



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 1

श्रीक्षावल्ली

Lessons 9 and 10

Volume 10

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In the past few lessons, the Upanishad has been talking about different kinds of upasanas - meditations involving Japas, Havans, etc. Such meditations do help in gaining a steadiness of mind, which is absolutely necessary to perform any कर्म - any activity, effectively. Such meditations, however, do not replace or cancel the other necessary activities in one's daily life.

While human activities are many and varied, and they are different for different people, there are certain activities, which should be done by all people. The Upanishad talks about such activities in this lesson. They are कर्तव्यं कर्मस - they are कर्मस to be done by everybody. Why? Because they are necessary, first and foremost for cultivating self-discipline.

Self-discipline is an essential prerequisite for any human accomplishment, whether it is with respect to धर्म, अर्थ, काम or मोक्ष. Therefore, Vedic education attaches the greatest importance to the cultivation of self-discipline, and consequently, to those कर्मस which cultivate self-discipline in the first place, and which will also help subsequently in one's pursuit of Upanishad studies for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं - Self-knowledge.

The first objective, however, is to gain self-discipline, which is called तपस्, or तपः in Vedanta. The lesson we are reading now ends with the words तद्धि तपस् तद्धि तपः - तत् हि तपः, तत् हि तपः - That is indeed self-discipline, That is indeed self-discipline, repeated for emphasis. "What is self-discipline" is, those कर्मस which build self-discipline in oneself. What are those कर्मस? The Upanishad says:

1. ऋतं च स्वाध्याय - प्रवचने च ।

ऋतं and स्वाध्याय - प्रवचनं and च, something more. ऋतं is धर्मम् यथा शास्त्रं - right conduct and good moral character in everyday life, in accordance with the teachings of our scriptures. That is called ऋतं. As the Upanishad said in its opening lesson, ऋतं is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - a direct and immediate visible manifestation of परमेश्वर. Wherever you see right conduct, ethical behavior and moral character, there you see परमेश्वर, which means proper conduct and moral character in every day life are the surest means for recognizing परमेश्वर in one's own self, and every self. Therefore, cultivate ऋतं - proper conduct and firm moral character, in everything you do. Without ऋतं, life is one of self-degradation. Do not degrade yourself. Cultivate ऋतं. ऋतं is self-discipline.



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Spiritual knowledge cannot be gained by a person who is morally weak. Therefore, cultivating ऋतं in daily life is the first requirement for one to become fit for gaining spiritual knowledge. ऋतं is indeed तपस् - self-discipline. What is said in the scripture, and what you understand by the words of the scripture must be identical - that is again ऋतं. That is why one needs the help of an appropriate teacher, and also the help of one's own steady mind, to reflect on the words of the scriptures, to understand and assimilate the content and the intent of the scriptures and to act accordingly. Therefore, in the same sentence, the Upanishad says:

स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च

स्वाध्याय is वेद अध्ययनम् - study of the scriptures, learning Vedic knowledge, which includes Upanishad knowledge, and प्रवचनं is वेद अध्यापनम् - teaching the knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Therefore स्वाध्याय प्रवचनं is वेद अध्ययनम् and वेद अध्यापनम् together. Learning and teaching the knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads, both for the good of one's own self as well as for the good of the society, must be done as a matter of self-discipline.

Practicing is the best form of teaching. One has to learn to teach, and one cannot really teach something which one does not practice. Therefore, प्रवचनं - teaching, naturally involves both learning and practicing. Study the scriptures to gain the knowledge of the Vedas and Upanishads, and teach the scriptures by practicing what you learnt.

Such learning and teaching is a single life long activity, two-fold in nature. One without the other is ineffective. This two-fold activity is called स्वाध्याय प्रवचने. Such learning and teaching is not an isolated activity. It has to be done in addition to and along with every other activity in daily life. That is why the word च, meaning "and" is included with the expression स्वाध्याय प्रवचने.

The expression स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च is repeated twelve times, together with each of the twelve other activities listed here as कर्तव्यं कर्म - activities to be done as a matter of self discipline - तपस्. The repetition here is to emphasize that learning, practicing and teaching Veda-Upanishad knowledge should never be missed, even while being engaged in various other activities of daily life. Further,



2. सत्यं च स्वध्याय प्रवचने च

सत्यं is truth. Speak the truth at all times. Not only that, be truthful in thought, word and deed, at all times. सत्यं in action is doing every कर्म in accordance with, and consistent with what you know to be true. That which is सत्यं is also शिवं and सुन्दरं - auspicious and beautiful. Truth, expressed as धर्म in human life is an eternal value. It cannot be molded and shaped to suit one's convenience. All actions must be done in conformity with truth. Such action is indeed तपस् - self-discipline.

Vedanta declares again and again, that peace and prosperity is where truth is, and the truth of all truths is indeed ब्रह्मन्. In addition to being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times,

स्वध्याय प्रवचने च - study, practice and teach the Veda-Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you to be truthful at all times. Such सत्यं, स्वध्याय and प्रवचनं, together is indeed तपस् - self-discipline.

3. तपश्च स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च

तपः - all austerities are collectively called तपस् - penance or self-discipline. Every form of तपस् involves a spirit of sacrifice, a spirit of self-denial, and a spirit of total commitment to a superior goal in human endeavor. Such self-discipline endows one with a superior stamina for a higher and nobler life. Therefore, let there be तपस् - austerity of some kind, in your everyday life. Without तपस्, nothing can be accomplished. With तपस्, anything can be accomplished.

Lack of तपस् means lack of capacity to understand, appreciate and assimilate knowledge. Whether it is objective knowledge or spiritual knowledge, तपस् is particularly essential to assimilate Upanishad knowledge. Therefore, Vedanta declares again and again the importance of तपस् in the pursuit of ब्रह्मविद्या to gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं - आत्मज्ञानं - Self knowledge. Therefore, cultivate the necessary kind of तपस् in your every day life. In addition

स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च - study, practice and teach the Veda Upanishad knowledge. That is indeed self-discipline.

4. दमश्च स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च



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दमः means **इन्द्रिय निग्रहः** – restraint, control and mastery over one's external organs of perception and action. Practice, self-restraint and self-control over your physical expressions - that is **दमः**. Don't be overpowered by anger, impulses, likes and dislikes. Let **ऋतं** – proper behavior and moral character control your actions. That is **दमः** – self-restraint. In addition to practicing such self-restraint,

स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च – study, practice and teach the Veda-Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you to gain **दमः** – self-restraint in your physical expressions. That is indeed self-discipline.

5. शमश्च स्वाध्याय – प्रवचने च

शमः means **मनो निग्रहः** : – control and mastery over one's mind, mastery over one's ways of thinking. The mind is only an instrument, and it can be used or misused, just like any other instrument. When one reduces one's mind to the level of an instrument, then one becomes the master of the mind, and when that master is also governed by **ऋतं** – proper behavior and moral character, then the mind of that master enjoys quietitude, which is called **शमः**. Cultivate such quietitude of mind. In addition,

स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च – study, practice and teach **वेद** -Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you to cultivate quietitude of mind. That is indeed self-discipline.

6. अग्रयश्चस्वाध्याय प्रवचने च

अग्रयः means **अग्नि-आदि देवता आराधन**, which means **इष्ट देवता आराधन** – worshipping **देवता**s in names and forms which are in harmony with one's own **स्वभाव गुण** – one's own natural maturity and upbringing. Cultivate **ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि** – cultivate the attitude of **प्रसाद बुद्धि** in all your daily activities. In addition

स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च – study, practice and teach Veda-Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you to cultivate **प्रसाद बुद्धि** in all your daily activities. That is indeed self-discipline.

7. अग्निहोत्रं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

अग्निहोत्रं refers to any ritual involving Agni - fire. Even if you light a lamp and say a prayer, it is **अग्निहोत्रं**. Such rituals may play an enormously important part in contributing to the spiritual growth of every human being. Therefore, perform such



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rituals appropriate to your natural maturity and upbringing, with total dedication and devotion. Let such rituals, with proper attitude, be part of your daily life. In addition

स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च – study, practice and teach Veda-Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you in performing your rituals with proper dedication and devotion. That is indeed self-discipline.

8. अतिथयश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

अतिथयः means guests. When you have guests, known or unknown, treat them as **पूज्याः**. Treat them with worshipful respect and devotion, because such treatment of guests uplifts you to a higher plane of human existence. In addition

स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च – study, practice and teach Veda-Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you to treat guests with a worshipful attitude. That is indeed self-discipline.

9. मानुषं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

मानुषं refers to all social and worldly duties. Perform all your social and worldly duties properly and diligently in the highest interest of human welfare. In addition

स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च – study, practice and teach Veda-Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you in performing your social and worldly duties properly. That is indeed **तपस्** – self-discipline.

10. प्रजा च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

11. प्रजनश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

12. प्रजातिश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च

प्रजाः, प्रजनः, प्रजातिः – These refer to family duties.

प्रजाः – Duties concerning the welfare of all members in the family

प्रजनः – begetting children in accordance with **ऋतं**, proper conduct and moral character

प्रजातिः – Getting grandchildren, which means, doing whatever you need to do so that your sons and daughters are happily married, in the overriding interest of the family and the society as a whole.



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All these are duties of a householder. These duties must be performed properly, fully, and in time. In addition,

स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च - study, practice and teach Veda-Upanishad knowledge, and that will also help you to perform the above family duties properly and in time. That is indeed तपस् - self-discipline.

Thus, in addition to स्वाध्यायप्रवचने - studying, practicing and teaching Veda-Upanishad knowledge, which has to be done throughout one's life, twelve other specific activities have been listed as कर्तव्य कर्म s - कर्म s to be done by everybody, and they are

1. ऋतं - maintaining proper conduct and moral character in daily life
2. सत्यं - being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times
3. तपः - maintaining personal austerities of various kinds
4. दमः - self-restraint in physical expressions
5. शमः - control over one's ways of thinking
6. अग्रयः - daily worship of इष्ट देवता
7. अग्निहोत्रं - ritualistic worship of परमेश्वर
8. अतिथयः - worshipful treatment of guests
9. मानुषं - proper performance of one's social and worldly duties
10. प्रजाः - taking proper care of the family
11. प्रजनः - begetting children consistent with moral character
12. प्रजातिः - duties towards the happy marriage of children

All the above कर्मs build self-discipline, and they are also helped by self-discipline in their proper and effective performance.

Now the Upanishad wants to emphasize that सत्यं - being truthful in thought word and deed at all times, तपः - maintaining some kind of austerity in one's daily life, and स्वाध्याय प्रवचने - studying (learning), practicing and teaching Veda-Upanishad knowledge, are particularly important for everybody for cultivating self-discipline. The Upanishad says that by quoting some authorities. The Upanishad says:



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सत्यमिति सत्यवचा - राथीतरः - According to Rishi राथीतरः, who always speaks the truth, TRUTH being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times, is the highest form of self-discipline.

तप इति तपोनित्यः पौरुशिष्टिः - According to Rishi पौरोशिष्टिः, who does some kind of तपस् at all times, तपस्, being in तपस् of some kind at all times, is the highest form of self-discipline

स्वाध्याय प्रवचने एवेति नाको मौद्गल्यः - According to Rishi नाक, son of मुद्गल्य, studying (learning), practicing and teaching Veda-Upanishad knowledge throughout one's life is the highest form of self-discipline.

All this simply means सत्यं, तपस् and स्वाध्यायप्रवचने, all the three, are complementary to each other, and one cannot be done without the other two. Therefore, सत्यं, तपस् and स्वाध्याय प्रवचने together constitute the very basis for a meaningful and fulfilling life.

तद्धि तपस्तद्धि तपः - तत् हि तपः, तत् हि तपः - That is indeed तपस् - self-discipline. That is indeed तपस् - self-discipline. So says the Upanishad. Now we go to the next lesson, Lesson 10.

In the last lesson which we just read, the extraordinary importance of स्वाध्यायप्रवचने - studying, practicing and teaching of Veda-Upanishad knowledge was emphasized repeatedly twelve times, and it was itself described as तपस् - a necessary act of self-discipline for meaningful everyday life.

Such स्वाध्यायप्रवचने itself requires regular scripture reading every day, scripture reading not simply in a mechanical manner, but scripture reading in a highly dedicated manner with total understanding, appreciation and absorption of the content of the words of the material being read, always keeping the ultimate goal in mind. To bring the mind and बुद्धि ready for such scripture reading is itself a kind of तपस् - an act of self-discipline. The object of this तपस् is to reset, uplift and orient the mind and बुद्धि towards the ultimate goal to be reached by such scripture reading, namely, gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं - gaining Self-realization, gaining recognition of ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर, already in oneself as ONESELF Itself, gaining realization as ब्रह्मैवाऽहं अस्मि - I am indeed ब्रह्मन्.



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When one does reach that goal, and gain such self-realization, how does one feel about oneself? It is said in the Vedas that on gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं – Self-realization, one famous Rishi Trishanku felt so great about himself that he spontaneously exclaimed to himself as follows, expressing his exalted state of total self-fulfillment. This is the post-self-realization monologue of Rishi Trishanku.

अहं वृक्षस्य रेरिवा ।
कीर्तिः पृष्ठं गिरेरिवा ।
ऊर्ध्वपक्त्रो वाजिनीव स्वमृतमस्मि ।
द्रविणं सर्वसम् ।
सुमेधा अमृतोक्षितः ।
इति त्रिशङ्को- वे दानुवचनम् ॥

1. अहं वृक्षस्य रेरिवा (= रेरिचन्)

अहं – I here is आत्मा "I". वृक्षस्य – of the tree. Here the tree is संसार वृक्ष – this entire creation of transient existence. रेरिचन् – the stimulator, or the mover. Therefore,

अहं वृक्षस्य रेरिवा – I am The आत्मा, the stimulator, or the mover of this entire creation of transient existence. Remaining in this body as आत्मा, I am the one who keeps this entire creation going. How? संनिधिमात्रेण – By just being there. By my very presence, the mind becomes mind, the बुद्धि becomes बुद्धि, the sense organs become what they are, and the entire creation becomes what it is. Thus I am The आत्मा "I" is सर्वस्य कारणं – the ultimate cause of all causes. That is what I am.

2. कीर्तिः पृष्ठं गिरेरिवा

कीर्तिः – My ख्याति – my glory is गिरेः पृष्ठं इव – like the top of a mountain. My glory being top-most, includes all glories in this creation. Any glory anywhere in this creation is nothing but my own glory. All glories in this creation arise from My glory alone. That is what I am.

3. ऊर्ध्वपक्त्रो वाजिनीव स्वमृतमस्मि

ऊर्ध्वपक्त्रः is ऊर्ध्वम् पक्त्रम् – ऊर्ध्वम् पावनम् – शुद्धम् ज्ञानप्रकाशम् – The शुद्ध आत्मा – The Self, raised to the highest purity and sanctity. The highest self recognized by knowledge, and that is परं ब्रह्म.



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वाजिनी इव - same as in वाजी - the sun

सु अमृतं अस्मि, शोभनं अमृतं अस्मि - I am that Immortal Being free from any contamination. Therefore,

ऊर्ध्वपक्वित्रो वाजिनीव स्वमृतमस्मि - The शुद्ध आत्मा who is in this देह - in this body, and the शुद्ध आत्मा who is in the sun are one and the same. That शुद्ध आत्मा is ज्ञानप्रकाश शोभन अमृत आत्मा - the self-effulgent Immortal Self free from contamination of any kind. That शुद्ध आत्मा - the ज्ञानप्रकाश शोभन अमृत आत्मा is what I am.

4. द्रविणं सवर्चसम् - I am द्रविणं - that exalted wealth, the wealth of ब्रह्मज्ञानं, and I am सवर्चसम्. I am स्वरूप आत्मा - I am the self-shining स्वरूप आत्मा. Gaining wealth is a पुरुषार्थ - one of the objects of human endeavor, and the highest wealth is ब्रह्मज्ञानं, because It is ब्रह्मानन्द - supreme joy, perennial happiness. Thus, being. द्रविणं सवर्चसम् - I am ब्रह्मज्ञानं, स्वरूप, स्वरूप आत्मा, आनन्द आत्मा. That is what I am.

5. सुमेधा अमृतोक्षितः

सुमेधा is शोभना मेधा - सर्वज्ञ लक्षण मेधा. I am auspiciousness Itself. The vigor and memory power of my बुद्धि is the all-inclusive all pervading knowledge itself. Consequently I am endowed with the capacity for creation, sustenance and dissolution of this entire creation. For the same reason,

अमृतोक्षितः - अमृतेन वोक्षितः - I am filled, in and out, by अमृतं - The unchanging, ever existent, all-pervading पर ब्रह्मन्. That अमृतं is परं आनन्दं - exalted happiness, शं सुखं, उत्तम सुखं, स्वरूप सुखं, पूर्ण सुखं - total unchanging supreme happiness, total fulfillment itself. That is what I am.

इति त्रिशङ्को - वेदानुवचनम् - These are the words uttered by Rishi Trishanku at the moment of his self discovery, at the moment of gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं - self recognition, at the moment of his realization of आत्म एकत्व विज्ञानं - oneness of आत्मा - the Self "I".

Even simply recalling those words of Rishi Trishanku, again and again, with reverential devotion, fills one's mind and बुद्धि with courage, faith and confidence in one's own



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endeavors in the pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं through daily scripture reading to gain ultimately the same state of ब्रह्मानन्दं – total fulfillment in life.

Therefore, just before starting one's scripture reading for the day, one usually does a few minutes of जप – silent meditation, on the above words of Rishi Trishanku, as a तपस् – as an act of self-discipline, to bring the mind and बुद्धि ready for the scripture reading, keeping the ultimate goal in view.

The Upanishad calls attention to this practice here, as an essential part of Vedic education.

We will go to the concluding part of this chapter next time.