



तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 1

शीक्षावली

Lesson 4 (continued)

Volume 5

As introduced briefly last time, the Upanishad is now talking about ॐ mantra उपासन - a form of worship of परमेश्वर as ॐ mantra. As we may recall, all worship of परमेश्वर is only through the form and name of one's इष्ट देवता - personal Deity with whom one identifies oneself naturally by स्वभाव - by one's innate and/or cultivated nature. In every form of ईश्वर उपासन, there are implicitly or explicitly, three distinct sequential steps, namely ईश्वर ध्यानं followed by ईश्वर ईक्षणं, followed by ईश्वर आराधनं.

- ❖ ईश्वर ध्यानं is bringing one's अन्तः करण - mind and बुद्धि to focus firmly and exclusively on one's chosen इष्ट देवता - the Alter of worship.
- ❖ ईश्वर ईक्षणं is recognition of प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - direct and immediate manifestation of परमेश्वर Itself, in one's chosen Alter of worship.
- ❖ ईश्वर आराधनं is some form of physical act of worship of परमेश्वर, already recognized in That chosen Alter of worship.

In the ॐ mantra उपासन which the Upanishad describes in today's lesson, the इष्ट देवता - the Alter of worship is ॐ mantra, not simply as sound OM, but as That which emerged spontaneously at the time of creation in the अन्तः करण - mind and बुद्धि of प्रजापति - the creator ब्रह्माजी, as the direct manifestation of परमेश्वर, the परमेश्वर as the very root, as the very essence of all existence.

According to Chandogya Upanishad (2-23-2 and 3) ब्रह्माजी, at the time of creation wanted to capture the very root, the very essence of all existence, all लोकs, देवs, etc. Therefore, He did तपस्, which means He made a concentrated and incisive enquiry



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on the subject. As a result of such तपस्, the three Vedas, namely Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas, all in their entirety unfolded themselves spontaneously in His अन्तः करण - mind and बुद्धि.

Then He wanted to capture the very root, the very essence of all the three Vedas. Therefore, He did तपस् again on the content of all the Vedas, for the benefit of the entire creation. From such तपस्, emerged in His mind and बुद्धि three cryptic mantras - words of inscrutable knowledge and power, namely भूः, भुवः and सुवः, called व्यहृति mantras. (The Upanishad talks about व्यहृति mantras in the next lesson).

Then again, wanting to capture the very root, the very essence of all the three व्यहृति mantras, He did तपस् on their contents. As a result of such तपस्, the ओङ्कार mantra revealed Itself in all Its glory, spontaneously to the अन्तः करण - mind and बुद्धि of प्रजापति - the creator, as ओङ्कार एव इदं सर्वम्. ओं mantra is indeed the all-inclusive and all-pervasive ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर. Being so, ॐ is the root of all this इदं सर्वम् - this entire universe of manifest and unmanifest existence.

ॐ mantra is far more than ॐ शब्द - the sound of OM. The sound OM includes this entire creation of forms and names. The OM mantra is that from which the sound OM arises, by which the sound OM is sustained, and into which the sound OM ultimately merges and disappears, only to arise again later, in the next cycle of creation. The OM mantra is the ever existent, never changing, all-inclusive, all pervasive आत्मा "I" of all that constitutes the content of the sound OM. That आत्मा "I" of sound OM - the ॐ mantra, has no sound. Its very nature is Absolute peace, Absolute silence, and Pure consciousness.

While the sound OM is ever inseparable from the ॐ mantra, the आत्मा "I", the ॐ mantra itself is ever independent of the sound OM. Again, while the sound OM includes everything that is seen or unseen in one's waking, dreaming and deep sleep states of existence, the ॐ mantra - the आत्मा "I" pervades inseparably everything that exists in all the above three states of existence, while Itself being independent of all of them.



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Therefore, when we chant the ॐ शब्द - the sound OM, we must learn to recognize the ॐ mantra - the आत्मा "I", of oneself, every self, and the entire creation - the परमेश्वर, all the way through the sound OM. It is That ॐ mantra - the आत्मा "I", the परमेश्वर, that is the Alter of worship in this उपासन, in this form of worship of परमेश्वर.

This उपासन has two distinct parts. The first part is जप. What we heard in the beginning are the जप mantras meant for silent repetition for as long as one needs. By such जप mantras, one recognizes परमेश्वर - the आत्मा "I" in the ॐ mantra - the Alter of worship. Such recognition of परमेश्वर is ईश्वर ईक्षणं

The second part of this upasana is a form of होम - a Havan कर्म, performed as ईश्वर आराधन - a physical act of worship of परमेश्वर already recognized in the Alter of worship, namely the ॐ mantra.

Now we start with जप mantras. Just for illustration and appreciation of the content of the mantras involved, let me be the one who is doing this उपासन. What do I do? First, through the discipline of ईश्वर ध्यानं I get my entire अन्तःकरण - mind and बुद्धि firmly and silently fixed on the Alter of worship, namely the ॐ mantra recalling its very genesis. As soon as I recognize ॐ mantra as परमेश्वर Itself, the following words of recognition of ॐ arise in my thoughts spontaneously.

यश्छन्दसाम् ऋषभो विश्वरूपः ।

छन्दोभ्योऽध्यमृतात् संबभूव ॥

That is the thought यः छन्दसाम् ऋषभः विश्वरूपः

यः - That which I recognize in the Alter of worship in front of my mind and बुद्धि. That which I recognize in the ॐ mantra, in the sound ॐ and all that It includes. That ॐ mantra, which I see in the Alter, is

छन्दसाम् ऋषभः वेदानां श्रेष्ठः : - the most prominent, the most distinguished among all the sounds and words in all the Vedas



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That ॐ mantra stands out so distinctly and dominantly in all the Vedas, that It looks like ऋषभः - the bull that stands out distinctly and dominantly among countless heads of cattle.

विश्वरूपः - सर्वरूपः - That ॐ mantra is all forms, including the formless. It is the entire universe of visible and invisible forms and names.

अमृतात् छन्दोभ्यः अधि संम्बभूव - What I see in the Alter is That ॐ mantra, which sprung forth

अधि संम्बभूव - gloriously in all its splendor

अमृतात् छन्दोभ्यः - from the immortal Vedas at the time of creation, as pointed out in the Chandogya Upanishad.

Being so, the ॐ mantra is Eternal. As the seed, as the root, as the essence of all existence, ॐ mantra is Itself all the Vedas, all the व्यहृतिs, all देवs, all लोकs, and indeed the entire universe of forms and names, including the vast expanse of all that is formless. Being Eternal and all inclusive, That ॐ mantra has ब्रह्म स्वरूपम् - has the very nature of ब्रह्मन् Itself, which means that ॐ mantra which is my Alter of worship is ब्रह्मन् Itself, IS परमेश्वर Itself.

So I recognize परमेश्वर in the Alter of my worship. Following such recognition, what do I do? I do नमस्कार to परमेश्वर, and then say a few words of silent prayer. I recognize that परमेश्वर is indeed all that exists in this creation, both in its manifest and unmanifest states of existence. And I am part of this creation, which ever remains inseparable from परमेश्वर, which means I am already in परमेश्वर, and परमेश्वर is already in me at all times. When that is the case, what is there for me to pray for?

Every prayer to परमेश्वर is not with respect to myself as आत्मा "I", but it is entirely with respect to my उपाधि I, my body vehicle. Every prayer to परमेश्वर is only with respect to the ever-changing faculties and dispositions of every component of the body-vehicle I am blessed with at any given time. The purpose of my body vehicle is always the same, namely निमित्त मात्रं भव - मत् कर्म परमो भव - to be an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर and enjoy being in the service of परमेश्वर at all times. For that purpose, my prayers to परमेश्वर at this time are the following:

1. स मेन्द्रो मेधाया स्पृणेतु ।



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सः मा इन्द्रः मेधया स्पृणेतु - सः इन्द्रः मा (मां)
मेधया स्पृणेतु (बलयतु)

सः - सः ओङ्कारः - That ॐ manta, which is

विश्वरूपः - all forms and names in One, and also

अमृतः - Immortal,

सत्यं - ever existence, and never subject to change,

इन्द्रः - That ॐ mantra, being परमेश्वर Itself, is इन्द्रः - The Lord of all इन्द्रियs and

इन्द्रिय विषयs - The Lord of all my organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि, sense objects, desires, hopes and expectations.

सः इन्द्रः मा (मां) मेधया स्पृणेतु - May the power and glory of that ॐ mantra जप bless me, may strengthen me, with मेधा - प्रज्ञा बलं - intellectual vigor and memory.

Thus my first prayer is for मेधा, which is प्रज्ञा बलं - intellectual vigor and memory, which means not only ability for me to think properly at all times, but also for the ability of my knowledge and its strength to spring forth, to come to my rescue when I need them most, when I am weak, or when I am about to be overpowered by internal or external negative forces such as anger or temptations of various kinds.

2. अमृतस्य देव धारणो भूयासं

हे देव, अमृतस्य धारणः भूयासं

हे देव - O! Lord, भूयासं - may I become

धारणः - a worthy receptacle

अमृतस्य - for ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Upanishad knowledge. O! Lord, please bless me, my body vehicle, with what I need so that by your grace, I may become worthy for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं.

What do I need to become worthy for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं - everything my body vehicle needs

ये उपनिषत्सु धर्माः ते मयि सन्तु - ते मयि सन्तु - whatever disciplines, moral values and virtues for gaining and retaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Upanishad knowledge, may I be blessed with all of them in full measure. That is the prayer.



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3. शरीरं मे विचर्षणं - मे शरीरं - मम शरीरं - My physical body

विचर्षणं - विचक्षणं भूयात् - may it always be clean, healthy, able and active, free from disabilities

शरीरं मे विचर्षणं - May my physical body be ever clean, healthy, able and active, fit for diligent pursuit of ब्रह्मज्ञानं - Upanishad knowledge. This prayer has the same meaning as

आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि । वाक् प्राणः शक्षुः
श्रोत्रमथो बलं इन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ॥

Let me enjoy good health so that all parts of my body may function in harmony and serve me well in my efforts to gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं through Upanishad studies. A healthy body is absolutely necessary for the diligent pursuit of परमेश्वर, and hence this prayer.

4. जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा - मे जिह्वा - मम जिह्वा - My tongue

मधुमत्तमा (भूयात्) - may it be the most sweet. मधुमत्तमा is superlative for मधुमत् - sweetness. Therefore जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा - May my tongue be always the most sweet .

The tongue, as we saw last time, is direct and immediate manifestation of Divinity, because what comes out of the tongue is speech, which is वाक् देवता, विद्या देवता - Goddess Saraswati. Being so, वाक् - speech is a glory of परमेश्वर, and being endowed with the ability to speak is itself the very grace of परमेश्वर, the very manifestation of परमेश्वर. Recognizing that, one must be filled with a sense of God-consciousness every time one speaks. That sense of God consciousness in speech is वाक् तपस् - total discipline at the level of speech, which is indicated here as मधुमत्तमा - superlative sweetness for the tongue. In every day life, what constitutes such वाक् तपस् - मधुमत्तमा total discipline in speech, a superlative sweetness for the tongue. Sri Krishna says (G17 - 15)

अनुद्वेगकर वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।
स्वध्याय अभ्यसनम् चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥

अनुद्वेगकरं - Speech which does not hurt, irritate or excite another person in any way
सत्यं - speech which tells the truth as it is



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प्रियहितं - speech which manifests love and care for the person, and, which at the same time is also हितं - beneficial to the person spoken to, and
स्वध्याय अभ्यसनम् - speech conditioned by daily practice of chanting Veda mantras or their equivalents. It is only such speech that constitutes वाक् तपस् - self-discipline at the level of speech, and such self discipline is जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा. Therefore the prayer here is for such वाक् तपस्.

5. कर्णाभ्यां भूरि विश्रुवं - कर्णाभ्यां - श्रोत्राभ्यां - By these two ears

भूरि विश्रुवं, बहु श्रोता भूयासं - May I hear a lot, more and more, again and again, may I be a good listener of Upanishad words imparting ब्रह्मज्ञानं. May I speak sweetly, and listen much more. May I hear fully and frequently what I need to hear for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं. Let me have more and more opportunities to listen to the words of the Upanishads,

Vedantic knowledge can be grasped only through श्रवणं - hearing and listening again and again, not simply through reading. Ability to listen to Vedanta knowledge is a discipline in itself, and every opportunity to listen to such knowledge is ईश्वर प्रसादं - a blessing from परमेश्वर. Therefore, the prayer here is for श्रवणं - for ability to listen and for more and more opportunities for such listening to Upanishad knowledge.

6. ब्रह्मणः कोशोऽसि मेधयापिहितः

ब्रह्मणः कोशः असि - You are, which means ॐ mantra is a कोश - a cover for ब्रह्मन्, मेधया पिहितः - concealed by मेधा. For ordinary people, for whom मेधा - the intellectual vigor and memory extends only to objective knowledge and worldly experiences, you are a कोश for ब्रह्मन् - you are a cover for ब्रह्मन्, which means for such people, ब्रह्मन् is out of view and ओं-कार mantra is simply a symbol for ब्रह्मन्.

On the other hand, for those people for whom मेधा - intellectual vigor and memory extends also to Upanishad knowledge, for them, ब्रह्मणः कोशः असि - you are a कोश for ब्रह्मन्. Here कोश means उपलभ्यस्थानं - the place where the content of ब्रह्मज्ञानं is available for recognition by one's बुद्धि.

Therefore, for enlightened people who have gone through the discipline of Upanishad knowledge, ॐ is not simply a symbol for ब्रह्मन्, It is the very content of ब्रह्मन्, which



means ॐ mantra is ब्रह्मन् Itself. The prayer here is for continued appreciation of ॐ mantra as ब्रह्मन् Itself.

7. श्रुतं मे गोपाय - श्रुतं is आत्म विज्ञानं, which means knowledge on the nature of The Self itself in oneself, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं, ईश्वर ज्ञानं, आत्म ज्ञानं gained through श्रवणं - hearing, listening and understanding, followed by मननं - reflection of what has been heard and understood, and निदिध्यासनं - absorption of the knowledge so gained, all these together constitute आत्म विज्ञानं or श्रुतं. That is why Upanishads are called श्रुतिः.

मे गोपाय - मां रक्ष - Protect that knowledge for me, O! Lord. What kind of रक्षणं - protection is needed for Upanishads knowledge gained through श्रवणं, मननं and निदिध्यासनं ? Let That knowledge be protected from forgetfulness. Let it not be lost or stifled by mental agitations and obstructions arising from काम, क्रोध, राग, द्वेष etc., which means may my मेधा - intellectual vigor and memory be penetrating and powerful enough to preserve and protect the Upanishad knowledge gained through scriptural studies.

This completes my prayer and also my ॐ mantra जप. As we may note here, the entire ॐ mantra जप is for मेधा प्राप्ति - for gaining intellectual vigor and memory, extending deep into Upanishad knowledge - ब्रह्मज्ञानं. This is one of the very important forms of ईश्वर जप commonly used in the pursuit of Upanishad knowledge. One usually does this जप before undertaking a study of any Upanishad, especially before commencing a study of ब्रह्म सूत्र mantras. In all such cases, one usually ends this जप with the usual शान्ति mantras. Therefore, let us hear again these जप mantras.

यश्छन्दसाम् ऋषभो विश्वरूपः

श्रुतं मे गोपाय

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

We will go to the second part of this upasana next time.