



कठोपनिषत्
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यच्छेत् वाङ् मनसी प्राज्ञः, तत् यच्छेत् ज्ञान आत्मनि ।
ज्ञानं आत्मनि महति नियच्छेत्, तत् यच्छेत् शान्त आत्मनि ॥ 3 – 13

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत ।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया, दुर्गं पतस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥ 3 - 14

As we saw last time, if a जीव - an individual person is endowed with विवेक विज्ञान बुद्धि and also अतिसूक्ष्म बुद्धि - a बुद्धि capable of recognizing what is real and what is unreal, and also a बुद्धि cultivated enough to recognize utmost subtlety in all existence, such a बुद्धि, in its spiritual journey within oneself to reach for the TOP, can reach, can recognize The आत्मा "I" one's innermost self - The प्रत्यग आत्मा "I", as विष्णोः परमं पदं - as the all-pervading परब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर, the अन्तरयामी अमृत आत्मा - the indwelling immortal Self in oneself, by oneself, as oneself.

Such reaching, such recognition of one's innermost self - The आत्मा "I", takes place through the following successive steps of recognition.

- ✓ Starting with one's सूक्ष्म इन्द्रियाः - subtle sense organs, the बुद्धि first recognizes the corresponding इन्द्रिय विषयाः - the sense objects, as more subtle, more interior and hence inner to the respective sense organs.
- ✓ Then the बुद्धि recognizes मनः - the mind, as even more subtle, more interior, and hence inner to all the sense objects.
- ✓ Then the बुद्धि recognizes itself, the बुद्धि itself, as even more subtle, more interior, and hence inner to मनः - the mind.
- ✓ Then the बुद्धि recognizes हिरण्यगर्भ - which is the जीव of the entire creation, as even more subtle, more interior, and hence inner to the बुद्धि of all individual जीवs in the entire creation.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

- ✓ Then the बुद्धि recognizes माया - which is the inherent power of ब्रह्मन्, and the immediate cause for the birth of हिरण्यगर्भ as even more subtle, more interior, and hence inner to the हिरण्यगर्भ.
- ✓ Finally, the बुद्धि recognizes पुरुष, The पुरुषोत्तम, The परमेश्वर, The परब्रह्मन्, The सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्मन्, as the most subtle, most interior and hence the innermost self of oneself and the self of the entire creation.

The बुद्धि also recognizes that there is nothing more subtle, more interior and inner to that पुरुष which exists as प्रज्ञानघनं - a mass of infinite self effulgent, all-inclusive Pure Consciousness.

That पुरुष is the प्रत्यग आत्मा - the innermost self in oneself, and in every self, everywhere in this entire creation. That पुरुष, that प्रत्यग आत्मा is अध्वनः पारं - beyond संसार गति, beyond the road of transient realities. That पुरुष, that प्रत्यग आत्मा is विष्णोः परमं पदं - the abode of all-pervading महा विष्णु - the परमेश्वर - the परब्रह्मन् - the आत्मा "I", सा काष्ठा - the destination of one's spiritual journey within oneself, सा परा गतिः - the supreme goal to be reached by the जीव in every physical body.

That truth of आत्मा "I" being universal, it can be recognized by सूक्ष्म दर्शिभिः - by people who are endowed with बुद्धि that is cultivated, sharp and powerful enough to penetrate the layers of subtlety all the way through to reach the utmost subtlety of Absolute Reality of oneself, by oneself.

Having unfolded that sequence of knowledge involved in the recognition of the आत्मा "I", the Upanishad now points out the practical means by which a qualified person can reach, can recognize आत्मा "I" in oneself, by oneself, as oneself, through a life of contemplation on आत्मा "I" through अध्यात्म योग.

अध्यात्म योग is a process of constant endeavour for self-discovery - discovery of oneself as what the Upanishad says, **one really is**. The Upanishad says:

तत् त्वं असि - That सर्वात्मक परं ब्रह्म you are. अध्वनः पारं - you are. You are already beyond the shores of संसार गति - the everchanging appearances of this transient world.



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

विष्णोः परमं पदं – you are the abode of the all-pervading, all-inclusive, ever-existent, परं ब्रह्मन्, परमेश्वर already in you. That is your true self, your प्रत्यग आत्मा – the innermost self - the आत्मा “I” in yourself. The practical means to reach, to recognize That आत्मा “I” in yourself is अध्यात्म योग.

For the pursuit of अध्यात्म योग, one must first be a प्राज्ञः – a विवेकि - a wise person, one who has विवेक चिज्ञान वैराग्य बुद्धि, one who has आत्म-अनात्म ज्ञानं – one who has a clear knowledge of what is आत्मा and what is not आत्मा. One who has a firmly cultivated पूर्ण ज्ञानं - totality of knowledge. One who has cultivated the ability to recognize increasing orders of subtlety both in the world outside of oneself and in the world within oneself.

The very fact that one is a प्राज्ञः means one is really committed to the pursuit of one's own self-discovery. For such a प्राज्ञः – a wise person, the Upanishad now points out the process of self-discovery in the following words.

यच्छेत् वाङ् मनसी प्राज्ञः, तत् यच्छेत् ज्ञान आत्मनि ।

ज्ञानं आत्मनि महति नियच्छेत्, तत् यच्छेत् शान्त आत्मनि ॥

3 - 13

There are four distinct steps involved here. With reference to each step, the Upanishad uses the word यच्छेत् or नियच्छेत्. यच्छेत् means resolve. नियच्छेत् means through deliberate efforts resolve. यच्छेत् and नियच्छेत् are command words of the Upanishad. If one really wants to reach the ultimate goal of life, this is what one must do, namely, यच्छेत् – resolve, नियच्छेत् – make all the necessary efforts to resolve what needs to be resolved, and thus uplift yourself.

"Resolve" means what? What is to be resolved into what? Since every effect is only a particular manifestation of its cause or its source, "resolve" means merging the effect into its cause or its source. Such resolving is only by analysis, understanding and recognition by one's बुद्धि, and it always involves both negation and upliftment.

In the context here, one must resolve one's "I" notion from something which is an effect into something which is the immediate cause or the immediate source of that effect. The cause or the source involved is naturally more subtle, more pervasive, more immense, more interior and therefore becomes the inner self of the effect to be resolved.

The Upanishad says:



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यच्छेत् वाङ् मनसी प्राज्ञः - Let the प्राज्ञः - wise person, a विवेकि resolve one's "I" notion from one's वाक् speech into one's मनसी - mind. This is the first step. Let the wise person resolve one's "I" notion from one's speech to one's mind.

वाक् - speech stands for both the organ of speech and the action of speech. Thus वाक् is उपलक्षण - an illustration representing all इन्द्रियाः - organs of perception and action, and all इन्द्रिय विषयाः - sense objects, which means वाक् represents all of one's names, forms, attributes, actions, possessions, accomplishments, etc.

In one's spiritual journey deep within oneself, in order to reach the top, the supreme within oneself, namely the प्रत्यग आत्मा - the innermost self within oneself, the Upanishad says, the first step is

प्राज्ञः वाङ् मनसी यच्छेत् - Let the wise person resolve and uplift one's "I" notion from one's names, forms, attributes, actions, possessions and accomplishments into one's mind. "Uplift" means "totally uplift", and that means totally negate. Let the wise person recognize clearly without any doubt or hesitation that

- ✓ I am not my names
- ✓ I am not my forms
- ✓ I am not any of my attributes
- ✓ I am not my actions
- ✓ I am not my possessions
- ✓ I am not my accomplishments

All my names, forms, attributes, etc. are only for the roles I am blessed to play in my outside world. They have nothing to do with the true nature of "I" myself. Then who am I? I am my mind, because it is my mind that is the source of my "I" notion in my names, forms, attributes, actions, possessions and accomplishments.

That is the first step in one's journey within oneself. Can anyone reach this first step? One has to try and find out for oneself. Having reached the first step, then the Upanishad says:

तत् यच्छेत् ज्ञान आत्मनि - Let the wise person resolve, uplift तत् - That "I" notion from the mind into ज्ञान आत्मनि, means प्रकाश रूप बुद्धि - the बुद्धि one is aware of, and that is one's intellect. Let the wise person uplift the "I" notion in one's mind into one's बुद्धि - intellect, which means, let the wise person recognize clearly, without any doubt or hesitation, that "I am not my mind". Then who am I? I am my बुद्धि - intellect, because it is my intellect which is the master of my mind. The kingdom of my बुद्धि - intellect



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

pervades my mind, all my इन्द्रिय विषयाs and all my इन्द्रियाs - all my sense objects and sense organs.

Therefore, I am my बुद्धि - intellect, which means "I am not my names, forms, attributes, actions, possessions, accomplishments or my mind. I am my बुद्धि - my intellect. Now one's intellect is the abode of one's अहंकार - Ego "I". therefore, "I am my intellect" means "I am my अहंकार - ego "I", which means I fully entertain the notion that I am the कर्ता and भोक्ता - I am the doer of all my कर्मs and the enjoyer of all my कर्मफलs.

Such recognition of oneself, one's I-notion in one's अहंकार - Ego, is the second step in one's spiritual journey within oneself. We must clearly understand what is involved in these steps of analysis, resolving and uplifting process, is total negation, not qualified negation. For example, if one thinks "Yes, I certainly have my I-notion in my बुद्धि, in my intellect, and at the same time I also have my I-notion in my mind, in my names, forms, attributes, actions, possessions, accomplishments, etc., then that is not total negation. That is not upliftment at all. That is what यच्छेत् means in the Upanishad.

In अध्यात्म योग, there should be continuous, unidirectional propulsion of one's बुद्धि towards आत्मा "I", towards परमेश्वर within oneself. At this second step of अध्यात्म योग - being in total negation of one's I-notion in one's mind, all of one's sense objects and sense organs, one's बुद्धि recognizes one's intellect just as a bundle of अहंकार - ego "I" only.

Therefore, even reaching this second step in अध्यात्म योग may not be as easy as it may appear, especially because there is always some confusion in one's notions about one's mind and one's intellect in daily life. However, it is only common knowledge that every ordinary person exhibits, now and then, plenty of ego in one's worldly transactions, and hence it is certainly possible for one to reach the second step in अध्यात्म योग. For the one who has reached this second step in the continuing process of total negation and self-upliftment, the Upanishad says:

ज्ञानं आत्मनि महति नियच्छेत्

ज्ञानं महति आत्मनि नियच्छेत् - ज्ञानं here means one's अहंकार बुद्धि Ego - I



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

महति आत्मनि – in the great आत्मा, The प्रथमजा the first-born of ब्रह्म काम which means the हिरण्यगर्भ – the pure जीव of the entire creation, which has ब्रह्म लक्षणं, which means it has no अहंकार.

नियच्छेत् – resolve, uplift through the necessary efforts for such upliftment.

Therefore ज्ञानं महति आत्मनि नियच्छेत् means let the wise person resolve, uplift through the necessary efforts one's I-notion from one's अहंकार बुद्धि – Ego-I into the अहंकार-free हिरण्यगर्भ, which means, let the wise person realize clearly without any doubt or hesitation that “I am not my अहंकार बुद्धि; I am not my Ego I. Then who am I. I am हिरण्यगर्भ – I am the pure जीव of this entire creation. I no longer have any individuality of my own. I am indistinguishably one with this entire creation”.

Thus, totally negating one's individuality and uplifting one's I-notion from one's अहंकार बुद्धि – Ego “I” to the हिरण्यगर्भ – the pure जीव of this entire creation is the third and the most difficult step in one's spiritual journey within oneself. That is why the Upanishad uses the word नियच्छेत् for this step of resolving one's I-notion in one's बुद्धि, अहंकार बुद्धि.

This is indeed the most difficult step because uplifting one's “I” notion from one's अहंकार बुद्धि involves totally giving up one's ego and hence one's individuality to become indistinguishably one with the entire creation. How can one give up one's ego? It is here that all the teachings of the entire भगवत् गीता come into the picture.

अहंकार– ego cannot be given up by one's will. If I say I give up my ego, I am only confirming my ego. Ego has to disappear naturally by itself. That is possible only through कर्म योग, ज्ञान लक्षण ईश्वर भक्ति and पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति, all of which require, as we have learnt from भगवत् गीता, extraordinary efforts, discipline and a profound change in attitude in one's everyday life.

When अहंकार totally vanishes from one's बुद्धि, one is as pure as हिरण्यगर्भ, which means ब्रह्मन् is within the reach of one's sight, and there is nothing to obstruct the vision of परमेश्वर, the vision of आत्मा “I” in oneself. When one has reached that stage, the third step, the Upanishad says:



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तत् यच्छेत् ज्ञान आत्मनि – Now, let the wise person तत् यच्छेत् – resolve, uplift, one's I-
notion from one's हिरण्यगर्भ बुद्धि to the शान्त आत्मा – the सत् स्वरूप, चित् स्वरूप,
आनन्द स्वरूप, पूर्ण पुरुष – the आत्मा “I” – the Innermost Self already in oneself. That is
the fourth and final step in one's spiritual journey within oneself.

The आत्मा “I” cannot be resolved any further. Therefore it is प्रत्यग आत्मा – the
innermost self in oneself. It is सर्वान्तर आत्मा – the innermost self of all beings in
हिरण्यगर्भ – the entire creation. It is सर्वेषां बुद्धि, प्रत्यय सूक्ष्म भूत शुद्ध चैतन्य अविक्रिय
आत्मा .

The आत्मा “I” is the witness of the totality of all forms of knowledge, thought, etc. in all
the बुद्धि of all beings in this creation, and it is in the form of infinite, all-inclusive, ever-
existent, unchanging pure consciousness. The आत्मा “I” is the अन्तर्यामी अमृत आत्मा –
the indwelling immortal self of all beings, and it is विष्णोः परमं पदं – the abode of the
all-pervading महा विष्णु – the परमेश्वर, the परब्रह्मन्, and It is:

सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः – It is the innermost reach, the ultimate destination of all beings
in this creation.

Thus, one's spiritual journey within oneself is now complete and fulfilled. That is the
अध्यात्म योग – a life of contemplation through कर्म योग, ध्यान योग, भक्ति योग and ज्ञान
योग.

Now how does हिरण्यगर्भ – I in step 3 is resolved into आत्मा in step 4?

Reaching step 3, there is no further obstruction to the vision of आत्मा “I” in one's बुद्धि,
which is now as pure as हिरण्यगर्भ. Consequently, the process of uplifting हिरण्यगर्भ “I”
into आत्मा “I” takes place through ज्ञान निष्ठा – by the very grace of परमेश्वर, already in
oneself, as Sri Krishna says:

भक्त्या मां अभिजानाति, यावान् यश्चास्मि तत्त्वतः ।

ततो मां तत्त्वतो ज्ञात्वा, विशते तदनन्तरं ॥

18-55

The person who has progressed thus far in ज्ञाननिष्ठा, recognizes परमेश्वर clearly,
totally and directly, both in oneself and in every being as the ONE all-pervading, all-



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

inclusive, eternal reality of existence in its entirety. Thus knowing ME, the परमेश्वर as the पूर्ण पुरुष, the person enters into ME, the परमेश्वर, says Sri Krishna.

Knowing परमेश्वर is itself entering into परमेश्वर, becoming one with परमेश्वर – the आत्मा “I”. Having gained पूर्ण ईश्वर ज्ञानं, पूर्ण आत्म ज्ञानं – knowledge of absolute reality in its entirety, one naturally and spontaneously enters into परमेश्वर – आत्मा “I” by the very grace of परमेश्वर. That is how one’s बुद्धि reaches आत्मा “I” already in oneself. We will see more about ज्ञाननिष्ठा in Chapter 18 of भगवत् गीता.

Thus, all the four steps in अध्यात्म योग are understandable.

We may note here in this four-step process of अध्यात्म योग that माया as such is not involved. That is because in माया, everything – this entire creation, is in a state of लय – dissolution. If one places one’s “I” notion exclusively in माया, one will go immediately into the deep-sleep state. On waking up by the force of one’s प्रारब्ध कर्मs, one will have to restart the process all over again, with no opportunity ever to uplift oneself to reach आत्मा “I”. That is why माया as such is not involved in the above four-step process of अध्यात्म योग.

When one successfully uplifts oneself through अध्यात्म योग and sees and recognizes the indwelling आत्मा “I” in oneself, by oneself, as oneself, then what happens? One gains आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge, which means अज्ञानं – self-ignorance disappears. One recognizes clearly the truth of oneself, the truth of every self, and the truth of the entire creation as परमेश्वर itself, and appreciates the Upanishad declaration ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं, and thus becomes a ज्ञानी – a person of wisdom.

That means one realizes that all the transient realities of everyday life in this everchanging world – the संसार, do not in any way belong to him, touch him or affect him. One realizes that all the नाम रूप कर्मs, all the names, forms and actions, all the क्रिया कारक फल लक्षणs, all the attributes of actions, instruments of actions and results of actions, belong only to the world of माया, which means they are all मिथ्या – transient appearances which disappear in the wake of सत्यं – the Absolute Reality – the ब्रह्मन् – the परमेश्वर – the आत्मा “I”.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

One recognizes the fact that unless one recognizes सत्यं, मिथ्या can never be understood. Recognizing सत्यं, how does a ज्ञानी deal with मिथ्या in daily life?

A ज्ञानी deals with मिथ्या in daily life in the same way that one deals with मरीचि उदकं – mirage water and रज्जु सर्पं – rope serpent. Recognizing mirage, one does not go after the appearance of mirage water. Recognizing rope, one does not run away from, or one is not afraid of the appearance of rope serpent. Similarly for a ज्ञानी, there is really nothing to go after, or run away from, or be afraid of the ever-changing appearances of this world of मिथ्या and माया.

When there is nothing to go after or run away from, or be afraid of, one becomes प्रशान्तः, one's अन्तःकरण – mind and बुद्धि becomes free from sorrow and distress of any kind. One becomes कृतकृत्यः – one has already done all that needs to be done, and thus one becomes a person of total fulfillment in life. Thus,

स्वरूप दर्शनेन स्वस्थः भवति – by recognizing one's own true nature, one becomes fulfilled. Therefore, one's overriding duty to oneself is to take the steps necessary to see, to recognize the Truth of oneself, to gain आत्मदर्शनं – to gain the ability to see, to recognize the आत्मा “I” in oneself, by oneself, as oneself.

Therefore, out of compassion for the entire humanity, with a loud and commanding voice, the Upanishad calls upon everybody who can listen:

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान् निबोधत ।

क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया, दुर्गं पतस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥

3 – 14

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत

उत्तिष्ठत – Get up, जाग्रत wake up. Get up from what? I am already awake and active in this world around me, then what is meant by “get up and wake up”. The Upanishad says, “No, you are not really awake. You are in अज्ञान निद्रा – you are blissfully immersed in the slumber of self-ignorance. You are only a dream-walker in this world of मिथ्या – everchanging appearances of माया. Therefore,

जाग्रत – wake up from your dream and do what needs to be done to gain आत्मदर्शनं – to gain the ability to see yourself as you really are.

Then what should I do? That we will see next time.