



तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 1

Lesson 1

Volume 2

As we saw last time, the first chapter of Taittiriya Upanishad called शीक्षावल्ली opens with a set of शान्ति mantras - invocation mantras, which together constitute ईश्वर उपासन - worship of परमेश्वर, which is a necessary prerequisite for gaining अन्तःकरण शुद्धि - purity of mind and बुद्धि, for becoming fit for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं, and ultimately मोक्ष - total fulfillment in life.

In the Vedic culture, proper training for life long practice of ईश्वर उपासन begins from childhood onwards, even before one learns to read and write. Naturally therefore, the very first lesson in Taittiriya Upanishad is ईश्वर उपासन - worship of परमेश्वर. All worship of परमेश्वर is only through one's इष्ट देवता as हरिः ॐ. Every इष्ट देवता as हरिः ॐ is परमेश्वर Itself. One may have any number of इष्ट देवता s - personal Deities, each in any form and name, and each इष्ट देवता is recognized through the हरिः ॐ mantra as परमेश्वर Itself, in any form of ईश्वर उपासन.

ईश्वर उपासन naturally takes different forms at different times. In every form, however, there are three distinct sequential steps involved, and they are:

ईश्वर ध्यानं followed by

ईश्वर ईक्षणं followed by

ईश्वर आराधनं

ईश्वर ध्यानं is, in the words of Sri Krishna, मय्येव मन आधत्स्व (G 12-8) - fix your mind firmly in Me, the परमेश्वर. Let there be no doubt in your mind about pursuit of परमेश्वर as your ultimate destination in life. In the Upanishad here, परमेश्वर is one's इष्ट देवता as हरिः ॐ. Therefore fix your mind, firmly and exclusively, on your इष्ट देवता. That is ईश्वर ध्यानं.

ईश्वर ईक्षणं is seeing, recognizing That इष्ट देवता, as परमेश्वर Itself. Such recognition is accomplished by reverentially and devotionally installing That इष्ट देवता, which



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

means doing प्रतिष्ठ of That इष्ट देवता through one's mind and बुद्धि, into one's हृदय देश - heart space, and invoking the content of one's "I" notion into that इष्ट देवता as हरिः ॐ, as परमेश्वर Itself.

ईश्वर आराधनं is worshipping That इष्ट देवता, now recognized as परमेश्वर Itself, through physical actions of some kind, as ईश्वर कैङ्कर्यम् - as devotional service to परमेश्वर, with a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude. Such service to परमेश्वर is truly service to ONESELF, as परमेश्वर Itself. Thus ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर ईक्षणं and ईश्वर आराधनं together constitute ईश्वर उपासन - worship of परमेश्वर, through worship of one's इष्ट देवता.

When we do ईश्वर उपासन in any form, we must clearly recognize all the above three steps to fully understand, appreciate and enjoy what we are doing. For example, when we listen to, or participate in doing विष्णु सहस्रनाम अर्चन as ईश्वर उपासन at this temple, we may recognize the above three steps as follows:

In this upasana, the इष्ट देवता is महाविष्णु. Therefore, as we may recall

क्षीरोदन्वत्प्रदेशे शुचिमणिविलसत् सैकते मौक्तिकानां ।
मालाकलुत्पा सनस्थस्स्फटिकमणिनिभैः मौक्तिकैर्मण्डिताङ्गः ॥

शुभ्रैरभ्रदम्रैः उपरिविरचितैः मुक्तपीयूषवर्षैः ।
आनन्दी नः पुनीयादरिनलिनगदा शङ्खापाणिमुकुन्दः ॥

etc. This is ईश्वर ध्यानं, then followed by

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।
शान्ताकारं भुजगशयनं पद्मनाभं सुरेशं ।
विश्वाधारं गगनसदृशं मेघवर्णम् शुभाङ्गम् ।
लक्ष्मीकान्तं कमलनयनं योगिहृद्धानगम्यं ।
चन्दे विष्णुं भवभयहरं सर्वलोकैकनाथम् ॥

etc. This is, ईश्वर ईक्षणं, then followed by

ॐ विश्वस्मै नमः
ॐ विष्णवे नमः



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

ॐ वषट्काराय नमः

ॐ भूतभव्यभवत्प्रभवे नमः etc

This is ईश्वर आराधनं. Here the physical action of आराधनं is devotionally reciting ईश्वर विभूति s - the infinite glories of महाविष्णु, as परमेश्वर Itself, as ॐ Itself. Thus ॐ नमः is common in every अर्चन mantra. That is the format of विष्णु सहस्रनाम अर्चन, as ईश्वर उपासन.

The opening शान्ति mantras of the Taittiriya Upanishad present ईश्वर उपासन in the same format. Here, हरिः ॐ mantra is ईश्वर ध्यानं through the हरिः ॐ mantra, I fix my mind firmly and exclusively on all of my इष्ट देवताs. Following such ईश्वर ध्यानं, these are my ईश्वर ईक्षणं mantras.

शं नो मित्रं शं चरुणः ।

शं नो भवत्वर्यमा ।

शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः ।

शं नो विष्णुरुक्रमः ॥

Here मित्रं, चरुणं, अर्यमा, इन्द्र, बृहस्पति and विष्णु are my इष्ट देवताs. I see, I recognize the same ONE परमेश्वर in all my इष्ट देवताs. How do I recognize that परमेश्वर? By reverentially and devotionally chanting the above four ईश्वर ईक्षणं mantras, I recognize परमेश्वर as शं - स्वरूपः, which means, सुख स्वरूपः - आनन्द स्वरूपः - the one whose very nature is शं सुखं - exalted happiness, Absolute Happiness. I recognize that Absolute Happiness is what I seek. Absolute Happiness can come only from Absolute Happiness, and the same source of Absolute Happiness is indeed परमेश्वर.

Therefore, my vision of परमेश्वर now is परमेश्वर is सुख स्वरूपः. The लक्षणं of परमेश्वर is शं - सुखं - the very nature of परमेश्वर is Absolute Happiness. Such vision of परमेश्वर is ईश्वर दर्शनं through ईश्वर लक्षणं - recognition of परमेश्वर by identifying the very nature of परमेश्वर as शं - स्वरूपः - सुख स्वरूपः, आनन्द स्वरूपः as Absolute Happiness Itself. But I still do not have direct contact with that परमेश्वर, not yet. On the other hand, I do have, even now, direct contact with every one of my इष्ट देवताs, by virtue of my स्वभाव गुण - natural, cultivated, and experientially valid



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

associations with all of them as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर every day of my life. My इष्ट देवता s being the very manifestations of that परमेश्वर, the स्वरूपः of all my इष्ट देवता s also is शं - सुखं - Absolute Happiness. By identifying myself totally with my इष्ट देवता s as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर, I can also be That Absolute Happiness, which परमेश्वर is.

When that happens, जीव ब्रह्म ऐक्यं - the union of जीव (the individual) and ब्रह्मन् - the परमेश्वर takes place, which is indeed मोक्ष - total fulfillment in life.

Therefore, this is what I do now. Through the ईश्वर ध्यानं mantra, हरिः ॐ I touch all my इष्ट देवता s, recognizing all of them as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर Itself, whose लक्षणं - very nature, is शं - सुखं - Absolute Happiness. I express that recognition by the following four ईश्वर ईक्षण mantras. The first mantra is:

शं नो मित्रं शं वरुणः - शं नः मित्रः शं वरुणः - Here, I touch, in my mind and बुद्धि, two इष्ट देवता s, namely मित्र and वरुण, and utter these words of recognition.

शं नः मित्रः (भवतु) (भवतु the verb understood) - I see, I recognize, right now, the मित्र देवता as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर. May that मित्र देवता be शं for us (who are doing ईश्वर उपासन in the pursuit of परमेश्वर)

शं (नः) - वरुणः (भवतु) - I see, I recognize, right now, the वरुण देवता as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर. May That वरुण देवता be शं for us (who are doing ईश्वर उपासन in the pursuit of परमेश्वर). The Upanishad word शं means सुखं कृत् - The Bestower of Happiness.

The सुखं here is not ordinary happiness that comes and goes. It is extraordinary happiness. It is

उत्तम सुखं - exalted happiness

उत्कृष्ट सुखं - uplifting happiness

पूर्ण सुखं - total happiness

स्वरूप सुखं - happiness which is the very nature of सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूप ब्रह्मन्

श्रोत्रियस्य सुखं - the happiness of an enlightened person

अकामहतस्य सुखं - the happiness enjoyed by a person who is not destroyed by the forces of one's own likes and dislikes



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अनपेक्ष सुखं - It is that happiness which does not depend on any situation

प्रशान्त सुखं - It is the happiness of one who is naturally peaceful

सुखं उपैति योगिनं, योगी सुखं अश्नुते (गीता 6 - 27) - It is that incomparable, infinite happiness that is enjoyed by a ध्यानयोगी at maturity. It is that kind of exalted happiness that is indicated by the Upanishad word शं.

Therefore, शं नो मित्रं शं वरुणः means, may the मित्रं देवता as well as the वरुण देवता as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर Itself, be the bestower of शं - सुखं - exalted happiness to us (नः) (who are doing ईश्वर उपासन in the pursuit of परमेश्वर).

मित्रं, आदित्यं, अर्यमा and विष्णु are some of the several word pointers for सूर्य - the sun, as सूर्य देवता in Vedic vocabulary. The sun is also the अधिष्ठान देवता - the presiding deity for enlightenment on every kind of knowledge, and also for the ability of one's own eyes (mind and बुद्धि) to see everything in this creation properly, clearly and totally.

Likewise, वरुण is the word pointer for आपः - water, as वरुण देवता, वरुण देवता is the presiding deity for water and all it signifies in this creation, including अपान वृत्ति - all things which have to be removed from one's उपाधि - body vehicle, for its proper function.

While the extraordinary importance of सूर्य देवता and वरुण देवता for life on earth is obvious, to recognize them as the very manifestations of परमेश्वर Itself, and also the very means for recognition of परमेश्वर already in oneself, for such recognition, one needs proper education and training, and that is what is provided by the basic Vedic education, and the daily lifestyle it teaches. For example, according to the Vedic teachings, one is required to perform सन्ध्यावन्दनम् - a Vedic prayer ritual, 3 times a day, in all of which मित्रं देवता and वरुण देवता are worshipped as परमेश्वर Itself.

Now continuing with the Upanishad, the second ईश्वर लक्षणं mantra is:

शं नो भवत्व्र्यमा - शं नः भवतु अर्यमा - I see, I recognize, right now, the अर्यमा देवता - सूर्य देवता as अर्यमा देवता, as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर. May that अर्यमा देवता be the bestower of शं - सुखं - exalted happiness नः - to us (who are doing ईश्वर उपासन in the pursuit of परमेश्वर).



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

सूर्य - the sun is called by different names in different months of the year. For example, in धनुर मास (December - January) सूर्य is called मित्र. In मकर मास (January - February) the same सूर्य is called विष्णु, and in कटक मास (July- August) the same सूर्य is called अर्यमा.

Generally, people pray to सूर्य देवता as अर्यमा देवता for good eye sight. Of course, one can pray सूर्य देवता for good eye sight any time of the year, and such prayer simply means "May I be blessed with the ability to see things properly, clearly and totally". Such seeing includes the ability to recognize सूर्य देवता as परमेश्वर itself.

The third ईश्वर ईक्षणं mantra is:

शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः - शं नः इन्द्रः, शं नः बृहस्पतिः - I see, I recognize, right now, ईन्द्र देवता and also बृहस्पति देवता as हरिः ॐ, परमेश्वर. May That ईन्द्र देवता and also that बृहस्पति देवता be the bestowers of शं - सुखं - exalted happiness, नः - to us (who are doing ईश्वर उपासन in the pursuit of परमेश्वर).

इन्द्र देवता is the presiding deity (अधिष्ठान देवता) for बल - bodily strength in general, which simply means "May we enjoy good mental and physical strength in our spiritual endeavour by the very grace of ईन्द्र देवता as परमेश्वर.

बृहस्पति देवता is the presiding deity for speech and intellect. By the grace of बृहस्पति देवता, may we be blessed with goodness in speech and sharpness in intellect in our pursuit of परमेश्वर.

The fourth ईश्वर ईक्षणं mantra is

शं नो विष्णुरुक्रमः - शं नः विष्णुः उरुक्रमः भवतु - I see, I recognize, right now, the विष्णु देवता, सूर्य देवता, as विष्णु देवता, as हरिः ॐ - परमेश्वर. May that विष्णु देवता be the bestower of शं - सुखं - exalted happiness, नः - to us (who are doing ईश्वर उपासन in the pursuit of परमेश्वर).

As we may recall, Sri Krishna says (G 10-21)



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

आदित्यानां अहं विष्णु - Among the several word pointers for आदित्य - the सूर्य देवता, I am विष्णु देवता. Therefore सूर्य - the sun is indeed a direct manifestation of परमेश्वर as महाविष्णु, who is सर्वव्यापी - all pervading.

That महाविष्णु is indicated here as उरुक्रमः - the one whose feet are all over. Thus the सूर्य देवता as विष्णु देवता is considered the presiding deity for feet, which gives the meaning "May our legs, indeed all our limbs, be healthy and fit for our own endeavors to reach परमेश्वर already in oneself".

That completes the ईश्वर ईक्षणं mantras. By the above four mantras, all the इष्ट देवता are now firmly installed (प्रतिष्ठ) in one's heart (mind and बुद्धि) and by the grace of all the इष्ट देवता s, all of them are now recognized as the very manifestations of the ONE ब्रह्मन् - the परमेश्वर Itself, already in oneself.

Now follows the ईश्वर आराधन mantras - worship of परमेश्वर, again through the इष्ट देवता s recognized as परमेश्वर Itself. As indicated earlier, ईश्वर आराधन is worship of परमेश्वर through some physical action, done as ईश्वर कैङ्कर्यम् - as devotional service to परमेश्वर. Why is such ईश्वर आराधन necessary? Because only through such ईश्वर आराधन one can cultivate कर्म योग बुद्धि and ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि, all of which are necessary for one to become fit for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं, ईश्वर प्रवेशनं, मोक्ष - total fulfillment in life.

ईश्वर आराधन naturally takes different forms at different times. Here, in the first lesson of this Upanishad, ईश्वर आराधन is simply a reverential and devotional expression of नमस्कार to ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर, as recognized through one's इष्ट देवता in one's pursuit of परमेश्वर, already in oneself.

These are the ईश्वर आराधन mantras here:

नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो ।
त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि ।
त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म वदिष्यामि ।
ऋतं वदिष्यामि ।
सत्यं वदिष्यामि ।
तन्मामवतु ।



तद्भक्तारमवतु ।

अवतु मां ।

अवतु वक्तारं ।

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

नमो ब्रह्मणे - नमस्कार् to ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर. With परमेश्वर नमस्कार, I do नमस्कार् to all the देवताs, and seek their blessings.

But ब्रह्मन् is still beyond the reach of any sense perceptions. Therefore, I invoke ब्रह्मन् in my इष्ट देवताs and offer worship to ब्रह्मन् through my इष्ट देवताs. How do I do that?

नमस्ते वायो - O! Lord वायो, नमस्कार् to you. My नमस्कार् is now directly addressed to वायु भगवान्, who is the अधिष्ठान देवता for प्राण - breathing. Since the bodily function of breathing is available to me for direct perception, वायु भगवान् is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - direct manifestation of ब्रह्मन् for me. Therefore, through वायु भगवान्, I can touch ब्रह्मन् directly and immediately. Therefore, addressing वायु भगवान्, I declare

त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि - O! Lord वायु, you are indeed प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - ब्रह्मन् the परमेश्वर, directly available for my sense perception, because प्राण as well as knowledge about प्राण are recognizable to me directly and immediately.

About every other organ of perception, I have only indirect knowledge. For example, I have eyes because I see. I do not have eyes because I do not see, etc. Thus my "eye-knowledge" is only inferential. But my प्राण-knowledge is direct. I do not need proof to recognize that I am breathing. Therefore, त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म वदिष्यामि - O! Lord वायु, I would say now, that you are indeed प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् to me. You are indeed ब्रह्मन् Itself, available to me for my direct and immediate perception as प्राण देवता.

