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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G8

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 2

ब्रह्मानन्द वल्ली

Lesson 1 (Continued)

Volume 16

For the past three sessions, we have been reading this short first lesson of this Upanishad, and we are not yet through with it. That indicates the immensity of the content of this extraordinary lesson, which will become even more evident as we go through the rest of the Upanishad. Let us now continue from where we left last time. The Upanishad says:

From that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, आकाश - the space is born

From space, वायु - the air is born

From air, अग्नि - the fire is born

From fire, आपः - the water is born

From water, पृथिवी - the earth is born

From earth, ओषधयः - the entire plant kingdom is born

From the entire plant kingdom, अन्नं - the food is born

अन्नात् पुरुष - from food, पुरुषः - the human being is born

स वा एष पुरुषः अन्नरसमयः - This पुरुषः born of food is indeed a modified form of अन्नरस - the very essence of the food the person came from.

मय (or मयी) - as an affix to a word means "totally made of" or "totally constituted of" Therefore स वा एष पुरुषः अन्नरसमयः means this पुरुषः - the physical body of this person born of food, is totally constituted of अन्नरस - the essence of food eaten throughout its evolution, which means the essence of food not only eaten by oneself, but also by one's parents, grandparents, great grandparents, great-great grandparents, etc. throughout the course of its evolution.

Thus the Upanishad traces the origin of every जीव - every person, immediately to अन्नं - food, and ultimately to that ब्रह्मन् - सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म. Likewise, the Upanishad traces the entire creation, which of course, includes every person, to that ब्रह्मन्.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

By tracing the origin of every person, and indeed the entire creation, including everything in this creation, to that **ब्रह्मन्** in this manner, the Upanishad calls attention to one of the most fundamental facts of nature, which needs to be understood, appreciated and realized fully by every person. That fact of nature is in the form of cause-effect relationship with respect to everything that exists in this creation.

Recognizing this cause-effect relationship in its entirety with respect to the nature of one's own self is indeed self-realization. Every cause-effect relationship has two aspects - the cause is in every effect, and hence, the effect is inseparable from the cause. That is one aspect. The other aspect is the supremacy of the cause over the effect, because the effect is transient, and the cause is permanent, in relative terms, which means

- ❖ The cause precedes the effect
- ❖ The cause exists in the effect and
- ❖ The cause exists even after the effect has disappeared

Once we understand and fully appreciate these two aspects of cause-effect relationship, self-realization becomes easier. The cause is in every effect, and the effect is inseparable from the cause. This is an overriding fact of nature. All human accomplishments, including all material progress, are only expressions of this fact. If you are a knowledgeable person, on seeing an effect, you recognize the cause immediately. If you are not a knowledgeable person, you do not recognize the cause even when you see the effect. This is common experience, and this is true with respect to spiritual knowledge also. Recognition is always a matter of knowledge.

On the basis of the cause-effect relationship by which this entire creation is born, as already unfolded by the Upanishad, it is clear that **सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म** is the ultimate cause for everything that exists. This entire creation is an effect for which the ultimate cause is **सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म**, which means that **ब्रह्मन्** is in everything in this creation, and everything in this creation is inseparable from that **ब्रह्मन्**.

Further, between what I see in this creation and that **ब्रह्मन्**, there are infinite cause-effect relationships. Since that **ब्रह्मन्** is **सत्यं** - ever existent and unchanging, it is also clear that every cause, as the cause of some effect, is only a manifestation of the ultimate cause. Now, how can ONE ultimate cause, without undergoing any change, manifest itself as infinite number of causes? That is possible only because of the very nature of that ultimate cause, which is **अनन्तं ब्रह्म**, **ब्रह्मन्** whose very nature is **अनन्तं** - limitlessness itself.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Thus we get another vision of अनन्तं ब्रह्म. Therefore, the very first thing one must appreciate and realize about the cause-effect relationship is to recognize the fact that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म, as It is, without undergoing any change, exists in every effect, in every manifestation in this entire creation, both individually and collectively. Consequently, the Upanishad statement ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम् यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत् is just a statement of factual knowledge. This knowledge needs to be understood and recognized at all times.

Now, about the supremacy of cause over effect. ब्रह्मन् is the Supreme Being because ब्रह्मन् is the Supreme Cause for every being.

यत् कारणं तत् सत्यं - That which is the cause is सत्यं - ever existent, and That is the स्वरूप of ब्रह्मन्

यत् कार्यम् तत् मिथ्या - that which is the effect, that is मिथ्या - transient appearance, subject to change, and that is the nature of a जीव - any individual person.

In this entire creation, including the creation as a whole, सत्यं and मिथ्या exist together naturally in everything that exists, and in every aspect of existence. Consequently in every human being, ब्रह्मन् and जीव exist together, in inseparable identity, naturally. One has to learn to recognize this natural identity. Again, recognition is always a matter of knowledge.

Every cause, as the cause for something, is a manifestation of ब्रह्मन्. Every manifestation of ब्रह्मन् is a glory of ब्रह्मन्. When so recognized, every manifestation of ब्रह्मन् is a देवता - the bestower and controller with respect to such manifestation. Therefore, one must learn to recognize ब्रह्मन् in every देवता as the very glory of ब्रह्मन्.

Akasa, Vayu, Agni, Aapah आपः and Prithvi पृथिवी are देवता s, because they are the cause for everything else in this creation. They are manifestations of ब्रह्मन्, and one must learn to recognize ब्रह्मन् in every one of them, each as a देवता as a glory of ब्रह्मन् as a manifestation of ब्रह्मन् itself. This process of ब्रह्मन्-recognition must extend to everything in this creation, and to all aspects of existence. When one is spiritually mature enough and knowledgeable enough to recognize ब्रह्मन् in everything there is,



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

one's विवेक बुद्धि has reached that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म in one's own heart, satisfying the requirement of the Veda mantra:

यो वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् - the one who reaches ब्रह्मन् in one's own heart, by one's own विवेक बुद्धि. To help one reach that state of maturity is the purpose of this Upanishad, which is a प्रमाण - a means of knowledge for gaining such spiritual maturity. That state of knowledge-realization and spiritual maturity can be gained only through education and discipline. As part of such education, the Upanishad tells here something more about one's own self. Ordinarily, one understands one's own self to be one's gross physical body with all its names, forms, capabilities, limitations, etc. That is natural, and that is all right to start with.

The Upanishad says that one must know something more about one's own body. A human body is not simply one body. It is five bodies in one. These five bodies are अन्नमय, प्राणमय, मनोमय, विज्ञानमय and आनन्दमय. These are कोशs to start with. They serve as barriers, obstructing your vision from That ब्रह्मन् already inside yourself. But when you recognize the real nature of these five bodies, through necessary education and discipline, they cease to be barriers. The doors are always open, and you see That ब्रह्मन् in and through all of them.

The Upanishad tells the real nature of these five bodies in a peculiar style. The style is simply a method of communication, and it need not be justified. Therefore, let us accept the style, as the style of this particular Upanishad. In this style, a human being is imagined as a cosmic bird, a spiritual being in the form of a bird. This is called पक्षि कल्पना - an imaginary bird.

This bird has five bodies, and each body has five parts - a head, a right wing, a left wing, a trunk, and a foundation on which the whole body stands. The latter foundation is designated here as "tail (पुच्छं)". Each body is a cover for another body inside, each successive inner body being more subtle than the outer one. Further, each body is as full as the other, which means there is no distance between one body and the next. These bodies are then just matters for identification and recognition, which is again a matter of knowledge.

The outermost body is the gross physical body, which you see. The inner bodies you don't see, but they are identical with the gross body in form, but different in content. In this respect, the visible gross body is like a mould. You fill the mould with anything, and it assumes the form of the mould, and the mould is full.



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

When you fill the mould with अन्नरस – the essence of food, it assumes the form of the gross physical body. Thus the visible gross physical body of a human being is अन्नरसमयः – the very essence of food in its entirety. स वा एष पुरुषः अन्नरसमयः – this अन्नरसमयः पुरुष is the अन्नरसमय कोश of the human being.

Imagining the human being as a cosmic bird, the Upanishad teacher says, pointing out to his own body, for the अन्नरसमय कोश of this cosmic bird:

तस्येदमेव शिरः

तस्य – अन्नरसमयस्य – for this अन्नमय शरीर

इदं एव शिरः – this is indeed the head. The teacher points out to his own head, and says, तस्य इदं एव शिरः – for this अन्नमय शरीर, this is the head. Then pointing to his right hand, he says

अयं दक्षिण पक्षः – this is the right wing. Then pointing out to his left hand he says

अयं उत्तर पक्षः – this is the left wing. Then pointing out to the middle part of his body, the trunk of his body, he says

अयं आत्मा – this is "I", the Atma, the self. Here the word आत्मा is used in the ordinary sense, the way one ordinarily points out to oneself as "I", the part of the body to which all the other limbs of the body are attached is called here as आत्मा – the self.

Then the teacher points to the lower part of the body, the limbs below the navel, the legs, etc., and says:

इदं पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा – this is the tail for the अन्नमय शरीर. पुच्छं literally means "tail". It is an indicative word. It indicates आधारं, that which is the foundation on which the whole body stands. Again, the word प्रतिष्ठा is an important indicative word, which means प्रति तिष्ठति अनया इति – प्रतिष्ठा – the foundation on which the whole body stands and operates.

इदं पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा – The lower part of this body is the foundation for the अन्नमय शरीर of the cosmic bird. The tail is obviously very important for the bird. It controls the movements of the bird, just as the legs control the movement of the body. Like the tail is for the bird, so are the legs for the human being.

First of all, imagine the human body in the form of a cosmic bird. For the अन्नमय शरीर of this imaginary bird



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

- this is the head
- this is the right wing
- this is the left wing
- this is the trunk, indicating आत्मा - the self, and
- this is the tail, the foundation.

All these parts one can see, and there is no imagination involved.

The cosmic bird has also a प्राणमय शरीर, which you do not see. That प्राणमय शरीर also has a head, a right wing, a left wing, a trunk and a foundation. Before I tell you what they are, so says the teacher, you must know something more about this अन्नमय शरीर, because

तदप्येष श्लोको भवति

तत् - on that matter, on the matter concerning अन्नमय शरीर

एषः श्लोकः अपि भवति - there is also the following Veda mantra. So saying, the teacher quotes the following Veda mantra.

Here ends Lesson 1.

Lesson 2

Lesson 2 now starts with the Veda mantras concerning the spiritual nature of अन्न - food which fills this अन्नमय शरीर.

अन्नाद्दे प्रजाः प्रजायन्ते । याः काश्च पृथिवीं श्रिताः । अथो अन्नेनैव जीवन्ति ।
अथैनदपि यन्त्यन्ततः । अन्नं हि भूतानां ज्येष्ठम् ।
तस्मात् सर्वोषधमुच्यते । सर्वम् वै तेऽन्नमाप्नुवन्ति । येऽन्नं ब्रह्मोपासते ।
अन्नं हि भूतानां ज्येष्ठम् । तस्मात् सर्वोषधमुच्यते अन्नाद्भूतानि जायन्ते ।
जातान्यन्नेन वर्धन्ते । अद्यतेऽस्ति च भूतानि । तस्मादन्नं तदुच्यते इति ॥

अन्नात् वै प्रजाः प्रजायन्ते

वै - As it is well known

अन्नात् - from food

प्रजाः प्रजायन्ते - people are born

From food, people are born. This is true of all living beings on earth.



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

याः काः च पृथिवीं श्रिताः – Whoever or whatever being lives on earth,
अन्नात् चै प्रजायन्ते – they are born of food only. This statement means more than what is obvious. प्रजाः means people. They are जायन्ते born. They are not simply born. They are प्रजायन्ते. They are not born by accident. They are born strictly in accordance with their past कर्म s. They are born in accordance with यथा कर्म, यथा श्रुतं (K 5 -7), each in accordance with one's own past कर्म s, cultivated knowledge and mental disposition, which means the birth of people is governed by the strict law of कर्म कर्मफल – cause-effect relationships. Therefore,

अन्नात् चै प्रजाः प्रजायन्ते – "from food, people are born" means that the physical body of every person is only अन्नरस विकार – a modification of the essence of food eaten by oneself and one's ancestors.

That this is true for all living beings on earth is obvious. The Veda mantra says something more. By adding the ँ sound to the word पृथिवी – the earth (पृथिवीं श्रिताः) the Veda reminds us that the earth here is not simply a geographical entity. It is पृथिवी देवता, which means It is पृथिवी रूप ब्रह्मन्. It is that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म Itself, manifested as the earth, and so is अन्नं born of पृथिवी देवता. Therefore the moment one recognizes the origin of one's body as अन्नं, one must also recognize that ब्रह्मन् already in oneself.

Thus directing one's attention to पृथिवी देवता – mother earth, as the very glory of ब्रह्मन् from which food itself is born, the Veda continues

अथ अन्नेन एव जीवन्ति – Being born of food, people are then sustained by food. They remain alive by food only.

अथ एनत् अपियन्ति अन्ततः – अथ means moreover. While being alive, people go after food, until अन्ततः, finally

एनत् अपियन्ति – they go into food, they merge into food, they resolve themselves into food, which means the शरीर – the physical body finally joins the ocean of food again. Thus the physical body arises from food, and finally after death, it goes back into food, all of which is indeed obvious. But the object of this Vedic statement is to point out what is said in the next sentence.

अन्नं हि भूतानां ज्येष्ठम्



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

हि - Indeed

अन्नं भूतानां ज्येष्ठम् - food is ज्येष्ठम् to all created lives. ज्येष्ठम् means "elder", "one born before". The food is born before body is born, and the food exists when the body exists, and the food continues to exist even after the body is no more.

Therefore, between अन्नं and शरीर, अन्नं is कारणं and शरीर, is कार्यम्. अन्नं is cause and शरीर is effect. As we have already seen, यत् कारणं तत् सत्यं, यत् कार्यम् तत् मिथ्या - that which is cause is permanent, and that which is effect is transient. In view of the supremacy of cause over effect, अन्नं is सत्यं and शरीर is मिथ्या.

As सत्यं, अन्नं becomes अन्नं रूप ब्रह्मन् - the same सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म now in the form of अन्नं. That is why the Veda reminds us of ब्रह्मन् when referring to अन्नं as अन्नं हि भूतानां ज्येष्ठम्.

On the nature of अन्नं - food, the Veda continues

तस्मात् सर्व औषधम् उच्यते - Because अन्नं is necessary for the sustenance of this body

तस्मात् - therefore

अन्नं सर्व औषधम् उच्यते - अन्नं सर्वप्राणिनां देह - दाह - प्रशमनं उच्यते - food is called medicine for all living beings, because it puts out the fire of hunger in all living beings.

If hunger is a disease, then अन्नं is औषधम्, medicine for the disease. This statement also indicates that food is not something to be eaten indiscriminately, but it has to be treated as a medicine, which means, only the food that is right and necessary for one's health should be eaten, which is only common sense knowledge.

Through the above statements, the Veda tells a spiritually inclined person that अन्नं is अन्न देवता, and it should be recognized as such, which means that अन्नं as अन्न देवता is fit to be worshipped as the very glory of ब्रह्मन्. Consequently, the moment one sees अन्नं, one must also be able to recognize that सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म in अन्नं.

Even though we eat several times a day, and even though अन्नं as ब्रह्मन् is brought to our attention in many of our Vedic rituals, yet the spiritual identity of अन्नं and ब्रह्मन् does not easily take roots in our बुद्धि. It requires meditation, a discipline based on



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

knowledge, to gain the ability to recognize अन्नं naturally and spontaneously as ब्रह्मन्
Itself. Such meditation is called अन्न-ब्रह्म-उपासन. The Veda says

सर्वम् वै तेअन्नं आप्नुवन्ति, ये अन्नं ब्रह्म उपासते

ये अन्नं ब्रह्म उपासते - Those who practice अन्न ब्रह्म उपासन, meditation on अन्नं as ब्रह्मन्, those people gain all blessings that अन्नं देवता can bestow, namely, all good health, happiness and prosperity.

अन्न ब्रह्म उपासन - Meditation on अन्नं as ब्रह्मन् means what? It is a deliberate and sustained enquiry on the nature of अन्नं as pointed out already. By such meditation, one's बुद्धि, one's faculty of discrimination and judgment, is uplifted towards विवेक बुद्धि - the ability to recognize what is सत्यं - the truth and what is मिथ्या - a transient appearance.

Identifying oneself from one's body self to अन्न देवता that fills the body self, is the first step in uplifting oneself to gain a clearer vision of one's own self. How to do that अन्न ब्रह्म उपासन? Just repeatedly reflect upon the nature of अन्नं, what it is to you, and what it does to you. Recall again and again the following facts, stated already, says the Upanishad

अन्नं हि भूतानां ज्येष्ठम्

अन्नं - Please remember at all times that अन्नं is अन्न देवता. अन्नं is अन्नं स्वरूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्. अन्नं is a direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् itself. That अन्नं is supreme among all created living beings. It is that अन्नं that fills your शरीर उपाधि - body mould. As such, अन्नं - the grace of अन्न देवता is necessary for the sustenance of your शरीर.

तस्मात् सर्व औषधम् उच्यते - For that reason, the grace of अन्न देवता is the medicine for all human beings

अन्नात् भूतानि जायन्ते - It is by the grace of अन्न देवता that people are born as people जातानि अन्नेन वर्धन्ते - those who are born are sustained by the grace of अन्न देवता, that अन्नं स्वरूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्

अद्यतेऽस्ति च भूतानि, तस्मात् अन्नं तत् उच्यते - Please remember, why अन्नं is called अन्नं. It is because

अद्यते (भूतैः)- it is eaten by people. People eat food. This statement needs no explanation. At the same time,



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अति च भूतानि - food eats people also. How? By overeating, under eating or improper eating, food incapacitates, and ultimately destroys the शरीर - the body.

तस्मात् अन्नं तत् उच्यते - that is why, अन्नं is called अन्नं. Thus the very etymology of the word अन्नं tells exactly what अन्नं is. अद्यते अति च is अन्नं - that is the etymology of the word अन्नं

As food, अन्नं is कर्ता, कर्म and क्रिया (subject, object and also predicate) all in one, and so is ब्रह्मन्. By meditating on अन्नं in this manner, one gains a clearer appreciation of the nature of अन्नं as अन्न देवता, as अन्न रूप ब्रह्मन् and one feels comfortable with the recognition of oneself as अहं अन्नं - I am food, I am the very embodiment of the very blessings of अन्न देवता, as अन्न रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्.

When the अन्नमय - nature of one's physical body is thus recognized and appreciated, then the Upanishad leads the spiritually inclined person to one's next level of SELF-recognition, namely प्राणमय. We will see that next time.