

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:

अथ यथा वाचो धिया भवति यथा वाचो भूया भवति यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति

यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति

यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति

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यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति

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

अथ यथा वाचो धिया भवति यथा वाचो भूया भवति यथा वाचो ब्रह्म भवति

Because of that whatever one thinks by mind

एतत् तद्वदन्ति एतद्वदन्ति

that one does

एतत् तद्वदन्ति एतद्वदन्ति एतद्वदन्ति

What is first in the mind as seed

एतत् तद्वदन्ति एतद्वदन्ति एतद्वदन्ति

that later forms as desire

एतत् तद्वदन्ति एतद्वदन्ति ए

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 Upana 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.

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 93: Chapter 6, Verses 27 and 28

Greetings All,

Shloka # 27:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 6.27 ॥

Indeed the bliss supreme accrues to this sinless Yogin whose mind has been stilled, Rajas suppressed, and who has become Brahman.

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, in this chapter of the Gita, Sri Krishna is elaborately discussing the topic of Nidhidhyasanam. Nidhidhyasanam is only relevant after Sravanam and Mananam of Vedas. Actual knowledge takes place during Sravanam. When I see myself in the mirror, if it is a clear one, I can get a good picture of myself so long as my vision is also good. Guru keeps the verbal mirror in front of the student and then he gets a good picture of himself in the verbal mirror. And

So long as this teaching is properly presented, and the listener has got a defect-free mind, this very teaching can and will generate the knowledge in the mind and therefore we should remember knowledge is only through sravanam. Vedantic meditation does not give rise to knowledge.

And then this has to be followed by my mananam. This has to remove any trace of doubt with regard to the teaching. It has

to remove any trace of doubt with regard to **the fundamental aspects of Vedanta, which are:**

- **Brahman is the substratum of the world; and**
- **The world is dependent on Brahman, and**
- **Brahman the substratum is none other than myself.**

Thus, sravanam and mananam should do the job of producing knowledge. Thus, conviction regarding Vedantic teaching has to take place only through sravanam and mananam. Once this has happened what is the role of meditation? The role of meditation is to enjoy the benefit of the knowledge.

Our problem is, we seem to know and understand the teaching; but the promised benefit does not seem to appear. The scriptures say that a Gyani is free from emotional problems but when I look at myself from that standpoint, I feel, there is a big gap between a Gyani and me. Therefore we doubt our knowledge.

Sri Krishna says that there is no defect in knowledge. What we lack is not knowledge rather we lack the benefit of knowledge. This benefit of knowledge is shanti or freedom from anxiety; sense of fulfillment; freedom from jealousy, hatred etc. and therefore the role of nidhidhyasanam is removing the block between Gyanam and Gyana phalam.

And what is the block between knowledge and the benefit of mano shanti? The block is our habitual ways of thinking and our habitual ways of looking at ourselves. We are habituated to look at ourselves as a physical person; or as an emotional person, or as an intellectual person; whereas Vedanta has taught us that physical body is not ourselves. Therefore, the physical identification, emotional identification, etc. are our habitual way of looking at ourselves.

Our response to life and events is also habitual. Everything is based on our habits. Citing an example, Swami Dayananda Saraswathi used to say that in India he would get into any car

on the front, left hand side; the passenger side. When he visited USA, he would tend to do the same thing there as well. Unfortunately in USA the passenger side is the right side. This was a habitual response. These habits have developed over a very long time. The word Vasana is used to denote our habitual response. Nidhidhyasanam makes me to relook every thing in context of Vedanta including all relationships. I will not call many situations as problems anymore. Furthermore, verbalization reflects our habits as words represent our thinking. A change in words changes our thinking. Problems that we face now are not a problem anymore, per Vedanta as Prarabdham causes them.

And therefore nidhidhyasanam is to invoke my Vedantic personality, and learn to re-look into myself; in the light of Vedanta, learn to relook into one's family situation, work situation etc. In the light of Vedanta one should re-look all problems. We should learn to rename them; we will not call them a problem, anymore.

This relook in context of knowledge of Vedanta is nidhidhyasanam. Success and failure are just words.

Citing an example imagine two people are together running a business and one person expected five percent profit; other person expected fifteen percent profit and the profit was 10%. And now the first person is going to say that it is wonderful while second person is disappointed. The result remaining the same, one calls it success while another calls it a failure.

Therefore most of our responses are born out of tagging; which is born out of thinking; which is born out of our knowledge or ignorance;

So Vedanta is a painful, time-consuming re-assessment of our situations in life; and in that reassessment, I should be able to say I am happy, not because of situations, but in spite of situations. Citing another example: A Swamiji lost his eyes

because of diabetics. People were shocked. Swamiji himself was happy and he consoled people who felt sorry for him. He told them, now he could focus on God fully without distraction of the external world. He had changed his perspective with his blindness.

Abhibhava means you don't solve rather you dissolve the problem. Similarly, Vedanta does abhibhava of the ego's problems; they become insignificant; they become too small in front of the poornatvam that I have discovered; and this abhibhava is the job in meditation. I look at every problem of mind and see it as insignificant. It is like the stars during daytime; they are as good as absent.

Once I change my perspective, my anxiety goes away. My future continues to be unpredictable, as always, still the unpredictability does not give me anxiety. Gyani's peace of mind is not because his future has become predictable; Gyani's freedom from anxiety is not because of predictability; but in spite of unpredictability. This is called Jivan mukti. It is not a thoughtless state. It is not a mystic state. It is re-looking world and myself in context of Vedanta.

Citing another example, In Bhagavatham, they describe how Sri Krishna looked at all the Yadavas fighting and killing each other. And Sri Krishna sees right in front of his eyes; the Shapam coming through; the shapam being that you are going to fight and die; and Sri Krishna is the Lord himself; and Sri Krishna could not stop his family members fighting and dying one by one. Soon he is also going to join them; he is also going to be shot; and Bhagavatham describes Sri Krishna's perception of those events; leaning on a tree; with his hands on the tree; he looks at the whole event with a smile; it is a choice-less situation, even for Bhagavan. The Omnipotent, Omniscient Sri Krishna choice-lessly sees the event of every family member of his dying one by one.

And what was Sri Krishna's response; a smile; not that he is

happy about it; but the thing is he looks at the situation and knows a choice-less situation has to unfold. Where there is a choice, Sri Krishna will certainly take an action; Therefore, Gyani does take action where it has to be taken; Gyani also accepts the situation where it is choice-less. So the world and the life will continue.

Change is in our perception and response. This is discussed further in shloka # 27.

Gyani enjoys great ananda born out of knowledge of poornatvam. I the atma am Poornaha. A Gyani is one who has struggled and used Vedantic knowledge to understand knowledge to look into every aspect of this kind. It is just like, if you want to change a raga, in Carnatic music, you have to go to the svaras which go make the raga; you cannot change the raga, without changing the svara; if I want to change the shape of this hall, I will have to take every brick and rearrange it.

If my life has to change every thought has to change. Jealousy, sorrow, anger are all just thoughts. These thoughts just arise and we respond. Our life is really a collection of all these thoughts. It is a time consuming process to change our thoughts.

Prashanta Manasa is one whose mind is free of unhealthy thoughts. He is not thoughtless; but his thoughts are undisturbing thoughts; thoughts that do not disturb the mind.

In fact for one hour you are listening to my talk during which I am presenting ideas to you; and the ideas are generated in your mind in the form of thought alone. Now is this thought a burden to you? If it were a burden, you would not come here.

So, thought is not samsara; you need not eliminate any thought; compassion is a thought pattern; and compassion is not samsara; love is not samsara; generosity is not samsara; **burdening thoughts are replaced by the thoughts which are not a burden; and that is called shanta vrittihi; they are called**

Thus integrating himself always, the sinless Yogin easily achieves contact with Brahman or infinite bliss.

Same idea is prescribed in a different manner.

One gets shanti or gyana phalam. Meditation does not produce it. It removes obstacles to our knowledge and lets it flow. Gyanam is shanti. Obstacles are our habits. By reorienting our habits knowledge just flows. Situations, now, do not produce as much anxiety. This is a slow and gradual process. Even as our physical change is slow and gradual so it is with Vedantic knowledge. Shanti gradually increases. Who attains this sukham? The Yogi. How does he bring this transformation? It is like physiotherapy for an arm or a leg. It is a time consuming process as the mind is very subtle. In shloka, atma means mind, Yunjan means reorienting the mind; Vigatkalamasha means unhealthy habits, habitual negative thinking, will gradually leave.

Everything like anger is a viparitha bhavana; frustration is a viparitha bhavana. Vigata Kalmasham means unhealthy habits of thinking gradually come down.

So, sitting in a place think about the things that disturb you. You have to be alert in day-to-day transactions.

That is also nidhidhyasanam; but there are certain issues for which general alertness is not sufficient; you have to sit and ask the questions: Oh Mind why are you disturbed by that; and look at in the light of Vedanta; ask the question, can you change the situation; or is it choice-less; if you can change better work on changing; rather than working on worrying; And if you cannot change at all; learn to reorient mind to withstand the changeless situations; thereafter one should not talk about that situation again and again; because after knowing that it cannot be changed, what is the use of talking; I stop talking about the disturbing situation; I talk about the change required in my mind to withstand the situation;

that is a worthwhile effort.

