

Inspiring Saint

His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin

Shankaracharya of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham



Inspiring Saint

The Life and Teachings of His Holiness

Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin

Shankaracharya of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham

Golden Jubilee Year Edition

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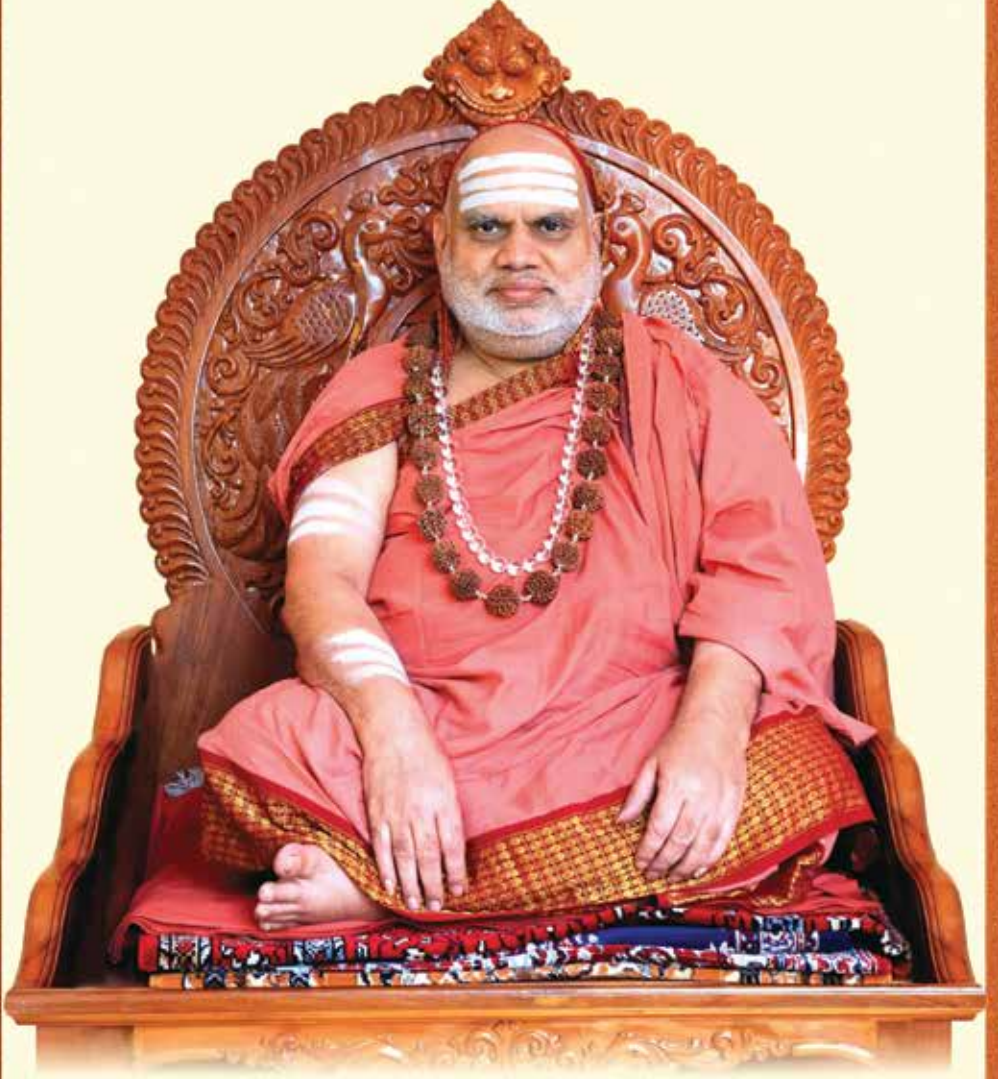
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Dedication



*We humbly dedicate this work
at the Lotus Feet of
Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin
during the Golden Jubilee Year of
His Sannyasa Ashrama*

ॐ



*In response to our prayers, in 2021,
Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Swamin
had blessed this work with a benedictory message.
This message adorns the first few pages of this
Golden Jubilee Edition.*



श्री श्री जगद्गुरु शङ्कराचार्य महासंस्थानम्, दक्षिणाम्नाय श्री शारदापीठम्, शृङ्गेरी

शृङ्गेरीजगद्गुरु-श्रीश्रीभारतीतीर्थ-महास्वामिकरकमलसञ्जातानां
जगद्गुरुश्रीविधुशेखरभारतीमहास्वामिनामनुग्रहसन्देशः

दक्षिणाम्नायशृङ्गेरीशारदापीठं परिभूषयन्तोऽस्मद्गुरुचरणाः जगद्गुरुश्रीश्रीभारतीतीर्थमहास्वामिनः
वैराग्य-वैदुष्यवात्सल्यादिनिखिलसुगुणस्तोमलीलाविहारभूमयः निखिलास्तिकवन्दनीयचरणाम्बुजाताः
चकासतीति संविद्रत एव समेऽप्यास्तिकाः । तेषामेषामाचार्यचूडामणीनां दिव्याः कटाक्षाङ्कुराः
निखिलमप्युपद्रवगणं विद्राव्य श्रेयस्सन्ततिं प्रसुवते । तेषां वदनसूर्वात् निस्सुताः सद्गुणदेशमरीचयः
श्रोतृबुद्धिसौधेषु अभिव्याप्तमज्ञानान्धतमसं समूलं ध्वंसयन्ति । तेऽमी आसेतोरातुहिनाचलं
क्रियासमभिहारेण सञ्चारं विधाय धर्मब्रह्मतत्त्वे लोकानवबोध्य रामेश्वर-वाराणसी-श्रीशैलादिमहाक्षेत्रेषु
भगवन्तं सम्पूज्य निखिलास्तिकश्रेयांसि प्रार्थयन्त । नानाप्राण्तेषु भगवदायतनानां
जीर्णोद्धार-प्रतिष्ठाकुम्भाभिषेकादिकं व्यधासिषुः । निखिलेष्वपि शास्त्रेषु अप्रतिहतधियोऽमी
वेदशास्त्रपोषकसभादिप्रवर्तनेन भारतस्य नानाप्राण्तेषु वैदिकसम्मेलन-वेदशास्त्रविद्वत्सम्मानन-
वेदपाठशालादिस्थापनैश्च वैदिकीं विद्यां समभिवर्धयन्तः शृङ्गेरीक्षेत्रे असकृत् लक्षपुष्पार्चन-
कोटिकुङ्कुमार्चन-सहस्रचण्डीमहायागादिधर्मपूगानुष्ठानेन स्वर्णरथसमर्पण-स्वर्णशिखर-अत्युच्चराजगोपुर-
निर्माणादिकार्यैश्च भगवतीं श्रीशारदापरमेश्वरीमतितरां प्रीणयन्तः चिकित्सालयादिसंस्थापनेन
अन्नदानादिना च दीनजनोपकारं वितन्वन्तः सनातनधर्मप्रचारमनवरतं विदधानाः
सत्कीर्तिधवलताशेषदिगन्तराः जगद्गुरुरितिसंज्ञामन्वर्थतां नयन्तस्सन्ति । तत्तादृशमहामहिमसम्पन्नान्
अस्मद्गुरुनधिकृत्य तेषामनुग्रहभाजनेन के.सुरेशचन्द्रेण इतः माकि शरदां पञ्चविंशतेः प्राक् कश्चन ग्रन्थः
आङ्ग्लभाषया विरचितः विद्यातीर्थफौण्डेषन्संस्थया प्रकाशितश्च । सोऽयं ग्रन्थः निखिलास्तिकजन-
स्वान्तान्यावर्जयन् पौनःपुन्येन मुद्रितः आन्ध्रद्रविडकर्णाटकभाषास्वप्यनूद्य जगद्वन्द्यजगद्गुरुरितिनाम्ना
च प्रकाशितः । स चायं ग्रन्थः सम्प्रति अस्मद्गुरुणां सप्ततिपूर्तिमहोत्सवसन्दर्भे नूतनानां बहूनां
विषयाणां योजनेन पुनः प्रकाश्यते इति महतः प्रमोदस्य स्थानम् । ग्रन्थोऽयं सर्वानपि गुरुभक्तान् नितरां
रञ्जयिष्यतीत्यत्र नास्ति संशयलेशोऽपि ।

अत्र कृतसाह्याः समेऽप्यास्तिकाः अस्मद्गुरुचरणानां निरवग्रहानुग्रहेण श्रेयःपरम्पराभिस्समभि-
वर्धिषीरन्नित्याशास्महे ।

शृङ्गेरिः
शार्वरिफाल्गुनकृष्णैकादशी
सौम्यवासरः ७-४-२०२१

इति नारायणस्मरणम्
विधुशेखरभारती

Benedictory Message of
Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamin,
the Disciple born of the lotus-hand of
Sringeri Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamin

It is well known to all Astikas that our revered Guru, Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamin, who adorns the Dakshinamnaya Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, shines as the One whose lotus-like-feet are respected by all. He functions as a recreational ground for the entire collection of noble qualities such as dispassion, scholarship and affectionate grace towards disciples. The divine compassionate glances of our Guru, the crest-jewel of preceptors uproot all obstacles and bring about the supreme good. The rays of instructions that emerge from His Sun-like-countenance dispel the dense darkness of ignorance enveloping the mansion-like-minds of devotees.

Our Guru has repeatedly undertaken extensive tours from the Setu (Rameswaram in the south) to the Himalayas (in the north of India), enlightened people on the essence of Dharma and the Truth of the Supreme Brahman, and has offered worship at important holy centres such as Rameswaram, Varanasi and Srisailam with prayers for the welfare of all *Astikas*. The Mahaswamin has revived ancient temples and consecrated new temples at various places.

The Mahaswamin, Himself a scholar par excellence in all scriptures, has fostered Vedic knowledge by guiding the Veda Poshaka Sabha and Shastra Poshaka Sabha towards conducting Vedic Sammelans, honouring Vedic and Shastric scholars and establishing Veda Pathashalas across the country. He has conducted many dharmic activities that gladden Goddess Sri Sharada Parameshwari. These include the multitudinous

conduct of Laksha Pushparchana, Koti Kumkumarchana and Sahasra Chandi Mahayaga at Sringeri as well as the dedications of the golden chariot, golden Shikhara (Vimana Gopura) above the sanctum sanctorum and the majestic Rajagopuram.

By establishing institutions that extend healthcare and by initiating facilities to engage in Annadana, the Mahaswamin has brought about the societal welfare of many in need. Thus, ever engaged in the propagation of Sanatana Dharma, the Mahaswamin whose noble fame has reached all quarters, has fulfilled the import of the title, Jagadguru - the world-preceptor. On our Guru endowed with such remarkable spiritual stature, Sri K Suresh Chandar, a recipient of our Guru's grace, penned a book in English about 25 years ago.

Published by Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation, the book has enthralled the hearts of all *Astikas*, been reprinted numerous times and also been translated and published in languages such as Telugu, Tamil and Kannada under the title "Jagadvandya Jagadguru". It is a matter of great joy that presently, on the occasion of the completion of seventy years of Our Guru, this book is being republished with the extensive addition of new content. There is not even an iota of doubt that this book will delight all Guru-bhaktas.

We bless that by the grace of the pre-eminent Guru, may all those who are endowed with faith and have assisted in bringing about this publication prosper well by a stream of auspiciousness.

**Thus, with the recollection of Narayana, the Supreme
(S/d) Vidhushekhara Bharati**

Sringeri

Shaarvari-Phalguna-Krishna-Ekadashi

Wednesday - April 7, 2021

Foreword

By

Guruseva Dhurina Dr. V. R. Gowrishankar

Administrator and CEO

Sri Sringeri Math and Its Properties

श्रीमतां देशिकेन्द्राणां पादपद्मे नमाम्यहम् ।

मन्दोऽपि वन्दनाद्येषां विन्देत गुरुतुल्यताम् ॥

Little over twelve centuries ago Lord Shiva took the form of Sri Adishankara to resurrect the practice of Sanatana Dharma. To continue His work He started four monasteries in four corners of the Bharatha Desha of which Dakshinamnaya Sri Sharada Peetham at Sringeri is the first and foremost. An unbroken line of Acharyas have adorned this Peetham since then and have attained unbounded glory by their unique contribution towards sustenance and propagation of Sanatana Dharma.

Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamigal is the 36th Guru in the line of succession adorning this great throne of transcendental Wisdom. No words are sufficient to explain the supreme joy that one experiences in His presence. It is too personal for anyone to detail in words. In fact, interactions with great sages can only be experienced and cannot be put into words. It is naturally so with His Holiness.

His spiritual stature is topmost. He is a scholar par excellence, yet simple and accessible to all devotees. His vast knowledge is something beyond comprehension. His memory and razor-sharp recollections are second to none. His communication skills are extraordinary. Added to this is His mastery over several languages.

He is a strict disciplinarian but most merciful when it comes to the needy. He is benevolence personified but a task master like a supreme commander. His compassion and concern for people know no bounds. All the qualities that

make one, an all-time great, are there to be experienced. The very thought of Him brings out ecstasy, peace and bliss in us.

Many questions come up when we think of Him. How will He speak? How will He react? How does He lead His life? How do people interact with Him? What makes Him so unique? A direct and simple answer to these questions is just not possible. An attempt could be made to find an answer by observing various events in His life and by understanding what He preaches.

One such attempt is the book – “Inspiring Saint” – a biography of His Holiness. This book was initially published in the year 1995. This special edition brought out on the occasion of His Holiness’ 71st Vardhanti not only portrays the biography of His Holiness but also takes the reader through the innumerable contributions made by His Holiness over the last three decades in preserving and promoting our country’s heritage and culture. His unparalleled devotion to Sri Adishankara and the way He imparts the teachings of Sri Shankara are certainly bound to inspire any avid reader.

This book also features several centenary celebrations and many dharmic events presided over by His Holiness for the welfare of the world. Consecration of Sri Adishankara Temple, dedication of Swarna Vimana and the 127-foot majestic Rajagopura will speak volumes of His Holiness’ greatness for eternity. His Holiness is deeply committed to promote the Sanskrit language and remarkable achievement to this noble cause is there for all to see. This special edition also has the privilege of recounting the Sishyasweekara ceremony.

No biography can be complete or error-free. It is meant to inspire the reader by recalling the life of a great saint and make a sincere attempt to lead a life as professed by Him. If we are even partly successful, then our efforts are worth in gold and this humble effort would please the Guru.

May Goddess Sharada, Lord Chandramouleeswara and Their Holinesses bestow their blessings on everyone to conduct themselves in righteous path and prosper with continued happiness.

Sringeri

9th April 2021

V. R. Gowrishankar

Preface

Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin, Shankaracharya of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham embodies the meaning of the word “Acharya”. His Holiness’ life bears a close resemblance to the life of Sri Adi Shankara in many aspects. Sri Shankara went all the way from Kerala to the banks of River Narmada in Madhya Pradesh in search of His Guru. His Holiness went from Andhra Pradesh to the banks of River Shipra in Madhya Pradesh to study under His Guru. Furthermore, His Vijaya Yatras, the hymns that He composed on various deities, His debates with scholars and His astounding ability to deliver discourses on the intricate subjects of Vedanta to common man, **marks Him as the Shankara of this era**. Proficiency in Sanskrit, strict adherence to tradition, deep devotion to God, universal compassion, keen interest in learning Shastras and respect for the ancient values are some of the traits of His Holiness that are life lessons for all to emulate.

With this intention we, in Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation, were fortunate to publish His first biography in 1995; and the book has since gone through revisions to update various events and facets of His life. This golden jubilee edition makes an earnest attempt to portray the Jagadguru’s contribution to the propagation of Sanathana Dharma for the welfare of the world.

The journey and transformation of a devout young boy into a sanyasi is summarised in the first three chapters of this book. The fourth chapter highlights His Holiness ascending the sacred Sharada Peetham as its Shankaracharya. His scholarly abilities are detailed in chapter Five. Chapter Six and Seven record the divine experiences of those who were fortunate to interact with Him intimately and receive His bountiful grace. The next chapter throws light on Jagadguru’s unparalleled devotion to Sri Adi Shankara. It is mere coincidence that this chapter is numbered as ‘Eight’, since the number Eight happens to be of great significance in the life of Sri Shankara. The world at large was blessed when His Holiness nominated **Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Swamin** as His successor designate and this is recounted in chapter Nine. Chapter Ten brings out His distinctive style of propagating dharma at every single event be it a centenary event of a temple, a Pathashala or His Guru. His contributions to this World as Jagadguru Shankaracharya are detailed in chapter Eleven. Chapter Twelve brings out the role of the Jagadguru as the torch-bearer of Sanathana Dharma. The final chapter provides lessons for seekers to develop dispassion towards worldly affairs. The appendix highlights the teachings and compositions of the Jagadguru along with a composition on the Jagadguru by His disciple, Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Swamin.

We submit our humble pranams at the Lotus Feet of the ever-compassionate **Jagadguru, Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Swamin** for providing us invaluable advice whenever required; and for His continuous guidance in bringing out this comprehensive Golden Jubilee Edition to its current state. We have no words to express our immense gratitude to the Jagadguru for graciously blessing this work with a Srimukha.

We are extremely thankful to Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar, the then Administrator and CEO of Sri Sringeri Mutt for penning a foreword in the previous edition of the book in 2021. We would also like to record the support provided by Sri P.A. Murali, the present Administrator and CEO of Sri Sringeri Mutt in bringing out this sacred work.

Our thanks are due to Sri K. Suresh Chander for preparing the initial draft of this book; and to Sri K. Anand of the Advaita Research Centre in Sringeri who did a phenomenal job in collating and segregating the relevant details in compiling this voluminous work.

We are thankful to Dr. R. Krishnan, Emeritus Professor of Business, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, California and Retired Research Professor, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida who did the complete editing. We appreciate the splendid work of Sri S. Murali, Sri K.N. Venkatsubramanian and Sri N. Meenakshisundaram who coordinated. Our sincere thanks are due to Sri C.S. Shivakumar of Jwalamukhi Mudranalaya for printing this edition with personal care and attention.

Even though we have not seen Sri Shankara, dharshan of His Holiness, is bound to generate the image of Sri Adishankara in our mind, engulfing us with His divine grace. We trust this book will fully serve its purpose - to both type of readers alike; an ardent devotee and a person who is yet to personally experience His grace - in visualising the Jagadguru as 'An Embodiment of Dharma'; and in applying the essence of His teachings in shaping one's life along dharmic principles.

Like a golden utensil decorated with gems, aptly called the 'Golden Jubilee' edition, this book endeavours to present as many memorable events studded with invaluable teachings, from the 'half a century' of Sannyasa life of the Jagadguru, from 1974 till present day, so as to enable the reader become a recipient of His grace.

It is indeed a great blessing for us to bring out this 'Golden Jubilee' edition on the occasion of Shankara Vijayam Festival, organized to mark Suvarna Bharathi - the Golden Jubilee year (2023-24) of Sannyasa Ashrama of the Jagadguru. We dedicate this revised edition at the Lotus Feet of the Jagadguru at the Festival, now held in Chennai.

We once again submit our sashtanga pranams at the Lotus Feet of the Jagadgurus for compassionately showering their blessings on us to accomplish this noble task.

Chennai
7th April, 2024

R. Krishnan
Managing Trustee

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication		
Srimukha of Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Swamin		
English translation of the Srimukha		
Foreword		
Publisher's preface		
1	The Advent of Divinity	3
2	Supreme Surrender	15
3	Illustrious Disciple	35
4	The Coronation	57
5	Scholar Par Excellence	67
6	Compassionate Guru	95
7	Memorable Moments of Grace	109
8	Deep Devotion to Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada	139
9	Nominating Successor-Designate	169
10	Dharmic Events for the Welfare of the World	205
11	Ideal Jagadguru	247
12	The Vijaya Yatras	293
13	Disengagement & Seclusion	309
14	Appendix 1 - Teachings	325
15	Appendix 2 - Verses of Veneration	353
16	Appendix 3 - Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam's Composition on His Guru	405





Chapter 1

THE ADVENT OF DIVINITY

“Inspiring words,” said a scholar, “influence our thinking, enliven our sensitivity to life’s meanings, arouse us from lethargy and exalt us by strengthening the heart and restoring the soul.” Our holy land blessed by many sages who, by their inspiring words and deeds, have set standards galore for humankind. Association with them has caused many sincere spiritual aspirants to transcend transmigration. A divine sage, characterised by astonishing spiritual attainments, an incisive intellect, winsome simplicity, innate compassion, and undeviating dedication to *dharma*, lives right amidst us as a spring of gushing grace where all can overcome their disquiet and distress. He is none other than *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, the 36th *Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya* of the celebrated Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham.

Brahmasri *Taṅgirāla Venkateswara Avadhani*, born to Brahmasri *Taṅgirāla Subbaiah* and Smt. Sundaramma, was an orthodox Telugu Brahmin belonging to *Kutsa Gotra* and *Āpastamba Sūtra*. He was a good kind man steeped in orthodoxy and untarnished by bigotry. As a youth, he turned his back on the temptations of modern living and earnestly took to scriptural studies to become a *purohita*. Unassuming and free from avarice, he discharged his duties as a priest and *Vedic* teacher to the complete satisfaction of all concerned. Sri Avadhani married *Saubhāgyavatī Anantalakshmamma*, the daughter of Sri Vedamurthy Kota Brahmaya Shastri of Mennakallu village in Andhra Pradesh belonging to *Kauṇḍinyā Gotra*. Smt. Anantalakshmamma proved to be a pious and hospitable wife, deeply attached to her spouse. The villagers of Alugumallepadu, where they lived, respected them, and were happy to be associated with them. In due course, the merciful *Bhagavān* blessed them with four daughters. However, the couple longed for a son.

Alugumallepadu is a quiet village on the banks of river Naguleru. Proximate to the river is situated the temple of *Śrī Bhavānī Śaṅkarā*. Sri Avadhani went to this temple and entreated *Bhagavān Śiva* to grace him with a son. To secure the



Bhagavān's favour, he resolved to worship the holy *Śivaliṅga* with *mahānyāsa-purussara-rudra-abhiṣeka* (*abhiṣeka* accompanied by the chanting of the *Śrī-rudra* and preceded by the chanting of the *mahānyāsa*) everyday, for a year. The scriptures declare that *Bhagavān Śiva* is easily pleased and that He becomes especially propitious to the devotee who performs *abhiṣeka* while chanting the very potent *Śrī-rudra*. In fulfilment of his vow, day after day, Sri Avadhani bathed early in the river, completed his *anuṣṭhāna* and then meticulously performed *mahānyāsa-purussara-rudra-abhiṣeka* at the temple. He gave no quarter to laxity and lacunae.



The blessed parents

Subsequently, Sri Avadhani shifted his residence to Machilipattinam. There, he celebrated *Rāma-navarātrotsava* with devotional fervour. Beseeking *Bhagavān Rāma* to fulfil his desire, Sri Avadhani averred that he would name his son 'Sitarama'. For her part, Smt. Anantalakshmamma sought *Śrī Āñjaneya's* favour and promised to name the male child born to her as 'Anjaneyulu'.

Beseeking *Bhagavān Rāma* to fulfil his desire, Sri Avadhani averred that he would name his son 'Sitarama'. For her part, Smt. Anantalakshmamma sought *Śrī Āñjaneya's* favour and promised to name the male child born to her as 'Anjaneyulu'.



One early morning, she dreamt of *Śrī Āñjaneya* appearing before her, gracing her with three mangoes and vanishing. On waking up, she narrated her blissful experience to her spouse. Neither they nor those to whom they described their dream were able to fathom the significance of the bestowal of a triad of mangoes. Did *Bhagavān Āñjaneya* wish to indicate that a divine-being capable of transcending the three worlds, heaven, earth, and the nether world was going to incarnate through Smt. Anantalakshmamma? Or was the significance that, reminiscent of *Śiva, Rāma* and *Āñjaneya*, the three divinities worshipped by the couple, Smt. Anantalakshmamma could have a son with dispassion, passion for *dharma* and flawless eloquence? Or was it that she was going to have a son who would have three births, first as a baby, next, at the time of *upanayana*, as a perfect *brahmacārī* and finally as a glorious *sannyāsī*? Whatever may have been the purport of the enigmatic dream or vision, the fact is that shortly after the experience, Smt. Anantalakshmamma conceived.

On April 11 1951¹, the *Bhagavān* blessed Sri Avadhani and Smt. Anantalakshmamma with a baby boy. In accordance with their vows, the parents named their baby 'Sitaramanjaneyulu'.² When the child was one year old, Sri Avadhani shifted his family from Machilipattinam to Narasaraopet.

The child mesmerised everyone with His charming smile and was invariably the darling of the neighbourhood. It was as though the *Bhagavān* had intended for

1 Caitra-śukla-ṣaṣṭhī of the year Khara

2 Sitarama Anjaneyulu (Sītārāma Āñjaneyulu)

The child mesmerised everyone
with His charming smile
and was invariably the darling
of the neighbourhood.



Smt. Anantalakshmamma to play the part of the Divine Mother Yashoda—letting her kid carried away by the neighbours and then pursuing them to retrieve her child from them. One early morning, on waking up, Smt. Anantalakshmamma casually glanced at her son. What caught her eyes was a phenomenon that was not just wondrous, but beyond human perception and comprehension. The atmosphere was calm with wavelets of a lovely breeze, and she found an orb of brilliant light on the face of her sweet little boy who was peacefully asleep. She sat there quietly, unable to take her eyes off this divinely captivating sight. Slowly the orb of light disappeared, bringing that blessed mother down to a worldly plane from a divine experience that was beyond description. She was blessed, even though she at the time had no idea what that even meant. She was certainly not aware that she had been blessed with a son, born not to lead a transient mundane life but to accomplish a divine mission; a mission to sustain and propagate the tenets of *Sanātana-dharma* as the 36th *Jagadguru* Shankaracharya of the glorious Dakshinamnaya Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham *Guru-paramparā*, founded by none other than *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*.

Sri Anjaneyulu was barely three years old, when His parents found devotion inherent in Him. The episode that follows is a definite testimony to this fact. One day, for reasons unknown to the parents, the little boy started to cry, and it soon turned into an inconsolable weep. The parents tried their best to pacify their son, but their attempts were all futile. Feeling helpless, the parents took Him to a temple of *Bhagavān Śiva* in the neighbourhood. To their complete surprise, the boy stopped crying the moment they stepped into the shrine. With His palms joined

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in reverence and His eyes focused on the sacred *Liṅga* at the sanctum sanctorum, the boy started reciting, '*Śambho Śiva Śiva*', '*Sāmba Śiva Śiva*.' The parents were awestruck to notice this sudden transformation in their child.

With His palms joined in reverence
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sanctorum, the boy started reciting,
'Śambho Śiva Śiva',
'Sāmba Śiva Śiva.'

One day Smt. Ananthalakshamma did not find Sri Anjaneyulu in the house. She grew anxious and started searching for Him. She need not have worried at all, for Sri Anjaneyulu had only gone to the nearby *Hanumān* temple. Seated under a tree inside the temple, the young boy started reciting God's holy names. Time passed and he dozed off for a while. Searching for him

all over the place and finally finding him in the temple, Smt. Anantalakshamma asked him, "What are you doing here? I have been very worried." Sri Anjaneyulu calmly looked at her and replied, "Why are you worried, Mother?" Is anything wrong? I came and sat here and was only chanting 'Śambho Śiva Śiva' 'Sāmba Śiva Śiva.'" The mother's heart rejoiced at her child's innate love for God and serene disposition.

Sri Avadhani used to narrate to Sri Anjaneyulu moral stories and episodes contained in the *purāṇas* and the child would listen to them intently. When the elders performed *pūjā*, He would calmly sit and watch it attentively. He could even repeat with wonderful clarity the *ślokās* chanted by the elders. He was a very obedient child who did not require any instruction repeated for the second time. These admirable and astonishing traits of the child made the parents feel immensely proud and happy.




The Young Brahmachari

At Narasaraopet, Sri Pratapagiri Sivarama Shastri, a great scholar in *Samṣkṛta*, taught small children *Samṣkṛta* in an effective way. Sri Venkatesa Avadhani's daughter, Srilakshmi, was his student and was fluent in that divine language. Sri Anjaneyulu too joined His sister in learning *Samṣkṛta* from Sri Shastri and to the great surprise of everyone, He started conversing in very fluent *Samṣkṛta* in a short time.

When Sri Anjaneyulu turned seven, Sri Avadhani performed His *upanayana*. This enabled Sri Anjaneyulu to obtain the scriptural license to taste the nectar of *Veda* and *śāstra*. *upanayana* brought about a lot of changes in His behaviour and personal appearance. He meticulously implemented the *śāstraic* dictates meant for a *brahmacārī*. He maintained a tuft. His forehead smeared with sacred ash added grace to His appearance. He started wearing a simple dhoti. He meticulously learnt all the *anuṣṭhāna mantra*, word to word, with remarkable accuracy. He sincerely performed His *sandhyā-vandana*, *samidādhāna* and *brahma-yajña* at the appropriate timings. He found great joy in chanting the *Gāyatrī mantra*. His knowledge of *Samṣkṛta* aided Him to acquire the import of the most potent *mantra*, and He involved Himself in the contemplation of its meaning. The scriptures say that for a *brahmacārī*, *Śrī Gāyatrī* becomes the mother, the *Guru*, and the father. Quite naturally, this wonderful *brahmacārī* developed a strong affinity towards *Veda-mātā*.

Sri Avadhani, besides being a dutiful father, was also a *Vedic* scholar of repute in that area. Sri Anjaneyulu readily found a perfect '*Vidyā Guru*' in His father and started learning the *Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda* from him. Tutoring his son was indeed a very pleasant experience to Sri Avadhani. Sri Anjaneyulu exhibited an extraordinary power of grasp. He was an '*ekasanta grāhī*' (one who grasps anything taught just once). His in-depth knowledge of *Samṣkṛta* was of great help in understanding the meaning of the *mantras* while chanting. His intellect was so perfect and sharp that He could learn much from His father in a short period. He easily got through the 'Guntur district *Vedapravardhaka Vidvat Parīkṣā*' with honours.


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Sri Anjaneyulu was of great help to His loving father. He used to assist His father during the *pūjā* at home. Sometimes Sri Avadhani, owing to his professional commitments, could not stay at home and perform the *pūjā*. During such occasions, Sri Anjaneyulu would perform the *pūjā* with great enthusiasm. Sri Anjaneyulu's assistance to His father did not stop with the household responsibilities alone. As warranted by his profession, Sri Avadhani used to visit houses and temples to perform scripturally ordained ceremonies. Sri Anjaneyulu used to accompany His father to offer His assistance. He would observe the formalities and the procedures and sincerely register everything in His brilliant mind. When Sri Avadhani took Him to such ceremonies for the second time, anywhere else, he used to be surprised to receive appropriate assistance from Sri Anjaneyulu without needing any instructions from him.

One day Sri Avadhani made a commitment to a householder that he would come and perform the *upanayana* of the latter's son on a particular day. On that day, the concerned person came to Sri Avadhani's house to take him to his house but, unfortunately, Sri Avadhani was unable to honour his commitment as he was busy elsewhere. The concerned person was in a fix. Sri Anjaneyulu, realising his troubled state of mind, offered to perform the *upanayana* Himself. The person immediately agreed without even knowing how blessed his son was, for he was going to be initiated into the sacred *brahmacārya āśrama* by a great soul! Sri Anjaneyulu went to the concerned person's house and with great ease, performed the necessary rites to the greatest satisfaction of all. Sri Avadhani, who was incessantly worried about his inability to honour his commitment, became immensely happy on knowing what had happened. He felt immensely proud of his dearest son.

In 1961, Sri Anjaneyulu had completed ten golden years of age and entered His eleventh year. All these 10 years of His life, filled with wonderful events, fascinating everyone around. The time is ripe for Him to get fascinated and it did come in that year itself.

Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin, the 35th pontiff of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, paid a visit to the city of Vijayawada. Brahmasri Kavitha Subrahmanya Shastri of Narasaraopet, known to His Holiness, took Sri Anjaneyulu to Vijayawada for the *darśana* of the great *Guru*. There he introduced this divine boy to the worshipful *Guru* saying, "This boy speaks fluent *Samskṛta*". Surprised



Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamin

that a 10-year old boy could converse fluently in *Samṣkṛta*, His Holiness started conversing with Sri Anjaneyulu in *Samṣkṛta*. The ease with which Sri Anjaneyulu spoke in *Samṣkṛta* impressed His Holiness. He was incredibly happy and blessed Sri Anjaneyulu with a silk shawl. Sri Anjaneyulu returned to Narasaraopet enthralled by the abundant grace showered on Him by His Holiness.

A few days later, the holy Master paid a visit to Narasaraopet itself. This time, Sri Prathapagiri Sivarama Shastri, the *Samṣkṛta* teacher of Sri Anjaneyulu, took Him for the *darśana* of the *Jagadguru*. On seeing Sri Anjaneyulu, the great *Guru* started conversing with Him in *Samṣkṛta*. The deep affection that the *Jagadguru* had felt for Sri Anjaneyulu at Vijayawada gushed forth and He specially blessed Sri Anjaneyulu.

Sri Anjaneyulu's mind experienced a very holy transformation. He felt the *Jagadguru's* presence within Him always. Whatever activity He undertook, He felt that His Holiness was guiding Him in accomplishing the same perfectly. All the time, He spoke only about the great *Ācārya* to His friends. He would eagerly listen to those people who had just returned after having had the *darśana* of *Ācārya*.

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Sri Anjaneyulu entered the local school in the sixth class (first form) and had His studies in Telugu medium. He was very punctual in attending His classes. He was a very sincere student. Mathematics was His favourite subject though He was also good at all the other subjects. Everyone at the school admired His proficiency in English.

He attended school with a tuft, clad in simple dhoti. He did not indulge in childhood pranks and wasteful talk. He was very polite to everyone and was soft spoken. None could ever spot even a single trace of pride or arrogance in His behaviour at any time. In other words, He was a perfect student. He was so popular as a bright student in the school that the headmaster paid special attention to Him. The school changed the medium of instruction from Telugu to English in the 10th standard and this caused a lot of students to leave the school. The headmaster was, however, not willing to let Sri Anjaneyulu leave the school. He was confident that Sri Anjaneyulu would fare well even in the English medium. Sri Anjaneyulu, of course, did not disappoint His headmaster!

His teachers were fascinated by His remarkable ability, to think independently, logically, and critically, and to apply His knowledge. There were many of His age who moved with Him but, with regard to knowledge, He was miles ahead of everyone. He used to listen to the teachers with extraordinary sincerity and concentration. This helped Him to instantly grasp the essence of the topics taught and to retain it permanently. He used to take down notes diligently. He never kept any homework pending. He would complete all His assignments promptly so

that He did not have to spend His after-school hours on schoolwork. He wished to spend those hours on *Vedic* and *Saṃskṛta* studies and assisting His father. He used to prepare sincerely for the examinations. He would not leave any question unanswered. His answer paper would be neat, impressive, and above par. Soon after coming back home from the examination hall, He used to compare the answers He had written in the examination with those in His class notebooks. After that, He would not be concerned about His performance. Why should a '*Karma Yogī*' be concerned about the results of His actions, after all? True to the adage, 'Where there is perfection, there is the pinnacle of success,' He was the first rank holder throughout His school life.

For Sri Anjaneyulu, time was very precious! He was never idle, always engaged in performing useful work. Procrastination and anxiety were unknown to Him! With a resolve to observe strict *brahmacārya*, Sri Anjaneyulu meticulously practiced rules prescribed in the *dharma-śāstra* for a *brahmacārī*. He turned his back on the temptations of sense pleasures and earnestly engaged Himself in the thoughts of God. He would not eat anything outside His house. He avoided watching films or plays or attending any other cultural functions. Temple visits, learning *Veda* and *Saṃskṛta* and going to school were His only activities!

The scriptures declare, "A *brahmacārī* should assume the study of *śāstras* along with his *vedādhyayana*." These words had a strong effect on this perfect *brahmacārī*! Unable to control His burning desire to learn the *śāstra*, Sri Anjaneyulu expressed His intentions thus to Sri Avadhani, "I want to undertake the *śāstraic* studies in the traditional manner. I do not want to accept this divine work casually." Though Sri Avadhani felt incredibly happy about his son's desire, he could only reply, "What you ask for is particularly good. Still, you must await the right time and proper guidance to get your wish fulfilled. Everything will take place as per *Īśvara's* will. Let us wait and see." The appropriate time for the fulfilment of Sri Anjaneyulu's wish arrived in the year 1966.

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In February 1966, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* graced Narasaraopet with a visit. Sri Anjaneyulu, who was then in His 11th class, had the *darśana* of His beloved *Guru*. Pleased at the sight of Sri Anjaneyulu, the holy Master opened a conversation in *Samskṛta*. The delighted disciple spoke to His Holiness with great enthusiasm. The *Guru* wholeheartedly blessed Sri Anjaneyulu and it awakened his inner desire to become a disciple of the *Guru*. The blessed boy was convinced: "He alone is my *Guru*. I can only reach the goal of human life with His grace. For this, surrendering at His Lotus Feet alone is the way." From that day on, Sri Anjaneyulu's mind was constantly looking forward to the right time to reach His *Guru*.

The blessed boy was convinced:
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 only reach the goal of
 human life with His grace.
 For this, surrendering at His
 Lotus Feet alone is the way."

The right moment came soon! His Holiness had decided to observe His *Cāturmāsya vrata* at Ujjain on the banks of river Shipra. *Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmīn* of Narasaraopet was leaving for Ujjain to have the *Cāturmāsya darśana* of the great *Ācārya*. Sri Anjaneyulu expressed His wish to him to tag along, as He desired to study the *śāstras* by staying at and serving the *Ācārya's* sacred Lotus Feet. *Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmīn* replied to Him that He could do so only with due permission from His parents. However, Sri Anjaneyulu was determined to leave. He replied to *Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmīn*: "As per the dictate उद्धरेदात्मनाऽऽत्मानम् (Uddharedātmanā"tmānam — *One should uplift oneself by one's own self*³), I'm leaving to secure Self-realisation. The permission from my parents is therefore not necessary. I have already made up my mind to reach His Holiness." Impressed by the boy's determination, *Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmīn* agreed to take Sri Anjaneyulu with him to Ujjain. When they reached Vijayawada railway junction and boarded the Delhi express, the joy of Sri Anjaneyulu found no bounds. The divine journey began.

3 "One's own self" refers to the person's controlled mind, that becomes oriented towards the supreme objective or Self-realisation.





Chapter 2

SUPREME SURRENDER

Śrī *Vidyāraṇya Svāmin* and Sri Anjaneyulu reached the Kaliadeh Palace on the banks of the river Shipra, where the *Jagadguru* was camping. Like a prismatic peacock thrilled at the very sight of dense dark clouds, Sri Sitaramanjaneyulu's mind was instantly thrilled at the very thought that He was soon going to surrender at the Lotus Feet of His *Guru*. His Holiness was blessing the visitors with His sacred *darśana*. Sri Anjaneyulu joined the queue of devotees who had assembled there to pay their obeisance to the holy master. When His turn came, Sri Anjaneyulu submitted His humble prostrations to the *Jagadguru*.

In *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda* explains the manner of worshipping the *Guru* by using the appropriate words and with true devotion. He says: "My *Guru*! I bow to You. You are the friend to those who make obeisance to you. You are the ocean of compassion. I have fallen into the sea of *saṃsāra*. Bathe me in the nectar of Your straight and compassionate look and save me from the depths of this ocean." This was precisely how Sri Anjaneyulu felt at that time.

A historically and spiritually noteworthy event took place there. A person who was going to steal the hearts of thousands of devotees as their beloved "*Jagadguru*" in the near future, a person who was going to head a celebrated *pīṭha* decorated by great *Jīvanmuktas*, and a person who was going to uncompromisingly dedicate His entire life to spreading the tenets of *Sanātana-dharma* was prostrating there before His beloved *Guru* and none among the assembled devotees knew this hidden glory of that youngster at that time.

In His celebrated commentary on Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda*'s *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, Śrī *Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* explains the greatness of the *Guru*'s compassion¹ thus: "The *Guru* is an ocean of compassion that asks for no reason. He is the friend to the pure who makes obeisance to Him. The *Guru*'s compassion

¹ Commentary on verse 35 (of *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*) that describes the *Guru* as अहेतुकदयासिन्धुः - (*Ahetuka-dayā-sindhuh*) - the ocean of compassion that arises out of no reason.

is unmotivated by anything-else other than the urge to destroy the affliction of another. Some may strive to help people out of their mental distress, only to get rid of the sense of pain that they themselves experience seeing the distress of others. To show that the *Guru's* compassion is not of this kind, *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* uses the word '*Ahetuka.*' Because of His *brahmajñāna* (knowledge of the Supreme), no pain can touch him, whether the pain emanates from others or Himself. His only desire is that man should cross the ocean of *saṃsāra* (the dreadful cycle of births and deaths). This desire arises in Him when He comes out of His *samādhi* to world consciousness." *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin's* innate compassion was of this kind.

Jagadguru's compassionate looks fell on Sri Anjaneyulu and a beautiful smile blossomed forth on His lotus face. The great *Jīvanmukta* asked Sri Anjaneyulu: "Aren't you the boy who spoke to me in *Saṃskṛta*?" That His Holiness recognized Him made Sri Anjaneyulu incredibly happy and He answered in the affirmative. "What has brought you all the way here?" asked His Holiness. "I have come here with a firm resolve to learn the *śāstras* from Your Holiness." Sri Anjaneyulu's surrender was total and His determination not to leave His *Guru* thereafter was very firm. "Well, come for class from tomorrow. I will teach you '*Tarka-saṅgraha*'." The joy of Sri Anjaneyulu found no bounds. His wishes granted; Sri Anjaneyulu submitted His humble prostrations to the great sage.

'*Tarka-saṅgraha*' is an introductory text prescribed for those intended to learn '*Tarka-śāstra.*' The lessons started on the next day. Sri Anjaneyulu was very well aware not only of the value of the text taught but also of the greatness of the person who was teaching it. So, He listened to the Teacher attentively.

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Sri Anjaneyulu wrote to His parents that He intended to stay with the *Jagadguru* and study the *śāstras*. The parents, in fact, were very worried. Smt. Anantalakshamma, who loved her first son very much, was deeply upset about His sudden disappearance. The news that He was in Ujjain gave them great relief. However, they did

not make any attempt to bring Him back to Narasaraopet because they could understand His thirst for *śāstraic* knowledge. They consoled themselves that it was only due to God's will that the golden opportunity to be a *vidyārthī* under the Sringeri *Ācārya* Himself had come to Him. They wrote back to Him conveying their blessings.

Just as a child finds comfort in its mother's lap, Sri Anjaneyulu enjoyed His stay with His Holiness. Blessed with a remarkable potential characterised by tremendous willpower, sharp logical reasoning, a deep passion for learning *śāstras* and an extraordinary faith in the words of the *śāstras* and of the *Guru*, this diligent disciple pleased His *Guru* in every way. If there was class, He would attend it without fail. At other times, He was either engrossed in studies or reciting *mantras*.

After completing the *Cāturmāsya vrata*, the *Jagadguru* left Ujjain. Sri Anjaneyulu accompanied His beloved *Guru*. Before returning to Sringeri, His Holiness's tour covered several other places in North India and then the state of Andhra Pradesh over a year and a half. In spite of His hectic schedules, the *Jagadguru* paid special attention to His dear disciple. In due course, His Holiness made Sri Anjaneyulu take part in the *Vidvat-sadas* (assembly of scholars). The scholars present on such occasions were spellbound by Sri Anjaneyulu's fascinating oration in chaste *Samskṛta*.

The famous adage in *Samskṛta*, "*विद्या ददाति विनयम्*," (*Vidyā dadāti vinayam*) states that knowledge, when properly assimilated, results in humility. True to this adage, Sri Anjaneyulu endowed with such scholarship, was an embodiment of humility. He wore very ordinary *dhoti* and a simple upper cloth. His charming face bore the shining white lines of holy ash and one could see the sparkling brilliance of divinity. He would not interact with the crowd. He would not behave in a fashion so as to draw others' attention. He would be seen, during the *Candramaulīśvara pūjā* performed by His Holiness, chanting the *pūjā-mantras* and would silently slip away from the scene the moment the *pūjā* was over. His desire for seclusion did not prevent devotees wanting to converse with Him. This admirable adolescent would not be indifferent to anyone. He would receive them with a pleasant smile and talk to them. His pleasing manners and His high proficiency in *Samskṛta* inspired and mesmerized everyone. While His *Guru* Bhakti attracted many, His deep dispassion surprised many others. Scholars who used to visit His Holiness

would somehow come across Sri Anjaneyulu too. He would stun them with His telling eloquence and rich scriptural knowledge. They would even approach His Holiness later and express their joy and satisfaction about having met Sri Anjaneyulu. His Holiness would acknowledge their updates with a smile of approval.

As the days passed, devotees of His Holiness developed a special liking for Sri Anjaneyulu. Many of them offered Sri Anjaneyulu gifts — cash and kind — but this ever-content lad would politely decline the offers with a smile. What follows is an interesting episode that demonstrates Sri Anjaneyulu's contentment and His *Guru's* compassion.

On one occasion, in Mumbai, an ardent devotee of the *Jagadguru* wanted to gift Sri Anjaneyulu an imported notepad and a pen. When he approached Sri Anjaneyulu and requested Him to accept the gift, the sincere *brahmacārī* politely refused to take it. Disappointed and feeling sad, the devotee left. On his way back, he happened to have the *darśana* of His Holiness. The *Ācārya*, who had noticed him coming from where Sri Anjaneyulu was staying, looked at his sad face, quickly sensing what would have caused it. While He was proud of Sri Anjaneyulu's principled lifestyle, He also felt sympathetic towards this devotee. An ocean of compassion that He was, the *Jagadguru* decided to cheer him up. He initiated a short dialogue with that devotee.

His Holiness: What is it you have in your hand?

Devotee: It is a note pad and pen set, *Mahāsvāmin*. (The devotee hands the pen and the pad over to His Holiness.)

H.H.: (Gently feeling the surface of the paper by moving His soft fingers over it) How smooth it is! It should be of very high quality. Isn't it?

D: Yes, Your Holiness, it is. It is an imported item.

H.H.: (Smiling) Oh, I see. Shall I keep this notepad and the pen with me for my personal use?

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Sri Anjaneyulu with His parents

The devotee was overwhelmed by joy at this unexpected opportunity to submit it as an offering to His beloved *Guru* Himself. He humbly prayed to His Holiness to accept it. Thus, the *Jagadguru* transformed the devotee's state of mind from one of disappointment into that of delight.

Mysterious are the ways of God! When so many people wanted to be of some service to Sri Anjaneyulu but could not, the opportunity knocked on the door of another devotee of the *Jagadguru* in Mumbai. At a certain campsite in Mumbai, Sri Anjaneyulu found the place meant for His stay too congested to perform His *anuṣṭhāna* peacefully. He noticed that a devotee of the *maṭha* was living near the camp venue. He went to the house of this devotee. Pleased to see at his doorstep the young *brahmacārī*, who was serving his *Guru*, the devotee extended a warm

welcome to Him and asked if he could be of any help to Him. "Would it be possible for you to provide me with some space here to stay for a while and perform my *anuṣṭhāna*?" requested Sri Anjaneyulu. Moved by this very polite request, the devotee replied, "It is our pleasure! You are most welcome to use our place." Sri Anjaneyulu felt happy and expressed His gratitude to the host. After completing His *anuṣṭhāna* there peacefully, He left. It was only years later that the devotee realised how blessed his home was to have been sanctified by a divine personage who was to be the thirty-sixth *Ācārya* of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham!

When His Holiness camped at Vijayawada, Sri Anjaneyulu's parents came for the *Jagadguru's darśana*. He prayed to His Holiness, "*Svāmin*, please bless me with Your permission to take our son Sri Anjaneyulu, keep Him with us for a few days, and send Him back to Your Holiness to continue His studies." His Holiness could feel the genuine parental affection. Though He prefer not to disturb the regulated study routines of His dear disciple, He, at the same time, also did not want to reject their humble request. His Holiness decided to grant their wish. He said, "Well, I can understand your mind. You may take him with you now but keep him with you only for four days. We are scheduled to camp at Srisailam in four days. You must bring him there." The delighted father submitted his obeisance to the *Guru*. Sri Anjaneyulu was not at all willing to leave His *Guru*. However, as it was His *Guru's* instruction, He left with His father. He took it as His bounden duty to carry out His *Guru's* instructions. He left for Narasaraopet with Sri Avadhani.

The whole family was excited to have Him back home. However, Sri Anjaneyulu's dispassionate mind found no joy in His homecoming. He did not talk much to anyone. During those four days of home-stay, He immersed himself in revising His lessons! He confined Himself to monosyllabic responses or a few sentences at the maximum, whenever His family members spoke to Him. As agreed, Sri Avadhani took Sri Anjaneyulu to Srisailam after four days. Sri Anjaneyulu was extremely happy to be back in the sacred presence of His beloved *Guru*.

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revising His lessons!

Finally, in March 1968, His Holiness reached Sringeri. His Holiness arranged a comfortable stay for Sri Anjaneyulu at a small building called *Āhnikā-mandiram* inside *Narasimha-vana*, the region on the southern side of the River Tuṅgā inside the *Maṭha* complex. The holy *Guru* ensured that food and other necessities were provided to His dear disciple in a timely manner. His Holiness had also arranged for the continuation of His advanced *śāstraic* lessons. It is said: “*विद्यतुराणां न सुखम् न निद्रा (vidyāturaṇāṃ na sukham na nidrā* — For one who is intent upon acquiring knowledge, there is neither seeking of pleasure nor sleep)”. It is the sincerity in learning that makes a student achieve perfection in all respects. As a *vidyārthī* of the great *Guru*, Sri Anjaneyulu possessed such a laudable quality.

Once, while referring to the affection shown by a *Guru* to his disciple, the *Jagadguru* said: “It must always be borne in mind that the *Guru*, who is the knower of *Brahman*², is an ocean of mercy and that He cares for the disciple without any selfish motivating factor whatsoever. His concern for the disciple is far greater than that of even parents who in their anxiety to give their children material comfort, ignore the highest good.” Sri Anjaneyulu could obviously experience the underlying truth in the *Jagadguru’s* words. His Holiness had a deep affection for His beloved disciple and showed it on many occasions. For instance, once, on a *pradoṣa* day, Sri Anjaneyulu had been to the shrine of *Śrī Śakti-gaṇapati* on the northern side of the *Tuṅgā* river. That night, as usual, He came for the *Candramaulīśvara pūjā*, performed daily by His Holiness, to recite *mantras*. When His Holiness arrived at the *pūjā* hall, He asked Sri Anjaneyulu: “Did you go to the other side of the river today?” Sri Anjaneyulu answered very obediently, “Yes, I went.” His Holiness said to Him, “It is enough if you stay in *Narasimha-vana* itself. I will always be observing you.” On hearing this, Sri Anjaneyulu was not only surprised that His *Guru* had been closely observing Him but was also moved by the maternal care that was evident in His *Guru’s* words.

His Holiness asked Sri Anjaneyulu to shift His residence from the *Ahnikā-mandiram* to *Guhā*, a room newly constructed by His Holiness in the basement of His holy abode, *Saccidānanda Vilāsa*. His Holiness also arranged for Sri Anjaneyulu’s advanced studies in *Nyāya (Tarka) śāstra* under the great scholar Sri Gollapudi Gopalakrishna Shastri who was a student of the celebrated scholar of Varanasi,

2 A neutral gender word in *Samṣkṛta* for the Ultimate Reality (God without attributes such as name and form). The nature of *Brahman* is described as *Sat* (Existence), *Chit* (Consciousness) and *Ananda* (Bliss).

Sri Rajeshwara Shastri. His Holiness, impressed by Sri Gopalakrishna Shastri's deep erudition, chose him to teach Sri Anjaneyulu.

The classes started. As ever, Sri Anjaneyulu's attention was total. Sri Shastri would teach Sri Anjaneyulu one portion of the text in the morning and then, in the evening, Sri Anjaneyulu would repeat flawlessly everything that was taught in the morning. A stranger passing by that way in the evening would conclude that it was Sri Anjaneyulu who was teaching Sri Gopalakrishna Shastri!

Sri Anjaneyulu was also pursuing the higher levels of studies in *Yajur-veda*. This scholar-disciple thoroughly impressed His *Vedic* teachers by His exceptional interest and focus on the scriptural studies. His teachers were awestruck at His ability to memorise the *mantras* just by repeating them twice as per tradition and that was it! Unlike other *vidyārthīs*, He never had to undertake rigorous practice for long to retain what was taught. His Holiness who kept Himself consistently posted of Sri Anjaneyulu's academic progress felt proud of Him.

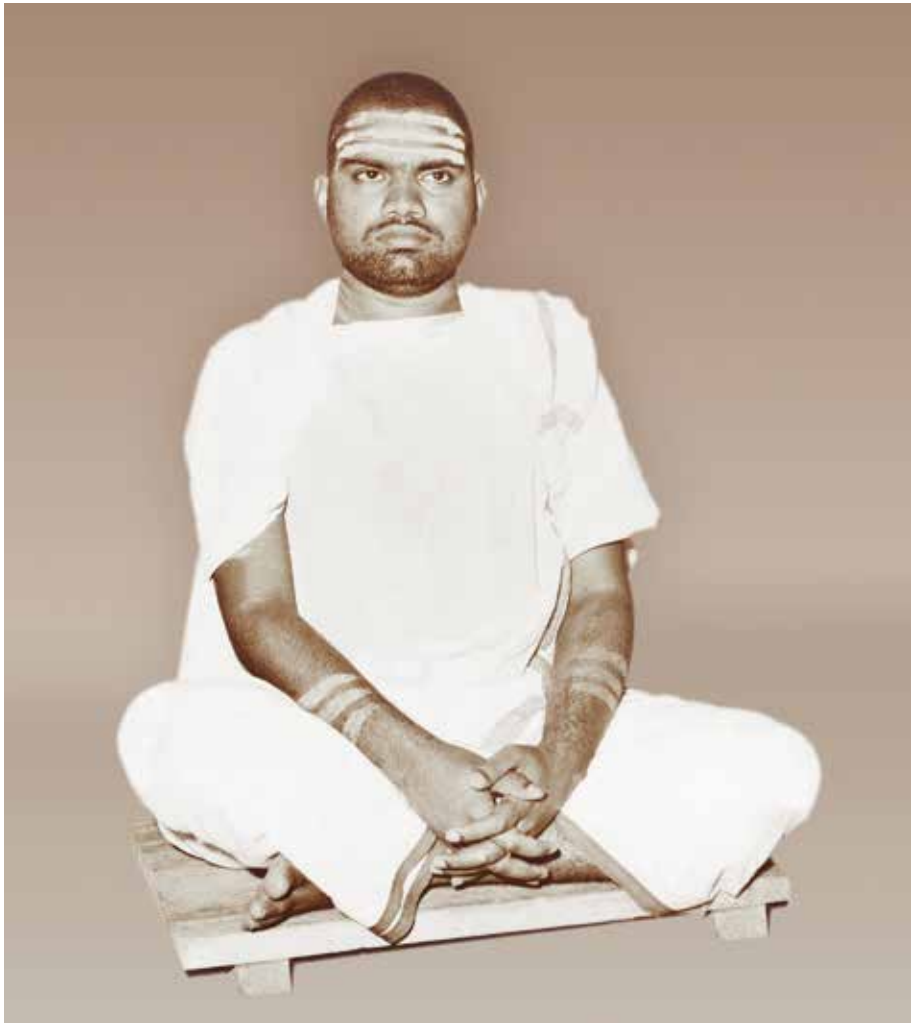
Sri Anjaneyulu had the habit of getting up at 4 a.m. to start His studies, soon after His bath. He also observed admirable austerities. His needs were very frugal. He used to have only one meal a day and that too after His Holiness partook of His *bhikṣā*. The term 'laziness' never found a place in His dictionary. He always kept Himself engaged in *śāstraic* studies and *japa*. He would come out of *Saccidānanda Vilāsa* only rarely and even during such visits outside, He would be seen helping

Sri Shastri would teach Sri Anjaneyulu one portion of the text in the morning and then, in the evening, Sri Anjaneyulu would repeat flawlessly everything that was taught in the morning.



other *vidyārthīs* with their lessons in *Samṣkr̥ta*. He would be the centre of attraction for all the other *vidyārthīs*. Sri Krishna Bhatta, the current Superintendent of the *maṭha's Veda-pāṭhaśālā* was a *vidyārthī* at that time. He respectfully recalls how he and a few other *vidyārthīs* of the *pāṭhaśālās* used to flood Sri Anjaneyulu with their doubts and how He used to clear them with amazing ease. These *vidyārthīs* revered Him so much that they vied with each other to attend to His requirements even without Him asking for anything.

Another striking quality found in Sri Anjaneyulu was His patience. Even when faced with testing



The dispassionate Brahmachari

situations, He would be perfectly calm and composed. The following incident exemplifies His patience. One morning, Sri Anjaneyulu went to take a bath. At that time someone else was taking a bath there. Sri Anjaneyulu waited patiently for that person to finish. Soon after he finished, someone else arrived there. He saw that Sri Anjaneyulu had already been waiting there. Nevertheless, he went forward and started bathing without even seeking formal permission from Sri Anjaneyulu. Any person in Sri Anjaneyulu's position would have felt offended, but Sri Anjaneyulu waited patiently for this person to finish his bath. A third person then arrived and repeated what the second one had done. Even then Sri Anjaneyulu did not lose

His patience. Only after the third one had finished his bath; Sri Anjaneyulu had His bath.

It is said: "The highest reward for man's toil is not what he gets for it but what he becomes by it." Years of sincere study of *śāstras*, practice of austerities, burning dispassion, restraint of senses, control of mind, deep dedication to *dharma*, exceptional erudition, innate compassion and intense devotion to God and the *Guru* had made Sri Anjaneyulu shine with a divine brilliance. With the concurrence of *Śrī Śāradāmbā*, the *Jagadguru* decided to grant *sannyāsa* to Sri Anjaneyulu and ordain Him as His successor-designate.

The *Navarātrī* festival started in Sringeri with its usual grandeur in 1974. Sri Venkateswara Avadhani and Smt. Anantalakshamma paid a visit to Sringeri for *darśana*. After a few days of their visit, one evening, His Holiness summoned Sri Avadhani and told him: "As per *Śāradāmbā's* command, I have decided to grant *sannyāsa* to Sitaramanjaneyulu and make him my successor-designate for this *Pīṭha*. You may convey this to your wife. Your other son (Sri Dakshinamurthy) will take diligent care of both of you. My blessings are there for you all." Sri Avadhani could not believe his ears! He offered his prostrations to His Holiness, expressive of his gratitude for the extraordinary blessing that the great *Guru* had bestowed upon his son. He then returned to his room carrying the pleasant news.

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When Smt. Anantalakshamma heard the information, she, like any other mother, felt sad over the fact that her son was going to leave her once and for all. However, blessed as she was, realized: "My son is, after all, going to cut asunder all His worldly ties and enter the sacred path of spiritual supremacy." She gave her consent wholeheartedly, grateful to the *Jagadguru* for blessing her son in such a great way.

The *Navarātrī* festival came to an end with the grand '*rathotsava*'. On that day, His Holiness entered the sanctum sanctorum of *Śrī Śāradāmbā* temple and

sat absorbed in meditation. After His meditation, His Holiness came out and announced to the assembled devotees that with the concurrence of the Divine Mother, He had chosen Sri *Taṅgirāla* Sitaramanjaneyulu as His successor-designate and that the *śiṣya-svikāra* ceremony would take place on the 11th day of November 1974.

The news sent a wave of thrill and joy through the assembled devotees. Soon the newspapers reported it and this happy news spread throughout the country. The *Maṭha* administration, too, started sending His Holiness's 'Śrīmukham' (official communication) to all the close devotees of the *maṭha*. Devotees from all corners of the country started to assemble in Sringeri, the little town of rich spiritual excellence. His Holiness's choice of Sri Anjaneyulu as His successor was very apt in all respects. It was obviously in line with the following conditions prescribed by *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* Himself: "Śuci (pure-unimpeachable character), *Jitendriya* (conqueror of senses), and *Veda-vedāṅgādi-vicakṣaṇa* (well versed in *Vedas*, its *aṅgas*, and *śāstras*). Sri Anjaneyulu possessed all these and more.



Crossing the River Tunga on the day prior to Sannyasa Sweekara

Moreover, His Holiness Himself trained Him for eight years. In short, His was like the case of a priceless diamond well-polished by an incomparable expert to be fitted in a celebrated and unique crown! While the facts remained thus, Sri Anjaneyulu, on informed of His Holiness's decision, was somewhat concerned. He, in spite of His extraordinary competence and worshipful character, was afraid whether He was fit, even to an infinitesimal extent, to become the *Jagadguru* of a *pīṭha*

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Offering prayers at the shrines of
Jagadguru Sri Adi Shankaracharya and Goddess Sharadambal

which was established by *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* Himself and which was decorated by a chain of great *Jīvanmuktas*. He voiced this concern even to His Holiness Himself. The Acharya reassured Him saying that as it was *Śāradāmbā's* decision, He need not entertain any doubts about His competence for the post and that He will receive Her blessings.

The rituals started on the 10th of November 1974³ with Sri Anjaneyulu began the day with *sāṣṭāṅga-praṇāms* to the *Jagadguru* and attending the *pūrṇāhuti* of the *Gaṇapati-homa* conducted at the Sri *Śāradāmbā* Temple. After offering His *praṇāms* to *Śrī Śakti-gaṇapati*, He had *darśana* of *Śrī Śāradāmbā*. Then He visited *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's* shrine and offered His respectful *praṇāms* to *Śrī Bhagavatpāda* into whose chain of disciples He was to be linked. From there, He visited the various temples in the *maṭha* and returned to the *adhiṣṭhānam* of *Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* (the thirty-third *Ācārya* of the *pīṭha*) and *Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* (the thirty-fourth *Ācārya*) and offered His prostrations. There He performed the preliminary rites (*Aṣṭa śrāddhas*) that have to be completed before entering the *sannyāsa āśrama*. It happened to be the *Jayanthi* day of *Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*, and His Holiness performed *pūjā* at the *Mahāsvāmin's adhiṣṭhānam* that night. Sri Anjaneyulu was present there chanting the *mantras*.

When the 11th day of November 1974 dawned, Sri Anjaneyulu completed His *sandhyā-vandana* and then performed the *Puruṣa-sūkta-homa* followed by the *Virjā-homa*. The *Śiṣya*-designate then went to the River *Tuṅgā* and having had a bath, stood in waist deep water. He then discarded all His clothes including the thread that held His loin cloth. Next being discarded was His sacred thread. Then He chanted the '*Preṣoccāraṇa mantra*' granting freedom to all beings from fear on account of Him. As He took a few steps downstream, His Holiness *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* called Him and gave Him the saffron robes, a bamboo staff, and a vessel (*kamaṇḍalu*).

The *Guru* and the *Śiṣya*-designate then went in procession to the accompaniment of *Nadaswaram* and *Vedaparāyaṇam* to the *adhiṣṭhānam* of *Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*. There the senior *Jagadguru* initiated Him into the *praṇava-upadeśa* followed by the *Mahāvākya upadeśa* and mentioned

3 *Ānanda-āśvayuja-kṛṣṇa-ekādaśī*



Performing rituals associated with the Sannyasa Sweekara ceremony



The Shishya Sweekara ceremony on the banks of river Tunga



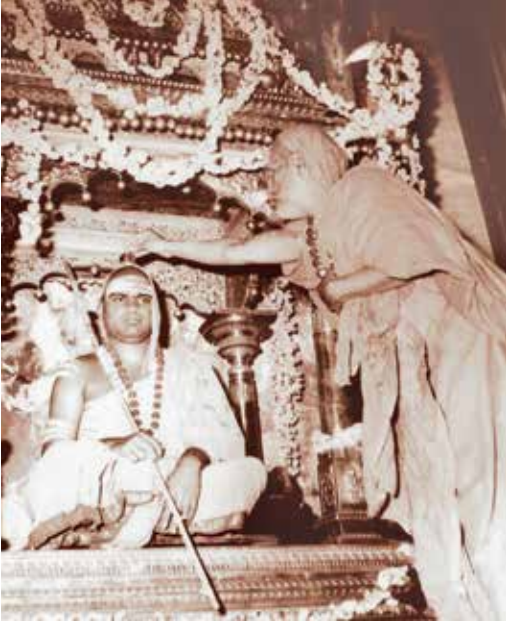
The Acharyas proceeding to the Adhishtanam of Jagadguru Sri Chandrasekhara Bharathi Mahaswamin



The sacred Initiation



The glorious Guru with His devout disciple



The senior Jagadguru worshipping the Salagramam placed on the head of His Holiness



The senior Jagadguru showing Aarthi to the Salagramam

the *yoga-paṭṭa* in His Disciple's ears. From there, They proceeded to Śrī Śāradāmbā Temple where the śiṣya-designate was seated on the *Vyākhyāna simhāsana*. His Holiness kept a *Śāligrāma* on the head of the Śiṣya-designate and worshipped It. After *Maṅgalārati*, the *Guru* took His seat on the *Vyākhyāna simhāsana* and Śrī *Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* worshipped the Lotus Feet of His *Guru*. After this worship was complete, the senior Jagadguru made public His Holiness's *yoga-paṭṭa*, "*Bhāratī Tīrtha*".

The *Guru* and the Śiṣya next went to the *sanctum sanctorum* of Śrī Śāradāmbā Temple and offered Their worship. From there, They visited the shrines of



The Jagadgurus in the Royal Durbar Attire

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda and Śrī Thorānā Gaṇapati. They then paid Their respects to the Pādukās of the thirty-second Ācārya of the pīṭha, Śrī Vṛddha Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin. From there, They visited all the other shrines situated in the northern side and finally returned to Narasiṃha-vana.

If ever one had thought that the Jagadguru had just nominated a successor to the pīṭha, that would have been only a superficial view, for the holy Guru had, in fact, introduced a priceless gem of spiritual excellence to the world! Śrī Śāradāmbā had thus adorned Herself with another jewel of holiness and invincible wisdom! On that day, the ardent devotees of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham had been blessed by the senior Jagadguru with a Guru, to guide them and their progeny.

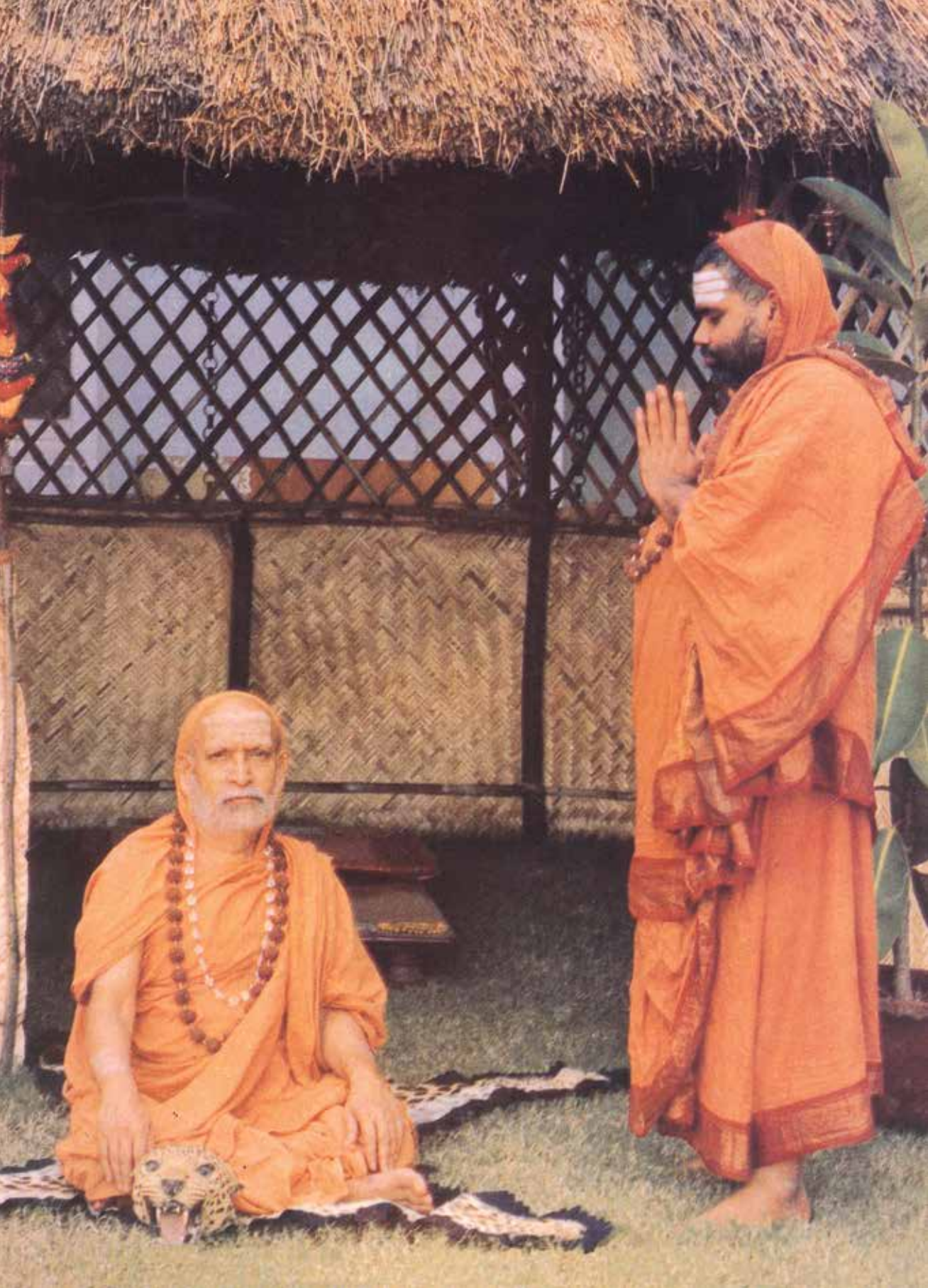
The senior Jagadguru started addressing His Holiness as "Svāmin" from the very day of the śiṣya-svīkāra. He even advised His devotees that whatever respect they had been showing Him must be shown to His Holiness also. He used to instruct whoever came for His darśana to have the darśana of the Svāmin too. On an occasion, while referring to the choice of His Holiness for the pīṭha, the senior Jagadguru mentioned: "Every Ācārya of this pīṭha faces an acid test. It is about choosing the right successor for this sacred seat. By selecting the Svāmin for the post, I have passed that test with First Class!" On a different occasion, when the senior Jagadguru was conversing with a devotee of His, He said, "The Svāmin is an incredibly special person. He has mastered the Vedas and the śāstras even before taking up sannyaśa." Similarly, while addressing an assembly of devotees, He mentioned, "I have chosen a very competent Guru to guide you all. He is a remarkable person."

In accordance with the Sringeri-pīṭhādhipati tradition, the senior Jagadguru initiated His Holiness into several mantras such as those of Lakṣmī narasiṃha, Medhā-dakṣiṇāmūrti, Bālā-tripurasundarī and the Śrīvidyā, besides teaching all the anuṣṭhāna kramas (ritualistic procedures) meant for ascetics to His Holiness. He also taught Him the various traditional practices followed in the maṭha.

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- The senior Jagadguru





Chapter 3

ILLUSTRIOUS DISCIPLE

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda says in His Svātmanirūpaṇam:

आस्ते देशिकचरणम् निरवधिरास्ते तदीक्षणे करुणा ।
आस्ते किमपि तदुक्तम् किमतः परमस्ति जन्मसाफल्यम् ॥

āste deśikacaraṇam niravadhirāste tadīkṣaṇe karuṇā.
āste kimapi taduktam kimataḥ paramasti janmasāphalyam..

(There is the foot of the Guru. In His glance, there is limitless compassion. There is something that has been said by Him. What else is there that constitutes the summum bonum of life?)

An ideal disciple finds immense pleasure and satisfaction in serving his holy *Guru* and thus so does His Holiness, who has always felt that the senior *Jagadguru* granted Him the greatest privilege by choosing Him as His *śiṣya*. The brief speech He gave during the 1977 *Ṣaṣṭyabdapūrṭi* celebrations of *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* held in Chennai spoke volumes about His reverence towards His *Guru*. While acknowledging the *svāgatam* given to His *Guru* and Himself by the devotees of Chennai, He said: “The knowledge of highly metaphysical treatises and spiritual texts may help one win laurels in an assembly of scholars or score a victory in a debate. But this knowledge, astounding though it may be, will not by itself attune one’s mind to think of getting away from worldly shackles. The desire and a strong will to renounce the world can come only if one seeks the guidance of a spiritual preceptor, who will show the path of God-realisation.

Not everyone will get an opportunity to attach themselves to a *Guru*, for even the inclination to approach the preceptor will depend upon one’s past spiritual attainments. To find a ready response from the *Ācārya* by way of His willingness to take the aspirant as His disciple and bless him, is a greatest privilege.



In this respect, I consider myself most fortunate in having had a unique opportunity of getting initiated into the ascetic order by my revered *Guru*.”

His Holiness listened to His *Guru*'s words and instructions with extraordinary care and concentration. He unfailingly executed His *Guru*'s commands to the last letter without any delay. There are many incidents that serve to illustrate this.

Sometimes the senior *Jagadguru* would remark, “Today's *pūjā* will be done by the *Svāmin*.” His Holiness would immediately get ready to perform

Śrī Candramaulīśvara pūjā. Once, both the *Ācāryas* graced a function at Srirangam. First, the senior *Jagadguru* addressed the assembly of devotees. He concluded His speech by saying, “The *Svāmin* will speak next. He is an excellent orator. However, I do not think it will be possible for him to speak for a long time today because he has to go for his *snāna*, *āhnikā*, and *pūjā*, and it is already late.”

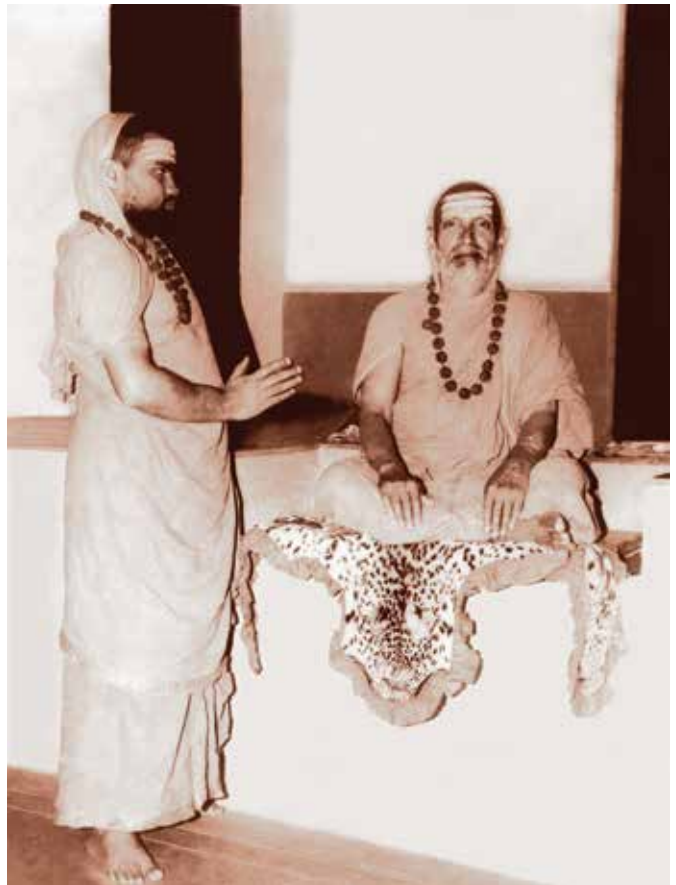
He unfailingly executed
His *Guru*'s commands
to the last letter
without any delay.



When His Holiness started His speech, He said, “*Our revered Guru* Himself has said that I would not be able to speak for long. His words contain His *ajñā* (orders), and it is my first and foremost duty to carry out His instructions.” After this, His Holiness completed His discourse soon and promptly left for His *snāna*.

After the *śiṣya-svikāra* ceremony, the senior *Jagadguru* had given up wearing ochre robes with golden borders, while His Holiness, in keeping with the *maṭha* tradition, wore such ochre robes. One day His Holiness felt, “Why not I wear a plain ochre robe just as my *Guru* does?” and so donned the robes devoid of golden borders. The senior *Jagadguru* was quick to notice this. Summoning His Holiness, He said, “*Svāmin!* You are wearing an ordinary *vastra*! Though you personally want to be simple, you should be aware that you are the *Uttarādhikārī* (successor-designate) of this *pīṭha* and should therefore follow certain traditions. Please wear only the type of robes you are required to.” His Holiness obeyed.

The *Gītā* instructs: “One should meditate upon one’s *Guru* throughout one’s life. Even though one enjoys independence, one should not show even a fraction of indifference in one’s attitudes towards one’s *Guru*.” For His Holiness, His *Guru* is everything. He did not let His separate identity as the *successor-designate* distract Him at any time. His Holiness’s mind always dwelled on His *Guru*. One day, He was conversing with a devotee inside *Saccidānanda Vilāsa*. When the devotee humbly enquired where His revered *Guru* was, His Holiness replied, “My revered



Guru has gone to the other side of the river to visit the temples. At this moment, He is emerging from the *Śāradāmbā* temple." The devotee realised that His Holiness was specifying His *Guru's* exact location, though His *Guru* was not within His range of sight.

His Holiness never relished any prominence given to Him in the presence of His *Guru*. If, at any time, a devotee approached Him with a request for blessings, He would immediately advise him to go and seek the blessings of His *Guru*. As far as His Holiness is concerned, nothing can excel the greatness and compassion of His holy *Guru*. Such is His faith! In His *anugraha bhāṣaṇas*, He has averred that whatever He has achieved in His life is solely because of His *Guru's* grace. His Holiness has advised His audience to utilise His *Guru's* grace and compassion to succeed in

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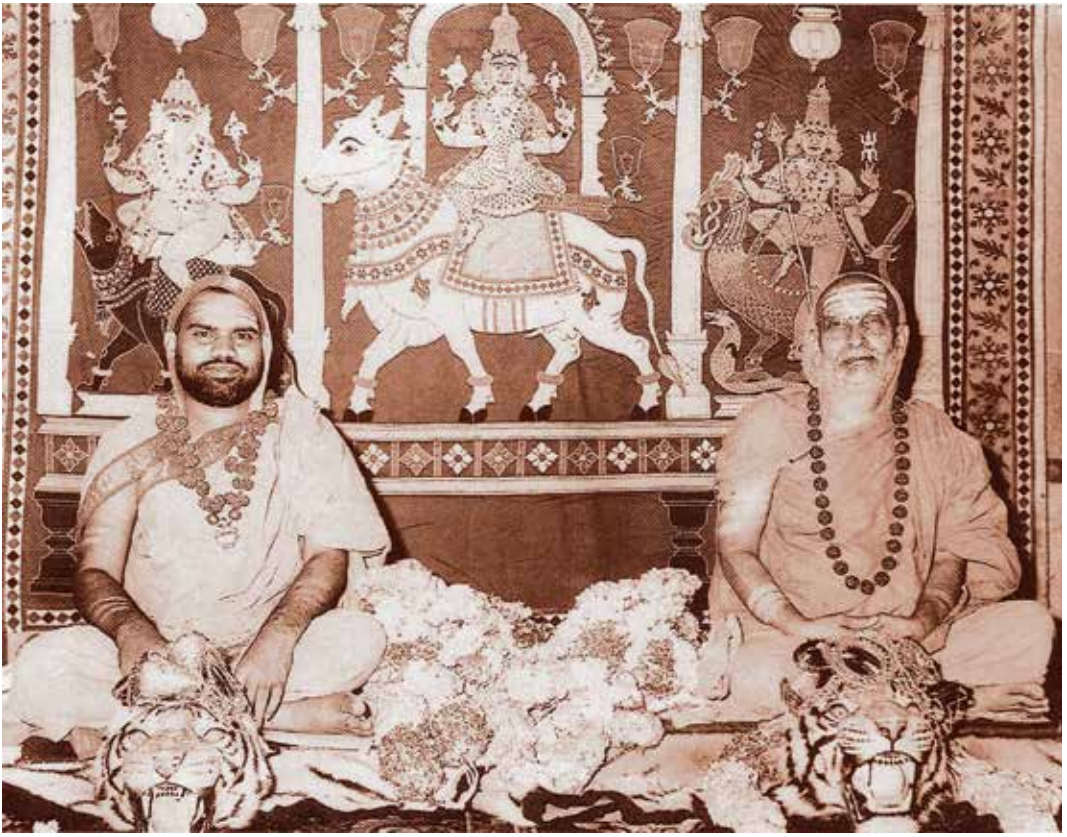
their spiritual practices. In a talk, He said: “seeking Ācārya’s blessings for wealth, health and the like will not get us the maximum. We must pray to Him for His grace and nothing else. Once we become the recipients of His mercy, we will get everything.” The entire assembly learnt on that day a valuable lesson as to how one must pray to great souls who can grant anything.

Many have noticed a striking similarity in the thoughts and actions between the *Guru* and the *śiṣya*. A couple of incidents illustrate this *Guru-śiṣya* relationship.

When the *Jagadgurus* were camping in Chennai, several reporters came to interview Them. First, they asked His Holiness some questions and received His replies. Thereafter, they came to the senior *Jagadguru* and posed the same questions. Much to their surprise, He also gave them the same answers. The reporters exclaimed, “It would have been sufficient if we had met just one of Them. Even in Their words, there are no differences.”

Some affluent devotees of the *maṭha* wanted to build an educational institution. One of them went to Sringeri, had *darśana* of the senior *Jagadguru*, gave the details about the project and sought His blessings. He said, “Let me also contribute some money towards this noble cause” and mentioned a particular amount. He then blessed him. Thereafter, the devotee went to His Holiness who was then on a sacred tour in the Southern regions of India and sought His blessings. His Holiness said, “Let me also contribute some money towards this noble cause” and mentioned the exact amount specified by His *Guru*!

One day, His Holiness visited a devotee’s house. The devotee placed two requests at the Lotus Feet of His Holiness – One, he had just built his own house and



The Illustrious Disciple and the Peerless Preceptor

fixed a date for *gṛhapraveśa* (housewarming ceremony) and sought His Holiness's blessings and, two, he had fixed a certain date for his son's *upanayana*, and he prayed for His Holiness's blessings for his son. His Holiness said, "My whole-hearted blessings are there for your *gṛhapraveśa*. However, I am unable to consider the case of *upanayana* because you have fixed it in the *dakṣiṇāyana* period, which is not acceptable to the *śāstras* for conducting *upanayana* ceremonies. So, come to Sringeri in *uttarāyana* and conduct the *upanayana* function there. I will bless you." The disappointed devotee who desperately wanted to conduct the *upanayana* function as scheduled, approached the senior *Jagadguru* with the hope that He would be giving His blessings. Without mentioning his visit with His Holiness, the devotee informed the senior *Jagadguru* about the *gṛhapraveśa* and his son's *upanayana* and sought His blessings for both the events. The senior *Jagadguru* said, "I bless you for the *gṛhapraveśa*. However, for the *upanayana* you come to

Sringeri in *uttarāyaṇa*, perform it there and accept my blessings.” The devotee remained speechless at the striking similarity in the words of both the *Ācāryas*.

A devotee once approached the senior *Jagadguru* and prayed that he be blessed with His sacred *Pādukās*. He queried him, “Are you performing your *Nitya Karmas* (scripturally ordained daily rites) without fail?” The devotee replied in affirmative. “Have you been initiated into a *mantra*?” was His Holiness’s next question. “Not yet, *Mahāsvāmin*” answered the devotee. He advised him, “Well, then, you first take the *mantropadeśa*. We will see about the *Pādukās* later.” Next morning, He blessed the devotee with a *mantra*. Years later, the devotee approached His Holiness and prayed that he be blessed with His *Pādukās*. The devotee, however, did not mention anything about the same request he had submitted to the senior *Jagadguru* and the subsequent *mantropadeśa* received from the *Ācārya*. His Holiness said, “So, you have been performing your *Nitya Karmas* without fail; you have also been initiated into a *mantra*. Now, only the *Pādukās* are due. Is it not?” The devotee was stunned by the order of events that His Holiness was listing, perfectly identical to what the senior *Jagadguru* had mentioned years before. Then His Holiness blessed the devotee with His sacred *Pādukās*.

How should one conduct himself in the presence of his *Guru*? The *Guru Gītā* says, “One should worship with utmost devotion, the sacred *Pādukās*, the holy seat and the like belonging to his *Guru*. When the *Guru* walks, the disciple should follow Him. He must not cross the *Guru’s* shadow.”

Those who had the great fortune of seeing both the *Ācāryas* together, could have noticed the great reverence with which His Holiness conducted Himself in the presence of His *Guru*. His Holiness used to visit His *Guru* every morning, offer His prostrations at the most sacred Lotus Feet of His beloved *Guru*. Whenever They walked together, His Holiness would never over-step His *Guru*. Whenever both of Them were to occupy Their seats, His Holiness would

Those who had the great fortune of seeing both the *Ācāryas* together, could have noticed the great reverence with which His Holiness conducted Himself in the presence of His *Guru*.





wait for His *Guru* to be seated first. Sometimes, when His Holiness arrived a little later than His *Guru* to attend a function, He would pay His respects to His *Guru* first and only then take His seat. Whenever both the *Jagadgurus* were present in an assembly of devotees, and the senior *Jagadguru* blessed the assembly of devotees with a sacred discourse, His Holiness would listen to His *Guru's* discourses intently. While conducting the *Vidvat-sadas* (assembly of scholars), His Holiness would ensure that whatever He spoke met with His *Guru's* approval.

His Holiness strictly adheres to the proper code of conduct in the presence of His *Guru* and His Holiness will constantly preach how one should conduct themselves before the senior *Jagadguru*. The following incident relates to a request made by a young boy for *mantropadeśa*. *Mantropadeśa* from a revered *Guru* is a great blessing and The *Guru* gives only when the person is deemed fit to receive it. His Holiness's compassion to help a young boy vividly comes out in the following.

A young boy approached His Holiness and innocently asked, "Can You give me *mantropadeśa*?" His Holiness, while happy to see the young boy's interest in

mantra initiation, felt the need to teach him the proper way to make the request to the senior *Jagadguru*. So He guided the boy thus, "Prostrate at the Lotus Feet of our *Guru* and humbly pray, "Please bless me with *mantropadeśa*," The young boy followed His Holiness's instructions and received *mantropadeśa* from senior *Jagadguru* the very next day. When the boy reported back to His Holiness about the initiation, His Holiness expressed His Happiness and then remarked to a gentleman nearby: "This boy came to me yesterday and straightaway asked for *mantropadeśa*. I taught him the right way of submitting the request to our *Guru*. Luckily, he approached me first and hence I could correct him to submit his request in a befitting manner to our *Guru*." What is noteworthy here is that His Holiness, Himself being the *successor-designate* and deserving full respects, did not mind the boy's impromptu request to Him, but was very particular that the boy should submit the request to His *Guru* in a more appropriate manner.

On another occasion, the *Jagadgurus*, accompanied by some devotees, visited the Sabari hills to worship Lord *Ayyappa*. While climbing the hill, His Holiness, followed



by a couple of devotees, reached a spot, and sat on a rock to enjoy the gentle breeze and the soul-stirring beauty of nature. At this moment, one of the devotees said, "This place is very beautiful, and we must request the senior *Jagadguru* to remain here for some time and enjoy the scenery." No sooner did he finish saying this than His Holiness responded in a tone of disapproving of the devotee's suggestion, "Who are we to suggest anything to the senior *Jagadguru*? He knows everything. Our job is just to obey our *Guru* and not to go about suggesting things to



Him.” Thus, through a simple statement, His Holiness taught an invaluable lesson on how one should conduct oneself in the presence of one’s *Guru*.

As per the senior *Jagadguru*’s directions, His Holiness started taking up independent *vijaya-yātrās* since 1983. While on tour, His Holiness used to write letters to His *Guru* and update Him on the happenings. The senior *Jagadguru* would send

prompt replies to His Disciple. His Holiness’s letters to His *Guru* would be polite and poetic and the senior *Jagadguru*’s letters showered grace and affection! The English translation of two letters, one by His Holiness to His *Guru* and the other, His *Guru*’s reply are reproduced below:

His Holiness’s letters to His *Guru*
would be polite and poetic
and the senior *Jagadguru*’s letters
showered grace and affection!



Letter written by His Holiness on 04 February 1988:

Namakkal

prabhava-māgha-kṛṣṇa-dvītīyā

This submission is preceded by my sāṣṭāṅga namaskāra at the Lotus Feet of the most worshipful, eminent Guru. By the grace of Your Holiness, the tour is proceeding well.

After completing the Mahāśivarātri pūjā in Dindigul, I shall proceed, via Palakkad, to Kallidaikurichi. I shall perform the consecration of the vighrahas of Śāradā and Śaṅkara there at the newly constructed Śaṅkara maṭha and then proceed to Coimbatore. Sahasra-caṇḍī and other religious events are to take place at Coimbatore in the śukla-pakṣa of the month of madhu (19 March 1988 – 03 April 1988). I intend to perform the consecration of the vighraha of Śāradāmbā that month itself at Tiruppur and reach Chennai on Kṛṣṇa-caturdaśī (15 April 1988) to initiate the celebration of Śaṅkara Jayantī there. I believe that by the grace of Your Holiness, all these functions will proceed as intended. I laid the foundation stone for the construction of a marriage hall in our Śaṅkara Gurukulam in the pilgrim centre of Srirangam.

I have an intense desire to prostrate before the feet of Your Holiness at Sringeri after completing the tour as quickly as possible. I believe that it will be fulfilled through the unlimited compassion of Your Holiness and Śrī Śāradā Candramaulīśvara.

Your disciple offering sāṣṭāṅga namaskāra Sd/- Bhāratī Tīrtha.

In response to this, the senior *Jagadguru* sent the following letter to His Holiness from Sringeri on 15 February 1988.

Sringeri

prabhava-māgha-kṛṣṇa-trayodaśī

May the blessings, preceded by the contemplation of the unity of the inner self and Brahman, conferred in respect of my dearest disciple, the eminent monk Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha manifest well.

I have received your letter penned on prabhava-māgha-kṛṣṇa-dvītyā (04 February 1988), Thursday. I felt pleased to note from the letter that the tour is proceeding satisfactorily as planned, Several institutions are being established at various places for the benefit of disciples, as well as many sacred events and festivals are being conducted.

From the letter, I understood that you yearn to have my darśana at Sringeri after completing the tour as quickly as possible. I pray that Goddess Śrī Śāradā fulfils your wish.

Though old and weak, acting in accordance with my age, I am serving the feet of Śrī Śāradā. I spent some time at the maṭha at Kotekar during the winter season. Devotees will be celebrating the rathotsava of Goddess Śrī Śāradā at the city of Bengaluru on the full-moon day of the first month of the year vibhava (03 April 1988). I need to be present there for their mental satisfaction. All is well here.

With the recollection of Narayana Sd/- Vidyātīrtha.

Admiring the divine relationship between the senior *Jagadguru* and His Holiness, Dr. Mandana Mishra, a reputed educationalist and *Saṃskṛta* scholar, said:



The holy Jagadgurus at beautiful Banatheertham

"We have read that *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's* disciples went with Him. How was He? How were His disciples? I was only conjecturing. Now I have concluded that They must have been like this. It is so satisfying."

It is said: "Never does a *Jivanmuktā* care for his body or its needs. He is not worried about its decay or destruction. The space encased in a pot is unaffected by the condition of its walls, whether they are intact or cracked. When the pot is broken, the space it contains becomes indistinguishable from the space outside. So too does a *Jivanmuktā's Ātman* becomes indistinguishable from *Brahman*. Like milk mixing with milk and becoming one with it, the Knower of Truth merges in Brahman and becomes one with It." *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, the Lord who had manifested Himself in a human form by the power of His *Māyā* for the welfare of the world, decided to terminate His role as a human in 1989. His Holiness, being an ocean of compassion, started slowly preparing His beloved *Śiṣya* for His impending departure. Besides, few other devotees too seemed to have got the hint though at that time they did not understand it fully.

One day when both the *Jagadgurus* were standing near the *samādhi* shrine of *Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*, the senior *Jagadguru* said, "*Svāmin*, after my life is over, you need not have to wonder where to have my *samādhi*. It can be built here (pointing to the southern side of the *samādhi* shrine)." His Holiness, unable to bear to hear such words from His beloved *Guru*, said, "Why should *our revered Guru* talk about such matters now?" On another occasion the senior *Jagadguru* said to His Holiness, "I know your grief will be uncontrollable when this body ceases to exist, but it is the way with all flesh."

In 1989, sometime before His Holiness was about to commence His *vijaya-yātrā* in February, His *Guru* initiated a casual talk. He asked, "*Svāmin*, how much longer should I live?" His Holiness, treating this question as a casual one, replied, "I will not be greedy. The *Veda* itself declares that the life span of a human being is one hundred years. Now my revered *Guru* is about seventy-two. So, my revered *Guru* can very well live for another twenty eight years at least." The senior *Jagadguru* was quick to reply, "*Svāmin*, what are you saying? Is this not enough? Should I live for twenty eight more years? I do not want it at all." His Holiness did not realise at that time that His *Guru* really meant His words.

A few months after His Holiness left Sringeri on His *vijaya-yātrā*, the senior *Jagadguru* set out on a tour to Kalady. One of His devotees accompanied Him from Sringeri to a particular town on the way to Kalady. From there, this devotee was to leave for Bengaluru while the senior *Jagadguru* was to proceed to Kalady. This devotee accepted *mantrākṣata* and started on his journey. A few minutes had passed when a *maṭha* official came running to him and told him that the senior *Jagadguru* was calling him. He immediately rushed back. The *Ācārya*, with great compassion said to this devotee, "Why don't you come with me till the next halt? I feel like talking to you." He casually added, "Who knows! We may not be able to meet thereafter." The statement was so casual that the devotee could not get its real import. He obeyed the instructions and accompanied Him, only to see that the senior *Jagadguru* was particularly jovial and compassionate. At the next halt, with the wholehearted blessings of *Ācārya*, the devotee left. Little did he realise then that he would never be able to meet the senior *Jagadguru* again!

Another devotee from Chennai visited Kalady in 1989 for the *darśana* of the senior *Jagadguru* and in the course of her conversation with the *Guru*, said, "This time I have come with an idea to stay here for a longer time and have the *darśana* of *Ācārya*". To this, He casually but with an indirect emphasis, replied, "Have *darshan* to the extent to which you want. Have it once and for all to your heart's content." During the stay the devotee noticed that the *Ācārya* made Himself available to all the devotees for a longer time than usual. Only later did she realise that He had enabled her and other devotees to make the best use of their final opportunity to have the *darśana* of His physical form.

On 21 September 1989, a disciple of the senior *Jagadguru* had a dream at around 05:30 a.m. at his residence in Chennai. *Ācārya* appeared, gave him *prasāda*, blessed him and said, "Hereafter, you will collect *prasādas* from *Śrī Sannidhānam*." Then, He disappeared. The devotee immediately woke up and kept thinking about that dream wondering what it meant. The significance of what senior *Jagadguru* said dawned on him much later.

Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin, the unequalled saint of Sringeri, the crest jewel of *Yogis*, the *Guru* par excellence, shed His mortal coil on Thursday, the 21st of September 1989 at about 11:30 in the morning¹, at His abode at the

1 Bhadrapada Krishna Saptami of year Shukla.

Narasimha-vana in Sringeri. The mystic visionary had gone beyond the horizons of human visibility becoming one with the Infinite, the all-pervading Absolute.



The news sent a shock wave through the hearts of millions of people for whom the great *Guru* was more than an affectionate mother whose gentle care and concern gave them an extraordinary as well as a “never-before-like” comfort. All their hearts sank into an unidentifiable grief that tore them to pieces. The very thought that they would have to see a Sringeri without the senior *Jagadguru* made them grow sick mentally and physically. Millions cried the moment they heard about the shocking news. Thousands of grief-stricken devotees rushed to Sringeri to have the final glimpse of the divine physical form of this *Mahātman*.

The news was conveyed to His Holiness who was then in Pune. His Holiness never expected that He would be physically separated from His most beloved *Guru* once and for all, this soon. His grief was uncontrollable. His Holiness air-dashed to Mangaluru from Pune and from there reached Sringeri by car at 12 midnight. When He entered *Saccidānanda Vilāsa*, He went running to behold the sacred physical form of His supreme Master and, upon reaching the place, lay prostrate before His *Guru* for long. His intense grief was well evident. Realising that He had the duty left by His *Guru* for Him, He soon composed Himself and addressed the grief-stricken devotees. He asked them to console themselves with the fact that though His *Guru* was not going to be physically present anymore, He would live thereafter in the hearts of everyone. His Holiness then gave the necessary instructions for the final rites to commence.

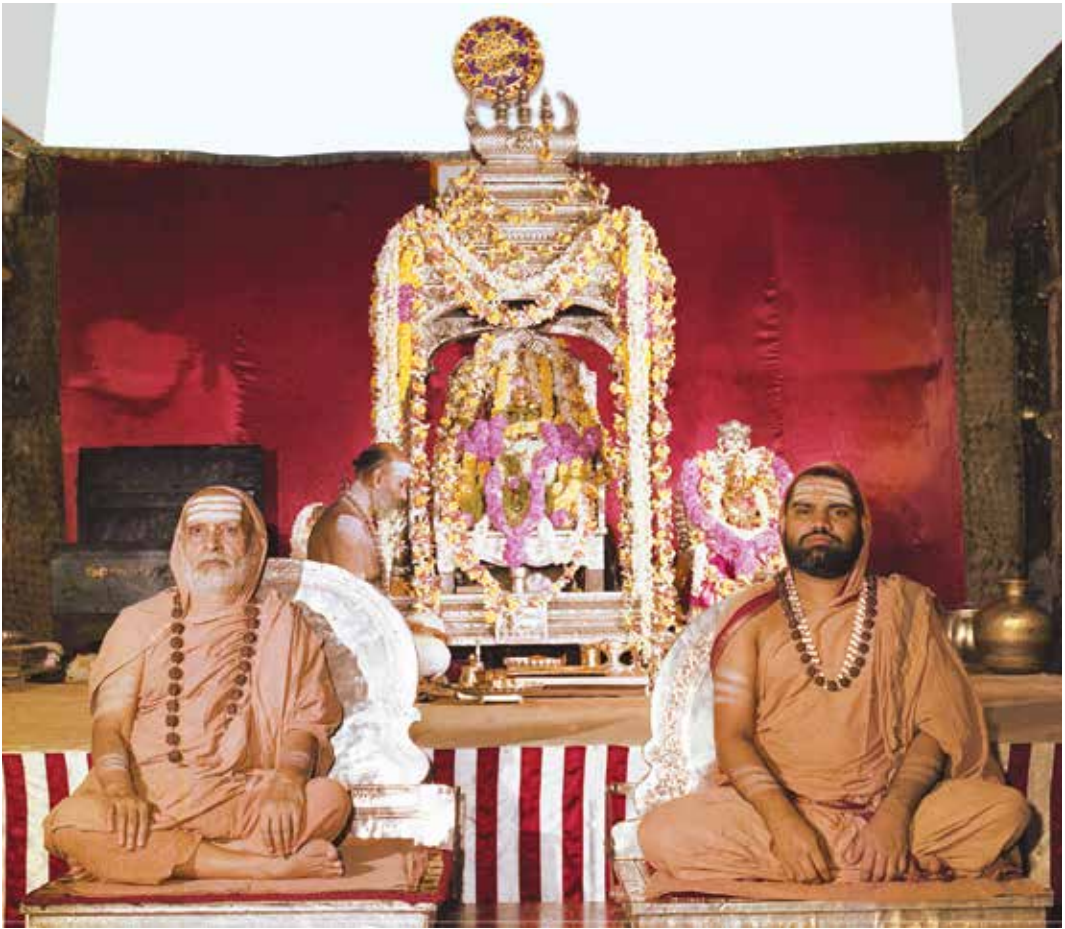
The next morning, the mortal remains of the great *Jagadguru* were carried to *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* temple on the other side of the river. There, His Holiness performed *abhiṣeka* with *pañcamṛtā* and with the water drawn from the *kamaṅḍalu-tīrtha* (the well near the *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* temple). The sacred physical form was decorated with a red shawl, a crown and a necklace of diamonds and rubies. After the *maṅgalārati*, the sacred body was placed in *padmāsana* posture on a silver palanquin. The palanquin inched through the crowded streets of Sringeri and returned to *maṭha*.

Thousands of devotees including Sri Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, paid their respects. Then the sacred body of the senior *Jagadguru* was taken to the *Sandhyā-maṅḍapa* in *Narasimha-vana*. (This is the bathing-ghat for the *Jagadgurus*.) His Holiness had a dip in the river and performed *abhiṣeka* to the revered body of His *Guru* with the waters of *Tuṅgā*. His Holiness's grief at this

time was uncontrollable, especially because He had to perform the *abhiṣeka* at the same place where His *Guru* had initiated Him into *sannyāsa* and blessed Him with the *kamaṇḍalu* using which He now performed *abhiṣeka* to His beloved *Guru*'s mortal remains.

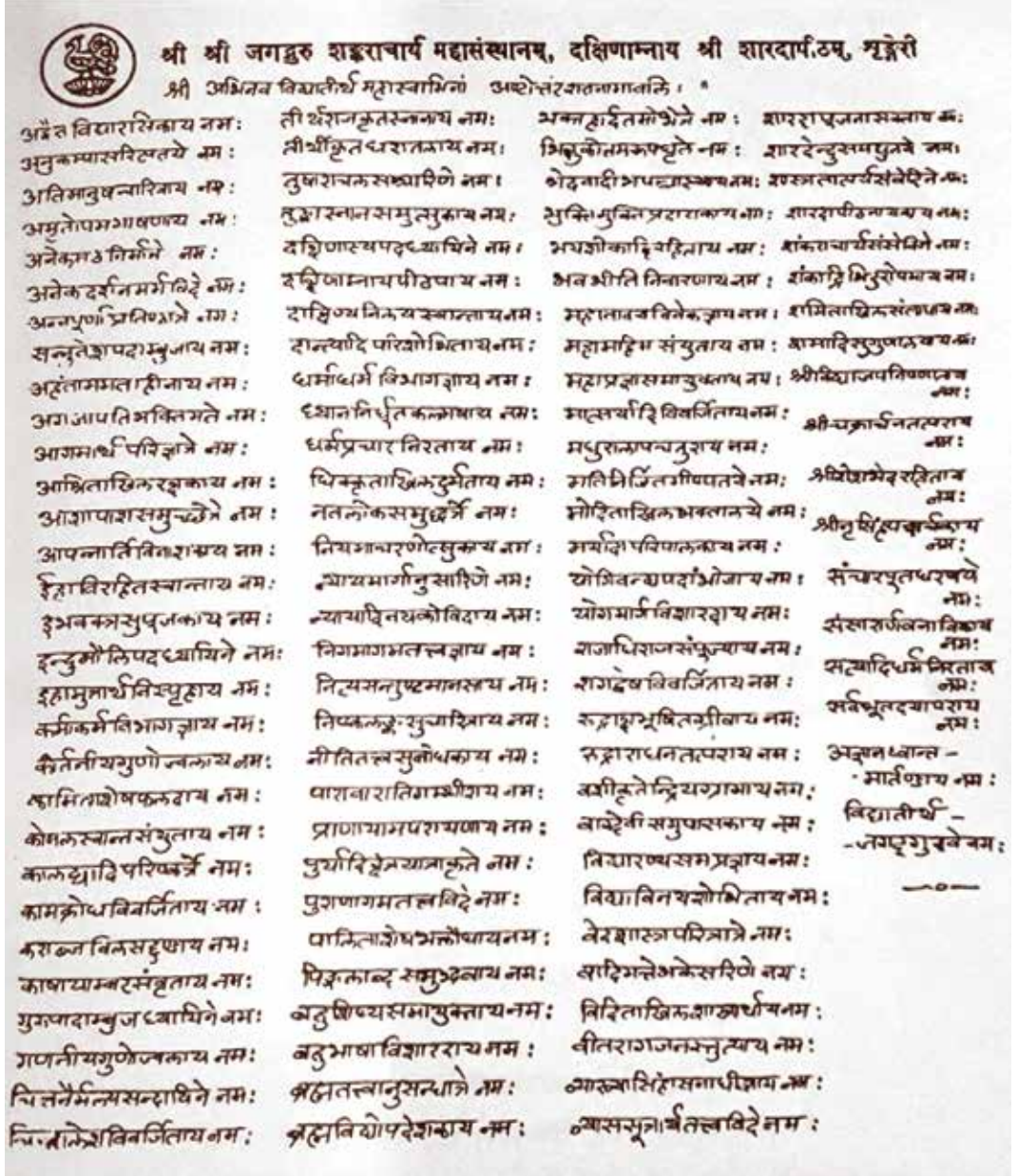
Then the divine body was carried to the *adhiṣṭhānam* of *Parama-guru, Śrī Candrasekhara Bhārati Mahāsvāmin*. Soon after the *pañcamṛtā abhiṣeka* and *pūjā*, the holy physical form of the great *Jagadguru* was moved to the site adjacent to the *samādhi* shrine of the thirty-third *Jagadguru*. The Holy Body was then lowered into a trench ten feet in diameter and 8-feet deep and taken further down into a pit at the centre, which was 3-feet deep and 2.5 feet in diameter. The smaller pit was filled with camphor and layers of sand and salt up to the level of the top of the head. The Danda (staff) of the senior *Jagadguru* was broken into three pieces and together with His *kamaṇḍalu* in pieces, was placed along with the sacred body in the pit as ordained by the *śāstras*. As per the rituals, a coconut had to be broken on the head. However, His Holiness was not ready to do such a thing on the head of His most beloved *Guru*. So, the head was pierced by the thin end of a conch and five coconuts were broken separately. The outer pit was filled up and an earthen *Śivaliṅga* was installed at the top, to which His Holiness performed *pūjā* in the evening. His Holiness again offered *pūjā* at the *samādhi* in the night.

The senior *Jagadguru*'s departure obviously affected His Holiness so much that He was expressive of it on several occasions. For instance, once while He was crossing the *Tuṅgā* during that year's *Navarātrī* celebrations, His Holiness threw small pieces of coconut and other edibles for the fish in the river where a shoal of fish normally swims. On that day, not a single fish came up to the surface to take the food stuff. A devotee who was accompanying Him felt surprised at this and pointed it out to His Holiness. To this He replied, "It seems that even the fish are mourning the demise of our great *Guru* to such an extent that they do not even want to come out to the surface for their routines!" Even during the *Navarātrī* durbar of 1989, His Holiness had the portrait of His *Guru* placed on the seat and conducted the *sabhā* as if He were conducting it in the august presence of His great *Guru*. On another occasion, His Holiness remarked: "It is a great misfortune that our worshipful *Guru* who had spread the fame of Sringeri from Kanyakumari to Nepal is not with us today. But who can stop the actions of the Almighty? However, We are determined to follow the footsteps of the great sage."



His Holiness ensured that the thirteen-day *Vedic* rites in connection with the *ārādhana* of His *Guru* were conducted with intense sincerity. The rites ended on 4 October 1989. On that day He addressed the gathering of devotees and blessed them with a historic discourse on the greatness of His *Guru*. He said: "It is said that Śrī *Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* was in intense grief when His *Guru* passed away. Then the *Guru* appeared in His dream and said, 'What are you grieving for? Where have I gone? Till now I was confined to a certain body. Now I have become one with the all-pervading Absolute.' I recall this message and console myself that our *Guru* has not left us at all and ask you to follow in the footsteps of our *Guru* and deserve His blessings."

His Holiness Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin composed beautiful verses on His Guru.² What follows is an image of His composition Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Aṣṭottara-śata-namāvalī in His own handwriting.



Ashtottarashata Namavali by His Holiness own handwriting

2 For the benefit of the readers, these compositions are provided in the Appendix 2 - "Verses of Veneration."

On an occasion, a question was posed to His Holiness: "Which would You consider as the most significant event of Your life?" He replied, "The most significant event in my life was my *Guru's anugraha* and His accepting me as His *śiṣya*. He was my father, my *Guru*, and my God. He taught me the *sannyāsa dharma*, the *sampradāya* of the *pīṭha* and everything. He never concealed anything from me. I can never forget Him." An illustrious Disciple, indeed!

"The most significant event in my life was my *Guru's anugraha* and His accepting me as His *śiṣya*. He was my father, my *Guru*, and my God. He taught me the *sannyāsa dharma*, the *sampradāya* of the *pīṭha* and everything. He never concealed anything from me.
I can never forget Him."





Chapter 4

THE CORONATION

Spectacular Coronation

The mantle fell on His Holiness *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* on October 19, 1989, when He formally took over as the Head of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, the throne of transcendental wisdom. His Holiness is the 36th *Jagadguru* in the unbroken line of succession to the glorious *pīṭha*, the first and foremost of the four *Āmnāya-pīṭhas* founded by *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*.

Sringeri town wore a festive look during this historic event. *The entire population of Sringeri and neighbouring talukas of Malnad celebrated the coronation festival as one of their own. Devout śiṣyas from all over the country thronged to Sringeri to celebrate this rare and once-in-a-lifetime event.* Lavish floral decorations in and around the *Śrī Śāradāmbā* temple transformed the math into a heavenly place. The *Vyākhyāna śiṃhāsana*, the throne of transcendental wisdom, was placed facing *Śrī Śāradāmbā*.

Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin started from *Saccidānanda Vilāsa* in *Narasimha-vana*, in the forenoon of October 19. The entire path right from *Saccidānanda Vilāsa* up to *Śrī Vidyāśaṅkara* temple on the northern side of river *Tuṅgā* was carpeted with flowers. His Holiness donning silk *vastram* and a silk crown, offered prayers and prostrated at the *samādhi* shrines of the earlier *Jagadgurus*. His Holiness then had *darśana* of *Śrī Śakti-gaṇapati* and *Śrī Śāradāmbā* and offered prayers.

The *āsthāna panditas* and the *purohita* (priest) first performed *pūjā* and *ārati* to the *Śiṃhāsana*. His Holiness then ascended the *Śiṃhāsana* as the 36th head of the Sringeri *maṭha* amidst *Vedic* chants and the playing of *maṅgalā-vadyās*.

The Karnataka Governor, Sri P. Venkatasubbaiah, read out the message of the President of India, Sri R. Venkatraman. Sri M.L. Fotedar, Union Minister, read out the special message and greetings sent by the Prime Minister of India,



श्री श्री
जगद्गुरु शंकराचार्य महासंस्थानम्
दक्षिणाम्नाय श्री शारदापीठम्,
शृंगेरी



पद्मभिषेक महोत्सवाह्वान पत्रिका

कथा:

श्रीपद्मभूषण श्रीशंकराचार्य, श्रीशारदापीठे दक्षिणाम्नाय शृंगेरी शारदा पीठे पुरोहितकालात् पद्मभिषेकमहोत्सवस्य विधानं श्रीशारदापीठे विधानमनुसृत्य जगद्गुरुः

श्रीपद्मभूषण शारदापीठे महासंस्थानम्

श्रीशारदापीठे जगद्गुरुः, श्रीशारदापीठे दक्षिणाम्नाय शृंगेरी शारदा पीठे पुरोहितकालात् पद्मभिषेकमहोत्सवस्य विधानं श्रीशारदापीठे विधानमनुसृत्य जगद्गुरुः

श्री शारदापीठे महासंस्थानम्

श्रीशारदापीठे जगद्गुरुः, श्रीशारदापीठे दक्षिणाम्नाय शृंगेरी शारदा पीठे पुरोहितकालात् पद्मभिषेकमहोत्सवस्य विधानं श्रीशारदापीठे विधानमनुसृत्य जगद्गुरुः

श्री शारदापीठे महासंस्थानम् पद्मभिषेकः

श्रीशारदापीठे जगद्गुरुः, श्रीशारदापीठे दक्षिणाम्नाय शृंगेरी शारदा पीठे पुरोहितकालात् पद्मभिषेकमहोत्सवस्य विधानं श्रीशारदापीठे विधानमनुसृत्य जगद्गुरुः

शृंगेरीः
महान् महासंस्थानम्
पद्मभूषणः १-१०-१९८९

श्री श्री श्रीशारदा
श्री श्रीशारदा महासंस्थानम्
शृंगेरीः

श्री

Sri Sri Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamikal the 35th pontiff of the world renowned Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham — first and prime Math of the four Amnaya Peethas established by Sri Adi Shankaracharya — attained Vidharmakāṁṁ having adorned the transcendental throne for 35 years.

His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharathi Theertha Swamikal the successor designate has been under the direct tutelage of Sri Sri Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamikal for the last 15 years and in line with His Benign wish Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharathi Theertha Swamikal will ascend the throne and be the Jagadguru of Dakshinamnaya Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham.

The Pottabhisheka Mahotsava of **His Holiness Jagadguru Sri Sri Bharathi Theertha Swamikal** will take place as per tradition with all grandeur on Thursday the 19th October, 1989 at the auspicious time in Dharm Lagnam (12.00 P.M. — 12.05 P.M.) at Sringeri.

You are cordially invited to participate in the Pottabhisheka Mahotsava and be the recipient of the Grace of Sri Sharada Chandramashekhara and Blessings of the Jagadguru.

Sringeri
S. 10-1989

V.R. GOWRISHANKAR
Administrator
Sri Sringeri Math

Sri Rajiv Gandhi. The special offerings of the President and Prime Minister were placed at the Holy Feet of the *Jagadguru*, with *sāṣṭāṅga-praṇāms*. This was followed by the offerings made by the heads of Shivaganga *maṭha*, Hariharapura *maṭha* and Nelamavu *maṭha* and by other eminent *śiṣyas*.

The entire function was aired over the closed-circuit colour TV sets placed all over the *maṭha* complex to the delight of 50,000 devotees. The brief sharp shower during the occasion was a divine blessing.

In the evening, a special function was held for the devotees to express their happiness and offer their *praṇāms* to the *Jagadguru* who was seated on a beautifully decorated dais, flanked by *Maṭhādhīpatis* and *Sannyāsīs*.

Śrī Abhinava Rāmānanda Sarasvatī Svāmin, the head of Hariharapura *Maṭha*, and *Śrī Saccidānanda Bhāratī Svāmin*, the head of Sringeri Shivaganga *Maṭha*, spoke in honour of His Holiness.

Understanding the Coronation Ceremony

His Holiness blessed the audience with a historic *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, beautifully explaining the purpose of the coronation ceremony. "Many people asked me, 'Does not a ceremony like the *paṭṭābhiṣeka* (coronation) to a *Sannyāsi*, look a





Gracing the Vyakhyana Simhasana

bit incongruous?' In fact, from the times of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* to *Śrī Vidyāraṇya*, the *Ācāryas* of Sringeri did not possess royal regalia, or royal insignia. They did not undergo the coronation ceremony.

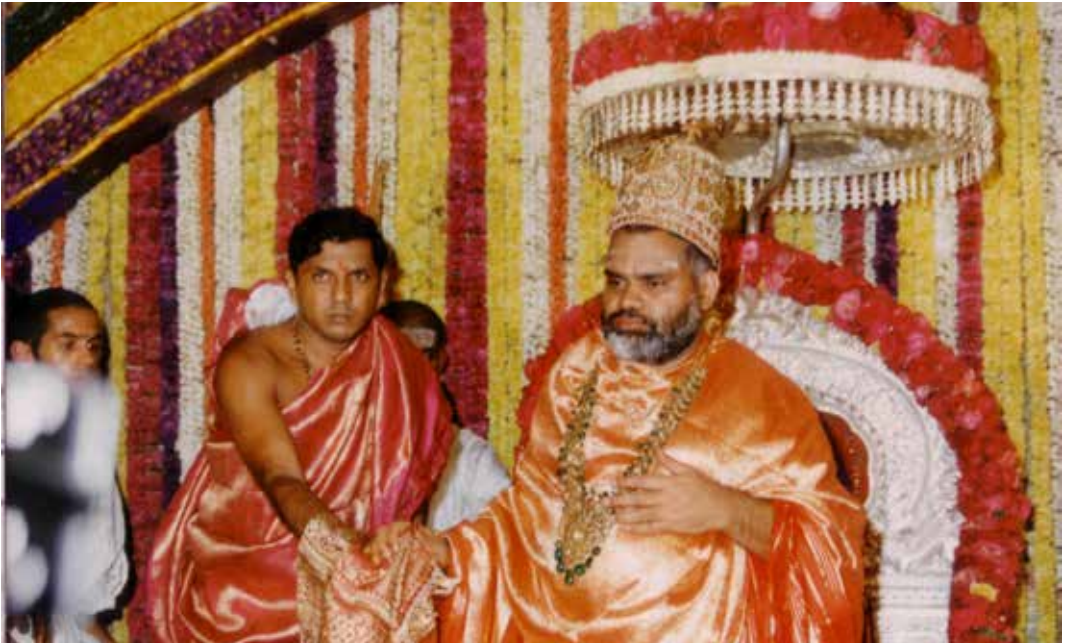
Jagadguru Śrī Vidyāraṇya, himself a great ascetic, became the *Karnāṭaka Simhāsana Pratiṣṭhāpanācārya*. He blessed two royals named Hakka and Bukka and helped them establish the *Vijayanagara* empire by the power of tapas. The royals expressed their gratitude by placing all their royal insignia at His lotus feet, requesting the *Ācārya* to adorn them during the *Navarāthri* festival. The *Ācārya* graciously accepted their request. *Śrī Vidyāraṇya* did not seek such honours. Neither the *Ācārya* nor

his successors who have borne these royal insignia, had any fascination for these insignia. The *Ācāryas* are *Sannyāsīs* devoted always to the *Upanishadic* teaching expounded by *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. The royal insignia are adorned, during the ceremony, only to uphold tradition. There is no other ulterior motive; nor is there expectation of anything."

His Holiness then drove home the reason for the establishment of *Āmnāya-pīṭhas* by *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, explaining that the primary objective of a *pīṭhādhipati* is *dharma pracāra* – spreading *dharma* by taking steps to ensure that people live in the *dhārmic* way.

Fitting Finale

The coronation ceremonies concluded with the *Aḍḍapallakki Utsava*, a unique event that highlights the special status accorded historically only to the Sringeri *Jagadgurus*. As part of the *utsava*, His Holiness was carried on a golden palanquin that moved crossways or perpendicular to the road, thus preventing anything or anyone else passing. Seated on the beautifully decorated palanquin, wearing royal robes and a gem studded crown, His Holiness had the spatika mala in his right hand, chanting *mantras* gently, with eyes sometimes beaming at people around



and sometimes half-closed in introversion. It was then the biggest ever procession at Sringeri.

At the end of the *utsava*, *Śrī Śāradāmbā Vighraha* was taken through the corridors of *Śrī Śāradāmbā* Temple in a silver *Ratha* with His Holiness taking steps backwards, facing the deity. The *Jagadguru* sat on the *Siṃhāsana* facing *Śrī Śāradāmbā*. *Maṅgalārati* was then offered to *Śrī Śāradāmbā* as a fitting finale to the memorable event.

Unbroken Parampara Splendour

No institution has survived for 12 centuries with such continuous and ever increasing splendour as the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sri Sharada Peetham at Sringeri.

- It was here that *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* installed *Śrī Śāradāmbā* on a *Śrīcakra* and stayed teaching chosen disciples.
- It was here that *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* appointed *Śrī Sureśvarācārya*, the most elderly and scholarly disciple of *Bhagavatpāda* as the *pīṭhādhipati* of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham.
- It was here that successive *pīṭhādhipatis*, such as the illustrious *Vidyātīrtha* and *Vidyāraṇya*, brought fame and glory to the institution.
- It was from here that a galaxy of illumined sages and realised souls, such as *Śrī Saccidānanda Bhāratī*, *Śrī Vṛddha Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī*, *Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī*, *Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī* and *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha*, spread *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's* ideals everywhere.
- It is here again that the present Holiness *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, the 36th *Jagadguru* in the *avicchinna-guru-paramparā*, adorns the throne as the living symbol of the great Upanishadic seers, and guides all spiritual seekers.

The ever glorious tradition of the institution continues undimmed by the passage of time.

Śrī Vidyātīrtha Setu

Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin, in his last letter¹ to His Holiness, stated, "Here the bridge over the *Tuṅgā*² might be completed by the month of *māgha*. The condition of my health is in consonance with my age. Performing the duties which are absolute, without anything in mind, I am happy here. I bless you and God will bestow welfare on you."



By His grace, considerable progress had been made by the time He attained *Mahāsamādhi* in September 1989. His Holiness strongly felt that His first and the foremost responsibility was to fulfill the wishes of His beloved *Guru*.

Ensuring the quick completion of this noble task commenced by His *Guru*, His Holiness *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* inaugurated the bridge on 21st May

- ¹ It is a practice for the Sringeri *Jagadguru* and the successor-designate to write hand-written letters to each other if they are at different geographic locations. This usually happens when one of them is on a *vijaya-yātra*. His Holiness' *Guru*, observing *Cāturmāsya vrata* at Sringeri, penned this letter on July 20, 1989, to His Holiness who was observing *Cāturmāsya vrata* in Pune that year.
- ² For the convenience of the increasingly large number of devotees and pilgrims to reach *Narasimhavana*, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* decided in 1986 to construct a bridge across the river *Tuṅgā* to link the *maṭha* complex on the northern bank with *Narasimhavana* on the southern bank.

1990 and named it 'Śrī Vidyātīrtha Seṭu'. Addressing the gathering at the function, His Holiness said: "Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin was the 35th in the unbroken line of succession and was the Pīṭhādhipati for 35 years. During these 35 years, our Guru worked for the benefit of the āstikas by establishing pāṭhaśālās, branch maṭhas and other institutions to encourage and honour thousands of scholars. The construction of this bridge is one of the great contributions of the Guru." His Holiness named the bridge after His Guru who took the initiative, laid the foundation, and made all efforts to construct the bridge.

The Adhiṣṭhānam of the Guru

As a fitting tribute to His Guru, His Holiness had a beautiful granite adhiṣṭhāna (samādhi shrine) built at Narasiṃha-vana, right next to the adhiṣṭhānas of the 33rd and the 34th Jagadgurus. An exquisitely carved life-size replica of Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin in superfine marble specially made in Jaipur was brought to Sringeri and installed inside the adhiṣṭhāna. His Holiness composed the following short, beautiful verse outlining the significant events in the life of His Guru, and had it inscribed on the granite pedestal that holds the marble statue of His Guru.

जातः पिङ्गलहायने यतिरभूद्यश्च प्रजापत्यभि-
-ख्येऽब्दे पीठपतिर्बभूव जयवर्षे यश्च शृङ्गाचले ।
कीर्तिं प्राप्य दिगन्तगां तनुमिमां यश्शुक्लवर्षे जहौ
विद्यातीर्थगुरुर्जयत्यभिनवो लोकान् सदा पालयन् ॥

jātaḥ piṅgalahāyane yatirabhūdyascha prajāpatyabhi-
-khye'bde pīṭhapatirbabhūva jayavarṣe yaśca śṛṅgācale.
kīrtiṃ prāpya digantagāṃ tanumimāṃ yaśśuklavarṣe jahau
vidyātīrthagururjayatyabhinavo lokān sadā pālayan..

(Born in the year piṅgala (1917), He became a Sannyāsi in the year prajāpati (1931), and the Pīṭhādhipati of Sringeri in the year jayā (1954). Having attained fame that spread to the end of the quarters, He discarded the body in the year śukla (1989). Triumphant is He, Guru Abhinava Vidyātīrtha who ever protects all.)

The *kumbhābhiṣeka* of the *adhiṣṭhāna* was performed by His Holiness on 12th May 1993. On the same day, the *kumbhābhiṣeka* was also performed for Śrī Śāradāmbā temple. Thousands of devotees thronged Sringeri during the celebration.

His Holiness also celebrated the birth centenary of His *Guru* in 2017 in a befitting manner.

The next chapter focuses on the Scholarly prowess of His Holiness. Chapter 6 describes his compassion toward śiṣyas. In Chapter 7, śiṣyas describe their memorable experiences. His deep devotion to Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, described in Chapter 8, will inspire everyone. His meticulous selection of

Successor-designate is explained in Chapter 9. Chapter 10 details *dhārmic* activities performed for the welfare of humankind. Chapter 11 explains what makes Him an Ideal Jagadguru. Chapter 12 details interesting episodes of *vijaya-yātrās* undertaken by His Holiness to spread *Sanātana-dharma* and Chapter 13 describes his gradual detachment from day-to-day affairs of *maṭha*.





Chapter 5

SCHOLAR PAR EXCELLENCE

Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin, while addressing an assembly of devotees in September 1987 at Bangalore, mentioned: “When I was in Delhi (in 1982), my disciple (*Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*) was with me. On the occasion of the *Vidvat-sadas* (assembly of scholars convened to analyze the import of scriptural passages), he showed that he was more scholarly than the most erudite of the scholars who came.”

His Holiness *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* is one of the best traditional scholars of recent times. He is frequently sought after by scholars for diverse reasons such as clarification of doubts, scholarly evaluation of their works, and taking guidance on performing scripture-prescribed rituals.

Scholars from various parts of the country and also from Nepal deem it to be their great privilege to attend the assembly of scholars conducted in the august presence of His Holiness at the *pīṭha* twice annually – the *Veda-sadas* during the annual *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda Jayantī* celebrations and the *Mahāgaṇapati-vākyārtha-sabhā* during the *Vināyaka Caturthī* festival. This is because they not only get the opportunity to display before His Holiness what they have learnt and take valuable suggestions from Him, but they also get to witness the fascinating

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- The senior Jagadguru



depths of His Holiness's command over the scriptures and a wide range of philosophical treatises.

This is what *Vidvān* Sri Nagaraja Bhatta, an acclaimed *vyākaraṇa paṇḍita*, has to say about *Śrī Mahāsvāmin*, "The erudition of the *Mahāsvāmin* is so extraordinary that we scholars cannot help but wonder if all that the *Mahāsvāmin* does throughout His day is only study and teach the *śāstras*. However, this is not the case, as we well know that He has an otherwise packed schedule. Therefore, amazed we are as to how His Holiness achieved such an outstanding command over the *śāstras* for, we have no clue to when He gets the time to peruse the *śāstras* in the first place."

The first *Gaṇapati-vākyārtha-sabhā* that His Holiness presided over as the *Pīṭhādhipati* took place at Sringeri from the 24th of August till the 04th of September 1990. In His inaugural address, His Holiness testified to His resolve to conduct the *sabhā* strictly as per the rules laid down by His *Guru*: "Our *Guru*, *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* who had immense interest in the propagation of the *śāstras*, expanded



Jagadguru presiding over the Annual Vidwat Sadas at Sringeri

the scope of this *sabhā* and gradually the number of the participating scholars increased. *Vidvāns* from all over the country were invited and honoured. This tradition is being continued by us also. Though my heart is filled with joy in organising the *sabhā* and participating in the same, I feel immensely pained as my *Guru* is not physically present in our midst now. The discussions in this *sabhā* are not for asserting one's superiority over others. Nor are they for decrying any school of thought. Our *Guru* never allowed anyone to put unwarranted, embarrassing, or offending questions to tease any *vidvān*. He saw to it that no *vidvān* was insulted in any way. Our *Guru* wanted educative, constructive, and healthy discussions at the *vākyārtha-sabhā*."

A significant trait of His Holiness witnessed in the assembly of scholars is the encouragement He extends to the newcomers and also to those who are faced with inhibitions. On one occasion, a young *vidvān* attended the *sadas* for the first time. Seeing an assembly of very learned scholars, presided over by the *Jagadguru* Himself, he was fear-stricken and chose to remain tight-lipped. His Holiness noticed it and wanted to encourage him to set aside his inhibitions and take part in the discussions. Throwing a point for debate before the assembly, His Holiness drew the attention of the young scholar and gently asked him to come out with his views. Thus, motivated by the *Jagadguru* Himself, the *paṇḍita* attempted to express his views and soon felt quite comfortable and subsequently overcame his fear.

Sri Gurunatha Ghanapati recollects how the *Jagadguru* cheered him up during his very first appearance in the *sadas*: "I was then a student studying *śāstras* and I visited Sringeri for the *Gaṇapati-vākyārtha-sabhā* for the first time. With trepidations, I was waiting for my turn to talk. His Holiness who had noticed my discomfort set about motivating me, "You are the one who roars like a lion... Why are you afraid to talk now? Begin speaking with confidence." Having said this, He also laid the outline for my very first presentation at the *vākyārtha-sadas*. I was perfectly fine afterwards. This is but a testimony to His commitment to encourage *vidvān*."

Sri VG Subramanya Ghanapati, a renowned Vedic scholar, recalled his experience after attending the Sabha: "I was fascinated by the *Jagadguru*'s command over the scriptures as well as the works of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*.

With His unparalleled command over *Sam̐skṛta*, His Holiness would interpret with remarkable ease even the most complicated portions from the scriptures. We, the scholars, learn a lot from His Holiness during the *sadas*, as hardly a debate passes without His Holiness contributing His scholarly views on the texts taken up – be they on *Nyāya*, *Vedānta*, *Vyākaraṇa* or *Mīmāṃsā*. The scholars felt Goddess *Sarasvatī* Herself presided over the *sabhā*, assuming a human form!" The assembly of scholars is held every evening in the august presence of His Holiness. It is customary for each *vidvān* to choose some text and go through it in the mornings with the other *vidvāns* and discuss it in detail in the evenings in the assembly. His Holiness encourages



Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin with the scholars honoured at the Vidwat Sadas

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candid communication among the scholars. He intervenes when any issue remains undecided and settles the same in His characteristic style. For instance, For instance, His Holiness settled the doubt of a scholar on how to interpret a statement from *Mahābhārata*¹.

His Holiness encourages candid communication among the scholars. He intervenes when any issue remains undecided and settles the same in His characteristic style.



Vidwat Sadas in progress

1 This instance is excerpted from the article "Certitude about the Impeccability of *Bhagavatpāda's* Words" published in the 'Jagadguru Vaibhavam' (2011) souvenir (pp. 229-234)



His Holiness clarifying a point

“One morning, when His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin was camping at Mumbai in 2007, scholars discussed the *Pratiṣedha-ādhikaraṇa* of the *Brahmasūtras* in the presence of His Holiness. In this section, Sage *Bādarāyaṇa* starts with a consideration of the Upanishadic teaching, “न तस्य प्राणा उत्क्रामन्ति ब्रह्मैव सन्ब्रह्माप्येति (*Na tasya prāṇā utkrāmanti brahmaiva san brahmāpyeti* — His organs do not depart. Being *Brahman*, he merges in *Brahman*)” and establishes that upon death, unlike everyone else, the person who has realised the Supreme *Brahman* does not go anywhere; he just abides as *Brahman*. After arriving at His conclusion based on the *śruti*,

the sage draws attention to the support of the *smṛti* by stating the *sūtra* “स्मर्यते च (*smaryate ca* — And the *smṛti* says so).” While expounding this *sūtra*, Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda* cites the *Mahābhārata* about the absence of departure for an enlightened one. He then considers a possible objection that a course of travel for even a person who has realized his identity with the all-pervasive *Brahman* must be admitted in view of the following *smṛti* passage: “शुकः किल वैयासिकिः मुमुक्षुः आदित्यमण्डलम् अभिप्रतस्थे (*Śukaḥ kila vaiyāsiki: mumukṣuḥ ādityamaṇḍalam abhipratasthe* — Once upon a time, *Vyāsa*’s son *Śuka*, who was desirous of liberation (*mumukṣu*), headed for the Sun).” When this passage was read, a reputed scholar asked, ‘The universal view is that *Śuka* was a *Mukta* (a liberated one). How is it that he has been spoken of here as a *mumukṣu* (one desirous of liberation)?’ The scholar admitted that he had had this doubt for over two decades but had been unable to resolve it. None of the several sub-commentaries on the *Brahmasūtra -bhāṣya* has taken up this point. As for the scholars to whom the question was addressed, none had any answer. Noting this, His Holiness Himself provided the solution. He said, ‘The word *Mumukṣu* specifies

here that Śūka desired liberation from the body; he wanted to shed his body. It does not convey that Śūka wished for liberation from the bondage of *saṃsāra*.’

His Holiness’s interpretation is etymologically impeccable. The word *Mumukṣu* stems from the verbal root ‘*muc*’ that has the sense of ‘to liberate,’ the affix ‘*san*’ that imparts the sense of ‘desire for’ and the affix ‘*u*’ that results in a noun. Hence, its etymological meaning is ‘one desirous of liberation from something or desirous of freeing something’ and not merely ‘one desirous of liberation from the bondage of *saṃsāra*.’ Usage too favours His interpretation; the word is used in the scripture and in the literature even in contexts other than the bondage of *saṃsāra*. For example, the *Mahābhārata* describes Duryodhana as saying, “क्लेशान्मुमुक्षुः परजान् स वै पुरुष उच्यते (*Kleśānmumukṣuḥ: parajān sa vai puruṣa ucyate* —He indeed is deemed a man who is desirous of liberating (*Mumukṣu*) his people from the miseries caused by his foes).” Importantly, His Holiness’s words echo Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda*’s later mention of *शरीरोत्सर्गः* (*Śarīrotsarga*: — the discarding of the body). The answer provided on the spot by His Holiness visibly delighted the scholars.”

Scholarly moments with His Holiness thus prove to be intellectually delightful for the *paṇḍitas*. What follows is yet another instance where *paṇḍita* Sri Mahabaleshwara Bhat gratefully recalls his enlightening moment with His Holiness:

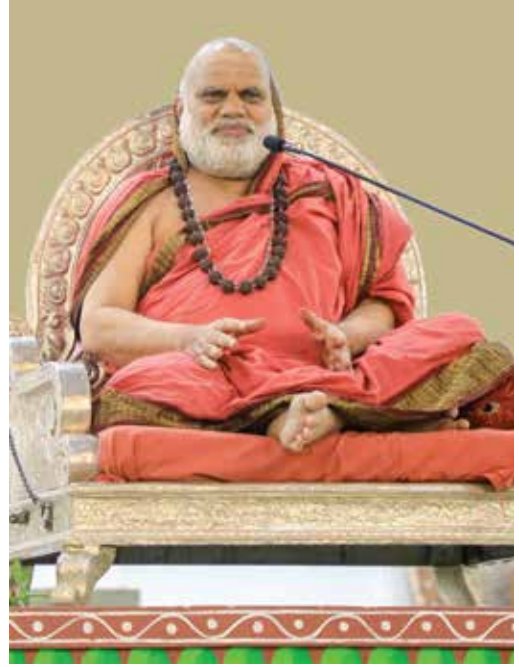
“Every day I recite the following verse that forms a part of the Sringeri *Guru Paramparā Stotra*. It glorifies the eleventh-*Guru* of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin.

अज्ञानां जाह्नवी तीर्थं विद्या तीर्थं विवेकिनाम् ।
सर्वेषां सुखदं तीर्थं भारतीतीर्थमाश्रये ॥

ajñānāṃ jāhnavī tīrthaṃ vidyā tīrthaṃ vivekinām.
sarveṣāṃ sukhadaṃ tīrthaṃ bhāratītīrthamāśraye..

I wrote down the meaning for the above verse as follows: ‘For the ignorant ones, *Guru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha* is like the holy river, *Gaṅgā*. For those endowed with discrimination, He is like the river of Knowledge. For everyone, He is like the river of happiness. I seek refuge in *Guru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha*.’ His Holiness happened to notice what I had written down. Out of compassion, His Holiness blessed me with the correct version of the meaning for the same sloka: ‘*Gaṅgā*, is the sacred abode

(of joy) for the ignorant. Knowledge is the sacred abode (of joy) for the Wise. (However) *Guru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha* is a sacred abode (of joy) for everyone. I seek refuge in *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha*.' My joy was boundless after hearing this enlightening interpretation of the verse. Sri Nagaraja Bhat, a renowned grammarian and a great scholar was also by my side when His Holiness blessed me with this meaning. He said, 'I too have been reciting the verse for decades now. But I have never thought of the meaning on the lines of what His Holiness has just said. It is simply perfect.'"



From what has been seen so far, one should not jump to the conclusion that scholarly moments with His Holiness are possible only in the assembly of scholars. Even on various day-to-day occasions, many have witnessed and enjoyed the brilliance of His Holiness's erudition.

On a certain occasion, His Holiness was inaugurating a ten-day course to train teachers in *Samskṛta*. In His benedictory address, His Holiness considered three major objections raised against *Samskṛta* learning and He refuted all of them. That day the audience could witness His Holiness's impressive skills in *Tarka* (logic). His Holiness said:

"Three objections are raised by people against the study of *Samskṛta*. The first is, '*Samskṛta* is a dead language.' Those who say so deserve to be questioned as to whether they regard *Samskṛta* as 'dead' because it is not spoken universally or because no one uses it. If a language is to be considered as 'dead' because it is not used by all, then Telugu, Kannada etc., must also be regarded as 'dead' because all people do not use them. On the other hand, if a language is to be regarded as 'dead' because no one uses it, then *Samskṛta* cannot be regarded as 'dead' because there exist people who do use *Samskṛta* even today.

The second objection raised is, 'Saṃskṛta is meant for a select few.' This is not true. Pāṇini speaks of the intonation of the womenfolk of Saurashtra who sold curds. If the womenfolk of Saurashtra who sold curds were to speak Saṃskṛta, then is it not proof that Saṃskṛta was commonly spoken in Pāṇini's time?

The third objection is, 'Saṃskṛta grammar is very tough.' This objection is also baseless. This is because 'tough' and 'easy' are relative terms. To one proficient in Saṃskṛta, Saṃskṛta grammar is easy. On the other hand, for one who does not know Saṃskṛta, its grammar is tough. The same rule applies equally well to other languages.

Hence, we can safely conclude that the objections raised against the study of Saṃskṛta are unfounded and further conclude that the study of Saṃskṛta is greatly beneficial."

The entire gathering cheerfully applauded when His Holiness finished presenting the counter argument.

Expounding the Meaning of "Amṛta Mahotsava"

The year 2015 was the one hundred and twentieth anniversary for "Śrī Sadvidyā sañjivinī saṃskṛta mahāpāṭhaśālā". His Holiness suggested that the occasion be celebrated in a grand manner. He did not stop with the suggestion but went ahead and named the proposed celebration as the "Amṛta Mahotsava" of the pāṭhaśālā. Everyone including the Principal of the pāṭhaśālā had no clue as to why it is named "Amṛta Mahotsava." Expressions such as "Vajra Mahotsava," "Rajata Mahotsava," "Svarṇa Mahotsava" and the like are familiar. However, "Amṛta Mahotsava" being an entirely new expression, everyone was curious to know the reason behind His Holiness coining a name like that. His Holiness addressed this matter in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa* during the celebrations. He said: "The pāṭhaśālā has been functioning for one hundred and twenty years. It thus has *amarāṇa dharma*, (the *nature* of immortality). The adjective of the word 'immortality' in Saṃskṛta is 'Amṛta.' It is indeed apt for the occasion. There are sayings from the *Veda* अमृतं तु विद्या (*Amṛtam tu vidyā* — knowledge is nectar), विद्यया विन्दते अमृतम् (*Vidyayā vindate amṛtam* — Immortality is attained through knowledge). Such knowledge being taught in the pāṭhaśālā, the word "Amṛta" was indeed apt for the celebrations. Hence the name 'Amṛta Mahotsava' has been suggested for the occasion."

His Holiness as a Composer

His Holiness *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* is not only a great scholar but also a divine poet. The roots of His poetic genius started gaining ground even as He was young. With a remarkable proficiency in *Samṣkṛta*, He was able to compose verses quite spontaneously, even before He was nine years of age!

His extempore verses delighted everyone. However, the poet in Him took a back seat when He left home and took refuge in His Guru at Ujjain. He started dedicating His entire time to Vedic and *śāstraic* studies. Soon after His *sannyāsa*, His inborn poetic talent re-surfaced. He composed beautiful verses on His *Guru*, His Predecessors, and various forms of God. His verses are simple and anyone with a working knowledge of *saṃskṛta* will be able to understand and enjoy their content.

The following incident clearly demonstrates his *Samṣkṛta* poetic skills in action.

His Holiness acceded to the request of a devotee for a verse on *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* and blessed him with a set of beautiful verses which came to be called "*Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Akṣaramālā Stotra*." As the name suggests, each of its eight verses commences with a letter from the sacred name of His *Guru* as "A-Bhi-Na-Va-Vi-Dya-Thee-Rtha." The real challenge was posed by the last letter (*rtha*) as there is no word in *Samṣkṛta* that starts with this letter! However, His Holiness did commence the final verse with "*Rtha*." He wrote:

रथमपूर्वं श्रुतेर्यस्तु यथावदवबोधयन् ।
शिष्यान् धर्मपथासक्तान् कुरुते तमहं श्रये ॥

rthamapūrvaṃ śruteryastu yathāvadavabodhayan.
śiṣyān dharmapathāsaktān kurute tamahaṃ śraye..

As there is no word in *Samṣkṛta* beginning with '*rtha*,' His Holiness creatively worded the beginning of the verse as *rthamapūrvaṃ*, the meaning of which is - '*rtha*' preceded by 'a' - and He thus generated the word 'artha (import).' He then logically linked it to the meaning of the overall verses: "I take refuge in Him who makes known the true import of the scripture to disciples and makes them dedicated to the path of *dharma*." The disciple who requested the *śloka* found this usage ingenious. Subsequently when this *śloka* was officially released, this particular usage undoubtedly fascinated scholars and devotees. His Holiness's composition

“Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Aṣṭottara Śata Nāmāvalī” is known to all. Every sacred name in this poetically charming composition has a scholarly delight embedded in it. For instance, let us consider the second *Nāma* - “अनुकम्पा-सरित्-पतये नमः (*Anukampā-sarit-pataye namaḥ*—Salutation to Him who is an ocean of compassion)”. The choice of words to convey the meaning is indeed fascinating. To indicate ‘compassion,’ there are words like ‘*Dayā*,’ ‘*Karuṇā*,’ and ‘*Kṛpā*’ all of which are remarkably familiar to everyone, and which are very often used by writers and poets. However, His Holiness does not seem to have considered any of these three and preferred only ‘*Anukampā*’ to indicate His *Guru*’s compassion. The choice kindles our curiosity, for there could be a deeper significance. The moment we come across the expression “*Anukampā*,” we are reminded of the Lord’s declaration in *Bhagavad Gītā* (Chapter-10/verse-11):

तेषामेवानुकम्पार्थमहमज्ञानजं तमः ।

नाशयाम्यात्मभावस्थो ज्ञानदीपेन भास्वता ॥

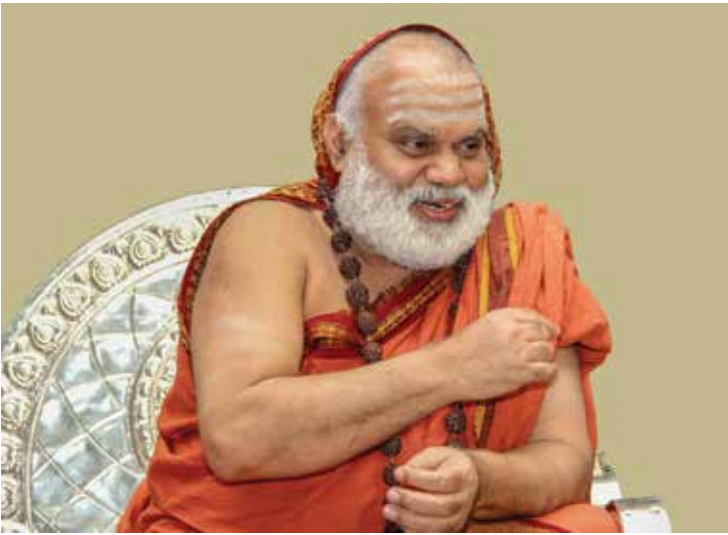
teṣāmevānukampārthamahamajñānajaṃ tamaḥ.

nāśayāmyātmabhāvastho jñānadīpena bhāsvatā..

In the verse above, we find the Lord employing the expression “*Anukampā*” (compassion) when referring to His compassion. What is this “*Anukampā*” of the Lord capable of? It is capable of destroying the darkness of the heart (ignorance) and filling the space with the light of knowledge (Self-realisation), which is certainly the highest possible blessing. *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*’s compassion too has such capability, as he is God Himself. Therefore, it is only apt to use the expression “*Anukampā*” when describing His compassion. Hence the usage!

Now let us turn our attention to the second part of this sacred name - “*sarit-pataye*.” “*Sarit*” refers to ‘rivers.’ “*pataye*” means ‘Lord.’ Who is the Lord of rivers? Ocean is referred to as the Lord of rivers as all the rivers head for the ocean and merge with it. Again, in *Saṃskṛta*, there are numerous familiar words for ‘ocean’. We have “*sāgara*”, “*aṛṇava*”, “*abdhī*”, “*tīrtha*” and so on. However, His Holiness has not opted to employ any of these. Instead, He has coined a poetically beautiful brand-new expression “*sarit-pataye*” to refer to ocean! What could be the significance of employing this particular expression to describe His *Guru*’s glory?

Here, rivers symbolize human minds. Just as rivers are turbulent, human minds too are turbulent. Just as rivers traverse terrains of diverse nature and carry with them all kinds of objects – good and bad, human minds pry on diverse sense objects and are loaded with impressions of pleasure and pain. When rivers merge with the ocean they are instantly cleansed of all their deformities and they become one with the ocean, stripped of their individual identity. Similarly, when the human minds, turbulent with the impressions of myriad kinds, surrender themselves at the most sacred lotus feet of *Guru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, they are instantly stripped of their turbulence and impurities and remain in a blissful state, one with Him, as, after all, He has “*Anukampā*” potent enough to confer liberation to those who surrender unconditionally. Thus, by effectively employing the choicest expressions “*Anukampā*” and “*sarit-pataye,*” His Holiness testifies to His revered *Guru’s* immaculate glory.



His Holiness is not just a Scholar, but also an unparalleled teacher of traditional scholars. Some of them had regular classes from His Holiness in *Tarka* and *Vedānta-śāstras*, besides sessions on *Śaṅkara-bhāṣyas*. Without exception every one of them has enjoyed His Holiness’s teaching methodologies.



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has helped them a lot. As a teacher of advanced level students of scriptural studies, His Holiness goes by certain self-stipulated rules. Prior to commencing the session for the day, His Holiness goes through the portion of the text meant for teaching that day. While at class, He encourages the students to raise their doubts and settles them then and there. Once a text is completed, He would make sure that the students have grasped the content of the completed text, before moving to next one. He administers tests to ascertain the competency levels of the students in the completed text. He does not stop with completing the lessons every day. He also regularly checks up on His students' activities: whether they get up early in the morning and focus on their studies, whether they take to revising the texts during after-class hours and so on. His Holiness encourages His students to regularly attend the meeting and exchange their views with the visiting scholars. When, after the completion of the course, the students graduate, they prove to be brilliant scholars, ready to train others.

Master Exponent of Scriptures

With all His exemplary scholarliness and graceful eloquence, the *Jagadguru* is equally at ease when expounding the highest truths even to beginners.² Let us dwell on an instance of His Holiness imparting *Vedāntic* wisdom, in Tamil, in a series of lectures, to a vast gathering in Chennai during His *vijaya-yātra* in the year 2012. The subject taken up was the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, the commentary of Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda* on the *Brahma-sūtras*, a text that is comprehensive, profound, and authoritative, and traditionally taught and studied by the students of *Advaita-vedānta* and analysed and debated upon in the assemblies of accomplished scholars over centuries.

In one of His lectures in the series, His Holiness Himself explained why He decided to take up the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* for expatiation. He said, "The *Upaniṣads* teach, succinctly in some places and elaborately in others, that *Brahman*, the Supreme, is the only reality, the world is 'mithyā, not absolutely real' and the 'jīva, the soul' is but *Brahman*. The Lord has imparted this in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Sage *Vyāsa*, in His terse aphorisms known as the *Brahma-sūtras*, and *Bhagavatpāda*, in His lucid and in-depth exposition thereof, the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, have demonstrated that

² In Appendix 1, His Holiness responds to some significant spiritual queries with His customary profound thinking on difficult themes in a simple language.

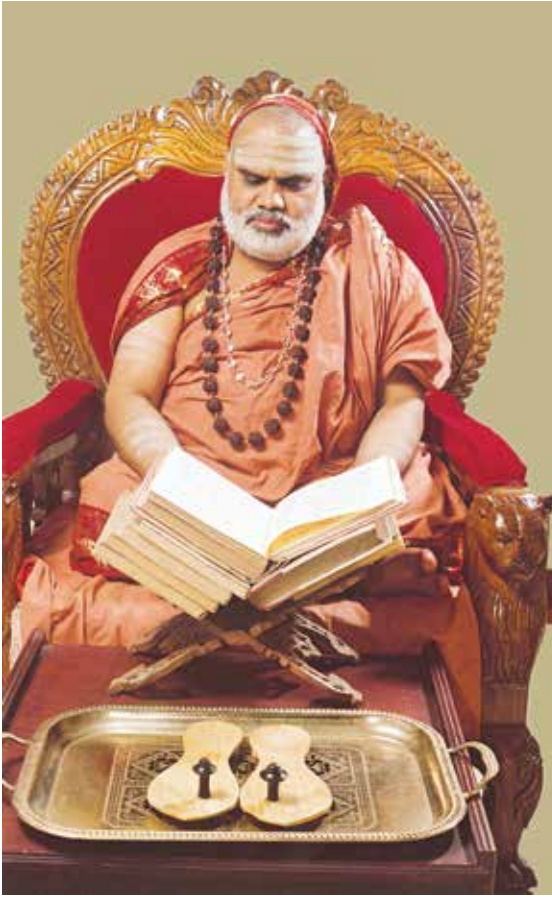
this is the scripture's final purport and defended it by considering and compellingly confuting the various objections raised against it by those who subscribe to other schools of thought. With the *Brahma-sūtras* and the *bhāṣya* thereon as basis, I shall present some of the objections and their rebuttals in a series of discourses. My aim is two-fold; (i) to help you disciples of *Bhagavatpāda* appreciate that *Advaita-vedānta* as championed by Him is flawless and impregnable, and (ii) to gratify the yearning of many disciples for hearing the essence of the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* from me during this *Cāturmāsya*."

His Holiness's talks were so comprehensive that they covered the complete basics of *Advaita-vedānta*. To this end, the pertinent *sūtras* had been skilfully handpicked by the *Jagadguru* and elucidated based on the *bhāṣya*. Given below are the major topics discussed, in the form of questions; the list is not exhaustive. "What are the qualifications required for an aspirant who is desirous of studying *Vedānta*? What are the qualities of the *Guru* whom such a disciple should approach and seek knowledge? How is the conclusion of the *Advaita-siddhānta* – *Brahman* alone is real, the world is not absolutely real and *jīva*, the individual soul, is non-different from *Brahman* – flawless? How is it that *Advaita-siddhānta* does not admit any duality and avers that there is only *Brahman*, the Absolute, while the *jīvas* are many, the world is experientially valid, and God is superior to the *jīvas* and is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world? Is God, the creator of the world, its material cause or efficient cause or both? If God is the material cause, then how is that when the cause is conscious and pure, the effect, the universe, is inert and impure? If God is accepted as the efficient cause, would He not be subject to the charge that He is partial and cruel, as He dispenses sorrow to some while He bestows happiness on others? What should one practise to secure knowledge? Is knowledge of *Brahman* alone sufficient for attaining liberation? Is emancipation from enlightenment certain? If knowledge alone is the cause of liberation, what happens to the residual *karma* of a *jñānī*? Will it not cause his rebirth? Can those who are ineligible to perform scriptural rites strive for and obtain enlightenment? Can liberating knowledge arise in this birth itself? Will enlightened persons reincarnate? Is time of death significant for the enlightened?" His Holiness considered many significant questions such as these and answered each one of them convincingly, engaging the entire crowd with His gripping exposition. He thus succeeded in translating into plain language a subject that can seem esoteric. And that too to a mixed audience, from adolescents to octogenarians across different walks of life and sections of

the society. He refrained from using tough *Vedāntic* phraseology, as the bulk of his audience was hardly familiar with even the fundamentals of *Vedānta*, nay, even *Samskṛta*. He used a lot of illustrations to drive home His points. He concluded that the objections of the opponents are rooted in the misunderstanding of *Advaita* and that *Advaita* alone is supported by the *Upaniṣads*. He had made an intense subject thoroughly intelligible to all. Needless to mention, with His eloquence, His Holiness can engage any audience, scholarly or otherwise.³

Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Veda Shastra Granthamala

Religious publications serve as an ideal source of wisdom. Under the auspices of the Sri Shankara Advaita Research Centre, Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin



instituted a publication series in 2001 for publishing hitherto unpublished as well as rare texts in the *Vedas* and *Śāstras*. Some of the works in this series titled, *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Veda Śāstra Granthamālā*, include those deciphered from manuscripts preserved in the archives of the *maṭha*, some are newly written, and others being re-edited and published again. The books are released during the valedictory function of the famous annual *Mahāgaṇapati Vākyaṛtha Vidvat Sabhā*.

The works that have been sourced from the archives and published include *Vaktavya-kāśikā* (a millenium old commentary on *Padmapadācārya's Pañcapādikā* written by Śrī Uttamajna Yati,

³ Taken from the article, "Exemplary Erudition and Eloquence," by G. Ramasubramanian, Chennai published in the "Divya Saptati" special Commemoration Volume, 2021, pp.. 254-256.

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a disciple of the fifth Ācārya of Sringeri, Śrī Jñānottamācārya), *Guru Stuti Śatakam* (composed by the twenty fifth Sringeri Ācārya on his predecessors and published along with a commentary), *Śiva Gītā Bhāṣya*, (penned by the twenty-fourth Sringeri Ācārya Śrī Abhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī) and *Tattva-cintāmaṇi-vivecanam* (penned five centuries ago by Śrī Candraśekhara

Bhāratī, a Sannyāsī disciple, of the twentieth Sringeri Ācārya Śrī Rāmacandra Bhāratī) The newly written and published works include *Laghu-candrikā-prakāśa*, a new sub commentary on *Laghu-candrikā* (a commentary on the famous work *Advaita Siddhi*), *Bhagavatpāda Prayoga Vaiśiṣṭyam* (containing descriptions of usages of special words in the commentaries of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda*) and works in *Nyāya* such as *Anyathā-khyāti-vāda*.

The following example further amplifies Śrī Mahāsannidhānam's profound *Vedāntic* expertise and His dedication to publish rare texts of *Vedānta* and *Śāstras*.

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, Sri Bhatta Tryambaka Shastri authored "*Bhāṣya-bhānu-prabhā*"⁴ to refute the objections raised by the proponents of the dualistic school (of *Madhvācārya*) against the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* of Śrī *Bhagavatpāda*.



His Holiness examining a manuscript

4 The title of the text means - The splendour of the sun-like *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda*

A portion of “*Bhāṣya-bhānu-prabhā*” was published in 1962 with a note saying that the work contained therein was incomplete. The entire work of The “*Bhāṣya-bhānu-prabhā*” was preserved in the “*Sarasvatī-bhaṇḍāra*” (now housed in the Sri Shankara Advaita Research Centre), the centuries old manuscript library at Sringeri. However, when the manuscript was examined, the folios were not in order.

Śrī Mahāsannidhānam collated these folios, transcribed the majority of these folios in **in His own handwriting** into the **Devanagari** script, got the remaining sections transcribed by scholars and had it published in 2022. The entire work was brought out in 2022 as the twenty sixth publications of *the Granthamālā*.

Many books were edited and republished, including the entire *Sama Veda*, *Vedāntic* texts such as *Ratnaprabhā* with *Pūrṇānandiyā*, *Advaita-ratna-rakṣaṇam*, and texts in *Vyākaraṇa* such as *Bṛhad-dhātu-rūpāvali* and *Siddhānta-kaumudī* with *Kāśikā*.

His Holiness also initiated publishing the proceedings of the famous annual *Mahāgaṇapati-vākyārtha-sabhā* held under His presidentship. Titled “*Vidvat-pratibhā*,” this annual publication contains the proceedings of topics covered by the scholars in the previous year’s *sabhā* and serves as a great boon to students and teachers of the *śāstras*.

In addition, some notable *Vedic* compilations and works that have been overseen and blessed by His Holiness include a gloss on *Nyāya-rakṣāmaṇi* of Sri Appayya Deekshita, Kannada translations of *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyāranya’s* commentary on the *Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda*, *Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda Svāhākāra Paddhati* in accordance with the *Satyāśādhā Hiranyakeśiya Śrauta Sūtras*, *Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda Taittirīya Śākhānubandha*, *Ṛk-sūkta Saṅgraha*.

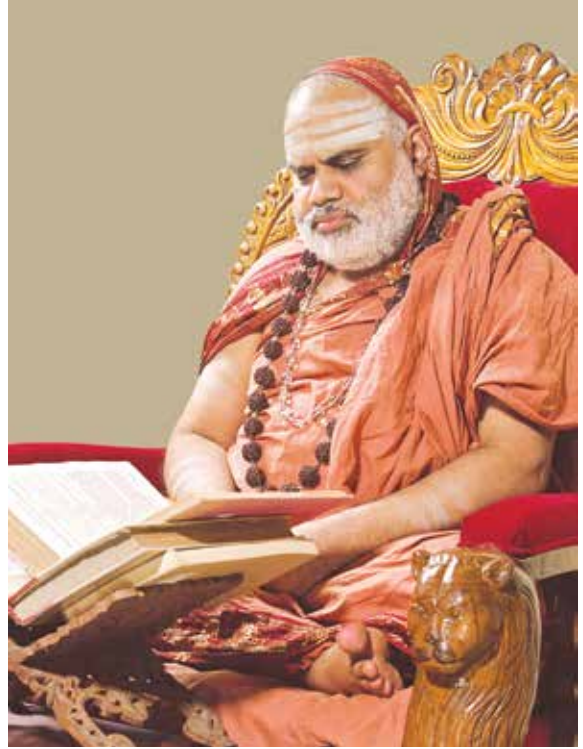
His Holiness also initiated the annual publication of a souvenir of the *Sadvidyā Sañjivini Saṃskṛta Mahāpāṭhaśālā*, titled “*Sadvidyā*” containing articles penned by faculty, alumni, and current students of the *pāṭhaśālā*.

His Holiness also initiated publishing the proceedings of the famous annual *Mahāgaṇapati-vākyārtha-sabhā* held under His presidentship.



Promoting Saṃskṛta

His Holiness always encourages those who sincerely attempt to learn *Saṃskṛta*. There is an instant delight on His face whenever anyone starts conversing with Him in *Saṃskṛta*. He is ever ready to offer suggestions to anyone who approaches Him either to improve his personal knowledge or to spread this holy language by starting an educational centre. When He took over as the thirty-sixth Pontiff, the *Maṭha* was running several centres of *Saṃskṛta* learning throughout the country. However, His Holiness was desirous of establishing two major institutions, *Kendriya*



Saṃskṛta Vidyāpīṭha – an advanced *Saṃskṛta* learning centre at Sringeri and Sri Shankaracharya Sanskrit University at Kalady. He took earnest steps and exercised extraordinary patience to see that His wish came true. To enlighten the reader on the sincere efforts taken by His Holiness and the attachment of His Holiness to *Saṃskṛta*, the text of the *anugraha bhāṣaṇa* delivered by His Holiness during the fortieth *Vardhanti* day celebrations in 1990 at Sringeri is given below. In His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, which was attended by the then Vice- President of India Sri Shankar Dayal Sharma, former Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi, and the then Chief Minister of Karnataka Sri Veerendra Patil, His Holiness gently reminded the leaders about implementing the proposal for establishing a *Saṃskṛta* University at Kalady and stressed the importance of this language. His Holiness said:

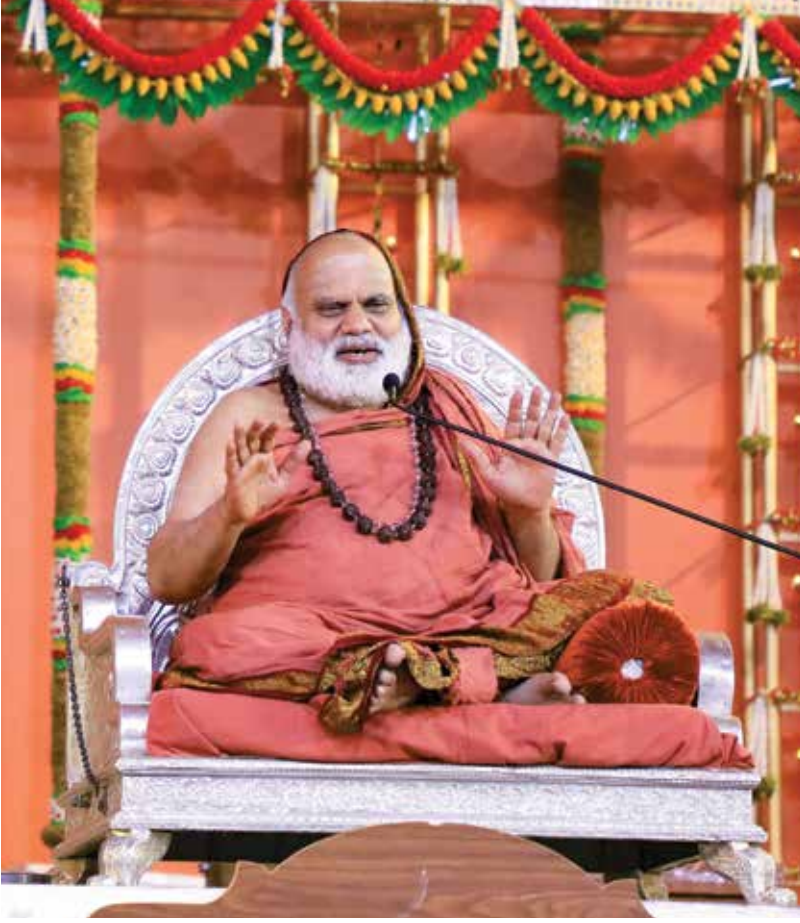
“The main spring of our culture is *Saṃskṛta*. *Saṃskṛta* is the source of all languages. I take this opportunity to refer to a misunderstanding which exists in the minds of many. They think that any advancement in *Saṃskṛta* would endanger their own language. But this is only a misunderstanding of the position. *Saṃskṛta* is like a mother to all languages. This is something which everybody should keep in mind.

No danger would come to any language from *Samṣkṛta*. We need not fear *Samṣkṛta*. As long as we have devotion to *Samṣkṛta*, no danger would come to our language. Anyone who wants to encourage his language should also necessarily encourage *Samṣkṛta*. The illustration given by the *śāstras* may be referred to here. Anybody who wants to see a tree blossom forth with leaves, flowers and fruits should safeguard the root. Likewise, anybody desirous of encouraging his language should protect and nurture *Samṣkṛta*. With this in view, I wanted a *Samṣkṛta* University to be established at Kalady, the birthplace of *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. That desire is still there. I had discussed this matter with many distinguished personalities including Sri Rajiv Gandhi. All had agreed to this proposal. But, as you know, for the fruition of every desire an opportune moment should come. Such an opportune moment has not yet arrived for this proposal. But I have not given up hope. It is also my desire to start a *Samṣkṛta Vidyāpīṭha* at Sringeri for the advanced study of *Samṣkṛta*. No doubt, we have been running a *pāṭhaśālā* here. But there is a world of difference between our running an institution, and the government running one. How many people could we appoint? How much salary could we give? What facilities could we afford? But, if the government decides to do it, it could work wonders. When I suggested this to the dignitaries present here, they agreed to my proposal. Our Chief Minister of Karnataka has assured all help from his side once we commence the work.”

His Holiness always encourages those who sincerely attempt to learn *Samṣkṛta*. There is an instant delight on His face whenever anyone starts conversing with Him in *Samṣkṛta*. He is ever ready to offer suggestions to anyone who approaches Him either to improve his personal knowledge or to spread this holy language by starting an educational centre.



As per His Holiness’s wishes, the government established the Shankaracharya Sanskrit University at Kalady. Accepting the invitation from the then Chief Minister of Kerala, Sri Karunakaran, His Holiness visited Kalady and laid the foundation for the university on 01 December 1992. His Holiness also announced a donation of five-lakh rupees on behalf of the *maṭha* for the university. The university was established in 1994 and started admitting students. Now the university has over eight regional



campuses across the State of Kerala. His Holiness laid the foundation stone for the Rajiv Gandhi *Kendriya Saṃskṛta Vidyāpīṭha* at Sringeri on 05 March 1992 in the presence of the then President of India, Sri R. Venkatraman. It offers courses at various levels such as *Prāk-śāstrī*, *śāstrī*, *Ācārya*, *Śikṣā-śāstrī*, *Vidyā-vāridhi*, and a course at the Diploma level in *Vāstu*. These apart, classes are also conducted for many other disciplines including *Vyākaraṇa*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Nyāya*, *Vedānta*, and *Sāhitya*. His Holiness accepts invitations from this *Vidyāpīṭha* and visits it during their annual day functions and other important events.

His Holiness's bold vision of Sanskrit University's mission and goals and a clearly articulated strategic plan led to the establishment of the Shankaracharya University in Kalady and has, in a span of just twenty seven years, become an institution of global repute in Humanities and Social Sciences, especially in *Saṃskṛta*



Jagadguru Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahaswamiji gracing Sree Sankaracharya Sanskrit University at Kalady in 1995

Studies. Furthermore, the popularity of the program has led to the opening of eight regional campuses in Kerala alone. Sri Rajiv Gandhi *Kendriya Samskṛta Vidyāpīṭha*, Sringeri Campus (now part of Central Sanskrit university), as envisioned by His Holiness, has been attracting eminent, nationally recognized teachers to guide students in *śāstras* research. It is

remarkable to observe that the university, since its inception, has already produced many graduates in advanced *Samskṛta* studies. His Holiness vision of creating and disseminating *Samskṛta* knowledge is flying high. His Holiness's persistent efforts clearly showed that:

- ❖ *Samskṛta* is flourishing and doing well.
- ❖ *Samskṛta* is not for few... the universities have produced many graduates and they go on to spread the *Samskṛta* language.
- ❖ *Samskṛta* grammar is not difficult for those who are proficient in it.

Development of all these institutions of higher learning in *Samskṛta* studies is a testament to his persistent efforts. As the saying goes, "*The words of Mahātmans come to pass,*" is absolutely true indeed!

