

Maitreya 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!*

Chapter 1

I-1. The King, Brihadratha by name, had his eldest son installed on the throne and considering the body to be impermanent and feeling disgusted (with worldly life) went to a (penance) forest. There he performed the highest kind of penance and facing the sun remained with his arm uplifted. At the end of a thousand years the sun-god (taking the form of the sage Sakayanya) approached the sage. Like fire (blazing) without smoke and burning all as it were with his effulgence the sage Sakayanya, the knower of the Self, said to the king: ‘Rise up, rise up, choose a boon’. Bowing to him the king said: ‘Revered Sir, I know not the Atman. But we hear that you are a knower of the truth. Expound to me that’. ‘This request of yours is impossible on the very face of it. Do not ask me this question. Oh descendant of Ikshvaku, choose (the fulfilment of) other desires’. Reverently touching the feet of the sage Sakayanya the king gave utterance to the following religious text (Gatha).

I-2. Now then why speak of other things ? (There is) the drying up of great seas, the downfall of mountains, the movement of the polestar or of trees, the submerging of the earth and the loss of position by the gods. In this worldly life which is of the nature of (distinction between) ‘he’ and ‘I’, what is the use of enjoying desires as, resorting to them, there is seen the repeated return (to the phenomenal world) ? Hence it behoves on your part to uplift me. I am like a frog in a well in this worldly life. Revered Sir, you are my refuge’. Thus (the king said).

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I-3. Revered Sir, this body is born of sexual union alone, is devoid of consciousness and is verily hell as it has emerged through the urinal path, full of bones, daubed with flesh and encased in skin; it is fully filled with faeces, urine, wind, bile, phlegm, marrow, fat, fatty exudations and many other filthy things. Remaining in a body of this kind, revered Sir, you are my refuge. Thus (he implored).

I-4. Then the revered sage Sakayanya greatly pleased, said to the king: 'Great king Brihadratha, you are prominent in the family of the Ikshvakus, a knower of the Atman, one who has done his duty well and you are well known by the name of Marut. Such is your Self. Revered Sir, who is to be described ? And he said to the king:

I-5. The objects such as those denoted by sound and touch are apparently (a source of) danger; for the individual self (encased in the five elements) may not remember the highest goal when attached to them.

I-6. Through penance one gets to know the inborn disposition (Sattva); from Sattva one gets (stability of) the mind; through the mind one realizes the Atman; by realizing the Self (worldly life is) prevented.

I-7. Just as fire, when fuel is exhausted, calms down in itself, so the mind, when its activity is exhausted, becomes quiescent in its source (i.e. in the Self).

I-8. When the mind is calmed down into its source and goes in the true path, the results dependent on activities are unreal as the objects of the senses are confounded (i.e. actions performed do not affect him as he is without attachment).

I-9. It is the mind that constitutes worldly life; this should be purified. As the mind, so the things appear coloured by it; this is the eternal secret.

I-10. By the purity of the mind one destroys (the effect of) good and bad actions. When with a pure mind one remains in the Self one enjoys inexhaustible bliss.

I-11. If a person's mind, which is well attached to the region of the sense-objects, were turned towards Brahman, who will not be released from bondage ?

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I-12-14. One should feel the supreme Lord to be present in the midst of the lotus of one's heart as the spectator of the dance of the intellect, as the abode of supreme love, as beyond the range of mind and speech, as he rescue ship scattering all worry (of those sinking in the sea of worldly life), as of the nature of effulgent Existence alone, as beyond thought, as the indispensable, as incapable of being grasped by the (active) mind, possessing uncommon attributes, the immobile, steady and deep, neither light nor darkness, free from all doubts and semblance, and is consciousness consisting of the final beatitude.

I-15. That which is the eternal, the pure, the ever vigilant, free from the nature (of delusions), the true, the subtle, the supremely powerful, the one without a second, the ocean of bliss and transcendent, that I am, the innermost essence (of all); there is no doubt about it.

I-16. How can the danger (of duality) approach me, resorting as I do to the inner bliss of the Self, who despise the female goblin of desires, who view the phenomenal world as in illusion and who am unattached to it ?

I-17. Those ignorant people who stick to castes and orders of life obtain the (worthless) fruit of their respective actions. Those who discard the ways of caste, etc., and are happy with the bliss of the Self become merged in Brahman (lit. Purushas).

I-18. The body consisting of various limbs and observing the (rules of) castes and orders has a beginning and an end and is only a great trouble. Free of attachment to one's children, etc., and the body, one should live in the endless supreme happiness.

Chapter 2

II-1. Then the revered sage Maitreya went to Kailasa. Approaching him (the Lord) he said: 'Lord, expound to me the secret of the supreme Truth'. The great god said to him:

II-2. The body is said to be the temple; the individual Self (Jiva) is Shiva alone. One should discard the faded flowers in the form of spiritual ignorance and worship God (with the conviction) 'He and I are one'.

