Dakshinamurthy (Dakṣiṇāmūrti) is indeed the foremost preceptor of all the Vidyaas. He is the personification of the ultimate awareness and knowledge. We worship him as the god of wisdom. Dakshinamurthy Upanishad states

“shemushhii dakshiNaa proktaa saa yasyaabhiikshaNe mukham.h | dakshiNaabhimukhaH proktaH shivo.asau brahmavaadibhiH |”

The word ‘Dakshinā’ means Buddhi. Because Buddhi is the eye by which Siva can be directly seen, He is called Dakshinabhimtikha by the Brahma-vâdins”.

In this article, we will explore Sri Dakshinamurthy as ‘Guru of all Gurus’ in terms of research, teachings, understanding and inferences by looking at the Kumaras, Sri Adi Shankaracharya, Bhagvan Ramana Maharishi, Pujyashri Dayananada Saravati and Sri Kanchi Mahaswamy.

**Lord Dakshinamurthy and Four Kumaras**

Sanaka, Sananda, Sanathana and Sanatkumara who were born from the mind of Brahma, collectively referred to as “Kumaras”. When Brahma ordered them to procreate, they rejected the orders of Brahma. They were very dispassionate and not interested in material things as several questions sprang from their minds and they wandered for about one hundred years searching for answers. The almighty and all merciful Lord Shiva who is the indweller of all enlightened four Kumaras.

Sri Dakshinamurthy is believed to teach through *para vak*, which is a divine speech form inaudible to worldly ears and resides in the recesses of silence. As soon as Sri Dakshinamurti assumed Silence, the kumaras too merged into Supreme Silence, the true state of the Self. The four Kumaras represent the four components of the antahkarana (“inner organ”) - manas (sensory mind), buddhi (intellect), ahamkara (ego) and chitta (mind stuff) - ever given to and focused on realizing the Divine Reality within. Ordinary expressions are not needed to grasp the teachings of Sri Dakshinamurthy who explains the true meaning of Brahman naturally.

It is strange to see the very old disciples and the very young teacher, who sit under a banyan tree, with the teacher always observing silence, and the students getting all the doubts cleared.

**Lord Dakshinamurthy and Sri Adi Shankaracharya**

We believe that the first substantial historical record about Dakshinamoorthy is in Suta Samhita of Skanda Purana. It is believed that Sri Adi Shankara studied this Suta Samhita eighteen times before composing his Brahma Sutra Bhashyam. Perhaps it was Sri Adi Shankara's familiarity with this text, which eventually inspired him to compose the profound Sri Dakshinamoorthy Stotram.

The Dakshinamurti Stotram of Sri Adi Shankaracharya contains some of the most profound teachings of Advaita Vedanta. The wisdom conveyed by its verses can bring about a radical transformation of one’s world view by removing ignorance about the world, about Bhagavan, and about oneself. This transformative knowledge is capable of destroying the mula avidya (fundamental ignorance) that is the ultimate cause for all suffering. Thus the Dakshinamurti Stotram is moksha shastra, a scriptural teaching that can lead to one's liberation. This stotra is also a superb work of poetry set in a meter known as shardula vikridita. In its verses, Shri Shankara deftly employs poetic imagery and vivid metaphors to extend the power of the Sanskrit language beyond what is possible in mere prose. Among all of Shri Shankara's works, this stotra stands out as a dazzling, colorful gem.

**Lord Dakshinamurthy and Bhagvan Ramana Maharish**

During His early days on Arunachala, Bhagavan said that he discovered a secret place on the north side of the Hill where lay a secluded banyan tree. It was here, He was stung by bees, for intruding on this sacred site.

Bhagavan very strongly believed that by silence, eloquence is meant. Oral lectures are not so eloquent as silence. Silence is unceasing eloquence. The Primal Master, Dakshinamurti, is the ideal. He taught his Rishi disciples by silence.

I vividly remember reading ‘Mountain Path’ as well as Bhagvan's devotees explaining during satsang that during Maha Shivaratri day when one of the devotees requested him to teach them the essence of Sri Dakshinamurti, he agreed to their request and said here it goes and remained silent for hours and asked whether they understood all about Sri Dakshinamurti, all were glowing and at peace not realizing that well over 8 hours have passed.

Bhagvan’s profound statement “Chumma Iru” meaning Just be silent. It is not a state without thoughts; it is where there is no ‘thinker’. The silence is something that no thought or deed
can assail; they take place in the silence. It is the natural state of Being. It cannot be ‘practiced’.

If we can admit that ‘action’ can take place spontaneously, it can likewise be understood that the ‘thought’ also can take place spontaneously. This spontaneity and unison of thought, speech and action is the reason that jnanis are said to have the nature of a child.

**Lord Dakshinamurthy and PujaSwami Dayananda Saraswati**

Puja Swami Dayananda Saraswati has specifically chosen Dakshinamurti Shiva as the main deity in his Ashrams. Be it Saylorsburg, PA or Coimbatore, India. In fact, all his disciples when they establish their own order and ashram, Sri Dakshinamurti is the main deity.

When asked as to why he chose Dakshinamurti as main deity for his ashram temples even though it is not a common deity for temples, he responded that, in ashram where Advaita Vedanta is taught, there could not be more appropriate deity. Further he explained that the word Dakshinamurti can also interpreted as Dakshin Amurti – Dakshinascha asau amurtischa iti saha Dakshinamurti (:). One who is Dakshin and also Amurti (both adjectives). One who is skillful and formless. Here Dakshina means Skillful. Skillful in removing the ignorance. Dakshinamurti is Lord Shiva in the form of a teacher – not merely south facing”.

Traditionally, south direction is considered inauspicious direction as it is associated with death, ignorance and all the things that are undesirable in life. That is why; in some tradition people are cautious of directions while sleeping. They keep head towards south. It symbolically represents that ignorance needs to be removed through knowledge. Why does Dakshinamurti face south? Well, why would the Lord be afraid of anything? He can face everything without worrying about any problems. Teachings of Swami Tadatmananda Saraswati Page 16 of 113 So the students sit facing north while Dakshinamurti sits facing south. Puja Swami Dayananda Saraswati has specifically chosen Dakshinamurti Shiva as the main deity in his Ashrams. This is the main deity in his Saylorsburg, USA ashram established in 1990. About 6 years later, his ashram in Coimbatore, India also has Dakshinamurti as main deity. In Swami Tadatmananda's ashram at Somerset, USA also has Dakshinamurti as main deity. Why did Swami Dayananda choose Dakshinamurti as main deity for his ashram temples even though it is not a common deity for temples? The reason is, in ashram where Advaita Vedanta is taught, there could not be a “more appropriate deity. This is in reference to the second meaning above of Dakshinamurti – skillful in removing ignorance. Dakshinamurti is Lord Shiva in the form of a teacher – not merely south facing”.

Any “Vidya” is good, but if you are able to give self-knowledge to a person, that is the greatest contribution. This is exactly what Vedanta does.

**Lord Dakshinamurthy and Kanchi Paramacharya**

PujaShri ChandraShekarendra Saraswati

Kanchi Mahaswamy reminds us of Sri Dakshinamurthy when he talks about the power of silence. Maha Periva explains this concept beautifully quoting the following slokam from Adi Shankara's Dakshinamurthy Stotram:

```
Maunavyaakhyaa Prakattita Parabrahma-tattvam
```

Profound Silence awakens the Knowledge of the Supreme Brahman. One cannot really get to know Parabrahmam by mind or speech. The Brahma Tatwam (Philosophy) is best explained by Silence. Maha Swamy says that by practicing silence, one can progress from the stage of “No-thought to God-thought”.

It is indeed a great opportunity for all of us to learn, experience and research more on Sri Dakshinamurthy and we are so blessed to highlight ‘Learning’ as part of the Sri Medha Vidyaa Vaaridhi Mahotsavam and Hindu pantheons of Gods focusing om education.

“Gurave sara lokaanam, Bishaje bhava roginaam, Nidhaye sarva vidhyanam, Sri Dakshinamurthaye nama”

Salutations to that Sri Dakshinamurthy, Who is the teacher of the entire world, Who is the doctor to those afflicted by the disease of birth and death, And who is the treasure house of all knowledge.

**References/Source**

2. Subramanian & Ganesh. “The teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi - The concept of Sri Dakshinamoorthy”
4. Hinduism Stack Exchange
5. Mountain Path
6. Lectures of PujaSwamy Dhyanamanda Saraswati
7. Devathin Kural

Venkat Angarai Subramanian hails from a traditional family who firmly believe in Sanatana Dharma. Venkat is a trustee at SSVT; Co-Founder/Secretary of HEF-DC; Ekal-DC and other business/social organizations. Venkat has been working and leading project ‘Akshaya Vata’. He is the founder, President & CEO of Management Consulting firm ANGARAI.