

DAKṢIṆĀMŪRTI STOTRAM

उपासकानां यदुपासनीय -

मुपात्तवासं वटशाखिमूले ।

तद्धाम दाक्षिण्यजुषा स्वमूर्त्या

जागर्तु चित्ते मम बोधरूपम् ॥ १ ॥

upāsakānām yad upāsanīyaṁ
upāttavāsaṁ vataśākhimūle,
taddhāma dākṣiṇyajuşā svamūrtiā
jāgartu citte mama bodharūpam.

May that Supreme Spirit that has taken its abode under the banyan tree taking an anthropomorphic form facing south as an act of great condescension and which is the object of meditation for the devotees remain in my mind activating my intellect.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti is one of the radiant human forms which Lord Śiva the Supreme Spirit takes out of His infinite mercy (dākṣiṇya) to uplift the ripe soul from bondage. The banyan tree under which he is seated typifies the microcosm and the macrocosm in the tiny seed of the tree and the vast expanse of its branches, leaves and roots that evolve from it respectively thereby illustrating how the Universe evolves out of the Supreme Spirit Who willed in the Upaniṣadic words 'Bahusyām', 'May I multiply'. The banyan tree which outlives several other living species also stands for the eternality (sat) associated with the Supreme. The devotees who meditate on Him have their consciousness (cit) illumined and experience Bliss (ānanda). Thus Dakṣiṇāmūrti is none other than Sat-cit-ānanda.

अद्राक्षमक्षीणदयानिधान -
माचार्यमाद्यं वटमूलभागे ।
मौनेन मन्दस्मितभूषितेन
महर्षिलोकस्य तमो नुदन्तम् ॥ २ ॥

adrākṣaṁ akṣīṇa dayā-nidhānaṁ
ācāryaṁ ādyaṁ vaṭamūlabhāge,
maunena manda-smita-bhūṣitena
maharṣilokasya tamo nudantam.

I beheld under the banyan tree the Primordial Preceptor, the receptacle of undiminishing compassion driving away the darkness of ignorance of great sages by mere silence that is adorned by a gentle smile.

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda records his experience in beholding the graceful form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Who as a true Guru, a term which means dispeller of ignorance, enlightens the great sages by His mere silence that radiates light. A Guru is merely instrumental in drawing out the inherent powers of the soul. The mere presence of the Supreme in this benign form of a Guru would suffice to efface the ignorance of the soul and lit the flame of true knowledge that leads to liberation.

विद्राविताशोषे - तमोगुणेन
मुद्राविशेषेण मुहुर्मुनीनाम् ।
निरस्य मायां दयया विधत्ते
देवो महांस्तत्त्वमसीति बोधम् ॥ ३ ॥

vidrāvitaṣeṣa tamogṇena
mudrāviṣeṣeṇa muhur munīnām,
nirasya māyām dayayā vidhatte
devo mahān tat-tvam-asi iti bodham.

The Great Lord endowed as He is with compassion drove away often and on, the quality of ignorance of the sages in entirety by His jñānamudrā (the pose of fingers that confers true knowledge) and thus destroyed their nescience and ushered in the profound knowledge 'That thou art'.

The power of māyā is such that the thick well of ignorance has got to be stormed more than once before it is annihilated. The truth of the Mahāvākya dawns on a person only when the Lord out of His abundant grace enables him to perceive it. The Cinmudrā is an index of this grace. It is also taken to signify the non-duality of jīva and Īśvara represented by the joining of the thumb and the fore finger. The two together stand for the pure Consciousness or cit. The mudrā that enables one to comprehend this truth is therefore called Cinmudrā.

अपारकारुण्यसुधातरङ्गैः

अपाङ्गपातैरवलोयन्तम् ।

कठोरसंसारनिदाघतप्तान्

मुनीनहं नौमि गुरुं गुरुणाम् ॥४॥

apārakāruṇya-sudhā-taraṅgaiḥ

apāṅgapātair-avalokayantam,

kaṭhora-samsāra-nidāghataptān

munīn aham naumi gurum gurūṇām.

I offer my obeisance to the Preceptor of preceptors Who, by His ambrosial glances marked by unlimited grace, was looking at the sages afflicted by the intense heat of that fierce misery of worldly existence.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti is the path finder and arch preceptor in disseminating True Knowledge to the successive ācāryas that walked on the Globe. He is therefore the Ādi-Guru. The only way in which a 'Guru' can transmit right knowledge to his disciple is kindness and compassion. As an ideal Guru, Dakṣiṇāmūrti sets an example. His gleaming eyes shed nectar that soothes the intense sufferings of the aspirants. The healing touch works miracles. The sweltering heat of Samsāra is no more. The cool breeze of Ānanda has begun to blow in the mind of the sages.

ममाद्यदेवो वटमूलवासी

कृपाविशेषात्कृतसन्निधानः ।

ओंकाररूपामुपदिश्य विद्यां

आविद्यकध्वान्तमपाकरोतु ॥५॥

mamādyadevo vaṭamūlavāsī

kṛpāviśeṣāt kṛtasannidhāṇaḥ,

omkārarūpām upadiśya vidyām

avidyaka-dhvānataṃ apākarotu.

May my primordial Lord, dwelling at the foot of the banyan tree, out of divine mercy appear before me, offer instruction in the mystic lore 'Om' and dispel the darkness of nescience.

कलाभिरिन्दोरिव कल्पिताङ्गं
मुक्ताकलापैरिव बद्धमूर्तिम् ।
आलोकये देशिकमप्रमेयं
अनाद्यविद्यातिमिरप्रभातम् ॥ ६ ॥

kalābhir indoriva kalpitāṅgaṁ
muktākālāpairiva baddhamūrtim,
ālokaye deśikaṁ aprameyaṁ
anādyavidyā timira-prahbātam.

I behold with my eyes the incomprehensible form of the Divine Preceptor, the veritable dawn that dispels the beginningless darkness of Nescience, a form that appears, to be made as though with the digits of the moon or perhaps with a collection of pearls.

Again the blessed Ācārya exults in the divine vision that was vouchsafed to him by the Ādi Guru. The white sheen of brilliance of the vision of that Divine form is fancied by the poet philosopher as being fashioned out of the white digits of the moon and a collection of white pearls. Not satisfied with these fancies he draws a metaphor picturing the radiant Dakṣiṇāmūrti as the dawn that drives away the darkness.

स्वदक्षजानुस्थितवामपादं
पादोदरालङ्कृतयोगपट्टम् ।
अपस्मृतेराहितपादमङ्गे
प्रणौमि देवं प्रणिधानवन्तम् ॥ ७ ॥

svadakṣajānu-sthita-vāmāpādaṁ
pādodarālaṅkṛta-yogapaṭṭam,
apasmṛter-āhita-pādaṁ-aṅge
praṇoumi devaṁ praṇidhānavantam.

I adore the Lord in His meditative aspect, Whose left foot is placed on His right thigh, Who wears the yoga vastra adorned by a serpent and Who has His (right) foot placed over the body of apasmāra puruṣa.

The 'apasmaāra puruṣa' represents the evil nescience that is stamped out by the Lord. In this connection we may recall the 'dhyāna śloka' in Sri Dakṣiṇāmūrti Upaniṣad which seeks to confer on the meditator freedom from nescience. 'Ajñānāpaham ādim ādimagirām artham Bhavānīpatim nyagrodhānt anivāsinam para gurum dhyāyāmyabhiṣṭāptaye' - 'I meditate on the Supreme Preceptor Who dwells under the banyan tree, Who is none other than the Lord of Bhavānī, the import of Vedic words, the first God Who destroys nescience'. (v.14).

तत्त्वार्थमन्तेवसतामृषीणां
युवाऽपि यः सन्नुपदेष्टुमीष्टे ।
प्रणौमि तं प्राक्तनपुण्यजालैः
आचार्यमाश्रयगुणाधिवासम् ॥८॥

tattvārthaṁ antevasatām ṛṣiṇām
yuvāpi yaḥ sannu padeṣṭum iṣṭe,
praṇaumi taṁ prāktanapūnyajālaiḥ
ācāryaṁ āścarya-guṇādhivāsam.

I offer my obeisance, thanks to my past accumulated merit, to that Preceptor, the abode of marvellous qualities, Who despite His youthful appearance yearns to instruct His disciples, the Sages, the Supreme Spiritual Truth.

True Knowledge would arise only when there is earnestness and competence both in the teacher and the taught. Here the sages, the Brahmavādins are the disciples and Lord Śiva in His youthful aspect of Dakṣiṇāmūrti is the Preceptor. The former are the 'antevāsiṇaḥ' who dwell in the residence of the Preceptor under the banyan tree and the latter Who is anxious to teach them (upadeṣṭum iṣṭe) is Himself, 'the very embodiment of Consciousness Who leads His devotees to the realisation of the Consciousness'.

एकेन मुद्रां परशुं करेण
करेण चान्येन मृगं दधानः ।
स्वजानुविन्यस्तकरः पुरस्ताद् -
आचार्यचूडामणिराविरस्तु ॥९॥

ekena mudrāṃ paraśuṃ kareṇa
kareṇa cānyena mṛgaṃ dadhānaḥ,
svajānuvinyastakaraḥ purastād
ācārya-cūḍāmaṇir-āvirastu.

May the crest jewel among the Preceptors Who holds one of His hands in the Cin-mudrā pose, holds in another an axe, in yet another a deer and keeps the (fourth) hand on His thigh present Himself before me.

The 'Cinmudrā' indicates that He is the be-all and end-all of knowledge par excellence. The axe stands for his skill in destroying ignorance. The deer held in His hand is suggestive of His control of the senses as a Master Yogin.

आलेपवन्तं मदनाङ्गभूत्या
 शार्दूलकृत्या परिधानवन्तम् ।
 आलोकये कञ्चन देशिकेन्द्रं
 अज्ञानवाराकरबाडवाग्निम् ॥ १० ॥

ālepavantam madanāṅgabhūtyā
 śārdūlakṛtṭyā paridhānavantam,
 ālokaye kañcana deśikendram
 ajñān-vārākara-bādavāgnim.

I behold an extraordinarily Great Prince among Preceptors Who is the very submarine fire (capable of consuming) the ocean of nescience. I see Him besmeared with the ash of the limbs of cupid and clad in tiger's hide.

चारुस्मितं सोमकलावतंसं
 वीणाधरं व्यक्तजटाकलापम् ।
 उपासते केचन योगिनस्त्वां
 उपात्तनादानुभवप्रमोदम् ॥ ११ ॥

cārusmitam somakalāvatamsam
 vīṇādharam vyaktajaṭākālāpam,
 upāsate kecana yoginaś tvām
 upātta-nādānubhava pramodam.

Only a few among the Yogins worship Thee of smiling countenance and waving tresses, wearing the digit of the moon as a crest jewel, holding the lute in a hand and exuding joy arising from the sweet notes of the lute played on.

Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda conjures up a vision of the 'Saumya' or benign aspect of the Viṅādhara Dakṣiṇāmūrti that was worshipped by a few sages, only by a few, because such a vision is vouchsafed only to those even among the learned sages who are the recipients of His special grace. Has it not been said 'Yam eva eṣa Vṛṇite tena labhyaḥ, Tasyaiṣa ātmāvivṛṇute tanūm svām' (Kāthoponiṣad, II, 33).

उपासते यं मुनयः शुकाद्याः

निराशिषो निर्ममताधिवासाः ।

तं दक्षिणामूर्तितनु महेशं

उपास्महे मोहमहार्तिशान्त्यै ॥ १२ ॥

upāsate yaṁ munayaḥ śukādyāḥ

nirāśiṣo nirmamatādhi vāsāḥ,

tam dakṣiṇāmūrtitanuṁ maheśaṁ

upāsmāhe moha-mahārti-śāntyai.

I meditate on Maheśvara in the form of Dakṣiṇāmūrti with a view to obtain the peace arising from the removal of the suffering caused by delusion. It is that very form which was meditated upon by sages Śuka and others who are free from attachment and a sense of possession.

People of ordinary type generally pray for wealth, health, fame etc. But an ideal aspirant like Śuka will seek nothing of a

mundane nature for himself. Being free from the sense of 'I' and 'mine' our Ācārya following the footsteps of Śuka seeks peace and the consequent Bliss and thus shows the way to us to follow.

कान्त्या निन्दितकुन्दकन्दलवपुर्न्यग्रौधमूले वसन्

कारुण्यामृतवारिभिर्मुनिजनं संभावयन्वीक्षितैः ।

मोहध्वान्तविभेदनं विरचयन् बोधेन तत्तादृशा

देवस्तत्त्वमसीति बोधयतु मां मुद्रावता पाणिना ॥ १३ ॥

kāntyā nindita-kundakandala-

vapur nyagrodhamūle vasan

kāruṇāmṛte-vāribhir munijanāṁ

sambhāvayan vīkṣitaiḥ,

mohadhvānta vibhedanaṁ viracayaṁ

bodhena tat tādrṣā

devas tat-tvaṁ-asi iti

bodhayatu māṁ mudrāvataṁ paṇinā.

May the Lord, with His palm showing Cinmudrā, endowed with a body that surpasses in lustre the jasmine flower, staying under the banyan tree, gracing the sages with looks that exude nectarine compassion, break asunder the darkness of delusion and instruct me in that Supreme Truth embedded in the scriptural text 'That-thou-art'.

The Ācārya prays for the grace of the Ādi Guru to impart the import of the Mahāvākya which proclaims the non-duality of the Brahman and Jiva. Once this Advaitic knowledge is received the veil of avidyā is sundered and there is no more the cycle of births and deaths in this ocean of transmigratory existence.

अगौरगात्रैः अललाटनेत्रैः

अशान्तवेषैः अभुजङ्गभूषैः ।

अबोधमुद्रैः अनपास्तनिद्रैः

अपूर्णकामैः अमरैरलंनः ॥ १४ ॥

agauragātraiḥ alalāṭanetraih

aśāntaveṣaiḥ abhujāṅgabhūṣaiḥ,

abodhamurdraiḥ anapāstanidraiḥ

apūrṇakāmaiḥ amarairalaṅnaḥ.

I have no need for any God whose body is not white, who does not have an eye on his forehead, who is not quietistic in appearance, who does not wear the jewel of serpent, who does not show the Cin-mudrā, who has not abandoned sleep and who has not his will fulfilled.

This verse illustrates how one should have implicit faith and devotion to his iṣṭadevatā in a particular form which alone is a sure means aiding meditation and earning His grace, that ultimately confers Liberation.

दैवतानि कति सन्ति चावनौ

नैव तानि मनसो मतानि मे ।

दीक्षितं जडधियामनुग्रहे

दक्षिणाभिमुखमेव दैवतम् ॥ १५ ॥

dāivatāni kati santi cāvanau

naiva tāni manaso matāni me,

dīkṣitaṃ jaḍadhiyāṃ anugrahe

dakṣiṇābhimukhaṃ eva daivatam.

Many indeed are the Gods on this earth; but none of them are agreeable to my mind. The only God I adore is the One with His face turned to south Who has resolved to extend His grace to the dullard.

Ācārya's unassailable and abiding devotion to Dakṣiṇāmūrti is again emphasised here. In His infinite mercy He has taken upon Himself to help the lowliest to attain beatitude.

मुदिताय मुग्धशशिनावतंसिने
भसितावलेपरमणीयमूर्तये ।
जगदिन्द्रजालरचनापटीयसे
महसे नमोऽस्तु वटमूलवासिने ॥ १६ ॥

muditāya mugdhaśaśināvatamsine
bhasitāvalepa-ramaṇīya mūrtaye,
jagadindrajāla-racanāpaṭīyase
mahase namo 'stu vaṭamūlavāsine.

Obeisance to that Great God dwelling under the banyan tree filled with joy, wearing the digit of the moon as a crest jewel and bearing a form pleasing with the holy ash smeared over it. He is indeed an adept in creating this magic show of this everchanging world.

The holy ash smeared over His body is the remnant of the Universe that is destroyed by Śiva at the time of the Mahāpralaya and it is indicative of the impermanence of the phenomenal world. This world is illusory like the product of magic and the causality of this world is to be accounted for in the indeterminable māyā grounded in Īśvara. He is filled with joy (mudita) that arises from a sense of fulfilment.

व्यालम्बिनीभिः परितो जटाभिः
कलावशेषेण कलाधरेण ।
पश्यल्ललाटेन मुखेन्दुना च
प्रकाशसे चेतसि निर्मलानाम् ॥ १७ ॥

vyālabhinībhiḥ parito jaṭābhiḥ
kalāvaśeṣeṇa kalādhareṇā,
paśyallalāṭena mukhendunā ca
prakāśase cetasi nirmalānām.

Thou with the long matted tresses hanging around (Your face) adorned with the digits of the moon that is not full, an eye on the forehead and a face that is beautiful like the full moon shine in the minds of men of purity.

Cittaśuddhi is a sine quo non for an aspirant to Self Realisation. It is only in the pure mirror of mind of such a person will reflect the radiant form of the Prince of Preceptors, Dakṣiṇāmūti revealing True Knowledge.

उपासकानां त्वमुमासहायः
पूर्णेन्दुभावं प्रकटीकरोषि ।
यदद्य ते दर्शनमात्रतो मे
द्रवत्यहो मानसचन्द्रकान्तः ॥ १८ ॥

upāsakānām-tvaṁ umāśahāyaḥ
pūrṇendubhāvaṁ prakāṭīkaroṣi,
yadadya te darśanamātrato me
dravatyaḥo mānasacandrakāntaḥ.

Thou with Umā as Thy Consort reveal to Thy devotees the nature of a full moon. For now as I have vision of Thee, that vision makes my mind melt as though it is a moon stone.

The Mūrti of Umāmaheśvara is a favourite of devotees. This is seen in one of the verses addressed to this form by Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda in his Umāmaheśvara stotram: “Namaskṛtābhīṣṭa-varapra-dābhyām” - ‘Who grants the boons desired by the devotees’. This form, unlike some others marked by a bundle of oddities such as ashes, skull garlands etc. is quite pleasing associated as it is with the compāssionate mother, Umā. No wonder that the mind of the ripe soul melts at the delightful sight of Umāśahāya.

यस्ते प्रसन्नामनुसन्दधानो

मूर्तिमुदा मुग्धशशाङ्कमौलेः ।

ऐश्वर्यमायुर्लभते च विद्याम्

अन्ते च वेदान्तमहारहस्यम् ॥ १९ ॥

yaste prasannām anusandadhāno

mūrtim mudā mugdhaśaśaṅka-mauleḥ,

aiśvaryaṁ-āyur labhate ca vidyām

ante ca vedānta-mahārahasyam.

Those who constantly meditate with great exultation on Thy form with a head marked by the digit of the moon will obtain prosperity, longevity of life, True Knowledge and ultimately the great secret of Vedānta.