

# **MANEESHA PANCHAKAM**

**By**

**Adi Shankaracharya**

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## **Introduction:**

The traditional story behind this PANCHAKAM is rather skeleton. One day Adi Shankara along with his disciples, after a cool & refreshing bath in the Ganges at Kasi, was on his way to the sacred temple of Sri Vishwanath. Everyone is a creature of the powerful social values of his age. Shankara saw a dirty sweeper, with his professional instrument under his arms, coming along. The Brahmin in the Acharya colored by the traditional custom, prevalent at that time cried "Go-Go, Move - Move".

Now the Sweeper very innocently asked a very deep and meaningful question to the 'Master' and this lashing question of the apparent 'Sweeper' shocked Adi Shankara and deep within him he must have moved away from his identification with matter (Body, Mind and Intellect), and must have glided into the Infinite state of Pure Self.

There are total seven verses in this Panchakam from which first two verses are the questions asked by the Sweeper to the Acharya.

### Verse. 1

अन्नमयादन्नमयमथवा चैतन्यमेव चैतन्यात्।द्विजवर दूरीकर्तुं वाञ्छसि किं ब्रूहि गच्छ  
गच्छेति॥

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" Oh! the best among the twice born, by saying 'Move away-Move away,'  
do you wish to move matter from matter, or you mean to separate Spirit  
from the spirit."

### Verse. 2

किं गङ्गाम्बुनि बिम्बिते\_म्बरमणौ चण्डालवाटीपयः पूरे चान्तरमसित  
काञ्चनघटीमृत्कुम्भयोर्वाम्बरे।प्रत्यग्वस्तुनि निस्तरङ्गसहजानन्दावबोधाम्बुधौ  
विप्रो-यं श्वपचो-यमित्यपि महान् को-यं विभेदभ्रमः॥

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Is there any difference in the " jewel of the sky" when it is reflected in the  
waters of the Ganges or in a ditch in the way-side of a slum? Is there any  
difference in the space as such, be it in a golden pot or in a mud-pot? In  
the ocean of the self-existing Blissful Consciousness, in the inner Self,  
devoid of thought ripples, how can there be this delusory distinction: 'this  
is a Brahmin' and 'this is a dog-eater'?

With these two verses the 'Sweeper-divine has tickled the Acharya with His intelligently concealed piercing satire. As a Master of Advaita, preaching and propagating the one Infinite Self (Brahman) of the Upanishads, Shankara must have felt a poignant pain at the social ulcer that was prevalent at his time.

In the following five verses Shankara replies the Divine-critic at the street corner, carefully treasuring therein a secret message for all his immediate followers and all deep students for all times that the distinctions based upon social, moral, ethical and such other considerations have no sanction or sanctity in the light of the Upanishadic Truth



## Saloka 2:

ब्रह्मैवाहमिदं जगच्च सकलं चिन्मात्रविस्तारितं सर्वं चैतदविद्यया  
त्रिगुणयाऽशेषं मया कल्पितम्। इत्थं यस्य दृढा मतिः सुखतरे नित्ये परे  
निर्मले चण्डालोऽस्तु स तु द्विजोऽस्तु गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम॥

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He who, in his direct experience of the Immaculate Supreme - Bliss-  
Eternal, has come to the firm understanding that the entire universe is  
but an extensive play of Pure Consciousness, all projected by his  
'Ignorance,' expressed in the three moods of his mind, while he himself  
is but that Brahman-- he alone is my Guru, be he a Sweeper, be he a  
Brahmin.

### Saloka 3:

शश्वन्नश्वरमेव विश्वमखिलं निश्चित्य वाचा गुरोः नित्यं ब्रह्म  
निरन्तरं विमृशता निव्याजशान्तात्मना। भूतं भावि च दुष्कृतं प्रदहता  
संविन्मये पावके प्रारब्धाय समर्पितं स्ववपुरित्येषा मनीषा मम॥

ममवृत्तमभवे विमक्षीपलं निमिद्धवागा गुरोः नित्यं ब्रह्म निरन्तरं विमृशता  
निव्याजशान्तात्मना। भूतं भावि च दुष्कृतं प्रदहता मविन्येषा पावके प्रारब्धाय  
समर्पितं स्ववपुरित्येषा मनीषा मम॥

He who has done long reflections upon his teacher's words that this world of change is permanently in a state of flux-- he who has tamed his mind to a true state of quiet and poise-- he who has brought his mind, devoid of all dissimilar thoughts, constantly to contemplate upon Brahman -- he who has burnt up all his past and future residual- vasanas in the fire of Pure Consciousness-- he who has offered his body to live through and exhaust its present destiny.... he alone is my Guru; be he a sweeper, be he a Brahmin.

Saloka 4:

या तिर्यङ्गदेवताभिरहमित्यन्तः स्फुटा गुह्यते यद्भासा  
हृदयाक्षदेहविषया भान्ति स्वतोऽचेतनाः। ता भास्यैः  
पिहितार्कमण्डलनिभां स्फूर्तिं सदा भावयन् योगी निर्वृतमानसो हि  
गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम॥

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गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम॥

A Yogi with his hushed mind lives meditating upon That, which express as "I---I" the subjective individuality in all creatures: - plant, animal, human and angels--That, by whose Light, Mind, Senses and Body are all enlivened to activity, even though they are all made up of inert and insentient matter--- That, which illumines everything as Sun from behind a bank of clouds .....He alone is my Guru: this is my firm conviction.



### Saloka 5:

यत्सौख्याम्बुधिलेशलेशत इमे शक्रादयो निर्वृता यच्चित्ते नितरां  
प्रशान्तकलने लब्ध्वा मुनिनिर्वृतः। यस्मिन्नित्यसुखाम्बुधौ गलित  
धीर्ब्रह्मैव न ब्रह्मविद् यः कश्चित्स सुरेन्द्रवन्दितपदो नूनं मनीषा मम॥

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During its moment of utter quiet a Yogi's mind gains that Ocean of Bliss,  
a tiny drop - let from which is sufficient to make Indra and others feel  
contented and happy. Such a one who has dissolved his individual  
intellect

in this Eternal Ocean of Bliss, is verily Brahman not a mere Knower of  
Brahman....That rare one, whose feet are worshipped even by the very  
King of Gods, indeed, he alone is my Guru; this is my firm conviction.