

Kurma Purana - How a Sannyasi should conduct and the method of realizing the Advaitic Supreme

In the 29th chapter of the Second Part of this Purana is a long discourse on the Sannyasin and his sadhana. This Purana has been cited by Sri Vishveshvara Saraswati (the Guru of Sri Madhusudana Saraswati) in the Yati Dharma sangraha.

The entire chapter is the sadhana for the Sannyasin. After stating the prayaschitta for any error on the part of the Sannyasi, the sadhana for the Advaita Atma Jnana praapti.

First the original shlokas are given and later the English translation is given. There is bound to be spelling inaccuracy in the Sanskrit shlokas.

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एवं स्वाश्रमनिष्ठानां यतीनां नियतात्मनाम् ।
भैक्षेण वर्तनं प्रोक्तं फलमूलैरथापि वा ॥ २९.१

एककालं चरेद् भैक्षं न प्रसज्येत विस्तरे ।
भैक्ष्य प्रसक्तो हि यतिर्विषयेष्वपि सज्जति ॥ २९.२

सप्तागारं चरेद् भैक्षमलाभात् तु पुनश्चरेत् ।
प्रक्षाल्य पात्रे भुञ्जीयाददभिः प्रक्षालयेत् तु पुनः ॥ २९.३

अथवाऽन्यदुपादाय पात्रे भुञ्जीत नित्यशः ।
भुक्त्वा तत् संत्यजेत् पात्रं यात्रामात्रमलोलुपः ॥ २९.४

विधूमे सन्नमुसले व्यङ्गारे भुक्तवज्जने ।
वृत्ते शरावसंपाते भिक्षां नित्यं यतिश्चरेत् ॥ २९.५

गोदोहमात्रं तिष्ठेत कालं भिक्षुरधोमुखः ।
भिक्षेत्युक्त्वा सकृत् तूष्णीमशनीयाद् वाग्यतः शुचिः ॥ २९.६

प्रक्षाल्य पाणिपादौ च समाचम्य यथाविधि ।
आदित्ये दर्शयित्वान्नं भुञ्जीत प्राङ्मुखोत्तरः ॥ २९.७

हुत्वा प्राणाहुतीः पञ्च ग्रासानष्टौ समाहितः ।
आचम्य देवं ब्रह्माणं ध्यायीत परमेश्वरम् ॥ २९.८

अलाबुं दारुपात्रं च मृण्मयं वैणवं ततः ।
चत्वारि यतिपात्राणि मनुराह प्रजापतिः ॥ २९.९

प्राग्रात्रे पररात्रे च मध्यरात्रे तथैव च ।
संध्यास्वग्नि विशेषेण चिन्तयेन्नित्यमीश्वरम् ॥ २९.१०

कृत्वा हृत्पद्मनिलये विश्वाख्यं विश्वसंभवम् ।
आत्मानं सर्वभूतानां परस्तात् तमसः स्थितम् ॥ २९.११

सर्वस्याधारभूतानामानन्दं ज्योतिरव्ययम् ।
प्रधानपुरुषातीतमाकाशं दहनं शिवम् ॥ २९.१२

तदन्तः सर्वभावानामीश्वरं ब्रह्मरूपिणम् ।
ध्यायेदनादिमध्यान्तमानन्दादिगुणालयम् ॥ २९.१३

महान्तं पुरुषं ब्रह्म ब्रह्माणं सत्यमव्ययम् ।
तरुणादित्यसंकाशं महेशं विश्वरूपिणम् ॥ २९.१४

ओंकारान्तेऽथ चात्मानं संस्थाप्य परमात्मनि ।
आकाशे देवमीशानं ध्यायीताकाशमध्यगम् ॥ २९.१५

कारणं सर्वभावानामानन्दैकसमाश्रयम् ।
पुराणं पुरुषं शुभ्रं ध्यायन् मुच्येत बन्धनात् ॥ २९.१६

यद्वा गुहायां प्रकृतं जगत्संमोहनालये ।
विचिन्त्य परमं व्योम सर्वभूतैककारणम् ॥ २९.१७

जीवनं सर्वभूतानां यत्र लोकः प्रलीयते ।
आनन्दं ब्रह्मणः सूक्ष्मं यत् पश्यन्ति मुमुक्षवः ॥ २९.१८

तन्मध्ये निहितं ब्रह्म केवलं ज्ञानलक्षणम् ।
अनन्तं सत्यमीशानं विचिन्त्यासीत् संयतः ॥ २९.१९

गुह्याद् गुह्यतमं ज्ञानं यतीनामेतदीरितम् ।
योऽनुतिष्ठेन्महेशेन सोऽश्नुते योगमैश्वरम् ॥ २९.२०

तस्माद् ध्यानरतो नित्यमात्मविद्यापरायणः ।
ज्ञानं समभ्यसेद् ब्राह्मं येन मुच्येत बन्धनात् ॥ २९.२१

गत्वा पृथक् स्वमात्मानं सर्वस्मादेव केवलम् ।
आनन्दमजरं ज्ञानं ध्यायीत च पुनः परम् ॥ २९.२२

यस्मात् भवन्ति भूतानि यद् गत्वा नेह जायते ।
स तस्मादीश्वरो देवः परस्माद् योऽधितिष्ठति ॥ २९.२३

यदन्तरे तद् गगनं शाश्वतं शिवमच्युतम् ।
यदाहुस्तत्परो यः स्यात् स देवः स्यान्महेश्वरः ॥ २९.२४

व्रतानि यानि भिक्षूणां तथैवोपव्रतानि च ।

एकैकातिक्रमे तेषां प्रायश्चित्तं विधीयते ॥ २९.२५

उपेत्य च स्त्रियं कामात् प्रायश्चित्तं समाहितः ।
प्राणायामसमायुक्तः कुर्यात् सांतपनं शुचिः ॥ २९.२६
ततश्चरेत् नियमात् कृच्छ्रं संयतमानसः ।
पुनराश्रममागम्य चरेद् भिक्षुरतन्द्रितः ॥ २९.२७

न नर्मयुक्तमनृतं हिनस्तीति मनीषिणः ।
तथापि च न कर्तव्यं प्रसङ्गो ह्येष दारुणः ॥ २९.२८

एकरात्रोपवासश्च प्राणायामशतं तथा ।
उक्त्वा नूनं प्रकर्तव्यं यतिना धर्मलिप्सुना ॥ २९.२९

परमापदगतेनापि न कार्यं स्तेयमन्यतः ।
स्तेयादभ्यधिकः कश्चिन्नास्त्यधर्म इति स्मृतिः ॥ २९.३०

हिंसा चैषापरा दिष्टा या चात्मज्ञाननाशिका ।
यदेतद् द्रविणं नाम प्राण ह्येते बहिश्चराः ॥ २९.३१

स तस्य हरति प्राणान् यो यस्य हरते धनम् ।
एवं कृत्वा स दुष्टात्मा भिन्नवृत्तो व्रताहतः ।
भूयो निर्वेदमापन्नश्चरेच्चान्द्रायणव्रतम् ॥ २९.३२

विधिना शास्त्रदृष्टेन संवत्सरमिति श्रुतिः ।
भूयो निर्वेदमापन्नश्चरेद् भिक्षुरतन्द्रितः ॥ २९.३३

अकस्मादेव हिंसां तु यदि भिक्षुः समाचरेत् ।
कुर्यात्कृच्छ्रातिकृच्छ्रं तु चान्द्रायणमथापि वा ॥ २९.३४

स्कन्नमिन्द्रियदौर्बल्यात् स्त्रियं दृष्ट्वा यतिर्यदि ।
तेन धारयितव्या वै प्राणायामास्तु षोडश ॥ २९.३५

दिवास्कन्ने त्रिरात्रं स्यात् प्राणायामशतं तथा ।
एकान्ते मधुमांसे च नवश्राद्धे तथैव च ।
प्रत्यक्षलवणे चोक्तं प्राजापत्यं विशोधनम् ॥ २९.३६

ध्याननिष्ठस्य सततं नश्यते सर्वपातकम् ।
तस्मान्महेश्वरं ज्ञात्वा तस्य ध्यानपरो भवेत् ॥ २९.३७

यद् ब्रह्म परमं ज्योतिः प्रतिष्ठाक्षरमद्वयम् ।
योऽन्तरा परं ब्रह्म स विज्ञेयो महेश्वरः ॥ २९.३८

एष देवो महादेवः केवलः परमः शिवः ।
तदेवाक्षरमद्वैतं तदादित्यान्तरं परम् ॥ २९.३९

यस्मान्महीयसो देवः स्वधाग्निं ज्ञानसंस्थिते ।
आत्मयोगाहवये तत्त्वे महादेवस्ततः स्मृतः ॥ २९.४०

नान्यं देवं महादेवाद् व्यतिरिक्तं प्रपश्यति ।
तमेवात्मानमात्मेति यः स याति परमं पदम् ॥ २९.४१

मन्यते ये स्वमात्मानं विभिन्नं परमेश्वरात् ।
न ते पश्यन्ति तं देवं वृथा तेषां परिश्रमः ॥ २९.४२

एकमेव परं ब्रह्म विज्ञेयं तत्त्वमव्ययम् ।
स देवस्तु महादेवो नैतद् विज्ञाय बध्यते ॥ २९.४३

तस्माद् यतेत नियतं यतिः संयतमानसः ।
ज्ञानयोगरतः शान्तो महादेवपरायणः ॥ २९.४४

एष वः कथितो विप्रो यतीनामाश्रमः शुभः ।
पितामहेन विभुना मुनीनां पूर्वमीरितम् ॥ २९.४५

नापुत्रशिष्ययोगिभ्यो दद्यादिदमनुत्तमम् ।
ज्ञानं स्वयंभुना प्रोक्तं यतिधर्माश्रयं शिवम् ॥ २९.४६

इति यतिनियमानामेतदुक्तं विधानं
पशुपतिपरितोषे यद् भवेदेकहेतुः ।
न भवति पुनरेषामुद्भवो वा विनाशः
प्रणिहितमनसो ये नित्यमेवाचरन्ति ॥ २९.४७

इति श्रीकूर्मपुराणे षट्साहस्र्यां संहितायामुपरिविभागे एकोनत्रिंशोऽध्यायः ॥

The English translation of the above is given in the sequel: In the translation sometimes the word 'Brahmaa' is used to denote the Supreme Brahman. One needs to bear in mind the context and comprehend the correct meaning.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

Duties of an Ascetic

Vyāsa said :

1. In this way the sustenance of ascetics of restrained soul (mind) who strictly adhere to the stage of their life, has been declared to be on begging alms or on fruits, roots etc.

2. He should beg for alms only for once. He should not indulge in it for long. Since, if an ascetic is attached to alms, he becomes involved in worldly affairs.

3. He should beg for alms only at seven houses.¹ If nothing is received he should begin begging for alms once again. He should wash the vessel and take food in it. Then once again, he should wash it with water.

4. Or he should take another vessel for collecting the alms and another for taking food everyday. After taking food he should wipe off that vessel and take food only to facilitate the journey of life. He should not be covetous.

5. The ascetic should go to collect alms when there is no smoke or burning coal, at a house where all the people have taken food and where the threshing rod is kept resting and the potsherds are disposed off.²

6. After saying "Bhikṣā" (alms) once, the mendicant ascetic should stand with the head bent (facing down) for a period of a *Godoha* (i.e. the time taken to milk a cow). (After receiving the alms) he should eat it silently. He should be pure and restrained in speech.

7. He should wash his hands and feet and perform the *Ācamana* rites in accordance with the injunctions. He should show food to the sun-god and partake of it facing the east. He should remain pure.

8. He should take in the five *Prāṇāhutis* (i.e. take the five particles of food while uttering *Prāṇāya svāhā* etc.). With concentration he should take in only eight mouthfuls of food.

1. Vasiṣṭha Dh. S. X. 7, Śaṅkha Smṛ. VII. 3

2. Manu VI. 56, Śaṅkha VII. 2

After performing the *Ācamana* rite he should meditate on Lord Brahmā, the great Īśvara.

9. Manu, the Prajāpati, says that the following four types of vessels may be used (for begging alms) by ascetics viz. : a gourd, a wooden vessel, a mud-pot or a bamboo pot.¹

10. He should think of Īśvara always early in the night, in the middle of the night, at the close of the night and during the *Sandhyās* (i.e. dawn and dusk). During the *Sandhyās*, he should particularly make use of sacrificial fires.*

11-13. He should keep within the abode of the lotus of his heart, the deity named Viśva who is the cause of the birth of the Universe. He should remember the Ātman of all living beings—that which is stationed beyond darkness, the Ātman that is the support of all the brilliance, the unchanging bliss, that which is beyond Pradhāna and Puruṣa, Śiva (stationed in the) cavity of the sky, Īśvara of the form of Brahman, present within all beings. He should meditate on the lord devoid of beginning, middle and the end, the abode of the qualities such as bliss, etc.

14-15. He should meditate on the great Puruṣa, the Brahman, Brahmā, the unchanging truth, the universal formed Maheśa resembling the mid-day sun. He should stabilise the Ātman in the Supreme Ātman through Omkāra. He should meditate on Lord Īśāna present in the middle of the Ākāśa (firmament).

16. One meditating on the ancient pure Puruṣa, the cause of all beings, the only receptacle of bliss, shall be released from bondage.

17-18. Or he should ponder over the great firmament, the sole cause of all living beings, that which is present in the cavity of the heart, the abode of illusion for the universe; he should meditate on the enlivening force of all living beings, where the world gets dissolved; which, those desirous of liberation, see as the subtle bliss of Brahman.

19. After pondering over the infinite real,*Īśāna, the Brahman that is lying hidden in its middle, the Brahman characterised by perfect knowledge, he should sit with perfect self-control.

20. This is the greatest secret of all secrets imparted to ascetics by Maheśa. He who brings into practice the perfect knowledge, shall experience Yoga pertaining to Īśvara.

21. Hence, he should always be devoted to meditation; he should be devoted to the Ātmavidyā (knowledge of the soul). He should resort to the perfect knowledge of Brahman, whereby he shall be released from bondage.

22. Realising the non-identity of the self from all other things, and that the self is pure bliss, devoid of old age, one should meditate again on that Supreme knowledge.

23. He is, therefore, the Supreme Lord as from him all beings originate, by attaining him one is not born again. He is the God who transcends and rules over all.

24. That Lord is Maheśvara, the journey unto whom is mentioned to be perpetual and auspicious, and whom they call as the greatest.

25. Whatever holy main vows and subsidiary vows of the mendicant ascetics have been mentioned, if any of these are transgressed, expiatory rites are enjoined.¹

26. After approaching a woman carnally, he should make amends as follows : He should control his mind, remain pure and perform Prāṇāyāma. He should then perform the expiatory rites called *Kṛcchra** and *Sāntapana*.

27. Thereafter he should remain with perfect mental control and regularly perform the *Kṛcchra* (expiatory) rite according to injunctions. The mendicant should come to the hermitage again and perform his regular duties with alertness.

28. Learned men say that a falsehood uttered for fun does not affect one adversely. Still it should not be pursued, as this is a serious incident.

1. VV. 25-36 enumerate the atonements or expiations for transgression of rules by a Sannyāsin.

*a better v.l. is *prāyaścittam samahitam* with concentrated mind take the

29. (If one speaks a lie even in joke) an ascetic desirous of piety should fast for one night and perform one hundred Prāṇāyāmas.

30. One should not commit theft even if one loses one's interest* (?). The Smṛti states that there is no other act of irreligion than theft.

31. It is spoken of as another kind of violence. It deprives one of the knowledge of the self. What is called wealth is the externally wandering life of man.

32. He who deprives a man of his wealth, deprives him of his life. If one commits it, that extremely wicked person, fallen from his pious way of life, gets his sacred vow violated. (Repenting again if) he feels despondent, he should perform Cāndrāyana vow.

33. Śruti says that he should perform (the Cāndrāyana rite) for a year in accordance with the injunctions in the scriptures. If the mendicant ascetic should repent again, he should perform his vow alertfully.

34. If the mendicant ascetic commits violence accidentally he should perform the expiatory rite of Kṛcchrātikṛcchra or Cāndrāyana.

35. If, on seeing a woman, an ascetic involuntarily discharges his semen virile due to his weakness, he should perform sixteen Prāṇāyāmas.

36. If the involuntary emission of the semen takes place during the day time, he should perform hundred Prāṇāyāmas every day for three days. If one takes to wine and flesh in secret, or takes salt openly during Navaśrāddha (first Śrāddha after a person's death) Prājāpatya vow is the expiatory rite.

37. All the sins of a person engaged always in meditation perish. Hence, one should be engrossed in meditation on Maheśvara after realising him.

38. That which is the greatest Brahman, the brilliantmost light, the imperishable and unchanging support of all and is immanent in everything, should be known as Maheśvara.

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39. This lord Mahādeva is the pure and the greatest Śiva. He alone is the non-dualistic imperishable deity within the orb of the sun.

40.* (Defective verse) Since the lord is very great and is stationed in the principle called Ātmayoga and termed Svadhā, Agni (fire) and (knowledge) Jñāna, he is known as Mahādeva.

41. He who does not see any other lord than Mahādeva, he who realises him as the Ātman, attains the greatest region.

42. Those who consider their own Ātman different from Paramēśvara do not realise the lord. Their effort is futile.

43. The only Brahman is the supreme Brahman. That should be known as the unchanging principle. That lord is Mahādeva. By not realising this, one is fettered.

44. Hence, an ascetic of controlled mind should worship invariably. He should be quiescent, devoted to Mahādeva and engaged in the path of knowledge.

45. O Brāhmaṇas, thus the auspicious stage of life of the ascetics has been detailed to you. This has been formerly expounded to the sages by lord Pitāmaha (god Brahmā).

46. This excellent knowledge, the auspicious thing based on the duties of the ascetics, imparted by the self-born deity, shall not be given to anyone else except to sons, disciples and Yogins.

47. Thus the rules governing the rites of the ascetics have been described. It shall be the sole cause of the propitiation of Paśupati. Those who practise this every day with concentration of the mind are not reborn nor shall they face destruction.

Om Tat Sat