



कठोपनिषत्
Katopanishad
Section 6
Volume 30

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Lord यम is now in the midst of summing up His Teachings on the Process of Self-Discovery. He is pointing out again the landmarks one can recognize in the path of one's journey within oneself to reach for the TOP – namely, The अन्तरात्मा – The Innermost Self in oneself, The Self “I” – The ब्रह्मन् –The परमेश्वर already within oneself.

As we may recall, these landmarks have already been pointed out by Lord यम in Section 3 of this Upanishad, as follows:



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्थाः, अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिः, बुद्धेः आत्मा महान् परः ॥ 3 – 10

महत्तः परं अवयक्तं, अवयक्तात् पुरुषः परः ।

पुरुषात् न परं किञ्चित्, सा काष्ठासा परा गतिः ॥ 3 – 11

The sense objects – the senses of hearing touch sight, taste and smell – these sense objects are more subtle, more pervasive, and hence, more interior to and higher than the sense organs – namely the ear, the skin, the eyes the tongue and the nose. Likewise, even more interior to, and higher than the sense objects, is the Mind. Even more interior to, and higher than the Mind, is the बुद्धिः. Even more interior to and higher than the बुद्धिः is the हिरण्यगर्भ – The समष्टि जीव – The Totality of the entire created existence. Even more interior to, and higher than the हिरण्यगर्भ is the Unmanifest माया – the inherent Power of ब्रह्मन्. Even more interior to, and higher than the Unmanifest माया is The पुरुष – The पुरुषोत्तम – The परमेश्वर, The ब्रह्मन् – The आत्मा – The Self “I” Itself.

There is nothing more interior to and higher than The आत्मा – The Self “I”. That Innermost आत्मा – The Self “I” is the ultimate destination to be reached in one’s inward journey within oneself. So said Lord यम. All this we have seen in detail before.

Now, Lord यम repeats the same message again in almost the same words, and also says something more as follows:

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः, मनसः सत्यं उत्तमं ।

सत्त्वादधि महान् आत्मा, महत्तः अवयक्तं उत्तमं ॥ 6 – 7

अवयक्तात् तु परः पुरुषः, व्यापकः अलिङ्ग एव च ।

यं ज्ञात्वा मुच्यते जन्तुः, अमृतत्वं च गच्छति ॥ 6 – 8

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः – In terms of subtlety and pervasiveness, the Mind is interior and superior to, and hence higher than, the इन्द्रियाः – the senses, including both the sense organs and the sense objects. Likewise,
मनसः सत्यं उत्तमं – सत्यं here is बुद्धिः. The बुद्धिः is interior and superior to, and hence higher than the Mind.



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सत्वात् अधि महान् आत्मा - the हिरण्यगर्भ is interior and superior to and hence higher than the बुद्धि

महतः अव्यक्तं उत्तमं - the Unmanifest माया - the inherent Power of ब्रह्मन् is interior and superior to, and hence higher than the हिरण्यगर्भ whereas

अव्यक्तात् तु परः पुरुषः - the पुरुष - The पुरुषोत्तम - The परमेश्वर - The ब्रह्मन् - The आत्मा - The Self "I" is the most interior and superior to and hence higher than the Unmanifest माया (because) माया has no independent existence, माया exists because ब्रह्मन् exists - ब्रह्माश्रया माया

पुरुषः व्यापकः अलिङ्ग एव च - That पुरुष - The पुरुषोत्तम - The परमेश्वर - The ब्रह्मन् - The आत्मा - The Self "I" - is व्यापकः : all pervading and also अलिङ्गः devoid of any indicative marks and hence imperceptible to the senses.

यं ज्ञात्वा - On recognizing That पुरुष - The पुरुषोत्तम - The परमेश्वर - The ब्रह्मन्, आत्मा The Self "I" through the wisdom and discipline of Upanishadic knowledge. जन्तुः मुच्यते - a person is freed from all worldly bondages even while living in this very life.

अमृतत्वं च गच्छति - that person gains also Immortality

In one's journey within oneself to reach for the TOP - The Innermost and The Highest in oneself - aside from one's recognition of the various layers of experience whose land marks are The Mind, The बुद्धि The हिरण्यगर्भ and The Unmanifest माया one needs to recognize The पुरुष - The पुरुषोत्तम, The परमेश्वर - The ब्रह्मन् - The आत्मा - The Self "I" - The True Nature of oneself. That आत्मा is व्यापकः - all pervading, and अलिङ्गः - without any indicative mark by which one's mind usually grasps objects of experience.

लिङ्ग refers to any invariable sign which forms the basis for any inference. If an object has any indicative mark which relates it to similar objects, but differentiates it from other objects, then that object is within the possible grasp by the human mind.

But, आत्मा - The Self "I" - is not an object among objects. It is the subject of all experience, the Seer behind all acts of seeing, the Knower behind all acts of knowing, and, as such, It is ONE without a Second. It is व्यापकः - It pervades all seeing, knowing and all other processes of living. Realizing and recognizing That आत्मा as ONESELF Itself - one becomes truly free from all limitations, and consequently becomes also Immortal. Therefore, the Upanishad says:



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यं ज्ञात्वा मुच्यते जन्तुः, अमृतत्वं च गच्छति – The word used here for a human being is जन्तुः which literally means “a creature”. All creatureliness denotes only a sense of helplessness and dependence. In spite of great advances in every field of objective knowledge and their accomplishments and contributions to individuals and societies in terms of education, health, prosperity and happiness – in spite of all such advances, most of us are still जन्तुs, entertaining a never-ending sense of helplessness and dependence with respect to some thing or other in every day life. In the vision of Vedanta, the root cause for such sense of helplessness and dependence is अविद्या – Self-ignorance. A person can become truly educated, truly free and truly independent only through आत्मज्ञानं – Self-Knowledge and Self-Realization.

In the next 3 verses, Lord यम points out again, how That आत्मा – The Self “I” – which is व्यापक : - all pervading and अलिङ्ग : without any identification mark can still be recognized by a human being.

न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसा अभिक्लृप्तः ये एतत् विदुः , अमृतास्ते भवति ॥

6 – 9

न संदृशे तिष्ठति रूपं अस्य

अस्य रूपं, आत्मरूपं – The Form of आत्मा – The Form of Self I

संदृशे (सन्दर्शन विषये) न तिष्ठति – does not stand out – does not exist – as an object of one’s clear perception.

The Form of आत्मा – The स्वरूप of आत्मा – the Form of the True Nature of आत्मा – The Self “I” – does not stand out as an object of any means of clear sense - perception, because, आत्मा is not an object and आत्मा has no form.

न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चन एनं

न कश्चन, एनं आत्मानं, चक्षुषा पश्यति – No person sees आत्मा with one’s eyes – here “eyes” stand for all sense organs: therefore,

-no person can recognize आत्मा by any of one’s sense organs.

Then how can one recognize आत्मा ?

Knowledge – any knowledge takes place only in one’s बुद्धि therefore, the Upanishad says:



हृदा मनीषा मनसा अभिक्लृप्तः

हृदा literally means “in the heart”. Heart is Upanishadic expression for बुद्धि in its entirety – not simply one’s limited intellect. Therefore, हृदा means by the बुद्धि within you. आत्मा can be recognized only by the बुद्धि within yourself.

Now, everybody has बुद्धि. Can any बुद्धि recognize आत्मा? No, only मनीषा हृदा, only by a मनीषा बुद्धि, the presence of आत्मा can be recognized. What is मनीषा बुद्धि? Let us try to understand. The presence of आत्मा cannot be recognized by any of one’s sense organs – namely, the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose. These sense organs are बाह्य करणाः – they give us the knowledge about the world outside of us – the non-SELF world around us.

Even that knowledge is nothing more than blurred and confused information till the Mind – which is part of अन्तःकरण – brings some order, clarity and precision into that information. The Mind also, in its sense-bound state is really nothing more than another sense organ. It also cannot recognize the presence of आत्मा because of its bondages to the sense organs and the sense objects.

Only when the Mind is totally uplifted from its bondages to the sense organs and the sense objects, through the discipline of योग विचार – enquiry, and मननं – reflection on the words of the Upanishads, that it develops a natural tendency to move upwards in one’s inward journey, and gets resolved – gets integrated with बुद्धि, which is immediately inner to and higher than the Mind.

When that happens, the बुद्धि totally commands the tranquility of the Mind free from all disturbances of the sense objects. That बुद्धि is called मनीषा बुद्धि – a बुद्धि that totally commands the tranquility of the Mind free from the disturbances of all sense objects. That मनीषा बुद्धि can recognize the presence of आत्मा. That is why Sri Krishna described आत्मा as बुद्धिग्राह्यं अतीन्द्रियं (G6 – 21) – the presence of आत्मा can be grasped by a बुद्धि which is beyond the reach of sense objects.

How is that मनीषा बुद्धि able to recognize the presence of आत्मा within oneself as oneself itself?



ब्रह्मचिद्या **Brahma Vidya**

मनसा अभिक्लृप्तः

मनसा means मनन रूपेण, ज्ञानेन

संयक् दर्शनेन – by the clarity of knowledge on आत्मा gained through मननं – reflection on the words of the Upanishads:

अभिक्लृप्तः means अभिप्रकाशितः. Knowledge on आत्मा having been very well revealed – clearly revealed through बुद्धियोग

As we have already seen in the भगवत् गीता (2- 48, 49), बुद्धियोग is कर्मयोग बुद्धि and ज्ञानयोग बुद्धि together in their integrated natural sequence. Thus, only the मनीषा बुद्धि can grasp, can recognize the presence of आत्मा within oneself as ONESELF Itself through बुद्धियोग – through the clarity of knowledge on आत्मा clearly revealed by the words of the Upanishads.

ये एतत् (आत्मानं) विदुः : – Those who know, who recognize The आत्मा so revealed.

ते अमृताः भवन्ति – they become अमृताः which means they are Immortal themselves.

In the next two verses Lord यम points out how one gains मनीषा बुद्धि – a बुद्धि that commands, which means that controls and maintains the tranquility of the mind.

यदा पच्य अवतिष्ठन्ते, ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।

बुद्धिः च न विचेष्टति, तां आहुः परमां गतिम् ॥ 6 –10

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरां इन्द्रियधारणां ।

अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥ 6 -11

Tranquility in the Mind is first established by totally withdrawing both the sense organs and the Mind from all sense-objects and their expressions in thoughts, words and deeds. By this process, the बुद्धि also is relieved of all its normal engagements of deliberations and decisions on sense bound matters. The tranquility so established is maintained by the Superior power of बुद्धि, by projecting and propelling itself, together with the Mind and sense organs, single-pointedly in the path of Self-Discovery, towards आत्मा – The Self “I” – The परमेश्वर within oneself. When that is accomplished, the बुद्धि is मनीषा बुद्धि – a बुद्धि that controls and maintains the tranquility of the Mind, and that State of Mind and बुद्धि is योग – that is what is indicated by the above two verses.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यदा, पञ्च ज्ञानानि, (पञ्च ज्ञान इन्द्रियाणि), मनसा सह अवतिष्ठन्ते

मनसा सह अवतिष्ठन्ते - When the five instruments of knowledge, namely the five sense organs, along with the mind (having been totally withdrawn from sense objects and their expressions) remain still and quiet within Oneself alone.

बुद्धिः च न विचेष्टति - when the बुद्धि also is totally relieved of its activities generated by the disturbances of the sense-bound objects and their expressions

तां आहुः परमां गतिं - they say, the sages say, that That, is the Supreme State of Mind and बुद्धि

This State of Mind and बुद्धि is gained only with great effort, by अभ्यास and चैराग्य - by constant practice and total dispassion, as Sri Krishna says (G. 6 – 35).

It is this State of Mind and बुद्धि that Sri Krishna describes in six verses (G. 6 – 18 to 23) in ध्यानयोग commencing from the verse:

यदा विनियतं चित्तं आत्मन्येव अवतिष्ठते ।

निःस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यः युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥

G – 6 – 18

When the mind is led properly by self-endeavor towards परमेश्वर within oneself, when Mind and बुद्धि abide in oneself only, and when longing for all sense-bound objects has totally vanished, then one is said to be a युक्तः, समाहित चित्तः - one with a tranquil mind, quiet mind, etc. We have seen these verses in detail not too long ago. Going to the next verse.

तां स्थिरां इन्द्रियधारणां योगं इति मन्यन्ते - That firm control of the Mind and the sense organs is what they (the sages) call योग : Restraining the Mind and the sense organs from their wandering tendencies by the power of बुद्धि is called योग.

तदा अप्रमत्तः भवति - while practicing योग - Meditation and Contemplation on आत्मा, the बुद्धि of the योगी is, and has to be, ever careful, alert and vigilant, never losing control of the Mind and the sense organs, because,

योगः हि प्रभवाप्यभौ - the State of योग gained, can also be lost through inadvertence. Such loss usually arises from the still lingering वासनाs - impressions of past sense experiences, which the योगी - the Meditator might have overlooked or belittled. Therefore vigilance of the बुद्धि is needed to avoid any such loss.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

In the next two verses of the Upanishad, Lord यम points out the difficulty in comprehending the Truth of आत्मा and how it should be approached.

नैव वाचा न मनसा, प्राप्तुं शक्यो न चक्षुषा ।
अस्तीति ब्रुवतोऽन्यत्र कथं तत् उपलभ्याते ॥ 6 – 12

अस्तीत्येव उपलब्धस्य तत्त्वभावेन च उभयोः ।
अस्तीत्येव उपलब्धस्य तत्त्वभावः प्रसीदति ॥ 6 – 13

न वाचा, न मनसा, न चक्षुषा एव (आत्मा) प्राप्तुं शक्यः – Not by words, not by Mind, not by eyes, not even by any other sense organ, one can gain knowledge of आत्मा – one can realize the True Nature of आत्मा – The ब्रह्मन् – The परमेश्वर. That being so, the question arises – Does आत्मा really exist? If it does, how can one recognize आत्मा? As we may recall, the entire केनोपनिषत् is concerned only with the above question.

In order to know आत्मा, one must first start with the recognition that आत्मा does exist – whatever be its nature. We see the world around us, therefore we recognize that the world exists. We also recognize that everything in this world is the effect of some cause, therefore, the world itself is an effect of some cause.

As long as there is an effect, there must be a cause. In order to know what that cause is, one must first recognize that the cause exists. The ultimate basis for the pursuit of recognition of any cause is only सत् बुद्धि – Existence बुद्धि – The ultimate cause exists – that Existence बुद्धि is सत् बुद्धि. Without सत् बुद्धि there can be no appreciation of any thing. Even to say “there is no cause” – one must have सत् बुद्धि. Without सत् बुद्धि no knowledge is possible.

That सत् प्रत्यय, विषय – that “Existence-Knowledge” is non-separate from Awareness that obtains in all forms of बुद्धि – in all means of recognition of Existence. That is why सत् is चित् – Existence is Awareness.

If आत्मा is अलिङ्गः, if आत्मा has no identification mark whatsoever, then how can I have सत् बुद्धि in आत्मा – what is the basis for me to consider that आत्मा does exist?



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

I consider that **आत्मा** does exist, not only because such consideration stands to reason but also primarily because the Upanishads say so. The Upanishads are the Truth-declarations of people who have realized, who have recognized **आत्मा**, not simply those who believe in **आत्मा**. Their words, through the Upanishads, are authoritative for any one to entertain **सत् बुद्धि** in **आत्मा**, because

अस्ति इति ब्रुवतः अन्यत्र – except those Self-Realized ones who declare” **आत्मा** is” – **आत्मा** exists” – from direct realization.

कथं तत् उपलभ्यते – how else the **सत् बुद्धि** for **आत्मा** can be obtained from any other authoritative source, which means that the Upanishads constitute the only authoritative base for entertaining **सत् बुद्धि** in **आत्मा**. Therefore,

अस्ति इति एव उपलब्धव्यः तत्त्वभावेन च उभयोः

तत्त्वभावेन च उभयोः : -Between the two views on the **स्वरूप** of **आत्मा** – the reality of **आत्मा**, namely, whether **आत्मा** exists or **आत्मा** does not exist, between these two views on **आत्मा**

आत्मा अस्ति इति एव उपलब्धव्यः – **आत्मा** must be comprehended only as **आत्मा अस्ति**, **आत्मा** – does exist, the existence of **आत्मा** is beyond question on the basis of the Teachings of the Upanishads which are the Truth Declarations of the Self-Realized ones.

अस्ति इति एव उपलब्धस्य – For the person who comprehends **आत्मा** as **आत्मा अस्ति**, **आत्मा** exists, only for that person

तत्त्वभावः प्रसीदति – the **स्वरूप** of **आत्मा** – the True Nature of **आत्मा** reveals itself.

First you start with: **आत्मा अस्ति**, **आत्मा** exists. Then follow the Teachings of the Upanishads in every detail. Finally you realize **आत्मा अस्मि** – I am That **आत्मा**
Lord **यम** continues. We will complete this Upanishad next time.