

**Adi Shankaracharya: The Persona and The
Philosophy to Be a Perfect Man**

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ABSTRACT

Adi Shankaracharya is a prominent Indian philosopher and theologian. The main objective of his teaching is to convey the principles of Advaita Vedanta, which emphasize the non dual nature of reality, the unity of individual soul (Aatma) with the ultimate reality (Brahma) and the Quest of self realisation or enlightenment through knowledge (jnana) in spiritual practice. Advaita philosophy systemised and pronounced by Shankaracharya is capable of accommodating the greatest extent possible what science is revealing in today. Shankaracharya even looked up on the Upanishad as revealed text, Shruti beyond human questioning and took them as the basis of his philosophical system. Shankar's real approach contributed to develop the advanced system of philosophy that was based on essential thrust of Upanishadic thought. Shankar treats the mind as 'sukshma' or subtle matter his teaching suggest that greatest barrier to the knowing are true self is the mind and ego. His teaching mentions two kinds of knowledge 'para Vidya' or higher knowledge and 'aparavidya' or knowledge of lower order.

The right Guru gives depth to knowledge and mechanical knowledge is not enough to understand the world and become a good human being, understanding to contemplation and contemplation to the wisdom to differentiate between the eternal and a ephemera -nitya- anitya Vivek. One of the Shankara's most quoted aphorism, 'Satyajanam, Anantham Brahma': knowledge is truth , Brahman is eternal .

In short Shankar was not dogmatic about rites of morality for the liberation but he was clear that certain moral practices had an undeniable utilitarian value in the goal of self-realisation. The thoughts of Shankaracharya are most relevant for a person to develop their overall holistic development. Today youth is diverted from their path they need more concentration and to realise themselves thoughts of Shankaracharya have important role in their lives. These thoughts will be a torch bearer for youth not only to build their health, career but also spiritual upliftment.

Keywords: Advaita (Non-dual) Mission, Brahmsutra, Atma Bodha (self-realisation), who am I, Aparokshanubhuti (Ultimate realisation), Digvijaya, Anand (state of Bliss), Maya (the illusion), knowledge, the Guru Tradition, modern education, youth, Goal of perfect man.

Adi Shankaracharya is the fountain head of Vedic Wisdom. He was a spiritual genius, illuminated sage and a profound philosopher with a comprehensive rational-scientific approach to establish truth and reality with broad vision and action. He establish Vedic region in whole

India and placed India at the top in whole world. Teachings of Adi Shankaracharya are source of bliss (Sat-Chit-Anand) those are depicted in his writings. Liberation of self is the central idea/thought of his teachings, without knowing self, one can not understand the reality. Advaita Vedanta emphasised on the self-realisation and attachment with ultimate reality. Advaita Vedanta is great philosophical contribution of Adi Shankaracharya to humankind which is originated from the oldest book of the world the Rigveda, where Vedic Rishi elaborated ultimate reality in two words “**Swadha Tadekam**”. The meaning of Advaita is non-dual or non-Secondness refers the idea that Brahman alone is ultimate reality and every observatory world is illusionary appearance (Maya). According to Upnishadic wisdom and philosophy of Adi Shankaracharya individual self (Atama) is identical to universal consciousness (Brahman). The highest objective of a person is to realise this identity through spiritual practice and self-realisation.

“Perfect Man” can be defined differently on the basis of different sphere of the world as cultural, religious and individual thinking. But in spiritual traditions like Vedic, Buddhist, Christianity etc. a Perfect Man is that who has qualities such as compassion, love, wisdom, spirituality etc.

Adi Shankaracharya’s mission to the universe was twofold (a) Eshtablishing the fundamental spiritual research of Vedanta on a rational and scientific basis as an entity of integral reality, amenable to open investigation and realisation by all competent persons and (b) The socio-spiritual regeneration of the comprehensive Vedic-Dharma on the basis of Vedantic Truths.¹

The Vedantic movement of Swami Vivekananda is the modern form of the Vedanta of Adi Shankaracharya. Ram Krishna Paramhansa and Maharishi Ramana experience the Vedanta of Adi Shankaracharya in their life and taught the same to entire world. Paul Brunton interpreted it for the western world. Advait – Vedantic philosophy of Shankaracharya is “ National Philosophy of India.

Thousand years ago Adi Shankaracharya gave Mantra for upliftment of common man as a Perfect man that is “ Mano Buddhi Ahankara Chittani Naaham, Chidanandaa Rupah Shivo ham Shivo ham” (Nirvana Shatkam) .² This Mantra indicates about the real journey of a human being. Jagat Guru explained that “ I have no fear of death, no caste or creed, I have no father,

¹ Acharya Dr. Jaymant Mishra (Ed.), “ Adi Shankaracharya-25th Century commemoration Volume, Lokvani Printing Press, Patna, p. 315, 2001.

² AdiShankaracharya, “Nirvana Shatakam”, Mantra II1II.

no mother, for I was never born, I am not a relative, nor a friend, nor a teacher nor a student. I am the form of consciousness and bliss, I am the eternal Shiva/Brahman.

According to Bhagwadpada Jagatguru Adi Shankaracharya “A Perfect Man” is one who full of knowledge, pure, without desire, a perfect knower of Supreme, perfectly put him/herself in the Supreme, full of calm as burning lamp of light without air, ocean of mercy and an intimate friend to all good people. (srotiyo vrijino kamahato yo brahmavitam brahmanuparatah santo nirindhana ivanalah ahetukadayasindhurbadhranamamatam satam).³

A perfect man always think about the welfare of others. He never indulges in greed or exploitation of others. As depicted in Ramcharitmanas “ Parhit bas jinhke mann mahim, Tinhke kahum jag durlabh kachhu nahim”⁴ is indicating Lord Ram who known as Purushottam (best among human beings). Also Gita teaches us about a good human being and emphasise on detachment from the fruits of our actions whether they are good or bad (karmanyevadhikaraste ma faleshu kadachana, ma karma falheturbhurma te sangoastvakarmani).⁵ Nishmaka Karma is central theme of Mahabharata and Bhagvada Gita explained by Lord Krishna to be a good or perfect man on the earth to maintain material and spiritual life. According to Bhagavad Gita a perfect person has to give up all desires for sense gratification and free from ego, greed and proprietorship; the character of true role model is describe as reaching the pinnacle of accomplishment through inner unfoldment. This condition is elaborated as Sthita Prajyana (Man of steady wisdom) in Bhagavad Gita.

The man of perfection does not cling to what brings about pleasure nor does he shun sufferings. He always touch the stage of Bliss like the nirvana of Lord Buddha. He is beyond the pairs of opposites and always live like yogi and never overpowered by the outside objects. He does not even when feed on the objects even when chancing upon them for they do not stimulate. Him and his attitude of dispassion towards all objects. This stage elaborated as Vairagya (detachment) in Vedic literature.

Adi Shankaracharya in his book Vivekachudamani explained about perfect man as “who has obtained the stage of completeness through absolute realisation and knowledge of Atman.”⁶ In Advaita philosophy of Adi Shankaracharya a perfect man always stay in the stage of Jivanmukti (living freedom). Swami Vivekananda in his preaches elaborated the concept of “Larger self”, which means one who has believe in Non-duality (Advaita) and serving of

³ Adi Shankaracharya, “Vivekachudamani” Mantra II33II also (varma-vivekachudamani.blogspot.in/2013)

⁴ Ramcharitmanas, Aranya kanda, 30:5.

⁵ Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Verse 47.

⁶ Adi Shankaracharya, “Vivekachudamani”, verse II1II.

humankind without any narrow thinking. A perfect man live with practical Vedant that it is highest ideal of Advaita philosophy should be put into practice in every level of life.

Life and teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji demonstrated and characterised perfect man in many ways, he said that a perfect man should make balance in social and religious life, perfect man should not do discrimination on the basis of race, caste and creed, speaking truth without fear in every condition, simple life in harmony and compassion is the universal message of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. In his words “Jab lag duniya rahiye Nanak kich suniye kich kahiye” (as long as we are in this world O Nanak! We should listen and speak of the Lord).⁷

Non –duality (Advaita) is the solution of all the problems of contemporary society. We need to attach ourselves with Supreme reality and live with that reality. We can detach ourselves from all bad habits like violence, greed, anger, lust etc. by attaching from the real Supreme like our Great Perfect Persona like Adi-Shankaracharya.

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⁷ Dr Sant Singh Khalsa (Eng. Tr.), Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Page 661.

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