



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 2

ब्रह्मानन्द वल्ली

Lesson 1

Volume 13

हरिः ॐ

सह नावतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु ।

सह वीर्यम् करवावहै ।

तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्वेषावहै ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् । तदेषाऽभ्युक्ता ।

सत्यं, ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।

यो वेद निहितंगुहायां परमे व्योमन् ।

सोऽश्नुते सर्वान्कामान् सह ।

ब्रह्मणा विपश्चितेति ।

Thus begins Chapter 2 of तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत् (Upanishad,) which gives an overview of the essential content of the ज्ञान काण्ड - the Upanishad parts, of all the Vedas. Since all Upanishads are concerned primarily with ब्रह्मज्ञानं, ईश्वर ज्ञानं, आत्मज्ञानं, this chapter is essentially a discourse on such ब्रह्मज्ञानं - knowledge about ब्रह्मन्, presented in a series of nine extraordinary lessons, which make this chapter an **Upanishad in Itself**.

This chapter is entitled ब्रह्मानन्दवल्ली. ब्रह्मानन्द means "supreme joy", which is a लक्षण - a distinguishing mark of ब्रह्मज्ञानं. More about ब्रह्मानन्द we will see later in this Upanishad.

Just like every other Upanishad, this chapter begins with a peace invocation, indicating that this chapter is an Upanishad in itself.



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ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

These शान्तिः mantras are already familiar to us. We will briefly recall what we have heard already. We start with the वेद महा mantra - हरिः ॐ. हरिः ॐ is the ईश्वर उपासन - devotional worship of परमेश्वर, which includes ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर ईक्षणं, and ईश्वर आराधनं, all in one. Setting their अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि in the disposition of such ईश्वर उपासन, the teacher and the students together recite the following words of prayer, seeking the grace of परमेश्वर for success in their pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Upanishad knowledge.

सह नौ अवतु - May परमेश्वर protect us all together

सह नौ भुनक्तु - May परमेश्वर bring nourishment of this Upanishad knowledge to all of us

सह वीर्यम् करवावहै - May the study of this Upanishad inspire us to greatness in action. Let us all realize आत्मना विन्दते वीर्यम् - the source of all greatness is only परमेश्वर, already within oneself.

तेजस्वि नौ अधीतं अस्तु - May the study of this Upanishad bring enlightenment to all of us. May the study of this Upanishad enable us to recognize परमेश्वर in everything in this creation, and, at the same time, recognize everything in this creation in the same one परमेश्वर.

मा विद्विषावहै - O! Lord, by Thy grace, let us all be totally free from any kind of द्वेष, so that we are all fit for the pursuit of ब्रह्मविद्या - Upanishad knowledge.

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

नमस्कार to ॐ शान्ति, सत्य स्वरूप, ज्ञान स्वरूप, अनन्त स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्. This is a prayer for ॐ शान्ति - exalted peace conducive to Self-discovery and gaining Self-knowledge.

Now begins Lesson 1 of Chapter 2 of this Upanishad



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ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् । तदेषाऽभ्युक्ता ।
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यो वेद निहितंगुहायां परमे व्योमन् ।
सोऽश्नुते सर्वान्कामान् सह ।
ब्रह्मणा विपश्चितेति ।

The very first sentence is a concise statement of the entire chapter. It says:

ब्रह्मचित् आप्नोति परम्

ब्रह्मचित् - The one who knows ब्रह्मन्

आप्नोति - reaches or gains

परम् - that same ब्रह्मन् (परम् is another word for ब्रह्मन्)

The one who knows ब्रह्मन् reaches or gains That ब्रह्मन्. What this statement means is what is said in this chapter. The word ब्रह्म is a लक्षण वाक्य for ब्रह्मन्, which means, the word ब्रह्म reveals the वस्तु - The Reality called ब्रह्मन्, by pointing out the glory of that ब्रह्मन्, just as the words भगवान्, नारायण, महेश्वर and all the other thousands of names we have for परमेश्वर, including परमेश्वर itself, are all लक्षण वाक्यs, each name revealing the glory of परमेश्वर in some manner.

Thus the word ब्रह्म is a pointer, an arrow indicator, for the वस्तु - The Reality, परमेश्वर, whom we choose to call here ब्रह्मन्. What is indicated by the word परमेश्वर is ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, ब्रह्मन् is the लक्ष्य - The Reality which is revealed and ब्रह्म is the लक्षण - the pointer word, the arrow indicator, revealing the glory of That ब्रह्मन्.

Thus, in the language of the Upanishad, we are primarily concerned with लक्षण-लक्ष्य relationship. This relationship must be understood clearly. When I use my finger as a pointer, indicating some object which is beyond myself, my finger does not reach that object, and the object itself remains untouched, unrestricted and unbound by the limitations of my finger. Once that object is reached by recognition, the purpose of my finger as a pointer has been fulfilled.

Similarly, no लक्षण वाक्य - no pointer word for ब्रह्मन्, can reach the लक्ष्य वस्तु, the ब्रह्मन् Itself, which means ब्रह्मन् always remains untouched, unrestricted and unbound



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by the limitations of the pointer word ब्रह्म. Once that ब्रह्मन् is reached by recognition, with the help of the pointer word ब्रह्म, the purpose of the pointer word is fulfilled.

Now, how does the word ब्रह्म become a लक्षण – a pointer word for ब्रह्मन्? It becomes so by its root meaning. The word ब्रह्म comes from the root बृहत्, which means Big, Great, Vast, etc. Therefore, the word ब्रह्म immediately indicates something big, great and vast with no qualification whatsoever to restrict its bigness, greatness or vastness. Thus the word ब्रह्म indicates something that is absolutely big, great, vast, etc., unlimited and unrestricted with respect to any attribute whatsoever in this created existence, whether it is strength, power, immensity, subtlety or anything else. It is that something that we choose to call here as ब्रह्मन्. The one who knows That ब्रह्मन् is a ब्रह्मचित्.

The Upanishad says: That ब्रह्मचित् आप्नोति परम्. परम् means निरतिशयम् – that which remains unsurpassed, that which is not available for comparison with respect to anything in this created existence. So is ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, what is indicated by the word परम् is identical with that indicated by the word ब्रह्मन्, which means परम् is identical with ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, ब्रह्मचित् आप्नोति परम् means the knower of ब्रह्मन् reaches, or gains ब्रह्मन् Itself.

Now, "reaches ब्रह्मन्" or "gains ब्रह्मन्" means what? ब्रह्मन् by Its very nature is सर्वगतः – all-pervasive. That which is all-pervasive need not be reached or gained, because It is already there everywhere. Therefore, in the Upanishad language, reaching or gaining is only from the point of view of recognition or non-recognition.

The familiar example is, when you search for the key that is already in your pocket. If you recognize the situation, you reach for the key in your pocket. If you do not recognize the situation, the key is something to be gained. Similarly, from the point of view of recognition, ब्रह्मन् is something to be reached, and from the point of view of non-recognition, ब्रह्मन् is something to be gained.

Therefore, आप्नोति here simply means दर्शयति – recognizes. Therefore, ब्रह्मचित् आप्नोति परम् means the knower of ब्रह्मन् recognizes ब्रह्मन् naturally. Recognition of ब्रह्मन् is only ब्रह्म दर्शनं – seeing ब्रह्मन् as It is.

If ब्रह्मन् is everywhere, what is the difficulty in recognizing ब्रह्मन्? The difficulty arises because of अविद्या – absence of knowledge of ब्रह्मन्. Just as darkness is absence of



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light, अविद्या is absence of ब्रह्मविद्या. If ब्रह्मन् is not gained because of अविद्या, then one should be able to gain ब्रह्मन् through ब्रह्मविद्या, which means by the knowledge of ब्रह्मन् you gain ब्रह्मन्, and when the knowledge of ब्रह्मन् is gained, you naturally recognize ब्रह्मन् as It is, and thus you become the knower of ब्रह्मन्.

Therefore the statement ब्रह्मवित् आप्नोति परम् - the knower of ब्रह्मन् recognizes ब्रह्मन् as It is, is a सूत्र वाक्य, which means it is simply a concise and definitive statement of fact. It says all that needs to be said. The rest of what is said in this chapter needs to be realized by oneself by the daily practice of the basic Vedic teachings we saw earlier, namely

सत्यं वद । धमम् चर । स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः - Be truthful in thought, word and deed at all times, maintain proper conduct, ethical behavior and good moral character in daily life, and never neglect daily scripture readings appropriate to your maturity. By so being and so doing, one progressively uplifts oneself to become fit for one's ultimate recognition of the all-pervading ब्रह्मन्.

The सूत्र वाक्य "ब्रह्मवित् आप्नोति परम् - the knower of ब्रह्मन् reaches ब्रह्मन्, gains ब्रह्मन्" - this statement gives four distinct messages. They are:

1. ब्रह्मन् - That which is indicated by the pointer word ब्रह्म does exist, because only then a ब्रह्मवित् - a knower of ब्रह्मन् can exist
2. The word ब्रह्मवित् - knower of ब्रह्मन् assures that ब्रह्मन् can be known
3. That ब्रह्मन् is worth knowing, because, if you know that ब्रह्मन्, the फल - the result is that you gain that ब्रह्मन्, which means if ब्रह्मन् is great, you gain that greatness
4. ब्रह्मन् is परम्, and परम् is ब्रह्मन्. Then only ब्रह्मवित् आप्नोति परम् is possible. The knower of ब्रह्मन् has knowledge of ब्रह्मन् naturally. Since परम् is ब्रह्मन्, the knower of ब्रह्मन् becomes ब्रह्मन्.

If ब्रह्मन् is सर्वगतः - all-pervasive, it should be in all that exist, including myself, and naturally I should know that ब्रह्मन्. While it is obvious to me that I do exist, it is also equally obvious to me that I do not know ब्रह्मन्, which simply means that I do not know myself.



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Now, according to the सूत्र वाक्य, by knowing ब्रह्मन्, I can, and I will, know myself. This possibility is an extraordinary prospect for every human being. Therefore, the immediate question is: What is the nature, the स्वरूप of That ब्रह्मन् which is indicated by the pointer word ब्रह्म ? The answer to this question follows.

तदेषाऽभ्युक्ता - तत् एषा अभ्युक्ता

तत् - About That ब्रह्मन्, unfolding the nature of That ब्रह्मन्

एषा means एषा ऋक् - this Veda mantra, the knowledge indicated by this Veda mantra अभ्युक्ता has come to us, confirmed and reconfirmed from generation to generation, which means, about That ब्रह्मन्, this is what the Veda says. So saying, the Upanishad quotes the following mantras directly from the Vedas.

सत्यं, ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।

यो वेद निहितंगुहायां परमे व्योमन् ।

सोऽश्नुते सर्वान्कामान् सह ।

ब्रह्मणा विपश्चिता इति ।

इति means the quotation ends there. The entire quotation is a लक्षण वाक्य. The Veda presents this great message through pointer words. The message is about the स्वरूप of ब्रह्मन् - the nature of ब्रह्मन्, and that is सत्यं, ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म. To enable one to recognize That ब्रह्मन्, the Veda uses the three pointer words, namely सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं. These three pointers, when followed through, converge at the same ONE ब्रह्मन्, and reveal the स्वरूप of That ब्रह्मन्.

First of all, we must note that the word ब्रह्म, indicating the glory of That ब्रह्मन्, and all the three pointer words indicating the स्वरूप - the nature of That ब्रह्मन्, are set in singular terms, which means That ब्रह्मन् is singular in number. There are no two ब्रह्मन्s. There is only one ब्रह्मन्, and it is that ब्रह्मन् towards which all the three pointers are directed. Let us now try to set our vision along these pointers.

Words become pointers by virtue of their root meanings. The word सत्यं means truth, the word ज्ञानं means knowledge, consciousness, awareness, and the word अनन्तं means endless, limitless, all-inclusive. Consequently, सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म means that which is सत्यं is ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is सत्यं. Similarly, that which is ज्ञानं is



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ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is ज्ञानं. And that which is अनन्तं is ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is अनन्तं.

Again, even though the words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं are different words, each having its own meaning, as pointers of That ब्रह्मन्, as ब्रह्म लक्षणं, they enjoy an identity in meaning. That means when we understand that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is सत्यं, we must also understand that सत्यं is also ज्ञानं सत्यं, as well as अनन्तं सत्यं. Similarly, when we understand that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is ज्ञानं, we must also understand That ज्ञानं is also सत्यं ज्ञानं as well as अनन्तं ज्ञानं, and when we understand that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is अनन्तं, we must also understand that That अनन्तं is also सत्यं अनन्तं as well as ज्ञानं अनन्तं.

Thus, we have to set our vision along the pointers, सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं, each in terms of itself, along with the sense of the other two attributes, in order to gain a hold on the pointers of ब्रह्मन्. Now let us try to get a hold on these pointers.

The first pointer is सत्यं. What is सत्यं? That which is सत्, is सत्यं. सत् is existence, existence of an extraordinary kind. What kind? As Sri Krishna says, ना भावो विद्यते सतः (गीता - 2- 16). For सत् there is no अभाव - for सत् kind of existence, there is no non-existence. That means the सत् kind of सत्यं is अजः, नित्यः, शाश्वतः, पुराणः. That सत्यं is unborn. It is not a created object. It is eternal, ever-existent, unchanging, and it is ever ancient and ever new. It is ancient now and it was ancient before. It is as new today as it was before. As it is now, it was there before, and in between there have been no changes whatsoever.

That is सत्यं. It is that सत्यं, which is the स्वरूप of ब्रह्मन्. That सत्यं is ज्ञानं सत्यं. That सत्यं is conscious, alive and immortal सत्यं. That सत्यं is अनन्तं सत्यं. That सत्यं is beginningless and endless, all-inclusive and all-pervasive, TRUTH of all truths - सत्यस्य सत्यं. It is that सत्यं which is the स्वरूप of ब्रह्मन्.

Every object in this creation is only a name and a form. Every object in this creation has only a transient existence. Therefore, the vision of सत्यं as ब्रह्मलक्षणं releases our mind and बुद्धि from all notions about anything that has only a transient existence.

Every change in this creation is only an effect (कार्यं). सत्यं is not subject to any change. Therefore, ब्रह्मन् is not an effect. ब्रह्मन् is सर्वस्य कारणं - It is the ultimate cause for all effects. It is both the निमित्त कारणं and उपादान कारणं - It is both the



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efficient cause (which means the instrumental cause) as well as the material cause for everything in this creation.

Even though ब्रह्मन् is the material cause for everything in this creation, ब्रह्मन् is not a material. It is not an inert matter. ब्रह्मन् is not जड वस्तु, because ब्रह्मन् is ज्ञानं सत्यं - It is ever conscious, ever alive and ever dynamic. ब्रह्मन् is सत् स्वरूपं and चित् स्वरूपं at the same time.

Similarly, even though ब्रह्मन् is निमित्त कारणं - the efficient cause, the instrumental cause for everything in this creation, It is not a कर्ता, कर्म or क्रिया - It is not the doer of an action, doing an action or an action itself, all of which involve changes, differences and limitations, because ब्रह्मन् is अनन्तं सत्यं - It is all-inclusive सत्यं, It is सत्यं, without any limitations, without any change and without any division. That means कर्ता, कर्म and क्रिया are in the very nature of ब्रह्मन्, just as heat is in the very nature of sun.

Thus the vision of ब्रह्मन् as ज्ञानं सत्यं, releases the mind and बुद्धि from any notion of जडत्वं - inertness with respect to ब्रह्मन्. Likewise, the vision of ब्रह्मन् as अनन्तं सत्यं, releases the mind and बुद्धि from any notion of कारकत्वं - doership with respect to ब्रह्मन्. Thus, the pointer word सत्यं, together with the qualifying attributes ज्ञानं and अनन्तं, directs the mind and बुद्धि towards the never-changing, ever existent, ever conscious, all-inclusive Being - The ब्रह्मन्.

So much about the pointer सत्यं as ब्रह्मलक्षणं. Now, about the ज्ञानं as ब्रह्मलक्षणं. ज्ञानं refers to pure knowledge and pure consciousness in the absolute sense, with no reference to any object awareness. ज्ञानं is चित् स्वरूपं - absolute consciousness, not consciousness of just something. It is that because of which all cognition, any cognition is possible. That ज्ञानं is ब्रह्मन्. That ज्ञानं is सत्यं ज्ञानं, ever-present, unchanging, eternal consciousness. That ज्ञानं is also अनन्तं ज्ञानं - limitless consciousness, which is all-inclusive, undivided knowledge. It is that ज्ञानं that is ब्रह्मन्.

Therefore, the nature of ब्रह्मन् is absolute, ever present, unchanging, limitless, all-inclusive, undivided knowledge, consciousness, and awareness, eternally alive and dynamic. Since I have a sense of myself only in terms of awareness of myself, what I recognize by the word "I" or Self, अहं or आत्मा is ज्ञानं, I being the only source for the consciousness of myself.



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Therefore, ज्ञानं indicates आत्मा - the very content of "I". If The ब्रह्मन् is ज्ञान स्वरूपं, then आत्मा is identical with ब्रह्मन्, and so am "I". If ब्रह्मन् is ज्ञानं, सत्यं ज्ञानं and अनन्तं ज्ञानं - ever-existent, unchanging, all-inclusive eternally alive and dynamic, such a being, so is आत्मा and so is the content of "I".

Even though the word ज्ञानं immediately brings to mind and बुद्धि only consciousness of an object in that object consciousness, The आत्म चैतन्यं - Pure Consciousness itself does not undergo any change, which means the object consciousness itself is non-separate from Pure Consciousness at all times.

The cognition, as it arises, is pervaded by Pure Consciousness. When the cognition is gone, the Pure Consciousness is still there. Thus any कार्यं ज्ञानं becomes a लक्षण for स्वरूप ज्ञानं, which means the consciousness of any effect becomes a pointer for Pure Consciousness.

That is why the केनोपनिषत् indicates ब्रह्मन् as श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं, मनसो मनः, वाचोह वाचं, प्राणस्य प्राणः, चक्षुषः चक्षुः, which means that ज्ञानं - That Consciousness because of which the ear hears, mind thinks, word has a meaning, breathing is possible, and the eyes see, That Consciousness is ब्रह्मन्. We have seen these Upanishad words in detail already in केनोपनिषत्.

The ज्ञान स्वरूपं being सत्यं ज्ञानं, does not undergo any change at any time. It is ever-present. When you say that the pot is born, the birth is only with respect to the pot, and not clay, which was already there. The birth of the pot is not independent of clay.

As you follow the pointer ज्ञानं towards ब्रह्मन्, any कर्म, any कार्यं, any action, any effect is only उपचार for ब्रह्मन्. It is only an expression of honor to the glory of ब्रह्मन्, an expression of joy at the recognition of ब्रह्मन् - the परमेश्वर.

All the पूजा s, भजन् s, etc. that we do for भगवान्, are only उपचार for ब्रह्मन्. They are only expressions of honor and joy, recognizing the glory of ब्रह्मन्. When I recognize you, and say नमस्कार to you, that is also उपचार for ब्रह्मन् - an expression of honor and joy at the recognition of ब्रह्मन् already in you. At the limit, the उपचार itself is ज्ञानं, the उपचार itself is ब्रह्मलक्षणं. Such recognition of the glory of ब्रह्मन् is itself ब्रह्मन्.



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

All विषय ज्ञानं - all kinds of objective knowledge are only ब्रह्मलक्षणं - pointers for स्वरूपं ज्ञानं, which is ब्रह्मज्ञानं. No विषय ज्ञानं is possible without स्वरूप ज्ञानं - Pure Consciousness, which is ब्रह्मन् itself. Thus विषय ज्ञानं is ब्रह्मलक्षणं and स्वरूप ज्ञानं is ब्रह्मन् itself. An appreciation of विषय ज्ञानं - objective knowledge, is necessary for an appreciation of ब्रह्मज्ञानं, ब्रह्मन् Itself. That is why we worship Saraswati, the embodiment of all knowledge, both objective knowledge (विषय ज्ञानं) and undifferentiated all-knowledge - ब्रह्मज्ञानं. Worship of Saraswati is indeed worship of ब्रह्मन् as ज्ञान स्वरूपं, and That ज्ञानं is अनन्तं ज्ञानं - limitless knowledge. ब्रह्मन् is all-knower, all knowing, all knowledge, all by Its own light.

There being no वस्तु, no reality independent of ब्रह्मन्, ब्रह्मन् is Its own साक्षी - witness to everything happening in this creation in all the three periods of time, in all the three states of existence, because ब्रह्मन् is ज्ञानं. It is a conscious Being. It is सत्यं ज्ञानं It is ever-present and unchanging, and it is अनन्तं ज्ञानं. It is limitless all inclusive and all pervasive. Such is the ज्ञान स्वरूपं of ब्रह्मन्.

Now about the third pointer word अनन्तं as ब्रह्मलक्षणं, we will see next time.