

**Forever I bow my head to Your
divine form**

You sent for me to Your Lotus-
feet.

You are a rescuer in the river of
bondage.

Committed to worldly life, release
this orphan from the cycle of birth
and death.

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Kathamrita

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Chapter 42

O Siddharudha, I have surrendered to Your Feet. I will be a worthy person to gain Your grace by keeping my head at Your lotus feet. The company of yours even for a second removes the fear of bondage, and my mind gets purified. Then, I will attain Bliss Eternal. There is a beautiful parable to tell you how one should behave to gain the knowledge of self. Therefore, I will tell you a story in that connection in detail.

There was a village called Muktapur in the South. There lived a pious couple. They would go to the temple nearby and worship Lord Krishna lovingly. They led a carefree life. They had five sons. The second one's name was Shankar. As a boy, he would go to the temple and listen to the *puran*. When the saint Krishna was explaining Jnneshwari to him, he listened to it lovingly. After listening, he would go to a lonely place and pray, 'O Krishnanatha, be a giver of knowledge' A few days later, having got worldly knowledge, he forgot devotion to Krishna. Then, he married a beautiful woman and took much interest in mundane life. He was clever in business and made a lot of money. He was greatly honoured in the society. In addition to this, a son was born to him. Therefore, his joy found no bounds. It is said that ways of God are strange. Listen to a holy story with patience that actually took place in his life. The child was, then six months old.

Shankar dreamt a dream. In his dream, he saw a saint who was looking at him angrily. The saint disappeared

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suddenly. But he got up and said, 'Hari, Hari' and he fell on the ground shouting with that name, he lost his body-conscious. Alarmed by this, the members of the family took him to the temple. Having seen the image of Krishna, he wept by repeating the *Naam* of God. Thus, he was there for three hours and then he became calm. But his attitude turned to an opposite direction. The relation of wife and children broke completely from his mind. He said to himself, 'When I've none here, why should I live here? Now, I must go in search of Sadguru'.

At this time, he recollected an old event. When Shankar was a boy, an old man said to him, 'When I went to Hubballi, I had seen Siddharudha who was a well

known philosopher, knower of the real nature of Brahman.' Having remembered these words, he made up his mind to meet Siddharudha in Hubballi.

Deciding so, without informing anyone at home, he went to the East. Members the family searched and brought him home back but Shankar told them his firm decision to meet Siddharudha. Then, they sent him to Hubballi with his friend. Seeing Siddharudha, he did sashtonga (with the humble prostration of the body by touching the earth with the eight members) at Sadguru's Feet. He told Him his story and said, 'O Merciful, I can't live in worldly life. Please, tell me how I should achieve *Paramartha*' Having heard his prayer, Sadguru said, 'Keep remembering the *Naam* You are worthy to meditate and you will be worthy to achieve knowledge of self.' The moment he heard the words of Guru, he felt very happy and all his doubts were cleared. Wearing the words of Sadguru in his heart, he went to his native place. Abandoning all the worldly actions, he went to the forest in-order to do spiritual endeavors. They built a hut for him to live in. He always thought of Sadguru. He himself cooked

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food and ate only bland food. As he did namasmarane (remembrance of *Naam*), his mind got purified and his dualism was dried.

One day, when he was eating his food, a black dog came in and began to eat from his plate. Considering it as Sadguru's Grace, he started eating from the same plate with it (dog). After the meals, having saluted it, he sent it. The dog remained in the same place. Since then, both he and the dog began to eat from the same plate. If he found that the dog had any dirt, he would wash its face with his own hands and he would eat with it. As thus went on for some days, he gave up the body conscious ('I'm the body' idea) and attained the state devoid of pride or ego. He began to see Sadguru in all beings. 'A person, who salutes all bhutas (beings) he has every right to receive the Grace of God.' Thus says one of the vachanas of Tukaram. He decided to follow this vachana in life.

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We feel shy when we salute our loving friends, brothers, relatives, wife, children etc. We should understand that this kind of shyness is of body conscious 'I'm the body idea'. Leaving it aside, we should salute butcher, horse, cows etc. Shankar thought that the forest was not a proper place for such spiritual endeavour. Having given up the remaining clothes, he wore a loinctoth and went to his village.

There were men, women, children, friends, on the way. While they were looking at him, he moved on doing sastanga salutation to immovable and movable beings. People, who saw this called him 'Mad.' Women ran with fear. Some said.: 'He was good but spoiled' But the saints and sages said, 'This is his spiritual endeavour. He achieved it through Guru's Grace. He is really blessed. The way that Shankar got is a real path.

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There's no doubt that he will attain his true nature one day or the other. There was a hill near the village on which stood a temple. Since then he began to live in the temple. The wife would bring him food everyday. In the secluded place he kept busy in doing bhajan.

One day, having come in his heart, Sadguru inspired him to go to Hubballi. Accordingly, thinking that it was the order of Guru. It was a dark night Shankar left for Hubballi in the dark night. It was a rainy season. The sky was full of clouds. He had a firm belief that Sadguru would protect him. While going in the dark, he came across the river which was flooded. But Shankar did not think of anything.

`O Sadguru, this body is Yours.
You Yourself should guard me'
Praying thus he jumped into the
river. Since the current was very
strong he floated away. While
drowning himself in water, Shankar
prayed to Sadguru, `O Sadguru in
the form of the river, I'm now in
your belly. Merge me in You
Yourself.' In that very moment,
Sadguru manifested. He looked as
if He was sitting on the current.
Picking up Shankar, He was
carrying to the other bank of the
river. The moment they reached the
bank, Shankar told Him to be with
him and not to leave him.
Siddharudha replied, `I'm not
different from you when you see
me my form, how do you live
without Me? Don't worry about
anything, come to Hubbli, and stay
there for some days in my
presence.' Saying thus, He
disappeared. Shankar, thinking of
Sadguru, moved on. He went for
two days without food. His legs
swelled after the continuous walk
and fell in a charity institution.
Since he had no food to eat for two
days, he had no strength in his
body. His legs were swollen and he
could not lift them. But Shankar
did remembrance of Sadguru.
Knowing the terrible plight of His
disciple, the merciful Siddha came
there in the form of a Brahmin.
Seeing Shankar who was fallen as
orphan,

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Siddharudha shed tears. He said, 'There is none to take care of you here. Tell me, what your wish is' Shankar said to him, 'Having gone to Hubballi, there my wish is to serve Sadguru's lotus like feet day and night. Then the brahmma said, 'Your legs are swollen, You've not eaten anything, and no strength in your body. At this time, how can you go there? You've to live here for some days' He then fetched some oil and applied it to his legs and gave him food twice a day. Shankar recovered his health within three days. When the Brahmin gave some money, he did not accept it. He said, 'Don't tempt me. I'll never forget the help you offered. I'm going to Hubballi now. You Yourself have become my father and mother. I feel that You are Sadguru Yourself.' Speaking thus, he fell at the Feet of the Brahmin. Then, the Brahmin sent him to Hubballi in a vehicle.

Shankar came to Hubballi and met Sadguru. 'O Ocean of mercy, Sadgururaya, at last, You sent for me at Your Feet. Please, uplift me, raise me,' he prayed thus by shedding tears of joy. Having heard His prayer, He said, 'Listen to the Vedanta everyday. Then, you'll be able to gain knowledge (janana). Do *manana* of what you've heard in the lonely place. If you do so regularly, knowledge of self, will manifest in the heart and you'll be blessed in three worlds.' Then, Sadguru placed His hand on his head. Shankar experienced Eternal Bliss (Brahmananda) and saluted Siddharudha. Sitting in the presence of Sadguru, Shankar would listen to Sadguru who preached Aikya-bodha (merging of the Individual soul with the Supreme soul). After shravan (hearing) was

over, he would go to a lonely place to do manana (reflection) Thus, he performed shravana (hearing), manana (reflection) and nididhyasana (deep meditation) and he attained knowledge of Brahma through Sadguru's Grace.

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How can I describe the knowledge of Self! The whole world with its movable and immovable things appears as if it were his body. The world dissolves itself gradually and he feels that he himself remains. There is no duality. The body conscious, 'I am the body' idea is completely removed. He experiences that he is eternally blissful, he always remains so and never sees duality. There is nothing instrumental to duality in him. That itself is his real nature. His real nature is witness to the world's creation, state and destruction. That real nature itself is called liberation. But there is no bondage-liberation in it. Here, body-conscious is laughable and the duality is pleasure. Lust, anger etc

are shameful. There is no least of senses. When someone prays to God, he feels that he is praying to himself. If anyone praises God, it appears that the praise is his or belongs to him. If someone beats a dog, it appears that the beat has fallen on his body. Besides this, he himself is the beater. A realised soul experiences such things. After gaining such self-knowledge through the Grace of *Sadguru*, he left his body and attained liberation. The association of *Sadguru* even for a single minute enabled Shankar to achieve Supreme Soul.

O Listeners, now hear the secondary meaning of the story. Shankar is an intense secker. While going in search of his true nature, he fell into the river of worldly life. But, the kind *Sadguru* Himself came to his rescue. By holding his hand, He took him to the other bank. The intense seeker, Shankar was immersed in senses and sense objects. *Sadguru* advised him and removed his attachment to senses. He then sent him in a vehicle as Brahmatwa-bhava to *Sadguru*. As soon as he saw *Sadguru*, he attained his real nature. Here, Shivadas dedicates the forty-second chapter which burns all sins just by listening at the lotus-like feet of *Sadguru*.

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