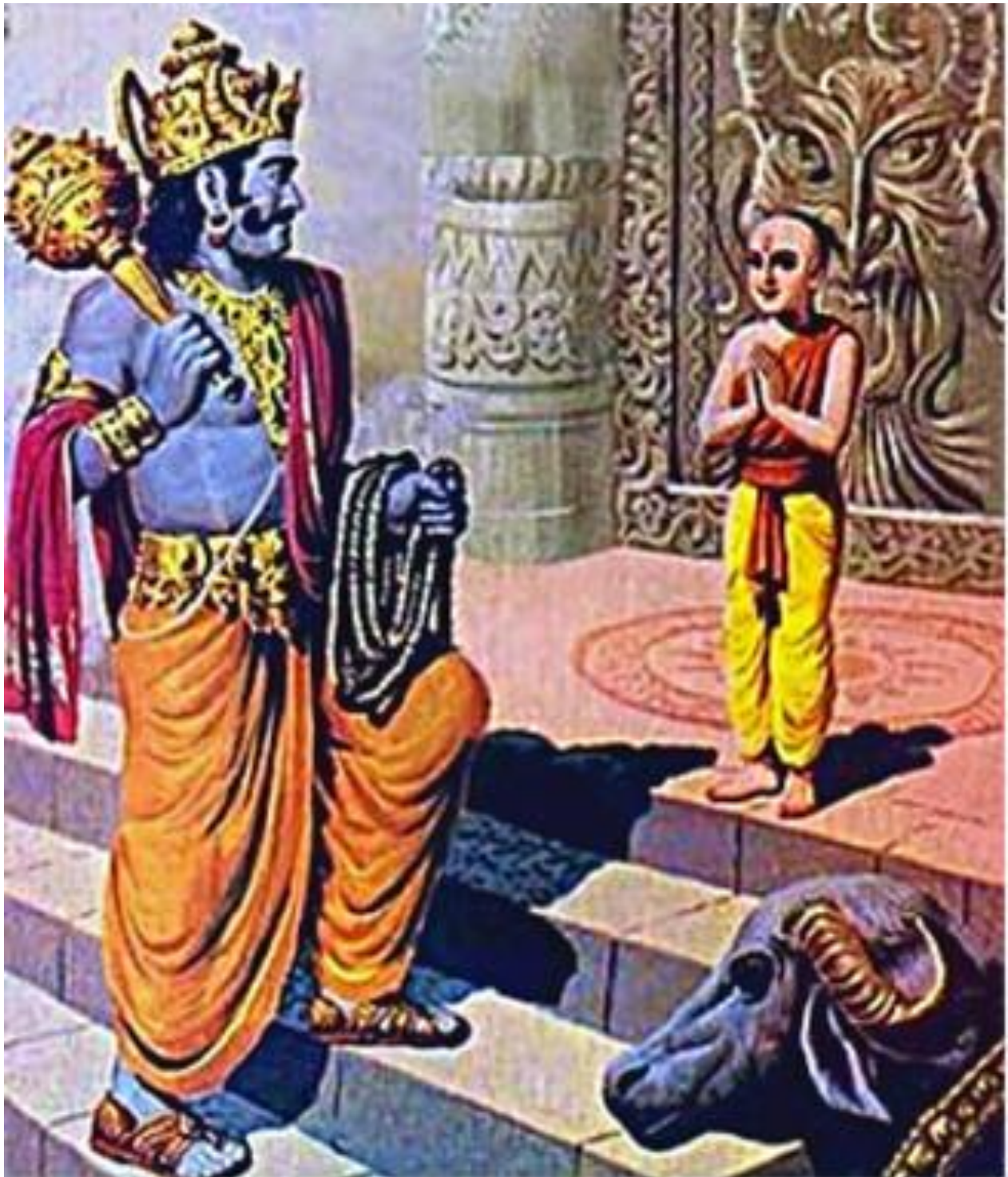


**“ART OF CONQUERING DEATH”
(HERE & NOW)**



Points To Ponder-1

Values:

1. Truth
2. Non-violence
3. Earning in the right way and donating some to the needy
4. Purity and Loyalty
5. No intoxication

- To gain knowledge we must be fully qualified with these 5 values and have interest in these discussions.
- Values are real wealth wherein there is real happiness..
- Though you have much wealth, without the values, you will not be happy. But, if you have all the values, you will be happy even without any wealth.

Difference Between Humans And Animals:

- Animals follow their natural instincts whereas humans use their highest level of reasoning.
- Animals only follow the path of what is pleasing to their senses whereas humans can differentiate between good and bad and do what is good.

The Paths Of Shreyas and Preyas

Shreyas- Doing what is good.

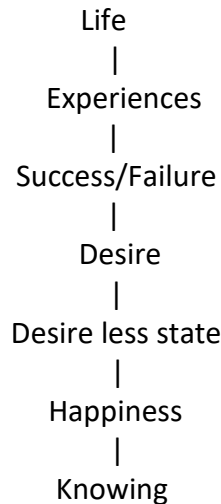
Preyas- Doing what is pleasing even though it might not be good.

Why are people attracted to the path of preyas?

1. It is because of ignorance about the values or lack of knowledge in proper proportions, which pulls us in the opposite direction. (Refer to the story of Valmiki, and, a boy raised as a robber)
2. It is also because of the impressions from previous birth which make us commit sin.

Points To Ponder - 2

Define success in life?



- When a desire gets fulfilled we get a feeling of success.
- But when we look deeper, we are actually craving for the desire less state, through the medium of desire, in which there is only happiness.
- To own up this cause less happiness is called success.

Without this whole cycle, can we get immediate happiness?

Yes, knowledge about who you really are will enable you to have access to causeless happiness.

Is there a price to pay to own up this cause less happiness?

Yes, you must be qualified with the five values to own up the causeless happiness.
Even Nachiketha gained knowledge because he had the values.

Nachiketa's Qualities:

1. Sense of Righteousness
2. Respect for truth
3. Patience and knows the importance of knowledge
4. Compassion
5. Goal Oriented

Why are values necessary to gain knowledge?

- Thinking that you are the body and mind is ignorance.
- This notion is being strengthened by the habits which contradict the values.
- Ignorance is getting strengthened each time we go against the values which steers us away from the path of knowledge.

If knowledge is given to the unqualified, he will harm himself along with others.

Knowledge and values move hand in hand:

If we have the values upto a level, then, the knowledge will motivate us to be completely bound to the values.

How can one develop these values?

1. To develop these values we must be in the company of values oriented people. Reading good books or attending satsangs will also help.
2. The values can also be developed through selfless service as we are not doing it for ourselves. So, the Ego cannot get strengthened through this service.
3. Every moment, we are faced with situations where we have to choose between Shreyas and Preyas. In such situations we must choose Shreyas. This in turn will help develop these values.
4. We must know the importance of these values and realize that they give us peace.

What is the proper way to perform selfless service?

While performing selfless service, we must look at the others as a manifestation of God. Then, the feeling of superiority will vanish while serving the needy. Gradually, the values will develop.

Points to Ponder-3

Who is God?

1. Creator

- Deity: Brahma
- We can understand that there is a God in this world or universe by examining God's very creation. Who created this whole manifestation, from the vast solar system to the tiny plants?
- By questioning and reasoning we can say that the very substratum of this creation is God himself and only He has created them.

2. Sustainer

- Deity: Vishnu
- The sustainer maintains his/her creation to keep peace and allows civilizations as well as flora and fauna alike to prosper.
- In addition, the absolute truth is maintained by God. Without this ultimate truth being sustained, there is no chance of discussions like this occurring.

3. Destroyer

- Deity: Maheswara
- The word “destroyer” to begin possesses a negative connotation. However, tearing things down is as vital and noble as building things up.
- For example, the possibility of having 10-15 generations worth of forefathers still alive today. We can conclude that in order to prevent chaos and disequilibrium in the universe, keeping a balance between creation and destruction is necessary.
- Natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, and pandemics are all examples of tools that are used by God to have a balanced universe.

Thesis:

- From the above points we can conclude that God is the supreme power/being who is taking care of creation, sustenance, and destruction. For this, we must thank Him through prayer.

Is God With or Without Form?

Formless

- God, essentially, is formless given the many places he oversees and all the manifestations of God that we observe on Earth on a daily basis.

Form

- However, to many people, God appears in a form which is not wrong either. For the sake of comprehension and communication He has chosen to appear in a form that you prefer the most.
- Hence, while praying or showing your thanks and devout belief in God, one should make the effort to envision this God in order to have better contact and communication with Him.

Thesis:

- To sum up, God occurs in a formless nature to manifest and oversee many things. However, God appears as a presence with form in order to facilitate comprehension and communication and relay messages to a given devotee.

Q: Why should we pray to god?

1. Gratitude
2. Shock absorber
3. Concentration and purity of mind

Gratitude

- We must show gratitude to those who have helped us.
- In the same way, God is the ultimate giverso we should have gratitude towards God.
- God is also sustaining us with good health. We are able to move forward only by his grace.

Shock absorber

- When you show gratitude, God will be there for you in the form of shockabsorber.
- God can be the shock absorber until you get clear knowledge.

Concentration and purity of mind

- With the support of God we can engage in selfless service. Selfless service can enable us to lead a noble and virtuous life where our mind is concentrated and pure.
- Selfless service is only possible through God's support.

We need a concentrated and pure mind to gain access to knowledge.

True devotees are those who live a righteous life and by living a righteous life it should take them further and give them facilities so that they are able to comprehend the real nature of the God to whom they are praying.

Swami Vivekananda : “You can be born in a temple but should not die in a temple”. (Selfless devotion should lead to the path of knowledge.)

Q: When should we pray to god?

A: Everyday

Which God/religion is the greatest?

- All religions have the same essence.
- The same supreme principle is appearing in whichever form you like.
- So, there is only one God and He is great.

Why is God with form so important?

- The majority of people use the formless aspect of God as an escape from surrendering to God with form.
- But, formless God is valuable to those who know the reality of mind which is Infinite Conscious Existence.
- From our childhood we are nourished in a way where we can only imagine God with the help of name and form.
- If we approach God with form properly then it will introduce us to the formless aspect of God.
- So, we can use the form to connect to the formless aspect and understand that God with form is just an appearance of the formless aspect.
- Even in the form we can see formless.

How should we pray to God?

In the light of the knowledge of Reality, prayer is done physically, verbally, mentally and spiritually.

Make yourself eligible to worship God as a true devotee by having purity of mind in action and thought.

1. Physical Worship:

- We offer our salutations to God of our choice who is in a Form, by lighting the lamp and seeking the blessings of the Form and pray that the entire universe live in peace.
- Pray to God to give strength and capacity to accomplish the day's duties as it is His work that we are doing. Similarly, at the end of the day, we offer the duties we have done

back to God as His service.

- The greatest form of devotion is selfless service which can begin from home by helping with the household chores.

2. Verbal Worship:

We chant slokas to the Form as means to express our gratitude and to give us support to lead a life with values.

3. Mental Worship:

Prayer can be done mentally by visualising the Form with a one pointed and concentrated mind in a way you gain confidence that the Form is the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

4. Spiritual Worship:

Concentration and purity of mind gained through worship is used for acquiring knowledge of one's Real Nature which is Infinite Conscious Existence.

How to do Puja

- See the nameless principle through the form (Shiva/Amma).
- With closed eyes visualize this form for 3 to 4 minutes in your mind.
- If distracted use the name of Shiva/Amma. (OM NAMA SHIVAYA/ OM AMRITESWARYAI NAMA)
- If still distracted, then, use the meaning of the name. OM itself is the Infinite Conscious Existence which is manifesting as Shiva/Amma.

Prayer before starting your work

- Give me the strength and capacity to do your work.
- I am working only because of your power.

End of the day Prayer

- I have done the work as your service and am offering the work back to Shiva/Amma.

In this way the whole day has become worship.

Points to Ponder - 4

Upanishad

- It is a formless journey from word to silence.
- It dispels ignorance about your real nature and bestows the lasting peace.
- To make yourself eligible to comprehend the implied meaning of Upanishad we should have purity, concentration of mind and the grace of God.
- The inspiration to gain knowledge is the highest blessing of God.

Upanishad- Gross

meaning Upa=near Ni=down

Shad=sit Sit down near the teacher.

Upanishad- Subtle Meaning

- Those who approach Upanishad understanding the transitory nature of the world the Upanishad will give them a way to gain causeless happiness which lasts forever.
- It generates knowledge in you which has the capability to dispel the ignorance.

Origin

- Upanishad came from Vedas (ancient text) which means to know.
- They were aged more than 5000 years ago.
- The knowledge aspect of Vedas are Upanishads.

Kathpanishad (Krishna Yajur Veda)

It was written by Kataka Muni or derived from Kataka branch. Hence, it is called Kato Upanishad.

Shanti Mantram

Subtle Meaning

Sahana avathu

Give me the capacity to understand the essence of these teachings

Sahanau bunakthu

Let me comprehend this teaching clearly such that I experience the result of the teaching

Sahaveeryam karavavahai

Let the knowledge be potent enough to eliminate all disturbances like doubts and habitual tendencies (body and notion) which distract me from enjoying the results of the teaching

Thejaswinavathi thamasthu

Let this knowledge glow within me throughout my life till all habitual tendencies are eliminated so that by default I can remain as Infinite Conscious Existence

Maa vidvishavahai

Let there be no obstructions (from the listener and the teacher) to have the knowledge. Let the teacher overlook my shortcomings and let the teachings continue.

Gross Meaning

Sahana avathu

Protect the teacher and the listener

Sahanau bunakthu

Take care of us

Sahaveeryam karavavahai L

et us become potent

Thejaswinavathi thamasthu

Let us be resplendent

Maa vidvishavahai

Let there be no misunderstandings between the teacher and the listener

Points to Ponder-5

Different views about what happens after death

1. Death is the end wherein communication with the physical body is gone but the Infinite Conscious Existence will remain even though the body goes away.
2. If we associate ourselves with name and form you will be left with a state of uncertainty (vacuum) when a loved one passes away. If we recognise ourselves as limitlessness before death we will be the same even after death.
3. Depending on the good deeds we do in this life we take a better birth in your next life. If experientially recognize your true nature there will be no rebirth.
4. Death is just a transformation of life. For example, the role you play in the drama of life ends when death occurs and takes up a different role in the next birth. It is the stage between one life and another.
5. Death is like deep sleep but permanent, as in both the states the body and mind don't play a role. You remain as Infinite Conscious Existence without a form in death and deep sleep too. The only difference is that you are alive in deep sleep.
6. Death is no longer an enigma when you own up your true nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence. As soon as you gain this knowledge experientially that very moment you are dead as body and mind. So when you disown this body and mind then death will no longer be a big deal.

How can we apply this knowledge even when our loved ones pass away? (Doubt)

- If you have experiential knowledge that you are Infinite Conscious Existence, that doesn't mean your loved ones are ignored with this knowledge.
- You see them as a manifestation of infinity itself.
- The moment you recognize your innate true nature, you and your loved ones, as body mind apparatus, pass away then and there.

Those who don't believe in rebirth:

Atheists:

- They are usually materialists who don't believe in rebirth. They don't believe in God so they have no fear of committing a sin.

Christians:

- For them, death is like sleeping and on the day of judgment Jesus will wake them up and send them accordingly to Hell or Heaven.

Muslims:

- They believe in Heaven and Hell.

Others:

- They don't believe in God but believe in serving others hoping that good will happen. For them, death is the end as no one has an experience of Heaven and Hell.

Those who believe in rebirth:

All Hindu religions:

- Some believe in Heaven and Hell.
- Others believe in the concept of rebirth.

Life ends but how does it continue?

- After death there is no gross body but there are subtle and causal bodies.
- The subtle body is like a storage device inside the body, wherein, all the activities done with the body including the thoughts are stored as impressions.
- The causal body acts like a cover for the subtle body.
- After death, the subtle body along with the causal body will leave the gross body. According to the deeds you did while you were alive, they will enter another gross body.

When does the subtle body die?

- When Earth ends, the subtle bodies also get destroyed, but the causal bodies stay.
- In the new planet, the causal bodies will associate with the new subtle bodies which travel together to find a new gross body. Hence, the cycle of birth and death continues.

Logic behind rebirth

- Once the merits (punyam) and demerits (papam) are exhausted in Heaven and hell respectively, they will be reborn.
- Based on the impressions, it is decided which form they will take birth as.
- The results of these merits or demerits may ripen this moment, in this birth, the next birth or maybe even in the next ten births. But, experiencing these results is inevitable.
- If they have merits, they will be reborn as a human in a good family who know the importance of values wherein the basic necessities are not compromised.
- If they have demerits, they will be reborn as animals until their sins are exhausted. Then they will be born as humans.
- We all deserve a thumbs up because of all the good things that we have done in our previous life as we are born as human beings in decent families in this life. So let us be motivated enough to reach the goal of being human which is to own up Infinity as our true nature.

Kato Upanishad Chapter 1 Mantra 20 (Yeyam Prete) Nachiketa's third boon

Nachiketa approached Yama in confusion. Some say that there is life after death but others believe that death is the end. So, as the third boon, Nachiketa asked Yama which the correct answer was.

Yama was stunned to see such a small boy asking such a mature question. He was hesitant to talk about this with Nachiketa as Yama knew that the fate after death was different for people who knew their true nature. So, in order to answer Nachiketa's question, Yama must introduce

him to this knowledge. But, Yama couldn't decide whether Nachiketa was qualified to comprehend this knowledge.

Yama tried to dissuade Nachiketa from this question. He told Nachiketa that this truth was so subtle that even the most intelligent people failed to comprehend it.

Why is this knowledge so subtle?

It is subtle as it is beyond objectivity, senses, mind and intellect.

Why do the most intelligent also fail to comprehend this knowledge?

As they are trained for objective study but this knowledge is subjective recognition.

Objective study only requires concentration of mind. Subjective recognition required purity of mind along with concentration of mind.

Yama suggested Nachiketa to ask for any other boon except this question. Nachiketa, due to his one pointed nature, realized that if this knowledge is difficult to comprehend even by the most intelligent people, no one in his world could answer his question. So, he didn't want to let go of this opportunity of learning this knowledge from Yama. He also thought that there was nothing greater than learning his true nature and that his life is worthless if he did not know who he truly was.

Yama tried to tempt Nachiketa by offering him worldly objects (Vehicles, musical instruments, etc...) instead of an answer to this question.

Mantra 26 (Svobhava martyasya)

Nachiketa refused all these worldly objects as he knew that they were only ephemeral, which would give him only temporary happiness. They will wear away his vigor, energy and intelligence but he still couldn't escape death. So, he thought it was wise to learn about death.

Why do you think knowing about death is considered so important by Nachiketa?

- Nachiketa thought that if there was life after death, an intelligent one must know about it and plan accordingly.
- In case there was life beyond death, Nachiketa wanted to know how he could plan accordingly in this life in order to live comfortably in the next life.

Mantra 29 (Yasminnidam vicikitsanti)

Nachiketa did not seek any other thing as a boon except for the answer to his question. Many people have a confusion about death and is inscrutable. He also believed that the answer would lead to great results. Yama found him fit for knowledge and praised him for his one pointed nature and tenacity.

Points to Ponder-6

Chapter 2 Mantra-1 (anyāc chreyo 'nyad ūtaiva)

Deeper meaning for Shreyas and Preyas:

Shreyas and Preyas are contrary like light and darkness.

Sreyas:

- All activities which lead to true knowledge come under Shreyas.

Activities that lead to true knowledge.

- Selfless service
- Showing gratitude and selfless devotion
- Live with values being the facilitators to get rid of ego.
- Pursuing knowledge by reading good books and listening to Satsangs.

Preyas:

- All activities that strengthen ignorance come under Preyas.
- By pursuing Preyas one will be trapped in ignorance and fall from their goal.

Activities which lead to ignorance

- Not praying to God - no gratitude
- Not doing selfless service
- Not living a value oriented life.
- Not going in the path of knowledge

How would Shreyas and Preyas culminate?

- If you follow Shreyas, in the end you will be content and happy and attain true knowledge.
- If you follow Preyas, you may find momentary happiness (illusion of happiness) but in the long term you will be filled with sorrows and will be left in ignorance.

Those who follow the path of Preyas aim for and attain pleasure. So, how can we say that they fall from their goal?

- His goal is attaining pleasure and he is reaching it for the present moment.
- But, happiness obtained from materialistic things are temporary and are tainted with sorrow.

What is the difference in quality of happiness attained by Shreyas and Preyas?

- Shreyas path leads to causeless happiness because you are identifying yourself with infinity (real nature). This will end the cycle of birth and death.
- Preyas path leads to momentary happiness as you are identifying yourself with objects. This will lead to rebirth as you are not connected with the true knowledge.

- If you aim for happiness in ignorant ways you will forever be in search for happiness through objects.

What is the ultimate goal of this knowledge?

Every human being by default is ignorant (identity with body and mind). The ultimate goal of this knowledge is to recognize our innate oneness with happiness. With this knowledge, we remain happy by default and pursue all the things in life with this happiness and not for happiness.

If Shreyas and Preyas are present before you, what will help us choose Shreyas over Preyas in every moment of our life?

- The sense of discrimination in the moment helps us choose the right path which gives us long term benefits.
- Association with those who have a value oriented life leads us to the path of Shreyas.
- In the light of consciousness, you will always be inclined towards the path of Shreyas.

Chapter-2 Manthra-2 (Sreyas ca preyas ca manusyam...)

When the discrimination to choose Shreyas or Preyas gets clouded in that moment, then:

- A man of true intelligence (dheeraha) will examine the merits and demerits of both the paths, maybe not in the moment, but even before the moment arises.
- He has the ability to clearly separate the good verses the pleasing just like how a swan separates water from milk.
- Dheeraha has the ability to separate because of the merits he has gained by leading a value oriented life.
- On the other hand a fool is only confined to short-term, momentary happiness. For example, he will choose toddy over milk as it gives him immediate pleasure.
- So, we have to prime our machines through selfless service, selfless devotion and leading a value oriented life, so that we will be prepared to discriminate even before the situation to choose between Shreyas and Preyas arises. Then, no situation can take us on a ride and the right decision can be taken.

Why do the people in Preyas path fail to recognize their true nature?

- Those in the path of Preyas don't go beyond the fleshy body as they aim for only short term happiness.
- They will do anything for the well-being of their physical body and even go as far as to completely disregarding their quality of mind and emotions.
- They finally end in psychological distress like depression and anxiety.

Why do people take film stars as role models instead of people who gained causeless happiness?

- The film stars give an impression to the world as though they are really successful in life through the roles they play and the world gets carried away.

What does spiritual knowledge mean?

- Spiritual knowledge is not physical. It is beyond the physical form. It is about your true nature.

The process of spiritual knowledge:

1. Sravana- The process of hearing this knowledge.
2. Manana- When you hear, doubts may still remain within you. You aren't able to put these doubts into your own words to form a question. It further obstructs us from gaining knowledge. With mananam you will get all these doubts clarified.
3. Nidhidhyasana- You will get confirmed knowledge and reach your goal.

How do we know whether we are qualified for this subtle knowledge?

1. We should know the criteria based on which Yama has considered Nachiketa to be qualified for this knowledge. Based on this we will know whether we are qualified or not.

Mantra 3 (Satvam priyam...)

Nachiketa wasn't tempted by the so-called causes of delight in this world. In spite of having the capability to own them, Nachiketa disregarded them and insisted only on knowledge. He knew that all the people who have accepted these delights have drowned in grief.

Mantra 4 (Duram ete viparite)

Just because Nachiketa disregarded Preyas, can he be qualified for knowledge?

- Path of preyas is based on ignorance. It is followed by people who are averse to selfless prayer, no concern for selfless service, ignore values, and have no regard for satsangs.
- The people who are averse to activities based on ignorance, automatically get qualified for the path of knowledge (shreyas), as both these paths are widely contradictory.

How do we apply these two mantras into our lives?

Implication of Mantra 3 and 4:

- Spiritual search: This is the search to discover your essential nature.
- It isn't a search taken up by people who are depressed in life due to various reasons like poor health, failed family life, professional failures, and financial collapse.
- Spiritual search is for people who are mentally stable in life.
- It is for people who have observed the world (people) around them and came to a firm conclusion that there is no lasting peace in the way people are living and leading their lives. These people spend their whole life chasing a mirage of happiness through desire.

What is the deciding factor for success in spiritual life?

Discriminative observation:

- If you have discriminative observation you will inquire and initiate ways to have access to lasting peace.
- This will help you develop all the vigor required to own up this peace along with the knowledge.
- Then, you will do everything with happiness but not for happiness.

- Your effort that has been put forth in this realm of spirituality is directly proportional to the amount of discrimination that you have regarding the world around you.

Even though the path of self knowledge is enabling you to own up your real nature, why are many averse towards this path?

- Many have not been introduced to this knowledge and are satisfied with the limited happiness from the external objects thinking that there is nothing beyond it.
- We are caught up on body-mind apparatus, preconceived notions and commitments. There are many hurdles to cross in order to gain the results of the knowledge which dilute the path.
- Many people are confused and think that they are leading their lives with happiness.
- The various bondings with others may also prevent us from having this knowledge.
- Preconceived notions also play a role in gaining knowledge.
- People are satisfied with the peace they find in their own path and don't see the need to switch to the path of knowledge. Such people are unaware of the concept of lasting peace.
- Some cannot overcome the ego which always pulls them away from the knowledge.
- Many may not have critically observed the world and as a result are caught up with temporary happiness.

Chapter-2, Mantra-5 (avidyāyām antare vartamānāḥ...)

3 reasons why many people are averse to the path of knowledge:

1. Majority live in the midst of ignorants. They are born into societies or families who do not lead a value oriented life. Henceforth, they are not introduced to knowledge. They even ridicule the person who initiate them to devotion and continue in their own way of leading a miserable life.
2. They assume they are already intelligent because they have earned some ranks or degrees in education life. So, they feel they are scholars. They are proficient in making a living but not on how to live happily.
3. They make the people who crave for temporary happiness in the realm of objects as their role models. The objects which prevent them from going in the path of permanent happiness are the 3 Ws: Wealth, Women (men) and Wine. They are ignorant fools who go round and round (craving for temporary happiness) without reaching anywhere. It is like the blind leading the blind on a rough/rocky road. They will finally end up in calamity.

Chapter-2, Mantra-6 (na sāmparāyaḥ pratibhāti...)

Even though the right advice is available in plenty, why don't the majority still not appreciate their importance?

- They assume that there is only this life and nothing other than what is visible to them. They spend their whole life in merry, trying to find a livelihood to be happy by gaining pleasure from the objects. They confine themselves to objectivity and cannot go beyond it.

- They are nondiscriminatory like kids(bala). Normally, kids evolve by age. Otherwise, they are labeled as mentally challenged or retard. People cannot evolve unless they have discriminative observation on the world around them. The worldly experiences are given for the sole purpose of developing this discriminative observation. With this ability, you must come to a conviction that there is no lasting happiness with these objects. Until this discrimination is developed, you are labeled as bala. So, don't you think you must observe the world and evolve?
- They are excessively preoccupied with matter related to wealth. They earn endlessly and still crave for more.

What is the fate of those who do not turn to spirituality?

- They will come again and again in the hands of Yama. This means that they continually revolve in the cycle of birth and death.
- Devoid of knowledge, there is nothing but suffering from womb to tomb.
- If we really perform selfless devotion and selfless service along with leading a value oriented life, we will have access to knowledge and the cycle of birth and death will cease.

Points to Ponder-7

Why do the majority of people prefer to follow the path of religion and not the path of spirituality?

- Majority of people don't know the difference between spirituality and religion. Others, due to their ignorance, might not have been introduced to the path of spirituality. So they get conditioned into the path of religion.
- True religion always culminates to spirituality. Many follow religion without knowing the true meaning of it. This is why they never gain true knowledge.
- Those who want their desires to be fulfilled will follow religion. Those who want to know the illusion of desires will follow spirituality. As many people want their desires to be fulfilled, they choose the path of religion.
- The path of religion is also followed by a majority of people to overcome their fear and insecurities.

**Mantra 7 (Sravanayapi
bahubhir yo na...)**

3 reasons as to why majority of people go in the path of religion rather than spirituality even if they are introduced to it:

1. Lack of interest on spirituality

- Spirituality is a path that is very subtle as it is not an objective recognition, but a subjective exploration. An interest for this subjective exploration is very rare.
- Why is this interest rare? It is because majority are content with their own restlessness in pursuing fleeting happiness in the realm of objects.
- Why? As they do not have discriminative observation. They never cared to analyze the world around them. Hence, they never came to a conclusion that there is little joy in the midst of immense suffering in this world. With ones own conviction, if they question whether there is a way to put an end to inevitable suffering they will gain regard towards the path of spirituality.
- With selfless devotion this discriminative observation will slowly blossom and pave a path for spirituality.

2. Lack of opportunities to learn about your true nature

- Even if you have interest and are ready to learn this knowledge, the opportunity to hear about your true nature isn't available to many. The speaker of truth is a rare commodity. First, students who are interested in learning this knowledge are

rare and the students who have comprehended this knowledge are even rarer. Among the students who have understood, a rare one will have interest and a skill to teach.

Why are teachers a rare commodity?

- There are many teachers, but proficient teachers are few.

Who is a proficient teacher?

- A proficient teacher is someone who can come down to the level of the student and take him/her gradually to the lofty heights of non-dual experience.
- A proficient teacher will help the student own up their real nature from body- am -I notion to Infinite Conscious Existence.

How do we get the right teacher?

- With the grace of God through selfless devotion, we will be led to the right teacher.

3. Not all will understand this truth despite having interest and finding the right teacher. Why?

- This is because you need courage to transcend the world (name and form) and hold on to the implied experience of this knowledge.
- Many people don't have courage to transcend the world as it requires purity of mind through selfless service. Selfless service and values enables you to transcend the excessive preoccupations with individuality(name and form)
- Only a qualified student can comprehend the knowledge with the help of a proficient teacher.

In life, there are inevitable sufferings. So let us qualify ourselves through selfless devotion, selfless service and values to have an experience of our true nature. With this knowledge, we will lead life without even suffering the least. Then, we will live with happiness instead of craving for happiness throughout our life.

Why do you think Upanishad is insisting on a proficient teacher?

- Someone who has the experience of non-duality is essential as they will guide us in the path of knowledge. Without a proficient teacher, we may get lost in the way.
- We need a proficient teacher as only he can come down to the level of the student and understand what the student is comprehending without having any ego.
- This subtle knowledge may be confusing at times and without a proficient teacher, it is very likely that we misinterpret the teachings. This can cause the

student to harm himself and the people around him. Hence it is crucial to have a proficient teacher who guides the student in the right path.

- Only a proficient teacher can teach from their experience in a way that the student can grasp their teachings.
- A proficient teacher is required as only he can clear the student's doubts and examine the student's progress over time.

Chapter-2 Mantra-8 **(na nareṇa varena prokta)**

Reasons as to why Upanishad is insisting on a proficient teacher:

- If an incompetent teacher teaches then it is difficult even for a qualified student to comprehend adequately.

Who is an incompetent teacher?

- An incompetent teacher has a wild imagination of reality but not a subjective experience of reality as he has objectified it. Therefore it is impossible for a teacher who has an objective experience of reality to give the student a subjective experience.
- A incompetent teacher is one who has not transcend the name and form. So he will not be successful in subjective teaching.

Why is it important for a spiritual teacher to transcend name and form to teach effectively?

Or

What are the challenges faced by a spiritual teacher?

Aneeya anupramanat, atarkyam, bahudha cintyamanah

1. Unlike regular teachers, a spiritual teacher must communicate about that which is beyond the word through the word and make the listener comprehend it by transcending the word.
2. This subject is unique as it is very subtle and even subtler than an atom. You cannot see it but experience it as your real nature. It is subtle as, from the time we are born, we have associated ourselves with this body-mind complex, while strengthening our identity with it. But for this knowledge we have to transcend the body-mind apparatus.
3. Knowledge about the truth is very subjective and is beyond reasoning. Although reasoning is there it is purely based on one's own experience. The truth can be comprehended through logic, but it must be subjective logic.

4. There is a lot of confusion regarding the topic of 'Self' due to so many prevalent notions present in the society. Hence, if a qualified student doesn't learn from a proficient teacher he may feel that this knowledge is very ambiguous.
5. Only one who has comprehended this knowledge subjectively by deriving identity from reality can teach this knowledge effectively. Then, the student will understand their true nature easily.

How do we know if we comprehended this subtle knowledge correctly?

1. There is no doubt about the existence of real nature as it is in your experience. The knowledge what you have gained has yielded doubtless recognition about your real nature.
2. You will know- I Am- Infinite Conscious Existence as your experience.
3. If you understand this knowledge there remains nothing else to be known as there is no knowable left.
 - For example, a wave's reality is water. Once it realizes that it is water, there is nothing more for it to know as there is nothing there but water. In the same manner if we realize that our real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence then, there is nothing else except for that infinite consciousness. If there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence, then, you own up that to be happiness. We are one with happiness within and we experience nothing but happiness outside.
 - If we clearly understand this then from that moment we don't crave for happiness but rather we live with happiness. Happiness becomes your very identity.
 - Once you know your real nature not only do you realize the real nature of the entire universe (objectivity) but you also realize the real nature of God. The Infinity appears as entire universe, as God and as your body, mind.
4. The moment you recognize your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence, The notion that you are a body and mind apparatus dies. You will be free from the cycle of birth and death.

Points to Ponder - 8

Essence of Mantras 9, 10 and 11 Pointers

to know whether we are qualified for this knowledge:

1. Compassion:

An important quality to know subjectively, is to check whether you have a compassionate outlook.

- Do not unnecessarily cause anyone harm or pain mainly through your words and activities.
- Help others whenever the opportunity arises where in you have the capability to do so.
- Give a compassionate ear to people when they're feeling down over some, event so that they are relieved of misery.
- Sharing this understanding of reality to only those who you believe are also qualified and deserve it. This knowledge has to be imparted depending on the situation and moulded according to the need of the day.
- By causing joy to others, this subtle understanding of knowledge is possible.
- Sometimes, because of our ego, the understanding gained until now will also be of no use when needed the most.

2. True Resolution (Sathya druthi):

- You will comprehend the real nature only if you have true resolution or resolved mind (firm decision).
- Extrovert tendencies may surface and topple you at any moment. Only with true resolution, you will be immune to these tendencies and prioritize this path.

How can you be resolute?

- With discriminative observation of the world, you will have true resolution.
- Everybody is putting forth effort craving for true happiness, but don't achieve it as they are being helplessly tossed between joy and sorrow. Even the successful people in the world don't achieve true happiness as they don't know the difference between joy and happiness.

What is the difference between joy and happiness?

- Joy (Sukham): Joy is a state of mind derived by fulfilling desire in the objective realm which is there momentarily.
- Happiness (Anandam): Happiness is recognizing its presence within you as your real nature, which is synonymous to Infinite Conscious Existence. You cannot be apart from happiness because you remain as it, once you recognize it as your true nature. It is the peace in the background which is not disturbed by any event.
- If you have discriminative observation, you recognize the possibility of being peaceful in the midst of joy and sorrow. To bring it in your experience, you differentiate joy and happiness and try to own up the happiness through action.

Sukham → Joy → derived from an object for instant happiness
Anandam → Happiness (Peace) → you recognize it as your very own nature (infinite conscious existence).

The two actions that can be undertaken to own up this true happiness:

1. Bahiranga Sadhana

- External/Gross Practices that include safeguarding values, selfless service, and selfless devotion
- These practices by themselves are not complete. They help us to gain focus on the internal practices.

2. Antharanga Sadhana

- Internal/Subtle Practices that include Sravanam, Mananam, and Nidhidhyasana.
- Sravanam denotes hearing or simply listening to the satsang.
- Mananam is to eliminate or resolve doubts by analyzation and discussion. The doubts can be resolved based on the knowledge you learnt during satsang. Here, you must clarify the doubts by consulting the remedies given in the Upanishads, as they are the most authoritative compared to the puranas and smritis like Bhagavad Gita.
- Nidhidhyasana denotes sitting one-pointedly and letting knowledge sink in. It also means to eliminate this habitual tendency that you are a body-mind apparatus that arises despite having no doubts.

How can you transcend sorrows in life? (Responses from the group)

- You can transcend sorrows in a way by thinking that they will pass away.
- Being convinced enough that your real nature is happiness and so sorrows will not bother you.
- Totally surrendering to God so that you no longer have to worry about them.
- Focus on your breath to take your mind off of the sorrowful event.
- Sorrows are given to you by God for you to evolve in life. This belief depends on the confidence you have in God.
- Know the reality of the sorrows to transcend them. Sorrow is nothing but the manifestation of Infinity itself.
- The more confidence you have on the knowledge of your true nature, the more you comprehend it and own it up to an extent that nothing can make you sad.

MANTRA 12
(Tam durdarsam gudham...)

This Mantra gives a wonderful insight of not being afraid of sorrow anymore. Through this you can transcend sorrow.

Aadhyathmika Yoga:

- It means to withdraw the mind from outer objects (cause of sorrow) and focus it on Self which is your true nature.
- You feel sorrow because your mind is excessively preoccupied with the sorrowful event. The technique Upanishad recommends is to shift the focus on to the Self. Focus can be made on objects which you can see. You can't see the Self but still you have to focus on it.

How does the Self look like?

- You cannot see the Self but only know it well so that it remains as your experience. Seeing is nothing but knowing it.
- **Durdarsam**: it is difficult to perceive Self (formless) and transcend sorrow.

Why is it difficult to know the Self?

- **Gudham anupravistam**: It is difficult because it is in an inaccessible place.

What is the inaccessible place where the Self resides?

- It is in your own body.

Why is it inaccessible?

It is inaccessible because:

- The body is taken for granted so we ignore finding it there and therefore, miss it.
- Body is the cause of endless miseries. So we don't search for Self, which is absolute bliss, in the body which is the cause of inevitable sufferings.

Where in the body is the Self present?

- **Guhahitam**: It is present in the cave of intellect.
- You cannot recognise it as it is hidden by thoughts (which change accordingly with worldly objects). So, we tend to miss it.
- The Self is veiled by these thoughts.
- But, Self is there in the midst of these thoughts as the illuminator of them.

How is this Self in the intellect?

- It is there as your very consciousness.

What is this consciousness?

- Consciousness is that because of which you are conscious of everything. But, it is not what you are conscious of.
- Your real nature is there as your very Consciousness.
- Your body, mind and intellect are also only objects which are being illuminated by Consciousness itself. It is present devoid of all these as well. Because of Consciousness, we are conscious of everything.

Why did we miss it?

- You miss it as you are preoccupied with the things you are conscious of. So, you ignore Consciousness, because of which we are knowing all these things. This implies that **you are the Consciousness**.

How do I find this Consciousness?

- Just by knowing about it.
- You can only find what is different from you. But Consciousness is what you are.
- You should know it clearly.

Puranam: Knowing that Consciousness is ancient or everlasting Self. What is the everlasting Self?**What is remaining as everlasting in your experience?**

- In your experience, nothing is present as everlasting except your Consciousness .
- This changeless principle which witnesses all the changes externally and internally is the Consciousness.
- So it is there in our experience as the Conscious entity that is illuminating everything without any change (everlasting).

Clues to recognize consciousness as your true nature (summary):

1. The principle within you because of which you are Conscious of everything.
2. The principle within you which you call yourself as **I**, remains as it is from your childhood till now, as the witness to all the changes in life.

Dhirah:**Viveki (intelligent one):**

He will not identify himself with body and mind and hence will transcend joy and sorrow. Every experience is used as an aid to recognize himself to be Consciousness.

Aviveki (unintelligent one):

He will strengthen his identity with body and mind with every passing experience. Hence, he is tossed between joys and sorrows.

How can you deal with sorrow with this knowledge?

- When you are faced with sorrow, you immediately become alert and know that you are conscious about the thought of this sorrow because you are Consciousness.
- This is a radical shift of identity from body mind apparatus to Consciousness.
- The nature of Consciousness is peace and immediately you own up the peaceful state.
- The sorrowful event has become an aid for you to recognize yourself as Consciousness.
- This knowledge helps to go beyond the sorrowful state, as your identity is now shifted from the sorrow state of mind to that which is knowing the sorrowful state (Consciousness). In Consciousness, there is no trace of sorrow.

HW Exercise:

Before having food:

1. Remain as Consciousness (for at least 3 mins) - Be conscious of neutral thoughts or thoughtlessness.
2. Take one of the most sorrowful events, assume that it happened right now and apply that I am conscious about that sorrowful event.

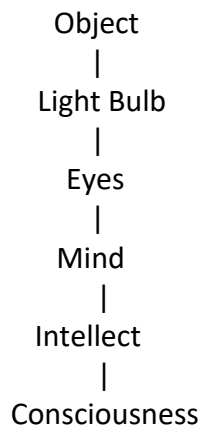
Points to Ponder -9

How do you recognize Consciousness?

- Why is the word 'recognize' used here? The Upanishad says, Consciousness is everlasting (puranam). We are not creating it, as it is already there but seems to be missing because of our ignorance.
- So we are consciously owning up Consciousness.
- You need not work hard to own it up. If done so, it will only take you further away from it. To recognize it you need to relax and know that you did not miss it though you were ignorant of it.
- At any moment of time we cannot say we are not Conscious. We are Conscious of everything the whole time we are awake. But, if it is so simple, how did we miss it? We missed it as we are always busy with the objects (including body and mind) which it is illuminating, to such an extent that we lost track of the illuminator.
- It is like wearing spectacles and searching for them everywhere. If you are relaxed, there is a chance for you to find them.

Hints to recognize Consciousness:

- During the daytime how do we see the objects? Due to the sunlight. How about in the night? It is because of the electric lights. What if there is no power? Then, it is because of moonlight. If it is a no moon day, our eyes get adapted to the dark and we start to see limited images . How is this possible? It is because of the light of Consciousness. Through the light of Consciousness only, we are able to see everything.
- How do we see the objects right now?



You see objects because of the bulb. You see the bulb because of your eyes. So, the eyes are illuminating the bulb. Mind is then illuminating the eyes. Intellect is illuminating the mind. Finally, Consciousness is illuminating the intellect, mind, eyes, light bulb and object. It is self luminous. So, you can no longer have an imagination of Consciousness. You own it up and remain as Consciousness.

- Even the senses are illuminated by the Consciousness. What you are experiencing (sound, touch, sight, taste and smell) is not Consciousness. It is a faculty in you which is enabling you to appreciate the sense objects, by remaining as Consciousness. Example: a pot with five holes is placed on a light source.

How can you handle sorrow with this recognition?

- Sorrow is a thought. You are Conscious of this thought. Then you remain as Consciousness. Now, you are making use of sorrow to recognize yourself as Consciousness. The sorrowful event acts as an aid to own up the Consciousness which is your real nature.

How will the sorrow cease?

- Due to the shift in identity.
- Usually, you are identified with body and mind. So, sorrow will overwhelm you.
- But now, you are Conscious of the reasons for the unpleasant mental activity and also Conscious of the individual who is sorrowful.
- So, you are a witness (Conscious) to the sorrowful individual and also to the mental activity.
- So, sorrow is there but you are no longer sorrowful.
- You will be sorrowful in sorrow only when you derive your identity from body and mind. But when you are conscious of sorrow consciously, then, there is an identity shift from body and mind apparatus to Consciousness, which cannot be sorrow by default.
- In the light of Consciousness, the sorrow fades away.

Exercise

Aim: Consciously trying to be conscious of the Consciousness.

- Sit for 3 minutes before food.
- Be Conscious of a sound/thought while remaining as Consciousness.
- One more sound comes, you are appreciating that sound because of Consciousness.
- The whole experience of sounds/thoughts is happening only because of Consciousness.
- You are acknowledging these sounds/thoughts because of your natural experience of Consciousness.
- Whatever thoughts may come and go they are only strengthening our experience of being Consciousness. So you remain as Consciousness.
- Even when you are conscious of not appreciating any sound, in effect you remain as Consciousness.

Hw question

- Do you like your experience of being Consciousness?
- If you like it then why?

Responses from the group:

The experience of being Conscious is liked because:

- It helps to transcend sorrows and thoughts and be truly happy and blissful.
- It helps to be aware of the activity in the light of Consciousness.
- It helps to transcend all the worries and problems which are associated with the body and mind.
- There is nothing else to be known as everything is illuminated by the Consciousness.

Why are you not having the experience of being Consciousness?

- You tend to protect your individuality by trying to remain as subject and experience Consciousness as an object.
- But, you cannot retain individuality and experience Consciousness at the same time as the reality of the individuality is Consciousness.
- The mind is pushing for an objective experience, so even this Consciousness is made an object which makes it impossible to recognize objectively.
- We are habituated to handle things in a complex way. So, when a simple thing is presented, you try to handle it complexly and hence miss it.
- You give credit to your individuality for having experiences of all the senses, disregarding Consciousness by which these (senses) are illuminated.
- Consciousness is an illuminating principle which has the potency to know.

How can Consciousness be your real nature?

- Your body and mind are continuously changing. But, a changeless principle within you which is illuminating all of these changes is Consciousness. So, Consciousness is your real nature and you cannot imagine to be without it.
- For example, the real nature of a wave is water. The water remains as itself, and appears in different forms like small wave, bubble, big wave, etc... Here water is said to be real nature of waves because it remains changeless as water and appears as change in the form of waves.

Real challenge:

Failure: When all the experiences fool you into assuming you are body and mind. **Success:** When you handle all the experiences in the light of knowledge by knowing they (experiences) are all there to facilitate you to own up that **you are Consciousness.**
Let us aim for success as it is reality.

HW

- Remain as Consciousness. This meditation can be done as per your wish for how long you want and how many times you can.
- Then, during neutral activities (walking, taking a bath, etc...), see how the Consciousness is.
- See whether you are able to own up (identity with your true self) Consciousness in the midst of these activities.

Points to Ponder-10

How should neutral activity be done in the light of this knowledge?

- All the neutral activities should be done peacefully. If it is giving peace, nothing should prevent you from owning it up more frequently. This peace will be felt by others in your presence.
- By increasing the time in which you sit consciously will further have a high potency to burn the restlessness in any challenging activity. When dealing with a challenging activity, instead of getting carried away by a thought, take ownership of it and remain as Consciousness. This will give you the strength to overcome restlessness with peace.
- The confidence gained in handling neutral activities with peace will help in dealing challenging activities, eventually.

What is the quality of mind while sitting for yourself ?

- The mind is pure and subtle because it is trying to get to its source which is Consciousness.
- It will evolve to a different dimension and unknowingly, attentiveness will be your true nature.

Choice:

- Assuming yourself to be body and mind- You will be a slave to your mind.
 - Being as Consciousness- Your mind will be your slave and, hence, you will be peaceful.
- This peace will slowly creep into all the other activities that you do daily. A peaceful mind is required for future discussions Kathopanishad.

Was the comprehension of the previous Mantra (Aadhyathma Yoga) theoretical or practical?

Practical comprehension:

- Spirituality is a practical oriented philosophy.
- When it culminates into experience, it becomes practical comprehension.

Theoretical comprehension:

- When you don't have a concept of how to apply knowledge in life, and when imagination has a role, comprehension becomes theoretical.
- When knowledge is not being put into practice, it remains only in the level of theory.

How can you get a practical comprehension of knowledge?

- Initiating Aadhyathma Yoga in daily life can help you to comprehend knowledge practically.
- In Aadhyathma Yoga, you are using the objects as a portal to own up our real nature as Consciousness.
- Even sorrow can be handled with this technique by owning up your real nature as Consciousness.

Homework:

How do you know whether you really recognized consciousness or are just imagining it? Is it a theoretical illusion or a practical experience?

Responses from the group:

- Emotions like happiness, peace and bliss are experienced which confirms that the recognition is real and not an imagination. There was an access to a happy zone which cannot happen in an illusion.
- An enjoyable change is experienced.
- Experience is enjoyable where there is true happiness. So, the exercise was done more often.

- Everything is a passing cloud and in the substratum of Consciousness there is no change. So, in a way, not able to get rid of Consciousness which is real.
- At least for some time, was able to be exclusively with Consciousness. So, it is reality. Not only in that moment, but in the light of Consciousness, every experience is happening. So, that cannot be an illusion.
- There is reality in my doubtless recognition of Consciousness. So, it cannot be an illusion.
- As the experience of Consciousness helped in transcending many unpleasant situations, it is not an illusion.

Mantra-13 (Yethath sruthva)

This mantra answers whether our recognition is real or imaginary.

Why is it important for the Upanishad to give clues?

Upanishad wants to evaluate whom to take forward.

Three reasons:

1. The subject is subtle (Anu aapya) because it is beyond senses, mind and intellect. The comprehension is easy and difficult at the same time. It is easy because it is our real nature. So, however subtle it is, it doesn't matter. It is difficult because, until now we are trained only to comprehend through the senses, mind and intellect, but not transcend them. So, Upanishad wanted to make sure whether you really comprehended it or you are having a grand imagination of it in your mind.
2. Experience of Self is non objective, meaning that it is subjective. In fact, every experience is subjective. But, what makes the experience of self unique is that it is the subjective experience of subject itself. So, there are higher chances of having an imagination.
3. A lot of illusions are already prevalent in the path of Self knowledge. For example, seeing lights, hearing sounds, knowing events in future. These are all imagination of Self, but are not Self.

To know Self you need an innocent and open mind. The joy here is to know about our real nature.

What are the clues that Upanishad is giving to make sure that you are not imagining the Self?

1. Yethath sruthva:

- You have to hear about it and have an experience. Clear knowledge is itself an experience. It is not that you will have knowledge first and have an experience later. Doubtless recognition is as such an experience. However, there are some exceptions

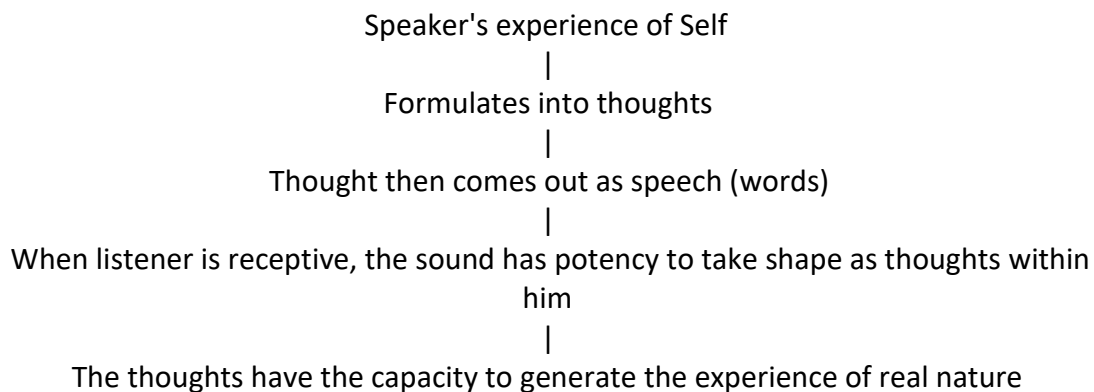
like Ramana Maharshi, who without any formal hearing recognized real nature through inquiry.

Why is hearing important?

- You are trying to know what you already are. It needs to first be recognized and reinstated by someone, confirming that you are Consciousness.
- All other sadhanas (efforts), like meditation, have use only when initiated after shravana (like which is done in satsangh). Japa, puja ..facilitate one pointedness and help us in shravana. For a qualified student, shravana alone is enough.

What happens in shravana?

The conviction of Self in the speaker, through the medium of sound (words), is transferred to the listener, who is receptive for it.



2. Pravruhya dharmyam

- Separating from the body, you are recognizing the Self.
- The recognition of Consciousness leads to ruthless negation of everything presented before you. That which remains and cannot be negated is Consciousness.
- Experience of Consciousness cannot be confined to the experiences within the body. The only experience you can have is peace/happiness. Other experiences appear grand and fantastic but they have nothing to do with the Self.

Have you separated what you are Conscious of, and owned up the Consciousness? Did you negate all those things which are being experienced and owned up that because of which all experiences are possible?

- Yes, I have owned up my real nature as Consciousness and negated that which I am conscious of.

3. Sampari gruhya

- It means to grasp fully about the Self doubtlessly. Grasping fully means knowing it to be your own Self. Consciousness is your own Self. You (body and mind) are recognized by Consciousness.

- Recognition of Self implies remaining as the Self. Recognizing Consciousness means Consciousness waking up to its Infinite nature. Until now it is as though we have recognized it with body and mind. But now, Consciousness is comprehending itself.
- There is no subject and object, meaning that the nature of Consciousness is non dual.

4. Modhathe modhaneeyam labdhva

- You will rejoice, having obtained that which is the cause of all delight/happiness.
- In the moment of being as Consciousness, we are there as infinity, that is, without any limitations. To experience that infinity is to be happy/peaceful. Infinity alone is happiness.
- When you recognize the Infinite nature of Consciousness, you get addicted to remain as it.

All the four clues in a nutshell:

1. Shravana- Hearing about it.
2. Did you enquire and transcend all what you are Consciousness of and own up your real nature as Consciousness?
3. Consciousness is conscious of Consciousness.
4. Have you owned up that happiness which is the source for countless happy events?

Why do you like deep sleep so much?

- Deep sleep is liked as you are present as Infinity in deep sleep. Consciousness is Conscious of its own infinite nature in deep sleep. So you are happy in deep sleep.

What is the cause of all happy moments in life?

- In all our happy moments in life, we remained as Infinite Consciousness.
- The quality of all the happy moments is exactly like peace/happiness born out of Consciousness recognizing Consciousness.
- When you are tuned to Infinite Consciousness, you are happy.
- Unknowingly, you may be tuned to it through an object. You use the help of objects to be face to face with your real nature.
- So, your real nature is the only source of all happiness.

Homework

- Recognize Consciousness during your meditation. Acknowledging its Infinite nature, remain as happiness/peace.
- Apply this to the neutral activities. Let them happen in the light of Infinite Consciousness. Let the neutral activities unfold without covering your peace. You can pick a minimum of 2 to 3 activities.
- Dissolve any unwelcome emotions/negative thoughts in the light of Consciousness. Transform them into peace/happiness.

Points to Ponder-11

Continuation of Mantra 13

Nachiketa passed through all the 4 gates and Yama considered Nachiketa to be fit to own up freedom from ignorance of real nature. Once you know your real nature, you consciously own up this mansion of infinity. We are also fit to own up our real nature as Infinite Consciousness and, in a way, own up the undisturbed peace.

Even after you already recognized your real nature to be peace, why is Upanishad saying that you are fit now?

- We only have a glimpse of real nature, now. There is no difference in real nature, but there is a difference in doubtlessly owning it up to be your real nature.
- Before these discussions, we have confidence that we are body and mind. So, with the same confidence, you have to own up Infinite Consciousness.
- Many will not even have a glimpse of their real nature as peace, in spite of introducing them to knowledge. But, if you have a glimpse of your real nature as peace, you are fully qualified further to own up your real nature to be Infinite Consciousness, as vividly as you believed your real nature to be body and mind in ignorance.
- Upanishad gives endless portals to strengthen our knowledge regarding our real nature. We must be eligible to hold onto these portals and strengthen our identity with infinite consciousness. If one who is not yet eligible has access to these portals in the path of knowledge, then it will cause more harm than good.

Why is there a difference in comprehension for the students when the same Upanishad is being taught by the same teacher?

- Difference is because of the difference in the qualification. Those who are qualified fare better.
- Qualifications – 5 values, selfless service & selfless devotion
- These needs to become part of our life initially with effort, and later effortlessly.
- If you are making these qualifications a part of your life, then, comprehending the Upanishad will be easy. Why is it so?
- Upanishad deals with the Ego (body-am-I notion). If you don't follow these qualifications, your Ego will be strengthened which in turn makes the knowledge difficult to penetrate within.

How do you know whether you owned up Infinite Consciousness without doubt?

You can do so by taking the help of the 4 clues:

1. Is the recognition the result of shravana? Yes.
2. Are you consciously acknowledging the Consciousness within you by not getting carried away with thoughts? Yes.
3. Now, who is owning up Consciousness? The body isn't owning up Consciousness. Then, the Consciousness alone is remaining and it is owning up eternal Consciousness.

4. How is that Consciousness? That Consciousness has no limitations. So, it is Infinite, which is peace.

If you pass these four indicators, then, there should not be any doubt in owning it up. Consciousness has owned up Consciousness, which is peace. All thoughts are appearing in Consciousness and have no power to veil Consciousness. There should not be any doubt as it is in your own experience.

- Even the values will become stronger and spontaneous in the light of Consciousness.

Mantra 14 (Anyathra dharma...)

Yama told Nachiketa that he was fit to proceed further in owning up the experience of Infinity. Nachiketa felt very inspired and without wasting the opportunity, he put up a question to Yama.

What is beyond dharma (righteousness) and adharma (unrighteousness), cause and effect phenomena and time (birth and death)?

By this question of Nachiketa, we can say that he is a serious thinker and observer. He observed that there is no uniformity on the aspect of righteousness and unrighteousness. He found out that there was no lasting peace in the mad race of cause and effect phenomena. He noticed that time eats away everything. He then asked Yama if there was anything beyond these three so that he can own up peace which has no limits, in spite of living in the midst of a world revolving around these three. He further asked Yama to share an insight on this topic if it is in his experience.

Mantra 15 (Sarve veda...)

Yama answers positively to Nachiketa's question that there is a state that transcends all the three which were mentioned. Nachiketa felt relieved.

That state:

1. Is glorified in all the Vedas.
2. To attain this state, people engage in many austerities since time immemorial. They are also engaged in brahmacharya (staying with the teacher and studying scripture along with doing seva).

Why is that state not prevalent now?

- It is not prevalent now, as people are habituated to live a life devoid of real peace. So, the path seems to be obscured.
- Just because it is not prevalent, it cannot be denied. It is always there for the brave and the intelligent.
- This path of truth is flowing eternally in this country without any break in continuity.

What is that state?

- It is the most subtle state and, in brief, it is OM. The whole essence is in it.

HW

What is OM?

Responses from the group:

- It is a sacred sound which refers to the ultimate reality and truth, i.e, Consciousness.
- A, U and M are the representation of the hindu Gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, and the three Vedas. OM is considered to be Shiva.
- Consciousness is evoked by the sound of OM.
- A-waking state, U- dream, M- deep sleep. The silence that follows represents Consciousness which is illuminating everything.
- OM represents the silence as my real nature, witnessing all the three states.
- The sound of OM came from the damarukam of lord Shiva, and all the letters followed it. It is an auspicious word in Hinduism. It is the essence of all Upanishads (OM TATH SATH).
- OM is Infinite Conscious Existence. It is the nameless and formless principle which is the essence and manifests as everything.
- OM is the Parabrahman, which is the nature of God and me. The silence is called Thuriyam which is the state beyond all these three represented by OM. Those who understand the essence of OM are considered as 'realized souls'.

OM, as a symbol, is worshiped by Hindus. It existed even before Hinduism. It is not connected to any single personality like cross is connected to Christ. It transcends the entire manifestation and is the reality of it. A short name for Infinite Conscious Existence is OM. It represents the reality of all Gods and human beings and this reality is not affected by time.

What is OM? (As said by Yama)

- There is a state which transcends all these three and it is represented by OM. OM is comprehend in three levels based on eligibility :

Level 1 :Adhama/ Manda Adhikari

- These people are excessively occupied with body-am-I notion. They only have a gross outlook and cannot transcend form. For them, it is a medium to satisfy their desires. They cannot think beyond the symbol OM. They see God in the form of OM and pray to it to fulfill their desires.

Level 2: Madhyama Adhikari

- They have the capability to transcend the gross outlook and comprehend the subtle implications of OM. For them, OM is a sound. They chant OM and hold on to the sound. They see Paramathma in the sound. Sound is the representation of supreme God.

Level 3: Uthama Adhikari

- They are capable of transcending both gross and subtle identities of OM. They are potent enough to comprehend subtler things. They comprehend OM as the reality of God, which is the reality of the entire manifestation including themselves.

Are we qualified as Uthama Adhikari to go ahead?

- You are Conscious of the form (gross) and sound (subtle). Leaving sound, you have the capability to comprehend the principle which the sound represents. So, you transcended sound and are using it as a medium to recognize the reality of sound as Consciousness. Hence, we should be confident enough that we belong to stage three and have transcended name and form. So, we are qualified to go ahead.

What are the qualities of Uthama Adhikari?

- They will be able to follow 5 values with ease. They have selfless devotion and never miss an opportunity to do selfless service. Such people can transcend the gross aspect of body and mind easily.

How do Uthama Adhikari comprehend the reality of OM ?

1. OM implies A, U, M and amaathra, ending with silence which is important.
2. A- Represents the gross world of name and form.
3. U- Represents the subtle world of thoughts (thoughts inside us).
4. M- It represents Karana Prapancham, the silence of thoughts, but not absolute silence. It has the potency to bring in one more thought. It can be considered as the gap between two thoughts, which is the relative silence of thoughts.
5. Amaathra- When a one pointed inquiry is done into silence represented by M, it will take you to Amathra.

Process of inquiry with the help of OM:

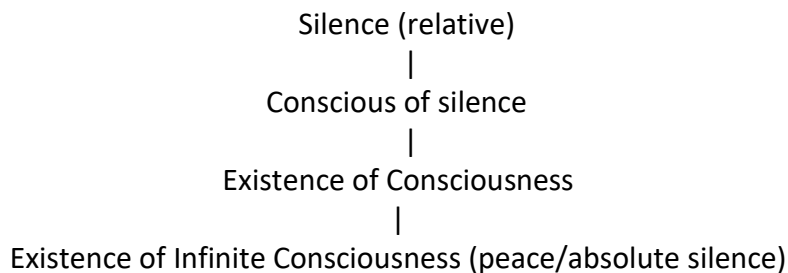
When you sit for yourself if,

- You remember names & forms. By the time you say A, in OM, they should be transcended.
- Then thoughts. By the time you say U the thoughts are to be transcended and there is a silence of M.
- What is there in that silence? You, as name and form, are Conscious of silence.
- You are Conscious of the Existence of Consciousness. Then, ' body-am I ' notion is transcended and only Consciousness is there.
- Consciousness which is existing has no limitations. So, it is Infinite, which is peace.

Uthama Adhikari takes the support of OM to own up the Infinite Consciousness Existence and remain as it.

HW

- Double the time in which you meditate.
- Conscious, Consciousness, Infinite Consciousness and remaining peaceful.
- When peace is challenged by an endless stream of thoughts, then break them using the support of OM.
- A ending in U, U ending in M, M ending in silence. Forms are subsiding into thoughts and thoughts are subsiding into silence.
- You are Conscious of that silence and at that moment, we are bringing it into our experience.
- Now from being conscious of that silence, we move to acknowledging the existence of Consciousness.
- Now, the silence has gone to the background and the Consciousness is brought to the foreground.
- When this is owned up it is the Existence of Infinite Consciousness, which is absolute silence.



- When the peace that you have owned up is challenged by any thought, chant OM. When hearing the sound, split it and focus on the inner meaning of the three parts (A, U and M).
- You should be capable of chanting OM and silencing the thoughts so that thoughts will give up.

When you are not reaching peace, go back to OM. Use it even when challenging thoughts come. It becomes more powerful, the more you practice it.

Points To Ponder-12

Meaning of Amaathra:

- Maathra means parts. Om consists of three parts: Akaram (A), Ukaram (U) and Makaram (M). When all the three parts are chanted together, it is OM.
- Amaathra means to be devoid of any parts/ absolute silence. The silence following OM is Amaathra. This Amaathra is the implied meaning of OM, which is Infinite Conscious Existence.
- All words come from silence and fade into silence. It is the silence because of which words have value.

Manthra- 16

Results of chanting OM:

- OM represents both Aksharabrahmam (all the forms of God which we worship) and Parabrahmam (Using OM to realise the real nature).
- This Om is of help to these two groups: those who have capability to comprehend OM and own up their real nature and also to those who do not have the capability but are satisfied with their personal Gods. Even this group need atleast some extent of this

knowledge of God as a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence, so that their worship is fruitful.

Manthra-17

Upanishad is further praising OM in this Manthra. The medium of OM is the best way (sreshtam) to recognise the real nature. It is supreme(param). Through this medium of OM, one will become adorable in the Brahma Loka. This implies that when the qualified chant OM while knowing its meaning, they will understand the implied meaning of OM which is Infinite Conscious Existence or Brahman. The one who recognises Brahman will remain as Brahman forever. The individual is sublated/faded in the process of trying to know Infinite Conscious Existence. You, as an individual, remain as an image on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.

OM meditation simplified:

- For every concrete thought, chant OM.
- Give the full identity of disturbance(thought)on chanting A.
- When U and M are chanted, the disturbance (gross thought) is shrinking/melting away into the silence. Just as sound is ending into silence at the same time thought too is vanishing into silence.
- Conscious of silence.
- Consciousness is existing (Consciousness has taken over you).
- Once you own this up, it is there as infinity or Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Finally, remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- This is all an experience by itself. Just as the silence which follows OM is not a thought but an experience, in the same way, the journey from silence to remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence is an experience by itself.

How does meditating with OM end?

- You remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.. The mind will appear from time to time and fade away, giving way to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence. With this knowledge, the peace of meditation should remain with us.

What will happen to the body and mind?

- The body, mind and all other external appearances are there as images on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Homework

1. Continue meditation. After meditation is over, sit for some time. Bring into your experience that the body, mind and all other objects are merely images on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.
2. How is Nachiketa's question (what will happen after death) answered in this discussion?

Responses from the group:

- Once you recognise your true nature as Infinite Conscious Existence, you will always remain as it, even after death. You will always remain as screen on which all images will pass.
- As we move forward in this path of knowledge, we realise that everyone's purpose in life is to gain knowledge about your real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence. Once you realise this, your body and mind will perish as it is limited with time. However, Infinite Conscious Existence will remain forever and manifest as the whole universe. If you don't realize your real nature, you will be given another chance to know that your real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- When we recognise Consciousness as Infinite, it gives no value to the body and mind. Even after death, it is the only thing which lasts forever.
- When you recognise and own up Infinite Conscious Existence, death will not change anything as Infinite Conscious Existence remains even after death. Body and mind no longer have any value.
- Once you recognise your true nature as Infinite Conscious Existence, you remain as that. The body is narrowed down to nothing. It is just an image on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- My real nature is an eternal, changeless and formless principle in which death is an image.

What will happen to your body and mind apparatus, which you assumed to be real, with the discovery of your real nature?

- Nothing will happen to it. It will continue as before.
- No special effects (like light behind the head) will come to the body.
- With knowledge, only one thing will come. It is peace of mind.
- If any other thing comes, they are only side effects of knowledge, but not the intended effect.

- With knowledge, Infinite Conscious Existence remains as Infinite Conscious Existence. The values you inculcated in your life will become spontaneous. You will have the capacity to be peaceful in every situation, as you will remain as peace. Naturally, the images change, and nothing will be a shock for you. With this knowledge, you will remain undisturbed, despite all the disturbances around you.
- When you recognise and remain as Infinite Conscious Existence, your body will continue as it did before. But, it will continue in the light of Infinite Conscious Existence, i.e, peace.
- You must own up Infinite Conscious Existence and allow all the events in your life to unfold, just as images unfold on the screen.
- Death and birth happen to the images on the screen, not the screen itself. The screen is changeless. Remaining as screen, it facilitates all the changes of images.

Manthra-18

This Manthra is told by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavath Gita. If this Manthra is correctly understood, it will relieve you of the greatest fear which is haunting the society: disease and death.

Most important word in this Manthra:

Vipaschith= intelligent self/ medhavi

- It is Consciousness, which is not subject to change.
- Another name for Infinite Conscious Existence is Vipaschith.

Is there a Consciousness that is subject to change in your experience?

- No, there isn't. No change to Consciousness from childhood till now. Consciousness will always remain as Consciousness.
- Throughout our life, everything will change except the Consciousness with which we are witnessing all the changes. These changes are all happening on the changeless principle called Consciousness.
- Because there is a changeless principle, all other changes are possible.
- This Infinite Consciousness is not born and hence no death too.

Homework

- Do the same OM meditation.
- After meditation, sit for at least one minute and, with your new identity, reconcile the status of your body along with the world around you.
- Then, acknowledge the changeless principle in the midst of all changes.
- Do not try to negate the thoughts. Instead, let them pass in the light of Consciousness.

Write in brief about the summary of Bhagavath Gita, chapter-2, verse-20.

Points To Ponder-13

What is expected in this week's homework? We need to experience whether all the events happening on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence or not. When interacting with people, if you get hurt, that is a change. In this situation you can apply this principle in a way to happen with peace as background. This is evident based on the way you react. Prior to this knowledge, when irritated you react because of frustration. Now, you react as the situation demands, but, you will do it out of peace which you cannot be apart from. This peace is like a screen wherein all the challenges are like the images passing on the screen without the screen being impacted. This means that our real nature which is Infinite Conscious Existence is changeless on which the changes take place.

Challenges are a test for this knowledge. Even if you fail in overcoming challenges with peace, it is okay. From this, you can confer the strength of your meditation in experiencing peace.

Responses from the group:

- Changeless principle was experienced in the activities throughout the day.
- Felt liberating and free as nothing can affect me. In an event, got carried away initially due to shock, but slowly overcame the event with peace.
- Experienced peace in and out in the background which is appearing throughout.
- No difference while closing and opening eyes. Was able to remain in that peace.

The verse 20 in chapter 2 of Bhagavad Gita explains the qualities of Consciousness. It is taken from this Upanishad, verse 18, with some changes. What it is in the verse is same as what we are experiencing with this knowledge. It portrays our experience. But, since we did not recognize it yet, the book is facilitating the experience in us.

Yama is preparing us, through Aadhyathma Yoga, to comprehend the answer of Nachiketa's question: What will happen after death. Do we continue to exist or not?

As an answer, Yama says that after death, from Consciousness standpoint, there is no change. Why? As Consciousness is not born, it will never die. To understand this, we will take the support of logic (Yukthi). If our experiences pass through logic and shruthi, then, our knowledge will be complete and strong.

Some questions which may shake your understanding and in turn make it strong:

How can you say that Infinite Conscious Existence is not born when it is evident?

- From Consciousness standpoint, it is not born. But, it is the body which is born and which dies.

Without the body, how can there be Consciousness?

- You may feel that the Consciousness is there in the body. But, on the screen of Consciousness, the body is there as an image which is there in your everyday experience.

How is Consciousness in my everyday experience?

- One of the experiences is as in deep sleep.
- After waking up, if you analyze and enquire how you were in deep sleep, you will know that you remained as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Infinite- There is a knowing principle in deep sleep which has no boundaries. If there are any boundaries, you would have known them as images. As it is not like that, it has no limitations and boundaries. So, it is Infinite and hence peaceful. This is why you say that you slept peacefully.
- Conscious- You are Conscious of nothing because there is nothing there in your deep sleep. You recognized that you did not know anything there.
- Existence- You existed there in deep sleep which cannot be denied.
- In deep sleep, you remained as an illumined screen.
- God has given this state of deep sleep to everyone so that they can recognize their real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence.

Dream:

- You are Conscious of dream body and dream experiences because of the conscious principle which is there illuminating all these dream objects.
- The dream objects and experiences are present as images on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Waking

- In the waking state, all these images are vivid, present on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.

So by analyzing and enquiring about deep sleep, you have knowledge that all the experiences of the body are taking place on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence. It is there throughout deep sleep, dream and waking state. That is why it is our real nature.

If you remain as unalloyed peace in deep sleep, how were you in the happiest moment of your life?

- For a moment or for a fraction of second you are one with the Infinite Conscious Existence in the happiest moment of your life. Your experience of your happiest moment is exactly the same as that of deep sleep.

How will you perceive your happiest moment prior to knowledge?

- If you do not recognize Infinite Conscious Existence in your happiest moment, you give credit of the happiness to the object, event or fulfillment of a desire.
- All the thoughts put on a particular desire have been eliminated when the desire is fulfilled. They are eliminated with such a force that the individuality is eliminated for a fraction of a second. Then, you remain there as Infinite Conscious Existence, just as in deep sleep.

Homework

- Experience some of the most joyous or sorrowful events in your life, from birth until now, happening on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence after meditation.

Response from the group:

- Felt same as when trying to experience everything as images on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Felt like the screen and had no emotional excitement.
- During the previous exercise, it was difficult to overcome the joyous/sorrowful event which was being recollected. But now, there was a lot of change in the way the situation was dealt with. Was not feeling happy/sad. Could not even relate to those emotions anymore.
- The events just came and went. Felt no attachment to them.
- All the five events felt like images on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence. Was able to recognise the changeless principle among all the changes. Would still remain peaceful even if the events took place now.
- Felt invincible, calm and peaceful. The events did not trigger my peace/calmness.
- Both the joyous and sorrowful events revolved around the individual. When the individual was recognised as an image on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence, I remained unaffected and was peaceful.

Manthra-18 Na Jayathe....

- With this meditation, everything is taking place on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence, including death.
- Just like birth, in death, you will not be able to recollect how you reacted in that event after it has passed.
- It is not death which is killing people. It is the fear of death which is killing people.
- Upanishad is trying to handle death which is tormenting the entire humanity. If it is dealt with, there is no other bigger obstacle to tackle. With knowledge, death will lose its tragic nature.

How is the experience of death for one who has knowledge?

- He is not terrified anymore because of the firm conviction that in death, he will remain as Infinite Conscious Existence in the same way as he is in deep sleep. So he will not have fear of death.

How will the ignorant and the knowledgeable people handle the fear of death to themselves or loved ones?

- Pain is the same for both of them. The difference lies in the extent of the pain.
- During tragic events, the ignorant people will resort to intoxicators and other tranquilizers as they do not have knowledge about the real nature and hence- in most cases- cannot tolerate the pain of separation with loved ones.
- A man of knowledge will have sorrow for some time depending on the strength of his knowledge. Then, the thoughts of real nature will take over and bring him out of the sorrow.

He will conquer the pain which comes with the loss of a loved one with knowledge. This knowledge will be an armour, which protects him.

Another angle to overcome the pain of death of a loved one:

- With knowledge, there is a way to connect with your beloved ones who are dead.
- The dead remain as Infinite Conscious Existence. We can connect with them by recognising and remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Even if the dead carry forward in the cycle of birth and death, there is no chance for them to be other than Infinite Conscious Existence.
- By recognizing the real nature and remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence, we are connecting to them as their Infinite Conscious Existence.

I can recognise and remain as my Infinite Conscious Existence, but how does that mean that I am connecting to their Infinite Conscious Existence?

- How many Infinite Conscious Existences are there? Only one.
- It is Infinite only because there is nothing other than it. If there was a second thing, then the real nature would not have been termed as 'Infinite'.
- As there is only Infinite Conscious Existence, once you remain as your Infinite Conscious Existence, you are automatically connected to the Infinite Conscious Existence of everyone, including those who are dead. Finally, the peace will come to the foreground and the event to the background. You will then remain peaceful.

Two indicators of real nature (Consciousness) given by Upanishad:

1. Nayam Kuthaschith:

Real nature did not originate from anything

- This eliminates the confusion of real nature with the body as the body has clearly originated from another body.
- Upanishad is directly implying that real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence and not the body.

2. Na Babhuva Kaschith:

Nothing originated from it

- Infinite Conscious Existence is not giving rise to anything apart from it.
- Infinite Conscious Existence is not giving birth to the entire manifestation like how the mother gives birth to a child. It alone is appearing as the entire manifestation.
- For example, clay is appearing as pots and toys. The pots are not apart from the clay. Images are not apart from the screen, that does not mean that images have originated from the screen. Similarly, all the manifestations are not apart from Infinite Conscious Existence. However, this does not mean that the manifestations have originated from Infinite Conscious Existence.

How can we say that Infinite Conscious Existence is there forever even though it is not born?

3. Ajo Nithya Sasvatham Puranam

- What is born will grow, decay and die.

- Infinite Conscious Existence is not born, but its existence cannot be denied, from our very own experience. This Infinite Conscious Existence will not grow, decay and die so it is forever or undecaying. That which is forever is eternal.
- Infinite Conscious Existence is ancient as it is unborn, but it is also new. It is there as it is eternally.

4. Na Hanyate Hanyamane Sareere

- Infinite Conscious Existence is not killed when the body dies. It remains as it is as peace.

Manthra-19

Upanishad says that there is a principle called Infinite Conscious Existence which does not die when the body dies. But, most of the world does not believe this. How can the Upanishad's statement be justified when the whole world is thinking the opposite?

- What the whole world believes in need not be right. What is right or wrong is not decided by what the majority feels.
- For example, for hundreds of years, majority of people believed the earth to be flat and only a few believed it to be round. It was later proved that the earth is in fact round. This example proves that what the majority feels need not be right.
- People believe that they are being killed as they assume themselves to be the body and mind apparatus due to ignorance about their real nature, though they are essentially Infinite Conscious Existence. The remedy for this is knowledge.

Homework

1. Why aren't people receptive to knowledge even if it can dispel ignorance? Even if they are receptive to it, in a way, why do they not understand it?
2. As an addition to the meditation, take one of the events (images) as your death or the death of a loved one and try to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.

Points to Ponder-14

Handling the death of loved ones:

- We are bothered by the death of loved ones because of the disease of Aham and Mama. We are putting an effort to come out of it with the intensity and power of knowledge. What remains is only knowledge where there is lasting peace. There are no feelings based on ignorance with knowledge. We see the loved ones who have departed as the very manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Earlier, we were affected by the death of loved ones and the mere thought of death of oneself which are major challenges. But now, we have a tool to deal with and remain peaceful. We know how to handle the most dreadful situations in the light of knowledge.
- With knowledge, you will not have fear of disease and death as they are just images on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- This does not mean that you should be careless. You must take all the precautions required to protect yourself. Despite these precautions, if you come face to face with death, you must deal with it peacefully with the support of knowledge.

Responses to the question:

- People are not receptive to this knowledge as they have no qualities, are narrow minded and cannot comprehend the fact that what they believed for a long time is not true. It can also be because they do not have a proficient teacher.
- They do not have the qualities required to own up knowledge. They are used to following the body and mind notion and cannot get their head out of it.
- They are conditioned to believe that they are the body and mind apparatus and cannot come out of it. It can also be because they do not have discriminative observation.
- People are only following the path in which the majority follow, so the path of knowledge is being neglected. Even though they are introduced to the path of knowledge, they are incapable to have it in their experience and be one with the real nature.
- It is because of their ignorance and the bonding with other people.
- People find joy in being sorrowful. They think that objective joy itself is real happiness. Furthermore, they believe that they are already peaceful and so they do not find the need to follow the path of spirituality. Even if they follow this path, they will not understand if they do not have all the qualities. As a result, their individuality will be strengthened which makes it harder for the knowledge to penetrate.
- Most people are not eligible for this knowledge and do not have a glimpse of lasting peace. They follow whatever the majority follow. They don't know what causeless happiness is.

Why do you want to dispel others' ignorance?

- Ignorance leads to suffering and knowledge puts an end to suffering.
- If this is in your experience, you will have compassion towards others and have enthusiasm to dispel others' ignorance with knowledge.

What kind of suffering are people experiencing?

- Most people experience psychological suffering. In this world, there is more psychological suffering than physical suffering. The increase in suicide rate in the world is a proof for this.
- People get acclimatized to physical suffering over a period of time. But, with psychological suffering, stress is more intense in the majority of people. They do not know a way to get out of the stress and in turn commit suicide.

How will spiritual knowledge help you to overcome stress in life?

- Spiritual knowledge is knowledge about your real nature. Life will be meaningful only if you know your real nature. Whatever knowledge you acquire in your life, will only have value if you have knowledge of your real nature. Without this, if you graduate in some field, it is not the graduation of an individual, but the graduation of a corpse because body and mind as such are inert things and not life.
- With spiritual knowledge, you will have a tool to overcome the inevitable stress in the long run and own up the infinite nature which is peace.

Manthra-20

Upanishad mentions two qualities with which one must be qualified enough to own up their real nature: desirelessness and purity of mind and senses. These are the prerequisites needed not only for the intuitive understanding of the real nature but also to be established in the knowledge too. If knowledge is not in your experience, it means that the qualities are not complete in you.

1. Desirelessness:

- Desireless means desireless worship and desireless service. You pray out of gratitude and serve just for the sake of serving. You serve others as a responsibility given by God to take care of his creation.

2. Purity of senses and mind:

- In gross level, purity of mind and senses means to follow the five values (truth, non-violence, no stealing, purity and loyalty, and no intoxicators).
- The whole body and senses should be pure which means that all the information through the senses must be pure. For example, the food that you consume should be pure.
- One with purity will recognize the real nature.

Where will you recognise the real nature?

- You recognise it as existing within the heart of all beings. You recognise it within yourself, as your real nature. There will not be another person apart from it. You will not acquire knowledge while protecting the reality that you give to your body. This means that the reality is there as your real nature and you still seem to miss it, because you assume body itself to be real.

Upanishad gives a clue to recognize your real nature in this Manthra, though not directly, but as a riddle:

“Your real nature is smaller than the smallest (subtler than the subtlest) and bigger than the biggest (greater than the greatest).”

Homework

Solve this riddle. How can the reality be the smallest and the biggest simultaneously?

Manthra-20 (continuation)

Ignorance is the cause of suffering and the only solution is knowledge. This knowledge should make you immune in any given situation by preventing the accumulation of psychological suffering. So, knowledge has to be acquired. For it to be fruitful, you should be qualified for it with values, selfless devotion and selfless service.

Further in this Manthra, **Existence** is emphasised.

Subtler than the subtlest and greater than the greatest:

- The smallest particle in the Universe is quark and the biggest is Jupiter. Your real nature (Self) is imparting (giving) Existence to the smallest and biggest things. For example, quark exists, Jupiter exists. This means that they have been given existence. If not, they do not exist. All objects have been given this existence by something which is not the object itself. For anything to exist, Existence must be given to it. Otherwise, it is reduced to non-existence (unreality). Nothing can even be imagined without the existence aspect of the Self.

What does it mean when we say that an object exists?

Object and existence are not the same. Until now, we are habituated to an object without giving credit to its Existence. The existence of an object relies on the absolute Existence.

Existence may seem like just a word used for vocabulary. But, it is not so. To understand this, you must have a first hand experience of absolute Existence.

Where can you have a first hand experience of absolute Existence?

- In deep sleep (naturally) and it is also there all the time.

How are you in deep sleep?

- I just remained there as pure or absolute Existence, which is there even now.

If it is there even now, why do I not know of it?

- As you did not recognise. You all know of it but you overlook or take it for granted in such a way that you miss it. But, if you recognise that existence, then you acknowledge it in the entire manifestation. You do not have experience of anything without Existence.

Objects, Thoughts and Existence

- Existence is common for all the objects. For example, a phone exists, a book exists, a laptop exists, etc.
The objects might change, but the quality of Existence does not. All objects are trying to bring that existence into experience, but we are lost in the objects and disown the Existence.
- Existence is the basis for all our thoughts too. They are all directly pointing to Existence. So, we cannot miss this existence.
- Now, the Existence has come into the foreground and the objects and thoughts have gone into the background.

In deep sleep, we remain as Existence. In dream and waking states, we experience it in the form of existence of our body, mind and all the objects around.

Relation between Consciousness and Existence

- If Existence is further analyzed, we know that we are Conscious of this Existence. It is the same as earlier, where we have acknowledged the Existence of silence and became conscious of the silence.
- It is the Consciousness that illumines the existence of an object. They are the two sides of the same coin. They are inseparable.
- Without Consciousness and Existence, there are no external objects and internal thoughts. There is no knowing without Existence and no Existence without Consciousness.
For example, fire has many appearances (forest fire, fire place, candle flame, etc...). But, its essence is heat and light. There cannot be fire without heat and light. At the same time, light and heat, which are the properties of fire, cannot be apart from each other.
Similarly, like in fire, the entire manifestation is nothing but Consciousness and Existence, which are inseparable.
- This Conscious Existence as it is, devoid of any objects to which it renders Existence and illumination, is always Infinite.
- Absolute Existence means that, if there is an object (including the body and mind), it is there only to give an experience of Infinite Conscious Existence.
For example, if a crazy fellow is threatening your peace, use him to remind yourself about Infinite Conscious Existence.
- All objects will be pointers to Conscious Existence which is nothing but peace. The entire manifestation is eager to make you own up peace.
- If understood well, peace is there not only in deep sleep but also in the waking state. With this understanding, the whole perception of the world around you will change

Dhathu Prasadha Mahimana Athmanaha

- Those who are pure are qualified and will appreciate the glory of Self. They will see only reality everywhere, including as their very own real nature. Even when applied to the body and mind too, there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence.

So, Upanishad is saying that the truth is simple and if you are ready, then take it.

Veetha Sokaha

- Only those who have comprehended this knowledge will be free of psychological suffering (sorrow).

Homework

1. Meditation:

- Do meditation to own up your innate peace. If thought comes acknowledge its Existence or presence. Reduce the thought to Existence and then to Consciousness. Conscious Existence is Infinite in nature. The nature of Infinity is peace. So, you remain as peace.
- After meditation, if an object in front of you is dominating your peace, reduce it to Existence- Consciousness- Peace.

2. Question

- How is the Self both joyful and sorrowful simultaneously?

Points To Ponder-15

In a way, a new dimension has opened up wherein whatever you see, you see nothing but Self. If an object is seen, it is only a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

What is the real meaning of the word 'Love' ?

- There is a deeper meaning of love in the light of this knowledge. When there is recognition of others' real nature as a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence, then, that is called love.
- When you see a person as what they really are (as Infinite Conscious Existence), which is not different from what you really are, then there is no distance between both from reality standpoint. Having no distance is called love.

What is the real meaning of the word 'Beauty' ?

- When you recognize the reality of objects around you ie when you see the objects as the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence, that is called beauty. True beauty lies where you appreciate the Reality.
- When you see something beautiful, it triggers happiness in you in such a way that you unknowingly get connected to the reality of the object which makes you happy. You

unconsciously get connected to the Infinite aspect of the object which is already there in it.

- If you consciously have access to Infinite Conscious Existence, then, there will not be anything ugly in this world as everything is a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence. With the strength of knowledge of real nature, the whole world appears beautiful.

In a nutshell, when you appreciate Infinite Conscious Existence in people, it is called love. When you appreciate it in objects or person, it is called beauty.

Manthra-21 (Aaseeno Dhuram Vrajathi...)

In this Manthra, Upanishad is explaining our real nature using contradictory terms.

Aaseeno Dhuram Vrajathi: The Self, while sitting, goes far.

- Even though it is stationary (no movement), the Self seems to be travelling far.
- Why is there no movement for the Self? It is because of the absence of place for it to move. Limited objects can move from one place to the other. But, Self is unlimited (Infinite). So, where can it move to?
- Then, how can the Self go far? The mind of a person can go very far in no time instantaneously. No matter where the mind goes, that place has already been imparted Existence. Not only Existence, the place is illumined by Consciousness.
- Wherever the mind goes, it finds nothing but the Self. It is rendered Existence only by the Self. So, we are saying that the Self is stationary but it seems to go far.

Sayaano yaathi sarvathaha:While sleeping, the Self goes everywhere.

- From body standpoint, while sleeping you are there wherever you are.
- From Self standpoint, when we are sleeping, we are there only as Infinite Conscious Existence which alone is there everywhere without any objects. This Infinite Conscious Existence alone is everywhere and manifests as everything. There is nothing apart from it. So, you are everywhere while sleeping.

Kastham madamadam devam:Self is both joyful and sorrowful

- Sorrow and joy are both just states of mind. When seen from body standpoint you cannot be joyful and sorrowful at the same time. They cannot be fit from individual standpoint .

It is possible from Self standpoint. Self imparts Existence and Consciousness to both joy and sorrow. They are manifestations of Self.

Self can only be blissful or peaceful. Bliss/peace are not properties of the Self. They are another name for the Infinity aspect of the Self (Self itself).

Why is Upanishad giving such contradictory statements?

- Who can know the Self except for those who are eligible for it? Only those who have selfless service, selfless devotion and the five values can recognise the Self. Others get confused with the assumption of body and mind identity.
- Those who are not eligible for knowledge about their real nature will try to strengthen their body-am-I notion every time. When they look at these statements, they will get totally confused as they cannot comprehend them as they always see from body standpoint. But, those who are eligible will look at the statements from Self standpoint and will strengthen their knowledge about Self.
- Upanishad wants to dispel the identity with body- am- I notion (if at all you are stuck up with it) and make you recognise the Self.

Homework

“Self remained permanent in the midst of impermanent.” How?

Points To Ponder-16

Manthra-22 (Asareeram sareero..)

Dheeraha na sochathi: The brave one does not grieve which means that he does not have sorrow.

What does it really mean to be brave?

- In daily life, we see so many people like the army, dacoits, robbers, naxals, who are not afraid of anything including death. They are considered to be fearless. But, Upanishad does not agree them to be brave as some of them get stressed at times and commit suicide due to sorrow. So, they are not really brave.
- **Mahantham vibhumathmanam:** Those who derive identity from the Infinite Self are the real brave. Nothing is greater than the Infinity. People assume themselves to be body-mind naturally. But, Upanishad is saying, even though it is natural, only the brave gain identity with the Self. Why?
- The brave have the courage to transcend the familiar body-am-I identity and own up the identity with the Infinity which is seemingly unfamiliar.

What are the steps taken to own up the identity with Infinity for the recognition to become spontaneous?

1. Realising the drawbacks of living life with body-am-I identity.
 - The search for happiness with this identity is through objects or desires which seems to own up that but goes away. There is no true happiness/peace.
2. Searching for ways to gain true peace.
 - To achieve this, you choose various paths like being a part of Ashrams, devotional paths, different techniques of meditation, etc...
3. Hearing about ways based on knowledge to transcend the false identity with body-am-I notion.
 - In this process, you choose the path experimented by various people that are also established in the Upanishads.
4. Own up your true identity.

To ascend the first three steps, you need understanding based on discrimination (vivekam). For the last step which is owning up the true identity, you need tremendous courage to leave the familiar (body-am-I notion) and explore the seemingly unfamiliar arena which is Infinity. So, Dheerah, here, has two meanings: brave and viveki.

How does the Dheerah own up Infinity?

- Through contemplation (Manana) the Dheerah will own up Infinity.

How does the brave one (Dheerah) initiate this contemplation?

Asareeram sareereshu anavastheshu avastham: Upanishad is giving two portals based on which the brave does contemplation of his true nature and own it up.

1. Bodiless in the midst of bodies.
 - He recognises real nature to be bodiless in spite of having a body. How?
 - Only because of having a body we are doing mananam. Body exists and it is pointing to Existence. Through Existence, a new door opens: Consciousness. Then, you remain as Conscious Existence which is Infinity. So, you start as a body-mind and end up remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence which is not limited to a body, hence bodiless.
2. Permanent in the midst of impermanent.
 - That which is subject to change is impermanent and that which is changeless is permanent.
 - Every object including the body and mind is changing continuously. So, they are impermanent. The changeless principle (Infinite Conscious Existence) is the substratum for the entire phenomenon of change. It is also common to all objects. So, it is permanent. Example: Screen and images. The images on the screen do not exist without the existing and illuminating aspect of the screen.
 - One more way of understanding the changeless and the change is through the three states, namely, waking, dream and deep sleep which cannot be avoided in

our everyday experience. All the three states are not permanent because, whatever you achieve in waking state is becoming nothing in dream. Both dream and waking states are nothing in deep sleep. In spite of all these changes, there is a changeless principle which is active in us, recognising all these changes which is Infinite Conscious Existence.

The brave will contemplate on these portals and take identity with Infinite Conscious Existence. Hence, he will not be carried away and grieve endlessly due to sorrows.

Homework

We discussed that the brave one contemplates through one of the portals and will know his real nature.

There seems to be a defect in this statement.

One who contemplates is one who has 'body am I' identity ie a finite individual.

His real nature is infinity. How will finite know infinite?

Manthra-23 (Naayamathma Pravachanena Labhya..)

Truth alone will own up as it is. This Manthra is the pinnacle of everything we have discussed so far. We make an attempt to know the truth through Bahiranga Sadhana and Antharanga Sadhana. Antharanga Sadhana culminates in steadfast knowledge.

There is a frequent complaint from the seekers that in spite of dedicating so many years to Antharanga Sadhana they are not able to own up peace as identity. What is the cause? Upanishad in this Mantra is explaining why the peace has not owned them up.

Naayamathma pravachanene labhya Na medhaya

- Self (Infinite Conscious Existence) is not attained through studying books on your own or with a fine intellect alone.

Na bahuna suthena:

- Self also cannot be attained by hearing about it from a teacher.

Then, how is the Self attained?**‘Self’ is attained by people chosen by ‘Self’****Whom does the ‘Self’ select?****Yamevesha vrunathe:**

- Who ever chooses it (self)

What do you mean by selecting it alone?

- Part-time endeavour (Timepass attitude) is not fruitful in this path of knowledge. It will not culminate in real peace (peace which is not affected by time and place).
- If you want to remain peaceful which is not affected by time and place, you must prioritise to be peaceful or content.
- Real peace/ happiness is there only in remaining as your true nature. All other forms of happiness are only sorrow in disguise of peace/ happiness.

Mumukshutvam:

- Scriptures mention that this is the essential quality needed by the seekers to be successful in the path of self knowledge.
- This means earnestness or keenness to remain peaceful. It is an intense desire to be free from ignorance which is the cause of suffering.
- It is one pointedly seeking Self which is your true nature.
- A whole hearted longing to be peaceful and content is needed.

This is applicable only to the underprivileged. I have happiness and comforts. Why should I crave for this peace?

- Everyone who does not derive their identity from Infinite Conscious Existence will be haunted by the feeling of lack. All the desires are manifest in them as a sense of lack or discontentment. It is this discontentment which drives their life. This is common to beggars along with the rich. They will never truly be content as they believe contentment comes from objects.
- For a man of firm knowledge, the sense of lack is replaced permanently by contentment. This is born from the elimination of ignorance by knowledge of real nature. How?
- Real nature is Infinity. Infinity cannot be improved upon. If there is scope for improvement, there will be discontentment.
- If you want real peace, you must prioritise it over everything.

What will happen to one who, as a finite being, has 100% dedication towards real peace and prioritize it over everything?

- The Self becomes known of its own.
- The Self of the seeker reveals its true nature in that moment of having 100% dedication.
- In the world, we commonly see that the seeker seeks various things(job,family,wealth etc) which are different from him. But here, the seeker is seeking something unique which is not different from him.The illusory self is seeking for the real Self. So, they are seeking their own real nature which they missed due to ignorance. When the seeking is one pointed and complete,we realize that the discontent body-am-I individual will cease, in that moment and only the Self (contentment) will remain.

Limited self which is discontented has attained real Self which is content. How is this possible?

- Are there really two different selves? No. The limited self is born out of ignorance of real nature. In 100% seeking, the ignorance vanishes.
- Limited individual is seeking real nature. The more he is seeking, the more the real nature is manifesting itself. Finally, it manifests to such an extent that it dissolves the unreality into itself. There are no two entities. There is only one real entity. The other is an illusion born out of ignorance. The limited self is swallowed by the Real Self.Real nature knows about itself.
- With 100% dedication, real nature only remains as real nature. It owns up to be Infinite Conscious Existence (contentment).
 - If you choose to be content or peaceful whole-heartedly then, only peace remains. Eg. Just like one who mistakes himself to be an aborigine and by seeking to be normal whole heartedly will realize that he is always normal. Here the aborigine will not attain normality. Only ignorance ceases, ignorance about his real nature.

Homework

If you choose to be peaceful wholeheartedly you will remain peaceful. Why is it that the majority are suffering due to discontentment when it is so easy to remain as your real nature?

Points To Ponder-17

Illustration of aborigin and Fani explained in detail:

- The previous Manthra 23 explains how knowledge will be fruitful for the one who is earnest. But sometimes, there is a chance to imagine yourself to be Reality instead of experiencing it firsthand.
- In the example,
Aborigin- body and mind (individuality). Cause for origin of aborigin- ignorance of true nature
Solution to end the aborigin- knowledge about real nature.
- First, aborigin should get convinced of the misery he is facing by assuming himself to be an aborigin. Sometimes, this misery (body-mind complex) becomes habituated and taken for granted. By observing the world, he comes to a conviction that he is not being peaceful by default. So, he makes a one-pointed effort towards wanting to be peaceful by default. When convinced enough, the sense of lack which he is facing will end only with the right effort through knowledge about real nature. Then, the body-am-I (aborigin) notion ceases and only the Reality remains.

In Reality, even after gaining knowledge, will the individual remain or cease?

- Previously, you took up the identity with body and mind. With knowledge, you know that body and mind are manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence and took up identity with it.
- Before also the body was the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence but now, with knowledge, you are recognizing it. Individuality is not there anymore apart from Reality but only as an appearance of it. The body and mind will be there physically until death. It ceases after knowledge in the sense that you will no longer take identity with it.
- Example: Water in the form of a wave.
Wave does not exist apart from water. It made a one-pointed enquiry and recognized it to be water. In the recognition, the shape of the wave is not eliminated. But, the ignorance of the wave to think itself to be an individual entity is eliminated. Because of the immense effort of the wave, it is as though water woke up from the ignorance and owned up its all pervading nature in and through all the manifestations.

Stages passed while attaining knowledge:

Stage 1: I am individual (body and mind) only and I am happy with it. Those who preach about reality are fools. This is dense ignorance.

Stage 2: You will start appreciating the misery associated with the misunderstanding.

Stage 3: When you feel you are miserable and have recognised that, you will be receptive to hear advice from well wishers who have excelled in the path of knowledge.

Stage 4: You will strive one-pointedly to get out of the false identification.

Stage 5: You understood the misinterpretation with the individuality but are not able to sustain that recognition. The individual is still imagining Reality.

Stage 6: You have a doubtless recognition of your real nature. You wake up from ignorance and remain as you always were as Infinity. Reality has woken up and laughs at the ignorance of the identity with body/mind complex.

All this presentation is to illustrate that this process is so easy. It is so simple to discard individuality and own up Reality because individuality need not create Reality. You are already the Reality but you must recognise it by getting rid of the ignorance. Those who are not fully qualified to get rid of ignorance will still be trapped because there is every chance to imagine the Reality.

Did I gain knowledge or am I imagining it?

- It is not an imagination because we are taking identity with Infinite Conscious Existence and not with body and mind.
- Can taking this identity be an imagination? If it was, then all the answers to the questions in our discussions wouldn't be from our experience. The experience of real nature is already there which is waiting for an opportunity for it to come out. So, Infinity itself is owning up its real nature.
- The driving force for us to recognize our real nature is the sense of lack. As the sense of lack is real, we are putting effort towards eliminating it through knowledge. Now, the sense of lack is replaced by a sense of contentment, which is also real, where there is no chance for imagination.
- Earlier, every job is done with this lack. But now, the job is done with contentment. The effort put forth is the same, but the job is pursued with peace.

Manthra-24 (Naa viratho duscharithan...)

We are discussing the path of knowledge. This Manthra discusses the four categories of people who are not qualified for this path.

1. **Na aviratho duscharithan:** Those who have not desisted from the prohibitive actions which are the opposite of values. These people will not hesitate to lie, always harm others, do anything to earn money, lead an immoral life and take intoxicants.
2. **Na asanthaha:** Those whose senses are not controlled. Because, one should not see, hear or eat anything which clouds their understanding of knowledge.
3. **Aa samahithaha:** Those whose mind is not concentrated and is scattered. Because, the path of knowledge demands a focused mind. With a one-pointed mind, you must concentrate on your own experience which has been clouded by other assumptions for many years, and finally recognize Reality. This cannot be achieved with a scattered mind as it cannot focus solely on one thing (your experience).
4. **Na asantha manasaha:** Those whose mind is not at rest as it is hankered on the results of the action. They are perpetuating a false sense of identity with body and mind. (Example: Why am I not attaining knowledge?)
Shankaracharya mentions one more point that you should have a teacher to make progress in this path of knowledge.

For those who have desisted from prohibitive actions, whose senses are controlled, whose mind is concentrated, who are not restless for getting the results of actions and who has a teacher who will recognise their real nature with ease.

Homework

Many in the society (learned and have a position) try to attain peace, not through knowledge, but they will choose ways which impair the birth of knowledge.

1. Do you agree with this statement or not? Give reasons with examples.
2. What does the most powerful person fear for?
3. Do you have a solution to transcend the fear?

Manthra 25 (Yasya brahmasya...)

In this Manthra, Upanishad is figuratively saying that you will not gain knowledge if you have the qualities mentioned in the previous Manthra.

Those who have regard for good qualities will automatically give respect to scriptures and saints who in turn encourage these qualities to get rooted in you.

Who are saints?

- Those who have derived their identity with Infinity and who live with peace are called saints. Their life will be in line with scriptures and they will encourage values. The experiences of saints (in the form of words) are written in scriptures.

Those who have the negative qualities tend to disregard scriptures and saints. They criticise them (directly or indirectly) whenever the opportunity arises. They substantiate the dislike for spirituality because of some black sheep in the field.

Then, who do they give value to? They give value to people who yield power in the society like influential and intelligent people (ex: politicians, celebrities, sports persons, etc).

- Upanishad mentions two words to categorize the influential people, i.e, Brahmana and Kshatriyas. These people are great but they too are always troubled by death and haunted by the sense of lack.
- Upanishad figuratively mentions that these two categories of people are like rice (food) to the Self and death is like the curry.

How does the influential lot become food to the Self?

- The influential people too are taken back everyday by the Self during deep sleep. In deep sleep, everything ceases but Self remains. They are swallowed by the Self. Self has taken back all the forms into itself.

Eg. The wave ceases but the water remains. The image ceases but the screen remains. It is like the water has taken back the wave into itself and screen has taken back the images into itself.

So, it is described as the great eater of the entire manifestation. Only Self remains in deep sleep and so you are peaceful.

These people are dreaded by death. But for the Self death is like a curry which it would take as a dip (side dish) along with rice.

How does death become curry to the Self?

- In death, everything ceases but Self remains as it is. So, it is said that Self swallows the death too.

So what is Upanishad trying to convey?

Upanishad has downplayed the value given to the influential people of the society and glorified the Self. It encourages us to follow life with values, give value to scriptures and saints and own up the real nature.

Why don't people give value to the path of knowledge?

- They are giving value to the influential people because of which they are getting restlessness in life and not able to lead a virtuous life. If they give value to scriptures and saints, they can ultimately own up the peace when qualified with values.

What is Reality?

- Reality is the real nature of yourself, the entire universe and God.
- Reality is a mere word until you have knowledge of Reality. To get the knowledge, give value to virtues in life, to scriptures, saints and satsangs.

Homework:

Tell the summary of the first two chapters of Katopanishad.

Points To Ponder-18

One-minute summary of chapter 1 and 2

To gain knowledge about our real nature we must be fully qualified and have interest in this knowledge. The five main values or qualities that we need to be qualified for this knowledge are truth, non-violence, no cheating, purity and loyalty and no intoxicators. We should also be partaking in selfless service as well as selfless devotion.

Being compassionate and having true resolution also plays a role into knowing whether you are qualified for this knowledge or not. After understanding what your true nature is, you must own it up. And you should be convinced that your real nature is happiness and sorrows will not bother you. You should also be able to understand that sorrows are also just a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence. The self is something that remains in your experience. It is everlasting and is the one changeless principle within you that illuminates all of these changes. As, our true nature (Infinite Conscious Existence) is there even after death, but the body isn't. We all take the Self for granted and we ignore finding the self and therefore we miss it. People who are trying to attain knowledge should be keeping it as their top priority with 100% dedication towards attaining peace. Only if they do this, they will attain true, everlasting, causeless happiness.

- The first thing would be to understand the shift from what we have been thinking for several years, i.e, body and mind notion to Infinite Conscious Existence. Once we comprehend the knowledge, the first thing that we appreciate is that happiness is always with us and there is no happiness in materialistic things. Secondly, we have a way to deal with problematic people without losing peace with the help of this knowledge.
- Infinite Conscious Existence which is our real nature is like the screen on which there are all these images like body, mind and the entire objectivity. Even after the images pass, Infinite Conscious Existence (screen) still remains. So, you no longer have to be scared of death as you know that you still remain as Infinite Conscious Existence even after the body and mind die. Once you realise this, the sorrows in life will no longer affect you as they also are a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Goal of these discussions:

- The final goal is to remain peaceful by default which means to consciously own up the peace to be our real nature, and to shift from the body-am-I identity to taking identity with real nature.

How many of you have reached the goal?

- Those who feel that they have already reached the goal need not attend the satsangs as a rule but can do so as a healthy time-pass. Others who feel that they have not reached the goal, but have recognised the truth, being your real nature. But you are not able to sustain the recognition. Why?
- Knowingly or unknowingly, you have developed various imaginations from childhood and from birth after birth about real nature. All these impressions come as a challenge for this

new recognition of real nature. Even if you have dissolved all of the notions, lots of tendencies still come once in a while. We may get carried away for a moment but then, depending on your maturity and strength of knowledge, the time lag (between the moment you get carried away and the moment you own up the peace) will be less and less. When there is no time lag, it means that you are there as peace by default.

- In deep sleep, we are as Infinite Conscious Existence. So, the goal is for the peace of the deep sleep to prevail in spite of you being in waking, i.e, a waking deep sleep. The same peace in deep sleep is there in waking. But, it seems as though the peace is veiled by the disturbances of the mind.
- If the recognition is strong, you need not put in effort for the peace to remain as background. There is nothing that can challenge that peace.

What should I do for the peace to remain as the background?

- You must make the knowledge complete without having any misunderstanding about real nature so that you remain peaceful by default.
- Firstly, you need to recognise if there are any loopholes in the qualifications and eliminate them. If you follow all the values, then you are on the path of shreyas. Otherwise, you are on the path of preyas. Develop discriminative observation. Do selfless service within the home and then extend that outside the home. Practice selfless devotion for concentration of mind. The process of knowledge itself can be used for concentration.

Primary means to remain as peace by default are shravana, manana and nididhyasana.

- By practicing shravana, manana and nididhyasana, you are consciously trying to derive identity with Infinite Conscious Existence to remain as it by default.
- Everyday, you must do either shravana, manana or nididhyasana. Otherwise, the conviction of the ignorant people around you will influence your conviction and dominate you. Finally, you will start to doubt your own knowledge.

1. Shravana

- Shravana means to hear about your real nature. You will take the support of external sound to remain as your real nature.

2. Manana

- Once you have a glimpse of your real nature, it will get imprinted in you. In manana, you will take the support of those impressions and remain as your real nature.
- Pondering over the teachings in effort to remain as your real nature is called manana.

3. Nididhyasana

- In nididhyasana, you will remain as your real nature without the need to take the support of external sound or ponder over the teachings.
- If this is unaffected by time, place and situations in life then that is the culmination wherein we remain as our real nature by default.

What is the problem of those who have stopped at recognition and still have not reached the goal?

- These people can remain as their real nature even without the support of shravana and manana, but this remaining is affected by time, place and situation.
- Here, the understanding is complete, but the earlier impressions are creating a havoc.
- To prevent this, you must do shravana. Then, using all the knowledge gained in shravana, you must do manana.

Five steps to do manana: (based on Chapter 2)

1. Aadyathma Yoga:

- When a thought comes, first recognise it. Who has recognised this thought? I did. Who am I? Consciousness and Existence which is essentially Infinite Conscious Existence, i.e, peace. Remain peaceful.

If more thoughts come relentlessly, then console your mind by saying that you are not trying to achieve something great. You are only trying to consciously remain like how you were in deep sleep. (This para is introduction for 2)

2. Asareeram sareereshu Anavastheshu vasthitham:

- Infinite Conscious Existence is the permanent in the midst of all the impermanent objectivity. All the three states (deep sleep, dream and waking) are passing but Infinite Conscious Existence is there in all three of these states.
- Despite having a body, Infinite Conscious Existence is bodiless. So, you have to transcend the 'body am I' identity and remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.

3. Na jayathe mriyatheva vipaschith:

- Infinite Conscious Existence is not born, it does not undergo change and it does not die.
- No matter what worrisome thought comes, at the most, you will get worried about death. What is this thought about death? It is just an image on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence. I am Infinite Conscious Existence which is the screen. All other thoughts come and stay taking my support and finally dissolve into me. I, as peace, remain unaffected.

4. Sarve veda yat padam aamananthi

- If the mind still brings another thought, then chant OM. OM will convert every disturbance into vapour [Gross thought (A) to subtle (U) to silence (M)]
- If you did not reach silence through OM, take a deep breath and again chant OM. Do this until you recognise silence and use it to remain as Consciousness- Existence- Infinity (Infinite Conscious Existence).

5. Aaseeno duram vrajathi

- Use this when you sit at one place to remain as your real nature but your mind goes somewhere else.
- The place where your mind went has already been imparted Existence and Consciousness. It will show up as thought but when you look into it, there is only Infinite Conscious Existence.

Now, to practice manana, you have five facilitators. Use them and consciously remain peaceful. With this, Kathopanishad will remain lively in you.

Homework

1. Do this manana and share your observations.
2. Read verses 3 to 9 in chapter 3 Kathopanishad and give a summary.

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Points To Ponder-19

What is real meditation?

- The culmination of meditation is Nididhyasana (Remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence without taking any support of external sounds or pondering over teachings).
- As long as the meditator is still there, struggling to meditate, the real meditation has not yet started but is in the process.
- The start and end of real meditation is when you remain without individuality (body-am-I notion) and remain only as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Thought is not the disturbance (problem) in the meditation. The thought giving you an assumption that you are the thinker, is the problem. It strengthens the body-am-I identity with which we cannot own up Infinity (peace).

Why is using the other four bullets (other than OM) important for manana?

- You may feel that there is no need to follow other portals (bullets) when OM itself is doing the job of helping you remain peaceful. But, the other four portals are highly intellectual and logical. The importance of OM is not downplayed, but the supremacy of the other portals is being established. Portals which are more intellectual will help to hold on to the real path of knowledge. With OM also you can remain as peace to some extent. But, when you are convinced intellectually, then naturally you are established in knowledge. It will have a lasting effect.
- You first need to get convinced that you do not need any of these five portals to remain peaceful by default. An aura of peace is always with you and you do everything with peace. Peace is gold-a valuable thing to cherish. The goal is to remain peaceful by default. But, for that to be in your experience, you have to consciously put in effort with the help of the five bullets.

All the bullets revisited

1. Adhyatma Yoga:

- Unlike OM, here you are remaining as peace without any aid.
- When you are conscious of a thought, your attention shifts to consciousness. Then, you consciously remain as real nature (peace).
- If lost in thoughts, then use this portal again. If you are continuously getting lost in thoughts, then move on to the next portal as you do not want your mind to get habituated to a particular portal.

2. Asareeram sareereshu anavasteshu vasthitham:

- Tell your mind that remaining peaceful is not some extraordinary task. It is your real nature only which is peace which you experience everyday in deep sleep. With this, you are trying to remain peaceful without any difficulty.
- In deep sleep, we remain as though we are bodiless inspite of having a body and also remained as a changeless entity without any change. So, we remain here (waking) as our real nature which is bodiless and changeless inspite of functioning

with body which is subject to change. You remain here (waking) consciously as peace which is Infinite Conscious Existence

3. Na jayate mriyate va vipaschit:

- All these thoughts are being noticed because there is a changeless principle which is the substratum for all these thoughts. This principle is Infinite Conscious Existence.
- I am the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence on which all these thoughts are passing.
- We are consciously not trying to eliminate the thoughts. Rather we are using the thoughts to remain as our real nature.

4. OM:

- If more thoughts are coming, then chant OM. By chanting OM, immediately the thought current is broken and you come face to face with silence. You are Conscious of that silence which takes you to Infinite Conscious Existence which is peace.
- The moment the thought arises, catch it immediately and, if you can, you can trace back the thought to the previous thought and from that one to the preceeding one which initiated that thought. By this you will know how the mind seems to fool you inspite of your initiative to handle it through these bullets. Find out how alert you are instead of burying the thought. Or else, there is a chance that the mind may subside for a few minutes and later arise again, fooling you, which means that it has taken control.
- If overpowering thoughts come, then move on to the next portal because every thought if left unchecked has the potency to strengthen ' body am I ' identity.

5. Aseeno duram vrajathi:

- This is the most powerful portal intellectually.
- Everything in this universe is permeated by Consciousness and Existence. So, let the mind go anywhere. There is only Conscious Existence there. Any thought is used to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.

In this way, with the help of these five bullets, we try to remain peaceful throughout the day.

Chapter-3
Manthra-2

Knowing fully well the challenges faced by the students in owning up the eternal peace, Upanishad is giving way to help you to own it up.

What is samsara?

- Leading life with ignorance is called samsara. Here, samsara is being compared to an ocean.

Why is samsara being compared to an ocean?

- An ocean is vast and crossing it is difficult as there are deadly creatures in it. Also, an ocean is endless.
- The whirlpools of the ocean are compared to the depressive situations in life. Once you get pulled into it, you will not be able to get out unless you are lucky.
- The deadly monsters of the ocean are compared to desires, anger, greed, attachments/delusions, pride and jealousy. These monsters challenge the peace.

Do you want to stay in the ocean or come to the shore?

- Come to the shore.

What is there in the shore?

- Reality is there in the shore. It is infinite, immortal and fearless.

How can you say that Reality is it Infinite?

- Reality is Infinite as it is in our experience.

How is Reality fearless?

- Fear comes because of duality. Here, in non-duality (Infinity) how can there be duality (fear)?
- In non-duality, you remain as yourself as Infinity.

How is Reality immortal?

- It is immortal as it is beyond birth and death.
- Birth and death is only in the realm of finite. In the realm of Infinite, there is no possibility for birth and death. This shows that Reality is immortal.

How can you overcome negative emotions (desire, anger, greed, etc...) with this knowledge?

- You may feel that these negative emotions are disturbing your peace and you may want to get rid of them. But, you cannot be free of these emotions unless you resort to Reality. Why?
- It is because all these emotions are holding on to the body-am-I notion. With the knowledge of real nature, we can overcome them by the shift of identity from this ' body am I ' notion to Infinite Conscious Existence. With this shift the negative emotions naturally cease as they do not have a support to hold on.

How can we cross the ocean of samsara with ease?

- To cross the ocean of samsara, we need the ship of satsang. We can cross the ocean with ease by practicing shravana, manana and nididhyasana.
- Once you recognise real nature without a doubt, you can remain peaceful.

In chapter 3, the process to recognise truth is explained to those who are eager to cross the ocean of samsara and reach the shore of immortal and fearless Brahman. This is done through an illustration of a chariot to have a doubtless recognition of Reality and eliminate any problems associated with reaching the goal.

Manthra 3 and 4

Owner/rider of the chariot= self (limited)

Chariot= the body

Charioteer= The intellect

Reins= mind

Horses= Five senses

Path= sense objects

What does 'self' refer to in this analogy?

- The rider/owner of the chariot is the 'self'. Here, 'self' is referring to the individual self (jivatma) and not Infinite Conscious Existence. Why?
- Absolute Self cannot be confined to the body and mind apparatus. As the owner is sitting in the chariot, it has to be referring to the limited self.
- The owner appears to reach Vishnu (Self). So, we must interpret the owner as the limited self who reaches the absolute Self.

Manthra 5 and 6

Two scenarios are presented based on the condition of the charioteer (intellect):

1. If the charioteer is devoid of discrimination

- In this case, he will not have control over the reins and the horses will become wild and vicious.
- Here, the intellect is devoid of discrimination as it is drunk with various enchantments. Then, the intellect will not exert any control over the mind and so the senses become unrestrained. The senses will run after inauspicious objects. He will go against the values.

2. If the charioteer has discrimination

- In this case, he will have control over the reins and the horses will be obedient.
- Here, the intellect has discriminative understanding leading to a controlled and disciplined mind. The senses will become restrained. They will become your slave and not the opposite.

We must see what is good. Do not be completely blind. Hear what is good. Speak pleasingly without hurting others.

Manthra 7

If the rider has a charioteer who is compared to a non-discriminative intellect, then, the horses will run wild and the chariot will fall into a ditch. The journey is filled with misery. He will have everything except peace. He will continue in samsara.

Manthra 8

One who has a discriminative intellect has control over the reins and the horses will be well tamed. The journey will be pleasant and he will reach the desired goal which is peace.

Manthra 9

What is the goal which is to be reached?

- The man who has discriminative intellect as his charioteer has controlled/concentrated/pure mind. Then, he reaches the supreme goal which is peace.
- Upanishad says the supreme goal to be 'Vishnu Paramam Padam'.

Vishnu means Vasudeva.

Vasu=The one who provides the dwelling place within himself. He provides vaasam, meaning existence. That which imparts Existence to everything within himself is absolute Existence.

Deva=Effulgence=Self luminous. It is that which imparts Consciousness to everything because of which we are conscious of everything. This is absolute Consciousness.

So, Vasudeva= Infinite Conscious Existence.

- The one who has discriminative intellect will clearly comprehend this Infinite Conscious Existence. He recognises his identity with Infinite Conscious Existence.
- It is as though Infinity wakes up and owns up its Infinite nature. When he is fully bent on recognising real nature, in the moment of recognising it Infinite Conscious Existence takes over him. So, Infinity is Conscious about its Infinite Existence.

How can you discipline the mind and control the senses?

You can discipline the mind and control the senses through discriminative intellect.

Homework

Some might feel that despite knowing what shreyas and preyas are, their mind tells them to go for preyas. What is the solution for this individual?

Points To Ponder-20

Why does the mind run after preyas?

- Preyas is the path of extraversion and shreyas is the path of introversion.
- The mind runs after preyas as it assumes that it gets happiness in this extraverted path. It is trained in that way by society.
- Example: People believe that they get happiness from alcohol as the whole world is addicted to intoxicants. So, they also want to get happiness from this path.

What is there in the happiness which is derived through objects and craved by everybody?

- There is truth in the happiness attained through objects. We cannot deny it as it is experienced by them. But, what is that happiness?
- In that moment of happiness, when the desire gets fulfilled through objects, the desire gets eliminated with such a force that the individuality, which strengthened along with the desire, also ceases. Then, awareness is aware of its Infinite Existence. In that moment, you remain desireless and without any limitation, for a fraction of a second, as your real nature. But, you immediately feel that the object is the cause of happiness. It is correct in a way but not completely as the happiness is not increasing with the object. The object has only triggered a process which leads to happiness.

If you have access to the same state of happiness without the need for objects and which is not limited by time and place, will you not go for it? Upanishad calls people who do not go for this path despite knowing its advantages as 'mudaha' which means fool. So, let us shed the foolish ways of living and start a way of life in which we are aiming for real happiness.

Are there really two paths like shreyas and preyas to choose from?

- No. Shreyas (going for real bliss) is the only path. But, because of the overwhelming ignorance which has enveloped the entire universe, you feel that you are lost to this path.
- Once you have discovered this path, you think that only the minority of people follow this path of introversion and the majority follow the path of extraversion.
- But, once you are convinced intellectually, you will know that shreyas is the path of the wise and preyas is the path of the foolish/unwise.

Until when will you have a choice between shreyas and preyas?

- You will have a choice between these two paths as long as you feel that the happiness prompted by preyas activities are experiential and that of shreyas is theoretical (but not in our experience).
- Once you realise that true happiness is only when the awareness is aware of its Infinite Existence and this is the source for all other happiness in the world, then you will realise that this path to attain happiness is real and all other paths are just imaginations created by ignorance.
- Then, there is no trouble choosing between shreyas or preyas as the illusion of preyas is

exposed by the experience of the state in which shreyas finally culminates which is doubtlessly recognising your real nature.

Upanishad, in the next two mantras, gives us an easy portal to reach that state wherein we are not troubled by the act of choosing between shreyas and preyas and instead directly own up the culmination of shreyas. Before that, we have to pass through various stages where you will be vulnerable to the attraction of preyas until you reach the last step. You may know at which stage you are and what the next step to be taken is.

What are the stages of introversion in the path of shreyas?

Manthra-10 (Indriyebya para...)

Senses < Sense objects < mind < intellect < I-ness < I-lessness < Self

1. Senses

2. Sense objects are superior to senses.

- Sense objects give functionality to senses and determine the activity of the senses. Senses are inert. They are only inlets that carry information from the objects. They are like doors. For example, ears and eyes hear and see whatever situation is present before them. They cannot differentiate whether it is good or bad just like how a door cannot decide who will enter the house.
- The good and bad data that the senses carry is determined by the quality of the objects. So, choose the company or environment you live in. Be careful of the company you choose to live among. If the company is extrovert oriented, you too tend to be so. You need to place yourself in an environment, with whatever limited choice you have, such that you safeguard yourself and do not allow the sense objects to take you away from the quest of true peace.

3. Mind is superior to sense objects

- The experience the sense objects create with the senses cannot be appreciated without the mind. Mind plays a significant role in controlling the senses even if the sense objects are present before it. When the mind is preoccupied with something then the information that the senses bring in through the sense objects will not have the intended impact on you when the mind is trained for a higher way of life.

4. Intellect is superior to mind

- Mind is, by nature, wavery and intellect can control the mind with the power of resolve. It controls the mind by logical conviction. It tames the mind by bringing to surface the knowledge gained about shreyas and preyas, discriminative understanding, peace, etc... so that you go in the right direction. For example, the mind brings up a doubt of whether to sit for satsang or not. The intellect is the one which says yes.

5. Great soul is superior to intellect

- The great soul (athma) means the innermost principle of intelligence of all beings which is pervasive and common to all beings and subtler than the intellect. It is the i-ness which dominates our lives and is evident of all beings.
- It is superior to intellect because it takes the ownership of the intellect like 'my' intellect.
- 'i' is the one which is owning up everything like 'my' senses, 'my' mind, 'my' intellect.

Manthra-11 (Mahathaha param avyaktham...)

6. Avyaktham (unmanifest) is superior to the great soul (i-ness)

- This is because the unmanifest transcends the name and form ('i') which cannot be described in words.
- Transcending the 'i' means to drop the 'i' (i-lessness). Then, the experience about yourself cannot be denied but we struggle to put it in words. When 'i' is dropped, we are there but not like before. So, we are exploring the stage of not being sure of what we are.
- Transcending 'i' means to transcend the entire manifestation of name and form. Then, how are you? At the most we can say that it is the same experience as in deep sleep.

7. Purushah is superior to avyaktham

- There is nothing superior than this. This is the highest goal a human mind can comprehend. It means 'purna'. It fills up everything and there is nothing other, subtlety and all-pervasiveness. The more subtler it is the more all-pervasive and vice versa.
- Example:

Ice block – gross
Water -subtle
Vapour -subtler

What is this I-less state which you are not sure of?

- Are you there? Yes. I cannot deny my presence. There is no 'I' which claims the ownership but there still is a state there which cannot be named. What is that state? It is Existing and you know you are existing. It is Conscious Existence which is Infinity (not limited). Nothing can limit that because even 'I' is removed.

“You can reach the supreme goal (recognising the Self) through knowledge”. Here, the word ‘reach’ cannot be used.

- What is not you, you can reach. If it is already you, then how can you reach? Also, you

can reach something which is unattained. But, real nature is already you and it is inherent in you. What you already are, how can you attain? So, there is nothing like attaining it. Self just has to be recognised.

- It is a journey from ignorance to knowledge. It is a journey of a wave to water. The wave will reach its true nature which is water. But, did it travel anywhere? No. It is only gaining knowledge. Similarly, the whole journey is within you.
- It is the journey from a finite individual to Infinity and from sorrow to peace through knowledge.
- One who recognises real nature will remain as real nature, or, who recognises peace will remain as peace.

Homework

Is this path easy or difficult ?Give reasons.

Theory and practical in the path of knowledge:

- Worldly knowledge has both theory and practical. But, there is no difference between theory and practical at one point in this path.
- In the path of knowledge, while doing shravana itself your ignorance vanishes, maybe not completely but sufficiently such that you remain as your real nature at that time. Later, the subconscious impressions of your mind will surface up and challenge your understanding. So, next you will do manana and apply what you have heard in shravana.
- So, here theory and practical do not apply in the same way as they do in other worldly learnings. If you clearly understand theory (through shravana, manana and nididhyasana= endorsing your real nature), that itself is practical. There is nothing other than that to do for practical as it is your own real nature. You have to recognise it and remain as it. All the effort is only to understand the theory properly.
- When all residual ignorance is removed and knowledge is clearly understood, that only is said to be practical.
- We must remove from our mind the notion that theory and practical are different as it sometimes may block the understanding to go forward in the path.

Are deep sleep and waking states theory or practical?

- The experience of deep sleep is practical. So, you cannot be anything other than that in waking.
- From manifestation standpoint, there is a lot of difference between deep sleep and waking. But, here we are looking at the Reality of both manifest and unmanifest states. From this standpoint, there is no difference between deep sleep and waking.
- From Reality point of view, the reality of deep sleep and waking is Infinite Conscious Existence. That alone is remaining. If Infinite Conscious Existence alone is appearing as all manifestations, then there is only Reality in waking too in spite of all the names and forms. As there is no difference between deep sleep and waking, if the experience of deep sleep is practical then it should be so in waking too.

Manthra- 12 (Yesha sarveshu....)

Considering the entire humanity, the Upanishad is saying that this path of knowledge is very difficult and at the same time it is easy.

How is it difficult?

- In spite of Reality being present in all beings, it is still covered by ignorance. So, they do not know Reality as their real nature.
- Upanishad is pitying all the ignorant people as even if Reality is their real nature they do not know it. Even if it is being told to them, they do not grasp it. But, without anyone telling them, they accept body and mind to be their real nature.
- Body and mind are just objects to Consciousness just like a table, chair, etc...You know of them but you do not identify with them as you are able to experience them apart from you. So, what you know of is not you. As you know of your body and mind, it cannot be your real nature. That which is supporting the entire objectivity, that because of which everything is known and that which is essentially changeless is your real nature. But, it is difficult to own it up because of ignorance.

How is this path easy?

- It is easy for one who has a one-pointed intellect (the ability to concentrate on a subject for a period of time).
- Along with this, you also need purity of mind (the capability to be introvert). This quality is unique to the path of knowledge. No other field requires you to have a pure mind.

Summary

The path of knowledge is easy for those who have a pure and one-pointed intellect. Otherwise, it is difficult.

How do you know that you have purity of mind and a one-pointed intellect?

- If you are showing interest towards this path and are able to understand the knowledge clearly, it shows that you have purity of mind.
- If you are able to focus for some time on this topic and able to understand it to some extent, you have one-pointed intellect.
- The extent of your understanding is determined upon the purity and one-pointedness of your mind. Even though you are deficient in these qualities initially, the antharanga sadhanas, which lead to doubtless recognition of Reality, will make you fully qualified.

For Whom is this possible?

- It is possible for those who have the skill to penetrate into the subtlest aspects of the entire manifestation. Infinite Conscious Existence cannot be seen but cannot be denied. Only those who have the capability to experience and own up the subtlest aspect of Reality can attain it. Then in spite of seeing the manifestation all around you will see the Reality alone in

and through everything. Like, wherever your eyes fall you see Infinite Conscious Existence which is the real nature of the entire manifestation, God and yourself.

Manthra-13(Yachhe dhvaag manasee...)

If you have a one-pointed and pure mind then you will have the capability to follow the portal Upanishad is giving in this Mantra to own up your very real nature. This is an excellent portal used for manana which is even recommended by Ramana Maharshi to own up the peace.

1. Senses and sense objects

- Do not get carried away with senses through the sense objects(sensations) present around you.

2. Senses and sense objects to the mind

- Now the mind is active as many thoughts will come.

3. Mind to the intellect

- With a firm resolve, you will resist from getting carried away by thoughts which means merging the mind into intellect. Who made this resolve? The intellect which has been convinced to do manana made this resolve. Now, you are at the level of intellect. Then no thought for a while, but mind shows up after a while even though a resolve is made.
- But when you take up this resolve, immediately a silence will follow where there is no thought. Take advantage of this silence and still your mind.

4. Intellect to i-ness

- Now transcend the intellect. Ask yourself, "Whose intellect is this?" "It is my intellect," will be the response. Now, catch the assumed owner of the intellect, mind and senses which is the i-ness.

5. i-ness to real nature

- Do a one-pointed enquiry into 'i'. "Who is this 'i'?"
- The mind will never expect such a question. So, 'i' will disappear. Merge this 'i' into Infinity. There is no 'i' at anytime but because you focussed on it before, it took control over you for all these years. When this 'i' is questioned you will be face to face with silence.
- You are Conscious of the silence which is Existing. Conscious Existence is Infinite. Instantly, you own up Infinite Conscious Existence as the real nature which is you in the place of 'i'.
- If you get one more thought, then repeat the process. Senses/sense objects → thought (mind) → intellect → i-ness → Infinite Conscious Existence

Homework

1. Do the manana using the above portal.
2. Why do you think the terms arise and awake are used successively in the next manthra.

Points To Ponder-21

Manthra-14 (Uthishtatha jagratha...)

This Mantra, based on the qualifications of the individual, can be seen in two ways as basic and advanced levels.

Basic level is for people trying to lead a noble life. Until now, they were not aware of this noble life and just followed society for many years. Later, they were interested in this style of living.

Advanced level is for people who are already leading a virtuous life and are now trying to own up their innate peace.

Majority will fall between these two levels and have the tendencies of both the levels.

Basic Level:

Arise:

- Get up from the illusion that happiness is found in the sense objects. Get up from the illusion that lasting happiness is achieved by fulfilling the goals set up by society (people) who themselves do not have lasting peace. Get up from the illusion that happiness is obtained outside you. This tendency of finding happiness outside is seen from childhood to oldage, but only the objects vary.

How do you get out of this illusion?

- By approaching a teacher who knows the secret to true happiness.
- Teachers' presence is of two types: physical proximity and proximity with the teachings. One who is at the basic level needs both as he needs to get inspired enough by the teacher to go into this path. After getting inspired, listening to the texts is enough. You need to approach those teachers who can convince you, intellectually and experientially, that there is no happiness outside in the world. Coming out of this ignorance is not easy. So, you need the help of a teacher.

What do the teachers teach?

- The teachers will guide you to analyze the world around you and enable you to recognize that you will not find lasting happiness by blindly following the ways of the world. By this you will know through your own experience that there is no lasting happiness in the external objects.
- They will stress on the importance of values, not as a rule, but make you logically understand that it will lead to lasting peace. This will in turn facilitate you to be qualified to gain real knowledge.
- Further, they inspire you to engage in selfless service and selfless devotion and to have discriminative understanding. They emphasise on how life with values is meaningful and how selfless service and selfless devotion will make you qualified to go ahead in the path of knowledge.

This world will become a happy place to dwell once you recognise the happiness which is already there within you.

Sometimes, the old habits will overwhelm your understanding and fool you around. So, Upanishad is telling you to be 'awake'.

Awake (Jagratha):

- Be wakeful by being careful or watchful to your own tendencies cropping within you. The earlier birth's tendencies will still be inherent in you. Sometimes, these animalistic tendencies will show up from time to time.
- Then, what should you do? Upanishad is saying that, though inspired by the teacher, to lead a virtuous life, still, be wakeful of those tendencies that overwhelm your understanding and pull you down.
- Those habits will dominate your understanding wherein the values will be compromised. So, be careful so that these tendencies do not dominate your understanding.
- Be careful as the world is used to a perverted way of life that has a capacity to veil your understanding.

Why is this path very difficult?

- The wise who have treaded this path earlier have declared that this path is like a sharp edge of a razor. There is every chance to get toppled because the majority are under the spell of ignorance and their influence will dominate you, even without your intention, from time to time.
- If you are not really inspired and focused, there is every chance for you to fall and get lost. What is the solution for this? Try to be in the company of like minded people or attend satsangs and get inspired from time to time.

Advanced Level:

The one who is living a life with values along with selfless service and devotion is qualified for this level. When they meet their teacher, they will be made to arise and awake.

Arise:

- Get up from the sleep of ignorance of the 'body-am-I' notion. They will be made to understand what their real nature is spontaneously. Their real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence which is directly pointed out by the teacher. Then, they will intuitively comprehend the implications of the teachings and recognise their real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- In the traditional schools, this path is called the Shakthi Path. Once a qualified student approaches a teacher, he is awakened to his real nature. The Shakthi which is dormant within him is made to wake up from the slumber of ignorance and own up their real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence. This can happen only through appropriate teachings.
- But there is still a problem here. These people have comprehended reality in the presence of a teacher but still seem to be dominated by the body-am-I notion when they are there for themselves or are active in the world (away from the teacher).

The path is difficult. It is sharp in the sense that it is narrow. On a wide path, you can go however you want. But, if it is narrow, you must be careful.

Why is this path narrow?

1. The path and the goal are the same. When you are convinced about your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence and you remain as it and if there is no tendency in you to overwhelm this understanding, then that is the goal. The path to reach this goal is laid by

shravana, manana and nididhyasana. Through shravana, you are able to easily recognise your real nature and in manana and nididhyasana, you are holding onto the experience of recognising the real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence. So, the goal is where you are doubtlessly established in it and the path to reach it is also the same.

2. If your real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence, there is no scope for identification with body and mind, intellect, sense objects and senses. With this baggage, the narrow path cannot be treaded. You can tread on this path only by remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence and by not taking the identity to be the body and mind. So, this path is very narrow.

Awake:

- You have to be careful in this path like a soldier on the battlefield.
- You have known your identity to be peace, essentially. But, when we are away from satsangs, the body and mind identity tries to creep inside. Depending on the provocation from outside (society) that challenges the peace and induces the body and I identity, use the bullets ie portals that facilitate manana.
- Manana is the main sadhana to remain peaceful. The path is peace and it culminates as peace.

Granthi Bhedh: All the notions which we have entertained about ourselves in this life and earlier

life will come in front of us as challenges or knots (Granthi). These knots of ignorance are cut by the sword of knowledge through shravana, manana and nididhyasana.

Homework

Read Mantra-15 and tell why this path is subtle.

Mantra-15 (Ashabda asparsa)

- Upanishad says that Infinite Conscious Existence is beyond sound, touch, form, taste and smell.
- Real nature cannot be known through senses. They are helpless and of no use in the effort to know Reality, even though they are considered very powerful in the realm of objectivity.
- Reality is beyond intellect. So, mind and intellect also have a limited role. All the objective phenomenon is negated.

- Reality cannot be experienced outside the body or within the body. So, all the mystic experiences (hearing bells, various smells, seeing lights, etc...) that are described by various people and which take place either outside or within the body are not real. They have no value in the realm of knowledge. In the name of these experiences, people will be side tracked from knowledge.
- Reality cannot be experienced objectively but can be known only subjectively as it always is as your real nature.

Reality and knowledge about Reality:

- In the objective realm, the knowledge about the object is different from the object itself. Example: Knowledge about the apple and apple itself are different.
- Here, knowledge about Reality is not different from Reality. Example: Sunlight is not different from the sun.
- In our earnest effort to know Reality, Reality wakes up to its own very nature.

How can we know that what is known subjectively is Reality rather than a grand illusion (imagination) of mind?

- We can know this through the five clues the Upanishad is giving from falling into the traps of the imaginary mind. Mind may trick you in strengthening the subjective experience of Reality. But, if your discovery is compatible with the five characteristics described below, then it is nothing other than Reality.
- All the five characteristics described below will apply to Reality and knowledge about Reality, equally. Earlier, we have applied similar terms only to Reality (like eternal, changeless, constant, Infinite, ancient, etc...). But now we are discussing these five characteristics in relation to the knowledge of Reality.
- These five characteristics can be used for self analysis to see whether you are really appreciating Reality or if you are in some imagination about Reality. You have to make sure to remain as Reality after all the efforts put.
- We are applying these five clues not on Reality but on the knowledge of Reality. Apply these five to check whether you have knowledge of Reality and if it is firm.

Five clues:

1. **Avyayam**= Knowledge does not diminish with place and time
 - If it is diminishing, you are in the process of gaining knowledge but did not reach the culmination. Peace remains unchanged with time, place and event.
 - For example, in some tragic event, just because you are feeling sorrow, it does not mean that peace is lost. Feeling joyful or sorrowful based on external events is fine. But, you will not be carried away by them as the firm knowledge will present itself as a deep peace within you.
2. **Druvam**= Knowledge is changeless/constant.
 - Absolute knowledge cannot be improved upon.
 - If you feel that there is scope for improvisation, then improve it. In the process of improving, do not feel that it is the culmination (peace).

3. **Anantham**= Knowledge has no end
4. **Anaadhi**= Knowledge has no beginning
5. **Nityam**= Knowledge is Eternal

You feel that you have knowledge of reality by hearing about it. Then, how can you say that there is no beginning for knowledge ?

- From the knowledge about Reality standpoint, you always are, were and will be Infinite Conscious Existence. But, from the mind standpoint, if the mind- which is claiming to be enlightened at a particular time- is still there as real (ie as an independent entity) after the apparent enlightenment, then the mind is still ignorant. It is ignorant as it has not been sublated. In Reality, there is nothing other than Reality.
- From the mind standpoint, there is date and time for the birth of knowledge. But, from the Reality standpoint, this reference to time is meaningless because it always remains as it is and the knowledge about Reality is not different from itself.
- For example, wave may say that it got knowledge about its real nature to be water at a particular time and place. But this is not correct from the water standpoint which in fact is the only real stand point. In the earnest effort of the wave to know its Reality, the water will wake up to its own glory. In real knowledge, the wave establishes its identity with water and in this new identification, it ceases its identity with wave form and thereafter, water only remains as it always is. The real nature of water is revealed to water itself. Then, water laughs at its ignorance of identifying itself with a wave in spite of remaining as water all the time. It does not give value to time or place as it remained as water at all times and in all places.

If knowledge is firm, then it is anaadhi, anantham, druvam, avyayam and nithyam.

What is the purpose of referring these five characteristics in reference to knowledge?

- To ensure that we are not satisfied with incomplete knowledge and to encourage us to initiate manana, nidhidhyasana, so that we have firm knowledge (dhruda jnanam).
Fully qualified seekers can get firm knowledge through shravana itself. The others need to exert through repeated shravana, manana, nidhidhyasana to eliminate defects in comprehension. Defects in comprehension can manifest in the form of doubts about reality and also as habitual identification with the ' body am I ' concept.
- They help in self-introspection to check whether the knowledge is firm. If you feel that it is diminishing or changing, then you are in the process of gaining knowledge. So, do not relax and put effort towards owning it up.
- To show how this knowledge once recognized remains as it is ie without being subject to change. Hence the peace which is a synonym for this knowledge and for reality also remains changeless.
- If you feel that knowledge is diminishing, then do manana in the following lines:
Knowledge as such cannot diminish because it is about Infinite Conscious Existence. This Infinite Conscious Existence cannot be diminished or improved. So, knowledge also cannot be diminished or improved as it is already Infinity.

What is the benefit of gaining knowledge?

- One who has knowledge remains peaceful while living and will be freed from the jaws of death. Death is a natural and physiological process. It is the cause of fear for the entire mankind. How is he freed?
- One who has firm knowledge has firm identification with Infinite Conscious Existence. Infinite Conscious Existence regains its identity even while living. There is no death to Infinite Conscious Existence but only to the body and mind with which he has no identity. Even while living, he remains peaceful and also continues to be as peace itself (infinity) after death.
- He has no sorrow regarding his death and that of others as he has recognised the reality of himself and everybody around him. Then, there is no scope for sorrow.

Summary

Subjectively who has realized his real nature and verified whether that knowledge is firm or not with the clues that are given, then, there is a high chance for him to get firm knowledge. With this, he has peace while living and even after death.

Manthra-16 (Nachiketa upakhyanam)

Through this Mantra, Upanishad is praising the student who has studied the text and also mentioning the result he will attain for the effort.

1. The student is intelligent because he has chosen the path of shreyas.
2. If the student hears about this eternal teaching, understands it, shares its implied meaning with others or chants it knowing its meaning, he will be glorified in Brahma Loka.

Why will he be glorified in the Brahma Loka?

- One who has firm knowledge will remain as Brahma which is Infinite Conscious Existence.
- If someone put in effort but did not succeed in getting firm knowledge, then they will have access to Brahma Loka where they will be glorified having heard the Kathopanishad. Brahma will teach them the Upanishad and make sure that they doubtlessly understand it and remain as peace.

Why is this teaching eternal?

It is eternal as it remains valid forever to the humanity who are in need of true peace.

Mantra-17 (Ya imam paramam guhyam...)

Upanishad concludes this chapter by stressing again on the value of this text. This Mantra can be seen in two ways.

1. If the person who has been purified chants this supreme text for the Brahmins, who are invited to the funeral (shraaddha) ceremony of a dead person, then that will be conducive to eternal result for that person.
2. A person who has experiential knowledge and is purified (not necessarily a Brahmin born in that community but can be a Brahmin by qualities and actions – guna & karma ie who has

experiential knowledge) not only chants but explains the inner meaning of the text at the time of a funeral ceremony to those who are eager to comprehend its meaning. By this those who are receptive to the teaching will get infinite result ie they will know about the way to recognize their immortal Self.

Homework

Write the summary for chapter 3.

Points To Ponder-22

Five portals for manana from chapter 3

1. Choose between the path of darkness and the path of light. For this, you must know the destinations for both these paths:
 - If you follow the path of darkness, you will end up living a life filled with fear.
 - If you choose the path of light, you will lead a life with fearlessness that culminates in immortality.
 - While doing manana, if some event in life is disturbing you again and again and pulling you back to the body-am-I notion, then revise and ask your mind whether it wants to follow the path of darkness (which is filled with fear) or the path of light (which leads to fearlessness and immortality).
2. If you want to follow the path of light, you need to qualify yourself in the following ways as this path requires a pure and one pointed mind.
 - Body is like a chariot. You need to maintain it in a healthy way by eating sattvic and healthy food and doing regular exercise so that it is in a good condition.
 - Choose a good company/environment where you live:
 - For many births, you have been carried away with the sense objects. So, while treading the path of light, you must be careful in choosing the environment you live in.
 - Even if you are choicelessly placed in a bad environment, you must try not to get carried away by the sense objects by controlling the mind.
 - If the mind is still wavery, then take a resolve at the level of intellect to tread the path of light because you want to reach the state of vasudeva (peace) in which this path culminates.

With the next portal, you are taking a leap into your real nature.

3. Every moment, there is a chance to get caught up and lost into the world because of sense objects instead of remaining as your real nature. So, what can be done to own up your real nature?
 - Transcend from senses to mind to intellect to the ego. When you are at the level of ego, question it. "What is this ego?" It is the one which is preventing you from owning up peace. Even without having a reality of its own, it is still creating tremendous misery. When the ego is eliminated (ie, its illusion is exposed through self enquiry) you will be one with your real nature (Infinite Conscious Existence).
 - If the ego is not overcome, you remain as a finite being who is vulnerable to all the misery in the world. But, if you expose the illusion of this 'I', you remain as impenetrable peace where no force in the world can dare to disturb you.
4. Word of caution: Be awake so that you do not fall into the pitfalls in the path of knowledge (light).

These pitfalls are:

 - i. Being content by imagining experience of self at the level of senses.

- You are trying to imagine experience of Self at the level of senses and are content with it. Here, very subtly you are caught up with the senses.
- ii. Being content with incomplete knowledge, i.e, knowledge associated with defects.
 - Here, your ignorance is gone to certain extent, but the knowledge is still not complete. It has defects in the form of doubts which are preventing you from owning up real nature. You need extreme subtlety to even identify the doubts. If you are getting carried away with the 'body-am-I' notion from time to time for no reason, then that means you have doubts regarding real nature. You do not have peace as the background because the 'i' has possessed you. This implies that you do not have a firm and doubtless knowledge. As and when you have these tendencies, identify that you are being caught up with ignorance. Try to remove the residual ignorance and own up your real nature through shravana, manana and nididhyasana.

**How do you know that the knowledge is complete and all the defects are eliminated? (Or)
How do you know whether your mind is imagining the awakening or the awakening has really happened?**

This can be known through the four clues:

- (i) Avyayam = knowledge will not get diminished.

There are three ways in which knowledge can get diminished: time, place and situation
- ii. Anaadi & Anantham = Knowledge has no beginning and no end. So, it does not diminish with the passage of time.
 - Knowledge of Reality is beyond time. If the Self has awakened to its own real nature, it knows that it always remains as the Self. It has no birth and death.
- iii. Nithyam = Knowledge is not affected by place.
 - When you go to places where you are surrounded by unawakened (ignorant) people, they will influence you and you may notice that your understanding is getting diminished or challenged. This is because the 'i' or ego which is still there in a dormant form has dominated you. How? When you live around people who give utmost importance to the 'i', then you will naturally be taken over by it when you are dealing with them.
 - But, if the Self has awakened to its real nature, knowledge is not affected by place.
- iv. Dhruvam = Knowledge will not diminish based on any situations in life.
 - If you are able to handle challenging situations in life with the background of peace, then your knowledge is firm.
 - If you are not able to do so, you need not worry. That occasion has given you an opportunity to recognise that your knowledge is not firm. Then, undertake manana and make your knowledge firm.

5. The result of this knowledge is that you are freed from the jaws of death.
 - If you have firm knowledge of your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence, you will have no death. You will lead a fearless and peaceful life while living and remain as peace after death too.
 - If you do not have firm knowledge, then you will go to the Brahma loka where you will be initiated to gain firm knowledge.

Share this knowledge with:

1. Those who are troubled by the grief of their beloved ones: If a tragedy happens to someone you know, then adapt this teaching to them such that they comprehend it.
2. Those who are aged: If you know someone who is aged, prepare them with the help of knowledge so that they know how to overcome death while living.

Doing this will in turn strengthen your knowledge.

Homework

What is the difference between an intelligent and an unintelligent based on mantras 1 & 2 in chapter 4.

Chapter-4

In spite of our real nature being Infinite Conscious Existence, the unintelligent (ignorant) fail to comprehend it even if they are advised about it. This is because they lack a pure mind and a one-pointed intellect. We may say that we are able to comprehend knowledge which means that we have a one-pointed intellect. Then, why is there another mention about this? Upanishad says that if you have a one-pointed intellect, one hearing is enough to know the truth and remain established as reality. If this is not happening, we need to further exert to develop a one-pointed-intellect. We all have some degree of pure mind and one-pointed intellect which is why we are connected to this subtle subjective path. Still, we need to find out those obstacles that are preventing us from having a one pointed intellect and a pure mind ,which are essential to have firm knowledge.

What is the cause for lack of one-pointed intellect so that you can remove the obstacles and own it up?

Mantra 1 and 2

These two mantras point out what the obstacles are.

Majority of the people ignore shreyas which promises them a peaceful life and voluntarily choose Preyas which is pleasing to pursue but culminates in ashanthi (misery). Why?

- Upanishad is saying that this tendency to follow the path of preyas is not your fault. There is a defect in the creation itself. We are helplessly being driven into the path of preyas. The Self manifest (Ishwara) has designed the senses to be extroverted. By doing so, in a way, He has destroyed your progression towards introversion.

- The defective sense organs (which run after extrovert objects) along with the mind are busy with the pursuit of external duties and pleasures. They are fully into this duty-bound pleasure-seeking mode because of which they do not have time to introspect and think about Atma (real nature). There are some who have faint interest but postpone the spiritual pursuit.

Shankaracharya's verse from Bhajagovindam

The childhood slips away in attachment to playfulness.

Youth passes away in attachment to women / men.

Old age passes away worrying about many things.

Alas, there is hardly anyone who wants to be lost in Parabrahman.

- Even though the senses are made to be defective, i.e extrovert, you do not need to worry as you have a choice to either be intelligent or unintelligent. If you want peace in life then you must plan a constructive way of living and own up that peace by putting forth effort in the right direction.

Homework

Try to go within yourself and answer the following question: What is the savior point that will help you to not get tempted by preyas in life?

Points To Ponder-23

Difference between shreyas and preyas

- The activities done by keeping the values in mind are shreyas. All activities which oppose the values are preyas.
- You cannot safeguard the values forever. So, to further protect the values you must engage in activities like selfless service and selfless devotion.
- Pursuing the path of knowledge is also shreyas.
- Prioritising other activities over shreyas activities is considered as preyas.
Example: Prioritising movies over homework or satsang is called preyas. But, watching movies without neglecting homework is shreyas. Not only that, but the quality of the movie must be in line with shreyas.
- In the path of preyas, the illusionary 'i' gets strengthened which is an obstruction to recognise the true happiness within us. The path of shreyas facilitates knowledge which in turn helps you to see the illusion of 'i'. But, by merely

choosing the path of shreyas, the illusion of 'i' cannot be exposed. It has to be followed by efforts to gain knowledge.

We do so many activities for survival which are against the values but they do not harm anyone. In which category (path) do these activities come under?

- You have to put the activity exactly in the category that it deserves (Shreyas or Preyas). To please ourselves, we cannot change the category it falls into. Then there is scope for enquiry ie whether the preyas activity is useful or harmful in the long run.
- If you feel it is difficult to stick to the path of shreyas, you have to analyze for how long and how far you should go with this preyas activity.
- Firstly, the activity must not hurt anybody. Secondly, you must check if it is hurting you. If you feel that the activity with which you are going ahead is not right, it means that you are hurting yourself. Immediately, you may not realise it. But, it will come to a point when you realise that you are getting hurt and it is in turn clouding your understanding in the path of Reality. Then, you must reevaluate yourself and see if there is an alternate way of doing things without you being hurt. Finally, make intelligent decisions with clarity and wisdom from moment to moment.

What does hurting yourself imply in this context?

Hurting yourself in this context means compromising on your values even though you know what it means to live a virtuous life

Golden Principle: Do not hurt others and do not hurt yourself. Safeguarding this rule, take part in any activity.

By observing the society over a period of time, the following terms are redefined:

Brahmin= The one who has a thirst to know Reality and who has known reality

Kshatriya= The one who likes to do selfless service

Vaishya= The one who lives a life of values

Shudra= The one who has no interest for all these three activities

We all have the traits of shudra, vaishya, kshatriya and brahmin. These traits are not limited to a particular caste. A vaishya will live a dharmic life, i.e, he will not harm others. A kshatriya will do selfless service. A brahmin will have thirst for knowledge. But, just because you have a thirst for knowledge does not mean that you are a brahmin. Similarly, just because you are doing selfless service does not mean that you are a kshatriya. Why? A kshatriya should first live a life based

on dharma and on top of that, he should do selfless service. A brahmin must have a background of living a dharmic life, must take part in selfless service and on top of that he should have a thirst for knowledge.

Shudra should be under the guidance of the other three, so that he will gradually get inspired to lead a virtuous life.

Hurting others through words in three scenarios:

1. When you talk, you try to get pleasure by satisfying your ego. Through your words, we sometimes hurt others and get a subtle joy of trying to establish your supremacy. If this becomes a habit, it will be difficult to come out of it.
2. Purposely, you try to harm others through your words.
3. You unintentionally hurt others by saying something which may be right for your understanding, but is perceived by others in a harsh manner. Here, once it comes to your notice that you are hurting others, you must not repeat it again.

Homework

“There is no real happiness in pursuing preyas. Not only that, but the same act of pursuing preyas will become an obstacle for you to recognise your real happiness.” Use this double edged sword and try to overcome the habits which pull you towards preyas. Do it like a manana. Based on this manana, share your insights.

Mantra 1 and 2 (Continuation)

The senses are created to be extroverted by the God or Ishwara. So, naturally we tend to be extroverts. But that does not mean that we are condemned to be lost in the pursuit of pleasurable activities (seeking happiness outside) for the rest of our lives. Why? The same Ishwara who has made the senses extrovert has also given us the faculty of intelligence (vivekam). This intelligence will remain dormant at the time of birth and over time it will develop.

What does the term “Intelligence” mean in this context?

- Here, intelligence does not mean IQ which is a faculty of mind that helps to earn livelihood. This kind of intelligence helps us to have a better standard of living. Even animals have this kind of intelligence.
- In this context, intelligence means to introspect your own life and initiate steps that facilitate you to live a worthy life instead of blindly imitating the world around.

What is a worthy life?

- A worthy life is one wherein you don't live *for* happiness but live *with* happiness. It is not to live a beggarly life always seeking happiness outside throughout your entire life. The world around will train you to crave for happiness outside you, making your life unworthy.

How will an intelligent and an unintelligent one lead his life?

- An intelligent one (dheerah) will ruthlessly observe his own life and see the worthlessness of craving for happiness in the external objects. Then, he will seek for ways to live with happiness instead of living for happiness.
- An unintelligent one (bala) blindly imitates the ways of the world and relentlessly seeks for happiness in the objects around. Their mission is to follow external desires and get happiness from external objects. These objects seem to change from time to time and place to place, but the motive behind them is the same: to seek happiness from objects.

Why do the unintelligent relentlessly crave for fleeting happiness through the objects?

- This is because of the ignorance of the fact that the so-called happiness that they seem to enjoy is only a reflection of the happiness which is there within themselves.
- If they are freed from the ignorance of their real nature (which itself is peace or happiness) there will be happiness within and outside also.

What is the fate of the intelligent?

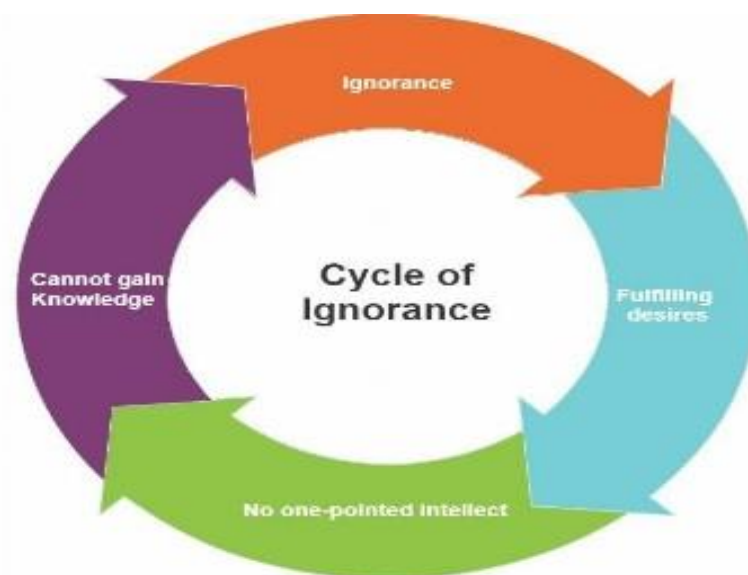
- The intelligent, being freed from ignorance, recognise their real nature which is peace or happiness. Recognising real nature means discovering real nature to be Conscious Existence which is Infinite. This Infinity itself is experienced as peace or happiness. In the light of this peace or happiness, the external names and forms, which appeared as solid reality until then, fade away. Now, they appear as forms on the background of peace for which names have been given. Then, the whole world will be seen in a different dimension despite not changing externally. The intelligent will see all the happenings in the world on the background of peace.

What is the fate of the unintelligent one?

- For the unintelligent (ignorant), the forms and names seem to be real by themselves. Ignorance will propel them to get trapped in the spell of endless desires. The goal of all the desires is to seek happiness in the objects. So, they will relentlessly do various actions to satisfy the desires. and are caught in the cycle of ignorance.

The cycle of ignorance:

- The unintelligent will be in the cycle of avidya (ignorance), kama (desire), karma (actions). Ignorance and desires are obstacles for attaining one-pointedness intellect. Ignorance cannot be removed if you do not have knowledge. As long as you have ignorance, you will go after desires because of which you cannot develop a one-pointed intellect. Without a one-pointed intellect, you cannot gain knowledge.



How do you break this cycle?

- The goal is to know about your real nature where there is real happiness. To break this cycle, you must follow these steps: First, you have to put in effort for realising that there is no real happiness in objects. By this, you can come out of ignorance motivated actions to some extent. Then, you will find out ways to gain knowledge about Reality (true happiness). Later, for the sake of gaining knowledge, you will try to control your desires and be focused on the desire to attain knowledge.
- Slowly, over a period of time, you will reorient to your new understanding and come out of this cycle.

What is the fate of the ignorant who are caught up in this cycle?

- They will be entangled in the snares of widespread death. This can be understood in two ways:
 1. They will live a life chasing desires. In the end, they will die. To accomplish the unfulfilled desires, they will be reborn. If those desires are compatible for human birth, they will be born as a human. Otherwise, they will be given an appropriate birth based on their desires. In this way, they will be in the cycle of birth and death.
 2. By being in this cycle, they seem to be dead even when they are alive. How? If they are ignorant about their real nature, they will lead their entire life trying to fulfill desires. Their whole life will be propelled by ignorance. Because of this, they will be unaware of their true nature. This means that they are under the grip of an illusory real nature (aham). So they are dead to their real nature and alive to their unreal nature.

Is the whole mankind condemned to live such a pitiable life or are there any exceptions to this?

- There are some rare discriminating ones (kaschit dheeraha) who are exceptions to living such a life. Upanishad is saying that there are only few people who tread this path of true peace. They will always be a minority.
- The majority choose to live a miserable life. You cannot say that they are unaware of this path of true peace. They have been given a sense of discrimination which is unique to humans and differentiate them from animals. They are supposed to use it. If not, they will live like animals, only trying to fulfill their desires for which they exert only in the realm of senses.

What do the intelligent (discriminating ones) and unintelligent ones do?

- The intelligent use their sense of discrimination to come up in life.
- The unintelligent will not use their sense of discrimination and will continue to do whatever they have been doing from childhood to oldage (going after objects for happiness).

How do the intelligent use their sense of discrimination?

- They observe that everything in the world is continuously changing.
- For example, relationships are very unsteady in our life. A person who we consider as a friend today may become an enemy tomorrow. Another example is wealth. Someone who is rich today can be poor tomorrow. Education and employment are variable too. God gives us these kinds of experiences to wake up and grow up in life.
- By analyzing such experiences, the intelligent will ponder on whether there is a state which is not subject to change among these unsteady entities which constantly change. Is there a way to live a stable life by holding on to something which remains steady in such an unsteady world? In the process of analyzing the world and employing their discrimination in quest for true peace, they will come across a teacher or a teaching.

What teaching will the intelligent come across?

- They come across the teaching which claims to give them access to that state which they are aiming at (a steady and constant state). How will this teaching give them access to that state? The teaching will help them recognise the reality of this entire manifestation which is their reality too. Only when they recognise their real nature, they will grasp the changeless principle among the changing world. They will be happy for finding a way out of this mass hypnotised state of misery.

What do the intelligent desire for?

- Their only desire will be for an immortal state in the midst of mortality.
- They want to know the changeless in the midst of the change, i.e, they want to know the Reality (Self).

How do they know their real nature?

- The only way to do so, as described by Upanishad, is turning their eyes away (from the extroverted objects), i.e, controlling their sense organs, and developing purity of mind. Then, they are introduced to the portals of recognising their real nature.
- The one who goes ahead in their quest while having discrimination will surely recognise their real nature which is not subject to change (death). Then, they will continue in that true state of indwelling Self. Because of this, they will not crave for happiness in objects and instead live with happiness. They will have well regulated desires which are in line with the quest for the truth. They will not entertain desires which take them away from the quest of the truth. Whatever desires they have, they fulfill them with the background of happiness/peace.

Homework

Read Mantras 3 and 4 and identify the excellent portal given in them to recognise Reality.

Points To Ponder-24

In the last Mantra, we learnt that some rare intelligent ones restrain their mind and senses. They do not follow the blind ways of the world. They recognize Reality and remain as the Self leading a life of contentment (devoid of worries).

1. Completely, you cannot restrain senses just by a resolve of the intellect to lead a life of Shreyas. This is because the world has trained us to be extroverted. Then, how can you control your senses and the mind to recognise Reality? To some extent, you can control by knowing the culmination of the paths of shreyas and preyas.
2. Just by living a regulated life (by controlling the mind and senses) you cannot recognise the Self.

Then, what is the way out? You need to recognise the Reality. Without recognising the Reality, a completely restrained/regulated life is not possible.

So, how do you recognise Reality?

Manthra 3 (Yena rupam rasam...)

This Mantra gives an excellent portal through which you can recognise your real nature.

Portal: Experiences of the world through forms, taste, smell, sound and touch sensations is pointing to the Reality in you. That Reality is Consciousness.

Yethenaiva Vijanaathi:

The only purpose of the world is to make you recognise your real nature. The world is created only to make you realise your real nature to be Consciousness. Through the Self which is Conscious by nature and which is distinct from the body we are conscious of sound, form, taste, smell and touch.

Kimathra parisishyathe: What remains in the world which is not known (unknowable) by the Self?

There is nothing.

- The world or the worldly transactions are not an obstruction for this knowledge. They are an obstruction to some level until you maintain a virtuous life (following values, restraining senses, choosing good company, etc...). For the ones who are leading a virtuous life, they act as facilitators to identify the Reality within them.
- In essence, nobody is an obstruction to anybody. How? You are using them as a portal to recognise or strengthen the recognition of your real nature.
- The whole world is there to awaken you from your ignorant mode. Whether an incident is pleasant or unpleasant, you are knowing it. Then, you have the freedom to recognise the real

knower in you. The only thing that is knowing is the Consciousness within you. Do not imagine that you are an inert mass of flesh. Realise that you are Consciousness.

- From the time you wake up until you go to sleep, you cannot avoid experiences. All the experiences are pointing to your real nature which is Consciousness.
- For whatever you are experiencing now (hearing, seeing, etc..) who is the knower? It is the Consciousness within you.

What is the experience that differentiates humans from animals?

- This five dimensional experience (form, taste, sound, smell and touch including the pleasurable sensations from sex) is not exceptional to humans. Even animals have it.
- The difference between them is in the capability to use the natural appreciation of these worldly experiences to recognise the Reality of the world. This is not possible for the animals.
- If you do not use these worldly experiences to recognise Reality and are mesmerized by the experience itself, then you are no different from animals.
- Even though the perception of senses (external object – retina – nerve – brain – perception of object) is explained in a fancy way, you are only saying that you are an individual having an experience of the world. Animals have the same experience. They may not be able to put it up in a way that you are explaining. But they may have an even fancier explanation in their own language.
- The only difference between humans and animals is the capability of the humans to know the real knower which is not limited to the senses or mind.

How do you tackle the external and internal disturbances that are affecting you?

- We are using all the disturbances affecting us to recognise our real nature as peace.
- Sometimes we may be disturbed by some upsets with the body. Then use the same disturbance to recognise the peace within. Who is the one that recognised the disturbance? It is not the body or the mind but the Consciousness which has recognised the disturbance.
- Now, you do whatever is needed to the body with peace as you have recognised it.
- In any moment of life, sad or joyful, first recognise the peace within and proceed whatever you want to do.

Why doesn't the whole world believe that Consciousness is the only real knower? Why was I identified with my body and mind for all these years?

If it is so simple to own up Consciousness as real nature, then why is the whole world living in this hypnotised state?

Why didn't I identify myself with Consciousness as soon as I was born? (naturally)

There are 2 reasons for this

1. Everybody feels the body mind complex is knowing that it is conscious and that which is conscious of everything around is not anything apart from the body. But in reality, the

body, mind and intellect are just objects to the consciousness just like any other external object. They are also known just like any other object. So, you cannot be them as you are witnessing them as a witnessing principle which is apart from them. You are

something other than the body, mind and intellect who is conscious of their working mechanism.

- Unlike the worldly objects, body, mind and intellect seem to be very close or intimate objects of experience. So you mistake them to be yourself. For example, when you use a contact lens it will become a part of your body. Even though it is an object, you feel that it is a part of you as it is so close to you.
- In the same way the body, mind and intellect are just like the contact lens which seem to be very intimate to the Consciousness. We identify with them as our real nature and forsake the Consciousness. You seem to be so close to the body, mind and intellect compared to other external objects and so you take identity with them. Unless you are introduced to Consciousness you are carried away with these three things initially and later with the external objects. Because of their proximity they cover up the Consciousness completely and take up the ownership as the Reality.

2. Anyonya Adhyaas=Mutual superimposition.

- You are conscious and you exist. There will be no change in the Consciousness and Existence with respect to time. For those who have experienced this, it is the Reality. But those who are not introduced to their real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence, assume their identity to be the body as it is existing and it is conscious. They are not conscious of the absolute Consciousness and absolute Existence. That which is giving Consciousness and Existence to the body and mind is left out completely and that which is imparting Existence to the entire Universe is denied. What a paradox it is! Those which are inert by nature and which appear to be conscious by the presence of Consciousness are given reality and said to be existing and conscious by themselves. And at the same time you assume non existence of the absolute conscious existence. ("I do not know about it as it does not exist"). This is called mutual superimposition.
- We conveniently forget that which is real and that which is unreal is taken to be real. Those which do not have Consciousness and Existence of their own (body, mind and intellect) are assumed to be conscious independently and exist independently. We seem to be ignorant about that which is imparting Consciousness and Existence to them.
- This can be understood with an example. An iron ball is heated on coal which is burning. An active fire cannot be seen from the coal which is heating the iron ball. After a while the iron ball looks blazing red. The truth here is the light and heat belongs to the coal. But we feel the iron ball has the light and heat of its own.

Though we are naturally Conscious Existence, because of this mutual superimposition, we seem to be ignorant about our real nature to be Conscious Existence. So, through knowledge we have to be introduced to our real nature.

In this way this mantra is helping us to establish our real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence. This is the state of Vishnu which Nachiketa is aiming for.

Being conscious of the world around you is an excellent portal to own up your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence.

You are conscious of the world so you are Consciousness. As this Consciousness is existing, it is Conscious Existence. As Conscious Existence, it is Infinite. So, it is Infinite Conscious Existence. There is nothing higher beyond this.

Homework:

1. Meditation:

- When you sit for yourself, you are hearing the sounds in the world. You are conscious of that sound so you are not that sound. Whatever you are conscious of, you are not that.
- You can feel the sensations within the body because you are conscious of the body. So, you are not the body.
- So many thoughts are moving in the mind. Because you appreciate all these thoughts, you are not these thoughts or the mind.
- If what you are conscious of is not you, then who are you? You are the Consciousness and this consciousness is existing and this Conscious Existence is Infinite. You then remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Again if there is a disturbance in the outside world, body or mind, you are recognising it. By that, you are conscious of the disturbance and at the same time, you are conscious of the Consciousness because of which you are recognising the disturbance. Then, remain as Infinite Conscious Existence which is your real nature.

2. Question: Mantra 3 clearly pointed out what our real nature is. But there is still a chance to get stuck at the level of intellect and assume that to be Reality (pitfall). Mantra 4 gives you a clue by which you can avoid that pitfall. Identify what it is. If not, be conscious of that which is not able to identify.

As you are trying to comprehend your real nature, you can settle at the level of mind and assume that to be Consciousness. This is seen commonly in people who have not gone in the traditional way to acquire knowledge.

How do I know if I have imagined Consciousness at the level of mind or recognised Consciousness as such? Is there a way for self examining myself and finding out where I am in this path of knowledge?

If you are caught up at the level of mind or intellect and imagine that to be Infinite Conscious Existence, you can check it through a self questionnaire.

1. Will you get disturbed by petty (small) things in life?
2. Do you overreact to events that take place in life?
3. Do you imagine trouble and suffer?
4. Do you take a long time to gain normalcy in real troubles of life?

If your answer is yes to any one of these questions, that means you are imagining Consciousness at the level of mind and assuming that it is real knowledge.

How do we get out of this pitfall?

We should understand exactly where we are stuck to get out of this pitfall.

What does getting stuck at the level of mind and intellect mean?

For this, we must know what mind is.

- Mind is a group of thoughts. Subtly, all these thoughts are hanging to one thought which is common to all the thoughts: the 'i' thought. All thoughts are connected to 'i'. Basically, without the 'i' there are no thoughts and without the group of thoughts there is no mind. So, the mind is only this 'i' sense (ego).
- You are stuck (caught up) with an aspect of mind called ego. This 'i' is imagining that it is recognising Consciousness.

Mantra 4 (Swapnantham Jagarithantham...)

Through Mantra 3, we may either succeed in recognising that which is conscious of the waking state or we may get stuck at the level of ego. Mantra 4 is a safety measure to pull you out if you

are stuck at the level of ego. If you are not pulled out, you will remain there for the rest of your life in a grand illusion of having recognised the Self.

How do we transcend this ego?

- The clue is given in Mantra 4.

Mathva: Comprehending or recognizing that which perceives the contents of waking and dream states or which is conscious of waking and dream states.

- Upanishad says that you are conscious of both waking and dream states by the same knower. That is why you will sometimes be confused whether an event happened in dream or waking.
- The known objects and the relative knower in the waking state are different from the known objects and the relative knower in the dream state. But both of them are recognised by something which is other than two states. So, whatever that is, it should be in both the states.
- If your body and mind in the waking state are not present in the dream state, and if the dream body and dream mind are not present in the waking state, then how are you able to remember the dream after waking? Then who is having the experience of that dream? Though waking and dream states are different entities, that which is the common substratum for both the waking and dream states is the cause by which we are knowing about the dream even in the waking state. There is some element of dream which has been a witness for the dream and the same element is there in the waking also as a witness for the waking. This is the one which comments on the dream you have.

What could be that principle which is common in both the states?

- It is Consciousness because you are conscious of the dream state and you are conscious of waking state. This Conscious Existence is the substratum on which dream is taking place and later the waking is taking place.
- The one which is conscious of all the perceptions of the waking state is only conscious of all the perceptions of the dream state.

Example: Screen and images:

- On the same screen of Consciousness, the dream and waking states are happening. All the images are rendered existence because of the existence of the illumined screen (Consciousness).
- In dream, the dream body and dream objects are taking existence from the screen of Conscious Existence and they are illumined by Consciousness.
- So, there is Conscious Existence on which dream is appearing and again on the same Conscious Existence waking is appearing. The screen of Conscious Existence is common to both these states. That is why you are having a memory of a dream in the waking state because you are Conscious Existence.

How is this Conscious Existence, Infinite?

- This world looks infinite (with no end). All the galaxies found are images and for all these images to exist, there must be a substratum. If you feel that this objectivity is endless, then the substratum should naturally be endless too. That is why the Conscious Existence which is in our experience is Infinite.
- If the screen is Infinite, then, that only has to be there (as there cannot be a finite along with infinite). If we assume there is anything other than that, it has to be an image which in reality is nothing but the screen only. This means that in and through the image there is only the screen.

How can you say that ego is not imagining all this?

- We know that the same Infinite Conscious Existence is the substratum for everything, in waking and dream states too. But, the ego in the waking state has no entry into the dream state and the dream ego has no entry into the waking state. In both these states there is a common substratum which is Infinite Conscious Existence. So, there is no scope for ego which is only limited.
- So now, even if you are stuck at the level of ego, you are compelled to transcend it and comprehend this Consciousness which is not limited to either waking or dream but is there through and through both these states.

Mahaantham Vibhu Atmaanam:

Mahaantham= Great

Vibhu= All pervading

Atmaanam= Your real nature

- Your real nature (Infinite Conscious Existence) is great because it is all pervading. That is why it is there in both the states as your real nature.
- Here, we have concluded that your real nature is all pervading. So, how can the ego which is limited to your body and mind be your real nature? Your real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence. Vibhu and ego cannot exist together, as one is all pervading and one is limited. There is no scope for ego. If at all we have to give scope for it, we have to say that it exists as an image on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- In this Infinite Conscious Existence which is you, the entire waking and dream state is taking place. Once you are tired, the waking state will go away and the dream state will begin. This process repeats every day. Using these two states, we are owning up our real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence which is the substratum for both the states.
- If this is understood properly, you will feel the peace that cannot be challenged by anything in the universe.

Dheeraha Na Sochathi:

Upanishad says that those who understood this are very brave (dheeraha) and intelligent.

Why?

- They are brave to let go of this silly ego (limited) which has scope only in the waking state. The brave is one who owns up their real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence.

They are intelligent as they are able to use one-pointed and pure intellect to probe into the reality of who they really are.

Why do these intelligent people not grieve (Na Sochathi)?

- It is because they know that their reality is peace. They take their identity with the Infinite Conscious Existence and they know that everything including the grief and the causes of grief are all a fleeting phenomenon on the substratum of peace.
- If you are having grief at the level of your body, before you are overwhelmed by the grief, the knowledge of real nature will overpower you and will tell you that it is happening to the image.
- Those who recognise real nature very clearly as Infinite Conscious Existence by taking the help of both the waking and dream states will not have any grief. No matter how sorrowful they are, with the strength of knowledge, they remain unaffected.

Homework

Mantra 5 gives clues which eliminate all traces of ego completely. What are those clues and how do they help in annihilating the ego?

Points To Ponder-25

If you understand Mantra 5 well, it is over by itself wherein manana is not needed. As you hear, you will gain firm knowledge and remain as real nature forever.
(Shravana samakalena jnanam, jnanam samakalena mukthi).

Manthra-3: Upanishad gave a portal to recognise our real nature. We are recognising everything through Consciousness but not through the body and mind. So, you cannot miss your real nature.

Mantra-4: That which is conscious of waking is conscious of dream too. The waking ego has no permission in dream and the dream ego has no permission to the waking state. So, that which is common to both is nothing other than Consciousness.

By Mantras 3 and 4, we have no choice but to remain as the Infinite Self which is peace (without any grief). But, Upanishad is not satisfied. It wants to make sure whether we are stuck at the level of ego assuming it to be the Self or you really recognised the Self.

Manthra-5 (Ya imam madvadam veda...)

Manthra 5 investigates and finds out whether the illusion of ego is exposed or if it is playing a new game.

How do we detect the mischief of the manipulative ego?

If your answer is yes for any of the following questions, then that means that the ego is still thriving in you.

1. Do you have fear?
2. Is there a sense of insecurity in you?
3. Is there a feeling of lack in the background?
4. Are your activities taking place in the background of fear and discontentment?
5. Are you using your activities to escape from the discontentment within?
6. Are you getting angry?
7. Do you feel worry – when result of any action is not upto your expectation?
8. Do you feel hurt, when people have not recognised your contribution to success?

This Mantra is all the more important for those whose response is 'yes' for all or any of these questions.

Upanishad is doing a thorough analysis on our behalf. It wants us to analyse and find the cause for all these fears because without finding the causes, the effects cannot be eliminated.

Is the cause for all these fears and insecurities poverty and ill health?

No. If they are the cause for these fears, then the healthy and the rich should not have insecurity. But this is not the case. Even they have fears and insecurities.

What is the cause of suffering in the form of insecurity?

- There is only one cause. It is the ego (body-am-I notion), however subtle it is. How?
- Ego, essentially, is not a real entity but exists in our imagination due to our ignorance. This unreal nature exists only because of non-enquiry. So, it is very unstable. To maintain this non-existing entity, we exert in various ways to give it a reality being unaware that we are being deceived. Majority are under the grip of this non-existing entity.

Choice:

- If you naturally identify with Infinity, you initiate all the actions in the background of peace. If you fail to recognise real nature to be Infinity, then there is no choice but to assume your real nature to be the limited entity or ego and suffer.
- Either you remain as your real nature or remain as unreal nature (body-am-I notion).

Why do we exert to maintain the ego in ignorance?

- This is because we are afraid of the absence of ego. In the absence of ego, the Reality is all the more evident. But we fear facing Reality because we are not familiar with it.
- So, we try to engage in one activity or the other, either physically or mentally, so that the ego (body-am-I notion) is maintained. Ego needs something to thrive. It holds on to something or the other because if it is not there, the Self is there and we feel threatened by the experience of Self.
- Example: Wave is trying to maintain its identity because it knows it is only a wave (physical form). It exerts to escape from fear, insecurity and discontentment and creates a wave world, so that its ego is honoured which only increases its fear and insecurity. It fears water because it is not introduced to its real nature and tries to maintain its individuality always.

Example: A king (Self) one day feels that he is a beggar (ego), completely forgetting that he is a king. He will only try to save his identity as a beggar, even if it is only increasing his fear and insecurity. So to sustain his identity as a beggar, he finds various ways to convince himself and others that he is a beggar. Subconsciously, so many activities will be going on to maintain his false identity.

- Just as the beggar retains all the possible ways to maintain the beggarliness in spite of being a king, we too may subconsciously take part in many activities to maintain this ego. It is happening subconsciously because it has become a habit of many lifetimes.
- Due to ignorance, the Self is veiled and we come under the grip of ego. We subconsciously initiate activities to save ego from being exposed.

Vijugupsate: Effort to save the assumed Self (ego) from extinction.

What is the solution to stop the efforts which are saving ego from extinction?

- You have to expose the illusion of the ego which is popping up once in a while and inducing in us a feeling of fear, insecurity and sense of lack. You have to know its non-existence through enquiry. You will only experience the effects of the ego in the form of fears, insecurities, etc...

How can you expose its illusion when you are already in its grip?

- First you need to understand where the ego is gaining strength to sustain itself.
- It is getting strength from three concepts:
 1. It feels that it has a continuous existence.
 2. It feels that it has an independent existence.
 3. It feels that it is the enjoyer of the fruits of its actions.
- These three concepts are enabling it to survive.
- To eliminate this ego once and for all, you have to expose the illusion of all these three concepts. Through this, you drain out its strength to sustain. Then, there is no chance for the ego to survive.

1. Continuous existence:

- With time, ego feels that it has a continuous existence. But in reality, it does not have continuity in time.
- Every moment, it survives based on the situation or fluctuations of the mind. But it still assumes that it is there continuously with time.
- Even though the body and mind is continuously changing, the ego still feels that it is a continuous entity. Why? There is nothing like a single ego. Every moment it appears and disappears. But because it happens at such a rapid pace, we feel that it is a single entity. But the whole continuity is derived from the Reality.
- Why does the ego feel that it has continuity with time? It is because of the substratum which is beyond time. Reality alone is continuous. But the ego takes the credit of the Reality and assumes itself to be continuous.
- The screen only is continuous but the image is not. The image feels that it is continuous because of the existence of the screen.

Ishano bhutha bhavyasya: The Reality is like the lord of the past and the future. It is there beyond the limitations of time.

2. Independent existence:

- It does not have independent existence as its existence is based on the absolute existence which imparts existence to everything (both animate and inanimate).
- All the objects around you are existing because you are conscious of them. Similarly, you are also existing just like any other object which is nothing great. Just like how every image shares the same screen, every object is sharing the same existence and no object owns that existence.

- In the same way, the ego also does not have an existence of its own. It is only sharing the absolute existence of Reality. By this, we know that it has no independent existence.

3. It feels that it is the enjoyer of the fruits of its actions

- If the ego does not have an independent existence and has no continuity in time, then how can it be the enjoyer of the fruits of actions?
- Assuming that you (ego) are the enjoyer strengthens a false notion. The ego is not the subject of all actions that are being done.
- The Self, which alone is there in deep sleep, appears as dream and waking states. So, the Self is the only reality which is evident through and through all the states.
For example, in a dream, you planted a seed, it became a tree and you ate the fruit that it yielded. Due to that, you gained weight. Here, the Self is appearing as the fruit, the Self is appearing as the one who ate the fruit and the Self only is appearing as the one who gained weight. This is because the only reality that is there is the Self. You may feel that you (ego) are the one who is doing all these actions but it is not true.
- The whole cause and effect phenomenon is negated from the Reality standpoint.

If you feel that you have a continuous existence with time and an independent existence, if you feel that you are the enjoyer of fruits of actions, then you are caught up with the ego and cannot be free of insecurities. But, if you know well that these concepts are false, then, the Self will only be there appearing as everything.

Then, should we not do anything?

- You can lead your life and do everything as a spontaneous appearance of Reality.
- You are not there as an individual entity to do anything. Everything is happening spontaneously in you as Reality itself which is Infinity. This can be understood easily with reference to deep sleep experience.

What is there in deep sleep?

- There is nothing other than Self. So, Self alone is appearing as everything in dream.
- Waking is nothing but a long dream. Whatever is happening in the waking state is only an appearance of Self.
- The Self in deep sleep is appearing as every object or personality in dream and waking states. These objects do not have a continuous existence or an existence of their own. You are not the enjoyer of fruits of action. Self is appearing as however it wants to in all the events.

As long as you feel that you are the individual, you will have fear, insecurities and discontentment. Once you understand that everything is happening spontaneously in you as Reality itself which is Infinite (not limited by place, time and objects), these limitations will vanish. You will no longer make a subconscious effort to save the fleeting individuality. This is because you own up your real nature as Infinity where there is no scope for individuality to arise. The illusion of the ego is exposed. There is a shift in identity from individuality to Infinity. So, you will lead your life with fearlessness and contentment.

Homework:

Do manana on Mantras 3, 4 and 5 and share your recognition.

Mantra 5 Revisited

This Mantra will help us to spontaneously handle everything in the light of Consciousness. All these fears will never surface up. Even if they surface up, they only do so to face their natural extinction. So, all of us should be aiming at that level with this Mantra 5.

The whole humanity is under the clutches of the pseudo personality called ego under which we were also included for a long part of our life.

If it is a common problem for the whole of humanity, why should I worry about it?

- We are worried about the mischief this pseudo personality is creating in the form of feelings like greed, jealousy, desires, etc... due to which we suffer.
- Upanishad is telling that there is a way of living peacefully without being bothered by these negativities or other forms of suffering.
- If there is a way to transcend suffering and own up peace, then why don't we put a little effort to own it up?

Through Mantra 5, I have understood that there is no valid reason for suffering as I am the absolute Consciousness. But still, why are these popping up once in a while?

- They are popping up as you subtly still feel that there is scope for them to exist.
- On one hand, you know that because of knowledge there is no scope for suffering, but on the other hand, you cannot deny your experience of suffering. Then what should you do?
- You have to clearly prove that there is no valid reason for the sufferings to exist. This is achieved through Mantra 5.

How can you say that there is no valid reason for suffering?

- The cause of suffering is assuming yourself to be individuality (ego). This is true to some extent. But, what is the cause of ego? It is due to the conditioning which is due to the ignorance of our real nature. So, finally the cause of suffering is the ignorance of our real nature.
- From the real nature standpoint, which is the only valid standpoint, is there ignorance? No. When there is no ignorance, how can there be effects of ignorance in the form of body-am-I notion (ego)? When there is no ego, how can there be suffering?

I know that there is no ego and that my real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence. But still, why do I feel overwhelmed by fear occasionally?

- You have access to true peace and will be pained when that peace is disturbed by the past tendencies of the ego. Then, you will immediately recognise a feeling of lack, fear, insecurity, etc...
- Recognising that all these fears are lurking in you is itself half victory. So, you can initiate efforts to eliminate them.

What should I do to get rid of them (fears) permanently?

- Whenever they surface, know that they are the result of ego.
- For all those who have access to this knowledge, the ego either goes into hibernation and surfaces up from time to time, or gets destroyed.

Why did the ego go into hibernation?

- It is because it cannot tolerate knowledge which is an adverse climate for ego to thrive. It thrives in ignorance and gets destroyed with knowledge.

Why did ego not get annihilated in me and is instead surfacing up in the form of fears?

- You have done enquiry about the non existence of ego, but it is not sufficient. So, the ego is sometimes popping up in the form of fears.
- There are three scenarios which can happen while enquiring about Reality (during satsangs).
 1. There is no change in the ego even while attending the satsangs.
 2. Ego goes into hibernation and surfaces from time to time.
 3. Ego ceases permanently.

What determines these three scenarios for each one of us?

- The listeners' capability to imbibe this knowledge. If the listener is not qualified for knowledge at all, then there is no change in the ego. They are fully possessed by the ego.
- If the listener is partially qualified, he feels peace but tends to get disturbed.
- If the listener is fully qualified, he remains as peace wherein the ego is completely annihilated. They have values, regard for selfless service, observed the world and made a sincere resolve and made earnest efforts to get out of suffering.
- But the truth is that the majority will go through all these three scenarios. None can directly go to the third scenario though it seems to be good.

What should be done to get rid of this false individuality permanently?

- Whenever you experience fear, insecurity or anything that disturbs your peace you must try to find the experiencer in all of them. Who is the one that is experiencing the fear and insecurity? Who do you think will be the experiencer?
- Obviously, the experiencer cannot be the Self because in Self, the fears cannot exist as Self is synonymous with peace. Self cannot experience absence of peace just like how the sun cannot experience darkness.

Then who is the experiencer?

- It is the ego (pseudo-i) which is lurking inside and experiencing the fear and insecurity. It is the one which enjoys all those things which are troubling us. Whatever you do not like, is experienced by the pseudo-i which thrives happily on all these fears and enjoys the misery.
- We need to expose the illusion of this pseudo-i.

How do we expose the illusion of the pseudo-i?

- For the ego to be the experiencer, it should have independent existence. Without independent existence, it cannot be the experiencer. To have independent existence, it should have a continuity in time. This means that it should exist without change all the time and in all the states. As this is not the case, hence its illusion is exposed.

Why are we having a feeling of its presence without it actually being present?

- Ego doesn't exist in reality, as it has no continuity with time. It is taking the support of that which exists in all the three states which is Infinite Conscious Existence and gives us an impression of its presence.
- Infinite Conscious Existence is there in all the states and in the past, present and future too. It is the substratum for time. Even time exists and it is known because of the Infinite Conscious Existence.

Though ego is a non entity, it is there in our experience. How is it possible?

- As we analyse, we found out that ego is there depending on two things simultaneously.
 1. The Conscious Existence aspect of Reality: If you know that ego is there, it means that it is taking the Conscious aspect of Reality. It is existing by taking the Existence aspect of Reality and establishes its sovereignty.
 2. It depends on the body and mind apparatus: The body-am-I notion is the ego. It takes advantage of the "I am" aspect of the body.
- So the ego takes some aspects of Conscious Existence and some aspects of the body and mind and shapes itself as an entity called ego. But basically it is a non entity.
- Even though it does not have a personality of its own, it uses our assets to come into being.

Ego is the one which tells you that you do not have peace and that you need to pursue some desires which give happiness. All these are not commented by the body or the Self but by this pseudo-i. Everything will be done but there will still be discontentment because the pseudo-i is ruling us.

Is the ego the experiencer of various experiences?

We already know that it does not have an independent existence. So, it cannot be the experiencer. It is only appearing to be the experiencer because of our inadvertence. If chance is given for the ego to be the experiencer, it will perpetuate and make sure to ruin your life. Here, it is not that the ego is there and is not given a chance. By enquiry the ego is never there. So, we have negated that which we assumed was the experiencer our entire life. Then, who is the experiencer? There is no experiencer. There are only experiences.

I have experiences right from the time I am awake. Then, how can there be experiences without an experiencer?

- With enquiry it will be clear that there is no experiencer. From Reality standpoint there is no experiencer but only experiences. All experiences are happening like the images on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence which is your real nature.

- In deep sleep, you remain as Infinite Conscious Existence. The experience of dream is taking place which we are not negating. There is an apparent experiencer (dream ego) but he doesn't know about deep sleep. The dream and deep sleep states are given to be applied in the waking state.
- Just like how the dream is taking place on the screen of deep sleep, the experience of waking is also taking place on the screen of our real nature (Infinite Conscious Existence). So, there is no experiencer but only experiences.
- All the events of life are taking place in the background of peace. There is no separate experiencer at all.
- The most difficult thing to get rid of is the sense of experiencer and the sense of doership. We may think that we are doing the activities. But in reality, we are doing nothing but remaining as the screen. If this is clearly understood, then there is no experiencer but only experiences. Actions will be done without a doer.

By this, will all the fears and insecurities vanish?

- Whenever they appear, logically expose that there is no real experiencer. So, if at all they appear, they appear on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence and immediately leave. This is because you negated that which these fears hold on to (the experiencer). Slowly, they will not appear at all.
- Finally, you remain as peace itself.

Homework

Start living without an experiencer or a doer. Allow everything to take place on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence or peace. In case an experiencer shows up, do enquiry in these lines and prove to yourself that there is no scope for an experiencer.

Points to Ponder- 26

How can you live peacefully?

You can live peacefully only if you recognise your essential identity with peace itself. You will be disturbed only if you get caught up with the pseudo entity called ego.

Why am I caught up with the pseudo entity and suffering?

It is because you assume it to be real and in turn miss the Reality. Because you did not recognise Reality you assume the pseudo entity to be real. So what should be done? Just expose the illusion of the pseudo entity.

Till now, we assumed that the ' body-am-I ' identity is the experiencer. But that which does not have an independent and continuous existence cannot be an experiencer. So, who is the experiencer?

- We cannot negate all the experiences we have on a daily basis. So there must be an experiencer.
- Here, the only experiencer is the Self and not the limited ' i '. The concept of introducing Self as the experiencer is done so as to facilitate the seeker of peace to get out of the clutches of ' body-am-I ' identity. This is why the Self is said to be an experiencer. But this has its own limitations.

What are the limitations of accepting Self as the experiencer?

- If you accept Self as the experiencer, you are reducing the Infinite Self to the finite self. How?
- Every experience involves a subject (experiencer), object (what is being experienced) and an experience (process/act of experience). Example: Eater=subject, that which is eaten=object, the process of eating=experience. This triad is called triputi. It is valid for all daily transactions of individuals. But, when it comes to the Self, experiences consisting of the triad is not possible as the Self is infinite (it is not limited by space, time or objects). In Infinity, which is non-dual, there is no scope for duality consisting of subject-object relation. Hence, in the absence of subject-object relation, there is no scope for Self to be an experiencer. There is nothing other than Self from the Self standpoint. So, where is there a scope for experiencer? When there is nothing other than Self, how can there be an experience?
- There is nothing wrong in accepting Self as the experiencer. Thinking that you as the Self is the experiencer will help initially to dissociate from the reality you have given to your individuality. But this is not complete by itself.
- If you accept Self as the experiencer, you take a risk of missing the Infinite true Self and in turn give scope for the ego to assume itself as an eternal and infinite experiencer. There is a high risk of glorifying the ego as the infinite Self.

How will this recognition of not accepting Self as the experiencer help you in the enquiry?

- For anyone, the problem is not the experience. It is the experiencer who creates a lot of imagination about various experiences that includes disease and death too. This is the cause of all anxiety.

- So, we are negating the experiencer completely. It is neither the individual nor the Self. Let the experience happen on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence. You don't take the role of an experiencer and suffer.
- Example: In dream, there is an apparent experiencer, experienced objects and the experience of the dream. When you wake up, you realize that neither the experiencer, nor the experienced objects are real. But the experience of the dream is there. Where did this experience take place? The whole experience of dream appeared and disappeared in Infinite Conscious Existence (deep sleep).

Similarly, waking is only an extension of dream.

All objects are appearing giving us an experience as though the experience is real, and are finally going away. Just like how the dream is appearing on the screen of Infinite Conscious Existence and going away, all the experiences of the waking are appearing and disappearing on the same screen

Whatever has happened till yesterday, experience is only in the memory – like in the dream.

- So, the Self is not the experiencer. It is the substratum for all these experiences to take place.
- Just as Self appears as all the experiences, it is also appearing as the experience of disease and death. After death, the body dies but you remain as the Self which is the deathless and birthless principle.

Homework

Allow all the experiences to take place without an experiencer. Let all activities unfold without taking ownership of them.

If you analyze and enquire, the individuality is not a reality as it does not exist in time, doesn't have an independent existence and is not eligible to be the experiencer. So, Manthras 3, 4 and 5 are negating the individuality. Now, if you have understood the illusion of the individuality then you should be able to do all activities without the individuality.

How can you do an activity without a doer (eat, eater)?

- Without an eater, how can you eat? Basically, we are assuming that the doer is the body-am-I. But, if there is no Consciousness, even the body cannot eat which means that the activity of eating is just taking place on the screen of Infinite Consciousness.

There is a shift in identity from the 'body-am-I' notion to Consciousness. So, the whole activity of eating is done in the light of Consciousness. But we assume that we (as the body and mind) are the one that is eating which is untrue.

- So, without taking ownership, we can still do activities. The one who is taking ownership is doing so because one has not explored into its reality.
- The images on the screen may feel that they are the individual. But, they are only appearances of the screen. Similarly, we are only appearing to do things. Everything is happening only because of that Infinite Conscious Existence.

Now, who is doing these actions?

- On the screen of Self, all the actions are going on.

Culmination of knowledge: You are living without an individuality.

Choice:

- You have a choice to live as a peaceful enlightened being or as a depressed ignorant being.
- If you want to go on the path of peace, you need to recognise the peace that is always there within you as your very real nature. After listening to all these discussions, this should not be difficult as we have already exposed the illusion of the individuality. What remains is Infinity, which comes to our experience. In its light, all experiences take place.

Real Puja:

- Real puja will happen when there is no doer of puja as an entity different from God. Then, only God will be there. Otherwise, we are only pretending to do puja while limiting God to a name and form. As long as the devotee is there as a principle apart from God, you are denying the infinite nature of God. Then to whom are you praying to? To an imagination of your own mind.

True meditation:

- True meditation is when there is no meditator (individual who is meditating). Then, meditation happens.

Mantra 6 and 7
(Yah purvam tapaso...
Ya pranena sambavathy....)

We will comprehend these mantras to suit our present cultural settings and the present context of where we are. Without compromising the essential aspect of these mantras, let us use them to strengthen our knowledge.

What is 'Hiranya Gharba'?

- The one who is first born from brahma (Infinite Conscious Existence) is Hiranya Gharba. This in turn manifests as the five elements: earth, water, air, fire and space. It only

created the body, senses, sense objects, Gods, etc... The intention of this Mantra is for the man of knowledge to see Hiranya Gharba as brahman only.

- We will take Hiranya Gharba as the 'first born'. What is 'first born' in our experience? Here, 'first born' does not mean you coming out of your mother's womb. Waking up from deep sleep, which is like death (absence of manifestation), is called birth. So, everyday, you have birth and death. When you wake up from deep sleep, the first

thing that you experience is the 'first born'. What is that? It is the aham (ego). How?

You can find this by doing enquiry in the following lines:

- As you wake up from sleep, sit back again and try to find out what the first thing that came to your experience was. Then, you will realize that that which first comes to your experience is the feeling of 'I am'. Why? Without this, the world is of no meaning to you. All other things are connected to this feeling (I am going to school, I need to brush my teeth, etc...). With this notion, your entire world will open up to you. Try to catch this body-am-I notion when you wake up.
- This body-am I notion will come before the body and mind itself as soon as you wake up, even if they look inseparable. How can this body-am-I notion come before the body and mind? It is due to samskaram (tendencies accumulated from previous births). Because you have an impression in you that you are the body and mind from various births, you will automatically have a body-am-I notion. So, the body-am-I notion comes first and as this notion gets operational, it will bring in the body and mind. Therefore, the one that is the cause for the birth of your body and mind and the whole world is this notion.

Experience of the world when we are dominated by the ego:

- Due to this ego/ aham (body-am-I notion) we associate with this body as *myself* and everything other than this body we call it as *other*. So, we confine ourselves to this limited individuality and try to seek happiness in the objects around. For the most part, we are dominated by fear, sense of lack, insecurity, etc...There are some moments of happiness when we achieve our goals. This fleeting happiness is the fuel to carry our depressed life forward as we do not know about the real happiness.

Homework:

Day 1

When you wake up, the first thing you will experience is the feeling of "I am this body". Identify the ego that comes to your experience when the eyes are still closed. Recognise this feeling throughout the activities of the day. So, the whole day is under the influence of ego.

Day 2

The next day, when you wake up from deep sleep do not allow the same ego to possess you. Negate the ego (body-am-I). Recognise the Self only. Just like how there is no doer in deep sleep try to remain without a doer in waking too. Allow all the activities to happen in the background of peace without an experiencer.

Points To Ponder-27

Brief summary:

Mantra 3: Recognised our real nature to be Consciousness.

Mantra 4: This Mantra is assuring that it is not the ego which is recognising Consciousness. The upanishad wants to make sure that we are owning up real nature not with the ego which is appearing as Consciousness, but with the Infinite Consciousness itself.

Mantra 5: If you still have fear, insecurity and sense of lack, it means that the ego is lurking in you. So, this Mantra has given us three pointers to expose the illusion of ego.

They are: the ego does not have a continuous existence with time, it has no independent existence and it is not the enjoyer of the fruit of actions.

Mantra 6 and 7: If you are successful in locating the ego and its absence, you can negate the ego by taking support of deep sleep.

Mantra 6 and 7 continued

These Mantras are saying that those who see Hiranya Gharba see Brahman only.

Hiranya Gharba is described as residing in the heart of all beings. It is there as the five elements, senses and all the Gods. We have taken Hiranya Gharba with reference to ego (body-am-I notion).

How do we reconcile these two Mantras by taking ego as Hiranya Gharba?

Hiranya Gharba is first born. Here, we took the first born as ego. It finds place as Reality in the hearts of all beings (all beings are completely under its control). Even we were completely possessed by the ego until we started enquiry.

What would be the impact of taking Hiranya Gharba to be ego?

For the ignorant, this body-am-I notion (ego) has been deep rooted in them such that they cannot even imagine their existence without it. They perceive the entire world, including the Gods, through the lens of body-am-I notion. As a result they undergo immense suffering.

What is this suffering?

The suffering due to the body-am-I notion manifests as desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy, fears, insecurity, sense of lack, etc.. If you do not enquire into this illusion of body-am-I notion, you have no choice but to suffer.

What is the relation between the body-am-I notion and suffering?

- If you remain ignorant or if you are possessed by the body-am-I notion you will have suffering.
- The ego will lead to narrow mindedness (myopic mentality). Then this aham and mama (me and mine) tendency is strengthened and along with that, the notion that the rest of the people are different from you is also strengthened.

Due to this notion being prevalent in you, you go through immense suffering.

- Strain in relationships, wars, religious persecution, caste rivalry, etc... are all due to the collective notion of ego.

How do we get out of this suffering?

To know that you are suffering is half victory. Now, identify the cause of suffering which is ego. Then, enquire and expose the illusion of the ego. Along with it, the suffering will cease.

How can we expose the illusion of the body-am-I notion?

- What is this ego? It is only an illusory appearance that exists as reality in a non-enquired mind.
- We have seen in Mantra 6 that you are conscious of that ego. This means that you are different from that ego, as what you are conscious of, is not you. You are the Consciousness. If you further enquire into the nature of the Consciousness in Mantra 7, you found that it is Infinite Consciousness because it is transcending even waking state because it is also there in dream and deep sleep. So, you are Consciousness and along with it comes Infinity and Existence.
- As soon as you are conscious of the ego, it is gone, as its illusion is exposed. Then, there is a shift in identity from ego to Consciousness itself.
- So, own up your identity as Infinite Conscious Existence.

What is the result of this enquiry?

- For those who are successful in the enquiry, their vision of the world will be through the lens of Infinite Reality. Wherever their eyes fall, they see Reality alone. Everything is a manifestation of Reality. Their identity is no longer with the ego. It is with the Infinite Conscious Existence itself.
- You have a choice to be identified with this silly ego which does not have an existence of its own or to derive your identity directly from Infinity. If you do not exercise the choice in a constructive way, you will make your life miserable. But if you do it otherwise, you will make your life a festival.

Does this mean that you cannot appreciate duality at all? Will you see blankness wherever your eyes fall?

- Just because you gained knowledge, this whole world will not disappear. There is no change in the physical realm. You will hear, taste, smell, see and feel exactly the same as before. Then, what is the difference?
- The difference is that you know that the seeming phenomenon that is unfolding is unfolding - in the background of peace with which you have your identity. All experiences will take place without an experiencer.
- Everything is a manifestation of Reality itself. Everything in the dream (dream experiencer, experienced objects, experience of dream, etc..) are manifestations of what is there in deep sleep which is Reality (Infinite Conscious Existence).
- In this way there is no scope for the ego to arise. Why? It has been sublated in the light of knowledge. If it seems to arise, even then it is just an appearance of Reality itself.
- Example: Water alone appears as wave. What is there in water? H₂O is there.

The same H₂O is there in wave. Can carbon dioxide sneak into the H₂O of wave?
No. Why? Because it is not there in the H₂O of water.

Summary of Mantras 6 and 7:

A man of knowledge will only see Brahman in the first born (Hiranya Gharba). Because of this knowledge, you will see Brahman only and nothing other than Brahman (Infinite Conscious Existence) everywhere. If at all you say that there is ego for functional activity, you know that it is only an appearance of the Infinite Conscious Existence. You can also say that the ego has been sublated in the light of knowledge.

Mantra 9 (Yatha Schodhethi Suryo...)

Yatha Schodhethi Suryo

The sun arises, stays and again sets as the manifestation of Brahman. Infinite Conscious Existence alone is appearing as the rising of the sun and the setting of the

sun. Here, the sun is taken as an example. From this, we have to understand that the entire manifestation, including all the Gods, are a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Existence.

Then what are all these objects? They are just names given for the purpose of transaction. From the Reality standpoint, there is nothing other than Reality. So, the names and forms which we see are only manifestations of Reality. There is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence.

Na Athyethi Kaschana

There is nothing in the manifestation that can transcend Reality. This means that there is nothing that can remain apart from the Reality. The entire manifestation, from a blade of grass to the Gods that you worship, are all equally the manifestations of Reality.

Example: However beautiful ornaments you make out of gold, the ornaments are not apart from gold. Whether it is beautiful or not, in essence, it is only gold. The ornaments cannot transcend the gold. They cannot be anything apart from the gold.

What is the importance of God?

- They will facilitate you to recognise the Reality. So, even though they are also a manifestation, their manifestation has a unique place because if you approach them selflessly, you will be facilitated to recognise the Reality.

Mantra 8 (Aranyornihitho Jaathaveda...)

What is Yagnam?

- It is a sacrificial fire.
- It is produced by churning a wooden stick on a grooved wooden surface covered with dry grass. This creates friction from which fire is produced. This fire is used for sacrificial offerings.
- This Mantra is saying that when you create a fire with great effort, you will try to protect it. Who will protect that fire? Those who are ritualistic will protect it.
- Fire is prayed by everybody as God itself. Why? Without fire can you imagine life? No, as you cannot even cook food without fire.
- In vedic times, fire is also used as a medium through which oblations are offered. Based on your desires and wishes, those oblations will reach the appropriate God and you will get the results of it.
- This fire is protected just as the foetus is protected by a pregnant woman. Just as how the pregnant mother will be very cautious and go to any extent to protect the foetus by sacrificing their own likes and dislikes, the ritualistic people will be very vigilant and protect the fire. The yogis (meditators) will also protect the fire within them. They will do meditation on the fire principle within them.

Why do Yogis protect the fire?

- They do so because they consider the fire as God himself and use the fire as a medium to communicate with God. So, they are very vigilant and protect the fire.

What are we going to derive out of this Mantra?

- Fire God, just like all other Gods, is none other than Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Some people see God in fire. But if you have this knowledge by exposing the illusion of the ego, not only fire, you will see everything as the manifestation of the Reality itself.
- Another way of interpreting it is: Fire means form. Out of the five elements, the aspect of form will start from the element of fire. You can see fire but you cannot see space or air. So, the entire manifestation which has form is represented by fire. So, all forms are known to be Brahman or Infinite Conscious Existence. This is the implied meaning of Mantra 8.
- Those who are successful in knowing the illusion of ego and derive identity with Infinite Conscious Existence will know that there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence.

Homework

Is there anything in your experience other than the Infinite Conscious Existence? Take deep sleep support if needed.

In the next Mantra, the Upanishad is helping us to clearly understand the non-dual nature. It is warning us about the consequences of not comprehending the ultimate truth.

Mantra- 10 (Yedeveha thadamuthra yadamudra...)

“What is here is there and what is there is here”. This is what the upanishad is saying in this Mantra.

What does 'here' and 'there' imply?

- 'Here' refers to the manifest Reality and 'there' refers to the unmanifest Reality. So, the unmanifest Reality (Infinite Conscious Existence) alone is there as the manifest Reality and the manifest Reality alone is there as the unmanifest Reality.
- The unmanifest Reality (Infinite Conscious Existence) alone is there as the entire manifestation.

What does the entire manifestation comprise of?

- Everything that is objective and that you know, i.e, the entire universe which includes your body comprises the entire manifestation. This includes your internal faculty too (mind, intellect, ego, memory, etc...). Even God is included in this objective manifestation.

To say that both the manifest and unmanifest Reality are the same, we must have direct experience of both. We only have experience of the objective manifestation because it is perceived by the senses. But, how do we know the unmanifest Reality, if we don't have knowledge about it or if we have not experienced it? Then, how can you say that the unmanifest Reality alone is there as the manifest Reality unless you have a direct experience of unmanifest Reality?

- We all have experience of unmanifest Infinite Conscious Existence as our very real nature. How? In deep sleep, we all uniformly remain as Infinite Conscious Existence. Everyday, the entire humanity enters into this glorious state of deep sleep. It is glorious as you remain there as Infinite Conscious Existence. Because you remain there as Infinity, you are addicted to that state.
- Though we all remain as Infinite Conscious Existence in deep sleep, only those who enquire about how they were in deep sleep (after waking up) will comprehend their real nature as Infinity itself.

How can you say that you remained as Infinite Conscious Existence in deep sleep?

- When you are asked to comment on deep sleep after you wake up, you say that you were aware of nothing because there is no manifestation there. So, you are aware of the unmanifest world.
- Then, you need to exist to be aware. So, you existed there not knowing anything.
- This Existence not knowing nothing is called peace. Why? It is because it is limitless. Even in waking state, when your desires are fulfilled, you experience this state of Infinity for a moment and call it happiness. In the same way, in deep sleep, you existed not knowing anything and you are calling that peace because it is devoid of limitations (it is Infinite).
- You were aware of "nothing". So, Consciousness is there. You existed there and slept well. So, Existence is there. If at all you say that you were happy in deep sleep, then that means that Infinity is there, which is you (your real nature).
- By this, we know this unmanifest Reality through our daily experience of deep sleep.

How can this unmanifest Reality alone manifest in the waking state? How can this waking state be nothing other than this unmanifest Reality?

This can be seen in two ways:

1. If you enquire about this objective manifestation, you know that it is permeated by Existence and Consciousness. There is no object in your experience that doesn't have existence. There is no object in your experience that you are not conscious of. When you are conscious of an object, only then it will exist. If you are not conscious of the object, then you do not care if that object exists or not. So, every object is permeated by Conscious Existence.

- What about the Infinity aspect? The entire objectivity must be considered as a whole instead of focusing on a single object. This objectivity is limitless. So, that

which is the substratum for it (Infinity) should also be limitless. Hence, the entire objectivity has Infinity as its substratum and is permeated by Conscious Existence. But, we are used to being carried away by the object and miss the Infinite Conscious Existence aspect of it.

2. In deep sleep, the Reality does not have a manifestation. In waking the Reality alone is manifesting as various forms for which we have given names. But you are caught up with these names to such an extent that you forget the Reality of the manifestation.

- In deep sleep, we don't have an affinity or repulsion to any object as there are no objects in deep sleep. So, it is very easy to recognise Infinite Conscious Existence there. But as soon as you wake up, you have an affinity for your body and feel some as your people and others as different. Because of this, you will lose your clarity and in turn might miss the Infinite Conscious Existence aspect of the objectivity as a whole.
- Also, you have fixed notions about Reality in waking state and miss Reality.

Just as the reality of a caterpillar alone is there as the reality of the butterfly, the Reality of deep sleep appears as the Reality of the waking state. That which is there in deep sleep without a manifestation is there in waking as the entire manifestation. So, the Mantra is saying that what is there is here and what is here is there. In deep sleep if there is Infinite Conscious Existence, that alone is there in waking too.

The same concept is being expressed in the following shanti mantra and the Kaali-Shiva example.

Meaning of the shanti mantra Purnamadah Purnamidam (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad based)

Om Puurnnam-Adah Puurnnam-Idam

That is Infinity, this is Infinity

Puurnnaat-Purnnam-Udacyate

From Infinity alone Infinity has manifested

Puurnnasya Puurnnam-Aadaaya

If you comprehend the infinite nature of that Infinity

Puurnnam-Eva-Avashissyate

That Infinity alone will remain

Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

Why is Infinity (purnam) alone used in this mantra?

- Infinity comes along with Conscious Existence. But, there is a chance for Conscious Existence to be imagined whereas Infinity cannot be imagined. In Infinity there is no scope for finite. There is no scope for you to sit apart from Infinity and imagine it because Infinity will deny everything including individuality. So, only Infinity was used in this mantra.
- Infinite Conscious Existence is not just a word. It is a subjective experience. It is already there. You only need to discover it and own it up as a subjective experience. As a result of its doubtless comprehension the entire objectivity will remain sublated meaning that they will lose their reality as name and form.

Kali and Shiva interpretation

- Kaali (kaala) represents the realm of time which means the entire objectivity.
- Shiva (mahakaala) represents a principle beyond time which means the substratum of time.
- Shiva alone is there as Kaali. The timeless principle alone is manifesting as time.
- Kaali is the waking state and Shiva is like the deep sleep state. Life is full of dual experiences like pleasure, grief, gains, losses, etc.. This is represented by Kaali. If you visualise the form of Kaali, on one side, she is blessing you and on the other side, she has a sword with a decapitated head. This symbolically represents the entire creation. Shiva alone is appearing as Kaali. This means that the Reality of deep sleep alone is there as the Reality of the entire waking state.
- The one who has knowledge of Reality will be relaxed like Shiva. He knows fully well that in and through this entire manifestation there is nothing other than his Reality which is appearing as everything. Shiva essentially knows that he alone is manifesting as this entire objectivity, so he will remain relaxed. Similarly, he who attained knowledge will stay relaxed even while witnessing dynamic experiences of life.

What is the use of this comprehension?

You will have peace as the background and you will derive your identity from peace itself.

Consequences of not comprehending this truth:

- Those who do not comprehend the Reality of objectivity and are carried away assuming the dualistic world is real as name and form, will go from death to death.

What is the meaning of going from death to death?

1. Avidya-kama-karma

- Because of ignorance you feel you are ignorant about your real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence which is peace. Then, because you do not have peace, you think that you can attain it by fulfilling your desires. So, you will chase your desires.
- So, because you are ignorant about your real nature as happiness, you try to gain happiness by fulfilling desires through objects and for that you exert. In the end, in the process of trying to get happiness, death approaches. Once you die, your unfulfilled desires will give you one more birth and if you do not recognise your real nature again, you will repeat this cycle.
- So, the Upanishad is saying that this is the fate of those who appreciate only duality as Reality (ignorant people).

2. Not knowing Reality and assuming yourself to be body is almost like death.

- Upanishad is calling those who do not comprehend Reality as waking/walking corpses. How? Your Reality is Infinite Conscious Existence. But you are completely ignorant of this glorious fact and you assume yourself to be somebody you are not. So, from the Reality standpoint, this is like death.
- Example: In a hypothetical situation, let us say that an old woman called Mary one day forgot who she was and falsely thought herself to be Lucy, a 20-year-old woman. Then, as long as Lucy is active, Mary dies. Here, Mary symbolises our real nature (Infinite Conscious Existence) and Lucy symbolises the body-am-I notion. So, if you fail to enquire and associate yourself with the body-am-I notion, from the Reality standpoint you are dead because just like how Mary is dead from Mary standpoint. This is because you missed the most essential thing and you are assuming yourself to be something and are living your whole life based on this false notion that you are this body-am-I notion.
- So, the Upanishad is saying that you are living like a dead body if you fail to recognize reality.

Homework

1. Learn this shanti mantram along with its meaning. As, you chant, dwell on its meaning.

Points To Ponder- 28

Mantra 11 (Manasai veda...)

What is the significance of mantra 11?

- Some people may feel that the path of advaita is difficult because it is denying what is obvious, i.e., the external duality which is in their experience, and at the same time it is forcefully establishing non-duality which is not in their experience. If you have the same feeling, this mantra will help you overcome it.

Neha nanaasthi kinchana: Upanishad says that there is no trace of duality.

Upanishad may declare advaita (non-duality) but what is the use as long as I don't experience it?

Manasai veda maapthavyam: You need to know non-duality through your mind. The non-dual Reality is easily comprehended by those who have a pure mind.

What do you mean by an impure mind?

- A mind which is extroverted and under the influence of preyas is called an impure mind. Because the mind is under the influence of preyas it is extroverted and because it is extroverted, it is fickle. This fickle mind is called an impure mind.

What is a pure mind?

- A mind which is one pointed, introverted and is inspired by shreyas is called a pure mind. This introverted mind will not be fickle.
- To accomplish anything extraordinary, you have to lead a controlled life. Based on this, your mind tends to be introverted and finally one-pointed. In the path of knowledge, this one-pointedness must be inspired by shreyas.

So, for advaita to become an experiential reality, first you need a pure mind.

How should we purify our mind so that advaita becomes an experiential reality?

- In this context, Shankaracharya insists on satsangh and association with the teacher to purify the mind. Basically, association with the teacher itself is satsangh. If this is there then all the qualities (like pure and one-pointed mind) needed will come along in due time as long as you have interest and wholeheartedly participate in the satsangh.
- For example, even former criminals like Valmiki and Anguli Mala and drama actor Girish Chandra Ghosh have changed their lifestyle by recognising Reality through satsangh.

According to Yogavasishta (discussion between sage Vasishta and Lord Rama), to attain freedom (moksha), one has to pass through four gates. These gates are guarded by gatekeepers, namely, satsangh, shanthi, vichara (enquiry) and santosh (contentment).

1. Satsangh

Satsangh means the company with the teacher or the teaching. Because of this you will be far away from the bad company that culminates in ashanthi. You will be inspired to lead a life of shreyas (self controlled life).

2. Shanthi

Shanthi, in this context, means having control over senses and mind by which you can experience peace.

- How can we have a controlled life? Controlled life will be gradually facilitated by the teacher/satsangh. How? The students will be inspired to observe the world around and know how people are suffering. Later, they will be encouraged to take part in selfless service, selfless devotion and then follow the values in life.
- Satsangh can be anything which is inspiring you to be attentive to the world outside and know how suffering has become inevitable in the world. Secondly,

satsangh should inspire you for selfless devotion, selfless service and values in life. Value oriented living imparts peace in life.

3. Vichara

If you have a regulated mind and life, you will be capable of vichara. Vichara means enquiry into Reality. You will be taught various portals by which you can recognise your real nature.

4. Contentment

You recognise your identity essentially with that Infinite Conscious Existence. Because of that, you no longer crave for happiness. You will live with happiness/contentment.

For the student who is competent to comprehend, the teacher gradually teaches non-dual reality. There is no trace of duality from the Reality standpoint. Even though you feel that duality is obvious and non-duality is a theoretical assumption, the Upanishad is ruthlessly negating duality. The scripture says that non-duality alone is there in your experience and duality is a theoretical assumption which you assume to be in your experience only because of mass ignorance. That's why you feel that duality is in your experience but in reality, it is not there in your experience as you are only assuming it. For that feeling to vanish, you have to enquire.

How do we logically prove that non-duality is in our experience and that duality is a theoretical assumption?

- Nothing is there in our experience which is other than Consciousness or awareness. Without you being conscious, can you be aware of anything? No. Hence, everything is an appearance of Consciousness.
- For example, there are no waves without water. So, waves are only appearances of the water. Just as waves are non-dual from water standpoint, the dualistic world is nothing other than the Consciousness from the Reality standpoint.

We are saying that there are no experiences without awareness. But what if I say there is awareness only because of the experiences? Why can't I say that because of objects, awareness is there and hence awareness is the manifestation of objects?

- We cannot say that Consciousness is there only because of objects/experiences as we are Conscious of everything because of Consciousness. Consciousness cannot be the product of manifestation because you have in your experience a state where there are no objects but there is Consciousness. This state is deep sleep.
- In deep sleep, you are there naturally as Infinite Conscious Existence. Once you wake up, you are conscious of this objectivity. So, who is conscious of this

objectivity? Consciousness is there as Consciousness alone in the deep sleep state. On that screen of Consciousness an image appears during waking state and immediately feels falsely that the Consciousness belongs to it. All of the objectivity is like the images.

- We have a choice to either to own up the Infinite Conscious Existence as our real nature or to identify with one unreal personality. On one side you have freedom and on the other you are bound.
- We know that non-duality alone is there in our experience. Duality is an assumption which we have inherited even though our experience is only non-duality.

Upanishad is now saying that through mind alone one knows the non-dual Reality. As long as there is a mind as the knower, how can that which is being known be non-dual? How can there be non-duality as long as there is a mind which is knowing the non-duality? If you say that mind is the knower, then it has to be separate from the non-duality. If it is separate from the non-duality, then non-duality is reduced to duality as there is a knower and a known. So, how can you say that the Self is non-dual when there is scope for triad (knower, known and process of knowing)?

- In the process of the pure mind putting utmost concentration (one-pointed effort) towards comprehending the Reality through the given portals, it will end up remaining as the Reality itself. How? There is no longer a dualistic mind apart from Reality. What is there is the Reality manifesting as everything including the mind itself. Some scriptures say this to be Amanibhavam (the mind remaining as manifestation of Self).
- For example, wave in its effort to know its reality, which is water, will end remaining as water itself. Thereafter there is no wave apart from water. What is there is, water manifesting as everything including a bubble, ripple, wave, etc...

Consequences of not comprehending Reality

- Those who do not comprehend the Reality of this entire name and form will be carried away by assuming this name and form to be real. So, they will go from death to death. You are almost dead if you carry on with your life without knowing Reality. Only if you know Reality, you are worth to be called alive.

What is samadhi state?

Some people say that there is no point in imagining advaita with the mind without experiencing the state of samadhi.

- Upanishad is saying that Reality is presented in a simple manner so that pure minds can comprehend it. Samadhi is an exercise by itself which facilitates comprehension of Reality in a complex manner which is used by people with complex minds.
- To negate such illusions of samadhi, Upanishad is saying that Reality must be known through the mind (Manasai veda mapthavyam). Reality is recognised by the effort at the level of mind which means through shravana, manana, nididhyasana. Shravana is the practice of using external sound to remain as your real nature. Manana is using the impressions gained by listening to satsangh to clear the doubts which are there within you and seem to obstruct you to remain as your real nature. Nididhyasana means doubtless abidance of real nature where the mind gives way so that you can remain as the Self. Then everything will be just a manifestation of the Self including the mind.
- This doubtless and effortless abidance of real nature is called samadhi. So, samadhi is not an exercise but is a natural state of firm knowledge.

For Mantra 12 and 13 we need to first understand why Upanishad is bringing us to a level of an imaginary limitation of Self and whether it is useful for us or not. We have seen from the previous mantras that there is a great loss if you do not comprehend the non-dual Reality. It is as though you are dead even when you are alive. This recognition of the Reality is possible only through a pure mind which is purified enough to take up shravana, manana and nididhyasana (antharanga sadhanas). Then, the mind will end up as the Self itself. All other sadhanas (bahiranga) like pilgrimage, idol worship, devotional exercises, etc... will only make you qualified to take up shravana, manana and nididhyasana. But, the aim of all sadhanas is to make you introverted. Why? The more extroverted you are the more you are lost in unreality, i.e, assuming names and forms to be real by themselves.

Why do scriptures design extrovert sadhanas?

- To make you qualified for the path of knowledge by reducing your extroversion. This in turn will pave way for antharanga sadhanas.

Example: Let us take one bahiranga sadhana-puja.

- Why should you do puja? If you are extroverted the scripture wants you to use your tendency of extroversion to slowly reduce it. So, using our weaknesses, they are helping us come to the path of introversion.
- In puja, all senses are activated in the name of God. Flowers activate the sense of touch, agarbathi activates smell, lamp activates sight, bell activates sense of sound and prasadam activates taste. Here, the extrovert tendencies are used for the sake of surrendering to the divine. What is surrendered? The ego is surrendered to God. If you selflessly do puja then the ego will gradually get thinned out. If the ego is thinned out to some extent, then the antharanga sadhanas will be taken up automatically.
- Shravana= using sound to transcend the ignorance about Reality
 Manana= based on the knowledge gained during shravana, you will eliminate any doubts that prevent you from remaining as real nature.
 Nididhyasana= Sometimes the body-am-I notion possesses you even after

recognising real nature because of the habitual tendency of association with the body. Identifying these situations and eliminating them and remaining as real nature is called nididhyasana.

Who is considered qualified for knowledge?

- Those who have access and interest to do antharanga sadhanas are qualified for knowledge.
- Furthermore, those who are truly qualified for knowledge will pursue it relentlessly till they attain contentment by default.

In the next mantras, Upanishad is designing a meditation for those who are not fully qualified to own up their identity with the Reality so that they gradually develop qualifications to comprehend non-dual Reality.

Upanishad tries to teach us this Reality in three ways. Upanishad likes us to dwell on one of the three:

1. For those who are firmly caught up with body-am-i notion:
 - For these people Upanishad says that the Reality is there within their body. This is the base for the next two Mantras.
 - If you are caught up with the body-am-I notion, the Upanishad gives the location inside the body where you can find the Self.
2. As they focus on this aspect of reality, the Upanishad will tell them that Reality is not there within the body but you are there within the Reality.
 - This means that in the background of peace all activities are taking place.
3. Once you have comprehended this well, Upanishad says not that it is there within the body or you are there within it but there is nothing other than the Reality and you have recognised identity with the Infinite Conscious Existence.

In the next two Mantras Upanishad is dealing with those people who are less qualified for the Reality by giving them advice so that they gradually qualify themselves for the undiluted Reality.

Mantra 12 and 13 **(Angushtamathraha purusho madhya athmani...)** **(Angushtamathraha purusho jyothiriva dhumakaha...)**

This Mantra is conveying the location of the Consciousness within the body and the characteristics of this Consciousness. Here, the word 'purusha' is used to describe Consciousness.

Where is the Consciousness (Purusha) located within the body?

- Upanishad says that the Consciousness is located in the heart. It is taking heart as we cannot live without the heart. Also, in a way we feel that inhalation and exhalation is taking place from the heart and that the heart is the centre of their being.
- It is further saying that Consciousness is present in the mind which acts like a container within the heart. The size of the Consciousness within the heart is thumb sized.
- This understanding is giving value to your body, mind and at the same time it is trying to put forth its logic in you by saying that Consciousness is there in the centre of your being in your mind as awareness.
- So, anytime you feel disturbed, remind yourself that within your body and within your heart there is Consciousness. It is there as awareness within the mind and within every thought. Through this, you will be focused on the awareness/Consciousness aspect.

Upanishad is describing some characteristics of this Consciousness as stated below.

- Consciousness is like light without smoke. Usually smoke will veil the light. We infer the presence of light by seeing the smoke. But here, the light of Consciousness has no smoke. This means that there is light without darkness. This is metaphorically saying that awareness is so vividly available for each one of us that we cannot miss this comprehension. Even if you try you cannot get rid of it. That is why it is your real nature.
- Eeshano butha bavyasya : It is the lord of the past and the future and it is there even in the present. That vivid Consciousness only is there in our experience always. It is there in the past, it is there now and it will be there in the future too. Hence, it is eternal and unchanging. No one can transcend this awareness because no one exists without this awareness.

Why has Upanishad given the location and the characteristics of Consciousness?

- It has done so to facilitate upasana (meditation) for those who are caught up with the body-am-I identity. There is no problem even if you feel that you are the body-am-I identity. Spend some part of your day doing meditation that Consciousness is there within your body in your heart without which you are not there. This awareness is so vivid that you cannot miss it. You are trying to transcend the body and appreciate the Consciousness that is there within the body.

How does this Upasana help in the path of knowledge?

- The only obstruction in this path of knowledge is the tendency to hold on to the unreal individuality/ego. Because of the non-enquiry, the illusionary ego is being strengthened. This tendency to hold on to the ego is gradually weakened by this Upasana. How?
- The body and mind are continuously changing. But the Self (purusha) is there in the past, present and future making it continuous. It is eternal (beyond time). So, it is changeless

unlike the body and mind which change with time and finally perish. This means that body and mind are under the influence of time but the purusha is unaffected by time.

- The perishable body and mind are the cause of suffering whereas the Purusha is devoid of suffering (it is like light without smoke). Now, you have a choice to invest your energy on either the perishable or the imperishable. This upasana (meditation) will make you invest your energy to own up the imperishable. Then, you can deal with the perishable with the contentment of having access to imperishable.

What should I do now?

1. You remain as Infinite Consciousness knowing that there is nothing other than that. This is the ultimate recognition.
2. If you feel that that is too much, then know that you along with all the objects in the universe are images on the Infinite screen of Consciousness.
3. If this is also difficult, then know yourself as the eternal, changeless awareness which is in the mind located inside the heart. That is your real nature. Even if the body perishes, the awareness is imperishable.

Mantras 14 and 15

In these Mantras, the Upanishad encourages us to put forth steadfast effort towards non-dual nature if you want to have peace, security, fulfillment and happiness.

Mantra 14 (Yadodakam durge...)

It is mentioning the fate of one who does not pay attention to this non-dual knowledge through an example. When it rains on a mountain top, the water disperses to the lower hilly terrains. These streams of water can go in any direction. In the same way, those who perceive themselves to be the body-mind apparatus will be chasing their numerous illusionary desires. They will die only to be born again to continue their chase after their fleeting desires. In the process they will gain little happiness which is the bait to repeat this mad chase which causes unfulfillment, insecurity and grief.

Mantra 15 (Yadodakam sudde...)

This mantra describes the fate of those who give due importance to the non-dual knowledge and practice it in their day to day life through an example.

When pure water is poured into pure water only pure water will remain. Similarly, one who recognises his real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence through the process of shravana, manana and nididhyasana will remain as the Reality itself. Those who put effort to gain a pure mind and direct that mind towards shravana, manana and nididhyasana will end up remaining as Reality itself.

If a wave looks itself as an individual wave, it always has fear about its eventual destruction which causes insecurity. But once it realises its reality to be water, then it has absolute security. It will not be afraid of death at all as water cannot get destroyed. Similarly, in the

path of knowledge those who get rid of ignorance through shravana, eliminate all obstructions in the form of doubts through manana, and eliminate the tendency to casually identify with 'body am I' notion with nididhyasana, will remain as their real nature and have peace and happiness by default.

Points To Ponder-29

Five Portals of Chapter-4

1. You are telling your mind that there are **two ways of living**: as an intelligent one (dheerah) or as a foolish one (bala). You are asking the mind if it wants to live an intelligent or foolish life. Then, you will obviously say that you want to live an intelligent life. An intelligent one is a person who recognises the immortal Reality.

2. Here, you are recognising the Reality.

- An intelligent one uses all the experiences in life to recognise the true knower (Vijanaathi) of all the activities which is Infinite consciousness. From the time you wake up to the time you go to sleep, everything is known by the true knower. So, do not get carried away by the known. In Reality you are the Infinite knower (vibhu) which cannot be an imagination of the mind. It is infinite because it transcends even the waking state as it is there in dream and deep sleep state too.
- You are considered as an intelligent one if you are not carried away with what is known and instead recognize the knower through the known. This knower is Infinite consciousness.

3. I recognised Reality. That recognition is made clear further. How? With the experienter-less experience.

- Usually, you are tossed with the experiences of life. Here, we are getting rid of the experienter itself. How? You know the Reality and there is nothing other than the Reality. But, there are some overwhelming feelings like fear, insecurity, sense of lack, etc... that we are inheriting from various lives. Because of these, we doubt our own understanding about the Reality. This means that the ego is still subtly active in you.
- With the support of the deep sleep state, you are disallowing the birth of ego itself. Once you do that, the experienter-less experience will be your experience. Then, as soon as you wake up, there is no scope for the ego to be born at all. So, there is no experienter but there are only experiences.
- The waking and dream states are taking place on the Infinite screen of Consciousness.

For example, when your body is in any type of pain, you say that *you* are in pain. But in reality, this pain appeared only on the screen of Consciousness. Here, the experience is not denied but the experienter as the individual is not there. How? If you got some body pain in dream, where did it come from? From the Infinite Conscious Existence. Anything in the dream has a source only with the reality of the dream which is Infinite Conscious Existence. In waking, when you enquire about the dream state, you will know that all the feelings and emotions of the dream were not yours (as individual) but were the manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence. So, you are using the illness/emotions to go back to the Infinite Conscious Existence from where they have appeared.

4. Non-duality is established

- If you feel that there is some reality in the experience then again the ego will establish itself as the experiencer. So, even the experience is denied along with the experiencer.
- Non-duality is established in its pure form. There is neither experiencer nor an experience. How? There are no objects apart from the Self. Then, where is the experience? Without an experiencer and experienced objects, how can there be an experience?
- All the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, space) are nothing other than the Self itself. There is nothing in the world other than the Self. The Reality alone is there and there is nothing other than the Reality. This is the pinnacle in the knowledge of Reality.
- From the standpoint of Self, there is nothing other than the Self just like how there is nothing other than water from the standpoint of water.

5. Ladder to own up the Reality

- Before you get up from manana, you are telling your mind that that state (non-duality) which you are experiencing is your real nature. With this peace, you can handle everything in this world.
- If you feel otherwise, you must put forth effort to make your mind pure and one-pointed. Use that mind everyday for shravana, manana and nididhyasana. If you feel that this is difficult then Upasana is also devised.
- Upasana is a meditation method where body-mind are given reality so as to facilitate comprehension of your real nature . Then it is said that Consciousness is there within your heart and conditioned (limited) by the mind. You as the body and mind will perish but the Consciousness will not. So, put in some time to
recognise the Consciousness within you which is the cause of happiness, instead of being carried away with the body and mind which is the cause of suffering.

In the last two mantras, Upanishad is giving a warning. If you do not pursue this path then you will end up with unfulfillment, insecurity and grief. If you want to be free from these miseries, then you focus on making your mind one-pointed and use it for shravana, manana and nididhyasana.

How do you know whether your meditation is fruitful or not?

You can say that your meditation is fruitful if the peace you gained through the meditation goes beyond the meditative state and permeates the activities throughout the day. The extent of the positive influence it has towards the rest of the day will help you to know if your meditation is fruitful or not.

Chapter-5/ Valli-2 Chapter-2

Upanishad is giving more portals to recognise reality.

What is the need for these portals when I have already recognised Reality? Till you doubtlessly remain as your real nature and are not carried away by external perceptions, internal thoughts, feelings and emotions, you need to pursue the Upanishad. Till you have no choice but to derive identity from peace or Infinite Conscious Existence, you must go forward with this Upanishad.

Why do the mantras present the Self in a way where there is scope for imagination?

Why can't the Upanishad stick on to presenting the undiluted absolute truth? Isn't it more productive to spend our time learning only the undiluted truth?

- Upanishad presents the diluted and the undiluted version impartially. The seeker of the truth needs to select the portal based on their physical, mental and social conditions that they are subjected to at any given point of time.
 - Physical: Illness/age related changes of the body. When you get these physical illnesses, you may find it difficult to connect with the Consciousness through undiluted portal. But, you may be able connect to the Consciousness through less intense portals instead of being lost altogether. For example, the body may be disturbed with illness but you can recognize the Consciousness within it which is changeless.
 - Mental: Anxiety about future, financial issues, future illnesses, death, etc... In these cases, some portals which you chose may not be helpful to you.
 - Social conditioning: Relationship issues with children, employees, relatives, friends & neighbors etc.. wherein the relationship is strained.
- Upanishad is coming to our level imagining that we may get stuck in any of the above levels, and is presenting the truth (which may be compromised but only to some extent). The aim of Upanishad is to take you forward on the path of knowledge in any given scenario instead of being left out.
- Some seekers easily comprehend the essence of advaita but fail to maintain their tranquility when faced with unfavorable and unavoidable physical , mental and social issues. For them, Upanishad presents the truth in such a way that they can hold on to it even in difficult situations and maintain their tranquility. If Upanishad had not done this, then it would have been an all or none phenomenon for the majority where we may not have a method as per our capability at that particular point to hold on to the truth in spite of being in adverse situations.
- So, the Upanishad is devising more and more portals to facilitate recognition of the truth even in adverse situations in life. One such portal is explained in Mantra 1.

Mantra-1 (Puramekadasa dwaram...)

Imagine a kingdom or fort with eleven doors. This kingdom is our body. Our body also has eleven doors, namely, 2 eyes, 2 nostrils, 2 ears, 1 mouth, 2 excretory organs, umbilical opening and the brahmarandhra (on the crown of the head).

The wall around the city or fort is the skin.

Wbc, lymphocytes (T cells), are the defence system i.e. soldiers. Roads within city are:-

1. Digestive tract – food is transported
2. Respiratory tract – oxygen and co2 are transported
3. Blood vessels like arteries and capillaries.

Just as the kingdom has a ruler, there is a ruler for this body which is the Consciousness (Chethasa). Without the Consciousness, the body cannot function. When the Consciousness stops manifesting in its full glory, the body ceases. You may

mistake Consciousness for another organ in the body or with an aspect of mind. To avoid such confusions, the Upanishad further mentions that the Consciousness is unborn (Ajasya) and changeless (Avakra). These two adjectives will help you differentiate the Consciousness from the body-mind apparatus and clearly appreciate the Reality.

Ajasya:

- Body is born. So, it is subjected to change. If you agree to the fact that you are born, you are in turn agreeing to the fact that the body will grow, decay and eventually perish.
- But, the Consciousness is not a physical aspect belonging to the body. It has no birth which implies that it is not subject to change in the form of growth, decay and death.

Avakra:

The mind is the one that controls the body. So, how can you say that the Consciousness does not belong to the mind?

- To avoid such misunderstanding, the Upanishad further describes Consciousness as Avakra.
- The mind is continuously subjected to change. But, Consciousness is changeless. It is illuminating both the body and the mind. For this reason, Shankaracharya mentions Consciousness as Ekarasam Nithyam (No change). This is the only thing in our experience which was, is and will remain changeless. It remained exactly as it was from the time we have known about it.

How can you say that Consciousness is unborn? Isn't Consciousness born with the body and won't it perish with the body?

- Is there Consciousness without the body? Yes, in deep sleep state.
- We seem to come into existence with waking and we seem to end with deep sleep. Waking is like the birth and deep sleep is like death.
- Enquiring about how we existed in deep sleep state paves a path to recognise Consciousness as unborn. If you have existed before birth as Infinite Conscious Existence then it implies that birth is only for the body-mind apparatus and not for the real nature. Hence, Consciousness is told to be unborn.
- In deep sleep, you existed not knowing anything. So, you remained there as Infinite Conscious Existence. Later, in waking state, the body appeared but Self remained as it was in deep sleep.

The Upanishad wants us to meditate (Anushtaya) on the Consciousness which is unborn and changeless, whenever we are faced with adverse situations which shake our recognition of our real nature.

Homework

1. Meditate for half-an-hour by using your favorite mantra and remaining as your real nature. We can remain for the first 10 minutes as real nature by using the chosen mantras.
2. For the next 20 minutes, if you feel that your peace is disturbed by the possession of the body-am-I notion, then take the help of the five portals of manana.
3. You can also use portal of “Ajasya Avakra Chethasaha” to remain as real nature in spite of being distracted by the physical, mental and social conditionings of the body mind apparatus.

Points To Ponder-30: Sadarshanam

Mantra-1 (Sat prathyayah...)

If Sadarshanam had to be told in one line, it would be this mantra. With this mantra, you are directly negating the body and the mind.

Is there anything in your experience without 'Sat' (Consciousness)?

- No matter how grand your dream is, after you wake up, it has no value. In the same way, no matter how much reality you give to this world, it has no value if there is no 'Sat'. In a way, there is no world without 'Sat'.

Where is this 'Sat'?

- There is Sat in the entire objectivity because we say that all the objects exist. This is always there in our experience but because we did not know about it we are living without recognizing it.
- We cannot be apart from Sat which is there in our experience. When we recognise it, we say that there are no names and forms apart from it. .
- This knowledge is very evident and is easy because it is our real nature. This is understood only by those who are qualified.

Mantra-2 (Mruthyum jayam...)

Fear of death is unavoidable. Then, what can I do to overcome that fear?

- Take refuge in those who have transcended the fear of death/ in God. Death, in a way, means sorrow.
- Selfless devotion to God gives us an opportunity to know our real nature which is the real nature of God too. If you resort to them, then with their blessings, you will be bestowed with an opportunity to know your real nature.

Mantra-9 (Dhiya sahodethi...)

How can I transcend these fears and sorrows?

- You can transcend these fears in deep sleep where you are one with Reality (real nature). You remain as God itself. There is pure non-duality in deep sleep. We are one with our real nature which is without fears and sorrows.
- Even in waking, we are the same but because we do not know this, we are experiencing fears and sorrows.
- That is why those who have fears should know that by practicing selfless devotion and selfless service they will be given an opportunity to be introduced to their real nature.

Mantra-15(Satyas chidatma...)

To transcend the fear of death, we must take refuge in those who have overcome these fears. Then, we will be introduced to our real nature (where there are no fears) which is in our experience in deep sleep.

But all our fears arise in the waking state and not in the deep sleep state. So, how can our real nature, which we experience in deep sleep, be of use to tackle these fears?

- In waking state, nothing has been added or subtracted to the Reality as which you remained in deep sleep state. How?
- From Reality standpoint, there is no change in the Reality even in waking state.
- Example: Water itself is there as a wave. From water standpoint, there is only water. "Wave" is only a name given to the water. Similarly, from Reality standpoint, there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence. Even when it appears as the entire objectivity, there is only Infinite Conscious Existence from the Reality standpoint (as the substratum for all objects is Infinite Conscious Existence only). To comprehend this, you have to take the stand of Reality and see the beauty of it.
- The Reality itself, which is in our experience, is manifesting as these names and forms. We have merely given names for these manifestations of Reality.
- Example- Gold and ornaments: From Gold standpoint, there is only gold in different ornaments. We have given names and value to each form of gold only.
- In the process of knowing Reality, we become one with Reality. As we remain as Reality, there is nothing other than it. This becomes our experience. Then, you will not feel bad that others have not recognised this valuable Reality because Reality alone is appearing as some people knowing Reality and some people not knowing Reality. All our fears and sorrows are only manifestations of Reality and there is nothing other than it.
- Example: As Sri Ramakrishna states, there is no difference between a moving snake and stationary snake from the standpoint of the snake. Here, a stationary snake is compared to deep sleep and a moving snake is compared to waking state, where manifestation is prevalent. There is no difference between both from Reality standpoint.
- When you remain as Sat (Existence) and Chit (Consciousness) there are no limitations. Then, you remain as Infinite Conscious Existence, which is your real nature. There is nothing other than it.

Mantra-13(Boddharam aatmanam...)

Knowing that there is nothing other than Reality (from Reality standpoint) and remaining as Reality itself is only ultimate knowledge. There is no value to any other field of knowledge if you have not known your real nature (Atma jnanam). Spiritual knowledge is experiencing your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence. If you recognise your real nature as Reality, then there is nothing other than Reality, wherein non-duality is established.

Manana

1. There is nothing other than Reality.
2. If this is not recognised due to fear of death or sorrows, take refuge in those who have transcended death or in God.

3. What is there is deep sleep (Reality) is only manifesting as names and forms in waking state.
4. Just as gold appears as ornaments, Reality alone manifests as the entire objectivity from the standpoint of Reality.
5. This is the ultimate knowledge wherein non-duality is established. All other knowledge is of no value without recognizing our real nature.

Mantra-17(Bhutham bhavishyacha...)

How can I be in the present moment when situations are compelling me to be in the past and the future?

- Thoughts about the future will become an impediment for recognising the truth. Truth will become your natural state when you have no doubts about it.
- A common man spends his life brooding over the past and dreaming about the future. For an aspirant who wants to know the truth, this habit is an obstacle in the path of knowledge.

What is astrology?

- In astrology, people sacrifice their present by dwelling in the past to give foolish interpretations about the future.
- This practice is not for aspirants of the truth. It is okay for others as they might find some solace in it.

How are thoughts of past and future an obstacle for an aspirant of truth?

- The goal of a true aspirant is to transcend the illusion of individuality which implies comprehending real nature.
- These thoughts of past and future are anchoring onto the individuality. We can say that the past and the future are tools of the ego to take you away from your goal of realising the illusion of ego. This is why the past and future are obstructions in the path of knowledge.

How can we get out of the trap of past and future?

- This Mantra says that there is nothing like the past and future. They are only different names for the present. When the past and future were happening, they were actually present only. Past is the present that has already happened (previous present). Future is the upcoming present. So, instead of brooding over the past and dreaming of the future, first remain in the present.

If you negate the past and future, how can you live in a world which runs on time?

- To overcome this issue, we have categorized time into two: Chronological time and psychological time. We are negating the psychological time but not the chronological time. All the affairs of the world take place based on chronological time.
- Psychological time is where the worrying and brooding of the future and past take place. When there is no worrying, it is only chronological time.
- For the ego to establish itself, it throws the trap of time in which you are entangled. Due to this, you start worrying where your individuality gets strengthened.

- Professionally too, you fare better when you can get rid of this psychological time. One cannot succeed in life when they are stuck with the psychological time. So, we must notice whether we are entering the arena of psychological time and prevent it.

I have understood the difference between psychological and chronological time and will remain in the chronological time. But how will this help me in recognising real nature?

- Remaining in the chronological time means to remain in the present. Chronological time is a tool in the present that you are using for living. Even though you are planning your endeavours in life, you are still in the present.
- To recognize real nature, you have to be in the present. Those who dwell in the past and the future will not have time and focus to enquire about real nature while relatively being in the present.
- **The present itself is a portal to recognise Reality.**
 - When you are not carried away by the psychological time, you remain focused (which means that you are in the absolute present).
 - **How can I comprehend Reality by being in the present?**
By being in the present, you are free from bothering about the past and the future. So, you have better focus on the present moment. Then, you are using that attentiveness of the mind to explore the present moment. Doing so will help you recognise the Consciousness which is there in the present moment. This is a portal to recognise Reality.
 - For example, you can enjoy nature to its fullest when you are in the absolute present moment. You automatically recognise that there is nothing other than Consciousness and remain as it. So, we are using the present moment to have access to the Consciousness.
 - Consciousness is the power that is concealed within the present moment. Once you have discovered the existence of Consciousness, you will know that this Conscious Existence is without any limitations. So, you have access to your natural state of Infinite Conscious Existence which is the natural state of the entire objectivity.
 - Activity: Choose an object like a flower, tree, mountain, etc... and focus on it. You are conscious of that object. Then, you are recognising the existence of Consciousness that is conscious of the object (but not merely that of the object). You are aware about the existence of the Consciousness. That Conscious Existence is limitless. With this, the entire objectivity has become an appearance of this Infinite Conscious Existence which you have owned up as the reality of the entire objectivity.
 - This Infinite Conscious Existence is the substratum for time in the form of past, present and future. Access to this substratum is through the present moment.

What is 'presence' with reference to the present moment?

- When you use the present to recognise the existence of the Infinite Consciousness then that is called as presence. In the present moment you have access to the presence or, in a way, to the power of life itself which is traditionally called as God itself.

If it is that easy to recognise the Reality using the present moment, then why is it not comprehended by the majority?

- Majority miss it because they are lost to the play of the ego. They continuously worry about the past and the future because they cannot focus on the present. They get obsessed with the past and future and think that it is their right to do so.
- The greatest enemy of the ego is the present. It cannot tolerate it. The ego uses the past and the future to establish itself. Even though the past and the future are only names given to the present, people give them reality to such an extent that they do not have access to the presence of the present moment. If they come out of the illusion of past and future, it is very easy to recognise Reality.

In this mantra, Ramana Maharshi says that if there is Reality in the present, is it not ridiculous to sacrifice it and brood over the past and the future?

Ramana Maharshi further emphasizes the fact that present only is there through an example: There is only one number which is '1'. '2' is just a name given to two 1s. Similarly, all numbers are just names given to the number 1. Hence, in reality, there is only 1. So, is it not ridiculous to start counting without the number 1? Similarly, if there is nothing other than the present, isn't it ridiculous to forsake it and get lost in discussions about the past and the future?

But doesn't Reality transcend time? Then, how can you say that it is there in the present?

- There is no doubt that Reality is beyond time. But, to comprehend it, the present is an ideal portal. After you comprehend it, then you will know that it is the substratum of time. Time is a concept that seems to exist with Reality as its substratum.
- Here, we are not saying that the present is the ultimate truth. We transcend the present and recognise the presence (Reality).

Points To Ponder-31

What is meditation?

- Nididhyasana is a synonym for meditation in this context. Your meditation should be backed by shravana and manana which builds the foundation for meditation. Otherwise, meditation will not be constructive.
- Meditation is not a ritual. It is a way of abiding as the peace itself.
- We all love deep sleep because we remain there as peace itself. In the same way, you will fall in love with meditation when you discover the peace in it which is inherent in your real nature.
- When we enquire in line with the scriptures, we will discover through our experience and logic that our real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence.
- But, it is not enough to casually know that your real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence even though that is a big achievement too. Instead, you must know your real nature so firmly that you have no choice but to remain as peace itself. For this to happen, you need to engage in meditation.
- Your knowledge is strengthened when you progress in meditation. The peace which you gain during meditation will percolate into your daily activities.

How long should we continue with the meditation?

- Until you remain peaceful by default, you must continue with the meditation.
- We are not aiming for peace which is a mental imagination like how the majority assume. They think that they are peaceful when there is nothing bothering them. Instead, we are aiming for peace which is synonymous to Infinity remaining as Infinity itself. There is no scope for peace otherwise. You recognise Infinity and have the capability to remain as Infinity which is your real nature.
- Meditation is discovering your real nature and remaining as it. If you say that you are not able to meditate it is like saying that you have recognised your real nature but cannot remain as it and also cannot put forth effort to remain as it. This implies that you do not know your real nature. We can say this because if you know your real nature then you will remain as it.
- We all have this experience of Infinity remaining as Infinity in deep sleep. So, we all say that we have slept peacefully. We need to meditate until this peace remains as default even during waking state.
- Peace which is there in deep sleep is there in the waking state too. This peace has to be unaffected in spite of physical and mental botherings like perceptions, speech, sensations in the body, thoughts, emotions which are triggered by thoughts, etc... So, meditation should be continued until you remain peaceful by default.
- If you can remain peaceful by default then you no longer need to do meditation because there is nothing that can challenge your recognition.
- If the peace is disturbed then the knowledge is challenged. This implies that the knowledge is not complete and firm. So, you have to continue with shravana, manana and nididhyasana through which knowledge will be complete and firm.

- One more way of answering this question is: You must meditate until you realise that meditation is what you are and not what you do. Meditation is necessary as long as you have a feeling that you are the meditator.

“Meditation is not what you do. It is what you are.” What is the difference?

- If you are doing meditation the doer is very active. The notion of doership is still firm. Because of this, you still assume yourself to be an individual and try to meditate. The individuality is active in you to some extent. With this doership, you try to expose the illusion of individuality through meditation and own up Infinite Conscious Existence. You enter meditation with body-am-I notion and use meditation to get rid of it. When you come out of meditation, you are free from individuality to some extent and unknowingly get possessed again.
- If this is your experience then there is no issue. Continue your meditation sessions without fail. If there is a break in the habit of meditation then you may be slowly deprived access to this peace. Over time, you may seem to lose even the understanding that you have gained.
- Example: A black board must be wiped with a duster frequently for it to be useful. If you do not do so for many days, then it will become difficult to wipe the board and it cannot be used further. In the same way every action we do with the ‘body am I’ notion will create an impression within us. These impressions accumulate and strengthen that notion that you are the body mind apparatus. This in turn will deprive us peace. Meditation means cleaning the impressions which obstruct the essential peace. Duster implies to the positive impressions we gained through the satsangs. Meditation is the process of cleaning. Ignorance rooted impressions like ‘body am I’ notion are erased and our innate peace is regained.
- What do you mean by meditation is what you are? As you do shravana, manana and nididhyasana you continue your identity with the Infinity or peace so firmly that there is nothing in the realm of the objective phenomenon which can challenge this recognition. There is no power in this universe that can again induce you to be overwhelmed by the ‘body am I’ notion.
- Even before meditation your real nature is Infinity and you continue to be so even after meditation. Then what is the need for meditation? There is no need because nothing can challenge your recognition. As a result, there is no change in you due to meditation as you abide by the peace by default. You continue to be as what you were before meditation, during meditation and also after meditation. So, it is said here that meditation is what you are.

What is the need for meditation for one who has firm knowledge (whose peace is not challenged by anything in this world)?

- There is no need for such a person to meditate. The entire waking is meditation for them irrespective of being active or remaining still. If they want to they can continue with meditation out of habit.

So, until you own up peace by default, you need to meditate.

Manthra 1 (continued)

The ruler of the magnificent body with eleven doors is the Consciousness which is unborn and changeless. This manthra further states the result of meditation on this Consciousness.

What is the result of meditating on Consciousness?

- You will not have grief or sorrows if you meditate (anushtaya na sochathi).
- The cause of grief is fear.
- What do we fear for or what could be the apparent cause of fear?
Fear of failing exams, unemployment, financial insecurity, fear of not getting an ideal partner, fear of bearing children who are unhealthy, fear of children going astray, fear of disease, old age & death, etc...
- Just because you meditate does not mean that all these fears will disappear. Instead, you will not be overwhelmed by them as you handle them with the underlying peace which you gained through meditation. In spite of having many issues which are capable of generating fear and thereby grief, still you will not have grief/fear. Those issues cannot challenge your peace.

What is fear?

- It is a distressing emotion. Anxiety, worry, etc... all come under fear. Let us understand the mechanism in the formation of fear.
- Based on our own experience/hear-say experience of the past about an event, we tend to have an impression deep inside us. We assume that impression to be real. Taking a stand on that impression we tend to visualize the future using our imagination. This is an unwanted creativity that culminates in a distressing emotion which affects physical and mental health.
- The negative impressions of the past are projected into the future which generates fear in the present.

How will meditation make us fearless?

- During meditation you recognise your real nature (Consciousness). In the process of meditation, there is a shift of identity from the 'body-am-I' notion to Consciousness.
- For fear to develop in the present, you need the support of past and future. For the existence of the past and future you need an individual for them to anchor on to. Due to meditation, the body-am-I notion is replaced with Consciousness-am-I conviction. In the absence of body-am-I notion (where there is no individuality) there is no scope for obsession over the past and future. Hence, there is no scope for fear too.
- So, the Upanishad says that those who meditate will live a fearless life (devoid of grief or sorrow). These people pass through all the challenges in life fearlessly.

So, do you want to have such a life which is devoid of fear, anxiety, worry and grief? If you want it then you need to meditate.

Homework

Continue with the meditation. Ask yourself three questions after the meditation:

1. Is there anything disturbing my meditation?
2. If any, what are they? Resolve them with the knowledge you gained so far.

3. Is there any disturbance which you cannot handle or resolve? If so you have to Sravana, Manana, Nidhidyasa to get from knowledge.

Second benefit of doing meditation

Vimukthasya vimuchhathe= The one who is free will be liberated.

Free from what and liberated from what?

- Freed from ignorance and liberated from rebirth.

You do not remember your last birth and will not remember this life in your next birth. So how does having a rebirth matter? This explanation does not suit the logic. This is why we will interpret this statement in a different way which can be verified through our experience.

Vimukthasya vimuchathe reinterpreted:

- The one who has knowledge will be freed from ignorance and liberated from the effects of ignorance which traditionally means jeevan mukthi (freedom in this life itself). One of the effects of ignorance is rebirth but we are not considering it here. We are only looking into the effects of ignorance which we experience in this birth.

What does freedom from ignorance mean here?

- Ignorance implies ignorance about your real nature (Infinite Conscious Existence) which is by default bliss or peace. Freedom from ignorance means freedom from the body-am-I notion.

What are the effects of ignorance from which you will be liberated?

- If knowledge about our real nature is by default peace, then ignorance of our real nature is by default absence of peace.

What is disturbing our peace?

- The six enemies of mankind which are desire, anger, greed, delusion (unreasonable emotional attachment towards those who are living or dead and to objects), pride and jealousy disturb the peace. These all are the effects of ignorance.

How do you get rid of them?

- When you meditate you get rid of all these. How?
- All of these anchor on to the unreal Self that is the body-am-I notion and steal your peace. When the body-am-I notion is eliminated with knowledge, these effects will not have anything to hang on to and so they will vanish.
- Through meditation you will reclaim your real nature as the Infinite Conscious Existence which amounts to annihilating the body-am-I notion and in turn the unwanted effects of ignorance.
- Hence, one who meditates will have peace as there is no scope for these effects of ignorance to arise and disturb the peace.

Do you want to live a life which is devoid of grief and is filled with peace? To achieve this you must meditate everyday without fail.

If you say that you want to meditate but you do not have time then that means that you have the desire to meditate, not because of understanding the real need for meditation, but because of curiosity. If you understand the need for living a peaceful life then you will never say that you do not have time for meditation. You will make time by refraining from some of your extrovert activities.

Meditation Reinterpreted

What we discussed until now is only to facilitate nididhyasana. Shravana, manana and nididhyasana are all equally important. Meditation will not be fruitful for those who do not lead an orderly life. An orderly life which means living a life of values. This will mature into shravana which then leads to manana. Manana will mature into nididhyasana.

Shravana

- Here, you are taking the external support of sound like hearing the discussions, reading the satsang notes etc... to recognize and remain as your real nature. This is called shravana.
- This means that meditation is happening even during shravana. You are in the state of meditation the moment you recognise your real nature. Later you allow the discussion to take place maintaining the new identity which you have discovered.

Manana

- Remaining as your real nature without any external sound or text is manana. You remain as your real nature by holding on to a memory of what you have heard in shravana
- Examples of Portals from previous chapter and this chapter mantra 1:
 1. I am that which is conscious of everything in waking and dream states ie infinite consciousness.
 2. I am the substratum for this entire manifestation that is unfolding in waking and dream states
 3. I alone am there as infinite conscious existence in all this manifestation and am devoid of this manifestation in deep sleep.
 4. I am the unchanging consciousness and not the body with 11 doors.
- Manana is not a mechanical repetition of these portals. We must use these portals in a constructive way to recognise and remain as Reality.

Nididhyasana

- Remaining as your real nature without the support of external sound or internal memory generated portals is called nididhyasana.

From now on, our meditation is nididhyasana. It is not a mental exercise to attain concentration (there is no object to concentrate on). In nididhyasana, Infinite Conscious Existence is not an object- it is our real nature. There is neither an object nor a subject in nididhyasana because the

individuality is negated. We transcend the subject-object realm and enter the realm of Reality (Infinity).

We remain as our real nature in shravana, manana and nididhyasana too. But, there is a difference in these three with regard to the presence and absence of external aids used to remain as real nature.

Example: A baby first crawls to gain strength in its limbs. This is compared to developing values in life. Then, it will hold onto someone's hand to stand up and walk. This is compared to shravana. Later, it will take the support of other objects surrounding it to walk which is like manana. Finally, it will walk on its own without taking the support of any external factor. This is compared to nididhyasana.

Here, walking is the aim of the baby and it takes place in all the modes. The difference is in the presence and absence of aids. In the same way, you are as your real nature in shravana, manana and nididhyasana with the only difference being the presence and absence of external aids.

So should I do shravana, manana or nididhyasana?

- Your aim is to remain as real nature. To achieve this, you can use whatever method that suits you best. You must decide based on your mental capability. This varies based on the situation in which you are placed.
- You can start with manana and then switch over to nidhidhyasana. If there are interruptions in nidhidhyasana, you can get back to manana. If you feel even manana is difficult to continue you can resort to shravana (hear that part of satsangh that has inspired you to remain as your real nature).

Homework

1. Continue with meditation
2. Read the mantra -2 and find the given clue to handle the disturbances which arise while doing meditation.

Points To Ponder-32

If there are no disturbances in meditation that means that this mantra is your spontaneous experience. If there are disturbances they have to be handled very effectively. How?

The disturbances are mainly in the form of thoughts. The thoughts are broadly classified into two types: thoughts pertaining to yourself (as the body mind apparatus) and thoughts pertaining to other things around you. You have to handle all these disturbances as you have made up your mind to remain as the real nature for half-an-hour. All these thoughts, whether they are about yourself or the world around, hang on to one fundamental thought- the i-thought. This i-thought is a deep rooted conviction that you are the body and mind.

I am disturbed by thoughts as such but I have not noticed the i-thought. How did I miss it?

You miss the i-thought due to two reasons:

1. The i-thought is very subtle because it is always covered by thoughts pertaining to objects. Due to these thoughts, you will not have the focus to trace back to the i-thought which is the substratum for all other thoughts.
2. The i-thought is not known like other thoughts. As it is there by default you tend to overlook it and miss it. All other thoughts are known to you, but the i-thought is experienced as the conditioned entity or a confined individuality. This can only be known by those who are on the path of knowledge.

Example: If your computer is attacked by a virus, the virus will not show up but the computer shows some symptoms due to which you will be able to know the presence of the virus. Similarly, the i-thought will not make itself known. It will generate innumerable thoughts while subtly hiding behind them.

The symptoms of the i-thought are sense of lack, sense of insecurity, etc... due to which you cannot be peaceful.

Until when will this i-thought be active?

As long as this body-am-I conviction is active, the i-thought will remain in you generating countless thoughts.

How can I get rid of this i-thought?

There is a clue in mantra 2 to handle this generator of thoughts.

Mantra-2 (Hamsa ssuchisha...)

If you properly understand this Mantra, you will remain as your real nature effortlessly.

Rutham= Reality, Bruhath= Infinity

This means that Infinite Reality is the solution to get rid of the i-thought.

What is meant by Reality?

- That which is unchanging is eligible to be called real. That which is subjected to change is unreal. Sometimes, unreal may appear to be real but essentially it is not real (Example: a mirage).
- Everything in this universe along with the body and mind are continuously changing. So, they are not real. What is that which is unchanging? It is Infinity. How?
- It is in our experience that everything that is subjected to change is finite. So, that which is unchanging must be Infinite. Infinity alone is changeless. Therefore it is qualified to be called real.
- For a change to occur in an object, there must be many factors acting on it to bring that change. Only that which is finite will be liable for other factors to act on it. But if it is Infinite, then what can act on it? 'Infinite' itself implies that there is nothing other than it. There are no factors external to the Infinite to act on it.

How do I handle the thoughts with this Infinite Reality?

- To solve all the issues which are bothering you while you are in meditation, you have to experience this Infinite Reality.
- What is Infinite alone is real and what is real is only Infinite.

How do I experience Infinite Reality?

- Just by recognising that which is already there in your experience as Infinite Reality. If Reality implies changelessness, then you need to find out that which is changeless in your experience. The only thing which remains changeless in your experience is Consciousness. This Consciousness is conscious of everything without a change in its essential nature as Consciousness. There is a change in the objects/thoughts of which you are conscious of, but there is no change in the essential nature of Consciousness as Consciousness.
- Objects that are external to your body and internal as thought formations are continuously changing along with the body. But there is no change in the Consciousness as such. This changeless Consciousness is there in your experience.
- It is not dependent on anything external to itself for it to be conscious. Hence, it is called self-luminous and is ever-luminous in our experience.

Why is the Consciousness compared to the Sun?

- The Consciousness is compared to the Sun as it too is ever-luminous and self-luminous.

Homework

See how you cannot miss this Consciousness and its self-luminous and ever-luminous properties.

If Consciousness is so obvious why did I miss it all these years?

- You have confused Consciousness with the mind. You felt that the mind was conscious of everything. You were so caught up with the mind that you missed the Consciousness.
- Mind, by itself, is insentient (inert). Consciousness alone is sentient (able to perceive things independently). Still, we miss it and assume the mind to be a conscious entity.

How can I make such a blunder of missing the sentient and assuming the insentient to be sentient?

Let us see this answer with the help of a story.

Once upon a time, there was a tribal village on the foothill of a mighty mountain with a snow covered peak. This lofty mountain was the tallest amongst the surrounding mountains. The first ray of sunlight always fell on this mountain much earlier than the Sun rose from the surrounding mountains. This made it seem as though the mountain emitted light of its own due to the Sun rays reflecting off of its peak. The villagers assumed that the light was being imparted by the mountain itself. To strengthen their belief, even after the Sun sets behind the surrounding mountains, the rays continue to reflect off of the peak. So, the villagers firmly believed that the light emitted by the mountain peak only illuminated the whole village including the Sun. They were justified to believe so because of their village's geographical location. They were not aware of any other human habitation because there were no other villages in their vicinity.

- Just like how this village is surrounded by mountains we too are held in this waking state which is between the dream and deep sleep states.
- For the villagers, the reflected light from the mountain peak is there throughout the day. So, they get caught up with the notion that it is the source of all light. Similarly, the mind operates throughout the waking state. So, it is natural to assume that its sentience is the cause of all sentient actions that take place in the waking state.
- Furthermore, the villagers worship the mountain peak because they think that it is the source of all light due to which they can carry on with their duties. We too worship some forms of the creation of the mind and undertake austerities to please them.
- The villagers give importance to the people who agree with their views that the mountain peak is the one imparting light and is God. They will shun those who oppose their belief or put forth an alternate view. Similarly, we keep away those who try to present the absolute truth and will be eager to pursue those who confirm our ignorance based on duality (like priests, gurus who teach duality, etc.).
- It seems impossible to bring sense to the villagers regarding the source of light. In the same way, it seems impossible to bring sense to those who are carried away with the notion that the mind is sentient on its own and there is nothing higher than this body and mind apparatus and their imagined God.

Now, what is the way out? How will the villagers recognise the absolute source of light?

They could not figure it out on their own. It had to be pointed out to them by an intelligent/brave one who was eager to figure out the real source of light. He trained himself to trek to the top of the massive mountain. He was discouraged by many in the pursuit of intangible goals. But still, he did not give up his goal and succeeded in ascending the mountain. He realised the truth of the light which was illuminating the village. He realised that the villagers were conveniently disregarding the actual source of the light and assumed the reflected light to be real. He was eager to go back to the village and share the truth with the villagers. But he was shunned by the villagers (which included the so called intelligent and accomplished villagers). Only few innocent ones found some truth in what he was saying and started listening to him. They trained

themselves to start their journey to the mountain peak to experience the truth by themselves and make it their discovery.

After the needful training they all started on the trek. They are being guided at every step by their teacher who knew the path. Still some were unable to sustain their faith in him as the process of climbing the mountain became tough due to adverse climate and steep increase in altitude. So few left him half way and came back to their village. Others who were able to sustain faith in him and in the path shown by him along with intense desire to know truth followed him. As a result they were able to reach the summit. After reaching the peak they were guided to observe, how there is Sun beyond the mountains surrounding their village, inspite of darkness on the mountain peak during early morning and late evening. They were able to see villages far away which did not have the access to the light from their mountain peak but are still illumined by the Sun. Hence they had dispelled their illusion that the source of light is the mountain peak. They had knowledge about the glory of the Sun, which is the real source of light. They were astonished about the fact that they missed the real source of light ie Sun in spite of its availability and how they entertained contrary views. They dispelled the illusion that the source of light was the mountain peak and had knowledge about the glory of the Sun (absolute light). They now knew that the Sun was the source of all light.

Applied Aspects of the Story in Comparison to our Problem:

- Village between the mountains - Waking state which is between deep sleep and dream
- Sun - Consciousness
- Mountain peak which seems to emit light - Mind
- Villagers - People devoid of knowledge (baala ie fool)
- Intelligent villagers - Intelligent baala (they don't know about the absolute truth but assume themselves to be intelligent in various fields)
- Successful villagers - Accomplished baala
- Dheeraha or a rare intelligent villager - one who had doubted the seeming reality of appearance.
- Training to climb mountain = getting qualified to know truth
- Climbing the mountain- Initiating a sincere enquiry to know the truth.
- Villagers returning half way = seekers losing enthusiasm after pursuing for a while
- Villagers who pursued the path till they had experience of source of light = seekers who have faith and intense desire to know truth pursue till knowledge remains as their very experience

What is the logic through which the villagers came to know about the truth of the source of light (Sun)?

Light emitted by the Sun is independent of the mountain peak and pervades beyond the village whereas the reflected light from the mountain peak is dependent on the sunlight and is limited to the one village. Through this logic, they were able to shed their belief that the light is coming from the mountain peak.

What is our logic?

Consciousness is beyond the waking state whereas the mind in waking state is neither in dream nor in deep sleep state. So, the mind is not the cause of sentience. The cause of sentience is

Consciousness as Consciousness is present in all three states irrespective of the presence or absence of mind. **We did not know about this because we did not care to enquire.** Hence, we unnecessarily gave ownership to the mind. In essence, what is there is only Consciousness which is real nature.

Just as the Sun is seen with the light of the Sun itself, in the same way Consciousness is known by Consciousness itself and not the mind which is insentient.

Even though this knowledge looks simple once it is comprehended still it will be shunned by majority. Only some innocent and pure minded people will find some logic in this knowledge. These people will gather together and start their quest for knowledge under the guidance of one who has comprehended it. To gain this experience, they must first train themselves by following values, doing selfless service and selfless devotion, etc... After this training, if they are ready, they will start the process of enquiry while being guided at every step by the one who has already traversed this path.

Still those who are not fully qualified will not be able to sustain their faith in the teacher as the process becomes tough, ie, when they have to renounce their fancy imaginations about the reality regarding body, world and their God. So they leave the teacher half way and come back to their ignorant outlook. Others who were able to sustain faith in the teacher and in the path shown, along with intense desire to know the truth follow the teacher and the path. As a result they will be able to initiate a sincere enquiry (vichaarana) on the reality of themselves, on the world around and even God they worship. They enquire into the reality that pervades all the three states (waking, dream, deep sleep) and recognize the unchanging Consciousness.

Where did we go wrong and hence seemed to miss reality?

- Even though the sentiency belongs only to Consciousness still we attribute it to the mind and miss the glory of Consciousness in spite of its presence in our experience.
- This is as silly as assuming that the spectacles we wear are the cause for the vision with which we perceive the world around.
- The Sun is seen with the light of the Sun itself. In the same way Consciousness is known by Consciousness itself and not the mind which is insentient.
- Until you transcend the reality of the Sun it is the only source of light.

Homework

When you wake up, who is the one seeing this world? It is the Consciousness but not the mind as it comes and goes and cannot be apart from the Consciousness. Till you sleep, there is only Consciousness and you cannot be other than it. Recognize and remain as Consciousness.

Points to Ponder-33

If you are getting carried away during the half an hour meditation then the most important thing is that you are knowing that you are getting carried away. Who is knowing that you are getting carried away? Consciousness is knowing it. Then the focus on the obstruction will be shifted onto Consciousness. There is nothing more to do than to remain as Consciousness.

Stages of Recognizing and Remaining as Consciousness

Stage 1: Recognizing the unchanging principle within us which is Consciousness

- Who is knowing the Consciousness? It is not the mind which is knowing about the Consciousness because the insentient cannot know about the sentient. Only the sentient can recognize the sentient. Hence, only Consciousness is knowing about Consciousness.
- Even if you feel that the mind is knowing about Consciousness who is knowing that the mind is knowing about Consciousness? It is the Consciousness.
- Can this Consciousness get carried away? No.

But how can I ignore the fact that I am getting carried away?

- Here we are not ignoring the fact that you are getting carried away. Instead, we are addressing it in a very positive way. Slowly it will become a reality that this carrying away is not possible.

By recognizing Consciousness we are recognizing the unchanging principle in us experientially i.e., the Reality which is devoid of change.

Stage 2: Comprehending Infinity

- You cannot comprehend Infinity with the mind because the mind is insentient (as it is continuously subjected to change) and appears to be sentient due to the presence of Consciousness.
- So we initiate to comprehend Infinity by taking stand of Consciousness which alone is real and sentient.

How to comprehend Infinity:

Where do you remain as Infinity naturally in your day to day life?

In deep sleep we remain as peace (Infinity) and we are conscious of it. We naturally remain as Consciousness which is conscious of the Infinite Existence. When Consciousness remains as Consciousness it is always there as Infinity (peace/devoid of limits).

Enquiry to prove that we naturally remain as Infinite Conscious Existence in deep sleep:

Is there Consciousness in deep sleep?

Yes.

How do you know that there is Consciousness in deep sleep?

After we wake up from deep sleep we are conscious of the fact that we have slept well. It is possible to say that we had slept well only because Consciousness alone is there in this deep sleep.

Are you there in deep sleep?

I exist as nothing other than Consciousness in deep sleep but not as body and mind.

How do you know that the Consciousness is Infinite in deep sleep?

You know that you are happy in deep sleep. You are happy only because you remain as Infinity (peace) without any limitations in deep sleep.

Through this enquiry we can say that in deep sleep we naturally remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.

What is the state, other than deep sleep, where you remain naturally as Infinity in your life?

The happiest moment of your life.

- When there is a desire there is an effort to fulfill the desire. When the efforts are fruitful the desire is fulfilled and then you seem to be happy for a few seconds. In those few seconds of happiness Infinity remains as Infinity. So Consciousness remained as Infinite Consciousness.
- In these happy moments the happiness comes from within you due to the Consciousness owning up its Infinite nature and not from an external factor. In fact consciousness is always there as Infinite Conscious Existence or peace or happiness only. But we do not seem to have its experience as it is veiled by desires. When we are focussed on one particular desire for time being and if that gets fulfilled, we seem to end up in a desireless state for few moments. Then the underlying natural presence of infinity as peace seems to come to our experience. But because we are ignorant of the fact that it is our natural state, we assume that the peace or happiness is result of fulfilling a particular desire on which we were focussed on just prior to that experience of happiness.

Can I not experience Infinite Consciousness unless I am in deep sleep or unless I fulfill a desire to create a happy moment?

- You can experience Infinite consciousness even outside of deep sleep state or happiest moment. Deep sleep state and your happiest moment are only natural states given to you to help you recognize Consciousness.
- By remaining as Consciousness you need to investigate and find out whether that Consciousness has any limits.

What do you mean by limits?

- Every object has a definite shape. For example, your body has a shape. That shape is a boundary for your body. If you are asked to draw the map of India you will draw the boundaries of the country. This is because you feel the nation is limited by these boundaries which can be called as the limits. This can be applied to every object. So, everything which has a finite shape has limits.

Does Consciousness have any limits?

- In our experience, Consciousness does not have any boundaries so it is unlimited. This also means that Consciousness is Infinite (peace).

Now you readily have a portal to be happy at any given moment:

Am I Conscious? Yes. Does this Consciousness have any limits? No. Then you remain as this Infinite Consciousness, whose other name is happiness.

Why do some people say that they are able to comprehend their real nature to be Consciousness, but they fail to appreciate its Infinite nature?

It is because they have not even comprehended Consciousness. They are imagining Consciousness with their mind, which is limited. So they assume some aspects of the mind to be Consciousness. Later they will try to find if this imagined Consciousness has any limits. They are bound to fail because they are trying to find the limitlessness in the limit which is not possible.

Homework:

You have already recognized Consciousness. Now you have comprehended its Infinite nature. With this, you can remain peaceful without any effort. Experiment on this and then review your experiences.

Obstruction to meditation means the disturbances which trigger you to be identified with the body-am-I notion. Sometimes the disturbances will come once in a while and at other times they will come as a continuous stream where you will not even identify that the peace is disturbed. If the peace is disturbed then that means that there is something that is triggering you to associate with the limited. What are those that are triggering you? Usually the obstructions will come from the world around you or from your own body. We will find a way to resolve these obstructions with the help of step three.

Step 1: Recognizing the unchanging Consciousness. This means that the Consciousness is not limited by time, to such an extent that it is the substratum for the time itself.

Step 2: The unchanging Consciousness has no boundaries. Hence it is Infinite in nature which means that it is not limited by place. It is everywhere(All pervading)

Step 3: Consciousness is unlimited from the standpoint of objects. To comprehend this step, we need to first understand what we mean by limitation due to objects.

Example

On this table we placed an object like TV. Now TV occupied that table completely. Now you cannot place one more object of equal size like an aquarium on the same table at the same time. Because the space on the table is already occupied by TV. There is limitation of space on the table

as it is already occupied. You can place one more table and have an aquarium on that, but you cannot have it on the table on which TV is already placed. Hence we say that space has limitation with respect to objects.

For anything to be considered Infinite it must fulfill three criteria:

1. Should be unlimited by time
2. Should be unlimited by place
3. Should be unlimited by objects (the objects should not have the capacity to limit it)

Here space will fulfill two criteria ie unlimited by place and time. But it seems to fail the third criteria ie unlimited by object.

Because, when an object is placed in a particular space, the object occupies that particular space based on its dimensions. In other words there is no more empty space present in that location.

Hence it is said that space has limitation with respect to objects

Nothing can fulfill these criteria except the Consciousness.

How is the Conscious Existence unlimited by objects?

- For this to be possible no object can cause a limitation in Conscious Existence. But how can an object exist and still not cause any limitation? Let us look at this answer through an example.
- How can a wave exist in water and still not cause any limitation to water? Wave cannot be a limitation for water as water alone is present in and through the wave. In the same way objects cannot be the cause for limitation to the Conscious Existence if the Conscious Existence alone is present in and through the object.

How can you prove that there is only water in and through all the waves?

- All waves have Existence in common along with fluidity. The waves may differ in size, shape, and name but they can never be devoid of Existence and fluidity. Hence we say that fluidity and Existence is not owned by any particular wave. On the other hand they seem to equally share that. Then to whom do all these two features belong to? They belong to water. How can you say so? Even in the absence of waves, water exists with the feature of fluidity. So water alone is appearing as all the different waves.

How can you prove that there is only Conscious Existence through all of objectivity?

- The whole objective phenomenon is felt through perception (sounds, forms, etc.), sensations, and thoughts. All these have two things in common: they exist and they are known (illumined). The Existence and being illumined are common to the entire objectivity just like how the Existence and fluidity are common to all the waves. Can you talk about an object that exists and is not being illumined? You cannot. Even imaginations have Existence and are illumined. Without these two features you will fail to locate an object.
- To whom do these features belong to? This Existence and illumination belong to your real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence. How can you say so?
- Even in the absence of perception, sensations, and thoughts, Reality remains with the features of Existence and Consciousness.
- So we can say that Reality alone is there in and through all the manifestations and as the manifestation itself. To make this clear we can take the experience of deep sleep state. In

deep sleep state even though there are no manifestations but still the Infinite Conscious Existence is there.

- Dream state is given to us to know how the Infinite Conscious Existence alone appears as all the objects that are there in the dream. Similarly all the objects in waking state are only manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- So we can conclude that this Conscious Existence is not limited by the objects of waking state. It is Infinite from the objects standpoint just as it is Infinite from the standpoint of time and place.

Summary:

- Step 1: Consciousness is unchanging, i.e, it is not affected by time. It remains constant.
- Step 2: Consciousness is Infinite from the stand point of place (space) too ie it is all pervading.
- Step 3: That Infinite Conscious Existence alone is manifesting as every object. (unlimited by objects too)

If you understand this properly no object can challenge you anymore and make you take the standpoint of body and mind. If an object comes to disturb you, you will immediately see the Reality of it by knowing that it is nothing other than the appearance of Infinite Consciousness Existence.

HW: Meditation (remaining as you were in deep sleep while you are awake)

- **Step 1:** Recognize your real nature as the unchanging Consciousness.
 - “Are you conscious while doing this meditation? Is this Consciousness unchanging?”
- **Step 2:** Observe whether this unchanging Consciousness has any boundaries/limitations.
 - “Does this Consciousness have any limits in your experience?”
- **Step 3:** Own up your real nature as this unchanging and limitless (infinite) Consciousness.
- **Step 4:** Confirm this recognition with naturally available experience of infinity which is deep sleep.

After Meditation (use these three steps while winding up your meditation or when you feel disturbed while in meditation)

- **Step 1:** Reconcile the understanding that you are Infinite Conscious Existence with the objectivity (the body and the world around).
 - Acknowledge the fact that all the objects including the body and thoughts have one thing in common - Conscious Existence. This means that Infinite Conscious Existence alone is manifesting as all these objects.
- **Step 2:** Reconcile step 1 with your experience of dream.
Just as how the Infinite Conscious Existence in deep sleep manifests as the dream, all the finite objects of the world in waking state are also manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence

- **Step 3:** You have discovered that there is nothing in the world that can challenge your peace because everything is in fact the appearance of that peace itself. Reassure yourself with your discovery that logically you cannot be apart from peace.

Points To Ponder-34

In the last few discussions, we have dealt elaborately on Mantra-2 about ratham and bruhath which means changeless Infinity (Infinite Conscious Existence). We discovered our real nature to be this Infinite Conscious Existence. Further, we discovered that this entire objectivity is also an appearance of Infinite Conscious Existence from the standpoint of Reality.

Here, our aim is to have an experiential understanding that this whole manifestation is an appearance of Infinite Conscious Existence but not to simply gain some information on it.

What do you mean by experiential discovery/understanding?

Let us understand this with the example of faith in God.

- We believe that there is God because it is mentioned in the scriptures and was told by many people who have read them.
- In the path of knowledge also, we should have some belief in what is being said. Then, you will be introduced to your real nature being Consciousness which is Infinite (peace).
- When you pursue this path with faith in it, you will finally end up in having an experiential recognition of your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence.

Mantra-2 Continued

The entire objectivity is nothing but Infinite Conscious Existence. In this Mantra, we are defining what the objectivity (names and forms) is.

The entire names and forms in the universe are put into seven headers. They are:

1. Body and mind
2. All other beings
3. Those whom you adore the most (God). The real nature of God is Infinite Conscious Existence. But to enable us to get connected to this formless principle, it manifested as a form called God.
4. The modes of worship
5. All the five elements
6. All the marine life
7. All the plants

All of these are nothing other than the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Let us revise the three step Infinity meditation and check whether it is in our experience or not.

1. Recognising our reality to be Consciousness. If you know this, then you know that Consciousness is not subjected to change with time (it is unlimited with time). This means that if this is in your experience, then you will not worry about this recognition being lost.
2. This Consciousness is not limited by space. It is all pervading (Infinite). That which is not lost with time is itself peace/happiness which is in your experience without the need for any apparent external factor.

3. By recognising that the Reality is not limited by objectivity, you know that this peace, which you have owned up as your real nature, is not affected by objectivity. There is nothing in the world that can challenge your peace. '

If you are able to remain as peace by default, there is nothing more to do.

When you share this knowledge with someone, what could be their reaction when they hear about the Reality of the entire manifestation?

1. They would accept the knowledge from their heart and discover the Reality.
2. They will hear out of regard for you even though it does not make any sense to them.
3. They will not accept what is being said and will insult you for wasting their time.

The Upanishad is now telling us how the people in the third group will argue against you in the next mantra.

They may say that the entire life on this planet is supported by the ability to breathe. If one breathes only they are alive. When you cease to breathe you are declared as dead. Life on this planet is dependent on the capability of inhalation and exhalation. They will ask you if you have seen a living being who does not breathe or a dead being who is still breathing. If your answer is no, then you have to accept that the cause of life is the ability to breathe and not any of your wild imaginations like Infinite Conscious Existence.

Homework

How will you convince a person that life is not sustained by just breathing but there is a Reality which is sustaining this life? Read the next three mantras (3, 4 and 5) and find out the hint which the Upanishad is giving to answer those who argue against this knowledge.

Belief in God

Most people believe in God not because they have an experience of God but because they have faith that by believing in God, their goals will be achieved. The rest of the people are mostly atheists.(who don't believe in God)

How can we define God?

God is the creator (Brahma), sustainer (Vishnu) and destroyer (Shiva). He is a superpower. We can also define God as omniscient (has Infinite knowledge), omnipotent (the source of all power) and omnipresent (all pervading).

How does a non-believer argue against the presence of God?

1. Do you have an experience of this God which was described above? (Or) Do you have an experience of God, who is said to be all pervading, within you?
2. All the happenings at the individual level (Ex: breathing,etc...) or cosmic level (Ex: Earth rotating around the Sun, etc...) happen spontaneously. God does not play a role in the spontaneous function of all these things. Nothing is compelling them to function.

Upanishad answers such questions through mantras 3, 4 and 5.

Mantra-5 (na pranena na apanena...)

Life is not sustained just because of the spontaneous activity of bodily organs- lungs for breathing, heart for pumping blood, etc...Their independent functioning itself cannot justify taking ownership of life on this planet. Spontaneity is not responsible for life on the entire planet. They seem to function seamlessly because of a power outside them on which everything is dependent.

I believe in only what I see. I believe that spontaneity is the cause of life because that is what I experience and see. If I cannot see a power which is the cause of life, how can I believe it?

- What you experience need not be the truth. The prater of someone saying that they only believe in what they see is like a child saying that a car moves only because of its four tyres. A child who plays with a tyre (rolls the tyre with a stick) will believe that the four tyres are the cause for the movement of the car when in reality this is not true.

The message that we want to convey to the atheist through the above example is given in Mantra 4.

Mantra-4 (Asya vistransamaanasya...)

Just as an invisible power is propelling the activities of various devices, there is a power which is propelling the functioning of the body.

There is something in the body whose presence is the cause for life. How do we recognise it?

A solar light is only reflecting the Sun's energy. It is not independently producing light. In the same way, there is something within the body whose presence is the cause of life and whose absence results in death. This entity is called as God by all the religions of the world. It enables everything to take place including the so called spontaneous activities at the individual level and also at the cosmic .

What exactly is God is clearly told in Mantra 3

Mantra-3 (Urdhvam pranam unnayaty...)

Vishvey deva upasathe

- The activities of all the sense organs are because of this power. Life appears to be meaningful only because of these sense organs. Even if one of them is impaired we feel that life is miserable.
- Every sense organ is different in their physiology and anatomy with diverse functions. Upanishad is saying that they are all functioning because of one power. What is that power?
- We may say that it is the mind because the utility of all the sense organs is dependent on mind. The sense organs are of no use if there is no mind. Mind appears to be the perceiver of information gathered by the senses and also directs the senses. But if we enquire into the

functioning of the mind, we will know that it is inert. It is simply taking commands from the intellect. It is the intellect which is directing the mind.

- The thoughts which we entertain are based on the intellect. So, is the power the intellect? No, because intellect becomes sentient only because of the presence of the sentient principle. The intellect, mind and sense organs (body) gain sentiency because of this sentient principle. They all seem to be acting as independent conscious entities because of the presence of the source of the sentiency. What is this sentient principle? It is Consciousness or awareness.
- Right now, what is it that is enabling you to comprehend what is being heard? It is Consciousness. Can this Consciousness be missed? It cannot be missed even if you want to miss it. It is there in your experience right now. You only have to recognize it.
- You exist only because you are Conscious and cease to exist for all practical purposes when you are not Conscious. So, in a way, Existence is depending upon Consciousness. Even though they cannot be separated, for practical purposes, we say that Existence depends on Consciousness.
- Even latest developments in quantum physics conclude that 'Consciousness determines existence'.
- The common name given to Consciousness is God. It is there within us always. All we need to do is discover it.
- When we are caught up with this body-mind notion we say that God is present within the body as Consciousness. This will enable us to atleast accept concept of God to be Consciousness. But this will usually be an imagination in the mind just like any other imagination because you are still giving reality to the body (which is as such inert). Unlike all other imaginations, this is a constructive imagination as it will pave way for comprehending Reality as it is. The Reality here is the Infinity which is the substratum for everything within and outside the body.

So, these three Mantras are saying that it is the Consciousness which is the cause for life at the individual level and at the cosmic level.

Points To Ponder-35

We always refer to deep sleep as our true nature, but we think about it after we wake up. So how can I experience it within deep sleep itself.

Who wants to experience? It is Consciousness. Then how can you experience it if it's anyhow there as itself. When we are going into deep sleep then all the gross objects and our gross identifications with the body is also gone. If a dream appears then you will have identification with the subtle body and subtle world. In deep sleep there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence based on our experience. Then if you say I need to experience it in waking state again you're trying to make it a possibility of the body in the waking state to enter deep sleep state. As long as there is a waking self, there is no deep sleep and when deep sleep starts naturally the waking state ceases. You don't exist as the body mind apparatus in deep sleep state. You only remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.

You don't have to worry in deep sleep (about experiencing consciousness in deep sleep) as you're peaceful there. In deep sleep there is no waking self. When you say I am aware in deep sleep then that cannot be deep sleep. At the most we can say that it is a dream in which you're aware of the deep sleep state. But in deep sleep, Consciousness alone remains as Infinity. Because of deep sleep experience we can say our real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence. In waking our body and mind will cloud our understanding.

Now the most logical and practical question should be - how can I experience Infinite Conscious Existence in waking? If that alone is there, why am I not knowing it? Isn't that a great loss?

In our meditations we have used portals to recognise our real nature. The unchanging Consciousness is not limited by place and time so it is Infinite (peace). When thoughts come and interfere in this recognition, you say that you're conscious of thoughts or sounds. Then your attention goes to Consciousness which was already there.

Nothing is going and coming anywhere, but the Consciousness which is already there in us is beginning to manifest more clearly. Then if you're not diverted further by any thoughts or any external stimuli then that Consciousness which is not veiled will come to your experience. Then you're exploring its limitations by which you recognize that it is limitless or all pervading in your experience. The quality of this state is exactly like deep sleep- it is like experiencing deep sleep while you are awake.

The objects also cannot limit this recognition because that reality alone manifests as all these objects around us. So, in and through all these objects, there is reality alone and taking the shape of the objects because they are existing and are being illuminated or known. Then you continue with all your daily activities by remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence.

What happens after death?

All religions answer this question to some extent in order to fulfill the curiosity of their followers. Here we will see how Lord Yama (the deity for death and dharma) answers this question through the following Mantra.

Mantra-6 (Hantata idam pravaksyami guhyam...)

Before we look into the view of Yama, we must understand the importance of this topic. Is it just to satisfy your curiosity or is there any other higher purpose? If Upanishad started an expedition looking into the events after death, then it is obvious that it is not meant just for inquisitive minds and has a higher purpose.

What is the purpose to discuss about post death events?

- Those who plan their life with an eye on their future are considered to be intelligent people. They see the future as an effect and the present as the cause. They assume life to be more worthy if they exert with an eye on the consequences of their actions.

Note: To fulfill your physiological needs, you need to be like this. But excessive preoccupation with the future to such an extent that you get emotionally stressed out because of psychologically dwelling in the future more than the present is discouraged.

- The Upanishad knows how the human mind works. So, it is mentioning about afterlife events to inspire us to plan and live a life with an eye on the broader implication that the present life has even in the distant future.

What is the distant future which the Upanishad is talking about?

- The Upanishad is saying that death is not a dead end. It is only a pause to life in the physical realm/ gross realm. Life continues at the subtle plane even after death. Again you experience the physical realm after this pause.

How will life continue after death if everything that has been acquired during life will be gone with the body?

To understand this, you need to understand about our three bodies (sareera thrayam)

- The Upanishad has dissected the body at a very subtle level and has found that there are three bodies. They are
 - Gross body: The body which is externally seen.
 - Subtle body: The body that is not seen externally but known internally as mind, intellect, memory, etc. by its owner.
 - Causal body: It is not seen externally or known internally but its presence cannot be denied. It is interpreted through logic based on our experience. It is the cause for the other two bodies. This is because it bears the impressions that are generated due to the actions in our life.
- After death the gross body will perish but the causal body will move out and start a journey to find a new gross body. This enables life to continue after death.

What happens during death?

- The separation of causal body from gross body is called death.
- During death, the body and mind are destroyed but not the impressions gained in the lifetime which are stored in the causal body.

What determines the exit of the causal body from the gross body?

- It is the Prarabdha karma which determines the exit of the causal body from the subtle body.

What is Prarabdha Karma?

- The latent impressions that are responsible for the present birth (the karma which has started to yield its results) is called Prarabdha Karma.

So, the latent impressions which are responsible for the present birth determine the exit of the causal body from the gross body which is called death.

What is the source for this Prarabdha Karma?

- Any action that we do or any thought that we entertain will be registered within us as a samskara (impression) in the causal body. For example, when you concentratedly hear the satsang, an impression of that sort is created in the causal body.
- These impressions are of three types:
 - Sanchita Karma: Total impressions gathered in all our lives till now including those that are being gathered in the present life is called sanchita karma.
 - Aagaami Karma: The impressions that are meant for future lives are called aagaami karma.
 - Prarabdha Karma: The impressions that influence the present life is called prarabdha karma. A small portion of the sanchita karma which governs the present life is prarabdha karma.
- As soon as the prarabdha karma exhausts itself, you will die.
- So, during death, the causal body which stores the impressions in the form of sanchita karma will leave the gross body and will further determine the future course of events.

How do we fare after death?

- Upanishad is saying that what happens after death is a secret (guhyam). This secret is told in the next Mantra.

Mantra-7 (Yonimanye prapadyante...)

There is no uniformity in what happens after death. It depends on the person. Some will be born as human beings and some will be born as plants/animals. The reason for this non-uniformity is the samskaras (impressions) that an individual has acquired based on his actions while living.

Will there be a new birth immediately after death or will there be a time lag?

This is also not uniform for all beings. Some enter other bodies immediately after death but others do so after a time lag.

What is the cause for the difference in the manner they are reborn?

Yada karma yada shrutham:

- As per the knowledge/understanding you possess you take birth. If you pursue any action, the cause for that action will be the knowledge you have about that action.

- The understanding will determine the thoughts that you entertain, thoughts will determine the actions that you perform, these repeated actions will become habits, the habits will determine your character and by the time the character has formed, the corresponding impressions will be imprinted in the causal body. These samskaras will be the cause for rebirth.

Why is the Upanishad discussing these facts?

- Upanishad doesn't want us to be short-sighted in performing our duties. It wants us to do our actions by keeping in mind the future (after death) as they determine further births.
- Humans tend to do actions that satisfy desires and do not hesitate to violate righteousness/dharma. They feel that they are secured if they cleverly outwit the system of law.
- But the Upanishad is saying that this is not possible. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. For every action/ thought that we entertain, an impression will form. You cannot escape the formation of these impressions.
- So, keeping the future in mind, mould your personality and develop true knowledge (knowledge based on dharma/ adharma). Based on that knowledge, initiate actions. Based on that, the samskaras will form which determine a better life in this birth and thereafter.

Do all beings have rebirth as default?

No. Those who have access to the eternal principle and have comprehended that which is eternal and remain by default as it will not have rebirth.

The Upanishad is saying that the knowledge of the eternal brahma will always be a secret. Why? Everyone knows about that which has birth and death. But we are ignorant of the existence of the phenomenon which is not subject to birth and therefore doesn't have death. As it is not commonly known, it is said to be a secret. Furthermore, the extroverted minds cannot comprehend it.

Mantras 8,9 and 10 reveal the secret of knowledge. .

Those who have access to this secret knowledge will be spared from the endless cycle of birth and death.

Why is this knowledge a secret?

- This knowledge is about the eternal Brahma which is our real nature (Infinite Conscious Existence).
- Majority of mankind is deprived of this knowledge despite it being their real nature. They are averse to the possibility of even knowing their real nature. Only the people who have focused minds can penetrate into the reality of this objectivity and can find out their real nature.
- It is a secret because very few people have access to the path of knowledge about their real nature.

What is the cause of suffering?

- Even though we are immortal Infinite Reality, we assume ourselves to be limited and mortal entities. This very assumption is the cause of all suffering and hereafter puts us to endless births.
- This assumption is based on ignorance about our real nature. Knowledge alone can put an end to it.

Is our assumption so powerful to put us into endless births? How?

- Yes, a silly assumption that you're this limited entity is the cause of all this suffering which creates turmoil.
- Assumptions based on ignorance can be like assuming a rope to be a snake or a stump to be a ghost in the dark. Sometimes they can even kill people.
- If assumptions about external objects can be so powerful, won't the ignorant assumptions about one's Reality be potent enough to cause endless births? It can cause endless births.

What is the logic behind the wrong identity based on ignorance about your real nature leading to rebirth?

- The wrong identity is the identity with the finite by missing the Infinite or identity with the limited (body-mind apparatus) and missing the unlimited.
- It is the identity with the personality that is limited by time, place and objects. So this limitation will end up as the cause for unhappiness.
- Every human being, not only those in the path of knowledge, wants to get rid of limitations physically and mentally. They want to overcome limitations and remain peaceful, which itself is Infinity, even for a fraction of a second.
- We see a lot of people in the world getting happiness by entertaining desires for objects which may change. Without a desire even if they get the object, they will not get happiness from that. They have no access to remain as Infinity (happiness / peace) without pursuing a desire. So, they strive relentlessly to fulfill their desires. On fulfilling a desire, they experience a desireless state for a moment which means remaining as Infinity.
- Without understanding the logic behind happiness, (remaining as Infinity) they ignorantly attribute the cause of happiness to be the objects.

Note :- The objects only seem to be the cause which is not true because in that moment of happiness, there is no desire and also no object. There is only you remaining as your real nature which is happiness.

- With each such experience, they get convinced that there is happiness in the objects around and that encourages them to entertain more and more desires.

Identity with limitation (body-mind) → sorrow → desire for objects → strive and fulfill some of the desires → gain happiness → sorrow → one more desire → strive... this cycle goes on.

- Majority are sorrowful naturally because they have identity with the limited. So they strive for happiness through desires for objects. In the end, they gain happiness which is short lived. If desire is not fulfilled they are unhappy and even if the desire is fulfilled also they are unhappy as the happiness will not last forever which leads to sorrow.

- In this process, they will die. In the moment of death, there will obviously be many unfulfilled desires. All these desires become samskaras and are stored in the causal body as sanchita karma. They will play an active role in the destiny of an individual after death by shaping rebirth.
- These are all adding to the countless desires that are already there as samskaras carried from the previous births.
- After death, a few samskaras are grouped and packed as prarabdha karma. This will influence the course of events in the next birth (where and to whom to be born). Due to this the future birth will be determined. Nature is only facilitating to fulfill our unfulfilled desires.

Ignorance -> Individuality -> Limitation -> Sorrow -> Desires -> Die in the process of fulfilling desires -> Rebirth

So, those who derive identity from the limitation will have rebirth. Rebirth gives you an opportunity to fulfill your unfulfilled desires.

After death, when the body-mind apparatus is eliminated, where is the scope for samskaras to exist?

- Even though the gross body is eliminated after death, samskaras are still there in the causal body. They derive their existence from the Infinite Conscious Existence which is the substratum for all the three bodies (gross, subtle and causal).

Some people may doubt that all of this is a grand imagination. They cannot accept that there is Consciousness after death acting as the substratum for all the impressions generated during life and that itself is the cause for the events after death leading to rebirth. Upanishad deals with such kinds of doubts in the next Mantra.

Mantra-8 (Ya esha suptheshu jagarthi...)

Upanishad is answering the question in such a way that we can verify after death events yourself.

How can we verify after death events?

- Death, as per our experience, is like deep sleep where everything ceases. There is nothing physically or mentally.
- Rebirth is like dream experience. In dream, we will have a separate body-mind apparatus which experiences various people and objects in the dream world. If you have multiple dreams, then we can understand from that experience how there can be multiple births after death.
- A dream is either totally different or has some resemblance to the waking state. Sometimes we feel that the waking state has an impact on the dream state (the waking thoughts/experiences may appear in a dream). Similarly, the events of the present birth will have an impact on the next birth.
- Just as dreams are created to fulfill the unfulfilled desires which have not materialised in the waking state, rebirth is also a chance to fulfill unfulfilled desires in this life.

There is some resemblance between death and deep sleep and also between rebirth and dream experiences, but how can we accept Consciousness to be their substratum?

- Consciousness as the substratum for the entire phenomena is there in our experience. Hence it cannot be denied. How?
- Even in deep sleep there is still something which is awake and that is the cause for all dream experiences. This is Purusha (Consciousness).
- Upanishad further said that Consciousness represents purity (sukram ie white). Something can only be called pure when it is one without a second (advaita). Purity is further pointing out to Brahma (Infinity).
- In deep sleep there is the existence of Infinite Consciousness.
- Upanishad is also saying that Infinite Conscious Existence is Amrutham which means immortal or indestructible. Anything that is indestructible is changless. Infinite Conscious Existence remains unchanged despite the change in the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep). What is there as the reality of deep sleep alone is there as the reality of the waking and dream state as well. The three states are different from each other, but from the Reality standpoint they're the same as manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence. It is manifesting as nothingness in deep sleep, as subtle images in dream and as gross manifestations in waking.

Let us discuss

1. Consciousness is the cause for desires, why?
2. How can you work without accumulating samskaras?
3. How do you get rid of samskaras that are already accumulated?

Points To Ponder-36

How is Consciousness the cause for desires?

View 1

- This question seems to be a thought-provoking one because everyone knows that Consciousness is Infinity where there is no chance for desires as desires are finite. So, how can Infinity be the cause for finite?
- Consciousness is considered to be Reality because it is a changeless principle. Desire is a change. For a change to exist it needs the substratum of a changeless principle. Existence and Consciousness does not belong to the desire even though it appears to be. Consciousness and Existence is imparted to desire by Consciousness. So, Consciousness is the substratum for the appearance of desire.
- Consciousness is the cause for desires because it is the only true entity.
- Example: What is the cause for the delusion of a snake in the dark? It is the rope because the existence of the snake is derived from the rope. When there is no rope, even the snake is not visible. In the same way, Consciousness is the cause for desire.
- We can also say that once desire is fulfilled you will get back to Consciousness alone. So, in a way Consciousness is only the cause for desire.

View 2

- Desires are taken as a synonym for dream and waking. How? Desires in the waking state are the cause for dreams (unfulfilled desires are manifesting subtly as dreams) and unfulfilled desires of life (along with those of the previous lives) are manifesting as rebirth (waking state). What is essentially manifesting as dream and waking? Consciousness. If you agree with this, then you also have to agree that Consciousness is the cause for desires as desires are the cause for both the dream and waking states.

View 3

- The only real entity is Infinite Conscious Existence. So, everything in this Universe has to be its manifestation including desires.
- Desire by itself is not an issue. But when you feel that that desire is yours (an individual desire), then that is a problem. The problem is ignoring the Reality and bringing the unreal as real.
- When you clearly appreciate the illusion of individuality there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence and whatever manifests, it is only its manifestation.
- A man of knowledge will also have desires despite not having rebirth. Here, because there is no individuality all the desires are sublated as they are directly the manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence. There is no 'I' to own up the desires and cause psychological suffering.

How can you work without accumulating samskaras?

We can discuss this answer in two ways. One way is to prevent the samskaras from accumulating to an extent and the other is where the samskaras will not accumulate at all.

1. Path of Devotion

- If you do any work as it is, then you are bound to allow the impressions to accumulate. For the impressions to not accumulate, do the work as God's work and offer the result to God . Whatever the results are, they are His prasadam. Then, you are not affected to some extent and think that whatever happens is His will.
- This will give you some clarity which will encourage you to take up the path of knowledge. Through knowledge you will find a method where this samskaras will not accumulate at all. How?

2. Path of knowledge

- You know your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence experientially with the help of shravana, manana and nididhyasana. Finally, through firm knowledge of your real nature you will remain as Reality .Then, the most cherished thing until now, which is individuality, will be gone. When there is no individuality then there is no anchor for the samskaras to hang on to. Even though the actions are performed, there will be no samskaras developing.

How do you get rid of samskaras that are already accumulated?

- The impressions in the form of sanchita and aagaami karma are accumulated with this individuality. In this birth, by living a righteous life with values and having selfless devotion and selfless service, if you gain knowledge and expose the illusion of individuality then further whatever actions you do, you will not accumulate samskaras.
- In all your previous life, if you have not undergone the process of gaining knowledge then the individuality is active. But, in this life if you have understood the illusion of the individuality then the foundation onto which the sanchita and aagaami karma hang on will be eliminated. Then all the samskaras will disintegrate due to lack of a foundation to hang on, the moment you have a firm understanding of the illusion of individuality. Then all the impressions are sublated.
- The prarabdha that has started to yield its result will continue but there will not be any further accumulation. They will live a life based on prarabdha. As soon as the prarabdha ceases there will not be any rebirth.

What is individuality?

- Individuality is the non-apprehension of Reality as Infinite Conscious Existence that has apparently given birth to the presence of individuality.
- Finally there is only Consciousness

If Consciousness is one without a second, how will it be the cause for manifesting unfulfilled desires of waking as dreams?

- If you are asking any question from the highest level of advaita it means that you are asking that question from the standpoint of that which is one without a second.
- Now we are going to own up that experience of Consciousness.
- Consciousness is one without a second which means that it is Infinite. This Infinity must exist so we say Infinite Existence. This Infinite Existence can be told to exist only when you know that it exists. So, it is Infinite Conscious Existence.

Is there anything apart from this Infinite Conscious Existence?

- There is nothing. Why? If there is anything independent apart from this Infinite Conscious Existence then there is a limitation for Infinite Conscious Existence. Conscious Existence will lose its Infinite nature. So, there is nothing which has independent existence or independent Consciousness apart from Infinite Conscious Existence.
- You cannot say that Conscious Existence is Infinite and that there is something apart from Infinite Conscious Existence at the same time. If you say that there is something apart from Infinite Conscious Existence, then it is only there in your imagination.
- Everything in the Universe, including the Universe, is an imagination if you assume that they exist independent of Infinite Conscious Existence.

How about the body?

- Even the body is an imagination if you assume that it exists independent of Infinite Conscious Existence. But at the same time, this body is real as a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Example: If you say that a wave is independent of water, then we say that it is there in your imagination. But the same wave is real as the manifestation of water. In the same way, everything in the universe including your body is an imagination if you assume that it exists independent of Infinite Conscious Existence. But they are real if you recognise them to be the manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Can we say that everything exists as a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence?

- Yes.

But there is one thing that is not the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence. What is it?

- It is the ego (body am I notion). Ego is veiling the Reality (Infinite Conscious Existence). Infinite Conscious Existence and ego cannot co-exist. Only one who has comprehended the illusion of ego by the strength of their knowledge will comprehend how everything is the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- If you say that the ego is there but at the same time everything is a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence, then that whole statement is a grand imagination. Unless you expose the illusion of ego, you have no right to experientially own up that everything is a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Role of Enquiry in true comprehension of advaita (one without a second)

Right now, I am Conscious. You as Consciousness is Existing. Who is Conscious of that ego? It is Consciousness Existence. Here, you immediately took the stand of Conscious Existence which is the substratum even for the i (ego).

Previously, Infinite Conscious Existence has been veiled by your negligence into inquiring the reality of what i is. This has given a scope for this i to manifest. But if you have enquired then there is no scope for i to exist as you have owned up Reality to be Conscious Existence which is Infinite. If you take the standpoint of Infinite Conscious Existence then everything will be its manifestation.

When you say that Consciousness is one without a second, from a state where ego has no role, then you are taking the stand of Consciousness which is one without a second.

How will it be the cause for manifesting the unfulfilled desires of waking as a dream?

- Everything you assume to exist should ultimately borrow their existence and Consciousness from that which alone is truly existent and is conscious of.
- So, we can easily conclude that Infinite Conscious Existence alone is there as the waking as the unfulfilled desires generated in the waking, and as dreams.

A man of knowledge will not have rebirth because he has recognised his identity with Infinite Conscious Existence thereby rendering the individuality ineffective for gathering samskaras. Then how will Reality which is Infinite carry impressions from waking to dream even for a man of knowledge?

- The entire dream experience is not the result of the impressions of the waking state. There can be dreams which are the result of impressions from the previous births too. So, you will sometimes come across certain dream experiences which come without a relation to waking state.
- A man of knowledge will have dream experience due to prarabdha which is also the cause for waking state experiences.
- The exhaustion of prarabdha will take place not only in the waking state but in the dream state too.

Who is in search of freedom?

- First we must clearly know what 'freedom' means here. What does one want freedom from? One would want freedom from ignorance/ the effects of ignorance. If you are in search of liberation/freedom, you are basically seeking freedom from the clutches of ignorance.
- So, the one who is seeking freedom from ignorance is by default the ignorant. The ignorant is the one who is in search of freedom. The ignorant are driving for liberation.
- Ignorant means one who assumes themselves to be the body-am-I notion. Is this body-am-I notion real? It is real from the ignorant standpoint but an illusion from a knowledge standpoint.
- So, for an ignorant, from his standpoint, he is striving for freedom. The search for knowledge is done by the ignorant and is valid due to his ignorance. But from the knowledge standpoint it is foolish.

Ex . Ten innocent villagers who crossed a river.

Here searching for the tenth man is justified from the ignorant stand point. But it is foolish from the knowledge stand point.

Points To Ponder-37

How do you know that you are possessed by ego (or) How do you recognise ego?

- In this context we are not taking ego as pride but we are taking it as the body-am-I notion. It cannot be sensed externally by our actions or conduct. Its presence can only be recognised internally.
- The presence of ego can be diagnosed by the symptoms it manifests like absence of peace, sense of lack, feeling of insecurity, discontentment, boredom, etc. All these may or may not need a reason to manifest.
- 'I' is a sort of ownership associated with the body/mind complex which expands and is recognised through 'mine' (mama). It is a feeling of my-ness (my people, my religion, my caste, my country, my thoughts/desires etc.,) For the purpose of tradition or social life you can have these feelings based on mine upto a limit. But in the path of Self knowledge, where the goal is to recognise undisturbed peace, they have no value.

How can Infinity be the cause of finite (desires) when all my desires are elevating individuality?

- From the state of experiential aspect of advaita there is nothing but Consciousness. Once you know Reality, there is nothing other than that. It is one without a second. Then the desires appear in Infinite Consciousness Existence or peace and again they dissolve back into peace.

How do we handle desires?

- Recognise the ego in the desires and expose its illusion. Then you remain as Reality or peace.
- Let us understand the ways to handle functional desires with an example. You want to eat something (desire). You have two choices.
 1. Take away the ego based desire and remain as Infinite conscious Existence.
 2. With the peace alone, which is not disturbed, fulfill the desire. So, the desire arises in peace, is maintained in peace and is fulfilled or unfulfilled in peace. In that moment due to some circumstances if that peace is disturbed then recognise that you are possessed by ego.
- If you are able to appreciate the existence and consciousness aspect of desire and it is in line with the dharma then it is a manifestation of Consciousness. If not, any desire is a problem when it is challenging your peace.
- One more angle to understand this concept is that Consciousness is trying to experience itself in an ignorant person through the medium of desire. Desires on fulfillment will only culminate as the experience of Infinite Conscious Existence.

In a nutshell,

1. Consciousness is absolute and one without a second. Even when we examine a desire we know that it exists and is being known. So, desire is a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence only.
2. Infinite Conscious Existence as peace manifests as this desire and again this desire gets dissolved in this Infinite Conscious Existence.

3. Desire (restlessness) is Kali and Consciousness (peace) is Shiva. Shiva has no issue with Kali, because He knows it is not different from himself. There is no compromise with the innate peace. He sees nothing other than Himself. So, He is not disturbed. But, one who is caught up with the body-am-I notion gets disturbed by the desire.

If reality is Infinite Conscious Existence, then, from where did this ego arise?

- Theoretically, it is not possible for ego to arise, just as it is impossible for a snake to arise from the rope. But we cannot deny the practical experience of ego in the day to day life just as we cannot deny the experience of an illusionary snake on seeing a rope. If we enquire the cause for that snake notion we will conclude that it is not the rope as such, but it is because of the semi darkness that is there in that location.
- In the same way the cause for ego is due to the ignorance about your real nature. As you do not know your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence, the Consciousness and Existence aspects will settle on the body mind complex and give birth to ego.
- We cannot negate the Consciousness and Existence aspects that we experience in the ego. But, when the Infinity aspect of conscious existence is not recognized, then naturally the Consciousness and Existence aspect is given to the body mind complex which gives rise to the body-am-I notion (ego).

We are naturally recognising that we are body am I notion. So it is Reality. This Infinite Conscious Existence is a delusion born out of imagination due to perverted intellect. How can you prove this statement to be false?

- Truth of the statement is not based on the support it receives from the majority of the population. So, Infinite Conscious Existence alone is Reality and ego is a fictitious entity born only out of ignorance.

Is there any logical basis to support the above statement?

- Truth means that which is changeless. Infinite Conscious Existence alone remains changeless.

In that case some people may argue saying that “Ego also is changeless because the body-am-I notion is there from birth to death. So ego only is Reality and Infinite Conscious Existence is an illusion.”

- Body-am-I notion is constant for majority only in waking state. But in dream state there is no waking ego but only the dream ego. In deep sleep it is absent completely. So, that which is changing cannot be Reality.

What if someone says recognising body-am-I notion is spontaneous and effortless, so it is real?

To comprehend the answer to this question we need to analyze our spontaneous search for happiness in objects and deep sleep.

- We are happy when a desire is fulfilled, hence we believe that the desired object is the cause for happiness. Then, who is that which is experiencing this happiness? We attribute it to a finite individual due to ignorance. This habit of attributing the cause for happiness to objects and the experiencer of that happiness to an individual is natural from childhood and gets strengthened with each experience. But, in reality we remain as our real nature unknowingly

in fulfilling the desires. So, in a way all these desires on fulfillment are facilitating us to remain as our real nature which is Infinite Conscious Existence and which alone is there as happiness or peace. But due to ignorance we do not know that.

So, from this we understand the cause for the entire humanity to be in pursuit of happiness which is because of a deep rooted desire to remain devoid of limitation or individuality or ego which obscures their real nature.

To put this in another way, the entire humanity strive relentlessly for happiness because they are not content with the 'body am I' notion (limitation) and hence invent ways to temporarily be free from this notion. In this process they find happiness either on fulfillment of desires or in deep sleep. But in both these occasions they are in fact remaining as their real nature.

Hence even though it appears from the superficial stand that 'body-am-I' notion is natural to everybody, still on enquiry we find that the tendency of constantly trying to go beyond this limitation of 'body am I' notion is spontaneous and natural. This constant effort to be free of 'body am I' notion is spontaneous and natural because 'body am I' notion is unreal and what is real is that state which is devoid of this 'body am I' notion.

So we are unconsciously trying to get rid of this foreign body called aham or 'body am I' notion even though we assume it to be real, because it is not our real nature and because it is veiling our real nature.

Eg. Dust in the eye, or thorn in the leg

If this ego is so firm from childhood, is there a chance to eliminate it?

- Yes, there is a chance to eliminate it because it is unreal. To prove its unreality, you need to inquire with a pure and one-pointed mind.
- As soon as you wake up, and also in your meditation, you may be possessed with ego. Then, be Conscious of the ego. That which is Conscious is existing and is Infinity. Then, where is this ego? You are using the ego to remove the ego.

Can there be thought without ego? Is ego synonymous with thoughtlessness?

Why will we have such doubts?

1. We are familiar with egolessness generally in the deep sleep state where there is no mind (thought). So, it is obvious to assume that egolessness is a synonym for thoughtless.
2. Meditation is also a reason for us to conclude that egolessness is a synonym for thoughtlessness. When nididhyasana is rightly done, we will try to stop the flow of thoughts by trying to recognise and remain as Reality of thoughts and aham (ego). The reality of thoughts is Infinite Conscious Existence. So, over time, we will develop a feeling that egoless state is the same as thoughtless state and we conclude that there will not be thoughts without aham. But, this assumption is not true.

Why is this assumption not true?

- Initially, you need to tame these thoughts to have a successful and productive self-enquiry. Only then can you remain as your real nature. Or else, you will be lost in thoughts or in sleep where there is no chance for self-enquiry.
- Then, once the thoughts are controlled we enquire and recognise our real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence. At the same time, we are also recognising the illusion of ego which is the body-am-I notion.
- Later, actions at the level of the body and thoughts at the level of the mind are not a problem. With the clarity that our real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence, we can continue our thoughts with the strength of knowledge.
- Example 1-Learning to drive a car:
Initially, while learning to drive a car, our focus will only be on driving and not on any other activities like talking, turning on the radio, etc.. Later, when you gain an expertise in it, you drive effortlessly.
In the same way, if you expose the illusion of ego or when you can remain as your real nature then you can effortlessly engage in physical and mental (thoughts) activities without losing your peace. It only depends on the strength of your recognition.
- Example 2- Water and waves:
If a wave identifies itself only as a wave just like all the other waves, then the enquiry to recognize its real nature will be difficult. But if it can comprehend its real nature to be water, then the other waves are no longer an issue because it sees only water in and through all these waves.
- There is a difference in perception before and after you recognise your real nature. But, there still might be some confusion on the experience of Reality because of deep sleep state and meditation. You might think that it is not possible to remain as Reality if you have thoughts. But with firm knowledge, it will be clear that we can still participate in our day-to-day activities without our peace being disturbed.

After clearly recognising our real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence what will happen to the entire objectivity (names and forms) and our internal thoughts?

- They get sublated. If you recognise Infinite Conscious Existence and remain as it, then the thoughts and objectivity fail to retain their individual existence apart from Reality. They are seen as spontaneous manifestations of Reality alone.
- So, the change is not external but internal. Internal means within us there is a recognition.

Example- Screen and images:

Initially, images do not know what the screen is. Later, when the image inquires about the screen, it regulates its thoughts and activities slowly. Then, it recognises the screen and realises that the screen itself is appearing as all images including itself.

Conclusion:

Depending upon the strength of your knowledge you will have the capability to engage in all the activities and even the thoughts without losing your peace. You have the capability to remain as the Infinite Conscious Existence and appreciate everything as its manifestation.

Some people argue waking state is not possible without ego or mind. For any thought to exist you need ego. So, in the same way you need ego for this thought of Infinite Conscious Existence too. You cannot be in the waking state without ego. If at all you want to experience egolessness and thoughtlessness you can go to deep sleep.

- Infinite Conscious Existence essentially is not a thought. It is an experience by itself which is the essence of every experience. Every experience is happening to you because of Consciousness and now you are able to appreciate Consciousness and remain as it. Then that existence of Consciousness as Infinite will reveal in you.

Logic for comprehending how Infinite Consciousness Existence is not a thought but experience :

Any thought has three parts: subject, object and process of thinking. These three should be distinct from each other. Thoughts are held by the subject on one side and the object on the other side. In the initial stages of self enquiry, you assume yourself to be ego (which can be a thought) until you know your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence. So, here, the subject is ego (individual) and we assume Infinite Conscious Existence to be the object. In this context the ego is trying to know the real nature which is Infinite Conscious Existence.

- Later, you know that Infinite Conscious Existence cannot be an object because it is one without a second and a subject (ego) cannot remain apart from Infinite Conscious Existence and know it. So, Infinite Conscious Existence cannot remain as thought because there is no subject and object. The subject and object have merged into one.
- You assume that ego is the cause for all thoughts and is therefore the cause for the thought of Infinite Conscious Existence. But once you realise that Infinite Conscious Existence is not a thought but an experience by itself, then there is no scope for ego.
- With firm knowledge, Infinite Conscious Existence alone remains and there is no scope to assume that it is a thought thereafter.

Who will understand that Infinite Conscious Existence is not a thought?

- Only those who have experience of Infinite Conscious Existence will understand this. Infinite Conscious Existence remains as a thought for those who have not comprehended it experientially.

Sometimes, even though you realise your real nature to be Infinite Conscious Existence without any doubt, you tend to assume yourself to be the body and mind. This is a natural tendency. This is because of the lack of firm knowledge. You still have some doubts in you. The solution for this is through shravana, manana and nididhyasana. Through shravana you get rid of ignorance. Through manana, any residual doubts will be cleared and through nididhyasana (meditation), you will no longer assume yourself to be the body and mind.

Homework

Do meditation in the following lines:

1. Recognizing the unchanging principle within us which is Consciousness.
2. Comprehending Infinity. The unchanging consciousness has no boundaries.

3. Own up your real nature as this unchanging and limitless consciousness and confirm this recognition with naturally available experience of Infinity which is deep sleep. Now, you have the peace of deep sleep and at the same time you are awake.

(Please refer to “points to ponder 33” for a detailed explanation of these steps)

Note: Now we are in the awakened deep sleep state where there is no ego (egoless state) This is in a way to make you familiar with this egoless state.

4. With the eyes closed you are remaining as your real nature and appreciating sounds. You are allowing the sounds to appear in you (Infinite Conscious Existence).
5. You are also appreciating the sensations of the body in you (Infinite Conscious Existence).
6. Now open your eyes. The first image you see is your body. The body is appearing in Infinite Conscious Existence like every other image.
7. As a thought comes we recognise it to appear in this Infinite Conscious Existence.

Note: Earlier you are familiar with the egoless state and the thoughtless state too. Now in spite of the thoughts, sensations, and sounds you still remain as Infinite Conscious Existence devoid of ego. There is no disturbance or obstruction for you to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.

8. In this process if you feel your identity is with the ego, don't convince yourself saying that it is the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence only. Instead go back to step 1 and know that it is Consciousness alone that is knowing and it alone is there as Infinity. You remain as the Infinity and in that alone everything is appearing. Now you can remain as your real nature and still have thoughts without ego(body-am-I identity).
9. Just like how dream appears in deep sleep, now we have recognized through this meditation that the waking(sounds, sensations of the body, thoughts, images,etc.) is appearing in Infinite Conscious Existence which is the Reality of deep sleep.

Points To Ponder-38

Nididhyasana is not an effort, it is an effortless abidance as peace itself. It only adds value to your daily life. With meditations our goal is to recognise and remain as our real nature and inturn perform our daily activities with the background of peace.

People who are not always peaceful (those who did not get rid of the body-am-I notion) also need not worry. Why?

- Getting rid of the body-am-I notion is a gradual process for many of us because we have cherished this notion for a long time. We are habituated in chasing after momentary pleasures.

Then what is the way out?

- We have to convince our mind again and again about the futility of chasing after happiness and the worth of living with happiness.

How can you always remain peaceful?

- Choose your lifestyle and also your life partner (if applicable) in such a way that will be conducive to live a happy and contented life.
- Never forsake shravana, manana and nididhyasana until you master the art of leading a peaceful life by default and that peace is not lost even in adverse situations of life. If all these are followed you will slowly get rid of the body- am -I notion and will have peace by default.

Some say that “I got good clarity with shravana and later i have resolved all my doubts too. Now peace by default is not there as such. But, I console myself by thinking that I have knowledge as such but still due to prarabdha I am not having peace. I do not like to further engage in meditation or nidhidhyasana because I already have knowledge”. They even quote various scriptures and words of some saints to justify their sorrowful state of mind. Now what is the advice for such people?

These people are suffering from a syndrome called Nidhidhyasana deficiency syndrome - NDS

Advice to such people is what is the use of knowledge if it cannot offer you peace , a peace which is the substratum for all the activities of the body and mind, a peace that is not lost even in adverse situations in life.

Such a peace is reserved for those who have firm knowledge and not for those who have partial knowledge. Hence we need to pursue shravana. Manana & nidhidhyasana till we have peace by default and not justify disturbed states of mind in the name of knowledge.

Mantra 7: Mentions about the fate of an individual after death. The next birth depends on the knowledge gained along with the deeds and actions done in the present birth.

Mantra 8: It is giving us experiential proof for the possibility of rebirth based on our natural experience of deep sleep and dream. Deep sleep is equated with death and dream with rebirth. Just as Infinite Conscious Existence is the substratum for the experience of all the three states (waking, dream, and deep sleep), in the same way, that very Infinite Conscious Existence is the substratum for the causal body which is facilitating rebirth (after death experience).

Refer to “Points To Ponder-35” for detailed explanation of Mantras 7 and 8.

Thasmin lokaha sritaha sarve: All the worlds are supported by Infinite Conscious Existence.

What is meant by all the worlds?

- Based on this context we can interpret the worlds as dream world and waking world.
- Furthermore, according to Puranas there are 14 worlds that are experienced after death, 7 above the Earth and 7 below the Earth. Earth is in between them. Hence it can be either heaven or hell.

Where would you like to live? In heaven or in hell?

- All the possibilities lie before you in the present birth itself to make this Earth a heaven or hell. If you have knowledge about your real nature, you have a new vision and Earth is a heaven. Then you can live in heaven on Earth which is called New Earth (according to Eckhart Tolle).
- It is a hell when you live with the effects of ego, fear of insecurity, fear about next birth etc.
- So you will definitely want to live on an Earth which is like heaven.

How can you have access to New Earth?

- By recognizing the substratum for this manifestation you have the access to New Earth.

Tathu naathyethi kaschana: Nothing can transcend Infinite Conscious Existence or Brahma. This means that nothing can exist apart from Reality.

Yethath Vaithath: All this is that only. The entire objectivity starting from body and mind to the manifest world is the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Ex: Screen and images: When we are not aware of the screen we are lost with images. With the experience of deep sleep we come to know that the substratum for images is the screen. Can there be images apart from the screen? No. So, we can conclude that all the images are manifestations of an illumined existent screen. In the same way the entire objectivity including our body and mind are all manifestations of the very Infinite Conscious Existence.

Conclusion of Mantras 7 and 8: Mantra 7 gives insight about rebirth. Mantra 8 is giving a proof for rebirth and also saying that non-dual knowledge can bestow freedom from ignorance about Reality in this birth and put an end to anxiety about rebirth too. So with firm knowledge you can live the rest of your life with peace and contentment and make this Earth a New Earth.

1. How do we reconcile the following 2 statements?
 1. What you entertain/think about at the moment of death will determine what you become in the next birth.
 2. We also learned today that firm knowledge about Reality will put an end to rebirth.

Let us have a detailed discussion about death .

- Moment of death is basically unpredictable. There will not be a voluntary will at the time of death because the majority of mankind will go into a state of brief amnesia (loss of memory) followed by unconsciousness. Finally, death will approach. Rarely, people leave their body consciously. So, even if you want to remember about God or Self at the moment of death, you may not be successful because of the complex phenomenon that is associated with death.

Reconciling both the statements:

- That which is predominant in the subconscious level will surface up at the moment of death and that will facilitate rebirth. This means that what you remember at the moment of death will facilitate rebirth.
- At the same time we are saying that a man of knowledge will not have rebirth. How?
- Everybody will have a fear of death. Due to that, their mind will be disturbed (with the thoughts of fear) which facilitates rebirth. But a man of knowledge naturally knows his real nature or knows the illusion of birth, death and rebirth. So, naturally he remains composed (calm and peaceful) at the moment of death. He remains as his real nature thereafter too and so he will not have rebirth.
- In deep sleep, that which is predominant subconsciously in you will surface up as dreams. Similarly, if our identity with real nature is firm, then by default, it will be dominant in the subconscious and will surface up at the time of death too. The one with firm knowledge will remain as Reality alone at the time of death.

Can you conquer death even while living?

- If you are firmly established as your real nature, contrary to your identity with body-mind, then it is like a new birth. You have cast off identity with body and mind. Thereafter, you remain as Infinite Consciousness for the rest of your life which is not touched by death.
- In a way, the main aim of Katopanishad is to conquer death while being alive.

How are death and deep sleep similar and what makes them seem to be dissimilar?

- Just as in death, in deep sleep too, you remain oblivious to your surroundings including your body. In that way, they both are similar. But there is a big difference in the mode of our approach towards them.
- We approach deep sleep willfully with enthusiasm. Contrarily, we approach death unwillingly with reluctance and fear. If possible, we try to avoid death because we know that we will not come back after death. At the same time, we assume we come back from deep sleep the same way we have entered into it.
- There is a certainty with regard to your existence after deep sleep and there is no certainty with regard to your existence after death.
- All human beings are naturally scared about the uncertainty about their very existence when death approaches. This uncertainty is what leads to fear which in turn is the cause for reluctance to die. Some are scared to even hear about death.

How can we not be worried about death when it can happen to anybody at any time (even in deep sleep)?

- We will not be bothered about death if we learn the art of dying.

The Art Of Dying

Step 1: Get rid of fear about death.

- We can get rid of fear to some extent even when not relying on knowledge about real nature. How?
- Let us assume that the body is no longer compatible for fulfilling desires. Then God has arranged a compatible or suitable body in the next birth to fulfill the unfulfilled desires. So, to avail that new body, you need to discard this old body. If you know this, you will never be afraid of death.
- Death is not an on toward event but rather a necessary event.

- The creation of God is so compassionate in a way that sometimes, even before a person dies, a new body is ready to continue their life. The exit of the old body and the entry into the new body will be at the same time. This is for people who have led a virtuous life.
- So, there is no need for the fear of death.

Step 2: Get rid of anxiety about death

Why do we have anxiety about death?

It is because of the assumption that you will not come into this body after death. To get rid of this anxiety, we need to understand that there is no difference between deep sleep and death.

- In deep sleep there is neither subject or object. There is no experience of any sort. In death too there is no subject and object.
- In death and deep sleep, even though there is no subject and object, you remain there as Infinite Conscious Existence. So, both the states are similar.

We have the possibility to wake up and get back to this body and world and continue with day to day affairs after deep sleep. But this is not possible after death. Then how are they both similar?

- Your belief that one who is sleeping is the same after waking is an assumption. From an ignorant point of view it is true. But from the absolute knowledge standpoint **the one who is sleeping is different from the one who is waking up.**

What is this absolute knowledge standpoint?

- Infinite Conscious Existence alone is appearing spontaneously (moment to moment) as this manifestation. Just as dreams are spontaneous manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence even the waking state is the spontaneous manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- “Infinite Conscious Existence alone is manifesting as all the three states” is there in our experience. Now let us try to understand its spontaneous manifestation in reference to the dream state.
- If that alone is manifesting as dream 1 and dream 2, then are the dream characters in both the dreams the same? No, because Infinite Conscious Existence chose to manifest as one form in dream 1 and as another form in dream 2. There will be no similarities in the way both the dreams appear because Infinite Conscious Existence chose to appear

spontaneously and differently. However they are similar in a way that both are manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence.

- In the same way each waking state is a spontaneous manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence which are essentially different from each other even though they seem to be the same.

But we still feel that we are waking up to the same body which was there when we fell asleep. How can we say that both the bodies are different?

- Being in the waking state and understanding that each waking state is different from another is not possible because we are caught up with various notions of giving reality to this waking state. Since there is no difference between waking and dream states from manifestation standpoint, let us try to understand with reference to dream. Later, we can apply our conclusion to the waking state.
- Let us say that you are experiencing a dream in which you are performing some activity. Followed by this dream is deep sleep. Then, you may get another dream in which you are doing the same activity. As you are caught up with the dream you will think of it to be real just like how you think that waking is real in waking state. Finally, when you wake up, you will realize that both these dreams are different and do not have any connection with each other. Even though the forms appearing in the dreams seem to be the same, they are not.
- Waking is nothing but a long dream. When you apply the same logic used above for two long dreams, then you will easily comprehend that the body before falling asleep is different from the body after waking up. The first waking state is one manifestation and the other waking state is another manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence. In other words, Infinite Conscious Existence is spontaneously manifesting as different waking states. So the body in one waking state is different from the body in the next waking state.

Are waking state and dream state similar? Is there no difference between both the states?

- There is no difference as such. We can only say that there is one difference which is waking state is lengthy and the other is a short one. This observation is valid only because we are speaking from the viewpoint of the waking state. But during the dream, you will assume that the dream state is lengthy too. In the dream state, the dream is real (just like waking state) until you wake up.

If waking state is a dream then what about different waking states?

- They are like different dreams. Just as there is no relation between two dreams, so too there is, as such, no relation between two waking states. The only continuity that is there between the states is their substratum which is Infinite Conscious Existence.

Infinite Conscious Existence manifests as one dream, then as another dream, later as a waking state which is one dream and as one more waking state which is another dream. So, Infinite Conscious Existence will continuously manifest spontaneously with which it has no issue because it alone is there as all the states. Who has issue? The one who is not taking the stand of Infinite Conscious Existence will have various imaginations for which it is not liable. Just as there can be similar dreams so too there can be similar waking states.

Now how do we overcome anxiety about death?

- Your anxiety related to death is caused because of the fact that you will not come back after death.
- You will not be anxious to go to deep sleep because you come back to the same body when you wake up. But, as we have seen from the absolute knowledge standpoint, you are getting back to a different body whenever you wake up. Infinite Conscious Existence is manifesting spontaneously moment to moment as all the objects in the waking state including your body. It manifests differently each time, according to its will which makes it possible that whenever you sleep and wake up you are not essentially the same even though you feel to be the same.
- Just as we fall asleep without anxiety, we must not have anxiety when death approaches, as deep sleep and death are not different from each other.
- If this is understood clearly, then the notion of anxiety related to death is shattered from the standpoint of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Step 3: To get familiar with death itself

- You already understood that there is no difference between death and deep sleep from the Infinite Conscious Existence stand point. Then death is like entering deep sleep and deep sleep is like entering into death.
- While falling to deep sleep assume you are dying or get familiar with death. If you have a dream recognise that as rebirth and on waking recognise that as another birth.
- It is like when waking up-one more birth,dream-one more birth,dream after dream-birth after birth,numerous wakings-endless births.

- When you sleep you are getting familiar with death and coming back to a new life.
- This will eliminate any residual fear and anxiety you have within you regarding death because you have already died many times before the actual death approaches.
- Ramanamaharshi simulated death and woke up as a Jnani. His new identity is with Infinite Conscious Existence which is deathless. From that moment onwards He remained as Infinite Conscious Existence.

Step 4: Preparation to face the dying moment.

- You can prepare to face the dying moment by preparing to face the sleeping moment.
- When you lie down to sleep follow these 4 steps:

Preparation to face the dying moment,

1. Know the body lying inert.
2. Thoughts in the mind are gradually eliminated.
3. There is only awareness of the breath.
4. From that awareness we have appreciated the existence of the awareness which is Infinite. Remain at that moment as the Infinite Conscious Existence.

If this is done regularly then the same will repeat even when death is imminent. You remain as Infinite Conscious Existence without any fear.

Homework

Practice this art of facing death.

Points To Ponder-39

The art of living means recognising our real nature and living peacefully. Along with this you also recognise that this entire objectivity is a manifestation of Reality. The art of dying means the art of welcoming death. When death approaches, with the strength of knowledge, you will have the courage to face the dying moment and encounter it with ease in the same manner as you welcome deep sleep. You attain victory against death even while living.

Let us look at the first 2 steps that we discussed last week again to make them clearer.

Step 1: Get rid of fear of death

- Fear is a mental distress with regard to a specific or known cause for which you are fearful of.
- If you want a new body you need to discard the old body. A proper understanding of this statement will eliminate the fear related to death because death is not an onward event rather a necessary event.
- If the following beautiful verse from Bhagavad Gita is always in your memory then you will never dread death.

vasamsi jirnani yatha vihaya

navani grhnati naro 'parani

tatha sarirani vihaya jirnany

anyani samyati navani dehi

- This means that just as you discard old clothes and wear new ones, in the same manner death is only a process where you discard an old and damaged body and acquire a new body. So, there is no need to be afraid that you are losing the old body.
- It is also there in the tradition that just as you celebrate birth, in the same way you celebrate the death of the elderly people. Death is an opportunity to cast off the old body and enter into a new body. So, it is an event to celebrate.

Step 2: Get rid of anxiety

- Anxiety is the response of the body and mind to a non specific cause of danger.
- Eg Parents have anxiety regarding well being of children based on imagination.
Students have anxiety regarding the outcome of their examinations.

- In the same way we develop anxiety towards death based on imaginations we have regarding death.
- Anxiety towards death is because of the assumption that you will not come back to this body after death unlike in deep sleep where you get back to the same body upon waking. Due to this imagination you cannot equate death with deep sleep assuming that they are not similar.
- You do not want a new body that is unfamiliar to you which is like the saying “A known devil is better than the unknown angel”. The thought of not accepting a new body will make you even more anxious.
- To get rid of the anxiety you should have a firm understanding that deep sleep and death are similar. To have that in experience you should first dispel the notion that the body before you sleep is the same as the body when you are awake. To comprehend this you need to take the absolute knowledge standpoint.
- This absolute knowledge stand point can be understood through mantra 8 which we have seen in two ways.
 1. We have seen an experiential proof for rebirth as the manifestations in dream. Just like how you get dreams in deep sleep, you get rebirth after death.
 2. Comprehending the Reality pertaining to the manifestations of the waking state.
- To dispel the notion that the body while you are sleeping is the same as the body when you are awake we are taking both the views together. Then we are coming across a very new possibility and arriving at a logic based on experience.

Let us understand the logic by 3 aspects

1. Dream is a spontaneous manifestation of what is there in deep sleep.
 - What is there in deep sleep alone is manifesting as dreams contrary to the belief that the impressions of waking state is the cause for the dreams.

How is the cause for dreams, deep sleep but not the waking state?

Let us answer this with the help of our experience. Suppose someone has died which is apparent in the waking state. But it is possible that sometimes they may appear in the dreams. We know that they are no longer alive but still they appear in dream. So if we believe that the impressions of waking state appear in dream how can one who is no longer alive in the waking state appear in the dream. Hence the impressions of waking state are not the cause for the dream.

What is the cause for the dreams?

Dream is just the spontaneous manifestation of what is there in deep sleep.

2. There is no relation between dream and waking states.
 - Dream state has a direct relation with the deep sleep state alone but not with the waking state. However there is similarity between the dream and waking states. How?
 - You are there as a subject in both the states. Both the states have a beginning and an end. There are objective experiences in both the states. So there is no difference between dream and waking states. At the most you can say dream as mini waking and waking as long dream.
3. Waking also is a spontaneous appearance of what is there in deep sleep.

What is there in deep sleep?

There is Infinite Conscious Existence in deep sleep.

How can you say that alone is manifesting as dream and waking states?

- Mantra 8 is saying that Purusha (Infinite Conscious Existence) is creating and manifesting as everything. There is nothing apart from that.
- Let us see this from our experience. In waking, we can comment about our dreams and deep sleep. So, there should be something common between the three states. Or else you cannot remember your dream and also cannot tell that you had a good sleep.
- That which is common in the three states should obviously be Consciousness because that alone is there in all the three states and is conscious of three states.
- We can say that alone is manifesting because there is nothing other than that. If anything was there other than Infinite Conscious Existence in deep sleep, then we should be conscious of that. But we do not have such experience.
- This means that there is Infinite Conscious Existence alone in deep sleep and immediately after that there is a dream called a short dream and later waking state called a long dream. In between there is a high chance for the possibility of deep sleep.
- So, in deep sleep there is Infinite Conscious Existence and now a dream appears. It appeared from deep sleep. So, obviously this dream appeared from Consciousness.
- Now we can conclude that Infinite Conscious Existence alone is appearing as all manifestations as dream and waking states or short and long dreams.

- In other words Infinite Conscious Existence alone is there in deep sleep without any manifestation and it is there as manifestation in dream and waking states. So, the dream and waking states are spontaneous manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence.

We agree waking and dreams are manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence. But on what basis are you saying that both of them are spontaneous manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence ?

- In waking the Consciousness alone is spontaneously manifesting as waking state.
- In dream state the same Consciousness is spontaneously manifesting as dream.
- But we do not feel like that because we do not give importance to Consciousness in waking. We feel that it is an insignificant (negligible) thing. So, we will automatically give importance to the manifestations (objectivity) of the waking state and naturally think that these manifestations of waking state are the cause for the manifestations of the dream state too.
- But the reality is, the manifestations of waking state are the manifestations of Consciousness and exactly like that the Consciousness is appearing as those manifestations in the dream state.
- Between these states there is deep sleep where there is nothing remaining (no manifestation) which acts as a connection between them. There is dream 1, deep sleep and then dream 2. This means the Infinite Conscious Existence in deep sleep is appearing as dream 1 and later as dream 2.
- In the same way there is waking later deep sleep and one more waking meaning Infinite Conscious Existence is manifesting spontaneously as all the objects in both the waking states with no direct relation between the two waking states.

We are having anxiety related to death because of the assumption that you will not come back to this body unlike in deep sleep where you are coming back to the same body when you wake up. With the help of shruthi (mantras), our experience and logic we are proving that even after waking up from deep sleep you are not coming back to the same body. This can be comprehended clearly only when you analyse from the Infinite Conscious Existence standpoint. So, just as you glide into deep sleep effortlessly, the same can be experienced when death approaches without having any anxiety.

With step 2 we are confirming that everything is a spontaneous manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

What would be the implications of comprehending that everything in waking is a spontaneous manifestation of Infinite Consciousness in your life?

We are saying that all these appearances are the spontaneous manifestations of Infinite Conscious Existence. You have to understand clearly what is the difference between manifestation and spontaneous manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Mantras 9 and 10

(Agnir yadyko...)

(Vayur yadyko...)

Upanishad further explained in these mantras that the entire objectivity is the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence with the help of examples of fire and air. Both these mantras are almost similar. They are different with only one word. Mantra 9 tells about fire and in Mantra 10 fire is replaced by air. So, let us see these mantras together.

- It is a wonder to know that that which you cannot see is manifesting as everything. Let us see this with an example of fire.
- Fire does not have a fixed shape. Just because it does not have a fixed shape, we cannot say that it has no appearance since we can see fire.
- Fire doesn't have fixed shape, size, or colour. They are determined by the combustible substances involved in allowing it to manifest. It appears as the shape of the solid object it burns. Its shape differs when it is burning liquid or gaseous objects.
- Fire is everywhere, but it appears in a shape only when it is conducive to manifest. How is fire everywhere? We all can agree that atoms are everywhere. When they undergo fission or fusion, fire is emitted. So, we can say that fire is everywhere.
- It either manifests or it is there in its unmanifest form, but its presence cannot be denied.
- Fire is there everywhere. When it burns (manifests) it is not to think that it is there in that particular combustible material but it is there outside too. So, it is there universally but manifests wherever it is conducive to manifest.
- Similarly, air is there everywhere. It does not have any size or shape by itself but takes any size or shape of the container in which it is filled.

Let us take the application aspects of these examples of fire and air.

Swaroopam and Swabhavam

- There is no shape, smell, touch and size for this Infinite Conscious Existence.
- It alone is appearing as everything. It is the Reality (swaroopam) of everything.
- Water is the Reality and waves are its appearance (swabhavam). In the same way Infinite Conscious Existence is the swaroopam and the entire manifestation is its swabhavam. It is manifesting externally as the objectivity and internally as the thoughts.
- When you have a thought it is the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence. But, when you fail to appreciate the thought as the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence then it bothers you. There you are seeing thought apart from Infinite Conscious Existence. Due to ignorance, you are assuming thought to be an independent entity. Now, through knowledge you are recognising the thought to be a manifest form of Infinite Conscious Existence. Infinite Conscious Existence is swaroopam and thought is its swabhavam. Instantly the thought is divinised. Then, you will not be bothered by the thought unless you feel that the thought is 'my-thought'. In Infinity, there is no place for i-ness and my-ness.

Let us understand swaroopam and swabhavam with the example of Shiva and Kaali.

- Earlier we took Shiva as form and worshipped Him. By His grace we were bestowed with the opportunity to know His swaroopam. Then as our attempts to know His Reality were fruitful we recognised the entire objectivity as His swabhavam. So, Shiva's presence is there in the entire manifestation.
- Until now we took Shiva as the Infinite Conscious Existence and standing on Him is Kaali. We took Kaali as the manifestation of the entire objectivity.
- Now, we are taking the Shiva-Kaali example in a different view. When Shiva stands, he is Kaali. When Kaali lies down, she is Shiva. Here, the meaning of Shiva is taken as Infinity (shunyam-empty of entire objectivity). This Infinity is in our experience which is beyond the comprehension of the mind.
- This Infinity alone is manifesting as the entire objectivity. This objectivity is not manifesting on the background of Infinity. So, Shiva only is Kaali. In the same way, water only is wave and screen only is images.
- Our experience itself is Infinity. This Infinity, in unmanifest form is experienced in deep sleep. There, we remain as Shiva. When we wake up, we appear as Kaali in the manifest form which includes body, thoughts, emotions, and feelings along with objectivity.
- Kaali represents time. When you say tomorrow, then there is scope for space and in that space the entire manifestation/creation appears. So, time manifested as space or

accommodated space, which in turn accommodated or manifested as names and forms. Hence, starting from time and culminating as this entire manifestation is Kaali. Is there time in this absolute moment i.e. absolute now? No, there is only Infinite Conscious Existence. That is Shiva.

So, timelessness or eternity appeared as time i.e. Kaali. Just as the timeless deep sleep appeared as time in dream and waking.

- Shiva (Infinite Conscious Existence) is the potential form. When it takes the kinetic form (energy) it is Kaali. So, everything (including thoughts) is the spontaneous manifestation of Shiva.
- From the absolute standpoint of knowledge or the standpoint of Shiva there is no kaali (as an individual) in the dance of Kaali.

Why?

Because Shiva only is manifesting spontaneously as Kaali. Individually Kaali has no role. Every movement of Kaali is the spontaneous manifestation of Shiva.

Points to Ponder 40

Continuation of Mantra 9 & 10

- **Ekastha Sarva bhutanthantaratma:** Atma means Self. Antaratma means inner Self. Bhutantharatma means inner Self of beings. Sarva bhuta antharathma means inner self of all beings.
- It is the real nature of all the animate and inanimate things.
- With the examples of fire and air in the mantras 9 and 10 we have seen what is the Reality of the entire objectivity that is visible. It cannot be seen, heard or touched. But still you cannot deny its presence because it is there in your experience. Sometimes it is there as unmanifest (devoid of appearance) and at other times it is there in the manifest form (gross appearances).
- Bahischa: Upanishad used this term to denote the unmanifest (formless) aspect of Reality.

“Formless is appearing as forms”

- This statement is only partially true. The complete truth is that Reality is sometimes appearing as forms and sometimes it is there as without forms.
- In deep sleep and in meditation (nididhyasana) it is there without form. We are able to appreciate the thoughtless state in meditation for which Infinite Conscious Existence is the substratum. On this note we have to know that formlessness and thoughtlessness alone is not Reality. Reality is appearing as formlessness and thoughtlessness.
- In the waking and dream states it is there as gross and subtle forms including as the thoughts too. Who is getting these thoughts? The Reality alone is manifesting as these thoughts.
- In deep sleep you are conscious of nothing. This emptiness is not Reality. Reality is the one which is the substratum of this emptiness in deep sleep which is to be appreciated.
- Silence is not Reality but silence helps in the recognition of Reality. Reality is appearing as silence.

How do formless state and thoughtless state (silence) facilitate the recognition of Reality?

- Majority of the people find it difficult to enquire into the Reality of forms because we have developed strong opinions which strengthen the false notion that forms are real by themselves. Due to this we have various imaginations about the truth which make the recognition difficult. So, initially we need to appreciate the state of silence and then recognise the reality of that silence. For this we need to create some space in the mind by eliminating all the unnecessary thoughts. Then we need to enquire into the reality of the silence thus created.

Once Reality of silence is recognized, it would be easy for us to know that the same Reality is manifesting as the names and forms.

Mantra 11(Suryo yatha sarva lokasya chakshuhu....)

This mantra is showing us how to remain untouched by sorrow. Everybody in the world will try to eliminate suffering which is a universal phenomenon. With the help of this mantra we gain knowledge to remain untouched by suffering even though it is there.

What is suffering?

- It is a mental anguish.

What is the cause for suffering and how do people try to eliminate it?

- There can be many endless causes for suffering. For example parents will have mental anguish (like about the survival of their handicapped child) and sometimes children also will have mental anguish about their parents (like for an alcoholic father). Moreover there is suffering due to relationship issues, settlement in life, etc. Suffering can also be due to social causes like terrorist attacks, wars, famines, floods, pandemic, etc. There are some inevitable causes for suffering like disease, old age and death.
- The most important cause of suffering is worry and anxiety.
- Mankind will try to eliminate suffering by ignoring it thinking that time will heal it. They try to be preoccupied with other things in life and try to forget suffering. For this some take intoxicants and some share their sorrow with the people who care for them. Few people follow astrologer's advice to be relieved from suffering and others visit temples or ashrams to plead God and gurus and find some solace according to their temperaments. There are others who read books and hear satsangs to find some temporary relief to suffering.
- You should not try to mask the suffering but should take it as an opportunity to find ways to get rid of it once and for all through knowledge just like Arjuna did in Bhagavad Gita.

This Mantra is giving us an insight on how to remain unaffected by suffering even though it is inevitable. How ?

- **Ekaha Sarva bhutantaratra Na lipyathe Loka dhukena bahyaha:** By recognising the one Infinite Conscious Existence or by remaining as it, you remain unaffected by the sorrows in the world.

- Sun is said to be the eye of the world. It is through sunlight we have the vision of the world around. Sunlight spreads everywhere and illumines everything uniformly without any discrimination. In its light many holy and unholy events happen. In spite of illuminating the entire world, sunlight is not affected by the events that are happening.
- In the same way our real nature too, in spite of manifesting as everything, is not affected by sorrow that seems to arise from the body, mind and the world.

Reality is unaffected by suffering but what about my suffering?

- Your suffering will still be there.

Then what is the use if my suffering is not removed?

- There is a cause for all of your sufferings which has to be eliminated for you to be unaffected by it. What is that cause?
- That ultimate cause is the individual self which needs to be removed. The individual self is the entity which derives its identity from the body and mind apparatus. Individual self and suffering are the two sides of the same coin. This means that if you derive your identity with the individual self you are affected by suffering or vice versa.

How will my suffering end?

- The suffering will cease by putting an end to the individual self knowing that it is not real.
- But can you be there without an individual self? Is it there in your experience? Yes, in deep sleep. In deep sleep there is no body-am-I notion (ego) so we remain happy in deep sleep. In dream and waking states it appears different as dream ego and waking ego. So, it is always changing which makes it unreal.
- So, if the illusion of this individual self is exposed with the help of inquiry and knowledge then you remain unaffected by suffering.
- By inquiry you will know that your real nature and the reality of this entire manifestation is Infinite Conscious Existence which is unchanging in all the states and hence real. It is the only one which is appearing spontaneously however it wants to.
- There is no individual self but there is only Infinite Conscious Existence. That alone is appearing spontaneously as the cause of the sorrow, as the sorrow and as the apparent sufferer.
- So, suffering is there but there is no sufferer as the individual self. Until inquiry is done, it is the "I"(individual self) who is suffering but after inquiry the Infinite Conscious Existence appears as suffering and the "I" is removed as its illusion is exposed. Then there is no sufferer because you no more have the identity with your body(as my body). This identity

is shifted to the Infinite Conscious Existence which takes over and appears spontaneously as the suffering with no sufferer. There is sufferer only in ignorance.

- You remain as your real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence and in you the suffering is arising, staying for a while and dissolving back into you.
- The choice is yours to assume that you are the sufferer and suffer or have the knowledge of who you are and remain as the substratum for the inevitable sufferings that come across life and remain untouched by them.

Continuation of Mantra 11

If mantra 11 is understood well then you will be immune to all the sufferings. There may be suffering but you remain unaffected as there is no sufferer. We have proved the illusion of the sufferer by recognising the reality of the sufferer. To understand this clearly Upanishad is using the terms baahyaha.

Baahyaha: This knowledge is transcendental to ignorance and ignorance born sufferer. It is transcending the personality (body and mind).

- For example, there is rope which is real and a snake which is in our imagination born out of ignorance. Rope is transcendental to the snake and snake born suffering.
- In the same way our real nature is transcendental to the illusion born out of ignorance and also to the suffering thus arise.

Why do some people, in spite of hearing about the Reality, still suffer?

- For most people a casual hearing about the Reality is not enough because the principle is so subtle that you have to dive inside yourself and comprehend your real nature. Your recognition should be firm enough to eliminate suffering. But, for some people casual hearing is enough for a complete comprehension.
- You need to be qualified for hearing itself and later do manana and nididhyasana and clearly recognise Reality.
- Then with the strength of the knowledge you can easily come out of the so-called suffering.

Mantra 12 (Eko vasi sarvabhutaantaratma...)

This mantra is saying that the one who has comprehended the non dual truth will have access to eternal happiness. You will remain as eternal happiness itself.

How do we get this eternal or unending happiness?

Upanishad is giving some clues like atmastham, sarva bhutaantaratma, ekam rupam bahudaya karothe to own up this eternal happiness.

Atmastham: Recognise one's Reality as Consciousness.

Sarva Bhutaantaratma: That alone is there in all beings or the reality of all beings is Consciousness.

Ekam rupam bahudaya karothe: The reality of all beings that has name and form is Consciousness. The non dual truth appears as the name and form of the entire manifestation which seems to be diverse.

Why One Reality appearing as Many?

The answer to this question is that the question itself is wrong.

Cause and effect is at the level of multiplicity or duality. But, in non duality cause and effect is meaningless. The question "why is Reality appearing as objectivity" is asked by one of the forms, but that question is not relevant at the level of non dual Reality. For example one of the waves is asking why water is appearing in so many forms. Water has no issue with it because at the standpoint of water there is no wave. For water there is nothing but water. So, Reality remains in its non dual glory freely appearing however it would like to. The onlooker who gives names to the different forms of water is worried about the origin but not the water. The reason for the multiplicity is given by the one who ignorantly misses his Reality and assumes identity with the manifestation. If the ignorance is gone the question also ceases.

Continuation of Mantra 12

How does this understanding lead to eternal bliss (sasvathy sukham)?

- By analysing happy moments in life and happiness filled deep sleep we find that happiness means infinite which is Consciousness without limitations.
- Desires are at the level of mind. When the desires are fulfilled there are no more desires and the desirer too. Then you have unknowingly transcended the identity with the body-mind apparatus and you remained as your real nature.
- In that state which is beyond the body and mind you are one with the Reality which is infinite.
- Our real nature is Infinity which alone is there as both gross forms and subtle thoughts. It remains unaffected by them because it alone is there as these gross and subtle forms.

Happiness or Infinity is your real nature and remains unaffected by the gross and subtle manifestations. How?

- Infinity alone is there one without a second. It remains unaffected by the gross and subtle manifestations because it alone is there as these gross and subtle forms. There is nothing that can stand opposing it. So there is happiness alone or eternal bliss.
- There is no person to experience happiness but there is happiness alone which is eternal.

Homework

What is the reason for the majority not having the fruit of this wisdom “eternal happiness”? Clue: “anupáśyanti dhīrā”

Points to Ponder 41

Mantra 13 (Nithyo anithyanaam.....)

Everyone needs shanthi. The mantra is promising that if you understand reality you will have access to eternal peace.

What is the difference between happiness and peace(shanthi)?

- Generally to experience happiness, you need some object or happiness depends on objects.
- To be peaceful you can remain for yourself without the need of any objects.

Before we understand about this unbroken peace let us see about the causes of ashanthi. There are innumerable causes of ashanthi which vary with time, place and person. But all of them will share a uniform or common mechanism which ultimately culminates in ashanthi. This mechanism is based on a triad. These three things are the foundation for giving ashanthi.

Triad of ignorance

1. Assuming the world and the objects are real or changeless or imperishable.
2. Assuming the body and mind apparatus to be conscious by itself.
3. Assuming the existence of a super human entity which we call God and we entitle Him to fulfill the unfulfilled desires.

To understand the triad for ashanthi we have to go back to the time when we were not introduced to this path of knowledge about Reality. Then we all assumed ourselves to be nothing other than the body and that the body itself is a conscious entity. We assumed the world and objects to be permanent. So, we put time and energy into acquiring them. We also assumed God to be a wish fulfiller. All these three are assumptions that triggered a mechanism generating ashanthi.

What is the mechanism involved by which these three can generate ashanthi?

- The triad of assumptions will reinforce a behaviour pattern that will culminate in ashanthi.
- You assume yourself to be a limited conscious entity (body and mind) and this limitation is a discomfort that leads to ashanthi. This limitation born discomfort settles as inbuilt sense of lack and will be the driving force in one's life
- To get rid of this ashanthi you resort to the world (people) or realm of objects assuming them to be real and permanent. This will add on to ashanthi which you already have

- In our endless pursuit of acquiring the objects sometimes we succeed and sometimes we may not. Then we try to improve our success rate by bringing in the super natural phenomenon called God. We invest faith in God only to fulfill our desires. By this, sometimes the desires get fulfilled and sometimes they don't, culminating again in ashanthi.

How come there are some people who are leading a peaceful life though they are influenced by the triad of assumptions?

- It is not possible for anybody who is influenced by the triad to be peaceful. This can be due to the following reasons.
 - Your statement may be an objective imagination rather than a subjective declaration by the person you assume to be peaceful. In other words, you may think a person is peaceful but only that person will know whether he is peaceful or not.
 - Some people will get habituated to this life of ashanthi and consider that to be shanthi. They do not know that everlasting peace even exists.
 - We all sometimes experience fleeting moments of shanthi but that itself is ashanthi in disguise because of its fleeting nature. These fleeting moments are by themselves the cause of ashanthi. By the time you think that you have peace it slips away.

So, to know what this eternal peace (shanthi) is, we have first understood what ashanthi is and what causes it.

We can conclude that we are assuming that we are the limited body and mind which gives us ashanthi. We further think that the solution for ashanthi is to seek shanthi through objects. But we fail to notice that this search for shanthi through objects is not always successful and brings in the God principle. We use Him to make our search more vigorous. So, these three imaginations are going hand-in-hand and they are successfully leading to a perpetuated state of ashanthi.

Now, Upanishad does not want to provide a temporary solace from the triad of assumptions which lead to ashanthi. These assumptions are due to ignorance. Upanishad is trying to dispel ignorance through knowledge about our real nature, about the reality of this world and the objects, and the reality of God.

What is the solution for the problem of ashanthi that the Upanishad is recommending through this Mantra?

It is recommending the triad of knowledge as a solution for the problem of ashanthi.

The triad of knowledge

1. Chethana chethananam
2. Nithyo anithyanam
3. Eko bahunam yo vidhadaathi kamaan

1. Chethana chethananam: Consciousness among the Conscious

- Just because the body and mind apparatus is Conscious, we cannot conclude that Consciousness belongs to it. Body and mind by themselves are inert but they are rendered to be conscious entities because of Consciousness.
- Why can't we say that the body and mind are conscious entities by themselves? We all have an experience of being conscious or aware of the body. Just because we are conscious of the body does not mean that the Consciousness belongs to the body.
- Is it the mind that is conscious of the body? It appears to be so. But we have an experience of being conscious of the mind too. So, we cannot say that the mind is conscious of the body.
- It cannot be the intellect because we are conscious of the intellect too. We know how intellectual we are. So intellect cannot take the ownership of Consciousness.
- Consciousness does not belong to body, mind and intellect . It is independent of body, mind and intellect.
- Consciousness seems to appear in them but in reality all these appear or exist in this changeless Consciousness.

How can you say that Consciousness is changeless?

- Because it is devoid of change in your experience.
For example, right now you are aware or conscious of the words you are reading. Later, you will be conscious of another activity and so on. In this manner Consciousness is there in your experience from the time you were born without any change.
- The things about what you are conscious of change, but for the Consciousness as such there is no change. It is the same and changeless as per our experience.
- It is not subject to change even in the changing states of waking,dream and deep sleep. The objects that you are conscious of change in waking and dream states, but there is no

change to Consciousness. Even in deep sleep you are conscious. We can say this because after waking up you are conscious that there is nothing in deep sleep which means that there is Consciousness which is not aware of anything in deep sleep. In fact it is the continuous presence of consciousness between all the three states which is giving validity to these states.

Can we say there is a changeless Consciousness for every conscious being? Does every conscious being have an individual Consciousness?

- No because there is no experience of difference between the Consciousness of one person from the Consciousness of the other person.

Upanishad is trying to remind us that every body and mind apparatus is not conscious by itself but they are appearing in the Consciousness which is 'one' and it is there in our experience.

2. Nithyo anithyonaam

- Consciousness is eternal among the ephemeral. It is the indestructible among the destructible. That which is changeless is indestructible. Anything that is subject to change will get destroyed because they were once born and everything that is born will grow, decay and die.
- As per our experience the only thing that is changeless is Consciousness. Hence, It is eternal. There is one Consciousness that is eternal and changeless in which all the bodies, minds and the entire objective phenomenon that are subject to change appear.

Throughout our life we have invested energy in the the objects that are subject to change and in that process we are becoming prey to ashanthi

3. Eko bahunam yo vidhadhaati kamaan:

God or Isvara is defined here by the upanishad to be a non-dual phenomenon that fulfills the desires of all.

Do you have the experience of such a God as described by upanishad?

- We all have a belief in God rather than an experience of Him. The majority of mankind are believers of God. They all believe God based on the religion in which they are born. They choose that aspect or form of God that they feel will cater to their desires. If they are not satisfied with Him/Her they change the God or religion. In a way, everyone is in search of a God who will hear their wishes and fulfill them. Sometimes they may even bargain to give

God some things in return for the favors that they get from Him. Others even replace Gods with Gurus for the sake of fulfilling their wishes

Does your God or Guru fulfill all your desires?

- A sincere devotee will say no.
- An emotional God fearing devotee will not admit it out of fear that their God may get angry.
- So, reality is that God will fulfill your desires based on 'His' wish and not based on your wish list.

However, the Upanishad is saying that God is one and He fulfills the desires of everybody. We need to understand the intention of Upanishad by remaining close to our experience. Upanishad statement about God is "The non dual phenomenon that fulfills the wishes of all". That non dual phenomenon in our experience is Infinite Conscious Existence. This means that in a way Upanishad is referring to God as Infinite Conscious Existence which is fulfilling our wishes.

How can we say that the non dual principle (Infinite Conscious Existence) is fulfilling the wishes of everyone?

When all the responses are summed up there are three versions. Firstly there are no desires at the experiential level of Infinite Conscious Existence. Secondly desires may be there but they may not be fulfilled. Thirdly desires arise and they are fulfilled. To conclude Infinite Conscious Existence is there one without a second (Infinite). Through our experience we have recognised that it is not limited. So, remaining as Infinity and saying there are no desires is justified. Again Infinite Conscious Existence only is spontaneously manifesting as the desire, desire being fulfilled or remaining unfulfilled. Hence in this way we are syncing with the Upanishad statement that the non dual principle is fulfilling the wishes of everyone or Ishvara is there in everyone's experience as Infinite Conscious Existence fulfilling the wishes.

Application of the mantra 13

- In ignorance we assumed ourselves to be a limited body and mind apparatus or conscious limited entity. We assumed the fleeting world as the object of happiness. We pray to God to fulfill our desires in the realm of objects assuming that happiness is derived from objects.
- All of these by themselves create ashanthi. On one side we create ashanthi and on the other side we try to get out of it through 'means' which will only increase it.
- We are creating ashanthi by feeling that we are the body and mind apparatus. By feeling so, we have given a place for ashanthi to thrive within us just by having the notion of

being a limited entity. Aiming to come out of ashanthi we are in fact increasing it by chasing for objects which are ephemeral in nature and in that mad chase we are using God or Ishvara as a facilitator.

- We can come out of this ashanthi only by getting rid of ignorance. Through the triad of knowledge, we recognise our real nature as Infinite Conscious Existence and remove ashanthi. Ignorance is based on our imagination, but knowledge is based on our natural experience. So it is easy to own up our real nature.
- With the strength of our recognition (about our real nature) we remain further as shanthi itself. You also resist in chasing for happiness in the fleeting objects. You stop using God as the facilitator in the foolish chase. Finally you own up the eternal peace by recognising the reality of the world, objects and God.

Why can't the majority of people own up eternal happiness in spite of knowledge?

Thesham shanthi shasvathy na itharesham: The eternal happiness or peace is entitled to only who have knowledge. Only those remain as peace but others cannot.

- Upanishad says that 'those' refers to the bravest of the brave (dhiras) who have access to eternal bliss and not others.
- Who are the dhiras? They are the wise people who have a discriminative outlook. Only these people can get out of ignorance based on assumption. and own up the knowledge based on experience. They discriminate and know the difference between the assumption and the experience.
- Knowingly or unknowingly we have made the triad of ashanthi so strong that we are far away from our experience. Only the dhiras can discriminate and own up their experience which is there within themselves as the Reality.
- You need courage to own up the ever existing experience.

Tham athmastham anu pasyanthi dhira:

Tham athmastham: those who have recognised Infinite Consciousness (subjectively) as their Reality and remain as it.

Anu pasyanthi: Those who have attained the needful qualification, have taken the help of a teacher and scripture and have undergone uninterrupted shravana, manana and nididhyasana will have subjective recognition of Reality.

- As a result of a shift in identity (athmastham) you only experience Infinite Consciousness and the world and God are only its manifestations. By knowing your Reality you will simultaneously recognise the Reality of the world and God.
- You know the Reality of your own body and all other bodies and objects including Ishvara.
- Dhiras are the ones who have broken the orientation of objectification. This means that they have taken the stand of the eternal subject (which is Infinite Conscious Existence) for which nothing remains as objects. For example, until water recognizes itself as water, it only considers itself to be a wave and hence sees all other formations of water as its objects. But after recognizing its reality to be water itself, it ceases to see objects as there is nothing other than water.

What is the relation between eternal happiness/peace and Infinite Conscious Existence?

Infinity is the synonym for happiness or peace which is there in our experience. So when you take the identity with the Infinite Conscious Existence then, in a way, you remain as peace which cannot be disturbed. There remains no reason to be disturbed or interrupted or nothing can disturb the peace. Hence, you attain eternal happiness or peace. Nothing has the power to disturb your peace.

You take the stand of dhiraha and own up eternal happiness or peace experientially.

How to comprehend the concept of God in the context of recognising our real nature:

- Here, we are not denying God with form. We have all taken refuge in a God with form until now and through that we have developed some values in life. Later, by the grace of God, we were given an opportunity to recognise our real nature along with His real nature. We have recognised the manifest form of God as Consciousness which is the substratum of all experiences. God is present experientially in all of us as Consciousness.
- Even while praying to God we are praying to the Consciousness in God. From the Consciousness stand point there is no difference between you and God. There may be differences from the standpoint of body and mind but at the level of Consciousness there is no difference.
- However, we are denying the idea that God is only a medium to fulfill our foolish desires. God knows everything including what is right and wrong for us. God will only give us what is good for us. So, we must trust him to do what is good for us. We must not tell him to do various tasks as per our wishes.

What if someone says that they are getting peace by praying to God?

If someone says that they get peace by praying to God then that is also not wrong as they are surrendering their worries to God. By trusting God, they will spontaneously develop values in life. Then, they can be taught methods to recognise the real nature of God which are in fact the ideal ways to worship him.

Conclusion

Surrendering to God (saranagathi) means surrendering our misconceptions regarding reality. It means to remove our ignorance through the light of knowledge. So, attaining the blessings of God means to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence by exposing the illusion of the body-am-i notion. That alone is everlasting happiness as there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence.

Points To Ponder-42

The student has faith in the teacher that the teachings are made only for his benefit. But still he need not accept them until it is there in his experience. If what is being taught is not in his experience, then that means that there is a problem in the understanding of the teachings. There are some obstructions which need to be identified and eliminated. Sometimes a student may not even identify that which is obstructing his understanding experientially. He can only convey his problem clearly to the teacher that he is not able to enjoy the end result of the teachings. So an earnest student will pester the teacher till the teaching becomes his experience. In the same way, Nachiketha is put in a fix in the mantra 14 wherein he is trying to express his dissatisfaction. In a way, he is satisfied with the teaching and at the same time he is also dissatisfied.

Mantra 14

(Thade thadithi manyanthe anirdeshyam...)

To understand this mantra (Nachiketha's question) clearly we need to reconcile the previous mantras (11,12,13) because only after hearing those mantras Nachiketha landed with his question of doubt in mantra 14. Mantra 11 clearly says that with this knowledge you will not be touched by sorrow. Mantra 12 and 13 promises eternal bliss and eternal peace for those who have an experiential understanding of this knowledge. In a way, these mantras are promising the pinnacle of human attainment which is being untouched by sorrows and remaining as eternal bliss and eternal peace. The only way to reach this state is by removing ignorance based assumptions through knowledge and owning up our innate happiness.

What is Nachiketha's problem?

- Nachiketha is a qualified and intelligent seeker of knowledge. He sincerely pondered over his problem and concluded that he was not able to own up the eternal bliss experientially while some people are able to own this up in the light of knowledge.
- He also concluded that the knowledge he has attained is incomplete. If the knowledge is complete he would have eradicated ignorance completely and when ignorance is gone he would have access to supreme bliss. So he doubted his comprehension of knowledge.
- He also has the feeling that those with complete knowledge will know it directly like it says in the mantra "Tad etad iti manyante"
- One side he feels he does not have supreme bliss because of incomplete knowledge. On the other side he knows that those with complete knowledge will have access to it.
- Furthermore Nachiketha pondered about the supreme bliss that Upanishad is promising. He felt that this supreme bliss is not an object to be known like any other objects. It is only an emotion that cannot be seen with the senses but cannot be denied. He mentioned

supreme bliss or happiness in the mantra as “anirdeshyam” which means beyond description or indescribable. His inquiry ended in even more confusion.

- kathāṁ nu tad vijānīyāṁ kīṁ u bhāti vijbhāti vā: Nachiketa is confused whether he has that supreme bliss or not because anyhow you cannot identify bliss with the intellect.
- His confusion has ended in a very complex situation. One side he feels he has incomplete knowledge based on absence of supreme bliss. On the other side he feels that this supreme bliss is not known distinctly like objects. It is only known internally so maybe he has that happiness and is unnecessarily doubting it. Hence there is no point in concluding that knowledge is incomplete. Finally he is confused about the reality of his knowledge.

Many sincere seekers end up in a complex situation like Nachiketha’s wherein they doubt the reality of the knowledge. On hearing satsangs they feel that they have reached the culmination in their path. Sometimes they may have spent considerable time assuming that they have attained the pinnacle of spiritual pursuits. But their knowledge seems to be challenged by certain events in life, some states of mind or due to some samskaras unfolding in their life because of which they begin to doubt their confidence on reaching contentment in the spiritual path.

In this path of knowledge which is a subjective inner path there is ample scope for getting confused. So to give clarity to all such seekers who are treading this subtle path, upanishad is using this opportunity that is created by Nachiketha to dispel all such loopholes in this path of knowledge.

Before looking at the solution given by the upanishad, we need to be clear regarding a few terms which are the basis of confusion for Nachiketa. They are direct knowledge (aparoksha jnanam) and indirect knowledge (paroksha jnanam), practical knowledge and theoretical knowledge, and vijnanam and jnanam. These are all synonyms for complete and incomplete knowledge respectively.

What is self-knowledge (atma jnanam)?

- It is Consciousness knowing itself or knowing its infinite existence. Consciousness has awakened to its infinite existence. So one who has awakened to his knowledge remains choicelessly as Consciousness only.

Is there a possibility to have different types of Self knowledge?

- There is only one self knowledge.

How come there are many terms for self-knowledge?

- They are all different names for the depth of comprehension of knowledge.

What determines the depth of comprehension?

- The presence of samshayam (doubt) and viparyayam (habituated identification) determines the depth of comprehension.
- The effect of the habitual conditioning (viparyayam) will be expressed as an assumption that you are an individual, from moment to moment. It is the subtle expression of residual doubt. There is a doubt inside but we cannot express what it is clearly. For example we are assuming a rope to be a snake. Even though it is proved that the snake no longer exists there will still be some doubt because you once assumed its presence.
- In the same way for many years or births we assumed ourselves to be body-mind complex. Later we recognised ourselves not as body-mind complex but as the Infinite Conscious Existence without any doubt. But still the impressions created earlier seem to make us feel that we are the body-mind complex. The solution to come out of this feeling is to counsel ourselves again and again that our real nature is Infinite Conscious Existence through nidhidhyasana.

What will determine the degree or level that one can comprehend knowledge?

- One's eligibility will determine the level of comprehension in the path of knowledge.
- The eligibility includes selflessness and concentration or purity of mind. Those who fall short of these will fall short of comprehension.
- An interest in shravana implies that one is qualified. The selfless outlook will help to progress in the path. It will take some time to fully comprehend the knowledge. Those who are not fully qualified will have incomplete knowledge which is not a matter to worry. This needs to be recognised like Nachiketha to move forward in this path. Those who are fully qualified will have complete knowledge as they are devoid of samshayam and viparyayam.
- Based on his qualification which is promising, in a way Nachiketha was able to recognise and present his problem to his teacher Yama.

On critically analysing Nachiketha's question we can conclude that

- Nachiketa is confused whether he has knowledge or he is imagining that he has knowledge.

- Because on one side he feels his knowledge is incomplete based on absence of supreme bliss. And on the other side he feels this bliss is not known distinctly like objects of senses, hence there is no point in assuming that his knowledge is incomplete.
- All of us might have been in the state of Nachiketha at some point in the path of knowledge. There will be some situations in life when knowledge seems to be challenged. Then you need not worry. With the help of manana and nidhidhyasana recognise where you are stuck and move forward.

Nachiketha seems to be interested in supreme bliss and he has presented his problem. But when you are looking at mantra 15 Yama seems to answer his question by mentioning about Consciousness without any reference to Nachiketha's problem. How will Yama's advice help Nachiketha in his pursuit of supreme bliss?

There is truth alone but we may get stuck at different levels in the path of knowledge. To get out of this problem we resort to truth again. A path will be made by a teacher from the point where you are stuck to help you reach the truth. At this juncture you may feel the same thing is repeated again and again.

There are different ways in which the truth is presented. The final goal is to recognise the truth and remain as the truth. If you are unable to reach the goal then we have to identify that which is preventing you from retaining your identity as truth. Finally to reach the goal you need knowledge about reality and that reality is Consciousness.

With reference to Nachiketha's question we cannot say that he has no knowledge because he is qualified and already heard about the reality from a teacher. At the same time we cannot say that he has complete knowledge because he still has doubts. A qualified aspirant(Nachiketha) was stuck with incomplete knowledge. A teacher or guru will help by facilitating him to gain complete knowledge.

Yama wants to give more hints in the path of knowledge by which Nachiketha will be able to eliminate defects (samshayam and viparyayam) in his comprehension through mantra 15

Mantra 15 (Na thathra suryo bhaathi.....)

Mantra 15 gives hints to effortlessly own up our real nature which is bliss itself and also effortlessly eliminates the seeming obstructions in the path.

- Our aim is to clearly recognise Reality. We know that Reality implies that which is changeless. We also know that the only thing that is changeless in our experience is Consciousness.

- How do we recognize consciousness?
- We are accustomed to know objects only with our senses. Senses can only comprehend things which they can see, smell, touch, hear or taste. But Consciousness does not have any of those objective descriptions. So it is not in the scope of the senses to recognise Consciousness. Hence we are puzzled in our attempt to know Consciousness.
- Upanishad is teaching us ways to recognise Consciousness in such a way that even a child can grasp it easily.

Na thathra suryo bhaathi na chandra tharakam

Nema vidhyutho bhaanthi kutho yamagnihi

- How do we know about objects? We are able to clearly see the objects with the help of the Sun in the day, moon in the night, stars on a no moon day, and lightning on a cloudy night. On a cloudy night devoid of lightning we can see objects with the help of a big flame.
- Now, how do you know about yourself? Your answer will simply be 'I know. I do not need a source of light to know about myself.' To know anything other than ourselves we need an external source of light. But these external sources of light are not needed to know our real nature.

Thameve baantha manubhathi sarvam

Thasya bhaasa sarvamidam vibhaathi

- We know because we are that knowing itself or awareness itself or Consciousness itself. In fact, everything is known because of this knowing principle or Consciousness which we essentially are. Everything includes our body, those external to our body, and also mind and intellect. Consciousness recognises itself to be Consciousness and everything is known because of Consciousness.
- This Consciousness is always changeless. That is why it facilitates comprehension of everything that is changing which includes the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

If this mantra is clearly understood there is nothing left to understand further and nothing can be an obstruction to the path of knowledge or path to eternal bliss.

With mantra 15 Upanishad has boldly declared that you can effortlessly own up your real nature which is bliss itself and can also effortlessly eliminate the seeming obstructions in the path. How ?

- Effort is needed to know objects which are apart from us. We can only know about objects with the help of senses, mind and intellect. But to know about yourself as Consciousness what else is needed other than Consciousness which you already are. So, you can own up Consciousness effortlessly.
- What are the seeming obstructions in the path? They can be from the world around. For example, failure in any worldly achievement may make you sorrowful and in that moment, you may fail to apply the knowledge you have gained. This stands as an obstruction in your path. Sometimes endless thoughts, various diseases and old age may also pose an obstruction in the path of knowledge.
- These obstructions are, in a way, not real obstructions because acknowledging the presence of obstructions implies acknowledging their illuminator that is Consciousness. For example, you have a thought. That thought is illumined by your real nature which is Consciousness.
- So, when all these obstructions come in the form of internal thoughts, feelings, emotions, bodily sensations or perceptions they are reinforcing your recognition as unchanging Consciousness.
- If you understand this clearly you remain peaceful in any situation in life because you use those situations, which you felt earlier as obstructions, to reinforce your recognition of your identity as Consciousness.

Do I have practical (complete) knowledge or only theoretical (incomplete) knowledge about my real nature?

If you have such a doubt you have to eradicate it in the following lines:

- Consciousness recognising its conscious nature should obviously be direct, practical and complete knowledge. How?
- We did not take the help of any other thing for this recognition so it is direct knowledge.
- This Consciousness is devoid of any limitations; it is bliss or peace itself. Hence recognising it, has practical implications in the form of peace. So when you are experiencing the peace, practicality of this knowledge is on display.
- This is complete knowledge because of our doubtless recognition that we are nothing other than Consciousness. Only because of Consciousness we are knowing everything and to know this Consciousness it does not need any external thing. It is self evident for itself. (Swayam prakasam sada prakasam)

As long as I am for myself it is fine but sometimes I feel the knowledge is lost or my peace is obscured when I am active in the world. So I feel my knowledge is incomplete. What is the way?

- We need to do some manana and check for ourselves whether the knowledge that “I am Consciousness” is subject to change or not. If it is changeless in your experience then it is complete knowledge.
- Manana can be done in the following lines:

Analyse the gross perceptions and then the subtle, subtler and the subtlest ones.

1. Gross perceptions are the ones through which we see the world in five dimensions, i.e., through sight, sound, taste, smell and touch. The perceptions are generated through these five senses and later we are knowing these perceptions. This knowing is there because you are there as Consciousness or, in other words, knowing is happening because of Consciousness which you essentially are. Even though these perceptions are changing, the knowing principle is changeless.
2. Analyse the subtle realm which are the thoughts. Endless thoughts are being perceived which are known because of Consciousness. Thoughts are changing but there is no change at the level of Consciousness. The gross and the subtle things are appreciated by the same Consciousness.
3. Analyse the subtler realm where there are no thoughts like in meditation. When you are appreciating the silence (thoughtlessness) in meditation then the silence is being known by Consciousness.
4. Analyse the subtlest realm which is Consciousness as such. Here we are not knowing anything but Consciousness is there as it is. This is in our experience in deep sleep.

In the gross, subtle and subtler realms there are changes in the objective realm but there is no change in the Consciousness which is facilitating all these experiences to take place.

- By doing this manana we know how Consciousness remains changeless in spite of the changes in the gross, subtle and subtler planes of objectivity. This manana can also be done starting with the subtlest and go to the objective realms and experience that there is no change to the Consciousness as such.
- All the changes are taking place in the changeless Consciousness. So there is no chance for the Consciousness to be lost.
- This can be understood by the example of the screen and images. This screen of Consciousness is unlimited.

Deep sleep - screen is there as it is

Meditation - silent screen

There is no difference between these two screens. In a successful meditation where you remain as Consciousness itself, you remain as you were in deep sleep.

Thoughts - the screen is facilitating the thoughts to come and go

Sense perceptions- on the infinite screen of Consciousness all the perceptions are coming and going

- The screen as such is not worried about the presence of anything on it as nothing that appears on the screen can affect it. At the most we can say that the screen remains veiled by the objects when we notice the screen from outside. This means that once we appreciate Consciousness as such we do not have a problem with anything but if you stand apart from it and imagine Consciousness then you have endless problems.
- The screen itself will know that the objects are appearing on it. So, nothing can disturb the screen. In the same way all our activities both at the level of body and mind are taking place in the infinite screen of Consciousness which remain unaffected by the activity.
- The whole objective phenomenon is pointing to the presence of changeless Consciousness. As the Consciousness which is infinite is experienced as peace there is peace by default as the background of all the physical and mental activities. None of the activities can have the power to obscure it but at the most they can only point to its presence. Hence the peace remains unchallenged.

Homework

1. Enjoy and verify the unchallenged peace which is never lost. Recognise this experientially.
2. Go over the whole chapter. See which Mantra is of great relevance to you and how it helped you to evolve in this path of knowledge.

Points to ponder-43

Why are we talking about the knowledge pertaining to Reality (self knowledge) again and again?

- To know this we need to clearly understand the difference between the worldly knowledge and self knowledge.

What is the difference between the knowledge about the worldly objects and the knowledge about Reality?

- There are two differences. One is the characteristic nature of the topic itself. All branches of knowledge related to worldly objects (external to you) provide information to one who is in search of knowledge. But spiritual knowledge (which is about yourself) gives knowledge about the one who is in search of the knowledge. It tells about the reality of the knower.
- The other difference lies in the result or consequences of the knowledge. The fruitfulness of the extroverted study lies in strengthening the knowledge quotient of the knower (individual) whereas the fruitfulness of the introverted study lies in the comprehension of the illusion of the individuality of the one who is trying to gain knowledge. The extroverted study adds on to the load of the knowledge but the introverted study helps in getting out of the assumption that you are individuality.

Repeated study is inevitable in any field of knowledge. Some may grasp the content in no time, others may need little more time and some may not grasp the content no matter how many times they study it. This is the same with spiritual knowledge too. But unlike the worldly knowledge where there is a specific scale for measuring the extent of your comprehension, in spiritual knowledge you can track your level of comprehension by following some hints.

What are the hints in chapter 5 that helps you to assess the comprehension of the mantras?

- Na lipyathe lokha dukhena bahyaha (undisturbed by sorrow)
- Sasvatham shanthi (eternal peace)
- Sasvathy sukham (eternal happiness)

If you are undisturbed by sorrow and own up eternal happiness and peace or remain as peace by default, that means that you have reached the culmination of the study. If not, you have to continue on this path and do shravana, manana and nididhyasana again and again until peace remains as your very own nature.

What do you mean by the peace which we are aiming for?

- The Bible describes this peace as “the peace that passeth all understanding”
- It is the peace that transcends the mind and intellect. That which transcends mind and intellect is the Self. It is the Self that gives existence to the mind and intellect and illumines them. So, this peace is Self only.

How will you know that which is transcending the mind and intellect?

- You will know through experience .

How will that experience of transcending mind and intellect be?

- It is like the experience of deep sleep wherein there is no experiencer but only pure experience.

What is this experiencer less experience?

- It is the state of Infinity which is aware of its infinite existence. It is the peace which all the spiritual studies are aiming at.
- One who recognises peace will remain as peace itself. It is the synonym for Infinite Conscious Existence.

Do I have the experience of such peace or not ?

- This question arises for a sincere seeker in the path of quest for eternal peace.
- To find an answer to this question you have to know the various stages in the process of attaining eternal peace and put yourself in that which fits you the most.

What are the various stages in the quest for eternal peace?

There are 4 stages

- Stage 1: People in this stage reject such a state of eternal peace itself.
- Stage 2 : People in this stage agree that there is a state of eternal peace but they do not have access to it. They try to gain access to it by doing various sadhanas but refuse to follow the path of Self knowledge with enthusiasm
- Stage 3 : People in this stage get a glimpse of the state of eternal peace but it seems to vanish in no time. They hear satsangs and do meditation with enthusiasm. As they hear

satsangs, they have the capability to transcend the sound and recognise the peace which is their real nature. But they find it difficult to remain as peace always.

- Stage 4 :People in this stage recognise eternal peace and remain as it undisturbed

What should the people of these stages do to reach stage 4?

- People in stage 1, to get into stage 2, should come across a bitter experience in life that will act as a catalyst to instill faith in this path.
- People in stage 2, to get into stage 3, should devote their time to selfless service based on devotion.
- People in stage 3, to get into stage 4, should continue to attend satsangs, discussions and do meditation.

What will happen when you continue with satsangs?

- People in stage 3 already have the sufficient purity and concentration to have a glimpse of Reality. But purity and concentration are not sufficient to enable them to remain as the peace itself.
- They have to make up for the insufficiency of concentration and purity. They have true interest for spiritual endeavours (antharanga jnana sadhanas) which is born out of a glimpse of Reality or because of the intuitive recognition of reality. So they need to pursue those efforts like attending satsangs which will enable them to develop immense concentration and purity. As they attend these discussions the mind will stop its wavering tendency and remain as the reality of the mind itself that is Infinite Conscious Existence.

Revision points for Chapter 5

- Mantras 1-5 : Ajasya avakra chetasa , Rutham bruhat , Vishwe Deva: You recognise the changeless Consciousness and know that alone is there as everything including the functions within the body.
- Mantras 6 and 7 talk about rebirth.
- Mantras 8-10 : They talk about how non dual Reality alone is there as the entire manifestation which is made clear with the help of the examples of deep sleep, fire and wind.
- Mantras 11-13 : They help you to self check whether you comprehended the previous mantras or not. If recognised experientially you remain unaffected by sorrow and have eternal happiness and peace.
- Mantras 14,15: They tell that this knowledge cannot be missed or obscured .

Manana on chapter 5

- The entire manifestation is pointing to the unchanging Consciousness. The entire manifestation includes your body, mind, mental conditions of the mind and the entire world outside. While sitting for manana whatever is appearing either mentally or physically is taken as the pointer for recognising the Reality which you essentially are.
- That alone is there as the entire manifestation.
- Then you remain as Infinite Conscious Existence untouched by sorrow or you remain as undisturbed peace.

3 R's to remember manana easily

- Recognise Consciousness.
- Reconcile entire manifestation to be that only .
- Remain as the innate peace.

How do we get out of the problem created by thoughts by not allowing you to be peaceful when in meditation?

Let us solve this problem with the help of some mantras in Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna was taught meditation by Lord Krishna which Arjuna found out to be difficult sometimes because of his disobedient mind. So he presented his problem to his teacher Krishna in the following verses from chapter 6.

cancalam hi manah krsna

pramathi balavad drdham

tasyaham nigraham manye

vayor iva su-duskaram

- In the above verse, Arjuna is giving reasons as to why meditation is difficult. He expresses that advising someone to do meditation is easy but actually doing it is difficult. It is as difficult as controlling the wind.
- The mind has to be restrained in meditation. But Arjuna says that it is not possible to control the mind because of the incessant flow of thoughts. He defines the characteristics of mind as fickle, turbulent, powerful and stubborn.

Krishna by coming down to the level of his student Arjuna addresses his problem through the following verse:

asaṁśayaṁ mahā-bāho
mano durnigrahaṁ calam
abhyāseṇa tu kaunteya
vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate

- There is no doubt that it is very difficult to control your mind but that does not mean it is impossible. It is possible to tame the unruly mind and remain peaceful through practice and detachment.
- What is that practice? As and when the fickle and unsteady mind wanders it should be subdued then and there. It should be kept under the control of Self alone. The same can be put in steps in the following manner:
 1. Use the disturbing thought to recognise Infinite Conscious Existence. You are aware of that thought so you are awareness. Now immediately your identity is shifted from body-am-I notion to Consciousness.
 2. Know that Infinite Conscious Existence alone has manifested as the thought (like water has manifested as a wave)
Note: We are not suppressing the thoughts but only seeing its reality which is Infinite Conscious Existence.
 3. Remain peaceful.

If another thought arises, we must not get worried as to why it came. We should also make sure that we are not carried away by the thought. Be detached to it and use that to get back to Reality (step 1). See that thought in the light of Reality (step 2) and remain peaceful (step 3).

Facing the day

Before starting your activities for the day ahead, ask the following question to yourself.

“Is your aim to remain peaceful only during meditation or even after meditation?” If your aim is to remain peaceful always then you need to ask yourself in the midst of the activities whether you are peaceful. If you are peaceful continue the activities in the background of peace. But if you are not peaceful there is nothing to worry about. Know that activity has veiled Reality. That

activity (involving people or objects) has brought in the sense of individuality due to which there is absence of peace. You can come out of this problem by using the portal of 3 R's.

- Use that activity (either the people involved or objects involved in that activity) to recognize Infinite Consciousness.
- Then reconcile those seeming obstructions for your peace in the light of Infinite consciousness. Remain peaceful.

Now let all events in life (pleasant and unpleasant) unfold in the background of peace. We will no longer be at the mercy of life but will always remain peaceful.

If the entire worldly activity which invariably consists of a storm of thoughts could continue in the background of peace, why should I negate thoughts in my meditation?

- In a way this question is incorrect because the person who is struggling to remain peaceful in meditation cannot even dream of engaging in worldly activities in the background of peace.
- The desire to remain peaceful in the midst of worldly activity needs to be addressed initially by remaining as peace in meditation.

Is there a possibility of entertaining thoughts without sacrificing peace?

Yes, if it is possible to remain peaceful in the midst of worldly activity. Then it is equally possible to remain peaceful in the presence of thoughts.

Then why should we negate thoughts during meditation?

- Generally all thoughts arise because of the body-am-I notion and they only strengthen the individuality. So if there is continuous flow of thoughts you will fail to recognise the substratum which is Infinite Conscious Existence. That is why the thoughts have to be silenced initially to recognise Reality. Later when you reconcile thoughts on the background of Reality you will experientially know how we can remain peaceful even in the presence of thoughts.
- We are not aiming at the thoughtless state but using the relatively thought free state to initially recognise the substratum of thought and later the reality of thought. With steady practice you will be able to reconcile internal thoughts and external manifestations in the light of Infinite Conscious Existence. Then you can remain peaceful in any situation in life.

Points to Ponder-44

In chapter 5 Upanishad has shown us a way to remain peaceful untouched by sorrow. It is not devising any difficult tasks to own this peace. It has given us simple means such as the 3 R's by which we can remain peaceful. All of us are inspired enough to follow the easy solution that Upanishad has given to own up the peace. But the sad thing is that there are some people who are not ready to take it up.

Why is it that we are not inspired enough to own up the peace through the ways Upanishad has devised?

- The reason is that we are addicted to momentary peace or happiness derived from objects. These objects are usually wealth, wine and women. The scope of these objects has increased now-a-days to gaming, social media apps etc... We derive a sense of happiness through these objects.

What is the cause for this addiction?

- The cause for this addiction is due to the belief that what is known through the senses is real. We are trained by society to think so. This became a mass hysteria prevalent in the world. We are of the opinion, that it is better to invest on objects that are real even though the happiness derived from them is fleeting instead of spending some time on trying to find eternal peace that is Infinite Consciousness which is unreal.

Why do we feel Infinite Consciousness is unreal?

- We feel so because it is not seen or known through any of the senses.

Humanity is addicted to the notion that what they see only is real. So they do not care for discovering peace by recognising Infinite Conscious Existence. By this analysis Upanishad, out of compassion, is taking us into chapter 6. Mantra 1 of chapter 6 helps us get de-addicted from unreal objectivity and own up the eternal peace.

Chapter 6

Mantra 1(Urdhva mula avakshaaka....)

Upanishad with the help of the example of the inverted holy peepal tree (raavi chettu) is helping us to facilitate comprehension of Reality which is not in the realm of senses and at the same time

it cannot be denied. This tree has a long life and is very vast and has the capacity to regenerate even after being cut. Its roots are extensive. The portion of the tree above the roots like trunk, branches, leaves, fruits, flowers represent the entire manifestation we perceive with our senses. This can also include our own body and mind. The roots represent that which we cannot perceive with our senses. Just because we cannot see the roots or know it through our senses we cannot deny their existence. In fact it is only because of the roots that the tree is able to grow. The roots provide support and nourishment to the tree. The existence of the roots is more obvious than the tree itself because when we cut the tree even at the trunk or remove everything that is visible above the soil it still grows back.

Sukram brahma amrutham : The roots represent Consciousness that is pure (light of Consciousness), infinite and immortal (unchanging).

Yasmin lokah srithaha sarve : The entire manifestation is based on Infinite Consciousness.

Tadu nathyethi kaschana: This manifestation is not there apart from the substratum.

Just like there is no tree without roots which cannot be seen, in the same manner we cannot deny Consciousness because it is not perceived by senses and at the same time it is the substratum for the entire manifestation.

In the example of the inverted tree why is Infinite Consciousness represented by the roots?

- There are 3 reasons for this :
 1. Just like the tree derives its existence from the roots, so too the entire manifestation which looks vast and eternal is having the Infinite Consciousness as its substratum.
 2. If you trace the origin of the tree you end up with the roots. In the same manner by enquiring into the reality of the manifestation we end by recognising the Infinite Consciousness.
 3. After discovering the roots of the tree we will know that the tree is not different from the roots. In fact root alone appeared as the tree. In the same way after discovering Infinite Conscious Existence as the substratum for this manifest world we will know Infinite Conscious Existence alone is manifesting as these manifestations.

Why is the tree inverted in this mantra?

- To dispel the notion that the substratum of the manifestation is not there because it is not perceived by the senses.

How does the inverted tree dispel this notion?

- We cannot miss the roots which are obvious to us when the tree is inverted. In the same way Infinite Consciousness is very much obvious to us at the experiential level though not at the sensory level. It is there in our experience as Consciousness and Existence.
- When we see or perceive anything we cannot do it without it being illumined by Consciousness and without borrowing its Existence. But we usually will not acknowledge it as we take it for granted to such an extent that we miss it all together. We cannot find anything in this Universe that is not supported by Consciousness and Existence because such a thing does not exist. Even non-existence is being known by the Consciousness.
- Conscious Existence is as obvious as the roots of the inverted tree. That is why the example of inverted tree is used by the Upanishad to convey that just as the roots, the substratum of the manifestation is very much there in our experience.
- We did not know because we did not care to recognise it.

Yethad vythat: This invincible and undeniable substratum alone is there as the entire manifestation.

Cutting off the tree implies to destroy the ignorance that the entire manifestation has independent existence.

Mantra1 is in a way warning us to not to conclude that what you perceive through the senses is real. It has done this with the example of an inverted peepal tree. Consciousness and Existence cannot be perceived through senses but still it cannot be denied as it is there in our experience. It is there as the entire manifestation. These revelations of the Upanishad are so profound that the majority will entertain doubts. That is why our rishis have formulated a three pronged approach in the form of shruthi (scriptural authority), yukthi (logic) and anubhavam (experience) while dealing with the subtle truth. Shrutis are the texts written in the form of mantras. These mantras are the experiences of those (Rishis) who treaded this path successfully. Everything we discuss should be in line with the shruthi. Various methods are formulated to impart ultimate knowledge to the student. It should also appeal logically (Yukthi). Finally, it must be capable of rendering an experience to us also ,so that we can verify the authenticity of shruthi and yukthi.

Now we are adding a new factor to this list which is modern science because knowingly or unknowingly, we are all influenced by science. It plays a vital role in the way we live and interact

in the world. We cannot imagine a life without relying on science. Even basic amenities in life need science. We now blindly believe in science without verifying it. But when we look back a few centuries, this was not the case. People did not accept the scientific view. There were times when scientists were executed because their views contradicted the accepted views of the society. Religion used to prevail when compared to science. But these days, we believe what science says and take what scriptures say with suspicion. Because of this subconscious conditioning we are compelled to look at our recognition of Reality through the eyes of modern science.

What is the meaning of the word science?

It is the knowledge gained through an objective study based on evidence.

What are the limitations of science in exploring this subjective Reality?

- Science is always focused on objective study. But still it finally came to the level of the subjective realm because the so-called subjective has been included in the objective. Science started to include the body and mind in the objective realm and subsequently became a pure subjective study.
- Science considers the person who is studying science to be real as the body-mind apparatus and then initiates study from that standpoint. So the discoveries which scientists make will be limited as they start from the standpoint of assumed limitation of reality. So, the scientific world will be rattled when their sincere effort exposes the shallowness in their understanding about their own body-mind apparatus.
- Scientists are trying to understand the world and in the process of trying to understand the world they will come across a stage where they have no choice to include themselves who have initiated the study within the scope of this study. They will find this very disturbing because it will challenge their very individuality. So, many will abandon the study at that point and use fancy excuses saying that such a study is no longer science but is a philosophy.
- Very few will continue to sincerely pursue the study. They will then get exempted from the scientific community by being called philosophers and no longer scientists. But this is all due to the fear of losing individuality.

Why are the scientists uncomfortable when their individuality is shattered?

- To understand this we have to look at our ancient approach to science. There are two types of study
 1. Objective study (Bouthika Vidya): which includes study of everything other than the individual.
 2. Subjective study (Aadhyathmika Vidya): The subjective study is about the individual who is ultimately included in the Universe.

The objective study is about the observed whereas the subjective study is about the observer.

- According to our ancient approach, qualifications for these two types of study will differ. Objective or materialistic study of science needs only concentration but subjective or spiritual study of science needs purity along with concentration. It is for this reason morality is such an important feature of spiritual study and this is completely ignored in the materialistic science. Here purity means selflessness . All the efforts where individuality (ego) is strengthened will become impediments in the study of the real nature of the individual. With moral values the apparent self will be thinned allowing it to inquire into its Reality. But if you don't have values the individuality will become dense making it impossible to enquire into the reality of individuality.
- So the scientists who lack the qualification for subjective study feel uncomfortable when science is taking them to a point where there is no choice rather than to comprehend the reality of individuality or illusion of individuality. In a way they get disturbed as they are not trained for it.

Is there a need to understand the scientific view point when we are satisfied with shruthi, yukthi and experiential understanding?

- There is a need because we are living in the scientific world and sometimes our understanding will be challenged by the half baked scientists.

So we are taking the best of the science in comprehending the Reality and adding the scientific approach along with the shruthi, yukthi and experience.

Let us understand the Universe on a fundamental level. This Universe on a fundamental level is objects-molecules-atoms-subatomic particles (protons,neutrons,electrons)- quarks, leptons, bosons, etc...

What is there within the quarks, leptons and bosons?

- There is dark matter (emptiness). This can be compared to avyaktam/sunyam from our scriptures. The scientific study has stopped here. Why?
- To see anything, you need light. This dark matter is so small that light cannot even fall on it. The light is simply passing through the quark where you cannot see anything within it. Therefore, they assumed that there is nothing in the quark (it is empty).
- But how can objects form from emptiness? How can something come from nothing? This is very illogical. Just because we cannot see whatever there is inside the quark, we cannot conclude that there is nothing.
- To answer these questions, the string theory has been devised.

String Theory

- This theory helps us to understand the universe at its fundamental level.
- According to this theory, the dark matter within the quarks consist of vibrating strands of energy which is in the form of a string. When they vibrate they produce particles.
- One of the vibrational states of the string will give rise to graviton-a quantum mechanical particle that carries the gravitational force. So, the string theory is also called the theory of quantum gravity.
- This implies that the particles which are the building blocks of this manifest world and the forces that govern this universe are the result of vibration of the strings.
- To summarise, the universe in its fundamental level which consists of quarks are nothing but tiny vibrating strings, when further analyzed. This vibration is the seemingly final event for this phenomenon called world. Even time and space are built from fundamental bits (loop quantum gravity).



<https://youtu.be/Tl6sY0kCPpk>



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on String theory

What is the cause for this vibration?

If we know the answer for this question, then we will know the cause for the manifest universe. To find the answer to this question, we will now look into the double slit experiment.

Double Slit Experiment

- When we pass beams of electrons through a double slit, we observe a wave pattern on the screen instead of simply just two beams (like particles).
- Scientists did not understand why the electrons showed wave patterns when passed through the double slit. So, they kept a camera to figure out why.
- Once the electrons realised that they were being observed, they no longer formed the wave pattern on the screen. They instead formed two beams just like how normal particles would form.
- This observation was shocking to many. They did not understand why the nature of electrons were changing (from wave like to particle like) when they were being observed. This effect is called the observer effect.

- This implies that the world, until it is viewed, is only a wave pattern. When it is observed, it will appear as matter. So, the observer is the cause for the wave pattern to take the pattern of the particle.



<https://youtu.be/A9tKncAdIHQ>



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Who is this observer?

The observer cannot be our eyes, brain, mind or intellect because they are all part of the world's appearances. It cannot be anything in the realm of space and time as they are also only appearances.

Who is the real see-er who is influencing the vibration in string theory and who is behind this manifestation?

- This vibration is influenced by the observer. According to our knowledge, who can be the observer? Only Consciousness can be the real observer because without Consciousness, no one can take the role of observer. So, the vibration of the string is caused by consciousness.

What is the Consciousness and how do we know about it?

- It is the Consciousness which is there in deep sleep which is naturally devoid of manifestation.
- It is not known because there is nothing to know in deep sleep and you remained as Consciousness.
- Later it is the Consciousness which appeared as the entire manifestation.

What is the role of the brain in context to this Consciousness?

- Brain is already a part of this manifestation that this Consciousness appears as.

Let us rebuild this Universe with this knowledge. We magnified the apple and went upto the level of vibration and with the double slit experiment we concluded that all this is the play of Consciousness.

Consciousness - quantum gravity - string - quarks - electrons - atoms - molecules - physical world
(apple, body-mind apparatus)

This entire manifestation is nothing other than Consciousness even according to science.

The absolute knower alone is appearing as that which is known. The manifestation is only a perception of five senses. We come across various perceptions from the moment we wake up. We find a sequence in all these perceptions and collectively call it the waking. We remember dreams distinctly only when you find a sequence in the dream perceptions. All these perceptions are being known by the one knowing principle which alone is appearing as all these perceptions from moment to moment.

The conclusion of the experiments based on our experience in real life:

1. Through the double slit experiment, we have concluded that Consciousness has an influence on matter.
2. Through the string theory, we analyzed the fundamental bits of the matter and came across the vibrating bands (strings) of energy which form the particles. Here, in a way, we can say that the vibrating bands of energy by itself are also matter.
3. From 1 and 2, we can say that because of Consciousness alone the matter in the form of the strings is appearing as particles.
4. Now, we know through our experience that Consciousness is there even if it is devoid of matter (we can come to this conclusion by analyzing the deep sleep experience). So, Consciousness alone is appearing as the bands and then it is further appearing as all this material.

We can understand the observer effect more clearly with the example of kali-shiva

- Kali is the entire universe. The garland of heads represents the thoughts. We assume that the thoughts are arriving to us as a body-mind apparatus. But the truth is that everything is illuminated and rendered existence by the one Conscious Existence only which is Shiva.
- Only because Shiva is observing, there is Kali. So, all of the thoughts and bodies (including our own thoughts and body) are appearing in one Infinite Conscious Existence only. It is the Infinite Conscious Existence that is appearing as everything.
- Prathyaya prathyagathma: Consciousness is not illuminating the manifestation by being apart from it. It is illuminating from within (like the light in the t.v). It alone is there as the manifestation just like how Shiva alone is there as Kali.

Finally with the help of shruthi, yukthi, experience and modern science we have come to the conclusion that the entire manifestation is Consciousness alone.

How can we know that the entire Universe (matter and energy) is only Consciousness?

- The entire Universe is perceived through a five dimensional approach (five senses) and only that we call as Universe.
- We are knowing the sense perceptions because of Consciousness.
- Without the senses there is no manifest world. But there is still an awareness that there is nothing .This means that there is Consciousness even in the absence of manifestation. Later when senses perceive manifestation we are conscious of that manifestation. So, Consciousness which is essentially nothing but infinite conscious existence is only manifesting as all the manifestations.

Points to Ponder-45

Upanishad is only interested in enabling people to live a peaceful life. It inspires us to own up the innate peace. Initially we do not know about innate peace. Later we know about it but cannot remain as it. So the Upanishad designed portals like the 3R's wherein we can remain peaceful in any situation. At this stage success is when you apply the 3R's promptly as and when required, so that we will not be alienated from our innate peace. In the last discussion we have seen the reasons for inability to apply 3R's as and when needed even when we are compelled to be sorrowful. We are not able to apply because we are assuming Reality to be limited to what is perceived by senses. With the help of the inverted tree example it is made clear that Reality as Conscious Existence is all the more evident in spite of it not being within the limits of senses. We discussed it in four angles namely shruthi, yukthi, anubhavam and modern science.

If we imagine a scenario where Upanishad or teacher asks at this juncture whether the students are peaceful or not, then the replies could be any of the possibilities given below:

- Some of the students said they are peaceful.
- Some of them said that they are restoring their peace with the help of 3R's.
- Some of them said that they want to remain peaceful but are not inspired enough to promptly initiate 3R's. In a way they are carried away by the incidents of life and are unable to restore their innate peace.

Upanishad in the next two mantras is catering to all three categories of people. It is addressing an emotion that is the cause for disturbance of peace which is fear. Fear is the emotion that will manifest a year after birth and will be there for the majority till their death. The entire humanity is under the grip of the emotion called fear.

What is the cause for fear?

- Fear is generated by an assumption that we are weak and somebody other than us is strong. The moment you assume that the other person is strong then you admit yourself to be weak and vice versa (apakarsha-uthkarsha bodham).
- We fear something which is more powerful than us either physically or authoritatively. For example students are afraid of the class leader who in turn is afraid of the teacher and so on
class leader-teacher-principal-director-district collector-education minister-chief minister-prime minister-other country heads.
- So, nobody is free of fear and even the external accomplishments are not making them fearless.

Is there a way to get rid of fear?

Or, as human beings, are we condemned to only live with fear ?

- To understand the answer to this question more clearly let us discuss an incident that took place in the life of Alexander The Great.

Alexander had an ambition to conquer the entire world at a very young age. He was known for his bravery. He had a habit of taking the blessings of his teachers before going on an expedition to conquer mighty kingdoms. On one such occasion, Alexander's teacher told him that if he was going to India he would come across some strange people (saints) who were worshiped there. He told Alexander to bring one of them back with him so that their whole country would benefit from him. Alexander took a leave to conquer various countries and finally entered India. After conquering some parts of India he felt like going back to his country and then remembered his teacher's words of bringing a saint along with him. The soldiers came across one saint and asked him to come to their country but the saint denied. The soldiers said that they belonged to the most powerful ruler of the world-Alexander. But, the saint said that he knew of only one powerful ruler in this universe and wondered who this Alexander was. Finally Alexander himself humbly approached the saint and requested him to accompany them to Greece for which the saint rejected. Even though he was offered luxurious gifts, the saint still refused. Alexander lost his patience. He took out his sword and threatened to kill the saint. The saint laughed. He said that death could not touch him. No weapon in this world could touch him. Wind cannot dry him, water cannot wet him and fire cannot burn him. Nothing could affect him in any way.

nainaṃ chindanti śāstrāṇi nainaṃ dahati pāvakaḥ

na cainaṃ kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ

He would not die even if his body was destroyed. He further said that his death was not in Alexander's hands. Hence Alexander could not destroy his body unless the real king decides. Alexander was stunned by the saint's words and wondered who this real king was. His hands trembled and his sword fell out of his grip. For the first time in his life Alexander met someone who was fearless. He was puzzled by the saint's fearlessness and the way he laughed about death itself.

What would be the reason for the saint's fearlessness?

- The saint inquired further (instead of stopping at the level of country head or world leader) and concluded that the entire humanity (including the brave emperors) is subjected to disease, old age and death. They are also afraid of the natural disasters. So he

wanted to find out who is the most powerful person who remained untouched by all these causes of fear.

Note : In our ancient cultures all these natural forces (which influence earthquakes, cyclones, tornados, etc) whom everybody was afraid of were all represented by deities (surya dev ,agni dev, varuna dev, vayu dev, bhoo devi, yama dev). They did their respective jobs because of the most powerful principle.

- The saint knew about the most powerful principle because of which he remained fearless. The same is said in mantras 2 and 3

Mantra 2 and 3

(Yadidham kincha jagath sarvam)

(Bhaya dhasya agni sthpathi.....)

- The most powerful principle that the saint has known and because of which he remained fearless is mentioned in these mantras as “Prana” which means para brahma or Infinite Conscious Existence which you all are familiar with.
- All natural laws operate because of para brahma. Fire burns, sun shines, wind blows and even death occurs because of para Brahma.
- Mahat bhayam vajramudhyutam: This para Brahma is of great terror like an upraised thunderbolt.
- This is the figurative expression of Upanishad. Just as the students attend their classes obediently when they see their teacher with a raised stick in hand, so to all the natural forces that govern the Universe methodically do their respective jobs without a break even for a moment because of this Para Brahma.
- Yadhidam kincha jagat sarvam prana yejathi nishrutham: That from which the Universe emerges, exists and also functions is Parabrahma or Prana.

How can I understand this Parabrahma experientially?

- Knowledge about this parabrahma or the supreme principle experientially will make you fearless and in turn peaceful. Let us know this with the help of 1. shruthi 2. yukthi 3. anubhavam.
1. Shruthi is the experience (in the form of texts) of earlier aspirants (rishis) who have treaded this path successfully. Here, the shruthi statement we are taking is “Yadhidham kincha jagat.....”. The statement is pointing to the absolute Existence which implies

Consciousness and which by itself is Infinite. Some aspirants may understand this statement just by hearing it as they have already put an effort in enquiring about it.

2. But those who still did not comprehend the above shruti statement can use the yukthi (logic) for a clear recognition. The statement means that that which is there even before this manifestation existed, and that which is there along with this manifestation.
 - From what is this Universe (manifestation) emerging? To know this we have to go to a place where the Universe is not there and in the absence of the Universe there should be something. That same thing should also be there in the presence of the Universe too.
 - That which exists in the presence and absence of the Universe is Infinite Conscious Existence.
 - How? Without any manifestation the experience we have is deep sleep. In deep sleep state there is Consciousness not knowing anything and “I exist” (not as body and mind) which is Existence. It is reported in the waking state that in deep sleep you are remaining not knowing anything and also you like that state of remaining not knowing anything which is also called happiness or peace (Infinity). So from the logic of deep sleep we can conclude that we remained as Infinite Conscious Existence even without any manifestation. From that very Infinite Conscious Existence the manifestation or Universe has emerged just like how the dream experiences emerge from the same changeless Infinite Conscious Existence. So that by which the natural forces are compelled to act accordingly is there in our logical comprehension.
3. Now let us take the anubhavam of waking state to verify the above statement and own up the experience. We do not have an experience of manifestation in a waking state devoid of Consciousness. How? When we sit with the eyes closed the whole manifestation has vanished. But still you are conscious of the sound, touch, smell which means you cannot be devoid of the knowing principle. Even when each of the sensation is removed you still are aware of their absence because of the Consciousness. Now if you open the eyes the world of name and form have appeared and all other sensations are also appearing in the Consciousness. So we have a direct experience of Consciousness in the waking state in the presence of manifestation and devoid of manifestation too.

With the help of shruthi, yukthi and anubhavam we have the experience of Infinite Conscious Existence as our real nature and the reality of the entire manifestation. We are free of the inferiority and superiority assumptions. If nonduality is in our experience there will be no fear because there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence (ekam) and it alone appears as the entire manifestation in whatever way it chooses to. In the absence of fear we remain peaceful.

Yethad vidhur amruthasthe bhavanthi: Those who know this will attain immortality because they no longer have the identity with the body. They derive their identity with the changeless Infinite Conscious Existence and will naturally be devoid of fear of death. Hence they remain fearless.

Why do we equate time with death?

First, we will discuss the answer to this question in a simple way.

- Time implies change. All changes are measured by time. Even age implies calculation of change based on time. At the bodily level change consists of growth, decay and ultimately death. So, time is equated with death.

Now, let us consider a more complex explanation to this question.

- Time can also be said to be past and future. Past and future means death. So, time is equated with death.

Time=past and future

Past and future=death

So, Time=death

Explanation:

Why does time imply only past and future? Why did we exclude the present from time?

- This is because in experience, there is nothing like the present. For example, let the time now be 3:30:15 PM. Before you even say it out loud, it will become the past. So, you cannot even catch hold of the present which you feel is included in time. You cannot even make a sensible comment on it because by the time you say it, it becomes past and is no longer the present.
- You can only comment on time that has elapsed or the time that will manifest in the future. But, you cannot comment on the time in the present because before you comment on it, it will become the past.
- So, we are saying that time implies only past or future.

Why did we say that the past and the future are death?

- Life is always lived only in the present moment which is a timeless moment. You cannot live in the past; you can only comment about your life in the past. In the same way, you cannot live in the future; you can only imagine your life in the future. This means that life

is possible only in this moment which is a timeless moment. So, this present moment which is a timeless moment is equated with life. Brooding about the past or dreaming about the future by sacrificing the present moment is termed as death.

We now know why time is equated with death.

Earlier, we have seen how fear disturbs our peace in life. We have also seen the cause of fear which is because of the tendency to attribute inferiority and superiority upon oneself and others. We have discussed that the solution for this is knowledge of the Reality behind this manifestation through shruthi, yukthi and anubhavam.

Now, we will discuss one more cause for fear which is time.

What is the relation between time and fear?

- Time means past and future.
- Based on information related to the past when we imagine a future it leads to the birth of fear in the present. All fears arise like this.
- So this useless garbage called the past and this illusionary future is messing our life.

How do we escape from this fear which has its root in time?

- We can do so by dwelling in the present moment which is the only real moment in which there is nothing but Infinite Conscious Existence.

How is there only Infinite Conscious Existence in the present moment?

For this, we will do an experiment.

Sit and try to find what is there in your experience at this moment and which is there devoid of any change in the next moment and the next moment and so on. You will end up discovering there is nothing except for changeless Consciousness which is there as it is from moment to moment. This Consciousness itself is existent and which in experience is always Infinite. Hence Infinite Conscious Existence alone is there in the present moment.

Infinite Conscious Existence is there in the present moment. But how will it eliminate fear?

- We already have seen how fear is there when one is in the clutches of time, ie, by imagining the future based on impressions from the past. We also concluded that fear is absent in the present moment which in reality is a timeless moment. So the present moment which is a timeless moment is a fearless moment. And now we have recognized through our experiment that in the present moment there is nothing but Consciousness

which is of Infinite Existence. Hence, by remaining as Consciousness, knowing that alone is appearing as this manifestation, moment to moment, will by default leave you in the present moment where there is no fear.

- You yourself are there as this Consciousness which appears as this entire manifestation from moment to moment. Here there is no duality so there is no fear.
- So, you remain in the relative present and recognise Consciousness and get to the absolute present which is devoid of fear. What is the relative present? It means to have concentration on what is happening in that moment without getting carried away by the events of past and imaginations about the future.

Let us look at some scientific observations on this topic.

- Classical pythagorean geometry was corrected by Einstein by including the element of time. He said that, "The space between two entities minus the time between them is zero".

$$\text{Space} - \text{time} = 0$$

- Let us rephrase the sentence as "The space between two entities is equal to the time between two entities".

$$\text{space} = \text{time}$$

Example

- Let us consider two objects A and B. The distance between these two objects is 8000 miles. The time difference is 10 hours. So, according to this statement, we are saying that, $8000 \text{ miles} - 10 \text{ hours} = 0$.
- This means that at 0 the two objects are together which implies that the two objects have merged into one object. Only then there will be no distance and no time. When there is no distance and no time, there cannot be two objects. When these objects move apart, the distance and the time between them start to increase.

Application

- These thoughts are appearing in the space in the mind just like how objects are appearing in the space in the outside world. There is one constant thought that is always present. We do not even recognise it to be a thought because it is so constantly present in us. This is the i-thought. As soon as you wake up in the morning the first thought that you get is the thought that you are the body and mind. Later, based on this thought, all other thoughts will appear. But you do not appreciate that i-thought as a thought because of its constant presence, unlike other thoughts that come and go.
- Based on this i-thought (body am I notion) all other thoughts arise. It is for this reason that all thoughts are linked to this fundamental thought.

- Role of time and distance at the level of the fundamental i-thought and other thoughts:
When past or future thoughts are entertained they seem to create a distance from the present moment. That distance implies space (space in time) which in turn accommodates more thoughts about various objects. Then it implies that in the absolute present moment there is no possibility for space and hence no possibility for other thoughts based on i-thought to exist.
- Now what is there in that present moment?
We have seen earlier that in the absolute present moment which is a timeless moment, there is neither time nor space. What is there is only consciousness. There is no possibility for i- thought (body am I notion) to exist either.
- Are there no thoughts at all like in deep sleep?
No, there are thoughts devoid of i-thought as their base. Whatever is there either physically or mentally are there now as spontaneous manifestations of that Infinite Conscious Existence only.
- All the other thoughts and the i-thought seem to be separated by some time and distance. But in reality there is no time between them which implies that there is also no distance between them. All of them are manifesting from moment to moment as spontaneous manifestations of Consciousness.
- The constant principle is Consciousness where all thoughts seem to appear. So, they are separated by time and distance. But when we say that the time and distance between them is zero, then, no time which indicates no distance. The thoughts have integrated into one principle called Infinite Conscious Existence.

Application in the context of devotion:

- Generally there is a devotee and there is a God (example: Rama or Krishna) who the devotee assumes to be apart from Him. They seem to be separated by time and distance.
- If there is no distance between them, then there is no time. They have merged to remain as one principle. That one principle which is devoid of any form has appeared on one side as the devotee and on the other side as God to facilitate devotion in the devotee. So, that one formless principle has assumed both. But if you are able to understand that and remain as it, then it implies that you have recognised your real nature which is nothing but the real nature of God itself.

Conclusion

- All duality is based on the assumption of time and space (distance). If time is eliminated, it amounts to the elimination of space which means non-duality.

With these two mantras we know the reasons that disturb our peace and also the solutions that restore our innate peace. They are:

1. The superiority and inferiority attributes.
 - By comprehending the reality of manifestation the distinction is removed because the reality of you and the reality of others is clearly comprehended. The distinction is the cause of fear and the non-dual comprehension eliminates fear. Thereby, the peace remains undisturbed.
2. We are lost in time.
 - By eliminating the psychological mischief of time, fear also is eliminated. This is possible by understanding that time is a synonym for fear and present moment is the synonym for peace. We have to clearly understand that Infinite Conscious Existence is spontaneously manifesting as everything from moment to moment without any scope for psychological conditioning with time. With this comprehension we have no choice than to remain as peace.

These two mantras will apply to all the students who are in any of the three phases of understanding. Those three phases of understanding are :

1. They are capable of restoring the peace as when they are disturbed through the portal of 3R's.
2. They are already peaceful.
3. These people want to remain peaceful and also know how to remain peaceful but they are not inspired to promptly initiate the 3R's. They get carried away.

How are these mantras helping the students in these three phases of understanding?

Phase 1

- These people are able to do manana on 3R's which helps them in restoring the innate peace. So upanishad wants to put them in a place where they can spontaneously and effortlessly remain as peace without the need for 3R's. Then if they have already established their identity with peace then there is no need to restore it from time to time. Restoring is for those who have not comprehended well.

Phase 2

- These people are already peaceful. They do not need to use the 3R's. But they have to be careful because they cannot imagine themselves to be peaceful or mask themselves to be peaceful. These mantras will help to comprehend that real peace cannot coexist with fear. So they have to eliminate fear and restore their peace by using the 3R's or clearly comprehend the Reality where they do not even need the 3R's. Then peace only remains without fear.

Phase 3

- These people want to remain peaceful but are not inspired enough to take up the portals Upanishad is giving to remain peaceful in life. These two mantras give a solution to these people by inspiring them to be peaceful and instill a desire in them to be free of fear.

If you remain stuck wherever you are or caught up with the body-am-I notion then invariably you will be troubled by fear. So you have to be inspired to do manana as and when needed and own up the true peace until there is no event in the world that disturbs your peace.

Some Students feel that - why. Why should I waste my time knowing about Reality and such matters? We need to take up these matters in old age when we do not have any challenging goals to reach. Upanishad is addressing the mentality of such students in the next two mantras 4 and 5 and offering to solve the problem of postponing our efforts to recognize Reality and to remain peaceful.

Points to Ponder 46

With these two mantras (4 and 5) Upanishad is aiming at some students who are careless in their attitude in the path to peace. These careless students do not give importance to the values which are required to lead a peaceful life. But no sane person will deny wanting to lead a peaceful life.

Then how do we know whether we are giving value to peaceful life or not? Everybody wants to lead a peaceful life at a superficial level but deep down their intentions are different. They differ to such an extent that they themselves do not know to what they are aiming at. For example every student desires to pass in the exam and go to the next level. But this desire of theirs, when seen subtly, is a very superficial one. Their real intention can only be known by observing their day-to-day activities. If they really want to get good marks, then they will attend classes regularly, pay attention in class and also study and eliminate other activities that are a distraction to reach their goal. But if their desire is superficial they will bunk classes, be inattentive in class, will not study regularly and will indulge in activities that distract them from studies. In the same way most people want to lead a peaceful life only at a superficial level. We will know whether the intention to live peacefully is true when we scan our day-to-day activities in five angles. They are:

1. Values:

We do not give value to values in life when our intention to live a peaceful life is only superficial. To justify our compromised life we give fancy excuses (like it is hard to lead a truthful life, difficult to lead a life without any intoxicants and so on). However if our intention to remain peaceful is real, we will follow the five values because that itself will give peace. Speaking truth, earning through rightful means, not harming others in word or deed, refraining from intoxicants and being faithful to the life partner will enable us to be peaceful.

2. Selfless Service:

Selfless service implies prioritising others even at the cost of your discomfort and without seeking any rewards in return. These others are anybody apart from you. Those who have prioritised others over themselves will have peace of mind and clarity in understanding. Selfless service alone is an end to itself with regards to happiness as it is not in need of external objects to generate happiness.

3. Selfless devotion:

Selfless devotion implies praying to God out of gratitude but not for fulfilling our wishes. God bestows true peace for those selfless devotees. God creates circumstances for the selfless devotee which enable him to own up the true peace.

4. If our intention is true peace then we find time to read good books and attend satsangs. This helps us to recognise the peace, which we are in quest of, as our real nature.
5. We use the portals like 3R's to remain peaceful.

Upanishad in the next two mantras is addressing those people who do not give importance to the above mentioned but still wish to remain peaceful.

Mantra 4 (iha ced aśakad bodhum...)

In this mantra Upanishad stresses the importance of owning up true peace and knowing our real nature in this life itself. There is a chance of being born as any creature in a total of 84 lakh living creatures. Human birth is one among them. As per our scriptures, attaining human birth itself is a rare event and the possibility to know our real nature is possible only in this birth. Human beings alone have that faculty to know the real nature. So upanishad wants us to hurry up and recognise the real nature. The scriptures consider only those who are longing for true peace as human beings and all others as animals in human form.

What is the plight of the one who has acquired countless merits in this life but has not put any effort towards recognising his real nature?

- The answer to this question is presented through mantra 5

Mantra 5 (yathādarśe tathātmani, yathā svapne...)

Upanishad is saying that though you have acquired merits in this life, there is no guarantee that you will come back to this birth after death. Due to the merits (punya) gained you may go to other worlds like gandharva or ancestral or brahma lokas.

What are the reasons Upanishad is mentioning to know our real nature in this birth itself?

1. Putting in effort towards knowing our real nature and owning up peace now helps us to remain peaceful for the rest of our life.
2. It is easier to know our real nature in this birth. It is as easy as seeing our face in the mirror. Once the real nature is recognised all the activities will be done in the background of peace. In the other worlds, the mind will not be as clear as it is in the birth as a human being which makes it difficult to recognise our real nature.

Why is it difficult to know our real nature in other worlds?

- One desires to go to the other worlds for the sake of enjoyment. The objects of enjoyment are readily available in those worlds. So one who goes there will easily get lost in those pleasures and will thereby not put forth effort to know their real nature.
- A good teacher to introduce you to your real nature may not be available in other worlds (pitru & gandharva lokas). A good teacher is not available there because a good teacher

implies one who has clearly recognized Reality and such a one will not have a need to dwell in those lokas.

- In the ancestral world (pithru loka) the mind and intellect will be clouded and the appreciation of Reality, even if attempted, will be indistinct (not clear) like the dream vision.
- In the world of gandharva the appreciation of Reality will be like trying to get a glimpse of one's face in trembling waters. You may seem to get a glimpse of the Reality but it is very unclear.
- Because of all these limitations of those worlds, the desire to know real nature is difficult and nearly impossible.

What about in Brahma loka?

- In the world of Brahma (brahma loka) the presiding deity itself is the teacher. There is no issue of having an ideal teacher and also no disturbances too. So you can recognise the Reality as clearly as recognising light and shade.
- If the upasana of your favorite deity or guru is done one pointedly, then your mind will be occupied by the remembrance of the deity by default at the time of death. Then after death you can go to the world where your favorite deity is presiding. He will become the teacher and will impart knowledge.
- But it is very difficult to reach brahma loka because you have to spend a lifetime doing upasana along with vedic karmas. Only then there will be a possibility to reach brahma loka.

Finally Upanishad in these two mantras is trying to emphasize the need to put forth effort to recognise Reality in this life itself.

What is the message Upanishad is giving for those who do not believe in life after death?

- It is saying that these worlds or lokas are there in this life too. All these worlds imply being lost in pursuit of pleasures derived through objects. So in the present life if you are lost in the fleeting pleasures and waste your valuable time without recognizing the source of real happiness which is real nature then you will be deprived of real peace and end up living a life of fear and despair.
- Brahma loka here means staying in the presence of a Guru which is very difficult to attain just as attaining entry to Brahma loka. It is difficult to be in Guru's presence due to various reasons like the permission from the Guru, family responsibilities and so on. Some people make the goal of their life to be in the presence of a Guru. It is good if they use that opportunity to recognize the Reality. But most people assume that they have reached

their goal just by being in the presence of a Guru. They postpone their effort in recognizing the Reality because of the security and contentment they gain in the Guru's presence. They fail to understand or initiate effort to comprehend the reality of the guru which is the reality of themselves too.

So do not waste this precious birth by being carried away with the objects which will only give momentary happiness. Do not settle for anything less in the name of spirituality other than knowing your real nature which is a synonym for peace.

Is it not enough to use the last part of my life for spiritual pursuits?

- Upanishad is questioning how one will know when life is going to end. Life can cease at any moment.
- So it is not wise to entertain foolish desires. You should immediately initiate efforts towards the path to true peace as you do not know when life will end.

What does the term “Iha” mean in the mantra 5?

- “Iha” in this mantra implies “here” . But it can be taken as “this moment” . Then this mantra implies that one who succeeds in knowing the Reality and remains as peace will be free in this moment itself. If not, they will be tossed in the cycle of birth and death.
- Implication of mantra 5 when “Iha” taken as this moment:
 - Life can cease at any moment. Hence recognise the Reality in this moment. Those who postpone to recognise it later will never arrive at that moment in this life.
 - If you want to be peaceful in this moment then recognise Reality in this moment.
 - Reality is always available in this moment as Consciousness which one cannot miss to acknowledge. Recognise that to be your real nature and be peaceful every moment of your life.

When this mantra is understood well you will always lead a life of contentment. You will not live a life of animals which live at the level of senses and spend their life eating and breeding. Instead, you will live a glorious life with peace.

Some of the students are not happy on hearing this because they want to be peaceful by dwelling at the level of senses. They argue that happiness is reality at the level of senses. They do not want to sacrifice happiness which is readily available at the level of senses and dream of achieving peace by recognising Consciousness. Upanishad in the mantra 6 is answering to such types of people.

Some of the students who do not belong to the above category may feel that this mantra is not relevant for them. But the truth is, it is relevant for even those who seem to be interested in living a disciplined life and who put forth effort to recognize reality.

How?

In a way the human mind is very unpredictable because its nature itself is wavery. Right now (when attending satsangs) we may not have such doubts. But there is no guarantee that they will not crop up in the future because we are living in an extroverted world comprising of hypnotized individuals.

Hence let us see what Upanishad is explaining in mantra 6.

Mantra 6(indriyāṇām pṛthag-bhāvam...)

Dheeraha na sochathi: a discriminative one (viveki) will not have sorrow.

Who will have sorrow?

- Non discriminative ones (aviveki) will have sorrow.

Who are the ones who are non discriminative that are condemned to have sorrow?

- These are not the ones that are illiterate or who do not follow Upanishad.
- These are the ones who live at the level of senses or whose Reality is confined to only what is perceived by the senses. Their outlook is confined to the objective realm (external world). They derive their identity from the body.

Can all of these people be termed as non discriminative just because they are living at the level of senses?

- It is natural for anybody born in this world to assume that they are the body and mind apparatus and in turn assume the world to be real. So why should they be called as the non discriminative ones?
- Humans, unlike the animals, are given a sense of discrimination of real from illusion. So if they do not use their discrimination and continue to live like animals then they are called as non discriminative.
- The problem is that the consequences of the assumption that they are the body and mind apparatus (confined to senses) is not pleasant. These unpleasant consequences can be eliminated using the sense of discrimination.

What are the consequences faced when you do not use the sense of discrimination?

- A man is not made to live a life of sorrow. He is made to live joyfully. But when the sense of discrimination which only the humans are given is not utilised properly they have sorrow. How can you tell they have sorrow by not using the sense of discrimination?
 1. If the sense of discrimination is not used there will be a mad chase behind the fleeting joys. There is no one who has an experience of lasting happiness derived from objects. Such happiness is in a way only sorrow because that happiness will not last long which passes away and finally gives sorrow. So such life is filled with sorrow with glimpses of happiness.
 2. If you do not have the sense of discrimination you will be stuck at the level of body-am-I notion which in turn leads to fear of disease and death. This fear is a form of sorrow.

How do people become discriminative?

- No one is born with the sense of discrimination. The challenging circumstances that one passes through in life will propel them to entertain some questions about life like :
 - Are we condemned to live this pitiful life filled with sorrow and finally die or is there a life devoid of sorrow?
 - Should we live like an animal and die like an animal or is there anything glorious beyond this or in other words should I simply eat and breed or is there a life glorious beyond this?
 - Is the Reality confined to what is presented by the senses or is there something beyond them which we are missing?
- With such doubts when they come across any occasion where their doubts are being acknowledged to be true they use that opportunity to the fullest in hope of clearing their doubts. In the process of seeking answers to questions about life they enquire about the reality that is presented by the senses.
- What is the reality that is presented by the senses? They present the body-am-I notion and the world to be real. But these people doubt the reality of their own body and the reality of the entire world.
- The discriminative ones are not satisfied by the inputs from the senses. They enquire into the reality of this manifestation. They discriminate and comprehend the distinction between the apparent reality and the reality.

What is the apparent reality and reality?

- Reality is the changeless principle where as apparent reality is which appears to be real and is subject to change.
- Example : Wave and water
Wave is the apparent reality because it collapses by the time you start appreciating it. You may think it is real because it is visible but it is not real as it is subject to change. If you assume the wave with its shape and form to be real by itself then that is apparent reality. But if you recognise that in and through that wave there is only water then that is not apparent reality. As water, waves are real. Water is the reality because it is changeless.
- In our experience everything that we perceive with the senses is the apparent reality as they are subject to change. This includes the entire manifest world and the body too because it is continuously subject to change.
- These senses and their respective spheres of perception are all subject to constant change. They appear to be real but are not real.
- So Consciousness which is there in our experience is the only changeless principle and everything at the level of our senses (body and the world) is changing.

The world as presented by the senses and the senses by themselves arise and set everyday in our experience. But the Consciousness does not arise and set. It is there continuously facilitating the entire activity of the waking and dream states. It is there as the substratum for this entire phenomenon. The objects you are conscious of are subject to change but not the Consciousness by itself. This Consciousness does not arise and set so it is real. A discriminative one discriminates and comprehends the reality of this manifestation without getting carried away by the manifestation. By inquiry he comprehends the non dual Infinite Consciousness which is not limited by time, space and objects. It alone appears as the entire manifestation. Further he knows that everything which includes the whole world, senses, sense objects and so on arises and sets into his real nature which is Consciousness. So in a way if you recognise your real nature to be Consciousness then you are no less than God (not as a body). But if you are caught up with the body- am -I notion you are no less than an animal.

How is dhirah devoid of grief or sorrow?

- By default, everyone who derives identity with the body and mind apparatus will have sorrow because the body and mind are limited and impermanent. Limitation causes sorrow because it leads to unhappiness. Limitation is synonym for sorrow and unlimitedness is synonym for peace. Identity with that which is impermanent leads to fear of disease and death. This fear is a form of sorrow.

- To be free from limitation, all human beings generally will exert through the senses by chasing the sense objects. They seem to be happy for a while and in no time it is gone leading to sorrow. So they end up in a mad chase until death. This mad chase is termed to be life by many people. They are running for happiness or running away from sorrow in vain.
- A dhirah discriminates and comprehends the reality of this manifestation which is devoid of sorrow in the form of fear and also in the form of chasing after fleeting pleasures. In a way he has no reason to worry as he has access to the changeless peace.
- The wave will have sorrow due to its limitation. It experiences sorrow as it has to fall again though it rises. But if it wants to have peace it should know that it is nothing but water which is devoid of sorrow. From then on it lives a life filled with joy or peace.

Points to ponder- 47

From the previous mantras it has been made clear that those who comprehend the Self which is distinct from the body and the world alone will be free from sorrow. We have also seen that the distinction between the world that is presented by the senses and the Self which is beyond these senses is change and changelessness. Those who recognise the changeless Self to be infinite alone will be peaceful. The student who is keenly following Upanishad wants to be free from sorrow in this life itself or in this moment itself. So he approached the Upanishad and conveyed his desire. He requested the Upanishad to guide him to a method that is simple to follow and at the same time it should instantly give the ultimate result.

What is that method suggested by the Upanishad that is simple yet gives instant and ultimate results ?

- The method is devised in mantra 7

Mantra 7(Indirebhyam parm manaha.....)

The intention of Upanishad behind this mantra:

We have discussed similar mantras earlier in chapter 3 but there is a difference in those and this mantra. In the earlier mantras, Upanishad has devised a method to facilitate meditation or manana about the Reality. It is stressing the necessity of sense control in the path of knowledge about Reality (by citing the example of chariot). Further those mantras tell about the characteristics needed to comprehend the truth and tread on the subtle path. They suggest practice methods to enable the mind to comprehend Reality. But now this mantra is not aimed as a method to practice but as a means to comprehend Reality in a direct way. It will be discussed as a means to instant and ultimate result (druda jnana) but not as a method to practise. It is hinting towards knowledge rather than the practice that a student should initiate. We are seeing it from a different angle because now the students are mature enough in the path of knowledge. They have gained the concentration and purity to comprehend the subtle truth.

The intention of the Upanishad behind this mantra needs to be known essentially because through that we will be able to derive the total benefits it is planning for us. If the intention is not known we may think that the mantras are repetitive. We might also use the mantras as practice tools and thereby miss the opportunity to go beyond practice which leads to getting stuck at the level of effort. Thereby we miss the effortless natural state of peace. So let us use these mantras as a means to own the natural state of peace effortlessly which is possible only through knowledge.

Through mantra 7, we are initiating the journey starting at the level of the body and gradually reaching the Unmanifest. At each step upanishad is introducing the next step by saying that it is superior to the preceding one. By this we will be transcending from one state to another state. Now we should be clear about the basis on which Upanishad is deciding the superiority so that we are in line with it.

On what basis is the superiority decided by the Upanishad ?

- Pervasiveness (vyapakathvam) is the basis for deciding the superiority in this context.

Now let us start our journey to reach the most superior. We will start from the most familiar one which is the body.

Indriya (body): In a way indriyas (senses) represent the body because the external body consists of 5 sense organs and 5 organs of action (jnanendriyas and karmendriyas). For a while, assume that you are the body. Then the pervasiveness of the body is dependent on the size of the body. This means that we are confined to the size of the body when you identify yourself with the body.

What is more superior (pervasive) than the body?

- Mind is superior to the body. Why? Because it is more pervasive than the body. How?
- Even though we feel that the mind is located in the body or within the brain, still it is not bound by the boundaries of the body because of its capability of comprehension. That is why it can travel far and wide within no time.
- But it has a boundary which is decided by the senses. It can access everything that all the five senses illumine or it can go anywhere based on the information given by the senses.
- As we hear this you need to evolve in your pervasiveness from the limitation of the body to the pervasiveness of the mind. Until now we are habituated to be limited by the body. But now we have recognised that we are not confined to the body because with the mind we can go anywhere in the Universe. So now we are as big as the Universe.

What is superior to the mind?

- Intellect is superior to the mind. We need to understand the difference between mind and intellect, though they seem to be similar because of the absence of the physical characteristics. There are functional differences between both of them.
- Intellect is the reasoning, decision and judgement making faculty. That is why IQ is dependent on intelligence.
- Intellect is superior because it is more pervasive than mind. How? It is pervasive due to its reasoning capability. How? It can penetrate anything and everywhere because of its

reasoning capability. It can go to the very basic unit of matter, though not visible to the eyes, with the help of reasoning capability. Only the intellect can speculate the laws of nature that are invisible.

- With the help of intelligence we can even comprehend the mind of others and conclude what they are upto though it may not always be correct.
- Because of the capability of intelligence to transcend matter and mind, it is more pervasive than mind.
- As we hear this we take the stand of intellect which means owning the pervasiveness of the intellect.

What is superior to intellect ?

- Mahat is superior to intellect. Traditionally mahat refers to hiranyagarbha which means samashti buddhi or samashti sukshma sareeram. But practically let us take mahat to be aham or ego sense or I-ness.
- Ego relates to one particular body mind apparatus. So how can that be superior or more pervasive than intellect ? Theoretically aham refers to be one body- mind apparatus but it is different when we see its experiential aspect. When you feel that aham experientially there is no difference between your sense of aham and the sense of aham of another person. There may be obvious differences between the body, mind and intellect of one person to the other but not in the sense of aham. That is why it is universally called as I or mine. That is why the mantra is calling this universal aham as Mahan Atma.
- So when you access the aham in you practically you, have access to the aham of the entire manifestation.
- This is superior to intellect because of its pervasiveness. It transcends the intellect and finds itself connected to all the beings.
- As we hear this we take the stand of the universal aham.

What is superior to Mahan Atma (aham)?

- Avyaktha (unmanifest) is superior to aham.

What is Avyaktha (unmanifest)?

- It is traditionally described as Eshwara or samashti kaarana sareera.
- Avyaktha is simply the absence of manifestation.

What is this manifestation whose absence is labelled as unmanifest?

- Everything at the level of senses, mind, intellect and even the ego sense are labelled as manifestation. Hence, unmanifest means transcending all of them.
- Aham is the last manifest thing that we hang onto even though it is not as differentiated as the intellect, body or mind. Now, to comprehend Avyaktham, you need to transcend that aham too. So, boldly transcend the aham and remain as that unmanifest state/Avyaktha.

Remain as that unmanifest state (Avyaktha) by transcending aham for as long as it is possible for you. Then, try to answer the following question based on your experience: 'How is this unmanifest state superior to manifest state? How can nothingness be superior to something?'

Brief summary of the previous discussion:

That which is more pervasive than gross manifestation (body and senses) is mental world, represented by the mind. That which is more pervasive than the mental world is the intellectual world and that which is more pervasive than the intellectual world is aham. That which is more pervasive than aham is the world of unmanifest represented by avyaktam. So we concluded that this unmanifest is the most pervasive.

Did you enter this unmanifest world? How are you there?

- You do not enter because there is no entrance for 'I' in the unmanifest world.' I' cannot be there (nothingness). At the cessation of 'I' only unmanifest prevails. As long as the 'I' is intact there is no unmanifest and in the presence of unmanifest there is no 'I'.

There is a price to pay to enter the unmanifest. The price here is the possessor himself. This means that we must boldly give up the individuality and remain as unmanifest itself. Sometimes we assume remaining as unmanifest is possible but retaining that state is not possible. This is because we feel that we are disturbed by thoughts that belong to the physical world, mental world or intellectual world. These seem to be the intruders for not allowing us to enter the unmanifest world. But the actual cause is the aham which does not want to get transcended. So it always retains its existence by hanging on to those three realms. It plays its cunning tactics by preventing you from entering into the realm of the unmanifest. It is the master in the art of retaining itself thus keeping the individuality intact. It uses different ploys and takes you on a ride. It changes the ploys moment to moment at such a speed that you fail to recognise its presence. For professional meditators it throws in some deadly ploys like letting you get carried away by the thoughts of Infinite Conscious Existence. As you get carried away it establishes its hold and

effectively prevents you from remaining as unmanifest. By knowing all this you are now successful in evading all the tricks of aham by transcending it and remaining as avyaktha.

How will the experience of remaining as avyaktha be?

- The experience cannot be put in words as it is a state of nothingness or no-thing-ness. This is because all the tools like senses, mind and intellect have been transcended along with the aham too. Without all these tools we remain as nothingness and cannot describe the state of avyaktha. At the same time we cannot negate the presence of the state. Why ?
- The presence of the unmanifest state cannot be negated because it is there in our experience. You have been experiencing this even before our discussions and everyday from the day you are born and even before birth. How?
- You have been experiencing it in deep sleep. What is there in deep sleep? Avyaktha is there naturally in deep sleep which is a state of not knowing anything.
- You cannot deny that state of Avyaktha but at the same time you cannot comment on it as it is there beyond the comprehension tools like senses, mind and intellect that are there at your disposal. The term Avyaktham was coined by intellect in its helplessness to comprehend it. Avyaktham is an experience beyond the range of senses, mind, intellect and aham.

All these properties (changeless, peaceful, transcends the senses, mind, intellect and aham, present in deep sleep) seem to be descriptions of Brahman. Why are we attributing them to Avyaktha here?

- All of these descriptions are like the description of Brahman because Brahman is also unmanifest.

The Brahman is the ultimate. When we have already comprehended this Brahman, then why are we taking a step down and learning about the Avyaktha? Why should we bother ourselves with Avyaktha instead of transcending it and owning up the ultimate Brahman?

- You cannot comprehend Brahman before comprehending Avyaktha.
- You need to first comprehend Avyaktha and then transcend this to experientially comprehend Brahman. To transcend Avyaktha you need to first experience it. Otherwise, there is a high chance that Brahman will be a grand imagination of the seeker depriving him of the experiential comprehension. There is a high chance for the aham to play a role in this grand imagination. But if we comprehend Brahman through Avyaktha, there is almost no chance for the aham to play a role. Then, there is a high chance for you to recognize & remain as Brahman.

But I have comprehended Reality without bothering about Avyaktha

- Here, you might be imagining Reality. You can say that you are not imagining it as you have comprehended it strongly and because you do not have any doubts. But, here, you must know whether you have experientially comprehended Reality or if you are just imagining it.

How do you differentiate between real experience of Reality and an imagination of Reality?

- If it is an imagination, then it will be a fleeting experience. Your intellect may be imagining it based on something that you heard (about Brahman). So, this experience will not last for a long time as this experience depends on the mind or the intellect which keeps changing.
- If it is a real experience, then it will not be fleeting. There will be no change in the experience. It pertains to Reality or is reality itself which is not fleeting.

First, we have crossed the body and entered the mind, then crossed the mind and entered the intellect, later crossed the intellect and entered the aham and finally crossed the aham and entered Avyaktam.

What does it mean to cross the aham and enter into the state of Avyaktam?

- Crossing aham means to expose the illusion of aham. Aham seems to be there because we have assumed its existence and gave it a high status. In reality, there is nothing like aham.
- Entering Avyaktha means to remain as Avyaktha.

Without literally crossing and entering how will you remain as Avyaktha?

Methods to remain as Avyaktha:

Method 1:

- Imagine that you are wearing distorted spectacles. Through the spectacles, you cannot see anything clearly. On the spectacles, there is a pink colour shade. On top of the pink shade there is a green shade and on top of the green shade there is again a brown shade. When you look at the whole world through this kind of a spectacle, you cannot see anything clearly. Now, if you want to go back to normalcy, you have to take off the spectacles. But, you have been wearing them continuously for a long period of time so you may find it uncomfortable taking it off all of a sudden. Hence, first you will take off the brown shade, then the green and then the pink layer. Your vision will be much clearer than before. Finally, you will take off the spectacles as a whole. Then, you remain as you always are.

- Similar to this example, Avyaktham only has always remained in our experience. But, we have ignored it. So, now we are trying to again recognise it and remain as it. Here, the brown, green and pink shades of the spectacles refer to the senses, mind and intellect respectively. The distorted spectacles is our aham. On the base of the aham, the senses, mind and intellect exist. Once we transcend all these, Avyaktham alone will remain. By doing so, we have overcome the factors which seem to cloud Avyaktham and have comprehended it clearly.

Method 2:

- To understand this even better, we will start from deep sleep. In deep sleep, we remain as unmanifest/nothingness. When we wake up, immediately, the aham comes and crucifies the limitless Avyaktha and takes us into a limitation. Then, the intellect comes. Then, the mind and the body also come. Now, to own up the Avyaktha in the waking, we are doing the same steps in reverse through knowledge. First, we remove the veil of the senses. Then, we come out of the veil of mind and then that of the intellect. Then, you come out of the limitation of aham. Finally, you remain as Avyaktha.

Method 3:

Who-am-I meditation:

- Who-am-I meditation is also a good tool to remain directly as Avyaktha.
- When you ask the aham “who are you” then you will directly remain as Avyaktham. Due to the one pointed enquiry into the aham it will give way or its illusion is exposed and what remains is Avyaktham.
- If this “Who-am-I” enquiry is successful, then that itself is mukthi (liberation) from the body, mind, intellect and aham.

But the topic of Avyaktha is not stressed by many preachers of philosophy. So, is this really necessary?

- Many who are not interested in the experiential aspect of Reality dismiss this aspect of knowledge. They will jump into Infinite Conscious Existence straight away. However, if they have the maturity to remain further as Infinite Conscious Existence and if they can solve the problem of ignorance and its effects in the form of sorrow in life, then there is no problem with it. But, if you do not clearly recognise Infinite Conscious Existence to be your real nature and still experience sorrow, then the knowledge you have gained is of no use.
- To avoid such mishaps, the Upanishad is slowly guiding us so that we can comprehend the truth firmly and get rid of ignorance born sorrow.

Let us see what the Bhagavad Gita is saying about Avyaktha.

- All that which manifests comes from the unmanifest and again dissolves back into the unmanifest.
- There is one more unmanifest reality (implying to Brahman)
- This unmanifest Reality is imperishable. It is the highest goal. On comprehending it, you will be free of samsara.

Now, we have clearly comprehended what Avyaktham is.

We are calling this state as Avyaktha because we do not have tools to describe that experiential state. Here, we will not accept names like Infinite Conscious Existence because they are labels given by the intellect which we have already transcended. So, we remain as Avyaktha which is free from the burden of vyaktha (manifest). The manifest has been sublated due to the experience of the unmanifest. Now, the manifest unfolds on the screen of unmanifest. Unmanifest alone appears as manifest in unmanifest just like how water appears as a wave in water.

Homework

Remain as Avyaktha in waking. Start by getting familiarized with it after abstaining from activity. Later recognise it during activity.

Points to Ponder-48

Without activity, the mind is completely there but still there is a challenge to completely tame the mind. That could be the reason for you to face the challenge of exposing the limitation of the mind. With activity only a portion of the mind has the access to the substratum by which you are successful. We will try to solve all these problems through knowledge and understand the state of avyaktha by approaching it in a different way.

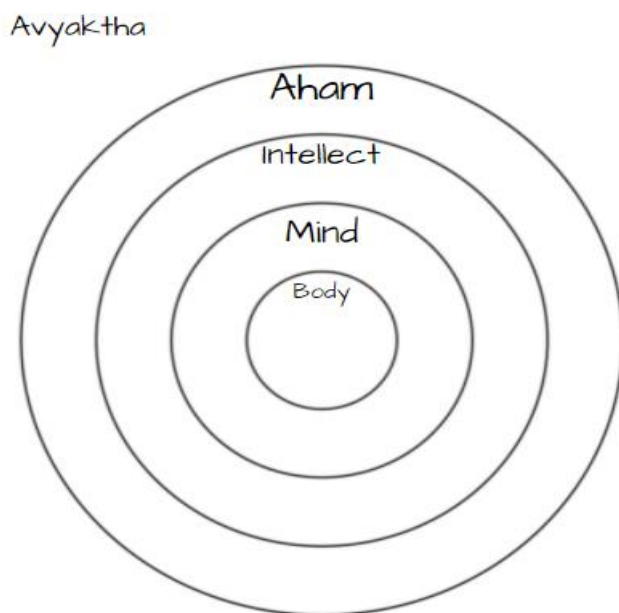
Though the role of aham is as such evident in the last step its role is latently evident in all the former steps too. We can say so because effort implies the function of individuality. So effort to transcend each level is possible because of the underlying factor of aham or individuality. We need to transcend aham because it is keeping us in a state of continuous suffering.

How do we transcend aham?

- Any action needs an individuality to initiate it. So transcending aham too needs individuality. Then it appears as though we need aham to transcend aham. It is like one trying to cross himself. We can transcend something which is different from us but how can we transcend ourselves? It appears to be complex and not possible. But, by resorting to avyaktha it is possible to transcend aham completely. But, here we face another problem. We need to reach avyaktha by transcending aham but at the same time, to transcend aham we need to step into avyaktha. So, what should we do to come out of this problem?
- This problem is based on the assumption that the four pointers (body, mind, intellect, aham) towards avyaktha are like four steps on our journey towards avyaktha. Until now, we took one portal after another and moved away from the earlier portal. As we reached avyaktha we assumed that we moved away from the other realms. During an activity the other three realms were still there with us and hence we felt like we could not remain in the state of avyaktha. Without activity, we were anyway away from those realms and so felt that we can easily remain as avyaktha. This assumption is not correct because as we take one portal after another we do not move anywhere. There is only a change in recognition without any movement. Avyaktha is there at this moment too. But we fail to recognize it due to ignorance. So, if ignorance is eliminated through knowledge we can recognise it now and here.
- There is no distance between the body and avyaktha. The distance is zero because the body (along with mind, intellect) have manifested in the avyaktha which is devoid of manifestation. So, manifestation can appear only in that which is devoid of manifestation just as sound can appear only in silence. In deep sleep we are naturally devoid of identification with body, mind, intellect and aham but in waking we seem to be in a state of identification which makes it difficult for us to remain in avyaktha.

- The one who is there in deep sleep alone is there in waking too. In deep sleep one knows the absence of all the four and in waking one knows their presence. So, there is no distance between how you were in deep sleep and how you are in waking.

Let us understand how there is no distance between manifest and unmanifest with the help of a diagram:



- Here let us assume four concentric circles are drawn on a white paper. The innermost circle is the body. It is surrounded by a bigger circle which is the mind. Around that is another circle which is called intellect. Around the intellect is the biggest circle which is the aham.
- Here, in avyaktha only all the four circles are drawn. The white paper on which the circles are drawn is avyaktha. In avyaktha, which is devoid of manifestation, the body, mind, intellect and aham manifest. We need not draw one more circle to represent avyaktha because it is limitless. Body, mind, intellect and aham all have limitations but once you transcend aham there are no limitations.
- What is the distance between the circles, which represent body, mind, intellect and aham, and the paper, which represents avyaktha? There is no distance.

For the complete recognition of avyaktha we need to get rid of some assumptions.

What are the implications in knowing that there is no distance between body, mind, intellect, aham and the avyaktha?

1. Even though the Upanishad presents this topic in a way that implies movement from body to mind to intellect, etc... we must realize that in reality, there is no such movement taking place.
2. The importance of knowledge. The body-am-I notion is dispelled through knowledge about avyaktha. In the ignorance about avyaktha, we seem to derive identity with vyakta (manifest) which is limited. To get rid of limitation we need to expose its illusion. By doing so, we can conclude that there was never actually a limitation. There was only an assumption of limitation due to the ignorance about avyaktha. When ignorance is eliminated, only avyaktha, which is real, remains.
3. The time taken for this recognition is zero. It happens in a moment because dispelling ignorance (darkness) with knowledge (light) is instant. You are already that avyaktha. Some may feel that it may not be instant because Upanishad has conveyed the process to reach avyaktha through multiple steps. Even though there are four steps presented by the Upanishad, in reality, there is only one step. The first three steps are gradually preparing the seeker to boldly apply the one step of exposing the illusion of aham.

How is the Upanishad preparing the seeker to take the final step?

- The individual will get offended when he is being told that he is nothing as a body and mind apparatus. That is why Upanishad is saying that you are not limited to the body but more pervasive than that. By saying so initially, the individual will come along with the Upanishad.
- The Upanishad is saying that your mind is more pervasive than the body and your intellect is more pervasive than the mind. Aham, which is experientially taken as the individuality of all the beings in the Universe, is more pervasive than the intellect. This aham is not gross like the body, mind and intellect but at the same time it cannot be denied as non-existent as it is experienced subjectively as the sense of limitation.
- Recognising aham is very important to recognise avyaktha because both are purely subjective experiences. Hence, the capability to recognise and isolate aham is essential to transcend it and reach the final step of avyaktha. Once aham is recognised then only Upanishad talks about the final step of transcending it .
- In this way Upanishad is gradually preparing the seeker by stretching the individuality to a point where it can be eliminated with ease.

Both aham and avyaktha are devoid of manifestation. So, why do we say that avyaktha alone is devoid of manifestation?

- This is because aham may not have a physical form but it is experienced universally as a sense of limitation. This sense of limitation is experienced as a sense of lack and a craving for happiness which are there universally. This happens because unknowingly we are veiled by the mask of limitation. So, though it has no physical form it is in the realm of manifestation as a sense of limitation.
- Avyaktha is devoid of even this sense of limitation. We are experiencing this in deep sleep. When we wake up we feel that we are again possessed by the aham as a sense of limitation. Without activity or in meditation there is no role for aham because of the strength of the knowledge you have. When in activity we assume or feel that aham has a role. But in reality once you have recognised the illusion of aham it vanishes and only the unmanifest remains irrespective of the presence or absence of activity.

How can we eliminate ego or aham?

- We can get rid of aham just by observing it. It is not a passive observation but a dynamic observation with utmost care and attention. Let us do an exercise to understand this:

Sit with the eyes closed and be attentive. A sound is made and you are able to hear the sound. Now, who heard the sound? You would say, “I heard it”, which means you have recognised the I. This is the aham which is subtler than the body, mind and intellect. It is the sense of limitation. To find out what that ‘I’ is, question yourself, “Who am I?” Do not seek an answer at the level of body, mind and intellect. Let the answer reveal as an experience. Remain as the experience or let the experience remain for itself. Now open your eyes and think about that experience. The experiences of the seekers after initiating enquiry into the reality of aham are listed as:

- a. The experience is there and there is nothing to explain about it,
- b. i felt deeper and farther away from aham which cannot be put in words,
- c. there is nothing there to describe.

By these experiences it is made clear that aham is not only recognised but transcended too. That state which you all are saying as which cannot be described or put in words is avyaktha.

How did we reach avyaktha when we tried to find the reality of aham?

- We were able to experience avyaktha because in reality there is no aham. We only questioned the aham (which we experience as a sense of limitation), and as a result it seemed to disappear.
- It is there in your experience as a sense of limitation only until you questioned it.
- This aham will rule us till its reality is inquired with definite purpose. With inquiry you will know that it was never there in spite of our experience of it as a sense of limitation. Avyaktham is always there in our experience or we ourselves remained as avyaktha.

Homework

Continue to remain as avyakta (unmanifest), which is pervasive, not only with closed eyes, but also with open eyes and even in the midst of activities or without activities.

We can understand very easily that our real nature is devoid of manifestation through our experience of deep sleep. Here we naturally remain as avyaktha. Dream appears and later it gives way to avyaktha. In the waking state we need to comprehend and remain as avyaktha. We can do so by exposing the illusion of aham or individuality.

Even though you put utmost effort to remain as avyaktha in the midst of activities there may be some doubts inside you which can be put as:

Unlike in deep sleep we need to function with the body, mind and intellect in the day to day activities. How can we engage in the activities with the knowledge of avyaktha? How can we reconcile avyaktha with vyaktha? How can we remain as avyaktha and perform our activities which are vyaktha?

- The reconciliation between avyaktha and vyaktha should be clear before we go further. The above question can be put as: How can the movie continue after knowing its reality to be a screen? This question arises for the viewer which makes it a valid one. He may ask the question because to enjoy the movie he needs to forsake the screen completely. When this example is applied here at our level of understanding there is no viewer but only the screen and images. The screen is not bothered about the movement of images on it. Here the screen represents our unmanifest nature (avyaktha) and images represent manifest nature (vyaktha). We as an image are caught up with the images to such an extent that we have completely ignored the reality of the image which is the screen. Once the image enquires and recognises the screen to be its reality then it remains as screen and allows the images to continue as before. The difference lies in having access to the unlimited nature of the screen. In the same way by exposing the

illusion of aham through inquiry we remain as unmanifest and allow the manifest to continue its manifestation.

What is the difference between before inquiry and after inquiry?

- There is no difference in the manifestation of body, mind and intellect before and after inquiry.
- But the limitation of aham which is the cause for a sense of lack, craving for happiness, etc... is eliminated after inquiry. That is why you remained as the unlimited or as peace.

Let us see with a short story how the activity in the realm of manifestation or limitation can continue even after having access to the unlimited:

Long ago there used to be a mighty emperor who was blessed with a son. A war was declared and during the war it was inevitable that the emperor would be defeated. For the fear of losing the son who was the only heir, the commander-in-chief of the army gave the prince to the care of a wealthy businessman. Knowing fully well that the entire kingdom would be looted upon being defeated, the businessman gave the prince to be taken care of by his servant. The servant out of loyalty towards his master took the child to the forest thinking that he will be more protected there. He left the child in the care of the tribal chief in the forest. The child mistook himself to be a forest dweller because all this happened when he was still an infant. He grew up as a jungle dweller. After ten years when the kingdom became a safe place to live, the servant came in search of the child. He wanted to take back the child along with him. Though it was difficult for the child to leave the familiar surroundings and the people that took care of him, he left with the servant. He was adjusting to the new environment as the son of the servant. He lived happily for five more years. At the age of 15 the wealthy businessman came and took the boy along with him after convincing the boy that he is his real father. The boy was in a fix but went with the businessman with great difficulty. Slowly he got accustomed to his new parents. He was living a luxurious life but still had regard to his earlier set of parents who took care of him. On his 20th birthday the commander-in-chief came in search of this energetic boy. He took the boy along with him to be trained in martial arts, after convincing him that he is his father. Five more years passed and the commander, after being impressed with the bravery of the prince, told him that he was a prince born to the great emperor of this land. Even though his parents were not alive the commander said that he belonged to a royal lineage and the prince should get back to his kingdom. The prince was convinced to fight for the lost kingdom, he fought and victoriously got back his kingdom.

The prince who was the son of an emperor mistook himself to be a forest dweller, then a servant, later a businessman, next a warrior and finally became an emperor. Here the prince did not really become anything. He only failed to know who he really was and that one simple error resulted in a series of misconceptions which culminated in him believing that he was a tribesman.

Implication of the story:

1. The power of knowledge: The change happened only with the knowledge. It may take time for some people based on the extent of their conditioning. Change in the outlook based on true knowledge is inevitable with the help from a well wisher coupled with the sense of reasoning.
2. The activity at the level of body, mind and intellect can continue as before even with the knowledge. The child, though moved with the servant, still had regard for the forest family. He still can express gratitude and love to them as their son. His identity has changed but his actions based on earlier conditioning can still continue. This will not harm his new identity as the son of a servant. Not only that, even after becoming an emperor he can connect at ease with all the earlier families without sacrificing his new identity. He need not sacrifice anything to get connected to the earlier families. He knows fully well that he has a new identity as an emperor because of the knowledge and his reasoning. With his new identity the activity with regard to his earlier identity can still continue.

Application of the story: Just as the child in the story is born as a prince we all are born as avyaktha without any superimposed limitations. After a few months in our journey of life we identify ourselves at the level of body. Later in a few more months the mind blossoms and starts recognising the things around. Later intelligence shows up and finally aham in the form of a sense of belonging flourishes in due course of time. Now with the help of the well wisher or guru, you will be convinced gradually about your real identity. Just as the prince retains his identity after knowledge and interacts with the earlier assumed relationships so too we can interact with the tools of body, mind and intellect in the light of our new identity.

What will happen to the aham after knowledge?

- Aham or ego implies body, mind and intellect-am-I notion. This notion is eliminated with doubtless knowledge. External life is the same as before with regard to body, mind and intellect but aham is eliminated. Life continues without the veil of ego. All the activities are done in the light of knowledge but not in the mask of ignorance.

How do we know whether we are under the grip of ego or devoid of ego? Or how do we know whether we are in the grip of ignorance or devoid of ignorance?

- Sometimes the ego itself will make you feel that you are devoid of ego, so that you will stop the efforts in eliminating it. But some courageous souls will not fall for the trick of ego, but some will fall for its cunning tricks. Though it is there it will make you believe that it is not there. There are some people who know that the ego is active in them, but they are fed up with the efforts in eliminating it.
- We need to recognise whether we are in the grip of ego. How? You will know it based on the effects of ego or effects of ignorance. Ego manifests as a sense of lack, sense of insecurity, craving for happiness. After recognising the illusion of ego, in the light of knowledge these effects of ego will cease. Then we will live a life of peace by taking up the challenges of life with peace as the background. Our identity is with that which is devoid of limitation.
- In the example of water and wave, water alone is there as the wave, bubble, ripple and froth. With knowledge, water can still express itself as either wave or bubble or ripple or froth. It appears as all of them simultaneously with ease because it knows in its essence it is devoid of any limitations. It has no issue in appearing as all other forms. Before the dawn of knowledge the wave, bubble or ripple felt that they are independent entities which means that they assumed that they can exist by themselves. Dawn of knowledge implies water waking up to its reality as water. Water now knows that it alone exists as waves, bubbles or ripple. These are all the names given to the water as and when it takes form as it pleases.
- What is the difference between these forms of water before and after the dawn of knowledge? Physically there is no difference. But the notion that these forms have an independent reality is eliminated. This is because water establishes its all pervasive limitlessness. Water is unaffected by the birth and death of waves, bubbles, or ripples.
- In the same way with knowledge what remains is the limitless avyaktha allowing the apparent limitation of body, mind and intellect to do their respective roles.

But still some may say there is a difference between their state of being with eyes closed and when they are active in the world.

- Physically there is difference because when you sit for yourself you do not contribute or create any nuisance in the world around you. This may not be the case when you are active in the world. At the same time, from the knowledge standpoint (i.e. comprehending the illusion of aham) there is no difference between active and inactive states as you remain peaceful by default through the recognition of avyaktha which is equally there in both the states.

Let us understand this clearly based on our earlier session of Self enquiry:

As we close our eyes we are cut off from worldly perceptions. So, we are automatically more focussed internally. Then we heard a sound which the mind recognised and the intellect said that the sound of clapping is intentionally created. We are focussed physically, mentally and intellectually too. Then you are directed to concentrate on the one who heard that sound. Through that you are made to identify yourself as the individuality called the I. In that moment you are totally focussed on the sense of individuality. Later we questioned the reality of individuality by raising a question "Who am I?" The individuality has never expected such a question because it is only used to question everything around. It is stunned with this question to such an extent that it ceased to exist. Its habit of thriving under the cover of ignorance -ceased. Thereafter what remains is an obvious experience which is labelled by some of you as nothingness, emptiness, limitlessness, silence and peace. To sum up there are two main events that took place:

1. Concentration is generated.
2. You realised the illusion of individuality which is the synonym for limitation.

But still why is it for some of you owning up that peace is only confined to that exercise but for some the peace remained in spite of the activity after that exercise?

- Peace remained confined to that sitting meditation to those who are impressed with the focussed or concentrated states of mind and intellect. The mind will stop its function the moment you concentrate on anything. So these people were carried away by the peace born out of this concentration.
- Peace permeated beyond the sitting meditation for those who acknowledged the illusion of aham.

I have acknowledged both the events (concentration and the illusion of aham). Still my peace is confined to the inactive states. Why is it that my peace is disturbed in the activity or am in the grip of limitation?

- This is because you assume that the ego in the inactive state is different from the ego in the active state. During the inactive state, you feel that the illusion of individuality (that belongs to the one who is sitting and engaging in the meditation) is realised at that moment. The individuality in the inactive state is exposed but still the individuality of the one who is active is intact. Hence you feel that the individuality will gain control over you and prevent you from identifying your real nature as limitless reality in an active state.

- In reality, there is only one ego. It should be very clear that once you have exposed the illusion of that ego by sincere inquiry it is gone forever. If it bounces back that means that you have given an invitation for it to take over.
- Once the ego is eliminated you remain as the limitlessness (avyaktha) and in it the body, mind and intellect behaves as per the need of the activities they have undertaken.

The sitting meditation should be done in a way that once the illusion of ego is exposed and eliminated there is no scope for it to arise again. By this there is no more individuality to haunt you by imposing a sense of limitation. Then there is only limitlessness or peace in which you perform all the day to day activities.

But if you feel you are possessed by it you have to resort to the knowledge.

Homework

Remain as limitless avyakta (unmanifest) and allow body, mind and intellect function as per external situation with freedom from limitation in the background.

As soon as you feel that the peace is being disturbed make a firm resolve that there is no chance for that to happen. Suppose you are having disturbing thoughts, trace out to whom these thoughts came and question that I . Then at that moment the illusion of individuality is exposed and later it cannot arise.

Points to Ponder 49

Mantra 8(Avyakthathu param purusho.....)

Until now we know that avyaktha is devoid of limitations and hence more pervasive. But the mantra is saying Purusha is superior or more pervasive to avyaktha.

How is Purusha superior to avyaktha?

- Purusha is more pervading than avyaktha. It is the most superior because of its all pervasive nature. We should understand this based on our own experience.

How do we comprehend Purusha or how can there be experience of Purusha?

- The mantra gives us a clue to comprehend Purusha by mentioning that Purusha is alinga which means that it is devoid of any signs, indications or attributes. All attributes are valid at the level of senses, mind and intellect. Hence that which transcends all these is naturally devoid of all attributes.

How can the term alinga become a clue to comprehend Purusha?

- Upanishad in a way is telling that Purusha is devoid of all manifestations by using the term alinga. But we already have access to avyaktha which is devoid of all manifestations. Then this means that there are two avyakthas, one (Purusha) superior to the other (avyaktha). This is also told by Lord Krishana in the Bhagavad Gita.

How do we reach the higher avyaktha, which is called here as Purusha, from this avyaktha which is there in our experience now?

- There is no manifestation in the state of avyaktha and remaining devoid of manifestation, which includes individuality too, we are approaching the state of Purusha(second avyaktha). We say that we are not there in the state of avyaktha as per our experience. At the same time we cannot deny the experience. To understand the experience clearly let us repeat the process of self inquiry. (body – mind – intellect – I – avyakta)
- When we are asked to describe our experience that we experienced as a result of self inquiry, the experiences are described as follows: remained as a knowing principle , being aware and peaceful.
- Based on these responses, we can say that there is the existence of an experience. That existence of experience is being known. That knowing is possible only because of the knowing principle or Consciousness. There cannot be existence without knowing

principle and also knowing is not possible without the existence of a knowing principle. At the same time there are no two entities called existence and knowing because there is no knowing apart from the existence of knowing. Rather it is one entity described from two perspectives.

- This can be understood with the example of an illumined screen. The screen cannot be apart from the light and the light of the screen cannot be apart from the screen.

Points to Ponder-50

How do we have experience of Reality?

- Hridamaneesha manasa abhiklipthaha: Reality is revealed by the insight gained through the intellect which resides in the heart.

