

The course on ***Kaivalya-upaniṣad*** comprises of ten lessons. A detailed description of the topics covered in each lesson is provided below.

Lesson 1: Introduction and Śānti-mantra

- Understanding of prakaraṇa- and śāstra-granthas
 - Examples of prakaraṇa-granthas and the topics they deal with
 - Prasthāna-traya: Upaniṣad, *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Brahmasūtra*
 - Major and minor Upaniṣads
 - Daśopaniṣad
- Śānti-mantra
 - Reasons for chanting the śānti-mantra
 - How we must engage our senses only for the auspicious
 - Invocations to various deities

Lesson 2: Gurūpasadana, Śraddhā, Bhakti and Dhyāna [Mantras 1–2]

- How does the disciple Āśvalāyana reach his Guru?
 - Preparation of a student to receive this great knowledge
 - Six wealths of Bhagavān
- Understanding of the meaning of the term ‘Brahmavidyā’
 - Why does Āśvalāyana want to learn Brahmavidyā?
- Two aspects of ignorance
 - How one gives up all pāpa at once
- Anubandha-catuṣṭaya
- Three means to comprehend the teachings of the Guru – śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna
 - Correlation of śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna with śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana
 - Union of śraddhā, bhakti and dhyāna in the seeker

Lesson 3: Tyāga [Mantra 3]

- Karma, prajā and dhana
 - These are not the essentials for attaining Brahmavidyā
 - Śrauta- and smārta-karmas
 - Manuṣya- and daiva-vitta

- Two categories of higher lokas
- Tyāga
 - The meaning of amṛtattva
 - How amṛtatva can be attained by tyāga alone?
 - Understanding who is a yati
- Location of the supreme Reality in the cave of one's heart

Lesson 4: Jīvanmukti and Brahmaloḥa-prāpti [Mantra 4]

- Efforts the sage must put for Liberation
- The wisdom of Vedānta
 - The method of attaining Aparokṣa-jñāna
- How does the mind become pure?
 - The meaning of sannyāsa
 - Understanding of sannyāsa-yoga
- How does the sage become a Jīvanmukta?
 - What happens if the sage does not get Jīvanmukti despite the best of efforts?
 - Who can attain Brahmaloḥa?
 - Understanding of krama-mukti
- Types of pralaya
 - Calculation of the lifetime of Creator Brahmā in terms of human years

Lesson 5: Preparation for Upāsana and Nirguṇa-upāsana [Mantras 5–6]

- External preparation for upāsana
 - Place
 - Time
 - Posture
- Internal preparation
 - Withdrawal of mind and senses
- Method of purifying the heart after initial preparation
- Understanding of nirguṇa-upāsana
 - Nirguṇa-upāsana keeping Lord Śiva in the heart

Lesson 6: Saguṇa- and nirguṇa-upāsanās [Mantra 7]

- Bheda- and abheda-bhāvanā
- Sopādhika- and nirūpādhika-upāsanā
- Difference between upāsanā and dhyāna
- Puruṣa- and vastu-tantra
- Visualisation of Lord Śiva in saguṇa-upāsanā
- Progression from saguṇa to nirguṇa to dhyāna
- Citta-śuddhi and citta-ekāgratā
- Upāsanā and dhyāna with respect to individuality

Lesson 7: Sarvātmabhāva and Om [Mantras 8–11]

- Experience of a person who attains oneness with the Lord
 - How the Jñānin is no different from Brahmā, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Indra, māyā and all
 - Kṣara and akṣara
- The Jñānin in all periods of time
- Understanding reaching beyond death
 - How saṁsāra is avidyā-kārya
 - Correlation of mṛtyu, saṁsāra and avidyā
- Jñānin's perception of own Self in all beings and all beings in own Self
- The creation of fire by churning for the Vedic rituals as a metaphor to churning of mind and intellect by manana and nididhyāsana to gain knowledge
 - Severing the bondage of 'I' and 'my'
- Why is Om called 'praṇava'?
 - Understanding of the word 'Om'

Lesson 8: Consciousness as Viśva, Taijasa and Prājña [Mantras 12–14]

- How do aham and mama tie a knot of bondage since Self is untouched and unconnected Consciousness?
- Connection of Self with the body as 'I'
 - Māyā projecting Self as the individual
- Identification of Self with the gross body using the senses in waking state
- The individual creating one's private world in the dream state

- The individual attaining the bliss of ignorance
 - Laya in deep sleep
- Who is jīva?
 - Jīva is the Paramānanda despite being deluded by māyā

Lesson 9: Mahāvākya, Sākṣin and Brahman [Mantras 15–19]

- Jīva the material cause of everything
- The supreme Brahman is the Self in all
- Mahāvākya – That is you alone; and you alone are That
- How are the three states ‘prapañca’?
- Liberation from ‘I’ and ‘my’ by recognising the knowledge of Mahāvākya
- How do we recognise sākṣin?
 - Tripuṭi or triad
 - How is sākṣin ‘dṛk’ and distinct from tripuṭi
- All the three states in me
- I am the non-dual Brahman

Lesson 10: Self-realisation and Phalaśruti [Mantras 20–24 and Phalaśruti 1–2]

- How am I the manifold universe and of the nature of Śiva?
- How am I ever Consciousness?
- How does the entire Vedas reveal me, and how am I the knower of the Vedas?
- How there are neither puṇya and pāpa nor birth and death for me?
- Apavāda – in the absence of kāraṇa for the upādhis
- Understanding the cave of the heart
- Paramātman – one’s essential nature
- Phalaśruti
 - Reciting the Śatarudrīya
- Final purpose/goal of Knowledge