

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यविरचितमोहमुद्गरम्

MALLET FOR THE DELUSION

of

SHREE SHANKARAACHAARYA

Translation and Explanation

by

Narayanalakshmi

INTRODUCTION

The original composition consists of twenty seven verses.

As Shankara is said to have sung twelve more verses, this composition is also known as 'DVAADASHA MANJARIKA STOTRAM - bunch containing twelve verse-blossoms. The fourteen disciples who were with their Guru are said to have added one verse each. These fourteen together are called 'CHATURDASHA MANJARIKA STOTRAM' bunch containing fourteen verse blossoms.

These verses are easy to recite and remember. They are simple instructions for the common man who wants to rise to higher levels of spirituality.

Recital is not enough; understanding the correct import of the verses and the practice of Self-Contemplation is a necessary discipline to be followed by the aspirant who studies these verses.

मोहमुद्गरम्/ भज गोविन्दम्

MOHAMUDGRAM/BHAJA GOVINDAM

1

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविदं
 गोविदं भज मूढमते
 सम्प्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले
 नहि नहि रक्षति डुकृङ्करणे ॥

*Take shelter in Govinda! Take shelter in Govinda!
 Hey you with stagnant brain!
 Take shelter in Govinda (the Supreme Self)!
 When Death arrives and approaches,
 the derivation of the 'Duk' suffix is not going to save you!*

मूढमते Mooda-Mate:

मूढ Moods - is a word used for stagnation.

In this verse, Shankara addresses the minds which are stagnated.

A river flowing freely towards its goal of joining the ocean becomes a stagnated pool if some un-dissolvable garbage blocks its path.

Brains become stagnant when they do not think; when they incessantly are absorbed in the acts of survival and reproduction and do not rise above the level of the body.

When a child enters the world arena, what is the goal set before it in this world?

'Get educated and earn a lot of money; if money can come without education, even drop the education.'

Next goal presented in the agenda is 'marry and reproduce'.

All children, children's children, their children are all guided towards the same goal - 'Make money by hook or crook and reproduce'.

Every female child now wants to become a Miss Universe; every male child wants to roll in money and act in films. Marriage is just a secondary option. Sex is no bar at any age with any partner.

These brains which are set for only such goals are called by Shankara as 'Mooda Mati's'-stagnant brains. Why does not at least one child want to become an Einstein and discover the secrets of space and time? Why does not at least one child want to become a Gaargi or Maitreyi, the intellectual giants of yore? Why Knowledge gaining is considered as a waste of time?

These body oriented brains act recklessly at the peak of their youth and indeed are moving towards a rotten state of mind and body, paving their way to diseases of unknown origins. Shankara calls out to these 'ignorance filled minds' and advises them to pause a moment in their race for wealth and fame and asks them to 'Think'.

The only occurrence you can be certain about in this world is Death. Whatever be the greatness one achieves in this short period of earthly existence, whatever be the wealth one accumulates; 'Death' ends it all and laughs at the apparent wastage of all human endeavors.

It seems once Shankara the Advaitic Master was walking along the banks of River Gangaa with his disciples. Some Brahmin students of grammar were sitting under the shade of a tree and were engaged in grammar studies. At that time a small copper vessel happened to slip out of the hands of an aged Brahmin and rolled along the stone steps with the noise – duk duk duk...! The students sitting under the tree, instead of picking up the vessel and helping the old man, started discussing the phonetic principle of the sound 'duk' and were trying to find the resultant grammatical formations of the suffix – 'duk'. The discussion was never ending. Shankara is supposed to have addressed these students and uttered these 'Bhaja Govindam' verses.

Mastery in any subject without developing the essential human characters like love, selfless work etc is futile. Moreover one should understand that language is a tool to exchange knowledge between each other and is not an end in itself. Mere proficiency in Scriptures or a recital capacity of Vedas will never save one from the ever stretching arms of the Death-God.

Either a direct approach to Self-enquiry or an indirect approach to Self Realization through the guidance of a Guru or devotion to God is presumed to be a necessary quality one should develop if one wants to escape the crunching jaws of death.

मूढ जहीहि धनागमतृष्णाम्
 कुरु सद्बुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम्
 यल्लभसे निजकर्मोपात्तम्
 वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥

*O you of muddled brain!
 Throw afar this thirst for earning wealth.
 Develop interest towards noble things.
 Make your mind free of wants.
 Whatever you gain by your own actions,
 remain contented and happy with that wealth alone.*

Shankara still cannot but feel pity for the lot of the common man. What else can he comment on those brains which use all their efficiency only in accumulating more and more wealth?

Not that every man strives for fulfilling the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter and reproduction alone. Every male or female has only one goal in this life – that is to have more wealth than the neighbor.

Not one house, but more; not one ornament but more; not one clothing but more; not one vehicle but more; the list is endless.

Desires are infinite; wants are always increasing; thirst for sense pleasures is never ever on the decrease; love for the body and the outer appearance has become a religion.

There is no effort to keep the body free of diseases or the mind free of wants. Ever struggling after the mirage of desire-fulfillment, these ignorant ones end up in the jaws of death sooner than the normal course ordained by Nature.

To these lost brains Shankara gives the advice:

Stop the flow of your desires.

Do not engage your brains only in fulfilling the desires of the body and senses.

Turn your intellect towards higher pursuits.

Do not keep your goal in life as a struggle to achieve ephemeral wealth alone.

Analyze within.

What is the meaning of having a lot of material wealth as yours?

Whatever be the amount of gold or land or any other kind you have managed to acquire, what is it in reality?

Just a thought; an idea; a neural pattern in the brain!

Every perception you see, every part of cognition you experience, every piece of knowledge you gain is nothing but a thought in your mind or a symbolic representation in the neural network.

The gold spread out in front of you is just the gold; a metal valued on this planet for its stable nature. You waste the whole of your life to possess it but actually you end up with only an 'idea' in your brain – 'my gold'.

'The gold' becomes 'my gold'; 'the land' becomes 'my land'; 'the diamond' becomes 'my diamond'!

All the effort was just to change 'the' prefix into 'mine' prefix.

The whole life is wasted in filling the brain with 'my' 'my' ideas.

The rose is a rose and gives the same pleasure whether it is 'the' rose or 'my' rose. But the ignorant brains think that pleasure is million fold on the increase if the 'mine' prefix is added to any object. The foolish ones forego health, peace, family pleasures, rest etc etc. just trying to add these 'mines' to their brains.

They do not even enjoy a good meal as they struggle continuously till the end of their life to fill the never ending thirst for wealth.

As a saint rightly proclaims- the poor lamb bleats 'mey mey' (mine mine) continuously and the wolf called 'Death' pounces on it, all of a sudden and swallows it up.

One Tamil saint comments- 'Not even a needle with a broken eye will accompany you after death'. Yet, the ignorant never learn the lesson.

In the evolutionary cycle of million years, a life on earth as a human being is just a little less than a hundred years; half of it wasted in sleep; half of that is an incapacitated phase as an old person or a child. The remaining precious years are spent not in accumulating Knowledge; but in adding the idea of 'mine' to all the material objects or in wasting all the accumulated 'mine's of the parent.

However much you can gloat about the 'mine's you have filled in the dark basket of your brain, what use is all the wealth, if you eat only a restricted diet in a disease ridden body; if you do not ever enjoy the love and affection of a good family; if you do not get time to even look up at the sky and smile at the orange hued moon on the star ridden sky?

As Shankara comments in another work of his-

Whatever be the achievement, if one has not realized his own Self, - TATAH KIM TATAH KIM- SO WHAT? SO WHAT? – What is anything worth gaining in this ephemeral world?

Wealth is necessary; true!

But just earn enough to fulfill your needs or to help those who are in need.

Be contented with what minimum requirements you need and become happy, says Shankara.

Enjoy the love of the family; beauty of Nature; pleasure of intellectual pursuits and ultimately aim for the realization of the Self and laugh at Death like the Tamil poet Bhaarati who said:

'I am no more afraid of death; O Death, I will kick you with my leg!'

नारीस्तनभरनाभीदेशम्
 दृष्ट्वा मा गा मोहावेशम्
 एतन्माम्सवसादिविकारम्
 मनसि विचिन्तय वारं वारम् ॥

*Do not raise the level of your passion
 looking at the navel-place filled with huge breasts of a woman!
 Analyze again and again in the mind
 this ugly mass of flesh filled with blood and nerves!*

Next to wealth the man's most cherished desire is to enjoy a woman; for a woman, it is the company of a man.

But usually a female body alone is considered as an object of enjoyment in all the worlds, be it a heaven or Earth. So the advice of Sri Shankara is mostly directed at the male category of the human world.

Let us follow the instructions of Sri Shankara and analyze well the structure of a female human body!

What is attractive in a female body?

It is just a meat piece with eruptions here and there; all holes stinking and dirty; mouth filled with smelly saliva and not honey; lips are not fruit pieces but just a decolorized gateway for the ugly array of bone pieces; breasts nothing but fleshy eruptions; navel just a left over reminder of the torture phase called birth; sweat not nectar but extra liquid thrown out by the body; nails just protective growths, acting as weapons in lower animals; the sexual pleasure is just a momentary thrill felt by the nerves through the stinking holes which are used for excretory purposes; hair, not the monsoon clouds but some cellular growths protecting the skull!

There is a story related by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa:

There was once a boy who grew up in the forest with the Sages and was trained in spiritual practices from childhood. He had never seen a female in his life of fourteen years. Once the Sages decided to test him and sent him to beg for food in the village. The boy knocked the door of the first house he saw. The lady of the house brought a plate of rice to be given to the young boy. The boy was surprised by the shape of the woman. He asked innocently:

“You look so different from the people in the forest. What creature are you? What are those eruptions on your chest?”

The lady did not feel offended by the boy's questions. Understanding that the boy's mind was as pure as the Ganges on Shiva's head, she replied: “My child! These eruptions are there to feed the little baby of mine who will be born in the future.”

The boy was amazed by her reply. He stood there like a statue for a few minutes. Then he threw away his begging bowl and said: "Oh! What a fool I am! God is so great; God is so kind; he has already arranged food for the baby which is not yet born; then why won't he feed me too? I better spend more time in my studies and contemplative practices than bother about the stomach!" He returned to his forest home and engaged himself in enquiring about the Self and succeeded in no time.

Moreover what is the beauty we perceive in a woman?

Each person develops an idea of beauty in his mind according to the environment and education he has access to.

When any person of the opposite sex is seen, the mind superimposes the idea of beauty in the person though actually there is nothing beautiful about the human body.

As Shankara rightly says, what is a female body that provokes all men all over the world? Just a meat piece with eruptions and stinking holes here and there, which when alive is preyed upon by men and when lifeless is preyed upon by dogs!

4

नलिनीदलगतजलमतितरलम्
 तद्वत्जीवितमतिशयचपलम्
 विद्धि व्याध्यभिमानग्रस्तम्
 लोकं शोकहतं च समस्तम् ॥

*The water drop clinging on to the petal of the lotus flower is highly unstable;
 likewise the life is also extremely unstable!
 Know that this entire world held in the grasp of disease and vanity
 is stuck by extreme sorrow!*

Suppose it is argued that that wealth and sense pleasures even if ephemeral, pleasures of all sorts even if just a magic of chemicals - life is for enjoyment only; there does not arise the need for Self-realization; Shankara gives the answer.

What life? What enjoyment?

Show one person of the world without any disease or vanity!

A child is a helpless dependent; an old person is also a helpless dependent. And uncontrolled enjoyments in youth are definitely going to obey the laws of science and erupt in the body as diseases.

Even if one proudly proves his unblemished health of the body, he is surely stuck by the mental diseases like envy, jealousy, hatred, vanity, selfishness, anxiety etc.

It may be easier to find a man free of diseases even, but a man who has no anger, no anxiety, no tension, no irritation etc. is difficult to find. And if even one such negative emotion is there, physical ailments are not far off.

There is a very popular story of Gautama Buddha!

A woman fell at his feet asking him to revive her dead child; he asked her to get a handful of mustard seeds from a house where death had not occurred. She searched for a long time here and there and came back empty handed. Then Buddha explained to her the ephemeral state of life and taught her the path of wisdom.

Any man or woman who claims that the material bliss is the true aim of life cannot claim that he or she is not at all affected by the death and diseases of their close ones; that he or she is not affected by the selfishness and vanity of the other co-existent beings.

And how long does one live on this Earth?

After sixty years one gets ready to get frightened of the demon called death. Every time his acquaintance of the same age dies; he sighs with relief- 'I escaped' and cries heartily for the dead one!

A Tamil saint (Pattinattaar) once was walking on the street. He heard a wailing sound from one house on the roadside. He peeped in and discovered that there had been a death in the family and everyone was crying for the dead one. He immediately collapsed on the ground and started weeping aloud beating his chest repeatedly. The others who were just crying for the sake of habit stopped their work and said to each other; "Look at this man; he is so good; he is also crying for the dead man like us".

The saint got up and said, "I am not crying for this dead man; I am crying in advance for you people who are going to die!"

He laughed aloud and walked away as the people there watched him wonder-stuck.

Life is more unstable than a water drop clinging to the tip of the lotus petal. One will never know when it will fall off; the lotus petal is not going to support the poor water drop. What value is the land or gold or money worth in this tiny phase of human life?

Sri Ramakrishna says:

Only two times does God smile at the foolishness of human beings; when some one says –'this land is mine'; another time when the doctor says – 'I have saved this patient'!

यावद्वित्तोपार्जनसक्तः
तावन्निजपरिवारो रक्तः
पश्चाज्जीवति जर्जरदेहे
वार्ता कोऽपि न पृच्छति गेहे ॥

*As long as a man is capable of earning wealth,
so long does one's family show some interest.
Later one lives in a dilapidated body;
no one even utters a word of enquiry in one's home!*

If it is argued that it does not matter that the life is ephemeral; life is worth living for the enjoyment it offers even in that tiny period; wealth is necessary to maintain a family so all the run around is done for the family only ; what is wrong with that?

Sri Shankara says:

What family? Do the family members really have true affection for the Master of the house?

There was a terrifying dacoit living in the jungles of Himalayas. He ruthlessly killed any one who travelled in those jungles and robbed them of their wealth. There was no compassion in his heart for any other human being except his family members.

Once, Sage Naarada chanced to pass that way. The dacoit stopped him and threatened to kill him if he did not offer him his possessions. Naarada laughed aloud and said that he owned nothing and slowly engaged the dacoit in a friendly conversation. He asked casually the reason for the dacoit to rob and kill all travelers.

The dacoit confessed that he had a large family and had to loot and rob to feed them all. The Sage then described to him all the hells and the punishments waiting for the dacoit after his death. The dacoit started sweating and started crying. Naarada consoled him and told him to tell the family members about all this and request them to share his punishments too as they shared his earnings. The dacoit was sure that his family members would help him in this matter and went home. When he related all that the Sage had said and asked them to share his punishments, they laughed and said, your earnings alone belong to us, not your sins.

The dacoit was shocked by their reply; returned to the Sage and related what had happened. The Sage then advised him that he can get rid of the sins by repeating the Supreme name of the Lord – Rama!

The dacoit trusted the Sage's words and decided to repeat it for a long time till all his sins were destroyed. He left the family; entered deep jungles; sat under a tree and started repeating the two letters RA MA.

He was so absorbed in the recitation that he lost sense of his body. Soon leaves covered his body. Ants built a mud colony over his immobile body. Snakes made it their home. The dacoit was unaware of all this. Only two letters were repeatedly heard from deep inside the ant hill. Again Naarada appeared in the scene. He woke up the dacoit with his Yogic power. The dacoit immediately came crashing out of the anthill- the VALMIKA. He is VAALMIKI, the author of Ramayana; the most compassionate Sage ever known, who cried at the death of a bird shot by a hunter.

Understand the fact that your family does not want 'you'; it wants only your money. When you later live as a dependent in your body which is shattered by old age, no one has even the courtesy to exchange a single word. If at all any kindness is shown, it will be because of a masked politeness or expecting some more wealth or it may akin to the kindness shown to a dying dog on the roadside!

The day you die, they will be relieved that at last the old devil is gone!
That is family and world for you!

6

यावत्पवनो निवसति गेहे
तावन्पृच्छति कुशलं गेहे
गतवति वायौ देहापाये
भार्या बिभ्यति तस्मिन्काये ॥

*As long as the air resides in the body,
till then will any one care for one's welfare.
When the breathe leaves at the death of the body
even a wife fears the non-moving corpse!*

If it is argued that one does not care what the family thinks but lives for one's own sake, then Sri Shankara says:

What life? What enjoyment?

Some fine day without any prior information death will snatch your life away!

The body which you pamper by feeding the most exotic food, the body which you use for enjoying any pleasure money can buy, will one day lie lifeless. At least an old man breathing still is permitted to stay in a dark corner of the house like a dying dog; but once the air circulation in the body stops, people look at the lifeless corpse with disgust and treat it like loathsome object.

If you could see the inner feeling of the people sitting around the corpse, you will wonder how you lived with all of them all through your life!

The wife whom you drowned in gold and diamonds will refuse to stay with the dead body alone. She will shy away from that very body which embraced her with all love and affection. Gone are all the respect, glory and greatness along with the wind which ceased to enter your nasal holes blocked with cotton pieces!

7

बालस्तावत् क्रीडासक्तः
 तरुणस्तावत् तरुणीसक्तः
 वृद्धस्तावत् चिन्तासक्तः
 परमे ब्रह्मणि कोऽपि न सक्तः ॥

*The child is interested only in playing.
 The youth is interested only in the young girl.
 The old man is interested in only worrying.
 No one is interested in Para Brahman!*

If it is argued that there is no time to pursue the higher truths because one has to educate himself, earn for the family, guide the youngsters and so on-

Sri Shankara says: How can there be no time for nobler things in life?
 Yes true; survival is difficult in a world full of competitions and challenges; but if we analyze where all one wastes time it will be really surprising.

A child spends more time in playing than learning; a youth spends more time in seeking the company of pretty girls than gathering knowledge; an old man suffers that his desires have not been fulfilled in a short span of life and envies the youngsters!
 Who has time for Para Brahman!

का ते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः
 सम्सारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः
 कस्य त्वं कुत आयातः
 तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिह भ्रातः ॥

*Who is your beloved wife? Who is your son?
 This worldly existence is very strange!
 To whom do you belong?
 Who are you?
 Where have you come from?
 O My Brother!
 Think about the true answers for these enquiries!*

Sri Shankara advises the man to free himself for just a few minutes in his never ending race for money and enjoyments and think:
 Just jump outside your own identity for a few minutes and look at your surroundings, your family, your own place in this Universe, like watching the characters moving on a pre-arranged stage.

Sri Ramana once did like this when lying on the bed analyzing his own identity. He just wondered what would happen if he died that very moment. He brought the whole death scenario into his vision and watched it like a drama watched by an outsider. He saw the dead body, the people lamenting on his death, the body carried on the pall, and he even saw his body consumed by fire. He wondered how if the body was no more, he was not yet dead. He did not imagine the scene; he actually was in the scene. Death of the body was not imagined by him; but he had gone thorough the death phase as a reality. He was observing from within the body-field itself, the body dying, the body burning etc. He was in the body when it was set fire to; but he did not feel the fire. It was a true experience for him, not an imagined contemplation.

At the moment the body became ashes, he was in the Self state and was the Para Brahman watching the projections of a mind labeled as VenkatRaaman in this world. He had no sensation of the body from that moment. When he opened the so called eyes of his body, he felt he was in a dream experience. He could not identify with the body of the boy lying on the bed. But it moved if he willed; the body was just an 'It' for him; so he just moved 'it' towards the hill where he felt his father's presence would be there.

Father?

AnnaaMalai of the Red Mountain! Who else!

For Akka Mahadevi it was Sri Shaila, for Ramana it was Arunaachala.

He just lived as Ramana till the perceptions ceased at the so called death of the body. Otherwise his state was like space, having no identity with anything; everything was just a dream like experience for him; a play of Para Brahman!

He was a supreme Yogi; yes, a Maha Rishi of the Yore appearing in a body structure in this modern age. He died 'once when alive' and remained as his true Self the rest of the life here in a 'Ramana perceived world'; as Para Brahman playing the role of Ramana!

Any one, who realizes the Self is in the state of Para Brahman, perceives the 'mind projected world' as a dream; Para Brahman as Mahadevi; Para Brahman as Ramakrishna; Para Brahman as Shankara and so on.

That Para Brahman can see the world as you and me too. That Para Brahman alone is the Self of all! Once you realize the true Self of yours, you can also be blissful like Ramana or Ramakrishna or any such great ones.

Realization does not mean that you have to walk out of the family and stop enjoying the world; but it is seeing the world as a projection of the mind from the state of Para Brahman.

The same world; but different knowledge!

Same blue sky; you know that it is the play of atmosphere in the colorless space; you know in your inner eye that there is infinite space beyond this blue color.

But by your Knowledge, blue color does not disappear.

Same blue sky; an ignorant one sees nothing beyond the blue color; for him it is a canopy provided by some God!

That is why Shankara advices you to just hold back yourself for a few minutes and analyze the world and people around you.

“Who am I? Who is this person called wife? Who is this son of mine?

Are the things perceived real or are they the projections of my own mind?

Where was I before getting born? What will happen after death?

What will happen to all these family members when they die?

Will we all meet again after death? Will we become ghosts and wander aimlessly in crematoriums? What is a soul? Who am I?”

Thus one should enquire and find the answers for these questions. These questions are not the quiz contest questions; but questions that will tear of the lies around you and free you from the limited existence you have inadvertently stuck with!

सत्सङ्गत्वे निस्सङ्गत्वम्
 निस्सङ्गत्वे निर्मोहत्वम्
 निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्त्वम्
 निश्चलतत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ॥

*In the company of the noble lies detachment.
 In detachment lies dispassion.
 In dispassion lies the Non-moving Truth.
 In the Non-moving Truth lies 'liberation while living'.*

Well, you listened to Shankara's advice and asked these questions to yourself; of course not all can find the correct answers; may be you did not find too.

Most people think Self Realization is some state you have to reach by countless hours of contemplation and meditation.

Some think that they will see color lights; some think that they will see Shiva or Brahma or Vishnu; some think that a golden colored Brahma as HiranyaGarbha will be there; some think that they will be transported to heavenly worlds and will have wonderful experiences; some think that they will be able to know all the three time phases past, present and future of everybody; some think that they will float in the air; some think that they will be like Gods having all the world at their feet; some think that they will become Gods!

Or else, they all pretend to do all this and mislead their students towards these goals and make Self-realization sound like some far off state high above the sky; most of all, these religious freaks think that realized state is a weapon against scientific reasoning.

Little do they know what the Scriptures advocate actually!
 Scriptures like YogaVaasishta, Tripura Rahasya, and Upadesha Saahasri etc. explain the Universe as it is presented in the modern theories of Physics.

Anyhow Self-realization is not a magical turning point in your life. You will not become super human by realizing your own Self.

You are thinking you are a limited Self; after Self realization you will understand that you are Para Brahman. That is all. It is just the true understanding of your own identity.

We have heard of the story where some child left to the care of the wolves in the forest grows up like a wolf imitating the cries and behavior of the wolves. When that child who was behaving like a wolf was brought to the city and trained to become human, he realized his human nature. From the misperception that he is an animal, he understood that he was human.

That is Self realization for him.

Swami Vivekananda quotes the story of a lion cub which grew up in the midst of sheep. It ate grass like the sheep, it bleated like the sheep; it was happy to be a sheep. Then once there came a lion hunting for food. He was surprised to see the lion cub acting like a sheep. He caught it in his huge mouth and brought it away from the other sheep. The lion cub trembled in fear. The lion roared and said-“Hmm! Roar like me”. The sheep struggled a little; but when it roared, immediately all its sheep-ness was gone. It knew it was the lion all the time. The cub roared again and pounced on the sheep as the Master did. That is realization for the lion.

When the teacher roars –I AM THAT, the disciple also roars I AM THAT and realizes the same state as the Guru.

Seek a Master who is not a magician; seek a Master who exactly tells you what the Scriptures say without his own version; seek a Master who has no interest in advertising himself as a Super Guru. If you do not find such a one in the present world, seek the books and get the company of the past saints. Learn from them how to develop detachment; the worldly patterns will stop affecting you; slowly you will develop a disinterest in all the worldly pleasures; you will develop equanimity; you will understand the One Reality which is the support of this multifarious perceptions; with the Vision of the Self you will become liberated while living!

10

वयसि गते कः कामविकारः

शुष्के नीरे कः कासारः

क्षीणे वित्ते कः सम्सारः

ज्ञाते तत्त्वे कः सम्सारः ॥

When youth is gone, where remains the lascivious desire?

When the water has dried up, where remains the lake?

When the wealth is gone, where remains the surrounding crowd?

When the Truth is known, where remains the worldly existence?

If there is a doubt as to the efficacy of Self-realization, Shankara explains how the world loses its solid nature, once the Truth is known.
When a person becomes old, his senses surely lose their power to satisfy his desires. Desires are not there, you cannot say; but capacity to fulfill the desires surely is not there. This is a well-known truth.

There was a King named Yayaati. He became an old man by the curse of Sage Shukraachaarya. He exchanged his old age with his youngest son Puru and enjoyed all the sense pleasures. Old age indeed is a cursed age where desires are alive and the body is almost dead!

When water dries up, it is not a lake but dry land!
When experiences dry up, the human body is just a worthless collection of atoms which move in and out and nothing more!

Another sure thing that everyone knows but do not understand is that the love and affection of all the family and friends is based only on the wealth one owns; if ever it becomes less or is completely gone, not one single person will even recognize the poor man's existence.

If all these things are certain occurrences in the world, then the disappearance of the limitations of the worldly existence at the time of realization is also true.
How can the Samsara remain when the Truth is known?

11

मा कुरु धनजनयौवनगर्वम्
हरति निमेषात्कालः सर्वम्
मायामयमिदमखिलम् बुद्ध्वा
ब्रह्मपदं त्वं प्रविश विदित्वा ॥

*Do not be vain headed about wealth, people and youth.
Time snatches away everything within a minute!
Understanding the entire world to be of illusory nature,
knowing the TRUTH you enter the 'State of Brahman'!*

Shankara addresses those who ignore his advice and walk away unbothered. The wealthy, the youth and people surrounded by the affectionate members of the family surely do not go after the realization of the Truth. They are so happy with their present status; they seem to think that the same state will continue forever! They never can imagine any thing can change and upset their happy lives.

Shankara warns these ignorant fools:

Wealth is not a permanent feature of life. Even Rama lived his youthful years in a forest; Paandavas never ever enjoyed any royal status; Nala did not even have a cloth to cover his body; even Gods lose their powers and suffer! Who can say what will happen the next moment?

Youth just stays in a man's life as long as a lightning flash. Rest of the life is just a struggle to live in a competitive society. Just because one becomes attractive to other youthful members of the opposite sex, it does not mean that it will be the 'be all and end all' in life. A few intoxicated years and one is back again in the whirlpool of Samsaara. That is the age also where a man commits the maximum mistakes and ends up as an unhealthy scarecrow after the youthful years are gone!

And as far as the family and friends who surround you, they might be there for the wealth you possess and enjoy the material benefits bestowed by your generous nature. They will leave you once you lose the wealth. Suppose you proudly announce that your family members and friends are pure and loving, with hearts equal to gold, then be assured that death or diseases will snatch them away and leave you lost in the world. Time like a cruel demon eats up all your years, possessions and people.

Do not waste time; do not procrastinate; do not trust the stable nature of anything in the world. Understand the delusory nature of the world, quickly realize your own Self and enter the state of Para Brahman and be blissful.

12

दिनयामिन्यौ सायं प्रातः
 शिशिरवसन्तौ पुनरायातः
 कालः क्रीडति गच्छत्यायुः
 तदपि न मुञ्चति आशावायुः ॥

*Day and night, dusk and dawn,
 winter and spring again arrive!
 Time plays its game; life ebbs away.
 Even then, the winds of desires never leave one!*

Observe the world, says Shankara:

What is permanent in this impermanent world?

Night follows day; day follows night; seasons keep on repeating; year after year you struggle to achieve the fulfillment of your countless desires.

At the fag end of you life, as you lie on the death bed breathing heavily, when the body has lost control of even the excretory systems, when your loved ones avoid coming close to you unable to bear the stink; when your eyes do not see, when your ears do not hear, when death is slowly eating you up; even then your mind is alive thinking about all unfulfilled wants of yours!

What a pity!

13

का ते कान्ता धनगतचिन्ता
 वातुल किं तव नास्ति नियन्ता
 त्रिजगति सज्जनसङ्गतिरेका
 भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका ॥

Who is your wife?

Wherefore is this anxiety for accumulation of wealth?

O Ignorant one!

Is there not a Controller for you?

In all the three worlds, only the company of the noble

becomes the ship taking you across the ocean of mundane existence!

O man! Why are you so much after accumulating wealth? Why are you so much attached to the pleasures got by your wife and children?

O man! Be serious! Is there no one to guide you in the correct way?

Come on; do not waste time; seek the company of the noble ones!

Can't you see that you are in a stormy ocean of suffering? Are you blind to everything around you? Don't you know that the happiness you enjoy at the present moment will last only for a flickering second and you will be drowned soon in endless physical and mental anguish?

Imagine this scene:

A man walking in the forest has slipped and is falling into a deep pit. He somehow manages to grab a long root of the tree which was hanging from the above ground. Inside the pit, at the deep bottom roars a hungry tiger and is jumping at him repeatedly to snap at his legs. A rat is slowly nibbling the root he is hanging on to. A huge mad elephant is ready to smash him to bits if he ever climbs out of the pit. A deadly snake is slowly climbing down the root to put its fangs on him. The man can never escape his death; he knows it too. At that time a drop of honey drips from a honeycomb from a tall branch of the tree. The man sees it falling and immediately puts his tongue out to lick that drop of the sweet honey!

The enjoyment of a human being in this world is equal to the drop of honey with many forms of death lurking all around.

So quickly wake up to the dangers of this worldly existence, seek the guidance of the noble and get yourself safely deposited on the blissful shores of Self-realization.

14

जटिलो मुण्डी लुञ्चितकेशः
 काषायाम्बरबहुकृतवेषः
 पश्यन्नपि न पश्यति मूढो
 ह्युदरनिमित्तं बहुकृतवेषः ॥

*Matted locks; clean-shaven heads; plucked out hairs;
 saffron cloths; many are the disguises worn!
 Though seeing, the fool does not see;
 all types of disguises worn only to fill the belly!*

Be careful of the Gurus of this world.

Do not get fooled by their flowery speeches and God-like acts.

Matted locks do not signify hard penance; hair plucked out torturously does not signify sainthood; saffron cloth does not mean renunciation.

All these are disguises worn by the cheats to fill their belly with sweets made of pure ghee and tasty rice balls.

These ignorant ones are surely in a position to really sit and contemplate on the Self; but they consume intoxicating roots and leaves and pretend to be in the trance of the Samadhi state. Beware of these lazy idiots!

15

अङ्गं गलितं पलितं मुण्डम्
 दशनविहीनं जातं तुण्डम्
 वृद्धो याति गृहीत्वा दण्डम्
 तदपि न मुञ्चति आशापिण्डम् ॥

*The limbs are worn out; the head has turned bald;
 the gums have become teeth less;
 the old man moves with the support of the stick;
 even then he does not leave the morsel of desires!*

Look at the old man who wasted his youthful years in the pursuit of wealth and women. He would have been the most handsome man in his youth; girls would have swooned at his very sight; he might have been the wealthiest man at those times. He would have lavishly spent his money on all those who licked his feet in adoration. He might have worked day and night continuously to accumulate the wealth. He might have spent sleepless nights in worrying about how to increase his wealth.

But now look at him!

His whole body shivers with weakened nerves; he can not eat any thing much because of the diseases he has incurred by his worries and unhealthy habits of youth; all the black hair which he admired every day standing in front of the mirror has fallen gradually somewhere in his life's long journey; his teeth are gone and he can not even speak clearly; even to walk a few steps he needs a stick to support him.

His family members give more respect to their pet dogs than him. Everyone is waiting for him to die and leave his wealth to them; even servants do not bother about him; his wife, if still alive has no time to enquire about his welfare even once a day; she has to butter up the next heir by her services so that her position is stabilized in the future; most of his friends are dead or in the same state suffering innumerable ailments; he is alone and truly alone fearing the death lurking in the corner; but look at him eyeing the left over sweets on a child's plate and trying to pick up the crumbs with his trembling hands for the tiny pleasure sensation that may arise in his tongue for a second!

What a pity! What a pity!

If only he had listened to the voice of the saints and sought self-control in his youth, he would now be the Master of his body, mind and situation! He missed the train, so to say! He missed the golden opportunity of realizing the Self in his youth and now suffering the consequences!

16

अग्ने वह्निः पृष्टे भानुः
 रात्रौ चुबकसमर्पितजानुः
 करतलभिक्षस्तरुतलवासः
 तदपि न मुञ्चत्याशापाशः ॥

*Fire in the front and sun at the back;
 at night cuddling up with the chin buried in the knees;
 palm as the begging bowl; and residence under a tree;
 even then the rope of desires does not loosen up!*

Look at those fake Gurus and saints filling up every nook and corner of temples and holy places! They also do not have any home or family; true! They too own no property. They wander here and there all through the day; fill their stomach by begging in holy places. As the sun sets, they collect sticks and make a warm fire; sleep on the ground with their bodies so much cuddled up that the chin touches their knees; they do not have much clothes also to call their own; they do not even possess begging bowls; they use their palms to hold the food given as charity; they live under trees; they look like true saints; they look like Sages who have renounced everything; they live under the tree and eat what they get daily as charity.

