

The
Dhūpa Gandha Dīpa
Naivedya Upaniṣad

*“The Inner Meanings of the Offerings of Incense,
Sandal Paste, Lamp and Food”*

by Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara



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Introduction



The *Dhūpa Gandha Dīpa Naivedya Upaniṣad* (*dhūpagandhadīpanaivedyopaniṣad*) consists of four verses composed by one Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara, that explain the inner meanings of the offerings of incense, sandal paste, lamp, and food offering. We are only aware of this author and his hymn due to its being quoted by the great Śrīvidyācārya, Śivānanda Muni in his commentary on the *Nityāṣoḍaśikārṇava* called the *Rjuvimarsinī*. Commenting on Chapter 1, verse 183, which calls for the offering of incense, sandal paste etc., and food offering to the Goddess Tripurasundarī after worshipping the circuits of the Śrīcakra, Śivānanda Muni defines worship as "*pūjā viśvasya vedyasya cidbhūmiviśrāntiḥ*" meaning "Worship is the repose of all objects of perception in consciousness, which is their ground." He then clarifies that "etc." in the list of offerings in the verse refers to offering the lamp. This brings the list of offerings to be made to the Goddess up to exactly those described in Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara's hymn - incense, sandal paste, lamp, and food offering. This hymn, Śivānanda Muni says, explains the subtle inner meaning (*vāsanā*) of these offerings which should be borne in mind when performing the "worldly" (i.e. external) version of these same offerings.

This hymn, though only consisting of 4 verses, is extremely dense and deep in its meaning. Each offering of worship becomes a contemplation of the process of the non-dual recognition of consciousness that dissolves duality. Specifically, each verse speaks in its own way and with regard to the particular offering, of a process by which all objects of perception are realized as being one with the consciousness that perceives them, and that by making that offering to the deity, that consciousness is further recognized as one with the universal consciousness of Lord Śiva. It may come as a surprise to some for Śivānanda Muni to quote a hymn of offering to Lord Śiva when commenting on the worship of the Goddess Tripurasundarī, but this is the same mystery seen in the *Cidvilāsastava* of Amṛtānanda Yogin, where almost all verses refer to Parama Śiva, though it is a hymn on the inner meanings of the Śrīcakra Pūjā of the Goddess. Though this is a mystery that we hope will become more clear with the grace of the Guru, greater practice of worship, meditation, and study, for now, we offer this suggestion - in the recognition of the non-dual consciousness, Lord Śiva and Tripurasundarī are one, consciousness and the power by which consciousness recognizes itself. Every offering is made to Parama Śiva, the universal identity of the supreme consciousness. However the very act to which each verse refers, the process by which we recognize that we and every object of perception are also that universal non-dual consciousness, is the Goddess Tripurasundarī. The universal all encompassing identity and the process by which it recognizes itself. In this way, the process and contemplation described in each verse is itself an embodiment of the Goddess, and what it brings about is the recognition of Parama Śiva, with whom She is one.

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VERSE 1

देहप्रमातृताशान्तिर्येन सिद्ध्यति तं भजे ।

विश्वेन्धनं निजं धूपं ज्ञानपावकसम्भवम् ॥ १ ॥

dehapramāṭṛtāsāntiriyena siddhyati taṃ bhaje |

viśvendhanaṃ nijam dhūpaṃ jñānapāvakasambhavam || 1 ||

I praise the incense (*dhūpa*) [offered] to you, produced by the burning of the purifying fire of knowledge enkindled upon the entire universe which is its fuel. It brings about the cessation of the state of existing as the [limited] perceiver [identified with] the body.

Translator's Notes:

Here the incense is understood in the following way - Its fuel (i.e. what it burns upon) is the universe, in other words all objects of perception, everything we perceive to be other than the Self in ordinary perception. The flame which must be lit to produce the smoke of the incense from this fuel is the purifying fire of knowledge, in other words, the knowledge of non-duality. The fragrant smoke which arises from burning all the objects of perception with the purifying fire of non-duality is the offering to Lord Śiva, the Supreme Perceiver and All-Embracing Identity (*pūrṇābhantā*). Consciousness appears as both the objects of perception and the perceiver, and in the state of duality, this causes the perceiver to seem to be the limited self identified with the body instead of the universal consciousness which is Lord Śiva. The act of the fragrant smoke being offered and "smelled" by the deity, Lord Śiva, is the recognition of the reality that all the objects of perception appearing as the universe are actually also part of the same universal consciousness of the Supreme Perceiver. Just as the incense smoke enters the person smelling it and exists within them as the experience of savoring the fragrant smell, while the incense offered itself burns away outside and ceases to exist separately, the objects of perception lose their separateness from the perceiver as their reality as aspects of consciousness is recognized. The body that the limited perceiver identifies with is also composed of the principles which make of the universe. When the universe is seen as being one with the universal consciousness, the recognition that one's own Self is also that universal consciousness occurs. That is the offering of the incense (*dhūpa*) according to Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara.

VERSE 2

संविन्मार्गगतो योऽयं प्रयत्नस्त्वात्मसंश्रयः |
तमेव सम्श्रये गन्धमानन्दोदयकारणम् ॥ २ ॥

saṁvinmārgagato yo'yaṁ prayatnastvātmasaṁśrayaḥ |
tameva saṁśraye gandhamānandodayakāraṇam ॥ 2 ॥

I take refuge in that fragrant sandal paste (*gandha*) [which has been offered to you], it is the persevering effort of residing within the Self on the path of consciousness, which causes bliss to arise.

Translator's Notes:

Here the offering of fragrant sandal paste (*gandha*) is explained as follows - In order to produce the sandal paste which is offered to the deity one must with great effort grind the piece of sandal wood against the grind stone again and again in order to produce the fragrant paste. Likewise, in the path of consciousness (*saṁvit marga*), where one practices to recognize one's own self and everything as the one universal consciousness of Lord Śiva, one must again and again make an effort to recognize that everything that exists resides within the Self and is not different from it, and from this continuous effort arises bliss. Here, the universe composed of the objects of perception is the piece of sandal wood. The Self is like the grind stone. The continuous recognition that both are the one universal consciousness is the great effort made to grind the sandal wood on that grind stone. The bliss which arises from this recognition is the beautiful fragrance that arises when the sandal paste has been produced. This is the offering of sandal paste (*gandha*) which is made to the Lord Śiva, according to Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara.

VERSE 3

यस्मिन् सर्वमिदं भाति यः सर्वत्रावभासते ।
कल्पयामि प्रकाशं तं दीपं पूजाविधौ निजे ॥ ३ ॥

yasmin sarvamiḍaṃ bhāti yaḥ sarvatrāvabhāsate |
kalpayāmi prakāśaṃ taṃ dīpaṃ pūjāvidhau nije || 3 ||

I contemplate that the lamp (*dīpa*) [offered] in your worship, is the light [of consciousness] (*prakāśa*), in which all of this appears and which shines manifest everywhere.

Translator's Notes:

Here the offering of the lamp (*dīpa*) is explained in this way - a lamp provides a light which spreads out and fills an entire room or space, illuminating all of the objects within it. What one sees with the eyes is not the objects directly, but light itself shining forth from the lamp, which bounces off the objects and returns to one's eye in the shape, color etc. of the objects. Without the light, no objects would be perceivable even though present in the room, and what the eye sees is the light in the shape of the objects, rather than objects directly. Likewise, it is consciousness which is the light of the light. Without consciousness, even if someone were to shine a great light everywhere, the perception of any objects by the eye or any sense organ would be impossible. Just as the light is the precondition for the eye to see any object, consciousness is the precondition for any object to appear in perception, the difference here is that the lamp and light are separate from the eye which perceives them, but the illuminating rays of consciousness (*vimarśa*) are both produced from and perceived by the light of consciousness itself (*prakāśa*). So in this offering of the lamp (*dīpa*), the lamp is the light of consciousness (*prakāśa*). The light coming from the lamp and illuminating the room is the power of reflexive awareness (*vimarśa*) of consciousness (i.e. the power of consciousness to appear to itself as any object of perception). The room which is illuminated by the light is the universe consisting of all objects of perception expressed as all the ontological principles of reality (*tattva-s*). The light which shines manifest everywhere in the room taking the shape of all the objects of perception is again the power of reflexive awareness of that consciousness (*vimarśa*). The offering of the lamp to Lord Śiva, who is himself the Universal Consciousness which is the oneness of the self-luminous awareness of consciousness (*prakāśa*) and its reflexive awareness (*vimarśa*), is to recognize that everything that exists appears within consciousness, as a manifestation of consciousness, by means of the illumination of consciousness to the perceiver who is that same consciousness. Thus the offering of the lamp is explained by Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara to be the recognition that everything is the Universal Consciousness of Lord Śiva.

VERSE 4

विश्वं शिवादिभूम्यन्तं चमत्काररसाश्रयम् ।
महीयसे महाभोक्त्रे महेशाय निवेदये ॥ ४ ॥

**viśvaṃ śivādibhūmyantaṃ camatkārarasāśrayam ।
mahīyase mahābhoktre maheśāya nivedaye ॥ 4 ॥**

I offer everything beginning from the [principle (*tattva*) of] Śiva and ending at [the principle of] earth, furnished with the nectar of the astonishing wonder [of the recognition of the universal consciousness], as the food offering (*naivedya*) to he who is greater [than all of the principles], the Supreme Experiencer/Great Enjoyer, Maheśa, the Great Lord Śiva.

Translator's Notes:

Here the food offering (*naivedya*) is explained as follows - In sanskrit, the word *bhoga* means at once eating, enjoyment and experience/perception. So here the food offering is the entirety of what is experienced, all of the objects of perception, the entire universe, consisting of the 36 ontological principles (*tattva*-s) beginning from the highest *Śiva Tattva* and ending at the lowest principle of earth. This "food" (i.e. the objects of perception) is said to be residing in or furnished with a juice or nectar, which has the form of an experience of astonishing wonder (*camatkāra*), the term for the profound aesthetic and spiritual experience of awe at recognizing that everything which exists consists of the one Universal Consciousness appearing as everything and experiencing its own Self. This supreme food offering of the entire universe suffused with the nectar of non-dual realization, is offered to the one who is greater than it, Lord Śiva, who is the very ground and essence by which the universe exists. Just as the food is eaten and becomes one with the eater who relishes its taste, so when the non-dual recognition arises, one sees that all objects of perception are one with the awareness that experiences them. Maheśa, the Great Lord Śiva, is thus the great eater of this food offering, in other words, the supreme universal perceiver, which experiences all things as its own Self. Thus according to Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara, to make the food offering to Lord Śiva, himself the all-embracing identity and universal perceiver, is to recognize with great wonder and aesthetic delight (*camatkāra*) that this entire existence, from the principle of Śiva down to the principle of earth, is one with the very consciousness that experiences it, and that same consciousness is no different from the universal consciousness itself, Lord Śiva.

इति भट्टगङ्गाधरस्तोत्रे धूपगन्धदीपनैवेद्योपनिषत्
iti bhaṭṭagaṅgādharaṣṭotre dhūpagandhadīpanaivedyopaniṣat

Thus concludes the teachings on the inner meanings (*upaniṣad*) of the offerings of incense, sandal paste, lamp and food offering, in the Hymn [composed by] Bhaṭṭa Gaṅgādhara.

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