

अमृतबिन्दु उपनिषद्
Amṛtabindu Upaniṣad
Verses 14 - End

Even though *ātmā* is compared to space, remember space is used only as an example. Space still has one quality, that of sound. *Ātmā* does not have any quality. It is subtler than space also. It is *nirguṇaḥ*, no qualities, no attributes, no properties. Space is brought here only as an example. Space has its limitations. It is inert. The inertness of space is brought out in the next verse.

घटवद्विविधाकारं, भिद्यमाने पुनः पुनः ।
तद्भग्नं न च जानाति, स जानाति च नित्यशः ॥१४॥

ghatavadvividhākāraṁ, bhidyamāne punaḥ punaḥ
tadbhagnaṁ na ca jñāti, sa jñāti ca nityaśaḥ (14)

Ghatavat, like that of a pot, *vividhākāraṁ*, of various shapes and forms, when *bhidyamāne punaḥ punaḥ*, broken again and again, *tad bhagnaṁ na ca jñāti*, the space does not know that breakage. The space does not know when pots are broken. The space is not sentient and so it does not know. It is inert. Even though space is the closest example to *ātmā*, it is still inert by nature. It cannot know that a pot is broken. Contrast that with, *sa*, that *ātmā*, *jñāti ca*, knows, *nityaśaḥ*, always. The pot can be broken and in the same way, the body is subject to destruction. Space does not know that the pot is moving or it is broken or anything like that. *Ātmā*, because it is sentient, it is consciousness, it knows! *Ātmā*, like space is all pervasive, but unlike space it is not inert, but sentient. It is aware, conscious of everything. It knows all, anything and everything that happens, at all times. What is born, all the six modifications and the final decay, all that *ātmā* knows. So *ātmā* is incomparable. We saw the comparison of space and *ātmā* in the last verse, how even though both are all pervasive, space is inert, but *ātmā* is sentient.

शब्दमायावृतो नैव, तमसा याति पुष्करे ।

भिन्ने तमसि चैकत्वम्, एक एवानुपश्यति ॥१५॥

śabdamāyāvṛto naiva, tamasā yāti puṣkare
bhinne tamasi caikatvam, eka evānupaśyati (15)

Śabdamāyāvṛtaḥ, covered by the illusion of sound, *na eva tamasā yāti*, here *yāti* means knowing, *tamasā*, due to it being covered by sound, here it should be understood in the context of *Om*, in connection with *Om*. *Om* which is the representative of the Self, is the indicator of the Absolute Truth, earlier that which was said to be an *ālambanam*, support, a sound symbol, however it cannot lead you there, to the Absolute, unless the ignorance is removed. So, *puṣkare*, in the space of consciousness, *tamasā*, due to darkness, ignorance, *śabdamāyāvṛta ātmā*, the Self that is covered by the illusion of sound, *na yāti*, is not known. *Bhinne*, upon removal, of this darkness, *ekatvam*, the oneness, the singularity, *eka eva*, with oneself, *anupaśyati*, he sees.

We had seen in the 7th *mantra* earlier, *svareṇa sandhayed yogaṁ, asvaraṁ bhāvayet param, asvareṇa anubhāvena, bhāvo nābhāva iṣyate*. So that *Om* is first referred in the form of sound, but what does the master want us to do? What has he asked us to do? *Asvaraṁ bhāvayet param*, go to that state of no sound. Follow the sound by silence. *Asvareṇa anubhāvena*, by recognizing the silence as it is, *bhāvaḥ nābhāvaḥ iṣyate*, the existence of the world is negated as non-existence. The apparent non-existence is now expressed or experienced clearly. So as though the Self is covered by *śabdamāyāvṛta ātmā*, the illusion of sound, *bhinne*, on removal of *tamasā āvṛtaḥ*, that veil of ignorance, *ātmā*, the Self is seen.

So various indicators are used, various words are used in the *veda*-s. *Om* is indicated as a symbol. As *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* says, *praṇavaḥ sarva vedeṣu*, I am that *praṇava* in all *veda*-s. That is the main subject matter in all *veda*-s. *Om*, even though it is a sound, it represents waking, dream and deep sleep state. *A U M*, *akāra* is for the waking state, *ukāra* is for the dream state,

makāra is for the deep sleep state, the silence that follows, shows the 4th state that is beyond all these three states. That is not just mere mute silence. When the awareness, understanding takes place, *bhinne tamasi*, when the ignorance is removed, then one understands what the silence means, the *turiya avasthā*, the 4th state. Even though it is referred to as a state, it should not be taken to be 3 + 1. It is present in all three. Yet it is not experienced in the three states unless one experiences it, one knows it directly, as oneself. Upon removal of ignorance, *ekatvam anupaśyati*, one comes to experience that oneness of the Self that is present silently.

So it is not inert like the space. When you make the sound *Om* and then follow it with silence, the silence represents awareness that is aware of the three states. It is not mute, inert. Space is inert, not the Self. Consciousness is not inert existence. Therefore one comes to recognize it distinctly. *Om* is only a launching pad. It is the pole in the pole vaulter's hands. Using *Om*, recognize the beyond. One has to leave the *āvṛta māyā* and leap into the consciousness. So now,

शब्दाक्षरं परं ब्रह्म, तस्मिन् क्षीणे यदक्षरम् ।
तद्विद्वान् अक्षरं ध्यायेत्, यदीच्छेत् शान्तिमात्मनः ॥१६॥
śabdākṣaram paraṁ brahma, tasmin kṣīṇe yadākṣaram
tadvidvān akṣaram dhyāyet, yadīcchet śāntimātmanah (16)

Paraṁ brahma śabdākṣaram, the Supreme *Brahman* is in the form of *śabda*, sound. *Akṣaram brahma* is in the form of *śabda brahma*, sound *Brahman* meaning in the form of *Om*. What does it represent? *Akṣaram*, that is why every letter is referred to as *akṣara*. *Kṣaram na vidyate iti akṣaram*, that which is not subject to decay. Now, we understand language as the written one. Originally language was only spoken. Even now there are some languages that have no script. How did you learn your mother tongue? It was by just listening to sounds. So language is always in the form of sound. It was like

that to begin with. Writing came much later. So that sound is not subject to destruction. Sound is always there, *akṣaram*, does not disappear. So the sound, letter that represents the Supreme *Brahman*, *Om* is called *śabdākṣaram param brahma*. It is *Brahman* symbolically represented by the letter ॐ.

Tasmin kṣīṇe, when that *akṣaram brahma*, in the form of sound symbol, when that sound is subject to *laya sthiti*, when in your meditation you reduce the sound to silence, *tasmin kṣīṇe*, then, what remains is *yad akṣaram*, that which is ever imperishable. What remains in that silence is that which is *akṣaram*, that which never decays. One *akṣaram* is in the form of the letter, but the real *akṣaram* is the Self which is not subject to absence. *Tad vidvān*, the wise one who knows that, *akṣaram dhyāyet*, let him *dhyāyet*, meditate on *akṣaram*. Let him meditate on that which is really imperishable, not just the symbolic letter which just indicates the Truth. From the *śabdākṣaram*, from the word symbol *Om*, let him go to the real imperishable *Brahman*, awareness, let him meditate on that.

Yadi icchet, if one wants, *ātmanaḥ śāntim*, peace for oneself, let him meditate on that imperishable *Brahman*, awareness. If you say, I want peace of mind, this is what you should understand, this is what you should do. So long as the mind is in pieces, you will not have peace of mind. A fragmented mind, a mind that is full of conflicts, peace is not possible for such a mind. Until the mind is overcome, peace cannot be experienced. *Om* sound symbol is only a means, it is a support to quieten the mind. The quietened mind should pay attention to the silence that follows. When that silence is understood, not as a mute silence, but as the presence of the Self, and you meditate on that presence, then you will have peace. Let one recognize the presence of awareness. That is why he says, *tad vidvān*, one who knows that, *dhyāyet*, let him meditate on *akṣaram*, the imperishable. So you should know two things, one that *Om* is the sound symbol and two, you should know what lies beyond that, *ātmā*, the Self, the pure awareness, the Supreme *Brahman*.

द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये तु, शब्दब्रह्म परं च यत् ।
शब्दब्रह्मणि निष्णातः, परं ब्रह्माधिगच्छति ॥१७॥

*dve vidye veditavye tu, śabdabrahma param ca yat
śabdabrahmāṇi niṣṇātaḥ, param brahmādhigaccati (17)*

Dve vidye, two types of knowledge, *veditavye*, are to be known, *tu*, indeed two things are to be known. One is *śabdabrahma*, the sound *Brahman*, and two, *yat param ca*, and that which is supreme. So one should know both, the sound *Brahman* and the supreme *Brahman*. Who can really do that, go to that state, transcending *śabdabrahma* and reach that supreme *Brahman*? *Śabdabrahmāṇi niṣṇātaḥ*, one who has become proficient, adept in *śabda-brahmāṇi*, in the practice of *Om*. Then he, *param brahmādhigaccati*, he attains the supreme *Brahman*. So the practice of *Om* at the seat of meditation when one becomes adept in that, he gains supreme *Brahman*. How to do that? How to do that lift off?

So the important thing is, only those who have become *niṣṇātaḥ*, proficient in *Om* meditation, realizes supreme *Brahman*. That does not mean scriptures are to be ignored. Many people think, meditation is great, I'll directly jump into meditation. Anyway I have to do that, so why not just do that? It does not work that way. The mind has to be purified. We need purity of thought and clarity of vision. Purity comes from spiritual practices. Clarity comes only from *vedānta śravaṇa* and *manana* and you get the right understanding. One who has practiced, studied, purified and clarified, only he is able to put his attention exclusively on the Self. Only he can do the meditation and go beyond. It is not an experience that happens at one instant of time. It is a gradual, steady progress to inner perfection. *Pūjya Gurudev* uses the phrase, hasten slowly. Slow does not mean relaxed. Having studied the scriptures, with that knowledge take to *Om* meditation and go beyond. Reach that state of experience, awareness. Then what should you do? That is said in the next verse.

ग्रन्थमभ्यस्य मेधावी, ज्ञान विज्ञान तत्परः ।

पलालमिव धान्यार्थि, त्यजेद्-ग्रन्थमशेषतः ॥१८॥

granthamabhyasya medhāvī, jñāna vijñāna tatparaḥ
palālamiva dhānyārthi, tyajed-granthamaśaṣataḥ (18)

Grantham aśeṣataḥ tyajet, throw all the texts away, discard them, but wait! Let us see what is said in the earlier part of the verse. *Medhāvī*, one who has the retention power, that is the literal meaning. *Medhā* means power of retention, memory. Memory can be about anything. If you sit quietly, you can remember so many useless, unwanted things. So it is said in our tradition, why so much emphasis on memory? One reason is that our mind unnecessarily registers unwanted things. So much useless garbage we remember. When you sit for meditation, sit quietly, what comes is what is already there, mostly what is undigested. So they come up again and again. The mind brings back memories of the past. I should not have said this, I should have done that. Instead of that, if you have learned something, those thoughts would come and you contemplate on that. If you see a musician who has trained well in carnatic music, do they keep a paper in front of them? A concert that goes on for 3 or 4 hours, continuously they perform, flawlessly, perfectly. No paper, sheet music, nothing, the music just comes out. They have practiced so much.

So if one has unnecessary thoughts in the mind, and they come up again and again, how to overcome that? It is very difficult to get rid of them. So try to replace them, to substitute them with something else. Study the scriptures, on one hand convince your intellect. Still the mind brings up so many unwanted things. So our tradition holds that you should remember more important things. Commit to memory *śloka*-s, *sūktam*-s, keep the mind engaged in those thoughts, even if you do not have the book in front of you. When you continuously engage in that *abhyāsa*, you are a *grantham abhyasya medhāvī*, that *medhāvī* who can remember, through thought practice,

exercise of scriptures. Why is it called *grantha*? In the old days, they were all written on palm leaves and banded together with a thread. The material bound by thread is called *grantha*. So that *grantham abhyasya medhāvī*, and *jñāna vijñāna tatparaḥ*, he has *jñāna*, scriptural knowledge and also *vijñāna*, a personal first-hand experience. He has kept that as *tatparaḥ*, supreme. He has kept that alone as the very highest! He has the goal of realization as the highest. Therefore he has become *jñāna vijñāna tatparaḥ*. That is the highest goal. Nothing else is important.

Who is that person who has kept that as the supreme goal and striving to achieve it, experience it? He says here, just a like a person who is picking the grain and not interested in the husk, *palālamiva dhānyārthi*, his interest is in *dhānyam*, the grain. He is not interested in *palālam*, the husk. What is the core content? That is most important. Container is not important. Once you have gained the knowledge, scriptures can be discarded. Caution, then alone you can discard them. Only you have thoroughly understood what is said in the scriptures, then the scriptural texts can be thrown away, not before that. So in the name of renunciation, do not give up the study of scriptures. Without knowledge, renunciation has no meaning at all. One need not read so many texts. If you have studied and understood what is said in one *upaniṣad*, that is enough. This is what is said in the next verse.

गवाम् अनेकवर्णानां, क्षीरस्यापि एकवर्णता ।

क्षीरवत् पश्यते ज्ञानं, लिङ्गिनस्तु गवां यथा ॥१९॥

gavām anekavarṇānām, kṣīrasyāpi ekavarṇatā

kṣīravat paśyate jñānam, liṅginastu gavāṁ yathā (19)

Aneka varṇānām gavām, cows are of various colors, *kṣīrasya api eka varṇatā*, but the milk of one color only. It may be a brown cow, black cow, white cow or a black and white cow, whatever be the color of the cow, the cow's milk is always white. It is not that a brown cow gives chocolate milk. Only white cows can give white milk, no, it is not like that. *Eka varṇatā*, one color

is the cow's milk. Similarly many different scriptures are there, but what they all give is the same knowledge. *Kṣīravat paśyate jñānam*, like the one color of the milk from all different colored cows, in the same way, knowledge is the same! *Brahma vidyā, ātma vidyā, mokṣa sādhanam, śruti, smṛti, itihāsa*, or *purāṇa*-s, they may all be different, but *jñānam*, the knowledge they impart is the same. They are all *liṅginaḥ*, the various limbs of scriptures, *tu*, but, *gavām yathā*, just the cows, what they give out is the same. Multi branched scriptures are like the multi colored cows. Their contents are the same.

So do not go by what is outside the text, find out what is said inside. That is always the same in all branches of scriptures. *Kṣīravat paśyate jñānam*, the knowledge given out in all those texts is all the same. How many scriptures one has to read? If you have studied and understood what is in one, that is enough. Any other book you take, you will find the same knowledge. The method of instruction may be different. Truth is one! Men of wisdom talk about it differently. Depending upon the audience, situations, society, time period when the texts are written, according to the maturity of the student, the pedagogical approach may be different. Anyone who studies the various texts properly and understands the meaning correctly and reflects upon what is said, will arrive at the same knowledge.

घृतमिव पयसि निगूढं, भूते भूते वसति विज्ञानम् ।

सततं मन्थयितव्यं, मनसा मन्थानभूतेन ॥२०॥

ghṛtamiva payasi nigūḍham, bhūte bhūte vasati vijñānam

satatam manthayitavyam, manasā manthānabhūtena (20)

Ghṛtam, butter, *payasi*, in the milk, *nigūḍham*, is hidden. The butter is hidden in the milk. How to get that butter that is hidden in the milk? You have to churn. Upon churning, the butter slowly comes up. *Ghṛtamiva payasi nigūḍham*, as you go on churning, butter comes up. You take the butter and put in water, what happens? You take the curd or buttermilk and put it water, what happens? Butter floats, but the curd or buttermilk does not

float. Butter is lighter, it is dehydrated, it floats. In the same way when one reflects and meditates upon the truth that is hidden in the scriptures, the Truth in them comes up. The stickiness in his mind disappears. The knowledge is revealed.

Even though you cannot see the butter when you look in the milk, when you start churning, the hidden content, the butter rises up. In the same way, *bhūte bhūte*, in every being, *vasati vijñānam*, resides the wisdom. It is not a person does not have the knowledge or wisdom. It is there hidden. Nobody is devoid of *ātman*, the Self. It is there even in the most ignorant person. He just does not know. He has not done the reflection. He has not done the churning! We do have everything that we need. We have the scriptures, we have the teachers. They give the guidance. Then the student has to do some work, *satatam manthayitavyam*, he has to go on churning, reflecting. The mind is the churning rod! Words in the scriptures are the ropes. Keep churning, keep reflecting! The knowledge is there. Like the butter that is the essence in the milk, the essence of the scriptures, the wisdom rises up. Once you get that, it will not go back and dissolve and be hidden again. Like the butter that can float in the water, you can go back to the world and float, move about freely without being sucked into the worldliness. Your mind will not be agitated by the charms of the world. If you do not do the reflection, any study you have done will be a waste. You were an ignorant fool before the studies. Without reflection, after just the studies, you will be a learned fool. So, *satatam manthayitavyam*, constantly reflect on what you studied. How do you do that? *Manasā*, by the mind, what else? Keep reflecting in your mind, you will get the wisdom. Another example is given in the next *mantra*.

ज्ञाननेत्रं समादाय, चोद्धरेद्-वह्निवत् परम् ।
निश्कलं निश्चलं शान्तं, तद्ब्रह्माहमिति स्मृतम् ॥२१॥

*jñānanetram samādāya, coddhared-vahnivat param
niśkalaṁ niścalaṁ śāntaṁ, tadbrahmāhamiti smṛtam* (21)

In *vedic* times, the fire for the rituals was not invoked through matches or anything like that. Instead they had two wooden pieces called *araṇi*. The pieces were attached to rods and when the rods were churned, the two wooden pieces rubbed against each other. Due to friction, heat is generated and then you get sparks. From that you can get the fire that can be used in the ritual. The idea is that the fire is already there in the wood and it has to be brought out by churning. Similarly, as was said in the previous *mantra*, *bhūte bhūte vasati vijñānam*, the *ātman* is hidden within one self. It has to come out. It has to be realized. *Jñānanetram samādāya, samyak ādāya*, having taken up well, *jñānanetram*, here *netram* means rope, taking the rope of knowledge, *ca uddhared-vahnivat param*, and just like churning the rod and rubbing the wooden pieces to generate fire, reflection and meditation should be done to bring out the supreme fire. You have seen this example in *Ātma Bodha* and other texts and so no need to repeat. With the mental churning comes out the fire of knowledge.

From that supreme fire of knowledge what comes out is *niśkalaṁ niścalaṁ śāntaṁ, niśkalaṁ*, part-less, *niścalaṁ*, unmoving, steady, eternal, unchanging, *śāntaṁ*, peaceful. That knowledge takes place. What is that knowledge? *Tad brahma aham iti*, that *Brahman*, I am, *smṛtam*, that understanding, that knowledge I am that *Brahman* is brought out. This *manthāna*, churning, reflection, meditation is the *sādhana* to bring out the wisdom that is hidden in oneself. In the first few verses, the knowledge was given, in these verses the *sādhana* is given. Just as fire is bright and brilliant, one who has knowledge of the Self is also bright and brilliant. The brilliance is in the clarity of the understanding. Fire burns! Knowledge burns away ignorance. It burns away all the unnecessary things. Everything that is unwanted is reduced to ashes. Most importantly, just as fire always goes up, knowledge also lifts one up. It

is always elevating. What does it lead to? Now the last verse.

सर्व भूताधि वासं यत्, भूतेषु च वसत्यपि ।

सर्वानुग्रहकत्वेन, तदस्म्यहं वासुदेवः ॥

तदस्म्यहं वासुदेवमिति ॥२२॥

*sarva bhūtādhi vāsaṁ yat, bhūteṣu ca vasatyapi
sarvānugrahaḥkatvena, tadasmyaham vāsudevaḥ,
tadasmyaham vāsudevamiti (22)*

Tad asmi aham vāsudevaḥ, that *Vāsudeva* I am. This is repeated a second time to indicate the *upaniṣad* comes to an end. That, *sarva bhūtādhi vāsaṁ yat*, which is, *adhi vāsam*, meaning the supreme presence in all beings, the one that stays in all beings, and *bhūteṣu ca*, where all being stay, the abode of all beings, *vasati api*, staying in all beings, *sarva anugrahaḥkatvena*, by blessings us all continuously, that *Vāsudeva* I am. *Ātman* is constantly showing its grace, blessing us all. Even though we seek the Lord, somewhere in the heaven, but it actually is blessing us from within. In *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa* says, I bless all people by giving them *śraddhā*, that is the greatest blessing. With that one realizes that *Vāsudeva* I am. This is the state of enlightenment! One who knows that is very rare. One should strive for it. The Lord is there within you to bless you!

Thus this *upaniṣad* concludes. *Om Tat Sat!*