

**Pujya Swamiji's address
On Śaṅkara jayantiDay (18.5.2010)
at AVG, Coimbatore.**



Living one's life with the attitude of "Doing all that needs to be done" is a continuous struggle. But this struggle is worthwhile when in one stroke mokṣa is achieved by gaining knowledge. This gain is maṅgalam for the mumukṣu. Sam means maṅgalam, grand finale with the fulfillment, "I have done what needs to be done". Śam karoti iti Śaṅkaraḥ. It can be gained by all people!

Śaṅkara didn't have a philosophy of his own. In the Vedānta tradition, nobody has a personal philosophy. In Vedānta there is no "my thinking." Vedānta is not a philosophy. If at all, Vedānta is a public philosophy.

The greatest contribution of Śaṅkara is his commentaries on the Ten Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and the Brahma Sutras, known as prasthāna traya bhāṣyam. In the

first Upaniṣad, the Īśāvāsya, he declares, "All that is here is to be understood as īśvara." This statement cannot be improved upon. What is Advaita – it means non-dual. Nothing transcends what is.

Śaṅkara is the last link in the Advaita tradition. vande guru-paramparām - I salute the lineage of teachers. Starting from Lord īśvara the lineage is coming down all the way to my teacher. In the middle were Vyāsa and Śaṅkara.

There is nothing emotional about Śaṅkara having established the six modes of worship (ṣaṅmata-sthāpana) or composed glorious hymns on various deities or travelled on foot all over the country conquering opponents of Advaita tradition. What strikes the most in his contribution is that he captured the whole Advaita tradition and

teaching in his bhāṣyas (commentaries on the prasthāna traya) which he directly taught to his disciples. He was the first teacher to perpetuate the Advaita tradition and teachings in written form on palm leaves. Up to Śaṅkara's time the teachings had been passed on from generation to generation through the prevalent age-old oral tradition. If today Śaṅkara would visit us, he would smile about the fact that his invaluable work containing the tradition and teaching not only survived centuries but is being passed on to the next generation in its purest form.

Śaṅkara says, in his introduction to the commentary on Bhagavad Gīta, that he had found that the teachings of the Bhagavad Gīta were misinterpreted and taught in different ways that often opposed each other and he is making effort to properly unfold the vision of Gīta, leaving no room for misunderstanding and misinterpretation in the times to come.

Almost all Westerners who came to India to study her culture, religion and spirituality went back home with crumbs. Carl Jung, a psychologist from Switzerland visited India in the 1920. Not far from here he stayed at a Christian Seminary in Mysore. Which spiritual insights did he take back to

Europe? An expanded view about heaven based on the Hindu concept of svarga!! That was all.

Śaṅkara was known for taking on his opponents' views in a very objective manner. Letting the truth of Vedanta excel, he defeated his opponents by negating their arguments with logic, clarity and the power of truth. The truth stays as it is. Forever! It brooks no opinions. It is not open for options. jñānam is a vastu-tantram, as true as the object is. The teaching says, "What you want to be is what you are: completeness, limitlessness, timelessness. NOW! Not later, not after death."

Śaṅkara is the abode of the Śrutis Smṛtis and Purāṇās. He is also abode of compassion that is instrumental in our getting his teaching in the form of his Bhāṣyās.

I salute Vyasa, the author of Brahmasūtras, who is an incarnate of Lord Nārāyaṇa. If Vyāsa is Lord Nārāyaṇa, Śaṅkara who wrote the bhasyas on the sutras has to be an incarnate of Lord Śiva. Śaṅkara and Vyāsa stand out in the connecting link of this teaching tradition.

