

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 2

Greetings All,

Introduction:

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, we saw in the last class that Self-knowledge can be gained through shastra pramanam. It is a mirror that I need, to reflect my Self. It can, however, communicate its message correctly only with the help of a Guru. That Shastra Darpanam gives me knowledge of myself. It is also called Gyana Yoga. This Gyana Yoga has three specific exercises. They are Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam. Thus,

Sravanam: means consistently listening to teachers six fold clues that are used to extract the core teaching of Vedanta. The six fold clues or six *pramanas* are the correct means of accurate knowledge and to the truth. They are:

- 1) *Pratyakṣa* (perception),
- 2) *Anumāṇa* (inference),
- 3) *Upamāṇa* (comparison and analogy),
- 4) *Arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances),
- 5) *Anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and
- 6) *Śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts).

Without these clues one cannot get to the core of the teaching. Now, there are several interpretations of Upanishads. They include:

3. I am different and God is different.

4. God and I are only partially different and that I am part of God;
5. I am neither part nor different from God. Rather, I am that.

These several interpretations indicate the need for analysis of scriptures or a reverential enquiry into scriptures also known as Mimamsa. This process of enquiry is known as Sravanam. **Here, I learn that I am Brahman and that there is no second thing other than Me. I am the whole. I am All.** This process is called Sravanam.

Mananam:

It is meant to remove doubts about teaching. **These are the obstacles between knowledge and conviction.** Doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance. Citing an example, you see a power chord and don't know if it is live. Someone says it is not live. As you are about to touch it, he says, he is only 99% sure it is not live. In this case, you probably will not touch the power chord. Here, even one percent ignorance is ignorance.

The main Vedantic teachings are extraordinary and unswallowable. "I am infinite" is difficult to swallow. I am very sure that I am a mortal human being who is growing old and will die one day. My lifestyle is based on the fact that "I am aging and I will die". The statement I am infinite is not acceptable to me.

With respect to the world, Vedanta says, this world that we are experiencing solidly is not there at all, rather it is a mistaken version of the formless Brahman. Formless Brahman alone exists. Form-full world does not exist. Vedanta tells me, I am something I don't experience. So, with respect to Jiva, Jagat and Brahman, all three of them, I find Vedanta's position difficult to swallow. Therefore, I am full of doubts. The reason for the doubt is that my sense organs reveal a

world contrary to the Vedanta. My eyes, ears, nose etc., reveal a world of plurality or Dvaitam, while Vedanta asserts that there is only Advaitam. When there is a clash between direct experience and scriptures, we tend to believe the direct experience. Scriptures are, after all, words written a long time ago by some unknown person(s). So, How can I trust this knowledge while I am experiencing something different everyday. This conflict is called **Prameya Virodha**, or object revealed only by scripture (Advaitam) rather than by direct experience (Dvaitam).

Dvaitam and Advaitam are directly opposite to each other. This intellectual problem can be resolved only through thinking. This process of removing doubts is called Mananam. It alone can give me conviction. Only thinking can validate Vedantic teaching. Many think scriptural teaching has to be proved. It is not possible to do so. No experience can remove an intellectual problem. All intellectual problems arise from non-thinking or wrong thinking. Only right thinking can solve it. We think meditation and Samadhi will remove these doubts. This is wrong. It is said that Patanjali never got his intellectual conviction through his Yoga Samadhi. Samadhi cannot remove doubts. It can only be removed by the thinking, "I am Satyam and Jagat is Mithya".

Nidhidhyasanam:

This consists of different types of exercises. Central aim is dwelling on teaching for assimilation and internalization. Here, I am soaked in Advaita Gyanam. Nidhidhyasanam can be performed in different ways. They are:

1. Repeated Sravanam. Keep listening to teaching again and again. Be reminded of the teaching again and again.
2. Repeated reading.
3. Writing on the teaching.
4. Students of equal knowledge share their knowledge.
5. Teaching some one who does not have the knowledge.

6. Try to imitate the behavior of a Jivan Mukta. I try to imitate life of a Gyani, until I get Gyanam. As they say, fake it to make it. Citing example of namaskara to elders by children, this should be encouraged. Although it is initially a mechanical process one can hope that after some time they will discover the inner reverence too. Thus, fake namaskara becomes reverent namaskara. Chapter 2, shlokas 54-72 and other chapters of Gita deal with Jivan mukta and how they behave. It is called an alert life.
7. Samadhi Abhyasaha: This is different from other forms that you can practice any time and at any place. In this, a sitting meditation is performed in a proper posture, as per scriptures. The goal is focusing on any aspect of the teaching or behavioral problem of the individual. Some people have Kshama, Depression, Kama, Madha, Krodha, and Matsarya. One focuses on his or her area of weakness and meditates on poornatvam.

We don't insist on a type of meditation. During meditation we should dwell on the Shastra. **Purpose of this meditation is not Moksha.** Moksha is not a future event. It is an eternal fact. It is the knowledge that " I am free in spite of the situation". Nidhidhyasanam is not for Gyanam. For Gyanam one performs Sravanam. Nidhidhyasanam is not meant to prove the knowledge. Proving is only through Mananam. Nidhidhyasanam is not meant for any extraordinary experience. All experiences belong to Anatma. They come and go. Mystic experiences have no connection to Self Knowledge. A Gyani may not get any mystic experience. A Gyani may not have any Sidhi.

In this context four types of people were cited:

- 1) Gyani and Sidha;
- 2) Gyani and not Siddha;
- 3) Sidha and not Gyani;

4) Neither Gyani nor Sidha.

Among these four, only the Gyani is liberated. An Adharmic Sidha is also possible as known from stories of Rakshasas. Therefore, Nidhidhyasanam is only for assimilation of knowledge. What are the signs of assimilation?

Samasaraic reactions to life situations will change. Reactions will be healthy. You will not get a halo. Unhealthy reactions should come down. As you practice Nidhidhyasanam, there will be a gradual reduction in unhealthy reactions. This assimilation can be measured by the following:

1. **Frequency** of unhealthy reactions will be reduced. There will be more shanti or Brahmagyana phalam anubhavam.
2. **Intensity** of reaction is lower. The reaction is usually felt in mind, body and speech. Now, there will be no physical reaction. While mental reaction may occur, I can control it. I do not respond verbally as well.
3. **Recovery** period is reduced. In the past it could affect one for years. Now, it comes and goes in minutes.

Vedanta does not say we should not have a reaction. It just says we should have a reaction that is healthy. Citing another example, it is like the bouncing back of a rubber ball versus the lack of resilience in a clay ball. Thus, psychological resilience comes from Nidhidhyasanam.

From these three exercises we get Gyana Phalam or Jivan Mukti. This teaching is called:

1. Vedanta or the end part of the Vedas
2. or Gyana Kandam (Karma is not discussed)
3. or Brahma Vidya
4. or Atma Vidya.
5. or knowledge of myself as the ever-free one and it is also called Upanishad.
6. Upanishad: Shankaracharya has defined Upanishad as a teaching in which the freedom is hidden. You are

discovering freedom in yourself.

Take Away:

Vedanta says, this world that we are experiencing solidly is not there at all, rather it is a mistaken version of the formless Brahman. Formless Brahman alone exists. Form-full world does not exist.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy