

Hastāmalaka

Hastāmalaka

Stotram

॥ श्रीः ॥

Composed by Hastāmalaka Ācārya, a direct disciple of the great teacher/saint Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, the Hastāmalaka Stotram is a short Vedāntic text dealing exclusively with the higher nature of the Self. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya had four primary, direct disciples whose works survive to the present day; Sureśvara, Padmapāda, Toṭaka and Hastāmalaka. Though numerous texts are available for study by Sureśvara, only this particular work by Hastāmalaka has survived. It is unknown whether he produced any other works.

The Sanskrit word hasta-āmalaka (which is actually a compound of two words) may be unfolded to mean 'an amla berry (āmalakam) in the hand (hasta)'. Amla berries are also known as Indian Gooseberries and emblic; the tree and the fruit are known by the same name. The āmalaka berry is opaque when it is unripe and turns translucent when it is ripe. It is interesting to note that amla is one of the three ingredients of the āyurvedic medicine triphalā. It is believed that Śaṅkarācārya used this particular berry as a metaphor to acknowledge Hastāmalaka's 'ripeness' and his clarity of knowledge regarding Vedānta, and also to reveal the esoteric nature of the Vedāntic scriptures as a whole (to reveal knowledge that is 'hidden'). Many scholars believe that one of the driving forces behind Śaṅkarācārya's desire to 'revive' the Vedāntic teaching tradition was in direct response to the popularity of Buddhism. There are apocryphal stories regarding the esoteric nature of the āmalaka berry in Buddhism (including one regarding the emperor Aśoka). Knowing this, one may postulate that Śaṅkarācārya purposely used this metaphor to draw attention away from the Buddhist doctrine and focus it on Vedānta. It is assumed that the name Hastāmalaka is a nickname. Hastāmalaka's given or saṁnyasi names do not survive into the present era. In truth, very little is known about Hastāmalaka, but stories regarding his youth do survive.

As one story goes, Śaṅkarācārya was traveling and teaching in the South-Western part of the Indian subcontinent (near Mangalore in

what is the present-day Indian state of Karnāṭaka). A great Brahmin scholar named Prabhākara, along with his wife and son, visited Śaṅkarācārya's retinue. After prostrating himself to Śaṅkarācārya (which is the custom) he confided to Śaṅkarācārya: "My son seems to be mute and has no social skills. He conducts himself in a peculiar way. He has no friends. He socializes with no one. I wish for him to become a great scholar, as I am myself. Yet I am afraid that will never happen. Please help me." At that moment Prabhākara's son fell to the ground and stayed prone in front of Ādi for quite some time. Śaṅkarācārya then asked the boy a seemingly simple question; 'Who are you?' to which the child responded, spouting 12 astonishing Vedāntic verses on the higher nature of the Self. Ironically, the father became dumbfounded. Śaṅkarācārya, thrilled by this revelation, expressed his desire that the child was to become a member of Śaṅkarācārya's saṅgha and become his disciple.

hastāmalakavataputajñānamastyavartate

"While an unripe amla berry in an open hand remains opaque, the same berry when it is ripe allows one to see what was previously unseen."

This text is known by two names; Hastāmalakīyam ('that which was written/composed by Hastāmalaka') and Hastāmalaka Stotraṁ. We have chosen the name Hastāmalaka Stotraṁ for this booklet edition.

Generally it is the student (śiṣya) who will write a commentary on their teacher's work. However, in this rare case, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has written an elaborate commentary on his pupil's work. This commentary has survived to the present day but is not included in this edition.

tvāṁpada lakṣiyārtha varṇaṇam

The Hastāmalaka Stotraṁ deals with a topic in Vedānta called 'tvāṁpada lakṣiyārtha varṇaṇam'; a description of the higher nature of the Self. In this context, the Sanskrit word tvam may be unfolded to mean 'you'. However, the 'you' spoken of, being the higher Self,

has no relation to the body-sense-mind complex. When the higher nature of the Self is understood, the student's understanding regarding the relationship between 'I' and Brahman becomes clear. The study of tvāṁpada lakṣiyārtha varṇaṇam is important in order for the student to grasp the mahāvākya arthaḥ.

There are more Vedāntic texts which deal with jīvātmā (tvāṁpada) as the focus of study than there are texts dealing with paramātmā (Brahman; tatpada lakṣiyārtha varṇaṇam). For example, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya's Upadeśa Sāhasrī (675 verses in 19 chapters) concentrates on the meaning on the word 'you' as a tvāṁpada lakṣiyārtha varṇaṇam. If this is clearly understood, the mahāvākya 'ahambrahmāsmi' will be self-evident.

ātmā

The fourth line (refrain) of each of the 12 verses except for the final verse is the same. It is Hastāmalaka's answer to Śaṅkarācārya's question "Who are you?"; to which Hastāmalaka's reply is "aham ātmā asmi" (I am ātmā). In Vedānta śāstra, the word ātmā is considered to be significant, having four distinct meanings; each meaning revealing the nature of ātmā.

yacchāpnoti yadādaste
yacchātti viśayā niha
yacchadyasantato bhāvaḥ
tasmād ātmeti kīrtiyate

- 1) Āpnoti iti ātmā (āpnoti/vyāpnoti/vyāptiḥ iti vyāpatattvam); from the root (dhātu) 'āp'; that which lends existence to everything. 'I am the nature of Self-existence which pervades and enlivens the whole of creation'. And by this, the existence-nature of ātmā is revealed; 'I am pure-existence; the all-pervading existence principle'; ātmā sadrūpaḥ asmi.
- 2) Ādātte iti ātmā (from the root 'dā' plus the prefix 'ā'); 'I am the fundamental substratum (adiṣṭhāṇam) unto which all material resolves at the time of pralayaṁ (the time when the

entire universe coalesces into its un-manifest form)'; that which swallows the whole of 'creation' into itself. Just as upon waking, the entire dream universe resolves into the wak-er; from the standpoint of pure-consciousness, the entire manifest universe is understood to be mithyā (dependent existence), having no substantiality of its own, which is then absorbed into itself at the moment of pralayam; sarva laya adiṣṭhāṇam iti ātmā.

- 3) Astī iti ātmā (from the root 'ad'; to eat/experience/consume/witness). 'I am that consciousness principle which witnesses/consumes/illuminates the entirety of the universe.' 'I am that consciousness which witnesses/illuminates/experiences everything (the internal universe of thoughts and the external universe of objects)'. That which is all-seeing; omniscient.
- 4) Asatī iti ātmā (from the root 'aṭ'; permanent/to exist always); 'I am that consciousness which exists in the past (along with the past universe), exists in the present (along with the present universe), and exists in the future (along with the future universe)'; trikāle api asti sandata bhāvaḥ. That which is unconditioned by time.

(nitya) upalabdhi (svarūpa)

In the refrain for each main verse in the stotraṁ, Hastāmala uses a rarely used Sanskrit word; upalabdhi. Upalabdhi is a synonym for cit; caitanyam; jñānam (vijñānam), all of which mean 'pure-awareness'. Pure-awareness may also be indicated by the word 'pure-consciousness' and is synonymous with 'pure-existence'.

- 1) Consciousness is not a part, product or property of the body-sense-mind complex.
- 2) Consciousness is an independent entity that pervades and enlivens the body-sense-mind complex.

- 3) Consciousness is not bound/limited by the boundaries of the body-sense-mind complex.
- 4) Consciousness survives even after the body-sense-mind complex has disintegrated.
- 5) Consciousness is not available with which to transact in this field of experience (or any field of experience) after the dissolution of the body-sense-mind complex not because consciousness does not exist, but because there is no medium through which consciousness is able to express itself (a medium for transaction).

That consciousness is me.

sahā ātmā

Students of Vedānta who have spent many years in study will replace the words 'consciousness/existence/awareness' with the word 'I'. This is one of the most important sādhanas in the whole of Vedānta.

This introduction was inspired in part by a series of talks given by Śrī Svāmī Paramārthānanda Sarasvatī in Madras, Tamil Nadu, India titled "Hastāmalaḥ". Our deepest thanks to Svāmī jī for helping to inspire the creation of this booklet.

॥ हरिः ॐ ॥

॥ हस्तामलकस्तोत्रम् ॥

॥ ॐ अथ हस्तामलकस्तोत्रम् ॥

कस्त्वं शिशो कस्य कुतोऽसि गन्ता

किं नाम ते त्वं कुत आगतोऽसि ।

एतन्मयोक्तं वद चार्भक त्वं

मत्प्रीतये प्रीति विवर्धनोऽसि ॥ १-अे ॥

हस्तामलक उवाच ।

नाहं मनुष्यो न च देव-यक्षौ

न ब्राह्मण-क्षत्रिय-वैश्य-शूद्राः ।

न ब्रह्मचारी न गृही वनस्थो

भिक्षुर्न चाहं निजबोध रूपः ॥ १-बी ॥

निमित्तं मनश्चक्षुरादि प्रवृत्तौ

निरस्ताखिलोपाधिराकाशकल्पः ।

॥ **Hastāmalakastotraṃ** ॥

॥ om atha hastāmalakastotraṃ ॥

kastvaṃ śiśo kasya kuto'si gantā

kiṃ nāma te tvam kuta āgato'si ।

etanmayoktam vada cārbhaka tvam

matprītaye prīti vivardhano'si ॥ **Introduction, 1-A** ॥

hastāmalaka uvāca

nāhaṃ manuṣyo na ca deva-yakṣau

na brāhmaṇa-kṣatriya-vaiśya-śūdrāḥ ।

na brahmacārī na grhī vanastho

bhikṣurna cāhaṃ nijabodha rūpaḥ ॥ **Introduction, 1-B** ॥

nimittam manaścakṣurādi pravṛttau

nirastākhilopādhirākāśakalpaḥ ।

रविलोकचेष्टानिमित्तं यथा यः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ १ ॥

यमग्न्युष्णवन्नित्यबोध स्वरूपं
मनश्चक्षुरादीन्यबोधात्मकानि ।
प्रवर्तन्त आश्रित्य निष्कम्पमेकं
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ २ ॥

मुखाभासको दर्पणे दृश्यमानः
मुखत्वात् पृथक्त्वेन नैवास्ति वस्तु ।
चिदाभासको धीषु जीवोऽपि तद्वत्
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ३ ॥

यथा दर्पणाभाव आभासहानौ
मुखं विद्यते कल्पनाहीनमेकम् ।
तथा धीवियोगे निराभासको यः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ४ ॥

ravirlokaceṣṭānimittam yathā yaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 1 ॥

yamagnyuṣṇavannityabodha svarūpaṁ
manaścakṣurādīnyabodhatmakāni ।
pravartanta āśritya niṣkampamekaṁ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 2 ॥

mukhābhāsako darpaṇe dr̥śyamānaḥ
mukhatvāt pṛthaktvena naivāsti vastu ।
cidābhāsako dhīṣu jīvo'pi tadvat
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 3 ॥

yathā darpaṇābhāva ābhāsahānau
mukhaṁ vidyate kalpanāhīnamekam ।
tathā dhīviyoge nirābhāsako yaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 4 ॥

मनश्चक्षुरादेर्वियुक्तः स्वयं यः
मनश्चक्षुरादेर्मनश्चक्षुरादिः ।
मनश्चक्षुरादेरगम्यस्वरूपः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ५ ॥

य एको विभाति स्वतः शुद्धचेताः
प्रकाशस्वरूपोऽपि नानेव धीषु ।
शरावोदकस्थो यथा भानुरेकः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ६ ॥

यथाऽनेकचक्षुःप्रकाशो रविर्न
क्रमेण प्रकाशीकरोति प्रकाश्यम् ।
अनेका धियो यस्तथैकः प्रबोधः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ७ ॥

विवस्वत् प्रभातं यथा रूपमक्षं
प्रगृण्हाति नाभातमेवं विवस्वान् ।

manaścakṣurāderviyuktaḥ svayaṁ yaḥ
manaścakṣurādermanaścakṣurādiḥ ।
manaścakṣurāderagamyasvarūpaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 5 ॥

ya eko vibhāti svataḥ śuddhacetāḥ
prakāśasvarūpo'pi nāneva dhīṣu ।
śarāvodakastho yathā bhānurekaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 6 ॥

yathā'nekacakṣuḥprakāśo ravirna
krameṇa prakāśīkaroti prakāśyam ।
anekā dhiyo yastathaikaḥ prabodhaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 7 ॥

vivasvat prabhātaṁ yathā rūpamakṣaṁ
pragṛṇhāti nābhātamevaṁ vivasvān ।

यदाभात आभासयत्यक्षमेकः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ८ ॥

यथा सूर्य एकोऽप्स्वनेकश्चलासु
स्थिरास्वप्यनन्यद्विभाव्यस्वरूपः ।
चलासु प्रभिन्ना सुधीष्वेव मेकः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ९ ॥

घनच्छन्नदृष्टिर्घनच्छन्नमर्कम्
यथा निष्प्रभं मन्यते चातिमूढः ।
स्था बद्धवद्भाति यो मूढ-दृष्टेः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ १० ॥

समस्तेषु वस्तुष्वनुस्त्यूतमेकं
समस्तानि वस्तूनि यमन स्पृशन्ति ।
वियद्वत्सदा शुद्धमच्छस्वरूपः
स नित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा ॥ ११ ॥

yadābhāta ābhāsayatyakṣamekaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 8 ॥

yathā sūrya eko'psvanekaścalāsu
sthirāsvapyananyadvibhāvyasvarūpaḥ ।
calāsu prabhinnā sudhīṣveva mekaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 9 ॥

ghanacchannadrṣṭirghanacchannamarkam
yathā niṣprabhaṁ manyate cātimūḍhaḥ ।
sthā baddhavadbhāti yo mūḍha-drṣṭeḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 10 ॥

samasteṣu vastuṣvanustyūtamekaṁ
samastāni vastūni yamna sprśanti ।
viyadvatsadā śuddhamacchasvarūpaḥ
sa nityopalabdhisvarūpo'hamātmā ॥ 11 ॥

उपाधौ यथा भेदता सन्मणीनां
स्था भेदता बुद्धिभेदेषु तेऽपि ।
यथा चन्द्रिकाणां जले चञ्चलत्वं
तथा चञ्चलत्वं तवापीह विष्णो ॥ १२ ॥

॥ इति श्रीहस्तामलकाचार्यरचितं
हस्तामलकसंवादस्तोत्रं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

Hastāmalakastotraṃ*

[Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya asked]:

Oh child, who are you? Who are your parents? Where are you going? Where are you from and what is your name? Why do you not speak? You seem to be a nice child. Why are you unable to answer my questions? **(Introduction, 1-A)**

[Hastāmalaka replied]:

I am not a human being. I am neither angel nor devil. I do not belong to any of the four āśramas; brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, sūdrāḥ. I am beyond all āśramas, labels and objects of perception. I am of the nature of pure-consciousness. **(Introduction, 1-B)**

I am that consciousness principle which lends sentience to the mind, the eyes, and all other subtle aspects which comprise the subtle body, just as the sun illumines all; uninvolved and unaffected by all that it illumines;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. **(1)**

*This is a free (not word-for-word) translation of the text.

upādhou yathā bhedatā sanmaṇīnām
sthābhedatā bhddhibhedeṣu te'pi ।
yathā candrikāṇām jale cañcalatvaṃ
tatha cañcalatvaṃ tavāpīha viṣṇo ॥ 12 ॥

॥ iti śrīhastāmalacāryaracitaṃ

hastāmalakasaṃvādistotraṃ sampūrṇam ॥ (closing śloka)

That which itself is One; that which is unchangeable and essentially eternal (just as the essential nature of fire is heat); that which lends sentience to all actions, to the mind, to the eyes; these being objects of awareness and manifest due to ignorance;

I am of the nature of pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. **(2)**

All material manifests from prakṛti/māyā. All these bodies-minds-objects are inert by their very nature and have no substantiality. Yet it is mind that is able to reflect consciousness (pratibimba caitanyaṃ);

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. **(3)**

Just as the reflection vanishes when the mirror is removed, yet the true face still remains, unsullied by any delusion; ātmā remains even when there is no reflecting medium;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. **(4)**

That ātmā which is abiding, uninvolved with mind, eye, and the rest; is itself mind, eye, and the rest; whose nature illumines mind, eye, and the rest; yet is not mind, eye and the rest;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. (5)

That which, being One, shines forth self-effulgently. Being pure-awareness, itself essential light, which yet appears 'as though' as the inner instrument; shining just as the one sun shines reflected in water as infinite waves;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. (6)

I am not the eye, the form, or the sun itself. They are all inert and require Me to enliven them. Just as the sun illumines countless eyes, also illumining, simultaneously all objects in awareness; so too does ātmā, the one intelligence, illumine infinite inner instruments;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. (7)

Just as the body is illumined by the sun, revealing the form of the object, and yet, when un-illumined reveals nothing; so too does the one sun illumine the mind;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. (8)

Just as the one sun appears as multiplicity in agitated waters, and even when reflected in still waters may still yet be recognized as non-separate from the reflected waters; so too that which, though one, seems many in the restless fluctuations of the mind;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. (9)

Just as she whose eyes, when mediated by a cloud, thinks in her delusion that the sun is occluded and has lost its light; so too ātmā, which she is ignorant of, is obscured by ignorance in her mind's eye;

I am of the nature of pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. (10)

That which, being in itself One; that which is in-and-through all objects of awareness yet is never touched; that which, like space, is always pure and uncontaminated due to its very nature;

I am of the nature of that pure-consciousness. I am ātmā. (11)

Just as a pure, clear crystal's appearance is seemingly modified by an 'outside' presence, so too do You appear differently due to the diversity of individual minds; just as tremulous moonbeams appear on the water, so too do You, Viṣṇuḥ, appear to flicker in our world. (12)

Thus the study of the Hastāmalaka Stotraṁ is complete.

॥ हरिः ॐ ॥

श्री स्वामी वागीशानन्द सरस्वती

Śrī Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī

Śrī Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī is a senior disciple of Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī, and has been studying and teaching Vedānta since 1975.

Svāmī jī was in his teens when he became fascinated with mystical poetry and non-dualistic philosophies. In 1975, at the age of 19, he left his home in the United States and traveled to India to study in a traditional gurūkulam. After graduating from a three-year residential course in Vedānta and Sanskrit, he attended four subsequent three-year courses in the United States and in India.

Using the traditional methodology called sampradāya, Svāmī Vāgīśānanda 'unlocks' the scriptures of Vedānta, thereby removing the veil of ignorance; the cause of all human suffering. He is a traditional samnyāsi (a renunciant who is committed to a life of knowledge and has taken a vow of non-injury). A master of the South Indian Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda style of chanting, Svāmī jī has traveled the world teaching Sanskrit, Vedic chanting and Vedānta.

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॥ हरिः ॐ ॥