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यत्परं ब्रह्म सर्वात्मा विश्वस्यायतनं महत् ।

सूक्ष्मात्सूक्ष्मतरं नित्यं तत्त्वमेव त्वमेव तत् ॥ १६ ॥

yatparam brahma sarvātmā viśvasyāyatanam mahat

sūkṣmātsūkṣmataram nityam tattvameva tvameva tat

यत् - which परं ब्रह्म - unconditioned *brahman* सर्वात्मा - the self of all विश्वस्य - of the universe आयतनम् - the support महत् - great सूक्ष्मात् - than the subtle सूक्ष्मतरम् - subtler नित्यम् - timeless तत् त्वम् एव - that is you alone त्वम् एव तत् - you are that alone

That which is the unconditioned *brahman*, the self of all, the great support of the universe, subtler than the subtle, and timeless, that alone you are, you are that alone. (16)

Param brahma means *brahman* that is unconditioned, limitless. To *brahman* is added the adjective, *param*, because the word *brahman* is also associated with the *aparāma* or inferior *brahman*. The word *brahman* is used for both *saguṇa-brahma* and *nirguṇabrahma*, the conditioned *brahman* and the unconditioned *brahman*, and, therefore, the adjective *param* is added as a qualification. *Param* means *deśa-kālavastu-pariccheda-sūnyam*, that which is devoid of the limitations of space, time, and attributes. In fact, the word *brahman* itself means limitless. *Brahman* is that which is unqualified or unconditionally big and limitless.

Brahman is limitless; it is *satyam jñānam anantam*. *Brahman* is *satyam*, of the nature of truth, *jñānam*, of the nature of awareness, and *anantam*, infinite. *Brahman* is *sarvātmā*, the self of all, because the universe has arisen from it. *Yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante, yena jātāni jīvanti, yatprayantya bhisaṁviśanti*. “*Brahman* is that from which the whole universe of names and forms emerges, that by which it is sustained, and that unto which it goes back.”¹ It is the *upādāna-kāraṇa*, material cause,

¹Tai.Up. 3.1

as well as the *nimitta-kāraṇa*, intelligent cause of the universe. Being the material cause, it is *sarvātmā*, the self of all, the self of the whole universe, like clay in the universe of pots. For that reason, it is also *mahad āyatanam*, the great abode of the entire universe, the substratum of the entire universe.

Brahman is also said to be *sūkṣmāt sūkṣmataram*, subtler than the subtlest, because the material cause is subtler than the effect, like clay is subtler than the pot made out of it. Subtlety implies pervasiveness; the subtler an entity, the more pervasive it is. For example, clay is more pervasive than a pot, inasmuch as clay has the potential of being any number of pots in various shapes and forms. It pervades all the effects, whereas, a pot is confined to a given name and form. Thus, the material cause is superior to and subtler than the effect. *Brahman*, the cause and substratum of everything and the self of all, is limitless and the subtlest.

Now the teacher says that one is indeed *brahman* that is described in the first line as the cause of creation, the limitless substratum and self of all, subtler than the subtlest and yet greater than the greatest, meaning that it is free from the very ideas of smallness and bigness. One may wonder, 'I can understand that *brahman* is limitless, but wait a minute, am I *brahman*? How can I be that *brahman*? I am limited in every way, while *brahman* is limitless, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. I can be a part of it, a fraction of *brahman*. *Brahman* is my self all right, but how can I be the self that is *brahman*?' It is possible that a doubt like this may arise, because the statement '*tat tvam asi*,' from the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, has been explained in different ways by different *ācāryas*. Therefore, different *ācāryas*, using their expertise in grammar, seek to distort the meaning of this simple statement revealing identity, and explain it in a way that conforms to their own notions of reality. However, this Upaniṣad eliminates all such doubts by saying "You are that," as well as "That you are," leaving no doubt about the mutual identity.

To be continued...