II-3. True knowledge consists of seeing non-different (in all); deep meditation consists of the mind freed from thinking on sensory objects; bathing is the removal of impurity in the mind and cleansing consists of controlling the senses.

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II-4. He should imbibe the nectar, Brahman, go about for alms to preserve the body, and becoming devoted to the one (Brahman) live in the solitary place of oneness free from duality. Thus should a wise man spend his life; he alone will attain liberation.

II-5. This body is born and it has death; it has originated from the impure secretions of the mother and father; it is the abode of joy and sorrow and it is impure. Bathing in the form of discarding attachment to it is ordained when one touches it with the idea that it belongs to one.

II-6. It is built up of primary fluids, subject to grievous maladies, abode of sinful actions, transitory and diffused with agitated feelings. Touching this body, bathing (as aforesaid) is ordained.

II-7. It always naturally exudes at the appropriate time impure secretions through the nine apertures (eyes, ears, etc.). Having impure matter it smells foul. Touching this, bathing (as aforesaid) is ordained.

II-8. It is associated with the mother in impurity at birth and is born with the impurity caused by child-birth; as it is born associated with death (in due course) and the impurity caused by child birth, touching this body, bathing (as aforesaid) is ordained.

II-9. Viewing the body as 'I' and mine is smearing oneself with faeces and urine in the place of cosmetics. Thus pure cleansing has been spoken of (in the verses above). Cleansing (the body) with mud and water is (the external one) practised in the world.

II-10. Cleansing which purifies the mind consists of the destruction of the three inborn tendencies (loka-vasana, shastra-vasana and deha-vasana); (real) cleansing is said to be by washing with mud and water in the form of (true) knowledge and dispassion (Jnana and Vairagya).

II-11. Feeling of non-duality is the alms (which is consumed) and the feeling of duality is the thing unfit for consumption. The receiving of alms by the mendicant monk is ordained in accordance with the directions of the Guru and the scripture.

II-12. After embracing renunciation of his own accord the wise man shall move away from his native place and live far away, like a thief who has been released from prison.

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II-13. No sooner has (the ascetic) moved away from the son of ego, the brother of wealth, the home of delusion and the wife of desires than he is liberated (from worldly bondage); there is no doubt about it.

II-14-15. How shall I perform the twilight worship (Sandhya, i.e., there is no need for it) when the mother of delusion is (just) dead and the son of true awakening is born, causing two-fold impurity ? How can I perform twilight worship when the bright sun of consciousness ever shines in the sky of the heart and it never sets or rises ? (i.e. there is no twilight at all and hence there is no scope for worship).

II-16. The conviction, which is present from the words of the Guru that there is only one (reality) without a second, alone is the solitude (necessary for meditation) and not a monastery nor the interior of a forest.

II-17. There is liberation for those who are free from doubts; there is no emancipation even at the end of repeated births for those whose minds are invaded by doubts (about the non-duality of the Atman). Hence one should have faith.

II-18. There is no (true) renunciation by discarding action, nor by reciting the mantras of Praise (at the formal ceremony of renunciation). Renunciation has been declared to be the oneness of the individual self (Jiva) and the universal Self (Atman).

II-19. One, to whom all primary desires, etc., (such as for wife, wealth and progeny) appear like vomit and who has discarded pride in his body, is entitled to renunciation.

II-20. A wise man should embrace renunciation only when there has risen in his mind dispassion for all worldly things; otherwise he is fallen.

II-21. He who renounces worldly life for amassing wealth (contributed by rich disciples) or for the sake of (assured) boarding and clothing or for a stable position (as the head of a monastery) is doubly fallen (i.e. he has neither the full pleasures of worldly life nor liberation); he does not deserve final beatitude.

II-22. The wisest take to contemplation on the reality (of Brahman); the middling ones contemplate on the scripture; low people think of the mantras; the lowest are deluded by (the efficacy) of holy places.

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II-23. A fool in vain takes (theoretical) delight in Brahman without practically experiencing it (as I am Brahman), like the joy of tasting fruits found in the branch of a tree reflected (in a lake).

II-24. If a sage does not give up – the inward (conviction of non-duality in) the collecting of alms from various houses as a bee does honey from flowers, the father in the form of dispassion, the wife of faith and the son of true knowledge, he is liberated.

II-25. People rich in wealth, old in age and similarly those mature in knowledge – all these are (but) servants, (nay) the servants of the disciples of those who are mature in wisdom.

II-26. Even learned people have their minds deluded by the illusion created by me and without realizing me, the Atman, who am omnipresent, they but wander like cows to fill the wretched belly !