But are they true Gurus? Are they great Sages? Are they fit to be your guides?

It is just a lazy life they lead; they did not attend schools in their childhood because they thought acquiring Knowledge was a waste of time; they renounced the family because of laziness, for family meant responsibilities; a family would force them to earn regularly; so they ran away from home; they discovered that acting a saint got them easy food; they live addicted to herbal drugs too.

These saffron attired men are not the true Knowers; they are just lazy beggars and cheats. Beware of these fake saints!

17

कुरुते गङ्गासगरगमनम्
 व्रतपरिपालनमथवा दानम्
 ज्ञानविहीनः सर्वमतेन
 मुक्तिं न भजति जन्मशतेन ॥

*One journeys up to GangaaSaagar;
 performs austerities or charities;
 a person without Knowledge – in the opinion of one and all,
 does not attain Liberation even in hundred births!*

How do you start your spiritual journey- by travelling to sacred places like GangaaSaagar, Kaashi, Rameshvaram, etc etc.?

How do you plan to get liberation- by performing severe austerities like starving, rolling on the temple floor, eating food from the muddy ground, piercing the tongue and back-side with spears?

What are you going to do become a saint – give charity and smile at the downtrodden like a savior?

You can try all these in every birth; even after hundred births you will never be near the goal of liberation you want to achieve; as long as you have not gained the true Knowledge of your Self!

18

सुरमन्दिरतरुमूलनिवासः
 शय्या भूतलमजिनं वासः
 सर्वपरिग्रहभोगत्यागः
 कस्य सुखं न करोति विरागः ॥

*Living in temples and under the trees;
 bare ground as bed and deer-skin as a cover for the body;
 complete renunciation of all attachments and pleasures;
 to whom does such a dispassion not bestow bliss!*

What is true dispassion like?

This Yogi also has no home or family; he has renounced everything with the only purpose of realizing the Truth; he continuously travels to meet great saints who might guide him in his life and help achieve his goal; he does not care what he eats or where he sleeps; it may be a ruined temple on the roadside or just a tree in the middle of the forest; he does not care. Even a tree is a God given home to him. Any ground is enough to serve him as a bed. Some discarded animal skin is enough for him to cover his body; to such a man of dispassion, dispassion is not an advertisement to attract crowds but the real bliss of freedom.

Once a Tamil saint was sleeping on the stone pedestal in front of a house. He had kept his palm to support his head as he rested; a lady who passed that way commented to her friend; “Look at this man; he calls himself a Sannyasin and needs the comfort of his palm to support his head”

The saint removed his hand immediately and rested his head on the hard stone. Then the same lady returning that way commented: “Look at this fake Sannyasin; he changes his ways to please every passer by.”

The saint felt ashamed and sat up. He heard the charming laughter of his child deity Kumara in his heart and heard him say: “My dear saint! Just remain quiet!”

The saint understood the simple instruction of God and immediately quietened all his thoughts and contemplated on his Self. He realized his true state and became blissful. Later he never cared whether he slept on the finest cotton bed or on hard rocks. Every experience was the same to his stabilized mind.

Once, Swami Vivekananda was passing through a jungle. He felt extremely hungry. It was already late night. He was too tired to enter a village and beg for food. He left everything to his Mother Kaali to take care of and sat off in contemplation. A few hours later he found a villager approaching him with a lantern and a basket full of food.

Swami was surprised. The villager confessed that he was sleeping soundly when Mother Kaali appeared in his dream and ordered him to give food to a great saint who was in the forest. So he had searched everywhere and brought this food to the Yogi Maharaj. Vivekananda was amazed by the divine act of the compassionate Mother Kaali!

Dispassion is a unique state of bliss! Only those who have developed it will know the bliss arising out of it! What is more pleasurable- the sweetness of the sweet or the sweetness of not having the desire to eat it at all?

Real bliss is not in obliging the senses but in controlling them!

19

योगरतो वा भोगरतो वा
 सङ्गरतो वा सङ्गविहीनः
 यस्य ब्रह्मणि रमते चित्तम्
 नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव ॥

*Engaged in Yoga or engaged in pleasures;
 with company or without company;
 he whose higher intellect is always in the bliss of Brahman;
 he is happy; happy; happy indeed!*

For a man of true dispassion there is no outward show of renunciation. He need not even wear saffron robes and advertize his saintly nature. After realization, he may continue to live the same way as he lived before; or he may walk out of the family and become a recluse like Shuka or he may sit like an idiot like Jada Bharata or he may become the most charming personality in the society like Krishna, or he may become a good administrator like King Janaka. It does not matter how he makes the narrative of his life! It is his random wish, what he chooses to do.

Whatever he is doing, wherever he is, he is always in the blissful state of his Self and enjoys any pattern of life that happens to be around him. His bliss never diminishes. He is of the nature of bliss itself and the pleasures of the world even if he chances to enjoy do not affect him at all. He is like the ocean which never increases or decreases by the amount of waters by rivers entering it or evaporating to form clouds.

20

भगवद्गीता किञ्चिदधीता
 गङ्गाजललवकणिका पीता
 सकृदपि येन मुरारि समर्चा
 क्रियते तस्य यमेन न चर्चा ॥

*If Bhagavad-Gita is read even just a little;
 if even a droplet of the Ganges water is drunk;
 if one has worshipped the Killer of Mura even once;
 he has nothing to discuss with Yama!*

Of course it is not easy to realize the Self so easily as a Shuka or Janaka. In millions of births, human birth is a very rare occurrence; to desire liberation in human attire, you need the collection of merits of countless births.

So begin your spiritual journey by doing virtuous acts; read now and then Gita a little; do not recite it like a parrot, but read one verse a day at least and contemplate on its meaning the whole day; soon you will know what Krishna tells you about your Self!

Visit holy places; not to see the stone idols and watch the color liquids bathing the taintless God; but maybe in such visits you will chance to see a true Yogi somewhere and he may guide you in the spiritual path!

Worship some deity with love; it does not matter which divine form happens to be your chosen deity; all forms of Gods are nothing but the variously shaped sugar cakes with Para Brahman acting as the sugar in all of them! But do not ask these Gods for wealth, health and solutions to family troubles; do not ask for anything, but cry at the lotus feet of the Lord "Oh when will I realize my Self and have dispassion towards the worldly objects?" Pray only for Knowledge.

