



कठोपनिषत्
Katopanishad
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अद्भुष्टमात्रः पुरुषो मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।
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एतत् वै तत् ॥

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एवं धर्मान् पृथक् पश्यन् तानेव अनुविधावति ॥

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एवं मुनेः विजानतः आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥

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इति चतुर्थी वल्ली

“तत् त्वं असि - That ब्रह्मन् you are”. That is वेद महावाक्य - A great Vedic declaration. Recognizing ब्रह्मन् - The परमेश्वर, already within oneself, as Oneself Itself, as The अन्तर्यामी अमृत आत्मा - as the Immortal Self, within oneself, is the ultimate Goal of every human being. This Goal has been pointed out in different ways in all our Upanishads.

The ईशावास्य उपनिषत् says ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं - All this, everything in this creation, including oneself, is, in and out, permeated by and indwelt by ईश्वर. Nothing in this creation, no object in this creation, no event in this creation stands apart from ईश्वर.

Where do I find that ईश्वर ? The केनोपनिषत् says:



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प्रतिबोधविदितं, बोधं बोधं प्रति विदितं - By your own बुद्धि learn to recognize that सत्-चित्-आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् as reflected and perceived by, in and through every pulsation of action, knowledge and awareness in all states of existence. You are not going to see, you are not going to recognize That Ever-Existent, all-pervasive, All-Inclusive ब्रह्मन्, apart from or separate from anything you see or recognize at any time, anywhere, by any means of perception.

That ब्रह्मन् exists, inseparably and indistinguishably in every thing you hear, you touch, you feel, you see, you taste, you smell, any कर्म you do, in thought, word or deed, and any experience you go through in all your waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states of existence.

The कठोपनिषत् says

अक्रतुः धातु प्रसादात्, तं आत्मनः, महिमानं पश्यति - The one who has overcome the forces of one's object-desires through अन्तःकरण शुद्धि, gains the clarity of vision of one's बुद्धि to recognize the Glory of आत्मा as the indwelling परब्रह्मन्, परमेश्वर - The Immortal Self, in every धातु - in every segment within every शरीर - everything in this creation, including the creation as a whole.

Then the Upanishad adds: आवृत्तचक्षुः - Only by turning all of one's organs of perception and action inwards towards one's own बुद्धि and let the बुद्धि explore the Absolute Reality of one's own Self, one can see, one can recognize the true nature of आत्मा - The SELF "I" within oneself, as परमेश्वर Itself.

But turning all of one's sense organs inward is not easy to accomplish, because "turning inwards" is contrary to their natural disposition. Since the बुद्धि acts only on the knowledge provided by one's organs of perception and action and properly communicated to the बुद्धि through one's mind, the quality of one's mind becomes critically important for accomplishing the ultimate purpose of life.

That is why, Lord यम pointed out earlier (4-11)

मनसा एव इदं आप्तव्यं - Only through a well cultivated and properly oriented mind, this जीव-ब्रह्म-एकत्व-विज्ञानं - the knowledge of the identity of जीव and ब्रह्मन् - the



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knowledge of the identity of oneself as ब्रह्मन्, परमेश्वर, आत्मा – The SELF “I”, can be grasped, can be recognized, can be realized. For such realization to take place, the necessary prior requirement is that the person must have a विवेक बुद्धि, together with a daily life based on सत्यं and धर्म – Truth and Propriety, rooted in ईश्वर ध्यान – God Consciousness, which alone can ultimately make the person’s mind fit for the successful pursuit of आत्म ज्ञान – Self Knowledge. Cultivation of such ईश्वर ध्यान is accomplished only through the diligent practice of ध्यान योग – Meditation on ब्रह्मन् – Meditation on आत्मा in some Form.

One can meditate on परमेश्वर in any Form one chooses, because परमेश्वर is everywhere in everything at all times.

In the context here it is not simply a matter of Meditation on परमेश्वर in some Form, in the sense of keeping one’s mind fixed on some Form of परमेश्वर for a length of time, but what is needed here is a particular form of Meditation wherein, all the sense organs are projected inward towards a Form of परमेश्वर already within one’s own self, and the mind meditates on That परमेश्वर, recognizing That परमेश्वर as The आत्मा – The Self “I”, inseparable from oneself as oneself.

In the next 2 verses, Lord यम calls attention to that form of Meditation on परमेश्वर, which is well known in योग शास्त्र, which means that That form of Meditation has a proven record of success in ultimately cultivating a mind, fit for the successful pursuit of आत्मज्ञान – Self Knowledge. Lord यम says:

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो, मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।

ईशानं भूतभव्यस्य, न ततो विजुगुप्सते ॥ एतत् वै तत् ॥

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अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो, ज्योतिः इव अधूमकः ।

ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य, स एव अद्य, स उ इव ॥ एतत् वै तत् ॥

4-13

The particular Meditation technique pointed out in these two verses is not simply Meditation on something superimposed on ब्रह्मन् for the purpose of Meditation. On the other hand, it is a Means that reveals the nature of ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, here, what looks like Meditation on ब्रह्मन्, is really contemplation on the nature of ब्रह्मन् by which the



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sense organs can be turned inward towards ब्रह्मन् within oneself and the mind can grasp the जीव ब्रह्मन् एकत्व विज्ञानं – the knowledge of the identity of जीव and ब्रह्मन्.

Both the verses end with the pointer expression एतत् वै तत् – That is indeed The आत्मा The Self “I”, which means that That ब्रह्मन्, That परमेश्वर, indicated in these two verses, is indeed एतत् वै तत् – The आत्मा – The Self “I” that you asked about, so says Lord यम to Nachiketa.

That ब्रह्मन् is indicated in these two verses by the word पुरुषः. The पुरुष here is पूर्ण पुरुष – The पुरुषोत्तम, The ONE who is All-pervasive and All-inclusive. If such पूर्ण पुरुष is indeed The आत्मा, then The आत्मा – The Self “I” is also पूर्ण – All-pervasive and All-inclusive, which is precisely the meaning of the word आत्मा.

The word आत्मा has two meanings: these are अस्ति and आप्नोति – That which always is is आत्मा. That which is all-pervasive and All-inclusive is आत्मा. The Upanishad says:

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषः, मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति – Contemplate upon That पुरुष – That ब्रह्मन् – That परमेश्वर, visualizing That ब्रह्मन् as अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः – of the size of your Thumb, मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति – that exists already in the center of your स्थूल शरीर – the physical body – namely, your heart-space. Contemplate on ब्रह्मन् – visualizing ब्रह्मन् as of the size of your Thumb that exists already in your heart -space.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषः – How can one think of the All-pervasive ब्रह्मन् as of the size of one’s thumb? As it was pointed out earlier (2-20), ब्रह्मन् is अणोः अणीयान्, महतो महियान्. ब्रह्मन् is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest in this creation, which means ब्रह्मन् has no dimensions. ब्रह्मन् is limitless and Infinite. Therefore, one can think of ब्रह्मन् in any dimension one chooses, such choice of dimension being only for ease of Meditation and concentration on ब्रह्मन् by one’s sense organs including mind and बुद्धि. Here, Thumb-size is chosen as an appropriate dimension for ब्रह्मन् because, in योगशास्त्र, ब्रह्मन् is visualized traditionally as अङ्गुष्ठमात्रं हृत् पुण्डरीकं a Thumb size Full bloom Lotus Flower in one’s heart space for the sole purpose of Meditation and concentration on परमेश्वर.



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We may recall here the words of कैवल्य उपनिषत् (कैव -5)

हृत् पुण्डरीकं विरजं विशुद्धं , विचिन्त्य मध्ये विशदं विशोकं ।

That is how one traditionally meditates and concentrates on परमेश्वर, as a Thumb size पुण्डरीकं – Full bloom Lotus Flower stands for आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्, whose nature is पूर्ण आनन्द – Exalted happiness, Total Fulfillment in Life. That ब्रह्मन् – That परमेश्वर, is visualized as already being in one's heart-space. Why heart space? Because, heart-space is where one usually appreciates oneself as The आत्मा –The Self "I".

Whenever you want to point to yourself as "I", you usually point your finger towards your heart space. For example, when you say "I did it", you point your finger towards your heart space as "I". Here, the object of contemplation is to concentrate on ब्रह्मन्, visualizing ब्रह्मन् as अद्भुष्टमात्र पुण्डरीक रूप आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् – परमेश्वर already in oneself as आत्मा – The Self. That is why the Upanishad says:

अद्भुष्टमात्रः पुरुषो मध्ये आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।

Referring to that ब्रह्मन् the Upanishad says again what was said already in verse 5 as the आत्मा, namely

ईशानं भूतभव्यस्य, न ततो विजुगुप्सते । एतत् वै तत् ॥

भूतभव्यस्य ईशानं means सर्वलोकेमहेश्वरं. Recognizing that अद्भुष्टमात्र हृत् पुण्डरीक रूप, आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् as सर्वलोकमहेश्वरं, as परमेश्वर – the Lord of all the past, present and the future, already within oneself in one's heart space, न ततो विजुगुप्सते – one does not, and cannot suffer from any kind of hatred or fear because

एतत् वै तत् – That ब्रह्मन् is indeed The आत्मा – The Self "I". Recognizing that ब्रह्मन्, that परमेश्वर in oneself as oneself, as आत्मा – The Self I, there is nothing to fear in life.

The description of the process of contemplation and concentration on ब्रह्मन् by one's sense organs including one's mind and बुद्धि continues in the next verse.



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अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषः ज्योतिः इव अधूमकः - That अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषः - That thumb-size Full Bloom Lotus Flower like ब्रह्मन् already in one's heart space is

अधूमकः ज्योतिः इव - like Flame without smoke, which means That ब्रह्मन्, That आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् is also ज्योति स्वरूपं, meaning चित् स्वरूपं, शुद्ध चैतन्य स्वरूपं - It is of the nature of All knowledge - Pure Consciousness totally free from ignorance, delusion, sorrow and distress.

That means That ब्रह्मन् is ज्ञानस्वरूपं - Flame without smoke, means ज्ञानदीपं. We have talked about ज्ञानदीपं in chapter 10 of भगवत् गीता. ज्ञान दीपं is the lamp that gives the light of आत्मज्ञानं - knowledge of आत्मा - The ब्रह्मन् - The परमेश्वर already in oneself. The oil for this ज्ञानदीपं is ईश्वर भक्ति, परम प्रेमस्वरूप ईश्वर भक्ति. The wick for this ज्ञानदीपं is ज्ञानसाधन संस्कारं - adequate preparation of one's body-mind-intellect complex for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं. The air that sustains the flame of ज्ञान दीपं is ईश्वर भावं - one's firm commitment to the pursuit of ईश्वर ज्ञानं. The environment for the location of this ज्ञान दीपं is mind and बुद्धि, totally absorbed in ईश्वर ध्यानं, and the one who lights up this ज्ञान दीपं is the very Grace of परमेश्वर Itself. All these लक्षणस - characteristic of ज्ञान दीपं are involved in the expression अधूमकः ज्योतिः meaning smokeless light - चित् स्वरूप, ज्ञान स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्. Further, That same ब्रह्मन् is

ईशानः भूतभव्यस्य, स एव अद्य स उ इवः । एतत् वै तत् ॥

भूत भव्यस्य ईशानः - That आनन्द स्वरूप, चित् स्वरूप, ज्ञान स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् is the Lord of all the three periods of time transcending time itself - which means परमेश्वर - the Lord of this entire ever changing creation.

स एव अद्यः - That परमेश्वर exists to-day, right now, right at this moment.

स उ इवः - That same परमेश्वर will exist to-morrow also, which means That परमेश्वर is सत्य स्वरूपं - ever existent.

एतत् वै तत् - That ब्रह्मन् - That परमेश्वर is indeed the आत्मा, The Self "I" that you asked about. So says Lord यम.

This mode of ईश्वर ध्यानं - Meditation like contemplation on ब्रह्मन् reveals the true nature of आत्मा - The Self "I" as ब्रह्मन्, as परमेश्वर Itself - already in oneself as



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ONESELF Itself. Meditation on ब्रह्मन् simultaneously as अङ्गुष्ठमात्रं हृत् पुण्डरीकं – as Thumb size Full Bloom Lotus Flower already in one's heart-space reveals आत्मा The Self "I" as आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्.

As ज्योतिः इव अधूमकः – as Flame without smoke reveals आत्मा The self "I" as ज्ञान स्वरूप, चित् स्वरूप, ब्रह्मन्

As स एव अद्यः स उ इवः – as already existing right now and will continue to exist tomorrow also, reveals आत्मा – The Self I – as सत्य स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्

As भूतभव्यस्य ईशानः – as the Lord of all the past, present and future reveals आत्मा – The Self "I" as परमेश्वर as ONESELF Itself

Thus this mode of ईश्वर ध्यानं reveals आत्मा – The Self I – as सत्य स्वरूप, ज्ञान स्वरूप, आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्, as परमेश्वर Itself, already in oneself as ONESELF Itself.

No matter how often and in how many ways the Upanishads point out the ONENESS OF आत्मा – The Self "I" in all the different उपाधिस – in all the diverse forms and names, people generally recognize only the differences in उपाधिस – the forms and names and fail to recognize the same ONE आत्मा in all of them.

Now, concluding this section of this Upanishad, Lord यम again points out the ONENESS of आत्मा in the diversity of all forms and names through two simple examples in these two verses.

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं, पर्वतेषु विधावति ।

एवं धर्मान् पृथक् पश्यन्, तानेव अनुविधावति ॥

4-14

यथा उदकं दुर्गे वृष्टं – Just as water (उदकं) falling as rain (वृष्टं) on the peak of a mountain (दुर्गे)

पर्वतेषु विधावति – gets scattered in the hills in the lower regions of the mountain to become many rivers flowing through different paths and in different directions, under different forms and names such as Ganga, Yamuna etc.

एवं धर्मान् पृथक् पश्यन् – seeing the different individual जीविस in this creation as different from each other because of their apparently different धर्मस, meaning different उपाधिस –



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forms, names, सुख, दुःख experiences, and levels of awareness. तान् एव अनुविधावति – one runs after such धर्म s only, which means one strives only for different उपाधिस – apparently different forms, names, experiences, levels of awareness etc., and one fails to strive for the recognition of आत्मा – The underlying Absolute Unity in all such diversity of उपाधिस. Again

यथोदकं शुद्धे शुद्धं, आसिक्तं तदृक् एव भवति ।
एवं मुनेः विजानतः, आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥

4-15

गौतम – O! Nachiketa, please understand this clearly.

यथा शुद्धं उदकं, शुद्धे (उदके) आसिक्तं – Just as Pure Water poured into Purer Water, for example, just as a drop of Pure water is put into a vessel full of Pure water.

तदृक् एव भवति – remains the same Pure water only and nothing else, similarly,

आत्मा एवं भवति – The आत्मा – The Self “I” remains so, which means The Self in one remains the Self in all, with no difference whatsoever

विजानतः मुनेः – for a wise person, who clearly recognizes the identity of both The Self of the Pure water poured in and that of the Pure water poured into, which means, the wise person who recognizes the identity of आत्मा – The “I” in the व्यष्टि – the individual, and That in समष्टि – The Total, that person only recognizes the ONENESS of आत्मा in all the diverse forms and names in this creation. Only that person recognizes ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं – so says the Upanishads.

We may recall essentially the same Message in the words of Sri Krishna (G 5 – 19):

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो, येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म, तस्मात् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥

येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः – Those people for whom the entire अन्तः करण mind and बुद्धि is firmly established in ब्रह्मन्, those people for whom the entire अन्तः करण is awake to आत्मज्ञानं – Self-knowledge at all times, those people whose अन्तः करण is in परमेश्वर – in God consciousness at all times.

तैः, इह एव, सर्गः जितः – by those people, in this very life itself, this world of creations, this life of ever-present changes is conquered, is transcended.



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निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म - That ब्रह्मन् - The आत्मा -The Self "I", the Absolute Reality of every being, is free from all impurities born of माया गुणs

तस्मात् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः - Therefore, the Wise people - the ज्ञानीs remain firmly established in ब्रह्मन्, remain inseparably ONE with ब्रह्मन्, recognizing their identity with ब्रह्मन्

This message, namely आत्म-ब्रह्म ऐक्यं - the identity of आत्मा - the Self "I" and सत्य स्वरूप, ज्ञान स्वरूप, आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् - This Message आत्म ब्रह्म ऐक्यं concludes Section 4 of this Upanishad.

We will go to Section 5 next time.