



मुण्डक उपनिषत्

Chapter 3

Section 2

Volume 25

57. नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः  
न च प्रमादात् तपसो वापि अलिङ्गात् ।  
एतैः उपायैः यतते यस्तु विद्वान्  
तस्य एष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्म धाम ॥ 3 - 2 - 4
58. संप्राप्यैनं ऋषयः ज्ञानतृप्ताः  
कृतात्मनः वीतरागाः प्रशान्ताः ।  
ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीराः  
युक्तात्मानः सर्वम् एव आविशन्ति ॥ 3 - 2 - 5
59. वेदान्त विज्ञान सुनिश्चितार्थाः  
सन्यासयोगात् यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।  
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले  
परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥ 3 - 2 - 6
60. गताः कलाः पञ्चदश प्रतिष्ठाः  
देवाश्च सर्वे प्रतिदेवतासु ।  
कर्माणि विज्ञानमयश्च आत्मा  
परे अव्यये एकीभवन्ति ॥ 3 - 2 - 7

Continuing from where we left last time

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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

अयं आत्मा बलहीनेन न लभ्यः - This आत्मा, The Self I already in oneself, cannot be gained, cannot be recognized, cannot be reached, by a person who is weak in the required strength. Again

प्रमादात् च अयं आत्मा न लभ्यः - Through प्रमाद - indifference resulting from lack of वैराग्य - lack of dispassion towards all other worldly pursuits, through such प्रमाद also, one cannot gain, recognize, and reach The आत्मा, The Self I, already in oneself. Further

अलिङ्गात् तपसा वा आत्मा न लभ्यः - Through तपस् without लिङ्ग, also, The आत्मा, The Self I cannot be recognized, cannot be reached by any person. What does that mean?

Here, the तपस् - the self-discipline that leads to आत्म ज्ञानं is सम्यक् आत्मविचारं - proper enquiry on the nature of जीव jīva, जगत् jagat and ईश्वर as unfolded by the words of the Upanishads through श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं and the three-fold means of enquiry namely प्रणिपातनं, परिप्रश्न and सेवनं as we talked about earlier (G4-34)

As one progresses through such आत्मविचारं - self-enquiry, one must be able to recognize in oneself some manifestation of such progress in one's own daily life. It is only through such manifestation, one recognizes for oneself, one's own sure progress towards the ultimate destination to be reached, by one's continued आत्मविचार. That manifestation of one's progress, recognizable in oneself, by oneself, is the लिङ्ग, the sure indicator of one's sure progress towards reaching one's ultimate destination, namely Self-recognition.

We must understand the word लिङ्ग here. लिङ्ग is any manifested indicator through which one recognizes the sure existence of something, that is not immediately recognizable for some reason. For example, smoke is a लिङ्ग for the sure existence of fire somewhere. Here the Upanishad points out:

अलिङ्गात् तपसा वा आत्मा न लभ्यः - Through तपस्, through आत्मविचार, Self-enquiry, without any लिङ्ग, without some manifested indicator for one's sure



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

progress in one's endeavor through self-enquiry, the आत्मा, The Self I already in oneself, cannot be reached.

Now, what is the लिङ्ग - the manifested indicator for one's sure progress in one's endeavor through आत्मविचार - self-enquiry? Let me make the following statement just for illustration

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम् यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्  
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधः कस्यस्वित् धनं ॥

I have now heard these Upanishad words, explained and elaborated, again and again, hundreds of times. The message here is this: The Eternal, All-pervading, All-inclusive परमेश्वर is The आत्मा, The Self I, already in myself, recognizable in my own बुद्धि. To recognize That आत्मा by myself, through आत्मविचार - Self enquiry, is the ultimate destination for my life, because, reaching That destination is indeed Total Fulfillment in life. In order for me to be able to progress in such Self-enquiry, the Upanishad gives me the following four distinct instructions to re-order my life immediately. They are:

1. Cultivate परमेश्वर -consciousness at all times, overcoming all apparent obstacles
2. Enjoy life every day, doing whatever comes to you as your duty, and never allow yourself to be propelled by your राग-द्वेष forces, forces of likes and dislikes
3. Cultivate a continuing disposition of संन्यास - renunciation with respect to fruits of all actions. Enjoy life through total detachment from the very notion of doership in all actions; and
4. Never covet, never crave for, never develop an attachment for the wealth of anyone, including that of yourself. Never entertain the notion of ownership with respect to anything in life.

Now, even after having heard the above message hundreds of times, if I do not see any लिङ्ग - any recognizable manifestation of the impact of that message in my values and mental dispositions in my daily life, then the Upanishad tells me loud and clear:

अलिङ्गात् तपसा वा आत्मा न लभ्यः - The आत्मा, The Self I, already in yourself, cannot be reached by you, because of your बलहीनं - lack of strength in विवेक वैराग्य बुद्धि and the related qualities indicated earlier. That is the message here.

Now let us continue with the Upanishad



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

एतैः उपायैः यतते यस्तु विद्वान्  
तस्य एष आत्मा विशते ब्रह्मधाम ॥

तु - On the other hand

यः विद्वान् - the ONE who is a wise person, who

यतते - makes the proper effort to recognize and reach The आत्मा, The Self I in oneself

एतैः उपायैः - by all the means indicated earlier, namely through विवेक वैराग्य बुद्धि,  
together with सत्यं, meaning सामान्य सत्यं, तपस्, सम्यक् आत्मविचारं and सम्यक्  
ज्ञानं

तस्य एष आत्मा - The Self I of that wise person

ब्रह्मधाम विशते - naturally enters into The Abode of ब्रह्मन् in one's own self, which  
means the wise person naturally recognizes the ONENESS of Self I and ब्रह्मन् in one's  
own बुद्धि. The entry of Self I into ब्रह्मधाम - the Abode of ब्रह्मन्, is just like the entry of  
room-space into the total space, which means the room space recognizes its identity  
with the all pervading total space. This is further explained in the next verse.

58. संप्राप्यैनं ऋषयः ज्ञानतृप्ताः

कृतात्मनः वीतरागाः प्रशान्ताः ।

ते सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीराः

युक्तात्मानः सर्वम् एव आविशन्ति ॥

3 - 2 - 5

संप्राप्य एनं - एनं आत्मज्ञानं संप्राप्य - Having naturally gained Self-knowledge ब्रह्मैवाहं

अस्मि - I am indeed ब्रह्मन्, अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म - The Self I in myself is ब्रह्मन् Itself. Having  
gained That Self-knowledge

ऋषयः - the enlightened Rishis

ज्ञानतृप्ताः भवन्ति - ज्ञानेन तृप्तिं गताः भवन्ति - they become totally satisfied by Self-  
knowledge, which is free from all limitations. Being so, they also become totally free from  
all notions of limitations

कृतात्मानः भवन्ति - they become totally fulfilled in the very purpose of life, having  
reached their ultimate destination



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

वीतरागाः भवन्ति - they become totally free from all worldly attachments and likes and dislikes in the rest of their worldly life

प्रशान्ताः भवन्ति - they enjoy the abiding tranquility arising from Enlightenment of Self-knowledge. Further

ते धीराः - ते धीरपुरुषाः - these enlightened Rishis

सर्वगं सर्वतः प्राप्य, सर्व व्यापिनं आत्मानं सर्वत्र प्राप्य - having reached, having become ONE with the all-pervading आत्मा, The Self I, everywhere

युक्तात्मानः सन् - with their entire अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि merged in contemplation on आत्मा, The ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर

सर्वम् एव आविशन्ति - they enter into all, they become inseparably ONE with all-existence. That is how ब्रह्मविदः ब्रह्मधाम प्रविशन्ति - The Knowers of ब्रह्मन् enter into The Abode of ब्रह्मन् already in the ब्रह्मपुरि region of one's own बुद्धि.

59. वेदान्त विज्ञान सुनिश्चितार्थाः

सन्यासयोगात् यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।

ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले

परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥

3 - 2 - 6

This is one of the very well known verses in Vedanta, often used to welcome people with scholarship and maturity in वेदान्तविज्ञानं - Upanishad Knowledge. We will see this verse again in कैवल्य उपनिषत्, with minor changes in word structure, the same verse occurs in other Upanishads also.

The Upanishad is now talking about यतयः यत्नशीलाः सन्यासिनः - people who have successfully put forth the proper efforts, which means, people who have gone through the entire pre-required discipline for the successful pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge, namely cultivation of विवेक वैराग्य बुद्धि and related qualities, together with a daily life of सत्यं, धर्मम्, तपस्, ब्रह्मचर्यम्, सम्यक् आत्मविचारं leading to अपरोक्ष आत्मज्ञानं - clear, direct and immediate recognition of आत्मा - The Self I, already in oneself.



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Such यतयः are सन्यासिनः - true सन्यासीs, which means, ज्ञानीs - Self-realized, Self-recognized people who are आत्मज्ञः - ब्रह्मवित् - knowers of ब्रह्मन्. Being so, they are the very manifestations of ब्रह्मन् Itself, परमेश्वर Itself, in an absolute sense. How did they become such true सन्यासीs?

सन्यासयोगात् - through a life of सन्यास and योग in ONE. Life of सन्यास is the ever present attitude of सर्व कर्मफलत्याग बुद्धि - an attitude of total renunciation of the fruits of all actions, the attitude of नैव किञ्चित् करोमि, इन्द्रियाणि इन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्ते - इति ज्ञानं (G 5 - 8 and 9). "I am not the doer of any action. All my organs of perception and actions, each is doing its job as ordained by परमेश्वर. The Self I in myself has nothing to do either with their actions or reactions". Such attitude of one's mind and बुद्धि is सन्यास. And योग yoga is being in परमेश्वर - consciousness at all times.

Through such सन्यास योग बुद्धि, the यतयः have successfully reached their ultimate destination, namely Self-recognition in life. Thus they have become ज्ञानीs.

वेदान्त विज्ञान सुनिश्चितार्थाः - Such ज्ञानीs, such सन्यासीs, are naturally endowed with well-ascertained, clear, doubt-free conclusive वेदान्त विज्ञानं - the knowledge unfolded by the words of the Upanishads, namely ब्रह्मैवाहं अस्मि - I am indeed ब्रह्मन्. अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म - The Self I in myself is ब्रह्मन् Itself, वासुदेवः सर्वम् इति ज्ञानं - परमेश्वर is indeed All, That Knowledge. As a consequence, such ज्ञानीs are

शुद्धसत्त्वाः - people whose अन्तः करण - mind and बुद्धि are absolutely pure, totally free from राग द्वेष - impurities and अविद्या काम कर्म बन्धनs - totally free from the hold of the forces of likes and dislikes, and the bondages of worldly desires and actions born of Self-ignorance.

ते परान्तकाले ब्रह्मलोकेषु परामृताः सर्वे परिमुच्यन्ति

ते यतयः ते सन्यासिनः - Those true संन्यासी, those ज्ञानीs

परान्तकाल - at the time of death

For an ordinary person, अन्तकाल - end of life is only with respect to one's स्थूल शरीर - gross physical body. The सूक्ष्म शरीर - the subtle body is still alive, and it still has a long



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

way to travel through repeated births and deaths. But for a ज्ञानी, अन्तकाल is परान्तकाल - end of life is both for the gross physical body and the subtle body, because a ज्ञानी has no more कर्म to do, or कर्मफल to experience. A ज्ञानी has no rebirth. Consequently परान्तकाले - When the body falls at the time of death

ब्रह्मलोकेषु, ब्रह्म एव लोकः तेषु - for them, The Self I merging into the all-pervading ब्रह्मन् Itself, is their final experience, final Abode. So merging

परामृताः भवन्ति - they become परं - Limitless and अमृतं आनन्दं - Immortal Happiness Itself. They recognize the Self I in them as ब्रह्मानन्द स्वरूपं - Limitless Absolute Happiness Itself.

सर्वे परिमुच्यन्ति - They are released from all individualities of forms and names. Being ONE with ब्रह्मन् Itself, they are now Formless, Limitless and All-inclusive. The expression सर्वे परिमुच्यन्ति - the ज्ञानीs, as जीवs getting released from all individualities of forms and names at the time of their death, is explained in the next verse.

60. गताः कलाः पञ्चदश प्रतिष्ठाः

देवाश्च सर्वे प्रतिदेवतासु ।

कर्माणि विज्ञानमयश्च आत्मा

परे अव्यये एकीभवन्ति ॥

3 - 2 - 7

Any individual person, as a जीव, may be considered to be आत्मा together with an उपाधि - a body vehicle made up of an integrated assembly of 15 functional constituent parts, called पञ्चादश identified in प्रश्नोपनिषत् (प्रश्न 6-4) as: प्राण, श्रद्धा the five great elements (आकाश, वायु, अग्नि, आपः, पृथिवि), इन्द्रियs (organs of perception and action), मनः (mind - entire अन्तः करण), अन्नं (means शरीरं), वीर्यम् (strength), तपः (self-discipline), मन्त्रः (Vedas-cultivated knowledge), कर्मs (actions by virtue of one's गुणs) and लोकs (world of personal experiences). All these 15 constituent parts function under the distinct eternal laws of परमेश्वर, through अधिष्ठान देवताs - presiding deities, which are only distinct manifestations of ईश्वर शक्ति. Thus each कल - functional constituent part, has its own अधिष्ठान देवता. For example, the अधिष्ठान देवताs for the sense of



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## ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

sight, taste and smell are सूर्य, चरुण देवता, and अश्विनि देवताs, etc. respectively. These अधिष्ठान देवताs are the immediate sources of power (प्रतिष्ठाः) from which the कलs derive their powers to function as they do. Now, the Upanishad says:

When the यतयः संन्यासिनः - ज्ञानीs, when they die, this is what happens:

पञ्चदश कलाः प्रतिष्ठाः गताः - The fifteen functional constituent parts of the ज्ञानीs naturally resolve into, which means, they naturally merge and disappear into their respective sources of power. Explaining the above statement further, the Upanishad adds:

सर्वे देवाः च प्रतिदेवतासु गताः - Here देवाः stands for the powers of all इन्द्रियs *indriyas* - all organs of perception and action of the ज्ञानीs. They also resolve into, and naturally merge and disappear into their respective अधिष्ठान देवताs - presiding deities from whom they derived their respective powers. And

कर्माणि विज्ञानमय आत्मा च परे अव्यये एकीभवन्ति - Here कर्माणि stands for the संचित कर्मs. All कर्मs accumulated by the ज्ञानीs before they became ज्ञानीs and विज्ञानमय आत्मा - refers to अन्तः करण उपहित चैतन्यं - consciousness conditioned by the qualities of one's mind and बुद्धि. For the ज्ञानीs, there is no कर्तृत्वभाव - there is no notion of doership in them, and hence there is no कर्ता to do कर्म. Further, their consciousness is absolutely pure. Therefore, their संचित कर्मs and consciousness

परे अव्यये अक्षर ब्रह्मणि एकीभवन्ति - they all become ONE in the All-pervading, All-inclusive अक्षर ब्रह्मन्, परमेश्वर Itself.

We will be completing this Upanishad next time.