

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 7

Greetings All,

Chapter # 1, Anuvaka # 3, Shloka # 6:

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad and recapping the Anuvaka # 3 so far, Swami Paramarthananda said, we are in the last part of the Samshito Upasanas. All five upsanas put together are known as Maha Samshito Upasanas. In each Upasana the Alambanam (meditation) is the same, one meditates on the four factors of Poorva roopa, Uttara Roopa, Sandhihi and Sandhanam. In each Upasana objects from five different fields are invoked. The fields are: Adhilokas, Adhi-jyautisham, Adhi-vidhyam, Adhi-prajam, and Adhyatmam. Thus, there are five Upasanas and four objects in each upasana totaling 20 objects that are meditated upon.

Chapter # 1, Anuvaka # 3, Shloka # 7:

These are called “ The great blendings”; he who understands them as expounded here, becomes united with progeny, cattle, food and the like with the glory of the holy lustre, wealth and heavenly joys.

This shloka is glorification of this samshito upasana. They are great because they belong to the Vedas. We are invoking great objects; hence they are great as well. With this the Upsana is over. Now the benefits of the Upasana are given.

The phalam depends on the attitude of our Upasana. Our motive determines the type of result. A criminal uses a knife to kill a person with the motive of getting something. A doctor also uses knife to heal but in the process the person dies. The criminal is sent to prison while the doctor is praised for trying to save a life. The motive is based upon sankalpa. If Upasana is for material results it is Sakam Upasana. However, if motive is Dharmic and for Chitta –Shuddhi, it is called

Nishkama Karma.

In the Gita Sri Krishna says if it is for Sakama Karma one has to perform the Upasana very carefully other wise the phalam my backfire on us. When the same Upsana is performed as a Nishkama Karma the rules are relaxed. Even mistakes are accepted. They don't affect as much. Positive results are always obtained. Negative result will not occur. So this is the perspective on phalam looked at from two angles.

Benefits of Nishkama Karma are:

- 1. Expansion of mind for spiritual growth is the first benefit.** We are invoking three Lokas. Mind assumes the form of object meditated upon. If we visualize small, the form will be small. In olden times people visualized big, hence the reason we see very large temples. Nowadays we tend to visualize small and things are smaller as well.

Since I meditate on totality of universe, I revere the Earth as Bhuma Devi. I wake up and pray to the mother Earth. Earth, Water, Sun are all, sacred. This reverence helps me later in Vishwaroop Darshanam. It expands the mind and transforms our attitude. I develop reverence for every object in this meditation including. reverence towards the teacher. Then I invoke and develop reverence towards parents. Then I develop reverence towards my own body and its organs. Body is the greatest gift of God. Once an organ is damaged we cannot recreate it. Therefore, respect the body. It does not mean attachment to or ownership of the body. Thus expansion of mind occurs, as does a change in perspective. This change in perspective happens due to the Gyana Chakshu. Citing an example, when we buy an apple from a store, we just cut it and eat it. The same apple when it is offered as prasadam at a temple, we apply it to our eyes first. This perspective is called divya Chakshu. **Divya chakshu is the second benefit.**

The **third benefit is the focus of mind improves**

Fourth benefit is that we get Chitta shuddhi as we are invoking Ishwara.

All this helps with Vedanta Sravanam, and Atma Gyanam.

Benefits of Sakama Upsana:

If one performs Upsana on all four factors (Poorva roopa, Uttara Roopa, Sandhihi and Sandhanam) and honor all the deities invoked, tangible benefits will come from association.

Benefits are of two types. They are: 1) Iha loka Phalam and 2) Para Loka phalam.

Iha Loka Phalam: You will get progeny. The nature of phalam is dependent upon the nature of the upsana. If God is worshipped as knowledge, one gets Gyana phalam. If worshipped as Shakti one gets Shakti. If worshipped as beauty one gets beauty. As the upsana, so is the phalam.

Here sandhi is the upsana, so one gets combination as children. From Vidhya upsana one gets knowledge. From Pashu upsana one gets wealth. From Brahma Varchas Upsana one gets attractive personality. From Annam one gets nutritious food.

Paraloka Upasana Phalam: After death one does not get moksha. For moksha atma gyanam is required. However, one gets to a higher loka. Which Loka depends upon quality and quantity of one's upsana.

Therefore one should perform Samshito Upasana. Vedas do not make this upsana compulsory. With this the third Anuvakaha is complete.

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

This is a bigger section. It has two spiritual sadhanas. They are: 1: Mantra Japa sadhana and 2) Homa sadhana, a physical

ritual on fire.

In these two sadhanas Manasika, Vachika and Kayika karmani are practiced.

In this shloka we are offering prayer to God. God can be visualized in any form. God, himself, is formless as he is limitless. Symbolically we worship a form such as a Linga or Turmeric powder etc. In this shloka "Omkaara" is worshipped.

What is benefit of Omkaara Upasana? I seek Gyana Yogyatha Prapthi through this sadhana. I seek all round fitness, physical, verbal (communication skill), emotional fitness (mind should be balanced) and intellectual sharpness are all required to understand Vedanta. The sadhanas do not offer any mystic experience. The student has to understand the teaching. Any knowledge is intellectual in nature. I am asking for Gyana Yogyatha. Since God is invoked as Omkaara, it is glorified. On Omkaara, I invoke parameshwara.

Rishabhaha in shloka means greatest.

Omkaara is greatest among Vedic mantras. Why is a Vedic mantra called Chandus? Chand means pleasing or giving happiness. So learning to give joy is one meaning. Another meaning of Chandus is to protect from worldly problems.

How did Omkaara originate? Scriptures say Omkaara was extracted from the Vedas. Like butter from milk. Brahmaji himself churned the Vedas through his tapas, to obtain the Veda Sara. The first extract of his churning was the Gayathri Mantra.

Thus, from Gayathri mantra came:

Rig veda: Tatsa Vithuhu varenyam: Bhu: A

Yajur Veda: Bhargo Devasysa Dhimahi: Bhuvaha: U

Sama Veda: Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat: Suvaha: M

Thus AUM came into being created by Brahmaji for the benefit of Kaliyuga where people have very little time for spiritual activity.

Since Omkara is the essence of Vedas, when it is expanded it becomes the Vedas. Analogy is to orange juice concentrate when diluted with water become regular orange juice. This Omkara is seen as God himself. So one prays to this God to strengthen one self.

He strengthens by:

1. Giving Medha Shakti or capacity to understand and absorb teaching.
2. Dharana Shakti: Capacity to retain the absorbed teaching.

Take Away:

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreaya Upanishads, Class 5

Greetings All,

Chapter 1, Shikshavalli.

Paragraph # 2:

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, the chapter # 1, Shikshavalli, is Sadhana Pradhana. We started the teaching with Shiksha

shastram that provides the rules for mantra chanting. Shankaracharya pointed out that the method of chanting is very important in Vedas. He says, initially the student learns or Veda Adhyayanam. At this time one learns only the chanting not necessarily the meaning of the shlokas. This stage is Shabda Pradhanam and must be learnt properly. Veda Adhyayanam is also used for Veda Parayanam or Brahma Yagyam. This parayanam helps with Chitta Shuddhi. The Vedas must be chanted properly to obtain the Adrishta balam. This adrishta balam takes a person on the path to spiritual growth. The Veda Adhyayanam, where students learn proper chanting, but may not yet know meaning of the shlokas, will be used to understand it's meaning now in a process known as Veda Mimamsa. Veda Mimamsa is Vedic enquiry. It is divided into two parts called Poorva mimasa and Uttara mimasa. Poorva mimasa is also known as Karma Kanda and its study results in Adrishta balam. Uttara mimasa also called Veda-anta is same as Gyana Kanda and it results in Drishta balam. For this enquiry one has to learn the Vedic mantras. Through an analysis of the Vedic mantras one obtains Karma Gyanam and later Brahma Gyanam.

Gyanam is Drishta Phalam. Punyam is Adrishta Phalam or Karma phalam.

The rules for proper chanting have six factors and we discussed this in the last class. In this manner the science of pronunciation has been presented.

