

॥ गणपत्यथर्वशीर्षोपनिषत् ॥

Gaṇapati Atharvaśîrṣa Upaniṣad

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः । भद्रं
पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः । स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाꣳ संस्तनूभिः ।
व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः । स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः ।
स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः । स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो
अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*om bhādraṃ karṇēbhiḥ śṛṇuyāma devāḥ | bhādraṃ
pāśyemākṣabhīryajātrāḥ | sthīrairāṅgaistuṣṭuvāgṃ sāstanūbhiḥ | vyaśēma
devahitaṃ yadāyuh | svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḥ | svasti naḥ pūṣā
viśvavedāḥ | svasti nāstārksyo ariṣṭanemiḥ | svasti no bṛhaspatīrdadhātu ||
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||*

O gods, may we hear auspicious words with the ears. O protectors of worshippers, may we see (perceive) only auspiciousness with the eyes (senses). (May our discrimination be such that no perception disturbs us from the pursuit of knowledge.) Enjoying good health, with strong limbs, glorifying the Lord with hymns of praise, may we thus spend our Lord-ordained span of life. May the famous *Indra*, *devatā* of physical prowess and strong will, bless us with auspiciousness. May the omniscient *Surya*, nourisher of all, bless us with auspiciousness. May the eagle of unobstructed flight bless us with auspiciousness. (May our pursuit of knowledge be as unobstructed as the flight of *Garuḍa*.) May *Bṛhaspati* bring auspiciousness to us. Om. Let there be peace, peace, peace. (May

there be peace due to the cessation of problems arising from the three different sources: one's body-mind-sense complex, people and situations in the world, and thirdly from natural calamities.)

ॐ नमस्ते गणपतये । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं तत्त्वमसि । त्वमेव
केवलं कर्ताऽसि । त्वमेव केवलं धर्ताऽसि । त्वमेव
केवलं हर्ताऽसि । त्वमेव सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मासि । त्वं
साक्षादात्माऽसि नित्यम् ॥१॥

*om namaste gaṇapātaye | tvameva pratyakṣaṁ tattvāmasi | tvameva
kevalaṁ kartā'si | tvameva kevalaṁ dhartā'si | tvameva kevalaṁ hartā'si |
tvameva sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahmāsi | tvam sākṣādātmā'si nityam || 1 ||*

Salutations to *Gaṇapatiḥ*, the lord of all groups of beings. You alone are truth, perceptible as the manifest universe. You alone are the only creator of all that is here. You alone are the only sustainer of all that is here. You alone are the one in whom everything resolves. This entire universe is *Brahman* and you alone are indeed that *Brahman*! Obviously, you are ever the self, *ātmā*, the content of 'I'. || 1 ||

ऋतं वच्मि । सत्यं वच्मि ॥२॥

ṛtaṁ vacmi | sātyaṁ vacmi || 2 ||

I declare that you are the Truth, *ṛtaṁ*, the ascertained knowledge of the scriptural teaching. I declare that you are *satyam*, that same ascertained knowledge expressed in speech and action. || 2 ||

अ॒व त्वं॑ मा॒म् । अ॒व वृ॒क्तार॑म् । अ॒व श्रो॒तार॑म् ।
 अ॒व दा॒तार॑म् । अ॒व धा॒तार॑म् । अ॒वानू॒चान॑म॒व
 शि॒ष्य॑म् । अ॒व प॒श्चात्ता॑त् । अ॒व पु॒रस्ता॑त् ।
 अ॒वोत्त॑रात्तात् । अ॒व दक्षि॑णात्तात् । अ॒व चो॒र्ध्वात्ता॑त् ।
 अ॒वाध॑रात्तात् । सर्वतो मां पाहि पाहि॑ सम॒न्तात् ॥३॥

*ava tvaṁ mām | avā vaktāraṁ | avā śrotāraṁ | avā dātāraṁ | avā dhātāraṁ |
 avānūcānamāva śiṣyam | avā paścāttāt | avā purastāt | avottarāttāt |
 avā dakṣiṇāttāt | avā cordhvāttāt | avādhārāttāt | sarvato mām pāhi pāhi
 samantāt || 3 ||*

May you protect me absolutely by blessing me with wisdom, and relatively by blessing me with the strength to live a life of *dharma*. May you protect the teacher of this *upaniṣad*. May you protect the hearer of this *upaniṣad*. May you protect the giver of the teaching. May you protect the one who keeps this *upaniṣad* alive in his memory. May you protect the one who recites this *upaniṣad* after the teacher. May you protect the disciple who understands/studies the meaning. May you protect me/us from all forms of adversity. Completely protect me on all sides. || 3 ||

त्वं वाङ्म॑यस्त्वं चिन्म॑यः । त्वमा॑नन्दमयस्त्वं ब्रह्म॑मयः ।
 त्वं सच्चि॑दानन्दाऽद्वि॑तीयोऽसि । त्वं प्र॒त्यक्षं॑ ब्रह्मा॑सि ।
 त्वं ज्ञा॑नमयो विज्ञा॑नमयोऽसि ॥४॥

*tvaṁ vāṅmayastvaṁ cinmayah | tvamānandamayastvaṁ brahmayah |
 tvaṁ saccidānandā'dvītyo'si | tvaṁ pratyakṣaṁ brahmāsi | tvaṁ jñānamayo
 vijñānamayo'si || 4 ||*

You are in the form of words, a manifestation of knowledge. You are in the form of pure consciousness, the source of knowledge. You are of the nature of happiness, fullness. You are Reality in the form of Pure Existence, the source of the existence of everything – implied by the term *brahma*. You are non-dual existence, consciousness, fullness. You, imperceptible *Brahman*, are in the form of the directly perceptible universe. You are Reality, the source of all manifest knowledge. || 4 ||

सर्वं जगदिदं त्वत्तो जायते । सर्वं जगदिदं त्वत्तस्तिष्ठति ।
सर्वं जगदिदं त्वयि लयमेष्यति । सर्वं जगदिदं त्वयि
प्रत्येति । त्वं भूमिरापोऽनलोऽनिलो नभः । त्वं चत्वारि
वाक्पदानि ॥ ५ ॥

*sarvam jagadidam tvatto jāyate | sarvam jagadidam tvattastiṣṭhati | sarvam
jagadidam tvayi layameṣyati | sarvam jagadidam tvayi pratyeti | tvam
bhūmirāpo'nalo'nilo nabhah | tvam catvāri vāḥpadāni || 5 ||*

This entire objective universe, including the body-mind-sense complex, emerges from you. This entire manifest universe exists in you. This entire manifest universe will resolve in you. This entire universe returns into you, will become indivisibly unmanifest in you. You are in the form of five elements: earth, waters, fire, air, space. You are speech, limited to four forms/types of words (*om*, *bhūh*, *bhuvah* and *svah*) and the four stages of sound placed in the body-mind-sense complex of an individual. || 5 ||

त्वं गुणत्रयातीतः । त्वम् अवस्थात्रयातीतः ।
त्वं देहत्रयातीतः । त्वं कालत्रयातीतः ।

त्वं मूलाधारस्थितोऽसि नित्यम् । त्वं शक्तित्रयात्मकः ।
 त्वां योगिनो ध्यायन्ति नित्यम् । त्वं ब्रह्मा त्वं विष्णुस्त्वं
 रुद्रस्त्वमिन्द्रस्त्वमग्निस्त्वं वायुस्त्वं सूर्यस्त्वं चन्द्रमास्त्वं
 ब्रह्म भूर्भुवः स्वरोम् ॥ ६ ॥

*tvam guṇatrāyātītaḥ | tvam avasthātrāyātītaḥ | tvam dehatrāyātītaḥ | tvam
 kālatrāyātītaḥ | tvam mūlādhāraasthitō'si nityam | tvam śaktitrāyātmaḥ |
 tvām yogino dhyāyanti nityam | tvām brahmā tvām viṣṇustvam
 rudrastvamindrastvamagnistvam vāyustvam sūryastvam candramāstvam
 brahma bhūrbhuvāḥ svarom || 6 ||*

You are distinct from the three *guṇas* of *māyā*. You are the witness, distinct from the three witnessed states of experience: waking, dream and deep sleep. You are distinct from, transcend, the threefold body (gross, subtle and causal). You are distinct from time (past, present, future). You ever abide in the *mūlādhāra* at the base of the spine. You alone are in the form of the threefold manifest power: *jñāna śakti*, *icchā śakti*, *kriyā śakti* – the power to know, desire and act. *Yogis* ever meditate on you. As Absolute Reality, you are the Lord, the only powerful source of creation, sustenance and resolution as *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇuḥ* and *Rudraḥ*. You are *Indraḥ*, you are *Agniḥ*, you are *Vāyuḥ*, you are *Suryaḥ*, you are *Candraḥ*, you are the threefold utterances or the three worlds *bhūḥ*, *bhuvāḥ*, *svaḥ*, and you are *Om*, Reality. || 6 ||

गुणादिं॑ पूर्वमुच्चार्य॑ वर्णादीं॑स्तदनन्तरम् । अनुस्वारः
 परतरः॑ । अर्धे॑न्दुलसितम् । तारेण॑ ऋद्धम् । एतत्तव
 मनु॑स्वरूपम् । गकारः॑ पूर्वरूपम् । अकारो

म॒ध्य॑म॒रूप॑म् । अनु॒स्वारश्चा॑न्त्य॒रूप॑म् । बिन्दु॑रुत्तर॒रूप॑म् ।
नादः॑ सन्धा॒नम् । सँहि॑ता स॒न्धिः । सैषा गणेश॑विद्या ।
गण॑क ऋषिः । निचृ॑द्राय॒त्रीच्छु॑न्दः । गण॑पतिर्दे॒वता ।
ॐ गं ग॒णप॑तये नमः ॥ ७ ॥

*gaṇādiṁ pūrvāmuccārya varṇādīṁstadanantaram | anusvārah pāratarah |
ardhēndulasitam | tāreṇa rddham | etattava maṇṣvarūpam | gākārah
pūrvarūpam | akāro madhyāmarūpam | anusvāraścāntyarūpam |
binduruttārarūpam | nādāḥ sandhānam | saṁhitā sandhiḥ | saiṣā
gaṇēśavidyā | gaṇāka ṛṣiḥ | nicṛdgāyātrīcchandaḥ | gaṇapatirdevatā |
om gaṁ gaṇapātaye namaḥ || 7 ||*

Having first pronounced the beginning sound ग् of the word *gaṇa*, the first of the Sanskrit vowels, अ, should be pronounced. *Anusvārah* (म्) has to follow the other two sounds and is decked or embellished by a sign like a crescent moon. *Gaṁ* is made powerful, auspicious, by sounding the sacred *om* before it – thus: *om gaṁ*. This is the true description/nature of your *mantra*. The consonant ग् is the first form. The vowel अ is the middle form and the last sound is the nasal ङ्. The last sound ङ् continues to prolong or lengthen as a nasal sound known as *binduḥ*. The same last sound ङ्, still further prolonged and lengthened, is known as *nādāḥ*. It brings together or unites these different sounds to form a *mantra*. Sequential utterance of these different sounds is *saṁhitā*. Their sequential utterance completes the *mantra*. This *saṁhitā* is *sandhiḥ*, union/unison. This is a meditation upon Lord Ganesha. *Gaṇaka* is the name of the *ṛṣi*, the seer of this *mantra*. The metre is *nicṛdgāyatrī*. The presiding deity is *Gaṇapatīḥ*.
Om gaṁ gaṇapātaye namaḥ – my obeisance to Lord *Gaṇapatīḥ*. || 7 ||

ॐ एकदन्ताय विद्महे वक्रतुण्डाय धीमहि । तन्नो दन्तिः
प्रचोदयात् ॥८॥

*om ekadantāya vidmahē vakratuṇḍāya dhīmahi |
tanno dantiḥ pracodayāt || 8 ||*

We know the single-tusked Lord *Gaṇapati*. We contemplate upon the one (the Lord) with a curved trunk. May the Lord inspire our thoughts in contemplation. || 8 ||

एकदन्तं चतुर्हस्तं पाशमङ्कुशधारिणम् । रदं च
वरदं हस्तैर्बिभ्राणं मूषकध्वजम् । रक्तं लम्बोदरं
शूर्पकर्णकं रक्तवाससम् । रक्तगन्धानुलिप्ताङ्गं रक्तपुष्पैः
सुपूजितम् । भक्तानुकम्पिनं देवं जगत्कारणमच्युतम् ।
आविर्भूतं च सृष्ट्यादौ प्रकृतैः पुरुषात्परम् । एवं ध्यायति
यो नित्यं स योगी योगिनां वरः ॥९॥

