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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 1

श्रीक्षावल्ली

Lessons 11 and 12

Volume 11

वेद मनु च्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिन - मनु शास्ति ।
सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः ।
आचार्याय प्रियं धन - माहृत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः ।
सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यम् ।
कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । भृत्यै न प्रमदितव्यम् ।
स्वाध्याय प्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् ।
देव पितृ कार्याभ्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् ।
मातृ देवो भव । पितृ देवो भव ।
आचार्य देवो भव । अतिथि देवो भव ।
यान्यनवधानि कर्माणि । तानि सेवितव्यानि ।
नो इतराणि । यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि ।
तानि त्वयोपास्यानि । नो इतराणि ॥

ये के चास्मच्छेयो सो ब्राह्मणाः ।
तेषां त्वयाऽसनेन प्रश्वसितव्यम् ।
श्रद्धया देयम् । अश्रद्धया अदेयम् ।
श्रिया देयम् । ह्रिया देयम् ।
भिया देयम् । संविदा देयम् ।
अथ यदि ते कर्म विचिकित्सा वा
वृत्त विचिकित्सा वा स्यात् ।
ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः सम्मर्शिनः ।
युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः ।
यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् । तथ तत्र वर्तेथाः ।
अथाभ्याख्यातेषु । ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः सम्मर्शिनः ।
युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः ।



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

यथा ते तेषु वर्तेरन् । तथा तेषु वर्तेथाः ।
एष आदेशः । एष उपदेशः । एषा वेदोपनिषत् ।
एतदनुशासनम् । एवमुपासितव्यम् ।
एवमुचैतदुपास्यम् ॥
इति एकादशोऽनुवाकः

शं नो मित्रः शं चरुणः । शं नो भवत्वय्यमा ।
शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः । शं नो विष्णुरुरुक्रमः ।
नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि ।
त्वामेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मावादिषम् । ऋतमवादिषम् ।
सत्यमवादिषम् । तन्मामावीत् तद्वक्तारमावीत् ।
आवीन्माम् । आवीद्वक्तारम्
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
हरिः ॐ
इति द्वादशोऽनुवाकः

This is the concluding part of this chapter. The Upanishad presents here the basic teachings of the कर्म काण्ड of the Vedas, as वेद उपदेश mantras. These mantras are already familiar to us, since we read them, or hear them at this temple every week at this time, as part of the regular Sunday Pooja schedule. These mantras have already been included in our earlier scripture readings on Introduction to Upanishads, which is now available to anyone who is interested.

These mantras have to be heard, understood and appreciated again and again, throughout one's life, because, the messages involved here are extremely important and immediately relevant to our everyday life. Therefore, let us go through these mantras again, paying attention to every word here, just as we did before,

Most of the students pursuing Vedic studies in a formal गुरुकुल - the teacher-student institution, choose to leave their studies to get on in life, as soon as they complete their own chosen parts of the कर्म काण्ड of the Vedas, even before they are exposed to any Upanishad knowledge. On the eve of this departure from the गुरुकुल, the teacher presents to them these वेद उपदेश mantras as अनुशासनम्. अनुशासनम् means words of advice and command.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

We must understand the word अनुशासनम् properly in the context here. Just as a mother advises a child, with a commanding voice, not to play with fire, to protect the child from possible dangers, similarly the teacher advises the students in a commanding language, under the authority of the Vedas, for their own good, and such words of advice and command constitute अनुशासनम्.

This is how the Upanishad presents the वेद उपदेश mantras - the basic teachings of the Vedas.

वेद मनु च्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनं अनुशास्ति

वेदं अनूच्य - having taught the कर्म काण्ड or the pre-Upanishad part of the Vedas

आचार्यः - The teacher अन्तेवासिनं

अनुशास्ति - gives the following advice to the departing students in the commanding words of the Vedas themselves. This is the first command

सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर

सत्यं वद - Speak the truth

धर्मं चर - Follow धर्म

These two simple looking sentences are in fact inseparable. When you speak the truth, you follow धर्म, and when you follow धर्म, you can only speak the truth. Thus सत्यं वद and धर्मं चर are inseparable from each other. Together they constitute the single overriding message, the single overriding advice, and the single overriding command for every human being in one's daily life.

It is the overriding message in the sense that

- ❖ it is the essential message of all our scriptures
- ❖ it is the essence of सनातन धर्म - the Eternal Order of life, the natural law of human existence
- ❖ it is our every day religion
- ❖ it is Hinduism in essence

It is the overriding advice in the sense that it is the surest and the only means for gaining total fulfillment in life. It is the only means for realizing peace and happiness in daily life. There is no other means.

It is the overriding command in the sense that, to disobey that command is only to court self-degradation, and all its consequences. Therefore, the importance of Vedic education communicated by the words सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर cannot be over emphasized.



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Thus सत्यं वद and धर्मं चर constitute the very core of Hindu life. When we worship परमेश्वर in any manner, we are only worshipping सत्यं and धर्मम्, and when we recognize सत्यं and धर्मम् anywhere, there we recognize the direct and immediate manifestation of परमेश्वर in the form of सत्यं and धर्मम्.

The absorption of this message, this advice, this command, is a matter of continuing endeavor for every human being. That is why one has to be reminded of this message again and again, in different ways, and that is exactly what all our scriptures do. In this process of absorption, the message सत्यं वद and धर्मं चर progressively assumes wider and wider, and deeper and deeper dimensions, with the growth of one's spiritual maturity, until finally, all notions of धर्मं merge into सत्यं - dissolve and disappear into सत्यं, and that सत्यं is realized as सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म. We will talk about this merger a little later. Let us now briefly reflect on the simple meaning of the words सत्यं वद and धर्मं चर.

सत्यं वद - Speak the TRUTH. वद means speak. Speak means what? All that we speak is really not speaking. Most often we misuse our organ of speech, and create problems for ourselves and others. वद means वदनार्हम् वद, or वक्तव्यं वद - speak only what deserves to be spoken, speak only what needs to be spoken.

Speaking is वाक् तपस् - self-discipline at the level of speech, which means speak with full control over what you speak, so that whatever needs to be spoken is always सत्यं, हितं and प्रियम् - truthful, helpful and caring. With respect to such speech, सत्यं वद - speak the TRUTH.

Now, TRUTH means what? In every day life, सत्यं is ordinary truth. सामान्य सत्यं - is what is true to the best of your knowledge, which is subject to change in this ever changing world of plurality. As one becomes mature, one realizes that सत्यं is far more than सामान्य सत्यं. There is indeed a higher TRUTH, which is सत्यस्य सत्यं - the TRUTH of all truths, which is never subject to change.

But there is no contradiction between the ordinary truth and the higher truth. And in fact, the ordinary truth is non-separate from the higher truth, and the higher truth can only be realized by adhering to the ordinary truth at all times. Therefore, सत्यं वद - Speak the truth is an advice and command for all times, which means speak the truth at all times.



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

The action of speaking is the distinguishing mark of a human being. The action of speaking is the most exalted among all human actions. Being so, the action of speaking represents all actions of a human being. Therefore, सत्यं वद not only means "speak the truth at all times", it also means "Be truthful in all actions, thought, word and deed at all times.

Be सत्यं at all times. Why? Because your true nature is सत्यं at all times, as you will discover later. Thus the Vedic education expressed by the command word सत्यं वद is about one's own very being, which means, realize your true nature and be your true self, only then you can enjoy peace and happiness in daily life.

That is the meaning of सत्यं वद.

Now about धर्मं चर. Follow धर्मं. Move in the path of धर्मं. While सत्यं वद is concerned with being, धर्मं चर is concerned with doing. Being and doing together constitute the entire life of an individual.

धर्मं is a general word for कर्म that is proper. What कर्म one should do, or one should not do under one's immediate circumstances, that धर्मं cannot be defined in exclusive terms. That धर्मं is not simple ordinary ethics in terms of man-made law. That धर्मं is enlightened, inspired and uplifting action in terms of Sanatana Dharma - the eternal Law of human existence. What that धर्मं is, one has to discover for oneself, on the basis of one's own विवेक बुद्धि - faculty of discrimination. That is where our scriptures like भगवत् गीता come in.

Thus, we must understand that धर्मं is कर्म that is proper. But it is not any particular कर्म. It is कर्म with a special qualification.

Such धर्मं कर्म is श्रौत - स्मार्त कर्म , which means कर्म that is consistent with the teachings of our श्रुतिस, namely, the Upanishads and the भगवत् गीता, and also the lessons of our स्मृतिस, such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagvata, etc. Therefore, we have to continuously educate ourselves by reading again and again at least some of these scriptures, and try to assimilate their teachings in our daily lives. That is why the next Vedic command is

स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमद : स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमद :



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

स्वाध्यायात् means स्व - अध्ययनात् - from one's own study and practice of scriptural teachings

मा प्रमदः - do not dissociate yourself, either because of ignorance, indifference or disregard.

If you neglect scriptural studies and practice for any reason, you can never gain a clear vision of धर्म. You will always remain confused as to what is right and what is wrong, in the varied circumstances of life, and, ultimately, you will let yourself down, at some point, and degrade yourself as a human being.

That is why स्वाध्याय and प्रवचन - studying, practicing and teaching scriptural knowledge should never be missed, even while being engaged in various day to day activities of life. This was emphasized twelve times in the earlier section of this Upanishad (which we saw last time) as a matter of personal discipline. Now, it is being emphasized here again as the means for cultivating wisdom in daily life.

If one has to answer the question - What is Hinduism,

सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः is the complete answer.

The Vedic teaching continues

आचार्याय प्रियं धन - माहृत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः

आचार्याय प्रियं धनं - इष्टं धनं - आहृत्य - अनीत्य - After bringing the teacher, after giving the teacher the wealth as you wish as दक्षिण, as an expression of your gratitude to him, receive the blessings from the teacher, for you to get married, and then,

प्रजातन्तुं means सन्ततिं विस्तारं - मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः - do not snap, do not cut out continuity of family. You do what you have to do to ensure continuity of family in terms of children and grandchildren.

The teacher is now referring to an ancient tradition in Vedic society. The student, while living with the teacher, does not pay any fees, any money to the गुरुकुल, the teacher-student family. In time, the student leaves the गुरुकुल, starts his own career, and just before his marriage, goes to the teacher, expresses his gratitude to him and presents him some material wealth as दक्षिण, and seeks his blessings for his proposed marriage.



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Only after receiving the teacher's blessings, which is called अनुज्ञा, the marriage proposal is finalized, and the marriage itself is later solemnized. Symbolically, this tradition continues even today in all Vedic marriage ceremonies.

The overriding purpose of marriage in Vedic society is to ensure the continuity of the family through children and grandchildren, whose mission is to preserve सत्यं and धर्मम् in society. Therefore, the marriage and the married life themselves must be governed by सत्यं and धर्मम्. Only then the results of marriage and married life can preserve सत्यं and धर्मम् in society. That is how धर्मम् becomes सनातन धर्म and सनातन धर्म protects society through the institution of गुरुकुलs. Consequently, the Vedic society has an obligation to maintain the गुरुकुलs, by presenting दक्षिण s to the teachers.

Therefore, the Upanishad says: "Give the teacher the दक्षिण due to him, as much as you can, on your own free will. Seek the blessings of the teacher for your proposed marriage, then, marry according to सनातन धर्म, and live a full life, so that your children and grandchildren may sustain सत्यं and धर्मम् in the society through the Vedic knowledge and traditions transmitted from generation to generation.

After marriage, life takes different dimensions, even more different than what was imagined by the person as a bachelor. Life becomes more complex, and in the midst of such complexities, it is easy to forget even the fundamentals one learned in one's school days. Therefore, the Veda repeats again:

सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यम्

सत्यात् न प्रमदितव्यम् - Let there never be any negligence, indifference or disregard with respect to सत्यं - being truthful in thought, word and deed, at all times. Indifference to being truthful simply provides an opportunity to fall into falsehood. Once you fall into falsehood, you have already degraded yourself, and it is very difficult to uplift yourself from such degradation. Therefore, even forgetfully or even jokingly, or even to save your life, untruth should never be spoken.

Don't be untruthful in thought, word or deed at any time. Similarly, **धर्मात् न प्रमदितव्यम्** - even forgetfully or even temporarily, either due to ignorance or due to passions, do not neglect धर्म कर्मs, कर्म s which are proper, and never do any improper कर्म at any time. Neglecting proper कर्मs, or doing improper कर्मs really means letting yourself down and degrading yourself. Never degrade yourself.



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यम् - कुशलात् न प्रमदितव्यम् - कुशलं is योग क्षेम of the family - the needs and welfare of every member in your family. Do not neglect your duties with respect to the needs and welfare of each and every member of your family.

भूत्यै न प्रमदितव्यम् - भूतिः refers to मङ्गल कर्मs as well as अर्थ कर्मs. मङ्गल कर्मs are activities related to auspicious occasions, whether they are religious or secular. मङ्गल कर्मs are actions to be done to maintain the health and wealth of the family. Therefore, भूत्यै न प्रमदितव्यम् means never be indifferent to मङ्गल कर्मs and अर्थ कर्मs, because they are ज्ञान साधनं - they are helpful for cultivating wisdom in daily life.

स्वाध्याय प्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् - Even while you are busy doing all the above activities, do not neglect स्वाध्याय and प्रवचन - learning, practicing and teaching Veda-Upanishad knowledge. Scripture readings, together with the practice and teaching of Veda-Upanishad knowledge, must go on every day all through one's life as a matter of self-discipline. Maintaining such self-discipline is the governing rule for a meaningful and fulfilling life.

देव पितृ कार्याभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् - Never neglect, never be indifferent to देव कार्य and पितृ कार्य. देव कार्यs are duties relating to all aspects of one's form of worship of परमेश्वर, and पितृ कार्यs are duties relating to departed ancestors. Never neglect such duties. Never lose sight of your roots.

Your ancestors are your roots, and परमेश्वर is the root of all ancestors. When you say ॐ नमः शिवाय, you are only recognizing your roots. By doing your duties with respect to देव कार्य s and पितृ कार्यs, you are holding on to your roots. Never cut your own roots, and also, never let others cut your roots.

मातृ देवो भव । पितृ देवो भव ।
आचार्य देवो भव । अतिथि देवो भव ।

मातृ देवो भव - You be the one for whom Mother is God. Mother is a direct and immediate manifestation of परमेश्वर. Similarly,

पितृ देवो भव - you be the one for whom father is God. Father is an immediate manifestation of परमेश्वर. Similarly,

आचार्य देवो भव - you be the one for whom teacher is God. Teacher is a direct and immediate manifestation of परमेश्वर. Similarly,



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अतिथि देवो भव - you be the one for whom the guest is God. The guest is a direct and immediate manifestation of परमेश्वर.

These are very beautiful Vedic commands. They have to be understood properly. There is no replacement for परमेश्वर here. There are no descriptions here for mother, father, teacher or guest. There is only one thing involved here, and that is सत्यं - TRUTH.

Whoever my mother is, I am the son of my mother - That is सत्यं. That is TRUTH. That is both सामान्य सत्यं - ordinary TRUTH as well as सत्यस्य सत्यं - the highest TRUTH, never subject to change.

In terms of आत्मा "I", my mother, my father, my teacher, my guest, and, in fact everyone else are one and the same. But unless I learn to worship, I learn to respect, I learn to cultivate a sense of overriding gratitude to my mother, whoever she is, to my father, whoever he is, to my teacher, whoever he is, and to my guest, whoever that person is, I can never realize what सत्यं is, what TRUTH is. I can never realize the divine presence in anything, I can never realize the true nature of existence, and I can never realize the true nature of my own self.

Therefore, the Vedic command is: "Cultivate a divine respect to your mother, your father, your teacher, and your guest, known or unknown. That is the first step in realizing सत्यं, in gaining ज्ञानं - wisdom, in living a life of fulfillment.

Continuing the वेद उपदेश mantras, the teacher says:

यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि । तानि सेचितव्यानि ।
नो इतराणि । यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि ।
तानि त्वयोपास्यानि । नो इतराणि ॥

The daily कर्मs are infinite in number. What should one watch about one's कर्मs in daily life? The Veda says:

यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि । तानि सेचितव्यानि - These कर्मs which are अनवद्यानि, which cannot hurt anybody, including yourself, which are proper beyond doubt, and which are rooted in proper sense of values

तानि सेचितव्यानि - तानि कर्तव्यानि - only such कर्मs must be done by you.

न उ इतराणि - certainly not, any other kind of कर्म



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

A proper sense of values must govern all of one's actions in daily life. These values include humility, modesty, non-violence, etc. - all the 20 qualities Sri Krishna lists in Chapter 13 of भगवत् गीता .

न उ इतराणि the word उ here is for emphasis. It means certainly. Certainly, you should never do any action that hurts anybody.

An improper action is improper, no matter who does it, even if that person is a learned person, or a generally well-respected person. One should follow respected people only with respect to their respectable actions, not with respect to their shortcomings.

Similarly, यानि अस्माकं सुचरितानि, तानि त्वया उपास्यानि, न उ इतराणि - Those कर्मs which are taught and practiced by us, teachers, as teachers of Vedic knowledge, only those कर्मs should be followed and practiced by you, all the time reflecting on them as a rule of right conduct in life, certainly not any other actions of the teacher.

A teacher is a teacher only with respect to his teachings. Otherwise, he is just an ordinary person. As a person, he may have his own shortcomings. Therefore, follow the teacher only with respect to his teachings. Never follow the teacher with respect to his shortcomings - so says the Veda.

The Vedic teachings continue. We will complete this chapter next time.