

“Om Sri Lakshmi Narashimhan Nahama”

Niralamba Upanishad

Om! That (Brahman) is infinite, and this (universe) is infinite.

The infinite proceeds from the infinite.

(Then) taking the infinitude of the infinite (universe),

It remains as the infinite (Brahman) alone.

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. I shall raise and answer (questions covering) all that must be known for liquidating the misfortunes of living beings plunged in ignorance.

2.

(1) What is Brahman ?

(2) Who is God ?

(3) Who is living being ?

(4) What is Prakriti ?

(5) Who is the Supreme Self ?

(6) Who is Brahma ?

(7) Who is Vishnu ?

(8) Who is Rudra ?

(9) Who is Indra ?

(10) Who is (the god of) Death ?

(11) Who is the Sun ?

(12) Who is the Moon ?

Niralamba Upanishad

(13) Who are the Gods ?

(14) Who are the demons ?

(15) Who are the evil spirits ?

(16) Who are men ?

(17) Who are women ?

(18) Who are animals and so forth ?

(19) What is the immobile ?

(20) Who are the Brahmanas, etc., ?

(21) What is a caste ?

(22) What is deed ?

(23) What is a non-deed ?

(24) What is knowledge ?

(25) What is ignorance ?

(26) What is pleasure ?

(27) What is pain ?

(28) What is heaven ?

(29) What is hell ?

(30) What is bondage ?

(31) What is liberation ?

(32) What is to be adored ?

Niralamba Upanishad

(33) Who is the disciple ?

(34) Who is the sage ?

(35) Who is the deluded ?

(36) What is the demoniac ?

(37) What is austerity ?

(38) Which is the supreme abode ?

(39) What is to be sought after ?

(40) What is to be rejected ?

(41) Who is the renouncer (Sannyasin) ?

3. (1) Brahman is the ineffable Spirit. It appears as the Mahat (the Sankhyan Great), the ego, (the elements) earth, water, fire, air and ether – the macrocosm and as actions, knowledge and ends. It is non-dual and free from all adjuncts. It is big with all powers and is without beginning and end. It may be spoken of as pure, good, quiescent, unqualified.

4. (2) God is the veritable Brahman that, depending on Its power called Prakriti creates the worlds and enters (into them) as the inner Controller of Brahma, etc., (He) is Ishvara, as He controls the intellect and the sense-organs.

5. (3) The living being (Jiva) is he who, through false superimposition, affirms ‘I am gross’ due to ‘the name and form’ of Brahma, Vishnu, Isana, Indra, etc. (Jiva thinks): Though I am one, due to the differences of the causes that originate the body, the Jivas are many.

6. (4) Prakriti is but the power of Brahman; it is intellectual in nature and competent to create the variegated and marvellous world from (the matrix) of Brahman.

7. (5) The supreme Self is Brahman alone being altogether different from body, etc.

Niralamba Upanishad

8-9. (6-20) Brahma, Vishnu, Indra, (the god of) Death, the Sun, the Moon, the gods, the demons, men, women, animals, etc.; the immobile the Brahmanas, etc.; are that very Spirit.

10. (21) Neither skin nor blood nor flesh nor bone has caste; To self is caste ascribed through mere usage.

11. (22) 'I do the deeds that are done through sense-organs' – the deed thus done as centred in the Self alone is the deed (in question).

12. (23) The deed done with conceit as agent and enjoyer, causing birth, etc., binds; The non-deed is the obligatory and occasional action – sacrifice, holy vow, austerity, gifts, etc., done without desire for their fruit.

13. (24) Knowledge is the immediate realization, due to the disciplining of body and sense-organs, service rendered to the Teacher, hearing, thinking and meditation, that there is nothing but Spirit, the essence of both subjects and objects, which is immutable among the mutables like pots and clothes, the same in all, their innermost (essence).

14. (25) Ignorance is the illusory knowledge – like that of the snake in the rope – of Brahman that is All in all, all-pervasive and non-dual. (This illusory knowledge) is associated with a plurality of selves based on the plurality of the adjuncts of bondage and liberation, viz.; stations in life, castes, men, women, the immobiles, mankind, (lower) animals and gods.

15. (26) Pleasure is the blissful state that succeeds the knowledge of the essence of Being, Intelligence and Bliss. (27) It (Dukha - pain) is the mere Sankalpa (or the thinking) of the objects of mundane existence (or of not-Self).

16. (28) Heaven is the association with the holy.

17. (29) Association with the worldly folk who are unholy alone is hell.

18. (30) Bondage consists in imagining due to the beginningless latent impressions of nescience, 'I am born, etc.'

Niralamba Upanishad

19. Bondage consists in imagining a plunge into the flux of existence with its possessive claims on fields, gardens, houses, children, wives, brothers, mothers and fathers.

20. Bondage is the conceit of egoistic agency in regard to actions, etc.

21. Bondage is the imagination prompted by the desire for the eight powers, anima, etc.

22. Bondage is the imagination prompted by the yearning for adoring gods, men, etc.

23. Bondage is the imagination (leading to) the practice of Yoga with its eight limbs, Yama, etc.

24. Bondage is the planning of action and duties bound up with castes and stations of life.

25. Bondage is to imagine that Atman has qualities like doubts, fear, etc.

26. Bondage is to plan (to acquire) knowledge, to perform sacrifices, vows, austerity and (make) gifts.

27. Bondage is to plan to devote oneself exclusively to moksha.

28. Bondage is what springs exclusively from imagination.

29. (31) Liberation is the attenuation, through discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral, of the sense of ownership in regard to objects that generate fleeting pleasures and pains in the transmigratory life.

30. (32) Adorable is the teacher who leads one to Brahman, the Spirit dwelling in all bodies.

31. (33) The disciple is Brahman indeed that remains altogether immersed in the knowledge of the world as obliterated by the awareness (of its ground, viz., Brahman).

32. (34) The sage is the knower of the essence of Self-awareness present in all as their innermost (part).

Niralamba Upanishad

33. (35) The deluded is he who is sustained by the conceit of egoism as regards agency, etc.

34. (36) Demoniak is the austerity, rooted in entrenched attachment, aversion, destructive violence, hypocrisy, etc.; that torments oneself by performing 'repetition of holy names' and Agnihotra while fasting and that is prompted by the desire to secure the power of gods like Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and Isana.

35. (37) Austerity is the burning, in the fire of immediate realization of the world's falsity, of the seed of imagination fashioned by the desire to secure the power of Brahma, etc.

36. (38) The supreme abode is Brahman's status, one of eternal freedom, comprising Being, Intelligence, and Bliss, beyond the qualities of the inner organ and the sense-organs and the vital breaths.

37. (39) To be sought after is the essence of the pure Spirit undetermined by space, time and objects.

38. (40) To be rejected is the thought that true is the world other than one's own Self that is perceived by the false sense organs and the intellect.

39. (41) The Sannyasin (mendicant monk) is the wandering independent ascetic who has known for certain, in the indeterminate concentration (Nirvikalpa-Samadhi), 'I am Brahman'. He is led upto it through the experiential knowledge of the contents of Major texts like: 'There is no plurality here'; 'All this is Brahman'; 'That Thou Art', etc.; after renouncing all duties, sense of possession and the ego, and taking refuge in the beloved Brahman. That ascetic is liberated; he is adorable; he is the Yogin; he is the Immense; he is the Brahmana.

“Om Sri Lakshmi Narashimhan Nahama”

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Here ends the Niralambopanishad belonging to the Sukla-Yajur-Veda.

Reference

Dr. A. G. Krishna Warriar. The Theosophical Publishing House, Chennai. “Niralamba Upanishad.”