



मुण्डक उपनिषत्

Chapter 1

Section 2

Volume 7

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The Upanishad is now talking about some details on the mode of performance of a few Havan कर्मs, just for illustration. Since we do Havan कर्मs of different kinds, both at home and at the temple, on different occasions, it is important for us to know what the Upanishad says about the performance of Havan कर्मs, in general.



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Referring particularly to the performance of Agnihotra and the related Havan कर्मs, the Upanishad says:

11. यदा लेलायते हि अर्चिः समिद्धे हव्यवाहने ।
तदा आज्यभागौ अन्तरेण आहुतीः प्रतिपादयेत् ॥ 1 - 2 - 2

यदा हि - Only when

लेलायते means चलति, moves. When the fire in the Havan Kund is well kindled and burning well, the flame shoots up, moving on all sides. Such movement of flame in the Havan Kund is referred here as लेलायते.

अर्चिः means अग्निशिखा. The tuft for the fire in the Havan Kund, which means, the flame, well kindled and moving on all sides

समिद्धे हव्यवाहने means सम्यक् इद्धे, प्रज्वलिते, अग्नौ - in the very well lighted fire. By using dry twigs from some special trees, the fire in the Havan Kund is very well lighted. Therefore, समिद्धे हव्यवाहने means in the fire that is burning well in the Havan Kund.

Here अग्नि - the fire in the Havan Kund, is called हव्यवाहने the carrier of the oblations to the Devatas being worshipped. हव्यं is हवन योग्यं - what is offered, or what is fit to be offered to the Devata being worshipped. It is by offering materials such as ghee, fruits, food materials of some kind, the grace of the Devata being worshipped is sought. Such offerings to the Devatas are called oblations - आहुतीःs.

तदा - then

आज्यभागौ अन्तरेण means in the middle, between the right and the left portions of the fire in the Havan Kund. In the दर्श and पूर्ण मास Havans, which follow the Agnihotra ritual, two oblations are offered, one in the right portion, and another in the left portion of the fire in the Havan Kund, with the mantras अग्नये स्वाहा and सोमाय स्वाहा respectively. These two portions of the fire are called आज्यभाग, while the middle portion of the fire, where the whole remaining oblations are offered, is called आवापस्थान. Therefore, आज्यभागौ अन्तरेण means in the आवापस्थान the middle portion of the blazing fire in the Havan Kund.

आहुतीः प्रतिपादयेत् - the oblations should be offered with श्रद्धा and devotion. Thus,

लेलायते हि अर्चिः समिद्धे हव्यवाहने - Only when the fire in the Havan Kund is well lighted, and the flame is shooting up, moving on all sides



तदा - then

आज्यभागौ अन्तरेण आहुतीः प्रतिपादयेत् - the oblations to the Devatas should be offered with श्रद्धा and devotion, in the middle portion, in the आवापस्थान of the blazing fire in the Havan Kund. This is with particular reference to Agnihotra ritual which should be performed by every गृहस्थ - every married householder, in the morning and evening of every day throughout one's life.

The purpose of this verse is specifically to point out that no oblation should be offered to any Devata when the fire in the Havan Kund is smoldering with smoke, and strict attention should be given to where and with what mantra, each oblation should be offered in the Havan Kund.

Further, the path of Agnihotra Havan कर्म (which involves proper offering of oblations to Devatas) is the road for any one to be able to get the intended results of such कर्म. But it is difficult to do the Agnihotra Havan कर्म properly in every respect, because it must necessarily be followed by several other Vedic rituals, at different times. Some of these latter rituals are indicated in the next verse.

12. यस्य अग्निहोत्रं अदर्शम् अपौर्णमासं
अचातुर्मास्यं अनाग्रयणं अतिथिवर्जितं च ।
अहुतं अवैश्वदेवं अविधिना हुतं
आसप्तमान् तस्य लोकान् हिनस्ति ॥

1 - 2 - 3

Some of the Vedic rituals which must be performed, along with the Agnihotra Havan कर्म at different times, are the following:

दर्श, पूर्णमास, चातुर्मास्य, अग्रयण, अतिथि पूजा and वैश्वदेव - The दर्श कर्म is done on every new moon day, and, पूर्णमास कर्म and चातुर्मास्य, अग्रयण are seasonal कर्मs. The चातुर्मास्य कर्म is done at the beginning of each season of four months. And the अग्रयण कर्म is done in autumn and spring (शरद ऋतु and वसन्त ऋतु) with newly harvested corn. In every one of these कर्मs, अतिथि पूजा should be done, welcoming one or more guests and serving them with श्रद्धा and devotion. Some of these rituals also involve another कर्म called वैश्वदेव, feeding animals and birds, chanting mantras. And each one of these rituals has got its own precise restrictions and stipulations with respect to their mode of performance. The Upanishad points out here that if the Agnihotra Havan कर्म is not followed by all of the above rituals, in the proper manner, at their appropriate times,



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the Agnihotra ritual itself will result in undesirable consequences. This is how the Upanishad communicates this message.

