

Discussion Summary, November 1, 2015

Swamiji as part of his closing remarks on Katho Upanishad reminded us of the essence of second chapter.

Valli 1, Mantras 1 to 3:

Yama discussed disciplines, one of them being control of senses. Sense organs are outward looking. It is not acquired. It is instinctive. So, we are fighting our own nature. It needs a lot discrimination and will power. Some rare people master sense organs. Suppression of our senses is a control from outside. Mastery is from the inner knowledge. If one does not have sense control we will be lost in the ephemeral world of Kama or mortality including going through the cycle of birth and re-birth. So understand and master the sense organs, says Swamiji.

Valli 1, Mantras 3 to 13 :

Here Yama answers questions about Atma Swarupam. Atma is Consciousness or Chaitanya. Consciousness is not part of the body.

- . It is an independent entity that pervades and enlivens the body.
- . It extends beyond the body and is all pervading.
- . Consciousness continues to exist even after fall of body. It is eternal. It is not bound by time.
- . The Consciousness principle is the reason we are conscious of everything

Even though it is all pervading and one, it manifests in matter media in different ways. Why so? This is because of the quality of the medium. Thus electricity manifests itself in a fan as a mechanical motion while in a bulb as light.

The manifestation of consciousness occurs at three levels:

At the gross level:

1. Samashti Karana Prapancha or Total Causal Universe or Seed Form.
2. Samashti Sukshma Prapancha or the Subtle Consciousness or Hiranyagarbha and
3. Sthula Prapancha or total gross universe or Virat Chaitanya.

At the micro level:

1. Karana Shariram- Pragya Chaitanya
2. Sukshma Shariram – Saigasa Chaitanya
3. Sthula or Vishwa Chaitanya.

All six are different manifestations of Chaitanya in matter. It should be noted that micro and macro are only in matter. No such thing exists in Consciousness.

Consciousness is one but there is plurality in matter. Why?

Yama says there is no plurality in matter as well. It is same consciousness in matter as well. Consciousness with Nama and Rupa is matter.

Valli 1, Mantras 14 & 15:

Benefits of this vision:

One who sees Dvaita is born again and again. Where as one who sees Advaita becomes immortal.

Giving examples Swamiji says rainwater flowing down a mountain separately eventually gets absorbed in earth. While streams that flow down, if they merge, eventually flow down and merge into ocean. Similarly, when a wave sees itself as a wave it is mortal. The same wave when it sees itself as water becomes immortal.

Valli 2, Mantras 1-7:

These seven mantras are dedicated to Atma Swarupa Varnanam.

Jivatma is at micro level.

Paramatma is at macro level

Atma is at individual's own level.

Atma alone makes every material being alive. Atma lends consciousness to Prana. Prana thus becomes sentient. Prana then lends Consciousness to physical body. Thus body borrows from Atma through Prana. If there were no consciousness the body would be dead. Every activity in every organ is an expression of Chaitanya.

Valli 2, Mantras 8-16:

In these mantras Atma is looked at from a micro angle. The Atma is not located in the body. Rather all bodies are located in Consciousness.

Giving an example: Space is within the hall. Space is outside the hall as well. Reality is that space is all pervading.

Being Sarva Aadharam, Atma is all pervading. Example: The fire principle pervades entire earth, as does the air principle. When fire permeates metals, it seems shaped like the metal. Reality is, fire is in all metals, and in between them as well, in a furnace. Fire is formless but has form when in contact with a medium or so it seems. It

is the same with Consciousness. Even though Consciousness is all pervading it is not affected by anything. Sunlight pervades everything but it is not touched by water, color, smell etc. So also Consciousness is not tainted in any way.

Since Consciousness is all pervading it is the only One, there is not another. Other philosophies like Samkhya say there are many Atma's. They say, each body has an Atma. In Advaita, this One Atma appears as many. It manifests in a pluralistic world or as Jagat Karanam.

This Atma is Nityaha. Everything else is Anithyam. Clay is there before, during and after creation of the pot. It is the Pot that is subject to birth and death.

Atma is the cause or Karanam

Valli 3, Mantras 1-4: In these mantras Yama summarizes Atma Swarupa. Atma is alone the cause, the maker and material of the universe. Just like the spider is the intelligent cause of the web, Atma is the intelligent and material cause of the universe.

Valli 3, Mantras 5-13:

In these mantras the preparatory disciplines or the four Sadhanas are described:

1. Remembering the great human birth. Do not take it for granted. In this human birth alone gyana is possible. In Brahma loka also it is possible but it is a difficult place to get into.
2. Atma/ AnAtma Viveka. The "I" is a mixture of body, mind complex as well as Consciousness. "You" are the body and Consciousness. I is Tvampada.
3. Yoga Abhyasa or meditation to discipline the mind. The goal is to withdraw the mind or focus it in a field. This absorption is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi. It is also called Sadhana.
4. Shradha in the words of Guru and Scriptures. Give them the benefit of doubt. Listen with Shradha.

Valli 3, Mantras 14-18

In these mantras Gyana Phalam is discussed. They occur in three forms.

1. Sarva Granthi nashaha. All knots are removed. All

ignorance and misconceptions are destroyed.

2. Sarwa Kama Nashaha. All desires, all binding desires, expecting fulfillment, are gone. Non-binding desires do not affect us any way. Thus we obtain Kama Moksha.

3. Brahma Praptihi. Oneness with Brahman is obtained. Dropping the notion of division between Atma and me. Yama says the result of these benefits is available here and now.

4. The phalam of Nachiketas ritual with Virat-upasana was discussed. This will result in Krama mukti. In Brahma Loka one is liberated.

Lastly, Upanishads say, who ever gained this knowledge will also get the benefit same as Nachiketas.

Thus Katho Upanishad was concluded.

Suggested Practice:

Consider going back through these notes or listen to Swamiji's talks, periodically, to reinforce the learning from this great Upanishad.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy