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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

तैत्तिरीय उपनिषत् *taittirīya upaniṣat*

Chapter 1

श्रीक्षावल्ली *śikṣā vallī*

Lesson 4 (continued)

Volume 5

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

- ❖ ईश्वर ध्यानं *īśvara dhyānam* is bringing one's अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* to focus firmly and exclusively on one's chosen इष्ट देवता *iṣṭa devatā* – the Alter of worship.
- ❖ ईश्वर ईक्षणं *īśvara īkṣaṇam* is recognition of प्रत्यक्ष ब्रह्मन् *pratyakṣa brahman* – direct and immediate manifestation of परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself, in one's chosen Alter of worship.
- ❖ ईश्वर आराधनं *īśvara dhyānam* is some form of physical act of worship of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, already recognized in That chosen Alter of worship.

In the ॐ mantra उपासन *upāsana* which the Upanishad describes in today's lesson, the इष्ट देवता *iṣṭa devatā* – 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 अन्तःकरण *antaḥ karaṇa* – mind and बुद्धि *buddhi* of प्रजापति *prajāpati* – the creator ब्रह्माजी *brahmāji*, as the direct manifestation of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, the परमेश्वर *parameśvar* as the very root, as the very essence of all existence.



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

According to Chandogya Upanishad (2-23-2 and 3) ब्रह्माजी *brahmājī*, at the time of creation wanted to capture the very root, the very essence of all existence, all लोकs *lokas*, देवs *devas*, etc. Therefore, He did तपस् *tapas*, which means He made a concentrated and incisive enquiry on the subject. As a result of such तपस् *tapas*, the three Vedas, namely Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas, all in their entirety unfolded themselves spontaneously in His अन्तः करण *antaḥ karaṇa* - mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*.

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

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

ॐ *om* mantra is far more than ॐ शब्द *om śabda* - 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 *ātmā* "I" of all that constitutes the content of the sound OM. That आत्मा *ātmā* "I" of sound OM - the ॐ *om* mantra, has no sound. Its very nature is Absolute peace, Absolute silence, and Pure consciousness.



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

While the sound OM is ever inseparable from the ॐ *om* mantra, the आत्मा *ātmā* "I", the ॐ *om* 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 *om* mantra - the आत्मा *ātmā* "I" pervades inseparably everything that exists in all the above three states of existence, while Itself being independent of all of them.

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

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

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

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

यश्छन्दसाम् ऋषभो विश्वरूपः ।



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

yaśchandasām ṛṣabho viśvarūpaḥ ।
छन्दोभ्योऽध्यमृतात् संबभूव ॥
chandobhyo'dhyamṛtāt sambabhūva ॥

That is the thought यः छन्दसाम् ऋषभः विश्वरूपः *yah chandasām ṛṣabho viśvarūpaḥ*

यः *yah* – That which I recognize in the Alter of worship in front of my mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*. That which I recognize in the ॐ *om* mantra, in the sound ॐ *om* and all that it includes. That ॐ *om* mantra, which I see in the Alter, is

छन्दसाम् ऋषभः वेदानां श्रेष्ठः *chandasām ṛṣabhah vedānām śreṣṭhaḥ* – the most prominent, the most distinguished among all the sounds and words in all the Vedas

That ॐ *om* mantra stands out so distinctly and dominantly in all the Vedas, that it looks like ऋषभः *ṛṣabhah* – the bull that stands out distinctly and dominantly among countless heads of cattle.

विश्वरूपः *viśvarūpaḥ* – सर्वरूपः *sarva rūpaḥ* – That ॐ *om* mantra is all forms, including the formless. It is the entire universe of visible and invisible forms and names.

अमृतात् छन्दोभ्यः अधि सम्बभूव *amṛtāt chandobhyaḥ adhi sambabhūva* – What I see in the Alter is That ॐ *om* mantra, which sprung forth

अधि सम्बभूव *adhi sambabhūva* – gloriously in all its splendor

अमृतात् छन्दोभ्यः *amṛtāt chandobhyaḥ* – from the immortal Vedas at the time of creation, as pointed out in the Chandogya Upanishad.

Being so, the ॐ *om* mantra is Eternal. As the seed, as the root, as the essence of all existence, ॐ *om* mantra is Itself all the Vedas, all the व्यहृतिः *vyahṛtas*, all देवः *devas*, all लोकः *lokas*, 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 *om* mantra has ब्रह्म स्वरूपम् *brahma svarūpam* – has the very nature of ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself, which means that ॐ *om* mantra which is my Alter of worship is ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself, is परमेश्वर *parameśvar* Itself.

So I recognize परमेश्वर *parameśvar* in the Alter of my worship. Following such recognition, what do I do? I do नमस्कार *namaskār* to परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

then say a few words of silent prayer. I recognize that परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* 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 *paramēśvar*, which means I am already in परमेश्वर *paramēśvar*, and परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* is already in me at all times. When that is the case, what is there for me to pray for?

Every prayer to परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* is not with respect to myself as आत्मा *ātmā* "I", but it is entirely with respect to my उपाधि *upādhi* I, my body vehicle. Every prayer to परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* 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 *nimitta mātraṁ bhava* - मत् कर्म परमो भव *mat karma paramo bhava* - to be an instrument to serve the will of परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* and enjoy being in the service of परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* at all times. For that purpose, my prayers to परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* at this time are the following: -

1. स मेन्द्रो मेधायाम् स्पृणेतु ।

sa mendro medhāyā spr̥ṇetu ।

सः मा इन्द्रः मेधयाम् स्पृणेतु - सः इन्द्रः मा (मां)

saḥ mā indraḥ medhayā spr̥ṇetu - saḥ indraḥ mā (mām)

मेधयाम् स्पृणेतु (बलयतु)

medhayā spr̥ṇetu (balayatu)

सः *saḥ* - सः ओङ्कारः *saḥ onkāraḥ* - That ॐ *om* manta, which is

विश्वरूपः *viśvarūpaḥ* - all forms and names in One, and also

अमृतः *amṛtaḥ* - Immortal

सत्यं *satyaṁ* - ever existence, and never subject to change

इन्द्रः *indraḥ* - That ॐ *om* mantra, being परमेश्वर *paramēśvar* Itself, is इन्द्रः

indraḥ - The Lord of all इन्द्रियसु *indriyas* and

इन्द्रिय विषयसु *indriya viśayas* - The Lord of all my organs of perception and action, including mind and बुद्धि *buddhi*, sense objects, desires, hopes and expectations.



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

सः इन्द्रः मा (मां) मेधया स्पृणेतु *saḥ indraḥ mā (mām) medhayā spr̥ṇetu* - May the power and glory of that ॐ *om* mantra जप *japa* bless me, may strengthen me, with मेधा *medhaa* - प्रज्ञा बलं *prajñāa balam* - intellectual vigor and memory.

Thus my first prayer is for मेधा *medhaa*, which is प्रज्ञा बलं *prajñāa balam* - 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
amṛtasya deva dhāraṇo bhūyāsaṁ
हे देव, अमृतस्य धारणः भूयासं
he deva, amṛtasya dhāraṇaḥ bhūyāsaṁ

हे देव *he deva*- O! Lord

भूयासं *bhūyāsaṁ*- may I become

धारणः *dhāraṇaḥ* - a worthy receptacle

अमृतस्य *amṛtasya* - for ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahmajñānam* - 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 *brahmajñānam*.

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

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

3. शरीरं मे विचर्षणं *śarīram me vicarṣaṇam* - मे शरीरं *me śarīram* - मम शरीरं *mama śarīram* - My physical body
विचर्षणं *vicarṣaṇam* - विचक्षणं भूयात् *vicakṣaṇam bhūyāt* - may it always be clean, healthy, able and active, free from disabilities



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

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

आप्यायन्तु ममाङ्गानि । वाक् प्राणः चक्षुः
āpyāyantu mamāṅgāni | vāk prāṇaḥ cakṣuḥ
श्रोत्रमथो बलं इन्द्रियाणि च सर्वाणि ॥
śrotramatho balaṁ indrayāṇi ca sarvāṇi ||

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 *brahma jñānaṁ* through Upanishad studies. A healthy body is absolutely necessary for the diligent pursuit of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and hence this prayer.

4. जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा *jihvā me madhu mattamā* - मे जिह्वा *me jihvā* - मम जिह्वा *jihvā* - My tongue

मधुमत्तमा *madhu mattamā* (भूयात् *bhūyāt*) - may it be the most sweet. मधुमत्तमा *madhu mattamā* is superlative for मधुमत् *madhumat* - sweetness. Therefore जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा *jihvā me madhu mattamā* - 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 *vāk devatā*, विद्या देवता *vidyā devatā* - Goddess Saraswati. Being so, वाक् *vāk* - speech is a glory of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, and being endowed with the ability to speak is itself the very grace of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*, the very manifestation of परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. 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 *vāk tapas* - total discipline at the level of speech, which is indicated here as मधुमत्तमा *madhu mattamā* - superlative sweetness for the tongue. In every day life, what constitutes such वाक् तपस् *vāk tapas* - मधुमत्तमा *madhu mattamā* total discipline in speech, a superlative sweetness for the tongue. Sri Krishna says (G17 - 15)

अनुद्वेगकर वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।
anudvegakara vākyaṁ satyaṁ priyahitaṁ ca yat |



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

स्वध्याय अभ्यसनम् चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥

svadhyāya abhyasanam caiva vāṅmayam tapa ucyate ॥

अनुद्वेगकरं *anudvegakaram* - Speech which does not hurt, irritate or excite another person in any way

सत्यं *satyam* - speech which tells the truth as it is

प्रियहितं *priyahitam* - speech which manifests love and care for the person, and, which at the same time is also हितं *hitam* - beneficial to the person spoken to, and

स्वध्याय अभ्यसनम् *svadhyāya abhyasanam* - speech conditioned by daily practice of chanting Veda mantras or their equivalents. It is only such speech that constitutes वाक् तपस् *vāk tapas* - self-discipline at the level of speech, and such self discipline is जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा *jihvā me madhu mattamā*. Therefore the prayer here is for such वाक् तपस् *vāk tapas*.

5. कर्णाभ्यां भूरि विश्रुचं *karṇābhyām bhūri viśruvam* - कर्णाभ्यां *karṇābhyām* - श्रोत्राभ्यां *śrotrābhyām* - By these two ears

भूरि विश्रुचं *bhūri viśruvam*, बहु श्रोता भूयासं *bahu śrotā bhūyāsam* - May I hear a lot, more and more, again and again, may I be a good listener of Upanishad words imparting ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. May I speak sweetly, and listen much more.

May I hear fully and frequently what I need to hear for gaining ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānam*. Let me have more and more opportunities to listen to the words of the Upanishads,

Vedantic knowledge can be grasped only through श्रवणं *śravaṇam* - 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 *īśvara prasādam* - a blessing from परमेश्वर *parameśvar*. Therefore, the prayer here is for श्रवणं *śravaṇam* - for ability to listen and for more and more opportunities for such listening to Upanishad knowledge.

6. ब्रह्मणः कोशोऽसि मेधयापिहितः *brahmaṇaḥ kośo'si medhayā pihitaḥ*

ब्रह्मणः कोशः असि *brahmaṇaḥ kośah asi* - You are, which means ॐ *om* mantra is a कोश *kośa* - a cover for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, मेधया पिहितः *medhayā pihitaḥ* - concealed by मेधा *medha*. For ordinary people, for whom मेधा *medha* - the intellectual vigor and memory extends only to objective knowledge and worldly



Hindu Temple of Ottawa-Carleton Inc.
4835 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1X 1G6

ब्रह्मविद्या Brahma Vidya

experiences, you are a कोश *kośa* for ब्रह्मन् *brahman* – you are a cover for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, which means for such people, ब्रह्मन् *brahman* is out of view and ओं-कार *omkār* mantra is simply a symbol for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*.

On the other hand, for those people for whom मेधा *medha* – intellectual vigor and memory extends also to Upanishad knowledge, for them, ब्रह्मणः कोशः असि *brahmaṇaḥ kośah asi* – you are a कोश *kośa kośa* for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*. Here कोश *kośa* means उपलभ्यस्थानं *upalabhya sthānaṁ* – the place where the content of ब्रह्मज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ* is available for recognition by one's बुद्धि *buddhi*.

Therefore, for enlightened people who have gone through the discipline of Upanishad knowledge, ॐ *om* is not simply a symbol for ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, It is the very content of ब्रह्मन् *brahman*, which means ॐ *om* mantra is ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself. The prayer here is for continued appreciation of ॐ *om* mantra as ब्रह्मन् *brahman* Itself.

7. श्रुतं मे गोपाय *śrutam me gopāya* – श्रुतं *śrutam* is आत्म विज्ञानं *ātma vijñānaṁ*, which means knowledge on the nature of The Self itself in oneself, ब्रह्म ज्ञानं *brahma jñānaṁ*, ईश्वर ज्ञानं *īśvara jñānaṁ*, आत्म ज्ञानं *ātma jñānaṁ* gained through श्रवणं *śravaṇam* – hearing, listening and understanding, followed by मननं *mananam* – reflection of what has been heard and understood, and निदिध्यासनं *nididhyāsanam* – absorption of the knowledge so gained, all these together constitute आत्म विज्ञानं *ātma vijñānaṁ* or श्रुतं *śrutam*. That is why Upanishads are called श्रुतिस *śrutis*.

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



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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

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

यश्छन्दसाम् ऋषभो विश्वरूपः
yaśchandasām ṛṣabho viśvarūpaḥ
श्रुतं मे गोपाय
śrutam me gopāya
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः
om śāntih śāntih śāntih

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