In Paragraph # 2, or Anvaka # 2, Veda Parayanam or Brahma yoga is discussed. Gayathri parayanam is considered equivalent to chanting the Vedas. Ramayana parayanam or any other scriptural parayanam are all part of Brahma Yagna.

Paragraph or Anuvakaha # 3: In introduction we said that Shikshavalli talks of different disciplines of Pancha Maha Yagna, Proper Values (moral, ethical), Verbal Sadhanas, (parayanam, Japam) and five types of Upasanas or meditation. These meditations are not Vedantic meditations while

Nidhidhysanam is a vedantic meditation. The five upasanas are:

1. Sagumhito Upasana: These upasanas are difficult and some say more difficult than Vedanta itself. Nowadays, they are mostly of academic interest only. Today, puranic upasanas such as praying to deities is more common. The study of upasanas itself is considered very sacred and results in great punyam.

This anuvaka begins with a prayer that says, “ May my Guru and myself become popular in society. May I have an attractive personality, born out of spiritual life or as the shloka calls it Brahma Varchas”. Why is student asking for such a boon? Especially when we are studying Vedanta it does not seem to make sense. Swamiji clarified every Vedantic student wants to receive knowledge and share it with others. They were concerned about future generations. All Vedantic students, especially Brahmin students had to teach. A Kshatriya or Vaishya did not have to teach others. In Vedic times a Brahmin could not take up any other profession. His only profession was to spread the teachings of the Vedas. In studying the Vedas you become indebted to the Rishi's who brought this knowledge to you. So, I have to express my gratitude to the Rishi Parampara. This is called Rishi Rinum. One way to remove the Rinum (debt) is to share your knowledge or support an organization that supports teachings of the Vedas.

For above reasons you should be a popular Guru is the prayer.

The Sagamhitaya is derived from Sagumshita. Here M followed by sh, sa or Ha becomes Gum.

So, what is the Upasana? Any upsana requires two things. 1. An Object of the Upasana. This can be a deity such as Shiva, Vishnu etc. This then is the Upasana Vishayaha. Since most objects are too big and invisible, hence often we need a symbol to conceptualize the object. Citing an example, when we

worship our country we end up worshipping a flag that represents the country. The country is too big and diverse physically to conceptualize, while the flag is easy to see. This worship of flag or a symbol is called Alambanam. While a Vishaya may not be concrete, an alambanam usually is. Thus, Vinayaka is worshipped in the turmeric powder, a book represents Sarswathi and the cow represents Laxmi.

So, what is the Sagumhitaya? It is a Vedic combination of letters; it is an alambanam. It is also called a sandhi. The shloka says:

Sagumhithayaha Upanishdam. Here the visarga drops out. For this upasana four factors are considered. Swamiji discussed these four factors through an example. The first mantra of Yajur Veda is: Ishe Tva. E (Ay) and T are thus joined. In this the E is the swaraha and is called Purva rupa and T is called Uttara rupa. Thus, Poorva and Uttara join together and their junction is called Sandhi. Through this joining a new letter comes in and it called Sandhanam. Thus, when E + T join another T comes in. Thus, the four factors are: Purva, Uttara, Sandhi and Samshanam. Hence, it is called Samshito Upsana, On these four symbols, four Vishayaha, one for each symbol, is invoked.

To further clarify this idea, Swamiji cited following example. Consider the four factors are like four chairs. Four people (Upsana Vishaya) are honored to sit on each chair.

The four Vishayas are associated with a particular field such as say sports, music etc. In the first Upasana a puja is performed to all four people, say from sports field and then they are asked to vacate the chair.

In second Upasana another four people, say from field of music, are asked to sit and puja is performed.

In this manner five rounds of pujas or Samhito Upasanas are performed. In total 20 objects are worshipped in five

different fields. Each field is called Adhikaranam. From each field four objects are invoked.

Why should Upanishad prescribe such a difficult Upasana, asks Shankaracharya? Why not keep it simple like worship of a cow? Answering his own question, Shankaracharya says, in those days people studied Vedas for 8 to 12 years. There were a variety of chanting's one learned. A lot of time was spent in learning Vedic chanting. Thus, we have chanting methods of Vakya patha, Pada patha, Krama Patha, Jatha Patha, and Ghana Patha. Here the combination of how the words are chanted, vary. Sandhi plays an important role in chanting. Every student was thorough with each "Letter" of Vedas. Experts in this field were called Salakshna Ghanapady. Vedic students were experts in words and they came to this Upasana with this knowledge. So, they were naturally inclined in its direction.

The five fields chosen are:

1. Adhilokam: Various Lokas
2. AdhiJyautisham: Luminaries such as the Sun, moon, stars etc.
3. Adi Vidhyam: Educational or learning
4. Adi Prajam: Progeny or family
5. Adhyatma or Shariram; our own bodies and its parts.

Each selected one is meditated upon. Thus, there are twenty meditations. We invoke 20 objects. Hence, they are called alambanams. What are these twenty objects?With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot note:

Chanting methods:

Pada Patha: "Gajaananam Bootha Ganaathi Sevitham"

Krama Patha: "Gajaananam Bootha, Bootha Ganaathi, Ganaathi Sevitham"

Jata Patha: “Gajaananam Bootha Bootha Gajaananam Gajaananam Bootha;

Bootha Ganaathi Ganaathi Bootha Bootha Ganaathi;

Ganaathi Sevitham Sevitham Ganaathi Ganaathi Sevitham”

Ghana patha: “Gajaananam Bootha Bootha Gajaananam Gajaananam Bootha Ganaathi Ganaathi Bootha Gajaananam Gajaananam Bootha Ganaathi;

Bootha Ganaathi Ganaathi Bootha Bootha Ganaathi Sevitham Sevitham Ganaathi Bootha Bootha Ganaathi Sevitham;”

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 4

Greetings All,

Chapter 1,Shikshavalli.

Paragraph # 1:

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, Taittiriya Upanishad is written in prose. The first chapter that we are getting into is called Shikshavalli and it has 12 anuvakaha's. Anuvakaha means a paragraph. It can also sometimes mean a chapter. Shikshavalli's first and the last or twelfth anuvakaha's are both shantipatha's.

The content of Shikshavalli occurs between these two shaniti-pathas. The entire chapter # 1 is Sadhana pradhana and relates to preparation of the seeker. It does not have any Vedantic teaching. Many Sadhanas are mentioned for preparation. The Sadhanas are:

1. Kayika Karmani: Here the physical body plays a role. It is also called Karma Yoga or Pancha Maha Yagnaha. All these are required to purify our mind and beat Tamoguna or laziness. Tamoguna exists at the intellectual as well, however, physical activity makes one alert.
2. Vachika Karmani: Many karmas are prescribed at the verbal level. They include: Japam, Parayanam, etc. Parayanam is chanting of shlokas. It can be performed knowing the meaning or not knowing the meaning of the shloka. Chanting, knowing the meaning, is considered more effective. Japa is repetition of a mantra several times. Some mantras are chanted even 108 times. In Parayanam, however, one does not repeat the mantra.

There are two types of Japas.

1. Gyana Yogyatha Sidhi Japas and
2. Gyana Sidhi Japa.
3. Manas Karmani: These are mental activities. The organs of speech and organs of body are not involved in this activity. It is a purely mental activity or Upasana. Five Upasanas are mentioned in Shikshavalli. They are, however, not practiced anymore as such they are only of a theoretical interest to us.

Thus, the three karmani's, two Japas and five Upasanas are all part of Shikshavalli.

Paragraph # 2:

The second paragraph starts with the word Shiksha, which gives the name to the chapter. Mere chanting or parayanam of scriptures is sacred. During chanting we are in touch with the

Mahatmas who created them. Among parayanams, Veda parayanam is considered the highest. All others are smriti's. Vedas come from God. In this paragraph Veda parayanam is glorified. It is very important to chant the Veda parayanam correctly. There are rules established on how one should chant. There are sign rules used for chanting. This science of chanting is called Shiksha Shastram or science of phonetics or proper pronunciation. Mundaka Upanishad talks about 6 Vedangas. They are Shiksha (Phonetics), Vyakarana (grammar), Chandas (Prosody), Nirukta (Etymology), Jyotisa (astronomy) and Kalpa (sacrificial lore). The rules for pronunciation described in Shiksha shastram are six in number. They are: 1) Varna, 2) Swara, 3) Matra, 4) Balam, 5) Sama and 6) Santanaha.

Varnaha: It tells us how every letter of the alphabet is pronounced. It describes from which part of the body the pronunciation comes out. Eight parts of the body are recognized. Based on this the alphabets are categorized as vowels (swaras) and consonants (vyanjan). Consonants are categorized according to source of body part from which sound emanates. Thus we have: Kanta, Talu, Murdha, Danta, Oshta, Nasika, etc.

Swaraha: This describes the accent or intonation or pitch of sound usually as high, medium or low. The pitch is very important in Vedic chanting and is usually marked in the text. The pronunciation is very important as the wrong pronunciation can change the meaning of the word.

Narrating a story in this context, there was a Devapurohita named Vishwarupa. Secretly he liked asuras. Indra got angry with him because of this and killed him. Vishwarupa's father Twashta wanted to revenge his son. He wanted a son who would kill Indra. He performed a Yaga and got a son named Vitrasura, an Indra Shatru. Instead of him killing Indra, Indra killed him. The father was very upset about this. He learnt that the chanting of Indra Shatru was performed in wrong manner. It was chanted as a Bahuvrihi Samas. The difference between Tatpurush

and Bahuvrihi samas is the pronunciation. Here Tatpurush became Bahuvrihi and came out, as "I want a son for whom Indra is the killer". Thus, due to a wrong pronunciation his son was killed. It is for this reason that Veda mantras are not chanted en masse or even from a book. These situations can lead to wrong chanting of Vedas resulting in results that may be different from the originally intended one. In mass chanting errors are covered up by others. Such errors are acceptable for Nish Kama Karma mantras but not for Kami kama mantras.

Matra: The measure or length of a vowel. Consonants are uniform and are of ardha matra. For Swaras (vowels) there are three measures: Short (hrishwa), Long (dirgha) and very Long (plutha). A Plutha can be three or more matras long.

Balam: The stress or effort involved in uttering a letter. Some require more emphasis such as the difference between Ka and Kha. Effort comes from two sources, the mouth (abhyantra prayathna) and throat (bahya Prayathna). Abyantras are of five types while Bahya antra are of eleven types.

Sama: The pace or speed of chanting. It should not be slow or fast, usually medium pace is suggested. Sama is governed by certain rules. It is considered Chanting only when one can chant from memory. One has to learn the chant from a Guru. To memorize one must chant regularly. While performing Brahma Yagya, a part of Pancha Maha Yagya, one can chant fast. However, in a ritual chanting one has to chant the letters clearly and at a medium pace. When teaching some one to chant it should be done at a slow pace.

Santanaha: Continuity of words. This is a combination of words and letters. Chanting rules do not allow splitting and joining as one likes. Compound words can't be split. During teaching one may split but later, it must be compounded. When you combine, the word can change.

Thus: Sham Naha Mitra becomes Shannomitra. These rules for combining are called Sandhi rules and are very important.

Usually one learns chanting from a Guru by imitating him. The above are the six factors to be followed in chanting Vedas. One should avoid Veda chanting, as wrong chanting may give adverse results. For Chitta Shudhi non-Vedic mantras can be chanted as well.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 3

Greetings All,

Continuing his introduction to the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, in the last class he pointed out that among many Upanishads ten are most important due to Shankaracharya writing commentaries on them. All of them are chosen from the Vedas. Taittiriya Upanishad is from Yajur Veda. Yajur veda has two branches. Krishna Yajur and Shukla Yajur veda. Katho and Taittiriya Upanishads are from Krishna Yajur Veda. Ishavasa and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads are from Shukla Yajur Veda. Taittiriya Upanishad occurs at the end of of Taittiriya Aranyakam. This Aranyakam has 10 chapters. The last 4 chapters are philosophical ones. The famous Suyra namaskra or Aruna Prashna occurs in Taittiriya Aranyakam. Last four chapters 7,8, 9 and 10 of the Aranyakam are called Taittiriya Upanishad. Shankaracharya has commented on chapters 7, 8 and 9 only. He did not comment on the last chapter 10

called Mahanarayanam. Taittiriya and Ishawasa Upanishads have an uniqueness to them. They are used for pararayanam due to their swaras or intonation. They were preserved in the sampradaya of chanting. Mundako and Keno upanishad's were not preserved in the sampradaya of chanting. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad also has swaras but they are not very popular.

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

The first story comes from the Puranas or is of mythological origins and is considered more a symbolic one. Once there was a sage by name of Vaishampayana and he had a great disciple by the name of Yagnavalkiya. Yagnavalkiya was a brilliant student. On one occasion he insulted one of his classmates. Vaishampayana came to know about it. He knew Yagnavalkiya had a big ego. He wanted to punish him. He asked Yagnavalkiya to return all the Vedas taught to him. Yagnavalkiya vomited all the food he had eaten and in that vomit all Vedas were surrendered as well. He lost all the wisdom he had learnt. In the vomit was also all his well-digested knowledge. A bird also digests its food and feeds that to its young. All the Rishi's who were with Yagnavalkiya thought it would be a great idea if they could become birds and eat his vomit, so that they would get the wisdom very quickly. So all Rishi's converted themselves to Tittiri birds (partridge) and they ate up his vomit. The Tittiri bird is small but it can consume a lot of food. Thus, all the Rishi's gained wisdom. It is said that because the vomit was mixed with some blood it had become dark or "Krishna", hence this knowledge is known as Krishna Yajur Veda. Later, Yagnavalkiya learnt the Vedas from Surya Bhagavan and he created the Shukla Yajur Veda. All the Rishi's who got their wisdom from the vomit, taught others the Krishna Yajur Veda and thus the Veda spread.

The symbology in this story is that Yagnavalkiya's vomit was like teaching the students a second time. Brilliant students usually grasp information very fast or the very first time.

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

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

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

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

The chapter 2 begins with Brahma and is called Brahmavalli.

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

Fourth chapter is called Narayanavalli but it is not studied.

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

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

Shikshavalli or chapter 1:

The Shanti patha:

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

Through shanti patha students are asking for Gyana Yogyatha prapthi. All of my organs must be in a fit condition to receive knowledge. The 17 organs (The karmendriyas, Gyanendriyas etc.) should also cooperate. During Sravanam my gyanendriyas must be active, not Karmendriyas. I must obtain Karana Yogyata prapthi. Each organ has a Devata. I invoke these devatas so that they keep my organs fit. Various Devatas are mentioned in prayers. Prayers ask that there be no obstacles. Parthibandha Nibhadhyathi.

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

Mitra: God of exhalation (outbound breath)

Varuna: Apana: God of inhalation

Aryama or Surya: God of the Eyes.

Indra: God of the hand.

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

Urukrama or Vishnu: Is God of the feet or the ability to move

and sit. Urukrama means one with big strides.

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

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

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

Naha: Student and teacher.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Foot Note:

Karmendriyas:

1.pāyu – the excretory organ.

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

2.upastha – the sexual organs

This is the generative organ.

3.pāda – the locomotion organ

Legs are the locomotory organs.

4.pāni – the organ of apprehension

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

5.vāk – the speech organ

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

Panchamahabhootas:

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

Greetings All,

Introduction:

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, we saw in the last class that Self-knowledge can be gained through shastra pramanam. It is a mirror that I need, to reflect my Self. It can, however, communicate its message correctly only with the help of a Guru. That Shastra Darpanam gives me knowledge of myself. It is also called Gyana Yoga. This Gyana Yoga has three specific exercises. They are Sravanam, Mananam and Nidhidhyasanam. Thus,

Sravanam: means consistently listening to teachers six fold clues that are used to extract the core teaching of Vedanta. The six fold clues or six *pramanas* are the correct means of accurate knowledge and to the truth. They are:

- 1) *Pratyakṣa* (perception),
- 2) *Anumāṇa* (inference),
- 3) *Upamāṇa* (comparison and analogy),
- 4) *Arthāpatti* (postulation, derivation from circumstances),
- 5) *Anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof) and
- 6) *Śabda* (word, testimony of past or present reliable experts).