When NarendraNaath first met Ramakrishna, his family was in dire financial crisis. There was not even enough food to feed all the family members. Many a times Narendra would go without food for many a days, till Mother Shaarada finding out about his starvation fed him whenever he visited Dakshineshvar. Once Narendra argued with his Master and begged him to tell Mother Kaali about his family problems and get them removed by her power. Ramakrishna smiled and asked him to go to the temple of Kaali and ask the boon himself. When Narendra went and stood before the statue of the Mother, his mouth would pray to her asking to bestow dispassion and Knowledge on him; he could never ask for material boons at all. He tried for three days consecutively and later gave it up as a futile effort. His prayers were answered. In one magical day, the ordinary Narendra became a world renowned Vivekananda!

21

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणम्
 पुनरपि जननीजटरे शयनम्
 इह सम्सारे बहुदुस्तारे
 कृपयापारे पाहि मुरारे ॥

*Once again a birth once again a death;
 once again a sleep inside the womb of the mother!
 O Muraari! Save me with extreme compassion
 in this worldly existence which is very difficult to cross over!*

Birth follows death; death follows birth; again and again a residence reserved in a mother's womb! Who else can save you from this never ending cycle other than the Supreme Godhead Naaraayana! Pray to him; hold on to his lotus feet; cry out your inability to grasp the subtle truths; do not lose faith in him; he will surely guide you in your spiritual journey; he is the most compassionate of all Gods!
MURAARI means the enemy of the demon MURA; MUR also means to envelop, to encircle; one who destroys the encircling delusion around us is also MURAARI.

22

रथ्याचर्पटविरचितकन्थः
पुण्यापुण्यविवर्जितपन्थः
योगी योगनियोजितचित्तः
रमते बालोन्मत्तवदेव ॥

*Some ragged cloth made out of torn pieces fallen on the chariot driven road
to cover the body;
the path of life free of merits and demerits;
the Yogi with his pure intellect fully merged
in the union of his Self with the Supreme Self;
is gleeful like a child or a mad person!*

How will you identify a realized person? Very difficult!
He may be living right next to you and you won't know him.
He may be that idiot looking guy who collects thrown way pieces of rags from the road and stitches a clothing for himself; or he may be that mad person who is laughing aloud for no apparent reason; or he may be that saffron robed saint playing with children like a child; or he might be the most decently dressed rich man in the most expensive car passing by!

A realized person has no merits to gain; nor any sins to collect! Whatever he does has no connection to him. He is free to live as he likes; he has no duties ordained for him; he is just happy anywhere, anytime, doing anything, and not doing anything also.

23

कस्त्वं कोऽहं कुत आयातः
 का मे जननी को मे तातः
 इति परिभावय सर्वमसारम्
 विश्वं त्यक्त्वा स्वप्नविचारम् ॥

*Who are you? Who am I?
 From where have I come from?
 Who is this mother of mine?
 Who is this father of mine?
 Thus contemplate on everything as of no essence;
 rejecting the entire Universe as belonging to a dream world!*

Those great Yogis of yore followed the path of Self enquiry.
 You can also reach the same blissful state by asking the same questions to yourself.

Who am I? Who are you? Where did I come from? Who is this mother who gave birth to my body? Who is the father? Did I have parents in my last birth? Where are they? I might have parents of many births too! Maybe this donkey standing in front of my house might have been a mother to me in some birth! Why do I not love this mother of my past birth? What is the meaning of this all? Is it all just a dream from which I will wake up one day and laugh at the whole thing?

(VISHVA means the ever changing world of perceptions.)

24

त्वयि मयि चान्यत्रैको विष्णुः
 व्यर्थं कुप्स्यसि मय्यसहिष्णुः
 भव समचित्तः सर्वत्र त्वम्
 वाञ्छस्यचिराद्यदि विष्णुत्वम् ॥

*In you, in me, and in others too, there is only that One Vishnu existing!
 You are getting angry with me being impatient with me!
 You just be equal minded everywhere
 if you wish to attain the state of Vishnu very soon!*

Shankara consoles the eager student who asks for the quickest means for realizing the Self:

You want to attain the state of the all pervading Vishnu, is it not so?

That Vishnu or Para Brahman or Self is the same Self in everyone: know that first.

When you lose all differentiations between every one, the next simplest thing to do is just be equal minded everywhere.

Do not get excited by good things; do not get depressed by tragedies.

Do not love a person or hate a person. Do not have likes and dislikes.

Do not get angry or overly happy.

Remain always in the same state of thoughtless quietness.

You will soon be in the Supreme state of Self!

(VISHNU means one who pervades everything.)

25

शत्रौ मित्रे पुत्रे बन्धौ
मा कुरु यत्नं विग्रहसन्धौ
सर्वस्मिन्नपि पश्यात्मानम्
सर्वत्रोत्सृज भेदाज्ञानम् ॥

*Do not make efforts in separating from or joining
with a foe or friend or son or relative.
See Thine own Self everywhere.
Completely get rid of
the ignorant conception of differentiation everywhere!*

Do not waste your time in setting right the family narratives.

It is a useless effort and wastes your precious time too.

Everyone gets provoked by the chemicals acting in their brain and body.

There is no meaning in their anger, joy, love or hatred. They just react to outer circumstances and have no purpose in life. Their very existence is to feel anxious and suffer.

If you have the goal of realizing your Self, then stop worrying about the life narratives. Watch every event like a witness. Do not feel anxious about everything. See everything as a projection of your own Self. See it as a dream concocted by your mind.

26

कामं क्रोधं लोभं मोहम्
 त्यक्त्वात्मानं भावय कोऽहम्
 आत्मज्ञानविहीना मूढाः
 ते पच्यन्ते नरकनिगूढाः ॥

*Renouncing completely the emotions of desire, anger, greed, and delusion
 contemplate on the Self and enquire –Who am I?
 Those of dullened intellects bereft of Self-Knowledge
 will bake in the hell fires forever.*

Have perfect control over your emotions.
 Do not have desires for any worldly object.
 Do not feel annoyed when you do not get what you strived for.
 Do not try to earn more than your limited needs.
 Do not give into the deluding nature of the world.
 Look at the whole world as a picture drawn on space.
 Always be in the witness state.
 Every moment observe your own actions as an outsider.
 Practice watching the continuous array of thoughts.
 Concentrate on the state of witness and remain as the Pure Consciousness alone!
 Do not bother about convincing others about the greatness of Self realization.
 Those ignorant ones, whose idea of 'I' can never go beyond the form and name will
 never be able to grasp the subtle Knowledge of the Self.
 They are bound for hells because of their ignorance.
 They do not need hells after death; their very existence here is hell like.

They are all like blind persons probing through the dark forests of life. They will dash
 against trees, bleed by hitting rocks, get pricked by thorns; fall into pits and so on. Their
 suffering never ends; they never attain what they want also. They will wander round and
 round the same thorny paths and suffer. That itself becomes their ordained hell.
 But you with the Sun of Self Knowledge shining in you can see everything on the path
 clearly. You will avoid thorns; go round tress, jump over pits, cross over the rocks and
 soon attain the Supreme Goal of oneness with Brahman.

