

## Chapter XII. Brahmanubhava Upanishad

### Nonduality is the essence of all Upanishads

The traditional scriptures (*sruthis*) declare “*Brahman* is one only, without a second (*ekam eva advithiyam Brahma*)”. That is to say, there is nothing besides *Brahman*. Under all conditions, at all times, everywhere, *Brahman* alone is. In the beginning, there was just being (*sat*) and nothing else, says the *Chandogya Upanishad*. The *Mandukya Upanishad* calls it peace, auspiciousness, and non-duality (*santham, sivam, a-dwaitam*). Only the evolved or the manifested can appear as two. That which is seen is different, one from the other and all from the seer. Moreover, the seen is the product of the seer’s likes and dislikes, their imagination and feelings, their impulses and tendencies. When the lamp is brought in, the “snake” disappears and only the rope remains and is understood as such. When the world is examined in the light of knowledge of *Brahman* (*Brahma-jnana*), the “illusory picture that attracted and repelled, the picture of duality” disappears.

It is the “two” that causes fear. If one is oneself the listener, the seer, the doer, the enjoyer, how can fear arise? Consider your condition when asleep! The external world is then absent; you are alone with yourself. The state is “One, without a second”. Contemplation of that One and worship of that One leading to the realisation of secondlessness gives you that experience. Like the other, He is immanent; like the vital air, He is the secret of all consciousness (*chit*), activity, movement.

### Brahman is described by five attributes

Being, consciousness, bliss, fullness, eternity (*sat, chit, ananda, paripurna, nithya*) —*Brahman* is described by these five attributes. Through an understanding of these, *Brahman* can be grasped. Being is unaffected by time. Consciousness illumines and reveals itself as well as all else. Bliss creates the utmost desirability. Fullness knows no defect or diminution or decline or defeat. Eternity is that which is unaffected by the limitations of space, time and objectivisation.

In light of this knowledge of *Brahman* (*Brahma-jnana*), the world is a mirage, temporary, unreal, and negated by knowledge. The world is but another name for “things seen, heard, etc.”. But remember that “you”, the individual (*jiva*), the seer, are “being, consciousness, bliss, *Brahman*”. Get fixed in that assurance; meditate on the *Om*, which is its best symbol. Become aware from this moment that you are the *Atma*. When the fog of ignorance vanishes, the *Atma* in each will shine in its native splendour. Then you know that you were pursuing a mirage in the desert sands, that you were taking as “real” objects that had a beginning and therefore had an end.

### Give up desire, attachment, and ego

The mind becomes bound with attachment when it dwells upon, desires, or dislikes an object. To get free from such bondage, the mind should be trained not to dwell upon, desire, or dislike any object. It is the mind that binds and unbinds. If dominated by passion (*rajas*), it easily falls into bondage; if purity (*sathwa*) predominates, it can achieve freedom.

He who feels one with the gross body feverishly pursues the pleasure derivable through the senses. Desire

is the consequence of identification with the physical frame. Give that up and you are given up by desire. Joy and grief are like right and wrong, to be transcended. Affection and hatred are of the nature of the internal instruments of people. They don't belong to the "Liver" who lives with them, to the individual soul (*jivi*), or to the *Atma*, the essential reality of the individual.

### **Atma is ever full, ever pure, and Self-luminous**

The *Atma* is ever pure, ever free from attachment, for there is no second to get attached to. The *Mundaka Upanishad mantra* (III-I) says,

Two birds, ever together, with significant and subtle wings, are perched on a tree. One bird is engaged in tasting the fruits. The other just watches.

The tree is the body, and the twin birds are the individual Self (*jiva-atma*) and the highest *Atma* (*Paramatma*). The individual Self experiences the joy and grief from the deeds in which it engages. The Supreme *Atma* is subtler than the subtlest and just watches, is just a witness.

How can this gross physical frame of plasma and pus be the pure, the self-luminous, the ever-witnessing *Atma*? This is built up by food; this is ever in a flux. Before birth it was not, and after death it is not! It is perishable any moment. It can live on without a limb or two, but the moment the vital air stops flowing, it starts to decompose. So, the body should not be taken as the chief or as the be-all and end-all.

The *yoga* you should practise is: watch the agitation in the mind as a witness, free yourself from resolutions and even decisions, for and against. Have your mind and its journeys always under control. *Yoga* is the parallel progress of the individual soul (*jiva-atma*), with every step in tune with the supreme *Atma* (*Paramatma*). The goal is the merger of both; then, all grief ends. One who steadily takes up *yoga* with faith and is prodded on by unswerving renunciation (non-attachment) can certainly win victory.

### **Give up desires, attachments and negate the mind**

The awareness of consciousness (*chit*) in being-awareness-bliss (*satchidananda*) means the super knowledge (*vidyana*) that confers perfect equanimity and purity, in fact, *Atmic* wisdom (*Atma-jnana*), which can be experienced by one and all. In common parlance, super knowledge is used to indicate the sciences, but really it means the Higher Wisdom. In that "Self-form", there is no room for "impressions from action (*karma*)" or for wishes that prompt actions. Wishes vitiate the mind. Wishes lead to action, action leaves a scar (*vasana*) on the mind. Be alone with yourself; then the mind can be negated. For this reason, *yogis* retire into caves.

The impressions (*vasanas*) fall into two categories: beneficent (*subha*) and maleficent (*a-subha*). Beneficent impressions help liberation. Repetition of the name, meditation, good works, charity, justice, unselfish service, gratitude, compassion —these are beneficent. The maleficent tendencies of anger, cruelty, greed, lust, and egotism have to be uprooted with the help of the beneficent. Finally, just as the thorn with which the thorn in the foot is removed is also thrown away, the impressions that were used to overcome the impressions that hurt are also to be discarded.

The beneficial impressions are the products of attachment and produce further attachment, which may persist through many births, so the liberated soul (*jivan-muktha*) also has to conquer the beneficial impressions. For such

a soul, they should be like a burnt rope that can't bind. In fact the entire group —sensual craving, desire, greed, etc.— gets burned the moment the *Atma* is visualised. One will not be inclined toward anyone or anything; one will be unattached. Where the sun sets, there one lays down for rest. One moves among people unknown and unrecognised, seeking no recognition, why even avoiding it.

When the seer and the seen are the same, the joy is described as that of the fourth stage (*thuriya*). Beyond this, the *Atma* is certain to be reached. By dwelling constantly on the *Atma* and its reality, attachment to the world will fall off. The spiritual discipline must be without break. Genuine spiritual seekers must, with all their resources, redirect the mind from the affairs of the world and the objects that entice the senses and concentrate on the austere purpose of knowing *Brahman*.

Ignorant (*thamasic*) resolutions spell grief; pure (*sathwic*) resolutions promote *dharma* and help sustain society and individual; passionate (*rajasic*) ones plunge you into the worldly flood. Give up these three, and you become entitled to the honour of knowledge of *Brahman*.

### Attain Brahman by the process of negation of senses

*Brahman* is of immeasurable depth; how can It be measured and comprehended by this petty mind? It is beyond all possibility of being described by categories, without limit, beyond denotation. To grasp It through the senses is impossible.

The *Brahman*, which *Vedanta* declares can be spoken of only as “not-this, not-this,” is I-Myself. My reality is the *Brahman* in the cavity of my heart; I am the *Brahman* that spiritual aspirants strive to know and succeed in reaching. *Brahman* is that which remains after subtracting the body, the mind, the vital airs, the brain, etc.

This knowledge is reached by the discipline of negation. Just as by this method of partial elimination you arrive at the conclusion, “So, this is Devadattha (a person),” by this principle of appearance or presumption and its later removal the truth “That thou art (*that thwam asi*)” is established. When the veil hiding the individual soul (*jivi*) is removed, the individual soul is revealed as the highest *Atma* (*Paramatma*) or supreme *Brahman* (*Parabrahman*). The true Self (*jiva-atma*) is of the essence of the highest *Atma*.

“I” refers to this reality, the being-awareness-bliss (*satchidananda*); it is only ignorance that can use it to indicate the body! This ignorance and this wrong identification are the causes of continuous cycles of grief and joy. So, use the word “I” with discrimination to mean only your *Brahmic* reality; that will win knowledge of *Brahman* (*Atma-jnana*) for you.

For experiencing the *Atma* as your Reality, control of the senses, removal of physical attachment, and truth are essential.

### God is encased everywhere

*Brahman* is the teacher of the gods (*brihaspathi*) prompting the intellect (*buddhi*), the Mind of the mind, the Ear of the ear, the Eye of the eye, the Illuminer of all, the Self-illuminant One. His splendour is the light from which everything else emanates. He is the basic support and sustenance. In the mind, He is wisdom. The mind and the intellect do envelop the senses, and without Him, the mind and intellect are helpless to function. They emerge from Him and merge in Him like grass that is born from the earth and becomes part of it. Iron placed in

fire becomes red and turns black again when cooled; so too, intellect becomes resplendent with spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) by dwelling on the highest *Brahman* (*Parabrahman*), who is the true nature of spiritual wisdom (*jnana-swarupa*). God is encased everywhere, as the child in the womb.

### Discover Divinity through the eye of wisdom or of love

Some declare that they will believe only in a God that can be seen or demonstrated. This is the usual argument of the worldly minded. But it is not easy to see the Highest *Atma*, which is subtler than the subtlest, with gross physical eyes. You must first get command over a powerful microscope, one fit for the purpose. Either the eye of wisdom or the eye of love is wanted; only with these can you see God.

Can you show others what the thing called “pain” is, or “sweetness”? The eye cannot see an abstract thing like love, pity, mercy, virtue, faith; it is beyond its capacity. But by words, actions, and behaviour we infer that a person has love in the heart. So too, it is possible to judge whether people are knowers of *Brahman*, how deep they are established in their own reality, whether by fits and starts or steadily and securely. Divine wisdom, divine treasure, harmony with nature —through these He can be identified and discovered. Therefore, try by all means to earn either the eye of wisdom or the eye of love.

Just like sugar in cane juice or sweetness in sugar, the supreme *Atma* (*Paramatma*) is ever immanent in creation; He is the inner core of all beings. He is everywhere, always in everything; He has no form; *Atma* is “without body (*a-thanu*)”. It is the in-dweller (*Purusha*). Only by throwing off attachment to the body and purifying the mind and intellect can you merge in your truth and earn the eternal bliss, highest peace (*prasanthi*), the purest wisdom. Thus only can one earn liberation from the bond-age of birth and death.

### Joy and grief, vice and virtue are binding products of the mind

*Deha*, meaning the body, is derived from the root *dhah*, meaning burn. It implies that which has to be burned. But, the wise man (*jnani*) has three bodies: the gross, subtle, and causal. Then what is burned? The fuels are the material world (*adi-bhauthika*), fate (*adi-daivika*), and the individual soul (*adi-atmic*), called the three penances or the cavity of the heart (*hridaya-akasa*). They can burn and consume the three bodies more quickly and completely than fire. However informed one may be, if one identifies with the body, one must be pronounced foolish.

On the other hand, one who is fixed in the faith that one is being-awareness-bliss (*satchidananda*) will be transformed into divinity Itself. Don’t identify the individual with the gross body of flesh and bone or even with the subtle and causal. The *Atma* must be identified only with the Highest *Atma* (*Paramatma*). Only then can permanent bliss emerge. Joy and grief, good and bad belong to the realm of the mind, not to you. You are not the doer or the enjoyer of the fruits of the deeds. You are ever-free.

Virtue is *dharma*; vice is *a-dharma* (not *dharmā*). Both are products of the mind, strings that bind the heart. When people experience this higher truth, they become free from both and achieve the vision of reality. Just as the silk worm gets entangled and imprisoned in the cocoon that it spins around itself, so people spin cocoons of wishes around themselves and suffer.

The *Atma* is ever disentangled. It is “not-bound by worldly flux.” Its nature is purity, wholeness, joy, wisdom. Where ego is, bondage persists. Where there is no “I”, freedom holds sway. The “I” is the real shackle.

## Overcome the triple distinctions or illusions

The three obstacles in the path of the seeker of *Atma-jnana* are the past, present, and future. They must be overcome. The liberated soul (*jivan-muktha*) is not worried by these. It has gone beyond the triple distinction of the seer, the seen, and the sight; it has known that the distinction is artificial, a product of the mind. Once you have conquered the triple illusion, you will experience *Brahman* in all things and at all times.