

Classic Poetry Series

# Adi Shankaracharya

## - poems -

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# Adi Shankaracharya(788 - 820)

Adi Shankara (Sanskrit: आदि शंकराचार्यः Adi Saṅkara), also known as Saṅkara Bhagavatpadacharya and Adi Saṅkaracharya was an Indian sage from Kalady in present day Kerala who consolidated the doctrine of advaita vedanta. His teachings are based on the unity of the atman and brahman— non-dual brahman, in which brahman is viewed as nirguna brahman, brahman without attributes.

Shankara travelled across the Indian subcontinent to propagate his philosophy through discourses and debates with other thinkers. He is reputed to have founded four mathas ("monasteries"), which helped in the historical development, revival and spread of Advaita Vedanta of which he is known as the greatest revivalist. Adi Shankara is believed to be the organizer of the Dashanami monastic order and the founder of the Shanmata tradition of worship.

His works in Sanskrit concern themselves with establishing the doctrine of advaita (nondualism). He also established the importance of monastic life as sanctioned in the Upanishads and Brahma Sutra, in a time when the Mimamsa school established strict ritualism and ridiculed monasticism. Shankara represented his works as elaborating on ideas found in the Upanishads, and he wrote copious commentaries on the Vedic canon (Brahma Sutra, principal upanishads and Bhagavad Gita) in support of his thesis. The main opponent in his work is the Mimamsa school of thought, though he also offers arguments against the views of some other schools like Samkhya and certain schools of Buddhism.

## <b> Life </b>

Traditional accounts of Adi Shankara's life can be found in the Shankara Vijayams, which are poetic works that contain a mix of biographical and legendary material, written in the epic style. The most important among these biographies are the Madhaviya Saṅkara Vijayaḥ (of Madhava, c. 14th century), the Cidvilasiya Saṅkara Vijayaḥ (of Cidvilasa, c. between 15th century and 17th century), and the Keraliya Saṅkara Vijayaḥ (of the Kerala region, extant from c. 17th century).

## <b> Birth and Childhood </b>

Shankara was born to Sivaguru [VISWAKARMA] and Aryamba Antharjanam in Kaladi in central present day Kerala, 4 km from Nedumbassery airport, Kochi.

According to lore, it was after his parents, who had been childless for many years, prayed at the Vadakkunnathan temple, Thrissur that Sankara was born under the star Thiruvathira.

His father died while Shankara was very young. Shankara's upanayana?, the initiation into student-life, had to be delayed due to the death of his father, and was then performed by his mother. As a child, Shankara showed remarkable scholarship, mastering the four Vedas by the age of eight.

### <b> Sannyasa </b>

At the tender age of 7, Shankara was inclined towards sannyasa, but it was only after much persuasion that his mother finally gave her consent. He only received her consent in a very interesting manner. While bathing in the river Poorna one day, a crocodile caught hold of his leg. Shankara appealed to his mother, who had arrived at Poorna, asking for permission to become a sanyasi. His mother finally gave consent, only to have the crocodile let go of young Shankara. A crocodile had never been found in Poorna ever or since Shankara then left Kerala and travelled towards North India in search of a guru. On the banks of the Narmada River, he met Govinda Bhagavatpada the disciple of Gaudapada at Omkareshwar. When Govinda Bhagavatpada asked Shankara's identity, he replied with an extempore verse that brought out the Advaita Vedanta philosophy. Govinda Bhagavatpada was impressed and took Shankara as his disciple.

The guru instructed Shankara to write a commentary on the Brahma Sutras and propagate the Advaita philosophy. Shankara travelled to Kashi, where a young man named Sanandana, hailing from Chola territory in South India, became his first disciple. According to legend, while on his way to the Vishwanath Temple, Sankara came upon an untouchable accompanied by four dogs. When asked to move aside by Shankara's disciples, the untouchable replied: "Do you wish that I move my ever lasting Atman ("the Self"), or this body made of flesh?" Realizing that the untouchable was none other than god Shiva himself, and his dogs the four Vedas, Shankara prostrated himself before him, composing five shlokas known as Manisha Panchakam.

At Badari he wrote his famous Bhashyas ("commentaries") and Prakarana granthas ("philosophical treatises").

### <b> Meeting with Mandana Mishra </b>

One of the most famous debates of Adi Shankara was with the ritualist Ma??ana

Misra. Maṅana Misra held the view that the life of a householder was far superior to that of a monk. This view was widely shared and respected throughout India at that time. Thus it would have been important for Adi Shankara to debate with him. Madana Mishra's guru was the famous Mimamsa philosopher, Kumarila Bhaṅga. Shankara sought a debate with Kumarila Bhaṅga and met him in Prayag where he had buried himself in a slow burning pyre to repent for sins committed against his guru: Kumarila Bhaṅga had learned Buddhist philosophy from his Buddhist guru under false pretenses, in order to be able to refute it. Learning anything without the knowledge of one's guru while still under his authority constitutes a sin according to the Vedas. Kumarila Bhaṅga thus asked Adi Shankara to proceed to Mahishmati to meet Maṅana Misra and debate with him instead. (Mahishmati is on the banks of the holy river - Narmada, in Madhya Pradesh. Mahishmati is now known as Mandala. Mandala finds mention in Pauranic literature as the capital of Sahasrabahu Kartyaveer Arjun who had obstructed the river by his thousand arms by his frolicking, at his capital Mahishmati).

After debating for over fifteen days, with Maṅana Misra's wife Ubhaya Bharati acting as referee, Maṅana Misra accepted defeat. Ubhaya Bharati then challenged Adi Shankara to have a debate with her in order to 'complete' the victory. She asked him questions related to sexual congress between man and woman - a subject in which Shankaracharya had no knowledge, since he was a true celibate and sannyasi. Sri Shankracharya asked for a "recess" of 15 days. As per legend, he used the art of "para-kaya pravesa" (the spirit leaving its own body and entering another's) and exited his own body, which he asked his disciples to look after, and psychically entered the dead body of a king. The story goes that from the King's two wives, he acquired all knowledge of "art of love". The queens, thrilled at the keen intellect and robust love-making of the "revived" King, deduced that he was not their husband, as of old. The story continues that they sent their factotums to "look for the lifeless body of a young sadhu and to cremate it immediately" so that their "king" (Shankracharya in the king's body) would continue to live with them. Just as the retainers piled Shankracharya's lifeless corpse upon a pyre and were about to set fire to it, Shankara entered his own body and regained consciousness. Finally, he answered all questions put to him by Ubhaya Bharati; and she allowed Maṅana Misra to accept sannyasa with the monastic name Suresvaracharya, as per the agreed-upon rules of the debate.

<b> Philosophical tour </b>

Adi Shankara then travelled with his disciples to Maharashtra and Srisailam. In Srisailam, he composed Shivanandalahari, a devotional hymn in praise of Shiva. The Madhaviya Shankaravijayam says that when Shankara was about to be

sacrificed by a Kapalika, the god Narasimha appeared to save Shankara in response to Padmapadacharya's prayer to him. As a result, Adi Shankara composed the Laksmi-Narasimha stotra.

He then travelled to Gokarna, the temple of Hari-Shankara and the Mukambika temple at Kollur. At Kollur, he accepted as his disciple a boy believed to be dumb by his parents. He gave him the name, Hastamalakacharya ("one with the amalaka fruit on his palm", i.e., one who has clearly realised the Self). Next, he visited Sringeri to establish the Sarada Peetham and made Tothakacharya his disciple.

After this, Adi Shankara began a Dig-vijaya "tour of conquest" for the propagation of the Advaita philosophy by controverting all philosophies opposed to it. He travelled throughout India, from South India to Kashmir and Nepal, preaching to the local populace and debating philosophy with Hindu, Buddhist and other scholars and monks along the way.

With the Malayali King Sudhanva as companion, Shankara passed through Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Vidarbha. He then started towards Karnataka where he encountered a band of armed Kapalikas. King Sudhanva, with his Nairs, resisted and defeated the Kapalikas. They safely reached Gokarna where Shankara defeated in debate the Shaiva scholar, Neelakanta.

Proceeding to Saurashtra (the ancient Kambhoja) and having visited the shrines of Girnar, Somnath and Prabhasa and explaining the superiority of Vedanta in all these places, he arrived at Dwarka. Bhatta Bhaskara of Ujjayini, the proponent of Bhedabeda philosophy, was humbled. All the scholars of Ujjayini (also known as Avanti) accepted Adi Shankara's philosophy.

He then defeated the Jainas in philosophical debates at a place called Bahlika. Thereafter, the Acharya established his victory over several philosophers and ascetics in Kamboja (region of North Kashmir), Darada and many regions situated in the desert and crossing mighty peaks, entered Kashmir. Later, he had an encounter with a tantrik, Navagupta at Kamarupa.

**<b> Accession to Sarvajnapitha </b>**

Adi Shankara visited Sarvajñapeetha (Sharada Peeth) in Kashmir (now in POK, Pakistan). The Madhaviya Shankaravijayam states this temple had four doors for scholars from the four cardinal directions. The southern door (representing South India) had never been opened, indicating that no scholar from South India had entered the Sarvajna Pitha. Adi Shankara opened the southern door by defeating

in debate all the scholars there in all the various scholastic disciplines such as Mimamsa, Vedanta and other branches of Hindu philosophy; he ascended the throne of Transcendent wisdom of that temple.

Towards the end of his life, Adi Shankara travelled to the Himalayan area of Kedarnath-Badrinath and attained videha mukti ("freedom from embodiment"). There is a samadhi mandir dedicated to Adi Shankara behind the Kedarnath temple. However, there are variant traditions on the location of his last days. One tradition, expounded by Keraliya Shankaravijaya, places his place of mahasamadhi (leaving the body) as Vadakkunnathan temple in Thrissur, Kerala. The followers of the Kanchi kamakoti pitha claim that he ascended the Sarvajñapiṭha and attained videha mukti in Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu).

### <b> Dates </b>

Several different dates have been proposed for Shankara:

788–820 CE: This is the mainstream scholarly opinion, placing Shankara in mid to late 8th century CE. These dates are based on records at the Sringeri Sarada Piṭha, which is the only matha to have maintained a relatively unbroken record of its Acharyas; starting with the third Acharya, one can with reasonable confidence date the others from the 8th century to the present. The Sringeri records state that Shankara was born in the 14th year of the reign of "VikramAditya", but it is unclear as to which king this name refers. Though some researchers identify the name with Chandragupta II (4th. c. CE), modern scholarship accepts the VikramAditya as being from the Chalukya dynasty of Badami, most likely Vikramaditya II (733–746 CE), which would place him in the middle of the 8th c. Max Muller, Macdonnel, Pathok, Deussen and Radhakrishnan all accept the dates 788-820 CE. The date 788–820 is also among those considered acceptable by Swami Tapasyananda, though he raises a number of questions.

509–477 BCE: This dating, more than a millennium ahead of all others, is based on records of the heads of the Shankara Mathas at Dvaraka Pitha and Govardhana matha and the fifth Peetham at Kanchi. However, such an early date is not consistent with the fact that Shankara quotes the Buddhist logician Dharmakirti, who finds mention in Xuanzang (7th c.). Also, his near-contemporary Kumarila Bhaṭṭa is usually dated ca. 8th c. CE. Most scholars feel that due to invasions and other discontinuities, the records of the Dvaraka and Govardhana mathas are not as reliable as those of Sringeri. Thus, while considerable debate exists, the pre-Christian Era dates are usually discounted, and the most likely period for Shankara is during the 8th c. CE.

44-12 BCE: Anandagiri believed he was born at Chidambaram in 44 BCE and died in 12 BCE.

6th Century CE: Telang placed him in this century. Sir R G Bandarkar believed he was born in 680 CE.

805-897 CE: A D Venkiteswara not only places Adishankara later than most, but also had the opinion that it would not have been possible for him to have achieved all the works apportioned to him, and has him live ninety two years.

### <b> Mathas </b>

Adi Shankara founded four Mathas (Sanskrit: ??) to guide the Hindu religion. These are at Sringeri in Karnataka in the south, Dwaraka in Gujarat in the west, Puri in Orissa in the east, and Jyotirmath (Joshimath) in Uttarakhand in the north. Hindu tradition states that he put in charge of these mathas his four main disciples: Suresvara, Hastamalakacharya, Padmapada, and Totakacharya respectively. The heads of the mathas trace their authority back to these figures. Each of the heads of these four mathas takes the title of Shankaracharya ("the learned Shankara") after the first Shankaracharya.

According to the tradition in Kerala, after Sankara's samadhi at Vadakkunnathan Temple his disciples founded four mathas in Thrissur, namely Naduvil Madhom, Thekke Madhom, Idayil Madhom and Vadakke Madhom.

### <b> Philosophy and religious thought </b>

Advaita ("non-dualism") is often called a monistic system of thought. The word "Advaita" essentially refers to the identity of the Self (Atman) and the Whole (Brahman). Advaita Vedanta says the one unchanging entity (Brahman) alone exists, and that changing entities do not have absolute existence, much as the ocean's waves have no existence in separation from the ocean. The key source texts for all schools of Vedanta are the Prasthanatrayi—the canonical texts consisting of the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras.

Adi Shankara was the first in the tradition to consolidate the siddhanta ("doctrine") of Advaita Vedanta. He wrote commentaries on the Prasthana Trayi. A famous quote from Vivekacūṣṁai, one of his prakarana granthas that succinctly summarises his philosophy is:

Brahma satyaḥ jagat mithya, jivo brahmaiva naparah

Brahman is the only truth, the spatio-temporal world is an illusion, and there is

ultimately no difference between Brahman and individual self.

Adi Shankara's Bhashyas (commentaries) on the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita and the Brahma Sutras are his principal works. Although he mostly adhered to traditional means of commenting on the Brahma Sutra, there are a number of original ideas and arguments to establish that the essence of Upanishads is Advaita. He taught that it was only through direct knowledge that one could realize Brahman. "A perception of the fact that the object seen is a rope will remove the fear and sorrow which result from the illusory idea that it is a serpent". Cited from Shankara's "Vivekachuudaamani"/ verse #12/translated by Mohini M Chatterji. This metaphor was borrowed from Yogacara Buddhist thinkers, who used it in a different context.

Adi Shankara's opponents accused him of teaching Buddhism in the garb of Hinduism, because his non-dualistic ideals seemed rather radical to contemporary Hindu philosophy, and so he earned the title "pracchannabuddha". However, although Advaita proposes the theory of Maya, explaining the universe as a "trick of a magician", Adi Shankara and his followers see this as a consequence of their basic premise that Brahman alone is real. Their idea of Maya emerges from their belief in the reality of Brahman, as opposed to Buddhist doctrines of emptiness, which emerge from the empirical Buddhist approach of observing the nature of reality.

**Historical and cultural impact**

Because of his unification of two seemingly disparate philosophical doctrines, Atman and Brahman, Westerners who know about him perceive him as the "St. Thomas Aquinas of Indian thought" and "the most brilliant personality in the history of Indian thought."

At the time of Adi Shankara's life, Hinduism was increasing in influence in India at the expense of Buddhism and Jainism. Hinduism was divided into innumerable sects, each quarreling with the others. The followers of Mimamsa and Sankhya philosophy were atheists, insomuch that they did not believe in God as a unified being. Besides these atheists there were numerous theistic sects. There were also those who rejected the Vedas, like the Charvakas.

Adi Shankara held discourses and debates with the leading scholars of all these sects and schools of philosophy to controvert their doctrines. He unified the theistic sects into a common framework of Shanmata system. In his works, Adi Shankara stressed the importance of the Vedas, and his efforts helped Hinduism regain strength and popularity. Many trace the present worldwide prominence of

Vedanta to his works. He travelled on foot to various parts of India to restore the study of the Vedas.

Even though he lived for only thirty-two years his impact on India and on Hinduism was striking. He reintroduced a purer form of Vedic thought. His teachings and tradition form the basis of Smartism and have influenced Sant Mat lineages. He is the main figure in the tradition of Advaita Vedanta. He was the founder of the Dasanami Sampradaya of Hindu monasticism and a mata of Smarta tradition. He introduced the Pañchatana form of worship.

Adi Shankara, along with Madhva and Ramanuja, was instrumental in the revival of Hinduism. These three teachers formed the doctrines that are followed by their respective sects even today. They have been the most important figures in the recent history of Hindu philosophy. In their writings and debates, they provided polemics against the non-Vedantic schools of Sankhya, Vaisheshika etc. Thus they paved the way for Vedanta to be the dominant and most widely followed tradition among the schools of Hindu philosophy. The Vedanta school stresses most on the Upanishads (which are themselves called Vedanta, End or culmination of the Vedas), unlike the other schools that gave importance to the ritualistic Brahmanas, or to texts authored by their founders. The Vedanta schools hold that the Vedas (which include the Upanishads) are unauthored, forming a continuous tradition of wisdom transmitted orally. Thus the concept of apaurusheyatva ("being unauthored") came to be the guiding force behind the Vedanta schools. However, along with stressing the importance of Vedic tradition, Adi Shankara gave equal importance to the personal experience of the student. Logic, grammar, Mimamsa and allied subjects form main areas of study in all the Vedanta schools.

Regarding meditation, Shankara refuted the system of Yoga and its disciplines as a direct means to attain moksha, rebutting the argument that it can be obtained through concentration of the mind. His position is that the mental states discovered through the practices of Yoga can be indirect aids to the gain of knowledge, but cannot themselves give rise to it. According to his philosophy, knowledge of Brahman springs from inquiry into the words of the Upanishads, and the knowledge of Brahman that shruti provides cannot be obtained in any other way. It has to be noted that it is generally considered that for Shankara the Absolute Reality is attributeless and impersonal, while for Madhava and Ramanuja, the Absolute Truth is Vishnu. This has been a subject of debate, interpretation, and controversy since Shankara himself is attributed to composing the popular 8th century Hindu devotional composition Bhaja Govindam (literal meaning, "Worship Govinda"). This work of Adi Shankara is considered as a good summary of Advaita Vedanta and underscores the view that devotion to God,



Traditionally, his works are classified under Bhaṣya ("commentary"), Prakaraṇa grantha ("philosophical treatise") and Stotra ("devotional hymn"). The commentaries serve to provide a consistent interpretation of the scriptural texts from the perspective of Advaita Vedānta. The philosophical treatises provide various methodologies to the student to understand the doctrine. The devotional hymns are rich in poetry and piety, serving to highlight the relationship between the devotee and the deity.

Adi Shankara wrote Bhaṣyas on the ten major Upanishads, the Brahma Sūtras and the Bhagavad Gīta. In his works, he quotes from Shveshvātara, Kaushitaki, Mahanarayana and Jabala Upanishads, among others. Bhaṣyas on Kaushitaki, Nrisimhatapani and Shveshvātara Upanishads are extant but the authenticity is doubtful. Adi Shankara's is the earliest extant commentary on the Brahma Sūtras. However, he mentions older commentaries like those of Dravida, Bhartrpran̄cha and others.

In his Brahma Sūtra Bhaṣya, Adi Shankara cites the examples of Dharmavyādha, Vidura and others, who were born with the knowledge of Brahman acquired in previous births. He mentions that the effects cannot be prevented from working on account of their present birth. He states that the knowledge that arises out of the study of the Vedas could be had through the Puranas and the Itihasas. In the Taittirīya Upanishad Bhaṣya 2.2, he says:

Sarvesaṅ cadhikaro vidyayaṅ ca sreyah: kevalaya vidyaya veti siddhaṅ

It has been established that everyone has the right to the knowledge (of Brahman) and that the supreme goal is attained by that knowledge alone.

Some western academics consider only Upadesasahasri among independent philosophical works as authentic. Many other such texts exist, among which there is a difference of opinion among scholars on the authorship of Viveka Chudamani. The former pontiff of Sringeri Math, Shri Shri Chandrashekhara Bharati III has written a voluminous commentary on the Viveka Chudamani.

Adi Shankara also wrote commentaries on other scriptural works, such as the Vishnu sahasranama and the Sanatsujatiya. Like the Bhagavad Gīta, both of these are contained in the Mahabharata.

# Body

Thy body may be beautiful and glow with flawless health,  
Thy fame colossal and thou mayest have won to fabulous wealth,  
But if to the Guru's feet thy heart untethered still remain.

Then all thou hast achieved on earth is vain, is vain, is vain.

Thou mayest be deep-versed in all that scripture have to tell  
A beacon of light, a master of prose and verse delectable,  
But if to the Guru's feet thy heart untethered still remain.

Then all thou hast achieved on earth is vain, is vain, is vain.

Adi Shankaracharya

# I Am He!

Mind, nor intellect, nor ego, feeling;  
Sky nor earth nor metals am I.

I am He, I am He, Blessed spirit, I am He!

No birth, no death, no caste have I;  
Father, mother, have I none.

I am He, I am He, Blessed spirit, I am He!

Beyond the flights of fancy, formless am I,  
Permeating the limbs of all life;  
Bondage I do not fear; I am free, ever free.

I am He, I am He, Blessed spirit, I am He!

Adi Shankaracharya

# I Salute That Lord Of Ranga

I salute that Lord of Ranga,  
Who sleeps in the yogic pose,  
On the bed of Adhishesha,  
Below the tall dome,  
Which resembles a lotus bud ,  
And is surrounded by seven ramparts,  
And which is in between two Kaveri rivers,  
With his right hand near his crown,  
And his lotus like merciful left hand,  
Pointing towards his feet which takes care of us all.

Let my mind revel in the form of Ranga  
Whose form is the epitome of happiness,  
Whose form is the true knowledge,  
Whose form is as told in the Vedas,  
And who is of the form of the comforting moon and beautiful

Let my mind revel in the form of Ranga  
Who is on the banks of river Kaveri,  
And playfully dispenses mercy,  
Who is below the Mandhara tree,  
Where he speedily and prettily plays,  
And who destroys all asuras,  
By his play spread over the whole world.

Let my mind revel in Ranga,  
As the one who lives in Sri Ranga,  
In whom goddess Lakshmi lives,  
Who is the abode of the universe  
Who lives in the lotus of our heart,  
Who lives in the face of the Sun.  
Who is the abode of mercy,  
And who lives where good conduct lives.

In Him let my mind revel  
As the one who is saluted in Sri Ranga,  
Who is venerated by gods like Brahma,  
Who is venerated by the entire universe,  
Who is venerated as Mukunda,

Who is venerated by lord of devas,  
Who is worshipped by sages like Vyasa,  
And who is venerated by sages like Sanaka.

Let my mind revel in Him  
Who is the king of Sri Ranga,  
Who is the king of gods like Brahma,  
Who is the king of the holy bird , Garuda,  
Who is the king of Vaikunta,  
Who is the king of the king of devas,  
Who is the king of the three worlds,  
And who is the king of the entire universe .

Let my mind revel in Him  
As one who protects the city of Sri Ranga,  
Who has , whose sign is never failing  
Who is in perfect sleep,  
Who is in the Yogic sleep,  
Who sleeps on the ocean,  
Who takes care of goddess Lakshmi,  
And in whom the whole world sleeps

Let my mind revel in Him  
As the one who sleeps in the city of Sri Ranga,  
Who sleeps pretty as a picture,  
Who sleeps on the king of serpents,  
Who sleeps on the lap of Nanda,  
Who sleeps on the lap of Lakshmi,  
Who sleeps on the ocean of milk,  
And who sleeps on the banyan leaf.

He who sheds his body in this ranga (ground)  
Never gets embodiment again  
As Ranga has chakra in His hand,  
The Garuda is His vehicle,  
The serpent is His bed  
And his feet is wetted by river Ganga,

Any one reading this octet on the Lord of Ranga,  
As soon as he gets up in the morning,  
Will get his wishes fulfilled,  
And in the end attain salvation

Adi Shankaracharya

# Nirvana Shatakam

1)

I am not mind, nor intellect, nor ego,  
nor the reflections of inner self (chitta).

I am not the five senses.

I am beyond that.

I am not the ether, nor the earth,  
nor the fire, nor the wind (the five elements).

I am indeed,  
That eternal knowing and bliss, Shiva,  
love and pure consciousness.

2)

Neither can I be termed as energy (prana),  
nor five types of breath (vayus),  
nor the seven material essences,  
nor the five coverings (pancha-kosha).

Neither am I the five instruments of elimination,  
procreation, motion, grasping, or speaking.

I am indeed,  
That eternal knowing and bliss, Shiva,  
love and pure consciousness.

3)

I have no hatred or dislike,  
nor affiliation or liking,  
nor greed,  
nor delusion,  
nor pride or haughtiness,  
nor feelings of envy or jealousy.

I have no duty (dharma),  
nor any money,  
nor any desire (kama),  
nor even liberation (moksha).

I am indeed,  
That eternal knowing and bliss, Shiva,  
love and pure consciousness.

4)

I have neither merit (virtue),

nor demerit (vice).

I do not commit sins or good deeds,  
nor have happiness or sorrow,  
pain or pleasure.

I do not need mantras, holy places,  
scriptures (Vedas), rituals or sacrifices (yagnas).

I am none of the triad of  
the observer or one who experiences,  
the process of observing or experiencing,  
or any object being observed or experienced.

I am indeed,  
That eternal knowing and bliss, Shiva,  
love and pure consciousness.

5)

I do not have fear of death,  
as I do not have death.

I have no separation from my true self,  
no doubt about my existence,  
nor have I discrimination on the basis of birth.

I have no father or mother,  
nor did I have a birth.

I am not the relative,  
nor the friend,  
nor the guru,  
nor the disciple.

I am indeed,  
That eternal knowing and bliss, Shiva,  
love and pure consciousness.

6)

I am all pervasive.

I am without any attributes,  
and without any form.

I have neither attachment to the world,  
nor to liberation (mukti).

I have no wishes for anything  
because I am everything,  
everywhere,  
every time,  
always in equilibrium.

I am indeed,

That eternal knowing and bliss, Shiva,  
love and pure consciousness.

Adi Shankaracharya

# Saundarya Lahiri

Thou art residing in secrecy with Thy Lord  
in the thousand petalled Lotus,  
having pierced through  
the Earth situated at Mooladhara,  
the water in the Manipura,  
the Fire abiding in the Swadhishtana,  
the Air in the Heart  
the Ether above  
and Manas between eyebrows  
and thus broken the entire kula path.

Adi Shankaracharya

# Tad Niskala 'That I Am Not'

Om. I am neither the mind,  
Intelligence, ego, nor 'chitta',  
Neither the ears, nor the tongue,  
Nor the senses of smell and sight,  
Neither ether, nor air,  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

I am neither the 'prana',  
Nor the five vital breaths,  
Neither the seven elements of the body,  
Nor its five sheaths,  
Nor hands, nor feet,  
Nor other organs of action.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Neither fear, greed, nor delusion,  
Loathing, nor liking have I,  
Nothing of pride, of ego,  
Of 'dharma' or Liberation,  
Neither desire of the mind,  
Nor object for its desiring.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Nothing of pleasure and pain,  
Of virtue and vice, do I know,  
Of mantra, of sacred place,  
Of Vedas or Sacrifice,  
Neither I am the eater,  
The food or the act of eating,  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Death or fear, I have none,  
Nor any distinction of 'caste',  
Neither Father, nor Mother,  
Nor even a birth, have I,

Neither friend, nor comrade,  
Neither disciple, nor Guru.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

I have no form or fancy,  
the All-pervading am I,  
Everywhere I exist,  
And yet I am beyond the senses,  
Neither salvation am I,  
Nor anything to be known.  
I am Eternal Bliss and Awareness.  
I am Shiva! I am Shiva!

Adi Shankaracharya

# Thy Guru's Feet

Thy body may be beautiful and glow with flawless health,  
Thy fame colossal and thou mayest have won to fabulous wealth,  
But if to the Guru's feet thy heart untethered still remain.

Then all thou hast achieved on earth is vain, is vain, is vain.

Thou mayest be deep-versed in all that scripture have to tell  
A beacon of light, a master of prose and verse delectable,

But if to the Guru's feet thy heart untethered still remain.  
Then all thou hast achieved on earth is vain, is vain, is vain.

Adi Shankaracharya