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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 2

ब्रह्मानन्द वल्ली

Lesson 1 (Continued)

Volume 14

ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् । तदेषाऽभ्युक्ता ।

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।

यो वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् ।

सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह ।

ब्रह्मणा विपश्चितेति ।

तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः संभूतः ।

आकाशाद्वायुः । वायोरग्निः । अग्नेरापः ।

अद्भ्यः पृथिवी । पृथिव्या ओषधयः ।

ओषधीभ्योऽन्नम् । अन्नात् पुरुषः ।

स वा एष पुरुषोऽन्नरसमयः ।

तस्येदमेव शिरः । अयं दक्षिणः पक्षः ।

अयमुत्तरः पक्षः । अयं आत्मा ।

इदं पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥

इति प्रथमोऽनुवाकः ।

The Upanishad opens with a सूत्र वाक्य - a definitive statement of fact, which says:

ब्रह्मविदाप्नोति परम् - The person who knows ब्रह्मन्, who recognizes ब्रह्मन् as it is, reaches That ब्रह्मन्, gains That ब्रह्मन्, becomes That ब्रह्मन् Itself.

तत् एषा(ऋक्) अभ्युक्ता - About That ब्रह्मन्, unfolding the स्वरूप - The nature of That ब्रह्मन्, the following Veda mantra has come to us, confirmed and reconfirmed, from generation to generation. So saying, the Upanishad quotes the following Veda mantra:

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म ।

यो वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् ।

सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह ।



ब्रह्मणा विपश्चिता इति ।

इति means the Vedic quotation ends here.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म - As we saw last time, 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. It is That ब्रह्मन् whom we generally refer to as परमेश्वर.

The words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं are word pointers - arrow indicators, all the three of which, when followed through, together converge at the same one ब्रह्मन्, revealing the very nature of That ब्रह्मन् - the स्वरूप of That ब्रह्मन् The परमेश्वर. Thus, by the expression सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म we understand that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is सत्यं, and that सत्यं is also ज्ञानं सत्यं as well as अनन्तं सत्यं. Again, that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is ज्ञानं and that ज्ञानं is also सत्यं ज्ञानं as well as अनन्तं ज्ञानं. Likewise, that ब्रह्म स्वरूपं is अनन्तं and that अनन्तं is also सत्यं अनन्तं as well as ज्ञानं अनन्तं.

About सत्यं and ज्ञानं as ब्रह्म लक्षणं, we saw in detail last time. Now let us try to get a hold on अनन्तं as ब्रह्म लक्षणं. The pointer word अनन्तं indicates that Limitlessness is the लक्षणं - the distinguishing mark of ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर. Limitless means what? Limitations are generally three-fold, namely, देश, काल and वस्तु - place, time and object. The word "object" here includes all attributes in all dimensions.

अनन्तं ब्रह्म लक्षणं means that ब्रह्मन् is limitless from all the three points of view. When one tries to think of ब्रह्मन् as limitless from the point of view of place (location), immediately, the notion of space - (अकाश) comes to mind, because there is no place where space is not.

On further enquiry however, it becomes obvious that while अकाश is limitless with respect to place, it is not limitless with respect to time or object. अकाश is an object of one's knowledge. It is a created object. Anything that is created is created in time, and it is subject to disappearance at another time. Therefore, there is a time when अकाश is, and there can also be a time when अकाश is not. Consequently, अकाश is not limitless with respect to time.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अकाश is not limitless with respect to object also, because, as an object of knowledge, अकाश is different from every other object, such as वायु, अग्नि, etc.

ब्रह्मन् is not a created entity, nor is it the effect of a कर्म - an action. There is no instrument of action to create ब्रह्मन्. ब्रह्मन् is non-separate and inseparable from anything that exists. Its existence is सत्यं eternal. There is no object in existence, which is independent of ब्रह्मन्, while ब्रह्मन् itself is independent of everything in this creation. Therefore, ब्रह्मन् and अकाश are not identical.

ब्रह्मन् remains independent of अकाश, and indeed, independent of जगत् - the entire creation. If this जगत् - this entire creation is non-separate from ब्रह्मन्, how does that make ब्रह्मन् limitless? That is so because, in this world of objects, every object limits every other object. That is how one distinguishes one object from another. In order for ब्रह्मन् to have a limitation, there should be another ब्रह्मन्. Since there is no other ब्रह्मन्, and there is only ONE ब्रह्मन्, the सत्यं ब्रह्मन् is also ज्ञानं ब्रह्मन् as well as अनन्तं ब्रह्मन्.

Let us think of a pot and a lid, both made of clay. When the mind goes from pot-knowledge to lid knowledge, the clay-knowledge is not eliminated, because the कारण is already in the कार्य - the cause is already in the effect.

Because ब्रह्मन् is the ultimate cause for every effect, and the effects are limitless, ब्रह्मन् remains limitless, objectwise.

Thus, by the अनन्त शब्द - by the word अनन्तं as ब्रह्म लक्षणं - the total independence and the total all-inclusiveness of ब्रह्मन् are indicated. Such अनन्तं is naturally सत्यं अनन्तं - eternally all-pervasive and also ज्ञानं अनन्तं - all embracing consciousness, all inclusive knowledge.

Such अनन्तं is also आनन्द - absolute happiness. There can be no absolute happiness, totally independent, all-inclusive, everlasting happiness in anything that is limited. Only in अनन्तं there can be आनन्द - eternal happiness. Therefore, अनन्तं ब्रह्म is indeed आनन्दं ब्रह्म.



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Thus, सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म is indeed सत् चित् आनन्द आत्मा, and that is ब्रह्म स्वरूपं - the nature of ब्रह्मन्, the nature of परमेश्वर. More about अनन्तं we will see as we progress. From what we have seen thus far, it should be clear that the words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं together indicate the स्वरूप of ब्रह्मन् - nature of ब्रह्मन्, and the sentence सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म is a लक्षण वाक्य, which means, by that sentence, ब्रह्मन् is indicated and not defined, limited or restricted.

Therefore, the words सत्यं ज्ञानं and अनन्तं are pointers indicating ब्रह्मन्. They by themselves do not touch ब्रह्मन्. They do not reach ब्रह्मन्. With the help of these three pointers, the Veda says:

यो वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् ।
सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह ।

यो वेद - यः वेद - The person who knows That ब्रह्मन्, about that person, the Veda says something which we will see a little later. First, let us reflect on the words यो वेद.

यः वेद - The person who knows That ब्रह्मन्. Now, how does one know That ब्रह्मन् ?

Let me use the word "I" or you, just for purposes of understanding. I am given three words - सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं, with the help of which I am required to know That ब्रह्मन्, which means, I must be able to reach That ब्रह्मन्. If I do not reach That ब्रह्मन्, I cannot know That ब्रह्मन्. I am still away from That ब्रह्मन्, which makes knowing That ब्रह्मन् impossible. Therefore, the only way I can know That ब्रह्मन् is by reaching That ब्रह्मन्.

How can I reach That ब्रह्मन् from where I am, with the aid of the three words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं ? I must admit that at this moment, सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं are just words to me. Whatever explanations are available to me, those words themselves do not take me to ब्रह्मन्, which means that my mind cannot comprehend That ब्रह्मन् just through the explanations of the words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं, however scholarly the explanations may be. Because it is obvious to me that:

सत्यं - I know many truths, but I do not know That Truth which is the truth of all truths



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

ज्ञानं - I know I am conscious of many things, but I do not know That Consciousness because of which I am conscious of many things

अनन्तं - I know many things, and I also know that I do not know many things. Whatever be the extent of my knowledge about anything, it is still limited. However much I know, I still have much more to know, which means I can never know about something which is, by its very nature unlimited.

That being so, what is indicated by the words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं is अप्रमेयः - beyond the comprehension of my mind. The Upanishad itself confirms that by saying

यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह - words cannot reach That ब्रह्मन्, and mind cannot also reach That ब्रह्मन्. Then how can I know That ब्रह्मन् simply through the words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं.

Is reaching ब्रह्मन् really possible for any person? The Upanishad says - YES. Then only the Upanishad can talk about ब्रह्मवित् - the knower of ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, reaching ब्रह्मन् must be possible. Reaching ब्रह्मन् is indeed possible for any person who has the necessary श्रद्धा. The means for reaching ब्रह्मन् involves a sequence of three distinct steps to be taken on the part of an interested person, namely:

Step 1 : Gain a firm hold on the pointers to ब्रह्मन्

Step 2: Direct the pointers towards ब्रह्मन्, fixing your vision firmly focused on the destination to be reached

Step 3: Move, step by step, along the pointers towards ब्रह्मन् holding the pointers and the vision of your destination firmly in your mind and बुद्धि, until you reach ब्रह्मन्.

Regarding Step 1: Gaining a firm hold on the pointers to ब्रह्मन् - this means the words must be first converted into pointers, सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं respectively, each individually as well as all the three together, as ब्रह्म लक्षणं, revealing the glory of That ब्रह्मन् which you want to reach.

The above conversion of सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं from words to pointers to ब्रह्मन् is possible only when your daily life is totally governed by the three basic Vedic teachings, namely



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

सत्यं वद, धर्मम् चर, स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः – Be truthful in thought, word and deed at all times. Maintain proper conduct, ethical behavior and good moral character at all times. And, never neglect daily scripture readings as appropriate to your maturity.

When you follow the above three basic Vedic teachings diligently in your daily life, then, and then only, you can gain a firm hold on सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं as pointers to ब्रह्मन्. Otherwise, the words सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं will continue to remain just as words only.

Regarding Step 2: When you gain a firm hold on सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं as pointers to ब्रह्मन्, then direct those pointers, simultaneously, by your mind and बुद्धि, towards ब्रह्मन् fixing your बुद्धि-vision firmly focused on that ब्रह्मन् which you wish to reach. This is possible only through a कर्म योग and ध्यान योग way of daily life.

That means recognizing every कर्म you do as ईश्वर आराधन कर्म – as a physical or a mental act of worship of परमेश्वर. Do every कर्म as well as you can, totally for its own sake, in appreciation of the joy and love of the कर्म itself, absolutely free from any kind of attachment or craving for the fruits of the कर्म involved, always remembering Sri Krishna's words:

असक्तो हि आचरन् कर्म परम् आप्नोति पुरुषः (G 3 -19)

By performing action without attachment, a person verily reaches ब्रह्मन् ultimately. That is कर्म योग way of life.

Again, while being in such कर्म योग way of life, keep your mind and बुद्धि always in दुःखसंयोगवियोग – dissociation from all associations with दुःख of any kind - discontent, sorrow or distress of any kind, diligently following the five guidelines provided by Sri Krishna for such dissociation (G 6 - 24 - 26). As we may recall, these guidelines are:

1. संकल्पप्रभवान् कामान् त्यक्त्वा सर्वान् अशेषतः – Maintaining a proper value-structure and विवेक बुद्धि, give up, renounce, and totally detach yourself from all thoughts rooted in various sense-objects and sense experiences.
2. मनसा एव इन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः – With respect to all aspects of life, orient your mind and बुद्धि so that all your instruments of perception and action are kept



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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

well disciplined, controlled, and led properly and effectively by your विवेक बुद्धि for cultivating the mental disposition of कर्म संकल्प संन्यास indicated in Guideline 1.

3. शनैः शनैः उपरमेत् बुद्ध्या धृति गृहीतया - Slowly and slowly, gradually, let your दुःखसंयोग - associations with दुःख get resolved in the vision of ब्रह्मन्, in the vision of परमेश्वर, your इष्ट देवता already in yourself.

4. आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् - Never let your mind and बुद्धि lose sight of ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर, your इष्ट देवता already in yourself, and finally

5. यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्। ततस्ततो नियम्यैतत् आत्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥
-You cannot prevent the mind moving from one thought to another, but by your विवेक बुद्धि, you can always make your mind realize that no matter where the thoughts go, what your mind sees is only That ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, and nothing else. That is ध्यान योग way of life.

By the strength of such कर्म योग and ध्यान योग governing all aspects of your daily life, let your mind and बुद्धि direct the pointers सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं simultaneously towards ब्रह्मन् with your बुद्धि -vision firmly and constantly focused on That ब्रह्मन् which you wish to reach. That is step 2.

Regarding Step 3: With your vision of ब्रह्मन् so fixed, and the pointers to ब्रह्मन् so directed as in Step 2, now let your अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि move, step by step, along the pointers, holding them firmly in the direction of ब्रह्मन् - That सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म.

This step by step movement of अन्तःकरण is possible only by the strength of ज्ञानयोग and भक्त योग way of life. The ज्ञानयोग here is what is indicated by Sri Krishna's words (G4-39)

श्रद्धावान् लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिं अचिरेण अधिगच्छति ॥



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

The one who has श्रद्धा in ब्रह्मज्ञानं does gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं ultimately, does reach ब्रह्मन् ultimately.

What is श्रद्धा? श्रद्धा is abiding faith, faith in yourself, faith in your pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं, a faith in your ability to gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं and ultimately reach ब्रह्मन् already in yourself. Such faith expresses itself through श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं - listening, understanding, reflection and appreciation and absorption of Upanishad knowledge, together with a daily way of life totally dedicated to knowledge and service at all times. That is ज्ञानयोग way of life.

And, the भक्ति योग is what is indicated by Sri Krishna's words (G9-36)

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु - Be in a perpetual state of ध्यानयोग. Be in absolute love and devotion to परमेश्वर at all times. Do every act of worship of परमेश्वर only for gaining अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - purity of mind and बुद्धि, and recognize परमेश्वर in yourself, as yourself itself, by surrendering all your notions of doership and enjoyership at the Alter of परमेश्वर already in yourself. That is भक्ति योग way of life.

ईश्वर ज्ञानं promotes ईश्वर भक्ति, and ईश्वर भक्ति promotes ईश्वर ज्ञानं. Thus, by their very nature, ईश्वर ज्ञानं and ईश्वर भक्ति together contribute to an ever increasing level of ईश्वर ज्ञानं and ईश्वर भक्ति, continuously uplifting the person closer and closer to one's identity with परमेश्वर, already in oneself.

Therefore, the step by step movement of the अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि towards ब्रह्मन् in step 3 naturally follows the sequence ईश्वर ज्ञानं and ईश्वर भक्ति, followed by ईश्वर ज्ञानं, ईश्वर भक्ति again and again, each step helping to make the following step closer to that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म - that ब्रह्मन् already in oneself.

Thus, let your अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि keep moving towards ब्रह्मन् in the manner indicated in step 3. How long should you keep moving in the above manner? Until the destination is reached. How far is the destination? That depends on how far is ब्रह्मन् from you. How far is that ब्रह्मन्? On that matter, the Isavasya Upanishad says:

तत् दूरे - That ब्रह्मन् is farther than the farthest you can imagine, and at the same time,



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तद्वन्तिके - तत् उ अन्तिके - That ब्रह्मन् is nearer than the nearest you can imagine. What does that mean? Whether That ब्रह्मन् is farther or nearer, you are still away from It. You can never reach that ब्रह्मन् just by your steps, just by your own efforts, no matter what you do, because, reaching ब्रह्मन् is not simply the result of any कर्म - any action. Please understand this, that by ordering one's life in terms of सत्यं, धर्मम्, स्वअध्ययनं, कर्म योग, ध्यान योग, ज्ञान योग and भक्ति योग, one can only make oneself fit for reaching ब्रह्मन्.

When one becomes absolutely fit for reaching ब्रह्मन्, reaching ब्रह्मन् takes place by itself, spontaneously. That final event is indeed the very grace of परमेश्वर, the very grace of ब्रह्मन्. Therefore, what should you do now? Sri Krishna says: (G18-66)

सर्व धर्मान् परित्यज्य मां एकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

In thought, word and deed, surrender yourself totally to परमेश्वर. I will remove all obstructions that stand in the way of your reaching ब्रह्मन्. There is just nothing for you to worry about it, so says Sri Krishna. Therefore, that is what you should do.

In your own step by step movement along the pointers सत्यं, ज्ञानं and अनन्तं in terms of ज्ञान योग and भक्ति योग, indicated in step 3 above, your own final step is only भक्ति योग, and that is पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति - total surrender to परमेश्वर already in yourself. That is all you have to do, and there is nothing more for you to do to reach That ब्रह्मन् you wish to reach. Reaching ब्रह्मन् will take place at the appropriate time by the very grace of ब्रह्मन्. When that event takes place, that is the ultimate in ज्ञान योग. That is gaining ब्रह्म ज्ञानं. That is मोक्ष. That is the state of ब्रह्मचित्. That is when you become the knower of That ब्रह्मन्. It is about that knower of ब्रह्मन् the Veda says:

यो वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् ।
सोऽश्नुते सर्वान् कामान् सह ।
ब्रह्मणा विपश्चिता इति ।

We will see this statement next time.