



मुण्डक उपनिषत्

Chapter 3

Section 1

Volume 20

44. द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया
dvā suparnā sayujā sakhāyā
समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।
samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ pariśasvajāte ।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति
tayoranyaḥ pippalaṁ svādu atti
अनश्नन् आन्यः अभिचाकशीति ॥ 3 - 1 - 1
anaśnan ānyaḥ abhicākaśīti ॥

45. समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नः
samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagnaḥ
अनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः
anīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ
जुष्टं यदा पश्यति अन्यः ईशं
juṣṭaṁ yadā paśyati anyaḥ īśaṁ
अस्य महिमानं इति वीतशोकः ॥ 3 - 1 - 2
asya mahimānaṁ iti vītaśokaḥ ॥

46. यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णम्
yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukmavarṇam
कर्तारं ईशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
kartāraṁ īśaṁ puruṣaṁ brahma yonim ।
तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय
tadā vidvān puṇya pāpe vidhūya
निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यं उपैति ॥ 3 - 1 - 3
nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyaṁ upaiti ॥

In the last four sections constituting the first two chapters, the Upanishad has been talking about अपरविद्या *apara vidyā* (objective knowledge) and परविद्या *para vidyā*



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(ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge) and why both kinds of knowledge are absolutely necessary for any person to reach the परम पुरुषार्थ *parama puruṣārtha* - The Ultimate Goal of Life, namely, gaining Total Freedom, Absolute Happiness and Total Fulfillment in Life.

With reference to That परम पुरुषार्थ *parama puruṣārtha* - The Ultimate Goal of Life, the Upanishad has been talking about अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* as अद्रेश्यं *adreśyam*, अग्राह्यं *agrāhyam*, अगोत्रं *agotraṁ*, अवर्णम् *avarṇam*, अचक्षुः *acakṣuḥ*, श्रोत्रं *śrotraṁ*, अपाणिपादं *apāṇipādaṁ*, नित्यं *nityam*, विभुं *vibhuṁ*, सर्वगतं *sarvagataṁ*, सुसूक्ष्मं *susūkṣmaṁ*, भूतयोनिम् *bhūtayonim* - all of which indicate the Same ONE सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyam jñānam anantaṁ brahma*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The ज्योति स्वरूप शुद्ध चैतन्य आत्मा *jyoti svarūpa śuddha caitanya ātmā*, The Pure Conscious, all conscious आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I, The true nature of ONESELF Itself, already in the body-vehicle of every person.

That आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I can be recognized by every person as आनन्द रूपं *ānanda rūpaṁ*, as ब्रह्मानन्द स्वरूप *brahmānand svarūpa*, as Absolute Happiness Itself in one's बुद्धि गुह *buddhi guha*, in the बुद्धि *buddhi*-हृदय *hṛdaya*-आकाश *ākāśa*, in the व्योमिन् दिव्य ब्रह्मपुरि *vyomin divya brahmapuri*, in the Ever-bright, Self-effulgent region of one's own बुद्धि गुह *buddhi guha*, through श्रवणं *śravaṇam*, मननं *mananam* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* of Upanishad knowledge, followed by ओं मन्त्र उपासन *ōm mantra upāsana* - contemplation on the content of The Word ओं *ōm*, as unfolded by the Upanishads. All that has been told in detail.

However, for most people, That अक्षर ब्रह्मन् *akṣara brahman* - The आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I, as unfolded by the Upanishads remains practically unreachable, and hence unrecognizable, because the अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of the person involved is not pure enough to transcend all of one's internal obstacles to reach that व्योमिन् *vyomin* - That दिव्य ब्रह्मपुरि *divya brahmapuri* region in one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*, where alone That ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, That आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I is available for direct and immediate recognition.



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The "I" most people do see - do recognize - is only the अहंकार *ahamkār* I, the ego I, which obviously controls most of one's actions in daily life. So long as one is committed primarily to प्रेयस् *preyas* - worldly pursuits of various kinds, one can only see अहंकार *ahamkār* I. Only when one's entire अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* turns totally to the pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge, can one reach That दिव्य ब्रह्मपुरि *divya brahmapuri* region in one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*, and spontaneously recognize That ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, That आत्मा *ātmā* I, already in oneself as the true nature of ONESELF Itself. Such pursuit of आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge, necessarily requires the prior and continuous cultivation of certain ethical values, such as सत्यं वद *satyaṁ vada*, धर्मं चर *dharmam cara*, etc., and also certain spiritual practices helpful for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge, such as various kinds of practices of self-discipline and ईश्वर उपासनस *īśvara upāsanas* ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānam* ईश्वर ईक्षणं *īśvara ikṣaṇam* ईश्वर आराधनं *īśvara ārādhnam*, etc. about all of which we have heard already in the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* and the Upanishads we have seen thus far.

In this chapter, the Upanishad talks about some of the ethical values and spiritual practices that one must cultivate in full measure in order to be able to gain पूर्ण अन्तःकरण शुद्धि *pūrṇa antaḥ karaṇa śuddhi* - Absolute Purity of Mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. When that happens, the अहंकार *ahamkār* I - the ego I, the ever-changing notion of shadow I or false I in the person, naturally disappears, enabling the person to reach spontaneously the ब्रह्मपुरि *brahmapuri* region in one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*, and recognize the true nature of oneself, the आत्मा *ātmā* I, The Self I, as सत् चित् आनन्द शुद्ध चैतन्य स्वरूप ब्रह्मन् *sat cit ānand śuddha caitanya svarūpa brahman* Itself.

To initiate this process of Self recognition, one must first recognize the apparent coexistence of अहंकार *ahamkār* I and आत्मा *ātmā* I, the ego I and the Self I, abiding in the same body vehicle of oneself. Therefore, the Upanishad first calls attention to this apparent coexistence of अहंकार *ahamkār* I and आत्मा *ātmā* I, symbolically in the language of an allegory of two birds abiding in the same tree. This is how the Upanishad communicates this message.

44. द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया
dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā



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समानं वृक्षं परिष्वजाते ।

samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ pariśvasajāte ।

तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति

tayoranyaḥ pippalaṁ svādu atti

अनश्नन् अन्यः अभिचाकशीति ॥

3 - 1 - 1

anaśnan anyāḥ abhicākaśīti ॥

द्वा सुपर्णा *dvā suparṇā* = द्वौ सुपर्णौ *dvau suparṇau* - Two birds

सयुजा सखाया *sayujā sakhāyā* = सयुजौ सखायौ *sayujau sakhāyau* - bound to each other in close friendship

परिष्वजाते *pariśvasajāte* = परिष्वक्तवन्तौ *pariśvaktavantau* - they remain clinging to each other. They appear bound to each other inseparably and flutter around here and there, perching on

समानं वृक्षं *samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ* - the same tree

तयोः अन्यः *tayoha anyāḥ* - of the two birds, one of them

पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति *pippalaṁ svādu atti* - eats the fruits of the tree with relish and enthusiasm, while

अन्यः *anyāḥ* - the other bird

अनश्नन् *anaśnan* - without eating or tasting anything

अभिचाकशीति *abhicākaśīti* = केवलं पश्यति एव *kevalaṁ paśyati eva* - simply remains looking on, whatever the first bird does

Thus the Upanishad calls attention to two birds, apparently bound inseparably to each other in close friendship, perching on the same tree. Of them, one of the birds eats the fruits of the tree with relish and enthusiasm, while the other bird, without eating or tasting anything, remains simply looking on, whatever the first bird does. That is the simple word-meaning of this verse. Now we must understand what is being communicated by these words.

वृक्षं *vṛkṣa* - The tree referred here is the संसार वृक्षं *saṁsār vṛkṣa* - the tree of this phenomenal world of ever-changing existence, represented by the अश्वत्थ *aśvattha* tree described in detail by Sri Krishna in Chapter 15 of भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* (G



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15-1 to 4). Leaving aside the माया जनित जगत् *māyā janita jagat* - the apparently endless world outside of oneself, every जीव *jīva* - every person has a world of one's own, in the form of one's body, mind and intellect, governed by अविद्या *avidyā* - self-ignorance. For the time being, what an ordinary जीव *jīva* recognizes as "I" - the self, is only the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I - the ego I, the false I, commonly understood as जीवात्मा *jīvātmā*.

On the other hand, the true nature of every जीव *jīva* is indeed परमात्मा *paramātmā* - the आत्मा *ātmā* I. In reality, there are no two Is. When the अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* of the जीव *jīva*, when the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of the person gains absolute purity, the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I (the ego I) naturally disappears, and the identity of जीवात्मा *jīvātmā* and परमात्मा *paramātmā* becomes self-evident. Until that happens however, the ego I and आत्मा *ātmā* appear as two separate entities coexisting in the same one body of the जीव *jīva*. In the allegory, in the symbolic language used here, the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* "I" and the आत्मा *ātmā* "I" are the two birds, abiding in the same physical body (the tree), and it is the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I which tastes and eats the fruits of the संसार *saṁsār* tree while the आत्मा *ātmā* I eats nothing, but remains as a witness to whatever the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I does.

सुयुजा सखाया *suyujā sakhāyā* - These two birds, the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I and the आत्मा *ātmā* I are सुयुजा *suyujā* - they appear to be bound to each other inseparably, because, आत्मा *ātmā* is सर्वगतः *sarvagataḥ* - all-pervasive. Consequently, every entity in this creation, real or imaginary, including अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I, is non-separate from आत्मा *ātmā* I, and hence appear to be bound to आत्मा *ātmā* I. It is still an appearance, because, in reality, आत्मा *ātmā* I is always असंगः *asaṅgaḥ*. It is not bound to anything, because It is पूर्णः *pūrṇaḥ*. It is ever ONE without a second. There is nothing else to get bound to.

Still, The आत्मा *ātmā* I appears to be a सखा *sakhā* - a true friend to अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I, because, आत्मा *ātmā* I lets अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I do whatever it wants. As Sri Krishna says (G 13-22), आत्मा *ātmā* I is उपद्रष्टा अनुमन्ता च *upadrṣṭā anumantā ca*. The आत्मा *ātmā* I in the body is in the form of a pure witness in whose presence alone all knowledge and all actions take place in the entire body. Being Itself Fullness in



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nature, The आत्मा *ātmā* I blesses whatever the body-mind-intellect complex does or wants to do, by virtue of its own स्वभाव गुणs *svabhāva guṇas* - one's सत्व *satva*-रजस् *rajas*-तमस् *tamas* गुणs *guṇas* and experience the results of its own actions. Thus आत्मा *ātmā* I remains as a true friend, अहेतुक उपकारि *ahetuka upakāri*, one who helps without expecting anything in return. The अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* I easily recognizes that some ONE else is really helping it in all its actions, even though it does not know who That ONE is.

परिषस्वजाते *pariṣasvajāte* - The अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* I and The आत्मा *ātmā* I appear to cling to each other inseparably, because, wherever the अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* I moves around in this संसार वृक्ष *saṁsār vṛkṣa* - in this ever-changing world of transient reality, the आत्मा *ātmā* I is there with the अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* I at all times, everywhere. That is because, अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* I has no existence apart from आत्मा *ātmā* I.

पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति *pippalaṁ svādu atti* - Living in the अश्वत्थ *aśvattha* tree - the संसार वृक्ष *saṁsār vṛkṣa*, this is how the अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* bird spends its time. It moves about in the various branches of the tree, पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति *pippalaṁ svādu atti* - tasting, relishing and eating the varieties of the fruits obtainable in the tree as अनेक विचित्र वेदन आस्वाद रूपं *aneka vicitra vedana asvāda rūpaṁ* - in the form of varieties of tastes such as sweet, sour, bitter, etc., which means the अहंकार *ahaṅkāra* I is experiencing the results of its own actions in the form of varieties of सुख-दुःख *sukha-duḥkha* - pleasure and pain experiences in life. On the other hand अन्यः *anyaḥ* - The other bird, the आत्मा *ātmā* bird, the आत्मा *ātmā* I अनश्नन् *anaśnan* - does not taste or eat anything. It does not do anything, because आत्मा *ātmā* is अकर्ता *akartā* - That is the स्वरूप *svarūpa* of आत्मा *ātmā*. Therefore, आत्मा *ātmā* I neither does any कर्म *karma*, nor It has any कर्मफल *karmaphala* to experience. Being so,

अभिचाकशीति केवलं पश्यति एव *abhicākaśīti kevalaṁ paśyati eva* - The आत्मा *ātmā* bird simply goes on looking at the bird, which means, the आत्मा *ātmā* I remains simply as उपद्रष्टा *upadraṣṭā* and अनुमन्ता *anumantā* - a witness and permitter of every action that takes place in the body vehicle of the person. The आत्मा *ātmā* I



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blesses whatever the बुद्धि *buddhi* of the person decides to do, and lets the person experience the fruits of all of one's actions.

The Upanishad continues.

45. समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नः

samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagnaḥ

अनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः

anīśayā śocati muhyamānaḥ

जुष्टं यदा पश्यति अन्यः ईशं

juṣṭam yadā paśyati anyah īśam

अस्य महिमानं इति वीतशोकः ॥ 3 - 1 - 2

asya mahimānam iti vītaśokaḥ ॥

समाने वृक्षे पुरुषः *samāne vṛkṣe puruṣah* - The पुरुष *puruṣa*, the जीव *jīva* bird, the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* bird, abiding in the same tree, पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति *pippalam svādu atti*, tasting, relishing and eating the fruits obtainable in the अश्वत्थ *aśvattha* tree, the संसार वृक्ष *saṁsār vṛkṣa*, which means the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* I, the ego I, abiding in one's own body vehicle, entertaining the notions that "I am the कर्ता *kartā*, the भोक्ता *bhoktā*, the सुखी *sukhī*, the दुःखी *duḥkhī*, etc. - I am the doer of actions and enjoyer of कर्मफल *karmaphalas*, I am happy now and then, I am unhappy and miserable at other times" etc. In all of such feelings, the notion of "I" is involved. Being so involved, the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* bird, the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* I - the ego I

शोचति *śocati* - then becomes sad, entertaining sorrow of various kinds, such as

निमग्नः शोचति *nimagnaḥ śocati* - निमग्नः *nimagnaḥ* means "drowned".

देहात्मभावं आप्पन्नः निश्चयेन मग्नः *dehātmabhāvaṁ āppannaḥ niścayena magnaḥ* is निमग्नः *nimagnaḥ*. Being fully convinced of its identity with one's body, the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* bird, the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* I - the ego I is drowned in sadness arising from its own body-mind-intellect limitations of various kinds. Seeing its own body limitations, the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* I - the ego I, feels "अयं एव अहं *ayam eva aham*" - I am only this (body). Please note here that with reference to anything else in this creation, the अहंकार *ahaṁkār* I - the ego I does not say "I am this". It is only with reference to one's own body that it says "I am this" because of its देहात्मभावं *dehātma bhāvaṁ* - sense



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of identification with one's own body. The moment one feels that "I am this body", one already entertains an immediate relationship with all of one's body attributes, qualities and associations, real or imaginary. Thus, being convinced that "I am this body", the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I - the ego I associates itself with birth and death, and everything in between. Being so is निमग्नः *nimagnaḥ* - निश्चयेन मग्नः *niścayena magnaḥ* - being inescapably drowned in the ocean of one's body limitations. Further,

अनीशया शोचति *aniśayā śocati* - अनीशया *aniśayā* means न ईशया *na īśayā* - feeling a sense of total helplessness. The अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* bird, the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I - the ego I feels that life is taking its own unpredictable course, and it has no say on the matter. The ego I feels bound to one's कर्मसु *karmasu*; and, every time it tries to undo the undesirable results of one's कर्मसु *karmasu*, that effort itself creates more कर्मसु *karmasu*, and more unpredictable results, all of which bind it to कर्मसु *karmasu* for ever. The ego I is now convinced that there is no escape from कर्मसु *karmasu* and their results. That is अनीश *aniśa* - the sense of helplessness to uplift oneself from the sorrows of worldly life. With such sense of helplessness

मुह्यमानः शोचति *muhyamānaḥ śocati*, मूढ भावः सन् शोचति *mūḍha bhāvaḥ san śocati* - The अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* bird, the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I - the ego I, feels thoroughly confused and deluded with a sense of deep sorrow, sadness and depression. Then, something happens:

जुष्टं यदा पश्यति अन्यः ईशं
juṣṭam yadā paśyati anyaḥ īśam
अस्य महिमानं इति वीतशोकः ॥
asya mahimānam iti vītaśokaḥ ॥

यदा *yadā* - When

We must understand what is indicated by the word यदा *yadā* here, in the context here. Every जीव *jīva*, every person, without exception in one's life, does some पुण्य कर्मसु *puṇya karmasu* also. They may take their own time to fructify, but they certainly do fructify at some time. When that happens, when the good कर्मसु *karmasu* of the जीव *jīva* I, the अहंकार *ahaṁkāra* I - the ego I fructify, by the very grace of आत्मा *ātmā* I, The



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परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in the बुद्धि *buddhi*-हृदय *hrdaya*-आकाश *ākāśa* of the जीव *jīva* - the ego I, comes across a great teacher like Sri Krishna, or the great teachings like the भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* and the Upanishads, and gets exposed to the teachings therein. Inspired by such Teachings, the mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of the जीव *jīva* - the ego I, gains a new set of values and embarks on a new line of thought and action in daily life, governed by सत्यं *satyaṁ*, धर्मम् *dharmam*, शमदमादि *śamadamādi* qualities (indicated in our Introduction to The Upanishads), अहिंसा *ahimsā*, ब्रह्मचर्य *brahmacarya*, सर्वकर्मफल त्याग बुद्धि *sarvakarmaphala tyāga buddhi*, ईश्वर प्रसाद बुद्धि *īśvara prasāda buddhi* and thereby gains समाहित चित्तं *samāhita cittam* - absolute equanimity of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, enabling it to live a continuing life of कर्मयोग *karmayoga*, ज्ञानयोग *jñānayoga*, ध्यानयोग *dhyānayoga* and भक्तियोग *bhaktiyoga* as directed by the great teachings (दर्शित योग मार्गः *darśita yoga mārgaḥ*), leading to the attitude of पूर्ण ईश्वर शरणागति *pūrṇa īśvara śarṇāgati* together with ज्ञाननिष्ठा *jñānaniṣṭhā* - सदा ईश्वर चिन्तनं *sadā īśvara cintanam*.

यदा *yadā* - when that happens

अन्यं पश्यति *anyamḥ paśyati* - the जीव *jīva* I - the ego I sees, recognizes the other bird, the आत्मा *ātmā* bird, the आत्मा *ātmā* I already in the body, as

जुष्टं ईशं परमेश्वरं *juṣṭam īśam parameśvaram* - The most worshipful, the most sought after (जुष्टं *juṣṭam*), आनन्दं परमेश्वरं *ānandaṁ parameśvaram* - as आनन्द स्वरूप शुद्ध चैतन्य आत्मा *ānanda svarūpa śuddha caitanya ātmā* - The Self I Itself.

By पश्यति *paśyati*, by such seeing, the जीव *jīva* gains अपरोक्ष ज्ञानं *aparokṣa jñānam* - direct and immediate knowledge of the स्वरूप *svarūpa* of oneself, the true nature of oneself as The आत्मा *ātmā* I Itself, as ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself, as परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself. Not only that

अस्य महिमानं पश्यति *asya mahimānam paśyati* - The जीव *jīva* now sees the entire creation as the very glory of That परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The आत्मा *ātmā* I, The



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Self I Itself. Now the जीव *jīva* recognizes, अहं सर्वभूतात्मा *aham sarvabhūtātmā*, न तु देहस्य आत्मा *na tu dehasya ātmā* - I am not simply the Self I of this body, I am The आत्मा *ātmā* of all beings in this creation, including the creation itself.

इति *iti* - So recognizing oneself as आत्मा *ātmā* I Itself, as परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself

वीतशोकः भवति *vītaśokaḥ bhavati* - The जीव *jīva* becomes totally free from any kind of sorrow, sadness and depression. That means, the अहंकार *ahamkār* I, the ego I, the false I has naturally disappeared and the identity of जीवात्मा *jīvātmā* and परमात्मा *paramātmā* reveals Itself.

46. यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्मवर्णम्
yadā paśyaḥ paśyate rukmavarṇam
कर्तारं ईशं पुरुषं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।
kartāraṁ īśaṁ puruṣaṁ brahma yonim ।
तदा विद्वान् पुण्यपापे विधूय
tadā vidvān puṇya pāpe vidhūya
निरञ्जनः परमं साम्यं उपैति ॥ 3 - 1 - 3
nirañjanaḥ paramaṁ sāmyaṁ upaiti ॥

We will see this verse next time.