



THE BRIHADARANYAKA UPANISHAD

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RECAPITULATION

Chapter II

THE SUPREME GOAL OF LIFE

The Second Chapter begins with the famous conversation between Balaki, the learned sage, and the king Ajatasatru, the dialogue actually hinging upon the subject of the conditioned Brahman and the unconditioned Brahman, the formed or the manifested aspect of Reality and the formless or the absolute nature of It; the learned accoster insisting upon the forms of manifestation as objects of meditation and the king who was more educated in this line emphasising, on the other hand, that no form, no particular manifestation can be regarded as complete in itself unless its universal background is also taken into consideration. The whole conversation between these two persons is on the particular theme of recognising the universal in every particular mode of manifestation. And the highest universal is Consciousness whose faint inklings are observable in the state of deep sleep when all externality of being is withdrawn. That is the essence of the discourse between Balaki and Ajatasatru.

There is then the interesting and enigmatic instruction that everything that is cosmic is also present in the individual. What is in the 'Brahmanda' is in the 'Pindanda'. The great Sages Vasishtha, Visvamisra, Bharadvaja, Atri, Jamadagni, Gautama and Kasyapa are in our bodies. They are superintending over the different limbs of our personality. They are situated in our own senses. Even the gods themselves can be located in the eye itself. The various parts of the eye, which is the subtlest manifestation of the body, are presided over by certain subtle divinities, so that in our own selves we can recognise the cosmic realities

and God can be realised in our own being. The Upanishad, then, tells us that the five elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—can be classified into the mortal and the immortal, the Murta and the Amurta, which can be converted into objects of meditation, for purpose of establishing harmony between the individual and the cosmic, in their forms as well as essences.

The quintessential teaching is given to us in the famous conversation between Maitreyi and Yajnavalkya. This occurs towards the end of the Second Chapter. This is an eternal message that the Upanishad gives us. All loves are loves for God. Every satisfaction is a satisfaction that comes by contact with God, and every affection, whatever be its nature, is a tendency towards God, and no one loves anything except for the sake of this universal Self present in that particular object. "*Na va are sarvasya kama sarvam priyam bhavati, atmanastu kamaya sarvam priyam bhavati*—Nothing is loved for its own sake; it is for the sake of the Absolute Self in it that anything is loved." This is the greatest truth that can ever be proclaimed, but it is also the most difficult thing that anyone can afford to understand. That which we are called upon to visualise as an object of attraction is the Universal Absolute. It is the Infinite summoning the Infinite, as it were, when the subject and the object pull each other for the purpose of personal evaluations. The evaluation is ultimately a universal one. It is the presence and the recognition of the Universal in the particular that evokes satisfaction. But on account of the preponderance of the clamour of the senses and the urges of the lower mind, the activity of the Universal subtly present in this contact of the subject with the object, is missed always, so that the sudden happiness that comes on account of affections is always miscalculated and projected upon an object of sense, because of the inability of the senses and the mind to recognise the presence of the Universal in the particular, which flashes forth in moment's existence at the time of this contact. The Universal never manifests itself wholly in the particulars; it is manifest only when there is a forgetfulness of personality. Whenever there is a tendency in you to forget your own self, there is a gravitation of the mind to the experience of happiness. The more you forget yourself, the more are you happy; and this tendency to forget oneself is the pressure of the Universal to manifest itself in the particular. When it is consciously experienced, becomes Yoga-practice; when it is unconsciously experienced, it becomes a rapture of the senses and a desire of the mind, which is binding in its nature. So, Yajnavalkya tells Maitreyi that all affections, all loves, all attractions, all pleasures, all happiness, anything that we like in this world, is ultimately the tendency to like the Absolute, and it is the Absolute casting its shadow on the various objects of sense which we mistakenly see in the vehicles of satisfaction. The Universal has neither a subjective side nor an objective side—"*Yatra hi dvaitamiva bhavati, taditara itaram pasyati*." When the Universal is lost sight of, when the particular alone is visualised, then it is that we miss the awareness of the real abode of the happiness that comes out at the time of the contact of the subject with the object. When we are awakened to the awareness of the Universal, we would see that it is neither a subject nor an object—that state of awareness is called Brahma-sakshatkara, the realisation of the Absolute.

At the end of the Second Chapter we have, what the Upanishad calls, the Madhu-Vidya or the knowledge of the interconnectedness of things, imparted by the great sage Dadhyana Atharvana. Usually, consciousness and object are regarded as exclusive of each other. The one cannot be in the position of the other. The perceiver is conscious and the object is what is experienced by consciousness. The two are categorised as two distinct characters in the field of experience. Where the subject is, the object cannot be; and vice-versa. The object cannot be the subject and the subject cannot be the object; consciousness cannot be matter and matter cannot be consciousness. This is our usual notice of things and our practical experience, too. But the Madhu-Vidya gives us a revolutionary idea in respect of what we usually regard as a field of the duality of subject and object.

The Madhu-Vidya is an insight into the nature of things, which reveals that there are no such things as subjects or objects. They are only notional conclusions of individual subjects from their own particular points of view, the one regarding the other as the object, so that there is a vast world of objects to a single individual perceiver, and this is the case with every other perceiver, also. The fact of experience itself is a repudiation of the phenomenal notion that subjects are cut off from objects, as if the one has no connection with the other. If there has been a gulf of difference, unbridgeable, between the experiencing consciousness and the object outside, there would be no such thing as experience at all. The great revelation of the sage Dadhyana Atharvana—is that the Adhyatma and the Adhibhuta are linked together by the Adhidaiva, and a transcendent Divine Presence connects the phenomenal subject and the phenomenal object, through an invisible force, so that we have a universe of interrelated particulars, one entering the other, one merging into the other, one coalescing with the other, like the waves in the ocean, and not the universe we see with our eyes, as a house divided against itself.

This experience is the revelation of the sage Dadhyana, a knowledge Madhu-Vidya, which is supposed to have been imparted to Indra and to the Ashvins, and to the other sages through them. The significance of the word 'Madhu' in the term, Madhu-Vidya, is that everything is the 'essence' of everything. 'Madhu' is honey, which symbolises the quintessential essence of everything. The basic reality of all things is called Madhu in this Vidya. The essence of everything is, thus, the essence of everything else, also. Whatever is the basic quality, the reality, the fundamental being of anything, is also the fundamental being of everything else. Thus, there is no prerogative on the part of any particular individual in respect of anything. There is no superior, qualitative excellence in any object or any subject. It is only a point of view that is called a subject, it is also only a point of view that is called an object. So, if the isolated points of view are lifted to a universal point of view, there would be neither subjects nor objects. In a universal expanse of experience certain aspects are abstracted from others and each aspect is emphasised from its own point of view. This particular point of view of a particular aspect of the total reality is called an individual subject to

which everything else stands in the position of an object. But this is not a correct point of view, because it is an abstraction from the total.

So, the Madhu-Vidya reveals to us the truth of the immanence of the Reality that is universal in every particular, so that there can neither be an ultimate cause nor an ultimate effect in a world of mutual dependence and correlativity of things. Madhu-Vidya is the knowledge of the correlativity of the subject and the object in such a way that they merge one into the other, cancelling the subjectness and the objectness of each, embracing each other in a union of their particularities and revealing their inner essence called the 'Madhu'. This applies to everything that is outside in the world called Adhibhuta, everything that is inside called Adhyatma, and everything that is transcendent called Adhidaiva. So, from three points of view the sage describes the correlativity of everything in the universality of being. Here is the conclusion of the Second Chapter.