

Vedic Quote: Watch your thoughts...

“Watch your thoughts, they become words;
watch your words, they become actions;
watch your actions, they become habits;
watch your habits, they become character;
watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”

This is a quote one often sees in the class rooms and other public places and attributed to many scholars like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Lao Tzu, Frank Outlaw, Gautama Buddha, Bishop Beckwaith, Father of Margaret Thatcher and Mahatma Gandhi. Sometimes it is attributed to anonymous.

This is also a quote often mentioned by Swami Paramarthananda in his Upanishads and Baghawat Geeta classes. When I inquired, Swamiji indicated that the origin is from Taitreya Aranyaka of Krishna Yajur Veda. Subsequently, I traced the origin of the quote to Taitreya Aranyaka, Chapter 1, Anuvaga 23, Verse 1. Here is a part of the verse in Sanskrit:

Three groups of square blocks are shown. The first group has 3 blocks, the second has 4 blocks, and the third has 5 blocks.

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Shri Jayanthilal Patel, who is my Sanskrit teacher, gave the literal meaning of the verse as:

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Because of that whatever one thinks by mind

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that one does

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What is first in the mind as seed

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that later forms as desire

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That is what this proclaimed

The quote, as currently formulated and presented at the beginning of the post, has practical applications by asking to us watch our thoughts, words and action. These three form our habit and character which ultimately determine our destiny. But in Vedanta, it has deeper meaning:

- Each of us control our destiny as we control our thoughts, words and action. We and we alone control our destiny.
- Katha Upanishad states that, atma, our non-changing consciousness, witnesses every one of our thoughts. We generally lose sight of the consciousness and act on our thoughts. This, in turn, impacts our destiny.
- Katha Upanishad gives a wonderful example comparing a chariot to our life's journey. In this example, control over thought patterns and mastery of sense organs are equated to pulling in the reins of the horses drawing the chariot.
- Taitreya Upanishad states that consciousness (atma) is the witness of the arrival and departure of our thoughts, indicating we, our consciousness, control our thoughts.

We may never know who the author of the quote as currently formulated, but it's wisdom is based on the Vedas, specifically Taitreya Aranyaka, Chapter 1, Anuvaga 23, Verse 1 of Krishna Yajur Veda. Maybe that is why sometimes this quote is attributed to Buddha or anonymous.

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 Upsana 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, Annamaya 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.

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 25

Greetings All,

Chapter 2, Anuvakaha 1, Shloka # 2.

Om, the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme. With reference to that, is the following hymn recited. Brahman is Truth, knowledge and infinity. He who knows It as existing in the cave of the heart in transcendent akasa, realizes all his desires along with omniscient Brahman.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad Swamiji refreshed our memory about last week's class. He said we are in anuvakaha # 1 of the second chapter also known as Brahmanandavalli that has an important sutra that reads as follows: **Brahmavit Apnoti Param**. The Shloka goes on to say that Brahman is Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. The Upanishad also quotes a Rig Veda mantra "tadeshsa Abhiyukta" meaning "On my own sutra vakyam".

The Upanishad asks three questions & answers them as well:

- What is Brahman? Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam, each respectively is Brahman.
- How to know Brahman? The Brahman has to be known as the witness consciousness to the presence or absence of thought. Sakshi Chaitanyam Eva Brahman. One cannot search for Sakshi Chaitanyam as one does not experience it as an object. It is claimed as " I am". To convey the idea of Sakshi Chaitanyam the Upanishad uses the word Atma. Atma is Self or Aham. Brahma gyanam is "Aham

Brahma Asmi”.

- What is Poornatvam? I am the greatest and highest. The one, who knows Brahman, simultaneously fulfills all sensory desires. Fulfilling our desires one after another is an endless process as new desires keep coming up. Brahma gyanam, however, fulfills all desires, simultaneously.

How is it possible to fulfill all desires at the same time? Brahmananda happens to be Poorna ananda. When you have a lake full of water why run after the Corporation water, asks Swamiji? What is the proof that Brahmananda includes all Vishayananda? Once I have Brahmanada, all my desires for Vishyananda drops. This Vairagyam or dispassion that one develops towards finite pleasures is an indication of Poornatvam.

Brahman is Vipaschit or is the all-illuminating consciousness that also illumines the entire world.

So, total fulfillment is Poornatvam.

Thus, all three questions have been answered. Now the Upanishad elaborates on answers to these three questions by a process known as Vakhyanam.

Chapter 2, Anuvakaha 1, Shloka # 3 and first line of shloka # 4: (swamji's shlokas 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.

Here we are addressing what is Brahman? We already know that Brahman is Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. This topic is further elaborated upon, now.

Here Srishti prakaranam is being discussed. Brahman (Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam) is also Jagat Karanam or the cause of the Universe. Universe is born out of Brahman. When Brahman is "I" consciousness it is called Atman. Therefore, Brahmatma is jagat karanam.

What kind of cause is it?

Every product has two causes. One is an intelligent cause and second is a material cause. Thus, in furniture made by a carpenter out of wood the carpenter is the intelligent cause and the wood is the material cause. These two causes come together to produce wood. Both causes are required. Before creation there was only Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. **Brahman is unique in that it has within it both the intelligent cause and the material cause.** Citing an example a spider also has an intelligent cause and material cause within it.

Here we are focusing on material cause alone. From material cause the universe appears. It is like ornament appears from gold. The ornament also goes back to Gold.

Even if Brahman is cause of Universe, it is it's own Maya Shakti (present in Brahman) that causes this universe. It is just like our own dreams. We create our own dreams.

Maya is Srishti Shakti. Thus, any power is not separate from the powerful. Maya Shakti Ukta Brahman is Maya Shakti.

Now, in creation the five elements were created first. The elements are known as Bhutas. Then the elementals were created known as Bhoutika. The subtlest element is created first then the gross ones. Thus, Akasha is created first then Prithvi. How do we know this?

Prithvi can be perceived by all sense organs or all our senses. Akasha (space) has only one Guna; Vayu (air) has two gunas; Agni (fire) has three gunas; Apaha (water) has four Gunas and Prithvi (earth) has five gunas. Brahman being

subtler than Akasha has no gunas.

So, if I can appreciate space that means I am ready to appreciate Consciousness as well. Akasha is a positive material entity. Now, since akasha is born out of Brahman it means Brahman was there before it. If so, where is the location of Brahman? Let us remember that location involves space. If I cannot conceive the location of space, how can I conceive the location of the subtler Brahman? **Therefore, Brahman is unlocatable.**

From Brahman, as Maya, comes Akasha with the one guna of hearing (sound).

From Akasha comes Vayu with two gunas of hearing (sound) and feeling (touch).

From Vayu comes Agni with three gunas of hearing (sound), feeling (touch) and seeing (sight).

From Agni comes Apaha with four gunas of hearing (sound), feeling (touch), seeing (sight) and tasting (tongue).

From water (Apaha) comes Prithvi with five gunas of hearing (sound), feeling (touch), seeing (sight), tasting (tongue) and smelling (nose).

Prithvi represents all solids in universe and not just the earth.

So, at first there is pancha sukshma bhuta shakti. Thus, the subtle elements create the subtle body.

Then, comes pancha sthula bhuta shakti. Here the gross elements create the gross body. Thus, plants or herbs are born. From plants food is born. From food the physical body is born.

The word Purusha has several meanings. One meaning is Atma. Another meaning is the physical body born out of anna rasam.

Why is it called anna rasamaya? Food cannot be converted directly into a physical body. Annam enters the father's body and becomes the seed. Annam enters the woman's body and becomes the egg. When man and woman join, the egg and seed combine, to create a child. Hence, a child is also called annarasamayaha. The physical body is bhautika shariram.

What other ideas are implied in the shishti prakaranam shloka or shloka # 3?

When I say gold is Karanam and ornament is the Karyam, it means gold is inherent in all ornaments. Thus, wood is inherent in furniture. So, Karanam is inherent in all karyam. Therefore, when I perceive a karyam, I should also perceive the karanam, choicelessly. Thus, when I see jewelry I see the gold.

In this context, if Brahman is karanam and creation is karyam then Karanam Brahman must be appreciated as inherent in creation. Now, what is it that I am appreciating in creation? What is it that is inherent in everything? When I say there is a table, the inherently appreciable thing is the "is". Thus, Karanam appears in karyam as the existence of Karanam. Thus, gold appears in all ornaments as "is". Remove the gold and the ornament does not exist anymore. So, Karanam alone lends existence to Karyam. Thus we appreciate Brahman in everything as " that which is available as existence in all Karyam". **Brahman, as Karanam, alone is Satyam or pure existence and it is inherent in all substances.**

You cannot talk of the existence of a thing without being conscious of it. Pot existence pre-supposes pot knowledge. If there is a thing, which no one knows about, at any time, then we cannot know about its existence. Thus, man-existence pre-supposes man-consciousness. **Similarly, pure-existence pre-supposes pure-consciousness. Therefore, Brahman is Gyanam.**

If there is a cause and effect, then the ornament is not a

substance separate from gold. Then, the ornament is just a new name for gold. It is the same for furniture as well; it is just wood with a new name. **No product is substantial. It is just a name and a form. Thus, Karyam is not a separate substance; it is just Karanam. The very fact that we cannot separate means a substance is just a name. A new substance cannot be created. It is just re-shaping an existing one. Thus, there is no substance called world other than Brahman.** The only thing is Brahman. Therefore, Brahman is Anantam. Thus, through Srishti Prakaranam it is shown that Brahman is Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam.

Take Away

- 1. There is no substance called world other than Brahman.**
- 2. Brahman, as Karanam alone, is Satyam or pure existence and it is inherent in all substances.**

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 24

Greetings All,

Chapter 2, Anuvakaha 1, Shloka # 1.

Om, the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme. With reference to that, is the following hymn recited. Brahman is Truth, knowledge and infinity. He who knows It as existing in the

cave of the heart in transcendent akasa, realizes all his desires along with omniscient Brahman.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad Swamiji summarized last week's class. He said we are in anuvakaha # 1 of the second chapter. This anuvakaha has a very important sutra that goes as follows: **Brahmavit Apnoti Param**. It's meaning is: A Brahma Gyani attains Param or the highest goal of moksha or poornatvam or self-sufficiency or freedom from wants.

With reference to this sutra, in the same shloka, the Upanishad now says, Brahman is Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. The Upanishad has provided a commentary on this Vakyam. It asks three questions:

- What is Brahman?
- How to know Brahman?
- What is Poornatvam?

Upanishad quotes shloka # 2 as answer to these questions.

First question was what is Brahman?

The shloka says, it is Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam. Explanation of each of these words follows.

Anantam

In the last class we discussed one attribute of Brahman known as Anantam. We also discussed Shankaracharya's elaborate commentary on this topic as well. **Anantam** means limitless one or limitlessly big or infinite one. Anything has three limitations. They are:

- 1) Spatial;
- 2) Temporal and
- 3) Attribute or object limitation.

Now, the other two attributes of Brahman, Satyam and Gyanam

are explained.

Satyam:

Before discussing satyam some general comments about it may be useful. Every word is used to reveal an object. Thus, when we say chair, we are revealing the object chair. In our shastra's verbal communication is analyzed. Every word has a main meaning called mukhya artham. The word can also have secondary meaning(s) known as Lakshyartham. The secondary meaning is dependent on the context in which it is used. Thus, there can be many secondary meanings.

Suppose I ask the length of Ganga? You will understand it as the length of the river from Gomukh till its end. Now, suppose I say I took a bath in the Ganga. It does not mean I took a bath all over Ganga. It means I took a bath at a particular place or spot on Ganga. This is known as Eka Deshaha or one part. Thus, sometimes, a word conveys the whole and sometimes a part. If I say, I bought mango, it would mean a whole mango. If I say, I ate a mango; it means I ate only the edible part of the mango. If I ask, what is cost of building the hall, it means the whole hall. If, however, I say, I was sitting in a hall; it means I was only in a part of the hall. I say I saw a movie. The "I" connotes the atma, the indriyas, the body etc. However, in watching the movie only my eye was involved.

Thus, in resolving such a question, usually the primary meaning is applied to see if it fits. If it does not fit a secondary meaning is applied.

When I say, I am happy, it refers to the mind alone where happiness is experienced. It is an ekadesha artha.

When I say, I was born, it refers to body alone, which is born, another ekadesha artha.

This is called Tyaga Lakshana method of analysis.

Coming to Satyam, its primary meaning is, any existent object. Thus, this book is Satyam. This pen is Satyam. A dream object is considered an Asatyam (non-truth), as it does not exist.

Satyam's primary meaning as Brahman has some problems with it. Any existent object is limited by time and space while the Upanishad calls Brahman as anantam. Thus, Brahman cannot be an existent object. So, we have to use a secondary meaning using Bhaga Tyaga Lakshana. For an existent object, which part should we accept?

Shatras say every object has three parts. They are:

- Nama
- Roopa
- Satta or existence.

Thus, an existent fan has: Nama, Roopa and Satta.

The words anantam requires that we can't use Nama as it has limitations. Roopam also can't be used as it too has limitations. That leaves only Satta. The Satta is in every being. All limited and unlimited objects have Satta. So, Satta is a common factor. **Therefore, Nama Roopa Rahita Satta is the secondary meaning of Satyam.**

This, the existent part that is known as Satta, is Satyam. This existence, Satta, is not a part, product or property of an object. It is Satta that makes an object existent to begin with. Satta is not limited by boundaries of the object. Even if an object is destroyed, Satta continues to survive; however, it cannot be recognized, as there is no medium to manifest it.

Therefore, the word Satyam means pure, independent and eternal existence. This existence, that is without a Nama and roopa and is an independent entity, is a difficult concept to grasp for many of us. Thus, limitless existence is Brahman. Shankaracharya says everybody is experiencing everything (a

man, woman, child, book etc.,) as Brahman. This existence is a noun.

Gyanam:

Next topic is Gyanam. Its primary meaning is knowledge.

If so, knowledge of what, are we talking about? It means knowledge of an object. It can be knowledge of a chair or a book.

How does knowledge exist? It exists in our mind as a thought. It is a mental modification also known as vrithi. Thus, if there is an object in front of me and I do not show any cognition and just stare at it with a blank look; here, one would say, the mind does not have vrithi.

Knowledge in form of thought cannot be Brahman as any particular knowledge is limited. Thus, pot knowledge is limited to pot. Knowledge of physics is limited to physics. It is limited in time and space (location). So knowledge as primary meaning is limited. Therefore, we have to default to secondary meaning(s). Now, according to shastra, knowledge has three parts to it. They are:

- Nama
- Roopa
- Awareness, consciousness, chit or chaitanyam.

Thus, pot knowledge means I am conscious of pot. So, we have to remove Nama and roopa, as both are finite. Only the conscious part is Anantam. In our mind a variety of thoughts appear and disappear. Consciousness, however, remains as is. "I am a conscious being" is there in every thought. This is Anantam. **Therefore, Nama Roopa Rahita Chaitanyam is Gyanam. Thus, pure consciousness is without Nama and roopa.**

Therefore, Satyam Gyanam Anantam is Brahman.

With respect to Consciousness, it is also not a part, product,

or property of a product. It is pure and unlimited. With this, the definition of Brahman is now over.

Second question was, how to know Brahman?

Although Brahman is all pervading, one has to recognize it in one's own mind. Thus, to test electricity in a circuit, to see if it is live, we use the tester in only one place.

In whose mind is Brahman recognized? One has to recognize it in his or her, own mind. Brahman is available in Guha or mind.

Where is mind located?

As per scriptures it is located in Hridaya or the physical heart. The shloka calls the inner space of heart as Paramam Vyoman.

Why is heart considered sacred?

Heart is sacred because Brahman resides in it. It is like God in the temple.

Thus: Body> Heart> Akasha> Mind> Brahman.

How to know this Brahman in the mind?

Some people ask, in meditation I have come to the blank state; where do I see Brahman? **Brahman is not an object of knowledge. It is the "I", the subject and never the object.**

So, negate every thing we experience, as they are all objects. Once you negate the world, the body and thoughts, whatever is left is Brahman. Unfortunately, we search this residue for Brahman. Shastras say the one left is the witness of the blank mind. So, "I", the witness consciousness, pervades the blank mind. It is the witness to presence or absence of thought. The word Veda in shloka means Brahman. **So, know the Brahman as "I" the witness consciousness.**

The third question was: What do you mean by obtaining the

greatest or Poornatvam?

The shloka says: Saha ashnuto sarvan Kaman.

Kama here means worldly happiness such as one's derived from eating, music etc. Brahma Gyani obtains all possible sense pleasures in the world. He attains all anandas.

How can one obtain all pleasures of the universe, such as say from food? There are after all so many dishes from all parts of the world. The word Saha in shloka means simultaneously. Simultaneously the Gyani gets all the pleasures and not one after another, say the shastras.

How is it possible? Upanishad says it is through Brahmananda that he gets all pleasures. Brahmananda means, infinite ananda. In this infinite ananda all finite sense pleasures are included.

What does this mean?

In Brahmananda he gets all sense pleasures? How do you know that? **Once I get Brahmannda, my cravings for sense pleasures go away.** I get Tripti that includes all objects. **This Poornatvam or freedom from sense pleasures is called Brahman.**

Take Away:

1. Satyam means pure, independent and eternal existence. This existence, that is without a nama and roopa and is an independent entity.
2. Gyanam is pure consciousness without Nama and roopa.
3. Once I get Brahmananda, my cravings for sense pleasures go away. This Poornatvam or freedom from sense pleasures is called Brahman.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 23

Greetings All,

Chapter 2, Shloka 1:

Shanti patha:

Om. May he protect us both. May he help us both to enjoy the fruits of scriptural study. May we both exert together with enthusiasm to find the true meaning of the sacred texts. My our studies make us brilliant. My we never quarrel with each other. OM shani, Om shani, Om shanti.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad Swamiji said, having completed chapter one of the Upanishad we are now entering the second chapter. It is the main chapter of the Upanishad. It talks about Vedanta shastra and as such is a very important chapter. Shankaracharya has written a beautiful commentary on this chapter. Chapters 1 and 3 do not deal with Vedanta and only deal with preparation or Sadhana Chatushtaya Samapthihi. Chapter 2 is beneficial only for one who has sadhana chatushtaya sampathihi. Chapters 1 and 3 are considered sadhana chapters. Chapter two is called by various names including: Brahmavalli, Anandavalli and Brahmanandavalli. It is known as Brahmavalli as the chapter begins with the word Brahma. It is known as Anandavalli as it discusses ananda or happiness and tells us how to obtain it. Since it deals with both Brahma and Ananda it is also called Brahmanandavalli. It begins with a separate shanti patha. Chapter 3 also uses the

same shanti patha. The shanti patha is the famous manta “Sahana Vavatu, sahanau bhunaktu...” This mantra is also a part of Katho Upanishad.

The Essence of the Shanti patha:

This shanti patha is particularly relevant to Vedantic students. A mantra , such as, “bhadram karnebhi ..”, however, can be used by all students, Vedantic and nonvedantic. Here the student asks God for five blessings. They are:

1. The knowledge of moksha is a result of my own sincere effort and is not determined by fate or God. There is a strong belief in free will or a belief in Purusharttha (self effort). Shashtra’s do not support the idea that God knows what is best for me. Upanishad says it is more important that you know what is more important for yourself. I need to know first, and then God can help. Otherwise, I may even reject God’s help.

This self-effort is very important. Having faith in myself is very important. This is the meaning of “ Saha Veeryam Karava vahay.”

2. Student has to study Vedanta for a length of time. Knowledge cannot be given in one sitting. It has to go through its building blocks. It is a long study. The length of study depends upon many factors. Vedanta is a study of Jiva, Jagat and Ishwara and it has to be built gradually.

Since it involves a developed teaching, student has to remember the past teaching in every class. Each class builds upon previous class. This is the reason why it is called a class and not a discourse. Taittiriya Upanishad has to be listened to, with a background in other Upanishads such as Katho, Kaivalya etc. **Student must be able to listen and retain, a power called Medha Shakti. In the shloka this is “ Tejusvi nou adhitam astu”.**

3. **Student prays for a healthy relationship between with the Guru.** The shloka says “Ma Vidhvishavahai”. The relation with Guru must be one of love and respect. So, even if I do not accept a part of the teaching, still I give the benefit of doubt to the teacher. It means being open minded with shradha.
4. All must culminate in Gyanam. “ Saha Nau Avatu”. Citing example of football knowing the passing game is not enough for a team, we must be able to convert the pass into a goal as well. So, the student prays, “ **0 God, give me Gyanam.**”
5. He prays for Gyana Phalam. **I want to transform myself. I must be able to withstand the experiences of life with equanimity.** Between Gyanam and Pahalam there can be obstacles. The obstacles are mostly our emotional handicaps or Asuri Sampathi, qualities like kama, krodha, lobha etc. I wish to convert my knowledge to emotional stability. Subtle ragahas and dveshas can create problems for us. “ Saha Nau Bhunaktu” is the prayer in the shloka.

Thus the student asks for the five blessings of self-effort, ability to listen and retain, good relationship with teacher, blessing of Gyanam and blessing of transforming myself.

Chapter two is in prose. Upanishads are generally in Mantra or Brahmana form. Mantra is poetry or in metrical form. Brahmana is in prose form. Thus Mundaka Upanishad is in mantra while Taittiriya Upanishad is in prose.

The chapter two is divided into nine anuvakahas or sections.

Chapter 2, Anuvakaha 1, Shloka # 1.

Om, the knower of Brahman attains the Supreme. With reference to that, is the following hymn recited. Brahman is Truth, knowledge and infinity. He who knows It as existing in the cave of the heart in transcendent akasa, realizes all his

desires along with omniscient Brahman.

This first section captures the entire teaching in a capsule form or in an aphorism or also called a Sutra.

The sutra here is: Brahnavit Apnoti Param. After the sutra comes the Vrithi or abbreviated notes or commentary on the sutra. After the Vrithi, the rest of the chapter 2 is an elaboration on the sutra. This elaboration is also known as Vyakhyanam.

Explanation of Sutra:

Brahma Vit: Knower of Brahman. A Brahma Gyani attains Param or the highest goal of moksha or poornatvam or self-sufficiency or freedom from wants. The Tamil statement “Kurai onrum illai”, meaning, “I am without any wants”, is an apt description of this state.

Brhama Gyani alone attains moksha. People without Brahma Gyanam are Samsari's. They can be called ignorant ritualists or religious samsari's. Even a great upsaka of say Rama, Krishna or Devi will only be an Upasaka Samsari without Brahma Gyanam. Due to their upasana they may get powers but they will remain upsaka samsari. So, knowledge alone can get one his moksha.

There are many paths to purification of mind including: rituals, social service, bhajans etc., but there is only one path for Moksha and it is Gyanam.

It is our ignorance that causes us not to go after moksha. In Purana's there are stories of bhakta's that pray to God, “don't give me moksha, I just want to be in your presence all the time”. Swamiji says such a prayer to God is coming out of ignorance.

This sutra raises three questions.

- What is Brahman?

- How can I know Brahman? and
- What do you mean by Poornatvam or moksha prapthihi?

The three questions are answered in the vrithi's on sutra vakyam.

What is Brahman? Brahman has several meanings. Omkara is called Brahman. A Brahmin by birth is called a Brahman. The Upanishad, defining Brahman, however says, Satyam, Gyanam and Anantam is Brahman.

How do you know Brahman? It has to be known within myself. It is not something I need to search outside.

The Upanishad answers these questions by quoting mantras from the Rig Veda, which is in the shloka. Taittiriya Upanishad is a Yajur Veda Upanishad while it is quoting a mantra from Rig Veda.

Shankara's commentary:

Shankaracharya has written a commentary on this "Sayam, gyanam, anantam brahman". He says it is a very important vakyam.

Brahman means the big one. What is big? Big is a relative word. When we say a big mosquito versus a big mountain each means different things. The Upanishad does not quantify how big the big is in the shloka. **So, we must understand it as unconditionally big or infinitely big. It is defined by the word Satyam.**

Anantam means limitless one or limitlessly big or infinite one. Anything has three limitations. They are:

- 1) Spatial;
- 2) Temporal and
- 3) Attribute or object limitation.

Brahman is free from space, time and objectivity limitations. This is the meaning of Anantam.

Spatial limitation means object is located in one place hence it cannot be in another place. Thus, presence in one place means not present in another place. So, Brahman is all pervading and not limited by space.

Time limitation: If object exists only at a period in time, it is time limitation. Thus, someone who lived between 1912 and 1972, we can say he did not exist prior to 1912 and after 1972. Brahman, however, is eternal. It was always there and will continue to be there in future.

Object limitation: Brahman is not limited by another object. Consider a clip and a watch. Clip is not watch or a watch a clip.

The clip enjoys its clipness while watch enjoys its watchness. Since clip enjoys clipness and it enjoys only clipness, it is a clip. By being a clip it does not have any other “ness” such as watchness etc., that are excluded. Enjoying a “ness” is a limitation. Claiming to be a “man” deprives me of claiming to be any other object. If Brahman has to be free from this limitation it has to be non-dual or must possess second-lessness. This idea of being without the three limitations (space, time and object) is conveyed by Anantam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad Class 21

Greetings All,

Shlokas # 6, 7 and 8:

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 6:

Now, if there should arise any doubt regarding your acts or any uncertainty in respect of your conduct in life, you should act in those matters exactly as those Brahmanas who are present there, who are thoughtful, religious (experienced), not set on by others, not cruel (i.e. gentle) and are devoted to dharma.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad Swamiji said, there is a general complaint that Hinduism is the most confusing religion in the world. Moreover, this criticism comes from Hindus themselves. They feel, compared to Hinduism, all other religions are far less confusing Swamiji says, there is some truth in this statement. Whatever is presented as inferior in Hinduism, the very same ideas also make it superior as well. So we should know about the so-called weaknesses of Hinduism as well as how they are also its greatness.

First: Hinduism has voluminous scriptures. It is said to be so vast that a person studying them 24X365 for years may not be able to complete them. It is said that Bharadwaja Rishi studied scriptures for 100 years and then asked Indra to give him boon of continuing his studies in the next birth, from birth itself, as well. Thus, he is supposed to have studied the scriptures for 300 lives at which point he asked Indra how much more he had to go? Indra picked up a handful of mud from a mountain and said you have a long ways to go. Indra also said the Vedas are infinite. Out of 1008 scriptures we have found only six of them. So, this can be a positive or negative aspect of Hinduism. To understand a part from the whole one must have an awareness of the whole. This is the discovery

allopathic medicine made that while treating a part one has to consider the whole body as well the psychosomatic aspects as well.

But to know the whole you have to study each part of it as well. To study Gita, one has to study each shloka. We also need to know details of each shloka. So, to know any part of Hinduism one has to have an understanding of the totality of Vedic vision, but the scriptures are too voluminous for that. This is thus a weakness as well as positive aspect of the religion.

Second: Scriptures do not address any specific human being or group rather they address the many layers of seekers. Thus, many Varnas (Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra) and many ashramas (Brahmacharya, Grihasta, Vanaprasta, Sanyasa), are all addressed. From the grossest (spiritually) to the most evolved are addressed. So, if we do not understand which part is meant for who it can become a problem. It is like a doctor asking one person to eat well while advising another to fast. Vedic teaching is thus directed to different adhikari's. In some places puja is glorified while in another it is not. Karma is considered great in some while elsewhere it is not. In Mandukya Upanishad Gaudapada says it is unfortunate that people are committed to Ishwara Upasana. Gaudapada also criticizes religion, Ishwara etc., causing confusion. So, it is seemingly full of contradictions; a negative on one hand; on the other hand it addresses all levels, even a tribal can follow it; which is a positive. Thus, even Ishwara is described as Aroopa, Eka Roopa, and Aneka Roopa. So, which Ishwara Roopa is correct? It is a complex teaching.

Third: Ethics and Morality: At superficial level we can discern ethics and morality. However, at deeper level, there are more gray areas also known as Dharma Sankata. Thus, what is my duty as a husband may conflict with my duty as a father? Scriptures give us a lot of stories that illustrate Dharma Sankata; we are supposed to learn from them and take our

lesson. Citing example of Rama, when he asked Sita to go to the forest, he had a conflict between the role of husband and role of ruler. Another example: a middle class person has an aged parent who needs expensive treatment while he also has a son who has to pay an expensive fee for a college admission. Where should he spend his limited money? This is dharma Sankata. Was Vibhishana correct or Kumbhakarna? The epic, Ramayana, stresses that neither Vibhishana nor Kumbhakarna strayed from the path of Dharma and that there is no single way out of a moral dilemma. Ramayana teaches that Kumbhakarna adhered to the Dharma of loyalty to his kin when his advice fails, while Vibhishana chose to oppose his kin when his advice failed.

Thus, there are a lot of gray areas. Scriptures can only guide us. There are subjective areas. In Gita as well, Sri Krishna says ahimsa is very important, therefore Arjuna should fight. While Gita teaches Satyam as a value Sri Krishna himself obfuscates the truth in many instances. Scriptures appear to be vague. Dharma is relative and not absolute.

Fourth: Scriptures were given to man a long, long, time ago. They did not imagine all situations that we face. Citing an example: For learning driving one can be taught some traffic situations. The reality is that in India all possible traffic situations are faced. Thus, we face buffaloes, pot holes etc., to name a few. Scriptures do not mention many situations. So, interpretation is required. Citing another example, consider that in many homes the toilet and bathroom are together. As per shastras one is a place for shaucham while other is a place for ashucham. Both are not supposed to be together. However, the house is usually small and both have to be placed together. So, heavy interpretation is required.

Finally: Method of interpretation is per sampradaya or mimasa, which we never study. We cannot interpret on our own. Shatras have built-in interpretation and the Gurus's presented this to students. That is a reason why scriptures were not printed. It

was always passed on in an oral tradition. Under the oral tradition, one could not perform self-study. You always needed a teacher. However, due to western influences it is now printed but there is no one to help interpret them.

So, now, we go an original text without a key. Vedas used exaggeration. Thus, the story of Ajamila is that he was a Brahmin who fell into sinful ways, but at moment of death he chanted Narayana. He was actually calling for one of his sons. But his Narayana chant took him to God. Thus, in Kali Yuga, Nama smaranam is considered a path to liberation. These are considered exaggerations of shastras. However, because they are publicized today, without interpretation, they are causing confusion. To not to be confused one has to learn under a Guru or go to a person who can interpret. Then, Hinduism will not be confusing. The interpreter has to be a Guna Brahmana, an empath and one who is a dharma-moksha pradhana. Once you learn from them your conscience will become shastra oriented. Then, it will give you the right answer. One has to be free of Raga and Dvesha to be able to interpret Shastra.

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 7:

And now with regards to those who are falsely accused of some crime; you should rule yourself exactly in the same manner as do the brahmanas who are present there, who are thoughtful and religious, not set on by others, not cruel, and are devoted to Dharma.

Our doubts are usually related to conduct or rituals. Veda cites an example. Suppose you have a friend. Then, you come to know from other sources that he is not an ethical person. The question is should I drop him? Shastra say one should drop an unethical person. What should I do? So, find a brahmana interpreter and see if he associates with your friend? Or ask the interpreter about your dilemma and ask him what you should do? Seek their guidance related to dharma shastras.

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 8:

This is the command. This is the teaching. This is the secret of Vedas. This is the commandment. This should be observed. Verily, having understood this fully, one must act in the way taught above, continuously till the last and not otherwise.

If one does not follow this advise of shastra, we will lose. The essence of Vedas, Veda Poorva, is enshrined in Anuvakha # 11. Following the commandments of Anuvakaha # 11 is considered following the dharma shastra itself. These are the commandments of God. It is a commandment because if you violate it then you suffer in Samsara. This is not an optional commandment. It is a requirement of Vedas. So, lead a life as per Anuvakaha # 11.

Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 12, Shloka # 1:

Concluding Shantipatha.

May Mitra (sun) be good to us. May Varuna be good to us. May Aryama be good to us. May Indra and Brihaspathi be good to us. May all pervading Vishnu be good to us. Prostrations to the Brahman. Prostration to thee, O Vayu. Thou, indeed, art the visible Brahman. Thee I have declared the “right”. Thee I have declared the “good”. That has protected me. That has protected the teacher.

Now the shanti patha is chanted. It is a Thank you. There are some differences between the invocation shloka (chapter 1, anuvakha 1, shloka 1) and this ending shanti patha.

You have blessed us. We could complete the teaching. So, thank you. With this the Om Shanti is repeated three times. The Om Shanti is said to remove obstacles to Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam.

Take Away:

Dharma is relative and not absolute.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 20

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 1 through 4:

Summarizing last class Swamiji said Anuvakaha 11 summarizes the dharma shastras covering topics of values, ethics, puja and developing a proper attitude. Our teachings are scriptures oriented, not person oriented. In person oriented it tends to become a cult while in scripture oriented it becomes a tradition. Until I understand scriptures, the Guru is important, but once I have access to the scriptures, the Guru is supposed to recede to the background. Our scriptures and traditions don't allow creation of a cult. The Vedic Acharya says, I have taught you now on give more validity to scriptures. At all times scriptures alone rule and nothing else does.

Whenever you have great people available make use of their presence to learn. Make them talk more to learn from them.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 5:

Gifts should be given with faith; they should never be given without faith; they should be given in plenty; with modesty and with sympathy. Let there also be agreement in opinion (or

friendly feelings) when gifts are offered.

Our scriptures talk of numerous disciplines and sadhanas. They have also condensed them for us into three basic sadhanas as well. **The three fundamental sadhanas are:**

- 1. Yagya**
- 2. Dana**
- 3. Tapaha**

These are three fundamental religious disciplines. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and the Gita's Chapter # 18, both mention these sadhanas.

Yagya: It is leading a life style of worship or leading a prayerful life. From the moment one gets up in the morning until one goes to sleep every activity performed is converted into worship.

Tapaha: Moderation in everything is important. Golden means has to be adopted. Don't let any activity get out of hand. You must be able to say "no" to anything, at any time. Moderation is just one meaning of Tapaha.

Danam: It is sharing with others. Make your life one of taking as well as giving. When both are practiced, only then the cycle of universe continues. There should not be any stagnation. Thus, the water cycle is: Ocean>cloud>river>ocean. Everything in life is cyclic. If we refuse this, then stagnation occurs and it affects negatively. In health as well energy taken in must equal energy put out else health problems occur. Superficially Danam appears like a loss. Scriptures, however, say whatever you give alone comes back. Hatred comes back. Love comes back. So, give good and things in plenty. Danam is highlighted in this shloka. Panch Maha Yagya also requires charity.

How to perform Danam?

1) Give with Shradha or with faith. Nothing given is a loss. It always comes back to me. I may lose materially but I gain spiritually. It comes through inner growth or through Chitta shudhi. This faith must be strong.

2) Ashradhaya Adeyam: Do not give without faith. When you give without faith you tend to see only the loss. Don't give with heartburns. Even if you don't have faith, give. Faithless giving is better than not giving at all. One hopes this giving will lead to faithful giving.

3) Shriya Deyam: Give in abundance. Depending upon your capacity give proportionately.

4) Hriya Deyam: Don't look down upon the receiver. Arrogantly given danam becomes Rajas and or Tamas Danam. Gita, in chapter 17 discusses this topic. During giving, have the feeling that you have the good fortune to be able to help others.

5) Bhiya Danam: Give with concern to the receiver. Whatever you give must help others. One must have empathy. Identify with problem of receiver and give.

Here another shastric meaning comes in. Danam is considered a compulsory duty by shastras. You have to share with others without expecting anything back. It can even be kind words or even service to others. Live like the trees. They give more than they receive. That is why everybody wants trees. However, nobody wants more humans around as they only take. Giving is not a kanya karma; it is considered a nitya karma, like giving tax. If you don't do your Vedic duties you can get Pratyavaya Papam. So to fulfill your daily karmas, give.

Samvida Deyam: Giving must be performed with understanding of Desha (place), Kala (time) and Patram (recipient must be a deserving person). You need not give to persons without right credentials. One can find appropriate institutions and give through them as well.

Keep in mind that Danam is not money alone, it includes seva, kindness etc. as well.

Shlokas # 6, 7 and 8:

Shloka # 6:

Now, if there should arise any doubt regarding your acts or any uncertainty in respect of your conduct in life, you should act in those matters exactly as those Brahmanas who are present there, who are thoughtful, religious (experienced), not set on by others, not cruel (i.e. gentle) and are devoted to dharma.

Previously we saw scriptures are the primary source of dharma and adharma (do's and don't's). But Vedas do not discuss all possible situations in life. They are already very voluminous. So, Vedas do provide guidelines for us. We should be able to interpret them according to scriptures and according to situations. Therefore interpretation is important. With time, society and life styles change and they have to be taken into consideration. Vedas are very flexible in this regard. Citing an example Swamiji says Vedas are like the constitution of a country that can be applied to many situations that a country faces.

To interpret the Vedas, it must be performed in the right spirit as well. So, who will interpret the scriptures? Interpreters require a fine intellect to perform this task. Interpreters should have qualifications. Suppose one has a doubt about a religious practice or ritual, how to address this? This is called Vrata chikitsa. Vratam means conduct.

Vedas say, go to those people who are Guna Brahmanas. They must be able to interpret. The rules of interpretation are documented in Mimasa shastra. Once an interpretation is done, the verdict must be accepted. One who does not accept such a verdict is called a Nastika.

The qualifications of a Samarshinaha (independent interpreter) are:

- Yukta: One who lives a life of Daharma.
- Ayukta: One who is impartial and independent person. He must not benefit from verdict.
- Aluksha: One who is considerate and empathic. He must benefit society.
- Dharma and Kama: He must not be interested in money, wealth etc.

Therefore, a Brahmin was supposed to lead a life of poverty totally immersed in scriptures. Such a life of voluntary poverty meant such a person was not afraid of anything.

Such people alone should interpret. And, if their verdict for some reason compromises with Shastras, one has to accept it. Citing story of Shankaracharya, once while he was travelling with his disciples he was offered alcohol to drink. He drank it. His disciples were disdainful of his action. Soon after, he came across a black smith who was melting metal. Shankara drank some of the molten metal as well astonishing his disciples. His message to his disciples was, I could do all this as nothing affects me. Until you can reach this stage you still have to follow scriptures.

When mahatmas violate dharma, we should keep in mind that they also follow dharma most of the time at a very high level.

Take Away:

1. Yagya, Dana and Tapaha are the three sadhanas that are considered the essence of Vedic religion.
2. While giving or making a Danam one must keep following in mind:
3. Do it with shradha;
4. Give generously;
5. Do not look down upon the person receiving the danam.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad Class 19

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 1:

**Having taught the Vedas the preceptor enjoins the pupils, “
Speak the truth, do your duty, never swerve from study of the Vedas, do not cut off the line of descendants in your family, after giving the preceptor the fee he desires. Never err from truth, never fall from duty, never overlook your own welfare, never neglect your prosperity and never neglect the study and the propagation of the Vedas.”**

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 2:

Never swerve from your duties towards gods and towards the departed “souls’ (manes). May the mother be, to thee, a god. May the father be, to thee, a god. May the preceptor be to thee, a god. May the guest be, to thee, a god.

Swamiji said Anuvakaha 11, Chapter # 1, presents the core of dharma shastra's. This knowledge is supposed to be learned by everybody and certainly followed by a Brahmachari. Dharma

includes:

- Performing puja to God or performing Karma's.
- Developing proper values and ethics or Daivika Sampathi
- Developing proper attitude or Bhavana

All three are important. Some rituals are mentioned as well such as Daivika Karmani and Pitṛ Karmani

The Upanishad also talks about Satyam Vada. It also discusses some attitudes we need to develop, the topic we are now discussing.

One has to look upon one's Mother, Father, Teacher and the Guest, each of them respectively, as God. Mother and father both may have defects. Despite that one should look upon them as God. Acharya can also have defects but one should look upon him as God. Acharya here includes teachers of material sciences (physics, chemistry...) and arts (dance, music.) as well.

Atithi is to be looked upon as God. In Vedic times this value was a very important one. The visit of a guest was looked upon as will of God. As per Vedas, Atithi is one who comes as an unknown visitor on an unplanned visit. Unfortunately, we cannot follow this value anymore as many Swami's and Con artists are now coming in as Atithi's. Moreover, nowadays, hotels are available as are restaurants, as well as modern tools of quick communication. Even the average family today is a small one usually living in small quarters. So, this value has become one of academic interest only. They say Shiva and Vishnu also lived with their in-laws for long periods enjoying hospitality. Even with in-laws the longer your stay, the level of hospitality decreases.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 3:

Let only actions that are free from blemishes be done, and not others. You must follow only those virtuous actions that are

irreproachable, and not others.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 4:

You must not breathe a word when those, who are more distinguished than you, are in discussion on spiritual matters (or, you must offer a seat to superiors and worship them with acts of reverence and love).

Continuing Anuvakaha 11, chapter 1, here, the teacher gives an important advice. There are three sources of knowledge for dharma and adharma or establishing the Do's and Don'ts in life. They are:

- **Vedas:** also known as Sruthi Grantham, is the primary source of dharma. Especially the Vedapoorva Bhaga.
- **Smrithi's:** Rishi's and Acharyas wrote secondary scriptures, also known as Smrithi Grantham. Smrithi's are based upon Vedic teachings. Thus, words are of Acharya but content is of Vedas. Smrithi elaborates the teachings of Sruthi through stories. Values are hidden in the story like butter in milk. We have to churn and extract the butter. Acharyas churned and brought the butter up. They all bring Dharma Gyanam.
- **Lifestyle of people who lived according to the Sruthis.** These are people have conquered Raga and Dvesha. Their life is an open book of shastric living also called Shista Achara. They follow shastras in life. Their life is visible to us or it may even come to us in the form of a biography.

Suppose Smrithi has a statement or a Shishta does something, contradicting the Sruthi's; whose direction should I follow? How to handle such contradictions? Citing an example of this contradiction, Durvasa was a great Rishi but he was angry all the time, while Shashtra's say one has to maintain a balanced mind.

The answer is Shruti alone dominates, not the Shista or the

Smrithi. So, in all such cases of contradiction, follow the Vedas. Shastras believe, in general, that no human being is 100% perfect. Even Rishi's can have doshas. Even Avatara's can have Doshas. There is only one perfect being and that is God. Even god, when he comes down as a human being, he shows human weaknesses. So, the teacher says, follow the Shashtra Vidhi, at all times.

Why Mahatmas perform contradictory actions, one does not know. Do not challenge them? Do not judge them. Learn from their right actions and don't take up their wrong actions. Thus, Parashurama cut his mother's head while Ekalavya cut his thumb as a dakshina for his Guru. In such cases do not judge or criticize them. Sometimes the situation requires compromises, like Sri Krishna's actions in Mahabharata. No value is absolute; they are all situational. If so, why can't I compromise, is a question that can rise? Shastras say you can also do so but only after mastering Values and Ethics. Once you conquer Raga and Dvesha you can consider compromising on values. Rishi's and Mahatma's have transcended Raga and Dvesha, hence they can perform contradictory actions.

Vedas say such a person can contradict Vedas and even create their own Dharma.

Birla gave a blank check book to Mahatma Gandhi. However, after quiet some time he noted that Gandhiji had used only one Rupee. So, you give freedom to one who is mature and responsible. So too, it is with Mahatma's. Once you reach this maturity you can also perform actions contradictory to shastra's.

Follow your Guru, but be aware that if the Guru performs actions contradicting the shastras, don't follow him, follow the shastra's. Thus, it is said of Sri Krishna, don't go by what he did rather go by what he said.

Don't take adharmic actions. Do not criticize mahatmas.

Great people also had weaknesses. Filter the weaknesses. Look at positives and imbibe them. Mimamsa is filtering positives and pulling it out. Citing several examples: Prashurama, in cutting his mother's head, was following his father's instructions. Ekalavya was willing to give anything as Gurudashina. He displayed Guru bhakti. Rama sent Sita to the forest. The lesson was, a king was supposed to have the pulse of the people in mind or a Prajaraajaka Raja. Pandavas sharing of one wife, here the mother's instructions were followed. Prahalada violated father's instructions but he was glorified. Here Pitravakyam was not in sync with the shastra's.

Vedic tradition is not person centered. Thus, Vedas are not prophet centered like Christianity and Islam. Buddha was an Avatara but Buddhism contradicted the Vedas, hence he could not succeed in India.

Until you know the shatras, the Guru has to teach you; after that Guru has to withdraw. After that, shastras alone prevail.

Patanjali, a Rishi, gave us the Yoga system. Yoga's philosophy, however, was not in sync with Vedas. So, his philosophy was not accepted. Yoga itself was accepted.

Gyana Vaiseshika was accepted but its philosophy was not accepted, as it was not in sync with Vedas.

Anywhere Shastras are contradicted, do not accept it. This is the teaching of the Guru. Even Shankaracharya's writings were analyzed for such contradictions.

Shloka # 4:

Keep an open mind. Suppose some Brahmanas (Not by birth, rather people who have studied Vedas) were to come, who are superior to us in age, experience, and knowledge, welcome them and use it as an opportunity to learn. Experience is a big teacher. An uneducated man with experience knows a lot more than an educated one without experience. When they, come ask

them to take a seat. Once seated don't talk about your self. Use their visit to learn more. Mahatmas generally don't like to talk. So, don't talk about your self. Ask them questions and make them talk. Thus, learn more and more.

Take Away:

2. Follow the teachings of Shashtra's at all times. Any contradictions to Shastras, anywhere, do not follow them.

3. Do not criticize mahatmas.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 18

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 1:

Having taught the Vedas the preceptor enjoins the pupils, "Speak the truth, do your duty, never swerve from study of the Vedas, do not cut off the line of descendants in your family, after giving the preceptor the fee he desires. Never err from truth, never fall from duty, never overlook your own welfare, never neglect your prosperity and never neglect the study and the propagation of the Vedas."

We are in Anuvaka # 11. It talks about Brahmacharya Ashrama. This ashrama has two steps in it.

First step: In Vedic times chanting of Vedas was not written down. It was handed from the mouth to the head in the Karna Parampara. In effect the mantras were chanted and committed to memory. This chanting is called Svadhyaya Yagna and this sadhana is used to purify the mind of the chanter as well as the people listening to the chant. In this process, even the society and nation also benefited. Veda Ghosha, Vedic chanting loudly by a big group, was also performed for benefit of others. This chant is supposed to purify even the environment. Even plants grow better after this chant. This process of Vedic chanting is also called Adhyayanam.

Second step: Study of Veda Mimasa consisting of understanding the meaning of Vedas in context of Karma Kanda. Here the purpose was not to understand Vedanta rather it was to understand Dharma Shastra also called Veda Poorva Mimasa. The Dharma shastra is condensed in Anuvakaha # 11.

(Note: The differences were that the Mimamsa school developed and emphasized *karmakaṇḍa*, or the study of ritual actions, using the four early Vedas, while the Vedanta schools developed and emphasized *jnanakaṇḍa*, the study of knowledge and spirituality, using the later parts of Vedas like the Upanishads.)

The Anuvakaha # 11 consists of:

Satyam vada: In various religions God is considered divine while world is considered secular. Thus, there is a division. Vedas do not create division between God and the world. They say the universe has born out of the divine. So Vedas see everything as divine. There is no division between divine and secular. So, one has to cultivate the bhavana of seeing the divine in everything. This is a lifelong effort. This bhavana is called Satyam.

Dharmam chara:

Do not criticize rituals. They are important. Values are

important as well. There should be a balance between rituals and ethics. Both are important.

Svadhyaya: We listen to scriptures and then forget their teachings. Hence continuous learning of scriptures is important to be reminded of the teachings. Do not neglect scriptural studies.

Guru Dakshina: You have to give the guru his dakshina. A Guru, however, should not insist upon it. Even without asking the shishya should give dakshina. Teaching obtained without dakshina has negative consequences. It is called Adakshina. It is also called Runam (debt). A mind with Runam is considered an impure mind. So, give dakshina.

Be a part of an ashrama: After leaving the Gurulkula, a man still has to be a part of one of the four ashramas. Without an ashrama your duty cannot be identified. One can become a permanent Brahmachari so long as he is initiated as a Naishtika Brahmachari. Such a Brahmachari has to serve his teacher. One can also choose Grihasthashrama, Vanaprashtha or Sanyasa. If he chooses Sanyasa he has to go back to ashrama and study Vedanta. Generally, most people opt for Grihasthashrama. Only grihasthashrama has the infrastructure for Karma Yoga. Other three ashramas cannot have money. Only Grihastha has money. In Grihasthashrama one can perform the Pancha Maha Yagna as well as fulfill worldly desires, in a legitimate manner.

Do not neglect commitment to values. Satyam in Dharma shastra means speaking the truth. In Vedanta, satyam means the ultimate reality or truth.

Do not neglect religious way of life. Thus getting up early before sunrise to pray to the Sun god. The day starts with prayer. Applying religious marks on forehead is important. Namaskara with both hands is also important.

May you not neglect your own well being. Do not neglect your

personal interests. Take care of the body. Make sure it is fed and rested. Serving society is part of your own growth. It is for Chitta Shuddhi. Only after moksha can one neglect the body. Being selfish in this context is not wrong. It is your duty.

Do not neglect acquisition of wealth. It is very important. Only through Laxmi can one reach Saraswathi. More earning is not enough. One should also give a proportionate share to the deserving. One should keep in mind that the other three ashramas depend on the Grihasta. The Ahavanti Homam is performed for acquisition of wealth. Money is meant for noble service through Pancha Maha Yagna. Through this one obtains Chitta Shuddhi that in turn leads to Gyanam and then Moksha. Bhutyaha in shloka means Prosperity.

Study of scriptures is very important. Anything that stagnates can be sickening. Even money, if it stagnates, can create problems. Scriptures encourage giving.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 11, Shloka # 2:

Never swerve from your duties towards gods and towards the departed “souls’ (manes). May the mother be, to thee, a god. May the father be, to thee, a god. May the preceptor be to thee, a god. May the guest be, to thee, a god.

Worship of God is important. Just as you nourish a tree by pouring water at its root, similarly the whole universe is a tree with many needy people. The reality is you cannot help every needy individual. Therefore, Vedas prescribe that one contributes to the root of the universe. This root is Ishwara. Therefore perform puja to God and ask his blessing for the welfare of all people. This blessing will go to all people including needy ones. Unfortunately we cannot see the blessing reaching the deserving. So, Deva Yagya helps many. It is also a two fold Karma as it benefits the deserving as well as it purifies your own mind.

Pitr Yagya: is worship of ancestors. This worship reaches even if they are re-born. My general offering goes to all ancestors, not just mine. This also purifies my mind. Keep in mind this offering is for my growth not God's. So, Pancha Maha Yagna is mentioned. Ethics via Satyam also has been mentioned. Now attitude is discussed.

Attitude towards one's mother: Treat your mother as goddess herself. While a mother is not a goddess, irrespective of the character of the mother, she deserves worship. Hence, namaskara is performed to her. The namaskara is to the Goddess within the mother.

Develop reverence towards father: Despite his limitations one should worship the father. Don't judge him. Often a father's problem is one of Parampara, that is habits transferred from his father to son. Never find fault with parents.

Consider the Acharya a God. In our early years our first contact is with mother and then with father. Then comes the teacher. The teacher contributes to the psychological growth of the child. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says if mother, father and teacher are good the child will have a healthy attitude in life. In our society kula, gothra etc. are very important for a marriage. Katho Upanishad says a mature human being is one who has good relationship with all the three. So, look upon teacher as a God.

Atithi Devo Bhava: Look upon a visitor as a God. This was an important value in Vedic times. It is not important anymore. In Vedic society, when people travelled, they had to stay somewhere. In that society food was not sold. There were no restaurants. So one took shelter in some house in a village. That family usually gave food and shelter. Being a pilgrim he was not known to the family. He also arrived without prior notice. When things happen, unplanned, like arrival of such a pilgrim, it was considered God's will. So, God has sent the Athiti, so we have to feed him, was the thinking. He also did

not stay more than a night. So, he was treated like a God. Nowadays with con artists and such, this approach is difficult to practice.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 17

Chapter 17

Lecture 0n Sept, 3. 2017

Swamiji observed that we completed 10 sections of Upanishad covering– Preparatory Disciplines to get Brahma Vidya– Also discussed, Karma Yoga , varieties of Upasanas, values(Deiviha Sampath) and two Japas (Gnana yogyadha Prapthi and Gnana Prapthi).

All previuosly discussed Sadhanas were reminded.

Now on to Auvaha 11.

Upanishad is condensing Dharma Sasthram – contained in Veda Purva Baha. It is nothing but a religious way of life and get purified mind and become Gnana Yogyadha–and enter Veda Antha Baha. –Start with religion and transcend religion–

Sanyasa Asrama reflects this.

Dharma Sastra(Veda Purva) as elaborated by Jaimini Maharishi

in Purva Mimamsa. It consists of:

1) Rituals

2) Attitude towards life (family, creation, health, wealth, strength etc)

3) Values—ethics and morals

the above three are condensed Dharma Sasthra. When you learn and practice then you are fit for Veda study.

Upanishad condenses Dharma Sasthra in Anuvaka 11. When should one begin to study? It should start at a very young age, in schools or colleges—during Brahmacharya Asrama—when there is no responsibilities—no relationship—and with a relaxed mind.

It starts with 1) Veda Adhyayana (learning to chant words without meaning)—young minds absorb very quickly and next step 2) Veda Mimamsa—learning the meaning of Vedas (only Veda Purva Mimamsa) and 3) study of Dharma sasthra

After entering Grihastha Asrama, one should practice Dharma Sasthra in day to day life (Anushta Prayanam). This leads to Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi—when you achieve this, Grihastha Asrama is not relevant and it is only an intermediate stage—relationships and associations come

and go—gradually withdraw from responsibilities and handover to the next generation— and take to Sanyasa Asram—with a relaxed mind you are fit to study Veda Antha under the guidance of a Guru.

Upanishad says Guru during Bramacharya Asram:

Teach to chant Veda—

Collects Sasthras and structure lessons for each student depending on profession they take up later

Teaches religion, ethics and attitudes

Persuade students to follow Sastras

Guru practices what is taught and is a role model.

Upanishad stresses salient features of Dharma Sastra:

Satyam Vadha—Harmony between thoughts and word and integrated personality

Dharmam Chara—Implement all Karmas and Discipline commanded by scriptures--do not neglect scriptural study

For implementing Dharma Sastra, materials are required—Grihastha Asrama provides the infra-structure

After completing study, under Guru—your knowledge can be exhibited to to a King or rich persons—get rewarded —and handover the same to Guru as Dakshina—for propogating the Guru Sishya Parambara

Then become A grihastha—and maintain the Kula Parampara—teach your children a religious way of life and faith in Veda.

Namasthe