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## Srimad Adi Sankaracharya - As An Integrator

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### Abstract

-An earnest attempt is made to augment our understanding of Sri Sankara as a Nation Integrator. It is known fact that Sri Sankara is one of the most powerful manifestations of Lord Shiva. Sri Sankara integrated the nation with a futuristic vision of progress and prosperity of Sanatana dharma in the country. A few of the integration effected by Sri Sankara are: (1) Integration through the methodology of synthesis and systematization (2) Integration through the establishment of mutts in various parts of India (3) Integration through the establishment of sanmata (4) Integration through the establishment of dasanami sanyasa (5) Integration through the priestly duties, and (6) Integration through the worship of spatika lingas.

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powerful manifestations, futuristic vision, Nation Integrator, visible.

### Introduction

An earnest attempt is made to augment our understanding of Sri Sankara as a Nation Integrator. It is known fact that Sri Sankara is one of the most powerful manifestations of Lord Shiva. The question arises: where is the need for the advent of Sri Sankara? The answer necessitates a discussion on the situation that prevailed at the time of Sri Sankara's advent (Jayaraman, 1999).

The Sanatana dharmic environment experienced internal and external disturbances at the time of Sri Sankara's birth (509 BC/2593 Kali). Internally, the primary disturbance came in the form of an inappropriate understanding of the Vedas by the Mimasakas. Externally, the primary disturbance emerged from the spread of Buddhism. Sri Sankara was given the task of

restoring and rejuvenating the Sanatana dharma in the country.

### National Integration

Sri Sankara integrated the nation at different levels based on the futuristic vision of progress and prosperity of Sanatana dharma in the country. A few of the integration effected by Sri Sankara are:

### Integration through the methodology of Synthesis and Systematization

Sri Sankara, having very high respect for tradition, did not want to leave out any positive ideas/concepts that have been developed in Sanatana dharma over the years. At the same time, Sri Sankara did not want to carry-

forward any erroneous ideas/concepts that has crept into Sanatana dharma over the years (Sankaranarayanan, 2011).

Sri Sankara uses the methodology of synthesis to re-define and re-orient the positive concepts/ideas, and systematized them into the structure of Sanatana dharma, in general and Advaita Vedanta, in particular.

This twin-methodology of synthesis and systematization is very much visible in all the works of Sri Sankara, especially in the commentaries on the Prasthanaya traya (the Upanisads, the Brahmasutra and the Bhagavad Gita).

This integration set a very strong foundation of Hinduism in India.

### **Integration through the establishment of Mutts in various parts of India**

Sri Sankara founded the Dwaraka Mutt at Gujarat, in 491 BC/2611 Kali, on Magha Sukla Saptami of the cyclic year Sadharana with Sri Hastamalakacharya as its first Pitadhipati.

Sri Sankara founded the Jyotir Mutt near Badrinath (Uttarakhand), in 486 BC/2616 Kali, on Pusya Suddha Purnima of the cyclic year Raksasa with Sri Totakacharya as its first Pitadhipati.

Sri Sankara founded the Govardhan Mutt at Puri (Odisha), in 485 BC/2617 Kali, on Vaisakha Sukla Navami of the cyclic year Nala with Sri Padmapadacharya as its first Pitadhipati.

Sri Sankara founded the Sarada Peetha at Sringeri (Karnataka), in 484 BC/2618 Kali, on Pusya Purnima of the cyclic year Pingala with Sri Sureswaracharya as its first Pitadhipati.

Sri Sankara founded the Kamakoti Peetha at Kanchipuram (Tamil Nadu), in 482 BC/2620 Kali, on Vaisakha Sukla Purnima of the cyclic year Siddharthi with Sri Sankara himself as its first Pitadhipati. These mutts are doing a great service to preserve, propagate and transmission of Sanatana dharma for generations (Prema Nandakumar, 2013).

Integration through the establishment of Sanmata

During Sri Sankara's time, there were 72 sects following diverse spiritual and religious practices causing

confusion in the country. With the objective of forging unity, Sri Sankara founded 'sanmata' (six modes of purified forms of worship). The six forms of deity worship are:

Shaivism - the worship of Lord Shiva

Vaishnavam - the worship of Lord Vishnu

Shaktham - the worship of Goddess Shakti

Ganapathyam - the worship of Lord Ganesha

Kaumaram - the worship of Lord Karthikeya, and

Souram - the worship of Lord Surya.

Further, Sri Sankara also established the practice of 'Panchayatana Puja', wherein the five major deities of the Vedas, namely, Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti, Ganapati and Surya are worshiped on the same platform. The sixth deity, Karthikeya is worshiped in the form of 'Yagneswara' (fire) in the daily rituals (through Agnihotra). This method of worship avoids the deliberate elevation of any one deity over the others.

### **Integration through the establishment of Dasanami Sanyasa**

Sri Sankara not only integrated the householders with the establishment of Sanmata, but also integrated the Sanyasins through the establishment of Dasanami order of Sanyasins.

Those who enter Sanyasa in the Ekadandi tradition take up one of the ten names associated with this Sampradaya. The names are: Saraswati, Bharati, Giri, Puri, Tirtha, Aranaya, Ashrama, Parvata, Sangara and Vana.

### **Integration through the Priestly Duties**

Sri Sankara effected integration through the duties of temple priest. He ordained the priests of Kerala to be the temple priests at Badrinath, the priests from Kasi/Kashmir/Nepal/Maharashtra to be the temple priests at Rameswaram, the priests from Orissa to be the temple priests at Dwaraka and the priests from Gujarat to be the temple priests at Puri.

### **Integration through the Worship of Spatika Lingas**

From Kedarnath, Sri Sankara went to Kailasa and had darshan of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva gave Sri Sankara the Soundarya Lahari as well as the Five Spatika Lingas for worship. Sri Sankara effected integration through the identical worship pattern of Spatika Lingas as under:

Sri Sankara consecrated the Vara Linga at the Neelakanta Kshetra in Nepal

Sri Sankara consecrated the Mukti Linga in the temple at Kedarnath

Sri Sankara placed the Bhoga Linga at the Sringeri Saradha peetha

Sri Sankara consecrated the Moksha Linga at the Sri Nataraja temple in Chidambaram

Sri Sankara retained the Yoga Linga for his own worship at the Kanchi Komakoti Mutt. From the above discussion, we are able to have a glimpse of the integrator-dimension of Sri Sankara.

Sri Sankara ended his earthly physical existence with ascending the Throne of Omniscience (Sarvajna Peetha) in Kanchipuram, at the age of 32 (477 BC/2625 Kali) on Sukla Ekadasi of the month of Adhika Rishobha in the cyclic year Raktakshi.

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