



## **THE CHHANDOGYA UPANISHAD**

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**DISCOURSE-18 (12 JULY 1977)**

The perception of a *Jivanmukta* is now described very precisely in one or two sentences. With our present state of mind it is not possible to understand what the perception of *Jivanmukta* could be. We can only have comparisons, illustrations and analogies. But what actually it is, it is not possible for us to understand. Some of us may be under the impression that he sees God, and does not see the world. This is the usual way of giving an opinion about the experiences of a *Jivanmukta*. As I have already stated, these are all our ways of looking at things and our ways of thinking. There is no such thing as seeing God and not seeing the world. Such differences, such contrasts do not find a place in a vision which sees what Truth is. There is a lot of controversy among the different schools of thought as to whether the world is seen by the *Jivanmukta* or not. It all depends upon what is meant by the word 'world'. He sees the world! Yes. Or he does not see the world. Both statements are correct. He sees the world as it really is, and he does not see the world as it appears to the senses which are distorted in their structure. Our relative values should not be carried to this realm of universal perfection. It would be unbecoming on our part to appraise the experiences of a *Jivanmukta* in the scales of our understanding.

There is no world even now and the question of seeing the world, or not seeing the world, does not actually arise. Whatever is there now, will be there even afterwards. Just because someone has changed his mind, the world is not going to be different. But his mind has undergone discipline to such an extent, and has changed and transformed in itself, that it will see the world in the way it has to be seen. The Upanishads are never tired of telling us that the correct way of perception is to perceive the Self in things and not to see the form in them. This is exactly what the *Jivanmukta* sees. To see the Self in a thing is not to see the thing or the object as such. Even these analogies are inadequate. We cannot understand as to what it is to see the Self in a thing.

Again we will be interpreting the Self as something outside us, to be seen with the eye of spiritual perception. It is nothing of the kind. With this cautious background we have to try to understand these very short portrayals of the grandeur of the *Jivanmuktas* given in these passages of the Upanishad. He may

do exactly what you do and what I do. There is no difference in his conduct. He may speak the same language and he may eat the same food. Yet, he is not eating and he is not speaking. This is a difficult thing to understand, because these particular activities and particular modes of experience are generalised and universalised in his case, so that they no longer become obstacles to his unique experience. They become obstacles only when they are wrested out of their universal context and made one's own, my own, your own, or made to stand on its own legs, independently of others. His actions are not individual actions, but universal movements. And he does not think as I think or you think. His is just a thought which includes every thought. It is the general substance of every kind of mind and thought. So when the Upanishad says that he speaks, he laughs, he moves about and he enjoys, it does so from our point of view only. The question of enjoying or speaking or moving about does not arise for that which has no particularised consciousness, either of space, time, or movement. In the vision of other people, he will be practically speaking just like anyone else. You cannot identify a *Jivanmukta* by observing him. He will look like yourself only. But there will be a tremendous difference inside.

The electrons are not seen with our naked eyes, but the microscope can see them. You keep a solid object in front of you and gaze at the solid object, and keep also a very powerful microscope. Your eyes are seeing the object and the microscope is also seeing the object. But the two instruments are seeing two different things altogether. What your eyes see the microscope does not see, and what the microscope sees your eyes do not see. But, both are seeing the same thing simultaneously. Now, you are the person to judge whether the object is what your eyes see, or whether it is what the microscope sees. Which is the correct thing? This is just an example.

You see a world and the *Jivanmukta* also sees it, but he sees it differently from what you see it because of the difference of the instrument of perception. For him an instrument does not exist. He himself is the instrument and he himself is the object seen. He has become that which he is seeing and so it cannot be called seeing, but it is rather 'being'. Seeing, he does not see. It appears that he does not see, because there is nothing outside him, and yet, he sees everything because he is himself that. He cannot be conscious of the body. He is not only in one body. He is in every body. Whatever you think is his thought and whatever anybody thinks also is his thought only. So you cannot say whether he thinks, or I think, or you think. The consciousness of a particular body or object does not arise because all the bodies or objects are his, nay he himself. So the Upanishad says that he has no awareness of a particular encasement in some individual body. Just as bulls may be yoked to drag a cart, this Supreme Self manifests itself as the *prana* and is yoked to this cart of the body, as it were. The bulls do not become one with the cart. They are different. Likewise, this *prana* or consciousness that is yoked to the body is not identical with the body. Whatever the eyes see when they are cast into space is something different in the case of this liberated soul from what our eyes see. From the point of view of the liberated soul, when the eyes perceive something outside, it is not the eyes that are seeing the object, but it is 'something else' that sees.

This was the subtle point which was in the mind of Prajapati when he told Virochana and Indra at the very outset that whatever is reflected in the eye is the Atman. So he is right from his side. But both Indra and Virochana could not understand what his intention was. What sees through the eye is not the eye, but is something different from the eyes. And what hears through the ears too is not the ear but there is something else inside which hears through the ears. So is the case with every other sense organ. The senses do not contact the object. He who contacts is 'somebody else' utilising these senses as instruments.

*Atha yatraitad-akasam anuvisannam caksuh, sa caksusah  
purusah darsanaya caksuh, atha yo veda idam jighrantiti, sa  
atma gandhaya ghranam, atha yo veda idam abhivyaharaniti sa  
atma, abhivyaharaya vak, atha yo veda idam srnavaniti, sa atma,  
sravanaya srotram.*

This eye is only an instrument of perception. What sees an object is not the eye. What sees through the eye is the same thing as that which hears through the ear. The eye cannot hear and the ear cannot see, and so are the functions of the other senses limited to their respective domains. There is a distinction among the functions of the different senses. But we know very well that we can integrate these perceptions through all the senses into a single whole, so that one individual being is aware simultaneously that there is seeing, hearing, etc. In our case, it is only an inference, but in the case of the liberated soul, it is an actual revelation

It is not merely that. It is something deeper than this implication. What sees through the eye also is different from the eye, and what is seen through the eye also is different from the object. It is not the eye that sees, and it is not the object that is seen. It is 'something else' that is seen and it is the same 'something else' that sees. Therefore, the seen and the seer are one. It is as if that 'something else' is beholding itself. It is the Atman that smells, not the nose. The nose or the instrument of smelling is only a vehicle utilised by consciousness for this purpose. One that speaks is not the tongue. It is the Atman that speaks utilising the instrument of the tongue as merely an occasion for its manifestation in that particular manner. So is the case with the ear. The ear is only an occasion for the manifestation of the Atman. The Atman is a single, non-dual, all-pervading Being which works in these diverse ways in the forms of the senses, sense-perception, and the objects of perception. So, there is really no such things as sense-perceptions, the senses and their objects. It is the Atman projecting itself in every nook and corner of the universe through these orifices called the senses and contacting its own universal body, outside which we wrongly call the objects of sense. This is the truth. The liberated soul is fully aware of this truth, while others are ignorant about it, although it is the same in their case also.

*Atha yo veda, idam manvaniti sa atma, mano'sya daivam caksuh  
sa va esa etena daivena caksusa manasaitan kaman pasyan  
ramate.*

*Ya ete brahma-loke tam va etam deva atmanam upasate, tasmāt  
tesam sarve ca loka attah sarve ca kamah, sa sarvams-ca lokan*

*apnoti sarvams-ca kaman, yas-tam atmanam anuvidya vijanati,  
iti ha prajapatir-uvaca, prajapatir-uvaca.*

