



कठोपनिषत्
Katopanishad
Section 4
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यतश्च उदेति सूर्यः, अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति ।
तं देवाः स्र्वे अर्पिताः तद् नान्त्येति कश्चन ॥
एतत् वै तत् ॥

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यदेव इह, तत् अमुत्र, यत् अमुत्र, तदनु इह ।
मृत्योः, स मृत्युं आप्नोति, य इह, नाना इव पश्यति ॥

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मनसा एव, इदं आप्तव्यं, न इह, नानास्ति किंचन ।
मृत्योः, स मृत्युं गच्छति य इह, नाना इव पश्यति ॥

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Using a variety of pointer-words, Lord यम continues to sharply focus Nachiketa's attention to the Nature of आत्मा – The Self “I”.

This entire Universe – this समस्त सूक्ष्म-स्थूल प्रपञ्चम् – constituted of subtle and gross beings and objects, with various forms and names, ever-changing in nature, this entire Universe, being as it is, is only a manifestation of an infinite variety of effects and their immediate causes. And, the Ultimate Changeless cause of this entire Universe is That सत्य स्वरूप - ज्ञान स्वरूप - अनन्त स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् That ब्रह्मन् is indeed The आत्मा – The Self “I” – in every self including oneself – That is the central Message here.

Lord यम repeats this Message again and again, though a variety of simple-looking word pointers. In the next verse, Lord यम says:

यतश्च उदेति सूर्यः, अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति ।
तं देवाः स्र्वे अर्पिताः, तद् नान्त्येति कश्चन ।
एतत् वै तत् ॥

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यतः च उदेति सूर्यः, अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यतः च means यस्मात् च – Also that from which

सूर्यः उदेति – the sun rises

सूर्यः अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति – and also, into which, the sun sets. Therefore,

यतश्च उदेति सूर्यः, अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति – That from which the Sun rises and into which the Sun sets. What is that? We know that sun-rise and sun-set are only appearances. Certainly, the Upanishad also knows that – Then, what is That from which the Sun rises and into which the Sun sets?

In the Upanishad here, the word सूर्य – The Sun is उपलक्षण for विराट् – which means, सूर्य – The Sun stands for विराट् – the entire स्थूलप्रपञ्च – the gross physical universe, the universe of ever changing effects and their immediate causes. That which is the immediate cause for this entire स्थूलप्रपञ्च – the विराट् is the entire सूक्ष्म प्रपञ्च, the हिरण्यगर्भ – the Totality of this Universe in its subtle form. Therefore,

यतश्च उदेति सूर्यः, अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति means from which हिरण्यगर्भ, this विराट् – this entire physical universe has arisen, and also, into which हिरण्यगर्भ this विराट् – this entire physical universe, ultimately resolves itself and disappears. The cause for विराट् – the स्थूल प्रपञ्च – the entire physical Universe is हिरण्यगर्भ सूक्ष्म प्रपञ्च – the totality of this universe in its subtle form .

As indicated in the अनुप्रवेश श्रुति in Taittiriya Upanishad, the cause for हिरण्यगर्भ itself is ब्रह्मन् – The सत्य स्वरूप, ज्ञान स्वरूप, अनन्त स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्, which makes That ब्रह्मन् as सत्यं – The Absolute Reality, and both हिरण्यगर्भ and विराट् as only मिथ्या – a transient reality of appearances.

Every मिथ्या – transient reality, being only an effect arising from an immediate cause, resolves itself, and disappears into The Ultimate cause, namely सत्यं – The ONE Absolute Reality which is never subject to change, and That सत्यं is एतत् वै तत् – The आत्मा. That is what is indicated by the Upanishad statement

यतश्च उदेति सूर्यः, अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति ।

Further, about That हिरण्यगर्भ, the Upanishad says:

तं देवाः सर्वे अर्पिताः

तं refers to हिरण्यगर्भ – the सूक्ष्म प्रपञ्च – the totality of this Universe in its subtle form



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देवाः – all our organs of perception and action and their Presiding Deities – the particular cosmic powers by which they all function as they do, they are called देवाः – Divine Functionaries. The ear, the skin (means the sense of touch), the eyes, the tongue (means the sense of taste) and the nose (means the sense of smell) are our organs of perception, and their presiding deities are respectively, आकाश देवता, वायु देवता, सूर्य देवता, चरुण देवता and अश्विनि देवता. Similarly, our organs of action are speech, hands, legs, anus and the genitals and their presiding deities are अग्नि देवता, इन्द्र देवता, विष्णु देवता, मृत्यु देवता and प्रजापति देवता.

The Upanishad says:

सर्वे देवाः तं अर्पिताः – all these देवताs – all these invisible cosmic powers are अर्पिताः – they are inseparably fixed to, which means that they are integral parts of That हिरण्यगर्भ, just as the spokes of a wheel are inseparably fixed to its axle. All the देवताs derive their respective powers to function as they do, only from That हिरण्यगर्भ. Therefore, at the individual level – at the व्यष्टि level, each इन्द्रिय is a करण – each organ of perception or action is an instrument. At the total level – at the समष्टि level – all इन्द्रियाs of all individuals resolve themselves into their respective देवताs. For example, सूर्य देवता is the presiding deity for the eyes of all beings. So is the case with respect to every other देवता. And, all these देवताs derive their powers only from The ONE all inclusive हिरण्यगर्भ; and That हिरण्यगर्भ Itself – being an effect – resolves itself into its cause namely ब्रह्मन्.

In summary, everything in this universe, subtle or gross, is only ब्रह्मन्. The हिरण्यगर्भ – The सूक्ष्म प्रपञ्च – is ब्रह्मन्. The विराट् – The स्थूल प्रपञ्च is ब्रह्मन्. Everything is indeed ब्रह्मन्.

तत् उ - certainly, clearly, everything in this universe is indeed ब्रह्मन्
न कश्चन अत्येति – Nothing in this creation can even transcend That ब्रह्मन्. Everything is in ब्रह्मन् only. That ब्रह्मन् is सर्वात्मकं ब्रह्म. That ब्रह्मन् is the सत्ता – That which gives existence for anything. Nothing stands apart from ब्रह्मन्. No object can exist, giving up its existence itself. Therefore, no object can transcend ब्रह्मन्



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ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

एतत् वै तत् - That ब्रह्मन् is indeed The आत्मा – The Self “I” that you wanted to know about, says Lord यम to Nachiketa. Further,

यदेव इह, तत् अमुत्र यत् अमुत्र तदनु इह ।
मृत्योः, स मृत्युं आप्नोति य इह, नाना इव पश्यति ॥

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Please see the language here:

“What is indeed here, that is there. What is indeed there, that is here. The person who sees as though there is a difference, goes from death to death.”

That is how Upanishad communicates Knowledge. Let us now try to understand what exactly the Upanishad points out here:

यत् एव इह, तत् (एव) अमुत्र

यत् एव means यत् शुद्ध चैतन्यं एव – Which Pure Consciousness – The आत्मवस्तु, The आत्मा – The Self I, is इह – here, in this जीव उपाधि – in this body-vehicle, in the physical body of a person

तत् (एव) – That same Pure Consciousness is

अमुत्र – there, in ईश्वर उपाधि namely सत् चित् अनन्त स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्

Which Pure Consciousness – The आत्मवस्तु - The आत्मा The Self “I” – is in this जीव उपाधि in the physical body of a person, That same Pure Consciousness is in ईश्वर उपाधि in the all-inclusive manifestation of ब्रह्मन् as the आत्मा – The Self “I” of परमेश्वर – The Lord of this entire creation.

अनु - Likewise,

यत् अमुत्र, तत् इह

यत् अमुत्र – Which Pure Consciousness, Which आत्मा – The Self “I” is there in ईश्वर उपाधि, namely ब्रह्मन्

तत् इह – That Same Pure Consciousness, That आत्मा – The Self “I” is here in this जीव उपाधि – in the body vehicle of a person, which means **In both the जीव उपाधि and ईश्वर उपाधि , The आत्मा – The Self “I” is identical.**



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That means, there is no difference between a जीव – an individual person and परमेश्वर in terms of आत्मा The Self “I”, शुद्ध चैतन्यं – Pure Consciousness, सत्यं – Absolute Reality. But there is a difference in terms of उपाधि – one’s vehicle of manifestations.

The nature of जीव उपाधि – the nature of the body-vehicle of an individual जीव – an ordinary person – is a combination of कार्य उपाधि and कारण उपाधि.

The कार्य उपाधि is one’s सूक्ष्म स्थूल शरीर – one’s physical body made up of subtle and gross components, together with all its peculiar संसार धर्मस – worldly characteristics, such as notions of doership and enjoyership and the consequent ever changing experiences of सुख, दुःख etc. and, the कारण उपाधि is one’s Self-ignorance – ignorance of आत्मा – The Self “I” – (अविद्या).

Because of one’s Self-ignorance, the जीव – the individual person mistakes one’s body vehicle and all its experiences, as The आत्मा – The Self “I”. The truth is that the आत्मा – The Self “I” is NOT one’s body-vehicle and its experiences, which are the results of one’s own past and present कर्मस – all of which being totally transient and ever subject to change

On the other hand, the nature of ईश्वर उपाधि is सत् स्वरूप, चित् स्वरूप, अनन्त स्वरूपं, ब्रह्म स्वरूपं, which means सर्वज्ञत्वं – Omniscience, Totality of All Knowledge

सर्व शक्तिमत्त्वं – Limitless Power

सर्व व्यापकत्वं – All-pervasiveness

सर्व कारणत्वं – The Ultimate cause for everything

पूर्णत्वं – All inclusiveness

ब्रह्म स्वरूपं – The ONE Absolute Reality of all existence, never subject to change, which is precisely the nature of आत्मा – The Self “I”.

If such आत्मा – The Self “I”, is in both जीव उपाधि and ईश्वर उपाधि, then, why is it that I, as a जीव, do not have all the attributes of ईश्वर as indicated above? That is because of all the limitations of my उपाधि – my body-vehicle. All my limitations belong only to my body-vehicle, and not to The आत्मा – The Self “I” in my body vehicle.

This, we must understand clearly. All of us are identical in terms of आत्मा – The Self “I”, and this fact is never subject to change. At the same time, all of us are different from



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each other, in terms of our उपाधि – body vehicles which are transient in nature, which are totally the results of our own past and present कर्मs, and they are ever subject to change. If that is so, then what is the difference between The आत्मा – The Self “I” in my उपाधि and that in ईश्वर उपाधि ?

The answer is that there is absolutely no difference. Just as the nature of water in a drop of a wave in the ocean is no different from that of all water in the entire ocean, similarly, the nature of आत्मा – The Self I in a जीव उपाधि is no different from that of आत्मा – The Self “I” in ईश्वर उपाधि. That is the content of the Upanishad message:

यदेव इह, तत् अमुत्र, यत् अमुत्र, तदनु इह ।

From what has been said above, it is clear that the true, unchanging, and unchangeable nature of oneself, The आत्मा – The Self “I”, is ब्रह्मन् – is परमेश्वर itself. That being so, the Upanishad adds:

मृत्योः, स मृत्युं आप्नोति, य इह, नाना इव पश्यति ॥

य इह नाना इव पश्यति

यः – Anyone, any person being deluded by अविद्या – Self-ignorance, and भेद बुद्धि – notions of division arising from differences that are natural to उपाधिस – body-vehicles
पश्यति – anyone, being so deluded, who sees

इह – here, in this ONE ब्रह्मन् – in this ONE आत्मा – in this ONE परमेश्वर – which is in every उपाधि

नाना इव – as though there is a difference, which means anyone who entertains the mistaken notion that The आत्मा – The Self “I” in me is different from That in another person because of differences in उपाधि – body-vehicles, and also that The आत्मा – The Self “I” in any person, in any being, is different from ब्रह्मन् – The परमेश्वर

सः – that person,

मृत्योः मृत्युं आप्नोति – gets death after death, which means he becomes subject to repeated birth and death.

Therefore, one must cultivate a विवेक बुद्धि to be able to see things as they really are and discard mistaken notions born of Self-ignorance and भेद बुद्धि – notions of unreal



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divisions, and gain the ability to see oneself as: “The true nature of myself and indeed every being in this creation, is indeed ब्रह्मन् - ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम्.” That is the Message of the statement:

मृत्योः, स मृत्युं आप्नोति - य इह नाना इव पश्यति

The same message is reinforced again in the next verse which says:

मनसा एव, इदं आप्तव्यं, न इह, नानास्ति किञ्चन ।

मृत्योः, स मृत्युं गच्छति, य इह, नाना इव पश्यति ॥

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Clear, direct and immediate recognition of the identity of जीव and ब्रह्मन् takes place only in one's बुद्धि. For such a recognition to take place, one requires a mind which is pure, clean and ready for such knowledge, because the बुद्धि acts only on the knowledge provided by the sense organs through the mind. Therefore, the Upanishad says:

मनसा एव इदं आप्तव्यं

मनसा एव – Only through a qualified mind

इदं – this

जीव ब्रह्म एकत्व विज्ञानं – this knowledge of one's identity with ब्रह्मन्,

आप्तव्यं – can be obtained, can be grasped. आप्तव्यं means आप्तुं योग्यं – a mind fit for grasping आत्मज्ञानं – Self Knowledge

Now, what kind of mind is fit for grasping आत्मज्ञानं – Self Knowledge? Only a mind which is totally in control of one's sense organs, and which is purified through the discipline of कर्म योग, ध्यान योग, भक्ति योग and cultivated Upanishad Knowledge, is fit for grasping आत्म ज्ञानं – Self-knowledge

Through the input of such a mind, when one's बुद्धि recognizes one's identity with ब्रह्मन्, then what happens? Self-ignorance naturally disappears, which means one naturally recognizes

न इह नाना अस्ति किञ्चन

इह – in ब्रह्मन्



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किञ्चन नाना न अस्ति – even minute division of any kind does not exist, which means, ब्रह्मन् is पूर्णः. While the उपाधिस, the नाम रूपस – the names and forms are infinite in number, ब्रह्मन् is ONE, whole and all-inclusive, with no division what so ever. On the other hand,

मृत्योः, स मृत्युं गच्छति य इह, नाना इव पश्यति ।

यः – any person

इह नाना इव पश्यति – who sees as though there is division in ब्रह्मन् – even by super imposing some thing on ब्रह्मन्

सः – that person

मृत्योः मृत्युं गच्छति (एव) – does (indeed) go from death to death, meaning that person becomes subject to repeated birth and death; that person cannot escape the cycle of birth and death. So says, the Upanishad

All our Upanishads call attention to the knowledge of एकत्वं – ONENESS and पूर्णत्वं – All-inclusive Totality of ब्रह्मन्. We are familiar with the Upanishad declaration: पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं. We may also recall here the words of Taittiriya Upanishad:

एतस्मिन् उदरं अन्तरं कुरुते, अथ तस्य भयं भवति ॥

When a person entertains the notion of separateness from ब्रह्मन्, even to a minute extent, then ब्रह्मन् becomes the Source, the cause, and the Means of fear. The fear here is मृत्यु भयं – the fear of change, the fear of death.

Again, we may recall the words of ईशावास्य Upanishad:

अविध्यया मृत्युं तीर्त्वा विध्यया अमृतं अश्नुते ॥

Through the cultivation of the discipline and depth of objective knowledge, one gains the ability to understand the ever-changing nature of the material world, and through the simultaneous cultivation of the discipline and depth of Upanishad knowledge, one gains the ability to realize that all the changes taking place in the material world are only different manifestations of That ONE unchanging, ever-existent, all-inclusive ब्रह्मन्.



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Such simultaneous cultivation of totality of knowledge, ब्रह्मज्ञानं, is the function of one's विवेक बुद्धि – which ultimately makes a person बुद्धिमान् – a wise person, fit for gaining मोक्ष – Total Fulfillment in Life. For gaining such विवेक बुद्धि, a daily life of सत्यं and धर्म, rooted in ईश्वर ध्यान – God-Consciousness, is necessary. It is such a daily life that makes one's mind fit for the successful pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge.

So is the message of our Upanishads. We will continue next time, when we will be completing this section of the Upanishad.