CHAPTER IV
The great Acarya Sri Saṅkara is best known as a religious teacher, an idealist reformer and a versatile philosopher; people in general are not expected to be acquainted with the outstanding literary genius of this great sage of mediaeval India. If setting aside the philosophical and religious aspects of his writings one concentrates on the literary aspects only, he will come to the conclusion that Saṅkara's writings can be called the specimens of best compositions in prose and poetry. Thus both the matter and manner both the thought-content and the form of the great master's literary output claim unstinted admiration.

This impressive literary performance, from Saṅkara's own point of view, is incidental. He thinks that his sublime duty lies in teaching the disciples about the knowledge of the Supreme Reality as well as in making the common run of people acquainted with the divine teachings of the sacred texts; and the kernel of sanātana dharma. And, therefore, all his endeavours centre round the formidable task of the expositions of eternal truths inherent in the ancient sacred books; and by way of fulfilling this momentous Divine mission unwittingly he has produced master-pieces teeming with literary and linguistic excellence.

The works of Śrī Saṅkara, as mentioned earlier, consist of commentaries on sacred books and original digests or Prakāraṇas and eulogies. The commentaries of Śrī Saṅkara are indeed models of style and language and as such, are precious gems in the store-house of sanskrit prose compositions.
Most of the commentaries that we come across in Western literature are dull whenever they go beyond the writing of foot-notes. Their authors seem to lack originality of thought and ideas. But, in India the most original and imaginative products of native intellect are the commentaries of different ages; when one goes through the commentaries of the great Ācārya, he can fully realise the validity of this statement as the noted commentaries stand unrivalled in marvellous expression, high flight of imagination and originality of thought and diction.

The commentaries of Śrī Śaṅkara are ideal in every respect. The style that he follows is unique. At the outset of every commentary, he gives a brief introduction (abhāṣa-bhāṣya) on the whole book so that the reader may form an idea of the whole work in a condensed form. Every section of the book begins with a brief remark of the learned commentator; these remarks are of great utility for a better understanding of the contents. The fundamental theories are summed up whenever occasion arises and these are invariably followed by detailed elucidations; Padmapādācārya, the direct disciple of Śrī Śaṅkara, calls the former the sahgrahavākya and the explanatory part the prapāṇca.

While proceeding to explain the philosophical doctrines, Śaṅkarācārya employs an effective style of composition. It is in the domain of philosophical speculations, dialectical and grammatical exegesis that this style is widely cultivated and fairly developed by earlier writers. Rightly does Sir R.G. Bhandarkar observe: "The earliest work of the kind we know of is
Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya and Katyāyana’s Vārtikas on notes on Pāṇini’s sūtras. Nearly the whole of the philosophical literature of the Sanskrit is written more or less in the style of disputation. An Indian author does not lead his readers into the processes his own mind has gone through in arriving at the doctrines he lays down; in other words, he does not tell us how he has come by the opinions he holds, but lays down these doctrines and sets forth those opinions and conceives objections that may be raised and answers them.

The writers following the style have the advantage of a threadbare discussion of their own propositions as well as a skilful refutation of the views of their opponents. The method really consists of a series of dialogues between one who speaks in the voice of the opponents and another who lays down the propositions. The author first states the views of his opponents in the form of questions by an intelligent and curious student who cites arguments sometimes with related examples, with a view to assigning required weight to the objections and doubts raised by the opponents. This presentation of the opponents’ case is known as the prior view (Pūrvapakṣa). The writer then proceeds to refute point by point the objections raised and to clear the doubts raised. This refutation (Khandana) of the opponents’ case is styled Khaṇḍanapakṣa. Last of all comes the statement of the philosopher’s own position followed by a line of arguments and examples. This portion, therefore, is called the subsequent view.

