



मुण्डक उपनिषत्

Chapter 2

Section 1

Volume 12

24. दिव्यो हि अमूर्तः पुरुषः सबाह्य अभ्यन्तरो हि अजः
अप्राणो हि अमनाः शुभ्रो हि अक्षरात् परतः परः ॥ 2 - 1 - 2

25. एतस्मात् जायते प्राणः मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च
खं वायुः ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥ 2 - 1 - 3

26. अग्निः मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्र सूर्यौ
दिशः श्रोत्रे वाक् विवृताश्च वेदाः
वायुः प्राणः हृदयं विश्वमस्य
पद्भ्यां पृथिवी हि एष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥ 2 - 1 - 4

The Upanishad is in the process of unfolding the nature of अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, the सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, The परमेश्वर as पूर्ण पुरुष - The all-inclusive, all-pervasive परमात्मा - The Universal Self I in every self.

24. दिव्यो हि अमूर्तः पुरुषः सबाह्य अभ्यन्तरो हि अजः
अप्राणो हि अमनाः शुभ्रो हि अक्षरात् परतः परः ॥ 2 - 1 - 2

We saw this verse, in part, last time. Briefly recalling, the Upanishad says: The nature of That पूर्ण पुरुष, The परमेश्वर, The परमात्मा, The Universal Self I in every self is

दिव्यः - all-inclusive, all pervasive, Self-Effulgence

अमूर्तः - Itself Formless

सबाह्य अभ्यन्तरः - abiding both inside and outside of every form and name, every object, in this entire creation

अजः - Itself Unborn, and hence ever existent, and never subject to change

अप्राणः - Itself independent of प्राण, while sustaining प्राण in every living Being in this creation.



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अमनाः - Itself independent of mind, while sustaining the entire अन्तःकरण - inner instrument of perception in every conscious Being, and

शुभ्रः- Itself absolutely Pure, being ONE without a second. All this we saw last time. Further

अक्षरात् परतः परः - The nature of That अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, The परमात्मा is even beyond अक्षरं, which means It is even independent of अक्षरं. What does that mean? Here the pointer word अक्षरं indicates the unmanifested माया - the unmanifest part of the inherent power of परमेश्वर, the unmanifest ईश्वर शक्ति.

Let us understand clearly what is being communicated here by the expression अक्षरात् परतः परः. अक्षरं is That which is ever-existent and never subject to decay or disappearance. That is indeed the स्वरूप - the very nature of परमेश्वर. माया is ईश्वर शक्ति - the inherent power of परमेश्वर and it is ever inseparable from परमेश्वर Itself. Consequently माया also is अक्षरं. While माया is dependent on परमेश्वर, परमेश्वर Itself is ever independent of माया, just as every person is ever independent of one's own powers.

In the विभूति योग of भगवत् गीता Sri Krishna says (G 10-42)

विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नं एकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ।

That means, only a minute part of माया, the ईश्वर शक्ति manifests itself as इदं जगत् - this entire creation, revealing परमेश्वर. The rest of माया, the rest of ईश्वर शक्ति remains unmanifest. That unmanifest माया also reveals परमेश्वर, since माया is ever inseparable from परमेश्वर. At the same time, परमेश्वर Itself remains independent of both the unmanifest माया and जगत्, while being the cause for both. Further, परमेश्वर reveals Itself also by Its own ज्योति स्वरूप - Self-effulgence, independent of both माया and जगत्.

Therefore, in terms of सर्वात्म स्वरूप - the all-inclusive nature of परमेश्वर, इदं जगत् - this entire manifested creation available for perception gives a vision of परमेश्वर. The unmanifested माया, the unmanifested ईश्वर शक्ति gives another vision of the Same



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ONE परमेश्वर and That which is other than माया and जगत्, The ज्योति स्वरूप of परमेश्वर, the cause for both माया and जगत्, also provides yet another vision of the same ONE परमेश्वर.

Thus, all the above three distinct visions of the Same ONE परमेश्वर are involved in one's Total Vision of परमेश्वर as पूर्ण पुरुष. Revealing That Total Vision of परमेश्वर in पुरुषोत्तम योग, Sri Krishna says (G.15 -16, 17, 18):

द्वाविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरचाक्षर एव च ।

क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥ 15-16

उत्तमः पुरुषस्त्वन्यः परमात्मा इति उदाहृतः ।

यो लोकत्रयं आविश्य विभर्ति अव्यय ईश्वरः ॥ 15-17

यस्मात् क्षरम् अतीतोऽहं अक्षरादपि चोत्तमः ।

अतोऽस्मि लोके वेदे च प्रथितः पुरुषोत्तमः ॥ 15-18

We have seen these verses in detail already

- The Vision of परमेश्वर revealed by a minute part of माया, the ईश्वर शक्ति, the inherent infinite power of परमेश्वर, manifested as objects in this ever-changing creation, including the creation itself, That Vision of परमेश्वर is called क्षर पुरुष, meaning, परमेश्वर manifested as the ever-changing objects in this creation
- The Vision of परमेश्वर revealed by the vast still unmanifested part of माया - the infinite inherent power of परमेश्वर, is called अक्षर पुरुष, and
- The Vision of परमेश्वर revealed by Itself, by Its own ज्योति स्वरूपं - Self-effulgent nature, is called उत्तम पुरुष - The परमात्मा, The पुरुषोत्तम.

Only when one recognizes the Same ONE परमेश्वर as क्षर पुरुष, अक्षर पुरुष and उत्तम पुरुष, all at the same time, one truly recognizes परमेश्वर in Its entirety - The पूर्ण पुरुष, The पुरुषोत्तम.

Focusing one's attention on such recognition of परमेश्वर, Sri Krishna says:

यस्मात् अहं क्षरं अतीतः अक्षरात् अपि च



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अतीतः अहं उत्तमः । अतः लोके च वेदे च
अहं पुरुषोत्तमः इति प्रतिथः ॥

Because I remain transcending both क्षर and अक्षर- transcending both जगत् *jagat* and माया *māyā*, I, The परमेश्वर, remain naturally independent of both. Being so, I am पूर्ण पुरुष, The परमेश्वर in Its entirety. It is for this reason, I, The परमेश्वर am well known as पुरुषोत्तम both in popular language and also in all the scriptures, says Sri Krishna.

It is That पूर्ण पुरुष, The पुरुषोत्तम, the Upanishad points out here by the expression अक्षरात् परतः परः. Therefore the nature of That अक्षर ब्रह्मन् is indeed पुरुषोत्तम. Further, the Upanishad continues:

25. एतस्मात् जायते प्राणः मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च
खं वायुः ज्योतिरापः पृथिवी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥

2 - 1 - 3

एतस्मात् - From That पूर्ण पुरुष, The परमेश्वर

From That अक्षर ब्रह्मन्

From That सत्यं-ज्ञानं-अनन्तं ब्रह्म

From That परमात्मा, The Universal Self

From That पुरुषोत्तम

जायते - are born

प्राणः - all forms of life

मनः - Mind, the entire अन्तः करण

सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च - and also all organs of perception and action

खं वायुः ज्योतिः आपः पृथिवी - all the पञ्चमहाभूताs - all the five great elements, namely Akasa, Vayu, Agni, Water and Earth

विश्वस्य धारिणी - which support the entire creation.

Thus the Upanishad points out That पूर्ण पुरुष as the cause for the entire creation, both subtle and gross.

Therefore That पूर्ण पुरुष, even though It is formless, is the cause for all forms and qualities manifested in this entire creation, including the creation itself. Since only an All-conscious, All-knowledge Being can be the cause for the entire creation, including the



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creation itself. Since only an All-conscious, All-knowledge Being can be the cause for the entire creation, That पूर्ण पुरुष is Omniscient - चित्स्वरूपं and ज्ञानस्वरूपं, and consequently It is the निमित्त कारणं - the efficient cause, the instrumental cause for this entire creation.

Then, what is the material cause for this entire creation? When the Upanishad says एतस्मात् जायते - from That पूर्ण पुरुष alone, from That परमेश्वर alone, this entire creation is born, that means That परमेश्वर is also the material cause for this entire creation, that becomes clear and beyond doubt, from the verses which follow.

ईशावास्यम् इदं सर्वम्, वासुदेवः सर्वम् इति ज्ञानं

Everything in this creation is born of परमेश्वर. Everything in this creation is परमेश्वर Itself. That is the knowledge that needs to be understood, appreciated, realized and recognized by every discerning person. Only then, by knowing the true nature of परमेश्वर, the true nature of everything in this creation becomes self-evident.

That परमेश्वर is both the निमित्त कारणं as well as the उपादान कारणं - the efficient cause as well as the material cause for all forms of existence, is the overriding theme of this Upanishad. This Upanishad communicates that knowledge through a variety of pointer words. In the next verse, the Upanishad says:

26. अग्निः मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्र सूर्यौ
दिशः श्रोत्रे वाक् विवृताश्च वेदाः
वायुः प्राणः हृदयं विश्वमस्य
पद्भ्यां पृथिवी हि एष सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा ॥

2 - 1 - 4

In this verse "अस्य " stands for "यस्य", meaning "whose". We will use this word in a few minutes. In this verse अग्निः मूर्धा चक्षुषी चन्द्र सूर्यौ, the cause is pointed out in terms of its effects. The cause is Formless and hence cannot be seen, but its effects are formful and hence can be seen.

By seeing the effects, one recognizes the cause. Knowing the true identity of the effects as the cause Itself, one recognizes the unseen formless cause, by seeing Its formful effects. By so doing, the formless unseen cause is recognized as the material cause, the उपादान कारणं for all the formful effects seen in this entire universe.

परमेश्वर has already been pointed out as Formless (अमूर्तः). I come to the temple and see The same ONE परमेश्वर in so many different forms. How can I do that? By



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naturally identifying all the different forms with That same ONE परमेश्वर Itself. I recognize that the material cause for all forms I see, and also every part of each form I see, both individually and collectively, are nothing but That ONE Formless परमेश्वर Itself.

It is just like this: Talking in relative terms, a molding clay, by itself, is formless. Out of that molding clay, one makes different forms, according to one's own imagination. It is obvious then, that all these forms and every part of every form, both individually and collectively, are nothing but that molding clay as the material cause for all the forms arising from that clay.

Similarly, in this verse, The Upanishad gives an imaginary Form to That परमेश्वर with reference to this creation as a whole.

What Form one can give to परमेश्वर? Any Form, one may choose to worship as परमेश्वर Itself, is appropriate for the purpose here. Because, Sri Krishna says:

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तान् तथैव भजाम्यहं G 4 - 11

"In whatever manner, in whatever form, with whatever motive, and to whatever extent people worship Me, The परमेश्वर, I bless them exactly in the same manner, and precisely to the same extent".

Accordingly, the Upanishad chooses here to describe परमेश्वर in a particular imaginary form, whose purpose is only to communicate the knowledge that परमेश्वर is the material cause - उपादान कारणं, for all forms and names in this entire creation, including the creation itself. Presenting that imaginary form, the Upanishad indicates परमेश्वर as ONE

यस्य मूर्धा अग्निः - whose Head is Agni (fire) - (Heaven)

यस्य चक्षुषी चन्द्र सूर्यौ - Whose eyes are the moon and the sun

यस्य श्रोत्रे दिशः - whose ears are the various directions

यस्य विवृताश्च वेदाः वाक् - whose organs of speech are the well-known Vedas revealed by परमेश्वर Itself

यस्य प्राणः वायुः - Whose प्राण is Air



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यस्य हृदयं विश्वम् - Whose heart, whose अन्तःकरण - whose internal organs of perception in the entire creation, is the entire world of knowledge.

यस्य पद्भ्यां पृथिवी - whose feet are earth

एषः हि सर्वभूत अन्तरात्मा - That परमेश्वर is indeed The पूर्ण पुरुष indwelling as The Innermost Self in all Beings, in all forms and names, as the Seer, Hearer, Thinker, Knower, etc., as सर्वकारण आत्मा - as The Cause of all causes, as The Self in every self.

Thus, That पूर्ण पुरुष is The material cause for all that exists in this entire creation. One may choose to use the above imaginary form of परमेश्वर (or any other Form) one may like) for the purposes of ईश्वर उपासन - Worship of परमेश्वर, or meditation on परमेश्वर.

In Chandogya Upanishad, a particular Form of meditation on परमेश्वर called पञ्चाग्नि विद्या, is described, wherein the word अग्नि is used to indicate असौ लोकः - The world beyond earth, the heaven.

We may recall here, briefly, the व्याहृति उपासन in Taittiriya Upanishad, where the व्याहृति mantra सुवः is identified with असौ लोकः (सुवरित्यसौ लोक), असौ लोकः is the world of all planets in the sky beyond earth. That असौ लोकः is द्यु लोकः - the abode of all celestial beings, which we call Heaven.

In the पञ्चाग्नि form of meditation on परमेश्वर, अग्नि - the fire (the first of the five fires involved in the meditation) is identified with the entire world of celestial Beings - the Heaven. The Upanishad here calls attention to the पञ्चाग्नि form of meditation on परमेश्वर in the next verse.

Therefore, in the context here, by the words

यस्य मूर्धा अग्निः - The head of the imaginary form of परमेश्वर is indicated here as अग्नि, meaning द्यु लोकः - The Heaven, the abode of all celestial beings.

Let us always remember this: The discussion here is not about पञ्चाग्नि विद्या. It is brought in here to focus attention on an essential message, namely:

Whatever form one gives to परमेश्वर for purposes of worship or meditation



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वासुदेवः सर्वम् इति ज्ञानं

परमेश्वर is ALL, परमेश्वर is both the efficient cause as well as the material cause for all that exist in this creation. That is the knowledge that needs to be understood, appreciated, realized and recognized by every person. This knowledge is being communicated repeatedly through different pointer words in the rest of this Upanishad.

We will continue with the Upanishad next time.