

# തോടകാഷ്ടകം

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Here is an article containing the toTakAShTakam, eight verses composed in honor of Adi ShankarAchArya.

A short description of the advaita paramparA and a short account of Shankara's disciple toTaka are included.

Invocation:

ശംകരം ശംകരാചാര്യം കേശവം ബാദരായണമ് |  
സുതദ്രാഷ്ടയകൃതൗ വന്ദേ ഭഗവന്തൗ പുനഃ പുനഃ ||

I offer obeisances again and again to shrl Veda VyAsa, the author of the Brahma sUtras, who is none other than Lord VishNu, and shrl ShankarAchArya, the commentator on those sUtras, who is none other than Lord Shiva.

advaita guru-paramparA:

നാരായണം പദ്മഭൂവം വസിഷ്ഠം ശക്തിം ച തത്പുത്രപ്രരാശരം ച |  
Jയാസം ശുകം ഗൌഡപദം മഹാൻതം ഗോവിന്ദയോഗീന്ദ്രമഥാസ്യ ശിഷ്യമ് ||

ശ്രീ ശംകരാചാര്യമഥാസ്യ പദ്മപാദം ച ഹസ്താമലകം ച ശിഷ്യമ് |  
തം തോടകം വാതിരീകകാരമന്യാനസ്മദ്ഗുരൂൻ സംതതമാനതോ | അസ്മി ||

These two verses honor the advaita paramparA . The names mentioned here,

in order, are 1) Shrlman nArAyaNa, 2) BrahmA, 3) VasiShTha, 4) Shakti, 5) ParAshara, 6) VyAsa, 7) Shuka, 8) GauDapAda, 9) GovindapAda, 10) Shrl (Adi) ShankarAchArya, and his four disciples, 11) PadmapAda, 12) HastAmalaka, 13) toTaka, and 14) Sureshvara, and other Gurus.

Sureshvara is also known as VArttikakAra because he wrote the famous vArttika's on the BRihadArANyaka and taittirIya upaniShads.

ShrlmannArAyaNa instructed the Vedas to BrahmA . The Vedas have no author, and are hence called "apauruSheya." Veda VyAsa authored the Brahma sUtra and other texts, such as the GIItA, to expound the knowledge of the Vedas.

Jagadguru Adi ShankarAchArya is a unique historical figure of India in that he combined within himself the characteristics of a poet, logician, an ardent devotee and a mystic and at the same time was the leading exponent of the system of philosophy called advaita . In his commentaries on the Prasthanatraya, he exhibited a rare faculty of relentlessly logical and concatenated argument and refutation, and such subtlety of reasoning as has been unsurpassed in the philosophical works of the world.

His main teachings may be summarized as the affirmation of SamsAra or succession of births and deaths due to Karma and its significance, the realization of the essential relativity of phenomena in comparsion to the reality of the Supreme Self, the realization of that Self not being a mere theoretical exercise, but in the nature of the direct realization and actual experience taught by the upanishadic saying, tattvam asi, "You are That."

On the occasion of Shrl Shankara Jayanti, I decided to post the popular stotra on Shankara known as "toTakAShTaka." The hymn is so called because it has been composed in the difficult but beautiful meter called toTaka.

There is an interesting history associated with this stotra . Anandagiri was one of the less scholarly disciples living with Shankara at Sringeri.



to be set to music . A suggested RAga is (Hindustani) toDi.

വിദിതാവിലശാസ്ത്രസ്രുധാജലയേ മഹിതോപനിഷത് ക്രമിതാർഥനിയേ ।  
ഹൃദയേ കലയേ വിമലം ചരണം ഭവ ശങ്കര ദേശിക മേ ശരണമ് ॥ ൧ ॥

O knower of the nectar-ocean of the scriptures, the expounder of the  
knowledge of the great upanishadic treasure! I meditate on Your pure lotus  
feet in my heart . O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge.

കരുണാവരുണാലയ പാലയ മാം ഭവസാഗരദുഃഖവിദൂനഹൃദമ് ।  
രചയാഖിലദർശനതത്ത്വവിദം ഭവ ശങ്കര ദേശിക മേ ശരണമ് ॥ ൨ ॥

Save me whose heart is afflicted by the misery of the ocean of births,  
O (You who are) the ocean of compassion! (By Your grace) make me the  
knower of the truths of all the systems of philosophy . O Preceptor Shankara,  
be my refuge.

ഭവതാ ജനതാ സുഹിതാ ഭവിതാ നിജബോധവിചാരണ ചാരുമതേ ।  
കലയേശ്വരജീവവിവേകവിദം ഭവ ശങ്കര ദേശിക മേ ശരണമ് ॥ ൩ ॥

The people have found happiness due to You, who have the intellect adept in  
the inquiry into Self-knowledge . Make me understand the knowledge of God  
and the soul . O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge.

ഭവ ഏവ ഭവാനിതി മേ നിതരാം സമജായത ചേതസി കൌതുകിതാ ।

മമ വാരയ മോഹമഹാജലധിം ഭവ ശങ്കര ദേശിക മേ ശരണം ॥ ൪ ॥

You are Lord Shiva Himself . Knowing this my mind is filled with an abundance of joy . Put an end to my sea of delusion . O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge.

സുകൃതേ । അധികൃതേ ബഹുധാ ഭവതോ ഭവിതാ സമദർശനലാലസതാ ।  
അതിദീനമിമം പരിപാലയ മാം ഭവ ശങ്കര ദേശിക മേ ശരണമ് ॥ ൫ ॥

Only after numerous virtuous deeds have been performed in many ways, does a keen desire for the experience of Brahman through You arise. Protect (me who am) extremely helpless . O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge.

ജഗതീമവിതും കലിതാകൃതയോ വിചരന്തി മഹാമഹസശ്ചരലതഃ ।  
അഹിമാംശൂരിവാത്രവിഭാസി ഗുരോ ഭവ ശങ്കര ദേശിക മേ ശരണമ് ॥ ൬ ॥

For the sake of saving the world, (Your) great (disciples) wander assuming various forms and guises . O Guru, You shine like the sun (among them). O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge.

ഗുരുപുംഗവ പുംഗവകേതന തേ സമതാമയതാം നഹി കോ । അപി സുധീഃ ।  
ശരണാഗതവത്സല തത്ത്വനിയേ ഭവ ശങ്കര ദേശിക മേ ശരണമ് ॥ ൭ ॥

O Best among the Gurus! The Lord whose flag bears the emblem of the

bull! You have no equal among the wise . You who are affectionate to those  
who seek refuge! The treasure of truth! O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge.

വിദിതാ ന മയാ വിശദൈകകലാ ന ച കിംചന കാഞ്ചനമസ്തി ഗുരോ ।  
ദ്യുതമേവ വിധേഹി കൃപാം സഹജാം ഭവ ശങ്കര ഭേശിക മേ ശരണമ് ॥ ൮ ॥

I have neither understood even one branch of knowledge clearly, nor do I  
possess any wealth, O Guru . Quickly bestow on me the compassion which is  
natural to You . O Preceptor Shankara, be my refuge.

More Information:

A life-sketch of Shankara and information on advaita may be found at:

<http://www.cco.caltech.edu/~vidya/advaita/advaitatml>

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