Adi Shankaracharya

Prelims: *Current events of National importance | Indian Culture*

Why in News?

Recently, the Prime Minister paid homage to Adi Shankaracharya on his Jayanti, recalling his profound teachings and his role in revitalising spiritual thought across India.

Key Details	
Position	Spiritual luminary, philosopher, and reformer of Hinduism.
Birth	Kalady, Kerala (c. 8th century CE).
Life Span	32 years.
Guru	Govindapada (on the banks of Narmada).
Philosophy	**Advaita Vedanta** – "Brahma Satyam Jagan Mithya, Jeevo Brahmaiva Na Para".
Title	Ideal Sannyasi; considered an incarnation of Lord Shiva.

Key Contributions

- **Philosophy –** Advocated non-dualism (Advaita Vedanta), emphasising oneness of existence.

  *Advaita Vedanta is a school of Hindu philosophy that teaches **non-dualism**, the idea that there is no fundamental difference between the individual soul (Atman) and the ultimate reality (Brahman).*

- **Institutional Reform –** Reordered the ***Sannyasa tradition*** into the Dasanami system.
- **Char Dhams –** Established 4 maths (ashrams) at Sringeri, Dwaraka, Badrinath, and Puri, each entrusted with a disciple, a Veda, and a Mahavakya.

Char Dhams	Associated Veda	Mahavakya

Sringeri Math	Yajur Veda	Aham Brahmasmi
Dwaraka Math	Sama Veda	Tattvamasi
Badrinath (Jyotir Math)	Atharva Veda	Ayam Atma Brahma
Puri (Govardhan Math)	Rig Veda	Prajnanam Brahma

- **Six-sect Worship –** Unified diverse sects by systematising worship of six deities (Shiva, Vishnu, Shakti, Ganesha, Surya, Muruga).
- **Cultural Integration –** Revitalised Sanatana Dharma by challenging ritualism and promoting universality of love and compassion.
- **Final Rites –** Performed miraculous cremation of his mother using plantain stalks, overcoming social restrictions on Sannyasis.
- **Literary Works –** Authored commentaries on the Brahma Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, and Upanishads; composed hymns like ***Soundarya Lahari and treatises like Viveka Chudamani.***
- Dasanami tradition.
- **Significance of Legacy**
  - **Philosophical Impact –** Condensed Vedic wisdom into accessible Advaita doctrine.
  - **Institutional Strengthening –** Unified scattered ascetic orders through maths and the
  - **Cultural Preservation –** Promoted devotional literature, temple rituals, and sect harmony.
  - **National Integration –** Travelled across India, spreading Vedantic thought and establishing centres of learning.

Reference

PIB | Adi Shankaracharya

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
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