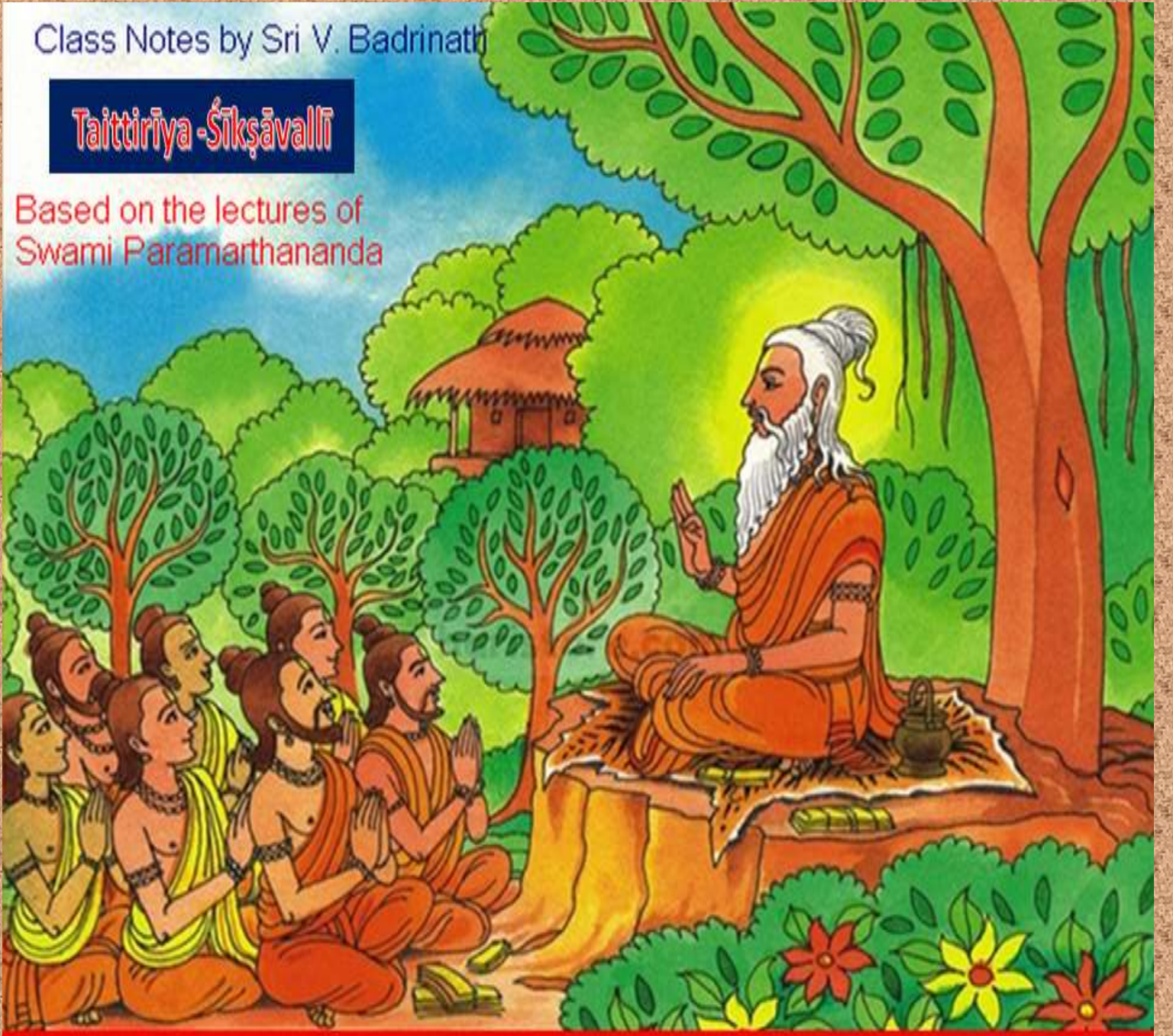


Class Notes by Sri V. Badrinath

Taittirīya - Śikṣāvallī

Based on the lectures of
Swami Paramarthananda



TAITTIRĪYA UPANIṢAD - तैत्तिरीय उपनिषद्

Published by



Arsha Avinash Foundation

104 Third Street, Tatabad, Coimbatore 641012, India

Phone: +91 9487373635

E mail: arshaavinash@gmail.com

www.arshaavinash.in



Class Notes on Śikṣāvallī

**(Based the Lectures of
Swami Paramarthananda
Saraswati)**

Compiled by Sri V. Badrinath



Śikṣāvallī

Introduction

In this section, we shall recollect the introductory points we have seen in the previous Upaniṣads. Our basic scriptures, the four Vedas, are broadly classified into two portions: *Veda-pūrva* and *Veda-anta*. The former is more voluminous and deals with various karma or activities. All the activities in *karma kāṇḍa* are classified into three categories:

- **Kāyika karmāṇi** – consisting of physical activities such as *yāga*, *pūjā*, *namaskāram* etc.
- **Vācika karmāṇi** consisting of verbal karmas such as orally chanting prayers, *nāma-japa*, *pārāyaṇam* etc. (chanting of *Viṣṇusahasranāma*).
- **Mānasa karma** are *upāsanās*, where only the mind is used for these activities. *Upāsanās* are of many types such as mental *pūjā* (*mānasa pūjā*), mental repetition of the names of Bhagavan (*japa*) and meditation (*dhyāna*).

For these types of karmas, the scriptures promise three types of results (*phalams*). The results can be broadly placed in the following categories:

- **Upādhi-phalam** – The body-mind-sense organ (B-M-S) complex is one's instrument (*upādhi*) to conduct transactions in this world. The human beings know that the B-M-S complex needs to be in good condition to enjoy things in this world. A deaf person cannot enjoy music even if Saraswati plays the veena. No one can enjoy anything when the mind is disturbed. Many rituals are prescribed for the improvement of the B-M-S complex.
- **Viśaya-phalam** – For a human being to enjoy, the healthy sense organs need to interact with sense objects. Many rituals are prescribed for acquiring the objects of enjoyment known as *viśayaḥ*. Without food, what is the use of a healthy tongue? If there are no wonderful things to see, what is the use of the healthy eyes?
- **Loka-phalam** – A suitable environment – peaceful and harmonious - is required to enjoy the sense objects with the healthy B-M-S complex. Currently, in Syria, it is hard to enjoy even if one has everything. A person living in a posh house amidst a slum cannot enjoy the luxury while watching the suffering around him. It is difficult to enjoy life in a tense environment in a family.

Vedas point out that a thinking person who goes through such a life with a healthy B-M-S complex, with access to sense objects in a healthy environment will discover some important things. All these *karma-phalams* are wonderful, but they have certain intrinsic defects also. Most people do not notice it because they lead a mechanical life. There are three types of defects in *karma-phalam*:

- ***Duḥkhamiśritattvam*** – The pleasures experienced from these results are not pure; they are always mixed with pain. To accomplish these results, one must struggle through planning and effort mixed with anxiety [*ārjane duḥkham*]. The higher the result (and therefore the pleasure), the greater the competition. This is evident from the fact that these days everyone competes for IT jobs that pay higher wages. Once you accomplish the results, one goes through pain to retain them. Retention is as difficult as accomplishment. Despite all efforts to maintain or preserve the accomplishment, one will lose it all one day. No one can possess anything permanently. Lord owns everything – He giveth and He taketh. It is painful when the loss occurs despite the effort to preserve it.
- ***Atṛptikaratvam*** – Whatever we accomplish through our actions is finite. Every action has a proportionate result. Since all actions are finite in nature, the results will also be finite. Any *karmaphalam* therefore is *apūrṇam* or *paricchinnam*. We are never satisfied with finitude; we always crave for the next higher thing regardless of how much we have. We are ever in the state of dissatisfaction.
- ***Bandhakatvam*** – All the results (*karmaphalams*) cause dependence; they are addictive. They are mental crutches for one to be happy. One who needs an external support to be happy is weak. We depend on hundreds of *karmaphalams* to stay happy. When anyone of them becomes non-functional, the life may become miserable (lack of internet, electricity, car, cell phone etc.). Every object has the capacity to enslave us. We try to travel from dependence to independence by acquiring more and more, while in fact, we only travel from one dependence to another. In the materialistic society, the more things one possesses, the more successful he is, but the Vedanta says that he is a failure because he is dependent psychologically.

One who lives a Vedic life (karma yogi) discovers these defects because this life style is designed for such discovery. On the other hand, the person who is non-Vedic and materialistic, continues to be in the defective mode; he settles for less in life because he does not know the limitations of *karmaphalam*. The Vedic life allows one to fulfill his desires as well as to discover the limitations. When he discovers these defects, he seeks a higher goal that is defect-free (*doṣa-rahita-sādhyam* or *puruṣārtha*). Once he reaches this stage, *veda-pūrva* becomes irrelevant to him. In the Kāṭhōpaniṣad,

Naciketas was offered all the worldly wealth and pleasures, but he chose *jñāna* (and hence mokṣa). With this, there is a shift from *pūrva-mīmāṃsā* to *anta-mīmāṃsā*.

The Upaniṣads introduce Brahman as the goal that is defect-free. One then poses a question with the intention of finding Brahman: what is the nature of Brahman? The Vedānta, after an elaborate discussion, makes a shocking revelation: You are that (*tat tvam asi*) and that you need not and should not seek Brahman as an external object.

Prior to being exposed to the Vedānta, I viewed myself as limited and lacking (*apūrṇa-puruṣaḥ*). The Vedānta declares that I am Brahman (*pūrṇa-puruṣaḥ*). Now, I require self-enquiry to resolve this difference. A person that successfully completes this self-enquiry realizes that the notion that he is limited (or lacking in life) is a misconception. The idea that one needs people and things to be happy is a misconception. The fact is that one does not require anything to be happy because he is the embodiment of happiness. This knowledge is called *Brahmavidyā* or *Ātmavidyā*.

Brahman is not a new thing to be discovered or acquired. It is his real nature that one needs to introduce himself to and understand. When Kunti revealed to Karṇa that he was her son, this knowledge made him a *kṣatriya* instantly. No action or travel was required on his part to acquire this identity. Similarly, self-knowledge helps one to own up to *Brahmatvam* (*pūrṇatvam*) and disown the *jīvatvam* (*apūrṇatvam*) status. This freedom from the sense of inadequacy (*apūrṇatvam*) is mokṣa

Adequate effort in the right direction is required to achieve success in self-enquiry. The scriptures emphasize that one must take the help of the *śāstras* to engage in self-enquiry. One must also take the help of a qualified guru who applies the time-tested method to communicate this teaching. It is highly risky to engage in self-enquiry without their help because it is possible that one may erroneously confirm his *jīvatvam* instead of *Brahmatvam*.

When the Upaniṣad says that you are Brahman, *śraddhā* is required to be open minded. Without *śraddhā*, one may drop the study of the Upaniṣads. After *upanayanam*, the *brahmacāri* is required to keep a *vratam* (austerity) for three days. On the fourth day, he worships *śraddhā devi*. Then for the next 10-15 years, he develops the *śraddhā* in the Vedas by constantly offering prostrations to them. I should develop as much faith in the Vedas as I have in my eyes to see. With this, I do not question the Vedas, but I question my conclusion, especially, that I am different from

Brahman. Analysis is required to verify whether the Vedānta or my conclusion is right. This is self-enquiry or *ātma vicāra*.

To do this enquiry, I need a proper instrument. The instrument used for acquiring knowledge is called *pramāṇa*. *Pramāṇa* leads to the acquisition of *pramā*, the knowledge. The one who uses the *pramāṇa* to acquire *pramā* is called *pramātā* [*pramātā pramāṇena pramā prāpnoti* – *pramātā* obtains *pramā* by using the *pramāṇa*].

The object of knowledge is called *prameya*. *Pramātā* obtains *pramā* of the *prameya* through the *pramāṇam* [*pramātā pramāṇena prameyasya pramām jānayati*]. Since there are varieties of objects in the world, and the nature of those objects are different, the instrument of knowledge will vary depending upon the object of knowledge. If the sound is the object, the relevant instrument is the ear. No other instrument can be used for this.

The *Vedānta śāstra* places the *pramāṇas* into six categories. An outline is given to get an idea of how our forefathers made a study of everything thousands of years ago:

Pratyakṣa (Direct perception) - the five sense organs are grouped together into one means of knowledge. *Pratyakṣa pramāṇa* is the basic instrument of knowledge through which we learn things from our birth.

Anumāna (Inference) – It is to know something indirectly when it is not in the range of direct perception. When I hear the horn behind me on the street, the ear can only hear the sound, but I infer that there is a car behind me (even though I do not directly see it). For this, I need the knowledge of the connection between the car and the horn. The knowledge through connection is called *vyāptijñāna*. The horn is known through *pratyakṣa*, but the car knowledge is through *anumāna*.

The *sāstras* give the example: when there is smoke, we infer that there is fire. Even though I do not see the fire behind the wall, when the smoke enters the room, I know that there is fire somewhere.

Arthāpatti (Presumption) – It is very close to inference. By experiencing one event in the present, I come to know about another event in the past even though I have not experienced it. For example, when I see wet streets in the morning when I wake up,

I conclude that it must have rained in the night even though I did not perceive the rain.

Upamāna (Comparison or analogy) – Through comparison you can know other objects. You see a wild animal in the forest and conclude it is a wild buffalo because it looks like your village buffalo. This knowledge of the wild animal is obtained by comparison.

Anupalabdhi (Non-cognition) – This is a special instrument for knowing the absence of things. If I ask you, “Is there a chair behind the wall?” To know that there is a chair or not, you must go behind the wall and see. The presence as well as absence requires seeing. Knowledge of absence is also a specific knowledge and it requires specific instrument - *anupalabdhi*. Eyes can see only colors and forms, but you saw the absence of the chair. The absence of forms and colors (*abhāva*) cannot be seen; the absence can be known by the peculiar method *anupalabdhi*. Books have been written on this topic of non-existence.

Śabda pramāṇa (Communication through words – verbal or written) – You learn about Brexit from the newspaper or internet articles – you learn a lot about it even though you were not in Great Britain personally to witness it.

One must use a pramāṇa to gain knowledge - Knowledge is valid only if it is born of these six instruments of knowledge; otherwise, it is just speculation or wishful thinking. No new knowledge can happen by just meditating. In meditation, only the existing knowledge is recycled; any “new” thing that you have generated is imagination because none of these six *pramāṇas* is used during meditation.

One requires an appropriate instrument of knowledge - The *sāstras* say that we do not have a choice in the use of an instrument to obtain a specific type of knowledge. To know the color, one must use the eyes.

The knowledge to be acquired (or verified) is whether I am a miserable *jivātmā* (gloom) or the wonderful *paramātmā* (bloom). To seek this knowledge, I need a *pramāṇa*. I must use a relevant means of knowledge out of the above six. On analysis, the first five *pramāṇas* are useless in the acquisition of self-knowledge:

- *Pratyakṣa* is useful for objective knowledge because the sense organs are turned outward towards the objective world. They are incapable of objectifying Ātmā that is behind the B-M complex. The observer (perceiver) cannot be observed (perceived) even by using the most powerful instrument. When the most powerful microscope cannot see the eyes themselves, what to talk of Ātmā who is behind the eyes?
- Once *pratyakṣa* is ruled out, the other 3 *pramāṇas* are ruled out because inference can only operate on perceptual data.

Śabda pramāṇa (communication through words) remains and it is the appropriate method for self-knowledge. This *pramāṇa* is classified into two: *laukika śabda* and *vaidika śabda*.

Laukika śabda – words given out by worldly people – in the fields of material sciences.

Vaidika śabda – Created by the Lord and transmitted to the world by the *ṛṣis* (*mantra draṣṭāḥ* – they did not invent the mantras, but discovered the already existent mantras).

Laukika śabdās deal with the objective world and therefore, are useless for self-knowledge. These are the study of the observed and not the observers – “the observer cannot be observed.”

We are left with *Vaidika śabda* – it is also divided into two: *Veda-pūrva śabda* (*karma kāṇḍa*) and *Veda-anta śabda* (*jñāna kāṇḍa*). Upon analysis, *karma kāṇḍa śabdās* are not useful for self-knowledge because they deal with the objective world of actions and results (in the field of *anātmā*).

Vedānta śabda pramāṇa is the unique instrument that deals with the subject, the observer. To see my own eyes, the only suitable instrument is the mirror – no other instrument works. *Vedānta pramāṇa* is the “mirror” to reveal myself - which I have never attempted know. If you are interested in seeing (knowing), *Vedānta pramāṇa* is the only instrument.

It is difficult to understand the Upaniṣad through self-study because a peculiar method is used to communicate this knowledge. Normally, the words are used to reveal the

objective knowledge, but the Upaniṣads must use the words to reveal a more difficult subject – myself. The Upaniṣad does not use the normal method. If it uses the normal method, it will conclude that there is an object called Brahman (other than you). One will seek to see Brahman face to face through meditation (*Brahma-darśanam*). The Upaniṣads communicate in such a way that it describes Brahman as my own nature and not as a separate object. That is how *śravaṇam* should take place. Tremendous skill is required to communicate this, or, the student may claim that he has understood Brahman will set out to experience it. Improper teaching and understanding will result in knowledge-experience dichotomy. There is no division between knowledge and experience in *Brahmajñānam*. The interpretation of the Upaniṣads require the guidance of a guru. Guru has the technique of opening the knowledge and giving it to you on a platter.

The guru uses six indicators (*ṣaḍ līṅgāni*) to extract the central teaching (*tātparyā*) of the Upaniṣads:

Upakrama upasamhārau – The summary at the beginning and the end of the Upaniṣad give the central message. For example, in the radio or television news, the headlines are given first, then the detailed news and then the summary again of the headlines. A good presentation or an article will also have the summary of the key points in the beginning and the end. Every Upaniṣad has a message summarized in the beginning as well as the end.

Abhyāsaḥ - The topic that is repeated often is the central message (*abhyāsaḥ* = *āvṛttiḥ* = repetition). Whenever we want to stress something, we repeat it. We saw in Muṇḍaka and Kathopaniṣad, *ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā* was repeated many times. In Kathopaniṣad, we saw the examples of oneness in *agni*, *vāyu* and *surya* in mantras 2.2.9, 2.2.10 and 2.2.11 (*agni dṛiṣṭānta ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā*, *vāyu dṛiṣṭānta ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā* and *sūrya dṛiṣṭānta ekastathā sarvabhūtāntarātmā*). The oneness is the central theme.

Apūrvatā – This is a technical clue and an important one. The purpose of the Vedānta is to teach us something that is not available in the other five *pramāṇams* and the *veda-pūrva*. (*Pramāṇāntara avedyam apūrvam*). The Vedānta can never teach *dvaitam* because it is already available through the other *pramāṇams*. *Advaitam* is not knowable through any other *pramāṇam*. The other *pramāṇams* deal with *vyāvahārika*

dvaitam (lower order of reality – *dvaitam*). Only the Upaniṣads teach this unique topic – therefore, *advaitam* is the central topic of the Upaniṣads.

Phalam - A new knowledge that is revealed must have some utility for me. For example, pure science should be followed by technology; only then the scientific discovery becomes useful to human beings. Human beings being utilitarian, will not be interested if the Vedānta tells him that there is something wonderful called Brahman beyond the clouds. The crucial question is what result does the study of the Vedānta give me? If the Vedānta teaches *dvaitam*, it will be useless because *veda-pūrva* already deals with it and it gives deficient results. The unique benefit of *advaitam* is taught in the Vedānta.

Arthavādaḥ - Identify what is praised by the Vedānta and what is criticized. What is criticized cannot be the message of Vedānta. What is praised alone will be the message. In the Upaniṣads, *advaitam* is praised and *dvaitam* is criticized. Therefore, *advaitam* is the message. Karma is criticized and jñāna is praised (*karma nindā, jñāna stuti*). You can use the rituals as the stepping stone, but not as the central message of the Vedānta. The central message of the Upaniṣads: knowledge, knowledge and knowledge.

Upattiḥ - It is that which is supported by logic. In the name of *śraddhā*, we should never sacrifice our intellect and reasoning power. We should extract the teaching in such a way that it doesn't contradict reasoning. We may not be able to prove the teaching through reasoning, but the teaching must not be contradictory to reason. We emphasize *śraddhā*, but we also permit questioning by the student to get clear knowledge.

In the Gītā, karma, bhakti and jñāna are elaborately discussed. How do I know what the central teaching is? Different scholars claim different things. The guru will help the student discover the *tātparyam* or the central teaching of the Upaniṣads – you are what you want to be in life – full, secure and immortal. Whatever you want to be or become, you already are. The guru must teach this consistently again and again, until the student nods his head in agreement with conviction. This is *Vedānta vicāra* or *Vedānta mimāṃsa*. This is not merely an academic exercise. The more I see *śāstra* clearly, the more I understand myself clearly. When I look at the mirror, the clarity of my face depends upon the mirror - the clearer the mirror, the clearer my image. The *śāstra* must be clear and doubt free for us to understand our own nature. Only then I

will understand that my erstwhile conclusion that I am a mortal limited human being is wrong and that I am really the immortal Brahman. *Aham brahma asmi* becomes a fact for me.

The understanding of the nature of the Upanisads helps us to show the right attitude towards *śravaṇam*, which, in turn will help us get the knowledge as we listen. *Śravaṇam* is the only means of acquiring knowledge; one can never get knowledge through mere meditation. People make the wrong conclusion that the knowledge is inside and therefore, the book that the guru shows is not useful for self-knowledge. The guru must show the Vedāntic mirror to the student. When you look at the mirror, you are not extroverted, because you are looking at yourself. Thus, the study of the *śāstras* is not extroverted.

This *Vedānta vicāra* or jñāna yoga consists of three stages: *śravaṇam*, *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*.

Śravaṇam - *Śravaṇam* is the consistent and systematic study of the scriptures under a competent guru who uses *ṣaḍ līṅgas* to arrive at the central theme of the Upanisads. Since the Upanisads can be interpreted in various ways, it can cause confusion. We have three major schools of thought arising from different interpretations: *dvaita*, *viśiṣṭādvaita* and *advaita*. As we are doing *śravaṇam*, doubts will arise and we must keep them aside without asking any questions. This is the first stage.

Mīmāṃsā is used for the analysis of the scriptures. *Mīmāṃsā* means reverential analysis – this term is used only for scriptures. *Mīmāṃsā* is otherwise called *śravaṇam* and with this, I arrive at the conclusion that I am that infinite Brahman (*pūrṇa brahman*). Also, I arrive at the conclusion that there is no second other than me (*aham advaitam brahma asmi*) and that I am the whole and all (*ahameva idagrṇ sarvam*). After the Vedāntic enquiry, Tamil "āḷ" (ஆள்) becomes English "all".

Mananam - *Mananam* is the second stage of enquiry, where all doubts regarding the teaching are removed. The doubts are the intellectual obstacles that stand between knowledge and conviction. Knowledge must be converted to doubt-free conviction (*samśaya-rahita-jñānam*) because doubtful knowledge is as good as ignorance. Swami Chimayananda gave an example:

If you see an electrical wire hanging and ask a person nearby if it is live and if he answers that he is 99% sure, how useful is this knowledge?

In the case of Vedantic teachings, the doubts are not ordinary because the teachings are extraordinary. It is not easy to swallow the fundamental teaching that *I am infinite*, because I am certain of the fact that I was born at a certain finite time, will grow old and then eventually die one day. My entire lifestyle is based on this entrenched notion. I prepare for my old age, for my children etc. based on the assumption that I will eventually grow old and die. When the Vedānta says that I am neither born nor I die (*na jāyate mriyate vā kadācit*), I will naturally resist it. The concept that I am infinite is difficult to accept.

Then the Vedānta says that the world that I am experiencing does not exist at all. Only the formless Brahman exists; there is no world separate from Brahman. The Vedānta negates what I am experiencing solidly, but attaches reality and existence to something (Brahman) that is abstract and not experienced by me! Therefore, my intellect is full of doubts regarding the teachings of the Vedānta related to *jīva*, *jagat* and Brahman because my sense organs and the mind experience something opposite. All the instruments of knowledge are asserting *dvaitam* (they reveal plurality) while the Vedānta is asserting *advaitam*. There is a big clash between the two sources of knowledge. When there is a clash between the direct experience and the scriptures, our natural tendency is to respect the direct experience more than the scriptures. The scriptures are after all words, written by someone – we don't know who wrote it and what their mental condition was when they wrote it. How can I trust that when my intimate and direct experience is contradicting it? This conflict is called *prameya asambhāvanā* (*prameya* = the teaching or the object revealed).

We have two objects revealed – *advaitam* by the scriptures and *dvaitam* by direct experience. We cannot accept both because they are diagonally opposite. Thus, this is purely an intellectual problem which can be resolved only by deep thinking and further analysis. This process of removing my doubts and answering all the questions is called *mananam*. The Vedāntic teaching can be confirmed only by clear analysis and thinking. Many people think erroneously that the scriptural teachings must be proved by an extraordinary experience. No experience can remove an intellectual problem. All intellectual problems are born out of non-thinking or improper thinking. They can be solved only by right thinking. *Nirvikalpaka samādhi* attained through meditation will not remove doubts. The yoga founders (like Patañjali) focused on and perfected the

nivikalpaka samādhi, but they were never able to remove the doubt through these practices. Patañjali's conclusion was *dvaitam* and so, his doubt was never removed. Removal of doubt requires thinking and more thinking until the doubt is removed and I am convinced of the fact *aham satyaṁ jagan mithyā*.

Nididhyāsanam. The central objective of *nididhyāsanam* is dwelling on the teaching and assimilating it. This is a process of internalizing the teaching like soaking in the syrup of *advaita jñanam* (like rasagolla or gulab jamun). This can be done in different ways:

- Through repeated *śravaṇam*, your mind can remain in the teaching. Initially, you get new ideas through *śravaṇam*. When you listen to teaching repeatedly, you do not get new ideas, but you get the opportunity to remain in the teaching. Repeated reading (of your own notes), writing, discussions with peers and teaching someone are all effective methods of *nididhyāsanam* to remain in the teaching.
- Try to imitate the behavior of a *jīvanmukta* who has assimilated and transformed. After some time, it will become natural. Swami Dayananda said – “fake it and make it”. We ask the children to do *namaskāra* at the temple or to a *mahātmā*. They do it mechanically without reverence. The parents train them with the hope that this mechanical practice will turn into a reverential one. We can imitate the *mahātmās* described in the Gītā in chapters 2 (verses 54-72), 13 (verses 13-20) and 14 (verses 21-27) and lead an alert life.
- Meditation is a traditional form of *nididhyāsanam*. It is practiced in a specific place in a specific posture as described in Verse 5 of Kaivalya Upaniṣad. This exercise of focusing is called *samādhi abhyāsaḥ* (*samādhiḥ* = focus; *abhyāsaḥ* = exercise). The focus is not on Brahman as an object, but on any aspect of the teaching that is relevant to you. If I feel I am lacking something in life, I should meditate that do not lack anything in life, indicating *pūrṇatvam*. If I fear dying, I should focus on *nityatvam* (eternal). If relationships are causing problems, focus should be on *asaṅgatvam* (non-attachment). Thus, choose the appropriate teaching and focus on it to internalize it.

The purpose of *nididhyāsanam* is not mokṣa. Through the teaching, we have understood that mokṣa is not a future event to happen. It is to remind ourselves that a change in a situation will not make me free because I am already free despite that situation. It is not even meant for knowledge, which is gained only through *śravaṇam*. *Nididhyāsanam* is not meant to prove, confirm or validate the knowledge. Proving is done by *mananam*. It is not for gaining an extraordinary experience because all experiences belong to *anātmā*. Ordinary experiences belong to ordinary *anātmā* and

extraordinary experiences belong to extraordinary *anātmā*. Even Śaṅkarācārya admits that extraordinary experiences are possible, but they have no relationship to self-knowledge. A *jñānī* is not necessarily a *siddhi*, a mystic with extraordinary experiences or powers. There are four types of people:

- A *jñānī* who is also a *siddhi*
- A *jñānī* who is not a *siddhi*
- A *siddhi* who is not a *jñānī* (like Rāvaṇa)
- One who is neither a *siddhi* nor a *jñānī* (the majority)

Thus, *nididhyāsanam* is for solely for assimilation of the teachings by dwelling on them. What is the sign of assimilation? It is the change in the unhealthy reaction or responses to the situations in life. One will attain peace (*śānti*) – *samatvam* - which is the experience of the benefit of self-knowledge (*brahmajñānaphala anubhava*). There is no experience of Brahman. This transformation is not instantaneous; it is gradual. It can be measured using the **FIT** test:

F – reduction in **F**requency of unhealthy reactions to situations in life

I – Reduction in **I**ntensity at all three levels – physical, verbal and mental. The intensity of disturbance at the mental level is the least, where one knows he is angry, but has sufficient balance to postpone reaction. The physical reaction is the most intense because it has crossed the other two levels.

T – Reduction in the **T**ime of recovery. How much time to recover balance? It is said that a *uttama puruṣa* recovers in a moment, the *madhyama* in 1 ½ hours and *adhama* in 24 hours, but a *pāpi* (sinner) does not recover even till death.

The Vedānta does not expect us to be completely free of these reactions; it only helps us to keep the balance. A healthy body does get sick sometimes, but recovers fast because it has the internal immunity to fight the disease and get back to health. Similarly, a healthy mind bounces back negative state like a rubber ball, while an unhealthy mind stays in the negative emotions like a wet clay ball. This benefit of *jñāna* (*jñānaphalam*) is called *jīvanmuktiḥ*.

This teaching is at the end part of the Vedas and therefore, it is called *Vedāntaḥ* (*Veda* + *antaḥ*). Since the focus is on *jñāna* (self-knowledge) in this section, it is called *jñānakāṇḍa*. It is also called the Upaniṣad. In this stage of spiritual progression, karma

is not absent, but the focus is predominantly on *brahmavidyā* or *ātmaavidyā*, which is the knowledge of myself as the ever free one.

Śaṅkarācārya has given a special meaning to the word Upaniṣad: *upaniṣannaṁ śreyah asyām iti upaniṣat* - that in which freedom is hidden or kept. By analyzing the Upaniṣads, you are discovering the freedom within yourself. You discover freedom at the emotional level (*ātmayeva ātmanā tuṣṭah*) and achieve total self-satisfaction and fulfillment, not after death, but here and now. Therefore, the study of the Upaniṣads should not be treated as an academic exercise.

The teaching in the Upaniṣad is usually given in the form of a dialog between a guru and a disciple (*śiṣya*). In Kena, Kaṭha and Muṇḍaka Upaniṣads, the dialog is between one guru and one *śiṣya*, while in Praśnopaniṣad, the dialogue is between one guru and six *śiṣyas*. In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka and Chāndogya Upaniṣads, there are several gurus and several *śiṣyas* in different sets of dialogues.

There is a total of 1,180 branches in the four Vedas. Each branch has an Upaniṣad and therefore, there are 1,180 Upaniṣads. However, many of them are lost and only 200+ survived, of which 108 are popular. Only ten of these are generally studied because Śaṅkarācārya wrote commentaries on them. These ten Upaniṣads are useful for the study of Brahmasūtra. Taittirīya Upaniṣad belongs to Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda.

Yajur Veda uniquely has two branches – *Kṛṣṇa and Śukla Yajur Vedas*. Taittirīya and Kaṭha Upaniṣads belong to *Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda*, while Īśāvāsya and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣads belong to *Śukla Yajur Veda*. Taittirīya Upaniṣad occurs at the end of *Taittirīya āraṇyakam*, which has ten chapters, of which the last four are philosophical. The first six chapters deal with karma and *upāsana*. The famous *Sūryanamaskāra* mantras (*Arunaprasnaḥ*) occurs in the first chapter of *Taittirīya āraṇyakam*. The last four chapters 7 through 10 are called Taittirīya Upaniṣad. Śaṅkarācārya has written a commentary only on three chapters 7 through 9. The tenth chapter is well known as Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad. Of the ten Upaniṣads, Taittirīya and Īśāvāsya are used for *pārāyaṇa* because the *svaras* (intonations) are available for them. The *svaras* of all the Upaniṣads have not been preserved and so the chanting tradition has been broken for these. The *svaras* of some portion of the Kaṭhopaniṣad have been preserved, but they are not available for Muṇḍaka and Kena Upaniṣads. Although the *svaras* of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad have been preserved, it is not that popular for *pārāyaṇam*.

There are two stories behind why Taittirīya Upaniṣad received its name:

The first story says that this Upaniṣad was composed by a ṛṣi called Tittiri and therefore, the Upaniṣad got its name: Taittirīya.

The second story is mythological and hence, should be taken symbolic. Vaiśampāyana ṛṣi, a Yajur Veda ācārya, had a great disciple called Yājñavalkya, who later composed the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. Yājñavalkya was brilliant compared to the other students. On one occasion, he misbehaved arrogantly towards another student. Vaiśampāyana came to know of this and punished him by asking to him return all the Vedas that he was taught. Yājñavalkya vomited the food and along with it, all his Vedic knowledge came out. He lost all the wisdom that he had gained through the assimilation of his knowledge. Symbolically, the teaching was in a digestible form. The other ṛṣis recognized this to be the ideal time to get those teachings, but they could not consume it in the human form. Therefore, they transformed into *tittiri* birds (partridges), which, although physically small, are voracious. They received the wisdom by consuming the vomit. The ṛṣis who consumed the vomit, composed the Upaniṣad called *Taittirīyam*. The vomit was mixed with dark blood and therefore, it came to be called Kṛṣṇa (dark or deep red) Yajur Veda. Yājñavalkya, later studied under Sūrya Bhagavān created Śukla Yajur Veda. Thus, he was responsible for the Upaniṣads from both the branches.

The symbolic meaning

A school consists of both brilliant and dull students. Many a time, the teacher asks the brilliant student to teach the co-students (it sometimes happens in modern schools also). In the same way, Yājñavalkya learned from his guru Vaiśampāyana, digested the teaching and gave it to his student brothers. This is symbolically presented in the form of vomit. The students are represented as eager *tittiri* birds (book worm = like book worm – similarly, the students were like *tittiri* birds) to receive the teachings.

There are four chapters in Taittirīya Upaniṣad of which three have been commented by Śaṅkarācārya. Each chapter is named with the first word with which the chapter begins.

- First chapter begins with *śikṣām vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* – therefore, it is called Śikṣāvallī.
- Second chapter begins with *brahavidāpnoti param* and therefore, it is called – Brahmāvallī

- Third Chapter begins with *bhṛgurvai vāruṇiḥ* and therefore, it is called Bhṛguvallī
- Fourth chapter – is called Nārāyaṇvallī

Of these three chapters, the first and the third chapters do not teach the Vedānta. Only the second chapter discusses the Vedānta (jñāna yoga) and therefore, it is the most important chapter. Śaṅkarācārya has written a very beautiful commentary on it. The first and third chapters discuss the preparatory disciplines of karma and *upāsana* to gain the eligibility to pursue jñāna (*(jñāna-yogyatā-sādhanāni)*).

Brief Introduction to Śikṣāvallī

This Upaniṣad is in a prose form, divided into paragraphs instead of verses. A paragraph, small or big, is known as *anuvākaḥ*. Śikṣāvallī consists of 12 *anuvākas* with *śānti pāṭhas* in the first and the twelfth *anuvākas*. The main text is given in the 2nd through the 11th *anuvākas*. As mentioned in the introduction, Śikṣāvallī is a preparatory chapter (*sādhanā-pradhāna*); it does not contain any Vedāntic teaching at all. The Vedāntic teaching is in the second chapter. The first chapter discusses various *sādhanās* prescribed for gaining *jñāna yogyatā (jñāna-yogyatā- siddhyartham vividha sādhanāni)*.

As we have seen in the introduction, there are *sādhanās* in the form of rituals and activities (*kāyika karmāṇi*), in which the physical body plays a prominent role. These activities constitute *pañca-mahā-yajña* (karma yoga). They are for the purification of the mind and to remove the intrinsic laziness (*tamoguṇa*) from the body. The physical activities make one agile and alert and therefore *pañca-mahā-yajña* is emphasized.

Similarly, many karmas are prescribed at the verbal level in the form of *pārāyaṇam* and *japa*. Whether we understand the meaning or not, recitation of *ślokas* or *mantras* bless us. If the meaning is understood, the efficacy will be more, but mere chanting with or without knowing the meaning will purify the mind. Repeating a *mantra* as a *japa* again and again (*mantra-āvṛitti- rūpa-japaḥ*) is also a *vācika karma*. The difference between *pārāyaṇam* and *japa* is that the mantras are not repeated in the former. Śikṣāvallī talks about two types of *japa* – one for *jñāna yogyatā siddhi* and another for *jñāna siddhi*.

Śikṣāvallī also discusses *mānasa karma* or *upāsana*s that are purely at the thought level. Śikṣāvallī, describes five types of *upāsana*s which are highly technical and not practiced nowadays. We study these *upāsana*s purely with academic interest.

Thus, in Śikṣāvallī, we will see one *pārāyaṇam*, two *japas*, five *upāsanās* and *karma yoga* – all these *sāadhanās* are prescribed to prepare the mind.

This Upaniṣad two *śāntipāṭhas* – one in the first and another in the second chapter.

Anuvāka 1

ॐ शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः । शं नो भवत्वयमा । शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः । शं नो विष्णुरुक्रमः । नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मवदिष्यामि । ऋतं वदिष्यामि । सत्यं वदिष्यामि । तन्मामवतु । तद्वक्तारमवतु । अवतु माम् । अवतु वक्तारम् । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om śam no mitraḥ śam varuṇaḥ / śam no bhavatyaryamā / śam na indro bṛhaspatiḥ / śam no viṣṇururukramaḥ / namo brahmaṇe / namaste vāyo / tvameva pratyakṣam brahmāsi / tvameva pratyakṣam brahmavadiṣyāmi / ṛtam vadiṣyāmi / satyam vadiṣyāmi / tanmāvavatu / tadvaktāramavatu / avatu mām / avatu vaktāram / Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

मित्रः भवतु – *mitraḥ bhavatu* - May Mitra be शं नः – *śam naḥ* - the source of auspiciousness to us. वरुणः – *varuṇaḥ* - May Varuṇa (be) शम् – *śam* - a source of auspiciousness (to us). अयर्मा – *aryamā* - May Aryamā (be) शं नः – *śam naḥ* - a source of auspiciousness to us. इन्द्रः बृहस्पतिः – *bṛhaspatiḥ* - May Indra and Bṛhaspati (be) शं नः – *śam naḥ* - a source of auspiciousness to us. विष्णुः उरुक्रमः – *viṣṇuḥ urukramaḥ* - May Viṣṇu, the Lord of long stride (be) शं नः – *śam naḥ* - a source of auspiciousness to us. नमः ब्रह्मणे – *namaḥ brahmaṇe* - Prostrations to Hiraṇyagarbha. वायो – *vāyo* - Oh Vāyu! नमः ते – *namaḥ te* - Prostrations to You. त्वम् एव असि – *tvam eva asi* - You alone are प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म – *pratyakṣam brahma* - the perceptible Brahman. वदिष्यामि – *vadiṣyāmi* - I shall declare त्वम् एव – *tvam eva* - Yourself प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म – *pratyakṣam brahma* - to be the perceptible Brahman. वदिष्यामि – *vadiṣyāmi* - I shall declare – ऋतम् – *ṛtam* - (You to be) the right understanding. I shall declare सत्यम् – *satyam* - (You to be) truthfulness. तद् अवतु माम् – *tad avatu mām* - May He protect me. तद् अवतु वक्तारम् – *tad avatu vaktāram* - May He protect the teacher. अवतु माम् – *avatu mām* - May He protect me. अवतु वक्तारम् – *avatu vaktāram* - May He protect the teacher. ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः – *Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ* - Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

May Mitra be the source of auspiciousness to us. May Varuṇa (be) a source of auspiciousness (to us). May Aryamā (be) a source of auspiciousness to us. May Indra and Bṛhaspati (be) a source of auspiciousness to us. May Viṣṇu, the Lord of long stride (be) a source of auspiciousness to us. Prostrations to Hiraṇyagarbha. Oh Vāyu! Prostrations to You. You alone are the perceptible Brahman. I shall declare Yourself to be the perceptible Brahman. I shall declare (You to be) the right understanding. I shall declare (You to be) truthfulness. May He protect me. May He protect the teacher. May He protect me. May He protect the teacher. Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

Through the *śānti pāṭha*, the student is asking for two things:

- *Jñāna योग्यता प्राप्तिः* - eligibility to receive knowledge. For this, all the sense organs must be in a fit condition (*karāṇa योग्यता प्राप्तिः*). In Tattva Bodha, we saw 17 organs – 5 sense organs (*jñānendriyāṇi*), 5 organs of action (*karmendriyāṇi*), 5 physiological systems (*pañca prāṇas*), the mind and the intellect. Some of them should cooperate by doing something and some others, by not doing anything (like some people, if they do not interfere, it is a great blessing!). During *śravaṇam*, the sense organs (*jñānendriyam*) should be active and not the organs of action (*karmendriyam*). Each organ is presided over by a deity (*adhiṣṭhāna devata*). Therefore, we invoke these *devatās* to keep the organs fit (*karāṇa योग्यता सिद्ध्यर्थम्* through *karāṇa योग्यता प्रार्थना*).
- The second prayer is for the removal of any obstacle in the application of my organs (*pratibandha nivṛttiḥ*). Let there not be any obstacle related to myself internally (*ādhyātmika*), environmentally (*ādhibhautika*) and natural disasters (*ādhidaivika*).

