

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 3

Greetings All,

Continuing his introduction to the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, in the last class he pointed out that among many Upanishads ten are most important due to Shankaracharya writing commentaries on them. All of them are chosen from the Vedas. Taittiriya Upanishad is from Yajur Veda. Yajur veda has two branches. Krishna Yajur and Shukla Yajur veda. Katho and Taittiriya Upanishads are from Krishna Yajur Veda. Ishavasa and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads are from Shukla Yajur Veda. Taittiriya Upanishad occurs at the end of of Taittiriya Aranyakam. This Aranyakam has 10 chapters. The last 4 chapters are philosophical ones. The famous Suktanamaskra or Aruna Prashna occurs in Taittiriya Aranyakam. Last four chapters 7,8, 9 and 10 of the Aranyakam are called Taittiriya Upanishad. Shankaracharya has commented on chapters 7, 8 and 9 only. He did not comment on the last chapter 10 called Mahanarayanam. Taittiriya and Ishavasa Upanishads have an uniqueness to them. They are used for pararayanam due to their swaras or intonation. They were preserved in the sampradaya of chanting. Mundako and Keno upanishad's were not preserved in the sampradaya of chanting. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad also has swaras but they are not very popular.

Two reasons are given as to how the name Taittiriya Upanishad has come about.

The first story comes from the Puranas or is of mythological origins and is considered more a symbolic one. Once there was a sage by name of Vaishampayana and he had a great disciple by the name of Yagnavalkiya. Yagnavalkiya was a brilliant student. On one occasion he insulted one of his classmates. Vaishampayana came to know about it. He knew Yagnavalkiya had a big ego. He wanted to punish him. He asked Yagnavalkiya to return all the Vedas taught to him. Yagnavalkiya vomited all

the food he had eaten and in that vomit all Vedas were surrendered as well. He lost all the wisdom he had learnt. In the vomit was also all his well-digested knowledge. A bird also digests its food and feeds that to its young. All the Rishi's who were with Yagnavalkiya thought it would be a great idea if they could become birds and eat his vomit, so that they would get the wisdom very quickly. So all Rishi's converted themselves to Tittiri birds (partridge) and they ate up his vomit. The Tittiri bird is small but it can consume a lot of food. Thus, all the Rishi's gained wisdom. It is said that because the vomit was mixed with some blood it had become dark or "Krishna", hence this knowledge is known as Krishna Yajur Veda. Later, Yagnavalkiya learnt the Vedas from Surya Bhagavan and he created the Shukla Yajur Veda. All the Rishi's who got their wisdom from the vomit, taught others the Krishna Yajur Veda and thus the Veda spread.

The symbology in this story is that Yagnavalkiya's vomit was like teaching the students a second time. Brilliant students usually grasp information very fast or the very first time. Others, slower students, need more time. It was not unusual for a teacher to ask his brilliant student to teach the slower students or his Co-brahmachari's. So, Yagnavalkiya is supposed to have taught the students who were also very eager to learn. The Tittiri bird also symbolizes a desire to learn quickly. Thus, like a Tittiri bird they received their teaching.

The second story is a simpler one. There was a Rishi named Taittiri. It was an Acharyas name not that of a bird. He was from Yajur veda paramapara. Hence, the name of the Upanishad.

This Upanishad has 3 sections that were commented upon by Shankaracharya. He did not comment on the fourth section. The last or fourth section (chapter) is the Narayanavalli and it is usually chanted while welcoming a Sanyasi. Each of the three chapters or sections is named after the very first word used in the chapter.

Thus, chapter 1, beginning with word Shiksha, is called Shikshavalli.

The chapter 2 begins with Brahma and is called Brahmavalli.

Chapter 3 begins with Brighu and as such is called Brighuvalli.

Fourth chapter is called Narayanavalli but it is not studied.

First and third chapters are not dealing with Vedanta. Vedanta occurs only in chapter 2 and is the most important one. Shankaracharya's commentary on this chapter is very famous. Chapters 1 and 2 are about preparation for gaining Gyanam and deal with Karma Yoga and Upasana.

These two subjects are discussed in chapters 1 and 3. Between these three chapters they have two shanti pathas. First chapter has a Shanti patha and chapters 2 and 3 together have another shanti patha. The invocation Sahana Vavatu comes from this shanti patha.

Shikshavalli or chapter 1:

The Shanti patha:

May Mitra be propitious to us. May Varuna bless us. May the blessings of Aryama be with us. May the grace of Indra and Brihaspathi be upon us. May Vishnu, the all pervading (wide-striding) be propitious to us. Salutations to Brahman. Salutations to Thee O Vayu! Thou art the visible Brahman. Thee alone shall I consider as the visible Brahman. I shall declare: Thou art the "Right"; Thou art the "Good". May that protect me; may that protect the speaker. Please protect me. Please protect the speaker.

Through shanti patha students are asking for Gyana Yogyatha prapthihi. All of my organs must be in a fit condition to receive knowledge. The 17 organs (The karmendriyas, Gyanendriyas etc.) should also cooperate. During Sravanam my

gyanendriyas must be active, not Karmendriyas. I must obtain Karana योग्यता प्रप्तिहि. Each organ has a Devata. I invoke these devatas so that they keep my organs fit. Various Devatas are mentioned in prayers. Prayers ask that there be no obstacles. Parthibandha Nibhadhyathi.

