



SACRED HYMN · SANSKRIT (DEVANAGARI) WITH MEANING

KALI ASHTAKAM

— ◆ —
Attributed to Adi Shankaracharya

Three meditation verses on Kali's form, followed by the eight verses of praise, each closing on the same refrain.

DHYANAM 1

गलद्रक्तमुण्डावलीकण्ठमाला महोघोररावा सुदंष्ट्रा कराला ।
विवस्त्रा श्मशानालया मुक्तकेशी महाकालकामाकुला कालिकेयम् ॥

With a garland of severed heads dripping blood about her neck, roaring most terribly, fierce with great fangs, unclothed, dwelling in the cremation ground, her hair loose: this is Kalika, intent on union with Mahakala.

DHYANAM 2

भुजेवामयुग्मे शिरोऽसिं दधाना वरं दक्षयुग्मेऽभयं वै तथैव ।
सुमध्याऽपि तुङ्गस्तना भारनम्रा लसद्रक्तसृक्कद्वया सुस्मितास्या ॥

In her two left hands she holds a severed head and a sword, and in her two right hands she shows the gestures of granting boons and of fearlessness. Slender-waisted yet full-breasted and bending under their weight, the two corners of her mouth glistening with blood, her face wears a gentle smile.

DHYANAM 3

शवद्वन्द्वकर्णावतंसा सुकेशी लसत्प्रेतपाणिं प्रयुक्तैककाञ्ची ।
शवाकारमञ्चाधिरूढा शिवाभिश्चतुर्दिक्षुशब्दायमानाऽभिरिजे ॥

Two corpses are her ear ornaments, her hair is lovely, and she wears a single girdle made of the hands of the dead. Seated on a couch shaped like a corpse, she shines forth while jackals howl on all four sides.

VERSE 1

विरज्यादिदेवास्त्रयस्ते गुणास्त्रीन् समाराध्य कालीं प्रधाना बभूवुः ।
अनादिं सुरादिं मखादिं भवादिं स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

The three gods beginning with Brahma became foremost, holding the three gunas, by worshipping Kali. You are without beginning, the origin of the gods, of sacrifice and of worldly existence; yet even the gods do not know your true form.

VERSE 2

जगन्मोहिनीयं तु वाग्वादिनीयं सुहृत्पोषिणीशत्रुसंहारणीयम् ।
वचस्तम्भनीयं किमुच्चाटनीयं स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

She is the enchantress of the world and the one who gives power of speech; she nourishes friends and destroys enemies. She silences speech and drives foes away; even the gods do not know your true form.

VERSE 3

इयं स्वर्गदात्री पुनः कल्पवल्ली मनोजास्तु कामान् यथार्थं प्रकुर्यात् ।
तथा ते कृतार्था भवन्तीति नित्यं स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

She bestows heaven and is a wish-fulfilling creeper; she brings the desires of the heart to true fulfilment, and so those who worship her are always made complete. Even the gods do not know your true form.

VERSE 4

सुरापानमत्ता सुभक्तानुरक्ता लसत्पूतचित्ते सदाविर्भवते ।
जपध्यानपूजासुधाधौतपङ्का स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

Intoxicated with the divine drink, loving toward her true devotees, you always reveal yourself in a shining, purified heart; through the nectar of japa, meditation and worship the mire of sin is washed away. Even the gods do not know your true form.

VERSE 5

चिदानन्दकन्दं हसन् मन्दमन्दं शरच्चन्द्रकोटिप्रभापुञ्जबिम्बम् ।
मुनीनां कवीनां हृदि द्योतयन्तं स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

Your form is the root of consciousness and bliss, softly smiling, radiant like the light of ten million autumn moons, shining in the hearts of sages and poets; yet even the gods do not know your true form.

VERSE 6

महामेघकाली सुरक्तापि शुभ्रा कदाचिद् विचित्राकृतिर्योगमाया ।
न बाला न वृद्धा न कामातुरापि स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

Dark as a great rain cloud, and at times deep red or white, of wondrous forms, you are Yogamaya. You are neither a girl nor old, nor driven by desire; even the gods do not know your true form.

VERSE 7

क्षमस्वापराधं महागुप्तभावं मया लोकमध्ये प्रकाशीकृतं यत् ।
तव ध्यानपूतेन चापल्यभावात् स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

Forgive my offence: out of restlessness, though purified by meditation on you, I have revealed your deeply hidden nature in the midst of the world. Even the gods do not know your true form.

VERSE 8

यदि ध्यानयुक्तं पठेद् यो मनुष्यस्तदा सर्वलोके विशालो भवेच्च ।
गृहे चाष्टसिद्धिर्भूते चापि मुक्तिः स्वरूपं त्वदीयं न विन्दन्ति देवाः ॥

The verse says that whoever recites this with meditation becomes renowned in all the worlds, has the eight siddhis in his home, and attains liberation after death. Even the gods do not know your true form.

CLOSING

इति श्रीमच्छङ्कराचार्यविरचितं श्रीकालिकाष्टकं सम्पूर्णम् ॥

Thus ends the Kalika Ashtakam composed by Shri Shankaracharya.

READ IT ON ITS PAGE

The Kali Ashtakam with its meaning, how and when it is recited, and the same text in five more scripts:
astrobhava.com/mantra/kali-ashtakam/



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