Seven presiding *devatās* are invoked here:

मित्रः - *mitraḥ* – Mitra *devatā* presides over the exhalation breath (*prāṇaḥ* = *prāk gamanavān vāyuḥ*)

वरुणः – *varuṇaḥ* - presides over the inhalation breath (*apānaḥ* = *adho gamanavān vāyuḥ* – that which enters your nostril and goes down to your lungs). This meaning is in the context of breathing. *Apānaḥ* has another meaning – evacuation, which also goes down.

Thus, the meaning of this prayer to Mitra and Varuṇa is: Oh Lord, when I am doing *śravaṇam*, let my breathing continue unobstructed (suspend respiratory problems like asthma etc.)

शं नो भवतु अर्यमा - *śaṁ no bhavatu aryamā* - Aryamā is Sūrya *devata*, who presides over the eyes (*caḡsurindriyam*) – May my eyes be in good condition.

इन्द्रः - *indraḥ* - Indra presides over the hands – I pray for strength (for writing notes etc.).

बृहस्पतिः – *br̥haspatiḥ* - Bṛhaspati represents intelligence and communication skills (*vācaḥ patiḥ*). Communication skill is important also for a *śiṣya* because he should be able present his questions (doubts) properly. Precision and brevity in presenting the question is important. Otherwise, the teacher may misunderstand and give an elaborate answer to a wrong question. We ask Bṛhaspati to bless us with the ability ask the appropriate question in an appropriate manner.

विष्णुः उरुक्रमः - *Viṣṇuḥ urukramaḥ* – is the Lord of the feet (*pādayoḥ viṣṇuḥ*). He gives the capacity to move, do service and guru *śuśrūṣā*. Even to sit in one place for an hour, the legs must cooperate. Urukramaḥ means *trivikramaḥ* - one with long legs. In the *purāṇic* story. Viṣṇu takes *Vāmana avatāra* and asks Mahābali for three strides worth of land. With one stride, he takes the earth and the other, the heavens. When there was no other place to offer the third stride, Mahābali offers his head to place the third stride. The concept of Urukramaḥ has been in the Vedas even before the *purāṇas*. He is *anantaḥ* (eternal).

वायुः – *vāyuḥ* - Brahma is Hiraṇyagarbha, who is the total subtle body (*samaṣṭi sūkṣma śarīram*). Being subtle, he is not visible (*parokṣa devata*). Even though he is invisible, he is available as Vāyu (*samaṣṭi prāṇaḥ*), the air that we breathe. Vāyu, the *samaṣṭi prāṇa* represents Hiraṇyagarbha, the *samaṣṭi sūkṣma śarīram*.

प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि – *pratyakṣam brahmāsi* - In the form of total mind, Hiraṇyagarbha is imperceptible (*parokṣa devata*). In the form of Vāyu, Hiraṇyagarbha becomes a perceptible *devatā* (*pratyakṣa devata*). He is experienced by the nostrils.

शं भवतु - *śam bhavatu* – Let them be a source of auspiciousness (strength) for me. [this statement must be added to each *devatā*].

नो (नः) - *no (naḥ)* – for us. This prayer is for both the students and the teacher. The teacher's organs also should function properly. His memory should be clear and strong so that he remembers and communicates his guru's teachings (otherwise he will start spinning his own stories and philosophy). The teacher has a great responsibility to remember and teach what his guru taught.

नमः – *namaḥ* - I offer prostration (*namaskāram*) to all of them

ब्रह्मणे – *brahmaṇe* – especially to Hiraṇyagarbha who is the *samaṣṭi devatā* that includes all the *devatās*.

नमः ते वायोः - *namaḥ te vāyoḥ* - Hiraṇyagarbha (total intellect, knowledge etc.) is imperceptible, but he is symbolized here as experienceable Vāyu (air) – the life-giving breath. We worship all the five elements – water in *sandhyāvandanam*, and fire (agni) in the form of rituals, even when we light the lamp. Space (*ākāśatattvam*) is worshipped during *sandhyāvandanam* when we worship each direction (*digvandanam*). The earth (*pṛthivī*) is worshipped as Bhūdevi.

त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म असि - *tvameva pratyakṣam brahma asi* – you are the perceptible (*pratyakṣam*) God who is everywhere. I do not have to go to any special temple. Each time I breathe, I am in contact with the Lord. Is God required for living? Close your nostrils and mouth – then you will know.

त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म वदिष्यामि - *tvameva pratyakṣam brahma vadiṣyāmi* – I declare that you are available as Vāyu, the *pratyakṣam brahma*. I want to spread the word. In Christianity, they talk about the good news that Christ will take away their sins. We also have the good news that Vāyu is the *pratyakṣam brahma* who is available to us everywhere [*tvameva pratyakṣam brahma iti sarvatra vadiṣyāmi*]. I declare this so that everyone will worship you in the form of Viśvarūpa.

ऋतं वदिष्यामि सत्यं वदिष्यामि - *ṛtam vadiṣyāmi satyam vadiṣyāmi* - I declare that you are *ṛtam* and *satyam*. Normally, these are synonymous, but when they occur together, we make a subtle distinction between them. *Ṛtam* means living a life according to what I have learned (*yathā jñānam ācārah*). There is no incongruence between my knowledge and my lifestyle.

Satyam is proper knowledge acquired from the scriptures (*yathā śāstram jñānam*). It is useless and harmful if I live according to improper knowledge. My knowledge should be aligned with *śruti*, *yukti* and *anubhava*. *Śruti* means the *śāstras*, *yukti* means reasoning and *anubhava* means experience. Only when I have my knowledge from these sources, it will be the right knowledge.

In simple language, *ṛtam* is right action and *satyam* is right knowledge.

You (*Hiraṇyagarbha-tattvam*, the *samaṣṭi prāṇa-tattvam*) are the embodiment of right knowledge and right action.

Up to this, the prayer is for *yogyatā prāptiḥ* – especially the word *śam*, which is the source of auspiciousness should be interpreted as *yogyatā*.

तन्मावतु - *tanmāvavatu* – May Hiraṇyagarbha protect me from the obstacles (*pratibandha nivṛttiḥ*). Even if they do not go away permanently, they should be suspended at least during *śravaṇam*. [*Tat* = *Hiraṇyagarbha-tattvam*; *mām* = me; *avatu* = protect]

तत् वक्तारम् अवतु - *tat vaktāram avatu* – May the Lord keep the guru also healthy. The student is offering prayer for guru's health and longevity (*vaktāram* = guru), at least till he completes his study. [Guru is not worried about his body because he has already attained what needs to be attained (*Brahmaniṣṭhā*). He is ready to leave the body any time].

Pratibandha nivṛtti being extremely important, the student offers this prayer once again for emphasis.

अवतु माम् - *avatu mām* – Protect me

अवतु वक्तारम् - *avatu vaktāram* – Protect the teacher

ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः - *Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ* – A *śāntiḥ* for each *pratibandha* – *ādhyātmika* (from within), *ādhibautika* (environmental) and *ādhidaivika* (natural). O Lord, remove the three-fold obstacles (*trividha pratibandhāḥ*)

Anuvāka 2

शीक्षां व्याख्यास्यामः । वर्णः स्वरः । मात्रा बलम् । साम सन्तानः । इत्युक्तः शीक्षाध्यायः ॥

Śikṣām vyākhyāsyāmaḥ / varṇaḥ svaraḥ / mātrā balam / sāma santānaḥ / ityuktaḥ śikṣādhyāyaḥ

व्याख्यास्यामः शीक्षाम् - *śikṣām vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* - We shall expound the science of pronunciation. **वर्णः** - *varṇaḥ* - (It deals with) the alphabet, **स्वरः** - *svaraḥ* - accent, **मात्रा** - *mātrā* - measure, **बलम्** - *balam* - emphasis, **साम** - *sāma* - uniformity (of pace, **सन्तानः** - *santānaḥ* - (and) conjunction. **इति** - *iti* - Thus **उक्तः** - *uktaḥ* - has been taught **शीक्षाध्यायः** - *śikṣādhyāyaḥ* - the chapter on the science of pronunciation

We shall expound the science of pronunciation. (It deals with) the alphabet, accent, measure, emphasis, uniformity (of pace, and) conjunction. Thus has been taught the chapter on the science of pronunciation

The text begins with the word *śikṣa* and therefore, it is called Śikṣāvallī. In this small *anuvāka*, the Upaniṣad gives the importance of *pārāyaṇam* as the *sādhanā*. Mere chanting of scriptures is a purifying process. The words in the scriptures come from the *mahātmās* and therefore, have the purifying power. Among all *śāstras*, *Veda pārāyaṇam* is considered as the best purifier because they are the original scriptures. All others (*smṛitis*) only have borrowed glory because they are based on the Vedas. The Upaniṣad points out that to do *Veda pārāyaṇam*, one must know how to chant the Vedas properly. The science of phonetics that defines the rules to properly pronounce and chant the Vedas is called *śikṣā-śāstram*. In verse 1.1.5 of Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, six *veda-aṅgas* (limbs of the Vedas) are discussed and one of them is *śikṣā*. Here the word is spelled as *śikṣā*. When the pronunciation is given differently in the Vedas, it is not called a mistake, but Vedic usage. Six factors that influence the rules of pronunciation are discussed in *śikṣā-śāstra*. Various *ācāryas* have elaborately written on it, with the most popular one being *Pāṇinīya śikṣā śāstra* written by a great grammarian called Pāṇini Maḥarṣi.

व्याख्यास्यामः – *vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* - (The teacher) in the Upaniṣad says: I shall enumerate (the six factors of)

शीक्षाम् - *śikṣām* – the science of pronunciation

वर्णः - *varṇaḥ* - One should know how to pronounce every letter in the alphabet. The science of pronunciation says that the letters originate from eight parts of the body (*aṣṭausthānani varṇānām*). One should know the part of the body that a letter should

be pronounced from. In the Indian languages, the alphabet is arranged based on the part of the body. The vowels and the consonants are first placed in separate categories. In English, the vowels and the consonants are mixed. The consonants are also grouped according to the part of the body they originate from:

- *Ka, kha, ga, gha ṛa* – come from the throat and so they are grouped together. They are called guttural.
- *Ca, cha, ja, jha, ña* – come from the palate with the tongue flatly touching the roof part of our mouth. It is called *pālavyāḥ* (palatal).
- *Ṭa, ṭh, ḍa, ḍha ṇa* – This group is called cerebral (*mūrdhanyāḥ*) because the tip of your tongue touches the roof of your palate and the air is directed towards your cerebrum.
- *Ṭa, ṭha, ḍa, ḍha, ṇa* – This group is called *dāntyā* (dental) because when pronouncing these letters, the tip of the tongue touches the root of the teeth.
- *Pa, pha, ba, bha, ma* – This group is called *oṣṭhya* (labial) because when pronouncing the words, the lips join together (if you have sore lips, it is hard to pronounce the name Padmanabhan).

Rule #1: we should utter the words properly by knowing where the letter comes from.

स्वरः - *svaraḥ* – it means accent or intonation or the pitch in which the letter has to be uttered – high, medium and low. One must hear it from the *ācāryas* to learn it correctly. These days, the *svaras* are marked in the books. It is important in proper Vedic chanting or, the meaning may differ and the result may be counterproductive. To convey this idea, there is a story in the Vedas:

Viśvarūpa was a celestial priest. Although he was the priest of the devas, he had a secret allegiance to their arch-rivals, the asuras. When Indra came to know about this, he killed Viśvarūpa. Tvaṣṭhā, who was Viśvarūpa's father wanted a revenge. Revenge is the most natural negative emotion. To get rid of it is extremely difficult. Even if we don't actively seek revenge, we feel satisfied when our enemy suffers. Tvaṣṭhā performed a great yāga to obtain another son Vṛtrāsura whose sole purpose was to kill Indra. Tvaṣṭhā intended to ask for a son as the killer of Indra (Indra-śatruḥ). Instead of Vṛtra killing Indra, the reverse happened. Upon analysis, he realized that the svara of chanting Indra-śatruḥ was wrong. The pitch was not proper – instead of tatpuruṣa-samāsa, it was chanted in bahuvrīhi samāsa. The wrong svara gave

meaning that he wanted a son who will be killed by Indra! Vṛtrāsura died in the hands of Indra because of this subtle mistake.

If the *Veda mantras* are not chanted properly, it may produce adverse effect. Therefore, they were never taught to the masses and that too in public. The practice of learning with the masses to chant from the books or CD is highly discouraged. If one is not properly trained in the *Veda mantras*, he/she can do *pārāyaṇam* of non-Vedic scriptures. There is no need for an average person to study the *Veda mantras* because there are people exclusively dedicated for *Veda-adhyayanam*. If not properly learned, the mistakes will propagate to the next generation and consequently, we may never be able to distinguish between the right and the wrong.

मात्रा - *mātrā* - Measure or length of vowel. A consonant has a uniform length with no variation (*ardhamātrā*). The duration of the vowel is called *mātrā*. There are three measures for vowels – short, long and longer (prolate). In Sanskrit, the longer vowel is called *plūtam*. We use this when we chant *Harīh Om*: In the Vedic books, they write 3 after the letter O in Om to indicate that the length of chanting should be equal to 3 short vowels. The length of chanting (3 or more) is indicated by a number in parentheses.

बलम् - *balam* – The stress or the effort applied in uttering a letter. For example, more stress is given when pronouncing *kha* (ख) than *ka* (क) and on *dha* (ध) than *da* (द), etc. In the science of pronunciation, the effort applied in the mouth region is classified into five categories and that applied in the throat region into eleven (*ādhyantara prayatnaḥ pañcadhāḥ; bāhya prayatnaḥ ekādaśaḥ*). Elaborate studies have been done on the effort applied to each letter. Any subject in our tradition is vast and deep. Tamil is the only Indian language in which no such distinction is shown in the letters; the stress given is contextual. For a Tamilian, it helps to know another Indian language to study the scriptures.

साम - *sāma* – the pace or speed of chanting. Śaṅkarācārya says *sāma* means medium pace of chanting. There are rules for when to chant at slow, medium or fast pace:

अभ्यासार्थं धृतां वृत्तिं प्रयोगार्थं तु मध्यमा ।
शिष्यानां उपदेशार्थं कुर्यात् वृत्तिं विलंबिताम् ॥

*Abhyāsārthe dhṛtām vṛttim prayogārthe tu madhyamā
Śiṣyānām upadeśārthe kuryāt vṛttim vilambitām*

A person must memorize the mantras before chanting; reading from the book is not considered chanting. Your learning is complete only when chanting is done from memory. This was compulsory in the olden days. Learn from a guru, memorize it and chant it regularly to keep it in memory (*Brahmayajña*). Once in memory, the mantras can be chanted fast for practice (*abhyāsārthe*). When chanting as part of a ritual, the mantras should be chanted at medium pace where every letter is clearly pronounced and heard (*prayogārthe tu madhyamā*). When the mantra is taught to someone, it should be chanted slowly so that the student catches each letter correctly.

सन्तानः - *santānaḥ* – This means combination of words and letters. In chanting, there are rules for combining and splitting the letters. For example, in Gurustotram, you can chant words in this line separately:

अखण्ड मण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचारम् ।
Akhaṇḍa maṇḍalākāraṁ vyāptaṁ yena carācaram

However, in the following, the whole statement is a compound word and the words should not be separated:

अनेकजन्मसम्प्राप्तकर्मबन्धविदाहिने
Anekajanmasamprāptakarmabandhavidāhine

For the sake of teaching, we split, but the students continue to practice in the wrong way. The combination is called *samhitā* or *sandhi*. Here it is called *santānaḥ*.

Also, when the words are combined, they undergo changes, which is unique in Sanskrit. For example, in the *śānti pāṭha*,

शं नो मित्रः = शं + नः + मित्रः
śaṁ no mitraḥ = śaṁ + naḥ + mitraḥ
नः (*naḥ*) becomes **नो** (*no*) because of the combination rules

There are elaborate rules on *sandhi*. The Sanskrit class generally begins with *sandhi-prakaraṇam*. There are general as well as exceptional rules for vowel and consonant

sandhis. There are also counter-exceptions and counter-counter exceptions. For example, *mitraḥ śam* should be pronounced as *mitraśśam*. *Namo brahmaṇe* is *namaḥ + Brahmaṇe*; *namaste* is *namaḥ + te*. These are called *santanaḥ*. Generally, the students do not know the rules, but they simply imitate the guru who knows the rules. That is why learning to chant from a guru is extremely important. Because of all these strict rules, only the learned should chant the Vedas or, the mistakes will be transmitted to the next generation. If the objective of the non-scholar is *citta śuddhi*, he/she can chant non-Vedic scriptures. If you are not a qualified teacher, teach only the non-Vedic slokas to the children. Otherwise, it will be a disservice to the Vedas.

इति उक्तः शीक्षाध्यायः - *Iti uktaḥ śikṣādhyāyaḥ* – In this manner, the science of pronunciation is presented (*iti* is the end of quotation).

Other notes:

Śaṅkarācārya points out in his commentary that it is important for one to chant the Vedas properly; otherwise, one should not chant. He gives two reasons:

- *Veda-adhyayanam* – the chanting or *pārāyaṇam* of the Vedas give *punya*, which is the invisible benefit (*adr̥ṣṭa phalam*). When a person chants the Vedas correctly, even if he does not know the meaning, he gets *punya*. Through proper Veda *adhyayanam* (brahmayajña), he gets the purification of the mind also (*citta śuddhi*) when enables him to progress spiritually.
- *Veda-Mīmāṃsā* - *Veda adhyayanam* will be used later for the study of the meaning of the Vedas. This enquiry into the meaning is called *Veda-Mīmāṃsā*. The word *mīmāṃsā* means reverential enquiry and is used only for Vedic enquiry [a routine police enquiry into a crime should not be called *mīmāṃsā*). It is classified into:
 - *pūrva-mīmāṃsā* - to enquire into the meaning of *Veda-pūrva bhāga*. It is also called *karma kāṇḍa vicāraḥ*
 - *uttara-mīmāṃsā* to enquire into *Veda-anta bhāga*. It is called *jñāna kāṇḍa vicāraḥ*. One can only enquire into the meaning if he can enquire into the mantras.

By analysis of the Vedas, one gets the benefits of *karma-jñānam* and *brahma-jñānam*. Jñānam is a visible benefit (*dr̥ṣṭa-phalam*) because, that I know or not is clearly evident. *Punya* is an invisible benefit (*adr̥ṣṭa-phalam*). *Veda-adhyayanam* is for *adr̥ṣṭa punya phalam* and *Veda- mīmāṃsā* is for *dr̥ṣṭa jñāna phalam*.

Anuvāka 3

सह नौ यशः । सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसम् । अथातः सः हिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः ।
पञ्चस्वधिकरणेषु । अधिलोकमधिज्यौतिषमधिविद्यमधिप्रजमध्यात्मम् । ता महासः हिता
इत्याचक्षते ॥

*Saha nau yaśaḥ / saha nau brahmavarcaśam / athātaḥ saḥ hitāyā upaniṣadaṁ
vyākhyāsyāmaḥ / pañcavadhikaraṇeṣu / adhilokam adijyautiṣam adhividyam
adhiprajam adhyātmam / tā mahāsagṛhitā ityācakṣate*

नौ सह - *nau saha* - May we both (enjoy) यशः - *yaśaḥ* - fame. नौ सह - *nau saha* - May we both (enjoy) ब्रह्मवर्चसम् - *brahmavarcaśam* - spiritual effulgence. अथ - *atha* - Now, अतः - *ataḥ* - since (the student is familiar with vedic chanting), व्याख्यास्यामः - *vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* - we shall teach उपनिषदम् - *upaniṣadam* - meditations संहितायाः - *saṁhitāyāḥ* - on the conjunction of letters पञ्चसु - *pañcasu* - dealing with (the following) five अधिकरणेषु - *adhikaraṇeṣu* - topics: अधिलोकम् - *adhilokam* - related to the worlds, अधिज्यौतिषम् - *adijyautiṣam* - related to the luminaries, अधिविद्यम् - *adhividyam* - related to knowledge, अधिप्रजम् - *adhiprajam* - related to progeny, अध्यात्मम् - *adhyātmam* - (and) related to the individual. आचक्षते - *ācakṣate* - (The sages) call ताः - *tāḥ* - इति महासंहिताः - *iti mahāsaṁhitāḥ* - them the great conjunctions.

May we both (enjoy) fame. May we both (enjoy) spiritual effulgence. Now, since (the student is familiar with vedic chanting), we shall teach meditations on the conjunction of letters dealing with (the following) five topics: related to the worlds, related to the luminaries, related to knowledge, related to progeny, (and) related to the individual. (The sages) call them the great conjunctions.

The *sādhana* in the last *anuvāka* was *Veda-pārāyaṇa* or *Brahmayajña*. If a person does not know the entire Vedas, he should at least chant the Gāyatrī mantra, which is the capsule form of the Vedas. If this person does not know Gāyatrī mantra, he should do other *pārāyaṇams* such as *Sahasranāma*, *Rāmāyaṇa* etc.

The third *anuvāka* is a long one and therefore, we shall split it into small portions for the convenience of study. In my introduction, I mentioned that Śikṣāvallī discusses the physical *sādhana*s such as Karma Yoga (*pañca mahā yajña*), the verbal *sādhana*s such as *japa* and *pārāyaṇa* and the mental *sādhana*s consisting of five *upāsana*s (*pañca upāsana*ni). These *upāsana*s are non-Vedāntic preparatory meditations. The

Vedāntic meditation or *nididhyāsanam* is meant for assimilating the teachings. *Nididhyāsanam* is not discussed here.

The Upaniṣad introduces the first *upāsanā* called *saṁhitopāsanā*, which is highly classical and technical. We may wonder if it is even possible to do these *upāsanās* because they appear more difficult than the Vedānta itself. Nowadays, these are not commonly practiced and we study these only with academic interest. These have been largely replaced by simpler *purāṇic upāsanās* where personal deities are invoked in meditation.

The teacher and student consider the study of the *upāsanās* as sacred. The student seeks a special blessing for this. Therefore, this *anuvāka* begins with another prayer to complete this study successfully.

सह नौ यशः - *saha nau yaśaḥ* – The student prays that the he and teacher (together) become popular in the society. What a prayer!

सह नौ ब्रह्मवर्चसम् - *saha nau brahmavarcaśam* – In addition to scholarship and knowledge, we also should have magnetic personality to attract students. *Brahmavarcaśam* means the magnetic personality born out of religious and spiritual way of life. It is also called *brahma tejas*. After all, after studying the Vedānta, one should drop all the desires for name and fame. Why should the student ask for these? This is because, to a Vedic student, sharing the knowledge with the others to preserve the culture is just as important as receiving it. The present generation must mold the future ones through precept and practice. With this awareness of the future generations in our culture, the Brahmin student was also assigned the duty of teaching. The *kṣatriyas* the *vaiśyas* had the duty to learn the Vedas (*adhyāyanam*), but not to teach it (*adhyāpanam*). The Brahmana is not permitted to take up any other profession; his only duty is to learn and spread the scriptural teachings (*pāṭhanam-pāṭhanam; yajanam-yājanam*).

The Vedāntic student incurs a debt to the *ṛṣis* when he studies the scriptures. He appreciates and benefits from the scriptures because the *ṛṣis* struggled to bring out the knowledge and preserve it. The student is not indebted only to his guru, but the entire guru *paramparā*. Thus, he has a debt (*ṛṇam*) to fulfill to the *ṛṣis* by sharing the wisdom with the others. If he is unable to teach because he lacks confidence or

communication skills, he can indirectly fulfill this debt by supporting the institutions that teach the Vedas.

Naturally, a *brāhmaṇa* is keen to receive top grade students so that the *paramparā* can be preserved. He therefore prays that the society should come to know that he is a great teacher so that the students will come in droves. What a wonderful concept! The more you dwell upon it, the more you will come to know the holistic nature of our tradition. The student includes the teacher also in this prayer.

The Upaniṣad is now introducing the first *upāsanā*:

संहिताया उपनिषदं व्याख्यास्यामः – *sagr̥hitāyā upaniṣadam̐ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ* - *sagr̥hitā* is *sam̐hitā*. [*Śikṣā* rule: When the letter “m̐” is followed by *śa*, *sa*, *ṣa*, *ha*, *ra* etc. “m̐” will become *gr̥m̐*]. The word *upaniṣadam* means *upāsanā*. We are going to teach you (*vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*) *sam̐hitā upāsanā*.

What is *sam̐hitopāsanā*? *Upāsanā* requires two things: the object of *upāsanā* (meditation) like various deities (*upānsā viṣayaḥ*) and a symbol to represent the objects, because these objects are either invisible (abstract) or too big to visualize in the mind. To worship my country, I represent it with a flag. Thus, the nation is the *upāsanā-viṣayaḥ* and the flag is the *upāsanā-ālambanam*. *Ālambanam* is concrete while *viṣaya* is not always concrete. *Śivaliṅga*, *śāliḡrāmam*, turmeric powder (for Vināyaka), flame (for Devi) are all examples of *ālambanam*. Cow is an *ālambanam* for Lakshmi Devi, and the book is for Saraswati Devi.

Now the Upaniṣad is going to introduce an *upāsanā* where *ālambanam* is *sam̐hitā*. What is that blessed *sam̐hitā*? *Sam̐hitā* or *sandhiḥ* is the Vedic combination of letters. In Sanskrit, the combination of letters is governed by many rules. We already saw an example – *śam̐ no mitraḥ*, where *śam̐ naḥ* becomes *śam̐ no* when joined with *mitraḥ*. The term *sam̐hitāyā upaniṣadam* is really *sam̐hitāyāḥ upaniṣadam*; when the words are joined the *visargaḥ* (*ḥ*) after *sam̐hitāyā* gets dropped. For this *upāsanā*, we are going to take the Vedic combination of letters where four factors are going to be involved. I will give you an example:

In olden days, the priests chanted all the four Vedas after the *pūjā* in the temple. These days, only the first mantra of each of the Vedas is chanted. The Yajur Veda

begins with *īṣe tvā ūrje* (इषे त्वा ऊर्जे). The first two words are *īṣe* and *tvā*. Let us study the combination when the words *īṣe* and *tvā* come together. The word *īṣe* ends in a vowel "ए" (e) and the next word begins with the consonant "त" (t) in *tvā* (त + व + आ). In this example, the letter "ए" (e) will be called *pūrva rūpam*. The next letter "त" (t) is called *uttara rūpam*. When the first word (*pūrva rūpam*) and the next (*uttara rūpam*) join, the junction is called *sandhiḥ*. According to the rules of *sandhiḥ*, a new additional letter is created. This additional link letter is called *sandhānam*, which means the arriving or emergent letter. When the two words are joined together, the statement becomes *īṣettvā ūrje*. Here, "ए" (e) is *pūrvarūpam*, "त" (t) is *uttararūpam*, the junction is *sandhiḥ* and the additional link letter "त" (t) is *sandhānam*. These four factors of *sandhiḥ* are taken as *ālambanam* in the *upāsanā*, which is also called *saṁhitā-ālamabana upāsanā* (*saṁhito-upāsanā*). On each of these four symbols, an object of meditation (*upāsanā viśayaḥ*) will be invoked. An analogy is given below for better understanding:

We will use four chairs as *ālambanam* and invite four people for honoring by seating them on these chairs. The invitees are equated to *upāsanā-viśayāḥ*. Each of the *viśayas* are associated with a field. For example, we are honoring people from the field of sports by seating them on the chair: Viswanathan Anand for Chess, Sachin Tendulkar for Cricket, Roger Federer for Tennis and Michael Jordan for Basketball. This is one *saṁhitā upāsanā*. After honoring them, you can vacate the chairs and bring another group of four people from another field, say, music and honor them. This is another *upāsanā* with different four *viśayas* while using the same *ālambanams*. Five such *saṁhitopāsanās* are described in this Upaniṣad. For each *upāsanā*, there are 4 objects and thus, 20 objects are brought for meditation. These 20 objects are taken from five different fields called *adhikaraṇam* (*pañcasvadhikaraṇeṣu*).

Śaṅkarācārya asks why the Upaniṣad should prescribe such a difficult meditation on the Vedic combination of letters and not some other simpler objects? He himself answers. In those days, everyone thoroughly studied the Vedas (minimum of 8 years and maximum of 12). When they study the Vedic chanting, they have various ways of chanting: *pada pāṭha* (word by word), *krama pāṭha* (words in sequence of 1-2, 2-3, 3-4), *jaṭā pāṭha* (words in sequence of 1-2-2-1-1-2), *ghaṇa pāṭha* (in sequence 1-2-2-1-1-2-3-3-2-1-1-2-3-2-3-3-2-2-3-4-4-3-2-2-3-4 etc.). When they do these

permutations and combinations, they must apply the *sandhi* rules. Thus, every Vedic student is thorough with every letter of the Vedas (not just every word). A *salakṣaṇa ghanapāṭhi* knows where each letter originates from and the presiding *devatā* behind it [*ghanapāṭhi* – one whose head is heavy with knowledge].

अथः - *athaḥ* – after having completed the study of the Vedas, the student takes to *upāsanā*. His brain is full of Vedic letters and nothing else. Therefore, he naturally inclined towards the *upāsanā* that uses Vedic letters as *ālambanam*. If one is an avid Cricket fan, he should be given the three stumps as *ālambanam* with *trimūrti* as *viśayas* for *upāsanā* and he will take to it immediately! In summary, the student has the familiarity of Vedic letters and therefore, this type of *upāsanā* is appropriate.

पञ्चसु अधिकरणेषु - *pañcasu adhikaraṇeṣu* – the five fields from each of which four objects will be taken (*adhikaraṇam* = fields or departments).

अधिलोकम् - *adhilokam* – the various lokas – the four lokas are going to invoked on *pūrvarūpam*, *uttararūpam*, *sandhi* and *sandhānam* and then meditated.

अधिज्यौतिषम् - *adhijyautiṣam* – luminaries like the sun, moon etc.

अधिविद्यम् - *adhividyam* – the fields of knowledge

अधिप्रजम् - *adhiprajam* – family – the field of progeny. The family is important and sacred and that is why *gr̥hasthāśrama* is prescribed by the *śāstras*.

अध्यात्मम् - *adhyātmam* – In this context, *Ātmā* means body (*śarīram*) – we will take four objects from our own body.

This group of five *upāsanās* is called *samhitopāsana*.

ताः महासः हिताः – *tāḥ mahāsagmhitāḥ* - these are known as great *ālambanams* because 20 great objects of meditation are invoked. The *samhitās* by themselves do not possess any greatness, but they acquire it when associated with these objects of meditation. For example, a cricket bat by itself is made of ordinary wood, but if it had been used by a great batsman like Don Bradman or Gary Sobers, it would fetch much

higher amount than the original cost when auctioned. A used bat of an ordinary person will fetch much less than the original cost.

इति आचक्षते - *iti ācakṣate* – it is said by great sages

Other notes:

When you invoke Gaṇapathi in turmeric powder as *ālambanam*, the latter gets its greatness and it deserves the *ṣodaśa upacāra pūjā*, *neyvedyam* and *arcanā*. Otherwise, turmeric itself does not have greatness. After the *pūjā* is over, the priest chants a mantra requesting Gaṇapathi to vacate the turmeric powder. Once Gaṇapathi “leaves”, it becomes ordinary turmeric powder. However, we do not use it for cooking sambar because it still retains its sacredness because of its past association with Gaṇapathi. The used articles of ordinary sports star are revered – what to talk of *mahāsamhitās*?

अथाधिलोकम् । पृथिवी पूर्वरूपम् । द्यौरुत्तररूपम् । आकाशः संधिः । वायुः संधानम् ।
इत्यधिलोकम् ।

Athādhilokam / pṛthivī pūrvarūpam / dyauruttararūpam / ākāśaḥ sandhiḥ / vāyuḥ sandhānam / ityadhilokam

अथ अधिलोकम् – *atha adhilokam* - Now (begins the meditation) related to the worlds.
पृथिवी पूर्वरूपम् – *pṛthivī pūrvarūpam* - The earth is the prior letter; द्यौः उत्तररूपम् – *dyauḥ uttararūpam* - the heaven is the posterior letter; आकाशः संधिः – *ākāśaḥ sandhiḥ* - the interspace is the junction; वायुः संधानम् – *vāyuḥ sandhānam* - air is the link. इति अधिलोकम् – *iti adhilokam* - Thus (ends the meditation) related to the worlds.

Now (begins the meditation) related to the worlds. The earth is the prior letter; the heaven is the posterior letter; the interspace is the junction; air is the link. Thus (ends the meditation) related to the worlds.

The first *samhitopāsana* is introduced here. It is called *adhiloka upāsana*.

अथ - *atha* – Now (begins)

अधिलोकम् - *adhilokam* – the *upāsana* related to the worlds. [add the word *samhitopāsana*]

For each of the *ālabanam*, i.e. *pūrvarūpam*, *uttarakūpam*, *sandhiḥ* and *sandhānam*, an object (*viśayaḥ*) is invoked.

पृथिवी पूर्वरूपम् - *pṛthivī pūrvarūpam* – the earth is invoked in *pūrvarūpam*

द्यौः उत्तररूपम् - *dyauḥ uttararūpam* – *svargaloka* (heaven) is invoked in *uttarakūpam*

आकाशः संधिः - *ākāśaḥ sandhiḥ* – the intermediary space (*ākāśaḥ*) where the earth and the heaven meet is called *antarikṣam*.

वायुः संधानम् - *vāyuḥ sandhānam* – Vāyuḥ, the atmosphere, is the link that connect the two *lokas* in that junction. In short, in this *upāsana*, the totality (the entire cosmos) is visualized on the components of *sandhi*. This expansion of vision is important because it helps us get out of the narrow-mindedness of caring only about self and the closest family members. The Upaniṣad asks us to spend some time visualizing the macro universe in the form of *lokatrayam* – *bhūloka* (earth), *bhuvarkā* (intermediary space) and *svarkā* (heaven).

इति - *iti* – thus ends (or concluded)

अधिलोकम् - *adhilokam* – *adhiloka samhitopāsana*.

Thus, we start with macro and we will conclude with the *śarīra upāsana*, which is micro. The world is called *brahmāṇḍam* and the body is *piṇḍāṇḍam*. In *brahmāṇḍam* → *piṇḍāṇḍam*, you visualize everything.

**अथाधिज्यौतिषम् । अग्निः पूर्वरूपम् । आदित्य उत्तररूपम् । आपः संधिः । वैद्युतः संधानम् ।
इत्यधिज्यौतिषम् ।**

Athādhijyautiṣam / agniḥ pūrvarūpam / āditya uttararūpam / āpaḥ sandhiḥ / vidyutaḥ sandhānam / ityadhijyautiṣam

अथ अधिज्यौतिषम् - *atha dhijyautiṣam* - Now (begins the meditation) related to the luminaries. **अग्निः पूर्वरूपम्** - *agniḥ pūrvarūpam* - Fire is the prior letter; **आदित्य उत्तररूपम्** - *āditya uttararūpam* - the sun is the posterior letter; **आपः संधिः** - *āpaḥ sandhiḥ* - water is the junction; **वैद्युतः संधानम्** - *vaidyutaḥ sandhānam* - the lightening

is the link. इति अधिज्यौतिषम् - *iti adhijyautiṣam* - Thus (ends the meditation) related to the luminaries.

Now (begins the meditation) related to the luminaries. Fire is the prior letter; the sun is the posterior letter; water is the junction; the lightening is the link. Thus (ends the meditation) related to the luminaries.

अथ - *atha* – hereafter (after the first *samhitopāsanā*)

अधिज्यौतिषम् - *adhijyautiṣam* - comes the second upāsanā called *adhijyautiṣam*. The word *jyautiṣam* is derived from the word *jyotiḥ* which means a luminary (*prakāśātmaka vastu* or *prakāśa vastu*). Sūrya (the sun), Candra (the moon), *nakṣatra* (the stars), agni (the fire), *vidyut* (the lightening) etc. are examples. An object associated with *jyotiḥ* is *jyautiṣam*. Astrology is called *jyautiṣam* because it deals with luminaries such as planets, stars, sun, moon etc. In this context, it means the *upāsanā* associated with *jyotiḥ* (*adhijyautiṣa samhitopāsanā*).

अग्निः पूर्वरूपम् - *agniḥ pūrvarūpam* – Agni is the light principle (*tejas tattvam*) on the earth (*bhūloka*) and therefore, invoked in the *pūrvarūpam*.

आदित्यः उत्तररूपम् - *āditya uttararūpam* – the sun is also the fire principle (*agnitattvam*), but since it is in the upper loka, it is invoked in *uttararūpam*. [In the example of *iṣe tvā*, "e" (ए) Agni and "t" (त्) is Āditya)

आपः संधिः - *āpaḥ sandhiḥ* – The rainy water which is present in the form of cloud (*meghajalam*) - it is between Agni (*bhūloka*) and Āditya (*suvarloka*).

वैद्युतः संधानम् - *vaidyutaḥ sandhānam* – the lightening is the luminary that connects the sky and the earth. What a beautiful imagination! The lightening originates in the sky and enters the earth through anything that is available. *Vaidyutaḥ*, the lightening is the link between the luminary Ādityaḥ and Agniḥ. Therefore, visualize the lightening in meditation.

इति अधिज्यौतिषम् - *iti adhijyautiṣam* - thus concludes *adhijyautiṣa samhitopāsanā*. In this *upāsanā*, we are visualizing the powerful natural forces. In the previous one, the lokas or cosmos were visualized. Learn to visualize everything as Bhagavan's glory. Don't take them granted.

अथाधिविद्यम् । आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् । अन्तेवास्युत्तररूपम् । विद्या सन्धिः । प्रवचनं संधानम् ।
इत्यधिविद्यम् ।

*Athādhividyam / ācāryaḥ pūrvarūpam / antevāsyuttararūpam / vidyā sandhiḥ /
pravacanagṃsandhānam / ityadhividyam*

अथ अधिविद्यम् - *atha adhividyam* - Now (begins the meditation) related to knowledge.

आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् - *ācāryaḥ pūrvarūpam* - The teacher is the prior letter; अन्तेवासी

उत्तररूपम् - *antevāsī uttararūpam* - the student is the posterior letter; विद्या सन्धिः -

vidyā sandhiḥ - knowledge is the junction; प्रवचनं संधानम् - *pravacanam sandhānam*

- teaching is the link. इति अधिविद्यम् - *iti adhividyam* - Thus (ends the meditation) related to knowledge.

Now (begins the meditation) related to knowledge. The teacher is the prior letter; the student is the posterior letter; knowledge is the junction; teaching is the link. Thus (ends the meditation) related to knowledge.

अथ - *atha* - after addressing the cosmos and the natural forces (in the first two *upāsānās*),

अधिविद्यम् - *adhividyam* - Now the Upaniṣad describes the *saṃhitopāsānā* in the educational field (*adhi* means related to).

आचार्यः पूर्वरूपम् - *ācāryaḥ pūrvarūpam* - The teacher is the *pūrvarūpam*. The definition of *ācārya* is:

आचिनोति शास्त्राणि आचरे स्थापयति स्वयम् आचरते यस्माद् तस्माद् आचार्यः उच्यते ।

Ācinoti śāstrāṇi ācāre sthāpayati svayam ācarate yasmād tasmād ācāryaḥ ucyate

The teacher culls or collect (*ācinoti*) all the important teachings from the scriptures depending on the need (level) of the students. He then requests the students to learn and follow (*ācāre sthāpayati*) thus establishing the right conduct. He does not merely command the students to follow, but becomes a role model by living what he teaches (*svayam ācarate tasmād*). Precept and practice should go together. The guru does these three things: *ācinoti*, *ācāryati*, and *ācarati* and so he is called *ācāryaḥ*. That *ācārya* is invoked in *pūrvarūpam*.

अन्तेवासी उत्तररूपम् – *antevāsī uttararūpam* – A resident student is called *antevāsī* (*gurukula sampradāye vidyārthi*). *Ante* means near (*samīpe*) and *vasī* means resident. The student should live with the teacher because he learns more from the lifestyle of the guru than from mere classroom lectures. The teacher transforms the student through constant contact. The student is the *uttararūpam*.

विद्या सन्धिः - *vidyā sandhiḥ* – The purpose of the student-teacher association is education. Therefore, the education is the junction or *sandhiḥ*.

प्रवचनं संधानम् – *pravacanam sandhānam* – *Pravacanam*, the verbal communication is the link between the teacher and the student. Scriptures say that verbal contact is important and more importantly, psychologically, eye contact is required. The mother's eyes are constantly in contact with the child's. There are occasions that mother does not talk anything; she only keeps on looking in the eyes of the child. In that exchange, the relationship gets reinforced. Since the teacher and the student should have the eye-contact, the latter should never listen to the class in a meditative mode. Book learning can never create an eye contact. When we require eye-contact for an ordinary communication, what to talk of the highest concept *tat tvam asi?* Therefore, a live teacher and *gurukulavāsam* are highlighted. The expired gurus (Śaṅkara, Ramaṇa, Ramakrishna etc.) cannot be gurus, but they can be inspirers. The teaching must come from a live person because eye contact is the root of all important communication. Teaching is the link.

इति अधिविद्यम् - *iti adhividyam* – thus ends the meditation on education – *adhividyā-samhitopāsanā*.

अथाधिप्रजम् । माता पूर्वरूपम् । पितोत्तररूपम् । प्रजा संधिः । प्रजननं संधानम् । इत्यधिप्रजम् ।
athādhiprajam / mātā pūrvarūpam / pitottararūpam / prajā sandhiḥ / prajananagmsandhānam / ityadhiprajam

अथ अधिप्रजम् - *atha adhiprajam* - Now (begins the meditation) related to progeny.
माता पूर्वरूपम् - *mātā pūrvarūpam* - Mother is the prior letter; **पिता उत्तररूपम्** - *pitā uttararūpam* - father is the posterior letter; **प्रजा संधिः** - *prajā sandhiḥ* - progeny is the junction; **प्रजननं संधानम्** - *prajananam sandhānam* - procreation is the link. **इति अधिप्रजम्** - *iti adhiprajam* - Thus (ends the meditation) related to progeny.

Now (begins the meditation) related to progeny. Mother is the prior letter; father is the posterior letter; progeny is the junction; procreation is the link. Thus (ends the meditation) related to progeny.

The fourth *saṁhitopāsanā* comes from the field of *prajā* (progeny), which means *gṛhasthāśrama* or family life. In the previous statement, *brahmacaryāśrama* field was described. This is to indicate that each *āśrama* plays a key role in the spiritual development of a person. The significance of the *gṛhasthāśrama* is described here:

अथ अधिप्रजम् - *atha adhiprajam* – after the *adhividyā upāsanā*, we now enter the field of *prajā* (family)

माता पूर्वरूपम् – *mātā pūrvarūpam* - mother or wife is *pūrvarūpam*. In this *upāsanā*, the mother is visualized as the letter on the left-hand side

पिता उत्तररूपम् – the father is the latter letter.

What is the purpose of their union (*gṛhasthāśrama*) must be understood and remembered. The society today has a different intention than what the Vedas have prescribed. Today's *gṛhasthāśrama* is totally focused on *artha* and *kāma* whereas, the Vedas declare them to subservient to dharma, the primary goal (*puruṣārtha*). There is a tendency among the married couples not to have children, but enjoy the pleasures that dual income can bring (DINK – double income no kids). In the *dhārmic gṛhastha* life, *prajā* or progeny is required.

In the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, karma is called *pāṅktam* which means that which requires five factors. Every Vedic ritual requires five factors: *yajamāna* (performer of ritual), *patni* (his wife), *putra* (children), *daiva vitta* (Vedic mantras) and *mānuṣa vitta* (priests). *Gṛhasthāśrama* is meant for the performance of the Vedic rituals (*vaidika karma*) and therefore, children are required. The children are called *dharmaprajāḥ* – the children for the sake of dharma. [In the marriage *saṅkalpa*, we state *dharmaprajā abhivṛttyartham karma kariṣye*].

Apart from the karmas, children are required so that the values of the current generation can be transmitted to the next generation. The personality of the child forms in the first five or six years and therefore, the values must be inculcated then. Once the mind is hardened, it is difficult to mold the personality. The first few years are spent with the parents and therefore, the values must be taught primarily by the parents. Nowadays, the children grow in the hands of an ayah (nanny). What values can the child learn from the ayah? Swami Dayananda said repeatedly that the system of sending children very early to school (for the entire day) produces emotionally immature ones. Therefore, *gṛhasthāśrama* is meant for bringing up children who follow dharma. Dharma is not protected by the *dhārmic śāstras*, but by the *dhārmic*

children who grow in the hands of *dhārmic* parents. The parents teach the children by being role models and not by lecturing.

प्रजा संधिः - *prajā sandhiḥ* – the *dhārmic* progeny is the context in which a male and female get married.

प्रजननः संधानम् – *prajananagrṇ sandhānam* – the conjugal union of the male and female (*garbhadāna saṁskāra* in Vedic language) is the link. In the *garbhadāna saṁskāra*, mantras are chanted to get children who are embodiment of values. Only after values, money is enumerated. According to our tradition, dharma alone gives ānanda. If dharma is not there, money becomes a source of sorrow. If dharma is there, ānanda will be there whether one has money or not. Dharma decides whether a family is happy or not. Thus, the union is not for conjugal pleasures, but for the creation of *dharmā prajā*.

इति अधिप्रजम् - *iti adhiprajam* – thus concludes *adhipraja saṁhitopāsanā*.

We started from the macro and gradually we are moving towards micro, the body – we will see in the next *upāsanā*.

अथाध्यात्मम् । अधरा हनुः पूर्वरूपम् । उत्तरा हनुरुत्तररूपम् । वाक्सन्धिः । जिह्वा संधानम् । इत्यध्यात्मम् ।

Athādhyātmam / adharā hanuḥ pūrvarūpam / uttarā hanuruttararūpam / vāksandhiḥ / jīhvā saṁdhānam / ityādhyātmam

अथ अध्यात्मम् - *atha adhyātmam* - Now (begins the meditation) related to the individual. **अधरा हनुः पूर्वरूपम्** - *adharā hanuḥ pūrvarūpam* - Lower jaw is the prior letter.; **उत्तरा हनुः उत्तररूपम्** - *uttarā hanuḥ uttararūpam* - upper jaw is the posterior letter; **वाक् सन्धिः** - *vāk sandhiḥ* - speech is the junction; **जिह्वा संधानम्** - *jīhvā sandhānam* - the tongue is the link. **इति अध्यात्मम्** - *iti adhyātmam* - Thus (ends the meditation) related to the individual.

Now (begins the meditation) related to the individual. Lower jaw is the prior letter.; upper jaw is the posterior letter; speech is the junction; the tongue is the link. Thus (ends the meditation) related to the individual.

अथ – *atha* – after *adhipraja saṁhitopāsanā*,

अध्यात्मम् – *adhyātmam* – now comes the *saṁhitopāsanā* in which the physical parts of the body (organs) are invoked. Which organ is the most active? If we analyze our transactions, we find that most are verbal. [Even if you go to an isolated place, you carry a cell phone]. Even a written letter represents verbal communication. A country can grow when IT (communication) is revolutionized because the businesses depend on communication. The whole technology is working to improve communication. The Vedas know that. Therefore, it gives importance to the mouth, which is organ of communication.

अधरा हनुः पूर्वरूपम् – *adharā hanuḥ pūrvarūpam* – the lower jaw is the *pūrvarūpam*. Notice that only the lower jaw moves when you speak; the upper jaw is stationary

उत्तरा हनुः उत्तररूपम् – *uttarā hanuḥ uttararūpam* – the upper jaw is *uttararūpam* [Hanumān means the one who has a pronounced upper jaw].

वाक् सन्धिः – *vāk sandhiḥ* - These jaws come together when speaking (they also come together when eating). Therefore, speech is *sandhiḥ*.

जिह्वा संधानम् - *jihvā sandhānam* – The tongue is the link. The tongue is one of the softest parts of the body and the teeth are among the hardest. The softest tongue is between two sets of hard teeth. It must constantly move between them without getting caught. How smart must be the tongue! Learn from the tongue how to live in the family. All the people are like teeth – manage in life like a tongue.

इति अध्यात्मम् - *iti adhyātmam* – thus concludes the *adhyātmā-saṁhitopāsanā*.

Thus, these five *upāsanās* constitute the *mahā-saṁhitopāsanā*.

We shall now see the benefits (*phalam*) of this *upāsanā*.

Other notes:

Even though we have 5 *upāsanās*, we take it as one *upāsanā* because the *ālambanams* are the same (four factors in Vedic conjunction).

**इतीमा महासंहिताः । य एवमेता महासंहिता व्याख्याता वेद ।
संधीयते प्रजया पशुभिः । ब्रह्मवर्चसेनात्राद्येन सुवर्गेण लोकेन ॥**

*itīmā mahāsaṁhitāḥ ya evametā mahāsaṁhitā vyākhyātā veda
saṁdhiyate prajāyā paśubhiḥ brahmavarcasenānādyena suvargēṇa lokena*

इति - *iti* - Thus, इमाः महासंहिताः - *imāḥ mahāsamhitāḥ* - these are great conjunctions. यः वेद - *yaḥ veda* - One who meditates upon एताः महासंहिताः - *etāḥ mahāsamhitāḥ* - these great conjunctions एवं व्याख्यातः - *evam vyākhyātaḥ* - as described above संधीयते - *sandhīyate* - is blessed with प्रजया - *prajāyā* - progeny, पशुभिः - *paśubhiḥ* - cattle, ब्रह्मवर्चसेन - *brahmavarçasena* - spiritual effulgence, अन्नाद्येन - *annādyena* - agreeable food, सुवर्ग्येण लोकेन - *suvargyeṇa lokena* - (and) the heavenly world.

Thus, these are great conjunctions. One who meditates upon these great conjunctions as described above is blessed with progeny, cattle, spiritual effulgence, agreeable food, (and) the heavenly world.

इति महासंहिताः - *iti imāḥ mahāsamhitāḥ* - The Upaniṣad is glorifying the *mahāsamhitās*. They are great for two reasons: one, the letters chosen are Vedic and the other, because great objects are invoked for meditation. With this the *upāsanā* portion is over.

Hereafter, the Upaniṣad gives the *phalam* of practicing this grand *upāsanā*.

The *upāsanā phalam* depends upon the attitude with which we do *upāsanā*. Our *saṅkalpa* (motive) has the capacity to determine the type of result. A criminal has a different motive than a doctor when using a knife; the former uses it to hurt the victim, while the latter uses it to save the patient. Even if the action results in death, the doctor may be honored for his attempt (at least not punished), while the criminal will be punished. Thus, action being the same, the motive brings different results.

Saṅkalpa or the motive has the capacity to determine the result of a karma. When one performs an *upāsanā* for material results (*artha* and *kāma*), it is called *sakāma upāsanā*. When the very same *upāsanā* is performed dharma and *mokṣa* (*citta śuddhi*, *jñāna prāpti* and *mokṣa prāpti*), it is called *niṣkāma upāsanā*. In the Gītā, Krishna makes it clear that when a person does *sakāma karma*, he needs to be very careful and alert about the rules and regulations, or, the mistakes may work against him. The *karmaphalam* may even be the opposite of what was asked for (Vṛtrāsura example given earlier). On the other hand, in *niṣkāma karma*, the rules are relaxed because we seek *citta śuddhi* and *mokṣa*. We get will only positive results. With mistakes, it may be less positive, but never negative. When we study these *sādhanās*, we must highlight the results from both *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* angles.

There are many benefits to the practice of *niṣkāma upāsanā*. The benefits are not material in nature (money, positions, status and other possessions), but they are conducive to spiritual growth. The following are the benefits of *niṣkāma karma*:

- Expansion of the mind: By invoking various *lokas* in this *upāsanā*, we learn to visualize the three worlds – the earth (*pṛthivī*), the heaven (*dyauh*) and the interspace (*ākāśaḥ*). The mind always assumes the form of the object. If you visualize something small, your mind also becomes smaller. In past, in our culture, everything was big such as the temples and houses with high ceilings and huge pillars. Today, the houses are like match boxes with low ceilings and our mind also becomes narrow. The *samhitopāsanā* starts with the macro-verse and so it expands the mind.
- Reverence for the universe: Since I meditate on the totality of the universe, I develop reverence for the universe. I show reverence to the earth as Bhūmādevi and offer *namaskāra* asking for pardon:

समुद्रवसने देवी पर्वतस्तन मण्डले ।
विष्णुपत्नी नमस्तुभ्यं पादस्पर्श क्षमत्व मे ॥

Samudravasane devī parvatastana mandale

Viṣṇupatnī namastubhyam pādasparśam kṣamatva me

O Mother Bhūdevi, the consort of Viṣṇu, I bow to you. Pardon me for stepping on you (because I cannot fly).

The earth, water, the sun, the other luminaries and the entire creation becomes sacred for me. This reverential perspective will help me in *viśvarūpa darśanam*. By invoking the guru and *śiṣya* (*ācārya pūrvarūpam, antevasi uttarūpam* etc.), I develop the reverence for the teaching and education. In our tradition, we respect any book that we study (unique tradition). The reverence for *ācārya* is unique in Vedic culture. I revere my parents. Finally, I develop reverence for my own body by meditating on it. We should remember that the body is the greatest gift from God because we cannot create a single organ. Once an organ is damaged, it can never get back to its original form. Therefore, I must respect my body (*deho devālaya proktaḥ* - body is a temple) and take good care of it, but must not be attached to it. Attachment would mean sense of ownership – I am caretaker of the gift from the Lord and not the owner.

Thus, there is transformation of the mind as described as the *divya cakṣuḥ* in Chapter 11 of the *Gītā*. For example, when you buy an apple from the shop, you put it your bag or mouth directly, but the very same apple, if it comes from a temple or *mahātmā*, it goes to your eyes first. The material is the same, but there is a change in the perspective. This is *divya cakṣuḥ*. Arjuna got a temporary *divya cakṣuḥ* from Krishna to see the *Viśvarūpa Īśvara*. From this *saṁhitopāsanā*, I can earn the *divya cakṣuḥ* for *viśvarūpa darśanam*.

- The capacity to focus: Many have the attention deficiency syndrome. This *upāsanā* will help us increase the attention span and enhance the focus on a field for a length of time.

Since we invoke *Īśvara* in the form of *Viśvarūpa*, we also get *citta śuddhiḥ*. Therefore, the benefits are *citta śuddhiḥ*, *citta ekāgrata*, *citta viśālatā*, and *citta naiścalyam*. This will help in *Vedānta śravaṇam*, the first step in gaining *ātmajñānam*.

Certainly, there are benefits to be derived from *sakāma upāsanā*. These are described in the last portion of this section.

यः एतः महासंहिता व्याख्याता वेद - *Yaḥ etaḥ mahāsaṁhitā vyākhyātā veda* – The word *Veda* means *upāsanā*. When a person practices this *upāsanā* upon these great Vedic conjunctions (*mahāsaṁhitā*), which have been talked before (*vyākhyātā*) in the previous paragraphs,

एवं (वेद) – *evam* (*veda*) – exactly as prescribed. The rule for assigning the appropriate chair for each dignitary must be followed. For example, *pūrvārūpam* must honor a specific dignitary while *uttarūpam* must honor another appropriate one. In the modern functions, the organizers spend hours on deciding the assignment of seats. If a dignitary is not given the appropriate seat, he/she will not be happy and may not give donation. *Sakāma* means seeking donation; if you want it, you must honor the dignitary properly. In *niṣkāma*, there is no donation sought and so, any error on honoring will not have serious consequences.

संधीयते - *sandhiyate* – since he has meditated on the Vedic combination, he will get association with (blessed with)

प्रजया पशुभिः - *prajayā paśubhiḥ* – plenty of children and wealth. *The sakāma phalam* will be obtained in this world and the next one (after death). With the association with this *upāsanā*, you will get progeny (*prajayā*) and wealth (*paśubhiḥ*). The significance is that the nature of the *phalam* depends upon the nature of *upāsanā* (*yathā yathā upāstate tadeva bhavati*). If a person meditates on *Īśvara* as the embodiment of knowledge (*sarvajñā Īśvaraḥ*), he will get plenty of knowledge (*jñāna viśiṣṭa Īśvara upāsanena jñāna phalam*). If he meditates on *Īśvara* as the omnipotent (*śakti viśiṣṭa Īśvara upāsanā*), strength will be the benefit. If he meditates on a beautiful or handsome *Īśvara* (*satyam śivam sundaram*), he will become handsome. If he meditates on *nitya Īśvaraḥ*, he will be blessed with long life. *Sandhī upāsanā* means the *upāsanā* on combination. Therefore, the *upāsaka* will get benefits based on the combination he chooses.

ब्रह्मवर्चसेन - *brahmavarcasena* – Resplendent personality or *tejas* - magnetic, charming, brilliant and attractive

अन्नाद्येन – *annādyena* – plenty of food (*annam*) that is nutritious (*ādyam*). *Ādyam* means *adana-yogyam* – fit to be eaten.

These are the benefits enjoyed in this world (*ihaloka phalam*). What will happen to him after death? Whether he engages in *sakāma* or *niṣkāma* *upāsanā*, he will not get mokṣa. For mokṣa, he requires *ātmajñānam*.

सुवर्गेण लोकेन – *suvargyeṇa lokena* - after death, he will get *svarga* (*heaven*). There are six levels of heaven (*bhuvanloka, suvarloka, maharloka, janaloka, tapaloka* and *satyaloka*). The type of *loka* obtained will depend upon the quantity and quality of *upāsanā*. *Samhitopāsanā* can be practiced for material or spiritual benefits. However, it is not compulsory; *puraṇas* prescribe *upāsanās* on deities as other option.

Anuvāka 4

यश्छन्दसामृषभो विश्वरूपः । छन्दोभ्योऽध्यमृतात्सम्बभूव । स मेन्द्रो मेधया स्पृणोतु । अमृतस्य देव धारणो भूयासम् । शरीरं मे विचर्षणम् । जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा । कर्णाभ्यां भूरि विश्रुवम् । ब्रह्मणः कोशोऽसि मेधया पिहितः । श्रुतुं मे गोपाय ॥

Yaśchandasāmṛṣabho viśvarūpaḥ / chandobhyo'dhyamṛtātsambabhūva / sa mendro medhayā sprṇotu / amṛtasya deva dhāraṇo bhūyāsam / śarīraṃ me vicarṣaṇam / jihvā

me madhumattamā / karṇābhyāṃ bhūri viśruvam / brahmaṇaḥ kośo'si medhayā pihitaḥ / śrutuṃ me gopāya

यः अधिसम्बभूव - *yaḥ adhisambabhūva* - (That Onkāra), which manifested अमृतात् छन्दोभ्यः - *amṛtāt chandobhyaḥ* - from the eternal Vedas, ऋषभः - *ṛṣabhaḥ* - is the greatest छन्दसाम् - *chandasām* - among the vedic mantras विश्वरूपः - *viśvarūpaḥ* - and is endowed with manifold forms. सः इन्द्रः - *saḥ indraḥ* - May that Lord (Onkāra) स्पृणोतु मा - *spṛṇotu mā* - strengthen me मेधया - *medhayā* - with intelligence. देव - *deva* - Oh Lord! भूयासं धारणः - *bhūyāsaṃ dhāraṇaḥ* - May I become the enjoyer अमृतस्य - *amṛtasya* - of the immortal wisdom. मे शरीरम् - *me śarīram* - May my body विचर्षणम् - *vicaṛṣaṇam* - be healthy मे जिह्वा - *me jihvā* - May my tongue मधुमत्तमा - *madhumattamā* - be very sweet. विश्रुवम् - *viśruvam* - May I listen (to the scriptures) भूरि - *bhūri* - repeatedly कर्णाभ्याम् - *karṇābhyām* - through (my ears). असि कोशः - *asi kośaḥ* - You are the abode ब्रह्मणः - *brahmaṇaḥ* - of Brahman, पिहितः - *pihitaḥ* - (which is) veiled मेधया - *medhayā* - by worldly knowledge. गोपाय - *gopāya* - May you protect श्रुतं मे - *śrutam me* - what is heard by me.

(That Onkāra), which manifested from the eternal Vedas, is the greatest among the vedic mantras and is endowed with manifold forms. May that Lord (Onkāra) strengthen me with intelligence. Oh Lord! May I become the enjoyer of the immortal wisdom. May my body be healthy. May my tongue be very sweet. May I listen (to the scriptures) repeatedly through (my ears). You are the abode of Brahman, (which is) veiled by worldly knowledge. May you protect what is heard by me.

This section gives two spiritual *sāadhanā* for refining the mind:

- *Mantra-japaḥ* – a *sāadhanā* in the form of repeating a mantra. *Japaḥ* = *āvṛittiḥ* = repetition of chanting [the seeker is asking for *jñāna योग्याता प्रप्तिḥ*]
- *Homa-sāadhanā* – a *sāadhanā* in the form of a physical ritual where oblations are offered to Agni

Upāsanā, is mental in the form of meditation (*manaḥ pradhāna*), *japaḥ* is verbally repeating the mantras and in *homa*, physical body is engaged in a ritualistic activity. Thus, we have *mānasa*, *vācika* and *kāyika* karmas.

chandas which means the Veda mantras (*chandasām madhye = veda mantreṣu madhye*). In chapter 10 also, Krishna glorifies *orikāra* in 10.25 as the greatest among the Vedic mantras.

A vedic mantra called *chandas* for two reasons:

- *chandayati* means it pleases a person; it gives happiness to a person (*prīṇayati iti chandaḥ*). If you learn the Vedas, it will give you joy.
- *chandayati* means protects (*rakṣayati*). The Vedic mantras protect you from *saṁsāra*, the worldly problems [*mantra = mananāt trāyate iti mantraḥ*].

Orikāra mantra is extracted from the Vedas just as butter is extracted from milk by the churning process. How was this done? Who extracted this *orikāra*? It is said that Brahmāji himself churned the Vedas to extract *orikāra*, the essence of the Vedas (*Veda-sārah*) by doing *tapas*, which is intellectual churning. The first three lines of the Gāyatrī mantra are the essence (*sārah*) of the three Vedas – Ṛg, Yajuh and Sāma:

- Ṛg Veda *sārah* is *tat savituḥ vareṇyam*
- Yajurveda *sārah* is *bhargodevasya dhīmahi*
- Sāma Veda *sārah* is *dhiyoyonaḥ pracodayāt*

Brahmā thought that in Kaliyuga, the people will not even have the time to chant the Gāyatrī. Therefore, he condensed it further: from the first line, he extracted *bhūḥ vyāhṛti*, from the second, *bhuvah* and from the third, he extracted *suvaḥ*.

The people have no time even for meditating on these three words because they are too busy with material pursuits. Brahmāji further condensed the *bhūḥ vyāhṛti* into letter "a" (अ) and extracted "u" (उ) from *bhuvah* and "m" (म) from *suvaḥ*. AUM (Om) is formed from the three letters (*mātras*) - a (अ) + u (उ) + m (म), the essence of the Ṛg, Yajuh and Sāma Vedas.

छन्दोभ्यः अमृतात् - *chandobhyaḥ amṛtāt* – from the eternal Vedas (*amṛtam*)

अधि संबभूव - *adhi sambabhūva* – originated or surfaced in the form of an extract (*orikārah*)

Therefore, the greatest mantra came out of the Vedas through Brahmāji's churning (*tapas*) [*chandasām ṛṣabhaḥ orikārah amṛtāt vedebhyaḥ adhisambabhūva*]. Since *orikāra*, when expanded is the Vedas, it is called *Viśvarūpaḥ*.

सः इन्द्रः - *saḥ Indraḥ* – I see that *orikāra*, as the Lord Himself. *Indraḥ* in this context is *Parameśvaraḥ* in the form of *orikāra* (*orikāra-rupa parameśvaraḥ*).

स्पृणोतु मा - *sprṇotū mā*– may He strengthen me (*balayatu*). May He make me eligible to be a Vedāntic student by giving the following qualifications:

मेधया - *medhayā* - *medhā śaktiḥ* is defined as the capacity to receive, grasp, absorb and retain (*grahaṇa-dhāraṇa-śaktiḥ*) the Vedāntic teaching. Then I will enjoy the immortal wisdom:

देवः - *devaḥ* - Oh, *Parameśvara* in the form of *orikāra*

धारणः भूयासम् - *dhāraṇaḥ bhūyāsam* – I should be the possessor (of *amṛtam*). [*dhārayati iti dhāraṇaḥ*].

अमृतस्य - *amṛtasya* – in this context *amṛtam* means self-knowledge (*ātmajñānam* or *brahmajñānam*). Literally, *amṛtam* means immortality, which means mokṣa. *Ātmajñānam* is the means for immortality (*amṛtasādhanaṁ*). By being the carrier of *ātmajñānam* (*jñānī*), I become immortal. Oh Lord, let me become a *jñānī*.

To get *ātmajñānam*, it requires preparation. It can be obtained only by consistent and systematic study under a qualified guru for a length of time. This is true with any knowledge transfer – after many years of systematic study, one becomes the carrier of knowledge in Physics, Mathematics, Chemistry etc. To listen to the guru (*śravaṇa sadhana*), all organs of the body must be fit. The seeker prays for physical fitness:

शरीरं मे विचर्षणम् - *śarīraṁ me vicarṣaṇam* (*bhavatu*): May my body be healthy and fit (*vicarṣaṇam*) [*ārogya, dṛḍha gātraṁ bhavatu*].

जिह्वा मे मधुमत्तमा - *jihvā me madhumattamā* – In addition my body being fit, my speech (*vāk indriyam*) must also be fit to conduct verbal transactions. Let my tongue

(*jihvā*) be sweet (*madhumān* – soaked in honey). *Madhumattamā* means the sweetest (organ). Let my words be sweet – noble and auspicious (*maṅgala śabdah*). Lord Krishna gives four criteria for the words to be auspicious in verse 17.15 of the Bhagavad Gītā:

- Non-hurting: Choose words that are not sharp or rude. Watch also the tone and pace of speech. If you speak very fast, you cause stress to the listener because he must concentrate hard to understand you. If the pitch is too high, it causes hurt and tension.
- Pleasant: Be positively pleasant in your expression through politeness and use encouraging, praising, positive, appreciating words. Even criticism of one's actions must be mixed with positive comments on good actions. Avoid dwelling on negatives. Appreciating words must be more in proportion to criticizing ones.
- Satyam – be truthful.
- Hitam – the words should be beneficial to speaker as well as the listener.

How do I know whether my words are sweet? People enjoy talking to me. Otherwise, people avoid me.

कर्णाभ्यां भूरि विश्रुवम् - *karṇābhyām bhūri viśruvam* – Let my ears also be fit. The first *sādhana* in learning the Vedānta is *śravaṇam* – without it, one cannot go to the next steps of *manana-nididhyāsanam*. I should use my ears primarily for *śravaṇam* of the *śāstras* (not for unimportant things). I should have sufficient *puṇya* to make it possible. Without obstacles, let me hear the (*śāstras*) repeatedly (*bhūri*).

Thus, the student prays for fitness of all his organs (*jñānendriyāṇi* and *karmendriyāṇi*) so that he can be eligible to pursue *jñāna* (*jñāna-yogyatā-prāptiḥ*).

Then the student concludes by glorifying *orikāra* once again:

ब्रह्मणः कोशः असि - *brahmaṇaḥ kośaḥ asi* – (Hey *orikāra!*) you are the abode (temple) of Brahman. You are the sheath (*kośaḥ*) that protects the residence of Brahman. *Orikāra* is like a jewel box in which the jewel of Brahman is kept. What does it mean? The all-pervading Brahman can never be contained by anything. The significance of this statement is by enquiring into the word *orikāra*, and by analysis, one can discover Brahman [*orikāra vicāra dvārā brahma prāptyum śakyate*]. Since *orikāra* is the means for discovering Brahman, it is figuratively presented as the container of Brahman. Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad extensively discusses the process of discovering Brahman through

orikāra

vicāra.

If *orikāra* is the container of Brahman, how come I am not able to discover that? For that, the student himself gives the reason. I am not able to know that because it is covered (hidden) as it were. You must “dis-cover” it. What is covering Brahman in *orikāra*? (*orikārasthita brahmaṇaḥ āvraṇaḥ kim?*). The student says:

मेधया पिहितः - *medhayā pihitaḥ* – In Śaṅkarācārya’s language, *medhā* means *laukika jñānam* or worldly knowledge (*anātma-jñānam*). [Only three lines before, we said *medhā* means *grahaṇa-dhāraṇa śakti*). Most people are only interested in *anātma-jñānam* or worldly knowledge and therefore, they are extrovert in nature. They have so busy with the worldly affairs that they have no time for enquiring into Vedānta. Thus, the extrovertedness becomes an obstacle for *Vedānta śravaṇam*. This gets worse as we materially advance more and more. *Pihitaḥ* means covered – figuratively, Brahman is covered by my extrovertedness. Hey *orikāra*, help me turn my mind inward.

Then the student concludes the *japa*:

श्रुतं मे गोपाय - *śrutam me gopāya* – (Hey *orikāra-rūpa Parameśvara*), let whatever I hear during *Vedānta śravaṇam* (*śrutam*), be preserved in my mind (*gopāya*). In *gurukulam*, the gap between two classes is short. Now the gap is so big that so many worldly things may displace what was learned in the previous class. The prayer is: let it be green in my memory when I come to the next class.

With this *japa-sādhana* is complete. It must be repeated over and over.

The next is *homa-sādhana*:

आवहन्ती वितन्वाना । कुर्वाणाचीरमात्मनः । वासां सि मम गावश्च । अन्नपाने च सर्वदा । ततो मे श्रियमावह । लोमशां पशुभिः सह स्वाहा ।
Āvahantī vitanvānā / kurvāṇācīramātmanaḥ / vāsāṅsi mama gāvāśca / annapāne ca sarvadā / tato me śriyamāvaha / lomaśāṃ paśubhiḥ saha svāhā

ततः - *tataḥ* - Thereafter, **आवह मे** - *āvaha me* - bless me with **श्रियम्** - *śriyam* - fortune **अचीरम् आवहन्ति** - *acīram āvahanti* - which will immediately bring, **वितन्वाना** -

vitānvānā - increase, **कुर्वाणा सर्वदा** - *kurvāṇā sarvadā* - (and) preserve forever **वासांसि** - *vāsāṁsi* - clothes **आत्मनः** - *ātmanaḥ* - for me, **च गावः** - *ca gāvaḥ* - as well as cattle, **अन्नपाने** - *annapāne* - food, drinks, **च लोमशाम्** - *ca lomaśām* - and woolly animals **सह पशुभिः** - *saha paśubhiḥ* - along with (other) animals **मम** - *mama* - for me.

Thereafter, bless me with fortune which will immediately bring, increase, (and) preserve forever clothes for me, as well as cattle, food, drinks, and woolly animals along with (other) animals for me.

[Note: The word `svāhā' occurring in this and the following portions indicates that this *mantra* is to be used in a *homa*].

The expression *svāhā* indicates that it is *homa-sādhanā* offering oblations to the fire. Through this *sādhanā*, the seeker is offering prayers to *orikāra-rūpa-Parameśvaraḥ*. Since the mantra begins with the word *āvahantī*, this *homa* is popularly known as *āvahantī homaḥ*. It is a very popular *homa* which is performed even these days. *Āvahantī homa* is discussed from now till the end of the fourth *anuvāka*. Through this *homa*, the seeker asks for four things:

- *Dhana-prāptiḥ* – acquisition of wealth and prosperity (now we know why this *homa* is popular)
- *Citta śuddhiḥ-prāptiḥ* – the attainment of the purity of the mind (*antaḥkaraṇa - śuddhiḥ*). Purification of the mind is not ultimate objective, but it is necessary to pursue *jñāna*. [You wash the plate so that you can eat in it – keeping it clean for use]
- *Jñāna-prāptiḥ* – Attainment of *jñāna* after achieving the pure mind.
- *Śiṣya-prāptiḥ* – after attaining *jñānam*, I should be able to share it with the other people. *Vidyā-dānam* is the greatest charity.

The order presented above is different from that in the mantra, but there is a significance to this order. In this order, the first one is always wealth, because money is required for *karma yoga anuṣṭhānam*. Karma yoga is the first *sadhana*, which is in the form of contributing to the society. *Pañca-mahā-yajña* (karma yoga) requires giving more than what you take from the society. This requires resources. The wealth must be used for dharma (*dhanam* for *dharma- anuṣṭhānartham*); not for sense pleasures (*kāma-bhogārtham*) which should be treated only as a secondary and incidental benefit of wealth.

Wealth should be spent in such a way that it leads to *citta-śuddhiḥ* – *viveka*, *vairāgya*, *śamādiśatka* and *mumuṣatvam* (*sādhana-catuṣṭaya sampatti*). It should lead to desire for the Vedānta. One should purposefully live *gṛhasthāśrama* in way that it leads him to the Vedānta. Producing children (*kula-santati-abhivṛttiḥ*) is only a secondary objective (*avāntara phalam*) of the *gṛhasthāśrama* and that too for preserving the tradition (*paramparā*). The primary objective of this *āśrama* (*ucca phalam*) is to develop the urge for *Vedānta jñānam*. When this urge comes, it is the indication that the mind is pure.

Citta śuddhiḥ is not sufficient; to gain *jñāna*, I need an opportunity to learn from a qualified guru. I pray to the Lord to give me the opportunity to fulfill the desire of *jñāna-prāptiḥ*. Once I have this knowledge, I should also be blessed with the opportunity to share this knowledge with the others to preserve the tradition (*jñāna-paramapara*). Thus, my duty is not limited to the expansion of family (*kula paramparā*), but to also preserve the *guru-śiṣya paramparā*.

The teacher starts with

ततो मे श्रियम् आवह - *tato me śriyam āvaha* – Oh Lord, bring me Śridevi (Lakshmi Devi). May she come to my house. May prosperity come to me. *Tataḥ* means thereafter. Then the question arises: whereafter? We should never take a Vedic statement for granted. Śaṅkarācārya tells us to dwell on the word *tataḥ*. He gives a very significant observation that money is a two-edged sword: money can lead to spiritual growth if properly used, but can lead to spiritual destruction if it is improperly handled. As they say, money is a good servant, but a very bad master. I should decide whether money is my servant or master. To make money my servant, I should acquire the knowledge of *dharma-śāstra* (*dharma-śāstra-jñānam*). I should have the knowledge of morality, ethics and the righteous way of living. It is given very clearly in *dharmaśāstra* as *vidhi-niṣeda*, how money should and should not be used.

Per Śaṅkarācārya, one should never ask for money before knowing *dharmaśāstra*. Before asking for money, I should ask for *medhā* – the knowledge of *dharmaśāstra*. That is why in our tradition, in the past, our parents never gave us pocket money. The parents now think that they are expressing love by giving the children large pocket money. Children do not have discrimination and there is a risk that they will spend it on the wrong things. This is evident from alcohol and drug problems in residential

universities. In *gurukulams*, the students are not allowed to touch the money. They can earn only after learning the *dharmaśāstra*. Therefore, Śaṅkarācārya says *tataḥ* means after developing maturity through the knowledge of *dharmśāstra* (*dharmajñāna-anantaram* or *medhā-prāpti-anantaram*). For this, material education is not enough; the student requires education on religion and values also.

He then lists things that are indicators of wealth (lest Lakshmi Devi comes empty handed!). I should have the capability to acquire them and expand the wealth. Then, I should also be able to preserve and retain it (Tamil: *azhiyātha selvam* – அழியாத செல்வம்).

Acquisition→expansion→preservation

आवहन्ती - *āvahantī*—acquisition of material wealth

वितन्वाना - *vitānvānā* – the expansion of the material wealth

कुर्वाणा सर्वदा – *kurvāṇā sarvadā* – it should remain with me all the time (preservation)

What material things do I want Lakshmi Devi to bring with her?

आत्मनः – *ātmanaḥ* - for me (and my family)

वासांसि – *vāsāṁsi* – plenty of clothing

गावः च - *gāvaḥ ca* – cattle – this represented wealth including gold, money real estate, vehicles (*vāhanam*) etc.

अन्नपानम् - *annapānam* – food and water (drink)

When should Lakshmi Devi come?

अचीरम् – May she come immediately

It should be remembered that the seeker is a cultured person (*dharmapradhāna puruṣaḥ*) and he is asking for this wealth for dharma and then mokṣa (*kāma* is subservient).

Perhaps these people lived in cold places and so they required warm clothing in winter:

लोमशां पशुभिः सह - *lomaśāṃ paśubhiḥ saha* – May we have plenty of wooly animals (like sheep so that we can get woolen garments).

In summary, may I become prosperous.

It is now clear that the Vedas never condemned wealth. Some, including the ones in the Vedic culture, criticize money as evil (*māyā* etc.). This amounts to disrespecting Lakshmi Devi. This type of criticism is borrowed from other immature cultures. Vedic culture is very mature. It says that money is important, but you should know how to handle it. In fact, big *āśramas* can run only if the wealthy patronize them. Without money, no temple or *veda pāṭhaśāla* can run. The three *āśramas* that don't make money – *brahmacaryai*, *vānaprastha* and *sannyāsa* – need money for living and maintenance. They depend upon *gṛhasthāśrama* for support. So, the *gṛhasthas* must earn plenty of money, but must also share the wealth to patronize the other *āśramas*. Earning is never criticized, but hoarding of excessive wealth is. This mantra is the source (*pramāṇa*) for this Vedantic concept.

Other notes:

The external wealth should lead to internal purity, which in turn should lead to knowledge, which in turn should lead to teaching.

आ मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । वि मायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । प्र मायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । द मायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । श मायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा । यशो जनेऽसानि स्वाहा । श्रेयान्वस्यसोऽसानि स्वाहा । तं त्वा भाग प्रविशानि स्वाहा । स मा भाग प्रविश स्वाहा । तस्मिन्सहस्रशाखे । नि भगाहं त्वयि मृजे स्वाहा । यथापः प्रवता यन्ति । यथा मासा अहर्जरम् । एवं मां ब्रह्मचारिणः । धातरायन्तु सर्वतः स्वाहा । प्रतिवेशोऽसि प्र मा भाहि प्र मा पद्यस्व ॥

ā mā yantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā / vi māyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā / pra māyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā / da māyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā / śa māyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svāhā / yaśo jane'sāni svāhā / śreyānvasyaso'sāni svāhā / taṃ tvā bhāga praviśāni svāhā / sa mā bhāga praviśa svāhā / tasmīnsahasraśākhē / ni bhagāhaṃ tvayi mṛje svāhā / yathāpaḥ pravatā yanti / yathā māsa aharjaram / evaṃ māṃ brahmacāriṇaḥ / dhātarāyantu sarvataḥ svāhā / prativeśo'si pra mā bhāhi pra mā padyasva

ब्रह्मचारिणः - *brahmacāriṇaḥ* - May students आयन्तु मा - *āyantu mā* - come to me.

ब्रह्मचारिणः - *brahmacāriṇaḥ* - May students आयन्तु मा - *āyantu mā* - come to me वि -

vi - with varied interests. ब्रह्मचारिणः - *brahmacāriṇaḥ* - May students आयन्तु मा - *āyantu mā* - come to me प्र - *pra* - with intelligence. ब्रह्मचारिणः - *brahmacāriṇaḥ* - May students आयन्तु - *āyantu* - come to me द - *da* - with sense-control. ब्रह्मचारिणः - *brahmacāriṇaḥ* - May students आयन्तु - *āyantu* - come to me श - *śa* - with mind-control. असानि यशः - *asāni yaśa* - May I be well-known (as a teacher) जने - *jane* - among the people. असानि श्रेयान् - *asāni śreyān* - May I be the greatest वस्यसः - *vasyasah* - among the wealthy. भग - *bhaga* - Oh Lord! प्रविशानि - *praviśāni* - May I merge तं त्वा - *taṁ tvā* - into You. भग - *bhaga* - Oh Lord! सः - *sah* - May You प्रविश मा - *praviśa mā* - merge into me. भग - *bhaga* - Oh Lord! अहं निमृजे - *ahaṁ nimrje* - May I purify myself तस्मिन् त्वयि - *tasmin tvayi* - in You सहस्रशाखे - *sahasraśākhe* - who have thousands of forms. धातः - *dhātaḥ* - Oh Lord! ब्रह्मचारिणः - *brahmacāriṇaḥ* - May students आयन्तु माम् - *āyantu mām* - come to me सर्वतः - *sarvataḥ* - from all directions. एवं यथा - *evam yathā* - (May students come to me) just as आपः यन्ति - *āpaḥ yanti* - water rush प्रवता - *pravatā* - downwards यथा - *yathā* - (and) just as मासाः - *māsāḥ* - the months (rush towards) अहर्जरम् - *aharjaram* - the (next) year. असि प्रतिवेशः - *asi prativeśaḥ* - (Oh Lord!) You are (like) a rest-house. प्रभाहि - *prabhāhi* - Reveal Yourself मा - *mā* - unto me प्रपद्यस्व मा - *prapadyasva mā* - (and) enter into me.

May students come to me. May students come to me with varied interests. May students come to me with intelligence. May students come to me with sense-control. May students come to me with mind-control. May I be well-known (as a teacher) among the people. May I be the greatest among the wealthy. Oh Lord! May I merge into You. Oh Lord! May You merge into me. Oh Lord! May I purify myself in You who have thousands of forms. Oh Lord! May students come to me from all directions. (May students come to me) just as water rush downwards (and) just as the months (rush towards) the (next) year. (Oh Lord!) You are (like) a rest-house. Reveal Yourself unto me (and) enter into me.

