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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 2

ब्रह्मानन्द वल्ली

Lessons 2 and 3

Volume 17

तस्माद्वा एतस्मादन्नरसमयात् ।
अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा प्राणमयः ।
तेनैष पूर्णः स वा एष पुरुषविध एव ।
तस्य पुरुषविधताम् । अन्ययं पुरुषविधः ।
तस्य प्राण एव शिरः । व्यानो दक्षिण पक्षः ।
अपान उत्तरः पक्षः । आकाश आत्मा ।
पृथिवी पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा । तदप्येष श्लोको भवति ॥
इति द्वितीयोऽनुवाकः

प्राणं देवा अनु प्राणन्ति । मनुष्याः पशवश्च ये ।
प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः । तस्मात्सर्वायुषमुच्यते ।
सर्वमेव त आयुर्यन्ति । ये प्राणं ब्रह्मोपासते ।
प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः । तस्मात् सर्वायुषमुच्यत इति ।

The Upanishad is talking about Self-recognition, the modes and means of recognizing the ultimate nature of oneself. Recognition is always a matter of knowledge. Therefore, the teaching here is about the knowledge one needs in order to recognize oneself.

There are two distinct levels of self-recognition, namely, the immediate level and the ultimate level. The immediate level is to recognize oneself as one actually is for the time being. The ultimate level is to recognize oneself as one really is at all times, whether one knows it or not. To move from the immediate level to the ultimate level of self-recognition is self-upliftment. In between the immediate level and the ultimate level, there are many intermediate levels of self-recognition, at different stages of one's spiritual growth.

The object of this Upanishad teaching is to help everyone to uplift oneself through all stages of spiritual growth, until one reaches the ultimate level of self-recognition. At the



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immediate level, one ordinarily recognizes oneself in terms of one's name, form, occupation, relationship, etc. Therefore, it is clear that while the person is one, the modes of recognition of that person are many, and the person himself or herself, remains independent of the mode of recognition.

Again, all modes of recognition are not of equal status, in the sense that they are not equally significant for one's self-upliftment. For example, simply by changing my name, form, or occupation, I do not become a better person. Therefore, an appropriate choice in the modes of recognition of one's immediate self is necessary as a helpful means for one's self upliftment. The Upanishad offers such a choice, even while talking about self-recognition in an ultimate sense. Pointing out to the self of any person, the Upanishad says

अयं आत्मा - as we saw last time, again, referring to the same person, the Upanishad says

आकाश आत्मा - again, referring to the same person, the Upanishad says

आदेश आत्मा - again, referring to the same person, the Upanishad says

योग आत्मा - again, referring to the same person, the Upanishad says

आनन्द आत्मा - We will see these words as we progress.

Thus the Upanishad offers five modes of recognition of the same person. These modes of self-recognition apply to every person at any level of spiritual growth, and hence, they are applicable to you and me, as we are, at any time, at any place. No matter what I want to be, I have to start with what I am. Therefore, it is absolutely important that I recognize myself as I am at this moment before I make a conscious effort to uplift myself to whatever I want to be.

What I want to be is simply to recognize my true unchanging Self, which requires knowledge on the ultimate nature of oneself, while what I am actually at this moment is the result of so many things which have happened to me, because of the lack of that knowledge. Consequently, in order to uplift myself, I still have to start with myself, recognizing myself as I am. Who am I then? The Upanishad tells me:

- ✓ That which is food for you, That is what you are. Food here means food for your body, mind and intellect, and also food for all your organs of perception - food for ears, eyes, etc. All that which is food for you, That is what you are. Again,
- ✓ That which you absorb and assimilate, whether that is food, knowledge, or techniques, That is what you are
- ✓ Your sense of values and your code of conduct, That is what you are



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- ✓ Your attitude towards anything you do, That is what you are
- ✓ That which brings you a sense of happiness, That is what you are

You are all these, and at the same time, you are independent of all of them, so says the Upanishad. Simple as it may seem, these particular modes of self-recognition, taken together as a group, constitute an extraordinary way of recognizing oneself as one is, at any given time.

By reflecting on the above five modes of self-recognition, one can rediscover oneself. Your food, your ability to absorb and assimilate, your sense of values, your code of conduct, your attitude towards anything you do, and your objects of happiness, all these together identify you as an individual जीव - as an individual person, as you are at this moment. All that is common among us, and also all that is different among us, are only in the content of the above five modes of self-recognition.

The specific content of each one of the above five modes of self-recognition is amenable for change. By changing one or more of them appropriately, one can uplift oneself to recognize the ultimate nature of one's own self.

By a step by step process, the Upanishad unfolds Self knowledge in such a way that one recognizes that one's ultimate Self is indeed सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म. The Upanishad adopts a peculiar style for unfolding this knowledge.

First, the Upanishad says that आत्मा - The Self is अन्नमय. Then it says, beyond and inside अन्नमय आत्मा there is प्राणमय आत्मा, and beyond and inside प्राणमय आत्मा there is मनोमय आत्मा, and beyond and inside मनोमय आत्मा there is विज्ञानमय आत्मा, and beyond and inside विज्ञानमय आत्मा there is आनन्दमय आत्मा, and beyond and inside the आनन्दमय आत्मा there is the ultimate Self - The ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, which is what one is at all times.

Since there is only one आत्मा, with the additional knowledge gained at each step of self-recognition, the notion of आत्मा - The Self, held previously, falls out naturally. Until one recognizes that ब्रह्मन्, That सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म as आत्मा - The Self, every other notion of oneself turns out to be a mistaken identity for one's real Self, which means, until ब्रह्मन् is recognized, अन्नमय, प्राणमय etc. serve only as a कोश - a cover for the true identity of one's ultimate Self.



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Until you recognize yourself as ब्रह्मन्, the only way that knowledge can be imparted is to tell you that you are not this, you are not this, etc. Instead of telling that you are not this, you are not this, etc., the Upanishad says that aside from this आत्मा, there is another आत्मा, another आत्मा, etc. So saying, the Upanishad progressively takes you to the ultimate आत्मा.

First, one is given up and another is accepted as real. Then, in the wake of further knowledge, that is given up, and yet another is accepted as real, and so on, until you reach the truth of all truths. That is the Upanishad's method of teaching Self-knowledge. The आत्म बुद्धि - the notion of self, is at all levels. By deeper and deeper knowledge, the आत्म बुद्धि is uplifted progressively to higher and higher levels. It is like removing the several layers of husk on a grain.

After describing the अन्नमय शरीर which we saw last time, the Upanishad continues

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अन्योऽन्तर आत्मा प्राणमयः

तस्मात् वा - As it was said before

एतस्मात् अन्नरसमयात् - aside from what has been said as अन्नरसमय आत्मा

अन्य अन्तर आत्मा प्राणमयः - there is another आत्मा which is interior to the अन्नमय आत्मा, and that is called प्राणमय आत्मा - the self whose nature is प्राणमय - life-giving air all over.

तेनैष पूर्णः

तेन प्राणमयेन, एषः अन्नरसमय आत्मा, पूर्णः - By the प्राणमय आत्मा, this अन्नमय शरीर is filled up, which means that प्राण - the life giving air is there everywhere in this body. Wherever this अन्नमय शरीर is, प्राण also is there. There is no distance between अन्नमय शरीर and प्राणमय शरीर. अन्नमय शरीर and प्राणमय शरीर are distinct, but they are not separate. They are distinct because you can recognize them by your knowledge. They are not separate because, they are, by nature, inseparable in every जीव - in every person.

स वा (वै) एषः (प्राणमयः) पुरुषविधः (पुरुष आकारः) एव

तस्य (अन्नमयस्य) पुरुषविधताम्, अनु अयं पुरुषविधः



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This प्राणमय आत्मा is indeed the self of the पुरुष, the जीव - the person in the अन्नमय शरीर. The प्राणमय शरीर naturally takes the form of the अन्नमय शरीर in every respect.

Thus the अन्नमय शरीर becomes the mould for the प्राणमय शरीर. प्राण has no form of its own. It is all-pervasive in the शरीर. It takes the form of अन्नमय शरीर in every respect. That means, in terms of पक्षिकल्पना - bird imagery, the प्राणमय शरीर also has a head, a right wing, a left wing, आत्मा - the self in its centre space, and foundation on which the entire प्राणमय शरीर stands. What are they?

तस्य प्राण एव शिरः - For the प्राणमय आत्मा, which has the प्राणमय शरीर, प्राण एव शिरः - the respiratory activity, the breathing in and breathing out, is the head.

व्यानो दक्षिण पक्षः - व्यान - blood circulation is the right wing for the प्राणमय शरीर

अपान उत्तरः पक्षः - अपान - elimination of body wastes is the left wing for the प्राणमय शरीर

आकाश आत्मा - the central part of the प्राणमय शरीर is the आकाश - the space. The space here is उदर आकाश - the stomach space where the food is digested and also assimilated. Consequently, the digestive power, the power of absorption and assimilation is the आत्मा the self "I", for the प्राणमय शरीर. Thus the word आकाश here is a लक्षण - indicative word for समान - the digestive and assimilative power.

पृथिवी पुच्छं प्रतिष्ठा - पृथिवी here is पृथिवी देवता. The grace of mother earth is the foundation on which the entire प्राणमय शरीर stands. The sustenance of प्राण in this body, the stability of movement of one's limbs on this earth, and one's very life on this earth - पृथिवी are all by the grace of पृथिवी देवता in whom आकाश, वायु, अग्नि and आपः are already there, because the cause is already in the effect. Therefore, for one's प्राणमय शरीर, पृथिवी देवता is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् itself.

तदप्येष श्लोको भवति - तत् - On that matter, on the matter concerning प्राणमय शरीर एष श्लोको अपि भवति - there is also the following Veda mantra. So saying, the teacher quotes the following Veda mantra. Here ends Lesson 2.



Lesson 3 now begins with the Veda mantra concerning the spiritual nature of प्राण - the life-giving vital air, which fills this अन्नमय शरीर.

From what has been said above, it is clear that for the अन्नमय शरीर, the आत्मा - the self, is प्राण - the vital air one breathes in and out. Without प्राण, the अन्नमय शरीर cannot function. It is प्राण which makes the अन्नमय शरीर a जीव - a living person. Such is the glory of प्राण, which makes प्राण as प्राण देवता. In praise of the glory of प्राण देवता, the Upanishad quotes the following Veda mantras

प्राणं देवा अनु प्राणन्ति । मनुष्याः पशवश्च ये ।
प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः । तस्मात्सर्वायुषमुच्यते ।
सर्वमेव त आयुर्यन्ति । ये प्राणं ब्रह्मोपासते ।
प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः । तस्मात् सर्वायुषमुच्यत इति ।

This is what the Veda mantras say about प्राण

प्राणं देवा अनु प्राणन्ति - प्राण is प्राण शक्ति, which is क्रिया शक्ति - the power to act, the power of action

देवाः - the Devas आकाश, वायु, अग्नि, आपः, पृथिवी, सूर्य, चन्द्र etc., all the Devas अनु means enjoying the उपाधि - the vehicle of प्राण शक्ति - the क्रिया शक्ति - the power of action

Just like human beings, all Devatas also have प्राण. The उपाधि or शरीर vehicle for all the Devatas is their respective प्राण शक्ति or क्रिया शक्ति - power of action. With their प्राण शक्ति

देवाः प्राणन्ति - प्राणन्ति means क्रियावन्तः भवन्ति - they become active. Therefore

प्राणं देवाः अनु प्राणन्ति - Endowed with प्राण, all the Devatas live and do their jobs. The wind blows, the rain rains, the sun shines, because the wind, the rain, the sun, etc. are all endowed with प्राण शक्ति and क्रिया शक्ति, and hence they are alive and active.

मनुष्याः पशवश्च ये - so is the case with respect to मनुष्य s -human beings, and पशवः च - also the entire world of animals, and indeed, all living beings.



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It is so because all our ज्ञान इन्द्रियs and कर्म इन्द्रियs - all our organs of perception and action arise only from the सत्व, रजस् and तमस् गुणs of Devas. For example, from the सत्व गुण of आकाश, वायु, अग्नि, आपः, and पृथिवी, our organs of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell are born. Similarly, from the रजस् गुण s of the same Devatas, our organs of action are born; and all our organs of perception and action are active only because of प्राण.

Therefore, in the previous sentence, प्राणं देवाः अनु प्राणन्ति, the word देवाः also means इन्द्रियाणि. Devas are the अधिष्ठन देवताs, the presiding deities for all इन्द्रियs - all organs of perception and action in one's body. Consequently, all the Devatas are already within us, and all our organs are alive and active, only by the blessings of the Devas, who are themselves alive and active because of प्राण.

Thus, it is clear that this अन्नमय शरीर is alive. It is a जीव only because of प्राण, which means that this अन्नमय शरीर is a उपाधि - a vehicle for प्राण. A physical body alone does not enjoy a self. One must have प्राण to enjoy a self. Therefore, for an अन्नमय शरीर, the आत्मा - the self is प्राण.

A physical body is unique to every person. But the प्राण in the physical body is the same for all persons, all Devas, all beings. प्राण is in every living being, which means प्राण is universal to all beings. So is ब्रह्मन्.

Therefore, it is clear that प्राण is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - the direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् for all human beings. Therefore, the Veda mantra continues

प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः - प्राण is life, longevity for all beings. The ONE who is प्राण in all beings is परमात्मा - The परमेश्वर. Therefore, one can see परमेश्वर as प्राण.

Therefore, I can recognize myself as प्राण - प्राणोऽहं - I am प्राण. प्राण is ब्रह्मन्. तत् ब्रह्म अहं अस्मि - That ब्रह्मन् I am. I am प्राण रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् in all जीवs. I am indeed direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् in the form of प्राण in all living beings.



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Such recognition of प्राण, such vision of ब्रह्मन् is प्राण ब्रह्म उपासन - worship of ब्रह्मन् in the form of प्राण. The recognition of प्राण here is प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः - प्राण is life for all beings.

तस्मात् सर्वायुषं उच्यते - for that reason, प्राणं is called सर्वायुषं. It is a गुण नाम. सर्वायुषं is a name for प्राण. It is a name indicative of its nature, namely It is a life for all beings.

सर्वम् एव त आयुः यन्ति , ये प्राणं ब्रह्मोपासते

ये प्राणं ब्रह्मोपासते -Those who practice प्राण ब्रह्म उपासन worship of प्राण as ब्रह्मन्
Itself

ते - those people

सर्वम् एव आयुः यन्ति - they certainly gain

सर्वम् आयुः - all life, meaning पूर्णम् आयुः - full life allotted to their शरीर s by virtue of their कर्म s and कर्मफलs

Those who practice प्राण ब्रह्म उपासन are naturally blessed with full life.

प्राण ब्रह्म उपासन means what? It means meditation and reflection based on recognition and appreciation of the fact

प्राणो हि भूतानां आयुः - प्राण is indeed the life of all beings. प्राण is universal to all beings

तस्मात् सर्वायुषं उच्यते - therefore, प्राण is सर्वायुषं - the very nature of प्राण is सर्वायुषं - a universal life full for all beings. And as such प्राण is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - the direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् Itself.

Consequently, I realize प्राण - I am प्राणोऽहं अस्मि - the very content of my body is प्राण. I am the embodiment of the very grace of प्राण देवता. As a जीव, I am inseparable from प्राण रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्. Such recognition about the nature of प्राण, about the glory of पृथिवी देवता as प्राण देवता gives one a new vision of प्राण, a new respect for life, and uplifts one to a higher level of self-recognition.

इति - Here ends the quotation from Veda regarding प्राण. The next higher level of self-recognition is मनोमय आत्मा. Before we continue with the Upanishad, let us briefly recall a line from the भगवद्गीता which we have already seen, In Chapter 4, Sri Krishna says (4 - 11)



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ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तान् तथैव भजाम्यहं ॥

In whichever manner, in whichever form, with whatever motive and to whatever extent people worship me, the परमेश्वर, I bless them exactly in the same manner, and precisely to the same extent.

That is exactly what the Veda mantras also say with reference to अन्न ब्रह्म उपासन and प्राण ब्रह्म उपासन.

सर्वम् वै तेऽन्नमाप्नुवन्ति, येन्नं ब्रह्मोपासते - Those who practice अन्न ब्रह्म उपासन, they gain all blessings that अन्न देवता can bestow, namely all good health, happiness and prosperity.

सर्वमेव त आयुर्यन्ति, ये प्राणं ब्रह्मोपासते - Those who practice प्राण ब्रह्म उपासन, they gain full life and its blessings.

Thus, as you approach परमेश्वर, so you reach परमेश्वर. We will continue with the Upanishad next time.