यस्य अग्निहोत्रं - for the person who performs Agnihotra Havan कर्म

अदर्शम् अपौर्णमासं - if the Agnihotra Havan कर्म is not followed by the दर्श and पौर्णमास कर्मs at their appropriate times, and also

अचातुर्मास्यं अनाग्रयणं - not followed by चातुर्मास्य कर्म and अग्रयणं कर्मs at their appropriate times, and further

अतिथिवर्जितं च - if each of the above कर्मs is not performed together with अतिथि पूजा with श्रद्धा and devotion, and also

अहुतं meaning अश्रद्धया हुतं, if every one of the above rituals is not performed with श्रद्धा and devotion as देवता worship itself, and also

अवैश्वदेवं - if every one of the above rituals is not performed together with वैश्वदेव कर्म - feeding animals and birds in the proper manner

अविधिना हुतं - if all the above कर्मs are not performed exactly as prescribed in the कर्म काण्ड of the Vedas, then,

तस्य - for the person who does the Agnihotra कर्म

आसप्तमान् लोकान् हिनस्ति - the same Agnihotra ritual ruins one's life in all the seven स्वर्ग लोकs namely भूः, भुवः, सुवः, महः, जनः, तपः, सत्यं (ब्रह्मलोक), which also includes one's present life on earth.

आसप्तमान् लोकान् हिनस्ति may also mean that improper performance of the above rituals, ruins the life of the person for seven generations, including one's present life.

Further, there are Havan कर्मs, where oblations are to be offered in different types of flames of the fire in the Havan Kund. Therefore, when one lights up the fire in the Havan Kund, one must be able to recognize the type or the types of flames shooting up from the Havan Kund, depending upon the nature and quality of the tree twigs being used for maintaining the flame. The flame is considered to be the tongue of fire, and hence all oblations are required to be offered into the very mouth of the अग्नि देवता, as it were. There are seven distinct kinds of flames. They are:

13. काली कराली च मनोजवा च



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सुलोहिता या च सुधूम्रवर्णा ।
स्फुलिङ्गिणी विश्वरुची च देवी
लेलायमाना इति सप्त जिह्वाः ॥

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These are the names for सप्त जिह्वाः - the seven moving tongues of fire, tongues of अग्नि देवता. जिह्वाः means tongue; the flame of fire is called tongue because the flame is always out, always wanting more, and ready to consume more. The fire never says अलम् - enough. Therefore the fire is called अनलः - the one who never says enough. अग्नि देवता, as the carrier of the oblations to the देवताs being worshipped, has seven tongues - सप्त जिह्वाः. They are:

काली, कराली, मनोजवा, सुलोहिता, सुधूम्रवर्णा, स्फुलिङ्गिणी and विश्वरुची देवी
इति लेलायमाना सप्त जिह्वाः - These are the names for the seven moving tongues of
अग्नि देवता

काली - The black One, the very color of the flame is black

कराली - the fierce one, the frightening one

मनोजवा - and That which has the speed of mind, the fast moving one

सुलोहिता - That which is deep red and dangerous looking

सुधूम्रवर्णा - that which has the color of thick smoke

स्फुलिङ्गिणी - That which emits sparks of fire

देवी विश्वरुची च - That which is brilliant and manifold with innumerable rays of light

लेलायमानाः - all these flames are always moving on all sides, so long as they last

इति सप्त जिह्वाः - these are the names for the seven tongues of अग्नि देवता consuming the oblations offered to the various Devatas. To these NOT long-lasting tongues of fire, one offers NOT long-lasting oblations, and they produce NOT long-lasting results. That is the message behind the various Havan कर्मs described here.



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We may also note here that परमेश्वर, as कालाग्नि - The Ultimate Fire of TIME, devouring the entire universe at the time of महाप्रलय, is also called सप्त जिह्वाः. We have the following line in विष्णु सहस्र नाम स्तोत्रं

सहस्रार्चि सप्तजिह्व सप्तैधाः सप्तवाहनः

सहस्रार्चि - The ONE who shines with the splendor and brilliance of countless suns, all blazing forth together in the sky. As the Gita says:

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेत् युगपत् उत्थिता ।

सप्त जिह्वाः - The ONE who manifests ONESELF as the seven tongues of flames of fire

सप्तैधाः - The ONE who shoots forth all the seven tongues of flames of fire from one's mouths

सप्तवाहनः - The ONE for whom the सप्त जिह्वाः constitutes the सप्तवाहनः - the seven-fold vehicle for receiving the oblations offered in all Havan कर्मस.

All That is परमेश्वर, as महा विष्णु whom we worship with the words:

ॐ सहस्रार्चिषे नमः (826)

ॐ सप्तजिह्वाय नमः (827)

ॐ सप्तैधाय नमः (828)

ॐ सप्तवाहनाय नमः (829) इति ॥

विष्णु सहस्रनाम अर्चन सप्तैधाय सप्तवाहनाय

That is विष्णु सहस्रनाम अर्चन

Now continuing with the Upanishad

14. एतेषु यश्चरते भ्राजमानेषु

यथाकालं च आहुतयः हि आददायन् ।

तं नयन्ति एताः सूर्यस्य रश्मयः

यत्र देवानां पतिः एकः अधिवासः ॥

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The Upanishad is now talking about a person who has been doing these Agnihotra and related कर्मस properly and diligently throughout one's life. When that person dies, what



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happens to the जीव, the सूक्ष्म शरीर - the subtle body of that person? The Upanishad says:

यः चरते - Regarding the person who performs the Agnihotra and related rituals properly in all respects

एताः आहुतयः - offering the appropriate oblations to the देवताs

यथाकालं - at their stipulated time

एतेषु भ्राजमानेषु - in the tongues of fire when the shining flames are shooting forth from the Havan Kund

When that person dies, the पुण्यs accumulated by the person through one's life-long oblations to the देवताs, those oblation Devatas

तं आददायन् नयन्ति - carry and lead the जीव of the person, the सूक्ष्म शरीर (subtle body) of the person

सूर्यस्य रश्मयः - through the solar path, the bright path, to स्वर्ग - the heaven.

Thus, one's life-long oblations to the Devatas in the Havan कर्मs themselves, by virtue of their own self-effulgent nature, become the rays of the sun along the course of the solar path, the bright path, and they (the oblation, Devatas), carry and lead the जीव of the person, to स्वर्ग - the Heaven. That is the कर्मपफल - the fruit of the Havan कर्मs performed by the person.

तं आहुतयः नयन्ति हि - The oblation Devatas themselves, certainly, lead the जीव of the person through the solar path to स्वर्गलोक - The Heaven.

यत्र देवानां पतिः एकः अधिवासः - Where the one Supreme Lord of all the Devatas, namely इन्द्र, dwells presiding over all the Devatas, which means इन्द्रलोक. Now the Upanishad says how the oblation - Devatas carry the जीव along the solar path

15. एहि एहि इति तं आहुतयः सुवर्चसः

सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिः यजमानं वहन्ति ।

प्रियां वाचं अभिवदन्त्यः अर्चयन्तः

एष वः पुण्यः सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोकः ॥

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आहुतयः सुवर्चसः - The oblations offered by the person in one's Havan कर्मs earlier, are now सुवर्चसः - they are now in the form of स्वप्रकाश देवताs - self-effulgent divine beings. What do they do?

तं यजमानं वहन्ति - They carry the जीव of the यजमान् - the person who formerly performed all the oblations in the proper manner, and

सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिः - they (the Oblation Devatas) lead the जीव to स्वर्गलोक in the solar path, in the bright path of their own self-effulgence. While thus carrying and leading the जीव to स्वर्गलोक, the Heaven

प्रियां वाचं अभिवदन्त्यः - they are also speaking to the जीव in glorious terms with pleasing words, such as

एहि एहि इति - Welcome, welcome to स्वर्गलोक - The Heaven you have been praying for, etc.

अर्चयन्तः च - they also glorify the जीव by saying

एष वः पुण्यः सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोकः

एष ब्रह्मलोकः - what you are passing through now is the path of स्वर्गलोक - the heavenly regions of ब्रह्माजी - the creator

वः पुण्यः सुकृतः - this is the path gained by your well-earned पुण्यकर्मs, the result of all the properly performed oblations to Devatas in your Havan कर्मs.

Thus saying all the pleasing and glorifying words to the जीव, the oblation Devatas carry the जीव to स्वर्गलोक, and leave the जीव there in a prominent place, in the vicinity of the place where इन्द्र lives. There, they leave the जीव, free to do whatever the जीव likes

The जीव has now reached the स्वर्गलोक - Heaven one has been praying for. What does the जीव do in the स्वर्गलोक? We will talk about it next time.