ऋतं वदिष्यामि - त्वामेव ऋतं वदिष्यामि - ऋतं is धर्मं यथा शास्त्रं - proper conduct, ethical behavior, and good moral character at all times in daily life, consistent with सनातन धर्म - the eternal order unfolded by the teachings of the Veda. That is ऋतं, that is धर्मं. Therefore, once again addressing ब्रह्मन् through वायु देवता as प्राण देवता

नमो ब्रह्मणे - I do नमस्कार् to ब्रह्मन् and declare



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

त्वामेव ऋतं वदिष्यामि - I would call now ऋतं - proper conduct, ethical behavior and good moral character at all times in daily life is indeed Yourself - the ब्रह्मन् Itself, available to me for my direct and immediate perception, which means, wherever there is ऋतं - proper conduct, ethical behavior and good moral character, I see, I recognize That ऋतं as ब्रह्मन् Itself. Likewise,

सत्यं वदिष्यामि - (त्वमेव) सत्यं वदिष्यामि - I would call now सत्यं - being truthful in thought, word and deed, at all times in daily life is indeed Yourself - the ब्रह्मन् Itself, available to me for my direct and immediate perception, which means, wherever there is सत्यं, I see, I recognize that सत्यं as ब्रह्मन् Itself.

सत्यं वद, धर्मम् चर - speak the truth and follow धर्म under all circumstances. These are the most fundamental Vedic teachings on human values in daily life. The entire Vedic knowledge is based on these values. By saying सत्यं is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्, धर्मम् is प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्, the Upanishad here points out that सत्यं is शं - सुखं, and धर्मम् is शं - सुखं. Being truthful and following धर्म, in all aspects of daily life, at all times under all circumstances, is indeed शं - सुखं - exalted happiness - The source of all happiness, is indeed reaching परमेश्वर already in oneself.

By such statements, the Upanishad here unfolds the entire Veda as ईश्वर आराधन - study, expression, recitation of any वेद mantra, as a physical act of worship of परमेश्वर already in oneself. Therefore, what is it one should do as ईश्वर आराधन - physical act of worship in daily life? सत्यं वद, धर्मम् चर - be truthful and follow धर्म at all times, under all circumstances. That is ईश्वर आराधन in everyday life, to become fit for gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं - total fulfillment in life. That is the Upanishad message here. The Upanishad continues

तन्मामवतु । तद्भुक्तारमवतु ।

तन्मामवतु - तत् ब्रह्म मां अवतु - May that ब्रह्मन् protect me

तद्भुक्तारमवतु - तत् ब्रह्म वक्तारं अवतु - May that ब्रह्मन् protect the teacher

Since the teacher-student link is all-important for the preservation of Vedic knowledge and spiritual progress, both to the individual and the society at large, the same prayer is repeated for emphasis.

अवतु मां । अवतु वक्तारं ।

अवतु मां - तत् ब्रह्म मां अवतु - May That ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर, protect me



ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

अवतु वक्तारं - तत् ब्रह्म वक्तारं अवतु - May that ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर, protect the teacher

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

The obstacles to the pursuit of परमेश्वर are essentially three-fold. They are:

- Obstacles arising from one's own self
- Obstacles arising from known outside sources
- Obstacles arising from unknown sources

May that ब्रह्मन् the परमेश्वर protect us from all the three kinds of obstacles, and lead us all to peace, joy and happiness.

इति प्रथमः अनुवाकः - This ईश्वर आराधन completes ईश्वर उपासन - worship of परमेश्वर in Lesson 1.

Before we leave this lesson, let us take note of a लक्षण of ईश्वर उपासन - worship of परमेश्वर. While ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर ईक्षणं and ईश्वर आराधनं are distinct and recognizable steps in every form of ईश्वर उपासन, they are also inseparable, and often, indistinguishable. For this reason, in Vedic literature, all the above three steps, both individually and collectively, are called ईश्वर उपासन.

Further, in some cases, even ONE mantra, as a जप mantra, may unfold itself progressively as all the three steps in ONE. हरिः ॐ is such a unique मन्त्र. When properly understood, appreciated and contemplated upon, हरिः ॐ by itself, is progressively ईश्वर ध्यानं mantra, ईश्वर ईक्षणं mantra a ईश्वर आराधन mantra and a complete ईश्वर उपासन mantra in one's pursuit of परमेश्वर already in oneself. That is why, all the three chapters in this Upanishad begin with हरिः ॐ mantra.

Whatever be one's mode of ईश्वर उपासन from time to time, a conscious effort to recognize in it, each of the above three steps, will make it profoundly more meaningful, effective and enjoyable.

We will take up Lesson 2 next time.