

5. Kenopanishad

Where do you search endlessly, O crazy mind,
For the vision of the Lord?
Brahman is within you!
Recognise this truth and see Him within yourself.
Sai's words reveal the path of Truth.

Love cannot be grown on trees,
Nor can it be traded in a market.
Be he a King or a commoner, only when he gives
up ego
And becomes a man of sacrifice,
Will he know the divine Principle.

Embodiments of the divine Atma!

Every pilgrim travelling on the path of life is granted certain instruments (*karanas*) to pursue righteousness (*dharma*). These instruments are the mind, speech, ears, eyes, nose, hands and feet. Three objects are essential for any achievement in this world: instrument (*karanam*), cause (*karanam*), and doer (*karta*). The one who uses the instrument is the doer. That which is used is the instrument. The desire of the doer is the cause. A person's primary duty is to know the unity of instrument, cause, and doer.

We say that the eyes see, the ears hear, and the tongue speaks. If so, what happens after death? The sense organs stop working. Why? There is a power that makes them function. This divine Power is called the life principle (*prana*).

Where did the life principle come from? Where is it going? Who sends it here and there? This is the question posed by *Kenopanishad*. It asks, "Is the power to see, hear, speak, and walk provided by the life principle, or is there a greater power still?"

The sun shines, and its brilliance makes the moon shine. The earth shines because of moonlight. But why does the sun shine? Due to hydrogen and helium. Where did these elements emerge from? divine Power.

The *Upanishads* call this power *Brahman*. They declare that Brahman makes the world shine. Brahman lends His illumination to others, but nothing makes Brahman Himself shine. Brahman's effulgence makes the eyes see, but they cannot see Brahman! The mind can think only with Brahman's power, but it is unable to grasp Brahman Himself. The *Upanishads* declare, From where words and thoughts return, unable to comprehend anything (*Yatho vaacho nivartante apraapya manasaa sahaa*) — That is Brahman.

People are unable to realise Brahman within. Why? They cultivate external vision instead of inner vision. They can arrive at the Truth with proper enquiry, but they consider themselves weak and powerless. How should one enquire into this divine principle?

Kenopanishad declares that Brahman is the life of the life force (*prana*), the mind of the mind, the eye of the eyes. Current is essential in a car for the headlights to shine, for the horn to blare, for the wheels to turn, and for the engine to move. Similarly, all human faculties perform their functions by drawing strength from the *Atma*. All blooming flowers do not become fruits. All fruits do not ripen. But once ripe, fruits must necessarily fall down from the trees. This is a secret of human life. When the time, cause, and situation so decree, the body becomes weak, even lifeless. Thus, what is the basis for the life force (*prana*)? It is the *Atma*.

People consider the senses as most important. Beyond the senses is the mind. This mind is called *Indra* by the *Upanishads*. *Indra* means the master of the *indriyas* (senses). The *Kenopanishad* declares that Divinity is attained when the senses are merged in the mind and the mind merged in the *Atma*.

We let the mind run amuck along worldly paths, thereby creating a division between the mind and the *Atma*. Why does a people fail to recognise the *Atma*? Because of reliance on physical and mental strength, wealth, and ego.

The senses are inert. When the eyes see an object, the eyes are the seer and the object is the "seen". It is possible for the eye to become the seen. How? If the mind wanders, the eyes do not perceive what is in front. Thus, the mind becomes the seer and the eyes, the seen.

Then again, the mind can become the seen and the intellect, the seer. This happens when there is no sense of discrimination. For example, in sleep, the mind does not exist except merely as the seen. But the intellect is present as consciousness. Finally, in *samadhi* (total absorption, perfect equanimity), the intellect becomes the seen with the *Atma* as the seer.

The *Atma* is the ultimate seer. The senses, mind, and intellect are all "seen" — That is why they are called instruments (*karanas*). In the absence of the *Atma*, the most valuable instruments become useless. Expensive machinery is but a block of iron without electricity. It is one's primary duty to use one's faculties in a proper manner. However, it is not very easy to change one's worldly outlook.

You may cultivate onions in a field of camphor,
Using saffron and rose water for irrigation.
But won't the resulting onions still smell like
onions?

You may attend countless meetings with good people (*sathsangs*) and perform many spiritual practices, but the worldly tendencies that have dogged you for many lifetimes will not let go easily.

Hence, first understand the body. What is the body? Is it merely a bundle of waste matter, urine, and blood? Yes. But it also houses the priceless gem of the *Atma*. Gems are not found on trees but deep within the earth. Though they are within dirt (*mrinmaya*) they are eternal (*chinmaya*). In the same way, the body is full of filth but the indwelling *Atma* is divine.

Human life is the rarest among all species (*Jantu-naam nara janma durlabham*). Today, people sell their priceless heart, a gem, for pieces of coal. They do not recognise their own value. When a man dies in an accident, the government gives his family a sum of Rs. 5000. Is that all human life is worth? No! Human life is invaluable —no value ascribed to it is enough.

Some people keep very sturdy iron safes in their homes. The safe itself is cheap, but the jewels inside are very valuable. The body is like the safe. Divinity is like the priceless ornaments. O man! Value the jewel, not the iron safe. If a jewel is placed in a golden safe, thieves will decamp with both! That is why ornaments with value are placed in a worthless safe. This is a secret of creation. The body is temporary; the *Atma* is eternal.

The eternal *Atma* resides in the worthless body. For this reason, safeguard the body without neglect. For how long? As long as we have not recognised the Truth, we should keep the body healthy. Instead, giving undue importance to the body and forgetting the Indweller is not true humanity. When ego sprouts, we forget everything. When clouds cover the sky, even the effulgent Sun is not visible. Does that mean the Sun is absent? No, the clouds are merely blocking it. Are these clouds permanent? No, no! They are “passing clouds”. The clouds of ego and pride prevent us from understanding the *Atma*. Since we cannot see the *Atma*, we conclude it does not exist.

Why do you bother with so many Gods? You are God Himself! One example. If you go to a storage room that has many objects, you will see everything except one object —yourself! You are searching in this world. You see everything, but not yourself —that is a big fault. If you recognise yourself, you will be able to recognise all else easily. Since the vision is directed outward, the seer is not seen. Walking on the street with a flashlight, you can see the road but not yourself. Turn the flashlight on yourself to see yourself. This is divine

vision. When you turn your vision inward, you understand the Blissful, Nectarine, Immortal *Atma* in its brilliance.

Once upon a time, the Gods had won the war against the demons. They were celebrating their victory. They grew arrogant and unruly and forgot the reason for their victory. They swaggered around with inflated egos.

Lord Brahma noticed their state and decided to open their eyes. He assumed the form of a celestial being (*yaksha*) and appeared in their midst. Lord Agni, the God of Fire, was there. The *yaksha* asked him, “Son, who are you?” Agni replied, “Don't you know who I am? Listen. I am the powerful God who can reduce anything to ashes in an instant. I am Agni. I can melt and burn down even iron.” He was arrogant. Brahma threw down a blade of grass and said, “Agni! Burn it.” Agni smirked, “What an easy task!”, but he could not. He bent his head in shame and retreated.

The Wind God, Vayu, appeared and gloated, “When I blow, seas swell and entire cities are leveled. Don't you know about cyclones and storms? They are all my power!” The *yaksha* said, “Is that so? Please move this blade of grass.” Vayu attempted but failed.

Then Indra appeared. The *yaksha* disappeared and a woman appeared in his place. Indra saw her and asked, “Mother, who are you? Who was here before you arrived?”

She replied, “My name is Uma. Lord Brahma was here before me. Your arrogance has grown beyond limits. The Lord appeared to destroy your ego, to grant you His *darshan*. He donned a *yaksha's* form because those with ego are not eligible to see His true form. You are Indra —master of the senses. Fire, wind, and other elements are merely the senses. You are their Lord. Even you don't deserve to see Brahma. You have become the embodiment of desire. To destroy desire in you, I have appeared as a woman —the symbol of desire.”

The Gods realised their folly to some extent. They set aside their egos and meditated on Brahma. Imagine, such powerful Gods could not move a blade of grass!

How can one become powerful? Ego and attachment hide this power from humanity.

Then Indra bowed his head and said, “Without Your Will, not even a blade of grass moves. What is the use of intelligence, strength, education, and wealth? Without the power to know You, O Lord, all other powers are just curses. Only the powers of devotion and Love can reveal You. No power is higher than devotion.”

What is devotion (*bhakti*)? Loving the Lord with an unselfish heart and a humble attitude is devotion. Hence, consider the senses as instruments. Instruments

may be afflicted with diseases at times. What are these diseases? For example, a crowbar loses its sharpness with constant use. This is a disease. When plunged into fire and hammered, it becomes as good as new. That is the cure.

Similarly, the eyes have a disease. When the eyes are healthy, white is seen as white, yellow as yellow, and black as black. But a jaundiced eye sees everything as yellow. Is that a problem with the world? No! As long as the tongue is healthy, sweets taste sweet, salty items taste salty, and sour ones sour. But a malaria patient finds even sweet food bitter. The senses are plagued by diseases (*roga*) and attachments (*raga*), but have no *yoga*. Only when you control your senses do you become a *yogi*. Therefore, Patanjali said, *Yoga* is control of thoughts (*Yogah chitta vritti nirodhakah*). First control your senses. Teach them discrimination between the temporary and the permanent.

Students! The senses are very powerful at this age. The eyes, especially, are very sinful. They flit from person to person with impure motives, thereby accumulating a great deal of bad *karma*.

Educated people ask, “The eyes have been given to see. Why not see everything?” True, the eyes are meant to see, but see good, not bad! The mouth has been given to eat, so do you eat mud? The consequences of bad *karmas* are not readily apparent, but they cannot be escaped. Control wrong vision, wrong speech, and wrong hearing. Also control wrong thoughts and actions. This is the true spiritual path.

See no evil, see what is good,
Hear no evil, hear what is good,
Think no evil, think what is good,
Talk no evil, talk what is good,
Do no evil, do what is good,
—This is the way to God.

When we do not follow these teachings with real effort, we condemn ourselves to a future full of difficulties. The period of youth is extremely fleeting, but characterised by arrogance. Yielding to the senses, one reduces the future to ashes. In this period, make an effort to regulate the senses. This is the advice *Kenopanishad* gives to people, gods, and sages (*rishis*) alike.

In addition, it also sets ideals for people and divine beings, “O humanity! The fruits of your good and bad actions are not seen instantly, like milk seen flowing out of a cow’s udder upon milking. Rather, they are like sowing a seed.”

It takes many years for a seed to become a tree, more time for fruit to appear, and still more days for the fruit to ripen. Be careful! You may commit a sin and then assure yourself that you do not see any punishment.

It takes time for the result to hit you, but it cannot be avoided! You may avoid anything, but not the consequences of your actions. Hence, use these years to develop purity. “Start early, drive slowly, reach safely.”

The sanctity of the tongue

Make a conscious effort during youth. Speech is very pure. Jaideva¹ said, “O Sacred tongue, you can discern taste, you are endowed with sacred speech, you are the embodiment of Goddess Saraswathi. Why do you use impure words? In repentance, utter the divine names Govinda, Damodara, Madhava.”

The tongue has a great sense of sacrifice, respect, and honour. When it tastes a sour fruit, it stops it from reaching the stomach. God is present within humanity as Vaiswanara, the digestive force. The tongue decides that the sour fruit is not an appropriate offering to God within and spits it out on the ground, saying, “Mother Earth, please receive the fruit you have created.” If the fruit is sweet, the tongue says to Vaiswanara, “O Sweet Lord, please experience this sweet fruit.” The tongue does not experience the sweetness itself. It offers the good to God and the bad back to the world. Such is its sense of sacrifice!

The tongue has forbearance as well. How carefully it lives amidst thirty-two sharp teeth! This is what Vibhishana told Hanuman, “O Hanuman! Among these teeth-like demons, I live like the soft tongue, which chants the Lord’s Name. If I am not constantly watchful, these demons will end my life. I want to secure the vision of the Lord before I die.”

