

ऐतरीय उपनिषद् *Aitareya Upaniṣad*

Introduction

The next *upaniṣad* that we will take up is *Aitareya Upaniṣad*. This is one of the major ten *upaniṣad*-s that is commented by *Śaṅkarācārya*. This is the only *upaniṣad* among the ten that belongs to *Ṛg veda*. All others belong to the other *veda*-s. *Īśa* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* belong to *Śukla Yajur veda*, *Kena* and *Chāndogya* to *Sāma veda*, *Kaṭha* and *Taittiriya* to *Kṛṣṇa Yajur veda*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Praśna* and *Māṇḍūkya* to *Atharvaṇa veda* and *Aitareya* to *Ṛg veda*. Thus the ten major *upaniṣad*-s are distributed among the four *veda*-s.

Śaṅkarācārya has taken the various *upaniṣad*-s to comment upon to show that all the four *veda*-s are unanimous in their teachings, *gati sāmānya darśanārtham*. Otherwise one may think that different *veda*-s have different philosophies and wonder which is the right one. *Śaṅkarācārya* shows all of them teach the same philosophy and that is *brahma satyam jagan mithyā, jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*. The second reason that he takes up these ten is that *mantra*-s from these ten have been taken for analysis in *Brahma Sūtra*. *Brahma Sūtra* is a must read for the study of *vedānta* philosophy. *Brahma Sūtra* analyzes the *upaniṣad* to bring out a clear to understand philosophy. No doubt *upaniṣad* is the source of our philosophy, but it seems that it is full of contradicting, mystic, stray statements that are very difficult to understand. For a systematic thought development we need help and that is provided by *Brahma Sūtra*.

A systematic philosophy should discuss six topics – 1) who is the *jīva*, the individual, 2) who is *Īśvara*, the creator, 3) what is this world, *jagat*, 4) what is *bandhaḥ*, bondage because of which *jīva* suffers, why birth, why death, what is the purpose of life etc., 5) what is *muktiḥ*, liberation; different people describe

liberation differently and finally 6) what is *mokṣa sādhanā*, means of liberation. All philosophies whether it is eastern or western, whether is *āstika* or *nāstika* system, even atheists should about God, how God is not there.

Upaniṣad-s do cover all these topics, but it is not systematically arranged not said in many places. Therefore *upaniṣad darśana* is specially brought out in *Brahma Sūtra* by *Vyāsācārya*. So what *Vyāsa* writes in *Brahma Sūtra* is not his philosophy. It is *advaitam*, it is *upaniṣad*-ic philosophy, it is only *vedānt*-ic philosophy presented systematically by *Vyāsācārya* and later elucidated by *Śaṅkarācārya*. That is why we respect them and say *śaṅkaram śaṅkarācāryam keśavam bādarāyaṇam, sūtrabhāṣya kṛtau vande bhagavantau punaḥpanaḥ*. I salute to *Vyāsa* who presented the *upaniṣad*-ic philosophy in a systematic manner through his analysis and I prostrate to *Śaṅkarācārya* who further clarified *Vyāsācārya*'s analysis in his commentary on *Brahma Sūtra*. So *Brahma Sūtra* analyzed *upaniṣad*-ic statements and in whatever *upaniṣad* those statements come *Śaṅkarācārya* has commented upon those *upaniṣad*-s. Anyone who takes up the study of *Brahma Sūtra* should study these ten *upaniṣad*-s.

Aitareya is one of ten *upaniṣad*-s commented upon *Śaṅkarācārya*. It is a wonderful commentary and for a small *upaniṣad* quite exhaustive in some places. The introduction is a long one, but the essence of the introduction is that you must take *saṁnyāsa*. That is all! When he says *saṁnyāsa*, he means *saṁnyāsa dīkṣā*. If anyone has popularized *saṁnyāsa* order as such, it is *Śaṅkarācārya*. His point is, anyone who has any desire for *brahma vidyā*, even if it is not an intense one, but if it is there, this desire at the seeker level also, that person should take *saṁnyāsa*. Of course if there is someone who knows that is his path, he must definitely do so. For example, Swami Tapovan Maharaj, he was such a *saṁnyāsi* there was no need for him to have *dīkṣā*, but took that *saṁnyāsa dīkṣā* also.

You may ask, what is your hangup? Why do you insist so much on *saṁnyāsa*?

See there are so many *mantra* quotations – यत् अहरेव विरजते तत् अहरेव परिव्रजेत् । This quotation is a very famous statement in *upaniṣad*. The day you develop *vairāgya*, the same day you must take *saṁnyāsa*. Those who desire pleasure, power, other worlds and all that, they are not going to listen to such talk, but if one has even an inkling of a desire for *saṁnyāsa*, he should immediately take *saṁnyāsa*. Why? The simple reason is, when you want to achieve a particular goal, your means should be consistent with that goal. You cannot attend law school and hope to become a doctor. There are some jack of all trades, but they are master of none. Those who are totally devoted to science, Einstein is a great example or it can be in arts, sports, anything, they were all focused, totally devoted to that pursuit. When you want to achieve some goal, in a complete sense, you have to give 100% of yourself to it. If you come to this class and sit for 1 hour and go away and do nothing else related to the study, how will you achieve the goal of this effort? If you want to go sleep, even for that, you should be totally devoted to it. There should not even be one single simple thought in your mind to disturb you. Even your dearest grandchild should not disturb you at that time. Total renunciation of everything else is need for you to go to sleep. Then what to talk of reaching the goal of realization?

So what *Śaṅkarācārya* says is you are pursuing this goal of realization, but if you are not willing to pay the price, that is not right. Living in the same kind of world, with worldly things is not going to work. With some discipline you may develop the virtues to become fit for the knowledge at best. When you have intense desire, real longing for realization, you must take to this *saṁnyāsa*. So this insistence on *saṁnyāsa dīkṣā*. *Dīkṣā* makes a lot of difference. A policeman, or a military person, when he puts on his uniform, that very moment, his mindset is different. The minute he comes home and takes off his uniform, he is totally a different person. This being the case, *Śaṅkarācārya* says for this knowledge, *brahma vidyā*, you must take *saṁnyāsa*. This much is enough. If I say any more you will all renounce me!

Aitareya upaniṣad is significant for one more reason. Of the four *mahāvākya*-s one of them is taken from here. I have talked about *mahāvākya*-s before. What is a *mahāvākya* ? *Jīva Īśvara aikya bodhaka vākya* is a *mahāvākya*, a statement that reveals the identity between the creator and the created. These *mahāvākya*-s are many. Do not think there are only four. We just take four of them as samples, one from each *veda*. From *Ṛg veda* we take the *Aitareya upaniṣad vākya* which is *prajñānam brahma*. *Prajñānam* refers to awareness which is nothing but *brahman* that is the *jagat kāraṇam*. *Prajñānam* is the *tvam pada lakṣyam*, *brahma* is the *tat pada lakṣyam* and therefore *prajñānam brahma* means *tvam pada tat pada lakṣyayoḥ abhedārthaḥ*. From *Ṛg veda Aitareya upaniṣad* is taken for showing the *jīva Īśvara aikya* of the *mahāvākya*. So *Aitareya* is famous for the *mahāvākya*, *prajñānam brahma*.

Now why is it called *Aitareya upaniṣad*? This name is not only for the *upaniṣad* per se, but is a part of *Aitareya āraṇyaka*. The *Aitareya āraṇyaka* that comes after the *brāhmaṇa* portion that is called the *Aitareya brāhmaṇa*. You all know that each *veda* is divided into four parts *samhita*, *brāhmaṇa*, *āraṇyaka* and *upaniṣad*. *Samhita* is that portion where there are the hymns in glory of *devata*-s, the various *sukta*-s. Then comes the *brāhmaṇa* portion, that is the major chunk in any *veda*, dealing with the rituals. The third portion is *āraṇyaka* part in which we find the *upāsana*-s, the meditations. The last portion is *upaniṣad* that is purely the revelation of the truth. Nothing to be done, no *karma*, no *upāsana*, just knowledge. So we have *Aitareya brāhmaṇa*. *Aitareya āraṇyaka* and finally the *Aitareya upaniṣad*.

Now why do we call these portions *Aitareya*? The reason is all these are attributed to the *Ṛṣi* known as *Aitareyaḥ*. Incidentally you should remember whenever a *Ṛṣi* gives out a *mantra*, do not think it the *Ṛṣi*'s own, personal creation or composition or philosophy. *Ṛṣi* is only the medium through which the truth is revealed. The *mantra*-s are revelations that the *Ṛṣi* shares through the *guru-śiṣya* tradition. If you ask who is this *Aitareya Ṛṣi*, there are many stories. These are stories that have come through legends, hearsay. We

do not know anything for certain. That is why they say, *nadhi mūlam ṛṣi mūlam*, never ask. One story is *Itarāyāḥ putraḥ Aitareya*, so *Aitareya* is the son of *Itarā*. Who is this *Itarā*? There are many opinions, one is that it is just a name, a proper name of the mother. The meaning of the word *itarā* in the dictionary is, the other, the other wife. So he must have been the son of the second wife of a *Ṛṣi*. Others go further. *Itarā* means a low caste woman, one who has been raised in the other tradition, other than the *vedic* tradition. *Aitareya* was her son. To prove that point they say that *Aitareya* had another name *Mahidāsa* and the word *dāsa* means servant, servant of the land, one from a low caste. Now you are curious who was that *Ṛṣi* who was the father, who was his first wife, who was his second wife and so on. Do we need all these details. No! Not at all! That is why don't ask. Just study the *upaniṣad*. Being of pure mind and through his mother, who though apparently ill thought of due to her pedigree but because of her devotion, *Aitareya* was blessed with the knowledge of the Truth that he reveals it in this *upaniṣad*. That is the bottom line. The moment a person knows *brahman*, he becomes a *brāhmaṇa*, not only that, he becomes that *brahman*. *Brahmavit brahmaiva bhavati*, we have seen in *Muṇḍaka*.

The *upaniṣad* given by *Aitareya Ṛṣi* is called *Aitareya upaniṣad*. It has three chapters. It is a fairly small *upaniṣad*. The first chapter has three sections. The second and third chapters have only one section each. Totally there are five sections. In the first chapter the *advayam brahma* is revealed through *sṛṣṭi prakaraṇa*. To put it in technical terms, *adhyāropa apavādābhyām niśprapañcam prapañcate; śiṣyāṇāṃ sukha bodhārtham tatvajñānai kalpitaḥ kramaḥ*. So by *adhyāropa* and *apavāda* which we had seen elaborately in *Vedānta Sāra*, *sṛṣṭi* is described. It looks like a peculiar story. Unbelievable statements are given and in the second chapter, we get the various stages of a *jīva* right from *garbha* onward. A lot about *garbhavāsa* and coming out etc., so it is a gynecology chapter. Before starting the chapter, the *upaniṣad* itself says, *abhakrāmantu garbhinyah*, if there are any pregnant women in the

audience, may they please leave now. From this we can also glean another fact, in those days there were women who were attending these classes. Only in rituals, women had certain restrictive roles to play, but for knowledge no restrictions. The purpose of the second chapter, according to *Śaṅkarācārya*, is for one to get dispassion, *vairāgya siddhyartham*. If a person knows what are the difficulties involved in entering the womb, and staying there for 9 months, naturally one develops dispassion. With that the second chapter ends. The third chapter also has only one section, there the essence is *mahāvākya*. The essence of the third chapter is the revelation of the identity between *jīva* and *Īśvara*. This is how the chapters are divided.

Like any other *upaniṣad*, this *upaniṣad* also starts with a *śānti pāṭha*, a prayer to the Lord so that we will not have any obstacles for the study of this text, *trividha pratibandha nivṛttyartham*, for removing three types of obstacles, *ādhyātmika pratibandha*, obstacles from oneself, *ādhibhautika pratibandha*, obstacles from the surroundings, *ādidaivika pratibandha*, from the phenomenal forces, natural calamities. Each *veda* has its own specific *śānti pāṭha*. Let us see the *śānti pāṭha* for *Ṛg veda* to which this *upaniṣad* belongs.

ॐ वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता, मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितम्, आविरावीर्म एधि ।
वेदस्य म आणीस्थः, श्रुतं मे मा प्रहासीः ।
अनेनाधीतेनाहोरात्रान्, सन्दधामि, ऋतं वदिष्यामि ।
सत्यं वदिष्यामि । तन्मामवतु । तद्वक्तारमवतु ।
अवतु माम्, अवतु वक्तारम्, अवतु वक्तारम् ॥
ॐ शान्तिः । शान्तिः । शान्तिः ॥

Om vāṅ me manasi pratiṣṭhā, mano me vāci pratiṣṭham, āvirāvīrma edhi.
vedasya ma āṇīsthaḥ śrutam me mā prahāsīḥ.
Anenādhītenāhoṭrān, sandadhāmi, ṛtam vadiṣyāmi.
satyam vadiṣyāmi. tanmā mavatu. tadvaktāramavatu.
avatu mām, avatu vaktāram, avatu vaktāram.
Om śānti, śānti, śāntiḥ.

Now the *śānti pāṭha* begins with a prayer to two important organs *vāk* and *manaḥ*, speech and mind. For a *vedāntic* student, the speech and the mind are supposed to be very important. Not that it is any less important for others, but in the context of *vedānta*, they are going to be predominantly used. Mind is very important because it is the mind that does the *svādhyāya*, reception, grasping of the *sāstra*. In *śravaṇa*, we are going to use our mind. Of course the ears help us as a conduit. The main job is to be done by the mind alone. So if the mind has any problems, *vedānta* will fail for the student. Mind here indicates all the four functions of *antaḥkaraṇa*, mind, intellect, memory and ego. If any aspect of the mind disturbs you, then *śravaṇa* does not take place. Even in this class, if any of you have some worry that is bothering you, your listening cannot be deep and wholehearted. Mental uneasiness will disturb you from total listening. Total listening is very important and it is very difficult. Therefore mind is important, it must be free from all disturbances whether it is anxiety, guilt and so on. It should also be in good condition in the form of being intelligent.

Remember *vedānta* involves lot of thinking, discrimination, systematic analysis, logic. It is unlike the *purāṇa*-s or *karma khāṇḍa*. In *purāṇa*-s nothing much to think, it is all stories. You can listen even with a disturbed mind. The teacher is also okay with all kinds of disturbances. They are comfortable with everything that is going on. Here in *vedānta* such things will not work. If you miss one word, you will be in trouble. If you miss one syllable, you will be in trouble. In *karma khāṇḍa* also you do not need much intelligence because it is question of doing. *Indrāya svāhā*, what is there to think, take the ghee and put it in the fire. No logic, no reasoning, nothing. In *upāsana* also there is not much thinking, it is just imagination. Take the stone and imagine it is *Viṣṇu*. No logic. You imagine it is *Viṣṇu*. That is all. You do not think! The intellect need not be sharp and subtle for these things.

For the study of *vedānta* mind has to be very subtle, there are hair-splitting

discussions. Why do we do that? The reason is that *mokṣa* is in the form of understanding. Understanding means doubts are possible, to clear doubts, analysis has to be done. A lot of intellectual analysis has to be done, is necessary in philosophy. The truth that we seek is beyond intellect. To know that it is beyond intellect, you need the intellect. When you pole vault, you need the pole first, but you have drop that to clear the bar. At the same time you need the pole to propel you to the required height. In the same way, to know the truth that is beyond the intellect, you need the intellect to go leap beyond the intellect. So *vedānta* involves the intellect. In those the study of *vedānta* was preceded by the study of *tarka śāstra* and the purpose of it was to polish that intellect, to sharpen that intellect that will be necessary for the study of *vedānta*. Even a person with sharp intellect with a restless mind will have problems. The mind must be able to concentrate also. That is *dhāraṇa* in *yoga śāstra*. So mind is a very very important instrument for a student of *vedānta*. Therefore the prayer is directed toward the mind.

Another instrument that is involved is speech. Why is speech important? When we do *śravaṇam*, we are bound to have doubts. I will have to express my doubts clearly to my teacher. So I must have precision of expression. Many people do not have a clear idea of what their doubt is. There is no clarity of thinking. I should be able to express what exactly my doubt is very clearly. For that speech should be clear and clean. Clarity of speech depends very much on clarity of thinking. Wisdom is gained not only by asking questions, but it is also gained through discussion. Discussions clarify many things either with the teacher or with other students. To go further, for the clarity of learning, teaching is a powerful tool, *svādhyāya pravacanābhyāñ na pramati tavyam; svādhyāya pravacane ca*. Two fold advantage is there. One is tradition is propagated by teaching. Secondly I will know whether I have understood clearly. Many things I do not know if I have understood. If I can explain clearly, it means I have understood it. So teaching is also a part of learning. So speech also should be in good condition.

So the student has a special prayer here. *Vāṅ me manasi pratiṣṭhā*, let my speech be ever tuned to, ever fixed upon on my mind. Let me speak what I mean. First of all, speaking the truth is involved. There should not be a disconnect between what I say and what I know. So the basic idea is that *satyam* must be there. I will not compromise. I will not tell a lie. That is one thing. The second thing is I will always be alert in my language. All words I speak comes after a thorough censoring with my intellect. I will not blurt out. I will not blabber emotionally. Most carelessly used instrument is the mouth, both ways. The first step in *vāk tapas* is to reduce the quantity of speech. Most dialog is dominated by a monologue by one person. First is the quantity of speech. Thereafter, we have to observe the quality. If quantity is not controlled, quality also goes down. If we limit the quantity we can observe the quality of what we speak a little better.

The details of *vāk tapas* is not given here. We find that in several other parts of the scriptures especially in *Bhagavad Gītā*, 17th chapter where *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* talks about *vāk tapas* very clearly. In *Viveka cūḍāṃṇi* also *Śaṅkarācārya* says all *sādhana*-s begin with *vāk nirodhaḥ*. As we said earlier *vāk tapas* involves both quantity control and quality control. Of this quantity control must be done first because, if there is too much quantity, quality control will become extremely difficult. If I talk too much, I cannot be conscious about what I am saying. That is why in arguments, we forget all the norms of language. So we say, never argue. When we loose our hold on language, we go on and on, we get excited, we forget and we do not know what to speak. Therefore the first condition is, speak less.

Next comes the control of quality of speech. What are the things that should be observed. *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* says four aspects should be observed in speech quality. *Anudvegakaram, satyam, priyam* and *hitam*. Whatever we speak should pass a rigorous quality test in the form of these four parameters. The first one is *anudvegakaram*, it should not disturb the other person, *ahimsa*, the words

should not harm the other person, injure anyone. Then comes *satyam*. What do you mean by truthful? I should not talk what I do not know. If I do not know, it is better to say I do not know or do not say anything. I do not talk on something about which I am doubtful. It may lead to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Or what was said may be taken to be truthful. Finally I should not say something that is contrary to what I know. All these three, saying something I do not know, or about which I am doubtful, or something that I know to be otherwise, all of them come under *asatyam*.

The next is *priyam*. Anything that you can communicate in a polite language as well as in a polite way. *Priyam* means it should be polite, pleasant, gentle, soft. There are many ways by which you put things across in terms of words that we use. Mild, gentle, soft, polite, courteous language should be used. Finally comes *hitam*, it should be beneficial, useful. I should consider if it benefits the other person or benefit me. Suppose you sit in your porch and discuss politics with your friend or neighbor for one hour. What is the benefit to you or to your friend, especially when you are on the spiritual path? There are other news mongers, they just want to know everything about anything and anything about everything. What do we get out of all such inquiry? Just gossip without any purpose at all. *Hitam* means that there should be some benefit for the speaker or the listener. Really it should be for both, otherwise, I should not talk at all. These are the four conditions that we should observe. If we observe these four conditions, we will have pretty little to talk. Some people come to spiritual camps to just socialize. Spiritual students should form friendship in the field of *vedānta*. Generally friendship is only in areas other than spirituality. More you gossip about worldly matter, closer the friendship! In spirituality, friendship is in the form of *satsaṅga*. If anything else other than spirituality is involved, it become *duḥsaṅga*. I should avoid such associations. These four conditions are there for the speech quality control.

This is for normal transaction purposes. Suppose you are using speech for a specific purpose, communication in business, for discourses, taking a class or you want to do more through language, then come further conditions. What are those conditions? The first condition is choice of words. It is very important. A wrong word in the wrong place can completely change the meaning. The second condition is precision of expression. It should not be vague, ambiguous. It should be precise. Third important condition is clarity of purpose. For these three different things we have three different *śāstra*-s.

For choice of words the *vyākaraṇa śāstra* is there where there is a lot of thought put into the words and their meanings, how they are derived and how they are put together. When *ācārya*-s write commentaries, they analyze every word in the scriptures according to the rules in *vyākaraṇa śāstra*. The choice of words is determined by the study of language, *pada śāstra*.

Vyākaraṇa or grammar is called *pada śāstra*.

Then for the precision of expression we have *tarka śāstra*. It is also called *pramāṇa śāstra*. Every sentence has to be exact, has to be precise. It has to be refined again and again so that ultimately what you intend and what you speak must be exactly precise. It should be free from conveying what you do not want to convey while conveying what you want to convey.

Above all clarity of purpose must be there. In meetings we see this all the time. They meet to discuss certain things. They may even have an agenda listed. They end up talking about everything except what is on the agenda. The only item on the agenda that is taken up is the adjournment of the meeting to schedule the next meeting! Purpose should not be forgotten under any condition. Never forget the goal at any time. The third science dealing with purpose or *tātparya* is *mīmāṃsa śāstra* or *vākya śāstra*. Thus *pada śāstra*, *pramāṇa śāstra* and *vākya śāstra*, *vyākaraṇa*, *tarka* and *mīmāṃsa*, if these three things are there, communication will be successful.

A person who does not have the knowledge of the right communication and tries to express something to an audience, will fail miserably. We need to know the principles of communication. What is communicated will be exactly what was intended, rumors will not be spread. What is going on world over is misinformation, propaganda, fake news and so on. Some times it is intentional, quite often people are not even aware what they say may be misinterpreted. So *vāk tapas* is very important.

So the prayer here is *vāṅ me manasi pratiṣṭhā*, may my speech be rooted in my mind. Whenever a word comes from my mouth, let it be based on my mind. Let it come not from my lips alone, but from my deep mind. Let the speech be consciously used. Let it be carefully used. Let it not be loose, vague, negligent or purposeless language. Then *mano me vāci pratiṣṭham*, let my mind always be fixed in my words. I say what I mean and I mean what I say. So they both must be coordinated. This is called *vāk tapas*. This is the prayer of the student and this is not only the *sādhana* for all the people, but once one becomes a *vedāntic* student, this must be taken as a very important rule.

Āviḥ āviḥ ma edhi, *āviḥ* literally means *prakāśaḥ* and in this context, it is addressing the Lord, *svayam prakāśa brahman*. *Āviḥ* means *caitanya svarūpa*. *Āviḥ ma edhi*, the sentence has to be rearranged as *me āviredhi*. May you become evident to me. I do not know you now. Please reveal yourself to me. You are *prakāśa svarūpaḥ*, but I am not able to see you because of my ignorance. Even though you are of the nature of self-effulgence, I am not able to know you because of my veil. So please remove my veil of ignorance. May you become evident to me. May I come to know you.

In the next sentence he addresses *vāk* and *manas*. Previously he invoked the grace of God. Now he says, *vedasya me āṇīsthaḥ*, bring *vedic* wisdom to me, O speech and mind! *Āṇī*, means the one who brings, speech and mind, may you be the bringer of *vedasya*, *vedic* wisdom to me. May you both be the

messenger of *vedic* wisdom because the wisdom is of *śabda pramāṇa*, the knowledge comes through words alone. In other fields there are other means of knowledge. Here in the knowledge of the Truth, only *śabda* is *pramāṇa*. Therefore, speech bring me that wisdom.

You may bring the *vedic* wisdom and I may receive also, but it may go away! So I have one additional request. *Śrutam me mā prahāsī*, what I have listened to and heard, should not be given up. May you not erase, may you not remove whatever has been heard. *Tejasvi nau atītamastu*, the same is said here in other words. This is Lord's grace. I also must attempt not to give up. Just the Lord's grace only is not sufficient. I also should try my best not to forget what I have learned. How to avoid forgetfulness? There is only one way, *anena adhītena ahoṭrān sandadhāmi*, may I spend day and night in the thought of what I learned. How do you remember anything? Only through constantly thinking about it. How often do you dwell on *vedānta*, that determines how much it stays with you. Of course householders have to take care of so many things, still you can spend as much time as you want on *vedānta*. It is a question of intensity with which you approach the study of *vedānta*. Teacher can take care of only the *śravaṇa* part of the *jñāna sādhana*, *manana* and *dhyāna*, the student has to do. So the student says here, *anena adhītena*, with whatever I have learned, *ahoṭrān sandadhāmi*, like the cow chewing the cud, I will also chew the *vedāntic* cud and assimilate the wisdom.

Then *ṛtam vadiṣyāmi*, I will tell only the truth that I have learned from *vedānta*. I will not talk about any other thing. I will talk about *Brahman* and any other topic connected with *Brahman*. Then, *satyam vadiṣyāmi*. I shall speak only the truth. I shall not compromise with the scriptural teaching. In the scriptures certain bitter truths are mentioned. For the sake of society, a person should not change it. Whatever it is, I have to clearly say. Suppose I have to say *jñānādeva kaivalyam*. You have read somewhere, *bhaktya mokṣaḥ* or *karmaṇā mokṣaḥ* and you come and ask me which is correct. I have to say only knowledge will liberate you even if it offends someone who considers

devotion or action will liberate you. *Karma* as *karma yoga* will purify your mind, *bhakti* will give you concentration of mind. If I say anything other than that, it will be compromising what I know to be true.

Then *tan mām avatu*, let that Lord protect me. Here the protection is by giving me the right understanding. I should not misunderstand what the teacher says. Let the Lord protect me by revealing the correct meaning. Then, *tad vaktāram avatu*, let the Lord protect the teacher also by giving him the power of communication. Then *avatu mām avatu vaktāram*, it is repeated twice to indicate its importance. *Om śānti, śānti, śāntiḥ*. Peace! Peace! Peace! To ward off obstacles from the environment, from the phenomenal forces and also from oneself. Now having seen the *śānti pāṭa*, we shall go to the *upaniṣad* proper.