In this shanti patha following seven gods are invoked. They are:

Mitra: God of exhalation (outbound breath)

Varuna: Apana: God of inhalation

Aryama or Surya: God of the Eyes.

Indra: God of the hand.

Brihaspati: God of wisdom, intelligence and communication. The ability to communicate and ask questions is important. Precision and brevity in communication is required.

Urukrama or Vishnu: Is God of the feet or the ability to move and sit. Urukrama means one with big strides.

Vayu: is the Hiranyagarbha Devata or the Total subtle body. It is not visible. The visible part is Prana or Vayu. Samashti Prana is Vayu. It is total Sukshma shariram.

He is the Mangala Karta perceptible through the breath in our nostrils.

Students invoke these seven gods for auspiciousness, strength and Mangala Karta. This prayer includes prayer for fitness of teacher as well. It prays for teacher's organs and memory as well.

Naha: Student and teacher.

Namaha: Prostrating to Hiranyagarbha Tatva as it includes all Devatas or the Totality.

Hence, we worship the Pancha Maha Bhutas of Prithvi, Jalam, Vayu, Agni, and Akash Tatvam. All are worshipped during Sandhya Vandanam as well.

You are the perceptible God. I want to spread the good news.

Ritum: Living a life according to my studies. Not being a hypocrite.

Satyam: Since I should act according to my knowledge, my knowledge should be the right understanding. My knowledge should be right. It should be Right knowledge in keeping with Shastra, Reasoning and my Experience. When these three sources of knowledge are right, I have right knowledge. **Satyam is Right knowledge.**

Ritum and Satyam are embodied in Hiranyagarbha. All these are prayers for Yogya Prapthihi.

Prathibandha Nivritihi: means May god protect me. Let the obstacles go away. May God bless the Guru (Vaktaram) as well.

The Shantihi is chanted three times for removal of obstacles. These obstacles are Adhidaivika (of divine origin), Adhibhautika (originated in the physical, material beings) and Adhyatmika (created by ourselves).

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note:

Karmendriyas:

1.pāyu – the excretory organ.

Is the organ of excretion. Associated with the mooladhara chakra and the earth element.

2.upastha – the sexual organs

This is the generative organ.

3.pāda – the locomotion organ

Legs are the locomotory organs.

4.pāni – the organ of apprehension

Hands are the most complex organ of action as they can express, feel and touch.

5.vāk – the speech organ

Gyanendriyas: are the five sense organs :1. ghrāṇa – nose
2.rasanā – tongue 3.cakṣu – eye 4.tvak – skin 5.śrotra – ear

Panchamahabhootas:

- 1)Prithivi (earth) corresponds to the mooladhara chakra
- 2)Apas or Jala (water) corresponds to the Svadhistana chakra
- 3)Agni (fire) corresponds to the manipura chakra
- 4)Vayu (air) corresponds to the anahata chakra
- 5)Akasha (ether) corresponds to the vishuddha chakra.

Baghawat Geeta Class 71, Chapter 5, Verses 7 to 10

Shloka # 7:

योगस्थो योगिनश्चैतन्मूर्च्छयति ॥
सर्वभूतहितं विचार्य सर्वथा ॥ ५.७ ॥

Established in Yoga, his mind purified, his self and senses controlled, his Self becomes the Self of all living beings, he is not tainted though he works.

Greetings All,

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, in previous six shlokas Sri Krishna clarified Arjunas doubts about Grihasthashrama and Sanyasashrama, respectively. He says

there is a choice between the two and that both ashramas are good. Sri Krishna himself prefers Grihasthashrama as he feels Sanayashrama poses some risks. He says it is a one-way street. Even Bhagavatham criticizes a Sanyasi who renounces his sanyasa later, as a vomit-eater. In Grihasthashrama this risk is lower. In this ashrama, one can take Sanyasam in grihasthashrama itself or go the separate route of Sanyasashrama. This opportunity does not exist in Sanayasashrama; hence, Sri Krishna's preference for Grihastashrama.

After this clarification, now Sri Krishna talks about Sadhanas. He says one has to go through the rituals of purification. Both ashramas prescribe purification rituals called ashrama dharmas.

Following one's own ashrama dharma can purify everybody. After chitta shuddhi one then goes to Gyana Yoga.

This is the content of shloka # 7. Here, Sri Krishna is talking about Grihasthashrama, as he prefers this ashrama. Yoga Yuktha here means Karma Yogi. Chapter # 3 talks of the factors that affect a Karma Yogi. The factors are:

- He is one who gives priority to inner growth although he also knows value of material possessions.
- He considers spiritual growth more important.
- He thinks, what I am is more important than what I have.
- His security depends on what I am and not what I have.
- His happiness too depends on what I am and not what I have.
- He dedicates his life to God.
- All his actions are an offering to God and all his experiences he takes it as prasadam.

He is a Karma Yogi. This sadhana changes the personality of the individual. Vedanta measures by personality changes and not changes in possessions. The transformation is to become

pure minded. What is this purity about? It is freedom from all unhealthy ways of thinking or from Kama, Krodha, Mada, and Moha. It is removal of Asuri sampathi and allowing Daiviha sampathi to come in. He develops positive virtues and gives up negative ones.

In the words ,in the shloka,Vishud-Atma (pure minded) and Vijith atma , the word atma has two meanings. One means mind and the other the body. Vishudh atma means one who has purified his mind. Vijithatma means one who has mastered the sense organs. It is like damming a river. While damming the river saves water, if you do not channel it properly the water will flood. Therefore, it is important to store and direct the physical, mental, emotional and intellectual energies in a proper manner and this is called mastery over sense organs.

Therefore, one who has purified his mind and mastered his sense organs, he is now qualified for knowledge or he is Gyana Yogya. Purity of mind and mastery over organs is essential before Gyanam. Vedapoorva is Gyana Yogyatha and then comes Vedanta or Karma Kanda or Gyana Kanda.

Sarvabhutatma means the active person is converted to a quiet person or one transforms from an extrovert to an introvert. He says following are the stages of Gyana Yoga:

- “I” am consciousness, different from the body. It is like the light is different from my hand. The light continues even after removal of the hand. It is independent of the body. Shloka 12-25 in chapter 2 describe them as well.
- “I” the consciousness behind this body is the same behind every body. Just as the same light is in everything a book, a mike, me etc. **It is the one indivisible, one formless light that is illuminating all forms. Thus, the one formless Consciousness is pervading every formed body.**

So, the first stage is I-am-the-consciousness behind-my-body.

The second stage of knowledge is I-am-the-consciousness behind-every-body.

The third stage of Gyanam, Swamiji said, he will describe at a later time.

Gyana Yogi is one who knows I am the Atma behind my body as well as all bodies (Sarvabhutatma). This is repeated in chapter 6 again. Because of this knowledge what benefit accrues to one? He obtains detachment from Dehabhimanam. I normally tend to see everything from point of my body. Thus, one thinks, I am son of so and so; I am so many years old; etc. Our entire life is based upon Dehabhimana. Now, after Gyanam, I see consciousness functioning but not the body. From this process, detachment from my Karma also comes or Karmabhimana also leaves me. Karmabhimana is body dependent. Shankaracharya says our problems are based on two abhimanas. They are:

- Identification with body
- Identification with properties of the body.

Kurvanapi na Lipyathe means he does not identify with any action. Even in a fast car You are not the speeder. Here there is no ahamkara abhimana bhava or no Karma abhimana. One who identifies with the body becomes a karta and consequently becomes a bhokta as well.

Thus, Gyani is one who is able to objectify his own body as a part of creation. He looks at it just like another body. We are normally objective with respect to other bodies but not our own. This objectivity leads to Gods laws while subjectivity leads to resistance.

He accepts God's laws of birth, growth, decay and death.

Shloka # 8 & 9:

[illegible][illegible]

The five Gyanendriyas of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling are allowed to function. The five Karmendriyas of

breathing, talking, excreting, taking, opening and closing the eyes, breathing in and out and even sleeping (svapan, svasan, pralapan, visarjan, grhnan, unmisan nimisan) continue to function. The gyani functions just like a normal person. The only difference is that he has Gyanam. This, nevertheless, brings about a radical change in his attitude. This also changes his responses to situations. Citing the story of lottery winner, the Lottery Company wanted his doctor to convey his winning to him, as they were concerned he may not be able to bear the shock. The doctor contacted him and asked him what he would do if he won five lac rupees in a lottery? The man replied, O great Doctor, you are the reason I am still alive and I really planned on leaving you half my lottery prize. The Doctor was so shocked by his comment that he died. For a Gyani

there is nothing called shock, even if it arrives, it does not take much time, for changing from "what !", to so what? That is Gita; Gita is going "from what" to "so what"?

My body is made up of matter. Interaction of body is inevitable. One may consider staying away from the world for peace of mind. Sri Krishna asks how long can you escape the world? Your Prarabhdha Karma will make you act. Gyani acts knowing sense organs and objects will interact creating sensations. So, Gyani remembers this through all such interactions in an alert manner. He is a Yukta. " I have a higher Self" in front of which the lower self is insignificant.

Shloka # 10:

ब्रह्मनि स्थितो भगवन् कर्मणां प्रमोदितः ।
संशुद्धो न संशुद्धो न संशुद्धो न संशुद्धो ॥5.10॥

**Reposing all works in Brahman, he operates without attachment;
he is not stained by sin as a lotus is not by water**

What happens to a Gyani was discussed in previous shlokas. He

has discovered a higher "I" in front of the lower "I". Citing an example, during freedom struggle many Indians were sent to Andamans. What made them put up with this severe punishment? They too had two I's. The physical I suffered but the Indian I was predominant and therefore suffering was insignificant. You discover something far superior. Citing another example, Swamiji says, when we add water in salt and keep diluting it until salt is not felt at all. Gyanam does not give freedom from biological pain. Gyanam, however, frees you from the psychological pain. The "I" becomes insignificant. So, discovering the higher "I" is very important. Sri Krishna says, until you discover the higher "I" till then you should develop develop a love for God. Thus: From World Dependent>God Dependent>Self Dependent.

Here Sri Krishna comes back from Gyana yoga to karma yoga again. In Gyana yoga one is dependent on higher "I", while in Karma Yoga one is dependent on God.

