

# Śrī Śaṅkarācārya's Kāśī Pañcakam

With the commentary Tatva Prakāśikā

by

Svāmi Tattvavidānanda Sarasvati

Verse 4

काश्यां हि काशते काशी काशी सर्वप्रकाशिका ।  
सा काशी विदिता येन तेन प्राप्ता हि काशिका ॥  
kāśyām hi kāśate kāśī kāśī sarvaprakāśikā ।  
sā kāśī viditā yena tena prāptā hi kāśikā ॥

काश्यां kāśyām – in Kāśī हि hi – indeed काशी kāśī – Kasi काशते kāśate – shines,  
काशी kāśī - Kāśī, सर्वप्रकाशिका sarvaprakāśikā – illuminates all, सा sā – that, काशी  
Kāśī, येन yena – by whomsoever, विदिता viditā – realized, तेन tena – by him, हि  
hi - indeed, काशिका kāśikā – Kāśī, प्राप्ता prāptā – gained.

The city of Kāśī is indeed shining in the Awareness that is Atman. That  
Kāśī illuminates all. Whosoever realizes that Kāśī indeed gains Kāśī.

Kāśī is the light of lights, the Awareness that is Atman. In the waking state, the  
eyesight is light to shapes and colors and the ears are light to sounds. Mind is the  
light of all cognitions. But all these lights are illuminated by one light, the light of  
Awareness. In the dream state too, the light of Awareness illuminates the mind and  
all of its projections. In the sleep state, all lights are gone – no sun, no moon, no  
eyesight, no ears, no mind and yet, the absence of all is lighted up by the light of  
Awareness. This light of Awareness is Śiva and the body-mind is the city of Kāśī.

The ājñācakra located at the center of the eyebrows, where we apply kuṅkuma, is  
the shrine of Lord Śiva. In modern anatomy, it is the locale of the pituitary gland.  
It is interesting to note that the ājñācakra is described as a lotus with two petals  
and the pituitary has two lobes. The power center is represented as a lotus in the  
language of the scriptures. As one focuses the mind in the ājñācakra and merges in  
the awareness, one becomes Śiva. Śivo'ham, Śivo'ham, I am Śiva, I am Śiva.

The ājñācakra, the center of awareness, is considered to be the third eye of Lord Śiva. The sight of the two eyes is transient and fickle, and is not there when the eyes are closed, the mind is preoccupied, or in sleep. On the other hand, the third eye, the eye of awareness is nitya, timeless., It shines in all the three states. It is like the sun, which has no day or night. One who knows this Kāśī gains It. One has to meditate by focussing the mind in the center of the eyebrows.

This verse is a meditation verse and we will look into this meditation in detail:

### **Meditation 1:**

Sit comfortably in a stable position. Keep the neck, the back and the head in a straight line. Close the eyes half way and sport a smile on the lips. This inner smile symbolizes samatva, equanimity, towards the opposites of life. Squeeze the eyes once and watch the half closed eyes. Now, try to watch the mind that watches the eyes. Slowly, go behind the mind and watch it. If a thought arises, let it be; don't identify with it, don't judge or evaluate it. If it departs, let it go. Even as you attempt to watch the mind, it becomes quiet. Gradually, there is no mind to watch and you become the watchfulness itself. There is inner silence.

### **Meditation 2:**

Then there is the śāmbhavamudra antarlakṣyam bahirdṛṣṭirnimeṣavarjitā sā mudrā sām̐bhavi, focus is within while the eyes look out without blinking. Open the eyes and blink twice or thrice. Stop blinking and look ahead. Try not to see what is ahead. Focus the attention on the inner. Don't blink as long as you can. You reach a state of awareness, in which there is no seer-seen division. There is only the pure awareness of the being. This divisionless watchfulness is Kāśī. This practice builds the inner awareness and silence. We have to discover the inner silence. If we let the mind chatter non-stop all day, it makes us go crazy. The inner silence is Śiva, the immortal happiness. That is our true nature and we have to discover it.

### **Meditation 3:**

Sit erect keeping the hands in the lap. Close the eyes softly half way. Sport a smile on the lips. Make this smile intrinsic to you. Don't lose it at any time. Watch the eyes. The eyes are half closed. A little movement of the eyes is not uncommon, since the eyesight is known to be cala, unsteady. Keep the pupils in the center. Focus the sight of both the eyes in the center of the eyebrows. As you watch the center of

the eyebrows with the closed eyes, gradually the division between the watcher and the watched resolves in watchfulness. It is the awareness, of nothing in particular. It is Awareness pure, undifferentiated, and focussed on itself. That is the Kāśī. You are not the ego, not the doer, not the mind, and not the body. You are that light of awareness, you are Kāśī. And you are Śiva.

Atman is the changeless, spaceless and timeless Awareness. It is undivided and indivisible. It is not self-consciousness; It is impersonal. It is sat-cit, the awareness of the being. It is fullness in the sense that there is no sense of insufficiency in it. It illuminates the mind and the sense organs and enlivens the body. Be bold and say, 'I am Śiva'. 'Cidānanda rūpaḥ śivo'ham śivo'ham. I am of the nature of Awareness and I am Śiva, the auspicious'.

At the end of meditation, sit at ease for a while keeping the eyes closed and then slowly open the eyes. Each of these meditations can be done for about 15 minutes and practised at least for 41 days. As the mind moves, it creates the content of the waking consciousness. The content is unreal, but appears real due to ignorance. As long as we are interested and attached to the content, we will not be able to discover that it is unreal. Once we discover the inner silence through dispassion towards all contents of the waking consciousness, we need not do anything about that content. It will come and go. It is unreal and there is nothing to be done about it. It will go through its motions as per its own nature. Your home is the inner awareness, not the unreal content, and this is Self-knowledge. And you will know that you are Śiva. This is the real pilgrimage of Kāśī.

