

Avadhuta Upanishad

Om! May He protect us both together; may He nourish us both together;

May we work conjointly with great energy,

May our study be vigorous and effective;

May we not mutually dispute (or may we not hate any).

Om! Let there be Peace in me!

Let there be Peace in my environment!

Let there be Peace in the forces that act on me!

1. Then, it is said, Samkriti approached the venerable Avadhuta, Dattatreya, and questioned: Venerable Sir, Who is an Avadhuta ? What is his condition ? What his characteristic ? And what his worldly existence ? To him replied the venerable Dattatreya, the most compassionate:

2. The Avadhuta is so called because he is immortal [akshara]; he is the greatest [varenya]; he has discarded worldly ties [dhutasamsarabandhana]; and he is the indicated meaning of the sentence 'Thou art That', etc., [tattvamasyadi-lakshya].

3. He who rests constantly in himself, after crossing (the barrier of) castes and stages (of social position) and thus rises above varnas and asramas and is in union (with God) is said to be an Avadhuta.

4. His joy [priya] is (to be envisaged as) the head; delight [moda] is his right wing; great delight [pramoda] his left wing; and bliss (his very self). Thus he assumes a fourfold condition.

5. One should identify Brahman neither with the head nor with the middle part nor with the bottom but with (what remains in the shape of) the tail, since it is said that Brahman is 'the Tail' and substratum. Thus, those who contemplate this fourfold division attain the supreme Goal.

6. Not by rituals, not by begetting children, not by wealth, but by renunciation [tyaga] alone a few attained immortality.

7. His (the Avadhuta's) worldly existence consists in moving about freely, with or without clothes. For them there is nothing righteous or unrighteous; nothing holy or unholy. Through all-consuming, correct knowledge [samgrahaneshiti] (the Avadhuta) performs Ashvamedha sacrifice within (himself). That is the greatest sacrifice and the great Yoga.

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8. Nought of this extraordinary, free action (of his) should be disclosed. This is the great vow [mahavrata]. He is not tainted like the ignorant.

9. As the sun absorbs all waters, and the fire consumes all things (remaining unaffected by them), even so, the pure Yogin enjoys all objects, unstained by virtues or sins.

10. As the ocean into which all waters flow maintains its own nature despite the water pouring in (from all sides), so, he alone attains peace into whom all desires flow in like manner; not he who seeks the objects of pleasure.

11. There is neither death nor birth; none is bound, none aspires. There is neither seeker after liberation nor any liberated; this indeed is the ultimate Truth.

12. Many were my activities perchance in the past for gaining things here and hereafter, or for obtaining liberation. All that is now of the past.

13. That itself is the state of contentment. Verily remembering the same (i.e. the past) achievements involving objects, he now remains thus ever content. The miserable ignorant, desirous of children, etc., needs must suffer.

14. Wherefore shall I suffer, who am filled with supreme bliss ? Let those who yearn to go to the other worlds perform rituals.

15. What shall I, who am of the nature of all the worlds, perform ? For what and how ? Let those who are worlds, perform ? For what and how ? Let those who are qualified interpret the Shastras or teach the Vedas.

16. I have no such qualification, since I am free of action. I have no desire for sleeping or begging, bathing or cleaning. Nor do I do them.

17. If onlookers thus superimpose, let them do so. What matters to me the superimposition of others ? A heap of the red-black berries (of the *Abrus precatorius*) would not burn, even if others superimposed fire on it. Likewise, I partake not of worldly duties superimposed (on me) by others.

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18. Let them, who are ignorant of the reality, study the scriptures; knowing (the reality) why should I study ? Let them who have doubts reflect (upon what was studied). Having no doubts, I do not reflect.

19. Were I under illusion, I may meditate; having no illusion, what meditation can there be (for me) ? Confusion of body for the self, I never experience.

20. The habitual usage ‘I am a man’ is possible even without this confusion, for it is due to impressions accumulated during a long time.

21. When the results of actions set in motion [prarabdha-karman] are exhausted, the habitual usage also ends. This (worldly usage) will not cease even with repeated meditation unless such actions are exhausted.

22. If infrequency of worldly dealings is sought, let there be contemplation for you. Wherefore should I, to whom worldly dealings offer no hindrance, contemplate ?

23. Because I do not have distractions, I do not need concentration, distraction or concentration being of the mind that modifies.

24. What separate experience can there be for me, whom am of the nature of eternal experience ? What has to be done is done, what has to be gained is gained for ever.

25. Let my dealings, worldly, scriptural or of other kinds proceed as they have started, I being neither an agent (of action) nor one affected (by it).

26. Or, even though I have achieved what has to be achieved, let me remain on the scriptural path for the sake of the well-being of the world. What harm for me thereby?

27. Let the body be engaged in the worship of gods, bathing, cleaning, begging and so forth. Let speech repeatedly utter the tara-mantra or recite the Upanishadic passages.

28. Let thought contemplate Vishnu or let it be dissolved in the bliss of Brahman. I am the witness. I neither do nor cause any doing.

29. Being contented with duties fulfilled and achievements accomplished, he ceaselessly reflects as follows with a contented mind:

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30. Blessed am I, blessed am I. Directly and always, I experience my own self. Blessed am I, blessed am I, the bliss of Brahman shines brightly in me.

31. Blessed am I, blessed am I. I do not see the misery of existence. Blessed am I, blessed am I; my ignorance has fled away.

32. Blessed am I, blessed am I; no duty exists for me. Blessed am I, blessed am I; everything to be obtained is now obtained.

33. Blessed am I, blessed am I. What comparison is there in the world for my contentment ! Blessed am I, blessed am I; blessed, blessed, again and again blessed.

34. Logical ! The virtues accrued have yielded fruit ! Indeed they have ! By the richness of virtue we are as we are.

35. Wondrous knowledge, wondrous knowledge ! Wondrous happiness, wondrous happiness ! Wondrous scriptures, wondrous scriptures ! Wondrous teachers, wondrous teachers !

36. He who studies this also achieves everything to be achieved. He becomes free of the sins of drinking liquor. He becomes free of the sins of stealing gold. He becomes free of the sins of killing a Brahmin. He becomes free of actions, ordained or prohibited. Knowing this, let him wander according to his free will. Om, Truth. Thus (ends) the Upanishad.

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Here ends the Avadhuta Upanishad belonging to the Krishna-Yajur-Veda.

Reference

Prof. A. A. Ramanathan. The Theosophical Publishing House, Chennai. “Avadhuta Upanishad.”