Citing example of camera, if somebody is taking a picture with a camera and focus requires me to go back, but you cannot because there is a void behind you. This is a choice-less situation where cameraman has to go or you go. You cannot change the situation. Then one has to change the mind one has to toughen it to reduce impact of the situation. Therefore, change the world if you can; otherwise change your mind; stop complaining and worrying.

In shloka, Sada means regular alertness.

If this is done Yogi attains great ananda. Sukhen means effortlessly. Jivan mukti is an experienced result; you experience it. This ananda comes from my association with Brahman or Atman by owning up to my higher nature.

Does it mean he should not enjoy Vishayanada? He can enjoy it so long as it is Dharmic. Once I have

got brahmananda; it is like having a generator inside me; as long as vishayananda, the corporation power is there; you use it; when it goes off, you need not worry, you start your own generator. Similarly when vishayananda is there; certainly Gyani is going to appreciate the beauty; but when it goes he is not worried because he is automatically connected to the Brahmananda and atyantam sukham.

Take away:

1. The fundamental teachings of Vedanta are:
 - Brahman is the substratum of the world.
 - The world is dependent on Brahman.
 - Brahman the substratum is none other than myself.
3. Our life is really a collection of all our thoughts. Jealousy, sorrow, anger are all just thoughts. These thoughts just arise and we respond. If my life has to

The objects are divided into three:

- 1) The first object is external world; because it is an object of my experience;
- 2) The second object is my physical body itself; which is also an object of my experience;
- 3) The third object is my own mind; which is also an object of my experience.

In meditation, we withdraw from the world, then the body, then from the mind and then as the witness conscious principle, observe the mind. So, you are observing your own thoughts. Meditation is difficult. The mind tends to run to different places. Many emotions come up. It is escapism. All emotions are also part of the mind, which I am not. Many emotions are in my control and some are not.

So, therefore emotions will come. In Vedantic meditation, I do not try to control my emotions. In Vedantic meditation, I try to objectify my emotions. I try to stand aloof from my emotions and try to see that they also do not belong to me. So body has got its nature; mind has got its nature; and I am different from both of them.

Some people get pleasant experiences when the mind is quiet, however, they go away once mind becomes active. This is also Anatma. Enjoying pleasantness of meditation is an obstacle. This pleasantness belongs to the quiet mind while we are talking about the witness Atma. I want to own up to this Atma. Any special experience is not Me. Special experiences are like any other sensory experience such as eating an ice cream. It is another bondage. If I own up to "I am" the witness to the mind and all its experiences, it is worthwhile.

Therefore, Sri Krishna says; Shanaih Shanair uparamed; one should withdraw; with the help of buddhya or the intellect, which has the backing of this teaching. That is why Vedantic

meditation is possible only by a student of the Gita Upanishad; a non-student can never practice Vedantic meditation.

When, Sri Krishna says buddhya, it means Vedantic meditation is practiced with the help of the intellect, which has the teaching behind it. And the teaching is: I am neither the mind, nor the experiences of the mind

With the help of the intellect it has to be withdrawn. It must be an intellect supported by will power. Without will power I will get attached to pleasant experiences.

Having withdrawn, the mind should abide in the atma. How does the mind abide in the atma? Citing an example when we say a clip is resting on the table, can we say the same for Atma? No such thing happens. Atma is all pervading. There is no need to bring the mind to Atma. Atma is everywhere.

Here it means mind entertains the thought of God or Himalayas etc. So, here the mind is thought centered on the self as, " I am of the nature of consciousness". I enliven body and mind. Body and mind are only mediums. They can come and go.

So the experience comes and goes; the experiencer "I", the consciousness, am eternally present. So I am eternal consciousness, I am all pervading consciousness; I am

Undivided consciousness; I am untainted consciousness.

This is akhanda akara Vrithihi centered on the Atma. Here there is no subject object division. **Entertain only thought of yourself. Don't disturb yourself by thinking of other thoughts.**

In the shloka, nakinchidapi chintayet, does not mean don't entertain thoughts. Self-thought has to be there for Vedantic meditation. Otherwise it is called blind Samadhi. Blind Samadhi means, absolute thoughtless state. In Sanskrit it is

must remember that everything is temporary gift from God. Use them to grow. Don't fall in love with any idea or object. **Ownership is due to obsession. Obsession is due to distraction.**

This lack of ownership should come from inner most of heart. My own body and mind should feel I don't want to own. Thus, again, bring the mind to atma.

Shloka # 27:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ६.२७ ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ६.२७ ॥

Indeed the bliss supreme accrues to this sinless Yogin whose mind has been stilled, Rajas suppressed, and who has become Brahman.

What will be the result of this practice, or the dhyana phalam? The benefit is that the highest peace comes to him. A peace not determined by external conditions. It is not a conditional peace.

Swamji says anything conditional is fake.

If you say, I am secure because there is money; Vedanta calls it conditional security because money can leave you at any time. It is not real security.

Anything that can go away is not peace. Similarly it is with conditional happiness, conditional fulfillment etc. The benefit of Vedantic meditation is unconditional

peace. So, here uttamam means unconditional and nirapeksha means, I am peaceful. If somebody asks a Gyani why is he peaceful, his answer will be because that is my very nature. If you ask fire why are you hot, the fire will say: that is my nature.

Similarly, I am peaceful unconditionally; therefore I am

permanently peaceful; peacefully rich; peacefully poor; peacefully with house; peacefully without house; peacefully with people, peacefully without people; peacefully young, peacefully old; peacefully black haired; peacefully white haired also; or any other color. So this is uttamam sukham upaiti; this is the phalam.

Take away:

1. Vedantic meditation is entertaining only thought of yourself. Don't disturb yourself by thinking of other thoughts.
2. Repeated listening to teaching is also a form of Vedantic meditation.
3. Don't fall in love with any idea or object. Ownership is due to obsession. Obsession is due to distraction.

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 Apanoti 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 vrithihi. 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 Brahmananda, 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: Brahmavit 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

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 91: Chapter 6, Verses 23 to 25

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna has been talking about vedantic meditation as a means of assimilating self-knowledge. He does not prescribe meditation for gaining self-knowledge. Shankaracharya says self-knowledge can take place only from the teachings of a Guru. If one does not gain the knowledge by listening the first time one has to listen to it again and again, from the teacher, until it dawns in you. If this process requires another life (or lives) so be it. This is the only method of obtaining Atma Gyanam. Meditation is not prescribed for obtaining Atma Gyanam. Meditation is however accepted by the scriptures for assimilating Atma Gyanam. Citing an example it is the digested food that we assimilate into the body and not the amount of food that we eat. So what we listen to is not as important as to what we assimilate from listening. **It is the replaying of Sravanam that is Nidhidhyasanam.**

Steps of meditation are Dharana, Dhyanam and Samadhi. First withdraw mind from worldly personality. And bring the mind to vedantic teaching; this bringing the mind to the teaching is known as dharana; and then trying to dwell upon the teaching continuously is dhyanam; and then I am absorbed in the teaching, which talks about my higher nature, that I forget all my relative personality; this is Samadhi. One forgets family, relationships, friends etc., they all become incidental. In this stage only a thought such as Aham Brahma Asmi, Aham atma asmi etc., dominates.

As Wayne Dyer, beautifully says; **you are not a human being with a spiritual experience; but you are a spiritual being**

with an incidental human experience. Do not look for a spiritual experience; when you are looking for a spiritual experience you are just a human being seeking a spiritual experience. That is the worst that can happen.

On the other hand, through teaching, what we have to assimilate is: I do not seek spiritual experience, I want to own up to the fact that I am a spiritual being, all the time; while the human experience is something which comes and goes.

The steps of meditation of dharana, dhyana samadhi culminates in a state of total absorption. One is absorbed in "satchidanda svarupah asmi". This absorption is called nirvikalpaka Samadhi. Nirvikalpaka samadhi is the phalam of ashtanga yoga.

Sri Krishna is giving seven definitions of nirvikalpa Samadhi from different perspectives.

1. **Chitta Uparamanam:** in which the mind is totally relaxed, tranquil, at home, at peace and at poise. Chitta means mind, and uparamanam means quietude. It is not a thoughtless mind, but one without disturbance. Thoughts should not disturb. Knowledge is also a thought but not a disturbance. You can have thoughts with a quiet mind. Nidhidhyasanam is a quiet mind with Vedantic thoughts or it is quiet due to Vedantic thoughts.
2. **Atma Darshanam:** is a state in which one invokes, in his mind, the knowledge he has received. The knowledge received is that: I am not the body, I am not the sense, I am not the mind, and I am the consciousness principle, different from the body, pervading and illumining the body. This owning up to my own nature is atma darshanam. This was the second definition.
3. **Atyanta sukham:** It means the highest happiness, in which I own up to the fact that my very nature is happiness. It is not an experiential happiness. Experiential happiness is finite, because it is time bound. This is a

happiness born out of the knowledge that I do not miss anything in life; I do not lack anything in life; I do not have any imperfection; this very understanding gives me a sense of fulfillment. This knowledge born fulfillment is called atyantika sukham.

4. **Tatva nishta:** Which means that it is a state in which a person abides in his true nature; that he will not slip out of his svarupam even during transaction. So this is called not losing the center of gravity. The center of gravity is aham satchidanandasvarupah. This is called tattva nishta or also sahaja samadhi.
5. **Atyantika Labha:** it is the greatest and latest accomplishment in life. It is coming back to myself after going in search of peace all over and discovering that peace and fullness is my very nature. So, a person who discovers his svarupam has got a sense that I have come back. So this is called atyantika labha the highest gain in life.
6. **Atyantika dukha nivriti:** that gaining which a person does not know how to grieve in life; there is no more sorrow in life; even the worst crisis does not shake him; because he is very clearly aware that the whole anatma consists of body-mind and the world. This anatma is unpredictable and fluctuations will take place anytime. At the physical level any kind of change including death can occur at any time.

He is aware that similar changes can occur at the mental as well as world level as well. He is aware of anatma and is mentally prepared for all eventualities. Nothing comes as a shock for him. His initial reaction to a situation may be "what?" but it is soon converted to "so what?" He recovers very quickly. This is the sixth definition, atyantika dukha nivritih or total freedom from sorrow.

Now Sri Krishna provides the seventh definition in the next shloka.

Shloka # 23:

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ 6.23 ॥

Know that to be styled Yoga which consists in disjunction from experienced-pain. This Yoga has slowly got to be practiced with an undejected mind.

It is a technical definition to avoid confusion. Confusion can come from third definition of Athyantika Sukham. One may think knowledge and Samadhi will bring the highest happiness. This is a mistake as anything that comes in time will also be lost in time.

If one gets pleasure from meditation, when you are out of meditation, it will go away. So, never seek mystic pleasure, says Vedanta. Some people who experience nirvikalpika Samadhi say after Samadhi they experience pain.

Therefore even mystic bliss if it arrives, it is subject to time, and therefore Krishna wants to say that, infinite ananda should be that which never arrives. If it should be infinite ananda; it should never arrive at a place, or time or in particular condition; infinite ananda is possible only if it is already here and now. Infinite by definition is that which is here and now.

Then how to get infinite ananda? Infinite ananda in Vedanta means you remove superimposed sorrow or obstacles in your swarupam. Thus, when a doctor treats you he is not giving you health. We have acquired a disease and doctor has removed the disease, which is an obstacle to one's health. I have just come back to health. Swasthaha means being in one's own nature. When we enjoy ananda we are in our natural state. Sorrow is due to our misconception and is removed by atma gyanam.

Every sorrow is unnatural. It belongs to body, mind or world

and none of them is your nature. Hence the shloka, Chidananda rupaha shivahom shivoham. **Dissociation from association is ananda.** We have associated with sorrow due to ignorance. And, therefore, **samadhihi is dissociation from association with sorrow.** We have associated ourselves with sorrow, because of our ignorance, and that wrong association we now give up.

We do not develop a new association with happiness because we need not associate with happiness since happiness happens to be our svarupam. **So the seventh definition of nirvikalpika Samadhi is dissociation from sorrow.**

Now Sri Krishna gives advise to Vedantic students. One should practice this yoga of Bahiranga sadhanani, Antaranga sadhanani and meditation. Only practice will transform a personality. One should practice with perseverance. We must practice meditation without a depressed mind. Keep in mind that in meditation our worries come up. Never get frustrated. Work on meditation with an optimistic mind.

Shloka # 24:

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Giving up wholly all desires born of mental constructions and controlling, on all sides, the senses with the mind.

Sri Krishna talked about dhyana phalam in these verses, beginning from shloka 20 up to shloka 23. Sri Krishna is not totally satisfied and therefore once again he goes back and talks about dhyana svarupam for what is to be done in meditation for our reinforcement.

He says turn mind away from worldly thoughts, both past and future.

The word Kama in shloka means future plans or expectations. We rarely live in the present. Everyday I prepare for tomorrow.

For 20 minutes, every day, drop your plans for the future. And, how to do that? Any thought at its beginning stages is not powerful. It arrives feebly like a ripple in a lake. Then, with support of wind, the ripple becomes a wave. We keep thinking of the same subject and reinforcing it. So, don't let thought linger. Anger, jealousy etc., are all thoughts built up. Repeated thinking creates anger. So, in its seed stage itself divert the thought away.

Then withdraw the sense organs, which are the gateways, through which the external world enters your mind and disturbs. Then close the gate so that external world does not enter your mind. With the help of your mind itself withdraw from the external world totally. Indriyagram in shloka means group of indriyas. Gram means cluster. Viniyam means withdraw.

Shloka # 25:

विवृतं विद्वान्मनसं विद्वान्मनसं विद्वान्मनसं
विवृतं विद्वान्मनसं विद्वान्मनसं विद्वान्मनसं 6.25

Withdraw gradually, with the help of the resolute intellect; anchoring the mind in the Self, think of nothing whatsoever.

Withdrawal must be done gradually. Atma is the subtlest nature of mind. Mind can't turn from gross to subtle immediately. There will be intermediate stages. Make mind subtler and subtler. Move mind away from gross. The whole world is given to you for your inner growth.

Mind dwells upon a object due to which we have either aham abhimana, or mama abhimana; I am yours; you are mine. In reality nothing is yours,

nothing is mine; everything belongs to God alone. We

are fundamentally related to God or Paramatma; that is the only permanent tie that we have, the moment I put that in my mind, attachment is dropped and there is a relaxation. Once

you have withdrawn, the mama abhimana goes away.

Nobody is indispensable. You cry for a few days after a month you have even forgotten that person. While body is mine, it is also anatma.

And therefore withdraw from the external world; then coming to the body dismiss the body as anatma. It is only made of matter; therefore you withdraw from world to annamaya kosa; annamaya kosa to pranamaya; pranamaya to manomaya; manomaya to vigyanamaya; vigyanamaya to anandamaya. Body is gross; mind is subtle, mind is gross, consciousness is subtle.

I am not thought or mind; although, I am aware of thought and mind. I am not thought. I am witness consciousness. This must be done gradually to withdraw from all five koshas.

In mind don't be lost in thought rather becomes the witness consciousness. Once mind is in Atma, let it dwell there. Let it dwell on the features of Atma such as: I am the consciousness, which goes beyond the body; I am the formless consciousness; I am uncontaminated consciousness etc.

Hence, meditation is not possible without knowledge from a guru. Dwell even on a word such as: Aham Apanga.

How to do it?

Mind should remain in atma. What does it mean? Atma is all pervading. Mind is not away from atma. Nothing is away from atma. So, placing the mind means entertaining the thought of atma or centered on atma. Thus, thinking of Badrinath means your thoughts are on Badrinath. So, mind should have thoughts centered on atma. Thoughts such as: Aham brahma asmi. Even when thoughts are changing, I don't change. This is called akhanda akara vrithi or atma centered thoughts. **Flow of atma thought to the exclusion of anatma thought is meditation.**

Take away:

1. I do not seek spiritual experience, I want to own up to the fact that I am a spiritual being, all the time, while the human experience is something which comes and goes.
2. The seventh definition of nirvikalpika Samadhi is dissociation from sorrow. (shloka # 23).
3. Dissociation from association with sorrow is ananda.
4. In mind, don't be lost in thought rather becomes the witness consciousness.
5. Flow of atma thought to the exclusion of anatma thought is meditation.
6. It is the replaying of Sravanam that is Nidhidhyasanam.
7. You are not a human being with a spiritual experience; but you are a spiritual being with an incidental human experience.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 85:

Chapter 6; Verses: 9 and 10

Swamiji summarizes Lord Krishna's discussion thus far:

1. The topic of Bahiranga saadhana. These are the general disciplines to be observed by a person who wants his meditation to be successful.
2. Samatvam (equanimity) as one discipline, the importance of self-confidence, self-effort and self-integration of various personalities (the physical, the psychological, the intellectual). If a person takes care of all these disciplines, then the self-knowledge is very easy.
3. Krishna then mentioned the benefit of gaining the self-knowledge. This comes in the form of a total change of one's perspective of the world. According to Vedanta, the world does not have an intrinsic capacity to bind, to persecute, torment or disturb an individual. The individual gives the power to the world to disturb them. This occurs when a person has an unhealthy perspective of the world. The perspective is in your hands!

Chapter 6 Sloka 9

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ६.९ ॥

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ in the goodhearted, in friends, in enemies, in the indifferent, in neutrals, in haters, and in relatives ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ in the righteous ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ also ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ and ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ in the unrighteous ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ one who has equal mind ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ excels.

The yogis look upon all—well-wishers, friends, foes, the pious, and the sinners—with an impartial intellect. The yogi who is of equal intellect toward friend, companion, and foe, neutral among enemies and relatives, and impartial between the righteous and sinful, is distinguished among humans.

In this verse, Krishna says, not only does a jnaani have samtvam regarding inanimate objects, he has the sama darshanam regarding the living beings as well. Equanimity towards the living beings is more difficult, esp. with human living beings. When we befriend a person, we develop raga, dvesha, krodha, etc. Krishna has given a wide range of human beings.

सर्वज्ञः means by his very nature he is a well-wisher of everyone and will help anyone without any conditions or expectations.

सहोपायः another good person but this person is a conditional helper – helps only when the other is a known person.

द्वेषी (not seen separately due to the sandhi) means enemy

निर्विकारः: means an indifferent person. He does not harm nor do any good. मध्यस्थः: a mediator.

द्वेषी: one who is hateful; one who provokes hatred by his behavior

संबन्धुः: a relative; connected by family relation.

वैश्याः: a noble person who follows dharma. श्रेयसाढ्याः means a person doing good to others. A श्रेयसाढ्याः is a person leading a life of values, whether an opportunity arises to help others or not.

अश्रेयसाढ्याः one who leads a life of अश्रेयसाढ्याः – an unrighteous person.

These are the various types of people. A jnaani's attitude towards all of them is equanimity.

How can you see all the people equally when one person is a saint and another a criminal? The सर्वज्ञः must be understood very well. This was discussed in Chapter 5, Verse 18 as सर्वज्ञः सर्वज्ञः ।

Swamiji explains सर्वज्ञः again.

सर्वज्ञः can be looked at from two angles:

Meditation will be effective, if these steps are observed.

Stage 1: स्थान नियमः Desha NiyamaH

- स्थानः a secluded place of meditation with minimum disturbances.
- स्थानः alone; try to be alone.
- Let the place be spiritually and physically clean. The space should be associated with spirituality; puja room, temple, ashrama etc.

Stage 2: कालः Kaala NiyamaH (Krishna does not mention this).

- कालः Early morning is ideal for meditation. But the ideal time for meditation is when you are relaxed and not sleepy.

Stage 3: आसनः Aasana

- आसनः where should you be seated? You can sit on a chair if you are not able to sit on the floor. The main aim is the mind!
- Every meditator should have his/her own aasanam. It should be neither too soft nor too hard. Neither too high nor too low.

Stage 4: शरीर स्थितिः Shareera SthitaH; Posture of the body

- You should sit steadily; Keep the neck and head straight and relaxed

Stage 5: प्राणसायमः Praanasaamyam

- Even breathing. The breathing should be relaxed and smooth.

Breathing and our thoughts are interconnected.

Stage 6: इन्द्रिया निग्रहः Indriya NigrahaH; Sensory restraint

- Sense organs can influence the mind since every sense organ is a gateway in which the world enters the mind.
- Krishna says to withdraw the sense organs by turning the mind away.
- Krishna specifically mentions the eyes – the most powerful sense organs. If the eyes are open, all the things seen enter the mind and triggers the thoughts to wander. When the eyes are closed, by laws of association, we tend to sleep. Krishna says, let the eyes be half-closed, as though you are looking at the tip of your nose.

Stage 7: मनु नग्रहाः Mano NigrahaH; Withdrawal of the mind

- The mind must be withdrawn from mundane things; all the worldly roles you play in life as husband/wife/neighbor/mother etc. Each role has its set of anxieties and worries.
- For 15 minutes, shed all your roles. Become a sanyasi mentally. Relate to God or your Guru. These are the two relationships that have no problems.

Invoke the Guru. By law of association, you are reminded of the teachings. The relationship to the guru is in the context of teaching. Withdraw your mind; surrender to the Lord.

Stage 8: बुद्धि निश्चयः Buddhi NishchayaH

- Conviction regarding the necessity and utility of meditation. It should not be a mechanical routine. Need to meditate whole-heartedly, knowing the role of meditation.

With this conviction, sit in meditation, withdraw the sense organs; withdraw the mind. Now, you are fully available for meditation. These 8 steps are not meditation but specific preparation, called antaranga saadhanaani. The details will be discussed in the next class.

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 (Brahmachrya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, 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 sampradya or mimasa,

which we never study. We cannot interpret on our own. Shatras have built-in interpretation and the Gurus' 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

Bhagawat Geeta, Class 90, Chapter 6: Verses 20 to 22

Greetings All,

Continuing his teaching of the Gita, Swami Paramarthananda said, Sri Krishna has been talking about vedantic meditation that closely follows Ashtanga Yoga. Now he talks about the actual process of meditation and its culmination. As discussed in last class, culmination of meditation is the mental absorption in flow of similar thoughts also called Sajathiya pratyaya pravaha. In vedantic meditation, the

flow of thought should be dealing with the very nature of atma; and atma has got different features as we saw in the previous chapters, you can change the thought from one feature of atma to another feature of atma; but you should not change from atma to any other object.

Thus, Atma's features were discussed in chapters 2, 4 and 5 respectively. These features include: atma chaitanya svarupah; atma nityah; atma ekah and atma sarvagathah. The features were

detailed in shlokas 12-25, chapter 2.

Vedantic meditation is impossible without having studied under a Guru. A non-vedantic student cannot perform Atma dhyanam. That is why Sri Krishna is introducing the topic after five chapters. Non-Vedantic students can, however, perform Upasana Dhyanam. Swamiji said we would have a guided meditation at the end of this chapter as well.

A vedantic student has learned the different features of atma from the guru and guru has pointed out how atma is the nature of consciousness. Thus, Atma is nitya, satyah, sarvagatah; asangah; ekah, akarta; nirvikarah and abhokta. All these he has heard and understood.

If the student has not understood enough about the Atma, then he or she should listen to the teacher again. The student has to re-live the teaching. You can recollect only if you have been taught. **Meditation is recollecting and remembering all his teachings.** I am witness of thought; I am the changeless consciousness etc. When my mind dwells on the Atma (or any specific object) continuously it is called Sajathiya Pratyaha Pravaha. In time this dwelling becomes stronger and effortless as well.

This process of dwelling of the mind in Atma has three stages as per Yoga shastra.

1. First is collecting the mind and pulling thoughts together is Dharana.
2. Then comes Dhyana
3. Lastly comes Samadhi. Here there are two types of Samadhi. One is called Savikalpa and the other Nirvikalpa (spontaneous absorption without any will power). Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the culmination of Ashtanga Yoga. The first eight steps of Ashtanga Yoga are called anga's. The ninth is called анги, the goal, or Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Practicing it is a way of transforming life. Practicing Ashtanga Yoga's path of: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Prathyahara will transform you. In these five steps one is following Antaranga and Bahiranga sadhanani. Here, the mind reaches a stage of deep silence.

Second:

Atmanam Pashyan: Silencing the mind is not our aim. Silencing only gives temporary tranquility. Having silenced the mind, bring vedantic teaching into the silent mind. Thus, consider bringing the following mantra to mind:

manōbuddhyahamkāraccittāni nāham

na ca śrōtrajivhē na ca ghrāṇanētrē .

na ca vyōmabhūmiḥ na tējō na vāyuḥ

cidānaṁdarūpaḥ śivō:'ham śivō:'ham .

Know the meaning of the mantra and meditate on it. One should see the Atma, as revealed by the Guru and shastras during sravanam of Vedanta; hence the need for Vedanta sravanam. Without it, Vedanta dhyanam is not possible.

Where does he see the Atma? He sees it in his mind by recollecting the teaching of his Guru. This is vedantic meditation. **It is like a cow chewing the cud.** And in shloka atmanam means the atma; atmani means the mind; and atmana, means with the help of the mind itself. **So, with help of mind see the Atma, in mind itself.** Here you see Atma as a Sakshi. **Atma darshanam is second definition of Samadhi.**

What benefit do I get? Suppose you have a clock. Do you notice its ticking during day time; Probably not. But at night, in bed, you can hear it clearly. Nothing changed with the clock. In daytime the outside disturbances overpower. In Nidhidhyasanam all other noises are removed. In Nidhidhyasanam, when I recollect the teaching, it has more

tamil saying "Kurai onrum illai, Nirai iruku". The saying means "I am full and I have everything." Since I don't miss anything, whatever I enjoy due to my punyam, they will all be luxuries. **What is luxury? It is which you enjoy when you have it but don't miss when not available.**

Need is that you don't recognize when it is there. But once you don't have it you realize the need.

Citing example of car , one who has no car does not consider it a necessity as he is used to travel by public transportation. However, one who has grown up using a car, for him car is a necessity. This is the difference between luxury and need; luxury is that whose presence you enjoy; whose absence, you do not miss; need is that whose presence you do not recognize, whose absence you very badly feel.

For a Gyani everything in life is a luxury. When they are not there he does not miss them. Sanyasi's in Hrishikesh live on Bhiksha. They are used to it. Then tourists come. They want to feed the Sanyasi's with puri, halwa etc. Sanyasi's enjoy it knowing the next day they will be back on Roti and Dal.

So Sri Krishna says yam labdhva, having owned up this purnatvam, all the other aims in life; all other accomplishments become insignificant.

Therefore, the fifth definition of Samadhi is athyantika labhah. It is the highest gain in front of which all the other gains are insignificant.

They become insignificant in face of poornatvam.

Sixth definition: Remaining in Atma Nishta one is not shocked or shaken by the worst tragedy in life. Reacting to a situation, he says "What? When he hears about it at first, then changes to " so what"? He knows everything in life is subject to arrival and departure.

In shloka, the word guru is not a noun; rather it is an adjective, meaning, even by the heaviest sorrow.

The sixth definition of Samadhi here is atyantika dukhena nivritthi or total freedom from sorrow.

Take away:

1. Vedantic meditation is recollecting and remembering all of Guru's teachings.
2. First definition of Samadhi is total relaxation of mind.
3. Second definition of Samadhi is with help of mind see the Atma, in mind itself.
4. Third definition of Samadhi is Atyantikam sukham or limitless ananda. It is a state that is beyond sense pleasures.
5. Fourth definition of Samadhi is remaining in this absorption; or abiding in this atma; one does not deviate into anatma;
6. The fifth definition of Samadhi is athyantika labhah or obtaining poornatvam. It is the highest gain in front of which all the other gains are insignificant.
7. The sixth definition of Samadhi is atyantika dukhena nivritthi or total freedom from sorrow.
8. Luxury versus need: luxury is that whose presence you enjoy; whose absence, you do not miss. Need is that whose presence you do not recognize, whose absence you very badly feel.

With Best Wishes

Ram Ramaswamy