



मुण्डक उपनिषत्

Chapter 3

Section 1

Volume 23

50. बृहत् च तत् दिव्यं अचिन्त्य रूपं  
सूक्ष्मात् च तत् सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति  
दूरात् सुदूरे तत् इह अन्तिके च  
पश्यत्सु इहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ॥ 3 - 1 - 7
51. न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा  
न अन्यैः देवैः तपसा कर्मणा वा ।  
ज्ञान प्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्यः  
ततः तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ॥ 3 - 1 - 8
52. एषः अणुः आत्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यः  
यस्मिन् प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश ।  
प्राणैः चित्तं सर्वम् ओतम् प्रजानाम्  
यस्मिन् विशुद्धे विभवति एष आत्मा ॥ 3 - 1 - 9
53. यं यं लोकं मनसा संविभाति  
विशुद्धसत्यः कामयते यान् च कामान् ।  
तं तं लोकं जयते तान् च कामान्  
तस्मात् आत्मज्ञं हि अर्चयेत् भूतिकामः ॥ 3 - 1 - 10
- इति तृतीय मुण्डके प्रथमः खण्डः ॥

As we saw last time, the Upanishad points out:

येन सत्येन पन्थाः ऋषयः आप्तकामाः सन्  
आक्रमन्ति यत्र तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानं  
अन्तः शरीरे पश्यन्ति



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Through spiritual striving, rooted in the paths of सामान्य सत्यं and धर्मम्, together with तपस्, ब्रह्मचर्यम्, सम्यक् आत्मविचारं, and सम्यक् ज्ञानं, the enlightened Rishis, having become totally free from all longings, cravings and desires for कर्मस and कर्मफलस, ascend in their spiritual ladder, and ultimately they do see (पश्यन्ति), they do recognize, they do reach तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानं - That Supreme Abode of सत्यस्य सत्यं - That वैष्णवं परमं पदं, That विष्णु स्वरूपं, namely That ब्रह्म स्वरूपं, सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, The परमेश्वर, The आत्मा, The Universal Self I inside one's own body-vehicle (अन्तः शरीरे).

Now, the Upanishad points out the nature of That सत्यस्य परमं निधानं, That ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, The आत्मा, The Self I, and where That is recognized inside one's body. The Upanishad says:

50. बृहत् च तत् दिव्यं अचिन्त्य रूपं  
सूक्ष्मात् च तत् सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति  
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पश्यत्सु इहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ॥

3 - 1 - 7

तत् - That सत्यस्य परमं निधानं - That Supreme Abode of ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, The आत्मा, which the enlightened Rishis ultimately reach within themselves, That तत्, That ब्रह्मन्, is

बृहत् - महत् - ONE that is limitlessly Big, Great and Vast. Here बृहत् is Limitlessness Itself (a noun, not an adjective qualifying a noun)

दिव्यं च - It is also दिव्यं - Divine, which means, स्वयं प्रभं - Self-effulgent Pure Consciousness. ब्रह्मन् alone is स्वयं प्रभं. Everything else shines after ब्रह्मन्.

अचिन्त्यरूपं - That ब्रह्मन्, being Formless and all-pervasive, It is beyond any conceptualization as a form. It is the very content of every concept.

When I say "I am sad", the I-concept there is centered on the I-notion about myself. If I am really sad, I can never be happy, which only means that sadness is only a transient notion, subject to change. Even before my mind entertains any notion about myself, I am there as आत्मा, The Self I, independent of all notions about myself. That आत्मा, The Self I, is अचिन्त्यरूपं - beyond all my notions or opinions about myself.



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सूक्ष्मात् च तत् सूक्ष्मतरं - That ब्रह्मन्, The आत्मा, The Self I, is more subtle than the most subtle one can think of. Being all pervasive, there is no place where That ब्रह्मन्, That आत्मा, is not there.

विभाति, विविध रूपेण भाति - That Self-effulgent ब्रह्मन्, आत्मा, The Self I, shines in manifold forms in this creation, as The Sun, the moon, the stars, etc.

Even though That ब्रह्मन् is everywhere in everything, still, for those who are unaware of Its true nature, तत् दूरात् सुदूरे - That ब्रह्मन् is farther away (सुदूरे) than the farthest (दूरात्) one can think of. But, for those who are enlightened of Its true nature

तत् इह अन्तिके च - That ब्रह्मन् is the nearest to oneself, being in one's own body itself.

पश्यत्सु - For those who have grown mature enough to be able to see, they do recognize That ब्रह्मन्.

इह एव अस्मिन् शरीरे एव - in this body itself, in one's own body itself

निहितं गुहायाम् - in one's बुद्धि गुह - in the cave of one's own बुद्धि, to which most people do not even try to reach, in that बुद्धि-हृदय-आकाश, in that ब्रह्मपुरि region of one's own बुद्धि, as the Upanishad said earlier:

एषः आत्मा दिव्ये व्योम्नि ब्रह्मपुरे प्रतिष्ठितः (2-2-7)

How can one reach That ब्रह्मपुरि region in one's own बुद्धि, and recognize That ब्रह्मन्, The आत्मा therein, the Upanishad says:

51. न चक्षुषा गृह्यते नापि वाचा  
न अन्यैः देवैः तपसा कर्मणा वा ।  
ज्ञान प्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्यः  
ततः तु तं पश्यते निष्कलं ध्यायमानः ॥

3 - 1 - 8

तत् ब्रह्म, तत् आत्मा - That ब्रह्मन्, That आत्मा, The Self I

चक्षुषा न गृह्यते - cannot be seen, cannot be reached by the eyes



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वाचा अपि न गृह्यते - cannot be reached by words also

अन्यैः देवैः अपि न गृह्यते - cannot be reached by other इन्द्रियs - organs of perception and action, and also

तपसा कर्मणा वा न गृह्यते - cannot also be reached simply through तपस् - any acts of self-discipline, or through कर्मs of any kind.

We may recall here the words of केनोपनिषत् and कठोपनिषत्, heard earlier, about the nature of That ब्रह्मन्, the आत्मा, The Self I:

यत् वाचा अनभ्युदितं येन वाक् अभ्युध्यते ।  
यत् मनसा न मनुते येन आहुः मनो मतं ।  
यत् चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति ।  
यत् श्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रं श्रुतं ।  
यत् प्राणेन न प्राणिति ये न प्राणः प्रणीयते ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि ॥ (केन 1 - 5 to 9)

- ✓ That which is not revealed by words as their meaning, but by which words reveal their meaning
- ✓ That which cannot be comprehended by the mind, but by which the mind is able to comprehend the world of objects and changes
- ✓ That which cannot be seen by the eyes, but by whose Grace eyes are capable of seeing
- ✓ That which is not heard by the ear as a sound, but by which the ear is able to hear whatever is heard
- ✓ That which is not sustained by प्राण but by which प्राण is sustained

That alone is ब्रह्मन्, The आत्मा, The Self I. Again,

अशब्दं अस्पर्शम् अरूपं अव्ययं  
तथा अरसं नित्यं अगन्धवत् च यत् । (कठ 3-15)

That which does not have sound touch, form, taste, smell as qualities, and yet, because of which alone all qualities are lighted up, and experienced by one's sense organs, That



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

alone is ब्रह्मन्, The आत्मा, The Self I. The nature of That ब्रह्मन्, The आत्मा, being as It is, how can one recognize That ब्रह्मन् ? The Upanishad says:

ज्ञानप्रसादेन विशुद्धसत्यः (सन्) ततः तु ध्यानमानः तं निष्कलं (आत्मानं) पश्यते  
ज्ञानं एव प्रसादं is ज्ञानप्रसादं. Receiving ब्रह्म ज्ञानं - आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge through सम्यक् आत्म विचारं - proper enquiry on the nature of जीव, जगत् and ईश्वर, through श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं of Upanishad knowledge, is Itself a blessing received from परमेश्वर. Receiving ब्रह्म ज्ञानं in the above manner is ज्ञानप्रसादं.

ज्ञानप्रसादेन - By such ज्ञानप्रसादं

विशुद्धसत्यः - सन् (san) having gained

पूर्ण अन्तः करण शुद्धि - Absolute Purity in one's अन्तः करण - in one's mind and बुद्धि

ततः - then

ध्यानमानः (भवति) - the person naturally finds oneself in ज्ञाननिष्ठा, सदा ईश्वर चिन्तनं, being in ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर ईक्षणं, and ईश्वर आराधनं, thus being in परमेश्वर - consciousness at all times. Being so, that person

तं निष्कलं (आत्मानं) पश्यते (पश्यति) - ultimately, naturally (तु) sees, recognizes, reaches That ब्रह्मन्, as निष्कलं आत्मा - as the Undifferentiated indivisible Pure Consciousness, The आत्मा, The Self I, in the ब्रह्मपुरि region of one's own बुद्धि.

52. एषः अणुः आत्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यः

यस्मिन् प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश ।

प्राणैः चित्तं सर्वम् ओतम् प्रजानाम्

यस्मिन् विशुद्धे विभवति एष आत्मा ॥

3 - 1 - 9

एषः अणुः आत्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यः

एषः आत्मा - That आत्मा recognizable by a person in one's own बुद्धि, by virtue of ज्ञानप्रसादं, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं, received as the very blessing of परमेश्वर, That आत्मा is



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

अणुः - अतिसूक्ष्मम् - most subtle. As the कठोपनिषत् says (कठ 4-20)

अणोः अणीयान् महतो महीयान् - It is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest, which means It is formless, dimensionless and limitless.

एषः आत्मा चेतसा वेदितव्यः - That आत्मा has got to be known, has got to be appreciated in terms of knowledge by चेतसा - by an awakened अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि; because that is the only way by which one recognizes, one can reach That आत्मा, in one's निहितं गुहायां - in the cave of one's बुद्धि, in the ब्रह्मपुरि region of one's own बुद्धि. आत्मा can be recognized, can be reached only by ज्ञानप्रसादं, and not by any other means.

यस्मिन् प्राणः पञ्चधा संविवेश - The person who has got to know (वेदितव्यः) That आत्मा, must be able to appreciate this Upanishad knowledge (refer तैत्तिरीय Upanishad 1-7 and 2-6) namely

यस्मिन्, तस्मिन् शरीरे - in this body

प्राणः - वायुः - the vital air

पञ्चधा संविवेश - has entered naturally, permeating all over the body, and operates in the five-fold manner, namely प्राण, व्यान, अपान, उदान and समान as the five-fold digestive powers.

That means, recognition of आत्मा is not after death. It is only when the person is alive, and the अन्तःकरण (the mind and बुद्धि) of the person is awakened for आत्म ज्ञानं that recognition of आत्मा is possible. Recognition of आत्मा is a matter of knowledge, because आत्मा is already present in the body. Therefore, the Upanishad says:

प्रजानां सर्वम् चित्तं प्राणैः (सह) ओतं - Here प्राण refers to all sense organs. The आत्मा, the चेतन आत्मा, The ONE आत्मा as Pure Consciousness, already pervades (ओतं) सर्वम् चित्तं - the entire अन्तःकरण - mind, बुद्धि, चित्तं (memory) and अहंकार (ego I) , together with all sense organs of प्रजानां of all living beings born in different forms, each according to one's own past कर्म, यथा कर्म यथा श्रुतं (कठ 5-7)



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

It is this fact about आत्मा, the सर्वात्मस्वरूपं of आत्मा, the all-pervading nature of आत्मा, that needs to be appreciated by the person seeking recognition of आत्मा in oneself through ईश्वर उपासन ज्ञाननिष्ठा, being in परमेश्वर consciousness at all times (ध्यायमान)

यस्मिन् विशुद्धे विभवति एष आत्मा

यस्मिन् विशुद्धे - Only when the entire अन्तः करण

of the person, the entire mind, बुद्धि, चित्तं and अहंकार of the person is absolutely pure

एष आत्मा विभवति - प्रकाशयति - This ONE सर्वात्म ज्योति स्वरूप सत् चित् आनन्द आत्मा, This ONE all-pervading, self-effulgent. All-knowledge, Pure Consciousness shines, revealing Itself as the सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, The आनन्द आत्मा, The ever fulfilled all-inclusive Self I Itself, as Absolute Happiness Itself (आनन्द रूपं अमृतं यत् विभाति 2-2-7).

Now concluding this section, the Upanishad says:

53. यं यं लोकं मनसा संविभाति

विशुद्धसत्त्वः कामयते यान् च कामान् ।

तं तं लोकं जयते तान् च कामान्

तस्मात् आत्मज्ञं हि अर्चयेत् भूतिकामः ॥

3 - 1 - 10

विशुद्धसत्त्वः - The person whose entire अन्तः करण - mind and बुद्धि, is totally free from every kind of अशुद्ध - impurity

The greatest impurity in the mind and बुद्धि of any person is अविद्या - self-ignorance.

When the अन्तः करण is totally free from the अविद्या - impurity, which means, when the

person has gained आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge, that person becomes विशुद्धसत्त्वः.

Therefore, विशुद्धसत्त्वः here means the person who has gained self-recognition as ब्रह्मन् Itself, as The आत्मा, The Self I, Itself, such a Self-realized person

यं यं लोकं मनसा संविभाति, मनसा सं कल्पयति - whatever kind of experience he or she thinks about, in one's mind, or



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

यान् कामान् च मनसा कामयते - whatever kind of objects he or she desires in one's mind

तं तं लोकं तान् कामान् च जयते - that person wins , which means, he or she gains and feels fulfilled in each and every one of those experiences and also desires, without ever going after any of them

Whatever kind of experience or object of desire may pass through the mind of that person, that person becomes instantly and totally fulfilled in all of them, because the person is already the all-inclusive ब्रह्मन् Itself - सर्वात्मरूप आनन्द आत्मा Itself

As the तैत्तिरीय Upanishad says (तै 3 - 10)

इमान् लोकान् कामान्नी कामरूप्यनुसंचरन् - The Self-realized, The Self-recognized person, being the आत्मा, the self of every self in this creation, that person enjoys simultaneously all objects of enjoyment and all forms of enjoyment which pass through one's mind. Such enjoyment is now possible for that person because of one's सर्वात्मकत्वं - one being सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्, which means any object that the person thinks of, any form that the person thinks of, any manner of enjoyment that the person thinks of, the person gains them all simultaneously, since all of them are ONESELF Itself. That is the Glory of Self-recognition.

तस्मात् - Therefore

भूतिकामः आत्मज्ञं हि अर्चयेत् - any person who is committed to धर्म-अर्थ-काम pursuits, pursuits of worldly objects of various kinds for the fulfillment of one's desires

अर्चयेत् हि - should, indeed seek the blessings of

आत्मज्ञं - The Knower of आत्मा, The ब्रह्मचित्, The Self-recognized person, the ज्ञानी, as the very embodiment of परमेश्वर Itself. So saying ends the first section of the 3rd chapter of मुण्डक Upanishad. We will go to the last section of this Upanishad next time.