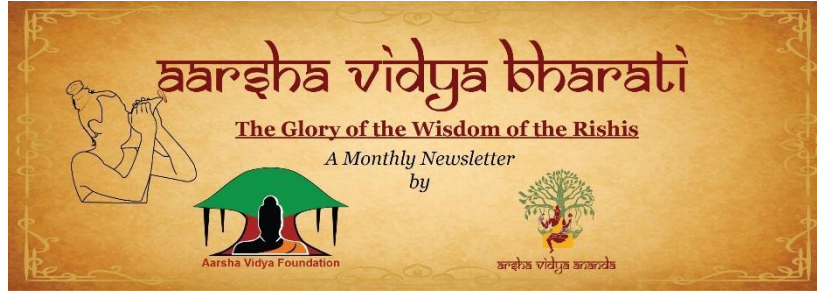

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A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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Celebration of Ādi Śankarācārya Jayanti 2024

By Prashanth Mohan, Sydney

Students of Swami Brahmaavidananda ji and Swamini Brahma-prajnananda ji gathered online on 12th May 2024 to celebrate the auspicious occasion of the birth of Jagadguru Ādi Śankarācārya also known as Shankara Jayanti. It falls on the Śukla Pañcamī day of the Vaiśākha month of the Hindu lunar calendar.

The function opened with a Pūjā to Ādi Śankarācārya followed by a talk by our beloved Guru Swamini Brahma-prajnananda ji. She spoke on the topic [‘Is Ādi Śankara a Māyāvādi or Brahmavādi?’](#) She explained how people wrongly call Ādi Śankara as a māyāvādi when indeed He is brahmavādi. She beautifully elaborated this by narrating a story between Bhagavān Krishna and Nārada Maharishi. She pointed out that Māyā is the shakti of Bhagavān and something to be understood and not rejected.



Where the shakti is, there the being, Bhagavān is. Māyā enjoys only a dependent reality and the whole world of experience is due to the play of the three guṇa-s of Māyā, aham-kāra and mama-kāra of the individual due to avidya. Śankarācārya did not negate the world but only showed us the way to recognise the dependent reality of it and the unchanging reality of oneself being in and through it.

This enlightening talk was followed by a presentation by Rohit Singh Nitwal and Sanchit Gupta from Bengaluru on the life of Śankarācārya highlighting the major events. That Śankarācārya was an incarnation of Paramēśvara Himself was evident with His extraordinary feats of mastering the scriptures and writing the commentaries at a very young age. Śankarācārya also established the 4 maṭha-s in the four corners of the country, debated several opponents and brought them back into the fold of Vaidika dharma.

A few verses from two stotra-s of Ādi Śankara viz. Śivamānasa Pūjā Stotram and Subrahmaṇya Bhujangam were then

explained by Purnima Bhat, Mumbai and Prashanth Mohan, Sydney. The *stotra*-s demonstrate to us the inclusive nature of *Śankara* by which all followers of *Vaidika mārḡa* are benefited by having a strong connection with *Īśvara* and deepening their devotion.

The program concluded with Swami Brahmanandananda ji's profound talk [debunking popular myths surrounding Ādi Śankara](#) like calling Him a missionary or an argumentative person. *Śankarācārya* only corrected the wrong ideas of some of the people within the same *Sanātana Dharma* and not from other religions. Similarly, debating intellectuals of other schools of thought does not make Him an argumentative individual but it's only an appropriate tradition of establishing the truth revealed in the *śāstra*. He went on to say that, to understand *Śankara*, one has to go into the *Bhāṣyam* and the most important one being the *adhyāsa bhāṣyam*, the introduction to *Brahmasūtra*-s. *Adhyāsa* is taking one thing to be something else which it is not. *Adhyāsa* is universal. It's *adhyāsa* that establishes the notion of bondage, the pursuit of Vedanta, the role of a student, Guru and *śāstra*. He concluded by praying to *Ādi Śankara* that we may all gain the *ātmajñānam* in this life itself and make it a purposeful one.

We as practitioners of *Sanātana Dharma* are eternally grateful to the contributions of *Ādi Śankarācārya* and the entire *Guru Paramparā*.