Kaivalya Upanishad

General Introduction to Upanishads

Meaning of Upanishads

The word Upanishad can be understood in many ways. The literal translation of उप is near, close to; नि is below or down and पद्ध is to sit: sit down close to or sit below close to. Traditionally, the disciple sits below the level of the preceptor, at his feet. He also sits close to him so he does not miss a word or gesture; or to ensure that the preceptor does not have to shout to make himself heard; or because of his devotion to the preceptor because all of us like to come close to those whom we revere. This implies that Upanishad is not something that can be understood by reading it by oneself as a book, even if it is accompanied by learned commentaries. In today’s context, Upanishad is also not something that can be understood by listening & watching videos or live-streamed discourses of the Master. It is the wisdom that can be absorbed only by humbly sitting close to the Master, making eye contact with him, watching and listening with full attention.

What makes the Upanishads so special? Bhagawan Adi Shankaracharya derives the meaning of “Upanishad” in his commentary on Kathopanishad. It is derived by adding उप (approaching close to) & नि (with certainty, fortitude) as prefixes & क्रिया as suffix to the root word पद्ध which means विधान break up, destroy; नििििििि अष्टििििििि संकेििििििि अविष्कार (ignorance, the very seed of worldly existence of those seekers) with विषय discrimination, who have developed वैराग्य detachment, from द्रुष्ट अनुवादिक विषयविषयिता: desires for all visible, tangible objects of this world as well as the invisible, intangible objects of higher worlds. They are no longer drawn to mundane joys—prosperity in the form of progeny, wealth, power, relationships—or for the more intense and longer versions of the same joys in heaven. They know well that even if the heavenly enjoyments last for several thousand human years, they would eventually have to end and the jivas have to return to the cycle of birth & death. They are मुमुक्षु—they seek nothing less than मोक्ष, the final liberation from all beginnings & endings. They उप approach the Knowledge that will lead them to that liberation with नि certainty & determination to succeed. Upanishad is therefore not a book, though it may take the form of a book. Upanishad is the import, the meaning, the Knowledge that will liberate the seeker.

This Knowledge is not objective knowledge. It is the insight that reveals my unchanging, unconditioned, independent identity. This is what I Am. It is the ultimate subject that cannot be known, but only existed. I can stand apart from all other forms of knowledge and say that I know this or that. But, there is no vantage point from which I can observe ‘I Am’ & claim that I know it; I can only Be. Once I am established in That, there is nothing else to be heard & learned, nothing else to be thought of, nothing else to be known, for I am complete & whole. It cannot be seen; it is indescribable by words; thought cannot reach it; it cannot be taught as objective knowledge. It lies at the root of all thoughts & words. A qualified, determined seeker needs to be carefully guided to that realisation by a teacher who has discerned the intention of the Shruti from his own teacher, who follows the example of his own Guru in instruction and who has himself realised that knowledge. Secondly, the minds of the teacher & student have to be attuned to each other. The student must have implicit faith that what the teacher is saying is the truth. There will be many times when his mind is unable to comprehend; the teacher must be generous & compassionate to the student through the latter’s doubts & confusions. None of these can be

1 येन अश्रुतं सुषुंिति भवति अमलं मतं अविष्कारं विष्कारं इति – Chandogya Upanishad 6.1.3
2 न तत्र चक्षुंिगति, न वाण गंिेंिि, नो मनं न विषयं, न विििाििि:– Kena Upanishad 1.3
established without a close personal relationship between the two. Hence, the need that the
disciple be at the feet of the teacher.

Upanishad also means रहस्यम् secret. Kathopanishad 1.3.17 calls it य इमं परमं गुह्यं this highest
secret. But “secret” and “hidden” do not necessarily mean “confidential” or “not to be revealed”. As Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharya says, the Knowledge in the Upanishads is accessible only to a
qualified seeker, as only a seeker who has keenly examined all the joys that the worlds can offer & found them to be paltry relative to the Infinite, will approach the Upanishads. The unqualified seeker can study the Upanishad to his heart’s content but will not be able to break out of the shell of his ignorance. On the contrary, by not understanding or misunderstanding Shruti, such a seeker can build up resistances in his mind that may cause considerable problems in future. This Knowledge is not something to be taken lightly.

There is a shloka that summarises all that has been said above. उपनिये्मतान्य भ्रामुपास्तवतः यथः
| निहन्तत्यनिद्यािज्जञ्च िस्मादुपनिषद् भिेि् | ( उपनिय इमं आत्मां भ्रामु अपास्त दृवः यथः | निहन्तति अविचारं
| तदु ज्ञातु तस्मातु उपनियपदं भवेतु || ) Which उपनिय leads the आत्मां jivas, souls to the Brahman
अपास्त sans अद्वयं any duality, which निहन्त्य destroys अविचारज्ञान ignorance & all the effects
born of ignorance - that is Upanishad.

The journey to the Upanishad.

What is my connection to Upanishad? All knowledge has to mean something to me, personally. If it is not relevant to me, I will have no interest in it. This applies even more to the knowledge of my Self, of what I really am. Hence, any introduction to the Upanishad has to include an introduction of myself to the Upanishad. How have I reached the moment in my life when I arrived at the Shruti? With what world-view have I come? What do I expect from it?

All beings struggle & strive to find आत्मितिक दुःख निवृत्ति & परमात्मन्त्र प्राप्ति, the complete
cessation of sorrow & the attainment of endless joy. Since our senses are extroverted by nature, we first look at objects, relationships & experiences outside of ourselves to find that happiness & avoid that sorrow. We compete, acquire & accumulate, change, arrange & re-arrange the
environment around us to obtain वर्ष security & काम enjoyment. After a while, some people
discover that such extroverted enjoyments have major defects. They are associated with pain. One has to struggle to acquire them. But they are all temporary. All pleasures eventually fade away. They create bondage through dependence. Sensory indulgence exhausts the senses ( ie damaging their ability to enjoy) while simultaneously creating dependence on them. So one has to search for stronger & more extreme experiences to get the same satisfaction.

The net result of all our experiences in life is either happiness or sorrow. There are three
components of all experiences: the Experiencer (the subject), the Experienced (the object) & the
Experience itself (the interaction between the two). I realise that परिस्थिति बाद the re-
arrangement, re-organisation of the objects in my environment will never fulfil me because they suffer from the above defects. I realise that I must deal with the Subject, I, the Experiencer. The objective sciences are useless in this quest because their concern is with phenomena whereas my problem is with the observer of phenomena. Joy & sorrow, the human condition, are not their concerns whereas they are my problem & solution. So, I come to धर्म the scriptures. The scriptures tell me that the joys and sorrows are for the body. I am the jiva that suffers & enjoys but never dies. So, I perform various rituals & prayers so that my jiva, due to accumulated merits arising out of these, can enjoy the bliss of heaven after the death of the body.

But even heaven does not promise the death of all sorrow & eternal happiness. Admittedly, the
joys of heaven would be of a higher order than on earth and endure for a much longer period. The music will be more melodious, the art more vivid, the atmosphere more beautiful. All
desires will be fulfilled; the enjoyments would be endless; there will be no pain, no sorrow, no fear.  But, even that will not last forever. Eventually, after the exhaustion of my accumulated merits, I would have to be reborn to run again the gamut of experience.

Many of us, who are presently leading peaceful, comfortable lives with no major shortcomings, will not regard the cycle of birth & death with dismay. But a little reflection will tell me that the अनन्त कल्याण that has now materialised as this comfortable life may not last forever. The other lives waiting to express themselves in my संकीर्ण कल्याण could be completely different. Again, while I am assured that no progress made in this life will be wasted, there is no assurance that, in the next life, the circumstances & my choices will allow me to continue on the path. I might even regress.

Secondly, the scriptures teach that the jivas have these fundamental defects. I have राग लक्ष्मण likes, things to which I am attracted & द्वेष लक्ष्मण dislikes, things from which I am repelled. So long as I am constantly torn between the two, running towards one & away from the other, I will never be at peace. I have त्योग निर्वक राग delusions, क्रोध लक्ष्मण anger, लोभ लक्ष्मण greed, मोह लक्ष्मण delusion, मद लक्ष्मण pride and मात्सय लक्ष्मण envy. So long as I regard myself as a jiva & retain my attachment to individuality, these defects will continue to operate in some fashion, whether on earth or in heaven. I will be forever incomplete.

When I realise that heaven is not my solution, I will come to the path of knowledge that will cut through the आिरण the veil, the barrier, that conceals the truth of the authentic & immutable relationship between जीि myself, जगि् the world & ब्रह्म. When I am in darkness, only light will dispel the gloom. When I am in ignorance, only knowledge will remove it. When this is realised, the drive to Liberation becomes far more urgent. I have already wasted enough time in this & in previous lives. There is no time to be lost. This is मुक्ति, the urgent desire to मोक्ष to be free of all bondages.

I have travelled this long road. Many others have not. I have found the Guru. I have come to the Upanishad. This is the journey that the Kaivalya Upanishad is referring to when it begins with अथ.

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3 कामस्या प्तं जगतः प्रतिश्च क्रोधः अनन्त्यम अभयस्य पारस्म – Kathopanishad 1.2.11. The end of all desires, the foundation of the world, the endless rewards of sacrifice, the other shore where there is no fear.

4 सर्व जीवित अल्पं एव – All lives are verily short. Kathopanishad 1.1.26. Even a life in heaven, lasting for several thousand human years, will have to come to an end. And as it comes to an end, it will bring sorrow.

5 नेहाभिक्रमकादशेषक्र्याविषयाय न विद्याते | स्वप्नमण्यास्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् || – Bhagavad Gita 2.40. In this there is no loss of effort, nor any harm produced of contrary result. Even a little of this knowledge, even a little practice of this yoga, protects from great fear.

6 अहंकारादिदेहानानु दुःखान्तज्ञानकल्पितान | सक्तरूपाविशेषं मातृतमिच्छा मुमुक्षुता || Vivekachudamani 27. The desire to free oneself from all bondage ranging from the ego to body identification, which are all imaginations created by ignorance, to realise one’s true Self, that is Mumukshutvam.
The Kaivalya Upanishad

The **Kaivalya Upanishad** is a minor Upanishad in the Atharvana veda. Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda, says that there are about 280 Upanishads extant of which 108 have been accepted by scholars as authentic texts. Of these, ten have been taken up for analysis & comments in the Brahma Sutra commentaries of Adi Shakaracharya & other masters. These ten are therefore called the major Upanishads. They are:

\[ \text{ईशक्तिः मुण्डकम् निनिरराः} \]
\[ \text{ऐरे यं च चछान्तदोग्यं बृहदारण्यकं तथा} \]

The other Upanishads are referred to as minor (सामान्यवेदान्तोपनिषदः).

All the Upanishads have the same theme – the identity between आत्मा & ब्रह्म. Some of them treat Brahman as the Creator, the real cause of the world (सप्रपञ्च) while others describe Brahman through negation ( न इति, न इति) & the world as an illusory appearance (निश्प्रपञ्च). केवल Kevala means homogenous, where no differences whatsoever exist. There is no difference of the type that exists within the same species जातीय भेद; there is no difference of the type that exists between species विजातीय भेद; there is no variance within itself व्यक्तित्व भेद (like limb & body, part & whole). The other differences identified by Vedanta are the perceived difference between souls, between souls & the world, between souls & God, between the world & God & between worlds. Kevala is that in which none of these differences exist. केवल homogeneity is the abstract quality. The Upanishad is named as such because it proclaims at the end that the person who attains this knowledge attains केवल i.e he perceives no variety or differences whatsoever, no otherness, at any time or place. There is only the One Indivisible.
The Invocation

॥ॐ॥ - means praying to God for the auspicious beginning of study. The Word Om 7 is the nearest pointer, indicator, of Brahman. It is the very first vibration in primordial space that emerged from the throat of the Creator, absolutely pure & untainted, as it did not even touch the tongue or palate or lips. 8 That vibration, the very sound of Om, even if the one who speaks it or the one who hears it does not understand its import, is auspicious, holy, sacred. The disciple prays that everything that he perceives be auspicious, so that he does not get disturbed while studying.

भद्रं कणेनभ: श्रुणुयाम देिााः ।
Oh Gods! May we hear only auspicious sounds by our ears.

Oh Gods! May we ever hear by ears what is auspicious alone, not gossip or unwanted conversation. It means to have the great ability to listen to the teaching with all our ears (because it is plural not dual) ie with full attention. It also means that we should speak only what is auspicious, because we are the first to listen to what we speak. So, it is to pray that nothing inauspicious comes out from our speech.

The idea is that may we have भद्रा to listen to Veda which is talking about the Truth. Without भद्रा: one would not listen seriously. May we also understand what we listen, because even if we listen with भद्रा:, it is useful only when we understand and grasp the teaching.

भद्रं पश्येमाक्षनभयथजरााः ।
Oh! Worshipful ones! May we see only auspicious sights by our eyes.

