

Taitreya Upanishad, Class 8

Greetings All,

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

He whose form is manifold, who is preeminent among the sacred hymns of the Vedas and who has sprung up from the sacred Hymns which are immortal, that Indra (omkara) may fill me with intellectual vigor. O lord, may I become the possessor of the immortal revelations. May my body become able and active, my speech sweet and agreeable to the utmost. May I listen abundantly with my ears. Thou art the sheath of Brahman. May you preserve my learning.

Continuing his teaching of the Upanishad, Swami Paramarthananda said, Shikshavalli, Chapter 1, Anuvakaha # 4, is a relatively bigger section. It has two spiritual sadhanas. They are: 1: Mantra Japa sadhana and 2) Homa sadhana, a physical ritual on fire.

Japa Sadhana:

In this sadhana the seeker is asking for Gyana Yogyatha Prapthihi. This prayer is addressed to God in the Omkara form. Therefore seeker glorifies Omkara first, then asks Omkara roopa parameshwara to strengthen him and immunize him from Samsara by giving him Medha shakti & dharana shakti. Medha Shakti is the capacity to absorb and Dharana Shakti is ability to retain the teaching.

Now, he says, O Lord, I should be possessor of amritam. Amritam here means atma gyanam. Amritam means immortality, which also means moksha. Atma gyanam is the giver of immortality. Therefore, let amritam as self-knowledge happen to me. Let me be a gyani.

Atma Gyanam requires a lot of preparation. Atma Gyanam is not

a physical substance. It can only be given by a systematic consistent study by a teacher. After all it is only after 20 years of education that one becomes knowledgeable in a field such as physics or chemistry. So, systematic sravanam is required.

To perform sravanam one must be physically be fit. For speaking, my tongue must be the sweetest one. The tongue is a gyanendriya (as for eating) as well as for karmendriya (as for speaking). Let my tongue be sweet. What is a sweet tongue? It means words uttered must be sweet. What is a sweet word? Noble (mangala) and auspicious words are considered sweet. How to define a mangala shabda? Chapter # 17 of the Gita addresses this topic in detail and it describes four criteria for words to be mangala. They are:

1. Words should **not be hurtful**. Speech should be in a relaxed manner, spoken slowly, at a mild pitch using right choice of words.
2. Words should be **positively pleasant**, encouraging, and pleasing. Appreciative words should be more than criticizing words.
3. Words should be truthful or **Satyam**.
4. Words should provide **Hitam** or must be beneficial to both speaker and listener.

If all above four criteria are met the words will be mangalam. This is result of a honeyed tongue. How do I know if I am honey tongued? If people like to speak to me I am probably honey tongued. If people do not like to speak to me I need to work on my speech.

Let my ears also be fit to be able to perform Sravanam. Ears must be used for listening to shastras. Therefore without obstacles let me listen again and again to shastras.

The student concludes by glorification of Omakra again. Kosha means box. He says this box called Omkara is the container of

Brahman. But Brahman cannot be contained? If so, why is Omkara a container? The enquiry into the word Omkara can arrive at the truth of Brahman. Since Omkara is the means of discovering Brahman, it is known as a box.

How can Omkara enquiry lead to Brahman? Mandukya Upanishad discusses this topic in detail. If Omkara contains Brahman, how come I cannot see it? The reason I cannot see it is because Brahman is covered and we need to uncover it. What covers Brahman? Anatma Gyanam covers Brahman. In shloka the word Medha is now used to mean Anatma as well. Most people are interested only in Anatma Gyanam. Therefore, they are extrovert. Therefore, they don't have time for Vedanta Vichara. Extroverted-ness is an obstacle for Vedanta Sravanam. Thus, time is also an obstacle. Even if we have time we tend to read Stardust and such non-spiritual material. The Seeker cries, O Omakra , help me move my mind inwards. Therefore, Brahman is covered by my extroverted-ness.

The student prays that whatever he hears in the class let it be preserved in his mind. With this the Japa Sadhana is over. This mantra is supposed to be repeated again and again.

Chapter # 1, Anuvakaha # 4, Shloka # 2:

Homa Sadhana:

O Lord , afterwards let prosperity be mine, consisting of hairy animals along with cattle. May fortune produce for me without delay and for all time, bringing continuous and in ever multiplying proportions food, clothing and cattle. All along, may celibate students, thirsty to know, come to me. Svaha! May they come to me from distant places and from all directions. May they come in large numbers. May the students , anxious to gain the knowledge of Brahman control their senses. May the students, anxious to live the knowledge of Brahman, be peaceful. Svaha!

Svaha in shloka means offering of oblation is involved. Here

too Omkara is being addressed. This homa is known as Aavahanti Homa. It is a common homa. This homa is the topic till end of this fourth Anuvakaha. In this homa student asks for four things. They are:

- Dhanam prapthihi or wealth.
- Chitta Shuddhi prapthihi
- Gavaha Prapthihi
- Shishya prapthihi. After getting knowledge I must share the Gyanam with other people.

The order in which the student asks is also importa. Money is required for Karma Yoga in the form of contribution to society. For Pancha Maha Yagna too money is needed. Dharma-anushtartham (for dharma) also we need money. Dharma will lead to Chitta shuddhi. Viveka and vairagya will also come in. Grihasthashrama should lead to urge for Vedanta Gyanam. It means mind is pure. **Only a pure mind has an interest in Vedanta.**

After Chitta shudhi I should get a guru and obtain Gyanam. After Gyanam I must enjoy sharing this knowledge with others. Therefore, Gyanam must be preserved.

Student asks for prosperity to arrive. Shankaracharya has said money is a two edged sword. It can lead to spiritual growth but it can also lead to spiritual destruction as well. It all depends on whether money is a master or servant. I have to decide this. How to make the decision? For this I must have knowledge of Dharma shastras (ethics and morality). Shatras say money is not to be utilized for purposes such as gambling or racing. Shankaracharya says don't ask for money first rather ask for knowledge of Dhamashastra first, and then ask for money. This is the reason our parents did not give us pocket money. We should not touch money until we are educated. Even in gurukula only after teaching is money given.

After Medha prapthihi money should be given. Lakshmi

(acquisition of wealth) should come to me with a lot of things. Later it should expand and I should be able to preserve it as well.

In the shloka, Aavahanti means acquisition. Vitnavana means multiplying of wealth. Kurvana means wealth must be preserved.

What materials should Lakshmi Devi bring or bestow?

Clothing also called here Vasamsi.

Gavaha: Cattle.

Annam: Food.

Panam, water.

All four should be with me in plenty. When should Lakshmi arrive? She should come immediately (Achiram).

Artha is used mainly for Dharma and then later for moksha. A cultured man is Dharma pradhana. Student asks for many wooly animals such as sheep as well. Lomashaha means wooly animal.

May I become prosperous. It is clear from this shloka that Vedas do not look down upon money. Some religions do so. Criticism of money is not part of Vedic culture, although one must know how to handle it. Big ashramas do require wealthy patrons. Brahmachari, Vanaprastha and Sanyas ashramas all require Grihasta ashrama's patronage. Shastra say share the money. "Ownership" is not critical, Earner-ship is. Earn plenty but give.

Take Away:

Only a pure mind has an interest in Vedanta.

With Best Wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy