

“Om Sri Lakshmi Narashimhan Nahama”

Kundika Upanishad

*Om! Let my limbs and speech, Prana, eyes, ears, vitality
And all the senses grow in strength.
All existence is the Brahman of the Upanishads.
May I never deny Brahman, nor Brahman deny me.
Let there be no denial at all:
Let there be no denial at least from me.
May the virtues that are proclaimed in the Upanishads be in me,
Who am devoted to the Atman; may they reside in me.
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!*

1-2. After studying the scriptures during the blemishless period of studentship in which he devotes himself to the service of the teacher, the Brahmacharin with the permission of the teacher, shall marry a suitable wife. Then (at the end of the householder's life) he shall kindle the sacred fire (for renunciation) bravely and perform a sacrifice lasting a day and night in which Brahma, etc., are the deities.

3. Then after dividing his property among his sons in the proper way and giving up all sensory pleasures, he shall journey along sacred places as a Vanaprastha.

4. Subsisting on air only or on (air and) water only or with the addition (in dire need) of approved bulbous roots (and fruits) he shall find all worldly life in his person alone. He shall not (remembering his past comforts) allow his tears fall on the ground.

5-7(a). How can a man, in the company of his wife, be said to have renounced (worldly life) ? How can one who is (merely) known with an appellation (of an ascetic) be said to have renounced ? Hence he should purify himself (first) by renouncing the result of his deeds through self-control (Vanaprastha); thereafter he may take to renunciation. One reaches the stage of forest-life (Vanaprastha) after having maintained the sacred fire (as a householder). He goes to lead the forest-life with self-control accompanied by his wife as though he were a person attached to her.

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7(b)-8. ‘Why does he undergo (the life of a mendicant monk) in vain, having given up the happiness of worldly life ? What is that (impending) misery the thought of which should make him abandon great pleasures ?’ (Such is the query of the wife). ‘I am afraid of the (miserable) life in the womb (of another mother) and also the miseries of heat, cold, etc. (So) I wish to enter the cave(-shelter) of renunciation, the means for the painless transcendent state (of Brahman)’. Thus (he replies).

9. Having renounced the sacred fire he shall not return to it (even in mentally reciting the mantras pertaining to it).

10. ‘For, I, (i.e. the mantra) (pertaining to this sacred fire) becoming extinct (being incompatible with renunciation) shall be merged into the oncoming (knowledge of Brahman).’

11. He may repeat the mantras pertaining to Self (realization).

12. He shall have consecration. (He shall be) wearing (ochre) coloured garment. (He shall remove) the hairs excluding those in the arm pits and the private parts. With (right) hand raised (he shall set forth as a mendicant monk), abandoning the path of worldly life. He shall move on without (a fixed) abode. Living on alms, he shall deeply ponder over (Vedantic texts) and meditate (on his identity with the transcendent Brahman). He shall possess pure knowledge (pavitram) for the protection of all beings.

13-14. (These) verses are there (or the same theme): (The mendicant monk shall have) a water pot, an (alms-) bowl, a sling (to carry his effects), sandals to traverse a long distance (literally, over the three worlds), a patched garment to withstand cold, a loin cloth to cover (his privities), a purifying ring (pavitram of holy grass), a bath towel and an upper garment; other than these the ascetic shall give up all else.

15. He shall sleep on the sandy bed of a river or outside a temple. He shall not bother his body too much either with pleasures or pain.

16. Pure water should be used for bathing, drinking and cleansing. He shall not become pleased with praise nor shall he curse others when censured.

17. His alms-bowl shall be (a cup) made of leaves and the material for washing shall be the prescribed (fresh earth).

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18. Thus provided with the means of living, he shall, with the senses subdued, always mutter the (philosophical) mantras. The wise (ascetic) shall realize in his mind (the identity of the individual self with the universal Self) which is the meaning of Om.

19. (From Brahman arose ether); from ether air; from air fire; from fire water; from water the earth. To (the prime cause of all) these primary elements. Brahman, I resort (in reverence); I resort to the ageless, immortal and indestructible Brahman.

20. In me, the ocean of unalloyed bliss, many a time arise and fall waves of the universe due to the winds of the fanciful sport of illusion (Maya).

21. I am not attached to my body just as the sky is not attached to the clouds. Hence how can I have its (i.e. the body's) characteristics during (the stages of) waking, dreaming and deep sleep ?

22. I am always far beyond imagination like ether; I am different from it (the body) as the sun is from the objects of illumination; I am ever changeless just like the unchangeable (i.e. the Meru mountain) and, like the ocean am I limitless.

23. I am Narayana, I am the destroyer of the (demon) Naraka, I am (Siva), the destroyer of the three (aerial) cities, I am the Purusha, I am the supreme Lord; I am the indivisible consciousness, the witness of all; I am without a superior, I am devoid of 'I-ness' (egotism) and 'mine-ness' (possessiveness).

24-25. (The ascetic) shall, by the practice (of Yoga) bring together the Prana and Apana vital airs in the body. He shall place the (palms of the) two hands at the perineum, gently biting the (tip of the) tongue thrust out to the extent of a grain of barley. Similarly directing the eyes open to the extent of a blackgram seed, towards the (ether of the) ear (and the feet firmly resting) on the ground, he shall not allow the ear (to function) and the nose to smell (i.e. the five senses shall be controlled). (Thus he accomplishes the union of the Prana and Apana vital airs).

26. (Therefore the vital air passing through the Kundalini and the Susumna gets dissolved in the Sahasrarachakra at the top of the head. Then the vision, the mind, vital air and the 'fire' of the body reach) the seat of Siva (and get dissolved); that is Brahman; that is the transcendent Brahman. That (Brahman) will be realized by the practice (of Yoga), which is facilitated by the acquisition of practice in previous births.

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27. With the (help of the) external and internal organs (the knowledge of the qualified Brahman) called effulgence, reaching the heart and supported by the vital air's capability (to proceed upwards, goes through the Susumna Nadi) and piercing the skull at the top of the body, one realizes the indestructible (qualified Brahman).

28. Those (sages) who attain the transcendent state (through the passage) in the skull at the top of their body, do never return (to the worldly life) for they realize the lower as well as the higher (Brahman).

29. The attributes of objects seen do not affect the onlooker who is different from them. The attributes of a householder do not affect him who remains non-aligned without any mental modification, just as a lamp (which suffers no change by the objects revealed by it).

30. Let (me) the non-aligned (sage) roll in water or on the ground; I am untouched by their characteristics just as the ether (in the pot) is not affected by the attributes of the pot.

31-32. I am free (from the effect) of activities, and changes, devoid of parts and form, I am without fancies, I am eternal , I am without a support and I am devoid of duality. I am the form of all (beings), I am the all, I am beyond everything and without a second; I am the one indivisible knowledge and I am the compact bliss of the Self.

33. Seeing everywhere the Self, considering the Self as without a second, enjoying the bliss of the Self, I remain without reflections.

34. Walking, standing, sitting, lying or otherwise, the wise sage delighting in the Atman shall live as he wishes (fulfilling his duties; and on leaving the world, will attain final liberation). Thus (ends) the Upanishad.

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Here ends the Kundikopanishad, included in the Sama-Veda.

Reference

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