(Uttarapakṣa) or the conclusion (Siddhāntapakṣa). The position of the opponent is narrated so skilfully that the reader feels constrained to think that there is no way out to escape the conclusions urged by the debater. Śrī Śaṅkara-Cārya himself emphasises the utility of this method and shows how it is superior to the dry reasoning followed by logicians; cf. *śisyācāryaprasnaptivacanarūpena kathanantu sukṣmavastuvīśayatvāt sukha-pratipattikāranām bhavati, kevalatarkāgamyatvaṁca darśitaṁ bhavati*.

Padmapāda-Cārya illustrates the excellent method followed by the great Ācārya in the following words; *tatra evambhūte viśaye śroṭṛnām sukha-prabodhattham vyācaśānaṁ prati-vādinam tatrasthamiva samutthāpya tena ākṣiptām anena prāthamiti matvā pratyuktam, punaraśu mxy svābhāpiyam vivṛnotī iti ākṣepamavatārya pratividhānām pratipadyante / sarvatra evam vidhe granthasan-nivese eṣa eva vyākhya-prakaraṇaḥ*.

It deserves to be mentioned that Śrī Śaṅkara-Cārya’s style of composition presents the philosophical style of the middle age in between the commentaries of Vātsāyana as well as Śavarasvāmin and the works of recent naiyāyikas. The language of the earlier stage as represented by the works of Vātsāyana and Śavarasvāmin is noted for its clarity, simplicity and spontaneity. The sentences are short and unwittingly represent those used by people at the time of ordinary conversations. The language used by Śrī Śaṅkara strikes a different note. The sentences are much

longer than those of the earlier works; the construction is more involved. "But", as Sir Bhandarkar points out, "the great Ācārya's style is perspicuous throughout, fluent and charming, and not solidified or petrified, as that of later writers is." In the works of later writers we are confronted with a more complex form of language. Among the cases, only nominative and ablative singular prevail in these works; long compounds occur frequently. The ideas of the writers are portrayed in the form of nouns, mostly abstract; even the participles are seldom used. This style reaches its climax in the writings of naiyāyikas of more recent times and is used not unfrequently by modern writers in all the scriptures. As Prof. A.B. Keith while summarising the points of difference between the works of Śrī Śaṅkara and those of earlier and later writers, observes: "In style Śaṅkara's Bhāṣya is unquestionably far advanced from the dialogue tone of the Mahābhāṣya or the Bhāṣyas of Vātsāyana and Śābarasvāmin. It has taken on the style of a lecture, with longer sentences, longer and more compounds, more involved constructions, fewer verbal and more nominal forms. But it is still far removed from the formalism of the later philosophical texts, and the author is not willing to show his command over more difficult and unusual grammatical usages."

Śrī Śaṅkara is a master magician of expression. When one ventures to open the doors of wisdom to his readers, he has first to systematise the means of expressions. Eventually we find Ācārya's words fall-in to give the desired meaning of the word

5. A.B. Keith, A History of Sanskrit literature, First Edn.1920, P.477
and not to give merely a speed unto the expression. None of the words used by the great Ācārya can be shown as unwarranted, redundant or inconsistent and this is a factor that goes a great way in making the subject-matter illustrated in the best way. This marvellous restraint in the employment of words bespeaks his genuine calibre - this is in fact a restraint of logic - a restraint of the aptness of import. His expressions are exceptionally logical and well-balanced pregnant with consistent and cogent arguments.

Ācārya Śāṅkara is considered a master of language as well. Even while discussing abstruse problems of philosophy, he makes use of so simple and beautiful Sanskrit that one is at once reminded of Kālidāsa - the immortal bard of India.

Principal R.D. Karimkar, while discussing Bāna's achievement as a prose-writer, admires the astonishing simplicity of Śāṅkara's style and makes a passing remark: "Whether we admit Pārvatiparinayā as coming from the pen of Bāna or not, it is beyond question that Bāna on the strength of his Hāraśacarita and Kādambarī must be regarded as the best prose writer of Sanskrit prose. The great Śāṅkarācārya, who with equal felicity could clothe philosophical thoughts and arguments in beautiful Sanskrit is, perhaps, the only Sanskrit writer who could be a rival for Bāna. Śāṅkarācārya can be regarded in a way as a greater writer, as he was able to describe abstruse philosophical matters in a very simple style."

That Śaṅkarācārya has thoroughly grasped the Supreme Truth, for the voice of God manifested in the Upanisads is amply proved by the fact that he can use their contents at ease. And his love of the Upanisadic doctrines and expressions leaves a magnificent impact on his works. So, his language is absolutely simple, charingly profound, and is adorned with an elegance which his votaries can certainly claim to be entirely a property of their master. This simplicity, this profundity as well as this elegance are the chief characteristics of both the Upanisadic literature and the works of Śrī Śaṅkara. Sometimes, his writings compare favourably with some of the best expressions of the Upanisadic seers themselves in rhythmic construction. The following piece is an illustration in point: "śa esa vidvān brahmavit sarvopādhiḥ sarvātma-mā sarvo bhavati; nirupāddhinirupāh- yo'nantaro'vāyah krtsmah prajñānaghamanō-'jo'jaro'mrto'bhayo'calo neti netyasthūlo'nanuritvevamviśeṣano bhavati."

His works are free from all sorts of artificiality that mark the compositions of most of the contemporary writers. He is never tempted by the desire of displaying learning, skill in the manipulation of words and verbosity. Padmapādācārya, while describing the style of Śrī Śaṅkara, characterises it as 'pasanna-gambhīra' - lucid and profound. In the benedictory verse of his celebrated work styled Pañcápādikā, he refers to the characteristics of his master's works. He says - they are lucid.

7. Brhadāraṇyakopanisādḥāṣya, 2.5.15, P.675.
and charming in language and profound and suggestive in sense; cf.

\[ \text{padādivṛntabhāreṇa garimāṇam vibhartti yat /} \\
\text{bhāṣyam prasannagambhiram tadvyākhyām sṛṣṭi-adhyāyarābhe/} \]

This view is endorsed by Vacaspati Misra, the author of Bhāmatī. In his admiration, he compares his own words with the waters of a highway that are purified by their conjunction with the holy current of the Ganges in the form of the work of his master.

Śrī Śaṅkara is never verbose. He is quite adept in using the appropriate words. He speaks the least, but expresses the maximum. Though he is used to write as little as he can, the reader is never confused to find out the exact import. The words are so skilfully employed that the right meaning manifests itself with the very utterance of the word. One marvels at the freshness and lively nature of his expressions and the profundity of his thought.

That Śrī Śaṅkara follows a simple and lucid style with great skill and wisdom requires no proof; no other Indian philosopher has to his credit the glory of producing so simple, lucid, profound, forceful and charming masterpieces. Nevertheless we may cite a couple of instances below:

In the Adhyāsa-bhāṣya Śrī Śaṅkara deals with the question as to how the not-self (the object of cognition) can be superimposed on the inner self (which is not the object of any

cognition) and puts forth a convincing reply in unambiguous terms:

If cātām punah pratyagātmanyavisāye' 'dhyāso visayata dharma-

nām ? sarvo hi puro'vasthita viśaye viśāyantaramadhyasyati;

yusmat-pratyayāpetasya ca pratyagātmano'visayatvām bravisi / ucyate,
na tāvadayamkānd-tenāvisayah, asmatpratyayavisayatvāt, aparoksa-
vācca pratyagātmaprasiddheḥ / na cāyamasti niyamah - puro'vasthita
eva viṣaye viṣayāntaramadhyasyatavyamiti / apratyakṣa'pi hyākāse
bālāstalamalinātādhyānyasyanti / evamaviruddhah pratyagātmanyapya-
tmādhyāsaḥ / 9

On one occasion Dr. S. Radhakrishnan refers to the charming
prose of Śrī Śaṅkara in high admiration: "It is a delight to
read the stately and sonorous prose of Śaṅkara. Look at this:

sa ca bhagavān jñānaisvāryasaktibalavīryatejobhiḥ sadā sampannanasti-
guṇā-tmikām vaisnāvīm x svām māyām mūlaprakṛtīm vaśikṛtya ajo'vyayo
bhūtānāmśvaro nityasuddhambuddhamuktasvabhāvo'pi san svamāyaya
dehavāniva jāta iva ca lokānugraham kurvannā lakṣyate." 10

Vāmana, the exponent of Rūti school in sanskrit poetics,
recognises three styles (Rūti): (i) Vaidarbhī (peculiar to writers
in of the Vidarbha region), (ii) Gauḍī (peculiar to writers in
Gauḍa), and (iii) Pāncālī (peculiar to the authors of Pāncāla
province). This classification based upon regions or territories
should, of course, be understood in a broader sense as the division
corresponds to the particular style of composition irrespective

10. S. Radhakrishnan, Occasional speeches and writings, P. 130.
of provinces or regions. Śaṅkarācārya's works usually conform to the Vaidarbhi style of composition (which finds an ardent exponent in Kālidāsa too). The Vaidarbhi style lays emphasis upon the use of simple, sweet and charming words that lend a peculiar lustre to the compositions and carefully avoids long compounds and alliterations. The meaning of words can be easily grasped; the sentences are not too embellished and hence, this style is considered a fine and lucid mode of expression. Visvanātha defines Vaidarbhi style in the following lines:

\[ \text{mādhuryavyañjakairvarnai racanā lalitātmikā / avṛttiralpavruttirā vaidarbhi rītisyaṭe} \]

We like to cite a few instances of how Śrī Śaṅkara does successfully make use of the style noted above:

(i) \[ \text{dhyānam cintanam yadyapi mānasam, tathāpi puruṣena kartumakartumanyathā vā kartum śākyam; puruṣatantarvatvāt /} \]
\[ \text{jñānantu pramāṇajanyam / pramāṇantu yathābhūtavastuvisayam / ato jñānam kartumakartumanyathā vā kartum na śākyam; kevalam vastutantrameva tat, na codanātantram, nāpi puruṣatantartram /} \]

(ii) \[ \text{evam tarhi yogāt samnyāsa eva visisyaṭe / kathām tarhi idamuktaṁ - tayostu karmasamnyāsāt karmayogo visisyaṭe iti?} \]
\[ \text{śrṇu tatra kāraṇam / tvayā prāṣṭaṁ kevalaṁ karmasamnyāsan karmayogāncābhhipreya tayoranyataḥ kaḥ śreyaṁ? tadanurūpāṁ prativaca-} \]
\[ \text{nam mayoktām karmasamnyāsāt karmayogo visisyaṭe iti}} \]

Sometimes, we are confronted with a few specimens of Gaudi style in the writings of the great Ācārya. The Gaudi style consists of compactness of structure (gādhabandhatva) achieved by the use of long compounds, harsh syllables and alliterations; all sorts of verbal jugglery are wittingly indulged in. The merit (Guna) styled vigour (Ojas) finds prominence in Gauḍī-riti. The style is extremely favourite with the pundits, Visvanātha.

defines Gaudi style thus:—

‘ojah prakāśakairvarṇairbandha ādambharah punah / samāsavahulā gaudī’

An example of the successful employment of Gaudi style by Śrī Śaṅkara is cited below:—

‘aviochinna-janna-jara-marana-śokādyanekānarthā—tmakah
pratiṣaṇemanyathāsvahāvo māyaṃarjeyudakagandharva—nagarādivat
dr̤tanastasvarūpātivādāvasāne ca vr̤savadabhāvātmakah, kadaśi—
stambhavat niḥsārah anekasatapāṇaṃdabuddhvikalpāpadeḥ tattva—
vijñāsubhiranidhāritaṃvantattvo vedānta—nirddhāritaparabrahma—mūlasārah, avidyā—kāma—karmavyaktabija—prabhavah aparabrahma—vijñāna—
kiyāśaktida—vayātmaḥ kiranyagarbāṅkuraḥ, sarvaprāṇilīngabhedas—
kandhah, tattattvā—tranājālāsekoḥbhutaḥdarpah buddhindriyāvisa—
-pravālāṅkuraḥ, śrutismrtinyāvidyopadesapalasāḥ, yajna—dāna—
tapa—adyanekakriyāsūpūjāpeḥ, sukhaduḥkhavedanānekarasah, prāṇyapā—
jīvyānantaphalalah tatttrapāsaśilāvasekapraruḍhjatīlāktadṛśabhadha—
mūlaḥ, satyanāmādisaptaloka—brahmādihīntapaksikrtanideḥ, prāṇisukhduḥkhodhūta—hāra—śoka—jāta—nrtīyagītvādvitarkaśvalitasphotitahastākroṣṭarūdaḥhāhamaunyamunocyādyanekasābdekratuntumulīnḥūtā—
mahāravaḥ, vedāntavīhita—brahmātma—darsānasangasastrasastra—ktocchedah
esa samārvyakṣas avatthath —’

The passage quoted above establishes beyond doubt Śaṅkara’s
capacity to compose scholarly treatises; the force and vigour that
we find in typical prose compositions of Bāṇabhatta are also
present here.

15. Śāhityadarpana, 9/3.
Sri Sankara is equally at home in poetic compositions. His poems form a class by themselves. His eulogies stand unparalleled in the realm of devotional lyrics (stotras). The great teacher does not strain at composing poems of art; he is more a philosopher and devotee than a poet. But, his poetic talent spontaneously comes out. The muse of his poetry is unique; the language and thought are forceful and straightforward. The skill with which he makes the best use of the figures of speech, metres, sentiments and the like has been discussed in details in proper contexts in the foregoing chapters. The fact that even a philosopher of his standing can combine in himself the best qualities of a successful poet is itself a remarkable event and achievement in the world of wisdom. Observes Sri Aurobindo:

"At the same time some of these poems are, if certainly not great poetry, yet admirable literature combining a supreme philosophical genius with a remarkable literary talent, not indeed creations, but noble and skilful constructions, embodying the highest possible thought, using well all the weighty, compact and startling phrase of the classical Sanskrit speech, achieving the harmony and noble elegance of its rhythms. These merits are seen at their best in poems like the Vivekacudamani attributed to Shankara, and there we hear even, in spite of its too abstract turn, an intellectual echo of the voice of the Upanisads and the manner of the Gita."

17. The Foundations of Indian Culture, Sri Aurobindo, P.325.
When one goes through the lucid poems of Śrī Śaṅkara, he can never conceive that these are the products of a profound philosopher of outstanding intellect and sharp logical acumen. Acārya Śaṅkara belongs to the Jñāna school of thought; Bhakti if minusèd from supreme knowledge, according to him, cannot lead one towards the attainment of a Supreme Bliss. But any objective and comparative study of the poems of Śrī Śaṅkara and the learned exponents of Bhakti cult will reveal that Śrī Śaṅkara in delineating the inner sentiments and emotions of a devotee surpasses even the scholars belonging to Bhakti cult of worship. The poems of the great Acārya have certainly an edge over others from every point of view - poetic excellence, beauty of words, depth of import, high flight of imagination and portrayal of sentiments and emotions. True, the poems of the great saints belonging to Bhakti cult are famous for their maturity and logical propriety; but the tender feelings and softness of ideas that stir the human heart to its depth are met with in the poems of Śrī Śaṅkara only; they are really delicious and highly gratifying to receptive minds.

Rājaśekhara, the great dramatist and rhetorician, eulogises the words of Śrī Śaṅkara in the following stanza (quoted by Jalhana in Sukti-muktāvalī);

\[
\text{sthitā mādhvākāvatāt m nisargadūrāpi hi} / \\
kimapi svadate vāni keśāmcidyadi śāṅkari //
\]

(incorporated by Arthur Avalon in the preface to his 'Wave of Bliss').
The words of Śaṃkara, sweet as they are by nature being composed in the poetic art of "mādhvīkapāka", have a peculiar relish for one whose mind is in Śaṃkara, i.e. Śiva. (Translated by Arthur Avalon).

The beauty of his poetic art at once draws the mind of the reader from the mundane objects and the reader finds himself to his great delight thrown into a stream of divine feelings of art. The mind of any real thinker will reveal an unending joy in the rhythm and ideas of the following devotional stotra:

bhaja govindaṃ bhaja govindaṃ bhaja govindaṃ mūdhamate
prāpte saṁnihite maraṇe nahi nahi raksati dukṛtāraṇe //
bālastāvat kriḍāsaktah tarunastāvat tarunīraktah /
vrddhastāvat cintāmagnah parae brahmān ko'pi na lagāh //

The poem entitled Ānanda-laharī is true to its title, as it really moulds the hearts of connoisseurs into waves of bliss. Let us quote a verse:

himaśriya sambhuta su laṃita kraudaṃ pallavayutā
supuṣpā muktāhircibhramaraṇkalitā cālakabharādīḥ /
kṛtaṇāstūnāsthānā kucaṇhālantā sūktisarasā
rujām hantri gantri vilasati cidadāndalatikā //

This mobile tender creeper of Intelligence and bliss, born in the snowy mountains, shinesforth - beautiful hands are its leaves, pearls its flowers, curly hair is its swarm of bees, with the support of stake (to the Devī sthāṇu is Śiva, while to

20. Ānanda-laharī, 6.
or creeper, branchless trunk) it seeks shelter, it stoops from the weight of fruits of breasts, sweet words are its juice (of fruits), it is the eradicator of diseases (to the Devi rujā is worldly miseries, and to creeper, diseases).

The figure Sāṅga-rūpaka in this stanza is superb.

The poem Saundarya-laharī (Wave of Beauty) is a dazzling gem among the devotional lyrics of Sanskrit literature. It will suffice to go through Saundarya-laharī alone if one wishes to acquaint himself with the high flight of imagination, the novelty of thought, and the freshness of ideas so frequently found in the poems of Śrī Saṅkara. Rabindranath Tagore in his Bengali book styled 'Chanda' portrays the central idea of this book in an artistic way. He says that the idea of female form that we come across in Saundarya-laharī represents an image of universal beauty. Her torrent of beauty flows without break; night awaits in the midst of the thick mass of hair; the rays of the newly arisen sun reddened by the glow of vermilion along the parting line of hair remains in her front. The stanzas of ideas arrayed in the words present a picture drawn by the delight of the poet's heart; the picture is of the female form of universal nature. The rhythm with which the picture is portrayed is not one of language alone; it is one of ideas too. A few ingredients of ideas stand arranged in the form of a bunch of similes and herein lies the magic. There remains the suggestion of many an unspoken word in her ever moving side-glances. Let us

Appearing as it were a channel to flow in the wave of beauty of your face, your parting line of hair (O Goddess!) bears (a mark of) vermilion, which seems as if the rosy ray of the newly appeared sun confined by the host of foes in the form of darkness of the thick mass of hair - let that parting line of hair tend to our welfare.