II-27. To one desiring liberation worship of idols made of stone, metal, gem and clay results only in the experience of rebirth; hence the sage should perform the worship of his heart alone (i.e. contemplate on Brahman enshrined in his heart, non-different from the Self). To prevent rebirth he shall avoid external worship (of idols).

II-28. He who is full inwardly and outwardly is like a jar filled in the sea; he who is empty inwardly and empty outwardly is like a jar empty in the sky.

II-29. Do not become one enjoying objects (of the senses), do not also become one believing in the senses. Rejecting all ideations, become that which remains.

II-30. Discarding (ideas of) seer, seeing and what is seen along with inward tendencies, may you resort only to the Atman who is the prime source of all phenomena.

II-31. That state of remaining like a stone with all ideations quiescent and freed from the states of waking and sleeping is the supreme state of the Self (in the disembodied state). Thus (ends the instruction given by Lord Shiva and the second chapter).

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Chapter 3

III-1. I am I, I am the other (the supreme one), I am Brahman, I am the source (of all), I am also the Guru of all the worlds, I am all the worlds, That I am.

III-2. I alone am, I have attained perfection, I am pure, I am the supreme, I remain always, I am He, I am eternal, I am pure.

III-3. I am the true knowledge (Vijnana), I am the special one, I am Soma, I am the all. I am the auspicious one, I am free from sorrow, I am consciousness, I am the impartial one.

III-4. I am devoid of honour and dishonour, I am without attributes, I am Shiva, I am free from duality and non-duality, I am free from the pairs (of opposites), I am He.

III-5. I am devoid of being and non-being, I am beyond speech, I am effulgence, I am the power of the void and the non-void and I am the auspicious and the inauspicious (i.e. beyond both of them).

III-6. I am devoid of the equal and the unequal, eternal, pure, ever auspicious; I am free of all and the non-all, I am the righteous and I ever remain.

III-7. I am beyond the number one and I am beyond the number two as well. I am above the distinction of good and bad and I am devoid of ideation.

III-8. I am free from the distinction of many souls, being of the form of unalloyed bliss. I am not (existent as an entity), I am not another, I am devoid of the body etc.,

III-9. I am free from the concept of substratum and that of the object resting on it; I am devoid of a prop. I am above captivity and liberation, I am the pure Brahman, I am He.

III-10. I am devoid of all things such as the mind, I am the supreme, greater than the great. I am always of the form of investigation, I am free from investigation. I am He.

III-11. I am of the form of the letter ‘a’ and ‘u’ and I am the letter ‘m’ which (as Om) is eternal. I am free from meditation and being a meditator, I am beyond the object of meditation, I am He.

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III-12. I am of the form which fills everything, possessing the characteristics of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. I am of the form of all holy places, I am the supreme Atman, I am Shiva.

III-13. I am devoid of aim and non-aim and I am the bliss 9rasa0 which has no extinction. I am beyond measurer and measure and the thing measured; I am Shiva.

III-14. I am not the world, I witness all and I am devoid of eyes, etc., I am immense, I am awake, I am serene and I am Hara (Shiva).

III-15. I am devoid of all the senses and I do all actions. I am the (object of) satisfaction to all the Upanishads, I am always easily accessible (to the devoted).

III-16. I am joy (to the devoted) and sorrow (to the careless), I am the friend of all silence. I am always of the form of consciousness and I am always of the form of Existence and Consciousness.

III-17. I am not devoid of even the least, nor am I a little. I am without the knot of the heart (i.e. partiality due to affection) and I abide in the midst of the lotus of the heart.

III-18. I am devoid of the six changes (of birth, etc.), I am without the six sheaths (the gross material body, etc.); I am free from the group of six (internal) enemies (passions, etc.) and I am the witness, being the supreme God.

III-19. I am free of space and time, I am the bliss of the principal unclad sages, I am beyond 'there is' and 'there is not' and I am devoid of all negation (i.e. I am pure Existence without a counterpart).

III-20. I am of the form of unbroken ether and I am of omnipresent form. I am the mind (chitta) free from the phenomenal world and I am devoid of the phenomenal world.

III-21. I am of the form of all effulgence, I am the effulgence of pure consciousness. I am beyond the three durations (past, present and future) and I am free from passion, etc.

III-22. I am above the body and its dweller and I am unique, devoid of attributes. I am beyond liberation, I am liberated and I am always devoid of final emancipation.

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III-23. I am above truth and untruth, I am always nothing other than pure Existence. I am not obliged to go to any place, being free of movement, etc.

III-24. I am always equanimous, I am quiescence, the greatest being (Purushottama); one who has his own experience thus is without doubt myself. He who listens to this (experience) even once (with supreme faith) becomes himself (i.e. becomes merged into) Brahman. Thus (ends) the Upanishad.

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And all the senses grow in strength.
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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!*

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

Reference

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