



The KENA-UPANIṢAD *of the*
SĀMA-VEDA



SARVAMANGALA FOUNDATION

*Translated in the light of Śaṅkarācārya's explanation
by Āchārya Vidyābhāskar*

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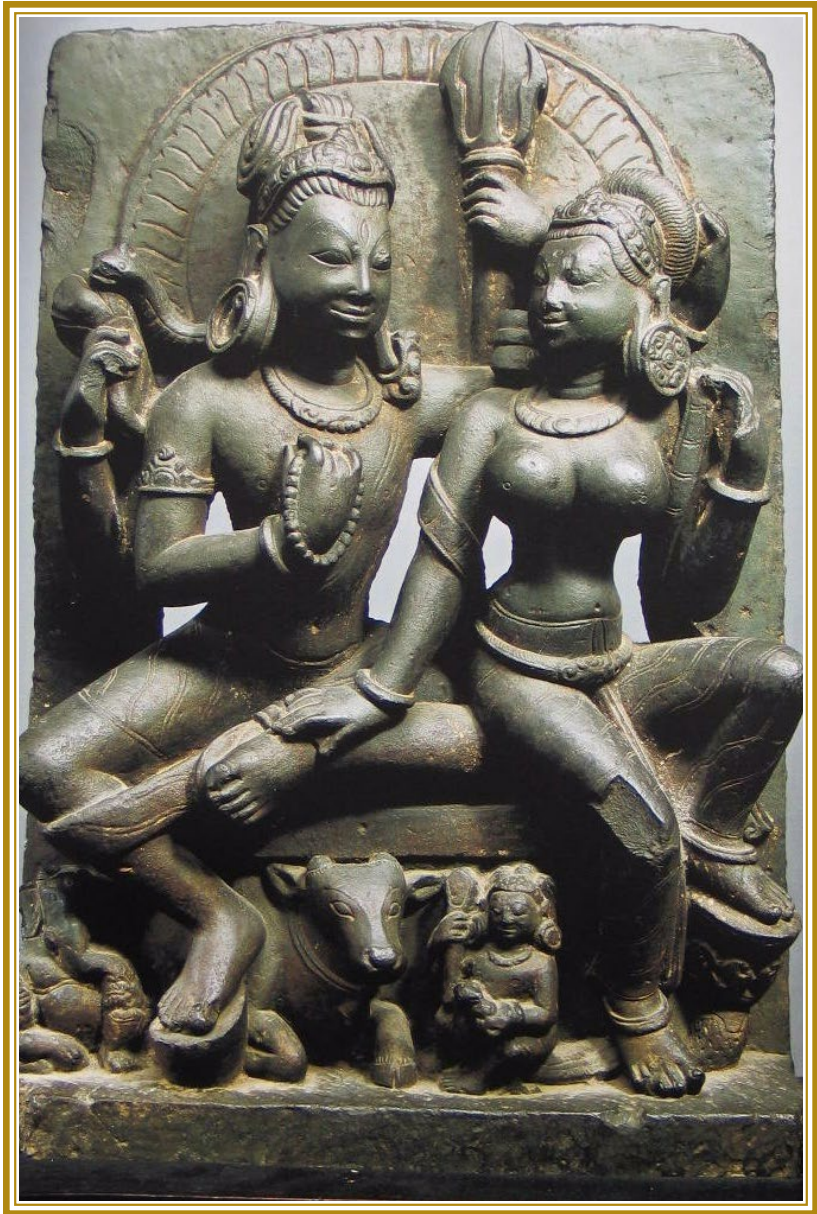
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SARVAMANGALA

केनोपनिषत्

The KENA-UPANIṢAD *of the*
SĀMA-VEDA



UMĀ, DAUGHTER OF THE HIMĀLAYA, WITH ŚIVA

According to the Kena-Upaniṣad, Umā revealed Reality to Indra.

Ancient Indian Sculpture ca. 900-999, Rubin Museum of Art @ Himalayan Art Resources

केनोपनिषत्

The KENA-UPANIṢAD of the SĀMA-VEDA

Śānti-Mantra

Prayer for Peace

ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

May he, *the Deity of Awareness*, protect us both!
May he nourish us both.
May we exert ourselves together!
May what we have studied become radiant!
May we never be averse towards each other!
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुः
श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ।
सर्वं ब्रह्मोपनिषदं
माऽहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां मा मा ब्रह्म
निराकरोदनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु ।
तदात्मनि निरते य
उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May my limbs, speech, life, eyes, ears, strength
and all my senses thrive.

All this is Brahman, *Absolute Awareness known through* the
Upaniṣads.

May I not negate Brahman, may Brahman not negate me.

May there be no negation, may there be no negation for me.

May the Dharmas that are in the Upaniṣads

be present in me who am immersed in ātman, *my own true nature*,

may they be present in me, may they be present in me.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace

प्रथमः खण्डः

Chapter One

केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः

केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।

केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति

चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क उ देवो युनक्ति ॥ १ ॥

A student asks:

Willed by whom does the mind sent forth proceed?

Directed by whom does the first breath emerge?

Willed by whom do we speak this speech?

Which *luminous being* or deva harnesses the eye and the ear?

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यद्

वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।

चक्षुषश्चक्षुरतिमुच्य धीराः

प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥ २ ॥

The Teacher replies:

It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind,

the speech of speech, the breath of breath,

the eye of the eye.

When *they are* liberated (*by realising this*)

the wise, on departing from this world,

become immortal.

न तत्र चक्षुर्गच्छति न वाग्गच्छति नो मनः
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथैतदनुशिष्यात् ।
अन्यदेव तद्विदितादथो अविदितादधि
इति श्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद्याचक्षिरे ॥ ३ ॥

The eye does not reach there, nor speech, nor *the conceptual* mind.
We do not know, we do not comprehend, how one could teach it.
It is different from the known, but also *different* from the unknown:
thus we have heard from our predecessors, who clarified this for us.

यद्वाचाऽनभ्युदितं येन वाग्भ्युद्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ४ ॥

What is not articulated by speech
but by which speech is expressed –
realise that alone to be Brahman, *the Reality of Awareness*,
not this *concept* upon which *people* meditate.

यन्मनसा न मनुते येनाहुर्मनो मतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ५ ॥

What is not thought by mind
but by which, they say, mind is thought,
realise that alone to be Brahman, *the Reality of Awareness*,
not this *concept* upon which *people* meditate.

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ६ ॥

What one does not see by the eye
but by which one sees the eyes,
realise that alone to be Brahman, *the Reality of Awareness*,
not this *concept* upon which *people* meditate.

यच्छ्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रमिदं श्रुतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ७ ॥

What one does not hear by the ear
but by which the ear is heard,
realise that alone to be Brahman, *the Reality of Awareness*,
not this *concept* upon which *people* meditate.

यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥ ८ ॥

That which does not breathe by breath
but by which breath is breathed,
realise that alone to be Brahman, *the Reality of Awareness*,
not this *concept* upon which *people* meditate.

इति केनोपनिषदि प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

Thus *ends* Chapter One in the Kena-Upaniṣad.

द्वितीयः खण्डः

Chapter Two

यदि मन्यसे सुवेदेति दहरमेवापि
नूनं त्वं वेत्थ ब्रह्मणो रूपम् ।
यदस्य त्वं यदस्य देवेष्वथ नु
मीमाँस्येमेव ते मन्ये विदितम् ॥ १ ॥

The Teacher says:

If you think 'I know it well',
then you know surely but little of
that nature of Reality which is among you,
that which is among the Devas, the luminous ones –
therefore I think you should still investigate it further.

After gaining deeper insight, the student says:

'I think I have understood.'

नाहं मन्ये सुवेदेति नो न वेदेति वेद च ।
यो नस्तद्वेद तद्वेद नो न वेदेति वेद च ॥ २ ॥

The student says:

I do not think I know it well,
nor do I think that I do not know it.
He among us knows it,
who knows that he knows it
and knows that he does not know it.

यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः ।
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम् ॥ ३ ॥

It is known by the one by whom it is not known.
The one by whom it is known, he knows it not.
It is not understood by those who understand,
it is understood by those who do not understand.

प्रतिबोधविदितं मतममृतत्वं हि विन्दते ।
आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यं विद्यया विन्दतेऽमृतम् ॥ ४ ॥

It is understood when it is known in every *state of* awareness,
and one attains immortality.
Through oneself one finds strength,
through knowledge one finds the immortal.

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति
न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ।
भूतेषु भूतेषु विचित्य धीराः
प्रेत्यास्माल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥ ५ ॥

If one has known it here, then it is the truth.
If one has not known it, it is a great loss.
The wise perceive it in all beings,
and departing from this world, they become immortal.

इति केनोपनिषदि द्वितीयः खण्डः ॥
Thus *ends* Chapter Two in the Kena-Upaniṣad.



THE BENGALI MAHĀSIDDHA MAITRĪPĀDA, 1007-1085 CE

Like the Sage of the Upaniṣad, he spoke about Reality in a contradictory language.

Tibetan Artwork in Private Collection, 1800-1899 @ Himalayan Art Resources

तृतीयः खण्डः

Chapter Three

A Story about Brahman, the Reality of Awareness

ब्रह्म ह देवेभ्यो विजिग्ये तस्य ह ब्रह्मणो
विजये देवा अमहीयन्त । त ऐक्षन्तास्माकमेवायं विजयोऽस्माकमेवायं महिमेति ।
तद्वैषां विजज्ञौ तेभ्यो ह प्रादुर्बभूव तन्न व्यजानत
किमिदं यक्षमिति ॥ १ ॥

Brahman attained a victory for the Devas,
the luminous Deities of the Elements and Senses,
and by that victory of Brahman the Devas were elated.
They thought:
'Truly, this victory is ours,
truly, this glory is ours alone.'

तद्वैषां विजज्ञौ तेभ्यो ह प्रादुर्बभूव तन्न व्यजानत
किमिदं यक्षमिति ॥ २ ॥

Brahman understood this about them
and appeared before them.
But they did not understand it: 'Who is this Being?'

तेऽग्निमब्रुवञ्जातवेद एतद्विजानीहि
किमिदं यक्षमिति तथेति ॥ ३ ॥
तदभ्यद्रवत्तमभ्यवदत्कोऽसीत्यग्निर्वा
अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीज्जातवेदा वा अहमस्मीति ॥ ४ ॥

तस्मिंस्त्वयि किं वीर्यमित्यपीदं सर्वं
 दहेयं यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति ॥ ५ ॥
 तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतद्देहेति ।
 तदुपप्रेयाय सर्वजवेन तन्न शशाक दग्धुं स तत एव
 निववृते नैतदशकं विज्ञातुं यदेतद्यक्षमिति ॥ ६ ॥

They said to Agni, *Fire*:
 ‘O Jātavedas, *knower of all beings*!
 Seek to understand who this Being is.’
 ‘So be it,’ he said, and rushed towards it.
Brahman asked him: ‘Who are you?’
 He replied: ‘I am Agni, I am also Jātavedas.’
Brahman said: ‘What power is in you?’
Fire replied: ‘I can burn everything on earth.’
Brahman placed a straw before him and said: ‘Burn this.’
 He rushed toward it with all his speed but could not burn it.
 Then he returned from there and said *to the other Devas*:
 ‘I could not understand who this Being is.’

अथ वायुमब्रुवन्वायवेतद्विजानीहि
 किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति ॥ ७ ॥
 तदभ्यद्रवत्तमभ्यवदत्कोऽसीति वायुर्वा
 अहमस्मीत्यब्रवीन्मातरिश्वा वा अहमस्मीति ॥ ८ ॥
 तस्मिंस्त्वयि किं वीर्यमित्यपीदं
 सर्वमाददीय यदिदं पृथिव्यामिति ॥ ९ ॥
 तस्मै तृणं निदधावेतदादत्स्वेति
 तदुपप्रेयाय सर्वजवेन तन्न शशाकादतुं स तत एव
 निववृते नैतदशकं विज्ञातुं यदेतद्यक्षमिति ॥ १० ॥

Then they said to Vāyu, Air:

‘O Vāyu! Seek to understand who this Being is.’

‘So be it,’ he said, and rushed towards it.

Brahman asked him: ‘Who are you?’

He replied: ‘I am Vāyu, I am also *known as Mātariśvā.*’

Brahman said: ‘What power is in you?’

Vāyu replied: ‘I can lift away everything on earth.’

Brahman placed a straw before him and said: ‘Lift this away.’

He rushed toward it with all his speed but could not lift it away.

Then he returned from there and said *to the other Devas*:

‘I could not understand who this Being is.’

अथेन्द्रमब्रुवन्मघवन्नेतद्विजानीहि किमेतद्यक्षमिति तथेति

तदभ्यद्रवत्तस्मात्तिरोदधे ॥ ११ ॥

स तस्मिन्नेवाकाशे स्त्रियमाजगाम बहुशोभमानामुमाँ

हैमवतीं ताँहोवाच किमेतद्यक्षमिति ॥ १२ ॥

Then they said to Indra:

‘O Maghavan! Seek to understand who this Being is.’

‘So be it,’ he said and rushed towards it

but it disappeared from him.

Then in that very space Indra met *Wisdom herself* as

an exceedingly beautiful Lady,

Umā, the daughter of the Himālaya .

He said to her: ‘Who is this Being?’

इति केनोपनिषदि तृतीयः खण्डः ॥

Thus *ends* Chapter Three in the Kena-Upaniṣad.



UMĀ, DAUGHTER OF THE HIMĀLAYA, WITH ŚIVA

The Divine Mother Umā reveals the Absolute to Indra.

Ancient Indian Sculpture @ Himalayan Art Resources

चतुर्थः खण्डः

Chapter Four

सा ब्रह्मेति होवाच ब्रह्मणो वा एतद्विजये महीयध्वमिति
ततो हैव विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ १ ॥

She said: 'Brahman'.

'By the victory of Brahman alone you were elated.'

Then he understood that it was Brahman.

तस्माद्वा एते देवा अतितरामिवान्यान्देवान्यदग्निर्वायुरिन्द्रस्ते
ह्येनन्नेदिष्टं पस्पर्शस्ते ह्येनत्प्रथमो विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ २ ॥

As they had touched it so closely
and were the first to know that it was Brahman,
the Devas Agni, Vāyu and Indra surpassed the other Devas.

तस्माद्वा इन्द्रोऽतितरामिवान्यान्देवान्स
ह्येनन्नेदिष्टं पस्पर्श स ह्येनत्प्रथमो विदाञ्चकार ब्रह्मेति ॥ ३ ॥

As he had touched it so closely
and was the first to know that it was Brahman,
Indra surpassed the other Devas.

तस्यैष आदेशो यदेतद्विद्युतो व्यद्युतदा३
इतीन् न्यमीमिषदा३ इत्यधिदैवतम् ॥ ४ ॥

This is the *adhidaiivata* or Devatā-related teaching about *Brahman*,
Absolute Awareness:
it is like the flash of lightning
it is like the blinking of *the eye*.

अथाध्यात्मं यद्देतद्गच्छतीव च मनोऽनेन
चैतदुपस्मरत्यभीक्षणं सङ्कल्पः ॥ ५ ॥

This is the self-related teaching about it:
It is that which the mind [of a meditator] seemingly approaches,
when through this [the mind] he remembers it,
and is mindful of it again and again.

तद्ध तद्वनं नाम तद्वनमित्युपासितव्यं स य एतदेवं वेदाभि
हैर्नै सर्वाणि भूतानि संवाञ्छन्ति ॥ ६ ॥

It is 'Everyone's Beloved' (*tad-vana*),
it should be worshipped by the name of 'Everyone's Beloved'.
All beings love him who knows it thus.

उपनिषदं भो ब्रूहीत्युक्ता त उपनिषद्वाह्मी वाव त
उपनिषदमब्रूमेति ॥ ७ ॥

The student said:

'Exalted One, tell me the secret *wisdom*, the Upaniṣad.'

The Teacher replied: 'I have told you the secret *wisdom*, the Upaniṣad.
I have told you the secret wisdom about Brahman.'



INDRA, THE KING OF THE GODS

Indra surpasses all the Gods with his nondual realisation.

Bronze Statue of Indra, ca. 1200-1299, The Norton Simon Museum @ Himalayan Art Resources

तस्यै तपो दमः कर्मेति प्रतिष्ठा वेदाः सर्वाङ्गानि
सत्यमायतनम् ॥ ८ ॥

For this *secret wisdom*
austerity, restraint and action are the foundation.
The Vedas are all *its* limbs
Truth is *its* home.

यो वा एतामेवं वेदापहत्य पाप्मानमनन्ते स्वर्गे
लोके ज्येये प्रतितिष्ठति प्रतितिष्ठति ॥ ९ ॥

He who realises this *secret wisdom*, having discarded evil,
in the infinite utmost luminous realm
he is established,
he is established.

इति केनोपनिषदि चतुर्थः खण्डः । इति केनोपनिषत् समाप्ता ॥
Thus *ends* Chapter Three in the Kena-Upaniṣad.
Thus the Kena-Upaniṣad is complete.

Śānti-Mantra

Prayer for Peace

ॐ सह नाववतु ।
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

May he, *the Deity of Awareness*, protect us both!
May he nourish us both.
May we exert ourselves together!
May what we have studied become radiant!
May we never be averse towards each other!
Om Peace, Peace, Peace

ॐ आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि वाक्प्राणश्चक्षुः
श्रोत्रमथो बलमिन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ।
सर्वं ब्रह्मौपनिषदं
माऽहं ब्रह्म निराकुर्यां मा मा ब्रह्म
निराकरोदनिराकरणमस्त्वनिराकरणं मेऽस्तु ।
तदात्मनि निरते य
उपनिषत्सु धर्मास्ते मयि सन्तु ते मयि सन्तु ।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om May my limbs, speech, life, eyes, ears, strength
and all my senses thrive.
All this is Brahman, *Absolute Awareness known through the*

Upaniṣads.

May I not negate Brahman, may Brahman not negate me.

May there be no negation, may there be no negation for me.

May the Dharmas that are in the Upaniṣads

be present in me who am immersed in ātman, *my own true nature*,

may they be present in me, may they be present in me.

Om Peace, Peace, Peace

PRAYER *to*
GODDESS SARASVATĪ *to*
INCREASE *our* INTELLIGENCE



GODDESS SARASVATĪ, THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE PERSONIFIED

Ancient Nepali Painting of Goddess Sarasvatī © Himalayan Art Resources

PRAYER to GODDESS SARASVATĪ to
INCREASE *our* INTELLIGENCE

ॐ नमस्ते शारदे देवि काश्मीरपुरवासिनि ।
त्वामहं प्रार्थये नित्यं विद्यादानं च देहि मे ॥

om namaste śārade devi kāśmīra-pura-vāsini |
tvām ahaṁ prārthaye nityaṁ vidyā-dānaṁ ca dehi me ||

Om Obeisance to you, O Goddess Śāradā,
You who are like the Full-Moon in Autumn,
You who dwell in the Region of Kāśmīr!
I ever beseech you:
Grant me the gift of knowledge!