In this portion, the student is praying for *śiṣya-prāptiḥ*. He is not ready to become a guru yet, but he is planning for the future. Oh Lord, once I become knowledgeable, the *śiṣyas* (disciples) should come to me from all directions. This is not for earning money from the *śiṣyas*, but to fulfill the *ṛṇam* (debt) to the *ṛṣis*.

ब्रह्मचारिणः आयन्तु मा - *brahmacāriṇaḥ āyantu mā* (*ā + yantu = āyantu* - should be read together) - Let many *brahmacāris* come towards me. *Brahmacāri* means *śiṣya*. Brahma means Veda and *cāri* means one who leads a disciplined life of a student (*ācarati iti cāri*). One of the primary disciplines of a disciple is to do homework. Vedas prescribe other disciplines – not engage excessively in entertainment, not being excessively extroverted, not being obsessed with decorating physical body (*deha-alarikāra*) etc. When he shows excessive interest in the in the physical body (*sthūla śarīram*), he neglects the subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīram*). A *brahmacāri* follows the disciplines to install the Vedic knowledge in his heart (*brahmārtham (vedārtham) vratam iti carati brahmacāri*). *Brahmacāri* does not mean an unmarried person. In the past, the students were unmarried and therefore, *brahmacāri* got its secondary meaning. The primary meaning is one who is a dedicated and committed student.

स्वाहा - *svāhā* – the seeker is offering oblations as he is chanting.

What type of *brahmacāri*? The qualifications of the student are mentioned here:

वि मा आयन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः - *vi mā āyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ* – Let the student that comes to me have varied interests to study different subjects (*vi* - with varied interests – *vividha kāmanāvantaḥ mā āyantu*). Only if the student has interest in various subjects can the teacher share the knowledge in those subjects. In addition to the Bhagavad Gītā and the Upaniṣads, he can teach other subjects such as *tarka śāstra*, *mīmāṃsā śāstra*, *vyākaraṇa śāstra* etc. [*mā* = towards me. There is another meaning for *mā* = not; this is the opposite of what the student wants].

प्रमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः - *pramāyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ* – *pra* means *prajñāvantaḥ* – with intelligence. Let the intelligent students come to me (not the dull students). The intelligence of the students is classified into three:

- *uttama* or superior, who absorbs everything that he is taught. The teacher is also inspired to teach. He is like camphor that catches fire quickly (Tamil: *karpūra buddhi* – கற்பூர புத்தி)
- *madhyama* or mediocre, who is slower to understand, but once he does, he retains the knowledge. He requires nurturing like the piece of charcoal that takes time to catch fire (Tamil: *kari buddhi* – கரி புத்தி).

- *adhama* or inferior, who neither can absorb nor retain the teaching. He may even make his teacher forget the Vedānta! He is like the stem of a banana tree, which not only will not catch fire, but also will put it out (Tamil: vāzhaittanḍu buddhi - வாழைத்தண்டு புத்தி).

दमायन्तु - *damāyantu* – *da* means of *dāntāḥ* – the ones who possess sense control (*damaḥ*), so that they are able to concentrate on the lectures in the class. He is asking for students who are *dama guṇavantāḥ*.

Once a student in a Math class was not paying attention. He was looking at the roof of the next building where a rat was going from one class to another. The rat almost entered a class – only his tail was sticking out. The mathematics teacher asked, "Did it enter (your head)?" The student replied, "Almost!" referring to the rat.

शमायन्तु - *śamāyantu* – *śamaḥ* means mind control. Let the mind of the student be focused with good attention span so that he does not get distracted mentally

With this, the *śiṣya-prāpti-prārthanā* concludes. Now the seeker returns to the previous topic:

यशो जने असानि स्वाहा - *yaśo jane asāni svāhā* – I should be well-known in the society (*yaśaḥ* means famous) so that the students will come from different directions. Let me be (*asāni*) a famous *ācārya* among people (*jane*).

श्रेयान् वस्यसः असानि स्वाहा - *śreyān vasyasaḥ asāni svāhā* – Let me the wealthiest person in the society. He is inviting students from all directions to whom, per our tradition, he must give knowledge (*vidyā*) free of cost. *Gurudakṣinā* is compulsory for the student, but the teacher must never expect it for discharging his duty. The teacher should be able to provide for every need of the student in this residential system (*gurukulavāsa*). He should have enough wealth to build and sustain the *āśrama* for the large number of students that he is praying for (*vasīyān* means wealthy).

The seeker here is praying for wealth to provide for his students and not for entertainment. The society must understand the necessity of such system. In the past, the society recognized the need for such infrastructure and provided for them. The guru focused on teaching the students instead of worrying about the wealth to

maintain the infrastructure. Bright students from all over the world are attracted to the US universities because research grants are available. The government and the private institutions support them with grants. One who spends time on Sarasvati should not worry whether Lakshmi will be there or not. The United States bags most of the Nobel Prizes because the society values Sarasvati and ensures that Lakshmi is there. The seeker is praying: may Lakshmi Devi come to me so that I can dedicate my time in pursuit of Sarasvati.

The purpose of this prayer is to ultimately reach the following goal:

भग – *bhaga* – O Lord!

तं त्वा प्रविशानि - *taṁ tvā praviśāni* – I want to ultimately merge into you; I seek to become one with you (*jīvātma-paramātma-aikyam*). *Aikyam* can be attained only through *jñānam*. This is the uniqueness of our culture: our society values *jñāna*. The word *Bhāratam* means that one that revels in the light of knowledge: *bhā* means light, which means knowledge and *ratam* means reveling or committed to. *Rata* is derived from the root *ram*, which means to revel. All our activities are geared towards gaining this knowledge: wealth is earned and spent for this purpose. Getting married is not just for producing children; it is for knowledge. In the *Sandhyāvandana mantra*, we remind ourselves – *maheraṇāya cakṣase* – O Lord, I want that ultimate knowledge. We do know all the qualifications required, but we call it the duty of *Īśvara* to supply us with those qualifications: *uśatīriva mātaraḥ, tasmā araṅgamāmavaḥ, yasyakṣyāya jinvatā, āpo janayatācanaḥ* – just as the mother feeds the child at the right time, O Lord, you should feed me with *viveka* (discrimination), *vairāgya* (dispassion), *ṣaṭka-sampatti* (discipline) and *mumuṣatvam* (desire) so that I can ultimately gain (*mahate ramaṇīyāya cakṣase*) *ātma-jñānam*. Therefore, merger into Lord means *jñāna-praptiḥ*.

Not only I should merge into you; you should merge into me.

भग - *bhaga* – O Lord!

मा प्रविश - *mā praviśa* – may You enter into me so that we become one. When the river flows towards the ocean to merge with it, the latter also flows towards the former to meet it; that is why the river water near the ocean is salty. The ocean also merges with the river. If I go to Bhagavan, He will come to me.

Now the student is asking for *cittaśuddhi* because he knows that *jñāna* is not possible without it. Purification of the mind means removal of the impurity. The physical impurity is removed by dipping in the river water (in the olden days, it was common to take a dip in the river). To purify the mind, one must dip into the thought of the Lord – *Īśvara smaraṇam*. The *vaiṣṇavas* are called *āzhvārgal* (Tamil) because *āzhvardal* means dipping - they dip themselves in the thought of the Lord. Here the student makes a beautiful metaphor. A river has many tributaries. You can dip in any of them and purify yourself. God is one, but you can purify yourself in any of His manifestations – Viṣṇu, Śiva, Lakṣmi, Sarasvatī and any other of the infinite forms. Therefore, he says:

सहस्रशाखे तस्मिन् - *sahasraśākhē tasmin* – You have thousands of branches or tributaries (forms). For example, Krishna has many forms - *kutti* Krishna, Radhe Krishna, *Gītōpadeśa* Krishna etc. Let me worship you in any form.

नि भग अहम् - *ni bhaga aham* – Hey Bhagavan, I dip myself in you.

नि मृजे - *ni mṛje* – let me purify myself (wash my sins by worshipping you).

There is an *āvaṇi avittam saṅkalpa*:

मानसं वाचिकं पापं कर्मणा समुपार्जितं श्रीरामस्मरणेनैव व्यपोहती न संशयः ।

Mānasam vācikaṁ pāpam karmaṇā samupārjitaṁ srīrāmasmaraṇaenaiva vyapohati na saṁśayaḥ

I have accumulated *mānasa*, *vācika* and *kāyika* (actions) *pāpams* and I remove it by the mere remembrance of the Lord (Sri Rama).

We now have all the four boons: *dhana-prāpti*, *cittaśuddhi-prāpti*, *jñāna-prāpti* and *śiṣya-prāpti*. Now the prayer concludes by asking again for *śiṣya-prāpti*. This person is very interested in teaching because it is the only profession for a Brahmin. *Puruṣasūktam* says: *brāhmaṇosya mukhamāsīt* - which means that the Brāhmaṇa is the mouth of the Vedic society. Therefore, he prays for excellence in his profession, i.e. he wants to excel as a *karma brāhmaṇa*.

How should the students come? He uses an example:

यथा आपः प्रवतायन्ति - *yathā āpaḥ pravatānti* – Just as the waters gush down a slope, the students must come to me from all directions (*pravatā* = slope)

यथा मासाः अहर्जरम् - *yathā māsāḥ aharjaram* – just as months (*māsāḥ*) rush to meet the next year (*aharjaraḥ*). Before we blink our eyes, the time is moving.

एवम् - *evam* - In the same way,

ब्रह्मचारिणः माम् (आयन्तु) - *brahmacāriṇaḥ mām (āyantu)* – may students come to me

सर्वतः - *sarvataḥ* – from all directions.

The only qualification required is the interest in knowledge. He does not say whether the student should be a *brahmacāri*, *gṛhastha*, a *brāhmaṇa* or a *kṣatriya*; no specification is given. There is no caste, age, or gender specification. I will teach whoever is interested in knowledge.

धातः - *dhātaḥ* - O Lord! The Lord is called *dhātaḥ* because he is *karmaphala dātā* – the one who gives appropriate *karmaphalam* to the appropriate *jīva* at the appropriate time and place. We must remember that *orikāra rūpa Parameśvara* is being addressed here.

This seeker has kept a long journey in mind – it takes time to obtain wealth; then it takes a long time to achieve purification of the mind; then, he must find a guru to get *jñāna (śravaṇa-manana-nididhyāsanam)*. The path is difficult and full of ups and down. The student is somewhat diffident and wonders if he can achieve his goal. He likens the Lord to a rest house, where he can find some relief from his mental and intellectual fatigue. With that, he hopes that his diffidence will be removed and he will be refreshed and rejuvenated to continue to the next next lap of the journey. Therefore, he says

प्रतिवेशः असि - *prativeśaḥ asi* – you are like a rest house. By this, the student indicates when we get frustrated in the learning process, bhakti (devotion) can give us the push. Personal effort (*puruṣātha*) is no doubt important, but despite this effort, frustration is bound to come because of attachments and aversions (*rāga* and *dveṣa*).

Rāga is a powerful obstacle, and *dveṣa* is still more powerful. Along with these, the other negative emotions such as anger, jealousy etc. stall our progress and cloud our mind. When such frustration comes, the only way out is to surrender to the Lord. In verse 18.58 of the Gītā, Lord Krishna says:

मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहङ्काराद् न श्रोष्यसि विनङ्क्षयसि ॥ १८.५८ ॥
maccittah sarvadurgāṇi matprasādāt tariṣyasi |
atha cēttvamahaṅkāṛād na śrōṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi || 18.58 ||

With (your) mind (fixed) on Me, you shall cross over all obstacles by MY grace.
But if you do not listen due to egoism, you will perish.

When you feel diffident, surrender to the Lord. You will gain the confidence that you will get mokṣa in this janma itself because you have the support of the Lord. This confidence is not because of arrogance, but because of bhakti. The bhakta is confident because Lord Krishna says in verse 9.22 of the Gītā:

अनन्याश्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥ ९.२२ ॥
ananyāścintayantō māṁ yē janāḥ paryupāsate |
tēṣāṁ nityābhīyuktānām yōgākṣēmam vahāmyaham || 9.22 ||

(Those) people who see Me as non-different from them offer worship (by) dwelling on Me. I take care of the yoga and kshema of those eversteadfast ones.

Therefore, a true bhakta never speaks pessimistically. When the seeker feels pessimistic, he must regain his confidence by autosuggestion: "I will be able to get mokṣa." The powerful Lord will give the push.

मा प्र भाहि - *mā pra bhāhi* – May you reveal yourself to me. Oh Lord, I will do my part and you should do yours. I am tired of this journey. I cannot walk anymore. You must do the rest for me.

मा प्र पद्यस्व - *mā pra padysva* – you come towards me. I have travelled this far and you must do your part to meet me. This is only a figurative expression because

Bhagavan is all-pervading and so, there is no question of physical travel. With this, the student seeks help in understanding. Merger into Bhagavan is merely dropping the notion of distance between Him and me. It is an intellectual process in which I should drop the notion and I will reach Bhagavan. This notion is dropped clear knowledge that I am Brahman (*aham brahma asmi*). The expression, "Come near me" means help me understand *aham brahma asmi* clearly.

With this *homa sādhanā* as well as the fourth *anuvāka* is complete.

Anuvāka 5

भूर्भुवः सुवरिति वा एतास्त्रिस्रो व्याहृतयः । तासामु ह स्मैतां चतुर्थीम् । महाचमस्यः प्रवेदयते । मह इति । तद् ब्रह्म । स आत्मा । अङ्गान्यन्या देवताः ।

bhūrbhuvah suvariti vā etāstisro vyāhṛtayaḥ / tāsāmu ha smaitāṃ caturthīm / mähācamasyaḥ pravedayate / maha iti / tad brahma / sa ātmā / aṅgānyanyā devatāḥ

भूः भुवः सुवः इति - *bhūḥ bhuvah suvaḥ iti* - *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah*, and *suvaḥ* - एताः वै - *etāḥ vai* - these are indeed तिस्रः व्याहृतयः - *tisraḥ vyāhṛtayaḥ* - the three *vyāhṛtis*. उ ह स्म - *u ha sma* - Verily, तासाम् - *tāsām* - along with them, महाचमस्य प्रवेदयते - *mähācamasya pravedayate* - *Mähācamasya* reveals एतां चतुर्थीम् - *etāṃ caturthīm* - the following fourth (*vyāhṛtī*) इति महः - *iti mahaḥ* - which is *mahaḥ*. तद् ब्रह्म - *tad brahma* - That is (to be meditated upon as) *Hiraṇyagarbha*. सः आत्मा - *saḥ ātmā* - He is the *ātmā*. अन्याः देवताः - *anyāḥ devatāḥ* - All other gods अङ्गानि - *aṅgāni* - are (His) limbs.

Bhūḥ, bhuvah, and suvaḥ - these are indeed the three vyāhṛtis. Verily, along with them, Mähācamasya reveals the following fourth (vyāhṛtī) which is mahaḥ. That is (to be meditated upon as) Hiraṇyagarbha. He is the ātmā. All other gods are (His) limbs.

In this *anuvāka*, another *upāsana* is introduced. This second *upāsana* called *vyāhṛti upāsana* which is like *samhitopāsana* in several respects. In *samhitopāsana*, we use *ālambanams* (symbols) associated with the combination of letters: *pūrvarūpam*, *uttararūpam*, *sandhiḥ* and *sandhānam*. We then invoke various objects of meditation using these *ālambanams*. In the *vyāhṛti upāsana*, we will use *vyāhṛti* mantras as *ālambanams*. Four *vyāhṛtī* mantras – *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah*, *suvaḥ* and *mahaḥ* - are introduced, upon which, four objects will be meditated. They are called *vyāhṛti* mantras for two reasons:

- Brahmāji uttered them when he extracted the essence of the Vedas. As discussed in the commentary on Chapter 10 of the Bhagavad Gītā, he condensed three Vedas – Ṛg, Yajuḥ and Sāma – into one line each of the Gāyatrī mantra. He then condensed it further: the first line into *bhūḥ vyāhṛti*, the second into *bhuvah vyāhṛti* and the third into *suvaḥ vyāhṛti*. He further condensed these into "a" (अ), "u" (उ) and "ma" (म) to make it *aum* (Om). Therefore, this condensation was done by Brahmaji during *tapas* and because he uttered it first, they got the name *vyāhṛiti* – *vyāhṛ* means to utter (*uccāraṇam*) – *brahmaṇā vyāhṛta iti vyāhṛtiḥ*.
- The second meaning is the extension of the first meaning. Since these condensed Veda mantras were uttered by Brahmāji, they are extremely sacred. Therefore, these mantras can remove *pāpams*. The second meaning of *vyāhṛ* means to eliminate or destroy – *vyāharati pāpāni iti vyāhṛti*.

Later, the fourth one *mahaḥ* was also added. These four *vyāhṛti* mantras will be used as symbols to invoke four objects in this *vyāhṛti upāsana*.

भूः भुवः सुवः इति वा एताः तिस्रो व्याहृतयः - *bhūḥ bhuvah suvaḥ iti vā etāḥ tisro vyāhṛtayaḥ* - the three *vyāhṛtis* are *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah* and *suvaḥ*. The word *vā* indicates that they are well known in the Vedic tradition. It is known in the *karma kāṇḍa* – everything is purified in the rituals by sprinkling water and uttering the mantra *bhūrbhuvah suvaḥ*. When we do *pariṣecanam* before eating the food, we say this mantra. The Gāyatrī mantra has these three words. These mantras are known in Karma, *upāsana* and *jñāna kāṇḍa*. Therefore, the word *vā* means *prasiddhaḥ* (famous). The real word is *vai*, but it becomes *vā* in *sandhi*.

तासाम् उ ह स्म एतां चाथुर्थीम् - *tāsām u ha sma etām caturthīm* – along with the three *vyāhṛti* mantras, the following fourth one was revealed – *u*, *ha*, and *sma* are particles revealing *prasiddhi* (fame). In *sandhyāvandanam*, we have *saptavyāhṛtiḥ* – in *praṇāyāma* mantra, there are *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah*, *suvaḥ*, *mahaḥ*, *janaḥ*, *tapaḥ* and *satyam*. The fourth *vyāhṛti* was discovered by

माहाचमस्यः - *māhācamasyaḥ* – *ṛṣi* named Māhācamasya - he is called that because he was the son of Mahācamas. Mahācamas means the one who used big ladles when performing the *yāgas* (*camas* – the spoon used in the *yāgas*) – this means he performed big rituals. By naming the *ṛṣi*, born in the *paramparā* of great Mahācamas, the glory of the *vyāhṛti* mantra is magnified.

प्रवेदयते - *pravedayate* – (such a great *ṛṣi*) revealed (the fourth *vyāhṛti*).

Now we have four *ālabhānam*s upon which we must invoke four objects – one for each *ālabhānam*. In the group of four objects to be studied, there is one main and three subordinate objects. In Sanskrit, the main object is called *anḡī* and the subordinate is called *anḡaḥ* – thus, there one *anḡī* and three *anḡas*. Of these four, the main one is the most glorious. Furthermore, the glory of the main object pervades that of the subordinate objects. The power of the subordinate is derived from the main just as the power of the cabinet ministers are derived from the prime minister. The prime minister's support is required for the other ministers to retain their posts. Therefore, we can say that the prime minister pervades the subordinate ministers. Of the four *vyāhṛtis*, one will symbolize the main and the others, the subordinates. In a public function, the chair of the main dignitary is generally, big and special. The Upaniṣad chooses *mahaḥ* (*mahovyāhṛti*) as the main because the name itself indicates that it is a great one (*mahān*). The term *mahaḥ* is derived from the root *mah*, which means to be worshipped or adored.

महः इति - *mahaḥ iti* – *mahaḥ*, the fourth *vyāhṛti* is the main one.

तत् ब्रह्म - *tat brahma* – that is the greatest one (the glorious one) – because it will symbolize the greatest object of meditation

सः आत्मा- *saḥ ātmā* – it is the pervading one (in this context, should not be interpreted as *saccidānanda ātmā*). The *mahovyāhṛti*, the main object pervades the other *vyāhṛtis*.

अङ्गानि अन्याः देवताः - *aṅgāni anyāḥ devatāḥ* – all the other objects of meditation represented by *bhūḥ*, *bhuvāḥ* and *suvaḥ* are only subordinates. They enjoy the (borrowed) power only because the head is willing to delegate the (intrinsic) power to them

Now that we have defined the symbols, we are ready for the *upāsanās*.

भूरिति वा अयं लोकः । भुव इत्यन्तरिक्षम् । सुवरित्यसौ लोकः । मह इत्यादित्यः । आदित्येन वाव सर्वे लोका महीयन्ते ।

bhūrīti vā ayaṃ lokaḥ / bhuva ityantarikṣam / suvarityasau lokaḥ / maha ityādityaḥ / ādityena vāva sarve lokā mahīyante

भूः वै - *bhūḥ vai* - Bhūḥ इति अयं लोकः - *iti ayam lokaḥ* - is (to be meditated upon as) this world. **भुवः** - *buvaḥ* - Bhuvaḥ इति अन्तरिक्षम् - *iti antarikṣam* - is (to be meditated upon as) the interspace. **सुवः** - *suvaḥ* - Suvaḥ इति असौ लोकः - *iti asau lokaḥ* - is (to be meditated upon as) the other world. **महः** - *mahaḥ* - Mahaḥ इति आदित्यः - *iti ādityaḥ* - is (to be meditated upon) the sun. **आदित्येन वाव** - *ādityena vāva* - By the sun alone, **सर्वे लोकाः** - *sarve lokāḥ* - all the worlds **महीयन्ते** - *mahīyante* - are glorified.

Bhūḥ is (to be meditated upon as) this world. Bhuvaḥ is (to be meditated upon as) the interspace. Suvaḥ is (to be meditated upon as) the other world. Mahaḥ is (to be meditated upon) the sun. By the sun alone, all the worlds are glorified.

Four objects in the form of *lokas* that will be invoked in the *vyāhṛtis*. Since they are taken from the field of *lokas*, they are called *adhiloka vyāhṛti upāsanās*. [In *saṁhitopāsanā*, we saw *adhiloka*, *adhijyautiṣam*, *adhividyam*, *adhiprajam* and *adhyātmam*).

भूरिति वा अयं लोकः - *bhūrīti vā ayam lokaḥ* – *bhūḥ loka* will be seated on the “first chair” as *bhuḥ vyāhṛti*. *Ayam lokaḥ* is this world in which we exist.

भुवः इति अन्तरिक्षम् - *bhuvaḥ iti antarikṣam* – *bhuvaloka*, the intermediary *loka* will be invoked in the *bhuvaḥ vyāhṛti mantrah*.

सुवः इति असौ लोकः - *suvaḥ iti asau lokaḥ* – *asau lokaḥ* means the world that is far away. Thus, *suvarlokaḥ* is the same as *svargalokaḥ* which is invoked upon the *suvaḥ vyāhṛti*.

महः इति आदित्यः - *mahaḥ iti ādityaḥ* – the sun is invoked upon *mahovyāhṛti*. We justify the sun to be the superior object because,

आदित्येन वाव सर्वे लोका महीयन्ते - *ādityena vāva sarve lokā mahīyante* – all the worlds are functioning because of the grace of the sun. Even astronomically, all the planets are surviving only because of the sun. The earth’s glory is derived from the sun.

Krishna says verse 15.13 of the Gītā that the pervading light from the sun sustains all living beings.

In summary, in this *adhiloka vyāhṛti upāsanā*, *bhūloka*, *bhuvārloka*, *suvarloka* and *mahārloka* are invoked on the four *vyāhṛtis*. Sūrya is the *aṅgī* and the other *lokas* are *aṅgas*.

भूरिति वा अग्निः । भुव इति वायुः । सुवरित्यादित्यः । मह इति चन्द्रमाः । चन्द्रमसा वाव सर्वाणि ज्योतींषि महीयन्ते ॥

bhūrīti vā agniḥ / bhuva iti vāyuḥ / suvarityādityaḥ / maha iti candramāḥ / candramasā vāva sarvāṇi jyotīṃṣi mahiyante

भूः इति वै अग्निः – *bhūḥ iti vai agniḥ* - *Bhūḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the fire. **भुवः इति वायुः** – *bhuvaḥ iti vāyuḥ* - *Bhuvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the air. **सुवः इति आदित्यः** – *suvaḥ iti ādityaḥ* - *Suvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the sun. **महः इति चन्द्रमाः** – *mahaḥ iti candramāḥ* *Mahaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the moon. **चन्द्रमसा वाव** – *candramasā vāva* - By the moon alone **सर्वाणि ज्योतींषि** – *sarvāṇi jyotīṃṣi* - all the luminaries **महीयन्ते** – *mahiyante* - are glorified.

Bhūḥ is (to be meditated upon as) the fire. *Bhuvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the air. *Suvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the sun. *Mahaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the moon. By the moon alone all the luminaries are glorified.

Four members are selected from the field of the *devatās*. We shall call it *adhideva vyāhṛti upāsanā*.

भूरिति वा अग्निः - *bhūrīti vā agniḥ* – *Agni devatā* is invoked in *bhūḥ vyāhṛti*

भुवः इति वायुः - *bhuvaḥ iti vāyuḥ* – *Vāyu devatā* is invoked in *bhuvovyāhṛti*

सुवः इति आदित्यः - *suvaḥ iti ādityaḥ* – *Āditya devatā* is invoked in *suvoḥvyāhṛti*

मह इति चन्द्रमाः - *maha iti candramāḥ* – *Candra devatā* is invoked in *mahovyāhṛti*. Why did we choose Candra? The Upaniṣad says

चन्द्रमसा वाव सर्वाणि ज्योतींषि महीयन्ते - *candramasā jyotīṃṣi mahiyante* – all these *devatās* are glorious only because of *Candra devatā*. Thus, *Candra devatā* is the main object and the others are subordinates.

This leads to a legitimate question: how can Candra *devatā* bless Sūrya when we know that Candra's light (moonlight) is borrowed from Sūrya (the sun)? The answer is: we are referring to the *devatās* being invoked and not the physical objects. We saw in Tattva Bodha that Candra presides over the mind (*antaḥkaraṇam*), while the other *devatās* preside over the sense organs of knowledge (*jñānendriyam*) and organs of action (*karmendriyam*) – Agni presides over speech (*vāg indriyam* – a *karmendriyam*), Vāyu over the sense of touch (*sparsā indriyam* – a *jñānendriyam*) and Āditya presides over eyesight (*caḥsurindriyam* – a *jñānendriyam*). [Puruṣasūktam: *candramāmanso jātaḥ; caḥsoḥ suryo ajāyata mukhāindrasyagniśca prāṇāt vayurajāyata*]. Since Candra presides over the mind, it is more powerful than the sense organs because the latter cannot function without the blessing of the former. In meditation, the mind is active while the sense organs are not. When the mind does not back a sense organ that sense organ does not function. For example, if your mind is elsewhere, you don't hear the lecture in the class. Thus, from the *devatā* angle, Candra is the *arigī* and the other *devatās* are *arigas*. Therefore, there is no defect in the Vedic teaching.

भूरिति वा ऋचः । भुव इति सामानि । सुवरिति यजूषि । मह इति ब्रह्म । ब्रह्मणा वाव सर्वे वेदा महीयन्ते ।

bhūrīti vā ṛcaḥ / bhuva iti sāmāni / suvarīti yajūṣi / maha iti brahma / brahmaṇā vāva sarve vedā mahīyante

भूः इति वै ऋचः – *bhūḥ iti vai ṛcaḥ* - *Bhūḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the *Ṛgveda*. **भुवः इति सामानि** – *bhuvaḥ iti sāmāni* - *Bhuvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) the *Sāmaveda*. **सुवः इति यजूषि** – *suvaḥ iti yajūṣi* - *Suvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) *Yajurveda*. **महः इति ब्रह्म** – *mahaḥ iti brahma* - *Mahaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) *Oṅkāra*. **ब्रह्मणा वाव** – *brahmaṇā vāva* - By *Oṅkāra* alone, **सर्वे वेदाः** – *sarve vedāḥ* - all the Vedas **महीयन्ते** – *mahīyante* - are glorified.

Bhūḥ is (to be meditated upon as) the Ṛgveda. Bhuvaḥ is (to be meditated upon as) the Sāmaveda. Suvaḥ is (to be meditated upon as) Yajurveda. Mahaḥ is (to be meditated upon as) oṅkāra. By oṅkāra alone, all the Vedas are glorified.

The third *vyāhṛti upāsanā* is described here. These four objects belong to the field of the Vedas. So, this can be called the *adhi-veda vyāhṛti upāsanā*.

भूः इति वै ऋचः - *bhūḥ iti vai ṛcaḥ* – Rg mantra is invoked in *bhūḥ vyāhṛti*

भुवः इति सामानि - *bhuvaḥ iti sāmāni* – sāma mantra is invoked in *bhuvaḥ vyāhṛti*

सुवः इति यजूषि - *suvaḥ iti yajūḥṣi* – Yajur Veda is invoked in *suvovyāhṛti*

महः इति ब्रह्म - *mahaḥ iti brahma* – in this context, brahma means *onkāraḥ*. *Onkāra* is the greatest because it consists of the essence of all the Vedas. *Onkāra* pervades all the Vedas.

ब्रह्मणा वाव सर्वे वेदाः महीयन्ते - *brahmaṇā vāva sarve vedāḥ mahīyante* – all the Vedas are glorified because of *Onkāra*.

भूरिति वै प्राणः । भुव इत्यपानः । सुवरिति व्यानः । मह इत्यन्नम् । अन्नेन वाव सर्वे प्राणा महीयन्ते ।
bhūrīti vai prāṇaḥ / bhuva ityapānaḥ / suvarīti vyānaḥ / maha ityannam / annena vāva sarve prāṇā mahīyante

भूः इति वै प्राणः - *bhūḥ iti vai prāṇaḥ* - *Bhūḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) *prāṇa*. **भुवः**

इति अपानः - *bhuvaḥ iti apānaḥ* - *Bhuvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) *apāna*. **सुवः इति**

व्यानः - *suvaḥ iti vyānaḥ* - *Suvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) *vyāna*. **महः इति अन्नम्**

- *mahaḥ iti annam* - *Mahaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) food. **अन्नेन वाव** - *annena*

vāva - By food alone, **सर्वे प्राणाः** - *sarve prāṇāḥ* - all the *prāṇas* **महीयन्ते** - *mahīyante* -

are glorified.

Bhūḥ is (to be meditated upon as) *prāṇa*. *Bhuvaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) *apāna*.

Suvaḥ is (to be meditated upon as) *vyāna*. *Mahaḥ* is (to be meditated upon as) food.

By food alone, all the *prāṇas* are glorified.

This is the fourth and final *vyāhṛti upāsana*. We take four objects from the field of *prāṇa* and therefore, it is called *adhiprāṇa vyāhṛti upāsana*.

भूः इति वै प्राणः – *bhūḥ iti vai prāṇaḥ* – The exhalation breath is invoked in *bhūḥ vyāhṛti* (*prāk gamanavān vāyuḥ*)

भुवः इति अपानः – *bhuvaḥ iti apānaḥ* – *Apāna* is invoked in *bhuvovyāhṛti*. *Apāna* has two functions: first, the inhalation air that goes down from the nostrils to the lungs (*adhogamanavān vāyuḥ*). Secondly, all the waste of the body is pushed downward through excretion – therefore, it is also called *apāna*. (*apāna* = inhalation + excretion).

सुवः इति व्यानः - *suvaḥ iti vyānaḥ* – *Vyāna* circulates everything in the body (*viśvak-gamanavān vāyuḥ = vyānaḥ*). *Viśvak* means all parts of the body – the blood circulates and distributes the nutrients to every part of the body.

The above are all *arigas*. Then what is the *arigi*?

महः इति अन्नम् – *mahaḥ iti annam* – *Annam* is the *arigi* because the *prāṇas* can function only if they are nourished by food. During *upavāsam* (fasting), the *prāṇas* become weaker. Without food for a length of time, the *prāṇas* will quit the body.

अन्नेन वाव सर्वे प्राणाः महीयन्ते - *annena vāva sarve prāṇāḥ mahīyante* – the *prāṇas* are glorious only when food is available.

This is *adhi-prāṇa vyāhṛti upāsana*. Thus, sixteen objects are invoked in this collective *vyāhṛti upāsana*. [In the *samhitopāsana*, twenty objects were invoked].

ता वा एताश्चतस्रश्चतुर्धा । चतस्रश्चतस्रो व्याहृतयः । ता यो वेद । स वेद ब्रह्म । सर्वेऽस्मै देवा बलिमावहन्ति ॥

tā vā etāścatasraścaturdhā / catasraścatasro vyāhṛtayaḥ / tā yo veda / sa veda brahma / sarve'smai devā balimāvahanti

ताः वै एताः चतस्रः – *taḥ vai etāḥ catasraḥ* - Thus, these four (*vyāhṛtis*) **चतुर्धा** – *caturdhā* - are meditated upon in the four-fold ways **चतस्रः चतस्रः व्याहृतयः** – *catasraḥ catasraḥ vyāhṛtayaḥ* - (and) four *vyāhṛtis* each are there (in each meditation). **सः यः वेद** – *saḥ yaḥ veda* - He who knows (and meditates on) **ताः** – *taḥ* - them **वेद ब्रह्म** – *veda brahma* - knows *Hiraṇyagarbha* **सर्वे देवाः** – *sarve devāḥ* - (and) all gods **आवहन्ति बलिम्** – *āvahanti balim* - carry offerings **अस्मै** – *asmai* - to him.

Thus, these four (vyāhṛtis) are meditated upon in the four-fold ways (and) four vyāhṛtis each are there (in each meditation). He who knows (and meditates on) them knows Hiraṇyagarbha (and) all gods carry offerings to him.

The Upaniṣad concludes this *anuvāka* with this section by giving the *phalam* (benefit) of this *upāsana*.

ताः वा (तावै) एतः चतस्रः - *tāḥ vā (tāvai) etaḥ catsraḥ* - in this manner, these four *vyāhṛtis*

चतुर्धा - *caturdhā* – (meditated) in four ways – each *vyāhṛti* represents four objects

चतस्रः चतस्रः व्याहृतयः - *catasraḥ catasraḥ vyahṛtayaḥ* – in each of the four *upāsanās*, four *vyāhṛtis* were used. Thus, sixteen 16 objects were meditated. Śaṅkarācārya gives an explanation why this statement is repeated explicitly when we already know there are sixteen: this is to emphasize that they need to be invoked in the same order mentioned here. The right object must be invoked in each *vyāhṛti*.

ताः यः वेद - *tāḥ yaḥ veda* – one who practices this four-fold *vyāhṛti upāsanā* (*veda = upāsanām karoti* – who meditates upon these *vyāhṛtis*) as mentioned in the Upaniṣads

सः ब्रह्म वेद - *saḥ brahma veda* – knows Brahma. In this context, the word Brahma means *Hiraṇyagarbha*. Thus, this person is practicing *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsanā*. (Few lines ago, Brahma meant *orikārah*). Śaṅkarācārya adds that this *upāsaka* (meditator) will become one with *Hiraṇyagarbha* when he successfully practices *upāsanā* (the *phalam* is *Hiraṇyagarbha prāpti*). Tattva Bodha defines *Hiraṇyagarbha* as the reflected Consciousness appearing in the reflected medium of total *sūkṣma śarīram*, which is the collective subtle body consisting mind and the *prāṇas* (*samaṣṭi sūkṣma śarīra sahita caitanyam*). Since *Hiraṇyagarbha* represents the total mind, it is *sarvajñāḥ* – the omniscient possessing the knowledge of all the minds. [*phalam = sarvajñā Hiraṇyagarbha padam prāpnoti*].

Śaṅkarācārya raises the question: if this person is only doing the *vyāhṛti upāsanā*, how can he get *Hiraṇyagarbha prāptiḥ*? Normally, the nature of the *upāsanā* dictates that of the *phalam*. For example, Lakshmi *upāsanā* will bring wealth and Sarasvati *upāsanā* will bring knowledge (*yathā yathā upāste, tadeva bhavati*). This statement from the Upaniṣad must be interpreted correctly to find consistency. In the next section (6th *anuvāka*), the teacher will discuss *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsanā*. Śaṅkarācārya says that the *vyāhṛti upāsanā* should not be practiced independently; it must be combined with *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsanā*. The result of this mixture is *Hiraṇyagarbha phalam*.

One will receive this *phalam* after death (*maraṇa anantaram*); thus, the primary qualification is death! By attaining this *phalam* (*Hiraṇyagarbha-padam*), the seeker acquires infinite power because the total *sūkṣma śarīram* has the combined power of all the sense organs of knowledge and action, the *prāṇas*, the mind, memory, intellect

and ego (*pañca karmendriyāṇi, pañca jñānendriyāṇi, pañca prāṇaḥ* and the four-fold *antaḥkaraṇam*). In short, he is the totality. Therefore,

सर्वे देवाः अस्मै बलिम् आवहन्ति - *sarve devāḥ asmai baliṁ āvahanti* – all the *devatās* will worship *Hiraṇyagarbha*

In the Tattva Bodha, it is mentioned that *Sūrya* represents the total eye power; *dig devatā* represents total hearing etc. – each *devatā* represents the total of each sense organ. *Hiraṇyagarbha* represents the total *sūkṣma śarīram* and therefore, all the *devatās*, who are part of him, worship him. Through this *upāsanā*, the seeker becomes one with *Hiraṇyagarbha* and therefore, all the *devatās* worship him. The *devatās* such as *Indra, Varuṇa, Agni, Sūrya* etc. will worship him and make offerings (*baliḥ*). This *phalam* of *Hiraṇyagarbha padam* is a *sakāma upāsanā phalam*. This position of *Hirayagarbha* is ephemeral. Why should the seeker practice this *upāsanā* if he is not interested in this ephemeral goal? The benefits of this *upāsanā* are *citta śudhhiḥ* (purification of the mind), *citta ekāgratā* (focus of the mind) and *citta visālatā* (expansion of the mind through the *upāsanā* of the *lokas*). These qualifications are pre-requisites to the pursuit of *jñāna*, which brings *mokṣa*.

This concludes the *vyāhṛti upāsanā*.

Anuvāka 6

स य एषोऽन्तर्हृदय आकाशः । तस्मिन्नयं पुरुषो मनोमयः । अमृतो हिरण्मयः । अन्तरेण तालुके । य एष स्तन इवावलम्बते । सेन्द्रयोनिः । यत्रासौ केशान्तो विवर्तते । व्यपोह्य शीर्षकपाले ॥

sa ya eṣo'ntarhṛdaya ākāśaḥ / tasminnayaṁ puruṣo manomayaḥ / amṛto hiraṇmayāḥ / antareṇa tāluke / ya eṣa stana ivāvalambate / sendrayoniḥ / yatrāsau keśānto vivartate / vyapohya śīrṣakapāle

अयम् अमृतः हिरण्मयः - *ayam amṛtaḥ hiraṇmayāḥ* - That eternal and effulgent **पुरुषः** - *puruṣaḥ* - *Hiraṇyagarbha* **मनोमयः** - *manomayaḥ* - who is revealed through the mind (is to be meditated) **तस्मिन्** - *tasmin* - in that locus **सः यः एषः आकाशः** - *saḥ yaḥ eṣaḥ ākāśaḥ* - which is the space **अन्तर्हृदये** - *antarhṛdaye* - within the heart. **यः एषः अवलम्बते** - *yaḥ eṣaḥ avalambate* - (*Suṣumnā nāḍī* passes through that part) which hangs down **इव स्तनः** - *iva stanaḥ* - like a nipple **अन्तरेण तालुके** - *antareṇa tāluke* - between the two palates. **व्यपोह्य** - *vyapohya* - (It comes out) breaking open **शीर्षकपाले** - *śīrṣakapāle*

- the crown of the head यत्र असौ केशान्तः - *yatra asau keśāntaḥ* - where the roots of the hair विवर्तते - *vivartate* - are divided apart. सः इन्द्रयोनिः - *saḥ indrayoniḥ* - That is the passage to (the world of) Hiraṇyagarbha.

That eternal and effulgent Hiraṇyagarbha who is revealed through the mind (is to be meditated) in that locus which is the space within the heart. (Suṣumnā nāḍī passes through that part) which hangs down like a nipple between the two palates. (It comes out) breaking open the crown of the head where the roots of the hair are divided apart. That is the passage to (the world of) Hiraṇyagarbha.

In this sixth *anuvāka*, the Upaniṣad is introducing the third *upāsana* of Śikṣāvallī. This is called *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsana*. *Hiraṇyam* literally means gold, but in this context, it represents knowledge. Both gold and knowledge shine and therefore, they are synonymously used here – *prakāśātmakatvāt hiraṇyam jñānam ityucyate*. *Hiraṇyam* refers to gold-like shining knowledge that removes removes ignorance (darkness). *Garbhaḥ* in this context means within (*garbhaḥ* literally means the womb). Therefore, *Hiraṇyagarbha* means: within whom there is infinite knowledge (*hiraṇyam garbhe yasya saḥ Hiraṇyagabhaḥ*). This *Hiraṇyagarbha* is to be meditated here.

Since *Hiraṇyagarbha* represents total mind (and intellect), it is not possible for the individual mind to conceive of the totality. The human intellect is too small to conceive of omniscience. *Hiraṇyagarbha*, being the total subtle body, is not perceptible by the sense organs. Then how can one meditate on *Hiraṇyagarbha*? How can one conceive of the inconceivable? The technique is to use a symbol (*ālambanam*). The best symbol for the total mind (*samaṣṭi manaḥ*) is the individual mind (*vyāṣṭi manaḥ*).

In general, people consider God as something external – He is somewhere remote, which means He is not here. With this orientation, we will have difficulty in assimilating the Vedānta because it teaches *aham brahma asmi* (I am Brahman). Even the *karma kāṇḍa* (ritualistic portion of the Vedas) espouses the notion that God is different from us. Therefore, in this stage, the seeker considers himself to be a puny little creature in front of God – I am *dāsaḥ* (the servant) and you are *swami* (the master); I am a destitute (*anāthaḥ*) and you are the Lord of the destitutes (*anātha nāthaḥ*). He keeps beating himself down; some religions even say that he is a sinner. [We already have problems and complexities and top of it they address us as O ye sinners!]. With this orientation, the Vedānta is difficult to digest because it says: I am Brahman, the purest of the purest - *nityoham, śuddhoham, anantoham, śāntoham, sarva-ādhāroham,*

asaṅgoḥam, jagat kāraṇamaham etc. Instead of these wonderful descriptions, why do I downgrade myself as puny and worthless?

How do I change this orientation? One method is to invoke the Lord within me instead of outside, so that I can get some respectability. May my *dvaita buddhi* (duality orientation) gradually vanish. May the feeling that I am different from God (*bheda buddhi*) may vanish. I can remove this notion of division by invoking the Lord in myself. This *upāsana* is called *aham graha upāsana*. In *sandhyāvandanam*, one practices daily by chanting the mantra: *asāvādityo brahmā brahmaivāhamasmi*. In the initial stages, it is an imagination, but in the later stages, it will be converted into a fact. When it is an imagination, it is called *aham graha upāsana* and when it is converted into a fact, it is called *aikya-jñānam*. Thus, the mind will be taken as the *ālambanam* for the total mind, *Hiraṇyagarbha*.

Where is this individual mind is located? The *śāstras* say that the mind is distinctly different from the brain. The mind is a subtle instrument while the brain is a physical and tangible organ. At the time of death, brain will be burned into ashes. Per the *śāstras*, the mind will not only survive after the body dies, but will travel in search of another body. Science has not accepted this. The scriptures say that every subtle instrument (*indriyam*) has a physical location (*golakam*) in the body. For example, *caḡṣuḥ* (eyesight) is the *indriyam* behind seeing and the eyeballs are the *golakam*. In a blind person, *golakam* is present, but *indriyam* is not. Per Śaṅkarācārya, the *golakam* for the mind is *hṛdayam*, the physical heart. During the *jāgrata avasthā* (waking state), the mind functions all over the body. In the *susupti avasthā*, the mind withdraws from the body and returns to its residence, the physical heart (*hṛdayam*).

अन्तर्हृदये - *antarhṛdaye* – in the physical heart

सः एषः आकाशः - *saḥ eṣaḥ ākāṣaḥ* – there is an inner space in the *hṛdayam*. Kathopaniṣad says in verse 2.3.17 that the space is as big as the thumb. The heart is of the size of the fist – the inner space is of the size of the thumb (when you cover the thumb with fist).

तस्मिन् अयं पुरुषः - *tasmin ayaṁ puruṣaḥ* – Invoke *Hiraṇyagarbha-puruṣaḥ* (the total mind) in the individual mind residing in that space.

Meditate upon the *Hiraṇyagarbha* with many virtues (*vividha guṇa viśiṣṭa Hiraṇyagarbhaḥ*) described below:

मनोमयः - *manomayaḥ* – he is the total mind (*samaṣṭi manaḥ*). The total pervades the individual just as India pervades Tamilnadu state. Therefore, invoke the total (*samaṣṭi manaḥ*) in the individual (*vyāṣṭi manaḥ*).

अमृतः - *amṛtaḥ* – he is immortal (in the relative sense of the term). In Chapter 8 of the Gītā, we saw that Brahmāji's life is much longer than our life – 2000 *catur yugas* equal a calendar day of Brahmāji. [1 *catur yuga* = 4,320,000 human years]. He lives 120 years, which is relatively eternal.

हिरण्मयः - *hiraṇmayaḥ* – he is omniscient (*sarvajñāḥ*)

The above constitute the rules (*vidhiḥ*) of *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsanā*.

From this line onwards, the consequences (*phalaśruti*) of this *upāsanā* are given. In the Muṇḍaka and Kaṭha Upaniṣads, it is mentioned that the *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsaka* will attain *brahmaloka* after death. The bundle of the subtle and causal bodies (*sūkṣma-kāraṇa-śarira*) travels to *Brahmaloka* in the path called *śukla-gatiḥ* which means bright or well-lit path.

The Upaniṣad says that *śukla gatiḥ* starts at the *hṛdayam*. At the time of death, the *sūkṣma śarīram* of the *upāsaka* is withdrawn into his *hṛdayam*. Kaṭhopaniṣad says that 101 main *nāḍis* (subtle part) emerge from *hṛdayam*. The main *nāḍi* is called the *suṣumṇā nāḍi*, which travels upward through the middle of the body, through the middle of the neck, then through the inner part of (fleshy hanging part - uvula), and then to the top of the head (*ucci*) where it opens. This opening is called *brahma randhram*. Then it goes upwards and passes through the middle of the sun and reaches *Brahmaloka*. Since the *śukla gatiḥ* takes one to *Brahmaloka*, the Upaniṣad gives a special title to this path: *indrayoniḥ*. Indra in this context is Brahmāji or *Hiraṇyagarbha*. *Yoniḥ* means path (*mārgaḥ*).

स इन्द्रयोनिः - *sa indrayoniḥ* – there is a *śukla gatiḥ* known as *indrayoniḥ* (that starts from the *hṛdayam*)

अन्तरेण तालुके - *antareṇa tāluke* – (it passes) through the middle of the inner throat (uvula)

स्तनः इव अलंबते - *stanaḥ iva alambate* – a fleshy portion (uvula) that hangs down like the nipple of the cow's udder

यत्र असौ केशान्तः विवर्तते - *yatra asau keśāntaḥ vivartate* – It goes to the top of the skull to the roots of the hair (*keśāntaḥ*)

शीर्ष कपाले व्यपोह्य - *śīrṣa kapāle vyapohya* – that *nāḍī* breaks open (*vhapohya*) the top of the skull (*śīrṣa kapāle*). This portion of the skull is very tender. When a *sannyāsī* dies, there is a tradition to break his skull with the coconut to open the *śukla gatiḥ*. If he has already gained *jñāna*, there is no travel because he gets mokṣa here itself. If he has not gained *jñāna*, he goes to *Brahmaloka* per the *śāstras*. That's why in our tradition, it is recommended to take *sannyāsa āśrama* because the minimum benefit is *Brahmaloka*. Some people who are afraid of *sannyāsa āśrama*, try to take the short cut to *Brahmaloka* by taking *āpat sannyāsa* at the time of death. Swami Dayananda called it *āpattu* (danger) for *sannyāsa*! This person, if he survives, it will be danger to *sannyāsa*. This is just a tradition; the *jīva* has already left the body and there is no point in opening the *śukla gatiḥ*. Even a *grhastha* will also go to *Brahmaloka* if he practices this *upāsanā*.

Other notes:

- Hiraṇyagarbha as the total mind is *sarvajñaḥ* and *sarva-jñāna-śaktimān* (omniscient).
- As the total *prāṇa*, he is *sarva-kriyā-śaktimān* (omnipotent).
- This *upāsanā* is defined as *nikṣṭa vastunī utkṣṭa darśanam upāsanā* because the inferior (limited) individual mind (*nikṣṭa*) is used to visualize the superior (limitless) total mind (*utkṣṭa*).
- Since Hiraṇyagarbha is visualized upon myself (my mind), it is called *aham graha upāsanā*.
- With *niṣkāma Hiraṇyagarbha upāsanā*, one gets the eligibility to pursue *jñāna* (*jñāna योग्याता प्राप्ति*)
- With *sakāma upāsanā*, the benefit is *Brahmaloka prāpti* or *Hiraṇyagarbha prāpti*. This attainment of *Brahmaloka* is a posthumous reward.

भूरित्यग्नौ प्रतितिष्ठति । भुव इति वायौ । सुवरित्यादित्ये । मह इति ब्रह्मणि । आप्नोति स्वाराज्यम् । आप्नोति मनसस्पितम् । वाक्पतिश्चक्षुष्पतिः । श्रोत्रपतिर्विज्ञानपतिः । एतत्ततो भवति । आकाशशरीरं ब्रह्म । सत्यात्म प्राणारामं मनानन्दम् । शान्तिसमृद्धममृतम् । इति प्राचीनयोग्योपस्व ॥

bhūrityagnau pratitiṣṭhati / bhuva iti vāyau / suvarityāditye / maha iti brahmaṇi / āpnoti svārājyam / āpnoti manasaspitam / vākpatiścakṣuṣpatiḥ / śrotrapatirvijñānapatiḥ / etattatto bhavati / ākāśaśarīraṃ brahma / satyātma prāṇārāmaṃ manaānandam / śāntisamṛddhamamṛtam / iti parācīnayogyopassva

प्रतितिष्ठति - *pratitiṣṭhati* - (At the time of death, the *upāsaka*) merges **अग्नौ** - *agnau* - into the fire **इति भूः** - *iti bhūḥ* - which is in the form of *bhūḥ*; **वायौ** - *vāyau* - (he merges) into the air **इति भुवः** - *iti bhuvah* - which is in the form of *bhuvah*; (he merges) **आदित्ये** - *āditye* - into the sun **इति सुवः** - *iti suvah* - which is in the form of *suvah*; **ब्रह्मणि** - *brahmaṇi* - (he merges) into *Hiraṇyagarbha* **इति महः** - *iti mahaḥ* - who is in the form of *mahaḥ*. **आप्नोति स्वाराज्यम्** - *āpnoti svārājyam* - He attains sovereignty. **आप्नोति** - *āpnoti* - He attains **मनसस्पितम्** - *manasaspitam* - lordship over all minds. **वाक्पतिः** - *vākpatiḥ* - He becomes the lord of speech, **चक्षुष्पतिः** - *cakṣuṣpatiḥ* - lord of eyes, **श्रोत्रपतिः** - *śrotrapatiḥ* - the lord of ears, **विज्ञानपतिः** - *vijñānapatiḥ* - and the lord of intellects. **ततः** - *tataḥ* - In addition to this, **एतद् भवति** - *etad bhavati* - the following (attributes) are also there. **ब्रह्म आकाशशरीरम्** - *brahma ākāśaśarīram* - *Hiraṇyagarbha* has a body which is all-pervading like the space **सत्यात्म** - *satyātma* - and which consists of the entire universe with and without form. **प्राणारामम्** - *prāṇārāmaṃ* - He has all the *prāṇas* as the sporting ground. **मन आनन्दम्** - *mana ānandam* - He has a mind which is an embodiment of *ānanda*. **शान्तिसमृद्धम्** - *śāntisamṛddham* - He is all peace and prosperity **अमृतम्** - *amṛtam* - and eternal. Oh **प्राचीनयोग्य** - *parācīnayogya* - *Prācīnayogya!* **उपास्व** - *upāssva* - May you meditate **इति** - *iti* - thus.

(At the time of death, the *upāsaka*) merges into the fire which is in the form of *bhūḥ*; (he merges) into the air which is in the form of *bhuvah*; (he merges) into the sun which is in the form of *suvah*; (he merges) into *Hiraṇyagarbha* who is in the form of *mahaḥ*. He attains sovereignty. He attains lordship over all minds. He becomes the lord of speech, lord of eyes, the lord of ears, and the lord of intellects. In addition to this, the following (attributes) are also there. *Hiraṇyagarbha* has a body which is all-pervading like the space and which consists of the entire universe with and without form. He has all the *prāṇas* as the sporting ground. He has a mind which is an

embodiment of ānanda. He is all peace and prosperity and eternal. Oh Prācinayogya! May you meditate thus.

This section tells us what happens to the *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsaka jīva* after death (*maraṇam*). We should remember that he has practiced *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsana* along with *vyāhṛti upāsana*.

He has meditated upon Agni in *bhūḥ vyāhṛti*, Vāyu in *bhuvah* and Āditya in *suvaḥ* (*aṅga devatās*). All those *devatās* are part of *Hiraṇyagarbha (aṅgī)*. He will become one with all these *aṅga devatās* and then the *aṅgī*, in this chronological order.

भूरिति अग्नौ प्रतितिष्ठति - *bhūrīti agnau pratitiṣṭhati* - The upāsaka reaches or merges with Agni *devata*, which is represented by *bhūḥ vyāhṛti*

भुवः इति वायौ - *bhuvah iti vayau (pratitiṣṭhati)* – *pratitiṣṭhati* means *ekī bhavati* - merges into the Vāyu *devatā* represented by *bhuvah vyāhṛti*.

सुवः इति आदित्ये - *suvaḥ iti āditye (pratitiṣṭhati)* – he merges into Sūrya *devatā* which is represented by *suvaḥ vyāhṛti*

Having merged into the *aṅga devatās*, he finally merges into the *aṅgī devatā*, the *samaṣṭi Hiraṇyagarbha*:

महः इति ब्रह्मणि - *mahaḥ iti brahmaṇi (pratitiṣṭhati)* – he finally merges into *Hiraṇyagarbha*. Brahma here is the *saguṇa Brahman* – *Hiraṇyagarbha*, which is represented by the *mahaḥ vyāhṛti*.

Once he merges with *Hiraṇyagarbha*, he enjoys the status of *Hiraṇyagarbha adhipati* – the Lord of *Brahmaloka*:

आप्नोति स्वाराज्यम् - *āpnoti svārājyam* – he attains sovereignty. He attains absolute overlordship of all the fourteen *lokas* because *Brahmaloka* is the highest *loka* – even Indra, Varuṇa etc. are under Brahmāji.

Because of this sovereignty, he lords over the organs of all the beings:

आप्नोति मनसः पतिम् - *āpnoti manasaḥ patim* – he is the Lord of all the individual minds because he is the total mind. The president or the prime minister has the *svārājyam* over the country. Although he looks like an individual, the decisions he makes impacts all the citizens (*sarveṣāṃ manasāṃ patiḥ = antaḥkaraṇa patiḥ*)

(आप्नोति) वाक् पतिः - (*āpnoti*) *vāk patiḥ* – he is the Lord of all the *karmendriyas* (*karmendriyāṇām patiḥ*). *Vāk* is speech that represents all the *karmendriyas* and *Varuṇa devatā* is the lord of the tongue.

चक्षुः पतिः श्रोत्रपतिः - *cakṣuḥ patiḥ śrotrapatiḥ* – *sarva jñānendriyāṇam adhipatiḥ* – he is the Lord of all the *jñānendriyas*. *Sūrya devatā* is the Lord of the eyes, but he is only a part of *Hiraṇyagarbha*.

विज्ञानपतिः - *vijñāna patiḥ* – he is the Lord of all the intellects – he is the total knowledge. When we do something, our own effort is important and so is the Lord's grace. The Lord is *Hiraṇyagarbhatattvam*. Without this grace, our effort may not be sufficient.

एतत् ततः भवति - *etat tataḥ bhavati* – the following additional glories are also in *Hiraṇyagarbha*. His *guṇas* (*vibhūti*) are:

आकाश शरीरं ब्रह्म - *ākāśa śarīram brahma* – Brahma, the *Hiraṇyagarbha* has space (*ākāśa*) as the body. He has the macrocosmic body. The word Brahma refers to *saguṇa Hiraṇyagarbha* only.

सत्यात्मा - *satyātmā* – his body consists of both the visible and invisible universe, just as the individual body consists of *sthūla* and *sūkṣma śarīrams*. *Satyātmā = sat + hya + ātmā*: *sat* means the visible universe (*mūrta prapañcaḥ*); *hya* means the invisible universe (*amūrta prapañcaḥ*) and *ātmā* means the body (*śarīram*) – *mūrta-amūrta-prapañca śarīraḥ Hiraṇyagarbhaḥ*. This explanation is based on *mūrtāmūrta brāhmaṇam* in Bṛhdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. It is explained more elaborately there.

प्राणारामम् - *prāṇārāmam* – *Hiraṇyagarbha* revels in the total *prāṇa*. He has the total *sūkṣma śarīram* which consists of total *prāṇa*. A garden or recreational ground is called *ārāmaḥ*. In short, he revels in every *jīva*.

मनः आनन्दम् - *manaḥ ānandam* – *Hiraṇyagarbha* experiences *ānanda* through every mind (*manaḥ eva ānandasthānaṁ yasya*). What about total sorrow (*duḥkham*)? Because of the extraordinary *puṇya* he has earned through the *upāsana*, only the *ānanda samaṣṭi* comes to him and not the total *duḥkha*. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad also says this.

शान्ति समृद्धम् - *śānti samṛddham* – *Hiraṇyagarbha* is the embodiment of total peace (*śānti*) as well as the total prosperity (*samṛddhi*).

इति उपास्व - *Iti upāssva* – meditate thus if you want to enjoy this *brahmapadam*

प्राचीनयोग्य - *prācīnayogya* – he is addressing the student – this means *prācīna vidyā yogyaḥ* – the student who is eligible to receive this ancient wisdom because he has *śraddhā*. May you practice this *upāsana*.

With this *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsana* is complete.

Anuvāka 7

पृथिव्यन्तरिक्षं द्यौर्दिशोऽवान्तरदिशाः । अग्निर्वायुरादित्यश्चन्द्रमा नक्षत्राणि । आप ओषधयो
वनस्पतय आकाश आत्मा । इत्यधिभूतम् । अथाध्यात्मम् । प्राणो व्यानोऽपान उदानः समानः ।
चक्षुः श्रोत्रं मनो वाक्त्वक् । चर्म मांसं स्नावास्ति मज्जा । एतदधिविधाय ऋषिरवोचत् । पाङ्क्तं
वा इदं सर्वम् । पाङ्क्तेनैव पाङ्क्तं स्पृणोतीति ॥

*pṛthivyantarikṣam dyaurdiśo'vāntaradiśāḥ / agnirvāyurādityaścandramā nakṣatrāṇi /
āpa ośadhayo vanaspataya ākāśa ātmā / ityadhibhūtam / athādhyātmam / prāṇo
vyāno'pāna udānaḥ samānaḥ / cakṣuḥ śrotraṁ mano vāktvak / carma māṅsagm
snāvāsti majjā / etadadhividhāya ṛṣiravocat / pāṅktaṁ vā idagm sarvam / pāṅktenaiva
pāṅktagm sprṇotīti*

पृथिवी - *pṛthivī* - The earth, अन्तरिक्षम् - *antarikṣam* - the interspace, द्यौः - *dyauḥ* - the
heaven, दिशः - *diśaḥ* - the (four) main quarters, अवान्तरदिशाः - *avāntaradiśaḥ* - and
the (four) intermediary quarters; अग्निः - *agniḥ* - fire, वायुः - *vāyuḥ* - air, आदित्यः -
ādityaḥ - the sun, चन्द्रमाः - *candramāḥ* - the moon, नक्षत्राणि - *nakṣatrāṇi* - and the
stars; आपः - *āpaḥ* - water, ओषधयः - *ośadhayaḥ* - herbs, वनस्पतयः - *vanaspatayaḥ* -
trees, आकाशः - *ākāśaḥ* - space and आत्मा - *ātmā* - Virāt – इति - *iti* - these (three

groups of five factors each) constitute अधिभूतम् - *adhibūtam* - *adhibhūtam* अथ अध्यात्मम् - *atha adhyātmam* - Now follow (the three groups of five factors each) which constitute *adhyātmam* – प्राणः - *prāṇaḥ* - *prāṇa*, व्यानः - *vyānaḥ* - *vyāna*, अपानः - *apānaḥ* - *apāna*, उदानः - *udānaḥ* - *udāna* and समानः - *samānaḥ* - *samāna*; चक्षुः - *caḥṣuḥ* - the eyes, श्रोत्रम् - *śrotram* - the ears, मनः - *manaḥ* - the mind, वाक् - *vāk* - speech, त्वक् - *tvak* - and the organ of touch; चर्म - *carma* - skin, मांसम् - *māṁsam* - flesh, स्नावा - *snāvā* - muscle, अस्थि - *asthi* - bone and मज्जा - *majjā* - marrow. अधिविधाय - *adhividhāya* - Having revealed them, ऋषिः अवोचत् - *ṛṣiḥ avocat* - the sage said – सर्वं वै इदम् - *sarvaṁ vai idam* - all these are indeed पाङ्क्तम् - *pāṅkatam* - *pāṅktas*. पाङ्क्तेन एव - *pāṅktēna eva* - With the help of the (three subjective) *pāṅktas*, स्पृणोति इति - *spṛṇoti iti* - one should meditate upon the (three objective) पाङ्क्तम् - *pāṅktam* - *pāṅktas*.

The earth, the interspace, the heaven, the (four) main quarters, and the (four) intermediary quarters; fire, air, the sun, the moon, and the stars; water, herbs, trees, space and Virāt – these (three groups of five factors each) constitute adhibhūtam. Now follow (the three groups of five factors each) which constitute adhyātmam – prāṇa, vyāna, apāna, udāna and samāna; the eyes, the ears, the mind, speech, and the organ of touch; skin, flesh, muscle, bone and marrow. Having revealed them, the sage said – all these are indeed pāṅktas. With the help of the (three subjective) pāṅktas, one should meditate upon the (three objective) pāṅktas.

We have seen three *upāsanās* so far: *saṁhitā*, *vyāhṛti* and *Hiraṇyagarbha*. It must be remembered that the second and third *upāsanās* should go together. We are now entering the seventh section that deals with the fourth *upāsanā*. This is called *pāṅkta brahma upāsanā*. In this *upāsanā* also, we will visualize the total creation, the *samaṣṭi prapañcaḥ* (the macrocosm) upon the individual, the *vyāṣṭi* (microcosm). The Upaniṣad is now training us for *aharṁ brāhmaṣmi*: these are rehearsals for *jivātma-paramātmā-aikyam*. We are practicing the visualization of the total upon the individual.

We have also seen that scientifically the micro and the macro are similar. In an atom, the protons and electrons revolve around the neutron. In the macro universe, the planets revolve around the sun. We are appreciating the similarities between the macro and micro in these *upāsanās*. A *pāṅktam* is a group of five members. We will now classify the creation into three groups (*pāṅktatrayam*). Thus, the creation is classified into 15 members. Similarly, the microcosm is also classified into three

pāṅkatams (*pāṅktatrayam*). Thus, we have a *samaṣṭi* and *vyaṣṭi pāṅktatrayam*. We must visualize the *samaṣṭi pāṅktatrayam* upon the *vyaṣṭi pāṅktatrayam*. In simple language, visualize the totality in yourself. The totality is called Brahma and therefore, this *upāsanā* is called *pāṅkta-brahma-upāsanā*. Now the Upaniṣad gives the list of each *pāṅktam*:

First, the Upaniṣad talks about the macro *pāṅktam*.

Śaṅkarācārya calls the first group *loka-pāṅktam*:

- *Ṙṭhivī* – the earth (*bhūlokaḥ*)
- *Antarikṣam* – the intermediary space between the heaven and the earth (*bhuvanlokaḥ*)
- *Dyauḥ* – the heaven (*svarga* or *suvarlokaḥ*)
- *Diśaḥ* – the four main directions – east, west, north and south
- *Avāntaradiśāḥ* – the intermediary four directions – northeast, northwest, southeast and southwest.

The second macro *pāṅktam* consists of:

- *Agniḥ* – Agni *devatā* - fire
- *Vāyuḥ* – Vāyu *devatā* - wind
- *Ādityaḥ* – Sūrya *devatā* – the sun
- *Candramaḥ* – Candra *devatā* - the moon
- *Nakṣatrāṅgi* – the stars

Śaṅkarācārya calls it *devatā-pāṅktam*.

The third macro *pāṅktam* consists of:

- *Āpaḥ* - waters
- *Oṣadhayaḥ* – herbs or plants
- *Vanaspatayaḥ* – the trees (big)
- *Ākāśaḥ* – the total space
- *Ātmā* – everything else in the creation not mentioned in this list. Śaṅkarācārya translates it as *Virāṭ*

Śaṅkarācārya calls this group *bhūta pāṅktam*.

इति अधिभूतम् - *iti adhibhūtam* - this is the *pāṅktatrayam* belonging to *samaṣṭi* or the cosmos (*loka + devatā + bhūta = samaṣṭi pāṅktatrayam*)

अथ अध्यात्मम् - *atha adhyātmam* – we will now see the *pāṅktatrayam* connected to the *vyāṣṭi*, the individual.

The first group is the *pañcaprāṇaḥ*:

- *Prāṇaḥ* – respiratory system
- *Apānaḥ* – the excretory system
- *Vyānaḥ* – circulatory system
- *Udānaḥ* – the reversing system
- *Samānaḥ* – the digestive system

Śaṅkarācārya calls it *vāyu pāṅktam* because they are all connected with *prāṇa-vāyu*.

The second group consists of sense organs:

- *Cakṣuḥ* - the eyes
- *Śrotram* – the ears
- *Manaḥ* – the mind
- *Vāk* – the organ of speech
- *Tvak* – the organ of touch

Śaṅkarācārya calls this group as *indriya pāṅktam*.

The third group consists of the parts of the body:

- *Carmam* – the skin (the inner skin)
- *Māṁsam* – the flesh
- *Snāva* – the muscles
- *Asthi* – the bones
- *Majjā* – marrow of the bone

Our *śāstras* and Ayurveda call this group *dhātuḥ*, which means the inner components of the body that sustain it (*dhatte iti dhātuḥ*). In Ayurveda, the health is nothing but harmony among the *dhātus* (*dhātu-sāmyam ārogyam*). When there is disharmony (like high cholesterol) it is called *dhātu vaiśamyam (rogaḥ)*.

Śaṅkarācārya calls this group *dhātu pāñktam*.

एतत् अधिविधाय ऋषिः अवोचत् - *etat adhividhāya ṛṣiḥ avocat* – the *ṛṣi* prescribed these six *pāñktams*

पाङ्क्तं वा इदं सर्वम् - *pāñktam vā idam sarvam* – the whole creation is nothing but *pāñktam*. *Vyaṣṭi* and *samaṣṭi* are all *pāñktams*

पाङ्क्तेव पाङ्क्तं स्पृणोति - *pāñktena pāñktam spr̥ṇoti* – may you visualize the *samaṣṭi pāñktatrayam* with the help of *vyaṣṭi pāñktatrayam*; this will strengthen you.

By visualizing the totality, the seeker gets the strength. When you visualize your family members, you get extra courage (I am a Tamilian → Indian → Asian → being: you get more strength and feel more secure when you include a bigger family). Strengthen yourself by invoking God in you. The more you invoke God in you, your battery gets charged. When we meet a *mahātmā*, we say that we get extra strength. We get the secondary charge that the *mahātmā* has borrowed from the Lord. Why can we not go to the Lord to directly get the charge? The more you visualize God within yourself, the more strength you get [like the uninterrupted power supply – UPS].

This *upāsanā* is called *pāñkta-brahma upāsanā*. This can be practiced in *sakāma* and *niṣkāma* manner. The benefits are *Brahmaloka* and *cittaśuddhi* (*citta-ekāgrata* and *citta-viśālatā*) respectively.

We will now enter the fifth and the final *upāsanā*: *onkāra upāsanā*.

Anuvāka 8

ओमिति ब्रह्म । ओमितीदं सर्वम् । ओमित्येतदनुकृति ह स्म वा अप्यो श्रावयेत्याश्रावयन्ति ।
ओमिति सामानि गायन्ति । ओं शोमिति शस्त्राणि शंसन्ति । ओमित्यध्वर्युः प्रतिगरं
प्रतिगृणाति । ओमिति ब्रह्मा प्रसौति । ओमित्यग्निहोत्रमनुजानाति । ओमिति ब्राह्मणः प्रवक्ष्यन्नाह
ब्रह्मोपाप्रवानीति । ब्रह्मैवोपाप्नोति ॥

omiti brahma / omitidagr̥msarvam / omityetadanukṛti ha sma vā apyo śrāvayetyāśrāvayanti / omiti sāmāni gāyanti / oḡmśomiti śastrāṇi śagr̥mśānti / omityadhvaryuḥ pratigaram̐ pratigr̥ṇāti / omiti brahmā prasauti / omityagnihotramanujānāti / omiti brāhmaṇaḥ pravakṣyannāha brahmopāpnvānīti / brahmaivopāpnoti

ओम् इति - *om iti* - (One should meditate upon) ओंकारा ब्रह्म - *brahma* - as Brahman सर्वम् इदम् - *sarvam idam* - (because), all this is ओम् इति - *om iti* - ओंकारा alone. एतद् ओम् इति - *etad om iti* - This ओंकारा ह स्म वै - *ha sma vai* - is indeed अनुकृतिः - *anukṛtiḥ* - an expression of acceptance. अपि - *api* - Moreover, आश्रावयन्ति - *āśrāvayanti* - (the priests) direct (the assistant) to recite (to the gods) इति - *iti* - thus – ओं श्रावय - *om śrāvaya* - "Om, may you recite (to the gods)". गायन्ति - *gāyanti* - The (Sāmaveda-priests) sing सामानि - *sāmāni* - the sāma-mantras इति ओम् - *iti om* - after uttering ओंकारा. शंसन्ति - *śamsanti* - (The Ṛgveda-priests) chant शस्त्राणि - *śāstraṇi* - the ṛg-mantras इति - *iti* - after uttering ओं शोम् - *om śom* - 'Om śom'. अध्वर्युः - *adhvaryuḥ* - The Yajurveda-priest प्रतिगृणाति - *pratigrṇāti* - expresses प्रतिगरम् - *pratigaram* - permission इति ओम् - *iti om* - by uttering ओंकारा. ब्रह्मा प्रसौति - *brahmā prasauti* - The Atharvaṇaveda-priest gives permission इति ओम् - *iti om* - by uttering ओंकारा. अनुजानाति - *anujānāti* - The priest permits अग्निहोत्रम् - *agnihotram* - (to do) the agnihotra-ritual इति ओम् - *iti om* - by uttering ओंकारा. प्रवक्ष्यन् - *pravakṣyan* - Desiring to learn the Vedas, ब्राह्मणः आह - *brāhmaṇaḥ āha* - the Brahmin utters ओम् इति - *om iti* - ओंकारा इति - *iti* - with the intention, उपाप्रवानि ब्रह्म - *upāpnvāni brahma* - "Let me attain vedic knowledge". एव उपाप्नोति - *eva upāpnoti* - He certainly attains ब्रह्म - *brahma* - vedic knowledge.

(One should meditate upon) Ōṅkāra as Brahman(because), all this is Ōṅkāra alone. This Ōṅkāra is indeed an expression of acceptance. Moreover, (the priests) direct (the assistant) to recite (to the gods) thus – "Om, may you recite (to the gods)". The (Sāmaveda-priests) sing the sāmā-mantras after uttering Ōṅkāra. (The Ṛgveda-priests) chant the ṛg-mantras after uttering 'Om śom'. The Yajurveda-priest expresses permission by uttering Ōṅkāra. The Atharvaṇaveda-priest gives permission by uttering Ōṅkāra. The priest permits (to do) the agnihotra-ritual by uttering Ōṅkāra. Desiring to learn the Vedas, the Brahmin utters Ōṅkāra with the intention, "Let me attain vedic knowledge". He certainly attains vedic knowledge.

This section deals with the *Ōṅkāra upāsanā* where *Om* is taken as the symbol (*pratīka ālambanam*) upon which *Īśvara* is invoked. *Ōṅkāra* can represent *Virāṭ*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* or *Īśvara*. *Virāṭ* represents the total gross universe (*samaṣṭi sthūla prapañca*),

Hiraṇyagarbha represents the total subtle creation (*samaṣṭi sūkṣma prapañca*), and *Īśvara* represents the total causal universe (*samaṣṭi kāraṇa prapañca*). The Upaniṣad says

ओम् इति अक्षरेण ब्रह्म (उपासीत) - Om iti akṣareṇa brahma (upāsīta) – We must supply the verb *upāsīta*. May you practice the *upāsana* upon Brahman using the symbol *orikāra*. The word “it” indicates the inverted commas on the syllable *Om*. Here the word Brahman refers to *saguṇa* Brahman because the *nirguṇa* Brahman is not an object of *upāsana*. Kena Upaniṣad says in verse 5:

यद्वाचानभ्युदितं, येन वागभ्युद्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि, नेदं यदिदमुपासते ॥
yadvācānabhyuditam, yena vāgabhyudyate
tadeva brahma tvam viddhi, nedam yadidamupāsate

The object of meditation is always *saguṇa Brahman* and never *nirguṇa Brahman*. The meditator is *nirguṇa Brahman* (*tadeva brahma tvam viddhi*) and never the meditated object. *Virāṭ*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Īśvara* are all *saguṇa* because they have *sthūla*, *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa guṇa* respectively.

When there are so many sacred words in the scriptures, why does the Upaniṣad choose *orikāra* as the symbol? Why did it not choose Śiva, Rāma, Gaṇeśa etc.? The Upaniṣad has already pointed out in the 4th anuvāka that *orikāra* is the most sacred mantra, because Brahmāji extracted it by churning the Veda mantras. Thus, *orikāra*, the essence (*sāraḥ*) is as potent as the Vedas. This section discusses the glory of *orikāra* (*orikāra mahimā*).

ओम् इति इदं सर्वम् - om iti idam sarvam – A word in any literature, scriptural or secular, can reveal only a specific object. The word “chair” reveals only a chair and not a table. When one says Rama, my mind will think only of Rama with his own specific attributes described in the scriptures. In the *Dhyāna śloka*, Rama’s description is different from that of Krishna. Rama stands for dharma; he walks upright and straight. Krishna is always happy and relaxed. In *Bharatanātyam*, the character of Krishna never stands straight. One of the *ślokas* describe him as *tribhāngi* which means bent in three axes. The words are limited and therefore, they cannot describe the limitless *Viśvarūpa Īśvara*.

The ingenious word that represents all the objects in the creation is *om*. The letter “*a*” (अ) represents the *sthūla* aspect of the creation, “*u*” (उ) represents the *sūkṣma* objects and “*m*” (म) part represents the *kāraṇa* aspect. *Om* consists of the three sounds – “*a*” (अ), “*u*” (उ) and “*m*” (म). To say something, one must open the mouth. The sound that comes freely when you open the mouth is “*a*”. Therefore, it represents the first letter. “*A*” (अ) is the first alphabet in any Indian language – Krishna says in the Gītā: *akārāṇām akṣarām asmi*. [In English, there is no “*a*” (अ) at all]. After saying something one must close the mouth and therefore, the last letter is “*m*” (म). All the intermediary letters of the alphabet of all languages are represented by “*u*” (उ). Thus, *om* represents all the alphabetic letters (*akṣara māḷā*). The alphabetic letters represent all the possible words in a language because the words are merely the letters arranged in certain combinations. *Om* represents the letters which represent all the words (*padam*), which in turn represent all the objects. Thus, *om* represents all the objects of the world:

Om→alphabets→words→objects.

No other word can express everything (*sarvam*). When I say chair, the word only points to the chair (unidirectional). *Om* is omnidirectional – *sthūla-sūkṣma-kāraṇa padārthas* are represented. The totality of all the *padārthas* is the Lord. Thus, *om* represents the Lord. *Om* is called *praṇavaḥ*, which means ideal name. It is the ideal name for the Lord because it represents totality. Therefore, *orikāra* becomes the ideal symbol for *Īśvara upāsanā*. In the *upāsanā kāṇḍa* of the Vedas, *orikāra* plays a prominent role as an ideal symbol for *Virāṭ*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Īśvara*.

Orikāra plays a prominent role also in the *karma kāṇḍa* of the Vedas. It is not mentioned here, but *orikāra* plays a prominent in role *jñāna kāṇḍa* also. How is *orikāra* important in the ritualistic portion? It is a versatile mantra employed for these purposes:

ओम् इति एतद् अनुकृतिः - *om iti etad anukṛtiḥ* – *anukṛtiḥ* means acceptance. *Om* is used to express acceptance to a request or a command. For example, if I say, “come to the class next week also”, you can accept this request by saying *Om*. [*Om* is same

as o(m)k!]. In the rituals, when the priest requests or commands the assistant, he replies with the word *om*.

ह स्म वै अपि - *ha sma vai api* – *ha, ma, vai, api* – all these words mean well known (*prasiddh*). It is well known because in the olden days, the rituals were popular and therefore, the student here is familiar with it.

ओं श्रावय इति आश्रावयन्ति - *om śrāvaya iti āśrāvayanti* – In a big ritual, many priests perform various functions. Some of them offer oblations to various *devatās*. Some others specialize in mantras chanted to invite and welcome the *devatās*. When they are ready to perform the oblations, the priests ask (command) the “invitation” priests (assistants) to chant the invitation mantras: *O śrāvaya* – which means “chant the invitation mantras loud enough to reach the *svarga loka*”.

ओम् इति सामानि गायन्ति - *om iti sāmāni gāyanti* – in a big rituals, the three Vedas are applied: *Ṛg* for the glorification of the *devatās*; *Yajuh* for offering oblations, and *Sāma* for *dānam* (charity).

ओं शोम् इति शस्त्राणि शंसन्ति - *om śom iti śastrāṇi śamsanti* – *śastrāṇi* means *Ṛg Veda mantrāḥ* (not weapons). The *Ṛg Veda* mantras chanted without *svara* (intonations) during the rituals are called *śastram*. They (*hotrgaṇāḥ*) chant starting with *om* (*om śom iti*).

अध्वर्युः प्रतिगरं प्रतिगृणाति - *adhvaryuḥ pratigaram pratigṛṇāti* – The Yajur Veda priest grants permission (*pratigaram*) to the assistant to offer oblations by saying *om*. [In some parts Sri Lanka, some Tamils say *om* for okay]

ओम् इति ब्रह्मा प्रसौति - *om iti brahmā prasauti* – *Brahmā*, the *Atharvaṇa Veda* priest (supervisor) commands (*prasauti*). Nowadays, we do not have *Brahmā* at all because no one is well versed in all the four Vedas. So, the priests invoke *Brahmā* in an *āsanā* (seat) by putting some *darba* (dry grass) and *akṣatā* (rice). They symbolically seek permission from the *āsanā*.

ओम् इति अग्निहोत्रम् अनुजानाति - *om iti agnihotram anujānāti* – *Orikāra* is used not only in big rituals, but also in *agnihotram*, the most fundamental *śrauta karma*. *Aupāsānām* is the first *smārta karma* that one is initiated into at the time of marriage. Soon after that, he is also required to begin performing a *śrauta karma*. *Agnihotram* is started with an initiation ceremony called *agni ādhānam* in six months (to become a qualified *gṛhastha*). Such a qualified *gṛhastha* is called *ācitāgñiḥ*. He is required to perform *agnihotram* twice daily before oblations for the rest of his life. It can be broken only under two conditions – death and *sannyāsa*. Generally, milk is offered as oblation. He needs to get permission for this, which is granted by saying *om*. All the *pūjās* start with *om*. The simplest ritual to spiritually and religiously purify the house is place the water in front of the Lord, chant *om* and sprinkle all over the house.

The teacher conveys that *orikāra* is significant in the *sādhanas* of all the four *āśramas*.

ओम् इति ब्राह्मणः प्रवक्ष्यन् आह - *om iti brāhmaṇaḥ pravakṣyan āha* – *Brāhmaṇaḥ* is a student of the Vedas, whose primary job is to learn the chanting of the Vedas. *Pravakṣyan* means when he is about to begin the lessons on chanting of the Vedas (*pravacanam kurvan = pravakṣyan*). Even before he begins the lessons, the *śiṣya* utters *om (āha)* when he says *om gurubhyo namaḥ*.

ब्रह्म उपाप्नावानि - *brahma upāpnāvāni* – may I grasp the Vedic chanting first [thereafter, may I grasp the Vedic meaning]. Learning the chanting is called *adhyayanam* and learning the meaning is called *mīmāṃsā*. A person must learn this in *Brahmacarya āśrama* in addition to learning his own profession. *Dharmaśāstra* is common to everyone.

ब्रह्मैव उपाप्नोति - *Brahmaiva upāpnoti* – the result is that he certainly grasps the Vedas. Since *orikāra* is important in all the *āśramas*, it is the most sacred mantra. Therefore,

ओम् इति उपातीत - *om iti upātīta* – may you use *orikāra* for *Īśvara upāsānā*.