His Holiness's bold vision of Sanskrit University's mission and goals and a clearly articulated strategic plan led to the establishment of the Shankaracharya University in Kalady and has, in a span of just twenty seven years, become an institution of global repute in Humanities and Social Sciences, especially in *Samskṛta* Studies.





Dr. M.C. Dileepkumar, Vice-Chancellor,
Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady
receives Jagadguru's Blessings

Nyaya Chair in the name of Śrī Mahasannidhanam in Madras Sanskrit College, Chennai

Dr. Mani Dravid Sastri, who is a reputed scholar of *Vedānta*, and *Mīmāṃsā*. and teaches at the Madras Sanskrit College, emphatically avers, "Our experience is that the *Jagadguru* is an incarnation of the Goddess of Knowledge, *Sarasvatī*, and a *Sarvajna*, an all knowing one."

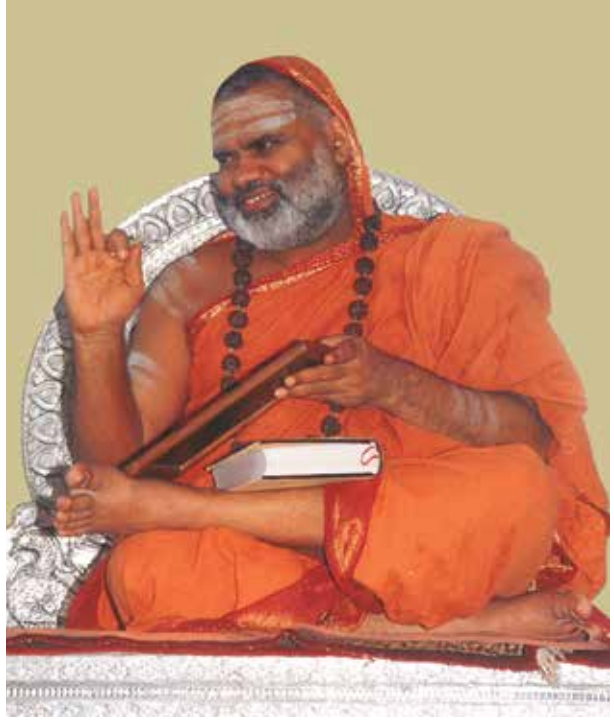
His Holiness, being a scholar par excellence in the *Vedas* and *śāstras* including *Nyāya* and *Vedānta*, it is only befitting that the Nyaya Department of the Madras Sanskrit College set up a chair in the sacred name of His Holiness to further studies and research in *Nyāya śāstra* in 2021.

Fondness for Saṃskṛta Scholars

Scholars of *Saṃskṛta* and people who strive for the spreading of *Saṃskṛta* at various levels are honoured by the *maṭha* from time to time. His Holiness showers His wholehearted grace on them.

Once, an elderly *Vedic* scholar visited Sringeri and had the *darśana* of His Holiness. He submitted a work of his in *Saṃskṛta*, at the lotus feet of His Holiness, for the latter's perusal, suggestions, and approval. His Holiness was very happy to see him and entered into a brief conversation with him in *Saṃskṛta*. The scholar replied to all His questions in *Saṃskṛta* itself. His Holiness felt very happy. Then He turned towards the other devotees standing there and said: "To speak in *Saṃskṛta* one must first develop a '*ruci*' (taste) for it. Then it will be easier." The next morning during the distribution of *tīrtha-prasāda*, His Holiness praised the sincerity of that scholar who had even at that age completed a work unmindful of the physical strain. Then He blessed the scholar with a shawl.

On another occasion, an ardent devotee of His Holiness visited Sringeri, had *daršana* of His Holiness and in the course of his conversation with His Holiness casually said, "We are conducting *Samṣkr̥ta* classes." The *Jagadguru's* face immediately brightened up much to the delight of that devotee. His Holiness soon bathed him with umpteen questions such as, "How often in a week are the classes conducted," "Who is the teacher?" "How many students attend the classes?" etc. The fascinated devotee enthusiastically answered all the questions. When he said, "The classes are conducted twice a week," His Holiness was a bit disappointed and said, "Just two classes? It is not at all enough." There was a very genuine concern in His voice. The devotee assured His Holiness that he would take up the matter with the committee members. Later when the devotee came out of the abode of His Holiness, he was full of praise for the *Ācārya's* deep interest in promoting *Samṣkr̥ta* education.



Peerless Proficiency in Other Languages

If, by looking at the inherent affinity of His Holiness for *Samṣkr̥ta*, anyone concludes that the matchless proficiency of His Holiness is limited only to *Samṣkr̥ta*, one is surely mistaken. Be it Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, or Hindi, the *Jagadguru* stuns His audience with an awe-inspiring command over the respective language. A fact which is noteworthy here is that except for Telugu which is His native language, the *Jagadguru* has not formally learnt any of the other languages.

The *Jagadguru's* maiden address in Kannada happened on the *Śiṣya-svīkāra* day itself on 11 November 1974. His Holiness *Bhārati Tirtha Mahāsvāmin* was expected

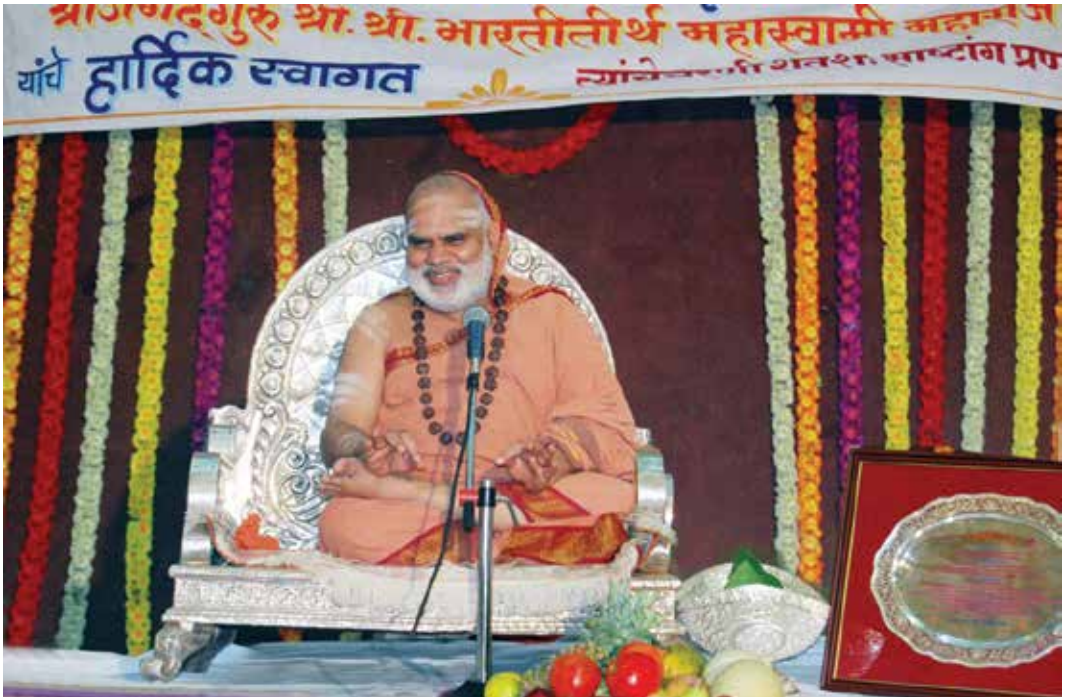
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to give a speech in Kannada, a language that was neither His native language nor one that He had been formally taught. Doubts were raised by many as to whether it was fair to expect Him to deliver His discourse in Kannada. Some of the devotees

even took up this matter with His *Guru*, *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* Himself. However, the *Ācārya* just smiled and dismissed them. The smile might have hinted that a surprise was awaiting them! The assembly eagerly awaiting His Holiness's maiden speech consisted of distinguished personalities including ministers, High Court and Supreme Court judges, members of the legislature, university professors, *Vedic* scholars, and the ardent devotees of the *Pīṭha*. After a brief invocation, the young ascetic commenced His speech in chaste Kannada. Marked by impressive fluency, excellent vocabulary and lucid exposition of the scriptural passages taken up as the subject matter, His audience were enthralled by the chaste delivery in Kannada.

A couple of months after the *śiṣya-svīkāra*, the *Jagadgurus* commenced Their *vijaya-yātra* to Rameswaram. On the way, They paid a visit to Gobichettipalayam. The devotees who had gathered for the *darśana* were all pleasantly surprised when the young Swamin delivered His talk in chaste Tamil. He took *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's* verse (beginning with) – “*जन्तूनां नरजन्म दुर्लभम् (jantūnāṃ narajanma durlabham)*” – from the text *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* and blessed the audience with an eloquent exposition of the verse in Tamil. The devotees remained wonderstruck, for they had never expected such a clear language flow in Tamil from a person whose native language was not Tamil and who had not had a formal tutor-led course to learn Tamil.

On a different occasion, a devotee submitted to His Holiness a verse which he had composed in Tamil on Him. The devotee thought of reading it out to His Holiness, for he had felt that the *Jagadguru* would not be able to read Tamil. As if reading his mind, His Holiness smiled, gently took the sheet from him, and started reading it out to the devotee! Interestingly, His Holiness even offered some correction in the content of the poem. The devotee's surprise was beyond measure!



The Jagadguru delivers an Anugraha Bhashanam

During His tour of North India, His Holiness addressed the devotees in chaste Hindi. People thronged to His place in large numbers to listen to His lectures. Hindi Scholars and teachers who happened to attend the *Jagadguru's* sacred talks were surprised to find that His Holiness was remarkably familiar with the nuances of the language. His Holiness delivered His benedictory addresses in Hindi not just within the four walls of the *maṭha* lecture-hall but also during His visits to schools, temples and even the Chamber of Commerce.

Having studied English as the second language at school till His school final, His Holiness has good knowledge of English. Though His Holiness does not address any gathering in this language, He reads letters written to Him in English and even dictates replies to them. Moreover, when foreigners who come for *darśana* speak to Him in English, He responds to them in English.

His Holiness does not confine His erudition to only holding discussions with or offering advice to scholars. He unswervingly uses it for the benefit of the public at large. A distinguished polyglot, His Holiness reaches out to the public through His benedictory discourses wherein He introduces them to the tenets of

Sanātana-dharma as enjoined in the scriptures and in the works of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. People attend in thousands to listen to His discourses. In His sacred talks, His Holiness cites extensively from a wide range of scriptural resources such as the *Vedas*, the *Śāstras*, epic resources such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, and philosophical resources such as the *Brahma-sūtra*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the works of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda as well

Through His captivating talks, His Holiness instills interest in the minds of people to know more about our *Vedic* culture and heritage, the rudiments of *dharma* and the greatness of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's works. The presentation of ideas is done in an orderly fashion so that it gets imprinted in the minds of people who attend His discourses with avid interest.



as those of several other saintly authors and poets. Through His captivating talks, His Holiness instills interest in the minds of people to know more about our *Vedic* culture and heritage, the rudiments of *dharma* and the greatness of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's works. The presentation of ideas is done in an orderly fashion so that it gets imprinted in the minds of people who attend His discourses with avid interest.

Scholar with Humility

Absence of intellectual pride marks the greatness of a true scholar. Such greatness is very much evident in His Holiness. A few incidents serve to illustrate this. In spite of His proficiency over the scriptures and allied literature, His Holiness makes it a point to refer to the respective texts before He proceeds to take classes. If at any time, a *vidvān* or a devotee refers to any text which His Holiness has not come across, He explicitly shows His interest, collects the particulars of the text, arranges to fetch it, and reads it.

Even when people eulogize Him, He interrupts and politely says, "It is all due to the grace of Śrī Śāradāmbā. I have done nothing!" Once, after His Holiness completed His discourse in Tamil, some members of the audience came to Him and praised Him for His astonishing proficiency in Tamil. His Holiness politely responded:



“Do not stop with giving me testimonials of proficiency but ensure that you also try sincerely to put into practice what has been advised. If at least one among you makes a firm resolve to strictly follow the path of *dharma*, I can deem the purpose of my discourse fully served.”

On an occasion, Sri Manian, the editor of a Tamil magazine approached His Holiness with a number of questions and received quite convincing answers for all of them. After the question-answer session was over, Sri Manian extolled the *Jagadguru* profusely for the fitting replies. His Holiness responded: “Well, you may approach me to clarify doubts, if any, in the tenets of *Sanātana-dharma*. I will definitely quell them if I know the answers. I should not show pride in such matters. Once the pride that ‘We know everything’ comes to us, God will see to it that nothing is known to us from that day onwards.” How unassuming is His Holiness, the *Jagadguru* of the celebrated Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham!

Scholar Par Excellence Indeed!





Chapter 6

COMPASSIONATE GURU

One day, a rich man of a miserly disposition visited a sage who took him by the hand and led him to a window. "Look out there," he said. The rich man looked out into the street. "What do you see?" asked the sage. The rich man replied, "I see men, women and children." Again, the sage took him to a mirror and asked him, "What do you see now?" The rich man replied, "I see myself." "Behold," said the sage, "In the window, there is glass, and the mirror is also glass. But the glass of the mirror is coated with silver. No sooner is silver added, you cease to see others and see only yourself." The rich man thereafter became a celebrated philanthropist.

The story above reveals the power of sagacious advice. Sages, by their supreme wisdom, reform even the most corrupt minds and elevate them to higher planes of spirituality. Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, ever since the great Preceptor, *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* one thousand two hundred years ago, established it, has been offering to the world sages of exceptional

wisdom and extraordinary spiritual attainments. In this sacred line of spiritual *Gurus*, comes His Holiness *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tirtha Mahāsvāmin*, thirty-sixth *Jagadguru* of this great *Pīṭha*. Compassionate and considerate, His Holiness offers appropriate advice to everyone who comes to Him seeking direction, keeping in mind the temperament and competence of the person. Numerous people - *sannyāsīs*, scholars, spiritual seekers, the religiously-oriented, and many others - approach His Holiness seeking His guidance. He receives everyone with

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His characteristic reassuring smile, listens to them and blesses them with His divine directions. This chapter describes instances of how His Holiness guides those who approach Him in good faith and with devotion.

Once a pious man resolved that he would perform *aṅga-pradakṣiṇā* (a practice wherein a devotee, soaked in wet clothes, rolls over his body around the sanctum on the floor inside the temple in fulfilment of his prayers) at the sacred shrine of Lord *Śrī Venkaṭeśvara* at Tirupati. However, due to age and physical weakness, he could not undertake the travel and fulfil the vow. He was deeply anguished about it. His son approached the *Jagadguru*, presented his father's plight and sought to know whether his father could relinquish his vow, considering his physical inability to perform it. The *Jagadguru* advised: "It is not appropriate to bow out of one's vow made at the shrine of the Lord. At the same time, it is also obvious that your father's physical state is not conducive to carry out such a strenuous task. Hence, I suggest that one of his sons could fulfil his vow on his behalf." Accordingly, one of the sons promptly performed *aṅga-pradakṣiṇā* at the shrine and relieved the father of his concern.



As the above illustration shows, *Mahāsvāmin* is an epitome of compassion. When devotees approach *Mahāsvāmin* with their problems, His Holiness gives them due attention and guides them with compassion. The collection of narratives described below will enable a reader to understand the compassionate nature of His Holiness.

It is not appropriate to bow out of one's vow made at the shrine of the Lord.



Disciple : At home, I worship a *Śivaliṅga* made of stone. I find a lot of deep scratches on it. Can I replace it with another *liṅga*?

His Holiness : Is there any deep fissure in it so that it is likely to break into two halves?

Disciple : No, I do not think so.

His Holiness : In such a case, you do not need to replace it.



Disciple : The scriptures declare that nearness to one's *Guru* is an essential prerequisite to attain salvation, but it is not possible for everyone to be near one's *Guru*. What should such people do?



His Holiness : (Smiling) It is not necessary that you should always be near your *Guru* to attain emancipation. It is enough if you sincerely conduct yourself as per *Guru's* instructions.



Once, a college student paid a visit to Sringeri and had the *darśana* of His Holiness. The following conversation ensued between His Holiness and the boy.

His Holiness : Where are you coming from?

Disciple : Chennai.

His Holiness : What made you come here?

Disciple : I have heard much about the Sringeri *Jagadgurus* and hence I desired to have Your *darśana*. So, I came.



His Holiness : I am very glad about your devotion. Did you inform your parents about your coming to Sringeri?

Disciple : No, I told them I was going to Mysore.

His Holiness : Oh? Then, when you start back from Sringeri, visit Mysore first and then go to your city as otherwise what you had told your parents would amount to a lie and this habit should not be entertained by you at any time in your life.

Disciple : I shall carry out Your Holiness's instructions. I seek Your blessings so that I should be able to visit Sringeri frequently and have Your *darśana*.

His Holiness : So be it!

The young man later became a very ardent devotee of the *maṭha*, visiting Sringeri quite often.



Disciple : It is said that both the *Vedas* and the *śāstras* serve as the *pramāṇa* (authentic basis) to decide on any matter. Suppose on a particular issue, if both the *Vedas* and the *śāstras* hold entirely different views, what should we do? Which of these two should we follow?

His Holiness : The chances for such differences are very remote. However, if at all there is any such issue, what the *Vedas* say should be followed, as the *Vedas* always hold the supreme authority.



Disciple : Is it true that the purpose of studying the *Mīmāṃsā śāstra* is to understand the import of the *Vedas*?

His Holiness : Yes. It is the purpose.

Disciple : The *Mīmāṃsā* text declares that the performance of *karma* will directly bestow *mokṣa*. Does this not contradict the *Advaitic* philosophy?

His Holiness : *Mīmāṃsā*, of course, remains the *pramāṇa* for understanding the meaning of the *Vedas*. However, *Mīmāṃsā* is not opposed



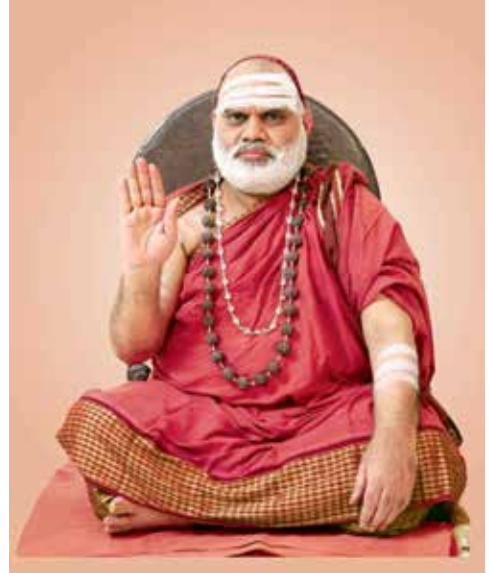
to the fact the '*jñāna*' is the prerequisite for *Moksha*. The prime purpose of the *Mīmāṃsā śāstra* is only to develop faith in the sincere performance of one's *karma* because such performance will fetch purity of mind and this renders one fit for *jñāna*. '*Jñānopadeśa*' cannot be given to everyone because it requires extraordinary competence and a well-refined state of mind. Moreover, we cannot say

that everyone desires *mokṣa*. Most of the people seek material pleasures and the performance of one's *karma* is itself conducive to such attainments. Therefore, we can conclude beyond doubt that the *Mīmāṃsā śāstra* aims at inducing people to perform *karma* and not at opposing *Advaitic* philosophy.



Disciple : Some religions maintain that Bhakti is superior to *jñāna*. Is it so?

His Holiness : That Bhakti is the most essential factor is very true, but it does not contradict the fact that *jñāna* is a must for attaining *mokṣa*. What is Bhakti? *Bhagavatpāda* has said in *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* that Bhakti is the greatest material aid for achieving *mokṣa*. To this, the great *Guru* has added, "Constant contemplation of one's own True Nature (that one is, in reality, the Supreme *Brahman*) is said to be Bhakti." Does this not prove beyond doubt that true Bhakti consists in the *śravaṇa* (hearing), *manana* (reflection) and the *nididhyāsana* (contemplation) of the Truth expounded by the *Upaniṣad*? Our intention here is not to decry other forms of Bhakti such as *nāma-saṅkīrthanā*, for *Ācārya Śaṅkara* Himself has declared in many a place that the chanting of the *Bhagavān's* name confers great merits.



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His Holiness visited a town in a southern district of Tamil Nadu and stayed there for a few days. A young boy approached the *Jagadguru*. After offering prostration, he posed a doubt and prayed that His Holiness bless him with a clarification. The *Jagadguru* cheerfully agreed.

Boy : In *Śrīmad Rāmāyaṇa*, *Śrī Rāma* is portrayed as the embodiment of mercy and the forgiver of sins. Isn't He?

His Holiness : Yes, He is!

Boy : All that *Rāvaṇa* had committed was just one sin. Is it not?

His Holiness : Yes, it is!

Boy : But *Śrī Rāma* awarded *Rāvaṇa* the capital punishment for just this one sin. Is it fair on the part of *Śrī Rāma*, the ocean of mercy, to award such a cruel punishment? This doubt has remained unsettled in my mind for a long time. I request Your Holiness to clear this.

His Holiness : (Full of appreciation for the boy's genuine intention) That *Śrī Rāma* was an embodiment of mercy and that *Rāvaṇa* had committed just one sin are quite right. However, the one sin he had committed was so grave and unpardonable that even the most merciful *Śrī Rāma* could not do anything but award him with capital punishment.

The boy felt satisfied with this answer.



It is said: "Education does not mean teaching people to know what they should know; it means teaching them to behave as they should behave."

One day, when the *Jagadguru* was distributing the *tīrtha-prasāda* to devotees at *Saccidānanda Vilāsa* in Sringeri, a small boy strayed away from the queue and coming straight to the *Jagadguru* for collecting the sacred *prasāda*. The *Jagadguru* beckoned to the boy and in a soft tone said to him:



His Holiness : Suppose there are four steps to enter your house. Will you ascend each step and enter your house, or will you simply jump over all those steps and enter?

Boy: I will not jump over but enter after ascending the steps one by one.

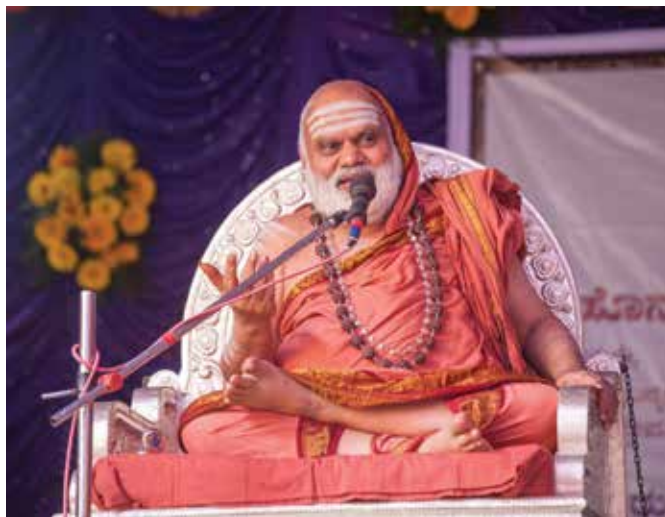
His Holiness : Well said! Likewise, there is a queue here to collect the *prasāda*. It is therefore inappropriate to neglect the queue. You must join the queue and collect the *prasāda* when your turn comes. Will you do that?

Boy: Yes, I will.

The boy then promptly went back, joined the queue, and received the sacred *prasāda* when his turn came. The people around were impressed by the effective manner in which His Holiness taught the right conduct to the boy without hurting his feelings.



The *Jagadguru* is an inspiring communicator. Steeped in *dhārmic* ways of life, He has a knack of imparting the subtleties of *dharma* through interesting stories, citations from the *Upaniṣads*, *purāṇas*, and *mahākāvya*m besides citing episodes from the life of great souls such as His illustrious Predecessors. His narrative skills are unquestionably impressive, and His storylines enchantingly engaging. Through His narratives, His Holiness teaches us essential morals which, when sincerely put to practice, will prove to be great mind purifiers. A few excerpts from His divine discourses are given below.



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My Parameṣṭhi-guru, Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin was camping at a place, when an officer of the forest department came to Him. The Guru was not in the habit of dismissing people after just enquiring about their welfare. To ascertain whether the officer had any inclination to know the highest Truth, He asked, "Do you ever become angry?" The officer replied in the affirmative.

Acharya : *What do you do when you are angry?*

Officer : *I take it out on my subordinate.*

Acharya : *If that is the case, what does he do?*

Officer : *He vents his ire on his assistant.*

Acharya : *Do you see how one man's anger gives trouble to many?*

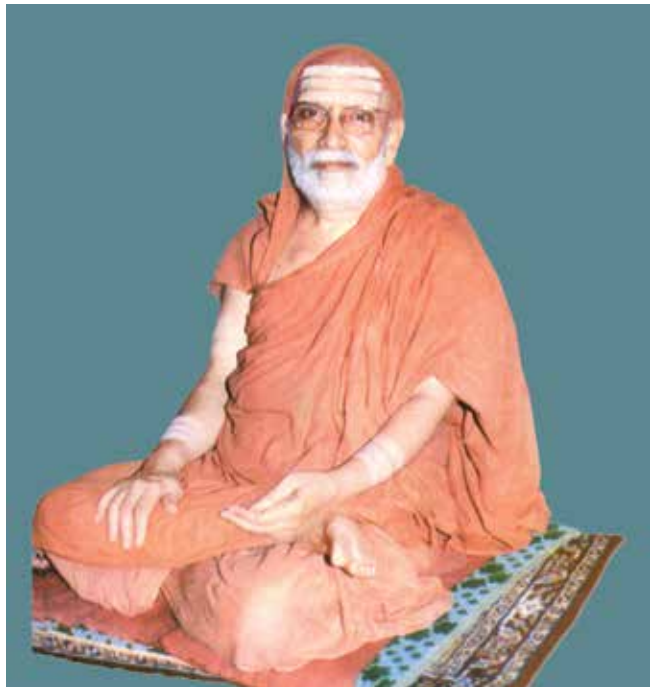
The officer admitted his fault and sought a remedy.

Ācārya said, "There are three types of men. Some foresee that they are going to get angry. Some, who are unable to foresee anger, are able to realise after the onset of wrath that they are angry. Some others recognise their anger only in retrospect, after the damage has been done. Amongst these categories of people to which one do you belong?"

The officer replied that though he did not belong to the first, he was a member of the second set of people. Ācārya advised him to join the first group, by thinking even before the onset of anger, "Is it fair on my part to give room to wrath?" Such analysis would forestall anger. The concerned officer paid his obeisance to the Guru and left for his place, where he was camping. It was midday by the time he reached, and he felt very hungry. Unfortunately for him, his servant had prepared only two rotis. He was about to lose his temper. However, he immediately recalled Ācārya's advice. He called his servant and asked the reason for his making only two rotis. The servant replied that the person who had left to fetch provisions had not returned. The servant had wanted to appease the hunger of his officer by preparing two rotis with the available flour. For his part, the servant did not eat anything and was prepared to remain hungry till the provisions arrived. The officer praised his servant as generous. The advice saved him from the sin of getting angry at his innocent servant. We too must think before allowing wrath to raise its head. If we try to analyse the situation and find out the reasons, there will be no room for anger.



The following incident took place during my Guru's time. An employee of the maṭha once committed an unpardonable error. Everyone in the maṭha pleaded for his dismissal. My Guru, however, told him, "It appears that you find the present job difficult to perform. Hereafter, you attend to another task." Some influential persons who were present felt that His Holiness should have dismissed him from the job instead of assigning him new duties. His Holiness told them: "It is not difficult to send him out of the maṭha. His family members are solely dependent on his earnings. What will happen to them if he loses his job? His children should not starve on account of our decisions. That is why I gave him a different job." They then realised that no one could be as compassionate as Ācārya.



Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamin

To err is human. Just because we have power, we ought not to inflict major punishments, unless the gravity of the act warrants it.



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In Rāmāyaṇa, there is this scene. Bharatha comes to the forest to behold Śrī Rāma. He is accompanied by his large army. His intention is to arrange for the coronation of Śrī Rāma by bringing Him back to Ayodhya. However, looking at Bharata approaching them with a battalion of soldiers, Lakṣmaṇa

becomes agitated and is suspicious of Bharata's intentions. He tells Śrī Rāma, "Brother! Bharata does not seem to allow us to live peacefully even here. He is coming with his army to harm us. If you permit me, I will slay him in no time." Ever calm and composed, Śrī Rāma replies to Lakṣmaṇa: "Why jump to this hasty conclusion, Lakṣmaṇa? Bharata is not wicked as you might think. He is visiting us perhaps to request us to return and accept the kingdom. I know his intentions fully. Your displeasure about Bharata seems to imply that you are interested in getting back the kingdom. If that is your intention, spell it out. I shall ask Bharata to do what is required." Lakṣmaṇa calms down.

Patience and trust, and not haste and suspicion, serve to strengthen human relations.

*Patience and trust, and not haste
and suspicion, serve to strengthen
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When Bharata reaches Śrī Rāma's abode in the forest, he offers his prostrations to Rāma, submits his profuse apologies for his mother's unpardonable behaviour, and pleads with Rāma to change His mind and return to Ayodhya to rule the kingdom. He goes on to say that as he is the rightful owner of the kingdom, he can now offer it to Rāma. He entreats Rāma to accept his request and return to Ayodhya. However, Śrī Rāma declines his offer. He advises Bharata: "Dear Bharata! I know that your affection for me is boundless. However, you must go back to Ayodhya and happily rule the kingdom. It is our duty to follow the instructions of our father."

If Rāma had accepted Bharata's offer and returned to the kingdom, then both of them would certainly have made everyone happy. However, both their actions would have resulted in a deliberate deviance from dharma. Daśaratha's assent to Kaikeyī's requests set two things in force. One, Rāma had to leave for the forest and not return to Ayodhya for fourteen years. Two, Bharata should be made the emperor. Neither of the two would have happened if Rama had accepted Bharatha's offer. So, Rāma's firm decline of Bharata's offer is perfectly justified.

Compromising on dharma for our convenience is not a good practice and it should, therefore, be avoided.



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A Gandharva by the name Puṣpadanta once committed a mistake and thereby became subject to Lord Śiva's displeasure. As a result, Gandharva lost his status, and he was transformed into a human. Realising his mistake, he earnestly prayed to Lord Śiva through a garland of spontaneous verses which came to be known as "Śiva-mahimna-stotram." Pleased by this melodious outpour of devotion, Lord Śiva pardoned him and blessed him with a reversal to his original status as a Gandharva. In that stotra, there is a verse through which Puṣpadanta sets an excellent example of how one's attitude towards God has to be. He says: "If God can be eulogized only by persons who are fully aware of His greatness, then the eulogies of even Brahmā and others are inadequate, for they too are not capable of completely realising the Lord's greatness. If one can panegyris the Lord in accordance with one's own intellectual acumen, then I too can praise Him according to my own capabilities."

The Lord accepts our prayers regardless of our varying levels of competence.



Śrī Śaṅkara defines a Guru to be one established in Brahman and intent only upon the spiritual progress of his disciples. This definition aptly describes Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin. His Holiness determinedly preaches Dharma to all with an aim to help them achieve mind purification and thereby walk the path of mokṣa.





Chapter 7

MEMORABLE MOMENTS OF GRACE

Moments with *mahātmans* are mind-purifying. The way a great soul thinks, speaks and acts sets standards for humankind. The illustrious *Ācāryas* of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham are all *mahātmans*. Devotees fortunate to be associated with Them have all been blessed with enlightening lessons. *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, the thirty-sixth *Ācārya* in the *avicchinna-guru-param̐parā* is a divine sage and moments spent in His glorious presence are so edifying that they leave indelible impressions in the minds of devotees. This chapter is a compilation of a few of those edifying moments which devotees have had with His Holiness on various occasions.



In July 2007, His Holiness was camping in the city of Mumbai. On a certain morning, when His Holiness was distributing the *tīrtha-prasāda* to devotees, an old lady approached Him. She was inconsolably sobbing. His Holiness asked her, “Mother, what is troubling you? Why are you crying?” She narrated: “My husband passed away long ago, and I do not have children to support me now. My only source of income is the rent from a tenant occupying a part of my house. The tenant who was promptly paying the rent for some time suddenly stopped paying it. I have not been receiving the rent for several months. For want of money,

Jagadguru
Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin,
the thirty-sixth *Ācārya* in the
avicchinna-guru-param̐parā is a
divine sage and moments spent in
His glorious presence are so edifying
that they leave indelible impressions
in the minds of devotees.



I have been struggling to meet even my basic needs. Moreover, knowing my helpless state, he is also trying all possible foul means to take the house for himself. I have been suffering a lot and I do not know what to do. I heard from my neighbours that the *Sringeri Jagadguru* has come to this place. I came here to present my problems and seek blessings." The *Jagadguru* was moved by her pitiable state of affairs. His Holiness consoled her saying, "I am there for you. Do not be worried." He then instructed His assistant to bring some money in an envelope.



His Holiness took the envelope, gave it to the old lady and said: "Keep this money and meet your household expenses. By God's grace your issue will be settled soon. Have no worries. Go back cheerfully." At this unexpected downpour of grace, the lady could not control her tears of joy. She went back happily. As the blessed lady was leaving the hall, His Holiness said to a devotee who was by His side at that time, "Look at her plight; she has to go through this kind of suffering at this age. May God bless that tenant with the right kind of thoughts so that he puts an end to his sinful acts."

Sympathy towards the suffering and anger towards trouble-makers are but natural. However, in the episode above, we find a different scenario. His Holiness, an ocean of compassion, felt sympathetic towards the miserable lady and even extended not only His words of benediction but also financial support to her. It is perfectly understandable. However, when it came to how the tenant had behaved, His Holiness's reaction was surprisingly not one of irritation but that of a sincere wish for the person's reformation! The episode testifies to how great souls view things, and how such views serve to refine our perspective of things and people.





Ocean of Compassion

His Holiness, an ocean of compassion, felt sympathetic towards the miserable lady and even extended not only His words of benediction but also financial support to her. It is perfectly understandable. However, when it came to how the tenant had behaved, His Holiness's reaction was surprisingly not one of irritation but that of a sincere wish for the person's reformation!





Sri Gurunatha Ghanapati and his son with His Holiness

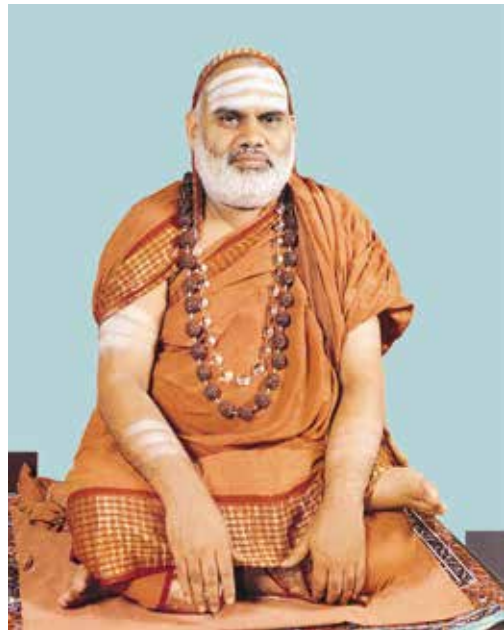
Sri Gurunatha *Ghanapāṭhī* from Chennai brought his son to Kalady for the *Śaṅkara-jayantī-sadas*. The young boy who was also a *vidyārthī* was seated near his father during discussions, watching the ongoing scriptural debates a bit passively as he was feeling hungry. His Holiness, who was noticing the boy for some time, called out to him, and

said: “You are hungry. Aren’t you? I will give you a fruit.” There was a plate full of fruits, kept by His Holiness’s side. Taking a mango from there, His Holiness smelled it and said, “No. This is sour.” He kept that mango back and chose another one and smelled it. He then said: “Yes, this is sweet and will taste nice.” His Holiness gave it to the boy and said, “Eat it. It will taste good.” The boy felt incredibly happy. Sri Gurunatha *Ghanapāṭhī* who was watching all this was moved by His Holiness’s compassionate care.

What is noteworthy about the above episode is His Holiness’s maternal care and concern for a budding scholar. Looking at the boy His Holiness sensed that he was hungry and guessed that he might soon lose attention, thereby missing the beneficial outcomes of the important scriptural discussions. His Holiness’s compassionate concern prompted a spontaneous reaction. The spontaneity, however, did not result in a random choice of some fruit. Even if it had, the boy would still have accepted it as it was coming from the *Jagadguru*. Nevertheless, His Holiness took care to choose the fruit that would not only taste good but also go well with the boy’s appetite so that he could continue watching the scholarly exchanges with focus and enrich his knowledge. His Holiness thoughtfully ensured that the budding scholar was not deprived of the invaluable scholarly moments in the assembly of great scholars that day!



A scholar-teacher par excellence, His Holiness conducts classes on a variety of scholarly disciplines such as *Tarka*, *Vedānta*, and *bhāṣyas* of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara. Vidvān Sri Nagaraja Bhat had the fortune of attending the classes blessed by His Holiness on *Bhagavatpāda's 'Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya.'* He reverentially recounts a particular act of His Holiness during the session. "The hall where the session takes place has the pictures of *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and *Śrī Śāradāmbā*. Every day, His Holiness commences and conducts the whole session with an absolute faith that the His revered *Guru, Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, and Śrī Śāradāmbā* are physically present there, witnessing the session in progress. At the end of the session, *Dakṣiṇāmūrti stotra* is recited. His Holiness very humbly stands before the pictures with joined palms and offers His prostration at the end of each verse of the *stotra*. By such devout acts, the *Ācāryas* of Sringeri serve as a perfect role-model for others."

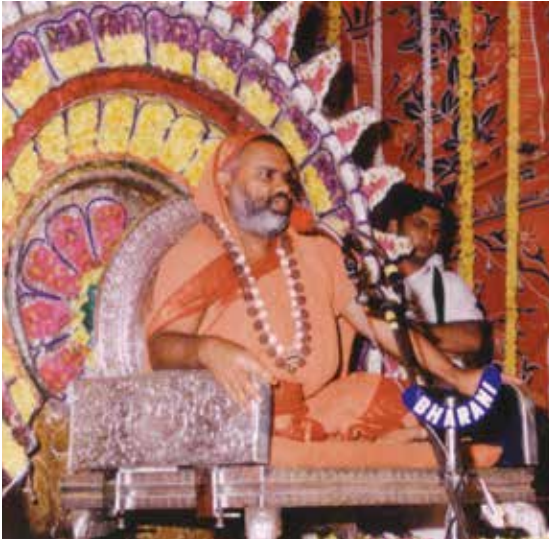


The episode shared above has this important lesson for life embedded in it. "The greater one grows, the humbler one should become."



On October 19, 1989, the ceremonial coronation of His Holiness had just been completed at Sringeri. Later in the day, in His benedictory discourse, His Holiness voiced His resolve for the days to come: "My *Guru* led the life of an ideal ascetic. It is my objective too. My resolve is that by treading the path shown by my *Guru* and by discharging the duties prescribed by Him, I will worship *Śrī Śāradā Parameśvarī* and obtain Her grace."

From a common man's perspective, a doubt might arise here: "When a sincere prayer made directly to the *Goddess* is by itself capable of fetching Her grace,



why take the pains of achieving it through roundabout means - by treading the path shown by the *Guru*, by discharging the duties prescribed by Him, and then worshipping *Śrī Śāradā Parameśvarī* - to obtain Her grace? What specific difference is it going to make?" At the outset, this objection does appear to be valid. However, upon careful consideration of the means suggested by the *Jagadguru*, we will realise that it is suggestive of a definitive as well as scripturally

significant course of action to gain the best of *Śrī Śāradāmbā's* grace. The following elaboration will throw light on this issue.

The scriptures declare that the grace of *Bhagavān* is capable of conferring both '*bhukti*' (worldly enjoyments) and '*mukti*' (liberation from the transmigratory cycle of birth and death). Of the two, '*mukti*' is considered superior as it grants us complete freedom from all kinds of miseries once and for all. Therefore, seeking the grace of God for '*mukti*' is shown to be the right course of action for all of us. However, driven by passion and devoid of diligence and discrimination, the clouded mind tends to seek *Bhagavān's* grace to achieve only material pleasures. This way it gets bound more and more in the cycle of birth and death, steeped in misery. On the contrary, when the same mind is guided by a competent *Guru*, who has knowledge over the scriptures and is a knower of Truth, it quickly realises the worthlessness of worldly pleasures. By discharging the scripture-stipulated duties that our *Guru* has prescribed to us, we are sure to please *Bhagavān* and reap the 'best of His grace' viz. the termination of ignorance and the dawn of eternal bliss. This precisely was the import of *Jagadguru Śrī Bhārati Tirtha Mahāsvāmin's* resolve on that day. Thus, on the very first day of becoming *Pīṭhādhipati*, the compassionate *Jagadguru* blessed everyone with a significant lesson on how the *Guru's* grace plays a major role in obtaining *Bhagavān's* grace in its true sense.





Ayuta Chandi Poornahuti in the divine presence of His Holiness

Sringeri witnessed the spectacular *Ayuta-caṇḍī-mahāyāgā* in April 2011, conducted for the first time in the recorded history of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham! Conducted under the compassionate guidance of His Holiness solely for the welfare of the world, this magnificent event drew thousands of devotees to Sringeri. People watched it with awe, and they felt grateful to His Holiness for blessing them with the opportunity to witness that unprecedented type of massive *dhārmic* event. A public meeting was organised on the final day and quite a few dignitaries spoke on the occasion. Every one of them extolled His Holiness for blessing the world abundantly with that historic *yāga*.

The fact that none of Them ventured into conducting such magnificent sacrifices during Their reign is only indicative of Their extreme compassion for me. Perhaps, They had all willed that an event of this grand a scale should happen in my time and that I take the full credit for it! With great reverence I worship All of Them.

- His Holiness





Finally, His Holiness addressed the gathering. Referring to the rain of praise from one and all, His Holiness, in a tone of extreme reverence, said: "From the available records on the history of this celebrated *pīṭha*, a *yajña* of this kind does not seem to have taken place at any time before. However, one should not jump to the conclusion that the illustrious predecessors of this *pīṭha* were incapable of conducting such grand *yajñas* as this. Nothing was impossible for those exalted *Ācāryas*. The fact that none of Them ventured into conducting such magnificent sacrifices during Their reign is only indicative of Their extreme compassion for me. Perhaps, They had all willed that an event of this grand a scale

should happen in my time and that I take the full credit for it! With great reverence I worship All of Them. I submit my humble prostrations to *Śrī Śāradāmbā*, as it is She who has conducted this *mahāyāga*, using me as a mere instrument."

The mark of a *mahātman* is modesty!



Traditional observances are the inseparable components of *Sanātana-dharma*. They go a long way in keeping a society intact. Noble acts of great souls become traditional practices set in motion for the benefit of the succeeding generations. A firm believer in the tenets of *Sanātana-dharma*, His Holiness is uncompromising when it comes to traditional practices.

His Holiness was returning to the city of Chennai after His extensive independent tour of the southern districts of Tamilnadu in 1988. A thought occurred to Him: "So far, I have visited this city several times accompanying my revered *Guru*. Now I am visiting it as part of my independent tour. It is a tradition that upon *Ācārya's* arrival in a city,

a town, or a village a prominent person of the place performs the *dhūli-pādapūjā* (the first *pādapūjā*) When my *Guru* visited this city on His first tour in 1960, it was the then Chairman of Simpson Anantharamakrishnan who performed the *dhūli-pādapūjā* to Him. Deeming it to be a tradition set in motion by my *Guru*, will the camp organising committee ask his son to perform it now?" His Holiness, however, did not voice His thoughts to the organisers of His camp in the city, for it might cause confusion, if they had asked a different person to do it. When His Holiness arrived in the city, He was extremely pleased to find that it was indeed Sri Sivasailam, the elder son of late Sri Anantharamakrishnan who was performing the *dhūli-pādapūjā*! Subsequently, when, during His benedictory address, His Holiness disclosed the matter and expressed His delight over what He had felt happened, the devotees found His respect for traditional observances absolutely admirable.

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On an occasion, a group of foreigners visited Sringeri. Acceding to their request His Holiness granted them a private audience. In the conversation that ensued, one of the visitors posed a question to His Holiness: "Which one would Your Holiness consider to be more pleasant - Your present stage of life as a *sannyāsī* or Your previous one as a *brahmacārī*?" His Holiness smiled and replied: "For a *sannyāsī* there is no looking back."

The *Jagadguru's* response might have surprised the visitors because there was an apparent mismatch between what was asked and what was replied. The question as such was unmistakable. What the gentleman intended to probe was the

relative merits of the two stages of life namely the *brahmacarya* and the *sannyāsa*. Nevertheless, His Holiness appeared to have given an entirely different reply - "For a *sannyāsī* there is no looking back."

What could be the reason for this apparent mismatch? Would it have been that the *Jagadguru* had not grasped the question in its true sense? This possibility is not even remotely conceivable as His Holiness's keen sense of listening and grasping anything spoken to Him is widely acknowledged. Such being the case, the other possible reason for this apparent divergence could be that the *Jagadguru* had seen a fundamental flaw in the very question itself, which might have prompted Him to answer it differently. This interesting revelation is worth further investigation. *Sannyāsa* does not consist only in discarding one's clothes, sacred thread, and tuft. One should also discard his attachment to his early life, however pleasant or painful it might have been. If after *sannyāsa*, a person was to linger on with the thoughts of his previous stage of life, his would only be a pseudo-renunciation. Thus, a true *sannyāsī* is one who is thoroughly indifferent to his previous stage of life. When such should be the case, where is the room for entertaining a question, however hypothetical it is, that expects him to not only recall his past life but also set about comparing the relative merits between his past and current stages of life? Therefore, as the very question is not sustainable, the *Jagadguru's* response had to be that way. Thus, there is no mismatch whatsoever!



A question was posed to His Holiness about the significance of the saffron robe worn by ascetics. The *Jagadguru* replied, "I do not treat it as a mere piece of cloth worn symbolically. To me, it is verily *Agni* (fire). He who has taken the scripturally-prescribed vow of *sannyāsa* and wears the sacred saffron robe must always remember that if he ever swerves from the discipline of renunciation, the very robe will burn him. Such is my faith."

The words of the *Jagadguru* are reflective of the uncompromising self-discipline that is expected of an ascetic. Though the saffron robe is only symbolic in nature, the *Jagadguru* did not choose to confine Himself to its mere emblematic representation. He went a step further to reveal what He actually felt about the robe, thereby expressing in no uncertain terms His determination that this sacred stage of life should not be taken casually or carelessly. While unequivocally applauding the path

of renunciation as the effective means for salvation, the scriptures also sternly warn about the grave sins that one would incur, should one swerve from the vow of renunciation. His Holiness therefore indicates that the very robe of a *sannyāsī* should be treated not as a mere piece of cloth but as a constant reminder of the *dharma* attached to it.



1999 was the Silver Jubilee year of His Holiness embracing *sannyāsa* (1974 – 1999). Devotees were quite excited about it and hence a celebration was planned. The highlight of the event was the proposed dedication of a golden chariot by His Holiness to *Śrī Śāradāmbā*.

On the day designated for the dedication, the *Jagadguru* visited the temple, packed with devotees. While everyone was expecting a routine dedication of chariot to take place, His Holiness went about it with a difference. His Holiness first submitted to *Śrī Śāradāmbā* a pentad of beautiful verses - '*Śāradā Svarṇā-Ratha Samarpaṇa Padyāvalī*'- composed by Him exclusively for the occasion. The verses convey not only His respectful prayers to the *Goddess* to compassionately accept that humble offering, but also His reverential invitation to Her to come aboard the chariot and bless everyone. Only after this did the *Jagadguru* dedicate the beautiful vehicle to Her, much to the elation of one and all assembled there.

At the outset, the information above might appear to be a report of a routine ritual that happens at temples time and again. Yet, when approached analytically, the enlightening lesson embedded in it reveals itself. Had it been just the dedication of a chariot, the event might have passed off for a random religious one. But it was not just a dedication. There was more to it! Prior to the dedication, His Holiness submitted a prayerful invitation to *Śrī Śāradāmbā* in the form of a pentad of verses to accept the humble offering and bless everyone by mounting the chariot.

Śrī Śāradāmbā should not be viewed as an inert golden image consecrated within the shrine but should be regarded as one's Divine Mother in Her glorious physical presence, showering Her grace in limitless abundance, and witnessing all that is happening around Her.



This earnest gesture of His Holiness imparts an incredibly significant lesson on the kind of 'bhāvanā (attitude)' that one should cultivate towards the Goddess. "Śrī Śāradāmbā should not be viewed as an inert golden image consecrated within the shrine but should be regarded as one's Divine Mother in Her glorious physical presence, showering Her grace in limitless abundance, and witnessing all that is happening around Her. Any submissions made to her must be done with absolute faith and utmost sincerity, as, She is the eternal Head of the pīṭha and the protector of all."

Devotion is enriched by right attitude. Bereft of right attitude, devotion loses its charm. The devotees of His Holiness were on that day blessed with an effective lesson on how one's attitude (bhāvanā) towards God should be.



What follow are the recollections of Svāmi Japānanda of Śrī Ramakrishna Sevāśrama at Pavagada who devoutly describes how His Holiness's advice and grace proved to be a turning point in His aspiration to serve the poor and the needy:



It was during 1990-91 that I was besieged by the 'Service of God in Man' call of Svāmi Vivekānanda and felt the tremendous urge to take up his mission at the grassroots level, but it was not an easy decision to make. I was already a monastic member of the Ramakrishna Order and had spent over eighteen years treading the same path of service, but I had felt the need to do it in a far more intense and focussed way.

It was a crucial moment in my spiritual life. My chosen mission was one that traditionalists might not approve of as suitable for a monk. It involved mingling with the sick and destitute, serving people with leprosy, washing their wounds, and treating them.

I was hesitant about how a orthodox sannyāsī would respond to this, though I had the blessings of the senior monks of the Ramakrishna Order in this regard.

At this critical juncture, I felt my last resort for definitive guidance was His Holiness. It may be mentioned that the Ramakrishna maṭha-sannyāsa tradition has its roots in Sri Sringeri maṭha, since Paramahansa Ramakrishna's Guru Śrī Totāpurī happens to carry the Sringeri maṭha's legacy. For this reason, even to this day the Ramakrishna maṭha monks pay their highest tributes to the Dakṣiṇāmnāya Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham.

I gathered enough courage to meet the great seer and open my heart before Him. I was accompanied by my confidante Sri P.N.Venkatanaryana (who later received sannyāsa dīkṣā in the name Svāmi Nityānanda Bhārati with the blessings of Sri Sringeri Jagadguru). The atmosphere was vibrant with holiness. We joined others in a line to receive the tirtha-prasāda from His Holiness. Feeling very nervous, I protracted and stood like a child. When His Holiness's divine gaze fell on me, I felt as if Divine Mother Sārādāmbā Herself cast Her affectionate glance upon me, and tears rolled down my eyes. With great difficulty, I managed to describe my situation, and expressed my apprehensions as regards my future course in the spiritual journey and sought His guidance.

His Holiness must have easily read my inner turmoil, and, in a very affectionate voice, He spoke to me, as if to a child. He said to me: 'You have chosen the right path to reach the goal supreme. Walk; continue to tread this path of service. This is in fact the need of the hour. Do not worry – you will be successful in your quest for spiritual realisation. There are a number of people who can lecture and sermon on the subject of service to humanity. But you have taken to the path of practical Vedānta. Continue; you will become a successful traveller as the great Kapila-muni expressed in Kapilopakhyaṇa to his mother Devahuti: 'A holy man is one who is patient in all circumstances, who is full of fellow-feeling, who is the friend of all, who looks upon none as enemy, who is overflowing with peace, who has virtue alone as his ornament, and who has a deep-rooted love for Me, characterized by a sense of inseparable intimacy. He works solely for My sake and abandons all dependence on relatives and clansmen,

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preferring to depend solely on Me.’ His Holiness spoke about humanitarian services and their need in the present day. Citing the Bhāgavata, He described the situation where Rantideva wishes to experience the pain and agony of all living beings by entering them, so that he could rid them of those miseries: ‘I do not pray to the Bhagavān for a state in which I shall be endowed with the eightfold powers, nor even for the state of liberation from the cycle of birth and death. I desire only to abide within all beings and undergo the sufferings that accrue to them. By my taking over their sufferings, they will be free from misery.’

Drawing from the great message of this tale, His Holiness urged me to proceed without any hesitation, as a means to Bhagavān realization. Every word of His Holiness entered into my heart and His graceful eyes consoled my broken mind. Finally with total confidence and renewed strength I got up and prostrated at His holy Lotus Feet. It was as if I had received the blessings of Mother Śāradāmbā Herself to go ahead in my chosen path. I also felt that I have been endorsed by none other than an authority on Hindu dharma, who lived every minute, every second in the realm of spiritualism.

Today, even after two decades later, the grace of Mother Śrī Śāradāmbā continues to pour in through His Holiness who enquires about every detail of our programmes and blesses all our team members. Much later, when His Holiness graced our “temple of service” – the SVIRHC Complex (Svāmi Vivekananda Integrated Rural Health Centre) at Pavagada – and distributed fruits to the leprosy and TB patients, it was an impossible dream coming true for us. How fortunate these patients were to receive Śrī Śāradāmbā’s grace through His Holiness!

I am reminded of this beautiful sloka from Vivekacūḍāmaṇi: ‘There are peaceful and magnanimous saints who, like the spring season, live for the good of humanity. They have crossed the dreadful ocean of finitude through their own efforts, and, with no ulterior motives, also help others to cross it.’



The following soul-stirring account of *Dharmātmā* Dr. S. Yegnasubramanian, Chairman of Sringeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation, USA testifies to how *Guru’s* grace works wonders in one’s *Dharmic* missions in life.

I had come to India to seek the blessings of His Holiness for the Bridgewater Temple New Jersey USA. His Holiness was then camping in Chennai as part of His all-India tour.

I was fortunate to keenly observe His Holiness perform the Kumbhabhisheka to Sri Sharadamba at the T Nagar branch of Sringeri Math in Chennai. I got extremely overwhelmed at the way His Holiness was performing it. The same afternoon, a brief private darshan was granted to me. I was let in, and after offering a series of sāṣṭāṅga-namaskāras at the lotus feet of His Holiness, I gathered myself to narrate the purpose of my visit. In this process, His Holiness passionately encouraged me to narrate all the dhārmic activities that I was engaged in, the Veda Classes, the temple, the devotees, the religious annual calendar that I was preparing for the temple then, and on and on. A brief meeting of ten minutes extended to over an hour, and the Ācārya did not dismiss me even then! I was internally crying at the affection of a spiritual mother showered on a total stranger during every moment of my stay in His presence! Since word came about His Holiness's next appointment, I thought I should seek leave myself and did another series of sāṣṭāṅga-namaskāras at the lotus feet of His Holiness. He blessed me, gave mantrākṣata and a dollar of Śrī Śāradāmbā, and said, "This Śāradā will be with you always"! I felt as if I was showered with the highest of my spiritual aspirations – what I prayed for in the morning while watching the abhiṣeka, was answered so precisely by the Ācārya the same afternoon.



Dharmatma Dr S. Yegnasubramanian with His Holiness

By this time, Sri Ravi Subramaniam and devotees of our maṭha had bought a site in the lush green mountains of the Poconos in Pennsylvania and wanted to build a shrine of Śrī Śāradāmbā. With the blessings of His Holiness, Sri V.R. Gowrishankar came to the USA in July 1995 and inaugurated a shrine of Śrī Mahāgaṇapati, Śrī Śāradāmbā, and Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. The first overseas affiliate of the ancient Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham – Sringeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation, USA (SVBF) – was thus born in the USA! Even though I never had any knowledge or exposure to the traditions of the maṭha, just by virtue of being a 'local guru' to groups of several āstika families, and also instrumental in building the Bridgewater temple, I got the opportunity to participate and play a key role in the inaugural functions.

It was December 3, 1996, when I landed at Sringeri on my first ever trip. I had The darshan of His Holiness in the afternoon. I had brought with me the list of names of all my students and requested the Ācārya to go through the list and read the names, so that they can all be blessed! That was the best that I could ever do to them for all their devotion and sincerity they had exuded while performing two mahārudrams. The students go through full rigour in observing the anuṣṭhānas – like trikāla sandhyā-vandana, doing at least five thousand Gāyatrī-japa a week before the mahārudram and observing restrictions on food intake.



His Holiness read out each and every name patiently, even enquiring about some of them just based on their names. After narrating how two mahārudrams were conducted in the precincts of the Śrī Venkaṭeśvara Temple in Bridgewater, and the monthly rudra- ekādasī was performed in one of the student's homes in rotation, I submitted my prārthanā at His lotus feet. I placed the desire to do an Ati-rudram in America next. I had reasoned in my mind that such a big event would make an impact in society to recognise the value of Vedic Education. Every profession has its respect and reward in society, whereas in spite of its mastery over our scriptures, for example by a Ghanapāthī, what is their lot? With such thoughts, I submitted to His Holiness that I needed only one thing for an event of such magnitude to happen. His Holiness asked me what that would be. I did sāṣṭāṅga namaskāra and said, if I had the anugraha of His Holiness, I could do it! His Holiness ordered to bring a vaidika shawl and put it on me and said, "You wear this shawl and do the Ati-rudra; it will be a great success!" Once that blessing was secured, rest just followed. We brought eighty five priests from India; the rest were my students who participated in the first ever Ati-rudra outside India.

Mobilising resources, planning and execution of an authentic vaidika ritual of this magnitude in a foreign land were tasks of astronomical magnitude. The USA

government issued visas for all the eighty five participants for the observance of a Hindu religious ritual. Sri Gowrishankar planned the logistics with absolute precision and the first Ati-rudra outside India in September 1997 and was a grand success! USA was blessed! We even organised for a procession of the Vedic Scholars on the streets of New York as part of the Independence Day parade, chanting Veda mantras! All because of that 'one thing' that was sought of the Ācārya – His anugraha. That reservoir of grace can flow even to the remotest parts of the world, crossing oceans, mountains, and deserts, by the sheer smarāṇa (thought) of His Holiness.

Since then, I have been visiting at least thrice and sometimes even five times every year from the USA! What a blessing! In 2001, when I had the desire to perform a sahasracaṇḍī-mahāyāgā, one of the most intensive rituals in the first place, His Holiness, like a caring mother, explained the complexities involved in performing such a ritual in the USA and gave permission to do a śatacaṇḍī-yāgā. This was the time of the unfortunate 9/11 incident in NY. Getting visas for the scholars was a huge challenge. When Sri Gowrishankar and the Vedic scholars were about to leave the Chennai Consulate with no hope of getting the visas stamped in the passports in time due to the procedural details, suddenly they were called back, and the visas were issued and stamped for all the sixteen of them within two hours! When His Holiness gives the anugraha, everything just goes well. The śatacaṇḍī-yāgā was duly performed for world peace.

In 2005, SVBF thought of building a full-fledged temple for Śrī Śāradāmbā in Stroudsburg, PA. I approached His Holiness again with the request. His Holiness enquired about my plans in details, gave lot of suggestions and blessed the initiative. His Holiness sent Sri Gowrishankar to perform the bhūmi-pūjā in 2006. The priest quarters were readied first to make sure that the priests were comfortably settled even before the kumbhābhiṣeka of the temple! Another first in the history of temple organisations in the USA!

While the construction of the temple had commenced in good pace, a huge bottleneck in terms of bringing the śilpis for the sculptural work had to be faced. All the sculptural fabrications of the vimānas, sanctums, Rājagopuram were done in India using glass-reinforced-concrete material (to withstand adverse weather conditions; it is fast and

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(thought) of
His Holiness.*



less expensive also). The śilpis are, normally, classified as construction workers and are issued a H1B visa, which also takes more time. However, I wanted them to be classified as religious workers based on the nature of their work and the religious expertise, they need to do the design of an authentic temple. Such a change would need an advisory opinion from Washington. Here too, the Ācārya's Grace enabled me to approach the right people who extended help at the last minute, and nineteen of the twenty śilpis who applied for the religious visa were approved! This also paved the way for any temple organisation in the USA who may want to bring a śilpi under a religious visa, provided they fulfil the requirements! At every stage, I felt like I was led by the Holy Hands of His Holiness!

The construction of the temple was completed. To my knowledge, ours was the first temple in the USA where the Rājagopuram also was completed in the first year itself. The kumbhābhiṣeka plans were laid out but seemed too ambitious. We wanted to do a koṭi-arcanas and a śatacaṇḍī-yāga for Śrī Śāradāmbā, a Ati-rudra for Śrī Candramaulīśvara, recitation of all the existing branches of all the four Vedas (even in India, this is only remotely possible), cultural programmes, Bhagavad-gītā recitations and competition, discourses, children/youth's events - all immediately following the kumbhābhiṣeka, in a span of twelve days! We wished to see Śrī Śāradāmbā in a gold chariot and take Her in procession on the day of kumbhābhiṣeka! In addition, we desired a live two-way teleconference with His Holiness on the first day of the celebrations, on the day of the kumbhābhiṣeka and on the final day from remote Sringeri! I again went to Sringeri to seek the grace of my Guru and God, His Holiness. The Ācārya said, "When you have such a pavitra saṅkalpa, Śāradāmbā will be with you and everything will go well." That was all I wanted.

One hundred and eighty seven Vedic Scholars from all over India were issued visas by the American Consulate in Chennai. The Consulates are jurisdictional; however, the Chennai Consulate graciously interviewed all our scholars from across the nation (twenty five of them hailed from Maharashtra) and gave visas in one morning session! Again, for a religious vaidika event! I always remember this with lot of gratitude. As always, Sri Gowrishankar planned all elements of the visit and kumbhābhiṣeka in the minutest details possible, including mobilising resources from several devotees within India! The event was a grand success.



What follow are the extracts from the article *Indelible Impressions* penned by Sri G. Ramasubramanian and published in the “Jagadguru Vaibhavam” Souvenir-2011:

Precisely thirty-two years have passed since I first walked into Saccidānanda Vilāsa, the erstwhile abode in Sringeri, of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, the Jagadguru of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham and had His sacred darśana. I can vividly recall that even at the very first glimpse of His divine form, His countenance instilled in me a feeling of deep reverence and devotion. In this write up, I shall confine myself to sharing with the readers few anecdotes featuring His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, whom I would, hereafter, reverentially refer to as ‘His Holiness.’

Śāstras have no secrets from His Holiness. A consummate scholar of the Nyāya and the Vedānta-śāstras, His Holiness fascinates even the most erudite of His audience with His magic tongue and entralls them with His scholarly expositions during the annual Vidvat-sadas (congregation of scholars) conducted in His sacred presence. The following incident took place in the early 1980’s. His Holiness used to encourage us to attend the sadas whether or not the discussions were intelligible to us at that time. When a scholar was debating during one such sadas, one of our friends chatted very briefly with someone. This, however, did not escape the watchful eyes of His Holiness. His Holiness beckoned my friend and admonished him for his conduct. My friend was terribly upset with himself as he had displeased the Guru. He apologized to His Holiness and begged for His forgiveness. Compassion personified, His Holiness assuaged his feelings and blessed him. However, the disciple could not help brooding over it. Later, His Holiness was sitting in His room granting darśana to the disciples. It was apparent from His countenance that He was relishing what He was reading. My friend went

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near His Holiness and once again requested Him not to take to heart his inappropriate conduct during the sadas. What His Holiness said in reply was remarkable. Sporting a captivating smile on his face and making a pun on the very words uttered by His disciple, His Holiness said, "I want to 'take to heart' only what is written in this book - the tetrad taught by Bhagavatpāda in His Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya. I do not want to take anything else to heart. So, do not worry." The message of His Holiness to the disciple, "you too should not keep worrying about trivia. Instead, focus on your sādhana" was loud and clear.

Not only in the assembly of scholars, but His Holiness is also eloquent even in routine conversations. None speaks like Him in such simple language to drive home invaluable wisdom. Often, His teachings are coupled with rib-tickling humour. Once, a fellow sādhaḥka (spiritual practitioner) was waiting in the august presence of His Holiness for his turn to receive mantrākṣata (holy rice) from Him. At that time, a family of devotees was taking leave of His Holiness. It could be easily discerned by my friend that a young lady in that family could hardly bear to leave the divine presence of His Holiness. Getting emotional, she began to weep inconsolably. Out of compassion, His Holiness beckoned her, comforted her with words of solace and blessed her. The family then left the darśana hall. The sādhaḥka who witnessed this incident was amazed by the intense devotion of the lady and soon, he started to wonder whether at all he had any devotion towards the Guru, for not even once had he wept when taking leave of the Guru. He decided to have it clarified from His Holiness Himself. He reverentially queried His Holiness, "Svāmin, why is it that tears do not well up in my eyes when I take leave of you? Does that not mean my devotion is grossly inadequate?" Pat came the reply from His Holiness who was already sporting a broad smile, "Try sprinkling chili powder on your eyes, if you want to get tears." The hilarious way His Holiness put this would have made anyone laugh nonstop. His Holiness then went on to explain to the sādhaḥka that devotion need not manifest in the form of tears or horripilation. If the disciple ever remembered the feet of his Guru and followed His teachings, that itself would mark devotion. A valuable teaching received, the sādhaḥka prostrated before His Holiness, received mantrākṣata from Him, and took leave of Him cheerfully.

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His Holiness is particular about upholding high standards of traditional practices. As a Guru, He takes good care to ensure that His disciples are set on the right path. For instance, He holds that Vedic chanting must be done in conformity with traditional norms. A friend of mine chanted a certain portion from the Yajur-veda-samhita when he got a chance to do so during an evening pūjā to Śrī Candramaulīśvara by His Holiness. As he chanted, His Holiness nodded His head and pleasantly smiled throughout. However, as he ended the chanting, His Holiness turned towards him,

as if in disapproval. My friend had no clue what his fault was. Later, after the pūjā, His Holiness pointed out to him that he had stopped the chanting at an inappropriate stage. His Holiness then taught him some points regarding the appropriate positions to end the Vedic chanting.

When you are in a difficult situation, surrender to the Guru and simply do as He says. The rest would be automatically taken care of. This is the moral of this upcoming anecdote. A person once submitted to His Holiness his desire to pursue spiritual sādhana in a committed fashion. Pleased with his sincere plea, His Holiness blessed him for success in his endeavours. However, the sādhanika was in a state of confusion. Even when he was a young boy, his parents and other family members were discussing among themselves that, at the appropriate time in the future, he should get married to a particular girl in the family. After few years, this person too agreed to this proposal. Now a man with dispassion

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towards worldly life and with extreme keenness to follow spiritual practices, he wondered if a married life would suit all this. At the same time, he was anxious that in the event of his rejecting the marriage proposal and remaining unmarried, he would be dashing the hopes of the girl and the family members involved and would cause great agony to them. The sādhanika submitted his dilemma to His Holiness and prayed for His guidance. His Holiness

appreciated his predicament and said that one must always keep one's word. His Holiness then suggested that he could, however, frankly convey his prevalent frame of mind to the family members concerned, make them understand that he was desirous of leading a life of spiritual sādhanā, that it was only fair on his part to let them know about this. The sādhanika did as instructed and, much to his surprise, the relatives did not raise any major protests and also reconciled to the situation. The sādhanika was thus able to proceed in his spiritual journey as desired by him, thanks to the blessings of the Guru.

This is the story of another disciple who too was interested in pursuing a spiritual life but was in two minds about it. He approached His Holiness and sought His counsel. His Holiness explained the situation with a beautiful analogy: "Obtaining joy from sense pleasures is equivalent to satisfying oneself by scratching a wound that itches. You scratch the wound again and again thinking you get more and more satisfaction, but actually you are only worsening the wound. No doubt, you may initially get some happiness from sense objects, but, in the end, they will destroy you." Just as Bhagavān gave a free hand to Arjuna to decide the course of his action at the end of His discourse,

His Holiness too concluded His advice saying, "You reflect on what I have said and take a decision about your future yourself." His Holiness would never force His opinions on others.

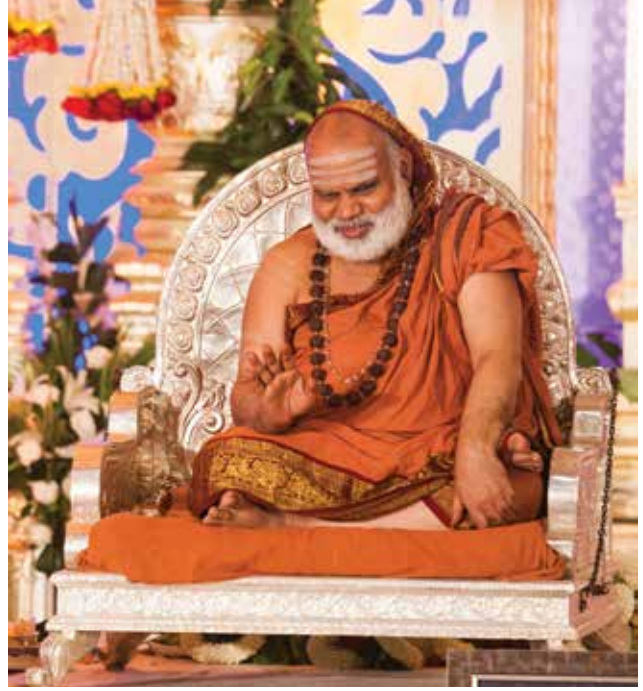
In the 1980's, a function had been arranged at Sringeri to release a book on Advaita philosophy written in English by an ardent disciple. At the instance of His Holiness, the whole function was to be conducted in Saṃskṛta, the language dear to the hearts of both Their Holinesses (Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin and His Holiness). However, the author of the book who too was to deliver a brief talk at the function, hesitated to speak in Saṃskṛta as he was anxious about his knowledge of the language being far too inadequate to give a speech in the presence of Their Holinesses and the scholars who were expected to assemble at the function. His Holiness understood the author's predicament, and being an embodiment of kindness, He himself wrote down the script of the author's speech in rich Saṃskṛta and handed it over to him, saying, "Our revered Guru would be greatly pleased if the entire function is conducted in Saṃskṛta. Hence, you may simply practise with this script



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and use it for your speech.” The author was dumbfounded by this compassionate gesture of His Holiness, and, needless to mention, the function went off well, much to the delight of the Jagadgurus and the learned audience.

A certain devotee who was holding a responsible position in an institution spoke in Saṃskṛta at a public function in the immediate presence of His Holiness. Many were appreciative of the way he delivered his speech. Desirous of knowing His Holiness’s assessment of the talk, a person close to His Holiness approached Him and raised the topic. His Holiness quipped, “But for (the violations in) Lingam (gender), vācanam (number)



“I was not interested in checking the vibhaktis in your poetry. It is your Bhakti (devotion) that is important to me.”



and vibhakti (declension), his speech was first-class.” The questioner could not control his laughter for he knew that it is only these three (Lingam, vācanam and vibhakti) that constitute the very core of Saṃskṛta. It was clear that His Holiness expected those who held responsible positions and spoke in public to function as role models to the others and therefore, it behooved them to speak the language impeccably.

His Holiness, however, does not apply His stringent benchmarks to the efforts of budding Saṃskṛta enthusiasts. A young devotee once submitted to His Holiness a poem composed by him on the Jagadguru. He confessed to His Holiness that he might have committed many errors in the verse as he was not a scholar in Saṃskṛta. His Holiness read the verse and told Him, “I was not interested in checking the vibhaktis in your poetry. It is your Bhakti (devotion) that is important to me.” Appreciating the zeal of the

disciple to write in Saṃskṛta, He blessed him.

Brilliantly erudite in the scriptures, boundless in His love, scrupulous in His austerities and steadfast in His dispassion, His Holiness is a rare blend of multiple virtues. Even a little interaction with His Holiness leaves indelible impressions about His greatness in the minds of His disciples.

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Mahāmahopādhyāya Vidvān Sri Ranganatha Sharma, a great scholar in Kannada and Saṃskṛta, and author of many books in both languages was deeply devoted to His Holiness. What follows are a few of his experiences with His Holiness. The reminiscent account reveals the maternal love with which His Holiness takes care of His devotees:

On an occasion I received a letter from the Sringeri Maṭha. It read: "The work called Śrī-Saṅkara-Dig-Vijaya, authored by Śrī Vidyāranya, is certainly known to you. It is the wish of the His Holiness that a Kannada translation of it be prepared, and that you should do it." In reply I wrote the following: "That book is highly advanced and difficult. Rendered difficult by the use of long metrical structures, it is hard to be translated into Kannada. Scriptural contents are hard to translate into simple language. I am aged and hence it is impossible for me to write. Therefore, I may kindly be excused."

Soon another letter came from the pīṭha: "It is verily because Śrī-Saṅkara-Dig-Vijaya is an advanced and difficult work that the task of its translation has been assigned to you. So, please accept it and start the translation work. As for the task of preparing the manuscript, someone else is being assigned to assist you. He will come home, be with you and write down the translation." Such is the His Holiness's trust in and favour for me. First, after translating two cantos of the

work I went to Sringeri and read out the Kannada translation to His Holiness for obtaining his approval. The Jagadguru was highly satisfied on hearing the translation. Thus, gaining self-confidence, I translated the whole book into Kannada.

Thereafter, I composed a short work called Śrī-Saṅkara-Carita Amṛta for the convenience of those who take to the regular recitation of the Śrī-Saṅkara-Dig-Vijaya. To submit this work at the Lotus Feet of His Holiness and take His approval, I went to Sringeri. Upon my request, the revered Ācārya agreed to listen to the work. Every day I used to go to the Narasiṃha-vana and read out a few verses from the book to Him. The Jagadguru listened to them and even suggested to me to change certain expressions at a few places in the book written in the Anuṣṭup metre. I incorporated the changes.

I coined certain expressions that describe the bhāṣyas of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. His Holiness was delightfully impressed by three of those expressions. They are –

द्वैतविध्वंसनोद्गण्डम् (That which holds the raised stick to demolish duality)

भाषाशैल्या उदाहार्यम् (The style of expression that is worthy of being cited)

वाचस्पतिशिरोधार्यम् (That which is worthy of being venerated by Brahmā by being placed on his head)

When He heard the last one, His Holiness exclaimed, “Ah! There is this verse in Bhamati –

आचार्यकृतिनिवेशनमप्यवधूतं वचोस्मदादीनाम्।
रथ्योदकमिव गङ्गाप्रवाहपातः पवित्रयति ॥

Ācāryakṛtiniveśanamapyavadhūtaṃ vacosmadādīnām.
Rathyodakamiva gaṅgāpravāhapātaḥ pavitrayati..

(Our words are rendered pure by their association with the composition of the Ācārya. This is like the flow of Gaṅgā purifying the water flowing on the street that merges with it.)

I was awestruck by His Holiness’s spontaneous recollection and recital of that verse.

I have already mentioned that I used to go to the revered Ācārya to read out my translation of Sri-Shankara-Dig-Vijaya and also my poetical work, Śrī-Śaṅkara-Carita Amṛta. The reading of them used to take place in a room on the first floor of the abode of His Holiness. For two days, the reading took place there. On the third day,

When He saw me, He said with a soft smile on his face, "As it is difficult for you to climb the staircase, I have made arrangements for the session here on the ground floor itself for your convenience." Dumbfounded by His words of extreme compassion, I bowed my head and offered my salutations to Him by prostrating on the ground.



when I went, a certain staff member asked me to go to a room situated on the ground floor itself. When I went there, I found His Holiness already there, awaiting my arrival. When He saw me, He said with a soft smile on his face, "As it is difficult for you to climb the staircase, I have made arrangements for the session here on the ground floor itself for your convenience." Dumbfounded by His words of extreme compassion, I bowed my head and offered my salutations to Him by prostrating on the ground.

There, the reading of Śrī- Śaṅkara-Carita Amṛta was completed in one day. After the reading was fully completed, the Ācārya got up, asked me to wait there for a while and left the room. After a few minutes, a disciple came in with a plantain fruit and a cup of milk and said to me, "Please partake of them." I did as directed. Both the fruit and the milk tasted like nectar to me! Frankly speaking, I had not eaten such a sweet fruit before, nor had I ever tasted milk, without sugar, and yet so sweet, before. "मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् (Madhurādhi-pate-rakhiḷaṃ madhuram — Everything of the paramount Lord of sweetness is sweet)" - recollecting these words of the poet, I left the room.



Vidvān Sri Naveena Holla had the good fortune of learning Nyāya śāstras under His Holiness. In his account that follows he recalls how great a teacher His Holiness is.

His Holiness was very committed to the rule that the expounding of the scriptural lessons should not be done without prior preparation. The other rule that He would comply with is that every day, at the appointed hour, the planned lesson has to be taught in the prescribed manner.

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During tours, on many occasions, the completion of the Utsava and pūjā will go past the midnight. Yet the next morning His Holiness, after completing His ahnika as per the injunctions, would glance at the lesson to be taught that day and would be ready for the classes with all enthusiasm by 7.30 AM.

In a tour that lasted fourteen months, His Holiness taught the texts (of the Nyāya śāstras) such as Pañca-lakṣaṇī, Caturdaśa-lakṣaṇī, Siddhānta-lakṣaṇam

and Pakṣatā. In that year, His Holiness observed the Cāturmāsya Vrata in New Delhi. There, He conducted classes for the students and made them present their śāstrārtha during the Mahāgaṇapati--vākyārtha-sadas.

*He would commence teaching of the next text only after ensuring, by testing, the grasp of the students of the current text. During some camps in Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Bihar, students could not attend the classes for three or four days owing to the indisposition of few students. His Holiness compassionately waited for the recovery of the students while advising them to maintain health by appropriate food intake. In some places such as Agra and Konark, the students, after class, used to go for sight-seeing and return. This reached the ears of His Holiness. Immediately He took the students to task, conveying to them the firm message: “विद्यार्थी चेत् तजयेत् सुखम्” (Vidyārthī cet tjaayet sukham — If one is a student, let him renounce pleasure)”.
Occasionally, His Holiness would enter the living quarters of the students to check on them. During a camp in Kerala, His Holiness entered the quarters of the students as early as 5.30 in the morning to ensure everyone had gotten up from*

At every step, preventing disciples from taking the wrong path, goading them to tread the right path, protecting them like a father, nurturing them like a mother, bathing them with the water of jñāna and blessing them, His Holiness Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin is the refuge of the disciples.



his bed on time! His action reflected the teaching 'there is neither pleasure nor sleep for those committed to learning'.

Thus, at every step, preventing disciples from taking the wrong path, goading them to tread the right path, protecting them like a father, nurturing them like a mother, bathing them with the water of jñāna and blessing them, His Holiness Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin is the refuge of the disciples. The exalted Guru is always to be venerated.



Vidvān Sri Gurunatha *Ghanapāṭhī*, a reputed scholar and an ardent disciple of His Holiness shares his enlightening experiences with His Holiness:

"Once when my brother and I were chanting Veda, we mispronounced a part due to carelessness. Ācārya wanted to correct this and the next day when it was time for the sacred tirtha-prasāda, He asked us to chant the Ṛg that we had chanted the previous day again. After listening to it, He said "why are you pronouncing the 'Hrasva' (short vowel) which is at the end of the Pāda (quarter) of the Ṛg as Dīrgha (long vowel)? Is this not against the rule of the śāstra?" Thus, saying with a smile, He corrected our error. Pronouncing even half a mantra less or more in Veda is an unconscionable crime and this He conveyed to us with a smile. His keen interest in protecting Veda and the fidelity towards vaidika varṇakrama is indeed great.

Little over 20 years back, His Holiness invited my father and gave him a golden ring and told him: "You train many students. There are many among your students who have passed exams at Sringeri. I am happy that you made your sons give up worldly pursuits and pursue vedādhyayana." It is amply clear that the Jagadguru wants Brahmins to uphold the tradition.

These illustrations reveal the moments with His Holiness are mind-purifying.





Chapter 8

DEEP DEVOTION TO SRI SANKARA BHAGAVATPADA

Once a question was posed to His Holiness *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, “What would Your Holiness attribute the greatness of this *pīṭha* to?” His Holiness replied, “What else but the fact that it was instituted by *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* Himself? Till this date, it is His grace that sustains all of us here! Even hereafter it will gloriously take this *pīṭha* right into the future. Have no doubt about this.”

His Holiness’ devotion to *Śrī Śaṅkara* is matchless. His Holiness has made it His bounden duty to spread *Śrī Śaṅkara’s* greatness and teachings. While astonishing scholars with His remarkable exposition of the teachings of *Śrī Śaṅkara*, His Holiness advises everyone to recite at least one verse composed by the great *Ācārya* every day and attain great good.

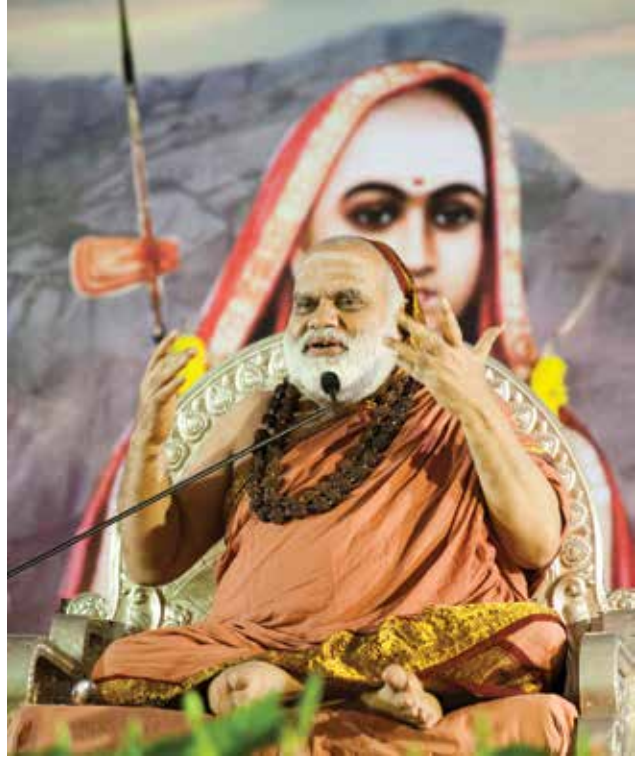
The manner in which His Holiness expresses His innate devotion and gratitude to *Śrī Śaṅkara* is inspiring. Whenever His Holiness enters the shrine of *Śrī Śaṅkara* to worship the great *Guru*, one can see how humble His Holiness is. The face joyous and the palms reverentially joined, His Holiness would remain there oblivious of His surroundings. His Holiness has mentioned on several occasions: “Never do I entertain the thought that I am facing a mere image of the *Loka-guru* while I am at His shrine. To me, the great *Ācārya* is very much there in His glorious physical presence.”

The grand five-day *Śaṅkara-jayanti* festival celebrated annually by *His Holiness* at Sringeri or wherever

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He is camping. This event is itself a testimony to the deep devotion that His Holiness has towards Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. The *Jayanti-pūjā* performed by His Holiness is a delightful sight to watch, with devotees attending it in large number. The celebrations take place for five days with great religious fervour. One can witness the immense joy and enthusiasm in His Holiness when He recites Śrī Śaṅkarācārya *Aṣṭottara* along with everyone. His Holiness presides over the evening *sabhā* where chanting of *Mādhavīya-*

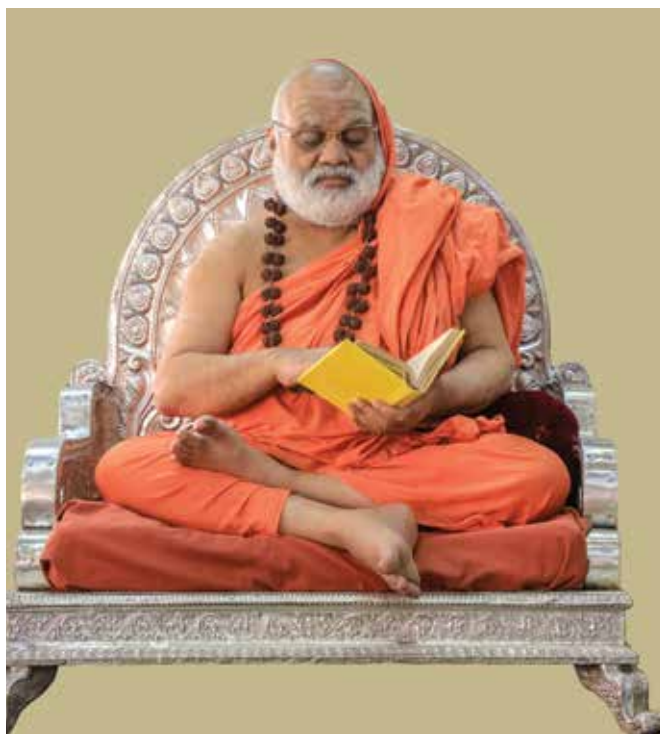


śankara-vijaya, the traditional biography of *Bhagavatpāda* takes place. His Holiness shows deep interest in arranging various discourses by eminent orators on the life and works of *Bhagavatpāda*.

His Holiness has arranged for a five-day annual *Vidvat Sadas* during the five-day *śankara Jayanti* celebrations at Kalady, the birthplace of *Bhagavatpāda*. In accordance with the directive of His Holiness, an *āsthāna vidvān* of *Sringeri maṭha* conducts the *sadas* that take place in front of the shrine of *Bhagavatpāda* at the *Janma-bhūmi kṣetram* in the *Sringeri Shankara maṭha* in Kalady.

His Holiness has made it a point to read at least a few portions from *Śrī Śaṅkara's* commentaries every day. On a certain occasion, with due respects a devotee posed a question to Him: "Your Holiness has already mastered the commentaries of *Śrī Śaṅkara*. What then would be the necessity to read a few portions every day?" With His characteristic humility, His Holiness replied: "Whoever has said that I have mastered these great works? They are the perennial springs of spiritual excellence that attract even distinguished scholars to pay repeated visits!

One should not claim that one has acquired mastery over Śrī Śaṅkara's monumental works. I, for my part, honestly feel that I could never fathom the depths of these unparalleled commentaries. I derive great joy and my knowledge gets reinforced every time I read them.



Bhashya Parayana at Sri Adi Shankaracharya Temple

One should not claim that one has acquired mastery over Śrī Śaṅkara's monumental works. I, for my part, honestly feel that I could never fathom the depths of these unparalleled commentaries. I derive great joy and my knowledge gets reinforced every time I read them." Whenever there arises an occasion to bless His audience with teachings of Śrī Śaṅkara, His Holiness enthusiastically goes about it. While observing *Cāturmāsya* at Chennai in 2012, His Holiness explained the *Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya*, in a simple language through a series of discourses to thousands of devotees.¹

His Holiness has penned a number of beautiful hymns in *Samṣkṛta* glorifying Śrī Śaṅkara. What is noteworthy here is that His Holiness has composed all these hymns in simple *Samṣkṛta* so that anyone could learn and recite them effortlessly and derive great benefits².

1 The topics of these sacred discourses have been mentioned in Chapter 5, "Scholar Par Excellence."

2 The hymns are presented in the Appendix 2 "Verses of Veneration."

His Holiness points out the fact that *Śrī Śaṅkara* has considered the spiritual elevation of all sections of people, from mighty scholars to ordinary men. That is precisely why the glorious *Guru* has composed not only great philosophical treatises and commentaries, but also simple verses in praise of the various forms of *Bhagavān*, the Supreme. It is His Holiness' earnest wish that every true believer of *Bhagavān* should make the best use of *Śrī Śaṅkara*'s precious pieces of advice.

His Holiness has blessed the world of devotees with hundreds of discourses illustrative of the greatness and the teachings of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. His Holiness has also been taking initiatives to create a wider awareness among the public about the glories and the teachings of *Śrī Śaṅkara*. A few of such initiatives are mentioned below.

A Majestic temple for Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda at Sringeri

His Holiness's long cherished desire that a beautiful temple for *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* be built inside the *maṭha* complex at Sringeri was fulfilled with the construction of the majestic shrine in February 2011.

The structure of the temple needs a special mention here. The granite temple consists of the sanctum sanctorum, the *Ardha Maṇḍapa* and the *Mahāmaṇḍapa*. Sculptures of the *Aṣṭa Diggajas*



Jagadguru lays foundation for Sri Adi Shankaracharya Temple



Jagadguru at Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony for Sri Adi Shankaracharya Temple

(eight elephants indicative of the eight directions) decorate the entrances of the temple. The main entrance has a flight of eleven steps, and as one enters it, one can see the carved images of two elephants and two lions. A beautiful 19-foot high two-storey *Vimāna* decorates the sanctum sanctorum. The *śikhara* (top of the *Vimāna*) is a single granite structure of about 25 tonnes. Images of *Haṁsa* (swan), the four disciples of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and the twelve *Jyotirlingas* beautify the inner walls of the sanctum sanctorum and the *Ardha Maṇḍapa*. The *Mahāmaṇḍapa* has twenty two exquisitely carved pillars, four of which are red granite. The ceiling at the centre of the *Mahāmaṇḍapa* has the *rāśī-cakra* depicting a wheel and the twelve zodiacal signs. Carved on the pillars of the *Mahāmaṇḍapa* are various sculptures including those of the *Aṣṭa-dikpālakās* (guardian deities of the eight directions), the *Sapta-r̥ṣis*, *Rāma*, *Gaṇeśa*, *Śiva*, *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śrī Rājarājeśvarī*, *Bhuvaneśvarī*, *Gaṅgā*, *Kālabhairava*, *Dakṣiṇāmūrti*, *Lakṣmī Narasiṃha*, *Dattātreya*, *Naṭarāja*, *Nandi*, *Hayagrīva* and *Kṛṣṇa*. On top of the *Mahāmaṇḍapa* along the three sides of the temple are the elegantly carved images of the *Trimurtis* - *Śiva*, *Brahmā*, and *Viṣṇu*. As we go around the temple,



Sri Adi Shankaracharya temple



Yaga in progress

we find sculpted depictions of the various events from the holy life of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. The periphery of the temple is beautified by sixty six lamps.

In the presence of His Holiness, the *pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka* ceremonies began with the *yāgaśālā praveśa*, *Ganapati-pūjā*, *Bimba-śuddhi-homa* and *Sānti-homa*. The *Vigraha* of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* was then kept immersed in the river *Tuṅgā* as part of the ritual of *Jalādhivāsa* was performed. The *Pañcaloha Vigraha* of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* was ceremoniously placed in the sanctum sanctorum with *aṣṭabandhana*.

On 16th February 2011³, *pratiṣṭhāṅga homa* was performed, followed by *prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā* of the *Vigraha* and then *pūjāṅga homa*. His Holiness graced the *pūrṇāhuti* of the *pratiṣṭhāṅga homa*. He then performed the *mahā-pūjā* to *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. *Rudra-abhiṣeka* took place with *abhiṣeka* from one hundred and eight *kalaśas*. His Holiness then performed *abhiṣeka* to the *Vigraha* with waters from about twenty-five different sacred rivers of the country. After the *abhiṣeka*, His Holiness offered a gold crown to *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* as part of the *alaṅkāra* and performed *arcanas*, *mahā-maṅgalārati* and *kanakābhiṣeka*. This was followed by the *kumbhābhiṣeka* to the *śikhara* of the *vimāna* above the sanctum sanctorum.

3 māgha-śukla-trayodaśi of Vikṛti samvatsara

In His sacred discourse delivered on the occasion, His Holiness made a historic announcement: "More than six hundred years ago, the then *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha* (the eleventh *Ācārya* of the *pīṭha*) constructed a massive temple for His *Guru*, *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyātīrtha* (the tenth *Ācārya*) and performed *kumbhābhiṣeka*. On that occasion, He resolved that a *Rathotsava* (Car Festival) must be held every year on the day following the *arādhanā* of *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyātīrtha*. On this day, I, having performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* temple, resolve that from this year on, a *Rathotsava* for *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* be held every year on *vaiśāka-śukla-śaṣṭhī* day (the day following *Śaṅkara Jayanti*). This resolve is due solely to the grace of Goddess *Śāradā*, *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, and our revered *Guru Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. May everyone celebrate the *Rathotsava* and attain *śreyas*."



His Holiness leading the Sri Adi Shankaracharya Maha Rathotsava



His Holiness performing Abhishekam



Sri Adi Shankaracharya



His Holiness offering Golden Crown



His Holiness showing Aarti



Kumbhabhisheka in progress



On this day, I, having performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* temple, resolve that from this year on, a *Rathotsava* for *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* be held every year on *vaiśāka-śukla-ṣaṣṭhī* day (the day following *Śaṅkara Jayanti*). This resolve is due solely to the grace of *Goddess Śāradā, Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, and our revered *Guru Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*.



Blessed thus with the divine command of their beloved *Guru*, the staff and the devotees enthusiastically swung into action and celebrated the *Rathotsava* in the same year on the *vaiśāka śukla ṣaṣṭhī* (May 9, 2011) in the divine presence of His Holiness. Since then, the *Rathotsava* has been jubilantly conducted on the day following the *Śaṅkara-jayanti* day every year.

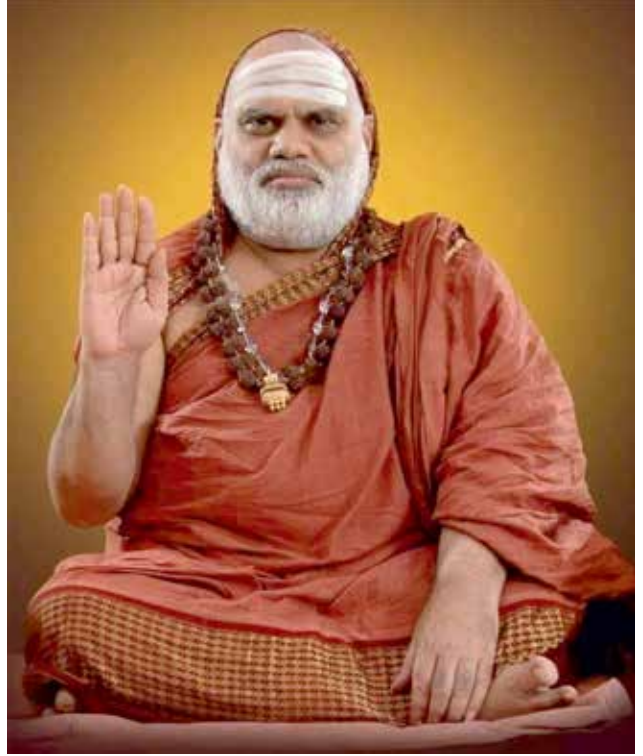
Svarṇā Śikhara Kumbhābhiṣeka of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda and Śrī Torāṇa-Gaṇapati Temples at Sringeri

On the auspicious *Śaṅkara Jayanti* day, Friday, May 6, 2022⁴, His Holiness⁵ performed an elaborate *pūjā* to *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and performed the grand *Svarṇā-śikhara kumbhābhiṣekas* of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and *Śrī Torāṇa-gaṇapati* temples. Devotees witnessed the conduct of many *dhārmic* events during the *mahotsava*. An array of *Vedic* and scholarly activities paid a fitting tribute to the great philosopher-saint. After performing the *Svarṇā-śikhara-kumbhābhiṣekas*, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* to the joy of the gathered devotees gave an *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* from atop the *Toraṇa-gaṇapati* temple: "*Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, who consecrated *Goddess Śāradā* and established the *Dakṣiṇāmṇāya pīṭha* at Sringeri is greatly revered by us. The shrine for *Śrī Torāṇa-gaṇapati* was consecrated during the time of our *Parāpara-guru (Jagadguru Śrī Vṛddha Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin)* for the smooth conduct of all our activities. The *kumbhābhiṣeka* for the *Svarṇā-śikhara* of the temple of *Goddess Śrī Śāradā-parameshwari* was performed a few years back. It is the blessing of *Śrī Śāradā-parameshwari* that

4 *śubhakṛt saṃvatsara Vaiśāka Śukla pañcamī*

5 along with *Śrī Sannidhānam*

a similar *Svarṇā-śikhara* has been constructed for the temples of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and *Śrī Torāṇa-gaṇapati* and the *kumbhābhiṣeka* has been performed. By the Grace of *Śrī Śāradā-parameshwari* and *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, this *Svarṇā-śikhara kumbhābhiṣeka* ceremony has been an occasion of immense gratification to all. May *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and *Śrī Torāṇa-gaṇapati* become immensely pleased and bestow *śreyas* on everyone. May everyone worship



Śrī Bhagavatpāda, *Goddess Śāradā-parameshwari*, and *Śrī Torāṇa-gaṇapati* with immense *śraddhā* and *bhakti* and become recipients of Their grace.”

Meetings with Maṭhādhipatis

In order to spread the tenets of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, His Holiness organises and participates in meetings of *Maṭhādhipatis* of the *Daśanāmī Sampradāya*. Significant amongst these are the two *Cāturāmnāya Sammelans* held in 1993 at Sringeri and in 2007 at Bengaluru. Devotees had the joy and fortune of beholding the *Jagadgurus* of *Bhagavatpāda's* four *Āmnāya Pīṭhas* of *Puri*, *Sringeri*, *Dwaraka* and *Badri* and listening to their enlightening discourses. His Holiness called for greater adherence to *Dharma* and understanding the significance of *Bhagavatpāda's* contribution for the welfare of all humankind. His Holiness pointed out that adhering to *Bhagavatpāda's* teachings brings about one's own *śreyas*.

On 9th March, 2009, a historic event was conducted at Sringeri where ascetics from different Maths following the *Śaṅkara* tradition assembled and shared their views



Jagadguru Shankaracharyas of Sringeri, Dwaraka-Badri and Puri



The historic Chaturamnaya Sammelan at Bengaluru in 2007

on the greatness and uniqueness of the philosophy of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. On this day, as per the divine directions of the *Sringeri Jagadguru*, an institutional body called '*Sanātana Dharma Samvardhini Sabhā*,' was started for the uplift and



Yati Samavesha (Year 2018)

propagation of *Sanātana-dharma* and its values and to spread the divine message conveyed in works such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Another major decision taken by the *Sanātana Dharma Samvardhini Sabhā* was to provide monetary support to any person dedicating his life to uphold the values taught by *Bhagavatpāda*. His Holiness regularly conducts such meetings of *Maṭhādhipatis* of the *Śaṅkara Paramparā*.

Advaita Śāradā Project

With the blessings of His Holiness, the *Sringeri Maṭha* initiated a project to digitise scriptural texts at the turn of the twenty first century. The effort saw fruition with the *Jagadguru* dedicating the Advaita Śāradā Project containing a searchable and hyperlinked online version of the *Prasthānatraya-bhāṣya* texts of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* during the *Śaṅkara Jayanti* Celebrations at Sringeri in 2014. Just as His *Parameṣṭhi Guru (Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin)* had brought out the first ever publication of the complete works of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* a century ago, His Holiness's blessings and guidance brought about the first ever collection of the principal commentaries of *Bhagavatpāda* on the internet. The project, accessible through <https://advaitasharada.sringeri.net>,



Devi Sharada

a venture of *Sringeri Maṭha's* Shankara Advaita Research Centre with support from Prof. Yogananda of M/s Sriranga Digital in Mysuru, has proved to be a boon to many students, spiritual seekers, and scholars of *Vedanta*. Subsequent updated versions were released in 2017 and 2019. The corpus of texts includes popular sub-commentaries on the *Prasthānatraya-bhāṣya* texts, independent treatises such as *Advaita-siddhi*, *Siddhānta-leśa-saṅgraha* and an elegant interface for viewing and searching.

His Holiness blessed this project with the following Śrīmukham (benedictory message):

“May the blessings preceded by the recollections of Nārāyaṇa shine forth on all the Astikas.

Among the four Puruṣārthās - dharma, artha, kāma, and moksha - the Supreme puruṣārthā is moksha. Moksha is obtained by Jñāna (Supreme Knowledge) alone. That (Jñāna) is indeed the Advaita Ātma Jñāna. It is the Ātma-tattvā illustrated in the Upaniṣads. That Advaita alone is the purport of the Upaniṣads has been ascertained by Bhagavān Bādarāyaṇa (Veda Vyāsa) in His Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā (Brahma-sūtras). This is also illustrated by Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, the avatāra of Lord Śiva, in His impeccable Sūtra-bhāṣya. This is further explained by prominent scholars like Vachaspati Mishra and others. This has grown into a huge corpus through various commentaries and sub-commentaries. This very expansive Vedanta-darshana is supreme among all darshanas⁶. It is not possible for all to study it comprehensively. That is why it is impossible for

⁶ Philosophical systems that accept the *Vedas* as an authoritative, important source of knowledge. These include *Sāṅkhya*, *Yoga*, *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta*

the general aspirants to locate a particular topic in this vast corpus. Now, the facility called 'Advaita Śāradā' has been developed by our (Shankara Advaita Research Centre). Through this resource an effort is initiated to enable an aspirant to locate the desired topic, by accessing the exact passages, in the Prasthānatraya-bhāṣya and its commentaries. This, we hope, would be a great help to those wishing to know the Truth."

Scholars, seekers, and students of *Vedānta* are using the facility worldwide.

Śāṅkara Tattva Prasāra Abhiyāna

Under the direction of His Holiness, the Sringeri Maṭha launched a programme called the *Śāṅkara Tattva Prasāra Abhiyāna* in November 2009. The programme focuses on training speakers to spread *Vedānta* with the emphasis on *Śrī Śāṅkara Bhagavatpāda's* works. The *Abhiyānam* has since then been actively involved in creating awareness of the life and works of *Śrī Śāṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. His Holiness then gave instructions to conduct *Śrī Śāṅkarācārya Aṣṭottara Pārāyaṇa* in several places in India and abroad.



Jagadguru at launch of Shaankara Tattva Prasaara Abhiyaanam

A program called *Guru Saparyā* is also conducted during the *Cāturmāsya* period when devotees in various centres gather to honour the entire *Guru Parampara* from *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa*, *Maharṣi Veda Vyāsa*, *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, to the *Sringeri Ācāryas*.

With the blessings of the *Jagadguru*, books containing bhajans to foster devotion and conduct were published and released during the inaugural event in January 2020. The bhajans along with text and audio are available at <https://bhajan.sringeri.net> A *Śaṅkara Pravacanam Mālikā* was made as an online series in 2020 via the website of the Sringeri *maṭha* that beams *anugraha- bhāṣaṇas* of the *Sringeri Jagadgurus* and lectures by erudite scholars on various aspects of *Vedānta*.

Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda Aṣṭottara Śata Nāma PārāyaṇaYajña

In His benedictory discourse marking the commencement of the activities related to the *Yajña* in 2016, His Holiness said: “It is our foremost duty to remember and revere *Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, the incarnation of Lord *Parameśvara*, for reviving *Sanātana-dharma* and for showing the path of welfare to all. Remembrance of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and His virtues can be done by all by chanting



Sri Mahasannidhanam giving Anugraha Bhashanam on Samaropa Samarambha of Sri Adi Shankaracharya Ashtottara Yajna

His *Aṣṭottara Śata Nāma*. If we understand the true import of each name in the *Aṣṭottara*, and chant them, we will feel as if *Śrī Śaṅkara* Himself is present before us blessing us with His *darśana*. Every follower of *Sanātana-dharma* should participate in this *Japa-yajña*. The chanting of the *Aṣṭottara* of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* must become part of our daily prayers." Accordingly, the *pārāyaṇa yajña* commenced throughout Karnataka in December 2015. Tens of thousands of devotees began chanting the one hundred and eight sacred names of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* in groups, spread across one thousand

two hundred centres in the various districts of Karnataka. The Heads of the monasteries at Yadathore, Swarnavalli, Hariharapura, Chitrapura and Haladipura engaged their devotees in this *yajña*. The *yajña* was also conducted by devotees in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Kerala. It was also enthusiastically taken up by the overseas devotees in Dubai and the USA. More than one lakh booklets were distributed to the participants of the *yajña*. The *Aṣṭottara* was chanted about fifty lakh times by the participants in total. More than seven thousand students in various schools and colleges took part in the *yajña*. *Akhaṇḍa-pārāyaṇa* (non-stop chant) also took place every month in Mangalore and during *Mahāśivarātri* in Bengaluru and Sringeri.

In May 2016, the Valedictory function of the *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda Aṣṭottara Śata Nāma Pārāyaṇa Yajña* took place in Sringeri in the divine presence of His Holiness⁷. About three thousand five hundred people from all over Karnataka arrived at Sringeri to participate in the event. In His sacred discourse, His Holiness said that the chanting of the *Aṣṭottara* of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* must not end with the conclusion of the *yajña*, and that every *āstika* must continue to chant it every day. His Holiness also announced that centres under the name

It is our foremost duty to remember and revere *Jagadguru Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, the incarnation of Lord *Parameśvara*, for reviving *Sanātana-dharma* and for showing the path of welfare to all. Remembrance of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and His virtues can be done by all by chanting His *Aṣṭottara Śata Nāma*.

- His Holiness

⁷ also, in the presence of *Śrī Sannidhānam*

of “Sharada Shankara Bhakta Mandali” would be formed in all the states and numerous *dhārmic* activities would be conducted under the auspices of these Mandalis.

Philosophers’ Day and Adi Shankara Day

Śrī Mahāsannidhānam felt that *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* should be given prominence by celebrating His *jayanti* at the National Level. In deference to His Holiness’s wishes, many national leaders responded with a proposal to recognise *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Jayanti Day*. The Government of Kerala and subsequently Government of Karnataka declared *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Jayanthi Day* as Philosophers’ Day.

His Holiness introduced *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Day* in Schools all over Tamil Nadu in 2019. His Holiness selected ‘*Rṣi Pañcamī Day*,’ the day after *Śrī Vināyaka-Caturthī*, as the day to observe *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Day*. As per His Holiness’ direction, a “Self-development Programme”, based on *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara’s* teachings, was administered to higher secondary school students. The entire project was closely monitored to ensure that the students become good and patriotic citizens of this country. As per the directions of the *Jagadguru*, Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation, Chennai devised this project and so far, little over a lakh of students have benefitted from this programme.



ANNEXURE TO CHAPTER - 8

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHT GLORIOUS NAMES OF ŚRĪ ŚAṆKARA BHAGAVATPĀDA

{Excerpts from the benedictory discourse blessed by *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* on 29-05-2016 during the valedictory day function of *Śrī Śaṅkara Aṣṭottara Śata Nāma Yajña* }

The *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda Aṣṭottara Śata Nāma Yajña* has been conducted in a grand manner. You have all participated well in this *yajña* and become the recipients of the abundant grace of *Bhagavatpāda*. You also have my blessings.

These one hundred and eight names contain the answers for whatever information we may need to know about *Bhagavatpāda*. We have heard about the text *Śaṅkara-Dig-Vijaya* (authored by *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyāranya Mahāsvāmin*). Similarly, there have been many other texts penned by numerous other authors about the greatness of *Śrī Śaṅkara*. From all these texts we have known quite a lot about *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. Even if we have not perused all those texts, if we properly understand the import of these one hundred and eight sacred names, it would amount to reading the content of all those huge volumes of texts on *Śrī Śaṅkara*. Such a wealth of information has been packed into these names.

Suppose we raise the question “Who, indeed, was *Bhagavatpāda*?” We find the answer in

साक्षाच्छङ्कर रूपधृते नमः

(*sākṣācchāṅkara rūpadhṛte namaḥ* -
salutation to One who is verily
Śiva incarnate)



Sri Adi Shankaracharya

This sacred name teaches us that Lord Śīva Himself took an *avatāra* in the form of *Bhagavatpāda*. The question, "For what purpose did He take this *avatāra*?" finds an answer in

अद्वैत स्थापनाचार्याय नमः

(*advaita sthāpanācāryāya namaḥ* -

salutation to One who established *advaita* school of thought)

Purely for the purpose of clearly expounding and propagating the *Advaita-siddhānta*, Lord Śīva took the *avatāra* of *Bhagavatpāda*.

Another glorification of *Bhagavatpāda* is

दुर्वादि मतखण्डनाय नमः

(*durvādi mata khaṇḍanāya namaḥ* -

salutation to One who refuted the opposing schools of thought)

Those who oppose *Sanātana-dharma* and the *Vedas*, make slanderous statements about our revered *Vedas* and propagate ideas that are diametrically opposed to the *Vedas*. They disturb the followers of *Vedānta*. To defeat them in debate and prove their ideas wrong, the *avatāra* of *Bhagavatpāda* took place.

Bhagavatpāda faced each of these opponents and pointed out certain aspects of their beliefs were inconsistent, illogical, and absurd. This matter would be clear to those who have correctly studied, learnt, and understood the deep import of the commentaries written by *Bhagavatpāda*.

Bhagavatpāda wrote,

यथा यथायं वैनाशिकसमय उपपत्तिमत्त्वाय
परीक्ष्यते तथा तथा - सिकताकूपवद्विदीर्यत एव;
न काञ्चिदप्यत्रोपपत्तिं पश्यामः

*yathā yathāyaṃ vaināśikasamaya
upapattimattvāya parīkṣyate tathā
tathā - sikatākūpavadvidīryata eva; na
kāñcidapyatropapattiṃ paśyāmaḥ*

Even if we dig deep into these *avaidika* texts and search, we are unable

Purely for the purpose of clearly expounding and propagating the *Advaita-siddhānta*, Lord Śīva took the *avatāra* of *Bhagavatpāda*.

- His Holiness



to find even a trace of anything remotely correct or logical. *सिकताकूपवद्विदीर्यत* – (*sikatākūpavadvidīryata*) – Just as one digs into a dry well that has only sand in it and any further digging will only draw more sand, perusing these *avaidika* philosophies brings up more of the dry sand of illogicality and incorrectness. In this way, *Bhagavatpāda's avatāra* was to refute the wrong darshanas.

There is another sacred name

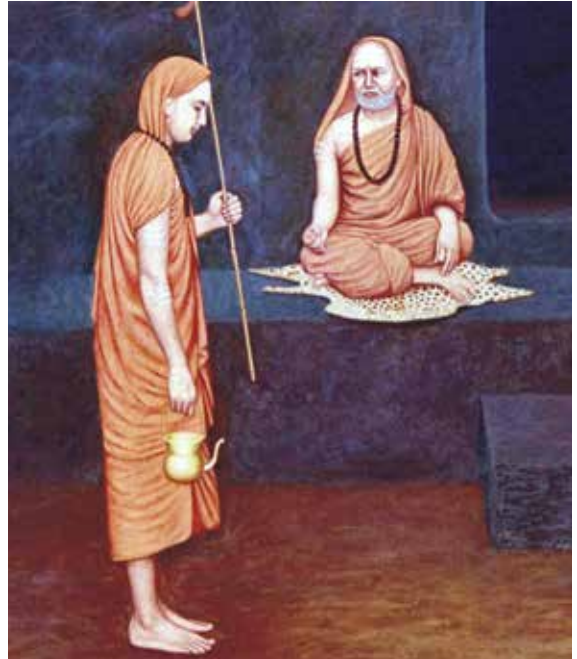
परमार्थ-प्रकाशकाय नमः
(*paramārtha prakāśakāya namaḥ*)

What is this *Paramārtha-Tattva*? To clearly expound this Truth for the benefit of the followers of our *dharma*, *Bhagavatpāda's avatāra* took place. *Advaita* is the *Paramārtha-Tattva* (*supreme truth*). Sri *Gauḍapādācārya*, who was the *Guru* of *Śrī Govinda Bhagavatpāda* and the *Paramaguru* of *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, Himself had stated this truth –

“मायामात्रमिदं द्वैतमद्वैतं परमार्थतः”
(*māyāmātramidaṃ dvaitam advaitam paramārthataḥ*)

What does *परमार्थतः* mean? It means “That which always exists and does not get destroyed at any point in time.” Apart from this truth, everything else does not always exist and is subject to destruction. They exist for some time and then get destroyed. Only one entity always exists and never faces annihilation. That entity is known as *Paramārtha-Tattva* or *Ātmā tattva* or *Brahma-tattva*.

Even though the *Upaniṣads* repeatedly assert this truth, people were unable to grasp it. The proponents of non-vedic schools of thought preached and propagated



Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada with His Guru
Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada

beliefs that were opposed to this Upanishadic proclamation. *Bhagavatpāda* came and refuted all these opponents of the Upanishadic truths and established the correct interpretation of the *Upaniṣads* that the *Ātmā-tattva* alone is the highest truth. So, if it is asked, "Why did *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* incarnate?" the answer is clear in that it was for "*Paramārtha Prakāsha*" (for showing us the highest truth).

Another reason and benefit of the *avatāra* of *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* is stated in another sacred name –

*“परिव्राजाश्रमोद्धर्त्रे नमः
(parivrājāśra moddhartre namaḥ)”*

The phrase "*parivraja āśrama*" means "*sannyāsa āśrama*." This fourth *āśrama* has been clearly established in the Vedas. The *śāstras* advocate *sannyāsa āśrama* to attain the direct realisation of the *Ātmā tattva*. This is the royal path and the people before *Bhagavatpāda*'s time had forgotten this.

This state of affairs preceding *Bhagavatpāda*'s advent has been described eloquently in Madhaviya Shankara Vijaya thus – "*न सन्ध्यादीनि कर्माणि न्यासं वा न कदाचन - Na sandhyādīni karmāṇi nyāsaṃ vā na kadācana*." People who have forsaken the *nitya-karmas* such as *sandhyā-vandana* do not even care for the *sannyāsa-āśrama*. For such people, the path to liberation had receded far beyond their reach. So how would they have attained liberation? It was in such a sorry state that *Bhagavatpāda* revived the tradition of *sannyāsa* and stressed its importance in the path to *mokṣa*. The sacred name "*parivrājāśra moddhartre namaḥ*" highlights this facet of His *avatāra*.

Bhagavatpāda came and refuted
all these opponents of the
Upanishadic truths and established
the correct interpretation of the
Upaniṣads that the *Ātmā-tattva*
alone is the highest truth.

- His Holiness



If we query "What did *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* do for us?" the answer comes in these two names,

*अज्ञानतिमिरादित्याय नमः
(ajñānati mirādityāya namaḥ)*

*सुज्ञानाम्बुधिचन्द्रमसे नमः
(sujñānāmbudhi candramase namaḥ)*

Just as the Sun dispels darkness, *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* is the blazing

sun of Knowledge that drives away the darkness of ignorance. Just as the ocean jumps with joy during a full moon day, *Bhagavatpāda* is like the cool moon that kindles and raises knowledge in people. So in these two names, He is compared to the Sun and the Moon as He destroys the darkness (ignorance) and blesses people with the right knowledge. This was the power of the *Upadeśa* of *Bhagavatpāda*.

Some may counter this by saying that “All this is fine. *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* seems to have blessed only *Mumukṣu* and *jijñāsu* (the seekers of knowledge and liberation). However, not everyone is a seeker of *mokṣa*. What has He done for the worldly people for whom liberation is not even on the radar?” The answer is provided in the sacred name,

भक्ताभीष्ट प्रदायकाय नमः
(*bhaktābhīṣṭa pradāyakāya namaḥ*)

God has compassion towards all beings. The Lord Himself has stated that there are four types of devotees in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

चतुर्विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनोऽर्जुन ।
आर्तो जिज्ञासुरर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरतर्षभ ॥

caturvidhā bhajante mām janāḥ sukṛtino'ṛjuna.
ārto jijñāsuararthārthī jñānī ca bharatarṣabha..

There are four types of devotees. One type includes those in difficulties. Another type consists of those who seek wealth. The third comprise those who seek knowledge. The devotees of the fourth type are the ones who are the Knowers of Truth. Among these, those in difficulties and seeking worldly wealth are the common people and the Lord takes care of them too. He blesses them by freeing them from their problems and also blesses them with the necessary material means.

Bhagavatpāda compassionately fulfills the needs of the devotees. If we worship Him with devotion, our cherished desires are fulfilled, and our difficulties are destroyed. We do not need to show any proof for this. This is known and experienced by people. One should have an *aikya-bhāva* in *Bhagavān* and *Guru*. That is, one should have the faith that *Bhagavān* and *Guru* are one and the same. You may ask, “We will worship *Bhagavān*. But why should we worship *Bhagavatpāda*?” We should

have the *abheda-bhāvanā* between God and *Guru*, that they are actually one and the same. In our *Sanātana-dharma*, we teach each and every child right from its early years the following verse:

गुरुब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः गुरुस्साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म...

(*gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdevo maheśvaraḥ gurussākṣāt paraṁ brahma... - The Guru is Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Śiva; the Guru is the Supreme Brahman Itself.*)

Then the *Guru* definitely has the power that God possesses. So whatever fruits we may obtain by worshipping God, will be obtained by worshipping *Bhagavatpāda*, Who is none other than God Himself. This is conveyed in

भक्ताभीष्ट प्रदायकाय नमः

(*bhaktābhīṣṭa pradāyakāya namaḥ -*

Salutations to One Who grants the desires of His devotees)

Well, how did *Śrī Śaṅkara* conduct His personal life?

वैराग्य निरताय नमः

(*vairāgya niratāya namaḥ -*

Salutations to One Who was the very embodiment of dispassion.)

He had no interest in any object of this world. He had no desires whatsoever. What was the extent of His detachment? Well, He did not identify Himself even with His own body. That was the height of His *vairāgya*. Once a *kāpālikā*, who was doing *Bhairava-upāsanā*, approached *Bhagavatpāda* and prayed to Him thus: For my *upāsanā* of *Bhairava* to succeed, I need to offer in sacrifice the head of an emperor or of a *sarvajña yati*, (a *Sannyāsi* who is the Knower of Truth). I cannot even imagine getting the head of an Emperor. However, You are

all-knowing and a great *sannyāsi*. I can sacrifice Your head if You permit me." *Bhagavatpāda's* reply was, "If, by offering my head in sacrifice you can get the *anugraha* of *Bhairava*, then I am extremely happy. You have my consent." Would such a bold utterance ever come from anyone else?

Whatever fruits we may obtain by worshipping God, will be obtained by worshipping *Bhagavatpāda*, Who is none other than God Himself.

- His Holiness



He did not just stop with merely giving his consent. He even gave a way to the *kapālikā* to accomplish this heinous task. He said, "Tomorrow afternoon, when my disciples go to the river, I will be here alone. You can come here at that time and remove my head." Will anyone ever say thus? *Bhagavatpāda* was unique and He said it because He was at the pinnacle of *vairāgya* (detachment). It is impossible to see such an embodiment of intense *vairāgya* as *Bhagavatpāda*.



Embodiment of Dispassion

There is also another way in which He blessed people. It is stated in the sacred name "संसारणावितारकाय नमः — (*saṃsārāṇavatāarakāya namaḥ*)"

He is the One who helps us cross this ocean of *saṃsāra*. Isn't that what we all need? *Bhagavatpāda* Himself has said in His *Bhaja-govindam*:

पुनरपि जननं पुनरपि मरणं पुनरपि जननि जठरे शयनं
इह संसारे बहुदुस्तारे कृपया पारे पाहि मुरारे ॥

*punarapi jananaṃ punarapi maraṇaṃ punarapi janani jaṭhare śayanaṃ
iha saṃsāre bahudustāre kṛpayā pāre pāhi murāre..*

How do we put a full stop to this endless cycle of births and deaths? We are not capable of doing it on our own. We can achieve it only by the grace of God. *Bhagavatpāda* has the capability to put a full stop to this cycle of births and deaths. If we reflect on the truth that He has expounded, in the right manner, and truly

understand them, then we will not get stuck in this quagmire of births and deaths. Hence, He is extolled as “Salutations to the One who helps us cross the ocean of *samsāra*.”

If one were to ask about the looks of *Śrī Śaṅkara*, the answer comes in “*प्रसन्नवदनाम्भोजाय नमः* (*Prasanna vadanām bhojāya namaḥ* - He was extremely pleasant and always had a smiling face)”

What is the definition of a *Guru*? He works for the uplift of the disciples and always wishes the best for them. The real *Guru* is one who always wishes for the highest good of His disciples. He resolves all the doubts of His disciples. Indicative of this fact there is the sacred name.

शिष्योपदेश निरताय नमः

(*śiṣyopadeśa niratāya namaḥ* -

Salutations to the One who is always eager to guide the disciples)

To the question, “What kind of work did *Bhagavatpāda* accomplish?” pat comes the answer:

श्रीब्रह्मसूत्रोपनिषद्भाष्यादिग्रन्थकल्पकाय नमः

(*Śrī brahmasūtropaniṣad bhāṣyādi granthi kalpakāya namaḥ* -

Salutations to Him who wrote the commentaries on

Brahma-sūtras, *Upaniṣads* and other *granthās*)

Bhagavatpāda has the capability to put a full stop to this cycle of births and deaths. If we reflect on the truth that He has expounded, in the right manner, and truly understand them, then we will not get stuck in this quagmire of births and deaths.

- His Holiness

Bhagavatpāda was a remarkable writer who penned innumerable commentaries including those on the *Upaniṣad*, the *Brahma-sūtras*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and many other texts. Not only that, but He is also revered as

चतुर्दिक्कतुराम्नाय-प्रतिष्ठात्रे नमः

(*caturdikcaturāmnāya pratiṣṭhātre namaḥ*)

(Salutations to One who established four *Āmnāya-pīṭhas* in the four directions of *Bhārata-deśa* at Puri, Sringeri, Dwaraka and Badri)



Sri Veda Vyasa is pleased after examining Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada on Brahma Sutras

In addition, there are also the glorifying expressions:

द्विसप्ततिमतोच्छेत्रे नमः

(*dvisaptati matocchetre namah*)

(Salutation to the One Who refuted seventy-two *avaidika* philosophies), and

सर्वदिग्विजयप्रभवे नमः

(*sarvadigvijayaprabhave namah*)

(Salutation to the One Who undertook extensive and victorious tours across the country to preach *dharma* to the common people).

Above all, He debated and defeated *Maṇḍana-miśra*, who was considered to be the greatest scholar of his times. *Maṇḍana-miśra* spoke about the *Mīmāṃsā*

Siddhānta and *Bhagavatpāda* spoke about *Advaita Vedānta Siddhānta*. There was a great debate between the two and in the end *Maṇḍana-miśra* had to give up and he said to *Śrī Śaṅkara*, "You have defeated me." Such was the greatness of the victorious tours of *Bhagavatpādacharya*. In this way, *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda's* personality and accomplishments have been captured in depth and highlighted in this *Aṣṭottara-śata-namavali*. The regular recital of this work bestows on the chanter the highest good. It bestows great *punya*. Everyone should have gratitude towards

one's *Guru*. The *śāstras* exhort us to be grateful to even a person who does the smallest of help to us. What, then, needs to be said of the grace and compassion of Śrī Śaṅkara showered upon us over hundreds of years?

How should we show our gratitude to Him? We can do it by reciting His glorious names again and again. We do not have any other way to show our gratitude, nor do we possess any great strength to do so. But we do have the strength to chant these one hundred and eight divine names of *Bhagavatpāda*. We

have been blessed with a healthy mouth and tongue. Instead of using them for indulging in wasteful talk, if we employ them to chant the glories of *Bhagavatpāda*, we would be properly utilising our precious time.

If we chant these one hundred and eight holy names of *Bhagavatpāda* with palms joined in reverence, it will be the way to express our sincere gratitude to Him. If there is one person who has done what no one on this earth was capable of



Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada toured extensively with His disciples



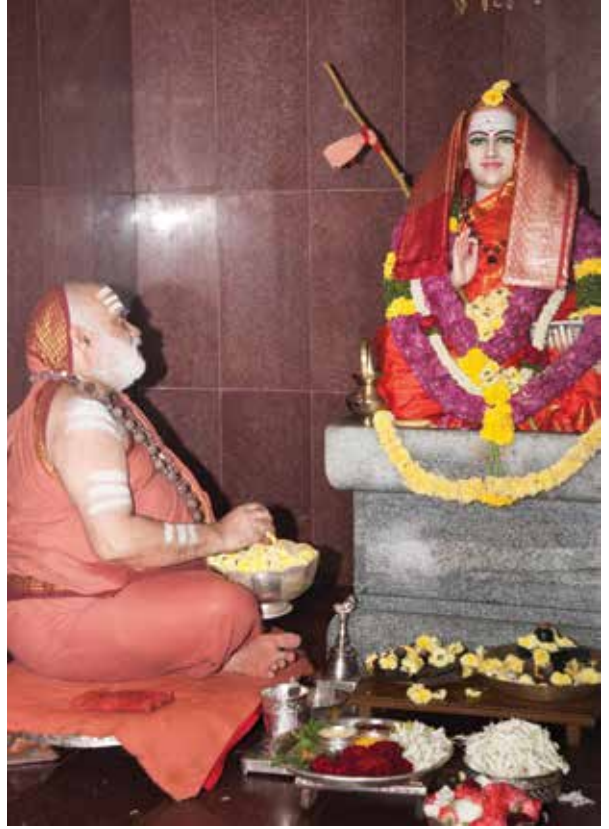
Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada debates with Sri Mandana Mishra



After the defeat in debate, Sri Mandana Mishra becomes a disciple of Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada

doing and has blessed the entire world, it is *Bhagavatpāda* alone. It is indeed our great fortune that we are disciples of such a great One. We are all followers of *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* and we are His devotees. We must become recipients of the grace of *Bhagavatpāda*, who is the *avatāra* of the Lord Himself, by the *pārāyaṇa* of these one hundred and eight names.

If there is one person who has done what no one on this earth was capable of doing and has blessed the entire world, it is *Bhagavatpāda* alone.



His Holiness performing puja to Sri Shankara Bhagavatpada





Chapter 9

NOMINATING SUCCESSOR-DESIGNATE

Sringeri was in a festive mood during the opening week of January 2015. The *Rajata-mahotsava* (silver jubilee) of His Holiness *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin's pīṭhārohaṇam* (commemorating His taking over as the *Jagadguru*) was being celebrated. His Holiness made an important announcement at the end of the *mahotsava* that caused a wave of joy among all devotees. The *Jagadguru* announced that He had chosen, with the concurrence of Goddess *Śāradāmbā, Brahmācārī*



Kuppā Venkateshwara Prasada Sharma to be His *Uttarādhikārī* – the successor-designate to the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, and that the *śiṣya-svīkāra* ceremonies would take place on 22nd and 23rd January 2015 at Sringeri.

Sri Kuppā Venkateshwara Prasada Sharma was born on the auspicious *Nāgā-pañcamī* day - July 24, 1993 - in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. Born as the second son of Sri Kuppā Shivasubrahmanya Avadhani and Smt. Seetha Nagalakshmi, He belonged to the *Kauṇḍinya-gotra* and is a native of Anantavaram, Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh.

His family has a long lineage of illustrious *Vedic* scholars all of whom were ardent disciples of the *Sringeri Jagadgurus*. In 1961, when the thirty-fifth *Jagadguru* of *Sringeri*, *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* visited Anantavaram village,



Sri Prasada Sharma with His parents

Sri Prasada Sharma's grandfather's elder brother, Sri Bairagi Shastri welcomed the *Jagadguru* with sincere devotion, performed *Pādapūjā* and received His blessings. In 1985, Sri Shastri also had the good fortune of welcoming and serving the present *Jagadguru* of *Sringeri*. Sri Prasada Sharma's grandfather's elder brother, Sri Kuppa Venkatachalapati Yaaji, embraced *sannyāsa* in 2002 with the permission of the *Sringeri Jagadguru*.

Sri Prasada Sharma's grandfather, Sri Kuppa Ramagopala Vajapeya-Yaaji is an eminent *Vedic scholar* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda* and has performed the *Śrauta yāga* of *Vājapeya*. Deeply devoted to the *Jagadgurus* of *Sringeri*, Sri Vajapeya-Yaaji has participated in many Vedic ceremonies at *Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham*.

Sri Prasada Sharma's father, Sri Kuppa Shivasubrahmanya Avadhani studied at the *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Śāstra Saṃvardhinī Pāṭhaśālā* in Hyderabad, established by *Jagadguru Śrī Bhārati Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. He became an eminent scholar in *Veda* and *Veda-bhāṣya*. Greatly devoted to the *Jagadgurus* of *Sringeri*,

he is presently the Principal of the TTD Veda *Vijñāna* Peetham in Tirumala and Project Officer, S.V. Institute of Higher Vedic Studies, TTD.

From a young age, Sri Prasada Sharma developed a deep devotion towards Lord *Kṛṣṇa* and visited the *Kṛṣṇa* temple near His home, every day. Seeing his son's devotion, Sri Shivasubrahmanya Avadhani performed His *upanayana* (sacred thread ceremony) at the age of five. His first lessons in *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda* were taught by His grandfather, Sri Kuppa Ramagopala Vajapeya-Yaaji. Sri Prasada Sharma rapidly progressed in His studies on *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda Krama* under His father.

He grew up in an environment steeped in devotion to God and adherence to a *Vedic* way of living. Hamsaladeevi is a holy place in Andhra Pradesh where the river Krishna meets the ocean. There, on the banks of the river, is a beautiful temple dedicated to *Veṅugopāla svāmī*. His family has conducted an annual *Bhāgavata-saptāha* at this temple for the last ninety five years, without a break. Sri Prasada Sharma attended this sacred event from an early age. He also accompanied His father on pilgrimages to holy places such as *Ayodhya*, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Varanasi, Kalady, Madurai, Mathura, Pashupatinath (in Nepal), Rameswaram and Ujjain. Since 2006, when He was thirteen years old, Sri Prasada Sharma began to accompany His father and grandfather who were participating in the *dhārmic* events at Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham. During His first visit, the *darśana* of the present *Jagadguru*, *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* had a profound impact on Him. He visited Sringeri again in 2008, and during His subsequent visit in early 2009, He expressed to the *Jagadguru* His desire to study *śāstras* under Him. Touched by the young boy's sincerity and impressed by His intelligence, the *Jagadguru* blessed Him with His consent and Sri Prasada Sharma took refuge under the Lotus Feet of the *Jagadguru* in June 2009.

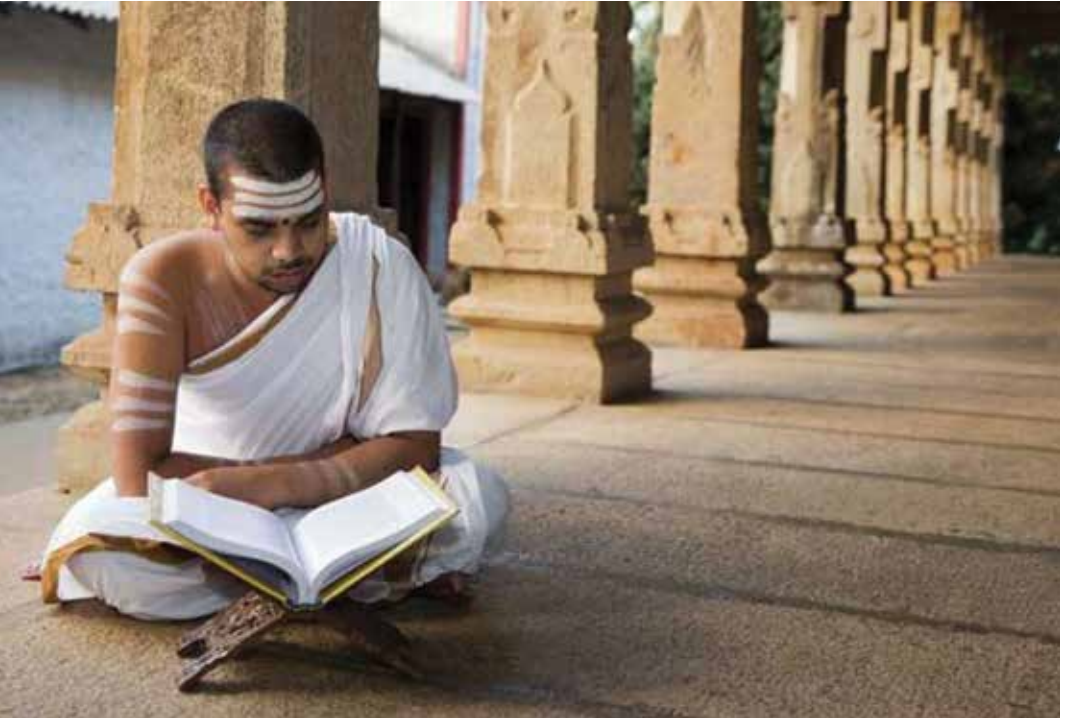
Under the guidance of the *Jagadguru*, He rapidly gained proficiency in written and spoken *Samskṛta*. *Sringeri Vidvān* Sri Taṅgirāla Shivakumara Sharma taught Him *Samskṛta* poetry and literature. He also learned the basics of *Vyākaraṇa- śāstras* under *Sringeri vidvān* Sri Krishnaraja Bhat.

From a young age, Sri Prasada Sharma developed a deep devotion towards Lord *Kṛṣṇa* and visited the *Kṛṣṇa* temple near His home, every day.



Observing His *Guru* Bhakti, humility, intelligence, and dedication to His studies, the *Jagadguru* was pleased and decided to personally teach Him the *śāstras*. The *Jagadguru* began teaching Him the *Tarka śāstra* in 2011. Sri Prasada Sharma grasped the teachings quickly and the lessons moved at an intense pace. Even during the hectic *vijaya-yātra* of 2012-13, the *Jagadguru* took this *Vidyārthī* along and continued the classes without a break. The *Jagadguru* soon transformed Him into a great *Tarka* scholar. When He spoke at Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham's prestigious *Mahāgaṇapati-vākyārtha-sadas*, the scholars were conclusively impressed by the youngster's erudition.

Under the guidance of the *Jagadguru*, Sri Prasada Sharma also studied *Mīmāṃsā śāstra*. He regularly attended the *Śrī Candramaulīśvara pūjā* performed by the *Jagadguru*. During this *pūjā*, He chanted the entire *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda-mūla* and the entire *Yajur-veda-krama*. Blessed with pleasant manners, humility, and cordiality, Sri Prasada Sharma soon won everyone's heart at the *Maṭha*. While keenly pursuing His own studies, He also began teaching the *Veda*, *Samskṛta* literature and *Tarka śāstra* to other students. He subsequently began His studies in *Vedānta* under the *Jagadguru*.



When Sri Prasada Sharma spoke at Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham's prestigious *Mahāgaṇapati-vākyārtha-sadas*, the scholars were conclusively impressed by the youngster's erudition.



In a matter of five and a half years of intense study (2009-15) under the direct tutelage of the *Jagadguru*, Sri Prasada Sharma became steeped in the *Vedic* tradition and blossomed in many ways as a student, devotee, scholar, and teacher. The *Jagadguru* was pleased by His *Guru* Bhakti, devotion to God, divine qualities, excellence in erudition, control of the senses, and, above all, dispassion. These

qualities indicated His unquestionable competence to head the *pīṭhā*. His Holiness decided to nominate Him as His successor and obtained *Śrī Śāradāmbā's* consent. Ceremonies related to the *śiṣya-svīkāra* commenced at Sringeri on January 22, 2015¹.



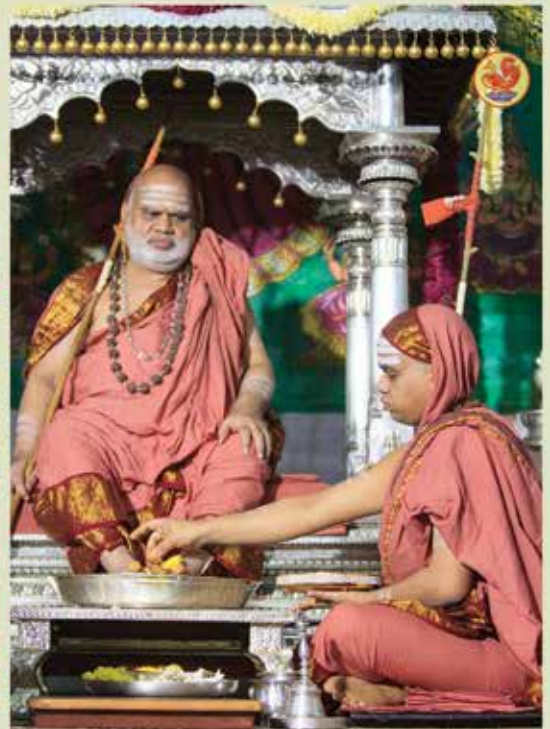
1 *Jayā saṃvatsara Māgha-śukla- dvitīyā*

Thousands of people from all corners of the country and abroad thronged the sacred town of Sringeri to witness this historic event.

On January 23, 2015, His Holiness initiated the Brahmacāri into Sannyāsa on the banks of the river Tuṅgā. At His revered Guru's adhiṣṭhāna, His Holiness initiated the new renunciant into the praṇava and the mahāvākyas and softly uttered the yoga-paṭṭa in His disciple's ear. His Holiness along with His disciple then arrived at Śrī Śāradāmbā temple, where His Holiness announced that He was blessing His disciple with the yoga-paṭṭa "Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī". As per tradition, devotees began reverentially addressing His Holiness as Śrī Mahāsannidhānam and Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin as Śrī Sannidhānam.

That evening, there was a *Guruvandana sabhā* where Śrī Mahāsannidhānam and Śrī Sannidhānam blessed the devotees with divine discourses.





In His post-sannyāsa maiden discourse, Śrī Sannidhānam said:

"I have taken refuge in a Great Soul because of the blessings of Goddess Śāradā. I have obtained the grace of a Great Soul who is a Jagadguru in the Paraṁpara of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, a Jagadguru who is none other than Bhagavatpāda Himself. I have obtained His blessings. From early on, I wished to lead a spiritual life and fulfill the purpose of my life. I also wished to learn the śāstras only under the Jagadguru of Sringeri. When I reverentially placed this request to the Jagadguru, He blessed me and taught me Nyāya and other śāstras. He has showered on me unbounded grace. At all times, He has wished only for my good and my progress in my studies. I cannot take credit for any of my accomplishments. It is solely due to the blessings of the Jagadguru. I came to Sringeri with an aim to study the śāstras and to lead a spiritual life in accordance to the scriptures. However, the Jagadguru Himself has blessed me with sannyāsa. When He told me that He would accept me as His successor-designate, my joy was boundless. You may all wonder why. The reason is that the Jagadguru belongs to the direct Paraṁpara of Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. In fact, I have received the blessings of the Jagadguru who is essentially Bhagavatpāda Himself. Today my life's mission is fulfilled."

Subsequently, Śrī Mahāsannidhānam` addressed the gathering (excerpts from His divine discourse are given at the end of this chapter). At the end, around 9:30 p.m., the "Aḍḍa-pallakki-utsava" of Śrī Mahāsannidhānam and Śrī Sannidhānam took place with Their Holinesses wearing the dazzling *durbar* dress. It was a sight to behold as Śrī Mahāsannidhānam and Śrī Sannidhānam being led reverentially from outside the sanctum of Goddess Śrī Śāradāmbā to begin the *utsav*. Sringeri overflowed with the devotees and everyone felt blessed to behold Śrī Mahāsannidhānam gracing all from the golden palanquin and Śrī Sannidhānam gracing all from the silver palanquin. The *utsava* ended around 11:30 p.m. and this concluded the *śiṣya-svikāra* ceremony.



*When His Holiness told me that
He would accept me as
His successor-designate, my joy was
boundless. In fact, I have received
the blessings of the Jagadguru who
is essentially Bhagavatpāda Himself.
Today my life's mission is fulfilled.*

- Sri Sannidhanam



Sri Śrī Mahāsannidhānam taught Śrī Sannidhānam all the traditional formalities related to the *pīṭhā* and personally trained Him in conducting important *pīṭhādhipati* tasks. For instance, when Śrī Sannidhānam started performing Śrī Candramaulīśvara *pūjā*, Śrī Mahāsannidhānam was present at the *pūjā* Mandapa, guiding His Disciple on the various stages of the *pūjā*. Śrī Mahāsannidhānam encouraged Śrī Sannidhānam to perform the other special *pūjās* such as the *Mahāśivarātri pūjā* and those occurring during the *Cāturmāsya* period. These apart, the *Jagadguru* started taking His beloved Śiṣya along with Him for important *pīṭhā*-related events as also other *Sanātana-dhārmic* events such as temple consecrations. For instance, soon after the *śiṣya-svīkāra*, Śrī Mahāsannidhānam involved Śrī Sannidhānam in the *Āmṛta Mahotsava* (one hundred and twentieth anniversary) events of the *Sadvidyā Sañjīvinī Saṃskṛta Mahāpāṭhaśālā* that took place from the 24th to the 26th of January 2015. While the *Jagadguru* presided over the *Navarātri-durbar* of

2015 accompanied by His Disciple, He encouraged Śrī Sannidhānam Himself to preside over the *Navarātri-durbar* from the year 2016.

Sri Śrī Mahāsannidhānam took His Disciple with Him on His sacred tours just as His revered *Guru* did so soon after He was chosen for the *pīṭhā* in 1974. At all the places of visit, Śrī Mahāsannidhānam encouraged Śrī Sannidhānam to address the

devotees and to undertake independent visits to local temples and other venues upon invitation from the authorities and devotees.

As the *Jagadgurus* visited places, devotees could experience how joyous *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* felt about His *Śiṣya*. For instance, in one of the camps, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* introduced His *Śiṣya* to the assembly of devotees. He said "The śloka":

विद्या-विनय-सम्पन्नं वीतरागं विवेकिनम् ।
वन्दे वेदान्त-तत्त्वज्ञं विधुशेखर-भारतीम् ॥

Vidyā-vinaya-sampannaṃ vītarāgaṃ vivekinam.

Vande vedānta-tattvajñaṃ vidhuśekhara-bhāratīm..

(I respectfully salute *Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī* who is well endowed with knowledge, humility, and discrimination, is free from attachment, and is knowledgeable about the *Vedāntic* Truth.)

Glorifying my disciple is indeed apt. He is indeed endowed with knowledge, humility, dispassion, discrimination, and is a Knower of the *Vedānta-tattvā*.



He has intense *Guru* Bhakti. He is ever ready by my side whenever required; he carries out my wishes and is a source of great joy to me.”

In obedience to the command of His *Guru*, the young successor-designate commenced His independent *vijaya-yātra* on February 18, 2018, to visit a few districts of Karnataka followed by extensive tours in the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. *Śrī Sannidhānam* was accorded a rousing welcome at the places He visited and devotees thronged in large numbers for *darśana* and listen to His benedictory discourses. In every place *Śrī Sannidhānam* visited, His Holiness always expressed His gratitude and deep devotion to His revered *Guru*.

Samskṛta, Telugu, Kannada, Tamil, and Hindi are all languages that His Holiness *Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī* speaks with exceptional fluency.. He fascinates His audience through His sacred discourses. Erudite, compassionate, and welcoming, *Śrī Sannidhānam* has been the source of refuge for both the scholarly and the common man.



Erudite, compassionate and welcoming,
Sri Sannidhanam has been the source of refuge
for both the scholarly and the common man.





ANNEXURE TO CHAPTER 9

THE UNBROKEN LINE OF PRECEPTORS

{Discourse blessed by Jagadguru Śrī Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin on 04-01-2015, as part of the Silver Jubilee celebration of the coronation as the Jagadguru, wherein the Jagadguru announced His decision about the śiṣya-svīkāra.}

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda, the reviver of *Sanātana-dharma*, is the foremost philosopher to have lived in this country. A *jñāni* (Knower of the Truth) and visionary equalling *Bhagavatpāda*, has not been born in our country yet. He lived only for thirty-two years. However, in this short span of life, He achieved what even a hundred people working for a hundred lifetimes could



never have accomplished. He mastered all the *śāstras* by the age of twelve. This is something beyond our imagination. Before He was sixteen, He completed writing all His *bhāṣyas* (commentaries). This is an inconceivable feat which only *Bhagavatpāda* could achieve. *Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* graced us all by penning not only *bhāṣyas*, but also volumes of *Prakarāṇa-granthās* (philosophic treatises) and *stotras* (verses). All His writings are profound and hence enlightening. If we correctly comprehend His teachings, our life will be rendered pure, and we can reach great heights. A great visionary, *Bhagavatpāda* knew that it would not suffice if *dharma* was preached only during His lifetime. He aimed at its continued sustenance. A well-wisher of the world, He wished to show the path of salvation for everyone, and He ensured that it happened. For the unhindered sustenance and propagation of *dharma*, He established the four *Āmnāya-pīṭhās*, of which He showed special regard for the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sringeri Sharada Peetham. Of course, *sannyāsīs* do

not have partisan outlook and it is also not appropriate for them. However, when there is something special about a place, then, regardless of whether one is a *sannyāsī* or not, it is natural for one to appreciate it.

Bhagavatpāda did witness something extraordinary in Sringeri. On seeing animals which were natural foes co-existing peacefully, He felt, "If these animals which are natural adversaries co-exist here peacefully, how sanctified this region should be!" Hence, He felt that, if, at such a place, He established a *maṭha* to sustain and propagate *dharma*, then it would surely thrive forever. Accordingly, He established the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya pīṭhā* here. *Bhagavatpāda* had four principal disciples - *Śrī Padmapādācārya*, *Śrī Sureśvarācārya*, *Śrī Hastāmalaka* and *Śrī Toṭakācārya*. Of these four, *Śrī Sureśvarācārya* was a highly qualified and erudite scholar. There was a difference between *Śrī Sureśvarācārya* and the other three principal disciples. The other three disciples sought refuge in *Bhagavatpāda*. However, it was *Bhagavatpāda* who went to *Sureśvarācārya* to take him into His fold.

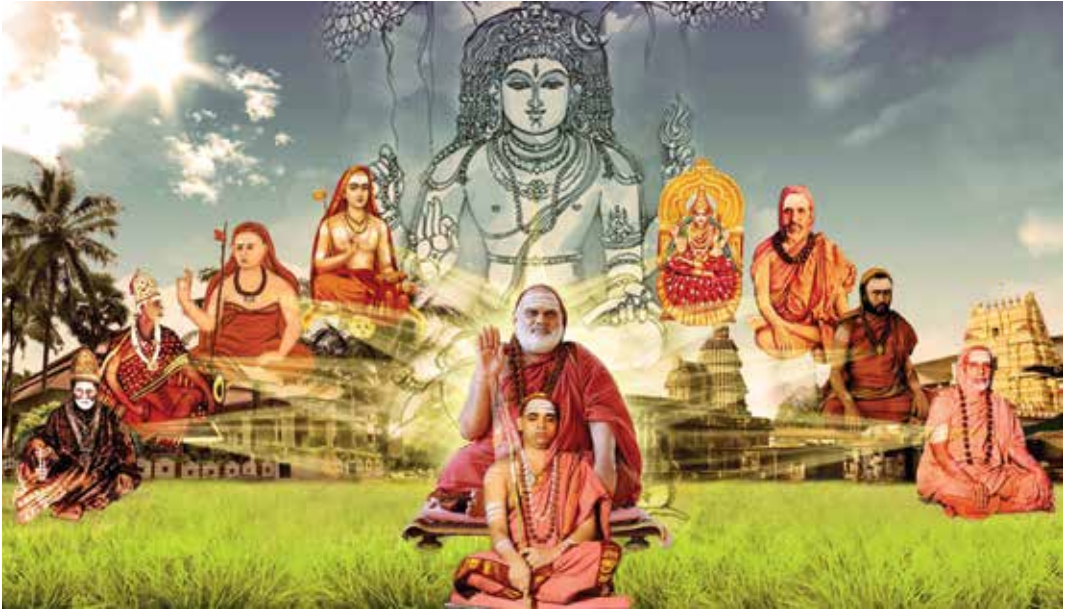
Śrī Padmapādācārya sought out *Bhagavatpāda* and surrendered to Him. *Śrī Toṭakācārya* served *Bhagavatpāda* for many years and received His grace. Even in

the case of *Śrī Hastāmalakācārya*, when *Bhagavatpāda* was visiting the village of Shrivali, *Śrī Hastāmalakācārya's* parents had the *darśana* of *Bhagavatpāda*. They brought their seemingly dumb son to *Bhagavatpāda* and sought His grace. With His divine look, *Bhagavatpāda* transformed this *Brahmacārī* into a great *Vedāntin*. Thus, these three disciples came and surrendered to *Bhagavatpāda*. However, *Bhagavatpāda* Himself went to *Śrī Sureśvarācārya's* place of residence, defeated him in a debate, imparted the *Vedāntic* Truth to him, initiated him into *sannyāsa*, and made him His disciple. Among the four disciples of the revered *Ācārya*,

A well-wisher of the world,
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Dakṣiṇāmnāya Sringeri Sharada
Peetham.

- His Holiness



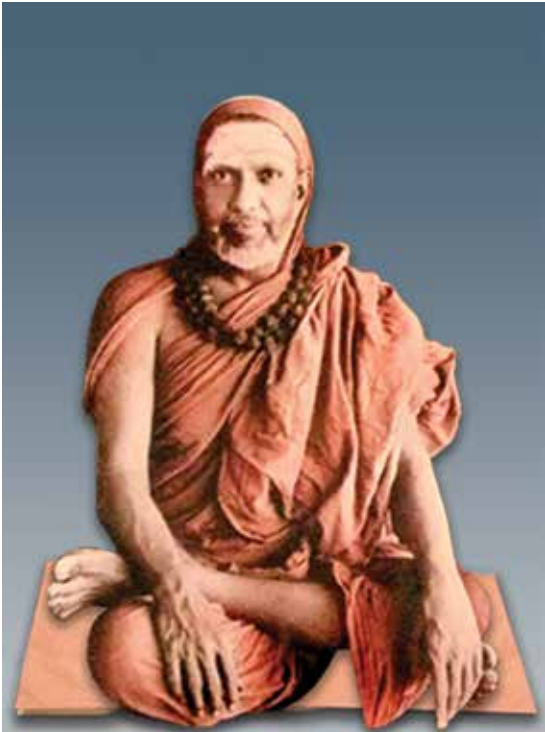


this was a special aspect of *Śrī Sureśvarācārya*. *Bhagavatpāda* was very affectionate, fond, and proud of *Śrī Sureśvarācārya* and made him the first *Ācārya* of this *pīṭhā*. *Sureśvarācārya* was a master of all the *śāstras*, was endowed with scriptural disciplines, and had all the qualities that *Bhagavatpāda* expected of the person who ascends this *pīṭhā*.

Following *Sureśvarācārya*, His Successors, from *Nityabodhagaṇa* to my *Guru*, ascended this Holy Seat, forming an *avicchinna-guru-paramparā* (*Unbroken line of Gurus*). All these *Ācāryas* were eminent scholars just as *Sureśvarācārya* was. They were always engaged in guiding disciples, undertaking *yātras*, preaching *Sanātana-dharma*, and imparting the knowledge of the Truth. They were all renowned as ideal *Jagadgurus*. Thus, this *pīṭhā* has had such an illustrious *Guru Parampara*. Every *Jagadguru* in this lineage has been intent on carrying out the directives of *Bhagavatpāda*, the founder of this *pīṭhā*.

Śrī Vidyaranya, the twelfth *Ācārya* is universally renowned for establishing the *Karnāṭaka Simhāsana* by inspiring and guiding the founders of the Vijayanagara empire. He thus protected *Sanātana-dharma* that was being threatened by invading forces.

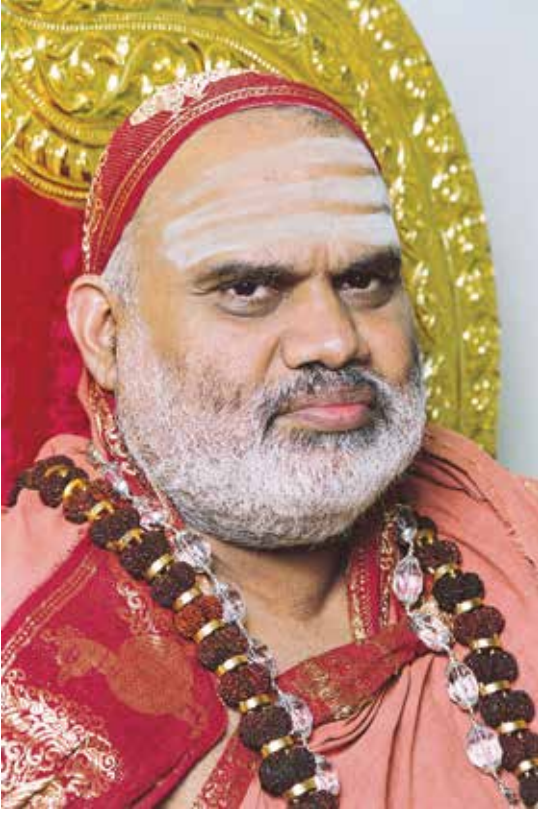
The great accomplishments of *Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin* were also inspired only by the desire to abide by the instructions



of *Bhagavatpāda*. He preserved and propagated *dharma* and taught the Truth of *Vedānta*.

The *Ācāryas* went on *vijaya-yātras* to spread *Sanātana-dharma* everywhere as prescribed by the *Bhagavatpāda*. A disciple must always follow the instructions of the *Guru*. And a *Guru* must always impart the knowledge of *dharma-tattvā* to his disciples. During the early days of my *sannyāsa*, whenever the disciples requested for a discourse during a *vijaya-yātra*, I would be uncertain. At that time, my revered *Guru* said "One cannot be considered to be an *Ācārya* if one is not willing to give discourses. If you do not give talks on *dharma*, you will be shirking your duty. Do not be hesitant to give discourses." These were my revered *Guru's* instructions during my early days of *sannyāsa*. Thus, an *Ācārya* must always teach his disciples about *dharma*. A disciple's faith and devotion in his *Guru* induces the former to follow the *dharma* taught by the latter. You cannot say anything to one who has no faith or devotion. However, a disciple must always have firm faith and devotion in his *Guru*.

The Lord advises us in *Bhagavad-gītā*, "Prostrate and surrender to a *Guru*, serve Him, place your doubts



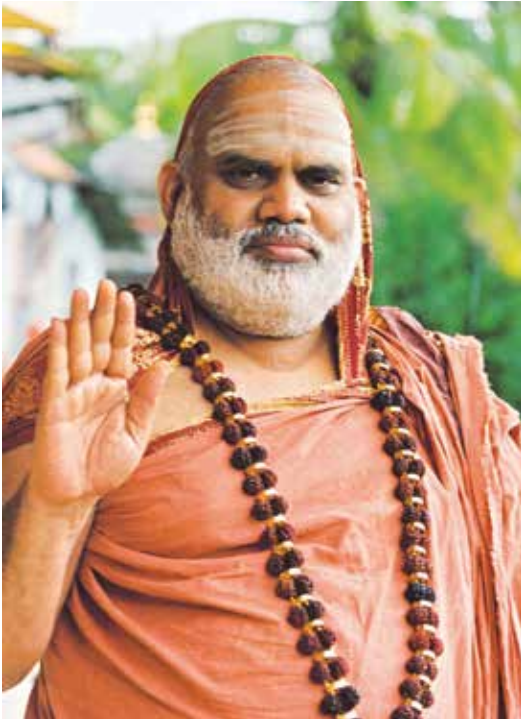
(regarding the Truth) before the *Guru*, and receive knowledge from Him." Surrender, requests for clarifications on the truth, and service are possible only for the person who has intense faith and devotion towards his *Guru*. Hence, for the benefit of disciples who have faith and devotion, we go on *vijaya-yātras* to teach them. The main objective during such travels is to give benedictory discourses and impart *dhārmic* teachings. In every town, the first thing a *Guru* must do is give a benedictory discourse and impart *dhārmic* teachings. Then, the *Guru* must clarify doubts and impart knowledge to those who approach him individually. The disciple must correctly understand the knowledge of the Truth as imparted by the *Guru*.

The True Knowledge will then dawn on the disciple and he will be at peace. However, the one who comes to assess the knowledge of the *Guru* will be ignored.

An *Ācārya* must always teach his disciples about *dharma*. A disciple's faith and devotion in his *Guru* induces the former to follow the *dharma* taught by the latter. You cannot say anything to one who has no faith or devotion. However, a disciple must always have firm faith and devotion in his *Guru*.



My *Paramaguru*, *Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*, had great liking for *Bhagavatpāda's* work, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*. He penned an excellent commentary on it. Once, a disciple approached Him. Citing a particular verse from the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, he requested the *Ācārya* to explain its meaning. He had a feeling that he could cite any verse from the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* and the *Guru* would immediately explain



it on being requested to. The *Jagadguru* in turn directed the disciple to specify the portion of the verse that he had not understood so that He could explain that part. The disciple replied that he had understood the entire verse and he just wanted to hear what the *Jagadguru* would say on the verse. The *Ācārya* dismissed him saying that it was not necessary.

If you are attempting to evaluate the *Guru* or debate with Him, you will not get an answer. If you are a sincere spiritual aspirant, and you approach your *Guru* with humility, you will surely get an answer. All the *Jagadgurus* of this *pīṭhā* have imparted the Truth and

blessed all the sincere and humble spiritual aspirants. During the times of my *Paramaguru*, when He was in an indrawn state, many people used to visit the *maṭha* but were unable to get His *darśana*. Once when the *Jagadguru* was out of that state, the *maṭha* officials informed Him that, since He was frequently delving into His indrawn state, disciples coming for *darśana* had to return disappointed, and that such a state of affairs was not conducive to the *pīṭhā*. They therefore requested Him to bless the disciples with His *darśana* whenever they came. The *Jagadguru* responded: "Devotees come here with a view that the *Jagadguru* is a doctor or a wizard. They come with requests for curing their physical ailments or for exorcising evil spirits. There are many people out there to cater to such needs." The *Jagadguru* added that every sincere aspirant, however, is getting the guidance and instruction from Him and there was no cause for any worry.

If you are attempting to evaluate the *Guru* or debate with Him, you will not get an answer. If you are a sincere spiritual aspirant, and you approach your *Guru* with humility, you will surely get an answer.

- His Holiness



A *Guru's* prime duty is to impart knowledge to a sincere aspirant and ensure his progress. *Jagadgurus* with such firm conviction have presided over this *pīṭhā*. Nowadays we do see very many people just focused on fame and name. However, the *Jagadgurus* of this *pīṭhā* never sought fame. This *pīṭhā* exists to propagate *dharma* and to teach the truth of *Vedānta*. We have always been doing this and will do so in the future as well. We do not subscribe to any other point of view on this matter.

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- His Holiness



Everyone must develop the correct attitude and devotion to the *Guru* and seek to hear the truth of *Vedānta* and to gain knowledge about *Sanātana-dharma* from Him. A disciple must possess such a disposition. The hallmark of excellence of this *pīṭhā* is that the obligations laid out by *Bhagavatpāda* have been perfectly followed by every *Jagadguru*. My *Guru* headed this *pīṭhā* in an exemplary fashion and passed on the responsibility to me. I took refuge under my *Guru* to learn the *śāstras*. Right from when I was very young, I had this feeling that the most eminent scholar in this nation was the Sringeri *Jagadguru*. The feeling that the '*śāstras* must be learned only under the Sringeri *Jagadguru*' was embedded in my mind right from my childhood. I did not want to learn under anyone else. This was a firm conviction that I had developed. With this firm conviction, I sought refuge in my *Guru* in 1966, when He was in Ujjain, observing His *Cāturmāsya vrata*.

Due to the blessings of my *Guru* and Goddess *Śāradā*, I had the good fortune of being able to converse in *Samskṛta* even when I was very young.

when I went to have His *darśana* in Ujjain, He asked, "Aren't you the boy who spoke to me in *Samskṛta*?" I said, "Yes, I am. I have come with a firm resolve to learn *śāstras* from Your Holiness."

- His Holiness



Once, when I was about nine or ten years old, my *Guru* visited my birthplace and I spoke to Him in *Samṣkr̥ta*. That made my *Guru* incredibly happy. Later, after about five or six years, when I went to have His *darśana* in Ujjain, He asked, "Aren't you the boy who spoke to me in *Samṣkr̥ta*?" I said, "Yes, I am. I have come with a firm resolve to learn *śāstras* from Your Holiness." A surprising thing occurred then. I am sure that someone else in such case would have asked me lots of questions. My *Guru* did not ask me any more questions. He replied to me, "Come tomorrow and I will begin teaching you *Tarka śāstra*." It was a great blessing! Even now whenever I think about it, I get overwhelmed. He did begin the class the very next day! He began teaching me *Tarka-saṅgraha* and *Dīpikā*. Thereafter, when the *vijaya-yātra* resumed, the lessons could not be held. So, after reaching Sringeri, my lessons continued both from Him, and also from a scholar-teacher.



My *Guru* did not ask me any more questions. He replied to me, "Come tomorrow and I will begin teaching you *Tarka śāstra*." It was a great blessing! Even now whenever I think about it, I get overwhelmed.

- His Holiness



Years later, He sent for me one day, and when I was present before Him, He took me by surprise by informing me that He had decided to initiate me into *sannyāsa* and take me as His successor-designate. I was surprised. I had wished to learn the *śāstras*, stay away from worldly living and pursue the path of renunciation. However, I never thought about becoming a Spiritual Head. When my *Guru* told me this, I said, "I doubt if I am competent for this great a responsibility."

He replied, "It is I, and not you, who should decide whether you are competent or not! Goddess *Śāradā* has given me Her consent as you are perfectly capable, and I can accept you as my successor-designate. Do not have any confusion. Have full faith that Goddess *Śāradā* will bless you with all that you will need to discharge this duty effectively."

I was also new to this Karnataka State. I was not a native of this region. This too intensified my anxiety as to whether I would be able to fulfil my responsibilities. However, my *Guru* told me that I should not have any anxiety as everything was happening by the will of Goddess *Śāradā*, and that She will bless me with all the required capabilities. His assurance and blessings removed all my reservations. From then on, you are all witness to how things have blossomed.

Thus, the *Guru-śiṣya* lineage of this *pīṭhā* endured solely because of the will, desire, and grace of Goddess *Śāradā*. My *Guru* received similar blessings from His *Guru*. And my *Paramaguru* in turn was blessed

similarly by my *Parameṣṭhi Guru*. This will be evident when you go through the history of the *pīṭhā*. Our *Parameṣṭhi Guru* was named successor-designate by His *Guru* when He was only eight years old. The eight-year-old boy was initiated into *sannyāsa* to take over as the Spiritual Head of the *pīṭhā*! The young boy, on



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- His Holiness



the night of His *sannyāsa* day, kept chanting 'Sarvo'ham Sarvo'ham Sarvo'ham' (I am all, I am all, I am all!) in His sleep! This statement can only be uttered by one who has reached the zenith of *Vedāntic* experience! The fact that it was uttered by a mere eight-year-old *sannyāsī*, in His sleep on the very night of His *sannyāsa*, gave His *Guru* immeasurable joy! He felt, "Ah! What a *śiṣya* I have been blessed with by Goddess *Śāradā*!" The *Guru* expressed His deep gratitude to Goddess *Śāradā*. The *Guru-śiṣya* lineage of this *pīṭhā* has evolved in this manner.

Now, just as my *Guru* blessed me and accepted me as His successor- designate, I also have a similar thought to fulfil my duty. I am sixty-four years old and already seven years older than my *Guru* was, when He initiated me into *sannyāsa*. The most important responsibility of the *Jagadguru* of this *pīṭhā* is to nominate His successor-designate. In this matter, my *Guru* humorously mentioned to me, "Svāmin, nominating a successor-designate is a big test for the *Jagadguru* of this *pīṭhā* and I have passed it with a first-class grade!" He was glad that He had selected a capable successor-designate. Likewise, I too have to pass this test and I have been making efforts towards it. Now, just as Goddess *Śāradā* conveyed Her will to my *Guru*, I too received Her command to nominate a successor-designate, teach him about the functioning of the *pīṭhā*, and make him similar to myself.

There is a *brahmacārī* by the name of Kuppa Venkateshwara Prasada Sharma who has been studying the *śāstras* under me for the last five to six years. This *brahmacārī* has studied *Kṛṣṇa Yajur-veda-krāmānta* and has completed the study of *Nyāya-śāstras*. He is dispassionate and of *dhārmic* conduct, endowed with *Guru-Bhakti* and possesses all the qualities meant for a spiritual person. As per *Śāradāmbā's* ordained-will which I received today at Her *Sannidhi*, I am now announcing in this assembly that I will initiate Kuppa Venkateshwara Prasada Sharma into *sannyāsa* and make him my successor-designate. The *śiṣya-svīkāra* ceremonies will be held on *Māgha-Śukla-dvītīyā* and *Māgha-Śukla-tritīyā*, that is, on 22nd and 23rd January 2015. On Thursday, the *Jayā-Māgha--Śukla-dvītīyā* (22nd January), the ceremonies will begin, and on Friday, *Māgha-Śukla-tritīyā* (23rd January), I will grant him *sannyāsa*, bestow upon him the *praṇava* and *mahāvākya upadeśas* and accept him as my successor-designate with the grace of *Śāradā*.

After forty years, the *śiṣya-svīkāra* ceremony will again be conducted at the Sringeri Sharada Peetham. My *Guru* performed this ceremony in 1974. After forty years, I will



He is dispassionate and of *dhārmic* conduct, endowed with *Guru-Bhakti* and possesses all the qualities meant for a spiritual person.

- His Holiness

be conducting this ceremony again. I chose this occasion to announce this because it would reach all the disciples instantly. All of you have assembled here in a joyous atmosphere. You regard me with great reverence and faith. You all know that I treat everyone equally, show my affection to every disciple equally and fulfil my responsibility as a *Guru*. Know for certain that my successor-designate will also be like me. After becoming a *sannyāsī* in this *pīṭhā*, he will certainly not associate himself with any specific region. His outlook would be, "Having come into the fold of the Sringeri Peetham, the entire world gets associated with Him."

Once a person becomes the head of this *pīṭhā*, he has to be large-hearted. He will consider the entire world as His family. Just as you have all followed my instructions and

assisted me in the progress of this *pīṭhā*, I expect similar assistance for the *śiṣya-svīkāra* ceremony. Serving thus, may you all attain beatitude.

During these twenty-five years, Goddess *Śāradā* has used me as an instrument to accomplish many good things. I dare not claim that it was I who accomplished all this. Only Goddess *Śāradā* has accomplished those deeds. As Lord *Kṛṣṇa* tells Arjuna, 'I perform all actions, you are only an instrument.' I believe that Goddess *Śāradā* performs everything and uses me as an instrument. Four years ago, the historic *Ayuta caṇḍī mahā-yajña* was conducted at Sringeri. Someone expressed to me that I have a great achievement by conducting such a grand *mahāyāgā*. I replied, "I have never entertained the feeling that I am the only one qualified



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- His Holiness

to have been able to conduct this *mahāyāgā*. All the exalted Predecessors of this *pīṭhā* definitely had the capacity to do it. However, they perhaps felt that the credit should go to me and hence chose not to perform it during Their times. This is my conviction.

This Silver jubilee function of my coronation day is being celebrated solely due to the will of Goddess Śāradā and my *Guru*. Just as Kings Hakka and Bukka assisted Śrī Vidyaranya then, Sri Gowrishankar is assisting me now. Just as Śrī Vidyāraṇya would have blessed kings then, I am blessing Sri Gowrishankar in a similar manner now.

I wholeheartedly acknowledge all the assistance that all of you have been providing for the growth of this *pīṭhā*. I continue to expect such assistance in the future. May this *pīṭhā* continue to show everyone the path of *dharma* forever. I bless you all. The residents of Sringeri have, with great faith and devotion, conducted this silver jubilee function, under Sri Gowrishankar's leadership. I bless the residents of Sringeri and, in particular, Sringeri's MLA Sri Jeevaraj. Many disciples have come here today from different parts of our country. Reminding everyone that you have an occasion (the *śiṣya-svikāra* ceremony) to be back again, in a fortnight, and blessing all of you, I end this discourse here.



FULFILLING A TRADITIONAL COMMITMENT

{ Discourse Blessed by Jagadguru Śrī Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin on 23-01-2015, the day of the śiṣya-svīkāra }



Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is well renowned not just in our country but all around the world. The service rendered by Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya to propagate *Sanātana-dharma* and the *Upaniṣadic* philosophy will be remembered for thousands of years. Although this great soul lived only for thirty-two years, His work will continue to be relevant through the passage of time. *dharma* alone serves as the means of welfare of man. *Adharma* will surely result in the degeneration of humankind. It is eternally

true that both *dharma* and *adharma* are respectively responsible for the uplift and downfall of man. This has never changed. While the *śruti*, *smṛti*, *Itihāsas*, *dharma-śāstras*, *purāṇas*, and *darśanas* might advance different views on other matters, they sound alike when it comes to *dharma* and *adharma*.

Dharma is the way to happiness and *adharma* results in suffering. All philosophers accept this premise. The *śāstra* classifies conclusions as *Sarvatantra Siddhānta* and *Pratitantra Siddhānta*. *Sarvatantra Siddhānta* is the conclusion that is accepted by everyone. That *dharma* results in happiness and *adharma* causes suffering is a *Sarvatantra Siddhānta*. Be it *Advaitins*, *Dvaitins*, *Viśiṣṭādvaitins*, *Śakti-viśiṣṭādvaitins*, *Buddhists*, *Jains* or *Vīraśaivas*, there is no difference of opinion with respect to *dharma* and *adharma*. Hence, if we adhere to this eternal truth and direct ourselves, our lives will become sanctified, and it will lead to a better future birth.

However, if we ignore this eternal truth and embrace *adharma*, we will have wasted our life. This is an eternal truth. We never say that Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya taught us something new. When people had forgotten what is clearly stated in the *śāstras*, He reminded them about it. It was at a time when people had forgotten the truth about *dharma* and were living like animals. *Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara* pointed out that it is not proper for us to waste our lives like this.

He has said, "This human life is very precious. It is not something that is easily obtained. We should not waste such a precious life. Adherence to *dharma* is the only way to fulfill the purpose of our lives. We should not stray from the path of *dharma*." If you stray from the path of *dharma*, you may feel that you will not experience suffering in this world. However, you will experience much suffering after you discard your present body. Man has but one desire. "Regardless of the kind of birth I get, I should be happy. In no lifetime should I experience suffering or difficulty." This is a deep desire in all human beings.

If you truly have this desire, then you must act accordingly. Students desire to pass their examination with a first-class grade, but they do not want to read their textbooks! If you do not even open your books, how will you clear your exams with a first-class grade? If you really want to obtain a first-class grade, then make intense effort. Similarly, if you wish to fulfill the purpose of your life, tread the path of *dharma*. Do not tread the path of *adharma*. Some people feel that it is difficult to walk the path of *dharma*. To obtain good results, we must undergo some trouble at first.

Students feel that it is exceedingly difficult to study. However, to obtain a first-class grade, shouldn't you struggle a bit more for it? Similarly, if one abandons *dharma* because it is difficult to follow then one will not obtain one's desired result. Our ancients have spoken of this in a very striking manner. We see a very strange attitude among humans. Our ancients have said, "Everyone wants happiness which

is the fruit of good deeds. However, no one wants to perform good deeds! No one desires suffering which is the fruit of sin. But everyone is eager to commit sin which results in suffering!"

It is not just me stating this strange behaviour of humankind. Our ancients have studied the behaviour of humankind and come to this conclusion hundreds of years ago. However, it is not appropriate for us to live like this. If we desire the fruits

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- His Holiness



of good deeds, then we must adhere to *dharma* and perform right actions. If we do not desire suffering, which is the fruit of bad deeds, we must not act in a sinful manner. *Bhagavatpāda* has elaborately explained this to us. He has written many commentaries, *Prakarāṇa-Granthās*, *stotras* and many other texts. In all these, the crux of His teaching remains the same - "Tread the path of *dharma*; stay away from *adharmā*." However, we must repeatedly remind people of this.



We advise students repeatedly, "You must study properly. Be obedient to your teachers. You must be affectionate towards your fellow students. You must not steal another's property. You must not lie to your teachers." It is not enough if you say all this just once. It has to be constantly repeated. If it is said just once, it will be forgotten. Just as we remind the student every day, we must continuously teach people about *dharma*.

It is for this reason that *Bhagavatpāda* has established *pīṭhās*. He appointed *sannyāsīs* to head these *pīṭhās*. Why *sannyāsīs*? A special quality of a *sannyāsī* is that he is not selfish. When there is no selfishness, then his time is not spent on worldly matters. A *sannyāsī* does not have familial bindings and hence his mind does not go in that direction. Having studied *Vedānta*, a *sannyāsī* does not have any desires. Hence, a *sannyāsī* will have many opportunities to propagate *dharma*.

Hence *Bhagavatpāda* instituted the tradition of *sannyāsīs* in His four *pīṭhās*. He laid a rule that only *sannyāsīs* should preside over these *pīṭhās* and practise and preach *dharma*. We should not just preach. Everyone must have heard of this saying in the Kannada language, "Heḷuvudu purāṇa, tinnuvudu badanēkāyi"² You should

2 The saying literally means that a person who expounds on **Puranas**, has the practice of eating brinjals even though the **Puranas** themselves prohibit eating brinjals - ಹೇಳುವುದು ಪುರಾಣ, ತಿನ್ನುವುದು ಬದನೆಕಾಯಿ

not be that way. You must practise what you preach. As our Administrator just mentioned, *Bhagavatpāda* wrote a series of laws for the functioning of the *pīṭhā*. The text is called "*Maṭhāmnāya-śāsanam*" and it describes the conduct expected of *sannyāsīs* heading the four *pīṭhās*.

Describing the qualifications of such a *sannyasi*, *Bhagavatpāda* says, "शुचि जितेन्द्रिय वेद-वेदाङ्गादि-विचक्षण — (*Śuci Jitendriya Veda-vedāṅgādi-vicakṣaṇa*)". The *sannyāsī* who presides over the *pīṭhā* must be of a pure character. He should have conquered His senses. He should have studied the *Vedas* and the *Veda-aṅgas*. He must have a deep understanding of the *śāstras*. Only such a person can preside over this *pīṭhā*. A person without this capability should not be allowed to occupy this *pīṭhā*. *Bhagavatpāda* had ordained this at the outset itself. From that day onward, Sringeri Sharada Peetham has abided by that dictate. This is the uniqueness of this *pīṭhā*. No one has appointed a person without such qualifications. If you look at the history of this *pīṭhā* from *Bhagavatpāda* to the present time, no one without these qualifications has ascended this *pīṭhā*.

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- His Holiness

Another unique feature about this *pīṭhā* is that one has to take up *sannyāsa* directly from *brahmacarya-āśrama*. This time-tested truth becomes evident when we examine the lives of the *pīṭhādhīpatīs* who have presided over this *pīṭhā*. We have learned about this through the biographies of the previous *Jagadgurus* and I have directly experienced these qualities in my *Guru*, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, who embraced *sannyāsa* when He was just fourteen years old. He was a *brahmacārī* and embraced *sannyāsa*. He studied and attained proficiency in all the *śāstras*. He fully learned the traditions of the *pīṭhā* from His *Guru*. He dedicated His life towards

the upliftment of His disciples and the development of the *pīṭhā*.

He was the Head of this *pīṭhā* for thirty-five years. Of that, He spent almost fifteen years in *vijaya-yātras*. Why did He undertake *vijaya-yātras*? He travelled in order to preach *dharma* to the people and to teach people the Truth of *Vedānta*. He spent half of His reign as the *pīṭhādhipati* traveling on *vijaya-yātras* in order to bring people to the righteous path. He developed Sringeri in a special manner. People who have had His *darśana*, people who have been blessed by Him and people who have experienced His greatness are present among us today. He initiated me into *sannyāsa* in 1974 and made me His successor-designate. He had a far-reaching vision. I was born in Andhra Pradesh. I was not aware of this region's history



My *Guru's* expectation was that I would work for the development of this *pīṭhā*, discharge my duty for the benefit of the people, preserve and propagate *dharma*, and that my efforts would contribute to the development of this country.

- His Holiness

and culture. Neither did I know the history of this *pīṭhā* nor was I conversant with the traditions and practices of this region. In such a situation, He made me His successor-designate. He taught me all these aspects that I just mentioned, and He appointed me to safeguard this *pīṭhā*. I am happy that I have lived up to His expectations with which He made me His successor-designate. My *Guru's* expectation was that I would work for the development of this *pīṭhā*, discharge

my duty for the benefit of the people, preserve and propagate *dharma*, and that my efforts would contribute to the development of this country.

Today, those who have witnessed the work that has been done thus far are content that the expectations of my revered *Guru* have been met, and this is all due to my revered *Guru's* grace. I reiterate that it would be foolish to think that this is all my doing. Nothing is my doing. It is only due to the grace of my revered *Guru* and the grace of Goddess *Śāradā*. I thought of my revered *Guru* and Goddess *Śāradā* when I encountered numerous problematic situations. All such issues were solved. What appeared to be impossible tasks became as simple as moving a flower from one place to another. I know this for sure and so does Sri Gowrishankar who has been by my side for twenty-nine years now.

Such is the illustrious *Guru-parampara* of Sringeri Sharada Peetham. I had a duty to ensure the continuity of this *Parampara*. As a mark of honouring this commitment, I have chosen my successor-designate. Today, I am reminded of November 11, 1974. A situation identical to this transpired on that day. What happened on *Ānanda-saṃvatsara*, *Āśvayuja-māsa*, *Kṛṣṇa pakṣa*, *dvādaśī*, on a Monday, has repeated itself on *Jayā saṃvatsara*, *māgha Masa*, *Śukla-pakṣa*, *tritiyā*, and Friday, 23 January 2015.

Today, those who have witnessed the work that has been done thus far are content that the expectations of my revered *Guru* have been met, and this is all due to my revered *Guru's* grace. I reiterate that it would be foolish to think that this is all my doing. Nothing is my doing. It is only due to the grace of my revered *Guru* and the grace of Goddess *Śāradā*.

- His Holiness



My *Guru* taught me the *śāstras*, educated me on the traditions of the *pīṭhā*, made me familiar with the disciples of the *pīṭhā* and placed this responsibility upon me. I have prepared my disciple in a similar manner and initiated him into *sannyāsa*. Here, in Sringeri, we do not have the practice of checking a person's horoscope to find out if he can be given *sannyāsa*. I have heard that in some traditions, people consult astrologers to determine whether a boy is destined for *sannyāsa*. They reject the boy even if one astrologer says that *sannyāsa* is not in the boy's destiny. My revered *Guru* did not do

that and neither have I. After giving me *sannyāsa*, my revered *Guru* asked me, “*Svāmin*, what is your date of birth? I ask this because there is a tradition in the *pīṭhā* to celebrate the birthday of the *Svāmin* as *Vardhanti*.” I asked my disciple the same thing, “When were you born? The birthday of the *Svāmin* has to be celebrated in the *pīṭhā* as *Vardhanti*.”

Here, at Sringeri Sharada Peetham, we do not refer to a horoscope and determine qualifications for *sannyāsa*. We personally observe the qualities and nature of the individual. We look at his mindset. Questions such as, “How is this person’s mind,” “What is this person’s nature,” “Is this person detached,” “Is this person compassionate and caring” are considered. The traditional practice of the Sringeri Peetham is to examine these factors to determine qualification for *sannyāsa*. I have conducted this ceremony today in strict adherence to this tradition and to how my *Guru* conducted it.

While describing the kingdom of emperor Dileepa, *Mahākavi kālidāsa* has said, “The subjects of emperor Dileepa’s kingdom would follow the path set by the kings of *Raghu-vaṃśa* without deviating even a little.” This is the rule at Sringeri Peetham as well. Those who have witnessed the ceremony on November 11, 1974, would know that it is the exact same way the ceremony was conducted this morning. About five or six of those who witnessed the ceremonies then are present here now. I saw the joy on their face’s indicative of their satisfaction that the ceremony was conducted in the same way as was done that day forty years ago.

This is the distinct aspect of Sringeri Peetham. Here it is only Goddess *Śāradā* who decides who the successor-designate will be. The presiding Acharya do not. The presiding Acharya accepts the one who is named by Goddess *Śāradā*.

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Our revered *Guru*, on the last day of Navaratri in 1974, after the *Pallaki utsava*, went inside the shrine of Goddess *Śāradā* and stayed there for five minutes. He obtained the permission of the Divine Mother and then came out and made the announcement. Although many disciples had been asking Him about the choice, He did not make any announcement until then. Devotees said, "Your Holiness is getting old. Your Holiness is already fifty-six years old. Has Your Holiness thought about nominating the successor-designate?" Our revered *Guru's* response was "Why should I? That is the responsibility of the Divine Mother. It will happen whenever the Divine Mother wills. Why should I worry about it?" He said, on that day, "The Divine Mother has instructed me to nominate this individual as the successor-designate. Once the Divine Mother has ordained, there is no room for any questions. His *sannyāsa* ceremony will be performed on the forthcoming *dvādaśī*."

It has repeated itself now. Eighteen days ago, on January 4th, the residents of our town conducted a grand Silver Jubilee ceremony on the occasion of my twenty-five years of heading over the *pīṭhā*. They were very insistent on having a *Pallaki Utsava*. So, the *Pallaki utsava* took place.

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After that, when I went inside and prayed to the Divine Mother, She impelled me, "Initiate this boy into *sannyāsa*." Just as She instructed my *Guru*, She instructed me too and I announced it in the assembly. Our Administrator said, "No one knew about it. Even those who are with the *Jagadguru* all the time did not know about it. His Holiness announced it suddenly." How can I announce that without the permission of the Divine Mother? I got the command from the Divine Mother and then disclosed it.

I am extremely glad that the officials of the State have attended this event with great veneration. It is well known within the State Government machinery as well as at the Central Ministries that Sringeri *Maṭha* does not get involved in politics. The Sringeri *Jagadgurus* have always stayed out of the political realm. They are immersed in Their (spiritual and *dhārmic*) responsibilities. They do not interfere in matters that do not concern them. It is a centuries-old tradition that everyone seeking the blessings of the *Jagadguru* visits Sringeri. During the times when kings ruled our state, we would send a Śrīmukham to the Maharaja of Mysuru (Mysore) during the *śiṣya-svikāra* ceremony at Sringeri. The Maharaja would attend the event himself. If he were unable to come, he would direct his Diwan, the Chief Statesman to attend the function, representing him. Traditionally, when the *Jagadguru* selects successor-designate as ordained by the Divine Mother, the Maharaja wholeheartedly accepts the decision and starts venerating the successor-designate.





I have bestowed upon my successor-designate, the *yoga-paṭṭa* as “*Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī*.” Many people are curious about the significance of this name. Our *Paramaguru*, *Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* is a universally renowned Sage. I wished to name my successor-designate after Him. However, if the name were to be identical, then it would not be appropriate on my part to address my disciple by the same name as that of the *Jagadguru* whom I worship with great reverence.

In *Samṣkṛta* a synonym for Chandra (moon) is Vidhu (as given in Amarakośa-a thesaurus in *Samṣkṛta* written by the ancient Indian scholar Amarasimha):

हिमां शुश्रन्द्रमाश्रन्द्र इन्दुः कुमुद बान्धवः ।
विधुः सुधांशुः शुभ्रांशुः

Himāṃ śuścandramāścandra induḥ kumudabāndhavaḥ.
Vidhuḥ sudhāṃśuḥ śubhrāṃśuḥ..

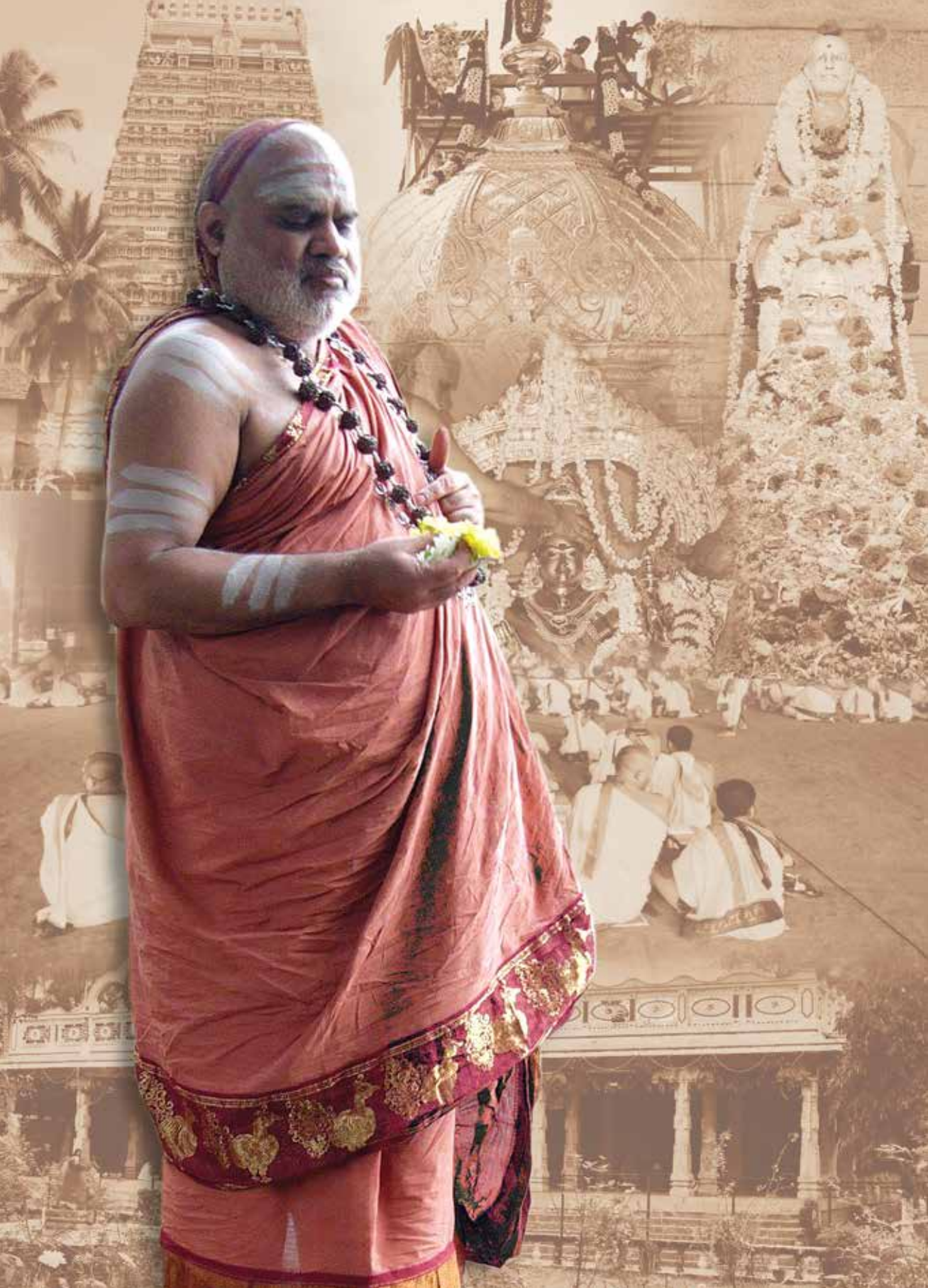
“Vidhu” is a synonym for Chandra (moon). Just as the terms *Sītā-pati* and *Dāśarathi* refer only to Lord *Śrī Rama*, the words Chandrah and Vidhuh refer to moon. Hence, to denote *Candrasekhara Bhāratī*, I have named my disciple *Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī*. This is the significance.

My successor-designate is highly qualified in the *śāstras*. He has immensely pleased me. For the last five to six years he studied the *śāstras* under me with total attention. He would not focus on anything except his studies. He has stayed away from worldly affairs and is completely detached. He is completely devoid of desires. The Divine Mother has ordained thus, after seeing all these qualities. I pray to the Divine Mother to bestow upon him the necessary competence to take the *pīṭhā* to new heights. With my blessings to all of you, I conclude this discourse.

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- His Holiness





Chapter 10

DHARMIC EVENTS FOR THE WELFARE OF THE WORLD

While addressing the devotees during the birth centenary celebrations of His revered *Guru*, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, His Holiness *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* said: “By my revered *Guru*’s grace, I have been blessed with a special privilege which none of the previous *Ācāryas* of this *pīṭha* have enjoyed during Their period of reign! I have been very specially blessed to preside over several *Śatamānotsavas*’ (centenary celebrations) during my reign so far.” In 1995, I conducted the centenary celebration events of *Śrī Sadvidyā sañjīvinī saṃskṛta mahāpāṭhaśālā*. In 2007, it was the centenary celebration of Sringeri *maṭha* at Shankarapuram in Bengaluru. Again, in 2010, I presided over the centenary celebration of the rediscovery of Kalady. In 2016, we celebrated the completion of one hundred years of *Śrī Śāradā* temple’s consecration in the granite superstructure. Now, I am amidst my revered *Guru*’s birth centenary celebrations. All this has been possible for me only by my revered *Guru*’s grace.”

Centenary celebrations and other important events that took place in the glorious reign of *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* are primarily for the welfare for the world and also for inculcating *dhārmic* values for betterment of the country.

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Centenary Celebration of Mahāpāṭhaśālā (1995) and The Amruta Mahotsava of Pāṭhaśālā (2015)

Śrī Sadvidyā sañjīvinī saṃskṛta mahāpāṭhaśālā was started by *Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* at Sringeri in the year 1895. In Their *pūrvāśrama* days, *Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* and *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* were students at the *pāṭhaśālā*. The year 1995 being the centenary year for this great institution, a grand celebration of the occasion took place with the blessings of His Holiness *Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin*.

To commemorate the centenary of the *pāṭhaśālā*, a foundation stone was laid for the construction of a new building for the *vidyārthīs* on the *Kālabhairava* hillock in *Narasimha-vana*. His Holiness, in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, traced the birth of the *Śrī Sadvidyā-sañjīvinī-saṃskṛta-mahāpāṭhaśālā* and said how the various illustrious *Gurus* had nurtured it and made it grow into the present stature. He said the modern building was the need of the changing times and would provide all facilities for the students and research scholars.



Sri Sadvidya Sanjeevini Samskruta Mahapathashala

The Āmṛta Mahotsava of Pāṭhaśālā (2015)

With the blessings of *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, several *dhārmic* as well as cultural programmes were organised to mark the celebration of the *Āmṛta-mahotsava* (one hundred and twentieth Anniversary) of the *pāṭhaśālā* from 24th to 26th January 2015. The *Jagadguru* blessed everyone with His sacred discourse in which He recalled that just as He was blessed with *sannyāsa* in the year 1974, a day before the *Vajrā-mahotsava* of *Śrī Sadvidyā-sañjīvinī-saṃskṛta-mahāpāṭhaśālā*, His disciple (Sri Kuppa Venkateswara Prasada Sharma) was also blessed with *sannyāsa* by Him in the year 2015, a day before *Āmṛta mahotsava* of the *pāṭhaśālā*.



Sri Mahasannidhanam inaugurating Amruta Mahotsava

The *Jagadguru* said that the three-day programme was being organised with distinct events such as *Kavi-Sammelan*, *Samṣkṛta aṣṭāvadhāna* and *Kannada aṣṭāvadhāna*, and that these programs had been organised to encourage the scholars. The *Jagadguru* concluded His sacred talk with prayers at the lotus feet of His *Parameṣṭhi-guru*, *Parama-guru*, *Guru* and *Goddess Śrī Śāradāmbā* for the long life of the *pāṭhaśālā*.

In the evening, *Samṣkṛta-kavi-goṣṭhī* took place in the divine presence of *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* and *Śrī Sannidhānam*. Scholars from various parts of the country read out and elaborated on their beautiful poems. The *Kavi-goṣṭhī* concluded with the *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam's anugraha bhāṣaṇa* in which the *Jagadguru* mentioned that a poem should not employ complex words and should convey the meaning directly without the necessity for a commentary, as seen in every verse of great poets such as *Kālidasa*. The *Jagadguru* concluded the *bhāṣaṇa* by invoking the blessings of *Goddess Śāradāmbā* to all.



His Holiness delivering an Anugraha Bhashanam during the Amruta Mahotsava



His Holiness releasing the Special Souvenir "Sadvidya" on the occasion of Amruta Mahotsava



His Holiness releasing "Sri Madhaviya Shankara Digvijaya Sara"

The Centenary Celebrations of Śaṅkara Maṭha, Bengaluru (May 2007)

The *Śaṅkara maṭha* at Shankarapuram (Bengaluru) was founded in 1907. As per the directions of *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam*, centenary celebrations started on 14th May 2007.

On the day of His arrival at Bengaluru, The *Jagadguru* in His benedictory address said: "*Śrī Śaṅkara* is the foremost amongst the philosophers of the world. A *mahāpuruṣa*, *Śrī Śaṅkara* has shown the path of welfare to every individual. Amongst the four *Āmnāya pīṭhas* that *Śrī Śaṅkara* established, the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham has had an 'avicchinna-guru-paramparā (unbroken line of *Gurus*)' right from *Śaṅkara-bhagavatpāda*. The thirty-third *Jagadguru* and our *Parameṣṭhi-guru*, *Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsimha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* who was famous as *Abhinava Śaṅkara*, founded the *Śaṅkara maṭha* at Shankarapuram, Bengaluru for the sustenance of *Sanatana-dharma* and consecrated the shrine of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara*. Thereafter, in 1939, our *Parama-guru Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* consecrated Goddess *Śāradā Parameshwari* here. Our revered *Guru Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* further expanded the *maṭha*." The *Jagadguru* conveyed that He had come to Bengaluru considering it the bounden duty to conduct the centenary of this *maṭha*, sanctified by such *mahāpuruṣas*.

On 14th May 2007, the Centenary celebrations (*śatamānotsava*) of the *Shankarapuram maṭha* started with the *Jagadguru* first performing *abhiṣeka* to Goddess *Śāradā* and then to *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* at the temples. The *Jagadguru* then performed *kumbhābhiṣeka* to the *gopurams* of both the shrines. He then inaugurated *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Veda Pāṭhaśālā Bhavana* – a new building for the *pāṭhaśālā* at Bengaluru. He also opened a new *gośālā*.

The *Jagadguru* in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa* said that it was with the intention of expressing gratitude to

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Jagadguru performing Kumbhabhisheka to Goddess Sharada temple

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda that *Parameṣṭhi-guru Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* had started the *maṭha* at Bengaluru a century ago. While pointing out the contribution of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* to the cause of *Sanātana-dharma*, He urged the masses to realise the fundamental tenet of our *Upaniṣads* that there is but one Supreme; only the names and forms are multifarious. The *Jagadguru* expressed happiness that many *dhārmic* activities including *kumbhābhiṣeka*, *Atirudra-mahāyāga*, opening of *pāṭhaśālā* building, *gośālā*, a speciality hospital to serve the needy took place during His stay and blessed the organizers and the gathering.



Purnahuti of Ati Rudra Mahayaga

Kalady Centenary Celebrations (May 2010)

Kalady, the birthplace of the unparalleled *Guru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* is, according to the *Ācāryas* of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, a sacred pilgrimage centre like Varanasi and Rameswaram. The year 2010 marked the centenary year of the revival of Kalady by the thirty-third *Ācārya*, *Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*. His Holiness *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* resolved to celebrate this glorious moment in a grand manner.

Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin reached Kalady on the 7th May 2010 evening. The *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* was taken in a grand procession to the sacred birthplace of *Śrī Śaṅkara*. At the entrance of the Kalady *agrahara*, the Royal Scion of Travancore, Padmanabhadasa Sri Uthradam Thirunal Marthanda Varma Maharaja received the *Jagadguru* with *pūrṇakumbha*. After receiving the state honours, His Holiness inaugurated the eastern entrance to the sacred *Janma-bhūmi kṣetram*.

In His sacred discourse, the *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* mentioned that Sringeri and Kalady are like the two eyes to the *Ācārya* of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham. Continuing, His Holiness said that until one hundred and twenty years back, no one knew about the location of Kalady or the *Janmabhūmi kṣetram* of

Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, and it was because of divine guidance and efforts of the thirty-third Ācārya of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, *Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*, that Kalady was rediscovered. The *Jagadguru* emphasized the importance of Kalady as a pilgrimage centre like Varanasi, Rameswaram, Ayodhya or Mathura and urged that it is the duty of every *āstika* to visit Kalady at least once in his lifetime.

The grand celebration of *Śrī Śaṅkara Jayanti* at Kalady in the presence of His Holiness from 14th to 18th May proved to be a fitting prelude to the centenary celebrations. With the blessings of *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, a *Lakṣa-modaka-Gaṇapati-homa*, *Atirudra-mahāyāga* and *Śatacaṇḍī-homa* were performed for the welfare of the world.



Ritwiks performing the Laksha Modaka Ganapati Homa

The *Jagadguru* emphasized the importance of Kalady as a pilgrimage centre like Varanasi, Rameswaram, Ayodhya or Mathura and urged that it is the duty of every *āstika* to visit Kalady at least once in his lifetime.



Ati Rudra Mahayaga Poornahuti in the divine presence of His Holiness



Shatachandi Mahayaga Poornahuti in the divine presence of His Holiness

On May 23, 2010¹, the *Jagadguru* conducted the *kumbhābhiṣeka* ceremonies. He offered *ābhiṣeka* and *pūjā* at the shrines of Lord *Śakti Gaṇapati*, *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* and Goddess *Śāradāmbā*. The *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* then performed the *śikhara-ābhiṣekas* to the *gopurams* atop the *sanctum sanctorums* of the shrines of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* and Goddess *Śāradā*. The *Maṭhādhipatis* of Shivaganga *Maṭha*, *Śrī Saccidānanda Bhāratī Svāmin*, also attended the event.

¹ *Nija vaiśāka-śukla-daśamī*



Jagadguru Mahaswamin offers diamond crown to Goddess Sharada on Kumbhabhisheka day



Kumbhabhisheka to Sri Adi Shankaracharya temple



Mangalarati to Sri Adi Shankaracharya on Kumbhabhisheka day



Kumbhabhisheka to Goddess Sharada temple

In the evening, a public congregation was held at the shrine of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācāryas* in the presence of the *Jagadguru Śrī Mahāsannidhānam*. In His benedictory address, the *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* described the glories of *Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*. His Holiness pointed out that the foremost of the thirty-third *Jagadguru's* achievements were the rediscovery of Kalady, instituting the *Śaṅkarā Jayanti* celebrations across India, and bringing out the first-ever publication of the complete works of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, and that every *āstika* should be grateful to the glorious *Ācārya*.

The Consecration of the Rajagopuram (2014) and The Centenary of the Kumbhābhiṣeka of Sri Sharada Temple in its current granite structure (2016-17)

As per the wishes and the blessings of *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, a majestic one hundred and twenty seven feet tall Rajagopuram was constructed at the entrance of the Sri Sharada Peetham temple complex at Sringeri. The grand *kumbhābhiṣeka* was performed by His Holiness *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* on 8th June 2014².

His Holiness pointed out that the foremost of the thirty-third *Jagadguru's* achievements were the rediscovery of Kalady, instituting the *Śaṅkarā Jayanti* celebrations across India, and bringing out the first-ever publication of the complete works of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, and that every *āstika* should be grateful to the glorious *Ācārya*.



² *Jaya saṃvatsara-jyeṣṭha-śuddhā-daśamī*

The thirteen-day celebration included a number of events of scriptural and cultural significance: *Lakṣa-modaka-Mahāgaṇapati--homa*, *Koṭi-kuṅkumārcanā* at the temple of Goddess *Śāradā*, *Suvāsinī-pūjā*, *Kumārī-pūjā*, *Lalitā-homa*, *Santarpaṇa*, the *Atirudra-mahāyāga*, a *Saṃpūrṇa-caturveda-parāyaṇa* (chanting of all the four *Vedas*), and *Vedic Sūrya-namaskāras* (worship of Sun God chanting *Vedic mantras*) and a *Sahasraçaṇḍī-mahāyāga*.

The other important ceremonies connected to Rajagopura *kumbhābhiṣeka* included *Vāstu-maṇḍala-devatā-pūjā* and *homa*, *Sarvatobhadra-maṇḍala-devatā-pūjā*, *Rakṣoghna-homa*, *Navagraha-homa*, *Agni-uttaraṇaṃ*, *Śānti homa*, *Bimba-śuddhi-sthāpana*, *Puruṣa-sūkta-nyāsa*, *Mantra-nyāsa*, *Kalaśa-sthāpanas*, *Śikharādhivāsa-homa*, and *Lakṣmī-nṛsiṃha-homa*.

Day eight (8th June 2014) marked the sacred *kumbhābhiṣeka* day. On this day, the *Jagadguru* performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* of both the newly built temple for *Sri Toraṇa-gaṇapati* and the *pīṭha*'s Rajagopuram.



Kumbhabhisheka related rituals commence in the divine presence of the Jagadguru Mahaswamin



His Holiness gracing the Sahasrachandi Mahayaga Poornahuti



Poornahuti of Lakshmodaka Ganapati Homa in the divine presence of the Jagadguru



Poornahuti of Lalita Homa in the divine presence of Jagadguru Mahaswamin



Poornahuti of Ati Rudra Mahayaga in the divine presence of the Jagadguru Mahaswamin

When The *Jagadguru* arrived at the the majestic Rajagopuram, the doors were ceremonially opened as per the scriptural injunctions. The *Jagadguru* offered *pūjā* to all the nine seven-foot tall *kalaśas* atop the Rajagopuram. The *Jagadguru* then performed the *Mahā-maṅgalārati* watched by tens of thousands of devotees on either side of the Rajagopuram. The *Jagadguru* prayed to Lord *Kumbheśvara* to reside in the *kalaśas* for all time and bless everyone.

In His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, the Jagadguru said, “Everyone seeking *jñāna* prays to Goddess *Śārādā*. The attainment of *jñāna* has paramount importance for every human because *jñāna* is supreme. Coming six centuries after *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, Jagadguru *Śrī Vidyāraṇya* (in the Madhaviya Shankara Digvijaya) describes Sringeri as the sacred abode where Goddess *Śārādā* resides to this day in accordance with the promise given to *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* (that She will sanctify the region forever) and fulfills the earnest prayers of all Her devotees –

या शारदाम्बेत्यभिधां वहन्ती
कृतां प्रतिज्ञां प्रतिपालयन्ती ।
अद्यापि शृङ्गेरिपुरे वसन्ती
विद्योततेऽभीष्टवरान् दिशन्ती ॥

Yā śārādāmbetyabhidhāṃ vahantī
Kṛtāṃ pratijñāṃ pratipālayantī.
Adyāpi śṛṅgeripure vasantī
Vidyotate'bhīṣṭavarān diśantī..



His Holiness performing Kumbhabhisheka to Sri Thorana Ganapati temple



Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha Mahaswamin performing Kumbhabhishekam of Sringeri Rajagopuram



After the Kumbhabhisheka, His Holiness blesses all from the top of Rajagopuram



Jagadguru Mahaswamin blessing all the devotees with an Anugraha Bhashanam during the Guru Vandanam programme

We can understand from these words of Jagadguru *Śrī Vidyāraṇya* that *Śrī Śāradāmbā's* divine presence is ever present here. We felt that such a divine and magnificent temple must have a Rajagopuram. Some people happened to ask the meaning of the word "Rajagopuram". The word Rajagopuram is explained in *Samskṛta* as गोपुराणां राजा-राजगोपुरम् (Gopurāṇām rājā) Rājagopuram (Supreme amongst Gopurams). Two other examples of words such as these are in the *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* where *Bhagavān* says "राजविद्या राजगुह्यं पवित्रमिदमुत्तमम् (Rājavidyā rājaguhyam pavitram idam uttamam)". *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* when commenting on this verse in His *Gītā-bhāṣya*, explains that the words Rajavidya and Rajaguhyam as "विद्यानां राजा राजविद्या" (*Vidyānām rājā rājavidyā*—the Supreme amongst all kinds of knowledge)" and "गुह्यानां राजा राजगुह्यम् (*Guhyānām rājā rājaguhyam*—the Supreme amongst all Secrets)". Thus the explanation for "Rajagopuram", is that it is the Sovereign amongst gopurams.

We see such Rajagopurams in our country, in famous *kṣetrams* such as the one for *Rāmanātha-svāmī* in Rameswaram, for *Mallikārjuna-svāmī* in Srisailam, for *Śrīraṅganātha-svāmī* in Srirangam, for *Śrīkaṅtheśvara-svāmī* in Nanjanagudu. These were built by kings and great personages in the past.

A Rajagopuram for the temple will be a fitting tribute to *Śrī Śāradāmbā*. Further, the Rajagopuram will make a person feel he is insignificant before the all-powerful divinity.

Early this morning, when I came out and had *darśana* of our *Guru Paramparā* (at the temples and *adhiṣṭhānas*) - from *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* to our *Guru*, I felt, "All our predecessor *Ācāryas* were all *Mahātmans* and fully capable of executing any task. Though nothing was impossible for them, they have all very graciously blessed that the construction of the Rajagopuram must take place during my time. During the *darśana*, it seemed as if all Our *Guru, Paramaguru, Parameṣṭhi-guru, Parāpara-guru, His Guru, Sri Vidyāśaṅkara* and *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* were acknowledging this fact and giving their blessings on the occasion. Hence, I developed a sense of deep gratitude. Thus arose a sense of satisfaction that the faith that Our *Guru* placed on me has been justified. The task of constructing a Rajagopuram is no ordinary one. Many thousands have been involved in this effort. It is *Śrī Śāradā* Herself who has inspired everyone and made this task a successful one. We need to look at two aspects whatever task we undertake. Firstly, *paropakāra* must ensue from this task, and secondly, we must not have any selfish gains out of it.



Swarna Shikhara Kumbhabhisheka of Goddess Sharadamba temple



We must only undertake such activities that have these two aspects. Such activities will always have the complete *anugraha* of *Bhagavān*.

Following in the *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*'s footsteps, *Ācāryas* from *Śrī Sureśvarācārya* to our own *Guru*, have all in their respective times engaged in activities only for *paropakāra*. It is with this very intention that this Rajagopuram too has been constructed, for it shall be long-lived and will enthrall devotees for centuries to come.

Entirely due to the Grace of the Divine Mother, the Rajagopuram has come up so beautifully. While it is true that the Grace of God will be with us for any noble venture, it is also true that - श्रेयांसि बहुविघ्नानि (*Śreyāṃsi bahuvighnāni*) whenever we take up a noble task towards the path of welfare, a number of obstacles would be spring up. However, he alone can be said to be deserving who unflinchingly moves past the obstacles and sees the noble deed to fruition - विघ्नैः पुनःपुनरपि प्रतिहन्यमानाः प्रारब्धमुत्तमगुणाः न परित्यजन्ति । (*Vighnaih punaḥ-punar-api pratihanyamānāḥ prārabdham uttama-guṇāḥ na pari-tyajanti*). This persevering effort along with God's Grace made the Rajagopuram a reality and everyone is full of joy today. The Rajagopuram and its *kumbhābhiṣeka* as well as the *Toraṇa-gaṇapati* temple and its *kumbhābhiṣeka* has brought about joy in everyone today. We bless all our disciples who have worked towards seeing this day."

Centenary Celebration of Śrī Śāradāmba Temple and Dedication of Svarṇā Śikhara Gopura (2016-17)

The present-day granite structure of Śrī Śāradāmba temple was consecrated in 1916-17. To celebrate the centenary of the temple, *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* wished to offer a golden śikhara for the gopuram above the sanctum sanctorum of Goddess Śāradā. A seventeen-day celebration (28th January to 13th February 2017) took place with a number of dhārmic events conducted for the welfare of all humankind. These included *Lakṣa Gāyatrī-japa*, *daśa-sahasra-gāyatrī-homa*, *Lakṣa-modaka Gaṇapati-homa*, *Atirudra-mahāyāga*, *Koṭi-kumkuma-arcana*, *Sahasraçaṇḍī-mahāyāga* as well as *pārāyaṇas* of the four Vedas, *prasthānatraya-bhāṣyas*, *Devī-bhāgavatam*, *Lalitopākhyāna*, and *Durgā-saptaśatī*.

On 1st February 2017 (the auspicious *Lalitā--pañcamī* day), His Holiness accompanied by Śrī *Sannidhānam* performed *abhiṣeka* to Goddess Śāradāmbā inside the temple with one hundred and eight *kalaśas* (containing holy water and various sacred ingredients sanctified by divine *mantras*) and offered *arcana*, *mahā-maṅgalārati* and *Ṣoḍaśa Upacāras*. Many mantras and hymns such as the *sarasvatī--sūkta*, *medhā-sūkta*, *durgā-sūkta*, *śrī-sūkta* and *Śrī-lalitā-sahasranāma* were chanted by the Vedic scholars assembled there at the temple. Thereafter, Śrī *Mahāsannidhānam* and Śrī *Sannidhānam* performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* to the *Svarṇa-śikhara* above the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. The *abhiṣeka* water came from various holy rivers in India.

In His short sacred discourse, Śrī *Mahāsannidhānam* conveyed His blessings to the thousands of devotees assembled on the occasion. Around noon, Śrī *Sannidhānam* performed a special *pūjā* to Goddess Śāradā as part of the *Lalitā--pañcamī*.

In His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, Śrī *Sannidhānam* said:

“Our *Parāpara-guru*, *Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*, began the construction of the present temple structure at a time when reaching Sringeri was far more difficult than it is today - it used to take three days to reach Sringeri from Bengaluru. People felt that building a temple of this size would not be necessary as Sringeri, being a remote place, was not frequented by many. However, the great *Ācārya* had such forethought to construct the temple the way it is that today, even two hundred devotees can simultaneously have *darśana* of Goddess Śāradāmbā.

Goddess Śāradāmbā is Śakti-trayātmikā- Mahākālī, Mahālakṣmī and Mahāsarasvatī. She fulfils the needs of all the four kinds of devotees mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* - the distressed, the person who desires prosperity and well-being, the devotee who seeks Knowledge and the Knower (*Jñāni*). As *Mahākālī*, She annihilates all evil forces and graces the distressed. As *Mahālakṣmī*, She bestows prosperity on those in need of material wealth and well-being. We all remember the young Śaṅkara pleasing the Mother with the *Kanakadhārā-stotra* with prayers for bestowing wealth on the poor yet large-hearted lady and her family.

We are all indeed fortunate to have such a Guru Parampara par excellence, where every Jagadguru has been of immaculate character, full of Knowledge and Tapas, undertaken Vijaya Yatras, engaged in Dharma Prachara and has blessed every disciple in His time.



Ritwiks of Koti Kumkumarchana, Ati Rudra Mahayaga and Sahasrachandi Mahayaga with Ubhaya Jagadgurus

As *Mahāsarasvatī*, She graces those desirous of knowledge. Even though the knower is beyond needs and hence requires nothing, is ever-satisfied and lives with the conviction "I am all," the greatness of the Mother is that She is worshipped even by this *Jñāni* as the Unqualified Pure Consciousness. As stated in the *Lalitā-sahasranāmāvali*, "मिथ्याजगदधिष्ठानायै नमः (*Mithyā-jagad-adhiṣṭhānāyai namaḥ*)" - prostrations are offered to the Divine Mother who is the substratum of the empirical universe that appears as real."

In His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* said:

"*Goddess Śāradā* is the bestower of Knowledge. All require knowledge, and hence the *upāsanā* (worship) of *Goddess Śāradā* is needed for all. We must devotedly worship and offer our prayers.

For what must we pray? The foremost prayer must be that we adhere to our *Svadharmā*. Our prayers to the *Goddess* must also be for always being able to listen to beneficial talk, see beneficial things, and talk nobly. Only then will our lives be purposeful. Our feelings, our worship and prayers must be placed with sincerity and purity in thought, word, and deed because what ensues is dependent solely on the purity of our feelings.

About fifty years ago, a roofing over the *Śāradāmbā* temple was done to prevent damage from the incessant rainfall in the region. However the roofing prevented devotees from being able to view the *vimāna-gopura*. It was as if *Goddess Śāradāmbā* told me, 'I will inspire some devotees to point the fact that the *vimāna-gopura* is not visible and that it be made golden. All that you have to do is agree to the suggestion.' Today, a *Svarṇā-vimāna-gopura* has been dedicated at Sringeri and the *kumbhābhiṣeka* has been performed. Our blessings are with everyone who has worked on this endeavour."



Birth Centenary of Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamin

The birth centenary of the thirty-fifth *Ācārya* of the *pīṭha*, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* (1917-2017) was organized by Sri Vidyatheertha Foundation, Chennai as per directions of the *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. His Holiness *Jagadguru Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī Svāmin* inaugurated a Photo Exhibition Series at Rajapalayam in April 2017. It was later held at Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, Sringeri, and at Chennai. A 3D Holographic video presentation of *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* was screened for the benefit of devotees for three months in the Pravachana Mandiram, Sringeri. The 3D Presentation contained rare footages including the one showing the Great *Jivanmukta* in *nirvikalpa-samādhi*. Devotees felt that it was a true life-like *darśana* of *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*.

Celebrations at Sringeri commenced with a special *lakṣārcana* on October 10, 2017. The Photo Exhibition at Sringeri was inaugurated by Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar, Administrator and CEO of the Mutt. On the evening of October 11, 2017, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* and *Śrī Sannidhānam* inaugurated the *smaraṇa-saptāha*. *Śrī Sannidhānam* in His *Anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* said that the life of His *Paramaguru* is itself a great message just as the life of *Śrī Rāma* is. He undertook many *vijaya-yātras* solely for propagating *dharma*

Śrī Sannidhānam in His *Anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* said that the life of His *Paramaguru* is itself a great message just as the life of *Śrī Rāma* is.



Laksharchana performed at Adhishtanam as part of Birth Centenary Celebrations



Ubhaya Jagadgurus at the inauguration of Smarana Saptaham



Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar inaugurates the Pictorial Exhibition

amongst the masses. Once the *Mahāsvāmin* had said that as *dharma* has to be constantly adhered to throughout one's life, *yātras* have to be undertaken to constantly remind them of the tenets of *dharma*. *Śrī Sannidhānam* also said that the purpose of remembering anecdotes pertaining to the *Mahāsvāmin* is to purify ourselves.

Śrī Mahāsannidhānam, in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, recalled the famous *dhyāna-śloka* composed by Him out of inspiration for His *Guru*,- "*विवेकिनं महाप्रज्ञं धैर्यौदार्य-क्षमा-निधिं* (*Vivekinam mahāprajñam dhairya-udārya-kṣamā-nidhiṃ*)" after the *Guru's videha-mukti*. *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* explained how that verse describes the greatness of His *Guru*. His Holiness expressed that it was His great fortune that such a great *Jīvanmukta* came to be His *Guru*. *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* said that it was fitting that the *smaraṇa-saptāha* was taking place as part of the birth centenary celebrations.

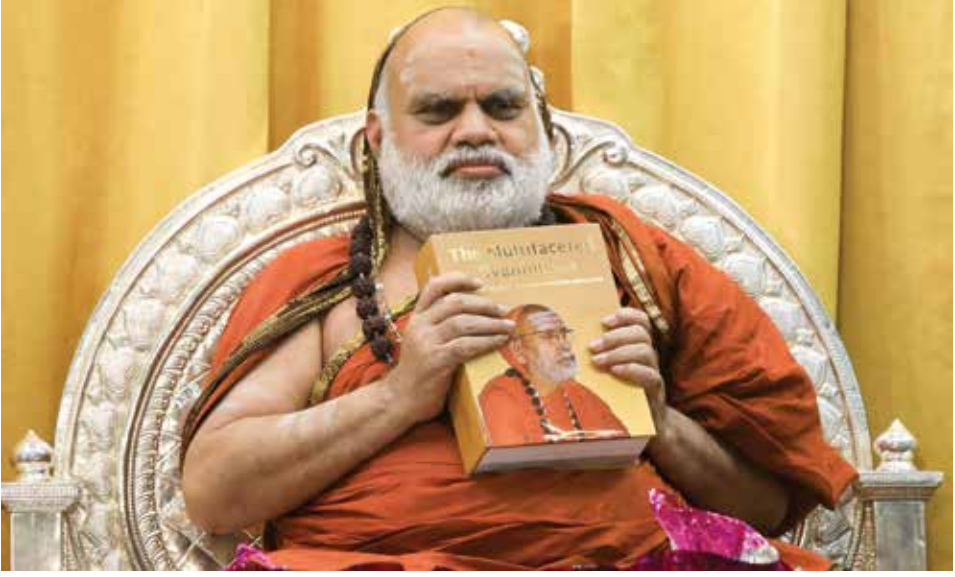
Many distinguished speakers, close disciples and ardent devotees recalled the bountiful grace of *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* in the divine presence of *Śrī Sannidhānam* at the *smaraṇa-saptāha*.

On the *Naraka-caturdaśī* day, marking the one hundredth Jayanti day of *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* performed a special *pūjā* at the *adhiṣṭhānam*. During the *pūjā*, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* offered to the marble *Vigraha* of His *Guru*, a *rudrākṣa-mālā* with a golden pendant of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* (submitted by the *Sevakas* of Sringeri *maṭha*) and a golden *aṣṭottara-śata-mālā* containing the *nāmāvali* on one hundred and eight gold coins. *Śrī Sannidhānam* offered worship at the *adhiṣṭhānam* and partook in the *maṅgalārati*. In the evening, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* released a comprehensive biography on *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, titled "*The Multifaceted Jīvanmukta*" containing the life, *upadeshas*, extensive details of *vijaya-yātras*, and photographs of His revered *Guru* and delivered the centenary *jayanti* address:

Śrī Mahāsannidhānam, in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, explained that the celebration of the *śatamānotsava* is to remember the *Ācārya* with *bhakti* and *śraddhā* and to obtain His grace. He added that after *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, His *Guru* was the only *Ācārya* to have travelled throughout *Bhārata* including Nepal. *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* mentioned with utmost devotion that it is His great fortune that He obtained such a *mahātma* as His *Guru*, was able to serve Him, and become a recipient of His grace.



Sri Mahasannidhanam offers Rudraksha Mala with golden Adi Shankaracharya pendant



Sri Mahasannidhanam releases the book *The Multifaceted Jivanmukta*

Śrī Sannidhānam, in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, expressed that the day is most auspicious as it is both *Naraka-caturdaśī* (the day Lord *Kṛṣṇa* put an end to the demon, *Narakāsura* and brought about the welfare of humankind) and the *Jayanti* day of His *Parama-guru*, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. *Śrī Sannidhānam* also performed a special *pūjā* with *Rudra-kramārcanā* at the shrine of the great *Ācārya* at night. *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* partook in the *mahā-maṅgalārati*. The sacred *Śatamānotsava* celebration concluded with the recital of *Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Akṣaramālā Stotra*”, composed by *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam*.



Sri Sannidhanam worships at the Adhishtanam of His Paramaguru on the 100th Jayanti day



Sri Mahasannidhanam in His Anugraha Bhashanam describes the glory of His Guru

The Grand Śaṣṭyabdapūr̥ti Celebrations of His Holiness Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsannidhānam at Sringeri (April 2011)

The *Śaṣṭyabdapūr̥ti Mahotsava* began on 4th April, the auspicious *Ugādi* day commemorating the start of the new year, *khara* (the year of birth of His Holiness). The performance of *Lakṣa-modaka-Gaṇapati-homa* marked the beginning of the many *dhārmic* activities as part of the celebrations.

As part of the celebrations, *Ayuta-caṇḍī-mahāyāgā*, *Atirudra-mahāyāga* and *Samhita-homa* took place for the welfare of humanity. In Sanskrit, "शै" means good or auspicious and "कर" means doer. The *Gurus* of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, in the sacred lineage of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācāryas* who established the Sri Sharada Peetham at Sringeri with the sole objective of welfare to all, are all "*Śaṅkarās*" by themselves. It is for this reason that *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* concurred with the *maṭha* for an *Ayuta-caṇḍī-mahāyāgā* conducted for the welfare of the world. *Ayuta* means ten thousand in *Samskṛta*.

April 6, 2011, was a historic day. The *mahā-saṅkalpa* of the *Ayuta Caṇḍī Mahāyāgā* took place in the massive *yāgaśālā* erected in *Narasimha-vana*. This is what His Holiness said about the *mahā-saṅkalpa*:

“In all the *mahā-saṅkalpas* done during the *mahāyāgās*, we have the important *saṅkalpa* “एतद्देशपरिपालकानां धर्मे श्रद्धाभिवृद्ध्यर्थम् (Etad-deśa-paripālakānāṃ dharme śraddhābhivṛddhyartham)—For the increase in *śraddhā* pertaining to dharma amongst those who rule this nation”. The *śāstras* drive man to ponder over the consequences of adharma before engaging in an adharmic act. Reflect over whether you want to do an act that would provide temporal joy but would soon lead to great suffering. Let people’s mind be fixed on dharma. Let adharmic bent of mind subside. The *saṅkalpa* also prays for “परस्परद्वेष परस्परनिन्दा परस्परहिंसा निवृत्त्यर्थम् (Paraspara-dveṣa paraspara-nindā paraspara-hiṃsā nivṛttyartham) —the eradication of mutual hatred (mental), insult (verbal), and violence (bodily).” With these thoughts, the special *ayuta-caṇḍī* with thousand *ṛtviks* chant the *Durgā-saptaśatī* simultaneously.

The *mahāyāgā*, conducted for the first time in the history of the *pīṭha*, required one thousand one hundred *ṛtviks*, more than a dozen *Sadasyas* or officiating *ṛtviks*, and hundreds of *paricārakas*. A huge *yāgaśālā* spread over tens of thousands of square feet and containing one hundred *homa-kuṇḍas* and a huge pedestal with a gigantic figure of Goddess *Durgāmbā* was indeed apt for the *mahāyāgā* of this scale.

With trees being required for the conduct of the massive *yāgas* that were conducted on the auspicious occasion, the *pīṭha* that has always been at the forefront in preserving the biodiversity of the Sringeri region, offered ten thousand saplings to various farmers and individuals. 10 representatives received the saplings.

By the *pārāyaṇa* of *Śrī Durgā-saptaśatī*, difficulties are overcome, diseases cured, and wishes fulfilled. After the *mahā-saṅkalpa* took place in the *Jagadguru*’s presence, the *Ṛtviks*, numbering thousand, performed a total of ten thousand *pārāyaṇas* of *Śrī Durgā-saptaśatī*, *koṭi-japas* of *Caṇḍī-Navakṣarī-mantra* throughout the five days.

In the Evening *sabhā*, Sri B. N. Srikrishna, former Justice of the Supreme Court and Chairman of sixth Central Pay Commission, spoke in Kannada expressing joy on the *Ṣaṣṭyabdapūrti* day. He said that the conduct of such *mahāyāgās* as *Ayuta-caṇḍī* and *Atirudra* is bound to infuse a sense of *dharma* in all activities across the nation. He added that it is good wisdom, good conduct, and adherence to *dharma* that one seeks through the blessings of the *Jagadguru*.

Accomplished *Samskṛta* Scholar, Prof. V. Kutumba Shastri, speaking in *Samskṛta*, expressed that the *Jagadguru* is a *Paramahansa Parivrājaka* and an epitome of



Ati Rudra Mahayaga in progress

śraddhā, bhakti and *anuṣṭhāna*. He pointed out the droplets of rain that had fallen during the *sabhā* were an indication that the *devatas* who were receiving the oblations from the various *yāgās* through Lord Agni were blessing through Lord *Varuṇa*. Prof. Shastri stated that just as the Sun remains at the centre and causes the solar system to function, the *Jagadguru* causes the entire system of *dharma*, *karma*, *saṃskāra* (impressions and tendencies), and *vidyā* to function. He expressed that there are instances in the *Śaṅkara--Dig-Vijaya* where *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* has performed feats that seem impossible. But such doubts are set to rest when we have *darśana* of *Jagadguru Mahāsvāmin*, in whom *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* is manifest. It is our *punya* that we are witness to the celebrations and are having *darśana* on this day.

An interesting incident took place on the eve of the *pūrṇāhuti* (April 10, 2011). Thunderstorms lashed Sringeri. It was as if Lord *Varuṇa*, who had controlled His blessings the previous day evening (during the *sabhā* on the *Vardhantī* day) was unable to withhold his joy any further. However, with heavy rains pouring in, water flooded the peripheries of the huge *yāgaśālā*. Everyone became concerned as to whether it would be possible to conduct the grand *Poornahuti* on the following

morning. When the rains eventually stopped, the *Ṛtviks* and devotees worked for many hours in the late evening to restore the *yāgaśālā* to its required state and make it ready for the *pūrṇāhuti*. His Holiness Himself graced the *yāgaśālā* late in the night and oversaw the efforts. The efforts of restoration concluded at 2 AM with the devotees and *Ṛtviks* standing up to the Goddess *Śāradāmbā*'s test of their devotion and dedication.

Pūrṇāhuti of the Mahāyāgās

The *Ayuta-caṇḍī pūrṇāhuti* took place on April 11, 2011, in the *Jagadguru*'s presence. In accordance with the scriptural dictum - "प्रतिश्लोकं च जुहुयात् पायसं च सर्पिषा (*Pratiślokaṃ ca juhuyāt pāyasaṃ ca sarpiṣā*)". Every *śloka* of the *Śrī Durgā-saptaśatī* was chanted and oblations of *pāyasa* were offered by the thousand officiating priests in one hundred *homa-kunḍas* blazing with the sacrificial fire. Immensely happy at the completion of the grand event, the *Jagadguru* in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa* after the *pūrṇāhuti* expressed great happiness at the completion of such a historic *mahāyāgā* for welfare of humanity. The *Jagadguru* also mentioned that when such *mahāyāgās* were conducted in the past, the Maharajas considered themselves fortunate to attend them, and today, the Karnataka Chief Minister, the representative of the people, has of his own volition come to the event seeking blessings for himself and the state. The *Ṛtviks* had all participated in the grand event with great reverence and devotion and considered it a fortune to be a part of the event in Sringeri in the *Jagadguru*'s presence.

At the end of the function, the *Jagadguru* blessed the huge gathering of devotees with a benedictory discourse in which He mentioned: "I do not have

I do not have the desire to celebrate my *ṣaṣṭyabdapūrti*.

However, as a grand *Devatā-ārādhana* (worship of God) in the form of *Ayuta-caṇḍī* and *Atirudra mahāyāgās*, *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Sāma Veda saṃhitā-yajñas* are beneficial to the world and, therefore, I gave my consent. Keeping my *Guru* and Goddess *Śāradā* in mind, I bless everyone to tread the path of *dharma* and attain *śreyas*."

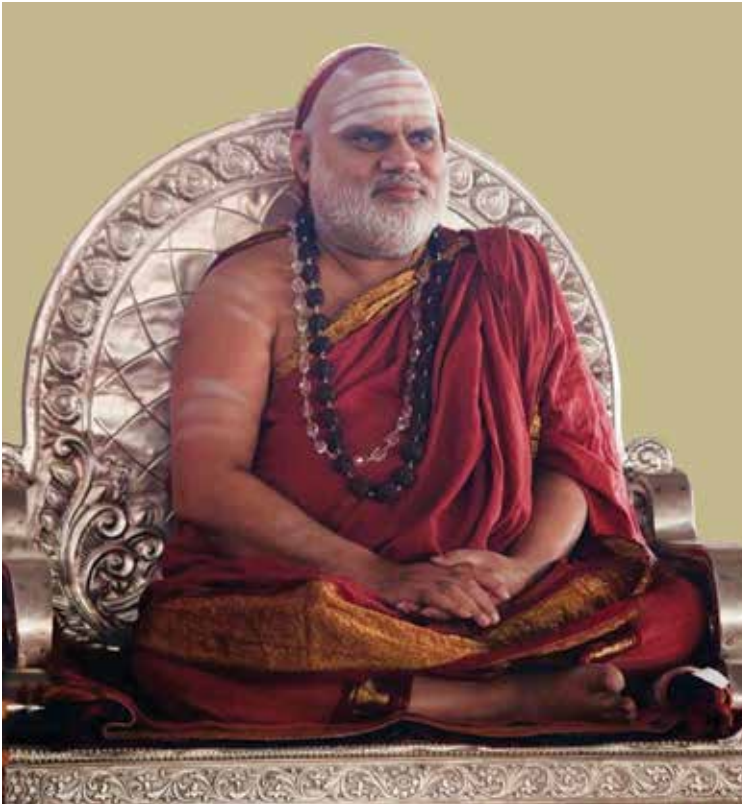


the desire to celebrate my *ṣaṣṭyabdapūrti*. However, as a grand *Devatā-ārāadhanā* (worship of God) in the form of *Ayuta-caṇḍī* and *Atirudra mahāyāgās*, *Ṛg Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Sāma Veda samhitā-yajñas* are beneficial to the world and, therefore, I gave my consent. Keeping my *Guru* and *Goddess Śāradā* in mind, I bless everyone to tread the path of *dharma* and attain *śreyas*."

A grand Guru Vandana Programme was organized on April 16th by the residents of Sringeri and adjoining areas. His Holiness, in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa* said,

"On this occasion, we have performed *Ayuta-caṇḍī* and *Atirudra mahāyāgās* and the *Veda-samhitā yāgās*. What is the objective? May the Lord be pleased.

What is the inspiration behind performing all these *yāgās* ? This can be conveyed with an illustration – Once, while in Allahabad, Sri Madana Mohana Malaviya told Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, who was about 3 decades younger – "You take great efforts to gather people under one roof. Do not be proud of it. In our *Sanātana-dharma*,



Jagadguru at the Sankalpa of Ayuta Chandi Mahayaga



Ayuta Chandi Mahayaga with 1,100 Ritwiks

we do not need to call people. A simple note in the *panchanga* that marks the *amāvāsyā* day of the *puṣya* month as '*mouni-amāvāsyā*' inspires and brings millions of people to o *Prayāg* for *Triveni-sanga-snāna*."

Similarly, the inspiration for all the above *dhārmic* activities is a single statement of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya (in His *upadeśa pañcakam*) - "तेनेशस्य विधीयतामपचितिः (Teneśasya vidhīyatāmapacitiḥ) — perform the worship of the *Bhagavān* through karmas



Jagadguru during the Ayuta chandi Mahayaga



Ayuta Chandi Mahayaga in progress in 100 Homa Kundas



A view of 1,100 Ritwiks chanting Durga Saptashati during Ayuta Chandi Mahayaga

enjoined in the Vedas". And this brings about welfare. If a single statement of *Bhagavatpāda* has caused all these activities, do we have the capability to imagine His greatness and personality? It is our fortune and pride that such a personality as *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* is our *Guru* and we are all part of His *śiṣya paramparā*.

Every *Ācārya* in this lineage has been a great personality. Be it our *Guru, Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* or our *Parama-guru Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*, their personality, their scholarship, and their compassion have been experienced by one and all. Without any personal motive, they have conducted many activities for the betterment of people.

After *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* Himself, it was Our *Guru* who travelled all over the country extensively over more than 12 years of His *sannyāsa āśrama*. He went from village to village in the country, gave *upanyāsa*, brought about a understanding of *dharma* in the masses, had temples constructed and performed many philanthropic activities. Whatever is happening today is due to the Grace of Our *Guru*, the direction shown by Him and the inspiration He has given. It is not Our competence but His blessings that are making all these activities happen. We do have the satisfaction that all these are happening during Our time.

The citizens of Sringeri have played a significant role by volunteering with a sense of duty, faith, and devotion to serve the noble causes undertaken by the *pīṭha*. All these activities need not get publicity. May people be inspired to go along the path of *dharma*. The *śāstras* say that "न्यायोपार्जितवित्तेन कर्तव्यं ह्यात्मरक्षणम् (Nyāyopārajitavittena kartavyam hyātmarakṣaṇam) —One must protect oneself through wealth earned by just means." Today people do not have this feeling. Instead the general notion that is observed is "I must make it big in some way or the other and become rich and powerful." We pray that people get the inspiration to respect truth, justice and *dharma* and act accordingly. Let the *Bhagavān* guide everyone to always have the thought "I shall not disregard truth, justice, and *dharma*. And I shall never comply with untruth, injustice and *adharmā*". This is the objective of all the *dhārmic* activities we have undertaken. May such activities ever continue in the *pīṭha*, may you ever serve in such causes, be blessed by the *Guru* and be guided along the right path."





Ayuta Chandi Mahayaga Poornahuti

Tungabhadra Puṣkara-mahotsava

With the blessings of *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* and *Jagadguru Śrī Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī Svāmin*, the *Tuṅgabhadrā Puṣkara* was celebrated in Sringeri for twelve days in 2020³. As part of the *Puṣkara-mahotsava*, many *pūjās*, *Teppotsavas* of the major deities and *Tuṅga āratī* took place for the welfare of humanity. The *Tuṅgabhadrā āratī* has become an annual event, conducted during the month of November⁴.

Koṭi Pārāyaṇa of Durgā Parameśvarī Stotra

Covid-19 Pandemic, a global pandemic of coronavirus disease, claimed millions of lives making it one of the deadliest diseases. It triggered severe social and economic disruption around the world. Many countries declared lock-down to contain the spread of the virus. *Jagadguru Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* directed devotees from all over the globe to chant the *Śrī Durgā Parameśvarī stotra* for the welfare of the entire humanity. The chant started in March 2020 and chant count exceeded 1.25 *koṭi* by the end of May.

Given the mutual respect between *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* and the *Dwaraka pīṭha Jagadguru Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin*, *Dwaraka Pīṭhādhipati* heeded the call of *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* and chanted *Śrī Durgā Parameśvarī stotra* for the welfare of entire humanity.⁵

Remarkably, even non-Indian followers of *Sanātana-dharma* from nations such as Brazil, Netherlands, and South Africa chanted the *stotra* solely for the welfare of humankind. The faithfuls translated the *Stotra* into many other languages, including Portuguese. *Ṣoḍaśa-lakṣa-kurṅkuma-arcana* and *caṇḍī homa* were performed in



Shankaracharya of
Kalika and Jyothir Peetham

3 *śukla-śaṣṭī* of *Kārtika-māsa* to *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa-pratipat*

4 *Kārtika-māsa-śukla-pakṣa*

5 The video containing *Mahāsvāmin's* chanting was distributed online for devotees to follow through.

the temples of Śrī Śāradāmbā and Śrī Durgāmbā to mark the completion of *koṭi pārāyaṇa* of Śrī Durgā Parameśvarī *stotra*.

Śrī Sannidhānam also conveyed His blessings on those struggling to meet ends and enduring health issues during the ongoing pandemic and quoted a verse:

यथा कन्दुकपातेनोत्पतत्यार्यः पतन्नपि ।
तथा त्वनार्यः पतति मृत्पिण्डपतनं यथा ॥

Yathā kandukapātenotpatatyāryaḥ patannapi.
Tathā tvanāryaḥ patati mṛtṭpiṇḍapatanam yathā..

Those who are noble minded, even when faced with difficulties, will overcome them, and rise again just as a ball bounce back after hitting the ground. However, the ignoble one having fallen in life will not be able to overcome it just as a clump of clay having fallen remains on the ground.

Divya-saptati-pūrṭi-mahotsava of Śrī Mahāsannidhānam

The *Divya-saptati-pūrṭi-mahotsava* commemorating the seventy-first *Vardhanti* His Holiness was celebrated with great devotional fervour at Sringeri in April 2021. A number of *dhārmic* activities took place in the *Tapo-bhūmi* of Sringeri with the sole intent of the welfare of humanity. These included the performance of *Lakṣa-modaka-Gaṇapati-homa*, *Atirudra-mahāyāga*, the conduct of the grand *Ayuta Caṇḍī mahāyāga* for the second time in the history of the Sringeri *maṭha*, *koṭi-kuṅkuma-arcana*s and special *pūjās* by His Holiness to Śrī Śāradāmbā and Lord Malahānikareśvara. Śrī Mahāsannidhānam dedicated a *Svarṇa-kavaca* to Lord Malahānikareśvara following which golden lights of grace permeated the entire temple.

In His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, *Jagadguru Śrī Mahāsannidhānam*, reiterated His desire to disengage from the general affairs of the *maṭha* and remain aloof. Śrī Mahāsannidhānam indicated He has fulfilled His duties and He is completely confident that Śrī Sannidhānam will guide the *maṭha* exemplarily.

On this occasion, seventy distinguished personages comprising of scholars of the *Vedas*, *śāstras* and *Upanyāsakas* were felicitated with a special "*Jagadguru Śrī Bhārati Tirtha Puraskāra*". This felicitation also happened the following year upon more than a hundred prominent disciples of the *maṭha* who had contributed to various causes of *dharma*.

Śrī Sannidhānam composed a beautiful hymn on His *Guru* for the occasion of Ācārya's Saptati Mahotsava and is reproduced in the Appendix-3 at the end of this book.

His Holiness also dedicated a beautifully carved wooden *Ratha* to be used for various *utsavas* conducted along the arterial roads of Sringeri. The following verses composed by *Jagadguru Śrī Sannidhānam* to mark the sacred occasion has been carved on the *Ratha*:

शुद्धेशरदारपीठषड्विंशजगतीगुरोः ।
भारतीतीर्थवर्यस्य दिव्यसप्ततिसन्महे ॥
शारदाम्बास्यन्दनोऽयं नानाचित्रविभूषितः ।
भक्त्या समर्पितो भक्तैः राजतां शरदां शतम् ॥
(श्री प्लव आश्विनशुक्लप्रतिपत् शालिवाहन शकाब्दः १९४३- ०७/१०/२०२१ - गुरुवासरः)

Śrīṅgerīśāradāpīṭhaṣaṭṭriṃśajagatīguroḥ.
Bhāratīrthavaryasya divyasaptatīsanmahe..
Śāradāmbāsyandano'yaṃ nānācitravibhūṣitaḥ.
Bhaktiyā samarpito bhaktaiḥ rājatāṃ śāradāṃ śatam..
(śrī plava-āśvina-śukla-pratīpat śālivāhana-śakābdaḥ
1943- 07/10/2021 - guruvāsaraḥ)

May this *Ratha* inscribed with various sculptures & offered to *Jaganmātā Śāradāmbā* by devotees on the occasion of the sacred Divya Saptati Mahotsava of the thirty sixth *Jagadguru* of Sringeri Sharada Peetham, *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, shine for many centuries. (Sri *Plava-saṃvatsara - Āśvinā-śukla-pratīpat - Śālivāhana-śakayear* - 1943 - 7.10.2021 - Thursday).

Historic Revival in Kashmir

It is well-known fact that *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* ascended the *Sarvajña pīṭha* of *Śrī Śāradā* at Kashmir. *Śrī Śāradā* has been revered in Kashmir since time immemorial and is referred to by the epithet, "*Kāśmīra-pura-vāsinī*." For many centuries Kashmiri *paṇḍitas* used to undertake an annual *yātrā* to the sacred abode of *Śrī Śāradā* – The *Sarvajña pīṭha* (now located across the LoC in PoK). The town of Teetwal lies in one of the *yātra* paths. In order to revive and sustain the culture and tradition of the Kashmir *paṇḍitas*, His Holiness blessed the "Save Sharada Temple Committee", led by Sri Ravinder *Paṇḍita*, with the *Pañcaloha- mūrti*



Jagadguru Sri Mahasannidhanam beside the Murti of Sri Sharadamba to be consecrated in Kashmir

of *Jaganmātā Śrī Śāradāmbā* for a new temple in the town of Teetwal, on the banks of the Kishanganga river, near the LOC in Kashmir.

The new *Śāradā* temple was inaugurated in March 2023⁶, unfolding a significant chapter in the annals of the region and the nation at large. The honourable Home Minister of India, Sri Amit Shah, inaugurated the temple virtually, with several dignitaries attending the inauguration at Teetwal. Two significant features of



Jagadguru Sri Mahasannidhanam blessing Sri Ravinder Pandita of Sharada Yatra (Sarvajna Peeth) Temple Committee, Kashmir

the *Garbha-gr̥ha* are worth mentioning: Given the connection between the life of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* and the *Sarvajña Pīṭha* of *Śrī Śāradā* in Kashmir, a *Pañcaloha- mūrti* of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* was placed inside the

⁶ *Ugādi* of *Śobhakṛt saṃvatsara*



Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam performs Pratishtha Kumbhabhisheka at Sri Sharada temple in Teetwal, Kashmir

Garbha-grha. The other significant feature is the placement of a stone taken from the site of the ancient temple of Śrī Śāradā (Śāradā Sarvajña Pīṭha), blessed by Śrī Mahāsannidhānam, inside the *Garbha-grha*.

On June 5, 2023⁷, with the blessings of Śrī Mahāsannidhānam, Śrī Sannidhānam undertook a historic *vijaya-yātra* to Kashmir and performed the *Pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka* of Mā Śāradā at the temple.

With the area around Teetwal once housing Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, the temple opening was a historic event as it brought back the harmony between these Indian communities in the region. The communities coming together to celebrate the *Pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka* of Mā Śāradā was indeed a memorable event. The aura of the Sringeri *Jagadgurus* generates a harmonious atmosphere and this has been quite evident in Sringeri for thousands of years.

⁷ Śobhakṛt-Jyeṣṭha- Kṛṣṇa-pratamā





Chapter 11

IDEAL JAGADGURU

Regarding the qualifications of a *Jagadguru*, *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* says, “शुचिः जितेन्द्रियो वेद-वेदाङ्गादि-विचक्षणः योगज्ञः सर्वशास्त्रज्ञः — (Śuciḥ Jitendriyo Veda-vedāṅgādi-vicakṣaṇaḥ Yogajñaḥ Sarvaśāstrajñaḥ)” The *sannyāsi* who presides over the *pīṭha* must be of a pure character. He should have conquered His senses. He should have studied the *Vedas* and the *Veda-aṅgas*. He must be a *Yogī* and have a deep understanding of all the *śāstras*.

Sringeri *Jagadgurus* have several important responsibilities, including:

- ❖ Preservation and propagation of *Sanātana-dharma*.
- ❖ Safeguarding and upholding the traditions of the *pīṭha*.
- ❖ Ensuring the development of the *pīṭha* in its efforts to touch the lives of millions of followers.

Jagadguru Śrī Bhārati Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, following in the footsteps of His illustrious predecessors, has been exemplary in fulfilling these responsibilities. His Holiness's accomplishment, in a span of mere thirty four years, is nothing short of a wonder.

His Holiness, while addressing an assembly of devotees, reverentially recalled His *Guru's* words of benediction: “After blessing me with *mantra-upadeśa* (initiation into a *mantra*), my *Guru* also blessed me that the *maṭha* will prosper in many ways during my reign. True to the saying, ‘*The words of Mahatmas come to pass,*’ various developments have taken place in the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, solely due to His blessings.”

His Holiness's reign that began in October 1989 has seen a number of initiatives to sustain and propagate *Sanātana-dharma*.

His Holiness's accomplishment,
in a span of mere thirty four years,
is nothing short of a wonder.





His Holiness arriving for the Pattabhisheka ceremony

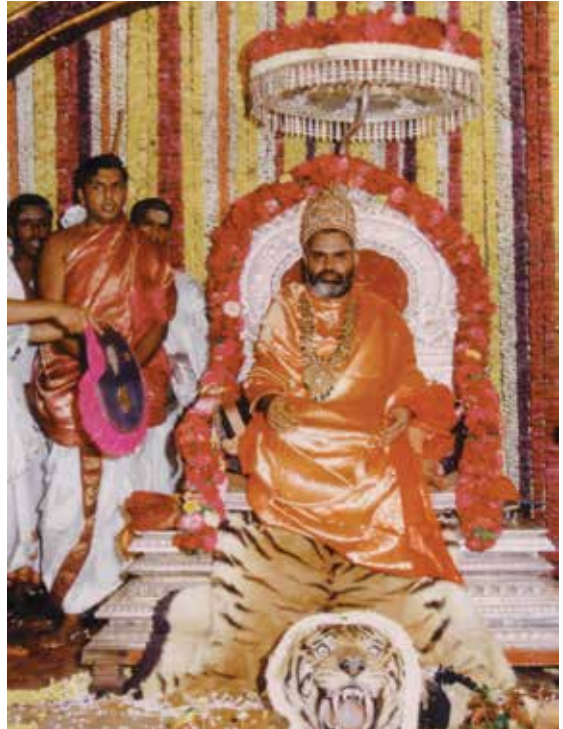
Fostering Temples

His Holiness always highlights the importance of temples in *Sanātana-dharma* in His discourses - "While *Brahman*, the Supreme-divine-consciousness is indeed formless and omnipresent, temples have been prescribed for man to enable him to focus on a divine manifestation in a form prescribed by the *śāstras*. This does not in any way limit the omnipresence of *Bhagavān*. It is our bounden duty to visit temples, not engage in useless talk when inside a temple, meditate on the divine form, and maintain temples in our villages and towns."

True to His nature as a *Śaṅkarācārya*, who adheres to *dharma* and instills *dhārmic* values in others, His Holiness shines as the



Anugraha Bhashanam by His Holiness in the evening function



Adorning the Vyakhyana Simhasana with the Durbar dress and crown

After blessing me with *mantra-upadeśa* (initiation into a *mantra*), my *Guru* also blessed me that the *maṭha* will prosper in many ways during my reign. True to the saying, 'The words of Mahatmas come to pass,' various developments have taken place in the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham, solely due to His blessings.





The Addapallaki Utsava

best example of one who upholds this tradition and performs the duties mentioned above.

His Holiness also conveys that it is more important to maintain existing temples than to construct new ones. Hundreds of ancient temples, both in and near Sringeri as well as in various villages of

South India have been renovated with the support of the *maṭha* as per the directions of His Holiness. His Holiness points out that the well-being of the residents of every town or village is dependent on the proper functioning of its temples. His Holiness has been the inspiration for the renovation of all the ancient temples of the six hundred year old Agrahara of Vidyaranyapura in Sringeri.

Special Bondage between Rameswaram Temple and Sringeri Maṭha

Rameswaram Temple requires a special mention. A unique bondage exists between Rameswaram and Sringeri and it dates back to *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. *Bhagavatpāda* designated Rameswaram as the “*kṣetram*” for Sringeri. The temple’s priests hailing from Maharashtra, traditionally receive *dīkṣa* from Sringeri *Jagadgurus* before their appointment at the temple. Thus far, 19 Rameswaram Temple priests have received *dīkṣa* from His Holiness. It is particularly noteworthy that besides the temple priests, only the Sringeri *Jagadgurus* and King of Nepal (by birth) can enter the sanctum sanctorum of the temple.

As per the direction of His Holiness, Sringeri *maṭha* constructed a 91-foot Gopuram at the southern entrance of Sri Rameswaram Temple and granite mandapam in front of the *garbha-gr̥ha* of Goddess *Parvata-varḍhinī*. These were dedicated to the temple during the 2016 *kumbhābhiṣeka* at Rameswaram.



Sphatika Linga offered for Nitya Puja from Sringeri Math to Sri Ramanatha Swamy temple

In February 2021, the *sphaṭika-liṅga* worshipped in the main shrine of Sri Rameswaram Temple, Rameswaram was unfortunately damaged. On hearing the news, His Holiness took prompt remedial action. To ensure continuity of temple rituals and in keeping with the tradition, His Holiness immediately dispatched a few *maṭha* officials and *Vedic* priests with a special *sphaṭika-liṅga* to Rameswaram. The *Vedic* priests from Sringeri performed all the necessary religious *pūjās* and the *Liṅga* was taken in a procession with all temple honours from Sri Sringeri *maṭha* to the Rameswaram Temple and properly handed over to the temple for the daily rituals.

Goddess Śāradā Temple

His Holiness offers a special and elaborate worship to Goddess Śāradā, the divinity of knowledge and the presiding deity of the *pīṭha* during *Navarātri* and a few select occasions such as *lalitā-pañcamī*. Those who witness His Holiness, revered as Goddess Śāradā Herself in moving form, performing *pūjā* to the Goddess deem themselves most fortunate.

His Holiness dedicated a golden chariot to Goddess Śāradā in 1999 to mark the completion of twenty-five years of His *sannyāsa*. In 2001 commemorating His fifty-first *Vardhanti*, the silver doors of the sanctum sanctorum of Goddess Śāradā

Hundreds of ancient temples, both in and near Sringeri as well as in various villages of South India have been renovated with the support of the *maṭha* as per the directions of His Holiness.



His Holiness performing Puja to Goddess Sharadamba

were replaced with gold doors and the inner walls fitted with gold sheets. The sanctum sanctorum now looks breathtakingly beautiful!

Impelled by divine will, the *Jagadguru* resolved to build a Rajagopuram at the entrance of the Sringeri *maṭha* premises, leading to the temple of Goddess *Śāradāmbā*. His Holiness ceremoniously laid the foundation stone

for the Rajagopuram in 2008. The *Jagadguru* performed the grand consecration of majestic one hundred-twenty-seven foot Rajagopuram in 2014.



His Holiness dedicating a golden chariot to Sri Sharadamba



Rajagopuram at the entrance of Sringeri Math premises

To mark the centenary of the consecration of Goddess Śāradā in the present granite temple, His Holiness dedicated a *Svarṇā-vimāna* above the sanctum sanctorum of Goddess Śrī Śāradā and performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* in February 2017 on the auspicious *lalitā-pañcamī* day. As per directive of His Holiness, the pillars of the top floor of Śrī Śāradā temple were reused to construct a new building in the *gośālā* building complex in the *Narasimha-vana* and inaugurated in November 2018.

His Holiness also consecrated the *Vaikuṅṭha-nārāyaṇa-yantra* in the Goddess Śāradāmbā temple beside the shrine of Śrī Śakti-gaṇapati.



His Holiness doing Abhisheka to Swarna Shikhara

Sri Sannidhanam has described His Holiness's intention behind the consecration.¹

When I was still a brahmacārī, our revered Guru once directed me, "The mantra- śāstra describes a distinctive Yantra. The śāstra state that worshipping this yantra results in great well-being. Therefore, the Yantra must be drawn, consecrated and worshipped in the maṭha. Draw the Yantra in accordance with the description in the śāstras". The Yantra has many lotuses, and each lotus has many petals. Certain mantras have to be written inside the petals. The śāstras instruct the first syllable of these mantras to be written inside the first petal, the second syllable inside the second petal, and so on. The Yantra had to be drawn as per these instructions.

1 This description is given by Sri Sannidhanam in Episode 3 of the 15-episode Sanskrit video series titled "Vande Lokagurum" available in the youtube channel of the *maṭha* <http://www.youtube.com/@sharadapeetham>. This unique video series features Sri Sannidhanam speaking on various qualities of His revered *Guru*.

I initially drew a certain portion of the Yantra and submitted it to our revered Guru. Our revered Guru looked at it and said, "All the syllables of the mantras you have written are facing inward. The śāstras state this about creating Yantras: 'If the syllables of the mantras are written facing inward and the Yantra is worshipped, the enemies of the worshipper will be quickly subdued. By worshipping a Yantra wherein the syllables are written facing outward, the worshipper brings about the welfare of whomsoever he wishes. Here, you have written the syllables facing inward. This will only cause harm to others. However, we have no enemies to subdue. Everyone is worthy of our blessings. So, I felt this Yantra must be worshipped with the intention of blessing everyone. I am hence directing you to draw this Yantra with its syllables facing outward. Only then will our wish for the welfare of all be fulfilled'".

And that is exactly what I did. The Yantra was then consecrated in the maṭha.

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya Temple and Rathotsava

His Holiness has unparalleled devotion to Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. It was His Holiness's long-cherished dream that a beautiful temple be built inside the maṭha at Sringeri for Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda. On Vijayadaśamī day in 2006, His Holiness laid the foundation stone for a magnificent temple to be built of granite stone. Five years later in 2011², His Holiness performed the Pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka of a beautiful Pañcaloha vighraha of Bhagavatpāda in the newly constructed temple. As per His Holiness's benedictory directive on the occasion, Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya Rathotsava, the only one of its kind, is being celebrated in a grand manner every year in Sringeri on vaiśāka-śukla-śaṣṭī (the day following Śrī Śaṅkarā Jayanti). His Holiness also dedicated a svarṇā-śikhara above the sanctum of the temple on Śaṅkarā Jayanti day in 2022.

² The kumbhābhiṣeka took place on February 16, 2011 (Vikṛti saṃvatsara-māgha-śuddha-trayodaśī). During the years of construction of the Śrī Ādi ŚaṅkarācāryaAdi temple at Sringeri, His Holiness observed the Śaṅkarā Jayanti Celebrations at Siddapura (2006), Bengaluru (2007), Kundapura (2008), Hassan (2009) and Kalady (2010).

The antique pillars around the *Pārijāta-totṭi* –(the quadrangle that housed the earlier shrine for the *Bhagavatpāda*) were used to construct the *yāgaśālā*³ named after His Holiness' *Parāpara-guru*⁴. To spread the life and teachings of *Bhagavatpāda*, His Holiness has initiated several programs such as *Śāṅkara Tattva Prasāra Abhiyāna*, *Śrī Śāṅkarācārya-aṣṭottara-śata-nāma-yajña*, and *Guru Saparyā*. His Holiness has been the motivation for the State Governments of Kerala and Karnataka to announce *Śāṅkara Jayanti* day as "Philosophers" day.

Historic Kumbhābhiṣeka of Śrī Vidyāśāṅkara Temple

One of the "*birudu-s*" or titles of the Sringeri *Jagadguru* is "*Vidyāśāṅkara-pādapadmā-ārādḥaka*" - "the worshipper of the Lotus Feet of *Śrī Vidyāśāṅkara*." The fourteenth century temple of *Śrī Vidyāśāṅkara* is a landmark monument of historic importance in the Sringeri *maṭha*. It is built in honour of the revered tenth *Ācārya* and renowned *Yogi*, *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* (1229 – 1333 CE).

The great sage spent His last years in *lambikā-yoga*, freed from hunger and thirst. He entered an underground cave prepared for this purpose, having ordered that the entrance be sealed after His entry with an instruction not to open the cave for 12 years.



Kumbhabhisheka of Sri Shankaracharya temple at Sringeri



Sri Vidyashankara temple Kumbhabhisheka being performed after 600 years

³ the heritage structure is in front of the *Śāradāmbā* temple

⁴ *Jagadguru Śrī Vṛddha Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī* (VIII), the thirty-second *Ācārya* (1817-1879 CE).



Sri Vidyashankara temple Kumbhabhisheka

Three years later, some *maṭha* staff wondering what happened to the *Ācārya*, opened the door to the cave. They could not see the *Ācārya* but saw a *Śivaliṅga* in his place.

The same day the *Guru* appeared in the dream of *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* (successor-designate of *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, and later the 11th *Ācārya* of *Sringeri Sharada Peetham* from 1333-1380 CE) and instructed Him to consecrate a *Śivaliṅga* over the cave. The beautiful and architecturally unique temple constructed at the very spot came to be known as the *Śrī Vidyāśaṅkara Temple*.

To this day, the *ārādhanā* of the *Jagadguru* is observed with great devotional fervour with the reigning *pīṭhādhipati* offering special worship at the temple. On February 15, 2012⁵, His Holiness performed a historic *kumbhābhiṣeka* of *Śrī Vidyāśaṅkara* temple by worshipping at the sanctum sanctorum and performing the *śikhara-kalaśa-abhiṣeka* atop the massive *Gopuram* of the temple. Eleven years later, on February 3, 2023⁶, His Holiness along with *Śrī Sannidhanam* performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka* at the *Garba Gṛha* of *Vidyāśaṅkara Temple*.

5 *Khara saṃvatsara- māgha - Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī*

6 *Śubakṛt saṃvatsara-māgha-śuddha-trayodaśī*

Śrī Toraṇa Gaṇapati Shrine

Śrī Toraṇa-gaṇapati's shrine was originally part of the building complex that housed the old shrine for *Bhagavatpāda*. Many devotees, during their visit to Sringeri, first offer worship to Śrī Toraṇa-gaṇapati before entering the temple of Goddess Śāradā. When His Holiness decided to build a grand temple for *Bhagavatpāda*, He also resolved to have an exclusive shrine built for Śrī Toraṇa-gaṇapati. The spot for the shrine was chosen on the northern side of Śrī Śaṅkara's temple and a small, beautiful granite temple was built. His Holiness performed the consecration in 2014 along with the Rajagopuram. His Holiness also consecrated the *Gaṇapati-yantra* and reverentially placed in the temple the sacred *Pādukās* of the thirty-second *Jagadguru* of the *pīṭha*, Śrī Vṛddha Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin, who recognized the power of the carving of *Gaṇapati* on the *toraṇa* (door frame) during His time and consecrated the carving as a deity worthy of worship. His Holiness dedicated a *Svarṇā-sikhara* above the sanctum of the temple on Śaṅkara-jayanti day in 2022.



The shrine of Thorana Ganapati



His Holiness performing Special Puja to Thorana Ganapati on the Kumbhabhisheka day

Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa Temple

As a mark of offering His respect to *Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa*, His Holiness had an exclusive shrine built for Sage *Veda Vyāsa* in the *Narasimhavana* and performed *kumbhābhiṣeka* in 2007. His Holiness has also renovated many shrines including those of *Śrī Sūryanārāyaṇa-svāmī*, *Śrī Lakṣmī-narasimha-svāmī*, *Śrī Kālabhairava* in the *maṭha* premises.



His Holiness performing Puja to Sage Veda Vyasa

Śrī Sureśvarācārya Jayanti Utsava

Āśvayuja-māsa-śukla-ekādaśī (the day following *Vijayadaśamī*) is the *Jayanti* day of *Jagadguru Śrī Sureśvarācārya*. The *Ācārya* was the foremost of disciples of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, who installed him as the first *Pīṭhādhipati* of the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya Sri Sharada Peetham* at Sringeri. From 2022, with the blessings of *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam*, the *Jayanti* is being celebrated in a more elaborate manner with *śata-rudra-abhiṣeka* at the *adhiṣṭhāna* of *Jagadguru Śrī Sureśvarācārya* and a *Jayanti sabhā* being organised in the Pravachana Mandiram.



Sri Sureshwaracharya

Śrī Caturmūrti-vidyeśvara Svāmī Temple Kumbhābhiṣeka

As mentioned earlier, the 10th *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* entered the underground cave to engage in *lambikā-yoga*. At that time, a unique structure was created at *Simhagiri* as per His instructions and He declared that similar structure would appear in the cave. The special stone sculpture made prior to His entering the cave can be seen in *Simhagiri* (near Sringeri) and is known as *Caturmūrti-vidyeśvara*.

His Holiness along with Śrī Sannidhānam performed *Kumbhābhiṣeka* at the renovated historic temple of Śrī Caturmūrti-vidyeśvara Svāmī at *Simhagiri*, on April 28, 2022.

Śrī Sannidhānam, in His *anugraha bhāṣaṇa*, explained the significance of the Śrī Caturmūrti-vidyeśvara mūrti revealing why His Holiness had attached such importance to the renovation of this historic temple and performed the *kumbhābhiṣeka*.

“The front portion of the mūrti depicts Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin seated in a *yogic* posture, bearing the *cinmudra* (the hand gesture indicating union of individual soul, *jiva*, with the supreme, *Brahman*). His two disciples, Śrī *Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* and Śrī *Vidyāraṇya Mahāsvāmin* (12th Ācārya of *Sringeri Sharada Peetham-1380-1386 A.D*), are depicted to His left and right, offering salutations to their Guru. Above the carving of Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin is a figurine of Śrī *Lakṣmī-Narasimha-svāmī*, with Śrī *Mahālakṣmī* and Śrī *Śāradāmbā* visible on either side.

To the right of Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin's *vigraha* is a figurine of the four-faced Lord *Brahmā*. In the western direction, and behind is a figurine of Sri *Mahā-Viṣṇu* along with a depiction of his *dasā-avatāras* (ten incarnations). In the northern direction is a figurine of Lord *Śiva* with five faces, surrounded by the *aṣṭa-digpālakās* (guardian deities of the eight directions). The upper portion of the mūrti depicts a *Śivaliṅga*.



Jagadguru Sri Mahasannidhanam and Sri Sannidhanam worshipping at the historic Sri Chaturmurti Vidyeshwara Swami temple

The significance of the *mūrti* is that *Śrī Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* is manifest here in the form of Lord *Dattātreyā*, with Lord *Brahmā* in the eastern side, *Viṣṇu* in the west, *Śiva* in the north, and in the upper portion a *liṅga* symbolic of the *parabrahma* (Supreme Consciousness).

Brahmā, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* in this *mūrti* represent the *saguna-tattva* (*Brahman* manifest as form), while the upper portion (form of *Śivaliṅga*) of the *mūrti* represents the *nirguna tattva* (the unmanifest *Brahman*).

Sri Sannidhanam explained that the *mūrti* symbolised the highest *advaitic* doctrine of non-duality as advocated by the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*, and as propagated by *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* in *prasthānatraya-bhāṣya* and texts like *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*.

Sri Sannidhanam described the relevance of *Śrī Caturmūrti-vidyeśvara* as a powerful symbol of the *advaita siddhanta*, explaining that the lower portion of the six-foot tall *liṅga* symbolized the *saguna* aspect of *Paramātmā*, while the upper portion symbolised the *nirguna* aspect. When the *Paramātmā* creates this universe, He is referred to as Lord *Brahmā*. When He maintains and sustains this creation, He is addressed as *Viṣṇu*, and when He engages in dissolution of this creation, He is referred to as *Śiva*.

The *Chaturmūrti Vidyeshwara Vighraha* thus tells us that the *Guru* is to be regarded as akin to the *trimūrtis*. This is its uniqueness and significance, and there is no *vighraha* similar to this anywhere in the world."

Mahā Kumbhābhiṣeka of Śrī Bhavānī Malahānikareśvara temple

Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya described the temple of *Śrī Malahānikareśvara* while establishing the Sringeri Sharada Peetham⁷. *Maharṣi Vibhāṅḍaka*, the son of *Maharṣi Kāśyapa* was instrumental in the manifestation of the *Śrī Malahānikareśvara Śivaliṅga*. Sringeri derives its name from *Maharṣi Vibhāṅḍaka's* son, *Maharṣi Ṛṣyaśiṅga*, who performed the *putra-kāmeṣṭi-yajña* for Raja *Dāśaratha* and was instrumental in ushering the *avatāra* of *Śrī Rāma*.

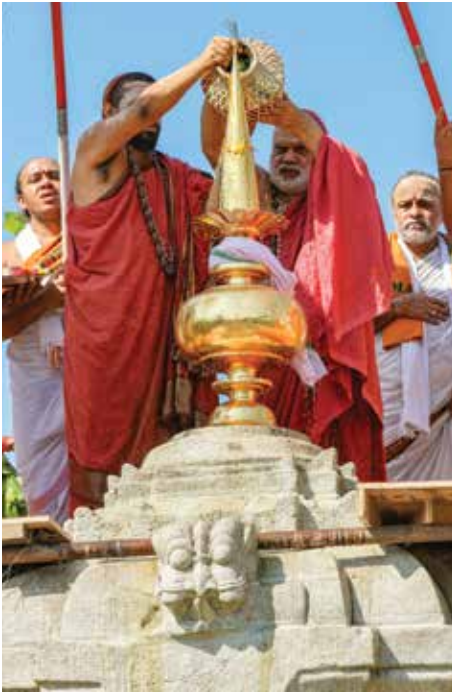
Owing to the *tapas* of *Maharṣi Vibhāṅḍaka*, *Bhagavān Paramaśiva* manifested as this *Liṅga* upon a hillock in Sringeri. It is known that after He worshipped

⁷ This description is available in the text titled *Maṭhāmnāya-mahānuśāsanam* that provides details about the four *pīṭhas* He established and describes the qualities needed for a person to occupy the sacred seat of *Śaṅkarācārya* in these four *pīṭhas*.

Śrī Malahānikarēśvara, Maharṣi Vibhāṇḍaka eventually merged into the Śivaliṅga. This merger is indicative of liberation, for the śāstras state that the jīva (individual soul when freed from all upādhi (limitations) merges into Īśvara. The Sringeri Jagadgurus devotedly worshipped the Malahānikarēśvara⁸, whose divine presence in Sringeri predates even the time of Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.



Sringeri Jagadgurus perform Mahakumbhabhisheka to Sri Malahanikareshwara



Sringeri Jagadgurus performing Shikhara Kalashabhisheka of Sri Malahanikareshwara temple

In April 2022, His Holiness along with Śrī Sannidhānam laid the foundation for a Rajagopuram to the ancient temple. The construction of the Rajagopuram was completed as per the directive of Śrī Mahāsannidhānam within a year.



Sringeri Jagadgurus performing Kumbhabhisheka of Rajagopuram of Sri Malahanikareshwara temple

8 The purāṇas give us the meaning of the word "Malahānikarēśvara" as one who destroys the sins of devotees - अंहोहानिकरं लिङ्गं मलहानिकरं विदुः (Aṃhohānikaram liṅgam malahānikaram viduḥ).

The Rajagopuram is sixty-five feet tall in accordance with the *Vāstu śāstra*, with a twenty foot foundation. The existing *vimāna-gopura* of *Śrī Bhavānī* shrine in the temple was replaced with a new granite *śikhara-gopura*. On this occasion, a new *Śrī Subrahmanya* shrine was added to the temple.

His Holiness along with *Śrī Sannidhānam* performed the *mahā-kumbhābhīṣeka* of *Śrī Bhavānī Malahānikareśvara svāmi* and the Rajagopuram on February 12, 2023.⁹ On this occasion, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* directed that the hillock will be henceforth addressed as '*Īśvara-giri*'. *Śrī Sannidhānam* on this occasion composed "*Śrī Malahānikareśvara-aṣṭaka*".

Sustaining and Spreading Vedic and Shastric Knowledge

Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin always gave priority to the needs of *Vedic* and *śāstraic* scholars. He was very firm in His view that we must care for *Vedic* scholars in order to protect the *Vedas*. Reflecting His *Guru's* compassionate gestures towards the scholars, *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* implemented several measures to foster traditional knowledge.

Every year, during the *Śrī Śaṅkara Jayanti* festival, under the auspices of the Sringeri *maṭha's Veda-poṣaka-sabhā*, *Vedic* scholars who have passed advanced exams conducted by the *Maṭha* at various points of time, attend the function and are honoured in the presence of the *Jagadguru*. The cumulative number of scholars eligible for honour keeps on increasing from year to year

as more young scholars pass the exams. His Holiness has also introduced exams in the *Vedāṅgas* as the *śāstras* call for their study as a necessary supplement to *Vedic* education. With the blessings of His Holiness, the *maṭha* has created a scheme to honour aged *Vedic* scholars and supports many scholars with a monthly stipend. The monthly stipend varies depending on the scholarship, experience, and age of the scholar.

The other important step His Holiness took was in setting up of the *Central Sanskrit University* in Sringeri and the *Shankaracharya Sanskrit University* in Kalady. This has reaped great benefits.

Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin implemented several measures to foster traditional knowledge.



⁹ *māgha -kr̥ṣṇa-saptamī* of the *Śubhakṛt saṃvatsara*



Vedic scholars awarded gold rings during Sri Shankara Jayanti at Bengaluru



Scholars who participated in Veda Poshaka Sabha with Their Holinesses



Central Sanskrit University

His Holiness took
was in setting up of
the *Central Sanskrit
University* in Sringeri
and the *Shankaracharya
Sanskrit University*
in Kalady

Śāstra-saṃvardhinī-sabhā

The Sringeri *maṭha* hosts several scholarly conferences called *Vidvat-sadas* wherein eminent scholars participate to expound and deliberate in *Samṣkr̥ta* on various intricate aspects of the *śāstra*. The foremost amongst these conferences is the *Mahāgaṇapati-vākyārtha-vidvat-sadas*, the famous annual conference commenced in the late nineteenth century and presided over by the reigning Sringeri *Jagadguru* for about two weeks. In 1990, His Holiness instituted the *Śāstra-saṃvardhinī-sabhā* to foster this tradition of conducting the *vidvat-sabhā* and honouring *śāstra* scholars. A special five-day *śāstra* conference is held at Kalady, the birthplace (*Janma-bhūmi kṣetram*) of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* during *Śrī Śaṅkara-jayanti* every year. The *Saparikara Advaita-vedānta-sabhā* in Andhra Pradesh also invites scholars and holds deliberations in *vedānta* and other *śāstras*.



Vidwat Sadas in progress during Chennai Camp in 2012

Śāstra Poṣaka Sabhā

In the early 1990s, His Holiness observed that the mean age of scholars participating in the vidvat-sadas kept increasing and that there was a dearth of young scholars. His Holiness then instituted the Śāstra-poṣaka-sabhā to foster the tradition of studying śāstras under a Guru. To encourage Guru-śiṣya education, His Holiness announced a life-time monthly allowance for fresh śāstraic scholars. His Holiness announced this at the concluding session of the Mahāgaṇapati-vākyārtha-vidvat-sadas held at Sringeri in September 1990. The stipend is given to those who have completed one of the four śāstras - Vyākaraṇa, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta - in the traditional way under a competent vidvān. The candidates must pass a series of examinations conducted by



Photograph of some of the scholars who participated in the Vidwat Sadas in 2012 at Chennai

the Sringeri maṭha with His Holiness conducting the final exam at the end of the five or six-year long course. They should dedicate their entire life for the teaching and the propagation of the śāstra in which they are proficient. The Jagadguru explained that this decision was taken mainly because many bright youngsters who had the urge to tread this noble path discontinue their pursuit due to lack of adequate encouragement. Owing to the initiative of His Holiness, young scholars who participate in the vidvat-sadas today outnumber the elderly scholars. Subsequently, a similar scheme was extended to Vedic scholars too! Hundreds of scholars have received this benefit and continue to do so.

All-India Vedic Conferences

By the grace of His Holiness, the first All-India Vedic Conference was held at Sringeri for three days from April 18-20, 1994, and was jointly sponsored by the Veda-poṣaka-sabhā of Sringeri, Shastra Samvardhini Sabha of Sringeri, Maharishi Sandipani Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan of Ujjain, and Shankara Vidya Kendra of New Delhi. It was attended by many Vedic scholars representing the various śākhās of the Vedas. During the conference, constructive discussions among the participating scholars led to fruitful exchange of ideas and sharing of knowledge. Research papers were presented. Eminent paṇḍitas spoke on this occasion and expressed their gratitude to His Holiness for His compassionate support for the cause of promoting Vedic education.

Vedic Sammelans have been conducted throughout the country since the turn of the millennium to give a thrust to traditional education by conducting *Veda-pārāyaṇa*, honouring proficient scholars, and encouraging students to excel in their branch of study. The annual *Sammelans* are being held in Varanasi, New Delhi, Kalady, parts of Maharashtra, Kolkata, parts of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh/Telangana. The *Sammelans* are achieving success in bringing together *Vedic* scholars from various parts of the country on a common platform. Several thousand *Vedic* scholars and students are honoured each year in these *Sammelans*.

His Holiness has also insisted on *Veda-pārāyaṇa* during *Candramaulīśvara Pūjā* He performs every night. At the directive of His Holiness, *pārāyaṇas* of the entire *Kṛṣṇa-yajur-veda samhitā*, the entire *Ṛg-veda* along with *Padapāṭha*, *Kramapāṭha* and the entire *Sāma-veda* have been completed over the decades of His Holiness' reign.

In addition, special *pārāyaṇas* of the *Krama*, *Jaṭā* and *Ghana of Ṛg* and *Yajur Vedas* and entire *Sāmaveda* have taken place in Sringeri.

Sringeri Pāṭhaśālā

Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin's commitment to ensure the sustenance of *Vedic* knowledge is a well-known fact. His Holiness resolved to provide high quality education, in a serene atmosphere, resulting in a new *pāṭhaśālā* building, a hostel and a separate dining facility for students. In February 1996, as part of the centenary celebrations of the *Śrī Sadvidyā Sañjīvinī Saṃskṛta Mahāpāṭhaśālā*, His Holiness inaugurated the new *pāṭhaśālā* building.



Sri Sadvidya Sanjeevini Samskruta Mahapathashala

Competent scholars are appointed to instruct the students. Comfortable accommodation, textbooks and food are provided free of cost to the students. The academic settings as envisioned by *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam* has attracted students from different parts of the country and Nepal to the *pāṭhaśālā*



Class in progress in Pathashala

to study the *Vedas* and the *śāstras*. His Holiness takes personal interest in grooming every sincere student to become a *Ghanapāthī* or a *Kramapāthī*. From time to time, the *Jagadguru* personally evaluates the students at the *pāṭhaśālā* in Sringeri. The *pāṭhaśālā* has also been

producing competent scholars in the *śāstras* who settle down in various parts of the country and serve as professors, lecturers, teachers, or *purohitas*. His Holiness has ensured that *Samskṛta* is spoken during various events associated with the *pāṭhaśālā* including the grand annual day event. As per His Holiness' directive, the *pāṭhaśālā* has been bringing about an annual souvenir called "*Sadvidyā*" for students, faculties, and alumni to pen articles, express their talent and use the occasion to bring out their best as budding scholars.

Establishing Pāṭhaśālās around the Country

Under His Holiness's guidance, Sringeri *maṭha* runs several *pāṭhaśālās* throughout India for fostering the study of *Vedas* and *śāstras*. *Pāṭhaśālās* function in many places including Bengaluru, Chennai, Kalady, Satara, Varanasi, Prayag, Maheshwar near Indore, Siddapura, Srirangam, Coimbatore and Tirunelveli. *Veda-pāṭhaśālās* were also established in Madipadu, Guntur, Nellore, Siddipet in the Andhra/Telangana region; in Rajapalayam, Melmangalam, Rangasamudram, Shenkottai in Tamil Nadu; in Palakkad, Kochi, Kozhikode in Kerala; as well as in Goa with the blessings of His Holiness.



Veda Pathashala at Kalady

The *maṭha* also monitors and supports the running of *pāṭhaśālās* in many towns, cities, and villages across the country – the farthest being located in Assam. Classes in *Vedas* are taught to qualified adults in various branch *Maṭhas* of the *Pīṭha* located in metros such as Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Mysore, Hassan, Hyderabad, and Vijayawada. The *pāṭhaśālās* at Sringeri and Kalady also support higher learning in the *śāstras*. The *śāstras* taught in Sringeri and Kalady include *Vedānta*, *Nyāya*, and *Vyākaraṇa*. All these *pāṭhaśālās* function with an emphasis on *Vedic* learning, its preservation and propagation.

Sri Shankara Advaita Research Centre

To house the “*Sarasvatī-bhaṇḍāra*,” the centuries old library of the *Maṭha* containing ancient manuscripts, historical records, and books and to encourage research in *Vedic* and *śāstraic* studies, His Holiness established Sri Shankara Advaita Research Centre in *Narasimhavana* in 2001. The Research Centre houses the ancient



Sri Shankara Advaita Research Centre

manuscript library of the *pīṭha* and undertakes conservation and digitization of manuscripts. Manuscripts are also accepted from the public for conservation and digitization. Under His Holiness’s active guidance, rare and hitherto unpublished texts are being published by the centre as a series under the title, *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Veda Śāstra Granthamala*. Since 2005, His Holiness has arranged for the annual publication of “*Vidvat-pratibhā*” containing the proceedings of the *vidvat-sadas*. The “*Advaita-Śāradā*” project blessed by His Holiness is a major step taken towards spreading *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*’s monumental works online.

Vidya Bharathi Press

With the blessings of His Holiness, the Vidya Bharathi Press was established in the premises of the branch *maṭha* in Shankarapuram, Chamarajpet, Bengaluru, as the in-house Printing Press of Sringeri *maṭha*. The Press has been instrumental

in printing and publishing books on a variety of topics related to *vedas*, *śāstras*, *Stotras* and the lives and teachings of the Sringeri *Jagadgurus*.

Teaching the Śāstras

His Holiness, notwithstanding His duties as a *pīṭhādhipati*, regularly engages in teaching the *śāstras* such as *Vedānta and Nyāya* to qualified students. His Holiness has often said in benedictory discourses, "It is the Grace of Goddess *Śāradāmbā* and *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, that from the time of *Śrī Sureśvarācārya*, the *Jagadgurus* of Sringeri have always shone as profound scholars, exemplary *sannyāsīs* and *tapasvins* of the highest order."

It is noteworthy that His Holiness, amongst the recent *Jagadgurus* of Sringeri, has Himself taught all the *śāstras* as stated in His benedictory discourse - "We have heard that *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* regularly taught the *śāstras* while touring the country during His *Dig-vijaya-yātras*. I am fortunate to have experienced it as a disciple who has been taught by my *Guru*, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānam*, during the 2012-2013, 2015 and 2017 *vijaya-yātras*. In spite of my revered *Guru's* busy schedule during the *vijaya-yātras*, He graciously took time to teach classes. I am indeed fortunate to have had the privilege of learning all the *śāstras* at the Lotus Feet of my *Guru*."

Thus, His Holiness has not only taken steps for others to study the *śāstras* but has shone as the teacher-par-excellence of the *śāstras*.

Meetings with Jagadgurus and Guiding Mathadhipatis

His Holiness along with the *Jagadgurus* of the other *Āmnāya-pīṭhas* has conducted two *Cāturāmnāya sammelans* to discuss the propagation of *dhārmic* values and the need to better inculcate *Sanātana-dharma* values to the public.

Exemplar for Mathadhipatis

Since the sixteenth century, the *Jagadgurus* of Sringeri during Their *vijaya-yātras* established several *shakha-maṭhas* (branches of the *pīṭha*) and installed heads (*Maṭhādhipatis*) for these *maṭhas*. Many *Maṭhādhipatis* and *Daṇḍī-sannyāsīs* visit Sringeri for the *darśana* of *Śrī Śāradā* as well as His Holiness.

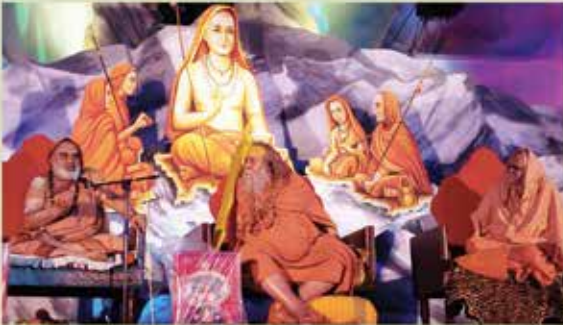
His Holiness with other Mathadhipatis / Sannyasins



Swami Harshananda, Former President of Sri Ramakrishna Math



Jagadguru Shankaracharyas of Sringeri, Dwaraka- Jyotir and Puri Math



Anugraha Bhashanam during Chaturamnaya Sammelan



Sadyojat Shankarashram Swami of Sri Chitrapur Mutt



Mahanth of Varanasi Annapoorneshwari temple



Swami Dayanada Saraswathi of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam



Sri Shankara Bharathi of Yadothore Sri Yoganandeshwara Saraswathi Math



Sri Balagangadharanatha Swami of Adichinchanagiri Math

His Holiness with other Mathadhipatis / Sannyasins



Swami of Udupi Math



Meeting of Ascetics at Sringeri



Ganapathy Sachchidananda Swami of Avadhoota Datta Peetham



Meeting of Ascetics at Sringeri



Hebbur Mutt Swami and Sadyojat Shankarashram Swami



Monks of Sri Ramakrishna Mutt



Padapuja by Karaveera Peethadhipati Sri Vidya Nrusimha Bharathi Swamiji at Kolhapur



Shankaracharya of Dwaraka and Jyotir Math and Swami of Sri Math, Varanasi

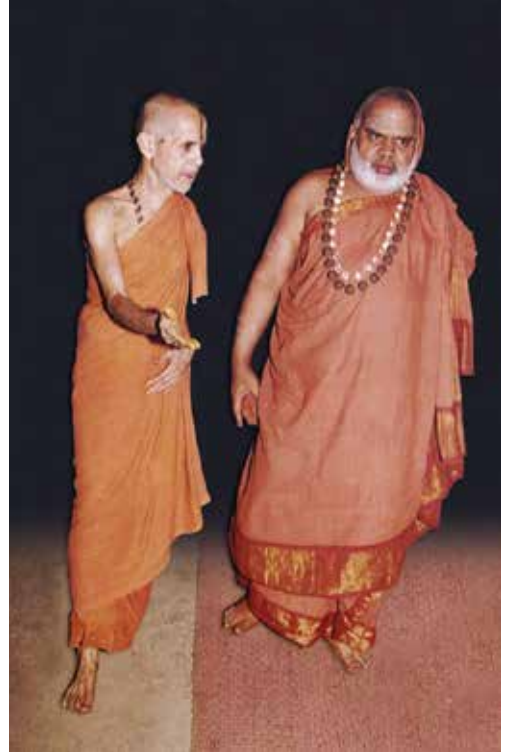
The *Maṭhādhīpatīs* look up to His Holiness as the exemplar for fulfilling their duties as the head of a religious institution while remaining steadfast in their observance of *sannyāsa dharma*. During His reign, His Holiness has installed new *Śaṅkarācāryas* at the Dwarka and Badri *pīṭhas*. His Holiness has also revived the lineages of many *maṭhas* (monastic establishments) such as those of Shivaganga, Avani, Yadathore, Hariharapura, Hebbur, Balekudru, Nelamavu, Chitrapur and Haladipur.

Saints of other *sampradāyas* such as the *Maṭhādhīpatīs* of Ahobila-*maṭha*, Pejawar-*maṭha*, Raghavendra-*maṭha* periodically meet His Holiness. Several *Mahamandaleshwars*, *Svāmins* of Sri Ramakrishna *Maṭha*, Chinmaya Mission, as well as eminent teachers of *Vedānta* such as *Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī* have all sought His guidance and blessings.

Upon the directions of *Jagadguru*, a new residential quarter named *Tapasvī-kuṭīra* has been constructed in a serene setting on the banks of the *Tuṅgā* inside *Narasimha-vana* at Sringeri for the comfortable stay of the visiting heads of *Maṭhas* and other monks.

Vijaya-Yātrā

To spread *dharma* amongst the masses, His Holiness has undertaken *vijaya-yātrās* to various states, districts, towns, and villages since His *sannyāsa* in 1974. Some of the notable *yātrās* include the ones in 1975, 1977, 1979-80, 1981, 1984 with His revered *Guru*, and in 1985-86, 1987-88, 1992, 1994-95 (fourteen-month long all-India tour), 2007, 2010, 2012-2013 (fourteen-month long South India



Vishweshwara Tirtha Swami of Pejawar Math with His Holiness

tour), 2015 and 2017 as the thirty-sixth *Jagadguru*.

As part of the *yātrās*, His Holiness has graced innumerable people with His divine presence, delivered several discourses to reinforce the teachings of *Sanātana-dharma*, strengthened *śraddhā* in the hearts and minds of the people, guided gatherings of devotees in the study of *Vedas* and the *śāstras*. His Holiness



graced *pāṭhaśālās* and many *dhārmic* institutions, offered *pūjā* for the welfare of the world at various sacred *kṣetrams* across the country. His Holiness established many branches of Sringeri *maṭha*, performed *kumbhābhiṣekas*, and instrumented the revival and maintenance of ancient temples in villages and towns.

Expanding the Maṭha Reach

Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham has over one hundred and eighty branch *maṭhas* now. Each branch *maṭha* is under the care of a branch head, assisted by a manager and other staff. There are shrines in each branch. Daily worship as well as special worships on important festive occasions such as *Navarātri* take place in the shrines. Apart from these, the branch *maṭhas* also conduct *dharma-pracāra* in the form of *Veda* classes, *śloka* classes, religious and spiritual lectures by competent scholars. Frequent interaction takes place between the branch heads and the Administrator aimed at developing the branch activities.

His Holiness mooted the idea of hosting seminars of Branch heads whereby there would be an opportunity for all the Branch heads to meet one another and exchange ideas. For instance, a two-day seminar was organised at Sringeri in February 2001.

In 2001, His Holiness said, "As the *pīṭhādhipati* of this *pīṭha*, my main aim is to spread *Sanātana-dharma*. You, the Branch Heads, are my representatives to carry out the duty of *Sanātana-dharma-pracāra*. To achieve this objective, *dhārmic* lectures must be arranged in all the branches. If hundred persons attend these lectures,

at least ten of them will be able to understand the message of the *Upaniṣads* and to know more about our culture. Those who are trained at our *pāṭhaśālās* are also spreading our glorious culture. All of you are striving hard to serve the *pīṭha*. I pray to the Lord to give you all more strength to conduct this sacred task of *Sanātana-dharma-pracāra*."

During a similar event organised in 2015, His Holiness, in his *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* said:

"It is the uniqueness of the *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sri Sharada Peetham at Sringeri, established by *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, to have had an *avicchinna-guru-paramparā* (unbroken *Guru-paramparā*), and to have had *Ācāryas* who have all been great scholars; are *sannyāsīs* of exemplary conduct and are ever intent on guiding disciples. Keeping *dharma-pracāra* (propagation of dharma) in mind, a number of branch-*maṭhas* also were founded such as the *maṭha* in Hampi (founded by *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyāranya*), Shivaganga (founded by the 24th *Ācārya*, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhārati*), etc. Over time, many branches also came to be founded over the past 150 years in various cities, towns and villages of the country, each functioning as centres of *dharma* for the *āstikas* therein. In recent times, the branch at Panchavati, Nasik is the oldest, having been established in the later part of the 18th century. The oldest known branch is at Kedar Ghat, Kashi where *Bhagavān Candramaulīśvara* was consecrated by *Jagadguru Śrī Vidyāranya* in the 14th century. Some of the relatively old branches were established during the time of my *Parāpara-guru*, the 32nd *Ācārya*, *Jagadguru Sri Vṛddha Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin*. These include the Pracheena Sringeri *maṭha* in Sultanpet, Bengaluru and the *maṭhas* in Georgetown, Chennai, in Amman Sannidhi Street, Madurai and in Tirunelveli town. Thereon, the 33rd *Ācārya*, *Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin* founded branches in Shankarapuram, Bengaluru and Kalady. The *maṭhas* in Mysore (Abhinava Shankaralaya) and Nanjangud came into existence during the time of my *Parama-guru*, *Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhārati Mahāsvāmin*. Many branches have been newly founded by the 35th *Ācārya*, my revered Guru, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* and during my time.

"It is no ordinary task to run and manage all these branches. Only people with devotion to the *Guru*, and firm faith in dharma can be given the responsibility of running these branches. All the branch heads assembled here have been rendering good service."

His Holiness blessed them all, invoking the Grace of Śrī Śāradāmbā to give them the ability to put in their best service.

Going Global

Towards the end of the twentieth century, Sri Sringeri *Maṭha* took a big step towards propagating *Sanātana-dharma* overseas and established its first affiliate outside India in New Jersey, USA. With His Holiness's blessings, the organization, named as Sringeri Vidya Bharathi Foundation, consecrated three full-fledged temples for Goddess Śāradā in Stroudsburg (Pennsylvania), Detroit (Michigan), and Houston (Texas) in 2008, 2019, and 2022, respectively. The foundation conducts *Atirudra-mahāyāgas* and *Śatacaṇḍī-yāgas*, *Mahārudra-yajña* and *Gāyatrī-japa homa* every year. In 2005, a similar foundation was instituted in Toronto, Canada with a community centre inaugurated in 2008 and a temple for Goddess Śāradā consecrated in 2010. The *Jagadguru's anugraha bhāṣaṇa* for the devotees in the USA and Canada were beamed live from Sringeri during the consecrations. Both the US and Canada centres conduct many *dhārmic* and cultural events and house a big library and a guesthouse with full-fledged *annadāna* scheme for all visitors, and a good facility for conducting annual *śrāddha*. A *gośālā* with a few cows also exists in Stroudsburg. One more temple is coming up in San Diego (California) to cater to devotees in the West Coast, thereby having temples along the four directions of the USA. During the *Navarātri* celebrations in Sringeri in 2013, His Holiness felicitated the Chairman of the foundation, Dr. Yegnasubramanian with the title "*Dharmātmā*" for his yeoman services to the propagation of *Vedic* studies and culture.



Goddess Sharada temple in Stroudsburg, PA, USA



Goddess Sharada temple in Toronto, Canada



Goddess Sharadamba temple at Detroit, Michigan, USA

Promoting Bhagavad Gītā

During the fifty-sixth *Vardhantī* celebrations of *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, the *Gītā jñāna yajña* was launched under which anyone who chants the eighteen chapters of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* from memory would be honoured with Rs.21,000. Three thousand candidates from all walks of life have participated in the scheme successfully. His Holiness blessed the candidates and encouraged them to follow the *dhārmic* path. As per His Holiness's direction, the *Bhagavad-gītā* book is available in *Sam̐skṛta* and Kannada for a very nominal price. Since 2017, *Gītā-jayanti* has been celebrated in a grand fashion at Sringeri.

Fostering Culture Through Arts

His Holiness gives great importance to the spread of traditional forms of music and arts towards spreading the culture of *Sanātana-dharma*. Every night, at the beginning of the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* by His Holiness, hymns composed by *Jagadgurus*, saints and eminent persons in *Samṣkṛta* and vernacular languages are sung. Concerts by artists of Carnatic and Hindustani music are regularly featured during the *Rāmanavamī* and *Navarātri* festivals at Sringeri. Major *dhārmic* events feature concerts by eminent musicians and are blessed by His Holiness with titles or made *āsthāna-vidvān* of Sri Sringeri *maṭha*.

To foster the tradition of *Kīrtanakāras* in Maharashtra, to spread Bhakti amidst the masses and the tenets of *Sanātana dharma* to the average person, *Kīrtanakār Sammelans* are an annual event organised under the auspices of the Sri Sringeri *maṭha*. His Holiness inaugurated the first Kirtankar Sammelan during the 2007 *vijaya-yātra* at Ahmed Nagar. Since then, annual *Sammelans* are held with the location of the *Sammelan* alternating between Sringeri and a suitable location in Maharashtra. Many elderly Kirtankars are honoured in this annual event while young and upcoming Kirtankars are fostered. The *Sadguru Śrī Tyāgabrahma Ārādhanā* Trust in association with Sri Sringeri *maṭha* instituted The annual *Bhāratī Tyāgarāja sammān* Awards to celebrate the contributions of *Saint Tyāgarāja* in music, drama, literature, and spiritual wisdom. During the 2015 *vijaya-yātra*, stalwarts of Indian classical music received the awards and were blessed by His Holiness and *Śrī Sannidhānam*. *Vedic* scholars are honoured every year at Thiruvaiyaru during the *Saint Tyāgarāja Ārādhanā*.



Eminent Musicians honoured by His Holiness

With the blessings of His Holiness, Bhajans and Namavalis in *Samṣkr̥ta* and vernaculars written by *Vāggeyakāras* and saints have been published along with audio. Instruments for performing Bhajans are also distributed freely for new *satsaṅgas* to be performed under the name “*Śāradā-Śaṅkara-Bhakta-Maṇḍalī*.”

Nation Building

All the *Ācāryas* of the Sringeri *Guru parampara* have stressed the concept of “One India.” *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* treated *Bhārata* as one entity. Sri Bhagavatpada led the national integration by appointing *Jagadguru Śrī Sureśvarācārya*, who hailed from Bihar, as the first *pīṭhādhipati* of the Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham in the South, *Jagadguru Śrī Padmapādācārya* from the South as the *pīṭhādhipati* of the *Puri Govardhana pīṭha* in the East, *Jagadguru Śrī Toṭakācārya* from the South as the *pīṭhādhipati* of *Badri Jyotirpīṭha* in the North, and *Jagadguru Śrī Hastāmalakācārya* from the South as the *pīṭhādhipati* of the *Dwaraka Kalika pīṭha* in the West. It is noteworthy to observe that, of the four disciples, three are from the South, yet *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* installed *Śrī Sureśvarācārya* from Bihar as the first *pīṭhādhipati* in Sringeri in the South.

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya Statue at Kedarnath

In a fitting tribute *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi dedicated the statue of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* at Kedarnath, where the *Jagadguru* ended the sacred mission of His *avatāra*. Upon invitation from the Chardham Board of Uttarakhand, the Sringeri *maṭha* sent a representative to Kedarnath to be present on this important occasion and to convey the *Śrīmukham* (benedictory message) of the Sringeri *Jagadguru* to the Hon’ble Prime Minister and also to offer *Seva* at the *Jyotirlinga kṣetram* of Kedarnath.

Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya Statue at Omkareshwar

The State Government of Madhya Pradesh, headed by Chief Minister Sri Shivaraj Singh Chouhan, constituted the Acharya Shankar Sanskritik Ekta Nyas with His Holiness as the patron. With His blessings, a 108-foot tall statue of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* was constructed in September 2023 on the banks of river Narmada in Omkareshwar, in Madhya Pradesh, to commemorate the meeting of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* and his Guru, *Śrī Govinda Bhagavatpāda*.

One Nation One People That is “India”

Sringeri *Jagadgurus* have always given high priority to national integration and advised that one should view oneself as an Indian first. The impartial outlook of the *Jagadgurus* of Sringeri makes Sri Sharada Peetham a favourite divine destination for many luminaries seeking guidance. In the olden days, Maharajas of Mysore, Gwalior, Varanasi, and Travancore visited Sringeri seeking the *Jagadguru's* blessings. In recent times, descendants from these royal families continue to visit Sringeri for *darśana* and guidance.

Presidents, Prime Ministers, Governors, Chief Ministers, important political leaders, and high-level Government and Court officials often visit Sringeri to seek the blessings and guidance of the *Jagadgurus*.

Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin, like His predecessors, travelled the length and breadth of India spreading *Sanātana dharma* and emphasizing the concept of “Indianness” wherever He visited. In every state, Chief Ministers and leading political leaders visit the *Jagadguru's* camp to pay obeisance and seek guidance from His Holiness. During one of the camps in 1985,



President Zail Singh with His Holiness



President R Venkataraman receiving Prasadam



President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma being honoured by His Holiness



President Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma with His Holiness during inauguration of Sri Sharada Krupa at Sringeri



President Dr Abdul Kalam with His Holiness



President Smt. Pratibha Patil with His Holiness



President Ram Nath Kovind with His Holiness



Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi with His Holiness



Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao with His Holiness



Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee with His Holiness



Prime Minister Sri H.D. Deva Gowda with His Holiness



Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi with His Holiness

President Zail Singh came to pay obeisance and seek the blessings of His Holiness. When *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* visited Delhi in 1995, President Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma received His Holiness at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and performed *pādapūjā*. Incidentally, *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* conferred the title of “*Rāṣṭra-ratna*” upon Dr. Sharma when he visited Sringeri in April 1993. This honor has been given only to the Presidents of India and only three have been honoured with this title. While in office, Presidents Sri R. Venkatraman in 1992, Smt. Pratibha Patil in 2009, and Sri Ram Nath Kovind in 2021 visited Sringeri and had *darśana* of Goddess *Śāradāmbā* and *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. President Dr. Abdul Kalam visited Sringeri in 2009. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi came to the Chennai camp in 1988 for his first *darśana* of His Holiness and in 1989 visited Sringeri at the time of *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin* Siddhi. Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Sringeri twice in 1977 and 1991. In 1991, he visited Sringeri to have a *darśana* of *Śrī Śāradāmbā* and *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao also invited His Holiness to his official residence in 1995 and performed *pādapūjā*. Former Prime Minister Sri Deve Gowda is an ardent disciple of the *Jagadgurus* and a frequent visitor to Sringeri. The *Jagadguru's* blessing is always the same, “Follow the *dhārmic* Way” for the betterment of the country.

Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham is always responsive to Government requests for performing important *pūjās* for the welfare of the country. At the request of the Central Government, His Holiness sent six priests from Sri Sharada Peetham to officiate in the *bhūmi-pūjā* during the foundation-laying ceremony for the new Parliament Building on 10th December 2020. The Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi also received *prasādas* sent by the *Jagadguru*. Sringeri priests again went to New Delhi on May 28, 2023, to conduct the puja and homa ceremonies *homa/pūjā* for the inauguration of the new Parliament Building. Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi participated in the *pūrṇāhuti* of the *homa*. Sringeri Math CEO Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar presented a special golden Kamadhenu, blessed by the *Jagadgurus* of Sringeri Sharada Peetham to the Prime Minister.

During the pandemic, His Holiness and *Śrī Sannidhanam* urged all devotees to chant *Śrī Durgā Parameśvarī Stotra* to create favorable health and spiritual climate in the country. His Holiness has always respected the “Rule of Law” and implores everyone to do the same.

When the lockdown was imposed, the Sringeri *maṭha* with the blessings of Their Holinesses, took a number of measures to contribute to society. These include *annadāna* at various branches across the country, supporting *Vaidikas* as well as the needy from different strata of society, supporting students from economically weaker backgrounds, providing health service to those affected by covid as well as cooperating with & assisting the Government driven efforts in offering critical care through our affiliated hospitals and health care centres.

Societal Welfare – Health and Education

Besides the sustenance and propagation of *Sanātana dharma*, the *pīṭha* also has made major contribution towards the welfare of the society primarily in terms of healthcare and education with the blessings of His Holiness.

Societal Welfare: Health

With the Blessings of *Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*, Rangadore Memorial Hospital (Multi-specialty) was started in 2007 in Bangalore. The Rangadore Memorial Hospital, Sharada Rotary Dental and Eyecare Services, Sri Shankara Cancer and Research Centre, and Rajarajeshwari Memorial Hospital at Guntur were established to provide quality healthcare at affordable cost.

PNNM Ayurveda Medical College at Shoranur in Kerala functions under the auspices of the *pīṭha*. The college offers programmes such as BAMS (Bachelor of *Āyurvedic* Medicine and Surgery), postgraduate degree in *Āyurveda* and *Śalya-tantra* and a paramedical certificate course for *Pañcakarma* therapists. It houses a full-fledged teaching hospital and college and is equipped with all modern facilities.



Sri Sharada Dhanvantri Hospital

In 1979, Sringeri Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin set up a hospital to cater to the needs of the people in and around Sringeri Taluk. Four decades later, the need for a hospital with state of the art facilities was felt to service not only people in and around Sringeri, but also neighbouring taluks as well as the large number of pilgrims who visit Sringeri. In accordance with the many healthcare initiatives of the *maṭha*, the multi-speciality hospital having the sacred name of the Jagadguru was proposed to focus on providing quality healthcare at affordable cost. Many charitable activities will be part of the hospital with the first ones being offering free cataract surgery and providing dialysis facilities at highly subsidised cost.



Mobile medical facility for neighbouring villages of Sringeri



Rangadore Memorial Hospital

With the blessings of Sringeri Jagadguru Shankaracharya Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahasannidhanam, Jagadguru Sri Sannidhanam inaugurated Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Multi-specialty Hospital in Sringeri on December 11, 2022. The hospital is affiliated to the SAVMPSJC (Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Mahaswamigal Peetharohana Silver Jubilee Celebration) Medical Foundation and is mentored by the Rangadore Memorial Hospital, Bengaluru (run with the support of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham Charitable Trust). The Sharada Nursing Institute, Sringeri, enables girls to get trained as qualified nurses. Sri Sharada Rotary Eye Care in Bengaluru, have performed about 40,000 free cataract operations for people in 7 districts in Karnataka.



Blessing needy with tricycles



Blessing needy womenfolk with tailoring machines



Sharada Nursing Institute, Sringeri



Blessing the Visually challenged

Societal Welfare: Education

Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham provides financial and logistical support to many schools in and around Sringeri. The children of Sringeri have been immensely benefitted by the *Vidyā-nidhi* Knowledge Centre that imparts free computer education. The Jnanodaya School in Bengaluru, affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), is a premier school run by the *pīṭha*. The Jnanodaya Pre-University College affiliated to the Karnataka State Board of Education and a pre-school block are also run by the *pīṭha*. The institutions aim at providing value-based and quality education and adopt a comprehensive approach for the overall development of the children. The Jnanodaya School at Dombivili, Maharashtra and Bharathi Vidyalaya at Chennai also function under the auspices of the *pīṭha*.

The *pīṭha* has also laid special emphasis in fostering education at Kalady, the birthplace of *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*. Sree Shankara College, run



Jnanodaya School at Bengaluru

by the Shankara College Association, functions with the objective of helping students achieve excellence in higher education, with a stress on creativity, personal values, and human development. Various baccalaureate and masters' degrees are offered here. The Adi Shankara Trust established under the patronage of His Holiness expanded the educational activities by starting Sree Sarada Vidyalaya (CBSE Higher Secondary School) in the year 1993, Adi Shankara Institute of Engineering and Technology in the year 2000 and Adi Shankara Training College in 2005. Currently, over six thousand students attend this campus. The Trust runs these educational institutions



Sri Sharada Institute of Indian Management - Research



Sri Shankara Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

to nurture Kalady as a cultural citadel with a bearing on knowledge dissemination and community development.

Recognizing the growing significance of value orientation to business, the *pīṭha* established Sri Sharada Institute of Indian Management Research in 1996 to impart the lofty ideals of character-building to future corporate managers.

The *pīṭha* also supports various high schools in and around the Sringeri Taluk with financial aid and/or providing infrastructure. Recognising that healthy nutritious food improves learning ability, Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham provides midday meals to schools in and around Sringeri every day. For the last twenty-five years, thousands of students have been fed midday meals every day.

'Socare Ind,' Bengaluru is an institution affiliated to the *Maṭha* and runs separate hostels for boys and girls. The children here number over two hundred and fifty and are children of lifetime convicts. This pioneering initiative has won a special award from the US-based Resources Recovery Project. Accommodation, food, education, and clothing are given free to these children. There is also a branch of this unit functioning in Kalaburagi. The Information Resources Centre, Bengaluru, counsels, and trains parents of Autistic and special children, besides providing data on suitable schools, therapists, and other relevant information. It also conducts certificate courses under various categories to help teachers and parents. The *pīṭha* also operates the Shankara Rotary Library for Children, Bengaluru, offering reference books, Internet access and vocational activities in association with the Rotary Club of Bengaluru.

Streamlining *Maṭha* Administration

The activities of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham are being managed by the Administrator who holds a general power of attorney and acts on behalf of His Holiness. The Administrator is assisted by a chain of staff in maintaining the day-to-day affairs. Dr. V.R. Gowrishankar, a resolute management professional, has been the Chief Executive Officer and Administrator of Sringeri Sri Sharada Peetham for over three decades. Meticulously serving the Guru and the *Maṭha*, Sri Gowrishankar has been instrumental in successfully implementing all the major projects that the *pīṭha* has seen ever since the *Jagadguru* took over in 1989 as the thirty-sixth pontiff. Pleased with his competent services, the *Jagadguru* has blessed him with the title, 'Guru Seva Dhurina.' In recognition of his successful implementation of

numerous social welfare projects, the State government of Karnataka presented him with their second highest civilian award namely '*Rājyotsava-praśasti*' in 2003, and subsequently the Government of India honoured him with the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2008.

Compassionate Jagadguru

The *pīṭha* employs many staff to manage its numerous *dhārmic* activities. His Holiness is very compassionate to all the staff of the *Maṭha*. Under His Holiness's blessings, the *Maṭha* has improved living quarters, salary structure, and other amenities for the staff.

His Holiness's compassion extends to all living beings. Sri Sringeri *Maṭha* gently cares for elephants, deer, horses, and cows. His Holiness is very fond of these animals and quite often feeds the animals Himself. While it is difficult for us to tell



His Holiness performs Go Puja on Deepavali day at Srisailam



His Holiness with Cow Lakshmi



His Holiness affectionately feeding the elephant



His Holiness feeds the deer named Sita

the cows apart, His Holiness can identify each cow by its name. The *Jagadguru's* sensing of events amazes even those who are closely serving him. Whenever an animal is in distress, His Holiness senses the problem and alerts His personal staff to check the status of the animal.

Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin strongly advocates practice of *ahimsā* towards the animals. According to His Holiness, “*Go-saṃrakṣaṇa* is a *dharma* and everyone should practice it. Respect for cow is part of our Vedic culture. The concept of “*Atmaupamyā*¹⁰” should be applied in our treatment of all living beings.”

Ease of Access: Guru-nivāsa

As the number of visiting devotees shot up exponentially over the years, there was a need for a bigger hall for the *darśana* of the *Jagadguru* and for sitting comfortably and witnessing the *pūjā* performed by His Holiness in the night. The need was also felt for making available a big residential place for His Holiness. Keeping this in mind, in 2001, it was decided to construct a spacious building of ten thousand sq. ft hall with a dome, precast roof and an annexe as the private residence of His Holiness. The structure is unique and one of its kind anywhere. The awe-inspiring building named “*Guru-nivāsa*,” adjacent to *Śrī Saccidānanda-vilāsa*, inside *Narasimhavana* was completed and dedicated on 8th May 2003.



Guru Nivas

10 Treating all living beings as one would treat oneself.

Annadāna Seva

Sringeri *Maṭha* has been providing free food as *Śrī Śāradāmbā's* Prasada to the thousands of devotees visiting the *Maṭha*. The *Maṭha* has a massive dining hall named '*Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha prasāda*.' Dedicated on



Nithya Annadana at Sri Bharathi Theertha Prasada

4th November 1999 for the use of visiting devotees and pilgrims. Every year, over twenty lakhs of pilgrims visit the dining hall to partake *Śrī Śāradāmbā's prasāda*. A separate fund – '*Sringeri-Śrī-Śāradā-nitya-annadāna-nidhi*' – has been set up and to support the expenses of providing food to the visiting pilgrims.

Facilitating Stay in Sringeri

The Sringeri *Jagadguru* has been the life-activating force for millions of devotees who have an emotional link with the *pīṭha* and the *Jagadguru*. Soon after taking over the role as the *Jagadguru* of Sri Sharada Peetham, His Holiness felt the need for additional guest houses to meet the accommodation requirements of the ever-increasing number of devotees and pilgrims visiting Sringeri. With the blessings of His Holiness, guesthouses named '*Sri Sharada Krupa*,' '*Yatri Nivas*,'



Sri Bharathi Theertha Krupa

However tight or monotonous His schedules are, His Holiness attends to all His *Pīṭhādhipati* duties with admirable enthusiasm and sincerity

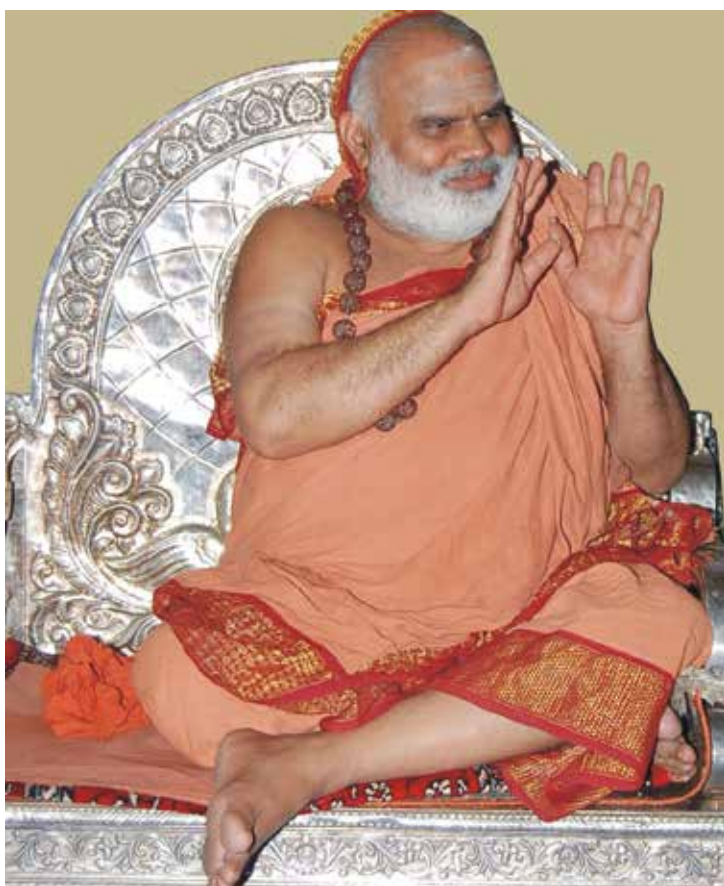
'Sri Shankara Vijaya,' and 'Sri Bharathi Theertha Krupa' were built to accommodate visiting pilgrims.

The *Jagadguru* leads by setting an example for others to follow *dhārmic* life. Despite His busy *Pīṭhādhipati* and *Sannyāsī* responsibilities, He gives *darśana* every day to all the pilgrims and offers appropriate advice for them to lead a productive life.

However tight or monotonous His schedules are, His Holiness attends to all His *Pīṭhādhipati* duties with admirable enthusiasm and sincerity, keeping in mind not only the rich traditional values of the Sringeri *Guru parampara* but also the great responsibility entrusted to Him by none other than His peerless preceptor, *Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. It would be only fitting to complete this chapter recollecting what His Holiness reverentially recalled during His historic discourse on the 23rd January 2015, the day when He granted *Sannyāsa* to His successor-designate:

"My Guru initiated me into Sannyāsa in 1974 and made me His successor-designate. He had a far-reaching vision. I was born in Andhra Pradesh. I was not aware of this region's history and culture. Neither did I know the history of this Pīṭha nor was I conversant with the traditions and practices of this region. In such a situation, He made me His successor-designate. He taught me all these aspects that I just mentioned, and He appointed me to safeguard this Pīṭha. I am happy that I have lived up to His expectations with which He made me His successor-designate. My Guru's expectation was that I would work for the development of this pīṭha, discharge my duty for the benefit of the people, preserve and propagate dharma, and that my efforts would contribute to the development of this country. Today, those who have witnessed the work that has been done thus far are content that the expectations of my Guru have been met, and this is all due to my Guru's grace. I reiterate that it would be foolish to think that this is all my doing. Nothing is my doing. It is only due to the grace of my Guru and the grace of Goddess Śāradā. I thought of my Guru and Goddess Śāradā when I encountered problematic situations. All such issues were solved. What appeared to be impossible tasks became just as simple as moving a flower from one place to another. I know this for sure."

An ideal *Jagadguru* indeed!



My Guru's expectation was that I would work for the development of this pīṭha, discharge my duty for the benefit of the people, preserve and propagate dharma, and that my efforts would contribute to the development of this country. Today, those who have witnessed the work that has been done thus far are content that the expectations of my Guru have been met, and this is all due to my Guru's grace.





Chapter 12

THE VIJAYA YATRAS

The *vijaya-yātrās* of the Sringeri *Jagadguru* are harbingers of great events and accomplishments towards the cause of *Sanātana-dharma*. When we look back at His Holiness's illustrious life, we realise that His Holiness Himself was influenced greatly and drawn towards His revered Guru during the latter's *vijaya-yātrās*. Likewise, His Holiness's impact on the followers of *Sanātana-dharma* is evidenced from the way that He undertakes and conducts a *vijaya-yātrā*.

During a *vijaya-yātrā*, His Holiness almost always travels by road in the afternoon hours from 3:30pm to 6:00 pm in order that none of His *anuṣṭhānas* are disturbed. His Holiness reaches the intended destination and graces the thousands of devotees welcoming him by travelling in a procession to enable all of them to have His *darśana* at once. He then graces a *Guru-vandana-sabhā* or *Svāgata-sabhā*. After *dhūli-pādapūjā* is performed by the senior most devotee of the town,



His Holiness is welcomed formally with a citation following which His Holiness blesses devotees with His benedictory discourse. In His own inimitable style, His Holiness would expound on various aspects of *dharma* and *Vedanta* to enlighten the devotees. Oftentimes, His Holiness would recount the historic connection between *Śringerī* and the town by recalling His previous visits and would even remember the visits of His predecessor *Ācāryas*. Thereafter, His Holiness would fulfil the time-honoured tradition of performing *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* and bless the devotees. In the mornings, His Holiness would grace various *dhārmic* institutions in the town, and then grant *darśana* to all who come to behold Him. Amidst all these interactions, His Holiness would never forego His *anuṣṭhānas* that include various *mantra-japas*, *pūjās*, *dhyāna*, *bhāṣya-pārāyaṇa* or the time allocated for teaching śāstra texts.

Packed Schedule

His Holiness's schedule during a *vijaya-yātrā* is often more packed than his busy general daily routine at *Śringerī*. There are days during the *vijaya-yātrā* when His Holiness dedicates nearly all His time for *dhārmic* events.

His Holiness' schedule on November 23, 2012, at Sharada Nagar in Shamshabad¹ was one such instance. At 6:30 am on that day, after completing His early morning *snāna* and *anuṣṭhānas*, His Holiness first went to Sampath Nagar in Shamshabad, had *snāna* again and performed the *Pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka* of *Sri Prasanna Vinayaka temple*. At 8 am, He performed the *Śikhara-kumbhābhiṣeka* of the temple.

Returning to Sharada Nagar, His Holiness again had *snāna* at 9 am, and performed the elaborate *Pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka* of various deities at the new *Sringeri Shankara-maṭha* in Shamshabad. The deities included *Śrī Candramaulīśvara*, Goddess *Śāradā*, *Śrī Mahāgaṇapati*, *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara*, *Śrī Subrahmaṇya*, *Śrī Gopala Kṛṣṇa* and *Navagrahas*. At 11:30 am, His Holiness performed the *Śikhara-kalaśābhiṣekas* atop the *Vimānas* of *Śrī Candramaulīśvara* and Goddess *Śāradāmbā*. From noon till about 2 pm, His Holiness gave *darśana* to the large number of devotees, enquiring their well-being, giving them succour, guidance or spiritual counsel as per their needs, and blessed them. Thereafter, His Holiness proceeded for His afternoon *snāna*, *anuṣṭhānas* and *bhikṣā*. At 3:30 pm, His Holiness gave special *darśana* to all the *Ṛtviks* involved in the above *kumbhābhiṣekas* and blessed them. At 4 pm, the Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court, Sri Pinaki Chandra Ghose arrived at

¹ Hyderabad-suburb located in the then undivided Andhra Pradesh and presently in Telangana

Shamshabad and had *darśana*² of His Holiness. Due to the events of the morning, His Holiness could not impart the regularly-scheduled morning lessons in the *Tarka-śāstra* to the *vidyārthīs* who were travelling as part of His retinue. Not wishing to skip a day, His Holiness imparted the *Tarka-śāstra* lessons from 4:45 pm to 6:00 pm.

At 6:15 pm, His Holiness arrived at the temple complex of the *maṭha* and graced the public function commemorating the *kumbhābhiṣeka*. After blessing various devotees and dignitaries who made the event possible, His Holiness stated that the *kumbhābhiṣeka* has provided a wonderful opportunity for the *āstikas* in the region for receiving the *anugraha* of Goddess Śāradāmbā. He explained that temples exist for the majority of mankind that has not realised the omnipresence of *Bhagavān*, and help us to focus our minds on the deity.

By 7:45 pm, His Holiness went for His evening *snāna* and *anuṣṭhānas* and by 8:30 pm, commenced the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā*. The day being a Friday, His Holiness also performed the *Śrīcakra-pūjā*.

His Holiness's day that commenced well before 4:00 am featured two *kumbhābhiṣekas* from 6:30 am, *darśana* to devotees, special *darśanas* to *Ṛtviks* and the Chief Justice of the state, the regular *śāstra* class, a grand public function and many elaborate *pūjās*, and finally ended at 10 pm.

Fostering Tirtha Kshetrams



Jagadguru worships Sri Dagaduseth Ganapati

His Holiness has always stressed the importance of temples for the local welfare and the need to support temple activities. During His *vijaya-yātrās*, His Holiness has performed special pujas for the welfare of the country at various important temples located in *Tirtha-kṣetrams* such as Rameswaram, Srisailam, Varanasi, Ujjain, Gokarna, Somnath, Nasik,

2 Such eminent dignitaries had *darśana* because His Holiness was to leave Shamshabad the following day and enter the state capital, Hyderabad. A few days earlier, the Governor of the state, His Excellency Sri ESL Narasimhan also had a *darśana* of His Holiness to welcome Him to Hyderabad.



His Holiness offering prayers at Shri Mahalakshmi Temple, Mumbai

Jamnagar (Gujarat), Pandharpur, Kolhapur, Siddhi-Vinayak Temple in Mumbai, Ellora (Ghrishneshwar), Mookambika in Kollur, Palani, Tiruchendur, Vemulawada, Kaleswaram etc. His Holiness has also offered special worships at Tirupati, Kanyakumari, Srikalahasti, Bhadrachalam, Vadakkunnathan Temple (Thrissur), Anantapadmanabha Swami temple (Thiruvananthapuram), Guruvayur, Thiruvannamalai, Madurai and Tiruttani.

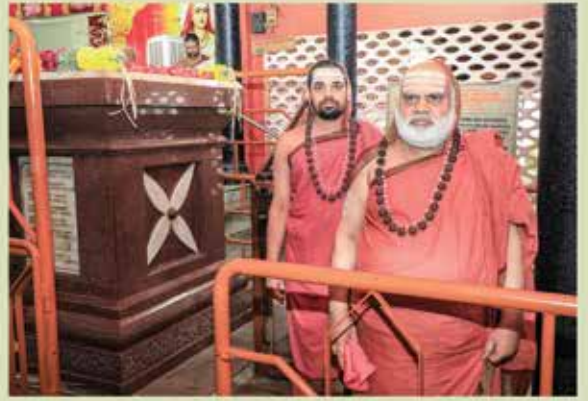
His Holiness has made many visits to Rameswaram as it is designated as the "*kṣetram*" for Sringeri by *Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*. The first few

visits were along with His revered Guru. In 2001, His Holiness conducted the *kumbhābhiṣeka* of Sri Ramanatha Swamy temple by undertaking a week-long *yātrā*. During an earlier *vijaya-yātrā* in 1986, His Holiness observed *Mahāśivārātri* at Rameswaram. His Holiness also visited Rameswaram in 2012 during the 14-month long *yātrā* in south India and in 2017 along with Sri Sannidhanam. During each of these occasions, His Holiness was accorded a ceremonial reception by the people of Rameswaram. After the customary *dhūli-pādapūjā*, a unique *Samūha-pādapūjā* is performed in accordance with tradition that stretches back over a millennium. This is performed by six families representing the three Tamil *brāhmaṇa* communities of *Bṛhaccharaṇam*, *Vadamā*, *Aṣṭasahaśram* and the three *brāhmaṇa* communities hailing from Maharashtra, Andhra and the *Mādhva* community. The local Muslim community also makes it a point to offer their respects to His Holiness. During every visit, His Holiness has offered special *pūjās* to *Lord Śrī Rāmanātha Svāmī* and *Sri Parvatavardhinī*.

Ever since the time of *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*, a special strong bond exists between Tiruchendur Subrahmanya Swamy Temple and *Śrīṅgerī Maṭha*. In 1983, upon receiving the invitation of the temple authorities for the *kumbhābhiṣeka*, His Holiness arrived at the holy town of Tiruchendur. The *kumbhābhiṣeka* was performed in the divine presence of His Holiness on June 27, 1983. Devotees from all over



Performing puja to Sri Siddhi Vinayaka at Mumbai



Ubhaya Jagadgurus at Aryamba Samadhi at Kalady



His Holiness after Darshan of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala



Puja to Vishnupada at Gaya



Jagadguru worships Lord Nandikeshwara at Mallikarjuna Temple



Jagadguru at Sri Panduranga Vitthal shrine, Pandharpur



His Holiness performs Sri Chandramouleeshwara Puja inside Rameswaram temple



Jagadguru performing Puja to Jyotir Linga at Triambakeshwar

India had *darśana* of Lord Subrahmanya Swamy and His Holiness. During the 2017 *yātrā*, His Holiness dedicated a *granite maṇḍapa* (Ānanda-vilāsa-maṇḍapa) which Lord Shanmukha (the *Utsava-mūrti*) will adorn during various festivals.

The Krishna temple at Kalady, the birthplace of Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda* acquires special significance because the deity is the family deity of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. The temple is located to the west side of the Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Janmabhūmi Kṣetram* in the Śrīṅgerī-*maṭha* at Kalady. During His visit to Kalady, His Holiness performs special *pūjā* at the Sri Krishna Temple.

Tirumala, Tirupati deserves a special mention. Whenever His Holiness visits Tirumala, He is received by the Executive Office of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams and religious authorities and given the special ceremonial *Istikapāl Svāgatam* by the *arcakas* of the temple. The *vastram* offered by the Jagadguru is placed on Lord *Venkaṭeśvara* and His Holiness performs *cāmara-sevā* to the Lord. Prior to the Jagadguru's visit in 2012, Tirumala was facing acute water shortage due to prolonged drought. Immediately after the Jagadguru's visit, Tirumala received copious rain to the joy of everyone.

A Fillip to Vedic Dharma

During the *vijaya-yātrās*, His Holiness has inspired the conduct of many events that foster the Vedic tradition and the culture of *Sanātana-dharma*.

For instance, on January 15, 2013, His Holiness presided over the Srinivasa Veda Sadas organised by the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) in Rajahmundry in Andhra Pradesh. The then Executive Officer of TTD, Sri L V Subramanyam recounted that it was at the directive of the Sringeri Jagadguru that the TTD had arranged the program in Rajahmundry, bringing in thousands of Vedic scholars. A Śāstra-*sadas* involving great Vidwans such as Vidwan Ramanuja Tatacharya, Darshanalankara Vidwan Vishwanatha Gopalakrishna Shastri took place with six scholars giving an introduction in simple Telugu to the six āstikas-darśanas—*Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣikā*, *Yoga*, *Sāṅkhya*, *mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta*. A number of elderly scholars were honoured on the occasion. In His *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa*, the Jagadguru spoke about the importance of the Vedas, the need to study the śāstra and to direct one's life along the path of *dharma*. His Holiness also makes it a point to grace various *Veda-pāṭhaśālās* in the regions covered during the *vijaya-yātrā* and honour *Vedic* scholars resident in every town and village.

His Holiness regularly organises programs to foster not only scholars of the *vedas* and *śāstra*, but also poets and practitioners of fine arts who spread the culture and tradition amidst the masses.

Beyond Physical Discomforts

The intense dispassion of His Holiness is noted by many during *vijaya-yātrās*. Be it rain or shine, the activities and engagements of His Holiness directed towards public welfare never cease. Despite the difficulties posted by climatic changes, His Holiness never gives up his rigorous schedule during *vijaya-yātrās*.

For instance, His Holiness halted at Thoothukudi in southern Tamil Nadu for the first 3 days of May during the 2012 *yātrā*. His Holiness performed *Punaḥ-pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka* of Lord *Bālā-venkatācalapati*, Goddess *Śāradā* and *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* at the Sringeri Shankara *Maṭha* at Thoothukudi. His Holiness also visited a temple, a Bhajana-*maṭha*, and gave benedictory discourses to devotees on every day. With the final day at Thoothukudi being *Nṛsiṃha-jayantī*, His Holiness also performed a special *pūjā* there. Many thousands of devotees had his *darśana* and received his blessings. However, except for a few attendants, no one knew that





the 61-year old śarīra (physical body) of His Holiness was running a temperature. When an attendant to His Holiness tried to dissuade His Holiness from following the normal schedule and requested His Holiness to rest, His Holiness stated, “The illness is only for the śarīra. We must all engage in our ordained duties to the extent possible. Our primary intent in undertaking *yātrās* is to ensure that people receive the message of *dharma* and channel their lives accordingly. Hence instead of submitting to the needs of the śarīra, we must dedicatedly do what we have to. Everything else must be left to *Īśvara-saṅkalpa* (the will of God).” His Holiness then continued to engage calmly in all the *dhārmic* activities that had been planned in advance.

Likewise, during the same *yātrā*, due to a bad bout of cough in late December 2012, His Holiness could not speak even three continuous sentences without the cough disturbing his speech. Despite this discomfort, His Holiness continued to give regular benedictory discourses knowing fully well that devotees throng to listen to them. Despite the cough troubling His Holiness for a week, His Holiness blessed devotees at Basar (*Jñāna Sarasvatī Kṣetram*), Nirmal, Vemulawada (*Sri Rājarājeśvarā Svāmi Kṣetram*), Kaleshwaram (the *kṣetram* housing the twin

Śiva-liṅgas of *Kāleśvara* and *Mukteśvara*) and Chennur. On one occasion, His Holiness even expressed compassionately his concern that the devout listeners could get distracted by the incessant cough interrupting the flow of his discourses.

Devotion matters

His Holiness has undertaken several short *vijaya-yātrās* in Karnataka. Innumerable requests are received from people inviting His Holiness to their respective towns. His Holiness graces these requests and blesses them in his own inimitable way.

Once, His Holiness performed the *Pratiṣṭhā-kumbhābhiṣeka* of a massive twenty-seven foot monolith *Veera-hanumān* at Naguru in Kundapura Taluk on 26th January 2012. The construction of the temple had been executed by a local community of devotees led by Sri Hiriyanna Shetty with the blessings and guidance of His Holiness. Dr. Veerendra Heggade, Dharmadhikari of the famous Manjunathaswamy temple at Dharmasthala was also in attendance. In the public function after the *kumbhābhiṣeka*, he remarked, "I was initially surprised to learn His Holiness had readily consented to travel from Sringeri just to grace such a remote location. It has been a very long time since His Holiness came to Dharmasthala. However, I have realised that His Holiness does not always look at the significance of a



His Holiness at Mysore Palace



His Holiness at Vadakkunathan Kshetram

place to grace it. His Holiness has graced the occasion and blessed the people here because of their *Guru-bhakti* and *Bhagavad-bhakti*."

A few years later, in 2016, when His Holiness along with Śrī Sannidhānam undertook a *yātrā* to Dharmasthala, Sri Heggade again mentioned that he had personally observed on many occasions that His Holiness give utmost importance to *bhakti* and śraddhā in devotees and never to position, wealth or status.

Another beautiful example of His Holiness is His gracing the town of Chennur (present-day Telangana) during the year-long 2012-2013 *vijaya-yātrā*. His Holiness upon arriving at Chennur stated, "A devotee will have a sense of liberty with God. He will even quarrel with God. An ardent disciple too enjoys the same liberty & relationship with his Guru. My dear disciple, Sri Gattu Narahari Avadhani fought with me and has arranged for the camp at Chennur! Initially, there was no intention to camp here. Sri Avadhani came to Srisailam during my stay there & said that he does not wish to stay in Chennur anymore as I had no intention to grace the town! Out of his devotion, he even went on to say he would lay in front of the car that I travel in to persuade me to come here. His prime motive was that for thousands of people residing in Chennur to get the Sringeri Jagadguru's *darśana*, the Jagadguru

must grace the town. His devotion has brought his Guru here!" Sri Avadhani and his family went to the extent of moving out of their house to make arrangements for the stay of His Holiness and his retinue. Many such instances exist.

Likewise, His Holiness decided to grace the small town of Darsi in Andhra Pradesh in March 2013. The tour programme of His Holiness, decided a month earlier, did not include a stop at Darsi. However, due to an inconvenience for the organisers of a nearby town, the camp location was changed at the eleventh hour to Darsi with some devotees coming forward to organise the camp of His Holiness. When the evening of His Holiness's expected arrival came, thousands of devotees gathered to welcome His Holiness in great fervour and eagerly waited for His *darśana* as He entered the town. However, a procession to take His Holiness around the town had not been organised due to the short notice. When His Holiness arrived at Darsi, He instantly noted that many thousands had gathered on the main road of the town to have His *darśana*. The embodiment of compassion that He is, His Holiness immediately instructed the authorities who were part of His retinue to arrange a procession so that all the devotees could have *darśana*. The Jagadguru patiently waited by the roadside while the arrangements were made, and a grand procession then took place to the immense joy of devotees.



Reviving the Guru-Shishya connect

His Holiness along with Śrī Sannidhānam graced the town of Mahadanapuram near Kanyakumari during the 2017 *vijaya-yātrā*. At Mahadanapuram, His Holiness addressing the group of devotees said, "The similarities between the life of Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda* and the life of my *Parameṣṭhi-guru*, the 33rd Sringeri Ācārya, Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava *Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin* are worth remembering here. In the first decade of the 20th century, the Ācārya, having located Kalady, the birthplace of *Bhagavatpāda*, was travelling towards it to consecrate temples for *Bhagavatpāda* and Goddess Śāradāmbā there. When He traversed the Kanyakumari region as part of His *vijaya-yātrā*, the Ācārya was approached by a *gṛhastha* from a nearby *agrahāra* named Asramam (pronounced as 'Aashraamam') seeking blessings for his dumb boy. The Ācārya blessed the boy and he soon began talking. This incident has been compared to the similar and famous incident of *Bhagavatpāda* blessing the dumb young son of a *gṛhastha* in Sribali (present-day Karnataka). The boy, who had remained dumb till then, when questioned by *Bhagavatpāda* thus - 'कस्त्वं शिशो! कुत आगतोऽसि?' - *Kastvaṃ śiśo! Kuta āgato'si* - 'O Child! Who are you? Where have you come from?'. The boy broke his silence and rendered beautiful verses each ending with 'स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा' - *Sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā* - 'I am that Self



whose nature is Eternal Awareness.' *Bhagavatpāda* went on to accept the boy as His disciple under the name *Hastāmalaka*, implying that the Supreme Truth was easily available to him as if it were a gooseberry on his palm.

"The comparison of this incident of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya blessing Śrī *Hastāmalaka* with the incident of the 33rd Ācārya blessing the young boy (Vatu) from 'Aashraamam' and making him an eloquent speaker was made in a *Samskṛta* verse by the Śiṣya of the 33rd Ācārya – the great *jīvanmukta*, the 34th Ācārya, Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin in one of the many *stotras* composed upon His illustrious *Guru* (the 33rd Ācārya):

आश्रामवासिवटुमेकमभाषमाणं सम्भाषमाणमकरोत्त्वरितं कृपातः ।
श्रीशङ्करार्य इव यः स हि हस्तधात्रीं दृग्गोचरो भवतु देशिकराण्ममाशु ॥

Āśrāma-vāsi-vaṭum ekam abhāṣamāṇaṃ sambhāṣamāṇam akarot tvaritaṃ kṛpātaḥ.
Śrī-śaṅkarārya iva yaḥ sa hi hasta-dhātrīṃ dṛg-gocaro bhavatu deśikarāṇ-mamāśu..

"I remembered this incident and the power of grace of my *Parameṣṭhi-guru* as I entered Mahadanapuram, close to which Asramam (Aashraamam) is located."

As soon as Sri His Holiness finished narrating the miraculous incident, *Vedic-paṇḍitas* and *purohitas* from nearby Nagercoil such as Sri *Ghanapāṭhī* Manikantha Sharma and his father Sri Nagaraja Vadyar mentioned with joy that they were a native of the *agrahāra* of Asramam and invited the Jagadgurus to grace the *agrahāra*. Further, these Vedic scholars, amazed by the incident that His Holiness narrated, and upon checking with some residents of the *agrahāra* found to their pleasant surprise that they themselves were descendants of the young boy who had been graced by His Holiness's *Parameṣṭhi-guru*, the 33rd Sringeri Ācārya, Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava *Nṛsiṃha Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin*.

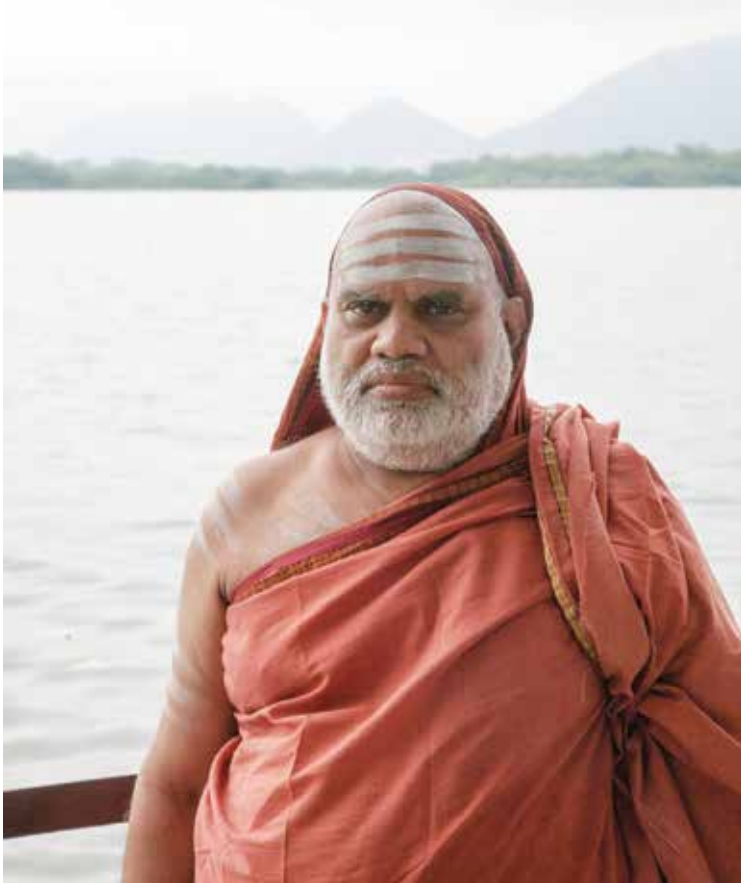
The young boy had grown up to become a person with thorough Vedic knowledge. The name of this Vedic scholar was Sri Ramaswamy Dikshitar and he was also popularly known as "Oomai Iyer" (the one who cannot speak). The reason for his being called so and the miraculous incident that had occurred in his childhood where he had been the recipient of the Grace of the then Sringeri Jagadguru came to be realised by the present-day natives of Asramam (Aashraamam) only after His Holiness had mentioned it in detail in the *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa*.

Accepting the invitation of the residents, His Holiness and Śrī Sannidhānam graced Asramam the following evening. They blessed the residents of the *agrahāra* including the descendants and relatives of Sri Ramaswamy Dikshitar. A photograph of Sri Ramaswamy Dikshitar was also retrieved during this time and shown to the Jagadgurus. At Asramam, His Holiness blessed the devotees with an *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa*, arranged for the renovation of the Balakrishna Swamy temple³ there and directed the residents of the *agrahāra* to chant daily the Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda Aṣṭottara-Śata-nāmāvali*.

The Significance of Blessings

Often during a *vijaya-yātrā*, His Holiness's radiant presence and benign blessings would propel the recipient of the blessings to unexpected heights. During the 14-month-long all-India *vijaya-yātrā* in 1994-95, His Holiness had visited the Paramahamsi Ganga Ashram in Madhya Pradesh. This is the Ashram founded by the Śaṅkarācārya of Dwaraka and Badari *Pīṭhas*, Jagadguru Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin. During His Holiness's stay, *vidyārthīs* studying in the *ashram* also had *darśana* of His Holiness. Amongst those examined by His Holiness was a young *brahmacārī* named Sri Uma Shankar Pandey. The same *brahmacārī* was later initiated into *Sannyāsa* with the monastic name "Śrī Avimukteśvarānanda Sarasvatī" and became the Śaṅkarācārya of the Badari *Pīṭha* in 2022. Śrī Avimukteśvarānanda Sarasvatī jī Mahārāj has recounted the following, "When His Holiness arrived in Paramahamsi Ganga Ashram in 1994, His Holiness gave me the great blessing of placing His hands on my head and stated - 'You are My disciple'. My Guru, Jagadguru Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin, later explained this to me by saying that the Śaṅkarācāryas are not four (one each for the four *Pīṭhas* of Puri, Sringeri, Dwaraka and Badari) but it is the same Śaṅkarācārya that takes on different forms at the four *Pīṭhas*. Ever since, I have considered His Holiness also as my *Guru* and my mind is ever engrossed in His Lotus Feet." This instance of His Holiness blessing a *vidyārthī* by placing His hand on his head and the *vidyārthī* going on to head the Badari *Pīṭha* is testimony to the power of His blessings.

3 His Holiness contributed a big amount as Śāradā-prasāda towards the renovation of the temple. The residents delayed the start of the renovation activity due to the remoteness of the place. However, they were pleasantly surprised when they did commence it. People from all over the world who traced their roots back to the village contributed immensely. The *kumbhābhiṣeka* took place in 2021 with the blessings of His Holiness.



Likewise, Śrī Sannidhānam who accompanied His Holiness during the 2017 *Vijaya-yātrā* to Tamil Nadu and Kerala, beautifully stated in His *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* on the occasion of His Holiness' *Vardhantī* celebrations at Madurai, "The effect of our revered Guru's blessings is that the person who is now giving a discourse to you all, was sitting amidst you (the audience) listening to His Holiness's discourse during His Holiness's earlier *vijaya-yātrā* to Madurai in 2012. This shows the greatness of our revered Guru."





Chapter 13

DISENGAGEMENT & SECLUSION

When certain *Sannyāsīs* or *Maṭhādhipatis* came for darśana, His Holiness would sometimes remark that in accordance with His nature, He would have preferred to have remained an independent sannyāsī rather than head the Āmnāya-pīṭha at Sringeri. His Holiness would quote a verse or two from the *Kaupīna-pañcaka*¹, penned by Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, referring to the fortune associated with the frugal living of a renunciate, who lives under a tree, uses only his hands as the vessel to receive *bhikṣā* and rejects all wealth regarding them as useless as rags. His Holiness would then go on to add that He was heading the *Pīṭha* only to fulfil the responsibility assigned to Him by His revered Guru, Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin.

The greatest responsibility arguably of an Ācārya in the Sringeri *Guru-paramparā* set in motion by Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is to find his successor designate. His Holiness, in His own words, has affirmed with His characteristic humility many a time that He was able to choose and train Śrī *Sannidhānaṃ* by the sheer Grace of His revered Guru and Śrī Śāradāmbā.

Today, His Holiness spends most of His time in seclusion - fulfilling the ideal of a *sannyāsī* as expressed by Him quoting the above verse. His Holiness has gradually moved towards this state of total disengagement from the majority of activities designated for a *Pīṭhādhipati* in the years following the historic śiṣya-svikāra ceremony conducted in January 2015.

1 मूलं तरोः केवलमाश्रयन्तः पाणिद्वयं भोक्तुममन्त्रयन्तः ।
कन्थामिव श्रीमपि कुत्सयन्तः कौपीनवन्तः खलु भाग्यवन्तः ॥



The Same Guru in Two Forms

In the final week of January 2015, as devotees thronged Sringeri to have *darśana* of His Holiness and His newly anointed *śiṣya-svāmin*, His Holiness began instructing them that there was no difference between Himself and the newly initiated Śrī Sannidhānam.

However, everyone has the natural disposition to see differences. This included even those serving in the *maṭha*. Sometimes they behaved differently towards His Holiness and Śrī Sannidhānam. His Holiness would promptly correct them, even admonishing a few, but mostly pointing out the non-difference jovially or cordially. His Holiness would even quote from Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's *brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya* to drive home the fact that the same Guru graces in two forms. His Holiness would softly utter the words of Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya - भेदस्य उपासनार्थत्वात् अभेदे तात्पर्यात् - (bhedasya upāsanārthatvāt abhede tātparyāt) - implying "the differences in describing the Absolute Reality exist only for engaging in *upāsanā* (focussed worship). The essence lies in non-difference". With such an explanation, His Holiness would state that disciples must understand and apply this very principle towards Himself and Śrī Sannidhānam.

His Holiness's face would beam with joy whenever He mentioned this unique aspect of non-difference between the reigning *Śaṅkarācārya*, and his successor designate causing devotees to be enthralled and joyous. Devotees began feeling that they were fortunate to witness a reigning *Śaṅkarācārya* nurturing faith and devotion towards the *śiṣya-svāmin*, Śrī Sannidhānam, who would one day become the next *Śaṅkarācārya*. With Śrī Sannidhānam Himself showering great care and grace in their lives, devotees started cultivating immense bhakti towards Śrī Sannidhānam.

What everyone failed to realise then was that this impeccable nurturing of disciples and devotees to orient themselves towards the new Ācārya was the start of a total disengagement by His Holiness.²

2 Sri Tummalapalli Ramalingeswara Rao, an ardent disciple and editor of the Telugu Shankara Kripa magazine of the *Śrīngerī Maṭha*, has recorded a similar state of disengagement from His Holiness' revered Guru in the mid 1980s.

Passing on core traditions

It has been a practice over many centuries at the Sringeri maṭha for devotees, who come to the abode of the Ācārya, to receive the *tīrtha-prasāda* - the sacred water that was used to perform *abhiṣeka* during *pūjā* to *Bhagavān Śrī Candramaulīśvara*. Many a time, the Sringeri Jagadguru Himself distributes this *tīrtha-prasāda* to devotees. The day following the *śiṣya-svikāra*, His Holiness directed that devotees receive the *tīrtha-prasāda* from Śrī Sannidhānam.

With the annual *Mahāśivārātri* only a few weeks away, one night, Śrī *Mahāsannidhānaṃ* personally trained Śrī *Sannidhānam* in performing Śrī *Candramaulīśvara pūjā*. As Śrī Sannidhānam performed the *pūjā*, devotees witnessed Śrī *Mahāsannidhānaṃ* guide His dear disciple through the various steps of the *pūjā*, thus passing on one of the most important traditions of worshipping the sacred *Candramaulīśvara-liṅga*, upheld by the Sringeri Jagadgurus from the time of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.

Likewise, while Śrī *Mahāsannidhānaṃ* performed most of the elaborate *śrāvaṇa-somavāra* and *kārtika-somavāra pūjās*, He instructed Śrī Sannidhānam to perform His first *śrāvaṇa-somavāra-pūjā* in 2015 and first *kārtika-somavāra pūjā* in 2016 (on the *Vidyāśaṅkara-ārādhana* day). In 2017, Śrī *Mahāsannidhānaṃ* performed all the *śrāvaṇa-somavāra-pūjās* while Śrī Sannidhānam performed the *kārtika-somavāra pūjās*. Ever since, Śrī Sannidhānam has been performing the *somavāra pūjās* regularly.

As the years passed, Śrī *Mahāsannidhānaṃ* instructed Śrī Sannidhānam to take up worshipping Śrī Śāradāmbā on the sacred *Lalitā-pañcamī* day. Śrī Sannidhānam also began doing the annual *pūjās* at various temples such as Śrī *Kālabhairava*, Śrī *Kālikāmbā*, Śrī *Āñjaneya*, Śrī *Lakṣmī-narasimha* and Śrī *Sūryanārāyaṇa*.

By the time the *Śaran-navarātri* celebrations began in 2015 (*manmaṭha saṃvatsara*), His Holiness had also trained Śrī Sannidhānam in offering worship to Śrī Śāradāmbā. After His Holiness performed *pūjā* every day to Śrī Śāradāmbā during *Navarātri*, Śrī Sannidhānam too performed the *daily pūjās* to Śrī Śāradāmbā.

His Holiness graciously consented to the request of ardent devotees to conduct the *navarātri durbār* along with Śrī Sannidhānam. The joy of having beheld the two Jagadgurus in royal attire - Śrī *Mahāsannidhānaṃ* on the golden throne with

Śrī Sannidhānam on the silver throne - in front of Śrī Śāradāmbā, fills the hearts of all devotees to this day.

From the following year, Śrī Sannidhānam conducted the *durbār*. On the *Vijayadaśamī* day in 2016, Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ stated, “The tradition of the Sringeri Jagadguru conducting *durbār* during *Navarātri* has been in vogue in the *pīṭha* since the time of establishing the Vijayanagara empire in the 14th century. We had conducted the *durbār* last year along with the *Śiṣya-svāmin* for the sake of devotees. Our revered Guru had passed on the responsibility of conducting the *durbār* to me a couple of years after I had been initiated into *sannyāsa*, and our revered *Paramaguru* too had done the same even earlier. I am now following in the footsteps of the Guru and *Paramaguru* and have passed on the responsibility of conducting the *durbār* to our *Śiṣya-svāmin* (Śrī Sannidhānam).”

While conducting the *rathotsavas*, the Jagadgurus after attending the initial ceremonies on the *rathotsava* day arrive at the *Śaṅkarācārya* temple. It has become a practice for the Jagadgurus to sit in seclusion in the *ardha-maṇḍapa* of the temple and engage in *bhāṣya-pārāyaṇa* during the time the *utsava-mūrti* and *bali-mūrti* are taken and placed on the *Ratha*. Śrī Sannidhānam, facing the *mūrti* of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya and with His revered Guru by His side, reads passages from the *bhāṣya* with His Holiness listening to them. During the *Śaṅkarācārya rathotsava* in 2015, after the ceremonial invitation to conduct the *rathotsava* was offered, His Holiness directed Śrī Sannidhānam to conduct the *rathotsava* and returned to *Narasimha-vana*. Since then, Śrī Sannidhānam has been conducting the *rathotsavas*³.

The Vijaya-yātrā in Early 2018

In the first 3 years since the *śiṣya-svīkāra* (January 2015 to February 2018), Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ had undertaken a few *vijaya-yātrās*. Notable amongst these were the 45-day *yātrā* in 2015 in Karnataka and the 3 month long *vijaya-yātrā* in 2017 covering Tamil Nadu and Kerala. A *vijaya-yātrā* to the Telugu speaking states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was also on the anvil. In early 2018, a tour programme of the first leg of this proposed *yātrā* was published stating that after *mahāśivārātri*, Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ and Śrī Sannidhānam will start from Sringeri

3 When Śrī Sannidhānam undertook the independent *vijaya-yātrā* in 2018, His Holiness graciously conducted the *Śaṅkarācārya* and *Vidyāśaṅkara Rathotsava*.

on February 18, grace a few towns in Karnataka and then enter Telangana. As with the previous *yātrās*, the joy of devotees knew no bounds.

However, a couple of days before the *vijaya-yātrā* was to commence, news trickled out that Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ would not be undertaking the *vijaya-yātrā* and will remain in Sringeri. Śrī Sannidhānam would undertake the *yātrā*, the first one ever without accompanying His revered Guru. This news caused both confusion and shock. The tour programme officially published by the *maṭha* had stated that both the Ācāryas would undertake the *yātrā*. Arrangements had also been done in the first few towns including those in Telangana to receive both the Ācāryas. On hearing the news, devotees from these areas rushed to Sringeri. Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ received them with great compassion and informed them that it was but the *saṅkalpa* of Śrī Śāradāmbā that such a change had been effected. All these devotees were also given the reassurance that they would all be graced by Śrī Sannidhānam as they had been graced by every Sringeri Jagadguru in the past.

The afternoon of February 18 arrived. Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ first arrived from *Narasimha-vana* to Sri Sharadamba temple. Śrī Sannidhānam had *darśana* at the *adhiṣṭhānas* in *Narasimha-vana*, arrived at the northern bank of the *Tuṅgā*, had *darśana* of various temples and arrived at Śrī Śāradāmbā temple. The revered Guru and His beloved *śiṣya* were closeted in the temple for a few minutes. As the door leading into the *Garbha-gr̥ha* opened, both the Ācāryas stepped out with compassionate smiles. Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ had specially blessed Śrī Sannidhānam with the assurance that the grace of Śrī Śāradāmbā and Śrī *Candramaulīśvara* and His blessings would ensure that the success of the *vijaya-yātrā*. Both the Ācāryas then proceeded for *darśana* at Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya temple and Śrī *Toraṇa-gaṇapati* temple. Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ then graciously gave consent and blessings to His dear *śiṣya*, Śrī Sannidhānam to commence the *vijaya-yātrā*. It was a sight to behold for devotees who saw the two renunciates of the highest *paramahansa* order - the Jagadgurus guiding all mankind, and yet connected by the purest and strongest Guru-*śiṣya* bond. Śrī Sannidhānam then took the first few steps of His first ever independent *vijaya-yātrā*. The steps were taken with Śrī Sannidhānam walking backward facing Śrī *Toraṇa-gaṇapati* and the beaming compassion-filled countenance of the most revered Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ. His Holiness gave a final indication with His benevolence-radiating eyes to proceed. Śrī Sannidhānam immediately turned around and began taking steps in the forward direction thus commencing a historic *yātrā*.

At the first stop in Bhadravati the same evening, Śrī Sannidhānam was welcomed with great reverence. Śrī Sannidhānam began His benedictory discourse at Bhadravati with the following beautiful invocation highlighting His revered Guru's profound scholarship, dispassion, austerity and graciousness.

शास्त्राब्धिपारदृश्वानं सङ्गहीनं तपोनिधिम् ।
भजे श्रीभारतीतीर्थगुरुं भद्रौघदायकम् ॥

Śāstrabdhi-pāra-drśvānaṃ saṅga-hīnaṃ tapo-nidhim.
Bhaje Śrī-Bhāratī-Tīrtha-guruṃ bhadrāugha-dāyakam..

I pay obeisance to Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha, who has crossed the ocean of the śāstras, is free of attachment, is a treasure-trove of tapas and the bestower of all welfare.

Śrī Sannidhānam, paying such a homage to His revered Guru, had thus undertaken one of the foremost duties ordained by Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya - the undertaking of a *vijaya-yātrā* to spread the tenets of dharma. Śrī Sannidhānam continued His *vijaya-yātrā* exemplarily into the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. While at Guntur (June 2018), Śrī Sannidhānam in a benedictory discourse how His revered Guru had pointed out that certain duties can only be fulfilled by the reigning Śaṅkarācārya, "Our revered Guru, Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ had once explained to me one of *Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa's Brahma-sūtras* which states - "जगद्ध्यापारवर्जं प्रकरणादसन्निहितत्वाच्च – jagad-vyāpāra-varjaṃ prakaraṇād asannihitatvācca". The *sūtra* points out that while in essence, the *Paramātman* (Īśvara) and the *Jīvātman* are not different from each other, only Īśvara engages in certain actions in the empirical (*vyāvahārika*) plane. An instance of such an action is the creation of *Jagat* (the phenomenal ever-changing universe). Likewise, while the Guru may instruct the *śiṣya* to undertake certain ventures, for instance this *vijaya-yātrā* as His representative, certain actions can be undertaken only by the Guru in accordance with *sampradāya*. For instance, a śrīmukham for a *dhārmic* event conveying the benediction of the Sringeri Jagadguru is given only by Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ."

Śrī Sannidhānam completed His *vijaya-yātrā* and returned to Sringeri before the *cāturmāsya* period commenced. After *cāturmāsya* and *navarātri*, His Holiness Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ on the *vijayadaśamī* day gave a benedictory discourse stating, "About 8 months back, with the intent of upholding the *sampradāya* of

conducting *vijaya-yātrās*, I had directed *Svāmin* (Śrī Sannidhānam) to undertake a *yātrā* in Andhra and Telangana. Accordingly, the *Svāmin* had completed the *yātrā* in the most fitting manner and blessed all the disciples in the region to their great happiness.

“Before the *yātrā* commenced, a few devotees had come to me and said, ‘We are a little dejected that Your Holiness is not coming (to our towns on the *yātrā*)’. The very same people returned after the *Svāmin’s yātrā* and said, ‘We never felt that Your Holiness Śrī Mahāsannidhānam was not present during the *yātrā*. Such was the Grace showered by Śrī Sannidhānam upon us’.

“Such has been the impact Śrī Sannidhānam has had in the minds and hearts of disciples. I consider all of this as the Grace of Goddess Śāradāmbā, Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara *Bhagavatpāda*, and our revered Guru upon me.

“Now, in accordance with the necessity to grace North Karnataka and Maharashtra and bless devotees of the region after a gap of about 12 years, I, as per the divine inspiration received from my revered Guru, am directing the *Svāmin* to undertake a *vijaya-yātrā* in that region.”

Needless to say, Śrī *Sannidhānam* completed this 4-month *vijaya-yātrā* in a remarkable fashion and returned to Sringeri before *Mahāśivārātri* (February 2019).

Changes in the Vikārī Saṃvatsara

On April 6, 2019, the Yugādi day ushering in the lunar calendar year “*Vikārī*” (whose very name implies - ushering change), His Holiness arrived at the Śrī Śāradāmbā temple for darśana as per tradition. Devotees noted that His Holiness was wearing saffron robes without any zari (the silk border).

As the year chugged along, the first drastic change was observed during the week-long *Śaṅkara-jayanti* celebrations. Every day, His Holiness arrived around 10 am, more than an hour earlier than usual, at the *Śaṅkarācārya* temple and engaged in *bhāṣya-pārāyaṇa* in front of the Sannidhi, even as the *śata-rudra-abhiṣeka* was being performed. His Holiness then directed the Vedic scholars to chant various *Upaniṣads*. His Holiness however did not grace the evening *sabhā* where *pārāyaṇa* of *Mādhaviya-śaṅkara-vijaya* and discourses took place. Instead, Śrī Sannidhānam graced the *sabhā*. Much to everyone’s surprise, it was

Śrī Sannidhānam who performed the Śankara-jayanti *pūjā* at the temple with His Holiness Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ arriving only for the *Maṅgalārati*.

Likewise, His Holiness attended the conduct of the *Mahāgaṇapati Vākyārtha-vidvat-sabhā* only sparingly that year. Until 2018, His Holiness would grace the proceedings of the *sabhā* and only leave towards the end to perform the *Candramaulīśvara pūjā*. In 2016, devotees had had the fortune to behold Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ and Śrī Sannidhānam grace and commence the *sabhā* proceedings on the Vināyaka-caturthī day with a *Vākyārtha* in *Nyāya-śāstra*. As part of the *Vākyārtha*, Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ and Śrī Sannidhānam had explained different aspects in a topic based on the Śatakoṭi text⁴ in *Nyāya-śāstra*. Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ mentioned at the beginning of the *Vākyārtha*, "Forty years ago, I and my revered Guru (Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin) had engaged in such a *Vākyārtha*. Presently, at the request of our Śiṣya-svāmin, we are both engaging in such a *Vākyārtha*." The devotees assembled felt it a great blessing to witness the Jagadgurus engage in this *Vākyārtha*.

In the *Vikārī saṃvatsara*, however, His Holiness attended only the first śāstraic deliberation and left immediately afterward, at about 6 pm every day. Śrī Sannidhānam then presided over the proceedings to their completion. On the concluding day, His Holiness did not grace the *sabhā*. It was Śrī Sannidhānam who delivered His first *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* in the prestigious *sabhā* stating, "For many decades, our revered Guru Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ has been blessing the *sabhā* and the scholars with many *Vākyārthas* and *anugraha-bhāṣaṇas*. This year, upon receiving my revered Guru's directive, I am venturing to address the *sabhā*. Our revered Guru has engaged in various ways to sustain and propagate the tradition of śāstraic learning. He has been teaching qualified disciples personally and making them proficient in the śāstras. His inimitable style of lucidly expounding the śāstras ensures that the śiṣyas clearly comprehend the intricacies. In addition, by conducting and organising many śāstra *sabhās*, honouring scholars and by bringing about the publication of useful and rare texts, He has been blessing us all by being the Ideal for anyone who wishes to engage in the propagation of the śāstras. It has been my fortune to have studied the śāstras under our revered Guru."

4 Authored by the renowned 19th century scholar, Sri Kunigal Rama Shastri, who was the father in the Poorvashrama of His Holiness's *Parameṣṭhi-guru*, Jagadguru Śrī Saccidānanda Śivābhinava Nṛsiṃha Bhārati Mahāsvāmin (the 33rd Ācārya of Śringerī).

Since 2020, in accordance with the directive of His Holiness, it is Śrī Sannidhānam who presides over the entire *sabhā*.

The *Vikārī Saṃvatsara* also saw His Holiness begin exempting himself from attending *pūrṇāhutis* of various *yāgas* conducted throughout the year.

The Final Benedictory Message

The *Divya-saptati-pūrti-mahotsava* marking the commencement of the 70th year of His Holiness was originally slated to have taken place in 2020. Owing to the global pandemic, the events were conducted in 2021. During the pandemic, *darśana* had been completely stopped with His Holiness continuing to perform the *Candramaulīśvara pūjā* and other regular *pūjās*. When the *Divya-saptati-pūrti-mahotsava* was performed in April 2021 with the conduct of many *dhārmic* events including the *Ayuta-caṇḍī-mahāyāgā* for the welfare of humanity. On April 18, 2021, the 71st Vardhanti day, His Holiness delivered a historic *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa*, revealing that it would be the last time He would grace a *sabhā* and address a gathering of devotees.

His Holiness stated, “Abiding by *Bhagavatpāda’s* dictum, every Ācārya who has adorned the Sharada Peetham at Sringeri has strived for the propagation of dharma and the *advaita-siddhānta* expounded in the *Upaniṣads*. Our Guru, *prātaḥ-smaraṇīya* Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin adorned this *Pīṭha* for 35 years and travelled across the country engaging in the propagation of *Sanātana-dharma* and was greatly revered. Our Guru showered His unbounded compassion on Me and gave Me the responsibility of heading this *Pīṭha*. By His Grace, I have fulfilled my duties in accordance with my capacity by travelling across India and spreading the tenets of dharma amongst the masses, establishing many *pāṭhaśālās*, having many temples built and consecrating many deities therein, conducting many *sabhās* (conferences), honouring scholars and bringing about the publication of many books.

I had been constantly praying to Goddess Śāradā *Parameśvarī* that I be blessed with an *Uttarādhikārī Śiṣya* who would be suitable for this *Pīṭha*. Acceding to my prayers, Goddess Śāradā *Parameśvarī* blessed me with an exemplary *Śiṣya*. Śrī *Vidhuśekhara Bhāratī Svāmin* is a scholar nonpareil in the śāstras, well aware of the tradition of the *Śrīṅgerī-maṭha* and by adhering to this sacred tradition, has greatly pleased us.

“Given all that has transpired, we have acquired a strong dispassion in worldly matters.

“The renowned scholar Sri Appayya Dikshita, who lived five centuries ago, went to the holy Chidambara *kṣetram* in his 70th year and stated thus -

चिदम्बरमिदं परं प्रथितमेव पुण्यस्थलम् ।
सुताश्च विनयोज्ज्वलाः सुकृतयश्च काश्चित् कृताः ॥
वयांसि मम सप्ततेरुपरि नास्ति भोगे स्पृहा ।
न किञ्चिदहमर्थये शिवपदं दिदृक्षे परम् ॥

cidambaram idaṃ paraṃ prathitam eva puṇya-sthalam.
sutāśca vinayojjvalāḥ sukṛtayaś-ca kāścit kṛtāḥ..
vayāṃsi mama saptater-upari nāsti bhoge sprhā.
na kiñcid-aham arthaye śiva-padaṃ didṛkṣe param..

“The import of Sri Appayya Dikshita’s words is that ‘I have achieved whatever I had to achieve in life. Having crossed the age of 70, I do not have any expectations. I am in need of only *Parameśvara-sākṣātkāra*.’

“I am in this state now. I am neither interested in any worldly affairs nor have the inclination to engage in any activity. Whatever had to be done, has been done. What must be done henceforth will be guided by our *śiṣya-svāmin*. Such a personage as our *śiṣya-svāmin* has come to this position owing to My fortune, or maybe the fortune of the *śiṣyas* or the fortune of this *maṭha*. I have total faith in the *Svāmin*. I have the confidence that the *Svāmin* will guide this *maṭha* exemplarily. I will henceforth not be engaged in the general affairs of the *maṭha* and will remain aloof.

“I go to the temple of Goddess Śāradāmbā and the *adhiṣṭhāna* of our Guru only with the intent of seeking the welfare of all. During such times, my mind is focussed on Goddess Śāradā and our Guru. It is only for this reason that I do not look at anyone during these times. Henceforth, do not have the desire that you must have my *darśana*. My blessings are ever with you. If you are faced with any troubles or need guidance, you can place them before our *śiṣya-svāmin*, and the *Svāmin* will provide you with what is needed. Whatever power you feel that I possess, that very power is present in totality in the *Svāmin* also. Hence whatever you expect from Me, will be fulfilled through the *Svāmin*.

“I have given thousands of *anugraha-bhāṣaṇas*, presented *vākyārthas*, and conducted *sabhās*. However presently, I am not inclined to give discourses or present *vākyārthas*. Many have requested, in recent times, for a benedictory message. They say, ‘we have already received the benedictory message from Śrī Sannidhānam, now we seek Yours.’ If the *Svāmin* has given a message of blessing, it is equivalent to myself having given it.

“I have decided to spend time only in Self-contemplation. May you all understand this well. My blessings are with you. People need not come here asking for *darśana* of the senior *Svāmin*, as there is no difference between the senior and junior here. This does not mean I shall never see anyone. If and when the situation arises, I will definitely meet people.

“We must always remember that all events take place in accordance with *Īśvara-saṅkalpa* and we have to merely submit to it.

“My Blessings are with you all.”

Thus did His Holiness end His final *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa*.

When it was time for the usual morning and evening *darśana* to resume post-pandemic, His Holiness had already decided that only Śrī Sannidhānam would grant *darśana*. His Holiness continued to perform only the *Candramaulīśvara pūjā* at night.

The Candramaulīśvara Pūjā

It must be noted here that His Holiness, during His reign as the *Śaṅkarācārya* of Sringeri, has ensured the complete chanting of the Vedas in various aspects during the nightly *pūjā* to Śrī *Candramaulīśvara* - the *Sphaṭika-Liṅga* handed down from Śrī Ādi *Śaṅkarācārya* and worshipped daily as the *Ārādhyā-devatā* by the *Ācāryas* of Sringeri. During the decades of His reign, His Holiness has ensured that the complete *Ṛg-veda* along with the *krama-pāṭha* and the *Jaṭā-pāṭha*, the complete *Ṛg-veda* along with the *krama-pāṭha* and *Jaṭā-pāṭha*, as well as the entire *Sāma-veda* have been completely chanted by eminent Vedic scholars as a *Seva* to Śrī *Candramaulīśvara*.

His Holiness had the practice of casting glances on devotees who would enter the *Guru Nivas* hall after He had commenced the *pūjā*. Even as He was engaged in

the *pūjā*, His Holiness would sometimes compassionately acknowledge a devotee walking in or even smile graciously at a few. There would also be times when He would turn towards Vedic scholars and direct them to chant a particular section from the Vedas or would ask some devotees to sing a specific *kīrti* or chant a particular hymn. However, by December 2021, His Holiness completely stopped this practice. As a further indication of His disengagement, His Holiness kept Himself facing only the Śrī *Candramaulīśvara*-liṅga during the *pūjā* and would turn towards the devotees only after the completion of *mahāmaṅgalārati*.

The Coronation of Two Śaṅkarācāryas

On September 26, 2022, the first day of Śrī Śāradā-Śaran-navarātri-mahotsava⁵, His Holiness performed *abhiṣeka* to Dandi Swami Śrī *Sadānaṇḍa Sarasvatī jī Mahārāj* and Dandi Swami Śrī *Avimukteśvarānanda Sarasvatī jī Mahārāj* declaring them as the *Śaṅkarācāryas* for the *Paścimāmnāya* Dwaraka *Pīṭha* and *Uttarāmnāya* Jyotir Maṭha at Badrinath respectively. The event took place in front of the Sannidhi of Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya temple at *Śrīgerī* and was performed following the *videha-mukti* of Jagadguru Śaṅkarācārya Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin in early September. This event took place in Sringeri because His Holiness had already resolved that He would not undertake further *vijaya-yātrās* and would remain in *Śrīgerī*.

Further, as per the directive received and blessings of Jagadguru Śrī *Mahāsannidhānam*, Jagadguru Śrī Śrī *Vidhuśekhara Bhārati Svāmin* undertook a week-long *yātrā* in October to the *tīrtha-kṣetras* of Dwaraka and Badrinath.



Jagadguru Sri Mahasannidhanam performing Abhisheka to Sri Sadanand Saraswati ji of Dwaraka Math and Sri Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati ji of Jyotir Math, Badari

5 *Śubakṛt saṃvatsara*

Śrī Sannidhānam performed the elaborate *paṭṭābhiṣeka* ceremonies of Śrī *Sadānaṇḍa Sarasvatī jī Mahārāj* and Śrī *Avimuktesvarānanda Sarasvatī jī Mahārāj* thus anointing them as Śāṅkarācāryas of the Dwaraka and Badari *Pīṭhas* respectively.

During the *yātrā*, Śrī Sannidhānam recounting the 1982 *paṭṭābhiṣeka*⁶ stated that the *paṭṭābhiṣekas* conducted now, 40 years later, differed only in one aspect - "In 1982, two Ācāryas (Śrī *Sannidhānam*'s revered Paramaguru and His Holiness) had performed the *paṭṭābhiṣeka* of one Ācārya (the then Dwaraka Śāṅkarācārya). Now, one Ācārya (Śrī Sannidhānam) had performed the *paṭṭābhiṣekas* of two Ācāryas - the Śāṅkarācāryas of Dwaraka and Badri!"

The Dwaraka Śāṅkarācārya Jagadguru Śrī *Sadānaṇḍa Sarasvatī jī Mahārāj* in His *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* recollected that it was at Badrinath that Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śāṅkarācārya penned His inimitable *Vedantic bhāṣyas* and His *upadeśa* delivered from the Himalayan region spread throughout the country as if it was the sacred Ganga. He also expressed with devotion that the Sringeri Jagadguru Śrī *Mahāsannidhānam*, who is the revered Guru for all, had blessed the occasion by sending Śrī Sannidhānam to conduct the *paṭṭābhiṣekas* and invoked the Grace of Śrī *Dvārakādhiṣha*, Śrī Śāradāmbā, Śrī Badri Narayan and Śrī *Candramaulīśvara* upon the assembled devotees and upon all āstikas.

The Badari Śāṅkarācārya Jagadguru Śrī *Avimuktesvarānanda Sarasvatī jī Mahārāj* in His *anugraha-bhāṣaṇa* said that while *Dakṣiṇa Bhārata* has the pride of having the Jagadguru Śrī Ādi Śāṅkara *Bhagavatpāda*'s birthplace, Kalady in it, the state of Uttaraakhand located in the Himalayan region has the pride of being the *Samādhi sthala* of *Bhagavatpāda*. Recounting the greatness of Śrī *Toṭakācārya*, the first Jagadguru of the Badari *Pīṭha*, the Badari Śāṅkarācārya referred to Śrī *Toṭakācārya*'s Vedantic treatise, the *Śruti-sāra-samuddharaṇam*. He also mentioned that the people of Badrinath are fortunate to have *darśana* of the Ācāryas of three Āmnāya-pīṭhas. He stated that Śrī Sannidhānam is indeed the *Mūrti-svarūpa* of Sringeri Jagadguru Śāṅkarācārya Śrī *Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin*. The Badari Śāṅkarācārya pointed this out by remembering Śrī *Mahāsannidhānam*'s words, "The *Utsava-mūrti* that graces devotees during the processions is non-different from the *Mūla-vigraha* in the *Garbha-gr̥ha* of the temple. Likewise, Śrī Sannidhānam undertakes tours while I remain here in Sringeri".

6 In 1982, His Holiness had accompanied His revered Guru, Jagadguru Śrī Abhinava Vidyātīrtha Mahāsvāmin to Dwaraka, where His Guru and His Holiness had performed the *paṭṭābhiṣeka* of Śrī Svarūpānanda Sarasvatī Mahāsvāmin anointing him as the Śāṅkarācārya of the Dwaraka *Pīṭha*.

This incident of not going even to perform the coronation of the two *Śaṅkarācāryas* and deputing *Śrī Sannidhānam* to do the same is testimony to the extent of disengagement and seclusion that His Holiness has undertaken.

His Holiness's Compassion

Having withdrawn himself to a life of Tapas and *dhyāna*, His Holiness *Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ* continues to shower his blessings on devotees every day. He performs the *Candramaulīśvara-pūjā* at night and gives *darśana* to all devotees after the *pūjā*. His Holiness also interacts with them, enquires about their well-being and conveys his blessings.

On two different occasions, His Holiness did compassionately address a gathering of devotees. The addresses were benedictions given from atop the *vimāna-gopura* of *Śrī Śaṅkarācārya* temple during the *Svarṇā Śikhara kumbhābhiṣeka* in 2022 and from atop the newly constructed Rajagopura on the *kumbhābhiṣeka* day of *Śrī Malahānikareśvara* temple in 2023.

Śrī Sannidhānam blessing the gathering of devotees with an *anugraha- bhāṣaṇa* during His Holiness' 72nd Vardhanti celebrations held in April 2022 stated, "Our revered Guru, Jagadguru *Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ* has gone deep into *antarmukha* (turned inward), engaging only in activities that involve worship of *Bhagavān* and distancing Himself from all public gatherings and other external activities. Whatever we have read about Jagadguru *Śrī Candraśekhara Bhāratī Mahāsvāmin* in books, we see the same in the life of *Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ* today. We read in those books that even those who could not have the Jagadguru's *darśana* and could only mentally submit their prayers had been tremendously blessed. Similar is the experience felt with respect to *Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ* now. Disciples must always remember that the compassion-filled blessings of our revered Guru are always with them because our revered Guru, *Śrī Mahāsannidhānaṃ* is ever engaged in *Ātma-dhyāna* and praying for the *śreyas* of all."





Appendix 1

TEACHINGS

In every discourse, *Jaḡadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha Mahāsvāmin* offers an important spiritual advice to help everyone move along the *dhārmic* path. His thoughtful reflection on complex subjects, in a simple language for all humankind, will leave the listener (or reader) enthralled. In this Appendix, His Holiness addresses some important spiritual questions to set all devotees in the right path in our life journey.

A GURU IS ESSENTIAL

In our tradition, a remarkably high position is accorded to the *Guru*. Without the grace of the *Guru*, no one can attain fulfillment of the purpose of life. We all desire *mokṣa* and the sole means to its attainment is *jñāna* (knowledge). The *Veda* says: "It is only by knowing the Supreme *Brahman* that one attains immortality. There is no other path."

Numerous *karmas* have been enjoined in the *śāstra*, but we cannot attain emancipation merely by their performance. Some opine that liberation can be attained by a combination of *karma* and *jñāna*. This school of thought has repeatedly been condemned in His *bhāṣyas* by *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. This conjunction of knowledge and action is not in accordance with the scriptural injunction that liberation can be attained only through knowledge.

How can that knowledge be obtained by us? Can it be got by perusal of texts? No, this knowledge can be acquired only from a *Guru*. In the *upaniṣads*, we hear of ascetics going to *Gurus* who are well versed in the scriptures

Only that knowledge which is obtained from the *Guru* is potent. Sans a *Guru*, no matter how many texts we may delve into, we cannot attain that, knowledge. There is a sacred tradition which can be learnt only from the *Guru*.



and established in the Supreme *Brahman* and making a request of the form “O *Guru*! Please impart knowledge to me.” Even though the *ṛṣis* seeking knowledge may have been scholarly, it is certain that their acquisition of knowledge

was solely dependent on their seeking it from a *Guru*. Only that knowledge which is obtained from the *Guru* is potent. Sans a *Guru*, no matter how many texts we may delve into, we cannot attain that, knowledge. There is a sacred tradition which can be learnt only from the *Guru*.



WHO IS FIT TO BE A GURU?

Who is fit to be a *Guru*? *Bhagavān Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* raises the issue and Himself gives the reply: “There are two characteristics of a *Guru*. The first is, “He is well-versed in the teachings of the *śāstras*, is familiar with tradition and is a Knower of Truth.” The second characteristic is, “He constantly strives for

the upliftment of his disciple.”

One may be a scholar, but if one were to be disinterested in expounding to another, then what is the use of that scholarship as far as another is concerned? It is the duty of the *Guru* to expound the Truth to a disciple who approaches him in the proper manner.

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The first is, “He is well-versed in the teachings of the *śāstras*, is familiar with tradition and is a Knower of Truth.” The second characteristic is, “He constantly strives for the upliftment of his disciple.”



Only that person in whom the two characteristics mentioned by Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda are found, is fit to be called a *Guru*. A man who is just familiar with the *śāstra* but is bereft of Self-realisation is not qualified to be *Guru* even if he be concerned with the upliftment of another. Such teachers behave as follows. When the disciple raises a query, one reply given by the teacher is "Read on. Do as I tell you"!

What is the use of such a reply? A second reply given is "Time is up. You keep raising questions and so the lesson cannot proceed now as time is running out. The third is, "The matter will become clear subsequently. Hence read on"! Can one who gives such replies ever qualify to be a *Guru*? Certainly not. It is imperative that the *Guru* has the capacity to dispel the disciple's doubt. Further, he should speak out what he knows. *Maharishi Āpastamba* avers, "He who does not explain what he knows cannot be a teacher." Likewise, regarding the disciple it is said, that disciple who has no faith in his *Guru* and who ascribes incapacity to the teacher is no disciple, for he has come more to evaluate the *Guru's* knowledge than to learn. Hence, only he who has total faith in his *Guru* is qualified to be a true disciple. Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya possessed all the characteristics of a true *Guru*. In His short lifespan of thirty-two years, He has done so much for the upliftment of *Sanātana dharma* and this itself speaks for His concern for disciples. As for knowledge, He was a veritable ocean of it. Even though we are not in a position to behold Him today, we can study His *bhāṣyas* (commentaries). These *bhāṣyas* make it extremely obvious that He was an ocean of knowledge. It is our great fortune that we are part of His *śiṣya parampara*.

In spite of being perfect, Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda sought Śrī Govinda Bhagavatpāda,, who dwelt on the banks of the river *Narmadā*, for His *Guru*. Why did He do so? The answer is "With a view to uphold tradition." If Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda had not sought a *Guru*, we too would not have been inclined to seek a *Guru*. We also note that even incarnations such as Śrī Rāma studied under a *Guru*. What great people do forms the basis of the actions of others.

If Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda had not sought a *Guru*, we too would not have been inclined to seek a *Guru*. We also note that even incarnations such as Śrī Rāma studied under a *Guru*. What great people do forms the basis of the actions of others.



DOES GOD HAVE FORM?



The *Paramātmā* has no form, as it is said, “He is formless, ageless and will never cease to be.” Though this is the case, He can manifest Himself in any form. Pure water has no taste, but if salt is added to it, it tastes salty; sugar makes it sweet. The *Paramātmā* is akin to pure water which can acquire different qualities. We cannot, however, describe the *Paramātmā* as possessing a particular form. This is so, since, for example, seawater cannot become sweet even if great amounts of sugar are added to it, saltiness being its very nature. Therefore, if it was true that the *Paramātmā* has a single form, then

it must be concluded that He cannot assume any other form. In such a case, He will be no God. Hence, it is said that He is formless, whereby there will be no difficulty in accepting that He takes on various forms.

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

Worshipping *Īśvara* with devotion is the greatest virtue. The word ‘devotion’ in the above statement is very significant. Our worship should not be for the sake of showing others that we are devoted. It must be remembered that we engage ourselves in divine worship in our interest alone. Generally, people performing noble deeds with an eye for publicity is not right. This is not the right attitude. One must be satisfied that *Īśvara* knows what one has done and must not long for publicity.

Some are very keen on the *sañkalpa* portion of any *pūjā*. Prayers for the fulfillment of many of their desires find a place in the *sañkalpa*. Is that necessary? Does



Īśvara not know what we require? Do we not believe that He is the all-knowing One? However, some are not content with this, and they pester their *purohitas* (priests) to add more words to the *saṅkalpa* to cover all their longings! All of this is unnecessary, as *Īśvara* knows what is best for us. If He is pleased with us, there is nothing else to be accomplished by us.

Kuchela, when he approached Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, did not express any of his needs. He merely offered

a handful of puffed rice to the Lord, with the sole intention of pleasing Him. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* consumed it with love and Kuchela turned Kubera in a trice. Does this incident not provide a proof for our belief that nothing need be asked of *Īśvara*?

Hence, all our good deeds must be aimed at pleasing *Īśvara* and not for publicity. That is why *Śrī Bhīṣma* said, "If you chant the names of the Lord with devotion, that itself is a great deed."

Even if we were to spend ten minutes in chanting the names of the Lord with devotion, which will amount to a great virtuous deed. Some allow their minds to wander in all directions when they perform their *pūjā* or *sandhyā-vandana*. "I have to receive such-and-such an amount from this person; I have to file a case against that person" – such are the kind of thoughts entertained by some during

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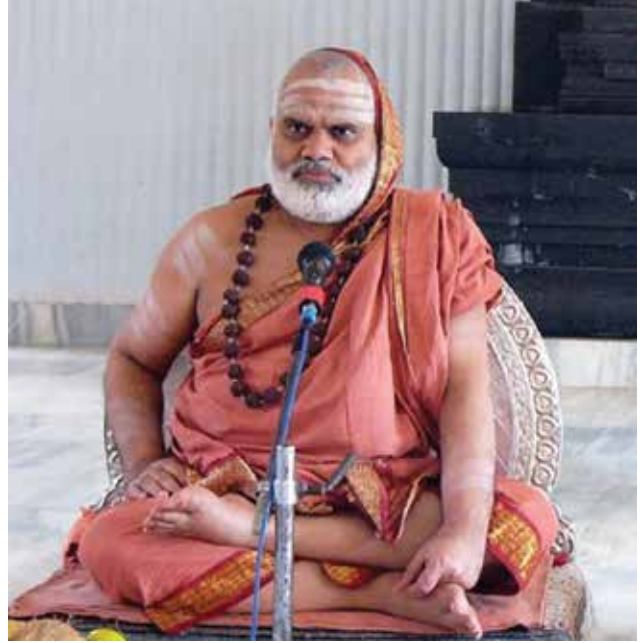


worship. This is not correct. Set aside all your worldly thoughts when you sit for *pūjā* and concentrate on *Īśvara* during that short period of ten minutes or so. Even though the time spent for the *pūjā* is very short, if it is spent with devotion, it will yield great *punya*.

WORSHIPPING GOD IS A MUST

We often hear people say that it was possible to perform rituals and *pūjās* in the olden days since people had plenty of time. They point out, “The farmers used to supply grains adequately and on time. With no worry regarding food and shelter and no other avocations, they could concentrate on rituals and worship. However, circumstances are different now.”

People’s predicament in this regard is understandable, but the claim that they cannot find



even a little time for God is unacceptable. It is true that in cities, people do leave early for work and return home late. But I ask them, “How is it that you find time for the newspaper, radio, and television? Can you not spare a little of this time for *Īśvara*? Your attitude only shows that there is a lack of devotion. Shed this attitude and develop devotion.” He, who has no devotion, tries to find excuses for his own lapses.

Deep devotion to God must be developed and we must set aside at least a little time every day for His worship.



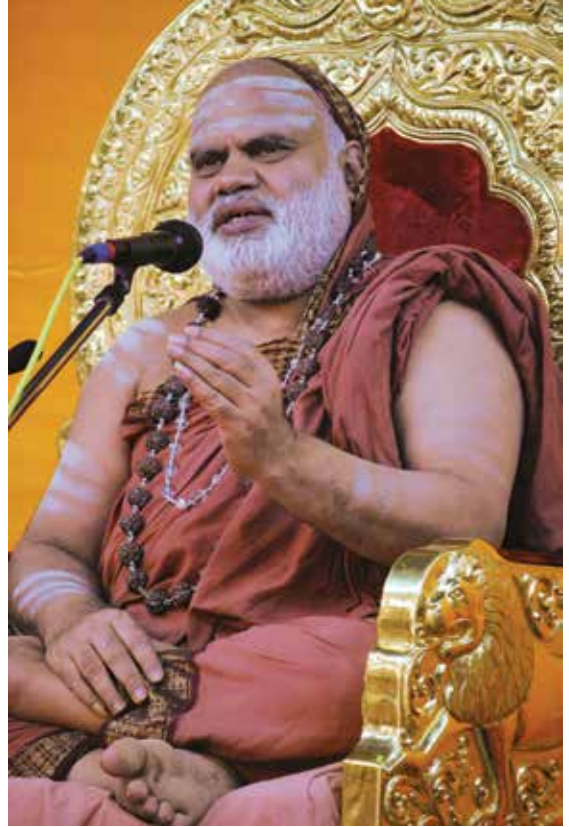
Deep devotion to God must be developed and we must set aside at least a little time every day for His worship.

CHANT BHAGAVĀN'S NAME

When asked to repeatedly chant “Hare *Rāma*, Hare *Rāma*, *Rāma Rāma* Hare Hare,” people sit tightlipped. However, they become garrulous when it comes to idle talk like discussing what an MLA or an MP said or what interesting happening took place in town. Worthless gossip has now become a matter of habit. Rather than wasting our time like this, why do we not spend it in chanting the Lord’s name? The Lord has the entire world under His control. He creates, preserves, and destroys it. He gives the appropriate results for all our actions. It is towards Him that we must develop Bhakti. If we are unable to do anything else, we can chant the Lord’s name. This is the best *dharma*, and through it we can achieve the aim of our life. We can attain śreyas.

HOW TO GET THE VISION OF ĪŚVARA?

“Why does *Īśvara* not physically appear in front of us?” is the question some ask. Our belief is that *Īśvara* is Omnipotent and Omniscient – there is nothing that is impossible for Him. Such being our faith, if He were to appear before us, would anyone allow Him to go back to His abode? We would not spare even a minister if he were to visit our place. We would pester him with all our needs such as electricity, borewells and water. Such being the case, what need be said about our conduct if *Īśvara* were to actually appear before us? Some may even force Him to bring heaven to their place before He leaves! So, will *Īśvara* ever decide to appear before humans? Yes, He will, and He has already appeared



in the vision of great men. Why do we not get the vision of His divine form? It is because our *sādhana* (spiritual practice) is different from that of the sages. How is it different? We also do whatever the sages did; they performed penance and so do we; they spent their time in meditation – we too meditate; they tolerated heat and cold and we too do so. However, the fruit we get is different from what they obtained. How can this discrepancy be accounted for?

Sages performed penance to get rid of all longings. However, our penance is for the fulfillment of the thousands of desires in our mind. They tolerated heat and cold with pleasure, but our plight is different. When the current fails, we know we cannot do anything about it, as we do not possess a generator. So, we do put up with heat and cold, but it is with discomfort that we do so. In winter, we may also agree to bathe in cold water, but only if it is impossible to get hot water. This is our way of “tolerating” heat and cold. The state of our ancients was different. They did not care for worldly comforts.

Their aim was to behold *Īśvara*. They meditated day and night on *Īśvara*'s holy form, whereas our meditation is on money. ‘How to acquire money and how to double it’ thus do we contemplate all 24 hours of the day. All these reasons account for the fact that the result we get is different from what our sages got.

Therefore, we must try and emulate their ways. It is incorrect to worship God for the fulfillment of our desires, as it is only the absence of all desires that brings true joy. There is no point in trying to gratify all our desires, as our efforts in this direction will only be in vain. The presence of desire can never bring pleasure to anyone. If we have ten rupees, we desire to earn a hundred rupees. When we earn a hundred, we feel that a thousand rupees would be enough. A person with

If we sincerely take steps to eradicate our desires and spend our time striving to behold *Īśvara*, we too can get *Īśvara darśana* (vision of the Lord).



a thousand, however, wants to possess a lakh of rupees. This desire to earn more keeps increasing as one with one lakh aims at becoming a millionaire and then a billionaire and so on. Where is the end for desires? If we sincerely take steps to eradicate our desires and spend our time striving to behold *Īśvara*, we too can get *Īśvara darśana* (vision of the Lord).

HOW DOES ĪŚVARA GRACE US?

The scriptures say that *Īśvara* graces a person by inducing appropriate thoughts in his mind. It is only with proper thoughts that one can achieve success in any activity. There is a short story that is relevant here.



Once, Goddess *Lakṣmī* and *Sarasvatī* were debating as to who was superior between Them. Goddess *Lakṣmī* said, "Look, you have been showering your grace on many, but what is the use? Many cannot even afford a full meal. On the other hand, those who received my grace live in affluence. A person who

does not even know how to write his name can become a millionaire if my grace is on him." Goddess *Sarasvatī* retorted, "All right. Let us take the case of a person who is illiterate. You first bless him with riches and let us see what happens."

Accordingly, a person with absolutely no knowledge was graced by Goddess *Lakṣmī* and as a result, he became a millionaire in no time. One day, he went to the tenth floor of the house he had built. When he looked through the window, he felt pleased at the sight of the city down below. The thought, "It will be great fun to jump from the tenth storey of this building. Why don't I do it?" arose in his mind.

Goddess *Sarasvatī*, who was watching all this along with Goddess *Lakṣmī*, told the latter, "Look at the extent of his foolishness. He is about to ruin himself by jumping from the tenth floor. How will his wealth help him now? If you are willing to accept failure, I shall save his life. When Goddess *Lakṣmī* conceded defeat, Goddess *Sarasvatī* induced wisdom in the mind of the

Īśvara induces right thoughts in the devotee when He intends to protect him.



man. He immediately realised his folly and decided not to jump from the building. The purpose of my narrating this story is to show that *Īśvara* graces His devotees by '*preraṇās*' or instilling proper thoughts at the proper time. If Goddess *Sarasvatī* had not given *preraṇā* to the man in the story, he would have jumped from the building and got fatally wounded.

Thus, *Īśvara* induces right thoughts in the devotee when He intends to protect him.

RECITE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ EVERYDAY

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Paramātmā's *Bhagavad Gītā* is the quintessence of all *Upaniṣads*. The *Gītā* highlights the *Advaita-siddhānta*. *Veda Vyāsa* has brought out its authenticity by referring to it in many places in His *Brahma-sūtra*. *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* has written an elaborate and authoritative commentary on the *Gītā*. Although the *Gītā* emphasises that only wisdom can lead to *mokṣa*, it has exhaustively dealt with the practices to be adopted before embarking on *jñāna* marga or the path of wisdom. *Gītā* says that the *dharma* of the castes must be followed with keen interest, that devotion to the Lord must be single-minded and that the mind should be controlled by the practice of *Yoga*. These points have been made very clear and at great length. Every believer in God should read this exalted text of the *Gītā*. *Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkara* has already said that each person should read at least a bit of the *Gītā* everyday so that there is no quarrel with *Yama* later on.

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DHARMA

It is *dharma* and *dharma* alone which saves man in this world and in *Paraloka*, the other world. *dharma* alone can give peace and happiness. Many a man does not know what exactly *dharma* is and what '*practising dharma*' means. That which gives eternal peace and happiness is *dharma*, and all actions which contribute towards that end comprise *dharma*. The *Veda* lays down what is *dharma* and what is not – it is the supreme authority in deciding the nature of *dharma*. The

presence of bright sunlight precludes the necessity of any other light to perceive an object. The authority of the *Veda* is similar to this - no other *pramāṇa* (testimony) is necessary. It will indeed be disastrous if individuals start volunteering their own versions and explanations of *dharma*.

When *Yudhiṣṭhira* asks *Bhīṣma* about the greatest *dharma*, *Bhīṣma* advises, "To think of the *Paramātmā* with sincere and continuous devotion is

indeed the greatest of all *dharmas*." The foundation for the well-being of this universe is *dharma*. Therefore, *dhārmic* acts alone will make us good human beings, and our lives will become worth living. *Dharma* must rule over every moment of our lives and if we deviate from *dharma*, we would be wasting this human birth and would ultimately meet with disaster. If we honour and practise *dharma*, *dharma*, in turn, bestows all benefits on us. It is said, "*dharma* protects those who protect *dharma*."

The happiness we experience today is the result of the *dharma* performed in previous births. *Adharma* leads only to misery and sorrow. This is the eternal law and there should be absolutely no doubt about it. Therefore, practising *dharma* and giving up *adharma* are the hallmarks of a successful life. We should follow this edict scrupulously and thereby attain fame, peace, and happiness. Do not neglect *dharma* at any cost. It is for your own good as well as for your own salvation.

STRIVE TO EMULATE LORD RĀMA

One must have same-sightedness in pleasure and in pain. We, however, do not behave in this fashion – we forget ourselves in joy and drown ourselves in sorrow. We must, instead, strive to emulate Lord *Rāma*. *Rāma* was told, "tomorrow, you will be installed as king of this territory having the oceans as the boundary." *Rāma* replied, "All right." The next day He was told, "leave everything and go to the forest." To this too, He reacted in the same way. Neither did He feel overjoyed on

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being told of His impending coronation, nor did He experience grief when ordered to go to the forest.

Sometimes, even animals come to the aid of one who upholds *dharma* while even a brother, let alone animals may renounce an evil one. The lives of *Śrī Rāma* and *Rāvaṇa* portrayed in the *Rāmāyaṇa* reveal this fact. *Śrī Rāma* always followed the path of *dharma* – not even in His dreams did He think of acting unrighteously. *Vālmīki* has said, “*dharma* took the form of *Rāma*.”



On the other hand, there was *Rāvaṇa* who was the embodiment of *adharmā*. *Viśvāmitra* once performed a *yāga* which did not get in the way of *Rāvaṇa*. However, the performance of the *yāga* did not please *Rāvaṇa*, whereby he sent *Subāhu* and *Mārīca* to disrupt it. He did all this to trouble *Viśvāmitra* who never interfered in his matters. Likewise, as one who has studied the *Rāmāyaṇa* would know, the great sages of *Daṇḍakāraṇya* were put into much difficulty by *Rāvaṇa*. But worst of all, he carried away the chaste *Sītā-devī* who was the incarnation of Goddess *Lakṣmī*. Such being the case, where is the wonder in his own brother *Vibhīṣaṇa* abandoning him? *Vibhīṣaṇa* tried his best to dissuade *Rāvaṇa* from pursuing evil, but on finding that his words were of no avail, he told *Rāvaṇa* that destiny would take its own course and that he would not participate in *Rāvaṇa*'s misdeeds. He wasted no time in leaving *Rāvaṇa* and joining *Śrī Rāma*. He took shelter in *Śrī Rāma* and became the recipient of His grace.

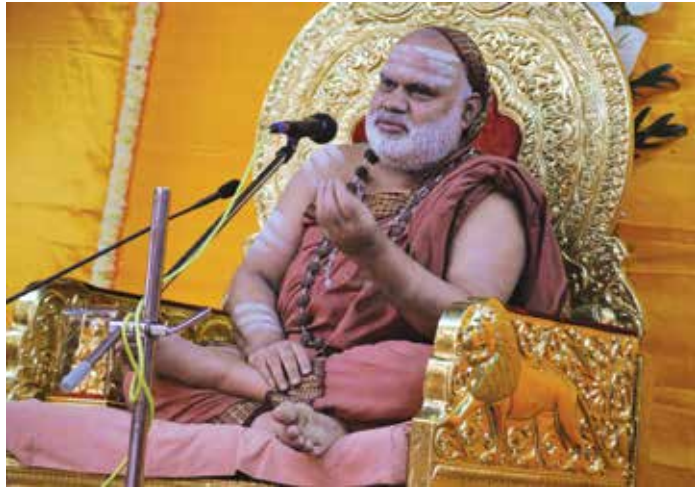
DO NOT WASTE THIS HUMAN BIRTH

Amongst the bodies got by the *Jīva*, the human body is considered great. That is what the *śāstra* declares. To appreciate this declaration, it is necessary to first realise that the *Ātma* is distinct from the body.

Why is it that so much of importance is given to the human body but not to other bodies? Other bodies are merely for experiencing the results of past *karmas*, but

the human body is capable of performing fresh *karmas* too. This is the difference. The lives of animals are spent in eating, sleeping and the like. If someone comes with a stick, they flee from him. If delectable food is shown to them by a person, they go near him to eat that item. This is all that the animals know. On the other hand, man is quite different. On account of his God-given intellect, he is competent to even attain *mokṣa*. At the same time, he has the competence to ensure for himself a place in hell. Depending on which way his intellect functions, he can attain either end. That is why the *śāstras* consider human birth significant.

The human body is like a boat. We have purchased it by spending a lot of money and it is doubtful if we will be able to procure another one. It is meant for crossing a great ocean. But it is also known that this boat will not last long, for there is the danger of it developing a leak and sinking. Before such a leak occurs, if one achieves the purpose for which one purchased the boat, then one is surely very intelligent.



What is this ocean? The cycle of births and deaths is indeed an ocean of suffering. Just as an ocean appears endless, so too is this cycle. Hence it is compared to an ocean. How many are the parents we have had so far? One can never give a figure. How many more times are we going to emerge from the womb of a mother? Here again, counting is not possible. Every time we are born, we grow and die. The cycle indeed appears endless like an ocean.

The boat of the human body has been purchased by us to cross this ocean of suffering. How much has been spent for purchasing it? A lot of *punya* has been spent for it cannot be got easily. What is the use if we are not able to accomplish our goal? We may again start getting animal bodies and no one is competent

The fulfillment of the purpose of human birth arises only through *jñāna* and not by means of anything else.



to say when we will get back a human birth. Hence, before this body dies, the purpose for which it has been got must be accomplished. How are we to achieve the purpose of this life? This question must arise in our minds. Instead, we have only many other questions coming up before us.

If *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* had not incarnated earlier, we would not have been able to understand the true import of the *śāstras* and perform our scripturally ordained duties. We have great teachers who have authored books and we also have great ones who can explain the meaning of such texts to us.

The fulfillment of the purpose of human birth arises only through *jñāna* and not by means of anything else.

Those who have attained the human body but have not strived to get knowledge have wasted their human birth. It would have been better for such people to have been born as animals. Why? Because there is no such thing as '*Pratyavāya*' or sin for animals. If we do not perform *sandhyā-vandana* at the proper time, we incur sin. On the other hand, we do not question an animal for its non-performance of *sandhyā-vandana*. An animal is superior to a Brahmin who does not perform *sandhyā-vandana*, because the animal does not incur sin and is better off. These are not just my words. I am merely saying what has been declared in the *śāstras*. Hence it must be concluded that human birth is for the attainment of knowledge. We must attain knowledge and fulfill this purpose of life.

OBSERVE THE VARNASHRAMA DHARMAS WITHOUT FAIL

To observe our *Varṇāśrama dharma*, faith is required. Amongst the ordained *dharmas*, *sandhyā-vandana* is very important. For a *brahmacārī*, the performance of *samidādhāna* and the study of the *Vedas* are also important. If a person cannot do all that is ordained, what is there to prevent him from performing the *karmas* to the extent possible? What is the difficulty in learning the *Vedas* when there is



someone to teach and when a person is competent to study the *Vedas*? A man incurs sin by not studying the *Veda* in spite of his having the competence to do so. Of course, the case of one who does not have the competence to study the *Vedas* is different.

A man came to my *Guru* and referring to another, said, "He is not competent to study the *Vedas* but he is studying them. Hence, he will certainly go to hell." On hearing this, my *Guru* said, "You have the competence to study the *Vedas* but are not doing so. Where will you go to? Let the other person's case be considered after you have set yourself right."

Apart from *samidādhāna* and *Veda-adhyayana* which are ordained for a *brahmacārī*, one must have regard for elders. Many seem to think that the more they insult elders the greater they become. Many young people do not behave properly even with regard to their parents.

My *Guru* once said, "People nowadays say that one must not be selfish and must share what one has with the needy. This, however, was declared much earlier by our ancients. They pointed out that one must not eat without feeding another. At the same time, they also said that one must not eat the food of another." On one hand it is said that others must be fed and on the other, that partaking food from others is wrong. The *gṛhastha* should think, 'Which great one will I have the honour of feeding today?' The guest, on the other hand, must feel, 'I should

Performance of ordained duties is the first step in the path to attain knowledge. By this, the mind will become pure. Then, by the Guru's words, we can get knowledge and hence mokṣa.



not eat at another's place, but I have travelled for long and do not know anyone in this place. If some great one gives me food here, I will be able to reach home before evening.' The guest arrives with great hesitation, while the householder eagerly awaits such a one's arrival. This was a state of affairs.

What is the situation at present? This too has been indicated by my *Guru*. "Nowadays, the householder shuts the door tight and refuses to feed anyone, while the guest is willing to force his way in!" Are these attitudes proper? Not at all. I pointed this out to indicate the importance of hospitality for *gr̥hasthas*.

A *Sannyāsī* is not expected to remain in one place but is expected to wander. He should perform *anuṣṭhāna*, abstain from talking too much, always contemplate on the Supreme *Brahman* and not have attachment to anything. These are specified for *Sannyāsīs*. You may ask me "Are you like that?" *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda* has given a responsibility to the *Pīṭha* and hence it is necessary for me to act accordingly. I would be extremely glad to remain silent and wander, but not when *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* has ordained otherwise. That is the reason for my present conduct.

Performance of ordained duties is the first step in the path to attain knowledge. By this, the mind will become pure. Then, by the *Guru's* words, we can get knowledge and hence *mokṣa*. Therefore, we must tread the proper path and attain the highest good.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK

It is ordained that one must always speak the truth. Therefore, one should be careful before conveying a message to another. If the message is true, but is going to cause anguish to the listener, some caution must be adopted.

Supposing that a gentleman is performing a religious function and is in high spirits and there is some unpleasant news to be conveyed to him. Should we spoil his pleasure and mental peace by giving him the message straightaway?



If a person resolves to speak the truth in a pleasant manner and not to utter a lie even to please another, then he would be no less than a sage.



If we did so, we may feel satisfied at having been truthful, but we must also think what repercussions our words might have on the continuance of the function. It would indeed be more appropriate to convey the message later, in a more congenial atmosphere. We should use our discrimination even in speaking the truth and make it, if it is unpleasant, as bearable as possible.

At the same time, we must not utter lies just to please a person. A pleasant untruth might make him happy, but his joy would only be short-lived. He will feel upset when he learns of the truth. So, we must never tell a lie even if it is harmless and gives momentary pleasure.

Therefore, only what is true as well as beneficial and pleasant must be spoken. This kind of speech is highly virtuous and is itself a *dhārmic* ritual. It is not necessary to retire to the forest to perform penance. If a person resolves to speak the truth in a pleasant manner and not to utter a lie even to please another, then he would be no less than a sage.

THE ROLE THAT PARENTS MUST PLAY

The tradition of beginning the child's education with the words, "*Namaḥ Śivāya,*" has been devised by our forefathers with a view to infuse faith in God even at that tender age. What a magnificent way to instill faith and virtue into our lives! When the child is brought up in this noble culture, he will never deviate from the virtuous path. In the name of modernity, however, these practices are now being

It is not enough if we just praise our ancestors – we must honour them by following the precepts and traditions that they have handed down to us.



discarded by parents and the disastrous consequences are evident. Old values are changing, virtue is being abandoned and good religious customs are being neglected. People often ask me for a way out of this mess. They do not realise that this is a result of the parents' neglect of their offspring. It is not enough if we just praise our ancestors – we must honour them by following the precepts and traditions that they have handed down to us.

DEVELOP COMPASSION

'*Karuṇā*' means compassion. That is, if one notices any being suffering in any manner and if one has the power to eliminate the suffering, then one must exercise that power. Only then can one be acclaimed as '*Dayāvān*' or a compassionate one. The *Yoga śāstra* refers to this as *ahimsā* and says that in the presence of one who is established (practise) in *ahimsā*, all beings abandon their enmity. We do not have to look very far for an example. We find it in the life of the sage *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga*, who was the son of the *Mahar̥ṣi Vibhāṇḍaka*. *Śṛṅgagiri* is but the *āśrama* of *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga*. It is mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that in his presence, all beings lived in amity. Why, going even that far is unnecessary when we have the example of *Śrī Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*. When *Bhagavatpāda* came to Sringeri, He witnessed a snake showing compassion towards a toad. In fact, it was this sight that induced Him to set up a *Maṭha* there. Would such amity have been possible but for the penance of *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga*? It is this type of '*Karuṇā*' that should be practised.

AVOID PRIDE

A quality which is found in everybody in this world, and which the wise do not care for, is 'pride.' It is rare to find a person without pride and such a one is indeed wise.

A man may be proud for various reasons. A rich man develops the feeling that there is none in the three worlds to equal him. However, he does not realise that his wealth is not going to stay with him for eternity. For some other people, a healthy body itself becomes the cause of pride. They may think, "I have the strength to do anything." Still others who are physically weak become proud for a different reason. They say, "Though I am not strong, there are hundreds of people to carry out my orders – I do not have to even come out of my house for anything. Whatever I want done will be done."

Though innumerable people of the above-mentioned kind exist in the world, how long is their pride going to last? Are the objects which make them proud going to always exist? Certainly not.

The lifespan of humans as mentioned in the *Vedas* is one hundred years. If anyone is seen living for over a hundred years, it will only be a rare case. Time being infinite, a hundred years seems next to nothing. As such, what can we accomplish



We must develop faith in Īśvara and strive to win His grace, since that is the greatest wealth. It is in fact ridiculous to treat anything else as wealth and falsely believe that it will bring us happiness.



in this short span of time? For how long will the physical strength that we boast of stay with us – throughout the hundred years? No, youth will last only for a very short while. So being strong forever is not possible. Moreover, for how long can we enjoy the support of another man? He will obey us only until we are able to provide him with help. At this juncture, an incident narrated to me by a devotee comes to mind.

A person was working as a Tahsildar. One day, his servant was standing by him, holding a pot of water when the Tahsildar was brushing his teeth. The Tahsildar said to his servant, "I have received transfer orders and so I will not be staying here any longer." The servant immediately dropped the pot! When the surprised officer asked him for an explanation for his act, the servant replied, "My duty to you is now over. Hereafter, I need to serve only the person who replaces you. Therefore, I do not have to do this work for you anymore!"

This tale clearly illustrates what I said earlier – people cannot be kept under one's sway at all times. Power is not eternal. Therefore, it must be said that pride is a mark of lack of 'Viveka' (discrimination).

We must develop faith in *Īśvara* and strive to win His grace, since that is the greatest wealth. It is in fact ridiculous to treat anything else as wealth and falsely believe that it will bring us happiness. *Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara Bhagavatpāda*, while talking about this lack of discrimination in people, advises, "Just as camphor vanishes these material objects will disappear in the course of time. What you consider as your own will not come to your aid at the time of need. When your body has lost all its strength, when your entire wealth is spent and when the people around you do not listen to you anymore, it will be *Īśvara's* grace alone that can help you. Therefore, what you should earn is only His grace – all else is useless."

We must always, therefore, remember that it is *Īśvara* who is the supreme, and we must engage ourselves with faith in the pursuit of securing His grace.

THE NEED FOR KṢAMĀ

Putting up with someone who causes pain is called '*kṣamā*.' Tolerance may be of two kinds. In one case, a person may not have the power to retaliate and will therefore not do so. Such a one is not said to be of a forgiving disposition. On the other hand, one who has the power to retaliate and yet does not do so, is said to be forgiving. If a person harms us, we must not want to inflict punishment on him. For, doing so, we would incur the sin of giving him grief. We must first find out if the harm was done willfully. If it was not, then we must drop the matter and if it was done on purpose, we should try and correct the person by giving him good advice. Non-retaliation on our part would induce the person to repent and be corrected. A forgiving disposition cannot be had by one who has not conquered anger. Anger is listed along with desire and greed as one of the internal enemies of man and must be overcome.

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THE TWO GREAT ENEMIES

Man has two enemies, one being '*ahāṅkāra*' and the other '*mamakāra*.' *ahāṅkāra* causes one to say, "I, I" while *mamakāra* gives rise to the feeling of "mine." Whenever some object is perceived, then the feeling, "This is mine," is due to *mamakāra*. Likewise, when one does something, the feeling, "I did this," is due to *Ahamkara*.

There is an incident which comes to my mind. When my revered *Guru* was once touring Andhra Pradesh, He graced a *kshetra*. That place, though sacred, had not attracted many pilgrims because it lacked conveniences for the public. One *adhikārī* (officer) took up the job of rectifying this. He made a lot of arrangements, after which people started visiting the place in large numbers. When my revered *Guru* went there, the *adhikārī* kept pointing to things, boasting to my revered *Guru* that

everything was his handiwork. My *Guru* remained silent. On coming to the main entrance of the temple, however, He stopped. He looked at the Gopuram.

Acharya : Do you behold this Gopuram?

Officer : Yes, I do.

Acharya : How high is it?

Officer : Very high.

Acharya : Where are we when compared to it?

Officer : On a very low level.

Acharya : Do you know why such Gopurams were built? It is to make us realise how insignificant we are so that we can get rid of our *ahaṅkāra*. When we think of *Īśvara*, the creator of this wonderful universe, and then

look at ourselves, we will realise that what we can achieve is insignificant compared to His magnificent deeds. Therefore, it is meaningless to hold on to ideas such as "I did this."



When we think of *Īśvara*, the creator of this wonderful universe, and then look at ourselves, we will realise that what we can achieve is insignificant compared to His magnificent deeds.



ALWAYS BE CONTENT

The feeling, "I want more," is due to longing. The absence of this is contentment, which means being satisfied with whatever one has. We must be satisfied with what we obtain on a day, and not bother about the future – the future will be taken care of by the Lord. How were our ancients? The answer is contained in a verse the meaning of which is as follows. "My intellect and body are functional now, but I was helpless and did not have much of an intellect when I lay in my mother's womb. Did I then have the capacity to procure food? No. It was the Lord who took care of me then. Why then should I bother myself now? Has the Lord now gone to sleep? Certainly not. I shall therefore simply do my duty and then cease to concern myself." It should be borne in mind here that this idea must not cause us to become lazy. On the contrary, the attitude of doing one's duty and then dedicating the fruits to *Bhagavān* must be present.

It is imperative to perform one's duty, for if one remains idle, *Īśvara* will not bestow anything. Only if you do your duty will the Lord do so. Therefore, he who remains without any longing alone gets contentment. And only by being content can he find happiness in life.

He who remains without any
longing alone gets contentment.
And only by being content can he
find happiness in life.



ART OF FRIENDSHIP

Some enquiries regarding true friendship have been done in *Samskrta* literature. Friendliness should be like that between milk and water. Sweetness and a white hue are qualities of milk which are not found in the same fashion in water. When water comes to milk and asks, "Will you allow me to join you?" milk readily agrees and gives it all its qualities, so much so that one is not able to distinguish milk from water. When milk is heated, it begins to suffer. Unable to bear

the suffering of its friend, water begins to give up its life and becomes vapour. "He sought refuge in me and is now giving up his life because of my suffering" – thinking thus, milk also begins to give up its life by foaming. We observe this when we overheat milk. At this stage, if we sprinkle some water, then thinking, "My friend has returned to me," milk calms down. True friendship should be like this. People talk of having friends. Let them compare their friendship to that between milk and water. When one possesses such friendliness, one experiences joy.

WHAT IS TRUE HAPPINESS?



We encounter various types of men in the world. Some are affluent while some others are poor; while some are highly educated, many are illiterate; some are good-looking, but some others are not. However, all these people have something in common – all of them desire that they should be happy forever.

A thief is engaged in stealing in order to become rich overnight. It is only with the motive of making himself happy that he robs others of their wealth. However, he finally

undergoes severe punishment, as the means chosen by him were unlawful. Thus, even though there are many varieties of men, all of them desire to be happy forever. That is why every person considers himself as the dearest among all in the world. There is no other object which is considered as dear as one's own self. What will bring happiness to the self? Do acts like consuming delicious food or listening

Our ancients have advised us to avoid worldly matters and focus our minds on Īśvara if we desire untainted bliss. We should never forget the existence of Īśvara – it will be a sin if we do.



to good music constitute bliss? Not at all. A person does feel glad when he eats tasty food, but such happiness does not last long. Soon, he suffers from a stomachache or some other ailment and runs to a doctor. If asked about this, he would say, “That is what the world is, Sir.”

This is true of listening to music too. We spend Rs.100 or Rs.200 for attending a music concert. However, after listening to a few songs, we get bored and feel like quitting the hall. Likewise, all worldly objects initially appear to be pleasurable, but finally get included in the category of unwanted things. Therefore, it is incorrect to consider sense objects as sources of eternal bliss.

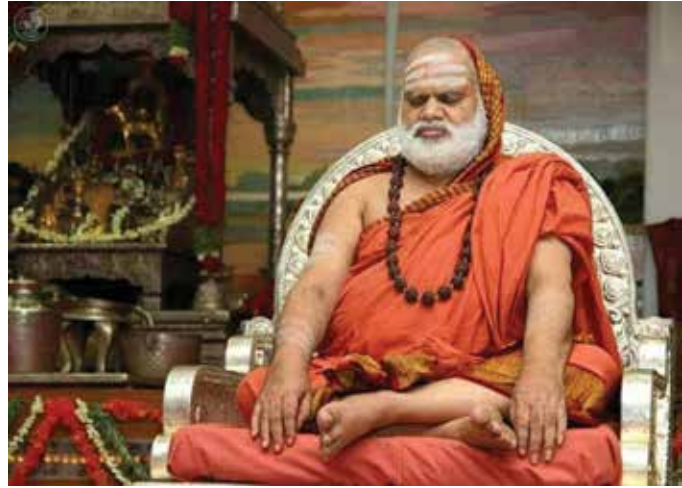
In fact, real happiness lies in our renouncing sense pleasures. The more we cling to worldly objects, the more we will develop dislike for them. On the other hand, if we desist from sensual pleasures right from the beginning, there would be no cause for any disappointment and final agony. Our ancients have advised us to avoid worldly matters and focus our minds on Īśvara if we desire untainted bliss. We should never forget the existence of Īśvara – it will be a sin if we do.

ĀTMA IS DISTINCT FROM THE BODY

It is a great misconception to think of the body as the *Ātma*. This is the conclusion of the *śāstras* and it is also a matter of our experience.

What is wrong if the body is considered the *Ātma*? As an answer to this query, *Dārśanikas* (traditional philosophers) have given many explanations. The joys and sufferings that we now experience, have some cause or the other. We are aware that no effect can exist without a cause. Joy and suffering are the nature of effects. Hence, what are their causes? Happiness results from good deeds and sufferings from bad deeds. If the body itself were to be considered the *Ātma*, the fruits of our past actions should have been experienced by our previous body itself and not by a subsequent body.

However, another body has now come into existence and is experiencing the fruits. The results of the deeds performed by the previous body are experienced by this body. Is this proper?



It is the rule that he who is the doer must be the experiencer also. But here, we are claiming that the body that did good and bad deeds in the previous birth is different from the body that is experiencing the fruits now. Therefore, the rule is broken.

The fruit of the actions performed by the present body has not been obtained in this birth itself. Further, the present body has to experience the results of what it has not done. This is a confused state of affairs. If we accept the body to be the *Ātma* we will find ourselves in such a mess and will not be able to explain the purport of the *śāstras*. Hence, if the rule is to be preserved, one must regard the *Ātma* as distinct from the body. In the previous birth too, it was only this *Ātma* which acted, and it is the one now experiencing the corresponding fruit. While the *Ātma* may have performed an action in a particular body, it may experience the fruit while associated with another body. Since in this case, the doer is the experiencer, there is no violation of the rule.

That the Self is distinct from the body is the conclusion supported by the scriptures as also by logic. The view of the opponents is against the tenets of our scriptures and logic. Hence, it can never become the *Siddhānta* (established conclusion). If the view of the opponents is considered as *Siddhānta*, then whatever one may think will have to be regarded as *Siddhānta*. If whatever one says is to be taken as valid, then a sorry state of affairs will result.

If, without some scriptural basis, whatever one says is accepted, then every such utterance will have to become *Siddhānta*. A compassionate one may say, "No one must suffer. This is my view." Just because he thinks so, does suffering cease to be?

No, it does not. Another person may say, "There should not be *mokṣa* at all for anyone." Just because someone holds this view, are *Śuka* and *Vāmadeva* going to be reborn? No. Therefore, that which is in accordance with the Shruti and logic alone can become the *Siddhānta*.

The view that the *Ātma* is the body does not conform to *śruti*, logic or experience and cannot therefore be accepted. By giving many reasons apart from the ones mentioned earlier, it has been established in the *śāstras* that the *Ātma* is distinct from the body. The connection between the *Ātma* and the body is similar to that between the body and clothes. We wear a set of clothes today and another set tomorrow. Surely, we cannot be the clothes ourselves! If a cloth tears, we discard it and take up a new one. In a similar manner, the *Ātma* discards one body and takes up a new one. Another example has also been given. The numerous gems of a garland are strung on a single thread. Similarly, the *Ātma* is the same though different bodies may be taken up by it, one after the other. The same *Ātma* gets various bodies depending on its *karma*. This is the *Siddhānta*.

The view that the *Atma* is the body does not conform to Shruti, logic or experience and cannot therefore be accepted.





Appendix 2

VERSES OF VENERATION

The compositions of *mahātman*s confer great good on those who recite them with devotion and sincerity. For the benefit of the readers the divine compositions of His Holiness follow.

॥ श्रीगुरुध्यानम् ॥

Sri Guru Dhyanam

अज्ञानध्वान्तविध्वंसिसहस्रकरतेजसम् ।

सच्चित्सुखात्मकब्रह्मनिविष्टहृदयाम्बुजम् ॥ १ ॥

पद्मासनोपविष्टञ्च ध्यानस्तिमितलोचनम् ।

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्तं महाप्रभम् ॥ २ ॥

सहस्रकिरणस्पर्धिदेहकान्तिसमुज्ज्वलम् ।

निर्विकल्पसमाधिस्थं निश्चलावयवं शिवम् ॥ ३ ॥

देहादिब्रह्मपर्यन्ते भोग्ये तुच्छत्वधीयुतम् ।

आर्तानामार्तिहन्तारं जिज्ञासुविशयच्छिदम् ॥ ४ ॥

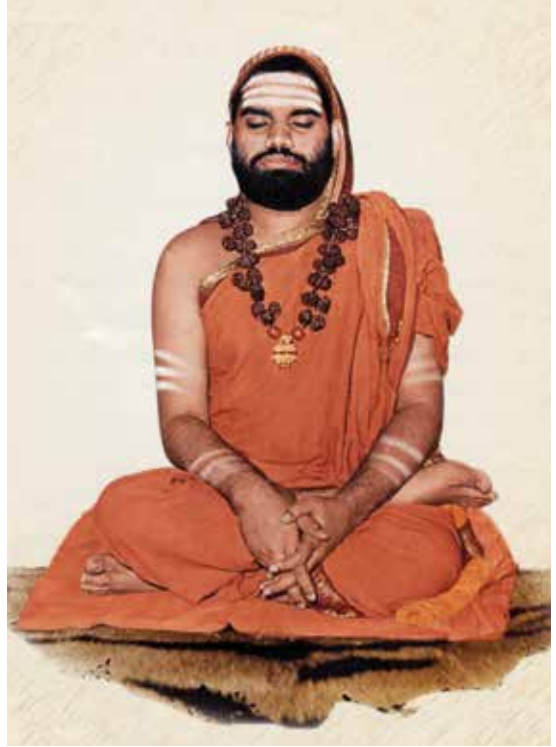
स्वावलोकनमात्रेण पुनानं निखिलं जगत् ।

मदीयहृत्सरोजातनिवेशितपदद्वयम् ।

विद्यातीर्थगुरूत्तंसं ध्यायामि भवमुक्तये ॥ ५ ॥



Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha
Mahaswamin



Jagadguru Sri Bharathi Theertha
Mahaswamin

For getting liberated from the world of transmigratory existence, I meditate upon the greatest Preceptor, Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha,

1. Who is resplendent like the thousand-rayed sun, dispelling the darkness of ignorance, and Whose mind is fixed on Brahman which is of the nature of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.
2. Who is seated in the Yogic posture of Padmaasana in deep meditation with His eyes absolutely still, Who holds His body, neck, and head perfectly upright, and Who shines brilliantly.
3. Who shines with His bodily splendor which vies with that of the sun, Who is in the ultimate state of Yogic perfection (Nirvikalpa Samadhi), Whose limbs are totally still, and Who is auspicious.

4. Who considers objects of enjoyment starting from the body to the position of Brahma as thoroughly insignificant, and Who annihilates the miseries of the afflicted and the doubts of those desirous of knowledge.
5. Who purifies the entire world just by His glance, and Who has placed His two feet in the lotus of my heart.



॥ श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थमहास्वामिसेवापद्यावलिः ॥

Srimad Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswami Seva Padyavali

श्रीमच्छङ्करदेशिकेन्द्रचरणाम्भोजातभृङ्गायित
 श्रीमच्चन्द्रकिशोरशेखरगुरुश्रीपाणिपद्मोद्भव ।
 श्रीविद्यामनुजापतत्परविभो श्रीचक्रपूजारत
 विद्यातीर्थजगद्गुरो करुणया ऋग्वेदमाकर्णय ॥ १ ॥

O Vidyatheertha Jagadguru! Thou are the bee that hovers on the lotus feet of Sri Shankaracharya, the Great Preceptor. Thou are the disciple of Sri Chandrashekhara Guru, having been initiated by Him. Thou are Great, immersed in the japa of Srividya and delight in the worship of Sri Chakra. Out of compassion, hearken to this recitation of the Rig Veda.

शान्ताहङ्कृतिमौनिवन्दित सदद्वैतात्मलीनानिशं
 स्वान्ताराधितशारदापदयुगद्वन्द्वारविन्द प्रभो ।
 चिन्तालेशविहीन विश्रुत सदा विद्यादितीर्थाख्यया
 श्रीमद्भारतितीर्थसेवित यजुर्वेदं समाकर्णय ॥ २ ॥

You are extolled by sages who have subdued their ego, You are always absorbed in the Self that is Non-dual Existence. O Lord, You have worshipped in Your heart the lotus feet of Sharada. Free from any worries, You are ever famed as 'Vidyatheertha'. O, One served by Sri Bharathi Theertha, give an audience to the recitation of Yajur Veda.

राकाचन्द्रसमानवक्र सततं राजाधिराजार्चित
रुद्राक्षप्रविभासिकन्धर विभो रुद्रार्चनादीक्षित ।
रागद्वेषविहीनमानस दयासिन्धो रजोवर्जित
विद्यातीर्थगुरुत्तमाद्य कृपया साम त्वमाकर्णय ॥ ३ ॥

O Vidyatheertha Guru, You always shine with the face that is akin to the full moon. You are worshipped by paramount sovereigns. Your neck dazzles with the Rudraksha necklace. O Lord, You are ever intent upon worshipping Rudra. O Ocean of compassion! Free from Rajo Guna, Your mind is rid of desire and hatred. Please listen to the Sama Veda.

अद्वैताब्धिसुधामयूख सततं सद्द्वैदिकाध्वप्रिय
विद्वत्संस्तुतपाण्डितीविलसित स्वान्तस्थगौरीपते ।
काशी-द्वारवती-पुरी-बदरिकादिक्षेत्रसन्दर्शक
सानन्दं त्वमथर्ववेदमिह भो स्वामिन् समाकर्णय ॥ ४ ॥

You are the moon to the ocean of Advaita (The ocean swells under the moon). You always respect the noble path laid out by the Veda. You are resplendent with the erudition that is celebrated by the learned. The Consort of Mother Gowri resides in Your heart. You have beheld the holy cities of Varanasi, Dwaraka, Puri, Badri, etc. O Lord, now listen with joy to the recital of the Atharva Veda.

दुर्वादीभमृगेन्द्रविक्रम दयावारान्निधे देशिक
सर्वाराधितपादपङ्कजयुग स्वाधीनसर्वेन्द्रिय ।
शर्वाणीपतिपूजक प्रणमतां पापौघविद्वंसक
सर्वैष्टार्थद सर्ववाद्यनिन्दं प्रीत्या समाकर्णय ॥ ५ ॥

You are the valorous lion to the elephant of wrong doctrines. O Ocean of compassion! Preceptor, Your lotus feet are worshipped by all. All Your senses are under Your control. You worship the consort of Parvati. You annihilate the sins of those who worship You. You grant all desires. Harken with love the sound of the musical instruments.

आर्याजानिपदाम्बुजार्चक सदा शान्त्यादिदानव्रत
कार्याकार्यविवेकद प्रणमतां सद्भक्तियुक्चेतसाम् ।
मर्यादापरिपालनैकनिरत ब्रह्मात्मधीसंयुत
तूर्यारावममन्दया शृणु मुदा तूर्णं जगद्देशिक ॥ ६ ॥

O, Worshipper of the lotus feet of Shiva, the consort of Parvati, You have always vowed to bestow self-control, and the like. You grant the discrimination between what is to be done and what is not to be done to those who approach You with pure devotion. You are ever intent upon maintaining the propriety of conduct. Your mind is given to the knowledge of the identity of Brahman and Atman. O Jagadguru, listen to the melodious piped instrument, joyfully.



॥ श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थ-अक्षरमालास्तोत्रम् ॥

Srimad Abhinava Vidyatheertha Aksharamala Stotram

अखिलानन्दसंदायिमनोज्ञमुखपङ्कजम् ।
जगद्गुरुं जगत्पूज्यं विद्यातीर्थमहं श्रये ॥ १ ॥

I take refuge in Sri Vidyatheertha, the world preceptor, Who makes everyone happy, Who has a lotus-like face, and Who is adored by one and all.

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिर्दृष्टे यस्मिन्नितिः श्रुतिः ।
जगौ परावरं शान्तं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥ २ ॥

I take refuge in that tranquil Sri Vidyatheertha who is the Supreme One, about Whom the Veda says, "On seeing Him, the knot of the heart (the host of impressions of ignorance in the form of desires that hang on to the intellect) is rent asunder".

नटत्याननरङ्गे हि यस्य साक्षात् सरस्वती ।
नतार्तिशमने दक्षं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥ ३ ॥

The Goddess of learning Herself, dances on the stage of His mouth; He is the most competent to destroy the miseries of those who take refuge in Him. To that Sri Vidyatheertha do I bow.

वटमूलं परित्यज्य शृङ्गाद्रौ निवसन् हि यः ।
तत्त्वं बोधयते भक्तान् दक्षिणास्यं तमाश्रये ॥ ४ ॥

Residing in the Sringeri hills after abandoning the foot of the banyan tree, He expounds the Truth to devotees. I salute Him, the south-facing Lord (Sri Dakshinamurthi).

विषयाशां परित्यज्य वैराग्यं परमं श्रिताः ।
मुनयो यत्कृपाभाजः तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥ ५ ॥

Renouncing all worldly desires and practising extreme dispassion, great holy men have sought out Sri Vidyatheertha and received His blessings. To Him, I offer my salutations.

द्यावाभूमी हि जनयन् देव एक इति श्रुतिः ।
यं वर्णयति सर्वेशं तं विद्यातीर्थमाश्रये ॥ ६ ॥

The Vedas declare that the Lord Who has created heaven and earth is One. I take refuge in Him, Who is verily Sri Vidyatheertha.

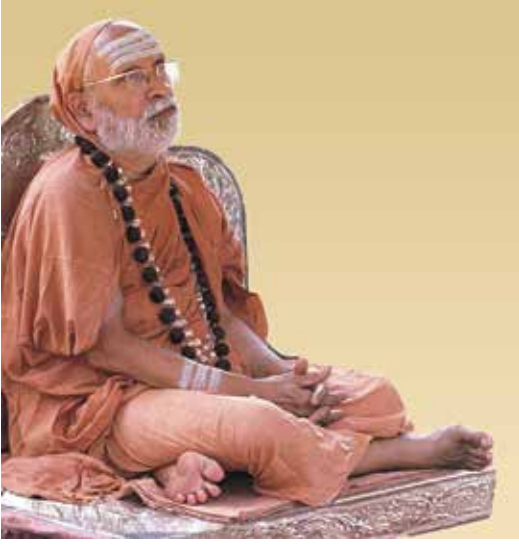
तीरे तुङ्गातटिन्या यः तत्त्वं शिष्यान् प्रबोधयन् ।
आस्ते देशिकाराजं तं विद्यातीर्थं समाश्रये ॥ ७ ॥

I take refuge in Sri Vidyatheertha, Who, on the banks of the river Tunga, teaches the Supreme Truth to His disciples, and Who is the king of preceptors.

धर्मपूर्वं श्रुतेर्यस्तु यथावदवबोधयन् ।
शिष्यान् धर्मपथासक्तान् कुरुते तमहं श्रये ॥ ८ ॥

By elucidating Dharma in accordance with the Vedic texts, He helps disciples tread the path of righteousness. And He, Sri Vidyatheertha, is my refuge.





Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha
Mahaswamin



His Holiness worshipping an image of
His Guru

॥ श्रीजगद्गुरु अभिनवविद्यातीर्थमहास्वामिनां अष्टोत्तरशतनामावलिः ॥

Sri Jagadguru Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamin Ashtottarashatha Namavali

No	Naama	Meaning
1	अद्वैतविचारसिकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who delights in the knowledge of non-duality
2	अनुकंपासरित्पतये नमः ।	Salutations to Him who is an ocean of mercy
3	अतिमानुषचारित्राय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose conduct transcends that of mortals
4	अमृतोपमभाषणाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose speech was like nectar
5	अनेकमठनिर्मात्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who established many Maths
6	अनेकदर्शनमर्मविदे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who mastered the hidden import of many schools of thought
7	अन्नपूर्णाप्रतिष्ठात्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who consecrated the deity of Annapurna (at Varanasi)

8	सद्गुणेशपदाम्बुजाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who adored the lotus feet of the Lord
9	अहन्ताममताहीनाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was devoid of the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'
10	अगजापतिभक्तिमते नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was devoted to the spouse of Parvathi
11	आगमार्थपरिज्ञात्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who comprehensively knew the import of the Agama Shastra
12	आश्रिताखिलरक्षकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who protects all who seek refuge
13	आशापाशसमुच्छेत्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who cuts asunder the cord of desire
14	आपन्नार्तिविनाशकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who destroys the misery of the distressed
15	ईहाविरहितस्वान्ताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose mind was free from desires
16	इभवक्रसुपूजकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who worshipped the elephant faced Lord Ganesha
17	इन्दुमौलिपदध्यायिने नमः ।	Salutations to Him who meditated on the feet of Lord Chandramouleeshwara
18	इहाऽमुत्रार्थनिःस्पृहाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was free from desires for objects of this world and the next
19	कर्माऽकर्मविभागज्ञाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who had known well the action and inaction
20	कीर्तनीयगुणोज्ज्वलाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was resplendent with admirable qualities
21	कामिताशेषफलदाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who grants the desired fruits
22	कोमलस्वान्तसंयुताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was endowed with tender heart

23	कालट्यादिपरिष्कर्त्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who developed Kalady and other places
24	कामक्रोधविवर्जिताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was bereft of desire and anger
25	कराब्जविलसद्दण्डाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who held the staff (Danda) in His lotus-like hands
26	काषायाम्बरसंवृताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was ochre-robed
27	गुरुपादाम्बुजध्यायिने नमः ।	Salutations to Him who meditated on the lotus feet of His Guru
28	गणनीयगुणोज्ज्वलाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who shone with venerable qualities
29	चित्तनैर्मल्यसन्दायिने नमः ।	Salutations to Him who confers purity of mind
30	चिन्तालेशविवर्जिताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was completely devoid of worry
31	तीर्थराजकृतस्नानाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who bathed in the waters of ocean
32	तीर्थीकृतधरातलाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who cleansed the earth
33	तुषाराचलसंचारिणे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who travelled across the mountains of Himalayas
34	तुङ्गास्नानसमुत्सुकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who relished the bath in Tunga river
35	दक्षिणास्यपदध्यायिने नमः ।	Salutations to Him who contemplated on the feet of Sri Dakshinamoorthy
36	दक्षिणाम्नायपीठपाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who headed the Dakshinamnaya Sharada Peetham
37	दाक्षिण्यनिलयस्वान्ताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose heart was the abode of kindness
38	दान्त्यादिपरिशोभिताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was radiant with virtues like the control of senses

39	धर्माऽधर्मविभागज्ञाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who knew the difference between Dharma and Adharma
40	ध्याननिर्धूतकल्मषाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who dislodged the sins through meditation
41	धर्मप्रचारनिरताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was devoted to the propagation of Dharma
42	धिकृताखिलदुर्मताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who defeated the wrong schools of thought
43	नतलोकसमुद्धर्त्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who uplifts those who pay obeisance
44	नियमाचरणोत्सुकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who rejoiced in adhering to Dharmic principles
45	न्यायमार्गनुसारिणे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who trod the righteous path
46	न्यायादिनयकोविदाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was an expert in Shastras like Nyaya
47	निगमागमतत्त्वज्ञाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who knew the real purport of Vedas and Shastras
48	नित्यसन्तुष्टमानसाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose mind was always blissful
49	निष्कलङ्कसुचारित्राय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose character was impeccable
50	नीतितत्वसुबोधकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who imparts the principles of justice
51	पारावारातिगम्भीराय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose mind was deep and fathomless like the ocean
52	प्राणायामपरायणाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was intent on controlling breath
53	पूर्वादिक्षेत्रयात्राकृते नमः ।	Salutations to Him who toured holy places like Puri
54	पुराणागमतत्वविदे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who knew the essence of Puranas and Scriptures
55	पालिताशेषभक्तौघाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who protects devotees

56	पिङ्गलाब्दसमुद्भवाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was born in the Pingala year
57	बहुशिष्यसमायुक्ताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was thronged by a huge following of disciples
58	बहुभाषाविशारदाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who is well versed in many languages
59	ब्रह्मतत्वानुसन्धात्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was absorbed in the thought of the Supreme
60	ब्रह्मविद्योपदेशकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who imparts the knowledge of the Supreme
61	भक्तहार्दतमोभेत्त्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who purges the minds of devotees of ignorance
62	भिक्षुकोत्तमरूपधृते नमः ।	Salutations to Him who had taken to Sannyasa of the highest order
63	भेदवादीभपञ्चास्याय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was a lion to the elephants of dualists
64	भुक्तिमुक्तिप्रदायकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who provides earthly pleasures and liberation as well
65	भयशोकादिरहिताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was devoid of fear and sorrow
66	भवभीतिनिवारणाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who removes the fear of birth
67	महावाक्यविवेकज्ञाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was endowed with the wisdom of Mahavakyas
68	महामहिमसंयुताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who shone with the greatest glory
69	महाप्रज्ञासमायुक्ताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was endowed with supreme awareness
70	मात्सर्यादिविवर्जिताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was free from jealousy etc.

71	मधुरालापचतुराय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was skilful in nectarine talk
72	मतिनिर्जितगीष्पतये नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose wisdom excelled that of the teacher of Devas
73	मोदिताखिलभक्तालये नमः ।	Salutations to Him who has delighted all His devotees
74	मर्यादापरिपालकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who preserved the precincts of Dharma
75	योगिवन्द्यपदाम्भोजाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose lotus feet were worshipped by Yogis
76	योगमार्गविशारदाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was an adept in Yoga
77	राजाधिराजसंपूज्याय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who is revered by emperors
78	रागद्वेषविवर्जिताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who has abandoned likes and dislikes
79	रुद्राक्षभूषितग्रीवाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose neck was adorned by Rudraksha
80	रुद्राराधनतत्पराय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was engrossed in the worship of Lord Rudra
81	वशीकृतेन्द्रियग्रामाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who had conquered the senses
82	वाग्देवीसमुपासकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who fervently worshipped the Goddess of speech
83	विद्यारण्यसमप्रज्ञाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him whose wisdom is comparable to that of Sri Vidyananda
84	विद्याविनयशोभिताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was resplendent with knowledge and humility
85	वेदशास्त्रपरित्रात्रे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who protected the Vedas and Shastras
86	वादिमत्तेभकेसरिणे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was like a lion to elephant-like disputants

87	विदिताखिलशास्त्रार्थाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was erudite in the teachings of all Shastras
88	वीतरागजनस्तुताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who is adored by dispassionate people
89	व्याख्यासिंहासनाधीशाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was the Lord of Vyakhyana Simhasana
90	व्याससूत्रार्थतत्त्वविदे नमः ।	Salutations to Him who knew the true import of Brahma Sutras
91	शारदापूजनासक्ताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who revelled in the worship of Goddess Sharada
92	शारदेन्दुसमद्युतये नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was effulgent like the autumnal moon
93	शास्त्रतात्पर्यसंवेदिने नमः ।	Salutations to Him who had mastered the imports of Shastras
94	शारदापीठनायकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who headed the Sri Sharada Peetham
95	शङ्कराचार्यसंसेविने नमः ।	Salutations to Him who worshipped Sri Adi Shankara
96	शङ्काद्रिभिदुरोपमाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was like a thunderbolt to the mountain of doubts
97	शमिताखिलसंतापाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who extinguishes all kinds of misery
98	शमादिसुगुणालयाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was a repository of virtues like restraint
99	श्रीविद्याजपनिष्णाताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who was engaged in the repetitive recitation of Srividya Mantra
100	श्रीचक्रार्चनतत्पराय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who relished in the worship of Sri Chakra
101	श्रीशेशभेदरहिताय नमः	Salutations to Him who did not discriminate between Vishnu and Shiva

102	श्रीनृसिंहपदार्चकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who worshipped the feet of Lord Narasimha
103	संचारपूतधरणये नमः ।	Salutations to Him who sanctified the earth through travelling
104	संसारार्णवनाविकाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who is the navigator in the ocean of transmigratory existence
105	सत्यादिधर्मनिरताय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who delights in the observance of Dharmic rules like speaking the truth
106	सर्वभूतदयापराय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who is merciful to all creatures
107	अज्ञानध्वान्तमार्तण्डाय नमः ।	Salutations to Him who is the Sun that dispels the darkness of ignorance
108	विद्यातीर्थजगद्गुरवे नमः ।	Salutations to Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha, the preceptor of the world

॥ ध्यानश्लोकः ॥

Dhyana Shloka

जातः पिङ्गलहायने यतिरभूद्यश्च प्रजापत्यभि-
ख्येऽब्दे पीठपतिर्बभूव जयवर्षे यश्च शृङ्गाचले ।
कीर्तिं प्राप्य दिगन्तगां तनुमिमां यश्शुक्लवर्षे जहौ
विद्यातीर्थगुरुर्जयत्यभिनवो लोकान् सदा पालयन् ॥

Born in the year Pingala (1917), He became a Sannyasin in the year Prajapati (1931), and the pontiff of Sringeri in the year Jaya (1954). Having attained fame that spread to the end of the quarters, He discarded the body in the year Shukla (1989). Triumphant is He, Guru Abhinava Vidyatheertha Who ever protects all.





Jagadguru Shi Chandrashekhara Bharathi
Mahaswamin



His Holiness worships at the Adhishthanam
of Jagadguru Sri Chandrashekhara
Bharathi Mahaswamin

॥ श्रीचन्द्रशेखरभारतीनवरत्नमालिका ॥

Sri Chandrashekhara Bharathi Navaratnamalika

श्रीमच्चन्द्रशेखरभारत्यभिधानमाश्रये यमिनम् ।

निरवधिसंसृतिनीरधिमग्नजनोद्धरणबद्धदीक्षं तम् ॥ १ ॥

I take refuge in Sri Chandrashekhara Bharathi, Who is ready to rescue the people immersed in the boundless ocean of Samsara.

काषायाम्बरपरिवृतम् ईषत्स्मितवदनमिष्टदातारम् ।
शेषारख्येयगुणालिं भूषायितशमदमादिकं वन्दे ॥ २ ॥

I take refuge in Him, Who is adorned by ochre robes, Who has 'Mind-control' and 'Sense-control' as His ornaments, Who has a benign smile, Who grants all wishes, and Whose qualities can be described only by (the thousand-headed) Adishesha.

गाङ्गझरीसमवाचं स्वाङ्गत्विण्णिर्जिताच्छगाङ्गेयम् ।
माङ्गलिकमाश्रयेऽहं जाङ्गलिकं भवमहाविषस्येशम् ॥ ३ ॥

I take refuge in that Guru Whose speech is like the flood of the Ganges, Whose body is resplendent like gold, Who removes the poison of Samsara, and Who bestows all auspiciousness.

करुणामृतसरिदीशं गुरुणाऽपि स्तुत्यमतुलधीयुक्तम् ।
तरुणारुणवदनाब्जं च नृणां गम्यं तमाश्रये सततम् ॥ ४ ॥

I always take refuge in Him, Who is an ocean of mercy, Who is worshipped by even our Guru (Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha Mahaswamin), Who has unsurpassed skills, Who has a face like that of the rising sun, and Who is worshipped by men.

अतिवेलमधुरभाषितमतितरलस्वान्तमखिलवन्द्यपदम् ।
यतिवर्यं हृदि कलये मतिमान्द्यस्यापनुत्तये सततम् ॥ ५ ॥

For the removal of my dull-wittedness, I take refuge in the great sage Sri Chandrashekhara Bharathi, Whose speech is sweet, Who is large-hearted, and Whose feet are worthy of worship by one and all.

पालितनिजभक्ततिं शीलितवेदान्तगूढतत्त्वं तम् ।
मीलितलोचनयुगलं लालितभुवनत्रयं नमामि सदा ॥ ६ ॥

I take refuge in that Guru, Who is an adept at taking care of His devotees, Who constantly dwells on the Vedanta-Tattva, Who is ever in contemplation, and Who protects the three worlds.

राकाशशिनिभवक्रं पाकारिप्रमुखकीर्त्यचारित्रम् ।
आकाशकेशभक्तं शोकापहमाश्रये गुरुत्तंसम् ॥ ७ ॥

I take refuge in that Guru Who has a lotus-like face resembling a full moon, Who possesses the credentials for being worshipped by Indra and others, Who forever worships Ishwara, and Who dispels grief.

तापारण्यकृशानुं भूपालकवन्दनीयपदयुगलम् ।
पापापहनामानं शापानुग्रहसमर्थमहमीडे ॥ ८ ॥

I take refuge in Him, Who destroys sins, Whose pair of feet is worshipped by kings, Who is known for warding off evil, and Who can censure as well as bless.

शङ्करदेशिकविरचितपीठाधिपमालिकामहारत्नम् ।
प्रणमामि चन्द्रशेखरभारत्यभिधानदेशिकं हृदये ॥ ९ ॥

I always pray in My heart to Guru Sri Chandrashekhara Bharathi, Who, like an emerald, adorns the garland of Peetadhipatis belonging to the Sringeri Peetham.





Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava
Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamin



His Holiness worships at the Adhishtanam
of Jagadguru Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava
Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamin

॥ श्रीसच्चिदानन्दशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारत्यष्टकम् ॥

Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi Ashtakam

पिङ्गलाभिधानहायने गृहीतजन्मनः
सर्वमङ्गलासहायपादसेवने रतान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरुत्तमान्
भावयामि भक्तिपूर्णचेतसा निरन्तरम् ॥ १ ॥

With a heart full of devotion, I always salute the great Guru, Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi, Who was born in the year Pingala and who revels in the worship of Lord Shiva, the consort of Goddess Sarvamangala.

श्रीनृसिंहगुरुपदाब्जबंभरायितान्तरान्
श्रीसदाशिवेन्द्रयोगितुल्यसिद्धिसंयुतान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारती यतीश्वरान्
भावयामि भुक्तिमुक्तिदायिनो नतालये ॥ २ ॥

I contemplate on the foremost ascetic, Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi, Who grants both worldly enjoyment and liberation from Samsara, Who, like the honeybee, hovers over the lotus feet of His Guru Sri Nrisimha Bharathi, and Who, like the Mahayogi Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra, acquired Siddhis.

धर्मतत्त्वबोधकानधर्मनिग्रहे रतान्
शर्मदानतत्परानशेषभक्तकोटये ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरुत्तमान्
शीलयामि सन्ततं शिवेतरापनुत्तये ॥ ३ ॥

I think of this great Guru Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi, Who revels in teaching the tenets of Sanatana Dharma and in the destruction of Adharma, and Who is interested in granting bliss to the multitudes of His devotees.

स्वीयपादपांसुपाविताखिलक्षमातलान्
स्वप्रकाशचिन्निविष्टमानसाननारतम् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारती जगद्गुरुन्
सादरं नमामि सर्वलोकरक्षणव्रतान् ॥ ४ ॥

I salute with humility the world-Preceptor Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi, Who has vowed to protect all the worlds, by the dust under Whose feet the earth has been purified, Whose mind always abides in the self-luminous Consciousness.

वेदशास्त्रसंप्रदायपालने धृतव्रतान्
विद्वदालिगीयमानपाण्डितीविभूषितान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरुत्तमान्
चिन्तयामि शिष्यहृत्तमो विवस्वतोऽनिशम् ॥ ५ ॥

I meditate upon the supreme Preceptor Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi, Who is the Sun to the darkness (of ignorance) in the hearts of His disciples, Who is the avowed protector of the scriptures and traditions, and Who shone with scholarliness praised by the highly learned.

दम्भदर्पवर्जितानशेषलोकवन्दितान्
कुम्भजन्मनस्समस्तवेदशास्त्रवारिधेः ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारती यतीश्वरान्
संस्मरामि संयमीन्द्रसेव्यपादपङ्कजान् ॥ ६ ॥

I recollect in the mind the supreme ascetic Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi, Whose lotus feet are worshipped by great yogis, Who is devoid of all pride and conceit, Who is revered by the whole world, and Who consumed the entire scriptures as Sage Agastya did with the waters of the oceans.

भूमिपालवन्दितानपूर्ववाग्झरीयुतान्
कामितेष्टदायकान् प्रपन्नलोकपङ्कये ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारतीगुरुत्तमान्
भावयामि भद्रपूगदायिदिव्यवीक्षणान् ॥ ७ ॥

I imagine the supreme Guru Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi, Whose glances are capable of bestowing auspiciousness and welfare, Who is worshipped by kings, Who has an unparalleled flow of speech and Who fulfills all desires of those who worship Him.

शारदाशशाङ्कमौलिविघ्नराजपूजकान्
शारदेन्दुतुल्यकीर्तिशालिनशिवङ्करान् ।
श्रीशिवाभिनवनृसिंहभारती जगद्गुरून्
शीलयामि शान्तिदान्तिमुख्यसंपदाप्तये ॥ ८ ॥

For acquiring basic qualities essential for spiritual progress like control of the mind and senses, I practise worship of the world-Preceptor, Sri Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi Who worships Goddess Sri Sharadamba, Lord Chandramouleeshwara and Lord Ganesh, Whose fame is like the lustre of the clear autumnal full moon and Who grants all auspiciousness and prosperity.



॥ गुरुद्वयाभेदानुसन्धानम् ॥

Gurudvaya-Abheda-Anusandhanam

आर्याम्बाशिवगुर्वोश्च लक्ष्म्यम्बारामशास्त्रिणोः ।
पुत्रत्वेनावतीर्णो यो धर्मसंरक्षणाय वै ॥ १ ॥
अष्टमे हायने यश्च तुर्यमाश्रममग्रहीत् ।
प्रस्थानत्रयभाष्यादेर्लेखको द्योतकश्च यः ॥ २ ॥
शृङ्गेर्यां शारदापीठं स्थापयामास यो महान् ।
अध्यतिष्ठच्च तत्पीठं लोकानुद्धर्तुमेव यः ॥ ३ ॥
कालट्यां यो जनिं लेभे यश्च तामुद्धार ह ।
शृङ्गेर्यां शारदां यश्च स्थापयामास सद्गुरुः ॥ ४ ॥
तामेव कालटीक्षेत्रे यः पुनः प्रत्यतिष्ठिपत् ।
शङ्करः सच्चिदानन्दशिवाभिनवपूर्वकः ॥ ५ ॥
नृसिंहभारती चेति नामद्वयविराजितम् ।
जगद्गुरुमहं वन्दे लोकानुग्रहदीक्षितम् ॥ ६ ॥

(I prostrate to that Jagadguru) Who (first) incarnated as the son of Aryamba and Shivaguru (in the form of Sri Adi Shankara), and (later incarnated) as the son of Lakshmamma and Rama Shastri (as Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi Mahaswamin) for protecting Dharma.

(I prostrate to that Jagadguru) Who took to Sannyasa at the age of eight (both Sri Adi Shankaracharya and the Mahaswamin), Who penned many works including the commentaries on the Prasthanatraya (Sri Adi Shankaracharya) and Who revealed them all (the Mahaswamin, by getting them published).

(I prostrate to that Jagadguru) the great One, Who established the Sharada Peetham at Sringeri (Sri Adi Shankaracharya), and Who adorned the same Peetham for uplifting the masses (the Mahaswamin).

(I prostrate to that Jagadguru) Who took birth at Kalady (Sri Adi Shankaracharya) and later rediscovered it (the Mahaswamin), Who consecrated Goddess Sharada at Sringeri (Sri Adi Shankaracharya), and Who consecrated Goddess Sharada at Kalady (the Mahaswamin). I prostrate to that Jagadguru Who has taken a vow to bestow His Blessings on the world, and Who revels in two names - Sri Adi Shankaracharya and Sri Sacchidananda Shivabhinava Nrisimha Bharathi.





Sri Adi Shankara



His Holiness performs Abhisheka to the Murti of Sri Adi Shankaracharya

॥ श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्यस्तुतिः ॥

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpadacharya Stuti

मुदा करेण पुस्तकं दधानमीशरूपिणं
तथाऽपरेण मुद्रिकां नमत्तमोविनाशिनीम् ।
कुसुम्भवाससावृतं विभूतिभासि फालकं
नताऽघनाशने रतं नमामि शङ्करं गुरुम् ॥ १ ॥

Obeisance to Shankara Guru, who is Shiva incarnate. He holds in one hand a book. With the other, He shows the symbol of wisdom dispelling darkness. He is clad in saffron and His forehead shines with three lines of holy ash.

पराशरात्मजप्रियं पवित्रितक्षमातलं
पुराणसारवेदिनं सनन्दनादिसेवितम् ।
प्रसन्नवक्रपङ्कजं प्रपन्नलोकरक्षकं
प्रकाशिताद्वितीयतत्त्वमाश्रयामि देशिकम् ॥ २ ॥

I seek refuge in the Guru, dear to Vyasa. He is an exquisite expounder of Advaita. He purifies the world with His holy presence. The pleasant-faced Guru protects His devotees.

सुधांशुशेखरार्चकं सुधीन्द्रसेव्यपादुकं
सुतादिमोहनाशकं सुशान्तिदान्तिदायकम् ।
समस्तवेदपारगं सहस्रसूर्यभासुरं
समाहिताखिलेन्द्रियं सदा भजामि शङ्करम् ॥ ३ ॥

He Himself is a worshipper of Shiva and His feet are worshipped by the wise. He bestows on His worshippers will-power and peace. He removes the attachment for progeny and the like. I worship Guru Shankara, knower of Vedas, and shining like myriad suns.

यमीन्द्रचक्रवर्तिनं यमादियोगवेदिनं
यथार्थतत्त्वबोधकं यमान्तकात्मजार्चकम्
यमेव मुक्तिकांक्षया समाश्रयन्ति सज्जनाः
नमाम्यहं सदा गुरुं तमेव शङ्कराभिधम् ॥ ४ ॥

An emperor among ascetics, a yogin par excellence and an expounder of real philosophy, He is sought by all for liberation. I pay my obeisance to My Guru, Shankara.

स्वबाल्य एव निर्भरं य आत्मनो दयालुतां
दरिद्रविप्रमन्दिरे सुवर्णवृष्टिमानयन् ।
प्रदर्श्य विस्मयाम्बुधौ न्यमज्जयत् समाञ्जनान्
स एव शङ्करस्सदा जगद्गुरुर्गतिर्मम ॥ ५ ॥

Compassionate even from His boyhood, He once caused a rain of gold to bless a poor brahmin lady, to the wonderment of all. He is Shankara, the World Teacher, My sole refuge.

यदीयपुण्यजन्मना प्रसिद्धिमाप कालटी
यदीयशिष्यतां ब्रजन् स तोटकोऽपि पप्रथे ।
य एव सर्वदेहिनां विमुक्तिमार्गदर्शकः
नराकृतिं सदाशिवं तमाश्रयामि सद्गुरुम् ॥ ६ ॥

By His birth, He brought fame to Kalady. Even Totaka, who was once dull-witted, attained eminence by being His disciple. He alone can show the way to liberation for mortals. I seek refuge in My Guru, who is Sadashiva in human form.

सनातनस्य वर्त्मनः सदैव पालनाय यः
चतुर्दिशासु सन्मठान् चकार लोकविश्रुतान् ।
विभाण्डकात्मजाश्रमादिसुस्थलेषु पावनान्
तमेवलोकशङ्करं नमामि शङ्करं गुरुम् ॥ ७ ॥

For the sustenance of the eternal order, He created four centres of learning in four directions, in holy places like Sringeri. I salute Guru Shankara, the benefactor of the world.

यदीयहस्तवारिजातसुप्रतिष्ठिता सती
प्रसिद्धशृङ्गभूधरे सदा प्रशान्तिभासुरे ।
स्वभक्तपालनव्रता विराजते हि शारदा
स शङ्करः कृपानिधिः करोतु मामनेनसम् ॥ ८ ॥

In Sringeri where peace reigns, Shankara installed by His holy hands the deity Sharada, ever to protect Her servitors. May the ocean of mercy, my Guru, purify me.

इमं स्तवं जगद्गुरोर्गुणानुवर्णनात्मकं
समादरेण यः पठेदनन्यभक्तिसंयुतः ।
समाप्नुयात् समीहितं मनोरथं नरोऽचिरात्
दयानिधेस्सशङ्करस्य सद्गुरोः प्रसादतः ॥ ९ ॥

This hymn extols the virtues of the Master. If one chants this with loving adoration, his wishes are sure to be fulfilled soon by the blessings of the gracious Guru.



॥ श्रीशङ्कराचार्यस्तवः ॥

Sri Shankaracharya Stava

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यवर्यं सर्वलोकैकवन्द्यं भजे देशिकेन्द्रम्

I worship Sri Shankara, the supreme Preceptor, the One object of worship of all the worlds.

धर्मप्रचारेऽतिदक्षं योगि गोविन्दपादात्त सन्यासदीक्षम् ।

दुर्वादिगर्वापनोदं पद्मपादादिशिष्यालि संसेव्यपादम् ॥ १ ॥

(I worship Sri Shankara), the expert propagator of Dharma, Who received the vow of asceticism from the yogi Govindapada, Who crushes the pride of opponents in debate and Whose holy feet are worshipped by hordes of disciples like Padmapada.

शङ्काद्रिदम्भोलिलीलं किङ्कराशेषशिष्यालि सन्त्राणशीलम् ।

बालार्कनीकाशचेलं बोधिताशेषवेदान्तगूढार्थजालम् ॥ २ ॥

His divine sport destroys doubts just like the thunderbolt shatters mountains; protecting and sustaining all His disciples who serve Him, is His wont. His clothes resemble the lustre of the rising sun, and He teaches the inner meaning of the Upanishads. (I worship that Sri Shankara.)

रुद्राक्षमालाविभूषं चन्द्रमौलीश्वराराधनावाप्ततोषम् ।
विद्राविताशेषदोषं भद्रपूगप्रदं भक्तलोकस्य नित्यम् ॥ ३ ॥

(I worship Sri Shankara) Who is adorned with the Rudraksha garland, Who attains fulfilment by worshipping Lord Chandramouleeshwara, and Who dissolves all sins and grants prosperity to His devotees.

पापाटवीचित्रभानुं ज्ञानदीपेन हार्दं तमो वारयन्तम् ।
द्वैपायनप्रीतिभाजं सर्वतापापहामोघबोधप्रदं तम् ॥ ४ ॥

(I worship Sri Shankara) Who is the Sun to the dense forest of sins, Who destroys the dense darkness in the mind, Who is the recipient of the grace of Veda Vyasa, Who imparts invaluable knowledge that dispels all misery.

राजाधिराजाभिपूज्यं रम्यशृङ्गाद्रिवासैकलोलं यतीड्यम् ।
राकेन्दुसङ्काशवक्रं रत्नगर्भेभवक्राङ्घ्रिपूजानुरक्तम् ॥ ५ ॥

(I worship Sri Shankara) Who is worshipped by emperors and ascetics, Who is fond of staying at picturesque Sringeri, Whose face resembles the full moon and Who revels in the worship of the divine feet of Lord Ratnagarbha Ganapati.

श्रीभारतीतीर्थगीतं शङ्करार्यस्तवं यः पठेद्भक्तियुक्तः ।
सोऽवाप्नुयात्सर्वमिष्टं शङ्कराचार्यवर्यप्रसादेन तूर्णम् ॥ ६ ॥

Whoever sings with real devotion this divine song composed by Sri Bharathi Theertha, shall surely beget all that is desired by the grace of Sri Shankara.





His Holiness doing Abhisheka to
Sri Adi Shankara



Mahamangalarti at
Sri Adi Shankaracharya temple

॥ श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्यगीतम् - १ ॥

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpadacharya Geetam - 1

(Karnataka Devagandhari Raga.... Adi Tala)

भज रे लोकगुरुं मनुज भज रे लोकगुरुम् ॥

O man! Worship the Preceptor of the world! O man! Worship the Preceptor of the world!

आर्याम्बामुखपङ्कजभानुम्
आर्याजानिपदाम्बुजभृङ्गम् ।

(Worship the world-Preceptor) Who is the Sun to the lotus-face of Aryamba and is the honeybee hovering over the lotus feet of Lord Shiva, the consort of Goddess Parvathi.

नित्यानित्यविवेचनचतुरम्
सत्याद्वयचिच्चिन्तननिरतम् ॥ १ ॥

(Worship the world-Preceptor) Who is an adept practitioner of the discrimination between the eternal and the transient and is engaged in the contemplation of the Supreme Brahman that is of the nature of absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

दण्डकमण्डलुमण्डितपाणिं
पण्डितपामरवन्दितपादम् ।

(Worship the world-Preceptor) Whose hands are adorned with the holy staff (Danda) and the holy water-pot (Kamandalu), and Whose holy feet are worshipped by the learned and ignorant alike.

शङ्करमाश्रितजनमन्दारं
किङ्करभारतीतीर्थसुसेव्यम् ॥ २ ॥

(Worship the world-Preceptor,) the auspicious One Who is the refuge of all who seek Him and is worshipped by His servant Sri Bharathi Theertha.



॥ श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्यनामावलिः - १ ॥

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpadacharya Namavali - 1

जगद्गुरो श्रीशङ्कर मुक्तिप्रदायक शङ्कर
विरागिपूजित शङ्कर विभूतिभूषित शङ्कर
भाष्यकार श्रीशङ्कर भद्रप्रदायक शङ्कर
सद्गुरुमूर्ते शङ्कर सङ्कटवारक शङ्कर
शिवावतार शङ्कर शिष्यहितङ्कर शङ्कर

Sri Shankara, the world-teacher; Shankara, the conferrer of liberation;

Shankara, who is worshipped by the dispassionate; Shankara, who is adorned with the holy ash (embellished with superhuman powers);

Sri Shankara, the author of the Bhashyas (commentaries on the Prasthanatraya); Shankara, the bestower of the auspicious;

Shankara, who is of the form of the Guru who teaches the Truth; Shankara, the remover of obstacles;

Shankara, the incarnation of Lord Shiva; Shankara, who does what is beneficial to His disciples.



॥ श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्यगीतम् - २ ॥

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpadacharya Geetam - 2

(Hamsanandi Raga Rupaka Tala)

शङ्करदेशिक मामव किङ्करमतिदीनम्
भङ्गुरविषयासक्तं भवभीतिग्रस्तम् ॥

O Guru Sri Shankaracharya! Save me, this wretched servant who is attached to transient objects of pleasure in this world and is gripped by the fear of transmigratory existence.

पूर्णातीरसमुद्भव चूर्णितदुरितौघ
काषायाम्बरभूषित करधृतचिन्मुद्र ॥

O Guru, born on the banks of river Poorna! You are adorned with saffron robes, wear the Chinmudra in Your hand and destroy all misfortunes by completely smashing them.

वेदान्ताम्बुधिसोम विद्रावितकाम
निगृहीताखिलकरण निखिलास्तिकशरण ॥

You are the moon to the sea of Upanishads. You destroy desire, and are the refuge of all Astikas. You have the mind and all the external and internal organs of perception and action under perfect control.

शृङ्गाचलकृतवास श्रितशशिमौलीश
पालितभक्तव्रात भारतीतीर्थनुत ॥

You made Sringeri Your abode. You are an ardent devotee of Lord Chandramouleeshwara and You protect all Your devotees. You are worshipped by Sri Bharathi Theertha.



॥ श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्यनामावलिः – २ ॥

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpadacharya Namavali - 2

शङ्करदेशिक मां पाहि शिवगुरुतनय मां पाहि
सज्जनपूजित मां पाहि सद्गुणशोभित मां पाहि
कालट्युद्भव मां पाहि कामविवर्जित मां पाहि
आर्याम्बासुत मां पाहि आर्तिविनाशन मां पाहि
सर्वज्ञगुरो मां पाहि सर्वशिवङ्कर मां पाहि

O Shankara, the Guru, protect me. O son of Shivaguru, protect me.

O the one who is worshipped by noble people, protect me. O the one who is adorned by good qualities, protect me.

O the one born in Kalady, protect me. O the one who is totally free from desires, protect me.

O son of Aryamba, protect me. O the destroyer of grief, protect me.

O the all-knowing Guru, protect me. O the one who confers auspiciousness on all, protect me.



॥ श्रीशङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्यगीतम् - ३ ॥

Sri Shankara Bhagavatpadacharya Geetam - 3

(Bagesri Raga Adi Tala)

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यं भज रे मानस अद्वैतविद्यागुरुं सद्द्वैदिकाध्वप्रकाशम् ॥

O Mind! Worship Sri Shankaracharya, Who is the supreme preceptor of Advaita Vedanta and is the bright lamp lighting the path of Vaidika Dharma.

वैराग्यशान्त्यादिसुगुणैकनिलयं श्रीव्याससन्दर्शनेनाप्तहर्षम्
वेदान्तदुग्धाब्धिराकासुधांशुं वीताशसन्मौनिसंसेविताङ्घ्रिम् ॥

He is the abode of qualities like dispassion and quiescence and was overjoyed by the direct Darshan of Veda Vyasa. He is the full moon to the milky ocean of Vedanta and His holy feet are worshipped by sages who have renounced all desires.

संसारघोरार्णवकर्णधारं संप्राप्तसर्वागमशास्त्रसारम्
संत्यक्तसर्वैषणचित्तचारं श्रीभारतीतीर्थहृत्पद्मसूरम् ॥

He is the boatman who helps cross the fierce ocean of transmigratory existence; He has imbibed the essence of all Shastras and Agamas and has given up all desires and mental activity. He is the Sun to the heart-lotus of Sri Bharathi Theertha.





Sri Shakti Ganapati



His Holiness performing Sri Vinayaka
Chaturthi Puja

॥ गणेशध्यानम् ॥

Sri Ganesha Dhyanam

वन्दे देवं विबुधविनुतं वेदवेद्यं दयालुं
विघ्नध्वान्तप्रशमनरविं विश्ववन्द्यं प्रसन्नम् ।
वेतण्डास्यं विदलितरिपुं वामदेवाग्र्यसूनुं
विद्यानाथं विमलयशसं वाञ्छितार्थप्रदं तम् ॥

I salute that God who is worshipped by the celestials and the learned, Who is realized by resorting to the Veda, Who is compassionate, is the sun that dispels the darkness called obstacles, Who is saluted by the entire world, Who is pleasing, is elephant-faced, Who rent asunder his enemy, Who is the elder son of Vamadeva (Lord Shiva), the Lord of learning, of blemishless fame, Who grants what is prayed for.



॥ गणेशगीतम् ॥

Sri Ganesha Geetam

(Saveri Raga..... Rupaka Tala)

प्रणमामि गणेश्वरं विघ्नध्वान्तदिनेश्वरम् ॥
पुरारिप्रियनन्दनं सुरारिदर्पदलनम् ।
मुरारिपूजितपदं विदारितान्तरायम् ॥
अज्ञानमाशुविनाशयन्तं प्रज्ञां द्रुतं प्रयच्छन्तम् ।
भक्ताभीष्टप्रदातारं भारतीतीर्थपूजितम् ॥

I salute Lord Ganesha, the beloved son of Lord Shiva, who is like the sun to the darkness of impediments, destroys the arrogance of the enemies of the devas and Whose feet are worshipped by Lord Vishnu. He destroys obstacles, removes ignorance and gives knowledge immediately, fulfils the desires of His devotees and is worshipped by Sri Bharathi Theertha.



॥ श्रीमाहागणपतिसेवापद्यावलिः ॥

Sri Mahaganapati Seva Padyavali

श्रीमच्छङ्करदेशिकेन्द्रविनुत श्रीपादपाथोरुह
श्रीगौरीशशिशेखरप्रियसुत श्रीशादिसंसेवित ।
श्रीवाणीप्रद पादनम्रततये श्रीसिद्धिबुद्धिप्रिय
श्रीमन् देव दयानिधे गणपते ऋग्वेदमाकर्णय ॥ १ ॥

O beloved son of Lord Shiva and Parvathi! O merciful Lord Ganapati Whose lotus feet are served by Sri Adi Shankara, Mahavishnu and others, Who bestows wealth, knowledge, Siddhi and Buddhi on those who salute You! Be pleased to listen to the chanting of the Rg Veda.

सर्गस्थेमलयं करोति जगतां यो लीलयैव प्रभुः
भर्गप्रीतिकरं यदीयभजनं स्वर्गापवर्गप्रदम् ।
स त्वं हस्तिमुख प्रपन्नजनतासंरक्षणे दीक्षित
सुश्राव्यं सुरवृन्दसेवित यजुर्वेदं समाकर्णय ॥ २ ॥

You, the Lord of the Universe, playfully carry on the work of creation, sustenance and destruction of the Universe; Lord Shiva is pleased when You are worshipped; You grant worldly enjoyment as well as liberation from transmigratory existence; You are the protector of those who take refuge in You. O elephant-faced Lord, Who is worshipped by hosts of devas! Kindly listen to the pleasant chanting of the Yajur Veda.

विघ्नध्वान्तदिवाकर प्रणमतां विद्याविवेकप्रद
 विक्तेशादिसमर्चिताङ्घ्रियुगली विद्योतमान प्रभो ।
 विद्वद्दृन्दसुकीर्त्यमानमहीमन् विघ्नेश्वराराधित
 विघ्नाधीश्वर सामवेदममलं देव त्वमाकर्णय ॥ ३ ॥

O Vigneshwara! You are the Sun to the darkness of obstacles and bestow knowledge and discrimination on those who salute You; Your divine feet are worshipped by Kubera and Brahma; Your glory is well-sung by scholars. Be pleased to listen to the chanting of the holy Sama Veda.

शैलारातिकृपीटयोनिमुखदिक्पालावलीपूजित
 वेलातीतदयानिधे धृतसृणे व्यालप्रबद्धोदर ।
 लीलानिर्जितनिर्जरारिवितते शैलात्मजालालित
 विघ्नेश त्वमथर्वणश्रुतिमिमां प्रीत्या समाकर्णय ॥ ४ ॥

O Supreme Lord of obstacles! You are served by Indra, Agni and the other celestials; You are the repository of boundless compassion; You hold the weapon Sruni and have a snake tied around Your waist; You have playfully conquered many asuras and are doted upon by Goddess Parvathi. Be pleased to listen to the chanting of the Atharvana Veda.

यन्नामस्मरणं समस्तजगतां सर्वाघविध्वंसकं
 यत्पादाम्बुजसेवनं खलु नृणां सर्वार्थसंसाधकम् ।
 यन्माहात्म्यमिहाभिधातुमनलं शेषोऽपि निश्शेषतः
 स त्वं संश्रुणु सर्ववाद्यनिनदं सर्वेश विघ्नेश्वर ॥ ५ ॥

Remembering Your names destroys all the sins in the world; worshipping Your lotus feet grants all desires of people; even the thousand-headed snake Adishesha cannot adequately describe Your glories. O Lord of all! O Vigneshwara! Kindly listen to the various musical instruments.

बीजापूरगदादिशोभितकरं दूर्वाङ्कुरस्रग्धरं
भक्तालिप्रवितीर्णमोदककरं लंबोदरं शङ्करम् ।
शंभुप्रीतिकरं भजे गणपते त्वां सर्वदा सर्वदं
प्रीत्येमं शृणु कर्णयोर्हितकरं तूर्यध्वनिं विघ्नप ॥ ६ ॥

Your hands are adorned with the mace and the fruit Beejaapura; You wear a garland made of the tender shoots of Durva grass; You hold in Your hand the modakas offered by Your devotees; You have a large belly; You are the bestower of welfare and happiness and are a source of joy to Your father Lord Shiva. O Ganapathi! I always worship You, the bestower of everything. O Lord of obstacles! Be pleased to listen to the pleasant sounds of the instrument Thoorya.



॥ श्रीसुब्रह्मण्यध्यानम् ॥

Sri Subramanya Dhyanam

सुब्रह्मण्यं देवसेनाधिनाथं
सुत्रामाद्यैरादितेयैस्समीड्यम् ।
गौरीपुत्रं गर्वितेन्द्रारिकालं
वन्दे भक्त्या वाञ्छितार्थस्य सिद्धौ ॥

I bow with devotion, for attaining success in My goals, to Subramanya, the Lord of Devasena, Who is worshipped by the offspring of Aditi such as Suthraama (gods under the 13th Manu), is the son of Gowri, and the killer of the foe of Indra (Soorapadma).





Lord Sri Balasubramanya Swamy at Sringeri His Holiness worshipping Lord Subramanya

॥ श्रीसुब्रह्मण्येश्वरगीतम् ॥

Sri Subramanyeshwara Geetam

(Shanmukhapriya Raga Adi Tala)

सुब्रह्मण्यं सदा वन्दे चिन्तितसकलेष्टदानदीक्षं तम् ।
दुष्टदैत्यविनाशनं देवसेनानायकं
दीनरक्षणतत्परं दयापारावारम् ॥
भवभीतिनिवारणं भवानीप्रियतनयं
भुक्तिमुक्तिफलप्रदं भारतीतीर्थसेवितम् ॥

I always salute Lord Subramanya, the adored son of Goddess Bhavani and the beloved of Devasena. He is an adept at fulfilling all desires, is the destroyer of demons, is always intent on protecting the afflicted and is an ocean of mercy. He destroys the fear of Samsara, bestows both Bhukti (worldly well-being) and Mukti (liberation from transmigration) and is worshipped by Sri Bharathi Theertha.





॥ धर्मशास्ता स्तोत्रं ॥

Dharma Shastha Stotram

जगत्प्रतिष्ठाहेतुर्यः धर्मः श्रुत्यन्तकीर्तितः ।
तस्याऽपि शास्ता यो देवः तं सदा समुपाश्रये ॥ १ ॥

The Upanishads declare that it is Dharma that sustains the world. I seek refuge in the Shastha, the Lord of that Dharma.

श्रीशङ्करार्यैर्हि शिवावतारैः धर्मप्रचाराय समस्तकाले ।
सुस्थापितं शृङ्गमहीध्रवर्यं पीठं यतीन्द्राः परिभूषयन्ति ॥ २ ॥

Sri Shankara, an incarnation of Shiva, established a Math on the hills of Sringeri for the propagation of Dharma. A lineage of excellent sages adorned this centre of learning.

तेष्वेव कर्मन्दिवरेषु विद्यातपोधनेषु प्रथितानुभावः ।
विद्यासुतीर्थोऽभिनवोऽद्य योगी शास्तारमालोकयितुं प्रतस्थे ॥ ३ ॥

Among them, My Guru, Sri Abhinava Vidyatheertha, revered for erudition, austerity and spiritual experience, desired to visit the Shastha temple.

धर्मस्य गोप्ता यतिपुङ्गवोऽयं धर्मस्य शास्तारमवैक्षतेति ।
युक्तं तदेतद्ध्युभयोस्तयोर्हि सम्मेलनं लोकहिताय नूनम् ॥ ४ ॥

It is right that They should meet - the Yogin and the Deity, One the upholder of Dharma, and the other, the protector of Dharma - for the welfare of the world.

कालेऽस्मिन् कलिमलदूषितेऽपि धर्मः
श्रौतोऽयं न खलु विलोपमाप तत्र ।
हेतुः खल्वयमिह नूनमेव नाऽन्यः
शास्ताऽस्ते सकलजनैकवन्द्यपादः ॥ ५ ॥

If Dharma is existent even in this age of Kali of decaying values, it is on account of Dharma Shastha who is universally revered.

ज्ञानं षडास्यवरतातकृपैकलभ्यं
मोक्षस्तु ताक्ष्यवरवाहदयैकलभ्यः ।
ज्ञानं च मोक्ष उभयं तु विना श्रमेण
प्राप्यं जनैः हरिहरात्मजसत्प्रसादात् ॥ ६ ॥

Shiva bestows wisdom and Vishnu, salvation. Shastha, the son of Shiva and Vishnu, confers both wisdom and salvation.

यमनियमादिसमेतैः यतचित्तैर्योगिभिः सदा ध्येयम् ।
शास्तारं हृदि कलये धातारं सर्वलोकस्य ॥ ७ ॥

The Yogins have to meditate in their hearts, on Shastha, the ruler of the Universe, with restrained mind and senses and with due observances.

शबरगिरिनिवासः सर्वलोकैकपूज्यः
नतजनसुखकारी नम्रहृत्तापहारी ।
त्रिदशदितिजसेव्यः स्वर्गमोक्षप्रदाता
हरिहरसुतदेवः सन्ततं शं तनोतु ॥ ८ ॥

Shastha, the son of Hari and Hara, is the resident of the Sabari Hills. He is worshipped by Asuras and celestials alike. He gives happiness and removes all mental afflictions. He bestows not only heavenly joys but also the ultimate liberation. May He be ever propitious to us!



Veena Sharada



His Holiness offering worship to
Goddess Sharadamba at Kalady

॥ श्रीशारदाम्बाध्यानश्लोकः ॥

Sri Sharadamba Dhyana Sloka

विद्यामुद्राक्षमालाऽमृतकलशकरा कोटिसूर्यप्रकाशा
जाया पद्मोद्भवस्य प्रणतजनततेः सर्वमिष्टं दिशन्ती ।
इन्द्रोपेन्द्रादिवन्द्या त्रिभुवनजननी वाक्सवित्री शरण्या
सेयं श्रीशारदाम्बा सकलसुखकरी मङ्गलानि प्रदद्यात् ॥

Goddess Sri Sharadamba, the Consort of Lord Brahma, is resplendent like a crore of Suns, and displays in Her hands the book of knowledge, the Chinmudra, a Rudraksha garland and a pot of nectar. She grants all the desires of those who salute Her and is worshipped by Indra, Upendra and others. She is the mother of the three worlds and the refuge of all. May the Goddess, the giver of all happiness, grant all prosperity.



॥ श्रीशारदापञ्चरत्नस्तुतिः ॥

Sri Sharada Pancharathna Stuti

श्रीमच्छङ्करदेशिकेन्द्ररचिते तुङ्गापगातीरगे
शृङ्गेर्याख्यपुरस्थिते सुविमले सन्मौनिसंसेविते ।
पीठे तां रविकोटिदीप्तिसहितां राराज्यमानां शिवां
राजीवाक्षमुखामरार्चितपदां वन्दे सदा शारदाम् ॥ १ ॥

My salutations to Goddess Sharadambal, the auspicious One, Who, resplendent like a crore of Suns, adorns the sacred Peetham at Sringeri established by the Supreme Guru Sri Shankaracharya on the banks of the river Tunga, and Whose feet are worshipped by Lord Vishnu and other Gods.

पादानम्रजनार्तिनाशनिपुणां नादानुसन्धायिनीं
वेदान्तप्रतिपाद्यमानविभवां वादादिशक्तिप्रदाम् ।
विद्याकल्पलतां चतुर्मुखमुखांभोजातसूर्यायितां
विद्यातीर्थगुरूत्तमैरहरहः संसेव्यमानां भजे ॥ २ ॥

I worship Sri Sharadambal, the glorious One described in the Upanishads, the wish-fulfilling tree of learning, Who confers the power to debate, an adept at destroying the sorrows of those who take refuge in Her feet, and One Who contemplates on the sound, is the Sun to the lotus face of Lord Brahma, and is worshipped everyday by the peerless Guru, Sri Vidyatheertha.

ईषत्तमेरमुखाम्बुजां कुचभरानम्रां त्रिलोकावनीं
दैत्यव्रातविनाशिनीं कचजितप्रावृट्पयोदां शिवम् ।
संसारार्णवमग्नदीनजनतासन्तापसन्नाशिनीं
वन्दे तां शुभदामनन्यशरणः स्वान्ते सदा शारदाम् ॥ ३ ॥

I, who have no other refuge, always worship in my mind Sharadambal, the auspicious One, Whose lotus face bears a faint smile, Whose heavy breasts lend a stoop to Her shoulders, Whose locks are darker than the rain clouds, Who confers good, Who protects the three worlds and destroys hosts of demons and the miseries of those who are submerged in the ocean of Samsara (transmigratory existence).

कारुण्यामृतवारिराशिमनिशं केयूरहारैर्वृतां
कामारेस्सहजां कराब्जविलसत्कीरां कुबेरार्चिताम् ।
कामक्रोधमुखारिवर्गशमनीं कैवल्यसंपत्प्रदां
कञ्जोद्भूतमनःप्रियां हृदि भजे भक्त्या सदा शारदाम् ॥४॥

I always devoutly worship in my heart, Goddess Sharadambal, the Ocean of compassion, Who destroys the internal enemies such as 'kaama' (desire) and 'krodha' (anger), Who confers the wealth of salvation, and Who is worshipped by Kubera, is bedecked in ornaments such as armlets and necklaces, holds a parrot in Her lotus hand, and is the sister of Lord Shiva and the consort of Lord Brahma.

नित्याऽनित्यविवेकदाननिपुणां स्तुत्यां मुकुन्दादिभिः
यत्याकारशशाङ्कमौलिविनुतां सत्यापितस्वाश्रवाम् ।
नत्या केवलमेव तुष्टहृदयां त्यक्त्वाऽन्यदेवानहं
भक्त्या मे हृदयाम्बुजेऽनवरतं वन्दे सदा शारदाम् ॥५॥

Abandoning all other Gods, I incessantly worship in the lotus of my heart, with devotion, that Sharadambal Who is an adept at conferring the power of discrimination, Whose heart is pleased with just a salutation offered to Her, Who establishes Her ardent devotees in the Supreme Truth, Who is extolled by Gods like Mukunda and worshipped by Lord Shiva in the guise of a Sannyasi (Shankara Bhagavatpadal).



॥ श्रीशारदाम्बागीतम् ॥

Sri Sharadamba Geetam

(Saramati Raga Khandachapu Tala)

श्रीशारदाम्बां भजे श्रितकल्पवल्लीम् ।
कारुण्यवारान्निधिं कलिकल्मषघ्नीम् ॥

I worship Goddess Sri Sharadamba, Who is the heavenly wish-yielding creeper to those who serve Her, the ocean of compassion and the destroyer of sins in the Kali Yuga.

इन्द्रादिदेवार्च्यपादाम्बुजाताम् ईशित्वमुख्याष्टसिद्धिप्रदात्रीम् ।
ऊहापथातीतमाहात्म्ययुक्तां मोहान्धकारापहस्वाभिधानाम् ॥ १ ॥

Her lotus feet are worshipped by Indra and other devas; She grants the eight Siddhis like lordliness; Her glory is beyond the scope of imagination; Her name dispels the darkness of delusion.

श्रीशङ्कराचार्यसंसेविताङ्घ्रिं श्रीशृङ्गगिर्याख्यपुर्या वसन्तीम् ।
श्रीवाग्विभूत्यादिदानप्रवीणां श्रीभारतीतीर्थहृत्पद्मवासाम् ॥ २ ॥

Her divine feet are worshipped by Sri Shankaracharya; She resides in Sringeri; She is an adept at granting the boon of eloquent speech; She dwells in the heart of Sri Bharathi Theertha.



॥ श्रीशारदाम्बानामावलिः ॥

Sri Sharadamba Namavali

शङ्करपूजिते शारदे शर्वसहोदरि शारदे
अभीष्टवरदे शारदे अद्भुतचरिते शारदे
शृङ्गगिरिस्थे शारदे श्रुतिप्रतिपाद्ये शारदे
मङ्गलदायिनि शारदे सङ्गीतप्रिये शारदे
कामितवरदे शारदे कोमलचरणे शारदे

Sharada, who is worshipped by Shankara. Sharada, who is the sister of Vishnu.
Sharada, the giver of all boons sought after. Sharada, whose conduct is astonishing.
Sharada, who resides in Sringeri. Sharada, who is expounded by the Vedas.
Sharada, who confers the auspicious. Sharada, who loves music.
Sharada, who giver of boons desired. Sharada, whose feet are charming.



॥ श्रीशारदास्वर्णरथसमर्पणापद्यावलिः ॥

Sri Sharada Swarna Ratha Samarpana Padyavali

श्रीशङ्करगुरुत्तंससमर्चितपदांबुजे ।
शारदे रथमारोह सौवर्णं सर्वमङ्गले ॥ १ ॥

O Goddess Sharadamba! O auspicious One Whose lotus feet are worshipped by the supreme Guru Adi Shankara! Kindly ascend this golden chariot.

स्वर्गादिसुखसन्दात्रि स्वर्णसच्छायविग्रहे ।
स्वर्णस्यन्दनमारुह्य सर्वान् पालय शारदे ॥ २ ॥

O golden-hued bestower of all heavenly joys! Kindly ascend this golden chariot and protect everyone.

भक्तप्रिये भद्रदात्रि भक्तानामभयप्रदे ।
भक्त्या समर्पयाम्येनं जांबूनदमयं रथम् ॥ ३ ॥

You are pleased by devotion and bestow auspiciousness and fearlessness on Your devotees. With devotion, I offer this golden chariot to You.

हिरण्यगर्भवामाङ्गि हरिदश्वादिसेविते ।
हिरण्यरथमारोह हिताय जगतां सदा ॥ ४ ॥

O Consort of Lord Brahma! You are worshipped by the Sun and other devas. For the eternal welfare of the Universe, kindly ascend this golden chariot.

कनकाभरणैर्युक्ते कविताविभवप्रदे ।
कार्तस्वरमयं मातः आरोह रथमुत्तमम् ॥ ५ ॥

O Mother! You are adorned with gold ornaments. You grant poetic skill to Your devotees. Be pleased to ascend this excellent golden chariot.



॥ श्रीचन्द्रमौलीश्वरवर्णमालास्तोत्रम् ॥
Sri Chandramouleeshwara Varnamala Stotram



His Holiness performing Kartika Somavara Puja to Lord Chandramouleeshwara

श्रीशात्मभूमुरख्यसुरार्चिताङ्घ्रिं श्रीकण्ठशर्वादिपदाभिधेयम् ।
श्रीशङ्कराचार्यहृदब्जवासं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ १ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, also known as Srikanta and Sharva, Who dwells in the heart of Sri Shankaracharya and Whose holy feet are worshipped by Vishnu, Brahma and other devas.

चण्डांशुशीतांशुकृशानुनेत्रं चण्डीशमुख्यप्रमथेज्यपादम् ।
षडास्यनागास्यसुशोभिपार्श्वं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ २ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Whose eyes are constituted by the Sun, the Moon and Fire, Whose feet are worshipped by Chandeeshwara and other Pramathaganas and Who has Lord Ganesha and Lord Subrahmanya by His side.

द्रव्यादिसृष्टिस्थितिनाशहेतुं रव्यादितेजांस्यपिभासयन्तम् ।
पव्यायुधादिस्तुतवैभवं तं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ३ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Who creates, sustains and destroys all elements and makes the Sun and other luminous objects shine.

मौलिस्पुरज्जहसुतासितांशुं व्यालेशसंवेष्टितपाणिपादम् ।
शूलादिनानायुधशोभमानं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ४ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Whose head is adorned by the Ganges and the moon, Whose hands and feet are encircled by serpents and Who is resplendent with various weapons like the trident.

लीलाविनिर्धूतकृतान्तदर्पं शैलात्मजासंश्रितवामभागम् ।
शूलाग्रनिर्भिन्नसुरारिसङ्घं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ५ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Who playfully terminated the pride of Yama, Who has Goddess Parvathi on the left half of His body and Whose trident kills hordes of asuras.

शतैः श्रुतीनां परिगीयमानं यतैर्मुनीन्द्रैः परिसेव्यमानम् ।
नतैः सुरेन्द्रैरभिपूज्यमानं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ६ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Whose praises are sung in hundreds of Vedic hymns, Who is worshipped by great sages practising self-restraint as also by Indra and other devas who bow before Him.

मत्तेभकृत्या परिशोभिताङ्गं चित्ते यतीनां सततं वसन्तम् ।
वित्तेशमुख्यैः परिवेष्टितं तं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ७ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Whose body is adorned with elephant skin, Who dwells forever in the minds of sages and Who is surrounded by Kubera and other devas.

हंसोत्तमैः चेतसि चिन्त्यमानं संसारपाथोनिधिकर्णधारम् ।
तं सामगानप्रियमष्टमूर्तिं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ८ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Who is always contemplated in the hearts of ascetics, Who is the boatman Who helps cross the ocean of transmigration, Who is fond of Sama-gaana and Who manifests in the eight forms.

नताघहं नित्यचिदेकरूपं सतां गतिं सत्यसुखस्वरूपम् ।
हतान्धकं हृद्यपराक्रमं तं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ९ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Who protects those who salute Him, Who is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Eternal, and is the goal of the virtuous, Who killed the asura called Andhaka, and Whose valour is magnificent.

मायातिगं वीतभयं विनिद्रं मोहान्तकं मृत्युहरं महेशम् ।
फलानलं नीलगलं कृपालुं श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ १० ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, the Supreme Lord, Who is beyond Maya, has conquered sleep, is fearless, destroys delusion and death, is compassionate, is dark-necked and has a third eye on His forehead.

मित्रं हि यस्याखिलशेवधीशः पुत्रश्च विघ्नौघविभेदक्षः ।
पात्रं कृपायाश्च समस्तलोकः श्रीचन्द्रमौलीशमहं नमामि ॥ ११ ॥

I salute Lord Chandramouleeshwara, Who has Kubera, the Lord of wealth, as his friend and the expert destroyer of obstacles as His son, and Who showers His grace and compassion on the entire world.



॥ श्रीविष्णुगीतम् ॥

Sri Vishnu Geetam

गरुडगमन तव चरणकमलमिह मनसि लसतु मम नित्यम् ।
मम तापमपाकुरु देव, मम पापमपाकुरु देव ॥ १ ॥

O Lord, Who moves about on Garuda, may Your Lotus Feet shine forever in my mind. O Deva, remove my suffering; O Deva, wipe out my sins.

जलजनयन विधिनमुचिहरणमुखविबुधविनुतपदपद्म ।
मम तापमपाकुरु देव, मम पापमपाकुरु देव ॥ २ ॥

O Lord, Who has lotus-like eyes, and Whose Lotus Feet are worshipped by Brahma and all the Devas led by Indra, O God, remove my suffering and wipe out my sins.

भुजगशयन भव मदनजनक मम जननमरणभयहारी ।
मम तापमपाकुरु देव, मम पापमपाकुरु देव ॥ ३ ॥



His Holiness performing Sri Krishna Jayanthi Puja



His Holiness in meditation

O Lord, Who sleeps on the serpent Adi Shesha, Who is pure existence, Who is the father of Cupid (Manmatha) and Who destroys my fear of birth and death, remove my suffering and wipe out my sins.

शङ्खचक्रधर दुष्टदैत्यहर सर्वलोकशरण ।
मम तापमपाकुरु देव, मम पापमपाकुरु देव ॥ ४ ॥

O Lord, Who sports the conch (Panchajanyam) and the disc (Sudarshanam), O destroyer of wicked demons, O refuge of all beings, remove my suffering and wipe out my sins.

अगणितगुणगण अशरणशरणद विदलितसुररिपुजाल ।
मम तापमपाकुरु देव, मम पापमपाकुरु देव ॥ ५ ॥

O Lord! Possessor of infinite noble attributes, O refuge of the forsaken, O destroyer of the enemies of the gods, remove my suffering and wipe out my sins.

भक्तवर्यमिह भूरिकरुणया पाहि भारतीतीर्थम् ।
मम तापमपाकुरु देव, मम पापमपाकुरु देव ॥ ६ ॥

O Lord! remove my suffering, wipe out my sins, and out of Your boundless compassion, protect this chosen devotee Sri Bharathi Theertha.





His Holiness performing Sri Rama Navami Puja

॥ श्रीरामगीतम् ॥

Sri Rama Geetam

(Thodi Raga..... Rupaka Tala)

दाशरथे मां पालय दारितदशवदन ।
दीनजनावनदीक्ष दुरितापहवीक्ष ॥
कौसल्याप्रियतनय कौशिकमुखविनुत ।
दण्डितदैत्यव्रात खण्डितहरचाप ॥ १ ॥
खरदूषणमुखरक्षो विदलननिपुणशर ।
खरकिरणान्वयसागर राकाशिशिरकर ॥ २ ॥
भवभयनाशनचतुर भजतामभयकर ।
भरताद्यनुजसमेत भारतीतीर्थनुत ॥ ३ ॥

O Rama, You are the destroyer of the ten-headed Ravana, Khara, Dooshana and hosts of other demons. You are an adept at protecting the afflicted and Your glance is sufficient to ward off misfortunes. You, Who broke the mighty Shiva-Dhanus (bow of Lord Shiva) and is like the full moon to the ocean that is the Surya Vamsa, are the object of worship of Rishis like Viswamithra. You destroy the fear of Samsara and grant the boon of fearlessness to those who worship You. You are in the company of Bharatha and others and are worshipped by Sri Bharathi Theertha. Protect me, O beloved son of Kausalya and Dasaratha!



॥ श्रीभद्रगिरीश्वररामगीतम् ॥

Sri Bhadragireeshwara Rama Geetam

(Punnagavarali..... Adi Tala)

कौसल्यासुत – कुशिकात्मजमखरक्षणदीक्षित – राम ।

मामुद्धर – शरणागतरक्षक - रविकुलदीपक – राम ॥ १ ॥

O son of Kausalya! Safe-guarder of the Yaga (sacrifice) performed by Sage Vishwamitra (Son of Kushika)! Protector of those who seek refuge! Shining Light of the Solar Race! O Lord Rama! Uplift me!

दशरथनन्दन – दितिसुतखण्डन – दीनजनावन – राम ।

पुरहरकर्मुकविदलनपण्डित – पुरुषोत्तम – रघुराम ॥ २ ॥

O Son of Dasharatha! Destroyer of the Asuras! Protector of the meek!
O Lord Rama! The One who effortlessly broke the bow of Lord Shiva!
O Best amongst men! O Lord Raghurama! (Uplift me!)

खरदूषणमुखदितिसुतकाननदावानलनिभ – राम ।

शबरीगुहमुखभक्तवरार्चितपादाम्भोरुह – राम ॥ ३ ॥

O Lord Rama! Who is akin to the fire that destroys the forest of Asuras such as Khara and Dushana! Whose lotus feet are worshipped by devotees such as Shabari and Guha! O Lord Rama! (Uplift me!)

वालिप्रमथन – वातात्मजमुखकपिवरसेवित – राम ।
वासवविधिमुखसुरवरसंस्तुत – वारिजलोचन राम ॥ ४ ॥

O Annihilator of Vali! O Lord Rama! Served by excellent Vanaras such as Hanuman! Worshipped by devatas led by Indra & Brahma! O Lotus-Eyed Rama! (Uplift me!)

दशकन्धरमुखदानवमर्दन – रक्षितभुवन – राम ।
सीतानायक – शीघ्रवरप्रद – सर्वजगन्नुत – राम ॥ ५ ॥

O Rama! Vanquisher of demons such as Ravana! Protector of the world! Lord of Sita! Bestower of boons without delay! Worshipped by all the worlds! O Rama! (Uplift me!)

भर्मविभूषणभूषितविग्रह – भाधीशानन – राम ।
भक्तभारतीतीर्थसुसेवित – भद्रगिरीश्वर – राम ॥ ६ ॥

O Rama! Bedecked with the best of ornaments! Whose face is pleasant like the moon! Worshipped by the devotee, Sri Bharathi Theertha! O Lord of Bhadrachala! (Uplift me!)





Appendix 3

COMPOSITION ON HIS GURU¹ - BY JAGADGURU SRI VIDHUSHEKHARA BHARATHI SWAMIN

गुरुवर्यदशश्लोकी

दक्षिणाम्नायशृङ्गेरीशारदापीठभूषणम् ।
नमामि भारतीतीर्थं दक्षिणास्यनवाकृतिम् ॥ १ ॥

Dakṣiṇāmnāya-śṛṅgerī-śāradā-pīṭha-bhūṣaṇam.
Namāmi Bhāratī-tīrthaṃ dakṣiṇāsyā-navākṛtim.. 1..

I prostrate to *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī Tīrtha*, who is Lord *Dakṣiṇāmūrti* manifest and is the ornament to the sacred seat named *Dakṣiṇāmnāya* Sri Sharada Peetham.

करुणारसनिष्यन्दिसरसापाङ्गवीक्षणम् ।
कटाक्षपातनिर्धूतपापौघं कलये गुरुम् ॥ २ ॥

Karuṇā-rasa-niṣyandi-sarasāpāṅga-vīkṣaṇam.
Kaṭākṣa-pāta-nirdhūta-pāpaugham kalaye gurum.. 2..

I contemplate upon the Supreme Preceptor, whose gracious side glance exudes compassion and whose glance destroys the store of sins of the devout.

दिग्वारणसुहृत्कीर्तिराजितं सङ्गवर्जितम् ।
कामादिद्विपपञ्चास्यं भजे भर्गार्चनोत्सुकम् ॥ ३ ॥

Digvāraṇa-suhṛt-kīrti-rājitaṃ saṅga-varjitaṃ.
Kāmādi-dvipapañcāsyam bhaje bhargārcanotsukam.. 3..

1 Jagadguru Sri Vidhushekhara Bharathi Swamin composed this hymn on the occasion of His Holiness's *Divya-saptati-pūrti-mahotsava*

I venerate the Supreme Preceptor, who dazzles with fame that is spread in all the directions, who is free of attachments, who has defeated the internal foes such as desire, and is ever intent in worshipping Lord Śiva.

माधवोमाधवाभेदधिषणं भिषजं कलेः ।
प्रज्ञानिधिं नमस्यामि गूढतत्त्वावबोधकम् ॥ ४ ॥

Mādhavomādhavābheda-dhiṣaṇaṃ bhiṣajaṃ kaleḥ.
Prajñā-nidhiṃ namasyāmi gūḍha-tattvāvabodhakam.. 4..

I bow to the Supreme Preceptor, who does not see any difference between Lord *Viṣṇu* and Lord *Śiva*, who is the physician for (the ills of) Kali-yuga, who is a treasure-trove of knowledge, & who has comprehended the sovereign esoteric tenet (of the identity of the *jīvātman* and Brahman).

शमादिसुगुणस्तोमभूषितं यमिनां वरम् ।
योगमार्गरतं नौमि योगक्षेमकृतं सदा ॥ ५ ॥

Śamādi-sugūṇa-stoma-bhūṣitaṃ yamināṃ varam.
Yoga-mārga-rataṃ naumi yoga-kṣema-kṛtaṃ sadā.. 5..

I worship the Supreme Preceptor, who is bedecked with divine qualities such as mind-control, who is the supreme amongst ascetics, who is established in the path of Yoga, and brings about the Yoga (vouchsafing what is needed) and *kṣamā* (protecting what has been acquired).

विद्यां विज्ञावलिर्वक्ति विमलां यं वपुष्मतीम् ।
विभूत्यै वचसां वन्दे विनीतो विश्ववन्दितम् ॥ ६ ॥

Vidyāṃ vijñāvalir-vakti vimalāṃ yaṃ vapuṣmatīm.
Vibhūtyai vacasāṃ vande vinīto viśva-vanditam.. 6..

In order to be blessed with supreme eloquence, I prostrate with utmost humility, to the world-revered preceptor, whom scholars regard as an embodiment of pure knowledge.

श्रुतिस्मृतिसदाचारपरित्राणविधौ भुवि ।
प्रभृतां प्रभृतां धत्ते यस्तं संस्तौमि सन्ततम् ॥ ७ ॥

Śruti-smṛti-sadācāra-paritrāṇa-vidhau bhuvī.
Prabhūtāṃ prabhūtāṃ dhatte yastam saṁstaumi santatam.. 7..

I ever praise the preceptor, who is the Supreme on earth amongst those engaged in protecting on the *śrutis* (Vedas), *smṛtis* (the remembered scriptures such as those penned by Manu, *Yājñavalkya* etc.), and *Sadācāra* (noble conduct enjoined therein).

यद्वाग्झरी सुपर्वाध्वतरङ्गिण्यवधीरिणी ।
सञ्चारपूतधरणिः पात्वाचार्यशिरोमणिः ॥ ८ ॥

Yad-vāg-jharī suparvādhva-taraṅgiṇyavadhīriṇī.
Sañcāra-pūta-dharaṇiḥ pātvācārya-śiromaṇiḥ.. 8..

May the crest-jewel of preceptors, who sanctifies the earth by His travels and whose river-like-flowing-speech excels even the holy river Ganga, protect us.

अनन्तोऽपि हृदाकाशे दहरे भासतेतराम् ।
ईडे श्रुतिशिरोवेद्यं परिपूर्णं गुरुद्वहम् ॥ ९ ॥

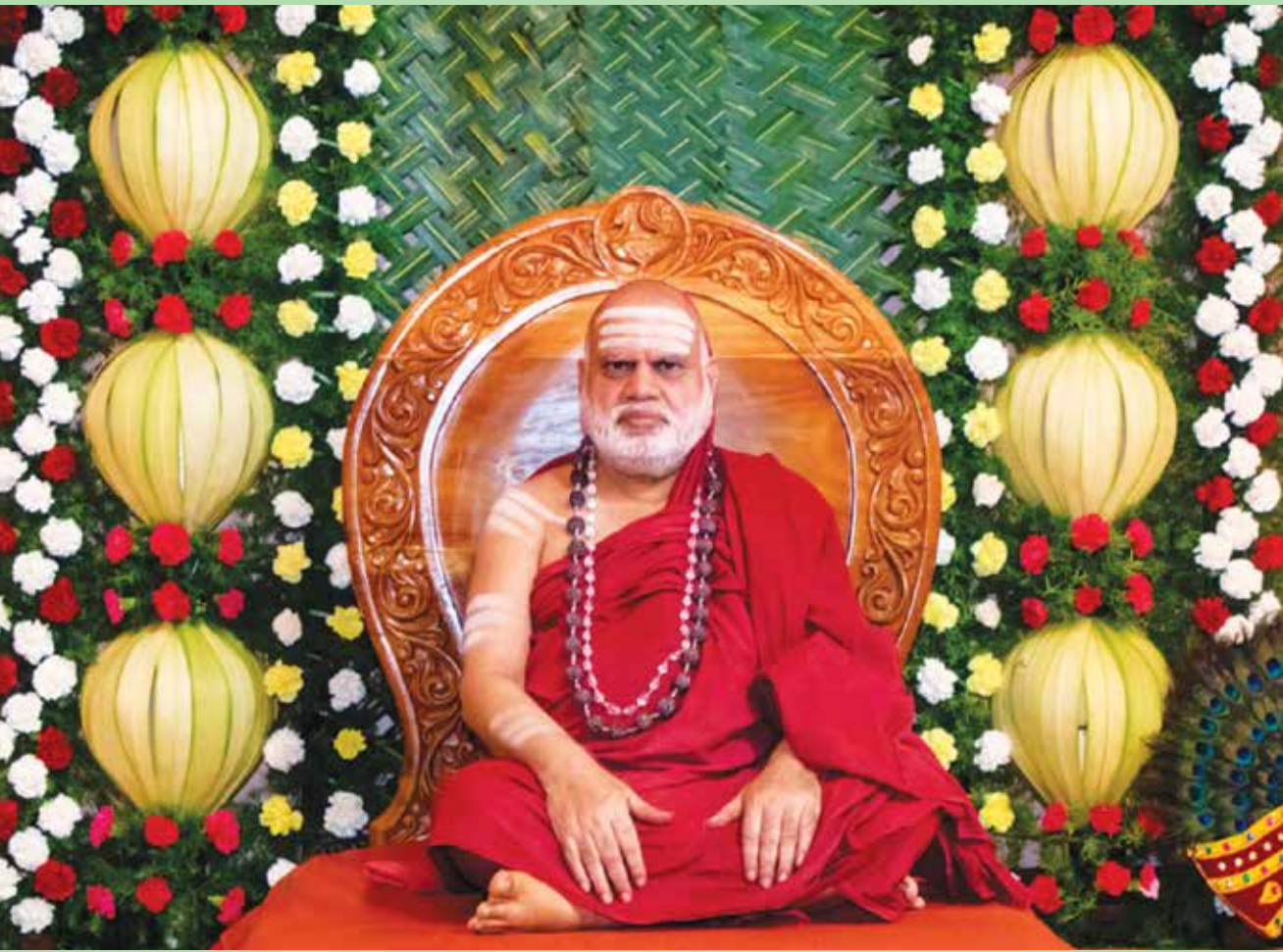
Ananto'pi ḥṛd-ākāśe dahare bhāsatetarām.
Īḍe śruti-śiro-vedyaṃ paripūrṇam gurūdvaham.. 9..

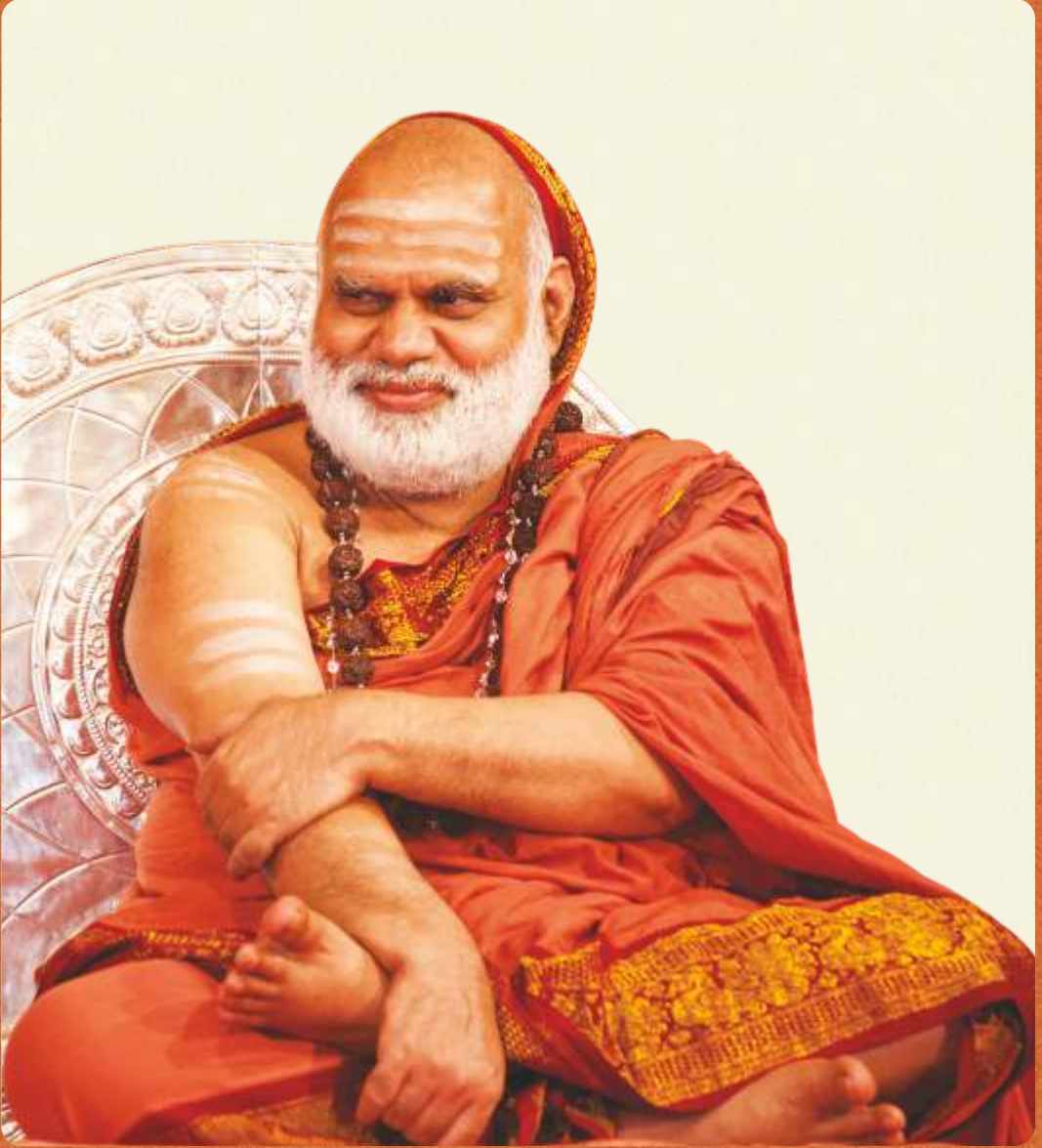
May the Supreme Preceptor, though infinite, shine in the secret space of our spiritual heart. I worship the perfect *Guru*, who is to be known by the *Upaniṣadic* utterances.

राजाधिराजसंसेव्यं राजविद्यागुरुं श्रये ।
शिष्यालिवन्द्यपादाब्जं भारतीतीर्थदेशिकम् ॥ १० ॥

Rājādhirāja-saṁsevyam raja-vidyā-guruṃ śraye.
Śiṣyāli-vandya-pādābjaṃ Bhāratī-tīrtha-deśikam.. 10..

I seek refuge in *Jagadguru Śrī Bhāratī-tīrtha*, the preceptor of the sovereign knowledge (Self-knowledge), who is adored by the kingly nobles, and whose lotus-like-feet are adored by all disciples.





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