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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

मुण्डक उपनिषत्

Chapter 3

Section 1

Volume 22

48. सत्येन लभ्यः तपसा हि एष आत्मा
satyena labhyaḥ tapasā hi eṣa ātmā
सम्यक् ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यं ।
samyak jñānena brahmacaryeṇa nityam ।
अन्तः शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो
antaḥ śarīre jyotiramayo hi śubhro
यं पश्यन्ति यतयः क्षीणदोषाः ॥ 3 - 1 - 5
yaṁ paśyanti yatayaḥ kṣīṇadoṣāḥ ॥

49. सत्यं एव जयते न अनृतं
satyam eva jayate na anṛtaṁ
सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।
satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ ।
येन आक्रमन्ति ऋषयो हि आप्तकामाः
yena ākramanti ṛṣayo hi āptakāmāḥ
यत्र तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानं ॥ 3 - 1 - 6
yatra tat satyasya paramaṁ nidhānaṁ ॥

The Upanishad is now talking about ज्ञान साधन ज्ञानं *jñāna sādhana jñānaṁ* - the means helpful for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge, the personal qualities one must cultivate in full measure in order to become fit for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge. As we may recall, Sri Krishna points out 20 such personal qualities in Chapter 13 of भगवत् गीता *bhagavat gītā* (अमानित्वं *amānitvaṁ*, अदम्बित्वं *admbitvaṁ*, अहिंसा *ahimsā*, क्षान्तिः *kṣāntiḥ*, आर्जवम् *ārjavam*, etc.) and we will see more of them in the chapters we will be seeing a little later. The Upanishad here highlights only a few such qualities, and they, in effect, stand for all the qualities necessary for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* - Self-knowledge. The Upanishad says:



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

48. सत्येन लभ्यः तपसा हि एष आत्मा
satyena labhyaḥ tapasā hi eṣa ātmā
सम्यक् ज्ञानेन ब्रह्मचर्येण नित्यं ।
samyak jñānena brahmacaryeṇa nityam ।
अन्तः शरीरे ज्योतिर्मयो हि शुभ्रो
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yaṁ paśyanti yatayaḥ kṣīṇadoṣāḥ ॥

एष आत्मा सम्यक् ज्ञानेन लभ्यः *eṣa ātmā samyakjñānena labhyaḥ*

एष आत्मा *eṣa ātmā* - This आत्मा *ātmā*

अयं आत्मा ब्रह्म *ayaṁ ātmā brahma* - This आत्मा *ātmā*, The सत्यं-ज्ञानं-अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyaṁ-jñānaṁ-anantaṁ brahma*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar* already in every self as the Self I Itself, This आत्मा *ātmā* can be gained, can be reached, can be recognized by सम्यक् ज्ञानं *samyak jñānaṁ*, सम्यक् आत्मविचारं *samyak ātmavicāraṁ* - by proper enquiry on the nature of जीव *jīva*, जगत् *jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvara*, as unfolded by the words of the Upanishads, by the three-fold means of enquiry, namely प्रणिपातनं *praṇipātanaṁ*, परिप्रश्नं *paripraśnaṁ* and सेवनं *sevanaṁ* - by the diligent study of the Upanishads followed by reflection on the content of the Upanishad teachings through repeated questioning of one's own understanding of the Upanishad words, and at the same time doing all of one's daily duties totally dedicated to परमेश्वर *parameśvar* with कर्मयोग बुद्धि *karmayoga buddhi* and अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति *ananya īśvara bhakti*.

Even to undertake such an enquiry on the nature of आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I, it is absolutely necessary for one to cultivate the personal qualities of total commitment to सत्यं *satyaṁ*, तपस् *tapas* and ब्रह्मचर्य *brahmacarya* in daily life. Therefore, the Upanishad says:

हि *hi* - Indeed



ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

नित्यं सत्येन एष आत्मा लभ्यः *nityam satyena eṣa ātmā labhyaḥ* - By being truthful at all times, This आत्मा *ātmā*, The आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I, already in oneself, can be gained, can be reached, can be recognized.

नित्यं सत्यं *nityam satyam* - means being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times. As the Veda mantra says

वाङ् मे मनसि प्रतिष्ठिता *vān me manasi pratiṣṭhitā*, मनो मे वाचि प्रतिष्ठितं *mano me vāci pratiṣṭhitam* - There must be complete straight-forwardness, proper alignment, clarity and focus in all of one's thoughts, words and actions

नित्यं *nityam* - at all times. That is indeed ज्ञान साधनं *jñāna sādhanam* - means helpful for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge. Further,

नित्यं तपसा एष आत्मा लभ्यः *nityam tapasā eṣa ātmā labhyaḥ* - This आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I already in oneself, can be reached and recognized by being in तपस् *tapas* at all times. तपसा *tapasā* here means इन्द्रिय मन एकाग्रतया *indriya mana ekāgratayā* - by being self-disciplined in the body, mind and intellect level with single-pointed devotion to the pursuit of आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge. Simply hearing the Upanishad words is easy enough. But listening to the Upanishad words requires concentrated attention of mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* to what one is hearing. Such listening is एकाग्र तपस् *ekāgra tapas*, which is the self-discipline needed for मननं *mananam* and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* - reflection and absorption of the content of Upanishad words.

One must diligently cultivate this quality of listening for one to be able to gain आत्मज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* from the words of the Upanishads. Further,

नित्यं ब्रह्मचर्येण एष आत्मा लभ्यः *nityam brahmacaryeṇa eṣa ātmā labhyaḥ* -

This आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I, already in oneself, can be reached and recognized by leading a life of ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacaryam* at all times, through a life-long commitment to the pursuit of ब्रह्मविद्या *brahmadevyā* knowledge, which means total commitment to knowledge and service at all times. Even though total commitment to सत्यं *satyam*, तपस् *tapas* and ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacaryam* are indicated here as three distinct pre-requirements for gaining आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānam* - Self-knowledge, in fact, they are only three distinct expressions of the same ONE all-inclusive pre-



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

requirement, namely सत्यं *satyaṁ*, for the successful pursuit of सम्यक् ज्ञानं *samyak jñānaṁ*. The परमपुरुषार्थ *parampuruṣārtha* - The Highest Goal of Life, the overriding purpose of life.

Through such commitment to a life of truthfulness in thought, word and deed, self-discipline in body, mind and intellect, and the pursuit of ब्रह्मविद्या *brahmavidyā* knowledge and ईश्वर कैङ्कर्यम् *īśvara kaiṅkaryam* every day

क्षीणदोषाः सन् *kṣiṇadoṣāḥ san* - and thus being naturally freed from all impurities and obstructions in one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*

यतयः यत्नशलाः परमपुरुषार्थ प्रयत्नाः *yatayaḥ yatnaśalāḥ param puruṣārtha prayatnāḥ* - those who are in the unbroken pursuit of the Highest Goal of Life, the overriding purpose of life, through Upanishad knowledge

पश्यन्ति हि *paśyanti hi* - they certainly see, they certainly recognize clearly, directly and immediately

यं तं आत्मानं *yaṁ taṁ ātmānaṁ* - That आत्मा *ātmā*, The ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The Self I

अन्तःशरीरे *antaḥ śarīre* - each in one's own body vehicle, in one's own बुद्धि *buddhi* as

ज्योतिर्मय शुभ्रः रुक्मवर्णः शुद्ध आत्मा *jyotirmaya śubhraḥ rukmavarāṇaḥ śuddha ātmā* - The Ever-bright Self-effulgent light, free from any shadow whatsoever

शुभ्रः *śubhraḥ* - Absolutely Pure Consciousness Itself, as Self I Itself, free from any roles such as कर्ता *kartā*, भोक्ता *bhoktā* etc. - doer, enjoyer, etc,

Let us understand this clearly: ONESELF free from, independent of, any roles in life is indeed one's true SELF. If I say "I am the seer, hearer, thinker, or doer, and I myself am independent of all of them, the I in myself Itself is free from being the seer, the hearer,

thinker or the doer. Then who am I? I am शुभ्रः *śubhraḥ* - शुद्ध आत्मा *śuddha ātmā* - I am The Pure Self I Itself.

It is That शुद्ध आत्मा *śuddha ātmā* - The Pure Self I, the अन्तःशरीरे ज्योतिर्मय पश्यन्ति *antaḥ śarīre jyotirmaya paśyanti* - those who are committed to the unbroken life-long pursuit of The परमपुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha*, The मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total Freedom, Absolute Happiness, Total fulfillment in life, ultimately do see, do



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4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

recognize, do reach, each in one's own बुद्धि *buddhi*, in one's own body vehicle, as ज्योति स्वरूप शुद्ध चैतन्य आत्मा *jyoti svarūpa śuddha caitanya ātmā* - as The ever-bright, self-effulgent, Pure-consciousness, The Self I Itself.

Usually in Vedanta, the word यतयः *yatayaḥ* refers to सन्यासीs *sanyāsīs* - renunciates those who renounce all worldly pursuits. We must understand "renunciation" properly; simply because one takes some vows of renunciation in a ritual, and alters one's lifestyle, changing one's name and external appearance, one does not, and cannot become a सन्यासी *sanyāsī*. Sri Krishna defines सन्यास *sanyāsa* as:

काम्यानां कर्मणां न्यासं *kāmyānām karmaṇām nyāsaṁ* (G 18-2)

Renunciation of all काम्य कर्मs *kāmya karmas* - कर्मs *karmas* prompted by desires of various kinds such as health, wealth, name, fame, power, पुण्य *puṇya*, पाप *pāpa*, heaven, etc. Renunciation of all such काम्य कर्मs *kāmya karmas* is called सन्यास *sanyāsa*. काम्य कर्मs *kāmya karmas* include every कर्म *karma* which yields a कर्मफल *karmaphala* - a result of action. So long as one entertains the notion of doership, every action of that person has कर्मफल *karmaphala*, and consequently, all actions of that person naturally become काम्य कर्मs *kāmya karmas* - desire prompted actions, whether or not one seeks or expects, or cares for that कर्मफल *karmaphala*. Whatever be one's disposition towards one's कर्मफल *karmaphala*, that disposition itself is the person's desire with respect to one's own कर्म *karma*.

Therefore, for the person who entertains the notion of doership, all actions are काम्य कर्मs *kāmya karmas*. Therefore, यतयः *yatayaḥ* - true सन्यासीs *sanyāsīs* are those from whom the notion of doership in action has naturally and completely disappeared. Such यतयः *yatayaḥ* are ज्ञानीs *jñānīs*, who do certainly recognize the आत्मा *ātmā* - The Self I as ONESELF Itself.

Highlighting further the need for, and the power and glory of सम्यक् ज्ञानं *samyak jñānaṁ*, सम्यक् आत्मविचारं *samyak ātma vicāraṁ* - proper enquiry on the nature of जीव-जगत् *jīva-jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvara*, through the means of सत्यं *satyaṁ*, तपस् *tapas* and ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacaryam*, for successful pursuit of the परमपुरुषार्थ



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

param puruṣārtha - the Highest Goal of Life, namely आत्मदर्शनं *ātmadarśanam* - Self-recognition, the Upanishad says:

49. सत्यं एव जयते न अनृतं

satyaṁ eva jayate na anṛtaṁ

सत्येन पन्था विततो देवयानः ।

satyena panthā vitato devayānaḥ ।

येन आक्रमन्ति ऋषयो हि आप्तकामाः

yena ākramanti ṛṣayo hi āptakāmāḥ

यत्र तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानं ॥

3 - 1 - 6

yatra tat satyasya paramaṁ nidhānaṁ ॥

सत्यं एव जयते

Truth alone wins

satyaṁ eva jayate

Truth always wins

Truth surely wins

As we have already seen, सत्यं *satyaṁ* and धर्मम् *dharmam* are inseparable. सत्यं *satyaṁ* is concerned with being and धर्मम् *dharmam* is concerned with doing. Being and doing together constitute one's entire life. Therefore, here सत्यं *satyaṁ* means being truthful in thought, word, and deed at all times, together with proper conduct, ethical behavior, and good moral character at all times, under all circumstances of life. That सत्यं *satyaṁ* alone wins, always wins, surely wins, whatever be one's endeavors in life, from time to time. This Upanishad message also defines success in life for all of us, both in terms of values, and in terms of commitment to knowledge and service of any kind.

Further, in the expression सत्यं एव जयते *satyaṁ eva jayate*, the Upanishad word सत्यं *satyaṁ* also refers to both the immediate means as well as the ultimate end, and everything in between. As the immediate means, for the ultimate end, सत्यं *satyaṁ* is only सामान्य सत्यं *sāmānya satyaṁ* - that which one knows as true, to the best of one's knowledge at any given time. But while this सामान्य सत्यं *sāmānya satyaṁ* - ordinary truth is ever subject to change, as one progressively uplifts oneself in one's level of awareness, it is never contrary to the Absolute Truth, The Ultimate End.



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Being so committed to सामान्य सत्यं *sāmānya satyaṁ* - ordinary truth in thought, word and deed at all times and under all circumstances of daily life is itself तपस् *tapas* - a form of intense self-discipline. Through such सामान्य सत्यं *sāmānya satyaṁ* and तपस् *tapas*, when one commits oneself to a life-long pursuit of the ultimate end, The सत्यस्य सत्यं *satyasya satyaṁ* - The Absolute Truth, never subject to change, behind all forms of ordinary truth, one naturally commits oneself to the pursuit of ब्रह्म विद्या *brahmavidyā* knowledge. Such commitment to the pursuit of ब्रह्मविद्या *brahma vidyā* knowledge is indeed ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacaryam*.

Living a life of ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacaryam*, one progressively uplifts oneself in one's sense awareness with respect to one's ultimate goal in life. परम पुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha* - namely recognizing the nature of That सत्यस्य सत्यं *satyasya satyaṁ* - The Truth behind all truths about जीव-जगत् *jīva-jagat* and ईश्वर *īśvara*, through proper understanding and appreciation of the words of the Upanishads gained through प्रणिपादनं *praṇipādanam* परिप्रश्नं *paripraśnam* and सेवनं *sevanam*. This process of upliftment in one's sense of awareness is ज्ञानसाधन ज्ञानं *jñāna sādhana jñānam* - सम्यक् आत्मविचारं *samyak ātma vicāram* - self-upliftment through proper enquiry on the true nature of all existence.

Through such सम्यक् आत्मविचारं *samyak ātma vicāram* - self-upliftment through proper enquiry on the nature of all existence, one ultimately recognizes That सत्यस्य सत्यं *satyasya satyaṁ* - The Truth of all truths, as ONESELF Itself, unfolded in the Upanishads as सत्यं ज्ञानं अनन्तं ब्रह्म *satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma*, ब्रह्म एव इदं विश्वं *brahma eva idaṁ viaśvaṁ*, भूत भव्यस्य ईशानः *bhūta bhavyasya īśānaḥ*, ज्योति स्वरूप शुद्ध चैतन्य आत्मा *jyoti svarūpa śuddha caitanya ātmā*, ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I. Such recognition of सत्यस्य सत्यं *satyasya satyaṁ* - The Absolute Truth, is indeed सम्यक् ज्ञानं *samyak jñānam*, अपरोक्ष ज्ञानं *aparokṣa jñānam* - immediate recognition as ब्रह्मैवाहं अस्मि *brahmaivāhaṁ asmi* - I am indeed ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, अयं आत्मा ब्रह्मन् *ayaṁ ātmā brahman* - The Self I in myself is ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself.



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

Thus, in the expression सत्यं एव जयते *satyaṁ eva jayate*, the Upanishad word सत्यं *satyaṁ* stands for सामान्य सत्यं *sāmānya satyaṁ*, तपस् *tapas*, ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahma caryam*, सम्यक् आत्मविचारं *samyak ātma vicāraṁ* and indeed सम्यक् ज्ञानं *samyak jñānaṁ*, which is indeed सत्यस्य सत्यं *satyasya satyaṁ* - The Absolute Truth of all existence, the ultimate end to be reached. It is That सत्यं *satyaṁ* which alone wins, always wins, surely wins. Here winning is gaining The परम पुरुषार्थ *param puruṣārtha* - मोक्ष *mokṣa* - Total Freedom, Absolute Happiness in life.

When the Upanishad says: सत्यं एव जयते *satyaṁ eva jayate* - Truth alone wins, that statement itself means untruth can never win. Still the Upanishad wants to emphasize that fact, and hence adds the statement:

न अनृतं *na anṛtaṁ* (जयते *jayate*) Untruth can never win. अनृतं *anṛtaṁ* - untruth includes deception, fraud, impropriety of any kind in all worldly transactions. If one chooses to think, as many do, that one can hide one's untruthful actions from others, and thereby escape the negative consequences of such actions arising from man-made laws, the Upanishad here reminds the person that one can never hide one's untruthful or improper actions from ONESELF and eternal laws of कर्म *karma*. The consequences of such actions are immediate in the forms of fear, conflict and self-degradation in one's स्वभाव गुण *svabhāva guṇas*, not only in one's present life, but also in all lives thereafter. On the other hand, being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times, together with proper conduct, ethical behavior and good moral character at all times, under all circumstances of life, what does that do to a person? The Upanishad says:

सत्येन देवयानः पन्थाः विततः *satyena devayānaḥ panthāḥ vitataḥ*

सत्येन *satyena* - By following सत्यं *satyaṁ* and धर्मम् *dharmam* as indicated above
देवयानः पन्थाः *devayāna panthāḥ* - the paths of spiritual striving, the paths following which the देव *devas*, the celestial beings such as अग्नि *agni*, वायु *vāyu*, चरुण *varuṇa* etc. have reached exalted positions they are in this universe, those paths are
विततः *vitataḥ* - broadly laid out, wide open to every such person, every person committed to सत्यं *satyaṁ*, तपस् *tapas*, ब्रह्मचर्यम् *brahmacaryam*, सम्यक् आत्मविचारं *samyak ātma vicāraṁ* and सम्यक् ज्ञानं *samyak jñānaṁ*. Further



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ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

येन ऋषयः आप्तकामाः (सन्) आक्रमन्ति
yena ṛṣayaḥ āptakāmāḥ (san) ākramanti
यत्र तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानं
yatra tat satasya paramaṁ nidhānaṁ

येन *yena*, येन देवयानः पन्थाः *yena devayānaḥ panthāḥ* - By the same paths of spiritual striving followed by celestial beings, the देवs *devas*

ऋषयः *ṛṣayaḥ* - the enlightened Rishis (who are still human beings, not yet become celestial beings)

आप्तकामाः *āptakāmāḥ* (भवन्ति *bhavanti*) - they become fulfilled in all their desires, which means

विगत तृष्णाः भवन्ति *vigata tṛṣṇāḥ bhavanti* - they become totally free from all kinds of longings and cravings, etc. for कर्मs *karmas* and कर्मफलs *karmaphalas* - and they acquire the disposition of total वैराग्य *vairagya* - dispassion towards कर्मs *karmas* and कर्मफलs *karmaphalas*

आप्तकामाः (सन्) *āptakāmāḥ (san)* - thus, having become totally desire-free

आक्रमन्ति *ākramanti* - they ascend in their spiritual ladder, and ultimately

प्राप्नुवन्ति *prāpnuvanti* - they do reach

यत्र *yatra* - where exists

तत् सत्यस्य परमं निधानं *tat satyasya paramaṁ nidhānaṁ* - That Supreme Abode of सत्यस्य सत्यं *satyasya satyam* - The Truth of all truths, the ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, The परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, The आत्मा *ātmā* already in oneself, as The Self I, ONESELF Itself

How does That सत्यस्य परमं निधानं *paramaṁ nidhānaṁ satyasya* - The Abode of the Truth of all truths, The ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, look like, and where, in one's own self, can one reach and recognize That ब्रह्मन् *brahman* as The आत्मा *ātmā*, The Self I Itself, are said in the next verse, which we will see next time.