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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत् *taittirīya upaniṣat*

Chapter 1

श्रीक्षावल्ली *śikṣā vallī*

Lesson 2

Volume 3

श्रीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः । *śikṣām vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* ।

वर्णः स्वरः । *vaṇaḥ svaraḥ* ।

मात्रा बलं । *mātrā balaṁ* ।

साम सन्तानः । *sāma santānaḥ* ।

इत्युक्तः श्रीक्षाध्यायः ॥ *ityuktaḥ śikṣādhyāyaḥ* ॥

इति द्वितीयोऽनुवाकः । *iti dvitīyo'nuvākaḥ* ।

As we saw last time in Lesson 1, the Upanishad unfolds the entire Veda as ईश्वर आराधन *īśvara ārādhana* mantra, which means, the very utterance of Veda mantras is a physical act of worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in one's pursuit of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, 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 *karma kāṇḍa* of the Veda, which serve as मोक्ष साधनं *mokṣa sādhanam* - particularly helpful for the pursuit of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, knowledge of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* 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 *śikṣām*, which also means the science of phonetics, or अक्षर उच्चारण लक्षणं *akṣara uccāraṇa lakṣaṇam* - 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 *karma kāṇḍa* of the Vedas, in the ritualistic parts of the Vedas, omissions and other errors resulting in wrong pronunciation of Veda mantras and their



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consequences can be neutralized by a प्रायश्चित्त कर्म *prāyaccitta karma* - a compensatory कर्म *karma* of some kind. But in the case of Upanishad mantras, there is no प्रायश्चित्त कर्म *prāyaccitta karma* 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 *śikṣām vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*

शीक्षां *śikṣām* - the science of phonetics of Vedic language

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

The word व्याख्यास्यामः *vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* is in fact a combination of three words, namely व्या *vyā*, आ *ā*, and ख्यास्यामः *khyāsyāmaḥ*. व्या *vyā* means विस्पष्टं *vispaṣṭam* - clearly, आ *ā* means completely, ख्यास्यामः *khyāsyāmaḥ* means will tell or will explain. Therefore शीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः *śikṣām vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* 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 ।

varṇaḥ svaraḥ | mātrā balam | sāma santānaḥ | ityuktaḥ śikṣādhyāyaḥ |

वर्णः स्वरः *varṇaḥ svaraḥ* - स्वरः *svaraḥ* is accent. वर्णः स्वरः *varṇaḥ svaraḥ* is accent on letters, syllables and words. Every Vedic chanting has prescribed स्वरः *svaras*. They are four in number, namely, उदात्तं *udāttam*, अनुदात्तं *anudāttam*, स्वरितं *svaritam* and प्रचयं *pracayam*. These स्वरः *svarahs* are usually indicated in the written versions of Veda mantras. For example, उदात्तं *udāttam* is indicated by a vertical stroke above the letter or the syllable, and it means "raise the voice". अनुदात्तं *anudāttam* is indicated by a horizontal stroke, and it means "lower the voice". स्वरितं



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svaritam 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 *pracayaṁ* means normal pronunciation. For one who is well trained in Vedic chantings, these स्वरः *svarahs* 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.

In addition to the four स्वरः *svarahs*, there is also the गुँ-कार *gum-kār*, which is sound symbol for total silence - the substratum sustaining all forms, names and sounds, which is indeed the true nature of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, without limitations of any attributes. Therefore, the sound symbol गुँ-कार *gum-kār* is only to remind oneself to turn one's mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. If one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* is already in ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*, 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 *gum-kār* sound is always uttered wherever prescribed, so that one may not lapse into mechanical chanting. In the written texts, गुँ-कार *gum-kār* is indicated by a curve and a dot ([˘]) above the syllable, as we see in ॐ *om*.

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

साम सन्तानः *sāma santānaḥ* - साम *sāma* 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 *sāma veda*. सन्तानः *santānaḥ* refers to the flow of words with respect to सन्धि *sandhi* and संहिता *saṁhita* - 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 *ityuktaḥ śikṣādhyāyaaḥ* - 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 *svaṛ* - accent, मात्रा *mātrā* - duration, बलं



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balam – strength or intensity, *साम sāma* – speed and intonation, and *सन्तान santān* – 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
iti dvitīyo'nuvākaḥ

Thus ends the second lesson in chapter 1 शीक्षावल्ली *śikṣāvallī*. Now we go to the third lesson.

Lesson 3

सह नौ यशः । सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसं ।

saha nau yaśaaḥ | saha nau brahmavarcaśam |

अथातः सँ हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः ।

athātaḥ saṁ hitāyā upaniṣadam vyākhyā syāmaah |

पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु ।

pañca svadhikaraṇeṣu |

अधिलोक - मधिज्यौतिष - मधिविद्य - मधिप्रज - मध्यात्मम् ।

adhiloka - madhijyautiṣa - madhividya - madhipraja - madhyātmam |

ता महासँ हिता इत्याचक्षते ।

tā mahāsaṁ hitā ityācakṣate |

अथाधिलोकम् । पृथिवी पूर्वरूपम् ।

athādhilokam | pṛthivī pūrvarūpam |

द्यौ - रुत्तररूपम् । आकाशः सन्धिः ।

dyau - ruttararūpam | ākāśaḥ sandhiḥ |

वायुः सन्धानं । इत्यधिलोकं ।

vāyuḥ sandhānam | ityadhilokam |

अथाधि - ज्यौतिषम् । अग्निः पूर्वरूपम् ।

athādhi - jyautiṣam | agniḥ pūrvarūpam |

आदित्य उत्तररूपम् । आपः सन्धिः ।

āditya uttararūpam | āpaḥ sandhiḥ |

वैद्युतः सन्धानं । इत्यधि - ज्यौतिषम् ।

vaidyutaḥ sandhānam | ityadhi - jyautiṣam |



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अथाधि - विद्यम् । आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् ।
athādhi - vidyam | ācāryaḥ pūrvarūpam |
अन्तेवास्युत्तररूपम् । विद्या सन्धिः ।
antevāsyuttara rūpam | vidyā sandhih |
प्रवचनं सन्धानं । इत्यधि - विद्यम् ।
pravacanam sandhānam | ityadhi - vidyam |
अथाधिप्रजं । माता पूर्वरूपम् ।
athādhiprajam | mātā pūrvarūpam |
पितोत्तररूपम् । प्रजा सन्धिः ।
pitottararūpam | prajā sandhih |
प्रजननं सन्धानम् । इत्यधिप्रजम् ॥
prajananam sandhānam | ityadhi prajam ||
अथाध्यात्मं । अधराहनुः पूर्वरूपम् ।
athādhyātmanam | adharāhanuh pūrva rūpam |
उत्तराहनु - रुत्तररूपम् । वाक् सन्धिः ।
uttarāhanu - ruttara rūpam | vāk sandhih |
जिह्वा सन्धानं । इत्यध्यात्मम् ।
jihvā sandhānam | ityadhyātmanam |
इतीमा महा संहिताः ।
itīmā mahā saṁhitāḥ |
य एवमेता महा संहिता व्याख्याता वेद ।
ya evametā mahā saṁhitā vyākhyātā veda |
सन्धीयते प्रजया पशुभिः
sandhiyate prajayā paśubhih
ब्रह्मवर्चसेनान्नाद्येन सुवर्ग्येण लोकेन ॥
brahma varcasenānnādyena suvargye ṇa lokena ||
इति तृतीयोऽनुवाकः ।
ita tṛtīyo'nuvākaḥ |

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 *veda vāda ratāḥ* (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 the content and intent of such Veda mantras and Vedic



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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 *īśvara dhyānaṁ* – how to get the wandering mind to focus on परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. It is hard work to tame the mind and turn it into ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*. 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 *īśvara dhyānaṁ* – learning to fix the mind in the thought of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, either through some prayers, जप *japa* mantras or some Vedic rituals. All these forms of meditation on परमेश्वर *parameśvar* are collectively called ईश्वर उपासन *īśvara upāsana*. This, and the next few lessons, are concerned with ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ* through such ईश्वर उपासन *īśvara upāsana*.

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

सह नौ यशः । सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसं ।

saha nau yaśaḥ | saha nau brahma varcasam |

सह नौ यशः *saha nau yaśaḥ* – May there be यशः *yaśaḥ* – fame and glory

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

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

Thus, the prayer here is for यशः *yaśaḥ* and ब्रह्मतेजस् *brahma tejas*. This prayer, at this stage of one's progress, is meaningful. It indicates that good moral character,



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truthfulness at all times and strong mental discipline are necessary to sustain the mind in ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*. With such moral and mental strength, one is ready for training in meditation techniques of ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*.

अथातः संहिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः ।

athātaḥ saṁ hitāyā upaniṣadam̐ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ

पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु ।

pañca svadhi karaṇeṣu

अथातः *athātaḥ* - अथ अतः *atha ataḥ* - Then and therefore. "Then" means after one has gained the required proficiency in reciting Veda mantras properly, अथ *atha* - 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 *īśvara dhyānaṁ*, and something more is needed in terms of training and discipline.

अतः *ataḥ* - Therefore

सँ हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः *sā hitāyā upaniṣadam̐ vyākhyāsyāmaah* - we will explain (which means the Vedic teacher will explain) clearly and completely, a process of ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*- meditation on परमेश्वर *parameśvar* called

सँहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana*, conducive to the practice of ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*.

पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु *pañca svadhi karaṇeṣu* - through the medium of five perceptible objects of meditation, in all of which the focus of attention is on परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself, which means the अधिकरण *adhakaraṇa* - the ध्यानवस्तु *dhyānavastu* - the object chosen for meditation is a ज्ञान विषय *jñāna viṣaya* - an object worthy of holy reflection. Thus, for those Vedic students who are ready for training in the discipline of ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*, the Vedic teacher will explain in detail a process of meditation called सँहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana*, through the medium of five perceptible objects which are themselves ज्ञान विषय *jñāna viṣayas* - objects worthy of divine reflection and contemplation. We must understand that ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ* is not ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ*. ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ* is only an aid, a necessary aid indeed, in gaining ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ*. What is presented here is a technique for ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ* - a technique for sustaining the mind in ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānaṁ*, and this technique is called



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संहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana*. This उपासन *upāsana*, being part of this Upanishad, becomes itself an Upanishad by लक्षण *lakṣaṇa* – 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 ज्ञान *īśvara jñānam* arising from a study of this entire Upanishad. That is why this संहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana* is referred here as संहित उपनिषत् *saṁhita upaniṣat* (सं हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः *saṁ hitāyā upaniṣadaṁ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*)

This technique of ईश्वर ध्यान *īśvara dhyānam* 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 संहित *saṁhita*. संहित *saṁhita* means sequential combination. When such sequential combination of thoughts leads to God consciousness, or sustains the mind in God consciousness, then that संहित *saṁhita* becomes संहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana*, which means a sequence of thoughts on a specific subject, which projects and sustains the mind directed towards परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

By proper mental attitude and by proper choice of the object of meditation (ध्यानवस्तु *dhyānavastu*) one can make any thought into संहित उपासन *saṁhita upāsana*, 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 *parameśvar* is sustained through a thought on a perceptible form of some glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and maintaining that thought through a sequential combination of four related thoughts, indicated here as:

पूर्वरूपम् *pūrvarūpam* – the earlier form

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

सन्धिः *sandhiḥ* – the combination between the above two forms, and

सन्धानं *sandhānam* – that by which such connection is brought about.

Thus, the sequence of thought here is in terms of पूर्वरूपम् *pūrvarūpam*, उत्तररूपम् *uttararūpam*, सन्धिः *sandhiḥ* and सन्धानं *sandhānam* with respect to each object of meditation involved. The above sequential combination of the four related thoughts constitutes the अधिकरण *adhikaraṇa* – the entire instrument for doing this संहित



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उपासन *saṁhita upāsana*. Thus the entire उपासन *upāsana* here is on a ज्ञान विषय *jñāna viṣaya* - a perceptible glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, whose recognition in the above sequence serves as the means to sustain one's mind steadily on परमेश्वर *parameśvar*.

पञ्चस्यधिकरणेषु *pañca svadhi karaṇeṣu* - पञ्चसु अधिकरणेषु *pañcasu adhikaraṇeṣu* - Five such perceptible objects of meditation, in all of which the locus of meditation is परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, are given here as the means for practicing this उपासन कर्म *upāsana karma*. They are:

अधिलोक - मधिज्यौतिष - मधिविद्य - मधिप्रज - मध्यात्मम् ।
adhiloka - madhijyautiṣa - madhividya - madhipraja - madhyātmam ।
ता महासँहिता इत्याचक्षते ।
tā mahā saṁhitā ityācakṣate ।

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

अधिलोकम् *adhi lokam* - knowledge concerning the universe
अधिज्यौतिषम् *adhi jyautiṣam* - knowledge concerning light - luminosity
अधिविद्यम् *adhi vidyam* - knowledge concerning विद्या *vidya* - flow of Upanishad knowledge
अधिप्रजम् *adhi prajam* - knowledge concerning progeny (maintaining family line) and
अधिआत्मम् *adhi ātmam* - knowledge concerning oneself as a human being

These are the five ज्ञान विषयs *jñāna viṣayas* - objects of thought involved in this उपासन *upāsana*.

ता महासँहिता इत्याचक्षते - ताः महा सँहिता इति आचक्षते
tā mahā saṁhitā ityācakṣate - tāaḥ mahā saṁhitā iti ācakṣate
ताः *tāh* - These five objects of thought chosen for this उपासन *upāsana* are called महा सँहिताः *mahā saṁhitāh* - 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 *parameśvar*.



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

इति आचक्षते *iti ācakṣate* - so they say, which means इति वेद विदः (ऋषयः) आचक्षते *iti veda vidah (ṛṣayah) ācakṣate* - 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 *upāsana*. The Upanishad simply presents this उपासन *upāsana* as it is practiced.

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