

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 42: Summary of Brahmanandavalli

1. Greetings All,

Swamiji said, today, I am giving you a summary of the Brahmanandavalli chapter. It is the main chapter of the Upanishad giving us the vedantic teaching. Chapters 1 and 3 are considered preparatory chapters dealing with preparatory disciplines only. Preparatory disciplines are also important in understanding Brahmanandavalli. In my summary, I am going to discuss it topic by topic.

Brahmanandavalli has nine sections or anuvakahas. It begins with Sutrabhaga, a capsule like aphorism, or capturing in a nutshell. A vrithi bhaga or a short note comments upon this sutra. The Vrithi bhaga is further elaborated upon in Vyakhyana bhaga. Thus, Sutra, Vrithi and Vyakhyana are three bhagas of Brahmanandavalli.

Sutra Vrithi: The sutra says the knower of Brahman attains the highest. The highest can be moksha or Brahman. This leads to three questions?

1. What is Brahman?
2. What is the method of knowing Brahman?
3. What is meant by, attaining the highest?

All three topics are dealt with in the Vrithi Bhaga.

1. Regarding what is Brahman the Upanishad says it is Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. Satyam here means pure existence; a noun and as a substance. Gyanam here means pure consciousness as an entity in itself or as a substance. Anantam means infinite or limitless as an adjective. **So, this limitless existence consciousness, this substance, is called Brahman.**

2. Regarding method of knowing Brahman, the Upanishad says, it is to be recognized in one's own mind. **It is known as "I" the witness of presence and absence of thought in the mind and as non-different from myself or as Aham Brahma Asmi.**
3. Regarding, what is meant by attaining the highest, the Upanishad says, it is attainment of all pleasures simultaneously. It is simultaneous fulfillment of all pleasures. Swamiji says, enlightened means mind becomes lightened.

With this Vrithi bhaga is over in anuvakaha # 1. Vyakhyana Bhaga was then discussed. It is an elaboration on the three topics already discussed. The elaboration is performed in following manner:

1. The method of elaboration on srishti prakranam is used to define Brahman.
2. Method of knowing Brahman is elaborated upon through pancha kosha viveka.
3. Method of attaining the highest is elaborated upon through ananda mimamsa.

Srishti prakaranam: From creation of akasha to the body is definition of Brahman. It is clarified in two ways.

1. Brahman is presented as Karanam.
2. World is presented as Karyam.

Karanam is that which exists before, during and after creation. Thus, clay exists before pot creation, after pot creation and after destruction of pot. Whatever remains in all three states of existence is Satyam. Karyam does not exist in all three states. It exists only in the present. Karyam, a product, does not exist separate from Karanam. World does not exist separate from Brahman. So, world is not a separate thing. Thus, one cannot say, water and wave are separate; similarly there is no duality between Brahman and the world. Thus, world cannot limit Brahman as there is no world other

than Brahman. Therefore, Brahman is limitless anantham. Srishti prakaranam thus shows Satyam and Anantam. Gyanam comes later under pancha kosha viveka.

3. Pancha Kosha viveka: This topic is discussed from anuvakaha # 1 to anuvakaha # 5. Here the Upanishad takes the student to finer states of mind. Mind is brought to its subtlest principle from the gross. In anandamaya, subtlest form of mind, mind enjoys calmness and fulfillment or priya, moda and pramoda. This is all ananda maya kosha.

So, now, how does one get to atma?

Once mind becomes calm will atma rise? Answering, the Upanishad says, never look for atma. It is the onlooker, the "I", the witness of priya, moda and pramoda; that "I", am the atma. Atmananda is the subject of experience. When is it available? It is available at all times say the shastras. Atma is ananda. This witness is called Brahman. It is a mahavakyam. With this pancha kosha viveka topic is over.

3.What is meant by the phalam or attaining the highest? This is discussed through ananda mimamsa topic in anuvakaha # 8. Anuvakaha 6 and 7 are discussed as side topics. Upanishad says there are two types of anandas: Atmananda and Koshananda.

The features differentiating these two anandas are:

1. Koshananda is a reflection while atmananda is the original.
2. Atmananda is a subject of experience. It is never an object. Whereas koshanada is always an object.
3. Atmananda is not subject to gradation. Koshananda is graded as priya, moda and pramoda, as such subject to gradation.
4. Koshananda can be attained through sense objects as well as through Vairagyam or contentment.

For getting atmananda there is only one method; that is by knowing that it is the very nature of the seeker. One who has all sense objects has koshananda. One who has vairagya will also obtain koshananda. However, it is only the one who has gyanam that gets both atmananda and koshananda. One who has gyanam has koshananda and Vairagya. Vairagya is essential for gyanam. Gyani, thus, enjoys atmananda and koshananda. This is known as phala prapthi.

Suppose this Gyani gets an opportunity for sense pleasures, does it make a difference to him? Swamiji says, it does not make any difference to him. With this anuvakha # 8, on phalam is over.

All three topics have been elaborated upon. Now Upanishad concludes with an upasamhara. Conclusion is that Gyani is not afraid of losing ananda. Gyani also goes through empathy and other emotional feelings. At time of sharing grief with others he is still aware of his own ananda. So, he does not fear.

Incidentally, the Upanishad adds, Gyani does not dwell on his past, his pre-gyanam days, and grieve. He does not feel hurt and guilt. Karta feels guilt while bhokta feels hurt. He sees them as mithya; as such he does not have samsara. This is moksha prapthi. With this Vrithi and Vyakhyanam, both are over.

Anuvakha # 6 and 7:

They are an aside of Brahmanandavalli. A student raised three questions. The questions are known as anuprashnaha. One question was an implied one while other two were explicit.

The questions were:

1. Is there a Brahman at all? Upanishad says, Brahman is not available for any transaction such as physical, emotional etc. What is proof of its existence? Some philosophers such as Visishtadvaita don't accept idea

of a nirguna Brahman. This implied question was answered elaborately. Seven answers were given. They are:

1. Brahman is nimitha karanam
2. Brahman is jivatma.
3. Brahman is the material cause; Brahman is existent as universe.
4. Brahman is Self Creator or Sukritam
5. Brahman is ananda.
6. Brahman is life principle.
7. Brahman is Bhaya Abhaya Cheta.

The final answer is that Brahman exists.

Now for the two other explicit questions, the answer is an implied one. The first answer is that the question is a wrong one to begin with. There is no question of attaining Brahman. Brahman is not an object to attain. Brahman is "I" myself (wise or ignorant person). **So there is no reaching Brahman. I am Brahman. So long as I am ignorant, I feel a notional distance. Thus, one feels one has not attained Brahman. In wise person this notional distance does not exist. He does not crave for Brahman. There is no reaching Brahman for him. Therefore, wise person has "as though" attained Brahman.**

Take away:

1. Brahman is not an object to attain. Brahman is "I" myself (one with wisdom or ignorant one). So there is no reaching Brahman. I am Brahman. So long as I am ignorant, I feel a notional distance. Thus, one feels "as though" one has not attained Brahman. In wise person this notional distance does not exist. There is no reaching Brahman for him. Therefore, wise person has "as though" attained Brahman.
2. So, this limitless existence consciousness, **this substance**, is called Brahman.

3. It (Brahman) is known as “I” the witness of presence and absence of thought in the mind and as non-different from myself or as Aham Brahma Asmi.
4. The Upanishad says, never look for atma. It is the onlooker, the “I”, the witness of priya, moda and pramoda.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy