

**Report on Shankar Jayanti celebrations
at AVG , Anaikatti on 17th May 2021**

It was a simple low-key function attended by 2 year course students and residents. Due to the lock down no outside guests were allowed. The program started at 11.30 am in the lecture Hall at the altar of Shankaracaryaji and all gurus. Puja was conducted by our two resident priests. The garlands were made and the flowers for the puja were collected by the resident students and asramites from within the premises. The occasion was blessed by the presence of our resident swamis and swaminis.

Talk by Sw Sadatmanandaji, the Chief Acharya -

Today we are celebrating the birthday - *avirbhava dinam* - the day Bhagavan Sankaracharyaji got manifested on this earth. In our tradition, Sankaracharyaji is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Shiva also known as Lord Dakshinamurti. It is said that Lord Dakshinamurti giving up his maunam got manifested in the form of Sankaracharyaji.

Sankara was born in Kaladi in Kerala state about 1235 yrs ago. At the age of 8 years itself he completed the study of vedas. Then he took sanyasa from Govindapadacarya who lived on the bank of Narmada. He walked all the way from Kerala to the Narmada bank to study with Govindapadacaryaji. At the age of 16 years, he completed writing the commentary called bhashyam on Upanishad, Bhagavad gita and brahma sutra which together are called prasthanatrayam. He was to live only upto 16 years, but Veda Vyaasacaryaji extended his life by 16 yrs. Therefore he lived for 32 years. The glory of Sankaracharyaji can be described in various ways. We have ashtottara-shata-namavali with 108 names describing his glories.

But I would like to highlight 3 of them. First one is- **वैदिकधर्मोद्धारकः** – *vaidikadharma uddharakah* . He was the one who re-energized vaidika dharma because during his time due to the influence of other dharmas, especially Buddhism, vaidika dharma was going down. Kumarila Bhatta and afterwards Sankaracharyaji revived it. So his first contribution is - he was *vaidikadharma uddharaka*.

The second glory which we value personally so much is – **वेदान्तगताद्वैतमतप्रकाशकः** – *vedantagata-advaitamata-prakashakah* - he revealed the vision of non-duality which is very much present in Vedanta. So he is not really *advaita mata sthapaka* - propounder of advaita mata. That is not our view, even though that is how scholars and academicians look upon Sankaracharyaji. But it is not that he speculated one more philosophy called advaita. But the traditional view is : advaita darshanam was very much there, already presented in Vedanta, but was not seen clearly by many. So Bhagavan Bhashyakara brought out through his commentaries that advaita is the tatparyam of all Vedanta vakyas. Also

he taught his vision to his shishyas and that is how it has come to us through the bhashyam and through the parampara of which he was the bright link. That is why we say - *Sankaracarya madhyamAm*. Thus his second contribution is that he was – *vedantagata-advaitamata-prakasaka*. He was a संयोजक :

His third glory is that he was a great synergiser or synthesizer. There were different views regarding worshipping the Lord. Each one of them was claiming oneself to be the highest and putting the others down. He became the synthesizer and connected all of them. He said all six forms of the Lord worshipped are manifestation of one and the same reality. The six views of the worshipping the lord are - shaiva, shakta, ganapatya, vaishnava, skandha and saura. He synthesized all of them. He was a great *sanyojaka*.

These are the three things, but if you see his other great qualities, he was very humble in his approach. He will many a time start his answer in the bhashyam saying- *baaDham* (You are right from your angle). There was no anxiety to dismiss others. Whatever part is right, he would highlight. He was very humble. He was also a person of purpose. In the bhashyam, you will not see any extra word. If something is already explained, he will say- *uktam*. It is already explained.

He was a great teacher of so many disciples. Four of them are very popular – Padmapadacarya, Sureshvaracarya, Hastamalakacharya and Totakacarya. Atleast we should know their names since we belong to that parampara. Each one of them was sent in one-one direction of the country. They took care of the centers called mathas and they continued the activity of teaching vedanta and protecting dharma. He had the foresight that in future also this vaidika dharma should continue and therefore he established these 4 mathas.

We are very grateful to Shakaracaryaji for leaving with us this teaching tradition. Because of him we are able to get the vision of advaitam which is there in Vedanta. Because of him the vaidika dharma continues with this strength. We remain always indebted to Sankaracaryaji. Today we pray and invoke his grace to be successful in our pursuit of knowledge. We seek his blessings in our pursuit of knowledge. Generally on this day we read his bhashyam. . so we will read some part.”

Acharyaji concluded the occasion by reading a portion of Sankaracaryaji’s adhyaasa bhashyam which is the introduction to brahmasutra. The students and all present were given fruit bags as prasadam sponsored by one of the last course students.

Om Tat Sat

Note: Pictures of this function, are in the last page (#32)