The thickness in the arrangement of words and the rise and fall of rhythm are seen at their best in the verses of Yatipāṇcaka. The following verse is an instance in point.

\[ \text{pañcākṣaraṁ pāvanamuccarantaḥ} \]
\[ \text{ṣṭiḥ paśūnām hṛdi bhāvayantah /} \]
\[ \text{bhikṣāśino duṣṭa dikṣu paribrahmantah} \]
\[ \text{kaupinavantah khalu bhāgyavantah} / / \]

The verse cannot be said to portray a high poetic sentiment. But, again according to the Rabindranath, the arrangement and the rhythm of the verse set our hearts vibrating in rhythmic response just as an expert beats a tambor.

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22. Saundarya-laharī, 44.
23. Yatipāṇcaka, 5.
Sāṅkara, like the exponents of Śākta cult, believes that the most exalted creative principle can justly be designated by the word 'Mother'. Sāṅkarācārya is among those Indian poets who utters the word 'Mother' from the inaccessible depth of their hearts whenever they refer to Divinity. That is why we come across a number of religious lyrics shining like purple patches among the eulogies dedicated to the Mother Goddess. The Devyaparādhaksamāpanastotra (Prayer to Devī for atonement of sins) of Śrī Śāṅkara presents a classic example of this assertion.

A verse from this lyric is cited here:

\[
\begin{align*}
prthivyāṁ putrāste jānani bahavaḥ santi saraṇāṁ & \\
param teṣām madhye 'viraṇa-taralo 'ham tava sūtaḥ & \\
\text{maṇḍya} & \\
madiyo 'yam tyāgaḥ samucitamāṁ no tava śīve, & 25 \\
kuputro jāyate kvacidapi kumātā na bhavati // & \\
O Mother! you have many sons of candid nature on the earth; but among them I am always fickle; still, O Mother, you cannot give me up; a son may be bad, but a mother can never be.
\end{align*}
\]

This form of flawless language can come out of the pen of only a devotee whose heart has been moved to its depth by a strange feeling of love for and devotion to the Divine Mother.

A successful literature can handle even a trifling thing with great skill and produce appreciable specimens of literature. In the writings of Śrī Śāṅkara we discover innumerable instances of this extra-ordinary poetic skill, equipped with a power of keen observation and high flight of imagination, he can mould even

25. Devyaparādhaksamāpanastotra, 3.
ordinary objects and insignificant occurrences of daily life into extraordinary and significant objects of philosophical speculation as well as literary gems. Let us have the pleasure of citing a few interesting stanzas:-

jñānodayātpurāṇādham karmajñānānna nasyati /
adatvā svaphalam laksyamuddisyotsṭabānavat //
vyāghrabuddhyā vinirmukto bāñha paścāttu gomatau / 26
na tiṣṭhati chinatyeva laksyam vegena nirbharam //

The action which has given birth to this body prior to the acquisition of knowledge is not destroyed by that knowledge without yielding proper fruits, just like an arrow discharged at an object. The arrow which is discharged at an object with the motion that it is a tiger, does not, when the said object is found to be a cow, restrain itself, but pierces the object with full speed.

ātmā tu satatām prāpto'pyaaprāptavadavidyayā /
tannāsē prāptavadbhāti svakaṇṭhabharaṇaṁ yathā // 27

The self, though always the essence of the individual, appears not to be realised due to ne-science and when ne-science perishes, the self is thought to be realised anew, just as one discovers the necklace hanging along one's own neck (but thought to be missing out of delusion).

27. Ātmabodha, 44.
When one makes an objective analysis of the verses noted above, he at once realises how successfully the great Ācārya does illustrate the most sublime philosophical ideas with simplest examples which are within the grasp of even a layman. And, hence it is said to be at once the language of the child and the philosopher moulded into one.

From the above discussion on the style and language of Śrī Śaṅkara it is gathered that many of his works in prose and poetry are endowed with the literary merits that characterise the works of celebrated Indian poets. Protagonists of other schools of thought may differ with him on philosophical theories and doctrines, but there is no denying the fact that he possesses an exceptional literary talent in addition to his remarkable philosophical wisdom, and this is a factor that places him on the forefront of Indian thinkers and poets.