

This is the *thirty eighth and final part of the serial article, continuation from July 2024 newsletter.*

## Upāsanā (Worship)

The teaching is essentially over. From the standpoint of the teacher and the teaching, nothing is left out, everything is taught: The *mahā-vākya* 'tat tvam asi' has been unfolded; the nature of the *tvam-padārtha*, the self, has been elaborately discussed; the nature of the *tat-padārtha*, *īśvara*, has also been elaborately discussed, and the similitude, identity or oneness between the two has been revealed very beautifully. This short Upaniṣad, in fact, contains everything that needs to be taught. Still, we find yet another passage here, because it is possible that in spite of imparting teaching that is complete in every way, the student may not gain the knowledge. The indication is that there still are some inhibiting factors, which prevent the student from seeing the truth or owning up to the truth. The teachers also consider it important to tell the students what to do in order to remove those inhibiting factors or obstacles. There may be knowledge, but it is knowledge that is yet to become fruitful. The final verse prescribes some *upāsanā* to remove some impurities of the mind that manifest as obstacles.

यः शतरुद्रियमधीते सोऽग्निपूतो भवति सुरापानात्पूतो भवति स ब्रह्महत्यायात्पूतो भवति ।

स सुवर्णस्तेयात्पूतो भवति स कृत्याकृत्यात्पूतो भवति तस्मादविमुक्तमाश्रितो भवति ।

अत्याश्रमी सर्वदा सकृद्वा जपेत् । अनेन ज्ञानमाप्नोति संसारार्णवनाशनम् । तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं कैवल्यं फलमश्नुते

॥ कैवल्यं फलमश्नुते इति ॥ २४ ॥

*yaḥ śatarudriyamadhīte so'gnipūto bhavati surāpānātpūto  
bhavati sa brahmahatyāyātpūto bhavati sa suvarṇasteyātpūto  
bhavati sa kṛtyākṛtyātpūto bhavati tasmādavimuktamāśrito  
bhavati atyāśramī sarvadā sakṛdvā japet  
anena jñānamāpnoti saṁsārārṇavanāśanam  
tasmādevaṁ viditvainaṁ kaivalyaṁ phalamaśnute*

*kaivalyam phalamaśnuta iti*

यः - who शतरुद्रियम् - śatarudriya अधीते - recites सः - he अग्निपूतः - purified by fire भवति - becomes सुरापानात् पूतो भवति - becomes free from the sin of drinking alcohol सः - he ब्रह्महत्यायात् (ब्रह्महत्यायाः) पूतो भवति - becomes free from the results of killing a *brāhmaṇa* सः - he सुवर्णस्तेयात् पूतो भवति - becomes free from the sin of stealing gold सः - he कृत्याकृत्यात् पूतो भवति - becomes free from the sin of commissions and omissions तस्मात् - on account of that अविमुक्तम् - Lord Śiva आश्रितः - one who takes refuge भवति - becomes अत्याश्रमी - one who is beyond all duties of life सर्वदा - always सकृत् - just once वा - or जपेत् - should recite अनेन - by this ज्ञानम् - knowledge आप्नोति - obtains संसार-अर्णव-नाशनम् - which destroys the 'ocean' of the life of becoming तस्मात् therefore एवम् - thus विदित्वा एनम् - knowing the self कैवल्यम् - state of nonduality, liberation फलम् - fruit अश्नुते - attains कैवल्यम् - state of nonduality फलम् - fruit अश्नुते - attains इति - in this manner

He who recites the Śatarudriya becomes purified as by fire, free from the sin of drinking alcohol, free from the sin of killing a *brāhmaṇa*, free from the sin of stealing gold and free from the results of all commissions and omissions. On account of that he gains refuge in Lord Śiva. One who is free from all duties (stages) of life (i.e. a renunciate) should recite this always, or (at least) once (a day). By this one attains the knowledge that destroys *saṁsāra*, the endless life of becoming. Therefore, in knowing the self, one attains the fruit of liberation; one indeed attains the fruit of liberation. (24)