Oh! Worshipful ones; May our eyes see only that which is auspicious. Grant us the insight to see auspiciousness in all and in everything, so that the sense of otherness reduces in us gradually. It could also be understood that the prayer is that we do not become the cause for seeing something that is not auspicious. Even if some inauspiciousness is seen, let us try to transform it to the auspicious. Since the ears and eyes have the longest range of perception, they are the two key sense organs which connect us to the world of objects & hence they seem to have been specifically indicated here. In general, these two lines of prayer indicate to us that we should focus on the virtues in everyone, rather than on their defects. The ability of seeing the good in people keeps us in peace within ourselves. People will have defects but we should have an attitude of seeing good in people. In other words, may we practise virtues like sympathy, compassion, understanding, love, sharing, giving & friendliness. It is only when we have these qualities, that we will see auspiciousness & not otherwise.

सत्यैं तुष्यवाग्यां सः तनूर्भि: व्यशेम देवहिं यत् आयुः ॥
With healthy body and able limbs, may we live our life engaged in the good of the Gods, praising your glory.

May we have firm limbs and body and enough life-span for the work of Gods, i.e. contentment and ability to worship/glorify Gods. It also means that may we have not any complaints as regards our limbs, body and lifespan which are as per our merits alone, granted by the Gods.

7 सवे वेदा यत्त पदमामन्ति तपसि सवाली च यद कदनि ।
8 अंकारश अथशब्दश च वेती ब्रह्मण पुरात

The goal (word) which all the Vedas declare of (praise), which all penances {austerities} proclaim, and wishing for which they lead brahmacaris, that goal (word) I shall briefly tell thee. It is Om. Kathopanishad 1.2.15.

Brahman uttered two words in the very beginning – ऑ & अथ. They emerged from his throat, without contamination by the saliva of the mouth. So the sound of both are auspicious.
May we perform God’s work silently & happily without blaming anyone at anytime, anywhere. Grant us the ability to connect with others without pinpointing defects. Wrong thinking leads to wrong action which leads to wrong results, leading to sorrow/grief. Also, grant us the wisdom to see the glory in Gods as also in other people.

स्वस्थि न इन्द्रो वृद्धथवा: May Lord Indra, the ancient and renowned, give us the blessings.

May we be granted the blessings from Lord Indra. Lord Indra being the deity of the hands, ie grasping, may He give us wisdom & strength to do good things. In other words, may all be well with us – may we think correctly so that we do correct things which leads to happiness-prosperity and to the company of good people.

स्वस्थि न पूषा विववेन्द्रा: May Lord Sun, the all-knowing, give us the blessings.

May our thinking/intelligence be enlightened by the Sun, the Illuminator, deity of Intellect. May His light give us good health.

The whole world functions because the sun sustains all lives – plants, animals and human beings. We know that because of sun, the clouds are formed leading to rains. Further, it is because of sun that the great rivers flow with water due to melting of ice in the mountains. Despite being so magnanimous, the sun does not claim any credit or compensation for his generosity. The message to us is that whatever great thing we may do, it is foolish to claim any credit for it as it is negligible compared to Sun’s role, under whom everything happens. So, let us keep doing our best possible silently and without any sense of doership.

स्वस्थि न: ताक्ष्यौ अतिपनेमि: May Lord Vayu/Garuda, the Lord of swift movement, give us blessings & save us from harm.

May we be protected from all inauspiciousness and blessed with solutions for all problems/issues by the god of swift motion, Vaayu or Garuda, who removes all obstacles. Both Vaayu and Garuda move in the sky freely, without any barriers. In the same way, may our journey towards the goal be free from all obstacles. Let us be free from our negativities and inherent enemies like काम, क्रोध, लोभ, मोह, मद, मात्सर्य, etc.

स्वस्थि न: वृहस्पतिः: दधािु ॥ May Lord Brahaspati give us blessings.

May we be blessed by Lord Brahaspati, who is Guru of Gods, with peaceful minds, power, health, intelligence and the right Knowledge. Let the Knowledge attained be retained in me and be available with me for ever.

ॐ शानन्तिाः शानन्तिाः शानन्तिाः The Chanting of शानन्तिाः three times is intended to ward off obstacles to our learning arising from 3 quarters, viz., (i) आचिदाबित्रिक, divine forces beyond our knowledge & control like earthquakes, lightning, etc.; (ii) आधिमाबित्रिक, i.e. issues related to the world around us which we know but are beyond our control like noise, rains, floods, etc.; and (iii) आध्यात्मिक, related to issues within me like inability to concentrate, mental disturbances & agitations, lack of faith caused by vasanas.
In short the invocation is addressed to Almighty God, through the presiding deities of cosmic forces, to bless us by keeping our minds fully available for learning; to improve those qualities in us that will enable us to understand & retain the knowledge. Its goal is spiritual growth not material gain. It is also to express our gratitude for the blessings already received. Addressing each deity intensifies the prayer.
Mantra 1
अथाश्वलायिो भगवन्तं परमेश्वरं उपसेत्योिाच (अथ अश्वलायिाः भगिििं परमेनििं उपसमेत्य उिाच)
अधीनह भगिि् ब्रह्मनिद्यां िररिां सदा सेव्यमािां निगूढाम् ।
ययाऽनचराि् सिथपापं व्यपोह्य परात्परं पुरुषं यानि निद्वाि् ॥ १ ॥
1. अथ Thereafter, then, Ashwalayana, approached the Lord of Creation, परमेनिि म् the one established in the highest seat of knowledge and said: Pray अधीनह teach me, भगिि् pray recollect to me what your teacher taught the िररिां ब्रह्मनिद्या highest meta knowledge, which सेव्यमािां सदा have always sought, chosen, निगूढाम् the highest secret. ययाऽनचराि् That knowledge which अनचराि् without delay, swiftly, अपोह्य destroys, discards all sins & निद्वाि् the wise man यानि attains or goes to परात्परं – that which is higher than the highest, that which is beyond the beyond.

The student is Sage Ashwalayana who is approaching Lord Brahma Himself for knowledge. He has already examined the promises of earth & heaven & found them wanting. He knows the Vedas, the Vedangas & the Upavedas. He has passed through the stages of कमथ & उपासिा. He is hungry for liberation. He has understood that the last & most difficult barrier is ignorance & the only antidote is Knowledge. In his existential journey, he believes he has developed the necessary qualifications of mind & intellect to understand it. He is such an unusually qualified अनधकारर seeker, student, that he is able to approach Lord Brahma, the original source of that Knowledge. The single word अथ encompasses all these meanings.

He approaches the Guru विधिनत्व उिाच in the manner prescribed in the scriptures, with reverence & humility, समित्वाणि wood faggots in hand as offerings for the sacrificial fire. These dry, small twigs & sticks signify the ego & identity that he is prepared to throw in the fire of knowledge so that it may burn brighter. He waits as long as necessary for the Guru’s favour and, in the meanwhile, occupies himself in the Guru’s service. After the Guru accepts him as a disciple, he waits for the appropriate moment when the teacher is not otherwise occupied & asks him the question that has been uppermost in his mind all along. The two words उिाच include all these meanings. The Upanishad is brief because Shruti assumes that the reader has the necessary knowledge to understand all the things that she leaves unsaid. We must not take brevity to be abruptness: that Ashwalayana pushed himself forward to meet Lord Brahman & tossed the question at Him.

Unlike Kathopanishad, Chandogya Upanishad & Prashnopanishad, Kaivalya Upanishad does not develop the plot & introduce the characters. Unlike Kenopanishad & Prashnopanishad, its questions are not preliminary, requiring long & patient explanations from the Master. Ashwalayana already has the अपाथि ज्ञािम् the general knowledge of the subject. He only needs it to be systematically explained. He knows precisely what he is looking for & goes directly to the point.

What is the knowledge that Ashwalayana is seeking? It is the highest knowledge that swiftly, immediately, destroys sin. Sins arise from our desire-dictated actions to find fulfilment in the objects & relationships around us. The root of that desire is the sense of individuality (of I) & possession (Mine). But the “I” remains incomplete regardless of all that I do to satisfy it. Brahmavidya is the only Knowledge that will falsify that finite individuality & reveal the truth.

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9 Vedanga – सिक्षा phonetics; व्याकरण grammar; निरुक्त etymology; छद्दस prosody; ज्योतिष astronomy; कल्प science of rituals. Upa Veda – आयुवेद science of life & health; गार्थव वेद the fine arts; अथवेद economics, politics, administration; धनुवेद science of archery & war.
about my authentic identity - I am, have been & always will be, whole & complete; there is no Other, all are I. When that is my most intimate Knowledge, all sins, all sorrows, will drop like dry leaves. All other sources of knowledge will teach me about इदम् the world around me; only this will teach me about अहम्. Once I have this Knowledge, there will never again be confusion or conflict about what the world is & what I am in relation to the world. I will know the relevance & value of everything.¹⁰ All wise men seek this Knowledge. Why is it then a secret? Because only wise men search for it. It is secret because though all of us know it, primal ignorance conceals it from us. It is hidden within all of us. It is rare to find someone who is searching for it; it is rarer to find someone who can teach it. It is rarest to find someone who can absorb & live that knowledge.¹¹

This verse also serves as the अनुवाद चतुष्क्रय the preface to the Upanishad. The अधिकारिः the reader it is aimed at is the highly qualified seeker. Shruti does not bother to explain the qualifications, assuming that the student who has come to the Upanishad knows enough to understand the meaning of अहम्. The mantra calls them सद्विद् they whose only interest is the truth of the relationship between the जीव, जगत् & जगत् कारणम् the triangular relationship between individuality, the world & the Creator. This विषय, the subject matter is ब्रह्मचित्रा, the highest knowledge. The प्रयोजनम् the end result of that knowledge is destruction of all sin. The सम्बन्धः the relationship is that this Upanishad will reveal that Truth.

Mantra 2

2 To him the Grand sire said, “अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवै�ीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवै�ीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवै�ीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवै�ीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं अवैधीं

¹⁰ येनाशुरूः श्रुतं भवत्यर्मं मतमविशालं विज्ञाम्यमिति – by knowing which what is unheard becomes heard, what is not thought of becomes thought of, what is unknown becomes known. Chandogya Upanishad 6.1.3
¹¹ आश्चर्यायां महत्त्वैरुपन्त्य नो लेखः कृपणोपि न वहनों न विशु। आश्चर्यो व त्रुट्य कृपणोपि व लेश्यः आश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कृपणतः निैषिनीर्द्धिः। He (the Self) of whom many are not able to even hear; of whom many, even they hear of Him, do not comprehend. Wonderful is the man, when found, who is able to teach the Self. Wonderful is he who comprehends the Self, when taught by an able teacher. Kathopanishad 1.2.7
¹² शाश्वस्यप्रत्यार्थस्य सत्यकृत्यवर्धारणा | स श्रद्धा कथिता सदिश्वयं कस्पुत्पत्भं || That by which one understands the precise import of the scriptures as well as the pregnant words of advice of the preceptor is called faith by the wise; by this alone does Reality become manifestly clear. Vivekachudamani 25
freedom. The seeker must have the courage & fortitude to pay whatever price, even the death of the body, if that is the cost of Liberation.\footnote{\textit{देहं वा पातयात्मक वा साध्याम्} | Either this body will drop, or I will know the Truth.}

Does that mean the substance of faith is only self-effort? No. It is the confidence that my self-effort will get the response of कृपा grace, favour. The scriptures will reveal themselves to me; the preceptor will compassionately accept & instruct me; god will remove barriers in front of me & smooth my way; and finally, that I will be able to learn & change. Is this a blind belief? No. It is the result of युनतिध logical thinking about श्रुति the scriptures saying that grace is in the very fabric of the universe, that effort will never go unrewarded. This abstract idea is supported by अतुमूति the evidence of my own experience or the experience of others.

भक्ति, devotion, is the fuel that the motor of ध्यान burns. It is the emotional support of the intellectual conviction. Devotion is another name for deep love. Devotion is its own reward; it seeks no other. It is the unconditional surrender of body, mind & spirit to the subject of one’s love. It is the utter indifference to anything other than one’s love.\footnote{Paraphrased from \textit{Narada Bhakti Sutra} 1.2.7-9} My love is for the सगुण, औपानधिक ब्रह्मि् God with attributes, expressing Itself in the world & in me. The relationship, when it begins, is trinary: the soul, the spirit & the world. As it develops, the world recedes & the relationship becomes binary: soul & spirit. In its highest form, devotion is unitary; there is only the Spirit. I have to begin with the सगुण ईश्वर to arrive at the निगुण ब्रह्मि्. Is devotion, love, an emotion that only a few people have & express? No. Acharyaji says - “We all have Love to express. If we don’t love God, we will love something else. But my highest, purest, love will be for God”.