Other notes:

1. The specialists from each Veda are asked to perform the rituals They have special names:

- *Hotā* - the specialist in the Ṛg Veda (*ṛg veda ṛtvik*). He has assistant priests to help him with the ritual. This group consisting of the hotā and his assistants (generally 3) is called *hotraḡaṇaḡ*.
- *Adhvaryuḡ* - is the head priest for the Yajur Veda and he has a group of three assistants. This group is called *adhvaryuḡaṇaḡ*.
- *Udgātā* – is the head priest of the Sāma Veda group. His role is to sing the glory of the *devatās* through sāma mantras. He has also three assistants and the group is called *udgātṛḡaṇaḡ*.
- *Brahmā* – is the heads priest of the Atharvaṇa Veda group. He does not have a direct role in the performance of a ritual because Atharvaṇa Veda does not have a direct application in the rituals. Thus, he becomes the supervisor of the entire ritual. He also has three assistants and this group is called *Brahmaḡaṇaḡ*.

Thus, the total number of priests is sixteen. With the addition of the performer of the ritual and his wife (*yajamāna* and *yajamāni*), the total number of the important people in the ritual is eighteen. Verse 1.2.7 of Muṇḡaka Upaniṣad references these 18 constituents of *yajña*.

The job of the Atharvaṇa priest (*Brahmā*) is to supervise these *ḡaṇas* to ensure that they perform their duties properly. If mistakes are committed and corrective actions are not taken, the ritual will become invalid - it will be a waste of time, money and energy. The remedy (*prāyaścitta*) varies according to the mistake. Minor mistakes may be countered by simple mantras, *prāṇāyāma*, *Gāyatrī mantra* etc., but a major one may cause them to start the ritual all over. Some others may be so severe that the performer may have to give away all his possessions to charity. *Brahmā*, the supervisor must have a deep knowledge and must know the duties of all the *ḡaṇas* very well. He must constantly watch for mistakes so that he can prescribe remedial steps for them. While the *hotā*, *adhvaryuḡ* and *udgātā* need only to know their respective Veda, *Brahmā* must be an expert all the four Vedas (*caturvedī*). The important point is all the four *ḡaṇas* constantly use *oṅkāra* mantras in the rituals.

2. Māṇḡūkya Upaniṣad discusses how Brahman is revealed through analysis of *oṅkāra*. *Upāsanā* is always on *sagūṇa* Brahman.
3. AUM – written in English does not exist. According to Sanskrit grammar combination, a+u = o (*ḡuṇasandhiḡ*). You should never write Om as AUM – it should be written as how it is pronounced.

4. The length of *oṅkāra* – at the beginning of the Vedic chanting, the length should be three *mātrās*. When concluding the Vedic chanting, it should be four *mātrās*.
5. *Oṅkāra japa* is only prescribed for the *sannyāsī*. Other *āśramites* should not chant *oṅkāra* alone as a *japa*. They can chant Gāyatrī and *oṅkāra* with some other name such as *Om namaḥ Śivāya* etc.). When a *sannyāsī* takes *dīkṣā*, he resolves the Gāyatrī into om (*tatsaviturvareṇyam akāre praveśayāmi; bhargodevasya dhīmahī ukāre praveśayāmi* and *dhiyoyona pracodayāt makāre praveśayāmi*). For this *sannyāsī* in meditation, om should be long, as much as his breath would allow – *dīrgha praṇava uccāraṇam*. Swāmi Dayānanda said that mere *oṅkāra uccāraṇam* can give deep dispassion (*tīvra vairāgya*). That is why it is recommended that only the *sannyāsīs* chant *oṅkāra*. The *gṛhasthas* have duties to perform and therefore, *oṅkāra* must be diluted with other names (Śiva, Viṣṇu etc.) so that *vairāgya* is not strong enough to disturb their ability to perform the duties. For the *gṛhasthas*, *vairāgya* should be enough to understand the Vedānta, but not to disturb their set up.

Anuvāka 9

ऋतं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । सत्यं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । तपश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । दमश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । शमश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । अग्रयश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । अग्निहोत्रं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । अतिथयश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । मानुषं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । प्रजा च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । प्रजनश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । प्रजातिश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च । सत्यमिति सत्यवचा राथीतरः । तप इति तपोनित्यः पौरुशिष्टिः । स्वाध्यायप्रवचने एवेति नाको मौद्गल्यः । तद्धि तपस्तद्धि तपः ॥

ṛtaṃ ca svādhyāyapracācane ca / satyaṃ ca svādhyāyapracācane ca / tapaśca svādhyāyapracācane ca / damaśca svādhyāyapracācane ca / śamaśca svādhyāyapracācane ca / agnayaśca svādhyāyapracācane ca / agnihotraṃ ca svādhyāyapracācane ca / atithayaśca svādhyāyapracācane ca / mānuṣaṃ ca svādhyāyapracācane ca / prajā ca svādhyāyapracācane ca / prajānaśca svādhyāyapracācane ca / prajātiśca svādhyāyapracācane ca / satyamiti satyavacā rāthītaraḥ / tapa iti taponityaḥ pauruśiṣṭiḥ / svādhyāyapracācane eveti nāko maudgalyaḥ / taddhi tapastaddhi tapaḥ

स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च - *svādhyāyapracācane ca* - (One should observe the following duties ---) study and teaching of the scriptures च ऋतम् - *ca ṛtaṃ* - as well as right understanding, सत्यं च - *satyaṃ ca* - truthfulness, तपः च - *tapaḥ ca* - austerity, दमः च - *damaḥ ca* - sense control, शमः च - *śamaḥ ca* - mind control, अग्रयः च - *agnayaḥ ca* - maintenance of sacrificial fires, अग्निहोत्रं च - *agnihotraṃ ca* - performance of the

agnihotra-ritual, अतिथयः च - *atithayaḥ ca* - hospitality, मानुषं च - *mānuṣaṁ ca* - service to humanity, प्रजा च - *prajā ca* - begetting progeny, प्रजनः च - *prajanaḥ ca* - procreation, च प्रजातिः - *ca prajātiḥ* - (and) begetting grandchildren. सत्यम् इति - *satyam iti* - Truthfulness (is the highest duty) according to राथीतरः - *rāthītaraḥ* - Rāthītara सत्यवचाः - *satyavacāḥ* - whose words are ever truthful. तपः इति - *tapah iti* - Austerity (is the highest duty) according to पौरुशिष्टिः - *pauruśiṣṭiḥ* - Pauruśiṣṭi तपोनित्यः - *taponityaḥ* - who is ever austere. स्वाध्यायप्रवचनेव इति - *svādhyāyapravacaneva iti* - To study and teaching of the scriptures alone (is the highest duty) according to नाकः - *nākaḥ* - Nāka, मौद्गल्यः - *maudgalyaḥ* - the son of Mudgala. तद् हि तपः - *tad hi tapah* - That alone is austerity. तद् हि तपः - *tad hi tapah* - That alone is austerity.

(One should observe the following duties ---) study and teaching of the scriptures as well as right understanding, truthfulness, austerity, sense control, mind control, maintenance of sacrificial fires, performance of the agnihotra-ritual, hospitality, service to humanity, begetting progeny, procreation, (and) begetting grandchildren. Truthfulness (is the highest duty) according to Rāthītara whose words are ever truthful. Austerity (is the highest duty) according to Pauruśiṣṭi who is ever austere. To study and teaching of the scriptures alone (is the highest duty) according to Nāka, the son of Mudgala. That alone is austerity. That alone is austerity.

With the previous section, the discussion on the five prescribed *upāsanaḥ* is complete. These *upāsanaḥ* develop the qualities of *citta śuddhi*, *citta ekagrata* and *citta viśālata* to make the mind ready to receive the teachings. No *upāsana* can give self-knowledge. and therefore, its mere practice does not give mokṣa.

In this Upaniṣad, we discussed the Vedic *upāsanaḥ*. In Chāndogya Upaniṣad, very peculiar *upāsanaḥ* are discussed. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad also prescribes many *upāsanaḥ*. The *purāṇas* and the *ītihāsas* introduce many non-Vedic *upāsanaḥ*. Therefore, it is not compulsory to practice only Vedic *upāsanaḥ*. Since our lifestyle has changed, few are familiar with *samhitā* or *vyāhṛti* and therefore, Vedic *upāsanaḥ* are not meaningful. These have been discussed for academic interest. To acquire the qualities necessary for jñāna yoga, we can practice *upāsana* on personal deities (*iṣṭa devatā*) such as Krishna, Ganesha etc. Many beautiful *dhyāna ślokas* in various languages are also available to assist the seeker in *upāsana*.

Now the Upaniṣad will discuss the importance of karma yoga, where the physical body is actively involved. Mere karma can exist without *upāsanā*, but not vice versa. A *grhastha* leads a lifestyle where karma is predominant. The Vedas advise that *upāsanā* must be gradually included in a *grhastha's* life. In *Sandhyāvandanam*, first karma is practiced with *argyam* etc. and then *upāsanā* through *Gāyatrī mantra japa*. Similarly, karma is emphasized early in life when the body is strong and capable of performing physical activities. Then the emphasis gradually shifts to *upāsanā* later in life when the body is weaker, but the mind is still active. Thus, the *vānaprastha āśrama* is predominantly oriented towards *upāsanā*.

The Upaniṣad now discusses karma yoga, which is the performance of actions that contributes to the spiritual growth. Karmas are classified into three:

Para-upakāra karmāṇi (sāttvika karmāṇi) – actions that benefit large number of people. These actions accelerate spiritual growth. To paraphrase Swami Chinmayananda: it makes me a God-man.

Para-udāsīna karmāṇi (rājasa karmāṇi)– I am interested only in the welfare of myself and my immediate family. I am not interested in the welfare of the others. This indifference towards the others is called *para-udāsīna*. However, I do not harm the others for my gain. These actions result in spiritual stagnation (I am man-man)

Para-apakāra karmāṇi (tāmasa karmāṇi)- these actions harm the others while seeking my own benefit. These lead to spiritual retrogression. I may gain enormous material wealth by these actions, but will spiritually fall (I become an animal-man).

Having known this, the objective of a karma yogi is to increase the *para-upakāra karmāṇi (sāttvika karmāṇi)* to get spiritual growth, reduce *rājasa karma* and abstain completely from *tāmasa karma*. The *śāstras* recognize that it we cannot avoid some *tāmasa karma*, which are called *sūnā*. The Vedas have built in remedies (*prāyaścitta*) in our daily duties. For example, *sandhyāvandanam* has a mantra:

यद्वात्र्या पापमकार्षम् । मनसा वाचा हस्ताभ्याम् । पद्भ्यामुदरेण शिश्रा । रात्रिस्तदवलुम्पतु
। यत्किञ्च दुरितं मयि । इदमहं मामृत-योनौ । सूर्ये ज्योतिषि जुहोमि स्वाहा ॥

*yadrātryā pāpamakāṛṣam / manasā vācā hastābhyām / padbhyā mudareṇa
śisnā / rātristadavalumpatu / yatkiñca duritaṃ mayi / idamaḥam māmṛta-yonau
/ sūrye jyotiṣi juhomi svāhā*

May the *devatās* please protect me from the sins I have committed through mental, verbal and physical actions at night (there is a mantra for day time sins also). I offer my purified self to the Lord in the form of the sun.

This section emphasizes the *pañca mahā yajñas*, which are integral part of karma yoga. These five great yajñas are:

- *Deva yajña* – the regular worship of *devatās* (*Īśvara*)
- *Pitṛ yajña* – regular worship of the ancestors, both living and the dead. Rituals such as *tarpaṇa* and *śrāddha* must be performed regularly
- *Ṛṣi yajña* – this represents the study of the scriptures and transmitting to the next generation so that this glorious tradition can be preserved. This is the way that we fulfill the debts to the great ṛṣis for giving us this tradition. This is also called *Brahma yajña*
- *Manuṣya yajña* – service to the community and humanity in general
- *Bhūta yajña* – protecting the non-human living beings and the environment in general

In this section, the Upaniṣad specifically emphasizes the study of the scriptures. Most people may engage in these *yajñas* in some form or the other, but they neglect the systematic study of the scriptures. People disparage it as a mere academic exercise without knowing their importance. Knowledge is power and the humans are powerful because of knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is more powerful than material knowledge because it can give us the infinite strength against the onslaught of *prārabdham* from all directions. Along with *pañca mahā yajñas*, the Upaniṣad also emphasizes *daivī sampat*, which is the acquisition of values that can reveal the divine nature in us. To discover God in me, I must be divine in character. Before installing the deity, elaborate purification rituals are performed to make the temple fit for installing the Lord. Through the *Vedānta jñāna*, I am installing the Lord in my heart and therefore, I must acquire divine character. Without that, the Vedānta will only be an academic exercise. Therefore, the values are emphasized:

स्वाध्याय प्रवचने च - *svādhyāya pravacane ca* – this expression will be repeated in every sentence. *Svādhyāyaḥ* means the study of the scriptures. In *brahmacarya āśrama* (student life), *dharmaśāstra* is studied along with professional science aligned with the role in society. For example, the king will learn administration and warfare. A person from the business family will learn business. Although the professions are different, *dharmaśāstra* is compulsorily studied by everyone. *Dharmaśāstra* is learned in *brahmacarya āśrama*, lived in *grhastha* and *vānaprastha āśramas*. The precept and practice should be in alignment. Brahman is then learned in the *sannyāsāśrama*. Thus, per the Vedas, *svādhyāya* means study the *dharmaśāstra* first and then the *brahmasāstra*.

Pravacanam – means sharing. The self-study from the Vedic books may give you the incorrect understanding. Vedas must be learned under a qualified guru – this is emphasized by verse 4.34 of the Bhagavad Gītā. You can learn because the guru is generously sharing his knowledge with you. Similarly, you have the responsibility to share your knowledge generously with the next generation. You have the obligation not to right to break the long *paramaparā* that has no beginning (eternal). In the Vedic society, sharing was done according to the capability and conditions. The minimum requirement is to share with your children; begin the process when they are very young. Although everyone should propagate these teachings according to their capability, the Vedas also ask a specific segment of the society to exclusively dedicate their time for this. These people are called *karma brāhmaṇas*. They should not demand money for their services; whatever *gurudakṣiṇā* is offered, they should accept and maintain their livelihood. Since they must live on voluntary offerings, they should lead a simple life. It is also advantageous not to have a big infrastructure that demand maintenance, so that they can spend all the time on research of various commentaries and *śāstras*. Thus, their only objective in life is to learn and share, while leading a simple lifestyle.

ऋतम् - *ṛtam* – *Sankarācārya* defines *ṛtam* as the knowledge regarding life in alignment with teachings of the *śāstras* (*yathā śāstram jñānam*). We should not confine our knowledge only to direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*). The material knowledge is very useful, but it is incomplete and insufficient. Our knowledge should be augmented by the the scriptural knowledge (*apauruṣeya jñānam*) also. In a materialistic society, the goals are centered around entertainment and enjoyment even at the age of 80! With mere material knowledge, one may not even know the

real goals of life. Only the *śāstras* teach that there are two more *puruṣārthas*, *dharma* and *mokṣa* in addition to *artha* and *kāma* and that they are far more important and significant. Therefore, the scriptural knowledge is necessary and important.

सत्यम् - *satyam* – means practice in according to *ṛtam*, the knowledge gained from the *śāstras*. My life must be in alignment with the scriptural teaching. Satyam in this context means that I should try to reduce the gap between what I know and what I do (*yathā jñānam anuṣṭhānam* which is expressed by the word *ācārah*). The Vedas expect a sincere attempt to perform the prescribed karmas, even if we are unable to accomplish all of them. [An ounce of practice is better than a pound of theory].

तपः - *tapaḥ* - means austerity or discipline. It is the willful self-denial to gain mastery over the sense organs (*jñānendriyāṇi*), organs of action (*karmendriyāṇi*), mind and intellect (*antaḥkaraṇam*). The *kartā* (doer) uses the organs as instruments (*karaṇam*) to conduct transactions in this world. *The karaṇams* should be under the control of the *kartā* and not vice versa. How do I know whether I am the master? I think I am the master, but by the time I discover that I am really the slave, the situation has become irreversible. An addict does not realize that he has become an addict until it becomes irreversible. Periodically, I should deny the things I do or use and examine the impact on my mind. If the mind becomes disturbed and dwells only on the object that is denied, I have lost my control. Willful denial is important. If it is forced by external factors (the *śāstras* or guru), it becomes suppression. Suppression is not discipline; it is oppression and causes depression. Then, it looks for expression elsewhere (that is how secret indulgences begin).

The common *vratams* (vows) are *upavāsa* (fasting) and *maunam* (silence). The tongue is the most powerful and disobedient organ. It is the only organ that is both a *jñānendriya* and a *karmendriya*. The *śāstras* say that if you can manage the tongue, you can control the other organs (*hitam sarvam hite rate*). In Tamil, there is a saying: *nāvaḍaṅgināl nālum aḍaṅgum* – when the tongue is controlled, the other four *indriyas* (*jñānendriyas* and *karmendriyas*) will automatically come under control. There many types of *upavāsas*; we will describe two of them here:

- *Kṛcchram* – this type of fasting is observed as a *prāyaścittam* (penance) for the violation of a rule. Gandhiji often practiced this.

- *Cāndrāyanam* – in this type of fast, eat till you are full on *paurṇami* (full moon day). Eat only 14/15th of the portion the next day and then 13/15th on the following day and so on until *amāvāsyā* (new moon day) and fast completely. Then on the day after *amāvāsyā*, eat 1/15th of the portion, then 2/15th the following day and so on and eat fully on *paurṇami*. The diet waxes and wanes with the moon.
- If you are unable to fast because of a stomach ailment such as ulcers (the śāstras have thought of this also), you can donate money to charity instead.

दमः - *damah* – this means sensory discipline (*indriya nigrahaḥ*). Discipline means regulation of the sense organs and not suppression. For example, I should know what to see and what not to see. Voluntarily avoid sense objects that stimulate the six vices (*kāma, krodha, lobha, moha, mada and mātsarya*), and voluntarily commit to those that promotes the virtues (*daivī sampat*). Most of us succumb to the wrong sense objects because going down is easy and natural, while going up is difficult.

शमः - *śamah* – this means thought discipline. Thoughts become words, which in turn become actions, which turns into habit. The habits define your character, which in turn determines your destiny. Thus, your thought determines your destiny; God does not. We take our thoughts for granted because the others cannot see them. Even in our own homes, the drawing room is well maintained, while the other rooms inside are filled with junk. We don't bother about the latter because it is not visible to the others. Thought is the source of words and actions and therefore we must be very careful.

The following expression is in *Sūryanamaskāra (Aruṇaprasna)*:

Tasmāt manasā yathā puruṣaḥ abhigaccati – when the mind gets saturated with the thought, even without his knowledge,

Tad vācā vadati – he blurts out even if does not want to utter it. If the word comes out without his knowledge, it is saturated in his thought personality. Even if the termites come out of the walls in small number, you know it has already damaged the inside.

Tad karmaṇā karoti – Ultimately, it becomes an action. Therefore, let your thoughts be monitored. Let your mental life be worth publishing.

अग्नयः च - *agnayaḥ ca* – In this context, *agni* (fire) represents the Vedic rituals or *deva yajñāḥ*. The rituals are called *agni* for technical reasons. The process of ritualistically kindling the fire for the ritual is called *agni ādhānam*. The *gr̥hastha* who kindles this fire is called *āhitāgniḥ*. The ritualistically kindled fire is called *gārhapatya agniḥ* – *agni* that is the master of the house. This *gr̥hastha* must maintain this fire throughout his life. Per the Vedic rule, the *gārhapatya agniḥ* must only be used for cremation. For rituals, he kindles two types of *agnis* out of *gārhapatya agniḥ*: *āhavanīya agniḥ* and *dakṣiṇāgniḥ* depending on the type of ritual. After the rituals, they must be merged again with *gārhapatya agniḥ*. Thus, these three *agnis* form an integral part of the life of a Vedic ritualist. These three fires represent all forms of rituals. For a *gr̥hastha*, 26 such fire rituals are mentioned – *saptapāka yajñāḥ*, *saptahavir yajñāḥ*, *saptasoma yajñāḥ* and *pañca mahāyajñā*.

अग्निहोत्रं च - *agnihotram ca* – may you continue to perform *agnihotram*, a fundamental Vedic ritual. Both *agnayaḥ* and *agnihotram* refer to *deva yajñāḥ*.

अतिथयः च – *atithayaḥ ca* - entertaining the guests accommodating and feeding them. This can be taken as *annadāna yajñāḥ*. *This atithi yajñāḥ* falls under the category of *manuṣya yajñāḥ*.

मानुषं च - *mānuṣam ca* – the fulfillment of all the social obligations. Being a member of the society, I am indebted to the society. I cannot survive without the help of the other members of the society. Since I benefit from the society, I should also generously contribute to it. All the social obligations will only end when I take up *sannyāsa*. A *sannyāsī* cannot expect anything from the society, including food (*yaducchālābhaḥ santuṣtaḥ*) and so, he has no obligations to the society. This also comes under *manuṣya yajñāḥ*.

प्रजा च, प्रजनः च, प्रजातिः च - *prajā ca, prajānaḥ ca* and *prajātiḥ ca* – these three put together come under *pitṛ yajñāḥ* as your duty to your *kulam* (family or *param̐parā*). This defines your duty to forefathers by perpetuating the *param̐parā*. This includes your duty to get married and beget children. Therefore, even *santati* maintenance is part of *pitṛ yajñā*. Three duties are highlighted here:

- *Prajā* – why does the Upaniṣad present begetting children as duty? Every living being in every species naturally perpetuates the *param̐parā* – we do not need Upaniṣad to tell us that. The Vedas tell us the married couple must beget children for spiritual progress. The uniqueness of our scriptures is that they convert even a natural and instinctive process into a sacred *sāadhanā* (a deliberate worship). Breathing is most fundamental to all the living beings. The Vedas convert this into say that even this fundamental process can be converted into *prāṇāyama sāadhanā*. *Prāṇāyama*, an instinctive process is converted into a deliberate *sāadhanā* by choosing the time and place, and the duration while maintaining the appropriate attitude. The next most instinctive activity is eating. Convert this instinctive eating process into *prāṇāgnihotra sāadhanā*. Consider your stomach as *prāṇa agniḥ* (*vaiśvānara agniḥ*) and convert whatever eat as an oblation. This deliberate *yajñā* consists of consuming appropriate quantity of food at the appropriate time and place with the appropriate attitude. [Swami Dayananda stopped giving talks in the open air because the food vendors distract the listeners].

In marriage, dharma is emphasized while *artha* and *kāma* are incidental [*sahadharma cāriṇi* and *dharma abhivṛtyartha vivāhaḥ*] – may you follow this as *saṁskāraḥ* (sacrament). Begetting a child is also called a *garbhādāna saṁskāraḥ*. When the child is born, a ritual called *jātakarma saṁskāraḥ* is performed. Naming the child involves *nāmakaraṇa saṁskāraḥ*. When the child is fed solid food for the first time, *annaprāsana saṁskāraḥ* is performed. The whole life including the natural processes are converted into deliberate *saṁskāra*.

- *Prajanaḥ* - one must go through proper vedic processes even to beget a child. These are called *vivāha saṁskāra* (wedding) and *garbhādāna saṁskāra*.
- *Prajātiḥ* – It is not enough that you have this proper attitude; you must make sure that your children also have it. Let them know that marriage is for spiritual growth and that the materialistic goals are secondary to dharma. Even in the choice of spouses, dharma is the primary consideration over *artha* and *kāma*. One should choose the appropriate spouse for religious and spiritual progress and not for frivolous reasons. When a flimsy reason brings the couple together, there is a risk that another flimsy reason will separate them. On the other hand, when a profound reason is used for coming together, the relationship will last forever. The literal meaning of the word *prajātiḥ* is to get grandchildren. Śaṅkarācārya interprets *Prajātiḥ* as: make your children also get married with proper attitude. The *sāstras* say that one should refrain from marriage only if he has a higher purpose in life. Thus, one should either become a *gṛhastha* or a *sannyāsī* – otherwise, the idle mind becomes a devil’s workshop. This comes under *pitṛ yajñā*.

Bhūta yajña, which is the worship of “lower beings” such as animals, plants etc. In modern language, it translates to respecting the ecological balance, i.e. being environment friendly. It is not mentioned here, but we will supply. In summary, we must perform *pañca mahā yajña* and observe values.

In this *anuvāka*, the Upaniṣad conducts a comparative study and highlights one *sādhana*. It says that *Brahma Yajña*, which it calls as *svādhyāya pravacana*, the study and propagation of scriptures, is the greatest *yajña*. Just as all vitamins are important for the physical health of the body, all values are important for spiritual health. Depending on the deficiency, a specific vitamin may be given more importance. Similarly, a specific *sādhana* may be stressed for some people. The scriptures may appear to criticize the other values to glorify a certain value, but it must be understood correctly that it is only to highlight the importance of that value and not to disparage the others. In Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, *satyam* is highlighted in verse 3.1.6 as the most important value. In the third chapter of this Upaniṣad, *tapas* is highlighted to such an extent that the Upaniṣad says that *tapas* itself is Brahman (*tapo brahmeti*). In this *anuvāka*, *svādhyāyaḥ* or scriptural study is highlighted and repeated many times, which indicates that the Upaniṣad is stressing its importance.

The Upaniṣad presents the opinion of three *ṛṣis* as to which *sādhana* is the most important. It then presents its own verdict on the best one.

सत्यम् इति सत्यवचाः रातीतरः - *satyam iti satyavacāḥ rātītarah* – *Rātītarah* is the name of a *ṛṣi* who espoused the value of *satyam* by taking the vow of speaking only the truth. As result, he received the title *satyavacāḥ* – the one who always speaks the truth. He says that truthfulness alone (*satyam iti*) is the highest value. In the context of *dharmaśāstra* (ethics and morality), *satyam* means speaking the truth. Śikṣāvallī deals with *dharmaśāstra* and therefore, *satyam* here means the verbal discipline of speaking the truth. The very word *satyam* will occur in Brahmānandavallī, the philosophical chapter of this Upaniṣad (*satyam-jnana-anantam-Brahma*) and there it should be translated as Reality, the pure Existence.

तपः इति तपोनित्यः पौरुशिष्टिः - *tapah iti taponityaḥ pauruṣiṣṭiḥ* – A *ṛṣi* by the name Pauruṣiṣṭiḥ espoused the life of austerity (*tapah*) and therefore, he was called *taponityaḥ*. In this *anuvāka* he says that austerity alone (*tapah iti*) is the highest *sādhana*.

स्वाध्यायः प्रवचनः एव इति नाकः मौद्गल्यः - *svādhyāyaḥ pravachanaḥ eva iti nākaḥ maudgalyaḥ* – The third ṛṣi is known by the name Maudgalyaḥ. He also has another name Nākaḥ. He says that *svādhyāya pravacana* (study and propagation of scriptures) is the highest discipline (*uttama sādhanā*).

The Upaniṣad passes the verdict:

तद् हि तपः - *tad hi tapaḥ* – *tat* means the third one – *svādhyāya pravacana* is the real *tapas* or the highest *sādhanā*.

तद् हि तपः - *tad hi tapaḥ* – repeated for emphasis

The Vedas' first instruction is to study the scriptures. If one studies the scriptures, the other instructions can be received through the scriptures (what an intelligent instruction!) during all the *āśramas* throughout the life. Make scriptures the permanent guide (*svādhyāyaḥ advetavyaḥ* is the Vedic instruction). Even Patañjali's *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*, which emphasizes meditation says that meditation should be tried only after the study of scriptures – meditation is the seventh of the eight steps while *svādhyāya* is part of *Niyama* which is the second step. Scriptural study is fundamental, based on which we can learn the theory of all the *sādhanās*. Without learning the theory how can one practice a *sādhanā* without knowing its significance and role?

Other notes:

1. In this *anuvāka*, *brahmayajña* is highlighted (*svādhyāyaḥ* and *pravacanam*). The word *pravacanam* also means *brahmayajña* as a ritual. It is a thanksgiving to the scriptures and the authors and their wives, with the first one being Vyasācārya (Kṛṣṇadvaipāyana). It should be performed everyday, but these days, people perform it once a year on the *āvāṇi avittam* day.
2. The *gṛhastha* is required to do five things daily:
 - *svaśāka Upaniṣad* – study a portion of the Upaniṣad in the branch of the Vedas he belongs to.
 - Bhagavad Gītā – pāraṇam of the entire Gītā at least a portion. If no time, at least chant verse 18.66.
 - *Viṣṇusahasranāmam* – If no time, at least chant: *śrīrāma rāmeti rame rāme manorame, sahasranāma tattulyam rāma nāma varānane*.

- Śri Rudram
- Puruṣasūktam

Anuvāka 10

अहं वृक्षस्य रेरिवा । कीर्तिः पृष्ठं गिरेरिव । ऊर्ध्वपवित्रो वाजिनीव स्वमृतमस्मि । द्रविणं सवर्चसम् । सुमेधा अमृतोऽक्षितः । इति त्रिशङ्कोर्वेदानुवचनम् ॥

ahaṃ vṛkṣasya rerivā / kīrtiḥ pṛṣṭhaṃ gireriva / ūrdhvapavitro vājīnīva svamṛtamasmī / draviṇaṃ savarcasam / sumedhā amṛto'akṣitaḥ / iti trīśaṅkorvedānuvacanam

इति - *iti* - The following वेदानुवचनम् - *vedānuvacanam* - is the declaration after the attainment of knowledge त्रिशङ्कोः - *trīśaṅkoḥ* - by Trīśaṅku – अहं रेरिवा - *ahaṃ rerivā* - "I am the sustainer वृक्षस्य - *vṛkṣasya* - of the tree (of the universe). कीर्तिः - *kīrtiḥ* - My fame इव - *iva* - is (as high) as पृष्ठं गिरेः - *pṛṣṭhaṃ gireḥ* - the peak of the mountain. ऊर्ध्वपवित्रः - *ūrdhva pavitraḥ* - I am absolutely pure. अस्मि - *asmī* - I am स्वमृतम् - *svamṛtam* - auspicious and immortal इव वाजिनी - *iva vājīnī* - like (the effulgence) in the sun. सवर्चसं द्रविणम् - *savarcasam draviṇam* - (I am) the effulgent wealth. सुमेधाः - *sumedhāḥ* - (I am) omniscient अमृतः अक्षितः - *amṛtaḥ akṣitaḥ* - and free from death and decay.

The following is the declaration after the attainment of knowledge by Trīśaṅku – "I am the sustainer of the tree (of the universe). My fame is (as high) as the peak of the mountain. I am absolutely pure. I am auspicious and immortal like (the effulgence) in the sun. (I am) the effulgent wealth. (I am) omniscient and free from death and decay.

This is a small section. In the previous nine sections, the Upaniṣad has discussed karma and *upāsanā* – the physical (*kāyika*) and mental (*mānasa*) activities respectively. Depending on the motive of the performer, they produce two types of benefits:

- Material benefits (*iha loka* and *para loka puṇya*), such as progeny (*prajā*), wealth (*paśuḥ*), magnetic personality (*brahmvarcasam*), great fame (*mahān kīrtiyā*) etc. are obtained through *sakāma karma sādhanās*.
- The seeker also can get spiritual *puṇya* (*sādhana catuṣṭaya sampattiḥ*) through *niṣkāma karma sādhanās*. With *sādhana catuṣṭaya sampattiḥ*, the seeker can seek

guru and the eligibility to pursue jñāna (*guruprāptiḥ*, *adhikāraprāptiḥ* and *śravaṇaprāptiḥ*).

If a person is interested only in jñāna and mokṣa and not in material benefits (like Naciketas in Kaṭhopanīṣad), the Upanīṣad gives him a special mantra to accelerate the spiritual journey for *jñāna-prāptiḥ*. [We have previously studied a mantra for *jñāna yogyatā prāptiḥ* in the fourth *anuvāka*]. In this *anuvāka*, the Upanīṣad quotes Triśaṅku ṛṣi (not the same Triśaṅku who was stuck in the interspace), who after attaining jñāna (*veda anuvacanam*), declares that the glories of Brahman are my glories. After attaining jñāna, I discover that I am Brahman. Then, instead of saying Brahman is *satyam-jñānam-anantam*, I will claim that I am *satyam-jñānam-anantam*. Instead of claiming that Brahman is *jagat-kāraṇam*, I will claim that I am *jagat-kāraṇam* as stated in Kaivalya Upanīṣad:

मय्येव सकलं जातं, मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

मयि सर्वं लयं याति, तद् ब्रह्माद्वयमस्म्यहम् ॥ १९ ॥

Mayyeva sakalaṁ jātaṁ, mayi sarvaṁ pratiṣṭhitam ।

Mayi sarvaṁ layaṁ yāti, tad brahmādvayamasmyaham ॥ 19 ॥

Everything is born in me alone; everything is based on me alone; everything resolves into me alone. I am that nondual Brahman.

In chapter 10, Krishna said that all the glories of the world belong to *Īśvara*. This ṛṣi says that all the glories belong to me. I must repeat the declaration of *Triśaṅku*. If I have not known that I am Brahman, making this claim may appear meaningless. However, training (or rehearsal) prepares me.

The advaitin said soham (I am He) and a dvaitin said that it was blasphemous and added the letter dā, making it dāsoham meaning that I am only a humble servant of God. Then the advaitin added another letter sa, making it sadāsoham, meaning that I am always He (not just after mokṣa). The dvaitin added another dā making it dāsadāsoham, which means that I am a humble servant of servant of God. The advaitin added another sa, making it sadāsadāsoham. The argument is still going on!

How long do you want to continue as a slave? Come to the scriptures to free yourself from slavery. Slavery is a bondage whether you are a slave of an ordinary person or God. Slavery is *saṁsāra* whether you are a *jīva-dāsa* or *Īśvara-dāsa*. You must from

jīva-dāsa to *Īśvara-dāsa* first and then eventually strive to claim: *Īśvara aham asmi*. This is a rehearsal mantra; by repeating it, we will find it easier to discover it as a fact (after *śravaṇam* and *mananam*). Once the discovery is made, we will find that it is not arrogance, sacrilege or a false claim, but it is the ultimate truth. If it is otherwise, the Upaniṣads would not have prescribed this.

अहं रेरिवा - *aham rerivā* – I am the activator – the one who enlivens. I am the energizer and life giver.

वृक्षस्य - *vṛkṣasya* – in this context *vṛkṣaḥ* means the universal tree (*saṁsāra vṛkṣaḥ*). I am the very of root of the universal tree (described as *ūrdhva mūlaḥ* in Kaṭhōpaniṣad and Chapter 15 of the Bhagavad Gītā). Without my support, the world cannot exist. *Mithyā* dream cannot exist without the waker, and thus, this *mithyā* universe cannot exist without I, the *satyaṁ brahma*.

The universe has no independent existence. I support the universe by lending existence to it just as I lend existence to the dream world. The proof is, when I wake up, the dream world loses its existence. Without the Consciousness, the world cannot have its existence. The body is conscious only by borrowing Consciousness from *Ātmā*. The body-mind-complex (BM), the reflecting medium (RM) enjoys only the reflected Consciousness (RC) lent by me, the Original Consciousness (OC). [I am *sattā caitanya pradātā* and *viśvādhāram*].

कीर्तिः - *kīrtiḥ* – means fame and glory. I have the greatest glory. In Chapter 10 of the Bhagavad Gītā, Krishna says that all glories belong to Him and that you are only the pipeline through which His glory is flowing. Can the pipe claim that he is the provider of water? The tank above it is the source of water. The glory of Bhagavan expresses through different people. Here, Trīsaṅku says: I have all the glories of the universe.

गिरेः पृष्ठम् इव – *gireḥ pṛṣṭam iva* – (my glory) is as high as the peak of a mountain.

ऊर्ध्वं पवित्रः अहम् अस्मि - *ūrdhva pavitraḥ aham asmi* – I am the purest of the pure. I can remove some of my *pāpam* through remedial actions (*prāyaścitta karma*). I can attain only relative purity in this manner. However, *jñāna* gives me absolute purity (*ūrdhvaṁ pavitram*)

अमृतम् अस्मि - *amṛtam asmi* – I am immortal or eternal.

वाजिनी इव - *vājinī iva* – like the (light of the) sun. My immortality is eternal like the sunlight (*sūryasya nitya prakāśavat*). *Vājī* means Sūryaḥ. *Vājam* means food or *annam* [this is the first thing asked in *camakam* after praising the Lord through *namakam*). Sūryaḥ is called *Vājī* because by his grace, he nourishes *annam*.

Trīsaṅku says that this was attained through

द्रविणम् - *draviṇam* wealth. I have this greatest wealth which is

सवर्चसम् - *savarcasam* – brilliant (*ātmajñānam*). *Jñānam* is brilliant because it removes the darkness of ignorance. When a student has a great capacity for absorbing knowledge, we call him brilliant student. This wealth is never destroyed or depleted by giving freely to the others. Infact, it increases by giving to the others [*vidyādhanam sarvadhanāt pradhānam*].

सुमेधा - *sumedhā* – I am the omniscient Brahman [*sarvajñam brahma aham asmi*]. I alone illuminate every mind and I know everything through all the minds. Minds are many, but the Consciousness is one. All knowledge belongs to me alone.

अमृतोक्षितः - *amṛtokṣitaḥ* – *amṛtaḥ* means eternal and *akṣitaḥ* means free from decay [other words in Sanskrit: *kṣayarahitaḥ* or *apakṣaya rahitaḥ*]. I am free from decay and death. Another meaning is: *amṛtena ukṣitaḥ asmi* which means I am soaked in the nectar of immortality [*ukṣitaḥ* = soaked]. I am soaked in immortal wisdom.

The essence is: I am Brahman (*aham brahma asmi*)

इति त्रिशाङ्कोः वेदानुवचनम् - *iti trīsaṅkoḥ vedānuvacanam* – this has been declared by Trīsaṅku after gaining knowledge.

If we repeat this mantra, it may not mean much now, but it will be meaningful after we gain knowledge. It will be easier to own up the identity of Brahman.

Anuvāka 11

वेदमनूच्याचार्योऽन्तेवासिनमनुशास्ति । सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः । आचार्याय प्रियं धनमाहृत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः । सत्यान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । धर्मान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । कुशलान्न प्रमदितव्यम् । भूत्यै न प्रमदितव्यम् । स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् । देवपितृकार्याभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् । मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो भव । आचार्यदेवो भव । अतिथिदेवो भव ।

vedamanūcyācāryō'ntevāsinamanuśāsti / satyaṃ vada / dharmam cara / svādhyāyānmā pramadaḥ / ācāryāya priyaṃ dhanamāhṛtya prajātantum mā vyavacchetsiḥ / satyāna pramaditavyam / dharmāna pramaditavyam / kuśalāna pramaditavyam / bhūtyai na pramaditavyam / svādhyāyaprvacanābhyāṃ na pramaditavyam / devapitrkāryābhyāṃ na pramaditavyam / mātṛdevo bhava / pitṛdevo bhava / ācāryadevo bhava / atithidevo bhava

अनूच्य वेदम् - *anūcyā vedam* - Having taught the Vedas, आचार्यः अनुशास्ति - *ācāryaḥ anuśāsti* - the teacher instructs अन्तेवासिनम् - *antevāsinam* - the student thus – वद सत्यम् - *vada satyam* - Speak the truth. चर धर्मम् - *cara dharmam* - Follow dharma. मा प्रमदः - *mā pramadaḥ* - May you not deviate from स्वाध्यायात् - *svādhyāyāt* - the study of the scriptures. आहृत्य - *āhṛtya* - After offering प्रियं धनम् - *priyaṃ dhanam* - the desired wealth आचार्याय - *ācāryāya* - to the teacher, मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः - *mā vyavacchetsiḥ* - may you not break प्रजातन्तुम् - *prajātantum* - the family-lineage. न प्रमदितव्यम् - *na pramaditavyam* - May you not deviate सत्यात् - *satyāt* - from the truth. न प्रमदितव्यम् - *na pramaditavyam* - May you not deviate धर्मात् - *dharmāt* - from dharma. न प्रमदितव्यम् - *na pramaditavyam* - May you not deviate कुशलात् - *kuśalāt* - from (your own) well-being. न प्रमदितव्यम् - *na pramaditavyam* - May you not deviate भूत्यै - *bhūtyai* - from your propitious activities. न प्रमदितव्यम् - *na pramaditavyam* - May you not deviate स्वाध्यायप्रवचनाभ्याम् - *svādhyāyaprvacanābhyām* - from the study and teaching of the scriptures. न प्रमदितव्यम् - *na pramaditavyam* - May you not deviate देवपितृकार्याभ्याम् - *devapitrkāryābhyām* - from the worship of gods and ancestors. भव मातृदेवः - *bhava mātṛdevaḥ* - May (your) mother be a god to you. भव पितृदेवः - *bhava pitṛdevaḥ* - May (your) father be a god to you. भव आचार्यदेवः - *bhava ācāryadevaḥ* - May (your) teacher be a god to you. भव अतिथिदेवः - *bhava atithidevaḥ* - May (your) guest to be a god to you.

Having taught the Vedas, the teacher instructs the student thus – Speak the truth. Follow dharma. May you not deviate from the study of the scriptures. After offering the desired wealth to the teacher, may you not break the family-lineage. May you not deviate from the truth. May you not deviate from dharma. May you not deviate from (your own) well-being. May you not deviate from your propitious activities. May you not deviate from the study and teaching of the scriptures. May you not deviate from the worship of gods and ancestors. May (your) mother be a god to you. May (your) father be a god to you. May (your) teacher be a god to you. May (your) guest be a god to you.

The preceding ten sections have discussed all the preparatory disciplines required for *Brahmavidyā*: karma yoga consisting of the *pañca mahā yajñas*, various *upāsanaś*, and values (*daivī sampat*) such as *ṛtam*, *satyam*, *tapaḥ*, *damaḥ* etc. The Upaniṣads prescribed two important *japas*: one for *jñāna-yogyatā prāptiḥ* (4th *anuvāka*) and another for *jñāna-prāptiḥ* (10th *anuvāka*). The Upaniṣad will now conclude Śikṣāvallī in the 11th *anuvāka* where all the previous discussions are reiterated and reminded in a summary form (*upasamhāra anuvāka*).

In this *anuvāka*, the Upaniṣad is condensing the *dharmasāstra*, which is part of the *Veda-pūrva bhāga*, that deals with the religious way of life. The religious life is necessary to attain *jñāna-yogyatā*. Thus, the process is to adopt with religion first in the family life and then transcend it. *Sannyāsa āśrama* represents the transcendence of the religious way of life. When a person takes up *sannyāsa*, he transcends the religious life by physically removing everything associated with it – the sacred thread, the tuft and the family life.

Dharmasāstra, the analysis on *Veda-pūrva* has been done elaborately by Jaimini Maḥarṣi through a set of 2000 + *sūtras* known as *pūrva-mīmāṃsā sūtrāṇi*, also known as *dharmajijñāsā sūtrāṇi*. This work is very voluminous work, nearly four times the size of *Brahmasūtra*, which has 555 *sūtras*. *Brahmsūtra* has four chapters, while *pūrva-mīmāṃsā* has 12 chapters. Jaimini Maḥarṣi calls it *dharmasāstra*, which begins with *athāto dharmajijñāsā*. It is very elaborate consisting of numerous prominent rituals. It describes what our attitude should be towards life, our body, family members and this creation. How should we look at the rain, the sun, the moon, the earth and even the insects? Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad discusses what our attitude should be towards health, wealth, strength and even ants! Ethics or morals make up the third component of *dharmasāstra*. Thus, *dharmasāstra* consisting of the three components, rituals,

attitude and ethics has been analyzed by Jaimini through the *mīmāṃsā sūtrāṇi*. Only after mastering the *dharmasāstra*, can one become fit for *Brahmasātra*. Without the *dharmapurushārtha*, *mokṣapurushārtha* is impossible, just as it is not possible to secure a graduate degree without a Bachelor's. The Upaniṣad summarizes the *dharmasāstra* in the 11th *anuvāka* (*dharmasāstra saṅgrahaḥ* or *pūrva-mīmāṃsā saṅgrahaḥ*).

When should one study *dharmasāstra*? Is it of any value to study this at the fag-end of life when one is unable to do much? Since the *dharmasāstra* consists of preparatory disciplines, it must be studied before the Vedānta. The students in schools and colleges do not require the study of the Vedānta, but they do of *dharmasāstra*. Teaching the Vedānta to them is counterproductive and may even be dangerous. The children are not ready for *jīva-Īśvara aikyam*. They need to be taught that *Īśvara* is the *swāmi* (master) and that they are the servants. The Upaniṣad says that *dharmasāstra* must be studied in the *brahmacharya āśrama* (the student life). The study cannot be in the *gṛhastha āśrama* because one is so busy with activities that he cannot spend quality time on the study. Furthermore, a *gṛhastha* must apply *dharmasāstra* in life; it becomes difficult to learn as he performs intense actions. Study requires a relaxed mind; where there is responsibility, there will be stress and strain. Responsibility without stress is possible only for a *jñānī*. Therefore, it is prescribed that all studies be done in an *āśrama* other than *gṛhasthāśrama*. A *sannyāsī*, has no relationship and therefore, has no responsibility like a *brahmacārī*. Thus, *sannyāsāśrama* also provides an ideal condition for study.

According to the Vedic vision, the study in the *brahmacharya āśrama* is divided into two stages:

- *Veda adhyayana*: In this first stage, the student learns to chant the Vedas by learning the words correctly. In this stage, the meaning of the words is not taught. (*artha-rahita-śabda-grahaṇam*). Although the mind of the child cannot think in a mature way, it can memorize very quickly (absorbs like a sponge). Therefore, one must be very careful of any conversation in front of a child because the child will absorb and repeat it and create uncomfortable moments. In *Veda-adhyayanam*, the student learns to chant mantras in both *Veda-pūrva* ad *Veda-anta*.
- *Veda mīmāṃsā*– Learning the meaning of the Vedas. This is restricted to the study of the meaning of *Veda-pūrva* (*veda-pūrva-mīmāṃsā*).

The study of *dharmasāstram* - religious way of life, healthy attitude and healthy values – is not merely for academic interest, but for the implementation later in life. The *brahmacāri* has limited contact in the world, i.e. only with his parents, guru and the fellow students. He has a very limited scope for implementation in the *Brahmacarya āśrama*. The concentration is only on theory (*adhyayana-pradhānam*). They will be practiced when he enters the *gṛhastha āśrama*, which is *anuṣṭhāna-pradhānam*. The *gṛhastha* will acquire *sādhana catuṣṭaya sampattiḥ* when he implements successfully what he learned in the *brahmacarya āśrama*. Per the Vedic design, the only purpose of *gṛhasthāśrama* is to acquire *sādhana catuṣṭaya sampattiḥ*. Once a person is successful, *gṛhasthāśrama* is no longer relevant. It is like taking the juice out of sugarcane – the cane loses its relevance. That is why it is called *āśrama*; it is only a stage in life and not the destination. Family life is only an intermediate stage in life and not the destination.

ऋणानु बन्धरूपेण पशुपत्नी सुतालयाः ऋणक्षये क्षयं यान्ति तत्रता परिदेवना ।

Ṛṇānu bandharūpeṇa paśupatiṇī sutālayāḥ; ṛṇakṣaye kṣayam yānti tatrataḥ paridevanā

Because of various *ṛṇams* (debts) of karmas, spouse and children come together. When the adhesive karma is gone (*ṛṇakṣaye*), this association ends in dissociation – either they or I leave. Once *sādhana catuṣṭaya sampattiḥ* is acquired, one must exit *gṛhasthāśrama* by either gradually withdrawing mentally or taking up *sannyasa*. All the responsibilities must be handed over to the next generation so that the seeker can take up the second student life. Once the responsibilities are gone, the relaxed and detached mind can focus on *Veda-anta-mīmāṃsā* (*brahmasūtrāṇi-Upaniṣad paṭhanam*). This Vedic design is pointed out in the 11th *anuvāka*.

वेदम् अनूच्य - *vedam anūcya* – The guru teaches vedic chanting to the student (*vedam śabdam pāṭhayitvā*). This is just chanting correctly following the rules without learning the meaning in the first part of *brahmacarya āśrama*. In the next part,

आचार्यः - *ācāryaḥ* – the guru who teaches the students according to their needs – the basic vedic chanting for all and then the skills specific to their profession. For example, archery will be taught to a *kṣatriya* and *arthaśāstra* (commerce) to a *vaiśya*. Thus, an *ācārya* is one who collects the *śāstras* (*ācinoti*), persuades the student to rigorously follow (*ācāre sthāpayatyati*) and more importantly, practices what he preaches

(*svayam ācarate yastu*). The student learns more from observation of the teacher, the role model than his words. He teaches the *dharmaśāstra* consisting of the religious rituals, attitude and ethics. This is called *anuvāsanam*. Whom does he teach?

अन्तेवासिनम् - *antevāsinam* – a resident student. In the *gurukulam*, the student lived with the guru so that he had a role model to observe and learn. In the formative years, the child needs role models in the form of mother, father and guru. If they do not serve as models, other dubious personalities in the society will; the society will be gradually destroyed. *Ante* means near or intimate (*samīpe*). The guru has a tremendous responsibility because many eyes are watching. He needs to be always extremely careful with behavior [he only has privacy in the bathroom!]. The guru felt comfortable because he was already naturally leading such a life.

अनुशास्ति - *anuvāsti* – The guru teaches the student *dharmaśāstram* after *Veda-adhyayanam*. Some interpret this *anuvāka* as a convocational address, but *Sanīkarācārya* says that it is not because it is not given at the end of *brahmacarya āśrama*, but between *Veda-adhyayanam* and *dharmaśāstra adhyayanam*. The chanting part is complete and the meaning part begins now. This section is a summary - the salient features are mentioned here.

सत्यं वद - *satyam vada* – be truthful – maintain harmony between thought and speech. *Satyam* represents the harmonized whole. The integration of thought and speech indicates the integration of all organs, namely, sense organs (*jñānendriyāṇi*), organs of action (*karmendriyāṇi*), the physiological systems (*pañca prāṇas*), and the mind and intellect (*antaḥkaraṇa*). In *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, these are trained by *pratyāhāra*, *āsanā*, *prāṇāyāma* and *dhyāna* respectively. Violation of *satyam* causes the disintegration of personality, which in turn causes strain and stress. This will weaken a person both physically and spiritually. In verse 3.1.6, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad says *satyameva jayate* – one can win mokṣa only with integration (*satyam*).

धर्मं चर - *dharmaṁ cara* – Jaimini's *pūrva mīmāṃsā sūtra* defines dharma as all religious – *śrauta* and *smārta* – activities enjoined or commanded by the scriptures. *Cara* is *ācara*, which means follow or perform. Dharma is not for talking, but for doing. [If you merely talk dharma – *dharmaṁ vada* - it will become *dharmaṁ vadha*

(destroy)!]. A few of these karmas are mentioned here; these are just reminders of what has been mentioned before:

स्वाध्यायात् मा प्रमदः - *svādhyāyāt mā pramadaḥ* – never neglect scriptural study. Even if you are in *gṛhasthāśrama* with a very busy schedule, you should allot some time, even if only a couple of hours a week for the study of scriptures. *Śravaṇam* must be followed by *mananam* through contemplation and discussion.

To implement *dharmaśāstra*, an appropriate infrastructure is necessary because *pañca mahā yajña* requires resources such as house, priests, wife, food etc. Only *gṛhasthāśrama* can provide this. *Brahmacaryāśrama* and *sannyāsāśrama* provide the infrastructure for the intellectual study of theory, but they lack the resources for practice and service to the society. To provide service, a *sannyāsī* must become a form of *gṛhastha* by establishing and managing institution with a trust to collect money. So, the teacher says that after learning the *dharmaśāstra*, one must enter *gṛhasthāśrama* by getting married. However, he asks the student to first give the *gurudakṣiṇā* before he gets married, so that the needs of the family do not present an obstacle to fulfill that obligation.

आचार्यप्रियं धनमाहृत्य – *ācāryapriyaṁ dhanmāhṛtya* – after completing the studies, the *brahmacārī* displayed his knowledge of the Vedas in front of a king or some philanthropists and earned money. He then offered the wealth desired by the *ācārya* (*ācāryapriyam*) as *gurudakṣiṇā*. This wealth will be used to fund the next generation of students. In our tradition, knowledge is always given free; the funding is done by the outgoing students.

After offering *gurudakṣiṇā* (*dhanam āhṛtya*), the *brahmacārī* should get married. What is the purpose of marriage?

प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः - *prajātantuṁ mā vyavacchetsiḥ* – may you not break your *kulaparamparā*, which alone can propagate and maintain *dharmaśāstra* in the future generations. This was discussed in detail in verse 1.40 of the *Gītā*. A child can imbibe the basic values and the faith in the Vedas only from the religious way of life taught by the parents. The faith cannot be cultivated through logic because we cannot logically prove that the Vedas are valid. Therefore, before logical thinking starts, the parents must expose the child to the atmosphere in which the Vedas, *mahātmās*,

sannyāsīs, temples are etc. are respected. Children observe and learn these and this must be done within the first 5 years. It is very difficult to inculcate later. Between 5 to 7 years of age, the child's mind is pliable like wet clay. What cannot be logically proven must be imbibed in those years. Only the strong family can give religious value to the child. Therefore, in every society, for the religious life to thrive, the family must be strong. When the family life is broken, religious life breaks down. The teacher says that the student should get married for the perpetuation of religious life. [*tantum* means *paramparā* or lineage).

Once the graduate enters *grhasthāsrāma*, he should not forget the values he has learned. He is reminded:

सत्यात् न प्रमदितव्यम् - *satyāt na pramaditavyam* – May you not neglect your commitment to values. *Satyam* is the speaking of the truth, which, in this context represents all values and attitudes. This is *satyam* of *dharmasāstra*. *Satyam* of the *Vedānta śāstra* is Brahman.

धर्मात् न प्रमदितव्यम् - *dharmāt na pramaditavyam* – May you not neglect the religious way of living. The religious discipline starts with waking up before sunrise. Our scriptures say that the sun represents God and he arrives each day to bless us. We should wake up and be ready to pray when he comes. Prayer before eating is another important religious activity (*ācārah*). The mark on the forehead is the reminder that God is in us. By touching the palms when greeting someone, we indicate that both the *jīvās* are essentially the same (*Īśvarasvarūpam*).

कुशलात् न प्रमदितव्यम् – *kuśalāt na pramaditavyam* – May you not neglect your own well-being. In the name of serving the society, you need not and should not neglect your own personal interests. The Vedas do not recommend that you fast and give the food to the others. Just as you have the duty to the society, you also have duty to your own body. Therefore, take care of the body first – eat, rest etc.

In the name of service to the world, you need not neglect or torture your body. Bhagavan has given this *manuṣya janma* to attain mokṣa. The body is not given merely to serve the society. Service to society is part of your own growth (*cittaśuddhi*). After acquiring *cittaśuddhi*, you should withdraw from social service also. If you are going to serve the society all your life, when are you going to get self-knowledge? In the

name of service, don't forget the duty to yourself. Only after getting jñāna and mokṣa, you no longer have the duty to yourself (Tamil: அவிழ்த்து விட்ட மாடு மாதிரி – free like a cow let loose). After getting mokṣa, you can again dedicate the entire life for the society (*loka-sangrahaḥ*). Until you get *ātmajñānam*, you have the duty to yourself. The Vedas say this: being selfish is not wrong; it is only wrong to be selfish at the expense of the others. It is your duty to take care of your well-being and your family's first.

भूत्यैः न प्रमदितव्यम् – *bhutyaiḥ na pramaditavyam* – *bhūtiḥ* means prosperity. Never neglect the acquisition of wealth. Money (Lakshmi Devi) is very important. Through Lakshmi alone, you reach Sarasvati. Earn plenty, but give in plenty also. We are never against earning, but if giving is not proportional to the earnings, it is called greed (*lobhaḥ*). There is nothing wrong in desiring wealth and ambition. The more you earn, the more you should share. The other three *āśramas* are dependent on *gṛhasthāśrama's* earnings and therefore, they will never object to your earnings! Earn, but also give - what a beautiful Vedic vision! When discussing *āvahanti homa*, four points were highlighted regarding wealth:

Dhanam dharmārtham – the money is meant for noble service (*pañca mahā yajñā*) and not for private entertainment only

Dharmaḥ cittaśuddhyartham – only when you do dharma through wealth, you will get purity. [The teacher will discuss charity (*dānam*) shortly].

Cittaśuddhiḥ jñānārtham – only with *cittaśuddhi* can one gain jñāna.

Jñānam mokṣārthaḥ – Through jñāna, you attain mokṣa [*mokṣa ātmānandārtham* (*ātmanyeva ātmanā tushtiḥ*). Ānanda is *Paramapuruṣārtha*].

स्वाध्याय प्रवचानाभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् - *svādhyāya pravacanābhyām na pramaditavyam* – Scriptural study is very important. Otherwise, you will only earn and never spend. Anything stagnant is sickening. Stagnant food produces extra weight. Stagnant money will cause problems in the society. The scriptures encourage you to give and therefore, one should keep in touch with the scriptures. These are reminders of *pañca mahā yajñā*:

देवपितृकार्याभ्यां न प्रमदितव्यम् – *devapitṛkāryābhyāṃ na pramaditavyam* – Worship of God is essential. Bhagavatam gives a nice example: to nourish a tree, pour water only at the root even though you want to water every cell of the tree. You know that water from the root will reach every cell in an invisible manner. Similarly, the universe is huge tree with many needy people. It is impossible for you to help every individual in the world. Therefore, the Vedas prescribe a method: serve or contribute to the universal tree whose root is *Īśvara*. [Verse 15.1 of the Bhagavad Gītā].

Offering a spoonful of water, regularly worship *Īśvara* (root of the tree) asking for the welfare of the entire world:

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु
मा कश्चिद् दुःख भाग्भवेत् ॥
sarve bhavantu sukhinaḥ
sarve santu nirāmayāḥ
sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantū
mā kaścīd duḥkha bhāgbhavet

It is a simple and deep prayer that will reach everyone in the entire universe. It is invisible just like the water reaching the cell from the root. The world is full of calamities such as war, terrorist attacks, earthquake etc. where people suffer and die. You cannot individually help everyone, but *devayajñāḥ* will. Therefore, never give up daily worship. *Devayajñā* gives two benefits: the prayers will help the world and in the process, you will purify the mind [it is our tendency to ask, “what is in it for me?"]. Two-minute *pūjā* for the sake of every living being (not just human beings) is sufficient and in the process, your mind gets ready for Brahmānandavallī, the second chapter of Taittirīya Upaniṣad.

Similarly, *pitṛkāryam*, the worship of the ancestors in the form of *śrāddha*, *tarpaṇa* etc. is also extremely important. If they are reborn in any form, it will reach them in an appropriate way. Even if they are not reborn, (because they have attained *videha mukti*), the benefit will go to the ancestors who had no children to make that offering. Even if we do not believe in this, we must perform this karma to attain *cittaśuddhi*. Whether the ancestors (*pitṛ*) require *śrāddha* and *tarpaṇa* is immaterial; do not neglect them at the expense of your own spiritual growth.

Thus, the ethics and values and *pañca mahā yajñā* have been addressed so far. In the following portion, the Upaniṣad discusses the attitude (*bhāvanā*) towards other beings starting from your own parents. The child is exposed to the parents in the beginning years. If he/she does not have the right attitude at this stage, how will he/she succeed in the later years?

मातृ देवः भव – *mātr̥ devaḥ bhava* – May you look upon your mother as God. May you invoke *Īśvara* in your mother. Mother is not God (even though essentially, she is, as everybody else is), because she has her own personal limitations, weaknesses etc. Irrespective of the nature of the mother, she deserves worship (*namskāra*). *Namaskāra* is offered to *Īśvara* who is invoked in the mother; it is like offering *namaskāra* to the temple idol, which is made of an inert stone. This is also like invoking the country when we salute the flag. The child has the first relationship with the mother because the contact starts in the womb and therefore, she deserves a reverential attitude.

पितृ देवः भव – *pitṛ devaḥ bhava* – May you develop a reverential attitude towards your father also in spite of his limitations. Most fathers have *rāga-dveṣas*, weaknesses, deficiency etc; we Very rarely do we find a *jñānī* father. Never judge, argue and complain that your father has not brought you up properly. Most fathers are sincere and they try their best to raise their children. This sincerity alone deserves a reverential attitude.

आचार्यदेवः भव – *ācāryadevaḥ bhava* – May you treat your *ācārya* as God. In the first few years, the intense contact is with the mother. In the next few years, it is with the father. The healthy relationship with the mother and the father in the early years develops a healthy mind. The next significant relationship is between the child and the teacher. In psychology, the person who contributes to the psychological well-being it is called "significant other" – *mātā*, *pitā* and guru. If these three relationships are healthy, the child will grow up to be a mature adult. If there is a deficiency in any of these relationships, the child may face psychological problems. In our tradition, when we do *namaskāra* (*abhivādaye*), we introduce ourselves giving our *gotra* to present our background. When arranging marriage, we carefully check the background (*kula* and *gotra*) to see how one has been brought up. The stability of the family reflects

the stability of the mind of a person. Verse 1.1.17 of Kaṭhōpanisad says that a mature human being is one who has had these relationship in an ideal manner.

Therefore, you develop a proper attitude towards your teacher – *ācārya devaḥ bhava (gurur brahma gurur viṣṇuḥ, gururdevo maheśvaraḥ)*.

अतिथिदेवः भव – *atithidevaḥ bhava* – may you consider the guest (*atithi*) as *Īśvara*. This attitude was very relevant and prevalent in the Vedic society. This is no longer the case today. However, you should appreciate it from the point of view of the Vedic society. In the Vedic times (even as late as two generations ago), people travelled long distances for weeks and months on pilgrimage to places such as Kāśī, Badrinath etc. They took leave of their families because they were not sure if they would even return. On such long travels, the pilgrims needed boarding. The Vedic society discouraged the sale of food; it must be given free of charge. Restaurants were not prevalent then. The pilgrims took shelter in some house or the other in some village on the way. The homes were build with verandas (Tamil: திண்ணை - *tiṇṇai*), which were neither inside nor outside the house. There was a shelter without disturbing the privacy of the family. That family fed the guests/visitors. A pilgrim was a total stranger, the first qualification for an *atithi*. The second characteristic was that he arrived without a prior notice. When something happens without our planning, we view it as God's will. The pilgrim also did not deliberately choose the host. Therefore, the *śāstras* say that only *Īśvara's* will brought the guest and the host together. Therefore, the host is obligated to feed the guest and give him shelter. The host also need not worry because the guest is on a pilgrimage and so, he will leave soon. He is on the move and he is likely not to stay more than one night [*na vidyate dvitīyāt tithiḥ yasya*]. In the Vedic society, when the guest stayed for a night, the host was urged to treat him like *Īśvara*. This practice comes under *manuṣya yajñāḥ*.

Nowadays, it is neither necessary nor practical to host an unknown guest. An unknown person is viewed suspiciously and rightfully so for the sake of safety. Moreover, we need not become an *atithi* because facilities are available today. We need not go unannounced because communication facilities are available. Safety is also a consideration to be careful with people who are unknown *atithis*. In general, staying more than a day is a torture (*himsā*) to the host. The only place that you are welcome for more than a day is your father-in-law's place. Even there, you wear out your welcome after five or six days. Therefore, do not unnecessarily become someone's

atithi without proper notice. *Atithi devo bhava* is only for the Vedic society and not for the present one.

Other notes

1. Chanting is *punya karma*. This was described as *svādhyāya yajñah* in Chapter 4 of the Gītā. Chanting has the capacity to purify the mind of the chanter as well as the ones who listen to it. The society and the nation get benefit out of Vedic chanting. The loud chanting of a large group of vaidikas is called *Veda-ghoṣaḥ*. The *ghoṣaḥ* can purify the environment; even the plants and the trees are believed to grow better when they listen to *Veda-śabda*.
2. *Satyam vada* - In most religions, God is divine and the world is secular – a clear division is maintained. There is no such division in the Vedic religion, which teaches that God Himself manifests as the visible world. Therefore, everything in this world is divine. Swami Dayananda Saraswati beautifully said: we don't have secular-sacred division at all because everything is sacred for us. We must make a life-long attempt to cultivate this most fundamental attitude. This *bhāvanā* (attitude) along with the values (*daivī sampat*) is represented by the word satyam.
3. There should be a balance between religious life and ethics. Those who follow the values, criticize the rituals and those who only follow the rituals neglect the values. The Upaniṣads say that both are equally important.
4. To maintain the inspiration, keep contact with the scriptures. Maintain direct contact with *satsang* and *mahātmās* or read their words on the scriptures.
5. If you receive benefit out of an activity without *dakṣiṇā*, it is considered a *tāmasik* activity (refer: verse 17.13 of the Gītā). Copying the CD without buying is a *tāmasik* activity because you are illegally copying it without proportionately compensating (it is an *adakṣiṇā* CD). *Adakṣiṇā* is an incomplete karma because *dakṣiṇā* is a part (*aṅga*) of an activity. You should not receive anything free. If you do receive a gift, you must give the value of the gift as donation to some institution. The *śāstras* declare that a mind with ṛṇam (debt) is an impure mind. You must give what the *ācārya* will be pleased with - generally he will be pleased with anything you give. You must give according to your capacity.
6. Per the *śāstras*, a person must belong to one *āśrama* or the other (*anāśramī na tiṣṭhet*). If he is outside the fold of the four *āśramas*, he does not have a designation. Without a designation, his duty cannot be identified (just like in a company). The *śāstras* allow a person to continue to be a *brahmacārī*, provided he stays in the *gurukulam* permanently and serves the *ācārya* and help him in the *āśrama* affairs. For that, he must take a vow called *naiṣṭhika brahmacaryam vratam*. Bhīṣma and Āñjaneya are examples. Otherwise, he must choose one of the three other *āśramas*. If he decides to take up *sannyāsa*, he must go to *gurukula*

again for *Vedānta-vicāra*. This is an exceptional course; the general course is to enter *gṛhasthāśrama*. The Upaniṣad considers it the general course because only *gṛhasthāśrama* has the resources to maintain the infrastructure for religious activities.

यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि । तानि सेवितव्यानि । नो इतराणि । यान्यसमाकं सुचरितानि । तानि त्वयोपास्यानि । नो इतराणि । ये के चास्मच्छ्रेयांसो ब्राह्मणाः । तेषां त्वयासने न प्रश्नसितव्यम् ।
yānyanavadyāni karmāṇi / tāni sevitavyāni / no itarāṇi I yānyasamākaṅ sucharitāni / tāni tvayopāsyāni / no itarāṇi / ye ke cāsmacchreyāṅso brāhmaṇaḥ / teṣāṃ tvayāsane na praśvasitavyam

तानि कर्माणि - *tāni karmāṇi* - Those actions (of ours) यानि अनवद्यानि - *yāni anavadyāni* - which are not unbecoming सेवितव्यानि - *sevitavyāni* - should be followed; नो इतराणि - *no itarāṇi* - not the others. तानि अस्माकम् - *tāni asmākam* - Those (actions) of ours यानि सुचरितानि - *yāni sucharitāni* - which are noble उपास्यानि - *upāsyāni* - should be followed त्वया - *tvayā* - by you; नो इतराणि - *no itarāṇi* - not the others. तेषाम् - *teṣām* - When those ये के ब्राह्मणाः च - *ye ke brahmaṇaḥ ca* - who are cultured and श्रेयांसः अस्मत् - *śreyāṃsaḥ asmat* - superior to us आसने - *āsane* - are in session, त्वया न प्रश्नसितव्यम् - *tvayā na praśvasitavyam* - may you not even breathe (a word).

Those actions (of ours) which are not unbecoming should be followed; not the others. Those (actions) of ours which are noble should be followed by you; not the others. When those who are cultured and superior to us are in session, may you not even breathe (a word).

Here the teacher gives an important piece of advice. There are three sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for *dharmaśāstra* (*dharmajñānam*):

- *Śruti granthās* (The Vedas) – these are the original and primary source of dharma (*vedochilo dharmamūlam*). The *Veda-pūrva* especially is the *dharmamūlam* (*mūlam* means *pramāṇam*).
- *Smṛti granthās* – these are the secondary scriptures written by various *ṛṣis* and *ācāryas* based on the *śrutis*. The *ṛṣis* were not the original creators of these teachings; they merely paraphrased, elaborated and concretized the abstract themes of *śruti* through stories and commentaries. Common people understand

the concepts through stories. The values are hidden the *śrutis* like butter in milk. Butter must be extracted by churning the milk. Similarly, *ācāryas* churned the Vedas to bring out the teachings.

- *Śiṣṭa ācāraḥ* - the lifestyle of those who have assimilated the *śruti* and *smṛti*. Their lifestyle is no longer governed by personal *rāga-dveṣa*; by long practice, they have transformed their lives to align with *dharmaśāstra*. Their lifestyle becomes the open book of the *śāstras*; it is not in a written format, but is available for all to see. This may also be studied indirectly the form of the biographies of *mahātmās*.

If a statement in the *smṛiti* or an action by a *śiṣṭa-puruṣaḥ* is contradictory to the teaching in *śruti*, the latter overrules the former two. Durvāsa ṛṣi was short-tempered, but when *śruti* tells us to be peaceful (*kṣamā*), which one should we follow? *Śruti* overrules the *ṛṣi*'s actions. Follow a *mahātmā*'s actions so long as they are not contradictory to the *dharmaśāstra* in *śruti*. Thus, the scriptures give an important lesson that no human being can be 100% perfect – even *ṛṣis* and the human *avatāras* have certain weaknesses and imperfections. None other than *Īśvara* is perfect. Guru advises the the students who view him as God (*ācārya devo bhava*) that after learning the *śāstras* from him, they should rely more on the *śāstras* and less upon him as a role model. He further says that if his actions are defective, although he is the guru, his students should follow the *śāstras* (and not his actions). At the same time, it is also important to understand that we should not judge the guru because we do not know why he performed an action contradictory to the *śāstras*. It is natural for these questions to arise in our mind: why was Durvāsa angry all the time? Why did Viśwāmitra, great *ṛṣi*, lose his self-control? Why did Dharmaputra, a great *mahātmā*, bet his own wife in gambling? Why did Paraśurāma, an *avatāra* of Vishnu, decapitate his own mother? Why did Droṇa, a great *ācārya*, take Ekalavya's thumb as the *gurudakṣiṇā*? Why did Rama, an *avatāra* of Vishnu, banish his pregnant wife to the forest? [Many ladies can never forgive him for that].

There are many such actions that we are unable to reconcile with the *śāstras*. We should filter these out and take only the right actions to follow. We should not use the *mahātmās* as role models for the wrong actions, but at the same time, we should not judge them. Sometimes, compromises may be required for a larger benefit because there are gray areas in values. For example, Lord Krishna compromised many values to win the Mahabhārata war. Almost every great warrior was killed because of Krishna's tricks. Values are not absolute; the *mahātmās* may have compromised them in some situations because it was necessary. A question may arise in our mind that if a *mahātmā* has compromised the values, why can I not? We must to be careful to

understand that we have no right to compromise any value until we have mastered it through practice for a long time. We must be free of *rāga-dveṣa* before we can think of compromising the values. Otherwise, we will interpret the values based on *rāga-dveṣa* and selfishness. When we reach that stage of mastery over *rāga-dveṣa*, the scriptures themselves give you the right to re-interpret the rules (*vidhi* and *niṣedha*).

G.D. Birla, a wealthy Indian industrialist gave the checkbook to Gandhiji giving him the authority to spend any amount he liked. After a year, he found that Gandhiji used only one rupee. Is there a reason to wonder why Birla gave the checkbook to Gandhiji and not to anyone? Freedom is given to a person only when it is known that he is responsible and mature. Until we become mature, we must follow the commandments of the Vedas.

Therefore, the guru gives a very important advice here:

अनवद्यानि कर्माणि – *anavadyāni karmāṇi* - (our) *dhārmic* actions – the ones that do not deviate from the path recommended by the *śāstras*

तानि सेवितव्यानि – *tāni sevityāni* – you should follow those alone.

नो इतराणि - *no itarāṇi* – Do not follow any other actions (adharmic) that the *śāstras* do not support. Do as Rama did, but as Krishna said. Krishna did many things that were not in line with dharma (like stealing butter starting early in life!).

यानि अस्माकं सुचरितानि - *yāni asmākaṃ sucharitāni* – (follow) all our noble actions. In the Mahabhārata, the characters have wonderful virtues as well as weaknesses. Our general tendency is to only look at their weaknesses. When learning the *purāṇas*, the children always ask why a character did what he did. Teach them to look at the positive side and imbibe. *Mīmāṃsā* is filtering the negative aspects of any story and taking only the positive aspects. Out of the story of Paraśurāma decapitating his mother, one should focus on the lesson of obedience to the father and not decapitation. In the story of Droṇa and Ekalavya, the lesson should not stress the meanness of the former, but the greatness of the latter who was willing to give anything as *gurudakṣiṇa*; even his thumb [*ācāryaya priyam dhanamāhṛtyā*]. Rama sent Sita to the forest because of the comment of a concerned citizen. The lesson to be learned is that the king should always put the concerns of his citizens first [*prajā*

rañjataḥ rājā; rañjayati iti rājā]. Here, the focus should be on Rama as a king, and not as a husband. The Pāṇḍavas shared a wife. The lesson to be learned is obedience to the mother (*mātr̥ vākya paripālanam*) and not sharing a wife. Every story has a positive and negative side; focus only on the positive and follow in life

तानि त्वया उपास्यानि - *tāni tvayā upāsyāni* – you should diligently follow only that (positive action). Prahlāda disobeyed his father because his command was against the injunction of the *śāstras*. He violated *pitṛ devo bhava* and then became the cause of his father's destruction. Yet, he is lauded as one of the greatest bhaktas. What does this mean? When the *pitṛ vākya* (father's words) and *śāstravākya* (*śāstra's* words) contradict, the latter always wins [*śruti smṛtyo param vāde śrutireva garīyati*].

Unlike the other religions, the Vedic tradition is not person-centered. Only the Vedas are great; no human is above the Vedas. Even if Krishna was found to contradict the Vedas, he would have been ruled out. Although Buddha is respected as an *avatāra*, Buddhism did not survive in India because he contradicted the Vedas. Until you learn the *śāstras*, follow the guru; once you have learned it, the guru will hand over the responsibilities to you.

नो इतराणि - No itaraani – do not follow the other things

As we have seen before, *śruti* (Vedas) overrules *smṛti* and *śiṣṭācāra* when there is a conflict. Patañjali has given the yoga system that consists of the physical aspect which develops one's personality and a philosophical one. The physical aspect is accepted, but the philosophical aspect is rejected because it is contradictory to the Vedas. We accept the *tarka śāstra* that teaches the method of thinking, but we reject the *nyāya vaiśeṣika* philosophy because it is contradictory to the Vedas. Sureśvarācārya even questioned Saṅkarācārya, his guru on the things he contradicted the Vedas on. Everything is analyzed with intellectual honesty based on *śruti* and *yukti*. Here, the guru himself is telling the *śiṣya*: if you see me violating the Vedas, reject me and follow the Vedas. What a great statement!

ये के ब्राह्मणाः च – *ye ke brāhmaṇāḥ ca* - when the *mahātmās* who are scholars in scriptures come to you, make use of their presence and learn from them. Keep an open mind. These scholars in the Vedas are called *brāhmaṇāḥ* [*brahma yaḥ jānāti saḥ brāhmaṇaḥ*].

अस्मत् श्रेयांसः - *asmāt śreyāṁsaḥ* - (the *brāhmaṇas*) who are superior to us in terms of knowledge, age and experience (*vayovṛddhaḥ, jñānavṛddhaḥ* and *śilovṛddhaḥ*). We respect an elderly person in our tradition because he is more experienced. Experience teaches that no book can teach. An elderly illiterate person may be more knowledgeable than a literate youngster. The people who have known and lived per the injunctions of the Vedas for a long time are called *śilovṛdhāḥ* (experienced people). You welcome them:

त्वया आसने न प्रश्वसितव्यम् - *tvayā āsane na praśvasitavyam* – this can be interpreted in two ways:

- First provide them the seat (*āsanā*) and relieve them of their weariness (*praśvasitavyam*)
- Once they are seated in the *āsanās* do not keep bragging about yourself. You will lose the opportunity to learn from them. The *mahātmās* generally are not talkative. They generally remain in silence. Do not give in to the temptation of filling this silence by bragging about yourself. Ask the question to clear your doubts and make them talk. This can be interpreted also as “do not breathe a word” (*na praśvasitavyam*)

Other notes:

Our tradition is scripture-centric. No individual, be it Śaṅkara, Gauḍapāda or Vyāsa, is greater than the tradition. If the disciple creates a cult with the guru as the center, then the latter has not taught the former properly. The Vedic *ācārya* says that he has taught student the scriptures and how to interpret them correctly. Hereafter, the student should give more importance to the scriptures than him. If his actions and lifestyle are contradictory to the scriptures, follow the scriptures.

श्रद्धया देयम् । अश्रद्धयादेयम् । श्रिया देयम् । ह्रिया देयम् । भिया देयम् । संविदा देयम् ।
śraddhayā deyam / aśraddhyādeyam / śriyā deyam I hriyā deyam / bhiyā deyam / samvidā deyam

देयम् - *deyam* - Charity should be given **श्रद्धया** - *śraddhayā* - with respect (for the receiver). **अदेयम्** - *adeyam* - Charity should not be given **अश्रद्धया** - *aśraddhayā* - with disrespect. **देयम्** - *deyam* - Charity should be given **श्रिया** - *śriyā* - in plenty. **देयम्** -

deyam - Charity should be given ह्रिया - *hriyā* - in modesty. देयम् - *deyam* - Charity should be given भिया - *bhiyā* - with concern. देयम् - *deyam* - Charity should be given संविदा - *saṁvidā* - with understanding.

Charity should be given with respect (for the receiver). Charity should not be given with disrespect. Charity should be given in plenty. Charity should be given in modesty. Charity should be given with concern, Charity should be given with understanding.

Our scriptures discuss numerous *sādhanaś*, but reduce them into three basic and fundamental ones (*yajñā-dāna-tapāṁsi*). This has been said in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad, which Lord Krishna borrows in verse 18.3 of the Gītā.

- *Yajñas* – prayerful lifestyle in which every activity is converted into a worship. Work is workship.
- *Dānam* – sharing whatever you have with the others. The natural cycle will be complete only when taking is followed by giving. There should not be stagnation anywhere. The knowledge should flow from the guru to the disciple and then to the next generation. The water rises from the ocean to form clouds, then rain, which then flows from the mountains as river and then flows back to the ocean. If we fail to understand this, there will be stagnation, which will lead to ill-health. The energy that you take from food must be balanced with what you spend or, it will lead to ill-health. This must be extended to the pañca kośas (the five sheaths of personality). This applies to money also. Superficially, giving *dānam* appears to be a loss, but the śāstras say that you never lose because it ultimately comes back to you. Only what you give comes back to you: love, compassion, hatred etc. This is the basic principle. Therefore, give good things in plenty.
- *Tapah* – moderation in everything (*ati sarvatra varjaye*) – the golden middle path, golden mean etc. You must be the master of your organs. You must control what you do and not the sense object you seek or indulge in. Moderation is *tapah* – no overindulgence.

श्रद्धया देयम् - *śraddhayā deyam* – May you give to charity with *śraddhā* (faith) that whatever you give will benefit you. It will come back to you in the form of *punya*, the invisible gain (*ādhyātmika purogatih*, *cittaśuddhi*, inner growth, *adṛṣṭam* etc.). Even though you appear to be materially losing, you are gaining spiritually. This faith must be there when giving.

अश्रद्धया अदेयम् - *aśraddhayā adeyam* – may you not give without the faith. If you do not have the faith, you will only see the loss and consequently, you will give with a heartburn. There is another interpretation for this - *aśraddhyā deyam*: Even if you don't have the faith, you should still give. In other words, giving is important whether with faith or not.

Even giving without faith is better than not giving. By the grace of the Lord, eventually, faithless giving will be converted to faithful giving. Therefore, both interpretations are acceptable.

श्रिया देयम् - *śriyā deyam* – give in abundance at least proportional to what you have. The Vedas do not fix the amount because possessions will vary from individual to individual. The *śāstras*, no doubt, ask us to give *bhūdānam* (land), *svaṇadānam* (gold), *go-dānam* (cow and other animals), but it also says that if you cannot afford it, offer at least *patram* (leaf), *puṣpam* (flower) or *toyam* (water). The important thing is that one should not select the latter as the first choice. Give according to your capacity.

हिया देयम् - *hriyā deyam* – *hriḥ* means humility or modesty. Do not think you are superior because you are the giver. Do not disparage or insult the receiver. *Dānam* given with arrogance is either *rājasa* or *tāmasa dānam* (Chapter 17 - Gītā). Give with the attitude that you are fortunate to be in the position to give to the others.

भिया देयम् - *bhiyā deyam* – may you have the concern (empathy). It can be interpreted in two ways: normal and *śāstric*. The regular concern is that what is given should be useful to the receiver. One must have the empathy that it will fulfill the need of the receiver.

There is also a *śāstric* meaning. *Dānam* is considered a compulsive duty like paying taxes. You should share your possessions with the others without expecting anything in return. It need not be just money; it can be knowledge, time, sweet words etc.

The trees give more than what they receive and therefore, we want to increase the number of trees. Human beings take more than what they give and that is why no one wants to increase the human population (*bhūbhāraḥ* – burden to the earth). You

must give to avoid being a burden. Giving is not a *kāmya karma* (action of choice), but a *nitya karma*, a compulsory action.

Failure to pay taxes will result in penalty and punishment. In the Vedic sense, the punishment for not performing a *nitya karma* is the acquisition of *pratyavāya pāpam*, the sin of omission. [*bhiyā deyam = pratyavāya pāpa bhayena deyam* – give for the fear of *pratyavāya pāpam*]. By giving, you are not doing additional good, but merely fulfilling a prescribed duty. We may take pride in giving a lot, but the *śāstras* say that you are human being only if you give.

संविदा देयम् - *saṁvidā deyam* – may you give with the understanding of *deśa* (where), *kāla* (when) and *pātram* (who) [Tamil saying: பாத்திரம் அறிந்து பிச்சை கொடு – *pātram arindu piccai kodu* – know who you are giving to]. Give at the right time in the right place to the right person [do not give a woolen shawl to one in May in Chennai after he has returned from a once in a lifetime trip to Kedarnath]. If the receiver does not have the right credentials, you need not feel bad to say no. You need not feel bad about saying no to the beggars at the traffic signal because it is the most inappropriate way of asking for alms. It is also not right to feel that no one has credentials and say no to everyone. There are many wonderful institutions that you can support.

This is *dāna sādhanā*.

अथ यदि ते कर्मविचिकित्सा वा वृत्तविचिकित्सा वा स्यात् । ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः । युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः । यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् । तथा तत्र वर्तेथाः । अथाभ्याख्यातेषु । ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः । युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः । यथा ते तेषु वर्तेरन् । तथा तेषु वर्तेथाः । एष आदेशः । एष उपदेशः । एषा वेदोपनिषत् । एतदनुशासनम् । एवमुपासितव्यम् । एवमु चैतदुपास्यम् ॥

atha yadi te karmavicikitsā vā vṛttavicikitsā vā syāt / ye tatra brāhmaṇāḥ saṁmarśinaḥ / yuktā āyuktāḥ / alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ / yathā te tatra varteran / tathā tatra vartethāḥ / athābhyākhyāteṣu / ye tatra brāhmaṇāḥ saṁmarśinaḥ / yuktā āyuktāḥ / alūkṣā dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ / yathā te teṣu varteran / tathā teṣu vartethāḥ / eṣa ādeśaḥ / eṣa upadeśaḥ / eṣā vedopaniṣat / etadanuśāsanam / evamupāsitavyam / evamu caitadupāsyam

अथ यदि - *atha yadi* - Suppose **ते स्यात्** - *te syāt* - you have **कर्मविचिकित्सा वा** - *karmavicikitsā vā* - a doubt regarding a course of action **वा वृत्तविचिकित्सा** - *vā vṛttavicikitsā* - or a doubt regarding the conduct in life. **स्युः** - *syuḥ* - There would be

ब्राह्मणाः - *brāhmaṇāḥ* - brahmins तत्र - *tatra* - in that place ये संमर्शिन्ः - *ye sammarśinaḥ* - who are discriminating, युक्ताः - *yuktāḥ* - experienced, आयुक्ताः - *āyuktāḥ* - impartial, अलूक्षाः - *alūkṣāḥ* - considerate, धर्मकामाः - *dharmakāmāḥ* - and committed to dharma. वर्तेथाः - *varthethāḥ* - May you act तत्र - *tatra* - in that situation तथा - *tathā* - in such as manner यथा ते वर्तेरन् - *yathā te varteran* - as they would act तत्र - *tatra* - in that situation. अथ - *atha* - Suppose (there is a doubt regarding your conduct) अभ्याख्यातेषु - *abhyākhyāteṣu* - with respect to the accused people. स्युः - *syuḥ* - There would be ब्राह्मणाः - *brāhmaṇāḥ* - brahmins तत्र - *tatra* - in that place ये संमर्शिन्ः - *ye sammarśinaḥ* - who are discriminating, युक्ताः - *yuktāḥ* - experienced, आयुक्ताः - *āyuktāḥ* - impartial, अलूक्षाः - *alūkṣāḥ* - considerate धर्मकामाः - *dharmakāmāḥ* - and committed to dharma. वर्तेथाः - *varthethāḥ* - May you conduct yourself तेषु - *teṣu* - with respect to them तथा - *tathā* - in such a manner यथा ते वर्तेरन् - *yathā te varteran* - as they would conduct themselves तेषु - *teṣu* - with respect to them. एषः आदेशः - *eṣa ādeśaḥ* - This is the injunction (of śruti). एष उपदेशः - *eṣa upadeśaḥ* - This is the injunction (of smṛti). एषा वेदोपनिषत् - *eṣā vedopaniṣad* - This is the essence of the Vedas. एतद् अनुशासनम् - *etad anuśāsanam* - This is the commandment (of the Lord). उपासितव्यम् - *upāsitavyam* - Life must be led एवम् - *evam* - in this manner; उपास्यम् - *upāsyam* - life should be led एतद् एवम् उ च - *etad evam u ca* - in this manner alone.

Suppose you have a doubt regarding a course of action or a doubt regarding the conduct in life. There would be brahmins in that place who are discriminating, experienced, impartial, considerate, and committed to dharma. May you act in that situation in such as manner as they would act in that situation. Suppose (there is a doubt regarding your conduct) with respect to the accused people. There would be brahmins in that place who are discriminating, experienced, impartial, considerate and committed to dharma. May you conduct yourself with respect to them in such a manner as they would conduct themselves with respect to them. This is the injunction (of śruti). This is the injunction (of smṛti). This is the essence of the Vedas. This is the commandment (of the Lord). Life must be led in this manner; life should be led in this manner alone.

Previously we saw that the Vedas are the primary source of knowledge on dharma and adharma – essentially the guide on how to live. The Vedas may not discuss every possible situation in life because it cannot visualize all of them. Therefore, they give

only broad guidelines. We must extract the meaning from them, appropriate to the situations we face in life. Therefore, the interpretation of the Vedas become important; we cannot blindly follow the words as is. As the society and lifestyle change, modifications (compromises) to certain laws are required. Anything rigid cannot survive. Our scriptures allow us the flexibility to interpret and modify the laws according to the situation. It is exactly like the constitution of the country. The founders would not have visualized all the possible situations.

We recently faced a question whether a governor can appoint a person as a Chief Minister (CM), if he/she is not qualified to contest the election. The constitution is silent on this matter. It only gives the power to the governor to appoint the CM, but it is unclear whether those disqualifications apply to that candidate for CM. So, there is a constitutional crisis. Interpretation is required based on the intention of the authors. We must know what is letter and what is spirit. In Sanskrit, we call it *vivakṣā* or *tātparyam* - what is not explicitly said, but intended by the author. The Indian constitution is only 70 years old and the authors could not visualize this situation. The Vedas have no beginning; how could they possibly have visualized all the situations? Therefore, interpretation is required. If interpretation is required and discretion is to be used, who will do that? The political parties, if asked to interpret, will do it the way it suits them. Therefore, interpretation should be allowed, but it should be specified who is qualified to interpret the laws. Otherwise, democracy will be a mess. Therefore, a constitutional bench is appointed with people who are constitutional scholars with integrity and who look out for the welfare of the country and not just their immediate family and circle of friends.

In the same way, Vedas will have to be interpreted as the society changes. You will come across new situations where you will face confusions. When you refer to the Vedas, you may either find that the Vedas have not dealt with your specific situation or it is impractical to follow the Vedas to the letter. Therefore, you must understand the spirit (spirit is always invisible!). Therefore, we need a very subtle intellect (*sūkṣma buddhi*) which must be used to extract, interpret and present. Therefore, the interpreters should have certain qualifications – the Vedas themselves give them in this section. What a far-sighted teaching!

अथ यदि ते कर्मविचिकित्सा – *atha yadi te karmavichikitsā* – suppose you have a doubt (*vicikitsā*) regarding a religious activity (karma)

वृत्तविचिकित्सा – *vṛttavicikitsā* – *vṛtta* means personal conduct (in the society). Hindus are all over the world. In India, the Vedic background still exists, but there will be doubt in the minds of the Hindus living in the other countries. *Vṛttam* = social behavior. If I interpret, I may do it according to my *rāga-dveṣa*. Therefore, the Vedas say:

ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः - *ye tatra brāhmaṇāḥ* – you go to (*guṇa*) *brāhmaṇās* who have *sattva guṇa* and are selfless in nature. They have the following qualifications:

संमर्शिनः - *saṁmarśinaḥ* – they have the capacity to interpret the scriptures. They are experts on the rules of interpretation (*mīmāṁsā śāstram* – hermeneutics). Once the interpretation is done, we must accept it. Otherwise, we need to appoint the interpreters of interpreters. The whole exercise will be meaningless. The ultimate authority should not be questioned. If the Supreme Court is questioned and disobeyed, one will be cited for contempt of court. In the Vedic society, the person who questions the verdict is called a *nāstika*, who is in contempt of the Vedic court.

युक्ताः – *yuktāḥ* – those who have lived the dhārmic and Vedic lifestyle. They are soaked in dharma. It is like the Supreme Court judge who has gone through sso many layers of positions in the justice system that we have the trust in his judgement.

आयुक्ताः – *āyuktāḥ* - those who are impartial. They do not have political or selfish leanings. They are incorruptible. [what will happen to the nation if a Supreme Court judge is corrupt?]

अलूक्षाः - *alūkṣāḥ* – those who are considerate; who have compassion and empathy. The mind should have expanded to consider the benefit of the vast society [*sarvabhūta hite ratatvam*]. *Alūkṣāḥ* means *arūkṣāḥ*, which means non-cruel (*rūkṣāḥ* means cruel).

धर्मकामाः - *Dharmakāmāḥ* – they should not be *artha-kāma* or *kāma-kāma*. They do not seek position, possessions aor power. Only such people will be impartial to the rich and the poor and courageous enough to pass the verdict. They should value *dharma puruṣārtha* more than *artha* and *kāma*. That is why the scriptures prescribe voluntary life of poverty to those interested in teaching and interpreting the Vedas. Swami Dayananda said: the traditional *brāhmaṇa* has nothing to lose except *kuḍumi* (tuft) and *pūṇal* (thread). There is no fear of anything or anyone.

Until one acquires these qualifications, he should seek the help of the wise in times of crisis.

यथा ते तत्र वर्तेरन् तथा तत्र वर्तेताः - *yathā te tatra varteran tathā tatra vartetāḥ* – act in the manner that they (*brāhmaṇāḥ*) would in that situation. You can trust their discretion even if their action compromises the Vedic injunction. You can also compromise the Vedas if they give you permission (only if they do). There is a story about Śaṅkarācārya that illustrates this point:

Once a devotee offered liquor to Śaṅkarācārya and he drank it. According to the śāstras, drinking is a pāpam. Confused by this, the disciples looked at each other, but said nothing. Śaṅkarācārya, however, noticed it. He moved forward and reached a shop of a blacksmith who was heating the metal in a pan in high heat. Śaṅkarācārya drank that molten metal also. If the disciples thought that they could drink alcohol because Śaṅkarācārya did, they should also drink the molten metal! He indirectly hinted that he had reached a stage where nothing would affect him. Until that time, they must follow the Vedas.

The *mīmāṃsā sūtra* itself says that some great people violate dharma (*dṛṣṭohi dharma vyatikramah*), but they also show that they are superhuman through their acts (*sāhasa ca mahatām*). Drink molten metal first before you drink alcohol! Krishna violated the śāstras, but he also lifted the Govardhana mountain. Most of us cannot even lift our own suitcase! So long as you are ordinary, do not violate the Vedic injunctions.

We often hear the complaint from the Hindus themselves that Hinduism is the most confusing religion in the world. They also state the other religions are far less confusing than Hinduism. On enquiry, we find that there is some truth to it. There are several reasons for that. However, the reasons presented to show Hinduism as inferior, also make it superior! The reasons for *dhūṣaṇam* are really *bhūṣaṇam*. It is important that we analyze these so-called weaknesses and understand how they make Hinduism great.

- *The scriptures are too voluminous compared to the other religions*: Even if you study them 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, all your life, you will not scratch the surface (Tamil: கற்றது கைமண்ணளவு கல்லாதது உலகளவு - *kaṭradu kaimaṇṇaḷavu kallādadu ulagaḷavu* – what have you have learned is equivalent

to a fist full of dirt while what is yet to be learned is the size of the earth). The Vedas present a story of Bharadwāja ṛṣi who continuously studies the Vedas for 100 years:

At the time of death, he asked for a boon from Indra that he should be able to do the same, also in the next birth. After studying intensely during the second janma, he asked for the third to do the same. Then, he proudly asked Indra how much he had covered in 300 years. Indra asked him to bring a handful of mud from each of the three mountains nearby. When Bharadwaja set the piles in front of him, Indra told him that this was what he had learned in 300 years (muṣṭhinā ādāde). Indra also said that the Vedas are infinite (anantāvaidedāḥ).

Out of the 1080 branches (śākhāḥ) of the Vedas, only six have survived. We will not be able to complete even these six in our lifetime. In addition to śruti, we have smṛti, purāṇas, itihāsas etc. with commentaries and sub-commentaries. The Mahabhārata, alone has 100,000 verses. This can be taken as positive as well as negative.

The size has a great disadvantage. To understand a part of the whole, it requires the awareness of the whole. We can never separate the totality from the study of the part. The medical community is beginning to realize that the Allopathic system of medicine that takes the reductionist approach of treating diseases only of the physical body is incomplete. The body has five kośas (sheaths) and this system of medicine only treats the annamaya kośa (the physical sheath). The diseases are psychosomatic in nature and so, the doctor should know not only anatomy and physiology, but also, psychology, sociology etc. The problem is, to know the whole, you must study it part by part! To learn a verse, you must know the background of the whole Gītā, but to know the whole of Gita, you must learn it verse by verse. This is a mutual dependence problem – a classic Catch 22!

- **One size does not fit all:** The Vedas address the entire humanity and therefore, the teaching varies according to the level of spiritual growth (varṇa bhedaḥ, āśrama bhedaḥ etc.). Our scriptures cater to everyone; from the spiritually grossest person to the subtlest and most spiritually evolved. If you do not learn at the right level, the teaching will be highly confusing. What is food for one is poison for another. A positive advice for one is a negative advice for another. For example, a doctor who advises patient to eat well may ask another to fast. A patient cannot take a medicine prescribed for another; he must have his own

unique prescription. Since the Vedic teaching is directed to various adhikārīs (eligible seekers), it appears contradictory. *Pūjā* is glorified in one place, but is criticized in another. Verse 1.2.7 of Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad describes the people attached to karma as indiscriminate (*mūdhāḥ*) and that they will be stuck in the cycle of birth and death. However, Taittirīya Upaniṣad asks us never to give up karma in the statement - *devapitrkāryābhyām na pramditavyam* - where *pūjā* and *śrāddhā* are emphasized. In Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, Gaudapāda calls those committed to *Īśvara upāsanā* as unfortunate. This is a dangerous statement. That is why I do not recommend the study of Māṇḍūkya in isolation – the student must train first with the other Upanisads. Otherwise, this statement may sound blasphemous to the untrained.

When looked at superficially, the seemingly contradictory teaching is the negative point for Hinduism. It is also a positive point because Hinduism caters to a tribal as well the most spiritually evolved. God can be viewed as a person as well as the impersonal Reality. Depending on your level, you may worship ekarūpa Īśvara (personal God), anekarūpa Īśvara (the universe as God) and arūpa Īśvara (formless God).

- *Our scriptures are vague:* dharma is relative and not absolute: We can only superficially categorize the ethical and unethical. When you get deeper, there is more gray than black or white. We encounter conflict (*dharma-saṅkata*) because we play multiple roles simultaneously. The duty for the role of a husband may contradict that of the son. The scriptures cannot cover all the possible situations, although they do illustrate many situations of conflict through stories. Even though the scriptures give different situations, the decision becomes subjective; there is no fatwa from some cleric to make the decision for you. Some of the situations of conflict are illustrated here:
 - Rama as the king had the responsibility to listen to the concerns of the citizens and act accordingly, while he had the duty as a husband to protect his wife. Should he banish his wife to the forest or ignore the citizen's concern?
 - A person with limited funds faces the medical treatment for his parent, which will wipe out his savings intended for his child's college expenses. Should he treat his parent or educate his child? If the old parent declines the treatment, there is no conflict, but he/she expects it, what should he do?
 - Rāvaṇa's brother Vibhīṣaṇa left him because of adharmā committed by the former. However, his other brother Kumbhakarṇa felt family loyalty was

more important and stood by his brother until his end. If we hold a debate on this, there definitely will be two sides because this is a gray area.

- Krishna says that *ahimsā* is the greatest value (*ahimsā paramo dharmah*) in 3 places in the Gītā. Then, he adds, “Therefore Arjuna, fight!” [*tasmād yudhasva bhārata*]. Is *ahimsā* the greatest value or can I compromise that value?
- *Satyam* is taught as the only means for spiritual victory as stated by verse 3.1.6 of Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, but Krishna violated it throughout the Mahābhārata. What should one do?

Thus, our scriptures bring out a lot of gray areas that require interpretation.

- ***Our scriptures require interpretation:*** It is believed that our scriptures are as old as the universe itself. Even the non-believers acknowledge that they are at least thousands of years old. They anticipated many situations of conflict, but not all of them. Pūjya Swāmi Dayānanda Saraswati gave this example of driving a car: The driving teacher can only teach you some possible traffic situations. From this, you must discern the spirit of driving and deal with new situations. You cannot accuse the driving school of not teaching you the situation you encountered. Life gives us infinite number of situations; many are covered by the Vedas and many are not. Therefore, interpretation is required. For example, the *śāstras* say that the toilet should be 80 ft away from the kitchen. Today the houses are as small as 20X20. Manu never thought of this! The bathroom (*śaucālaya*) and the toilet (*aśaucālaya*) are in the same unit. No *śāstra* could anticipate it and therefore, interpretation is required.

We can never interpret the scriptures arbitrarily with our own intuition or intelligence. A systematic method called *mimāṃsā* (also known as *sampradāya*) must be applied, but most of us do not study it. We read the translations of Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata, especially of western authors, who have no intimate knowledge of our tradition. In the olden days, printed material was not available and so, one learned from a guru, who presented the material in an appropriate manner. The interpretation of the scriptures was built in the guru’s teachings. When we self-study the purāṇas from these translations, they appear terrible and even disgusting, losing respect for our scriptures. The scriptures often use the method of exaggeration. I call it a cartoon method: if a politician has a slightly long nose, it is exaggerated in the cartoon.

- In some places in the scriptures, it is mentioned that if you utter Rama nāma (name), you will get moksha. We literally take this to be true and blame the scriptures.
- In another story, King Ajāmiḷa perpetrated atrocities throughout his life, but got mokṣa because he uttered Nārāyaṇa as the last word before death. If we don't interpret it correctly, we will misunderstand it.
- It is said that in Kali Yuga, Bhagavan *nāma* will give mokṣa and that no other *sādhanā* is required. These types of scriptural statements are made to highlight a specific *sādhanā* and downplay the others. This method is called *arthavāda*. These statements should not be literally taken as true. To add to this confusion, these untrue statements have been popularized by religious leaders.

The only way to avoid these confusions is to study under a qualified guru who has the holistic vision of the Vedas. His interpretation will not be based on his *rāga-dveṣa*, but will be objective. Such a guru has studied the Vedas and has a lifestyle that is aligned with *dharmaśāstra*. You will then find that Hinduism is not confusing, but very enriching with the most comprehensive teaching available. The Upaniṣad gives the qualifications of such a guru in this *anuvāka*: *ye tatra brāhmanāḥ saṁmarśinaḥ yuktaḥ, ayuktāḥ, alūkṣaḥ, dharmakāmāḥ* etc. Once you have followed them for a length of time, you will develop the maturity and then you can act according to your conscience. Follow the dharma for 12 years under a guru's guidance and your conscience will become the *śāstras*. You can then set aside the *śāstras* and act according to your conscience alone. A trained musician who has sung in his *śruti* (pitch) for decades, can sing exactly in that *śruti* even without the accompaniment (*tānpurā*) because he is soaked in music. Start with "in-tuition" and then graduate to intuition.

अथा अभ्याख्यातेषु – *athā abhyākhyāteṣu* – We always have our doubts about rituals (*karma*) and conduct (*ṛttam*). For example, if I come to know through other sources that my close friend is engaged in immoral activities (which I have not witnessed personally), should I continue the friendship? The *śāstras* declare that one should never have a relationship with an immoral person (*duṣṣaṅgaḥ sarvadā tyājyaḥ*). Such an association (*adharmā saṅgaḥ*) is a type of adharma. On the other hand, it is very difficult to end such a relationship especially when he has only been accused and not personally witnessed by me [*abhyākhyātaḥ* = he is only accused; I have not personally witnessed] What should I do? The teacher repeats the same path to clear the doubt:

ये तत्र ब्राह्मणाः संमर्शिनः । युक्ता आयुक्ताः । अलूक्षा धर्मकामाः स्युः । यथा ते तेषु वर्तेरन् । तथा तेषु वर्तेथाः ।

Ye tatra brāhmanāḥ sammarśinaḥ / yuktā āyuktāḥ / alūkṣa dharmakāmāḥ syuḥ / yathā te teṣu varteran / tathā teṣu vartetāḥ

In that society also, there will be cultured, informed, non-selfish and *dhārmic brāhmaṇās*; seek their advice on how they would handle such a conflict and follow it. Where the Vedas do not give direct advice, take the advice of the Vedic people. This is the guidance with regards to *dharmśāstram*. This is the summary of *dharmśāstra*.

एषः आदेशः - *eṣaḥ ādeśaḥ* – this is the commandment of the Vedas for our benefit (*śrauta vidhiḥ*). If we do not follow, it will adversely affect us. It is like violating the health rule – only we will suffer.

एषः उपदेशः - *eṣaḥ upadeśaḥ* – This is the instruction from the *smṛitis*, the secondary Vedic literature also (*smārta vidhiḥ*)

एषा वेद उपनिषद् - *eṣā veda upanīṣad* - This is the essence (*upanīṣad*) of the Vedas. [It is the *sāraḥ – veda-pūrva-bhāga rahasyam*]. This statement refers to the 11th *anuvāka*. If one understands and follows this, it is equivalent to following the entire *dharmśāstra*.

एतद् अनुशासनम् - *etad anusāsanam* – this is the teaching (instruction or commandments) of *śiṣṭas (mahātmās)* beginning from the Lord. The Vedas came from the Lord Himself through various *ṛṣis* such as Padmabhuvāḥ, Vasiṣṭa etc. If you violate them, *saṁsāraḥ* will be the punishment. Life itself will become the life imprisonment (*saṁsāra kāraṅgrahaḥ*).

एवम् उपासितव्यम् - *evam upāsitavyam* – one should follow as instructed here. It is not optional instruction

एवम् उ च एतद् उपास्यम् - *evam u ca etad upāsyam* – in this manner alone (as described in the 11th *anuvāka*), one should lead his life. The letters *u (उ)* and *ca (च)* give the emphasis here.

With this, the emphasis on *dharmasāstra* in the first chapter is complete. *Dharmasāstra* is the stepping stone for *brahmasāstram* given in the next chapter.

Now the *śānti pāṭha* is repeated as the Thanksgiving *śānti pāṭha* (the *śānti pāṭha* in the beginning was a prayer).

Anuvāka 12

ॐ शं नो मित्रः शं वरुणः । शं नो भवत्वयमा । शं न इन्द्रो बृहस्पतिः । शं नो विष्णुरुक्रमः । नमो ब्रह्मणे । नमस्ते वायो । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि । त्वामेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मावादिषम् । ऋतमवादिषम् । सत्यमवादिषम् । तन्मामावीत् । तद्वक्तारमावीत् । आवीन्माम् । आवीद्वक्तारम् । ओं शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

om śaṃ no mitraḥ śaṃ varuṇaḥ / śaṃ no bhavadvaryamā / śaṃ na indro bṛhaspatiḥ / śaṃ no viṣṇururukramaḥ / namo brahmaṇe / namaste vayo / tvameva pratyakṣam brahmāsi / tvāmeva pratyakṣam brahmāvādiṣam / ṛtamavādiṣam / satyamavādiṣam / tanmāmāvit / tadvaktāramāvit / āvinmām / āvidvaktāram / om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

मित्रः भवतु - *mitraḥ bhavatu* - May Mitra be शं नः - *śaṃ naḥ* - a source of auspiciousness to us. वरुणः - *varuṇaḥ* - May Varuṇa (be) शम् - *śam* - a source of auspiciousness (to us). अयर्मा - *aryamā* - May Aryamā (be) शं नः - *śaṃ naḥ* - a source of auspiciousness to us. इन्द्रः बृहस्पतिः - *indraḥ bṛhaspatiḥ* - May Indra and Bṛhaspati (be) शं नः - *śaṃ naḥ* - a source of auspiciousness to us. विष्णुः उरुक्रमः - *viṣṇu urukramaḥ* - May Viṣṇu, the Lord of long stride (be) शं नः - *śaṃ naḥ* - a source of auspiciousness to us. नमः ब्रह्मणे - *namaḥ brahmaṇe* - Prostrations to Hiraṇyagarbha. वायो - *vāyo* - Oh Vāyu! नमः ते - *namaḥ te* - Prostrations to you. त्वं एव असि - *tvam eva asi* - You alone are प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म - *pratyakṣam brahma* - the perceptible Brahman. अवादिषम् - *avādiṣam* - I declared त्वाम् एव - *tvām eva* - Yourself प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्म - *pratyakṣam brahma* - to be the perceptible Brahman. अवादिषम् - *avādiṣam* - I declared ऋतम् - *ṛtam* - (You to be) right understanding. अवादिषम् - *avādiṣam* - I declared सत्यम् - *satyam* - (You to be) truthfulness. तद् आवीद् माम् - *tad āvid mām* - He protected me. तद् आवीद् वक्तारम् - *tad āvid vaktāram* - He protected the teacher. आवीद् माम् - *āvid mām* - He protected me. आवीद् वक्तारम् - *āvid vaktāram* - He

protected the teacher. ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः - *om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ* - Om! Peace!
Peace! Peace!

May Mitra be a source of auspiciousness to us. May Varuṇa (be) a source of auspiciousness (to us). May Aryamā (be) a source of auspiciousness to us. May Indra and Bṛhaspati (be) a source of auspiciousness to us. May Viṣṇu, the Lord of long stride (be) a source of auspiciousness to us. Prostrations to Hiraṇyagarbha. Oh Vāyu! Prostrations to you. You alone are the perceptible Brahman. I declared Yourself to be the perceptible Brahman. I declared (You to be) right understanding. I declared (You to be) truthfulness. He protected me. He protected the teacher. He protected me. He protected the teacher. Om! Peace! Peace! Peace!

This is almost a repetition of the first *śānti pāṭha* with only some slight changes. In the first portion, the student glorified and sought the blessing of the Lord (Hiraṇyagarbha).

Here, he says, O Lord, I glorified you seeking your protection in the beginning of Śikṣāvallī (past tense). Then, I asked for your protection and you blessed me. You blessed the teacher also. The proof is that the teacher could teach this section completely and we were able to attend the classes successfully. For your anugrahaḥ, I am expressing my gratitude. Here also, *Om śāntiḥ* is chanted three times seeking the removal of obstacles. Even though śravaṇam is successfully completed, it is not the final *sādhana*. We are yet to complete *mananam* and *nididhyāsanam*. We are asking for the removal of obstacles for *dharmajñāna niṣṭhā* and subsequently, *brahmajñāna niṣṭhā*. May you bless us all.

इति शीक्षावल्ली
Thus ends Śikṣāvallī

Summary

Of the three chapters of this Upaniṣad, the first and the last concentrate on the preparatory disciplines (*jñāna yogyatā prāptiḥ*) which will make the mind fit for *brahmajñānam*. The second chapter focuses on *jñāna prāptiḥ* - the attainment of *brahmajñānam*. Without *jñāna yogyatā*, one can never get *jñāna*. There is some discussion of the Vedānta in the third chapter, but none in the first.

The first chapter begins with the *śānti pāṭha* like the other Upaniṣads. With the *śānti pāṭha*, the seeker asks for freedom from obstacles. He also praises the respective *adhiṣṭhāna devatās* to bless all the organs with fitness – *jñānendriya*, *karmendriya*, *prāṇa* and *antaḥkaraṇa* - so that they are ready to pursue *jñāna*. The obstacles may manifest because of our *prārabdha karma* (*pūrvā janma prārabdha doṣaḥ*). We may be able to handle known obstacles, but how do we handle the unknown and invisible ones? The only method is to produce an invisible force that can negate them. Prayer produces that invisible force. Therefore, the support for pursuit and the removal of obstacles are sought through the well-known *śānti pāṭha*.

Since the Upaniṣad is in the prose form, the mantras are presented in paragraphs known as *anuvāka*. Śikṣāvallī has 12 *anuvākas* with the 1st and the 12th ones as the *śānti pāṭhas*. The chapter can be broadly classified into four portions: *karma yoga*, *upāsana*, *homa-sādhanā* (*homaḥ*) and *japa-sādhanā* (*japaḥ*).

Karma Yoga Sādhanā

In simple language, we can call it the *dhārmic* or religious lifestyle. Karma yoga consists of three disciplines which are all equally important:

- *Mahā yajñas* – the five-fold spiritual activities or refining exercises known as *pañca mahā yajñas*:
 - *Deva yajña* – spend time exclusively for prayer and worship in any form – it can be as simple as offering flower and doing *namskāra*
 - *Pitṛ yajña* – the worship of the forefathers – living and the dead. If they are alive, treating them properly, respecting them and offering *namaskāra*. If they are not alive, worship them in the form of rituals such as *śrāddha*, *tarpaṇa* etc.

- *Brahma yajñā* – express gratitude by worshipping the scriptures and their authors. It can be in the form of ritual called *Veda yajñā* or *ṛṣi yajñā*, but should not be limited to that. We must study the scriptures and align our lifestyle with their instructions. Above all, the knowledge must be shared with the others. Study → Practice → Share.
- *Manuṣya yajñā* – this consists of all forms of social service
- *Bhūta yajñā* – environmental protection with a reverential attitude. Mere scientific activity cannot be called *yajñā*; when we take care of the animals and plants with reverence, it becomes *yajñā*.
- Depending on the individual, the emphasis may vary. Depending on the personality and resources, some may focus more on rituals, while some others on social service. However, all *yajñas* must be performed at a minimum level. These *yajñas* are called *sāttvika karmāṇi*, *uttama karmāṇi*, *niṣkāma karmāṇi*, *nitya* and *naimittika karmāṇi*.
- The second part of karma yoga is the acquisition of all the virtues (*sadguṇaḥ prāptiḥ*). Chapter 16 of the Gītā describes it as *daivī sampat* – in simple language, it is called *sadgunāḥ*. Śikṣāvallī enumerates a few of them:
 - *Satyam* – integrity – speaking the truth
 - *Śamaḥ* – mental or thought discipline
 - *Damaḥ* – the sensory discipline
 - *Tapaḥ* – moderation in everything
 - *Dakṣiṇā* – never take any services or goods for free. Even if you get something free, the equivalent amount should be spent on a noble cause – that money should not remain with you. Always give *gurudakṣiṇa* when you learn anything from a teacher whether he/she requires it or not (*ācāryapriyam dhanamāhṛtya*). *Dakṣiṇā* establishes the sense of fairness – if I get something, I should also give something.
 - *Dānam* – give to charity. Per our scriptures, at the time of death, our balance sheets should show that we have given more than we have taken.
 - *Kuśalam* – while doing good for the society, do not neglect your personal life and family. The children of the neglected families crave for the attention of the parents who are never available for them. Such negligence is an error (*doṣa*) even if they are performing a great social service. If one wants to dedicate his life to service, it is better that he remains a bachelor or takes up *sannyāsī*. If you choose *gṛhasthāśrama*, you must allot quality time for the family. Financial obligations to the family also must be first met before going for social service. Charity begins at home. Be pragmatic.

The details for these are available in Chapters 13, 16, 17 and 18.

- *Sad bhāvanā* – healthy attitude towards everything in the creation:
 - The general rule is that we should have reverential attitude towards everything in the creation as the manifestation of God. This attitude starts with *pañca mahā bhūtāni*, which extends to all the living beings and especially, mother, father and guru. This is not stated in the Upaniṣad, but I am telling you: During Navarātri, we worship the three Devis that represent three forces – Durgā stands for health, Lakshmi for wealth and Saraswati for knowledge. We cannot enjoy any two without the third one. Therefore, may you develop reverential attitude towards your own health, wealth and books.
 - Reverential attitude towards scriptures – they are valid sources of knowledge. If we follow them, we will be the beneficiaries, but if we don't, we will be the losers. The scriptures do not lose anything. This attitude towards the scriptures is called *prāmāṇya bhāvanā*. The three pramāṇas are:
 - *Śruti* – the Vedas, which are believed to have been handed to us by God
 - *Smṛti* – the secondary scriptures created mahātmās to elaborate the Vedic teaching through commentaries and stories
 - *Śiṣṭa ācāraḥ* - the cultured way of life led by the enlightened people.

When there is a conflict between these *pramāṇas*, *śruti* overrules the other two. When there is a conflict between *smṛti* and *śiṣṭa ācāraḥ*, the former overrules the latter.

Karma Yoga will lead to the spiritualization of the mind. This means that the mind will value spiritual goals over the material ones.

Upāsanā

Five types of Vedic meditation are prescribed in Śikṣāvallī. All these *upāsanās* could be easily practiced by the Vedic students of the past. The times have changed now. These *upāsanās* need not be practiced by us because our mental make up is totally different. We are studying this now only with academic interest. They can be replaced by *purāṇic upāsanās*, which are in the form of meditation on Rama, Krishna, Devi etc. The five *upāsanās* are:

- *Samhitopāsanā* – invoke various devatās on the combination of Vedic letters – *pūrvarūpam*, *uttararūpam*, *sandhiḥ* and *sandhānam*. This is a group *upāsanā* where 20 devatas are invoked.
- *Vyāhṛti upāsanā* – in which *vyāhṛti* mantras are taken: *bhūḥ*, *bhuvah*, *suvaḥ* and *mahaḥ*. *Devatās* are invoked in these four *vyāhṛti* mantras. This is a group *upāsanā* in which 16 devatās are invoked upon *vyāhṛti*
- *Hiraṇyagarbha upāsanā* – meditation on the total mind using the individual mind as the symbol (*ālambanam*). Sankaracarya points out that this *upāsanā* should be done together with *vyāhṛti upāsanā*; They should not be done separately. They are *aṅga-aṅgī upāsanās*.
- *Pāṅkta brahma upāsanā*, wherein macrocosmic world was divided into three groups of five members each. The individual (microcosmic) was also divided into three groups of five members each. Fifteen macrocosmic members will be invoked upon the 15 microcosmic ones. In this *upāsanā*, since each group has five members, it is called *pāṅktam* (*pāṅktam* = *pancānām samūhaḥ*).
- The fifth is the popular *orikāra upāsanā*. Here *Īśvara* (*Hiraṇyagarbha*) is invoked. The macro is invoked upon *orikāra*.

In general, *upāsanā* means meditation on God with attributes (*saguṇa dhyānam upāsanā*). For any *saguṇa dhyānam*, we use a symbol, which is called *ālambanam* (*ekasmin ālambane saguṇadhyānam upāsanam iti ucyate*).

The benefits of these *upāsanās* depends upon our motive (*sarikalpa*). Religion can be used for materialistic as well as spiritual purposes. We should remember that religion and spirituality are different. Every religious person need not be spiritual, but every spiritual person in our culture is religious. Rāvaṇa, Kāmsa, Hiraṇyakaśipu etc. used religion for power and control. When religion is used to acquire *siddhi* or miraculous powers, it is a materialistic application. Never value religion associated with miracles or vice versa. A materialistic person, religious or non-religious is a *samsārī*. Here, we are interested in using the *upāsanās* for spiritual (inner) growth – *citta ekāgrata* (the capacity to focus on the spiritual goal of life). If Bhagavan appears and grants me only one boon, I should, without conflict, be able to choose moksa. If I can say that, my priorities are clear [*citta-ekāgratā sampādanārtham*]. In addition to enhancing the capacity to focus, these *upāsanās* are also used to expand the mind through thought on the totality or *samaṣṭi* (*citta-viśālatā*)

Homa Sādhanā

A special *homa* or fire ritual is prescribed in Śikṣāvallī. It is a very popular *homa*, which is practiced widely even now. It is called *āvahantī homaḥ* because the mantra begins with the word *āvahantī*. Through this *homa*, the student asks for these four benefits:

- *Dhana-prāptiḥ* - Wealth
- *Śuddhiprāptiḥ (jñāna-yogyatā-prāptiḥ)* – Purity through wealth. Generally, people think that money will sully the mind. The Vedas say that money by itself is neither pure nor impure. Purity or impurity depends upon how the money is used. Using money for gambling or other addictions causes impurity and thus, harmful to our personality. Money used for *pañca mahā yajña* promotes purity. Any ritual or service requires money. [Tamil: கல்லறை வரை சில்லரை தேவை - *kallarai varai cillarai tevai* – money is needed till death]. Even for cremation, there is a lot of corruption, further distressing the already grieving family. Never say that money will pollute. It will be an insult to Lakshmi Devi if we say that money is evil. Money properly used will lead to purity.
- *Jñānaprāptiḥ* - Purity should lead to *jñānam* – *jivātma-paramātma-aikya-jñānam*. [*anuvāka 4: prativeśo'si pra mā bhāhi pra mā padyasva*].
- *Śiṣyaprāptiḥ* - Once I have the knowledge, I seek *śiṣyāḥ* (disciples) with whom I can share the knowledge. With this I perpetuate the *paramparā*, that started from Sadāśiva and has continued up to my guru. Therefore, every *śiṣya* must play the role of a guru. You must share whatever you know to perpetuate the tradition. The student is praying that many students may come to him (*āmāyantu brahmacāriṇaḥ svaha*). This *brāhmaṇa* had only one profession – i.e. learning and teaching and therefore, this prayer is very relevant to him.

Japa Sādhanā

Japa means repetition of a mantra (*mantra-āvṛttiḥ japaḥ*). If you chant it once, it is *pārāyaṇam*. It can be a mantra or a *nāma* (name) of the Lord; repetition makes it a *japa*. When this repetition of mantra is verbal (*vācika*), it is called *japa*, and when it is mental, it is called *dhyānam* (this point is not in Śikṣāvallī). Two *japa-mantras* are prescribed in Śikṣāvallī:

- *Jñāna yogyatā prāptiḥ (anuvāka 4)* - This is for the overall fitness of the body-mind-sense complex – physical (*śarīraṁ me vicarṣaṇam*), sense organs (*jihvā me madhumattamā, karṇabhyām bhūri viśruvam*) and most importantly, mental health. If a person has a sharp intellect, but emotionally unstable, a small disturbance will

irritate him. A person with a high IQ should have an EQ (emotional quotient) also. If a person is emotionally healthy, but intellectually weak, (rational thinking capability), he is not totally fit. The student is seeking *medhā śakti* - both emotional and intellectual health - through this *japa (samendrā medhayā spr̥notu)*.

- *Jnāna prāptiḥ (anuvāka 10)* – Mere repetition will not produce knowledge. *Japa* will produce conditions for knowledge and opportunity for śravaṇam by providing the *guru, śāstras*, time etc.

The above are the four main pre-requisites to *brahmajñānam*. The student expresses gratitude to the Lord. The *śānti pāthaḥ* from *anuvāka 1* is repeated with slight modification in *anuvāka 12* as Thanksgiving. With this, Śikṣāvallī concludes.

www.arshaavinash.in

WEBSITE FOR FREE E-BOOKS ON VEDANTA & SANSKRIT



Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati launched Arsha Avinash Foundation's website www.arshaavinash.in on Dec 31, 2014.

All the E-books available on the website can be downloaded FREE!

PUJYA SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI- A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY BY N. AVINASHILINGAM. It is available in English, Tamil, Hindi and Portuguese.

SWAMI PARAMARTHANANDA'S TRANSCRIBED CLASS NOTES: Available class notes are Bhagavad Gita (3329 pages), Isavasya Upanisad, Kenopanisad, Kathopanisad, Prasna Upanisad, Mundaka Upanisad, Mandukya Upanisad with karika, Aitareya Upanisad, Chandogya Upanisad, Brihadarnyaka Upanisad (1190 pages), Brahma Sutra (1486 pages), Tattva Bodha, Atma Bodha, Vivekachudamani (2038 pages), Panchadasi, Manisha Panchakam, Upadesha Saara, Saddarsanam, Jayanteya Gita, Jiva Yatra, Dhanyastakam, Advaita Makaranda, Dakshinamurthy Stotram, Drg Drsyva Viveka and Naishkarmya Siddhi.

BRNI MEDHA MICHKA'S BOOKS ON SANSKRIT GRAMMAR: Enjoyable Sanskrit Grammar Books- Basic Structure of Language, Phonetics & Sandhi, Derivatives (Pancavrttayah), Dhatukosah, Astadhyayi, Study Guide to Panini Sutras through Lagu Siddhanta Kaumudi, Sanskrit Alphabet Study Books- Single Letters, Conjunct Consonants.

There are many more books and articles on Indian culture and Spirituality, Chanting, Yoga and Meditation. There are also books in Tamil on Vedanta.



Arsha Avinash Foundation

104 Third Street, Tatabad, Coimbatore 641012, India

Phone: +91 9487373635

E mail: arshaavinash@gmail.com

www.arshaavinash.in