27

गेयं गीतानामसहस्रम्
 ध्येयं श्रीपतिरूपमजस्रम्
 नेयं सज्जनसङ्गे चित्तम्
 देयम् दीनजनाय च वित्तम् ॥

*Bhagavad-Gita and the thousand names of Vishnu have to be recited.
 The form of Sri Hari should be meditated upon a million times.
 The mind has to be guided towards the company of the noble.
 The wealth has to be given off to the poor!*

Perform virtuous acts.

Study and understand scriptures like Gita and Upanishads.

Worship any chosen Godhead with love and devotion. Pray for Knowledge.

Seek the company of learned men and clear your doubts.

Keep that much wealth alone to fulfill your minimum needs and give away rest of the wealth in charity. By such acts only a desire for liberation will arise in you.

28

सुखतः क्रियते रामाभोगः
 पश्चात् हन्त शरीरे रोगः
 यद्यपि लोके मरणं शरणम्
 तदपि न मुञ्चति पापाचरणम् ॥

Alas!

*One completely gives himself up to enjoyments when in good health;
 later the body is ridden with diseases.
 When surely death alone is the final refuge for one and all,
 the man does not ever cease from his sinful actions!*

No one is aware of the instability of life. They just believe that life goes on forever in the same way. The first half of their life is spent in accumulating wealth and fulfilling all the sensuous desires. They do not have the least control over their minds. A desire arises and they do all that they can to fulfill it immediately. Life just ebbs away satisfying one desire after the other. The later half of their life is filled with innumerable ailments and anxieties. They slowly tread their way towards death and vanish off like dust blown away by the winds. But the lesson is never learnt.

Once a Yaksha asked Yudhishtira – “What is the most amazing thing in life?”

The eldest of the Paandavas answered:

“A man sees some one or other dying every day. Yet he thinks he will live forever. That is the most amazing thing in life!”

29

अर्थमनर्थं भावय नित्यम्
नास्ति सुखलेशः सत्यम्
पुत्रादपि धनभाजां भीतिः
सर्वत्रैषा विहिता रीतिः ॥

Reflect always that wealth is just a calamity.

There is not an iota of joy present in it; this is indeed true.

There is fear of it getting snatched away even from one's own sons.

This is an ordained way everywhere in the world.

Know the true character of wealth. The more you own the more you will suffer. Every coin you earn brings along with it a curse of untold suffering. Wealth is just a means to fulfill your basic needs and comforts. Accumulating wealth should not become the sole goal in life. One should not slave away his life just to increase his possessions. When you own a lot of wealth you are surrounded by people who have no iota of love or affection for you. Their love is pretentious and only intent on gaining favors from you. They wait for opportunities to cheat you and use you for their selfish gains. Your wealth slowly diminishes like sand from a sack filled with holes. You become the store house of all sorts of physical and mental ailments. You forget even what a good peaceful sleep is. There is no time to enjoy even the possessions you have accumulated. As you slowly tread towards the inevitable cessation of life, the sons impatiently wait for your departure to the other world, so they can put their hands on the hard earned money of yours.

There is a saying in Sanskrit:

‘The wealth not spent for oneself, nor given to others becomes wasted away for sure.’

Money was invented to indicate the value of goods getting exchanged in the barter system. The currency you possess denotes your purchasing power of goods. Hoarding this power in lockers leads only to the destruction of the country's economy.

Ornaments of gold worn on your body must enhance your beauty, no doubt; but your body should not become an ugly stand used by the gold ornament to exhibit its beauty. Keeping the body clean and pleasant is a duty ordained even by the Scriptures; but trying to look young by the use of harmful chemicals will only help in the deterioration of your body cells.

Each age in a man's life is beautiful and worth its value.
The childhood should abound in innocence and pursuit of knowledge.

Youth is the time to develop physical fitness and accumulate more specialized Knowledge. The next stage is given to the joy of experiencing love and affection from wife and children and caring for them.

Old age, with the white hair proclaiming the experiences and knowledge thereof is not a thing to be ashamed off.

Material wealth harms you; but the wealth of Knowledge leads you to eternal life and freedom.

30

प्राणायामं प्रत्याहारम्
नित्यानित्यविवेकविचारं
जाप्यसमेतसमाधिविधानम्
कुर्ववधानं महदवधानम् ॥

*The regular practice of breath-control;
keeping the mind withdrawn from sense pleasures;
the discriminative analysis between permanent and impermanent things;
contemplative practices accompanied by the recitation
(of Upanishad Mantras);
perform all these with care, extreme care!*

Practice the Yoga of breath control regularly. The main purpose of Yoga is Cessation of thoughts (Chitta-Vrtti- Nirodha). Breath and mind are interconnected. You stop the function of one the other automatically becomes still. Those who cannot control the thoughts by Will, must take recourse to Praanaayaama and control the vibrations in the mind.

This practice should be accompanied by control of desires; one should stop hankering after sense pleasures and withdraw the mind from external objects.

One should continuously discriminate about the impermanence of the objects in the world.

One should practice differentiating all the 'mine' objects from 'I'; the non-Self from the Self.

One should turn the mind inwards and contemplate on the great statements of the Upanishads. Recitation of Mantras without the comprehension of the meaning is useless. Knowledge is the only means to liberation and not actions done by mind, body or intellect.

One should be very careful not to slip in the path of spirituality. Never give in to temptations even a little. Do not think that one small mistake will do no harm. The spiritual path is akin to walking on the sword's edge. A smallest slip and the body would bleed to death.

If even the least of desires gets satisfied thinking it to be trivial, it leads to greatest harms. A desire when satisfied does not end there. It leaves behind a Vaasanaa- a latent desire as a seed which will again sprout at some unexpected time and lead you towards your downfall. So be careful; do not suppress the desires; but eliminate them through proper intellectual process. Take the mind towards nobler things in life like guiding a child towards proper actions with kind and caressing words. Do not force the mind towards sense control. It will burst out breaking the dam with hundred fold force and destroy you. Gradually bring it under control through intellectual prowess. Be careful. Very careful!

31

गुरुचरणाम्भुजनिर्भरभक्तः
 सम्सारादचिराद्भव मुक्तः
 सेन्द्रियमानसनियमादेवम्
 द्रक्ष्यसि निजहृदयस्थं देवम् ॥

*O Devotee holding on to the lotus feet of the Guru!
 Be liberated from this worldly existence soon!
 By the discipline of the mind accompanied by sense control in this manner
 you will visualize the Lord seated in your own heart!*

समाप्तम्

May anyone who reads the instructions of
the Great Guru Shankara with devotion
attain liberation while living, soon.

By treading the path lighted by the kind words of the great Guru,
one is sure to gain control over his mind and attain Self-Realization.
One will surely get established in the Supreme state of Para Brahman
by the grace of Sri Shankara the Great Guru.

OM TAT SAT