*ekadantaṁ caturhastam pāśamaṅkuśadhāriṇam | radaṁ ca varadaṁ
hastairbibhraṇam mūṣakadhvajam | raktaṁ lambodaram
śūrpakarṇakam raktavāsasam | raktāgandhānūliptāṅgam raktapuṣpaiḥ
supūjitam | bhaktānukampinam devaṁ jagatkāraṇamacyutam |
āvīrbhūtam ca sṛṣṭyādaū prakṛtēḥ puruṣātparam | evaṁ dhyāyati yo
nityam sa yogī yoginām varaḥ || 9 ||*

The Lord, red in colour, endowed with a tusk and four hands, holds a snare, a goad and a tusk in three of them, and shows the gesture of being the

bestower of boons with the fourth. He has a flag of a mouse. He is large-bellied with ears like winnowing baskets. He is in red clothes, his limbs smeared with sandal-paste. He is worshipped with red flowers. The self-effulgent Lord is compassionate: he showers grace upon his devotees. Though the Lord is the cause of the universe he is essentially of the nature of changeless Absolute Existence. The Lord is manifest in the form of existence at the time of creation. He is distinct from and hence superior to *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*: the universe and the *jīva*. The Lord is not the cause, but both the intelligent and material causes are the Lord. Whosoever contemplates upon the Lord as unfolded in this *upaniṣad* is the most exalted among devotees. || 9 ||

ॐ नमो व्रातपतये । नमो गणपतये । नमः प्रमथपतये ।
 नमस्तेऽस्तु लम्बोदरायैकदन्ताय विघ्ननाशिने शिवसुताय
 श्रीवरदमूर्तये नमो नमः ॥१०॥

*om namo vrātapataye | namo gaṇapataye | namaḥ pramathapataye |
 namaste'stu lambodarāyaikadantāya vighnanāśine śivasutāya
 śrīvaradamūrtaye namo namaḥ || 10 ||*

Obeisance unto the Lord of all *jīvas*; obeisance unto the Lord of multitudes of beings and objects; obeisance unto the chief of all attendants of Lord *Śiva*; salutations unto the Lord whose belly is large; prostrations unto the Lord who removes all obstacles; obeisance to the son of *Śiva*; my salutations unto the Lord's form as the bestower of boons. || 10 ||

एतदथर्वशीर्षं योऽधीते स ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ।
 स सर्वविघ्नैर्न बाध्यते । स सर्वत्र सुखमेधते ।

स पञ्चमहापापात् प्रमुच्यते । सायमधीयानो दिवसकृतं
पापं नाशयति । प्रातरधीयानो रात्रिकृतं पापं नाशयति ।
सायं प्रातः प्रयुञ्जानो पापोऽपापो भवति ।
सर्वत्राधीयानोऽपविघ्नो भवति । धर्मार्थकाममोक्षं च
विन्दति । इदमथर्वशीर्षमशिष्याय न देयम् । यो यदि
मोहाद् दास्यति स पापीयान् भवति । सहस्रावर्तनाद्यं यं
काममधीते तं तमनेन साधयेत् ॥११॥

*etadatharvaśīrṣaṁ yo'dhīte sa brahmabhūyāya kalpate |
sa sarvaviḡhnaīrna bādhyate | sa sarvatra sukhamedhate |
sa pañcamahāpāpāt pramucyate | sāyamādhyāno divasakṛtaṁ pāpaṁ
nāśayati | prātarādhyāno rātrikṛtaṁ pāpaṁ nāśayati | sāyam prātaḥ
prāyuñjāno pāpo'pāpo bhavati | sarvatrādhyāno'paviḡhno bhavati |
dharmārthakāmamokṣaṁ ca vīndati | idamatharvaśīrṣamaśiṣyāya na
deyam | yo yadi mōhād dāsyati sa pāpīyān bhavati | sahasrāvartanādyam
yam kāmamadhīte taṁ tamanēna sādhayet || 11 ||*

Whoever studies this *Atharvaśīrṣa Upaniṣad* recognises his oneness with *Brahman*. He is not afflicted by any obstacle (in any form, in any of his pursuits). He attains happiness, always, everywhere. He is liberated from the five forms of the worst sins. Reciting this *upaniṣad* in the evening, the devotee is freed from sins committed during the day. Reciting it in the morning, he is freed from sins committed during the night. The devotee who recites it in both the morning and evening becomes freed from all forms of sin and thereby sinless. By reciting it in all circumstances and situations one becomes an obstacle-free person. He accomplishes all four human pursuits: *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*. This *upaniṣad* is not to be given to an

undeserving person. If someone deluded gives it, he becomes a sinner. Reciting this *upaniṣad* repeatedly, a thousand times, one can achieve any righteous desired end. || 11 ||

अनेन गणपतिमभिषिञ्चति स वाग्मी भवति ।
चतुर्थ्यामनश्नन् जपति स विद्यावान् भवति ।
इत्यथर्वणवाक्यम् । ब्रह्माद्यावरणं विद्यान्न बिभेति
कदाचनेति ॥१२॥

*anena gaṇapatimābhiṣiñcati sa vāgmī bhavati | caturthyāmanāśnan japati
sa vidyāvān bhavati | ityatharvāṇavākyaṃ | brahmādyāvaraṇaṃ vidyāna
bibheti kadācanēti || 12 ||*

One who performs *abhiṣeka* of Lord *Gaṇapati* with this *upaniṣad* becomes an orator. One who chants this on the fourth day of the lunar calendar, observing the discipline of fasting, becomes learned. This is a statement of *Atharvaṇa Rṣiḥ*. Repeatedly reciting this *upaniṣad* until the last breath, the very moment of death, one attains knowledge of oneness and thereby never fears. || 12 ||

यो दूर्वाङ्कुरैर्यजति स वैश्रवणोपमो भवति ।
यो लाजैर्यजति स यशोवान् भवति । स मेधावान्
भवति । यो मोदकसहस्रेण यजति स
वाञ्छितफलमवाप्नोति । यः साज्य समिद्धिर्यजति स
सर्वं लभते स सर्वं लभते ॥१३॥

yo dūrvāṅkūrairyajati sa vaiśravaṇopāmo bhavati | yo lājairyajati sa yaśovān bhavati | sa medhāvān bhavati | yo modakasahasreṇa yajati sa vāñchitaphalamāvāpnōti | yaḥ sājya samīdbhiryajati sa sarvaṁ labhate sa sārvaṁ labhate || 13 ||

Whoever worships Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ* with tender grass shoots will become comparable to *Vaiśravaṇaḥ-Kubera*, the *devatā* of wealth. Whoever worships offering puffed rice will become eminent. He also becomes blessed with the power of retaining and ascertaining the teaching. Whoever worships the Lord with a thousand *modakams* – a very specific sweet – will attain the desired results. Whoever worships the Lord offering twigs dipped in melted butter accomplishes everything, definitely accomplishes everything. || 13 ||

अष्टौ ब्राह्मणान् सम्यग् ग्राहयित्वा सूर्यवर्चस्वी भवति ।
सूर्यग्रहे महानद्यां प्रतिमासन्निधौ वा जप्त्वा सिद्धमंत्रो
भवति । महाविघ्नात् प्रमुच्यते । महादोषात् प्रमुच्यते ।
महापापात् प्रमुच्यते । महाप्रत्यवायात् प्रमुच्यते । स
सर्वविद्भवति स सर्वविद्भवति । य एवं वेद ।
इत्युपनिषत् ॥१४॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*aṣṭau brāhmaṇān samyag grāhayitvā sūryavarcāsvī bhavati |
sūryagrahe mahānadyām pratimāsannidhau vā japtvā siddhamāntro
bhavati | mahāvighnāt pramucyate | mahādoṣāt pramucyate |*

*mahāpāpāt pramūcyate | mahāpratyavāyāt pramūcyate | sa
sarvavidbhavati sa sarvavidbhavati | ya évam veda | ityūpaniṣāt || 14 ||*

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||

Teaching this *upaniṣad* to a deserving pupil one becomes brilliant like the Sun. Any devotee reciting this at a solar eclipse, on the bank of a river, or in front of Lord *Gaṇapati*'s form enjoys the benefits of the *mantra*. He will be liberated from very big obstacles, a highly major blemish and even from very major wrong action. Whoever worships or meditates upon the Lord thus will become omniscient, will become omniscient. Thus ends the *upaniṣad*. || 14 ||

Om – peace, peace, peace.

Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣa Upaniṣad

Word-by-word Translation and Commentary

॥ गणपत्यथर्वशीर्षोपनिषत् ॥

Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣa Upaniṣad

gaṇapati – Gaṇapati • *atharva* – na tharvati iti atharva - Atharva (one whose vision of the truth does not falter but is clear, firm and doubt-free) • *śīrṣa* – head (crest, summit)
• *upaniṣad* – Upanishad

The *Gaṇapati Atharvaśīrṣa Upaniṣad* is the end or summit portion of the *Atharva-Veda*. Therefore, it is known as the *Atharvaśīrṣa Upaniṣad*, implying that it is the crest jewel of the *Atharva Veda*. The *Atharva Veda* also contains other *upaniṣads*, namely the *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya* and *Praśna*.

Even though there are hundreds of *upaniṣads*, only ten have a commentary by Śrī Ādi Śaṅkara and hence are considered to be major ones. Others, although considered minor, are not different in content or greatness. The commentary on the *Gaṇapati Upaniṣad* was written by a *mahātmā*, *Brahmayogī*, a disciple of *Vāsudevendra Svāmī*.

The scripture aims to help us discover Reality, ultimately, but it also emphasises the worship of the Lord as an intermediary preparatory discipline for accomplishing the ultimate, the vision of the non-duality of Reality. Worship of the Lord means attention being focussed on the Lord. It can be a *kāyīkam*, *vācīkam* and *mānasam karma* – worship can involve body, speech and mind. *Upāsanam* is *mānasam karma*, mental worship, meditation. This *upaniṣad* discusses *upāsanam* and presents the teaching on the nature of Reality, *Brahman*. It is a small but complete *upaniṣad*.

Absolute security is in emotional independence or freedom. Emotional independence is possible only when one can claim Reality or Truth as the self on its discovery. Self-discovery involves time and effort in mental preparation. So, until one accomplishes wisdom in terms of self-knowledge, a human psyche naturally entertains insecurity, fear and thereby other emotions.

In any endeavour there is a desperate need to handle such mental conditions. Prayer, an intelligent way of seeking help, becomes a spontaneous expression of one's recognition of one's utter helplessness. Along with one's efforts in fulfilling one's wish, one naturally seeks grace for successfully completing any undertaking. Fervent, intense prayer with faithful devotion definitely helps in earning the grace of *Īśvara* who alone is adept at

removing obstacles in any of one's endeavours. The nature of worship of the Lord differs from person to person as it is determined by different emotional needs.

Gaṇapati worship is specifically for the removal of obstacles. Chanting of this *upaniṣad* as part of *Gaṇapati* worship is definitely the most effective means of neutralising hidden invariables that hinder the accomplishment of not only time-bound ends but mainly the attainment of the ultimate end: knowledge of Truth, *mokṣa*. This can bless one with the attainment of the very meaning of the word *upaniṣad* – *brahma vidyā* – which can lift one to *Īśvara* status by removing the distance (caused by ignorance) between the self and the Lord. One can see the Lord as one's own real nature. One can recognise oneself being non-distant and non-separate from the Lord.

gaṇapatiḥ – *gaṇānām patiḥ* • *gana* – group, multitude, (innumerable) groups of beings, i.e. the universe • *patiḥ* – lord, protector

Gaṇapati is a name for *Bhagavān* as the lord of the entire universe, the lord of groups of beings; a synonym for *Īśvara*. He is the lord of all laws. Laws determine the outcome of action, hence, he is the protector of all laws and of all beings.

ŚĀNTI-PĀṬHA

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयामं देवाः । भद्रं
पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः । स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाꣳ संस्तनूभिः ।
व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः । स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः ।
स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः । स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो
अरिष्टनेमिः । स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*om bhadram karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāmā devāḥ | bhadram
paśyemākṣabhīryajātrāḥ | sthīrairāṅgaistuṣṭuvāgṃ sāstanūbhiḥ | vyaśēma
devahitaṃ yadāyuh | svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḥ | svasti naḥ pūṣā
viśvavēdāḥ | svasti naṣtārksyo ariṣṭanemiḥ | svasti no bṛhaspatirdadhātu ||
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||*

om – the sound symbol of the Lord, an auspicious utterance • *bhadram* – auspiciousness (auspicious words) • *karṇebhiḥ* – with the ears • *śṛṇuyāma* – may we hear • *devāḥ* – O gods

O gods, may we hear auspicious words with the ears.

bhadram – auspiciousness • *paśyema* – may we see, perceive • *akṣabhir* – with the eyes (senses) *akṣabhiḥ* • *yajatrāḥ* – O (*devas*) protectors of worshippers

O protectors of worshippers, may we see, may we perceive (only) auspiciousness with the eyes (senses). (May our discrimination be such that no perception disturbs us from the pursuit of knowledge.)

sthiraḥ – steady, strong, *sthiraḥ* • *aṅgais* – by/with limbs, *aṅgaiḥ* (‘with strong limbs’ = good health) • *tuṣṭuvāgṃ* – *tuṣṭuvāmsaḥ* praising, glorifying (the Lord) • *sastanūbhiḥ* – with hymns of praise

Enjoying good health, with strong limbs, glorifying the Lord with hymns of praise...

vyāsema – may we spend • *deva* – Lord • *hitam* – ordained • *yad* – which • *āyuh* – life-span

...may we (thus) spend our Lord-ordained span of life.

svasti – auspiciousness (all desirable ends – ultimately *mokṣa*) • *na* – to us, *naḥ* • *indro* – *Indraḥ*, *devatā* of physical prowess and strong will who inspires right action • *vṛddhaśravāḥ* – very famous

(May) the famous *Indra*, (*devatā* of physical prowess and strong will, bless) us (with) auspiciousness.

svasti – auspiciousness (all desirable ends – ultimately *mokṣa*) • *naḥ* – us • *pūṣā* – one who nourishes (a name of *Surya devatā*) • *viśva* – all • *vedāḥ* – knowing

(May) the omniscient *Surya*, nourisher of all, (bless) us (with) auspiciousness.

svasti – auspiciousness (all desirable ends – ultimately *mokṣa*) • *nas* – us, *naḥ* • *tārksyo* – eagle, *tārksyaḥ* (*Garuḍa*) • *ariṣṭanemiḥ* – of unobstructed flight (obliterator of anything that obstructs its flight)

(May) the eagle of unobstructed flight (bless) us (with) auspiciousness. (May our pursuit of knowledge be as unobstructed as the flight of *Garuḍa*.)

svasti – auspiciousness (all desirable ends – ultimately *mokṣa*) • *no* – us, *naḥ* • *bṛhaspatir* – lord of speech (Jupiter, *bṛhaspatiḥ*) • *dadhātu* – may bring

May *Brhaspati* bring auspiciousness to us.

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

Om. (Let there be) peace, peace, peace.

(May there be peace due to the cessation of problems arising from the three different sources: one's body-mind-sense complex, people and situations in the world, and thirdly from natural calamities.)

1ST MANTRA

ॐ नमस्ते गुणपतये ।

om namāste gaṇapataye |

om – the sound symbol of the Lord, auspicious utterance • *namaste* – salutations to you (*namaḥ*, salutations; *te*, to you) • *gaṇapataye* – to *Gaṇapatiḥ*, lord of all groups of beings

Salutations to *Gaṇapatiḥ*, the lord of all groups of beings.

Gaṇānām patiḥ – *Gaṇapatiḥ*. In *Vedānta śāstram* it is clearly revealed that the Lord is the Truth, the absolute formless Reality, *arūpaḥ*; attributeless, *nirguṇaḥ*; changeless, *nirvikāraḥ*; and so on. Therefore, a worshipper of the Lord can invoke the grace of the Lord in any given form. Such a chosen form is said to be an *iṣṭha devatā* or *daivam* – personal god – having a 'form' and qualities, *sarūpaḥ*, *saguṇaḥ*. Hence, the word *Gaṇapatiḥ* has to be understood etymologically as well as theologically. When the formless Lord is invoked in a given form for the purpose of worship as a personal deity there comes always a legendary story pertaining to that personal deity.

Any worshipper sees one's own self as an isolated individual different from the Lord, the whole, even though none is different, distant or separate from the Lord. *Vedānta śāstram* tirelessly declares that every being is essentially the Truth, the Lord, but unfortunately (naturally) not all individual beings understand this. Non-understanding of this fact results in human suffering. When a devotee's worship culminates in discovering the fact of one's inseparability from the Lord – the non-difference in difference – he or she becomes free from the clutches of limitations and suffering. Until one has this vision (and in order to be qualified for the vision of this fact) the act of worshipping – involving physical, oral and mental activities – serves as a means of establishing the relationship and connection between the individual worshipper and the Lord, the whole. Worship enables the immature gross mind to become subtle, refined and thereby able to comprehend the subtle fact of the oneness of Truth.

There are many forms of the Lord portrayed by the scriptural stalwarts personified in the *purāṇas* (legends). The worship of the Lord in the form of *Gaṇapatiḥ* is the most significant one because *Gaṇapatiḥ* is also known as *Vināyakaḥ*, the first and foremost of everything.

The *parā* and *aparā prakṛtis* – the higher and lower natures of Reality – constitute the Lord. Reality, with its inseparable creative power, is personified in the *purāṇas* as Lord *Śiva* with *Parvatī*. Auspiciousness is always attributed to the Lord alone. If it is understood that everything is the Lord, everything is auspicious. *Gaṇapatiḥ*, depicted as the son of *Śiva-Parvatī*, symbolises *saguṇam brahma*, and *Śiva-Parvatī* stand for two inseparable orders of the only reality, *nirguṇam brahma*.

All beings live together in groups. There are innumerable groups of beings, including groups of *devatās*, all living creatures and humans, along with non-living things. All these beings enjoy their existence in Reality, *Brahman*. The protector, sustainer and Lord of all groups of beings is known as *Gaṇapatiḥ*.

Gaṇaḥ means ‘group’; *patiḥ* means ‘lord, protector’. If this expression *gaṇaḥ* in the name *gaṇapatiḥ* is analysed it should bring to our notice everything that is in groups: *devatās* – eight *vasus*, eleven *rudras*, twelve *ādityas*, seven groups of seven *maruts*, etc. Planets cluster in galaxies and atoms cluster in molecules. Every being and system is a composite of many factors. There is no independent entity at all – on the contrary, there is mutual interdependence.

Human beings too are of different groups: culture, caste, creed, religion, race, geographic background, predominance of *guṇas*, etc. Even people of different professions and different interests or hobbies form their own associations. There are also many many organisations of people founded on their priorities. This demonstrates that no individual being exists independently; everyone and everything form part of the whole.

Over-emphasis on individuality sooner or later brings experiences of inadequacy; it can never bring fullness. The more people try to emphasise individuality, along with individual freedoms and licences, the more they face problems and miseries.

The natural desire for the enjoyment of sense-pleasures is an expression of the desire for freedom in total measure, the desire for the enjoyment of life in full measure. However, there is a misplaced connection between fullness or freedom and sense-pleasures – all pleasures are only ever a fraction of the manifestation of fullness. The individual, being part of the total, can only discover fullness or happiness in gradually resolving individuality cognitively in totality, in the whole. Such cognitive resolution of individuality at the altar of totality is absolute surrender. Even family harmony is possible only when family members maintain a strong family bond by being together at home whenever possible, especially in prayer, at meals, etc. If a family member breaks from the family as a result of

friction he or she is actually seeking individual freedom through separation. It is an unfortunate mistake.

It is very natural for anyone to desire to be part of something. Even birds, animals, fish, insects, etc. live in groups. When a crow is fed it calls its other group members. From unicellular organisms to the most complex of creatures (including all flora and fauna) groups are the norm. Therefore, Absolute Reality, when looked upon as the lord of all beings, is invoked as *Gaṇapatiḥ*, the lord protector of groups.

The cosmology discussed in the Vedas states that there is no creation at all; there is only manifestation. The unmanifest, undifferentiated, creative power of the Lord, *māyā*, alone manifests as *mahat*, cosmic or universal intellect. *Ahaṅkāra*, the cosmic or universal ego, a further manifestation of *mahat*, alone manifests as the subtle elements and thereby the gross elements. All these manifestations, beginning from *māyā* (the unmanifest power) up to the gross elements, form a group. This entire group of basic principles, which constitute the whole universe, has come into existence from the Lord and enjoys its existence in the Lord. Therefore, *Gaṇapatiḥ*, being the lord of the group of basic principles, can also be understood as a cosmological name.

2ND MANTRA

त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं तत्त्वमसि । त्वमेव केवलं कर्ताऽसि ।
त्वमेव केवलं धर्ताऽसि । त्वमेव केवलं हर्ताऽसि ।
त्वमेव सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मासि । त्वं साक्षादात्माऽसि
नित्यम् ॥

*tvameva pratyakṣam tattvāmasi | tvameva kevalam kartā'si | tvameva
kevalam dhartā'si | tvameva kevalam hartā'si | tvameva sarvam khalvidam
brahmāsi | tvam sākṣādātmā'si nityam ||*

tvam – you • *eva* – alone • *pratyakṣam* – evident, directly perceptible • *tattvam* – absolute truth, reality • *asi* – are (in the form of the very existence of all that is here)

You alone are truth, perceptible (as the manifest universe).

Tasya bhāvaḥ tattvam – The existence (truth) of everything, indicated by the pronoun *tat*, is *tattvam*. Therefore, *tattvam* means the truth of the entire universe. The objective universe, which seems to be very real to the senses and mind, is not as real as it appears. Reality is implied by another expression, *sat*, which is defined as *tri-kāla-abādhitam satyam*, meaning: ‘that which is non-negatable or which cannot be negated in the three periods of time (past, present and future)’. No object obtaining in any form, such as a pot, an ornament, etc., can be called real because forms such as a pot etcetera were not existent until a given time and will not be so after a period of time. With reference to a gold ornament, its reality is gold. It is the gold that, alone obtaining in a specific configuration serving a given purpose for a given period of time, is seen as an ornament. Therefore, ‘ornament’ is another name for gold itself. Ornament, pot, etc., are words denoting their respective forms. The forms are not countable as independent entities and so are *mithyā*. Similarly, with reference to this entire cosmos, Absolute Reality – *sat-cit*, existence-consciousness *Brahman* – alone is *satyam*. All forms, names and functions constituting the whole are *mithyā* in that they do not have independent existence of their own.

Even though Reality alone is in the form of everything, no form can or does limit Reality because form is a mere superimposition. Hence, the universe of forms, names and functions is nothing but a superimposition on consciousness-existence, *Brahman*. The Lord, invoked as *Gaṇapatiḥ* here, is none other than that *Brahman*.

Reality is not available for sense-perception, thought conception and word description. It is something beyond the scope of human capacity, but the greatness and glory of Reality is very much accessible, manifesting as the universe before us. There is only divinity on all sides, above and below. As mentioned in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*, *Brahman* alone is in front, at the back, on the right, on the left, above and below, pervading all.

We experience pairs of opposites, likes and dislikes, emotions, etc, when we choicelessly come in contact with the external world of objects, forms, names, etc, attributing absoluteness to them and taking them to be real. But, in the wake of the clear vision of the Reality of the universe, all emotions, all pairs of opposites, resolve for good, no longer causing affliction. That is why the aim of *Vedānta* is to resolve affliction by helping us see what we do not see. In unfolding the nature of Reality, *Vedānta* reveals the *mithyā* status of forms and names. The *mithyā* universe of forms and names is in and through pervaded by Reality, the Lord.

Tattvam, the Truth, obtaining in the form of the perceptible world as *adhibhūtam*, has been discussed above. Now, if we also analyse the *adhyātmam*, the body-mind-sense complex, we can arrive at the fact that *Brahman*, Reality, alone manifests as all the sense powers, which function as instruments of knowledge.

The manifestation of the power of Reality alone makes the body sentient, conscious, alive. Each and every faculty in every living being is an *Īśvara vibhūti*, a glorious manifestation

of Truth. Thoughts, which constitute the *antaḥ-karaṇam* (mind) are widely varied, having different objects, but the essence of all thought is one and the same consciousness, *ātmā*. The truth of the ‘I’ thought, which is the essence of the individual, is nothing but *ātmā*, *Brahman*, the only non-dual, absolute reality expressing itself through all the sense powers, through the entire body-mind-sense complex. The instruments of knowledge, the instruments of action, the abode of enjoyment (the body) are all *upādhis*. *Upādhis* serve as manifesting media for *Brahman*. So, *pratyakṣam tattvam* means Reality – as pure knowledge or awareness – is one and the same, common to all forms of knowledge in a person, just as the light behind the scenes on a film screen and the water in all waves is common. Therefore, everything is the Lord. The sense of possession in ‘my body, my senses, my mind, and my I-sense’ is an expression of ignorance.

tvam – you • *eva* – alone • *kevalam* – only, alone • *kartāsi* – creator (*kartā*, maker, creator; *asi*, are)

You alone are the only creator (of all that is here).

tvam – you • *eva* – alone • *kevalam* – only • *dhartāsi* – *dhartā*, sustainer; *asi*, are

You alone are the only sustainer (of all that is here).

tvam – you • *eva* – alone • *kevalam* – only • *hartāsi* – *hartā*, destroyer, annihilator, snatcher; *asi*, are

You alone are the one in whom everything resolves.

Even though there is no creation at all, still there is a time the universe ceases to exist; there is a time it enjoys existence. When this universe ceases to exist it is not destroyed, it remains unmanifest. Again, from being unmanifest it becomes manifest. This unmanifest universe becoming manifest is creation; the manifest becoming unmanifest is dissolution. Absolute Reality, implied by the term *Brahman* or *ātmā*, being the source and substratum of these phenomena of creation and dissolution is bowed to as the Lord. Being the Lord, three different functional or phenomenal titles are attributed to Him. The creator, sustainer and the one in whom everything resolves is the Lord: *kartā*, *dhartā* and *hartā* respectively.

The Vedantic concept of ‘Lord’ is based on this vision that the Lord is the Truth, which alone is manifest as the whole, and hence the origination, sustenance and dissolution of the universe cannot, does not, happen or occur outside of that Truth. Therefore, the lordship and these three statuses are attributed to the only Reality. *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* are the personifications of this threefold phenomenon portrayed in the *Purāṇas*. So, we can say: “What is, is only Absolute Reality, *Brahman*.” Or it can be said: “All that is there is only the Lord.”

tvam – you • *eva* – alone • *sarvaṃ* – all • *khalv* – indeed, ‘aren’t you!’, *khalu* • *idaṃ* – this (manifest universe) • *brahmāsi* – *brahma*, *Brahman*; *asi*, are

This (entire universe) is *Brahman* and you alone are indeed that *Brahman*!

tvam – you • *sākṣād* – indeed, definitely, evidently • *ātmāsi* – *ātmā*, the innermost essence of all, the truth of ‘I’; *asi*, are • *nityam* – ever, always

Obviously, you are ever the self, *ātmā* (the content of ‘I’).

A devotee, having an understanding of the fact explained above in the earlier commentary, addresses the Lord saying: “Thou art *Brahman*, all that is here.” He further states that not only is this universe the Lord, but the very truth of the individual is also always the Lord. Thus he says: “You are the very self, always.”

Absolute Reality, being the only source of the existence of time, space and all the forms names and functions that constitute the whole cosmos, is of the nature of infinitude, limitlessness and hence is implied by the term *Brahman*. Therefore, the knower-known duality and the plurality of the world of objects exists in the second-less, non-dual, only reality, *Brahman*, which alone appears as many.

That which is the universe for an ignorant person is *Brahman* for a wise person. Hence, the wise devotee says, “This entire universe is *Brahman* – that is, you!” Even though it is clear that this universe is constituted of five basic elements – space, air, fire, water and earth – all are essentially nothing but consciousness-existence, *Brahman*. Those beings in which knowledge is manifest are animate and those where there is no manifestation of knowledge are inanimate, but all animate and inanimate beings and entities are nothing but *Brahman* in different forms with different names. From the grossest to the subtlest, the material objective universe in its entirety is nothing but the manifestation of Existence, *Brahman*. There is no matter other than *Brahman*. This is the knowledge of *Brahman* being *Sat*.

The most difficult aspect of Vedantic teaching is resolving tangible matter in the most intangible existence-consciousness. The statement *tvam eva sarvaṃ khalvidam brahmāsi* reveals the wise devotee’s vision of the universe being cognitively resolved in *Brahman*, whereas *tvam sākṣāt ātmāsi nityam* reveals that the individual ‘I’, the knower of the world, also is *Brahman*. The world, the known, is denoted by the pronoun *idaṃ* (this) from the standpoint of the body-mind-sense complex. Then, from the standpoint of ‘I’, the knower, the body-mind-sense complex itself becomes included in the known material universe, which is *Brahman*. The physical body enjoys sentiency because of its association with sentient sense organs. The sense organs enjoy their sentiency and existence in the sentient mind. The conscious mind enjoys its existence in *ahaṅkāra* and *ahaṅkāra* enjoys its existence in Pure Consciousness, the *ātmā*. *Ātmā* (consciousness) and *Brahman* (existence) are one and the same non-dual second-less reality. This is the knowledge of *Brahman* being *cit*.

Due to its all-pervasive nature, *sat-cit* is implied by the term *ātmā*. The knowledge of all objects through perception is called *pratyakṣa jñānam*, direct knowledge. The knowledge of objects such as heaven (or other far off things or places) not through direct perception but through other sources is called *parokṣa jñānam*, indirect knowledge. The knowledge of emotions such as fear, anxiety, etc., and other mental conditions imperceptible through the senses is called *aparokṣa jñānam*, immediate knowledge. What is left as non-objectifiable is the very knower, the witness-consciousness. It is this witness that is none other than *sat-cit-ātmā* obtaining as the immediate self, *sākṣāt ātmā*, the recognition of which is also *aparokṣa ātmajñānam*. *Aparokṣa ātmā* is none other than the Lord, hence the devotee says: “*Tvam sākṣāt ātmā asi nityam.*”

3RD MANTRA

ऋ॒तं व॒च्मि । स॒त्यं व॒च्मि ॥
 अ॒व त्वं॑ मा॒म् । अ॒व व॒क्तार॑म् । अ॒व श्रो॒तार॑म् । अ॒व
 दा॒तार॑म् । अ॒व धा॒तार॑म् । अ॒वानू॑चा॒नम॑व शि॒ष्यम् ।

ṛtam vacmi | śatyam vacmi ||
ava tvaṁ mām | avā vaktāraṁ | avā śrotāraṁ | avā dātāraṁ |
avā dhātāraṁ | avānūcānamava śiṣyam |

ṛtam – ascertained, doubt-free knowledge of the scriptural teaching • *vacmi* – I declare, say

I declare that you are the truth, *ṛtam* (the ascertained knowledge of the scriptural teaching).

satyam – living the vision: expressing it in speech and action • *vacmi* – I declare, say

I declare that you are *satyam* (that same ascertained knowledge expressed in speech and action).

Knowing the teaching: *ṛtam* ~ Living it: *satyam*

These two words, *ṛtam* and *satyam*, have the same meaning – the Truth. However, when they come together (as here) they differ in what they express. *Ṛtam* then stands for ascertained, assimilated, clear knowledge gained by scriptural study. *Satyam* stands for that same knowledge reflected in thought, word and deed.

Individuals' entire life, their functions, their body, their mind – everything – is choicelessly dependent upon the Lord, the whole. Any and every function can be identified with the Lord because all faculties of thought, word and deed are nothing but the power of the Lord expressed in each individual body-mind-sense complex. Therefore, as a devotee, one recognises this ascertained scriptural knowledge, *ṛtam* – and its reflection through thought, word and deed, *satyam* – to be the manifestation of divinity in every individual. This understanding is the first step towards Truth.

Ṛtam and *satyam* can also respectively mean *mithyā* and *satyam*, the relative and the absolute: two orders of reality. If one takes the example of a gold ornament, the gold is *satyam*, the ornament is *mithyā*. Similarly, the entire universe is empirically real. The source of the universe, the substratum, is Absolute Reality. All that actually exists is non-dual Reality, *Brahman*. The world is a superimposition; it doesn't exist independently from *Brahman*. In spite of appearing as the world, Absolute Reality remains changelessly eternal in its own incomparable, most exalted glory. Thus, here in this second meaning, *ṛtam* implies empirical reality, *satyam* implies Absolute Reality. It is declared by the devotee that *ṛtam* and *satyam* are both *Brahman*.

Dhāranāt dharmah – there is a universal, natural, moral law and order that upholds the entire universe together as the cosmos. It is this order that prevents chaos. *Ṛtam* means 'order' and *satyam*, the very substratum of that order, is the Absolute Reality that sustains and maintains it. The Lord, *Gaṇapatiḥ*, is recognised to be the order, *ṛtam*, and its very existence, *satyam*.

Here, in the third *mantra* (and second verse) the devotee expresses an intention to speak the truth. Simply expressing the truth one knows is *satyam*. Being validly certain of its veracity before revealing it to others is *ṛtam*. Unfortunately, it is common to find well-meaning people who, due to the lack of veracity in their words, misguide others.

ava – may protect (please protect) • *tvam* – you • *mām* – me

May you protect me (absolutely, by blessing me with wisdom, and relatively by blessing me with the strength to live a life of *dharma*).

ava – may protect (please protect) • *vaktāram* – the speaker, teacher

May (you) protect the teacher (of this *upaniṣad*).

ava – may protect (please protect) • *śrotāram* – the hearer

May (you) protect the hearer (of this *upaniṣad*).

ava – may protect (please protect) • *dātāram* – giver (the one who initiates the disciple into your worship and into the teaching)

May (you) protect the giver (of the teaching).

ava – may protect (please protect) • *dhātāram* – the placer, the one who keeps

May (you) protect the one who keeps (this *upaniṣad* alive in his memory).

ava – may protect (please protect) • *anūcānam* – one who recites, *anūcānaḥ*

May (you) protect the one who recites (this *upaniṣad* after the teacher).

ava – may protect (please protect) • *śiṣyam* – disciple

May (you) protect the disciple (who understands/studies the meaning).

Every student of the Traditional Teaching, who receives it properly from a teacher who knows the *sampradāya* (who knows both the Teaching and the methodology used to impart it) becomes a teacher himself. That *sampradāya* is inbuilt in the *Vedas* and hence is from *Īśvara* alone.

Such a teacher-student lineage or succession, known as the *guru-śiṣya paramparā*, preserves and perpetuates the Traditional Teaching for future generations of humanity.

Here, in this *mantra*, which is part of the third verse, the teacher prays for himself as well as for his disciples. He is praying for protection of both the teacher and the student. The student is one who memorises, recites after the teacher and understands the meaning through study. Both he and his teacher seek the Lord's grace because the accomplishment of knowledge is dependent on physical-emotional well-being and a disturbance-free atmosphere.

In order to remove all possible impediments to the gaining of knowledge, as well as to the enjoyment of the benefit of knowledge, the teacher prays for protection. The study involves initiation into the study; listening to the Teaching; reciting the *mantras* after the teacher in order to avoid errors in pronunciation, intonation, etc.; memorising the *mantras* and understanding their meanings. The teacher prays for the removal of obstacles at every step. The study of the scripture is itself an auspicious action and hence is a worship in itself. The teacher and student, who are involved in the study as the one who imparts and the one who receives, need to be protected. Thus the third *mantra* is a prayer for such protection.

4TH MANTRA

अव॑ प॒श्चात्ता॑त् । अव॑ पु॒रस्ता॑त् । अवोत्त॑रात्ता॑त् । अव॑
दक्षि॑णात्ता॑त् । अव॑ चो॒र्ध्वात्ता॑त् । अवाध॑रात्ता॑त् ।
सर्वतो॑ मां पाहि॑ पाहि॑ सम॒न्तात् ॥

avā paścāttāt | avā purastāt | avottarāttāt | avā dakṣiṇāttāt |
avā cordhvāttāt | avādhāttāt | sarvato mām pāhi pāhi samantāt ||

ava – may protect (please protect) • *paścāttāt* – from behind (the West) • *ava* – may protect (please protect) • *purastāt* – from in front (the East) (another version found - *purastattāt*) • *avo* – may protect, *ava*, (please protect) • *ottarāttāt* – from the left (the North) *uttarāttāt* • *ava* – may protect (please protect) • *dakṣiṇāttāt* – from the right (the South) • *ava* – may protect (please protect) • *cordhvāttāt* – *ca*, and; *urdhvāttāt*, from above • *ava* – may protect (please protect) • *adhāttāt* – from below

May (you) protect (me/us from all forms of adversity).

sarvato – on all sides, *sarvataḥ* • *mām* – me • *pāhi* – may protect (synonym of *ava*)
• *pāhi* – may protect • *samantāt* – entirely, completely, totally

Completely protect me on all sides.

