

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