Without these clues one cannot get to the core of the teaching. Now, there are several interpretations of Upanishads. They include:

3. I am different and God is different.

4. God and I are only partially different and that I am part of God;
5. I am neither part nor different from God. Rather, I am that.

These several interpretations indicate the need for analysis of scriptures or a reverential enquiry into scriptures also known as Mimamsa. This process of enquiry is known as Sravanam. **Here, I learn that I am Brahman and that there is no second thing other than Me. I am the whole. I am All.** This process is called Sravanam.

Mananam:

It is meant to remove doubts about teaching. **These are the obstacles between knowledge and conviction.** Doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance. Citing an example, you see a power chord and don't know if it is live. Someone says it is not live. As you are about to touch it, he says, he is only 99% sure it is not live. In this case, you probably will not touch the power chord. Here, even one percent ignorance is ignorance.

The main Vedantic teachings are extraordinary and unswallowable. "I am infinite" is difficult to swallow. I am very sure that I am a mortal human being who is growing old and will die one day. My lifestyle is based on the fact that "I am aging and I will die". The statement I am infinite is not acceptable to me.

With respect to the world, Vedanta says, this world that we are experiencing solidly is not there at all, rather it is a mistaken version of the formless Brahman. Formless Brahman alone exists. Form-full world does not exist. Vedanta tells me, I am something I don't experience. So, with respect to Jiva, Jagat and Brahman, all three of them, I find Vedanta's position difficult to swallow. Therefore, I am full of doubts. The reason for the doubt is that my sense organs reveal a

world contrary to the Vedanta. My eyes, ears, nose etc., reveal a world of plurality or Dvaitam, while Vedanta asserts that there is only Advaitam. When there is a clash between direct experience and scriptures, we tend to believe the direct experience. Scriptures are, after all, words written a long time ago by some unknown person(s). So, How can I trust this knowledge while I am experiencing something different everyday. This conflict is called **Prameya Virodha**, or object revealed only by scripture (Advaitam) rather than by direct experience (Dvaitam).

Dvaitam and Advaitam are directly opposite to each other. This intellectual problem can be resolved only through thinking. This process of removing doubts is called Mananam. It alone can give me conviction. Only thinking can validate Vedantic teaching. Many think scriptural teaching has to be proved. It is not possible to do so. No experience can remove an intellectual problem. All intellectual problems arise from non-thinking or wrong thinking. Only right thinking can solve it. We think meditation and Samadhi will remove these doubts. This is wrong. It is said that Patanjali never got his intellectual conviction through his Yoga Samadhi. Samadhi cannot remove doubts. It can only be removed by the thinking, "I am Satyam and Jagat is Mithya".

Nidhidhyasanam:

This consists of different types of exercises. Central aim is dwelling on teaching for assimilation and internalization. Here, I am soaked in Advaita Gyanam. Nidhidhyasanam can be performed in different ways. They are:

1. Repeated Sravanam. Keep listening to teaching again and again. Be reminded of the teaching again and again.
2. Repeated reading.
3. Writing on the teaching.
4. Students of equal knowledge share their knowledge.
5. Teaching some one who does not have the knowledge.

6. Try to imitate the behavior of a Jivan Mukta. I try to imitate life of a Gyani, until I get Gyanam. As they say, fake it to make it. Citing example of namaskara to elders by children, this should be encouraged. Although it is initially a mechanical process one can hope that after some time they will discover the inner reverence too. Thus, fake namaskara becomes reverent namaskara. Chapter 2, shlokas 54-72 and other chapters of Gita deal with Jivan mukta and how they behave. It is called an alert life.
7. Samadhi Abhyasaha: This is different from other forms that you can practice any time and at any place. In this, a sitting meditation is performed in a proper posture, as per scriptures. The goal is focusing on any aspect of the teaching or behavioral problem of the individual. Some people have Kshama, Depression, Kama, Madha, Krodha, and Matsarya. One focuses on his or her area of weakness and meditates on poornatvam.

