



कठोपनिषत्  
**Katopanishad**  
**Volume 17**  
**Section 3**

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एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु, गूढः आत्मा न प्रकाशते । दृश्यते तु अग्रयया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥	3 - 12

The Upanishad is in the process of describing रथ कल्पना – the chariot imagery – where the body-vehicle in the journey of life is compared to a chariot-vehicle moving towards its ultimate destination.

As we may recall, the components of the chariot imagery have been identified as follows:

- one's शरीर – one's physical body – is the chariot
- one's बुद्धि – one's faculty of discrimination and decision – is the सारथि – the Driver for the chariot;
- one's मनः – one's Mind – is the reins of the horses, held in the hands of the सारथि – the Driver, controlling the movements of the horses;
- one's इन्द्रियाणि – one's sense organs – organs of perceptions and action – are the horses;
- the इन्द्रिय विषयान् – the fields of experience of the organs of perception and action – are the roads through which the horses pass through; and
- the Master seated in the chariot, is the Master seated in the body-vehicle – namely – the जीव – the individual person – the “I” – the self in the शरीर for whom is the journey of life



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Recalling the last verse, we saw last time:

यः तु विज्ञानवान् भवति, समनस्कः सदा शुचिः ।  
सः तु तत् पदं आप्नोति, यस्मात् भूयो न जायते ॥

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If the सारथि – the Driver of the chariot vehicle – which means – the बुद्धि of the जीव in the body-vehicle – is an Enlightened one – one of cultivated पूर्ण ज्ञानं – which means – if the बुद्धि of the जीव has undergone the full discipline and depth of both objective knowledge and Upanishad Knowledge, with मनस् – the Mind always held pure and totally free from the hold of राग, द्वेष forces,

सः तु तत् पदं आप्नोति – that सारथि – that Driver of the Chariot – which means – the बुद्धि of the जीव in the body-vehicle, naturally reaches तत् पदं, तत् ब्रह्म पदं – That Destination of ब्रह्म पदं – from which there is no return to संसार – which means the जीव gains मोक्ष.

Now, what is तत् पदं – what is that ब्रह्म पदं the Destination that is reached by an enlightened बुद्धि ? About that तत् पदं, ब्रह्म पदं - the Upanishad says:

विज्ञान सारथिः यस्तु मनः प्रग्रहवान् नरः ।  
सः अध्वनः पारं आप्नोति तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं ॥

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यः नरः - The person described earlier as the जीव endowed with a body, बुद्धि, मनस्, इन्द्रियारु That person,

विज्ञान सारथिः : - who has a विज्ञान सारथि – which means – the जीव who has विवेक बुद्धि – Enlightened बुद्धि – a बुद्धि of cultivated पूर्ण ज्ञानं, that विज्ञान बुद्धि is the सारथि – the Driver for the जीव in the body-vehicle;

मनः प्रग्रहवान् - whose Mind – as reins, is very well under control, which means – समाहित चित्तः – whose mind is always composed, and

सदा शुचिः – always pure, uncontaminated with राग, द्वेष impurities – as said before

यः नरः - that person who is endowed with Enlightened बुद्धि and well-disciplined pure Mind

सः अध्वनः पारं आप्नोति - the बुद्धि of that person reaches अध्वनः पारं means



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संसारगते: पारं - the other end of the संसार road. The बुद्धि reaches the end of संसार road- means what? What one can reach by बुद्धि is only knowledge; and nothing else. The destination reached, by knowledge is the पारं here; there is no other पारं – no other end

संसार गति is the never ending road of संसार, पारं is the End. Therefore,

स ; अध्वन : पारं आप्नोति means by knowledge, the बुद्धि reaches the End of the never ending road of संसार. That means, the बुद्धि transcends संसार गति. The बुद्धि of the जीव is released from all worldly bondages – all the three strands of bondage, namely – the अविद्या काम, कर्म बन्धनs – the bondages caused by self-ignorance (अविद्या), desire and cravings for worldly objects (काम), and such desire prompted कर्मs seeking कर्म फलs. When the बुद्धि is so released from all worldly bondages, all the हृदय ग्रन्थिs also disappear – as the मुण्डक उपनिषत् says:

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिः, तस्मिन् दृष्टे परावरे ॥

On recognizing the true nature of पर and अवर – cause and effect, सत्यं and मिथ्या – Truth, and transient appearance, the Infinite and the finite, etc हृदय ग्रन्थिः – the host of images of पुण्य and पाप, and all ignorance-born tendencies tied up into a bundle in one's बुद्धि, is instantly untried and released, which means they simply disappear, enabling the विवेक बुद्धि – the Enlightened बुद्धि to gain संयक् दर्शनं – a clear vision of Itself, and that vision is:

तत् विष्णोः परं पदं -The Supreme Abode of विष्णु. Therefore, the अध्वनः पारं – the other end of संसार road – the End of the never ending, road of संसार – is indeed विष्णोः परमं पदं – The Supreme Abode of विष्णु

-विष्णु means व्यापनशीलः, सर्वव्यापी - All pervasive परं ब्रह्मन् - That which is all pervasive is not located in space; the space itself is located in That विष्णु, परं ब्रह्म

-परं ब्रह्म is परमात्मा – The Limitless Self

-पदं means स्थानं The Abode

Therefore, अध्वनः पारं आप्नोति means तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं आप्नोति which means तत् विष्णु स्वरूपं आप्नोति



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The विवेक बुद्धि – the विज्ञान बुद्धि – the Enlightened बुद्धि – reaches, gains विष्णु स्वरूपं, ब्रह्म स्वरूपं – the Very Nature of The All Pervasive परब्रह्मन्, परमेश्वर, महाविष्णु – as its own very Nature. When all bondages in the बुद्धि vanish, when all obstructions to संयक् दर्शनं – clarity of vision of the Self in oneself vanish, that State of existences is the destination reached by विज्ञान बुद्धि. That State of existences is तत् पदं, ब्रह्म पदं, विष्णोः परमं पदं, विष्णु स्वरूपं – The true nature The Self in oneself

The true nature of विष्णु, विष्णु स्वरूपं – is वासु देव – in the literal sense.

वासु देव literally means – The Self-effulgent Being, whose existence gives existence to all beings, to everything in this creation. We may recall Sri Krishna's words here:

बहूनां जन्मनां अन्ते ज्ञानवान् मां प्रपद्यते ।  
वासुदेवः सर्वं इति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

(G7 – 19)

After passing through a series of life-times, where in one cultivates one's बुद्धि to the level of ज्ञानवान् – a person of परिपाक ईश्वर ज्ञानं – one who has gained a mature, clear, full and unobstructed vision of परमेश्वर in oneself, the बुद्धि of the person recognizes वासुदेवः सर्वं इति Vasudeva is everything – the abode of everything in this creation is only परमेश्वर, ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं

That recognition is विष्णोः परमं पदं . Thus the विवेक बुद्धि a - बुद्धि of cultivated पूर्ण ज्ञानं – Totality of Knowledge, reaches विष्णोः परमं पदं – in itself, recognizes विष्णु स्वरूपं in itself as Itself.

That completes the रथ कल्पना illustration.

After all, the सारथि – the Driver of the chariot must take the chariot somewhere. A विज्ञान सारथि – a cultivated बुद्धि takes the जीव in the body-vehicle to the destination of विष्णोः परमं पदं – in the बुद्धि of the जीव itself – which means – by knowledge, That is the central core of the chariot-imagery.

Before we proceed further, let us stop briefly to continue our reflections, on the Message of this Chariot-imagery (रथ कल्पना), from where we left last time. When the entire disposition of a person is directed by a God-conscious बुद्धि – something wonderful happens. Every step in one's journey of life is accompanied by a steady rise in one's



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quality of life – the quality of one’s natural disposition - the quality of one’s entire personality. The बुद्धि गुह – described as the cave in one’s बुद्धि, though ever luminous, becomes largely inaccessible, if one’s बुद्धि simply functions, as the slave of one’s sense organs and their fields of experience; only when the बुद्धि is freed from the hold of the senses and their objects, the बुद्धि गुह opens itself, reveals itself, and the Glory of the Infinite Immortal Self, shines forth, through every segment of one’s body-vehicle. Therefore, every step in the process of freeing the बुद्धि from the hold of senses and sense-objects, marks an advance in the spiritual journey of a person, the destination of which is विष्णोः परमं पदं, already in one own बुद्धि.

The Chariot imagery brings before us, the vision of life, as continuous education towards total fulfillment in life; it is a total educational process of which the secular objective knowledge and the sacred Upanishad Knowledge are simply the earlier and later phases of one’s education and progress. That is why, in every वेद, कर्म काण्ड comes first, and Upanishads come later. The human personality with its constituent elements – namely the body, the sense organs, the mind, the बुद्धि and The Self – is the finest and the most extraordinary Means that nature has provided us, for the exploration of both the world of facts, and the world of values, in this world of transient reality.

Therefore, the privilege of being born as a human being is highly praised in Vedanta. This privilege of being a human being can lead to a life of total fulfillment, only if it is sustained by total commitment to knowledge and service, at the highest possible level, at all times, which alone can sustain the continuous urge for one’s spiritual upliftment and total Freedom.

Every human being is equipped by nature for exploration of both the outer and the inner worlds. If, in spite of the adequate equipment we are blessed with, we do not advance on the path of Total Fulfillment in life, or reach the Highest Destination possible, then, we have to conclude that either we have not taken proper care of the equipments we are blessed with, or we have not used them properly. That is why we need the help of competent Teachers – beginning with one’s own parents and then, schools, universities, professors, research Directors and आचार्याs and गुरुs of various kinds. But all help from external Teachers is meant only to awaken oneself to the Supreme Teacher, that is ever within us – and that is one’s own Pure Consciousness The अन्तर्यामी आत्मा – the आत्मा "I" - The परमेश्वर within oneself.

In the totality of our material and spiritual progress, though our central concern is with the cultivation of बुद्धि, keeping the health and vigour of the body, the sense organs and



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the mind are equally important. Their fitness is imperiled, as much by senseless austerity as by foolish indulgence. By proper discipline of the body, the sense organs and the mind, the बुद्धि becomes capable of recognizing the infinite dimensions of आत्मा "I" - The Immortal Self in oneself – The परमेश्वर in oneself. All the above Messages of रथ कल्पना – Chariot imagery – arise directly from the Teachings of Sri Krishna in the भगवत् गीता

Now, we return to the Upanishad. The Upanishad says:

विज्ञासारथिः अध्वनः पारं आप्नोति, तत् विष्णोः परमं पदं ॥

The Enlightened बुद्धि, आप्नोति = reaches, That which is beyond the संसार road, and तत् - That is, विष्णोः परमंपदं, विष्णु स्वरूपं That All pervasive ब्रह्मन् - The अखण्ड ब्रह्म चैतन्यं – The ONE Limitless Pure Consciousness. Here the word “आप्नोति =reaches” does not mean that बुद्धि has to go somewhere to reach ब्रह्मन् – there is no क्रिया – no action is involved here, only understanding is involved. Only recognition by बुद्धि is involved here. How does बुद्धि recognize ब्रह्मन् ?

The recognition is through the recognition of the different components of the जीव – the person, from the gross (स्थूल) to the subtle (सूक्ष्म) and also from the व्यष्टि to समष्टि – from the individual to the total – in successive steps. These successive steps of recognition are pointed out in the next 2 verses:

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्थाः अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिः बुद्धेः आत्मा महान् परः ॥ 3 - 10

महतः परं अव्यक्तं, अव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः ।

पुरुषात् न परं किञ्चित्, सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ॥ 3 - 11

What is presented here is a kind of analysis to help one to understand and recognize, what was indicated earlier as विष्णोः परमं पदं the ultimate destination reached by विवेक विज्ञान बुद्धि – an Enlightened बुद्धि – is indeed The आत्मा “I” The Self in oneself – which is the Supreme Destination to be reached by the जीव “I” in the शरीर of oneself – which means, विष्णो परमं पदं is identical with आत्मा “I” The Self in oneself – That is the Knowledge revealed by this analysis.

In this kind of analysis, expressions such as



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- ✓ पर (superiority – something being higher or superior to something else)
- ✓ कारण (causality – something being a cause for something else)
- ✓ सूक्ष्म (subtlety – something being more subtle, or more pervasive, or more immense than something else)
- ✓ प्रत्यग् (internality – something being interior to something else, or something being the inner-self of something else - all such expressions are used interchangeably and synonymously.)

For example, considering the Upanishad expression आकाशात् वायुः – From आकाश came वायु, one can say that आकाश is the cause for वायु; therefore, आकाश is superior to वायु, or higher than वायु. आकाश is more subtle, more pervasive, more immense than वायु. आकाश is interior to वायु, or आकाश is the inner self of वायु etc. – all such statements indicating the fact that between आकाश and वायु, आकाश is the ultimate End into which वायु gets resolved – which means, recognizing आकाश, वायु loses its independent identity. That is the Knowledge

Similarly, considering a clay-pot, one can say: From clay came pot. Therefore, clay is the cause for the very existence of pot and clay is superior to pot, or higher than the pot, or more subtle – more pervasive – more immense than the pot, or that the clay is interior to the pot, or clay is the inner self of the pot – even though clay is everywhere in the pot. That is the knowledge to be recognized by this analysis.

Now, considering this gross physical body as an integrated system of इन्द्रियाः, मनः, बुद्धि and आत्मा – The Self, the Upanishad says

हि – Indeed, it is obvious – namely,

इन्द्रियेभ्यः पराः अर्थाः

इन्द्रियेभ्यः -Relative to the five subtle sense organs – organs of perception – namely the Ear, the Skin, the Eyes, the Tongue, and the Nose

अर्थाः पराः - अर्थाः the corresponding sense objects, namely शब्द, स्पर्श, रूप, रस, गन्ध, the sense of Sound, Touch, Form, Taste and Smell, they are पराः meaning सूक्ष्माः – more subtle, more interior and hence superior

Why? Because, in the evolution of one's physical body, the sense objects are the very cause for the sense organs, because, it is only for the sake of gaining knowledge of sense objects, the sense organs are created. It is only for hearing sounds, the ears are



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created; it is only for seeing forms, the eyes are created etc. Thus, the sense objects are the causes for the birth of sense organs.

Since the cause is always more subtle, more interior, more immense, and more pervasive than the effect, each sense object is the inner self of the corresponding sense organ, and hence superior to the sense organ. Therefore, the Upanishad says

**इन्द्रियेभ्यः पराः अर्थाः** -The sense objects are more subtle than the sense organs. In this connection, we must briefly recall the basics of the Vedantic Vision of the evolution of this entire creation, about which we will talk again in more detail in **तैत्तिरिय** Upanishad. For our present purpose, it is important to remember that this entire world of objects – known and unknown, seen and unseen, both individually and collectively is evolved from **माया** - the inherent power of **ब्रह्मन्** – as the **पञ्चमहा भूताः** – The Five Great Elements – namely **आकाश**, **वायु**, **अग्नि**, **आपः** and **पृथिवी** – all in their pure subtle states – as **सूक्ष्म भूताः** (and by their later processes of internal mixing and grossification). In this discussion we are concerned only with the **सूक्ष्म भूताः** the recognition of their pure forms is their subtle states, which are called **तन् मात्राः** which means – differentiated manifestations of the power of **माया**, in their pure, subtle, discrete quantum dimensions.

Since **माया** itself is made up of **गुणः सत्त्व**, **रजस्**, **तमस्** **गुणः**- again in their subtle states – all these three **गुणः** are also in each of the Five Great Elements – pervading this entire world of objects, both individually and collectively.

From the **सत्त्व गुण** component of each one of the individual Great Elements, the sense objects (which means, the **गुणः**), and the corresponding sense organs are born in their subtle states.

For example, from the **सूक्ष्म भूत आकाश** (subtle **आकाश**), the **सूक्ष्म गुण शब्द** (the subtle sense object of Sound) and the corresponding **सूक्ष्म इन्द्रिय** of **श्रोत्र** – the subtle organ of Ear, are born. The same is true with respect to the other **सूक्ष्म भूताः** – other subtle elements, sense objects and sense organs with respect to all beings in this creation, both individually and collectively.

Thus, even though, both the sense objects and the sense organs are born of the **सूक्ष्म भूताः** – subtle elements – still, in terms of their discrete nature, the sense objects are more subtle than the sense organs, because the sense objects are the cause for the birth of sense organs, and that is why the Upanishad says



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इन्द्रियेभ्यः पराः अर्थाः - the sense objects are interior and superior to the sense organs; each sense object is the inner self of each of the corresponding sense organ.  
Now the Upanishad continues:

अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः, मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिः -The Mind is even more subtle, even more pervasive, even more immense than the sense objects, and hence, Mind is the inner self of both sense objects and sense organs, and hence higher and superior to both of them; again, the बुद्धि is still more subtle , still more pervasive, still more immense than the Mind, and hence, बुद्धि is the inner self of Mind, sense objects and sense organs, and hence बुद्धि is higher and superior to all of them. Why this is so, we will see next time.