

॥ कैवल्योपनिषत् ॥

Kaivalya Upanishad

from the Atharva Veda

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः
om bhadraṁ karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāma devāḥ

भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
bhadraṁ paśyemākṣabhir yajatrāḥ

O God, may we hear what is holy with our ears.
While worshipping, may we see what is holy with our eyes.

स्थिरैरङ्गैस् तुष्टुवाँ सस्तनूभिः
sthirair aṅgais tuṣṭuvāgṁ sas tanūbhiḥ

व्यशेम देवाहितं यदायुः ॥
vyaśema deva-hitam yad āyuh

May we worship with steady limbs
May our lives be helpful to the Gods.

स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः
svasti na indro vṛddha-śravāḥ

स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
svasti naḥ pūṣa viśva-vedāḥ

May Indra, the glorious, bless us.
May the Pusha, the omniscient, bless us.

स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः
svasti nas tārṣayo ariṣṭanemiḥ

स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
svasti no bṛhaspatir dadhātu

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

May Garuda, destroyer of evil, bless us.
May Brihaspati bless us.
Om! Peace, peace, peace.

यथाऽचिरात्सर्वपापं व्यपोह्य
परात्परं पुरुषं याति विद्वान् ।
तस्मै स होवाच पितामहश्च
श्रद्धाभक्तिध्यानयोगादवैहि ॥ २ ॥

yathā 'cirāt sarva-pāpam vyapoyha
parāt-param puruṣham yāti vidvān
tasmai sa hovāca pitāmahash ca
shraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogād avaihi

“With this knowledge, a wise person is quickly freed
from all sin and reaches the supreme being.”

Then Brahmā said to Āshvalāyana –
Attain it through faith, devotion, meditation and practice.

ॐ अथाश्वलायनो भगवन्तं
परमेष्ठिनमुपसमेत्योवाच ।
अधीहि भगवन्ब्रह्मविद्यां वरिष्ठां
सदा सद्भिः सेव्यमानां निगूढाम् ॥ १ ॥

om athāshvalāyano bhagavantam
parameshthinam upasametyovāca
adhīhi bhagavan brahma-vidyām varishthām
sadā sadbhiḥ sevyamānām nigūdhām

One day, Āshvalāyana approached Lord Brahmā and said,
“O Master, please teach me *brahma vidya*, the highest
knowledge, hidden yet always enjoyed by the wise.”

न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन
त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः ।
परेण नाकं निहितं गुहायां
विभ्राजते यद्यतयो विशन्ति ॥ ३ ॥

na karmanā na prajayā dhanena
tyāgenaike amritatvam ānashuh
pareṇa nākam nihitam guhāyām
vibhrājate yad yatayo vishanti

Not by good works nor by progeny or wealth,
but by renunciation some attained immortality.

Those who strive enter it,
shining within yet transcending heaven.

वेदान्तविज्ञानसुनिश्चितार्थाः
संन्यासयोगाद्यतयः शुद्धसत्त्वाः ।
ते ब्रह्मलोकेषु परान्तकाले
परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे ॥ ४ ॥

vedānta-vijnāna-sunishcitārtāḥ
sannyāsa-yogad yatayah shuddha-sattāḥ
te brahma-lokeshu parānta-kāle
parāmritāḥ parimucyanti sarve

Those who strive – established in Vedantic wisdom,
purified by renunciation and practice, dwelling in heaven
at the end of time – all become liberated, immortal.

विविक्तदेशे च सुखासनस्थः
शुचिः समग्रीवशिरःशरीरः ।
अन्त्याश्रमस्थः सकलेन्द्रियाणि
निरुध्य भक्त्या स्वगुरुं प्रणम्य ॥ ५ ॥

vivikta-deshe ca sukhāsanasthah
shucih samagrīva-shirah-sharīrah
antyāshramasthah sakalendriyāni
nirudhya bhaktya svagurum pranamya

Seated comfortably in a secluded place, purified,
with head, neck and body erect, in the final stage of life,
restraining their senses, bowing with devotion
to one's guru, they meditate.

हृत्पुण्डरीकं विरजं विशुद्धं
विचिन्त्य मध्ये विशदं विशोकम् ।
अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तरूपं
शिवं प्रशान्तममृतं ब्रह्मयोनिम् ।

hrit-pundarīkam virajam vishuddham
vicintya madhye vishadam vishokam
acintyam avyaktam ananta-rūpam
shivam prashāntam amritam brahma-yonim

They meditate on the immortal source of all
dwelling in one's own heart –
untainted and pure, silent and blissful, transcendent and
formless, infinite, sacred and peaceful ...

तमादिमध्यान्तविहीनमेकं
विभुं चिदानन्दमरूपमद्भुतम् ॥ ६ ॥

tam ādi-madhyānta-vihīnam ekam
vibhum cidānandam arūpam adbhutam

... without beginning, middle or end, one,
all pervasive, conscious-fullness, formless and amazing.

उमासहायं परमेश्वरं प्रभुं
त्रिलोचनं नीलकण्ठं प्रशान्तम् ।
ध्यात्वा मुनिर्गच्छति भूतयोनिं
समस्तसाक्षिं तमसः परस्तात् ॥ ७ ॥

umā-sahāyaṃ parameśvaraṃ prabhuṃ
trilocanaṃ nīlakaṇṭhaṃ praśāntam
dhyātvā munir gacchati bhūta-yoniṃ
samasta-sākṣiṃ tamaśaḥ parastāt

Meditating on Lord Shiva, accompanied by Parvati,
with three eyes and blue throat, peaceful,
a sage reaches the source of all,
the witness of all, beyond darkness.

s: ब्रह्मा स शिवः सेन्द्रः
सोऽक्षरः परमः स्वराट् ।
स एव विष्णुः स प्राणः
स कालोऽग्निः स चन्द्रमाः ॥ ८ ॥

sa brahmā sa śivaḥ sendraḥ
so 'kṣaraḥ paramaḥ svarāṭ
sa eva viṣṇuḥ sa prāṇaḥ
sa kālo 'gniḥ sa candramāḥ

That is Brahma, that is Shiva, that is Indra.
That is immutable, supreme, and sovereign.
That indeed is Vishnu, that is life.
That is time, Agni, and Chandrama.

स एव सर्वं यद्भूतं
यच्च भव्यं सनातनम् ।
ज्ञात्वा तं मृत्युमत्येति
नान्यः पन्था विमुक्तये ॥ ९ ॥

sa eva sarvaṃ yad bhūtaṃ
yac ca bhavyaṃ sanātanaṃ
jnātvā tam mrityum atyeti
nānyaḥ panthā vimuktaye

Indeed, that is all that was and will be, eternal.
Knowing that, one transcends death.
There is no other way to liberation.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं
सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
सम्पश्यन्ब्रह्म परमं
याति नान्येन हेतुना ॥ १० ॥

sarva-bhūtastham ātmānam
sarva-bhūtāni cātmani
sampashyan brahma paramam
yāti nānyena hetunā

Discovering that *ātmā* which exists in all beings
and in which all beings exist,
one reaches supreme *brahman*. There is no other means.

आत्मानमरणिं कृत्वा
प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम् ।
ज्ञाननिर्मथनाभ्यासात्
पापं दहति पण्डितः ॥ ११ ॥

ātmānam arañiṃ kṛtvā
praṇavaṃ cottarāraṇim
jnāna-nirmathanābhyāsāt
pāpaṃ dahati paṇḍitaḥ

Making oneself the lower fire-stick
and making om the upper,
from the repeated churning of knowledge,
a wise one burns sin.

स एव मायापरिमोहितात्मा
शरीरमास्थाय करोति सर्वम् ।
स्त्र्यन्नपानादिविचित्रभोगैः
स एव जाग्रत्परितृप्तिमेति ॥ १२ ॥

sa eva māyā-parimohitātmā
sharīram āsthāya karoti sarvam
stryanna-pānādi-vicitra-bhogaih
sa eva jāgrat-paritriptim eti

That *ātmā*, covered by ignorance, identifies with a body
and does all actions, enjoying various experiences like
women, food and drink while in the waking state.

स्वप्ने स जीवः सुखदुःखभोक्ता
स्वमायया कल्पितजीवलोके ।
सुषुप्तिकाले सकले विलीने
तमोऽभिभूतः सुखरूपमेति ।

svapne sa jīvaḥ sukha-duḥkha-bhoktā
svamāyayā kalpita-jīva-loke
sushupti-kāle sakale vilīne
tamo 'bhibhūtaḥ sukha-rūpam eti

That *ātmā*, identified with a body, feels pleasure and pain
when events are projected in the dream state.
In the sleep state, when all is resolved,
darkness prevails and bliss remains.

पुनश्च जन्मान्तरकर्मयोगात्
स एव जीवः स्वपिति प्रबुद्धः ॥ १३ ॥

punaś ca janmāntara-karmayogāt
sa eva jīvaḥ svapiti prabuddhaḥ

And again, due to karmas from other lives,
that *ātmā* becomes a wakeful person and dreams again.

पुरत्रये क्रीडति यश्च जीवस्
ततस्तु जातं सकलं विचित्रम् ।
आधारमानन्दमखण्डबोधं
यस्मिँल्लयं याति पुरत्रयं च ॥१४॥

pura-traye krīdati yash ca jīvas
tatas tu jātam sakalam vicitram
ādhāram ānandam akhanda-bodham
yasmin layam yāti pura-trayam ca

That *ātmā*, identified with a body, participates in
all three states. From *ātmā* all experiences arise.
Into that *ātmā* – the limitless consciousness which is one's
essence and source of happiness – all three states resolve.

एतस्माज्जायते प्राणो
मनः सर्वेन्द्रियाणि च ।
खं वायुर्ज्योतिरापश्च
पृथ्वी विश्वस्य धारिणी ॥१५॥

etasmāj jāyate prāno
manah sarvendriyāni ca
kham vāyur jyotir āpash ca
prithvī vishvasya dhārīnī

From this *ātmā* are born life, mind, all sense faculties,
space, air, fire, water and the earth that supports all.

यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्मा
विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ।
सूक्ष्मात्सूक्ष्मतरं नित्यं
तत्त्वमेव त्वमेव तत् ॥१६॥

yat param brahma sarvātmā
vishvasyāyatanam mahat
sūkshmāt sūkshmataram nityam
tat tvam eva tvam eva tat

That *ātmā* is supreme *brahman*, the self of all,
substratum of the universe, subtler than subtle, eternal.
That indeed you are. You are that indeed.

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्यादि
प्रपञ्चं यत्प्रकाशते ।
तद्ब्रह्माहमिति ज्ञात्वा
सर्वबन्धैः प्रमुच्यते ॥१७॥

jāgrat-svapna-sushuptyādi
prapancam yat prakāshate
tad brahmāham iti jñātvā
sarva-bandhaih pramucyate

One is liberated from all bondage by knowing –
“I am that *brahman* which becomes manifest
in the waking, dream and sleep states.”

त्रिषु धामसु यद्भोग्यं
भोक्ता भोगश्च यद्भवेत् ।
तेभ्यो विलक्षणः साक्षी
चिन्मात्रोऽहं सदाशिवः ॥ १८ ॥

trishu dhāmasu yad bhogyam
bhoktā bhogash ca yad bhavet
tebhyo vilakshanah sākshī
cin-mātro 'ham sadāshivah

“I am pure consciousness, forever sacred, the awareful
witness, independent of the experiencer, experience,
and all objects of experience in the three states.”

मय्येव सकलं जातं
मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।
मयि सर्वं लयं याति
तद्ब्रह्माद्वयमस्म्यहम् ॥ १९ ॥

mayyeva sakalam jātam
mayi sarvam pratishthitam
mayi sarvam layam yāti
tad brahmādvayam asmy aham

“In me alone, everything arises. In me, everything
is sustained. Into me, everything resolves.
I am non-dual *brahman*.”

अणोरणीयानहमेव तद्वन्
महानहं विश्वमहं विचित्रम् ।
पुरातनोऽहं पुरुषोऽहमीशो
हिरण्मयोऽहं शिवरूपमस्मि ॥ २० ॥

anor anīyān aham eva tadvan
mahān aham vishvam aham vicitram
purātano 'ham purusho 'ham īsho
hiryanmayo 'ham shiva-rūpam asmi

“Indeed, I am smaller than small yet I am vast.
I am the intricate universe. I am the ancient, sovereign being.
I am effulgent. My nature is divine.”

अपाणिपादोऽहमचिन्त्यशक्तिः
पश्याम्यचक्षुः स शृणोम्यकर्णः ।
अहं विजानामि विविक्तरूपं
न चास्ति वेत्ता मम चित्सदाऽहम् ॥ २१ ॥

apāni-pādo 'ham acintya-shaktih
pashyāmy acakshuh sa shrinomy akarnah
aham vijānāmi vivikta-rūpam
na cāsti vettā mama cit sadā 'ham

“I have no hands or feet, yet I have inconceivable power.
I see without eyes. I hear without ears. I know all forms
but no one knows me. I am pure consciousness.”

वेदैरनेकैरहमेव वेद्यो
वेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ।
न पुण्यपापे मम नास्ति नाशो
न जन्म देहेन्द्रियबुद्धिरस्ति ।

vedair anekair aham eva vedyo
vedāntakṛd vedavid eva cāham
na puṇya-pāpe mama nāsti nāśo
na janma dehendriya-buddhir asti

I am known through the Vedas.
I am the knower and author of the Vedas.
I have no good or bad karma,
nor birth, body, senses, or intellect.

न भूमिरापो न च वह्निरस्ति
न चानिलो मेऽस्ति न चाम्बरं च ॥ २२ ॥

na bhūmir āpo na ca vahnir asti
na cānilo me 'sti na cāmbaraṃ ca asti

For me, there is no earth, water, fire, air or space.

एवं विदित्वा परमात्मरूपं
गुहाशयं निष्कलमद्वितीयम् ।
समस्तसाक्षिं सदसद्विहीनं
प्रयाति शुद्धं परमात्मरूपम् ॥ २३ ॥

evam viditvā paramātma-rūpam
guhāshayam nishkalam advitīyam
samasta-sākshim sad-asad-vihīnam
prayāti shuddham paramātma-rūpam

Knowing the supreme *ātmā* thus – abiding within, undivided
and non-dual, witness of all, beyond the gross and subtle,
– one reaches the pure, supreme *ātmā*.

यः शतरुद्रियमधीते सोऽग्निपूतो भवति
सुरापानात्पूतो भवति
स ब्रह्महत्यात् पूतो भवति
स सुवर्णस्तेयात्पूतो भवति

yaḥ śata-rūdrīyam adhīte so 'gnipūto bhavati
surā-pānāt pūto bhavati
sa brahma-hatyāt pūto bhavati
sa suvarṇa-steyāt pūto bhavati

One who studies the Shata Rudriya is purified by fire.
He is purified from the sin of drinking liquor.
He is purified from the sin of killing a brahmana.
He is purified from the sin of stealing gold.

स कृत्याकृत्यात्पूतो भवति
तस्मादविमुक्तमाश्रितो
भवत्यत्याश्रमी सर्वदा सकृद्वा जपेत् ॥

kr̥tyākṛtyāt pūto bhavati
tasmād avimuktam āśrito

bhavaty atyāśramī sarvadā sakṛd vā japet

He is purified from sins of commission and omission.
From that, he finds refuge in the abiding One.
A person who has reached the last stage of life
should recite it continually or at least once.

अनेन ज्ञानमाप्नोति
संसारार्णवनाशनम् ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं
कैवल्यं पदमश्नुते ॥ २४ ॥

anena jñānam āpnoti
samsārārṇava-nāshanam
tasmād evaṁ viditvainaṁ
kaivalyam padam ashnute

Through these teachings, one gains the knowledge
which destroys the ocean of worldly suffering.
Knowing thus, one attains the state of liberation, *kaivalya*.