Whatever thinks through the mind also is the Atman. The so-called mind is only a cognitive instrument. But it is a superior kind of instrument. It is a celestial eye provided to us. In fact, the mind alone works in *Brahma-loka*. The senses do not exist there. These manifestations in five ways as hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling do not come into operation in *Brahma-loka*. The great souls living in *Brahma-loka* do not see with the eyes, do not speak with the tongue and do not eat and drink as we do. They merely exist in their mental body. There are some who even think that the mind also does not work there in the ordinary way. It is something super-physical and non-material that becomes the vehicle for the experience of the soul in *Brahma-loka*. This celestial eye comprehends all things at one stroke, unlike the senses which perceive only one thing at a time. This is the instrument that is used in *Brahma-loka*. The moment such a mind thinks, the whole conglomeration of objects connected with that thought appears at one stroke there in its presence. The archetypes of things are perhaps visualised in *Brahma-loka*, not the reflections. The objects which we see in this world are not the originals. They are only reflections. All the originals including those of myself and yourself are in *Brahma-loka*. We are all reflections of the original. We are all unreal bodies, apparitions in some respect, looking like very important persons. Our importance is somewhere else and we are rooted in a higher realm. And we are even now connected with that realm. Our legs are there though we appear to be moving here! We are reflections and therefore distorted. We are partial and finite, on account of which we are incapable of fulfilling our desires. The original which is the whole, the infinite, alone can work. Reflections cannot really work as efficiently as the original. This efficiency in working comes only when we reach *Brahma-loka*.

Now this *Brahma-loka* does not mean some other world which is several million miles away. It is a state of consciousness. It is within these very walls of our room. It is only a higher frequency of consciousness that is called *Brahma-loka*, into which one can raise oneself even here. Really there is no question of 'here' and 'there'. These are only inappropriate terms used in connection with sense experiences for want of better terms. There is neither 'here' nor 'there', neither 'then' nor 'now'. All these words cannot apply in *Brahma-loka*. Wherever you are, there is *Brahma-loka*, if only you can tune up your mind to the high frequency of its level of consciousness.

The great gods, having Indra as their leader who obtained this superior initiation from Prajapati in the manner mentioned here, contemplate on this Atman. Therefore they are able to fulfil all their wishes by mere thought. They establish contact with their inner mind in respect of everything that they think at any moment of time. All the worlds are comprehended by them. They can penetrate throughout the universe. Objects like huge mountains cannot impede their movement. Physical bodies are no obstacles for them. We sometimes hear in scriptures that angels fly and that gods easily move from plane to plane. This is so because they are in their subtle mental bodies. They are not physical vehicles, so they are not controlled by the power of the gravitation of the earth. Everything is

under their sway. They can have entry into every realm. They can move anywhere. All desires of theirs are fulfilled on account of this permeating consciousness which is not capable of being obstructed by anything.

This is a glorification of the knowledge of the Atman in respect of the gods who had it through Indra. This is a knowledge which can be had not only by gods alone, but anyone, including yourself and myself. It is not a prerogative of any particular person or individual. Everyone is heir-apparent to this great knowledge, provided the necessary discipline is undergone. We can imagine what hardship Indra had to pass through. Perhaps our hardship will be much more. We must be prepared to pay the price of this knowledge. Then it shall come. It can be the property of everyone, but first one has to be ready to become a receptacle for it. As is the case with all those who have realised the Self, so will be the case with everyone who attains this Knowledge. There will be complete control over things and fulfilment of everything, even of a mere wish that arises in the mind, at that very moment it arises. This is what Prajapati said in conclusion.

So, we have here an analysis of the various states of consciousness, through this story of instruction to Indra by Prajapati. This analysis is actually the logical approach by way of inference to the existence of a consciousness deep within every one of us. What Prajapati actually wanted to drive home to the mind of the disciple was that the Atman is ubiquitously present everywhere in all the three states. That is why he said first that It is in the eye in the waking state, then in the dream state, then in the sleeping condition, and finally as something transcendent. Now, all these definitions are correct, though we should not take them literally. The implication or the actual intention behind the instruction has to be understood. The Atman is in deep sleep state. Yes, it is true. It is in dream. It is also in waking. It is reflected through the eyes and the senses. All these statements are correct, because without the operation in some way or the other of this consciousness, there would be neither sleep, nor dream nor waking. A compartment or a wall, as it were, has been introduced by us between these various experiences, so that we are unable to connect the deeper implications of these different experiences. When we are in one condition, we completely forget the other conditions. When we are awake, we cannot be dreaming or in deep sleep. When we dream, we cannot be in deep sleep or awake. When we are in deep sleep, we cannot be awake or dreaming. This is our difficulty, in spite of the fact that our consciousness is one with the same substratum that is responsible for all these experiences. The difference arises on account of a peculiar faculty in us called the mind. It is not the defect of consciousness which is the same that is in me, in you, and in the *Jivanmukta*. The so-called mind is also not an independent thing absolutely different from the Atman. It is a hybrid, as it were, born from one side partially and belonging to another side partially. However, for all practical purposes of analysis, we may say that it is the same consciousness that we call the Atman which has somehow got twisted, as it were, and focussed in a single particular direction and got obsessed with the view that that direction alone is real and that every other direction is unreal and does not exist. This obsessed movement of consciousness, the mind, in respect of a particular

direction is what we call its target or the object of sense. This is a creation of its own, due to its *prarabdha* and we cannot say how and why it works. But the background is the Atman, the Consciousness. It does not vary. The mind in waking, the mind in dream, the mind in sleep and the mind that has transcended itself—all these are basically pervaded through and through, warp and woof, by the same consciousness. The feeling that 'I exist' is the Atman speaking in its own language. This feeling is persisting even in dream, and you cannot say that it does not exist even in deep sleep. So it is there always. Not only that, It exists as self-sufficient awareness. We are aware in one way in the waking state and we are aware in a different way altogether in the other two states. There is a difference in the structure of the awareness, because of the difference in the nature of the objects with which this particular compartment-like consciousness is connected. So we get shifted wholly due to our affiliation with the mind to these realms in which it moves, and then it is that we are unable to connect the one phase of consciousness with another phase.

So, Prajapati's instruction is a universal instruction that the Atman is present in every state. Even in the so-called unconscious state, it is there. The unconsciousness is not of the Atman. It is of the mind. It is a kind of stifling taking place in the finitude of individuality. The finitising principle we call the mind, and that gets suffocated, as it were. It closes its eyes in sleep, in coma, and even in death in a state of unconsciousness which cannot be attributed to the Atman. So, this is the difficulty with us.

Now the transcendent state which the great master Prajapati speaks of as bodiless, free from embodiment, is capable of being attained by means of certain disciplines as is pointed out by the Upanishad. But we are not told as to what these disciplines are. We have been told of *brahmacharya*, but we cannot fully understand what it means. Thirty-two years, again thirty-two years, a third time thirty-two years and again five years, thus one hundred and one years—it may even be a thousand years. But what was it that Indra did all these years? Was he merely having his breakfast and lunch in the hotel of Brahma and getting on there? It was not like that. There must have been something very strange in the way of life he lived there, an inkling of which we can get from a study of the way in which students lived in ancient times in their masters' hermitages and conducted themselves wholly and solely for the purpose of the realisation of the Self.

There should be a complete channelisation of our aspiration in the correct direction. It is for this that we come to the masters. There should be no distraction of aim or purpose. The discipline that is spoken of in the Upanishad is nothing but a channelisation of consciousness. We may call it *brahmacharya*, or we may call it self-control. It is concentration of our entire being in a given direction, so that it does not move in any other way or direction. It is like an arrow moving towards its target. The arrow will not be aware of anything else, either this way or that way. This arrow-consciousness is what is expected of us and we should not budge until the goal is reached. We are told of this sort of attitude of mind even in the case of comparatively recent personalities like

Buddha and others who budged not from the aim which was given to their minds from their own point of view.

Modern times are perhaps unfit for these strict disciplines. We have umpteen problems. But the wisdom lies not in merely saying that there are problems. There were problems even for those people. We should find ourselves in the proper place. We should not misplace ourselves in unsuited contexts. We have to rise from the level in which we are, whatever the level be. It may be a child's level, an adult's level, or a mature mind's level. It may be an official's level, a student's level, or a professor's level. Each one should be able to judge for himself where he stands. He must understand what is the context in which he is placed in the background of the aspiration, what he entertains in his mind, and what are his problems.

We are told that the great Ramatirtha had a peculiar technique of his own for self-control. He used to make a list of all his desires. It was no joke. It was an honest investigation into his own mind. To some extent we can know what our desires are. Go to a secluded place, or sit in your own room, or sit behind a temple or in a forest and think what your desires are. You should not say, "I have no desires." Nor can you say, "I do not know anything." You do know something, because it is the persistent thoughts in the mind that are your desires. When you are free from the distractions of the daily functions of life, your real desires will manifest themselves. These desires have to be dealt with in a proper manner. That is the discipline called for. The discipline or *brahmacharya* which the Upanishad speaks of is the discipline of dealing with the desires. What are you going to do with your desires? Are you going to just swallow them, or oppose them and crush them, or fulfil them? You cannot answer this question easily. This is the reason why a superior person's guidance is necessary. These desires are like snakes. You cannot touch them, and you cannot keep them lying in a corner. You can not do anything with them. But you cannot keep quiet also. You know very well the nature of the snakes. So a very dexterous method has to be employed. Neither subjugating, nor crushing, nor fulfilling, in the literal sense, but tackling them in the manner they should be tackled, under the circumstances in which you are placed, considering the strength and weakness of your mind, and the consequences also of your actions—this is the discipline. So, many factors have to be considered. All this an individual cannot do alone. Therefore, a Guru is necessary.

## SOUL

*Syamac-chabalam prapadye, sabalac-chyamam prapadye asva  
iva romani vidhuya papam, candra iva rahor-mukhat pramucya  
dhutva sariram, akrtam krtatma brahma-lokam  
abhisambhavami iti.*

We are now about to enter into the realm of *Brahma*. The aspiration has gone to its zenith. So the soul speaks to itself, as it were. "I shall reach that Supreme." Literally translated the first portion of this *mantra* means, "From the dark blue one I go to the more defined one, and from the more defined one I go to the dark

blue.” Nobody can understand what these words mean if they are interpreted grammatically. The commentators say that these words refer to the state of Supreme Experience. Various commentators have different meanings to say. “From the cause I go to the subtle and from the subtle I go to the cause”—this is one meaning. Another meaning given is, “From Isvara I go to Hiranyagarbha and from Hiranyagarbha I go to Isvara.” A third meaning given is, “From Brahman I go to Isvara and from Isvara I go to Brahman.” “From the Universal I go to the Cause thereof, and from the Cause I go to the Universal,” is still another interpretation. All these are exclamations of joy of the soul that is about to enter into the ocean of Being. And how does it go to this tremendous experience? It shakes its body and cleans it up as a horse does by shaking its body and throwing off all the dust from its hairs. This is not the literal shaking off of our physical body, but a shaking off of the entire vestures of the personality. *Annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijñanamaya* and *anandamaya*—the physical, the vital, the mental, the intellectual and the causal—all these sheaths or bodies are shed automatically.

The soul now exclaims: “I shall free myself, as the moon frees itself from the darkness of the eclipse, from the mouth of Rahu. I shall be freed from the clutches of ignorance, this darkness that has been overshadowing me up to this time. I shall shake off this body which is actually not there. I have been misled into the feeling that all along it has been there. I shall free myself from this obsession. I shall become a *kritatma*, one who has fulfilled one’s purposes. The aim of life has been attained and all my purposes have been fulfilled. There is nothing left to be done now, because that which is the ultimate purpose of all my efforts and endeavours in life has been reached. I shall attain *Brahma-loka*, the Supreme Abode of the Creator. I shall reach this Abode and become one with this Abode.”

Comparatively later mystics also have spoken about experiences of this kind. The great saints of India like Sant Ramdas, Tukaram, Jñanesvar Maharaj, and in the West, mystics like Plotinus have explained this experience without using the word *Brahma-loka*. In this supernal experience, there is the consciousness of the interpenetration of things. In the words of Plotinus, everything is mirrored in everything else. It is as if everywhere we have got only mirrors to which individuals are compared. These are not physical mirrors, of course, kept in space, but non-located super-physical mirrors, if at all you can call them such, where every individual is reflected in every other individual. Everything is everywhere. This is the experience of interpenetration in *Brahma-loka*.

### **THE PRAYER OF A SEEKER FOR ETERNAL LIFE**

*Akaso vai nama nama-rupayor-nirvahita, te yad-antara, tad-brahma, tad-amrtam, sa atma, prajapateh sabham vesma prapadye, yaso’ham bhavami brahmananam yaso rajnam yaso visam yaso’ham anuprapatsi sa haham yasasam yasah syetam adatkam adatkam syetam lindu mabhigam, lindu mabhigam.*



The space that we see here is the cause of the differentiation of name and form. What we call the objects of sense are nothing but names and forms. They manifest on account of the presence of space and time. But what is inside space and subtler than it? And is that the Absolute? We can see space but we cannot see what is beyond space, inside space. That which is internal to even the subtlest object of perception which is space is the Atman. That is Brahman, the Absolute. This is the Immortal.

Now, there is the exclamation of the liberated soul. “This is the Atman, this is Brahman. For the sake of this realisation I enter the hall, the abode of Prajapati, the Creator.”

In some Upanishads, like the Kaushitaki, we have very beautiful descriptions wherein are given realistic explanations of what things are met on the way by the soul in its ascent to *Brahma-loka*. The soul enters the hall of Brahma, goes to the abode of Prajapati, the Creator, and becomes the glory of every one. Your glory and my glory, all glories are one, because the ‘I’ enters into everyone. Whatever is the greatness of anything, that becomes ‘my’ greatness. Great men, geniuses, masters, scientists, artists, whoever they be, whatever greatness they have, that is ‘my’ greatness, because ‘I’ enters into their Being, ‘I’ gets united with their Being. And whatever they are, that ‘I’ myself am. That is ‘my’ glory. The ‘I’ attains everything. ‘I’ am the Glory of all glories. What is the Glory of the glorious people in the world? That glory has come not from them, but from something else, and that am ‘I’.

“May I not enter into this womb of the mother once again,” is the last prayer of the liberated soul. He shall not enter into the womb of the mother. These peculiar words mean, “May I not enter into the womb of the mother which swallows all souls into their embodiment and limits them into personalities.”

This is the great wisdom of the Chhandogya Upanishad in its quintessence.

### **PARTING ADVICE TO THE PUPIL**

*Taddhaitad brahma prajapataya uvaca, prajapatirmanave,  
manuh prajabhyah acarya-kulad-vedam adhitya yatha-  
vidhanam, guroh karma (krtva) atisesena abhisamavrtya,  
kutumbe sthitva, sucau dese svadhyayam adhiyanah, dharmikan  
vidadhat, atmani sarvendriyani sampratisthapy, ahimsan  
sarva-bhutany-anyatra tirthebhyah, sa khalveam  
vartayanyavad-ayusam brahma-lokam abhisampadyate, na ca  
punar-avartate na ca punar-avartate.*

This is what the great Creator Brahma spoke to his children who are called the Prajapatis,—Marichi, Asvini, Kasyapa, Angirasa, and others. This Knowledge has come down through *Guru-parampara* and not through books. Books cannot give this knowledge. By word of mouth has this knowledge been communicated. “Brahma spoke to Prajapatis.” Here too, there is difference of opinion in regard to the interpretation of the meaning of the Upanishadic words. What is meant by saying that Brahma spoke to Prajapati? It may be that the supreme Brahman

spoke to the creator Hiranyagarbha also known as Brahma. Or it may be that Narayana spoke to Brahma as we hear it in the Srimadbhagavata, for instance. Or, according to Sankaracharya who has commented on the Upanishad, Brahma, the Creator, spoke to Kasyapa and other progenitors of the family of the universe who are known as Prajapatis. And these Prajapatis spoke to Manu, the first man, the Adam of our Creation. Then Manu gave this knowledge to others. So it has gradually come, stage by stage, from Guru to disciple, and finally to us.