

Discussion Summary, October 25, 2015

Greetings All,

Continuing his recap from last week of Mantra 13 in Part 2, Cantos 3, Swamiji reminded us that in this last and final section Yama is summarizing Brahma Vidya and enumerating some qualifications required for it, as well as, the benefits of this knowledge. With Verse # 13 the first two requirements of what is Brahma Vidya and qualifications

required for it have been completed. Faith in Brahman is required. Brahman is not available for objectification by the mind, senses or words. It is totally without attributes. Even Philosophers do not accept Nirguna Brahman. So Sraddha is very important until we absorb the teachings. This open mindedness is very important and is called

Shraddha. Now we are entering the description of the Phalam of obtaining Brahma Vidya.

Mantra # 14:

Phalam is freedom here and now. Freedom from what, asks Swamiji? It is not freedom from the physical body. It is the inner freedom from fear, anger, insecurity etc. all symptoms of Samsara. Above all it is freedom from Kama. Due to ignorance we identify with the body mind complex. Due to Ahamkara, ignorance expresses itself in life as something wanting. Since, I cannot withstand limitation, there is always a struggle to remove this limitation. Thus, we experiment and have long struggles to obtain Purnatwam. Kama freedom is freedom from this struggle. I do not do anything for this completion. I do everything out of this completion. Samsara is the binding desire while

non-binding desire is with completion. The binding desire goes away with Brahma Vidya.

All desires are located in the mind including desire for moksha or desire for desire less-ness. Even this goes away. Gyana recognizes I am That. Such a person is immortal, free from the cycle of births. Our next birth is decided in this life, at time of death, by our strongest desire. So he is beyond the cycle of life and deaths. It is the "I" who thought he is mortal, now thinks he is immortal. It is an intellectual journey, not a physical one. The notion of mortality is lost. He becomes one with Brahman, here and now. Moksha is even while we are alive. This is known as Jivan mukta.

Other philosophies believe moksha is obtained only after death or dropping this body.

Mantra # 15:

Here a different aspect of Phalam is presented. With Brahma Vidya the Hridaya Grantha (knots) are destroyed. Shankara says ignorance is the knot. Like a knot it becomes firm and hence difficult to remove.

A knot is that which joins two things. I, the Atma, am associated with body mind complex due to Abhimana. Thus a knot is formed. I think of myself as the body. Ahamkara is the cause of the knot. Deha Abhimana is dropped due to this knowledge. So this mortal Jeeva notion now becomes immortal. Body is mortal but I am not mortal. The Abhimana in us is the Samsara. When somebody dies we do not feel anything. However, when it happens to somebody near, Abhimana comes in, including for my own body. The idea I am mortal is dropped. Yama now concludes and says, this much is my teaching.

Mantra # 16:

In previous two mantras Yama taught the phalam of Brahma vidya. Now he talks about the second boon of Nachiketas called Nachiketa ritual (Karma with Upasana) that is conducted on Nachiketa Agni. Karma Upasana Samuchaya (combination); giving us an example of this, Swamiji says, when a mantra is chanted

with a clear picture of it in mind, rather than blind chanting, it gives higher results. So, chanting the mantra is Karma. Chanting it with focus is Upasana. If one obtains Karma Moksha Mukthi, at death, he will go Brahma Loka via Sushumna Nadi. There, he will obtain Brahma Vidya. If one does Karma without Upasana, at death, he will emerge from other Nadis and will be born again. Nadis are passages in our body. There are 101 Nadis and only one emerges at top of crown.

Mantra #17:

Yama once again discusses Jeevan Mukthi or Brahma Vidya Phalam.

Antar Atma is as though the size of a thumb. It is also called Purusha (pure vasathi) it dwells in and beyond the body. It is also the Atma. It is present in heart and mind of every one as Consciousness, as the witness of all thoughts and absence of all thoughts. It is within the Anatma Shariram. Brahma Vidya separates the Consciousness from the

body mind complex. This must be clearly understood. Atma Anatma Viveka must dawn within us. It is an intellectual process of understanding. This requires a very subtle intellect. You cannot physically separate from body, only intellectually. Swamiji gives example of the Munja grass from which, very carefully, its tender shoot is separated.

Viveka is required for this separation. Twam pada Viveka or Aikyam is required. One should know this consciousness as Brahman described in scriptures. Separate yourself from body and thus identify with Brahman. This is Vedanta. This will give us Jivan Mukti. This concludes Yama Nachiketas Samvada.

Mantra 18:

Nachiketas obtained this knowledge from Yama. Yama also taught him Yoga Abhyasa. Having obtained wisdom he became one with Brahman. He became free from all impurities and free from mortality. Not only Nachiketas obtained Moksha, anyone who

receives this wisdom in same manner also is freed and gets Moksha. Papam and Punyam both are impurities, per Vedas. Since there is no Karma there is no result as well.

Mantra # 19

This mantra concludes the Upanishad This mantra is a prayer to establish the teaching within us.

Suggested Practice:

When chanting mantras try to visualize the deity and focus. This will be a very powerful Sadhana.

With my good wishes,

Discussion Summary, September 27, 2015

An Excellent summary by Ram Ramaswamy.

Moving on to Part 2, Cantos 3, Mantra Swamiji says this third and final section of Katho Upanishad deals with Atmavidya, Brahavidya Sadhanani and preparation for Brahavidya.

Mantra #1: This is an important mantra. It deals with nature of Brahman. Yama now compares Creation to the Ashwatha Vriksha or Pipal Tree. Shankara in his commentary says there are many things common between the two. Describing them, he says:

1. Both are vast in size.
2. Both do not have a beginning or end. Thus, the tree was from the seed of another tree and so on and on until we do not know when it started. So also with Creation. It

came into being due to Karma. Karma came into being because of creation. This endless paradox has been going on and knows one knows what started it all. The same is true of Creation itself. One creation after another keeps coming in an endless parade.

3. It is inexplicable. We cannot say which is the cause and which is the effect. Is the tree the cause or the seed? Same with free will and fate, they are all mutually dependent.
4. There is an invisible root underneath the tree that nourishes it. It is also the cause of the tree. It is same for Creation. There is one invisible root called Ishwara.
5. Both have branches spreading widely. Some are upper, some middle and some lower. So also with Creation; you have Bhu-loka, Patal-loka etc.
6. Both bear fruit, called Phalatwam. Every tree bears fruit. Some are sweet, some sour and some a combination. So also with Creation, we have Sukha, Dukha and Mishraphalam.
7. Because of the fruits, many birds nest on the branches that support them. It is a very noisy tree. Thus also with Creation that provides Jivatma (birds in the body) to nest in the Bhu-Loka branch. Sometimes the nest changes to another higher or lower branch or Lokas. The world is a very noisy place says, Shankara, full of music, laughter and wailing.
8. Even this large and powerful tree is moved by powerful winds. So also Samsara is moved by Prarabhda Karmas. Swamiji clarified that Prarabhda Karma includes my karma as well as karma of my surroundings.)
9. Swamiji says, even this large endless tree can be uprooted. Cut off the branch, trunk and root and it permanently destroy the tree. So also the sword of Knowledge can destroy this Samsara. The aadhara of Samsara is the Atman, says Swamiji. Just as one holds on to the chain link when taking a dip in the fast moving

river, so also hold on to Brahman even as you dip into this fast moving Life, says Swamiji. There is nothing that can exist outside the Brahman.

Elaborating further, even the biggest dream is in the Waker. Nachiketas asks Yama why are you talking about Brahman when I wanted to know about Atman. Yama tells him: You are everything. You are Brahman.

Mantra # 2:

Providing further clarification Swamiji says, Brahman is the intelligent cause of life. Just as dream world emerges from the Waker, everything emerges and functions in presence of Brahman. He is the creator and maintainer of everything.

Swamiji says Brahman also polices this Creation ensuring the Universe functions in an orderly manner. This policing intelligence is also called Ishwara. Those who know this achieve immortality. Swamiji adds every suffering we undergo is a punishment for some violation. Every violation of Dharma results in sorrow.

Suggested Practice:

Mr. and Mrs. Narayan recently visited Swamiji during their trip to Chennai. They informed him of our group's activities. Swamiji was very happy. He suggested that the Vedanta group read and practice the teachings of Chapter 17 of the Geeta. This chapter deals with the Gunas or our qualities.

Discussion Summary September

20, 2015

In today's class, Swamiji continued verses 11 to 15, of the third section of the second chapter of Kathopanishad. The subject of these verses are nature of paramatma, jivatma/paramtma aikyam and benefits of jivatma paramatma aikyam. Swamiji continued to mention the common features of surya prakasha (sun light) and chaithanyam or atma:

- They both are ekam, only one, without a second
- They both are all pervading
- They both are formless
- They both are indivisible
- They both are not tainted by any impurities; the impurities of sukshma sareeram do not affect atma because atma is higher than sukshma sareeram. This is very similar to the pictures projected on a movie theater screen; the screen is not affected by flood or fire that is projected onto the screen.
- They both illumine everything. Sun light illumines all objects; everything internal and external is known only because of atma or chaithanyam

Consciousness does not need matter for existence; consciousness need body/mind complex only for manifestation, but consciousness can exist without body/mind complex. Consciousness does not depend on matter, but matter needs consciousness. Consciousness remains one but seemingly appear to be many because it manifests into many objects, and as a result we mistakenly think that the consciousness in one person is not the same as the consciousness in another person.

Yama dharma raja says that all pervading consciousness resides in your own self, in the form of witness principle, I the experiencer. Only rare seekers recognize this fact. Paramatma is neither inside you nor outside you; it is you. The seeker who recognizes this wisdom gets everlasting

happiness and permanent fulfillment.

Explaining verse 13, Swamiji states that Paramatma is there in every sentient being in the form of consciousness. This consciousness with the power of Maya is Eeswara, and Eeswara fulfills all desires.

Brahmananda, the superlative, unexplainable, everlasting ananda, is never an object of experience because Brahman is not confined by time and space. Brahmananda is the nature of consciousness itself. One can get Brahmananda in the form of wisdom that Brahmananda is the very consciousness, I myself. Sunlight, moonlight, star lights, flashes of lightening or fire do not illumine consciousness. But all these are illumined and known because of consciousness. Swamiji says everything is known only because of self-evident consciousness.

New Year Discourse by Swami Paramarthanada

New Year Discourse by Swami Paramarthanda

Introduction to Vedanta

This document was created by John Manetta and is class notes for one of the discourses given by Swami Paramrthananda. The

term Vedanta may sound overwhelming, but this document explains many subjects like the organization of Vedic scriptures, creation, karma and ends with an introduction of Tattvabodha (Self Knowledge)