

# **Insights from the Upanishads**

*SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS OF  
THE HINDU TEMPLE OF WISDOM  
Canada*

**BRAHMA VIDYA**

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*Dedicated to all the Great Teachers of Humanity*

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## PREFACE

*How can we understand, participate and evolve on our spiritual Path?*

If we want to understand, participate and evolve, then we must be silent and listen to the voice of the Masters. The Masters say:

*“The use of words corresponds to this manifested Universe.”*

We use words to help us function in this human world.

But, the same words cannot be used to explain and understand a different level of Existence. For example: the expression: “SAT CIT ANANDA” means everything that we want to know.

If we could really penetrate the deep meaning of those words, we would have found the key that opens the unknown. After that, only silence would be appropriate, because we have not only penetrated the mystery, but we have become one with it.

Still, we need common words to interact and explain concepts whose essence is transcendental. Please, keep this in mind and meditate to penetrate the intended meaning of the words used.

We see that in this manifested universe, all is perfect: insects, bird’s nests, bee hives and many other marvels of nature, develop and maintain delicate and different ecosystems. We should ask ourselves: what are the bond, the link and the thread that keep these thousand things related and interacting? There is only one aspect able to maintain these complex relationships working smoothly. Do you know what it is? Have you ever asked yourself the question?

Similarly, human creations must possess harmony to be functional and may possess beauty to elicit a pleasant feeling in us. Objects created by human skill may be so highly appreciated that they are carefully kept in special places called Museums. What is that special quality that induces us to preserve material objects with such care? Have you ever asked yourself the question?

Think about! Can you envision the unique bond that is able to combine different qualities and make them beautiful and functional?

Could we call it LOVE? Yes, certainly!

*It is the Unconditional Love of the All-Pervasive Creative Consciousness!*

When we start observing our surroundings with inquisitive eyes, the first aspect calling our attention is the special manifestation of life in every place. Whatever can grow in a given environment, will grow, or will try to grow in every possible way adapting to the natural conditions. We see that a mysterious impulse is guiding the interactions between living and non living objects. If a stone, a rock, or any other obstacle prevents the natural tendency of a plant to express its natural shape, it will bend, develop accessory branches or whatever is useful and functional for the special situation. Similarly, insects and

animals adapt to a change in the physical characteristics of the soil, or other aspects of an ecosystem. The name given by science to this capacity is “instinct”. But this name is not appropriate.

The response of a living being to difficult circumstances in order to survive and to prosper is much more than an automatic instinct: it is intelligence. It is the expression of an all-pervasive intelligence intrinsic in the structure of the whole universe. It is the manifestation of an essential Order and Harmony invisible to our common senses, but alive and present in every corner of our world.

If we pay attention to these details and ask ourselves the correct questions, we will deduce that there must be an:

*“All-pervasive-Cosmic Intelligence and Order”*

There must be Universal Laws supporting this Universal Order; the existence of these Laws must precede the formation of the universe, as they have shaped the manifestation of the structures and of every aspect of the forms and relationships.

From our relative human point of view we can say that these Laws are eternal.

We can conclude that the primordial norms of manifestation are:

*“Cosmic Intelligence, Order and Harmony”*

For example, we can distinguish two aspects of Life. One is the manifested life of the “cell”; the other is the non manifested Life that makes the “cell” be what it is. Can you have an intuition of the unmanifested support of Life?

Only stillness and profound meditation can help us understand the depth of our ignorance. After we understand and accept it, then the surprising wonder will overcome us.

Nevertheless, ancient Seers, thousand of years ago, used to chant some inspiring melodies and words that would express the inexpressible. Across millennia and centuries, the teachings contained in the ancient chants have arrived to us in the form of a language called Sanskrit and the meanings are to be found in the Text of the Upanishads.

What follows are summaries, quotes and parts of some of the Upanishads interpreted in such an easy way that it will touch your heart and penetrate your intellect without effort. Just read, do not have expectations of any sort and let the music of the teaching do its mysterious work of benevolent magic.

[NOTE: To avoid confusions, please note: “In Vedantic terminology the words Creator, Brahman, and SELF are synonyms. They all refer to the same ONE ever-existent, all-pervading, all-conscious, ever-conscious, limitless, all-inclusive Supreme Being whom we also call Parameswara or God. Different names are used for the ONE - Supreme Being.”]

## INTRODUCTION

There is restlessness and restlessness - that of the worldly man hankering for the pleasures of the world; and of the spiritual seeker yearning for progress, wanting to move from a lower plan of consciousness to a higher one.

Spiritual life is a twofold movement, one of which may be represented as vertical and the other as horizontal. We have to rise higher and higher and also expand more and more in our consciousness.

Most of us may not care to rise to a higher plane. We fool ourselves by thinking that we are all right where we are. We are like Pluto's men in the cave who took the shadows to be real and were quite satisfied with the life of darkness they lived. We are quite contented with our life in the cellar.

But some of us want to come out into the light and rise to a higher plane with the help of the spiritual current, which may be likened to the elevator which takes people from one floor to another. The spiritual current, when properly roused, takes us from one center of consciousness, to another.

## VEDANTA

According to the *Vedas*, ultimate reality is all-pervading, uncreated, self-luminous eternal spirit, the final cause of the universe, the power behind all tangible forces, the consciousness that animates all conscious beings. This is the central philosophy of the Vedantist, and his religion consists of meditation on this spirit and prayer for the guidance of his intellect along the path of virtue and righteousness.

From the philosophical standpoint, Vedanta is non-dualistic, and from the religious standpoint, monotheistic. The Vedanta philosophy asserts the essential non-duality of God, soul and universe, the apparent distinctions being created by names and forms which, from the standpoint of ultimate reality, do not exist. Vedanta accepts all religions as true and regards the various deities of the different faiths as diverse manifestations of the one God.

According to Vedanta, religion is experience and not mere acceptance of certain time-honoured dogmas or creeds. To know God is to become like God. We may quote scripture, engage in rituals, perform social service, or pray with regularity, but unless we realize the Divine spirit in our hearts, we are still phenomenal beings, victims of the separative existence. One can experience God as tangibly 'as a fruit lying on the palm of one's hand,' which means that in this very life we can suppress our lower nature, manifest our higher nature, and become perfect. Through the experience of God, one's doubts disappear and the 'knots of the heart are cut asunder.' By ridding himself of the desires clinging to his heart, a mortal becomes immortal in this very body. That the attainment of immortality is not the prerogative of a chosen few but the birthright of all is the conviction of every follower of Vedanta.

Vedanta asserts that Truth is universal and all humankind and all existence are one. It teaches the unity of Godhead, or ultimate Reality, and accepts every faith as a valid means for its own followers to realize the Truth. The four cardinal principles of Vedanta may be summed up as follows: the non-duality of the Godhead, the divinity of the soul, the unity of existence and the harmony of religions. On these four principles the faith of the Vedantist is based.

The essential teachings of Vedanta, as stated by Swami Vivekananda are: "Each soul is potentially divine, the goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature: external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy -- by one, or more, or all these -- and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."

**BRAHMA VIDYA**  
 “Introduction to the Upanishads”

Study Guide and Summary of the Teachings  
 Hindu Temple of Wisdom

**Chapter 1**

Endeavours toward the various Goals of Life

- Everyone wants to be happy
- In Happiness the subject and the object are ONE
- All human endeavours are directed toward gaining happiness
- Happiness is ONE, but endeavours for gaining it are many
- Such endeavours for gaining happiness are called “The Goals of Life”

These Goals are of “Four” kinds:

1-To be Virtuous

2-To gain wealth of various kinds

3-To accomplish various desires

But the accomplishment of these three goals is not sufficient. One will want something more to be Fully Happy. The fourth Goal is called:

4- Absolute Freedom – this brings total fulfillment in Life, everlasting happiness and eternal Peace.

This means that:

- There is no sense of emptiness, discontent, bitterness of any kind
- There is no sense of dependence on wants and desires of any kind
- There is no delusion, confusion, sorrow or distress.

The happiness gained through the first three kinds of Goals is limited and leaves some emptiness in life. On the contrary, “Absolute Freedom” is gained through an appropriate means of Self-Knowledge.

If the body-mind-intellect complex does assiduously pursue that means of knowledge, one gains Self-Knowledge.

Self-Knowledge is never created, it is ever existent and it is Fullness in Existence.

The appropriate means for gaining Self-Knowledge is the study of the Upanishads.

The next and last topic in the general Introduction to Upanishads, is on the basic Teachings of the Vedas- which we recite and hear every week at this Temple. These basic Teachings are extraordinarily meaningful and powerful teachings, both for success in one’s pursuit of worldly life and also in one’s fruitful pursuit of Upanishadic Knowledge for gaining Total Fulfillment in Life.

Because of their above two-fold significance, with respect to success in one's worldly life and also with respect to success in one's spiritual progress, it is important for every person to constantly remind oneself of these Peace Invocations and on the basic teachings of the Vedas, whatever may be one's immediate interests.

Here in this Temple we worship, we identify ourselves with the essential Teachings of the VEDAS in all our actions - thoughts, words and deeds. That is our culture. Such worship The Upanishads are part of Vedas, which are our ancient Scriptures.

The Upanishads are concerned exclusively with Spiritual Knowledge. Knowledge is never created, when ignorance is removed, Knowledge reveals itself.

- Such revelation of Knowledge constitutes the Vedas.

Vedas were compiled in four groups, each complete in itself, under the names of Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda.

Knowledge about the Goals of Life is the subject matter of each Veda.

The final part of the Vedas, namely Vedanta or Upanishads deals exclusively about the pursuit of happiness; this is identical with the Total Fulfillment in Life; it is concerned with Knowledge about the - Nature of Existence – Nature of Oneself – Nature of the Universe and - Nature of the Lord.

Thus, the real purpose of the Upanishads is to prepare the person to become fit for one's Total Fulfillment in Life.

The study of the Upanishadic part of the Vedas requires a higher order of mental maturity and personal discipline.

All Upanishads deal with the same topic, namely "SELF"– knowledge, Absolute Reality of All Existence; but every Upanishad is different in terms of both style, and content-focus. All the four Vedas and Upanishads belong to the Vedic Age (c. 5000 BCE).

The "Bhagavad Gita" has become the most important of all the Upanishads and expresses the essence of the entire teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads.

Its study is the core of our Scriptures-reading program at this Temple, but we are not going to deal with it in this brief commentary to the Upanishads.

### Regarding Subject Matter

The Vedas accept us as the Doers of actions and the Enjoyers of the fruits of action. It teaches us what to do to live a happy life.

On the contrary, the Upanishads teach us a more profound lesson.

They tell us that we have to discover "THAT" which is truly independent:

*That "ONE SELF", one has to discover for oneself, by one self,  
Through Enquiry: That is indeed the overriding purpose of Life*

So say the Upanishads. This knowledge is distinctly different from the Vedas and still there is no contradiction between the teachings of the Vedas and those of the Upanishads.

- It is a matter of understanding
- It is a matter of Enlightenment
- It is a matter of Totality of Knowledge, necessary for Total Fulfillment in Life.

The teachings of the Vedas are naturally open to every person, without any restriction. On the contrary, pursuit of Upanishadic knowledge can be fruitful only to those who are mature enough, who are emotionally and spiritually ready and have a desire for that kind of Knowledge.

These persons have the following characteristics:

- Ability to discriminate between that which is eternal existence and that which is transient existence
- Total dispassion to the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions here and thereafter
  - Are endowed with the following virtues:
    - Control over one's mind-way of thinking
    - The ability to reduce one's thinking to the level of an instrument
    - Control over one's external organs of perception and action
      - Control on the strict observance of one's own duties
        - Ability to endure all pairs of opposites
        - To live with situations that one cannot change
      - Happy endurance of whatever comes one's way
        - Doing whatever needs to be done
    - Faith in the words of the teacher and in the Upanishads; absolute faith in yourself; faith in the knowledge you seek; absolute faith in your ability to gain that knowledge and to reach that goal
      - An overriding desire to BE FREE

Are we qualified enough for the pursuit of Upanishadic Knowledge?

“YES”, by the very fact of our presence at this Temple and our interest in these teachings.

Our presence at this Temple is a matter of natural growth towards one's own total Fulfillment in Life.

Wherever there is knowledge-in-practice in one's daily life, there is prosperity, success, happiness order and stability.

The ultimate result of Upanishadic knowledge is revelation of ONESELF – Absolute Happiness – Total Fulfillment in Life.

Because of three differences: difference in subject matter, difference in qualifications of the students and the difference in ultimate results, the early part of the Vedas and the Upanishads are uniquely distinguished.

The discourse about the meaning of the word “Upanishad” will be the theme of the next class.

## **Chapter 2**

- About the Meaning of the word Upanishads:
  - “A definite and well ascertained knowledge which does the job of destroying ignorance about oneself and helping one to reach ONESELF – to recognize one’s identity with one’s innermost SELF- with certainty.”
- About the Great Vedic Declarations of Revealed Knowledge:
  - From the Rig Veda: *“Pure Consciousness is Brahman”*
    - From the Sama Veda: *“That Brahman you are”*
  - From Atharva Veda: *“This SELF in oneself is Brahman”*
    - From the Yajur Veda: *“I am indeed Brahman”*
      - In the Bhagavad Gita,  
Sri Krishna says: *“In all objectifiable entities,  
The knower of such entity is MYSELF  
The SELF in every self is indeed Brahman.”*
- About the Nature of Brahman

Brahman is beyond the scope of words and of the reach of mind. ‘Pure Knowledge’, not ‘objects’ knowledge, is an appropriate pointer to Brahman because Pure Knowledge is uncreated, ever existent and all inclusive, and so is Brahman. The nature of Pure Knowledge is Pure Consciousness, not consciousness of something.

It is “THAT”- Consciousness, because of which alone all cognition-any cognition is possible.

Therefore the nature of Brahman is Absolute, Ever-Present, Unchanging, Limitless, All-Inclusive, Undivided Knowledge which is Pure Consciousness, Pure Awareness, Eternally Alive and Dynamic. THAT is Brahman.

Further:

- “I” am the only source for the consciousness of My-self.
- “I”, or “SELF” is also “THAT” Consciousness
- The knowledge of this entire creation obtained through the pointer of Pure Consciousness, means that Pure Consciousness itself is Brahman.

Therefore:

1. - *Pure knowledge is the Pointer to Brahman -*
2. - *All existence, including oneself, this entire creation and the Lord of this creation IS direct manifestation of Brahman -*
3. - *The Upanishads are the means for gaining Knowledge of Brahman.*
4. - *When THAT is realized, it is gained by one’s SELF though the Upanishads. That Knowledge itself is Brahman –*

- *About The Sound OM:*

- OM is the Means of Knowledge -
- The Sound OM is Auspiciousness Itself -
- The Word OM is Expression of the very Glory of Brahman –

All Vedic rituals and all forms of worship start and end with the sound OM. The sound OM is the integrated expression of all possible speech sounds, which means every possible speech sound is only a partial derivation of the integrated phonetic structure of the sound OM.

*OM is the integrated sound form of the Totality of Knowledge-* the combination of objective knowledge, which is ever subject to change, - and spiritual knowledge which is never subject to change, the Totality of which is the substratum of all existence, and Total Fulfilment in Life.

- *About the nature of the Sound OM*

The sound OM is the means for the expression Knowledge of Brahman.  
The totality of Knowledge is Brahman Itself, when it is realized.  
*The sound OM is the direct manifestation, direct experience of Brahman in the form of Sound.*

## **Chapter 3**

### Peace Invocation

Upanishadic teachings are only for those who seek “THAT-Knowledge”. Consequently, every Upanishadic Teaching is a student-teacher dialog, explicitly or implicitly. Before the teaching begins, and also after the teaching for the day ends, the students and the teacher together chant a Peace Invocation.

The purpose of the Peace Invocation is to get the person involved ready, both in terms of attitude and in terms of physical capabilities, for the pursuit of the Upanishadic Knowledge and for its continued retention in one’s memory.

This is so that, when one is weak, or is about to be overpowered by internal or external negative forces, THAT-Knowledge and its strength can spring forth, spontaneously to one’s rescue.

The Peace Invocation naturally starts with chanting “The Sound OM” recognizing that:

- The sound OM is the direct manifestation of Brahman
  - The sound OM is Parameshwara itself
- The sound OM is the place where Upanishad Knowledge is available – to reach, to realize and to enjoy Total Fulfillment in Life.

The Peace Invocation that follows the sound OM is addressed to THAT OM, to That Parameshwara manifested in the sound OM. The invocation itself is a Form of Prayer, seeking the Grace of Parameshwara to bless the persons involved, both the students and the teacher, having the appropriate frame of body-mind intellect vehicle, and its internal and external surroundings for the fruitful pursuit of Upanishad Knowledge, both with respect to teaching and with respect to listening and understanding.

Each Upanishad has its own Peace Invocation. Since there are many Upanishads, there are many Peace Invocations.

The Temple of Vedic Knowledge that we have at this Temple, specifically calls attention to four Peace Invocations, one taken from each Vedas. We recite and hear, at this Temple all these four Peace Invocations every week at this time. By so doing we do honour all the four Vedas. We re-establish contact with our Enlightened Forefathers and we recognize our unbroken identity with Parameshvara itself, which is our sacred heritage.

Since we are in this Temple of Vedic Knowledge, it is naturally important for us to know what exactly these four Peace Invocations say, so that we can better appreciate their significance to our continuing endeavour toward Total Fulfillment in our daily lives. Therefore we will now see and try to understand each of these four Peace Invocations in the order in which they are presented in our Temple of Vedic knowledge.

***The first Peace Invocation - from the Rig Veda.***

First Line:

“O! Lord,

- May my speech be rooted in my mind
- May my words express my thoughts faithfully
- Let there be complete identity between what I speak and what I think
- Let my speech be fully based on understanding

Considering that the word ‘*speech*’ is an illustration for all actions and likewise the word ‘*mind*’ is an illustration for all the faculties of the mind including one’s faculty of discrimination and judgement, the translation could also be:

- May my actions be rooted in my faculty of discrimination and judgement,
  - May my actions represent my faculty of judgement faithfully
- Let there be complete accord between what I do and what I think I must do
  - Let my actions be fully based on my considered judgement.

Second Line:

- May my mind express itself clearly in my words
- Let there be complete identity between what I think and what I say
  - Let my understanding be reflected in my speech

The translation could also be:

- May my mind be rooted in all my actions, or  
May I be able to concentrate my mind in all I do
- May my mind be ever clear in all my expressions
- Let there be complete identity between what I think and what I do
  - Let my faculty of judgement reflect itself in all my actions

In other words: Let there be straightforwardness, proper alignment, clarity and focus in all my thoughts, words and actions.

Next:

Addressing Brahman as Self-Revealed; the Brahman which is self-shining and self revealing, seeking the Grace of That Brahman – the Prayer says:  
 “O! Brahman! May YOU remain SELF-revealed to me”, or, “Reveal Thy-Self to me” As a result of my Upanishadic studies, may I become worth of the realization of Brahman and may I gain that Realization by Thy Grace.”  
 “May my thoughts and actions serve as two lynch pins, (similarly as the two lynch pins in the axle of a cart preventing the wheels from slipping off the axle) preventing me from slipping off the TRUTH revealed by the Vedas.”

This means: “May my thoughts and actions enable me to grasp the TRUTH revealed/declared by the Vedas and Upanishads.”  
 “The Upanishadic Knowledge that I have gained from the Vedas, let it never abandon me; let it never slip from my memory.

Through this Upanishadic study, day and night at all times, let me meditate and contemplate on Brahman, let me worship Brahman; let me be protected by Brahman. Let my daily life be guided by this Upanishadic study at all times; let me be protected by Brahman, my Real Source of Strength.

Proper conduct in daily life is direct manifestation of Brahman to me.  
Being truthful in thoughts, words and deeds at all times is Manifested Brahman to me.  
May proper conduct and being truthful in daily life protect me!  
May "THAT" Brahman protect the Teacher!"

The sound OM itself is invocation of PEACE from within.  
The nature of the OM is "THAT" which is Eternal, is Pure Consciousness,  
Is Pure Knowledge and Happiness in Full and is Total Fulfilment in life.  
All the Three in ONE, such is the Glory of OM!

Thus ends the peace Invocation from the Rig Veda.  
The concluding expression is the same of all the Peace Invocations from all the Vedas, all the Upanishads and for all forms of spiritual pursuit.

### ***The second Peace Invocation - from the Yajur Veda***

This Peace Invocation is an extraordinary one. It is not only a preview of the Upanishad that follows; it is the essential message of all Upanishads. It indicates the ONENESS, the TOTALITY and the IMMORTALITY of all Existence.

For this reason this Peace Invocation is the most popular in all our Scriptures and it is appropriate for invoking Divinity by anybody, in any time and place.

The peace Invocation is an Upanishad in Itself. The first part is Knowledge to be understood and realized. The second part is a mode of reflection to help the realization of that Knowledge.

As usual the Peace Invocation starts with OM, orienting our mind and speech, and indeed all one's organs of perception and action in the Form of the sound OM; then follows the Peace Invocation.

Through the Word-Sound OM we bring our wandering mind to attention and direct it toward OM- THAT- Meaning THAT which is manifested by the sound OM, namely:  
Brahman.

- About THAT Brahman the Upanishad says:

*"The very nature of That Brahman is Total Fullness- all inclusiveness- There is nothing lacking in it, nothing is outside of IT"*

What is the meaning of the following expression "This"?  
"THIS" means the entire manifestation and every individual thing in this manifestation.

- About "THIS" manifestation the Upanishads says:

*“This entire creation and everything in it is also “Total Fullness- all inclusiveness- is the very nature of Brahman and the true nature of this creation and everything in this creation is also Brahman.”*

We understand that the expression THAT means something remote from me in understanding, while the expression THIS means something that is immediately available for me, for my perception and identification. All knowable objects are covered by the word THIS.

Because of my ignorance, there is a difference for me between THAT, Brahman and THIS, the manifestation.

*When this ignorance is removed the identity of THAT and THIS Reveals itself as one and the same Fullness.*

If ALL existence can be grouped under the two words THAT and THIS, and if THIS includes everything I can objectify, the only thing that is apparently excluded from the expression THIS is the one who objectifies, namely My-self, the subject “I”. Therefore, THAT must mean “I”. The Upanishad says: “I am Brahman”. Everything in this manifested universe is Brahman.

Therefore, “I” am everything in this creation and “I” am Fullness Itself.

Again:

From my point of view you are different from me. From your point of view I am different from you. But from the point of view of Brahman, “I” am Brahman and “YOU” are Brahman. This means the “YOU” and “I” are in “Essence” identical. In spite of all apparent differences YOU and I are in fact ONE and inseparable BEING; even if you and I at the physical level appear to be different.

Again:

If THAT is Total Fullness and THIS is Total Fullness, why not simply say; “Everything is Total Fullness”. The Upanishads say that, everything is indeed Brahman.

The Upanishad recognizes the difficulty of the beginner. In terms of perception every ordinary person feels that the subject is different from the object. The Upanishads educate the person.

*Perception of difference should not lead to conclusion of difference.*

If you enquire properly, you will find that the subject-object difference vanishes leaving only the ONE Fullness- the ONE Brahman.

The Upanishad continues:

“From Fullness arises Fullness.” From THAT ONE – the Brahman - arises THIS ONE the Universe. The entire manifestation arises from Brahman just as a cloth arises from cotton and chains arise from gold. “Adding Fullness to Fullness or subtracting Fullness from Fullness, what is left is also Fullness.” This means that there is nothing left out of ONE to add or subtract. Therefore, no addition or subtraction from ONE is possible.

This means: “THIS” ONE is the limitless universe of name and forms only. “THAT” ONE is the limitless Brahman formless and nameless because of its all inclusiveness. Adding or removing – forms and names- from this Universe, what remains is still ONE, the limitless Brahman.

Just as if you add remove or change form and name of a gold chain, what remains is still gold. Brahman undergoes no changes whatsoever. All changes in this universe are only transient appearances in Forms and Names. This entire manifestation is one with Brahman – is inseparable from Brahman – is Brahman Itself.

Indicating THAT Knowledge, the peace Invocation concludes in the usual manner:

- “OM, Peace, Peace, Peace”

#### **Chapter 4**

Last Time we read the first two of the four Peace Invocations cited in our Temple of Vedic Knowledge, as initiation to the study of the Upanishads. The first is from Rig Veda and the second comes from Yajur Veda. The third is from Sama Veda and it reads as follows:

#### ***Third Peace Invocation - from Sama Veda***

This Peace Invocation is a prayer at an intensely personal level.

As usual the Peace invocation starts with OM. Deliberately orienting one’s mind and speech, and indeed all one’s organs of perception and action toward Brahman manifested in the Sound OM- then starts the prayer.

*“O! Lord,*

*All my limbs, all my instruments of perception, all parts of my body  
May they become mature, healthy and strong.*

*My organs of speech,*

*My physiological function,*

*Eyes and ears,*

*So too indeed, all my instruments of perception and action, without exception  
Become mature, healthy and strong.”*

This also means:

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 Liberation through this study. Further, my knowledge of Brahman is only through the words of the Upanishads.

The Upanishads say:

“THAT Brahman revealed by the Upanishads is Everything, including myself, the universe and God and I want to realize This Identity in this very life.

That is my Goal.”

May I not reject the Brahman; may I not loose faith in God, simply because I have not yet been able to realize THAT Brahman due to my own personal shortcomings. Let me not give up my Upanishadic studies in despair. Let me continue my efforts until I reach the Goal.

“Let THAT Brahman not reject me. Even with the best of means I know that THAT GOAL can be reached only by the Grace of God.

May the Grace of God be ever with me in my endeavour.

May the Lord be on my side, so that I may overcome all my obstacles.”

Let there never be any rejection on the part of the Lord.

Let me enjoy the grace of God at all times.

On my part also, let there never be any rejection of Brahman due to my failures, frustrations or shortcomings.

“Let my love of Brahman, let my love for the Upanishadic knowledge be ever steady, sure and firm.”

“I am truly devoted to Upanishadic knowledge. I am sincere in my devotion to Brahman. I also know that sincere devotion alone is not sufficient to realize Brahman.”

Upanishad study is not for the weak body or the weak mind. If the body is weak, it has to be taken care of immediately. If the mind is weak the intellect loses its capacity to absorb Upanishadic Knowledge. The only way to strengthen the mind is to cultivate the required disciplines, moral values and virtues in every aspect of daily life.

Therefore:

“O! Lord;

Whatever discipline, moral value and virtue are necessary for gaining Upanishadic Knowledge,

May those disciplines, moral values and virtues be with me.

Let me repeat and request – may those disciplines, moral values and virtues be with me in abundance and for ever by THY Grace, O! Lord.

OM Brahman OM.”

Thus ends the Peace Invocation from SAMA VEDA.

“Whatever personal qualifications are needed for gaining Knowledge of Brahman through Upanishadic studies O! Lord- let me be blessed with those qualifications.” This is the prayer.

Now, what are those personal qualifications for gaining Upanishadic Knowledge? Whatever be those personal qualifications, let us always remember Sri Krishna’s unqualified assurance in the Bhagavad Gita:

*“The one who has abiding faith, – faith in oneself- faith in the pursuit of Upanishadic Knowledge and faith in one’s ability to gain that Knowledge, That one, does ultimately gain that Knowledge. That is certain.”*

The fourth Peace Invocation cited in our Vedic Temple is from Atharva Veda and it reads as follows:

***Fourth Peace Invocation - from the Atharva Veda***

Here the prayer is addressed to the Devatas –the presiding Deities of natural law, governing all actions in our body. These are the Devatas whom we generally invoke and worship in all our Vedic Rituals.

Addressing these Deities in particular the Prayer is:

“May we hear in our ears, that which is manifestation of ever Auspiciousness – Absolute Happiness – Absolute Goodness – Total God Consciousness.”

That is what is indicated by the word ears.

“May we see by our eyes, That which is the manifestation of ever Auspiciousness – Absolute Happiness – Absolute Goodness – Total God Consciousness.”

The words “ears” and “eyes” are illustration for all organs of perception and action including mind and speech.

Therefore the Prayer is:

“O! Gods, we are about to begin a study of Upanishads. We seek your Grace, so that by your Grace, every part of our body, each doing its natural function may remain in harmony and peace with each other, to remain firmly Total God Consciousness, enjoying the Grace of every function of this entire body-mind-intellect complex flowing towards, entering into, and becoming ONE with Parameshwara.”

That is the Prayer.

“May we hear by our ears, and may we see by our eyes “THAT” which are the manifestations of Absolute Goodness.”

This Prayer does not mean that we want to hear only good things, and see only good things, ignoring or being insensitive to all the bad things which may be happening around us, that is not the meaning.

The meaning is: whatever may be our circumstances and the surroundings, O! Lord! may all our organs of perception and action, including mind and speech, have the ability to abide in- Total God Consciousness – Absolute Goodness.

Further:

In the present context, we are here only for the study of the Upanishads. At this time the duty of the teacher is to unfold the words of the Upanishads properly and fully; and the duty of the student is to listen and understand the teachings properly and fully.

Therefore, “May our ears hear” means: “May the teacher teach us well and may the student listen well.” Similarly, “May our eyes see” means: “May the teacher and student look upon each other only as such as teacher and students only, with respect to Upanishad knowledge and let not other factors enter into the picture.”

The Peace Invocation continues:

“Whatever life span has been allotted to each one of us, may we live that life fully – meaningfully- with all our limbs strong and healthy and fully contended with what ever we are blessed with, ever enjoying the Glory of Parameshwara in thoughts words and deeds.”

The last two lines of the prayer are invoking the Devatas and seeking their Blessings.

“May you all give us your Blessings,  
The most ancient and the most famous,  
Who brings enlightenment of all knowledge,  
Who is ever free to move,  
Representing the All-pervading Parameshwara,  
The Protector of the Spiritual Wealth in us,  
May you all give us your Blessings!”

This concludes the Fourth Peace Invocation

The four Peace Invocations cited in our Temple of Vedic Knowledge are extraordinary ones. Each one of them is appropriate to initiate study on any Upanishads from any Veda. One’s choice of Peace Invocation for Upanishadic study depends entirely on one’s own mental disposition at any given time.

Further,

The depth and the significance of the Peace Invocations will become evident only when they are recited in a contemplative mood, with understanding and dedication, in the context of one’s own life and one’s own mental disposition, which are subject to change from time to time.

So, we have completed the presentation of these Peace Invocations.  
is itself the highest form of human endeavour, for gaining Total Fulfillment in Life.

That is why, following the VEDIC tradition we read these Peace Invocations on the basic teachings of the VEDAS as part of our devotional and dedicated participation in the regular Temple schedule, every week at this Temple.  
It is naturally important for us to understand and appreciate what exactly is communicated by these Peace Invocations, so that we may constantly try to order and re-order our daily lives, so that we may remain true to ourselves-  
which is it self Total Fulfillment in Life.

The Peace Invocation that we recite here at this Temple at this time every week, forms the last section of the first chapter of the Taittiriya Upanishad. The author of this Upanishad is currently in the process of delivering a summary of the essential message of the entire Veda.

- Here a brief introduction is called for.

In the Vedic Age, students go to appropriate teachers. They live in the household of the teacher for several years, study those parts of the Vedas that give them proficiency in the professions in which they are interested, and when they finish such studies, they leave the house of the teacher to start they careers and get on with life.

All such studies are from the pre-Upanishadic part of the Vedas.

The context here is this: the students have now finished their studies of the chosen part of the Vedas. They feel educated enough to start their careers. They also know that they have not yet been exposed to the Upanishadic part of the Veda, but then they have no compelling motivation to study any further. They have already been with the teacher for about 10 years, and they are already in their twenties. They are anxious to graduate, leave the house of the teacher start their careers and get on with life.

Today is the last day of class. Most of them will be leaving the house of the teacher tomorrow. On this last day of class the teacher gives them his parting message, recalling and re-emphasizing the essential content of their Vedic education. The Teacher knows that these students have learned enough to do well in their chose careers; but they have not learned enough – they are not yet mature enough to live their lives well. Therefore, the teacher delivers his parting message in the form of both advice and command.

### **Chapter 5**

Just as a mother advises the child with a commanding voice not to play with fire – to protect the child from possible dangers, similarly, the Teacher advises the students in imperative language, under the authority of the Vedas, in the overriding interest of the students themselves.

Thus, in order to protect the students from the possible dangers in everyday life, the Teacher reminds them of the essential teachings of Sanatana Dharma in the very words of the Vedas itself.

The teacher gives the following advice to the departing students in commanding words:

- This is the first command: “Speak the truth! Follow the Dharma”

These two simple sentences are in fact inseparable. When you speak the truth, you follow the Dharma. And when you follow the Dharma you can only speak the Truth. Thus speaking the truth and following the dharma are inseparable from each other.

*Together they constitute the single overriding “message”, the single overriding “advice” and the single overriding “Vedic Command” for every human being in one’s daily life.*

-It is the overriding “message” in the sense that:

- It is the essential message of all our Vedas and indeed all our scriptures;
- It is the essence of Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Order of Life – The Natural Law of Human Existence;
  - It is our everyday religion;
  - It is Hinduism in essence.

- It is the overriding “*advice*” in the sense that:
  - It is the surest and the ONLY means of gaining Total Fulfillment in Life;
  - It is the only means for realizing Peace and Happiness in daily life - there is no other means.
- It is the overriding “*command*” in the sense that to disobey that command is only to court self-degradation and all its consequences.

*Therefore,*  
*The importance of Vedic education conveyed by the words “Speak the truth! Follow the Dharma” cannot be overemphasized.*

This Vedic Message – This Vedic Advice – This Vedic Command – has to be brought to the comprehension of every human being, repeatedly through one’s life until the person becomes the very embodiment of Truth and Dharma in daily life.

Thus, Sincerity and Dharma constitute the very core of Hindu Life.

When we worship God, in any manner, we are only worshiping Truth and Dharma - And when we recognize Truth and Dharma anywhere, we recognize the direct manifestation of God as Truth and as Dharma.

It is often said that we have too many scriptures.  
 This is a Blessing. All of our scriptures convey the same message, the same advice, the same command, namely:  
***“Speak the truth and follow the dharma.”***

The absorption of this message- this advice – this command is a matter of continuing endeavour for every human being. That is why one has to be reminded of this message again and again in different ways and that is exactly what all our scriptures do.

During this process of absorption, the message: “speak the truth and follow the dharma” progressively assumes wider and wider, deeper and deeper dimensions, with the growth of one’s spiritual maturity until finally all notions of dharma merge into truth, dissolve, disappear into Truth and THAT TRUTH is realized.  
 We will talk about this merger a little later. Let us briefly reflect on the simple meaning of the words “Truth speaking” and “Dharma follow.”

Speak the truth means “speak” What? All that we speak is really not speaking. We often misuse our organ of speech and create problems for ourselves and others.  
 The meaning is: *“Speak only what deserves to be spoken, only what needs to be spoken.”*

Speak with full control over what you speak, so whatever needs to be spoken is always Truthful, helpful and caring.

Now, what does Truth means? In ordinary life truth is ordinary truth, what is true to the best of your knowledge in this objective ever changing world of plurality. As one becomes mature one realizes that truth is far more than common truth.

There is a higher Truth that is the Truth of all Truths which is never subject to change.

But there is no contradiction between the ordinary and the higher Truth; in fact the ordinary truth is non-separated from the higher Truth, and the higher Truth can be realized only by adhering to the ordinary truth at all times.

Therefore the command is: "Speak the truth at all times."

Further, the action of speaking is the distinguishing characteristic of a human being. The action of speaking is the most exalted among all human actions. Being so, the action of speaking represents all actions of a human being. Therefore, "speak the truth at all times" also means "Be truthful in all actions, thoughts, words and deeds at all times."

Why? Because 'your true nature' is Truth at all times, as you will discover later.

Thus, the Vedic education is about one's own very Being: "Realize your nature and BE your true Self- only then can you enjoy Peace and Happiness."

- Now about the expression: "Follow the Dharma".

While Truth speaking is connected with "Being", Dharma following is connected with "Doing."

Being and doing form the entire life of an individual.

Dharma is a generic word for "what is proper". What dharma one should do and not do, under one's immediate circumstances. That Dharma cannot be defined in exclusive terms. That Dharma is not simple ordinary ethics in terms of man-made law. That Dharma is enlightened, inspired and uplifting action in terms of Sanatana Dharma- Eternal Law of Human existence.

What that Dharma is- one has to discover for oneself, on the basis of one's own faculty of discrimination. That is where our scriptures come in. Thus we must understand that Dharma is "what is proper". But it is not any particular duty; it is duty with a special qualification. It must be consistent with the teachings of the Upanishads, of the Brahma Vidya and with the lessons of our tradition such as the Ramayana, Mahabharata etc.

Therefore, we have to continuously educate ourselves by reading again and again at least some of these scriptures and try to assimilate their Teachings to our daily lives.

That is why the next Vedic Command is:

From one's own study and practice of scriptural teachings, do not dissociate yourself, either because of ignorance, indifference or disregard. If you neglect Scriptural studies and practice for any reason, you can never gain a clear vision of Dharma. You will always remain confused about what is right and what is wrong in the varied circumstances of life and ultimately you will let yourself down at some point and degrade yourself as a human being.

That is why studying and practicing Scriptural teachings should never be missed even while engaged in various day-to-day activities of life. This was emphasized 12 times in the

earlier section of this Upanishad, as a matter of personal discipline. Now it is being emphasized again as the means of gaining Wisdom in daily Life.

- Continuing with the Vedic Teachings:

The ancient tradition of the Vedic society was such that the student did not pay any money while studying at the house of the Teacher. Only after he started his career and just before marriage, he visited the teacher again and gave an appropriate gift to express his gratitude and to receive the blessing for his future marriage.

“After giving the Teacher the wealth as you wish, as an expression of your gratitude, receive the blessing from the Teacher in order to get married. You do what you have to do to ensure the continuity of the family in terms of children and grandchildren.”

Only after receiving the Teacher’s blessings, the marriage proposal is finalized and the marriage itself is solemnized. The Teacher, by its very presence exerts a beneficial influence in the mutual choice of the families involved.

In the Vedic tradition the marriage partners must naturally share some common spiritual value and tradition and must be in a comparable state of spiritual maturity for the marriage to provide a reliable basis for a stable society.

Further, the overriding purpose of marriage in Vedic Society is to ensure the continuity of the family through children and grandchildren whose mission is to preserve Truth and Dharma in society. Therefore the married life must be governed by truth and dharma; only then these can be preserved in Society.

That is how Dharma becomes Sanatana Dharma protecting the society through the institution of Vedic Education and by giving gifts to the Teacher.

The Upanishads says: “Give the teacher the gifts due to him as much as you can on your free will. Seek the blessings of the Teacher for your proposed marriage and then marry according to the Sanatana Dharma and live a full life so that your children and grandchildren may sustain Truth and Dharma in society through Vedic Knowledge and traditions transmitted from generation to generation.”

After marriage, life takes a different dimension – Life becomes more complex and in the mist of such complexities it is easy to forget even the fundamentals one has learned in the school day.

Therefore the Vedas repeats again:

*“Let there never be any negligence, indifference or disregard with respect to being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times.”*

Indifference to being truthful simply provides an opportunity to fall into falsehood. Once you fall into falsehood you have already degraded yourself and it is very difficult to uplift yourself after this degradation. Therefore, even forgetfully, or even jokingly or even to save your life, un-truth should never be spoken, Don’t be un-truthful in thought word or deed at any time.

Similarly: “Ever forgetfully, even temporally, either due to ignorance or due to passion, do not neglect Dharma. Do not neglect the proper Dharma and do not do improper Dharma.

This would mean degrading yourself.”

Further:

*“Do not neglect your duties with respect to the needs and welfare of each and every member of the family.”*

Further:

*“Never be indifferent to celebrate auspicious occasions, religious or secular; always do what has to be done to maintain the health and wealth of the family; practice wisdom.*

Even while you are busy doing all these duties, do not neglect studying and practicing the Teachings of our Scriptures. Scripture reading and practice must go on every day all through your life. This is the rule for living well every day of your life.

- Let us stop to think for a minute.

The Veda says again and again: “Read the Scriptures and practice the Teachings of the Scriptures every day.”

Now in the circumstances of our life here, what is the Scripture we should read and follow every day? Fortunately, in our tradition the choices are many and every one is free to choose one's own form of:

- Scripture Reading in accordance with one's own disposition.

On the basis of the knowledge we have already cultivated, the following choice is also open to every person. Just read every day, with understanding and appreciation, what we recite together at this Temple every Sunday, namely:

- The Peace Invocations from all the four Vedas,
- The Basic Teaching of Vedic Education - as presented in the last Section of the First Chapter of Taittiriya Upanishad
  - The first two verses of Isavasya Upanishad

That is our Scripture Reading complete in itself. It takes less than 10 minutes to read this scripture and its content when absorbed and followed at all times will certainly keep us prosperous and happy throughout our life time; so is my own understanding.

- Never neglect your duties relating to all aspects of worship of departed ancestors.
- Never neglect such duties. Never lose sight of your roots. Your ancestors are your roots,
  - Never cut your roots and also never let others cut your roots.
- You be the one for whom Mother is God. Mother is the very manifestation of God.
- You be the one for whom Father is God. Father is the very manifestation of God.
- You be the one for whom Teacher is God. Teacher is the very manifestation of God.
- You be the one for whom The Guest is God. Guest is the very manifestation of God.

These are very beautiful Vedic commands. They have to be understood properly. There is no replacement for God here. There are no descriptions here for mother, father, teacher or guest. There is only one thing involved here, and That is TRUTH.

Whoever my mother is, I am the son of my mother - That is truth. That is both ordinary truth as well as the Highest Truth – The Truth is not subject to change.

In terms of Parameshwara, my mother, my father, my teacher, my guest and in fact, everyone else is one and the SAME.

But, unless I learn to worship, I learn to respect, I learn to cultivate a sense of overriding gratitude to my mother, whoever she is, to my father, whoever he is, to my Teacher, whoever That is, and to my guest, whoever that person is, I can never realize what TRUTH is. I can never realize the Divine presence in anything. I can never realize the true nature of existence and I can never realize the true nature of my own Self.

Therefore, the Vedic command is "Cultivate a Divine respect to your mother, your father, your teacher, your guest, known or unknown; that is the first step in realizing TRUTH in gaining Wisdom and in living a life of fulfillment.

- Further, the Vedic command continues:

The daily deeds and actions are infinite in number. Then what should one watch about one's actions in daily life? The Veda says:

Those actions which cannot hurt anybody including yourself, which are proper beyond doubt and which are rooted in proper sense of values,

- *ONLY such actions must be done by you; certainly not any other kind of actions.*

A proper sense of values must govern all one's actions in daily life.

These values include humility, modesty, nonviolence, etc., the 20 qualities Sri Krishna listed in Chapter 13 of the Bhagavad Gita.

Certainly you should never do any improper action, any action that hurts anybody.

An improper action is improper no matter who does it, even if that person is a learned person or a generally well respected person. One should follow respected people only with respect to their respectable actions, not with respect to their shortcomings.

Similarly:

Those actions that are taught and practiced by us, teachers, as teachers of Vedic Knowledge, only those actions should be followed and practiced by you, all the time reflecting on them, as a rule of right conduct in life, certainly not any other actions of the teacher.

A teacher is a teacher only with respect to his teachings; otherwise he is just an ordinary person. As a person he may have his own shortcomings. Therefore follow a teacher only with respect to his teachings. Never follow the teacher with respect to his shortcomings.

So says the Veda.

The Teachings continue; we will see the rest next time.

### **Chapter 6**

Let us recall briefly The Basic Teachings of Vedic Education which we saw last time. Having taught the pre-Upanishadic part of the Vedas, the Teacher gives the following advices to the departing students in a commanding voice, in the very words of the Vedas.

- “- Be truthful in thought, word and deed at all times. Follow the Dharma all times. Do what is right and necessary in accordance with the teachings of our sacred scriptures.
- Never be indifferent or negligent with respect to the regular study and constant practice of our Scriptural Teachings
- Give to the Teacher the gifts due to him, as much as you can, of your own free will as an expression of your gratitude to him. Then seek his blessings; marry according to Sanatana Dharma, and live a full life so that your children and grandchildren may sustain truth and dharma in society through Vedic Knowledge and traditions transmitted from generation to generation.”

Further,

Even after marriage:

- “ - Let there never be any negligence, disregard or indifference with respect to being truthful in thought, word and deed at all times and also doing your duties totally in accordance at all times with Dharma.”

Further,

- “- Let there never be negligence, disregard or indifference in your duties with respect to the needs and welfare of each member of your family and also with respect to actions to be done on auspicious occasions, and also actions to be done with respect to the maintenance of the health and wealth of your family.
- Even while you are busy doing your daily duties, never neglect and studying the scriptures and practicing the Scriptural Teachings.
- Never neglect or be indifferent to your duties such as Temple duties, and duties related to departed ancestors, such as family traditions. *They are your roots. Never cut your own roots and never let others cut your own roots.*
- Cultivate the most divine respect to your mother, your father, your teacher and your guest - known or unknown. That is the first step in realizing - The Truth of all Truths - in living a life of Wisdom.

- Do only those actions which are irreproachable, which are beyond question. Never do any other kind of actions.
- An improper action is improper no matter who does it, even if that person is a learned person or a well respected person.
- Follow respected people only with respect to their respected actions, not with respect to their shortcomings.
- Actions which are taught and practiced by us Teachers, as Teachers, in accordance with the Scriptural Teachings, only those actions should be followed and practiced by you, all the time reflecting on their true significance as a rule of right conduct in life, not any other actions of the Teachers. Follow the Teacher only with respect to his teachings. Do not follow the teacher with respect to his personal shortcomings.”

Thus far we saw last time in detail.

Now let us continue. The Teacher says:

- The Upanishad is now referring to Brahmanas in the Vedic society.

“- Whoever they are, whether they are born of Brahmanas parents or not, let us understand this properly. While the incidence of birth is certainly a help, it is never a necessary or sufficient qualification to make one a Brahmana.

A Brahmana is such only by virtue of one's cultivated Enlightened disposition. A Brahmana is totally committed to the pursuit of service to society in terms of Brahma-Vidya, the pursuit of Liberation and Total Fulfillment in Life.”

Such Brahmanas whoever they are:

- They are even superior to us Teachers, because such Brahmanas are enlightened
- They not only have the wisdom of Brahman, they are the very embodiments of Brahman and possess the Vedic Knowledge in its entirety. When such Brahmanas come to you they should be received and treated by you with the highest respect.

How?

- by offering seat, and
- by attending to their immediate needs.

Probably such a Brahmana has come to see you under difficult circumstances, walking over a long distance in the hot sun and he is probably tired, or he has just come to see you under his own Divine Inspiration. In any case, give him a seat, offer him a glass of water, etc. and attend to his immediate needs;

And also:

- Listen to him attentively. There is nothing to discuss. Just listen to him attentively. Why? Because, what-for would a Brahmana come to you?

A Brahmana by his very nature is a fulfilled person. He has nothing to seek for himself. At all times, his thought, word and deed are totally and naturally directed towards the welfare of the entire society,

A Brahmana comes to you only in the discharge of his natural duties to the society, as ordained by Parameshwara. His aims are all spiritual and what are they?

- To spread the wisdom of the Vedas, says Sri Krishna,
- To uplift the moral and the spiritual fiber of the society as a whole,
- To uphold one's faith in God, to uphold one's faith in oneself, and to help you to uplift yourself, by yourself.

That is indeed the natural function of a Brahmana in the Vedic society.

When such a Brahmana comes to see you, certainly he seeks nothing for himself. Probably he has come to see you to seek some help from you, by virtue of your station in life for the welfare of the entire society, in which case, what do you do?

Or, alternately, the Brahmana has not come to you to ask for anything. He has come to see you for reasons unknown to you. Because he in fact did not ask for anything; even without your asking, he just imparted some Vedic knowledge to you and then went away. After he is gone, you realize what the Brahmana did. The only wealth the Brahmana has is his Vedic Knowledge; and that wealth he shared with you, seeking nothing in return. By such sharing, the Brahmana did not become poorer either.

You were ready for that Knowledge; therefore, by listening to him attentively, you were certainly inspired - inspired to greatness in action - you being a man of action.

There is just now, in front of you, a worthy cause, which needs the help of your own wealth. By God's grace you can help.

Then what do you do? The Vedic command is:

“- You must give your wealth, as much as you can for the worthy cause, as an expression of your gratitude to Lord Almighty, for whatever you are, as you are. That expression of your gratitude itself will uplift you. That is the overriding purpose of all wealth, to give it away for a worthy cause, for the welfare of the entire society.”

- It is not enough that you just give. You must give with - Faith.
  - Faith in one's own self.
  - Faith in the infinite power of Truth and Goodness;
  - Faith in the ultimate meaningfulness of life.

- Faith in the impelling force behind one's civic virtues and social grace, which we call culture. Such faith is the spontaneous force behind one's search for truth in oneself. That is indeed Faith in God. It is with such Faith that one should give.”

If you do not have that kind of faith, DO NOT GIVE - because, you still have a lot to grow up. You must first develop - faith in God, before you can even qualify for giving, in a spiritual sense. Giving without Faith can only promote hypocrisy.

All forms of wealth. Every form of wealth is only meant for sharing for the welfare of the society as a whole. Therefore, share your wealth, in whatever form it is, with immense Faith in the Best in your own Self.

- Give with modesty. Modesty is total absence of an air of superiority or arrogance.

You should consider yourself extremely fortunate that you have been given the opportunity to serve as an instrument in this Divine Play of cause-effect relationships in this creation.

- Give with a sense of Fear. The fear is only with respect to one's own ego power. One never knows when one's ego power overwhelms one's faculty of judgment.
- Prayer is the only means of keeping one's ego under control. Therefore one must always be prayerful in Giving. Never be overpowered by your ego.
- Give friendly help, whoever needs it. Whether the help is in the form of an advice at the right time, or a word of solace, or a word of encouragement, all such help is a Divine Gift, which is what Giving is.
- Whether it is your friend or foe, be helpful in all times of need.

So much about Giving: a Divine Gift.

Then the Teacher calls attention to the Vedic commands about “*Doubts*” - about what to do and what not to do, and doubts about codes of proper behaviour under different circumstances of life.

When you have such doubts, the Vedic command is:  
 "Seek the advice of Brahmana and do as the Brahmana would do".  
 This is how the Veda says.

If you have doubts as to what action is proper or what kind of behaviour is proper. Doubts about action and modes of behaviour, are always possible.

Personal circumstances are always complex and indefinable, and it is often difficult to decide what is appropriate in one's particular circumstances even for one who is familiar with the Vedic teachings.

For one who has only a limited knowledge of the Scriptures the decision is even more difficult.

The same thing applies to matters related to conduct in day-to-day activities; personal behaviour in interaction with people; details regarding food, clothing, levels of cleanliness; modes of communication, etc. -

Doubts in these matters means you cannot decide for yourself what is proper and what is improper in precise terms under one's particular circumstances. If that is the case, then what should one do?

“- Just as those Brahmanas,  
 - how they would behave in those circumstances  
 - in the same manner  
 - may you also do likewise in those circumstances.”

In matters of doubt, seek the advice of Brahmanas and do as they would do, then you will not go wrong.

Why? Because, by the very nature, the Brahmanas are enlightened  
 They have clarity of vision.

They have the natural capacity to analyze and understand the situation in its essentials and relate them to the overriding purpose of life.  
Therefore they can, and will help you.

Further:

- They are committed to proper action and conduct, in terms of Karma and Dharma which means they are committed to the highest overriding purpose of life, which is the same for everybody.

Further:

- They are committed to Truth and Dharma, not because they are indoctrinated or tutored by somebody else to do so, but because they are independent by virtue of being Enlightened and having an intellect which is capable of discriminating between Truth and transient appearance.

Further,

Brahmanas are:

- They are free from anger
- They are not crooked in their thinking.
- They are Peaceful by nature, and hence they are not carried away by momentary passions.

Further,

They are:

Their desires are consistent with Dharma

Says Sri Krishna: "In people who are totally committed to Dharma, I am their desires."

Therefore they are not destroyed by their own forces – the forces of likes and dislikes, passions and hatreds, which means, they are always in unison with the All-Pervading Paramatman.

Because of these reasons, the Vedic command is:

"When you have doubts in daily life, seek the advice of Brahmanas and do as they would do in your circumstances, then you can never go wrong."

If one should ask the question - where do I find such a Brahmana in the world of today? The answer is: "In the world of today, tomorrow and for ever you find that Brahmana in Sri Krishna, in the words of the Bhagavad Gita." Therefore, read the Bhagavad Gita again and again, and do as the Gita directs you to do, then you can never go wrong. At least that is my understanding.

Again the Teaching continues:

Further,

There are those who are accused of wrong actions without proper or insufficient evidence.

- With respect to such people, what should be your attitude?
- The Vedic command is:

"Your attitude towards them should be the same as said above with respect to other doubts; namely, if you cannot decide for yourself, seek the advice of Brahmanas and behave as they would do in your circumstances for the same reasons given earlier."

Namely: Brahmanas are naturally enlightened.

Therefore, if you follow this advice, you can never go wrong.

All the above Teachings go together. They are ONE and inseparable and must be treated as Sanatana Dharma

"- That is the ORDER"- That is the command. Whose command?

That is the command of the Vedas, which means that it is the command of the Eternal Order. That is Sanatana Dharma.

Further:

- That is the Teaching.
- Teaching of the Teacher to the student.
- Teaching of the parents to the children.
- The Teaching of Sanatana Dharma to all humanity.

- That is the essence of all the Vedas and the Upanishads for every human being. Since these Teachings are helpful for gaining Self-realization, they, together, constitute an Upanishad in themselves.

Therefore all the above Teachings constitute - Veda in its entirety for everyday life.

- That is Divine Declaration - The word of the Lord - The essence of all the Upanishads with respect to daily life - in terms of both advice and command.

Let these command words sink into your mind and understanding- as actions to be done, as the rule of proper conduct in daily life.

Don't forget them!

Let me repeat for emphasis.

- As actions to be done, these command words should be meditated upon, reflected upon, and absorbed by you.
- Do not forget today's lesson. It is all-important for daily life.

Thus ends the Introduction on the Basic Teachings of Vedic Education.

What follows is a - Peace Invocation in the form of a Prayer.

"- May Mitra, Varuna, Brahaspati, and Vishnu be the Bestower of Exalted Happiness to us.

O! Salutations to You

O! Salutations to You

You are indeed the visible manifestation of Brahman to me.

Throughout our studies, in all our meditations and contemplations on Upanishadic Knowledge, I have looked upon you as the visible manifestation of Parameshwara

I have looked for proper conduct, good character and being truthful at all times as the visible manifestation of Parameshwara.

- May That Brahman protect me. May That Brahman protect the Teacher.

- Again I repeat:

- May That Brahman protect me. May That Brahman protect the Teacher!

OM! Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthi!"

.....

This completes our General Introduction to Upanishads. We are now ready to go to the Upanishads directly.

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## BRAHMA VIDYA

### “Isavasya Upanishad”

From: “Hindu Temple Scriptures Readings”

#### *Volume 1*

Today we begin our Readings on Upanishads starting with Isavasya Upanishad.

This Upanishad is from the Yajur Veda.

Every Upanishad is a Student-Teacher dialogue.

We may not know who the student is and who the teacher is, but we do know that the Teacher is a Bhramana - an enlightened person, and the student is one who is sincerely committed to the pursuit of Knowledge about ONE-TRUE-SELF.

As usual, the Upanishad opens with a Peace Invocation, chanted by both the student and the Teacher. The Peace Invocation in this Upanishad is a familiar one:

OM!

Puurnamadah, puurnamidam

Puurnaata puurnamudacyate

Puurnasya puurnamaadaaya

Puurnamevaavashisyate

OM shaantih, shaantih, shaantih

We have already seen this Peace Invocation in detail. In brief, it says:

- The true nature of That-Brahman, That-Brahman manifested in the sound, the true nature of That Brahman is Total Fullness - All inclusiveness -

- The true nature of this creation and everything in this creation is also Brahman

From That-All-Inclusive-Brahman arises this entire creation of Forms and Names, which is also That Brahman - is Eternal Truth.

All our experiences in this ever-changing world of plurality must be understood in this light of that eternal Truth. Just think about this. A bubble rises on a sheet of water, plays on the surface of water for a few moments, and then disappears. Where did the bubble come from? And what was its nature? And where did it go? From water it came, and having come, it is still water, and into water it disappears at the end.

The real nature of that momentary existence, called "bubble", is water. Similar is the real nature of this entire creation. From Brahman IT came, IT is still, while IT exists, with countless forms and names, and into Brahman IT ultimately disappears.

- “All changes in this creation are only transient appearances in Forms and Names. This entire creation is ONE with Brahman, is inseparable from Brahman, Is Brahman Itself, which is The Absolute Reality of all existence.”

That is the Message of the above Peace Invocation, which is an overview of the Upanishad Itself that follows.

Now the Upanishad begins. The student is listening. The teacher speaks.

The topics of discussion are: the Individual, the Creation and Creator. Everywhere around us we see this ever changing creation, and we also see all changes being controlled by the so called Laws of Nature, which themselves do not change. It is obvious that all this creation must have a creator; the creator must have existed even before this creation, and the creator must wield all the Laws of Nature. It is that creator whom we call Brahman, Ishvara or God.

The very existence of this creation is proof enough for the existence of Ishvara

Now, the question is: Where is that Ishvara? The Upanishad declares:

“- All This,” meaning:

“- Everything, including the minuscule things that exist in this ever changing creation-“

“- All This”

“All this creation, including everything, without exception, in this ever changing creation, is Ishvara; indwelt by Ishvara, enveloped by Ishvara; in and out permeated by Ishvara.”

Therefore, where is Ishvara? Ishvara is everywhere in this creation. Nothing in this creation, no object in this creation, no event in this creation stands apart from Ishvara.

The Rig Veda and also in Yajur Veda, expresses the above Eternal Truth in this manner:

“ In whatever is seen or heard by any means of perception, in this entire universe – Ishvara exists – in and out – in all of IT without exception - which means:

? Ishvara is Parameshwara all pervading and all-inclusive

? Ishvara is in everything, and everything is in Ishvara.

? Ishvara is both the efficient cause as well as the material cause for this entire creation.”

Gaining that knowledge about Ishvara, realizing that Knowledge of Ishvara is indeed the very purpose of life, because that knowledge leads one to Total Freedom and Absolute Happiness, ultimately, realization of that knowledge in one’s own life, is indeed Total Fulfillment in life.

Now, the next question is, what is it that one should do to gain that knowledge, to realize that knowledge? The Upanishad says that what one should do is:

Ishvara Is all-pervading and all inclusive: That is Eternal Truth; the realization of that knowledge has extraordinary consequences to one’s everyday life – for that reason:

“Cultivate assiduously Ishvara-Knowledge through

- Listening and understanding the words of the Upanishads,

- Reflecting on the Message of the Upanishads, and

- Absorbing the content of Upanishad knowledge, by

- Overcoming all obstacles to gaining and realizing That Knowledge of Ishvara, God-Consciousness.”

In view of the extraordinary significance of Ishvara-Knowledge to one’s everyday life, and the overriding purpose of life itself, you must take immediate steps of cultivating God-Consciousness, by overcoming all obstructions to that endeavour.

How to do that, we will see as we progress. That is one meaning.

Enjoy life. Enjoy this world of plurality. This world is the very Glory of Brahman. Enjoy this Glory of Parameshwara. That is what human life is meant for. Enjoy life, not by exhausting yourself in frivolous activities, but by doing what has been left for you to do by Parameshwara. Therefore, enjoy life by doing what has been left for you to do by God.

As the Gita says: (3-7)

“Do what has come to you, as your duty at this time and place.”

There is no need for you to run after everything that catches your fancy from time to time. There is no need for you to be propelled into action by your forces of likes and dislikes. But just do what God has left for you to do at this time and place. You just use your body, mind and intellect for what they are really intended, namely, to do what has been left for you to do by Ishvara.

Another meaning is:

- “Enjoy life through renunciation.”

“Enjoy Life by renouncing the fruits of all actions” and ultimately by renouncing all actions themselves. This means: giving up all notions of “Doership” and “Enjoyership” in all actions.

- “Enjoy life in this world.”

True enjoyment of life lies only in such renunciation. By such renunciation, you uplift yourself to a far higher level of Enjoyment in life, ultimately to the state of Being Your Absolute SELF, BEING ONE with Parameshwara Itself.

Karma is bondage only if it is propelled by the thirst for the fruit of actions. On the other hand, Karma becomes a means for gaining Total Freedom and Absolute Happiness. When action is done as an offering to Parameshwara, such offering itself is Parameshwara says the Upanishad. Therefore, - with the attitude of total dedication to Parameshwara, DO whatever you need to do, as an offering to the Lord. That is Karma Yoga which ultimately leads to total freedom from all notions of Doership and Enjoyership in actions, which itself is Total Fulfillment in life.

Therefore remember the three meanings of these verses:

1. Cultivate - God consciousness, by overcoming all obstacles to the realization of knowledge about Parameshwara, about True God Consciousness.
2. Enjoy life in this world, doing what has been left for you to do by Parameshwara.
3. Enjoy life through renunciation - by dedicating all actions to Parameshwara, renouncing the fruits of all actions, and ultimately giving up all notions of Doership and Enjoyership in actions.

Further, the Upanishad continues:

“Never covet, never crave for never wish for, and never develop an attachment for the wealth of anyone.”

Wealth includes wealth of all kinds "of any one".

The term “any-one” includes one-self, as well as others.

Therefore:

“Never covet, never crave for, never develop an attachment for the wealth of anyone, including for your own wealth.”

That one should not covet or crave for, or develop an attachment for the wealth of others is only commonsense ethics. What the Upanishad says here is far more than that.

- You should not develop any attachment even for the wealth you are blessed with at this time. This means, *do not entertain any notion of ownership even with respect to any wealth you may possess*, because there is no such thing as exclusive ownership.

Ownership is purely a notion based on an erroneous understanding of one's relationship to an object. One is no more than a trustee for any wealth that one may be blessed with for the time being.

To be bound to any sense of ownership of any wealth, any object, is only to isolate oneself from That All-pervading All-inclusive Parameshwara.

Thus we must understand that entertaining a sense of ownership of one's possessions is also a form of covetous nature. Covetous nature, whatever may be its form, can never uplift a person. One has to uplift oneself to recognize the best in oneself, Parameshwara in oneself and to enjoy life, gain freedom and be happy.

The world is nothing but Blissful Brahman and one is fortunate to be born as a human being to be able to enjoy this world of plurality in a true sense. It is only when one's eyes and ears, and indeed all organs of perception and action, including mind and Intellect are purified by Renunciation, - that the true vision of the world will unfold itself as waves and waves of Bliss of Brahman.

The experience of That Vision is the True Joy of Life, True Zest in Life, True Fulfillment in life, and that is what is indicated by the words of the Upanishad.

*- All Existence is Ishvara, All Existence is Divine.*

*- Cultivate Ishvara-Knowledge by overcoming all obstructions to the realization of that Knowledge.*

*- Enjoy life doing what has been left for you to do.*

*- Enjoy life through Renunciation.*

*- Never covet, by thought, word or deed, what rightly belongs to others, what is legitimately possessed by anyone, including your-self.*

*- Live a life of Total God-Consciousness with the attitude of total dedication of all actions to Parameshwara.*

*- That is the way to be, **that** is the road leading to Total Freedom – Absolute Happiness.*

So says the first verse of Isavasya Upanishad. We will see the second verse next time.

## **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 8

### **Volume 2**

The first two verses of Isavasya Upanishad, which we just recited, must be understood together. We saw the first verse in detail last time. In brief it says:

- All this, meaning everything including the minuteness of everything that exists in this ever-changing creation
- All this entire creation, including everything in this creation without exception
- is indwelt by, is enveloped by, is in and out permeated by the Creator; which means that the Divine Creator exists, and “That Creator” exists everywhere in this creation. Nothing in this creation, no object in this creation, no event in this creation, stands apart from the Creator.

The Creator is IN everything that exists and everything that exists is in the Creator  
All Existence is Divine. That is knowledge about Parameswara, knowledge to be known, knowledge to be understood, knowledge to be realized.

- Cultivate that God Consciousness- That knowledge about Parameswara, by overcoming all obstructions to the realization of that knowledge. Enjoy life doing what has been left for you to do by Parameswara and enjoy life through renunciation –
- Never covet, never crave for, and never develop an attachment for the wealth of anyone, including that of your-self. That is the way to be. That is the road leading to total freedom, Absolute Happiness, Total Fulfillment in life.

That is the content of the first verse.

Continuing the same theme, the second verse says:

## **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 9

- May you desire to live a 100 years, may you desire to live a long and full life.
- The sound in any Vedic chanting indicates the need for the presence of Total God-consciousness with particular reference to whatever is being said. Therefore, in the context here, only when there is total God-consciousness at all times, "desire to live in this world a long and full life with total God-consciousness at all times, always doing every action as dedicated to God."
- There is no other way for you to live in this world, to be your true self and to be happy.
- For such a person, actions do not stain, actions do not touch, and actions do not bind.

First of all, develop an outlook based on a true appreciation of the real nature of all existence, recognizing all existence as - non-separate from Parameswara.

Then, desire to live a long, full way of life, working with zest and joy, dedicating all actions to the Lord, and enjoying the fruit of your actions as the very grace of God. That is the only way to live a sensible life in this world, there is no other way, asserts the Upanishad.

- “Only by performing actions” – “What actions should you perform?”

- Perform that action that has been left for you to do by Parameswara which is the action that has come to you naturally as a matter of duty at this time and place. That action is indeed Divine Action and in that action there is no choice.
- How should you do that action? With full appreciation of the Divine presence in every action as it comes, which means, recognize Parameswara in every action and recognize every action as the Glory of Parameswara.

## **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 10

With such recognition, Sri Krishna says:

“Dedicate all your actions to Parameswara having no expectations with respect to fruits of all your actions,” which means :

-Welcome all the fruits of your actions, whatever they are, as the very Grace of Parameswara.

-Let your mind be rooted in - discriminative knowledge and judgment, based on understanding, appreciation and enquiry.

-Let not your mind to be pushed by cravings, longings or expectations.

-Let your mind and discriminative Intelligence to be ever free from the notion of mine. There is indeed nothing “mine” in this world.

-Let your mind be free from any sorrow and distress; in performing one's duty there is no place for any sorrow or distress.

-Perform your duty, do whatever you need to do at this time and place, and do it as well as you can -

-Perform actions as divine actions and learn to live a life full of zest and joy in total God Consciousness at all times.

Vedanta does not ask one to desire to live a full life of 100 years, if such life were to be lived in despair, distress and delusion. A long life is not meant for dissipation through entertainments, excitement and exhaustion.

Vedanta holds before a human being a far greater purpose, namely, one of growth, maturity and realization by which every action leads progressively towards - Absolute Happiness, Total Fulfillment in life.

That is the significance of the words:

- Enjoy life through renunciation.

The ultimate object of life is to gain Liberation, which means transformation of man “the mortal” into man “the immortal” in this very life.

How can you do that?

- Sri Krishna explains that by saying:
- “Put the Divine Creator in everything. Conduct your life and enjoy your life in and through Divinity, because The Divine is the truth in everything and the truth of everything. Life and all its achievements become trivial when this Truth of Divinity does not shine through them.”

The trivialities of life are trivial only when taken by themselves. Recognize The Divine Creator in every one of your actions. Then even the most trivial aspects of life glow with purpose and significance.

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 11

When we understand this truth, a full life of zest and joy is possible. But in order to understand this truth, a spirit of enquiry is necessary. Our Rishis, the “Enlightened” ones, have conducted this enquiry and they have presented their results in the Upanishads.

If we are ready for that knowledge, and if we can absorb that knowledge, we stand to benefit. It is the only means by which you can become truly free. Actions are not bondages for a Yogi; action is a means for emancipation.

Godliness is fulfillment of manliness and not its negation. One must first achieve human happiness before even striving for Divine Happiness. Human happiness is possible only through a life of Truth and Dharma- Being truthful at all times, and living a life of propriety and gratitude in all actions.

That is why now and then we perform Havans of various kinds in which we worship various Divine aspects of the Creator.

- Who are the various functionaries of Parameswara? The various Deities.
- By performing such rituals we say “Thank You” to the various Deities.
- By touching the Deities we also touch Parameswara.

Whether I say thank you or not, the sun shines, the wind blows, the rain rains, and the earth moves. But by saying “Thank - you” to the Sun Deity and to others Deities for their functions in this creation, and by expressing my deep sense of gratitude to them, I realize the true nature of my own self and my own function in this creation.

The moment I realize myself as ONE with this entire creation, I find a new zest, a new joy and a new enthusiasm in life, and I realize:

.. To make others happy is also my happiness

.. To serve others and help them to achieve their life's fulfillment is also my fulfillment

This realization is one of the essential teachings of our Upanishads.

The very existence of Upanishads is an expression of such Realization.

Such is the content of the first two verses of the Isavasya Upanishad, together with the preceding Invocation. This content is repeatedly authenticated in every other Upanishad. It is this content that is expanded in all details in the Bhagavad Gita, which indicate the extraordinary significance of these three verses for our spiritual development.

## **Brahma Vidya**

### Isavasya Upanishad 12

. These three verses for our spiritual development constitute the essence of all our Upanishads, all our Scriptures and the basis of all our Scripture Readings here at this Temple.

Now let us continue with the Upanishad.

- All existence is Divine. That means one's essential nature is Divine. Life lived without the consciousness of one's Divine nature is indeed trivial. It is a life of darkness, ignorance, sorrow and distress. It is a life of spiritual blindness. Those who let themselves live in such spiritual blindness, they are really hurting themselves.

So says the third verse of the Upanishad.

Those who let themselves live in such spiritual blindness are called spiritual suicide. Those who destroy themselves hurt themselves, by spiritual ignorance, and by ignorance about the true nature of oneself. Their mind and their discriminating intelligence are weak and they have no Truth and Dharma in their life. Therefore, the Upanishad says:

- Those that let themselves live in such spiritual blindness, in self-ignorance, whoever they are, whatever be their other qualifications,  
 - Their worlds of life are called worlds of darkness, ignorance and delusion. Their planes of experiences, their fields of experiences, their objects of experiences, their physical, mental and intellectual dispositions, all these are verily embodiments of the physical impermanent worlds.  
 They are people whose personal qualities, values and dispositions are detrimental to one's own true progress in any field of human endeavour.  
 Such people depend entirely on external situations to find happiness.  
 They are incapable of enjoying True Happiness, of discovering and being the best in Them-selves, because, their worlds of experiences are covered by blinding darkness, which means ever increasing ignorance, sorrow and distress.  
 They find themselves constantly being beaten by the ups and downs of their daily lives.

## **Brahma Vidya**

### Isavasya Upanishad 13

They live that kind of life, not only now, but also after death. When they depart from their physical bodies by virtue of their ignorance, they will inevitably fall into the wombs of those whose minds and discriminative Intelligences are similarly governed by negative qualities and dispositions.

Consequently their life of self-degradation will continue, life after life, always going from bad to worse.

As Sri Krishna says:

“Having got into the wombs of people having negative qualities and dispositions, they remain as ignorant and deluded in every life, one after the other, accumulating more suffering for them-selves. They never get an opportunity to uplift themselves.”

Having not gained the good sense, the common sense to follow the path of Dharma and live a life of God consciousness, they push themselves downward into an endless succession of lower and lower wombs, life after life. That is the fate of those governed by self-ignorance and spiritual suicide.

The message of the Upanishads is this. Self-ignorance, spiritual suicide brings only ever increasing distress and delusion in daily life. If one thinks "Well all my problems are only as long as I live, and when I die, all my problems are solved", the Upanishad says, "No", the problems are not solved by death of the body. If you are ignorant now, you are not going to be enlightened after death. After death also you will continue to be ignorant, and you will continue to suffer life after life.

Please, realize this fact now while you are still living. It is never too late to take action now to live a life of Truth and Dharma; to live a life of God-Consciousness and to cultivate spiritual knowledge.

Through understanding, enquiry and contemplation learn to realize your Divinity.

## **Brahma Vidya**

### Isavasya Upanishad 14

The realization of That Knowledge is possible only through the human body, even though it involves a long period of yoga way of life, and continued physical, mental and intellectual discipline.

That is why the Upanishad says:

“Desire to live a long 100 years of God-conscious life. You need all that period of endeavour to reach the Goal of Liberation and enjoy Absolute Happiness, Total fulfillment

in this very life. This body is the best and the only equipment we have to gain That State of Liberation, That state of Absolute Happiness.

If one does not make use of one's body-mind-intellect equipment for the above purpose, one is only missing one's golden opportunity to uplift oneself and that is spiritual suicide." says the Upanishad.

Again and again our Upanishads exhort us to turn our attention to the Realization of the  
-Divine nature of One-self,  
-And indeed of all existence, by properly utilizing the God-given equipment, namely one's own body, mind and intellect.

The Upanishads implore us to make the best use of our own natural faculties to uplift ourselves through Absolute Happiness.

That is the call of our Upanishads, and it is expressed so forcefully in Other Upanishads:

- Arise, get up
- Wake up from the sleep of self-ignorance, turn towards Happiness
- Seek help from the proper people. You need help.
- Get the best help you can
  
- Get yourself educated clearly, definitely and beyond doubt.
- The path leading to self knowledge is very difficult to tread.
- It is very difficult to overcome obstacles on the way
- The path leading to Happiness is sharp, like the edge of a razor.

That means, one can easily get discouraged, frightened or misled through lack of understanding or lack of enquiry.

- That is the warning from the wise people who have successfully reached the goal.

## **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 15

The road leading to Enlightenment - Self-knowledge is full of difficulties. It is neither easy to tread nor easy to cross. It requires not only knowledge, both objective knowledge and spiritual knowledge, but also discipline and sustained efforts. It also requires that one must constantly be on one's guards to protect oneself from discouragement, misunderstanding, fear and fanaticism.

Therefore this life is your golden opportunity to uplift yourself to the greatness in action and greatness in "Being." That is indeed the purpose of life. Do not waste your time any more. Wake up from self-ignorance. Seek help and get yourself educated in Self-knowledge

At the same time, beware of pitfalls. Be on your guards.

Essentially that is the Message of the third verse of Isavasya Upanishad.

We will continue with this Upanishad next time.

**Brahma Vidya**  
**Isavasya Upanishad**  
**Volume 3**

The third part opens with an amazing declaration: “That Creator is everywhere, in everything, ever existent, all-pervading, all-conscious, ever conscious, limitless and all inclusive.”

Still what needs to be understood, what needs to be appreciated, and what needs to be realized is: “What exactly is the nature of that Creator?”

That Creator is beyond the scope of words, and beyond the reach of mind, but can be recognized, can be reached by one's faculty of discriminative knowledge and judgment.

In order to help one to recognize That Creator by one's faculty of discriminative Knowledge and judgment, the Upanishad now proceeds to provide a series of pointer words in the next five verses, with the help of which one can gain a clear vision of that Creator as IT is.

In Vedantic terminology the words Creator, Brahman and SELF are synonyms. They all refer to the same ONE ever-existent, all-pervading, all conscious, ever conscious, limitless, all-inclusive Supreme Being whom we call Parameswara or God.

With reference to Itself, That Supreme Being is Brahman. With reference to collective existence of everything in this creation, That Supreme being is the Creator or Parameswara and with reference to any single individual in this creation, That Supreme Being is The SELF.

- Pure Consciousness, Pure Awareness is Brahman
- The SELF in every self is Brahman
- I am indeed Brahman,
- I am indeed Parameswara
- I am indeed The SELF

Therefore the question "What exactly is the nature of that Creator is the same as:  
 What exactly is the nature of Brahman?  
 What exactly is the nature of The SELF?  
 What exactly is the nature of "I" in my-self?

In other words, the question about the exact nature of Parameswara is really a question about the true nature of “oneself”.

More particularly:

What is it because of which I am what I am?

What is it because of which I am unable to recognize what the Upanishad says I am?

What is it I need to do to recognize my true nature as Brahman Itself?

What exactly my discriminating intelligence needs to recognize in Brahman as Brahman?

That is precisely the question which essentially includes all other questions.

To unfold the answer to this question is the purpose of all our Upanishads.

Every Upanishad answers this question to the extent necessary in its own particular context.

Integrating the essence of all Upanishads, The Bhagavad Gita answers this question fully, in all details, and in a manner that is at once relevant and also which can be assimilated by every one who is interested and ready for this kind of knowledge, whatever may be one's immediate personal circumstances

But, in order to gain a proper and clear understanding of the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, one needs the background knowledge of the essential message of at least a few Upanishads, and that is what we are trying to cultivate through our present Upanishad readings.

Pointing out the exact nature of That Brahman, That Parameswara, That SELF, the fourth verse of the Isavasya Upanishad provides several pointers to That Brahman, to that SELF and to that Parameswara.

All pointers unfolding the content of the Upanishad declare that The Creator is everywhere and in everything – This means what?

The Nature of Brahman- The nature of Parameswara- The nature of SELF, is:

1. “Unmoving” –

It does not move, because it is All-pervading and Ever-Existent.

It is, as Gita says: “Already everywhere. There is no place it is not.”

Therefore there is no place it can move into, which means that “IT” is not bound by time and space. “IT” is Unchanging and Unchangeable.

Being “Unmoving”, it is the “I” in everyone. I am “Unmoving” as SELF.

My thoughts move, my memories move, but they all move in my consciousness, in my awareness. But “I” as SELF- “I”, as pure awareness, ever remain unmoving, “Unbound” and “Infinite”. That is the nature of “I-The Self”, The SELF, The Parameswara, and The Brahman.

Further:

2. “IS ONE”

“IT” is ONE. The SELF is ONE. It is not that I have one SELF and you have another SELF.

There is only ONE SELF. There is no other SELF. There is nothing that is separate from SELF. The SELF is all-inclusive.

“The Ultimate Reality” – “The Absolute Reality” of all existence is ONE and Indivisible – “IS ONE” and “That” is SELF, The Parameswara, The Brahman.

Thus the pointer word “IS ONE” indicates the Realization of the identity of - the SELF and Brahman, the SELF and Parameswara and at the same time:

“It moves faster than the mind.”

How? Because: “It” is all-pervading and ever existent.

It is The SELF and the ever changing entire creation.

Further:

### 3. “IS FASTER THAN THE MIND”

That SELF is faster, than the mind. That SELF moves faster than the mind.

Please note THE SELF is “Unmoving” and at the same time, “IT” moves faster than the mind.

How? Because: “IT” is all-pervading and ever existent.

By the time the mind lands on something, The SELF is already there in that something, because SELF is all-pervading and limitless.

There is something in my mind and something beyond my mind that is true only with reference to my mind and that is not true with reference to the Limitless.

Thus we see there is no contradiction between statements.

Again:

### 3. “The DEVAS CANNOT OVERTAKE THAT SELF”

The DEVAS cannot overtake The SELF. “IT” has already reached the object which is sought to be reached by any of the DEVAS.

Let us understand this statement properly.

The DEVAS are the functionaries of Parameswara.

The DEVAS in our body are: our sense organs, - including the mind and the discriminating intelligence - the faculties of hearing touching, seeing, tasting and smelling, - and also all the faculties of our mind and intelligence.

These are the DEVAS, the Divine faculties in our body.

The sense faculties cannot overtake Brahman because any object which is reached by any of these sense faculties is already there even before one hears, or one feels, or one sees, or one taste, or one smells or one perceives by one's mind and discriminate the presence of the object. And the object itself remains non-separate from Brahman.

Therefore even before any of the sense organs, including mind and Intellect, recognize the presence of an object, Brahman is already in that object, by virtue of the fact “IT” is everywhere, and no object is away from “IT”.

Further:

4. STAND STILL AND AT THE SAME TIME OVERTAKES OTHERS,

Meaning: the sense organs running after various sense objects and sense experiences.

The Unmoving SELF overtakes the ever-moving sense organs which run after various sense objects and sense experiences. Earlier, it was pointed out that the sense organs cannot overtake the SELF.

Here it is pointed out that "IT" overtakes the sense organs by "ITS" very nature

Again:

6. IT SELF NOT MOVING, CAUSES THE MOVEMENTS OF OTHERS

For example, the air moves because there is something behind the air which enables it to move.

Each object in this creation has its own attributes, its own functions, and these have their home only in The SELF.

The Nature of SELF is, as Gita says: "While The Self having no qualities or attributes, "IT" indwells, permeates and sustains all qualities and attributes in all beings in this creation."

Brahman has no attributes, but is the abode of all countless Divine, Auspicious, Enlightening and Uplifting natural qualities of various objects and events in this creation. The "Natural Qualities" in every object in this creation are the very manifestations of Brahman It-self.

This is what needs to be recognized.

The natural ability of the hands to move while doing any action, the natural ability of the feet to move while walking, etc., these are the "Natural Characteristics" of the hands, feet, etc.. That means that when the hand moves, The SELF moves causing the hand to move.

When the feet move, the SELF moves, causing the feet to move.

Thus as Air, The Creator moves; as Fire the Creator burns; as Water the Creator quenches, etc.

All the way there is the Creator and there is only the Creator and nothing else.

At the same time, That Creator stands-still, remaining for ever the same, from "ITS" own stand-point remains unmoving.

"IT" never moves. At the same time, every movement that takes place in this creation, never being away from Brahman, is Itself Brahman, is Itself-The-SELF.

That is the Truth in this entire creation.

Namely: "Every natural phenomenon in this creation is never away from The SELF."

Water sustains air; air sustains water, etc. Everything in this creation sustains everything else in this creation, as ordained by Parameswara.

Parameswara is the ONE who makes up the clouds as the clouds, the rain as the rain, the earth as the earth and everything else as it is.

Each does its proper function in this creation, as ordained by Parameswara.

Each finds its own total fulfillment in God-Consciousness,

It moves - The Brahman moves, and at the same time "IT" does not move – It ever remains Unmoving.

With reference to thought - It moves.

With reference to time - It moves.

With reference to air, etc. - It moves.

But with reference to Itself, It ever remains unmoving.

This is so because "IT" is "All-pervading and All-Inclusive."

Is this statement a repetition of what has already been pointed out?

Yes, but it is on a different plane of understanding.

It has a different dimension: here the movement is with respect to distance.

#### 7. BRAHMAN IS REMOTE, AND AT THE SAME TIME IS VERY NEAR

BRAHMAN is indeed very near; surprisingly near. It is the nearest.

There is nothing nearer.

For the person who is ignorant of Brahman, for the person who is ignorant of the true nature of oneself, Brahman is far away, the Creator is far away, The SELF is far away from oneself.

On the other hand, for the person who has Knowledge of Brahman, there is really no distance between oneself and The SELF; oneself and Parameswara and oneself and Brahman.

- There is no distance between the creator and the creation.
- There is no distance between I and myself.

Further:

#### 8. "IT" IS WITHIN ALL THIS

Meaning, "IT" is within everything in this creation;

Brahman is, The Creator; is, THE SELF is, in every thought, in every memory, in every event, and indeed in every being in this creation, and at the same time

Surprisingly also, "IT" is outside of everything in this creation.

Inside and outside are only with respect to objects in this creation.

From "ITS" own standpoint, "IT" is everywhere, in and out of every object in this creation.

As Sri Krishna says (G.13-15):

“The Self is outside of all beings in this creation, and also inside of all beings in this creation, whether the beings are immobile or mobile, insentient or sentient.”

That means that: That SELF, That Parameswara, and That Brahman remain undivided by the beings in this creation, whatever they are, just as space remains undivided by all the objects in space.

In the next two verses the Upanishad gives another vision of the same Knowledge.

“They unfold the identity of the “Infinite” in Man and the “Infinite” in God.”

It is the awareness of such Identity that uplifts a person from all pettiness and trivialities of life.

The Upanishad says: “The person who sees clearly all beings in one's own self, and, at the same time sees clearly oneself in all beings, for that person, takes place the realization of the: “Knowledge of Identity.”

That person does not and cannot entertain any revulsions for anybody or anything, because the one who sees clearly all beings in one's own self and at the same time sees clearly oneself in all beings, that person sees only the Glory of Parameswara every-where and such a person cannot entertain any tendency to find fault in others due to enmity, anger, hatred, jealousy, intolerance, etc. Revulsion is a corrosive quality and it is self destructive.

Total absence of revulsion is a pre-requisite for being a true Yogi. As only a perfected Yogi can see clearly all beings in oneself and also oneself in all beings; and such knowledge of non-separation, knowledge of Identity, is an expression of appreciation of the Upanishadic message.

Further:

-When a person comes to realize that all beings have come from SELF only-

-When a person realizes ONENESS of all beings,-

For that person, when that realization takes place, there is no delusion or distress, because that person is an enlightened person.

For that person who realizes unity in all existence and perceives all beings as his own SELF, there can be no delusion or sorrow which is again another vision of the Upanishadic message: the Eternal Truth.

Knowledge of Brahman, realization of ones' own Self as the SELF of all: such realization is the supreme source of strength for a human being.

-We must understand that Vedanta does not deny differences-

But, all the differences are only superficial.

Deep down these superficial ever-changing differences, is the never-changing Unity: “The Unchanging Atman” indicated by the Upanishadic message.

In the next verse, the Upanishad gives another Vision of the same message, another vision of SELF through another series of pointer words.

We will see this verse next time.

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 26

#### ***Volume 4***

The first 5 verses are for contemplation on Parameswara to uplift one's Intellect and maintain one's discriminative intelligence steadily in Total God-Consciousness.

We saw the first four verses in detail last time now let us see the last verse.

Pointing out to The Self in every person, indeed in every “Jiva”, in every being, the Upanishad says:

-11. “The SELF in every person, in every “Jiva” went all over this creation even before its manifestation in this cycle of creation” (more about this matter we will see later in the Taittiriya Upanishad).

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 27

Therefore, Atman went all over, means Atman is all over this creation, Atman is all-pervasive, The Self, or Atman is not confined to any person.

The SELF is in everyone and everyone is in That SELF only.

Again:

-12. That SELF is Self-Effulgent. That SELF is All-Enlightenment.

As the Gita says:

“That SELF is the Light of all Lights. It is because of That SELF that the sun, the stars, the fire etc. are what they are. It is by That Enlightening SELF that our mind and intellect shine.”

This means that they gain the power to do what they are naturally endowed to do. That luminous SELF is beyond darkness. It is not in any way affected by any kind of darkness or ignorance. Ignorance itself is lighted up by That SELF only.

The SELF is not opposed to ignorance. If I realize that I am ignorant, that knowledge itself is possible only by the blessing of that SELF.

As our Upanishads says:

“This entire creation including everything in this creation is illumined by that luminous SELF.”

Again:

-13. While the SELF is in the body of every person, That SELF Itself has no body. Consequently: The SELF is ever free from injury of any kind. No weapon can cause any injury to The SELF.

Also: The SELF has no muscles, ligaments, tendons, etc. - which exist in any gross physical body.

## **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 28

The Self lacks any qualities. The Self is in every body, but the SELF It-self exists independent of and uncontaminated by the body of any living being.

Every person is an extraordinary combination of body and SELF.

We will talk in detail about this combination in the Bhagavad Gita.

At this time it is enough to recall the fact that what we call “The body” - is itself made up of three components, namely:

- The gross physical body
- The subtle body, occupying the gross physical body
- The causal body - which is the cause for the other two bodies

About the nature of these three bodies, we will see later.

The Upanishads point out that SELF is free from all three bodies.

What is called an individual “Jiva”- an “individual living being” is an aggregate of three components:

“SELF, Causal Body and Subtle Body”

None of which is available for perception.

What is called an “individual person” is an aggregate of four components:

“SELF, Causal Body, Subtle Body and Gross body”

Thus, without a gross physical body, an individual living being is a JIVA, and with a gross physical body, the same living being is an individual person.

From the aggregate of an “individual person”,  
When all the three Bodies are dissociated by Knowledge,  
What remains is only pure SELF.

This is uncontaminated by the qualities and limitations of all the three BODIES.

Similarly,

From the aggregate of an “individual JIVA”  
When both Subtle Body and Causal Body are dissociated by knowledge,  
What remains is pure SELF, which is pure JIVA,

That is uncontaminated by the qualities of the two BODIES.

Thus pure JIVA and pure SELF are identical, which means JIVATMAN and Parameswara-Atman are ONE and The SAME.

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 29

That is how the pure SELF, the All-pervading Parameswara, is The Brahman.  
That SELF is pure Jiva totally free from the Causal and the Subtle-Bodies.

Continuing, the Upanishad says: That SELF is Pure - Pure Enlightenment - free from darkness - ignorance of any kind, free from all object limitations.

Again:

-15. - Totally free from any form of obstruction to Self-Knowledge because, THE SELF Itself is SELF-KNOWLEDGE.

Again:

-16. Witness SELF, is the seer of everything - Witness of every event in this creation

-17. All-knowing SELF, The SELF is “All-Knowing” – Omniscient Supreme Being

-18. The SELF manifests itself as “ALL” in this creation by its own power.  
The SELF is transcendent

-19. THE SELF is Self-Existent - It is not created by anyone.  
SELF is self existence itself.

-20. The SELF is that which has blessed all the Eternal Divine Functionaries - all the Devatas their respective powers - their respective duties in this creation, in accordance with the laws of nature as ordained by It-Self – by Parameswara Itself.

This Universe is ruled by the Eternal Laws of Parameswara.  
Parameswara is the Lord of all the Eternal Laws of Nature.  
Parameswara is ultimately the Law of all Laws.  
All the Devas obey the laws of Parameswara and maintain order in this creation.

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 30

Such is the nature of that Brahman – That Parameswara -That SELF.  
Such is the nature of "I" the nature of That SELF in every self.  
That is what is indicated by the Upanishadic Declaration:  
- “That is what needs to be realized.”-

Thus in the above five verses, the Upanishad has provided a series of 20 different simple-looking and yet far-reaching pointers to enable one to gain a full vision of That ONE all-pervading, all-inclusive Brahman, Parameswara and SELF in this ever changing creation, in one's own ever-changing self.

Gaining That Full Vision of Parameswara is indeed gaining Totality of Knowledge,  
That is the very content of the Upanishadic Message.

In the Upanishadic expression are indicated TWO kinds of knowledge.

Namely:

- Knowledge of the “absolute”, independent, never-changing Reality.
- Knowledge about the inherent Infinite Power of Parameswara, “manifested” as this entire ever changing creation.

All objective knowledge, knowledge about every field of arts, sciences engineering, technology, research, development, business, etc; all such objective knowledge is “manifested” or “MAYA” or “illusory knowledge”.

No objective knowledge, known or unknown has any independent existence. ALL objective knowledge ultimately depends on:

- That which is Absolutely-Real – That which is changeless.

In Vedantic terminology, all objective knowledge is called – “**not-Real**”

-Thus "REAL" refers to knowledge of changeless Reality-Absolute SELF

-"NON-REAL" refers to knowledge of the changeful Universe.

Or: all objective knowledge.

-"REAL" and "NON-REAL" together constitute the "Totality of Knowledge."

The Upanishad talks briefly about the need and the Means for gaining such  
TOTALITY OF KNOWLEDGE

In the following two sets of verses:

The first set of three verses is concerned with REAL and NOT-REAL

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 31

11- The Upanishad says:

-Those people who are committed to the pursuit of objective knowledge,  
-They enter into blinding darkness, which means they push themselves into total  
ignorance of Absolute Reality - total ignorance of Reality.

- On the other hand:

- Those who simply entertain themselves in the language of Upanishadic knowledge,  
neglecting the prior cultivation of the necessary discipline of objective knowledge,  
- They push themselves into darkness which is even more intense than blinding darkness,  
which means even greater ignorance of Knowledge of Absolute Reality.

Why?

Because: without the prior discipline of objective knowledge, pursuit of Upanishadic  
Knowledge cannot be fruitful and it may even lead to misleading and self-destructive  
ends.

Thus:

Neither the pursuit of objective knowledge by itself, nor the pursuit of Upanishadic  
knowledge by itself can bring you any enlightenment on Totality of Knowledge. Because:

- What is achieved by -Self-knowledge is quite a different thing and  
- What is achieved by - objective knowledge is yet another thing.

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 32

In the pursuit of - Totality of Knowledge - Self-Knowledge and - objective knowledge have very different functions. This is not simply a matter of opinion, says the Teacher.

-The Teachers have heard from the wise people who have gained Totality of Knowledge and explain that difference to us, in the following manner says the Teacher:  
 - The person who knows, who clearly understands and appreciates both REAL and NOT-REAL knowledge. Both: Self-knowledge and objective knowledge, together,  
 - Through the discipline cultivated in the pursuit of objective knowledge in depth, crosses and overcomes “The world of death”.

This means that the person gains clarity of understanding of the complexities of the world of changes.

That person realizes the cause-effect relationships of the world of changes, both in its Not-Manifest and Manifest states, - the world of MAYA -

By realizing True Knowledge - with the help of the Upanishadic knowledge- that person gains Immortality, gains the knowledge of the Changeless Reality behind and beyond the world of changes.

That person gains - Totality of Knowledge and gains:

- God-Realization arising from the holy confluence of the ever-flowing “Objective Knowledge” with the: “Limitless Ocean of Spiritual Knowledge.”

Such God-realization is possible only through, objective Knowledge and Upanishad Knowledge together.

Through the cultivation of the discipline and the depth of objective knowledge, one gains the ability to understand the ever-changing nature of the material world and through the simultaneous cultivation of the discipline and the depth of Upanishad Knowledge, one gains the ability to realize that all the changes taking place in the material world are only different manifestations of That one unchanging Ever Existent Brahman.

Such simultaneous cultivation of these two human abilities is the function of sincere study which ultimately makes a person a wise person fit for gaining - Total Fulfillment in Life.

## **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 33

For gaining such Total fulfilment in Life, a daily life of Truth and Dharma rooted in God-Consciousness is necessary, about which the Upanishad says in the second set of three verses:

14. As you may notice, these three verses are exactly the same as the previous three verses, except that using different words they refer to “Changeless” Brahman, and in

other words they refer also to the same Brahman indicated by a variety of Forms and Names and “Subject to change”.

The subject matter here is Mode of Worship of Parameswara, and subsequent God-Realization by an individual.

The Upanishad says: Those who worship Parameswara through Forms and names ONLY, without understanding and appreciating “That” which is behind and beyond those Forms and Names, such people are pushing themselves into ignorance on the true Nature of Parameswara.

On the other hand, those who entertain themselves with the notion of Worship of Parameswara deliberately avoiding and dissociating all Forms and Names from Parameswara, such people are pushing themselves into even greater ignorance on the true nature of Parameswara.

Neither of the above two kinds of people understand or appreciate the Knowledge communicated by the Teachings of the Upanishad.

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad 34

Not the one who does limit the worship of Parameswara to certain Forms and Names only, and not the one who deliberately avoids and dissociates all Forms and Names in the worship of Parameswara, can gain the true vision of Parameswara.

This is so, because if you think that you cannot see Parameswara in a blade of grass, in a lump of clay or in a piece of stone, you can never see Parameswara anywhere, in anything, and certainly not in something that is Formless, Unknown or unknowable.

“Only when you see the same Parameswara in everything that exists, Form or no Form, known or unknown and at the same time see all existence in the same Parameswara, then, God Realization is possible”. So says the Upanishad.

The above six verses expound the philosophy of - Totality of Knowledge – The Total Vision of Parameswara, leading to the unity of all that is comprehensible, and also all that is beyond comprehension - the Unity of the world external, and the world internal.

The Upanishad tells us that to concentrate our attention only on the external world and neglect the inner world of SELF is as good as pushing oneself into blinding darkness. On the other hand, to neglect this world which we can see, touch and handle, and to become involved only in the incomprehensible world within is as good as pushing oneself into even greater darkness.

What is needed is to understand and appreciate that Reality is ONE, untouched by limitations such as the outer and inner - Not-Self and the SELF - many and ONE – and we must learn to conduct our life in the light of this all-embracing knowledge. If the many and the ONE are indeed the Same Reality, then all modes of worship, all modes of work,

all modes of struggle are paths for Self-Realization. Then there is really no distinction between the sacred and the secular, religion and science. Such is indeed the Teaching of Isavasya Upanishad.

With this Teaching, the Knowledge part of the Upanishad is over. There are four more verses in this Upanishad and they are mainly for meditation and contemplation. We will complete this Upanishad next time.

### **Brahma Vidya**

Isavasya Upanishad

#### ***VOLUME 5***

Every Upanishad has explicitly or implicitly two distinct sections. The first section is concerned only with - Pure Knowledge - Knowledge of The SELF in every self. That is what we saw earlier in the first 14 verses of this Upanishad.

The second section is what is generally called as Reflection section, which is meant exclusively for reflection and contemplation on the content of the “Upanishadic - Knowledge”. This section takes different forms in different Upanishads, and what one learns from this section is also different for different people, depending on the state of one's own maturity.

The concluding verses of this Upanishad, verses 15 to 18, constitute the Reflection section for this Upanishad, and it takes the form of a Prayer at the most critical time of one's life. It is a Prayer for Divine Revelation.

Here is a person, a devotee of Parameswara, who has lived a long and full life, a life of Truth and Dharma, together with regular Scriptural studies, diligently cultivating God Consciousness throughout life.

This person understands and appreciates the nature of - Totality of Knowledge as revealed by the Upanishads, and he is full of concentration in his pursuits of Total Fulfillment in Life.

But, in spite of all his best efforts, he has not yet realized that highest truth of Fullness of Being in Himself. He has not yet realized That Knowledge of Brahman; one's Spiritual Identity with SELF- The All-pervading Parameswara in himself. He has not yet realized that Total Fulfillment in life expounded in the Upanishads.

We may immediately note here that this is indeed the case with respect to almost all people, including those who are among the most spiritually inclined. Therefore, what the Upanishad says with respect to this particular Devotee of Parameswara should be of interest to all of us.

Now, about this devotee of Parameswara:

Times have passed. Life has taken its natural course for this person in accordance with the fruits of his own past actions. Now, the time has come for him to leave his body and he finds himself on his death-bed.

Realizing That Divine Self within oneself within one's own very life has been his overriding Goal of Life, now he feels that he has to leave his body without realizing That Goal. He has done all he could, throughout his life to achieve That Goal. Obviously, that has not been enough.

What can he do now to help himself? Following the tradition of his Times, all his life he has been worshipping his personal Devas, as visible manifestations of Parameswara. By worshipping his personal Devas he has been worshipping Parameswara.

At this time, when his current worldly life is about to end, all he can do – the best he can do - to reach his cherished Goal is to think of Parameswara through his personal Devas and pray for Divine Revelation, NOW or at least in his next life.

That is exactly what he does, namely, think of Parameswara and of Parameswara only at the last moments of his life, which is indeed the most important time in one's life.

In the next four verses, the Upanishad describes his prayerful thoughts on Parameswara at this critical time.

First addressing That Parameswara, manifested visually as Lord SUN, he says in his thoughts:

“The Face of Truth, the Truth of Brahman behind The Form of SUN is hidden by the Golden lid - by the Golden Orb of the SUN. I realize that the face of TRUTH, the Truth of Brahman behind the Form of SUN is hidden, is concealed by the Golden resplendent orb of the SUN.”

“O! Lord SUN

- Please remove, please open up, please lift up, That Golden lid, That resplendent orb of Thine so that I, The Devotee of TRUTH may see That TRUTH, That TRUTH behind thy Form.”

“I am not satisfied by appearances any more. I am no longer content with seeing Thy Golden orb. I know that there is a TRUTH hidden behind thy resplendent Form. There is the TRUE SUN, The Cosmic Spiritual Being behind the SUN and I want to see THAT BEING, and recognize and realize my kinship with THAT BEING”, says the Devotee.

The expression “Golden Container” represents all the attractive physical forms, or objects in this entire creation.

“I have been seeing the perishable beauty of this material world of beings, including the Form of the Sun all my life. Now I want to see the imperishable beauty that lies behind all

forms and names. The external beauty of thy form is only a visible expression of the spiritual beauty behind Thy True Self.

Therefore, O! Lord SUN please condescends to reveal the Truth behind Thy Form, Ty True SELF to me.”

“The pursuit of truth is my life, my religion”, so says the devotee.

Addressing the Lord Sun Again the devotee says in his thoughts:

“O! Lord SUN, the son of Prayapati  
Please remove Thy Rays,  
Please set aside your dazzling effulgence,  
So that by Your Grace I may see “That” which is your most auspicious, Most Glorious Form,

Namely:

That which is the Form of the TRUTH behind your resplendent orb;  
That which is the SELF in YOU!  
That Most Auspicious,  
That most Glorious being behind your resplendent Form,  
He, I AM!

That Auspicious Being behind your resplendent Form,  
That never changing Truth behind your ever-changing resplendent Form  
That SELF in you I AM!  
I AM THAT SELF!  
The SELF in YOU is the SELF in my-self!

That spiritual Reality in you is also the Spiritual reality in me.  
In that spiritual reality- Absolute Reality- Eternal Truth, there is no difference.  
The only difference between you and me is in our bodies.  
You are a huge shining body.  
As a human being, I am indeed a minute creature in comparison.  
But behind both of us is the same Immortal Divine SELF.”  
So thinks the Devotee.

Lets us briefly stop to reflect on this.

This knowledge of the essential oneness of the whole universe is emphasized again and again in our Upanishads. Differences in Form, Name, Size, Quantity, Function, etc. do not involve any difference in Absolute reality.  
The Universe is all differences on the surface, but unity at the depths.  
The SELF is the Absolute reality behind all beings, big and small alike.

A big wave and a small bubble of water have their basic identity, basic oneness in the ocean.

In this way the Upanishads direct us to recognize the ONE behind the many.

The devotee is not overwhelmed simply because the Sun is extraordinary in size and function and he him-self is an insignificant creature.

His Upanishadic knowledge tells him, and his penetrating vision assures him, that behind the big and small, the significant and the insignificant, there is Spiritual ONENESS.

The Forms, names, attributes, etc. are temporary limitations.

They come and go.

All our Upanishads visualize also a Supreme Being without any Form.

That is the SELF in every Being, Pure and Perfect, Birthless and Deathless, in which all are ONE and That ONE is ALL.

“He THAT ONE – I Am – I am indeed Brahman.”

Let us now continue with the Upanishad.

The devotee is now getting weaker and weaker, but only physically.

His mind and intellect are firm and steady in God-Consciousness.

As he moves closer and closer into the last moments of his life, his thoughts also move as follows:

OM- O! Lord!

As we have seen OM is the direct manifestation of Brahman in the form of sound.

Addressing THAT BRAHMAN directly in his thoughts, the devotee says:

O! Lord, now that my last moments have arrived,

Let my breath, let my Vital Air merge into the immortal, All-Pervading ATMAN

By Thy Grace, let my ATMAN merge into the All-Pervading ATMAN You ARE

And then, O! Lord, by THY Grace. Let this body be reduced to ashes.

Let this body become one with the all inclusive material cause of this entire creation. Let the ashes of this body become holy ashes, direct manifestation of Parameswara it self.

There is something here to understand with reference to the expression “Holy Ashes”.

As we have already seen, Parameswara is both the efficient cause as well as the material cause for this entire creation. It is that material cause that is indicated by the expression Holy Ashes.

Any material in this creation is the “Material Cause” when it is recognized; When that material is recognized (by knowledge) as a manifestation of Brahman Itself.

In one’s awareness, that material is a visible expression of Parameswara Itself.

When the ashes of this bodily material is recognized as “Holy Ashes” then in one’s awareness that Holy Ashes is a visible expression of Parameswara it self. Being so, such Holy Ashes is a glory of Brahman.

The significance of devotionally putting such Ashes on one’s forehead in our Temple is a visible expression of being in God-consciousness.

Such is also the significance of devotionally putting kun-kun or any other material recognized as Holy.

Devotionally putting on such material is a visible expression of one's awareness of being in God-Consciousness.

In the context here, the devotee's prayer is that when the body is reduced to ashes, they become "Holy Ashes" by the very grace of Parameswara.

Further, holding his mind firmly in God-Consciousness, allowing no distractions, the devotee gives an order to his mind:

"O! Mind, this is the time to remember all that is fit to remember,

Therefore, remember all of them!

Remember all those actions done by this body in thought, word and deed, throughout this life in pursuance of its total commitment to Knowledge and Service!"

Totality of knowledge and service to Brahman, service to the health and welfare of the entire world all of which helped you remain steadily and steadfastly in God-Consciousness at all times.

"Remember those actions, only those actions." He repeats the same order to his mind again. Repetition implies firmness. The Mind is fully under his control.

"O! Mind! This is the time for you to remember all that is fit to remember. Remember all those actions done by this body in thought, word and deed, throughout its life in pursuance of its Total commitment to knowledge and Service."

Let us briefly stop here to reflect on the significance of what one remember at the time of Death. There is never any death for the SELF of a person. Death is only for the physical body. For an ordinary person, death is the beginning of another bodily existence to continue the process of one's natural evolution. Evolution of SELF toward further spiritual Upliftment, or spiritual degradation, depending on the fruits of one's past actions.

This makes the moment of Death the most critical time in one's life. It is the moment of critical change for the person. A change for the better or worse in one's continuing evolution. This is so, because whatever a person thinks, what ever a person remembers at the time of death that is what the person will be after "Death"- so say Sri Krishna.

Let us recall these words in chapter 8 of the Bhagavad Gita:

"Remembering or thinking about whatever object, whatever Form, name, attributes etc. one departs from one's physical body at the time of death, one reaches only that object, that form, name and attributes. Whatever a person remembers, or thinks at the time of death, that alone he reaches after death because, for a long time his mind and intellect have remained conditioned and committed to that object, Form, Name, attribute, so much that his SELF remain conditioned and committed when it leaves the body."

Thus, whatever a person thinks and remembers at the time of death that is what that person will be after death.

It does not mean that I can indulge myself doing anything I want from time to time throughout my life and just think on Brahman at the time of death. So I can go to heaven or become Brahman itself after death.

No! – It does not work that way simply because it is not possible.

If one has not been thinking of Brahman most of one's life it is just impossible for one to think on Brahman at the time of death.

At the time of death one can think only of those things which have occupied most of one's cultivated life. Whatever you will be able to remember at the time of death, and whatever you can be after death, will only be in-keeping with your cumulative cultivated thought-life.

That being so, what should you do to ensure the most, the highest Upliftment for you in your next life?

-Krishna says:

“Since at the time of death one can only remember those things which have been occupying one's thought throughout one's life, therefore, at all times during your waking hours, from this very moment onwards, be thinking on ME- the Brahman just as you have understood from the teachings of the Upanishads.”

Be in such God-Consciousness. Be in such thoughts on Brahman in yourself at all times and at the same time, do whatever you have to do in pursuance of your commitment to Parameswara and to the Totality of Knowledge and service to Brahman; service to the health and welfare of the entire world.”

-So says Sri Krishna.

Now we can understand why the devotee in the ISAVASYA UPANISHAD gives to his mind that special order on the eve of his departure from his physical body.

Returning to the Upanishad, the final moment of his life has now arrived for the devotee and he departs from the body with his last prayer in his mind.

This time the prayer is addressed to Brahman manifested. The prayer is not only on his own behalf, but is also on behalf of all the devotees like him who are still struggling to gain the Fullness of being, each in oneself and Total Fulfillment in Life, each in one's own life.

In his silent prayer he says:

“O! Lord!

Please lead us to the Supreme Wealth of Atman by the direct path, by the right path, by the obstacles free path of life.”

Why is it that we are asking you to do that for us?

Because:

“O! Lord! You are the knower of the numerous ways to gain the free Path of Life Eternal. Therefore, Please remove from us all the crooked deceitful attractions of sinful thoughts, words and deeds which obstruct our vision of Brahman. And for all THY GRACE, what can we do to express our appreciation and gratitude?”

We offer our best prayers to you. We offer you the best words we can find to express the Glory of the Lord.”

How best can we express the Glory of the Lord?

These are the best Words we can find to express the Glory of the Lord:

OM!

Puurnamadah, puurnamidam

Puurnaat puurnamudacyate

Puurnasya puurnamaadaaya

Puurnamevaavashisyate

OM shaantih,shaantih,shaantih

Thus ends the Isavasya Upanishad.

## BRAHMA-VIDYA

### SANATANA DHARMA

#### The Basic Vedantic Teachings on Sanatana Dharma The Eternal Order of Existence

1. Be truthful in thought, word and deed, at all times under all circumstances of life, fully realizing that:
 

TRUTH alone wins  
 TRUTH always wins  
 TRUTH surely wins

And untruth never wins and can never win.
2. Maintain proper conduct, ethical behaviour and good moral character at all times, under all circumstances of everyday life.
3. Remain totally committed to and totally governed by, the overriding code of NON Violence, in thought, word and deed in every one of your actions in daily life.
4. Strive for excellence in all actions, doing every action totally for its own sake, in appreciation, joy and love of action itself; absolutely unconcerned, unaffected and uncontaminated by anything other than action itself.
5. Do every action as Dedication to the Best and the Highest in one's own Self, and always maintain a charitable disposition of giving and a willingness and readiness to help others in need, in whatever way one can, and also maintain a constant disposition of discipline at the body level, speech level, and the Mind and Buddhi level at all times.
6. Reject firmly at all times any and every tendency toward improper desires, and the consequent anger and greed, and assiduously cultivate the ability to overcome the destructive powers of one's own forces of likes and dislikes.
7. Continue to cultivate one ever growing level of excellence in Knowledge and Service in one's own chosen field of Objective Knowledge, throughout in one's pre-retirement years, while, at the same time, never neglecting cultivation of one's Scriptural Education appropriate to one's own maturity.
8. Understand, appreciate, realize and recognize, at all times that one's own body vehicle is only an instrument to serve the Will of The Best and The Highest in one's own Self- one's own Innermost Consciousness- and never anything more.
9. Constantly remain totally committed to the discovery of The Best and The Highest in one's own Self.

10. In addition to, whatever one may be practicing in the name of, or in lieu of Scripture Reading, one must commit one self to read also the already available Bhagavad Gita-Upanishad Scripture Readings of This Temple- all the 265 of them, at least ONE every day- in the given sequential order, throughout one's life time, because all the Basic Vedic Teachings of Sanata na Dharma, are unfolded in detail in them.

### The 1- 2- 3 of Bhagavad Gita

ONE Word -> Chapter 2 :	WAKE-UP
TWO Words -> Chapter 11:	BEING AN-INSTRUMENT
THREE Words -> Chapter 18:	DISCOVERING ONE-SELF IT-Self

This is what I call the 1- 2- 3- of Bhagavad Gita

1. WAKE-UP, Grow up, and Uplift one-self.

**(That is "Self-Upliftment")**

How does one uplift one self? ONLY by proper Being and Doing in daily life – That is what life is all about.

By "Being" what, and "Doing" what?

2. BY BEING ONLY an instrument to serve The Will of Parameswara at all times, whatever one's notions about That Parameswara from time to time. That is the Means to gaining Knowledge about one's own self.

**(That is Self-Knowledge)**

And

3. By DOING at all times whatever is left for one to do by Parameswara and so discovering Parameswara already in oneself as ONE-SELF Itself – as the all inclusive Pure Consciousness in oneself

**(That is Self-Discovery)**

Such: **Self-Upliftment-** through  
**Self-Knowledge-** by  
**Self-Discovery,**

**IS BRAHMA-VIDYA**

Thus Brahma-Vidya and Bhagavad Gita are ONE and Inseparable.

## **BRAHMA-VIDYA**

### **KAIVALYA UPANISHAD**

#### ***VOLUME 1***

We now commence our readings on a short Upanishad called KAIVALYA UPANISHAD FROM THE Atharva Veda.

KAIVALYA means absolute Oneness, the state of being THE WHOLE.

Thus it is simply another name for: The Ultimate Goal of Human existence.

Namely:

Gaining, Self Realization, Self Recognition as:

“The SELF It-self”

“As Brahman It-self”

“As Parameswara already in oneself”

As Usual, the Upanishad opens with the Peace Invocation.

We address the presiding Deities of all our organs of perception and action, and offer them a prayer in these words:

“O! Gods,

-May we hear through our ears those sounds and sanctifying words which reseal and help one to recognize The SELF I in every self, including oneself. This revelation and recognition gives one Absolute Liberation from all limitations.

-May we become qualified to listen, understand, appreciate and grasp the content of the Upanishad words.

- We, being committed to the pursuit of Upanishad knowledge, may be able to see with our eyes; may we be able to recognize Parameswara in every thing in this creation, including in our own selves, by our own eyes, by our own intellect, through these Upanishad words.

-Keeping the mind and the intellect free from restlessness and distractions of any kind, may we be able to praise, by words, the Glory of Parameswara which reveal The Nature of Parameswara Itself.

- As long as we live, may we enjoy good health, to be able to engage ourselves in actions which are in total accordance with Vedic teachings, so that we can really ‘grasp’ Upanishad Knowledge.

- May the Lord bless us to be able to gain “Exalted Happiness”

- May Lord Sun bless us with the ability to understand, appreciate and enjoy Upanishad Knowledge
- May Lord Vishnu bless us with a clear, obstruction free path in our pursuit of Upanishad Knowledge
- May The Teacher of ALL bless us with a good Teacher for the pursuit of Upanishad Knowledge

- May we enjoy freedom from all the three kind of obstructions to the study of this Upanishad  
Namely:

- freedom from unknown and un-predictable obstructions over which we have no control
- freedom from obstructions from our immediate surroundings over which we have no control
- freedom from obstructions from within ourselves, such as ill-health, restlessness of mind and so on.

That is the prayer.

Now the Upanishad begins.

Like every other Upanishad, here also a teacher and a student are involved.

The student seeks knowledge and the teacher responds. The student request and the teacher responses together constitute the Upanishad.

The first word is very meaningful:

“Then”

This means that, through proper preparation, when one has become ready for the knowledge that one is seeking, ‘then’ he may ask questions.

“Then” Ashvalayana, the student seeking knowledge, approaching respectfully and reverentially the Great teacher, said as follows.

An explanation is needed here.

In the Vedantic Literature, Ashvalayana is well known as a great teacher of Rig Veda. Even today many who belong to the tradition of Rig Veda follow the Vedic Rituals formulated by Rishi Ashvalayana. Before he became a great teacher himself, Ashvalayana is said to have received education from the Creator Him Self, who is referred here as the Great Teacher. On the other hand, in our context here, Ashvalayana, could be any well qualified student seeking knowledge from any distinguished teacher. Therefore, let us understand that Ashvalayana, a well qualified student, approached a distinguished teacher and said as follows:

“O! Lord, O! Respected Teacher, please teach me (bring into my intellect) What?

“Please, teach me Brahma Vidya.”

It is here that the initial word “Then” becomes meaningful. The student knows exactly what he wants from the teacher because of his precious preparation, discipline and readiness for the knowledge he seeks.

Why does he want this knowledge?

Because, Brahma Vidya is the most exalted among all forms of knowledge, since it is about the highest purpose of human existence and it is about the Absolute Reality behind all forms and names of transient reality.

What exactly he wants to know about Brahma Vidya?

He wants to know that knowledge which is constantly being sought by all people who are blessed with the predominance of being the devotees of Parameswara.

The only thing those people constantly seek is Total Union with Parameswara Itself; nothing else and nothing less.

That destination they seek appears deeply hidden somewhere beyond reach of one's sense organs. Therefore, the student seeks the help of the teacher to give him That Knowledge.

- By which knowledge, quickly, naturally and spontaneously,
- Totally exhausting, totally eliminating all deeds, all karma of past actions obstructing the realization of That Knowledge.
- The one who is blessed with That Knowledge reaches That Parameswara Itself.

Thus Ashvalayana requests his Teacher to teach him that Knowledge by which he can quickly overcome all obstacles to the realization of That Knowledge and reach That Parameswara, Quickly, naturally and spontaneously.

There are two words that we must understand clearly.

The first means: "quickly, naturally and spontaneously with no time lag in between." Usually, it always takes time and effort to create the conditions necessary for gaining any knowledge. But, when the conditions are proper, the knowledge itself takes place naturally and spontaneously.

When the object of knowledge, and the means of gaining that knowledge are properly aligned, knowledge itself always takes place spontaneously, independent of one's will.

For example, if an object is in front of my eyes and if my mind and eyes are properly aligned toward that object, I see the object as it is, naturally and spontaneously, whether I want to see it or not.

The situation is different with respect to any action.

This is because 'action' is centered on the will of the person. One may will to do the action or not to do the action, or do it in a different way.

In each case the result is different.

Now, let clarify the expressions: "Manifest" and "Unmanifest".

For example, a huge tree can come from a tiny seed, but one cannot see the tree in the seed. Therefore, with respect to the tree, which is manifest, the seed is - unmanifest.

But each seed is unmanifest only with respect to a particular tree. There are countless trees and hence countless seeds, which means, there are countless ?'s - countless

unmanifest beings. If there is ONE unmanifest ??, which includes all seeds in ONE, all

the countless ?'s and ???s in ONE, That all-inclusive ONE ?? unmanifest is Parameswara.

The Parameswara which includes both - ?? and ???,- manifest and unmanifest, and at the same time transcends both.

That, The Parameswara, The Absolute Reality of all that exist.

Here Ashvalayana is asking his teacher to teach him how to reach

- That Unmanifest, All-inclusive Absolute Reality - naturally and spontaneously.

The teacher responds by saying:

- The Great Teacher -

Gladly accepting Asvalayana as a student, said to him as follows:

“The Knowledge you are seeking is something that you have to learn to know, you have to learn to discover, by yourself, in yourself, through Absolute Faith in yourself, Absolute Faith in the Knowledge that you seek, and Absolute Faith in your ability to gain That Knowledge and reach your Destination.”

Knowledge rooted in Upanishad Knowledge together with the attitude of constant meditation and contemplation on That Absolute Reality.

As Sri Krishna says: “Be in Parameswara-consciousness at all times.”

Thus, through such Absolute Faith all together, you have to learn to discover That Absolute Reality by yourself, in yourself.

Further, you must know:

These two verses are very well known in Vedanta. They are often used to welcome people with scholarship and maturity in Upanishad Knowledge. In the context here, the Teacher says:

The Destination that you want to reach, namely The Abode of That Absolute Reality,

- The state of Immortality, The state of Total Freedom from any change, time and death.

- That state of Immortality is gained, is reached:

- not by doing any action

- not by the services of other people,

- nor by any kind of material wealth.

But it is gained

- only by an attitude of renunciation, by giving up identifications with one's body, mind and intellect, and ideas and actions and their results, and seeking only the grace of Parameswara to reach Parameswara Itself.

- As Sri Krishna says:

“Thus, only the attitude of total identification with Absolute Reality through dedication, study, renunciation, can one reach That State of Immortality.”

What is That state of Immortality?

- It is That state which is far higher than all the heavenly joys.
- It is The State of - Eternal Infinite Bliss.

Where is That State?

- That state of Immortality lies hidden in the cave of one's own heart, in the region of one's inner Self, not accessible to one's recognition because of internal obstructions.

- That which shines in your heart as "Pure I", "The Self I", without any attributes, like body, mind, etc., is indeed That Absolute Reality- The- Parameswara, which is what you want to reach, and which is what you have to learn to recognize, in yourself, by yourself

The Enlightened Ones, the Rishis, striving through dedication are the ones who reach and enter into That state of Eternal Immortal Bliss.

Now, who are those Rishis - The Enlightened Ones? How did they become Rishis?

Those Enlightened Ones are: those who have well ascertained, doubt-free, Vedantic Knowledge, gained through their exclusive pursuit of Knowledge by virtue of their Faith and renunciation, with their mind and actions purified by their way of life.

- Those Enlightened Ones already being ONE with The Self of All; which means, having already gained in this life itself, having already reached The Abode of Absolute Reality, already in themselves.

- at the time of the natural death of their body vehicles,  
because of their already gained State of Immortality,

- they are totally liberated from all their deeds,

- they already begun in their present life and their accumulated, not yet fructified past Karma which means, all their lingering impressions, having disappeared, they are free from any rebirth. They are Immortal.

They have already become ONE with Parameswara forever.

Thus, the Teacher tells Ashvalayana:

“The Knowledge that you are seeking is something that you have to learn to gain through renunciation and Knowledge, all in ONE. That which shines in your heart as "I", The Pure I, independent of your body, mind, intellect and other limitations, That Pure I is indeed That Parameswara, The Unmanifest, All-inclusive SELF, which you are seeking, and which you have to learn to recognize by your own self through study and meditation and contemplation on That SELF Itself.”

So saying, the Teacher then proceeds to describe how to get started in such endeavour, which we will see next time.

Kaivalya Upanishad  
**Volume 2**

As we saw last time, Ashvalayana, a qualified and interested student, approached a distinguished teacher, in the proper manner, with this request:

- Please teach me That Exalted Knowledge by which one can quickly overcome all obstacles to the realization of That Knowledge and reach The Absolute Reality- naturally and spontaneously. The Teacher responds by saying:

The Knowledge that you are seeking is something that you have to learn to discover by yourself, in yourself, through renunciation, learning and dedication, all together in full measure.

Having said that, the Teacher now proceeds to describe how to get started in such Endeavour.

The Teacher says:

This is a short exposition on - meditation and contemplation on SELF.

The teacher first describes how to get started in meditation, and then tells what is to be meditated upon.

The one who meditates upon That - The Unmanifest, All-inclusive SELF, is

- one who can steadily concentrate and reflect, and hence fit to meditate and contemplate on THE UNMANIFEST.

Even as the teacher is describing a successful meditator, simultaneously, Ashvalayana is engaging himself in such meditation and contemplation.

Describing the process of successful meditation, the teacher tells Ashvalayana:

- In a quiet place, at a quiet time, with a quiet mind and with a mind and heart free from agitations of any kind

- as the meditator, you should be seated comfortably, with good posture, so that you do not feel disturbed, and you do not have to change positions during meditation,

- you should be clean, both inside and outside

It is relatively easy to be clean outside - take bath, wear clean clothes, and choose clean surroundings; that is having outside cleanliness. Having inside cleanliness is not that easy. It is usually achieved through some kind of prayer, or ritual, prior to meditation, to invoke an atmosphere of auspiciousness in the mind and heart.

Inside cleanliness is also a matter of daily life. Make sure that your daily life is proper, so that you can sit and meditate. If the daily life is not proper, no matter what you do, you cannot meditate on The UNMANIFEST.

Therefore:

- In a quiet and clean place, at a quiet time, with a quiet mind and heart, seated comfortably and invoking an atmosphere of auspiciousness in the mind and heart, the meditator is getting ready to begin meditation on SELF.

In further preparation for such meditation,

- sit erect with the neck, head and trunk in one straight line.

for the period of meditation.

This is the stage of absolute retirement from all worldly involvements.

At this stage of life, one naturally frees oneself from playing any role in society. One is just oneself, and nothing more. One does whatever happens to be one's duty, but one has no identification with any role, any relationship, any possession, etc. One spends one's time entirely in meditation and contemplation on Absolute Reality, The SELF in oneself and in every self, even while being actively engaged in one's daily business of life. Such meditation and contemplation will be possible only if the preparation for this stage of life starts very early in life, even in the very first stage in life, itself.

The teacher says here: "For the period of meditation, even if it is only for a very few minutes, you should completely detach yourself from all worldly roles, relationships and possessions.

- Withdrawing all your organs of perception and action, including mind and intellect, from all sense objects
- clearly understanding that one's own Teacher is really only Parameswara Itself, already in oneself. Therefore, do meditate with the attitude of total surrender to Parameswara.

All that has been said so far is preparation for meditation.  
Now, start to Meditate

Meditate upon That Unmanifest Lotus flower in full bloom that already exists deep within yourself.

In Vedic language, this expression indicates heart and head - emotion and intellect all together.

The Lotus Flower in full bloom, indicating The Pure Consciousness because of which alone one is conscious of anything and everything, including nothing.

For example, you are conscious of many things while you are awake.

In deep sleep, you are still conscious, but you are conscious of nothing.

That innermost unmanifest Conscious Being, The Atman, which is the center of all centers of perception, feelings, emotions, thoughts, etc. Thus meditate upon That Pure Unmanifest Conscious Being, deep within yourself.

Can one really meditate upon something which is unmanifest?

Yes, one can.

How? By using Knowledge and through pointers to That Knowledge.

Here is a simple example. Consider a perfect circle. It has a real center, because there can be no circle without a center - it is a matter of knowledge. Now where is the center of the circle? The center is a point, with no dimensions, and hence unmanifest. Then how do you locate the center? All radius lines drawn from any location on the circumference of the circle meet at the same ONE center. These radius lines are the arrow marks pointing to the same ONE center. This is also a matter of knowledge. Now, in order to indicate the location of the center, one may put a pencil mark, a dot, where all the radius lines appear to meet.

Is that dot the center of the circle? No, because even the dot has dimensions. One may mark the center of the first dot by a second dot, the center of the second dot by a third dot and so on, until finally, at the center of all center-dots, the dot vanishes, leaving

only the dotless reality of the Unmanifest center of the circle. That center of all centers is indicated here by the word Atman which is the innermost unmanifest center.

One's intellect can recognize the reality of That innermost center by virtue of one's knowledge about the circle and radius lines. Further, all radius lines being arrows pointing to the same ONE Reality of the center of the circle, there can be any number of such arrow pointers, each being different from the other, and many pairs being diametrically opposite to each other, but still pointing to the same ONE Unmanifest Reality.

The mode of recognition of That Unmanifest Atman, The Pure Self I, is similar, but far more comprehensive. By the knowledge of the SELF gained from Atman, and with the help of many different Upanishad pointers to that SELF one recognizes Atman as The Pure Consciousness in oneself, and in every self, by one's Knowledge.

The teacher now proceeds to give several such pointers to help Ashvalayana, the meditator, to recognize That innermost objectless Pure Consciousness within oneself.

That Pure Consciousness is

- untainted by the agitations of the mind and disturbances of the intellect
- It is absolutely Pure, Being The Whole, ONE without a second.
- It has nothing other than Itself, and hence It is absolutely Pure
- It is absolutely clear, being ONE which illuminates everything else
- It is absolutely free from any sorrow or grief, being independent of one's mind and intellect.

Further:

- It is not an object of thought.
- It is beyond the reach of thoughts
- It is not an object recognizable by senses
- Its form is endless and unlimited, being in everything and everywhere at all times in Unmanifest state.

Further:

- It is ever-auspicious, Absolute Happiness
- It is Absolute Peace, being ever-quiet, alert and vigilant
- It is ever-Immortal, never subject to change, never subject to time
- It is the very womb of the Creator, meaning, It is the cause for this entire creation

- Similarly:

- It is without any beginning, middle or end, being infinite in all dimensions
- It is ONE without a second.
- It is complete, The all-inclusive Whole, The Total of ALL
- It is all-pervading. It is everywhere, in everything.
- It is Total Awareness, Pure Consciousness, The Pure SELF I, whose very nature is Absolute Bliss
- It is Formless, Limitless
- It is Wonder beyond all description
- It is also The manifest and Unmanifest together

- It is also The Ever Peaceful, Ever Auspicious Lord Siva, whom we worship in the name and form as Trilochana and Neelakanta
- So meditating upon That Innermost Consciousness, the meditator goes to, reaches the cause of all beings, The SELF Itself, which is The Ever-present Witness of everything, and which is beyond both darkness and light.

As Pure Awareness, you are beyond darkness and light, being aware of both. That Pure Awareness, The Innermost Self I in yourself is indeed That Parameswara you seek.

Further:

Pointing to That Pure Consciousness, The Pure Awareness, The Pure Self I in oneself, the Teacher says:

- That is Brahma, The Creator
- That is Lord Shiva in Whom ultimately everything gets resolved
- That is Lord Indra Whom we worship in all rituals
- That is The Changeless Eternal Truth
- That is The Supreme Absolute Reality
- That is Infinite Consciousness that functions in every Being.
- That It is the Self-luminous
- That is The All-pervading
- That is life in every living Being
- That is Time
- That is Agni - The Fire
- That is The Moon.

In other words, That is Everything.

Further:

- That Transcendental Consciousness alone is all that was in the past, and all that will ever be in the future
- That is Eternal
  - The person who comes to recognize and reach That Consciousness,
  - Who becomes ONE with That Consciousness and who comes to recognize everything in the plane of Infinite Consciousness, that person crosses death.
  - That person becomes Immortal.
  - There is no other way for Total Liberation.
  - Recognition of The Great Self I in oneself, transcending all that is transient in this body, is the only way to gain the state of Immortality, Total Liberation.
- Again, clearly seeing, recognizing ONESELF in all beings, and all beings in ONESELF one goes, one reaches That Limitless SELF of All.
  - Not by any other means.

Only by recognizing the same Pure Consciousness, The Pure Self I in every being, can one see ONESELF in all beings, and all beings in ONESELF. Such recognition is possible only by one's meditation, by the Knowledge of Atman as SELF.

The various Upanishad pointers to That SELF as indicated in the process of meditation described above.

Listening to, and totally following the content of all these teachings, Ashvalayana is still in deep meditation. The teaching continues, which we will see next time.

## **BRAHMA-VIDYA**

Kaivalya Upanishad

### ***Volume 3***

Simultaneously following, in all details, the instructions of the teacher, Ashvalayana is still in the process of meditation and contemplation on SELF – The Parameswara. “The SELF.” The Pure Consciousness already in oneself.

But his mind and intellect have not yet reached That SELF, because of his own internal obstacles in the form of still lingering worldly bondages of many kinds.

The teacher recognizes this difficulty.

In order to help the student to gain total freedom from all such worldly bondages, the teacher now leads the student further in the process of contemplation on Atman, using a familiar Vedic ritual, to illustrate the process.

This ritual is called "Churning out the Fire of Wisdom in one's mind"

In the Vedic age, every time people perform a Havan ? ? , they freshly create the fire to light up the fuel pile in the Havan kund. The process of creating this fire is itself a very significant ritual, and the process is also simple. Sparks of fire are generated by the friction caused by rubbing two small blocks of wood. That fire is caught by a piece of cotton, which is then transferred into the fuel pile in the Havan kund. The process of generating the initial sparks of fire is the ritual here. This is how they do.

Two small flat circular blocks of wood are held, one above the other, with the flat

surfaces in contact. Each block of wood is called Arani. Thus there is a lower Arani and there is an upper Arani. Each block of wood has a hole scooped at the center, to accommodate a perpendicular wooden rod, which is firmly fixed into the hole of the lower Arani. The rod snugly passes through the hole of the upper Arani. A length of rope is wound, a few times, around the rod. One Vedic student, firmly holds the upper Arani by his hand, and another Vedic student rotates the lower Arani and rubs the upper Arani by pulling the rope around the rod, back and forth, exactly like what we do in churning butter in a milk pot. Both the vedic students chant the mantra OM, OM, OM repeatedly as the rod turns back and forth during this churning process. Out of this churning process arise sparks of fire which are recognized as The Sacred Fire of Wisdom. That is the Vedic ritual. Calling attention to this Vedic ritual, the teacher says:

Let us understand this - there is no ritual or Havan involved here. What is involved is only meditation and contemplation on SELF, using one's faculty of understanding and discrimination, and one's Vedic Knowledge on the content of the OM mantra. Mantra means word of knowledge and power. Uplifting Ashvalayana in his meditation process, the teacher says: Reset your mind. How?

Make your mind with all its notions about yourself as the Lower Arani, and make your knowledge about gained from Vedic education as the upper Arani

From your Vedic Knowledge, you already know that OM is The Pure Self I, the Pure Consciousness, That Parameswara, the Absolute reality. Let That Knowledge on the content of the OM mantra be the Upper Arani. Now, contemplate on that OM Knowledge. How?

- By repeated practice of churning of That Knowledge on OM by your ATMAN . This is how you do that. All your bondages constitute the rope for the churning process. By pulling the rope back and forth, which means, by repeatedly uttering the mantra Om, Om, Om, contact your SELF I back and forth repeatedly on the content of your knowledge on OM mantra. That is the process of contemplation. By the repeated practice of such contemplation, sparks of the fire of wisdom will arise, and they will progressively burn the entire rope, which means, all bondages with past deeds and actions will ultimately disappear naturally. That is how a wise person burns up all bondages with making the Atman totally free to reach Parameswara naturally and spontaneously. While the above illustration itself appears clear, some difficulty may be experienced in the practical process of the required contemplation, because:

all bondages are only in one's mind  
all Upanishad knowledge on OM mantra is also in one's mind; and  
the fire of wisdom also has to take place in the same mind.

When that is the case, what process of contemplation on Arani can churn the mind in That OM Knowledge, to bring about the required freedom and wisdom to the Atman?

Anticipating this question, the teacher now unfolds, in the next few verses, an appropriate process of contemplation, through an analysis of

the three fields of experience of an individual Jiva in the waking, dreaming and deep sleep states of existence. A clear understanding and appreciation of this analysis can churn out the required fire of wisdom. Therefore, focussing the SELF I in the 3-fold experiences in one's own daily life, in terms of the Upanishad Knowledge on OM is the theme of contemplation here. Describing the SELF in the waking state of existence, the teacher says:

The Self I, The Pure Infinite consciousness manifesting Itself through the subtle body as an individual person with a deluded mind and completely overpowered by the left-over impressions of one's past actions, both in this life and previous lives, that Atman, the individual person, identifying oneself with the body-mind-intellect complex with all its attributes, performs all actions, all good actions and bad actions; and That same Jiva, the individual person, in the waking state of existence, as a waker, seeks to gain supreme satisfaction in life. How?

- By going after endless varieties of transient pleasures of various kinds, foods, drinks, etc.

Further:

- In the dreaming state of existence, the very same individual person who was a waker before, and who is now a dreamer,
  - becomes the experienter of joy and sorrow in the dream world, created by one's own - residual effects of one's past actions - thoughts, words and deeds.

The difference between the waking state of existence and the dreaming state of existence must be clearly understood. The world one experiences in the waking state of existence is a manifestation of the totality of all residual effect of all past actions in this creation (which means that any action by any one, anywhere, at any time, leaves a continuing effect on every one in this creation) whereas the world one experiences in the dreaming state of existence is a manifestation of the residual effects of action of that particular Atman only. That is the difference.

Again, the same Atman, the same individual person

- in the dreamless, deep-sleep state of existence, as the sleeper
- when all experiences dissolve into the consciousness of total absence of everything

(We must understand that absence of a thing is also an object of consciousness. When I say "I see nothing", I am conscious of the absence of the thing. Thus, the characteristic of the deep sleep state is the consciousness of total absence of everything –)

- being overpowered by the state of simple ignorance
- the Jiva enjoys a kind of happiness in deep sleep, even though the person is blissfully unaware of that happiness while sleeping.

The Jiva went to sleep because its body required rest. After a good sleep, the person automatically wakes up again. Why? If the person enjoys sleeping, why does The Jiva wake up? Because it cannot sleep any more. It has actions to do. It came into the world only for the purpose of doing actions to exhaust all its lingering impressions of past actions.

Therefore,

Again, the very same individual person who was earlier the waker, then the dreamer, and then the sleeper, That very same Jiva because of its connection to actions arising from past lives, he wakes up automatically, and that waking also is  
 - another kind of dream, because the Jiva is not waking up to Absolute Reality, but it is waking up to this outer world of transient reality, which is only a manifestation of the totality of the impressions of all actions in this creation.

Let us understand this clearly: The Upanishad is telling here something very significant. Even when we are awake, as we think that we are right now, we are not really awake, because we are not awake to Absolute Reality. Our waking state is only another kind of dreaming state, where we continue to be ignorant about the true nature of ourselves.

The Upanishad continues:

- That Pure Conscious Being, which is in every Jiva,  
 That Pure Consciousness, The SELF I, in whose presence alone the Jiva plays the role of waker, dreamer, and sleeper in the three states of existence, namely the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state respectively  
 It is from That Pure Consciousness alone, from The Pure Self I alone, that all these amazingly varied beings, in different forms and names in this creation are born, which means that there is nothing in this creation which is independent of That SELF I.

Ashvalayana is already in deep meditation, intently listening to and absorbing the content of every word of the teacher. By the above analytical description of the three states of existence of an individual person, what the teacher tells Ashvalayana is the following.

The teacher says:

Recognize yourself, as you are: The waker, the dreamer and the sleeper are simply different roles played by the Jiva in the three states of existence. Please understand this. The waker is not in the dream state of experience, or in the deep-sleep state of experience. Again, the dreamer is not in the waking state of experience, or in the deep sleep state of experience; and likewise the sleeper is not in the waking state of experience, or the dreaming state of experience, but you are in all the three states of experience, which means The waker is you, but you are not the waker. The dreamer is you, but you are not the dreamer. The sleeper is you, but you are not the sleeper.  
 Who are you, then?

You are That ONE invariable conscious Being in all the three of them.

While the waker, the dreamer and the sleeper are dependent on your existence, YOU exist in all of them, independent of all of them.

As the waker, you are conscious of all the experiences in the waking state.

As the dreamer, you are conscious of all the experiences in the dreaming state.

And as the sleeper, you are conscious of the absence of every experience in the deep-sleep state.

That Pure Consciousness in you is common in all the three fields of experience, in all the three states of existence.

As Pure Consciousness, you are in every thought, in every perception, and in every kind of cognition, and you are also in all in-between thoughts where there is no thought, in all in-between perceptions where there is no perception, and in all in-between cognitions of any kind where there is no cognition of any kind.

That unchanging, continuous, unbroken Pure Consciousness You are. Therefore, That which is indicated by the content of mantra, You are. You are That ever-existent Absolute Reality. You are indeed You are the basis of all existence, limitless and undivided Infinite Pure Consciousness, in which all the three fields of experience, all the three states of existence resolve themselves into ONE. That you are. Now recognize That as Yourself.

It is from That Pure Consciousness alone, from That Parameswara alone, the SELF, that the mind and all organs of perception and action, the five great elements which sustain this entire universe, all of them are born.

That which is The Limitless SELF

- That which is The Pure Self I of all beings, That which is the Truth of every one and everything in this creation
- That which is the Abode of this Great Universe, and at the same time
- That which is more subtle than the most subtle one can think of
- That which is eternal existence, unbound by time
- That you are, certainly so
- You are indeed That

Thus the teacher effectively points out the identity of Pure SELF and that the true nature of every individual person is Brahman Itself.

The teacher concludes his teaching by saying

- That REALITY which illuminates the waking world, the dream world and the deep-sleep world, and also all the infinitely mixed worlds of existence and experience
- realizing That Reality as The Absolute Reality of The Self I in oneself, recognizing "I am That Reality" one is totally released from all bondages.
  - One gains total freedom from all bondages.

Here ends the teaching

Even as the teacher has been unfolding This Truth, Ashvalayana, who is already in deep meditation, finds himself totally released from all bondages, and recognizes his identity with SELF Itself.

That is the process of contemplation called "churning out the fire of wisdom."

The wisdom is direct and immediate recognition of oneself as the SELF.

The result is total release from all bondages. Such release is indeed gaining liberation becoming ONE with Parameswara Itself.

Thus Ashvalayana has now gained liberation, and has now become ONE with Parameswara Itself.

We will be completing this Upanishad next time.

By doing so, we will also be completing this entire second cycle of our Vedic scripture readings next time.

## **BRAHMA-VIDYA**

Kaivalya Upanishad

### ***Volume 4***

As we saw last time, having absorbed the entire content of the words of his teacher, Ashvalayana finds himself naturally and spontaneously released from all bondages, and he recognizes himself as The SELF. I am indeed The SELF Itself. Having gained That Wisdom, he now contemplates within himself on his extraordinary Self-discovery as a Self-recognized Jiva, as The Pure continuous, undivided, ever-existent, Unchanging – Conscious - Being. This is how he now recognizes Himself:

- I am That objectless infinite unchanging conscious Being, which illuminates all objects of awareness everywhere.

- I am That Pure Consciousness Itself.

- I am, at all times, The Ever-auspicious, Absolute Happiness, Absolute Fullness, Absolute Reality behind this entire creation.

- In all the three states of existence and experience, namely the waking, the dreaming and the deep-sleep states, and also in all the three in-between states of existence and experience,

- whatever is, or whatever can be the kind of experience

- whatever is, or whatever can be, the role played by the experiencer

- whatever is, or whatever can be the object of experience in all of them

- I remain as That Pure Infinite, Unchanging Consciousness Itself.

At the same time:

- I, as That Pure Consciousness, AM uniquely distinct from, and totally independent of all kinds of experiences, all kind of experiencer, and all kinds of objects of experience.

- I, as Pure Consciousness Itself, transcend all of them

- as That Pure Conscious Being, I am The Ever-present Witness in all states of existence, for all forms of experience.

Further

- This entire creation is born of ME, The Pure Infinite Consciousness alone
- This entire creation and everything in it, have their being in ME, The Pure Infinite Consciousness, I AM
- This entire creation and everything in it ultimately resolve into ME, The Pure Infinite Consciousness that I AM
- I AM That SELF which is ONE without a second, ONE which is all-inclusive, all-pervasive. I am ALL in ONE.

Further:

- That which is smaller than the smallest particle of matter one can think of,
- That is what I AM . At the same time
- I am without qualification, which means I am bigger than the biggest one can think of,
- I am smaller than the smallest, and at the same time, bigger than the biggest that one can think of, which means that I have no dimensions.

Again

- This entire amazingly variegated Universe That is what I am.

Further:

- I am ancient at all times. I am Eternal. There is no date of birth for me, I am unborn.
- I am That Whole, All-inclusive, All-pervasive, Undivided and Indivisible Being.
- I am The Lord of everything. I am Brahman Itself
- I am The Totality of All-knowledge
- I am the very manifestation of Lord Shiva, Ever-auspicious, Absolute Happiness,
- The Absolute Reality behind all existence, That is what I AM.

Further:

- All these hands, legs, eyes, ears, mind, intellect, etc., they all belong to this body.
- I am not the body.
- I am That Pure objectless Infinite Unchanging Consciousness.

Being so, without hands and legs, I am Limitless Power beyond comprehension  
Without eyes I, as Pure Consciousness, see all that is to see, and without ears, I hear all that is to hear

- I am Formless, but, as Pure Consciousness, I illuminate all the varieties of forms in this creation. I am the Knower of all forms in this creation. I am the Knower of all forms in all details, but there is no one who knows Me, My true nature.
- I am not an object of knowledge for any one
- at all times, I remain as the Pure Objectless, All-pervasive, manifest and unmanifest Consciousness Itself.

Further:

By the study of all the Vedas and the Upanishads, I alone am the ONE to be known, understood, appreciated and recognized.

All the mantras mentioned in the Vedas and all the rituals described in the Vedas are all meant to gain knowledge about Myself only.

Not only that,

- I am the author of all the Vedas and the Upanishads.
- I am the ONE who is the initiator of the tradition of teaching the meaning of the Vedas and the Upanishads, which means, I am Sri Narayana, the author and The Original Teacher of all The Vedas and the Upanishads
- naturally, I am The ONE who knows the meaning of all the Vedas and the Upanishads. The ONE who gains the Knowledge of the Vedas and the Upanishads is also Myself, because, as the Upanishad says:

The Knower of The SELF becomes The SELF, is The SELF Itself.

- To ME, there is neither birth nor death.
- There is no death or destruction for ME. I am Immortal.
- There is no birth, body, organs of perception and action, mind, intellect, etc. for ME.
- I have no body vehicle.
- I am The Pure Conscious Being, The Pure Consciousness Itself.

Further

The five great elements Earth, Water, Fire , Air and Space

- all of them are the constituents of the subtle and gross body.
- I am not any of them. I am not the subtle body, or the gross body.
- I am The Pure Infinite Consciousness, The Universal SELF.

For ME,

- There is no earth independent of Me
- There is no water independent of Me
- There is no fire independent of Me
- There is no air independent of Me
- Also, there is no space independent of Me

All these five great elements have their being in ME, and I exist independent of all of them.

- As the Universal SELF, The Pure Infinite Consciousness, there exists only ONE SELF, and That is The SELF "I".

Thus recognizing the, the true nature of ONESELF, through one's faculty of understanding and discrimination,

And recognizing That SELF as ONE undivided and indivisible

- All-inclusive, All-pervasive ONE without a second,
- That which is the witness of every event and every experience in all states of existence
- That which neither "Is nor Is NOT", which means: That which is not the object of one's knowledge as "something is" or "something is not".
- That which is neither gross body nor subtle body
- That which ever remains Pure, Uncontaminated and Uncontaminable

Thus recognizing the true nature of ONESELF as Pure Reality,  
one reaches ONESELF, The Parameswara.

Thus knowing the true nature of ONESELF, one reaches ONESELF, one gains Self-  
realization and Self- recognition.  
That is how Ashvalayana recognizes himself now, as a SELF-realized, SELF-recognized  
Pure SELF, The Parameswara.

Here ends Ashvalayana contemplation on Himself, on his discovery of The SELF "I" in  
himself, by himself, as Himself.

Thus ends The Kaivalya Upanishad and our own contemplation on the entire Upanishad  
Knowledge.

This completes this second cycle of Vedic scripture readings at  
This Temple

## Brahma Vidya

### Taittiriya Upanishad

- *Last Section of the First Chapter of Taittiriya Upanishad*

“OM”! “O Lord, please lead me through the right path in life, so that I can reach you and become ONE with you.”

That is what “OM” is, both a mantra both for meditation, and recognition of the glory of Parameswara as Itself “OM”. IT is also a mantra for repeated and continuous meditation.

We must understand that mind is the cause for all positive and negative achievements in life. Mind is also the cause for all notions of bondage and liberation. That mind, as it is, is usually restless. It has to be brought under control, then projected and propelled towards Parameswara, already in oneself, to ultimately gain Liberation. To bring that mind under such control, requires effort in the form of practice and conscious release from all obstructive thoughts, words and deeds.

By the “OM” and by dwelling on the content of the mantra, the mind begins to realize the futility of the other kinds of efforts in life for gaining absolute happiness - total fulfillment. Thus “OM” is an effective mantra.

Through mantra and meditation, the mind gets released from ego power, and gets absorbed in total surrender to Parameswara.

Renounce all ego power, renounce all notions of doership. Surrender to me totally. Get absorbed in Truth and do whatever has been left for you to do, with Truth and Dharma.

“I will uplift you from all your obstructions to Liberation.”

So assures Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita (G. 18-66).

Thus “OM” is Liberating mantra.

When union takes place, the river of the Jiva reaches its destination and joins the ocean of Brahman. The Jiva and Brahman become ONE at this junction.

Such a junction is called “delta”. That is why, in our culture, every place wherever a river joins the ocean, is a sacred place, because it indicates the union of Jiva and Brahman; where the pointer “OM” and the pointer Atman have both reached their common destination. At this destination, “OM” and Atman have become ONE.

When the river joins the ocean, the river discovers the ocean.

Similarly, when Jiva discovers Brahman, what does it discover?

Narayana is in everything, is everything.

Thus Narayana is the all-pervading, which means:

Whatever there is in this universe, whatever I see, whatever I hear, whatever I perceive through my sense organs, inside and outside, all that is only Narayana.

By the power of Parameswara, by the grace of Parameswara I discover Parameswara as Narayana everywhere.

Thus "OM" is Narayana mantra - the divine power which leads to clarity of vision of Parameswara as Narayana. When that clarity of vision occurs, I no longer entertain any individual identity of my own. I have no "my" notion any more. From that moment onwards

Whatever I do, by any means, is all Divine

All action is dedicated to Parameswara; which means every action I do is only oblation for Parameswara

There is nothing "mine" any more.

Everything is ONE with Parameswara. Everything is indeed Divine.

Therefore, let us understand and appreciate "OM"

The "OM" mantra is an Upanishad in Itself. It is the essence of the entire Veda.

It is with That "OM" mantra the Taittiriya Upanishad opens.

## Conclusion

*The goal which all the Vedas declare, which all austerities aim at, and which men desire when they lead the life of continence, I will tell you briefly: it is OM. This syllable OM is indeed Brahman. This syllable is the Highest. Whosoever knows this syllable obtains all that he desires. This is the best support; this is the highest support. Whosoever knows this support is adored in the world of Brahma.*

**-- Katha Upanishad I, ii, 15-17 <sup>1</sup>**

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*The sound OM is Brahman. The Rishis and sages practiced austerity to realize that Sound-Brahman. After attaining perfection one hears the sound of this eternal Word rising spontaneously from the navel. "What will you gain", some sages ask, 'by merely hearing this sound?' You hear the roar of the ocean from a distance. By following the roar you can reach the ocean. As long as there is the roar, there must also be the ocean. By following the trail of OM you attain Brahman, of which the Word is the symbol. That Brahman has been described by the Vedas as the ultimate goal."*

**-- The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna**

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*(To Mahima) "You explain 'Aum' with reference to 'a', 'u', and 'm' only."  
 Mahima: "'A', 'u', and 'm' mean creation, preservation, and destruction."  
 Master: "But I give the illustration of the sound of a gong: 'tom', t-o-m. It is the merging of the Lila in the Nitya: the gross, the subtle, and the causal merge in the Great Cause; waking, dream, and deep sleep merge in Turiya. The striking of the gong is like the falling of a heavy weight into a big ocean. Waves begin to rise: the Relative rises from the Absolute; the causal, subtle, and gross bodies appear out of the Great Cause; from Turiya emerge the states of deep sleep, dream, and waking. These waves arising from the Great Ocean merge again in the Great Ocean. From the Absolute to the Relative, and from the Relative to the Absolute. Therefore I give the illustration of the gong's sound, 'tom'. I have clearly perceived all these things. It has been revealed to me that there exists an Ocean of Consciousness without limit. From It come all things of the relative plane, and in It they merge again."*

**-- The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna**

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*"The sandhya merges in the Gayatri, the Gayatri in Om, and Om in samadhi. It is like the sound of a bell: t-a-m. The yogi, by following in the trail of the sound Om, gradually merges himself in the Supreme Brahman."*

**-The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna**