening to the summit of the hill one and a half hours before sunset.

“I directed my gaze to between the brows and, without any premeditation, chanted, ‘*om namaḥ śivāya* (Obeisance to Śiva)’ rather than just the *Prāṇava*. Soon, I beheld a moon-like disc of light between my brows. The mind became increasingly quiet, the sense of “I” faded away and, effortlessly, *nirvikalpa-samādhi* ensued. When I opened my eyes, the sun was about to set. Two birds were seated on my shoulders.

“That *Brahman* is all was as clear as a fruit in one’s palm. My mind automatically went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi* once again a few minutes later and remained in that state for nearly an hour. Shortly after I regained awareness of the body and the surroundings, a big monkey bounded up to me and positioned itself on my lap. After being cuddled for a while by me, it left. I started walking down the hill.

“By the grace of my *Guru* and God, the “*svanubhavo brahmātmanā saṁsthiṭiḥ* (direct realisation of *Brahman* and firm establishment in *Brahman*)”,<sup>8</sup> spoken of in the *Viveka-cūdāmaṇi* occurred at one stroke that evening, and there has been no deviation from the Reality ever since.”

ଋଷଭଋଷଭ

When His Holiness was returning from the hill after attaining *jīvanmukti*, He saw His *Guru*, the renowned *jīvanmukta*, Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāswāmin, standing outside Sacchidananda Vilasa and looking in His direction. The senior *Jagadguru* beckoned to Him and went inside. When He went to the room of His *Guru*, the latter, who was standing there, rushed to Him and embraced Him even before His Holiness could prostrate before His *Guru* or say anything. Holding Him by His shoulders, the senior *Jagadguru* said, “I am so very happy.” He then voiced a *mantra* of the *Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad*, a passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* and a verse of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, all of which are about an enlightened person, a *jīvanmukta*.

The import of the *Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad mantra* is, “When the supreme *Ātman*, which is both high and low, is realised, the knot of the heart (comprising the host of tendencies and impressions of ignorance in the form of desires) is destroyed, all doubts come to an end and one’s actions become dissipated.”<sup>9</sup> The cited passage of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* conveys, “He who was subject to death then becomes deathless and attains identity with *Brahman* while living in this very body.”<sup>10</sup> The import of the cited words of the Lord

in the *Bhagavad-gītā* is, “But that man who rejoices only in the *Ātman*, is satisfied with just the *Ātman* and who is contented in just the *Ātman* - for him, there is no duty to perform.”<sup>11</sup>

The senior *Jagadguru* then said, “Such declarations of the *śruti* and *smṛti* are applicable to you who abide as the Supreme *Brahman*.”



A disciple once asked His Holiness if there had ever been an occasion over the years when intense anger, worry or grief appeared in His Holiness’s mind, unaccompanied, even for a while, by the awareness of its falsity. His Holiness responded, “No, never. Even during excruciating pain, there has been the clear awareness that it pertains only to the illusory mind and that I am the changeless witness of the nature of pure consciousness.” Such instances leave no room for doubt about His Holiness’s firm establishment in the Truth.



*Jagadguru Sri Bhārātī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* once recollected about His *Guru*, “When His Holiness expounded texts on *Advaita-vedānta* such as the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma-sūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, along with *Ādi-śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda*’s commentary, His face would be flushed with joy. The kind of joy He had when reading the *Advaitic* scriptures, would be unmistakable to anyone who saw Him. On some occasions, He would close His eyes and slip into complete silence for a while, His face lit up with a smile. On occasion He would share His delight with me, saying, ‘See how wonderfully *Bhagavatpāda* has expounded this portion!’”



## 2. अनुकम्पासरित्पतिः *Anukampā-sarītpatiḥ*

One who was an ocean of compassion

A person who is a *śrotriya* and *brahma-niṣṭha*, as His Holiness was, would be pre-eminently capable of gracing disciples to cross the ocean of *samsāra*. However, he would actually do so only if he were to have unbounded compassion. It is for this reason that *Bhagavatpāda*, while delineating the characteristics of a *Guru*, says, “He is one who has realized the Truth and who ever strives for the welfare of his disciples.”<sup>12</sup> That this characteristic too fits His Holiness perfectly, is borne out by this *nāma*.

*Bhagavatpāda* eulogizes the *Sadguru* by saying, “There is no illustration whatsoever in even the depths of the three worlds for a *Sadguru*, the giver of knowledge.”<sup>13</sup> He goes on to explain that even the (now mythical) *sparśa* gem (philosopher’s stone), that can convert an ordinary piece of iron to gold, does not stand a chance of being a fit enough parallel. This is because the

*sparsā* transforms iron only to gold and not to another *sparsā* that in turn would be capable of producing more *sparsās*, whereas a *Sadguru* converts an ordinary human being into a *Sadguru*. The *Sadguru*, being a *brahma-niṣṭha*, has achieved all that has to be achieved. For him the entire world is but illusory, just as a dream is for one who has woken up, and the Supreme *Brahman* alone exists. When this is the case, there can be only one cause - compassion - for a *Sadguru* to descend to the level of the disciple who has surrendered to him, and grant him his own state of establishment in *Brahman*. Surely, such compassion must be exceptional.

His Holiness's compassion is compared here to *sarīpatih*, the ocean, implying that His Holiness's edifying compassion was constantly available, infinite, never diminishing and ever unprejudiced.

A question that would arise here is why such compassion of the *Sadguru* does not prompt him to grant the state of liberation to all, unprejudiced as it is. At any rate such total lack of prejudice would not only bring into question the validity of *Śāstraic* injunctions regarding the *sādhanā* (means or practices) to be pursued for liberation, but would also deal a body blow to the fundamental principles of natural justice. After all, 'liberation for all' would imply that a person who has strived for liberation as well as a sinner would both be granted liberation. It is obvious that no *Sadguru* so grants everyone liberation, for if it had happened, then everyone in the world would have become liberated. So the counter question that would arise is whether his compassion is really so unprejudiced after all.

Bhagavatpāda answers, 'Having accepted as his own disciple, one who takes refuge in his pair of feet, the *Sadguru* grants him his own state (of being established in *Brahman*)'.<sup>14</sup> Essentially, the *Sadguru*'s grace extends to those who seek it; he does not grant liberation to everybody, because giving knowledge to one who is not prepared for it can be disastrous. This is just as the ocean, referred to here as the lord of rivers, is available as refuge to any river that seeks it, but does not go out to rivers to engulf them for that would indeed be cataclysmic. Total surrender at the feet of the *Sadguru* by the disciple is the minimum that is necessary to earn his grace and also turns out to be all that is required. Thus, the *Sadguru*'s compassion does not depend on whether the person who approaches him is greatly qualified for knowledge or is an abject ignoramus - all that matters is that the person has truly taken refuge in him. The *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi* wraps it up thus: 'The *Sadguru* is an ocean of cause-less compassion; He is a friend (one who gets rid of misery) to those noble ones who have totally surrendered to him'.<sup>15</sup>

This ocean-like compassion of His Holiness made Him an inimitable *Sadguru*, the giver of the Supreme knowledge.



The following is excerpted from a narrative penned by Sri R. M. Umesh.

“I first had the *darśana* of His Holiness in Chennai in 1971. I earlier had no intention of even going for His Holiness’s *darśana*, being under the impression that no intermediary is required between God and a person and hence a *Guru* is superfluous. Much to my own surprise, when I had the *darśana* of His Holiness, I requested for *mantropadeśa* (initiation into a *mantra*) which His Holiness readily acceded to give. As instructed, I reached the place of His Holiness’s stay at Chennai the next morning. While His Holiness initiated me into the *Śiva-pañcākṣarī mantra*, I was in a daze and felt His Holiness’s grace possessing me.

“I went home soon after the initiation, and found that I was automatically mentally chanting the *mantra* linked with the outgoing breath, and that no thoughts crossed the mind, which was extremely joyful. As the day wore on, an intense desire to meditate gripped me. Locking myself up in the *pūjā* room of my residence, I assumed a meditative posture and gently closed my eyelids. I found that the *mantra* rumbled on but slowly faded away. The mind became increasingly calm and in a few moments I lost all awareness of the body and surroundings. I felt as if I was expanding. I beheld a vast expanse of intensely bright illumination and had the experience of merging into it. Waves of bliss submerged me and the sense of time was lost. In what seemed a trice, I regained light consciousness of the body. Actually an hour had elapsed.

“This experience was repeated every time I sat for meditation. The *mantra*, for its part, was spontaneously chanted throughout the day. The joy of the period of concentration was so great that coming out of that state to engage in other activities was positively repugnant to me. The desire for worldly enjoyments and attainments started waning and a burning longing for *saṁnyāsa* took its place.

“I knew beyond doubt that His Holiness had graced me in abundance and that my experiences were solely due to Him. I went to Sringeri in 1972 and He granted me a private audience. Before I could pose any questions, His Holiness began to speak. In the course of what He said, He cleared most of my doubts. He said, ‘I know that you want to take up *saṁnyāsa*. However, it is better that for the time being you continue your engineering studies.’ He assured me that I need have no fear of getting enmeshed in the snares of worldly life. He continued, ‘At the time of initiation, by the will of *Īśvara*, *śakti-pāta* (transfer of spiritual power) had occurred. You will not have obstacles to your spiritual progress.’

“His Holiness then said, ‘Till now you have been doing *saguṇa-dhyāna* (meditation on the Supreme as possessed of qualities). Now I will teach you

*nirguṇa-dhyāna* (meditation on the Supreme as devoid of attributes). When you sit for meditation, dissociate yourself with the body and the senses. Only the rise and fall of thoughts will be perceived. Segregate yourself from all mentation. Then realise yourself to be of the nature of perfect bliss. I will show you how to do so.’ Saying so, His Holiness closed His eyes. His body became motionless, His eyes were half closed and He radiated peace. About five minutes later, He opened His eyes and told me, ‘Go and try *nirguṇa-dhyāna*.’ ‘I intellectually comprehend what Your Holiness says’, I said, ‘but am at a loss to understand how exactly to proceed.’ ‘Try it’, His Holiness smilingly replied, ‘Everything will become clear to you.’

“Proceeding to the *adhiṣṭhāna* housing the *samādhis* of the earlier *Jagadgurus*, I sat down for meditation at the foot of a pillar. Almost instantaneously, I lost awareness of the surroundings and the body. Only the rise and fall of thoughts were recognizable. Slowly, the frequency of the thoughts became less and soon the mind was totally tranquil. I felt as though I was merging into pure *ākāśa* and becoming unlimited in size. There was an extraordinary experience of bliss. Suddenly there was a transition and even conception of *ākāśa* vanished. All distinctions disappeared without a trace. I am at a total loss for words to describe that state. All I can say is that I was lost in an ocean of unalloyed, indescribable bliss.

“When I began to regain my external consciousness and opened my eyes I could perceive nothing apart from me. Everything seemed to be in me like bubbles on the surface of the ocean. This unique experience lasted awhile before gradually fading away.

“This experience, which His Holiness later confirmed to me as being *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, accrued regularly. In 1974 at Sringeri, I asked His Holiness, ‘By Your Holiness’s blessings, I am repeatedly able to get the meditative state that Your Holiness has subsequently identified as *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. When I come down from that state, as I have told Your Holiness earlier, I feel as if there is nothing apart from me. This experience, however, is not steady. It fades away after a while and I would like Your Holiness’s benediction for that state to become steady.’ His Holiness looked upon me with compassionate eyes and then said, ‘After you complete your engineering studies that state shall become steady.’

“So unlimited is His mercy that just a few days after making this statement, He told me of His own accord, ‘Your surrender to Me has generated satisfaction. I bless you that that state become steady from now on.’ Can the blessings of the omnipotent One ever be in vain? What He said came to pass and the steadiness of the experience continues to this day. I regard that moment as the culmination of a blessing He had given years ago when I had

prayed to Him for pure devotion. He had said, ‘Abidance in the Self is indeed considered the highest devotion. May you have that true devotion.’”



The following are experiences of Sri P. S. Venkatasubba Rao.

“A relative of mine wanted a *liṅga* for *pūjā*, and approached me. I left for Sringeri and placed the request before His Holiness. His Holiness went upstairs and brought two *liṅgas*. One was a *sphaṭika Bāṇa-liṅga* while the other was a *Narmadā-liṅga*. His Holiness gave the latter to be given to my relative, and giving me the *Bāṇa-liṅga*, said, ‘Worship it. You will get *jñāna* (knowledge).’ I commenced daily worship of the *liṅga*.

“Later, I felt an urge to have some traditional lessons from His Holiness. I went to Sringeri from my place of residence in Chikkamagaluru, and made known my desire. Right away, His Holiness agreed and said that He would begin the lesson at 3 o’clock in the afternoon. Some *samnyāsins* and *paṇḍitas* also attended the classes. The text taken for exposition was the *Śrī-dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra* of Bhagavatpāda. Having given a lucid exposition of the first verse, His Holiness decided to explain the second verse the next day. He was having a sore throat that day. Yet, He chose to teach me saying, ‘You have come all the way for this. Hence, I will teach.’ On the third day, His Holiness said, ‘This is enough. In fact, what I taught you on the first day was itself sufficient for you. I took up the second verse on the subsequent day to ward off any possible feeling you may get that the absence of continuation of the second day is inauspicious.’

“A few days later, my uncle, Ananda Rao, who was in charge of the old guesthouse at Sringeri, told me about a peculiar person who had come there. The person called himself Parabrahma or Brahma. He was untidy and had long uncut nails and a big beard. His Holiness had spoken with him freely and made arrangements for his stay at the old guesthouse. Brahma observed no regulations. To all appearances, he was an eccentric, bordering on lunacy. His Holiness, however, recognised that He was enlightened.

“I went to the person’s room and offered salutation. Brahma said in English, ‘Happy man.’ I queried, ‘How about realization?’ ‘You will get it,’ said he. ‘How?’ I persisted. To this, he responded, ‘The mind will tell you.’ I reported this conversation to His Holiness. His Holiness remained silent and motionless for a while and then told me with a tone of finality, “He is a *rāja-yogin* and has realized the Truth of *Vedānta*.”

“His Holiness soon left on His first tour, but not before instructing the officials of the *Maṭha* to cater to Brahma’s requirements. I went some months later to Sringeri again and met Brahma. He instructed me on *ātma-anusandhāna* (contemplation on the *Ātman*). He then initiated me into the

*mahāvākya*s (great declarations of the Supreme Truth in the *Upaniṣads*) and caused me to be centred on the Self. The blessing of His Holiness that He had bestowed on me while giving me the *liṅga* for worship had fructified.

“So powerful is His Holiness’s *ātma-anusandhāna* that it has a profound impact on those nearby. On one occasion I accompanied His Holiness on a camp to Kundapura. I was travelling in the jeep that was piloting His Holiness’s vehicle when, at one point, I noticed that His Holiness had ordered His car to stop. He asked me to sit in the front seat of His car and sent His personal attendant to the jeep. No conversation ensued. His Holiness lost Himself in the contemplation of the *Ātman*. The effect of His silent *ātma-anusandhāna* on me was tremendous.”

[In later years, His Holiness remarked to some people that Sri Venkatasubba Rao was a realized soul.]



The following is the narrative of Smt. S. N. Manikarnikamma. [In it she refers to Sri D. S. Subbaramaiya, an intimate disciple of the senior *Jagadguru* and His Holiness and led to spiritual consummation by Them. His Holiness acknowledged Sri Subbaramaiya as a knower of the Truth.]

“Once in the early 1970s, upon our supplication, His Holiness directed my husband and me to learn *Vedānta* from Sri Subbaramaiya and blessed us for our *Vedānta-vicāra* (enquiry into the Truth taught in *Vedānta*). Since then, as assigned by His Holiness from time to time, Sri Subbaramaiya was kind enough to teach us various texts starting with the elementary ones, for nearly two hours every evening at his residence. He most compassionately guided, monitored and took us through the various stages of spiritual practices from *karma-yoga* through to contemplation on the *Ātman*. After our classes commenced, whenever Sri Subbaramaiya or we had the opportunity to have the *darśana* of His Holiness, He would invariably enquire about our *Vedānta* lessons, apart from Himself blessing us with His insightful remarks on portions of the texts being discussed.

“In our class at the usual hour in the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1976, Sri Subbaramaiya commenced by asking us about our experiences stemming from the contemplation on the *mahāvākya*, ‘*prajñānam brahma*’ (Consciousness is *Brahman*). He subtly led us by progressively and minutely distilling our contemplation. Thus, from prompting the recollection of being the witness of thoughts, he facilitated the strengthening of the realisation that even while being the witness, transcending that unattached witness is the innermost *Ātman* that is Self-luminous, of the very nature of incessant Bliss and non-different from the Supreme *Brahman*. Even as he was thus driving home the quintessence of the *mahāvākya*, my thought blossomed to transcend all limitations of space, time and objects, and became boundless.

In a flash, there fructified the realisation of infinite bliss, my intrinsic nature. Even while seeing, the world vanished. Only the Self shone directly, and there was nothing apart from me.

“His Holiness graced Bengaluru between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of November, 1976. On the evening of the 8<sup>th</sup>, Sri Subbaramaiya and a group of us students were ushered into the presence of His Holiness in the inner courtyard of the Sri Sringeri Shankara Math, Bengaluru. After we paid our homage to His Holiness, He compassionately enquired, as usual, about our *Vedānta* lessons and spiritual progress. As we were taking leave of His Holiness and my turn came to receive *mantrākṣatā* (rice grains mixed with turmeric powder blessed by His Holiness) from Him, I moved forward with cupped hands, head bent in reverence. Holding a fruit and the *mantrākṣatā* in His hand over my cupped hands, He prompted and directed me to chant a particular verse from Bhagavatpāda's *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*. Still with head bent, I obeyed. The verse conveys, ‘Being thoroughly shrouded by ignorance, even a man who is invariably sagacious, has scriptural knowledge, is skilled in analysis and is a perceiver of what is most subtle, does not clearly comprehend the *Ātman* even on being taught about It in various ways. He considers what is superimposed on account of delusion to be true and attaches himself to its qualities. Alas, formidable is the power of concealment of calamitous *tamas*.’<sup>16</sup>

“Even as I was chanting this verse, I was wondering as to why His Holiness was bringing to my mind the disastrous consequences of ignorance, which I felt was behind me for good. Once I had finished chanting the verse, He blessed me with the fruit and the *mantrākṣatā* He had kept in His hand. I stepped back, looked up and beheld Him. Looking at me with a most compassionate smile and waving His right hand utterly dismissively, He said with an authority that only He could command, ‘That deluding veil is not for you.’ I paid my silent salutations to Him with my tears. He had just confirmed, as only a *Sadguru* can, that the veil of ignorance was shattered for me once and for all. What else was this but the infinite compassion and the infallible blessings of His Holiness who, after putting me under the tutelage of Sri Subbaramaiya and impelling me from time to time both from within and without, chose to immerse me in Supreme Bliss, which is Himself!”



### 3. अतिमानुषचारित्रः *Atimānuṣa-cāritraḥ*

One whose conduct transcended that of mortals

This *nāma* conveys that in spite of seeming to be a human being who attained *jīvanmukti* through spiritual *sādhanā* and who shone as a compassionate

*Sadguru*, His Holiness was in fact an incarnation of the Lord, for His conduct transcended the ken of the human intellect. Alluding to a statement of the *Upaniṣad*,<sup>17</sup> *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* versified this very fact about His *Guru* poignantly as, “I take refuge in that Lord of all, *Vidyātīrtha*, who is described by the *Śruti* as the One God who created heaven and earth.”<sup>18</sup>

Not only are these dual views about His Holiness - as a *jīvanmukta* and as the Lord incarnate - not mutually exclusive and indeed only complement each other, they also afford people a glimpse of multiple facets of His Holiness’s glory. Importantly, each of these views has its own profound benefit. What His Holiness Himself said about *Rāma* in a benedictory discourse is instructive in this context: “*Rāma* can be viewed either as a man or as God. If He is viewed as a man, then we can improve our lives by emulating Him. After all, He too faced trials and tribulations like us. In spite of difficulties He emerged triumphant. If He is meditated upon as God, we can get liberation.”



His Holiness had to stay at Bengaluru for some time, while His *Guru* stayed on at Sringeri. Before His Holiness left for Bengaluru in 1936, the senior *Jagadguru* referred to His Holiness’s extraordinary vision of Śiva (described under *nāma* 10) and enlightenment (vide *nāma* 1) in December 1935 and told Him, in private, “I know that you are God Himself and ever perfect. Your engaging in *sādhanā* and apparently attaining enlightenment were only a part of your divine sport. Your vision of Śiva and your receiving His blessings and instruction a few days before your taking your *sādhanā* to its culmination were on the same footing as the vision, blessings and instruction of Śiva obtained by *Kṛṣṇa* (described in the *Droṇa-parvan* of the *Mahābhārata*).”

The senior *Jagadguru* even composed eight verses about His Holiness, in one of which He explicitly described His Holiness as One who is known by means of the *Pranava* (*Om*) and who is the manifestation of the Supreme *Brahman*.<sup>146</sup> Giving the verses to His Holiness, the senior *Jagadguru* said, “I have written only what I definitely know to be true about you. There is no exaggerated praise here.”



Sri D. S. Subbaramaiya, who, as described under *nāma* 2, was an intimate disciple of the senior *Jagadguru*, once recalled, “When I had once gone for the *darśana* of the senior *Jagadguru*, His Holiness came to have a necessary word with Him. As His Holiness was leaving, respectfully walking backwards so as to not show His back to His *Guru*, the senior *Jagadguru*

declared to me, ‘He is not just a respectable *saṁnyāsin*. He is God incarnate.’”



His Holiness was camping in Vathirairuppu (in Tamil Nadu) in October, 1957. After *pūjā*, He retired for the night to His room there. After some time, He abruptly got up and quietly walked out of the residence. Except for a few street lamps that were flickering, it was pitch dark everywhere. The Chaturagiri hill was at a distance and the Mahāliṅga-svāmi Temple was on its summit. His attention was drawn to it. He closed His eyes in contemplation, and after some time, started to head back to the camp. In the meantime, some disciples and townsfolk had woken up and, perplexed, approached His Holiness. His Holiness asked, “There is a temple on top of the hill. What temple is that?” Some replied, “That is the Mahāliṅga Temple.” His Holiness declared, “I am going there tomorrow morning. Make preparations without delay.”

The next day, He proceeded by car to a small town at the base of the hill and from there ascended the hill by foot. He walked briskly. The others were unable to keep pace with Him and lagged far behind. He reached the top of the hill around 12:30 p.m. There was not even a trace of strain or fatigue on His face. He went to the Sundara-mahāliṅga Temple and then that of the Goddess. It was around 5:00 p.m. by the time His afternoon routine was completed. He then decided to visit another shrine on the hill, that of Candana-mahāliṅga. His Holiness permitted only Sri Sundaram, a man who lived on the hill and knew every portion of it, to accompany Him. His Holiness proceeded in silence, leading. He had *darśana* of Candana-mahāliṅga. Telling Sundaram to wait there, He headed for another peak. He crossed some rough paths and proceeded swiftly as if He was most familiar with the place. Sundaram was stunned to see the speed with which His Holiness was navigating the dense path and proceeding so comfortably to a part of the hill rarely visited by anyone. He had never before seen a stranger walk at such a great pace on the hill he knew so well.

When it was past 6 o’clock but there was no sign of His Holiness, Sundaram climbed up a huge tree nearby. From his position at the top of the tree, He spotted His Holiness seated in a clearing on the hill. In front of His Holiness was a person in ochre robes, with matted hair tied in a knot. His Holiness appeared to be conversing with him. Sundaram thought he was hallucinating, for His Holiness had gone there alone and he had never seen that person before. Inexplicably experiencing haziness of vision and tiredness, he descended, rested for a while and returned to where He was supposed to wait. In a short while, His Holiness climbed down and returned to where Sundaram was waiting. His Holiness did not stop but continued to walk. He went to the Candana-mahāliṅga shrine and climbed down the

mountain. Sundaram quietly followed His Holiness. Subsequently, His Holiness returned to Vathirairuppu. Sundaram did not breathe a word of what had transpired that evening to anyone. However, later, when a *saṁnyāsin* known to him visited Chaturagiri, he told him all that had transpired. The *saṁnyāsin* was amazed and exclaimed that the person His Holiness conversed with that day was a great *siddha-puruṣa*, unavailable to others.

[These details were culled from two articles that appeared in the fortnightly Tamil magazine, *Shakti Vikatan*, in the issues dated 20th February, 2008 and 7th March, 2008. The two articles were written by Kudanthai Shyama and were a part of a series titled Chaturagiri Yattirai (Pilgrimage to Chaturagiri).]

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In April 1984, as His Holiness was giving *tīrtha-prasāda* in the front hall of Sacchidananda Vilasa in the morning, a devotee showed His Holiness two small idols of Lord Gaṇapati and requested His Holiness to sanctify them by His touch. His Holiness took the idols in His right hand and remarked that they were beautiful. With the idols in His closed palm, He remained with His eyes closed for a while. Thereafter, as He was about to give them to the devotee, He asked, “Are you intending to worship two idols?” The devotee replied, “I was desirous of receiving one from Your Holiness and of submitting the other to Your Holiness.” His Holiness smiled, gave him one idol and kept the other near Himself. As the devotee moved on, His Holiness looked in the direction of the entrance of the hall, beckoned to a disciple and said, “Tell them, in Hindi, to come after 20 minutes.” There were two men, one in his fifties and the other in his thirties, standing on the final step leading to the hall, looking quite ill at ease. They were wearing white pyjamas and kurtas, were bearded and had white skull caps. Once the disciple conveyed the message of His Holiness to these Muslims, they promptly left.

In a few minutes, the distribution of *tīrtha-prasāda* to the devotees was complete. His Holiness went inside, proceeded to the room on the eastern side of Sacchidananda Vilasa on the ground floor and sat on His wooden seat there. He had gestured to the disciple to follow Him. He ensured that no other attendant was present. His Holiness told the disciple to shut the door through which He had entered. Having sat silently for a while, He told the disciple, “The two would have come. Bring them in. Shut the door behind you.” The disciple did as instructed.

On His Holiness asking the two men to sit, they sat, not cross-legged but with their knees joined and positioned on the ground. Abruptly, His Holiness started to recite something in Arabic. He began with the words, “Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim” (which meant “In the name of Allah, the most Gracious,

the most Merciful.”) His subsequent chant started with “Alam nashrah laka sadrak.”

[His Holiness had chanted Surah 94 of the Quran, called “ash-Sharh (The Opening),” that comprises eight lines that convey: “1) Have We not opened your breast for you 2) And removed from you your burden 3) Which weighed down your back? 4) And have We not raised high your fame? 5) Verily, along with every hardship is relief, 6) Verily, along with every hardship is relief. 7) So when you have finished (your occupation), devote yourself for Allah’s worship. 8) And to your Lord turn (all your) intentions and hopes.”]

The two Muslims were awestruck. They quickly held their hands in the Muslim gesture of prayer, with their open palms held towards their faces. When His Holiness ended His chant, the elder of the two said, in Urdu, “Bābā, how wonderfully you chant the Quran!” His Holiness ignored the compliment and asked, in Urdu, “What is the purpose of your visit?” The younger man said, “My child is very ill.” Without waiting for him to continue, His Holiness said, “Bring the boy.” The man said, “I shall do so. He is with his mother in the car.”

As he went out, the elder person told His Holiness, “I teach the Quran in a madrasa and my son does so in another. Both of us, his wife and child are on a sightseeing tour and arrived at Mangalore (Mangaluru) a few days ago. We took a taxi and proceeded through Agumbe to the Jog Falls near Shimoga (Shivamogga). We then wanted to proceed to the origin of the river Tuṅgā. However, as we were nearing Koppa, my grandchild began to scream in pain, clutching his abdomen. My daughter-in-law tried her best to pacify him but could not. We took him to a doctor at Koppa. He examined the child and suggested that we admit him to a hospital there. We did so. Despite several tests and treatment, there was no improvement. The child was suffering much and could not eat or drink anything. He threw up even water. At night, due to exhaustion, my daughter-in-law must have dozed off for a few minutes. She dreamt that the child was dead and was inconsolable after waking up. Three years ago, her first son, when aged two, had clutched his abdomen and screamed. Later, he died in a hospital as his appendix had ruptured. Understandably, this child’s suffering severe pain in the abdomen and that too at the age of two was terrible for us. As there was no improvement even by this morning, we decided to shift the child to some big hospital in Mangaluru and got the child discharged, against the advice of the doctor at Koppa.

“As we were starting, the taxi driver suggested that as we would be passing through Sringeri en route to Mangalore, we should get the child blessed by you. He was sure that with your blessings itself, the child would get relief.

On hearing this, my daughter-in-law insisted that we should bring the child to you. My son and I strongly objected. We told her that her father was an Imam and we were orthodox Muslims. How could we take our child for blessings to some Swami who would know nothing of the Quran and would possibly prescribe some idol worship, which was clearly prohibited in the Quran? She, however, became hysterical and no matter how much we voiced our objections to come to you, she continued to insist. As she was becoming unmanageable and as the child was crying non-stop and unable to take even a drop of water, we agreed, unwillingly, to bring the child to you. When I saw you from a distance, you were giving an idol to someone. That made us uncomfortable. I felt that not knowing that idol worship is taboo for us, you would give us also some idol and ask us to worship it for the sake of our child. We were somewhat relieved when you asked us to come back after twenty minutes. Now, by your excellent chanting of the Quran, you have completely dispelled our misgiving about our bringing our child to some Swami who would have no idea about the Quran.”

His Holiness listened passively. A few moments of silence followed. The younger person entered with a bawling child in his arms and followed by his wife who was in purdah. Even as she entered, she repeatedly wailed, in Urdu, “Bābā, bless my child.” His Holiness assured her, “Do not worry. The child will be alright. Allah is most merciful.” She gained some composure and, in response to His Holiness’s gesture, both the husband and wife sat down. The child continued to cry. His Holiness asked the child’s father to hand Him the child. Placing the boy on His lap, His Holiness lifted the child’s upper garment up. Gently rubbing the child’s exposed abdomen, His Holiness chanted in Arabic what started thus: “Allahuma rabbi-nas.”

[What His Holiness had chanted was a dua (supplication) about which the Hadith says, “Aisha (R.A.) narrated: Whenever Allah’s Messenger (S.A.W.) paid a visit to a patient or a patient was brought to him, he used to invoke Allah saying, ‘Allahuma rabbi-nas adhabal ba’sa, ashfi wa entashafi, la shifa’illa shifa’uka shifa’la yughadiru saqama (O Lord of the people! Remove this pain and cure it. You are the One Who cures. There is no cure but Yours. Grant such a cure that no illness remains).’” This supplication is to be chanted while rubbing with the right hand the affected part of the patient.]

Even as He ended His chant, the child stopped crying. The mother blurted out, in Urdu, “Bābā, thank you, thank you.”

His Holiness asked her, “Do you have anything with you to feed the child.” She said, “Yes. I have milk and some eatables.” His Holiness handed the child back to his father and asked her to give the boy milk. The child drank the milk given in a cup. Helping the child to stand up, she told him, “Perform

salaam to Bābā.” The child smiled and did so. His Holiness smiled back. The elders profusely thanked His Holiness. He just said, “Be thankful to Allah and not to me,” and permitted them to leave. As they were about to leave, the elder Muslim said, “It is because of the driver that we came to you. Would you see him?” His Holiness said, “Yes. Send him in.”

In a couple of minutes, the driver entered. He had removed his upper garments. He was having *kuṅkuma* on his forehead and seemed to be in his fifties. On seeing him, His Holiness smiled and said, in Kannada, “You have come here before.” The man confirmed that he had and performed *namaskāra*. As he was getting up, His Holiness asked him, “Do you continue to chant ‘*sumukhāya namaḥ*’ and the rest?” The driver replied, “I do so every day, without fail. After I started chanting the twelve names as taught by Your Holiness and offering worship through them to the picture of Vināyaka that Your Holiness had blessed me with, my problems ceased and I am living happily since then.” His Holiness asked, “How is that picture now?” The driver apologetically said, “As I travel much and carry it with me in my car everywhere I go, it has faded.” Giving the driver the Vināyaka idol that had been submitted to Him earlier in the day, His Holiness told him, “Hereafter, worship this instead of the picture.” He then gave him a fruit and permitted him to leave.



His Holiness was once camping at Kotekar, near Mangaluru. It was about 2:30 p.m. He was seated in His private room. He was telling a disciple about an event when He abruptly got up, walked to the door leading to the open veranda in the front of the building and opened it. In moments, a man came rushing there. He was sweating, his shirt and trousers were dirty and his forehead was bandaged.

His Holiness gently asked him who he was and what he wanted. The man blurted out, in Kannada, “Please save,” but could not proceed further as he began to sob. Even without his having said anything more, His Holiness told him, “Your son will be alright soon. Do not worry.” Then gesturing to him to wait, He went inside and brought two big packets of cashew nuts and one large pack of almonds. He gave them to him, saying, “Give some of these to your son daily, after some days.” Having respectfully taken the dry fruits, he told His Holiness, “My son is in hospital. The doctor told me today that my child is suffering from cancer.” “No, he does not have cancer. He will come home soon from the hospital and be well,” His Holiness stated emphatically. The man joined his palms, thanked Him and left. His Holiness shut the door, resumed His seat and continued to talk to the disciple.

The next evening, when He was completing His evening walk, He saw the man standing at a distance, with palms joined. He smiled at him and entered

the building. The man walked up to the disciple and said, “Last evening, after I had returned to the hospital from here, the doctor came and said, ‘There was a mistake; reports had got mixed up. Your son does not have cancer. We can discharge him in two days. After taking him home, give him good nourishment.’ Please convey this to Swami. I am very thankful to Him. As I did not wish to disturb Him today, I stayed at a distance.” The disciple replied that he would submit this information to His Holiness. As the disciple was starting to leave, he added, “I am a Christian. When I was shell-shocked on hearing that my child has cancer, a Hindu friend told me to approach Swami for blessings. That is why I rushed here yesterday. I am glad that I did so.” Later, when the disciple reported the matter to His Holiness, He just heard him in silence.



In the year 1974 Sri P. Subramaniam, a close devotee of His Holiness from Kolkata, escorted a team of devotees to Sringeri during *cāturmāsya*. On reaching Bengaluru, the group was accommodated in the Shankara Math.

The devotee narrates: “Around midnight, my wife and I saw His Holiness standing near us and looking around the room where many of the devotees who had travelled with us were sleeping. We got up and prostrated at the lotus feet of His Holiness. We saw Him giving a benign smile and blessing us with His outstretched right hand. We saw Him walking away and disappear. We were amazed at having seen His Holiness there when we were expecting to have His *darśana* only at Sringeri. Our mind dwelt on the vision and wondered how and why it had happened.

“Next day, when we reached Sringeri and had *darśana* of His Holiness, I said to Him that we had had His *darśana* the previous night at the Shankara Math at Bengaluru. His Holiness smiled and said, ‘Since you were bringing a number of devotees from Calcutta (Kolkata), I wanted to see whether they were comfortably accommodated and properly looked after last night.’

“These words of His Holiness sent a thrill through us. He had not only come to Bengaluru, but had also given us eyes to have His divine *darśana* there.”



The following is a narrative by Smt. Vaikuntam Anantarama Seshan: “His Holiness once planned to visit Narasiṃha-parvata, a hill at the top of which Jagadguru Śrī Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin (the 33<sup>rd</sup> pontiff) had performed protracted penance. My husband and I wanted to accompany Him. He initially dissuaded us as it was raining heavily and the path was arduous, but finally granted permission. On the way, His Holiness performed *pūjā* at the Rṣyaśṛṅga temple at Kigga. We reached the summit of Narasiṃha-parvata and stayed there for the night.

“At 3.00 p.m. the next day, everybody was ready to descend. Ominous dark clouds began to gather and a downpour was expected any moment. “Let us start immediately. It will not rain till we go down,” remarked His Holiness, with a tone of finality. As we descended we saw that it was raining heavily on the hills to our right and left. However, we were not caught in the rain. The most intriguing part of the phenomenon was that the rain could be seen following us but it never caught up with us as we climbed down. As soon as we had reached the vehicles, His Holiness said, “All of you board the vehicles immediately. Testing of nature is sufficient.” No sooner had we taken our seats in the vehicles, than it began to rain cats and dogs. What better illustration is needed to show His Holiness’s total mastery over nature?”

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At times, His Holiness took totally unexpected decisions, the reasons for which were unapparent to the officials of the *Maṭha*; generally, these were prompted, as per His own admission, by the ‘*preraṇā*, divine inspiration’ that He received. For instance, in 1977, during His second all-India tour, He was scheduled to proceed to Delhi from Varanasi. Extensive arrangements were initiated at Delhi on the basis of the prior information available to the devotees there about His tour programme. Suddenly, He changed His stance and revealed His wish to proceed towards Kolkata. None could understand what had prompted Him to say so nor did He give any explanation.

Since commitments had already been made for Him to visit Prayagraj, He decided to go there from Varanasi and thereafter proceed towards Kolkata. All agreed later that His Holiness’s decision had been very timely and wise. The then President of India, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, expired about the time His Holiness was scheduled to have arrived at Delhi. It would have been rather odd if His Holiness entered the capital at a time when there was State mourning. Postponement of the visit to Delhi enabled the devotees there to put in extra efforts to hasten and complete the constructions in Shankara Vidya Kendra, the Sringeri Math branch in Delhi, prior to His Holiness’s arrival. Hence, when He came to Delhi, He could perform the *kumbhābhiṣeka* (consecration) of the temples there. Had He arrived at Delhi as scheduled earlier, this would not have been possible as the works could not have been completed by then. Thus, the sudden change in itinerary not only did not inconvenience anybody, it only proved advantageous to all concerned.

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Sri Ganapati Subrahmanya Avadhani, who served as the *Maṭha purohit*, once recollected, “One evening at Lucknow in January 1967, His Holiness was performing the Candramoulīśvara *pūjā* as usual, with scores of devotees gathered to witness it, when an intruder dashed into the place. On seeing him

wearing a coat, trousers and shoes, the guard tried to stop him. He simply brushed the sentry on duty aside and sprang forward. As he neared the *pūjā-maṇḍapa*, several others and I gathered around him and tried to prevent him from advancing further. Being a well-built man, he overcame the opposition. His Holiness noticed this. He gestured to us to let him be. On being freed, he moved closer to the dais. His Holiness directed him to sit down. He obeyed like an innocent child and squatted in *Vajrāsana*, with joined palms. He quietly watched the *pūjā* with rapt attention. After finishing the *pūjā*, His Holiness asked him to come the next day at eight in the morning. He said, ‘His Holiness is an embodiment of compassion but the people around are rude. What am I to do if I am treated by them in the same way as today?’ His Holiness understood his predicament and advised him to come wearing a *dhoti* and an upper cloth.

“The next day, after finishing His morning *āhnikā*, His Holiness told His attendant, ‘The Sethji who was here yesterday will be coming to see me. Usher him in.’ Later, the person came wearing a *dhoti* and a shawl, with sandal paste on his forehead as also *vibhūti* and a *tilaka*! We were pleasantly surprised to behold him thus. He was taken to His Holiness. After some time, he emerged, beaming.

“On his way back, he met me. I conveyed my apologies to him for the inconvenience caused the previous night. I then asked him what brought him to His Holiness. He gave the following account. He was having a host of difficulties and was struggling to overcome them. One night he had an unusual dream. A sage with a brilliant and smiling countenance appeared in front of him. On waking up, he wondered who that might be. After some days, when he was in his shop, he accidentally spotted a child carrying a large photograph. To his surprise, he found that it was a photograph of the sage whom he had beheld in the dream. On enquiry, he learnt that the photograph was that of the *Jagadguru* of Sringeri who was then camping in the city. Filled with joy, he immediately rushed to have *darśana*. My companions and I had tried unsuccessfully to stop him. His Holiness had duly blessed him and infused new strength into him.”



#### 4. अमृतोपमभाषणः *Amṛtopama-bhāṣaṇaḥ*

One whose speech was like nectar

The compound word ‘*amṛta-upama-bhāṣaṇaḥ*’ meaning ‘One whose speech is like nectar’, specifically employs the word ‘*upama*’ (like), though even without its explicit use, the meaning implied would only be ‘One whose speech is like nectar’. The significance of this may be gleaned from the following example.

The *Upaniṣad* says, “*ākāśavat sarvagataśca nityaḥ* ((*Brahman* is) all-pervading and eternal like space).”<sup>19</sup> Here space is cited as an analogy to understand the nature of *Brahman*. The phrase ‘*ākāśa-vat*’ (like *ākāśa*) indicates not that *Brahman*’s pervasiveness and eternity are on the same footing as those of space, but that *Brahman* is superior to space vis-à-vis these criteria. *Brahman* is more pervasive than space, for It pervades space as well. ‘Space is eternal’ is only a relative characterization, for though it does remain while other entities are annihilated during *pralaya* (cosmic dissolution), it too is finally destroyed. On the other hand, *Brahman* is eternal, for It is never ever subject to destruction.

Likewise, ‘His Holiness’s speech was like nectar’ implies not merely that His speech was equivalent to nectar, but that it was far superior to nectar. Nectar is delicious and joyful; it grants the *devas* (gods) who partake of it, freedom from death for the time being. However, the words of His Holiness conferred not just fleeting sweetness and joy, but pure knowledge and unalloyed, absolute bliss. His words gave the supreme knowledge that granted disciples liberation and thereby permanent freedom from rebirth.

The *Upaniṣad* instructs, “Know that alone, the one *Ātman*; eschew every other speech (that is not conducive to the realisation of the *Ātman*); this is the bridge to ‘*amṛta*’ (immortality).”<sup>20</sup> In accordance with this, His Holiness’s words were ever directed towards bringing about what is truly good to others, in the process of leading them on the path to liberation. That His Holiness guided spiritual aspirants to this Supreme *amṛta*, was glimpsed under *nāma* 2. Apart from giving individual guidance, He delivered *anugraha-bhāṣaṇas* (benedictory discourses) in the thousands, invariably stressing on the importance of assimilating spiritual pursuits into one’s life.



[The following is excerpted from His Holiness’s exposition on *karma-yoga*.]

Three brothers went on a vacation to a hill station and stayed there in a cottage booked by them. One night, when they were fast asleep, a powerful earthquake wreaked havoc in the region. The roof of the cottage fell and would have crushed them to death had not a portion of the roof-beam come to rest on a piece of wooden furniture in the bedroom. From the creaking sounds that the brothers heard, they realised that, in moments, the roof would descend on them. There was simply no question of their remaining where they were till help arrived.

They turned towards the two doors that led out of the room. Due to an electric short-circuit, a fire had started near one of them. The flames were spreading. The way to the other door was strewn with glass pieces from the shattered window panes. One of the brothers ran towards the door where the fire was. He managed to escape through it but suffered severe burns and had

to be hospitalised for weeks. The second brother recognised the danger of passing through the flames and so moved as swiftly as he could to the second door. His soles were pierced at several spots by the glass pieces on the way. He had to be hospitalised for two days.

The third brother thought, 'It is madness to remain here. Heading towards the spreading flames is foolish, for severe burns will be inevitable. So, I must escape through the other door. However, I must first do something to protect my feet from the glass pieces.' He tore his bed-spread and wrapped a piece of cloth on each foot. He worked fast and so the whole process took only seconds. Then, he headed for the door chosen by him. He escaped unhurt.

A person cannot remain without performing some action or the other just as the brothers were not in a position to remain where they lay in the bedroom. All his acts do have consequences. If he engages in *adharma*, he will experience much suffering in future, in hell or on earth. His behaviour would be on par with that of the brother who headed towards the door engulfed by fire. He who performs meritorious deeds experiences happiness for some time in heaven or acquires a good birth on the earth. In any case, he has to be reborn. Thus, even the acquirer of *punya* (virtue) does suffer the bondage of transmigration. His conduct is comparable to that of the second brother. The path to the fiery door was easy to tread as is the path of evil; the way to the other door was difficult as is the path of *dharma*, to go along which one has to restrain the mind and the senses.

The Lord has explained how a person may perform actions but avoid being bound by them. A person should dedicate all his actions and their fruits to God and discharge his duties without hankering for the results. This means of performing actions but escaping bondage is called *karma-yoga*. The performer of *karma-yoga* is like the third brother, who escaped through the very door through which the second brother had left, but without suffering any injury. The most intelligent of the brothers protected his feet with bandages; the *karma-yogin* protects himself by dedicating his actions and their fruits to God.

A devotee who sincerely performs the duties ordained for him by God and specified in the scriptures and, further, does so in a spirit of dedication, pleases God greatly and receives His grace in abundance. By the Lord's grace, his mind becomes very pure. In due course, he realises the Truth and gets liberated.

A woman doted on her young son and took great care of him. One day, she woke up with an intense headache, fever and nausea. Nevertheless, she attended to the child's morning requirements without any laxity. That day, she found the rice prepared by her to be slightly overcooked. Promptly, she

started to cook some more. Her husband noticed this and told her, “You are sick and in pain. Why do you want to strain yourself? The rice that is ready is quite eatable.” “I want to give my son only the kind of rice that he is used to and likes. As for the overcooked rice, I shall consume it,” replied the wife. Out of deep love for her child, the woman did her very best for him. Likewise, a *karma-yogin*, by virtue of his devotion to God, performs his duties to the very best of his ability and refrains from *adharma*.

Two students appeared for an examination. In spite of having prepared well, they fared badly because the questions were very tough and some of them fell outside the scope of the prescribed syllabus. One of them, who did not practise *karma-yoga*, became highly dejected because of his inept performance. When he went home and sat down to prepare for the next day’s subject, his mind kept reverting to that day’s question paper. His worry greatly hampered his preparation. The other boy, being a practitioner of *karma-yoga*, did not experience the least anxiety. This is because, in the examination hall itself, he had dedicated his performance and its fruit to God. After returning home, undisturbed by worry, he focused his attention on the next day’s subject.

On the following day, the first boy became flabbergasted on encountering a tough question. The *karma-yogin* read the question carefully and answered it to the best of his ability without getting perturbed in the least. It is hardly surprising that the first boy secured a lower rank than his friend. This example shows that the efficiency of a *karma-yogin* exceeds that of a person who acts with a longing for the fruits of his actions.

The Lord has declared in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Perform your prescribed duties, for action is superior to inaction. Moreover, even the maintenance of your body will not be possible through inaction. Man becomes bound by all his actions except those done by him for the sake of God. O son of Kuntī, perform actions for the sake of God, without being attached.... By performing his duty without attachment, a person attains liberation (through the purification of his mind).”<sup>21</sup>



[The following are extracts from benedictory discourses of His Holiness in which He spoke on the practice of meditation.]

*Dhyāna* or meditation is the one-pointed fixation of the mind on the object of concentration. Bhagavatpāda, in His *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya* (commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*) speaks of *dhyāna* as the proximate means to Self-realisation. *Dhyāna* is of two types. In *saguṇa-dhyāna*, one meditates on a form or sound while these are absent in *nirguṇa-dhyāna*. The final aim of *dhyāna* is to bring the spiritual aspirant face to face with the Truth. *Saguṇa-dhyāna* must be practised till one is competent to perform *nirguṇa-dhyāna*.

This does not, however, preclude the possibility of one who is an adept in *nirguṇa-dhyāna* performing *saguṇa-dhyāna*. The actual method of spiritual discipline to be practised is to be decided only by the *Guru* and the procedure is likely to vary from person to person on account of differences in temperament, state of spiritual development, circumstances and the like. This being the case it is not possible to describe a way of practising meditation common to all.

One method of performing *saguṇa-dhyāna*, which is suitable to many, is concentration on one's *iṣṭa-devatā* (favourite form of God) as seated in a red lotus in one's heart. One should imagine the red-petalled lotus in full bloom with the *iṣṭa-devatā* seated in it in the manner described in the appropriate *dhyāna-śloka* (verse describing the divine form associated with a *mantra*). Concentrating one's mind on the form of the *iṣṭa-devatā* one should perform *japa*. An easier method for some is to imagine the *iṣṭa-devatā* as seated in front of one. Another method is to meditate upon a *jyotis* (effulgence) in the space between the eyebrows, while performing *nāma-japa*. Meditation on the *Guru* can also be practised.

For some who are unable to mentally, clearly visualise their *iṣṭa-devatā*, a simple method would be to sit in front of a picture of the *iṣṭa-devatā*, look at the picture and perform *japa*. *Japa* may be done audibly, with the lips moving but without sound coming out, or mentally, the last one being the best. As one gains in concentration, one can begin to close one's eyes for brief periods of time and visualise the *iṣṭa-devatā* as seen in the picture. With due practice, meditation can be performed without the aid of the picture. *Saguṇa-dhyāna* can also be done by concentrating one's mind on the *mantra* alone, without taking recourse to the form of the *iṣṭa-devatā*.

Two difficulties generally encountered when people practise *dhyāna* are extraneous thoughts disturbing the meditation process and the aspirant feeling sleepy. The inability to keep one's mind fixed on the object of meditation is a difficulty which almost all *sādhakas* face. The method of tackling this problem consists in being vigilant at the time of meditation. If the mind wanders, it should be brought back to the object of meditation. In most cases, it is futile to attempt to simply force the mind to remain on the object of meditation. Therefore, as and when the mind goes out, one has no other choice but to watch its movement and bring it back. An aid to block the mind from going outwards or at least reduce the tendency, is to hold one's breath for a moment or two when one finds the mind going out. Another aid is to visualise the presence of the *iṣṭa-devatā* in whatever object the mind chooses to think about, so that the mind is made to think of the *iṣṭa-devatā*. Uttering the *japa* with somewhat greater vigour also helps one in gaining control. If one notices the commencement of distraction, more than

half the problem is solved as one can fixate the mind again on the object of meditation. In most cases people become aware that the mind has deviated from the object of concentration only after some time has elapsed. Vigilance, stressing on the mind about the transitory nature of external objects, and their inability to produce any happiness should be practised in order to hold the wandering mind. Perception of faults in the objects towards which the mind runs, acts as a brake on the wandering mind.

It must be borne in mind that these aids are, as it were, emergency measures adopted during the course of the meditation period. *Brahmacarya* (celibacy), complete faith in the *Guru*, *bhakti* (devotion), *vairāgya* (dispassion) and practice are all very necessary to achieve success in meditation.

In *nirguṇa-dhyāna*, the mind is focussed on the Supreme *Ātman* which is beyond all name and form and defies any positive conception. To perform *nirguṇa-dhyāna*, one should initially look at a light for a few moments. When one does so, worldly concerns are forgotten. Even the thought, 'I am forgetting', will be absent. At that juncture, the eyes should be closed. Next, one should feel, 'The eyes are seeing within.' Spontaneously, an effulgence will manifest. Unlike common illumination, it is generally blue-hued. At times it resembles moonlight. Feeling that the gaze is in-drawn, one should hold on to the thought, 'I am pure consciousness' and realise consciousness as all pervasive. If one does so, the process will culminate in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, and by this method one can attain the realisation of the Self.



## 5. अनेकमठनिर्माता *Aneka-maṭha-nirmātā*

One who established many branch *Maṭhas*

In order to sustain and propagate *Sanātana-dharma*, Bhagavatpāda established four *Maṭhas* in India. In accordance with the mandate given by Bhagavatpāda, the pontiffs in the unbroken line of traditional succession in the *Maṭha* of the south, Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri, have, over the centuries, continued to spread the message of *Sanātana-dharma* and the teachings of the *Upaniṣads* among the masses. In the process, they also established branches of the *Maṭha* at various locations in the country for efficacious dissemination of the teachings of Bhagavatpāda. Much like its headquarters at Sringeri, a branch *Maṭha* may have shrines of Śrī Śāradāmbā and Bhagavatpāda among others, *Veda* and *Śāstra pāṭhaśālas*, community halls for conduct of religious and spiritual activities including *satsaṅga*, *bhajans* and religious discourses, and accommodation for the stay of pilgrims. Branch *Maṭhas* serve as links between the local community and the *Jagadgurus* at Sringeri. In some branches, *sannyāsins* too are engaged in spreading the teachings of Bhagavatpāda.

Under His Holiness, the Sringeri Math saw stupendous growth in terms of establishment of new branch *Maṭhas*, all of which thrived under His watch.



Some of the branch *Maṭhas* newly established by His Holiness:

Location	Date
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu	04.12.1959
Karur, Tamil Nadu	14.12.1959
Chennai (T. Nagar), Tamil Nadu	14.01.1961
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh	02.07.1961
Gobichettipalayam, Tamil Nadu	02.04.1962
Chickmagaluru, Karnataka	19.04.1964
Srivilliputhur, Tamil Nadu	18.07.1964
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala	05.12.1964
Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu	21.01.1965
Chennai (IET Campus, Kodambakkam), Tamil Nadu	27.10.1965
Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh	03.02.1966
Kolkata, West Bengal	April, 1967
New Delhi	22.06.1967
Shivamogga, Karnataka	04.02.1968
Gokarna, Karnataka	19.01.1969
Sagara, Karnataka	20.01.1969
Chennai (Raja Annamalaipuram), Tamil Nadu	09.02.1969
Thenkarai, Tamil Nadu	23.02.1969
Karwar, Karnataka	16.03.1978
Bengaluru (Malleswaram), Karnataka	17.09.1978
Tumkuru, Karnataka	09.05.1980
Salem, Tamil Nadu	12.05.1980
Chennai (Kripashankari Street, West Mambalam), Tamil Nadu	22.01.1982
Mumbai, Maharashtra	25.03.1982
Kollur, Karnataka	23.02.1986
Kotekar, Karnataka	06.04.1986
Bengaluru (Lingarajapuram), Karnataka	27.07.1987



## 6. अनेकदर्शनमर्मवित् *Aneka-darśana-marma-vit*

One who knew the hidden import of many schools of knowledge

The word '*darśana*', though usually used for traditional systems of philosophy, also means 'schools of knowledge' in general. It can therefore be taken here to include other oriental and occidental philosophies or schools of thought, as also science and metaphysics, while the traditional *darśanas* are spoken of in *nāma* 46.

The term '*marma-vit*' means one who knows the hidden import. His Holiness is described here as a knower of the hidden import of not one, but

*aneka* or many *darśanas*. This implies that His Holiness could answer profound questions and untie intricate knots not merely within a single domain, but also across multiple such domains. He was indeed a master at doing so in an integrated and seamless manner. His deep knowledge mothered insight into several domains. He had the unique ability to convey complex concepts, integrating and distinguishing between various schools of thought, in the simplest of ways, to even a lay person.



In 1975, a Physics professor from Bihar in his forties, had a conversation with His Holiness in Hindi.

Professor: I am interested in showing that what was said in our ancient books is what modern science is now saying about the universe. It is now largely accepted that the universe is expanding. Its origin can be traced back to a time when it was a point. I believe that the universe will start shrinking after reaching a maximum size. This is because of the pull of gravity associated with the matter in the universe. It will return to the state in which it was when it originated. Then it will start expanding again. I think that this is exactly what is said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Purāṇas*.

His Holiness: You said that the universe will start shrinking because of the amount of matter in it. Has that much matter been discovered?

P: Not yet, but I am confident it will be.

HH: Let us suppose that it will be. Will the next cycle of expansion then be identical to the present one or bigger or smaller? If the next cycle of expansion is larger, more time will be required before the universe fully shrinks than will be needed for it to do so in the present cycle. Hence, ultimately, the universe will not shrink back, no matter how long one waits. Even if the next cycle of expansion is smaller than the present one, then too there will not be infinite cycles. If your position is that the scriptures speak of infinite cycles of expansion and contraction of the universe and that that is exactly what science is arriving at, you must not only have enough matter to cause the universe to shrink but it must also be that the next expansion must match the present one. Any evidence to the contrary will be fatal to what you are trying to establish.

P: I do not think such a contingency will arise.

[In 1975 when this conversation took place several physicists had shown that as per the second law of thermodynamics, the universe would not go through infinite cycles; even if there were to be cycles, the expansion of one cycle would not be the same as that of the preceding cycle.]

P (continued): If it turns out that the cycles will not be identical, I will have to go through our texts again and see how they exactly predict what conforms to the new data.

HH: In that case, you will be altering your interpretation of the scriptural texts to suit the scientific position of the day, whereas your aim is to start with texts and establish that that is what modern science has discovered. Let us suppose that nothing fatal to your present view is noticed now or in the near future and hence, no reinterpretation of the texts by you is needed for the present. Even then, what guarantee is there that even after a decade or two, data will not necessitate a major rethink? For instance, what would happen if scientists were to come across data that shows that the universe is expanding faster and faster? In that case, how would even the present expansion be followed by a contraction? Would you then reinterpret the texts to assert that they speak of the universe expanding faster and faster and not of it having infinite cycles of expansion and contraction?

P: I do not think that there is any reasonable possibility of data for an increasingly fast expansion turning up but I see the point that Your Holiness is making.

[As it turned out, the professor was wrong. Accelerated expansion of the universe was discovered in 1988 by two independent research teams and three scientists were awarded the Nobel Prize for this discovery in 2011.]

HH: I fully appreciate your interest in seeing scientific findings in the light of our ancient texts. The only point I was trying to make is that if you equate an interpretation of the scripture with a popularly held scientific view, as scientific interpretations are subject to change with new data or ideas, you may, in time, have to reinterpret the scripture to conform to the new scientific position.

P: I value our ancient culture and accomplishments. That is why I wanted to tell my students that modern science's universe with infinite cycles of expansion and contraction was made known very long ago, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Purāṇas*.

HH: There is much that can make us proud of our ancients in the scientific realm. The concept of zero is an instance. Our ancients were the first to understand it. Suśruta performed surgery on the eye to remove cataracts (the word His Holiness used was *netra-paṭala*) over 2000 years ago. If you see the *Śulba-sūtras*, which deal with the construction of sacrificial altars, you will find that thousands of years ago itself, our ancients had an impressive knowledge of mathematics. For example, a *Śulba-sūtra* of Bodhāyana states, "A rope stretched along the diagonal of a rectangle produces an area that the vertical and horizontal sides make together."<sup>22</sup> When His Holiness explained

the meaning of the *sūtra*, the professor exclaimed, “Amazing! This is the Pythagoras theorem. That means that we knew of this much before Pythagoras of the sixth-century B.C.” His Holiness proceeded to give some more examples about the discoveries in ancient India.

P: I did not know all this. I shall gather such information and present it to my students. I know Sanskrit and shall study the *Śulba-sūtras*.

After the professor left, His Holiness remarked to the disciple who was witness to the conversation, “He is sincere. He is, however, mistaken when he takes it that the *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Purāṇas* specify that the universe endlessly expands and contracts. What they actually teach is compatible with a universe that has infinite cycles, a universe that can be traced back to a point and also with a universe that expands faster and faster.”

ॐॐॐॐॐ

A person who came to have the *darśana* of His Holiness, had an objection to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s statement, “Taking the form of the gastric fire and residing in bodies of all beings, I digest, in association with *prāṇa* and *apāna*, the four types of food (the foods that are ingested by masticating, by swallowing, by sucking and by licking).”<sup>23</sup> He said there is no fire in the stomach; there is only acid.

HH: How do you specify the energy of an item of food?

Man: In calories.

HH: One method of determining the calories in an item of food involves putting the item in a container surrounded by water, burning it and noting how much hotter the water becomes than before.

Man: I did not know this.

HH: The stomach serves to digest food, the body receives energy from the food digested and this energy can be associated with the burning of the item of food. Hence, is it wrong to speak, at least figuratively, of a fire in the stomach, the gastric fire?

Man: No.

HH: When you say that the acid in the stomach digests the food and the Lord says that, being in the stomach, He digests the food in the form of fire, is it not discernible from the Lord’s words that He digests food by taking the form of gastric acid and the digestive processes? It is worth bearing in mind that our ancients were not such ignoramuses that they thought that some actual fire, like in the kitchen, burns in the stomach. They did know what the stomach contains.

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## 7. अन्नपूर्णाप्रतिष्ठाता      Annapūrṇā-pratiṣṭhātā

One who consecrated Goddess Annapūrṇā (at Varanasi)

The *darśana* of Śrī Annapūrṇā Devī at Varanasi is considered as important as that of Śrī Viśvanātha. It is an age-old tradition in India to pray to Goddess Annapūrṇā before partaking of food, chanting the verse that means, ‘O Annapūrṇā who is ever perfect and the beloved of Lord Śiva! O Pārvatī! Bestow alms upon me for the attainment of knowledge and dispassion.’<sup>24</sup>

The legend goes that when there was a great famine in the land, Goddess Pārvatī came to earth to provide food for all beings. She opened a kitchen in the holy city of Varanasi, and provided food to all. Parameśvara Himself came to Her with His *bhikṣā-pātra* (vessel for *bhikṣā*) asking for food, which She readily served. She has since been celebrated at Varanasi as Śrī Annapūrṇā Devī, the Divine Mother of the universe who provides food to all. To this day, Her temple provides food every day to all who come, irrespective of caste, creed, gender and religion. Her food stock never diminishes for She is ‘*pūrṇā*’, full, with ‘*anna*’, food, and none is sent away from her temple without food. It is said that Goddess Annapūrṇā does not eat until all Her devotees are fed in the temple for the day.

In this *nāma*, His Holiness is described as the *pratiṣṭhātā*, One who consecrated, Śrī Annapūrṇā Devī at Varanasi. This consecration happened in 1977. Perhaps it was divine will that the *Jagadguru*, Preceptor of the world, consecrate the idol of the *Jaganmātā*, Mother of the world, so that She may continue to grace devotees with not only food and prosperity, but also liberation, which gives ‘*pūrṇatā*’, the ultimate satiation.



When His Holiness first visited Varanasi in 1967, the idea of temple renovation was mooted. Once the intended work was completed, the *Mahant* in-charge of the temple was resolute that His Holiness perform the consecration. He waited for more than four years for this and visited Sringeri many times to request the *Jagadguru* to come to Varanasi. Much to the *Mahant*’s joy, His Holiness acceded to perform the *kumbhābhiṣeka* in 1977.

The consecration was slated for 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1977, the sacred *Vasanta-pañcamī* day. *Atirudra* and *Sahasracandī yajñas* were performed over three days, with the *pūrṇāhuti*s (final oblations) slated for the 24<sup>th</sup> morning. The *aṣṭabandhana* (process of affixing an idol to its pedestal) was completed on the night of the 23<sup>rd</sup> itself.

On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>, His Holiness along with His successor-designate, Sri Bhārati Tīrtha, and the *Jagadguru* of Puri, Śrī Nirañjana Deva Tīrtha, who had specially come for the *kumbhābhiṣeka*, were received with temple

honours. They entered the temple after attending the *pūrṇāhutis*. The consecration of Śrī Annapūrṇā Devī by His Holiness took place at 9:15 a.m. Then His Holiness Himself performed special *pūjā* to the deity amidst *Vedic* chanting by the *ṛtviks* (priests) and to the accompaniment of *maṅgala-vādyā* (auspicious music).

When His Holiness broke a coconut to offer as *naivedya*, He found a coconut flower inside. He regarded this as rather auspicious, and even held up the coconut for all to see. His Holiness then delivered an *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* in Hindi and blessed the devotees.



## 8. सन्नृतेशपदाम्बुजः                      *Sannuteśa-padāmbujah*

One who praised *Īśvara*'s Lotus Feet

The feet, *pada*, of *Īśa*, *Śiva*, are likened to the *ambuja*, lotus, not only because the Lord's feet are beautiful, but also because they are, akin to the lotus that is the source of the Creator *Brahmā*, the very source of creation. Worshipping the feet of the Lord is equivalent to propitiating the Lord Himself, and in fact signifies a high degree of surrender to Him. After all, when *Bharata* considered *Rāma*'s *pādukas* as *Rāma* Himself and placed them on the throne, what need be said about *Rāma*'s feet! The word '*nutaḥ*' means praise and refers here to *kīrtana*, the second among the nine forms of devotion to the Lord enumerated by *Prahlāda*.<sup>25</sup> *Kīrtana* includes chanting verses composed by oneself or by others, singing His glories through songs and chanting His *nāmas*.

The scriptures extol *kīrtana* as a lofty means to worship the Supreme. They variously state as follows. "Whatever is attained in *kṛta-yuga* through meditation, in *tretā-yuga* through *yajñas*, and in *dvāpara-yuga* through worship of the Lord, is attained in *kali-yuga* through singing of the glories of *Keśava*."<sup>26</sup> "What wonder is there that the Imperishable One seated in the minds of the pure-hearted grants them liberation, when sins are destroyed where that *Acyuta*'s glories are sung!"<sup>27</sup> "By the *kīrtana* of *Vāsudeva* done with or without knowledge, the universe completely vanishes, just as salt when placed in the midst of water."<sup>28</sup>

*Bhagavatpāda* states with finality, "The worthy tongue is that which utters the name of *Śiva*."<sup>29</sup> The Tamil saint *Manickavachakar* says in a devotional outpouring, "Obeisance to the feet of the Lord of the universe, obeisance to the feet of the Father of all, obeisance to the feet of the effulgent One, obeisance to the red-hued feet of *Śiva*, obeisance to the feet of the untainted One who is full of love, obeisance to the King who destroys births caused by *Māyā*."<sup>30</sup>

His Holiness is spoken of in this *nāma* as not just ‘*nutaḥ*’, but ‘*saṁ-nutaḥ*’, One who praised well, the lotus feet of Śiva.



[What follows is His Holiness’s description of what happened immediately after Śiva vanished after granting Him *darśana* (vide *nāma* 10).]

“In a state of ecstasy, I began to pay obeisance to and extol Parameśvara through verses that occurred to me spontaneously. My voice kept choking and had any musician been around, he would have been appalled at my unmusical singing.”

At this point, the disciple to whom His Holiness was narrating this, requested Him to kindly grace him with these verses. The following was His Holiness’s response: “I never bothered to put down those verses in writing and do not remember them either. Not attaching any importance to them, I did not subsequently think of and memorise them. They were, after all, just the prattle of an ignorant boy and not the compositions of any *mahātman* or of literary value.”



His Holiness’s *Guru* had Himself taught Him the *Ardhanārīśvara-stotra* (that glorifies Śiva in His form as half-male and half-female) and so He used to chant it every day without fail. He also revelled in chanting the *Śiva-pañcākṣarī-mantra*. The call, ‘*Śambho Mahādeva!*’ was very often on His lips while in the midst of activity; He would also chant the same thrice before going to sleep at night. He would sometimes loudly intone, ‘*Śivāya gurave namaḥ* (Salutations to the *Guru* who is Śiva)’.



His Holiness invariably commenced His discourses with an invocatory verse about God. He often chanted the verses that mean “Obeisance to Śiva, who has a body constituted by pure consciousness, is conversant with the *Vedas*, possesses a divine eye, bears the crescent moon and is the means to attain liberation”<sup>31</sup> and “I pay obeisance to the consort of Śiva whose tresses are decorated with the crescent moon and who is a river of nectar that removes the intense heat of transmigratory existence.”<sup>32</sup>

He also always ended every benedictory discourse by chanting, in effect, “Victory to the Lord” and getting His audience too to do so; the exact words that He normally chanted were, “*hara namaḥ pārvatī-pataye; hara hara mahādeva. jānakī-kānta-smaraṇam; jaya jaya rāma rāma.*” He thus not only chanted the Lord’s name but also induced others to do so. He thereby indicated that one should constantly think of God or do so at least at the start and end of every activity.



In Dewas, Madhya Pradesh in January 1983, while His Holiness was seated giving *darśana* to the public in the morning, some started to sing a Hindi *bhajan*. Soon, numerous others joined in. As He heard the words to the effect, “This is my prayer that my mind should remain centred every moment on Your feet; on Your feet, O *Bhagavān*,” tears of joy began to well up in His eyes. As the singing progressed, He became increasingly moved and soon plunged into meditation. He opened His eyes only some time after the singing was complete. He then appreciated the crowd and blessed that their hearts be ever full of devotion.



### 9. अहन्ताममताहीनः *Ahantā-mamatā-hīnaḥ*

One devoid of the feelings of ‘I’ and ‘mine’

The notion of ‘I’ as in ‘I am tall’, ‘I am young’, ‘I am blind’, ‘I am hungry’, ‘I am sad’, etc., is due to mistaken identity, because in reality, the body, mind, etc., do not constitute the Self. Bhagavatpāda says, “When a person deems himself distinguished by superimposing upon his Self, qualities that are present as also those that are absent, it is called *ahaṅkāra* or the sense of ‘I.’”<sup>33</sup> The feeling of ‘mine’, as in ‘This is my spouse’, ‘This is my child’, ‘This is my house’, ‘This is my wealth’, etc., is again due to false association. These two illusory notions of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are the causes of bondage. Hence Lord Kṛṣṇa counts freedom from them among the characteristics of a true devotee and teaches that having been freed from the notion of ‘I’ in the body, etc., one who is bereft of the perception of ‘mine’ and is of tranquil mind is rendered fit for realising *Brahman*.<sup>34</sup>

Bhagavatpāda explains that the absence of the notion of ‘mine’ is enjoined for an advanced spiritual aspirant with respect to even the means for the sustenance of the body and living.<sup>35</sup> He lauds those blessed ones who have renounced the two notions of ‘mine’ and ‘I’ that cause bondage, thus: “They view both praise and censure alike.”<sup>36</sup> He further says that on account of the natural destruction of the mind, when the sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ are shaken off, the foremost of self-controlled ones attain the state that transcends the mind, is devoid of wind-like activity and is the residue after even space is negated,<sup>37</sup> thereby indicating that freedom from these false notions leads to liberation. His Holiness was *hīna*, bereft of, any feelings of ‘I’ and ‘mine’.



Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin once reminisced thus: “My *Guru* was never One to stand on personal ego or give room for self-importance. He once said to me, ‘When we strive for the betterment of the *pīṭha*, we should not be concerned about whether people are giving us personal respect, how many *svāgata-patrikas* (welcome addresses) have been read



the other hand, God is ever captivating, constantly available and totally free from blemishes. Further, what or who can be as loveable as God who is the repository of all good qualities? So bewitching are His glories that even sages who have realized the Truth and have nothing to achieve go into raptures on thinking of Him.”<sup>39</sup>

While His Holiness was described earlier as having praised Śiva (*nāma* 8), His devotion to Śiva is brought out here, by saying that He was *bhaktimān*, One with devotion, to *agajā-pati*, the consort of the daughter of the mountain, that is Pārvaṭī. Perhaps the reference to the steadfast, massive Himalayas suggests that His Holiness’s *bhakti* to Śiva had similar qualities. The *Upaniṣad* declares, “For the great one who has supreme devotion to God and similar devotion to the *Guru*, the teachings that are verbalized as well as those that are not, shine forth.”<sup>40</sup> This was the case with His Holiness, whose devotion was supreme, without motive and unswerving.



His Holiness was exhausted when He retired for the night on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1931, the day He was initiated into *saṁnyāsa*. He was thirteen years of age at that time. As was usual, He fell asleep almost the moment He shut His eyes. That night He had a dream that He could vividly recall even decades later. In it, He found Himself on the amazingly scenic summit of a tall, ice-clad mountain. Though the mountain was icy, He felt no cold. In front of Him, at a distance of about twenty feet, He saw a huge, crystal *Śivaliṅga*. A torrent of water was falling on it in a column from above. He could not see the source of the water. He could hear the chanting in chorus of the *Vedic Rudra-praśna* (*Śrī-rudra*) but no chanter was visible. Suddenly, there was a great flash of light and from the *liṅga*, Lord Śiva manifested.

The Lord appeared as possessed of one face and two arms. He was extremely fair and radiant. His hair was matted and was tawny in hue. On beholding Śiva, His Holiness was so struck with awe that He stood unmoving. The Lord smilingly looked at His Holiness and raised His right hand in a gesture of blessing. His Holiness felt a great power entering into Him. Automatically, He began to chant ‘*Om*’ mentally. Śiva gestured to Him to sit down. A seat of deer skin with an ochre cloth spread on it appeared where His Holiness was standing. He did *namaskāra* and, strictly in obedience to the Lord’s wish, sat down even though Śiva was standing.

The Lord came near Him. A big tiger skin appeared on the ground and Śiva sat on it. He positioned His legs in the *padmāsana* and told His Holiness to do the same. While His Holiness knew even earlier how to adopt the *padmāsana*, Śiva’s approach was particularly graceful and His Holiness imitated it as best as He could. Then Śiva assumed the *siddhāsana*. In

response to the Lord's directive, His Holiness copied Him. With His hands, the Lord corrected His Holiness's posture.

The Lord then demonstrated to His Holiness, on that night and the next six, continuing on each successive night from where He left the previous night, *haṭha-yoga*, consisting of *prāṇāyāma*, *āsanas*, *kriyas* and finally the *khecari-mudra* and then *nāda-anusandhāna*. After demonstrating the latter, the Lord raised His right hand in a gesture of blessing and got up. His Holiness promptly prostrated before Him, placing His head on Śiva's lotus feet. As His Holiness rose, the Lord walked towards the crystal *liṅga* from which He had manifested. A flash of light preceded His disappearance into that *liṅga*. At this point, His Holiness's dream ended. The Lord had not left His seat at the close of the preceding six extraordinary dreams. Hence, when His Holiness woke up at His usual time, He knew that this was the last of this series of dreams.

After narrating the details of the first dream to a disciple more than four decades later, His Holiness said, "I had no words to express my gratitude to *Bhagavān* for having extraordinarily graced me in spite of my being so unworthy and that too on the very day of my new life. I did not have an iota of doubt that the Lord would ever take care of and guide me. All I needed to do was not give room to egoism.

"The Lord had, by His blessing, initiated the mental chanting of the *Prāṇava* (*Om*) and given me an understanding of how natural, uninterrupted and delightful it can be. I felt that the Lord intended that I should practise such chanting to the extent of it becoming effortless. Accordingly, I began to engage voluntarily in mental *Prāṇava-japa* within a minute of my awakening. By *Bhagavān*'s grace, within a year, such *japa* became as effortless and uninterrupted as in the special dream. It continued even in dreams and while I conversed."



[The following is excerpted from the reminiscences of His Holiness of the thrilling happenings of 5<sup>th</sup> December, 1935. Having sat down in the *siddhāsana* at His usual place of meditation on the hilltop that evening, His Holiness commenced meditation and went into *savikalpa-samādhi* on Śiva in consonance with Pārvati (vide *nāma* 17 for details).]

"After about one and a half hours, as I discerned later but what then seemed to me to be just a moment, I became lightly aware of the body. I opened my eyes. I could see the sun close to the horizon and feel a gentle breeze. I could, at the same time, clearly apprehend the Lord associated with Ambā (Divine Mother) in my heart-lotus. The Lord appeared to be emerging from within and expanding. A deep long sound of *Om* was audible. I then definitely beheld Śiva in front of and facing me. Oh, what a glorious sight that was!

“Tears of joy flowed from my eyes and my hairs stood on end. The Lord’s lips moved and I heard His very sweet voice. His words were: ‘*vatsa śvaḥ-prabhṛtyatra nirākāre pare tattve manaḥ samādhatsva | acireṇa brahma-samsthō bhaviṣyasi |* (O child, from tomorrow, fix your mind on the Formless, Supreme Reality here. You will soon become established in *Brahman*).’

“Then Śiva blessed Me by placing His hand on my head. Having done so, He disappeared. How compassionate He is to grace in such abundance one so insignificant and lacking in devotion as I! No sooner had He vanished than there was a drizzle. In a matter of seconds, the sun set; simultaneously, the light rain stopped. The sky had been quite clear when I sat for meditation. Even when the sun set, clouds were not apparent. The sun having been quite visible when it rained there, to me it appeared that the Lord was blessing me with a light bath in the Gaṅgā.”



After having thus received the special grace and instruction of Śiva, His Holiness commenced *nirguṇa-dhyāna* the next evening. Cogitating and meditating on the Supreme Reality (as described under *nāmas* 59, 67 and 72), He attained enlightenment and establishment in the Supreme. It was only years later, that His *Guru* formally taught Him *Vedānta*, and those teachings only served to confirm to Him what He already knew as a matter of experience. Such was the excellence of His Holiness’s devotion to *Īśvara* and the *Guru*, that He knew the true import of the passages of the *Upaniṣad* and *Smṛti* without being explicitly taught.



Once His Holiness attained establishment in *Brahman* on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1935, His mind kept plunging into *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and the mind became so intoxicated with bliss that He found it difficult to do His routine activities on the 14<sup>th</sup>. On the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> He did not feel like partaking of anything before retiring to His room, and no sooner had He sat down there than He again went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. He descended from *samādhi* on becoming vaguely aware of the intonation of the *Praṇava* by His *Guru*. When His Holiness opened His eyes, He found the senior *Jagadguru* seated next to Him and gently stroking His disciple’s head with His hand.

As per His *Guru*’s instructions, His Holiness eschewed *samādhi*, had His bath, finished His *āhnika* (religious rites), and went to His *Guru*’s presence. Once He offered *namaskāras*, the senior *Jagadguru* directed Him to sit down and then said, “I knew that your mind was becoming more and more absorbed in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Though you have transcended any need for *samādhi*, I did not interfere. Last night, however, the Lord made it clear to

me that your *samādhi* had become so intense that you would not emerge from it on your own. Unless aroused from *samādhi*, you would remain in it till physical death. As impelled by Him, I came to your room before the night ended. Telling your attendant to remain outside, I entered alone. The *Maṭha* staff have been under the impression that you have been unwell since yesterday. So the attendant assumed that I had come to check on your condition. I found you seated motionless, deep in *samādhi*. With great difficulty, I succeeded in awakening you.

“Regulate your *samādhi* and the introversion of the mind. Else, today itself, your *nirvikalpa-samādhi* will become such that you cannot be aroused from it at all by anybody. Do not leave me by entering irreversible *samādhi* and discarding your human form. There is so much to be done by you for me, for others and for the *Maṭha*.”

Śiva had taught His Holiness *haṭha-yoga* in a series of dreams, had specially graced Him by appearing before Him, placing His hand on His head and directing Him to perform *nirguṇa-dhyāna*, and had now directed His *Guru* to rouse Him from *nirvikalpa-samādhi* before it could become irreversible. All this bears testimony to His Holiness’s great devotion to Śiva.



## 11. आगमार्थपरिज्ञाता *Āgamārtha-parijñātā*

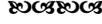
One who comprehensively knew the import of the *Āgama-śāstra*

An ancient declaration says, “*Āgama* is called so because it came (‘*ā*’*gataṁ*) from Śiva’s divine mouth, went (‘*ga*’*taṁ*) to Pārvatī’s divine mouth and was accepted (‘*ma*’*taṁ*) by Viṣṇu.”<sup>41</sup>

*Āgama* is said to comprise these seven characteristics: “Creation, dissolution, worship of deities, means to every attainment, repeated chanting of *mantras*, means to six types of actions and four types of meditation.”<sup>42</sup> The four forms of meditation spoken of here include *laya-yoga*, *saguṇa-dhyāna*, *nirguṇa-dhyāna* and *samādhi*. The *Āgama-śāstra* is commonly called the *Tantra-śāstra*, and imparts knowledge about *bījākṣara-mantras* such as those on *Bālā* and *Gaṇapati*, chanting of texts such as the *Durgā-saptaśatī* along with the associated sacrifices, meditations involving *yoga-cakras*, etc. It also includes the rules of construction of temples, rituals, etc., all of which are governed by *āgama-vidhis* or rules.

His Holiness is described here as a *pari-jñātā*, comprehensive knower, of the import of the *Āgama-śāstra*. He constructed and consecrated several temples in the branch *Maṭhas* that He established or expanded in various places in the country (vide *nāmas* 5 and 23), and also performed *kumbhābhiṣeka* for numerous ancient temples, all in strict accordance with

the *āgama-vidhis*. He presided over a number of *Atrirudra-mahāyajñas* and *Sahasraçaṇḍī-mahāyajñas*, apart from *Mahārudra* and *Śataçaṇḍī yajñas*, across the length and breadth of the country, and had them performed strictly in accordance with the *vidhis*. He performed and taught others to perform *japa* and *pūjā*, again as per the *vidhis*. Further, He prescribed specific *āgama*-based expiations in the form of *japas*, *pārāyaṇas* and *homas*, to rid devotees and society of various troubles that befell them.



A foreigner who was very interested in Devī-worship and had come to India to study it, arrived at Sringeri after visiting many Devī temples across India. He had some questions pertaining to *Śākta* worship (worship of the Mother Goddess), which none had been able to answer satisfactorily. At one place he had been told that the *Jagadguru* of Sringeri was the authority on such matters and that he could approach Him for help.

His Holiness readily gave the foreigner an audience and listened to His queries. With His Private Secretary acting as interpreter, His Holiness dealt with each of the foreigner's questions. The man was all but ecstatic at the way His Holiness had so beautifully answered every one of his queries.



Sri Rajagopalan, an ardent devotee and an Income Tax Officer at Erode, was falsely implicated in a significant financial fraud committed by his subordinate. He requested his friend who was going to Sringeri during the *cāturmāsya* of 1989, to submit to His Holiness the information regarding the ongoing investigation and seek His blessings.

On hearing of the issue, His Holiness exclaimed, “Oh! Our Rajagopalan who is an ITO at Erode! He is our devotee. He is a very good man, and not one to commit such offences.” His Holiness then went on to say, “Let him perform *Caṇḍī-homa*. He will have no problem thereafter. The *homa* can be performed either at his place or at Sringeri.” The devotee went to Sringeri and performed the *homa*. He was soon acquitted of all charges and retired in peace the same year.



The following was narrated by the prolific Kannada writer, Sri T. R. Subba Rao, better known by his pen name, ‘Ta-Ra-Su’.

“Once when His Holiness camped at Mysuru, He graced my house in response to my request. Having blessed the assembled ones, He entered the *pūjā* room of the house. He asked my wife and me to come in and dismissed my relatives saying, ‘I want to talk to them alone’. His Holiness then instructed me to chant, regularly, a *sahasranāma* and a particular hymn, and to also perform a certain *homa*. Thereafter, having spoken to us for a few minutes, He gave *mantrākṣatā* and left.

“I had not asked anything, and He had, of His own accord, proffered us those instructions. We did not know for what He had asked us to perform those rites. Yet, since it was the *Guru*’s command, we followed His instructions.

“A few days passed, and a peculiar illness afflicted me. An erudite astrologer scrutinized my horoscope and concluded that a certain planetary position was causing my problem. He prescribed a set of rites to be performed to tide over the difficult period. I was stunned to note that the astrologer had prescribed exactly the same set of expiations that His Holiness had!”

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Sri Niranjan Kumar recalls, “I was driving His Holiness’s car and was following a conversation going on between His Holiness and a devotee who was also in the car. Efficacy of *mantras* was the topic of discussion and the devotee was listing a number of *mantras* and the diseases that each such *mantra* was meant to cure. When there was a slight pause in their conversation I stepped in and asked His Holiness, ‘Is it possible to know all the *mantras*?’ His Holiness said, ‘First of all there is no need to know all of them. The *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma* alone is sufficient. It is a remedy for all diseases. There is no problem that cannot be solved by it.’ Subsequently too, when I sought His blessings for my friend ailing from cardiac problems, He was quick to say, ‘Ask your friend to chant the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma*.’”

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Sri Ramani, a devotee of Lord Hanuman, had a 32-foot tall statue of Hanumān sculpted for installation at a temple in Nanganallur, Chennai. In 1989, he went to Sringeri and requested His Holiness for His blessings for the proposed installation. His Holiness was very pleased with the devotee’s efforts and blessed him. He then asked, “Where do you intend to install the statue?” Ramani replied, “In front of the statue of Lord Rāma.” His Holiness said, “You say that in this idol Hanumān has His hands folded out of respect but His tail is turned upwards. Hanumān’s tail would not be curled upwards if He were to be standing in front of Rāma. Why don’t you instead place Him next to Rāma?” Ramani exclaimed, “Oh, it is impossible to place Hanumān’s statue there, because there is no space in the sanctum!” His Holiness did not say anything to this. Later, the temple committee members discussed the matter and concluded, “We have even decided the *kumbhābhiṣeka* date, so it would be impossible to make changes to the idol now. At any rate, His Holiness did not say anything when we reported lack of space. So we can go ahead.”

When the idol of Hanumān was being brought to the temple site, a monkey suddenly jumped in front of the truck carrying the idol. The driver slammed on the brakes. In the ensuing melee, the tail of Hanuman’s idol broke. The *kumbhābhiṣeka* was near at hand, and so the anxious organizers asked a

sculptor to modify the remaining portion of the tail. With the modification, the tail of Hanumān ended up being curled downwards, precisely as His Holiness had indicated. And this came about without derailment of the *kumbhābhiṣeka*.



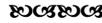
12. आश्रिताखिलरक्षकः *Āśritākhila-rakṣakaḥ*

One who protected all who sought refuge

The Lord's mercy extends to all. Did not Rāma tell Sugrīva when the latter voiced concern about accepting Vibhīṣaṇa, "To anyone who seeks refuge in Me but once, saying, 'I am Yours', I grant fearlessness. This is My vow"<sup>43</sup> In a similar manner, His Holiness unfailingly gave shelter to all who sought refuge in Him even once.

Many approached His Holiness seeking succour. Some came with a desire to serve Him, while others sought livelihood at the *Maṭha*; some who were destitutes sent their wards or dependants to Him, while others who were orphaned or handicapped came to Him to be taken care of or were brought by others to Him. He never turned away anyone. On the contrary, He protected each one of them in His inimitable way, by granting them what they wanted and safeguarding what they had, as promised by the Lord.<sup>44</sup>

He was the refuge of not just humans but also of animals. He most lovingly sheltered animals, including elephants, deer, dogs and cats in the *Maṭha*. Thus, for *akhilah*, all beings, who were *āśritah*, seekers of refuge, He was the *rakṣakah*, protector.



His Holiness never let down anyone who served the *Maṭha* sincerely. A case in instance is that of Sri Padmanabha Upadhyaya. Upadhyaya was, when young, a student of the *pāṭhasālā* at Sringeri. He came to the favourable notice of His Holiness. For some reason unapparent to others, His Holiness instructed the cook to supply him some milk every day. The cook grew jealous and started mixing some salt in the milk before giving it to the boy. Upadhyaya never uttered a word of protest; he did not complain about this to His Holiness either. His Holiness Himself discerned what was happening and, pleased with the boy, took him into His service. Perhaps, His Holiness had wanted to test the lad, aware of how the cook would balk at the idea of specially supplying him milk.

His Holiness personally trained him to handle *Maṭha* affairs with dexterity and, in particular, to establish rapport and get things done. He became His Holiness's Personal Assistant, who reported directly to Him and whose job primarily consisted in carrying out whatever task His Holiness gave him. He

served His Holiness with great sincerity and was at His Holiness's side at any time he was required, be it day or night. In 1974, he had to go to Delhi in connection with some *Maṭha* work. His Holiness intuitively felt that the trip should not be made as planned by Upadhyaya. Pressed to permit the trip, He gave His half-hearted consent. Upadhyaya passed away in an accident during that trip.

His Holiness had Upadhyaya's body flown to Bengaluru and transported to Sringeri by road. At that time, Upadhyaya's three sons were young and his two daughters were unmarried. His Holiness continued to provide them accommodation in Narasimhavana itself and took full care of them. In due course, all of them became comfortably settled in life. His Holiness remarked, "Upadhyaya did so much for the *Maṭha*. It would have been highly unjust if I had not taken care of his family."

His Holiness had, some years before Upadhyaya's death, given him suggestions that proved to be monetarily beneficial to him. There had been a dispute in his family regarding a division of property. His Holiness had asked him to stake his claim for a particular plot of land in Mangaluru and not to bother much about the rest. Upadhyaya had obeyed. Later on, the city developed in such a way that that land's value shot up.



Shortly after His Holiness became the pontiff in 1954, He wished to meet Sri Chennakeshava, a former employee, who, for some time prior to and after His Holiness's *samnyāsa* in 1931, used to prepare and serve food to Him. He had subsequently retired and settled down in Kota, a small town not far from Sringeri. His Holiness directed a person to go and fetch him.

The emissary went to Kota and, after making some enquiries locally, managed to locate and reach Chennakeshava's house. The man was in a very pensive mood and recalled that he used to covertly divert much of the milk and curds meant for His Holiness to his family. He continued to do so till he left the *Maṭha* and settled down in Kota. He told the emissary that a strange disease had then crippled his limbs. He attributed this to his misdeeds. He felt that he could never set foot in Sringeri since His Holiness would be extremely angry with him and would never forgive him.

The emissary comforted him by saying that he had come on His Holiness's instructions for the very purpose of taking him to Sringeri. Chennakeshava's fears only increased and he flatly refused to come to Sringeri. Helplessly, the emissary returned alone and reported back to His Holiness. His Holiness sent him again to Kota, this time in a vehicle of the *Maṭha* and told him to bring Chennakeshava at any cost, adding that if Chennakeshava still refused to come, He would be forced to go to Kota Himself.

When the emissary went and informed this to Chennakeshava, the latter became very apprehensive but, left with no option, accompanied him to Sringeri. As soon as Chennakeshava was ushered into His Holiness's presence, he broke down and, falling at His feet, confessed that he had wronged Him, and sought His pardon. His Holiness quickly assuaged him and told him that he was like a father to Him since he had fed Him during His boyhood days in Sringeri. He added that He wished to reward him for his services and gave him what was a very significant amount in the mid-1950s. Taken aback, Chennakeshava again referred to his usurping what was earmarked for His Holiness and said that he was in no way worthy of receiving the money. His Holiness completely comforted him. Chennakeshava then accepted the reward and received His Holiness's bountiful blessings. He returned to Kota in peace, relieved of his psychological and financial burdens.

It is pertinent that in the 1930s His Holiness did not initiate any remedial measures even though He knew that Chennakeshava was largely taking away what he had been officially instructed to serve Him in view of His frail health at that time. He also did not give anybody any inkling of what was happening. Even when sending an emissary in the mid-1950s, He did not assign any reason; it was Chennakeshava who confessed what he had done. Such was His utter indifference to any wrong done to Him.

One can only conjecture that His Holiness had intuitively discerned that Chennakeshava was contrite, burdened with guilt and badly off. Moreover, in His unbounded compassion, He decided to make him psychologically and financially unburdened and therefore sent a person to him not once but twice and had been prepared to Himself go to Kota, if required. His Holiness overlooked a wrong done to Him but was satiated to the extent of telling Chennakeshava, "You are like a father to me," just because Chennakeshava cooked and served Him food when young.

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When Sri Challa Annapoorna Prasad, another attendant, had come to the *Maṭha* as a lad, he had been unable to speak normally. His Holiness had intervened and set right his shortcoming. Some time later, His Holiness assigned him the job of preparing the *bhikṣa*. Challa had never before tried his hands at cooking and had absolutely no idea how to go about it. When recounting this episode, Challa said that it was only by His Holiness's grace that he learnt cooking and was able to cook the *bhikṣa* partaken of by His Holiness. He recounted how His Holiness used to encourage him by commenting that the food was tasty.

When Challa got to speak to His Holiness for the last time, just before His Holiness attained *Mahāsamādhi* (shed His mortal form), His Holiness told

him, “You will be prosperous”. Challa confirms that His Holiness’s words proved true and remain so to this day. After Challa left the service of the *Maṭha* and returned to his hometown Varanasi, he became a supervisor of cooks working under him. Further, not only was there never any dearth of work, but clients would themselves come searching for him.

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Sri Mahabala Bayari was a young boy who had lost his father and had no possessions when He came to the *Maṭha* seeking work. He served His Holiness as His personal attendant and was present with His Holiness till His Holiness’s last breath.

Once when Mahabala’s relative told him to go to a particular village to finalize a particular marriage proposal that had come for him, Mahabala submitted the matter to His Holiness and sought His permission to go. His Holiness told him, “Do not go on the date you mention. Go a couple of weeks later.” Mahabala did accordingly. When he went to the village, he discovered that had he made the trip on the initially planned date, it would have been rather awkward because there had been a death in the girl’s family, and his arrival with a marriage proposal would have been considered inauspicious.

Mahabala now leads a prosperous life with his entire family of wife, children and grandchildren at Bengaluru, and unreservedly expresses that he owes his prosperity and happiness to His Holiness.

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His Holiness frequently made enquiries about the welfare of the staff and did whatever was possible for their well-being. For instance, His Holiness once questioned the *Kiledār* (Estate Supervisor), Sri Sitarama Bhatta, regarding his health. Sitarama Bhatta mentioned that he experienced abdominal pain and indigestion. After suitable questioning, His Holiness felt that the likely cause was gastric ulcer and had him examined by a competent doctor. The doctor confirmed that Sitarama Bhatta had gastric ulcer and prescribed medication for it and some dietary restrictions. His Holiness made the necessary arrangements and also ordered that a glass of milk be supplied to Sitarama Bhatta every morning till his ulcer abated.

Years later, Sitarama Bhatta recalled, with gratitude, that His Holiness’s act of kindness had resulted in his suffering ending and his health being restored.

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The second son of Sri Ganesha Bhatta employed in the *Maṭha*’s cowshed was greatly handicapped; he could not see, hear, speak or walk and everything for the boy had to be done by someone else. The worker did not know whether *upanayana* (sacred thread investiture ceremony) should be performed for his son or not. The *paṇḍitas* whom he consulted were not able to give a definitive answer and so he decided to ask His Holiness. His

Holiness patiently heard him out and said, “*Upanayana* should be performed, but because the boy cannot perform his *nitya-karma*, it will suffice if you do some extra *Gāyatrī-japa* daily on his behalf.” Not stopping with this, He arranged for the conduct of the function in the *Maṭha* and at the *Maṭha*’s expense; the employee had to merely initiate his son.



There were two elephants – Shankara and Sharada – in the *Maṭha*. His Holiness had a special connect with and affinity for them. He had a spacious *gaja-śālā* (elephant-shed) built at Sringeri. It was once reported to Him that one of the pachyderms was unwell. He enquired about the symptoms in detail from the mahout and the supervisor. He quickly diagnosed the cause and decided on the requisite medication. He directed His attendant to fetch a handful of a certain herb from the coconut grove behind Sacchidananda Vilasa. Before proceeding to fetch it, the attendant gave Him his description of the herb to ascertain that he had the right one in mind. His Holiness corrected his misidentification and ensured that he brought the right one. His Holiness then personally supervised administering the medication.

Once, around 2 o’clock in the night, one of the elephants had been trumpeting for a while. His Holiness awakened, walked up to the *gaja-śālā* to personally investigate the cause of the animal’s discomfiture. He provided immediate succour and then directed necessary follow-up action.



### 13. आशापाशसमुच्छेत्ता      *Āśā-pāśa-samucchettā*

One who completely rent asunder the fetters of desires

Lord Kṛṣṇa explains the mechanism of the rise and consequences of *āśā*, desire, thus: “As one thinks of sense objects, one develops attachment towards them. From attachment springs desire and from (frustration of) desire, anger. From anger is born delusion (marked by the loss of the power of proper discrimination between right and wrong); due to delusion, the recollections of what one has been taught regarding righteous conduct is lost. This destruction of memory disrupts the functioning of the intellect and a person in this state is as good as destroyed.”<sup>45</sup> The Lord proceeds to caution, “It is desire and it is anger, born of the *guṇa rajas*, all devouring and sinful. Know that to be the foe here.”<sup>46</sup>

Elsewhere, Bhagavatpāda’s compelling words are, “On deep analysis it is seen that there is a sharp contrast between Yama, the God of death, and Kāma, the God of desire. Yama does what is beneficial despite being unpleasant, whereas Kāma, while being pleasing, wreaks havoc. Yama brings adversity only upon the vile but confers happiness on the virtuous, whereas Kāma, by hindering the progress of the virtuous, brings disaster

upon them. What then need be said of the fate of the vile in Kāma's hands!"<sup>47</sup> Surely, longing is a terrible foe.

This foe cannot be conquered by enjoying the objects of desire because such enjoyment only causes the desire to grow in strength, thereby leading to greater disaster. At any rate, enjoyment of objects of desire are themselves fraught with fears such as the fear of losing the object. Further, joy got from sense objects is but momentary and only leads to greater craving. Thus, objects of desire are, by their very nature, sources of sorrow. Indeed, desire is a dangerous snare, comparable to *pāśa*, fetters, that bind one.

The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* drives home this point assertively through the interesting story of a pigeon couple that perish in a hunter's snare owing to extreme attachment. In that context, the *avadhūta* teaches King Yadu, "He who, even on attaining a human birth, which is verily an open door to liberation, remains attached to his family, is known as one who has fallen from a lofty state. O King! Pleasure born of the senses is got equally in hell and in heaven, just as misery too is had in both places. Therefore, amongst embodied ones, he who does not desire is a wise man."<sup>48</sup> Moreover, a person chained by desires is incapable of pursuing higher goals, for the Lord pronounces that the ultimate tranquillity is never achieved by a person given to desires<sup>49</sup>.

Since it is well known that an effect is completely annihilated only when its cause is eliminated, it follows that comprehensive removal of desires is achieved only when its cause, thinking of an object of desire as a source of joy, is uprooted. It is in this precise sense that the prefix '*saṁ*', meaning 'completely', is used for the word '*ucchettā*' meaning 'One who rents asunder'. This *nāma* states that His Holiness was *samucchettā*, One who completely rent asunder, the *pāśa*, fetters, of *āsā*, desires, of disciples.



Apart from giving a glimpse of the potency of His Holiness's instructions and grace, His total lack of ego and intense devotion to His *Guru*, the following episode narrated by His Holiness to a disciple encapsulates His invaluable advice regarding surmounting desires.

"When I was about twenty years of age, two *Bairāgīs*, who lived on the banks of the Narmadā in Madhya Pradesh, came to Sringeri. They wanted to have my *Guru*'s *darśana* and seek some clarifications from Him. As He was in seclusion at that time, they were unable to approach Him. They met me. One of them looked weak and somewhat effeminate, while the other had powerful muscles and resembled a wrestler.

"In the course of his conversation with me, the first one hesitatingly said, 'I have been leading a life of renunciation but am not free from sexual desire.

While I never misbehaved with any woman, bad thoughts troubled me off and on. This was the situation till a few months ago, when I met a *Bābā* and posed my problem to him. He gave me a large packet of medicinal powder and said that if I consumed a little of it every day, I would obtain relief. I have been sincerely following his advice. My desires have largely vanished. I think that I have gained a great spiritual benefit. However, my muscular strength has come down and my chest has become a little like that of a female. My companion is in need of help to deal with lust. He is hesitant to take the *Bābā*'s medicine because he fears that his muscles will become weak. He wanted to ask *Guruji* whether in the interest of spiritual growth, he should overcome his hesitation and resort to the medicine. I wanted to ask *Guruji* if I should continue with this medicine or whether *Guruji* would give me some other medicine without the side effects. We have, however, not had the good fortune of being able to talk to Him. Would you like to keep and use some of the medicine that I have? I can replenish my stock from the *Bābā* who gave it to me.' I declined his offer.

"The second person asked me, 'You are young. Are you not troubled by sexual thoughts?' I answered that I was not. At this, both of them asked, almost in unison, 'Will You please help us and tell us what we should do?' I answered, 'Do not use the medicine. You cannot gain any spiritual benefit by checking the sexual instinct through it. Kings employed eunuchs in their harems because they were confident that the eunuchs would not be tempted and misbehave with the women. However, none regards those eunuchs as great celibates. None deems that they became spiritually great on account of castration. On the other hand, all of us regard sage Śuka as established in continence and as spiritually great. His body was intact but he was so free from desire that even damsels in the nude did not care to cover themselves when he passed by them. A dumb person cannot utter a lie but because of that he is not looked upon as one who never lies. A person who is unconscious is not revered as a *yogin* just because he is free from all thoughts of the world. Incapacity does not confer spiritual benefit. The medicine with you temporarily and partially renders you equivalent to a eunuch. It is, as far as gaining spiritual benefit is concerned, no better than castration. I shall provide you a medicine that will enable you to be rid of lust and to gain spiritual benefit.'

"I asked them to go to Śāradāmbā's temple, spend half an hour gazing at Her with devotion and to pray to Her with faith to rid them of lust. They returned after half an hour. I told them, 'In the *Durgā-saptaśatī* it is said that all women are the Divine Mother's forms. Whenever you are tempted by the sight of a woman or think of a female with desire, immediately think of the gracious Divine Mother. Feel that it is She who is in the form of all women.

Also implore Her now and then from the bottom of your heart to free you from lust.’

“‘Need not contempt for women be cultivated to combat lust?’ asked the muscular *Bairāgī*. I replied: ‘No. Just as desire is bad for your mind, so is hatred. Both likes and dislikes are impurities that agitate the mind. The scriptures speak of seeing the defects in an object just to neutralise a pre-existing attachment born of the notion that the object is pleasurable. The aim is definitely not to generate hatred. Śuka certainly did not hate or look down upon any woman. He looked upon everything as the Supreme *Brahman*.’

The *Bairāgīs* left Sringeri shortly thereafter. “They returned after about a year. This time, both of them looked healthy and muscular. On seeing me, they joyfully said, ‘*Swamiji*, your ‘medicine’ is very effective and has no side effects.’ I clarified that Śāradāmbā’s grace and their dedicated efforts were what had cured them. During this trip, they had the great good fortune of getting my *Guru*’s *darśana* and blessings.”



The following was narrated by a disciple of His Holiness who was serving Him at the *Maṭha*. This episode happened on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1989. His Holiness shed His mortal frame on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

“His Holiness was seated in the semi-open veranda on the first floor of Sacchidananda Vilasa. Sri C. V. Giridhara Sastry, His Private Secretary, and I prostrated before Him, sat facing Him and brought up, one by one, the letters received. A letter read out by Giridhara Sastry was from a devotee who sought His Holiness’s guidance on how he could control his senses and tackle distractions.

“Looking at Giridhara Sastry and giving His response, He said, ‘As long as an object is perceived as pleasing, it is but natural that a want develops towards that object. By discrimination, when one recognizes its inherent worthlessness, the craving, and hence, the consequent distractions, cease by themselves. ‘*doṣa-drṣṭyā muhur-muhuh* (By the repeated discerning of the defects)’<sup>50</sup> – this is the means to be adopted. No matter what the object is, it is sought after only if one sees positive attributes in it, sees it as pleasurable.’ Then turning to me, He said, with His countenance and tone leaving me in no doubt that He was instructing me, ‘What else? That is all. ‘*doṣa-drṣṭyā muhur-muhuh* (by the repeated discerning of the defects).’ An object perceived as a cause of unhappiness does not generate desire.’ Continuing to look at me, He nodded his head, as if to ensure that what He had stated had been grasped by me. ‘Yes,’ said I, meaning that I had paid attention to what I felt were His personal and direct instructions to me. This turned out to be the last day that letters were presented to Him.”



14. आपन्नार्तिविनाशकः      *Āpannārti-vināśakaḥ*

One who completely eradicated the misery of the anguished

When calamity strikes, apart from being engulfed by the troubles that come as a direct fallout of the calamity, people undergo mental agony. It is recognized by modern-day psychologists too that if the mental reaction to a negative experience is controlled, then the negative experience would have far less impact than otherwise. Thus, handling the mental dimension for the trauma-stricken is an important component of healing. This attenuation of mental suffering becomes more critical in cases where the cause of the troubles cannot themselves be countered or undone in any way, thereby leaving only the mental component to be dealt with. Furthermore, there are cases where the cause of suffering is imaginary, in which case only the mental component of the suffering exists in the first place.

This *nāma* is taken as covering only the mental agony of the anguished, because *nāma* 97 explicitly deals with all other kinds of afflictions. The focus here is solely on His Holiness being the *vināśaka*, One who completely eradicated, the *ārti*, mental agony, of *āpanna*, the anguished.



A lady who was hardly thirty lost her husband in an accident. The responsibility of looking after her two young sons fell on her shoulders. One day, she requested His Holiness for an audience. He asked her to come and see Him the next morning and told another devotee also to come with her. The lady asked His Holiness, “Why is it that I have to undergo so much suffering? I have not committed any sin. Why then should I suffer? Now that my husband is dead, who will look after me?” His Holiness spent much time consoling her.

He explained to her that the entire world is impermanent. He then proceeded to point out that one suffers due to one’s own *karma*; there is nobody who does not undergo suffering. He advised, “Your children are like your eyes. It is your duty to bring them up well. You are academically well-qualified. Take up a teacher’s job. That would fetch you sufficient money to meet the needs of your family. My blessings are with you.”

No sooner had His Holiness spoken with her and blessed her, than she felt great peace. Her morale grew manifold and she resolved that she would do as per His Holiness’s advice. She visited the *Maṭha* regularly. By His Holiness’s grace, she and her children did well in life.



During His Hyderabad camp in May 1960, His Holiness was one day visiting the houses of devotees for *pādapūjā*. Sri Padmanabha Upadhyaya, His

Personal Assistant, and Sri Kalasha Shamanna occupied the front seat apart from the devotee driving the car. The driver of the pilot vehicle that was in front of His Holiness's car realized that he was on the wrong road and, intending to make a U-turn, suddenly stopped the vehicle. Noticing the sudden stopping of the pilot vehicle, the driver of His Holiness's car also stopped. His Holiness, who was discussing some important issues with Upadhyaya and Shamanna, took it for granted that He had reached a devotee's house and immediately alighted. He walked straight into the house after opening the gates by Himself; the front door of the house was open. Upadhyaya and Shamanna blindly followed. What His Holiness had entered was the house of a Muslim family. He quickly sensed this and that there was some slip-up. The people in the house were mourning an unfortunate death that had occurred a few days back. His Holiness did not turn back and leave. Instead, addressing a middle-aged woman who was weeping inconsolably, He enquired kindly as to what the matter was. The people in the house stood up and one of them mentioned the cause of their grief.

His Holiness spent some time with them, uttering soothing and consoling words. Such was the way in which He freely interacted with them that they spoke with Him as if they had been intimate with Him for long. In a matter of minutes, not only was there no weeping in the house but the inmates appeared cheered up. His Holiness asked for fruits to be brought from the car and gave them to the family members. Having virtually become one of them and assuaged them, He started to leave. The entire family followed Him to the car and saw Him off.

After He left, neither did His Holiness chide His staff for the mix up nor did He even show any sign that something had gone amiss; it was as if He had been to a devotee's house and left as He would normally have done.



A man who had served in the army came to have His Holiness's *darśana*. He was suffering from severe depression. He considered himself the cause of the gruesome death of hundreds of people and this was tormenting him no end. Belonging to a traditional Hindu family, he had learnt, by rote, the *Lakṣmī-nṛsimha-karāvalamba-stotra* and while entering His Holiness's room, he loudly chanted the *stotra*. His Holiness spoke to him compassionately. In response he lamented, "Swamiji, I have killed many people in cold blood. I have thus committed an unpardonable sin. I feel that I deserve to die now. Will there be any expiation for my acts?" When he finished his emotional outpouring, His Holiness did something unexpected. He placed both His hands on the person's head and declared, "You will be alright. Do not worry." The man was overjoyed at this unexpected blessing and left with peace of mind.



15. ईहाविरहितस्वान्तः *Īhā-virahita-svāntaḥ*

One whose mind was exceptionally free from activity

Thoughts constitute the mind's activity. The mind is thoughtless in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* as also in deep sleep. In the waking state when the mind is engrossed in stages of meditation lower than *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, namely *dhāraṇā* (fixation, which is the binding of the mind to one place), *dhyāna* (meditation, which is the continuance there of the presented idea) and *samādhi* (the same *dhyāna* shining forth as the intended object alone and devoid, as it were, of its own nature),<sup>51</sup> the mind is exclusively focused on one object, and hence can be said to be free from activity in the sense that it is not moving from one object to another. His Holiness perfected meditation right up to *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Further, even during His *sāadhanā*, His mind was never given to wandering.

However, here His Holiness is described as being One whose *svānta*, mind, is *vi-rahita*, specially free from, *īhā*, activity. Clearly, this is not a description restricted to the times when He reposed in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, and so His state of mind at times other than in such *samādhi*, needs to be considered. When awake, not meditating and involved in some activity, the mind is generally in an active state. In fact, when His Holiness was involved in activity, even multiple at the same time, His mind was not merely active, but was also acutely attentive. He also never failed to analyse the past and anticipate the future before deciding what best to do in the present, given His razor-sharp intellect, pragmatism and intuition. However, in every situation, His thoughts were never short of being sufficient, and were never any more than necessary. There is yet another category in the waking but non-meditative state that merits consideration. There is an interval between two successive activities. His mind was actually free from any extraneous thought and centred in the *Ātman* even in those intervals - in this sense too, His mind was 'specially' free from thought.

Such was the control He had over His mind that it would indulge in thoughts of His choice if and when He so willed; when He chose not to think, His mind would remain free from thoughts, never wandering or remaining idle.



One morning in January-February, 1934, when His Holiness went to offer His *namaskāras* to His *Guru* during the latter's *āhnikā*, the senior *Jagadguru* asked Him, "When performing various *japas* during your *āhnikā*, you contemplate in accordance with the *dhyāna-ślokas* of the *mantras* chanted. Do you not?" His Holiness answered that He did. "How do you begin?" questioned the senior *Jagadguru*. His Holiness replied, "I take up the rosary and commence a *japa*, keeping my eyes partially or fully open.

Simultaneously, I just imagine the form described in the *dhyāna-śloka* concerned as present in my chest in a red lotus with eight petals.” His *Guru* said, “Your mind does not wander when you contemplate. However, you are aware of your body and surroundings. Am I correct?” His Holiness answered in the affirmative. “Independent of the requirements of your *āhnika*, would you like to practice deep meditation on divine forms?” queried the senior *Jagadguru*. His Holiness expressed His keenness on doing so, and the senior *Jagadguru* taught Him a technique to practice such meditation.

His Holiness started the practice of meditation a short while after His *Guru*’s teaching. Even in that first session of meditation, He could visualize the form of God with great clarity, and when He opened His eyes after what seemed to Him to be just moments, He found that actually, about half an hour had elapsed. During this time, He was unaware of the surroundings and His body. He was sixteen years old at that time.



His Holiness normally utilised an ochre handkerchief made of cotton. It used to get crumpled now and then. However, His Holiness had the habit of refolding it in such a way that it then appeared as if it were a freshly ironed cloth, with the edges forming perfect straight lines. It was not as if His Holiness did the folding to the exclusion of other activities. He has folded His handkerchief impeccably even while giving a serious discourse or reading a book.

In the course of His evening *āhnika*, as prescribed for *saṁnyāsins*, He used to take up water in a spoon from a vessel, chant ‘*Om*’ and put the water into another vessel, repeating this act over a hundred times. He performed all this in such a beautiful way that not a single drop of water spilt on the ground. His hand movement was the minimum possible and the speed perfectly suited His rhythmic chant of ‘*Om*’. The public had no access to His *āhnika* room and so it was not as though His optimal performance was meant as a lesson for another.

His Holiness used to remember the details of all jobs that were carried out in His presence. In fact, He could even recall the exact number of nails used for a particular task carried out in His presence and also the number of strokes with which each nail was driven in.

Since His late sixties, His Holiness started to have difficulty in climbing stairs because of His cardiac condition. A small wooden plank used to be placed on a step to act as an intermediary step to reduce the height to be climbed at a time. In August 1989, a disciple thought of designing an automatic device that would gently and smoothly lift His Holiness to the next step. To cater to steps of different heights, the disciple took measurements at various places in Narasimhavana and in the temple

complex. When he reported the matter to His Holiness, He told him, “You need not have taken the trouble of measuring various steps. I would have told you that the highest step is the first one in the Vidyāśaṅkara Temple, counting from the surface for doing *pradakṣiṇa*. Its height is twelve and three quarter inches. The top step there is ten and three quarter inches high.” His Holiness then mentioned the step-height at the *Samādhi* of His *Guru* and that in the front of Sacchidananda Vilasa. The disciple found that every measurement that His Holiness had provided was completely accurate. This was mind-boggling. It is noteworthy that His Holiness had never got the steps in the Vidyāśaṅkara Temple measured. He must have spontaneously and accurately judged their heights when swiftly climbing them in the past - such was His power of observation and accuracy of judgement. Similar was the case with the other steps. Moreover, He had been able to recall effortlessly what He had judged perhaps decades back.

Every day, His Holiness attended to a large number of letters from His various devotees, not only from India but also from abroad. The way He attended to the missives was a treat to watch. He would be reading one letter, writing something and dictating a reply to a second letter read out to Him earlier while not failing to accord by a nod, permission to sit down to some person who had been sent for – all at the same time. He often grasped the essence of a letter even when only a portion of it was presented to Him.

The first three examples above show, apart from other facets, how sharply attentive His Holiness was whether the activity bore religious significance or was a casual activity or even a mundane one. The fourth shows not only how attentive He was even while doing mundane tasks such as climbing steps, but also how quickly He grasped information from around Him with great accuracy. The last example shows how He could multitask with ease. In spite of His mind being so sharp and capable of engaging in intense activity, He could keep it quiet, at will, in between activities. This is revealed by His own words below.

His Holiness once remarked, “People say that thoughts keep coming to their minds. They can hardly conceive of a situation where the mind is quiet. However, this surprises Me. As I see it, the mind should be quiet and just rest on the Self, unless a thought is needed for any task. When the necessity ends, the mind should revert to the state of tranquillity. Even when a task is at hand, active thinking is generally not needed all the time. For instance, when reading a book, the mind ought to become quiet when a page is being turned.”



Dr. G. Lakshmipathy, a general physician, recollected, “His Holiness was ever in a state of equipoise and total peace. Once, in Coimbatore, His

Holiness visited the Śāradā Temple and I went to have His *darśana*. A function was in progress. I was finding it difficult to sit amidst the din and bustle of the *nādasvara* and other instruments, crowd, smoke and sweat. However, His Holiness was sitting on the dais, eyes half closed, completely at peace, with a beautiful smile on His face. I thought that this was the greatest sight I had ever seen because I could not take my eyes off Him.

“When I went to see Him some time later in Sringeri, I was thinking that it would be nice if I saw Him again in that state. At that time, He was very busy and was also ill. I told Him, ‘*Gurunātha*, I think You are exerting too much and should take rest. If You were not a *Jagadguru*, I would not have allowed You to take up all these responsibilities.’ He said, ‘What can I do? Left to myself, I would like to sit like this and meditate.’ Saying so, He went into a trance. I did not know what to say. Once again, I had the opportunity to behold Him as He was when seated on the dais, glowing with *tejas*.”



## 16. इभवक्रसुपूजकः *Ibha-vaktra-supūjakah*

One who was a devout worshipper of the Elephant-faced God

His Holiness was a ‘*supūjaka*’, devout worshipper, of ‘*ibha-vaktra*’, One who has an elephant’s face, that is Lord Gaṇeśa. The *aṣṭottaraśata-nāmāvali* of Bhagavatpāda has the *nāma*, ‘*sad-ratna-garbha-heramba-pūjakah*’ (The worshipper of Gaṇeśa who has pretty gems in His belly).<sup>52</sup> Bhagavatpāda gave that very idol of Śrī Ratna-garbha-gaṇapati that He worshipped, to the pontiff of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham. This Gaṇapati is worshipped at the *Maṭha* to this day. As per tradition, His Holiness would offer worship to this idol of Gaṇapati at the commencement of any *pūjā*, offering red-sandal paste, *dūrvā* grass, flowers and *naivedya* to the Lord.



His Holiness’s affection for Lord Gaṇapati has its roots in His childhood. [Note: His Holiness’s name before *saṁnyāsa* was ‘Srinivasa Sastry’.]

Sri Srinivasa Sastry privately worshipped a small crystal idol of Lord Gaṇapati. One day, He asked His mother, “Can I have something to offer as *naivedya*?” The poor lady was at a loss to do anything, for there was nothing in the house to give Him. Sensing His mother’s discomfiture, He hastened to reassure her and said, “Do not be ill at ease. If it is difficult for you to give me anything, please do not concern yourself.” The Lord could not be made to go hungry, could He? Nor was there anything to give Him. How did Sri Srinivasa Sastry extricate Himself from the horns of this dilemma? *Bhagavān* has said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, “Whatever the pure-minded one offers Me with devotion, be it a leaf, flower, fruit or water, that do I accept.”

Accordingly, with a heart full of love and a spoonful of water, Sri Srinivasa Sastry satiated the Lord's appetite.



Apart from Ratna-garbha-gaṇapati, Śakti-gaṇapati inside the precincts of, and Torāṇa-gaṇapati near, the Śāradāmbā Temple at Sringeri, occupied a special place in His Holiness's heart. He would offer *pūjās* to them on special occasions and also make offerings of coconuts before setting out on a tour as well as before and after the completion of a major task. He never failed to first offer salutations to Stambha-gaṇapati, the Gaṇapati on a pillar of the Malahānikareśvara Temple at Sringeri (etched into it by His Holiness's *Paramaguru (Guru's Guru)*, Śrī Sacchidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin), whenever He visited the temple. Similarly He would first offer obeisance to Vidyā-gaṇapati inside the Vidyāśaṅkara Temple before propitiating the Vidyāśaṅkara-*linga*. His Holiness is known to have often prescribed to devotees, special *pūjās* or prayers to one or other of these Gaṇapatīs, to tide over their problems.

Some time after He commenced meditation on various forms of the Lord, His Holiness engaged in meditation on Lord Gaṇapati as well. *Vināyaka-caturthi* was always witness to His Holiness offering devout *pūjā* to the idol of Gaṇapati, after which the *Gaṇapati-vākyārtha-sadas*, presided over by the Lord, would commence. Many a *sahasra-modaka-homa* and *Gaṇapati-homa* for the welfare of the world was conducted by the *Maṭha* on the instructions of His Holiness. His Holiness also consecrated scores of Gaṇapati idols in temples across the country.



The following was narrated by Sri Niranjana Kumar: "I was once driving His Holiness from Sringeri to Kotekar near Mangaluru in the late 1980s, when He asked me to stop the car at a particular spot in a place called Kerekatte, situated at the border of the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka, about 3 kilometres before the Kudremukh Road junction. He alighted from the car and went over to a small Gaṇapati shrine by the roadside, and paid His respects to the Lord there.

"He then told me, 'When I was passing by this place many years back, I heard a voice calling out, 'I am sitting here all alone, with none to care for me.' I immediately asked for the car to be halted and when I alighted to see who had appealed for help, I found Him (pointing to the Gaṇapati) seated here. Since there were only people of other religions resident in the area, nobody was taking care of Him. So I arranged for a shrine to be built exclusively for this Gaṇapati and for daily *pūjā* to be offered to Him. Since then, whenever I pass by this way, it has become a habit to halt and see Him before proceeding.'"



## 17. इन्दुमौलिपदध्यायी *Indu-mauli-pada-dhyāyī*

One who meditated on the feet of Lord Candramouliśvara

His Holiness was *dhyāyin*, One who meditated, on *pada*, the feet, of *indumauli*, the One who bears the crescent moon in His crest. His Holiness once clarified, “Śiva has the crescent moon in His crest. This moon stands for knowledge. Śiva’s wearing it in His matted locks is a pointer to the Lord being endowed with pure knowledge.” As such, that this *nāma*, which talks of meditation, uses the specific epithet ‘One with the crescent moon on His crest’ for Śiva, is significant. The *Upaniṣad* says, “Having meditated on the highest Lord (Śiva) who is powerful, has three eyes and a blue neck and is allied to Umā, the sage reaches Him who is the source of all, the witness of all and beyond *avidyā*.”<sup>53</sup> His Holiness meditated on Śiva as possessed of a form with the crescent moon in His crest, and soon went beyond attributes by practicing *nirguṇa-dhyāna* as per the Lord’s instructions (vide *nāma* 10), thereby becoming established in the pure knowledge symbolized by the crescent moon that that very Lord bears in His crest.



His Holiness used to meditate on Śiva as seated with Pārvatī, as Ardhanārīśvara, as Dakṣiṇāmūrti and as Naṭarāja.

It was the 5<sup>th</sup> of December, 1935, and the time was a little past 4:00 p.m. His Holiness was about to set out for His meditation spot on the hilltop. An attendant informed Him that the senior *Jagadguru* had sent for Him. He promptly presented Himself to His *Guru* and performed *namaskāra*. The senior *Jagadguru* gestured to Him to sit down. On His doing so, He asked, “Were you about to leave for meditation?” On receiving an answer in the affirmative, He smiled. Then He remained silent for a minute, gazing fixedly at His disciple’s face. Smiling again, He said, “I am glad. You can start.” As His Holiness then prostrated once more before His *Guru*, the latter leaned forward and placed both His hands on His disciple’s head and loudly uttered thrice the *mantra*, “*om namaḥ śivāya* (*Om. Obeisance to Śiva*).” This was unusual. As His Holiness got up, He strongly felt, “Today, I must meditate on Śiva.”

That day, the senior *Jagadguru* instructed His Holiness’s attendant not to accompany Him, and so He nimbly ascended the hill alone. At its summit, He sat down at His place of meditation, facing west. The distant Malahānikareśvara Temple was in His line of sight. The sky was cloudless. Both the sun and the moon were clearly visible.

Having adopted the *siddhāsana*, He mentally offered His *namaskāras* to His *Guru* and Śiva before commencing His meditation. He directed His gaze to the space between His eyebrows. Keeping His eyes fixed, He mentally

chanted the *mantra*, ‘*om namaḥ śivāya.*’ As usual, He felt a strong tingling sensation between His eyebrows. He soon began to behold an attractive and soothing moon-like disc of light within Him in that region. Such a disc had made its appearance only on a few earlier occasions. What manifested often was a blue hue; much less frequently, a green hue used to manifest. With His mind having become greatly tranquil and attentive, He imagined His heart-lotus in full bloom. As described in the *dhyāna-ślokā* of the *mantra*, He visualised Śiva therein as associated with the Divine Mother and as possessed of five heads and ten arms. The meaning of the said *dhyāna-śloka* is: “I salute Pārvatī’s Lord, who is tranquil, is seated in *padmāsana*, has the moon in His crest, has five faces (four in the four directions and one upward-turned), has three eyes (per face), bears a trident, thunderbolt, sword, axe and the symbol of granting freedom from fear (open upraised palm) in the (five hands on the) right side and bears a snake, noose, bell, the fire of cosmic dissolution and a goad in the (five hands on the) left side, is variously adorned and resembles (in complexion) a crystal gem.”

As He focused on the form, His awareness of the surroundings and the body vanished. Soon, His mental chanting of the *mantra* came to a stop and His mind thoroughly locked on to the divine form in the heart. Suddenly, the form became extraordinarily vivid. No effort to concentrate was needed any more. He could then literally experience the immediate presence of Śiva. He was overwhelmed with joy, particularly enthralled by the affection and smile He apprehended in the Lord’s *īśāna-mukha* (upward-turned face).



### 18. इहामुत्रार्थनिःस्पृहः *Ihāmutrārtha-niḥsprḥah*

One who was free from desires for objects of this world and the next Bhagavatpāda lists ‘*ihāmutrārtha-phala-bhoga-virāgaḥ*’ or dispassion with respect to the enjoyment of objects that are fruits of actions, as the second of four basic qualifications that a spiritual aspirant must necessarily possess. These objects may be of this world (*iha*), or the next (*amutra*) like heaven. Bhagavatpāda also explains exactly what freedom from desire or dispassion is, and simultaneously specifies the means to cultivate it: “*Vairāgya* is the absence of longing for objects of desire here and in the hereafter, born out of repeated perception of faults in them”<sup>54</sup> (vide *nāma* 13).

For the one who has realised the Supreme, however, such dispassion is complete. Bhagavatpāda summarises this when He says, “A knower of *Brahman* has attained all that has to be attained; there is no possibility of a desire arising for such a person, all of whose desires are fulfilled.”<sup>55</sup> In fact, Bhagavatpāda’s definition of the word ‘*niḥsprḥah*’ is, “One for whom the

desire even to merely keep the body alive, has completely gone.”<sup>56</sup> This is the zenith of dispassion.

While His Holiness was described in *nāma* 13 as one who freed others from the great foe that is desire, He is described here as Himself being *niḥspṛha*, free from desire, for *iha-amutra-artha*, objects of this world and the next.



As a young boy not yet in His teens, Sri Srinivasa Sastry used to regularly express to His friends, His desire to renounce the world. At first His companions found His longing ludicrous but soon realised that He was inexorably resolved. One boy asked Him, “What use is there in becoming a *saṁnyāsin*? By becoming a great king, one attains an exalted position.” Sri Srinivasa Sastry responded, “Do not think thus. What long-lasting benefit is there in becoming a monarch? An emperor can enjoy only when he is in power. That state of affairs must come to an end, sooner or later. If, however, I become a *saṁnyāsin*, I can constantly meditate and be without any worries. There will be a wonderful opportunity to behold God and I shall remain ever protected by Him.”



After the completion of His *upanayana* at Sringeri, Sri Srinivasa Sastry and members of his family crossed the river Tuṅgā and went to Narasimhavana to behold Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin. Looking compassionately at Sri Srinivasa Sastry, the *Jagadguru* said, “Now you are a *brahmacārin*. It may be necessary for you to go home and perform the ordained duties.”

“I would like to remain here,” Sri Srinivasa Sastry responded, with reverence. The *Jagadguru* asked, “Do you not have to study English and take up a job to earn your livelihood? If yes, it is imperative that you go.”

Undaunted in His resolve and frank in His expression, Sri Srinivasa Sastry said, “I desire neither that education nor a job. I wish to study Sanskrit here.”



When His Holiness was in His late forties, a disciple happened to see His Holiness waking up from sleep one night, eating a small, shrivelled plantain that was kept on a windowsill, drinking some water and then going back to bed. The disciple felt bad that His Holiness had eaten a banana that was fit to be thrown away.

When he had the opportunity to talk to Him next morning, the disciple gave vent to his feelings and said, “Why did Your Holiness choose to eat the fruit that was in such a bad state?” “Why not?” asked His Holiness. “There are boxes full of luscious grapes from Australia that were submitted to Your Holiness. Leaving those aside, why did Your Holiness have to eat that

particular shrivelled plantain?” queried the disciple. His Holiness said, “It is advised that one has to eat something when feeling pain due to peptic ulcer. The plantain served the purpose adequately. Just because better quality fruits are available today, do I have to eat them? Do you know what *virakti* (dispassion) is? It is not the dispassion that you have towards an object in its absence. Even when the object of desire is in front of you and is also rightfully yours, you should not enjoy it. Even the thought, ‘I want it’ should not be there in your mind. That alone is true *virakti*.”

His Holiness continued, “Even though I may not attempt to procure the object, if I were to entertain a desire for it, the very longing will remain in my mind as a residual *saṃskāra* (tendency). On a different occasion, such a *saṃskāra* may impel me to act even without my being conscious of it. This is not true *vairāgya*.”



Dr. H. C. Visvesvaraiya recalled, “During one of His Holiness’s visits to Delhi, I was desirous of making a special wooden cot for Him to sleep on, as the weather was extremely chill. Later, I found that His Holiness did not lie on it but on the floor. Anxious, I submitted, ‘I have arranged for the cot exclusively for Your Holiness’s use. It is brand new and no one has used it so far. I will be very happy if Your Holiness uses it.’ His Holiness smiled and said, ‘Yes, I will.’ Later, I was surprised to find that He used it only to keep His articles on and to occasionally sit on, but not for sleeping. He continued to sleep on the floor, unmindful of the testing weather.”



## 19. कर्मकर्मविभागज्ञः *Karmākarma-vibhāga-jñāḥ*

One who knew the distinction between action and non-action

*Bhagavān* Kṛṣṇa remarks, “What is action? What is non-action? As to this, even learned ones are deluded.”<sup>57</sup> The Lord Himself explains why knowing about these is important: “I will explain to you about action, on knowing which you will be liberated from the inauspicious (cycle of birth and death).”<sup>58</sup> He then goes on to say, “He who sees non-action in action (that is perceives the presence of the non-acting *Ātman* even in the midst of actions performed by the body, mind, etc.) and action in non-action (that is sees that even at times when the body, etc., seem to be inactive, action is going on through the body, mind, etc.) is wise, is a *yogin* and is one who has performed all actions.”<sup>59</sup> Thus, to know the distinction between action and non-action is to clearly comprehend that in reality, the *Ātman*, which is of the intrinsic nature of consciousness, does not act, and that action is only in the mind, intellect, organs and body, all of which are inert.



The day His Holiness commenced the practice of *nirguṇa-dhyāna* (which was at the age of eighteen) He sat at His meditation spot and reflected on the following lines in accordance with the scripture.

“This body, made up of skin, blood, flesh, bones and the like, is dependent on food and is inert. It is perceivable like an external object, such as a stone. What is inert and perceivable is different from what is conscious and perceives it. I am conscious and perceive the body; as for my consciousness, that is self-evident. So, I am not the body. Likewise, I am not the *prāṇas* (the vital breath). The organs are, in themselves, inert and are merely the instruments of perception and activity. As such, the possibility of me being the organs does not arise.

“The mind is changeful and comprises thoughts and emotions that arise and disappear. I am aware of the thoughts and emotions. How can I be the mind, for it is but an object of consciousness, as is a stone? It cannot be that a second thought, and not consciousness other than the mind, is necessary or sufficient to reveal a thought. This is because another thought would be needed to reveal the thought that reveals the first one; yet another thought would be needed to reveal that thought and so on. There would be the fallacy of infinite regress.

“*Sāttvika* food conduces to mental purity and calmness, while *rājasika* and *tāmasika* foods affect the mind adversely. It is well known that the thinking of a person heavily under the influence of liquor is impaired. Affected by what is ingested, the mind is a material entity, notwithstanding its subtlety. Though it appears to be conscious, the mind, which is material, is inert. I who am patently not inert cannot be the inert mind.

“The agent denoted by ‘I’ in notions such as, ‘I see this,’ ‘I feel dull’ and ‘I do this’ manifests in the states of waking and dream but disappears with the onset of deep sleep. One would not be in deep sleep at all if one were to have any notion at that time like, ‘I am fast asleep.’ I, however, do exist not only in the states of waking and dream but also in deep sleep. This is confirmed by the ready recognition on awakening, ‘During deep sleep, I slept happily. I did not know anything at that time.’ As the agent disappears during deep sleep but I persist therein, I cannot be this agent marked by the I-thought.

“Agency involves change and pertains to the intellect. Though reflecting the light of the sun and appearing bright, a mirror is intrinsically not a source of light. Likewise, though appearing to be intrinsically conscious, the intellect, being a material entity like the organs, is inert. I am the witness of even the intellect and, so, distinct from it.”

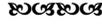
He attained direct realization of and establishment in the action-less *Ātman-Brahman*, transcending the body-mind-ego-intellect, within a week of commencing this contemplation.



20. कीर्तनीयगुणोज्ज्वलः *Kīrtanīya-guṇojjvalaḥ*

One who shone with qualities worthy of veneration

This *nāma* states that His Holiness was *ujjvala*, radiant, with *guṇas*, qualities, that were *kīrtanīya*, fit to be venerated, praised or celebrated. This implies that His Holiness possessed certain qualities that could be only wondered at and not fathomed, only worshipped and not possibly emulated.



His Holiness suffered an attack of angina in 1982, with severe pain in the chest and dull pain in His left arm. He was administered an intramuscular injection of morphine. Soon, He was in a state of semi-torpor. Only two of His close disciples were in the room with Him. Though hardly conscious of what He was saying, His Holiness muttered a verse, ending with the words, “*matī-kṛta-guṇadoṣā māṁ vibhuṁ na spr̥śanti* (The meritorious and faulty doings of the intellect do not touch me, who am all-pervading.)” This was the affirmation of His being centred in *Brahman*, that came from His Holiness even while experiencing intense pain and being just semiconscious.



It was not just that His Holiness could attain and regulate His meditative state and also the duration of His *nirvikalpa-samādhi* at will (as can be gleaned from *nāmas* 15, 27 and 40), but He also had the power to bestow *samādhi* on others at will. Not just this, He could do so without even being physically present and using another as an instrument.

Once a disciple mentally requested His Holiness to give *nirvikalpa-samādhi* to a certain youngster. His Holiness appeared in a vision and agreed. The disciple and the boy sat facing each other, and the disciple mentally asked His Holiness what should be done. His Holiness appeared before the disciple and asked him to place his left thumb in the space between the person’s eyebrows and right palm on the centre of the person’s chest. He then instructed the disciple, “Now concentrate and resolve strongly that he should get *samādhi*.” The disciple acted accordingly and found that the person began to close his eyes and slowly his breathing rate decreased. The disciple simultaneously noticed a sort of vibrating sensation in his right hand and also the feeling of a great *śakti* flowing through it into the person’s chest. The disciple’s palm became increasingly warm but His Holiness urged him to concentrate more. At a point His Holiness’s instructions came through

clearly: “Concentrate even more and then you yourself go into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.” The disciple obeyed.

After some time the disciple emerged from *samādhi* and opened his eyes. The person had his eyes half closed, did not have any noticeable breathing, and was about nine inches completely off the ground. He seemed oblivious of his surroundings and was an epitome of tranquility. His Holiness instructed the disciple to press the person’s thighs down. On the disciple doing this, the person gradually came into contact with the *āsana* spread on the floor. His Holiness then said, “He is now in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.” After the lapse of some time, His Holiness finally decided to bring him out of *samādhi*. He told the disciple that He would be erasing the memory of the *samādhi* because the time was not yet ripe for the state, which He had granted in response to the disciple’s wish. He said further, “He will feel as if only a few minutes have elapsed and that he never went into any firm concentration at all, for he continuously heard other sounds.”

When the person came out of *samādhi*, what the person expressed as his experience was exactly as His Holiness had stated. Thus, His Holiness was not only able to bestow the highest state through someone else, but also to withhold its memory.



## 21. कामिताशेषफलदः *Kāmitāśeṣa-phaladaḥ*

One who bestowed the desired fruit without exception

The desire for any object is fundamentally not for the object per se but for the happiness one expects to derive from the object. The *Śruti* points out, “O dear one! Nothing is dear for its own sake; it is for the sake of the *Ātman* that everything becomes dear.”<sup>60</sup> Bhagavatpāda explains, “That *Ātman*, because of which the body, wife, offspring, possessions and the like are dear, is, for this very reason, the most beloved of all. Everything other than the *Ātman* is the cause of sorrow. Therefore, how can these really be objects of love?”<sup>61</sup> He follows this up with the following analysis: “There is liking for an object here only as long as it gives happiness; there is dislike for an object for as long as it gives sorrow. The same object cannot give happiness all the time, nor can it always be a cause of sorrow. What is disliked may become dear at some point of time; what is dear may later become the object of dislike. Therefore, the *Ātman* alone is what is always the dearest.”<sup>62</sup> Therefore, a person who loves an object and hence desires to attain it, does so because he believes it will bring him happiness, but his calculations about the object may just go completely awry.

A *kāmita-phaladaḥ*, bestower of desired fruits, may be likened to the *kalpataru* or wish-fulfilling tree that gives whatever is desired, without

consideration of whether it would be ultimately beneficial to the recipient or not. However here, the word *aśeṣa*, without exception, has been added as a qualifier for the giving of desired fruits. This is profoundly significant because it means that His Holiness never failed to give completely to devotees, the desired fruits. This is possible only if He consistently and unfailingly granted happiness in response to what was desired. This granting of happiness by His Holiness could be in the form of granting the very object of a person's desire, or in the form of granting something else if that alone would be in the person's interests. Thus this *nāma* asserts the competence and compassion of His Holiness in unfailingly conferring all that was conducive to the true welfare of an individual.



The following is an account narrated by Sri Tirumalaiswamy.

“In 1984, I went to Kalady for the *darśana* of His Holiness. That day, while giving evening *darśana*, He was seated quite relaxed and no one else was present. His Holiness said to me, ‘What do you want? Whatever you want, you may ask without any reservations.’ I replied, ‘I wish to be blessed with the holy remembrance of Your Holiness's lotus feet always. I do not want anything else.’ His Holiness blessed me, saying, ‘You have my complete blessings. As per your wish, you will always have the thought of me in your mind.’

“After that, I always had His *smaraṇa* continuously amidst all my activities, from morning to night. The thought of His Holiness was always perceptible, even as I bathed, performed *pūjā*, travelled, etc., keeping me ever joyful.”



A pious lady who was spiritually inclined, fervently desired *mantropadeśa* from His Holiness. Her husband and parents-in-law, however, were against the idea, because they felt that if she received *mantropadeśa*, then she would be engaged in *mantra-japa* all the time and neglect her young children and the household. She could not request His Holiness for *mantropadeśa* by bypassing them, and yet her desire for it only grew by the day.

His Holiness was camping in Mumbai where the family resided and the lady used to attend the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* performed by His Holiness in public every evening. One day her desire for *mantropadeśa* had become very intense. During the *pūjā* that evening, when His Holiness got into His knelt-down position facing away from the audience in order to place the *Candramaulīśvara-liṅga* back in the *maṇḍapa* after *abhiṣeka* (ceremonial bath given to a divinity) and *alaṅkāra* (adornment of the deity with sandalpaste and flowers), the soles of His lotus feet were, as usual, directly visible to the gathering of devotees. At that juncture, the lady quickly prostrated to His feet from her position in the crowd, and mentally said to

Him, “I am unable to obtain *mantropadeśa* from Your Holiness directly, and so I am going to chant the *Śakti-pañcākṣarī-mantra* from this moment on, taking it that Your Holiness has blessed me with the *mantra*. I pray for Your Holiness’s blessings.” She then quickly reverted to her seated posture. Once His Holiness had placed the Lord in the *maṇḍapa*, He turned around and sharply looked at the lady, who was one among a teeming crowd.

The lady then sincerely kept chanting the *mantra* in her mind, whenever she could, using her fingers to keep count, without the knowledge of anyone in her family. For instance, whenever the family would go on an outing, say to watch a movie, she would remove her slippers and sit cross-legged in her seat in the theatre and quietly chant the *mantra*. None knew of her practice.

Many years later, after her children were well-settled, etc., her husband had the desire to get *mantropadeśa* from His Holiness. When he told the lady of his desire, and offered to request His Holiness for *mantropadeśa* for her too, she expressed disinterest and encouraged him to ask only for himself. After all, it was her firm belief that His Holiness had already initiated her long ago, though none else was any the wiser about it. Her husband therefore requested His Holiness for *mantropadeśa* for himself, and His Holiness readily acceded, asking him to come the next morning.

The devotee asked his wife to accompany him for the *mantropadeśa*, which she did. Once His Holiness had initiated him, in spite of her having expressed her unwillingness earlier, the man requested His Holiness to kindly bless his wife too with initiation. His Holiness’s instant and response was, “I have already initiated her long ago.”

His Holiness had granted the lady the fruit of what she had desired, namely the *mantropadeśa*, without having explicitly initiated her into a *mantra*.



A Malaysian student had once come to Sringeri as a tourist. Having had *darśana* of Śārādāmbā, he developed a desire to procure and wear a pendant with Śārādāmbā’s form imprinted on it. He searched all over the marketplace and made enquiries with various devotees at Sringeri, but drew a blank.

That evening, the student was standing along with several other devotees who had gathered for the *darśana* of His Holiness. His Holiness spotted the Malaysian and beckoned to him to come forward. He then asked the young man through an interpreter, “Who are you? Which country are you from? For what have you come to Sringeri?” The student answered. Having conversed with him for a few more minutes, His Holiness blessed him with a silver coin. Later, the lad was overjoyed on seeing that the coin had the form of Śārādāmbā embossed in it. What he was not aware of was that the coin was in fact given to only those who perform *pādapūjā*. He was surprised

that without his even intending to ask His Holiness for such a pendant, His Holiness had, of His own accord, blessed him with it and fulfilled his innermost desire.



The following was narrated by Smt. Susheela of Erode.

“On His way to Coimbatore, His Holiness’s car entered the colony where our rented house was situated. When the car stopped in front of our compound gate, His Holiness got out of the car, removed His *pādukās* and started walking barefoot. I was worried as to why His Holiness had to remove His *pādukās*, as the place was full of sand and sharp stones. His Holiness walked slowly and, on His entering the house, I could find the dust from His feet forming footmarks on the floor! He then looked at me with His characteristic smile and said, ‘See, I have come. Are you happy now?’

“Only then did I realize that He had, in letter and spirit, fulfilled my earlier request to Him, of gracing my house with the dust of His feet. Choked with emotion, I apologized, ‘Just to get my wishes fulfilled, I have committed the sin of making Your Holiness walk on sharp stones.’ His Holiness said, ‘It was not a problem at all. I am quite used to such terrain.’”



## 22. कोमलस्वान्तसंयुतः *Komala-svānta-saṁyutaḥ*

One who was well-endowed with tenderness of heart

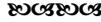
A verse in the *Mahābhārata* conveys, “O Bharata prince! *Kṛpā*, *anukampā*, *kāruṇya*, *ānṛśaṁsya*, *ārjava*, *kṣamā* and *satya* are special qualities. Cultivate them.”<sup>63</sup> Nīlakaṇṭha’s gloss explains the different shades of meaning of compassion, epitomised by the words *kṛpā*, *anukampā*, *kāruṇya* and *ānṛśaṁsya* of this verse, as follows: “*Kṛpā* is the effort put in for others’ happiness. *Anukampā* is the sorrow one feels on seeing others’ misery. *Kāruṇya* is the effort put in to relieve others’ suffering. *Ānṛśaṁsya* is the abstinence from giving sorrow to others.”<sup>64</sup>

Being *komala*, tender, implies that one’s heart melts at the sight of another’s misery (*anukampā*). Moreover, being *komala* or tender while dealing with others means dealing with them without harshness, that is in such a way that no difficulty is caused to them (*ānṛśaṁsya*). Though *anukampā* and *ānṛśaṁsya*, the two aspects of being *komala*, are distinct traits, it is worth noticing that the trait of *anukampā* is subsumed in *ānṛśaṁsya*. After all, a person whose outlook is such that he is never harsh to anyone, would surely have the basic quality of empathy towards the suffering.

The word *svāntam*, mind, in this *nāma* conveys the meaning, ‘One whose mind is tender’. This specific mention of the mind clarifies that it is not as if

His Holiness's tenderness was a mere external display marked by kind words and actions, but that it was something that emanated from His heart. The *Veda* explains, 'What the mind contemplates the tongue speaks and that is what the body does,'<sup>65</sup> implying that if a trait is had at the mental level, it automatically percolates to the instruments of speech and action. Thus the meaning that emerges is that His Holiness's heart, speech and actions were all endowed with tenderness. By the use of the word *yutaḥ*, endowed with, the *nāma* emphasizes that His Holiness was tender at heart by nature.

Further, this quality in His Holiness, even though congenital, did not suffer from the lacunae of diminishing or changing with time or with circumstances or from any possible dichotomy between speech and action due to change of mind. It is to convey precisely this aspect, that the *nāma* employs the suffix 'sam', implying fullness, constancy and firmness. Indeed, the saying, "The mind, speech and action are in harmony for a *mahātman*,"<sup>66</sup> forms an apt description of His Holiness. Thus, His Holiness's absolute tenderness of heart, which also translated into tenderness of speech and action, was innate to Him and was steady, undiminishing and uniform. His Holiness naturally and spontaneously felt empathy for others' pain and would do no harm whatsoever to whoever He dealt with, irrespective of time, person and circumstances. This is exemplified in innumerable instances of His dealings with devotees and *Maṭha* staff and indeed, all living beings.



Sri Srinivasa Sastry was playing blind man's bluff one day at Sringeri with some other *vidyārthins*. Sri Ramaswamy Avadhani had a cloth tied over his eyes and was the one who was supposed to touch the others who were moving around to evade him. As he came near Sri Srinivasa Sastry, the latter dexterously stepped aside. Ramaswamy struck himself mildly against a pillar there. Infuriated, he loosened the cloth that veiled his vision, struck Sri Srinivasa Sastry a blow and shouted, "You are the cause of this injury."

His hitting and accusing Sri Srinivasa Sastry were decidedly unjustified. Someone else in Sri Srinivasa Sastry's place might have chosen to retaliate with sharp words or, if possible, with a blow. He was made of finer stuff. He gave no room to anger. On the contrary, noting that Ramaswamy had injured himself slightly, He patiently pacified him and attended to his injury. Thereby, He won the heart of Ramaswamy, who was able to recollect this incident vividly even after the lapse of over fifty years.



When His Holiness was once camping at Dharwad, He readily consented to visit an orphanage at the request of its headmistress. The lady showed His Holiness around the place. She then introduced her wards to Him one by one, saying, 'I found this child abandoned in a railway station at the age of

three. This one was picked up from a dustbin...’ As He listened to her and saw the orphans, His heart melted and He was visibly moved.

He later blessed the children whole-heartedly and greatly appreciated the lady who had rescued so many children and was taking care of them as her own. Such was His tenderness of heart and compassion that He could not withstand even listening to tales of suffering.

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One afternoon, a disciple saw His Holiness working alone in the garden in front of Sacchidananda Vilasa, the abode of His Holiness. He was wearing gloves and was holding a pair of shears; near Him was a knife, a can of water and some tape. He noticed the disciple and gestured to him to come. He told the disciple that He was about to graft roses and that He would be using a method called “T-bud”; having said this, He jokingly commented, “By ‘T’, I did not mean the tea that people drink.” He then proceeded with the grafting; as He did so, He explained the steps.

He mentioned that before the disciple had come, He had sterilized the shears and the knife to avoid causing infection. Such was His love for the plants that before cutting, He addressed the rosebushes saying, “Forgive me for causing you pain. I will take good care of you. You will recover soon and be more beautiful than you are now.” The disciple saw tears in His eyes as He said so. He worked quickly but gently and soon the work was complete. His Holiness’s tender heart could not withstand the pain that the rose bush had to go through.

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His Holiness’s tenderness of heart manifested even when punishment had to be meted out to an erring staff. Once, an employee of the *Matha* was extremely careless and this resulted in a substantial loss. Sri Giridhara Sastry, as the Administrator, decided to recover the lost amount in instalments from that person’s salary and fixed the rate of recovery. When he reported the matter to His Holiness, He felt pity for the person and said, “I concede that punishment has to be given but what you have imposed is too much. Care should be taken to ensure that no trouble is caused to his family and to him. You have been recovering some fine until now. That is sufficient. No further recovery need be done.” His orders were duly carried out, though the remission meant that hardly ten percent of the lost amount was recovered.

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On an occasion, a staff poured ghee from the *Matha*’s kitchen into a vessel that he had brought from home. As he had to attend to some work, he kept the vessel at a particular spot. This was observed and the matter brought to His Holiness’s attention. His Holiness could have very easily exposed the

concerned person and put him to shame but He did not wish to do so. He asked another worker of the *Maṭha* to give the ghee to the kitchen and to replace the vessel at the exact spot where it had been left. When the culprit returned, he must have been in for a shock. He would have known that his theft had been discovered but would have been thankful that it was not made public. At any rate, he was in no position to complain, “I had kept some ghee in my vessel. It is missing now.” His Holiness thus unobtrusively and gently gave the staff an opportunity to mend his ways.



Dr. Lakshmiopathy once reminisced as follows.

“His Holiness had some breathing trouble and was under the treatment of an *Āyurveda-vaidya* (physician qualified in *Āyurveda*) in Bengaluru. He told me that the *vaidya*’s medicine was giving Him great relief. Being an allopath, I felt jealous. When I went to see Him later, He said that His trouble had recurred. I queried, ‘What about the *āyurvedic* medicine?’ With some satisfaction, I thought that that medicine was ineffective. However, He said, ‘I stopped taking it because the *vaidya* is aged and has to put up with difficulty to prepare it. Of course, he is quite willing to do it for me but I do not want him troubled. Hence, let me take your medicine. Your medicine is also effective.’ Such was His compassion that He was more concerned about the physician’s strain than His health and was willing to satisfy me in spite of my jealousy.”



Once during the daily *darśana* time, His Holiness was, as usual, seated in the forecourt of Sacchidananda Vilasa at Sringeri giving *darśana*. An old lady among the crowd of devotees came to His Holiness and poured out her tale of woe to Him. His Holiness consoled her and gave her *prasāda*. The old lady went and sat down among the crowd, but in a few minutes was up on her feet again. She went back to His Holiness and repeated the description of the very same problems. His Holiness listened to her patiently, as if He was hearing it all for the first time, and with words of consolation, gave *prasāda* to her again. Feeling reassured, the lady went back to her place and sat down. This sequence was repeated several times with His Holiness listening with the same empathy and tenderness of heart that He had in the first instance. Such was His tenderness of heart that He would not even tell the lady that she had already apprised Him of the matter and that He had already given His blessings.



Hurting dogs with stones is a pastime of many sadists. His Holiness vehemently opposed and prevented such unwarranted cruelty. When He was once addressing a group of school students in Bengaluru, the howl of a dog

was heard. It prompted Him to promptly remark, “Someone has pelted a dog with a stone. It is improper and indeed sinful.”

The spontaneity of His reaction bore testimony to His concern for animals and disapproval of people sadistically causing injury to them.

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His Holiness was extremely considerate to people and abhorred causing any kind of disturbance to the public. During a visit to Coimbatore in the early 1970s, His Holiness was set to deliver a benedictory address at a venue, when He noticed that loud speakers had been mounted not only within the hall but also outside, on the sides of the road. His keen power of observation led Him to realize that it would be possible to decouple the speakers outside the venue of the talk without difficulty.

He said, “Please disconnect the loud speakers on the road. It is sufficient and in fact appropriate that my speech be heard only here and not outside. This is because people who are interested are already seated inside. It is not right that people on the road be subjected to the nuisance of having a speech they are not interested in dinned into their ears. Often, during marriages, loud speakers are connected in such a way that music blares into the ears of those on the road. They wonder, ‘What a pain this function is!’ Instead of receiving the good wishes of everyone, the bride and the bridegroom unnecessarily earn the ill-will of some whom they do not even know. Functions, be they weddings or ones such as this, ought not to cause noise pollution.” The organisers were able to easily implement what His Holiness had suggested.

His Holiness’s consideration for the public and His keenness on avoiding noise pollution, a problem that was largely overlooked in India in the early 1970s, unlike now, are noteworthy.

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His Holiness was taken ill a few days before He shed His mortal form on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1989. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, at about 11:15 p.m., He was observed as having pain in both His arms and it was radiating to His back. He was forced to lie only on His back and was unable to sleep. Dr. Vasudeva Herale of the Sharada Dhanwanthari Hospital at Sringeri was contacted over the phone and informed of His Holiness’s condition. The doctor soon arrived, checked His Holiness’s blood pressure, recorded His ECG and administered an injection of Calmpose. The doctor came again at around 7 o’clock the next morning. He found that His Holiness continued to be in pain. He administered an intramuscular injection of Pethidine.

His Holiness expressed His discomfort at the doctor having had to come for His sake at night (at 11:30 p.m.) and again in the morning; it did not weigh with Him that it was only a ten-minute’s drive from the doctor’s house

to Sacchidananda Vilasa and that between his two visits, the doctor could have slept for over six hours.



A few nights prior to 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1989, Sri Giridhara Sastry slept outside His Holiness's room to attend to Him if required. As he was entering His Holiness's bedroom at night to check on Him, His Holiness asked, "Did I disturb you by saying, 'Nārāyaṇa' loudly?" When in pain, He used to repeat the name of God, but without any expectation whatsoever. He had done so that night and that was the basis of His question. He was so considerate that He did not want to disturb anybody's sleep even by voicing the Lord's name in the privacy of His room and that too, at a time when He was quite unwell and in pain.



### 23. कालट्यादिपरिष्कर्ता *Kālaṭyādi-pariṣkartā*

One who brought about the development of Kalady and other places

His Holiness is described as *pariṣkarta*, One who brought about the development, *kālaṭyādi*, of Kalady and other places. Being the birthplace of Bhagavatpāda, Kalady held a very special place in His Holiness's heart, and He spent considerable time, energy and resources in effecting extensive development at Kalady. In fact, He spent three *cāturmāsya*s in Kalady (1956, 1958 and 1984) and this especially facilitated His planning and overseeing the execution of developmental projects there.

Apart from Kalady, His Holiness took particular interest in carrying out the development of shrines and branches of the Sringeri Math at many locations throughout the country. The projects included creating facilities for pilgrims' stay and for devotees to conduct religious and spiritual activities, renovating existing temples and consecrating new ones, and establishing *pāṭhaśālās* for *Vedic* and *Śāstraic* studies.

Being an able administrator and having a keen engineering sense, He did not stop with merely initiating such works, but also planned the projects in great detail, meticulously architected them, closely monitored their progress, ensured that impediments at any stage were effectively neutralized, and made sure that the implementation was completely in optimal time.



The following list of improvements His Holiness brought about in existing branch *Maṭhas* like Kalady is merely illustrative and not exhaustive.

Location	Developmental work	Date
Kalady, Kerala	Construction of new buildings in the <i>Maṭha</i> premises including a guest house for pilgrims' stay, was started under His Holiness's direct supervision.	Jun-Sep, 1958

Location	Developmental work	Date
	His Holiness formed the Sri Shankara Educational Trust to manage Sri Shankara College whose financial position had become precarious. (The High Court of Travancore had entrusted His Holiness with the power to appoint the Managing Committee.)	1959-60
	In response to His appeal, devotees collectively raised Rs. 10 lakhs for the development of Sri Shankara College, and submitted the amount to His Holiness.	19.10.1960
	Various developmental activities planned for Sri Shankara College by His Holiness in consultation with the Sri Shankara Educational Trust.	March 1962
	Laid the foundation stone for Sri Shankara Memorial Hall housing a library, an auditorium, a gallery of murals, sculptures and other cultural accessories.	16.05.1964
	After completion of major renovation and expansion projects, the inauguration of the Shankara Memorial Arch and Hall was done by Sri K. Hanumanthiah, Hon'ble Minister for Railways, Government of India, in the august presence of His Holiness.	29.04.1971
	Consecrated newly constructed <i>rājagopuras</i> for the Śāradāmbā and Bhagavatpāda shrines.	22.08.1984
	Foundation stone for Sree Shankaracharya University of Sanskrit laid in the august presence of His Holiness and Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin.	10.09.1984
Chennai, Tamil Nadu	Inaugurated the renovated <i>Maṭha</i> at Krishnappa Naicken Agraharam at George Town.	13.03.1962
Bengaluru, Karnataka	Inaugurated the Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Kalyana Mandapa inside the Shankara Math campus.	03.06.1963
	Inaugurated the newly fabricated procession car ( <i>ratha</i> ) for Śāradāmbā.	02.04.1988
	Inaugurated the Jnanodaya School close to the Shankara Math compound, in the presence of Sri B. Somashekar, Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education, Government of Karnataka.	10.04.1988
	Performed <i>aṣṭabandhana-kumbhābhiṣeka</i> for the renovated Bhagavatpāda Temple in Shankara Math.	April 1988
	Laid foundation stone for a new auditorium in the <i>Maṭha</i> complex.	
Sivaganga, Tamil Nadu	Consecrated the idol of Bhagavatpāda and His four principal disciples in the Sringeri Shankara Math.	05.03.1965
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh	Consecrated the idol of Śrī Śāradāmbā in the newly constructed temple in the <i>Maṭha</i> .	09.02.1966
	Foundation stone laid for Shankara Sadan, a hall to be constructed between the newly built Śāradāmbā shrine and already existing Bhagavatpāda shrine.	

Location	Developmental work	Date
Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh	Made arrangements in the <i>Maṭha</i> for the installation of Śrī Śāradāmbā.	30.04.1967
Haridwar, Uttarakhand	Minutely scrutinized newly constructed main building in the <i>Maṭha</i> and gave instructions for future work.	24.06.1967
Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh	Consecrated the idol of Bhagavatpāda at the Sringeri Math	18.12.1967
Shivaganga, Karnataka	Consecrated new shrines of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Mahā-gaṇapati and Daṇḍapāṇi.	01.03.1971
Hassan, Karnataka	Consecrated the idols of Śrī Śāradāmbā and Śrī Bhagavatpāda.	18.03.1968
Shikaripur, Karnataka	Consecrated shrines for Śāradāmbā, Bhagavatpāda and Dattātreyā.	23.01.1969
Karur, Tamil Nadu	Consecrated the idol of Śrī Rājarājeśvarī at the Shankaralaya.	16.04.1971
Udupi, Karnataka	Consecrated the idol of Śāradāmbā at the Shankara Math	11.03.1976
New Delhi	In the august presence of His Holiness, the foundation stone for the library buildings at Shankara Vidya Kendra was laid by Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then Union External Affairs Minister.	19.04.1977
	Consecrated new shrines of Bhagavatpāda, Candraśekhara, Śāradāmbā at Shankara Vidya Kendra	05.05.1977
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu	Consecrated new temple at Sringeri Math for Śāradāmbā, Bhagavatpāda, Gaṇapati, Subrahmaṇya	25.11.1979
Madurai, Tamil Nadu	Consecrated idols of Śāradāmbā, Bhagavatpāda, Viśālākṣī, Viśveśvara after extensive renovations at Shankara Math, Amman Kovil Street	27.01.1980
Mysuru, Karnataka	Consecrated idols of Śāradāmbā, Bhagavatpāda and Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin.	05.05.1980
Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu	Inaugurated Sringeri Sri Sharada Kalyana Mandapam at Sivapuram Street, Meenakshipuram.	18.11.1981
Nanjanagudu, Karnataka	Consecrated idols of Śāradāmbā and Bhagavatpāda at Shankara Math.	02.06.1986
Mysuru, Karnataka	Consecrated <i>Navagraha</i> idols in the newly constructed temple at Abhinava Shankaralaya.	04.06.1986
Kotekar, Karnataka	Oversaw the progress of the construction of a temple for Gaṇeśa, Śāradāmbā and Bhagavatpāda.	January 1988
Kolar, Karnataka	Inaugurated newly constructed Kalyana Mandapa of Shankara Math.	April 1988
Tarikere, Karnataka	Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin inaugurated the newly constructed Sri Sringeri Sharada Sabha Bhavanam in the presence of His Holiness.	03.07.1988

Location	Developmental work	Date
Dharwad, Karnataka	Consecrated idols of Śāradāmbā and Bhagavatpāda at the Shankara Math.	26.05.1989



## 24. कामक्रोधविवर्जितः *Kāma-krodha-vivarjitah*

One who was especially free from anger born of desire

How desire arises, leads to anger and destroys a person, was seen in the context of *nāma* 13. It has been seen in *nāma* 18 that His Holiness was One who was completely devoid of desires. Ruling out the cause, desire, automatically implies that its effect, anger, is ruled out. Thus, interpreting the term ‘*kāma-krodha* (desire-anger)’ here as indicating that His Holiness was free from ‘desire and anger’ would amount to a double redundancy. Hence, the term may be taken here to mean ‘anger born of desire’.

Lord Kṛṣṇa emphasizes that desire and anger are among the triple gates to hell. It has been said, “My salutations to anger that severely burns him who gives it refuge!”<sup>67</sup> Thus, the very nature of anger is that regardless of whether or not it harms the one at whom it is directed, it certainly harms the one who harbours it. This real anger, is what is born of desire. By saying that His Holiness was *vi-varjita*, especially free from, *kāma-krodha*, anger born of desire, this *nāma* explicitly rules out such anger in His case. So by implication, should any anger remain at all, it must necessarily have been both not real and hence only seeming, and not born of desire and hence born of something else. As His Holiness’s universal, infinite and unconditional compassion was uniformly consistent across His thoughts, words and deeds (vide *nāmas* 2, 22, 37 and 106), His apparent anger must necessarily have been born exclusively from such compassion of His. Indeed, in this profound sense, He was especially free from anger born of desire.

All this apart, there was an overarching reason for His Holiness to display anger at times. As mentioned earlier (under *nāmas* 1 and 10), once His Holiness attained *jīvanmukti*, though He had transcended the need for *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, He kept slipping into and remaining in the state for long durations. As narrated in the context of *nāma* 10, His *Guru* aroused Him from the state before it could become irreversible. His *Guru* told Him, “Though unswervingly established in *Brahman*, you should learn to show, whenever appropriate, interest, appreciation, concern, anger, curiosity and the like in your dealings with devotees, the *Maṭha*’s staff and others.” The senior *Jagadguru* then cited, from the *Yoga-vāśiṣṭha*, the advice given by Sage Vāśiṣṭha to Rāma: “Sport in the world, O Rāghava, with assumed attachment, anger, etc., on the outside but without any turbulence in the heart, as a doer externally but internally a non-doer.”<sup>68</sup> His Holiness

discerned from His *Guru*'s words that to facilitate interpersonal dealings without any hypocrisy or subterfuge, His mind should accommodate fleeting emotions, and that appearance of thoughts and feelings merely when necessitated by and as appropriate to situations would enable effective and totally unpretentious functioning while leaving the mind basically silent. He always conducted Himself accordingly, in perfect deference to His *Guru*'s words, showing anger too, whenever appropriate.



Sri P. S. Narasimhan, a close devotee, recollected, “Once a leading disciple from Delhi was insisting that His Holiness should, during His stay in Delhi, take part in a rally for the protection of cows; this was scheduled as a big public protest and was to be televised. Raising His voice, His Holiness told the disciple, ‘I do not want all this. It is not necessary that I should join a demonstration for cow-protection or appear on television. I am, however, very much interested in the protection of cows and maintain several cows in Sringeri. This, one and all can see.’

“The next moment the fleeting show of anger had subsided and His Holiness was His usual personification of peace. After all the other disciples had left, my wife and I had stayed back to take leave of His Holiness. I referred to this incident and expressed my humble admiration for the extraordinary way in which His Holiness had been able to summon a show of anger and then to revert to His usual poise in an instant. His Holiness remarked, ‘There are certain occasions when we have to exhibit a show of anger. Anger must be under our control, to be used when necessary and abandoned when the need ceases.’”



## 25. क राजविलसदण्डः *Karābja-vilasad-daṇḍaḥ*

One in whose lotus hand shone a *daṇḍa* (sacred staff of a *saṁnyasin*)

About the procedure for *saṁnyāsa*, the scripture states, “Having renounced his sons, friends, wife, relations, etc., having done away with the *śikhā* (tuft), the holy thread, the study of the *Vedas* and all actions, and having given up this universe, he should accept the *kaupīna* (loincloth), the *daṇḍa* (staff) and clothes for the bare maintenance of his body and for the good of all.”<sup>69</sup> The procedure for the acceptance of the sacred *daṇḍa* by an ascetic is spoken of as follows: “Having first done *ācamana* (ceremonial sipping of water) he shall accept a single *daṇḍa*, a staff made of bamboo, whose height extends from his toe to the tip of his nose or the level of his eyebrows or head, is free from blemishes, has an even number of joints, is smooth, has no hole passing through it and is endowed with a symbol (consisting of the *paraśu-mudrā* that resembles a small flag tied in its upper part, below which is wound a

thread with a special set of knots), saying, ‘You are my friend. Protect my strength. You, my friend, are Indra’s *vajra* (thunderbolt) that destroyed Vṛtra (the demon). May you bring me happiness. Prevent that which is sinful.’”<sup>70</sup>

The sacred *daṇḍa*, also considered on par with the Śiva’s trident, was *vilasat*, an adornment, in His Holiness’s *karābja*, hand that was beautiful like a lotus.



On the day of taking *saṁnyāsa*, after completing the *Virajā-homa*, Sri Srinivasa Sastry proceeded to Sandhya-mandapa situated at the riverside in Narasimhavana. There, He entered the river and stood in waist-deep water. He then performed *sāvitrī-tyāga* in the course of which He chanted the *Gāyatrī-mantra* once, for the final time, and discarded into the flowing water His *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread) and tuft. By this act, He renounced His entitlement to perform scriptural rites and to chant the *Gāyatrī-mantra*. He discarded His upper garment, lower garment and even His loincloth and stood stark naked.

He then did *praiścāraṇa* (the declaration of renunciation) and *abhaya-pradāna* (the granting of freedom from fear), and with that He became a *saṁnyāsin*. He then moved towards the north in the river. The *Jagadguru* had been silently watching the scene. When His disciple had taken a few steps, He called out to Him and on His Holiness approaching Him, gave Him an ochre *kaupīna* (loincloth), *kaṭisūtra* (thread tied around the waist to hold up the loincloth), lower garment and upper garment. His Holiness donned the ochre clothing and applied *vibhūti*, sacred ash. The senior *Jagadguru* then gave His Holiness, who was clad in ochre, the *daṇḍa* and then a *kamaṇḍalu* (water-pot).



## 26. काषायाम्बरसंवृतः *Kāṣāyāmbara-saṁvṛtaḥ*

One who was clothed in ochre robes

His Holiness was *saṁvṛta*, clothed, in *kāṣāya-ambara*, ochre robes, as prescribed for *saṁnyāsins*.

The scripture states the following procedure in the context of acceptance of the ochre robes at the time of taking *saṁnyāsa*: “Accepting the *kaṭisūtra*, *kaupīna* and robe after having done *ācamana* while uttering, ‘*kaṭisūtra* that is the supporter of the loincloth, *Om*; *kaupīna* that is the cover for the private parts, *Om*; the robe that is the single protection against cold, wind, and heat, *Om*,’ and having been conferred a *yoga-paṭṭa* (monastic name), he shall be intent on following the rules of his (*saṁnyāsa*) *āśrama*, considering himself fortunate.”<sup>71</sup>



So firm was His Holiness's commitment to *saṁnyāsa* that He observed its norms, including wearing the ochre robes, even in His dreams.

His Holiness told a disciple in 1975, "Two days before taking *saṁnyāsa* I had thought, 'Dreams are not under my control. Mistakes committed in them do not result in sin. Nevertheless, my renunciation should be so sincere and firm that after being initiated into *saṁnyāsa*, I should not see myself in any dream as clad in white as I am now. I love chanting the *Gāyatrī-mantra*. Yet, as *Gāyatrī-japa* is disallowed for *paramahansa-saṁnyāsins*, I should not engage in it even in my dreams from the day after tomorrow.' By God's grace, this has come to pass."



## 27. गुरुपादाम्बुजध्यायी *Guru-pādāmbuja-dhyāyī*

One who meditated on His *Guru*'s Lotus Feet

From utterances of our ancients such as, "The *Guru* alone is the entire universe and is the essence of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva; there is none greater than the *Guru*. Therefore the *Guru* should be worshipped devoutly,"<sup>72</sup> that establish the greatness of the *Guru*, and the discussion under *nāma* 8 about the Lord's lotus feet, it can be inferred that the *Guru*'s lotus feet are also Supreme. In fact, Bhagavatpāda vouchsafes this when He asks rhetorically, as the refrain in each of the verses of the *Gurvaṣṭaka*, "If the mind is not focussed on the *Guru*'s lotus feet, then what is the use (of any achievement)?"<sup>73</sup> Bhagavatpāda's poignant verse in the *Svātma-nirūpaṇa* sums up the glory of the *Guru*'s feet as follows: "There is the foot of the *Guru*. In His glance, there is limitless compassion. There is something that has been said by Him. What else is there that constitutes the summum bonum of life?"<sup>74</sup> Thus, the *Guru*'s feet are sufficient to dispel the disciple's ignorance and grant liberation.

His Holiness once clarified, "A man had two servants. One of them was particular about eulogising his employer but not in executing his master's instructions. The other sincerely carried out the tasks assigned to him; he also held his master in high esteem. The employer obviously preferred the second servant to the first. A devotee who, like the second servant, sincerely performs the duties ordained for him by God and specified in the scriptures and, further, does so in a spirit of dedication, pleases God greatly and receives His grace in abundance." From this it is clear that a disciple worshipping or meditating on the *Guru*'s feet would signify true devotion only if he were to act in accordance with the *Guru*'s explicit and implicit instructions at all times. Therefore, when His Holiness is described here as a *dhyāyin*, one who meditates, on the *pādāmbuja*, lotus feet, of the *Guru*, it

implies that He had the greatest reverence and the most intense devotion for His *Guru*, marked by implicit obedience to Him.

Śrī Vedānta-deśika spells out the qualities of a model disciple in a verse that means, “The ideal disciple has a pure mind, resorts to the holy, has good conduct, is desirous of knowing the Truth, is intent upon serving (his *Guru*), is free from vanity, greatly values offering prostrations (to his *Guru*), waits for an opportune moment to pose his doubts (to his *Guru*), is of controlled mind, is of regulated senses, is free from envy, has surrendered (to the *Guru*), is possessed of faith in the *Śāstras*, is successful in tests and is grateful (to His *Guru*). Such a disciple is fit to be unconditionally taught what is desired.”<sup>75</sup> These attributes found complete fulfilment in His Holiness.



As described under *nāma* 18, after Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s *upanayana* at Sringeri in May 1930, He, along with His family, had *darśana* of the *Jagadguru*, after which His mind was made up to be with the *Jagadguru* and not go back home. He was then a boy of just thirteen. Arrangements were made for Him to commence His studies along with a small group of boys in Narasimhavana directly under the watch of the *Jagadguru*.

In the first quarter of 1931, Sri Srinivasa Sastry developed high fever one night and became delirious. He started to speak incoherently. When the matter was reported to the *Jagadguru*, He neither authorised medical attention nor did He give *vibhūti* as *prasāda* as He had done in the case of the other students when they had taken ill. He, however, specifically instructed Sri Vaidyanatha Sastry, the boys’ tutor, to note whatever Sri Srinivasa Sastry uttered while delirious, and inform Him.

Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s words primarily comprised an unusual combination of dedication to the *Jagadguru* and a declaration of the Truth. He kept saying, “*sadguro śaraṇam śivo ’ham śivo ’ham* (O *Sadguru*! You are my refuge. I am Śiva. I am Śiva).” Three days passed without His condition improving. He was awaiting *vibhūti-prasāda* from the *Jagadguru*. To assuage Him, Vaidyanatha Sastry told Him a lie to the effect that the *Jagadguru* would be gracing Him in person. Thereafter, He started to continuously chant, “*sadguro pāhi, sadguro pāhi* (O *Sadguru*, protect me. O *Sadguru*, protect me).”

When the *Jagadguru* was proceeding the next day, an *ekādaśī*, to the river for His afternoon bath, He heard Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s chant. After ascertaining that only Vaidyanatha Sastry was around, He abruptly entered the room where Sri Srinivasa Sastry lay. On seeing the *Jagadguru*, Sri Srinivasa Sastry got up and then prostrated in such a way that His forehead rested on His *Guru*’s feet. Vaidyanatha Sastry was shocked as it was not customary for anyone to touch the *Jagadguru* like this. The *Jagadguru*,

however, showed no signs of disapproval. Gently raising His disciple, He placed His hand on Sri Srinivasa Sastry's head. He innocently asked, "Have you still got fever?" and added, "Do not worry. Go and lie down." He then left. Sri Srinivasa Sastry's fever promptly vanished. Following the *Jagadguru's* touch, He became relatively introverted and avoided casual conversations.

That night and on the subsequent ones, the *Jagadguru* audibly prayed during His *Candramoulīśvara-pūjā*, "*sarvajñam śrīnivāsam kuru śiva-dayite satvaram madvinamram* (O beloved of Śiva, quickly make Srinivasa, my disciple, omniscient)."



Days after the above episode, the *Jagadguru* felt the impulsion of Goddess Śārādā to choose Sri Srinivasa Sastry as His successor. That night, He had a dream in which His *Guru* (the 33<sup>rd</sup> pontiff) fully approved of the choice. The *śiṣya-svīkāra* ceremonies took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1931.

That evening, the *Guru* and disciple were to be taken through the streets of Sringeri in golden and silver palanquins respectively. In keeping with the *Maṭha's* tradition from the time of the Vijayanagara kings Harihara I and Bukka I, They were attired in royal robes. The senior *Jagadguru* held out His index finger and His Holiness gently grasped it. He was so fond of His disciple that as He walked, He kept turning back to see His Holiness's face. The senior *Jagadguru* led the way till They reached the silver palanquin, with the golden palanquin still ahead of them. Here, He made a surprise move. He withdrew His finger and sat down in the silver palanquin. This was strange, for He was supposed to occupy the golden palanquin and His Holiness, the silver one. He asked His Holiness to move ahead and sit in the golden palanquin. This act of His resulted in confusion in the minds of those present nearby. Sri Srikanta Sastry, the *Maṭha's* agent as also some others approached the senior *Jagadguru* and requested Him to proceed to the golden palanquin as that was the tradition. He replied, "Let this be the tradition now. Have you forgotten the essence of the occurrences of today? If so, try to recall it and keep it fresh in your memories. Henceforth, all the honours pertaining to this *pīṭha* must be shown to Him and not to me. I desire to withdraw from worldly activities."

The procession commenced, with His Holiness seated in the golden palanquin and going in the front and with the senior *Jagadguru* sitting in the silver one and following. The scripture says that a disciple should follow his *Guru* and not go ahead of him. Further, the seat of the *Guru* is to be respected and not occupied by the disciple; the golden palanquin was the one that the senior *Jagadguru* had used for years. The senior *Jagadguru's* directive to His Holiness to move ahead and occupy the golden palanquin required His

Holiness to break these rules. Further, the large number of people who had gathered in the streets of Sringeri to witness the procession could not be expected to know the reason for His Holiness occupying the golden palanquin and could have censured Him, at least mentally, for this apparent breach of propriety. Notwithstanding such considerations and though He was just thirteen years of age at that time, He experienced no confusion whatsoever. He just did as He was told and occupied the golden palanquin.

In the 1980s, a disciple referred to this incident and asked His Holiness, “What did Your Holiness feel on receiving such a difficult instruction from the senior *Jagadguru*?” “What was there to feel? My *Guru*’s command is inviolable. As a disciple, it is my duty to carry it out. That was my only thought then,” He replied.



In the context of *nāma* 91 is presented how Śāradāmbā taught His Holiness about the *yoga-cakras* and the *kuṇḍalinī* through a thrilling vision, when He was about fourteen years old. More than four decades later, after describing the experience to a disciple, His Holiness added the following.

“As I opened my eyes after my experience ended, I was a bit bewildered whether I had been dreaming or vividly hallucinating or had had a divine experience. Without giving the matter any further thought, I got up and left for my *Guru*’s presence as it was time for Me to offer My obeisance to Him.

“While I performed my *namaskāras* to my *Guru*, He continued with His *āhnika*. He gave no indication of having noticed my presence. Not wanting to disturb Him, I started to leave quietly. Abruptly, He looked up at me and said, ‘Yes, tell me.’ I submitted, ‘A few minutes ago, I had an unexpected experience that seems to be of the nature of a divine teaching. However, I am not certain that it was not a day-dream or hallucination.’ His gaze was upon me but He said nothing. So, I proceeded to give the details. When I finished, He said, ‘All right,’ and readied Himself to perform *daṇḍa-tarpana*. Feeling happy that He had graced me with the opportunity of making my submission, I left.”

The above statement of His Holiness gives a glimpse of the kind of reverence and devotion He had towards His *Guru*.



The following conversation ensued after His Holiness narrated to a disciple, the last stages of His *sāadhanā* culminating in *jīvanmukti* (vide *nāma* 1).

Disciple: Did Your Holiness inform the senior *Jagadguru* about the consummation of Your Holiness’s *sāadhanā* as foretold by the Lord?

HH: No. Being my *Guru* and an excellent *śrotriya-brahmaniṣṭha*, He had the authority and the competence to decide upon not only the initiation and form of my *sāadhanā* but also its progress and culmination.

D: When and how did the senior *Jagadguru* react to Your Holiness's establishment in the Absolute?

HH: As I was returning from the hill, I saw Him standing outside Sacchidananda Vilasa and looking in my direction. He beckoned to me and went inside. When I went to His presence, He was alone. Even before I could prostrate before Him, He rushed to me and embraced me. Then, holding me by my shoulders, He said, "I am so very happy." On His letting go of my shoulders, I prostrated for long, placing My hands and head on His feet. Such was His greatness that He highly appreciated anything positive in another. His instructions, blessings and grace were responsible for my *sāadhanā* and whatever I achieved. Yet, he did not take any credit. He was so thoroughly free from egoism. Where can one now find the likes of Him?

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As presented in the contexts of *nāmas* 10 and 24, His Holiness's mind kept reposing in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* after He was established in *Brahman*. After rousing Him from the state with great difficulty, the senior *Jagadguru* said to Him, "Taking care to avoid any further *samādhi*, finish your bath and *āhnika* and come to me," and immediately left. His Holiness obeyed.

When His Holiness was later asked, while He was recounting these happenings, if He had had any difficulty in obeying that particular instruction of the senior *Jagadguru*, He answered, "No. My *Guru*'s word was final for me. There was no way that the tendency to repose in *samādhi*, no matter how powerful, could stand against the tendency to obey Him."

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The ideal disciple must not stand on formalities nor allow his ego to obstruct his implicit obedience to the *Guru*. His Holiness, being possessed of inimitable devotion and being free from egoism, never felt even slightly dissatisfied with any decision His *Guru* took. His Holiness never hesitated to issue any instruction as per the senior *Jagadguru*'s bidding as also to modify or reverse it one or more times subsequently if that is what His *Guru* merely felt or obliquely hinted should be done. In all circumstances, He saw to it that credit alone went to His *Guru* and He shouldered any discredit.

A disciple once asked His Holiness in 1982, "Has Your Holiness ever felt hurt that the senior *Jagadguru* dismissed any view or feeling of Your Holiness?" to which He replied, "Never." As He spoke, He grew visibly excited and, with a face flushed with emotion, continued, "I cannot even imagine feeling dissatisfied that my *Guru* dismissed any view or sentiment

of mine. Who indeed was I to even imagine so? He was everything to me and whatever He said or did was perfectly right as far as I was concerned. Had it occurred to me even once that my *Guru* had insulted me or had not been fair to me, then I would have been the vilest of human beings, fit to be ostracized.” At this juncture, His Holiness’s voice choked with emotion. Such was His high regard for and unquestioning obedience to His *Guru*.

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He was ever prepared to serve His *Guru* in every possible way. Once, the senior *Jagadguru*, who was somewhat unwell, had retired for the night. Two attendants were sleeping just outside the door of His room. One of them, Sri Rama Sastry, awakened because the cold was chilling his bones, and having informing his companion, proceeded to the boiler room to warm himself. However, a short catnap was all that he had there, for the thought of the senior *Jagadguru*’s illness nagged him. He rose to check from his companion whether the senior *Jagadguru* had been asleep or had asked for anything. Making his way in the darkness, he barely touched the one lying there, when the response, “What is it?” that he heard caused him to freeze in astonishment. The voice was that of His Holiness. Rama Sastry hastened to apologise but was set at ease by His Holiness, who had taken the other attendant’s place to Himself attend to the senior *Jagadguru*’s needs, if any. To Him, who had the status of a *Jagadguru*, functioning as an attendant to His *Guru* was not undignified; it was a sacred privilege.

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His Holiness devotedly and impeccably served His *Guru* not only in normal circumstances but also in extremely trying ones, where patience, dexterity and tact were a sine qua non. After 1928, the senior *Jagadguru* entered now and then, for varying durations, a state that has been referred to in some books on Him as ‘*antarmukha-avasthā* (inward-turned condition).’ During these periods, His behaviour was unpredictable. Punctilious as He used to be in all His actions and habits, this change to an uncommon state was quite beyond the comprehension of many. There was no regularity in His bath or meals. Time did not count with Him and the ordinary rules of conduct, worldly or spiritual, were no more for Him. It would happen that for days together He remained without bath, food or sleep but the lack of these did not seem to affect Him, for He was ever beaming with spiritual lustre; His body, however, showed signs of emaciation.

His Holiness told a disciple in later years, “He did not take exception to my meeting Him occasionally during His periods of seclusion and even spoke to me. However, His words were few and He did not permit any prolonged conversation.” So intense was the senior *Jagadguru*’s love for His Holiness.

During His state of withdrawal from normalcy, the senior *Jagadguru* had to be particularly cared for. In general, the *Maṭha* staff feared to approach Him since His reactions were unpredictable. Sometimes, He used to go away to the river bank and people feared that He might accidentally drown Himself or move away into the forest. None dared to approach Him, for He would drive them away. It was only His Holiness who was able to bring His *Guru* back to the safe interior of Sacchidananda Vilasa. His Holiness told a disciple how He did so once when His *Guru* was walking away into the forest.

The senior *Jagadguru* (observing His Holiness approaching Him): Why have you come?

HH: To request Your Holiness to come back to Sacchidananda Vilasa.

The senior *Jagadguru*: Why should I come back?

HH: I feel lonely without Your Holiness.

The senior *Jagadguru*: Why? Others are there.

HH: I feel thoroughly comfortable only with Your Holiness.

The senior *Jagadguru*: Very well.

Saying so, He accompanied His Holiness back to Sacchidananda Vilasa.

His Holiness concluded His account of this episode to the disciple by saying, “Since He responded to my requests to return, some humorously remarked that I was like a she-elephant that could calm down a tusker in rut.”

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There were even times when the senior *Jagadguru*'s transition from the normal to the other state took place rather abruptly. One hot day, when He was crossing the temporary wooden bridge across the Tuṅgā to proceed to Goddess Śāradā's temple, He started casting off His clothes, and walked on, naked and nonchalant. As soon as His Holiness learnt of this, He picked up spare clothes for His *Guru* and also the senior *Jagadguru*'s *pādukās* (wooden sandals) and ran behind Him. By the time He caught up with His *Guru*, the latter had rapidly traversed much of the main street of Sringeri.

On seeing Him, the senior *Jagadguru*'s first words were, “Why are you not wearing *pādukās*?” He was unaware that He was naked but could not brook His Holiness's bare feet treading the hot path! His Holiness told Him, “How could I wear them when Your Holiness is walking barefoot?” The senior *Jagadguru* then acceded to His Holiness's request and donned the clothes that His Holiness gave Him and wore His *pādukās*. By this time, an attendant came running with His Holiness's *pādukās*. Insisting that His Holiness wear them pronto, the senior *Jagadguru* returned to Sacchidananda Vilasa with

His dear disciple. There, He once again became indifferent to His body and His surroundings and remained so for days, but in the confines of a room.

His Holiness firmly opined that as the senior *Jagadguru* was a *jīvanmukta* par excellence, neither His normal behaviour nor His abnormal state affected His steady abidance in the Supreme *Brahman* in any way.



Shortly after Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin had attained *Mahāsamādhi* in 1954, a lady from North India came to Sringeri and had His Holiness's *darśana*. She expressed some of her doubts on religious practices to Him and also said that she had been unable to get satisfactory replies to them. His Holiness gave His clarifications in His inimitable style. The lady joyfully stated that her doubts had been fully resolved.

Prompted by His innate lack of ego and very great regard for His *Guru*, His Holiness said, "Had you come sometime earlier, you could have had the holy *darśana* of my *Guru*. You had to express your doubts to me and hear my replies. But if you had just beheld my *Guru*, that would have been sufficient for the answers to have become known to you. Such was His greatness."

[As can be seen under *nāma* 68, for instance, what His Holiness said about His *Guru* was perfectly applicable to Him too.]



The following are verses composed by His Holiness on His *Guru*.

- 1 I extol Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī who is ever immersed in the contemplation of the *Ātman*, is withdrawn from sense objects and is well-versed in the *Śāstras*.<sup>76</sup>
- 2 My salutation to the ascetic whose mind is absorbed in consciousness and the lustre of whose feet destroys the blinding darkness of *avidyā*.<sup>77</sup>
- 3 I pay obeisance to the cloud-like *Guru*, who abides in the (sky that is) the Supreme *Brahman*, pours forth the nectar of *Vedānta* and terminates the sufferings of people.<sup>78</sup>
- 4 Bowing low with humility, the disciple-bee gently touches, with constant faith, the celebrated *Guru*'s feet that are lotuses with the nectar of mercy.<sup>79</sup>
- 5 I daily prostrate with devotion before the pre-eminent *Guru*'s feet, which are merciful to devotees and an infinitesimal exposure to whose lustre always destroys the entire darkness (of ignorance) of the mind.<sup>80</sup>
- 6 I salute the glorious, foremost of *Gurus*, who is highly gracious to those who pay obeisance and a wee bit of the kindness of whose feet is itself the saviour in the forest of *samsāra*.<sup>81</sup>

- 7 I seek refuge in the lustrous preceptor, whose lotus feet are embellished (glorified) by the *Upaniṣads* and who eradicates the sorrows of those who pay obeisance to Him.<sup>82</sup>
- 8 I place as a crown on my head Your, my preceptor's, pair of *pādukās*, the remembrance of which certainly terminates the mental darkness of mankind.<sup>83</sup>
- 9 I prostrate before the pair of lotus-like feet of the glorious king of preceptors by paying obeisance to whom even a dullard becomes akin to the *Guru*.<sup>84</sup>
- 10 To those in the darkness of ignorance, He is the sun that is infinite as also within. To the multitude of drooping lilies that are the hearts of scholars, He is the moon. To those trapped in the forest of sense-objects and without a friend in the path to the Supreme, He is the flaming torch that lights the way. Victorious is the luminous *Guru* who confers joy on all.<sup>85</sup>
- 11 I prostrate before the greatest *Guru*, who is a wish-fulfilling tree to those who bow, who is worthy of being saluted by pre-eminent knowers of the Truth, who is the fresh sprout of bliss and who is the ocean of the *Śāstras* (that is, fully conversant with the *Śāstras*.)<sup>86</sup>
- 12 I yearn to behold the *Guru* who is the divine antidote for the malady of transmigration and on beholding whom, one attains peace.<sup>87</sup>

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The following is His Holiness's advice regarding the *Guru*'s *pādukās*: "Whatever reverence a person has towards his *Guru* should be there towards the *pādukās* also. Everyday, after devoutly prostrating before them, he should place sandal paste and flowers on them. It may seem good to perform *abhiṣeka* to them daily. If, however, they be made of wood and if the disciple desires that they be with him for long, he himself can decide how sensible it would be to offer *abhiṣeka* daily. If he pays respects to his *Guru*'s *pādukās* with sincerity or if he prays to them with true devotion, he shall get the fruits of the very same actions done directly in his *Guru*'s presence. Hence, he should never be careless as regards the *pādukās*. If a person wants to meditate on the *pādukās*, He can meditate on the *Guru*'s feet as adorned by the *pādukās*."

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## 28. गणनीयगुणोज्ज्वलः Gaṇanīya-guṇojjvalaḥ

One who was radiant with noble virtues

This *nāma* describes His Holiness as being *ujjala*, lustrous, with *guṇas*, qualities, that were *gaṇanīya*, worthy of regard. *Nāma* 20 described Him as

One with qualities that could only be venerated, while this *nāma* indicates that His Holiness possessed many qualities that not only inspire awe but are also meant to be imbibed to whatever extent possible.



Sri Gudalur Krishna Sastrigal, who was staying in Narasimhavana during a visit to Sringeri, asked His Holiness one morning, “I noticed last night that the lights of Your Holiness’s room were on even past midnight. Did Your Holiness not sleep last night?” His Holiness replied, “I was unwell, running high temperature, and so I could not sleep. Hence, rather than wasting time, I was reading a book on *Vedānta*.”



Simple living and high thinking characterise *Mahātman*s. His Holiness was particular about doing His personal work Himself. He took His attendant’s assistance only when that was essential or related to His pontifical duties. He maintained His things methodically, and being meticulous and tidy was innate to Him.

He arranged His books so well that He could locate a book placed by Him even years later, without the least difficulty. Sri Mahabala, His personal attendant, recalled that when His Holiness wanted him to fetch a book, rather than telling him the name or the author of the book, both of which would have been unfamiliar to him, His Holiness specified to Him the room where that book was, in which bookshelf in that room, the shelf in that bookshelf, the relative position of the book in that shelf and even its size and colour. Whenever Mahabala searched as per His directions, he invariably located the desired volume.



His Holiness was an avid lover of nature. Not just pleasant scenery, trees, flowers, and crops but also animals, birds, fishes and even insects interested Him. One day, when He was nearing sixteen years of age, He beheld a wasp in the course of His walk. It was bringing a motionless grasshopper to the mouth of a hole prepared by it. His keen power of observation and knowledge of insects led Him to know that the grasshopper was not dead; it had been paralyzed by a sting of the wasp. The wasp entered the hole, emerged and then dragged the grasshopper in. Thereafter, it closed up the hole and went away. He had heard that the wasp lays an egg and provides a grasshopper as food for the larvae that emerge from the egg. He desired to see the developments within the hole but did not want to partially uncover it. Nature, however, favoured Him. The next time He came to the spot, He found that the mud cover of the hole had a small opening. He brought His face close to it and peeped in. He saw the larvae that looked different from an adult wasp. He decided to examine the larvae and the grasshopper in greater detail. For this purpose, He required a magnifying glass but had not

brought one. He did not want to put off His study to another day. Being resourceful, He picked up a dried leaf, poked a small hole into it and put a droplet of rain water on the hole He had made. Suitably holding the leaf, He used the water drop as a magnifying glass and conducted His studies.

On another occasion, He beheld a monkey sitting seemingly pensively with its hand in the small gap between two very low-lying, horizontal branches of neighbouring trees. He placed His head close to the ground to see what was in the monkey's hand. He noticed that it held an apple which, apparently, someone had dropped there. As the monkey was unwilling to let go of the fruit, it was unable to extricate its hand and leave. "In spite of its intelligence, this simian does not choose to let go of the fruit, withdraw its hand and then pick up the same fruit by grasping it from below the gap," thought His Holiness. He felt pity for the monkey. With a plan to free it from the bondage of its own making, He peeled a banana and took the fruit near its mouth. The monkey leaned forward and began to eat the fruit but continued to hold on to the apple. He peeled a second fruit. This time, He kept it at some distance from the monkey. The simian had no choice but to release the apple in order to get the banana it wanted. As it was eating the banana, He pulled out the apple and presented the same back to the monkey.

His Holiness has said, "God's creation is so fascinating. Nature reminds us of God and is, in fact, His manifestation before all. When one watches the ocean, one is overcome with peace and when one looks at the starry sky at night, one experiences tranquillity and becomes conscious of how very miniscule one is in the enormous cosmos. Sun-rays playing on the ripples in water, green fields, the pranks of monkeys, the affection of cows etc., are delightful. Even insects that many tend to spurn have so much to teach us. Nature is a free, lovely show available for all to experience. Strangely, many ignore it and, spending much money and time, corrupt their minds by watching vulgar movies and listening to music with cheap lyrics."



## 29. चित्तनैर्मल्यसन्दायी *Citta-nairmalya-sandāyī*

One who completely conferred mental purity

The three-fold *malas* or mental impurities are *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversion) and *moha* (delusion). The *Yoga-śāstra* calls impurities of the mind 'kleśas', and delineates ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life as the five *kleśas*.<sup>88</sup> Mental impurities cause mental unrest and unhappiness by virtue of spawning various negative qualities, and are therefore impediments in worldly as well as spiritual endeavours.

Here, His Holiness is described as a *saṁ-dāyin*, One who gives well, *nairmalya*, freedom from mental impurities, to the *citta*, mind. Being totally

free from all mental blemishes Himself, His Holiness granted others antidotes to mental impurities through His conduct, instructions, teachings, writings and grace.



Once a group of devotees came to meet His Holiness. As one of them started to speak, He unexpectedly closed His eyes and said, “Before you start, I would like to make one thing clear. I cannot do anything that would hurt anyone’s feelings. So please do not put me in that situation.” He then opened His eyes and told them, “Yes, you can proceed.”

The devotees had wanted to complain about a person but were effectively denied the opportunity to do so. They spoke about other matters and left. Later, His Holiness solved their problem on His own in a diplomatic way, ensuring that all were satisfied.

He thus conveyed by His conduct that he was unwilling to lend His ears to backbiting or prejudiced nit-picking, thus driving home the lesson that such destroyers of mental purity are not to be indulged in.



His Holiness once explained, “It is always better to understand the meaning of *stotras* that we chant. Knowledge of the meanings helps us in focussing our minds. However, if certain mistakes occur without our knowledge, we need not be unduly concerned. Īśvara considers only what is in the heart. He is not swayed by external appearances. An ignoramus may say *viṣṇāya* instead of *viṣṇave*, as would be uttered by a learned man. Both secure the same *punya*, as Īśvara grasps only the inner feeling.

“Śrī Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita has explained this by means of an illustration. Devotees offer flowers to Īśvara and attain liberation. Manmatha wanted to shoot an arrow made of flowers at Śiva. By doing so, he sought to hinder Śiva’s penance. The Lord did not accept the flowers. On the contrary, He reduced Manmatha to ashes. In spite of the commonness in the use of flowers, devotees obtain the highest end, while Manmatha perished. The inner attitude is thus of prime importance.”



His Holiness once asserted, “All eligible persons should definitely learn the *Śrī-rudra*, *Camaka* and the *Sūktas* that are chanted during *pūjā*. *Mantras*, such as the *Śrī-rudra*, are very sacred. If the mind does not long for what is prayed for, purity of the mind and the grace of Īśvara are obtained. Everyone can chant the name of God. Bhagavatpāda has said, ‘The *Bhagavad-gītā* and the *Viṣṇu-sahasranāma* should be chanted.’<sup>89</sup> Such chanting greatly purifies the mind.”



30. चिन्तालेशविवर्जितः *Cintā-leśa-vivarjitaḥ*

One who was absolutely shorn of even a trace of worry

The detrimental nature of *cintā*, worry, is brought out in a verse that conveys, “Between *citā* (funeral pyre) and *cintā*, it is the latter that is powerful. While a *citā* burns the dead, *cintā* burns the living.”<sup>90</sup>

Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “Having dedicated all actions to Me with a discerning intellect (thinking, ‘I act for the sake of the Lord, as His servant,’) and being free from longings and free from the feeling of ‘mine’, fight without disquiet.”<sup>91</sup> Thus, the Lord teaches Arjuna to surrender to Him and thereby abandon all worry.

Śrī Sadāśiva Brahmendra, the renowned *avadhūta-yogin*, pours out in a musical composition, the bliss of the state shorn of worry, while at once indicating in detail, the means to attain that state: “There is no worry indeed for those who are filled with mind-control, sense-control and kindness, who keep the company of the holy, who have vanquished Kāma in all three spans of time (past, present and future), who have destroyed the insolence of all the senses, who have centred their minds on the feet of the *Paramahansa-guru*, and who are intoxicated in the nectar of the bliss of *Brahman*.”<sup>92</sup> His Holiness had all the above characteristics and was hence One who was *vivarjita*, completely free from, *cintā-leśa*, even a trace of worry. The word ‘trace’ here indicates the absence of even a small worry about the past, present and future, and the word ‘completely’ emphasizes that this was always the case.



His Holiness was, from childhood, filled with dispassion, intent on liberation and deeply devoted to the Lord. After He came to be with His *Guru* at Sringeri, the resolve to take up *saṁnyāsa* only grew, and His dedication to the Lord deepened, with His mind being ever intent on serving His *Guru*. During His *sādhanā*, he practiced to perfection, *karma-yoga*, contemplation on the *Ātman* and meditation, and soon achieved *Advaitic* realization. As such, He was so self-controlled at every stage of His life, that there was never any question of worry in His mind.



The Government returned the administration of the *Maṭha* to His Holiness in 1959, but without the 23 villages that had constituted the Sringeri Math’s *Jahagir* and 22 other *Inam* villages that had belonged to the *Maṭha*. Hence, a body blow was struck to the income of the *Maṭha*. In the place of the income from many villages and from an area within six miles around Sringeri, the *Maṭha* had to make do with a limited compensation to be paid annually.

His Holiness took the matter in His stride. When the loss of income was mournfully related to Him, He cheerfully replied, “The *Maṭha* had been functioning well even before the lands were granted. There is no cause for worry.” His stand was thoroughly vindicated, for the patronage of the devotees took over the patronage of the former kings. He firmly held, “*Īśvara* is there to take care of everything. Whatever He decides is indeed the best.”



The following are teachings of His Holiness about the cause of worry and the importance and ways of getting rid of it.

“Normally, when people are unable to remedy some unpleasant experience, they worry and lament. The spiritual aspirant who is endowed with true forbearance is different. A mind that is tainted by anxiety, lamentation, etc., is unfit to successfully enquire about the Truth.

“We should dedicate everything to God and be without any worry. If we do so, the Lord Himself will fully take care of us; He will provide us what we lack and preserve what we have. He will give the realization of the Supreme too. The deathlessness that we desire would then be ours. Attaining God is alone the ultimate attainment and the highest good.

“A sincere devotee has no cause for any worry, for he has surrendered his body and mind to God and left everything in God’s hands.”



### 31. तीर्थराजकृतस्नानः *Tīrtha-rāja-kṛta-snānaḥ*

One who took a holy dip in the king of sacred waters, *Prayāga*

In Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, is located the *trivenī-saṅgama*, a *prayāga* or confluence of three of the most sacred rivers, Gaṅgā, Yamunā and the underground Sarasvatī. It is the *tīrtha-rāja*, king of sacred waters, for the scriptures associate immense sanctity to it and hail it as a great destroyer of sins. The *Padma-purāṇa* records Lord Śiva as saying, “Where the Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī are present is a divine place of pilgrimage and is difficult for even the Gods to attain. In all the three worlds, this kind of place never was nor will ever be. This place, called *Prayāga*, is unsurpassed among sacred places.”<sup>93</sup> The *Mahābhārata* says, “O King! *Prayāga* is the greatest among places of pilgrimage. One is freed from sins by (even) listening to its glories, singing its name, or smearing the soil from it on one’s body.”<sup>94</sup> His Holiness was *kṛta-snāna*, One who took a dip, in this *tīrtha-rāja*.



His Holiness arrived in Prayagraj (then Allahabad) for the first time on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 1967. Early in the morning of the 4<sup>th</sup>, His Holiness went to the *triveṇi-saṅgama* and took a holy dip there. He worshipped the *akṣaya-vaṭa-vṛkṣa*, sacred banyan tree, Goddess Sarasvatī and other deities. Then He gave away gifts to the priests assembled. On 18<sup>th</sup> January, 1977, His Holiness again visited Prayagraj in the course of His tour. The *kumbhamelā* was being celebrated there, with close to 15 million people thronging the place. The special features of the *kumbhamelā* this time was that the *Pīṭhādhipatis* of all the four *Āmnāya-pīṭhas* had converged at the holy place. On 19<sup>th</sup> January, 1977, the sacred *mouni-amāvāsyā* day, the *Jagadgurus* had a holy bath at 5 a.m. in the *Prayāga*. His Holiness's third visit to Prayagraj was in May, 1977 and the fourth in September, 1982.



### 32. तीर्थाकृतधरातलः *Tīrthākṛta-dharātalaḥ*

One by whom places on the earth were made places of pilgrimage

The word 'dharā' refers to the earth and 'tala' connotes an area or location. Hence here His Holiness is said to be One by whom certain places on earth were *tīrthī-kṛta*, rendered into places of pilgrimage. Places like Varanasi, Dwaraka, Rameswaram, Kalady, Ayodhya, Puri and Mathura are considered as *tīrthas* because each of them is associated with incarnations of the Lord. Devotees visit these places, recall the events associated with the Lord's *avatāra* there, pay their homage, feel blessed and return with a sense of fulfillment. His Holiness being the Lord Himself (as seen in *nāma* 3), the places He graced would automatically be places of pilgrimage in their own right. Notwithstanding this, He specifically consecrated many a place and shrine all across the country.



On 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1965, His Holiness went to the Rama Setu at Rameswaram and determined the spot of confluence of the *Ratnākara* (Indian Ocean) and *Mahodadhi* (Bay of Bengal). His Holiness then consecrated it as a sacred bathing place for pilgrims, and after completing His *anuṣṭhāna*, proceeded to perform *pūjā* to the sacred *Rāmeśvara-liṅga*.



### 33. तुषाराचलसञ्चारी *Tuṣārācala-sañcārī*

One who travelled across the snowy mountains (the Himalayas)

Since *tuṣāra* (synonymous with 'hima') means snow and *acala*, mountain, *tuṣāra-acala* refers to the snowy, majestic Himalayas. His Holiness was *sañcārīn*, One who travelled, across the Himalayan region.



In a benedictory address on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1968 at Shivamogga towards the end of His first all-India tour, His Holiness recounted as follows:

“When I set out, I had no inclination to undertake such a long tour, save an occasional desire to visit Varanasi, bathe in the holy Ganges and have the *darśana* of Lord Viśvanātha. I wished to behold, if possible, the Himalayas once, visit Badrinath and Kedarnath. Again, the urge to worship, if feasible, Lord Paśupatināth in Nepal was lurking somewhere inside. However, I made no efforts in this regard. When devotees exhorted me now and then to undertake a tour, I thought, ‘Let *Īśvara*’s will prevail,’ and consented. Even then, I had not thought of where to go, when and how. Somehow, things started to fall in place and the tour started, went on and is finally coming to an end. To a large extent, it could be said that the tour has been completed satisfactorily. Looking back, it is clearly evident that all these were, in fact, possible due to the glory of Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda and my *Guru*’s grace.”



His Holiness was the first *Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya* after Ādi-śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda, to have visited Nepal.

The King of Nepal requested His Holiness to visit Nepal and His Holiness acceded. On 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1967, His Holiness set out for Kathmandu, Nepal, from Hitauti in Uttar Pradesh. He was given a royal welcome in Nepal. He visited the Paśupatināth Temple that evening. He also visited the temples at Bhaktapur including the Dattātreya Temple. Back at Kathmandu, His Holiness worshipped the Saptamātrkās (seven Mother Goddesses), visited the Guhyeśvarī, Tuljā Bhavānī, Budhanīlakaṅṭha and Bālāji temples.

He then proceeded to Tribhuvan University, where He was greatly impressed by the manner in which boys of eight to ten years of age chanted the *Vedas*. So pleased was He that He gave special presents in cash to the teachers and the students. He also visited Swayambhu, one of the holiest Buddhist Chaityas in Nepal.

On 9<sup>th</sup> March, His Holiness performed the *Mahāśivarātri-pūjā* at the Paśupatināth Temple, (as described under *nāma* 80.)



On 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1967, His Holiness commenced His journey towards Kedarnath, the first stop being Rudraprayag, considered as sacred as Prayagraj in the plains. Here, the Mandākinī flowing from Kedarnath meets the Alaknandā that flows down from Badrinath, and along with the underground Sarasvatī, they form a triple confluence to which immense sanctity is attributed. Situated on a spacious ground above the river is the temple of Rudranāth, the presiding deity of Rudraprayag. His Holiness performed the night *pūjā* in the temple premises.

His Holiness left for Guptkashi the next afternoon and reached there by about 8 p.m. The important temple in this place is dedicated to Lord Viśvanāth. His Holiness worshipped Lord Viśvanāth and also visited other places of religious importance in the vicinity.



The distance from Guptkashi to Kedarnath is about 47 kilometres and in those days had to be covered either on foot or on horse-back. His Holiness left on foot for Kedarnath on 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1967, with a pick of His camp followers. The trek from Guptkashi began on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>. En route, the halting places were Phata on the 11<sup>th</sup> kilometre, Rampur on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, Sitapur on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Gauri Kund on the 32<sup>nd</sup> and Rambara on the 41<sup>st</sup>. It was 4 p.m. when Rampur was reached. After ablutions and *bhikṣā* there, the journey towards Gauri Kund was resumed. This was a strenuous journey, but the constant rustle of the river, the intermittent roar of the wayside cascades and the exultation of walking with His Holiness, provided relief for all. By the time the party reached Gauri Kund at 9:00 p.m., it was raining cats and dogs. In spite of the late hour and the inclement weather, the local inhabitants turned out en masse. His Holiness immediately had His bath in the *tapt-kunḍ* (hot spring) and commenced the Candramoulīśvara-*pūjā*, which concluded by midnight.

The last lap of the journey to Kedarnath commenced just before noon the next day. His Holiness climbed the 14.5-kilometre-long steep and mountainous path barefooted and reached Kedarnath in the night. Here is His recollection of this experience:

“In the meandering and constantly ascending path to Kedarnath, the terrain was strewn with pebbles, boulders, smooth granite slabs and offered variety. Sharp pebbles pricked the feet; the heels were sore due to hard rocks; at places, it was slippery due to thin films of streaming water. As the day wore, the vagaries of weather - sharp afternoon sun, rain during dusk and a chilling wind with light snowfall as the night advanced - were in full view.

“Accompanied by growing darkness, the fall of snowflakes was like a shower of ‘*drona-puṣpa*’ (Leucas aspera or Thumbai / Tumble) on the face and a bed of sugar for the feet. The snowfall was incessant. The leg joints were stiffening. It was nearing 9 o’clock at night. On one side of the narrow path was a ravine, over 500 feet deep, with the torrential Gaṅgā below. On the other was the rocky steep mountain. Diminishing visibility led to uncertainty regarding where to tread. To compound this, having briskly trekked far ahead of the entourage, I was alone, with none in sight or earshot. Turning back was not an option. Catastrophe was just one false step away - either bang on the butting rock or fall on the lap of Mother Gaṅgā! Lo and behold, a person approached me from the direction of the temple with a

lantern and escorted me! What else if not the glorious divine sport of Śankara Bhagavatpāda?"

On the evening of the 27<sup>th</sup> His Holiness personally performed *pūjā* to Lord Kedārnāth. After the *pūjā* was over, He stood before the Lord in enraptured silence, His mind filled with adoration in the presence of the Supreme Lord of the Himalayas.

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After staying for a day at Kedarnath, His Holiness started on His downward journey and reached Guptkashi on the evening of 28<sup>th</sup> May, 1967. On the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup>, He had His sacred bath in the Gaṅgā and *Yamunā-dhārā* opposite the temple and worshipped Lord Viśvanāth.

He started for Joshi Math through Rudraprayag and reached the place late at night. He was received by Śrī Śāntānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin, the *Jagadguru* of Jyotir Math, with much joy. He visited the the Nṛsimha temple that has a *śālagrāma* said to have been worshipped by Bhagavatpāda, and also temples of Navadurgā, Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu on the 30<sup>th</sup>. He visited the various shrines and other important places in and around the *Maṭha* and after a long and cordial conversation with the *Jagadguru* of Jyotir Math, left for Badrinath (described under *nāma* 53).

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After visiting Rishikesh and Haridwar, His Holiness proceeded via Dehradun, Ambala and Jalandhar, to Jammu and Kashmir. He stayed in Jammu for two days, and granted audience to administrators, military commanders and tourists who flocked to see Him and take His advice. Early in the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup> June, 1967, He left for Ramban and there He worshipped at the Rāma Temple. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, His Holiness reached Srinagar.

On the 11<sup>th</sup>, He visited Sri Shankaracharya Temple, situated on the Shankaracharya Hill in Srinagar, and worshipped the massive *Bāṇalinga* there. In the afternoon, He proceeded to the Mārtāṇḍa Temple, dedicated to the Sun God, which is situated about 64 kilometres from Srinagar. He proceeded to Abhedananda Ashram on the 13<sup>th</sup>, where He addressed a public meeting of the citizens. He delivered a benedictory address on the 14<sup>th</sup>, to listen to which, military and civil officers had congregated apart from the general public.

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#### 34. तुङ्गास्नानसमुत्सुकः *Tuṅgā-snāna-samutsukah*

One who was extremely enthusiastic about bathing in River Tuṅgā

The river Tuṅgā originates from a spot called the Gaṅgā-mūla situated on a hill called Varāha-parvata of the Western Ghats. The sacred river is famous

for the sweetness of its water, and as per the popular saying, “*Tuṅgā-pāna, Gaṅgā-snāna,*” drinking from the Tuṅgā produces as lofty a result as bathing in the Gaṅgā. The Tuṅgā beautifully meanders through the valleys as she flows through Sringeri, which is not far from her place of origin. The Sringeri Math is located on both banks of this river.

When His Holiness first came to Sringeri in 1930 as a *brahmacārin* of twelve years, He did not know swimming, but gradually mastered it to the extent that He was as much at home in water as on land. He swam with the grace of a fish and the more torrential the current, the greater was His affinity to the flow. Even into His sixties, He never let go of an opportunity to plunge into the Tuṅgā, especially when it was in spate. He is therefore spoken of here as *sam-utsukah*, One who was extremely enthusiastic, about *Tuṅgā-snāna*, bathing in the Tuṅgā.



His Holiness used to jump into the Tuṅgā from high trees and swim long distances even when the river was swollen because of rains. Years later, when He went on tours as the pontiff, He did not let slip the opportunity to swim in various mighty rivers such as the Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Godāvarī, Narmadā and Kāverī, as well as the ocean in many places.

The 33<sup>rd</sup> pontiff, Jagadguru Śrī Sacchidānanda Śivābhinava Narasimha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin, was an expert swimmer. Any stretch of water, dangerous though it be, was an irresistible invitation to Him. He had the ability to hold His breath for a protracted period of time and, on occasions, used to frighten His attendants by diving under water and remaining there for a long time. His Holiness was like Him.



Perhaps because of His ignorance of swimming and His intense love for His Holiness, the senior *Jagadguru* used to become jittery whenever His Holiness plunged into the river. He did not expressly forbid His pupil from having the Tuṅgā for His companion but was heard remarking when His Holiness swam in the swollen Tuṅgā, “Oh! What is he up to? How dangerous all this is. I really hope nothing untoward happens.”

His Holiness once told a disciple, “Barring three things, I do not remember having done, even in a dream, on even one occasion, anything that did not meet with my *Guru*’s approval. The three things were swimming, climbing trees and going for long walks in the forests. I requested Him in person on two occasions to kindly forgive me for these three irresistible transgressions, and sought pardon once in writing, referring implicitly to these three acts.

“The first time I sought His forgiveness was in the early part of 1936, before I went to Bengaluru. He just smiled and patted me on the cheek. I did so the

second time in a letter from Bengaluru. He did not write back anything about this point. The second time I apologised in person was a year after His return from Kalady (that is, in 1941). In response to this, He told me, ‘I cannot even imagine them to be transgressions, for these are exactly the three things my *Guru* Himself could not resist. Hence, what is there to forgive? Just as fire cannot give up its heat, you cannot give up these, at least for the present. Therefore, it is I who must learn not to worry about what cannot be changed.’ I did not apologise to Him about these thereafter.”

The written apology alluded to by His Holiness was in the form of a verse in a letter penned by Him on 19th September, 1937. The verse carries the meaning, “Because of childishness or fickleness, I have, knowingly or unknowingly, committed transgressions. May the revered *Guru* deign to forgive them.”<sup>95</sup>



### 35. दक्षिणास्यपदध्यायी *Dakṣiṇāsya-pada-dhyāyī*

One who meditated on the feet of Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti

Lord Dakṣiṇāmūrti, a form of Śiva, is described as seated under a large banyan tree facing *dakṣiṇa*, South, teaching the oneness of *Ātman-Brahman* that is beyond speech and the mind, to the exalted sages, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra. This teaching is through the *cinmudra* (characterised by the tips of the thumb and index finger touching one another and the other three fingers held straight) and silence. An alternative explanation given by the *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-upaniṣad* for the word ‘*Dakṣiṇābhimukha*’, an epithet of Dakṣiṇāmūrti synonymous with ‘*Dakṣiṇāsya*’, is that the word ‘*dakṣiṇa*’ refers to the intellect that is capable of grasping *Brahman*; Śiva is the means (‘*mukha*’ or ‘*āsya*’) to attain (‘*abhi*’) such an intellect.<sup>96</sup>

As mentioned under *nāma* 17, one of the forms of Śiva that His Holiness meditated on was Dakṣiṇāmūrti. He did so on the Lord’s form as described in the *dhyāna-śloka* of the *Medhā-dakṣiṇāmūrti-mantra*, into which the senior *Jagadguru* had initiated Him. The import of the verse is, “I adore Dakṣiṇāmūrti who is of crystal and silver complexion, holds in His lotus-like hands a rosary of pearls, a vessel of nectar, a book and the *cinmudra*, has a serpent for His girdle, has the moon in His crest, is three-eyed and has donned various ornaments.”<sup>97</sup>

His Holiness meditated on Dakṣiṇāmūrti and became one with the Lord Himself. Little wonder that Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin has composed a verse describing His Holiness as follows: “I take refuge in that South-facing Lord (Dakṣiṇāmūrti), who, having relinquished the base of the

banyan tree, resides in Sringeri (as Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyāūrtha Mahāsvāmin) and teaches the Truth to devotees.”<sup>98</sup>



As described under *nāma* 10, Lord Śiva graced His Holiness with *darśana* and the instruction to commence *nirguṇa-dhyāna*. Once the Lord vanished, His Holiness felt an urge to meditate again. Since the Lord had directly instructed Him as a *Guru*, He thought of meditating on Him as Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the divine conferrer of knowledge. Mentally chanting the *Medhā-dakṣiṇāmūrti-mantra*, He straightaway visualised the Lord in His heart-lotus as described in the *mantra*'s *dhyāna-śloka*. Awareness of the surroundings and the body ceased. Subsequently, the mental chanting of the *mantra* automatically came to a stop and His focus was just on the form. There were no distracting thoughts of any kind. The meditation was deep, with the form quite clear. When He regained consciousness of the body and opened His eyes, He found no trace of sunlight. The place was, however, illumined by the light of the moon. Stars were visible.

It was only a few moments later that He realised that there was something on His neck. A big cobra had loosely coiled itself around it. Its upraised hood was near His right shoulder, facing away from Him. He had meditated on Bhujāṅga-bhūṣaṇa (an epithet of Śiva meaning, “He who has a snake for an ornament”) and now a snake was on His body as an ornament. Taking this as a sign of the Lord's grace, He felt very happy. He stroked the cobra gently. It seemed to like this and rested its head against His right cheek. After about five minutes, the snake slowly uncoiled itself and went away. He got up and walked down the hill, seeing His way in the light of the moon.

As per the normal practice, He was scheduled to have His *Guru*'s *darśana* only the next morning during the latter's *āhnikā*, and hence on returning to Sacchidananda Vilasa He went to His room. However, in a few moments, He received a message that He had been sent for by His *Guru*. As the senior *Jagadguru* was engaged in His evening *āhnikā*, His Holiness went to His presence and stood silently after performing *namaskāra*. On completing a *japa*, the senior *Jagadguru* looked at Him with a smile and said, “Today, you have received the very special grace and instruction of Parameśvara. Finally, for a while, you were a *bhujāṅga-bhūṣaṇa* (one adorned with a serpent). Is it not?” His Holiness reverentially answered, “Yes” and added that all this was the consequence of His *Guru*'s blessing bestowed on Him before He had left for the hill (vide *nāma* 17).



That night, He had a dream in which He beheld Śiva dancing magnificently in the form of Naṭarāja, the king of dancers, with the Divine Mother looking on. After some time, this scene was replaced by one in which Śiva appeared

in conjunction with the Divine Mother, as Ardhanārīśvara. In the dream itself, He venerated Śiva-Śakti by chanting the *Ardhanārīśvara-stotra*. Thereafter, the scene changed to one in which He lay prostrate before the Lord as Dakṣiṇāmūrti seated at the base of a big banyan tree. He found Himself merging into the Lord.



His Holiness was a lover of nature as mentioned under *nāma* 28. He would witness nature's beauty, say while crossing the river Tuṅgā or while seated in the evening at His meditation spot from where He could see the Malahānikareśvara Temple and the beautiful mountains and valley during sunset when the sky would be splashed with colours of various hues and the moon too would be visible at times. Charmed by the sights, He would chant the penultimate verse of Bhagavatpāda's *Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra*. The meaning of the verse is: "Obeisance to that resplendent Dakṣiṇāmūrti, who is incarnate in the form of the *Guru*, whose eight-fold form is all this moving and unmoving universe appearing as earth, water, fire, air, space, the sun, the moon and the soul, and beyond whom, the Supreme and all-pervading one, nothing else exists for the discerning."<sup>99</sup>



### 36. दक्षिणाम्नायपीठपः *Dakṣiṇāmnāya-pīṭhapah*

One who reigned over the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya-pīṭha*

Śrī Ādi-śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda established four *āmnāya-pīṭhas*, seats of *Vedic* learning, in the four directions, that is, *dakṣiṇa* (South), *pūrva* (East), *paścima* (West) and *uttara* (North). The *dakṣiṇa-āmnāya pīṭha*, the southern seat of *Vedic* learning, is located at sacred Sringeri, nestled in the picturesque Sahyadri mountain ranges, and a place where Sage Ṛṣyaśṛṅga of Rāmāyaṇa fame, performed austerities.

The Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham is assigned the *Yajurveda*, the *mahāvākya* (*Upaniṣadic* declaration of the great Truth), '*aham brahmāsmi* (I am *Brahman*),' and the presiding deity, Goddess Śāradāmbā. Bhagavatpāda appointed Śrī Suresvarācārya, one of His four direct disciples, as the first pontiff of this southern *pīṭha*. Ever since then, in an uninterrupted *Guru-śiṣya* tradition, successive pontiffs have occupied this great *pīṭha* that is the symbol of knowledge and wisdom. By virtue of being a representative of Bhagavatpāda Himself, every pontiff is reverentially referred to as '*Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya*'.



His Holiness once specified (in a communication sent from the *Maṭha*) the following criteria bearing on the selection of a successor to the Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham:

1. He should belong to the *Yajur-veda*.
2. With the exception of Sureśvarācārya, all the *ācāryas* (preceptors) who have adorned this *pīṭha* have been celibates. Hence, the person chosen should be a celibate and not a householder.
3. He should come from a good family.

All of these criteria found complete fulfilment in His Holiness.

After the *Mahāsamādhi* of His *Guru*, His Holiness's formal coronation as the 35<sup>th</sup> Jagadguru Shankaracharya of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham took place on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1954, corresponding to *āśvayuja-kṛṣṇa-pañcamī* of the cyclical year *Jaya*, under the star *Rohiṇī*.



### 37. दक्षिण्यनिलयस्वान्तः *Dākṣiṇya-nilaya-svāntaḥ*

One whose heart was the abode of kindness

The aspect of compassion that is termed *kṛpā* means ‘the effort put in for others’ happiness’ as explained under *nāma* 22, is the characteristic of *dākṣiṇya* or kindness talked of in this *nāma*. It is the characteristic of a person who acts in a manner that is favourable to others, even if that entails trouble for himself. Clearly, the traits described in *nāma* 22 are subsumed in this *nāma*, for a person who is willing to put up with suffering for the sake of others’ welfare, would certainly possess empathy and gentleness.

As in *nāma* 22, *svāntam*, mind, is used here to indicate that kindness was innate to His Holiness's mind and that not only His mind but also His speech and bodily acts were uniformly suffused with kindness. This *nāma* uses the description ‘*dākṣiṇya-nilaya* (abode of kindness)’ for His Holiness's mind, implying that kindness was permanently stationed in its entirety in His mind and never ebbed. Thus, whatever the circumstances, His kindness was unflinching. He would never hesitate to put up with even great personal hardship in order to do what is favourable to the other person. Bhartṛhari lauds such a person with a special sobriquet: “These ones are called *satpuruṣas* (noble ones), who strive for the well-being of others, even sacrificing their own personal ends in the process.”<sup>100</sup> His Holiness dealt with people in such a way that whatever He did was favourable to everyone concerned. He spontaneously, naturally and consistently showed kindness towards all. To Him, others’ well-being always came first.



Once, Sri Srinivasa Sastry's friend did not fare well in the examinations. Determined to severely punish him, the boy's strict father ordered him to bend and placed a heavy stone on his back. Unable to bear the load, the boy

soon began wailing. Sri Srinivasa Sastry heard the piteous cries and rushed to the spot. Addressing the father, He said, “You are older than me and wiser too. Your son is in great pain. Please let him rest, at least for a while. You may place the stone on my back instead and I shall support it for him.” The father was moved by Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s heartfelt concern and relieved his son of the burden imposed. Thus, Sri Srinivasa Sastry was willing to even put up with suffering to relieve others of their distress.

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The following episode took place on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1989. His Holiness shed His body on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

His Holiness was unwell that day. Some orange juice was what was to be His intake that afternoon. The attendant on duty was, however, unfamiliar with the use of the juice extractor. He ended up preparing juice mixed with significant solid residues. Though His Holiness noted this, He raised no objections. A disciple present there, however, suggested that the juice be filtered out. His Holiness guided the attendant and soon pure orange juice was ready, with not a drop spilt or left behind.

Unexpectedly, His Holiness told the disciple to taste it and see how he found it. As His Holiness never concerned Himself with the tastiness or otherwise of what He consumed, this was unusual. The disciple poured a little juice into his palm, swallowed it and reported, “It is nice.” “As it is tasty, have some more,” said His Holiness and directed His attendant to fetch a clean tumbler. Half the juice readied was poured into the tumbler. The disciple drank it. Not stopping with having given away half of what was to be His meagre intake, His Holiness happily instructed the disciple to consume the balance too. With no choice, the disciple obeyed. What served that afternoon as the substitute for His Holiness’s liquid diet was His joy in fully giving away to a disciple what the disciple found nice.

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When His Holiness was camping at Hyderabad, a devotee who hailed from an area that was approximately 50 kilometres away, came to have *darśana* of His Holiness. The devotee submitted to His Holiness that the *kumbhābhiṣeka* of a temple that had been built in his locality was going to take place, and requested His Holiness to grace the occasion. His Holiness’s schedule was, however, already tightly packed. Further, many devotees were of the opinion that a trip to the place, taking part in the functions and returning would be physically demanding as also time-consuming. However, His Holiness did not desire to refuse the invitation of the devotee and cause him unhappiness. So He set aside time for the event and not in the least minding great personal strain, went to the place on the appointed day and graced all the devotees there before returning.

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His Holiness graced a devotee's house in Delhi. The devotee's aged father who stayed with him, had very poor eyesight, and so he could not see His Holiness. When the devotee mentioned this misfortune to His Holiness, He asked him to shift his father to an open space in front of the house. His Holiness then stood at a spot where the sunlight fell directly on His form and asked the devotee's father if he could see Him. His Holiness kept adjusting His position so as to ensure that the aged man could have a fairly clear sight of His form. His Holiness stood for long doing this, unmindful of the scorching heat, until such time when the elderly man expressed his complete satisfaction with the *darśana*.

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During His Holiness's visit to Bengaluru in 1989, Dr. Lakshmipathy saw Him one day seated in a room giving *darśana* to a politician. The doctor was watching from the veranda and could not make out what the politician was telling His Holiness, but was sure it was bothering Him. When the politician left, the doctor went in and started a conversation with His Holiness.

Doctor: Your Holiness was disturbed by this man. Isn't this so?

HH: Yes. This man does things in a reckless manner and wants me to find a solution for him. How is it possible?

Doctor: I personally feel that Your Holiness should not allow these people to come close to Your Holiness.

HH: What you say is not correct. See, this man has a guilty conscience and he comes to me hoping that I will find a solution for him. If I also chase him away to whom will he go? Don't you think I should at least try sincerely to make him curb his evil deeds and put him on the correct path?

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### 38. दान्त्यादिपरिशोभितः *Dāntyādi-pariśobhitāḥ*

One perfectly adorned with the qualities starting with sense-control

*Dānti* (or *dama*) is restraint of the five senses, namely hearing, touch, vision, taste and smell. The term *ādi* (meaning 'starting with') in '*dāntyādi*' expands what is meant here to cover a set of six attributes including *dānti*. This hexad is counted by the *Śāstras* as the third among the four pre-requisites for a spiritual aspirant, which are *viveka* (discrimination), *vairagya* (dispassion), *śamādi-ṣaṭka-sampatti* (hexad of qualities), and *mumukṣutva* (desire for liberation). This hexad of attributes is *śama* or mind-control, *dama* or sense-control, *uparati* or self-withdrawal from worldly activities, *titikṣā* or forbearance, *śraddhā* or faith and *samādhāna* or one-pointed concentration.

His Holiness is described here as ‘One who was *pari-śobhitah*, perfectly adorned, with *dāntyādi*, the hexad of qualities. Bhagavatpāda states the position regarding the attributes of a *jīvanmukta* as follows: “Across the *Adhyātma-śāstra* (scriptural texts dealing with spirituality) the traits of the *jīvanmukta* are the very ones that are taught as the means for spiritual aspirants, for they can be accomplished through practice.”<sup>101</sup> Clearly, this *nāma* serves as a description of His Holiness after His attainment of *jīvanmukti*, for He is described as having been adorned by the six traits as His embellishing characteristics.

In fact, interestingly, the compound word ‘*dāntyādi-pariśobhitah*’ can also be split in a different way and interpreted to imply, ‘One because of whom the six attributes are exquisite ornaments’. Just as devotion itself obtained a celebrated status because of Lord Narasiṃha’s devotee, Prahlāda, this hexad of qualities attained the status of cherished ornaments because His Holiness possessed them.



As described in the context of *nāmas* 10, 24 and 27, on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 1935, His Holiness was awakened from *nirvikalpa-samādhi* by the senior *Jagadguru* to prevent Him from entering into the state irreversibly. The senior *Jagadguru* said to Him, “While You can now manage to perform Your routine activities, Your mind is still too introverted to engage in the serious study of the *Tarka* and other *Śāstras*.... Nothing of the world interests You at all. Such readily noticeable, rock-like imperturbability and disinterestedness in everything would be unexceptionable if You were an independent *saṁnyāsīn*. On You, however, rests the future of this great *pīṭha*.”

This one description of His Holiness by His *Guru* fully demonstrates how His Holiness was adorned by the hexad of qualities. He had gone beyond this illusory world and was absolutely shorn of desires. The mind and senses were totally under His control; His renunciation was complete; His mind was in a state of perfect *samādhāna*. The bliss of the *Ātman* shone without any obstructing ignorance.



### 39. धर्माधर्मविभागज्ञः *Dharmādharmā-vibhāga-jñāḥ*

One who was versed in the distinction between *dharma* and *adharmā*

It is well known that the common aspiration of all beings is, “May I have happiness; may I not have sorrow.” The causes of happiness (through *pūṇya*, merit) and sorrow (through *pāpa*, sin) have been taught in the *Śruti*: “*Puṇya* indeed accrues through good deeds and *pāpa* through bad ones.”<sup>103</sup> Good actions in turn are defined as *dharma*: “*Dharma* is that by means of which

there is the attainment of prosperity and emancipation.”<sup>104</sup> It has been taught, “The authority of the *Veda* stems from the fact that it teaches about that *dharmā*,”<sup>105</sup> and the Lord instructs, “Hence the *Śāstra* shall form the basis for you to determine what is to be done (*dharmā*) and what is not to be done (*adharmā*). It is after knowing these commands of the *Śāstras* that you should perform actions here.”<sup>106</sup> Therefore, the *Veda* constitutes the final authority to know what *dharmā* and *adharmā* are, and to avoid sorrow and earn happiness, one must do what the *Veda* prescribes and avoid what it proscribes. Since everyone may not have access to the *Veda*’s teachings, Manu says, “The *Veda*, *Smṛti* (texts written by sages with the *Veda* as basis), the conduct of the noble ones and mental satisfaction – these four are the evident marks of *dharmā*.”<sup>107</sup>

His Holiness was acquainted only too well with the subtleties of *dharmā*. It is said, “One who explores the *Vedas* and *Dharmā-śāstras* through ratiocination that is not opposed to the *Vedas*, he alone, and none other, understands *dharmā*.”<sup>108</sup> His Holiness’s sharpness of intellect, expertise with logic and comprehensive knowledge of the *Vedas* and *Śāstras* (described by *nāmas* 11, 46, 47, 54, 87, 90 and 93) vouchsafed this quality in Him. He was perfectly competent to provide inimitable guidance to all, to take them from sorrows to bliss.



A clear sense of what ought to be done and what ought not to be done was present in His Holiness even from His pre-*saṁnyāsa* days.

As mentioned under *nāmas* 18 and 27, Sri Srinivasa Sastry had His first *darśana* of the *Jagadguru* at Narasimhavana after His *upanayana*. In the course of the conversation that the *Jagadguru* started with Sri Srinivasa Sastry, He asked the young *brahmacārin*, “You must have been taught various morals. Tell me one moral which you regard as being rather important.” The elders who were present became tense, for they did not know what answer would be given. They need not have had any fears, for Sri Srinivasa Sastry answered unhesitatingly and with conviction, “Keep good company and eschew evil associations.”

Sri Srinivasa Sastry had thus grasped, at the tender age of twelve, the most critical ingredient to leading a fruitful life, avoiding *adharmā* and befriending *dharmā*.



The following was narrated by His Holiness to drive home the importance of doing good to others and refraining from harming others, which to Him was the most important *dharmā*.



is free from *kalmaṣas*.”<sup>112</sup> Here, good and bad actions are both impurities because they lead to bondage, that is rebirth. Past actions are completely destroyed on the dawn of knowledge, and since the *jīvanmukta* has gone beyond actions, whatever actions he does in the world do not bind him. Only *prārabdha* or the actions that have started to fructify remain for the *jīvanmukta*. In this context the Lord says, “Always remaining reposed in this *yoga* (that is eschewing everything other than such *yoga*) the *yogin* who is free from *kalmaṣas* effortlessly attains the superlative bliss that is associated with *Brahman*.”<sup>113</sup> Here *kalmaṣas* are the obstacles to experiencing *samādhi*, and it is in the sense of destroying these obstacles caused by *prārabdha*, that *samādhi* is said to ‘free’ even the *jīvanmukta* from *kalmaṣas*; sins or, for that matter virtues, in no way act as any bondage for the *jīvanmukta*.

His Holiness became a *jīvanmukta* through the royal path of *yoga* that culminates in the practice of *dhyāna* leading to *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (vide *nāma* 76). Even from the time when He started to meditate as a young *saṁnyāsin* in His teens, He was an adept at it, as described under *nāmas* 1, 27, 59, 67, 69 and 76. After *jīvanmukti*, He used to be able to go into and come out of even *nirvikalpa-samādhi* at will, for durations perfectly determined by Him. It is therefore apparent that none could be more suited than His Holiness to be described by this *nāma*.



[The following account shows how His Holiness could regulate the duration of His meditation even at a stage when He had just started His meditative practices.]

In January-February 1934 (when His Holiness was sixteen years old), the senior *Jagadguru* taught His Holiness a method to start meditation (vide *nāma* 15). Initially, His Holiness meditated twice a day - in His room in the afternoon and at the Kālabhairava Temple in the evening. The idea of meditating just before or immediately after His morning *āhnikā* and of going for His bath earlier than usual to facilitate this appealed to Him. However, He did not implement it for a couple of weeks. The reason was that He was not in a position then to predict or regulate the duration of His meditation. As He used to go after His morning *āhnikā* to the senior *Jagadguru*'s presence to offer *namaskāras*, He did not want to take the risk of becoming delayed because of unintentionally meditating for too long.

With regard to the estimation and regulation of the duration of meditation, He reflected as follows: “Once I lose awareness of the body and the surroundings and my mind locks on to the divine form, I have no awareness of the passage of time. So I am not in a position then to decide how long more I am to continue meditating. Even during deep sleep, I am unaware of the passage of time and am in no position to determine how long more to

remain in that state. Yet, it is not as though the duration of my sleep is quite unpredictable. Further, it is not that I cannot, on my own, alter the time for which I normally sleep.

“Habit influences how long a person sleeps at night. Other factors being the same, he is likely to sleep at night for as many hours as he usually does. Moreover, if he has the habit of sleeping for half an hour every afternoon, he is likely to awaken on his own after a half-an-hour siesta. Presumably, if I were to regularly meditate for fixed periods in the mornings, afternoons and evenings, my mind will spontaneously emerge from deep meditation at the end of these periods. Just as one can choose to go back to sleep, I should be able to revert to a state of deep concentration. By doing so for some days, I should be able to increase the time after which my meditation tends to lighten.

“When, on some night, I decide before sleeping that I must get up at a particular time, I awaken at that time on my own notwithstanding my having slept much less that night than usual. In like manner, I should be able to influence the duration of a session of meditation by making a resolve about the duration before beginning to meditate.” His experiences of the first two weeks accorded with this analysis. Confident that He could now estimate and regulate the duration of His meditation, He ceased to have any inhibition about having a session of meditation before going for His *Guru’s darśana*.

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[The sequel gives a glimpse of the level of mastery over meditation that His Holiness had even in the early stages of meditation.]

It was just a few months later the same year, that His Holiness gained proficiency in readily setting, at the time of beginning to visualise a form during meditation, the level of His concentration. For instance, He could adjust the intensity of His focus to block out the sound of a loud peal of thunder, or to allow a loud peal of thunder to be heard but not the sound of rain or a not-so-loud peal of thunder. If He felt like chanting a *mantra* throughout a session of meditation, He pegged the intensity of concentration on the form at a lower level than otherwise.

He had heard people say that their minds wander when they perform *japa* or when they try to meditate on a form. From the time He began meditating, He had not experienced this difficulty. To appreciate the problem of mental wandering, He experimented with progressively lowering the level of His concentration on the form. He found that when the concentration fell to a level far below that during His normal meditation, His mind started to wander a little to extraneous sounds. By deliberately keeping the intensity of focus low enough to allow some distractions, He determined, during a couple of sessions, over a dozen aids to deal with the disturbances. Chanting

the *mantra* with greater vigour, temporarily holding the breath and stressing the importance of meditation were some of them.

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A disciple of His Holiness once had a strong desire to behold His Holiness in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. The disciple did not express his wish to His Holiness but what can be hidden from the omniscient One? One day, He asked the disciple to accompany Him to the Kālabhairava temple (atop a hill in Narasimhavana) and there, He sat down for meditation. He asked the disciple to sit close to Him and then remarked, “We will meditate.”

The disciple saw His eyes close partially. Slowly, the heaving of His chest became slower and slower and soon, no trace of breathing was discoverable by the disciple, though he was seated very close to Him. He seemed to radiate peace. Suddenly, the disciple felt a force dragging him into meditation. He too closed his eyes and his mind soared to the heights of concentration.

The disciple opened his eyes after what seemed to him to be a moment, and observed His Holiness. Slowly, His breathing commenced and in a few moments He opened His eyes. Turning to the Kālabhairava idol, He called out the Lord’s name and after prostrating, came out of the temple. Actually, over half-an hour had elapsed. On coming out of the temple, He said, “*Nirvikalpa-samādhi* is very nice. Is it not?” His Holiness was such a master of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, that He had perfectly regulated the duration of His own state of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, to coincide with the disciple’s.

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A disciple once asked His Holiness whether the transition to *nirvikalpa-samādhi* during meditation could be effected by merely stilling the mind. His Holiness answered in the negative and then said, “Let us try it out. You try to go rapidly into *nirvikalpa-samādhi* by stilling your mind and I too shall do the same.” They sat face to face with one another. After about 45 minutes, the disciple gradually opened his eyes, only to find His Holiness doing the same. His Holiness had maintained perfect rapport with him and had duplicated his every move; this was unmistakable from the conversation that followed.

HH: Narrate one step of what you did and I shall state the next.

Disciple: I fixed my gaze between my eyebrows.

HH: Today, a light green hue manifested there.

D: Yes. I then started stilling my mind.

HH: The hue vanished and an expanse was perceived.

D: Yes. The mind then became progressively calm.

HH: Suddenly, you were transported into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. It thus appears that no fixation of the mind on the *Ātman* was required. Is it not so?

D: Yes.

HH: Actually, just prior to the transition you had, by force of habit, you fixed your mind on the *Ātman*. Still your mind this evening as you did now but pull yourself out of meditation just before you plunge into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Tell me later what happened.

The next day, when the disciple went to prostrate before His Holiness, He asked, “Did you try it?” The disciple replied that he had and found that what His Holiness had said was perfectly valid. With a smile, His Holiness remarked, “For the sake of confirmation, I too tried out this morning what I had told you to do and noted exactly what I had observed yesterday.”

Such was His Holiness’s expertise in meditation, in the attainment at will of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* and in its regulation.



#### 41. धर्मप्रचारनिरतः *Dharma-pracāra-nirataḥ*

One who was intent on propagating *dharma*

Bhagavatpāda says that when, over time, because of the intensification of desires in the minds of adherents, *adharma* that is caused by the waning of discriminative knowledge gives rise to the decline of *dharma* and the predominance of *adharma*, ...<sup>114</sup> such is the time when the Lord incarnates, and having re-established *dharma*, ensures its sustenance and propagation in ways that are appropriate to that age.

When Śiva incarnated as Bhagavatpāda, He not only uplifted *dharma* that had become decadent, but also established *Maṭhas* in the four directions (as mentioned under *nāma* 36) and mandated the pontiffs of the *Maṭhas* to sustain *dharma* by propagating it amongst the masses. Coming as He did in the *Śaṅkarācārya-guru-paramparā* (the tradition of *Gurus* beginning with Śrī Śaṅkarācārya) His Holiness discharged His duty as the pontiff of the Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham, with great devotion.

Further, as seen under *nāma* 27, His Holiness’s *Guru*, the 34<sup>th</sup> pontiff, had instructed Him to carry out His duties as a protector of *dharma*. His Holiness carried out His *Guru*’s instruction to the letter.



His Holiness set out in 1956, at the age of thirty-nine, on His first tour of South India. From 1956 right up to when He cast of His mortal frame in 1989, He undertook a total of 35 tours, long and short, that covered the whole of India thrice and also extended to Nepal. He graced not merely cities and

towns connected by good roads, but also remote villages. He thereby reached out to millions, blessing them regardless of their caste, creed or religion. He relentlessly drove Himself to the verge of exhaustion, only to inculcate *dharma* and spirituality in the hearts of people.

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On His tours, it was customary for His Holiness to give at least one benedictory discourse at every city, town or village that He visited. Though He delivered thousands of discourses, not one of them was discordant with another, even when the verses taken up by Him for exposition had dissimilar meanings. This was because He put things in the proper perspective.

Another aspect of His benedictory addresses was His practical approach. For instance, speaking on the study of the *Vedas*, He said, “A parrot and a man may utter the same words. A person goes to another in response to the latter’s call but does not give the same weightage to the same words uttered by a parrot. The chanting of a *Veda-panḍita* and that being played back by a tape recorder may sound similar. However, the former is chanting the *Veda*, while the latter is not. The scriptures specify that the *Veda* must be learnt only from a *Guru* if it is to be efficacious. It may be possible to learn by rote *Vedic* passages by employing a recorder. However, this will not confer the *puṇya* that learning from a *Guru* would. Nowadays, however, some have difficulty in finding a good *Vedic* scholar to teach them regularly and for long; also, because of their hectic work schedules, they seem to find it difficult to go to a *Veda-vidvān*’s place every day for long. Even such persons will do well to learn at least a few times from a teacher and get the words and intonations right. Thereafter, it does not matter if they employ recordings to strengthen and refresh their memories.”

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He met members of the armed forces in numerous places and conversed with them to answer their questions (vide episode under *nāma* 39) and solve their problems (vide episode under *nāma* 14). He also addressed large gatherings of them in many places and by exhorting them to diligently discharge their duties, boosted their mental strength and resolve.

For instance, addressing the armed forces at Hyderabad in 1967, He said, “I am pleased to see you all here to receive me in your midst. The purpose of life must be clear in your perspective. Man is bound by his duty. What is your duty? In ancient times, the task of protecting the nation and its people was enjoined on the *kṣatriyas*. That duty has now been entrusted to you. Whatever subgroup you may belong to, all of you of the armed forces have a paramount duty and that is to guard the nation. In this, you should not be half-hearted, come what may. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that fortunate is the warrior who gets an opportunity to wage a war against evil

and for righteousness, and that the doors of heaven are thrown open to him. Do keep this in mind and execute the tasks assigned to you, diligently and to the best of your ability.

“To attain the objective of life, salvation, one should cultivate qualities such as compassion to all beings. You should practise them to the extent possible, with a clear understanding of their essence, taking into consideration the context. There is a teaching that is pertinent to all of you who have chosen to render the yeomen service of protecting the nation. Śrī Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna on the battlefield, ‘Think of Me and fight.’ You too should do so. Pray to God before you set out to do anything and then perform your duty. That is enough for you and will fetch you great good. By your very performance of your duty duly accompanied by the thought of God and acting with sincerity and whole-heartedness, you will have served God well.”

On another occasion, He told a soldier who was troubled by the thought that he would incur sin because of his having killed many people in war, “You would not incur sin. You only did your duty and followed the orders given to you. You did that action for the sake of the nation and not for your own sake. If you had killed anyone out of animosity or for your selfish end, you would have been a sinner. However, you stuck to your duty for the sake of the nation. Lord Kṛṣṇa told Arjuna, ‘For a *kṣatriya*, waging a righteous war is an act of virtue and not a sin.’ You soldiers are in the position of the *kṣatriyas* referred to by the Lord.”



His Holiness pointed out, “Since time immemorial, we have been one as a nation, despite the fact that there were many kingdoms ruled by many monarchs of varied dispositions. The oneness of the nation was never lost on us. What was the spirit that held us together? It was the underlying *dharma* practised by the vast majority that unified us. Thus, though divided by kingdoms, we were united by the spirit of *dharma*.

“A glorious demonstration of that spirit can be seen in the life of Śrī Ādi-Śaṅkara Himself, centuries ago. He established four monasteries to sustain, uphold and propagate *Sanātana-dharma*. He was born in Kalady in Kerala. However, He chose to establish His monasteries in the four corners of India – Sringeri in the south, Dwaraka in the west, Puri in the east and Badri in the north. Moreover, He had no petty concerns such as regionalism. His actions are an illustration of this. Look at His choice of His principal disciples as the first pontiffs of those *Maṭhas*. He appointed Sureśvarācārya who was from the current Bihar to head the southern *Maṭha* at Sringeri; Padmapādācārya, a southerner, was appointed to head the western *Maṭha* at Dwaraka.

“The famous temple of Lord Viśvanātha is in Varanasi in the north; in the south, we have the celebrated temple for Lord Rāmanātha at Rameswaram. Yet, what was the ethos induced in us by our ancients? One from the northern belt cherished as a lifetime ambition a pilgrimage to Rameswaram and bathing Lord Rāmanātha with the waters of the holy Gaṅgā. Likewise, for the southerner, a pilgrimage to Kashi and *darśana* of Lord Viśvanātha there were lifetime goals.

“Besides, even something so seemingly commonplace as the custom of naming our children has a definite stamp of the oneness of our nation. While names such as Ramnath and Sharada are seen in the north, Viswanatha and Dwarakanatha are common in the south. How could all this have been if the great had not seen our nation as an integral entity?”

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A devotee, Sri T. S. Nagarajan, narrated the following.

I once said to His Holiness, “Even those who hardly do a good deed take to boisterous propaganda. The Sringeri Sharada Peetham is involved in initiating and executing so many *dhārmika* activities for the welfare of people but does not publicise such good deeds. Many people are not even aware of the good work of the *pīṭha*. I am agonised at this state of affairs.”

His Holiness retorted, “Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda established this *pīṭha* for *dharma-pracāra* (propagating *dharma*) and not for the *pracāra* (broadcasting) of its own *dharma* (good deeds).”

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#### 42. धिक्कृताखिलदुर्मतः *Dhik-kṛtākhila-durmataḥ*

One who defeated all flawed beliefs and doctrines

The word ‘*mata*’ appertains to the *mati*, intellect, and hence refers to a belief or doctrine to which one subscribes. The Lord has cautioned, as seen under *nāma* 13, that delusion causes one to forget what one has learnt regarding right and wrong, and this in turn disrupts the intellect’s ability to distinguish right from wrong, true from false. Clearly, this disruption of discriminative ability makes the intellect fertile ground for false beliefs to take root, and the primordial cause of this is disastrous delusion. Any flawed doctrine, belief or dogma rooted in such delusion and hence ruinous, may be deemed a *durmata*. It is only by destroying this dreadful delusion that *durmata*s can be uprooted from the intellect and this is impossible other than through gaining right knowledge.

His Holiness is described here as *dhikkṛta*, One who defeated, *akhila*, all, *durmata*s. A maxim that is relevant here is: “Indeed, censure is not done to simply deride the fault or the faulty, but to commend that which is proper.”<sup>115</sup>

His Holiness's aim in all cases was only to correct and not to censure. His openness, acceptance of people as they were, willingness to listen with patience, sharp intellect that enabled Him to swiftly gauge the intellectual ability of the person, His intense practicality, impeccable logic, purity of purpose, gentleness, kindness and compassion (vide *nāmas* 22, 37 and 106) made Him effectively and comprehensively, and yet tenderly, eradicate misconceptions of people.

A popular saying teaches, "A wicked person's learning leads to argumentation, wealth to arrogance and power to oppression of others. On the other hand, a good man's learning is for acquiring knowledge, wealth for performing charity and power for protecting people in difficulty."<sup>116</sup> His Holiness personified the latter category.



Sri Nagendra Rao reminisced, "In the summer of 1967, at the end of my first-year classes at the Indian Institute of Management in Kolkata, I went to Delhi to visit my parents. His Holiness was camping in Delhi at that time and my mother was very particular that I should go to seek His blessings. I mentioned to her that I was extremely allergic to meeting and wasting time on holy men and *sainnyāsins*. However, after much persuasion by her, I agreed to go but told her that under no circumstances would I go in the traditional mode of visiting Him (which is wearing a *dhoti* and *aṅga-vastra*). I would go just as I was, in a shirt and a pair of trousers, or I would not go at all. My mother had little choice and she accepted what I said with a somewhat heavy heart.

"We went to visit His Holiness. At that time, He was staying in the house of the then Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha. People had congregated to meet Him but somehow, we were called in immediately for a personal audience with Him. His Holiness was seated on a silver *āsana* in a corner of a fairly large room in the front portion of the house. When we were ushered into the room, He immediately beckoned to us to come to Him. It was at this point that, suddenly, a spontaneous transformation came over me. The innate purity of His nature and the great power of His *tapas* were such that I suddenly felt unclean and rather out of place in the vestments that I had come in and, therefore, was extremely reluctant to go forward. He was kindness itself and repeated several times that I should come forward, and made me sit within a couple of feet from Him. His first response on my sitting down was, 'Why did you not come to see me in Calcutta (Kolkata), my son? Your mother had shown me a photograph of yours and I was watching every day to see whether you were among the hundreds of people who came by.' This was but one more surprise, which left me totally dumbfounded. In the first instance, I never really thought we could get in to see Him so quickly. And in the second instance, I certainly did not expect that He would remember

me from the photograph that He had seen. Of course, at the time I had no idea of His Holiness's phenomenal memory and His punctilious attention to even matters of the smallest detail. Ordinary people often imagine limitations in great souls which are really not there, because they judge them by their own limited abilities and attitudes.

“As I started to recover my power of speech, I felt one should be very honest in the presence of one who, I now started feeling, was a very unusual person and one of great spiritual magnitude. I launched into my explanation as to why I had not come to see Him in Kolkata. I explained to Him rather tersely that I had heard that He saw only people of wealth and high social standing and that I had really little use for meeting such personalities, no matter how spiritual or famous or eminent they were considered to be. There was pin-drop silence from everyone around. In my estimate never before had anyone been quite so irreverent and that too in so explicit a manner, in front of His Holiness. I fully expected to be told to leave the room, never see His face again - some form of the Hindu equivalent of excommunication on the spot.

“His Holiness's response was totally unexpected. He just smiled and said, ‘I am told you are a student of business administration. Are you?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He then asked me if it was not true that I had to study some elements of law as part of my course work. I again said, ‘Yes.’ And He said, ‘Is it not also true that in law, as it is practised in the land, hearsay information is not considered evidence?’ I began to see what He was driving at and said He was correct. He then asked me that as a man endowed with considerable education and a fair degree of discrimination, was it not expected of me to have come there personally to see whether the allegations were true or unfounded. He was so logical and reasonable that I had really nothing left to say and I agreed with Him. What I also found remarkable at the time was that His Holiness used not the arcane letter and word of the traditional *Śāstras* of which I knew little at the time and for which I had even less regard. He used the very branches of secular learning with which I was fairly conversant and for which I had high regard, to make His point. This was another surprise to me. I had really not expected His Holiness to have such an immense understanding of and familiarity with the various branches of secular knowledge.”



A devotee took a group of foreigners including a Christian priest to Sringeri and had the *darśana* of His Holiness. His Holiness started chatting with them in His customary cordial style. The foreigners too freely voiced their doubts about Hinduism and its various tenets, including idol worship. His Holiness responded to their queries with convincing answers. The topic then shifted to *Advaita* philosophy, of which His Holiness gave a lucid explanation.

Noticing the priest's inability to grasp the subject, His Holiness resorted to catechism to drive home the points that He expounded earlier.

HH: Who are you?

Priest: I am so and so.

HH: No, I did not ask your name. Who are 'you'?

P: I am the son of so and so.

HH: No, no, not that. Who are 'you'?

P: I am the priest of...church.

HH: I did not mean that. Tell me who 'you' are.

P: (Confused) I don't know.

HH: (Smiling) See, this is the problem. We do not know who we really are. Your name, relationship to someone else and your profession – all these pertain to your body and not to you. Now, tell me, what are you called when you are starving?

P: A hungry man.

HH: Correct. What are you known as when you are overeating?

P: A glutton.

HH: That's right. Well, when you are travelling?

P: A traveller.

HH: Yes. Now consider this. Descriptions like 'hungry man', 'glutton' and 'traveller' are based on actions, again, pertaining to your body. Do you get the feeling that you are a different man every time you are called by a different name?

P: No, it is 'I' known by various names and relationships.

HH: There you are. 'You' are that unchanging common entity behind all these changing names and forms. That indeed is your true identity.

His Holiness then expounded the unreality of the universe according to the tenets of *Advaita* and the underlying Supreme Reality, the substratum of all names and forms. The delighted Christian priest profusely thanked His Holiness and was happy that he had received a valuable teaching that day.

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When His Holiness decided in the early 1980s to put up a permanent bridge across the river Tuṅgā, He entrusted the construction of the bridge He envisioned to Gammon India. In the planning stage, a superstitious

consultant objected, “Connecting north to south by a bridge is not a good idea.” His Holiness responded, “If you want to connect east and west, it cannot happen here.” He added, “The *Maṭha*’s cowshed is in a certain place. You may say that as some cow or calf has died here, this is not the right location for a cowshed. I may accept your advice and build another cowshed at the place specified by you. If, after I shift the cows to the new place, a cow or calf dies, what should I do?” Turning to a devotee present there, He remarked that in such matters one should be pragmatic, not superstitious.



Not only was His Holiness not superstitious, He was acutely discerning and logical. When He was around 21 years of age, a magician came to Sringeri and had His *darśana*. He then demonstrated to Him in private what he called, “My power of *indraajāla*.” He showed His Holiness the front and back of his open palm. He then quickly waved his hand and closed his fist. When he opened his fist, His Holiness saw a golden ring there. The magician went on to demonstrate several such tricks. Finally, he prepared a paper cone, showed it to be empty and then poured some water into it. After a few moments, he jerked the cone as if he were about to throw the water on His Holiness. But what fell near Him was a variety of small flowers. He liked the performance and told the man so. He, however, did not ask the magician how exactly he had performed the tricks because He felt, “Let me not embarrass him with questions about the secrets of his trade.”

In the 1980s, one day when a disciple went to His presence, He stretched out His right hand and told him, “Examine my palm.” “Is it not empty?” He asked. “Yes, it is,” the disciple replied. He waved His hands swiftly and while doing so, closed His fist. Then He burst out laughing and opened His fist. It contained *kuṅkuma* (turmeric powder reddened by adding lime juice). Giving some to the disciple, He said, “This *kuṅkuma* did not materialize from thin air. It is from Śārādāmbā’s temple.”

He then told the disciple, “Fetch a bowl of oil without telling anyone.” When the disciple returned with a vessel containing oil, His Holiness instructed him to heat it on a small electric heater. The oil was soon boiling. Even as the disciple watched, He dipped His right hand into the oil and pulled it out, all smiles. It was then that He told the disciple about the magician who had come to Him when He was around 21 years of age. “Though I did not ask the magician how he performed his tricks, I deduced them myself on the basis of what I had seen. Just as he produced a ring, I manifested the *kuṅkuma* purely by sleight of hand. He who is not discerning is likely to think that articles such as rings and *kuṅkuma* can be so manifested only through supernatural powers. I did not get burnt when I dipped my hand in the oil because, prior to my doing so, I had wet my hand without your knowledge. Thanks to the water, the temperature on the surface of my hand

was far below that of the oil. I have read that a foreigner dips his hand briefly in molten metal. Unfortunately, molten metal is not accessible to me right now or else I would have duplicated his feat for you,” elaborated His Holiness.

“Feel my pulse,” He continued. As the disciple did so, He closed His eyes. Soon, the disciple was unable to detect any pulse in His left wrist. A little later, the pulse was again detectable and He opened His eyes. “You might have imagined that because I went into a state of deep meditation, my pulse ceased to be detected by you. Actually, I did not meditate. Instead, it was through a strictly physical means that I briefly inhibited the blood flow to the hand. My heart continued to beat normally.”

He then closed His eyes once more and began to speak in a variety of markedly dissimilar voices. It would have been impossible for anybody to discern that the voices were from a single source. In fact, to the disciple, some of the sounds clearly seemed to be those of females with high-pitched voices. His Holiness opened His eyes and said, “What passes off as possession by a spirit is normally not so. It is easy for a person to consciously speak like different people. So a deceitful man can pretend to be possessed by some divine being and earn name, fame and money. People often do not realize that their faces and, in particular, their eyes betray far more than they imagine, about the workings of their minds. This and information gathered through assistants can help a fraud to pass off as a mind-reader. The behaviour of a person in the grip of hysteria may give rise to the impression that he has been possessed by some spirit.”

He then went on to explain how it was possible for a charlatan to make some *vibhūti*-like powder form gradually on his photograph. Finally, He told the disciple, “Till today, I have not demonstrated these tricks to anyone. I just wanted to show you some of the means people employ to fool the gullible and to pass off as persons endowed with special powers. I am, of course, not saying that genuine miracles do not occur. *Yoga-siddhis* do manifest but saints do not care for them.”



[The following parable was narrated by His Holiness in a benedictory discourse.]

“Once a proselytizer told a man that he had changed the latter’s religion and caste. A few days later, the ‘converted’ person invited the proselytizer to dinner. The convert served pork to his guest. The guest asked, ‘What is this?’ The host replied, ‘It is pork, sir.’ ‘What! Pork!’ exclaimed the guest. ‘Take it away from my plate. I do not eat such things.’ The host was not to be put off. ‘You told me that you had converted me. Why should you not accept what I give you?’ he objected. ‘Pork is impure’, replied the proselytizer.

‘Just as you changed my religion and caste by sprinkling water on me, I have also changed pork into mutton by sprinkling water on it. So, from your standpoint, it should be mutton, and not pork. It is surprising that you are not prepared to eat it’, argued the host. The proselytizer had no reply.

“The *Śāstras* do not accept that a Hindu can be genuinely converted to any religion by some process, such as sprinkling of water. If a person ceases to follow *Sanātana-dharma*, he becomes a *bhraṣṭa*, a fallen one. For various sins, expiations are prescribed. One can expiate for having discarded one’s scripturally-prescribed duties and carry on as if the ‘conversion’ had never taken place.”



[In the following lucid explanation given by His Holiness, He throws light on the significance of idol worship, and sets at rest the objections of many who consider idol worship meaningless.]

A person purchased a mud idol of Vināyaka and began worshipping it on *Vināyaka-caturthi*. At the end of three days of *pūjā*, he carried the idol and immersed it in a river. This was seen by a friend of his who had hardly any knowledge of idol worship and was puzzled by what he saw.

Friend: You were worshipping the idol with great faith. Yet, now, you have thrown it into the river. Why?

Worshipper: Originally, the idol had no sanctity and was just a beautifully-shaped piece of mud. Then, at the commencement of worship on *Vināyaka-caturthi* day, I duly invoked Lord Gaṇeśa into it. Thereafter, it became sacred. Treating it as the Lord Himself, I performed *pūjā* to it. At the end of the stipulated period of worship, I requested the Lord to withdraw His special presence in it. The idol lost its sanctity and became just a piece of mud. It was that mud piece which I immersed into the river.

Friend: How is it possible for a mere piece of mud to become holy and to then revert to its original state? Further, how can a devotee have the capacity to effect such transformations?

Worshipper: Consider an example. There is an ordinary man with whom we are all familiar. We are able to meet him whenever we wish. If he desires to see a high-ranking government official, he has to struggle to get an appointment. At the suggestion of people like us, he contests an election and, because of our votes, wins. He then gets appointed as a minister. Thereafter, if we want to see him, we have to fix up an appointment. The very officials whom he had difficulty in meeting, now come to him and carry out his orders. He is provided with security and good accommodation. After his tenure as minister, he contests an election again. This time, the people do not vote for him as before and hence he loses. Thereafter, as before, he becomes

a common man. The special privileges and the authority of a minister are not his any longer.

People like us, by our votes, cause this ordinary man to become a minister and then we revert him to his earlier state. Likewise, in response to the devotee's *āvāhana*, invocation, the Lord specially graces an idol and the idol then becomes holy. Having accepted the devotee's worship, the Lord withdraws His special presence in response to the devotee's request; the idol loses its sanctity.

An idol in a temple may have originally been a part of a rock on a hill; people might have walked over that rock and may have even urinated on it. A sculptor fashions what is an ordinary rock into a beautiful idol by chiselling it. Even then, it does not become holy. It, however, becomes sanctified when it is duly consecrated in a temple. Thereafter, people worship it. The very sculptor, who earlier delivered hammer blows to it, prostrates before it and does not so much as touch it.

Friend: Why did you make reverential offerings to the idol during your worship? After all, it did not even move a millimetre to accept anything.

Worshipper: When a venerable guest comes to our house, it is in our holy tradition to receive him with honour. He is offered a seat and his feet are washed. He is fed.

Devotees see in the idol not just mud or stone but the living presence of God. They hold that God does accept what is offered to Him, though the idol itself does not stretch out its hand to take what is given. That is why, in the course of my worship, I offered God a seat, just as I would, to a holy one who comes to my house. Then, I offered *pādya*, water, to wash His feet. Subsequently, I fed Him; this was my offering of *naivedya*.

Suppose a guest proves unworthy of the respect that is shown to him by misbehaving with a female in the host's house or by pilfering costly items. It is likely that the host will hand him over to the police. In the case of God, there is no possibility of His ever proving unworthy of the devotee's worship. Hence, devotees never discard the idol they worship in the middle of the *pūjā*.

Friend: On *Vināyaka-caturthi* day, Gaṇeśa is worshipped in many places at the same time. Which idol does He choose to specially abide in? What influences His choice?

Worshipper: All idols wherein God is properly invoked become sanctified. Wherever there is a drop in pressure, air rushes there. Likewise, God, who is everywhere, specially occupies all the idols where He is worshipped, regardless of the number and the location of such idols.

Friend: In some places, the food that is offered is very small in quantity and in others, it is very large. Is not the former insufficient for a deity and the latter excessive?

Worshipper: No. In the *Vedas*, it is said that the offering gets modified in accordance with the wishes of the *devatā* to whom it is offered. What is important is that if a devotee were to resolve to offer a certain number of *modakas*, say 1000, in a *Gaṇapati-homa*, that is the number he must offer. He should not think, “This is too much for Gaṇeśa to eat”, and offer less. Actually, the Lord needs nothing but accepts and becomes satiated with whatever is offered by a worshipper with devotion.

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[What follows is a selection from different dialogues had by devotees with His Holiness in which He answered questions about religious practices and their relevance in the modern world.]

D: *Yāgas* are being performed at several places. Expenditure is incurred for them. Some people raise the objection that the money could have been utilised to uplift the downtrodden instead of wasting it on *yāgas*. Is the objection valid?

HH: The expenditure on *yāgas* is but an insignificant fraction of what we spend on material pleasures. How can we object even to this? Further, gratified by the holy offerings, the Lord showers on us His returns that are many times greater than our meagre offerings. For instance, pleased by the *yāga*, *Īśvara* brings about sufficient and timely rains. It cannot therefore be said that expenditure on *yāgas* is a waste.

We sow seeds and reap the crop. As against this, is it sensible to say that sowing seeds is a waste and that we could have eaten the seeds instead? Like seeds sown, *yāgas* yield precious fruits. The *Śāstras* do not expect a poor person to perform a *yāga* involving much expenditure. That the scriptures command us to adhere to *dharma* to the maximum extent possible by us is a pointer to this. The expenses in *yāgas* are therefore only for our betterment. It is improper to look upon these expenses as wastage.

D: Will it not be convenient to have a single *dharma*, common for all? Is it necessary to have it as, “This is *dharma* for one; that is *dharma* for another?”

HH: Suppose shirts of the same size are distributed to a motley group of people. Then each one is required to wear the shirt received. Is it feasible for everyone to do so? No. Different physical sizes must be considered. Likewise, different *dharmas* have been prescribed for people of varied competence. However, *sāmānya-dharmas* are common to all though there are differences in the *viśeṣa-dharmas* (special *dharmas*). [*Sāmānya-dharmas* are explained under *nāma* 105.]



down there. His Holiness gave them a place to stay in Narasimhavana itself and also took care of their spiritual well-being.

During the *cāturmāsya* that year, His Holiness expounded, in chaste Sanskrit, the *Vedānta-paribhāṣā* (an authoritative, technical primer on *Advaita-Vedānta*) to the couple, several scholars and a *saṁnyāsīn*. After the first day's class, the lady approached Him in the evening and said, "I am blessed to attend Your Holiness's class. However, unlike all the others, I am not knowledgeable in Sanskrit and, hence, am unable to understand Your Holiness's exposition." Blessing her, He compassionately responded, "You will be able to comprehend the text."

The lady found, much to her own amazement, that from the next day onwards, she was able to follow His exposition and, that too, without any difficulty. Even the portion of the text that had been covered in the first class became clear to her. Later, His Holiness started expounding the *Vedānta-pañcadaśī* to the couple. Though He did so in Sanskrit, she was able to clearly follow His teaching. After covering a portion of this text, He told them that they could read the book by themselves and that it would be clear to them. That is what came to pass.

Decades later, the lady even demonstrated that she had understood the texts concerned by explaining correctly, in Tamil, the import of some textual portions that were read out to her.



His Holiness's spiritual advices were not only unfailingly lucid and effective but also specific to the individuals who sought His guidance.

A *sādhaka*, practitioner of spiritual disciplines, once came to His Holiness and said, "I experience acute breathlessness during meditation. As I begin concentrating, my breathing rate gradually decreases and soon respiration stops. Good focus of the mind accrues but in a matter of moments, I feel suffocated. What am I to do?"

His Holiness replied, "You are aware that control of breath and regulation of the mind are related. Hence, you make an involuntary effort to still your breath to improve your meditation. Your *dhyāna* is, however, not deep enough to warrant almost no breathing. To rid yourself of the problem of gasping for air, forcefully take a deep breath. Above all, ensure that you make no voluntary effort to alter the breathing pattern. Just pay attention to fixing the mind on the object of mediation. That is quite sufficient for you and you do not have to resort to any independent steps to lower your respiratory rate." The person implemented His advice and found that his problem disappeared and his meditation improved.

Another *sādhaka* asked His Holiness, “As I meditate, the Lord’s form becomes increasingly clear. Saliva secretion appears to wax and I am forced to swallow. Since this occurs every few minutes, it is quite a hindrance. What should I do?” His Holiness said, “In your case, folding the tongue such that its tip is turned towards the gullet and rests lightly on the upper palate will be helpful. Secondly, do not consciously or semiconsciously anticipate the necessity to swallow.” On the first day, the *sādhaka* found the folding of the tongue somewhat inconvenient but got used to it from the next day. The need to repeatedly swallow started decreasing and, in less than a week, ceased.



A young man approached His Holiness and reported, “I find my head feeling very heavy within a few minutes of my commencing *dhyāna*. The uneasiness gives way to pain and I end up with an acute headache.” His Holiness’s reply surprised the questioner. He said, “The problem will automatically vanish in one week. Till then ensure that you do not even accidentally direct your gaze to the tip of your nose or to the middle of your eyebrows. Further, do not conjecture the form of your *Iṣṭa-devatā* (chosen deity) in the heart. Visualise it in front of you. You can resume your normal procedure after one week.” The specified period passed and the difficulty ceased to be.



A couple once went to His Holiness and complained about one of their sons. They told Him, “This son of ours is unruly and disobedient. We are very worried about him.”

His Holiness told the boy to come forward, and holding his hand, queried, “Now, will you behave well? Will you listen to the words of your parents?” From that very day the boy’s disruptive behaviour disappeared. He became obedient and in due course His *upanayana* too was performed.



#### 44. नियमाचरणोत्सुकः                      *Niyamācaraṇotsukah*

One who was an enthusiastic adherent of the *niyamas*

The second limb of the eight-limbed *Yoga* is *niyama* or observances. (*Yama* or restraints constitute the first limb, and are covered under *nāma* 105.) Maharṣi Patañjali’s *Yoga-sūtras* list *śauca* (purity), *santoṣa* (contentment), *tapas* (austerity), *svādhyāya* (study) and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* (dedication to God) as the five *niyamas*.<sup>119</sup> *Śrī Sadāśivendra Sarasvatī* explains *śauca* as external and internal purity, *santoṣa* as contentment with whatever is obtained, *tapas* as emaciation of the body through performance of prescribed austerities such as fasting, *svādhyāya* as the recitation of *mantras* such as the *Gāyatrī*, and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* as the dedication of all actions, both prescribed and prohibited, to *Īśvara*, without consideration of results.<sup>120</sup>

His Holiness is described as *utsuka*, enthusiastic, about *ācaraṇa*, adherence, to these *niyamas*. Indeed, He took to them as naturally as fish to water, and they were in fact an integral part of His life even from childhood.



Right from childhood, His Holiness maintained cleanliness and would keep all His things tidy. After *saṁnyāsa* He used to bathe thrice a day and observed external purity impeccably. As for internal purity, the *Yoga-śāstra* says that it is to be engendered by cultivating friendliness towards happy ones, compassion towards those who suffer, joy at the sight of virtuous ones and indifference towards the vile. These qualities were His by very nature.



One day, Sri Srinivasa Sastry and His friends were served a dish and they began to partake of it. It was only then that they realized that it was very pungent. To assuage the strong burning sensation in their mouths, His friends screamed for water and jaggery. He, however, remained undisturbed. He suggested to them to be calm. Misunderstanding His well-intentioned suggestion, they reacted cuttingly to it. “You speak thus,” they challenged. “Can you eat a handful of chillies without a murmur of protest?” “Yes,” was His nonchalant reply. A handful of highly pungent chillies was placed before Him. One by one, the chillies disappeared into His mouth. The boys looked on, more surprised than disappointed. All the chillies were consumed by Him, without even a slight change of expression in His face. He then said, “One need not consume spices like this. As you demanded that I eat the chillies, I did so. My aim was only to convince you that it is possible to be contented with and thankful for whatever food one gets.”



His Holiness used to partake of only a meagre quantity of food and would be satisfied with whatever food He got. The little He partook was confined to the single *bhikṣā* (meal) in the afternoon ordained for *saṁnyāsins*. In fact, soon after *saṁnyāsa*, His Holiness started the practice of mixing up all the food served to Him and then eating the mixture; He was doing so to avoid giving any room for being influenced by taste. The senior *Jagadguru* noticed this one day and told Him that what He was doing was unnecessary and that He should eat His food in the normal fashion. His Holiness obeyed.

His Holiness fasted every *ekādāśī* and on other occasions such as *Śivarātri*.



Sri Srinivasa Sastry felt a great fondness for the *Gāyatrī-mantra* and started chanting it mentally whenever He could, right from the day of His *upanayana*. In about a month’s time, He was able to do so even while engaged in His regular activities. He was happy to soon find that He mentally repeated the *Gāyatrī* even during dreams. He did not disclose any of this to

others. [It was only in 1982, fifty-two years later, that His Holiness compassionately blessed a disciple with these particulars in response to his asking Him about His initial weeks in Sringeri as a *brahmacārin*.]

He once said, “At the time of giving me *saṁnyāsa*, my *Guru* initiated me into the *Praṇava (Om)* and the *mahāvākyas*. During my three *āhnikas* every day, I used to engage regularly in chanting them for protracted periods of time. That gave me great satisfaction.”

Apart from the *mantras* necessary for *saṁnyāsins*, the pontiffs of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham are also initiated into special *mantras* such as the *Narasimha-mantrarāja*, *Śiva-pañcākṣarī*, *Bālā-tripurasundarī* and *Śrīvidyā*. Since His *iṣṭa-devatā* was Narasimha, the chanting of the *Mantrarāja* accompanied by the contemplation of Narasimha’s form, particularly appealed to Him. He also found special delight in chanting the *Bālā-mantra*.

His Holiness read the *Brahmānucintana* of Bhagavatpāda every day. He also read Bhagavatpāda’s *Śataślokī* often. He committed to memory and chanted the *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa* of Śrī Sadāśivendra Sarasvatī regularly on every *pradoṣa* (thirteenth day of the lunar fortnight, considered sacred to Śiva).



After recalling to a disciple the momentous initiation He had into the *Narasimha-mantrarāja* (described under *nāma* 102), His Holiness said, “Throughout that day, offering everything to Narasimha was extremely easy. For instance, when I had my afternoon bath, I automatically felt that I was performing *abhiṣeka* to Narasimha who abided within me. During my *bhikṣā* (meal), I promptly visualised Him as accepting from within and eating whatever I put into my mouth. When I read a book after *bhikṣā*, He appeared to be listening from inside my heart as if I were reading to Him. As I walked, it spontaneously seemed that I was taking Him, who was within me, for a stroll.

“The next day onwards, however, I needed to consciously practise dedicating all my activities and their fruits to Him. I also started spending some time every day just for offering Him mental worship. The experiences of the day of initiation greatly facilitated both these and served as models. In a few months, *karma-yoga* became natural.”



#### 45. न्यायमार्गानुसारी

#### *Nyāya-mārgānusārī*

One who followed the path of justice and law

*Nyāya-mārga*, the path of justice and law of the land, serves to regulate the actions of its citizens as well as the functions and powers of institutions; it

stipulates both their duties and rights, and penalties for violations. All are expected to act in accordance with the law to ensure that law and order, justice, peace, harmony and prosperity reign.

His Holiness, an *anusārin*, One who acted in accordance with, the *nyāya-mārga*, scrupulously acted in accordance with the law, never ever faltered from the path of justice and inspired others in the same direction.



A person had donated a stretch of land to the *Maṭha*. As years went by, an adjacent portion too came into the possession of the *Maṭha*. The heir of the donor wanted to retake that ungiven land. The then administrator of the *Maṭha* declined the claim and the matter went to court. Legal opinion was in favour of the *Maṭha* winning the case by virtue of adverse possession.

At this juncture, the claimant wrote directly to His Holiness seeking His intervention. His Holiness examined the facts and remarked, “Withdraw the case. Give back what was not donated to the *Maṭha*.”

The fact that the *Maṭha* had already spent thousands on the case and was likely to get a favourable verdict did not deter Him from taking this decision. In the meantime, the person concerned wrote a letter expressing his willingness to pay a sum of Rs. 12,000 to effect an out-of-court settlement. It was also learnt that the *Maṭha*'s lawyer was negotiating the offer. His Holiness instructed that not a single paisa should be collected and that the disputed land should be returned forthwith. His instruction was complied with.



His Holiness was consistently apolitical. He held and expressed the view that whoever was genuinely committed to the welfare of the nation deserved the support of the people. In the course of a discourse in Kannada in Bengaluru, He stated, “People ask me to which *pakṣa* (party) I belong. I am *niṣpakṣa* (neutral). Whoever works for the welfare of the people at large deserves our support. Violent agitations and repeated moves to disrupt the proper functioning of a duly elected Government must be eschewed.”



At a time when communal harmony was challenged over reports of conversions in southern Tamil Nadu, His Holiness issued the following message.

1. No one must act in such a way as to harm another.
2. The *Śāstras* do not recognise conversion of a Hindu to another religion. As such, those who have ‘changed’ their religion, if they are remorseful, may be treated as if no change has occurred.

3. None should impose restrictions on the use of wells, places of prayer, etc., that are meant for the use of common people. People imposing restrictions as to who should use these may be penalised.

The *Śāstra* says: “*Dharma* protects one who protects it,”<sup>121</sup> and “There is higher good in performing one’s own *dharma*.”<sup>122</sup> These precepts should be borne in mind and acted upon accordingly.

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On another occasion, when His message to the nation was sought during an outbreak of communal disharmony, He said, “All Indians must owe allegiance to the Constitution of India, which we have given ourselves. We have set procedures to legislate through our elected representatives. We have the judiciary to adjudicate as per the law of the land. Attempts at settling disputes between communities, sects or regions by taking recourse to unlawful means are totally unacceptable.”

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With regard to the diversity in religious and social practices, He said, “Whatever practices one may wish to have in private is left to the individual, so long as they do not infringe on the others. One must abstain from fermenting quarrels with and creating trouble for other individuals or communities. Verily, everybody has a right to happiness. The prayer our ancients have taught us is: ‘May all beings be happy.’<sup>123</sup>

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#### 46. न्यायादिनयकोविदः *Nyāyādi-naya-kovidah*

One who was proficient in the traditional schools of theology starting with *Nyāya* (logic)

The six traditional schools of theology are *Nyāya* of Sage Gautama, *Vaiśeṣika* of Sage Kaṇāda, *Sāṅkhya* of Sage Kapila, *Yoga* of Sage Patañjali, *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā* (*Mīmāṃsā*) of Sage Jaiminī and *Uttara-mīmāṃsā* (*Vedānta*) of Sage Veda-vyāsa. His Holiness once clarified: “He who follows the Vedic religion is a *vaidika*. He may follow the *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Mīmāṃsā* or *Vedānta* school of thought. A person having the *Veda* as *pramāṇa* and intending to follow what is said in it is a *vaidika*.”

His Holiness was *kovida*, One proficient in, these six schools of philosophy. In fact, He was recognized world over as the authority on these six systems in general, and in *Nyāya* and *Vedānta* in particular. He had the uncanny ability to present complex concepts embedded in not just any one of these schools of philosophy but also across the entire spectrum of them, in a simple yet undiluted manner. At the same time, He used to regale scholars with His

incisive arguments concerning the various philosophies and His ruling was recognized as final by scholars across the country.

His Holiness personally taught the texts of *Nyāya (Tarka)* several times and produced, in batches, scholars fully versed in *Tarka* and themselves competent to teach it in its entirety to others. While *Tarka* serves the end of scholars, His Holiness, being interested in the spiritual uplift of people, laid particular emphasis on expounding *Vedānta*, be it for the general public through His *anugraha-bhāṣaṇas* or through formal classes.



His Holiness's studies in *Tarka* were as yet incomplete when a *Tarka* scholar from North India came to Sringeri to seek some clarifications from the senior *Jagadguru*. The senior *Jagadguru* directed the *paṇḍita* to His Holiness but the scholar was hesitant and sought help from the senior *Jagadguru* Himself. "Let him give the necessary explanation. If your doubts are still not dispelled, I shall clarify," said the senior *Jagadguru*. Unconvinced, but not in a position to say anything, the scholar settled down to hear what he presupposed would be the inept mumblings of a novice. He was taken aback when he heard a torrential flow of intricate points from His Holiness; all his doubts were resolved. He realised his folly in underestimating His Holiness's expertise and, after due apology, returned home satiated and wiser in more ways than one.



During His Holiness's visit to Kochi and surrounding areas of Kerala in 1964, Dr. C.A. Cuttat, the Swiss Ambassador to India, had His *darśana*. Well-versed in the *Advaita* philosophy, the Ambassador sought His Holiness's clarifications on spiritual practices, topics such as the difference between *susupti* and *samādhi* states, the distinction between various stages of *samādhi* and the role of devotion in *Advaita* philosophy. Much to the Ambassador's delight, His Holiness responded to each one of his questions, providing all the clarifications the Ambassador sought. His Holiness also appropriately guided him on his spiritual practice.



[In a benedictory discourse, His Holiness explained in very lucid terms, the basic philosophical aspects of the traditional schools of philosophy and established the superiority of the *Vedānta* school that propounds the *Advaita* philosophy. What follows are excerpted from the discourse.]

*Tārkikas* (followers of the *Nyāya* school) say that the *Ātman* undergoes joys and sorrows. However, what has a beginning must also come to an end. Hence, if joy and sorrow come to a person, they must also necessarily leave him at some time. Now if both happiness and sorrow leave, then what happens to the *Ātman*? The *Ātman* will become like an inert stone. Does this

mean that we, who are in a state superior to a stone now, have to strive to become a stone? If we ask this question to the *Tārīkikas*, they will not be able to answer it.

The *Sāṅkhyas* say that the *Ātman* is of the nature of knowledge and bliss. However, they say that there are multiple *Ātmans* that get liberated. If there are several *muktas* (liberated ones), then for such persons there may arise the feeling, “Am I the greater *mukta* or is this other person a greater *mukta*?” While the notion of multiplicity is still there, there is no question of liberation. Hence, there is a problem with this philosophy too.

The proponents of the *Yoga* school of philosophy teach that there are two entities, *jīva* and *Īśvara*. They say that *prapañca*, creation, which is different from the *Ātman*, is real. Since liberation cannot be had while the notion of duality persists, this philosophy is also not acceptable.

Even if we do not know who *Īśvara* is, we know that there is someone who has created this universe. The *Sāṅkhya* says this creator of the universe is *prakṛti* (Nature), while the *Vaiśeṣika* says it is *paramāṇu* (subatomic particle). The *Advaitins*, however say “Let it be *prakṛti* or *paramāṇu*. Without consciousness, no entity can create anything, and hence the enabler for the entire creation is a *caitanya*, that is a consciousness.” That we should take refuge in this *caitanya* is what we *Advaitins* say.

The *Upaniṣad* says, “There is fear indeed from a second entity (other than oneself).”<sup>124</sup> Then how is it that we are not afraid of the world that is different from us? If we ourselves were to create a ghost and have it in front of us, we would not be scared of it. It is only if a new ghost comes our way, that we may be afraid. According to *Advaita*, even though this whole world is like a big ghost, it is like our very *svarūpa* or nature. How can we be afraid of ourselves? This delight of non-dual *Brahman* is not there in any other philosophy.



#### 47. निगमागमतत्त्वज्ञः *Nigamāgama-tattva-jñāḥ*

One who knew the essence of the methods of *Vedic* worship

‘*Nigama*’ means the *Veda*. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* states, “Having obtained the grace of and understood well the import of the *āgama* from a preceptor, a person should worship the Lord in an image of his choice.”<sup>125</sup> Here, the word *āgama* means ‘method of worship’. The various *yajñas*, *pūjas* and other rites performed accompanied by chanting of *Veda-mantras* constitute *nigamāgama*, the methods of *Vedic* worship. His Holiness was a past master of these. His meticulous performance of *pūjā* accompanied by *Vedic* chanting every day, the *pūjās* He performed on special occasions like

Śivarātri and Navarātri, and the various *vratas* (vows) He undertook during *cāturmāsya* bore testimony to this.

Numerous are the specific forms of worship and meditation prescribed by the *Vedas* for those who seek worldly benefits as well as for those who desire liberation. The essence of even the former, however, is to eventually lead the individual to liberation through the realisation of *Brahman*. As the *Upaniṣad* says, “I will tell you succinctly about that attainment, which is proclaimed by all the *Vedas* and spoken of by all austerities, and desiring which people practice celibacy. It is this – *Om*.”<sup>126</sup> His Holiness was a *tattva-jñā* or a knower of this essence too of the *nigamāgama*.



[In His benedictory discourses, His Holiness would often stress on the importance of performing *karma* in accordance with the *Vedic* injunctions. Here are a few extracts from some of His discourses.]

People ask, “Why are *veda-vidhis* (*Vedic* injunctions) so insistent on the time of doing *karmas*? The *Vedas* are too strict and do not allow for any relaxation in the rules – in today’s world how can we follow all the rules to the fullest? Isn’t it enough to do *sandhyā-vandana* whenever possible? Why insist that it be done at a specific time? Similarly, it is said that during an eclipse one must have a bath and perform *anuṣṭhāna* such as *japa* and have another bath after the eclipse ends. At winter time, how inconvenient it is to have a bath in the middle of the night! In summer we can even have multiple baths!”

*Veda-vidhis* have to be followed strictly. It is said, “What is done at the wrong time is as good as not done.”<sup>127</sup> When people are able to take out time for other activities like watching plays in the evenings, why are they not able to spare a few minutes to do *sandhyā-vandana*? The reason is only that they do not give it the importance they give to other activities. Similar is the case of *naimittika-karma* such as those that are to be performed during an eclipse; these are as important as *nitya-karma* such as *sandhyā-vandana*. The *Veda* teaches us like a mother, and hence it is in our own supreme interests to follow *Vedic* injunctions sincerely to the best of our ability.

Some may feel, “So long as *sandhyā-vandana* is performed, what does it matter whether the scripturally-prescribed procedures relating to cleanliness and the like are observed or not?” The following example reveals the need to do things the way they are required to be done. A person has to use the prescribed application form to apply for a Government job; only then is one’s job-application considered. We may choose to reject the prescribed form and prepare one using paper of better quality. However, the authorities will not accept it; they will insist that we use the standard printed form. If we keep stressing the superiority of our form, the authorities may tell us, “Keep your fine paper with you; we will keep our ordinary forms with us!”

Just as applications for Government jobs have to be made in the specified mode, if a procedure is prescribed by the *Vedas* and we transgress it and do something else, *Īśvara* will not accept our religious observance. We may claim, “Our hymns are superior to those of the *Vedas*.” However, while people may find our poetic utterances delightful, such words will not yield *punya*, unlike the *Vedic* utterances.

Just because the import of a rite is not obvious to someone, it does not follow that the rite is without significance. The following example illustrates this. When one goes to a hospital, one has to scrub one’s hands before touching the surgical instruments there. Washing one’s hands with ordinary water is insufficient; one has to use a disinfectant. One may ask, “Why should I do so?” The answer is, “To avoid causing infection.” Suppose one were to argue, “I fail to see how I would infect the surgical patient. So, I refuse to disinfect my hands.” The response of the surgeon would be, “Get out.” There is a fixed procedure to be followed. Therefore, merely because one does not readily recognise the significance of *Vedic* rituals, it does not follow that they do not have any.

The Lord has said, “Following this *dharma* even to a small extent saves one from great sin.”<sup>128</sup> We should never be shortsighted in our views. Just because accepting bribes has become a common affair, are we justified in enacting legislation to permit it? That would only help its intensification. We should, likewise, not seek to modify the *Śāstras*. Consideration of changes in our ways of living is inherent in our *Śāstras*. “Follow to the utmost extent possible” is what they command. We, in our present condition, should abide by them to the maximum extent possible.

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His Holiness once said about the efficacy of *Veda-mantras*, “The chanting of *Veda-mantras* (by those who are qualified to do so) itself brings great *punya* to the ones who chant. But over and above all else, *veda-mantras* have great *śakti*. Some of them have the power to cure ailments too.

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The following episodes, narrated by Smt. Kalpagam Sundaresan who was a resident of Nanganallur, Chennai, are examples of instances in which His Holiness prescribed *Vedic* rituals to cure ailments.

“Once, my eldest son accidentally cut his thumb rather severely. The doctors were considering amputating the finger, because my son was a diabetic.

“Anxious that my son would lose his thumb, I wrote a letter to His Holiness submitting the matter and asking Him what is to be done. His Holiness advised me to perform Rudrābhiṣeka to Lord Śiva in a temple, daily, for a period of forty days. There was no Śiva temple nearby. Moreover, I found it

difficult to follow His instructions due to other unavoidable personal reasons. So, I wrote another letter to Him seeking His advice if it would be possible for the *Maṭha* to arrange for the *abhiṣeka* in a Śiva temple at Sringeri itself if I sent the required sum of money towards the cost of this forty-day *abhiṣeka*. His Holiness promptly arranged for the *abhiṣeka* to be performed for Śrī Malahānikareśvara at Sringeri itself. In addition to this, as per His instruction, the *prasāda* was also posted to me everyday without fail. My son's thumb came back to normalcy without the need for amputation.

“On another occasion, my youngest son was suffering in various ways, and we came to know that it was because somebody had performed black magic on him. I immediately took him with me to Sringeri. Submitting the matter to His Holiness, I prayed for His grace.

“His Holiness told us to stay in Sringeri for a few days. He then summoned an *Atharva-veda paṇḍita* of the *Maṭha* and instructed him to perform certain rituals for my son. He also directed him to perform *japa* of a specific *Atharva-veda mantra* for the purpose.

“The *paṇḍita* did as instructed by His Holiness. Once all the prescribed rituals were completed at Sringeri, my son and I returned to Chennai with the permission of His Holiness. All the problems that my son had been facing, simply vanished without a trace.”



#### 48. नित्यसन्तुष्टमानसः *Nitya-santuṣṭa-mānasah*

One whose heart was ever absolutely contented

*Santuṣṭi* means contentment or satiation. It may seem as if contentment is born of desiring, attaining and enjoying more and more objects. However, the *Śāstra* explains the true position as follows: “Never does desire subside through the enjoyment of desired objects. Instead, it only grows more and more as does fire because of clarified butter.”<sup>129</sup>

Now this may seem to be contradictory to people's experience in general. After all, when one attains the objects of one's desire, one does experience joy and satisfaction. *Bhagavatpāda* explains the mechanism in detail as follows: “The *Ātman* is changeless and is of the nature of Supreme Bliss. The non-Self, *Māyā*, is just the opposite – ever agitated and of the nature of sorrow. The mind, the limiting adjunct of the *Ātman*, takes on the steadiness and bliss of the *Ātman* or the agitation and misery of *Māyā*, depending on the circumstances. When the mind is seized by desire for an object, it gets agitated and the agitation gives rise to misery. When the desired object is attained, the mind becomes calm and steady and the bliss of the *Ātman* is experienced. The happiness that comes from sense objects in this manner,

continues only as long as the mind remains calm and steady, that is until the mind is again agitated by the next desire.”<sup>130</sup> Clearly, the mind can be maintained in a state of steady contentment only if divorced from sense objects and turned inwards.

This *nāma* says that His Holiness was one whose *manas*, mind, was *nitya*, always, not just *tuṣṭa*, contented, but *sam-tuṣṭa*, completely contented. Complete contentment is marked by satiation with whatever is got. The completeness of His Holiness’s contentment stemmed from the fact that it was undecaying and steady, unconditioned as it was by desire.

Śrī Sadāśīva Brahmendra contrasts the bliss of true contentment with the joys had from worldly objects: “On account of the excellence of *sattva*, unsurpassed internal joy arises for the contented *yogin*. Pleasure stemming from sense objects becomes unfavorable like poison. It is said, ‘The unequaled grandeur of enjoyment seems like poison for those tranquil ones who have attained the satiation of drinking the nectar of contentment.’”<sup>131</sup> His Holiness was a *yogīśvara* nonpareil, ever of absolutely contented mind.



Even as a child, Sri Srinivasa Sastry was contented with whatever He got and never craved for anything. While He was a *brahmacārin* studying at Sringeri, Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin used to ask the *brahmacārins*, in general, questions such as, “Was the food satisfactory today? Was it tasty? Was it excessively salty or pungent?” The boys used to enthusiastically express their views on the food eaten by them. Sri Srinivasa Sastry, however, remained silent on these occasions.

One day, the *Jagadguru* asked Him, “While all the others readily comment on their food when I ask these questions, why is it that you remain silent?” He replied, “All that we get is Your Holiness’s *prasāda*. As such, it is always tasty.”



Justice Somnath Iyer (who retired as the Chief Justice of Karnataka and had been the Governor of the State for some time) once asked His Holiness, “Your Holiness can have all the comforts in the *Maṭha*. Instead of experiencing any comforts, Your Holiness strains Yourself so much every day, from early in the morning to late at night. What does Your Holiness get out of this?”

His Holiness smiled at him and said, “Suppose you are offered a choice between plain jaggery and *badam halwa* (a sweetmeat made of almonds), which one would you choose?” Somnath Iyer said, “Where is the doubt here? I would choose *badam halwa*.” “Likewise,” responded His Holiness,

“those who have tasted the bliss of the Supreme will not seek mundane comforts.”



The following was reported by Sri S. G. Narasimhaiyya, who was His Holiness’s Private Secretary for a period of time.

“I asked His Holiness, ‘In the photos published in the *Maṭha*’s almanac and other publications, Your Holiness is just dressed as a *saṁnyāsin*. Should we not publish, instead, photographs of Your Holiness in all splendour, fully decked with ornaments symbolic of the position of the pontiff of this great *pīṭha*?’

“He said, ‘This is my preferred way of being. Intrinsically, I do not want any of the pomp and grandeur that the *pīṭha* is associated with, though they may be required on specific occasions as per the age-old tradition of the *pīṭha*. By my *Guru*’s grace, I am firmly convinced about this. If I were to have complete liberty, I would go away this very instant and, in solitude, immerse and lose myself in the contemplation of the Supreme.’”



#### 49. निष्कलङ्कसुचारित्रः *Niṣkalaṅka-sucāritraḥ*

One of spotless conduct and blemishless reputation

The word *cāritra* means conduct as well as reputation. The reputation of an individual is the opinion that others hold about him, which builds over time and is based on his conduct. ‘*Su-cāritraḥ*’ means ‘one of good conduct’ as also ‘one of good reputation’. A person whose conduct is good most of the time but not necessarily always, is generally also considered a *sucāritra*. The good reputation of a person built over time due to his good conduct is seen to acquire a blemish because of just one bad act of his. The explicit addition of the term ‘*niṣkalaṅka*’ in this *nāma* conveys that His Holiness’s conduct was absolutely spotless, and His reputation, ever blemishless.

It would not be surprising if those devoted to His Holiness or associated with Him had a high opinion about His conduct and reputation. What is significant, however, is that the same opinion was held even by those who did not see eye-to-eye with Him.



His Holiness’s sense of justice was well-known. A particular *saṁnyāsin* was asked to take charge of the branch *Maṭha* at Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh. He regularly rendered accounts to Sringeri. Before he passed away, he requested a person, Nageshwara Rao, to attend to the branch *Maṭha*. With the passage of time, Nageshwara Rao claimed that the property belonged to him. The matter went to court.

One day, Nageshwara Rao met His Holiness. His Holiness asked him, “Why should we unnecessarily take such matters to a court of law? Will not an out-of-court settlement be better?” “Yes, indeed,” responded Nageshwara Rao. His Holiness then proposed, “Why not we present the facts to a common arbitrator? You may choose any judge or lawyer. We will submit all our papers. You too submit your documents. Let the arbitrator examine the case. If the decision is in our favour, you may relinquish your claim. Otherwise, we will hand over the property to you.”

The proposal was of course fair and in fact, advantageous to Nageshwara Rao since the choice of the arbitrator was to be his. Surprisingly, he replied, “This will not be of any benefit to me. Your Holiness is a *Jagadguru* and is held in high esteem by the Hindus. As such, any Hindu arbitrator will decide in your favour.”

“You may select a Christian or Muslim as the arbitrator. There is no reason why such a person should be biased in my favour,” reasoned His Holiness. Nageshwara Rao was not agreeable to even this. He said, “It will make no difference even if I select a non-Hindu. Your Holiness’s fairness and sense of justice are very well-known. Whomsoever I select will decide only in Your Holiness’s favour.” The case continued. The court decided in the *Matha*’s favour.



(The following episode was narrated by Sri A. Ramaswamy.) When His Holiness was touring in North India for the first time, a highly influential and scholarly monk decided to test His sense-control. So, he arranged for a belle to try to tempt His Holiness. She entered the room where His Holiness was giving *darśana* just as the last of the devotees was leaving and remained till she alone was left. However, when she observed His Holiness, she was so overwhelmed by His patent purity that she became disconcerted. His Holiness compassionately asked her, “Mother, what is it?” At this, the girl simply broke down. She was about to confess and seek His Holiness’s pardon when the monk who had sent her himself entered.

The monk told His Holiness, “I knew that Your Holiness is a scholar par excellence. However, I wanted to ascertain whether Your Holiness is also a master of the organ of taste and are free from fondness for valuables. So, some time back, I sent you tasty dishes and jewels through people. However, Your Holiness turned down the offers. I finally wished to examine Your Holiness’s *brahmacarya* and, hence, sent this beauty to try to tempt Your Holiness. I now realise that Your Holiness is so pure, self-controlled and beyond temptation. I truly acknowledge Your Holiness’s greatness and pay my obeisance.”



50. नीतितत्त्वसुबोधकः *Nīti-tattva-subodhakah*

One who was an effective teacher of the essence of ethics

That His Holiness adhered meticulously to ethics and morality in the form of *dharmā* and the law is brought out in *nāmas* 45 and 74. That He was also a *su-bodhaka*, effective teacher, of the *tattva*, essence, of such *nīti*, ethics, is expressed in this *nāma*.

It is noteworthy that His Holiness often drove home aspects of *dharmā*, morals and ethics by narrating parables, an effective way of reaching out to both children and adults. He would narrate stories from sources such as the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*, apart from texts like *Nīti-cintāmaṇi*. Besides this, He had the ingenuity to come up with charming parables of His own that He narrated with gripping detail and great lucidity.



As a child in Bengaluru, Sri Srinivasa Sastry and His friends used to assemble after play and relate morally relevant stories. He proficiently narrated stories from the *Purāṇas*, *Mahābhārata* and the *Nīti-cintāmaṇi*. When narrating the story of Hariścandra, He stressed the importance of veracity and the advantages of being truthful. The dire consequences of attachment described in the story of Jaḍabharata and the soul-stirring devotion of Prahlāda were driven home by Him in some of His presentations.



[The following is a parable narrated by His Holiness.]

A group of boys wanted to write a story for a competition. After much discussion, they completed it and one of them narrated it in its final form to the others. As he was doing so, three people who were passing that way paused to hear that story. They did not mistake it to be a factual account but liked what they heard. As they moved on, they discussed the story among themselves. A teenager happened to overhear them when they talked about a pot of gold hidden under a banyan tree in a forest situated about 500 kilometres away.

The lad immediately developed a strong desire to somehow possess that gold. Without telling anybody, he proceeded to the forest concerned. There, he saw a man place a fruit in a small-mouthed vessel and then tie the vessel to a tree by means of a long rope. Moved by curiosity, he initiated a conversation with that man.

Teenager: What are you doing?

Man: I am setting a trap for a monkey. I intend to train a simian to perform tricks.

T: How will your contraption serve your purpose?

M: This place is infested with monkeys. One of them will certainly notice this vessel and the fruit in it. So, it will put its hand into the vessel and grab the fruit. The vessel's mouth is too small for the monkey to take out its hand while gripping the fruit. The vessel has been tied to the tree and so the monkey cannot carry it away. The animal will thus be forced to remain here and I shall catch it.

T: Are you joking? The monkey will release the fruit, extricate its hand and escape.

M: No, it will not. It will simply refuse to discard the fruit.

T: I cannot imagine a simian behaving so foolishly because of its desire for fruit.

M: Remain by my side and watch.

Both hid themselves a short distance away. Soon, a monkey came and behaved exactly the way the man had predicted. The lad said, "How stupid and crazy this monkey is!" and went his way.

After some time, he beheld a frog shooting out its tongue and catching a fly with it. Amused, he turned his attention to another frog that was nearby. As it was about to trap a fly, a snake stealthily came up to it and swiftly caught it in its mouth. The frog's tongue shot out and the fly stuck to it. Meanwhile, the snake proceeded to swallow the frog. The lad thought to himself, "What a strange sight! Even at its moment of death, this silly frog was busy catching a fly!"

He walked on and encountered a forester. The latter said, "Do not go much further in this direction. There is a wild tusker there and it may attack you." However, so intense was the lad's desire for the gold he hoped to find that he disregarded the advice. In about half an hour, he was deep within the forest. He was looking around for the banyan tree that he had heard was located somewhere there, when he heard the trumpeting of an elephant.

In a few moments, he saw a rutting tusker charging at him. He immediately took to his heels, with the elephant in hot pursuit. Though he ran as fast as he could, the pachyderm steadily gained on him. To his chagrin, he slipped and began to fall into a pit that he had not noticed. Flailing his arms, he providentially managed to catch a creeper and arrest his fall. The elephant reached the top of the pit and gazed at him.

The lad looked down and saw that the pit was deep. Further, he espied a cobra with upraised hood at the bottom. He realized that he was in very deep trouble, without the option of climbing up or down the creeper. As if his

problems were not adequate, the creeper began to give way; some insects were busy at work on it.

Unexpectedly, a drop of honey from a beehive on the tree overhead, fell on his nose and began to slowly flow down towards his lips. The boy stretched out his tongue and licked it. The honey seemed like ambrosia to him. He then heard the roar of a distant lion. The tusker felt terrified and swiftly left the place. The boy began to climb up the creeper. As he neared the top of the pit, the creeper gave way. But, somehow, he managed to hold on to the pit's edge.

In moments, he felt his hands slipping. However, to his surprise, he found himself being lifted up by the woodman who had advised him not to venture into this region. "When I heard the trumpeting of the elephant, I knew that you were likely to be in danger. I am far more familiar with this forest than people like you are. So, I rushed in the direction you had proceeded, to help you. I see that I have arrived just in time." The lad thanked him profusely. Still possessed by the longing for gold, he explained the reason for his coming there and sought the forester's help to locate the banyan tree in that region. His saviour told him that he was not going to find any gold and tried to persuade him to return before the tusker chose to come back. However, finding the boy adamant, he led him to the banyan tree. They searched there for the gold but did not find any.

Finally, the boy returned to his native place. He described his misadventure in detail to an elder. The elder laughed and informed him that what he had overheard was only a portion of the tale authored by a group of boys for a competition. He then proceeded to tell the lad, "You felt that the monkey and the frog had behaved thoroughly foolishly because of their longing. Your behaviour was far worse. The poor monkey refused to let go of the fruit that was in its hand. You, on the other hand, were led on by intense longing for gold that was actually non-existent. The frog stretched out its tongue at the moment of its death but possibly did so purely by instinct. You, on the other hand, are a human being endowed with discrimination. Yet, when you were about to perish, you savoured the drop of honey that fell on your nose. See the power of longing." The boy realized the devastating force of longing and hung his head in shame.

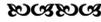


## 51. पारावारातिगम्भीरः *Pārāvārāti-gambhīraḥ*

One who was completely imperturbable like the ocean

Remaining unperturbed even in the face of disruptive influences - fear, grief, anger, elation, etc. - characterizes the trait of being *gambhīra*.<sup>132</sup> The *pārāvāra*, ocean, has this trait in abundance, and is hence used an analogy.

Vasiṣṭha observes about Rāma, “I could not discern even an iota of change in His countenance when He was invited for coronation and when banished to the forest.”<sup>133</sup> Much like Vasiṣṭha’s characterisation of Rāma, His Holiness’s *Guru* told Him the following: “Only tranquillity and happiness can be seen in your face. Even if I, to whom you are deeply devoted, were to cast off my body right now, your facial expression would not change. No matter how much you may be provoked, not a trace of anger would be visible.” Hence, most appropriately, His Holiness is characterized here as being *ati-gambhīra*, extremely unruffled, like the ocean. The ocean’s imperturbability stems from its great depth, which is in fact the literal meaning of the word ‘*gambhīra*’. His Holiness was, like the ocean, immensely *gambhīra*, deep, in terms of knowledge and wisdom.



Sri Chandramouli of Bengaluru had once gone to Sringeri for *darśana* of His Holiness, along with some others. During their stay, they accompanied His Holiness to Narasimhapura, where His Holiness asked them to accompany Him on His usual evening stroll. The place was a little marshy, and since the visitors were unfamiliar with such terrain, His Holiness told them to walk a few yards ahead of Him so that He could keep an eye on them.

All of a sudden, the visitors rushed back towards His Holiness. Terrified, they told Him that a big cobra had just crossed their path. Totally unperturbed, His Holiness consoled them, and telling them that their fear was unnecessary, closed His eyes, folded His hands and chanted, “*Subrahmanyō ’ham* (I am Subrahmaṇya). *Subrahmanyō ’ham. Subrahmanyō ’ham.*” The snake, which had been quietly gliding across the path, immediately stopped, turned towards the group and raised its hood. It then came towards them, and passing between the visitors and His Holiness, circumambulated Him. Then, after raising its hood once again, this time at His feet as if in a final salute, the snake went its way. All the while, His Holiness was just calmly observing the snake.

His Holiness then continued on the stroll after casually commenting to the flabbergasted visitors, “Oh, it is nothing. The snakes in Sringeri are harmless, that is all.”



In the course of His tour of Kerala, His Holiness graced a temple in Pattambi on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1979. About that time, some statements of His Holiness had been misrepresented in a section of the press and a hornet’s nest had been stirred. A strong crowd gathered outside the temple demanding that they see His Holiness and talk to Him. They were armed with sticks and seemed belligerent.

The then Personal Assistant to His Holiness, Sri K. M. Balasubramanian, talked to the accompanying security officials. Unfortunately, they were far outnumbered by the crowd, which certainly would have the upper hand in the event of an outbreak of violence. Worried, the Personal Assistant appraised His Holiness about the situation. For His part, His Holiness was thoroughly unperturbed.

After a while, He emerged from the temple; the vociferous crowd became all the more boisterous. Unexpectedly, taking a tray full of dry fruits He beckoned to an agitator. The man was taken so much by surprise that he mutely stepped forward. His Holiness handed him the tray and said softly but with force, “Distribute the *prasādas* to the people.” The man began to do so. Meanwhile, His Holiness beckoned to a second agitator and gave him a lot of fruits, again to be distributed. The distribution was thoroughly unexpected by the crowd which had, as though mesmerised, stopped shouting by then. His Holiness then said, “Repeat after me” and began to chant, “*Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare.*” Initially, only a few followed Him, but soon it became an impressive chorus. A belligerent crowd was transformed into a *bhajan* party. Minutes later, His Holiness drove off in His car after He had succeeded in assuaging the persons with comforting words.



As mentioned under *nāma* 2, His Holiness once expounded the *Śrī-dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra* of Bhagavatpāda for the sake of Sri P. S. Venkatasubba Rao. In the course of the class, an aged *saṁnyāsīn* posed some questions to His Holiness based on the *Tarka-śāstra*. His Holiness said, “These lessons are meant for Venkatasubba Rao. Hence, I am giving only those details that will benefit him. *Tarka* is not important for him. If you seek to understand the text from the standpoint of *Tarka* then I am willing to explain that one point itself for days on end, giving a different interpretation on each day.”

On another occasion, a devotee asked Him, “If Your Holiness were to spontaneously recall verses just from memory and chant them, approximately how many verses would Your Holiness be able to chant?” His Holiness replied, “At least a lakh.”

Such was His Holiness’s depth of knowledge.



## 52. प्राणायामपरायणः

## *Prāṇāyāma-parāyaṇaḥ*

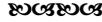
One who was intent on *prāṇāyāma*

*Prāṇāyāma* is the fourth limb of Sage Patañjali’s *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* (eight-limbed *yoga*). (The first three are *yama*, *niyama* and *āsana*, dealt with under

*nāmas* 105, 44 and 76 respectively). *Prāṇāyāma* means regulation of the breath, spoken of as, “When firmness in posture is accomplished, there follows *prāṇāyāma*, which consists of the cessation of the (natural) inward and outward flow of breath.”<sup>134</sup> It is a very important aid to mind control since the activity of the mind and breath are closely linked.

*Prāṇāyāma* can involve *pūraka* (inhalation), *kumbhaka* (retention), *recaka* (exhalation) and three *bandhas* namely *jālandhara*, *uḍḍīyāna* and *mūla*. These *bandhas* are described as follows: “Having contracted the throat, the chin should be held firmly at the chest. This is the *bandha* called *jālandhara*. It destroys old age and death. The abdomen above and below the navel should be drawn against the back. This is the *uḍḍīyāna-bandha*. It is the lion that kills the elephant of death. The *bandha* named *jālandhara* should be practised at the close of inhalation. The *uḍḍīyāna* should be practised towards the end of retention and the start of exhalation, that is before the retention of breath is concluded and exhalation is commenced. Pressing the perineum with the heel, one should contract the anus and draw up *apāna*. This is called *mūla-bandha*.”<sup>135</sup>

Having been taught *prāṇāyāma* and various forms of restraint of *prāṇa* by Lord Śiva Himself in dreams, His Holiness diligently practiced and perfected them.



[As briefly described under *nāma* 10, His Holiness had a series of seven dreams starting on the night of His *saṁnyāsa*, in which He saw Lord Śiva demonstrating the various aspects of *haṭha-yoga* to Him. In the first two of these dreams, the Lord demonstrated *prāṇāyāma* in its various aspects, some details of which are presented below.]

Once the Lord and His Holiness were seated in the *siddhāsana*, the Lord demonstrated how to perform *prāṇāyāma*. Exhaling the air within, He began to smoothly inhale through the left nostril. On the completion of *pūraka* (inhalation), He blocked both His nostrils with His fingers and lowered His chin to His chest to form the *jālandhara-bandha*. At the close of *kumbhaka* (retention), His Holiness saw Him deeply pull in and upward His abdomen to adopt the *uḍḍīyāna-bandha*. His body smoothly rose to about a foot above the ground. Raising His head, He exhaled smoothly through the right nostril. As He did so, His body gradually descended to the ground. He then repeated the process by inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left nostril.

By seeing the position of the Lord’s fingers on His nostrils and by observing His midriff, His Holiness could judge when Śiva was engaged in *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka*. As His Holiness had been spontaneously chanting the *Praṇava* (*Om*) in the dream, He discerned, with the number of *Praṇavas* as

basis, that the Lord's *kumbhaka* lasted four times His *pūraka*, while His *recaka* was twice His *pūraka*. He made this determination during the Lord's second round of *prāṇāyāma*. Having demonstrated the practice of *prāṇāyāma* in the *siddhāsana*, the Lord did it in the *padmāsana*.

After this the Lord cited three passages, the combined import of which is, "When breath is active, so is the mind. When breath is still, the mind is calm."<sup>136</sup> As a result of *prāṇāyāma*, the mind becomes fit for fixed attention.<sup>137</sup> Just as the impurities of ores are burnt by the furnace-blast, the faults of the organs are singed by the restraint of *prāṇa*.<sup>138</sup> As His Holiness heard the Lord's words, the understanding that automatically dawned on Him was, "When the mind is agitated, breathing is not slow and rhythmic. On the other hand, the breathing is gentle and rhythmic when the mind is calm. This common observation suggests that there is a relationship between one's mental state and breathing. Not only does one's mental state influence one's breathing, the converse is also true. Breathing is a gross manifestation of the activity of *prāṇa*. The correlation is fundamentally between the activities of the mind and *prāṇa*. By controlling *prāṇa*, the mind can be controlled. Through the control of breath, the practitioner of *prāṇāyāma* checks the activity of *prāṇa* and thereby that of the mind. *Prāṇāyāma* is a great purifier." The Lord remained silent for the few moments during which all this spontaneously registered in His Holiness's mind.

Thereafter, Śiva demonstrated how *prāṇāyāma* can be done with breathing being suspended after exhalation rather than after inhalation. Finally, He showed His Holiness the various kinds of restraint of *prāṇa* like *sūryabhedana*, *ujjāyī*, *sītākārī*, *śītalī* and *bhastrikā* in such a way that His Holiness could clearly understand and distinguish them.

When the Lord finished His demonstration of *bhastrikā*, His Holiness's dream ended and He awakened. The time was about two o'clock in the night. His mental chanting of the *Prāṇava*, which had begun when the Lord blessed Him in the dream, persisted throughout the dream, inclusive of when He heard the passages voiced by the Lord. On waking up, He noticed that He spontaneously continued to recite in His mind the *Prāṇava*.

Impelled by some force, He stood up, with His legs somewhat apart. He slightly bent forward and gripped His thighs with His hands. He gradually exhaled and pulled His abdomen towards His back and upwards to adopt the *uḍḍīyāna-bandha* in a standing posture. Though He could not understand why He was doing all this in the middle of the night, He felt amazed to see the extent to which a deep cavity had formed in the region of His abdomen. After some moments, He gradually exhaled and straightened up.

Directed further by the force, He sat down in the *siddhāsana* and started to perform *prāṇāyāma*. He inhaled for a shorter duration than had the Lord. This simplified the practice; however, it was not the result of any decision of His. At the end of *pūraka*, He adopted not only the *jālandhara-bandha* but also the *mūla-bandha*, characterised by the contraction of the anus. He had not identified the Lord's performance of the *mūla-bandha* in His dream and was unfamiliar with it.

His Holiness's having practised the *uḍḍiyāna-bandha* in a standing posture facilitated His doing it during *prāṇāyāma*. Though His *pūraka* was shorter than the Lord's, as in the Lord's case, His *kumbhaka* lasted four times the *pūraka* and *recaka* two times the *pūraka*. Having performed two *prāṇāyāmas* in the *siddhāsana*, He did the same in the *padmāsana*.

Throughout, there was no planning on His part and the mental chanting of the *Praṇava* proceeded without any interruption. After doing *prāṇāyāma* in the *padmāsana*, He lay down and fell asleep. He awoke very fresh, well before sunrise. The dream was crystal clear in His mind. After spending some minutes practising the different kinds of restraint of *prāṇa*, such as *śītalī*, His Holiness went for His ablutions. No one knew about His having done *prāṇāyāma* at night or before daybreak.

That night, Lord Śiva continued His teaching. Śiva first gave a demonstration of *kevala-kumbhaka*. His breathing stopped all of a sudden and He remained motionless for some time, with His eyes closed. His Holiness began to experience tremendous peace. His breathing too stopped without any reference to the preceding state of inhalation or exhalation. Gradually, the Lord started to breathe again and opened His eyes. As Śiva did so, His Holiness realised that this *kumbhaka* is superior to and is the fruit of the practice of restraint that considers *pūraka* and *recaka*.



After detailing to a disciple how Lord Śiva taught Him *prāṇāyāma* in the dreams, His Holiness said, "I initially did *prāṇāyāma* and the *bandhas* secretly at about three in the night and then went back to sleep. Subsequently, for some time, I did them privately during my *āhnikā*. It is only after having supposedly learnt them from others that I practised them without being secretive. I believe, I only did as God intended me to."



His Holiness went on to tell the disciple, "I performed *prāṇāyāma* every day with the three *bandhas*. I did 16 cycles with *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka* lasting for 16, 64 and 32 seconds or eight cycles with the timings being 32, 128 and 64 seconds. Over the course of every week, I also briefly accommodated the forms of restraint of *prāṇa* such as *śītalī*. After

*prāṇāyāma*, I spent about 15 minutes on stamina and strength building exercises before going for my morning bath.”

Disciple: Did Your Holiness straightaway start doing *prāṇāyāma* with the retention lasting for over two minutes?

HH: No. Over the course of two weeks, I raised the retention time from about a minute to this. Within a month of practice, I could retain my breath comfortably for five minutes. However, the idea of performing *prāṇāyāma* regularly with so long a *kumbhaka* did not appeal to me, for then I could not have done even four cycles within my scheduled half an hour. Though it is many years since I casually retained my breath for five minutes, I shall demonstrate this to you now.

A thought crossed the disciple’s mind whether during such prolonged retention His Holiness would slow down His metabolism and lower His pulse rate. Immediately, His Holiness laughed and said, “You can note my pulse now and in the final minute.” The disciple measured His pulse rate and found it to be 67 beats per minute. Then, His Holiness fully emptied His lungs, pressed His nostrils shut and performed the *jālandhara-bandha*. His eyes were open and there was a light smile on His face. At the end of the fourth minute, the disciple began counting His pulse and did so till the end of the fifth minute. His pulse rate was just 29 beats per minute. As the disciple withdrew his hand from His Holiness’s wrist, which He had held out to facilitate the measurement, He released the pressure on His nostrils and smoothly took a couple of deep breaths.

D: When did Your Holiness switch from the standard 1:4:2 ratio for the relative duration of *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka* to the ratio 1:2:2 that Your Holiness now favours?

HH: That was after my *Guru*’s return from Kalady (in early 1939). It was He who suggested the new ratio. I considered His hint a sacred directive and implemented it.



### 53. पुर्यादिक्षेत्रयात्राकृत Puryādi-kṣetra-yātrā-kṛt

One who travelled to places of pilgrimage such as Puri

Puri on the east coast of India, in the state of Odisha, is one of the *catur-dhāmas* (popularly called ‘Char-dham’ or four sacred pilgrimage spots), and home to the great temple of Lord Jagannātha. The other three places included under the *catur-dhāmas* are Dwaraka, Badrinath and Rameswaram. Bhagavatpāda chose three of these, namely Puri, Dwaraka and Badrinath to establish the *Pūrva-āmnāya* Sri Govardhana Math (eastern *pīṭha*), *Paścima-āmnāya* Sri Kalika Math (western *pīṭha*) and *Uttara-āmnāya* Sri Jyotir Math

(northern *pīṭha*) respectively. Bhagavatpāda designated the *kṣetra* (sacred place) of Rameswaram as associated with the *Dakṣiṇa-āmnāya* Sringeri Math (southern *pīṭha*).

One other grouping of sacred places featuring Puri finds mention in a popular verse that states that Viṣṇu, mounted on Garuḍa, goes to Badrinath at daybreak, visits Varanasi at midday, partakes of food at Puri and retires to bed at Dwaraka, every single day.<sup>139</sup>

His Holiness was *yātrā-kṛt*, One who travelled to, and worshipped at all these sacred places, namely Puri, Dwaraka, Badrinath, Rameswaram and Varanasi during His tours.

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His Holiness, along with His disciple and successor-designate, Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, visited Puri on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1977, and was received with great honour by Śrī Nirañjana Deva Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, the Śaṅkarācārya of the Sri Govardhana Peetham. His Holiness visited the Jagannāth Temple and offered worship there.

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His Holiness went to Dwaraka and installed Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī as the *Jagadguru* of the Dwaraka Peetham on 27<sup>th</sup> May, 1982. Holy waters from all over the country were used in performing the consecration ceremony. His Holiness, along with *Jagadguru* Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, also had *samudra-snāna* at the confluence of River Gomatī with the Arabian Sea.

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On 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1967, His Holiness reached Badrinath (as mentioned under *nāma* 33). He had His first *darśana* of Lord Badri-nārāyaṇa in splendid isolation. Early in the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup>, He again proceeded to the temple and witnessed the *ārati*. He offered flowers at the feet of the Lord and performed *arcana*. He then went on to visit the important places in and around Badrinath along with half a dozen *samnyāsins* from different parts of India. He also offered worship at the shrine of Śrī Mahālakṣmī within the Temple. He had a dip in the *tapt-kuṇḍ* as well.

His Holiness visited the *Pañca-śilas* and *Pañca-tīrthas* of Badrinath. After visiting several holy places in and around Badrinath, His Holiness proceeded to Brahma Kapal which is the spot sacred to the *pitṛs* (ancestors). Finally, He visited the Mātā Mūrti temple, dedicated to the wife of Dharma-prajāpati who was the mother of sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa. He also visited Charan Paduka, where the feet of Lord Badrinārāyaṇa are etched. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, He proceeded to the Vasudhāra-tīrtha where the eight Vasus are said to have performed penance. The path leads to Mana Village, the last village before

Chinese territory. Here, His Holiness met some Buddhists and acquainted Himself with their language and their way of life.

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His Holiness visited the temple town of Rameswaram a total of four times. His first visit was in 1957, with His Holiness reaching the sacred place on 5<sup>th</sup> November. His Holiness reached Pamban by steam boat. Then from the outskirts of Rameswaram Town where He was received with *pūrṇa-kumbha*, His Holiness walked through the main streets, in torrential rain, till He reached the Devasthanam Thiruppani Buildings, where He was to stay for a week. He performed the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* in the south-western corner of the famous third corridor of the temple. On the 7<sup>th</sup>, He took a sacred bath at Dhanushkodi during the lunar eclipse. On the 11<sup>th</sup>, He offered *pūjā* on a grand scale to Śrī Rāmanātha and Śrī Parvatavardhinī at the temple.

His Holiness's second visit to Rameswaram was on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1965. He worshipped at the shrines of Śrī Rāmanātha and Śrī Parvatavardhinī. An *utpātaśānti-homa* was performed on His instructions to allieviate the sufferings of people affected by the cyclone that had hit the place earlier. His Holiness then went to the Rama Setu as described in the context of *nāma* 32.

His next visit was to perform the *kumbhābhīṣeka* of the Rameswaram temple scheduled for 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1975. His Holiness, along with His successor-designate, arrived at Mandapam and took a steamer to Rameswaram on the 3<sup>rd</sup>. After the ceremonial reception They were received at the temple with *pūrṇakumbha* and other temple honours. The *Jagadgurus* personally visited the *yāgaśālās* on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, as well as on the 4<sup>th</sup> and supervised the rituals. On the 5<sup>th</sup>, the *kumbhābhīṣekas* of the temple towers were conducted in the august presence of the *Jagadgurus*. Subsequently, His Holiness personally performed an elaborate *pūjā* with His lotus hands at the shrine of Śrī Rāmanātha. This was followed by the worship performed by His Holiness at the sanctum sanctorum of Goddesses Parvatavardhinī and Viśālakṣī.

His Holiness visited Rameswaram again in 1980, again with His successor-designate. The *Jagadgurus* reached Rameswaram on 11<sup>th</sup> February, 1980. On the 14<sup>th</sup>, the *Mahāśivarātri-pūjā* was performed by His Holiness. The *Jagadgurus* had a holy bath in the ocean on the occasion of the solar eclipse on the 16<sup>th</sup>. They then left for Dhanushkodi where They bathed in the sea, after which His Holiness sat in meditation for a while by the sea.

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His Holiness's first visit to the holy city of Varanasi was on 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1967. On 1<sup>st</sup> May, He proceeded to the river Gaṅgā very early in the morning for a bath. He performed His morning ablutions and prayers on the banks of the sacred river, sitting in silent contemplation for nearly three hours, lost to the world and in communion with the Infinite. During His four days' stay at

Varanasi, He took holy dips in the Gaṅgā in various ghats, worshipped at the shrines of Lord Viśvanātha, Goddess Annapūrṇā, Dhunḍi Vināyaka and other deities, presided over two *vidvat-sadas* events and honoured nearly 160 scholars with cash prizes. Apart from blessing numerous devotees, He also visited the Varanaseeya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, the Sangaveda Vidyalaya and the Banaras Hindu University.

His second visit to Varanasi was in January 1977, to perform the *kumbhābhiṣeka* of Goddess Annapūrṇā (vide *nāma* 7). He made a brief halt at Varanasi again in May 1977. He visited Varanasi for the fourth time on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1982, and stayed there for five days.



#### 54. पुराणागमतत्त्ववित् *Purāṇāgama-tattva-vit*

One who knew the essence of the methods of *Purāṇic* worship

The *Veda* or *Śruti*, which manifested from the breath of *Īśvara*, is akin to *prabhu-sammita*, the laws laid down by a king. Similar is the case with the *Smṛtis* written by sages to elaborate on the *Śruti*. The *Śruti* and *Smṛtis* are expounded through stories in the form of *Purāṇas* to facilitate easy comprehension – these are like *suhṛt-sammita*, the advice of a friend.<sup>140</sup> Knowledge of the *Purāṇas* is very important because it is said, “If a learned man were to know the four *Vedas* with its limbs as also the *Upaniṣads*, but is not versed in the *Purāṇas*, he is not at all wise.”<sup>141</sup> The *Purāṇas* contain descriptions of creation, genesis of Brahmā, lineages, the epochs of various *Manus* and the stories of the lineages.<sup>142</sup>

*Āgama* means method of worship, as in *nāma* 47. The methods of worship laid down in the *Purāṇas* are based on the *Vedas* but are easier for the lay person to practice. Further, anyone can practice them to attain the highest. These methods include *karma-yoga*, *bhakti*, observances such as fasting, control of the senses and mind, and meditation on various forms of the Lord. The *Purāṇas* each extol a form of the Supreme such as Śiva, Viṣṇu and Ambā. But the essence of all of them is this: the devotee, by worshipping the Lord in a form dear to him, attains purity of mind and finally by that very Lord’s grace, attains knowledge of the oneness of the *Ātman* and *Brahman*.

As a *tattva-vit*, knower of the essence, of *purāṇa-āgama*, the forms of *Purāṇic* worship, His Holiness practiced and reached the highest through them and was thoroughly competent to guide devotees and spiritual aspirants.



The following is excerpted from the recollections of His Holiness about His meditative experiences on divine forms at the age of sixteen. He was

habituated to meditating only on the forms of Bālā and Lakṣmī-Narasimha before He was prompted by divine will to meditate on forms of Kṛṣṇa, which was followed by the events described below.

“One afternoon a divine form manifested without any volition on my part. It was that of Viṣṇu with eight, rather than four, arms. The Lord displayed in His four right hands the *sudarśana-cakra*, a rosary, the *kaumodakī* mace and the symbol of granting fearlessness. In His four left hands, I saw the *pāñcajanya* conch, the *śārṅga* bow, the *nandaka* sword and the symbol of granting boons. He was adorned with various ornaments, such as a diadem, armlets and bracelets, and wore a garland.

“For some time, I found myself mentally chanting the *Nārāyaṇa-aṣṭākṣarī*. Thereafter, my mind locked on to just the form. By the time I regained some awareness of my body, over an hour had passed. Even after I got up, I continued to see the form in my heart. That evening, I meditated on this form itself. The next morning, as I started my meditation, I found this form, which I had been perceiving since the previous day, replaced by one in which the Lord held just a rosary. His visage was extremely calm and He radiated peace. I continued to apprehend the new form in my heart even after my meditation ended.

“That afternoon, at the start of meditation, the form underwent a change and I now saw Him not merely without weapons but also without ornaments, such as a diadem. My evening meditation began with my focusing on this form. Abruptly, my attention was drawn to just His smiling face. Up to almost the close of the hour-long session, my focus was exclusively on this. Till I completed my bath the next morning, I could see in my heart, the Lord as bereft of ornaments and weapons and holding just a rosary. The form then vanished.

“When I reported my experiences with the forms of Viṣṇu to my *Guru*, He said nothing. However, a little later, He sent me a copy of the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* in which He had kept an empty sheet of paper. In the portion indicated, I found verses describing the very forms that I had seen and advising meditation on them.”

The concerned verses of the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, which are part of the advice given by sage Keśidhvaja to Khāṇḍikya, convey: “The *yogin* should, O king, concentrate his mind thoroughly on the Lord as adorned with a diadem, garland, armlets, bracelets and the like, as having in His (eight) hands, the *śārṅga* (bow), conch, mace, sword, discus, rosary and the signs of granting boons and fearlessness and as wearing rings of gems in His fingers till his attention becomes steady there. Success is to be understood as achieved when this thought does not leave the mind even when walking, standing or

engaging in some activity of choice. Thereafter, the wise man should contemplate the form of the Lord as tranquil, with a rosary, and bereft of a conch, mace, discus, *śārṅga* and so on. After that focus becomes as firm as before, he should think of God as devoid of adornments, such as the diadem and armlets. Next, the wise man should fix his mind on a prominent part of the Lord.”<sup>143</sup> The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* records that after telling Uddhava that one should meditate on the full form of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa said, “Then one should concentrate the mind that is distributed all over my body on one part and think of nothing else but the smiling face.”<sup>144</sup>



His Holiness once said the following in a benedictory discourse.

“Though the teachings of the *Śruti* and *Smṛti* are available, we will not be able to easily understand their import if we do not know the *Purāṇas*. For instance, the *Śruti* says, ‘*satyaṁ vada* (speak the truth)’. To understand whether anyone gained anything at all by speaking the truth, we need to look at the story of Hariścandra.

“There was a king called Hariścandra. He went through great trials and tribulations in life. But in the end Yama, Lord of *dharma* himself appeared before him and said, ‘I gave you all these miseries only to test you. In spite of having to face so many misfortunes you never swerved from the path of truth. Hence you will be remembered for posterity. You may now enjoy all the comforts of a king. May you live long. Your name will be glorified throughout the world while the sun and moon still last.’ Similarly, Indra, Mahārṣi Viśvāmītra, etc., who had come to test him also blessed the king.

“When we listen to this story, we feel, “Oh! There seems to be some value in the statement, ‘*satyaṁ vada*’. On the other hand, if the person were to merely hear the words ‘*satyaṁ vada*’, he would be likely to think, ‘On telling some lies people are able to accumulate much wealth. But I alone should speak the truth and wander around with nothing, is it?’ However, on listening to the story of Hariścandra, he would understand that it may seem like those who stick to the path of *dharma* initially undergo difficulties, but finally the good that accrues to them does not come to anyone else. This certitude is born out of reading the *Purāṇas*.

“The *Purāṇas* explain the philosophy of the *Śruti* and *Smṛti* to us very clearly. It is therefore said, ‘The study of the *Vedas* is to be supplemented by that of the *Itihāsas* and *Purāṇas*. The *Veda*, thinking, ‘He will deceive me’, is fearful of the one of meagre learning.’<sup>145</sup> Therefore, to know the import of the *Veda*, one must study *Itihāsas* such as the *Mahābhārata*, or *Purāṇas* such as the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*. If the meaning of the *Veda* is explained to one who has knowledge of these, then such a person would stand to benefit. Otherwise, the person may interpret *Veda-mantras* wrongly and also

go about teaching the wrong meanings to others, thereby causing the very *Veda* to fear that a situation may arise in which the entire world is shrouded by this darkness of ignorance!”



55. पालिताशेषभक्तौघः *Pālītāśeṣa-bhaktaughāḥ*

One who protects the multitude of devotees without exception

When her modesty was sought to be violated by Duḥśāsana in open court at Hastinapura, the helpless Draupadī appealed, as a last resort, to Lord Kṛṣṇa to protect her. At that very instant, the Lord, seated at Dwaraka, unequivocally declared that His immediate task is to set forth to protect Her. He said, “This increased debt of mine does not leave my heart, for Draupadī has cried out ‘Govinda’ to Me, who am far away.”<sup>146</sup>

While quoting this verse in one of His benedictory discourses in Chennai in 1961, His Holiness explained what the call of Draupadī has to do with debt, and that too for the Lord of the cosmos Himself: “When Draupadī’s pleas to her powerful husbands were in vain because they were bound by rules, she looked to call Him who is not only capable of saving her but is beyond all rules. If somebody close by calls us when in trouble, then the person may or may not have much faith in us. However, when Draupadī called out with all her heart to Kṛṣṇa who was not even near her, then what must have been the extent of faith she had in Him! The compassionate Lord’s heart melted and He felt that He is bound to go to her rescue, even feeling indebted to her for the faith she had in Him.”

When His Holiness’s disciple, Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin states through this *nāma* that His *Guru* is One by whom *bhakta-oghaḥ*, the multitude of devotees, is *pālita*, protected, He resonates a fact that His Holiness’s *Guru*, Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin expressed in the following verse that He composed on His Holiness: “O Wise people! Hold in the heart-lotus the *Guru*, Vidyātīrtha, the young One with a tranquil mind, who is exceedingly compassionate, who destroys the mountain of impediments by His extremely pure glances, who is skilled in protecting everybody, who is known by means of the *Praṇava (Om)* and who is the manifestation of the Supreme *Brahman*.”<sup>147</sup>

There is a significance to the qualifier *aśeṣa* (without exception) to the term *bhaktaughāḥ* of the *nāma*, meaning that He protects the multitudes of devotees “without exception”. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa assures, “Unequivocally proclaim, O son of Kuntī, never shall My devotee perish.”<sup>148</sup> Thus, the Lord guarantees protection to His devotees for all time - no devotee of the Lord needs to feel abandoned. In a similar manner, His Holiness’s shield of protection is assured for all His devotees even after He cast off His

mortal form, and regardless of even whether they have had His *darśana* in His physical form or not.

His Holiness giving the unequivocal assurance, “I will never abandon one whom I have accepted,” quoted in the context of *nāma* 43, begs recollection once again here. Being totally committed to truthfulness, His Holiness would never have intended any element of untruth or hyperbole while giving such a categorical and momentous assurance that totally disregards factors such as time, place and extent of the devotee’s devotion. There are many instances of devotees continuing to receive His grace and guidance even after He shed His mortal body. His grace is undiminished and His guidance available as ever to those who genuinely seek and need it.



Dr. A. G. Ramesh and his sisters planned to celebrate their father, Dr. A. R. Govinda Rao’s *ṣaṣṭyabdapūrti* (completion of 60 years) at Dharwad, where the latter lived. From among the few priests available at Dharwad, there were only a couple who were known to do a good job and were therefore in great demand. When Dr. Ramesh approached one of them, he finally agreed after a lot of fuss. The invitations were printed and dispatched. The family then went to Sringeri to seek His Holiness’s blessings for the function.

His Holiness looked at the invitation and said, “This *muhūrta*... is there not another one on which you can celebrate the function?” Ramesh replied with reverence, “This was fixed according to my father’s birthday.” His Holiness said, “Alright. Why don’t you consult the local priest and ask him if the function cannot be conducted on another date?” Those were tense moments for Ramesh and his family - they had already sent out the invitations, the date was close at hand and their father had acceded with great hesitation to the very idea of a celebration. However, since it was His Holiness’s directive, they approached a local priest, who confirmed that the date had been fixed correctly. The family heaved a collective sigh of relief and returned to report the matter to His Holiness. His Holiness then suggested, “Why don’t you ask the *Maṭha purohit* about this?” Once again they were apprehensive, but much to their joy, the *Maṭha purohit* too gave his stamp of approval. His Holiness then said, “Fine. But instead of celebrating this function in Dharwad, why not conduct it here at Sringeri?”

The family was pleasantly surprised at the idea of celebrating the function at Sringeri, and gladly agreed to do so. They got new invitations done immediately. A large number of relatives gathered at Sringeri for the function. Several of the relatives who had never visited Sringeri before were blessed with a private audience with His Holiness and He blessed them all. The happy family then returned to Dharwad.

Ramesh felt a little guilty that they had pleaded so strongly with the priest in Dharwad to officiate at the ceremony and had then conducted the function at Sringeri without even informing him. So he decided to visit the priest with some *prasāda* from Śāradāmbā's temple, and explain that they had changed their plans based on His Holiness's advice. When he reached the priest's house, however, he was shocked to hear that the man had passed away a few days ago. On further enquiry, Dr. Ramesh discovered that the end had come on the very day of the function.

He realized that His Holiness had taken the trouble to persist with the family in spite of their unwillingness. His Holiness had thereby compassionately protected the family from the event of the officiating priest passing away on the day of the auspicious function, which would not only have been very unpleasant, but would have also jeopardized the very function.

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The following was narrated by Smt. Vaikuntam Anantharama Seshan, who had settled down at Sringeri along with her husband (vide *nāma* 43).

“My husband once underwent a major surgery to fix a fracture in his leg. Just before the surgery, I received *prasāda* and blessings from His Holiness. The surgeon wanted to stay back with us at the hospital on the night after the surgery. Though I tried to dissuade him, he stuck to his decision. It was only in the morning that he told me, ‘The pulse rate was dangerously high at night. Only now it has improved.’ It was obvious to us that it was His Holiness's grace that had seen my husband through. Later, His Holiness, of His own accord, told us, ‘I had told Candramaulīśvara that I wanted Seshan to walk normally and that I did not regard it as proper to abandon one who had come to me.’”

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The following is a personal experience of a disciple of His Holiness, who was serving Him at the *Maṡha*. The episode happened on 19<sup>th</sup> September, 1989. His Holiness shed His mortal form on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

“That day, His Holiness directed me to read out select compositions of Bhagavatpāda. He had placed bookmarks in the pertinent volume of the ‘*Śāṅkara-granthāvali* (Series of works of Śāṅkara)’; this volume contained Bhagavatpāda's *stotras* (hymns). As I was reading from the book, I could hear His Holiness saying, ‘Hm,’ ‘Hm,’ in between when I was going fine. When I faltered, however, He promptly corrected me. Upon completing the *Brahmānucintana*, I looked at Him for His next directive. He said, ‘In the normal course, I would have read the *Ṣatpadī-stotra*, *Lakṣmī-Narasimha-karuṅārāsa-stotra*, *Moha-mudgara* (also called *Bhaja-govindam*), *Kaupīna-pañcaka*, and others. Since I am not in a position to read them on my own today, you read them aloud for me.’ I proceeded to read them out and then,

as directed by Him, read the *Dhanyāṣṭaka*, *Sādhana-pañcaka*, *Manīṣā-pañcaka* and *Ekaślokī*.

“I clearly realized that with this, His Holiness fulfilled what He had, a decade earlier, told me He would do for me someday. In 1979, I had been in Sringeri for my vacation at the time when His Holiness was expounding the *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya* to His successor-designate. One day, His Holiness told me, ‘Just be seated here and listen. Even if you do not follow, it can serve as *śravaṇa* for you.’ After a week, I received a message from my parents to return to Bengaluru to attend to the application formalities to join an Engineering course. I refused because I wanted to be in Sringeri till His Holiness completed the *Bhagavad-gītā-bhāṣya*. This came to His Holiness’s knowledge. He directed me to go home and join an Engineering course. He told me that He would teach me alone someday. Ten years later, in 1989, as I sat exclusively in His Holiness’s presence reading what His Holiness was telling me to read on His behalf and being corrected by Him whenever required, I did not have an iota of doubt that His Holiness was gracing me with that promised private session of *Vedānta*.”



Sri Baluchandran, a landlord, was facing untold misery caused by a leader who had been elected as the village sarpanch. The problems the leader was causing him were of the nature of encroaching upon the land holdings, inciting workers against him, non-payment of rent, diverting or preventing water flow to his fields, etc. The circumstances were such that he was unable to do anything about this.

This was the state of affairs when Baluchandran went to Sringeri in February 1989. He told His Holiness that he was having serious problems pertaining to his village. His Holiness promptly asked him, “Did an election take place in your village?”

Baluchandran: (Wonderstruck) Yes.

HH: (Nodding) What does he say?

B: (Briefing Him about the problem) A situation has arisen now, wherein either he will have to surrender or I will have to leave the village.

HH: Perform an *arcana* to Lord Narasimha. The troublemaker will surrender to you by himself. He will ask for pardon and the problem will be solved.

The devotee accordingly performed an *arcana* to Lord Narasimha before leaving Sringeri.

Some months later, at about 10 o’clock one morning, the doorbell rang at Baluchandran’s house in the village. Baluchandran later narrated what happened after that: “I opened the door and to my surprise, I found the

sarpanch standing there! He came into the house and fell at my feet and asked for pardon for all the trouble he had caused me, prompted by evil-minded advisors. He even assured me of his complete help thereafter. Later that evening, I got to know that His Holiness had shed His mortal form that day. His Holiness had carried out, even on the day of His *Mahāsamādhi*, the assurance given by Him.”



An aged disciple living over a thousand miles from Sringeri once came to Sringeri in the late 1980s and expressed a mental disquiet caused by conjecturing a time in future when His Holiness may not be present in His physical form. Having promptly pointed to the spot where His *samādhi* is now located, His Holiness assured the disciple, “When I am not physically present, you may come here to see me. I will be here.”



After His Holiness’s *Mahāsamādhi*, a devotee once approached Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin asking for His Holiness’s *pādukās*. The *Jagadguru* said, “How is it possible now that His Holiness is not physically present?” Then, on seeing the devotee’s genuine intentions, the *Jagadguru* added, “If your devotion is so firm, the *pādukās* will arrive on their own.”

After a few days, two ladies came for the *Jagadguru*’s *darśana*. They handed over a pair of His Holiness’s *pādukās* to the *Jagadguru*, saying that since there was none left to do *pūjā* in their family, they thought this was the appropriate course of action. After they left, the *Jagadguru* called the devotee who had earlier made the request for the *pādukās*, and saying with a smile, “They have arrived,” blessed him with His *Guru*’s *pādukās*.



## 56. पिङ्गलाब्दसमुद्भवः *Piṅgalābda-samudbhavaḥ*

One whose divine birth occurred in the cyclical year *Piṅgala*

His Holiness’s birth in the *abda*, cyclical year, *Piṅgala* (the 51<sup>st</sup> year in the list of 60) is hailed as a *sam-udbhava*, divine birth. He was the Lord Himself.

The child was born to Sri Rama Sastry and Smt. Venkatalakshamma at 6:45 a.m. on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1917, corresponding to *kṛṣṇa-caturdaśī* of the month of *āśvayuja* of the cyclical year *Piṅgala*, with the child’s *lagna* (sun-sign) being *vṛścika* (Scorpio), *rāśi* (moon-sign) being *tulā* (Libra) and the *nakṣatra* (birth-star) being *svātī*. Almost as if to mark a divine advent, there were widespread joyous celebrations with religious fervour; *dīpāvalī* was being celebrated at that time in several parts of India.

It is interesting that His Holiness’s *Paramaguru*, Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṁha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin (1858-1912), the *pīṭha*’s 33<sup>rd</sup>

pontiff (from 1879 to 1912), was also born in the cyclical year *Pīngala*. His Holiness was very often likened to His *Paramaguru* in more ways than one.



During her second pregnancy, Smt. Venkatalakshamma stayed for some time at her sister's house in Hosakote, near Bengaluru. While there, she bathed daily in the Pennar River and, with wet clothing, repeatedly went around an *aśvattha-vr̥kṣa* (peepal tree), regarded as sanctified by Lord Viṣṇu's presence. Her prayer was that she should give birth to a good son. This supplication was heard by the Lord and He graced her with an exceptional male child, who went on to become none other than His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin.

The child was born at Basavangudi in Bengaluru in a small room in Sri Rama Sastry's sister's house. As fate would have it, it was not given to Sri Rama Sastry to be around when the child was born. He was then an inpatient at a hospital, having been admitted there for the surgical treatment of an abdominal condition. Relatives attributed Sri Rama Sastry's quick recovery and early discharge from the hospital to the benign influence of the child.



57. बहुशिष्यसमायुक्तः *Bahu-śiṣya-samāyuktaḥ*

One who was intimately bonded with numerous disciples

It is said of Emperor Aja, “Every subject felt, ‘I am the favourite of the emperor.’”<sup>149</sup> All those who came to be associated with His Holiness had a similar connect with Him – He was *samāyukta*, intimately bonded, with *bahu-śiṣya*, numerous disciples. His Holiness placed no constraints on who qualified to be His disciple. He readily accepted and was equally accessible to devotees of all dispositions, irrespective of their past or religious beliefs.



In the course of His first tour, His Holiness was camping in Chidambaram between 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1959. Sri R. Krishnaswamy Iyer, Advocate, Madurai, sent a letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1959, to His Holiness, which was delivered at the camp by hand. In the letter, he updated His Holiness about various matters relating to the *Maṭha*, and also mentioned his desire that His Holiness's grace should turn on him for a while in sacred Chidambaram.

Sri N. Lakshminarayana Sastry, then Private Secretary to His Holiness, in his reply dated 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1959, wrote stating that Krishnaswamy Iyer's letter was received and its contents submitted to His Holiness. The reply further contained the following lines (reproduced verbatim here): “His Holiness was immensely pleased with your desire that His Holiness's thoughts should turn on you for a while in this sacred Kshetram Chidambaram. His Holiness has

directed me to inform you that He has not only thought of you in this place but you are ever in His mind.”

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Sri Shiv Kumar, an advocate from Bengaluru, was not the typical traditional type of person. In fact, he was quite the opposite – flamboyant, flashy and extroverted. Shiv Kumar’s father had a daily *pūjā* of his own, and Shiv Kumar used to do the worship on days that his father could not, with great sincerity and concentration. He once desired a *līṅga* for himself, and wrote to His Holiness’s Private Secretary, requesting for a *Śiva-līṅga* blessed by His Holiness for his daily worship. On the request being submitted to His Holiness, He readily acceded and instructed that Shiv Kumar be asked to come on a *kārtikā-somavāra* day (a Monday of the *Kārtika* month that was then round the corner) after prior intimation.

Shiv Kumar duly intimated the *Maṭha* that he would come to Sringeri on a particular Sunday and would like to receive the *līṅga* from His Holiness the following day. On being told of this, His Holiness had a *līṅga* placed in His *pūjā*, and offered sandalpaste and flowers to it.

When Shiv Kumar arrived at Sringeri, he wanted to talk with an official of the *Maṭha* before he had *darśana* of His Holiness. He confessed to the official that he had asked His Holiness for a *līṅga*, but was now wondering if it was right for him to have asked at all in the first place; he felt that he was not eligible for it, because of his flamboyant lifestyle.

The official advised Shiv Kumar to frankly place the matter before His Holiness. “Is it all right for me to ask Him this?” queried Shiv Kumar incredulously. The official replied, “Why not? And in any case, whom else will you ask?”

So Shiv Kumar made his way to the room upstairs where His Holiness was giving *darśana*, and was back in barely two minutes, with tear-filled eyes. He told the official, “I told His Holiness, ‘I had requested Your Holiness for a *Śiva-līṅga* and Your Holiness had also acquiesced.’ ‘Yes,’ His Holiness replied, ‘it is ready. I will give it to you tomorrow.’ I then hesitatingly said, ‘But I do not know if I am eligible,’ at which He dismissed me with the words, ‘That you want it is eligibility enough.’”

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During His visit to Coimbatore in the 1960s, His Holiness sent word to Sri G. D. Naidu, an industrialist, teacher and inventor referred to as the Edison of India, that He would like to visit the G. D. Naidu Industrial Exhibition. Naidu welcomed Him and, though His visit was meant to be for a few minutes, His Holiness spent, as Naidu said in a talk (on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1969), a few hours, observing everything in the exhibition minutely.

So impressed was Naidu with His Holiness's interest, grasp and knowledge and, as reported by him, His Holiness's "many constructional works", that he named the training institute that he subsequently started, as "Sringeri Jagadguru Sankracharya (sic) Vidhyatheertha Training Institute."

He later named after His Holiness a hall that he built, as also one of the two big bore wells that he set up to supply water to more than 1500 families. Such was the impact that His Holiness had on Naidu, an atheist. Interestingly, Naidu had the institute named after His Holiness inaugurated by 'Periyar' E. V. Ramasamy Naicker, the well known social reformer and diehard atheist of Tamil Nadu. His Holiness, for His part, inaugurated, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 1971, the "E. V. R. Periyar Hall" constructed by Naidu.

Naidu said in a speech on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1969, "One may be tempted to ask as to what connection there is between Periyar and Swamiji, who are poles apart in religious matters. I am a *śiṣya* of Periyar and at the same time I am also a *śiṣya* of the Swamiji."



58. बहुभाषाविशारदः *Bahu-bhāṣā-viśāradaḥ*

One who was proficient in many languages

His Holiness was a veritable polyglot who could converse with people all over the country with ease. Since He was born and brought up in Bengaluru and studied till the eighth standard there, He was fluent in reading and writing Kannada. He had a little exposure to English as well. His further studies were at Sringeri where He mastered Sanskrit. His mother-tongue was Telugu but He picked up much Telugu only later by Himself through reading and on his tours. Though He did not formally study Tamil, He picked it up through His interactions with those speaking Tamil, and could freely converse and discourse in the language. He took personal interest in learning Hindi, a language He relished, and in which He was, to a large extent, self-taught. He was so fluent in Hindi that, on listening to Him converse and discourse in Hindi, many native Hindi speaking people found it hard to believe that Hindi was not His mother-tongue. In fact they fondly referred to Him as, '*hamāre svāmī-ji* (our Swamiji)'. Thus, wherever He went in the country, His Holiness could freely converse and connect to people in a language that they could understand. He enthralled and enlightened the audiences with His benedictory addresses in all of these languages, namely Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit.



In August 1954, the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, visited Sringeri. His Holiness was then 34 years old, and had not undertaken any tour, let alone to North India.

The meeting between the senior *Jagadguru* and the President took place in Goddess Śāradāmbā's temple. His Holiness, who was present, translated into Sanskrit for His *Guru* what Dr. Rajendra Prasad said in Hindi, and translated for him into chaste Hindi what the senior *Jagadguru* spoke in Sanskrit. The President was highly impressed and the senior *Jagadguru* was pleased.

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In the course of His first all-India tour, His Holiness reached Madurai on 18<sup>th</sup> February, 1965, and camped there for a little over a month. Śrī Nirañjana Deva Tīrtha, the pontiff of the Govardhana Peetham of Puri visited Him there. The two *Jagadgurus* sat side-by-side on the same platform and delivered their discourses.

The *Śaṅkarācārya* of Puri spoke fluently in Sanskrit. One of the *paṇḍitas* who was present was asked to render the speech in Tamil. He, however, began to meander and the rigmarole was not faithful to the thoughts of the *Ācārya*. His Holiness relieved the *paṇḍita* by saying, "I shall translate the speech myself." He gave a precise and clear rendering of the Puri *Ācārya*'s discourse. Those familiar enough with Sanskrit to follow the original discourse were surprised to note that His Holiness had made a sentence-by-sentence translation, despite the speech having been long. The next day, both the *Jagadgurus* delivered their discourses in the famed Meenakshi Amman Temple. On this occasion, His Holiness straightaway volunteered to translate the Puri *Ācārya*'s speech so as to avoid any confusion. This time too His translation was accurate.

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The following was narrated by Sri Jandhyala Narayana Murthy.

"Until the year 1961, I had not even heard the name of Sringeri. I happened to purchase a book on Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin and found it to be rather attractive, but did not pursue it further.

"That year, His Holiness stopped by at Vijayawada, my hometown, for just one day, while on His way from Hyderabad to Chennai. It was during that night's *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* that I had my very first *darśana* of Him. His Holiness came to Vijayawada again in 1965, and this time I invited Him to grace my house. He acquiesced.

"After His afternoon *bhikṣā* at my place, He sent for me and spoke with me for a while. He then noticed some photographs that were on the walls of the room. Pointing to one, He asked, 'Who is this person?' 'My late father,' I answered. 'What was His name?' He queried. 'Shivanna Shastri' was my answer. His Holiness asked, 'Is it the same Shivanna Shastri who authored the Hindi-Telugu Dictionary?' When I replied in the affirmative, His

Holiness exclaimed, ‘Aha! I did not know that you were Shivanna Shastri’s son! Why didn’t you tell me earlier? It is only with the help of his book that I learnt Telugu! See! I have the volume here with me!’ Saying so, He picked up the dictionary He had next to Him and showed it to me. From that moment onwards, I felt that His Holiness’s affection for me increased manifold.”



### 59. ब्रह्मतत्त्वानुसन्धाता

### *Brahma-tattvānusandhātā*

One who was absorbed in cogitation on the Truth that is *Brahman*

*Brahma-tattva* means the Truth that is *Brahman*, and *anu-sandhāna*, deep cogitation or absorption in cogitation. When His Holiness was running on sixteen, He was initiated into contemplation on the *Ātman* by His *Guru*. This contemplation became effortless in a few months, prior to His completing sixteen years of age.

It was when His Holiness was eighteen that, as described under *nāma* 10, Lord Śiva manifested in front of Him and instructed Him to commence *nirguṇa-dhyāna* on the Supreme. The next day His Holiness commenced meditation on the Supreme Reality as devoid of attributes, supported by deep cogitation on *Brahman*, which led to His becoming established in *Brahman*.



What follows is His Holiness’s recollection of how His *Guru* initiated Him into contemplation on the *Ātman* and His account of how He engaged in such contemplation thereafter.

“When staying in Narasimhavana with my *Guru*, I used to go every evening to behold Śāradāmbā and remain there for up to an hour. On my return, He once asked me, ‘You have crossed the river and come. What thought arose in your mind?’ ‘What thought?’ I wondered and replied, ‘I perceived various objects.’ He asked, ‘What was new?’ I replied, ‘Nothing. I saw what was in front of me.’ ‘Must you see whatever is in front of your eyes?’ He queried. I said, ‘If the eyes be kept closed (to abstain from perceiving objects), it would not be possible to walk.’ He said, ‘You must see and yet not see,’ to which I queried, ‘How is that possible?’

“To this, He said, ‘*ātmāmbhodhes-taraṅgo'smyahamiti gamane*<sup>150</sup> (When walking, one should think that one is a wave in the ocean that is the *Ātman*).’ This is how we should conduct ourselves. When we get up from a seated position and start walking, the feeling should not be, ‘We are walking and going somewhere.’ In the big ocean - the *Ātman* - a wave has arisen. That wave is moving forward. This is the supposition. There is no difference between the wave and the ocean. Yet, because one walks (and thus moves forward like the wave), one should think of oneself as the wave. When the

occasion to walk arises, one should contemplate, 'I am a wave in the ocean of bliss, in the ocean of the *Ātman*.'

"His advice surprised me. He went on, 'At all times - even when you talk to someone - repeat this idea in the mind.' With practice, one uninterruptedly carries on this repetition even while speaking. Experience confirms this.

"What should be the thought when one is seated? He advised, '*bhāvayannāsanasthaḥ samvitsūtrānuviddho maṇirahamiti vā'smī* (When seated, one should think that one is a gem strung on the string of consciousness).' A gem has been strung on the thread of knowledge. The gem cannot be removed; the thread is made of unbreakable consciousness. I am that gem. Contemplation must be done in this manner.'

"(My *Guru* further said:) '*indriyārthapratītau draṣṭā(dr̥ṣṭo)*'smy-*ātmāvalokād-iti* (When perceiving sense-objects through the senses, one should think that one is seen since the *Ātman* is beheld).' Whenever some object is seen, the reflection should not be, 'This object is now visible.' One must think, 'Aha! Objectless consciousness has now become associated with objects. The *Ātman* was manifest earlier but now its manifestation has waxed.' On receiving a blow, we become markedly aware of the body, do we not? We normally do have awareness of the body but this awareness increases when we are beaten. Similar is the case here. Accordingly, even when perceiving some external object, one should cogitate that apprehension of the *Ātman* has occurred.

"(My *Guru* further said:) '*śayana-vidhau magna ānanda-sindhau* (When lying down, one should think that one is immersed in the ocean of bliss). Do not just fall asleep. When lying down, contemplate, 'I am now immersed in an ocean of bliss' and, with this feeling, begin to sleep.'

"Doing so is very good. Whoever wants can test the difference between simply lying down and going to sleep and sleeping after voluntarily eradicating all thoughts from the mind while lying down, generating a feeling of bliss and retaining it for some minutes till sleep overtakes one. The great joy that this approach to sleep yields becomes apparent once it is experienced for a few days.

"(My *Guru* concluded:) '*antarniṣṭho mumukṣuḥ sa khalu tanubhṛtām yo nayatyevamāyuh.*' Amongst the embodied, that seeker of liberation who leads one's life contemplating in this fashion is indeed the one who abides within, in the *Ātman*. Therefore, when walking, sitting, perceiving objects and even when lying down, this is how we must conduct our life.'

"This is the advice My *Guru* gave me. I was seated in front of my *Guru* when He gave this explanation. No sooner had He completed His instruction about the attitude to be maintained when seated than I strove to put this teaching

into practice. I did not think it appropriate to delay doing so even slightly. However, though I promptly generated the thought, 'I am a gem strung in the thread of consciousness,' the intensity of my contemplation was poor. A reason was that I was then primarily concentrating on what my *Guru* was telling me about the attitudes relating to perception and sleep. Further, while *karma-yoga* and *japa* had become effortless for me at that time, such contemplation was new to me. As I walked to my room after my *Guru* had finished, I contemplated, 'I am a wave in the blissful ocean that is the *Ātman*.' The intensity of this contemplation was much better.

"While I sincerely strove to practise what my *Guru* had taught Me, I did experience two difficulties. This contemplation clashed now and then with my *karma-yoga* (involving dedicating all actions and their fruits to God). My *Guru* resolved this difficulty by telling me two days later, 'The time has come for you to go beyond the stage of *karma-yoga*, which you have mastered. Now, direct your efforts to contemplating on the *Ātman*.' The second difficulty I had was that this contemplation partially came in the way of my enjoying the presence of Śāradāmbā in the temple, mentally worshipping Narasimha and the like. This is because I did these while seated and now I had been advised to contemplate when seated that I am a gem strung in the thread of consciousness.

"My *Guru* Himself clarified, 'While the knowledge of the *Ātman* of a *jīvanmukta* (one liberated while living) remains undisturbed by any thoughts and bodily activity, the case of contemplation by a spiritual aspirant is different. Hence, for the present, do your mental worship and the like as before and practise contemplation on the *Ātman* at other times.'

"Though I no more had any fundamental problems, my contemplation suffered from occasional discontinuities. Such breaks mainly occurred when I was speaking and when I got carried away by the beauty of the river and the surroundings. One evening when I went to my *Guru*'s presence, He asked, 'Where are you coming from?' 'From Ambā's temple,' I replied. 'What did you see on the way?' He queried. A break had occurred in my contemplation while crossing the river Tuṅgā. Understanding the thrust of His question, I said that I beheld fish playing in the Tuṅgā. 'Did you contemplate correctly at that time?' was my *Guru*'s next query. 'I was contemplating before and after that but, for a few moments, the process became disrupted,' I admitted. My *Guru* said, 'Never give room for such breaks.' I hung my head in shame and resolved that I should not be such a useless disciple. Thereafter, by my *Guru*'s grace, such discontinuities in contemplation did not occur. In a few months, the four forms of contemplation became effortless."

[The following are representative extracts from the *anusandhāna* on the *Brahma-tattva* that His Holiness did from the day after His *Śiva-darśana*, leading to His attaining *savikalpa-samādhi* on the attribute-less Supreme.]

On the evening of 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1935, His Holiness reached His meditation spot on the hill and sat down with the intention of focussing on the Supreme *Brahman*, with the scripture as the authoritative basis and corroborative reasoning as an aid. He started by calling to mind three profound statements of the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad*, which He knew by rote. The first of these conveys, “He who knows *Brahman* attains the highest.”<sup>151</sup> The import of the second is, “On realising the bliss of *Brahman*, the enlightened man is not afraid of anything.”<sup>152</sup> The meaning of the third is, “For, when this (ignorant) man perceives even the slightest variety in *Brahman*, then (because of that perception of difference) fear arises in him.”<sup>153</sup> He then reflected on them as under.

“From these scriptural declarations, it follows that on realising *Brahman*, I will attain unity with *Brahman*, the highest. On the other hand, as long as I do not realise *Brahman* and I perceive duality, bondage will not cease. Knowledge does not actually make or modify an object. It only removes the ignorance relating to the object. So, even now, I am indeed *Brahman* and the world has no existence apart from It. It is only because of ignorance that I seem to be otherwise and perceive duality. Else, there is no question of my realisation of *Brahman* leading to my becoming *Brahman* and to the cessation of diversity as declared by the scripture.”

His Holiness then cogitated on the reasons why the body, the vital force, organs, mind, the agent denoted by ‘I’ and the intellect cannot be the *Ātman* (vide *nāma* 19) and concluded that therefore He is indeed their witness and hence distinct from them all. He then continued His cogitation and concluded, “Being subject to annulment, the states of waking, dream and deep sleep are false. I am unstained by them like the desert by mirages. There is no ground to presume either that there is any difference in the consciousness that shines in the three states or that it is subject to any change. This unchanging consciousness cannot be other than myself. On the authority of the *Śruti*, I am the Supreme *Brahman*.”

Moving on to the nature of *Brahman* as made known in the scripture, He recalled the words of the *Taittirīya-upaniṣad*, ‘*satyaṃ jñānam-anantaṃ brahma* (*Brahman* is Truth, Knowledge and Infinite)’. Taking up each of the three characteristics of the Supreme spoken of, He pondered on them and concluded, “*Brahman*, which is absolute existence, pure consciousness and infinite, shines as the Self of every being. Though appearing as the world, It is non-dual and unaffected in any way. As taught by the scripture, I am

indeed the Supreme *Brahman*, the *Ātman* of all. I never was, am or will be otherwise.”

His aforesaid enquiry into the Truth lasted for about 45 minutes and resulted in great clarity of understanding, freedom from doubts, and conviction. Though He did not choose to keep His eyes closed during His deep reflection, He hardly noticed anything external. He felt ready to deeply focus on the Supreme. He initiated His meditation and mentally uttered the words, “*aham-eva param brahma vāsudevākhyam-avyayam*,”<sup>154</sup> as they captured the essence of His scripture-based reflection; these words convey, “I am indeed the Supreme *Brahman*, the One free from decay and known as Vāsudeva (He who resides in and shines in all).” Without repeating the words, He strongly held on to the idea conveyed. Immediately, He felt himself expanding and becoming pervasive like space. By countering the notion of being limited by the body and the like, this experience intensified the impact of His earlier contemplation. A great wave of joy arose and submerged Him and He remained in this state of deep meditation for what seemed a trice, but was actually about 30 to 45 minutes.

He mentally repeated the enquiry of that day twice in the course of the next day, the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, and went to His meditation spot as usual in the evening. He pondered on the fact that having falsely identified the *Ātman* with the mind, one deems oneself to be an agent and treats as valid, notions such as, ‘I see this,’ ‘This is mine,’ ‘I am happy’ and ‘I am unhappy.’ He concluded that decidedly, only right knowledge can annul ignorance and misunderstanding. He reasoned that since the *Ātman* is the witness of all thoughts, if He would stand back from a thought as a disinterested witness, the thought would be deprived of stimulation and should soon die out. He affirmed to Himself that He was pure consciousness unlimited by space, time and objects and started His meditation. He experienced no difficulty in initiating contemplation on the *Ātman* as the witness of this desire. Almost immediately thereafter, the mental activity serving as the object vanished. An essentially isolated ‘I’ thought remained. He maintained the attitude of being a witness characterised by pure, unlimited consciousness. Very soon, even the sense of ‘I’ almost completely faded away. The mind was then quite still and no effort was needed to keep it so. Consciousness shone clearly without any object and without limitations. He was overwhelmed by bliss, which was far greater than on the previous evening. The awareness of any distinction between the bliss and Himself was almost absent. About an hour passed thus but He was totally oblivious of the passage of time. As He emerged from this state, His first experience of *savikalpa-samādhi* on the formless Reality, He gradually became aware of the body.

Further that evening and over the next two days, He repeatedly attained *savikalpa-samādhi* on the attribute-less *Brahman* based on the reasoning of the first day, as the witness of the hue perceived while commencing meditation, and by turning attention to a sentence of Bhagavatpāda's *Pañcīkaraṇa*, the passages of which He had deeply considered while reflecting on the Truth. He then called to mind the passage of the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* that conveys, "A modification (of clay, such as a pot or jar) has speech as its origin and exists only in name; as clay alone, it is real."<sup>155</sup> He went on to reflect on it and concluded that every object has existence only as *Brahman*; the name and form of the object are its illusory aspects. Were such not to be the case, the scripture would not have emphatically taught that on knowing *Brahman*, everything becomes known, just as on knowing clay, all products of clay become known. Having reflected in this manner, He started His meditation, taking the sun as the object of relevance and ignoring names and forms and focussing on just its being, attained *savikalpa-samādhi*. The next morning He attained *savikalpa-samādhi* by focussing on the being of the wall in front of Him in His room.

In the evening on the hill, He mentally said, "*sarvādhiṣṭhānabhūta-sanmātra-brahmāsmi*"; this means, "I am *Brahman* of the nature of absolute existence, the substratum of everything." He intensified the resulting notion by disregarding names and forms in general, and attained *savikalpa-samādhi* after everything was stripped to bare being without attributes, and His sense of individuality faded with an upsurge in the intensity of concentration. The next morning, 10<sup>th</sup> December, after the apprehension of a hue, He promptly became absorbed in the Supreme and was in *savikalpa-samādhi*, for since the previous evening, attention to the Truth had been persisting effortlessly, being uninterrupted even during dreams.



## 60. ब्रह्मविद्योपदेशकः *Brahma-vidyopadeśakah*

One who imparted the knowledge of *Brahman*

Having declared *Brahma-vidyā* or knowledge of *Brahman* to be the basis for all knowledge,<sup>156</sup> the *Upaniṣad* speaks about it thus: "*Brahma-vidyā*... on acquiring which, the Supreme Being, the immutable Truth, is known."<sup>157</sup> Elsewhere, Bhagavatpāda clarifies that the utility of *brahma-vidyā* lies in the eradication of ignorance, and from that, the complete cessation of transmigration.<sup>158</sup>

On who can be an *upadeśaka*, teacher, of *brahma-vidyā*, it is said, "This cannot be known in the right manner if taught by one of shallow understanding, for It needs to be inquired into variously. There can be no comprehension if imparted by one who sees himself as different from It."<sup>159</sup>

This clearly means that none but a *brahma- $\text{\textit{niṣṭha}}$*  is competent to impart *brahma-vidyā*.

Further, compassion is the additional requirement for one to be a *Guru* who imparts *brahma-vidyā* (vide *nāma* 2). In the context of *nāmas* 1 and 2, it has been decidedly demonstrated that His Holiness was a *brahma- $\text{\textit{niṣṭha}}$*  and also an ocean of compassion. He was thus pre-eminently qualified to be an *upadeśaka* of *Brahma-vidyā*.

His Holiness's teachings were characterised by absolute clarity, sharp precision, forceful reasoning, tremendous lucidity, intense practicality and the unmistakable stamp of realization. Further, His teachings always came with His infallible grace that would enable the seeker to understand and carry out His teachings and instructions.



His Holiness accorded high priority to spiritual aspirants. An Italian came to Sringeri in November 1974, hoping to receive some clarifications regarding Gauḍapādācārya's *Kārikās* on the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad*. However, His Holiness was rather busy at that time with the *śiṣya-svikāra* ceremony slated for 11<sup>th</sup> November. Hence, it was felt that it would be impossible for the foreign aspirant to have a private audience with His Holiness. Yet, in response to his request, He readily consented to spare time and, with Sri Subbaramaiya acting as an interpreter, answered his questions and resolved his doubts. On later being asked about this, His Holiness said, "He is sincere and has come all the way to India to learn. It is my duty to provide him clarifications and, hence, obligatory on me to spare time for him."



On an occasion, three *brahmacārins* from North India came to Sringeri to have His Holiness's *darśana* and obtain spiritual guidance from Him. It was around 6.40 in the evening when they reached Narasimhavana. As His Holiness had finished granting audience that evening and was to proceed for His evening bath in a few minutes, His attendant was hesitant to inform Him about their arrival. His Holiness, however, specifically asked him, "Has anybody come for *darśana* now?" The attendant answered in the affirmative. "Usher them in," ordered His Holiness.

Accordingly, the *brahmacārins* were led to the presence of His Holiness. Once they had prostrated and were seated, His Holiness asked them, in Hindi, where they were from, as also the purpose of their visit. They said that they were interested in progressing in the spiritual path and reverentially posed their questions. His Holiness began His reply in right earnest. Since He chose to give elaborate answers, it was around 7.15 p.m. before the first of their major questions was dealt with. The question-and-answer session continued with His Holiness ignoring the attendant's repeated reminder

to Him that it was getting late for the 8 o'clock *pūjā*. It was around 9 p.m. before His Holiness finished answering all their questions. He then gave them His complete blessings and *prasāda*. They were visibly overjoyed and expressed their gratitude. They left spiritually charged, with joyful hearts and fond memories. In the middle of the discussion His Holiness turned to a disciple present there and said, “How sincere they are! It is delightful to be of some help to them. It does not matter however much my bath is delayed. Their requirements deserve top priority.”

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One day, His Holiness was not keeping well and *darśana* had been highly restricted. A spiritual aspirant in his twenties had travelled a long distance to see His Holiness and was to leave the next day. When the matter was made known to His Holiness, He had him called in. Unmindful of strain, He heard the aspirant thoroughly and then gave him invaluable spiritual advice.

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Dr. Gandhi Bai, a retired District Medical Officer from Madurai, was very devoted to His Holiness. On one of her visits to Sringeri, His Holiness asked her what she wanted. She promptly replied that she sought *Vedāntic* instruction from Him. Pleased, His Holiness remarked to those around Him, “Various people ask for this and that, whereas this Doctor-*ammā* seeks *Vedāntic* instruction. While all others seek what is *anitya*, ephemeral, she seeks what is *nitya*, permanent, which is what is most essential in life.”

Thereafter, over the next twenty minutes, His Holiness instructed her in the essence of the *Upaniṣads*, and kindled in her a keen interest in *Vedānta*. After this initiation, she studied *Vedānta* deeply and also shared her knowledge with many others who came to listen to her expositions. She had an idol of Bhagavatpāda installed at her residence, which His Holiness graced during one of His visits to Madurai.

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## 61. भक्तहार्दतमोभेत्ता

## *Bhakta-hārda-tamo-bhettā*

One who cut asunder the darkness in the hearts of devotees

Lord Kṛṣṇa speaks of the *guṇa* of *tamas* as follows: “O Bharata prince! Know *tamas* born of ignorance, to be delusive for all embodied beings; it binds them through the tendencies of inadvertence, sloth and sleepiness.”<sup>160</sup> He further says that the fruit of activity driven by this *tamas*, which is inevitably *adhārmic*, is only ignorance.<sup>161</sup> Thus, this *tamas* which is born of ignorance begets only *adharma* that in turn leads to further sinking into ignorance. *Tamas* is therefore perilous, for it only drives one into lower births and hence, greater suffering.

This *guṇa* of *tamas* is resident in the mind and is hence referred to as *hārda-tamas* here. His Holiness was a *bhetta*, destroyer, of this *hārda-tamas* of His *bhaktas*, devotees, thus weaning them away from sloth and dullness as well as from the tendency to commit sin.



The following is His Holiness's response to the question as to what is to be done if the mind becomes *tāmasika*, that is dull or sleepy during meditation.

“If a person is alert, he can discern that his mind is becoming passive and dull. By sensing the onset of torpor and awakening and focussing the mind, he can deal with dullness. The *japa* that is being done may be intensified. If this is done, the mind will become alert. But if, in spite of effort, the mind continues to drift into the state of torpor, it is advisable to take a small break, have a walk and then recommence *dhyāna*. On certain occasions, the mind should not be forced to meditate. If there is tiredness, it is advisable to commence *dhyāna* after a break. But, if indolence is the reason for the dullness, one should force the mind to continue with meditation.”



[What follows is His Holiness's exposition on the duties of children towards parents, neglecting which will lead only to sin.]

Parents strive for the welfare of their children. They put up with innumerable sufferings and inconveniences for the sake of their offspring. So it is not surprising that the *Veda* declares, “Revere your mother as a god. Revere your father as a god.”<sup>162</sup> Manu states that the mother is ten times more venerable than the father. A mother's love for her child is intense and unconditional. In any case, it is impossible for a person to repay his debt of gratitude to either of his parents. Were he to be ungrateful to them, he would be committing a heinous sin for which there is no expiation. The scriptures speak of the duties of a son towards his parents.

When his parents are alive, he should obey them. After they have passed away, he should perform the *śrāddha* ceremony every year. The performance of *śrāddha* at least once at Gaya is deemed laudable. It is well known that money sent through money-order remains at the post-office but an equivalent amount of cash is delivered to the intended recipient. Likewise, by the power of God, what is offered by a man with faith at a properly-performed *śrāddha* ceremony reaches those for whom the offering is intended in a form beneficial to them, regardless of whether they dwell in the world of manes or have been reborn on the earth. The *śrāddha* ceremony benefits the performer too, for he obtains much *punya* and the blessings of the manes, while abstaining from performing *śrāddha* only brings him sin.



[The following is a teaching of His Holiness regarding a major factor that contributes to a *tāmasika* mind.]

Food does influence the mind. Eatables are classified as *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. *Sāttvika* food is pure and confers strength and good health; curd is an instance of a *sāttvika* product. *Rājasika* food stimulates desire and anger; an example is a pungent item. *Tāmasika* food leads to sloth, sleepiness, etc. Putrid food and ort are instances of *tāmasika* eatables. The mentality of the cook and the presence of defiling factors, such as a strand of hair, also have a bearing on the purity of food. Care should be taken to consume only properly-prepared, *sāttvika* food.



## 62. भिक्षुकोत्तमरूपधृत् *Bhikṣukottama-rūpa-dhṛt*

One who donned the form of an ascetic of the highest order

The scripture describes four orders of *bhikṣuka*, ascetics: *kuṭīcaka*, *bahūdaka*, *haṁsa* and *paramahaṁsa*, each successive one being superior to its predecessor. There are rules specified for each of these orders of *saṁnyāsa*, with the following being the external marks of the mendicants of the highest order, *paramahaṁsa-saṁnyāsin*: “The *paramahaṁsa* ascetic is devoid of tuft and sacred thread... wears a single loincloth and a single (lower) garment, has a bamboo *daṇḍa* (staff), wears a single (upper) garment or is intent on smearing *bhasma* (sacred ash) on the body and has renounced everything.”<sup>163</sup> *Paramahaṁsa-saṁnyāsins* are not supposed to chant the *Gāyatrī-mantra*; *Praṇava-japa*, that is the *japa* of ‘*Om*’, is for them.

His Holiness was One who *rūpa-dhṛt*, donned the form, of a *bhikṣuka-uttama*, an ascetic of the highest order. The scripture states that the ascetic of the fourth (and highest) order, the *paramahaṁsa-saṁnyāsin*, is verily Lord Nārāyaṇa.<sup>164</sup>



On 21<sup>st</sup> May, 1931, Sri Srinivasa Sastry did *sandhyā-vandana* and then paid His respects to His *Guru* and received His blessings and consent for all functions of that day and the next. After the completion of a *Gaṇapati-homa*, He paid obeisance at the *samādhis* of the previous pontiffs and at the temples of Bhagavatpāda and Goddess Śāradāmbā. He performed the *aṣṭa-śrāddhas* that day as part of which He made offerings even to Himself as done to the manes, and with this, He completed once and for all His ritualistic obligations to His progenitors and became decoupled, as it were, from His life so far. His head was then tonsured; just a few strands of hair were left unshaven in His tuft. Having bathed in the river, He performed some purifying rituals. He fasted that day. He kept vigil in front of a sacred fire

the whole of that night, with His mind on God; He mentally repeated the *Gāyatrī-mantra*.

After bathing in the river the next morning and completing His *sandhyā-vandana*, Sri Srinivasa Sastry performed the *Puruṣa-sūkta-homa* and *Virajā-homa*. Standing in waist-deep water in the river He discarded the sacred thread, tuft and clothes, and then took the vow of *saṁnyāsa*. With this He became a *paramahansa-saṁnyāsin*. When He had taken a few steps towards the north in the river, the *Jagadguru* called out, “*bho āyusman, ita ehi* (O long-lived one, come here).” On His *Guru* calling Him, His Holiness approached Him with all humility. As described under *nāma* 25, the senior *Jagadguru* then gave Him ochre clothes, and later a *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu*.



### 63. भेदवादीभपञ्चास्यः                      *Bheda-vādī-ibha-pañcāsyah*

One who is a lion to elephants, the proponents of duality

‘*Bheda*’ or distinction presupposes the presence of more than one entity. One who holds that duality is real, is a *bheda-vādin*. The *Upaniṣads* speak of the *bheda-vādin* as ignorant, akin to a slave<sup>165</sup>, petty, mortal<sup>166</sup> and subject to fear.<sup>167</sup> On the contrary, for the *advaitin*, non-duality is the Absolute Truth and all duality is mere illusion. Of such a one who has realized the *Brahman-Ātman* oneness and sees nothing as different from himself, the *Upaniṣad* says, “Where he does not comprehend anything other, that is massive and what is massive is immortal.”<sup>168</sup> His realisation is characterised as, “Cessation of the world, tranquil, auspicious and non-dual.”<sup>169</sup>

The *bheda-vādin* is more of a tough nut to crack if he is a learned intellectual who harbours false notions buttressed by flawed reasoning. He is therefore spoken of as analogous to a burly elephant. His Holiness is described here as a *pañcāsyā*, lion, to the *bheda-vādin* elephants, for the lion vanquishes elephants. It is not without significance that the word ‘*pañcāsyā*’ has been used here, for it also means Śiva, the five-faced One. Śiva conquered the elephant demon Gajāsura who was terrorizing the virtuous much as the *bheda-vādin* confounds the minds of even those on the right path.



A questioner once had the following dialogue with His Holiness.

Questioner: In dim light, a rope may falsely appear as a snake. Similarly, the Supreme Being appears as the world. This, I have learnt from the *Śāstras*. If a rope is to falsely appear as a snake, someone different from both the snake and the rope is necessary. Similarly, if *Brahman* appears as the world, an observer, distinct from *Brahman* and the world, is necessary. Such an entity is not there. Therefore, is the illustration proper?

HH: An analogue can never match the original perfectly. If it does, then it will be non-different from what is sought to be illustrated. The rope-snake example is advanced only to show that one thing can falsely appear as another. Only this aspect of the illustration should be considered and not the existence of a perceiver different from the rope and snake.

Q: For a person to mistake a rope for a snake, he must have seen a real snake earlier. Else, the wrong notion of a snake cannot arise in him. Thus, the mistake presupposes the existence of a real snake. In the same way, if the Supreme Being is to be mistakenly seen as the world, there should be a real world. Is it wrong to argue in this manner?

HH: Yes. It is wrong. To mistake a rope for a snake, knowledge of a snake is necessary. It is incorrect to say that only a real snake can produce such knowledge. I will give an example. A person mistakes a tree to be a ghost. He saw a ghost in a dream had by him earlier. When he sees the tree now, he misapprehends it to be the ghost dreamt of by him. Did that ghost really exist? No, because it was seen only in a dream. Everyone knows that whatever is seen in the dream is unreal. So, it is only the knowledge of the snake that is necessary and not a real snake. Similarly, for the Supreme *Brahman* to appear as the world, there is no need for a real world to exist.

Q: Is *Māyā* real? If it is, then it will be wrong to say that *Brahman* is *advītya* (non-dual). Nor can we assert that *Māyā* does not exist, since we are able to see the effects of *Māyā*. What is the nature of *Māyā*?

HH: *Māyā* cannot be said to be ‘*sat* (absolutely real)’ because it is destroyed the moment true knowledge dawns, just as a dream disappears when we wake up. Hence, there is no second entity called *Māyā*, different from *Brahman*, just as there is no dream-object apart from the dreamer. *Māyā* cannot also be termed ‘*asat* (non-existent)’ as we can see its effects in the form of the world. That is why it has been said, with logic as the basis, that *Māyā* is neither *sat* nor *asat*.

Q: It is said that everything except *Brahman* is false. Then, are not the *Vedas* also false? If so, will not *Advaita* philosophy, which is based on the *Vedas*, be untrue?

HH: *Advaitins* say that the world is untrue from the standpoint of the Absolute. They do not, however, deny the empirical validity of the world. From the *vyāvahārika* (empirical) standpoint, to the extent that the world is admitted to be true, so are the *Vedas*. The *Vedas*, whose reality is no less than that of the world, give rise to the knowledge that is potent enough to sublimate the ephemeral world. What shines thereafter, is just the non-dual *Brahman*. Thus, *Advaita-vedānta* is quite in order.

Further, no damage will be done even if it is postulated that the *Vedas* are not real. This is because even an unreal thing can give us a real effect. For example, assume that a tiger chases us in our dream. We may wake up due to the fear produced. Here, the unreal tiger brings about the real effect of waking up. Hence, even if we say that the *Vedas* are unreal like the world, undoubtedly liberating knowledge can arise from its teachings. In this way too, it can be seen that *Advaita* philosophy is quite in order.

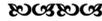


64. भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायकः *Bhukti-mukti-pradāyakaḥ*

One who specially bestowed both worldly good and liberation

Lord Kṛṣṇa says, “O Arjuna, four types of blessed people worship Me - the afflicted, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the knower.”<sup>170</sup> Bhagavatpāda blessed with a shower of golden gooseberries, the poor lady who gave Him her only possession, a dried up gooseberry; He blessed with liberation, His disciple, the greatly devoted but not very bright Giri. Likewise, people from diverse walks of life having different temperaments and requirements approached His Holiness for not only *mukti*, liberation, but also for *bhukti*, worldly prosperity.

His Holiness is described here as not just a *dāyaka*, giver, but a *pra-dāyaka*, special giver, of *bhukti-mukti*. The *Tantra-śāstra* says of the Mother Goddess, “Where there is worldly prosperity, there is no liberation, and where there is liberation there is no worldly enjoyment. However, for those who are intent on serving the gloriously beautiful Goddess, worldly prosperity and liberation are indeed both in the palm of their hand.”<sup>171</sup> Similar to the Mother Goddess, His Holiness blessed His devotees with not just either, but both, *bhukti* and *mukti*. After all, spiritual *sāadhanā* could be adversely affected when basic worldly needs are not met or problems not handled, and His Holiness took care of His devotees’ well-being completely.



Sri P. S. Venkatasubba Rao once recalled, “After studies, I took up employment. I worked as a manager in a company headquartered at Bangalore (Bengaluru), but I had to travel frequently and tour large estates. I began to get dissatisfied with my conditions of work, for I found the environment non-traditional. Dejected, I sought His Holiness’s advice. ‘Do not quit your job,’ He instructed, ‘for if you do so now, you will stand to lose not only materially but also spiritually.’ I did as instructed, and only stood to gain in precisely the manner He had indicated. Soon, the company’s management changed and the official climate improved to my satisfaction.”



Professor Narasimhan, who taught Economics at Madura College, Madurai (and who later became Manager of the Sringeri Math at Madurai) was a *Śrīvidyā-upāsaka* and was very orthodox in his habits. He used to have *darśana* of His Holiness whenever he could, but had never spoken with Him. When he was about 52 years old, he suffered a mild heart attack. His doctor cautioned him that if he continued with his cycling and did not take his medicines regularly, he would end up with serious problems. He, however, did not heed these warnings.

He developed a desire to worship a *Gowrī-śaṅkara*. When His Holiness was camping at Madurai, therefore, he went for *darśana*, with the intention of requesting His Holiness to bless the *Gowrī-śaṅkara* that he had taken with him. His Holiness enquired about him and asked him what he wanted. The professor replied that he taught at the Madura College and that he would like His Holiness to kindly bless the *Gowrī-śaṅkara* for him to worship daily.

His Holiness took the *Gowrī-śaṅkara* from him, and keeping it on His right lap, remained in deep thought for a minute before giving it to him. Even as the professor turned to leave, His Holiness called him, took the *Gowrī-śaṅkara* again from him, and having closed His eyes, meditated for a full ten minutes. Then, uttering “Śiva”, He gave the *Gowrī-śaṅkara* to the devotee, and told him, “All will be well with you. There is no problem for you.”

After this special blessing from His Holiness, his heart ailment completely vanished, much to everyone’s surprise. He continued to cycle and perform all his activities and remained quite healthy. He was deeply convinced that His Holiness not only blessed the *Gowrī-śaṅkara* for his spiritual upliftment but also saved his life.



In 1988, Sri Naganathan, who was about 40 years old, went to Sringeri with a *sphaṭika-liṅga*. He desired to have it blessed by His Holiness so that he could worship it every day. His Holiness readily took the *liṅga*, and gave it to the devotee with His blessings for his spiritual well-being.

On the occasion, the devotee, who had a seven-year-old daughter and who had a long-cherished desire to have a son too, expressed this desire of his to His Holiness. His Holiness said, “With the blessings of Śāradāmbā, a son will be born to you.” Much to the joy of the parents, a son was born to them the very next year, and they named him ‘Prasad’.



Sri Srinivasa Rao, trustee of the *Śrī Ananta-padmanābha* temple at Adyar in Chennai, reminisced, “I was once plagued by problems and had lost my mental peace. I decided to seek His Holiness’s grace to surmount the problems, and went to Sringeri with my wife. His Holiness saw me and

smilingly queried, ‘What is the matter?’ I replied that I had certain problems that I wished to place before His Holiness. He said, ‘Go and have *darśana* at all the shrines. We will talk thereafter’, and dismissed us.

“After having visited all the shrines, we went for His *darśana* at about 2 o’clock. He gave us *prasāda* in the front hall of Sacchidananda Vilasa, and said, ‘You have to reach Mangaluru by tonight, isn’t it? That would mean that you need to start now itself, else you will have to navigate through the forest roads at night and would be attracting the attention of wild elephants. Hence, you may start now.’ Having said so, He turned to go back inside. I immediately said, ‘I have come with the firm decision that I will not leave without solutions to my problems from Your Holiness.’ Turning around, His Holiness smiled at me and asked, ‘What are your problems?’

“I said, ‘My first daughter’s marriage is not getting fixed, in spite of us having searched for a suitable groom for long.’ His Holiness said, ‘Do not worry. In one week this problem of yours will be solved. Next problem?’ I said, ‘My factory was burnt down by a major fire. Production has therefore come to a standstill and the losses are huge.’ His Holiness blessed, ‘The losses will be made up and you will begin production. Your turnover will soon cross Rs. 100 crores per year. Do not worry.’ Every word He said came true, with the insurance company making good the losses due to the fire.”



### 65. भयशोकादिरहितः *Bhaya-śokādi-rahitaḥ*

One devoid of fear, dejection, etc.

Bhagavatpāda mentions *śoka* (sorrow), *moha* (delusion), *bhaya* (fear), etc. as being born of false perception.<sup>172</sup> *Harṣa*, elation, is the opposite of *śoka*, and the two are often spoken of together as in the *Śruti* passage, “The steadfast one, knowing that the Supreme Being is attainable through fixing the mind on the *Ātman*, rids himself of *śoka* and *harṣa*.”<sup>173</sup> This *nāma* is therefore taken as dealing with *bhaya*, *harṣa-śoka* and *moha*.

It is a matter of common knowledge that *bhaya*, fear, agitates the mind. Analysing the world, Bhartr̥hari says that everything is fraught with *bhaya*, including enjoyment of sense pleasures, family reputation, wealth, prestige, power, beauty, celebration of one’s learning and virtues, as well as the body, and concludes with the remedy: “Dispassion alone is free from fear.”<sup>174</sup> In the final reckoning, only one who has realized the oneness of *Ātman-Brahman* has no fear from anything whatsoever.<sup>175</sup>

*Harṣa* arises on experiencing pleasure, and *śoka*, on the experience of what is disliked and on the separation from what is liked.<sup>176</sup> Elation poses a serious problem as explained by R̥ṣi Āpastambha: “The elated one develops conceit;

the conceited one transgresses *dharmā*; on transgressing *dharmā*, once again there is indeed the experience of hell.”<sup>177</sup> Dejection is, of course, never a desirable state for anybody, for it only causes sorrow and delusion. The way out from *harṣa-śoka* is to maintain a sameness, which is the practice of *karma-yoga* marked by the performance of actions for the sake of God, detachment and same-sightedness in success and failure.<sup>178</sup> For the total cessation of all sorrows, the scriptures declare, “The knower of the *Ātman* overcomes sorrow.”<sup>179</sup>

Bhagavatpāda says, “*Moha* is misapprehension or lack of discrimination born of false impressions.”<sup>180</sup> It is to Arjuna who was steeped in such delusion, that Kṛṣṇa says, “Therefore arise, O Arjuna, with the resolve to fight the war.”<sup>181</sup> Essentially, Kṛṣṇa asks him to fight because it is his own *dharmā*, for following one’s own *dharmā* purifies the mind and helps in destroying delusion. Complete destruction of delusion, and hence sorrow, takes place only when the fundamental ignorance of own’s true nature is destroyed.

When this *nāma* asserts that His Holiness was free from fear, sorrow, etc., it means that He was eminently established in all the cures for these maladies. Above all, He was established in the non-dual bliss beyond ignorance where mental vicissitudes are inconsequential, and hence was beyond all fear, sorrow, elation and delusion. In His presence and by His guidance and grace, others were also cured of these malaises.



During His Holiness’s first All-India tour, a young boy once darted across the road in front of the pilot van. The driver slammed the brakes and the van screeched to a halt directly over the boy, who had slipped and fallen flat. Fortunately, he fell between the wheels and escaped uninjured though the vehicle was stationed atop him. The villagers who beheld the scene presumed the boy dead and rushed in a rage towards the hapless driver, who was already stricken with trepidation. Meanwhile, the boy crawled under the van, emerged from the rear and took to his heels, without the others noticing him. Not finding the boy, the irate crowd began to rain blows on the driver. In moments, he was bleeding. The security guard got out of the vehicle to rescue the driver but that was not to be his day. He grappled with a villager who attempted to snatch his rifle and soon, both went tumbling down the slope. The workhand managed to run away with the rifle, leaving the pitiable security guard not only injured but also very insecure.

In the meantime, His Holiness’s car arrived there. He immediately identified the head of the group and beckoned to him. Tempers ran high and villagers rushed towards His Holiness’s car, gesticulating wildly. His Holiness was not in the least afraid. The force of their ire was spent the moment His

Holiness addressed them with soft words. His Holiness's magnetic personality and soothing words had a miraculous effect on the furious gathering. Wrath gave way to reverence so much so that soon, the leader and the others stood with folded hands before His Holiness beseeching Him to stay at that place and grace them. At His Holiness's instance, the leader sent for the man who had snatched the rifle away and returned it to the security guard. The villagers had obtained a *Guru* and order was restored.

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In 1977, His Holiness's *ṣaṣṭyabdapūrti* celebrations were held at Chennai with great devotional fervour. Devotees from all over the country converged in Chennai for the sacred occasion. An *atirudra-mahāyajña* and a *sahasracandī-mahāyajña* were conducted and the celebrations spanned several days, concluding on 11<sup>th</sup> November, the sacred *vardhanī* day.

His Holiness's attitude towards the functions were expressed by Him when He addressed the gathering of devotees during the celebration. He said, "It is incumbent upon a king performing the *Rājasūya-yāga* to hear his praise for sometime. I am no monarch but an ascetic. There is no obligation on a *saṁnyāsin* to hear His own praise and, in fact, it is not even advisable. Further, I am not in the least interested in being eulogised. But here I am sitting in a *sabhā* wherein people are praising me. You are all deriving pleasure by panegyrising me and are keen that I should be present. I have nothing to gain by praise or loose by criticism. Hence I am not raising any objections to the celebrations and am present as a witness."

His Holiness's *Guru's jayantī* was also celebrated during the functions. Speaking on the occasion, His Holiness outlined His *Guru's* life, talked of the great grace His *Guru* had conferred upon Him and declared, "My *Guru* was a great *jīvanmukta*. His birthday has fallen amidst these celebrations. I firmly feel that it is for this occasion that all the functions are meant."

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Once a disciple, H. S. Suryanarayana, asked His Holiness, "Where is Śiva? How will He appear?" His Holiness said, "Śiva is right here. He is in everyone; in you, in your wife, in your friend and in your servant. You don't realise Him because of the delusion that you and the others exist separate from Him."

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66. भवभीतिनिवारणः *Bhava-bhīti-nivāraṇaḥ*

One who dispelled the fear of transmigratory existence

It is natural for a discerning person who analyses the ageless transmigratory cycle of births and deaths, to develop *bhīti*, fear, of *bhava*, this cycle.

Bhagavatpāda portrays the grave concern of such a person as he approaches a *Guru*, thus: “I am scalded by the fire of transmigratory existence that is hard to subdue; I am terrified and surrendered unto you; please save me!” Bhagavatpāda then states that the great *Guru*, looking at him with glances drenched in the essence of compassion, must grant him freedom from fear, and must compassionately teach him the Truth.<sup>182</sup>

Unless the mind is relieved from the grip of such fear, the fear itself acts as a hindrance to spiritual progress. Nothing other than the comforting assurance of a realised and competent *Guru* can rid one of that fear so as to enable one to practice enquiry into the Truth, as taught by the *Guru*, with a calm and resolute mind. Further, the *nivāraṇa*, complete eradication, of this fear happens only by the direct realisation of the Supreme Truth as imparted by the *Guru*, which gets rid of the illusion of duality itself. His Holiness is described here as having been such a *Guru*.



The following incident was narrated by Sri Narahari who was a seventeen-year-old working at the *Maṭha* at the time of this incident.

“It was 1982, when both Their Holinesses were camping at Gaya. They had retired for the night after *pūjā*. It was past 11 p.m. I tried to sleep but fear kept me from sleeping. There was a small stream, all that was left of a river, flowing alongside the *Maṭha*. A cremation was taking place on the other side of the stream. Lights in the hall where I was sleeping were off. The wail from the cremation site and the sight of the flames reflecting from the walls inside the hall with the shadows of people moving around the pyre virtually scared me to death.

“I woke up Sri Ananta Bhatta who was sleeping near the *pūjā* room downstairs. Reluctantly, he came up the stairs with me. He was snoring in a matter of minutes, but I lay awake rolling in my bed for a long time. Fatigue should have put me to sleep some time around 3 a.m.

“I was woken up at around 5.30 a.m. The lights were on in the rooms of both Their Holinesses. His Holiness came out of His room and told me to come into His room. He then asked me, “Did you sleep well last night?” I answered that I had hardly slept. I then explained the cause of my fear. With an understanding smile, He comforted me with soft words. His words made such an impact on me that I can recollect them even today. He said, ‘A dead body being consigned to flames is just like firewood being burnt. Suppose that we keep some logs of wood and burn them. Will you be afraid?’ I answered in the negative. He continued, ‘Life has left the dead body, and hence it is just like a piece of wood. Burning it is therefore just like burning a log of wood. Hence, there is no cause for fear. Do not be afraid anymore.’ I slept peacefully that night. In fact, I have had no such fears ever since.”

His Holiness got rid of the agony caused by the fear that Sri Narahari harboured, using a powerful analogy that the young lad could visualize, understand and relate to. Thus, He struck at the very root of the boy's fear by getting rid of his underlying delusion through the enunciation of fact.



[The following parable presented by His Holiness shows how the mind is the cause of both *samsāra* and liberation.]

A three-year-old boy asked for an apple. As there was none at home, his mother offered him other fruits instead. He refused them and insisted that he be given only an apple. His mother told him that she would procure one for him in the evening. He, however, began to cry and continued wailing till his indulgent mother took him to a shop and allowed him to pick an apple of his choice. It was when his desire was gratified that he smiled joyfully.

His seven-year-old sister, who had witnessed all this, desired to have some fun at his expense. She informed him with assumed gravity, "Without realizing it, you ate a seed. I saw you do so. Do you know what will happen? An apple tree will start growing in your stomach. It will cause you great pain and, emerging from your nose and mouth, make you look funny." He swallowed her tale hook, line and sinker and turned pale with fright. Seeing him petrified, his mother ascertained the cause and did her best to pacify him. She emphasized more than once that his sister had been pulling his leg. But her explanation fell on deaf ears. He continued to remain terror-stricken and did not take even a drop of water for hours. His mother started to worry about him. So, the moment her husband returned from work, she informed him about what had happened.

He held his son in his arms and said in a gentle reassuring voice, "Normally, no tree grows inside the stomach when an apple seed is swallowed. Even when it does, it is small. In fact, it is so tiny that it does not cause any pain and cannot be seen by others. So, even if a tree develops within you, you will neither suffer nor become the butt of ridicule. You like apples. Once there is a tree within you, you will have a constant supply of apples. You can put your fingers inside your mouth and pluck out a small fruit which you can then chew and swallow. It would be wonderful to be able to get delicious apples any time you desire them. Is it not?"

The boy nodded, with the traces of a smile forming on his face. "Do you want the tree to grow or not?" queried the father. "Definitely I do", responded the boy. "The seed may not sprout. But if it does, then, to help it develop into a tree, you will have to eat food and drink water. If you starve yourself, the tree will die," declared the father. Promptly, the boy ran to his mother and asked for his meal and a glass of water. His terror was completely replaced by joy and enthusiasm.

The boy was initially unhappy because of his unfulfilled desire for an apple. Thereafter, he was overcome with trepidation owing to his foolishly-imagined future danger to the body he was intensely fond of. His mind was thus the cause of his unhappiness before and after he obtained an apple.

The *Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad* declares, “The mind is of two kinds, pure and impure. It is impure when with desire; it is pure when devoid of desire.... The mind indeed is responsible for the bondage and liberation of humans. When attached to objects, it brings about bondage. When devoid of the thoughts of objects, it leads to liberation.”<sup>183</sup>



### 67. महावाक्यविवेकज्ञः *Mahāvākya-viveka-jñāḥ*

One who knew, through discrimination, the import of the *mahāvākyas*

The *mahāvākyas* are profound statements that occur in the scripture and make known the oneness of the *Ātman* and *Brahman*. Four *mahāvākyas*, one belonging to each of the four *Vedas*, are particularly esteemed, and are as follows: (1) ‘*prajñānam brahma* (Consciousness is *Brahman*)’<sup>184</sup> of the *Aitareya-upaniṣad*, *R̥g-veda*, (2) ‘*ahaṁ brahmāsmi* (I am *Brahman*)’<sup>185</sup> of the *Bṛhadāranyaka-upaniṣad*, *Yajur-veda*, (3) ‘*tattvamasi* (You are That)’<sup>186</sup> of the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad*, *Sāma-veda*, and (4) ‘*ayamātmā brahma* (This *Ātman* is *Brahman*)’<sup>187</sup> of the *Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad*, *Atharva-veda*.

The *mahāvākya* ‘*ahaṁ brahmāsmi*’, for instance, states “I am *Brahman*,” where “I” is not to be understood as what is not the *Ātman*, such as the body, mind, I-sense or intellect. Here, *viveka*, which is the power of discrimination between the *Ātman* and what is not the *Ātman*, is a sine qua non in order to understand properly and completely, the import of the *mahāvākya*; trying to understand it without *viveka* would either be an understanding at a superficial level not marked by experience, or would result in gross misinterpretation which could turn out to be calamitous. This *nāma*, therefore, specifically includes the word ‘*viveka*’ to convey that His Holiness was One who had the knowledge of the *mahāvākyas* from discriminative insight. Indeed, such knowledge of the *mahāvākyas* found complete consummation in Him, for He was established in their import, *Brahman*.



[After repeatedly attaining *savikalpa-samādhi* on *Brahman* (as described briefly under *nāma* 59), His Holiness further cogitated as summarized below, on the import of the *mahāvākyas*, and attained *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.]

On the afternoon of 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1935, His Holiness read and pondered on the verses of Śrī Sadaśiva-brahmendra’s *Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa*. Calling to mind the portion that conveys, ‘The Supreme *Ātman* shines pure,

enlightened and devoid of all variety'<sup>188</sup> and, specifically, the part '*vigalita-sarva-vikalpaḥ* (devoid of all variety)' therein, He reflected as follows.

“Even in *samādhi*, I have not realised the *Ātman* as shining totally free from diversity. After all, the sense of ‘I’ and the awareness of the distinction of the concentrator, concentration and the object of concentration also shine, no matter how feebly. I do understand from the words of the scripture, supportive reasoning and my *savikalpa-samādhis* that I am pure consciousness. The ripening of my present understanding and conviction into firm realisation would be greatly facilitated by the disappearance of even the vestige of duality during *samādhi*, leaving just the *Ātman* as residue. The thorough vanishing of duality during *samādhi* would, for me, be helpful.

“Further, while I almost become identified with bliss in *samādhi*, nonetheless, I do, to a minute degree, stand apart from it as the one who enjoys it. Infinite bliss is, on the authority of the scripture, my very nature. What is my very nature cannot, undoubtedly, be known objectively by me. It is *avidyā* that conjures diversity in the Truth, which is non-dual. Thus, no matter how great it may be, bliss experienced by me as an object lies in the realm of *avidyā*. It must not be savoured but transcended.”

He discerned that by establishing His mind on the *Ātman* and remaining without any thought, He would be acting in accordance with the Lord’s instruction in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, ‘One should gradually withdraw by means of the intellect endowed with firmness; making the mind established in the *Ātman*, one should not think of anything.’<sup>189</sup>

He then opened Bhagavatpāda’s *Viveka-cūdāmaṇi* at random. His eyes fell on a verse in which *nirvikalpa-samādhi* is spoken of. He read it and also the succeeding three verses; they too deal with *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

The import of these four verses is, “When thus purified (of misunderstanding and the like about the Truth) by continuous practice, the mind merges in *Brahman* (by remaining without any thought, in the form of *Brahman*), then there is *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, which brings about the effortless experience of non-dual bliss. By this *samādhi*, there occurs the destruction of the knot of impressions (rooted in ignorance), the annihilation of all one’s actions (leading to rebirth) and the manifestation, without effort, of one’s true nature, within and without, everywhere and forever. Reflection (on the Truth) is a hundred times superior to hearing (the Truth). Meditation (on the Truth) is a hundred thousand times greater than reflection. *Nirvikalpa-samādhi* is infinitely superior to that. *Brahman*, the Reality, is realised clearly, with steady certitude, by means of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* but not otherwise, for, then, because of the inconstancy of mental activity, the realisation would be mixed up with other notions.”<sup>190</sup>

His reading enhanced his keenness on going beyond the stage of *savikalpa-samādhi*.

That evening on the hill when He started His *dhyāna*, His mind entered *savikalpa-samādhi*. Though the bliss was very great, He restrained Himself from being overwhelmed by it and thought, “I am not the one experiencing bliss but am bliss itself.”

Suddenly there was a sharp change, and He plunged into *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (as described in the context of *nāma* 1).

After about two hours, when He opened His eyes, He could see the scene in front of Him and yet did not see it, for He was quite indifferent to the apparent diversity rooted in names and forms. So clear was the realisation that He was of the very nature of absolute existence that He apprehended nothing whatsoever as existing apart from Him. Everything was like bubbles on the ocean that was Himself. When He rose after some time, His body felt light like cotton wool and as He walked down the hill, it seemed as if He were on a moving canoe.



## 68. महामहिमसंयुतः *Mahā-mahima-saṁyutaḥ*

One who was endowed with immense glory

The *Upaniṣad* recounts a conversation thus: “Nārada asked, ‘Where is that *Bhagavān* established?’ to which Sanatkumāra answered, ‘In His own glory if at all some support is desired; in the absolute sense, He is not established even in His glory, for He is never dependant on anything.’”<sup>191</sup> This *nāma* describes His Holiness as *saṁ-yuta*, well-endowed, with *mahā-mahima*, immense glory, to show that His Holiness’s greatness was completely of the kind mentioned in the above passage of the *Śruti*, and nothing less. The following passage of the *Upaniṣad* that captures the glory of the Lord, applied to His Holiness: “He has neither a source nor any instrument. None equals or surpasses Him. Supreme is His power, which is spoken of variously. His knowledge, power and activity are spontaneous.”<sup>192</sup>

People of various genres came into contact with His Holiness - those seeking blessings for various reasons, those who wanted to serve Him, those who wanted to serve the *Maṭha*, those who came because He was their *kula-guru*, spiritual aspirants, employees of the *Maṭha*, atheists, scholars and even antagonists. Everyone viewed Him through the different prisms of their intellects. One is only reminded of Arjuna’s words to the Lord after witnessing His glorious *viśvarūpa*: “Taking You for a friend, I have addressed You as ‘O Kṛṣṇa’, ‘O Yādava’, ‘O Friend’! Out of ignorance of this glory of Yours or out of thoughtlessness or affection, I disregarded You,

directly or in Your absence, for the sake of frolic, while walking, lying down, sitting or eating. O Infinite One! Deign to forgive these transgressions of mine.”<sup>193</sup>



The following episode brings out the great glory of His Holiness’s mind.

In 1984, His Holiness was scheduled to leave Sringeri for Bengaluru. A *brahmacārin* from Rishikesh came a little after noon for His *darśana*, when He had already left for His afternoon bath. The *brahmacārin* told a disciple, “I have seven questions pertaining to *Yoga* and *Vedānta* which I wish to pose to His Holiness. They are very important to me. I contacted numerous scholars, practitioners of *Yoga* and *samnyāsins* at Rishikesh, Uttarkashi, Haridwar and Kashi but none was able to satisfy me. A scholar at Kashi directed me to Sringeri, saying, ‘If the *Jagadguru* of Sringeri cannot satisfactorily answer you then there is none in the world who can.’ That is why I have come most eagerly to Sringeri.”

The disciple told him, “His Holiness will be starting on a tour today. If you wait here, you can have His *darśana* just prior to His departure. However, there is no time today for you to have a lengthy private session with Him.” He said, “I will gladly wait to behold Him even if it be for just a moment.” He then told the disciple one of the questions that he had in mind and requested him to tell His Holiness about him.

The disciple fulfilled the *brahmacārin*’s request shortly after His Holiness completed partaking of His *bhikṣā* (meal). His Holiness responded, “The question that he conveyed to you is good and pertinent. As there is no time to spare today, he could, if he wishes, meet me at Bengaluru and pose his queries to me there. If I happen to know the answers, I shall tell him. Else, I shall readily admit that I am not in a position to help him.”

In about half an hour, His Holiness came out to the front portico of Sacchidananda Vilasa. Some devotees, inclusive of the *brahmacārin*, were there. The *brahmacārin* prostrated before His Holiness. His Holiness looked at him with compassion, raised His right hand in a gesture of blessing and said, in Hindi, “May you be happy.” He then moved on. The disciple quickly conveyed to the *brahmacārin* what His Holiness had told him. Even before the disciple finished, he said, “The answers to all my questions became fully known to me when His Holiness blessed me.”

In the car, of His own accord, His Holiness informed the disciple, “When I saw that *brahmacārin*, I was struck with his sincerity. Hence, I requested Śāradāmbā, ‘Please provide him the answers he desires straightaway.’ The kind of sincerity that this spiritual aspirant has deserves to be rewarded.”

When the disciple submitted to His Holiness what the *brahmacārin* had said, His Holiness joined His palms and said, “Śāradāmbā is so gracious.”



Here is an episode that gives a glimpse of the glory of His Holiness’s words.

His Holiness had set out for His evening walk in Narasimhavana, followed by a disciple. Strolling along the pathway adjoining Sacchidananda Vilasa leading to the car shed and looking at the rose and jasmine gardens to His right and left, all of a sudden, He chanted the Kannada nursery rhyme ‘*huyyo huyyo male rāya; hūvina toṭake nīrilla* (O rain god, pour forth, pour forth. There is no water for the flower garden).’ By the time he had chanted it the third time, it started drizzling. As they approached the shelter of the car shed, the drizzle had picked up into rain. Entering the shed, He turned around, faced the garden and surveyed the scene in front of Him with a sweeping glance. After a brief silence, He remarked, ‘This is strange. We were taught this line when we were kids. Whenever I recall it and chant it, it somehow starts raining. See, it is raining now. *Svāmigalu* (referring to His disciple and present Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin) even says, ‘Your Holiness should not recite this rhyme randomly. It will immediately rain.’

On a later date, the disciple mentioned this to Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin. ‘Yes, indeed! I have said so. I have seen it rain after even a casual utterance of that line by His Holiness. It may be surprising but I shall testify to it,’ was His response.



## 69. महाप्रज्ञासमायुक्तः *Mahā-prajñā-samāyuktaḥ*

One who was eminently endowed with great intelligence

The word *prajñā* is defined by the following: “*Smṛti* (memory) pertains to the past, *mati* (wisdom) to the future and *buddhi* (intellect) to the present. *Prajñā* (intelligence) is considered as pertaining to all three spans of time.”<sup>194</sup>

Thus *prajñā* means intelligence, connoting memory, understanding, intellectual ability, hindsight, insight and foresight, aided by abilities such as presence of mind, intuition, pragmatism and imagination. One who is *āyuktaḥ*, endowed with, *mahā-prajñā*, great intelligence, is clearly one who possesses these characteristics to a very high degree.

His Holiness has been described here as One who is *sam-āyuktaḥ*, eminently endowed with, such great intelligence. As such, what is meant is that His Holiness’s *prajñā* or intelligence was not at a level that can even be scaled up to by anyone, but was sheer inimitable genius.



It is one thing to grasp or derive inferences from what is presented, but quite another to intuitively glean something from what is not directly apprehended.

A *brahmacārin* who was given to meditation stayed for some days at Sringeri. His Holiness freely granted him interviews and provided him suitable facilities to carry out his meditative practices. After he went back from Sringeri, His Holiness told a disciple that the *brahmacārin* had meditated well and praised him.

His Holiness then took the disciple to the place where the *brahmacārin* had meditated, pointed out the spot where he had sat, and mentioned the direction he had faced. His Holiness then demonstrated the posture that he had adopted. The *brahmacārin* had not given any of these details to Him; on the contrary, towards the close of his stay, he had asserted to the disciple that His Holiness must be unaware of where and how he had practised meditation in Sringeri.



His Holiness not only had an intuitive insight into the abilities of individuals as shown above, but also had the understanding and vision to foresee the future course of events in general.

Sri R. Pandurangan was desirous of pursuing the M.B.B.S. course and becoming a doctor. When, in the early 1960s, he sought His Holiness's blessings, His Holiness told him that by the grace of the Divine Mother, his wish would be fulfilled. Pandurangan, however, failed to get through the interview. His Holiness again told him that he would obtain the M.B.B.S. degree. Pandurangan failed to secure admission the second time too. His Holiness yet again told him that he would obtain the M.B.B.S. degree. Finally, in the year 1963, Pandurangan joined the College of Integrated Medicine at Kilpauk, Chennai, for the G.C.I.M. course, which was not on par with M.B.B.S. but involved the study of *Āyurveda*, etc.

When this information was conveyed to His Holiness, He reasserted His response. The infallibility of His blessing became clear only when it so happened that, in response to representations, the Government decided to give the first and second year G.C.I.M. students the option of joining the M.B.B.S. course, with their earlier studies being given due credit. Pandurangan was accommodated in the M.B.B.S. course at Stanley Medical College and graduated four years later; what His Holiness had repeatedly assured him, came to pass.

Pandurangan then worked as Medical Officer at Vallanadu, near Tirunelveli. Later, he completed a D.O. course at the Egmore Eye Hospital and was posted as Assistant Eye Surgeon, Nagercoil. In this manner, though

seemingly impossible earlier, he was able to graduate with an M.B.B.S degree as blessed by His Holiness and thereafter, obtain a diploma in ophthalmology too.



70. मात्सर्यादिविवर्जितः *Mātsaryādi-vivarjitaḥ*

One who was completely free from envy, etc.

The ‘*ari-ṣaḍ-varga* (hexad of inner enemies)’ spoken of in the *Śāstras* comprises *kāma* (craving), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (conceit) and *mātsarya* (envy). Of these, *kāma* and *krodha* have already been spoken of in *nāmas* 18 and 24, and *moha* under *nāma* 65. Hence here, ‘*mātsarya-ādi*’, can be taken to mean *mātsarya* (envy), *lobha* (greed) and *mada* (conceit).

*Mātsarya* (also *asūya*) is intolerance towards another’s success, virtue, happiness, etc. Lord Kṛṣṇa censures, “Know that those who harbour envy are ruined, lacking as they are in discrimination.”<sup>195</sup> He also appreciates Arjuna for being free from envy and states that He will expound the most secretive knowledge to him, together with its realization, on knowing which, he would be freed from evil<sup>196</sup>. Envy may be overcome by inculcating a feeling of happiness in the successes and joys of others.

On acquisition of a desired object, the notion to protect it is born, which is called *lobha* or greed.<sup>197</sup> The greedy covet others’ wealth and do not part with their own to do good deeds. It is said, “Charity, enjoyment and destruction are the three courses that money can take; the wealth of one who neither gives nor enjoys, meets with the third fate.”<sup>198</sup> Thus, the wealth of a miser is ultimately no wealth at all. Further, greed only leads to sin, and the *Śruti* prescribes its antidote by saying, “Overcome greed by charity.”<sup>199</sup>

*Mada* (also *darpa*) is characterized as the puffing up due to erudition, wealth, strength of one’s kin, etc.,<sup>200</sup> and as already seen in the context of *harṣa* (elation) under *nāma* 65, it causes one to transgress *dharma*. Humility is the cure for conceit. The means to absolute freedom from conceit is taught by Bhagavatpāda thus: “Do not be overcome with pride due to wealth, acquaintances and youth, for all of it will be gone in a trice. Having given up all this which is but a product of *Māyā* (illusion), enter the abode of *Brahman* after having realized It.”<sup>201</sup>

This *nāma* describes His Holiness as One who was *vi-varjita*, completely and always free, from envy, greed and conceit. As such, the means prescribed for getting rid of these evil tendencies were fully present in Him.



Having a crystal-like pure heart, His Holiness was only able to identify the good in others. A poet has remarked that noble ones make a mountain of a molehill-like noble quality of another but treat even a major fault of another as if it were insignificant. His Holiness had this trait in abundance. He noted and even praised some good quality or other even in an apparently vile individual. It goes without saying that He was all praise for people with noble qualities. He said, “We are in this world for but a while. Is it not madness to pick holes and quarrel during our short sojourn here?”



Raja Venkata Rao Limbekar wanted to give what is presently the big branch *Maṭha* at New Nallakunta in Hyderabad to His Holiness. He told Him, “I want this to be the personal property of Your Holiness. Even if, at some time, the *Maṭha* were to come to a bad turn or things were to become greatly troublesome for Your Holiness there, Your Holiness need not bother. Your Holiness could simply move in here.”

His Holiness told him, “I am a *saṁnyāsin*. I am not supposed to own anything and I have not even a trace of a wish to do so. I would be quite happy to live in the manner prescribed for *paramahansa-saṁnyāsins*. I would love to move on foot from one place to another, bathe in a river or some other open body of water, subsist on what food I may get by begging, sleep under some tree, in some cave or in some temple, and spend my time largely in meditation, focused on the non-dual Truth and oblivious of the world. My *Guru* has, however, assigned me the duty of heading the Sringeri Math and that is the one and only reason I am shouldering this responsibility. The scripture teaches that the Supreme *Brahman* is all; there is not even a jot or a tittle distinct from It. Purely by the grace of my *Guru*, I know that I am *Brahman*. So what is there in the three worlds that is not mine? At the same time, nothing whatsoever is mine, for I am not the body-mind complex and am just unattached pure consciousness. King Janaka, according to the *Mahābhārata*, averred, ‘My wealth is indeed unlimited; I have nothing.’<sup>202</sup> I too have nothing and yet have everything.”



Quick rise to great eminence is known to be attended with an inflation of one’s ego. Nīlakaṇṭha-dīkṣita, a great devotee of Śiva and poet, has written, “Regarding eulogies as factual descriptions, looking upon oneself as a god and looking down upon fellow human beings as if they were worms are the consequences of newfound affluence.”<sup>203</sup> In the case of His Holiness, however, no negative change whatsoever occurred in Him consequent to His acquiring the status of a much honoured and influential *Jagadguru*. For instance, Sri Ramaswamy Avadhani, who had studied with His Holiness in Sringeri prior to His *saṁnyāsa*, recounts, “Even after becoming a *saṁnyāsin* and, later, the pontiff, His Holiness has been informal with me and even

playful at times. During a tour, He had been to the sea for a bath. He asked me casually to come with Him into the ocean. I protested that I felt scared stiff. He held me by the hand and led me into the waters. ‘Let us swim,’ He said and began to float on His back. For my part, I feared that I would be drowned. However, He himself held me up and, thereafter, led me safely to the shore.”



Sri A. S. Raghavan, an eminent musical exponent of the *Tiruppugazh*, reminisced, “During His Holiness’s visit to Kolkata in 1967, His Holiness told Sri P. Subramaniam, the chief organizer, ‘Invite Raghavan of Delhi to sing *Tiruppugazh* bhajans.’ My group members and I were pleasantly surprised that none had any difficulty in obtaining a week’s leave. On the scheduled morning, I sat on the stage to begin the *bhajan*. However, I learnt that His Holiness had left the venue earlier to fulfil devotees’ wishes that He grace their houses and bless them. I commenced singing with a heavy heart. I sang for over two hours. Just as I finished singing the last verse, His Holiness entered the venue, went straight to His seat and started blessing the devotees with *tīrtha-prasāda*. I joined the queue, cursing my ill-luck that in spite of being called to Kolkata at the behest of His Holiness, I could not sing anything in His august presence.

“When my turn came to receive *tīrtha*, His Holiness remarked, ‘You sang very well. I enjoyed listening to the *Tiruppugazh*.’ Unable to contain my disappointment, I blurted out, ‘Your Holiness was not here when I sang.’ Smiling at me, His Holiness said, ‘Oh, so you think that I did not listen to your *bhajan*?’ I nodded my head. His Holiness continued, ‘I arrived at the venue when your performance was hardly halfway through. I observed that the audience was engrossed in the *bhajan*. Had I entered the hall, I would have only disturbed your performance. People would have got up and even queued up to receive *tīrtha-prasāda*. There would have been commotion and you would have been forced to stop the *bhajan*. Hence, I sat outside the entrance to the hall. I instructed my staff not to let anyone know of my arrival. I enjoyed hearing your songs. I came in only after you completed your singing.’ I was awestruck by His considerateness and lack of ego.”



71. मधुरालापचतुरः

*Madhurālāpa-caturah*

One who was adept at sweet conversation

Given His Holiness’s steadfastness in non-injury, boundless compassion, command over various languages, intelligence, vastness of knowledge in various domains, humility and evergreen curiosity, together with His deep understanding of the psyche and needs of people of all ages and

backgrounds, His *ālāpa*, conversations, were *madhura*, sweet, both immediately (*priya* or pleasing) as well as in the long run (*hita* or beneficial).



Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin has this to say about what His Holiness taught Him about speaking with devotees: “His Holiness narrated His experiences and advised me about how I should conduct myself, the traditions of the *Maṭha* and how to treat devotees. He often said, ‘Whatever be the attitude of the visitor, we, for our part, should show affection to all. We should not forget this. None should feel that his presence is not liked.’”



Sri Niranjan Kumar recounts, “I was once driving His Holiness in His car, when a car came up from behind us, unnecessarily honking repeatedly and trying to force us to slow down in order to overtake us. Irritated by these uncalled-for antics of that driver, I stepped on the accelerator, refusing to allow that car to overtake us. This competition of sorts went on for a while. At a point, His Holiness softly told me, with His characteristic touch of humour, ‘Perhaps that man is in a hurry to proceed towards *mokṣa*. Why don’t you just allow him to go?’

“I broke into a laugh. The irritation inside me had built up greatly over the past minutes, but on hearing His Holiness’s words my mind became light instantly, and I just gave way for that car. His Holiness had the uncanny knack of using just a few words at the right juncture to change a stressful scenario into a pleasant one.”



An old lady started sobbing when she came to His Holiness for *darśana* at Chennai in 1986. He asked her what her problem was. Amidst sobs, she managed to say, “I heard that Your Holiness had a heart-problem. Though I do not know what the problem was, I am unable to bear the suffering of Your Holiness.”

His Holiness asked, “Have you seen a big tanker transporting diesel?” “Yes,” she replied. “While the tanker is able to transport much diesel, it too needs diesel to run. Likewise, the heart pumps much blood but it too needs blood for its functioning. If the tube supplying diesel to the engine of the tanker gets partially clogged, the engine will not be able to run properly. In the same way, if a tube supplying blood to the heart gets partially clogged, there is a problem, pain. That is all that happened in my case. I am alright now. Do not worry.” She largely calmed down.

“How could such a thing have happened to Your Holiness?” she asked, perhaps rhetorically. “Āñjaneya is fond of me. May be that is why He sent His mother, Añjanā, to be with me for some time. Thus, I had Añjanā,” remarked His Holiness, punning on the word ‘angina (chest pain / discomfort

caused by reduced flow of oxygenated blood to the heart muscle).’ She broke into laughter. He blessed her with a fruit and she moved on.



## 72. मतिनिर्जितगीष्पतिः *Mati-nirjita-gīṣpatih*

One by whose knowledge, Gīṣpati was surpassed

Gīṣpati is an epithet of Bṛhaspati, the deity who presides over speech and the intellect.<sup>204</sup> This *nāma* asserts that His Holiness was One, through whose *mati*, knowledge, the intellect and speech (represented by Gīṣpati) were ‘*nirjita*’, conquered, that is, transcended. The presiding deity of the intellect can be conquered not by any intellect but only by what is superior to the intellect; likewise, the presiding deity of speech can be triumphed over not by speech but only by something to which speech itself is subservient.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* teaches, “He, who inhabits speech, who is inside speech, whom speech does not know, whose body is speech and who controls speech from within, is the *antaryāmin* or Inner Ruler; He is your imperishable *Ātman*.... He, who inhabits the intellect, who is inside the intellect, whom the intellect does not know, whose body is the intellect and who controls the intellect from within, is the *antaryāmin*; He is your imperishable *Ātman*.”<sup>205</sup> The Lord says, “That Supreme *Ātman* is, however, beyond the intellect,”<sup>206</sup> and the *Śruti* says about *Brahman*, “Failing to attain which, speech, together with the mind, turns back.”<sup>207</sup>

Bṛhaspati is the presiding deity of the intellect, and His Holiness, being a knower of *Brahman* and hence *Brahman* Itself, thus transcended Bṛhaspati.



As described under *nāma* 67, His Holiness cogitated and meditated on *nirguṇa-Brahman* and attained *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1935. That night, as well as the next morning and afternoon, He effortlessly entered *nirvikalpa-samādhi*.

He then reflected as follows: “Suppose the *Ātman* were knowable like an object. The question would then arise as to who can know the *Ātman*. The answer cannot be that the *Ātman* is known objectively by Itself, for it is impossible for any entity to be both the subject and the object of a cognition. The *Ātman* cannot be known by the intellect, mind, organs, body and objects, for they are all inert. Moreover, the *Ātman* is the unchanging witness of the presence and the absence of thoughts. When the intellect and mind are themselves just objects witnessed by the *Ātman*, how could they be the perceivers of the *Ātman*? The scripture declares that the *Ātman* is *Brahman* and there is no knower other than the *Ātman-Brahman*. Thus, the *Ātman* is just not knowable like some external object.

“Though not knowable like an inert object by any means of knowledge, the *Ātman*, which is none other than *Brahman*, is not unknown either. What is other than oneself and inert may be unknown. The *Ātman*, however, is one’s very self and is of the nature of consciousness. Consciousness is what reveals objects and never needs to be revealed by anything else. It is presupposed in every act of knowing and is ever self-established.

“The agent of even the act of knowing, which has a beginning and an end, cannot but be subject to change. Further, only an entity subject to change can experience pleasure and pain. As the *Ātman* is changeless, It is neither the agent of any act, inclusive of that of knowing, nor is It subject to pleasure and pain. Agency, suffering, enjoyment of pleasure and the like belong to the changeful intellect. However, owing to *avidyā*, one mistakenly superimposes these that belong to the intellect on the *Ātman*. Also, though the intellect is inert, the consciousness of the *Ātman* is wrongly ascribed to it and the intellect-centred ‘I’ passes off as a conscious agent and experiencer.

“The scripture advocates realisation of *Brahman* not in the sense of knowing what is unknown but in the sense of getting rid of the *avidyā*-based superimposition on It. Whether focused on the *Ātman* or distracted, the mind is but an inert entity illumined by the *Ātman*. However, the mental *vṛtti* of the form of *Brahman* destroys, as declared by the scripture, *avidyā* that rests in and veils *Brahman* and presents It wrongly.

“Suppose a person, who is adept at *yoga*, feels he is established in the *Ātman* when he is in *samādhi* but that he deviates to some extent from the Reality when he emerges from *samādhi* and engages in activity. Such a person is not free from *avidyā*. *Samādhi* and distraction are conditions of the mind and not of the *Ātman*. The *Ātman* is ever changeless and of the nature of consciousness. *Samādhi* and distraction do not affect it in any way. It is because this *yogin* is not free from identification with the mind that he sees himself as influenced by changes in the state of the mind. He who has fully realised that he is the changeless Reality remains established in the Reality and unaffected regardless of whether his mind is in a focused, agitated or dull condition. He should not become attached to *nirvikalpa-samādhi* under the delusion that for its duration he becomes one with *Brahman*.

“Perception of the world could affect the vision of the Truth of one who ascribes reality to duality but not of one to whom names and forms are illusory. He who firmly knows that what lies in front of him is dry sand is not affected by the appearance or disappearance of a mirage there. Likewise, he who knows that there is nothing whatsoever apart from *Brahman* cannot be affected either by the appearance of the mirage-like world of names and forms or its disappearance during *samādhi* or deep sleep.”

Having reasoned thus, His Holiness reflected, in support of His conviction about the illusory nature of the world and that there exists nothing apart from the non-dual Reality, on the similarity between the states of waking and dream. He also thought of how the states of waking, dream and deep sleep rule each other out and of the persistence in all of them of consciousness, their witness.

The next evening, 12<sup>th</sup> December, when He went for meditation on the hill, He attained direct realization of and firm establishment in *Brahman*, thus surpassing the intellect.



### 73. मोदिताखिलभक्तालिः *Moditākhila-bhaktāliḥ*

One who delighted the entire multitude of devotees

This *nāma* describes His Holiness as One by whom *akhila*, the entire, *bhaktāli*, multitude of devotees, were *modita*, delighted. He delighted all by His actions, speech and mere presence. Indeed, He was a delight to even just behold. In fact, to those who have had even a single *darśana* or interaction with Him, merely reminiscing about Him would bring joy. The description of Lord Kṛṣṇa, “His words are sweet; His character is sweet; His robes are sweet; His posture is sweet; His gait is sweet; His roaming about is sweet. Everything about the King of Sweetness is sweet,”<sup>208</sup> was true in the case of His Holiness as well.

He had a wonderful sense of humour by which He delighted even large gatherings during His public discourses. Whenever appropriate, He proffered simple illustrations on the spot, often with an added touch of humour, to explain profound matters, philosophical, religious or scientific.



Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin had His first *darśana* of His Holiness when His Holiness visited Narasaraopet. Later, His Sanskrit teacher took Him and some other students to Vijayawada when His Holiness was camping there in 1961 and asked Him to deliver a talk in Sanskrit in the presence of His Holiness.

Recalling the impact that His Holiness’s *darśana* in Vijayawada had on Him, He said years later, “I had the good fortune of beholding the *Jagadguru* early in life. Once, I was asked to talk in Sanskrit by my teacher before His Holiness, in Vijayawada. I got a special prize from Him. At that time, it struck me that His Holiness was my teacher and my saviour. His beatific smile, I felt, was giving me a message. I felt that I got what I wanted. That day onwards, His benevolent looks were etched in my mind. The affection that He showered on me was more pleasant than the affection of my parents.

I decided then that He was my *Guru*. Whenever there was a problem, I felt that I was guided by the *Jagadguru*. My feelings towards Him grew to such an extent that I could no longer stay in my house.”

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The following is excerpted from an article by Sri S. Y. Krishnaswamy published in a souvenir in 1983.

His discourses are always tempered to the occasion, and by logic, analogy and often by illustrative anecdotes, He makes what is difficult look easy. Once, when I ventured to ask Him about a concept of salvation in which God and the individual continued to remain separate, He said, “What kind of salvation is this? Even after obtaining *mokṣa*, you are Krishnaswamy and I am a pontiff and I must keep wondering if you are going to do *namaskāra* to me!”

Once, in order to expound the variety in God’s creation and God’s endowment to each of a particular skill for survival, His Holiness said, “Take the bees. They fabricate a hive consisting of many apertures. There is a uniformity and perfection about the honeycombs which are remarkable. Birds make nests. One is surprised at the intricacy displayed in joining the little twigs together so as to make the nests stable. The mosquitoes sit on our skin to drink our blood. They do not take as much time as a doctor does to take blood specimen from our body.” He could go on and on with hundreds of such examples. Only the great can simplify the non-simple.

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His Holiness had a prodigious and eidetic memory. Many people were pleasantly surprised that even after a lapse of several years, He not only remembered them but also the particulars of their families. He was able to do this in spite of the fact that thousands of people flocked to have His *darśana*.

Smt. Sarada Kalyanasundaram recalled this experience: “In 1964, when I was not yet married, I went to Courtallam with my family to have *darśana* of His Holiness who was camping there. We arrived in time to attend the night *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* performed by His Holiness. Two people were singing during the *pūjā*. His Holiness, noticing me, asked for a microphone to be brought and placed before me, and asked me to sing. That day, I continued to sing for long but He did not seem to mind.

“More than 15 years later, in 1981, His Holiness graced our home when He camped at Thiruvananthapuram. We were astonished to say the least, when, with a chuckle, He pointed to me and told my husband, ‘At Courtallam, I gave her a microphone and asked her to sing. She was so happy that she sang for a very long time that day!’”

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Dr. A. G. Ramesh had just completed his post-graduate medical degree in ophthalmology and went to seek the blessings of His Holiness who was then camping in Chennai. On hearing the news of his successful completion of the course, His Holiness said, “People here are saying that I need to undergo an eye check-up to see if I need a change in my eyeglasses. Your specialization is Ophthalmology, isn’t it? Then why don’t you yourself conduct the necessary tests?”

The young doctor was struck by the simplicity and readiness with which His Holiness was trusting even a fresh graduate. He was also overjoyed at the fact that it was His Holiness’s eyes that he was first going to check in his medical practice. He got the required instruments and conducted the tests, after which he not only prescribed new eyeglasses for His Holiness but also, sought and obtained His permission, to procure and submit them to Him.



Sri S. N. Parameswara of Bengaluru had once gone to Sringeri during *Navarātri*. While having the *darśana* of His Holiness, the devotee submitted to Him that his birthday falls in *Navarātri*, and that that year, he was blessed to be at Sringeri during the time and seek His blessings. On the morning of his birthday, there was a knock at the door of his room in the guest house at Sringeri. It was an attendant of His Holiness, who handed Sri Parameswara a cup of oil, saying, “His Holiness asked me to give this to you,” and left. Sri Parameswara did not understand why His Holiness had sent him oil, and when he went for *darśana*, asked His Holiness about it.

His Holiness responded, “It is the tradition to have an oil bath during one’s birthday, isn’t it? I sent the oil to you for that purpose.” Sri Parameswara was overwhelmed by the motherly affection of His Holiness. Ever since that day, whenever he went to Sringeri during *Navarātri*, His Holiness always remembered to send him oil for his oil bath on the morning of his birthday.



#### 74. मर्यादापरिपालकः *Maryādā-paripālakaḥ*

One who was the protector of propriety of conduct

Regulations that govern one’s life are prescribed by the *Śāstras* in two ways, as *sāmānya* and *viśeṣa dharmas*. *Sāmānya-dharmas* are taken up in *nāma* 105. *Viśeṣa-dharmas* are prescribed in the form of *varṇa-āśrama-dharmas*, that is *dharmas* appropriate to one’s birth and stage in life. On the importance of adhering to one’s *dharma*, the Lord says, “It is more beneficial to die while following one’s own *dharma* (than another’s); following the *dharma* of another is fraught with fear.”<sup>209</sup> *Viśeṣa-dharma* also includes *dharma* based on one’s *sampradāya* or tradition, be it familial or regional. It

is said, “One who does not know tradition is to be shunned as a fool, even if he were to be a knower of all the *Śāstras*.”<sup>210</sup>

‘*Maryādā*’ refers to code of conduct. A person who follows his *dharma* and also conducts himself in accordance with the societal norms of propriety, decorum and dignity in consonance with his station in society, is said to be following *maryādā*, while a ‘*pālaka*’, protector of *maryādā*, is one who additionally induces others to follow the same. Hanumān gives Sītā the reason why Rāma is referred to as *maryāda-puruṣottama*: “He follows the codes of conduct and induces others also to do so.”<sup>211</sup>

Here, His Holiness is described as a ‘*pari-pālakaḥ*’, One who completely protects, *maryāda*. He impeccably followed the *viśeṣa-dharmas* applicable to Him at every stage and circumstance of life – prior to *saṁnyāsa*, His *dharma* was that of a son to His parents, a student to His school teachers, etc.; after His *upanayana* it was that of a *brahmacārin*; after He became an ascetic, it became that of a *saṁnyāsin*. He maintained the dignity of the *pīṭha* while also mingling with the masses, and was the epitome of poise and propriety. Finally, He also induced and guided others to uphold the code of conduct appropriate to them.



Even as a young boy, Sri Srinivasa Sastry made it a point to help His mother every day. He conscientiously performed various domestic chores, such as cleansing of vessels and sweeping. He also took care of His younger siblings. When once asked about His attending to His brother like a foster-mother, He said, “My mother is busy in the kitchen and my elder sister is assisting her. Who will attend to this young one? If I do not do so, it will add to my mother’s strain.”

He was an obedient and conscientious student and every morning would see Him trekking on time to His school in the prescribed uniform, which included a cap and a coat. He was sociable and friendly.

He was a bright student. His father, a primary-school teacher, was a strict disciplinarian and students feared him. Consequently, several young boys of the primary school sought Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s help to clear their doubts. Never did He grudge them help though such tuition demanded that He regularly spare time for them.



Once Sri Srinivasa Sastry’s *upanayana* was completed and He stayed back at Sringeri to pursue *śāstraic* studies, He developed the habit of waking up at around 4:30 a.m. After taking a bath, He used to perform His *nityakarma* (scripturally-ordained religious observances to be practised regularly) with meticulous care. He then partook of light tiffin and some milk. Thereafter,

He set Himself to studies. In the afternoons, after His *mādhyāhnikā*, He used to go for a meal. He was not in the habit of taking recourse to any siesta in the afternoons and was mostly engaged in studies. It used to be around 10:30 p.m. before He retired for the night.

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Once, standing in for His *Guru*'s attendant, when His Holiness held a large ceremonial umbrella over the senior *Jagadguru* in the place of an attendant, He stood with one leg off the ground. When later asked about this, He clarified that He stood that way for, otherwise, His foot would have touched His *Guru*'s shadow that day. Even His *Guru*'s shadow was sacrosanct for Him. His walk was swift, almost a sprint, and His attendants had a hard time keeping up with Him; the senior *Jagadguru*'s was sedate. Yet, when accompanying the senior *Jagadguru*, not once in the over two decades that They were together did He, even inadvertently, overstep His *Guru*.

He told a disciple decades later, "It is not that I took care not to move ahead of Him; it was impossible and inconceivable for me to do so." Even before He learnt of them, He spontaneously followed to the letter the injunctions, "The disciple must not cross over his *Guru*'s shadow," and, "When the *Guru* is walking, the disciple should follow him (not move ahead of him)." <sup>212</sup>

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The following account of Sri D. S. Subbaramaiya illustrates how very respectfully His Holiness conducted Himself towards His *Guru*.

"In 1946, His Holiness once went to behold the senior *Jagadguru*, taking me with Him. As He approached the door of the senior *Jagadguru*'s room from one side, He noticed that His *Guru* was reading a book. Not only did His Holiness not enter, He did not even want to stand next to the door on the side where He could be seen. Hence, He walked round Sacchidananda Vilasa and tiptoed to the other side of the door. He then moved slightly forward, leaned, peeped in and, finding that the senior *Jagadguru* was still reading, immediately stepped back. Thereafter, He stood motionless and silent. After a few minutes, He again looked inside as before and withdrew. About 15 minutes passed thus before the senior *Jagadguru* chanced to notice Him on unexpectedly looking up prior to turning a page. Immediately, He called His Holiness in. He entered and respectfully submitted that I had come for *darśana*. The senior *Jagadguru* rose, walked out of the room and began talking with me. To enable us to converse in private, His Holiness moved out of earshot and waited.

"The senior *Jagadguru* was scheduled to take a *Vedānta* class for His Holiness that day. As He approached after some time to have a necessary word with His *Guru* about the class, the senior *Jagadguru* told me, 'The *Guru* is coming. Do *namaskāra*.' As instructed, I prostrated before His

Holiness. The senior *Jagadguru* and His Holiness then conversed for a few minutes. Thereafter, His Holiness walked backwards till He was out of His *Guru*'s range of sight; He was unwilling to turn His back towards His *Guru*. Such was His reverence for His *Guru*."

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His Holiness desired to follow the teaching that the *śiṣya* should not eat prior to his *Guru*. Though the senior *Jagadguru* partook of His *bhikṣā* late in the afternoon, His Holiness consistently waited for Him to do so. He did this even though a separate kitchen had been arranged for Him, so that the time of His *bhikṣā* could be independent of that of His *Guru*. Later, out of concern for His Holiness's health, the senior *Jagadguru* cancelled the extra kitchen and Himself started going for *bhikṣā* earlier than before.

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75. योगिवन्द्यपदाम्भोजः      *Yogi-vandya-padāmbhojaḥ*

One whose lotus feet were venerated by *yogins*

His Holiness being taught various aspects of *yoga* by Lord Śiva in a series of dreams and by Goddess Śāradāmbā in a vision and a dream, are presented under *nāmas* 10, 52 and 91. These various forms of *yoga* culminating in His Holiness's experience of *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, the acme of *yoga* longed for by *yogins*, are presented under *nāmas* 1 and 76 among others. Such was His Holiness's mastery over *yoga*, that His *padāmbhoja*, lotus feet, were *yogi-vandya*, venerated by, even accomplished *yogins*. Indeed, the statement of the Lord, "Whatever a great person does, that is what another does. Whatever he upholds as authority, the world follows,"<sup>213</sup> was true with regard to His Holiness, the most exalted *yogin*.

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In response to a pressing invitation from Anandamayi Ma, a very well-known *tapasvini* with a very large following, His Holiness arrived at Haridwar on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1982. A large gathering of devotees and admirers, which included erudite *saṁnyāsins* and *Mahāmaṇḍaleśvars*, received His Holiness. He was taken in a colourful procession from Sri Shankaracharya Marg to Kankhal, about five kilometres from Haridwar, where He camped for three days. On arrival at the *aśrama*, He was received by Anandamayi Ma and the inmates. Anandamayi Ma had meticulously made exquisite arrangements for His Holiness's comfortable stay.

In private, she informed Him that she felt that the time had come for her to cast off the body. Though externally His Holiness did not reveal His views, He comprehended that her end was nearing. She sought His blessings, which His Holiness conferred on her.

After His Holiness returned to Delhi, He indirectly hinted at the impending end of the *tapasvinī*'s sojourn on earth by delaying the sending of some materials to Haridwar through a messenger who had arrived to collect them. A little later, the news arrived that she had expired.

Sri H. C. Vishweshwariah once recollected going to Haridwar and visiting the *āśrama* of Anandamayi Ma, along with Sri Giridhara Sastry. The inmates of the *āśrama* received the duo with great respect when they heard that they were connected with His Holiness. The inmates recollected to them the great grace His Holiness had showered on Anandamayi Ma, and the reverence she had for Him. The sacred *pādukās* of His Holiness had been kept in a room at the *āśrama*. When the visitors expressed their desire to have the *darśana* of the *pādukās*, the inmates of the *āśrama* told them that they would have to bath in the Gaṅgā, then bathe again at the *āśrama* and only then be allowed to even enter the room where the *pādukās* were kept. Such was the reverence they had for the *pādukās* of His Holiness.

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Śrī Iśvarānanda Sarasvatī, referred to as 'Kāśī-svāmin', was a very dispassionate *saṁnyāsīn* and an adept at performing *āsanas*. He had learnt the *Brahmasūtra-bhāṣya* from the senior *Jagadguru* and was close to the senior *Jagadguru* and His Holiness. He led a very frugal life, eating only by taking *bhikṣa*. In fact, (as described under *nāma* 76) His Holiness watched Kāśī-svāmin perform *āsanas* and learnt from him. Kāśī-svāmin, on the other hand, held His Holiness in the highest esteem and paid obeisance to Him.

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Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmin of Varadapura, Sagara, was an accomplished *yogin* who deeply revered His Holiness. His Holiness visited Varadapura on Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmin's request and blessed him.

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Mahesh Yogi of Transcendental Meditation fame had contacts with His Holiness even from his early days, when he was not famous. He wrote numerous letters to His Holiness and visited Him on several occasions. For instance, he called on His Holiness during His 1977 camp at New Delhi.

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In response to the invitation of Svāmi Satyānanda, the head of the Bihar School of Yoga, His Holiness visited Monghyr on 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1967 and camped at the Bihar School of Yoga. He was welcomed with all honours by the inmates of the institution. Speaking to a distinguished audience on the next day in the spacious hall of Baijnath Goenka Dharmasala, His Holiness made a fervent appeal to those present to follow the path of *dharma* as laid down by the sages of yore. He quoted verses from the *Gītā* emphasising the impermanence of the body and the eternity of the *Ātman*. He added,

“Bhagavatpāda has pointed to the ultimate unity of all faiths. One may follow any path one likes provided one sees the oneness of all religions. There is no fundamental contradiction between the tenets of one religion or cult and another. All spiritual paths ultimately lead to the same goal. This indeed is the universal appeal of the philosophy of *Advaita*.” The representative of the institution then offered respects to His Holiness as also gratitude for condescending to uplift the citizens of Monghyr.

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Śrī Śuddhānanda-bhārātī Svāmin, an independant *saṁnyāsin-yogin*, who had been hailed as ‘*kavi-yogin*’ by Jagadguru Śrī Sacchidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimha Bhārātī Mahāsvāmin, and had received the grace of and spiritual guidance from Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhārātī Mahāsvāmin, expressed that he considered himself extremely blessed to have had the *darśana* of and the opportunity to converse with His Holiness.

During one such *darśana* that he had of His Holiness, he spontaneously composed a Tamil verse that conveys, “The entire world is eager to serve the foremost among great sages, the pre-eminent Vidyātirtha, who ever gives extreme joy to the tradition of *Brahman* and the *Vedic* way of life, and who has come here today like a welcome torrent of rain.”<sup>214</sup>

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## 76. योगमार्गविशारदः *Yoga-mārga-viśāradaḥ*

One who was pre-eminently accomplished in the path of *Yoga*

His Holiness was a master of Sage Patañjali’s *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*, consisting of *yama* (set of restraints given under *nāma* 105), *niyama* (set of observances given under *nāma* 44), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (regulation of breath given under *nāma* 52), *pratyāhāra* (restraint of senses discussed under *nāma* 81), *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* (concentration, meditation and its culmination given under *nāmas* 1, 15, 27, 40, 59 and 67).

In His dreams and visions, His Holiness was taught the various facets of *yoga* directly by none other than Lord Śiva and Goddess Śārādā (vide *nāmas* 10, 52 and 91). He was not merely knowledgeable in all aspects of *yoga* such as *haṭha-yoga*, *kuṇḍalinī-yoga*, *nāda-anusandhāna*, *amanaska-yoga* and *samādhi-yoga* culminating in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, but had scaled the peak of perfection in the practice of each of them, attaining *jīvanmukti* when He was just 18 years old. It is no wonder that He is described as One who was *viśārada*, pre-eminently accomplished, in *yoga-mārga*, the path of *yoga*.

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[Under *nāma* 10 was described, briefly, how Lord Śiva appeared in a series of seven dreams of His Holiness, starting from the night of His *saṁnyāsa*,

and taught Him *haṭha-yoga. Prāṇāyāma* as demonstrated by the Lord during the first two of the dreams was described under *nāma* 52. The following is based on His Holiness's account of the rest of the dreams in the series, in which the Lord mainly covered the third limb of *yoga, āsana*.]

During the dream on the second night (23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1931) and the ones on the succeeding five nights, the Lord demonstrated numerous *yogāsanas* and *kriyās* such as *nauli*. There was no repetition. He performed the *āsanas* very swiftly but with unmatched grace and with each step unmistakably clear. No human adept could have performed even a quarter of the number of *āsanas* in the same time. He did not name any *āsana*. Also, He did not direct His Holiness to do any *āsana* before passing on to the next. However, whenever He performed one, His Holiness automatically understood whether this was just for His information or for His practice later. Such was the impact of and imprint created by the Lord's teaching that even decades later His Holiness was in a position to vividly recall the Lord's demonstration of any *āsana* that He wished to see.

On the seventh night, that is, on the night of 28<sup>th</sup> May, towards the close of His teaching in His Holiness's dream, the Lord threw light on the *khecari-mudrā*. Sitting in the *padmāsana*, He stretched out His tongue. In moments, the membrane connecting it with the lower part of the mouth began to give way gradually as if it were being cut with a knife. Simultaneously, the tongue became thinner and longer. Soon, it resembled that of a dog. The Lord turned it upwards. It reached up to the head. His Holiness automatically understood that the normal procedure involved cutting the fraenum, little by little, over a long period and elongating the tongue by shaking and pulling it. Having transformed His tongue into a thin long one, Śiva directed His gaze to between the brows. He then turned His tongue backwards and inserted it into the cavity at the back of the throat that leads to the nose. Thereafter, the Lord remained motionless and with no perceptible signs of breathing. At that time, His Holiness's breathing too stopped. He felt something cool and very pleasant to taste descend into the back of His mouth. It greatly invigorated Him. The understanding dawned that this fluid obviates hunger, thirst, weakness and dullness. As the Lord lowered His tongue, His Holiness's experience ended. The next moment, Śiva's tongue became normal.

Finally, Śiva taught His Holiness *nāda-anusandhāna* (contemplation on the internal sound). With His fingers, He closed His nose, mouth and ears. Then He concentrated on the ocean-like sound heard in the right ear. His Holiness comprehended that the Lord was doing so, because without any effort, His Holiness's attention locked on to such a sound in His own right ear. His Holiness also got the feeling that with practice one can focus on this sound even without closing the ears. Soon, His Holiness heard different sounds in

succession. Finally, all sounds ceased and He was overwhelmed with bliss. The next moment, His Holiness's experience ended. The Lord took His hands away from His face.

In the course of the seven dreams, the Lord had demonstrated hundreds of *āsanas*. These included all those described in the authoritative works such as *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* and numerous others not referred to in any text. His Holiness did not think even an expert with a highly supple body would be able to do more than a few of the many *āsanas* of the latter kind.



After the dreams, while His Holiness was able to perform the simple *āsanas* such as *śīrṣāsana* in the first attempt, the tougher ones such as *gheraṇḍāsana* and *mukhottānāsana* needed effort and practice.

Subsequent to hearing His Holiness's account of the seven dreams, the disciple to whom He had recounted them asked Him, "How many of the *āsanas* demonstrated by Śiva but not mentioned in books did Your Holiness master?" He said, "Six. I will show you one of them and you can see how tough it is." The disciple watched thoroughly spellbound as, step by step, His Holiness assumed an extremely complex, inverted pose. Such was the tight knot into which He tied Himself that it appeared that His body was made of highly elastic rubber and comprised no bones. Having held the final pose for about a minute, He gradually unwound Himself.

He then told the disciple, "The first two times that I tried to do this, I failed. The third time I succeeded only partially. On my next attempt, I somehow managed to adopt the final position but became stuck in it. I found that I was just unable to release the knot that bound my hands and legs. I called to mind *Bhagavān*'s performance of this *āsana*. In imitation of what He had done, I emptied my lungs and used my middle fingers to release myself a little. The rest was manageable. From the fifth try onwards, I had no difficulty."

About the number of *āsanas* He used to perform every day His Holiness said, "The number of *āsanas* varied. Within a few years after *saṁnyāsa*, I began to devote half an hour exclusively for *āsanas* and *kriyās* and half an hour for *prāṇāyāma*. I performed some *āsanas*, such as *śīrṣāsana*, *sarvāṅgāsana*, *matsyāsana*, *paścimottānāsana* and *ardha-matsyendrāsana*, and the *kriyā*, *nauli*, on all days. Apart from these, to the extent that I could accommodate within the available time, I did other *āsanas* from my repertoire. I ended with five minutes of *śavāsana*. I required a week to complete one cycle of all the *āsanas* that I practised."



Among the *kriyās*, His Holiness described His practice of *neti* which was quite useful in clearing the phlegm blocking the nostrils. He then

demonstrated *nauli*. He stood with His legs separated and His palms pressed against His thighs. Having fully expelled air from the lungs, He deeply pulled in His abdomen. He then controlled His muscles to make the abdominal region resemble a cavity with a vertical tube in the middle. He then made the tube swing from side to side and execute a churning motion. Finally, He restored His abdomen to its normal form and said, “This used to be my favourite *kriyā*.”

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His Holiness clarified, “I have not done any *āsana* or *kriyā* that Śiva had not shown me in the dreams. However, I practised the *āsanas* and *kriyās* only after learning, as it were, a number of them from Kāśī-svāmin and the *bairāgīs*. Further, I did come to know the names of *āsanas* from Kaśī-svāmin and the *bairāgīs* and, later, from books.”

On the reason for postponing doing *āsanas* and *kriyās* till having seemingly learnt many of them from humans, His Holiness said, “I felt that this is what God wanted me to do. Because of this, there was no scope for the *Maṭha* staff and others to wonder how I was abruptly able to practise *haṭha-yoga* without having been taught. As for *nāda-anusandhāna*, I did it once a week along with my *āhnikā*. I believe, I only did as God intended me to when I started doing *prāṇāyāma* with the *bandhas* after the first dream and *nāda-anusandhāna* after the seventh dream.”

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His Holiness’s first two explicit experiences of the ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī* caused Him to attain *savikalpa-samādhi* (described under *nāma* 91). On the second of these instances, as He emerged from *savikalpa-samādhi*, He felt Himself descending rapidly with the *kuṇḍalinī*. When He gained mild awareness of the body. He noticed that His tongue was folded backwards and felt the descent of a few cool drops of a uniquely tasty fluid into the back of His throat.

His Holiness had no difficulty in identifying the fluid that He felt descending into the back of the throat to be nectar from the *sahasrāra*, because the taste He had experienced during the dream of Śiva when the Lord had demonstrated the *khecārī-mudrā* had become imprinted in His mind. The taste of the fluid that He noticed on becoming mildly aware of the body was the same as that taste. The invigorating effect too tallied with what He had experienced in the dream. The invigorating effect of the nectar lasted for two days.

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His Holiness had His first experience of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1935 (as described under *nāma* 1). The next morning, He felt impelled to perform *nāda-anusandhāna*. So, as usual, He closed His ears,

nose and mouth with His fingers to commence His contemplation on the sound heard in the right ear. The ocean-like sound that He heard abruptly grew in intensity. Then, in quick succession, He heard a variety of sounds. These included those of a drum, a flute and a *vīṇā*. Each sound lasted for only a few moments before being replaced by the next. He had heard the same sounds, in the same sequence, when the Lord had demonstrated *nāda-anusandhāna* in the dream.

When the last of the sounds ended, there was just silence. His mind became extremely tranquil and suffused with bliss. The sense of “I” rapidly faded away completely and *nirvikalpa-samādhi* ensued. Only non-dual, objectless consciousness remained. About an hour passed before the mind descended from *samādhi*.



77. राजाधिराजसम्पूज्यः *Rājādhirāja-sampūjyah*

One who was worthy of reverential worship by kings and emperors

Ikṣvāku Emperor Dilīpa said to Sage Vasiṣṭha, “In the case of a goal that is difficult to accomplish for the Ikṣvākus, success is dependent on you.”<sup>215</sup> Thus, emperors held in high esteem, learned sages whose grace was potent in granting success in worldly endeavours. When such is the case, what need be said about the reverence of emperors for a sage who could grant not just worldly success but also the ultimate liberation! Emperor Janaka of Videha reverentially submitted to his *Guru*, “O Yājñavalkya who are worthy of worship! May That which is free from fear be yours, for you have made That which is free from fear known to us (by the removal of the veil of ignorance created by the limiting adjuncts. What can I give you in return for this knowledge, for you have presented the *Ātman* Itself? Hence), salutations to you. Here is Videha as well as myself at your service!”<sup>216</sup>

His Holiness was eminently *sam-pūjya*, worthy of reverential worship, by *rāja-adhirāja*, kings and emperors. Maharajas sought His guidance on material and spiritual matters, and several heads of state and leaders paid obeisance to Him. The royals of Nepal, Mysore, Travancore, Indore, Gwalior, Burdwan, Darbhanga, Kashi, Kochi, Baroda, Palitana, etc., would also regularly present their offerings to the *Jagadguru* in person or otherwise, during His *cāturmāsya-saṅkalpa* and on *vijayadaśamī* day.



The Maharaja Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, who ruled the Princely State of Mysore from 1940 to 1947 and, later, was the Governor of Mysore (now Karnataka) and then the Governor of Madras (now Tamil Nadu), was extremely devoted to His Holiness. He had *darśana* and performed *pādapūjā* on several occasions, and served His Holiness and the *Māṭha* in numerous

ways under the instructions of His Holiness. He sought His Holiness's guidance in various matters, both spiritual and worldly, as the following letters of his vouchsafe.

[The following is a translation of the Maharaja's letter to His Holiness written in Kannada on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 1964 and sent from Mysuru.]

Humble prostrations to the exquisite lotus feet of Sri Sringeri *Jagadguru*, Śrīmad Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin by me, who am a recipient of Your Holiness's grace. Mahāsvāmin! If it be Your Holiness's will, please consider and plainly advise me what I should do in the future – whether I should stay on in Madras (as Governor) or go abroad (to a western country) and work or enter politics. Of these options, which one does Your Holiness advice? ...I am sending this missive through A. G. Ramachandra Rao in a confidential manner. It would be sufficient if Your Holiness were to convey Your Holiness's opinion through him. Though I do not wish to trouble Your Holiness, I am compelled to write this letter as I have no other option.

The extremely obedient server of Your Holiness's feet,

Sd/- Jayachamaraja Wodeyar,

My humble prostrations.

[The following is a translation of the Maharaja's letter to His Holiness written in Kannada on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1963 and sent from Mysuru.]

Having offered prostrations, Your Holiness's dear disciple, the server of the *Guru*, the king Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, submits as follows.

By the grace of the lotus feet of Your Holiness, I am well till today.... May the glorious *Guru*, ever remaining in the kingdom of *tapas*, kindly grace this missive with benedictions. I am bearing on my head the *Śrīmukha* graced by Your Holiness. The *nyāsa* of the *ṣoḍaśākṣarī-mantra* graced by Your Holiness reached me and caused horripilation in me. I desire to hear about the *mahāvākyas* in the direct presence of Your Holiness. I yearn to come to Your Holiness for this purpose and receive blessings in person.

Praying that Your Holiness's blessing may ever be on me, with repeated prostrations,

Sd/- Jayachamaraja Wodeyar.

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King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal requested His Holiness to conduct the *Mahāśivarātri* celebrations in Nepal and a formal invitation was extended to His Holiness to this effect. His Holiness acceded to the royal request. He left for Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal on the afternoon of 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1967. His Holiness was accorded a royal welcome in Nepal under

the direct supervision of King Mahendra. En route, He was received by other leaders at Kalanki and was later escorted in an open car in procession to Murari Bhawan at Battisputali. In the evening, His Holiness visited Sri Paśupatināth Temple, as described under *nāma* 33. The connect between the Paśupatināth Temple and Sringeri Peetham goes back centuries, for the priests who worship at the temple are selected by the *Jagadguru* of Sringeri. On the *Mahāśivarātri* day, when His Holiness went to Sri Paśupatināth Temple to offer worship, His Majesty the King of Nepal and Her Majesty the Queen had His *darśana* and paid their respects to Him. They held a long conversation with Him and departed after receiving His blessings.



Rājamātā Vijayaraje Scindia of Gwalior hosted His Holiness in 1966 at Kalideh Palace in Ujjain where He observed *cāturmāsya*. The Rājamātā had also earlier arranged for His Holiness's stay at Brindavan.

The city of Gwalior offered a magnificent welcome to His Holiness on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> October, 1966. Under the patronage and personal direction of the Rājamātā, a Swagata Samiti had been formed consisting of a hundred members and headed by the Maharaja of Gwalior, Madhavarao Scindia. The young Maharaja of Gwalior received His Holiness at the Palace gate and conducted Him to the special shamiana where *dhūli-pādapūjā* was conducted. His Holiness then arrived at the Sanatan Dharam Mandir.

After a brief halt there, He was taken in procession to the Palace, less than 2.5 kilometres away. Three caparisoned elephants heralded the procession, followed by twelve horses and an equal number of cows and a vast column of volunteers marching alongside, with the members of the committee and the citizens accompanying the palanquin on foot. The procession took two hours to wind its way through the busy thoroughfares of the city, before it reached the reception pandal at the palace. A crowd of nearly forty thousand thronged the precincts. The Maharaja reverentially read the welcome address, and all listened with devotion to His Holiness's *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa*.

Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhārati Mahāsvāmin's *ārāadhanā* was celebrated for three days, after which the *Navarātri-utsava* was celebrated in a grand manner from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup>. In conclusion, the *pūrṇāhuti* of the *Caṇḍī-homa* was conducted. His Holiness was later given a royal send-off by members of the royal family and devotees.



When His Holiness started on His first tour in 1956, He arrived at Kalady on 13<sup>th</sup> July and observed *cāturmāsya* there. He was received as the royal guest of the Maharaja of Travancore, Chitra Tirunal Bala Rama Varma.

When His Holiness camped in Courtallam for *cāturmāsya* in 1964, the Maharaja of Travancore came there to pay respects and requested His Holiness to visit Tiruvananthapuram and conduct a *Caṇḍī-yajña*. It was partly in fulfilment of this request that His Holiness went to Tiruvananthapuram in November 1964, where He was received in a grand manner by the Maharaja. The *Caṇḍī-yajña* was conducted in the august presence of His Holiness.

His Holiness visited Thiruvananthapuram once again on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1980 along with His successor-designate, to a royal welcome. At the request of the Maharaja of Travancore, His Holiness accepted the *pādapūjā* done at the palace on the 8<sup>th</sup>. The *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* was conducted there. In the evening the Maharaja and others in the royal family called on His Holiness to offer their respects, after which a public reception was held at the palace.

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At the invitation of the Maharaja of Kochi, Sri Rama Varma Parikshit Thampuran, His Holiness visited his palace in November 1956. In recognition of the Maharaja's great scholarship in the *Tarka-śāstra*, His Holiness conferred on the sovereign, the title '*Abhinava-tarka-vāgīśa* (The new master exponent of *Tarka*)'. The Maharaja of Kochi participated in *vidvat-sabhās* presided over by His Holiness, had many a scriptural discussion with His Holiness and had the greatest respect for Him.

His Holiness visited Kochi-Ernakulam again in 1964, and was received with pomp. Later, He was taken in a grand procession to the Kochi Maharaja's *darbar* where the Maharaja performed *dhūli-pādapūjā* to His Holiness.

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When His Holiness visited Varanasi in 1967, He proceeded to the palace of the Raja of Kashi at the Raja's request. The young prince of eight years along with his father offered *pādapūjā*.

The arrival of His Holiness and Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin at Varanasi on the evening of 20<sup>th</sup> January, 1977 was a great sight for everybody at the holy city. The *Jagadgurus* were accorded a warm reception and taken in procession to the palace. At the invitation of the Maharaja, the *Jagadgurus* visited the Sanga Veda Vidyashala. A *vidvat-sadas* was arranged to commemorate the visit and about 400 scholars from all over India participated in it.

Again in 1982, His Holiness was accorded a grand reception at Varanasi by scholars and a large number of devotees led by the Raja of Kashi.

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Raja Venkata Rao Limbekar of Hyderabad, was deeply devoted to His Holiness. He hosted His Holiness in May 1960, May 1964 and November

1967 in Hyderabad. He also wanted to gift the land at New Nallakunta, Hyderabad, to His Holiness personally, as described under *nāma* 70.

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Similarly, the Raja of Ramnad was also highly devoted to His Holiness. On reaching Ramanathapuram along with His successor-designate on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1975, after having the *darśana* of Goddess Rājarājeśvarī, His Holiness performed the night *pūjā* at Sri Ramalinga Vilas Hall in the palace of the Raja of Ramnad. Arrangements for Their Holinesses' stay had been made with care by the Diwan of Ramnad under instructions from the Raja. When the *Jagadgurus* proceeded to Rameswaram for the temple consecration, the Raja, who was overseeing the activities connected with the consecration, received Them with devotion. Later, the Raja came with his family and performed *pādapūjā* and *bhikṣāvandana* to the *Jagadgurus*.

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Queen Frederica and Princess Irene of Greece had His Holiness's *darśana* on 20<sup>th</sup> November, 1966 at New Delhi.

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As described under *nāma* 58, when the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, visited Sringeri in August 1954 and had *darśana* of the senior *Jagadguru* in Goddess Śāradāmbā's temple, His Holiness played interpreter. The Hon'ble President was highly impressed by His Holiness and again called on Him on 13<sup>th</sup> August, 1960 at Chennai. On the occasion, His Holiness blessed him with the title, '*Rāṣṭra-ratna* (A gem of the nation).'

Presidents of India, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Zakir Hussain, Sri V. V. Giri, Dr. Giani Zail Singh, Sri R. Venkataraman and Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, have sought and had His Holiness's *darśana*, sometimes on multiple occasions.

Prime Ministers of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi, Sri Morarji Desai, Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao and Sri Atal Bihari Vajpayee have also had the great good fortune of His *darśana* and blessings.

Governors, Chief Ministers, Ministers of the Central and State Governments, social leaders, scholars, scientists, artists, industrialists and many others sought His Holiness's *darśana*, blessings and guidance.

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78. रागद्वेषविवर्जितः *Rāga-dveṣa-vivarjitaḥ*

One who was completely free from attachment and aversion

While *nāma* 18 talked of desires for objects of this and other worlds, this *nāma* deals with *rāga*, attachment, and *dveṣa*, aversion, that are experienced with respect to those objects. The root cause of *rāga-dveṣa* is gleaned from

the following exposition of Bhagavatpāda: “The notion ‘I am this’ with respect to the body, etc., which are not the *Ātman*, is ignorance. As a consequence of this notion, *rāga* arises in their honouring, etc., and *dveṣa* in their disgrace, etc.”<sup>217</sup>

The Lord cautions, “Attachment and aversion are in all objects of the senses. One must not come under their sway, for they harm those in the path to higher good.”<sup>218</sup> Hence the importance of getting rid of *rāga-dveṣa*. The Lord throws light on the means and fruit of getting over *rāga-dveṣa* when He says, “It is obligatory action that is done without attachment to the *karma* itself, is not motivated by any attachment or aversion, and is done by a doer who does not desire the fruits of the action, that is termed *sāttvika*”<sup>219</sup> and “By allowing the senses, which are under his control and are devoid of attachment and aversion, to contact sense objects, the man of restrained mind attains serenity.”<sup>220</sup>

Bhagavatpāda points out that *rāga-dveṣa* cease completely when all things are understood to be one and the same,<sup>221</sup> that is only when one who sees nothing as apart from the *Ātman*. Having directly realized the *Ātman*, His Holiness was *vi-varjita*, completely free from, attachment and aversion.



Two days prior to *saṁnyāsa*, the relatives of Sri Srinivasa Sastry got an opportunity to converse privately with Him and were enthusiastically doing so. An elderly person among them told Sri Srinivasa Sastry that even after His becoming a *Jagadguru*, He should have special affection for the close relatives who were present there. Upon hearing these words, He responded, “It is improper for elderly people like you to speak thus,” and made known that He would be the same towards all and would not have any favouritism towards relatives. He was only thirteen years old then.



His Holiness maintained this stance after *saṁnyāsa* and never showed any attachment or partiality towards His former family. Once, Sri Ramanatha Sastry, His Holiness’s younger brother from His *pūrvāśrama* (before *saṁnyāsa*) was in financial difficulties. Sri Nageshwara Sastry, His Holiness’s boyhood friend, approached His Holiness and asked Him to extend special help to Ramanatha Sastry. His Holiness dispassionately replied, “What all there is in the *Maṭha* does not belong to me. It belongs to Śārādāmba. I cannot extend special help to Ramanatha merely because he happened to be my brother. I can be impartial and that is all.”



There was in Narasimhavana a pretty cat of golden hue. His Holiness addressed it as ‘Bekku.’ It would, like a dog, respond to His call. His

Holiness played with it, teasingly waving a cloth in front of it as it jumped to catch the cloth.

After His Holiness had finished His *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* at night, when He went to the *Samādhi* of His *Guru*, the cat would be waiting for Him. It followed Him when He returned to Sacchidananda Vilasa and received milk there. When the news of the cat having disappeared reached Him, He heard it with equanimity. He discerned that it had died and so any attempt to find it would be futile. While His love for animals was great, He was unfettered by attachment towards them.



79. रुद्राक्षभूषितग्रीवः *Rudrākṣa-bhūṣita-grīvaḥ*

One whose neck was adorned with (a garland of) *rudrākṣa* beads

The *rudrākṣa* (berry of the *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* tree), is a sacred bead. The *Rudrākṣa-jābāla-upaniṣad* teaches, “*Rudrākṣas* are spoken of in the world as born of the eye of Lord Rudra. Indeed, after destroying the universe at the time of cosmic dissolution, Sadāśiva closes His (third) dissolution-causing eye. *Rudrākṣas* are born of the tears (formed as a result) from that eye.... By merely wearing that *rudrākṣa*, one obtains the fruit equivalent to that got by donating two thousand cows.”<sup>222</sup>

His Holiness is described here as One whose *grīva*, neck, was *bhūṣita*, adorned with, (a *mālā* or garland of) *rudrākṣas*. It seems as though Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāśvāmin specially coined this *nāma* on recollecting the resplendant form of His *Guru* sporting the *rudrākṣa-mālā*, with the *mālā*'s elegant sway as He walked, itself being a sight to see and cherish.



The following is an experience narrated by Sri H. S. Ramatheertha and recorded in the Kannada book, ‘Jagadguru’.

“I am an engineer who had my education abroad and am disinclined to accept as fact, that which have not been proved beyond doubt. However, I have had a notable but inexplicable experience, which seems like a riddle.

“One evening, I was called by my friends for games. Somehow, I did not feel like going and hence refused to join them. Soon after that, I went to my uncle’s house and started studying. Not even a few minutes had passed, but I felt an urge to go out. I set out on my bicycle. I saw one of the founder members of my institution standing amidst a gathering on a road. I stopped, wanting to know what was going on. Soon a car came there and halted near the gathering. Chants of *Veda-mantras* and victory slogans commenced. Oh! What spiritual splendour! Glittering like molten gold, wearing ochre robes,

with forehead glittering with bright *vibhūti* and neck adorned with a *rudrākṣa-mālā*, a sage of sages moved towards the assembled ones. I returned to my room enthralled. I am unable to explain the experience I had on that day. In fact, without knowledge, I had offered thousands of salutations to none other than His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin of Sringeri.”



## 80. रुद्राराधनतत्परः Rudrārādhana-tatparaḥ

One who was intent on worshipping Lord Rudra

While *nāma* 8 spoke about praising Lord Śiva, *nāma* 10 about being devoted to Him, and *nāmas* 17 and 35 about meditation on Him, this *nāma* focusses on *ārādhana*, worship, of the Lord. Reference to Śiva in this *nāma* by the specific name, Rudra, has a significance. Śiva is said to be fond of *abhiṣeka*, and while performing *abhiṣeka* during Śiva-*pūjā*, it is customary to chant the *Śrī-rudra* which is in praise of Rudra and is found in the the *Taittirīya-saṁhita* of the *Kṛṣṇa-yajurveda*.

One of the *nāmas* in the *aṣṭottaraśata-nāmāvali* of *Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda* describes Him as ‘*kailāsa-yātrā-samprāpta-candramauli-prapūjakah* (One who ardently worshipped the Candramauli *liṅga* obtained on His pilgrimage to Kailāsa)’.<sup>223</sup> It is that treasured crystal *liṅga* of Lord Śiva, known as the *Candramaulīśvara-liṅga*, that was given by Bhagavatpāda to the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham. To this day, *pūjā* is performed thrice to the *liṅga* every day, with the pontiff of the *pīṭha* performing the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* every evening apart from performing additional *pūjās* on special occasions such as *Śivarātri* and the Mondays of the *Śrāvaṇa* and *Kārtikā* months.

His Holiness took particular delight in the conduct of *Mahārudra* and *Atirudra yāgas*, and would prescribe *Śrī-rudra-japa* or *homa* for devotees who sought His intervention and grace to tide over various difficulties.



Lord Malahānikareśvara whose ancient temple is situated on a hillock at Sringeri, was very dear to His Holiness. His Holiness had the temple renovated under His direct supervision and performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* in 1984. As per tradition He used to proceed to the temple and worship the large *liṅga* of Malahānikareśvara on *Mahāśivarātri* day.



His Holiness has visited and performed, through *rudrābhiṣeka*, worship of the *Jyotirlingas* of Somanātha (Somnath, Gujarat), Mallikārjuna (Srisailam, Andhra Pradesh), Mahākāleśvara (Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh), Omkāreśvara (Mandhata, Madhya Pradesh), Vaidyanātha (Deogarh, Jharkhand),

Viśvanātha (Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh), Rāmanātha (Rāmeśvaram, Tamil Nadu) and Kedāreśvara (Kedarnath, Uttarakhand).



His Holiness reminisced about His tour of the 1960s as follows: “One day, as the tour was headed towards Varanasi, many dissuaded me, ‘Communal clashes and violence are prevalent in Kashi. The atmosphere is not conducive.’

“I could not decide. Praying to Lord Viśvanātha alone is our way, strength and duty. I pondered, ‘O Viśveśvara, why this? I cannot come when You call me! When I come, You should give me *darśana*. Why don’t You fulfil my intense urge?’ Musing like this for a while, I proceeded for about 40 miles towards Kolkata, when two eminent persons from Kashi came and wanted Me to return to Varanasi. I declined; they insisted; I acceded. Evidently, the Lord’s grace was there. What a grand welcome awaited me at Kashi! I was immensely fortunate for the Lord’s *darśana* and the glory of the *pūjā*! Reminiscing about these itself accentuates happiness, satisfaction and thrill.”



When His Holiness visited Kathmandu in 1967 (as mentioned under *nāmas* 33 and 77), a *Mahārudra-yajña* was commenced under His guidance and supervision. He visited the Paśupatināth Temple multiple times for worship. On the *Mahāśivarātri* day, He went on foot to the Paśupatināth Temple followed by thousands of pilgrims and devotees to the accompaniment of *Vedic* chanting, and offered worship. The *Mahāśivarātri-pūjā* throughout the night was performed by His Holiness in the presence of a huge gathering, to the accompaniment of the repeated chanting of the *Śrī-rudra*.



Sri A. Ramaswamy, a close disciple of His Holiness, recalled, “Once during a *pūjā* session, I noticed that the curtain that had been drawn to enable His Holiness to offer *naivedya* to the Lord in private as per tradition was opened after a longer time than usual. Curious to find out what had caused the unusual delay, I asked His Holiness about it when I had His *darśana* later. He said, ‘The *naivedya* was very hot. How could I offer it to the Lord? So I had to wait for some time for it to cool down before I offered it to Him.’

“His Holiness’s devotion to God was unparalleled. His performance of *pūjā* was bewitching. He never thought of the idols as mere images of God. He always felt the living presence of God in them. Naturally, He did not wish to offer a *naivedya* that was too hot and hurt the Lord.”



The following is excerpted from an article in a souvenir released in Mysuru in 1981 on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of *saṁnyāsa-svīkāra* of His Holiness. It is a narrative penned by Sri Shivjibhai H. Suchde.

“Once in the early 1980s, a person known to me who had gone from Shivamogga, Karnataka, for *darśana*, informed His Holiness that powercuts were the order of the day and that there was shortage of water in the Linganamakki Dam across River Śāravati, adding that in certain parts of Mysore (Mysuru), people were suffering greatly because of lack of drinking water. When He heard this, His Holiness said that there will be rain, provided *Rudra-abhiṣeka* is performed at Ambuthirtha, the birthplace of River Śāravati.

“We made arrangements for the *pūjā* at Ambuthirtha and went there for its commencement on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. When we reached there it was completely dry and the sky was clear. By the time the *pūjā* was completed, it started raining heavily and continued to do so for several days. In fact, on enquiring we discovered that it was raining heavily in all the surrounding areas such as Thirthahalli, Sringeri, Koppa and Shimoga (Shivamogga). Not only this, in the whole month of August there were copious rains and the Linganamakki Dam was filled. The suffering of the people of Mysore because of lack of water, thus ended.”

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The following is culled from the narrative of Sri A. Krishnan in the Kannada book, ‘Jagadguru’.

“One day, my son did not return from college after classes were over. We searched for him everywhere but could not find him. Even after six months he did not come home. We then wrote a letter to His Holiness stating our problem and praying for His grace.

“His Holiness directed us to perform *Ekādaśavāra-rudra-abhiṣeka* preceded by the chanting of the *Mahānyāsa*, for ten days and also on my son’s birthday. The rite commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 1959. On the 28<sup>th</sup> we received a telegram from my uncle’s house that my son had turned up there.”

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## 81. वशीकृतेन्द्रियग्रामः *Vaśīkṛtendriya-grāmaḥ*

One who had subjugated the host of senses

‘*Indriya-grāma*’ refers to the host of sense organs, namely ear, skin, eye, tongue and nose. It is a fact that a degree of sense-control is imperative even to achieve worldly success. When this is so, its importance in spiritual life can scarcely be overemphasized. The *Śruti* says, “The Lord rendered defective the senses, whereby they see what is outside and not the innermost

*Ātman*. Some resolute man who desires to see the *Ātman*, turns His sight inwards, seeking immortality.”<sup>224</sup> The senses thus only lead one away from the path of liberation. This is why sense-control is one of the hexad of attributes required in spirituality (vide *nāmas* 38 and 98), and forms the fifth limb of *yoga, pratyāhāra* (vide *nāma* 76).

To facilitate freeing people from the clutches of the senses, Bhagavatpāda drives home the perspective: “The deer, the elephant, the moth, the fish and the bee perish because of their attachment to sound, touch, sight, taste and smell respectively. What then is the fate of man who is attached to objects of all the five senses!”<sup>225</sup> The deer perishes, stupefied as it becomes by the sound of the hunter’s conch; the powerful wild tusker loses its freedom by getting lured by the touch of a trained she-elephant; attracted by the sight of light such as a flame, the moth rushes head on into it and perishes; the fish, succumbing to the sense of taste, grabs the bait attached to the hook of the angler’s fishing line and perishes; the bee sits savouring the aroma of a lotus, gets trapped in it at nightfall and meets its end when elephants run riot in the pond. When this is the lot of beings that are enslaved by just one sense, there can possibly be no room for doubt regarding the lot of man, who is a slave of all five senses.

In fact, the Lord gives an insight into the power of the senses when He says, “O Arjuna! The powerful senses lead astray the mind of even a learned man endowed with discrimination and striving.”<sup>226</sup> He then teaches, “Having subdued them all, one should remain concentrated, deeming Me as the Supreme. The wisdom of the one who has his senses under his control is firmly established.”<sup>227</sup> His Holiness had His senses ‘*vaśīkṛta*’, under His control. Indeed, He was a thorough master of His senses.



One day, His Holiness sat down in a coconut grove and asked a disciple to read out the first 50 verses of *Vidura-nīti* (comprising Vidura’s moral advice to Dhṛtarāṣṭra) and select compositions of Bhagavatpāda. As the disciple began chanting verses from the *Vidura-nīti*, His Holiness partially closed His eyes. When the disciple came to the 22<sup>nd</sup> verse, he heard a swishing sound. Before he could react, a big leaf-stalk and a coconut fell from a tree in the vicinity and landed on the ground with a big thud less than a metre from His Holiness. So concentrated was He on the import of the verses that He was totally oblivious of what had happened.

After reading from the *Vidura-nīti*, the disciple passed on to the compositions of Bhagavatpāda, such as *Manīṣā-pañcakam* and *Brahmānucintanam*. His Holiness listened motionless, with a light smile. He opened His eyes only a few moments after the disciple had finished. Suddenly, He winced in pain. Unseen by the disciple, and unfelt by His

Holiness, an army of ants had been biting Him on His legs and hands. His Holiness's feet were red and swollen.

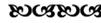
He knew by rote the verses that He had asked the disciple to read out and had Himself mentally recited them on hundreds of occasions. Yet, He concentrated upon them with such intensity that He remained totally unaware of even loud extraneous sounds and injury to His body. This was the kind of control that His Holiness had over His mind, body and senses.



## 82. वाग्देवीसमुपासकः *Vāgdevī-samupāsakaḥ*

One who was an ardent worshipper of the Goddess of Speech

Vāgdevī, the Goddess of knowledge and speech, is none other than Goddess Sarasvatī. The grace of Śāradāmbā, who is also worshipped in the form of Goddess Sarasvatī, bestows erudition and eloquence. His Holiness is said to be *sam-upāsaka*, an excellent worshipper, of Vāgdevī. His unmatched erudition and eloquence were ample proof of this fact. The elaboration of this *nāma* has been provided in a verse earlier composed by *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* Himself, meaning, “I take refuge in that Vidyāfīrtha, on the stage of whose tongue Goddess Sarasvatī Herself dances.”<sup>228</sup> Indeed, scholars held Him in the highest regard. His Holiness worshipped Vāgdevī and as Vāgdevī, He bestowed knowledge and speech on others.



On an occasion, on beholding the senior *Jagadguru* seated with His Holiness, a scholar well-versed in the *Sāma-veda* thought, “How difficult it must be for Him to train such a young disciple. Indeed, it must be a burden on Him.” Abruptly, the senior *Jagadguru* asked the preoccupied *Vedic* scholar to chant the *Sāma-veda*. The man stood up but found words failing him. He had mastered the *Sāma-veda* in its entirety but in spite of his best efforts nothing was forthcoming. Addressing him, the senior *Jagadguru* said, “Śāradāmbā is there to take care of things and everything goes on as per Her wish. She is His (His Holiness's) guardian.” The *Veda-pāṇḍita* realised his folly in presuming that His Holiness was an ordinary teenager, training whom would be a nuisance.



The Maharaja of Kochi, Sri Rama Varma Parikshit Thampuram, himself an accomplished scholar in the *Nyāya-śāstra*, once wrote a letter to His Holiness detailing a doubt he had in the *Nyāya-śāstra* and sent it to Him through a scholar. At that time, a *vidvat-sadas* was going on in the august presence of His Holiness. When the letter was submitted, His Holiness directed one of the scholars to read it out in the *sadas*, thereby initiating a

discussion among the scholars. One by one, the scholars attempted their resolution of the issue but one or the other scholar promptly rebutted the replies. Erudite *vidvāns* such as Sri Mathur Venkateswara Sastri, a professor in the Mysore University, and Sri Madhusudana Bhattacharya, a renowned *Tārīkika* from Kolkata, too offered their explanations only to be subsequently countered by the other scholars. The debate continued and it seemed as though it would be eternity before a conclusion could be reached. His Holiness suggested to the scholars that all of them reflect on the issue further and come out with a tenable conclusion before the concluding session.

As it turned out, even on the concluding day of the *sadas*, none of the scholars was able to resolve the doubt to the satisfaction of all. At this juncture, His Holiness Himself intervened and presented an appropriate answer in His inimitably lucid style. The scholars were awestruck by the splendid reply given by His Holiness. Mathur Venkateswara Sastri, who had learnt under none other than Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhārati Mahāsvāmin, openly remarked, “Only His Holiness can put any doubt to rest. After all, is He not the Goddess Śāradāmbā in human form?”

Needless to say, the Maharaja’s joy knew no bounds when he received the clarification given by His Holiness. He promptly wrote a letter to His Holiness conveying his reverential salutations and gratitude.



In 1976-77, the second daughter of Sri Meenakshisundaram Iyer of Dindigul, developed tonsillitis. This resulted in a total loss of speech even before the surgery. The worried father took the girl to Sringeri, after having exhausting all available courses of medical treatment. When Meenakshisundaram Iyer submitted to His Holiness the purpose of their visit, His Holiness asked them to be present during the evening *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā*. During the *pūjā*, His Holiness kept looking at the child now and then, while she sat with her palms joined in reverence. After the *pūjā* was completed, His Holiness beckoned to the father and giving him a ball of sandal paste that had been offered to Lord Candramaulīśvara, asked him to drop it into His daughter’s mouth. Soon after ingesting the *prasāda*, the girl said, ‘Ambā’, prostrated before His Holiness and started speaking. His Holiness, the worshipper of Vāgdevī, and indeed Vāgdevī Herself, had blessed the girl to regain her power of speech.



83. विद्यारण्यसमप्रज्ञः *Vidyāraṇya-sama-prajñah*

One whose wisdom matched that of Śrī Vidyāraṇya

Jagadguru Śrī Vidyāraṇya Mahāsvāmin, who reigned as the 12<sup>th</sup> pontiff of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham from 1380 to 1386 C.E., was both a pre-

eminent sage and a brilliant statesman. This *nāma* conveys that His Holiness's *prajñā*, intellectual prowess (vide *nāma* 69), was *sama*, equal to, that of the great Śrī Vidyāraṇya. Indeed, one was *vidyā-āraṇya*, a forest of knowledge, the other *vidyā-tīrtha*, a sacred place of knowledge.



His Holiness attained through deep contemplation and meditation, *savikalpa-samādhi* on *nirguṇa-Brahman* (vide *nāma* 59). He meditated using as props, external objects and mental thoughts, and on the *tattva* of the *Ātman* and of *Brahman*. While He was narrating the sequence of events decades later to a disciple, the following conversation ensued.

Disciple: Was Your Holiness familiar at that time with the scriptural account of the two *drśyānuviddha* (associated with a perceptible object) and two *śabdānuviddha* (associated with a sound) kinds of *savikalpa-samādhis*?

HH: No. I read the verses concerned of the *Sarasvatī-rahasya-upaniṣad* and the *Dr̥g-dr̥śya-viveka* much later. Only when I did so did I come to know that there were these varieties of *savikalpa-samādhi* and that I had properly practised all of them.

His Holiness, then just 18 years old, understood by Himself, and that too as a matter of direct experience, the esoteric passages of the *Śruti* with the correct interpretation. He had, on His own, contemplated and arrived at the two forms each of the two-fold types of meditation laid down by Śrī Vidyāraṇya in His text *Dr̥g-dr̥śya-viveka*, and practiced all of them perfectly to attain *savikalpa-samādhi* on *nirguṇa-Brahman*. Indeed, how can it be otherwise, when His Holiness's knowledge was, as stated in this *nāma* by His foremost disciple, on par with Śrī Vidyāraṇya's!



Śrī Vidyāraṇya was a sage who was initiated into *saṁnyāsa* by the 10<sup>th</sup> pontiff, Śrī Vidyātīrtha, in 1331 A.D., exactly six centuries before His Holiness (who had His *saṁnyāsa-dīkṣā* in 1931). The 14<sup>th</sup> century sage's vast repertoire of knowledge is apparent from the large body of writing that He produced spanning *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, the *Dharma-śāstra* and *Vedānta*. His masterpieces in *Vedānta* include the *Jīvanmukti-viveka*, *Pañcadaśī*, *Dr̥g-dr̥śya-viveka*, a sub-commentary on *Aparokṣānubhūti*, and six *Upaniṣad-dīpikas*, all of which are celebrated as authoritative works on *Vedānta*. Through these, He has explained the concepts of *Vedānta* in ways that have been useful to students of *Vedānta* and spiritual aspirants across generations.

His Holiness's contributions to the spread of *Vedānta* has been no less, and has also been in accordance with the requirements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His Holiness penned telling essays that capture the essence of *Sanātana-dharma*,

*Vedānta* and the practice of spirituality in such lucid terms that they can be understood and brought into practice by lay people of the present age. He extensively taught the scriptures to various classes of people from scholars to laymen who do not know Sanskrit. He gave scores of benedictory discourses in local languages, simplifying the tenets of *Vedānta* so that it reaches the common man. He answered questions of devotees and others without diluting the scriptures and yet catering to the modern mind. He initiated several into *mantras* and cleared their doubts, personally guiding many a spiritual aspirant. He provided lucid expositions on several knotty issues presented in the scriptures in a way that is universally understandable.



Śrī Vidyāraṇya was instrumental in the establishment of the Vijayanagara Empire in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. That was a watershed moment for India, because it ensured the re-establishment of *Sanātana-dharma*, which had suffered a body blow due to foreign invasions. This single act of the sage vouchsafed the rebuilding of several temples, restart of worship in many important ones that had been abandoned due to Muslim invasion, and sustenance of new *Maṭhas* established in different parts of South India. All of this, achieved through the patronage of the Vijayanagara emperors who owed the reinstatement of their kingship to the grace and guidance of the sage, in turn ensured that the Hindu faith was resurrected magnificently and placed on a firm footing.

His Holiness, as seen under various *nāmas* here, was equal to Śrī Vidyāraṇya in this aspect as well. When the *Maṭha* itself was deprived of all its income-generating lands, His Holiness's incisive intellect and vision caused Him to assure worried officials and well-wishers that the patronage of devotees will not only make up for the loss of revenue but will in fact far exceed it. His words came true. His Holiness toured India thrice and devotees thronged to serve the cause of *Sanātana-dharma* that He espoused. Temples were built and consecrated by Him, new *Maṭhas* established all over India, *Maṭhas* established earlier were renovated and expanded and became flourishing institutions, and several *pāṭhaśālas* were established. He was instrumental in starting periodicals that spread the message of Bhagavatpāda among the masses. At a time when western influences were obliterating the belief in *Sanātana-dharma*, His Holiness brought thousands and thousands into its fold and paved the way for their spiritual upliftment.



Śrī Vidyāraṇya wrote the authoritative biography of Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda, the *Śaṅkara-digvijaya*, also known as the *Mādhavīya Śaṅkara-vijaya*, thereby making a very significant contribution in spreading the message of Bhagavatpāda for the benefit of mankind.

The ways in which His Holiness worked to spread the message of Bhagavatpāda bears the stamp of His great *prajñā*. The birthplace of Bhagavatpāda at Kalady at which a *Maṭha* had been established earlier, was in a shambles, and His Holiness made extensive renovations and expansions to make it a thriving institution, apart from giving a major fillip to the town of Kalady itself (vide *nāma* 23). He encouraged and blessed the youngsters who organized the Shankara-jyoti that was travelling from Kalady to Kedarnath to spread the message of Bhagavatpāda in 1988. He used every opportunity to spread Bhagavatpāda's teachings through the length and breadth of the country. He wrote a treatise on Him forcefully bringing out the greatness of His life and teachings, gave benedictory discourses about His greatness and doctrine, taught the works of Bhagavatpāda to many, motivated people to read Bhagavatpāda's works and consecrated numerous shrines of Bhagavatpāda across the country.



Harihara I and Bukka I, the emperors of Vijayanagara, who regained their lost kingdom because of the guidance of Śrī Vidyāraṇya, submitted their kingdom at the feet of the *Jagadguru* of Sringeri, the reigning (10<sup>th</sup>) pontiff at the time, Jagadguru Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin. From then, the emperors of Vijayanagara served the *Jagadgurus* of Sringeri and helped immensely in the protection of Hinduism.

His Holiness, who was the new or 'Abhinava' Vidyātīrtha of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, too had Maharajas and heads of state pay obeisance at His feet and seek His grace and guidance for matters spiritual and worldly, as described briefly under *nāma* 77. Such was His spiritual stature, scriptural knowledge, rapport with people and amicable disposition that the wielders of the highest power flocked to Him to seek His blessings. As was the case with Śrī Vidyāraṇya, His Holiness was a *sannyāsin* with no possessions, and yet everything was placed at His feet.



#### 84. विद्याविनयशोभितः *Vidyā-vinaya-śobhitaḥ*

One who was adorned with humility born of erudition

That His Holiness was a treasure-trove of *vidyā*, erudition, has been glimpsed under many *nāmas*. What is often true is that achievement of even a little erudition is accompanied by haughtiness. However, it is said that *vinaya*, humility, actually comes from learning,<sup>229</sup> for true learning begets only *sāttvika* qualities. His Holiness was, by nature, free from even a trace of vanity. He was therefore *śobhita*, embellished, with humility that was coupled with His profound erudition and indeed born of it.



One day, Sri Srinivasa Sastry's mother came to have the *darśana* of and pay her respects to the Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhārati Mahāsvāmin and to see her beloved son. After meeting Them briefly in Narasimhavana, she returned to the northern bank of the Tuṅgā at about five in the evening. The *Jagadguru* then proceeded to the Kālabhairava Temple. On the way, He recited a verse that conveys, "A sow quickly brings forth many luckless piglets. A she-elephant, after long gestation, gives birth to a single calf that is loved by kings."<sup>230</sup> He then asked the students what, they thought, He had sought to point out through this verse.

While the others were puzzled and remained silent, Sri Srinivasa Sastry stepped forward and remarked, "A big school may give instruction to more than a hundred students. But if they are unable to grasp the substance of the teaching, the instruction will be a useless effort. A small school may have a single student. But if that boy is endowed with brains and takes maximum advantage of the instruction, he will bring fame to the institution. This, I think is the implied meaning of the verse." The *Jagadguru* then turned to Vaidyanatha Sastry and asked him his view. Sastry said, "It is given only to some rare lady to give birth to a child who becomes a *Jagadguru* worshipped by kings. Other mothers do not get this blessing." The reason for his giving this interpretation was that the *Jagadguru* had cited the verse just a few minutes after Sri Srinivasa Sastry's mother had left.

Subsequently, the boys started talking amongst themselves about this. One of them asked Sri Srinivasa Sastry whether it was not apparent that the verse referred to His mother. With His characteristic humility, He replied, "I cannot even imagine giving such an interpretation."

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About His mode of answering queries of spiritual aspirants, His Holiness has said, "I often give a solution based on personal experience. As I have tried out numerous methods when I was young, I usually do not have any difficulty in appreciating the conditions described by the *sādhakas*. Sometimes, after giving the questions a thorough hearing and getting additional necessary clarifications from the questioner, I try out what he practises. I then use the resulting experience to shape my reply. On some other occasions, I just feel like prescribing a particular course of action and so do it. I generally do not find it necessary to quiz disciples before giving them suggestions. It is only God's grace that makes the answers helpful to the seekers."

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Once a *sabhā* was held at Bengaluru where *paṇḍitas* debated whether Bhagavatpāda recognised *mūlāvidyā*, primordial ignorance that rests in and veils *Brahman* and is the basis of false knowledge about the *Ātman*.

Traditional *Vedāntins*, right from the time of Padmapādācārya, have undisputedly held that Bhagavatpāda accepts *mūlāvidyā*. However, Śrī Saccidānandendra-sarasvatī of the Holenarasipura Math and his followers contended that Bhagavatpāda did not admit the existence of *mūlāvidyā*; they opined that there is no veil of ignorance in deep sleep and that the only difference between deep sleep and liberation is that the former is temporary. Representatives of both the schools decided to thrash out the issue in a debate and that was why the *sabhā* had been arranged.

His Holiness witnessed the proceedings with avid interest. A person asked Him why He did not pass a verdict in His capacity as the *Jagadguru*. His Holiness's poignant reply was, "I am not sitting here as any *Jagadguru*. On the contrary, I am seated as one who was taught the *Śāstras* and am confirming what I have learnt." He was so unassuming and neutral in spite of His being recognised by scholars all over the nation as an unparalleled exponent of *Tarka* and *Vedānta*. [The debate ended in favour of the upholders of the traditional view.]



His Holiness never forgot any good done for Him. His *Guru* had personally taught Sri V. S. Ramachandra Sastri and made him a great scholar in *Tarka* and *Vedānta*; he also became an authority on *Mīmāṃsā*. Later, he was assigned the responsibility of expounding the *Tarka-śāstra* to His Holiness, with His Holiness's *Guru* regularly overseeing His studies. These were completed in the late 1930s. Even after becoming a pontiff in 1954, His Holiness held him in high esteem and interacted with him accordingly, through letters as well. In some of His epistles, His Holiness had explicitly addressed Sri Ramachandra Sastri as His '*upādhyāya* (teacher)' and had written to him with due regards.

From the letters written by Sri Ramachandra Sastri to His Holiness during the course of His Holiness's first South India tour, it is patent how very appreciative he was of His Holiness's great efforts for the cause of *Sanātana-dharma*. He had even written that the events of His Holiness's tour deserved to be engraved in gold. That he looked upon His Holiness as his *Guru* was unmistakable. In his letters, he sought His Holiness's advice on various matters, and His Holiness had readily obliged; in a letter, His Holiness had even recommended the practice of *amanaska-yoga*, involving mental quietude.

When Sri Ramachandra Sastri was ailing, His Holiness wanted to travel to Bengaluru to visit him and had to be dissuaded from doing so; when he passed away, His Holiness took a special bath at Sringeri even though it was not required as He was a *saṁnyāsīn*.



Sri S. N. Parameswara once recollected, “His Holiness was once camping at my brother Srithandaveswara’s place. The room He stayed in had an open cupboard that contained some books. I had kept in that cupboard a notebook in which I had written some *ślokas* in Kannada; I recited these every day. After His *bhikṣā*, His Holiness glanced at some of the books.

“When I went for His *darśana* in the evening, He told me, ‘Bring me the notebook.’ When I did so, He said, ‘I went through this notebook in the afternoon when I had some free time. You have written some *ślokas* in Kannada which you are probably reciting daily. Some of the verses contain spelling mistakes. I have corrected them to the extent that I could. I did so because I did not want you to recite them with mistakes. You may verify their correctness and recite them.’ Saying so, He handed me the notebook.

“For His unparalleled erudition and the seat He was occupying, He could have easily said, ‘I have corrected the mistakes. You may now recite them without error.’ Instead, He only said that He had corrected the mistakes to the extent that He could and that I might verify their correctness. Such was His humility.”



## 85. वेदशास्त्रपरित्राता

## *Veda-śāstra-paritrātā*

One who was the custodian of the *Vedas* and *Śāstras*

The *Vedas* form the principal basis for *dharma*, be it *pravṛtti* (action-oriented) or *nivṛtti* (liberation-oriented). ‘*Śāstra*’ here comprises the six *Vedāṅgas*, auxiliaries, and the four *Upāṅgas*, subsidiaries, of the *Vedas*. The *Vedāṅgas* are *śikṣā* (phonetics), *chandas* (prosody), *vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *nirukta* (etymology), *kalpa* (guidelines to perform rituals) and *jyotiṣa* (astrology). The four *Upāṅgas* are *Purāṇa* (including the *Upa-purāṇas*), *Nyāya* (including *vaiśeṣika*), *Mīmāṃsā* (including *Vedānta*) and *Dharmaśāstra* (including the *Itihāsas*, *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga* and the six *matas* namely *Śaiva*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Gāṇapatya*, *Kaumāra*, *Śaura* and *Śākta*).<sup>231</sup>

The importance of protecting, by preservation and propagation, the tradition of learning the *Vedas* and *Śāstras*, is underscored by the saying, “Had the community of teachers not painstakingly taught the *Vedas* and *Śāstras* to the generations of students, then it would have been devastating, for the earth would have been divested of both *Vedic* wisdom and sacrifices.”<sup>232</sup>

His Holiness was verily a *paritrātā*, protector, of the *Veda-śāstras*, because He accomplished several vital tasks for their sustenance, propagation and uplift, apart from Himself setting an example by following their decrees with sincerity and devotion.



His Holiness took personal interest in the welfare and studies of the students of the *pāṭhaśālā* in Sringeri and spoke to the students now and then. He renovated the *pāṭhaśālā* building and provided them comfortable accommodation and a good atmosphere for studies. At times, he probed the students' knowledge by gentle questioning. If the student did not know the answer, He never humiliated the boy but merely went on to the next question, often after having given a brief clarification.

He established *Veda-pāṭhaśālās* at numerous places. He started the *Veda-poṣaka-sabhā* for facilitating the teaching, study and propagation of the *Vedas*. Through it, He encouraged *Vedic* scholars by providing them financial assistance, honouring them and presenting them with cash awards. The *Veda-poṣaka-sabhā* has been unfailingly doing this every year to this day, during the five-day *Śaṅkara-jayantī* celebrations. It also conducts *Veda* examinations in this period; students from *pāṭhaśālās* all over the country have been taking these highly valued examinations. The successful students receive certificates and cash awards.

His Holiness invited those knowledgeable in the *Śāstras* such as *Vedānta*, *Tarka*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vyākaraṇa*, from all over the country to participate in the *vidvat-sadas* (assembly of scholars) commencing every year on *Vināyaka-caturthī* and ending on the subsequent *paurṇamī*. A scholar par excellence, He presided over and personally participated in this annual *sadas*. He ensured that humiliation of others, particularly budding scholars, was not indulged in and if any such attempt were made by a *paṇḍita*, He gently intervened. When students spoke, He encouraged them by posing simple questions that they could have the pleasure of answering.



The following was narrated by Sri Venkatappa Yajnanarayana (who became Śrī Jñānānanda-tīrtha after *saṁnyāsa*).

“As I was fortunate enough to accompany His Holiness during His tour of (then undivided) Andhra Pradesh, I was able to witness numerous incidents that underscored the faith He had in the *Vedas* and the regard He had for *vaidikas*. Whenever He visited a village or a town in Andhra Pradesh, He posed the question, ‘Is there any *agnihotrin* (a maintainer of the ordained fires and performer of the *agnihotra* rite every day at dawn and dusk) living in this place?’ If the answer was ‘Yes,’ He expressed His wish to pay a visit to the house concerned. Whenever He visited any such house, He praised the *agnihotrin* for his faith in performing such rites and specially blessed him and his family. He also advised the people who accompanied Him to such places to be sincere in the performance of their *nitya-karma*.”



Once during His Holiness's camp at Tenali, He heard about a sincere *agnihotrin* and decided to visit his house. The person concerned was informed about His Holiness's proposed visit and he was, naturally, delighted.

When His Holiness came to his place, He asked the *agnihotrin* to take Him to the place of his *agnihotra* worship. The house he lived in as also the shelter where he performed *agnihotra* were in a dilapidated condition. Appreciating his strict adherence to his *dharma* despite his penury, His Holiness instructed the officials of the *Maṭha* to construct a new house at the expense of the *Maṭha* and offer it free of cost to the sincere *agnihotrin*. The *agnihotrin* was moved at this compassionate gesture of His Holiness. Within months, the house was ready for the *agnihotrin* to occupy.

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His Holiness presided over the conduct of several *Atirudra-mahāyāgas* (in which the *Vedic Śrī-rudra* is collectively chanted 14,641 times and offerings are made into fire), *Sahasra-cāṇḍī-mahāyāgas* (in which the *Devī-māhātmya* is chanted a thousand times and offerings are made into fire), *koṭi-kuṅkuma-arcanas* (in which *arcana* is done to *Śrī-cakras*, chanting the names of the Divine Mother from the *Lalitā-sahasranāma*) and *homas*, such as the *R̥gveda-samhitā-homa*, *Yajurveda-samhitā-homa* and *Sāmaveda-samhitā-homa* (in which the hymns of the corresponding *samhitā* are chanted and offerings made into fire). All these were conducted for the welfare of all.

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For the propagation of Sanskrit, His Holiness started the *Sura-sarasvatī-sabhā*. This *sabhā* has a graded sequence of courses, with books for each level and teachers to train students. Those passing the examinations are awarded certificates.

For spreading *Sanātana-dharma* and facilitating connection with the Sringeri Math, He initiated the publication of magazines such as 'Shankara Krupa' in Tamil, Kannada and Telugu and 'Tattvāloka' in English. The Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamigal Education Trust was started with the blessings of His Holiness and caters to the publication of books; *Tattvāloka* is published under its aegis.

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86. वादिमत्तेभकेसरी

*Vādi-mattebha-kesarī*

One who was a lion to disputants who were like elephants in rut

A tame elephant is mighty and yet gentle and obedient. However, when in rut with copious ichor flowing down its temples, it becomes exceedingly

aggressive and combative and hence, extremely difficult to subdue. In this *nāma*, the *vādin*, debater, is likened to not just an elephant, but to *matta-ibha*, an intoxicated elephant. He is a formidable opponent in debate not just in might but also in aggression. His Holiness is described here as a *kesarī*, lion, when it comes to taking on such formidable *vādins* – He had the intellectual acumen as well as the verbal ability to vanquish the flawed arguments of even highly capable *vādins* intoxicated with arrogance and aggression. As Bhartrhari put it, “Even a lion cub pounces on elephants whose temples are hardened like walls due to the flowing ichor. Such is the nature of the capable. Indeed, age is not the cause of prowess.”<sup>233</sup>

However, His Holiness being gentleness personified as described in *nāma* 22, the possibility of Him confronting anyone of His own accord in a verbal combat with the sole aim of establishing His superiority over the other, simply did not exist even remotely. However, when there was a need to subdue such a challenger, He rose to the occasion. This prowess of His when displayed, always resulted in subduing the intellectual arrogance of the *vādin* and thus only brought about his betterment.



His Holiness visited Kolkata for the first time in 1967. As per His Holiness’s directives, a *vidvat-sadas* was organised there. People had heard of the scholarliness of His Holiness’s *Guru* but had not yet glimpsed His Holiness’s greatness.

There was, at that time, a great scholar of the *Nyāya-sāstra* in Kolkata. He was extremely erudite, but was an atheist. His Holiness was particular that he be invited. To the *Maṭha* officials who approached him with an invitation to the *sadas*, the scholar said, “I have two conditions. Firstly, I will not participate in the prayer. Secondly, I will not prostrate before the Swamiji. I will participate in the *sadas* provided these two conditions are met.” The conditions were agreed to and the scholar did participate in the *sadas*.

The *sadas* commenced, and the scholar was the first person to deliver an exposition. He spoke for an hour and when he finished, looked at His Holiness. His Holiness did not offer any comments. A few other scholars too spoke that day. His Holiness did not address the *paṇḍitas* on the first two days. At the end of the second day’s session, the haughty scholar remarked to a *Maṭha* official, “What is this? You have placed a statue in front of me. This Swamiji does not have anything at all to say. The reason must be either that He is not able to understand what I am saying, or that He is unable to think of appropriate arguments to counter mine. Anyway, I will attend this *sadas* one final time tomorrow.”

On the third day of the *sadas*, after the scholar had spoken for about twenty minutes, His Holiness asked him, “Have you completed your arguments?”

When the man answered in the affirmative, His Holiness began His exposition. He spoke for an hour and a half and addressed every argument that the scholar had raised. At the end of it, the scholar got up, took off his turban, and placing it at the lotus feet of His Holiness, prostrated before Him. The thoroughly humbled man remarked, “I have only read in books that great scholars existed in ancient India. I have never heard such an extensive and brilliant exposition of *Nyāya*. Today I have seen Goddess Sarasvatī Herself in front of me.”



In 1954, when His Holiness ascended the *pīṭha* after the *Mahāsamādhi* of His *Guru*, His Holiness was thirty-seven years old. On the seventh day after His ascension of the *pīṭha*, a *paṇḍita* from Andhra Pradesh visited Sringeri. He was a great scholar of *Vedānta* but was very egoistic. If he came across a scholar he would ask a barrage of questions. If the scholar was unable to answer immediately, he would berate and humiliate him mercilessly. On arriving in Sringeri, he approached a *Maṭha* official and said, “Please arrange for me to have the *darśana* of His Holiness.” The official who was aware of this man’s dubious reputation said, “It is not possible to arrange for a meeting with His Holiness.” However, the scholar continued to press for an appointment, and hence the official submitted the matter to His Holiness.

His Holiness said, “He is very well-read, isn’t he? And he intends to ask some questions. If he asks me something I do not know, I will listen to and learn from him. There is no loss. Go ahead and arrange for a meeting.” The official duly arranged for the *paṇḍita* to have the *darśana* of His Holiness.

The moment the scholar came into His Holiness’ presence, he began to ask a volley of questions, without waiting for or expecting an answer. His Holiness took up some water in His hands and threw it at the man’s face. Immediately, the man was reduced to a humble shadow of his former self. He had been possessed by a spirit which had been the one arguing with scholars all along, making it seem that the *paṇḍita* was behaving in an arrogant manner. His Holiness instantaneously cured the man of the spirit that had possessed him. He also graced the *paṇḍita* with a *mantra-upadeśa*.



A *vidvat-sadas* was organized at Delhi when His Holiness was camping there in 1967. On an *ekādaśī* day when His Holiness was observing silence, a scholar in *Vyākaraṇa* approached His Holiness and said, “I am unable to accept that scholars from Sringeri are extremely learned. I will put forth some questions and only if they are able to answer them satisfactorily, will I change my opinion about them. But all this is contingent upon one condition: Your Holiness must not intervene.” His Holiness nodded in acceptance of the condition.

At the *vidvat-sadas*, the scholar put forth a torrent of questions without giving a moment for the gathered scholars to think or get a word in edgeways. When he finished, the scholars sat dumbstruck. The silence that ensued was ominous. In front of His Holiness and facing Him, sat a *vidyārthi*, who barely knew anything. His Holiness motioned with His eyes for the lad to rise and answer. Out of deference to His Holiness's wishes, the boy stood up and opened his mouth to say something. Although he was not even aware of the subjects from which the scholar had culled his questions, the boy began to systematically answer the questions raised by the scholar, one by one in a thorough fashion. The scholar stared in amazement. The scholar fell flat at His Holiness's feet and begged His pardon. 'If even an amateur *vidyārthi* at Sringeri is capable of discoursing so proficiently and lucidly, then what to speak of the scholars who train the boys!' thought he, and thoroughly humbled, left the place.

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Once in the early 1970s, a man came to Sringeri and told His Holiness, "I am going to set up my *āśrama* at Sringeri near the *Maṭha* and teach my religion to all the people who come here."

HH: Why don't you first teach me what you are intending to teach others? That way, I will also get to know of your religion.

Man: Certainly. And whatever questions You may choose to ask me are welcome. I will answer all of them.

HH: Fine. When did your religion come into existence?

M: More than 1,970 years have elapsed since the founding of my religion.

HH: Did people exist before your religion came into being or not?

M: Oh, they certainly did! If not, to whom would we have taught the religion?

HH: Very well. In that case, were the people who existed before your religion was born, going to heaven or to hell after death?

M: They were all going to hell, because they were not following the laws of my religion.

HH: Isn't this complete injustice? Even today's governments have to make sure that they lay down the law first and only then hold people accountable if they transgress the law. How can we say, 'Nobody is following the law', even before promulgating it? Is the fact that people are not acting according to such a law, their fault or ours? As such, your claim that people who existed before you framed your religion and the associated laws, went only to hell, is rather unjust.

M: Alright, they did not go to hell, but to heaven.

HH: This too is not just. After all, before you brought in your religious laws, people were all going to heaven, while after you made the laws some people ended up going to hell. Thus, people were better off before you founded your religion, because they were all happily going to heaven.

The man was flummoxed and left the place, having altogether abandoned the thought of starting a competing *āśrama* at Sringeri.

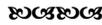


## 87. विदिताखिलशास्त्रार्थः *Viditākhila-śāstrārthaḥ*

One who knew the import of all the *Śāstras*

*Śāstra* means domain of knowledge. There are both religious and secular domains of knowledge. The former includes the six *darśanas* (vide *nāma* 46) while examples of the latter include the sciences (vide *nāma* 6) like *Bhautika* (Physics), *Rasāyana* (Chemistry), *Jīva-śāstra* (Life Science), *Vāstu-śāstra* (Science of Architecture) and *Śilpa-śāstra* (Sculpture), as also other domains such as *Artha-śāstra* (Political Science), *Alaṅkāra-śāstra* (Rhetoric), *Kāvya-śāstra* (Poetics), *Saṅgīta-śāstra* (Music) and *Nīti-śāstra* (Ethics). *Śāstrārtha* means the meaning of the *śāstra*.

His Holiness is described as One who *vidita*, knew, *akhila-śāstrārtha* the import of all *Śāstras*, be they religious or secular. As a consequence, He could easily connect with people of diverse knowledge backgrounds in a manner that interested and stimulated them. Furthermore, because of the vast spread of His familiarity over domains, He could view an issue in one domain from the perspectives of others and develop insights by linking them. In addition to having an integrated approach, His Holiness was characterized by open-mindedness, curiosity and eagerness to learn, and an uncanny ability to simplify seemingly complex issues. Importantly, he could apply this vast knowledge with remarkable ease to solve problems.



His Holiness's approach to any view was characterised by incisive ratiocination free from bigotry and dogma. The openness with which He considered the propositions of science, for instance, was refreshing. He had a thorough grasp of the contributions of ancient India to the fields of mathematics, medicine, engineering, architecture, etc., several of which predated those popularly attributed to the western world. At the same time, He desisted from attributing western contributions to Indian origin. He never shied away from taking contentious issues head-on. He had a knack of advancing arguments at once, with punch and simplicity. He was as much at ease in conversing with those with formal scientific learning and with

inquisitive youngsters as He was with traditional scholars of *Nyāya* and *Vedānta*. Singularly striking was His uncanny ability to comprehensively answer, without compromising on the teaching of the scripture, the questions of not only believers but also those of non-traditionalists and even iconoclasts.

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On an occasion, there was an urgent need to transcribe the contents of an audio tape contained in a seven-inch-diameter spool. The recording had been done at a speed of  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches per second. The *Maṭha*'s tape recorder that could accommodate a 7-inch spool was capable of playing back only at a speed of  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches per second. A second tape recorder was available that could play at the required speed of  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches per second but, being small, could accommodate only a 5-inch spool. The task of transcribing had been allocated to a disciple who was at a loss as to how to proceed. His Holiness came to his rescue and told him, "Why do you not use to advantage the principle that the receiving spool merely collects the tape that is moved by the spindle? I will show you what I have in mind." He placed the bigger tape recorder behind the smaller one and used some packing material to ensure that the deck-levels of the two recorders lay in the same horizontal plane. He then fitted the sending and receiving spools on the larger of the two recorders. Instead of taking the tape in front of the head assembly of that recorder, He passed it in front of the head assembly of the smaller recorder.

The recorders were turned on. The tape speed was decided by the spindle rotation of the smaller recorder and as such was  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches per second. The larger machine merely sent and collected the tape. Since the head of the smaller recorder was in contact with the tape, its amplifier and speaker units provided the audio output.

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In the 1970s, a disciple had an occasion to design and construct for His Holiness an inverter, working with a 6 volt D.C. secondary storage battery as the source, to supply a power of 20 watts at 230 volts A.C. The disciple was having some problems with the transformer that he was employing in a parallel-inverter circuit. His Holiness asked him how the work was progressing and the disciple explained his difficulty. His Holiness said, "I was given some transformers and they are lying upstairs, unused. You can use one if it suits you." The disciple decided to go upstairs to see if any one of the available transformers would match his specifications but His Holiness told him to wait. He called His attendant and told him to go upstairs and fetch a particular transformer. "I have a particular specification in my mind. Hence, may I go and select one?" the disciple queried. His Holiness smiled and said, "Wait and see if the one that is brought suits you. If not, you can select another one." To the disciple's surprise, the transformer that

was brought completely met his requirements. Apparently, His Holiness had intuitively arrived at the specifications the disciple had in his mind.

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During His several tours all over India, His Holiness showed avid interest in learning about subjects as diverse as agriculture, engineering, architecture, forestry, horticulture, energy management, etc. In fact, what happened when He was thinking of converting some of the *Matha*-owned land at Sringeri into agricultural land, is a classic example of the practical implementation of His diverse knowledge. Some ill-intentioned ones gave Him misleading advice and this led to some minor setbacks. For instance, repeated rotation of crops was suggested and it was made out that the region was thoroughly unsuitable for developing coconut groves. His Holiness was quick to see through their game. He had picked up too much knowledge of agriculture and horticulture during His tour to be misled any longer. He had already determined that the bane of the region was the haphazard policy of the earlier planners who cultivated a crop and whimsically replaced it with another, hoping that the new crop would fetch enhanced dividends. Examining the soil and keeping the climatic conditions in mind, His Holiness decided what crops it would sustain. He had acquired much knowledge about fertilizers and pesticides, both natural and synthetic, and about how best to attend to various crops and groves. In the face of extreme scepticism, He ordered the planting of coconut saplings. His instructions were carried out to the letter and lo and behold, Sringeri soon got its first coconut grove.

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A tractor was once donated to the *Matha* at Sringeri. His Holiness started asking for details about the working of its various parts. The experienced engineer who had been deputed by the manufacturer to hand over the tractor to the *Matha*, could not give satisfactory replies to all the questions. In fact, he realized that he had learnt much from this interaction with His Holiness. He even said later that he had not learnt in all the 25 years of his experience, what he had learnt from His Holiness in that one interaction. He felt that his experience would have been richer if he had had this opportunity much earlier in his career.

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Sri A. R. Viswanathan, a disciple of His Holiness, developed and maintained a beautiful garden with various types of flowering plants and trees in the compound of his house in Bengaluru. Whenever His Holiness camped in Bengaluru and paid a visit to his house, He viewed and enjoyed the garden. On several occasions, He discussed gardening with him. Once, when Viswanathan went to Sringeri with his friend to have *darśana*, His Holiness met them in private and conversed for over an hour about gardens, various plants and some of the difficulties in maintaining and nurturing them.

Viswanathan's friend was amazed at His Holiness's keen interest in and deep knowledge of horticulture and concluded that His Holiness must be a specialist in botany. His Holiness found it amusing when he told Him so.

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His Holiness had superior skills when it came to planning and construction of buildings. He came up with excellent architectural designs that did not compromise on utility of space or economy. His Holiness has said, "I have no formal engineering education but am ever ready to learn by questioning, observation and practice. Initially, I made some mistakes that I had to undo by making small modifications in the buildings; the consequence was some extra cost. However, I learnt from my mistakes and there are no such problems now."

Since people were put to inconvenience in Sringeri during the rainy season and since there occurred an unfortunate event of boat capsizing, His Holiness decided in the early 1980s to put up a permanent bridge across the Tuṅgā river to connect the two campuses of the *Maṭha*. He meticulously collected details of various bridges in India and abroad. He entrusted the construction of the bridge He had envisioned to Gammon India. When Sri T. N. Subba Rao, the Managing Director of the company, visited His Holiness, he was surprised to find His Holiness speaking knowledgeably about various bridges, such as the Laxman Jhula in Rishikesh, Howrah Bridge in Kolkata, Sydney Harbour Bridge in Sydney and Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. He exclaimed to Sri H. S. Nagashwaran, a disciple of His Holiness who had accompanied him (and who reported this in a talk), "I think He has travelled all over the world!" His Holiness expressed His preference to avoid columns in the middle of the river because, as He put it, He did not want the fishes in the river to be disturbed by the construction work. Finally, after taking various factors into consideration, He approved of Gammon India's proposal to build a bridge with one column in the middle of the river. He regularly watched over the construction.

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His Holiness was well-versed in the use of medicines. This is vouchsafed by doctors like Dr. Subhalakshmi and former Principal of the Davangere Medical College, Dr. A. R. Govinda Rao, both of whom served at the Sharada Dhanwantari Charitable Hospital, Sringeri. On the occasion when the latter submitted to His Holiness a newly published book on Pharmacotherapeutics that he had authored, he ended up getting many insights on the subject from His Holiness.

Sringeri and the nearby regions did not have any hospital. Hence, Sri K. S. Natarajan mooted to His Holiness the idea of establishing a hospital and Sri Vaidyasubramanya Iyer threw in his full support. A hill belonging to the

*Maṭha* at the entrance to Sringeri was made available by His Holiness for the hospital. Apart from providing land, His Holiness donated many lakhs of rupees and, in His time, the medical facility grew from a small out-patient unit to a full-fledged hospital in the early 1980s, with sophisticated medical equipment and a full-fledged lab. Dr. V. Parameshvara, a leading cardiologist of Bengaluru, served as the hospital's Chairman, and Natarajan functioned as its Secretary. His Holiness frequently visited the hospital and cheered and blessed the sick ones. With full knowledge of the role of His Holiness, Natarajan reported, "His Holiness is indeed everything to the hospital, and it is nothing without Him." A Scientific Research Academy with His Holiness as its trustee engaged in the conduct of medical research.

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His Holiness not only had a keen ear for classical music, both South Indian and North Indian, but was also quite familiar with its nuances such as *rāgas*. Especially in the 1950s and 1960s, He used to sing rather than chant not only the customary *maṅgala-śloka*, but also the other verses that He would quote in the course of his benedictory discourses. He would spontaneously set the verses to specific *rāgas*, invariably adhering to the rules of the *rāga* He chose, thus delivering a pure rendition that would touch the listeners' hearts. When renowned musicians performed during the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* that He did in public view every night, He would sometimes even choose the *rāga* for the next piece.

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His Holiness was an astute administrator who dealt with the *Maṭha* administration with a 360-degree-perspective. Many were the challenges He faced starting with the regaining of control of the *Maṭha* administration from the State Government. He solved every problem and spearheaded all-round development of the *Maṭha* with His characteristic wisdom, swiftness, dexterity and compassion.

His immaculate intuition and razor-sharp intellect contributed to His unerringly evaluating situations and how they would unfold. While He was easily and willingly swayed by a person's purity of heart and very accommodative of incompetent but sincere persons, He quickly sensed hypocrisy, insincerity and the buttressing of data to camouflage underperformance. He could comfortably manage even with staff who, as far as others could discern, were brainless and obdurate too. He gave all the *Maṭha* staff, regardless of the person's rank, age or experience, a patient hearing and considerately and promptly took steps to mitigate grievances. He gladly accepted and implemented any good suggestion from anybody. His Holiness was extremely just in His dealings and was unwilling to allow any deliberate misinterpretation of the facts.

To the extent feasible, His Holiness resorted to skill-based allocation of jobs and gave officials and supervisors considerable freedom to function in their respective departments. The norm was that He did not bypass any hierarchical order of control that He had established or allowed. He frequently made enquiries about the welfare of all the labourers, whether permanent or temporary, personally interacted with them and did whatever was possible for their well-being. However, when it came to giving orders, He directed them through the person in charge.

He would say, “Suppose a big log has to be lifted. Several people need to put in effort together to lift it. On the other hand, this approach will not do if a needle is to be picked up. For this, a single person needs to take the initiative. In the same way, sometimes people may need to work together as equals to accomplish a task and sometimes may need to work with someone taking the initiative and leading.”

He held that confrontation and threats seldom generate satisfactory solutions. In the main, He effectively defused tensions and animosity through soft words, impeccable logic, tackling of emotions and bringing to the fore a person’s sense of morality. He had the knack of subtly nudging groups that did not see eye to eye, to get together for a common cause.

His Holiness had the knack of dexterously handling even complex situations. At times, He had to do something on the spur of the moment in order to avert impropriety but without giving rise to any misgiving in those present. His Holiness could handle even embarrassing situations in an impeccable manner and with consummate ease. Not being obdurate, egoistic or prestige-conscious, His Holiness did not hesitate to modify or even reverse His instructions when additional facts necessitated this.

Being a light sleeper and capable of making do with only four hours of sleep, He used to wake up once or twice at night, call out to see if the watchman was vigilant and, off and on, go round Narasimhavana, checking even whether the cows and elephants were doing well and ensuring that everything was as it should be, such as that just the required lights were turned on and that too at the appropriate places only.

All these qualities contributed to making His Holiness an administrator par excellence.



88. वीतरागजनस्तुतः *Vīta-rāga-jana-stutaḥ*

One who was extolled by dispassionate ones

His Holiness was *stuta*, One who was extolled, by *janah*, people, who were *vīta-rāga*, free from attachments, that is dispassionate. When people free

from attachments extol someone, it would be factual, for the possibility of the praise being false or exaggerated in order to gain some benefit, simply does not arise in their case.

His Holiness was a sage firmly established in perfect dispassion. It is therefore natural that He was a role model and held in the highest regard by dispassionate ones. The truth of this *nāma* was expressed by Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin in a hymn He composed much earlier on His Holiness, in which He has said, “I seek refuge in that Vidyātīrtha, the recipients of whose grace have been sages who, after completely giving up desires for objects, have become established in supreme dispassion.”<sup>234</sup>



Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin once stated as follows in a benedictory discourse:

“I do not consider myself competent enough to adequately speak about His Holiness’s total mastery over the senses, perfect character or high erudition. Like the footprints of birds in the sky and of fishes in the water, the course of the knowers of the Truth cannot be discerned.”<sup>235</sup>

“Our *Guru* was the foremost of such knowers of the Truth. Having embraced *sannyāsa* at a young age like Bhagavatpāda, He was a stranger to passion; what He was conversant with was *mokṣa* (liberation).”



His Holiness was held in very high esteem by the pontiffs of all the other three *āmnāya-pīṭhas* established by Bhagavatpāda. Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin, the Jagadguru Shankaracharya of Jyotir Math, in particular, had great regard for His Holiness and met Him on numerous occasions. Śrī Abhinava Saccidānanda Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin of Dwaraka passed away in 1982 and had nominated Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin to succeed Him at the Dwaraka Math. On account of His great regard for His Holiness, Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin met Him and requested Him to come to Dwaraka to perform His *paṭṭābhīṣeka* (coronation). His Holiness graced the occasion and Himself performed the coronation in May 1982. Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin has a vast *āśrama* in Paramahamsi Gangashrama of Madhya Pradesh. He built a big temple there dedicated to Rājarājeśvarī and was rather keen that His Holiness Himself should perform the *kumbhābhīṣeka*, and accordingly arranged for His Holiness’s camp there. His Holiness graced the place in December 1982 and performed the *kumbhābhīṣeka* of the temple.



*Viśiṣṭādvaitic* religious heads like the Jeeyar of Vanamamalai met His Holiness. Likewise, during His 1979-80 tour when His Holiness was camping at the National High School in Tiruchirapalli, the Jeeyar of the

Ahobila Math met Him. *Mādhva Maṭha* pontiffs, such as Śrī Viśveśa Tīrtha of the Pejawar Math met His Holiness at Shankara Math, Bengaluru, during His Holiness's *cāturmāsya* there.



Śrī Saccidānanda Abhinava Subrahmaṇya Bhāratī Svāmin of the Sivaganga Math, along with his disciple, Śrī Viśveśvarānanda Bhāratī Svāmin, had requested His Holiness to grace Sivaganga. When His Holiness visited Sivaganga in 1968 and 1971, the *Svāmin* performed *pādapūjā*. The heads of the Hebsur Math and Machilipatnam *Gāyathrī-pīṭha* were also present on the occasion. His Holiness performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* and *pratiṣṭhā* of the new shrines of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Mahāgaṇapati and Dandapāṇi. Śrī Viśveśvarānanda Bhāratī Svāmin later offered his respects in 1977 during the *Ṣaṣṭyabdapūrti* celebrations of His Holiness in Chennai.

Śrī Saccidānanda Bhāratī Svāmin, the immediate predecessor of the current pontiff of the Sivaganga Math, had been a student of the Sringeri *pāṭhaśālā* prior to *samnyāsa*. He visited Sringeri and paid his obeisance to His Holiness on many occasions, besides having been initiated into a *mantra* by Him.



The *Mahant* of the Tarakeshwar Math highly revered His Holiness, and invited Him to and made excellent arrangements for His stay at Tarakeshwar on more than one occasion. He reverentially escorted His Holiness to the famous Taraknath Temple and was present when His Holiness performed *pūjā* to the holy *liṅga* there.

In December 1963, during His Holiness's tour of Goa, He was received with devotion at Parthagali by Śrī Dvārakānāth Svāmin, the head of the Parthagali Math.

On the request of Sri Ramanatha Jnana Desikar, the head of the Kovilur Math, His Holiness visited Kovilur and was received there by a mammoth gathering, which included many prominent Nagarathars. He was taken in a procession to the Kovilur Math. In the public meeting presided over by Dr. Raja Sir Muthiah Chettiar of Chettinad, the Kovilur *Maṭhādhipati* presented the welcome address. *Prasādas* were brought from the nine Nagarathar temples on the occasion.



Svāmi Cinmayānanda also maintained contacts with His Holiness and visited Him on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 1967 in Mumbai, and later at Shankara Math, Bengaluru, as well as at other places.

Svāmi Śivānanda, the founder of the Divine Life Society of Rishikesh, was a great admirer of the Sringeri Math. His successor, Svāmi Cidānanda, too held His Holiness in great esteem. When His Holiness toured the Himalayas

in May 1967, Svāmi Cidānanda organised a public meeting at Rishikesh and later showed Him around the Sivananda Ashram.



89. व्याख्यासिंहासनाधीशः *Vyākhyā-simhāsanādhīśaḥ*

One who was the Lord of the *vyākhyā-simhāsana*

His Holiness was the *adhīśa*, Lord, of the *simhāsana*, throne, of *vyākhyā*, exposition. (This throne is popularly referred to as ‘throne of transcendental wisdom’.) The throne is a venerated seat placed within the temple of Śāradāmbā at the *Maṭha* at Sringeri, in the elevated corridor outside Her sanctum. Only the *Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya* of the *Śāradā-pīṭha* or His chosen successor-designate is permitted to occupy it. In fact, a slight variant with the same meaning, ‘*vyākhāna-simhāsana-adhīśvara*’ features in the *birudāvali* (collection of honorifics) dedicated to the pontiffs of the *pīṭha*. This *nāma* expresses His Holiness’s authority in matters of scriptural erudition, which the pontiffs of the *pīṭha* are invested with.

Traditionally, the pontiffs of the *pīṭha* occupy the throne during *Navarātri* celebrations and during the events associated with the appointment of a successor-designate to the *pīṭha*.



On 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1931, once the rituals connected with *saṁnyāsa* were completed (vide *nāmas* 25 and 62) His Holiness crossed the river from Narasimhavana in a boat. Such crossing of a river by a new *saṁnyāsin* is symbolic of the crossing of the ocean of transmigratory existence. On the riverbank on the other side, He performed ‘*paryaṅka-sauca*’, a formalised cleansing of the body involving balls of mud and water. The senior *Jagadguru* and His Holiness then went to Goddess Śāradāmbā’s temple.

The texts on *saṁnyāsa* prescribe that the *Guru* should worship the disciple on the day of initiation, seeing the Divine in the latter and that thereafter, the disciple should worship the *Guru*. The *vyākhyāna-simhāsana* was kept facing north in the elevated southern corridor of the Śāradāmbā temple. Going to it, the *Jagadguru* seated His Holiness on it and placed on His head a *śālagrāma* (a special stone that is regarded as symbolic of Lord Viṣṇu and as ever-sanctified by His presence). He then sat near His Holiness’s feet, facing east, and commenced His worship. He proceeded to perform *abhiṣeka* to the *śālagrama* by pouring water on it with a conch. After performing *ārati*, the senior *Jagadguru* lay prostrate before His Holiness. His Holiness sat still and silent throughout this worship. After the senior *Jagadguru* finished the worship and removed the *śālagrāma* from His Holiness’s head, He occupied the *vyākhyāna-simhāsana*. His Holiness sat near His *Guru*’s feet, worshipped them and prostrated before them. After this worship was

complete, the senior *Jagadguru* made public His Holiness's *yoga-paṭṭa*. With the conclusion of the functions at the *vyākhyāna-simhāsana*, the initiation of His Holiness into *saṁnyāsa* and as the successor-designate of the *pīṭha* was formally complete.



After the senior *Jagadguru*'s *Mahāsamādhi* on 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1954, His Holiness's formal coronation as the 35<sup>th</sup> *Jagadguru Shankaracharya* of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham took place on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1954, which was just a few days before He turned 37.

On 14<sup>th</sup> October, the *vyākhyāna-simhāsana*, placed facing north in the southern corridor of the Śāradāmbā temple, was adorned with garlands and on it was placed a water-filled *kalaśa*. *Ṛtviks* engaged in rituals centred on the throne. *Homas* were performed adjacent to the throne. His Holiness came to the temple to have *darśana* and also offered salutations at Bhagavatpāda's temple.

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, after His morning *āhnikā*, He went to the *Samādhis* of His Guru and the 33<sup>rd</sup> pontiff. He then crossed the river and, at the Vidyāsankara Temple, sought Śrī Vidyātīrtha's permission to ascend the *vyākhyāna-simhāsana*. Thereafter, He adorned robes made of velvet and silk bedecked with precious gems and went to have *darśana* at His predecessors' shrines, including that of Suresvarācārya, all on the northern side of the river. In Goddess Śāradāmbā's temple, He presided over the *pūrṇāhuti* of the *homas* performed there and received, with devotion, the flowers and *vibhūti* presented to Him as *prasāda*. He sat on a silver seat to the west of the throne. His sandals were bathed in the sanctified waters of the *kalaśa* and several gifts were made in His august presence. Having propitiated Goddess Śāradā, He left for His abode in Narasimhavana.

On 16<sup>th</sup>, the auspicious *pīṭhārohana* (ascending of the throne as the pontiff) day, He came to Goddess Śāradā's temple and, wearing royal robes, ascended the sanctified *vyākhyāna-simhāsana*. The throne was veiled by a screen with 'śrīḥ' embroidered over it. The auspicious moment of coronation was signalled by the tinkling of bells. The screen was drawn eastward unveiling the throne and *akṣata* (unbroken grains of rice mixed with turmeric powder) was showered on His Holiness by the gathered priests. "Victory unto our *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha*" – this and more such eulogies in chorus filled the air. His Holiness's golden *pādukās* placed in the vicinity of the throne were bathed with the sanctified water of the *kalaśa* and the remaining water was poured on His Holiness's head. The grandeur of the occasion was enhanced by the chanting of *Vedic* hymns in unison. Precious stones were rained on His Holiness. He then removed His royal robes in the room adjacent to Śāradāmbā's sanctum sanctorum, and adorned new royal

garments and a crown. Having witnessed the *ārati* in Śāradāmbā's shrine, He went in a palanquin to the Vidyāśaṅkara Temple. He entered the temple and after having *darśana*, emerged and again sat in the palanquin. He then went to the various shrines.

In a short speech given by His Holiness following His coronation, He said that He was greatly in need of His *Guru*'s grace to carry out His duties as a *pīṭhādhipati* and prayed for His *Guru*'s blessings.



## 90. व्याससूत्रार्थतत्त्ववित् Vyāsa-sūtrārtha-tattva-vit

One who knew the true import of the *Vyāsa-sūtras*

The *Prasthāna-traya* or the triad of systems, consists of the *Upaniṣads* (*Upadeśa-prasthāna*), the *Brahma-sūtras* (*Nyāya-prasthāna*) and the *Bhagavad-gītā* (*Sādhana-prasthāna*), and constitute the fundamental basis for *Vedānta*. The *Brahma-sūtras*, formulated by Sage Vyāsa and therefore also referred to as *Vyāsa-sūtras*, form the fulcrum of any scholarly debate on *Vedānta*. For an interpretation of *Vedānta* to be considered valid, it is a sine qua non that it be aligned with the *sūtras*. Bhagavatpāda's commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras* forms a very important part of the repertoire of *Advaitins* to demonstrate that *Advaita* is the true import of *Vedānta*.

It is said that only one who has understood Bhagavatpāda's commentary is *artha-tattva-vit*, a knower of the true import of the *sūtras*. His Holiness not just understood, but was an authority on the *Brahma-sūtras* and Bhagavatpāda's commentary thereon. His expertise in making beguilingly lucid, complex philosophical nuances dealt with in the *sūtras* to a lay audience, was awe-inspiring.



[The following is an exposition of His Holiness on how the *Brahma-sūtras* establish that the *Ātman* is distinct from the body.]

Bādarāyaṇa's aphorisms, the *Brahma-sūtras*, consist of four parts: *samanvaya* (reconciliation through proper interpretation), *avirodha* (non-contradiction), *sāadhanā* (spiritual practice) and *phala* (result). In the third quarter of the third part, in the 53<sup>rd</sup> aphorism, the opponent's view point that there is no soul apart from the body is presented and then in the 54<sup>th</sup> aphorism this view is refuted. Let us consider these two aphorisms in some detail. The opponent's contention is stated as "Some deny the existence of the soul owing to its existence being dependent on the existence of the body."

Bādarāyaṇa seeks to confirm in this section that the soul is distinct from the body for if there be no soul apart from the body, there can be no basis for imparting instructions about results to be attained in another world. Further,

if there be no distinct soul then how can it be taught that the soul is, in reality, identical with *Brahman*, the Supreme?

The aphorism in question is formulated by way of doubting the soul's existence. The idea is that when the statement of refutation comes after raising the doubt, it produces a firm conviction about the subject matter.

The opponent's view is as follows: "It is seen that consciousness does not belong to external things such as earth, taken either individually or collectively. Still, consciousness may belong to the elements transformed into bodies. Apart from the body, there cannot be any soul, for the body itself comprises the soul."

The reason adduced by the opponent is: "Its existence is dependent on the body." Anything whose existence depends on the existence of another and which ceases to be when the other is not there is ascertained to be the attribute of the latter.

For instance, heat and light are seen to be attributes of fire, for their existence depends on the existence of fire. As regards other attributes, such as memory, which are held to belong to the soul by believers, the opponent says that these too are perceived within the body and not outside. His view is, "So long as any substance other than the body cannot be proved, these must be taken to be the attributes of the body. Hence, the soul is not distinct from the body."

Under this predicament, the aphorist's answer is: "But this is not so. There is distinction between the soul and the body because consciousness may not exist even when the body exists, as in the case of perception."

The soul is not identical with the body because consciousness may not exist even when the body is there. If it be inferred that attributes of sentience, etc., belong to the body because they are seen when the body is seen then why should it not be held that they are not attributes because they may not be seen even when the body is seen?

Characteristics such as consciousness, are not seen in dead bodies. Further, while it is possible to determine the presence of consciousness, etc., when a man is alive, it is not possible to conclusively ascertain their nonexistence after death. For, even when this body has fallen, these may well persist by virtue of transfer into another body. Even if this not be a conclusive proof, still it can demolish the opponent's claim of conclusive establishment of consciousness as an attribute of the body.

Further, the materialist does not accept any principle other than the elements. What then does he think of consciousness? If consciousness be regarded by him as perception of the elements and their derivatives, then we assert that



Him and asked Him to enter the sanctum sanctorum. On His entering, the door was closed. Śāradāmbā took Him on Her lap and said, “Your good times are ahead. Even kings will pay obeisance unto you. Do not become proud. Continue to worship Me and be with your *Guru*. Wear this crystal necklace to remind you of Me.” So saying, She put the necklace on His neck and permitted Him to leave. Thereafter, the *dīpārāadhanā* took place; at the same time, the necklace disappeared. The dream ended there.

One may conjecture that the Divine Mother had felt that as He had firmly lodged Her in His heart, there was no need for any external cue to remind Him of Her and so had caused the necklace to vanish in that dream.

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It was a day a few months after His Holiness’s initiation into *saṁnyāsa* in 1931. He was fourteen years old. He had just finished His morning *āhnikā* and was about to get up. Without premeditation, He joined His palms and said, “*śrī-śāradāyai namaḥ* (Obeisance to the glorious Śāradā).” Abruptly, He felt an upsurge of joy and stopped being aware of His surroundings. It began to seem that His body was becoming transparent and that He was seeing His backbone from some vantage point in front of His chest. The backbone stood out, whitish in colour, with the silhouette of the body appearing dark like a shadow. The backbone then seemed to become translucent to reveal a canal in its interior. In moments, the canal’s width became greatly magnified. He could then see a tube, red and bright like fire, traversing the length of the canal. A mellifluous female voice announced, “*iyam suṣumnā-nāḍī* (This is the *suṣumnā-nāḍī*).” He just heard the words but did not perceive the speaker.

The invisible speaker then revealed the *vajrā*, *citrīṇī*, *iḍā* and *piṅgalā nāḍīs* in a similar fashion. Then one by one His Holiness perceived the *yoga-cakras* starting from the *mūlādhāra-cakra* and proceeding upward along the *suṣumnā-nāḍī*. At every *cakra* was revealed to Him various aspects of the *cakra* such as the lotus of the *cakra*, the syllables of the Sanskrit alphabet associated with the *cakra*, the form of *Ambā* related with the *cakra* as also the *devatā* associated with the *cakra*. In the pericarp of the *mūlādhāra-cakra* He perceived a *śiva-līṅga* around which was wound a lustrous serpent. The serpent was motionless and appeared to be fast asleep. Yet, it was somehow unmistakable to His Holiness that it was the embodiment of unbounded power. He was told that this was the *kuṇḍalinī*.

Revealing six *cakras* in this manner starting from the *mūlādhāra*, the invisible speaker then revealed to His Holiness, above the end of the *suṣumnā-nāḍī* and within the head, a lotus with many white petals arranged in multiple layers. All the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet could be seen there. The voice told Him that this lotus with one thousand petals was the

*sahasrāra*. At the pericarp of the lotus was a region that resembled the full moon and shed nectarine rays. Inside this was a bright triangle. The female voice said, “*atra paramaśivaḥ sthitaḥ* (Herein abides Paramaśiva).” Even without hearing any words to that effect, He felt certain that the ascent of the awakened *kuṇḍalinī-śakti* ends at the *sahasrāra*, wherein Śakti unites with Paramaśiva.

At this point, His experience ended. He submitted the details of the experience to His *Guru*. Then, the senior *Jagadguru* lightly patted His Holiness on His left cheek and said, “You are blessed. Śāradāmbā has directly taught you today and that too, of Her own accord. I am reminded of the fact that She Herself had expounded *yoga* to my *Guru* (Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimha Bhārātī, the 33<sup>rd</sup> pontiff). My *Paramaguru* (Jagadguru Śrī Nṛsimha Bhārātī, the 32<sup>nd</sup> pontiff) had earlier told my *Guru* that She would do so.” He continued, “You are Her very own. So, it is but fitting that She chose to instruct you. She will teach you further. My *Guru* used to receive Her guidance not only when awake but also in dreams. You too shall do so.”

That very night in a dream, Śāradāmbā revealed to His Holiness the methods by which the *kuṇḍalinī* could be awoken from slumber and made to pass through the *susumnā-ṇāḍī* and reach the *sahasrāra*. He also beheld in the dream, the moonlike region at the pericarp of the *sahasrāra*, shedding nectar. Even during the dream His Holiness unambiguously realised that though Goddess Śāradā was Herself making known *kuṇḍalinī-yoga* to Him, She did not intend that this be His principal *sādhanā*. However, He did put into practice what all She led Him to recognize as meant to be implemented by Him. After the dream, He started the practice of mentally visualizing the various *cakras*, contemplating on the deities therein just as they had been shown to Him and then worshiping the *kuṇḍalinī* there. He would carry forward the worship done in one *cakra* to the next higher one, after conceiving that He reverentially led the *kuṇḍalinī*, whom He saw in the form of Ambā, there. He devoutly performed, without expectation of anything, such worship on Tuesdays and Fridays.



As mentioned under *nāma* 15, the senior *Jagadguru* taught His Holiness a method to meditate on divine forms, in January-February, 1934. Deciding to try out what the senior *Jagadguru* had taught Him, His Holiness went a little later to Goddess Śāradāmbā’s temple. There, He sat next to the sanctum, facing Her idol. As He looked at the idol, a jewel on the face glittered in the light of the oil lamps. From His position, it appeared bluish. When He shifted His face a little, it appeared green. After seeing the blue light for a short while, He half-closed His eyelids and directed His eyes towards the space between His brows. Simultaneously, He mentally chanted ‘*Om*’ repeatedly

in a slow, lengthened manner. In a matter of seconds, He could feel a tingling sensation between His brows. This gradually increased in intensity. He also began to see an attractive, blue disc of light. This resembled the light from the jewel on the Mother's face. The main difference was that this was diffused. He then visualised a diminished version of Her idol emerging from the disc and occupying the lotus of His heart. The great clarity of the image in His heart and the readiness with which He had been able to visualise it pleasantly surprised Him. He focused on the form. His chanting of 'Om' stopped. Moments later, He opened His eyes. Actually, about a half hour had passed. During this time, He was unaware of the surroundings and His body.

While recollecting His meditative practices to a disciple many years later, His Holiness said, "After my *Guru* taught me the way to begin meditation, I started meditating every day. On the first day I focused on Śāradāmbā in the morning and on Bālā-Tripurasundarī in the evening (at the Kālabhairava Temple). Śāradāmbā's temple being very sacred, I started my serious practice of meditation next to Her sanctum."

For about a fortnight prior to the senior *Jagadguru* teaching Him the method to initiate meditation, His Holiness had, in response to an inexplicable urge, been doing prolonged *japa* of the *Bālātripurasundarī-mantra* in the mornings. While engaged in such *japa* with His eyes open, He had, on some days, imagined Her form as remaining in His heart facing in the same direction as Himself. On others, He had imagined a bigger version of the same form as present in front of and facing Him. The special attention that He had been paying to Goddess *Bālā-tripurasundarī's mantra* and form motivated Him to meditate on Her on His first engaging in meditation at the Kālabhairava Temple.



Sometime in the period April-July, 1935, one morning, when His Holiness was about to visualise the form of Lakṣmī-nṛsimha, the form of Goddess Bālā made its appearance. He meditated on Her. That afternoon, He felt a strong urge to meditate upon Her as remaining in front of and facing Him and did so. It was months since He had focused on Her in this fashion. After the session, He thought, "Today, God is explicitly determining the form I am to meditate upon just as He had done nearly a year ago when He had caused me to focus on Kṛṣṇa with the flute, child Mukunda and Viṣṇu with eight arms" (vide *nāma* 54). He somehow felt sure that the evening session would be extraordinary.

When He commenced His evening meditation at the Kālabhairava Temple, in response to a powerful urge, He thought of Bālā in the same way as He had done in the afternoon. While He was focusing as usual on the full form of the Goddess, His mind suddenly locked on to Her feet. He had always

been seeing Her form clearly. However, the experience of that day was extraordinary. He vividly beheld the Goddess's feet; the sense of reality of the vision was intense and left no room for doubts. This was His first experience of *savikalpa-samādhi*. During this *samādhi*, He almost totally forgot Himself and that He was meditating; Goddess Bālā's feet alone manifested. After remaining for one and a half hours in *savikalpa-samādhi* with His mind locked on to Goddess Bālā, He regained awareness of the body and opened His eyes. He could literally see Her in front of Him within the temple. He reached out and touched Her feet with His hands. A few moments later, She disappeared.



It was some months after this first experience of *savikalpa-samādhi*, that His Holiness explicitly experienced the ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī*. On a Monday sometime in the period July-September, 1935, as He sat for His usual meditation, He felt an electric shock at the middle of His soles. The *kuṇḍalinī* started its ascent through the *yoga-cakras*, causing the lotuses of a *cakra* to bloom as it passed through it. After He had briefly seen the *ājñā-cakra* (*yoga-cakra* located in the region between the eyebrows) in bloom, He experienced a bright flash of light like lightning. Next, He saw a charming, luminous, tiny blue orb. His attention locked on to it and as He could then behold only that orb, its smallness was no more apparent. Thereafter, within it, He apprehended the forms of Śiva and Pārvaṭī. The blue orb with the forms of Śiva and Pārvaṭī constituted the object of His *savikalpa-samādhi*.

The next day, He again experienced the ascent of the *kuṇḍalinī*, but this time, when the *kuṇḍalinī* reached the *ājñā-cakra*, He had a vision of Śiva as Dakṣiṇāmūrti. After this the *kuṇḍalinī* reached the *sahasrāra-cakra* (located at the crown of the head) and He spontaneously went into *savikalpa-samādhi*, with the object of His focus being *Īśvara* as inhabiting the tiny space that He apprehended in the *sahasrāra*.

On the following Friday, as He was about to visualise and focus on a divine form in His heart, His tongue folded backwards. Then, for a moment, He saw the Divine Mother as seated in the *sahasrāra* and pouring down nectar. He decided to meditate on Her in this very fashion. So, He conceived of Her as He had glimpsed Her and focused on Her. He was soon in *savikalpa-samādhi*. When He regained awareness of the body, He felt a few drops of fluid descending into the back of His throat. The taste, coolness and invigorating effect were the same as on the previous occasion.



On the afternoon of 11<sup>th</sup> December, 1935, that is the day following His first experience of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* (vide *nāma* 1 and 76) His Holiness attained *nirvikalpa-samādhi* through *kuṇḍalinī*-centred *laya-yoga*. He had

just apprehended a hue between His brows when, involuntarily, His attention turned to the *anāhata-cakra* (situated in the level of the chest). He apprehended the *kuṇḍalinī* there. The divine Śakti headed rapidly to the *sahasrāra*, leaping, as it were, from one *cakra* to the next higher one. When the *kuṇḍalinī* reached the *sahasrāra*, He plunged into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. As His mind lightly came out of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* after about an hour, He discerned the descent of the *kuṇḍalinī* from the *sahasrāra*.

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On 12<sup>th</sup> December, 1935, His Holiness had attained *jīvanmukti* (vide *nāma* 1) and had therefore gone beyond the need for *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. However, His mind kept plunging into that exalted state. This was because ‘*nirodha-saṃskāras* (impressions stemming from the interception of the mind)’ had become intense, because of which there was utter indifference to names and forms, and such abidance in *samādhi* made His mind even further disposed to reposing in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* and disinclined towards everything else. That night, no sooner did He lie down than He went into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. By the time He emerged from it, the night had passed. The next morning, when He completed performing *āsanas* and readied Himself to start *prāṇāyāma*, His mind again plunged into *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. He remained in that state for about half an hour. Another session of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* occurred spontaneously during His *āhnikā*.

This was the state of His mind when, later that morning, He went on His usual Friday-visit to the temples in the *Maṭha* complex. Notwithstanding His great indifference to names and forms in general on account of great introversion effected by repeated and prolonged abidance in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*, when He stood silently near the sanctum sanctorum of Goddess Śāradā, tears of joy flowed from His eyes. Such was His devotion towards the Divine Mother.

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92. शारदेन्दुसमद्युतिः                      Śāradendu-sama-dyutiḥ

One who was lustrous like the autumnal moon

The *indu*, moon, during the season of *śarad*, autumn, appears brighter than in other seasons, and is hence especially beautiful then. It engenders peace and joy in the beholder. The Mother Goddess is described as ‘*śaraccandra-nibhānanā* (One whose face is like the autumnal moon)’.<sup>236</sup> Similarly, His Holiness was One whose *dyuti*, lustre, was *sama*, equal to, that of *śāradendu*, the autumnal moon. He ever radiated tranquility and joy.

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Sri H. L. Chandrasekhar of Mysuru recollected, “The spiritual splendour of His Holiness is wonderful. An experience of mine particularly convinced me

in this regard. In 1975, I once beheld His Holiness coming for *pūjā* after finishing His evening bath and *āhnikā*. An orange-hued glow enveloped Him. I could see the surroundings and so was in no trance. He sat for the *pūjā*. The halo continued to be visible to my naked eyes. When the *Vedic* chanting was going on, I saw a ray of light emanating from Him and penetrating me. I felt suffused with true peace and joy.”

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The following episode appeared in the Kannada book ‘Jagadguru’, as narrated by Sri Janaki Tanaya of Mysuru.

“Sri Avinashi Chetty of Muduku Thorai and a worshipper of Lord Sūrya, was a gentleman with very orthodox habits. He used to come to my house whenever he visited Mysuru. On one particular occasion when he came by, I had gone to the Shankara Math to witness the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* performed by His Holiness who happened to be camping at Mysuru at that time. So my wife directed him to the *Maṭha*. That particular evening, during the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā*, the whole building was suddenly plunged into darkness. The *pūjā*, however, was performed with oil lamps. After that, His Holiness went to the temple of Jagadguru Śrī Nṛsimha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin. When He was about to enter the temple, lights went off there, but came on in the hall in which the *pūjā* was conducted.

“Avinashi Chetty later told me, ‘I entered the *pūjā* hall in search of you. I was not concerned with the *pūjā* but since you were sitting in the front row, I did not want to disturb you. Suddenly, I had some passing thoughts. Why are so much pomp and paraphernalia needed for a *saṁnyāsīn*? Can He not do the *pūjā* in private? Why not use ordinary oil lamps for illumination instead of these decorated electric lamps? When I was thinking on these lines, all the lights went off, and I saw that His Holiness was not at all affected by this. I was a bit confused. When the *pūjā* was over and His Holiness was about to enter the temple, lights went off there also. This, in fact, added to my confusion and thrill. Then His Holiness turned towards me. I saw a bright  *jyotis* (light) coming from His eyes, making a circle, and then subsiding back into them. In one eye of His Holiness I beheld Lord Sūrya and in the other, Goddess Śāradāmbā. I was not able to think of anything at that moment. I cannot adequately describe the nature of my experience with mere words.’”

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93. शास्त्रतात्पर्यसंवेदी      Śāstra-tātparya-saṁvedī

One who knew thoroughly, the quintessence of the scriptures

Śāstra refers here to religious scripture, and tātparya, to its quintessence. The quintessence of the Śāstras is captured in the nineteen mantras of the

*Madhu-brāhmaṇa* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* (2.5.1-2.5.19). They convey that all the divine powers in the external world and the individual being are but the manifestations of the Supreme *Ātman-Brahman*, which is immanent in all; the eternal laws governing the inert and the sentient, and the evolutions from the interaction between the world and the individual are also *Brahman*. Concluding His commentary on this, Bhagavatpāda asserts, “Thus this is the instruction, the teaching of all *Upaniṣads*; this is the conclusive purport of all of *Vedānta*; this is immortal, free from fear; with this concludes the quintessence of the *Śāstras*.”<sup>237</sup>

One who knows the *Śāstras* would be able to articulate the meanings of scriptural passages, but His Holiness, who *sam-vedī*, knew thoroughly, the quintessence of the *Śāstras*, was One who knew the scriptures both extensively and incisively, as well as the essential import of the entire scripture as a matter of experience.



His Holiness once expounded the quintessence of the scriptures to a disciple, also relating it with the positions of modern day science. He said, “The scripture makes it amply clear time and again that the universe and the laws governing it are the manifestation of God. For instance, the *Chāndogya-upaniṣad* teaches, ‘He alone is below; He is above; He is behind; He is in front; He is to the south; He is to the north; He alone is all this.’<sup>238</sup> The *Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad* points out, ‘You are the woman; You are the man; You are the boy; You are the girl; You are the old man tottering with a stick... You are the black bee; You are the green parrot... You indeed are the seasons and the seas.’<sup>239</sup> The *Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad* instructs, ‘This world is nothing but *Brahman*, the highest.’<sup>240</sup> The Lord has said in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, ‘I am the moon... I am the mind... I am intelligence... I am the ocean... I am the lion... I am the wind... I am the shark... I am the letter ‘a’... I am time... I am the spring season... I am gambling... I am effort... I am silence... I am knowledge.’<sup>241</sup> He has also said, ‘I am fire. I am the act of offering... I am the effect. I am the cause.’<sup>242</sup>

His Holiness then recounted the conversation He had had with a person regarding the objection the latter had about Lord Kṛṣṇa’s statement that *Bhagavān* takes the form of gastric fire (given under *nāma* 6).

Continuing, His Holiness said, “In the *Śrī-rudra*, we have, ‘Salutations to You who stretch the bowstring; Salutations to You who release the arrow; Salutations to You who are the cause of the arrow moving towards the target; Salutations to You who are the cause of the arrow piercing the target.’<sup>243</sup> A Bowman’s role ends with pulling the bowstring, taking aim and releasing the arrow. The movement of the arrow to its target is dependent on its velocity, the laws of motion, the wind, the pull of the earth, etc.; all these are the Lord.

To penetrate the target, the sharpness of the tip of the arrow, the density of the target and such other factors play a role; all these are the Lord. The crux of all that I have been saying is that according to the scripture, God is everything in the universe and is every law governing its functioning.”

At this point, His Holiness took a sheet of paper and quickly sketched two pictures on it. He pointed to the first and asked the disciple, “What do you see?” The disciple said, “Two faces close to and facing one another, or a wine glass.” “Can you see both together?” He queried. “No,” the disciple replied. His Holiness then asked the disciple to look at the second picture and tell Him what he could see. The disciple responded, “Either a duck with its beak to my left or a rabbit facing right, with its long ears pointing backwards.” “Do you see both together,” He asked. The disciple answered in the negative.

His Holiness continued, “Each of these images is apprehended non-simultaneously in two different ways by a person. If two persons were to see either of the images at the same time, one may apprehend the image in one way and the other in the second way. Likewise, what is apprehended by a person as just the material world may be apprehended by him later, after spiritual discipline, as a manifestation of God; simultaneously too, what a materialist perceives as the material world, is seen by a saint as a manifestation of God.

“He who holds that God is a creator distinct from nature and its laws may have a problem if it be said that the bodies of the animals we see and humans came to their present state through changes over millions of years by the operation of the laws of nature; a true *vedāntin* would be fine with it. If someone were to say that gradual evolution of animals and humans is wrong, he would be fine with that too. To a *vedāntin*, a small irregularly shaped stone rolling in the river and becoming a round pebble, the formation of the sun and the earth, the development of a human child from a sperm and egg are all equally attributable to God.

“The scripture does not stop with presenting God as just being in the form of the universe and its laws. It goes further and says that the operation of every law of nature depends on God. The *Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad* teaches, ‘He, the basis of the cosmos, is the one who manifests the nature of things (such as the heat of fire) and transforms what is mutable.’<sup>244</sup> Thus, He is the universe and its laws; He is the one who gives life to the laws; He is the one who transforms things according to the laws of nature.

“He is, importantly, not only immanent but also transcendent. The materialist may be unwilling to concede this and argue against it but a true *vedāntin* is not put off by any of this because, to him, the materialist is a

manifestation of God and his temperament is also manifested by God. What is primary to the *vedāntin* is the essential nature of the Supreme, pure consciousness. It is in this that the universe with its laws appears, like a mirage in a desert or as a snake so misapprehended in a rope. There is, thus, no real cause and effect relationship between the Supreme of the nature of consciousness and the world, unlike between, say, a seed and a tree or say, between energy and the appearance of an electron. The *Kaṭha-upaniṣad* clearly states, ‘The Self of the nature of consciousness is not born; It does not perish; It did not originate from anything; nothing originated from It.’<sup>245</sup> There is, therefore, no way any measurement made on the universe or any understanding of its laws can call into question the scriptural teaching about the true nature of the Supreme *Brahman*. The Supreme *Brahman* is decidedly beyond the scope of science. The aim of the *Upaniṣads* is to make a *sādhaka* realize his true nature of being *Brahman* and become liberated. Therefore, all the descriptions of creation in them are only meant to establish that there is nothing whatsoever that is other than the Supreme; the confirmation or falsification of any such description is immaterial.”



#### 94. शारदापीठनायकः                      Śāradā-pīṭha-nāyakaḥ

One who was Lord of the Śāradā-pīṭha

Lore has it that while traversing the Western Ghats of southern India, Bhagavatpāda came to Sringeri, where He witnessed on the banks of the river Tuṅgā, a frog being protected by a cobra that had spread its hood as a shield over it against the scorching sun. Such compassion of a predator towards its natural prey convinced Bhagavatpāda that the place was sacred, and an abode of peace. Therefore, He chose Sringeri as the holy place for the first of the four *āmnāya-pīṭhas* founded by Him (vide *nāma* 36).

The *Mādhavīya Śaṅkara-vijaya* describes that Bhagavatpāda invoked the Goddess of knowledge, Śāradāmbā in an idol and established Her over a *Śrīcakra* at Sringeri. Hence the *pīṭha* is known as ‘Sri Sharada Peetham’. His Holiness was *nāyaka*, Lord, of the *pīṭha*, and the great power of Śāradāmbā manifested through Him.



His Holiness reigned over the glorious Sri Sharada Peetham as its 35<sup>th</sup> *pīṭhādhipati*, pontiff. He succeeded His *Guru*, Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin, and was succeeded by Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin. He took over as the pontiff of the Sri Sharada Peetham in 1954 after the *Mahāsamādhi* of His *Guru* and reigned as the *pīṭhādhipati* for 35 years, from 1954 to 1989, that is until He gave up His mortal form.



95. शङ्कराचार्यसंसेवी      Śaṅkarācārya-saṁsevī

One who devoutly worshipped Śrī Śaṅkarācārya

Śrī Ādi-śaṅkarācārya incarnated at a time when the country was in turmoil; people were being misled by faulty ideas and erroneous practices that were in vogue. He toured the length and breadth of the country on foot thrice, gently cleansing, of various corruptions, the then prevalent practices of worship, and leading people into the path to higher good. He defeated in debate, scholars of various schools opposed to the *Vedic* way and established the supremacy of the *Vedas* as also its true interpretation.

Bhagavatpāda championed the cause of *Sanātana-dharma* rooted in the *Vedas* and resurrected the knowledge of *Advaita* enshrined in the *Upaniṣads*. His peerless *Prasthāna-traya-bhāṣyas*, that is commentaries on the triad of paths which are the principal *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma-sūtras* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, serve to clearly establish the *Advaita* philosophy beyond doubt; His several minor philosophical works, *prakaraṇa-granths*, elucidate the same ultimate Truth in simple language for common people to understand; the many devotional hymns He composed can lift the ordinary soul to the sublime heights of *bhakti*.

In just the 32 years that marked His earthly sojourn, He managed to conquer, as it were, the entire country, unify it and bring peace to the land and the hearts of its people, conclusively vouchsafing for even future generations, a culturally, religiously and spiritually rich and vibrant Bhārata. And all this, without drawing a sword or subjugating anyone, but by the sheer brilliance of His intellect, speech and pen.

The *Mādhavīya Śaṅkara-vijaya* says about Jagadguru Śrī Ādi-śaṅkarācārya, “To save, by teachings about the Self, people, who are trapped in the dense forest of ignorance and who are exceedingly tormented by the heat of the flame of the forest fire of transmigratory existence, Dakṣiṇāmūrti gave up silence and, coming forth from the foot of the banyan tree, moves about in the world in the form of Śaṅkarācārya.”<sup>246</sup> He is therefore referred to as Bhagavatpāda, meaning ‘the pre-eminent *Bhagavān*’.

His Holiness was a *saṁsevī*, a devout worshipper, of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. His Holiness paid homage to Bhagavatpāda every day as an integral part of His *āhnikā*, paying obeisance to Bhagavatpāda’s idol placed next to the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā maṇḍapa*. He worshipped at the shrine of Bhagavatpāda during the five-day *Śaṅkara-jayantī* celebrations every year apart from paying obeisance at the shrine every Friday when at Sringeri. He was extremely devoted to Bhagavatpāda and would be moved to tears while recalling the various aspects of His greatness.

Another meaning of the word ‘*saṁsevī*’ is ‘one who excellently serves’. The best possible service that can be offered to Bhagavatpāda is to further the cause that He championed - protect, sustain and propagate *Sanātana-dharma* and the tenets of *Advaita*. After having Himself become established in the Supreme *Advaitic* principle taught by Bhagavatpāda, His Holiness carried out extensive renovation projects in Kalady, the birthplace of Bhagavatpāda (vide *nāma* 23). Building, consecrating and renovating the temples of Bhagavatpāda in several places, establishing, running, improving and supporting institutions of *Sanātana-dharma*, traveling the length and breadth of the country many times over and spreading the message of Bhagavatpāda, teaching Bhagavatpāda’s *bhāṣyas* to scores of disciples and scholars and training them in the tenets of *Advaita* are some of the ways in which His Holiness was a true *saṁsevī* of Bhagavatpāda.



In a letter penned by His Holiness from Bengaluru in 1937 to His *Guru* who was then at Sringeri, He paid glorious homage to Bhagavatpāda through a verse composed by Him, meaning, “By means of numerous unassailable arguments destructive of opposing schools of thought, He drove away all the Buddhists, who had internal divisions and had taken possession of the earth coveted by the *asuras*, and restored it to its pristine state. May He, our pre-eminent preceptor of *Advaita*, Śaṅkara, who is the sun to the lotuses of the *Vedas* and is of the image of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, confer happiness on those who are in dread of *saṁsāra*.”<sup>247</sup>



Regarding His visit to Kolkata in 1967, His Holiness reminisced, “I went to Kolkata. Even there some hurdles and hardships surfaced. ‘For *saṁnyāsins* like me, what is fame or infamy, triumph or defeat? Let *Īśvara*’s will prevail’ - thinking thus, I proceeded. On the very next day after I reached the city, a wonderful transformation was seen in the atmosphere. There was no end to the love and deference of the large gathering. Aren’t these the glory of Bhagavatpāda, tell-tale signs of *Guru*’s grace?”



[This is a summary of a benedictory discourse of His Holiness in which He brought out the greatness of Bhagavatpāda and insights into His teachings.]

What was the state of affairs in India when Bhagavatpāda incarnated? There was discord on metaphysical and *dhārmic* matters; each deemed his view to be paramount. Bhagavatpāda, however, emphasized a sameness in all. Nowadays, people create a hullabaloo about uniformity, without proper consideration of its nature and scope. It is a truism that there are and shall be differences between individuals; their natures are disparate. What Bhagavatpāda visualized was sameness compatible with human variety.

True sameness, which has been enunciated by the scriptures and by Bhagavatpāda, lies in the way a person conducts himself in the world, the way he mentally reacts to the world and in his discernment. If a man uniformly behaves in an appropriate manner in different situations and with different people then it can be said that there is a sameness in his conduct. What is appropriate is, however, far from uniform. Thus, the man in question would obey his parents but would instruct his students. While living as a householder, he would attend to the needs of his wife and children but would not continue to do so after becoming a *samnyāsin*.

People go to a dance hall for entertainment but not all of them have similar tastes. One who relishes the sentiment of valour feels happy on watching a performer enact the part of Karṇa; another who likes the sentiment of tranquility revels in the portrayal of Bhīṣma. Though such is the case, there is a sameness in the joy of the different persons. A man invited several people for lunch and not wanting to discriminate among his guests, served them the same quantity of food. As a consequence, by the end of the meal, a voracious eater was left hungry, a child ended up with a bloated abdomen and stomach-ache, and a man who disliked sweets was left grumbling. None of the guests was happy. On the other hand, another host served his guests in accordance with their requirements and tastes, ensuring that the hunger and taste of each of them were appeased. All left happy.

The *Śāstras* instruct a person to consistently adhere to his *dharma* and to eschew *adharma*. Certainly, there is a uniformity in the conduct of a person who consistently abstains from what he ought not to do and does what he should, with respect to different persons and in different circumstances. A person with such sameness in behaviour is like the dance drama that uniformly entertains the different members of the audience and like a host who uniformly satisfies the appetite and tongue of all his guests.

Commonly, a person's mind is full of likes and dislikes. Being swayed by attachment and aversion, people stray to the path of *adharma*. Blinded by attachment for Duryodhana, Dhṛtarāṣṭra did not pay heed to the beneficial advices of Vidura. Aversion led Duryodhana to make an attempt on Bhīma's life even when the two were but lads. Thus, likes and dislikes are impediments to true sameness in conduct.

A man engaged in activity cannot avoid pleasure and pain caused by persons, objects or even natural situations. For instance, even when no one disturbs a man, he feels discomfort on a very hot day but experiences pleasure when a cool, gentle breeze blows. Attachment and aversion towards the persons, things or events responsible for pleasure and pain are common, but unlike pleasure and pain, are avoidable. If a person gets rid of likes and dislikes, a sameness characterizes his mental responses to the world, for he does not

feel attachment to one who is friendly and aversion towards one who is hostile. Same-sightedness, marked by absence of likes and dislikes, is highly eulogised in the *Śāstras*. Just as true sameness in conduct is not antithetical to the diversity in the world, sameness in mental reactions is not opposed to the experience of pleasure and pain due to external stimuli. When a person is free from attachment and aversion, he consistently conducts himself in a righteous manner; he has sameness in conduct. Uniformity in conduct is an important step towards developing equanimity of vision. Thus, sameness in mental reactions and sameness in conduct are linked.

A gold bangle and a gold necklace, though regarded as different, have no existence apart from the single substance, gold. In semi-darkness, a person may mistake a rope to be a snake, while another may misapprehend it as a stick; it is the single entity, the rope, that appears as a snake and as a stick. Likewise, this diverse world has no existence apart from the Supreme *Brahman*; it is *Brahman* that appears, on account of *Māyā*, as the cosmos and its inhabitants. The wise man sees *Brahman* everywhere; there is thus a sameness in his discernment of apparently diverse persons and objects. It is only such uniformity of vision that cuts at the very root of likes and dislikes. Attenuation of attachment and aversion is important for knowledge of the Truth to dawn. Thus, sameness in discernment, sameness in mental reactions and sameness in conduct form a unit.

In the time of Bhagavatpāda, there were several creeds, each of which held that only its own view was correct. It was in this prevailing atmosphere that Bhagavatpāda incarnated among the people. Reform is best effected by keeping in mind the ways of the world. Bhagavatpāda graced people engaged in austerities, *yogins*, seekers of knowledge and those desirous of liberation. But He did not stop with that. He realised that He had the responsibility to set an example for the people by His life. Rāma has made such a great impact on us by His having led a life totally wedded to righteousness. Bhagavatpāda, like Rāma, showed by His life, what an ideal son is like. He implemented the Vedic injunction that one should venerate the mother as a god, in letter and spirit. He then wanted to set an example by adhering to the scriptural norm by approaching a *Guru*, receiving *saṁnyāsa* and learning at the *Guru*'s feet. So, He approached sage Govindapāda. Govindapāda was in *nirvikalpa-samādhi* at that time. Bhagavatpāda did not disturb His *Guru* but humbly waited on with the sincere longing for the *darśana* of the exalted *Guru*'s holy feet. On coming out of *samādhi*, Govindapāda asked, "What brings You here? Who are You?" Bhagavatpāda replied in ten verses that conveyed the Supreme Truth. The *Guru*, perceiving the divine plan underlining the unique disciple's arrival, prepared himself to play the role of an instrument in the execution of the divine plan. He accepted Bhagavatpāda as a disciple.

During His stay with His *Guru*, Bhagavatpāda, by the use of His *yogic* power, brought succour to the suffering people of the region by taking into His *kamaṇḍalu*, the flood waters of the Narmadā. Later, in accordance with the instructions of His *Guru*, He set out correcting the attitude of the various people who were following several schools propounded by men merely on the strength of their intellect. He analysed their viewpoints thoroughly and laid bare, before such blind followers, the lacunae contained in their merely relying upon the intellect and upon persons who propound fanciful theories.

Bhagavatpāda's teaching that the world is only an appearance is pertinent to those who have obtained an understanding of the Supreme Reality. Till that realization dawns, we are left with little option but to look upon this world as if it were true. The *Brahman* of the *Upaniṣads* is one which always was, is and will be, whereas the world does not satisfy this condition. That is why the world is said to be unreal whereas *Brahman* is regarded as the only Reality. It is the same Reality that appears to us as all the forms seen in the world. Distinction asserts itself only when you and I are regarded as different. It is only the One that appears as you and I. Where then is diversity? This, in a nutshell, is the teaching of Bhagavatpāda. He did not propound any new theory or any new deity for worship, but only restored the *Upaniṣadic* teaching to its pristine purity.

The *Brahman* established by the *Upaniṣads* is like pure water. It does not have any attributes of Its own, but is simply Truth, consciousness and infinite. It appears, owing to Its power, differently as Śiva or Śakti or Viṣṇu to different devotees, but in truth It is the Absolute. Bhagavatpāda accomplished His task of establishing sameness by taking care to see that no devotee was displaced and that no devotee was set up against another, stressing only that the worship of deities opposed to the *Śāstraic* way has to be given up. The great master showed each adherent the way to the Absolute by making him tread his chosen path without conflict with the other paths. In effect, He did this by dotting the i's and dashing the t's without radically upsetting the various systems.

The most compassionate *Guru*, Śrī Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda, rendered all of us indebted by His kind and profound teaching. We, who are fortunate to be His followers, will be gravely erring if we do not reverentially pay our obeisance to Him.



96. शङ्काद्रिभिदुरोपमः                      Śaṅkādrī-bhiduropamaḥ

One who was like a thunderbolt to the mountain of doubts

Śaṅka, doubt, is a formidable obstacle to progress towards knowledge. It is hence presented here as analogous to *adri*, a mountain. No explosive milder

than a *bhidura*, thunderbolt, is capable of blasting this mountain to smithereens. His Holiness was *bhidura-upama*, equivalent to a thunderbolt, to the mountain of doubts. This unequivocally asserts that He was Himself beyond doubts and was eminently capable of dispelling others' doubts.



On many occasions, His Holiness spontaneously said something that put a disciple's doubts to rest even before the disciple posed any question to Him.

A disciple who was translating into English Śrī Sadāśiva Brahmendra's gloss, *Yoga-sudhākara*, on Sage Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras*, came across a verse in it that means, "Having dissolved *Prakṛti* in its entirety in a sequence which is the reverse of that of its origination, one must contemplate on the residual entity, which is pure existence, consciousness and bliss."<sup>248</sup> He wished to have His Holiness's clarification regarding this.

That evening, His Holiness was seated on a rock in a coconut grove in the Shankara Math at Bengaluru and the disciple sat near Him on the ground. No one else was present there. Not wanting to disturb Him, the disciple did not pose his doubt to Him. His Holiness closed His eyes for a while and then melodiously chanted a verse of Bhagavatpāda's *Brahmānucintana*, which means, "*Prthvī* (earth) should be dissolved in *āpas* (water), *āpas* in *tejas* (fire), *tejas* in *vāyu* (air) and *vāyu* in *ākāśa* (space). *Ākāśa* should be merged into *avyakta* (the subtlest material cause); *avyakta*, in its turn, must be merged in the pure Absolute (*Brahman*). I am the Absolute, the dissolver of all."<sup>249</sup> The disciple was delighted to note that His Holiness had taken up a verse that paralleled the verse that he had in mind.

Of His own accord, His Holiness began to expound the import of what He had cited. He said, "One starts with something gross, say *prthvī* (earth). Then one analyses, '*Prthvī* has no existence apart from its material cause, *āpas* (water), just as a pot has no existence apart from its cause, mud.' This is the 'dissolution' of *prthvī* in *āpas*. One proceeds in a similar manner till one reaches *avyakta*. One then reflects, 'This too has no existence apart from the *Ātman*, just as a snake that is misapprehended in the place of a rope has no existence apart from its substratum, the rope.' This is the intended merging of *avyakta* into the Supreme. Finally, only the Supreme remains. There is no question of dissolving It in anything and one meditates that one is this *Ātman*."

By His Holiness's spontaneous exposition, He fully clarified what the disciple had wished to know from Him.



Sri Ramasubramanya Iyer of Tirunelveli recollected, "By virtue of His deep insight and mastery over the scriptures, His Holiness could resolve the

doubts of disciples in a trice. My personal experience bears testimony to this. I once got a doubt with regard to a verse of the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Though I went through the commentary with care and also pondered over the import for long, there appeared to be a dichotomy in the teachings contained in the verse. Unable to resolve the issue, I sought His Holiness's clarifications. He lent me a patient ear. Then He smilingly remarked, 'The issue is quite simple, for both *saguṇa* and *nirguṇa* aspects have been spoken of.' The reply might appear terse to others, but to me it was a revelation. The doubt vanished and I saw the verse in a new light."



97. शमिताखिलसन्तापः      *Śamitākhila-santāpaḥ*

One who subdued all afflictions

*Tāpa* or affliction is categorized into three types - *ādhyātmika*, *ādhidāivika* and *ādhibhautika*. By *ādhyātmika-tāpa* is meant bodily suffering due to diseases, and mental suffering due to psychological disorders or anger, jealousy, etc. Misery caused by objects or beings, such as poison, foes and snakes constitute *ādhibhautika-tāpa*. *Ādhidāivika-tāpa* is the misery resulting from malevolent spirits and the like and from natural calamities such as earthquakes. Just as fire burns forests, sorrows burn the individual trapped in the forest of *samsāra*. A seared person desperately yearns for something that can soothe his burns; likewise, the tormented being pines for relief and succour from the burns caused by the fire of these miseries.

His Holiness was One because of whom *akhila*, all, *santāpa*, blazing fires, that is the triad of miseries, were *śamita*, subdued. In *nāma* 14, His Holiness was characterised as One who completely eradicated the mental component of the agony of those who were afflicted by miseries. On the other hand, this *nāma* asserts that He eradicated the three afflictions from their very roots.



The following is culled from a narrative by Dr. Vijaya Ramaswamy, published in the magazine *Tattvāloka* (Dec 1989-Jan 1990).

"I come from a family that worships the Sringeri *Ācāryas* as *kula-gurus*. But my association was tenuous until 1984, when, though I had had a successful academic career with a Ph.D. in History, fellowships abroad and several academic publications, I felt a sense of isolation and a very real sense of personal insecurity. The feeling of fear, loneliness and frustration increased with time. I developed a disenchantment for academics and book-reading became reading of mere words. In fact, books became objects of acute repulsion and disgust. I began to lose interest in my work and lived in a self-created world of darkness and depression. There was just this awful feeling

of time slipping like sand through my fingers. I might have continued to live and perhaps die in this darkness but for the grace of His Holiness.

“One day I picked up the *Bhagavad-gītā* and tried to read it. To my sorrow I found that I could read the script but nothing more. The text itself made no sense to me. When I sat down with translation and commentary, what little I studied puzzled and frightened me. However, I persevered with my efforts.

“It was around this time that I began to have spiritually oriented dreams and visions of His Holiness. The dreams were initially of a great sage who blessed me by placing His lotus hand on my head. In the course of time these dreams crystallized into distinct visions of His Holiness, in which I was having His *darśana*, getting *tīrtha-prasāda* from Him, etc.

“In 1984, my uncle, Sri P. Subramaniam, informed the family that he would be taking a group of devotees to Kalady for the *darśana* of His Holiness. I decided to go with the group and had His *darśana* on 14<sup>th</sup> August. I expressed my deep yearning for *mantropadeśa* from His Holiness to one of His disciples, who advised me to directly submit my plea to His Holiness. When I did so, His Holiness graciously asked me to come on the 16<sup>th</sup> morning for *mantropadeśa*.

“The next day, however, my uncle was rather sceptical on hearing that I had sought *mantropadeśa* from His Holiness and that He had agreed to bless me with it, and thinking that I had got His Holiness wrong, apologized to Him for my foolishness. However, His Holiness only repeated, ‘Let her come at 9 o’clock in the morning.’

“His Holiness blessed me with *mantropadeśa* on a Friday, and I regard that as one of the most important days of my life. It was, for me, a spiritual rebirth. My personality changed as if it had been touched with the philosopher’s stone. Depression gave way to calmness and bitterness to faith.”



Sri M. E. Muralidhara of Shivamogga reminisced, “Once while His Holiness was giving *tīrtha-prasāda* at Sringeri, a couple from Shimoga (Shivamogga) came with their little son and stood in the queue to receive the holy *tīrtha*. The child’s father recounted to His Holiness the suffering the child was undergoing and expressed the parents’ trauma. The boy had a congenital skin disease that had seriously impaired his health. Much to their despair, treatment by doctors of different schools of medicine had given no relief. In fact, the doctors had now indicated that the disease could take a fatal turn or even if it did not, it would stay with the child throughout life.

“Helpless, the couple had brought the child to Sringeri hoping that if His Holiness showers His blessings on the child, there could be a ray of hope.

His Holiness, having patiently heard their pitiful story, took some sacred *tīrtha* in His hands and sprinkled it on the boy's head. He assured them that the boy would be alright. That is precisely what transpired. The child was completely cured of the disease, much to the doctors' amazement. The boy, a good friend of mine, grew up not only into a healthy man but also bearing no scar of the disease."

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Sri Subramanya Ghanapatigal from Madurai was a devotee of His Holiness. One night, his son, Sri Ayyappa was bitten by a poisonous snake. He wasted precious time chasing the snake, and soon the poison started making him giddy. He was then taken to Madurai General Hospital for treatment. The doctors there abandoned all hopes of saving the young man, and pointed out that if he had been brought earlier he might have stood a chance of making it. "Now, only a miracle can save him," they said.

When the Ghanapatigal was told of the critical condition of his son, he resigned himself to fate saying, "My son's past *karma* has to run its course." His attention was soon diverted to a place where he had kept the *mantrākṣatā* that He had received from His Holiness, along with Śāradāmba's *kuṅkuma*. His hopes revived, he immediately gave the *prasāda* to a relative and said, "His Holiness's grace is upon us. Let this *prasāda* save him." The relative rushed with the *prasāda* to the hospital and applied it to the man. In a short while, to the utter bewilderment of the doctors, the effect of the poison was nullified and soon, the sick one recovered completely.

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Even fearsome snakes meekly submitted themselves to the command of His Holiness. At Narasimhavana, Sri Srikantiah and Sri Malnad Venkatesa were once ploughing the *Maṭha* lands, employing a tractor. At one place, a number of cobras suddenly came out hissing at them. Grippled by fear, they ran to His Holiness and described to Him what had happened. He spoke words of encouragement to them, and giving them *mantrākṣatā*, asked them to continue the work.

The next day, His Holiness came to the said spot and looking around, said to the duo, "There don't seem to be any snakes here. Where are the snakes you spoke about?" Srikantiah pointed out a place and touched it with a spade. Immediately, numerous cobras came out and began dancing in front of His Holiness with their hoods upraised. Addressing the snakes, He said, "These people are afraid of all of you. It is better if you leave." To the surprise of the onlookers, all the snakes simply obeyed and left the place.

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Sri Ramalingam was a cloth dealer residing in Kochi. He had a shop and was assisted in his trade by his son. Strange events suddenly started happening

at the shop. Before closing for the day, the practice was to count the day's income, put the money inside a locker and take the key with them. On opening the locker in the morning, they started finding that the currency note bundles were neatly cut into two halves; the cloth bales stocked in the shop were cut so finely that it was not discernible until the cloth was taken out to show the customer. It was then decided that a watchman be employed. In spite of the watchman's presence, however, the incidents continued. The next try was to lock the watchman inside the shop. Not only were the notes and cloth torn anyway, but the watchman found himself outside the shop the next morning. These kinds of happenings continued for a while.

Finally, unable to bear the misery any longer, a grief-stricken Ramalingam wrote to His Holiness explaining the goings on, and praying for succour. When the letter was read out to Him, His Holiness instructed that the man and his son be asked to come to Sringeri. When the duo accordingly arrived at Sringeri, His Holiness learnt all the details from them again asking several questions regarding the happenings. He then gave Ramalingam two Narasimha-yantras with the instructions that he keep one in his shop and one at home, and also that he need not do any elaborate worship for the one kept in the shop, but should offer daily worship to the one kept at home.

The yantras were duly installed by Ramalingam as instructed. The strange happenings diminished gradually and totally stopped in just a few weeks.

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When His Holiness was on His first tour in 1950s-1960s, simple village folk troubled by prolonged lack of rain used to request Him to visit their place and bless them with rain, for they had heard that He was 'Mazhai-Svāmīgal (Svāmin who brings rain).' Some would even stop His convoy of vehicles and beseech Him to grace their village so that they may have rain. His Holiness obliged them all.

People from a particular town once came to His Holiness requesting Him to grace their town. His Holiness acquiesced. It was customary in those days to welcome His Holiness into a town or village with a palanquin procession, in which He would don royal attire over His saffron robes, and also wear a heavy crown and be taken around in a palanquin, as per *Maṭha* tradition. Accordingly, when He arrived in the town, the palanquin procession took place. The town was divided into two halves, one side inhabited by Hindus, and the other by Muslims, and the Hindus, who were the ones who had invited His Holiness, led the procession into all the streets that made up their half of the town. That evening, after the procession was over, there was a very heavy downpour in the town, but curiously, the rain fell only on the part of the town that His Holiness had passed through – the Hindu part.

On knowing about this, the Muslims were distraught. A delegation of them approached the *Maṭha* authorities the next day, and said, “Rain is common to all, regardless of religion. We would like to invite His Holiness to our part of the town and request Him to grace our area too. We too want to take His Holiness in a palanquin procession just as the Hindus did.” The authorities declined the request because of His Holiness’s packed schedule. So the Muslims went directly to His Holiness and placed their request before Him. His Holiness readily acceded to their request without the least hesitation. That evening, He again compassionately donned the royal attire, in spite of the great inconvenience of it, sat in the palanquin and was taken around by the Muslims, this time covering only all the streets in their half of the town. And that night too it rained heavily in the town. Only this time around, the rain fell exclusively in the Muslim half.



98. शमादिसुगुणालयः                      *Śamādi-sugunālayaḥ*

One who was the abode of the excellent qualities commencing with mind-control

‘*Śama-ādi*’ refers to the hexad of attributes listed under *nāma* 38. There His Holiness was described as One who, as a *jīvanmukta*, was adorned with this hexad of attributes, which verily became exquisite ornaments because He had them. That the hexad of qualities have been listed here as ‘*sama-ādi*’ indicates that this *nāma* deals with the pre-*jīvanmukti* stage of His Holiness’s life. This is so, for *śama* is prescribed by Lord Kṛṣṇa for one who has advanced beyond *karma-yoga*,<sup>250</sup> which Bhagavatpāda explains as, “For a person who has ascended *karma-yoga*, *śama* or giving up of *karma* forms the means to liberation.”<sup>251</sup> Also, the six attributes are referred to here as ‘*sugunas*’, or exceptional qualities. They are exceptional indeed, for they are a sine qua non for spiritual *sāadhanā*.

His Holiness was the *ālaya*, abode and also refuge, of the hexad. From a young age, His Holiness was extremely self-controlled, with his mind not given to wandering; He was inward-turned and even from childhood yearned only to take *saṁnyāsa*; His innate forbearance had only itself for a parallel; His faith in the *Śāstras* and His *Guru* was impeccable; to reach God was His only goal from childhood. Naturally endowed, as He was, with the hexad of qualities, His Holiness has been described here as the very abode of these qualities. Thereafter, subsequent to His taking *saṁnyāsa* and pursuing His *sāadhanā*, His Holiness practiced this hexad with such intensity that He became the very refuge of these qualities. After all, His *saṁnyāsa-svīkāra* was when He was going on fourteen, and in less than five years He had attained the summum bonum of life.



Upon taking *saṁnyāsa*, His Holiness decided that His body should be under His control (*dama*) and not vice versa and that He should be same-sighted towards the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold. Putting Himself to test, when winter was at its peak in 1931 (the year of His *saṁnyāsa*), for a few nights, He spread a wet towel on the floor and slept on it wearing just His loincloth. He somehow managed to keep this a secret from even His personal attendant. Thereafter, He repeated this every year for the next four years at Sringeri, one year in Bengaluru, and few years in the 1940s. Such was His control over His body.



Sri Srinivasa Sastry desired, from childhood, only to renounce the world and reach God, as described under *nāma* 18. After He came to Sringeri and was pursuing His studies as a *brahmacārin* under the *Jagadguru*'s watch, His commitment to renunciation (*uparati*) only grew in intensity.

One day, the *Jagadguru* directed Vaidyanatha Sastry to come to Him with just Sri Srinivasa Sastry. When His directive was complied with, He said, "Today, we shall discuss the comparative merits of being a householder and a *saṁnyāsin*. You first explain the advantages of family life." In obedience to His command, Sri Srinivasa Sastry and Vaidyanatha Sastry spoke of the plus points of being a householder. The *Jagadguru* then detailed the disadvantages of that stage of life. He gave many examples and also chanted two verses, the combined meaning of which is, "Who indeed knows which day shall be his last? Even when young, one should practise righteousness; life is decidedly transient.<sup>252</sup> During childhood, one is shorn of discriminative insight. While a youth, one is engrossed in the experience of sensual pleasures. Later, what success can an infirm old man achieve after the dawn of discrimination?"<sup>253</sup>

At the end, the *Jagadguru* asked, "Now, tell me. Is it better to become a householder or a *saṁnyāsin*?" Bereft of any hesitation, Sri Srinivasa Sastry averred that taking up *saṁnyāsa* was, indeed, superior.



Sri Srinivasa Sastry was patience (*titikṣā*) personified. One day, His friends sought to test the limits of His forbearance. In the course of a game, they fetched a stick and began to beat Him with it. He bore their unprovoked onslaught without a murmur. When the boys stopped, aghast at how far they had gone in testing Him, He won their hearts with kind words. To impress upon them the power of fortitude, He also told them the following story. A Buddhist monk was unjustly tortured by a monarch. At the end, the king softened. Ashamed, he begged the monk's pardon. As an act of atonement, he catered to the subsequent needs of the monk. Thus, merely by non-

retaliation, the monk was able to humble the emperor. His friends hung their heads in shame on hearing the tale and went home wiser.



His Holiness's faith (*śraddhā*) in the words of His *Guru* has been glimpsed in the context of *nāma* 27. His firm faith in the scriptures is borne out by an episode that took place during His childhood at Bengaluru. One evening a friend challenged Sri Srinivasa Sastry's conviction that God exists on the ground that neither He nor those He knew had seen God.

Sri Srinivasa Sastry: Can you prove that there is no God? Would you say that something does not exist because you have not seen it? For instance, have you seen Bombay (now Mumbai)? No. Does it then follow that Bombay is non-existent?

Friend: I have not seen Bombay. But I have seen many who have. That is why I believe that Bombay exists.

Sri Srinivasa Sastry: Very well. Likewise, our ancient sages who had beheld the Lord have given clear-cut indications to that effect. What is wrong if we unreservedly accept their words? Their experience cannot be set aside and so we must concede the existence of God.



That His Holiness possessed perfect mind-control (*śama*) culminating in complete tranquillity of mind (*samādhāna*) is apparent from the following:

After *sannyāsa*, His Holiness was accommodated for some time in an independent place in Narasimhavana. One day, numerous ants, which made that their home, bit Him, giving rise to red welts on His legs. He patiently tolerated the bites. This was repeated on the next few days. He did not mention any of this to anybody and took no remedial measures either. So long as the swellings were on His lower limbs and covered by His lower garment, the senior *Jagadguru* did not notice them. One day, the ants bit His back. The senior *Jagadguru* noticed the swellings when His Holiness did *namaskāra* to Him during His morning *āhnikā*; this was because His Holiness had removed His upper garment, put it on the floor and placed His *daṇḍa* on it, as He had been taught to do. The senior *Jagadguru* ascertained what had happened, directed His Holiness to take proper care of His body and arranged for Him to move back to Sacchidananda Vilasa.

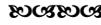
Even in the face of such pain, His Holiness had not uttered a murmur of protest. Why, there was not even a trace of lamentation in His mind. These happenings did not so much as create a tiny flutter in His Holiness's mind, endowed as He was with complete control of the senses, body and mind, and with perfect forbearance and renunciation.



99. श्रीविद्याजपनिष्णातः      Śrīvidyā-japa-niṣṇātaḥ

One who was proficient in the performance of Śrīvidyā-mantra-japa

The Lord extols *mantra-japa* as the best amongst *yajñas*.<sup>254</sup> A very important *mantra* in the Śākta tradition is the Śrīvidyā-mantra, which is dedicated to Goddess Mahā-tripurasundarī. It is also referred to as the *pañca-daśākṣarī* or *mantra* of fifteen syllables. The *Jagadguru* of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham initiates His successor-designate into several *mantras* including the Śrīvidyā-mantra. In keeping with this tradition, His Holiness was initiated into the *mantra* within a few days of His *saṁnyāsa*, by His *Guru*. Ever since, His Holiness regularly engaged in the *japa* of the Śrīvidyā-mantra. In fact, His Holiness was no ordinary performer of the Śrīvidyā-japa, but a *niṣṇāta*, One who had attained perfection, in it.



A few days after His Holiness initiated His disciple, Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin into *saṁnyāsa*, He initiated Him into the Śrīvidyā-mantra. During the initiation, as His Holiness was uttering the *dhyāna-śloka* concerned, He abruptly became motionless and unmindful of His body and surroundings. After some time, He regained normalcy and told His disciple, “You are fortunate. As I was reciting the *dhyāna-śloka*, I had a fascinating vision of the Goddess and was forcefully drawn into *samādhi*.”



100. श्रीचक्रार्चनतत्परः      Śrīcakrārcana-tatparaḥ

One who was intent on the worship of the Śrīcakra

The Śrīcakra is a representation of Goddess Lalitā-tripurasundarī as prescribed in the *Tantra-śāstra*. Its two-dimensional representation etched on a metal plate is called the Śrī-yantra, and its three-dimensional form is called Śrīcakra-mahāmeru. The Mother Goddess is invoked and worshipped in the Śrīcakra through an elaborate procedure, for which initiation into the Śrīvidyā-mantra is an essential prerequisite.

A sacred crystal Śrīcakra-mahāmeru worshipped by Bhagavatpāda has been worshipped by the successive *Jagadgurus* of Sringeri. As per tradition, His Holiness would perform elaborate worship to this Śrīcakra on Fridays at the end of the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* in the evening. On special occasions like the nine-day *śaran-navarātri*, He would perform Śrīcakra-pūjā every morning. Whenever He performed the *pūjā*, He would be totally absorbed in it, *tatparaḥ*, intent, as He was, on performing this *arcana*, worship, to the Śrīcakra, which symbolizes Durgā, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī.



Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin once reminisced in a benedictory discourse, “My *Guru* used to revel in performing *pūjā* to the *Śrīcakra*. He never wanted to miss doing the *pūjā* even if He were unwell. Once when I asked Him, ‘Your Holiness is not keeping well today. Shall I do the *Śrīcakra-pūjā*?’ He answered that He would do it. Considering the state of His health, I pressed, ‘Your Holiness is unwell. As such, doing the *pūjā* will cause much strain.’ He said gently, ‘No, it is alright. I will do the *pūjā* myself.’ So intent was He on worshipping the *Śrīcakra*, that He did not mind putting up with much physical discomfort in order to do so.”



As mentioned under *nāma* 3, His Holiness’s *Guru* composed verses about His Holiness. One of them that He wrote and gave to His Holiness conveys, “May Vāṇī, Lakṣmī and Gaurī guard you, the foremost *Guru*, while you sleep, sit, stand and walk.”<sup>255</sup> Clearly, the senior *Jagadguru* wanted that the Mother of the Universe in Her three forms, forever protect His dear disciple.



### 101. श्रीशेशभेदरहितः                      Śrīśeśa-bheda-rahitaḥ

One who did not differentiate between Viṣṇu and Śiva

Since Śrī is an epithet of Goddess Lakṣmī, ‘Śrī-īśa’, the Lord of Śrī, refers to Lord Viṣṇu, while ‘īśa’ is a popular epithet of Lord Śiva. His Holiness was *bheda-rahita*, One who did not differentiate, between Śrīśa and īśa, that is Viṣṇu and Śiva.

The *Purāṇa* declares, “Though the great Lord is spotless, devoid of qualities and just one, in view of the functions of creation, preservation and destruction, He manifests as a trinity.”<sup>256</sup> It is the same formless *Brahman* that assumes various divine forms, which is why the *Upaniṣad* says, “Salutation to Śiva who is of the form of Viṣṇu and to Viṣṇu who is of the form of Śiva. Just as Viṣṇu is of the nature of Śiva, Śiva is of the nature of Viṣṇu.”<sup>257</sup> Not only is the perception of non-difference between Viṣṇu and Śiva advocated, the apprehension of difference between Them is regarded sinful - ‘*śrīśeśayor-bheda-dhīḥ* (the notion of difference between Śrīśa and īśa)’<sup>258</sup> is listed as one of the ten *nāma-aparādhas* or offences relating to the chanting of the Lord’s names.



The *dhyāna-śloka* of the *Narasimha-mantrarāja* carries the import, “I worship Lakṣmī-nṛsimha whose essential nature is absolute existence, consciousness and bliss, who is immaculate, who is established in *yoga*, whose countenance is very pleasing, who is glorious with numerous ornaments, who has three eyes, who bears (in His four hands) the (*sudarśana*) cakra, the *pināka* (bow) and the signs of granting fearlessness

and boons, who is lustrous like the sun, who is fair in complexion like the moon, who has (the set of hoods of) the king of snakes (Śeṣa) serving as an umbrella over Him and who dwells in the middle of the ocean of milk.”<sup>259</sup>

Once in the course of His evening walk, His Holiness casually chanted this verse and then told a disciple who was with Him, “God, who is formless and of the nature of absolute existence, consciousness and bliss, appears as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Ambā and so on for the sake of His devotees. The form of Narasimha described in this *dhyāna-śloka* is itself suggestive of the actual non-difference between Śiva and Viṣṇu. That Narasimha is an incarnation of Viṣṇu is well known. Here, He is spoken of as being with Lakṣmī, the consort of Viṣṇu, as bearing the *cakra*, the weapon of Viṣṇu, and as having the hoods of Śeṣa as His umbrella, like Viṣṇu. Further, He is said to be in the middle of the ocean of milk. This too fits Viṣṇu. However, Narasimha is presented here, like Śiva, as three-eyed. He bears the *pināka*, the bow of Śiva. Further, like Śiva, and unlike Viṣṇu, Narasimha is described as very fair in complexion.”



[In many a discourse His Holiness emphasized that people must not differentiate intrinsically between Śiva and Viṣṇu and create discord. Below are some excerpts from His discourses.]

With respect to God with qualities, a person may wonder, “Is Śiva the greatest or Viṣṇu or Śakti or any other?” To the people who have such a doubt, Bhagavatpāda’s advice is, “The Supreme *Brahman*, devoid of all attributes and forms is indeed the greatest. It is this reality that appears as Śiva, Viṣṇu, etc. You may worship Śiva or Viṣṇu or Śakti or any other such divinity. When all of them are really one, what room is there for discord?”

Between Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu) and Vāmadeva (Śiva), the difference is only the letters ‘*su*’ and ‘*ma*’, making up the word ‘*suma*’ meaning flower. The flower may be different, but the fruit of worshipping Śiva and that of worshipping Viṣṇu is the same.

Śiva has the name Rāmeśvara, and resides at Rameswaram as a *vyotirlinga*. The name ‘*Rāmeśvaraḥ*’ is interpreted as ‘*rāmasya īśvaraḥ* (the Lord of Rāma)’, indicating Śiva to be the Lord of Rāma. After all, Rāma worshipped Śiva as a *liṅga* at Rameswaram. However, if Śiva were to be asked for the meaning of His name ‘*Rāmeśvaraḥ*’, He would say it is, ‘*rāmaḥ īśvaro yasya saḥ* (One whose Lord is Rāma),’ implying that Rāma is the Lord of Śiva. Śrī Padmapādācārya has explained the name as ‘*rāmaśca asau īśvaraśca* (He is Rāma as well as Śiva).’ Thus, there is no real difference between Viṣṇu and Śiva, and the *kṣetra* of Rameswaram stands testimony to this.



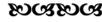
102. श्रीनुसिंहपदारचकः                      Śrīnṛsimha-padārcakahaḥ

One who worshipped the feet of Lord Narasimha

Lord Narasimha was the *iṣṭa-devata* (favourite God) of His Holiness, who is described here as ‘*arcaka*’, One who worshipped, the ‘*pada*’, feet, of ‘*Śrī-nṛsimha*’, the glorious Narasimha.

A few days after His *saṁnyāsa*, His *Guru* initiated Him into the *mantrarāja* of Lord Narasimha. During the process of the initiation, as is described in the sequel, He had a magnificent experience. At the end of the initiation, His *Guru* told Him, “Dedicate everything to Narasimha.” In later years, His Holiness once told a disciple, “From the time of initiation, Narasimha became very dear to me. As I have said on several occasions, He takes care of me like a child, guides me, provides clarifications and sets right all the foolish things I say and do.” As can be seen from this statement of His Holiness, He ever bore Lord Narasimha in His heart. He has also been seen conversing with the Lord and has even been photographed while doing so.

During *Narasimha-jayantī* every year He devoutly performed *pūjā* to Lakṣmī-narasimha. At the end of the *pūjā*, while reading the portion from the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* that deals with the *avatāra* of Narasimha and the soul-stirring devotion of Prahlāda, His voice would choke with emotion and His eyes would well up with tears.



Recalling what happened when His *Guru* initiated Him into the *Narasimha-mantra*, His Holiness once said to a disciple, “During the initiation, when my *Guru* was about to start voicing the *dhyāna-śloka*, I found myself spontaneously visualising Narasimha in my heart. As I heard and repeated the *dhyāna-śloka*, I realised with surprise and happiness that the form of Narasimha described therein and the one I was seeing matched.

“The words relating to the ‘*pañcopacāra-pūjā* (worship with five offerings, done after saying the *dhyāna-śloka*)’ took only some seconds for my *Guru* to utter and for me to repeat. Yet, I experienced no shortage of time in elaborately worshipping the Lord mentally in my heart with offerings of sandal paste, flowers, incense, lamp, food and so on. I can attribute only to divine grace the irresistible urge that led me to begin the worship. During *naivedya*, I served the Lord a variety of dishes in a jewel-studded golden plate, put a little food into His mouth, waited for Him to masticate and swallow and only thereafter offered another morsel. It was as if the several seconds miraculously became extended to over half an hour from my perspective. Even while performing the worship with concentration and dedication, I was able to see my *Guru* and repeat His words without delay.

“When my *Guru* started to utter the *Narasimha-mantra* (after the *pañcopacāra-pūjā*), He placed His right palm on my head. This was not usual. The moment my *Guru* chanted the *mantra* once and, following Him, I too did so, an amazing event occurred. He abruptly withdrew His hand from my head, joined His palms and gazed at me silently with deep reverence. My breathing stopped. The form of Lakṣmī-nṛsimha that I was seeing within me vanished. However, I began to experience the Lord as my *Antaryāmin* (Inner Controller), refuge and intimate wellwisher as clearly as one can see a fruit in one’s open palm. I ceased to regard the body, *prāṇa*, organs, mind and intellect as mine; everything was just His. I do not know how long I remained thus, motionless and immersed in bliss. All along, I did see my *Guru* keeping His palms joined and looking in my direction.

“The form of *Narasimha* then reappeared and my breathing resumed. My mental state reverted to what it had been during my chanting of the *mantra* but with the difference that I now felt extremely intimate with *Narasimha*. At the same time, my *Guru* lowered His hands. He then recited the *mantra* two more times, giving me time to repeat His words.

“After completing the initiation, my *Guru* said, ‘After you had said the *mantra* once, I saw just *Narasimha* in your place. That is why I jerked back my hand from your head and offered my salutation to Him. When His form disappeared and you reappeared, I proceeded with the initiation.’”

[The short-term and long-term impacts of these experiences as narrated by His Holiness Himself, have been included under *nāma* 44.]



### 103. सञ्चारपूतधरणिः *Saṅcāra-pūta-dharaṇiḥ*

One who rendered the earth sacred through His travels

*Adharma* makes the earth impure while *dhārmika* acts purify the earth. An *Upaniṣadic* prayer goes, “He who is purified by the ancient, all-pervading, sanctifying feet of the Lord, overcomes evil deeds and their effects. Having been rendered holy by those intrinsically pure and sanctifying feet of the Lord, may we overcome great sins, our enemies.”<sup>260</sup> By His *saṅcāra*, extensive travelling, His Holiness reached out to countless people, taught them ways to make their lives blessed, motivated them to tread the *dhārmika* path and strive for ultimate beatitude, weaned them away from wrong practices, and initiated, induced and supported several *dharmika* activities, thus causing the *dharāṇī*, earth, to become *pūta*, purified. *Nāma* 32 states that His Holiness rendered certain places on earth into places of pilgrimage. This *nāma*, on the other hand, describes how He rendered the entire earth sacred by spreading *dharma*.



His Holiness said after His long all-India tour, “From my tour, I see three aspects standing out: (1) I have personally witnessed and abundantly experienced the limitless grace of Īśvara and the greatness of His powers; (2) Though due to historical, geographical and social reasons we perceive some mild differences in the appearances, costumes and customs of our people, the society is fundamentally united; this is applicable not merely for those living in the south of the Himalayas, but also for those in Nepal, the sole remaining Hindu nation; the people of Nepal have immense faith in the Hindu religion and are extremely proud of being Hindus; (3) Touring the country is good for all, essential too; our perspectives widen and our broadmindedness proliferates; else, narrow feelings like, ‘We are great; our people alone are great; this world is nothing without us,’ get rooted.

“All in all, the *sanātana-hindu-dharma* will never cease to exist. With intense faith, if we feel, ‘We should prosper; the purpose of our birth should be fulfilled,’ and with a pure mind, we strive in the ordained path, by the grace of Bhagavatpāda, we all will, without any doubt, attain fulfillment.”

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[In His benedictory discourses, His Holiness never failed to talk about *ādhyātmika* practices that can be followed by all to make their lives sublime. Extracts from one such discourse is provided below.]

There are several religious traditions in the world. It is our duty to know about the particulars of our tradition and to conduct our lives accordingly.

Both *nāstikas*, unbelievers, and *āstikas*, believers, constantly require the grace of the power that transcends the realm of human thought but, remaining in the background, conducts all activities.

From the words of the *Purānas* and from our experience, we learn to a great extent that nobody can unfailingly fulfil all his longings. The rise of a desire and its subsequent frustration are actually experienced by all. We, by nature, have desires, some small and some big. When we are successful in consummating several of them, we get puffed up with pride. However, it is impossible for us to always fulfil our wishes; we do fail. Valorous persons themselves have perished. Not only can all desired objects not be attained, separation from the ones that have been obtained is also certain. Actually, worldly objects, whether desired and not attained or temporarily acquired, are all false, for they are subject to destruction.

God alone is the absolute reality, unsublatable in the three spans of time. *Āstikas* always accept the existence of God but, nevertheless, deluded by *Māyā*, they do perform what they should not. *Nāstikas* say on some occasion that God might exist. At any rate, they too commit misdeeds. Then, what is the difference in conduct between the *āstikas* and *nāstikas*, for both do err?

If there be a respected elder at home, even when there is an occasion to do wrong, a person often restrains himself, thinking, “What explanation will I be able to give when I return home?” In the case of an *āstika*, his firm belief in the existence of God serves as a restraining influence on him, like the presence of an elder at home. So, he discards several opportunities to go astray. The *nāstika* lacks the benefit of such a regulating influence.

Where exactly is God who serves as a regulating influence on the *āstika*? He dwells within the heart. Essentially He pervades the interior and the exterior of everything perceived or heard of in this world. Though actually birthless, formless and undecaying, God manifests for the good of the world. He thereby makes it easy for people to see Him outside themselves. For instance, numerous people had the good fortune of beholding Rāma and Kṛṣṇa in the *Treta* and *Dvāpara Yugas*. Now, people can take advantage of idols and pictures. When one sees a picture, such as of Kṛṣṇa or Śiva, the concerned form easily comes to mind.

However, such visualization, does not, by itself, constitute deep meditation and the clear apprehension of God within oneself. When one observes a picture briefly, closes one’s eyes and tries to hold the form steady in one’s mind, one is usually unsuccessful. On visualizing one part of the deity’s form, some other part is not visible. This is a common problem. What is a remedy for such inability to meditate on a form of God? If one were to see a picture for long and to then close one’s eyes, the form would get imprinted rather clearly in the mind. Then one could meditate upon the form that has got impressed upon the mind; with adequate practice, one succeeds.

Some ask, “What is the need for temples?” It is true that they are not necessary for a person who can behold God wherever he happens to be. On the other hand, consider the case of a man who is unable to focus on God even when he goes to a temple. What would his condition be if there were no temples at all? Thus, for a person of this kind, a temple is essential.

We should recognize that everything has got God for its essence. We should contemplate on God as immanent and as possessed of a form and make it our aim in life to experience Him. Alternatively, we should strive to make this our last birth by directly realizing that we are intrinsically God, the non-dual absolute reality, devoid of attributes. Only then will our life as humans become truly significant.

On the other hand, having got a human birth, association with a sage and the capacity to discriminate, if we remain concerned only with worldly enjoyments and the means to attain them, the following statement will apply to us: “Who indeed, is a greater fool than the person who is negligent of his own welfare?”<sup>261</sup> The *Śāstra* teaches us what is good for us and not about

the welfare of some unknown third party. It tells us, “Uplift yourself.” If we do not do that, we are thorough fools.

Bhagavatpāda has said in His *Upadeśa-pañcaka*, “Study the *Veda* everyday. Perform well the acts enjoined therein. Worship God through the performance of duties. Give up the thought of engaging in desire-prompted rites. Eradicate the host of sins. Contemplate the faults in worldly enjoyments. Establish the desire for the Self. Quickly go away from your house.”<sup>262</sup> The import is that if you have advanced up to establishing the desire for the Self, and you feel you have had enough of the world, then leave home. If you feel that the worldly experiences you have had are not sufficient, go right ahead and do the above activities not merely for the duration of this life but in a few succeeding lives also. At least thereafter, you will feel, “Enough of the world.” This is the special feature of Bhagavatpāda’s *Veda*-based teaching; the competence of the person is fully taken into consideration.

Next, there is the question, “Should one resort to God as *saguna*, with qualities, or as *nirguna*, devoid of all attributes?” The answer pertinent to the common man is, “You should resort only to God as *saguna*.” One should worship God in a form that is in accordance with one’s family tradition or is to one’s liking, but in all cases only a form that is allowed by the scripture. One is not given a choice when it comes to doing what is specifically enjoined by the scripture, adhering to rules such as veneration of parents, and abstaining from what is explicitly prohibited such as injuring other creatures. Have faith and do as much as you are capable of. The rules prescribed by the *Śāstras* must be adhered to; deviation from the norms is permissible only in exceptional circumstances.

Bhagavatpāda advises, “You should keep doing *karma* with sincerity. By virtue of its performance, your mind will become pure in due course. Then take to contemplation on God. With the practice of contemplation, you will gradually get to the stage where you will see the entire universe as having no existence apart from the Supreme. Then you would have become a *jñānin* or a knower of the Truth.” There are persons who are desirous of *dharma* and do not wish to cause any unhappiness in the mind of another. Their conduct should be our standard. By emulating them, we would be following our holy tradition and heading towards the goal.



104. संसारार्णवनाविकः *Samsārārṇava-nāvikaḥ*

One who was the boatman in the ocean of transmigratory existence

*Samsāra* or transmigratory existence is the continuous cycle of births and deaths. Bhagavatpāda says, “In this *samsāra* that is very difficult to cross,

there is birth again, death again, and again lying in the mother's womb. O Murāri! Save me through Your kindness!"<sup>263</sup> *Saṁsāra* is often likened to an *aṛṇava*, ocean, because of this very characteristic of it being difficult to cross.<sup>264</sup> Normally, an expert *nāvika*, boatman, is responsible to safely take the travellers on his boat to the other shore of the river, protecting them from the perils of turbulent waters, etc. Fittingly, Lord Kṛṣṇa is described as a boatman for the Pāṇḍavas to cross the fearsome, treacherous and formidable river that is the Kurukṣetra war.<sup>265</sup> Bhagavatpāda assures all, "There dwell calm, great noble ones who move about effecting, like the spring season, what is beneficial to people. Having themselves crossed the dreadful ocean of transmigratory existence, they, without any motive, cause other persons too to cross over."<sup>266</sup>

His Holiness, who was a master of several spiritual disciplines as has been seen through various *nāmas*, a peerless *jīvanmukta* and an ocean of compassion, was the expert boatman, who could safely see people through when it came to crossing the formidable and seemingly impossible-to-cross ocean of *saṁsāra*. He did not stop with merely proffering advice to His disciples, but hand-held them at every stage in their spiritual journey.



His Holiness generally gave *mantra-upadeśa* only in person, though there were some exceptions. A devotee had a dream of His Holiness initiating him into a *mantra*. Unfortunately, on waking up, he forgot what he had been initiated into. He wrote a letter to His Holiness about this. His Holiness directed His Private Secretary to reply that the *mantra* was '*klīm kṛṣṇa klīm*'; He also specified in what manner and how many times the disciple should perform the *mantra-japa*.



His Holiness did not confine Himself to just initiating a disciple into a *mantra*. He willingly gave clarifications about it when asked. For instance, a knowledgeable lady approached Him in Chennai in January 1982, and requested Him to explain the *dhyāna-śloka* of a particular *mantra*. His Holiness closed His eyes and gave such a lucid description that it seemed to her that He was seeing a form in front of Him and describing it. She remarked that His Holiness's description was so wonderful that she could readily conceive the form. His Holiness admitted, "I did not mechanically translate the *dhyāna-śloka*, for that would not have been of much use to you. I visualised the form spoken of in the verse. I focused my attention on a portion of the divine form, described what I was apprehending and thereafter moved on to another portion. That is why I spoke slowly."



Sri Ananthadapuram Vaidyanathan was a conscientious worker and a staunch devotee of His Holiness. He was ever ready to serve His Holiness

and efficiently discharged the tasks assigned to him. His Holiness would see him scurrying around at different times of day and night to get work done in time.

His Holiness suggested to him that he receive *mantropadeśa* from Him. Vaidyanathan told Him that he simply did not have the time to perform *anuṣṭhāna*, and saying that He would not be able to follow rules of ‘*maḍi*’ (observances of purity) etc., politely refused to take *mantropadeśa*. This, in fact, happened several times.

One day, the time was around 7:30 p.m. and His Holiness had just completed His evening bath. He summoned Vaidyanathan. His Holiness told him, “Look here, tomorrow morning, at around 7 o’clock, complete your bath and come wearing a silk *dhoti*,” and dismissed him. As His Holiness had only issued an order and not asked any question or given any suggestion, Vaidyanathan was in no position to reply and went away quietly.

The next morning, he reported to His Holiness at 7 p.m. as instructed. His Holiness asked him to sit down, and giving him a book said, “Read.” His Holiness continued, “Every morning, read this book after your bath. That is enough for you.” The book contained a collection of *mantras*.

Sri Vaidyanathan obeyed His Holiness’s command, and observed that he never had any hindrances in adhering to this practice. Thus, His Holiness graced him not only with an instruction that he could easily follow but also with the circumstances that enabled him to follow it without hindrances.



[Excerpts from an essay penned by His Holiness on a pre-eminent means available to all to cross the ocean of *samsāra*, are rendered below.]

*Bhakti* is an eminent and momentous means to ultimate blessedness.

It is an undeniable fact that though we persistently strive for happiness, we never so much as get a glimpse of its culmination but acquire, instead, a succession of woes. Our *Śāstras*, the lore on the lives of the sages of yore and the experiences of several *mahātmas* of modern times confirm that nonpareil bliss does exist. Hence, it must be admitted that there is some defect in our attempts to attain such joy. All of us want the fruit of perfect happiness but adopt means that are unrelated to that end and, hence, face disappointment. This is like planting a banyan seed and later lamenting that it yields no mangoes.

When people are unable to ascertain on their own, through the logical tests of positive and negative concomitance, as to what exactly constitutes the means to a specific end, they necessarily have to turn to the statement of a trustworthy person, for getting them the answer they seek. The most reliable

of all is Paraśiva, and the *Vedas* are words that emanated effortlessly, like breath, from Him.

The *Vedas* unequivocally emphasize that it is only when a person realizes the Supreme *Brahman* that he transcends sorrow and attains unsurpassable bliss. They teach that *śravaṇa*, hearing about the *Ātman* through the words of the *Guru* and the scripture, *manana*, reflecting on It through reasoning, and *nididhyāsana*, firmly meditating upon It, are the means to know *Brahman*. So, it behoves a person to realize the *Ātman* that is none other than *Brahman* by resorting to *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* and thereby attain emancipation from transmigration. Purity of the mind is a prerequisite for proper *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*.

*Bhakti* is ‘*anurāga*’, the deferential faith that we have in those who are worthy of our worship. The activities that engender devout belief in the venerable are also called *bhakti*. Hence, the means to devotion such as hearing about the glorious sport of the Lord and keeping Him in mind are themselves termed *bhakti*. Clearly, love of God is *bhakti*, for ‘*rāga*, the affection for God,’ ‘*anu*, that arises following acts like hearing about the greatness of God’ is *anurāga*.

*Bhakti* is said to be of three types: *sāttvika*, *rājasika* and *tāmasika*. Worship of God for the sake of harming another is a form of *tāmasika-bhakti*; being thoroughly unsuitable for attaining ultimate blessedness, it is fit to be eschewed. Worship of God for desired rewards in this world and the next is *rājasika-bhakti*; since it confers what is pleasurable but not what is most beneficial, it is unacceptable to those who keenly aspire for freedom from rebirth. The third kind of devotion is *sāttvika-bhakti*. This is an exalted means to attain the highest state. He who has *sāttvika-bhakti* regards the actions meant for his stage of life to be duties ordained by God and performs them for satisfying God, without hankering for the fruits of what he does.

Every human is qualified to practice such *bhakti-yoga*. All should strive to attain the highest state through it. In spite of seeing the world to be fraught with a variety of miseries, many are unable to discard sense-objects and, instead, remain smitten with them. Nevertheless, they too wish for everlasting, unsurpassable bliss. *Śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana* being out of their reach since their minds are impure, it is to *bhakti* that they should turn.

When *sāttvika-bhakti* resides uninterruptedly in the mind, the mind becomes pure. *Bhakti* blossoms into *saguṇa-upāsanā*, meditation on the Supreme as possessed of qualities; all the impurities of the mind are completely washed away by the force of such contemplation. To those who have been rendered pure-minded by their devotion to God, the Lord imparts the knowledge that



A day after *saṁnyāsa*, when His Holiness was walking in Narasimhavana, a cobra partially crossed His path, a little further down. It then moved towards Him and stopped just in front of Him. It raised its hood. Its upraised hood was directly above His feet. He stood still, admiring the snake and not in the least fearful of it. The snake, for its part, remained motionless. After some time, it lowered its hood and went away. Mahārṣi Patañjali has aphorised in the *Yoga-sūtras*, “In the presence of one who is established in *ahimsā*, even inimical creatures abandon their hostility.”<sup>269</sup>

Recalling this incident in 1974, His Holiness told a disciple, “It was not as though the snake did not fear me because I believed in *ahimsā*. All I can say is that I derived great joy because I regarded it as a good sign.”

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Truth was a *dharma* that was always extremely dear to His Holiness. After He became the *pīṭhādhipati*, in a certain hearing of a court case in Bengaluru, it was the turn of the *Maṭha* to present evidence. When reporting the case to His Holiness, the administrator voiced the legal opinion obtained that presenting the facts in a certain buttressed fashion would be monetarily beneficial to the *Maṭha*. “Will we be able to keep up in the future what we plan to indicate in the court now?” queried His Holiness. The administrator’s honest answer was, “No. It will be difficult for us to carry out what all we are going to declare.” “In that case, do not represent the case in that fashion. Just state the facts as they are,” directed His Holiness. He was unwilling to allow any deliberate misinterpretation of the facts.

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His Holiness often drove home the importance of not coveting another’s possessions. He once said, “Refraining from stealing implies that another person’s property should not even be mentally coveted. ‘Let whatever belongs to another person, be with him. I shall give something of mine to others’ – such a mentality should be ours.” His Holiness lived in accordance with His precepts. He was quoted in the context of *nāma* 70 as having described the state of Janaka and saying “I too have nothing and yet have everything.” He was thus absolutely beyond covetousness.

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After recollecting to a disciple, some of the advices of His *Guru* to Him when He was thirteen years old and still a *brahmacāri*, His Holiness told him, “My *Guru* was so kind that even when I was too young to be afflicted by passion, He emphasised the worthlessness of sensory pleasures and stressed the importance of dispassion and thereby precluded any scope for even the seed of passion finding a place in my mind. He rendered me fit for *saṁnyāsa*.”

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During His Holiness's camp at Hyderabad in January 1966, the Maharaja of Mysore and Raja Venkata Rao Limbekar had submitted high quality, imported mattresses and blankets for His Holiness's use. The attendant laid the bed for His Holiness at night before He entered the room. His Holiness removed His upper cloth, rolled it up and used this as His pillow. He lay on deerskin on the floor; His lower cloth served as His blanket. In the morning, as soon as He got up, He slightly rumbled the blankets on the bed. This went on for a few days.

One day, a disciple who had noticed what His Holiness had been doing, asked Him, "Why is Your Holiness doing this?" He clarified, "I am a *saṁnyāsīn* and I do not want comforts. However, those who donate such articles expect me to use them. If they come to know from the attendants that I am not utilising them, they may come to the conclusion that the items ordered were not regarded by me as good enough and feel bad about it. As a result, they may trouble themselves further and get me even more valuable objects. Why give room to all this? Because of seeing the blankets rumbled, the attendants will not report the eminent donors that I did not use them."



106. सर्वभूतदयापरः *Sarva-bhūta-dayā-parah*

One for whom compassion to all beings was paramount

His Holiness was described as extremely tender-hearted (*nāma* 22) and kindness personified (*nāma* 37). The trait of His Holiness that is described in this *nāma* is *dayā*, compassion. The definition of *dayā* is captured in the verse, "O best among the noble ones on earth! The desire arising in the heart to eradicate the sufferings of others even if it entails the taking of much effort, is called *dayā*."<sup>270</sup> Thus, *dayā* is equivalent to what Nīlakaṇṭha refers to as *kāruṇya* (vide *nāma* 22).

*Bhagavān* says, "Compassion is innate to the one who is born inheriting divine traits."<sup>271</sup> Mahārṣi Gautama lists compassion for all beings as the first of the eight *ātma-guṇas* (personal qualities)<sup>272</sup> to be cultivated by every individual. The *Yoga-sūtras* too enjoin compassion as a means to mental peace.<sup>273</sup> To His Holiness, *sarvabhūta-dayā*, compassion to all living beings, was *para*, the highest pursuit. As such, His was one-pointed dedication to this task. It was solely for the welfare of others that He sacrificed His own personal preference to remain absorbed in the Supreme.

It must be noted that in this *nāma*, the description of His Holiness's compassion reaches a crescendo. As already mentioned (vide *nāma* 37), the fact that His Holiness was tender at heart gets subsumed in His characteristic of doing good to others even if it entails taking on suffering for Himself. Here it is apparent that the latter is in turn subsumed in the aspect brought

out in this *nāma*. After all, one who always acts to relieve others of suffering is bound to act in a way that benefits others and not otherwise.



His Holiness was prepared to go out of the way to terminate the suffering being inflicted on even a small creature. This trait of His was apparent even from childhood. Sri Srinivasa Sastry once beheld a boy cruelly catching thoroughly innocuous butterflies, tearing out their wings and throwing the hapless creatures to a dog. Walking up to the boy, He quickly grasped his hands and twisted them. The boy yelled. Relaxing His vice-like grip, Sri Srinivasa Sastry said, “The butterflies also must feel like this. Just as you have hands, they have wings. Abstain from torturing them hereafter.”

According to the scripture, even a butterfly does have a *jīva* (transmigrating, individual soul) that can undergo suffering and it is possible for one to be reborn, as a consequence of one’s sins, as a butterfly. In the *Mahābhārata*, there is the story of a learned *ṛṣi* named Māṇḍavya being impaled on a stake. On his later going to Yama, the god of death, and asking the reason for his suffering, he was told that as a boy he had tormented butterflies. By getting the boy to desist from totally unjustifiably and sadistically torturing and killing harmless butterflies, He not only provided relief to the butterflies but also saved the boy from sinning by continuing to kill them and, thereby, saved him from having to suffer, at some time, the painful consequences of such sin.



One day during His first tour of Andhra Pradesh in 1960, His Holiness had travelled for about an hour when He espied from afar, a partially overturned automobile lying off the road. Some motorists passed on without even pausing. His Holiness had His car halted near the accident spot and rushed to the badly-damaged vehicle. He saw a motionless, blood-splattered man trapped within it. In a trice, He discerned that the mishap had occurred only minutes earlier and that the man was unconscious, not dead. He instructed a responsible employee of the *Maṭha* to proceed speedily in a *Maṭha* vehicle to arrange for an ambulance.

Having determined that the accident victim could be freed only after setting his car upright, His Holiness laboured, along with those who were with Him, to do the needful. He was then in His forties and His well-exercised muscles were hard and powerful. Nevertheless, as the vehicle was heavy, He had to put in much effort before it finally stood on its wheels. His Holiness then cautiously examined the wounded man and came to the conclusion that it would be safe to extricate him without waiting for the arrival of an ambulance. Using an improvised stretcher, His Holiness gently transferred him to a spacious *Maṭha* vehicle and ordered the driver to proceed smoothly

in the direction from which an ambulance was expected. His actions ensured that the accident victim received medical attention at the earliest. The man survived and recovered; he owed his life to His Holiness.

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A tree uprooted by a gale fell across a road. Consequently, all vehicles plying on that route were forced to decelerate to a crawl and swerve to beyond the edge of the road in order to get past the obstruction. The car in which His Holiness was travelling had just crossed the tree when He told the person at the wheel to stop the vehicle. “If we move on, as many others before us have done, motorists will continue to be put to inconvenience at this spot. So, we should move the tree to the side of the road”, declared His Holiness. In deference to His command, the *Matha* staff applied themselves to the task of shifting the tree. Though old and unwell at that time, His Holiness did not remain a mute spectator. He gave suggestions and contributed physically too. In a short while, the road became unobstructed. The good deed done, His Holiness resumed His journey.

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His Holiness had the compassionate insight to recognize the difficulties of people even if they were not explicitly presented to Him, the vision to arrive at optimal solutions to eliminate those difficulties, and the commitment and perseverance to make sure that these solutions are implemented. Many of His plans and schemes had as beneficiaries the general public, who might not even know that He was responsible for the schemes.

There used to be a road connecting Shivamogga in Karnataka to the port city of Mangaluru, through Agumbe, but it was not a road good enough for heavy vehicles like trucks and buses to ply. His Holiness noticed the practical difficulty faced by people because of this lack of good road connectivity between these two important cities. He also recognized the importance of such a road for the economic development of Karnataka State. Aware as He was of the good road connectivity between Shivamogga and Sringeri through Koppa (approximately 100 kilometres), as well as between Karkala and Mangaluru (approximately 60 kilometres), He concluded that a good road laid to connect Sringeri with Karkala (approximately 60 kilometres) through Nemuru and Kerakette, would suffice to achieve the Shivamogga-Mangaluru (a little over 200 kilometres) connectivity.

Not stopping at this, he took steps to have the plan implemented. When ministers or officials of the Karnataka Government came for his *darśana*, He told them of the idea and also impressed upon them in detail, the importance of such a road for Karnataka. This committed endeavour of His started bearing fruit when the Government started the construction of the road in the 1980s. However, His Holiness did not leave it at that. Until the

road construction work was successfully completed, He would go to the site and Himself monitor the progress of the work from time to time. This road stands today as National Highway 169, and is a busy road with large and heavy vehicles plying on it every day.

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As His Holiness's car was passing through a road in a city, He saw a beggar lying prostrate on the ground, convulsing sporadically. He ordered His driver to halt the car in order to attend to him. The driver said that beggars often put up a show of sickness to earn the sympathy of passers-by and get alms from them. His Holiness refused to budge and said, "Regardless of whether this man is genuine or not, I am going to help him." Hence, the driver halted the car. His Holiness observed that the man had stopped having fits. Without a moment's thought He picked up His water vessel and asked for the water to be given to him. In the meantime, another car stopped and its driver rushed with water to him before the vessel sent by His Holiness reached him. When His Holiness resumed His journey, He remarked, "How fortunate the other car's driver was to have been able to help him! I did not have the privilege of doing anything for him."

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The selfless compassion of His Holiness extended to not just human beings but to animals as well, all of which He loved deeply.

In the late 1970s, an *Āyurveda-vaidya* gave His Holiness a rare preparation, the composition of which was his guarded secret. The physician said that his preparation would heal any wound. The quantity supplied was small and so it was precious. One day, His Holiness beheld a dog that whimpered in agony due to a deep knife wound. Moved as He was, He immediately ordered for that rare medication to be applied to the dog. Whoever would have thought that such a rare medicine, possibly meant for some future use of His Holiness, would be parted with for healing a dog? The application was continued for a couple of days. The wound healed well and quickly too. The dog returned to its normalcy.

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His Holiness was once proceeding in His car from Narasimhapura back to Sacchidananda Vilasa, via the Durgāmbā Temple. The road leading to the temple consisted of many ups and downs and did not have an asphalt surface. At one point, the way was blocked by a bullock cart. The cart driver was coaxing his bullocks up a slope but the load coupled with excessive friction in the axle prevented the cart from moving up. The cart had a faulty axle and this led to the cart swerving sharply to the right when the bullocks put in additional efforts. On seeing His Holiness, the cart driver jumped down from his vehicle and stood reverentially. He then moved his cart to the edge of the road to enable His Holiness's car to pass. Since the road was narrow, the

resulting clearance for the car was not much but, nonetheless, sufficient. His Holiness told the disciple who was driving His car not to proceed and asked His attendant to lend a helping hand to the cart man, who, however, said that he would manage. He did not want His Holiness to wait because of Him. His Holiness, for His part, deemed that the man needed aid and so must be helped before proceeding.

His Holiness's attendant and the disciple who was driving the car got down from the car and pushed the cart, while the cart driver egged the bullocks on. His Holiness was unwell and so was observing the scene from His seat. He called out, "Do not push the cart from near the axle or from the back. Push the outer portion of the spokes and you shall get additional leverage. Alternatively, you can hold the rim of the wheel." Till then their struggles had been in vain but when they implemented His Holiness's suggestion they were glad to find that the cart started to inch its way up the slope. Soon, it ascended the slope and, thereafter, the bullocks were in a position to pull the faulty cart on their own. His Holiness asked the disciple to drive slowly behind the cart till it reached its destination. On the way, He said, "It would have been most unfair and improper to have left the bullocks to struggle and this man to be stranded with his cartload. Had I not been unwell and weak, I would certainly have joined all of you in pushing the cart up the slope."



107. अज्ञानध्वान्तमार्तण्डः      *Ajñāna-dhvānta-mārtaṇḍaḥ*

One who was a Sun to the darkness that is ignorance

*Ajñāna* or ignorance of one's true nature, shrouds the intellect and precludes the knowledge of the light of the *Ātman*. *Ajñāna* causes concealment of the very existence of something, misconception about one thing as something else and doubt about the nature of something. Suppose that there is a rope lying on the floor. If it is pitch dark, the rope itself is not visible. If the darkness is less dense, one may mistake the rope for a snake; alternatively, one may be in doubt whether it is a rope or a snake. *Ajñāna* is therefore likened to *dhvānta*, darkness. Shining bright light on the object causes eradication of all these defects, and nothing other than light can do the job. Similarly, it is knowledge alone that can dispel ignorance about something. Hence, knowledge is likened to light. Also, on dispelling darkness, light simply reveals what already existed and neither creates anything new nor brings about any transformation in an existing object. Similarly, on eradicating ignorance, knowledge just reveals the truth as is, and does not bring about any transformation in it.

The darkness of ignorance that we have is so dense and powerful, that it manages to shroud from us the *Ātman*, which is our very nature and is the

light of lights; this ignorance causes the propagation of *saṁsāra* itself. The eradication of such darkness surely requires a light none less than *mārtaṇḍa*, the Sun. Similarly, nothing less than the unceasing true knowledge of *Ātman-Brahman* is the ultimate antidote for primordial ignorance.

His Holiness is described as the Sun to the darkness that is ignorance, by virtue of His being a *jīvanmukta* and hence *Brahman* Itself, and a compassionate *Sadguru* who grants knowledge. As Lord Kṛṣṇa promised, “It is out of compassion for them (who have surrendered to Me) that I, remaining in their intellects, destroy the darkness arising out of their ignorance, through the lustrous lamp of knowledge.”<sup>274</sup> His Holiness was described in *nāma* 61 as One who destroyed the effects of the *guṇa* of *tamas* that drives one to sin, and is shown here as One who destroyed the causal ignorance itself, thus delivering devotees from beginningless *saṁsāra*.



[The following is excerpted from an essay penned by His Holiness in which He expatiates on what delivers one from the darkness of ignorance.]

We have some abilities that are almost absent in the members of the subhuman species. One such is the power of *vicāra* or enquiry. Though feebly inherent in animals, it cannot wax to sublime heights in them. To it, we owe our distinction. *Vicāra* is synonymous with deliberation. Reflection comes naturally to humans. However, we ought to ascertain what is truly worthwhile for us to ponder on.

We normally cogitate on purposeful as well as irrelevant mundane matters. Apart from considering the alleged or actual failings of others, we give thought to the domestic affairs and possessions of people. Nevertheless, nothing objective to which we bestow attention is dear to us at all times. Each of us has unwavering affection only for himself or herself. The self that is ever dear is termed *Ātman* in the *Śāstras*. Anything objective that is desirable now can become undesirable in the future and, likewise, what is currently distasteful can turn agreeable; the *Ātman*, however, is dear now and will continue to ever remain so. In the normal course, we encounter three states; waking, dream and deep sleep. In all of them, one is dear to oneself.

It is the height of foolishness for us, who are reflective by nature, not to attend to and enquire about ourselves. There is no point in pondering over what is thoroughly known, such as that consumption of food appeases hunger. It is impossible to enquire about what is totally unknown. We know that we exist but have not understood what our fundamental nature is. So, we need to enquire into it.

To carry out such *vicāra*, a suitable means is vital. The means may be either our own or that provided by another; through it, we can accomplish what we

seek. The works of Bhagavatpāda constitute the means for us to perform *vicāra*; He has spelt out the nature of the *Ātman* therein. Bhagavatpāda says, “Know this, your *Ātman*, to be that which shines in the heart as self-effulgent, eternal bliss and which, witnessing egoism etc., that have various forms and modifications and uniformly shining within at all times as the innermost entity and as not objectified, manifests itself very clearly in the states of waking, dream and deep sleep.”<sup>275</sup>

Owing to circumstances, a prince was growing up amidst foresters. One day, a palmist examined his palm and said, “You are a prince and shall become a sovereign.” These words appeared to be naughty at that time but subsequently their veracity became clear. The words above about our true nature are also like that; so long as we are ignorant of who we really are, the words that readily appeal to us are only those that conform to our erroneous notions.

Though being absolute existence, pure consciousness and supreme bliss, we experience the world because of being thoroughly shrouded by *tamas*. Ignorance of one’s own nature is *avidyā*. *Avidyā* has two powers - the power of *āvaraṇa* or concealment and the power of *vikṣepa* or projection. *Āvaraṇa* precludes correct knowledge of the *Ātman*. Because of *vikṣepa*, manifold forms can be seen in the *Ātman* that is veiled. The condition of being a *jīva*, a doer and an enjoyer, as also egoism, the feeling, ‘mine’ and so on appear in the *Ātman* owing to *vikṣepa*. These cause unhappiness and constitute transmigratory existence.

It is the position of the *Vedānta* school that illusory silver originates and is seen when a mother-of-pearl is mistaken, in partial darkness, to be a piece of silver. A justification for this view is that the annihilator of that silver is just the right knowledge of the mother-of-pearl and not any bodily action or meditation. If the *Ātman*’s present bondage is real or natural, it cannot be terminated by knowledge. However, scriptural passages reveal that liberation from bondage is effected exclusively by knowledge. That which is real must exist always. However, the condition of being a doer and an enjoyer as also the states of waking, dream and deep sleep do not co-exist with the *Ātman* at all times. In the waking state, the dream state is absent; in the dream state, the waking state is not there; in deep sleep, both these are missing. The *Ātman* alone is ever present. The states of waking, dream and deep sleep are each seen one moment and cease the next and, so, are unreal. The *Ātman* is eternal and, thus, real. Nothing else is needed to illuminate It; certainly nobody needs to find out whether he exists by asking another.

During deep sleep, there is objectless happiness. It is to experience this bliss that we fall fast asleep regardless of how many worldly activities we may have. At that time, there is no sign of any object or sense-organ. Bliss is had

then though there is no contact with anything objective. How indeed is this possible but for the *Ātman* itself being of the nature of bliss? In that case, is not deep sleep sufficient for one to attain the *Ātman*? No, because even though *vikṣepa* is absent in that state, *āvaraṇa*, which veils the *Ātman*, is definitely present. To remove not just *vikṣepa* but also *āvaraṇa*, realization of the *Ātman* is vital.

To free oneself from *avidyā* and thereby attaining the *Ātman*, the means of valid knowledge are the *Śāstra*, *yukti* or reasoning, the words of the *Guru* and one's own experience characterized by inner certitude. Here, by *Śāstra* is meant the *Upaniṣads*. Books together with practical training are essential to acquire some forms of knowledge. Just as observing adept cooks when they make cakes of flour and receiving guidance from them enable others to prepare such cakes, the life and teachings of living saints who have realized the *Ātman* enable people to acquire knowledge. Apart from the *Śāstra*, reasoning and the words of the *Guru*, personal realization of the *Ātman* is necessary. A person's own experience is what reveals to him whether he has realized the *Ātman* or not. Indirect knowledge based on the words of the *Śāstra* and the *Guru* is insufficient to bring about liberation from transmigratory existence.

Only those who have personally realized the *Ātman* are truly fortunate; they are ones whose dedication to *vicāra* is total. It is only in them that the power of *vicāra*, which is natural to humans, finds fulfilment.

It is said that thinking of *satpuruṣas* is most beneficial. Who are *satpuruṣas*? There is actually only one entity that is *sat* or absolutely real and that is *Brahman*. Thus, *satpuruṣas* are those who abide as *Brahman*. We should endeavour to become true *satpuruṣas*.



108. विद्यातीर्थजगद्गुरुः *Vidyātīrtha-jagadguruḥ*

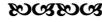
(Śrī Abhinava) Vidyātīrtha, the preceptor of the world

This *aṣṭottara-śatanāmāvalī* began with an allusion to *vidyā* or knowledge, and concludes here, again with a reference to *vidyā*. Apart from reverentially taking His name, Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin presents all the glories of His *Guru* through this one *nāma*, just as He did through the first three.

Taking some common meanings of the word 'tīrtha' along with the word *vidyā*, the word '*Vidyā-tīrtha*' can be seen to have many connotations. '*Vidyā-tīrtha*' means 'One who is the holy place of knowledge' and 'One who is worthy of veneration as the very nature of knowledge', thus conveying that His Holiness was a magnificent knower of *Brahman* (*nāma*

1). Similarly, ‘*Vidyā-tīrtha*’ also means ‘One who is the revered *Guru* who bestows knowledge’ and ‘One who liberates by means of knowledge,’ thus implying that His Holiness was not just a knower of the Supreme, but was a compassionate *Sadguru* too, capable of granting the ultimate beatitude (*nāma* 2). Finally, ‘*Vidyā-tīrtha*’ also means ‘One who is the very incarnation of knowledge’, indicating that His Holiness was not just a *jñānin* but was an incarnation of the Supreme Lord of the cosmos (*nāma* 3). Thus, the *Jagadguru* has beautifully summed up the entire glory of His Holiness in this one *nāma*.

Apart from this, the word ‘*Jagadguru*’, meaning ‘preceptor of the world’, also finds a place in this *nāma*. His Holiness’s *Guru* once explained the meaning of this term: “The word ‘*Jagadguru*’ is not a title, but a responsibility. When I am designated a ‘*Jagadguru*’ it becomes my responsibility to accept, help and protect anyone who comes to me for succour, irrespective of his caste, creed, religion, beliefs or nationality.” This rings true in the case of His Holiness. People of various religions, castes, belief systems and nationalities used to flock to Him and looked up to Him as their preceptor. He accepted everyone who came to Him, sometimes even drawing towards Himself and blessing those who had not even heard of Him. And He never abandoned anyone. The specific use of the word ‘*Jagadguru*’ in this concluding *nāma* highlights this poignant aspect of His Holiness.



At the time of His Holiness’s taking *saṁnyāsa*, the senior *Jagadguru* softly uttered in His Holiness’s right ear the *yoga-paṭṭa* (post-*saṁnyāsa* name) chosen by Him for His disciple, ‘Abhinava Vidyātīrtha.’ It is apparent that He chose this name, which literally means ‘The new Vidyātīrtha’, in memory of Śrī Vidyātīrtha, the 10<sup>th</sup> pontiff of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham.

So important was Śrī Vidyātīrtha in the *Maṭha*’s *Guru-parampara* (line of *Gurus*) that one of the honorifics of all the pontiffs of the Sringeri Math after Him is, ‘*vidyāśaṅkara-pāda-padmārādhaka* (Worshipper of the lotus-feet of Vidyāśaṅkara (Śrī Vidyātīrtha))’ and the seal of the *Maṭha* bears, to this day, just His name. Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha, the renowned author of several influential works on *Vedānta* was amongst His disciples and so was Śrī Vidyāraṇya, as also Śrī Sāyaṇa, the author of the esteemed and traditionally-studied commentaries on all the four *Vedas*. So deeply revered was Śrī Vidyātīrtha that obeisance has been paid to Him in the following manner: “Having saluted the Supreme *Ātman* present in the form of Śrī Vidyātīrtha...”<sup>276</sup>; “May Vidyātīrtha, the great God, who is immutable, who knows the true import of the *Vedas*, *Smṛtis* and the *Itihāsas*, be pleased...”<sup>277</sup>; “I salute the great God, Vidyātīrtha, whose breath is the *Veda*...”<sup>278</sup>; “He who delights in *lambikā-yoga* and is none other than Lord Śiva...”<sup>279</sup> and, “Vidyātīrtha, the

greatest of *samnyāsins*, excels the sun (that dispels the darkness outside during daytime) as He dispels the darkness (of ignorance) that is within people (in the mind) and outside them (as projected in the form of objects), and by day and by night.”<sup>280</sup> He was a consummate *vedāntin* and *yogin*.

Being greatly percipient, the senior *Jagadguru* perhaps felt that His Holiness would go on to equal or excel Śrī Vidyātirtha and so chose the name ‘Abhinava Vidyātirtha’ or ‘the new Vidyātirtha’ for Him.

His Holiness’s *Paramaguru* explains in a verse, “He who chants the four syllables ‘vi’, ‘dyā’, ‘tī’ and ‘rtha’ of the name ‘Vidyātirtha’, will ever be a *yogin* and will also have worldly joys. There is no room for doubt in this.”<sup>281</sup> The senior *Jagadguru* perhaps had these words of His *Guru* too in mind when He chose this sacred name for His disciple.

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When His Holiness was camping in Ghatkopar in Mumbai, a Muslim had the opportunity to have His Holiness’s *darśana*. Being conversant with Sanskrit, he introduced himself to His Holiness in Sanskrit. His Holiness was surprised and conversed with him in Sanskrit to encourage him. The man was very happy and told His Holiness that he had been yearning to have His Holiness’s *darśana* for a long time and added that his father, who was in Kolkata, had the same desire as well. His Holiness told him that his father could have His *darśana* when He visited Kolkata.

His Holiness then asked for some stones to be brought. Giving them to the man, He said, ‘These were given to me by some Muslims who had returned from Mecca. You can keep them. If your father requires one, you can give it to him too.’ The man then asked His Holiness if he could watch the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* that night. His Holiness told him that he may do so. At the end of the *pūjā*, His Holiness blessed him with flowers. He preserved the flowers. Furthermore, he embedded one of the stones given by His Holiness in a ring and wore that ring. His Holiness was truly held in the highest regard as a preceptor by all who sought Him, and He in turn graced everyone.

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A poor *paṇḍita* who belonged to Gokarna, once made a visit to Sringeri during *cāturmāsya*. Expecting to be given an honorarium as usual by His Holiness, he had brought with him only enough cash for the onward journey. When the time came for him to leave Sringeri after a few days’ stay, he waited eagerly for the honorarium (which was Rs. 25 in those days). However, it was not forthcoming, and His Holiness simply blessed him before he left.

The *paṇḍita* had planned a trip to Bengaluru on his return journey, but did not have enough money to reach the intended destination. Filled with anger and disappointment, he rashly decided to travel as far as the money he had would take him, and boarded a bus. He spent the entire bus journey in anger, fuming at the thought that His Holiness had been unfair to him. Finally, he was dropped off by the bus conductor at a place midway between Sringeri and Bengaluru. It happened to be a bus stop at the outskirts of a small village. The *paṇḍita* sat down on a rock there, in the middle of nowhere, his mind flooded with self-pity. “I, a *gṛhastha* (householder), have come to grief because of placing my faith in this *saṁnyāsin*,” he mentally moaned, condemning His Holiness.

Soon, quite unexpectedly, some well-to-do acquaintances of his came by in a car. They were delighted to see him for they had in fact been wanting to meet him. They asked him for some astrological advice regarding a building they were constructing, which he readily proffered them. Finally, after thanking him profusely, one of them took out a hundred-rupee note and thrust it into the *paṇḍita*’s hand, before bidding adieu. The overjoyed *paṇḍita* then completed the intended journey to Bengaluru and after finishing his work there, returned to his home in Gokarna. He, however, decided to keep the entire episode to himself and did not breathe a word about it to anybody.

A few months later, His Holiness came to Gokarna during His tour. This *paṇḍita* had not gone for *darśana*. One afternoon, the *paṇḍita* was making his way through the fields, when He espied His Holiness walking alone through the fields and coming in his direction! He ran towards His Holiness and prostrated. His Holiness asked, “Where is your house?” The *paṇḍita* answered that it was nearby. His Holiness then said that He had come to see him, and suggested that they proceed to his house.

After reaching the man’s house, His Holiness did not stay for long. Before leaving, He blessed the *paṇḍita* by giving him a handful of gold that He had brought in His hand. His Holiness then turned to leave. Near the doorstep, however, He paused, turned back and told the man softly, “But do not ever think that you have come to grief because of placing your faith in this *saṁnyāsin*.”

Indeed, it is said,

*vidyātīrthāya gurave parasmai tejase namah |*  
*yasya nāṅgīkṛta-sneha-daśā-hāniḥ kadācana ||*<sup>282</sup>

(Salutations to the *Guru* Vidyātīrtha who is the Supreme Effulgence, and whose compassion for anyone He has accepted never wanes.)



## Index to Quotations

1	तद्विज्ञानार्थं स गुरुमेवाभिगच्छेत् ... श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्मनिष्ठम् ॥	<i>Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad</i> 1.2.12
2	... अद्वैतं ... स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः ॥	<i>Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad</i> 1.7
3	सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 2.1.1
4	विज्ञानमानन्दं ब्रह्म ।	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad</i> 3.9.28
5	निरन्तराभ्यासवशात्तदित्थं पक्वं मनो ब्रह्मणि लीयते यदा । तदा समाधिः स विकल्पवर्जितः स्वतोऽद्वयानन्दरसानुभावकः ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 363
6	रसो वै सः ।	<i>Taittirīya Upaniṣad</i> 2.7.1
7	(ब्रह्मात्मनोः शोधितयोरेकभावावगाहिनी ।) निर्विकल्पा च चिन्मात्रा वृत्तिः ... । सा सर्वदा भवेद्यस्य स जीवन्मुक्त इष्यते ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 428
8	जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभमतः पुंस्त्वं ततो विप्रता तस्माद्द्वैदिकधर्ममार्गपरता विद्वत्त्वमस्मात्परम् । आत्मानात्मविवेचनं स्वनुभवो ब्रह्मात्मना संस्थितिर्मुक्तिर्नो शतकोटिजन्मसुकृतैः पुण्यैर्विना लभ्यते ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 2
9	भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिशिछद्यन्ते सर्वसंशयाः । क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥	<i>Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad</i> 2.2.8
10	अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ।	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad</i> 4.4.7
11	यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः । आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 3.17
12	को गुरुः अधिगततत्त्वः शिष्यहितायोद्यतः सततम् ।	<i>Praśnottara-ratnamālīkā</i> 2
13	दृष्टान्तो नैव दृष्टस्त्रिभुवनजठरे सदुरोर्ज्ञानदातुः	<i>Śataśloki</i> 1
14	... श्रितचरणयुगो सद्विरुः स्वीयशिष्ये स्वीयं साम्यं विधत्ते...	<i>Śataśloki</i> 1
15	अहेतुकदयासिन्धुर्वन्धुरानमतां सताम् ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 35
16	प्रज्ञावानपि पण्डितोऽपि चतुरोऽप्यत्यन्तसूक्ष्मार्थदृग्ब्यालीढस्तमसा न वेत्ति बहुधा सम्बोधितोऽपि स्फुटम् । भ्रान्त्यारोपितमेव साधु कलयत्यालम्बते तद्गुणान् हन्तासौ प्रबला दुरन्ततमसः शक्तिर्महत्यावृतिः ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 116
17	द्यावाभूमी जनयन्देव एकः ॥	<i>Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad</i> 3.3
18	द्यावाभूमी हि जनयन्देव एक इति श्रुतिः । यं वर्णयति सर्वेशं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥	<i>Abhinava-vidyātīrtha-akṣaramālā-stotra</i> 4
19	आकाशवत् सर्वगतश्च नित्यः ।	<i>Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa</i> 10.6.3.2
20	तमेवैकं जानथ आत्मानम् ; अन्या वाचो विमुञ्चथ ; अमृतस्यैष सेतुः ।	<i>Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad</i> 2.2.5

21	नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः । शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिध्दोदकर्मणः ॥ यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः। तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ ... असक्तो ह्याचरन्कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 3.8, 3.9, 3.19
22	दीर्घचतुरस्रस्याक्षया रज्जुःपार्श्वमानी तिर्यञ्चानी च यत्पृथग्भूते कुरुतस्तदुभयं करोति ॥	Bodhāyana's <i>Śulbasūtra</i> 1.48
23	अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः। प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 15.14
24	अन्नपूर्णा सादापूर्णा शङ्करप्राणवल्लभे । ज्ञानवैराग्यसिद्धयर्थं भिक्षां देहि च पार्वति ॥	<i>Annapūrṇā-stotra</i> 11
25	श्रवणं कीर्तनं विष्णोः स्मरणं पादसेवनम्। अर्चनं वन्दनं दास्यं सख्यमात्मनिवेदनम्॥	<i>Bhāgavata-purāṇa</i> 7.5.23
26	ध्यानकृते यजन्यज्ञैस्त्रेतायां द्वापरेऽर्चयन् । यदाप्नोति तदाप्नोति कलौ संकीर्त्यं केशवम् ॥	<i>Viṣṇu-purāṇa</i> 6.2.17
27	मुक्तिं चेतसि यः स्थितोऽमलधियां पुंसां ददात्यव्ययः किं चित्रं यदद्यं प्रयाति विलयं तत्राच्युते कीर्तिते ॥	<i>Viṣṇu-purāṇa</i> 6.8.55
28	ज्ञानतोऽज्ञानतो वाऽपि वासुदेवस्य कीर्तनात् । तत्सर्वं विलयं याति तोयस्थं लवणं यथा ॥	Quoted in <i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Viṣṇu-sahasranāma</i>
29	सा रसना ... या ... भर्गं ... वदति	<i>Śivānanda-laharī</i> 94
30	ஈச னாடிபோற்றி யெந்தை யாடிபோற்றி. தேச னாடிபோற்றி சிவன்சே வடிபோற்றி. நேயத்தே நின்ற நிமல னாடிபோற்றி. மாயப் பிறப்பறுக்கு மன்ன னாடிபோற்றி. சீரார் பெருந்துறைநந் தேவ னாடிபோற்றி.	Thiruvachakam 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15
31	विशुद्धज्ञानदेहाय त्रिवेदी दिव्यचक्षुषे । श्रेयःप्राप्तिनिमित्ताय नमः सोमार्घधारिणे ॥	<i>Kīlaka-stotra</i> 1
32	नमामि यामिनीनाथलेखालङ्कृतकुन्तलाम् । भवानीं भवसन्तापनिर्वापणसुधानदीम् ॥	<i>Sarasvatī-rahasya-upaniṣad</i> 17
33	विद्यमानैः अविद्यमानैश्च गुणैः आत्मनि अध्यारोपितैः 'विशिष्टमात्मानमहम्' इति मन्यते, सः अहङ्कारः	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 16.18
34	अहङ्कारं ... विमुच्य निर्ममः शान्तो ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 18.53
35	देहजीवनमात्रेऽपि निर्गतममभावः निर्ममः	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 18.53
36	त्यक्त्वा ममाहमिति बन्धकरे पदे द्वे मानावमानसदृशाः	<i>Dhanyāṣṭaka</i> 4
37	अमी यमीन्द्राः सहजामनस्कादहंममत्वे शिथिलायमाने । मनोतिगं मारुतवृत्तिशून्यं गच्छन्ति भावं गगनावशेषम्॥	<i>Yoga-tārāvalī</i> 22
38	सा त्वस्मिन् परमप्रेमरूपे ॥	<i>Nārada-bhakti-sūtra</i> 2

39	आत्मारामाश्च मुनयो निर्ग्रन्था अप्युरुक्रमे । कुर्वन्त्यहैतुकीं भक्तिमित्थंभूतगुणो हरिः ॥	<i>Bhāgavata-purāṇa</i> 1.7.10
40	यस्य देवे परा भक्तिर्यथा देवे तथा गुरौ । तस्यैते(ऽ)कथिता ह्यर्थाः प्रकाशन्ते महात्मनः ॥	<i>Śvetāśvatara-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 6.23
41	आगतं पञ्चवक्रात्तु गतञ्च गिरिजानने । मतञ्च वासुदेवस्य तस्मादागममुच्यते ॥ मलत्रयविनाशत्वादागमः परिकीर्तितः ॥	Traditional sayings
42	सृष्टिश्च प्रलयश्चैव देवतानां तथार्चनं । साधनञ्चैव सर्वेषां पुरश्चरणमेव च ॥ षट्कर्मसाधनं चैव ध्यानयोगश्चतुर्विधः । सप्तभिल्क्षणैर्युक्तं त्वागमं तद्विदुर्बुधाः ॥	
43	सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते । अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्व्रतं मम ॥	<i>Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa</i> 6.18.33
44	योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 9.22
45	ध्यायतो विषयान्युंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते । सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः । स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 2.62, 2.63
46	काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः । महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 3.37
47	यमस्य कामस्य च तारतम्यं विचार्यमाणे महदस्ति लोके । हितं करोत्यस्य यमोऽप्रियः सन्कामस्त्वनर्थं कुरुते प्रियः सन् ॥ यमोऽसतामेव करोत्यनर्थं सतां तु सौख्यं कुरुते हितः सन् । कामः सतामेव गतिं निरुन्धन्करोत्यनर्थं ह्यसतां नु का कथा ॥	<i>Sarva-vedānta-</i> <i>siddhānta-sāra-</i> <i>saṅgraha</i> 56, 57
48	यः प्राप्य मानुषं लोकं मुक्तिद्वारमपावृतम् । गृहेषु खगवत्सक्तस्तमारूढ-च्युतं विदुः ॥ सुखमैन्द्रियकं राजन्स्वर्गं नरक एव च । देहिनां यद्यथा दुःखं तस्मान्नेच्छेत तद्बुधः ॥	<i>Bhāgavata-purāṇa</i> 11.7.74, 11.8.1
49	शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 2.70
50	दोषदृष्ट्या मुहुर्मुहुः	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 22
51	देशबन्धः चित्तस्य धारणा ॥ तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ॥ तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ॥	<i>Yoga-sūtras</i> 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
52	सद्रत्नगर्भ-हेरम्ब-पूजकः	<i>Bhagavatpāda's</i> <i>aṣṭottara-śāta-</i> <i>nāmāvali (nāma</i> 105)
53	उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं त्रिलोचनं नीलकण्ठं प्रशान्तम् । ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनिं समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तात् ॥	<i>Kaivalya-upaniṣad</i> 7
54	वैराग्यं नाम दृष्टादृष्टेष्टभोगेषु दोषदर्शनाभ्यासात् वैतुष्यम्	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 6.35
55	ब्रह्मविदश्च आप्तकामत्वात् आप्तकामस्य कामानुपपत्तेः	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 2.4

56	निःस्पृहः शरीरजीवनमात्रेऽपि निर्गता स्पृहा यस्य सः	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya on Bhagavad-gītā 2.71</i>
57	किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।	<i>Bhagavad-gītā 4.16</i>
58	तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā 4.16</i>
59	कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः । स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā 4.18</i>
60	न वा अरे सर्वस्य कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवत्यात्मनस्तु कामाय सर्वं प्रियं भवति ।	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad 2.4.5</i>
61	यत्प्रीत्या प्रीतिपात्रं तनुयुवतीतनूजार्थमुख्यं स तस्मात्प्रेयानात्माथ शोकास्पदमितरदतः प्रेय एतत्कथं स्यात् ।	<i>Śataśloki 9</i>
62	यस्माद्यावत्सुखं स्यादिह हि विषयतस्तावदस्मिन्प्रियत्वं यावद्दुःखं च यस्माद्भवति खलु ततस्तावदेवाप्रियत्वम् । नैकस्मिन्सर्वकालेऽस्त्युभयमपि कदाप्यप्रियोऽपि प्रियः स्यात्प्रेयानप्यप्रियो वा सततमपि ततः प्रेय आत्माख्यवस्तु ॥	<i>Śataśloki 10</i>
63	कृपानुकम्पा कारुण्यमानुशंस्यं च भारत । तथार्जवं क्षमा सत्यं कुरुष्वेतद्विशिष्यते ॥	<i>Mahābhārata 5.95.6</i>
64	कृपा परस्य सुखार्थं यत्नः । अनुकम्पा परदुःखदर्शने त्रासः । कारुण्यं परदुःखप्रहाणार्थं यत्नः । आनुशंस्यं परदुःखाप्रदानम् ॥	<i>Nīlakaṇṭha's gloss on Mahābhārata 5.95.6</i>
65	यत्पुरुषो मनसाऽभिगच्छति । तद्वाचा वदति । तत्कर्मणा करोति ।	<i>Kṛṣṇa-yajurveda-taittirīya-āranyaka 1.23.1</i>
66	मनस्येकं वचस्येकं कर्मण्येकं महात्मनाम् ।	<i>Samayocita-padya-mālikā 22.7</i>
67	नमोऽस्तु मम कोपाय स्वाश्रयज्वालने भृशम् ।	<i>Yājñavalkya-upaniṣad 21</i>
68	अन्तः संत्यक्तसर्वाशो वीतरागो विवासनः । बहिः सर्वसमाचारो लोके विहर राघव ॥ बहिः कृत्रिमसंरम्भो हृदि संरम्भवर्जितः । कर्ता बहिरकर्तान्तर्लोके विहर राघव ॥	<i>Laghu-yoga-vāsiṣṭha 5.2.56, 5.2.57</i>
69	असौ स्वपुत्रमित्रकलत्रबन्धवादीन शिखायज्ञोपवीते स्वाध्यायं च सर्वकर्माणि संन्यस्य, अयं ब्रह्माण्डं च हित्वा, कौपीनं दण्डम् आच्छादनं च स्वशरीरोपभोगार्थाय च लोकस्योपकारार्थाय च परिग्रहेत्	<i>Paramahansa-upaniṣad 1</i>
70	पादादिमस्तकप्रमाणम् अन्नं समं सौम्यमकाकपृष्ठं सलक्षणं वैणवं दण्डमेकम् आचमनपूर्वकं 'सखा मा गोपायौजः सखायोऽसीन्द्रस्य वज्रोऽसि वार्त्रन्नः शर्म मे भव यत्पापं तन्निवारय' इति दण्डं परिग्रहेत्	<i>Nārada-parivrājaka-upaniṣad 4.39</i>
71	कौपीनाधारं कटिसूत्रमामिति गुह्याच्छादकं कौपीनमामिति शीतवातोष्ण-त्राणकरं देहैकरक्षणमामिति कटिसूत्र-कौपीन-वस्त्रम् आचमनपूर्वकं योगपट्टाभिषिक्तो भूत्वा कृतार्थोऽहमिति मत्वा स्वाश्रमाचारपरो भवेत्	<i>Nārada-parivrājaka-upaniṣad 4.39</i>

72	गुरुरेको जगत्सर्वं ब्रह्मविष्णुशिवात्मकम् । गुरोः परतरं नास्ति तस्मात्संपूजयेद्गुरुम् ॥	<i>Guru-gītā</i> 1.53
73	मनश्चेन्न लभं गुरोरङ्घ्रिपद्मे ततः किं ततः किं ततः किं ततः किम् ॥	<i>Gurvaṣṭaka</i>
74	आस्ते देशिकचरणं निरवधिरास्ते तदीक्षणे करुणा । आस्ते किमपि तदुक्तं किमतः परमस्ति जन्मसाफल्यम् ॥	<i>Svāma-nirūpaṇa</i> 147
75	सद्बुद्धिः साधुसेवी समुचितचरितस्तत्त्वबोधाभिलाषी शुश्रूषुस्त्यक्तमानः प्रणिपतनपरः प्रश्नकालप्रतीक्षः । शान्तो दान्तोऽनसूयश्शरणमुपगतश्शास्त्रविश्वासशाली शिष्यः प्राप्तः परीक्षां कृतविदभिमतं तत्त्वतश्शिक्षणीयः ॥	<i>Nyāsa-vimśati</i> 2
76	सदाऽऽत्मध्याननिरतं विषयेभ्यः पराङ्मुखम् । नौमि शास्त्रेषु निष्णातं चन्द्रशेखरभारतीम् ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
77	पादप्रभाविनिर्धूताविद्यान्धतमसाय ते । यतये चितिनिर्विष्टचित्तायस्तु नमो मम ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
78	श्रीमद्विष्णुपदाऽऽलम्बं वेदान्तामृतवर्षिणम् । लोकसन्तापशमनं वन्देऽभ्रसदृशं गुरुम् ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
79	विनयावनतः श्रीमद्गुरुपादाम्बुजमनी । दयामरन्दे शिष्यालिश्रुम्बति श्रद्धया सदा ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
80	गुरुवरचरणौ भक्त्या नित्यं प्रणमामि भक्तकरुणालू । यद्भानुलेशपातो हृदयध्वान्तानि सन्ततं हन्ति ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
81	श्रीमद्गुरुवरान्वन्दे वन्दारुजनवत्सलान् । यद्पादाब्जदयालेशो भवकान्तरतारकः ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
82	श्रुतिमस्तकभूषायमाणपादसरोरुहम् । नतार्तिहरणं कुर्वे शरणं देशिकारुणम् ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
83	किरीटयाम्युत्तमाङ्गे पादुके देशिकस्य ते । ययोः स्मृतेर्हि लोकानां स्वान्तध्वान्तं प्रणश्यति ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
84	श्रीमतां देशिकेन्द्राणां पादपद्मे नमाम्यहम् । मन्दोऽपि वन्दनाद्येषां विन्देत् गुरुतुल्यताम् ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
85	अविद्याध्वान्तानां दिनमणिरनन्तान्तरगतो विषीदद्विद्वद्भृत्कुमुदवनराका-हिमकरः । पराध्वामित्राणां विषयगहनानां हुतवहो गुरुस्तेजोरूपो जयति जनताऽऽनन्दधुरयम् ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
86	वन्दे वन्दारुमन्दारं वन्दनीयं बुधोत्तमैः । आनन्दकन्दलं तीर्थवारिधिं देशिकोत्तमम् ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>

87	दिदृक्षामि भवव्याधिशमने दिव्यमौषधम् । यदालोकेन लभते शान्तिं तद्देशिकं जनः ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on His <i>Guru</i>
88	अविद्या-अस्मिता-राग-द्वेष-अभिनिवेशाः पञ्च क्लेशाः ॥	<i>Yoga-sūtra</i> 2.3
89	गेयं गीतानामसहस्रम्	<i>Moha-mudgara</i> 27
90	चिन्ता चिन्ता द्वयोर्मध्ये चिन्ता नाम गरीयसी । चिन्ता दहति निर्जीवं चिन्ता दहति जीवितम् ॥	<i>Subhāṣita</i>
91	मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा । निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 3.30
92	चिन्ता नास्ति किल तेषां चिन्ता नास्ति किल । शमदमकरुणासम्पूर्णानां साधुसमागमसङ्कीर्णानाम् ॥ कालत्रयजितकन्दर्पाणां खण्डितसर्वेन्द्रियदर्पाणाम् ॥ परमहंसगुरुपदचित्तानां ब्रह्मानन्दामृतमत्तानाम् ॥	Śrī Sadāśiva-Brahmendra's musical composition
93	यत्र गंगा च यमुना यत्र चैव सरस्वती । तं देवतीर्थप्रवरं देवानामपि दुर्लभम् ॥ ईदृशं त्रिषु लोकेषु भूतं न च भविष्यति । तीर्थानामुत्तमं तीर्थं प्रयागाख्यमनुत्तमम् ।	<i>Padma-purāṇa</i> 6.24.2, 6.24.3, 6.24.4
94	प्रयागः सर्वतीर्थेभ्यः प्रभवत्यधिकं विभो ॥ श्रवणात् तस्य तीर्थस्य नामसंकीर्तनादपि । मृत्तिकालम्भनाद्वापि नरः पापात् प्रमुच्यते ॥	<i>Mahābhārata</i> 3.83.74, 3.83.75
95	बुद्धितो वाऽबुद्धितो वा बाल्यतो लाल्यतोऽपि वा । मया ह्यागांसि जातानि क्षन्तुमर्हन्ति देशिकाः ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness in a letter to His <i>Guru</i>
96	शेमुषी दक्षिणा प्रोक्ता सा यस्याभीक्षणे मुखम् । दक्षिणाभिमुखः प्रोक्तः शिवोऽसौ ब्रह्मवादिभिः ॥	<i>Dakṣiṇāmūrti-upaniṣad</i> 31
97	स्फटिकरजतवर्णं मौक्तिकीमक्षमालाममृतकलशविद्याज्ञानमुद्राः कराब्जैः । दधतमुरगकक्ष्यं चन्द्रचूडं त्रिनेत्रं विधृतविविधभूषं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥	<i>Dakṣiṇāmūrti-upaniṣad</i> 3 ( <i>Dhyāna-śloka</i> of <i>Medhā-Dakṣiṇāmūrti-mantra</i> )
98	वटमूलं परित्यज्य शृङ्गाद्रौ निवसन्दि यः । तत्त्वं बोधयते भक्तान् दक्षिणास्यं तमाश्रये ॥	<i>Abhinava-vidyātīrtha-akṣaramālā-stotra</i> 4
99	भूरम्भांस्यनलोऽनिलोऽम्बरमहर्नाथो हिमांशुः पुमाननित्याभाति चराचरात्मकमिदं यस्यैव मूर्त्यष्टकम् । नान्यत्किञ्चन विद्यते विमृशतां यस्मात्परस्माद्विभोस्तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥	<i>Bhagavatpāda's Dakṣiṇāmūrti-stotra</i> 9
100	एते सत्पुरुषाः परार्थघटकाः स्वार्थान्परित्यज्य ये	<i>Nīti-śataka</i> 75

101	सर्वत्रैव हि अध्यात्मशास्त्रे कृतार्थलक्षणानि यानि तान्येव साधनानि उपदिश्यन्ते, यत्नसाध्यत्वात् ।	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 2.55
102	बुद्धद्वैतसतत्त्वस्य यथेष्टाचरणं यदि । श्रुतां तत्त्वदृशां चैव को भेदोऽशुचिभक्षणे ॥	<i>Naiṣkarmya-siddhi</i> 4.62
103	पुण्यो वै पुण्येन कर्मणा भवति पापः पापेन	<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 3.2.13
104	यतोऽभ्युदयनिःश्रेयससिद्धिः स धर्मः ॥	<i>Vaiśeṣika-sūtra</i> 1.1.2
105	तद्वचनादाम्नायस्य प्रामाण्यम् ॥	<i>Vaiśeṣika-sūtra</i> 1.1.3
106	तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ । ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 16.24
107	वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः । एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्भर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥	<i>Manu-smṛti</i> 2.12
108	आर्षं धर्मोपदेशं च वेदशास्त्राविरोधिना । यस्तर्केणानुसंधत्ते स धर्मं वेद नेतरः ॥	<i>Manu-smṛti</i> 12.106
109	परोपकृतिकैवल्ये तोलयित्वा जनार्दनः । गुर्वीमुपकृतिं मत्वाऽवतारान्दशाग्रहीत् ॥	
110	परोपकृतिशून्यस्य धिञ्मनुष्यस्य जीवितम् । जीवन्तु पशवो येषां चर्माप्युपकरिष्यति ॥	
111	समाधिनिर्धूतमलस्य चेतसो निवेशितस्यात्मनि यत्सुखं भवेत् । न शक्यते वर्णयितुं गिरा तदा स्वयं तदन्तःकरणेन गृह्यते ॥	<i>Maitrāyaṇi-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 4.4.9
112	प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् । उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 6.27
113	युञ्जन्नेवं सदाऽऽत्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः । सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 6.28
114	अनुष्ठातॄणां कामोद्भवात् हीयमानविवेकविज्ञानहेतुकेन अधर्मेण अभिभूयमाने धर्मं प्रवर्धमाने च अधर्मे...	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> (introduction)
115	नहि निन्दा निन्द्यं निन्दितुं प्रवर्ततेऽपितु विधेयं स्तोतुम् ।	
116	विद्या विवादाय धनं मदाय शक्तिः परेषां परिपीडनाय । खलस्य साधोर्विपरीतमेतज्ज्ञानाय दानाय च रक्षणाय ॥	<i>Subhāṣita</i>
117	स्वामिन्नमस्ते नतलोकबन्धो कारुण्यसिन्धो पतितं भवाब्धौ । मामुद्धर	<i>Viveka-cūdāmaṇi</i> 37
118	सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज । अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 18.66
119	शौच-सन्तोष-तपस्-स्वाध्याय-ईश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥	<i>Yoga-sūtra</i> 2.32

120	शौचं मृजलाभ्यां बाह्यमलनिवृत्तिः मैत्र्यादिभावनायान्तरसूयादिमलनिवृत्तिः । सन्तोषो यथालाभपरितुष्टिः । तपः कायशोषणम् तदुक्तं योगयाज्ञवल्क्ये – 'विधिनोक्तेन मार्गेण कृच्छ्रचान्द्रायणादिभिः । शरीरशोषणं प्राहुस्तापसास्तप उत्तमम्' इति । स्वाध्यायो गायत्रीप्रभृतीनां मन्त्राणामध्ययनम् ... ईश्वरप्रणिधानं नाम अभिहितानामनभिहितानां च सर्वासां क्रियाणां परमेश्वरे फलानपेक्षतया समर्पणम् ।	Śrī Sadāśivendra Sarasvatī's <i>Yoga- sudhākara</i> 2.32
121	धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।	<i>Manu-smṛti</i> 8.15
122	श्रेयान्स्वधर्मः	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 3.35
123	सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ।	
124	द्वितीयाद्वै भयं भवति ।	<i>Brhadāranyaka- upaniṣad</i> 1.4.2
125	लब्धानुग्रह आचार्यात्तेन सन्दर्शितागमः । महापुरुषमभ्यर्चन्मूर्त्याभिमतयाऽऽत्मनः ॥	<i>Bhāgavata-purāna</i> 10.3.48
126	सर्वे वेदा यत्पदमामनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद्वदन्ति । यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं सद्ब्रह्मेण ब्रवीम्यमित्येतत् ॥	<i>Kaṭha-upaniṣad</i> 1.2.15
127	अकाले कृतमकृतम् ।	<i>Smṛti</i> attributed to Vyāsa in <i>Kṛṣṇa- yajurvedīya- sandhyā-bhāṣya</i> by Vedāntī Sitarāma Sastry
128	स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ।	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 2.40
129	न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यति । हविषा कृष्णवल्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥	<i>Bhāgavata-purāna</i> 9.19.14
130	आत्माकम्पः सुखात्मा स्फुरति तदपरा त्वन्यथैव स्फुरन्ती स्थैर्यं वा चञ्चलत्वं मनसि परिणतिं याति तत्रत्यमस्मिन् । चाञ्चल्यं दुःखहेतुर्मनस इदमहो यावदिष्टार्थलब्धिस्तस्यां यावत्स्थिरत्वं मनसि विषयजं स्यात्सुखं तावदेव ॥	<i>Śataśloki</i> 73
131	संतुष्टस्य योगिनः सत्त्वोत्कर्षादन्तर्निरतिशयं सुखमाविर्भवति । न केवलमेवम् ; प्रत्युत वैषाधिकं सुखं विषमिव प्रतिकूलं भवतीत्यर्थः । तदुक्तम् – 'संतोषामृतपानेन ये शान्तास्तृप्तिमागताः । भोगश्रीरतुला तेषामेषा प्रतिविषीयते' - इति ॥	Śrī Sadāśivendra Sarasvatī's <i>Yoga- sudhākara</i> 2.42
132	विकारहेतावुत्पन्ने गाम्भीर्यं निर्विकारता, भीशोकक्रोधहर्षाद्यैर्गाम्भीर्यं निर्विकारता	<i>Sāhitya-sāgara</i> 4.58, <i>Sāhitya- darpaṇa</i> 3.62
133	आहूतस्याभिषेकाय विसृष्टस्य वनाय च । न मया लक्षितस्तस्य स्वल्पोऽप्याकारविभ्रमः ॥	Hanumatkavi's <i>Mahānāṭaka</i> 3.22
134	तस्मिन्सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोगतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः ॥	<i>Yoga-sūtra</i> 2.49

135	कण्ठमाकुञ्च हृदये स्थापयेच्चिबुकं दृढम् । बन्धो जालन्धराख्योऽयं जरामृत्युविनाशकः ॥ उदरे पश्चिमं तानं नाभेरूर्ध्वं च कारयेत् । उड्डीयानो ह्यसौ बन्धो मृत्युमातङ्गकेसरी ॥ पूरकान्ते तु कर्तव्यो बन्धो जालन्धराभिधः । कुम्भकान्ते रेचकादौ कर्तव्यस्तुड्डियानकः ॥ पार्ष्वाभागेन संपीड्य योनिमाकुञ्चयेद्गुदम् । अपानमूर्ध्वमाकुष्य मूलबन्धोऽभिधीयते ॥	<i>Haṭhayoga- pradīpikā</i> 3.70, 3.57, 3.45, 3.61
136	चले वाते चलं चित्तं निश्चले निश्चलं भवेत् ।	<i>Haṭhayoga- pradīpikā</i> 2.2
137	धारणासु च योग्यता मनसः ।	<i>Yoga-sūtrā</i> 2.53
138	यथा पर्वतधातूनां दहन्ते धमनान्मलाः । तथेन्द्रियकृता दोषा दहन्ते प्राणधारणात् ॥	<i>Amṛtanāda- upaniṣad</i> 7
139	प्रभाते बद्रिकारण्यं मध्यान्हे मणिकर्णिकाम् । भोजने तु जगन्नाथं शयने कृष्णद्वारिकाम् ॥	
140	यद्रेदात्मभुसंमितादधिगतं शब्दप्रधानाच्चिरं यच्चार्थप्रवणात्पुराणवचनादिष्टं सुहृत्संमितात्	<i>Pratāparudriya</i> 1.7
141	यो विद्याचतुरो वेदान्साङ्गोपनिषदो द्विजः । न चेतुराणं सम्बिद्यान्नैव स स्याद्विचक्षणः ॥	<i>Vāyu-purāṇa</i> 1.1.200
142	सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च वंशो मन्वन्तराणि च । वंशानुचरितं चैव पुराणं पञ्चलक्षणम् ॥	<i>Kārma-purāṇa</i> 1.12
143	किरीटहारकेयूरकटकादिविभूषितम् ॥ शार्ङ्ग-शङ्ख-गदा-खड्ग-चक्राक्षवलयान्वितम् । वरदाभयहस्तं च मुद्रिकारत्नभूषितम् ॥ चिन्तयेत्तन्मयो योगी समाधायाम्मानसम् । तावद्यावद्दृढीभूता तत्रैव नृप धारणा ॥ ब्रजतस्तिष्ठतोऽन्यद्वा स्वेच्छया कर्म कुर्वतः । नापयाति यदा चित्तात्सिद्धां मन्येत तां तदा ॥ ततः शङ्खगदाचक्रशार्ङ्गादिरहितं बुधः । चिन्तयेद्भगवद्रूपं प्रशान्तं साक्षसूत्रकम् ॥ स यदा धारणा तद्वदवस्थानवती ततः । किरीट-केयूर-मुखैर्भूषणै रहितं स्मरेत् ॥ तदेकावयवं देवं चेतसा हि पुनर्बुधः ॥	<i>Viṣṇu-purāṇa</i> 6.7.84, 6.7.85, 6.7.86, 6.7.87, 6.7.88, 6.7.89, 6.7.90
144	तत्सर्वव्यापकं चित्तमाकृष्यैकत्र धारयेत् । नान्यानि चिन्तयेद्बुधः सुस्मितं भावयेन्मुखम् ॥	<i>Bhāgavata-purāṇa</i> 11.14.43
145	इतिहासपुराणाभ्यां वेदं समुपबृंहयेत् । विभेत्यल्पश्रुताद्वेदः मामयं प्रतरिष्यति ॥	<i>Mahābhārata</i> 1.1.204
146	ऋणमेतत्प्रवृद्धं मे हृदयान्नापसर्पति । यद्भोविन्देति चुकोश कृष्णा मां दूरवासिनम् ॥	<i>Mahābhārata</i> 5.59.21
147	दयासान्द्रं बालं निखिलजगतीरक्षणचपणं हरन्तं विघ्नाद्रिं विमलविमलैर्वीक्षणचयैः । परब्रह्माकारं प्रणवविदितं शान्तमनसं गुरुं विद्यातीर्थं कलयत बुधाश्चित्तकमले ॥	A composition on His Holiness by His <i>Guru</i>
148	कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 9.31
149	अहमेव मतो महीपतेरिति सर्वः प्रकृतिष्वप्यचिन्तयत् ।	<i>Raghuvamśa</i> 8.8

150	आत्साम्भोधेस्तरङ्गोऽस्म्यहमिति गमने भावयन्नासनस्थः संवित्सूत्रानुविद्धो मणिरहमिति वास्मीन्द्रियार्थप्रतीतौ । द्रष्टोऽस्म्यात्मावलोकादिति शयनविधौ मग्न आनन्दसिन्ध्यावन्तर्निष्ठो मुमुक्षुः स खलु तनुभृतां यो नयत्येवमायुः ॥	<i>Śataślokī</i> 12
151	ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् ।	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 2.1.1
152	आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् । न विभेति कुतश्चनेति ।	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 2.9.1
153	यदा ह्येवैष एतस्मिन्नुदरमन्तरं कुरुते । अथ तस्य भयं भवति ।	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 2.7.1
154	अहमेव परं ब्रह्म वासुदेवारव्यमव्ययम् ।	<i>Brahmānicintana</i> 1
155	वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम् ॥	<i>Chāndogya-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 6.1.4
156	ब्रह्मविद्यां सर्वविद्याप्रतिष्ठाम्	<i>Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad</i> 1.1.1
157	येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं... तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम् ॥	<i>Muṇḍaka-upaniṣad</i> 1.2.13
158	प्रयोजनं चास्या ब्रह्मविद्याया अविद्यानिवृत्तिः, ततश्च आत्यन्तिकः संसाराभावः ।	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 2.1.1
159	न नरेणावरेण प्रोक्त एष सुविज्ञेयो बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः । अनन्यप्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति	<i>Kātha-upaniṣad</i> 1.2.8
160	तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् । प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 14.8
161	अज्ञानं तमसः फलम् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 14.16
162	मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो भव ।	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 1.11.2
163	परमहंसः शिखायज्ञोपवीतरहितः... एककौपीनधारी शाटीमेकामेकं वैणवं दण्डमेकशाटीधरो वा भस्मोद्धूलनपरः सर्वत्यागी ।	<i>Samnyāsa-upaniṣad</i> 2.13
164	तुरीयः परमो हंसः साक्षान्नारायणो यतिः ।	<i>Nārada-</i> <i>parivrājaka-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 4.14
165	अथ योऽन्यां देवतामुपास्तेऽन्योऽसावन्योऽहमस्मीति न स वेद यथा पशुरेवं स देवानाम् ॥	<i>Bṛhadāranyaka-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 1.4.10
166	यत्र... अन्यद्विजानाति तदल्पं... अथ यदल्पं तन्मर्त्यम्	<i>Chāndogya-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 7.24.1
167	उदरमन्तरं कुरुते । अथ तस्य भयं भवति ।	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 2.7.1
168	यत्र ...नान्यद्विजानाति स भूमा... यो वै भूमा तदमृतम्	<i>Chāndogya-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 7.24.1
169	प्रपञ्चोपशमं शान्तं शिवमद्वैतम्	<i>Māṇḍūkya-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 1.7
170	चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन। आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 7.16

171	यत्रास्ति भोगो न च तत्र मोक्षो यत्रास्ति मोक्षो न च तत्र भोगः । श्रीसुन्दरीसेवनतत्परणां भोगश्च मोक्षश्च करस्थ एव ॥	
172	शोकमोहभयायासादिदुःखदोषनिवर्तकत्वात्... विपरीतज्ञानप्रभवो हि शोकमोहादिदोषः	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya on Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad</i> 1.4.7
173	अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति ॥	<i>Kaṭha-upaniṣad</i> 1.2.12
174	सर्वं वस्तु भयान्वितं भुवि नृणां वैराग्यमेवाभयम् ॥	<i>Vairāgya-śataka</i> 31
175	विद्वान्न विभेति कुतश्चन	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 2.9.1
176	इष्टप्राप्तौ हर्षः अनिष्टप्राप्तौ इष्टवियोगे च शोकः	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya on Bhagavad-gītā</i> 18.27
177	हृष्टो दृष्यति दृप्तो धर्ममतिक्रामति धर्मातिक्रमे खलु पुनर्नरकः ॥	<i>Āpastambha-dharma-sūtra</i> 1.13.4
178	योगस्थःकुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय । सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 2.48
179	तरति शोकमात्मवित्	<i>Chāndogya-upaniṣad</i> 7.1.3
180	मोहस्तु विपरीतप्रत्ययप्रभवोऽविवेकः भ्रमः	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya on Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad</i> 3.5.1
181	तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥	<i>Bhagavadgīta</i> 2.37
182	दुर्वारसंसारदवाग्निर्तप्तं...भीतं प्रपन्नं परिपाहि...निरीक्ष्य कारुण्यरसार्द्रदृष्ट्या दद्याद्भीतिं सहसा महात्मा...तत्त्वोपदेशं कृपयैव कुर्यात् ॥	<i>Viveka-cūdāmaṇi</i> 38, 43, 44
183	मनो हि द्विविधं प्रोक्तं शुद्धं चाशुद्धमेव च । अशुद्धं कामसङ्कल्पं शुद्धं कामविवर्जितम् ॥ मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः । बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्तयै निर्विषयं स्मृतमिति ॥	<i>Maitrāyaṇī-upaniṣad</i> 4.6, 4.11
184	प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म ।	<i>Aitareya-upaniṣad</i> 3.3
185	अहं ब्रह्मास्मि ।	<i>Brhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad</i> 1.4.10
186	तत्त्वमसि ।	<i>Chāndogya-upaniṣad</i> 6.4.7, 6.10.3, 8.9.4
187	अयमात्मा ब्रह्म ।	<i>Māṇḍūkya-upaniṣad</i> 1.2
188	विगलितसर्वविकल्पः शुद्धो बुद्धश्चास्ति परमात्मा ॥	<i>Ātma-vidyā-vilāsa</i> 4
189	शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया । आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 6.25

190	निरन्तराभ्यासवशात्तदित्थं पक्कं मनो ब्रह्मणि लीयते यदा। तदा समाधिः स विकल्पवर्जितः स्वतोऽद्वयानन्दरसानुभावकः ॥ समाधिनानेन समस्तवासनाग्रन्थे-र्विनाशोऽखिलकर्मनाशः। अन्तर्बहिः सर्वत एव सर्वदा स्वरूपविस्फूर्तिरयत्नतः स्यात् ॥ श्रुतेः शतगुणं विद्यान्मननं मननादपि। निदिध्यासं लक्षगुणमनन्तं निर्विकल्पकम् ॥ निर्विकल्पकसमाधिना स्फुटं ब्रह्मतत्त्वमवगम्यते ध्रुवम्। नान्यथा चलतया मनोगतेः प्रत्ययान्तरविमिश्रितं भवेत् ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 363-366
191	स भगवः कस्मिन्प्रतिष्ठित इति स्वे महिम्नि यदि वा न महिम्नीति ॥	<i>Chāndogya-upaniṣad</i> 7.24.1
192	न तस्य कार्यं करणं च विद्यते न तत्समश्चाभ्यधिकश्च दृश्यते । परास्य शक्तिर्विविधैव श्रूयते स्वाभाविकी ज्ञानबलक्रिया च ॥	<i>Śvetāśvatara-upaniṣad</i> 6.8
193	सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति । अजानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ॥ यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु । एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 11.41, 11.42
194	स्मृतिर्व्यतीतविषया मतिरागामिगोचरा । बुद्धिस्तत्कालिकी ज्ञेया प्रज्ञा त्रैकालिकी मता ॥	From Bhaṭṭa Tauta's <i>Kāvya-kautuka</i> , cited by Abhinavagupta in <i>Kāvya-kautuka-vivarāṇa</i> and <i>Dhvaṇyāloka-locana</i>
195	अभ्यसूयन्तो... विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 3.32
196	इदं तु ते गुह्यतमं प्रवक्ष्याम्यनसूयवे । ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यज्ज्ञात्वा मोक्षयसेऽशुभात् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 9.1
197	प्राप्तावर्थस्य संरक्षणमतिरुदितो लोभः	<i>Śataślokī</i> 18
198	दानं भोगो नाशस्तिष्ठो गतयो भवन्ति वित्तस्य । यो न ददाति न भुङ्क्ते तस्य तृतीया गतिर्भवति ॥	<i>Nītiśataka</i> 43
199	दानेन अदानम् ।	<i>Sāma-veda, Arka-parvan</i> 87
200	दर्पः विद्याधनस्वजनादिनिमित्तः उत्सेकः	<i>Śāṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 16.4
201	मा कुरु धनजनयौवनगर्वं हरति निमेषात्कालः सर्वम् । मायामयमिदमखिलं हित्वा ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥	<i>Moha-mudgara</i> 11
202	अनन्तं बत मे वित्तं यस्य मे नास्ति किञ्चन ।	<i>Mahābhārata</i> 12.17.18
203	प्रामाण्यबुद्धिः स्तोत्रेषु देवताबुद्धिरात्मनि। कीटबुद्धिर्मनुष्येषु नूतनायाः श्रियः फलम् ॥	<i>Kali-ṣiḍambana</i> 60



223	कैलासयात्रा-संप्राप्त-चन्द्रमौलि-प्रपूजकः	Bhagavatpāda's <i>aṣṭottara-śata-nāmāvali (nāma 80)</i>
224	पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात्पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् । कश्चिद्द्वीरः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्षदावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥	<i>Kaṭha-upaniṣad 4.1</i>
225	शब्दादिभिः पञ्चभिरेव पञ्च पञ्चत्वमापुः स्वगुणेन बद्धाः । कुरङ्ग-मातङ्ग-पतङ्ग-मीन-भृङ्गा नरः पञ्चभिरञ्चितः किम् ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi 78</i>
226	यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः । इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā 2.60</i>
227	तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः । वशो हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā 2.61</i>
228	नटत्याननरङ्गे हि यस्य साक्षात्सरस्वती । ... तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥	<i>Abhinava-vidyātirtha-akṣaramālā-stotra 3</i>
229	विद्यया विनयावाप्तिः	<i>Subhāṣita-ratna-bhaṇḍāgara, Śāmānya-nīti 551</i>
230	सूते सूकरयुवतिः सुतशतामत्यन्तदुर्भगं झटिति । करिणी चिराय सूते सकलमहीपालालालितं कलभम् ॥	<i>Subhāṣita-ratna-bhaṇḍāgāra, Sthalācāra-nyāyokti, 66</i>
231	अथ सर्वेषां शास्त्राणां भगवत्त्वेव तात्पर्यं साक्षात्परम्परया वेति समासेन तेषां प्रस्थान- भेदोऽत्रोद्दिश्यते । तथा हि-ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदोऽथर्ववेद इति वेदाश्चत्वारः । शिक्षा कल्पो व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषमिति वेदाङ्गानि षट् । पुराणन्यायमीमांसा धर्म-शास्त्राणि चेति चत्वार्युपाङ्गानि । अत्रोपपुराणानामपि पुराणेऽन्तर्भावः । वैशेषिक-शास्त्रस्य न्याये, वेदान्तशास्त्रस्य मीमांसायां, महाभारतरामायणयोः सांख्यपातञ्जल-पाशुपतवैष्णवादीनां धर्मशास्त्रे, मिलित्वा चतुर्दश विद्याः ।	<i>Madhusūdana-sarasvatī's Prasthāna-bheda</i>
232	नाध्यापयिष्यन् निगमान् श्रमेणोपाध्यायलोकाः यदि शिष्यवर्गान् । निर्वेदवादं किल निर्वितानम् उर्वीतलं हन्त तदाऽभविष्यत् ॥	<i>Subhāṣita-ratna-bhaṇḍāgara</i>
233	सिंहः शिशुरपि निपतति मदमलिनकपोलभित्तिषु गजेषु । प्रकृतिरियं सत्त्ववतां न खलु वयस्तेजसो हेतुः ॥	<i>Nītiśataka 38</i>
234	विषयाशां परित्यज्य वैराग्यं परमं श्रिताः । मुनयो यत्कृपाभाजस्तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥	<i>Abhinava-vidyātirtha-akṣaramālā-stotra 5</i>
235	शकुनीनामिवाकाशे जले वारिचरस्य च । पदं यथा न दृश्येत तथा ज्ञानवतां गतिः ॥	<i>Mahābhārata 12.181.9</i>
236	शरच्चन्द्रनिभानना ॥	<i>Lalitā-sahasranāma 129</i>

237	इत्येतदनुशासनम् सर्ववेदान्तोपदेशः; एष सर्ववेदान्तानामुपसंहृतोऽर्थः; एतदमृतमभयम्; परिसमाप्तश्च शास्त्रार्थः ॥	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 2.5.19
238	स एवाधस्तात्स उपरिष्ठात्स पश्चात्स पुरस्तात्स दक्षिणतस्स उत्तरतस्स एवेद... सर्वमित्यथातो... ।	<i>Chāndogya-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 7.25.1
239	त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी । त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वञ्चसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः ॥ नीलः पतङ्गो हरितो लोहिताक्षतडिर्भ्रं ऋतवः समुद्राः ।	<i>Śvetāśvatara-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 4.3, 4.4
240	ब्रह्मैवेदं विश्वमिदं वरिष्ठम् ।	<i>Mundaka-upaniṣad</i> 2.2.12
241	नक्षत्राणामहं शशी... इन्द्रियाणां मनश्चास्मि... मेधा... सरसामस्मि सागरः... मृगाणां च मृगेन्द्रोऽहं... पवनः पवतामस्मि... झषाणां मकरश्चास्मि... अक्षराणामकारोऽस्मि... अहमेवाक्षयः कालो... ऋतूनां कुसुमाकरः... द्यूतं छलयतामस्मि... व्यवसायोऽस्मि... मौनं चैवास्मि गुह्यानां ज्ञानं ज्ञानवतामहम् ।	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 10.21, 10.22, 10.34, 10.24, 10.30, 10.31, 10.31, 10.33, 10.33, 10.35, 10.36, 10.36, 10.38
242	मन्त्रोऽहमहमेवाज्यमहमग्निरहं हुतम् । प्रभवः प्रलयस्स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 9.16, 9.18
243	नम आयच्छब्दो विसृज्यश्च वो नमो नमोऽस्यब्दो विच्छब्दश्च वो नमः ।	<i>Kṛṣṇa-yajur-veda-</i> <i>samhita</i> 4.5.3
244	यच्च स्वभावं पचति विश्वयोनिः पाच्यांश्च सर्वान्परिणामयेद्यः ।	<i>Śvetāśvatara-</i> <i>upaniṣad</i> 5.5
245	न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिन्नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित् ।	<i>Kaṭha-upaniṣad</i> 1.2.18
246	अज्ञानान्तर्गहनपतितानात्मविद्योपदेशैस्त्रातुं लोकान्भवदवशिखातापपापच्यमानान् । मुक्त्वा मौनं वटविटपिनो मूलतो निष्पतन्ती शम्भोर्मूर्तिश्चरति भुवने शकराचार्यरूपा ॥	<i>Mādhavīya</i> <i>Śaṅkara-vijaya</i> 4.60
247	आक्रान्तां रत्नगर्भां दनुतनुजजुषां सौगतैरंशभेदैः तान्सर्वान्द्रावयित्वा परमतभिदुरैः युक्तिवृन्दैरभेदैः । स्वस्थां चक्रेऽथ यस्स श्रुतिकमलरविर्दक्षिणामूर्तिरूपो नोऽद्वैताचार्यवर्यो भवजनितभियां शङ्करश्शङ्करोतु ॥	Verse composed by His Holiness on <i>Bhagavatpāda</i>
248	विलाप्य विकृतिं कृत्स्नां संभवव्यत्ययक्रमात् । परिशिष्टं च सन्मात्रं चिदानन्दं विचिन्तयेत् ॥	<i>Yoga-sudhākara</i> on <i>Yoga-sūtra</i> 4.2
249	पृथिव्यप्सु पयो वह्नौ वह्निर्वायौ नभस्यसौ । नभोऽप्यव्याकृते तच्च शुद्धे शुद्धोऽस्यहं हरिः ॥	<i>Brahmānucintana</i> 12
250	आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते । योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 6.3
251	योगारूढस्य पुनः तस्यैव शमः उपशमः सर्वकर्मभ्यो निवृत्तिः कारणं योगारूढस्य साधनम् उच्यते इत्यर्थः ।	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 6.3
252	को हि जानाति कस्याद्य मृत्युकालो भविष्यति । युवैव धर्मशीलस्यादनित्यं खलु जीवितम् ॥	<i>Mahābhārata</i> 12.175.16

253	बाल्ये नष्टविवेको विषयसुखास्वादलम्पटस्तरुणः । परतो जातविवेको वृद्धोऽशक्तः किमाप्नुयात्सिद्धिम् ॥	
254	यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 10.25
255	वाणी लक्ष्मीस्तथा गौरी तिष्ठन्तं निद्रया युतम् । गच्छन्तमुपविष्टञ्च पान्तु त्वां गुरुशेखरम् ॥	Verse composed on His Holiness by His Guru
256	एकोऽपि सन्महादेवस्त्रिधाऽसौ समवस्थितः । सर्गरक्षालयगुणैर्निर्गुणोऽपिनिरञ्जनः ॥	<i>Kūrma-purāṇa</i> 1.4.53
257	शिवाय विष्णुरूपाय शिवरूपाय विष्णवे । यथा शिवमयो विष्णुरेवं विष्णुमयःशिवः ।	<i>Skanda-upaniṣad</i> 8, 9
258	श्रीशेशयोर्भेदधीः... नामापराधा दश ।	<i>Bhagavannāma-bhūṣaṇa</i> referred in <i>Bhagavan-nāmāmṛta-rasodaya, ullāsa</i> 6
259	सत्यज्ञानसुखस्वरूपममलं क्षीराब्धिमध्येस्थितं योगारूढमतिप्रसन्नवदनं भूषासहस्रोज्ज्वलम् । त्र्यक्षं चक्रपिनाकसाभयवरान्विभ्राणमर्कच्छर्वि छत्रीभूतफणीन्द्रमिन्दुधवलं लक्ष्मीनृसिंहं भजे ॥	<i>Dhyāna-śloka</i> of the <i>mantrarāja</i> of Lakṣmī-narasimha
260	चरणं पवित्रं विततं पुराणं येन पूतस्तरति दुष्कृतानि । तेन पवित्रेण शुद्धेन पूता अतिपाप्मानमरातिं तरेम ।	<i>Taittirīya-āranyaka</i> 10.1.11
261	इतः कोऽन्वस्ति मूढात्मा यस्तु स्वार्थं प्रमाद्यति ।	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 5
262	वेदो नित्यमधीयतां तदुदितं कर्म स्वनुष्ठीयतां तेनेशस्य विधीयतामपचितिः काम्ये मतिस्त्यज्यताम् । पापौघः परिधूयतां भवसुखे दोषोऽनुसन्धीयतां आत्मेच्छा व्यवसीयतां निजगृहात्पूर्वं विनिर्गम्यताम् ॥	<i>Upadeśa-pañcaka</i> 1
263	पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं पुनरपि जननीजठरे शयनम् । इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे कृपयाऽपारे पाहि मुरारे ॥	<i>Moha-mudgara</i> 21
264	मृत्युयुक्तः संसारः मृत्युसंसारः, स एव सागर इव सागरः, दुस्तरत्वात्	<i>Śaṅkara-bhāṣya</i> on <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 12.7
265	...सोत्तीर्णां खलु पाण्डवै रणनदी कैवर्तकः केशवः ।	Invocatory verses of the <i>Bhagavad-gītā</i>
266	शान्ता महान्तो निवसन्ति सन्तो वसन्तवल्लोकहितं चरन्तः । तीर्णाः स्वयं भीमभवार्षवं जनानहेतुनाऽन्यानपि तारयन्तः ॥	<i>Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi</i> 39
267	सत्यं वद ।	<i>Taittirīya-upaniṣad</i> 1.11.1
268	अहिंसा-सत्य-अस्तेय-ब्रह्मचर्य-अपरिग्रहा यमाः ॥	<i>Patañjali-yoga-sūtras</i> 2.30
269	अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः ॥	<i>Patañjali-yoga-sūtras</i> 2.35

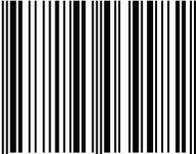
270	यत्नादपि परक्लेशं हर्त्तुं या हृदि जायते । इच्छा भूमिसुरश्रेष्ठ सा दया परिकीर्त्तिता ॥	<i>Padma-purāṇa</i> 7.17.87
271	दया भूतेषु ... सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 16.2, 16.3
272	दया सर्वभूतेषु	<i>Gautama-dharma-sūtras</i> 1.8.24
273	मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम् ॥	<i>Yoga-sutra</i> 1.33
274	तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः । नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥	<i>Bhagavad-gītā</i> 10.11
275	जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिषु स्फुटतरं योऽसौ समुज्जृम्भते प्रत्यग्रूपतया सदाऽहमहमित्यन्तः स्फुरन्नेकधा । नानाकारविकारभाजिन इमान्यश्यन्नहंधीमुखान्नित्यानन्दचिदात्मना स्फुरति तं विद्धि स्वमेतं हृदि ॥	<i>Vivekacūḍāmaṇi</i> 219
276	प्रणम्य परमात्मानं श्रीविद्यातीर्थरूपिणम् ।	<i>Mādhaviya</i> <i>Śaṅkara-vijaya</i> 1.1
277	श्रुतिमूर्तीतिहासानामभिप्रायविदव्ययः । श्रुतिव्याख्यानतस्तुष्याद्विद्यातीर्थमहेश्वरः ॥	<i>Anubhūti-prakāśa</i>
278	यस्य निश्चसितं वेदाः ... तमहं वन्दे विद्यातीर्थमहेश्वरम् ॥	<i>Jīvanmukti-viveka</i> 1
279	लम्बिकायोगनिरतमम्बिकापतिरूपिणम् ।	Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin's <i>Vidyātirthāṣṭaka</i> 2
280	विद्यातीर्थयतीन्द्रोऽयमतिशेते दिवाकरम् । तमो हरति यत्सुसामन्तर्बहिरहर्निशम् ॥	Sringeri inscriptions: No.2
281	वर्णचतुष्टयमेतद्विद्यातीर्थेति यस्य जिह्वाग्रे । विलसति सदा स योगी भोगी च स्यान्न तत्र सन्देहः ॥	<i>Vidyātirthāṣṭaka</i> 1
282	विद्यातीर्थाय गुरवे परस्मै तेजसे नमः । यस्य नाङ्गीकृतस्नेहदशाहानिः कदाचन ॥	

His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin, the 35<sup>th</sup> Jagadguru Shankaracharya of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, was a sage who had attained, by the age of eighteen, the state of *jīvanmuktī* (liberation while living), hailed by the scriptures as the greatest of all achievements, for it leaves nothing to be achieved thereafter, vouchsafing, as it does, freedom from the cycle of births and deaths. His Holiness was a consummate *yogin*, and an authority on scriptural matters, being a scholar par excellence especially in *Tarka* and *Vedānta*.

Apart from His Holiness's spiritual stature and scriptural expertise, His devotion to His *Guru* and God, infinite compassion for all living beings, His razor-sharp intellect, His deep insight into and understanding of modern science, His capacity and openness to learn and adapt to new things, His administrative acumen, His wide-ranging knowledge, His acceptance of and ready rapport with all manners of people irrespective of caste, creed, religion, nationality, belief or even lack of belief, His straightforwardness and His egolessness, made Him a *Guru* who guided not only by precept but also by practice. He untiringly toured India several times to inculcate *dhārmika* and spiritual values in the multitudes who flocked to Him. He was looked up to by thousands across India as well as other parts of the world, for His infallible grace and guidance.

After His Holiness shed His mortal form in 1989, His disciple and present Jagadguru Śrī Bhārati Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, composed an *aṣṭottara-śata-nāmāvalī* (series of 108 *nāmas*) on His *Guru*, which describes 108 facets of His Holiness and provides a wealth of information on His life and teachings. This book offers an explanation for each of these 108 *nāmas*, supported by various episodes from His Holiness's life and relevant extracts from His teachings, all of which are not only fascinating but compellingly edifying.

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