

## CHANDOGYA UPANISHAD

**T**his Upanishad is incorporated in the Sama Veda. It has eight sections, the first five dealing with various Upasanas or Forms of approaching the Ideal and the last three explaining the manner of acquisition of true Knowledge. Purity of the Consciousness is the essential prerequisite for Upasana. Single-minded concentration is essential for Knowledge of Brahman. These can be got by Karma and Upasana. Thus is Brahma Jnana won. That is the reason why in the Sastras, Karma is first described and Upasana next and Jnanam last.

In the First Chapter of the Chandogya, the Upasanas which form part of the Sama Veda are detailed. In the Second, the entire ritual of Sama is described. In the Third, the Upasana of Surya known as Madhuvidya, the Gayatri Upasana, and the Sandilya Vidya are all given. In

the Fourth, the Samvarga Vidya, and the sixteen-phased Brahma Vidya are taught. In the Fifth, the three Vidyas, Prana, *Panchagni* and *Vaiswanara* are elaborated.

Uddalaka taught his son, Swethakethu, the knowledge which if known, all things can be known. The knowledge of mud and of gold will give the knowledge of all pots and pans, as well as of all bracelets and necklaces. The mud and the gold are the truth. Their modifications and transformations are temporary, mere name-forms. So too, the world, like the pot and the bracelet, is just an effect, the cause being “Sath.” Sath means “Is-ness” is common to all objects; the pot “is”, the “bracelet” “is”. “Is-ness” becomes manifest through association with the pots and pans, the bracelets and necklaces. The “is-ness” may not be apparent to gross intelligences, for, it needs subtlety to realise it. The rosy colour which is manifested in the rose “is,” even in the absence of the flower.

Similarly, the “is-ness” that is the Universal character of all objects persists even in the absence of objects. Prior to creation, there was only just this “is-ness.” There was no void then. There was this “is-ness” everywhere! When the “is” was reflected in Maya or Primal Activity, it resulted in Easwara who partook of that activity to manifest as the Universe with the three elements of Fire, Earth and Wind. All creation is but the permutation and combination of these three.

The line of Uddalaka is steeped in the study of the Vedas, and so it is famed as a noble high-born family. But Swethakethu, the son, was wasting precious years after *Upanayana* (rite of leading pupil to preceptor), in idleness, without using them for Vedic Study. This caused concern for Uddalaka, for he who neglects the study of the Vedas, being born as a Brahmin, does not deserve that appellation. He can only be called *Brahmanabandhu*, one who has Brahmins as his relatives! So, Uddalaka took him to task and forced him to go to a teacher. There, by the exercise of his superior intelligence, he mastered, before he turned twenty-four, the Four Vedas with their meanings. He returned, proud and pompous, swelling with egoism, declaring that there was no one to equal him in scholarship and righteousness.

In order to prick his pride, Uddalaka asked him one day, “You have become haughty that you have no equal in learning and virtue. Well, did you seek from your teacher the message that reveals the Absolute, the lesson that only the practice of the Sastras can impart, the message which when heard makes you hear all things that are heard, which when imagined makes you imagine all things imagined? Did you learn that? That message would have shown you the Atma which is the fulfilment of all Study and Scholarship.”

The Atma is the base of individuals like Swethakethu. The pure Consciousness becomes

apparently limited into a variety of individuals. In deep sleep, the variety disappears and each individual lapses back into this “is-ness.” Then, all the manifold activities, and experiences, like, “I am Ranga”, “I am Ganga”, “I am father”, “I am son”, etc., are destroyed. The sweetness and fragrance of many flowers are collected and fused into one uniformly sweet honey, where all the manifold individualities are destroyed. The names Ganga, Krishna, Indus are all lost when they enter the sea.

They are thereafter called “the sea.” The Jivi who is eternal and immortal is born again and again, as a transitory mortal. He continues to accumulate activity, prompted by inherited impulses and the activity produces consequences which he must shoulder and suffer. It is the body that decays and dies, not the Jivi or the Individualised Soul. The banyan seed will sprout even if it is trampled upon. The salt placed in water, though not available to the grasp, is recognisable by the taste!

The Jivi, befogged by Ajnana, is unable to recognise his Reality. Discrimination will reveal the truth. A millionaire is kidnapped and left alone in the jungle, but he discovers the way out and comes back into his home. So also, the Jivi is restored to his millions! Once the Jivi reaches its real status, it is free from all the change and chance that is involved in Samsara, or the flow of time and space, of name and form. If he does not reach that

status, then, like the happy sleeper who wakes into the confusion of the day, he will be born into the world of decay and death.

Brahmam is described as *Ekam Eva Adwithiyam*; all this visible world is denoted as *Thathswarupa* or the Form of Brahmam. It can be realised by *Sagunopasana*, or worship of the limited qualified Divinity, just as Sathyakama and others did. The path of Brahmopasana is called the Sushumna Marga also. The Omnipresent Brahmam can be enclosed and discovered in the firmament of the heart! It is the capital of that Raja. Since He is seated there, the heart is called Brahmavesma, or the House of Brahmam. That firmament cannot, of course, limit or set boundaries to the illimitable Brahmam!

Yogis who are turned away from the objective world can attain the Parabrahmam, with Its splendour of realised knowledge, in the pure clear sky of their hearts. The worlds are fixed as the spokes of the wheel in the hub of Brahmam. Decline, decay and death do not affect It. Since that Supreme Entity can achieve whatever It decides on, It is called *Sathyakaama* and *Sathyasankalpa*. Now, what exactly is the Parabrahmam? We can know it by a single test. That which remains, after everything is negated as 'Not this', 'Not that'—that is Brahmam.

This is the Truth that all aspirants seek. Attaining It, they get the status of emperors and can travel wherever

they like. The Jnani who is established in the pure Reality sees all desires that dawn in his heart as expressions of that Truth only.

The Atma transcends all the worlds. It is uncontaminated. He who is aware of only the Atma is ever in Bliss. The *Brahmacharya* stage is an important step for attaining Atmic Wisdom. *Yajnas* (sacrifices), fasts and other vows are also equally helpful. The solar energy surges through the countless nerves of the body. The senses merge in the mind, at the moment of death; the Jivi who has realised that it was all this, while limited by the mind, then escapes into the *Hridayakasa* through the nerves. At last, on the point of death, the Jivi moves out of the *Sushumna* into the solar rays and from thence to the Surya Loka itself. The journey does not end there. It reaches out into Brahma Loka too.

But the Jivi who is caught in the mire of Ajnana, who is identified with the mind and its vagaries, escapes through the ear or eye or other senses and falls into Lokas, where Karma rules. The feeling of content and joy one gets in deep sleep is the result of Ajnana persisting in the individual.

The Chiththa is the source and support of Resolution. All resolutions, decisions and plans are the products of the Chiththa. They are of its form. They originate there. They are registered there. That is why when death overtakes a scholar of all Sastras, he becomes

but the equal of ordinary men and his fate is the same as that of the Ajnani. The Chiththa has to be saturated with Brahmic endeavour. Then only will it be an instrument of Liberation, freed from the shackles of Sankalpa. The mind etc., cannot free itself, as the Chiththa can. The Chiththa discriminates between resolutions. It tests them as duty and not-duty, and justifies with proper reasons the classification it has made. Once this selection is made, the word utters it, the name signifies it. The special sound-forms or manthras incorporate the resolutions, accepted as duty, by the purified Chiththa; the rites become one with the manthras. There can be no proper Karma without Chiththa.

Next, about Dhyana, which is even superior to Chiththa. Dhyana is the fixing of the Buddhi on the Divine, when it transcends such inferior helps as images, idols or saligrams. In Dhyana, all agitations cease, all modifications are unnoticed. On account of the effect of the *Thamo Guna*, and even of the *Rajo Guna*, all created things like the waters, the hills and mountains, the stars and planets, men with the spark of the Divine in them, all are agitation-bound, change-bound.

*Vijnana* is better than Dhyana. Jnana based on scholarship steeped in the Sastras is referred to as Vijnana. It is attained by Dhyana and, hence, it is more valuable than Dhyana.

Superior to Vijnana is Balam—Strength, Fortitude, Vigour. It illumines the objective world, it sharpens the *Prathibha* or Intuition. Prathibha is the power by which you can sense the Consciousness in all knowledge objects. Now there is one thing superior even to Prathibha: *Annam*, Food, Sustenance. It is the support of life. Deprived of it for ten days, man becomes powerless to grasp anything. It is life that makes possible study, service of the teacher, listening to his teaching, cogitation over what he has taught, and the earning of Thejas.

Thejas or Illumination is higher than Intuition, Prathibha or food. Thejas is fire, heat and light. Thejas creates water and water produces food. Thejas can make even wind lighter. It shines as lightning and sounds as thunder.

Akasa is superior to Thejas, remember. It is through Akasa that sounds are transmitted and heard. Love and play are products of Akasa. Seeds sprout on account of Akasa.

Now, consider this. *Smarana*, memory, is superior to Akasa. Without it, all experience is meaningless, all knowledge is a waste, all effort is purposeless. Nothing can be experienced without the help of memory. Objects like the Akasa will be unrecognised in its absence. It can be said that memory creates the Akasa and other objects.

Thus analysing the value and relative importance of objects and powers, man must give up identification of self with the physical body and recognise his real Reality. Such a man rises to the height of an *Uttamapurusha*, the noblest of men, laughing, playing and moving without regard to the needs or comforts of the body. The body-bound man is caught in Samsara. For the one who is free from that bondage, *Swaswarupa* (One's reality) is the field of activity. The wind, the lightning and the thunder have no permanent existence. When the rainy season comes on, they appear in the sky and get merged in it. So too the particularised Jivi appears as separate for a time against the background of Brahman and gets merged in It, at last.

This Ashtaadhyayi Upanishad teaches the series of evolved objects from Hiranyagarbha, Kasyapaprajapathi, Manu and Manushya. This lineage and the lessons to ennoble it are vital for mankind. It has to be learned by sons and students from father and teachers.