Just as ध्यान intellectual conviction will turn into dry knowledge without emotional expression, भक्ति devotion will become soft sentiment without the support of Knowledge. Bhagawan Adi Shankaracharya says व्यक्तिरित्वाभिमुखीयते single-pointed devotion is the supreme requirement for the constant endeavour to live up to one’s own Real Nature.\footnote{\textit{Vivekachudamani} 31}

ध्यान is contemplation, the ability to maintain one thought or an uninterrupted stream of one type of thought for a period of time, like a stream of oil being poured from one vessel to another. Faith will tell me that I will find the truth in the scriptures with the preceptor’s help; devotion to the scriptures & the guru will help me resolve my doubts & bridge the gaps in my knowledge. They will both sustain me in the next stage, meditation, the assimilation of scriptural statements into my understanding.
Mantra 3
ि कमथणा ि प्र
जया धिेि त्यागेिैक े  अमृित्िमािशुाः । ( त्यागेि एक े  अमृित्िं आिशुाः )
परेण नाकं निहिंतं गुहायां विब्राजाते यथतयो विशिष्टिः ॥ ३ ॥ ( यतू यतयः विशिष्टिः) 

2. Not by performing कमथणा rituals, or doing self-less work; not by getting progeny; nor by gathering wealth but by त्याग renunciation एक े  अमृित्िं आिशुाः attained. परेण Higher than िाकं ि heavenly {pleasures} it is; निहिंतं abiding in the गुहायां cave of intelligence-awareness, विब्राजाते shines by itself, independent of all. एके Only a few यतयः the self-controlled sages will विशिष्टिः enter into it. 16

कमथणा Shruti says that the performance of religious rituals, prayer, worship, altruistic service, will not lead to immortality, liberation. This is a very large statement that needs explanation. The result of all effort is the उत्पाद्यम् the production, creation of something that did not exist earlier. It could also be the निकायथम् the modification of something that existed in another form or सम्स्कायथम् the purifying, refining of something that existed earlier. Or it could be आप्यम् the acquisition of something that was previously unavailable. Religious rituals are performed with one or the other of these results in mind, to attain prosperity & peace in this or higher worlds. But Atma cannot be attained by any of these means. It is ever-existent so It cannot be produced. It is not an object to be procured. It cannot be modified as It is unchanging. It is purity itself so It cannot be purified.

Secondly, there are many forms of karma. I can worship, recite, chant, donate, serve & so on. But since it is only primal ignorance that blocks the awareness of the Atma, there is only means – knowledge – that can remove it.

So is all कम्या useless & the entire कमथखाण्ड of the Vedas a waste of time? No. The Vedas themselves explain that the knowledge of Brahman can be taught to them alone who perform rituals, study the vedas, meditate upon them, possess the faith & who themselves, personally, offer oblations to the sacred fire.17 कम्या योगा, as we understand it today, is not mentioned but we can take it that it that Shruti includes it. All these actions are essential to discipline my senses, purify the stream of thoughts in my mind, increase my ability to focus it in the desired direction, and, most of all, to remove the delusion in my mind that I am nothing more than the body & the ego. Only after these preliminary sadhanas refine my being will I become ready to approach the guru & the Upanishads.

प्रजया – the gift of progeny meaning sons. Only sons that inherit the father’s gotra can perform the funeral rites & the annual श्रा ceremony for their parents & ancestors allowing them to go to higher worlds of enjoyment. This too is not immortality.

धन – Wealth, meaning not mere accumulation of money but wealth in terms of कामिनि, काश्यन, कीर्ति women, gold & fame. All these could lead to a luxurious life on earth but nothing beyond that. Wealth used to contribute to charity, make donations & other expressions of social responsibility will have a better result but also will not lead to liberation. Wealth could also mean the gift of our talents & character that can be used for the benefit of others. While this is a worthy action, better than mere wealth accumulation, it too, will not result in liberation.

16 The same mantra, in a lengthier form, appears in Mahanarayana Upanishad Question 4 Verse 12
17 क्रियायतः श्रीतिया ब्रह्माणिष्ठया: स्वयं तत्तथ एवं ब्रह्माणिष्ठया:। तेषामेवतः ब्रह्माणिष्ठमां वैद्यते...॥ To them alone let one teach this knowledge of Brahman, who perform rituals, who read & study the Vedas, who meditate on Brahman, who possess faith & themselves offer oblations to the fire. ... Mundakopanishad 3.2.10.
Sacrifice alone leads to immortality. In this context, sacrifice is synonymous with renunciation. Immortality will be granted to him who willingly forfeits all worldly desires, attachments, achievements, for the single goal of liberation. Sacrifice is the surrender of something of relatively inferior value for something of relatively higher value. That does not mean that I have lost all desire for the inferior thing; it just means that the lower desire has been over-shadowed by a higher one. Renunciation, on the other hand, means the complete abandonment of all desires except for immortality. I strip away all likes, dislikes, attractions, repulsions & seek immortality with that clean intelligence. Only very few will be capable of that quality of वैराग्य & hence the mantra says त्यागे एक एक एक वर्षों में अमृतार्त्ति एक एक एक. Only very few perform that sacrifice.

All intelligent persons develop a certain amount of dispassion with age or experience. The urgency of many desires reduce; we become more moderate in expectations & are able to handle adversity without getting upset. Does it mean that such persons of experience also qualify to be called वत्स: self-controlled sages? No. Because their dispassion is the pragmatic result of their experience. It is not based on a higher value, their search for realisation of their true identity. Their dispassion does not falsify the desires themselves; it only reduces the ability of the desires to enchant.

परेण नाक्रमः The word क्रमः means joy. Its antonym is अक्रमः, sorrow. नाक्रमः means the absence of sorrow. We often mistake the absence of sorrow to be joy, the absence of dissatisfaction to be satisfaction. After all, even in our deep sleep, we experience the complete absence of experience & sorrow & mistake that for bliss. Shruti, knowing this, says it is superior to the state of sorrowless-ness. It is a never-ending flood of joy that abounds.

Mantra 4

वेदान्तविज्ञानसूनिश्चितार्थिः सूनिश्चितार्थिः: सूनिश्चितार्थिः: शुद्धमतः: ||
तेत्र ब्रह्मलोके भ्रमर्षाय ब्रह्मलोके भ्रमर्षाय तस्माः सत्तत्याः:॥

4. Those who शुद्ध मतः: minds are pure, the सूनिश्चित विज्ञान मन्त्र: self-controlled strivers who are united with renunciation, वेदान्त विज्ञान सूनिश्चित: come to clearly ascertain & absorb the deeper meaning of Vedanta {ie the identity revealing Mahavakyas of the Upanishads}. They परात्मान: in the end {at the time of death}, attain ब्रह्मलोके the world of Brahma परिमुखितः get freedom from everything पर अमृतार्त्ति & gain the highest nectar of immortality.

There is a difference between ज्ञान objective knowledge & विज्ञान the knowledge that has become my subjective self, which has changed me. Objective knowledge is the study of the effects, something external to me. It may affect & influence me but will not change my essential idea of my self. विज्ञान is the study of the cause, the subject, the introspection that changes my idea of my self. Objective knowledge is परेक्ष्म remote, separate from me. It is taught. Subjective knowledge is अपरेक्ष्म immediate, personal. It is realised. I have to recall & remember ज्ञान; I don’t have to remember विज्ञान because it is my nature. Objective knowledge is to know that there is a Brahma & I will attain It somewhere & sometime. Subjective knowledge is to know that I am Brahma.

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18 य: सर्वज्ञनासमस्यहस्तत्त्वाय शुभाशुभम्: नाभिनन्दनति न द्रेष्टि तथा प्रशः प्रतिष्ठिता। He who is without attachment everywhere, who neither rejoices nor hates on meeting anything good or bad, his wisdom is fixed. Bhagavat Gita – 2.57
Those with विज्ञानम् will know without any doubts or gaps in knowledge. They will have the certitude of स्व अनुभव of personal experience of the truth of the scriptures.

This certitude can come about only by means of a pure mind, self-effort & renunciation. The mind is cleansed of all attractions, aversions & all the negativities that flow from them: desire, joy, sorrow, anger, envy & so on. That sharp, clean mind can meditate on the import of the scriptures and remove all false notions of identity that has been built up over many lifetimes. That is the internal साधना. The external साधना is summarised in the invocation at the beginning of this Upanishad – that all I take in from the environment is auspicious. I might look at the world & see only enmity, conflict & confusion; the wise man will see the Atma & all events & experiences as evolution towards that Atma. It is an alternate view of the “reality of the world.”

What external साधनाः can I practise to purify myself? I must first eliminate all निषिद्ध desires & actions that are prohibited by the scriptures. Besides avoiding unethical, immoral actions, I should endeavour to see that my desires are moderate, as greed to get more than my share would deprive another. I must avoid all आयन selfish desires that bring me benefit & harm to others. I must retain only नियत & नैमित्तिक कर्म scripturally ordained daily & occasional duties. If I am not able or willing to perform rites & rituals, I must perform निष्ठाम कर्म perform the duties appropriate to my status & life station without my personal desires becoming the main driver of my actions. I must strive to ensure that my desires do not bind me in any way. I must be able to drop them as my प्रार्थ्य कर्म the circumstances of life dictate. All these will gradually reduce the preponderance of the ego, which is essentially a false phantom of identity imposed on the Self. However, both ritualistic & altruistic duties can be performed only with a sense of total surrender, as an offering to God इन्द्राङ्गणिधान. The importance of devotion cannot be over emphasized.

What is संन्यास renunciation? The external expression of renunciation is [a] observing vows of poverty or at least minimising the requirements for objects that would give comfort. In this each person must establish his own standards but in general must live with minimum requirements. [b] the performance of the daily & occasional rites & rituals are no longer duties that apply to the sannyasi. He has no interest in the householder state. This does not mean that the sannyasi ceases to perform his daily acts of worship as the faith that finds no expression would atrophy. It means that he has a choice whether to perform them or not. [c] just as one has given up attachments to possessions, the bonds of relationships must also be severed. It is not essential that the sannyasi must cut off all human relations & live like a hermit. He must surrender all his emotional bonds with his family & treat them as he treats everyone else. [d] the sannyasi must not initiate any transaction to gain, obtain, preserve any object or relationship with the world. 19 Is sannyasa an external discipline or an internal attitude? It is both. External observance वैदिक साधना strengthens the अन्तरिक्ष साधना internal attitude & vice versa. However, in terms of priority, the latter is more critical than the former. A householder can be fully involved in the duties required of his station but can still be wholly detached from them & attached to his spiritual evolution. On the other hand, the sadhana of a monk in ochre robes may be continuously disturbed by his engagements with the world.

What happens to such a sannyasi? There are two views. The first is that if his sadhana has been sincere, when his body drops, he attains ब्रह्मलोक the world of Brahman ie highest heaven and, at the time of प्रलय dissolution, unites with Brahman. प्रलय काले, the final moment of death, for them would be the dissolution. This is called क्रम मुक्ति gradual liberation. ब्रह्मलोक can also be interpreted to mean the union with Brahman when the gross body falls. Both follow the death of

19 त्रेषुपंचविषयेऽवेद निबोधित्यो भवावाय। नित्रिष्ठो नित्यसंस्कृतो निरियोगक्षेत्र आत्मवान्॥ The Vedas deal with the three attributes; be you above the attributes. O Arjuna, free yourself from the pairs of opposites & ever remain in goodness, freed from all thoughts of acquisition & preservation. Be established in the Self. Bhagavad Gita 2.45.
the body so they are called निदेह मुनतिध. But not all sannyasis have to wait for the body to fall to renounce it. There are a few who detach themselves completely from the body even when it breathes, moves & feels. For them, the body has already dropped. परान्तिकाले the ultimate moment of death does not have to await the cremation of the body. The liberation while the body continues to live is जीिि् मुनतिध.

The state of being they experience at & after the moment of realisation is पर अमृिा the ultimate moment of death does not have to await the cremation of the body. The liberation while the body continues to live is जीिि् मुनतिध.

The Acharya says: “Liberation is not freedom from sorrows; it is the realisation that in the midst of sorrows, I am free.”

Only an Upanishad can describe such a state of being. Mundakopanishad 2.2.8: नभद्यिे हृदयग्रनन्तथनश्प्छद्यन्तिे सिथ संशयााः क्षीयन्तिे चा स्य कमाथनण। क्षीयन्तिे चा स्य कमाथनण ॥

When That is seen in both the higher & the lower, the knots that tie the heart are sundered, resolved are all doubts & misgivings & dissolved are all karmas.

Questions: I have developed dispassion towards the short-term rewards of the world. I am removing the pollution & agitations in my mind. Knowing that I can only find the truth in the scriptures, I have turned to wards them. God has graced me with a teacher. I am studying & reflecting with all sincerity. But nothing is happening. What should I do?

Mantras 5 - 7
विविषित्वदेशे च सुखासित: शुनचः समग्रीिनशराः शरीराः ।
अत्याश्रमस्थाः सकलेनन्तद्रयानण निरुध्य, भक्त्या स्िगुरुं प्रणम्य ॥

5. विविषित्वदेशे In a secluded, clean & pure place, resting in a comfortable posture, शुनचः with neck, head & body erect in one line Having restrained all the senses, भक्त्या bowing in devotion to the Guru, विविषित्व turning one’s attentiveness to, meditating within the lotus of one’s heart on Brahman, the untainted, the pure, the clear & griefless.

अचिन्त्यमयात्मकन्यतरूपं शिंचं प्रशान्तिममृिं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
तथााऽक्वदमध्यान्तिनिहीिमेकं नि�भुं नचदािन्तदमरूपमद्भुिम् ॥

6. The unthinkable {which thoughts cannot reach}, the unmanifest, अचिन्त्यमयात्मक the One of manifold forms, the ever-auspicious, प्रशान्ति all the manifested world, the source of all the Creator Itself. The One without a beginning, middle & end, the only One {without a second}, निभुं the all-pervading, the Knowledge – Bliss principle, the formless, the wonderful.

उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं इष्ट देवता ।
ध्यात्िा मुनिाच्छनि भूियोिंिं, समस्िसािंक्षं तमसः परस्िाि् ॥

7. ध्यात्िा By meditating upon Parameshvara, the Lord of Lords, the consort of Lady Uma, the three-eyed, blue-throated, ever-tranquil, the meditator, the man of reflection, attains Him, the source of all the manifested world, the witness of all, the One who is beyond all darkness.

I can meditate on my इष्ट देवता, the God of my understanding, with a specific form & name described in the scriptures & who appeals to my emotions. I will start by meditating on that single form एक रूप प्रभुम् but as my intelligence clarifies & becomes more one-pointed, I will come to the ideal behind the idea. I will see the world around me as manifestations of that deity. As I see my God express Itself in the innumerable forms around me, my meditation becomes
multi-form अंतःक ्रुप ध्यानम्. 20 These meditations on the deity with form & attributes will purify & concentrate my mind. As I mature in my enquiries into Vedanta, I will realise the deity cannot be limited to certain categories of names & forms but encompasses all names & forms in this stupendous sprawl of the universe. This is विश्व ्रुप ध्यानम्. But even this universe, whose dimensions are far beyond the ability of the human mind to comprehend, does not exhaust, diminish, or fully express the imperceptible, indescribable, unthinkable, awesome, unitary Reality that is its foundation & support. My attention will shift to meditation on the formless, attribute-less One, अरूप ध्यानम्. Beyond that is the meditation in which I consciously, deliberately, gradually, dissolve the false identities that I have projected on myself & realise the truth that I am that formless One. That is निरितिध्यानम्.

The Upanishad explains all three forms of meditation. Mantra 5 tersely describes the location, time, posture & the internal attitude with which I must start meditation. The location should be secluded, clean & quiet. While one can learn to meditate in a group, meditation is, ideally, a solitary practice. I should fix a particular time & location for regular meditation so that my mind will get habituated to become quiet when I am there. शुचि cleanliness applies to the place & to myself. I should sit erect so I am alert & do not fall asleep. Initially, the mind is likely to confuse stillness with rest & tend to doze off. At the same time, my body should be comfortable so I can maintain that posture for some time. So much for the externalities.

अयाध्यमस्यः – अति आयामस्यः: Sannyasa is the last stage of life. For the duration of the meditation, I should lay aside all my various identities (name, form, roles, positions, relationships, etc.), all attachments & pre-occupations arising from them, much like a sannyasi does. I go naked into meditation. 21 I should consciously withdraw my senses (hearing, vision & so on) from the environment. I can close my eyes & shut off vision but as for the other sense organs, I must discipline myself to merely observe the sensations as they come & go. I must not record, analyse, compare & identify them or else the mind will get distracted. All physical movement of the body should cease. This is far from easy. The mind & ego will resist. I will need the support of my faith & devotion to my Guru, the scriptures & God to even compose myself for meditation. Only by invoking their grace & blessings can I attempt to begin. Guru, for me, should not mean only the person with whom I have been brought into contact. It should include the entire tradition of Gurus, the immortal men of Realisation, who have handed Knowledge down from generation to generation & who have included me in the range of their compassion.

हृत्पुण्डरीकम् - I turn my attentiveness ie my thought flow is channelled to my intelligence which is located in the centre of the lotus shaped heart. The reference is not to the physical heart though, in terms of physical practice, it would help to turn the attention to the heart or the अनाहत चङ्क area. During the waking state, intelligence pervades the whole body but in the deep sleep state, it resolves into a subtle, non-material space in the body centre. The attentiveness is turned to intelligence because it is there that the effulgence of the Atma, the “I” Consciousness, is reflected. The un-attached, un-acting, un-moving, un-affected silent witness can be accessed from the intelligence.

What is the Atma? It is not an objective entity that can be described. But I can reflect on what It is not to try & conceptualise It. It is विरजम् tranquil, peaceful, free of all रजस् restlessness, turbulence. विशुद्धम् immaculate, untainted of all तामस्. It is absolutely clear विशादम्, free of all negativity, anxiety, ever pleasant. All these are synonymous with peace, love & compassion, the

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20 पुरुष एवेदं सर्वम् || पद्मभूतं यन्त्यत्र भवयम् || All this is the purusha alone. What is present, what was past & what will be in future is purusha, Parusha Sukta 1 - 1
21 जैत्यमकोलकतदुःखः, नामरूपूपणाशयविनतिः || देशवालिश्वरात्तिविलेहि यद्य, ब्रह्मतत्त्वसि भावयासनि || That which has no caste, creed, family or lineage, which is without name & form, merit & demerit, which is beyond space, time & sense objects. “That Brahman Thou art…” meditate on this in your mind. Vivekachudamani 254
qualities ascribed by the scriptures to the personal or cosmic deity with attributes so it can be taken that this part of the mantra is meditation on the संगुण ब्रह्मन्.

Mantra 6 says It is अनूप्तम् un-manifest, formless, inaccessible to the senses. 22 Hence it is all-pervasive, encompassing infinite forms अनन्त रूपम्. It is शिवम् holy, sacred, perfect. It is प्रशान्तम् अमृतम् of the very nature of peace & immutability. It is the ब्रह्मायणिनि the origin, the source of all. This term can be understood in several ways. [a] as the source of the Vedas because they too are called ब्रह्म. [b] as the source of ब्रह्मा, the Creator, or हिरण्यगर्भ the un-manifest, subtle macrocosm.[c] as the source of subtle matter प्रकृती which eventually evolves into the gross universe. [d] the word योनि or womb is generally used to indicate the material cause. Hence the mantra is referring to the निमित्त उपादान कारणम् the efficient & material cause of creation. It is without beginning, middle & end – all-pervading, देशकालिकस् अपरिच्छेद unconditioned by time & space, अखण्ड homogenous, part-less and therefore एकम् the indivisible One without a second. It manifests in all. It is the nature of Knowledge & Bliss. It is a marvel. This part of the mantra is meditation on the निरूपण ब्रह्मन्.

The mantra includes all three forms of meditation. [a] एक रूप ध्यानम् with the deity being described as a deity of peace, love, compassion. In this case, the meditation is one-to-one between the individual meditator & the deity. [b] अनेक रूप, विद्वेशु रूप ध्यानम् with divinity being characterised as all-pervasive, holy, immutable, encompassing infinite forms. In this case, the meditation is between one who identifies himself as the cosmic जीव, an identity greater than one individuality 23 & Creator. [c] अनूप ध्यानम् is where the formless, limitless, immutable Principle cause of all is meditated upon by the intelligence in which even the idea of individuality is fading away. So can all the forms of meditation be practised simultaneously? No. Meditation on the personal deity of one form is relatively easy for all people. Meditation on the deity of many forms can be practised by contemplating the beauty & majesty of mountains, rivers & other vistas as indicators of the beauty & majesty of the deity. But here the radius of imagination has to expand far beyond one’s individuality to include neighbours, friends (& enemies!), even other beings & species. Meditation on the formless can be done by contemplating the indicators that are themselves formless, like space. Space is also all pervading, feature-less, part-less, unattached, unaffected, whole, complete, accommodating all, etc. But correspondingly the radius of imagination of the “I” identity has also to expand. I have to gradually abandon my conditionings, superimpositions, one by one. As I do that, the Divine will also shed the conditionings that I have imposed on It. I cannot stand on my toes & reach for the Infinite. I have to raise myself from one form of meditation to the other.

What is the quality of the intelligence that can traverse the road from the personal god to the impersonal spirit? A person may be highly intelligent in worldly matters but may lack the subtlety (finesse, delicacy, exquisiteness) of intellect to think of the formless, nameless. The axe & the razor are equally sharp but the axe cannot be used to trim beards & the razor would be useless to cut trees. The Acharya says: “The intellect that does not have the practice of dwelling on the formless, attribute-less, may be brilliant in the worldly sense but will not be able to function in the spiritual field.” The intelligence must be quick to grasp, reflect, resolve & retain. It must be pure, undisturbed by waves of likes, dislikes, fear, anger, regrets & expectations. It must be able to distinguish fine, delicate nuances with precision. It must be able to think in this

22 अनूप्तमस्यायनांरूपमयायं तथाश्रयं निश्चयाङ्गवच्यं यत्। अनानन्तं महतं परं धुरं... It is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, without taste, without smell, without beginning, without end, beyond the great, eternal, immutable... Kathopanishad 1.3.15
23 How does one come to see oneself as greater than one individual? Through love of all of those beings with whom I come into contact in my life. When I am able to accept them as they are regardless of their attitude towards me; when I am able to understand their point of view without judgement; when I see their faults in me & my virtues in them, then the separation between the “I and They” will greatly reduce. It means the love of humans more than love of humanity.
manner without the support of form, shape & quality. At the same time, it must be able to apply the result of thought to its own experience. Meditation should not be an abstract, philosophical flight of thought that finds no application in life. The intelligence that is so subtle also must be strong enough to overcome the disturbances that may arise from the vasanas in the subconscious & unconscious levels of the mind. Generally, the mind is so busy that these bubbles of past impressions do not have any impact. But when the mind is quietened in meditation, these disturbances could surface. They are one of the well-known obstacles to meditation called कशाय poisonous, bitter, unsettling tendencies. I cannot allow those tendencies to express themselves outside on others; neither can I swallow them for they will only return. I must learn not to take ownership of those thoughts but merely observe them. I must hold them within me but not be affected by them, just like Lord Shiva drank the poison but did not swallow it, turning his neck blue. It can take months, perhaps years, may be lifetimes to attain the clarity & purity of intelligence that can meditate on Brahman.

Mantra 7 returns to the theme of 3 forms of meditation, beginning with the form of the Lord. The Infinite is described in the form of Lord Shiva, उमाहायण्ड the consort of Uma. Uma also appears as हैमायति daughter of Himavan in Kenopanishad V-3.12, representing ढाब्बलिक्ष्य the supreme Knowledge of Brahman. Hence, depending on one’s point of view, the mantra spans the spread between एक रूप & अरूप ध्यानम्.

प्रभुं – the all-powerful, all – capable Lord of Lords who is कर्तृम्, अकर्तृम्, अन्नता कर्तृम् – who can do, not do or undo. It pervades the universe as Awareness, the inner Awareness in every being hence It is the controller of the universe. 24 Again, as Consciousness. It accommodates the universe but remains unconnected, unaffected by it.

त्रिलोचनम् नीलकगण्डम् – In एक रूप ध्यानम् the sun, moon & fire can be taken as the three eyes that illuminate: the sun during the day, the moon in the night up to the full moon, fire during the night of the new moon. In अनेक रूप ध्यानम्, two eyes represent love & order, mercy & justice, forgiveness & restitution, the opposing but complementary qualities with which the Lord governs creation. The blue throat can be a symbol for meditating on the God of my understanding.

भूतोनिम् समस्ताधिष्ठि – the fount, the cause from which everything springs. The एक रूप, अनेक रूप, विच्छेद रूप are all contained within this One source. It is the One Consciousness that gives existence & awareness to all beings & things as the silent witness. It is the अभिन्न निमित्त उपाध्यायन विच्छेद कारणम् the indivisible, efficient, material cause that projects the world. तमसः परस्तत्तु – Tamas here does not mean ignorance because ignorance operates only at the individual level. Tamas means माया cosmic primal concealment that hides the truth. Maya cannot exist without Brahman but it does not affect Brahman. Brahman pervades Maya, like It pervades the world. But just as It is unattached to it, unaffected by the world, it is independent of Maya. I am this Brahman, not anything else. This is the goal of अरूप ध्यानम्.

A मुनि meditator will use the mantras to reach that state of being. In meditating on the mantras, I will move from an admiration for the beauty of their composition to the stage of intellectual understanding of their meaning. I will have to move from there to the final stage of applying that meaning to myself for the conviction that This is I. This last mile would be difficult as it would demand the falsification of all that I previously thought of as real. How long would it take to reach this goal? No one can hazard a guess about that. The Acharya explains that “ It is not how long you meditate; it is the quality of meditation that counts”.

24 भयादस्यातििपतत भयातििपतत सूयग। भयातििपतत वायुश्च मृत्युधागवतत ॥ Kathopanishad 2.6.3
Mantras 8 - 10

8. He is Brahma; He is Shiva; He is Indra: He is the Immutable \{ Imperishable \}; He is the Supreme; He is the Self- effulgent. He alone is Vishnu; He is the Vitality; He is Time; He is Fire; He is the Moon.

9. He alone is all that was; \{ all that is; \} all that will be. He is the Eternal. Knowing Him, one goes beyond death. There is no other way to Freedom.

10. I am in all beings \{ the moving & unmoving, the flowing & the static, the horizontal & the vertical, all that is seen & unseen \}; all beings are in Me. The one who sees this clearly, he attains the highest Brahman. There is no other means.

The three verses are being read together because they raise one effortlessly from \एकरूप\ to \अपरिवर्त्तनीय\ to \अरूप\ to culminate in \अरूप ध्यानम्. The \स्\: the ‘He’ referred to in Mantra 8 is the meditator. In the beginning my attention is entirely on the form, decoration & beauty of my beloved deity. But even the most ardent devotee will eventually realise that if he limits his God to one form, he is actually diminishing It, imposing his own conditionings upon the Supreme. It is \अक्षर\ immutable, changeless, absolute. The names & forms will change over time but the formless, nameless Principle behind them will not change. It is the Highest, incomparable, Supreme. Life expressing through the macrocosmic gross forms is called \विराट\; the same supreme Spirit expressing through the totality of mind & intellect is called \सम्राट्. But the Supreme without the adjuncts of the gross & subtle matter, is \स्िराट्– self-luminous, \स्ियम्प्रकाशाः\ requiring no other source to bring It forth, no other light to ignite It, no other lamp to illuminate It. Because It shines, everything shines. 25 The most important meaning of the mantra is that it is not talking about a third party. I am not observing an event happening somewhere. It is the meditator, I, who is saying, I am Brahma, I am Vishnu, I am Shiva: I am the Creator, Sustainer & Destroyer of this awesome creation. It is relatively easy for me to intellectually grasp the idea of the eternal, immutable, ultimate, transcendent Cause as “something somewhere out there”. It is harder for me to absorb that that transcendent Cause, that is immanent in the universe, is also in me; perhaps only as a flawed image of the original, but present all the same. It is extremely difficult to raise myself to the last stage where I realize that I am the original, that there is only the original & the transactional reality that I experience is only a mirage. Only a few great souls are granted that revelation.

This is the declaration the meditator makes in Mantra 9. I do not say that I was previously separate but have now become one with Brahman. I declare that even before time began, even before time & space existed, I alone existed. I alone am existent now. I alone will exist in future. I am not only the creator; I am the very stuff of creation. Creation arises in me by My thought. It is sustained by My power & knowledge. At dissolution, at My command, time & space will contract & fold themselves into Me. This would appear to be a colossal lunacy to people who

25 न तत्र सूर्यों भाति न च मूर्त्तियों नेमा विविधयों भाति कृतोदयम्। \सर्व तस्य भावम्\ भाति कृतोदयमिद् भाति। The sun does not shine there, nor does the moon, nor do the stars, nor lightning and much less, this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him: by His light, all these shine. Kathopanishad 2.5.15.
can only see themselves as finite, faulty, flawed entities, each one different from the other, separated eternally from the world & God. But the Vedantin is not overwhelmed by his apparent meagreness against the unimaginable scale & variety of the universe. His attention is not on the effects but the Cause behind them. The mantra says स: He, second person singular, is सत्त्व everything, plural. There is no plurality; there is only One, appearing as many. The multitude of names & forms are बाच्चार्मण विकारी नामधेय merely names based on words.26 ते, He, is That. On knowing that, on realizing that Truth, he मूलम्यत्वति passes beyond the bondage of mortality. What is the bondage of mortality? My authentic nature is the eternal, boundless, indivisible One. But due to error, I see myself as the finite individual. So long as I see myself as this individual, I shall be born to die & be born again.

The individuality is the repository of likes & dislikes, preferences & expectations, This is the root of all sorrow. This is the ultimate bondage.27 The finitude of individuality is the ultimate bondage because all sorrow arises from that. Hence the nullification of the mirage of individuality & the realization that I am the universal पुरुष is the only means to freedom. There is absolutely no other way.

Is this single-minded dedication or a form of fundamentalism? In Mantra 2 the Guru stressed faith, devotion & meditation. It is one thing to say that the paths are many – कर्म, उपासना, भक्ति, राज योग & so on. But it is another thing to say that there is only one path & all others are auxiliary to that main path. But the issue is that while all the other paths may purify individuality & lift it to higher plane of existence, they will not negate it. A great devotee will be prepared to accept that his true identity is to be the servant of God he sees everywhere & in everyone. This, by itself, is a very high state of being. But Vedanta says that even that purified identity retains its individuality & thus the potential for harbouring likes, dislikes, pride, egotism & so on. At its most sublime expression, the distance that the devotee senses between his individuality & the subject of his love can be the cause of sorrow. That distance can only be bridged by knowledge. Acharya clarifies: “The falsification of individuality is the only way. Any religion that teaches this is Upanishad”. There is no other option but for me to change my understanding of myself. देहो देहात्मा प्रोतिधाः, जीवो देह समातनं, सोहं भावन पुजयति The body is the temple of the Spirit. The Spirit is eternal. I shall worship you God as being one with You. नीत्रं ईश्वर ऐक्यं – the one-ness of the soul & God is not the absorption of God into the soul; it is the soul that disappears leaving only the Spirit.

In Mantra 9 the meditator declares that I, Brahman am beyond Time, I am the Efficient Cause. In Mantra 10, he declares that I am beyond Space, I am the Material Cause. I am in all beings as their अन्तयोमिन्ता inner controller, illuminator, lending Existence, Awareness & Joy to all beings, from Brahma to a clump of grass, to use Bhagavan Adi Shankaracharya’s expressive phrase.

The inanimate know me as Existence; even the frailest creeper struggles to catch the sun. The intelligent know me as Existence & Self – awareness. The wise, who meditate on the source of Existence & Awareness, know that I am Existence, Consciousness & Bliss.

But how can I be in all beings & simultaneously all beings be in me? This seems contradictory. The simplest answer is that the proliferating variety we experience around us is only a

26 Chandogya Upanishad 6.1.4-6.
27 Adhyāyaquadvyapātya sattvāt a bhūtvā | vatsa prakāṣa śākṣeyam śīśityāmākṣānirātmata || The duality & misery of the non-dual blissful self is called bondage. Abiding in its own nature is said to be liberation. Hence to experience duality as real & be unhappy is bondage. To abide in one’s own true self is liberation. Panchadasi 10.4
projection; it is only seemingly real. If I look beyond the names & forms, there is only Brahman. I am aware of the variety because of Brahman. The projection is Brahman. The source of projection is Brahman.

There are vast oceans & small ponds. Oceans have huge waves whereas ponds can have only small ripples. The waves & ripples are nothing but the ocean & the pond. And both are nothing but water. Earth supports an enormous variety of species & life forms but ultimately all of them are made up of the same 5 fundamental factors, earth, water, fire, air & space. The 5 fundamental elements are nothing but combinations of elements in their purest form. They all arise from one source: Space. So, space is in all varieties are all varieties are in space.

Mantra 11
आत्मामरिंणं कृत्िा प्रणिं चोिरारनणम् । ( प्रणिं च उत्तरारणिम् )
जाननिर्मयनामायासात् पाशं स्तति पिण्डः ॥ ११ ॥

11. Keeping the mind (ego) as the lower block & Om { the indicator of Brahman} as the upper block, जाननिर्मयन अन्यासात् by the steady, repeated practice of churning the knowledge in the mind, the wise man burns up all the cords of bondage.

How do I reach that level of understanding of seeing only the totality & not my individuality? I have to put out self-effort. Shruti described the process of श्रणम्, मननम् & नितिदिशासनम् beautifully, using the analogy of the fire blocks. The sacred fires for the rituals were lit either by focusing the rays of the sun on the combustibles by a magnifying glass or by rubbing two blocks of wood together to create a spark. The अधो अरणि the lower block was of ashvattha wood & had a trough or scoop dug into it. The उत्तर अरणि was of shami wood. The upper block was inserted into the scoop & turned using a cord. The tiny spark that eventually resulted was fed with dry grass, cotton & other fuel until it became a flame & then transferred to the larger fire pit. There it was carefully nursed with fuel & wood until it became a blaze.

The lower block is the inner equipment, the composite of मनः, बुद्धि, चित्त, अहंकार – mind, intellect, memory & “I” sense. It has to be held steady as otherwise the उत्तर अरणि can never churn. Knowledge of the vedas, specifically the mahavakyas, have already scooped out an area on the false do-er, enjoy-er, ego identity. Hence, Shruti is referring to the qualified seeker who has already done श्रणम् which can be described generally as the consistent & systematic study of Vedantic scriptures under the guidance of a competent teacher. He is now doing मननम् & नितिदिशासनम्. He uses Om, the nearest indicator of Brahman, as the churn to deliberate on the knowledge imparted to him by the scriptures & the guru. Om here refers to the sound or symbol that is used to initially quieten the mind & seek the Lord’s grace for meditation. What is the significance of meditating on Om? Kathopanishad 1.2.16 says एतत्वेववाग्याचार चतुर्वेववाग्याचार परम् | एतत्वेववाग्याचार शाल्वा यो यदिच्छित्ति तस्य तत् ॥ This Word is verily Brahman alone, this Word is verily the Highest, he who knows this Word verily obtains whatever of the two he desires. The two that are desired are the saguna Brahman with attributes, qualities or the nirguna Brahman without any attributes, qualities. What does this meditation involve? It requires the meditator to apply the essence of the scriptures, the महावाक्याः, the terse, identity-revealing statements of the Upanishads to himself until revelation “ I am Brahman” dawns on him. How does he apply them? By meditating on the ways in which each Upanishad reveals the truth of his identity. Mundaka & Kaivalya Upanishad use the method of अवस्थापव विचार the enquiry into the 3 states with which Consciousness is associated: waking, dream & deep sleep. Kenopanishad uses दृष्टेन दृष्टेन त्रिभवक the examination into the see-r and the see-n. Kathopanishad uses three methods:
The fire-sticks must be churned repeatedly, patiently for the spark to come out. That spark must be sheltered from moisture & wind & be immediately fed with small bits of dry fuel so that it becomes a tiny flame. That small flame must be transferred to the fire-pit & again carefully nursed with fuel until it becomes a blaze. The analogy stresses the fortitude with which the seeker should continue his practice & the care with which the meditator should treat the flash of insight that comes to him. *Kenopanishad* says that the revelation would come as suddenly as a flash of lightning, as quickly as the blinking of the eye. So the meditator should be intensely alert to that leap of intuition, sedulously preserve it, continuously reinforce it until it becomes an unquenchable fire inside him. The meditator should take as much care of this spark as a pregnant mother does to preserve & nourishes the foetus inside her.

Continuing with the analogy of the fire, the mantra describes the result of revelation as the burning of all bondages. (See notes on Mantra 8-10 on bondage.) The first to be burned are the accretions of identity that I gather around me such as profession, caste, community, family; then my notion of doer-ship & enjoyer-ship. I then stand naked in front of Brahman in a *I–Thou* duality with the minimum of attributes & qualities. Finally the vestiges of identity merge into Brahman as the rivers flow into the sea.

If Brahman is all & all is in Brahman, what is then the explanation for the fact that we do not comprehend Brahman at all but are constantly aware of the reality of the individual *jiva* & the world? We can experience only the triangle of *jiva–jagat–Ishwara*; the second-less Brahman is not in our existential experience. The Upanishad begins the process of *अध्यायोपः अपनाऽः* negation of superimposition by assuming the *jiva* to be real & analysing the states of experience it endures.

Mantra 12 - 14

स एव मायापररमोनहिात्मा शरीरमास्थाय करोति सर्वम् ।
ख्रि-अश्वानादिविविचित्रभोगे: स एव जात्मारतिरतिस्मिति ॥ १२॥

12. His mind deluded by Maya, he (the Self), *shariramasthan* identifying with his body, performs all actions (perceptions, feelings, thoughts). In the waking state it is he who attains fulfilment {or strives to attain fulfilment} through a variety of objects like women, food, wine & so on.

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28 आत्मानं रथिनं विद्वं यशस्वरं संस्कृतं एवं तु || बुद्धि तु सारथिः विद्वं मनः प्रग्रहकृतं च || Know the Atman as the lord of chariot who sits within it & the body as the chariot. Know the intellect to be the charioteer & the mind, verily, as the reins. *Kathopanishad* 1.3.3

29 येन रूपं रसं दशं शब्दान् मैथुनान् || तवद्युतं व्ययुतंदा || Know the Atman by which man cognises form, taste, smell, sounds & sexual joys… *Kathopanishad* 2.4.3-1

30 ऋतं तपबन्तौ सुकृतस्य || प्रतवष्टौ परमं पराधे || The two who enjoy the fruits of their good works being seated in the cavity of the heart, the seat of the Supreme… *Kathopanishad* 1.3.1

31 तस्यैष आदेश || इतत आतंदैवतम् || This is the instruction/ teaching *आदेश*: *व्ययुतं व्ययुतं* [of Brahman] by means of illustration/ analogy. It is like that which is (known as) the flash of lightning, *व्ययुतं* & *व्ययुतं*. It is as the blinking of the eye *इत्त्वाचः* These are Its illustrations in the divine, cosmic context.

