



कठोपनिषत्
Katopanishad
Volume 10
Chapter 2

न नरेण अवरेण प्रोक्तः एषः सुविज्ञेयः बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः ।
अनन्य प्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति, अणीयान् हि अतर्क्यं अणुप्रमाणात् ॥ 2 - 8

नैषा तर्केण मतिः आपनेया प्रोक्ता अन्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ ।
यां त्वं आपः सत्यधृतिः बतासि त्वाद्दक् नः भूयात् नचिकेतः प्रष्टा ॥ 2 - 9

As we may recall, Lord यम 's words last time

आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धा आश्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः । 2 - 7

It is indeed a wonder to find an appropriate teacher to teach आत्म ज्ञानं, to find an appropriate student seeking आत्म ज्ञानं and to find the extraordinary spiritual illumination on आत्मा resulting from such teacher-student contact. That is the glory of perennial flow of Upanishad Knowledge, leading ultimately to श्रेयस् - मोक्ष - Total fulfillment in Life.

Lord यम now emphasizes the need for a competent teacher who alone can bring clarity of knowledge on आत्मा - The Self, to any well-prepared student. Lord यम says to Nachiketa:

न नरेण अवरेण प्रोक्तः एषः सुविज्ञेयः बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः ।
अनन्य प्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति अणीयान् हि अतर्क्यं अणुप्रमाणात् ॥ 2 - 8

एषः means एष आत्मा. The आत्मा -The Self about whom you are asking, That आत्मा अवरेण नरेण प्रोक्तः (सति) - when explained by an inferior person who has no cultivated spiritual knowledge, by a person totally immersed in the pursuit of प्रेयस्, by a person who is himself governed by spiritual blindness, when explained by such an inferior person, The आत्मा - The Self

न हि सुविज्ञेयः - is certainly not available for clear comprehension and doubt-free understanding.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

That **आत्मा** - The Self, about whom you are asking, is certainly not available for clear comprehension and doubt-free understanding if taught by an inferior person who is himself governed by self-ignorance, because

बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः - **आत्मा** is thought of in many different ways by such people, such as whether **आत्मा** exists or whether **आत्मा** does not exist, etc.

आत्मा is ONE, because of which alone any thinking is possible. If one has to think about that **आत्मा** itself, then certainly any number of thoughts about **आत्मा** are possible, and hence, one only makes one's own inference about **आत्मा** as an object of knowledge. **आत्मा** is not a matter for inference, because only **परोक्ष विषय** - that which is remote from oneself can be a matter for inference.

आत्मा - The Self, is not remote from oneself. **आत्मा** is **अपरोक्ष विषय** - it is a matter for immediate knowledge. That "I", The Self, exists, is a matter of immediate knowledge to me. Therefore, I, The Self, is simply to be recognized by me as It is. There is nothing for me to infer about **आत्मा**. But, to recognize **आत्मा** as It is, is a matter of knowledge - Self-knowledge. Only people who have no Self-knowledge infer about The Self. Therefore, the Upanishad says:

अवरेण नरेण प्रोक्तः (सति) एष आत्मा न हि सुविज्ञेयः - The nature of **आत्मा** - The Self, cannot be understood clearly if taught by a person who has no Self-knowledge.

Then how can one gain a clear understanding of **आत्मा** - The Self? The Upanishad says:

अनन्य प्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति - In this short sentence, Lord **यम** tells a lot about the teacher, the teaching itself, and the result of such teaching which leads to a clear and doubt-free understanding of **आत्मा**. There are two words here, **अनन्य** and **गतिः**, which must be understood first with reference to **आत्मा** - The SELF.

अनन्य is **न अन्यः** - The one who is not different. This description applies both to the teacher and the teaching itself, and

गतिः - is the path through which one moves in life in terms of thoughts, words and deeds. There are two kinds of **गति**, namely **सर्व विकल्प गति** - entertaining different thoughts and opinions on **आत्मा**, and **संसार गति** - going through repeated births, life circumstances, heaven, hell, etc. in this **संसार** - world of transient existence.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अनन्य when applied to the teacher means the teacher who is अपृथक् दर्शी, who sees no division between oneself and everything else in this creation, the one who recognizes the same परमेश्वर in all existence, the one who realizes that this entire creation is nothing but ब्रह्मन्, and That ब्रह्मन् "I am".

What is to be known (the ज्ञेय वस्तु) from Vedanta - from the words of the Upanishads, is ब्रह्मात्मा, meaning आत्मा - The Self, is The ब्रह्मन्, indicated by the words सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म. The one who has that realization is ब्रह्म निष्ठ - one who has realized the knowledge of ब्रह्मन्.

Since one becomes a ब्रह्म निष्ठ through the teachings of श्रुति - the Upanishads such a ब्रह्म निष्ठ is a श्रोत्रिय - one who is well-versed in Upanishad knowledge. And because he is a ब्रह्म निष्ठ, he can also teach Upanishad knowledge, just as he learned himself, as the means for gaining Self realization. That Self realization is ब्रह्मैवाऽहं अस्मि "I am indeed ब्रह्मन्". There is nothing separate from me.

Therefore, that अनन्यः - the one who sees no division between oneself and everything else in this creation is a श्रोत्रिय and ब्रह्म निष्ठ - a Self realized person. Hence

अनन्य प्रोक्ते (सति) - when the nature of आत्मा - The Self, is taught by such a श्रोत्रिय and ब्रह्म निष्ठ - such a self-realized person, a ज्ञानी, a person of spiritual wisdom गतिस्त्र नास्ति, गतिः अत्र न अस्ति - for the well-prepared student who has gained आत्म ज्ञानं - Self Knowledge from a teacher who is a ज्ञानी

अत्र - in the matter of आत्मा - The Self

गतिः न अस्ति - there is no गति - there is no scope for any different opinions or thoughts, because the student realizes that आत्मा is not one of the many things which exist, but it is the only thing that exists - there is nothing apart from ब्रह्मन्. That clarity of understanding is the result of such teaching.

Further, having got such a clear vision of आत्मा - The SELF - there is no question of any rebirth or passing through heaven or hell in this संसार - in this ever-changing world of existence, because the person who has such clear vision of आत्मा - The Self as ब्रह्मन् Itself is already ONE with the all-inclusive ब्रह्मन्.



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

That is one meaning for अनन्य प्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति. Now let us apply the word अनन्य to the teaching Itself. Here the teaching Itself is ब्रह्मात्मा, the स्वरूप of आत्मा. The Self is ब्रह्मन् as unfolded by the Upanishad words, सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म. Now, who can teach that the स्वरूप of आत्मा - the true nature of SELF is ब्रह्मन्? Only a ब्रह्मचित् - a knower of ब्रह्मन्, a Self Realized ज्ञानी can teach about आत्मा in that manner.

Being so taught, when the student realizes through श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं of Upanishadic Knowledge that the true nature of oneself is ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं - सर्वं खलु स्वरूपं इदं ब्रह्म - everything in existence is ब्रह्मन् only, and there is nothing other than ब्रह्मन्, on such realization, one simply recognizes oneself as ब्रह्मन् and everything else about oneself and this creation resolves totally into That ब्रह्मन्. When that happens, one is already ONE with ब्रह्मन्, and there is no question of any गति - any transmigration for that person in any form or name. Therefore,

अनन्य प्रोक्ते गतिरत्र नास्ति means

The सुविज्ञेय आत्मा - The आत्मा - The Self which is to be comprehended clearly, when the knowledge about That आत्मा is taught through Upanishad words which unfold the identity of The Self in oneself as ब्रह्मन्, by a Teacher who is himself a ब्रह्मचित् - knower of ब्रह्मन्, who became a ब्रह्मचित्, a ज्ञानी, through exposure to उपनिषत् knowledge, then one recognizes oneself, clearly and spontaneously, as ब्रह्मन् Itself, as unfolded by the pointer expression सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म. On such recognition, there is no scope for varying thoughts on the true nature of oneself, or transmigration of any kind, for The Self in oneself.

Otherwise, if the Teacher is not an अनन्य, a श्रोत्रिय and ब्रह्मनिष्ठ, a ज्ञानी, if the teacher is only an अचर - one who has no आगम ज्ञानं - Upanishad Knowledge, a clear comprehension of आत्मा - The Self is not possible.

Therefore, Lord यम says:

अणीयान् हि अतर्क्यं अणुप्रमाणात् - If the nature of आत्मा - The SELF, is taught by a teacher of inferior spiritual accomplishment, for such a person, आत्मा becomes अणुप्र



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माणात् अपि अणीयान् भवति - smaller than even the size of an atom, which means, in effect, that आत्मा becomes a matter of logical reasoning of one kind or another. Through one kind of logical reasoning one says that आत्मा is of the size of an atom. By another kind of logical reasoning, another one says that the आत्मा is smaller than even the size of an atom. It simply means that people of inferior spiritual accomplishments think of आत्मा in terms of some finite dimensions.

The truth is that आत्मा has no dimension. It is smaller than the smallest, and at the same time it is bigger than the biggest.

आत्मा अतर्क्यं - आत्मा cannot be comprehended beyond doubt by तर्क - by any system of logical reasoning of the mind. आत्मा is beyond the reach of the mind. आत्मा is beyond the scope of तर्क - any system of logical reasoning or argumentation. Lord यम points this out again in the next verse.

नैषा तर्केण मतिः आपनेया प्रोक्ता अन्येनैव सुज्ञानाय प्रेष्ठ ।

यां त्वं आपः सत्यधृतिः बतासि त्वादृक् नः भूयात् नचिकेतः प्रष्टा ॥

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Lord यम is so pleased with the mental disposition of Nachiketa being fit for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं - Self Knowledge, that he now addresses Nachiketa as प्रेष्ठ - meaning, one who is very dear to him. We may recall here that Arjuna seeks श्रेयस् ज्ञानं from Sri Krishna, and Sri Krishna tells Arjuna: इष्टोऽसि मे - you are dear to me. Here Nachiketa seeks श्रेयस् ज्ञानं from Lord यम, and Lord यम tells Nachiketa प्रेष्ठ - You are very dear to me, which means the moment Nachiketa becomes committed to the pursuit of श्रेयस् in life, the person is already a step closer to परमेश्वर, in oneself. Now Lord यम tells Nachiketa

एषा मतिः तर्केण न आपनेया

एषा मतिः - मतिः here is आत्ममतिः - Knowledge of आत्मा. Therefore

एषा मतिः - This knowledge of आत्मा revealed by the words of the Upanishads

तर्केण न आपनेया - cannot be gained through तर्क - mere intellectual ability for argumentative or logical reasoning

आत्म ज्ञानं - Recognition of आत्मा is not a product of तर्क - mere intellect.



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

We must understand the word तर्क properly. तर्क is essentially one's intellectual ability for understanding, analysis and proper judgment, which we often call बुद्धि. But the word तर्क, or intellect, stands for बुद्धि only in a very limited sense, because, while बुद्धि includes तर्क, बुद्धि itself is far more than तर्क. Besides तर्क - one's intellect, there is within बुद्धि a vast, hidden, unlimited and unrecognized knowledge and power manifesting itself as Pure Reason (called ब्रह्मपुरि in Mundaka Upanishad 2 -2 -7) or Intuition, beyond the reach of तर्क. Such Pure Reason is a manifestation of one's Pure Consciousness, ever-present, all-inclusive and unlimited ब्रह्मन् - The आत्मा, The परमेश्वर within oneself. It is with reference to such Pure Reason, Pure Consciousness in one's बुद्धि that the Taittiriya Upanishad says:

सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म । यो वेद निहितं गृहायां
परमे व्योमन् । सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह । ब्रह्मणा विपीश्वता इति ।

The one who recognizes That सत्यं-ज्ञानं-अनन्तं - That Pure Consciousness, which is the abode of Pure Reason lying hidden in one's बुद्धि, that person gains, experiences and enjoys the fulfillment of all desires simultaneously, which means that person enjoys ब्रह्मानन्द, witnessed by ब्रह्मन् Itself. Pure Consciousness remains as the witness to all that a person is, or can be, conscious of.

Such is indeed the power of Pure Consciousness, lying hidden from recognition in one's बुद्धि, the power of Pure Reason arising from the power of such Pure Consciousness. The knowledge and power of that Pure Reason lying hidden in one's बुद्धि is beyond the scope of mere तर्क - one's limited intellect. When Vedanta talks about बुद्धि, it means the knowledge and power of such Pure Consciousness, manifested as Pure Reason, which includes तर्क, but not limited to तर्क.

We must clearly understand that however great may be one's तर्क - intellectual ability, तर्क is only a very limited expression of the unlimited power of one's pure reason lying hidden in one's बुद्धि. Pure Reason is not against तर्क. Pure Reason transcends तर्क and fulfills तर्क.



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Having said that, we must understand why तर्क - logical reasoning of the intellect, is limited in knowledge and power, and why one cannot recognize आत्मा through तर्क. तर्क depends on the world of objective knowledge and sense experiences available in one's waking and dream states of existence. Precisely because of such dependence, तर्क - intellect is always an inadequate, incomplete and inconclusive means of enquiry on the nature of Absolute Reality - The आत्मा - The SELF.

In the deep sleep state of existence, one's entire world of objects and experiences disappears. Disappears where? Disappears into one's own Pure Consciousness, which is ज्ञान स्वरूपं - The abode of all knowledge from where the world of objects and experiences reappears again in the same or modified or extended forms, in one's waking and dream states of existence.

Therefore, in investigating the nature of Absolute Reality - The Atma, The Self, तर्क confines itself to the field of the known, and completely misses the Knower - The Pure Consciousness - The Self Itself, which explains the incomplete and inconclusive nature of the knowledge gained through तर्क.

Thus, the only means for recognizing Absolute Reality - The आत्मा - The SELF is through Pure बुद्धि - which is Pure Reason or Intuition arising from that Pure Consciousness whose very nature is सत्य स्वरूपं, ज्ञान स्वरूपं, अनन्त स्वरूपं - Unchanging infinite पूर्ण ज्ञानं - totality of all knowledge which exists in all the three states of existence, namely the waking, the dream and the deep sleep states, and which remain largely hidden from one's recognition because of अविद्या - spiritual blindness.

आत्मा being unlimited, आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge can be grasped only by बुद्धि - Pure Reason, arising from Pure Consciousness, which transcends all sense experiences. That is why Sri Krishna calls upon अर्जुन, who is seeking श्रेयस, to resort to बुद्धि - Pure Reason, so many times in the भगवत् गीता.

Sri Krishna's words such as

बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ - Seek refuge in बुद्धि. बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः, बुद्धि is the supreme power among one's faculties

बुद्धिग्राह्यं अर्तान्द्रियं - आत्मज्ञानं can be grasped by बुद्धि, but It is beyond the reach of sense perceptions



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बुद्धि योगं उपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव - It is by resorting to बुद्धि योग that one realizes one's identity with परमेश्वर in oneself, etc.

In all the above statements, बुद्धि must be understood as Pure Reason, reason rooted in Pure God Consciousness, and not तर्क - mere intellect.

Now, returning to the Upanishad, Lord यम says,

एषा मतिः तर्केण न आपनेया - This knowledge of आत्मा, revealed by the words of the Upanishads, cannot be gained through तर्क - mere intellect, mere logical reasoning. Then, how can one gain this knowledge?

अन्येन प्रोक्ता एव - Only when this knowledge is taught by another person who is oneself an आगमज्ञः one well-versed in आगम ज्ञानं - Upanishad knowledge, one who is oneself a ब्रह्मवित् - a Self-realized person, only then

एषा मतिः सुज्ञानाय (भवति), साक्षात् काराय भवति - this knowledge about आत्मा becomes अपरोक्ष ज्ञानं - immediate knowledge, as It is.

आत्मा becomes a matter of immediate knowledge, as It is, only when आत्म ज्ञानं is taught by an आगमज्ञः - a qualified teacher well-versed in Vedanta. Further,

यां त्वं आपः means यां आत्ममतिः त्वं आपः - What you already have about आत्म ज्ञानं namely overriding commitment to the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं that you already have, even that, तर्केण न आपनेया one cannot have through तर्क - through mere intellect. Then how does one get the mental disposition needed for a commitment to the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं ? Only when one has an overriding value, overriding devotion, overriding will for the pursuit of Absolute Truth at all times.

Nachiketa has indeed that overriding value, overriding devotion, overriding will for the pursuit of सत्यं - Absolute Truth, which Lord यम truly appreciates. Therefore, in appreciation of Nachiketa's love for सत्यं, Lord यम exclaims

सत्यधृतिः बतसि, त्वं सत्यधृतिः बत असि
बत, अहो - what a wonderful person you are



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

त्वं सत्यधृतिः असि - You are a सत्यधृति. You are one who has a firm resolve to recognize the Truth of आत्मा - The SELF. Even though you were tempted with a number of other things, you did not opt for any of them. You remained firm in your pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं - Self Knowledge.

बत - अहो What a wonderful person you are!

सत्यधृतिः त्वं असि - Indeed, you have your will yoked to TRUTH. "To yoke the will to Truth" is the greatest thing that a person can do with one's will. That is the highest moral and spiritual training in its entirety.

The will yoked to प्रेयस् - exclusive pursuit of transient pleasures, ultimately becomes a force for degradations in life. But Nachiketa's will is yoked to श्रेयस् -सत्यं. Nachiketa is indeed an extraordinary person.

त्वाद्दक् नः भूयात् नचिकेतः प्रष्टा

नचिकेतः - O! Nachiketa

नः - for us teachers

त्वाद्दक् प्रष्टा भूयात् - may we have

प्रष्टा - questioners

त्वाद्दक् - like you

May we, the आचार्याs - teachers like Myself, have such शिष्याs - disciples, devoted to Absolute Truth, like yourself, O! Nachiketa. With such extraordinary complements, Lord यम welcomes and accepts Nachiketa as a worthy disciple for Him to teach ब्रह्म विद्या, आत्म ज्ञानं, in fulfillment of his 3rd वर to Nachiketa.

Again, recalling our opening words to day

आश्वर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्य लब्धा आश्वर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः ।

Here in this Upanishad, the Teacher, Lord यम is wonderful. The student Nachiketa is wonderful, and what results from their contact with each other, namely the कठोपनिषत् is also wonderful as It is. We will continue next time.