Chapter 5

Upāsanās in the contemporary world context and upāsanās as a boon to the modern world

Before we enter into the realms of explaining the significance of upāsanās to the contemporary world, we have to go through the situation of the world. Does this idea of upāsanās, hold water is the major concern? Such a concern is based on the current world view of people looking at the vedas and other allied subjects of the ancient lore. Today, in nut shell vedas are predominantly used by a few traditional schools for teaching the same. In such schools the meaning of it is not at all conveyed to students and such students by the end of the study of the vedas take up the work of priest-ship and therein too, they use a very few mantras and hence their major part of their study for years, becomes futile. Some recite it on a regular basis in the name of earning punya or merit, without ever trying to know the science behind it or understanding the meaning of the same. So, when the meaning of it is not comprehended by the learners of the vedas themselves, what with people who have not learnt the vedas in a traditional set up. The second segment of people, take up the study of the samskrtam and proceed to study different śāstras. Though this is a heartening thing to listen to in the present juncture, the flipside of it is that very few take up the study of upāsanās, which is hidden in the vedānta and yoga sutras. Mere language scholasticism is of very less help to revive and preserve such delicate knowledge, which has to be practiced. So the deterioration of Indian culture in fact started when śāstras, became just a subject for logical arguments and discussions. People have been busy on the other side narrating the stories of epics of Indian cultures, to establish morality in the corruption plagued world. Some are busy in bringing their interpretations of stories closer to the world of science and commerce, which apparently is rosy, inherently is not a wholesome effort to preserve śāstras. People out of curiosity take up the study of philosophy and religion at the fag end of their professional life or at the dawn of the retirement from their professional life, which either will remain at a moral level or a mere time pass activity. In our country morality and spirituality are two different concepts in itself though they are
interlinked. Morality is just about doing good keeping in mind the well-being of the universe. But spirituality is the emancipation of oneself from the cycle of birth and death. If such an idea of the liberation of one’s own self and the well-being of the universe if brought together, it can be a more appropriate effort and an apt contribution to the problem-ridden world.

The next segment who are using meditations as a stress buster or as a bread earning way by commercializing and institutionalizing the same have spoilt the real identity of upāsanās as they have equated the concept with a few breathing practices or adoption of some postures. Most of the practices evolved out of ancient scriptures today are only simple breathing practices, which are in no way upāsanās.

Upāsanās, if have to be rejuvenated and practiced, the truth of the vedas, have to be assimilated. A large number of people have to unearth the knowledge resources hidden in different libraries all over the globe. The Indian government has to be also more proactive in renovating our culture and supporting the causes taken for the welfare of the world by the indology fraternity.

If the above solution is from a nationalistic and societal perspective, from the individualistic perspective the knowledge about gods and goddesses have to be procured and once procured, an individual should start trying to connect to such deities.

Our brāhmin-s may continue to be people of sacrifice, penance and knowledge. Our kṣatriya soldiers may be brave domineering, efficient and terror to the enemy. Our society may continue to produce mulching cows, powerful bullocks, galloping horses, family loving housewives and young soldiers capable to destroy the adversaries. The clouds should burst when we need them. Our farms should produce ripe fruits. Our joys and pleasures may keep on increasing.272

272 अब्रह्मण वास्तनं ब्रह्मवर्षसी जातनामा राज्यं राजन्यं: शुरू दशयोऽतिविधी महारथो जायता दोरायं धेतुं: योद्धाद्वाराः सति: पुरुष्योः जिष्ठादेहाः: सभेन्यो युवायं जयमात्रमात्र वीरो जायता निकामेन निकामे न: पर्यथयः वर्षंतु फसिन्यो न औषधय: पर्यत्नसं योगायामो न: कल्याणम्॥ S.Y.V. 22-22)
For this the knowledge of gods and goddesses is essential. In the previous chapter, the *vedic* gods and goddesses, their form, their dwelling place, their number and other minute details were discussed in detail. But now let us see as to how the divinity is attainable and what is the correct way of understanding gods and goddesses like *durgā, rāma, allah* or *jesus.*

Man is basically an energy field, which is addressed by physicists as energy, psychologists as consciousness and philosophers as *ātma.* This energy is spread in the body as *prāṇa* and *prāṇa* is divided into five based on its functionality. *Prāṇa, apāna, vyāna, udāna* and *samāna.* *Prāṇa* is the air which we inhale and *apāna* is the one which pulls it down, whereas *udāna* again takes it upwards, after *samāna* has retained within it in sufficient to spread it throughout the body. The air spread throughout the body is called *vyāna.* These five *prāṇas,* when are defragmented or when it is together proportionately spread in all parts of the body, will warm the body and thereby awaken the *kuṇḍalini.* But, when these *prāṇas* are fragmented and are spread within the body and is found in patches, it causes disease or it is a sign on ill health. For Ex. When *apāna,* which is found below naval region, is not proportionately distributed throughout the naval and below area, it causes diseases in the naval and below areas. In the same way when *samāna,* which dwells in the centre part of the body is not spread proportionately in the middle part of the body, it causes lungs and other diseases related to the middle part of the body. Thus the goal of one human being is to bring together all the *prāṇas* of the body in one region and make it flow in one direction. When all the *prāṇas* are streamlined as told earlier the *kuṇḍalini* awakens and starts releasing man from all kinds of pain at the physical vital mental intellectual and spiritual levels. This state is attained by many *yogis* all over the globe by persistence of practice. They find back their energy through their practice and hence when we connect ourselves to such energy centres, the path of life journey becomes smooth and more progressive to the ordinary man. Hence temples which are called as energy fields have to be visited to connect ourselves to those powerful deities. This is the essence of human life and finally by connecting ourselves slowly to such energy fields, we should also turn into one energy field. At such a level the whole of human
mankind looks as one single force and other such fruits are begotten. The fruits of upāsanās are listed below from different texts.

यस्य देशसः मन्यते भूतान्यात्मानेवानुपालयति || सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ततो न विजुगुणसते // I.U. 6

यस्मिन्सर्वाःपण भूतान्यात्मेवामृत्तिजानतः || तत्र को मोहः के शोक एकत्वमनुपालयः // I.U. 7

Who sees all beings in his own self and the self in all beings, he does not shrink away from anything, i.e., does not get disgusted with anything. In whom, the knower, all beings have become the self, to him, who beholds unity, where is delusion, where is sorrow? The person who has established himself in the absolute self sees everything situated in himself, because he is the support and the possibility of all beings. This realisation comes to him through absolute renunciation which means the transcendence of all particular forms and diving into the general substance which enters into the very fibre of the particularities. Because of this knowledge of the oneness of all beings there is no reason for him to get disgusted with any form or to be attached to any form. He knows that he lives in all bodies and that it is his spirit that works the life of the different individuals. He is the cosmic life in which all individual lives are included. Because of his separation from the body, the senses and the mind, he has got a full knowledge of and a control over all these objective functions. He controls the whole universe, because he has no attachment to it. Knowledge and power are the results of supreme renunciation. The sage with elf-realisation experiences himself as the undifferentiated witness of all changes and modifications. He is the unchanging Being who underlies all beings. He neither loves nor hates anything. Special attitudes and relationships are developed towards objects only when they are believed to be other than the self. The difference-less soul does not allow of any such distinction within its undivided existence. When an object is considered to be as much real as the subject or at least to have some reality, the value of the subject is limited, whereby the state of absoluteness is denied. If the absolute is at all possible, duality can never be possible. Absolute experience is non-relational. This knowledge destroys all delusion and sorrow. Such objective experiences as grief and delusion
have no meaning in the state of absolute unity. Pleasure and pain, confusion and mistake, are all the results of ignorance and desire which are possible only in the case of an individual. The Absolute being can have no such individual experiences. The cause of misery, together with all its effects, is completely rooted out in the state of the absolute. This is the experience of the sage.

There are two things in this world, (one path pertaining to worldly prosperity and the other pertaining to spiritual prosperity) and people pursue either this or that. These two may be regarded as the path of the pleasant, and the path of the good. Most people choose the former, and not the good. The pleasant is pleasing, but passing, and ends in pain. It is different from the good. But while the good need not necessarily be pleasant, the pleasant is not good. The dull-witted person chooses the pleasant: he wants to pass the day somehow. He does not know where or how the good is. The dheera or hero who is endowed with viveka, the power of discrimination, chooses the shreyas or the ultimate good.

The knot of the heart is broken, all doubts are cleared and all actions perish when the greatest Supreme Being is beheld.
As rivers flowing into the ocean lose themselves in the ocean, casting off name and form, so the knower, freed from name and form, attains the divine being who is higher than the high. He who knows the supreme brahman becomes brahman itself. In his family none devoid of the knowledge of brahman is born. He crosses over sorrow, he crosses over sin. Freed from the knots of the heart he becomes immortal.

Though oneness in the deity is all about contemplation, the realness and genuineness or the fructification of the contemplation happens or is when the infatuation and attachment of the world goes away forever. It is only by attaining detachment that one is eligible for a pure and pristine love feel of the consciousness. Hence, the effort to slay and annihilate the three guṇas such as sattwa, rajas and tamas and go beyond avidyā is the only process through with the soul is realized is the contentions of all magnum-opus scriptures.