32 इतत आदेश || इतत्वाचः* || *Kenopanishad* 4.4

33 यथा नामः स्यद्वान्तः समुद्रं गज्जत्ति नामरूपे विह्याय || Just as the flowing rivers disappear into the sea, losing their distinctive names & forms. *Mundakopanishad* 3.2.8-1

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13. The same individualised ego, experiences pleasure & pain in the dream state, the imaginary world created by his own Maya (misapprehension of Reality). In the state of deep sleep, when everything is merged, resolved { into their causal state}, he is overwhelmed by ignorance (non-apprehension), & attains the nature of bliss.

14. Once again, due to its connections with the deeds performed in previous lives, he comes back to the dream or waking states. That jiva, who sports in the three cities, from whom verily have sprung all varieties & diversities, he is the substratum, the indivisible, homogenous, part-less Consciousness. Into Him, the three worlds, cities resolve, go into dissolution.

Consciousness illumines the mind which, immediately deluded by the inexplicable, mysterious power of Maya, identifies itself with the body - mind - intellect - “I” sense complex to conclude “This is what I am.” In as much as the components are finite & unstable, the identity has a built-in sense of finitude, change & incompleteness. The mind illuminated by Consciousness goes through three levels of existential experience: the waking state, dream state & deep sleep state. In the waking state, all the senses of knowledge & action are active, flooding the mind with their signals. The “I” sense, captivated by the colourful multiplicity around itself, responds to its own sense of finitude to try to gain those objects & experiences that would give it a sense of fulfilment. The Upanishad employs the catch-all phrase “wine, women & song” to describe the hierarchy of physiological, emotional, psychological & intellectual needs that rise in the jiva. While the Upanishad says attains fulfilment, there is no human being who has ever found complete contentment in the objects of the world. The phrase refers more to the attempt rather than the end result.

The Upanishad’s purpose here is to explain my real identity by analysing the three states of existence it undergoes every day. The waking state is the most vivid of the three; it is also the one in which I remain the longest. But, based on those two factors alone, it would not be correct for me to conclude that the experiencer & the experiences in waking state alone are real & the others are unreal. Vedanta points out that I need to study my experiences in all three states to come to any firm conclusion about what is real & unreal. Vedanta admits that there are differences between the waking & dream state. But there are also similarities. The examination of those similarities would lead to the conclusion that the experiencer & the experiences in the waking state do not occupy a higher locus or plane of reality than the other states.

My body, senses, mind & intellect are all active in the Waking state. Carried away by their activities, I identify with them & say that this is my identity, the Waker. My mind, influenced by the impressions of the significant experiences that I underwent in the waking state, in this & previous births, projects another world within itself in the Dream state so that I may relive those experiences. \[34\] This is the power of projection. Identifying myself with the mind, I call myself the Dreamer & enter the dream world to experience the reality of the dream. At that point in time, the reality of the waking world no longer exists & I am no longer the Waker. From the dream state, I enter into deep sleep state in which my body, mind & intellect become

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\[34\] जागरनवस्थायां यद् दृष्टं यत् श्रुतं तत्ज्ञाति वचनाय निद्रासमये यः प्रेणः प्रत्येकं तस्मात् स श्रवयाय | The dream state is that which is projected while in sleep from the impressions born of what was seen & heard in the waking state.

Tattvabodhah
dormant. The Waker & Dreamer disappear. I have no experiencer to identify with; no experience to be undergone; no knowledge to be gained. निक्षेप शक्ति no longer entertains or agitates me; I am close to the wall of primal ignorance आिरण शक्ति. The mantra says the state of bliss is obtained in deep sleep. Can primal ignorance yield such bliss? The bliss experienced in deep sleep is not the positive bliss of knowledge but the passive, dull bliss of the absence of all thought modifications. It can be likened to the silence of the grave, not the peace that passes understanding. But Consciousness remains for when I wake up, I can assert that I did not know anything; I slept well. In each state, that state alone is real & no other state has reality. Only the Waker exists only in the Waking state; only the Dreamer exists in the Dream state; there is no Experiencer at all in the deep sleep state. There is no continuity of experience. Hence it cannot be maintained that the reality experienced in the waking state has a greater validity than the reality experienced in the others.

What occurs in the microcosm is a reflection of that which occurs in the macrocosm. The Waker is Brahman. But identifying with the body – mind – intellect complex, It becomes the jiva. The waking state & the waker are seen as real. In the dream, it is Brahman that becomes the dreamer & the waker is negated. The dreamer & the dream are seen as real. The waking & dream state are nullified in the sleep state where only primal ignorance, avidya or maya exists. But it is Brahman, pure Consciousness, that gives Existence & Awareness to all three states. The jiva, under the influence of avidya, projects the world of three states & inhabits them. Brahman + Maya project the variety of the worlds & inhabit them as Ishwara.

In mantra 14, the Upanishad resolves the allegory it began in mantra 12. I am the jiva that creates the dream world; I am the jiva that creates the waking world: I am the jiva into which both of them dissolve when I sleep in profound ignorance of my identity. I return again & again to these 3 fields of experience without realising that I alone have created them. The reality is that there is only the unity where I alone am creator, creation & creature. The trinity of soul, world & creator are merely the adjuncts that simultaneously conceal & point to the Consciousness on which they are projected. When I shift my perspective from the individual to the totality, I will wake up from the long sleep of Maya & realise that I am the fountainhead, the indivisible complete whole. I am the alpha & the omega. I am Brahman & there is nothing else but I.

**Mantra 15**

एतराज्ञायते प्राणो मनः सचेद्रियाणि च ।
खं वायुन्यायनिरापाः पृष्ठथी निश्वस्य धाररणी ॥ १५॥

15. From It (the supreme Reality) are born the vitalities, the inner equipment, and all the faculties {and organs} of perception & action. Born too are खं space, वायु air, atmosphere ज्वोति fire, water & the earth. He is foundation; the support of all.

The mantra summarises जगि् सृष्टि, creation of the individual & cosmic, the gross & the subtle, in two lines. The first line covers the organs of knowledge & action in the gross body, the faculties of perception & action in the subtle body & the mind with its four functionalities. In as much as the individual exists only in the context of the cosmic, the first line includes तिथ्र & विररं, कैलास & हिरण्य, प्राज & इश्वर. This is the description of the Self तत पद on both the miniature & the grand scale. But तत पद is possible only against the background, in the context of, the cosmic. Hence all descriptions of the Self are accompanied by an enquire into creation, because by perceiving creation as the effect, we can understand the cause. In the miniature frame of individuality, this is the world of waking, dream & deep sleep that I create. In the grand scale of the universe, it is the five elements that spring from Consciousness that Itself does not modify by their emergence. The purport of the mantra is that the individual can exist only in the context of
the cosmic, the microcosm in the macrocosm. Our conventional notion of individuality denies any connection with the totality & is therefore an illusion.

Mantras 6 to 10 taught about the goal for which I should aim. It is the revelation that I am in all & all are in Me. That is the only path to Liberation. There is no other. I can come to that knowledge by studying the scriptures under the guidance of a knowledgeable & competent preceptor; reflecting on the teachings to resolve all doubts; meditating to remove all contrary notions & establishing the scriptural truth in me. I have to expand the radius of my identity by first identifying myself with divinity in one form; then the divinity of many forms & finally the Divine of no form. At each stage, I also dissolve my attachment to the adjuncts that limit & confine me. Mantra 11 teaches how to meditate. Having established the goal & the means, the Upanishad turns to describe the student - meditator as the creator & expericer of the three states of experience in mantras 12 to 14. In mantra 15, it concludes the allegory of 3 states by establishing that the Self, that Consciousness, is the origin of Creation. Now in mantra 16, it completes the equation by declaring that I, the individual self जीवात्मा, is the same as the Self परमात्मा. This is the महावाक्य the great identity- revealing declaration of the Upanishad. This is, in fact, the Upanishad.

Mantra 16
यत् पर ब्रह्म स्वात्माविषवस्यायतं महत्;
सुक्तात्स्वसुस्कर्तं नित्यं तत्वमेव त्वमेव तत् ॥ १६॥

16. That which is the Supreme, which is the Self in all, the great आयतन स्यम् support, the great abode of the universe; which is subtler than the subtle; which is eternal – That alone thou art; thou art That alone.

The Upanishad indicates Brahman as महत् – colossal, gigantic like space. But space itself depends on Its support. Space is subtle because it has only one attribute – sound, or more accurately, vibration – with which it can be sensed. Atma does not even have that single attribute. Subtlety is also a measure of pervasiveness. Space is all-pervasive. But the Atma is subtler, more pervasive, than space because It is the cause of space. Space is the interval between objects; time is the interval between events. By adding नित्यम् the Upanishad says that Brahman is beyond space & time. It is the support of the universe. It is that from which this universe of innumerable worlds springs; it is that into which the universe folds & enters at dissolution. The Upanishad says: That is verily what you are; you are verily That.

The Upanishad has already taught me how to expand my idea of my identity by first meditating on the deity with one form, then many forms & finally the formless Infinite. But the vestige of the “I” identity remains because the intellect that I have used to negate all the other adjuncts is still there. Now the stage has come for me to deny that intellect itself. This is the last & most difficult leap of intuition to make. Vedanta describes the logical process of dissolving the small “I” into with the universal “I” in painstaking detail. One way of understanding Brahman is as महत्, विज्ञानार्थम्, कर्मफलदाता colossal beyond comprehension, the cause & support of the universe, the dispenser of all results. In other words, I try to understand Brahman’s infinitude by using the scale of my own finitude. But the Brahman of that understanding remains impossibly remote परोक्ष from me. On the other hand, I have प्रारूढ direct, unmediated experience of myself, meaning the combination of my mind, intellect, memory, "I" sense & जीवात्मा the reflection of consciousness. I have the intellectual conviction of the presence of the शुद्ध चैतन्य pure Consciousness. Vedanta says that all I need to do is to negate the finitude that has been projected on my “I” sense & the remoteness that has been projected Brahman to realise my true identity. Jivatma + Conditionings in the microcosm = Paramatma + Conditionings in the macrocosm. Thus when the Conditionings are negated what remains is the equation Jivatma =

Nota: The highlighted text in Devanagari script represents Sanskrit mantras and the additional emphasis indicates the importance of these verses in the context of the Upanishad's teaching on identity and consciousness.

35 एवं गण्ड्रहाण्यायुः संभूिम् – Thus there is identity between the microcosm & macrocosm. Tattvabodhah
Paramatma. As a matter of fact, there is not even the equation but only the singularity = Brahman. This is the crux of the problem. Denying my acquired external attributes is relatively easy. Denying my body & senses is more difficult but still possible. Denying my mind & the personality so carefully constructed by it is the most difficult of all. Furthermore, I do not have to deny it but falsify it i.e. I will continue to experience it every day but understand that it is not the real I. Knowledge has to triumph over existential experience. Acharya comments: “It is very easy to remove God’s conditionings but very difficult to remove our own”. But, as the Upanishad says, there is no other way to salvation.

The Upanishad now declares several mantras that I can use in my meditation to remove those limiting conditionings.

Mantra 17

ा ग्रत्वनुमसादिश्रेष्ठतत्त्वकावलि।
तदन्तमिति जात्वा सर्वविन्यः प्रसुज्ञप्यते ॥ १७॥
17. I am That Brahman that illumines the worlds of waking, dream & deep sleep. Realizing this, I am freed from all bondage, untied from all shackles.

The mantra calls each state of experience a separate world because the experience in each one of them is distinct from the other. I experience the five elements & their qualities most vividly in the waking state. I experience the same five elements but in their subtle form in the dream state. I experience the blankness of absolute ignorance in deep sleep. The mantra says अदि meaning all the experiences in between the three pure states. Who is the experiencer & illuminator? The mind complex, especially the “I” sense, is the experiencer; the illuminator is the pure Consciousness that lends Awareness to everything. It is the pure Existence that gives reality to every experience. I have no doubt about the reality of the dream while I am in dream. It is the अन्तिः करण the inner equipment that is affected by what it underwent; the शुद्ध चैत्य pure Consciousness illuminates the experience but is never affected by it. It remains the detached, dispassionate witness. It would be incorrect to even call It the witness because the witness exists only in relation to what is witnessed, whereas Existence – Awareness remains unaffected by whatever it illuminates or does not illuminate.

Why does the Upanishad have these आत्म लक्षण मंत्रयं verses that indicate the nature of the Atma? Vedantic meditation is not like Yoga meditation which seeks to cease the modifications of the mind. When the mind ceases to move, the Existence – Consciousness from which the mind springs is realised. That is नित्यिक्षण समाधि. Meditation in Vedanta, on the other hand, is the affirmation of one’s true identity & the negation of the superimposed false identity. This is the essence of अद्यावृत्त्व अपब्रह्म the negation of primal, beginning-less superimposition. It is the qualified, trained meditator’s continuous turning over the thoughts of negation & affirmation that is नित्यिक्षणम. Initially, the thoughts of negation have to be more frequent or more intense as the dirt of falsity has to be cleaned. As the illusions are cleared away, the Self, the foundation on which the superimposition is projected, rises in the intellect. The affirmations of the Self therefore serve to negate the Not-Self. Vedantic meditation (or Yogic meditation, for that matter) is not a process that begins & ends. It is a state in which the mind must continually remain because so long as the gross & subtle body exist, the superimpositions will remain & they have to be negated. The snake will continue to appear on the rope; the nacre will continue to flash on the seashell. I have to keep affirming what is real & negating that which is unreal.

**36** सूर्यो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षः न लिपयते चाशुपृष्ठः चाक्षुषः। एकतथा सर्वभूतानाय न लिपयते लोकः चेतन बाहः। Just as the sun, the eye of the whole world [the illuminator of the worlds] is not affected by the defects of the external eye, in the same way, the Atma, the innermost essence in all beings, is not contaminated by the sorrows [or joys] of the world. *Kathopanishad* 2.5.11.
It is important that there is an emotional content to these essentially intellectual endeavours. One way, of course, is to have love & devotion to a deity of one’s heart, while always knowing that the deity with attributes is only a sacred symbol of the attribute-less Brahman. But even in this bhakti, I must avoid the error of thinking that I am a part of the whole, a reflection of the original. Only something gross has parts. Only something of substance has areas of relative weakness. Only something that is manifest has dimensions. Even space, which is extremely subtle & insubstantial, has directions because it is manifest. The Atma has none of these features. Another way is to observe the lives & actions of realised persons who are my contemporaries in time & space. I can develop love & devotion for them. I can try & emulate their example. This would give a personal dimension to my meditations.

Mantra 18

अत्िेभ्यो निलक्षणाः सातिक्य नचन्तमारोऽहं सदानशिाः
मन्त्र १८

18. Everything in the three ग्राम्मु realms that is the object of enjoyment, the subject that enjoys, & the enjoyment - I am different from all of them. I am the Witness; I am the pure Consciousness; I am the holy, the auspicious.

I, the individual in the transactional world, create the dream & waking worlds within myself & then retire from both into sleep. None of the worlds exist by themselves; they are all dependent on me. Hence, even in the transactional plane, the three worlds occupy an inferior state of reality compared to the “I” who is their creator. In the same way, it is Brahman that gives existence to the waking, dream & sleep worlds; that gives awareness to the waker, dreamer, sleeper; that gives reality to the experiences endured in the three worlds. The truth is there is only Brahman as sans Existence - Consciousness there would be no experiencer, object of experience or the experience.

But the Upanishad simultaneously declares that I, Brahman, am different from all three of them. I exist quite apart from all of them meaning that Brahman is independent of the three states, the 14 worlds. Its Being is not, in the slightest manner, affected or influenced by the three. The Acharya beautifully put it this way: “Others say: The World was – I came – I went – the World remained. Vedanta says: I was – the world came – the world went – I remained”. While agreeing that Brahman is One, has to be One, there cannot be another, how do I reconcile that unity with the variety & multiplicity in the universe? Vedanta maintains that while the cause is one, results can appear as many. But does that mean that Brahman changes, modifies into many? Modification would require that certain parts of Brahman modify into certain things & other parts change into other things. This is विरिणाम वां the doctrine of modification. But that would contradict the declarations in the Upanishads including mantra 6 in this very Upanishad. Secondly, one modification would imply that there would be others: growth, maturity, decay & death. A limited, mortal, evolving entity of that nature cannot be Brahman. One way of reconciling the contradiction would be to apply Maya as “the black box solution” to the problem, saying, in effect, “The contradiction of a single cause modifying into multiple effects is because

37 देह बुद्ध्या तु दासोऽहं, जीव बुद्ध्या तदद्भ्याः। आत्म बुद्ध्या तमेवाः, इति मे निषिद्ध मतिः। Identified with my body, I am Your servant; identified with my soul I am a part of You. However as pure Self we are One; this is my firm conviction. Lord Hanuman to Lord Rama in Ramayana. Many realised Masters of Kevala Advaita retain a deep love for certain deities & draw inspiration from them. There is no contradiction between Kevala Advaita & bhakti as both attitudes are necessary. The Masters’ approach is like Lord Hanuman’s.

38 Three worlds can also be interpreted as भू; भुव; सुव; the representatives उपलक्षण, of the 14 worlds of creation, meaning the entire visible & invisible universe.

39 अर्थयथे भूमुक्ति प्रित्यक्तः रूपं प्रतिरूपं बयुः। एकस्वथा सर्वभूतानासमं रूपं प्रतिरूपं विद्यते॥ Just as fire, having entered the world, though one, assumes different forms according to the shape it enters, so does the eternal Atma of all living beings, though One, takes a form according to each shape it enters. It also in Itself exists beyond them. Kathopanishad 2.5.9
of Maya. We cannot know how it happened.” But Maya is not a blank, negative quantity that can be used to equalise all equations.

There is the other view that holds that Brahman is the foundational Reality on which Maya, the power of Brahman, projects innumerable names & forms. This is the doctrine of superimposition. To one on the other side, Maya conceals the indivisible, all-pervasive, Existence – Consciousness – Bliss of Brahman & superimposes, on that concealment, the bewildering variety of the three states in fourteen worlds. But the substratum, Brahman Itself, is not affected in the least by the superimposition. It remains Pure, Inviable Consciousness. Maya here is not a blank entity but a phenomenon, with powers that can be discerned by their effects. But unlike other phenomena, Maya is inexplicable; it appears to exist as long as I am not aware of it; when I become aware of it, it disappears.

But the very fact that I am trying to determine the reality of the universe in relation to Brahman is itself the effect of Maya. I am conditioned by my physical & mental frames of reference in which everything is bound by space, occurs in time, cause precedes effect & duality is real. To explain Brahman in the context of these conditionings, I need the doctrines of modification & superimposition because they serve the purpose of helping me get over the blocks in my mind. But in meditation, I have to do so. I have to deny the reality that I have given to the adjuncts, boundaries & conditions. As long as I continue to interact with the world, though I may regard it & my experiences in it as illusory, Consciousness would be the Witness, the unattached, unaffected, unconditioned, unlimited, immanent, transcendent, Awareness. But it would remain Brahman in relation to, in the context of, the world. There would be the dichotomy of the see-r & the see-n. But once I traverse the illusion & know the unreality of the world, even the see-r & the see-n would disappear. This is the उपसंहार, the reiteration, the summing up, the restatement of the उपक्रम declaration in mantra 16. The अध्यारोप अपवाद has been accomplished. There is nothing more to be accomplished. The Upanishad has ended.

The song of Liberation
Mantra 19

मय्येि सकलं जािं मनय सिं प्रनिनििम् ।
मनय सिं लयं यानि िद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्म्यहम् ॥ १९॥ ( तद्व ब्रह्म अद्वयं अस्मि अहम् )

19. In Me, verily, is everything born. In me, verily, does everything abide. Into me alone does everything gets dissolved. तद्व ब्रह्म अद्वयं अहं अस्मि That indivisible, non-dual Brahman I am.

Mantras 19 to 23 are the ecstatic declarations of the student who, carefully following the preceptor’s teaching, has attained the revelation of his real identity & spontaneously bursts into song. There is no other Upanishad with such a direct, articulate expression of realisation. In the Taittiriya Upanishad the meditator cries out in inexpressible awe & wonder 40 but is able to speak only in metaphors. In the Aitareya Upanishad, the meditator “sees” Brahman spreading over every creature & exclaims that he has seen it. 41 But in this Upanishad, the student is direct & articulate.

When I awake from the dream, I realise that I was not in the dream but the dream was in me. I am the cause & creator of the dream. I also experienced the dream, while I was the dreamer. When I woke up, the dream disappeared into me. I am the creator of the dream; I am the supporter of the dream; I am the dreamer of the dream; I am the source into which the dream disappears. Similarly, the waking & dream state fold into me in the deep sleep state. I am therefore the “I” in which all the three states of experience are created, sustained & dissolve. I

40 हा भुव भावु हाभु | अहमदारडादंहभमरस्मुद्रा हि | अहमदारडादंहभमरस्मुद्रा हि | Oh! Oh! I am the food, I am the food, I am the food! I am the eater of the food, I am the eater of the food, I am the eater of the food. Taittiriya Upanishad 3.10.6
41 इदमदशांति – “Oh! I have seen this.” Aitareya Upanishad 1.3.13

27 | P a g e
can make this statement confidently in the waking state after my अल्प निद्रा small sleep in the transactional world. I can make the same statement after awaking from the महा निद्रा of Maya.

Mantra 20
अणोरणीयानंहेतु तदन्महानं विध्ममं विचित्रम्। (अहं एव तदन्त महानं अहम्)
पुरातनोंहः पुरुषोऽहंश्रिण्मयोऽहं शिवरूपमयस्ति॥ २०॥
20. I am smaller than the smallest, subtler than the subtlest. I am also vastness {larger than the largest}. I alone am the diverse, multiform Universe. I am पुरातन: the ancient, timeless One. I am the पुरुष: the Universal Spirit. I am ईश: the Ruler, the Controller. I am हिरण्यव: the effulgent One. I am शिवरूपम् the very form of auspiciousness.

Shruti uses her favoured style of juxtaposition of opposites to indicate the indescribable Brahman. In the intellect that still insists on thinking “about” Brahman, objectifying It, the opposites cancel each other out, silencing all thought modifications. In that state of stunned silence, the “Is-Ness” of the intellect is revealed – and that Is-ness is Existence-Awareness – Bliss. Other Upanishads use the same technique. 42 Zen Buddhism also makes similar statements, though what it seeks to indicate may be different from Vedanta.

One thought flow could be: The infinitesimally tiny gap between atoms is not empty for I am there. The unimaginably colossal intervals between the galaxies is not empty for I am there too. Subtlety is the measure of pervasiveness & I am all-pervasive. The other meditation could be: From the tiniest to the greatest, what is there is only “I”. I am the cause; I am the effect. I am the creator & the creature. I am the alpha & the omega. I am this wonderful universe of multiple dimensions & uncountable varieties. They are only the different names that last a few moments for the same, unchanging Truth. Vishvam is used here to denote the magnificent mystery of life.

विविधं व्रतिः इति विश्वम् that which throbs, pulsates with life in unimaginably diverse forms is vishvam.

How can the indivisible singularity be the cause multifarious effects? One answer, that of विवर्त ब्राह्म is in Mantra 18. The other answer, of परिपत्र ब्राह्म, is that from the same Earth spring many varieties of grains, trees, fruits, flowers, herbs that take life & give life. So things with समाजीय, विज्ञातीय & स्वप्न भेद can rise from the same undifferentiated cause. But can that which is Consciousness give rise to that which is insentient? Can the sentient & the insentient exist in the same time & space? The answer is that in the same body in which every part throbs with life, grow nails & hair that are sentient. As a matter of fact, nails continue to grow even after the body dies. Thus the existence of variety & insentience cannot negate the possibility of one cause producing many effects.

I am the ancient one: I do not exist within the bounds of time; there was no “before” for me & there will be no “after” for me. There is no cause that preceded me. I am अजनतिः beginning-less. I am the Universal Spirit. पूर्व: means the resident of the body, the in-dweller पूर्व ग्रहित श्रेः श्रेः इति पुरुषः. It also means that which pervades everything पूर्वति नवर्त इति पुरुषः. I am the jivatma; I am the Paramatma.

Mantra 21
अपापांपरताः हृदयन्तियतश्चति: पश्चायम्यचक्षुः स श्रृणोम्यकर्णः।
(पश्चायम्य अचक्षुः स: श्रृणोम्य अकर्णः)

42 अणोरणीयान महती महिमाः कथोपाणिशाद 1.2.20. अनेकदेवं मनसो जीवीं...तद्हात्वकं हृदयन्त्यतितिश्रुत् It is the motionless One that is swifter than the mind… It is stationary but overtakes others who run after it. Ishavasya Upanishad 4
12. I have no hands & legs {and yet} of incomprehensible power. I see without eyes, hear without ears. निनितिधरूपाः Devoid of forms, I know everything { all forms} ि अनस्ि िेिा & there is none that know Me. I am ever the pure Knowledge.

In this mantra, Shruti sings the same song as Kenopanishad except that in the latter, Brahman is in the third person. Every day, in my dream, I see, hear, taste, feel objects & the faculty of perception which are, by themselves, inert. It is Consciousness that thrills the senses to life but Consciousness by Itself has no power to experience. This is not just poetic fancy. From the viewpoint of the Absolute, this entire creation is like a dream. The incomprehensible power that creates, sustains & finally enfolds it, without any visible manifestation of its power, is Maya. Consciousness is Existence ie I give existence to various objects, emotions, thoughts. Consciousness is Awareness ie I become aware of objects, emotions & thoughts. But while Consciousness gives existence & awareness to everything in general, there is no specificity to knowledge itself. Because of Consciousness, I become aware of things as objects, ie as apart from me. But Consciousness itself has no awareness of any object apart from Itself. It is the power of knowledge but not of knowing. On the other hand, objective awareness, while it is conscious of all things that surround it, cannot become aware of itself for there is no vantage point from which it can observe itself. It is the ultimate subject. It is pure Consciousness.

The purpose of the scriptures is to teach me something that I know but have not realised. That knowledge, of the Self, is self-evident in me. I experience It every moment of my life but I do not know It. I project that self-evident reality of the Self onto the teeming variety that I experience around me. The scriptures clear away all errors & doubts in thinking, defects & impurities in my mind so that I am able to see through the illusion to the underlying truth. This mantra is the spontaneous outburst of the one who has realised that truth. He sees no multiplicity around him; no separations or differences. As all differences boil down to the triad of the difference between the experiencer, the object of experience & experience, he uses that metaphor to indicate that there is only One.

I am the one truth taught by the different Vedas; I am the teacher, the one who reveals the true meaning of the Vedas; I am the one who studies the Vedas deeply & knows the meaning. I am the knowledge, the known & the knower. In other words, the differences & distinctions I see are only the effect of conditionings I impose upon myself. I am प्रमाण, the knowledge of Brahman that is taught by the Upanishads. I am प्रमेय, the subject, Brahman, that declares अहं 43

Mantra 22 & 23.1

The Eye cannot reach there, nor Speech, nor Mind. We do not know. Kenopanishad 1.3
I am the one, indivisible, all-pervading, homogenous, self-illumined Consciousness that is the substratum on which the existence & reality of all names, forms & perspectives mentioned above are projected. Without that substratum, nothing can be. With that substratum, everything is. When all distinctions fade away, when there is no projection at all, what remains is the ultimate Subject – Brahman. प्रमाण प्रमेर सरस्वती स्वातांत्र्य सिद्धि कि अपेक्ष्यते What is needed to establish the existence of That because of which the Knower, the Means of Knowledge, that which is Known, Knowledge itself, Power & Empowerment take place? It is self-evident; it is self-illumined.

So long as I identify myself as a jiva, conditioned by my vasanas & karmas, the body, senses, mind become real for me. I undergo the five modifications from birth to death. I act & so I earn merit & demerit. I manifest again & again to enjoy or suffer merit & demerit. My life as a jiva is real for me just as the waking state alone exists for the waker & the dream state alone for the dreamer. Just as when I awake from my अवस्मात्म, the dream disappears, when I awake from my महत्त्वान्त्व, the appearance of the individual & the collective, the subtle & gross, the one & the many disappear.

I am not the jiva so I have no subtle body & inner equipment, meaning I have no identification with a subtle body or mental equipment. Since I lack subtle body & inner equipment carry the burden of merit & demerit from incarnation to incarnation, I have no virtue nor sin. The gross body is the platform for experiencing the consequences of merit & sin, I have no gross body either. The negation has taken place. Since I have negated what I am not, I will now affirm my authentic identity.

Mantras 12 to 14 used the analogy of the three states of experience to describe the superimposition of being the कर्ता performer of deeds, भोज्य the enjoyer of the results, जीत्र the one who endures the results of doer-ship by returning time & again to run the gamut of experience. In mantra 14, Shruti draws attention to the screen on which these colourful names & forms are projected. Mantra 15 lifts the perspective from the individual to the totality, from the soul to the God of creation. The four mantras therefore covered the three cardinal points of the triad – जीत्र, जगत् & धर्मः. This is अध्यारोप - the superimposition of the nature & quality of one thing on the nature of another thing. What is unique about this Upanishad is the directness & rapidity with which अपवाद the negation of the same superimposition takes place. In the second half of mantra 22, the reality – existence of the individual jiva is negated. In the first half of mantra 23 Shruti negates the macrocosm: the four fundamental elements that emerge in तथापि form from the first evolve, Space. By negating them, the very source of matter, Shruti negates all that follow, the disturbance of harmony that starts the पञ्चमहाभूत their materialisation & mingling, the creation of time, the evolution of variety & multiplicity.

Why is अध्यारोप अपवाद required? ब्रह्म विद्या is not objective knowledge that can be taught. It cannot be sensed; it cannot be thought of; it cannot be described. It is so effectively concealed by ignorance that though I experience it every moment, I do not know it. Shruti has no choice but to use language to indicate what is indescribable; concepts to point out the inconceivable; what is familiar to reach the unfamiliar. I am constantly aware of myself – meaning the BMI & the world. So Shruti uses them as tools for analysis and shows me how to look beyond the superficiality of their names & forms to the truth. Once I am able to do that, she discards the

न निरोधवः न चौयस्यः: न भद्रो न साधकः। न समुक्षते वै मुक्तः: इत्येए परमार्थता॥ Creation there was not; there will be no dissolution, There is no bondage or the one who is bound. There is no liberation; no seeker for salvation. This is the Supreme Truth. This is I, Brahman. Amritabindu Upanishad 10
tools she has been using, just like the pole-vaulter drops the pole after it has taken him high enough to cross the bar.

To put the same in the form of a verse: कार्य्दर्षिः कारणं पश्येनु, पश्यात् कार्य्दर्षिः ततश्चाकारणं ततोः। गच्छति अरुशिः भवेन्मुनिः। In the effect, one should discern the cause; and after that, the effect negate. Thereafter, the cause-hood of the cause will vanish & what remains is the contemplator alone.

While I may admire the beauty of Shruti’s composition & accept the validity of the truth she’s teaching, my meagre qualification as a seeker & the maturity of my intellect may come in the way of realising that truth, taking ownership of it. In this transactional world, what is the use of my knowing that I, the limited soul & this world are only an illusion, like a dream? “It is worth remembering…so that when व्याप्त करण्व समस्कर्त्ता अन्तः प्रायति निषकलम् निषकलम् अनद्वेिीयम् समस्कर्त्ता अन्तः प्रायति निषकलम् अनद्वेिीयम् ॥ २३. २॥

23.2 एवं विद्वत्वा Having thus realised परमात्मरूपम् the nature of the Paramatman { the supreme Self} - गुहाशयम् the in-dweller that resides in the cavern of the heart; निषकलम् who is without parts, {whole & homogenous}; अद्वेिीयम् singular, non-dual;

24. समस्कर्त्ता the witness of all { three states of being, three points of view, in all creatures in all worlds} सदसनद्वहीिं beyond both existence & non-existence, शुद्धम् absolutely pure & untainted { without a trace of Maya}; I प्रायति attain, become one with परमात्मरूपम् the very nature of Brahman.

अथ, the first word at the very beginning of this Upanishad, summarised the long journey of the aspirant who began by seeking completeness in the objects & relationships of this & other worlds, discovered their faults through discrimination, saw detachment & dispassion grow within him, sought out the Guru & humbly surrendered to him in the traditional manner. एवम् विद्वत्वा indicates the self-restraint of body & mind with which he did अन्तः प्रायति listening to the Guru’s words with complete faith & attention; मननम् reflecting deeply & constantly to resolve his un-understanding, mis-understandings & doubts & निद्भासितम् meditating on the truth to negate all contrary notions. It is a long & difficult road to traverse. It is a road that one must walk alone. It demands great courage, determination & fortitude. The probability of failure, at least in one life, is very high. Many are called but few are chosen. Is there no other way? The Upanishad itself says अन्तः प्रायति अन्तः प्रायति अन्तः प्रायति तत्त्वज्ञै  कप्ल्पत क्रम ॥ २३. २॥

This is the affirmation. Having denied the reality of my individual & cosmic existence, I affirm that परमात्मरूपम् I am the inhabitant that dwells deep within all hearts, ie the authentic Self that declares “I Am.”. I am अद्वेिीयम् complete, whole, One. I am निषकलम् without parts or phases, growth or decay. I am समस्कर्त्ता I am the witness of all states of being, all points of view merge into me. I am beyond cause & effect, form & formless do not apply to me. I am the essence of Purity. There is nothing that can contaminate me. I am अद्वेिीयम् the undifferentiated mass of Consciousness without सजािीय, निजािीय, स्िगि भेद. I am the very nature of Brahman.
There may be some students, some sadhakas, who say, “I am not ready for this.” There are some mental blocks in their minds, in the form of “I am a sinner”; “I have done some wrong things in my life.” Or some negative incident has happened in their life whose impression is so strong that they are not able to push it aside. So, every now & then, the memory of that comes back to them & they are not able to remember that “I am Brahman.” That knowledge is obstructed continuously by पूिथ संस्कारs. The Vedas do not want to discourage such people. This is the compassion of the Shastra. Only thing is that you must have patience. For such people, some additional sadhanas are recommended.

Mantra 2.1

य: शत्रुद्रीयमधीिे सोउष्ण्पूिो भवति,
सुरापािाि्त्पूिो भवति, ब्रह्महत्यात्पूिो भवति,
कृत्याृत्यात्पूिो भवति, तस्मादविमुक्तमाधित्यिे भवति ।
अत्याधिमि सर्वदा सकृद्वा जपेतुं ॥ २.१॥

2.1 He who अधीिे studies, recites, the mantra called शत्रुद्रीयम 46 becomes {as though} purified by the sacred fire. He is पूि purified from the sin of सुरापािाि् of drinking wine, intoxication. He is purified from the sin of killing a ब्रामण. He is purified from कृत्याृत्यात्पूि all sins of commission & omission. Thereafter, he gains refuge in अत्याधिमि: the One who never leaves the Truth – Consciousness, Lord Shiva. The one who belongs to अत्याधिमि the last station of sannyasa should जपेतुं repeat this mantra सकृद्वा always or सकृद्वा once {daily}.

Shruti uses the word अधीिे. धी means intellect. One interpretation is study or ‘bringing the idea, assimilating the idea into the intellect’ – absorbing & living the truth. अधीिे can also mean prayer. We generally turn to prayer when we, by ourselves, are unable to find a solution. We can handle situations where we have a choice. We have serious problems when we have no choice: when we have to accept the inevitable, endure the unendurable, suffer the insufferable. One idea of prayer is as ग्राम्यन to seek support in the grace & compassion of the Lord in the duality of an intimate “I – Thou” relationship. Another idea is to acknowledge that the pain of the circumstances is suffered by the body-mind-intellect complex which is not my essential nature. I turn away from the BMI to the Self in the form of the God of my understanding in उपासिा to identify myself as closely as possible with It. Shruti suggests that the imperfect student begin at least with पारायणम् the recitation of the रुद्रम् the hymn in praise of Lord Shiva, the deity of this Upanishad. As I continue to recite I will begin to understand. I can recite this constantly, once daily or once in a few days. What is more important is that I pray with the attitude of a अत्याधिमि of a sannyasi who has renounced all his attachments. This is an internal attitude quite independent of my चर्म or आश्रम or the clothes I wear. Whichever form of prayer I adopt, Shruti assures me that it will grant me purity against all the negative vasanas of my past: सुरापािाि् sins of sensuality; ब्रह्महत्यात्पूि sins of violence against fellow men & holy men; sins against the divine & all other acts of commission & omission. Whatever qualifications I lack, the grace of the mantra will grant me. I will then attain the shelter of अत्याधिमि: the one who will never leave you, meaning the Self, or in the context of this Upanishad, Lord Shiva.

46 The mantra of 100 verses invoking Lord Shiva, the deity of this Upanishad, which is in the Taittiriya Samhita of the Yajur-veda.
Mantra 2.2
अिेि ज्ञािामाप्नोनि संसाराणथिम् { (अिेि ज्ञािं आप्नोनि संसार आणथिम्न) तस्मादेवं विदित्वः कैिल्यं फलमश्नुिे कैिल्यं फलमश्नुि इति } ॥ २.२॥

2.2 By this, the Rudra japa, one attains the knowledge that destroys the ocean of transmigration {the cycle of birth & death} therefore knowing this one attains the fruit of Liberation {that state of One-ness sans any distinction, separation, otherness, quality}. Indeed, one attains Kaivalya.

The previous verse described the means that the seeker can use to prepare his mind for understanding & absorbing the knowledge. This verse describes the result that I will attain through that puja. It will dry up, destroy, the boundless ocean of sorrow in which I have been struggling since time began. But how can knowledge that my authentic identity is the limitless, infinite, unchanging, unconditioned Self destroy anything? It will first falsify all my spurious identities of waker, dreamer, sleeper; knower, actor, enjoyer; inhabitant of the gross, subtle, causal body & so on projected by primal ignorance. Second, by falsifying these identities & the burden of “I” & “Mine” that they carry, it tears away the curtain that has thus far concealed the truth of the Self. I would become established in that Truth, the state called Kaivalya. I will perceive no difference between I & other beings; no difference between I & others like me; no differentiation of mind & body within myself. There would only be the “I”, encompassing everything. I would be anchored in that Knowledge which is utter contentment, the peace that passes all understanding.

The two verses bracket, as it were, the beginning & end of the spiritual journey. I must first dispassionately examine the attractions of these worlds & discover that they are fleeting. I must turn away from them & towards discovering the truth about myself. The four qualities of the seeker must grow within me. I must surrender to a preceptor, serve him & learn from him. I have to reflect on his teachings for clarity to come. I must then apply that knowledge to myself, to unlearn all my false understanding & absorb all that is true. All this is contained in the word अथ that is the first word in this Upanishad. Knowledge can be arrived at only in this way: तस्मादेवं विदित्वः The Upanishad itself says so: नात्यं. पन्तथााः निमुतिधये there is no other way to complete freedom.

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