

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 26

Greetings All,

Chapter 2, Anuvakaha 1, Shloka # 3 and first line of shloka # 4:

(The shloka's recited by Swamiji are numbered differently from the book we are reading).

From that (which is) this Atman, is space born; from akasa, air; from air, fire; from fire, water; from water, earth; from earth, herbs; from herbs, food; and from food, man. He indeed is this man consisting of the essence of food.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad Swamiji refreshed our memory about last week's class. He said we have completed the topic of Srishti Prakriya or creation. Brahman was defined as Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. By showing Brahman as the Karanam the Upanishad says it alone (karanam) is manifesting everything in the universe. It expresses itself as Existence. If Karanam is removed Karyam loses its existence. Thus, if gold is withdrawn the ornament loses its existence. This is called Anvaya Vyatirekha logic. Thus, gold alone "is" in every ornament. So also it is with Karanam, it alone is in all Karyam. Thus, Brahman is the "is" ness in everything. Thus, we say, the ocean is, the sky is etc. Brahman, that is also Satyam, lends this flowing "is" ness. It is also all pervading, hence known as Anantam. It is also Gyanam. Karyam, a product, cannot exist without Karanam. World cannot exist without Karana Brahman. That is why Brahman is also known as one without a second. There is after all no bangle other than Gold. So too, there is no world separate from Brahman. Hence, Brahman is known as the one without a second. Brahman is unlimited. Srishti Prakriya clarified Brahman's definition as Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. Upanishad originally asked three questions. What is Brahman? How to know Brahman? What is

Poornatvam? In Srishti Prakriya, what is Brahman has been answered.

The next topic is an elaboration on the second question of how to know Brahman? We have already provided a brief answer to this question. The answer is that Brahman has to be recognized as the “Witness Consciousness” in one’s mind. In one’s mind it is not the arriving and departing thought(s), rather it is the witness of all thoughts. Even the gap between two consecutive thoughts is in the awareness of the witness consciousness. Do not search for this witness consciousness, says the Teacher. Remember that it is, “I am”, the one who is reporting the blankness of the mind. So, it is the “I” the Atma alone. It is the Sakshi Chaitanya roopa “ Aham Brahma Asmi”. This brief answer is in the Rig Veda mantra that is quoted.

Chapter 2, Anuvaka 1, Shloka # 4:

This is his head. This is his right wing. This is his left wing (side). This is his trunk. This is his hind part forming his support and foundation. About this also is the following Vaidika verse.

In our book the first line of this shloka begins with Sa Va.... And Swamiji says this first line belongs to the shloka #3. This brief answer to the second question is now elaborated upon. It begins with the second line of shloka # 4 and starts as “ Tasyedmeva Shiraha...” And ends in anuvaka # 5.

The Upanishad now presents a method called Pancha Kosha Viveka Prakriya to know the Brahman. Taittiriya Upanishad is famous for this Pancha Kosha Viveka Prakriya. The Pancha Koshas are:

- Annamaya kosha – the food sheath
- Pranamaya kosha – the mind sheath
- Manomaya kosha – the mind sheath
- Vijnayanamaya kosha – the intellect sheath
- Anandamaya kosha – the bliss sheath

What is this method?

To know Brahman as “ I am”, when I use the word Aham, it represents I as the witness consciousness. So, I raise the level of my consciousness. It has to be raised to the subtlest consciousness that is the Witness consciousness. Only then can I claim Aham Brahma Asmi. It is a very abstract concept. This witness consciousness is not a part, property, dimension, taste etc., and does not have any attributes. It is an inconceivable entity. It is this abstract consciousness that is meant by the word “ I” from our present gross level of existence.

Presently, I am at a gross level from which my consciousness has to be raised. This raising has to be done gradually. There is a big gulf between present state and the level to be reached. The way to reach the future state (of consciousness) is by going through a series of steps, one step at a time. This gradual journey of the mind is achieved through Pancha Kosha Prakriya also known as Arundhati Darshanam Nyayaha.

One who wants to reach the greatest state has to place his full attention on each step before moving to the next one. The Upanishad talks of five steps to reach the goal, one for each kosha.

He has to approach the first step as though it is the goal. He has to approach it with his full attention. Once you reach step one, steady yourself. Then, go to step two. Each step must be approached with full attention as if it is the final destination. Once you have completed the first step, it falls away and just remains as a Sadhyam. Then, the second step becomes a sadhanam. Thus, each of the five koshas are to be ascended to reach the Atma.

So, approach the first step, the annamaya kosha as if it is the Atma itself. Once you reach the kosha steady yourself and then go to Pranamaya kosha. Here, then, Annamaya becomes

Anatma. Then continue on to Mano maya kosha. In this journey of the mind, each step or kosha becomes Atma first but later becomes Anatma. Thus, the mind is refined. Annamaya is gross while pranamaya is subtler. By the time one reaches Ananda maya kosha everything else has become Anatma. Once the mind is ready to understand the subtlest form of matter, you are ready to be introduced to the Consciousness Principle, which is the Witness of the “changing matter principle”.

So, first see the physical body as the Atma. See it as, “ I am the body’. All transactions are based on this principle.

Tasya in shloka means Annamaya Atma, the first step. Be aware of your physical features. It says, the features are: the head of annamaya atma; the right hand in right side of annamaya atma; the left hand on the left side of annamaya atma; Navel to neck as annamaya atma and lastly the portion below navel to one’s seat.

These are the five features of annamaya atma. With regard to this annamaya atma the following Rig mantra is useful. Using this mantra as an Upanishad we will steady ourselves on step one.

Chapter 2, Anuvakaha # 2, Shloka # 1.

All beings that exist on earth are born of food. They, hereafter, live by food; again, they ultimately go back to it and merge to become food. So, verily, food is the eldest of all creatures. On that ground it is called the medicament for all. Those who meditate on Brahman as food, indeed obtain all food. From food all beings are born, having been born, they grow by consuming food. Food is that which is eaten by the beings and also that, which in the end eats them; therefore, food is called annam.

We are now entering anuvaka # 2 with a Rig mantra for annamaya atma. The physical body is annamaya as it is a product of annam. Thus, we also say swarna maya for an ornament as it is made of gold (swarna). Thus:

Material cause + Maya= Effect.

Maya is added only to a material cause. Annam generally means food. Here in the shloka, however, annam represents the entire world of matter. Thus, from the universe come the plants; from plants come the food. This matter is known as annam. It is responsible for the Pancha Bhautika Sharira. The body is only a wave in the ocean of matter. It comes out of matter and goes back to it as well. We can say the gross universe is annam.

Prajaha in shloka means all physical bodies. All bodies are born out of gross matter. Thus, iron has to come through leafy matter (spinach) to the body for digestion. Thus, body is born.

All beings (insects, plants, humans..) dwelling on earth are from annam. Annam is Srishti Karanam for annamaya. Gross world provides food for me to absorb. Annam becomes Sthiti karanam. In the end Annamaya goes back to matter alone.

Annam is Virat shariram and it resolves in samashti annam. Annam is Srishti laya karanam. Annam is also upadana karanam. Karyam and updanam are essentially same here. The micro and macro are one and the same. Vishwa and Virat are the same. Thus, Annamya atma and annam are one and the same.

Annam as gross matter or universe must have existed before bodies were born or before annamaya atma. Gold must be there before an ornament can come into being. Therefore annam is called eldest son or Jyeshtam. Bhutanam means all annamaya atma's.

Because it is Karanam, it pervades all Karyam. Therefore it is called Annam Brahma. It is eldest and existed before all beings. So meditate on this annam. That is the reason food is worshipped as it represents Anna Brahman.

Take Away

1. The Brahman has to be recognized as the “Witness Consciousness” in one’s mind.
2. While reading the Upanishad please note that Valli means chapter and Anuvakaha means Section.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Note on Anvaya Vyatireka: These two words anvaya and vyatireka occur often in Vedanta. Anvaya is concordance or agreement and Vyatireka is discordance or difference. In vedAnta, the example of the beads strung to form a necklace is used to explain these two words. The fact that without the string which holds together the beads, there is no necklace of beads is anvaya. The fact that, however, the string is separate from the beads is vyatireka. The all-pervasiveness of the Absolute is anvaya. The distinctness of the Absolute is the vyatireka.

Note on Arundhati Nyaya: It signifies the method of leading from the gross to the subtle, from the known to the unknown, in logic and philosophy.