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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत्

Chapter 1

शीक्षावल्ली

Lesson 7 and 8

Volume 9

पृथिव्यन्तरिक्षं द्यौर्दिशोऽवान्तर दिशाः ।
अग्नि - वायुरादित्य - इन्द्रमा नक्षत्राणि ।
आप ओषधयो वनस्पतय आकाश आत्मा ।
इत्यधिभूतम् । अथाध्यात्मम् ।
प्राणो, व्यानोऽपान उदान समानः ।
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चर्म माँ सँ स्नावास्थि मज्जा ।
एतदधि विधाय ऋषिरवोचत् ।
पाड क्तम् वा इदँ सर्वम् ।
पाड केनैव पाड क्तं स्पृणोतीति ॥

इति सप्तमोऽनुवाकः :

ओमिति ब्रह्म । ओमितीदँ सर्वम् ।
ओमित्येत - दनुकृति ह स्म वा, अप्योश्रावयेत्याश्रावयान्ति ।
ओमिति सामानि गायन्ति ।
ओँ शोमिति शस्त्राणि शँ सन्ति ।
ओमित्यध्वर्युः प्रतिगरं प्रतिगृणाति ।
ओमिति ब्रह्मा प्रसौति ।
ओमित्यग्निहोत्रमनुजानाति ।
ओमिति ब्राह्मणः प्रवक्ष्यन्नाह ब्रह्मोपाप्नवानीति
ब्रह्मैवोपाप्नोति ॥

इति अष्टमोऽनुवाकः :



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In these two lessons, the Upanishad presents two simple-looking Japa mantras for meditation on ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर. The purpose of meditation is to gain steady-mindedness, which means gaining ability of the mind to concentrate on ब्रह्मन् initially, and subsequently to concentrate one's mind and बुद्धि on an enquiry on ब्रह्मन्.

Japa mantras are meant for silent repetitions. By such repetition, by steadily engaging the mind and बुद्धि on the meaning of the mantras as a pointer to ब्रह्मन्, a natural state of God-consciousness at all times is ultimately reached by the mind and बुद्धि. Meditation on ब्रह्मन् does not by itself bring enlightenment on ब्रह्मन्. Enlightenment comes only on subsequent enquiry – विचार on ब्रह्मन् by the three-fold process of श्रवणं, मननं, and निदिध्यासनं.

- ◇ श्रवणं is listening and understanding the words of the Upanishads
- ◇ मननं is gaining clarity of the knowledge communicated by the Upanishads through personal reflection, repeated analysis and confirmation, and complete elimination of all doubts, and
- ◇ निदिध्यासनं is absorption of the clear and confirmed knowledge through daily practice, in thought, word and deed.

Only through such enquiry can one gain ब्रह्मज्ञानं – knowledge about ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर. Meditation on ब्रह्मन् through जप mantras is only preparation of one's mind and बुद्धि for such enquiry.

Meditation on ब्रह्मन् is always as प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन्, which means meditation on the glory of परमेश्वर as manifested in this creation. Since the entire creation is nothing but the glory of परमेश्वर, any glorious vision of any part of this creation is appropriate material to serve as a locus of meditation, Alter for meditation, to engage the mind and बुद्धि directed towards ब्रह्मन्.

The two Japa mantras presented in today's lessons are just expressions of two glorious visions of this creation, each serving as a means for engaging the mind and बुद्धि directed towards ब्रह्मन् – The परमेश्वर, already in oneself. These mantras are particularly appropriate for students pursuing Vedic knowledge in their early stages of education and training, because these mantras use familiar examples to cultivate ईश्वर ध्यानं, ईश्वर ईक्षणं and ईश्वर आराधनं in one's mind. As we have seen already,



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- ◇ ईश्वर ध्यानं is projection and propulsion of one's mind and बुद्धि towards परमेश्वर
- ◇ ईश्वर ईक्षणं is recognition of परमेश्वर in one's chosen Alter of meditation
- ◇ ईश्वर आराधनं is some physical act of worship of परमेश्वर, already recognized in one's Alter of meditation, totally identifying oneself with That परमेश्वर, both intellectually and emotionally. ईश्वर जप is a form of ईश्वर आराधनं.

With such projection, recognition and identification, the mind and बुद्धि become ready for the next stage in one's Vedic education, namely, an enquiry on the nature of जीव, जगत् and ईश्वर, which enquiry ultimately leads to ब्रह्मज्ञानं – knowledge about ब्रह्मन्.

Now let us try to understand the content of the two जप mantras presented here. To start with, the जप mantra is

पाङ्क्तम् वा इदं सर्वम् – That is the जप, which means

पाङ्क्तम् – the group of five, is indeed a manifestation of ब्रह्मन्, which is in everything, everywhere in this creation. All these groups of five, which exist in this creation, are indeed direct manifestations of ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर. Whatever one recognizes in this manifested creation, as a glory of परमेश्वर, is a direct manifestation of परमेश्वर itself. The word पाङ्क्तम् – meaning the group of five, is a familiar word for all the Vedic students. Early in one's education, the Vedic student learns to act as a priest in the performance of a variety of household यज्ञ s or Havans, all of which go by the common name पाङ्क्तम्, because each such Havan is an integration of five necessary components, namely

- the performer of the Havan
- the spouse of the performer
- their children
- the material ingredients involved in the Havan and
- the इष्ट देवता invoked in अग्नि – the fire, in the Havan kund

The overriding purpose of a पाङ्क्तम् – a household Havan, is to cultivate God-consciousness or ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि in the entire family. If one chooses to meditate on ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर in terms of पाङ्क्तम् – the concept of group of five, depending on the way one looks at this entire creation, one finds that there are indeed infinite



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number of groups of five in this creation, which remind one of the glory of परमेश्वर. Let me use the first person I, just for illustration.

I may look upon this entire creation simply as a summation of myself and everything else other than myself, as the seer and the seen, as the subject (myself) and the objects (everything else). Looking at the objects around me, I see many groups of five which remind me of the glory of परमेश्वर. For example,

पृथिव्यन्तरिक्षं द्यौर्दिशोऽवान्तर दिशाः ।
अग्नि - वायुरादित्य - चन्द्रमा नक्षत्राणि ।
आप ओषधयो वनस्पतय आकाश आत्मा ।
इत्यधिभूतम् ।

पृथिवी - The earth

अन्तरिक्षं - the world between the earth and the heavenly bodies

द्यौः - the planets in the sky

दिशाः - the four directions, which means all that exists in all the four directions

अवान्तर दिशाः - all that exist in all the in-between directions

All the above five constitute one पाङ्क्तम् - a group of five, called लोक पाङ्क्तम् - the five fold aspects of the physical worlds, which is a glory of परमेश्वर. Again,

अग्नि - meaning अग्नि देवता

वायुः meaning वायु देवता

आदित्यः meaning सूर्य देवता

चन्द्रमा meaning चन्द्र देवता

नक्षत्राणि meaning नक्षत्र देवताs or

स्वप्रकाश देवताs, all the self-luminous stars as देवताs

All the above constitute another पाङ्क्तम् - group of five, called देवता पाङ्क्तम् - the five fold aspects of देवताs, the presiding deities of natural laws, which is a glory of परमेश्वर. Again,

आपः Water ओषधयः - the herbal plants

वनस्पतयः - the forests



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आकाश – the space and all that exist in space, and

आत्मा meaning the चिराट आत्मा – the cosmic entity which includes and sustains all the above. This is another पाङ्क्तम् – group of five , which is a glory of परमेश्वर.

इत्यधिभूतम् – All the above three sets of groups of five are together called अधिभूतम् – glory of परमेश्वर, manifested as this entire creation.

अथ अध्यात्मम् – Now let me look at myself. Looking at myself also, I see several पाङ्क्तम् – groups of five in myself. For example,

प्राणो, व्यानोऽपान उदान समानः ।

चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वाक्त्वक् ।

चर्म माँ सँ स्नावास्थि मज्जा ।

First there are the five physiological functions of my body, namely

प्राणः – respiration

व्यानः – blood circulation

अपानः – natural rejection of waste matter

उदानः – natural reactions and

समानः – natural assimilation or digestion

All the above five physiological functions together constitute a पाङ्क्तम् – group of five, called वायु पाङ्क्तम् – group of five involving प्राण – the vital air, which is a glory of परमेश्वर.

Again, there are the five-fold organs of perception and action, namely,

चक्षुः – the eyes, the power of sight

श्रोत्रं – the ears, the power of hearing

मनः – the mind, the power of thinking

वाक् – the organ of speech, the power of speech, and

त्वक् – the skin, the power of touch.



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These five-fold organs of perception and action together constitute a पाङ्क्तम् - group of five, called इन्द्रिय पाङ्क्तम् - group of five involving powerful organs, which is again a glory of परमेश्वर.

Again, there are the five-fold materials of which my body is made up of, namely

चर्म - the skin

माँ सँ - the flesh

स्नाया - the muscle

अस्थि - the bone

मज्जा - the marrow

These five-fold bodily materials constitute a पाङ्क्तम् - group of five, called धातु पाङ्क्तम् - group of five involving bodily materials, which is a glory of परमेश्वर. Thus

एतदधि विधाय ऋषिरवोचत् ।

पाङ्क्तं वा इदं सर्वम् ।

पाङ्क्तेनैव पाङ्क्तं स्पृणोतीति ॥ (हरिः ३०)

एतत् अधि विधाय - Thinking about, or reflecting on the extraordinary nature of all the above groups of five

ऋषिः अवोचत् - The Rishi declared. The Rishi who had the clear vision of the nature of all existence, declared, which simply means, the Veda declares, what?

पाङ्क्तम् वा इदं सर्वम् - All the above groups of five, both individually and collectively, are indeed direct manifestations of ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर, which is in everything, everywhere in this entire creation. Not only that,

पाङ्क्तेन एव पाङ्क्तम् स्पृणोति - There are two distinct messages here, Please listen

पाङ्क्तेन एव पाङ्क्तं स्पृणोति - Every group of five (पाङ्क्तम्) is sustained and fulfilled (स्पृणोति) only by some other group of five, which means no group of five is really independent. Again,

पाङ्क्तं एव पाङ्क्तम् स्पृणोति - That ब्रह्मन्, the परमेश्वर, indicated by * कार शब्द, who sustains and fulfills any पाङ्क्तम् - any group of five, that ब्रह्मन् alone sustains and fulfills every पाङ्क्तम् - every group of five, which means That ब्रह्मन्, That परमेश्वर alone is independent.



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That ब्रह्मन् - The परमेश्वर, while being totally independent of this entire creation, is in all that exist in this creation, sustaining and fulfilling all of them as they are.

That is the realization that one gains by this form of meditation. As one progresses in this form of meditation, the जप mantras now become

पाडकृतम् वा इदं सर्वम् ।

पाड केनैव पाड कृतं स्पृणोति - (हरि : ॐ)

It was for the sake of convenience in meditation that I initially divided the entire creation into myself and everything else other than myself, as the seer and the seen.

As a result of this meditation, I realize now that in fact, there is indeed no such division in nature. The seer and the seen are in fact one and the same. I am non-separate from this creation, and this creation is non-separate from me, and this entire creation and all that exist in this entire creation, including myself, is indeed प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् - direct and immediate manifestation of that invisible ब्रह्मन्. That thought, That realization progressively becomes the locus this meditation.

This form of meditation is of extraordinary significance. Whether this creation is looked upon in terms of groups of five, or any other number, and precisely what are included in the various groups chosen for meditation do not really matter for the purpose of this meditation. What really matters is the ability of one's mind and बुद्धि to elevate any familiar concept, or any ordinary thought, as the locus of meditation on ब्रह्मन् and make such meditation as the means for sustaining God consciousness and cultivating ईश्वर आराधन बुद्धि in oneself, so that one can remain performing every कर्म as ईश्वर कर्म, as कर्म योग in daily life. That is the real significance of this जप mantra.

The second जप mantra also has a similar significance. Now, let us see the words in the second जप mantra

ओमिति ब्रह्म । ओमितीदं सर्वम् ।

ओमित्येत - दनुकृति ह स्म वा, अप्योश्चावयेत्याश्चावयन्ति

ओमिति सामानि गायन्ति ।

ओं शोमिति शस्त्राणि शंसन्ति ।

ओमित्यध्ययुः प्रतिगरं प्रतिगृणाति ।

ओमिति ब्रह्मा प्रसौति ।



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ओमित्यग्निहोत्रमनुजानाति ।
ओमिति ब्राह्मणः प्रवक्ष्यन्नाह ब्रह्मोपाप्नवानीति
ब्रह्मैवोपाप्नोति ॥ हरिः ॐ

For a Vedic student, ॐ is the most familiar of all words. Living in the गुरुकुल, the student starts the day with ॐ, ends the day with ॐ, and in between, he chants ॐ reverentially so many times in the course of his education and training that, even without much enquiry, he intuitively recognizes that ॐ is an extraordinary word, it is प्रणव mantra, it is the word of the glory of परमेश्वर, and being so, ॐ is the easiest vehicle through which one gets in touch with परमेश्वर, and ॐ is the natural word through which one can meditate on ब्रह्मन्, The परमेश्वर. Hence, this meditation on ब्रह्मन् is based on the word ॐ. Using the familiar word ॐ, one meditates upon ब्रह्मन्, one engages one's mind and बुद्धि in the thoughts on ब्रह्मन् as follows:

ओं इति ब्रह्म – the word ॐ is ब्रह्मन्. ॐ is the word and ब्रह्मन् is its meaning. Just as a word and its meaning are inseparable, ॐ and ब्रह्मन् are inseparable. What is ब्रह्मन्, I do not know yet. At this stage of my awareness, even its dictionary meaning is good enough for meditation. The root ब्रह्म has two meanings: Limitless and all-inclusive is one meaning. That which sustains everything is another meaning. Therefore, ब्रह्मन् is that which is limitless and all-inclusive, and also which sustains everything in this creation. So is ॐ. Therefore,

ॐ इति इदं सर्वम् – ॐ The ब्रह्मन् is all this, all this entire creation. ॐ The ब्रह्मन् sustains everything in this creation, including the creation itself, and that means ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वम्.

All this, this entire creation is ॐ, which is indeed शब्द रूप प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् – the direct and immediate manifestation of ब्रह्मन् in the perceptible form of sound ॐ. Consequently, ॐ इति इदं सर्वम् is the जप mantra, the mantra for meditation on ब्रह्मन्. Having recognized the जप mantra, having fixed the जप mantra firmly in mind, the mind is then held steadily in this thought of ब्रह्मन् by a स्तुति of ॐ शब्द – the word ॐ, the sound ॐ, by remembering and praising the glory of ॐ mantra.



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The Vedic student remembers and recalls the glory of ॐ mantra in terms which are familiar and inspiring to him. Silently meditating on ॐ mantra as जप, the Vedic student recalls in his mind reverentially, the extraordinary part played by the ॐ mantra in यज्ञ s, in Havans, conducted for the welfare of the community as a whole. Such Havans are usually presided over by senior priests who have advanced Vedic knowledge and training. The Vedic students, still in their early stages of education, do not conduct such यज्ञs, but they are always present in such यज्ञs as observers. What do they observe? This is what they observe:

ओमित्येत - दनुकृति ह स्म वा, अप्योश्रावयेत्यश्रावयन्ति

ॐ इति एतत् अनुकृतिः, ह स्म वा

ह स्म वा is a manner of speaking expression, which simply means "It is well-known". The meditator doing the ॐ mantra Japa now recalls something that is already well known. What is that?

ॐ इति एतत् अनुकृतिः - ॐ is the word of approval of the chief priest in such यज्ञs. These यज्ञs involve four different types of priests, acting together in a prescribed manner. There is one chief priest, who is assisted by three small groups of priests, one each for Rig Veda, Sam Veda and Yajur Veda, who actually perform the rituals involved in the यज्ञ such as the appropriate Vedic chantings, oblations, etc.

The Rig Veda priests are called Hotrs, the Sama Veda priests are called Udgatrs, and the Yajur Veda priests are called Advaryus. The chief priest is called ब्रह्मा.

The chief priest, The ब्रह्मा, does not perform any ritual by himself, but he initiates, guides, and allows the rituals to be performed by the other priests, by simply using the word ॐ effectively. For example, if the performing priest wants to do something, he looks up to the chief priest for approval, and the chief priest gives approval by simply saying the word ॐ. Thus,

ॐ इति एतत् अनुकृतिः - OM is the word of approval of the chief priest with reference to every action in the proper performance of such यज्ञs.

अप्योश्रावयेत्याश्रावयन्ति

अपि, ओ श्रावय, इति आश्रावयन्ति



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अपि - also, as the thoughts continue on the glory of ॐ mantra, the meditator recalls the words ओ श्रावय, meaning ॐ श्रावय. ॐ श्रावय is a command word in the यज्ञs, used by the chief priest. ॐ श्रावय means "Call the Devatas, get in touch with the Devatas and bring the Devatas to the यज्ञ भूमि " so says the chief priest - the ब्रह्मा priest to the other priests.

इति आश्रावयन्ति - With this command word from the chief priest, the other participating priests, आश्रावयन्ति - they are made to contact, invite, and bring the Devatas to the यज्ञ भूमि to receive the oblations which are about to be offered.

How can the priests bring the Devatas, which means, the power behind the Devatas, to the यज्ञ भूमि? This is possible only by the purity and discipline of the priests involved, combined with the spiritual power of the Veda mantras, which means, by the proper, effective and reverential chanting of the appropriate mantras at the appropriate time, the Devatas are made to respond positively to the call of the qualified priests. How does that happen? As seen by the Vedic student, as an observer in these यज्ञs, this is what happens.

As soon as the chief priest issues the command word ओ श्रावय,

ओमिति सामानि गायन्ति - the Sama Veda priests, the Udgatrs contact the Devatas by singing their most penetrating Sama Veda mantras, starting with ॐ, then ओँ शोमिति शस्त्राणि शँशन्ति - the Hotrs, the Rig Veda priests recite (शँसन्ति - the Rig Veda invocation mantras शस्त्राणि) in praise of the Devatas, with their entire body, mind and intellect tuned to the thought of ब्रह्मन्. These mantras also start with ॐ (the word शोम् indicates that these mantras are not set to music. They are simply स्तुति mantras, mantras in praise of the Devatas). Then ओमित्यध्वयुः प्रतिगरं प्रतिगृणाति - supporting, strengthening and encouraging the Rig Veda priests in their invocations, and helping them to keep their mind firmly held in the thought of ब्रह्मन्, the Advarus, the Yajur Veda priests entuse the Rig Veda priests by shooting forth now and then, the appropriate प्रतिगर mantras - the reinforcing mantras, which again start with ॐ.



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By the power of the mantras chanted by the qualified priests, the Devatas do respond. They assemble at the यज्ञ भूमि. The whole atmosphere is now charged with spiritual power, and everybody can feel it in one's own self. At this point ॐ इति ब्रह्मा प्रसूति - the ब्रह्मा priest - the chief priest says ॐ to authorize the Yajur Veda priests - the Advaryues, to start offering oblations to the Devatas, and complete the यज्ञ in the prescribed manner, accomplishing the purpose of the यज्ञ.

प्रसूति means प्रसव कर्म करोति. The chief priest gives birth to a new act of ritual. He approves what has been done and asks the other priests to go ahead with the next step in the ritual involved.

Thus, the senior priests who have advanced knowledge of the Veda mantras invoke that ॐ mantra again and again, to assure the success of the यज्ञ throughout its progress, and the power and glory of ॐ is so impressive that it engages the mind of the meditator in the thought of ॐ during his जप.

ओमित्यग्निहोत्रमनुजानाति

ॐ इति अग्निहोत्रं अनुजानाति - अग्निहोत्रं is a general name for any यज्ञ कर्म - any Havan कर्म involving fire as अग्नि देवता. For performing any such यज्ञ कर्म, one must always get the approval (अनुज्ञा) from the officiating priest who must make sure that the prerequisites for the यज्ञ are totally satisfied.

ॐ इति अनुजानाति - When the priest gives his approval, he simple says ॐ, which again indicates that ॐ is the word of approval for doing any यज्ञ कर्म.

ओमिति ब्राह्मणः प्रवक्ष्यन्नाह ब्रह्मोपाप्नोतीति - A ब्राह्मण is any person who is mature enough to recognize that gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं is the overriding purpose of life. When such a ब्राह्मण undertakes studies on ब्रह्मविद्या (ब्रह्म उपाप्नोतीति इति प्रवक्ष्यन्), he always starts his studies saying the word ॐ (ॐ इति आह), which shows again that ॐ is not only ब्रह्मन्, It is also the word of auspiciousness (मङ्गल वचनं) for gaining the knowledge revealed by the ॐ mantra, because

ब्रह्मोपाप्नोति - that ब्रह्म एव उपाप्नोति that ब्राह्मण ultimately does succeed in gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं, which means, starting with the auspicious word ॐ, the ultimate success of the endeavor is assured.



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

Thus ॐ is not just an inert word. It is an extraordinary word full of life and power. It is an auspicious word. It is the word of the glory of परमेश्वर. Starting with ॐ the ultimate success of any endeavor is certain. Therefore, with faith and confidence, let me meditate upon ॐ mantra as ब्रह्मन्, as परमेश्वर, dwelling on the thoughts of ॐ as ओमितीदं सर्वम् - ॐ इति इदं सर्वम् ॥

That is indeed the जप mantra in this meditation. We will take up the next lesson next time.