



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

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 1

श्रीक्षावल्ली

Lesson 2

Volume 3

श्रीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः ।

वर्णः स्वरः ।

मात्रा बलं ।

साम सन्तानः ।

इत्युक्तः श्रीक्षाध्यायः ॥

इति द्वितीयोऽनुवाकः ।

As we saw last time in Lesson 1, the Upanishad unfolds the entire Veda as ईश्वर आराधन mantra, which means, the very utterance of Veda mantras is a physical act of worship of परमेश्वर in one's pursuit of परमेश्वर, already in oneself.

Accordingly, the Upanishad now proceeds to present, in a series of lessons, an overview of the essential content of a selected few major topics from the कर्मकाण्ड of the Veda, which serve as मोक्ष साधनं – particularly helpful for the pursuit of परमेश्वर, knowledge of परमेश्वर in its entirety. Since Vedic education is mainly through oral communication, the Vedic student first learns to utter the Veda mantras properly. What that involves is indicated in this Lesson 2, which we just heard.

The Vedic education starts with श्रीक्षां, which also means the science of phonetics, or अक्षर उच्चारण लक्षणं – principles of correct articulation and pronunciation. Correct pronunciation of letters and words is extremely important in teaching Veda mantras. Since wrong pronunciation of letters and words will ultimately lead to alteration of mantras and their meanings, early Vedic education stresses the all-important nature of correct pronunciation of Veda mantras.

In the कर्मकाण्ड of the Vedas, in the ritualistic parts of the Vedas, omissions and other errors resulting in wrong pronunciation of Veda mantras and their consequences can be neutralized by a प्रायश्चित्त कर्म – a compensatory कर्म of some kind. But in the case



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of Upanishad mantras, there is no प्रायश्चित्त कर्म for wrong pronunciations, leading to wrong meanings and their consequences. The only remedy to correct the ill effects of wrong pronunciation of Upanishad mantras is to learn to pronounce them correctly, together with their proper meanings with proper understanding. Therefore, Vedic education starts with phonetics of Vedic language.

शीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः

शीक्षां - the science of phonetics of Vedic language

व्याख्यास्यामः - we will explain, which means the Vedic teacher will first explain the science of phonetics of Vedic language. The word **व्याख्यास्यामः** is pronounced as **व्याख्यास्यामः**, extending the duration of the vowel in the first syllable. That is the prescribed स्वर - accent for this word. With this accent, the meaning of the word is enriched.

The word **व्याख्यास्यामः** is in fact a combination of three words, namely **व्या**, **आ**, and **ख्यास्यामः**. **व्या** means **विस्पष्टं** - clearly, **आ** means completely, **ख्यास्यामः** means will tell or will explain. Therefore **शीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः** means the Vedic education begins with a clear and complete explanation of the science of phonetics of Vedic language. This entire Upanishad being an abstract of the entire Veda, highlights only the essential topics which are indicated. With respect to phonetics of Vedic language, the essential topics are

वर्णः स्वरः । मात्रा बलं । साम सन्तानः । इत्युक्तः शीक्षाध्यायः ।

वर्णः स्वरः - **स्वरः** is accent. **वर्णः स्वरः** is accent on letters, syllables and words. Every Vedic chanting has prescribed **स्वरः**s. They are four in number, namely, **उदात्तं**, **अनुदात्तं**, **स्वरितं** and **प्रचयं**. These **स्वरः** s are usually indicated in the written versions of Veda mantras. For example, **उदात्तं** is indicated by a vertical stroke above the letter or the syllable, and it means "raise the voice". **अनुदात्तं** is indicated by a horizontal stroke, and it means "lower the voice". **स्वरितं** is indicated by two vertical strokes above the syllable, and it means raise the voice and lengthen the syllable by three units of time, and **प्रचयं** means normal pronunciation. For one who is well trained in Vedic chantings, these **स्वरः**s come naturally. Since I have no such training, my recitations may not be exact as prescribed, but are good enough to understand and appreciate the content of the mantras involved.



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In addition to the four स्वरः s, there is also the गुँ-कार, which is sound symbol for total silence - the substratum sustaining all forms, names and sounds, which is indeed the true nature of ब्रह्मन्, without limitations of any attributes. Therefore, the sound symbol गुँ-कार is only to remind oneself to turn one's mind and बुद्धि towards परमेश्वर. If one's अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि is already in ईश्वर ध्यानं, there is no need to utter this sound. If not, one must help oneself by uttering this sound.

Since this Upanishad is a popular one, chanted by people at different levels of maturity, the गुँ-कार sound is always uttered wherever prescribed, so that one may not lapse into mechanical chanting. In the written texts, गुँ-कार is indicated by a curve and a dot (◌̣) above the syllable, as we see in ॐ̣.

मात्रा बलं - मात्रा refers to style of pronunciation with respect to duration or vowel length, and बलं refers to intensity or effort associated with the style of pronunciation.

साम सन्तानः - साम refers to style of pronunciation with respect to speed and intonation (fast, slow, high pitch, low pitch, etc.). This is particularly important in साम वेद. सन्तानः refers to the flow of words with respect to सन्धि and संहित - connection and combination of letters and words.

In all these various forms of pronunciation, one should neither bite the words, nor swallow the words. The mantras themselves must come out crisp and clear, so that the meaning of the mantras can spring forth completely and spontaneously.

इत्युक्तः शीक्षाध्यायः - Thus the lesson on phonetics has been stated, which means that one must clearly understand that, aside from the language itself, which is obvious, स्वर - accent, मात्रा - duration, बलं - strength or intensity, साम - speed and intonation, and सन्तान - connection or combination are the most essential aspects of the science of phonetics with respect to proper utterance of Veda mantras as an inseparable part of Vedic education and training.

इति द्वितीयोऽनुवाकः :

Thus ends the second lesson in chapter 1 शीक्षावली. Now we go to the third lesson.



Lesson 3

सह नौ यशः । सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसं ।
अथातः सँ हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः ।
पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु ।
अधिलोक - मधिज्यौतिष - मधिविद्य - मधिप्रज - मध्यात्मम् ।
ता महासँ हिता इत्याचक्षते ।
अथाधिलोकम् । पृथिवी पूर्वरूपम् ।
द्यौ - रुत्तररूपम् । आकाशः सन्धिः ।
वायुः सन्धानं । इत्यधिलोकं ।
अथाधि - ज्यौतिषम् । अग्निः पूर्वरूपम् ।
आदित्य उत्तररूपम् । आपः सन्धिः ।
वैद्युतः सन्धानं । इत्यधि - ज्यौतिषम् ।
अथाधि - विद्यम् । आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् ।
अन्तेवास्युत्तररूपम् । विद्या सन्धिः ।
प्रवचनँ सन्धानं । इत्यधि - विद्यम् ।
अथाधिप्रजं । माता पूर्वरूपम् ।
पितोत्तररूपम् । प्रजा सन्धिः ।
प्रजननँ सन्धानम् । इत्यधिप्रजम् ॥
अथाध्यात्मं । अधराहनुः पूर्वरूपम् ।
उत्तराहनु - रुत्तररूपम् । वाक् सन्धिः ।
जिह्वा सन्धानं । इत्यध्यात्मम् ।
इतीमा महा सँ हिताः ।
य एवमेता महा सँ हिता व्याख्याता वेद ।
सन्धीयते प्रजया पशुभिः
ब्रह्मवर्चसेनान्नाद्येन सुवर्ग्येण लोकेन ॥
इति तृतीयोऽनुवाकः ।

By this time the Vedic students have become proficient in the recitation of Veda mantras, and they have also gained a certain degree of proficiency in conducting Vedic rituals of many kinds. They have now become what the Gita calls as वेद वाद रताः (G. 2 – 2), which means they can spin out flowery words to impress others on their knowledge of Veda mantras and Vedic rituals. But they have real difficulty in grasping



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the content and intent of such Veda mantras and Vedic rituals. Further, they are in a different age now, mostly in their teens. Their minds are always restless. They need help to make any real spiritual progress, and they know it.

For any real spiritual progress, the first thing one has to know is how to get into the discipline of ईश्वर ध्यानं – how to get the wandering mind to focus on परमेश्वर. It is hard work to tame the mind and turn it into ईश्वर ध्यानं. Most of the Vedic students drop out of their Vedic education at this stage. Only the better and the stronger among them now go to the next stage of Vedic education, namely, training the mind in ईश्वर ध्यानं – learning to fix the mind in the thought of परमेश्वर, either through some prayers, जप mantras or some Vedic rituals. All these forms of meditation on परमेश्वर are collectively called ईश्वर उपासन. This, and the next few lessons, are concerned with ईश्वर ध्यानं through such ईश्वर उपासन.

This lesson starts with a prayer. Every prayer is only an integrated expression of ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर ईक्षणं and ईश्वर आराधनं. Therefore, every spiritual endeavour starts with a prayer. The prayer here is: O! Lord

सह नौ यशः । सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसं ।

सह नौ यशः – May there be यशः – fame and glory

सह नौ – for all of us together who are in the pursuit of परमेश्वर; not vain fame and glory, but true fame and glory, born of ऋतं and सत्यं – good moral character and truthfulness in thought, word and deed at all times, under all circumstances.

सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसं – for all of us together, who are in the pursuit of परमेश्वर (सह नौ), may there be ब्रह्मवर्चसं, means ब्रह्मतेजसं – brilliance and splendor in look and behavior, which is the natural mark of a person who has undergone the intellectual discipline of ब्रह्मविद्या - Upanishad knowledge.

Thus, the prayer here is for यशः and ब्रह्मतेजस्. This prayer, at this stage of one's progress, is meaningful. It indicates that good moral character, truthfulness at all times and strong mental discipline are necessary to sustain the mind in ईश्वर ध्यानं. With such moral and mental strength, one is ready for training in meditation techniques of ईश्वर ध्यानं.

अथातः सँ हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः ।

पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु ।



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अथातः - अथ अतः - Then and therefore. "Then" means after one has gained the required proficiency in reciting Veda mantras properly, अथ - then, only then, and also, when one recognizes that such proficiency alone is not sufficient to gain the ability to sustain one's mind in ईश्वर ध्यानं, and something more is needed in terms of training and discipline.

अतः - Therefore

सँ हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः - we will explain (which means the Vedic teacher will explain) clearly and completely, a process of ईश्वर ध्यानं - meditation on परमेश्वर called

सँहित उपासन, conducive to the practice of ईश्वर ध्यानं.

पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु - through the medium of five perceptible objects of meditation, in all of which the focus of attention is on परमेश्वर Itself, which means the अधिकरण - the ध्यानवस्तु - the object chosen for meditation is a ज्ञान विषय - an object worthy of holy reflection. Thus, for those Vedic students who are ready for training in the discipline of ईश्वर ध्यानं, the Vedic teacher will explain in detail a process of meditation called सँहित उपासन, through the medium of five perceptible objects which are themselves ज्ञान विषयs - objects worthy of divine reflection and contemplation. We must understand that ईश्वर ध्यानं is not ईश्वर ज्ञानं. ईश्वर ध्यानं is only an aid, a necessary aid indeed, in gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं. What is presented here is a technique for ईश्वर ध्यानं - a technique for sustaining the mind in ईश्वर ध्यानं, and this technique is called सँहित उपासन. This उपासन, being part of this Upanishad, becomes itself an Upanishad by लक्षण - by its very nature, which means, as part of this Upanishad, it contributes to the purpose of this Upanishad, namely to help uplift oneself in terms of ईश्वर ज्ञानं arising from a study of this entire Upanishad. That is why this सँहित उपासन is referred here as सँहित उपनिषत् (सँ हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः)

This technique of ईश्वर ध्यानं is based on the following principle. Any thought can lead to any other thought, through a sequence of related thoughts. A thought on any subject can be considered as a sequential combination of several related thoughts. Such a sequential combination of thoughts on a specific thought is called सँहित. सँहित means sequential combination. When such sequential combination of thoughts leads to God consciousness, or sustains the mind in God consciousness, then that सँहित becomes



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सँहित उपासन, which means a sequence of thoughts on a specific subject, which projects and sustains the mind directed towards परमेश्वर.

By proper mental attitude and by proper choice of the object of meditation (ध्यानवस्तु) one can make any thought into सँहित उपासन, by a variety of sequential combination of related thoughts. The Upanishad here illustrates one such type of sequential combination. In this sequential combination, the thought on परमेश्वर is sustained through a thought on a perceptible form of some glory of परमेश्वर, and maintaining that thought through a sequential combination of four related thoughts, indicated here as:

पूर्वरूपम् - the earlier form

उत्तररूपम् - the later form (the terms earlier and later refer to the sequence, and not necessarily with respect to time).

सन्धिः - the combination between the above two forms, and

सन्धानं - that by which such connection is brought about.

Thus, the sequence of thought here is in terms of पूर्वरूपम्, उत्तररूपम्, सन्धिः and सन्धानं with respect to each object of meditation involved. The above sequential combination of the four related thoughts constitutes the अधिकरण - the entire instrument for doing this सँहित उपासन. Thus the entire उपासन here is on a ज्ञान विषय - a perceptible glory of परमेश्वर, whose recognition in the above sequence serves as the means to sustain one's mind steadily on परमेश्वर.

पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु - पञ्चसु अधिकरणेषु - Five such perceptible objects of meditation, in all of which the locus of meditation is परमेश्वर, are given here as the means for practicing this उपासन कर्म. They are:

अधिलोक - मधिज्यौतिष - मधिविद्य - मधिप्रज - मध्यात्मम् ।

ता महासँहिता इत्याचक्षते ।

These are the five अधिकरणs - the perceptible objects of meditation involved in doing this उपासन, namely:

अधिलोकम् - knowledge concerning the universe



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अधिज्यौतिषम् – knowledge concerning light - luminosity

अधिविद्यम् – knowledge concerning विद्या - flow of Upanishad knowledge

अधिप्रजम् – knowledge concerning progeny (maintaining family line) and

अधिआत्मम् – knowledge concerning oneself as a human being

These are the five ज्ञान विषयs - objects of thought involved in this उपासन.

ता महासँ हिता इत्याचक्षते - ताः महासँ हिता इति आचक्षते

ताः - These five objects of thought chosen for this उपासन are called महासँ हिताः - Great sequential combinations leading to and sustaining one's mind in God-consciousness, because, as objects of thought, they are of infinite scope, and hence easily recognized as the very glories of परमेश्वर.

इति आचक्षते - so they say, which means इति वेद विदः (ऋषयः) आचक्षते - so say the Enlightened Rishis.

Therefore, there is no need for us to question why these particular combinations of thoughts have been chosen for this उपासन. The Upanishad simply presents this उपासन as it is practiced.

Now, the Upanishad tells how this उपासन is practiced in terms of पूर्वरूपम् - the earlier form उत्तररूपम्, सन्धिः and सन्धानं. That we will see next time.