*Yaḥ śatarudriyam adhīte* means one who recites the Śatarudriyam, the *stotra* called Śatarudrīya, also known as the Rudram, beginning from the *mantra*, 'namaste rudra manyava uto ta iṣave namaḥ.' The hymn is called the Rudram or sometimes even the Śatarudriyam, one hundred *mantras* in praise of Rudra or Lord Śiva. This hymn is in both the rescensions of the Yajur Veda, which are the Śukla Yajur Veda and the Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda, the 'white' and the 'black' Yajur Vedas. It is considered very holy and is recited everyday by thousands of Hindus. This brings about purity of heart and produces *vairāgya* or dispassion. Thus, this Upaniṣad prescribes the re-

citing of the Rudram as a means of preparation, a means of purifying the mind.

In the commentary on the text of this Upaniṣad, the commentator, Nārāyaṇa, is of the opinion that Śatarudriyam refers to the verses of the Kaivalya Upaniṣad itself. Therefore, *yaḥ śatarudriyam adhīte* means that one who recites the *mantras* of the Kaivalya Upaniṣad becomes pure of heart. This implies that he is relieved of all the sins that he may have accumulated over various earlier births.

Every living being has been passing through several cycles of birth and death; each one of the *jīvas* has taken innumerable births, perhaps many as a human being and, in each humanembodiment, he would have performed different kinds of actions. Certainly, a lot of *punya-karmas* or virtuous actions must have been performed, because of which the present human birth has been obtained, and because of which there is exposure to Vedānta; this does indeed call for a great amount of *punya*. At the same time, it is possible that over all the past births and, perhaps, even in the present birth, some *pāpakarmas* or vicious actions may also have been performed. Those are the actions that result in obstacles in the present, such as various likes and dislikes, various emotional difficulties, and various impulses. Sometimes, these impulses or emotions take hold of the mind. We get swept away by the current of thoughts and cannot maintain focus or concentrate. In short, we are not able to do what we want to do. Sometimes, the mind is not sharp enough and so there may be difficulties in understanding the teaching, in retaining it, and assimilating it. Only when we understand, retain, and assimilate it does the knowledge truly become ours.

If the obstacles to learning are the result of past *karma*, what type of actions were these? These are what we may call sins or unbecoming actions, *adharma*, actions that are in violation of the order, which is called *dharma*. Even today, whenever we act out of anger, greed, or other passions, our actions are bound to be *adhārmic*.

When a person acts out of anger, his action is bound to be violent, at the level of body, the level of speech, or the level of the mind. This happens when we are not alert or strong enough. Sometimes, we fall for our own weaknesses, like temptations. The doctor may have told me not to eat sweets, but a student offers me a cookie and says that this is an exceptional cookie with a hint of orange in it. It may be very tempting and I may eat it. Thus, there are temptations. There is sometimes greed and sometimes anger. Sometimes, these impulses arise and take hold of us to the extent that we do things that are in violation of *dharma*.

It is the violations of the past that manifest at the present moment in the form of various obstacles, various irritants, various distracting factors, various conflicts, and various pressures or compulsions.

So what do we do? We get rid of these pressures by deliberately performing virtuous actions and also reciting the Rudram or reciting the *mantras* of the Kaivalyopaniṣad. The present *mantra* says that if this is done, one will be free of the negative effects of the actions that may have been performed in the past. One who repeats the Rudram or the Kaivalyopaniṣad, *agnipūtaḥ bhavati*, gets purified as by fire. This is said because fire is a great purifier. Many things are held in the heat of fire for the purpose of purification. *Surāpānāt pūtaḥ bhavati*. *Surāpāna*, the drinking of alcohol, is considered a *mahāpāpa*, a great sin, as is also the killing of a *brāhmaṇa*. In the past, we may well have done these things. Who knows what we did in which birth? We do not know the reasons for what we are experiencing today, although we ask, “Why is this happening to me?” We do not know what we did in the past and how those actions are fructifying now. But the verse says that by reciting the Rudram or the Kaivalyopaniṣad, the mind slowly becomes free from the effects of any negative actions that we may have committed.

*Kṛtyākṛtyāt pūtaḥ bhavati* means one becomes free from the sins of commission and omission. Sometimes, we do not do what needs to be done; that is also a sin, just as much as sometimes doing what should not be done. All this happens because

we are not perfect and not always in control of ourselves. Very often, we are controlled by our *rāgas* and *dveṣas* or emotions, and, therefore, there will be inadvertent sins of omission and commission. One is relieved of those sins as well.

The verse now presents an *upāsanā* or worship in the form of a recitation or chant. A *mantra*, like *om namaḥ śivāya*, can be repeated in the mind, but oral repetition is usually recommended for *sūktas* and hymns. The Rudram should be recited orally. The oral recitation of the Rudram or the Upaniṣad itself has a very healing effect; the mind carries many wounds created by unknown past actions, and these will be healed.

When we repeat the Kaivalyopaniṣad, the very subject matter of the *mantras* will have some impact on the mind, because these *mantras* only deal with or reveal the nature of the self, the highest reality, the most pure and the most auspicious. Therefore, these *mantras* or words, sentences or statements, which talk about the most auspicious, are themselves also auspicious. So repeating them also creates an auspicious effect in the mind. It is said that reciting the Vedas has a beneficial effect, even if you do not know the meaning of the *mantras*. *Śikṣā*, the science of phonetics, explains to us that during audible recitation, each breath of air originates from the region of the naval, rises upward, strikes the skull, and passes through different *sthānas* or parts of the organ of speech as it emerges from the mouth. That is how words are articulated or uttered. Every articulated word involves the movement of air through certain places in the head. For example, when I say, “Rāma, Rāma, Rāma,” the air originates from the navel and strikes the skull. So every time I say, “Rāma,” it has some effect on my brain or some effect on my personality and that is how these recitations become very healing. They have a very positive effect upon our entire being. You can see an inner shine on the faces of many *brāhmaṇas* who recite the Vedas regularly, because the recitation creates a certain effect that impacts one’s mind and one’s personality. Therefore, it is understandable that reciting the Kaivalyopaniṣad will also nullify the inauspicious effects of past actions.

*Tasmāt avimuktam āśritaḥ bhavati*, as a result of that one comes under the protection of Lord Śiva. Avimukta is one of the names of Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva is known as Paśupati, the Lord of animals. Animals are liberated ones, meaning that they have no duty or responsibility. They have no stresses because they have no responsibilities. They live their lives by instinct. A cat, a dog or a cow is *vimukta*, ever free. No *dharma* or *adharmā* attaches to their actions. They can never do anything wrong; whatever they do is automatically right, because they are programmed in that manner.

There is an interesting story about Lord Śiva and Pārvatī in this context. As the story goes, Lord Śiva and Pārvatī were once walking through a forest. At that time, the four child-sages known as the Sanatkumāras—Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, and Sanatsujāta—happened to be coming from the opposite direction. They were in deep concentration as they approached and neglected to offer their prostrations to Lord Śiva. Pārvatī noticed that the four sages did not bow down to salute Lord Śiva. She became quite upset that they had failed to show due respect to the Lord. She said, “Since you did not bend your heads down, from now on you will always only keep your heads up.” Her angry words turned the four sages into camels. Śiva and Pārvatī then continued their walk and left the location. Quite a while later, there came a time when Lord Śiva asked Pārvatī, “Do you remember those four sages that were cursed? Did you ever find out what happened to them?” “No,” she replied, “Let’s go and find out what happened to them.” So Śiva and Pārvatī went back to the forest where the four sages had been cursed. Over there, they saw four camels resting and leisurely munching on some grass. Pārvatī asked them how they were. “We are doing just fine,” they replied. Pārvatī asked, “How can that be? You are just camels.” They said, “First of all, we do not have to take a bath regularly because there is no need for *śuci*, purity. Secondly, we can eat whatever we want and whenever we want. There are no rules or regulations. We are ever free; we have no problems at all.” Pārvatī saw that it had been pointless to curse the sages! Thus, we can see how all animals are truly *vimukta*.

As their overlord, Lord Śiva is also called Avimukta. By reciting the Śatarudriya or reciting this Kaivalyopaniṣad, one secures the protection of Lord Śiva<sup>1</sup>. Here there is a recommendation, that the *atyāśramī* or one who transcends all the stages of life, meaning a *sannyāsī*, a renunciate, must repeat this text all the time or at least once a day. Many *sannyāsīs* do that. One of the texts that they repeat every-day is the Kaivalyopaniṣad; another is the Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra, and the third is the Māṇḍukyopaniṣad.

*Anena jñānam āpnoti.* By reciting the Śatrudriya or the Kaivalyopaniṣad one attains the knowledge. One gains the knowledge that destroys the ocean of *saṁsāra*, meaning one becomes free from *saṁsāra*. *Saṁsāra* is the repetitive cycle of birth and death; a life of becoming, a life of seeking, a life of death, ignorance, and sorrow. Such a life is called an ocean; it is as endless and boundless. It is only by gaining the knowledge that one comes to cross this 'ocean' of *saṁsāra*. This repetition enables one to gain the knowledge by which he or she breaks free from *saṁsāra*.

*Tasmād evaṁ viditoā enam*, therefore, having known the self in this manner, meaning the manner in which it is unfolded in Kaivalyopaniṣad, *kaivalyaṁ phalam aśnute*, one attains the fruit of *kaivalya*. This text is called the Kaivalyopaniṣad because the concluding verse says, *kaivalyaṁ phalam aśnute*, one attains the the fruit of *kaivalya*. *Kevala* means only, alone. *Kaivalya* is the state of being *kevala* or by oneself in oneness, the state of being the self of all, the nondual, and the state of being free from every limitation. This *kaivalya* is the result that one attains. *Iti*, in this manner, the Upaniṣad comes to a conclusion. We find that the last sentence is repeated, *kaivalyaṁ phalam aśnute, kaivalyaṁ phalam aśnuta iti*. That is the style of the oral tradition of the ancient texts; the last sentence is repeated so that the student

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<sup>1</sup> Avimukta is the name of Lord Śiva in the sense of one who never deviates from his innermost essence of oneness, never mixing up with *māyā*. Avimukta is also the name of a place in Vārāṇasī which, it is believed, is never abandoned by Lord Śiva and Pārvatī, even at the time of *pralaya*, or dissolution.

would know that it was the conclusion. The texts were not written down, but passed on in the oral tradition, from teacher to student. The Kaivalyopaniṣad is also concluded in this manner, with the last sentence repeated twice.

The completion of our study has been possible entirely by the grace of *īśvara* and that of all the teachers of our tradition. We are happy that we have enjoyed this grace and pray that we might assimilate and imbibe all that we have learned. We pray that the blessing of the Lord and our teachers may prevail in our lives. May each one of us gain the benefit of the study of the scriptures, *kaivalyam phalam aśnute*. May each one of us also gain the knowledge and attain the state of *kaivalya* in the true recognition of nonduality and the ultimate achievement of liberation.

*Om tat sat*

शान्तिपाठः

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः । भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः । स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाँसस्तनूभिः । व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः ।  
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः । स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः । स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

*In the last month's (July 2024) newsletter, in the serial article 'Kaivalyopaniṣad - Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati's transcribed talk', in the page #8, in the sloka #23, the first line was missing.*

(न भूमिरापो न च वह्निरस्ति  
न चानिलो मेऽस्ति न चाम्बरं च )

*The full sloka is as given below:*

न भूमिरापो न च वह्निरस्ति  
न चानिलो मेऽस्ति न चाम्बरं च ।  
एवं विदित्वा परमात्मरूपं  
गुहाशयं निष्कलमद्वितीयम् ।  
समस्तसाक्षिं सदसद्विहीनं  
प्रयाति शुद्धं परमात्मरूपम् ॥ २३ ॥

*The transliterated text and word meanings of this sloka, were all OK. We apologize for this oversight from our part.*

- Editor