Until you discover your higher Self, stay in Saguna Brahman or Ishta Devata. I discover Bhakti and surrender to the Lord. I dedicate all actions to that lord. Kamya karma and Nish kamya karma , both are dedicated to God. In kamya karma, when you get results, accept them as prasadam.

Take Away:

1. Gyani is one who is able to objectify his own body as a part of creation. He looks at it just like another body. We are normally objective with respect to other bodies but not our own.
2. Our problems in life are based on two abhimanas. They are:
 1. Identification with body (Dehabhimana)
 2. Identification with properties of the body.
3. The one formless Consciousness is pervading every formed body.

Ram Ramaswamy

All forms of sadhanas including Patanjali's yoga of meditation come under these sadhanas. Even Bhakti Yoga, depending on the type of practice, comes under one of these two sadhanas. When Bhakthi yoga is understood as pooja, or any type of saguna dhyanam it will come under karma yoga. When bhakti yoga is performed as a Shastric study, it becomes Gyana Yoga, a higher level of Bhakti Yoga. Thus, Bhakthi yoga is common to both

karma yoga and gyana yoga. Lower level of bhakthi yoga is called karma yoga. Higher level of bhakthi yoga is called Gyana yoga; there is no exclusive bhakthi yoga, separate from Karma yoga and Gyana yoga. Therefore, all the sadhanas will fall within these two alone.

Regarding life style, Sri Krishna says, there is a choice. We can be in society and follow both sadhanas or be out of society and follow both sadhanas. There is even a third choice in lifestyle. One can follow karma Yoga as a Grihasta then become a Sanyasi and follow Gyana Yoga. This third option is the one preferred by the Vedas.

The question is asked, how can one follow spirituality in Grihasthashrama where there are so many distractions? Sri Krishna says, in itself there is nothing wrong with Grihasthashrama. **The primary problem for a Grihasta is Raga and Dvesha.** We have expectations about everything, our children, wife, house, friend etc. One has an ideal in mind and when others do not meet that ideal, one is disturbed. We need to manage our Raga Dvesha. Such a person is a Nithya Sanyasi.

The advantage of Sanyasahrama is that the Sanyasi has no attachments. Therefore, he usually has a light mind. Even a Grihasta can enjoy a light mind if he does not have Raga and Dvesha.

Citing king Janaka as a model of Grihasthashrama, once the king was with his Guru amidst other Sanyasis. The Sanyasis looked down upon the King, as he was a Grihasta. The Guru wanted to teach the Sanyasis a lesson. He created an illusory fire in the ashram and immediately all Sanyasi's ran to protect their possessions. When they came back they found the king still sitting alone listening to the Guru's teaching. Swamiji says, wearing a saffron robe does not guarantee Sanyasa. Therefore, even a Grihasta can be a Sanyasi internally.

Swamiji clarified that Sri Krishna is not saying that one should not have Raga Dvesha. Human beings will have likes and dislikes. Even Gods have their likes and dislikes. See how Sri Krishna loves his flute and Saraswathi Devi loves her Veena and Sri Ganesha loves his carrier, the Mouse. Preferences in life will be there. Our personality is actually defined by our preferences or likes and dislikes. Sri Krishna, however says, do not become a slave to Raga and Dvesha. If you can fulfill them fine, if not convert it into a non-binding desire. What is a non-binding desire? Citing through an example, it is not unusual for a parent to dream of a child becoming an IAS officer. They try everything to help the child in this process. However, in the end, the child could become a Sanyasi. Sri Krishna says, have dreams; but be ready to face whatever happens; this is called management of ragah-dvesha. If you have this capability you are a Sanyasi.

0 Arjuna, one who has managed the Dvandas (pairs of opposites or Raga Dvesha), he will definitely attain Moksha even in Grihasthashrama. Even such a person will have to follow Karma yoga and then come to Gyana Yoga.

Shloka # 4:

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The thoughtless, not men of discrimination, affirm that Samkhya and Yoga are different. Properly resorting to either of them, one wins the fruit of both.

Sri Krishna concludes by saying that both ashramas are equally efficacious. He calls Grihasthashrama as Pravrithi marga and Sanyasashrama as Nivrithi marga. Sri Krishna has combined the four ashramas into two. Thus, Grihasthashrama includes Bramhacharya and Sanyasashrama includes Vanaprastha. Both ashramas are good and neither is superior. Only an ignorant person will say that one of them is superior or that they are

not equal. A wise person will certainly not say such a thing.

There is in Grihasthashrama a guru shishya paramapara as there is one in Sanyashrama as well. And in fact, among all the Upanishads, the most important portion is called **tatvamasi prakaranam**, where the teaching of tatvamasi comes. This teaching usually took place between a father and son. Thus, the scriptures talk about the Grihasthashrama Gyani parampara, as well as Sanyasashrama Gyani parampara. That these two paramparas existed indicate that you can get Gyanam in any of the ashramas.

In both ashramas Gyanam is possible. Sri Krishna advises that one should take the ashrama most suitable to one's inclinations and Prarabhda Karmas.

Many factors influence the type of ashrama one chooses. But once a choice is made one should follow the requirements of that ashrama implicitly. It is very important that finally the inner transformation occurs. Gyanam is also the goal of a Grihastha Sanyasi.

Shloka # 5:

संख्यया योगयोगेन च तत्त्वज्ञानं विना न भवति
तत्त्वज्ञानं तत्त्वज्ञानं तत्त्वज्ञानं तत्त्वज्ञानं तत्त्वज्ञानं 5.5

The status won by the Samkhyas is attained by the Yogins also. Only he perceives who perceives that Samkhya and Yoga are one.

Here again Sri Krishna reinforces the same ideas.

Samkhya Sanyasi's do attain moksha following Karma Yoga and then Gyana yoga. Purificatory sadhanas are many including the Sanyasi's Danda. A sanyasi does not have sacred thread he uses a danda instead. A danda puja is also performed daily. Both Sanyasi and Grihasta attain moksha through purification.

While both ashramas are equally efficient each has its plus and minus points exactly like having your own house versus a

rented house. The one who sees this fact, that person alone, sees that other people have wrong perceptions.

Sri Krishna says all this so that Arjuna does not run away from the battlefield. Arjuna, on the other hand, somehow or the other wants to run away. There is a tension between the two. If Sri Krishna says sanyasa ashrama is superior then Arjuna will run away; therefore he says that the one who sees both as equal, he alone has got the right vision.

Shloka # 6:

संन्यासः कर्मणोऽप्यसंन्यासोऽप्यसंन्यासः
संन्यासः कर्मणोऽप्यसंन्यासोऽप्यसंन्यासः 5.6

Indeed, renunciation, mighty armed! Is hard to win without Karma Yoga. With Yoga, the silent sge attains Brahman without much delay.

Sri Krishna now adds some new information. He has already said that both ashramas are equal and efficient. This is like asking which subject is better, physics or chemistry? All sciences are equally important. Now, if I have to choose one of them it is because of my mental make up and inclination. One of them may be more conducive. Some places are humid and others very dry. Some may prefer one or the other. In this context, a prepared mind is better for Sanyasa. An unprepared mind may feel very lonely in Sanyasa. There will be nobody to ask him how he feels.

Citing an example, an Indian couple was residing in a small town USA. The lady was a housewife and was often left alone. Due to loneliness she gradually became clinically depressed. Her house was a not a silent ashrama rather it was the silence of an Shmashana (cremation ground). After some time they came back to India. Here, now, she feels much better although it is very noisy.

So, to enjoy Sanyasahrama one needs a level of mind that is

different. So, only a contemplative person and one who likes Maunam, a Muni, will find it compatible. Such a person, by practicing Yoga, will attain moksha before long. So, Sri Krishna says, for majority of people, Grihasthashrama is the best choice. Sanyasahrama should be taken up only with advice of a Guru and consent of the shishya.

It is when this is not followed that one reads of the many problems with Sanyasi's today.

Shloka # 7:

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Established in Yoga, his mind purified, his self and senses controlled, his Self becomes the Self of all living beings, he is not tainted though he works.

Upto shloka # 7, it was a comparative study of the two ashramas. While both are considered good, a life of activity is considered better. Now, Sri Krishna talks of Sadhanas that both Grihastha and Sanaysi have to practice. What are those sadhanas? This shloka is all about sadhanas and the actions one has to take in his ashrama. Sri Krishna talks of Grihasthashrama first, as he prefers it.

Stages:

1. Karma Yoga Yukta: Become a karma Yogi as described in chapter # 3. Such a person is one who balances materialistic pursuit with spiritual pursuit. He does not spend all his time going after material aspects of life.

Every individual is a mixture of matter (anatma) and spirit (atma). One should find time to pursue Pancha Maha Yagna for inner growth. There is nothing wrong in acquiring money. However, one should also pursue Dharma and Moksha and not only

Artha and Kama. One may have to climb the corporate ladder initially, but at some point he must change to spirituality. In his last stages attention should be given totally to spirituality. Pray to God that just as a mango ripens and once ripe, falls, while initially I am stuck with worldly things, later I should be able to detach and become spiritual. This is called Yoga Yuktatvam. What I am is more important than what I have. If one can understand this itself one has become a Karma Yogi.

Vishudhatma in the shloka is one who depends less on external factors. Dependence is Samsara. Independence is moksha. Thus, less dependence psychologically is Vairagyam. Thus, detachment is purity. Raga Rahit Atma is same as Vishudhatma, which is same as Vairagyam.

Take Away:

We have expectations about everything, our children, wife, house, friend etc. One has an ideal in mind and when others do not meet that ideal, one is disturbed. This is Raga Dvasha. We have to overcome this.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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?

Samasara 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

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 1

Greetings All,

Introduction:

Starting his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, as a general introduction he wanted to recollect from his previous discussions on Upanishads. Basic scriptures are called Vedas also known as sources or instruments of Knowledge. They are four in all. They are further divided into two parts. First part is known as Veda Poorva while second part is known as Veda Anta.

Veda Poorva, also known as Karma Kanda, is dedicated to a wide variety of karmas or rituals. All these karmas are broadly classified into three categories. They are:

1. Kayika Karamani: Physical body plays a big part in them.
2. Vachika Karmani: Are in the form of Japas and Parayanams.
3. Manasika Karmani: It is purely through meditation.

All these karmas are also known as Upasanas. Scriptures prescribe these three karmas for obtaining different types of

karmaphalams. Therefore, these three karmas are also known as Sadhanas or means of obtaining different aims in life. Karma Kandas also calls them as Sadhana Trayam. These Sadhanas can produce end results called Sadhyams for our benefit. While there are many goals, these goals have been classified into three or the Sadhya Trayam. They are:

- Upadhi Prapthihi: Goals of improving our organs of pleasure, better health, better sense organs, improved mental faculty (intelligence and memory) etc. Thus, the Samidadhanam required to be performed by a Brahmachari is for improved memory and intelligence. It is also for improved emotional health, (shantihi), for intellectual health (shradha) etc. Overall purpose is to improve instruments of living and enjoyment or improving oneself.

Now, once you feel further improvement is not possible, due to age, health etc., then one can pray for another good body in the next birth as well. This too is Upadhi prapthihi.

- Vishaya Prapthihi: Is to improve objects of enjoyment. Thus, to obtain a good family, wife children, friends are all wishes that fall in this category. Each of these is important else life can become miserable.
- Lokaha Prapthihi: The environment of interaction between Self and objects should be favorable. It should be peaceful. It means improve present atmosphere or replace existing atmosphere. An atmosphere of violence, anger, hatred etc., is after all not very conducive for happiness.

All above are the Karmas or the three means and their respective three ends. Even if a person is lucky to enjoy all of the above three, such a Satvik person will learn from Life's Lessons. Important lessons learned are that all three goals are wonderful, however, inherent in them are deficiencies or Doshas. While these Doshas are relatively good

(Preyaha) they are not absolute good or Sreyaha. Thus, there are three Doshas or Dosha Trayam. They are:

1. Dukhamishritatvam: This includes desire for acquisition, preservation and loss. All three of them can also cause pain.
2. Atripthihi: They will not give us total satisfaction. You will always crave for more. You will tend to compare and there will always be someone with more than you.
3. Bandhatvam: When we have them and use them, we soon also become dependent on them. One becomes attached or addicted. You become more dependent without your own knowledge.

Most of us do not think of these Doshas. Many of us do not worry about it. A slum person prefers his slum even if a better place is offered to him. He will rent the new place and come back to his slum.

However, some people start exploring some goals that are free from these Doshas. To such intelligent people, Vedas say, there are such goals, but they cannot be obtained from Karma Kanda. Karma Kanda only deals with Preyaha. If you want Sreyaha you have to go somewhere else. Such an intelligent seeker is called a Mumukshu. Others are called Bubhukshu. Karma Kanda cannot serve a Mumukshu. Mumukshu has to go Vedanta for this.

So, what is this defect free goal? That defect free goal is Brahman or Moksha. It is not mired in dukha, atripthi and bandhaha.

Where is this Brahman and how to acquire it? Vedanta says you can never obtain it because that defect free one is in the form of the "Seeker" in you. You are that. I also have a very difficult time swallowing the idea that I am that defect free Brahman. Everything I have, has defects, including my body, mind and intellect. They all have limitations. All my

experiences, so far, have proven my limitation. Even my children tell me that I was a terrible parent. In this context I have a big doubt if I am a defect free Self. There is a very big gap between what I think of myself versus what Vedanta thinks of me. I sometimes feel like dropping the Gita, Upanishads and the Guru.

If I am born in a culture where Shraddha in scriptures is important, I will not drop the Upanishad. A boys Upanayana ceremony lasts four days and on the last day the Brahmachari worships Shradha Devi. To such a person the Shradha comes that the Vedas cannot go wrong. I develop deep faith in the Vedas. So, I need to question my conclusions. I have taken it for granted, "I am finite". I need to re-analyze my conclusion. Therefore, I have to start a Self Enquiry to verify if my conclusion is valid or not. For a long time human beings thought the Sun went around the Earth. Then came a person who said that the Earth went around the Sun or that we are not in a Geo-centric universe. This scientist was harassed and rejected.

When I enter into Self Enquiry, I find, I don't have the instruments for such an enquiry. Just as we have a telescope to study the stars and a microscope to study bacteria, I don't have an instrument to study the Self. Here I am enquiring into the Enquirer. Regular instruments are not useful for such an enquiry. Such regular instruments are also known as Pauresheya Pramanani because they are extrovert in nature and not useful for such an enquiry.

I need a special mirror, one to reveal my real "I". This is known as Shabda Pramanam or a verbal mirror. When somebody tells you, "you look jaundiced" (yellow) it is a Shabda Pramana or a Shabda mirror. When I try to study the Upanishad by myself, I find they use peculiar methods that are different from objective science. Shastra has to use words to reveal my Self.

Other methods will only give us an intellectual and in-direct knowledge. Other methods tend to objectify. Description of the Brahman is not one of an object rather it is one of my own Self. If not, Student will say he has understood but not experienced the Brahman. This knowledge and experience dichotomy (or division) does not occur in Brahmagyanam. The student should not come to a definite conclusion. Therefore, a Guru alone can make the Upanishad speak to you. What is the method used by the Guru? He uses six factors in the primary teaching also known as Tatparyam. It is “ You are what you want to be in life”. It will teach that you are a secure and immortal being. This teaching has to be provided consistently, again and again until the student nods his head in understanding.

Take Away:

There is a very big gap between what I think of myself versus what Vedanta thinks of me. It is very difficult to believe that I am that defect free Brahman.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 69, Chapter 5

Greetings All,

Continuing his teachings of Gita, Swami Paramarthananda started Chapter 5 today. He said in chapters 2, 3 and 4

respectively, Sri Krishna spoke about two topics. He spoke about Sadhana and Lifestyle. Recapping those teachings Swamiji said:

1. **Sadhana:** Regarding Sadhana he made it clear that everyone has to go through Karma Yoga Sadhana and Gyana yoga sadhana. There is no choice. Karma Yoga is the means towards Gyana Yoga and Gyana Yoga is the means towards liberation.

Karma yoga is a means and Gyana Yoga too is a means while moksha is the end. You can have a choice between means and a choice between ends but not a choice between a mean and an end. One can choose between pants or shirts. Here, there is choice. Choice is only between similar. Thus, one can't choose between a pant and a shirt. Similarly, one cannot choose between Karma Yoga and Gyana Yoga. Once you choose an end, it means the means is a given.

Citing an example, getting into a bus is meaningful only when you have chosen not only the bus but also the destination. You cannot choose the bus without choosing the destination. We are not getting into the bus for a joy ride. Similarly, if you have chosen a destination, you have to choose the means as well.

Citing another example, suppose I go to a doctor for stomach pain and the doctor prescribes a tablet. I cannot get away from not taking the tablet. If I chose the end of removing the pain, I have to choose the means as well. Therefore, choosing the means and end is complementary; one choice will validate the other choice and the other way around as well. Thus, Karma Yoga is the way to come to Gyana yoga. Gyana yoga is the way to Moksha.

Citing another example, it is just like a person occupies both the father status and son status. With regard to his son, he is the father and with regard to his father, he is the son.

From Karma yoga's perspective Gyana Yoga is an end. From Moksha's perspective Gyana Yoga is the means.

After explaining quite a bit by Sri Krishna, Arjuna is still not clear. His confusion is with respect to sadhana. This is an area of confusion to many people.

There are people who think karma yoga and gyana yoga are alternative means of liberation. Many still think and talk about different paths to liberation. Thus, if you are an active person, you attain moksha through karma and if you are an intellectual person, you attain moksha through Gyana yoga.

Even Shankaracharya struggled to clarify this confusion. He too says karma yoga cannot lead you to liberation, it will take you to Gyana yoga and Gyana yoga will lead to liberation; this is one part of the teaching;

Then there is second part of teaching with regard to the lifestyle. A person can lead two types of lifestyles, one is life of activity in society and the other is life of seclusion or life of work and life of withdrawal.

or Life in society and life in seclusion.

2.Life style:

Sri Krishna described two types of lifestyle. One is a person who is active in society and other is one who leads a life of seclusion.

Active in society is known as Grihasthashrama. While one leading a life of seclusion is known as Sanyasahrama. In olden times, after Gurukula, both lifestyles were open to a person. A lifestyle is also called a Nishta. Sri Krishna points out that every person has a choice in lifestyle. One can be a Grihastha or a monk. Whatever lifestyle or ashrama one adopts in both of them you have to have follow Karma yoga and then follow up with Gyana Yoga.

Grihasthashrama Dharma is Karma Yoga for householders. Sanyasahrama is Karma Yoga for monks. Both have their rites, pujas and rituals prescribed.

Grihastha will have a sacred thread while a Sanyasi has a danda. Grihastha has got rituals, prayers, pujas and parayanams. Sanyasi too has rituals, prayers, pujas and parayanams. The type of parayanams may vary.

For a grihastha Vishnu Sahasranama and similar mantras are emphasized. For the sanyasi,

Upanishad, Bhashyams, etc. are emphasized.

For a grihastha, saguna ishvara namas are given, like Namashivaya, Narayanaya etc.; for a Sanyasi, Upanishad mahavakya mantras are given for japa, or Omkara japa, and other similar mantras are also given. For both, puja is a requirement. All these are necessary to develop a mental conditioning required for reaching Gyana yoga. A sanyasi should qualify himself to enter Gyana yoga. A grihastha also has to qualify himself to come to Gyana yoga.

Sri Krishna asks all to follow their Svadharma.

Once ready, both should come to Gyana Yoga. Thus, in sadhana, there is no choice. In lifestyle, however, there is choice. Each lifestyle has plusses and minuses. For Gihastashrama the plus points are he is able to perform Pancha Maha Yagna, perform noble services for society, he has security through his children, family and wealth. The minuses are that he has equal responsibilities. He has to raise his children, provide education, marry off his daughters etc. He has to face the fears and anxieties related to raising a family.

In Sanyasa ashrama, however, there is no responsibility, no wife, no husband, no children and you need not bother about anything. If you get hungry, ask Bhavathi Bhiksham Dehi; somebody will give Bhiksha. So, while there is no

responsibility there is also no security.

So, every ashrama has got it's plus and minus points. Therefore, Sri Krishna says, take to any ashrama and pursue both the sadhanas and get liberation.

After listening to all this Arjuna wanted further clarification. He wants to know about the Nishta, when there is a choice. **Decision-making is always difficult. This is so, because we don't want to face the consequences of our decision.**

Arjuna's mind at the moment is voting for Sanyasa. He does not want to kill. In crisis, he wants to escape with Sri Krishna's blessings. His question is which is better, Grihastha or Sanyasa? Sri Krishna is going to talk about Sanyasa Yoga.

Shloka # 1: Arjuna said:

संन्यासं कुरुष्व मे त्वत्परां वदस्व मे
संन्यासं कुरुष्व मे त्वत्परां वदस्व मे॥5.1॥

The renunciation of works, Krishna, and again, their performance you praise. Tell me for certain which of the two is better.

In spite of Sri Krishna's clear teaching, Arjuna asks: Sri Krishna, you glorify both ashramas. You have glorified life of activity (grihasthashrama). You have also glorified Sanyasa Ashrama, life of seclusion. The two are contradictory. So, Sri Krishna, tell me, which one is better of the two? Both are opposites. I cannot follow both, life of seclusion and life of activity, at the same time.

In fact, the grihastha is supposed to be the pillar of the society. He is the one who nourishes all the other three ashramas because all the three ashramas live on Bhiksha. Thus, a brahmachari has to live on Bhiksha; a vanaprasthi has to live on Bhiksha and a sanyasi also has to live on Bhiksha

alone. So, if the three ashramas have to receive Bhiksha, somebody has to give it. So, he is the one who gives Bhiksha.

Some other monastic religions glorify Sanyasa. Ashrama is a place of spiritual sadhana. Ashrama can happen in family life too. Such a person is unaffected even in his family life. Janaka Maharaja is often cited as an example of a Grihastha Gyani.

Thus, says Swamiji, it is not a choice between Sadhanas rather it is a choice between lifestyles.

Shloka # 2:

Sri Krishna said:

[illegible]

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Both renunciation and Karma Yoga promote the supreme good; but of the two, Karma Yoga is superior to the renunciation of works.

Sri Krishna says, both ashramas are equally good for both sadhanas. In Vedanta the term Dvanda is used. It means everything in creation has a good and a bad aspect to it.

Both ashramas are equally good for following karma yoga sadhana and Gyana yoga sadhana. Karma yoga can be efficiently followed in grihastha ashrama; but for Gyana yoga the obstacles for Grihastha are many while you require an undistracted life. The many duties of grihasthashrama are all seen as obstacles. Therefore, in grihastha ashrama, karma yoga can be ideally followed;

In sanyasa ashrama, karma yoga cannot be ideally followed because he does not have the resources to do a lot of karmas; there is no money with them; he cannot do any good karma; he has to manage with limited activities, like japa, puja,

susrusha, etc. Therefore, there are certain advantages in following some sadhanas and some disadvantages in following other sadhanas. However, in both, you can follow the sadhana and attain liberation; therefore in both ashramas one can follow the sadhana and attain liberation.

Shastra also talks of the ashrama that fits a type of person. Sanyasa requires a particular mental make up that is not an easy one. Sanyasa ashrama is dangerous for an unprepared person. Sri Krishna, says, for majority of people life of activity is safer and ideal. In Vedas there are rules when one goes from Brahmacharya to Grihastha. From Brahmacharya one can also go to Sanyasashrama with Guru's advice and Shishya's acceptance.

The greatest risk of sanyasashrama is that you can't go back. It is an irreversible process.

So, Sri Krishna says, Grihastha Ashrama is a better choice for majority. He says Gita is for general public, while Upanishad is for evolved one's. While Upanishad prefers Sanyasahrama, Gita considers Grihasthashrama as the best. We should keep in mind that in Gita, both the Teacher and Student were grihastas.

Shloka # 3:

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Know him to be a perpetual renouncer who neither shuns nor seeks, O mighty-armed! One who is above such contraries is really liberated from bondage.

Now that Sri Krishna has recommended Grihastha Ashrama, is there any way one can get advantage of both Ashramas? This is a thought that can come in a person's mind. Sri Krishna, addressing this question, says, there is a method. He says one needs to handle Raga and Dvesha in Grihastashrama.

Householder's life is influenced by many factors. It is said nine planets influence a householder. A son-in-law is considered the tenth planet. He is a planet over which you have no control. Whatever he does affects your daughter but you cannot do anything about it.

Thus, there are many relationship that are similar, in which you have no control. When you get married to a girl and you place a knot on one neck simultaneously you

are putting knots on many other necks as well. You are immediately related to the girl's family. All these knots are factors that can influence you but you cannot control them. Therefore, you have to learn to manage your ragah-dveshah. Whether your likes and dislikes are fulfilled or not, you have to learn to navigate through life without being affected. This requires tremendous strength; And therefore Sri Krishna says a grihastha is a sanyasi, if he has learnt to handle likes and dislikes; For one who has managed his ragah-dveshah the house itself is an ashrama That is the trick. Sri Krishna , however, does not say how we are to manage Raga and dvesha.

Take Away:

Decision-making is always difficult. This is so, because we don't want to face the consequences of our decision.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Symbology of Nataraja

This is a power point presentation based on the book “Rambles in Vedanta” by Rajam Iyer, published in 1946. In his book, Shri Rajam Iyer shows how Nataraja is represented by vedantic philosophy and indirectly, gives guidance on how saguna brahman is connected to nirguna brahman. Download links are below the power point presentation.