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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

मुण्डक उपनिषत्

Chapter 3

Section 1

Volume 21

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कर्तारं ईशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
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निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यं उपैति ॥ 3 - 1 - 3

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अन्तः शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो
यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः ॥ 3 - 1 - 5

As we saw last time, when the अहंकार I - the ego I in any person, in any जीव recognizes Self I, The आत्मा I already in one's body vehicle, as जुष्टं ईशं परमेश्वरं, as आनन्द स्वरूप शुद्ध चैतन्य आत्मा, The Self I Itself, which means when the जीव gains direct and immediate recognition of the true nature of oneself as The आत्मा I Itself, as Self I Itself, as ब्रह्मन् Itself, as परमेश्वर Itself, and also sees the entire creation as the very glory of That परमेश्वर, of That आत्मा I Itself, of That Self I Itself, and also recognizes The आत्मा, The Self I as सर्वभूतात्मा, as The Self of, indeed every self there is in this entire creation, including the creation itself, when that happens, the अहंकार I, the ego I, the false I in the जीव naturally disappears, revealing the identity of जीवात्मा and परमात्मा. Then, the जीव becomes, the person becomes वीतशोकः - totally free from any kind of sorrow, sadness or distress, arising from all bodily limitations. The same message is unfolded further in the next verse.



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कर्तारं ईशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय
निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यं उपैति ॥

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यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णम् कर्तारं ईशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम्
पुरुषं ईशं पश्यति (पश्यते)

पश्यः here refers to a जीव - any person who sees clearly and totally (without any doubt or vagueness) what one really is. Such a person is indeed a चिबेकि one who has नित्य अनित्य चिबेक - a wise person

यदा पश्यः पश्यति - When such a जीव sees, recognizes; recognizes what?

पुरुषं ईशं पश्यति means आत्मानं पूर्णम् ईशं पश्यति - recognizes oneself, The Self I, as पूर्णम् ईशं - as the all-inclusive परमेश्वर Itself, The ONE without a second

रुक्मवर्णम् ईशं पश्यति - recognizes oneself, The Self I, as रुक्मवर्णम् ईशं, as स्वयं ज्योतिस्वरूपं ONE whose very nature is Self-effulgence, ज्योतिषां ज्योतिः - as The Light for all lights in this creation (रुक्मवर्णम् literally means "golden color" which is the color of the flame without smoke)

कर्तारं ईशं पश्यति - recognizes oneself, The Self I, as शृष्टिकर्ता, as The ONE who is the cause for this entire creation

ब्रह्मयोनिम् ईशं पश्यति - recognizes oneself, The Self I, as ब्रह्म च योनिम् च, as सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म Itself, also as The ONE who is the cause for हिरण्यगर्भ - the seed for this entire universe, and also as Omniscient, the abode of all forms of knowledge (all that is indicated by the word ब्रह्मयोनिम्)

यदा पश्यः पश्यति - When the जीव sees Itself, recognizes Itself in the above manner as आत्मानं पूर्णम् ईशं, रुक्मवर्णम् ईशं, कर्तारं ईशं and ब्रह्मयोनिम् ईशं
तदा - then, That जीव

विद्वान् भवति - becomes a विद्वान्, a wise person, a चिबेकि. That विद्वान्



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पुण्यपापे विधूय, पुण्यपापे दग्ध्या - burning up to ashes all of one's पुण्य कर्मs and पाप कर्मs, by the fire of such wisdom, as Sri Krishna says:

ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मात् कुरुते (G.4-37) - The fire of wisdom reduces सर्वकर्माणि - all actions both पुण्य कर्मs and पाप कर्मs to ashes, which means, all actions, even as they are being done, are rendered seedless and rootless. They cannot sprout any further. They cannot produce any action or reaction. That विद्वान्

निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यं उपैति - निरञ्जनः means निर्लेपः सन् - being free from all forms of impurities, being absolutely pure, and being free from all afflictions

परमं means Limitless

साम्यं means समस्त भावं - being पूर्णम्, being all inclusive, ONE without a second
उपैति - reaches

आत्मतया गच्छति - reaches by oneself naturally. Therefore,

तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय, निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यं उपैति - When the जीव recognizes oneself as आत्मानं पूर्णम् ईशं, as परमेश्वर Itself, then, the जीव becomes a विद्वान् - a wise person, burning all of one's पुण्य कर्मs and पाप कर्मs to ashes by the fire of wisdom, and thus being free from all forms of impurities, being totally pure in one's अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि - परमं साम्यं उपैति - naturally reaches The Limitless all-inclusive आत्मा I, already in oneself, and thus gains for oneself, ONE'S true Self I Itself. There is no longer any isolation of जीव I and आत्मा I, and the विद्वान् now enjoys the identity of जीवात्मा and परमात्मा as आनन्दरूपं - Absolute Supreme Happiness.

Talking about That विद्वान् - the wise person again, the Upanishad continues:

47. प्राणो हि एषः यः सर्वभूतैः विभाति

विजानन् विद्वान् भवते न अतिवादी ।

आत्म क्रीडः आत्मरतिः

क्रियावान् एषः ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठः ॥

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The Upanishad is now talking about a जीव - a person who has matured into a विद्वान् by virtue of one's Self-recognition.

यः एषः प्राणः हि सर्वभूतैः विभाति



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प्राणः refers to प्राणस्य प्राणः - the प्राण of प्राण. As the केनोपनिषत् says:

यत् प्राणेन न प्रणिति, येन प्राणः प्रणीयते तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि - That which is not sustained by प्राण, but That by which प्राण is sustained, That is indeed The ब्रह्मन्, The आत्मा, The परमेश्वर.

यः एषः प्राणः - यः एषः विद्वान् जीव प्राणः - The person, the विद्वान् who recognizes the true identity of oneself as The ब्रह्मन्, The आत्मा, The Self I as रुक्मवर्णम् पुरुषं ईशं कर्तारं ब्रह्मयोनिम्, as परमेश्वर Itself as indicated in the last verse, That person, That विद्वान्

हि - indeed

सर्वभूतैः विभाति - सर्वभूतैः विशिष्ट आत्मा सन् - सर्वभूतस्थ आत्मा सन् विभाति - That विद्वान् विभाति विविधं दीप्यते shines in a manifold manner, shines in the form of this manifold creation, as said earlier (मु 2 - 2 -10)

तमेव भान्तं अनुभाति सर्वम्, तस्य भासा सर्वम् इदं विभाति - because of That Self-shining आत्मा already everywhere in oneself, all that exist in this creation shine as they do. That विद्वान्

सर्वभूतैः विभाति - all the various beings which exist in this creation, such as the आकाश, वायु, अग्नि, आपः, पृथिवी - all those five great elements, all of them constitute विशिष्ट आत्मा - the सर्वभूतस्थ आत्मा - the all-pervading आत्मा, The ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर. Therefore, That विद्वान्, सर्वभूतस्थः सन् विभाति, abiding in all beings as The आत्मा, The परमेश्वर already in oneself, विभाति shines independently by Itself.

That means the आत्मा in one's उपाधि - body vehicle, is not an isolated आत्मा, is not isolated from anything in this creation. While every being that exists in this creation depends for its very existence on आत्मा, The आत्मा Itself exists independent of everything else in this creation.

Thus एषः जीव आत्मा - The जीवात्मा in the body of this Self-recognized विद्वान् exists as सर्वभूतात्म भूतात्मा (as Sri Krishna says (G 5 - 7)).



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The जीव, the person, The चिद्वान्, now naturally realizes "The Self in myself is indeed The Self of every self there is". That realization is indeed Self-realization. When that happens, कुर्यन्नपि न लिप्यते (G 5 - 7) even while performing actions, the person is not touched by, tainted by, or affected by any action. That is what is communicated here.

विजानन् चिद्वान् भवते (भवति) न अतिवादी

जानन् means knowing

आत्मतया जानन् is विजानन् - knowing as Oneself Itself. Therefore तं आत्मानं आत्मतया जानन् विजानन् - Knowing That आत्मा, The ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर as ONESELF Itself

चिद्वान् न अतिवादि भवति - The Self-recognized चिद्वान् does not become an अतिवादि - the one who makes tall claims for oneself. The person who recognizes that The Self in Myself is indeed The Self in every self - अयं आत्मा अहं अस्मि, The आत्मा, The I the Upanishad unfolds, is indeed myself. ब्रह्मैवाहं अस्मि - The ब्रह्मन्, the Upanishad unfolds as सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म is indeed Myself. "I am indeed परमेश्वर Itself" if a चिद्वान् vidvān talks like that, that person is not blabbering, that person is telling the truth, just like what Brigu does on gaining Self-realization.

अहमन्न महमन्न महमन्नम्

अहमन्नादो अहमन्नादो अहमन्नादः etc.

On the other hand, there are indeed some misguided people, with असुर स्वभाव, who entertain the notion " ईश्वरोहं - I am परमेश्वर, therefore I do whatever I want" etc. About such people, Sri Krishna talks in Chapter 16 of भगवत् गीता which we will see a little later.

By recognizing oneself as परमेश्वर Itself, a चिद्वान् does not become an अतिवादि - one who talks too much. On the other hand, what does a चिद्वान् become?

आत्मक्रीडः आत्मरतिः क्रियावान् भवति - Such a चिद्वान् becomes आत्मक्रीडः as well as आत्मरतिः - the ONE who enjoys ब्रह्मानन्दं. Being the सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् Itself, both outside of oneself as well as inside of oneself; and also क्रियावान् the चिद्वान् remains totally fulfilled in all of one's previous efforts with respect to the pursuits of ज्ञानं - उपनिषत् Knowledge, ध्यानं - ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर ईक्षणं and ईश्वर आराधनं, and also वैराग्यं - total dispassion for कर्मफल - results of actions.



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Such a विद्वान् is naturally a ज्ञानी and highest among ईश्वर भक्तस (G 7 - 17), Such ईश्वर भक्तस spend the rest of their worldly life, in the words of Sri Krishna (G 10 - 9):

मच्चित्ता मद्वत्प्राणा बोधयन्तः परस्परम् ।
कथयन्तश्च मां नित्यं तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च ॥

Their mind and बुद्धि are always in परमेश्वर ध्यानं. Their organs of perception and action are always flowing towards and merging into the ocean of परमेश्वर, already in themselves. Their actions are dedicated to the welfare of the entire world. They love to sing, to teach and to listen more and more on the glories of परमेश्वर. When they talk to other people, the topic of conversation is always about the glories of परमेश्वर only. So being and so doing, तुष्यन्ति च रमन्ति च - they enjoy themselves both outside of oneself as well as inside of oneself. विद्वान् ब्रह्मविदां चरिष्ठः Being so and doing so, such a विद्वान् - a self-recognized person, is the most exalted among those in the total pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं

ब्रह्मवित् - The knower of ब्रह्मन्, being ब्रह्मन् Itself, such a विद्वान् is ब्रह्मन् Itself, is परमेश्वर Itself. Consequently, such a विद्वान् is the most exalted among all manifestations of परमेश्वर in this entire creation.

Having said that, the Upanishad now talks about some of the pre-required values and spiritual practices that a person must necessarily cultivate in full measure, in order for one to be able to become such a विद्वान्- a totally fulfilled person in life. The Upanishad says:

48. सत्येन लभ्यः तपसा हि एष आत्मा
सम्यक् ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यं ।
अन्तः शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो
यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः ॥

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एष आत्मा लभ्यः

एष आत्मा - This आत्मा - उक्त लक्षण आत्मा, The आत्मा, The ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, about which the Upanishad has been talking about all along - This आत्मा लभ्यः has to be gained, has to be recognized, has to be reached. One must first of all, set That as one's



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overriding पुरुषार्थ - as one's overriding goal of life. Before one can do so, one must first be convinced that आत्मा अस्ति - "आत्मा does exist" and then follow the Upanishad teachings in full, until one finally recognizes आत्मा अस्मि" That आत्मा I am" (6-13). Between आत्मा अस्ति and आत्मा अस्मि, there is a long distance, for most people.

First, how is one convinced that आत्मा अस्ति - आत्मा - does exist? From all that we have seen thus far in the Upanishads, it is clear that आत्मा - The परमेश्वर, as an entity, must exist. Otherwise all that we see in this amazing creation cannot exist as they are. Further, as the Upanishad has already pointed out (मु 1-2-12)

परीक्ष्य लोकान् कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणः
निर्वेदं आयात् नास्ति अकृतः कृतेन ।

Analyzing all of one's worldly experiences resulting from one's actions, a mature person who is ripe for waking up, gains a realization of the essential powerlessness of actions, to provide everlasting happiness - Total Fulfillment in life

नास्ति अकृतः कृतेन - if there is a Being with unlimited powers, That Being is not a created Being at all.

अकृतः - The Unlimited Uncreated Being

कृतेन न अस्ति - cannot be produced by any action. That means, That Unlimited Uncreated Being must be Eternal in existence.

One comes to the same realization from the words of the कठोपनिषत् (कठ 2-10)

न हि अध्वैः प्राप्यते हि ध्रुवं तत् ॥

अध्वैः means अनित्यैः - through means which are transient in nature

तत् ध्रुवं - That which is Eternal, That आत्मा, The परमेश्वर

न हि प्राप्यते - certainly cannot be gained, cannot be reached

That which is Eternal cannot be gained, cannot be reached through that which is transient. That which is Infinite cannot be gained through the multiplication of the finite. That which is timeless cannot be reached through an endless extension of time. That which is unconditioned cannot be gained by an indefinite stretching of the conditioned.



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Therefore, both on the basis of the common sense experience in daily life, and also on the basis of the convincing words of the Upanishads, it is absolutely clear that आत्मा अस्ति - आत्मा, The परमेश्वर does exist, and It cannot be gained or reached by any कर्म whatsoever, because every कर्म is limited and transient in nature.

Then how can one gain आत्मा - reach आत्मा? The Upanishad says:

एषः आत्मा सम्यक् ज्ञानेन लभ्यः - This Unlimited, Uncreated, Eternal आत्मा, The परमेश्वर, can be gained, can be reached through सम्यक् ज्ञानं. सम्यक् ज्ञानं has two meanings:

As the means for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge, सम्यक् ज्ञानं means अपरोक्ष ज्ञानं - clear, direct and immediate knowledge gained through श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं of Upanishad knowledge, leading to the ultimate recognition:

- ब्रह्मैवाहं अस्मि - I am indeed ब्रह्मन्
- अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म - The Self I in myself is ब्रह्मन् Itself

That is one meaning.

As ज्ञानसाधनं ज्ञानं, as the means helpful for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge सम्यक् ज्ञानं means सम्यक् आत्मविचारां - proper enquiry on the true nature of आत्मा, The ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर - leading to That परमपुरुषार्थं - overriding Goal of Life.

As Sri Krishna says: (G 15-4)

ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।

ततः पदं - That Ultimate Goal of Life, That वैष्णवं परमं पदं - That Abode of all-pervading परमेश्वर, already in oneself, should be enquired into properly, seeking clear recognition of That ब्रह्मन्. The Destination about which one needs to enquire is तत् पदं - That ब्रह्मन् reaching which one becomes ONE with That ब्रह्मन् Itself and never has to return to संसार through rebirth. It is तत् पदं - That Destination about which one should enquire properly. Properly means in the words of Sri Krishna:

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया (G 4-34) The mode of enquiry is three fold:



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प्रणिपातनं परिप्रश्नं सेवनं

प्रणिपातनं is diligent study of Upanishad teachings with humility, dedication and unqualified श्रद्धा.

परिप्रश्नं is reflecting on the content of the Upanishad teachings through repeated questioning of one's own understanding and

सेवनं is doing every कर्म as ईश्वर कैङ्कर्य कर्म - service to परमेश्वर with कर्मयोग बुद्धि and अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति

But, even to become fit for undertaking such an enquiry, one must have cultivated, in full measure, some pre-required qualifications and they are with respect to सत्यं, तपस् and ब्रह्मचर्यम्. We will talk about these qualifications next time.