Having presented a specific prayer for the protection of the teacher and the disciple, the *upaniṣad* continues with a prayer for protection from obstacles and dangers possibly prevalent in all directions. Here the devotee addresses the Lord as the one who is manifest as the whole, the *Mahā Puruṣa*, *Viśvarūpaḥ*. The danger from hidden invariables can be in any form, anywhere, in any direction. Therefore it is specifically meant that any ill-effect, any harm, gained or drawn or attracted from any direction needs to be dealt with. Hence, prayer for protection from adversities from different directions is given here. The past passive participle *ātta* – meaning ‘gained or obtained’ – is found in each of the above prayers. Hence, the prayer is: “O Lord, may you protect me from all (forms of adversity or trouble drawn) from the west, east, north, south, above and below.”

All of a human being’s problems are caused by him alone. The Lord, in the form of the law, ordains the results of action. This prayer expresses the devotee’s recognition of *Īśvara* being the universal, natural, moral law and order. He prays for the removal of the ill-effects

of any future situations, or for the strength and prudence needed for their graceful acceptance.

Worldly transactions naturally result in acquiring many things, in developing relationships, and in desirable and undesirable situations. In due course of time people become emotionally dependent on situations, relationships, objects and people of the world. Dependence results in unhappiness, *samsārah*. It is very difficult to be dispassionate, to be independent from the world. Therefore, whenever difficulties and helplessness are understood we cannot do anything better than pray for grace, for wisdom.

The imperative word *ava*, may you protect, is repeated to make the prayer emphatic. *Ūrdhva* and *adhaḥ*, meaning ‘above and below’, actually imply *puṇyam* and *pāpam* respectively. The devotee therefore seeks freedom from both because not only does *pāpam* bind so too does *puṇyam*. Hence, the prayer is for protection from everything adverse from all sides.

5TH MANTRA

त्वं वाङ्मयस्त्वं चिन्मयः । त्वमानन्दमयस्त्वं ब्रह्ममयः ।
त्वं सच्चिदानन्दाऽद्वितीयोऽसि । त्वं प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि ।
त्वं ज्ञानमयो विज्ञानमयोऽसि ॥

tvam vāṅmayastvam cinmayah | tvamānandamayastvam brahmamayah |
tvam saccidānandā'dvītyo'si | tvam pratyakṣam brahmāsi |
tvam jñānamayo vijñānamayo'si ||

tvam – you • *vāṅ* – word, *vāk* • *mayas* – made of, in the form of, *mayah* • *tvam* – you • *cin* – reality, pure knowledge, pure consciousness, *cit* • *mayah* – a suffix meaning ‘in the form of, of the nature of’

You (are) in the form of words (a manifestation of knowledge). You (are) in the form of pure consciousness, the source of knowledge.

tvam – you • *ānanda* – limitless fullness • *mayas* – made of, in the form of, *mayah*
• *tvam* – you • *brahmamayah* – nothing other than absolute bigness i.e. Reality

You (are) of the nature of happiness, fullness. You (are) Reality, in the form of Pure Existence (the source of the existence of everything – implied by the term *brahma*).

tvam – you • *saccidānanda* – *sat*, existence; *cit*, consciousness; *ānanda*, fullness (happiness) • *advītyo* – non-dual, *advītyaḥ* • ‘*si* – are, *asi*

You are non-dual existence, consciousness, fullness.

tvam – you • *pratyakṣam* – directly perceptible • *brahmāsi* – *brahma*, *Brahman*; *asi*, are

You (imperceptible) *Brahman* are (in the form of) the directly perceptible (universe).

tvam – you • *jñāna* – pure knowledge (the source of knowledge) • *mayo* – the suffix *mayāḥ*, meaning: in the form of • *vijñāna* – manifest knowledge • *mayo* – the suffix *mayāḥ*, ‘in the form of, of the nature of’ • ‘*si* – are, *asi*

You (Reality) are all manifest knowledge (and also) its source.

The *Viṣṇu Sahasranāma* has the word *viśvam*, the universe, as the name of the Lord because the universe – consisting of innumerable forms, names and functions – is nothing but the Lord. Every form has its corresponding word. Even though forms are innumerable and useful, still they do not have an independent existence of their own; they do not have substantiality. Therefore, forms can be validated only in terms of words, their respective names. Names are words which are nothing but expressions or manifestations of knowledge – hence, words originate from the Lord. The only source of forms and names is the Lord. All forms names and functions shine only in the light of consciousness, the essential nature of the Lord. Forms, manifestations of the *sat* aspect of the Lord, shine in the light of consciousness, the *cit* aspect of the Lord. Names, the words (or terms) that are in between the forms and one’s own consciousness, are nothing but manifestations of knowledge, the Lord.

6TH MANTRA

सर्वं जगदिदं त्वत्तो जायते । सर्वं जगदिदं
त्वत्तस्तिष्ठति । सर्वं जगदिदं त्वयि लयमेष्यति । सर्वं
जगदिदं त्वयि प्रत्येति । त्वं भूमिरापोऽनलोऽनिलो
नुभः । त्वं चत्वारि वाक्पदानि ॥

sarvaṃ jagadidaṃ tvātto jāyate | sarvaṃ jagadidaṃ tvāttastiṣṭhati |
sarvaṃ jagadidaṃ tvayi layāmeṣyati | sarvaṃ jagadidaṃ tvayi pratyeti |
tvaṃ bhūmirāpo'nalo'nilo nabhaḥ | tvaṃ catvāri vākpadāni ||

sarvaṃ – all, entire • *jagad* – manifest universe, *jagat* • *idaṃ* – this • *tvatto* – from you, *tvattaḥ* • *jāyate* – originates from, becomes manifest from

This entire objective universe (including the body-mind-sense complex) emerges from you.

sarvaṃ – all, entire • *jagad* – manifest universe, *jagat* • *idaṃ* – this • *tvattas* – from you, *tvattaḥ* • *tiṣṭhati* – remains, stays, stands

This entire manifest universe exists in you.

sarvaṃ – all, entire • *jagad* – manifest universe, *jagat* • *idaṃ* – this • *tvayi* – in you • *layam* – resolution • *eṣyati* – it will

This entire manifest universe will resolve in you.

sarvaṃ – all, entire • *jagad* – manifest universe, *jagat* • *idaṃ* – this • *tvayi* – in you • *pratyeti* – it returns (*prati*, towards; *eti*, goes)

This entire universe returns into you (will become indivisibly unmanifest in you).

tvaṃ – you • *bhūmir* – earth, *bhūmiḥ* • *āpo* – waters, *āpaḥ* • *'nalo* – fire, *analaḥ* • *'nilo* – air, *anilaḥ* • *nabhaḥ* – space

You (are in the form of five elements) earth, waters, fire, air, space.

tvaṃ – you • *catvāri* – four stages, four forms • *vāk* – sound, speech • *padāni* – words

You (are) speech, (limited to) four forms/types of words (*om*, *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah* and *svah*) the four stages of sound (placed in the body-mind-sense complex of an individual).

Parā the unmanifest and undifferentiated power of speech is latent in the individual and found at the base of the spine, at the power centre called *mūlādhāra*. That same power when differentiated by and remaining with a specific emotion becomes known as *paśyantī*.

When a person is inclined to speak, the power goes upwards to another power centre, *manipūrakam*, located at the navel. As it enters into the heart power centre, *anāhata*, the same unmanifest power, *parā*, assumes by association with the intellect a specific word

form, *madhyamā*. When that same power reaches the power centre called *viśuddhi* (at the throat) it assumes a final spoken word form, *vaikharī*.

Therefore, all spoken words are Lord *Īśvara*'s glory, *vibhūti*. Any and every spoken word is nothing but the power of knowledge manifest in the form of the mental-cum-physical instrument of a human being. Alone among the four, *vaikharī*, the power of speech manifest in the form of the spoken word is obvious and known to all. The recognition of the earlier three is possible only for those given to the disciplines of yogic practice.

7TH MANTRA

त्वं गुणत्रयातीतः । त्वम् अवस्थात्रयातीतः ।
त्वं देहत्रयातीतः । त्वं कालत्रयातीतः । त्वं
मूलाधारस्थितोऽसि नित्यम् । त्वं शक्तित्रयात्मकः ।
त्वां योगिनो ध्यायन्ति नित्यम् । त्वं ब्रह्मा त्वं
विष्णुस्त्वं रुद्रस्त्वमिन्द्रस्त्वमग्निस्त्वं वायुस्त्वं सूर्यस्त्वं
चन्द्रमास्त्वं ब्रह्म भूर्भुवः स्वरोम् ॥

tvam guṇatrāyātītaḥ | *tvam avasthātrāyātītaḥ* | *tvam dehatrāyātītaḥ* |
tvam kālatrāyātītaḥ | *tvam mūlādhārasthito'si nityam* | *tvam*
śaktitrāyātmaḥ | *tvām yogino dhyāyanti nityam* | *tvam brahmā tvam*
viṣṇustvam rudrastvamindrastvamagnistvam vāyustvam sūryastvam
candramāstvam brahma bhūrbhuvāḥ svarom ||

tvam – you • *guṇa* – *guṇa* (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas* – the three aspects of the only power, *māyā*) • *trāyātītaḥ* – *trayā*, threefold; *atītaḥ*, beyond, distinct from

You (are) distinct from the three *guṇas* (of *māyā*).

tvam – you • *avasthā* – state of experience, state of mind • *trāyātītaḥ* – *trayā*, threefold; *atītaḥ*, beyond, distinct from

You (are the witness) distinct from the three (witnessed) states of experience (waking, dream and deep sleep).

tvam – you • *deha* – body • *trayātītaḥ* – *trayā*, threefold; *atītaḥ*, beyond, distinct from

You (are) distinct from, transcend, the threefold body (gross, subtle and causal).

tvam – you • *kāla* – time • *trayātītaḥ* – *trayā*, threefold; *atītaḥ*, beyond, distinct from

You (are) distinct from time (past, present, future).

tvam – you • *mūlādhāra* – *mūla*, root; *ādhāra*, basis, support • *sthito* – standing, abiding, remaining, *sthitaḥ* • 'si – are, *asi* • *nityam* – always, ever

You ever abide in the *mūlādhāra* (at the base of the spine).

Everything, including time and space, exists in the all-pervasive Lord alone. However, in order to be visualised in meditation, the Lord is said here to be abiding in the *mūlādhāra cakra*.

tvam – you • *śakti* – power • *trayātmakaḥ* – *trayā*, threefold; *ātmakaḥ*, in the form of

You (alone are) in the form of the threefold (manifest) power (*jñāna śakti*, *icchā śakti*, *kriyā śakti* – the power to know, desire and act.)

tvām – you • *yogino* – yogins, *yoginaḥ* • *dhyāyanti* – they meditate on, dwell upon
• *nityam* – always, ever

Yogis ever meditate on you.

tvam – you • *brahmā* – reality, the powerful source of creation, looked upon as Lord *Brahmā* • *tvam* – you • *viṣṇus* – the same reality, the only powerful source of sustenance, looked upon as Lord *Viṣṇuḥ* • *tvam* – you • *rudras* – the same reality, the only powerful source of the resolution of everything, looked upon as Lord *Rudraḥ* (*Śivaḥ*) • *tvam* – you • *indras* – *Indraḥ devatā*, physical prowess • *tvam* – you • *agnis* – *Agniḥ devatā*, fire • *tvam* – you • *vāyus* – *Vāyuḥ* • *devatā*, the wind • *tvam* – you • *sūryas* – *Sūryaḥ devatā*, the Sun • *tvam* – you • *candramās* – *Candramāḥ devatā*, the Moon • *tvam* – you • *brahma* – *Veda* • *bhūr* – *bhūḥ*, this world • *bhuvah* – intermediary space • *svar* – *svaḥ*, the higher worlds • *om*

– stands for all three (*bhūḥ, bhuvah, svaḥ*). Together the four are the foremost sounds of creation.

As Absolute Reality, you are the Lord, the only powerful source of creation, sustenance and resolution as *Brahmā, Viṣṇuḥ and Rudraḥ*. You are *Indraḥ*, you are *Agniḥ*, you are *Vāyuḥ*, you are *Suryaḥ*, you are *Candraḥ*, you are the threefold utterances or the three worlds *bhūḥ, bhuvah, svaḥ*, and you are *Om*, Reality.

Every natural phenomenon, *devatā*, is an aspect of the power of the Lord, the whole. Therefore, a specific respective name is given to a specific aspect of the Lord's power. The Lord, looked upon as the one endowed with the power to create, sustain and resolve, is known respectively as *Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra*. Each and every aspect of the only Universal Power of the Lord is visualised as a *devatā*. Hence, *devatās* may be likened to different limbs of the Lord.

Eight *devatās* preside respectively over the eight quarters, and this *mantra* mentions a few of them. *Indraḥ*, the presiding deity of physical prowess, is a *devatā*, as are fire, the wind, the Sun, the Moon – none is seen as merely a form of energy/matter but as a manifestation of knowledge. Everything is regarded as the Lord since everything here is a manifestation of knowledge. Therefore, the foremost utterances (*bhūḥ, bhuvah, svaḥ, om*) are also the Lord.

Even though many names are uttered, there is no plurality absolutely. The only Lord alone is addressed with different names from the standpoint of different aspects of the power. The one alone appears as many, plural and diverse. There is unity in diversity. All are in one. We have to remind ourselves constantly of this fact of one appearing as many, otherwise the extraverted mind may get stuck or remain emotionally entangled with forms. It may not rise to the level of appreciating the subtlest oneness of the Truth.

In the Vedic vision the whole cosmos is divided into three worlds – *bhūḥ, bhuvah, svaḥ* – the terrestrial, intermediate and celestial levels, the three levels of existence. All these three worlds emerge from the foremost of the auspicious sounds: *bhūḥ, bhuvah, svaḥ* respectively. These three sounds symbolise the Lord's will to bring the universe into manifestation as three worlds. Therefore, the Lord alone is in the form of all the worlds, the whole cosmos.

8TH MANTRA

गुणादिं॑ पूर्वमुच्चार्य॑ वर्णादीं॑स्तदनन्तरम् । अनुस्वारः
परतरः॑ । अर्धेन्दुलसितम् । तारेण ऋद्धम् । एतत्तव
मनुस्वरूपम् ।

*gaṇādiṁ pūrvāmuccārya varṇādīṁstadanantaram | anusvāraḥ paratarah |
ardhēndulasitam | tāreṇa ṛddham | etattava manūsvarūpam |*

Having first pronounced the beginning sound ग् of the word *gaṇa*, the first of the Sanskrit vowels, अ, should be pronounced. *Anusvāraḥ* (म्), which has to follow the other two sounds, is decked or embellished by a sign like a crescent moon. *Gaṁ* is made powerful, auspicious, by sounding the sacred *om* before it – thus, *om gaṁ*. This is the true description/nature of your *mantra*.

gaṇādiṁ – *gaṇaḥ* + *ādiḥ*, the first (*ādiḥ*) sound of the word *gaṇa* i.e. ‘g’ • *pūrvam* – first • *uccārya* – having pronounced • *varṇādiṁ* – *varṇa* + *ādiḥ*, the first (*ādiḥ*) of the vowels (*varṇa*) i.e. ‘a’ • *tad* – that • *anantaram* – after (after ‘g’, ‘a’ has to be pronounced)

Having first pronounced the beginning sound ‘g’ of the word *gaṇa*, the first of the Sanskrit vowels, ‘a’, should be pronounced.

anusvāraḥ – the nasal sound ‘m’ • *paratarah* – thereafter

Anusvāraḥ (m) has to follow (the other two sounds) ...

ardhendū – *ardha*, half; *induh*, moon (crescent moon) • *lasitam* – decked, embellished

... (and is) decked or embellished by a sign like a crescent moon.

tāreṇa – *tāraḥ*, by *om* • *ṛddham* – made rich, made auspicious

(*Gaṁ* is) made powerful, auspicious (by sounding) the sacred *om* (before it – thus: *om gaṁ*)

etat – this • *tava* – your • *manu* – *mantra* • *svarūpam* – true description, nature

This is the true description/nature of your *mantra*.

This *mantra*, the eighth, presents a detailed description of the *mantra* of Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ* – the description of the *mantra* is given in the form of a *mantra*! It is just a mono-syllabic *mantra*.

The half-crescent in the script found on the top of a syllable in any *mantra* denotes that the sound is nasal. *Om* is known as *tāraḥ*, the protector from *samsāraḥ*, because dwelling upon the meaning of *om-kāra*, the syllable *om*, in due course of time helps one resolve one's individuality (resolve one's identity with the Truth) thereby helping one cross the ocean of *samsāraḥ*.

Secondly, it takes four units of time to pronounce *om*. It is a prolonged sound (*a-kāra*, *u-kāra*, *ma-kāra* and silence (*a-mātraḥ*) = 4 units before the next 'a-kāra'. The correct pronunciation is 'om' not 'a-u-m' and the vowel 'o' is long, as in 'so'.

The details given in the description are significant. A human being's form, or any living being's form, is a composite of many parts or aspects. *Īśvara*'s form is not the same or similar to other so-called forms. Formlessness being the essential nature of the Lord, the Lord is the form of the very *mantra* itself! Hence, the different syllables forming the *mantra* are looked upon as different 'limbs' of the Lord's form.

9TH MANTRA

गकारः पूर्वरूपम् । अकारो मध्यमरूपम् ।
अनुस्वारश्चान्तरूपम् । बिन्दुरुत्तररूपम् । नादः
सन्धानम् । संहिता सन्धिः ।

gakāraḥ pūrvarūpam | *akāro madhyamarūpam* | *anusvāraścāntyarūpam* |
binduruttārarūpam | *nādāḥ sandhānam* | *sagṃhitā sandhiḥ* |

The consonant ग् is the first form. The vowel अ is the middle form and the last sound is ण्. The last sound ण् continues to prolong or lengthen as a nasal sound, known as *binduḥ*. The same last sound ण्, still further prolonged and

lengthened is known as *nādaḥ*. It brings together or unites these different sounds to form a *mantra*. Sequential utterance of these different sounds is *saṃhitā*. Their sequential utterance completes the *mantra*. This *saṃhitā* is *sandhiḥ*, union/unison.

gakāraḥ – *ga*, ‘g’; *kāraḥ*, letter, the consonant sound ‘g’ • *pūrva* – first • *rūpam* – form

The consonant ‘g’ is the first form.

akāro – *a*, ‘a’; *kāraḥ*, vowel sound • *madhyama* – middle • *rūpam* – form

The vowel ‘a’ is the middle form ...

anusvāraś – *anusvāraḥ*, the nasal sound ‘m’ • *cāntya* – *ca*, and; *antya*, the last or final • *rūpam* – form

... and the last sound is (the nasal) ‘m’.

bindur – *binduḥ* • *uttara* – next, following (sound) • *rūpam* – form

The last sound ‘m’ (continues to prolong or lengthen as a nasal sound, known as) *binduḥ*. *nādaḥ* – sound • *sandhānam* – uniting

The (same last) sound ‘m’ (still further prolonged and lengthened is known as) *nādaḥ*. It brings together or unites (these different sounds to form a *mantra*).

saṃhitā – close proximity, *saṃhitā* • *sandhiḥ* – connection, union, unison

Sequential utterance (of these different sounds) is *saṃhitā*. (Their sequential utterance completes the *mantra*.) This *saṃhitā* is *sandhiḥ*, union/unison.

The mono-syllabic *mantra*, *gaṃ*, presented in the previous *mantra* (the eighth) is further discussed here. This *mantra*, the ninth, visualises the *mantra gaṃ*, further dividing it into five parts (*g-a-m-binduḥ-nādaḥ*). Visualisation is actually for calming the restless mind. Therefore, elaborate description serves the purpose of enabling visualisation. That itself serves as a means of support in quietening the mind. The mind can lean on this as a support. In fact, worshipping the Lord in any form of one’s own choice is supposed to serve the same purpose, and here, the *mantra*, being a sound symbol, is more effective, much better, because concentration on a sound symbol is easier than on a form symbol.

A *mantra* is also more significant esoterically. The far-prolonged nasal sound ‘*m̐*’, known as *nādaḥ*, is highly purposeful in meditation in that it leads the attention of the mind into silence, bringing thoughts to an end. Therefore the *nādaḥ* ultimately helps in resolving the ‘I-sense’ in its *svarūpam*, pure awareness. Totally focussing one’s attention on this *nādaḥ* will subsequently lead one to silence, such that one can hear absolute silence – pure awareness – the only source of all knowledge, all sounds, all functions and all actions. Pure awareness (in terms of silence) arrived at through the *nādaḥ* is known as *nāda-brahma*.

10TH MANTRA

सैषा गणेशविद्या । गणक ऋषिः । निचृद्रायत्रीच्छुन्दः ।
गणपतिर्देवता । ॐ गं गुणपतये नमः ॥

*saiṣā gaṇeśavidyā | gaṇaka ṛṣiḥ | nicṛdgāyātrīcchandaḥ | gaṇapatirdevatā |
om gam gaṇapātaye namaḥ ||*

saiṣā – *sā*, that; *eṣā*, this (both f. pronouns indicate *vidyā*) • *gaṇeśa* – Ganesha •
vidyā – meditation (mental worship)

This is a meditation upon Lord Ganesha.

gaṇaka – *Gaṇaka* (the name of the *ṛṣi*, the seer of this *mantra*) • *ṛṣiḥ* – rishi

Gaṇaka is the name of the rishi, the seer of this *mantra*.

nicṛdgāyatrī – the name of the metre • *chandaḥ* – metre

The metre is *nicṛdgāyatrī*.

gaṇapatir – *gaṇapatiḥ*, lord of multitudes • *devatā* – a deity

The (presiding) deity (is) *Gaṇapatiḥ*.

om – the sound symbol of the Lord, an auspicious utterance • *gam* – the *bīja* (seed)
mantra of *gaṇapatiḥ* • *gaṇapātaye* – to *gaṇapatiḥ* • *namaḥ* – salutations

om gam gaṇapātaye namaḥ – My obeisance to Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ*.

The word *vidyā*, meaning knowledge, here means a *mantra*-aided mental worship. Every *mantra* has a seer who had a revelation. A wise person, with his saintliness – one who is absolutely pure-minded – can abide in the self and refrain from mundane affairs. For such a one, knowledge associated with the sense organs and mind (which are external manifestations) does not rise, but there is knowledge, purely revealed.

Knowledge in terms of revelation takes place and the ‘I-sense’ is simultaneously resolved in the Truth, the whole, so that the mind, sense organs and the world – all of them – remain resolved. Therefore, revelation is considered to be knowledge of the Lord, and the one who revels in the vision of the Truth being the Lord is known as a *ṛṣiḥ*. Here, the *ṛṣiḥ* is *Gaṇakaḥ*.

As *ahāṅkāra* remains resolved in revelation, in knowledge, revelation is not the product of an intellectual exercise, it is received from the Lord.

Knowledge of the empirical world is time-bound, but knowledge of Reality is timeless. Knowledge is never created anew because discovery of that which is already present is knowledge.

Just as revealed knowledge takes place, as mentioned above, so are *mantras* revealed. Thus, the single syllable *mantra* (*gam*) discussed above is further made into a highly powerful *mantra* of eight syllables, known as the *mahā gaṇapati mantraḥ* – the remover of all obstacles, not only in mundane activities but also in spiritual growth: *om gam gaṇapataye namaḥ*.

Every seeker is supposed to remember all the details, such as the *chandas*, *devatā*, *ṛṣi*, pertaining to the *mantra* that he should recite.

11TH MANTRA

ॐ एकदन्ताय विद्महे वक्रतुण्डाय धीमहि । तन्नो दन्तिः
प्रचोदयात् ॥

om ekadantāya vidmahē vakratuṇḍāya dhīmahi |
tanno dantiḥ pracodayāt ||

eka-dantāya – to the one with a (single) tusk; *eka*, one; *dantaḥ*, tooth/tusk • *vidmahe* – we know • *vakra-tuṅḍāya* – the one with a curved trunk; *vakra*, curved; *tuṅḍa*, trunk • *dhīmahi* – we contemplate upon • *tan* – that • *no* – our, *naḥ* • *dantiḥ* – (the one with) a tusk (Lord *Gaṇapati*) • *pracodayāt* – may inspire

We know the single-tusked (Lord *Gaṇapati*). We contemplate upon the one (the Lord) with a curved trunk. May the Lord inspire (our thoughts in contemplation).

This *mantra*, in *gāyatrī* metre, is known as *Gaṇapati gāyatrī*. *Gāyatrī* is the name of a metre consisting of 24 syllables, sixteen in the first line and eight in the second. If a *mantra* in *Gāyatrī* metre has one letter fewer, that metre is called *nicṛdgāyatrī*. The most ancient *Ṛg Veda* begins with a *gāyatrī* metre. Every *devatā*, in whichever form the Lord is invoked, has a *mantra* in *gāyatrī* metre. The *Sāvitrī mantra* in *gāyatrī* metre, known as *Sūrya Gāyatrī*, is the most popular one. The *gāyatrī* metre being the most significant can be understood from the *Bhagavad Gītā* in *Kṛṣṇa*'s words: *gāyatrī chandasām aham*, I am the *Gāyatrī* among metres (*Gītā* 10.35).

This *mantra* has a very significant prayer that it is not for the fulfilment of simple desires. The devotee recognises the fact of *ātmā* being the source of all thoughts. Natural laws govern thoughts, that they rise, remain and resolve. The 'I-sense', even though first and foremost, is a thought. The understanding of this fact enables the devotee to pray to the Lord to inspire his thoughts, to bless him with self-knowledge.

The symbolic interpretation of this form of the Lord as *saguṇa īśvara* is given in the *Maudgala Purāṇam*. The name *Ekadantaḥ* has two words: *eka* and *dantaḥ*. The word *eka*, meaning 'one', represents *māyā*, the power of Reality, the material cause, which is in the form of the universe. The word *dantaḥ* implies Absolute Reality, *Brahman*, the source of the power *māyā*. Reality, *Brahman*, being the powerful source is the intelligent cause. The Lord is the combination of these two causes, the two principals. Therefore, the manifestation of pure knowledge in the form of the existence of the universe in the power *māyā* is implied by the word *ekadantaḥ*.

12TH MANTRA

The spiritual aspirant focuses his attention on the sounds of the *mantra* in his meditation when he mentally chants the *mantra* of his *iṣṭa-devatā*, personal deity. Here, we find three *mantras* in one: a mono-syllabic one, a *mantra* with eight syllables and *gaṇeśa-gāyatrī*. If a seeker needs a form, he can also meditate on the form of the same *devatā*, not only on the *mantra*. Therefore, the scriptures describe the form of the Lord elaborately with details. Such elaborate description is helpful for an aspirant to fix and focus the attention of his restless mind on the description of the Lord. Fixing the attention of the mind in this way is

called *dhāraṇam*, a preliminary step for *dhyānam*. This *upaniṣad* also covers that aspect of the description of the Lord's form.

एकदन्तं चतुर्हस्तं पाशमङ्कुशधारिणम् । रदं च
वरदं हस्तैर्बिभ्राणं मूषकध्वजम् । रक्तं लम्बोदरं
शूर्पकर्णकं रक्तवाससम् । रक्तगन्धानुलिप्ताङ्गं रक्तपुष्पैः
सुपूजितम् । भक्तानुकम्पिनं देवं जगत्कारणमच्युतम् ।
आविर्भूतं च सृष्ट्यादौ प्रकृतैः पुरुषात्परम् । एवं
ध्यायति यो नित्यं स योगी योगिनां वरः ॥

*ekadantaṁ caturhastam pāśamaṅkuśadhāriṇam | radaṁ ca varadaṁ
hastairbibhrāṇam mūṣakadhvajam | raktaṁ lambodaram śūrpakarṇakaṁ
raktavāsasam | raktagandhānūliptāṅgaṁ raktapuṣpaiḥ supūjitaṁ |
bhaktānukampinaṁ devaṁ jagatkāraṇamacyūtam | āvirbhūtaṁ ca
sṛṣṭyādau prakṛtēḥ puruṣātpāram | evaṁ dhyāyati yo nityaṁ sa yogī
yoginām vārah ||*

The Lord, red in colour, endowed with a tusk and four hands, holds a snare, a goad and a tusk in three of them, and shows the gesture of being the bestower of boons with the fourth. He has a flag of a mouse. He is large-bellied with ears like winnowing baskets. He is in red clothes, his limbs smeared with sandal-paste. He is worshipped with red flowers. The self-effulgent Lord is compassionate: he showers grace upon his devotees. Though the Lord is the cause of the universe he is essentially of the nature of changeless, absolute existence. The Lord is manifest in the form of existence at the time of creation. He is distinct from and hence superior to *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, the universe and the *jīva*. The Lord is not the cause, but both the intelligent and material causes are the Lord. Whosoever

contemplates upon the Lord as unfolded in this *upaniṣad* is the most exalted among devotees.

eka-dantam – the one with one tooth/tusk, *eka-dantāḥ* • *catur-hastam* – the one with four hands, *catur-hastaḥ* • *pāśam-aṅkuśa-dhāriṇam* – *pāśam*, noose or snare; *aṅkuśa*, goad; *dhārī*, holder • *radam-ca-varadam-hastair-bibhrāṇam* – *radaḥ*, the lower part of tusk; *varadaḥ* boon-bestowing gesture; *hastaiḥ*, with hands; *bibhrāṇam*, one who holds • *mūṣaka-dhvajam* – the one with a flag of a mouse, *mūṣaka*, mouse; *dhvajaḥ*, flag • *raktam* – the red-hued Lord; red, *raktaḥ* • *lambodaram* – the one with the hanging belly; *lamba*, hanging; *udaraḥ*, bellied • *śūrpakarṇakam* – the one with ears like winnowing baskets; *śūrpa*, winnowing basket; *karṇakaḥ*, one with ears • *raktavāsasam* – the Lord in red clothes, *raktavāsas*; *rakta*, red; *vāsas*, clothing • *rakta-gandhānuliptāṅgam* – the Lord with limbs smeared with sandal-paste; *rakta-gandha-anulipta-angaḥ*; *rakta*, red; *gandha*, sandal paste; *lipta*, smeared; *angaḥ*, the one with limbs • *rakta* – red, *raktaḥ* • *puṣpaiḥ* – with/using flowers • *supūjitam* – *su*, well, beautifully; *pūjitaḥ*, worshipped • *bhaktānukampinam* – *bhakta*, devotee; *anukampī*, compassionate • *devam* – effulgent, *devaḥ* • *jagat* – world, universe • *kāraṇam* – cause • *acyutam* – does not slip away, *acutyah* • *āvirbhūtam* – originated, caused • *ca* – and • *sṛṣṭy* – creation, manifestation, *sṛṣṭi* • *ādau* – beginning, emergence • *prakṛteḥ* – material cause, *prakṛiti (jagat)* • *puruṣāt* – intelligent cause, *puruṣaḥ (jīva)* • *param* – superior, *paraḥ* • *evam* – in this manner • *dhyāyati* – meditates • *yo* – whosoever, *yaḥ* • *nityam* – always • *sa* – he/that, *saḥ* • *yogī* – meditator • *yoginām* – among all meditators • *varaḥ* – exalted

The four hands symbolise the four human pursuits: *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, *mokṣa*, implying that the Lord is the bestower of any or all four ends. The Lord, who is of the nature of formlessness, is invoked in any given form purely for the emotional nourishment of the devotee. The Lord is depicted as a holder of weapons as an expression of the assurance that the Lord will drive away all inauspicious, unwanted and evil influences from the seeker's life. Such assurance, expressed in the holding of protective weapons, helps the devotee surrender his problems to the Lord.

The noose or snare stands for ignorance as well as the time factor. The Lord, being timeless, uses time as his power. The goad symbolises the absolute mastery of the Lord over this universe. The tusk, in white, is to destroy the demon of ignorance. So, whoever surrenders to the Lord will be liberated from the jaws of death, the time factor. The Lord as the *varada*, the boon-bestower, shows a specific sign with the fingers of his fourth hand that he will fulfil all the righteous wishes and legitimate desires of his devotee.

The red colour is specifically mentioned for the fulfilment of the devotee's legitimate wishes and ambitions because red stands for *rāga*, attachment to the enjoyment of

legitimate pleasures here and hereafter. Worshipping the Lord as one clothed in red, smeared with red sandal-paste and worshipped with red flowers, etc., is the generally laid rule for meditating upon the Lord. As a seeker of *mokṣa* and *jñānam* one can worship the Lord, or meditate upon him, as the one in white and can use white instead of red in worship.

The large belly of the Lord shows he is the only source, sustenance and resolution of the universe. It means the universe exists in the Lord. The Lord's ears eliminate the impurities of the mind like winnowing baskets sifting the husk from grains, thereby preparing the seeker for the clear vision that is *mokṣa*, just as listening is key to the discrimination that sifts truth from what it is not.

The word *deva*, meaning 'effulgent one', is derived from the root 'div'. This root also means 'to play'. As the Lord is untouched by the creation (manifest or unmanifest) the creation is a sport, a play, a *līlā* for the Lord, created by the Lord in the Lord himself. The universe is merely an appearance and hence the Lord is free from doership and enjoyership. Without undergoing a change, the Lord enjoys the status of being a cause. Therefore, the Lord is known by the name *acutya*, one who does not slip from his real nature.

13TH MANTRA

ॐ नमो व्रातपतये । नमो गणपतये । नमः प्रमथपतये ।
नमस्तेऽस्तु लम्बोदरायैकदन्ताय विघ्ननाशिने शिवसुताय
श्रीवरदमूर्तये नमो नमः ॥

*om namo vrātapataye | namo gaṇapataye | namaḥ pramathapataye |
namaste'stu lambodarāyaikadantāya vighnanāśine śivasutāya
śrīvaradamūrtaye namo namaḥ ||*

Obeisance unto the Lord of all *jīvas*; obeisance unto the Lord of multitudes of beings and objects; obeisance unto the chief of all attendants of Lord *Śiva*; salutations unto the Lord whose belly is large; prostrations unto the Lord who removes all obstacles; obeisance to the son of *Śiva*; my salutations unto the Lord's form as the bestower of boons.

om – the sound symbol of the Lord, an auspicious utterance • *namo* – salutations, *namaḥ* • *vrātapataye* – *vrāta*, *jīva*; *patiḥ*, lord – Lord of *jīvas* • *namo* – salutations, *namaḥ* • *gaṇapataye* – to *Gaṇapatiḥ* • *namaḥ* – salutations • *pramathapataye* – to the chief of attendants (of Lord *Śiva*); *pramatha*, attendant; • *patiḥ*, chief • *namaste* – *namaḥ*, salutations; *te*, to you • ‘*stu* – *astu*, may there be to you • *lambo* – overhanging, *lamba* • *darāya* – *udaraḥ*, the one with a (large) belly • *eka* – one • *dantāya* – tooth/tusk, *dantaḥ* • *vighna* – obstacle, impediment • *vināśine* – destroyer (remover) • *śiva* – Lord *Śiva* • *sutāya* – son (of), *sutaḥ* • *śrī* – a respectful form of address • *varada* – bestower of boons, *varam* • *mūrtaye* – form, *mūrtiḥ* • *namo* – salutations, *namaḥ* • *namaḥ* – salutations

This thirteenth *mantra* consists of eight highly divine, auspicious names of the Lord: *Vrātapatiḥ*, *Gaṇapatiḥ*, *Pramathapatiḥ*, *Lambodarah*, *Ekadantaḥ*, *Vighnanāśī*, *Śivasutaḥ*, and *Varadamūrtiḥ*. The *gaṇapati-mahā-mantra* also consists of eight syllables, hence the number eight is an auspicious one. This *mantra*, having eight names, is known as the *mālā-mantraḥ*, the *mantra* garland. It enables the worshipper to be in communion with the Lord.

The word *gaṇaḥ* means ‘a group’, *vrātaḥ* means an individual, a *jīva*. Therefore, salutations are offered by the individual, the *jīva*, to the Lord of all *jīvas*. The title *pramathaḥ* means the attendant of Lord *Śiva*. Being the attendant of the Lord he is capable of destroying enemies, so actually, *pramathaḥ* is one who has conquered mental impurities in the form of emotions (*rāga-dveṣas*, etc) by the strength earned through his commitment to the Lord in the form of *dharma*, and who is thereby blessed with the vision of the Lord as the self.

Lord *Śiva*, as a father, is *nirguṇam-brahma*, attributeless reality. Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ*, as a son, is *saguṇam-brahma-īśvara*, the Lord with attributes. Thus, father and son are non-different, one and the same. Hence, one who is devoted to Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ* becomes blessed to discover his own identity with Lord *Śiva*. *Gaṇapati* worship blesses one with the vision of *Śiva*. The expression *namaḥ* reveals one’s surrender to the Lord.

The worship of Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ* is specifically for the removal of all obstacles in accomplishing any end. Prayer and worship alone can neutralise the hidden invariables that may hinder the accomplishment of desirable ends. Thus, in Vedic culture, any auspicious activity or inauguration is begun with *Gaṇapatiḥ* worship.

14TH MANTRA

This *upaniṣad* includes at this point a portion of *mantras*, known as *phala-śrutiḥ*, describing various benefits to be gained by a devotee as a result of worshipping the Lord as *Gaṇapatiḥ*.

Any ritual or worship, physical, oral or mental, is presented along with the benefits, mentioned in one or two sentences in the scriptural literature originally from the *Veda*. It is mainly for enthusing, motivating and inspiring a devotee when or if necessary. The same ritual or meditation, *mānasa pūja*, or worship in any form by a person of *puruṣārthanīścaya* – one for whom the ultimate goal is *mokṣa* (knowledge) – becomes a *niṣkāma karma* because the worshipper, being a *jijñāsu*, a *mumukṣu*, is not interested in time-bound, mundane material benefits. Instead, he accomplishes the absolute benefit of the vision of being one with the Lord.

Some *phala-śrutis* may exaggerate the benefits of worship. It is nothing but an effort to help an individual seek help. He or she is thereby made into a devotee by way of gradually shifting dependence from the world to the Lord. Such statements of exaggeration are known as *arthavādavākyaṇi*, meaning that they should not be understood literally but that the spirit behind the words should be appreciated.

एतदथर्वशीर्षं योऽधीते स ब्रह्मभूयाय कल्पते ।
स सर्वविघ्नैर्न बाध्यते । स सर्वत्र सुखमेधते ।
स पञ्चमहापापात् प्रमुच्यते । सायमधीयानो दिवसकृतं
पापं नाशयति । प्रातरधीयानो रात्रिकृतं पापं नाशयति ।
सायं प्रातः प्रयुञ्जानो पापोऽपापो भवति ।
सर्वत्राधीयानोऽपविघ्नो भवति । धर्मार्थकाममोक्षं च
विन्दति ।

etadatharvaśīrṣaṁ yo'dhīte sa brahmabhūyāya kalpate |
sa sarvavighnairna bādhyate | sa sarvatra sukhamedhate |
sa pañcamahāpāpāt pramucyate | sāyamādhyāno divasakṛtaṁ pāpaṁ
nāśayati | prātarādhyāno rātrikṛtaṁ pāpaṁ nāśayati | sāyam prātaḥ
prāyuñjāno pāpo'pāpo bhavati | sarvatrādhyāno'pavighno bhavati |
dharmārthakāmamokṣaṁ ca vīndati |

Whoever studies this *Atharvaśīrṣa Upaniṣad* recognises his oneness with *Brahman*. He is not afflicted by any obstacle (in any form, in any of his pursuits). He attains happiness, always, everywhere. He is liberated from the five forms of the worst sins. Reciting this *upaniṣad* in the evening, the devotee is freed from sins committed during the day. Reciting it in the morning, he is freed from sins committed during the night. The devotee who recites it in both the morning and evening becomes freed from all forms of sin and thereby sinless. By reciting it in all circumstances and situations one becomes an obstacle-free person. He accomplishes all four human pursuits: *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*.

Studying the *upaniṣad* is not mere mechanical reading or recitation. It is also understanding the meaning and dwelling on it for ascertaining and assimilating the facts it reveals that culminate in the attainment of the absolute end, *mokṣa*. This is not a non-verifiable belief – such as going to heaven after death – it is something to be appreciated through a gradual enhancement of clarity.

Anyone who recites this *upaniṣad* with fervent, intense devotion becomes – in due course of time – mentally pure and thereby taps an abundance of grace, which enables him or her to find a *guru* and thereby the teaching and *jñānam*, which is *mokṣa*. He will be free from obstacles in his pursuit of freedom. As a free person, *muktah*, he is ever happy in all situations because happiness is not a fleeting experience but his essential nature, the self. There is no need for him to be dependent on any situation or the world of objects or on people for his happiness and security. This independence is the greatest of all benefits.

The reciter's sins are washed away, which means the recitation will help in preparing the mind for knowledge. Being thus prepared – attaining knowledge through proper study of the scripture (*śravanam*, *mananam*, *nididhyāsanam*) – one discovers one's self being free from doership, enjoyership and sins (*puṇya-pāpams*). Mental preparedness involves a committed ethical life. Morning-evening recitation is for continuous, constant remembrance of the Lord. The more the Lord is in our thoughts, the more we are conscious of *dharma*, order; the more we are conscious of *dharma*, the more our actions, inclinations and impulses become purified.

There are five worst sins:

1. Killing: eating prohibited food, poisoning oneself or others, setting fire to property, etc.
2. Not being loyal to one's wife/husband; improper, illegal relationships.
3. Stealing, cheating, gambling
4. Keeping company with those who commit the above
5. Usurping others' property

These are said to be *panca-mahā-pātakas* because everything listed here fells a person into *samsāra* (*pātakam*, that which fells).

Intense prayer and worship of the Lord and recitation of this *upaniṣad* will protect one from involving oneself in any of the sins mentioned above.

Prayerfulness, worshipfulness, with a commitment to *dharma* (values) definitely blesses one with an abundance of grace enjoyed in the form of exposure to the teaching from a competent teacher, the attainment of knowledge (*mokṣa*) along with the other human pursuits: *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*.

15TH MANTRA

इ॒दम॑थर्वशी॒र्षम॑शि॒ष्याय॑ न दे॒यम् । यो यदि मो॑हाद्
दा॒स्यति॑ स पापी॑यान् भ॒वति॑ । सह॑स्राव॒र्तनाद्यं॑ यं
का॒मम॑धी॒ते तं॑ तम॒नेन॑ सा॒धयेत् ॥

*idamatharvaśīrṣamaśiṣyāya na deyam | yo yadi mōhād dāsyati sa pāpīyān
bhavati | sahasrāvartanādyam yaṁ kāmamadhīte taṁ tamanēna sādhayet ||*

This *upaniṣad* is not to be given to an undeserving person. If someone deluded gives it he becomes a sinner. Reciting this *upaniṣad* repeatedly, a thousand times, one can achieve any (righteous) desired end.

It is compulsory for *Veda mantras*, all of which are sacred, to be taught only to the deserving. Any deluded scholar who, considering monetary benefits, goes against this mandate and teaches the undeserving incurs sin. Such a mandate is mainly for preserving and maintaining purity, sacredness and reverence.

16TH MANTRA

अनेन गणपतिमभिषिञ्चति स वाग्मी भवति ।
चतुर्थ्यामनंश्रन् जपति स विद्यावान् भवति ।
इत्यथर्वणवाक्यम् । ब्रह्माद्यावरणं विद्यान्न
बिभेति कदाचनेति ॥

*anena gaṇapatimābhiṣiñcati sa vāgmī bhavati | caturthyāmanāśnan japati
sa vidyāvān bhavati | ityatharvāṇavākyaṃ | brahmādyāvaraṇaṃ vidyānna
bibheti kadācaneṭi ||*

One who performs *abhiṣeka* of Lord *Gaṇapati* with this *upaniṣad* becomes an orator. One who chants this on the fourth day of the lunar calendar, observing the discipline of fasting, becomes learned. This is a statement of *Atharvaṇa Ṛṣiḥ*. Repeatedly reciting this *upaniṣad* until the last breath, the very moment of death, one attains knowledge of oneness and thereby never fears.

Here, becoming learned can even be attainment of self-knowledge and freedom. *Caturthī tithīḥ*, the fourth day of the lunar calendar, is an auspicious day associated with *Gaṇapatiḥ*. Therefore, reciting this *upaniṣad* while fasting throughout the day, once or twice a month, is said to be a very effective discipline. A devotee can fast for half a day if he cannot fast the whole day. The sage *Atharvaṇa* himself states the mandate and its result. His statement is an assurance of the efficacy of this discipline. Finally, the recitation of it is said to bless the devotee with utter fearlessness, which itself is *mokṣa* in terms of knowledge.

17TH MANTRA

यो दूर्वाङ्कुरैर्यजति स वैश्रवणोपमो भवति । यो
लाजैर्यजति स यशोवान् भवति । स मेधावान् भवति ।
यो मोदकसहस्रेण यजति स वाञ्छितफलमवाप्नोति ।
यः साज्य समिद्धिर्यजति स सर्वं लभते स सर्वं लभते ॥

*yo dūrvāṅkurairyajati sa vaiśraṇopāmo bhavati | yo lājairyajati sa
yaśovān bhavati | sa medhāvān bhavati | yo modakasahasreṇa yajati sa
vāñchitaphalamāvāpnōti | yaḥ sājya samiddhiryajati sa sarvaṁ labhate sa
sārvaṁ labhate ||*

Whoever worships Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ* with tender grass shoots will become comparable to *Vaiśraṇah-Kubera*, the *devatā* of wealth. Whoever worships offering puffed rice will become eminent. He also becomes blessed with the power of retaining and ascertaining the Teaching. Whoever worships the Lord with a thousand *modakams* – a very specific sweet – will attain the desired results. Whoever worships the Lord offering twigs dipped in melted butter accomplishes everything, definitely accomplishes everything.

Worship of Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ* using the tender grass – significantly, while reciting the *upaniṣad* many times – will bless one with prosperity. Such a blessed person will be comparable to the lord of wealth, *Kubera*.

Puffed rice is one of the various oblations offered in performing Vedic rituals. It is offered to *Gaṇapatiḥ* in a fire ritual. The sweet snack, called *modakam*, made of rice, is also offered specially to Lord *Gaṇapatiḥ*. In any fire ritual, Peepul tree twigs (rarely or occasionally Mango tree twigs) are usually used as fuel. The regular performers collect them from the ground and store them for later use. *Ājyam* is clarified butter melted in sunlight. The twigs offered into the fire are first dipped in *ājyam*. The reciter of this *upaniṣad* would tap an abundance of grace without fail.

18TH MANTRA

अष्टौ ब्राह्मणान् सम्यग् ग्राहयित्वा सूर्यवर्चस्वी भवति ।
सूर्यग्रहे महानद्यां प्रतिमासन्निधौ वा जप्त्वा सिद्धमन्त्रो
भवति । महाविघ्नात् प्रमुच्यते । महादोषात् प्रमुच्यते ।
महापापात् प्रमुच्यते । महाप्रत्यवायात् प्रमुच्यते ।
स सर्वविद्भवति स सर्वविद्भवति । य एवं वेद ।
इत्युपनिषत् ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

*aṣṭau brāhmaṇān samyag grāhayitvā sūryavarcaśvī bhavati | sūryagrahe
mahānadyām pratimāsannidhau vā japtvā siddhamantro bhavati |
mahāvighnāt pramūcyate | mahādoṣāt pramūcyate | mahāpāpāt pramūcyate |
mahāpratyavāyāt pramūcyate | sa sarvavidbhavati sa sarvavidbhavati |
ya evaṁ veda | ityupaniṣat ||*

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||

Teaching this *upaniṣad* to a deserving pupil one becomes brilliant like the Sun. Any devotee reciting this at a solar eclipse, on the bank of a river, or in front of Lord *Gaṇapati*'s form enjoys the benefits of the *mantra*. He will be liberated from very big obstacles, a highly major blemish and even from very major wrong action. Whoever worships or meditates upon the Lord thus will become omniscient, will become omniscient. Thus ends the *upaniṣad*.

Om – peace, peace, peace

The *Gaṇapati mahā mantra* consists of eight syllables and hence eight is a significant number. Teaching eight people, the teacher would have brilliance such as that of the Sun. In Vedic culture it has long been followed that during any eclipse, solar or lunar, people pray, worship, chant *mantras* standing in water or remaining on the bank. Eating is prohibited even many hours before the eclipse begins and is allowed only after bathing when the eclipse ends. In fact, the whole time of eclipse is used only for *japa*.

The *mahā pāpa*, the great sin and the great obstacle, is nothing but ignorance and ignorance-caused bondage. *Pratyavāya doṣaḥ* is a very subtle, innate, strong orientation instigating sinfulness. This *pratyavāya* also becomes an obstacle. Recitation of this *upaniṣad* will remove all obstacles to the attainment of knowledge.

Contemplating upon the meanings of its *mantras* one can recognise one's own identity with the Lord, and one thereby recognises that omniscience is one's essential nature. Recognition of one's identity with the Lord is actually recognition of Truth, ultimate Truth, being one's own self, the pure consciousness in which the whole world rises remains and resolves.

Conclusion is indicated by repeating the last sentence twice. The promise revealed at the conclusion is that one who worships the Lord mentally (contemplates upon the *svarūpam*) will be blessed with omniscience.

om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