We don't insist on a type of meditation. During meditation we should dwell on the Shastra. **Purpose of this meditation is not Moksha.** Moksha is not a future event. It is an eternal fact. It is the knowledge that " I am free in spite of the situation". Nidhidhyasanam is not for Gyanam. For Gyanam one performs Sravanam. Nidhidhyasanam is not meant to prove the knowledge. Proving is only through Mananam. Nidhidhyasanam is not meant for any extraordinary experience. All experiences belong to Anatma. They come and go. Mystic experiences have no connection to Self Knowledge. A Gyani may not get any mystic experience. A Gyani may not have any Sidhi.

In this context four types of people were cited:

- 1) Gyani and Sidha;
- 2) Gyani and not Siddha;
- 3) Sidha and not Gyani;

4) Neither Gyani nor Sidha.

Among these four, only the Gyani is liberated. An Adharmic Sidha is also possible as known from stories of Rakshasas. Therefore, Nidhidhyasanam is only for assimilation of knowledge. What are the signs of assimilation?

Samasaraic reactions to life situations will change. Reactions will be healthy. You will not get a halo. Unhealthy reactions should come down. As you practice Nidhidhyasanam, there will be a gradual reduction in unhealthy reactions. This assimilation can be measured by the following:

1. **Frequency** of unhealthy reactions will be reduced. There will be more shanti or Brahmagyana phalam anubhavam.
2. **Intensity** of reaction is lower. The reaction is usually felt in mind, body and speech. Now, there will be no physical reaction. While mental reaction may occur, I can control it. I do not respond verbally as well.
3. **Recovery** period is reduced. In the past it could affect one for years. Now, it comes and goes in minutes.

Vedanta does not say we should not have a reaction. It just says we should have a reaction that is healthy. Citing another example, it is like the bouncing back of a rubber ball versus the lack of resilience in a clay ball. Thus, psychological resilience comes from Nidhidhyasanam.

From these three exercises we get Gyana Phalam or Jivan Mukti. This teaching is called:

1. Vedanta or the end part of the Vedas
2. or Gyana Kandam (Karma is not discussed)
3. or Brahma Vidya
4. or Atma Vidya.
5. or knowledge of myself as the ever-free one and it is also called Upanishad.
6. Upanishad: Shankaracharya has defined Upanishad as a teaching in which the freedom is hidden. You are

discovering freedom in yourself.

Take Away:

Vedanta says, this world that we are experiencing solidly is not there at all, rather it is a mistaken version of the formless Brahman. Formless Brahman alone exists. Form-full world does not exist.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 1

Greetings All,

Introduction:

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

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

1. Kayika Karamani: Physical body plays a big part in them.
2. Vachika Karmani: Are in the form of Japas and Parayanams.

3. Manasika Karmani: It is purely through meditation.

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

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

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

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

All above are the Karmas or the three means and their respective three ends. Even if a person is lucky to enjoy all of the above three, such a Satvik person will learn from

Life's Lessons. Important lessons learned are that all three goals are wonderful, however, inherent in them are deficiencies or Doshas. While these Doshas are relatively good (Preyaha) they are not absolute good or Sreyaha. Thus, there are three Doshas or Dosha Trayam. They are:

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

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

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

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

Where is this Brahman and how to acquire it? Vedanta says you can never obtain it because that defect free one is in the form of the "Seeker" in you. You are that. I also have a very

difficult time swallowing the idea that I am that defect free Brahman. Everything I have, has defects, including my body, mind and intellect. They all have limitations. All my experiences, so far, have proven my limitation. Even my children tell me that I was a terrible parent. In this context I have a big doubt if I am a defect free Self. There is a very big gap between what I think of myself versus what Vedanta thinks of me. I sometimes feel like dropping the Gita, Upanishads and the Guru.

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

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

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

from objective science. Shastra has to use words to reveal my Self.

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

Take Away:

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

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy