



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Introduction to Upanishads

Volume 3

Continuing the General Introduction to Upanishads, today is our topic on शान्ति पाठ्स - Peace invocations. Upanishadic Teachings are only for those who seek That Knowledge. Consequently, every Upanishad teaching is a student-teacher dialog, explicitly or implicitly. Before the teaching begins, and also after the teaching for the day ends, the student or the students, and the teacher together chant a शान्ति पाठ - Peace Invocation.

The purpose of the शान्ति पाठ is to get the persons involved ready, both in terms of attitude and in terms of physical capabilities, for the pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Upanishadic Knowledge and its continued retention in one's memory, so that, That knowledge and its strength, can spring forth, spontaneously, to one's rescue, when one is weak, or is about to be overpowered by internal or external negative forces of various kinds.

Every Peace Invocation naturally starts with chanting ओं शब्द - the sound OM, recognizing that

ओं is शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्

ब्रह्मज्ञानं is ब्रह्मलक्षणं

उपनिषत् is प्रमाण for ब्रह्मज्ञानं

- The sound OM is direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन्

- The sound OM is परमेश्वर itself

- The sound OM is the Place where Upanishad Knowledge is available - to reach, to realize, and to enjoy, Total Fulfillment in life

The Peace Invocation that follows the sound OM is addressed to That ओं - शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्, to That परमेश्वर manifested in Sound OM. The Invocation Itself is a Form of Prayer, seeking the Grace of परमेश्वर, to bless the persons involved, both the students and the teacher, with the appropriate frame of body-mind-intellect vehicle, and its internal and external surroundings for the fruitful pursuit of Upanishad knowledge, both with respect to teaching and with respect to listening and understanding.

Each Upanishad has its own शान्ति पाठ. Since there are many Upanishads, there are many शान्ति पाठ्स. The वेद मन्दिर - the Temple of Vedic Knowledge that we have at this



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Temple, specifically calls attention to four शान्ति पाठ्स, one taken from each Veda. We recite and hear, at this Temple all these four शान्ति पाठ्स every week at this time.

By so doing, we do नमस्कार् to all the four Vedas. We re-establish our contacts with our Enlightened Forefathers and we recognize our unbroken identity with परमेश्वर Itself, which is our sacred Heritage.

Since we are in this वेद मन्दिर- Temple of Vedic Knowledge, it is naturally important for us to know what exactly these four शान्ति पाठ्स say, so that we can better appreciate their significance, to our continuing endeavor towards Total Fulfillment in our daily life. Therefore we will now see and try to understand, each of these four शान्ति पाठ्स in the order in which they are presented in our वेद मन्दिर - Temple of Vedic Knowledge.

The first शान्ति पाठ is from Rig Veda

ओं वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता ।
मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
आचिराची-र्म एधि ।
वेदस्य म आणीस्थः ।
श्रुतं मे, मा प्रहासीः ।
अनेन अधीतेन, अहोरात्रान् सन्दधामि ।
ऋतं वदिष्यामि । सत्यं वदिष्यामि ।
तन्मामवतु । तद्वक्तारमवतु ।
अवतु मां । अवतु वक्तारं, अवतु वक्तारं ॥
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

This is a prayer addressed to ओं-कार शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्
ब्रह्मन् - परमेश्वर manifested in the sound ओं -

Therefore, ओं - O! Lord, वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

वाक् means word or speech. मनः means mind. प्रतिष्ठितं means "to get firmly established" or "rooted". Therefore वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता means मे वाक्, मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता



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- May my speech be rooted in my mind.
- May my words express my thoughts faithfully.
- Let there be complete identity between what I speak and what I think; and
- Let my speech be fully based on understanding.

Again, since the word "speech" is only a उपलक्षण- an illustration for all actions, and likewise, the word "mind" is only an illustration for all faculties of the mind including चित्तेक बुद्धि - one's faculty of discrimination and judgment, वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता also means:

- May my actions be rooted in my बुद्धि;
- May my actions represent my faculty of judgment faithfully;
- Let there be complete accord between what I do, and what I think I must do; and
- Let my actions be fully based on my considered judgment.

That is the meaning of the first line वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता.

Similarly मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितं means:

मे मनः, मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितं भवतु

May my mind be rooted in my speech, which means,

- May my mind express itself clearly in my words;
- Let there be complete identity between what I think, and what I say;
- Let my understanding be reflected in my speech.

Again, since the words "speech" and "mind" represent all actions and all faculties of the mind respectively, मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितं also means

- May my mind be rooted in all my actions - which means,
- May I be able to concentrate my mind in whatever I do;
- May my mind be ever clear in all my expressions
- Let there be complete identity between what I think and what I do; and
- Let my faculty of judgment reflect itself in all my actions

In other words, let there be straightforwardness, proper alignment, clarity and focus, in all my thoughts words and actions.

That is the overall meaning of वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितं ॥



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आचिराची-र्म-एधि

आचिः, आचीः म एधि

Addressing ब्रह्मन् as आचिः, The ब्रह्मन् which is self-shining and self-revealing, seeking the Grace of That ब्रह्मन् - the prayer says: एधि - may you remain, आचीः-self revealed म means मे - to me.

आचिः O! ब्रह्मन्, आचीः मे एधि - may you remain self revealed to me - which means "O! ब्रह्मन्, reveal Thyself to me. As a result of my Upanishadic studies, may I become worthy of ब्रह्मज्ञानं and may I gain That ब्रह्मज्ञानं by Thy Grace."

वेदस्य म आणीस्थः

स्थ is the dual form of the verb "to be" in the present tense. Therefore स्थ means "May the two be". The two here are मनस् and वाक्, the mind and speech, which are the same as Thought and Action. Again, म stands for मे = to me. Therefore मे स्थः means May my thought and action be; *let them be what?*

आणी स्थः Let them be आणी to me; आणी are the two lynch pins in the axle of a cart outside of the wheels, preventing the wheels from slipping off the axle. Figuratively the wheels represent the जीव and the axle the ब्रह्मन्. The जीव and ब्रह्मन् are held together by मनस् and वाक् - thought and action. Therefore,

वेदस्य म आणीस्थः May my thought and action serve as two lynch pins, preventing me from slipping off the TRUTH revealed by the Vedas, which means, may my thought and actions enable me to grasp the TRUTH revealed by the Vedas - declared in the Vedas and the Upanishads.

श्रुतं मे, मा प्रहासी :

श्रुतं -The श्रुति knowledge - the Upanishadic Knowledge that I have gained from the Vedas, मे, मा प्रहासीः - let it never forsake me; let it never abandon me; let it never slip from my memory



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श्रुतं मे, मा प्रहास्यीः - Let not my memory fail me at any time, with respect to the Upanishadic knowledge.

अनेन अधीतेन, अहोरात्रान् सन्दधामि

अनेन अधीतेन - Through this Upanishadic study,

अहोरात्रान् - day and night, at all times,

सन्दधामि- let me meditate and contemplate on ब्रह्मन् - let me worship ब्रह्मन्; let me be protected by ब्रह्मन्

अनेन अधीतेन, अहोरात्रान् सन्दधामि - Let my daily life be guided by this Upanishad study at all times; let me be protected by ब्रह्मविद्या - pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं at all times (let me recognize that ब्रह्मविद्या is my Real Source of Strength - every other strength is transient.)

ऋतं वदिष्यामि - Proper conduct in daily life is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् to me - direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् to me;

सत्यं वदिष्यामि - Being truthful in thought, word and deed, at all times is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् to me;

तत् मां अचतु - May that ब्रह्मन् - proper conduct and being Truthful in daily life - may that ब्रह्मन् protect me;

तत् वक्तारं अचतु - May That ब्रह्मन् protect The Teacher;

अचतु मां - May that ब्रह्मन् protect me - repetition to express sincerity of Prayer;

अचतु वक्तारं, अचतु वक्तारं : May that ब्रह्मन् - Proper conduct and Being truthful at all times -May that ब्रह्मन् protect the Teacher- May that ब्रह्मन् protect the Teacher, again repetition as expression of sincerity of prayer.

Finally औं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः meaning

औं शान्तिः means औं itself is शान्तिः - PEACE.

The sound औं itself is Invocation of Peace from within.

The Nature of That औं शान्तिः is That which is

सत् स्वरूपं, - Eternal,

चित् स्वरूपं, ज्ञान स्वरूपं - Pure Consciousness - Pure Knowledge and



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आनन्द स्वरूपं- Happiness in Full

पूर्ण आनन्दं - Total Fulfillment in life

All the Three in ONE. Such is the Glory of ओं - शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् .

Again नमस्कार् to ओं ब्रह्मान् - ओं परमेश्वर - ओं शान्ति

Thus ends the शान्ति पाठ् Peace Invocation from Rig Veda

नमस्कार् to Rig Veda. The concluding expression ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः is the same for all शान्ति पाठ्स - Peace Invocations from all the Vedas and all the Upanishads and indeed, for all forms of spiritual pursuits.

नमस्कार् to ओं शान्ति - That सत्-चित्-आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्. That is the meaning of ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

The second शान्ति पाठ् in our temple of vedic knowledge is from Yajur Veda, and this शान्ति पाठ् is a familiar one for all of us.

ओं पूर्णमदः, पूर्णमिदं, पूर्णात् पूर्णं उदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य, पूर्णमादाय, पूर्णं एवावशिष्यते ॥

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

This peace Invocation is an extraordinary one. It is not only a preview of the Upanishad that follows, It is the essential message of all the Upanishads, indicating the ONENESS, the TOTALITY and the IMMORTALITY of all Existence. For this reason, this शान्ति पाठ् is the most popular one, in all our scriptures, and it is appropriate for invoking divinity in anything, by anybody, at any time at any place.

This शान्ति पाठ् is an Upanishad in Itself. It has two parts. The first party is ज्ञेयं - knowledge to be understood and realized. The second part is मननं - a mode of reflection to help the realization of that knowledge.



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As usual, the शान्ति पाठ् starts with ओं, deliberately orienting one's mind and बुद्धि, and indeed, all of one's organs of perception and action, towards ब्रह्मन् परमेश्वर in the form of sound OM, then follows the शान्ति पाठ्.

पूर्ण अदः, पूर्ण इदं, पूर्णात् पूर्ण उदच्यते - that is the knowledge to be understood and realized; then,

पूर्णस्य, पूर्णमादाय, पूर्ण एवावशिष्यते - that is for मननं- reflection,

Finally as usual again ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः - that is simply a prayer for Knowledge and Peace.

Let us now try to understand the उपनिषत् as it is. Through the Word-Sound OM, we bring our wandering mind to attention, and direct it towards अदः - That, meaning That which is manifested by the Sound OM - namely ब्रह्मन् - शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्.

About That ब्रह्मन्, the Upanishad says:

पूर्ण अदः : - The very Nature of That ब्रह्मन् is पूर्ण- Total Fullness - all inclusiveness - There is nothing lacking in It, there is nothing outside of It.

Then what about इदं- This? "This" means, this entire creation, and every individual thing in this creation. About "this" इदं, this creation, the Upanishad says:

पूर्ण इदं: - इदं is also पूर्ण. This entire creation and everything in this creation is also पूर्ण - Total Fullness - the ब्रह्मन्. That means Total Fullness - all-inclusiveness - is the very Nature of ब्रह्मन्, and the true nature of this creation, and everything in this creation is also ब्रह्मन्.

The opening line of ईशावास्य उपनिषत् that follows this शान्ति पाठ् namely, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् is exactly the meaning of पूर्ण अदः पूर्ण इदं. Again, अदः means "That" , which means something remote from me in time, place or understanding - something that is distant from me for some reason.

On the other hand इदं - "This" means something which is immediately available for me, for perception and objectification, something which can be seen, known or is knowable by me as an object, which means this entire creation and all objects in this creation are covered by the word इदं.



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The relationship between अदः and इदं - That and This, is only one of distance or remoteness. In terms of knowledge, the distance is only ignorance. Because of my ignorance, there is a distance for me between अदः The ब्रह्मन् and इदं the जगत् - the creation. When this ignorance is removed, the distance disappears and the identity of ब्रह्मन् and जगत् reveals itself as one and the same Fullness. That is the meaning of पूर्ण अदः पूर्ण इदं.

Again, if all existence can be grouped under the two words अदः and इदं and if इदं includes everything I can objectify as "this", the only thing that is excluded from the word इदं is the objectifier, namely myself, the subject "I". Therefore अदः must mean "I".

The Upanishad says, पूर्ण अदः पूर्ण इदं. I am ब्रह्मन्. Everything in this creation is ब्रह्मन्. Therefore I am everything in this creation and I am Fullness Itself. That is the meaning of पूर्ण अदः, पूर्ण इदं.

Again, from my point of view, you are different from me. From your point of view I am different from you. But, from the point of view of ब्रह्मन्, I am ब्रह्मन् and you are ब्रह्मन्. That means that you and I are identical. In spite of all apparent differences, you and I are, in fact, ONE and inseparable BEING. That is the meaning of पूर्ण अदः पूर्ण इदं.

Again, if "That" is पूर्ण and "This" is पूर्ण, then why not simply say "Everything is पूर्ण". - Yes, the Upanishad says that also. सर्वं वै पूर्णं स्यात् - everything is indeed ब्रह्मन्. That is the पूर्णाहूति मन्त्र in all our havans. But that मन्त्र is at the end, not at the beginning.

The Upanishad recognizes the difficulties of the beginner. In terms of perception, every ordinary person feels that "I" the subject is different from the object one objectifies. The Upanishad educates the person. Perception of difference should not lead to conclusion of difference. If you enquire properly, you will find that the subject-object difference vanishes, leaving only the पूर्ण - The ONE Fullness - The ONE ब्रह्मन् -so says the Upanishad.

Further, the Upanishad continues:

पूर्णात् पूर्ण उदच्यते -From Fullness arises Fullness.



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अदः पूर्णात्, इदं पूर्णं उदच्यते - From That पूर्ण - the ब्रह्मन् arises This पूर्ण, the जगत् - The Universe - this creation. The entire creation arises from ब्रह्मन् just as cloth arises from cotton and chain arises from gold, etc. How this happens we will see later. So much about the Knowledge part of the Upanishad.

The next line is the मननं part. It says: पूर्णस्य, पूर्णमादाय, पूर्णं एवावशिष्यते

आदाय means to add or subtract. Adding पूर्ण to पूर्ण or subtracting पूर्ण from पूर्ण, what is left is also पूर्ण. That is the literal meaning of the second line.

The above statement is only for मननं - reflection. One must realize that there can be no two पूर्ण-s. पूर्ण is Fullness and It is ONE and all-inclusive. That means there is nothing left out of पूर्ण, to add to or subtract from पूर्ण. There is none left out of पूर्ण to do the job of adding or subtracting, Therefore no addition or subtraction from पूर्ण is possible. Then what does the statement mean? It means:

इदं पूर्ण is this limitless universe of forms and names only. अदः पूर्ण is the limitless ब्रह्मन्, formless and nameless, because of its all-inclusiveness. If you add or remove forms and names in this universe, what remains is still पूर्ण, the limitless ब्रह्मन्. Just as, if you add, remove or change the form and name of a gold chain, what remains is still gold.

ब्रह्मन् undergoes no change whatsoever. All changes in this creation are only transient appearances in Forms and names. This entire creation is one with ब्रह्मन् - is inseparable from ब्रह्मन् - is ब्रह्मन् Itself. That is the knowledge to be understood and realized.

Indicating That knowledge, the शान्ति पाठ concludes in the usual manner:

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

नमस्कार् to Yajur Veda

We will see the other two शान्ति पाठ-s next time.