



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Introduction to Upanishads

Volume 6

Let us recall briefly the वेद उपदेश मन्त्रs on The Basic Teachings of Vedic Education which we saw last time.

वेद मन्त्राचार्योऽन्तेवासिन मनु शास्ति ।

Having taught the कर्म काण्ड - the pre-Upanishadic part of the Vedas, the Teacher gives the following advice to the departing students in a commanding voice, in the very words of the Vedas.

सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । - Be truthful in thought, word and deed at all times. Follow धर्म at all times. Do what is right and necessary in accordance with the teachings of our srutis and smritis

स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः - Never be indifferent or negligent with respect to the regular study and constant practice of our Scriptural Teachings

आचार्याय प्रियं धनं आहृत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः - Give the Teacher the दक्षिण due to him, as much as you can, of your own free will as an expression of your gratitude to him. Then seek his blessings, marry according to Sanata Dharma, and live a full life so that your children and grandchildren may sustain सत्यं and धर्म in society through Vedic knowledge and traditions transmitted from generation to generation.

Further, even after marriage

सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यं । धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यं - Let there never be any negligence, disregard or indifference with respect to सत्यं - being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times and also doing your duties totally in accordance with धर्म at all times. Further,

कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यं भृत्यै न प्रमदितव्यं - Let there never be negligence, disregard or indifference in your duties with respect to the needs and welfare of each member of your family and also with respect to मङ्गल कर्मs and अर्थ कर्मs - actions to be done on auspicious occasions, and also actions to be done with respect to the maintenance of the health and wealth of your family.



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स्वाध्याय प्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यं - Even while you are busy doing your daily duties, never neglect स्वाध्याय and प्रवचन studying the scriptures and practicing the Scriptural Teachings.

देव पितृ कार्याभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यं - Never neglect or be indifferent to देव कार्यs and पितृ कार्यs - duties relating to ईश्वर उपासन such as Temple duties, and duties related to departed ancestors, such as family traditions. *They are your roots. Never cut your own roots and never let others cut your own roots.*

मातृ देवो भव । पितृ देवो भव । आचार्य देवो भव । अतिथि देवो भव । - Cultivate the most divine respect to your mother, your father, your teacher and your guest - known or unknown. That is the first step in realizing सत्यं - The Truth of all Truths - in gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं, in living a life of Wisdom.

यान्यनवध्यानि कर्माणि । तानि सेवितव्यानि । नो इतराणि ।

Do only those कर्मs which are irreproachable, which are beyond question. Never do any other kind of कर्मs

An improper action is improper no matter who does it, even if that person is a learned person or a well respected person.

Follow respected people only with respect to their respected actions, not with respect to their shortcomings.

यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि । तानि त्वयो पास्यानि । नो इतराणि ।

कर्मs which are taught and practiced by us Teachers, as Teachers, in accordance with the Scriptural Teachings, only those कर्मs should be followed and practiced by you, all the time reflecting on their true significance as a rule of right conduct in life, not any other actions of the Teachers. Follow the Teacher only with respect to his teachings. Do not follow the teacher with respect to his personal shortcomings.

Thus far we saw last time in detail. Now let us continue. The Teacher says:

ये के चास्मच्छेया* सो ब्राह्मणाः । तेषां त्वयाऽसनेन प्रश्चसितव्ययं - The Upanishad is now referring to Brahmanas in the Vedic society.



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ब्राह्मणाः - the ब्राह्मणःs ये के च - whoever they are, whether they are born of ब्राह्मण parents or not, let us understand this properly. While the incidence of birth is certainly a help, it is never a necessary or sufficient qualification to make one a ब्राह्मण. A ब्राह्मण is a ब्राह्मण only by virtue of one's गुण - cultivated Enlightened disposition. A ब्राह्मण has preponderance of सत्य गुण and he is totally committed to the pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं and service to society in terms of ब्रह्मविद्या the pursuit of मोक्ष - Total Fulfillment in Life. Such ब्राह्मणःs whoever they are

अस्मात् श्रेयाँ सः -They are even superior to us Teachers, because such ब्राह्मणःs are श्रेयाँ सः. They not only have the wisdom of ब्रह्मज्ञानं , they are the very embodiments of ब्रह्मज्ञानं - the vedic Knowledge in its entirety. When such ब्राह्मणः come to you

त्वया आसनेन तेषां प्रश्चसितव्यं -they should be received and treated by you with the highest respect. How?

आसनेन - by offering seat, and

तेषां प्रश्चसितव्यं - by attending to their immediate needs. Probably such a ब्राह्मण has come to see you under difficult circumstances, walking over a long distance in the hot sun and he is probably tired, or he has just come to see you under his own Divine Inspiration. In any case, give him a seat, offer him a glass of water, etc. and attend to his immediate needs; and also,

प्रश्चसितव्यं also means - Listen to him attentively. There is nothing to discuss. Just listen to him attentively. Why? Because, what for would a ब्राह्मण come to you? A ब्राह्मण, by his very nature, is a fulfilled person. He has nothing to seek for himself. At all times, his thought word and deed are totally and naturally directed towards the welfare of the entire society,

A ब्राह्मण comes to you only in the discharge of his natural duties to the society, as ordained by परमेश्वर. His कर्मs are all ईश्वर कर्मs, and what are they?

ज्ञानं विज्ञानं आस्तिक्यं ब्रह्म कर्म स्वभावजं - so says Sri Krishna. To spread the wisdom of the Vedas, to uplift the moral and the spiritual fiber of the society as a whole, to uphold one's faith in God, to uphold one's faith in oneself, and to help you to uplift yourself, by yourself. That is indeed the natural function of a ब्राह्मण in the Vedic society.



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When such a ब्राह्मण comes to see you, certainly he seeks nothing for himself. Probably he has come to see you to seek some help from you, by virtue of your station in life for the welfare of the entire society, in which case, what do you do? Or, alternately, the ब्राह्मण has not come to you to ask for anything. He has come to see you for reasons unknown to you. Because he in fact did not ask for anything; even without your asking, he just imparted some Vedic knowledge to you and then went away.

After he is gone, you realize what the ब्राह्मण did. The only wealth the ब्राह्मण has is his Vedic knowledge; and that wealth he shared with you, seeking nothing in return. By such sharing, the ब्राह्मण did not become poorer either. You were ready for that knowledge, therefore by listening to him attentively, you were certainly inspired - inspired to greatness in action - you being a man of action.

There is just now, in front of you, a worthy cause, which needs the help of your own wealth. By God's grace you can help. Then what do you do. The Vedic command is:

श्रद्धया देयं । अश्रद्धया अदेयं । श्रिया देयं । ह्रिया देयं । भिया देयं । संविदा देयं ।

श्रद्धया देयं - देयं means दातव्यं - You must give your wealth, as much as you can for the worthy cause, as an expression of your gratitude to Lord Almighty, for whatever you are, as you are. That expression of your gratitude itself will uplift you. That is the overriding purpose of all wealth, to give it away for a worthy cause, for the welfare of the entire society.

श्रद्धया देयं - It is not enough that you just give. You must give with श्रद्धा - Faith. Faith in one's own self. Faith in the infinite power of Truth and Goodness. Faith in the ultimate meaningfulness of life. Faith in the impelling force behind one's civic virtues and social grace, which we call culture. Such faith is the spontaneous force behind one's search for truth in oneself. That is indeed आस्तिक्य बुद्धि - Faith in God. It is with such Faith that one should give.

अश्रद्धया अदेयं - If you do not have that kind of faith, DO NOT GIVE - because, you still have a lot to grow up. You must first develop श्रद्धा - faith in God, before you can even qualify for giving, in a spiritual sense. Giving without श्रद्धा can only promote hypocrisy.

श्रिया देयं - श्री means all forms of wealth. Every form of wealth is only meant for sharing for the welfare of the society as a whole. Therefore, share your wealth, in whatever form it is, with immense faith in the Best in your own Self.



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ह्रिया देयं - Give with ह्रिया - modesty. Modesty is total absence of an air of superiority or arrogance. The cause is ईश्वर कार्य. Giving is ईश्वर कर्म. You should consider yourself extremely fortunate that you have been given the opportunity to serve as an instrument in this Divine Play of cause effect relationships in this creation.

भिया देयं - means भयेन देयं. Give with a sense of Fear. The fear is only with respect to one's own ego power. One never knows when one's ego power overwhelms one's बुद्धि - faculty of judgment. Prayer is the only means of keeping one's ego under control. Therefore one must always be prayerful in Giving. Never be overpowered by your ego.

संचिदा देयं - संचिदा is friendly help. Give friendly help, whoever needs it. Whether the help is in the form of an advice at the right time, or a word of solace, or a word of encouragement, all such help is दानं - a Divine Gift, which is what Giving is. Whether it is your friend or foe, be helpful in all times of need.

So much about दानं - Giving - a Divine Gift.

Then the Teacher calls attention to the Vedic commands about कर्म-विचिकित्सा and वृत्त
। विचिकित्सा. विचिकित्सा means "doubts". Doubts about कर्म, what to do and what not
to do, and doubts about वृत्त codes of proper behaviour under different circumstances of
life. When you have such doubts, the Vedic command is

"Seek the advice of ब्राह्मणःs and do as the ब्राह्मणःs would do". This is how the Veda
says that

अथ यदि ते कर्म-विचिकित्सा वा
वृत्त विचिकित्सा वा स्यात् ।
ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः सम्मर्शिनः ।
युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्म कामाः स्युः ।
यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् । तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः ।

अथ - Then for a person like you, who is living in a manner advised above in terms of
सत्यं and धर्म

यदि ते - suppose, at any time, for you, in your particular circumstances,



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कर्म-विचिकित्सा वा, वृत्त विचिकित्सा वा स्यात् - if you have doubts as to what action is proper or what kind of behaviour is proper. Doubts about कर्म - action and वृत्त - modes of behaviour, are always possible. Personal circumstances are always complex and indefinable, and it is often difficult to decide what is धर्म-कर्म in one's particular circumstances even for one who is familiar with the teachings of श्रुति and स्मृति s. For one who has only a limited knowledge of श्रुति and स्मृति, the decision is even more difficult.

The same thing applies to वृत्त also. वृत्त is आचार विषय - matters related to conduct in day-to-day activities, personal behaviour in interaction with people, details regarding food, clothing, levels of cleanliness, modes of communication, etc. - all these come under वृत्त. Doubts in these matters means you cannot decide for yourself what is proper and what is improper in precise terms under one's particular circumstances. If that is the case, then what should one do?

यथा ते तत्र (ब्राह्मणः) वर्तेरन् । तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः - Just as
ते ब्राह्मणाः - those Brahmanas,
तत्र वर्तेन् - how they would behave in those circumstances
तथा - in the same manner
तत्र वर्तेथाः - may you also do likewise in those circumstances.

In matters of doubt, seek the advice of the ब्राह्मणःs and do as they would do, then you will not go wrong. Why? Because, by the very nature, ब्राह्मणःs are

सम्मर्शिनः सम्यक् दर्शिनः - They have clarity of vision. They are विचार समर्थाःs. They have the natural capacity to analyze and understand the situation in its essentials and relate them to the overriding purpose of life. Therefore they can, and will help you. Further they are,

युक्ताः - They are committed to कर्म and वृत्त - action and conduct, in terms of सत्यं and धर्म, which means मोक्ष - they are committed to the highest पुरुषार्थ - overriding purpose of life, which is the same for everybody. Further, they are

आयुक्ताः which means अपर प्रयुक्ताः - विवेकिनः स्वतन्त्राः - They are committed to कर्म and वृत्त in terms of सत्यं and धर्म, not because they are indoctrinated or tutored by somebody else to do, but because they are independent by virtue of their विवेक बुद्धि,



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an intellect which is capable of discriminating between सत्यं and मिथ्या - Truth and transient appearance.

Thus a ब्राह्मण is both a युक्त as well as an आयुक्त. Further, ब्राह्मण:s are

अलूक्षा - means अरूक्षा - क्रोध रहिता: - They are free from anger

अक्रूर मतय: - They are not crooked in their thinking. They are शान्त स्वभावा: Peaceful by nature, and hence they are not carried away by momentary passions. Further they are

धर्म कामा: स्यु: - Their काम s their desires are consistent with धर्म.

धर्मा विरुद्धो भूतेषुकामोऽस्मि - "In people who are totally committed to धर्म, I am their कामs, I am their desires.", so says Sri Krishna. Therefore they are अकामहता:, they are not destroyed by their own राग-द्वेष forces - forces of likes and dislikes, passions and hatreds, which means, they are always in unison with the All-Pervading परमेश्वर.

Because of these reasons, the Vedic command is: When you have doubts about कर्म and वृत्त in daily life, seek the advice of ब्राह्मण:s and do as they would do in your circumstances, then you can never go wrong.

If one should ask the question - where do I find such a ब्राह्मण in the world of today, the answer is "In the world of today, tomorrow and for ever you find that ब्राह्मण in Sri Krishna, in the words of भगवत् गीता. Therefore, read the भगवत् गीता again and again and do as the Gita directs you to do, then you can never go wrong. At least that is my understanding. Again the Teaching continues

अथाभ्याख्यातेषु । ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः समर्शिनः ।

युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्म कामाः स्युः ।

यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् । तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः ।

अथ - Further अभ्याख्यातेषु

अभ्याख्याताः - are those who are accused of wrong actions without proper or insufficient evidence.

तेषु - With respect to such people, what should be your attitude? The vedic command is " Your attitude towards them should be the same as said above with respect to doubts on कर्म and वृत्त, namely, if you cannot decide for yourself, seek the advice of ब्राह्मण:s



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and behave as they would do in your circumstances for the same reasons given earlier, namely, ब्राह्मणःs are naturally सम्मर्शिनः, युक्ताः, आयुक्ताः, अलूक्षाः and धर्म कामाः. Therefore if you follow this advice, you can never go wrong.

All the above Teachings go together. They are ONE and inseparable and must be treated as

एष आदेशः । एष उपदेशः । एषा वेदोपनिषत् ।
एत दनुशासनं । एवमु पासितव्यं ।
एवमु चैत-दुपास्यं

एष आदेशः - That is the ORDER - That is the command. Whose command?

वेद आदेशः - That is the command of the Vedas, which means

ईश्वर आदेशः - That is the command of परमेश्वर - which means That is the Eternal Order. That is Sanatana Dharma. Further,

एष उपदेशः - That is the Teaching. Teaching of the Teacher to the student. Teaching of the parents to the children. As you mature, parents and Teacher merge into ईश्वर and then उपदेश also becomes

ईश्वर उपदेशः - The Teaching of ईश्वर to all humanity.

एषा वेदोपनिषत् - That is the essence of all the Vedas and the Upanishads for every human being. Since these Teachings are ज्ञान साधनं, helpful for gaining ब्रह्म ज्ञानं - Self-realization, they, together, constitute an Upanishad in themselves. Therefore all the above Teachings constitute वेद-उपनिषत् - Veda in its entirety for everyday life.

एत दनुशासनं - That is Divine Declaration - The word of the Lord - The essence of all the Upanishads with respect to daily life - in terms of both advice and command.

एवमु पासितव्यं - Let these command words sink into your mind and बुद्धि - as actions to be done, as the rule of proper conduct in daily life. Don't forget them, let me repeat for emphasis.

एवमु चैत-दुपास्यं - एवं उ च एतत् उपास्यं - As actions to be done, these command words should be meditated upon, reflected upon, and absorbed by you. Do not forget today's lesson. It is all-important for daily life.

Thus ends the वेद-उपनिषत् मन्त्रs - on the Basic Teachings of Vedic Education. What follows is a शान्ति पाठ - Peace Invocation in the form of a Prayer.

शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः । शं नो भवत्वयमा ।



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शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः । शं नो विष्णुरुरुक्रमः ।
नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो ।
त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि ।
त्वामेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मावादिषं ।
ऋतमवादिषं । सत्यमवादिषं । तन्मामावीत् ।
तत् वक्तार मावीत् । आवीन्माम् । आवीद्वक्तारम्
ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

May Mitra, Varuna, सूर्य देवता, इन्द्र देवता Brahaspati, and Vishnu be the Bestower of
शंसुखं - Exalted Happiness to us.

O! ब्रह्मन् - नमस्कार to You

O! वायु - नमस्कार to You

You are indeed the visible manifestation of ब्रह्मन् to me. Throughout our studies, in all our meditations and contemplations on Upanishadic knowledge, I have looked upon you as the visible manifestation of ब्रह्मन्. I have looked upon ऋतं and सत्यं - proper conduct, good character and being truthful at all times as the visible manifestation of ब्रह्मन्.

May That ब्रह्मन् protect me. May That ब्रह्मन् protect the Teacher.

Again I repeat.

May That ब्रह्मन् protect me. May That ब्रह्मन् protect the Teacher

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

That completes the वेद-उपदेश मन्त्रs. That also completes our General Introduction to Upanishads. We are now ready to go to the Upanishads directly. We will start with ईशावास्य उपनिषत् next time.