Hanuman replied, “Vibhishana, you equate your perilous state to that of the tongue. It is true. But which fall away first, the tongue or the teeth? The teeth. So do not worry. You will attain the proximity of Rama. These demons will be uprooted like the teeth.”

The tongue has a great sense of honour. It does not roam from house to house like a street dog. It stays within its doors —the lips— and never ventures out. Such is its honour. It may speak a lot, but does it ever come out? Like a royal queen, it lives within its limits, with dignity and honour.

Further, the tongue chastises a wrong-doer, “You are behaving like an animal (*pasu*)!” It praises a pious man, “You are like *Pasupati* (God) Himself.” The sacred tongue should be used only along sacred lines.

The sayings of the *Upanishads* are simple, sweet, and delicate. We forget these nectarine sayings. The *Upanishads* are the essence of all *Vedas*. No one makes

¹ A great devotee of Lord Krishna and author of *Gita Govinda*.

an effort to understand them today. The smallest pills can remove illness in the body. Similarly, these compact words can dispel ignorance and light the lamp of knowledge.

Students should make a sincere effort to live a sacred life from their early years. Along with wisdom, cultivate humility. Without humility, all education becomes useless. Respect your parents, teachers, and elders; love those younger to you. Avoid excessive talk.

Today people are heroes when it comes to talk
But zeroes when it comes to action!
Life is full of show.

This is the state of students today. Do not be pompous. How should life be lived?

Within education, wisdom should shine,
Just as brilliant lightning underlies dark clouds.

Do not be argumentative based on bookish knowledge. Arguments are not conducive to education. Only one who knows nothing argues. One who knows all remains silent. An empty banana leaf flutters in the wind, but one that is “full” with food² stays still. We should shine as “full” individuals. This is the royal road for students.

Pride, show, and arrogance are beyond limits in the period of youth. This is a result of bad habits and food. Such defects should be removed.

Students in this country have a reputation for causing unrest. Our students should offer protection to the fear-stricken and attract society with their loving nature, just as a magnet attracts iron. They should mingle and work with everyone. This is conveyed in the *Vedas* as, *Sahanaavavatu, sahanau bhunaktu, saha viryamkara vaavahai* —What is the meaning of this verse?

Let us mingle together, let us grow together,
Let us cultivate our knowledge together,
Let us live together happily without impurities.

This alone will grant peace. If we desire world peace, we should live without skirmishes.

Ponder the purity of the feelings expressed in the *Upanishads*. The sages of yore were not fools. They were far more accomplished than today’s scientists. Scientists have not approached even a thousandth of their discoveries. Scientists sit in dark rooms —they are akin to a frog in a well³. The sages (*rishis*) were expansive

² Banana leaves are used in south India as disposable plates since ancient times.

³ From an ancient parable. The frog in the well is visited by a frog from the ocean. The ocean-frog attempts to describe the vastness of the ocean, but the well-frog

like frogs in the ocean, and their investigations were broad. Today’s discoveries are mired in self-interest. The ancients were egoless and selfless. We might misjudge the declarations of our sages to be hallucinations or imaginary. In reality, they were gems of wisdom conferred upon the sages that have nourished humanity till this day. The *Upanishads* are the essence of the teachings of divine sages.

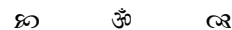
I conclude My discourse blessing you that you may take at least the smallest teachings of the *Upanishads*, put them into practice in simple activities of daily life, and experience divine life thereby.

Tomorrow we shall take up another *Upanishad*. All *Upanishads* lead you closer to the Divine. *Upa* means “near”, as in nearness to God. Your Vice-Chancellor requested on the first day that I teach you methods by which proximity to God can be attained.

Hence, chant the divine Name and exemplify pure and peaceful lives. Unrest and agitation have *grown* beyond limits today. In such an environment, students should foster fearlessness, happiness, and goodness. This is what I desire.

[Swami ended with the *bhajan* “*Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahin*”.]

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refuses to believe that anything could be larger than its well.