Earlier we discussed that Purusha is not known by the senses, mind and intellect, as it is so subtle because of its pervasiveness. But now, Upanishad seems to say that it is known through the intellect. So it seems to be contradicting the earlier statement. This notion is true when we are considering the literal meaning of intellect. But now, the implied meaning of intellect is different.

What is the implied meaning of the above statement?

- Hrida maneesha: Intellect that resides in the heart.
 - This doesn't mean that it resides in the physical heart. Its implied meaning is the introvert intellect. To understand what an introverted intellect is, we have to understand the four-fold inner organs.
 - When we say inner organs (antahkarana) it means that there are four components. They are mind, intellect, ego and memory. These four are not distinct entities. But the four components are given names based on the functional role that thoughts take up from moment to moment. When the thoughts are completely vacillating then it is called the mind. But when these thoughts remain focussed on any particular subject resulting in having the capability to comprehend the subject thoroughly then that is called intellect. When I thought gains prominence it is called ego (aham). When the thoughts are in the process of recollecting the past events then it is called memory.
- Intellect can be either extrovert or introvert. Extrovert intellect implies being focussed on the information that the sense organs generate. Introvert intellect implies being focused, but not on the information being generated by the sense organs.

Can you remain focussed without relying on any external objects?

- If you can remain focussed then that means you have introvert intellect (antaramuka drishti).

Without introvert intellect you cannot have intuition.

What is intuition (antara drishti)?

- Intuition is the ability to comprehend things without a need to think further about it.
- Upanishad refers to intuition with the term 'manasa'.

Abhiklipthaha: The term says without intuition you cannot have revelation of your real nature.

If you say that the Reality is clear to you then it implies you have revelation of it. This is because of the intuition which in turn is due to introvert intellect.

‘Hridamaneesha manasa abhiklipthaha’ can be understood well when we see it with the help of the previous mantras. These mantras mention a portal to recognize Reality, as Body - mind - intellect - aham. Then we inquired into the aham or I thought and remained as Reality.

What is the mechanism involved in this inquiry or portal?

- The mechanism involves generation of an introvert intellect. This generated an intuition which facilitated revelation of Reality. How did all these happen?
- When this inquiry is done the senses are at rest or controlled which means there are no inputs given to the mind through senses. Hence the mind has limited scope to vacillate on the sense objects. In that relatively calm state of mind the intellect has no extrovert topic to dwell upon. At this juncture the intellect is guided to become introvert by inquiring into the reality of individuality with the question ‘Who am I’.

What happens through this inquiry?

- Intellect is directed to find an answer which cannot be found in any means through the external realm. This forces the intellect to remain focussed internally.

What does this introvert intellect find in the process of introversion?

- It will not find anything objectively.

What about some people who claim to have objective experiences like hearing sounds and seeing lights?

- These claims of such people are baseless. These people are not capable of introversion. Their extrovert tendencies will force them to the level of sense objects because of their preoccupation with them. They tend to imagine about them even in their absence to such an extent that they seem to materialise.

What is the result for those who are capable of introvert inquiry?

- When intellect is made to focus on its apparent substratum (I-thought) the I-thought ceases. This gives rise to an intuition which instantly recognises the underlying Infinite Conscious Existence.
- You have the intuition of the revelation of Infinite Conscious Existence.

It is the intuition that recognizes Infinite Conscious Existence. Intuition is born from introvert

intellect. So how can you say that intellect or mind cannot know Infinite Conscious Existence?

- Intuition does not belong to intellect or mind. Once the introvert intellect focusses on itself to find Reality it completely ceases. How? This introvert intellect belongs to 'I' as we say 'my introvert intellect'. This ceases with inquiry. What remains is only the Reality of the mind, body, intellect, and ego apparatus which is Infinite Conscious Existence and it remains as an experience.

Where did this intuition come from?

- Intuition is nothing but the knowing principle that is inherent to this Infinite Conscious Existence. The word intuition is nothing but a figurative expression. It is like the light of the Sun- which is inseparable from the Sun- because of which the Sun makes itself known.

How can we deny the role of body, mind, and intellect apparatus in recognizing Infinite Conscious Existence?

- They seem to have a role which cannot be denied. That role is limited to generating a firm resolve to know Reality. But it is the Reality that reveals itself. This can be seen with an example. There is a glowing lamp in a room which is to be found. The room is dark and the lamp is concealed. Now you have to go inside a dark room and find this glowing lamp that has been concealed. After searching for it you will finally come across an inverted pot which on overturning it will instantly reveal the glowing lamp. How did you find this glowing lamp? It was found out with the light it emanates. Here, overturning the pot also has a role in this process which is only limited. Only because of the light that was emanated by the lamp you are able to recognize the lamp that is there within. Recognition of the lamp happened only because of the light that emanated from the lamp itself. Entering the dark room implies initiating the search for Reality through introvert senses. Overturning the pot implies the role of mind and intellect in the process of Self inquiry. The light of the lamp implies intuition. The lamp implies Infinite Conscious Existence. There is a will to recognize Infinite Conscious Existence. It is this will that started this introvert search. But still, recognition of this Infinite Conscious Existence happened because it revealed itself.
- Recognition of this Infinite Conscious Existence happened because it revealed itself as itself in the absence of an individual who desired its recognition. Even though you have desired the recognition, as long as the one who desired is active there as an individual, revelation will not happen. But once it is revealed there is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence.
- The earnest desire to know Infinite Conscious Existence is for the body mind apparatus. To fulfil the desire the senses are restrained, the mind is disciplined, and intelligence is

made introvert to enquire into its own Reality. But it is said the revelation of Infinite Conscious Existence is not for any of them. How is that possible? All these have a passive role in the process of revelation. The final revelation is due to Infinite Conscious Existence only. The Infinite Conscious Existence reveals itself. It is said revelation is not for the body mind apparatus because in the revelation of Infinite Conscious Existence there is only Infinite Conscious Existence. This revelation is the recognition of its own innate nature. Thereafter there is only Infinite Conscious Existence.

Does the manifestation cease after realization?

- No, the manifestation does not cease after realization. There is no change in the manifestation. Manifestation continues as before. Individual also continues to survive. The only change is that the individual is there without any individuality. Everything now is there as the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence.
- For example, a wave has enquired into its Reality and as a result recognized its reality to be water. Thereafter there is an appearance of the wave without the individuality of the wave. The wave now is an appearance of water. Water alone is there throughout the countless waves and it is there even in the absence of those waves. Image on the screen enquired into its Reality and it remained as the screen and its appearances. So there is no individuality in the image anymore.

What is the use of such a recognition when the one who strived for this recognition has no place in the final recognition itself?

- The one who strived for this recognition is the one who was burdened with sorrow. He was suffering from a sense of lack and a feeling of insecurity before initiating the enquiry. He is troubled by the shadow and is haunted by the fear of old age, disease, and death. But after recognition, he remains devoid of any of these psychological sufferings, troubles, and fears because he remains as Infinite Conscious Existence. In this recognition the individual who considered himself to be a silly mortal wakes up and owns up one's innate immortality.
- It is for this reason Upanishad is concluding by saying that those who know this become immortal. We fear death because we assume ourselves to be the body hence, naturally fear is there for its annihilation. But once we remain as Infinite Conscious Existence we know that it is devoid of death and in turn remain fearless.

What are the reasons for which Infinite Conscious Existence is devoid of death?

There are three reasons for this.

1. For the death to happen there must be some or other factor causing it. But the Reality of the body which is Infinite Conscious Existence is one without a second. Hence it

remains unaffected by any of these. There is no scope for the second thing to exist in this experience of Infinite Conscious Existence . Whatever is there is its appearance. So by itself, it is not affected by any of the factors that are usually presumed to cause death.

2. There is no birth itself for Infinite Conscious Existence. Only that which is born will die. But here Infinite Conscious Existence is not born, so it is beyond the limitation of space and time. The body will be born but the experience of Infinite Conscious Existence is eternal so it remains immortal.
3. Unlike the body, Infinite Conscious Existence doesn't grow and hence, no decay. So it remains changeless. This experience of Infinite Conscious Existence is always constant.

Yethath viduhu amritaste bhavanthi: This awareness is said to be immortal and because you are this awareness Upanishad is saying that once you experience this you remain immortal.

Four Levels

1. Having interest in topics related to Reality:
 - Having interest in topics like this (reality of the manifestation) is great by itself because these topics are not that entertaining from the worldly sense. You don't even have any spiritual-social entertainment like hari katha, bhajan, etc... Still if there is interest, then that is great by itself.
2. Dedicating time consistently towards activities related to Reality:
 - Not only having interest but dedicating time for it consistently over a period of time is greater because you are prioritising this over other activities which you and the world have considered to be important.
3. Comprehending Reality:
 - Comprehending the Reality is considered to be the greatest because it needs intuition generated by introverted intellect.
4. Remaining as it by default:
 - Remaining as it by default (druda jnanam or firm knowledge) is the final goal. There are no goals superior to this goal. Why is this considered the final goal? Because after this, there is no individual left as a reality to have further goals in this path. Remaining as Infinite Conscious by default is the highest accomplishment a human can even think of.

Now, you must figure out which level you are in out of the above four. All of the four levels are rewarding by themselves. The only difference is in the depth of peace and tranquility. This

increases as we proceed from one level to the other.

Example: From Vijayawada to Haridwar to Uttarkashi to Gongothri, as the altitude increases, the pollution decreases and the climate will be more pleasant (in the summer).

Wherever you are in these four levels, you need to first congratulate yourself for reaching that stage and for having access to the peace which is confined to that stage.

Mantra 10(Yadha panchavathishtanthe.....)

What is the difference between those in the different stages of the path of knowledge?

- There is only one main difference. It is in the degree of introvert intellect.
- You will have interest in such topics if you have some amount of introvert intellect. Only if you have introvert intellect, you will have antardrishti (intuition). If you have a bit more introvert intellect, you will have more enthusiasm to continue forward in this path. If you have an even more introvert intellect, you can clearly understand Reality. If you have a lot of introvert intellect, you will be able to remain as Reality without doubts and habitual conditioning.
- If you are in level three it means that you have introvert intellect but it is still not sufficient to be firmly established in Infinite Conscious Existence. Introvert intellect and intuition are directly proportional to each other. One with adequate introvert intellect will have adequate intuition and thereby firm knowledge.

How can we develop a degree of introvert intellect by which we can remain by default as Reality?

- We can achieve this through nididhyasana.

How can we be capable of effective nididhyasana or a nididhyasana that culminates in firm knowledge?

- We can achieve effective nididhyasana through effective manana.
- Manana means the ability to remain focused as our real nature with the help of thoughts of portals related to the truth.

How can we achieve effective manana?

- Through effective shravana.
- Shravana means the ability to remain focused on our real nature with the help of a satsang.

How will I be capable of effective shravana?

- The sense organs need to be regulated or disciplined. These disciplined sense organs will allow one to participate in satsang. Thereby, it will pave the way to remain focused on Reality.

One needs to regulate the senses, participate in shravana, manana and nididhyasana to have an introvert intellect which is capable of facilitating firm knowledge. The Upanishad in mantra 10 is glorifying this state as 'paramamgathi' which means the highest state possible to attain in human form.

What is that highest state (paramamgathi)?

- The state where there is possibility for effective shravana, manana and nididhyasana.

Why is it called the highest state?

- It is called the highest state because it will culminate in the highest goal of remaining as Reality by default.

What is the significance of the highest state?

- Upanishad is saying that paramamgathi is the highest state in which the five senses of knowledge along with the mind are at rest and the intellect does not waver. Through this, Upanishad is indicating a state wherein all the three (senses, mind and intellect) are focused by shedding their extrovert tendencies.
- For shravana you primarily need eyes and ears and also mind and intellect. Manana primarily needs mind and also intellect to an extent. Nididhyasana needs introvert intellect. So, effective shravana, manana and nididhyasana are possible only when the senses, mind and intellect shed their extrovert tendencies and remain focused on Reality which is the highest state.

So, for those in level three, effective nididhyasana is needed.

The next Mantra(11) is an answer to the following question

I want to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence by default and for that Upanishad is suggesting proper shravana, manana and nididhyasana. But I am already in it. As I listen I have experience of an intuition that recognises and remains as Reality. Later, based on the impressions generated through shravana in the form of portals, I do manana and remain as the Self. I even have experience of remaining as Reality without the need of manana too. But my problem is that it does not last long. I want to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence by default and appreciate this world of names and forms as its manifestation. So what should I do?

- Here, you may say that we have already discussed the solution to this problem as shravana, manana and nididhyasana. This is correct, but if you are still facing this problem even after doing shravana, manana and nididhyasana for a long time then we must approach it in a different way. Let us understand with the help of an analogy:
- When an archer shoots his arrow at the target, there are four possibilities.
 1. Arrow will go towards the target but instead of hitting the target, it will go to all the sides of the target.
 2. The arrow will not even reach the target. It will fall 2 meters before the target.
 3. It will touch the target but then it will fall down instead of remaining on that target.
 4. It will pierce the target and will remain stuck on it.
- The archer represents all of us. The bow represents the portals (shravana, manana, nididhyasana). The arrow represents our mind or intellect. The target is Reality.
- Among the four possibilities, what predominantly relates to you?
 - If it is 1, your mind does not even cooperate with you. You think of every other thing except for Reality in manana.
 - If it is 2, you feel as if you are going towards the Reality but, you will know later that in that process you have fallen asleep.
 - If it is 3, you seem as though you are there as Infinite Conscious Existence but, you very soon get distracted.
 - If it is 4, you remain as Infinite Conscious Existence as long as your effort to remain as Infinite Conscious Existence lasts.

How do we reach stage 4 from stage 3?

- Through mantra 11, Upanishad will help us reach stage 4.

Mantra 11(tām yogām iti manyante sthīrām...)

- Upanishad is introducing us to yoga in this mantra. Here the term yoga refers to unite or join. Some say yoga is the union of jeevathma and paramathma. From the absolute standpoint this is not correct, as, paramathma is infinite and there is no second thing apart from the infinite capable of joining it. The meaning we take here is from the relative standpoint that is a standpoint where we start a journey to Reality that is the dualistic standpoint. Here yoga can be taken as join, unite, or connect. For example, karma yoga means karma as a means to connect with the divine. Before we do any work we are praying for strength to do His work and offering everything to Him. Bhakti yoga is where we use devotion as a means to connect with the divine. Jnana yoga is where we use jnana as a means to connect with the divine. Here in jnana yoga we use shravana, manana, and nididhyasana to connect with the

divinity in us by recognizing it. Through these satsangs we are doing jnana yoga sadhana.

- Upanishad in this mantra is giving hints to aspirants who are trying whole-heartedly to remain firmly established in the Reality. So the benefit of this mantra is only for those that are trying their best.
- To be in group 3 we have already done enough shravana and used many portals to connect with the Reality. If you strive to remain as the Reality then this mantra will be more meaningful. Our goal is peace of mind so to attain it you should know your real nature. For this we persistently should do shravana, manana, and nididhyasana. Then this mantra will give us one more hint where we can spontaneously remain effortlessly as our real nature.

Homework:

Engage in manana everyday without fail for the number of minutes equivalent to your age. You should sit for yourself and use any portal and remain as your real nature. Remain as that peace and be watchful if any of these shad vairis induce individuality. If they do, neutralise them through enquiry.

Points To Ponder-51

Mantra-11 (Continuation)

Upanishad mentions the term Yoga in this mantra. Yoga, as a branch of philosophy, is included in the Sankhya system of philosophy. This yoga sutra was written by Maharshi Patanjali. It gives a detailed description of yoga through the study about the different types of minds. In the very beginning of the yoga sutra it is mentioned to whom this system of philosophy will be fruitful. It requires a highly refined mind to get through this study.

Why do I need to study this yoga sutra?

- You need to study the yoga sutra because you are already putting forth effort to refine your mind which is required to achieve your goal of remaining peaceful.

The Yoga Sutra

Commentary on yoga sutra by Vyasa classifies the mind in five categories: Mudha, Kshipta, Vikshipta, Ekagra and Niruddha.

The Five Types of Mind:

1. Mudha: Those with this mindset are dull and lazy. Given a choice they will choose to sleep. They will avoid work. They will always aim to postpone any activity that they are supposed to do till the last minute. When they are forced to do work, they do it half-heartedly without any interest. They are bothered by many worries. They look sad and depressed. If at all they take up any work they tend to drop it even before completion and use some fancy excuse to justify their laziness. They will be irresponsible in their behaviour. If they attend satsangs, they will sleep. Later, they will be regular to satsang so that they can get undisturbed sleep.
2. Kshipta: Mind in this state is restless. It cannot dwell on one thought even for a few seconds. They will have streams of dissimilar thoughts. For these people, rest means to be engaged in some activity. If nothing is there to do, they will engage themselves in activities like biting their nails, jerking their legs, etc... These people will avoid satsangs because it requires introversion and their restless mind does not give scope for introversion. If they are spiritual, they will make themselves busy in the name of seva.
3. Vikshipta: The meaning of this word in many Indian languages is disturbed mind. But here the meaning is different. It implies a state of mind which is capable of focusing on a chosen topic even if it is for a brief period of time. They even have the capacity to dwell on a matter seen or heard for a while and comprehend the implied meaning. But they cannot dwell on it for a considerable period of time. External situations like conducive surroundings will help them in their focus to a certain extent. But because of

their tendency to be disturbed (vikshepa) inherent within them, their mind will not be able to hold on to a particular topic for a prolonged period of time. With this mindset, they will attend satsangs and comprehend what is being said but will not comprehend everything that they hear due to vikshepa. They are unable to be present mentally throughout the satsang. Some of them in this group will not be able to focus when they read by themselves but will comprehend it when it is being told by somebody with a focus on the listener. So, a conducive external environment with the company of those who care for their evolution in this path is very essential for them.

4. Ekagra: The mind is able to focus on the object of its choice for a considerable period of time without being disturbed based on the will and desire to stay focused. For example, you have taken up one subject and want to remain focused on it. You can get connected to that topic because of your will and passion on that subject. Then, because of this capacity, you will comprehend the subtle implications of that topic. The illustration of an arrow piercing the target and sticking onto it represents Ekagra.
5. Niruddha: Here the mind effortlessly remains centered on the object. The passion is so high on the topic in which you have interest that you effortlessly remain connected with it.

For yoga to be fruitful, it is said that you need ekagra and niruddha states of mind.

Generally, we will have a mix and match of all these states of mind. Majority will be having the first three states. We cannot say that an individual has only kshipta, mudha or vikshipta. They are all present to some extent though their percentage may vary from person to person and from time to time in the same person. This discussion of the states of mind is mainly to understand in detail about yourself. It may help you to wisely choose the people with whom you need to associate with. You must associate with the people who are in a higher state of mind than you. Those with predominantly kshipta and mudha states of mind will be miserable and will make the lives of those associated with them also miserable. Helping them to evolve in this path is a risky adventure unless the one who is trying is confident about himself.

How will this knowledge about the different states of mind help me?

- This knowledge will help you to recognise in which state of mind you are in. If you are getting into kshipta and mudha states beware and get out of them. Always strive to be in the state which is one step higher than the one you are in until you reach niruddha state.

Some pointers will help us know if you are being possessed by Kshipta or mudha states. They are:

- If you are lying on the bed awake and feel lazy to get up then that is mudha state.

- Postponing important activities is mudha.
- Trying to do many activities at once without a proper focus on any of them is kshipta.
- Binge eating, binge watching, addiction to video games or any other addiction are all signs of kshipta.

What should I do if I am in any of these two states?

- You need to get into the third state of mind(vikshipta) if you are in any of these two states of mind. If you are in kshipta or mudha, then your goal is to get into vikshipta.

How can I get into vikshipta?

- Recognition of where you are at that particular point of time is a half victory already. Then, counsel your mind to get out of those states by educating the mind about their drawbacks.
- You need to educate yourself. The one which is educating will be the intellect and the one which is being educated and disciplined will be the mind.

How can I educate the mind?

1. You need to have a goal in life. It can be a long term goal but to achieve that you need to have short term goals. Goals should be as per your capability and not according to their marketing value. This is applicable both for material goals and spiritual goals. Now aspire to achieve that goal by inspiring your mind to achieve the short term goals as they finally culminate with your long term goal. Congratulate yourself for achieving short term goals.
2. Avoid the company of those addicted with the first two states.
3. Warn the mind how it will ruin its life by being in the first two states. Again and again tell the mind how it will only hamper your growth in life, both materially and spiritually. Tell your mind how these states look pleasing initially but will make your life miserable by drawing you into states like depression, anxiety and restlessness. Remind your mind about some familiar examples of people who have ruined their life by being dominated by these two states.
4. Inspire yourself by realising that you can achieve your goals by getting rid of these two states. Remind your mind about people who were successful in life by getting rid of these two states of mind. These people were alert and tried their best to avoid these states of mind. Finally they were victorious in achieving their goals. So, you must also be alert and watchful over these states. If they appear, you must immediately get out of them.

Note: Everyone faces the same problem. Those who try again and again to overcome the problems will succeed in life whereas those who succumb to the pressure will fail.

Some will say that they did not succeed despite their earnest effort. They want to know what is preventing them from getting into Ekagra state. They assume that there is some force within them that is pulling them down as and when they attempt to evolve.

- This is a common observation made by those who earnestly try to evolve in spirituality. That is why some say that spirituality is like a battle between two forces.

What are those forces that are against my will to ascend in this path?

- To understand this, you need to first comprehend gunas because these are the forces that are involved in the battle mentioned above.

What are gunas?

- They are modes of nature or qualities of nature. The forces that are operating within us are gunas.
- There are three gunas, namely, thamas, rajas and satva.
- They all have one thing in common. They seem to induce bondage. In spite of our real nature being Infinite Conscious Existence we still feel that we are the body-mind apparatus. This feeling is called the bondage. The forces that seem to bind us to this body and mind apparatus are called the gunas. As long as these forces are active it will be difficult for us to remain effortlessly as our real nature. Hence we need to understand them in detail to get out of their clutches.

The three gunas:

1. Thamas: Those who are predominantly under the influence of thamas will be dull and lazy. They will sleep at any time of the day. They will work only if they are compelled to work. They will not initiate anything productive. Even if they start something productive, they will do it half-heartedly for a while and drop it before it is completed. They are careless in their attitude. They will hesitate to do even those activities which they themselves feel are essential in their life. They lack alertness and discrimination. They will daydream and entertain many delusions.
2. Rajas: Those who are predominantly under the influence of rajas will be overactive in their outlook. They are always anxious over their work. They cannot imagine a life without work. Before they complete the work in hand, they will already start thinking about the work they will initiate later. They like to do many things at a time. They have mental and physical restlessness which is felt by others than themselves because for them, that is normal. They prefer to engage in meaningless activities rather than

remaining idle. They are under the influence of greed, likes and dislikes.

3. Satva: Those who are predominantly satva will be peaceful. They are devoid of shad vairis. They have a high degree of concentration. They will easily understand the implied meaning of scriptures. They revel in the happiness derived from the knowledge of the Self. They can remain happy even without relying on sense objects.

An individual will harbour all these three gunas in different percentages. Still an individual can know their nature in gunas based on which guna predominates their life. This knowledge is mainly for self analysis and not for judging others.

How will knowledge help us who are interested in getting into the ekagra mental state?

- It will help us when we analyse the five states of mind in relation to the gunas.
 - Mudha- Tamasic state
 - Kshipta- More of rajas and less of thamas
 - Vikshipta- Rajasic with some amount of thamas and satva
 - Ekagra- Pure satva
 - Niruddha- Gunathitham (beyond all these gunas)

If you are tamasic you must strive to get into rajas and if you are rajasic then you must get into satva and then even beyond satwa. This can be achieved through yoga.

Homework

1. Use the points discussed in today's satsang to shape your life. Set a long term goal and strive to reach it by fulfilling short term goals. Observe how the kshipta and mudha tendencies are a hindrance to your goals.
2. Read ashtanga yoga of Patanjali, i.e, the eight limbs of yoga starting from yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, etc...

Points to Ponder-52

How do we set long term goals?

- Set your goals according to your capacity. Later, have a subset of them (shortterm goals) and achieve them with peace and equanimity.

Why are we discussing the three gunas after discussing the five states of mind?

- The five states of mind are simply the final effects. To improve them we need to find the underlying forces that influence these states. These forces are the three gunas.(tamas, rajas and satva)
- The gunas will determine the states of mind. Any improvement at the level of the states need to be done at the level of the gunas. Tamas need to be eliminated with rajas and rajas need to be eliminated with satva. Satva in its purest form will be eliminated by itself through firm knowledge.
- We can notice the presence of gunas in our day to day life. We need to be sensitive enough to recognise the forces within. For example, when there is no inclination to sit for meditation or if you sleep in meditation then tamas is active.

When lost in thoughts then rajas is active. When you remain as your real nature then that is satva. So we can know where we are only when you meditate.

We can understand the drawbacks of tamas but rajas seem to be encouraging to achieve success in life. Why should we exert effort to minimise or eliminate rajas?

- Rajas seem to be productive but it is associated with anxiety and restlessness.
- Tamas in its extremity takes the form of depression and rajas in its extremity takes the form of mania.
- To remain productive and to not fall into its side effects, we need to ensure that the activities are done in the background of satva. Satva manifests as knowledge and peace.
- Wherever laziness is there it is to be recognised as tamas, restlessness as rajas and knowledge as satva.
- For these reasons we are trying to stop adding on to the rajas and tamas and gradually reduce the existing tamasic and rajasic tendencies by adding satva. We are trying to catch them in their budding stage and eliminate them with satva.

Why should one aim for satva guna?

- No one wants to be productive in life without happiness and peace. We should not allow our success and productivity in life to be defined by the people or society who lack basic understanding about life.
- We need to redefine success as a state where we are peaceful and those associated with us are also peaceful. Being wealthy or having a high profile job or having high academic qualifications will remain meaningful only if they are accompanied with peace and not at the cost of true peace.
- For these reasons we have to exert on satva and allow it to keep rajas in control and completely eliminate tamas.
- Aiming for satva guna is essential to lead a peaceful worldly life. There is no choice whether to lead a worldly or spiritual life from this standpoint because peace is aimed in both worldly and spiritual life. Worldly life includes spiritual life. It is for this reason that in ancient civilisations the children are first taught about recognising this peace (Gurukulas). Then they are given freedom to set their goals and accomplish them with the background of peace.

How do we get rid of tamas and rajas that prevent us from reaching our goals?

- The scriptures on yoga tell us to fill ourselves with satva through all the possible avenues. This will flush out the unwanted tamasic and rajasic tendencies that seem to dominate us.
- Let us understand this with an example. Once there was a tsunami or a high tide. Hundreds of villages were wiped out. A large lake in the village was filled with salt water thus making the villagers deprived of fresh drinking water. Unfortunately this was the only source that the villagers had for fresh water making it difficult for the people and the cattle. One day a saint passed through that village and heard about their problems. He advised the villagers to fill the lake with fresh water from one side and direct the salt water from the other side into the sea. Due to the heavy monsoon that year all the streams that were filled with rain water were connected to the lake on one side and on the other side an outlet was made and connected to the sea. Slowly the salinity of the water in that lake started to decrease and by the end of the monsoon the lake was again filled with potable water.
- In the same way we first need to desist from adding tamas and rajas from one side and at the same time add satva from the other side. We should not have a doubt if this could be achieved. None imagined that the entire salinity of the lake could be removed but still it happened.

How do we fill ourselves with satva?

- Mind is influenced by the inputs the senses (ears, eyes, tongue/mouth) provide.
- In the example of the three monkeys one monkey is closing one of its eyes, the other is closing one of its ears and the other is partially closing its mouth. This means to stop providing inputs to the senses that add to tamas and rajas and on the other hand allow the inputs which enhance satva.
 - Do not hear negative content or gossip. The other ear is open to encourage you to hear inspiring discussions or satsangs.
 - Use social media constructively to enhance your noble thoughts. They all should contribute in your effort to remain peaceful.
 - What you speak will affect you more than those who hear it. Speak only that which is beneficial to you and the others. The science of Ayurveda classifies the food into satva, rajo and tamasic foods. Stale food is considered tamasic food. Spicy/ meaty food, packaged/junk foods with excessive salt and sugar are considered rajasic foods. Fresh food, nuts, vegetarian and homemade foods are considered sattvic foods. Eat that which is fresh, nutritious and healthy. However, we should not be obsessed with trying to eat sattvic food only.

What is the logic behind the impact of sattvic inputs on the states of mind? How will sattvic inputs help to reach an ekagra state of mind?

- To find an answer to this, you need to have knowledge about the mechanics of mind. The common answer to what the mind is, is thoughts. But, thoughts are only a part of the mind. These are only what we experience on the surface. They are like ripples that are seen on the surface of the lake. The water in the lake is the mind stuff which appears as the thoughts on the surface. The functional aspect of the mind is thoughts. We have access mainly to the thoughts and not to the mind stuff as such.
- On what basis are you saying that there is mind memory apart from thoughts? We can incur the presence of mind memory because of its undeniable role. This is because in similar situations different individuals have different thoughts. On seeing a beautiful flower one person will have poetic thoughts. The other person will have thoughts about its botanical name and medicinal value. Another person may have thoughts about his lover. Some others will have thoughts connected to the lord he worships. Some others would like to make a painting about it.
- Why do different individuals have different thoughts of the same object? This is because there is something between the object outside and the thoughts within, which is determining the nature of thoughts that an individual entertains. This is the mind

memory. This may be varying between individual to individual and so are the thoughts varying between different individuals. Let us understand this with an example based on gunas.

Three individuals started on a journey to climb a mountain. One of them will entertain the thoughts of cutting short the trip. He has the tamasic mind stuff. One will entertain thoughts regarding the next trip.

He has the rajasic mind stuff. The other ones thoughts are centered around the beauty of the valleys and streams around. He has the sattvic mind stuff. They all are going to the same place but they are entertaining different thoughts due to their different mind memory. So the quality of mind memory plays a role in shaping the thoughts we entertain.

- What is determining the quality of the mind memory? If this question is asked to modern science it says it is due to genes. If this question is asked to scriptures they say it is due to samskaras. In either case it looks like we are born with a predetermined pattern of mind memory and we are bound to live with it the entire life without any choice. But this is not right when we know how these samskaras are formed.

Diagram 1

Our thoughts and actions leave an impression on the mind memory. These impressions accumulate and end up as samskaras. These samskaras further influence the quality of mind stuff which in turn will influence the quality of thoughts and actions. This is taking place in a cyclic pattern.

If the mind stuff is at the level of vikshiptha, then accordingly you will have thoughts and perform actions. Then those thoughts and actions will go into the mind memory and leave an impression. These impressions are stored in the form of samskaras.

Diagram- 1

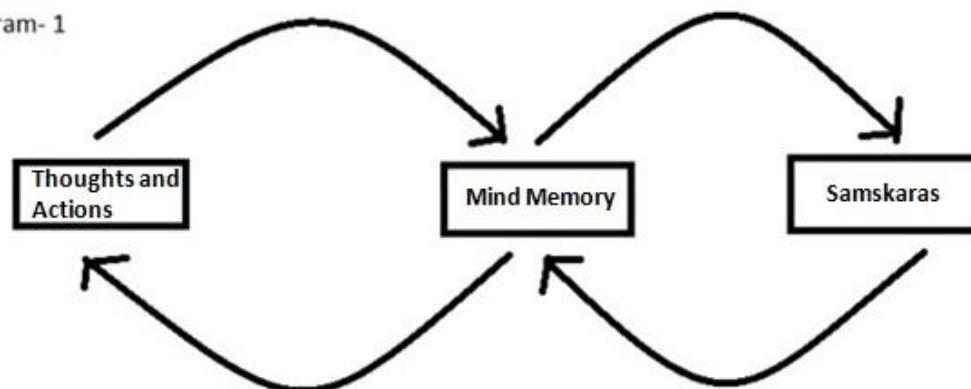
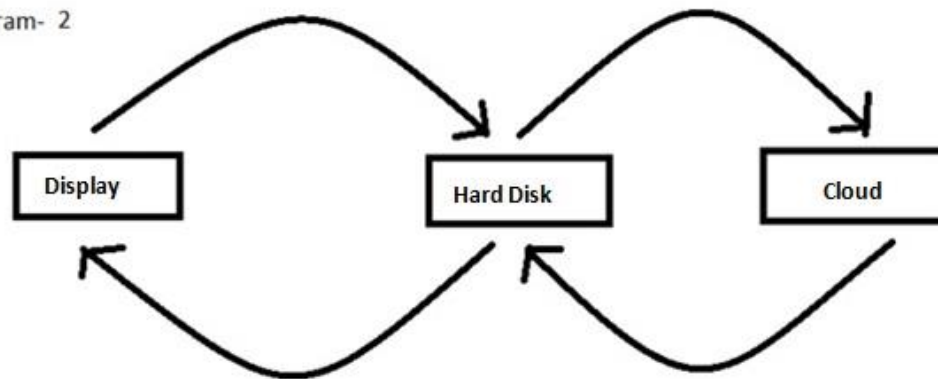


Diagram 2

Diagram 1 can be understood with the help of an example of a computer which is outlined in diagram 2. Whatever is there in the hard disk can be seen on the display (screen). Whatever will be displayed will come back to the hard disk accordingly. Any information that is updated will be stored in the cloud. The cloud will give inputs to the hard disk and the hard disk will determine the display, just like how the samskaras will influence the mind memory and the mind memory will be the cause for our thoughts and actions.

Diagram- 2

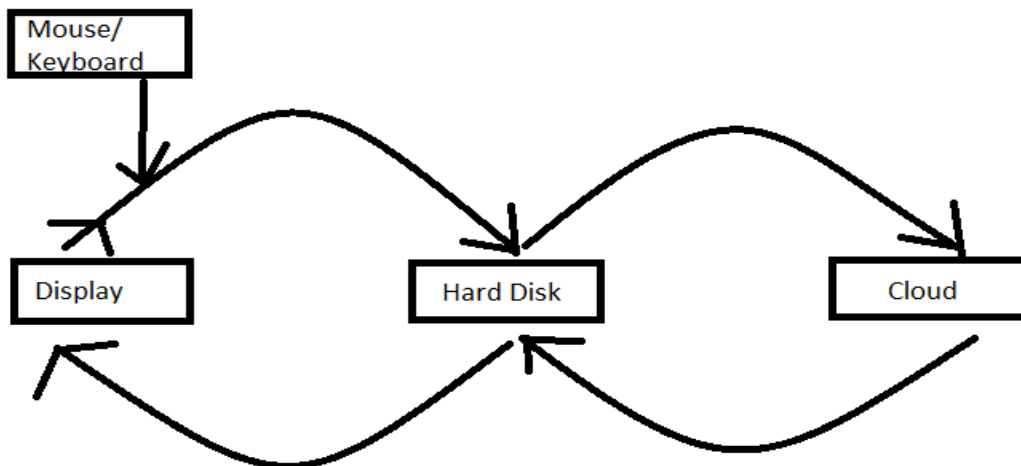


How do we improve the mind memory so that the gunas improve and accordingly the states of mind improve and through which I can achieve the goals of my life? The same question when asked from the computer standpoint will be: How do we bring changes in the data that is stored in the hard disk?

Diagram 3

In this diagram there is a mouse/cursor and keyboard. With these two things we can alter the information on the display. Changes are made voluntarily on the display with your will. Because of this, changes are reflected in the hard disk and accordingly the changes are updated in the cloud. The changes thus made in the cloud are now being carried back to the hard disk and then the same is brought to the display. If at any time you don't like what is displayed there is always an option to change it at your will.

Diagram- 3



H

What is the cursor and keyboard of our life which is capable of improving our mind states from vikshipta to ekagra and niruddha? Or what is the keyboard of our life that is capable of filling us with satva by which rajas is in control and tamas is eliminated?

Summary of the previous session:

Our aim in life is to own up undisturbed peace and for that we need an ekagra state of mind. To have an ekagra state of mind we need to eliminate thamas, control rajas and for this we need to increase satva. We discussed the structure of mind by differentiating it into mind stuff and thoughts. Then we understood through diagram show there is a possibility for bringing a change in the architecture of mind stuff. We ended with the question “What is the keyboard of our life which is capable of improving our mind states from vikshiptha to ekagra and niruddha?”

Mantra-11 (Continuation)

What is the keyboard of our life which is capable of filling us with satva?

- Upanishad very precisely answers this question with one word: Yoga. To prevent the listeners from misinterpreting the meaning of this word in accordance with their fancy imagination, the Upanishad itself is defining yoga as the steady control of the senses. (sthira indriya dharanam)

Let us dive deeper into the meaning of the word yoga.

How do we control our senses?

- This can be seen through the illustration of a chariot which we have already discussed in chapter 3. In that illustration, the senses are represented by the horses and the mind is represented by the reins tied to the horses. The horses can be controlled by controlling the reins. Similarly, the senses can be controlled by controlling the mind.
- So, yoga implies not only the control of senses but also the control of the mind.

How do we control the mind?

- The reins are controlled by the charioteer who represents the intellect. So, through a refined/discriminative intellect (buddhi), we can control the mind.
- Now, the definition of yoga has further expanded as control of senses, mind and having a refined intellect.

What do we mean by a refined intellect?

- An introvert intellect that is tuned towards its substratum is called a refined intellect.

What is the substratum of the intellect?

- That from which the intellect derives its existence and consciousness, i.e. Infinite Conscious Existence, is its substratum.
- In the chariot illustration, this is shown as the owner of the chariot. If the charioteer is in line with the owner of the chariot that is Infinite Conscious Existence, only then will he have control over the mind which in turn will control the senses.

What happens to the mind and the senses if the intellect realizes its reality to be Infinite Conscious Existence?

- This question is like asking what happens to the horses, reins and chariot when the charioteer is obedient to the owner of the chariot. The chariot will move gracefully as per the wish of the owner.
- In the same way, if the intellect realizes its reality to be Infinite Conscious Existence, then the intellect, mind and senses will function in the light of the Self with the peace which is a synonym of the Self.

So now, the definition of yoga is not just the control of senses, mind or just having a refined intellect. The scope of the definition has expanded. Sense control means mind control, for mind control you need to have a refined intellect, and a refined intellect means that the intellect must be in tune with the Reality which is its substratum.

Definition of Yoga: Yoga is the art of allowing the senses, mind and intellect to operate in the poise/peace of the Self. If yoga is the keyboard of our life, then it implies that our endeavour to enable our senses and mind to be in alignment with the Self will generate the needful changes in the mind memory. This will in turn reflect in the samskaras.

This is shown in diagram 4.

Diagram- 4

In this diagram, we see that the samskaras determine our mind memory and based on the mind memory the thoughts and actions will come out. This process takes place in reverse too. The actions and thoughts determine the mind memory which in turn gets feeded in the samskaras. When yoga is introduced (represented as the sun of yoga in the diagram), yoga based thoughts and actions will come out. These thoughts and actions, which are backed by yoga, will collide with the thoughts and actions which are naturally coming from your mind. Then, these yoga based thoughts and actions will put up a good fight against the thoughts and actions that naturally arise from the mind memory. We experience this as the white heat of meditation. Finally, the natural thoughts and actions will be refined due to the influence of yoga. The refined thoughts and actions will get into the mind memory. We must note that after every meditation, the mind memory is not the same. We may not notice it immediately. These changes in the mind memory will be reflected in the samskaras.

Diagram- 4

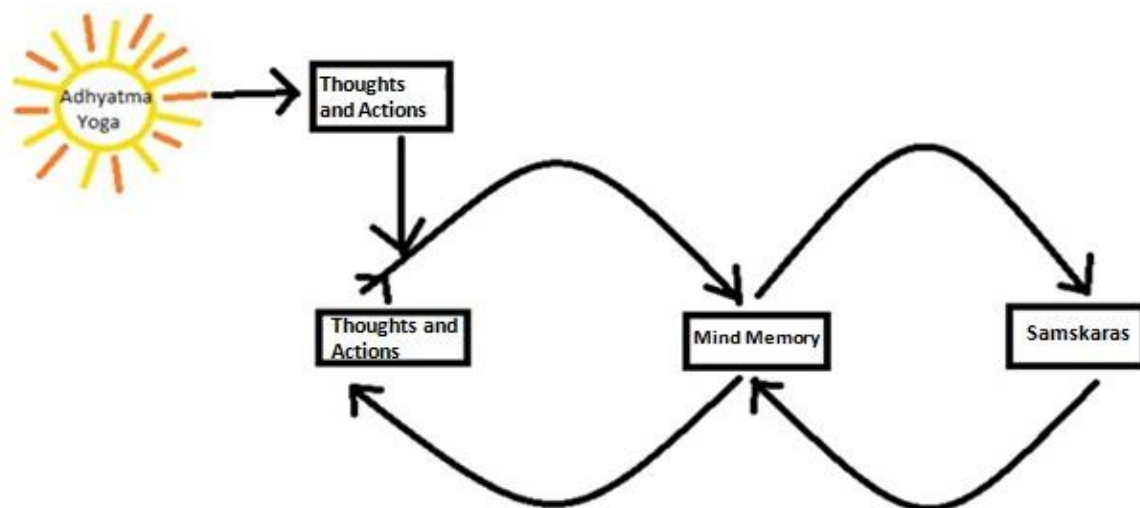


Diagram 5

The same process if it is presented from the states of the mind it will look like diagram 5. Here, thoughts and actions are represented with the states of our mind. VTP stands for

Vikshipta Thought Process. ETP stands for Ekagra Thought Pattern. When you are meditating, a concentrated thought pattern is being generated which collides with the vikshita thought process. As a result of that collision, slowly the thought patterns based on vikshipta will reform into ekagra thought patterns. This is why we must be consistent in our antaranga and bahiranga sadhanas. This will get reflected in the mind memory.

It must be noted that we took vikshipta as the current state of mind because the majority of the people are in vikshipta state of mind.

Diagram- 5

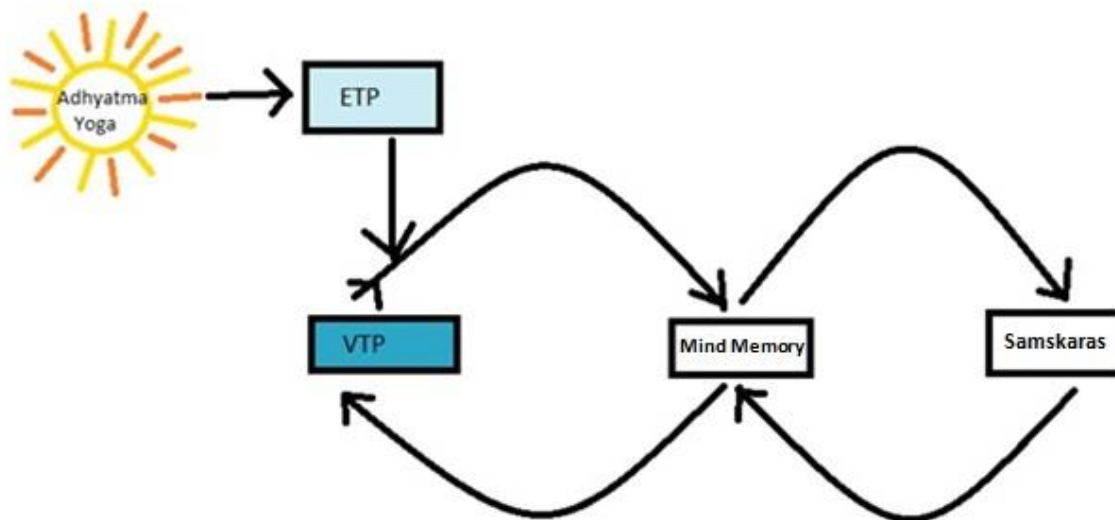
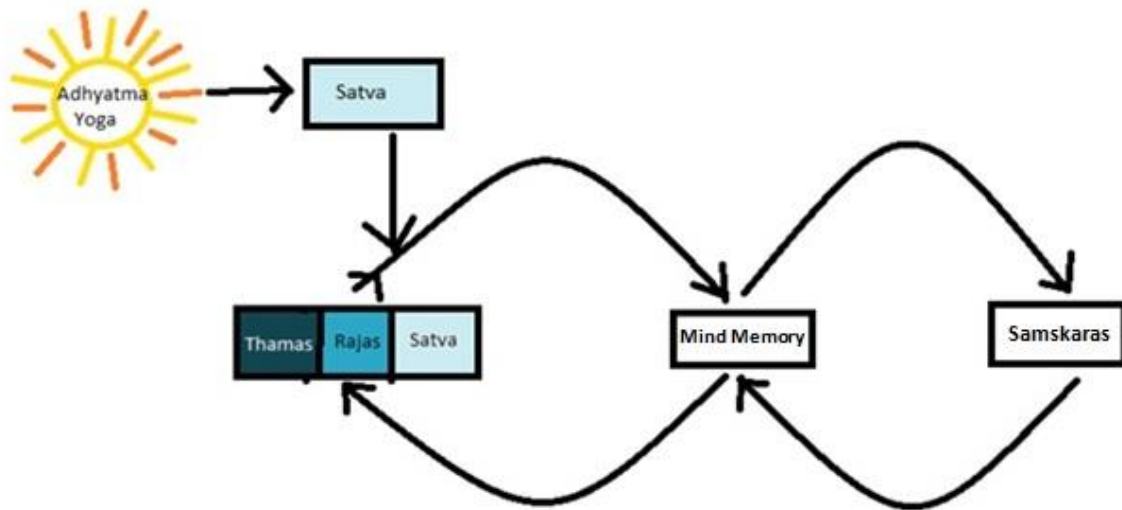


Diagram 6

This diagram represents the same process but from the point of view of the Gunas. Here, we replaced the vikshipta thought pattern with the gunas that come under it which are tamas, rajas and satva. Satva is generated through the practice of yoga which will oppose the thamas and rajas of vikshipta thought pattern.

Diagram- 6



The result of the studious practice of yoga is described in the next three diagrams.

Diagram 7

If yoga is continued tenaciously then sattvic thoughts continue to exert their influence over the combination of tamas, rajas and satva thought waves. This results in the increase in sattvic portion and thereby the decrease in rajas and tamas.

Diagram- 7

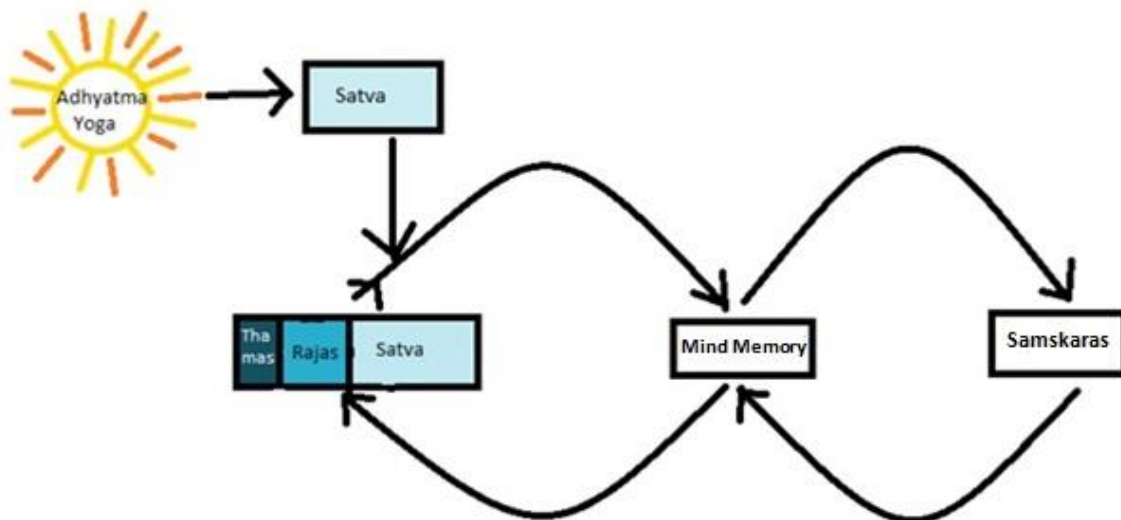


Diagram 8

As yoga progresses, tamas and rajas tendencies will vanish and the satva tendency will remain. The VTP has been replaced with ETP. The mixture of tamas, rajas and satva is replaced with pure satva.

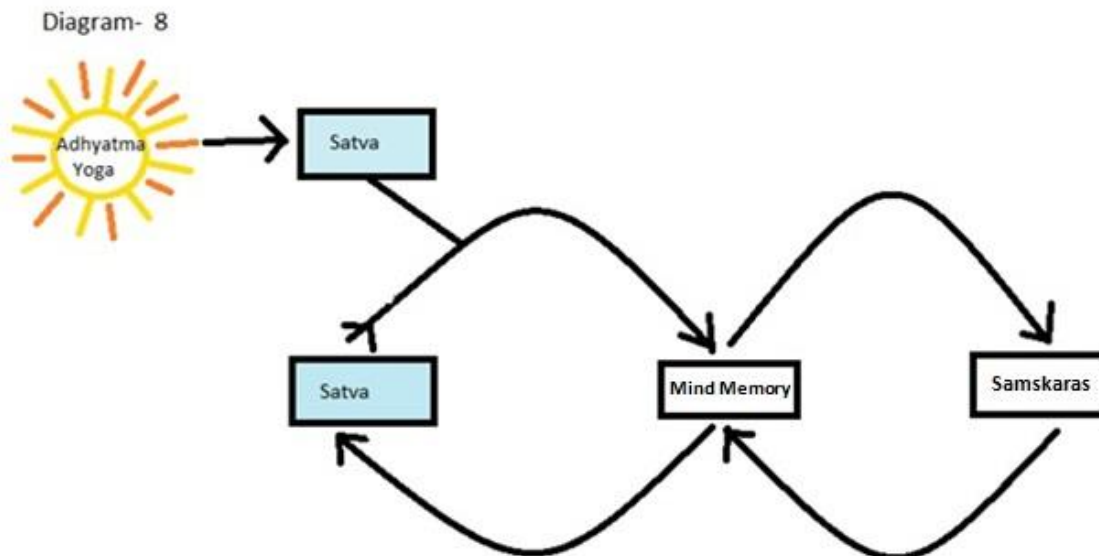
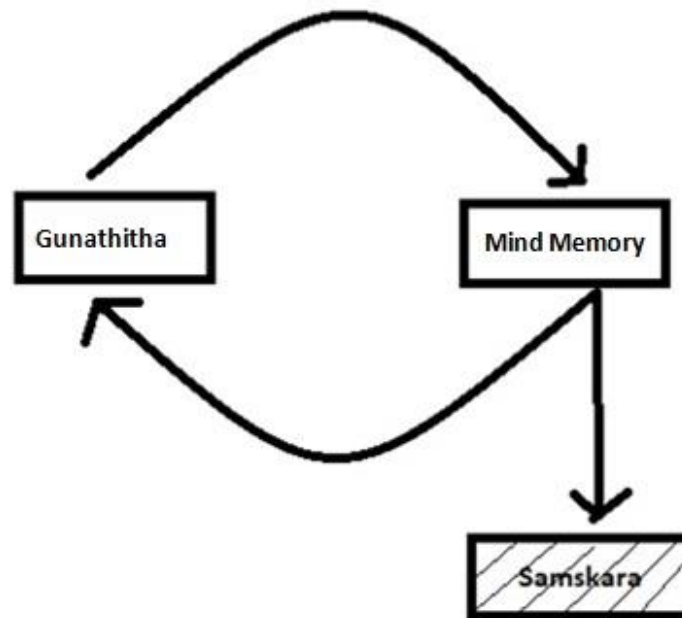


Diagram 9

Sattvic mind memory can only generate sattvic mind waves. So, in this state of sattvic saturation one remains effortlessly as that non dual Reality. This abundance will eliminate the reality of the meditator/seeker/individual forever. What remains is the Reality which is beyond the gunas (gunathitha). Here, there is effortless abundance as the Reality itself. This is called the niruddha state of mind. There will no longer be an independent mind memory for such an individual as it is recognized to be a manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence. Because there is no real independent mind memory but only an appearance of mind memory, the samskaras will also evaporate.

Diagram-9



Through all these diagrams, we are made to understand how yoga has the capability to transform our states of mind and enable us to effortlessly remain as peace.

What is this yoga that the Upanishad is talking about here, which has the capacity to take us to a niruddha state of mind? Is it ashtanga yoga?

- Ashtanga means eight limbs or parts. Any system of yoga which comprises eight components can be called ashtanga yoga. The most prevalent ashtanga yoga is the one devised by Patanjali Maharshi. There is one more eightfold path in the Buddhist philosophy. But here, the Upanishad is not referring to either of these paths.

How can we say that the Upanishad is talking about a different yoga?

- We can say so because Kato Upanishad chronologically precedes those systems of philosophy. Just because the mantra says yoga as a means, we cannot conclude that it is talking about ashtanga yoga of Patanjali.
- There is a mention of yoga earlier in the text in chapter 2 mantra 12. It mentions adhyatma yoga which is a mechanism by which this knowledge of the Self becomes a practical experience. It involves withdrawing the mind from outer

objects and focusing it on the Self which is your real nature. In short, adhyatma yoga implies owning up our real nature to be Consciousness through the objects we are Conscious of. The object can be of the form of a sound, thought, image or some event.

- Here, let us take the yoga that is mentioned in mantra 11 as the yoga mentioned as adhyatma yoga in chapter 2.

In mantra 11 yoga is mentioned as control of senses. In chapter 2 it is saying that yoga means to unite with the Self or to recognise the Self using the sense objects as portals. One seems to be talking about control and the other is hinting at union. How can they both mean the same?

- If you look carefully at the discussions we had till now, there will be no such confusion. Yoga means both control and union. How? Initially, it appears as control. As it progresses, it takes the form of union. Control is only to facilitate this union. It is a control culminating in an apparent union just like the apparent union of the iceberg with the sea.
- Under the spell of ignorance the body, mind and intellect seem to act as independent entities. They are unaware of the fact that they are only appearances of Infinite Reality or peace. Because of this error in understanding, they end up in a relentless search for peace and happiness in the wrong place not knowing that the so-called happiness that they seem to have in those objects is in essence a reflection of their own reality. This seeking of happiness in objects has become an addiction culminating in sorrow. You get a glimpse of peace but a mountain of sorrow. Adhyatma yoga is giving a solution for this problem.

What is the solution that adhyatma yoga is giving?

- First it suggests control. The senses must be controlled through a regulated life. This is like the de-addiction process. Then it (adhyatma yoga) gives knowledge of Reality which includes knowledge about the portals to remain as Reality. This knowledge facilitates an apparent union between the individual self and the supreme Self. It is a union wherein the illusion of individuality is comprehended and thereafter there is only Reality which alone is manifesting as everything including the body, mind, intellect, senses and sense objects. This alone is called kaivalyam (oneness) in yoga.

Homework

Continue with your meditations. On Monday night evaluate your state of mind. Again do it on Saturday. Do the evaluation in terms of peace, not only during meditation but during the rest of the day too. Then notice if there is a difference in your state of mind due to your studious practice of meditation.

Points to Ponder-53

If we are compelled to give a response for the above exercise in a precise manner then it can be in one of the following three ways:

1. There is no change.
2. It improved day by day.
3. The task of remaining peaceful became tougher day by day

All the three ways are signs of progress. How?

1. If you say there is no change, it is still a positive sign because change is a gradual process. Only a week may be less for evaluation. But if you are persistent in your effort change will occur gradually. You must also remember that there will not be change for those who have a doubtless identity with Reality.
2. It is also correct if you say the peace has improved day by day. This is because when the obstruction to peace is minimal then they are removed by minimal effort. For example, if there is fine dust on the mirror it gets eliminated by simply blowing some air on it.
3. Some others may say that the task of remaining peaceful became tougher day by day. This is because when the obstructions are plenty then it requires more effort to remove them just like how it may take more effort to remove tough stains on the mirror. Even then, these are signs of progress because the underlying obstructions have been noticed. These obstructions were always there but now you are aware of their presence and have initiated a sincere effort to eliminate them.

Because of this exercise you have recognised the state of your mind and in turn the importance of the need for effort and various portals like yoga and meditation to restore the innate peace. Effort is needed to remain as peace effortlessly.

If my aim is to remain as peace effortlessly then why can't I remain so by default? What is the need for effort in the name of yoga and meditation?

- We should be clear on why we need to put forth effort in this path. Effort is not for creating a peaceful Self. Rather it is for owning up our real Self. To be more precise, it is recognising our Infinite Self which we already are without any doubt.
- Effort is needed only to eliminate the obstructions that stand in our way of owning up our real nature. If obstructions are plenty then accordingly more effort is needed. The obstructions and effort are directly proportional to each other. If you think that remaining peaceful during meditation is difficult then it implies that there are more obstructions and accordingly more effort is needed.

Why do some people have less obstructions in owning up the peace?

- It is due to their samskaras which are created creatively in their ignorance. Due to these samskaras the obstructions occur accordingly. Those with positive samskaras will have less obstructions and owning up the peace will be easy.
- Those with more negative samskaras will face more obstacles in their path of owning up peace. So, these samskaras have to be unwound with the help of knowledge.
- Example: Sometimes, children play with long bamboo mats by wrapping themselves inside the mat. For the child to come out of the mat, they would first have to unwind the mat the same number of times they wound it around themselves. In the same way the number of samskaras that have been accumulated earlier, now have to be unwound or eliminated with the strength of knowledge. This effort of unwinding is called sadhana or meditation or adhyatma yoga.



<-- Bamboo mat

How do we get out of this ignorance that has been wounded around us?

- Upanishad is saying, “Tham yogam iti manyanthe” which means that unwinding is possible through yoga.
- Upanishad is not mentioning particularly about any one yoga. It is only saying about yoga that consists of sense control. The sense control is common to all the yogas which makes us confused on which type of yoga to follow. We need to figure out which yoga the katopanishad is mentioning.
- We have taken this yoga to be Adhyatma yoga as it has already been mentioned by the Upanishad in the previous chapter. It emphasizes selfless action, selfless devotion and even knowledge. So we have to take up this yoga which is rooted in knowledge with a scope for other practices that help in strengthening the knowledge.

What is the problem associated with Patanjali yoga and how is it different from Adhyatma Yoga?

- You are free to take up even Patanjali Ashtanga yoga as it is equally efficient. But there is a problem associated with this yoga. Most people start this yoga with great vigor but abandon it in the middle when it starts to get difficult. This can be compared to a marathon race wherein there will be countless participants at the start of the race but only a handful will make it to the end. The rest have abandoned the race when the initial thrill of the race has faded.
- This problem will be minimal when you take up Adhyatma yoga which is rooted

in advaita jnana. This is because you are already introduced to the peace of your real nature. You have the experiential grasp regarding the peace or Infinite Conscious Existence which alone is there as the entire manifestation. Here the path is of peace and the goal too is peace.

- In contrast to this, Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga seems to promise peace at the end through samadhi experience. The path is deprived of peace and it is a qualification that you have to acquire with rigorous effort by having an eye on the peace that only fills you in the end. But in Adhyatma Yoga, it may only take a second to remain as peace through methods of self enquiry like "who am I". Portals of knowledge aim to own your innate peace with ease, wherein you are directed to be conscious of the thoughts that come and that Consciousness is Infinite in your very experience. This Infinite Consciousness is synonym for peace and you are peaceful with ease.
- For a better grasp of Adhyatma yoga, ashtanga yoga can be reviewed. Both are similar in various ways but at the same time it is essential to know that they are different in some ways too.

Let us see Adhyatma yoga in the lines of ashtanga yoga but with the difference in the names of the last three steps. The 8 steps are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Shravana (dharana), Manana (dhyana), Nididhyasana (samadhi). We have discussed these steps in our earlier classes but not with these titles. As Upanishad has mentioned about yoga we will see these steps again in a sequence. We will see Adhyatma yoga in two ways: basic and advanced.

Basic version of Adhyatma Yoga:

The following 8 steps are the basic version of Adhyatma yoga wherein the need for leading an orderly life is stressed. This matures to shravana which in turn matures to manana and this in turn matures to nididhyasana. When this is followed tenaciously then one will develop the needful qualifications for comprehending the advanced version of Adhyatma yoga.

1. Yama: Self restrain. Firstly, we should speak truth (sathyam). Secondly, we should restrain ourselves from hurting other beings (ahimsa). Thirdly, we should restrain from stealing which means avoid earning money from unjustifiable means (astheyam). Astheyam also includes aparigraha which means accumulating wealth in excess. You can earn enough for a decent and peaceful living but the tendency to accumulate will encourage one to disregard ahimsa and astheya. The desire to accumulate will be the root

of all sins which in turn will push to have a disregard for values. Fourthly, we should restrain ourselves from sexual activities (abstinence). It mandates celibacy for brahmacharis and sannyasis but for grihasthas it implies being faithful to your partner (brahmacharya). Fifthly, we should restrain ourselves from intoxicants.

2. Niyama: Observances.

a. Saucha (purity)

We must develop purity which includes physical and mental purity.

b. Santosha (contentment)

Mental purity is developed through contentment. If we are content with whatever we have at the present moment then that satisfaction will prevent the shad vairis to develop. So absence of shad vairis implies mental purity. Discontentment gives rise to desires. If the desires are not fulfilled then it leads to anger. A discontented individual seems to be miserly and has excessive attachment. He seems to be full of pride and jealous of others' accomplishments.

How do we develop contentment?

- Contentment is not a natural phenomenon for a majority of mankind. No amount of wealth or relationships will give contentment. Everybody has reasons to justify their discontentment.
- Being content even in adverse situations is contentment. This contentment needs to be developed through effort and this effort is called tapas.
- Nobody is justified to be discontent in life. We should not lose our contentment in any adverse situations of life. If at any time discontentment creeps in it has to be removed through the effort of tapas.

c. Tapas: Tapas means to put forth strenuous effort.

How do we initiate the effort of tapas?

Tapas here consists of Svadhyaya and Ishvara Pranidhana.

d. Svadhyaya means self study. It is a study about the glories of the God from texts like Ramayana, Bhagavatham, Siva purana, Vishnu purana etc. Watching documentaries about these can also be considered as Svadhyaya. Through Svadhyaya you are introduced to the omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent

aspect of God. This in turn generates devotion in us which culminates in surrendering to Him.

e. Ishvara Pranidhana is the selfless surrender to God which gives contentment to the devotee. Whatever happens in life which includes joys and sorrows, we wholeheartedly surrender that to God. We believe that all the events of life are taking place by the wish of God. We offer our actions and thoughts to Him and the results are accepted as His blessings. Because of this attitude we develop a state of mind wherein we remain content in all the situations of life. We will only see His blessings (as Ishvara Prasad) in all the difficult situations of life and be content.

By tapas the mind has access to contentment by which one is devoid of the six enemies which rob your happiness.

3. Asana: Fitness of the body is essential to progress in the path. Some time in the day needs to be spent for basic physical exercises which help you to remain fit and flexible. You should develop fitness to sit in a comfortable and same position for a prolonged period of time. Everyone except the elderly should be able to sit cross legged on a flat surface.
4. Pranayama: It has been proven by the science that regulated deep breathing will boost the lung capacity. It also has an effect in calming the mind. Basic pranayama needs to be done everyday for a few minutes.
5. Pratyahara: It is the practice of withdrawing yourself from unwanted activities and finding time for shravana. We can review where the time is being wasted and try to conserve that for higher purposes in life.

The next three steps can happen only by the grace of God because we are on the way to know the reality of Himself. So He enables only those devotees with whom He is pleased to know about His reality. In the process He will introduce you to someone who will take interest to teach you scriptures through which you can have knowledge about Reality.

6. Shravana: Hearing about Reality from holy scriptures. It is the reality of yourself and even the God whom you worship.
7. Manana: Pondering over the satsangs heard and trying to comprehend the implied meaning.

8. Nididhyasana: The implication of all the scriptures is to enable us to recognise the reality of the entire manifestation as our experience. Nididhyasana is the one pointed effort to own the experience.

In this path of knowledge, the path is of peace and the goal also is of peace. Based on your experience, what do you feel?

If you feel that the statement “path is of peace and the goal is of peace” is in line with your experience then you are fully qualified to take up the advanced version of Adyatma yoga. Our goal is to remain peaceful by default irrespective of external events in life.

How can the path to peace also be of peace?

- This is the speciality of this path of knowledge. This will be clear when you take up your own journey on this path.
- Initially when we took up this path we were told about the importance of values which we cultivated in the belief that they would bring in lasting peace. Then we were told to make it a habit to sit and ponder over the teachings. Later, in satsangs we were introduced to our real nature. Hearing from some one is not like reading yourself as here the conviction of the speaker on the topic that is being discussed has an important role to play. Topic here is real nature. If one who is convinced about his real nature presents that to a listener, then the listener will recognize his/her own real nature and gets convinced about it as it is there in his/her very experience.
- This process of facilitating recognition is called Shakthi Path in some traditions. This means the transfer of shakthi/knowledge. As a result of this the listener has access to his real nature which is Infinity or peace. By this the listener is excited to such an extent that he has reached his goal for which he has strived for many years. This is undoubtedly a great achievement compared to the previous state of being ignorant of one's Reality.
- But this is still a partial success. Why ? This is because we are able to remain as our real nature based on the strength of the satsangs. But the real success is to remain as peace by default. What has to be done now? Now this recognition we have until now will be the boat through which we will navigate further. The task is to realign our life in the light of this recognition or in the light of this discovery. Even though we have the state of mind (vikshipta ie tamas, rajas and little satva) for comprehending our real nature, still we are not capable of remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence itself because of the presence of some disturbances which challenge our understanding from time to time.

These disturbances are like knots which have to be cut. This process of cutting the knots is called Grandhi Bedh. The knots that prevent us from remaining as peace itself are eliminated by the peace that we have recognised in shravana. Through relative peace we own absolute peace or through knowledge we are attaining firm knowledge where we are devoid of habitual identification with body-am-I notion.

Advanced version of Adhyatma Yoga:

In this version too there are 8 limbs like in the basic version, but there is a change in the order. It starts with shravana, manana and nididhyasana and is followed by the remaining five. The aim of the basic version is knowledge and the aim of the advanced version is firm knowledge. So accordingly the eight limbs will have a profound meaning even though the names are the same.

1. Shravana: Here shravana does not imply hearing about real nature but it is taking support of external sound (scriptural discussion) to remain as our real nature. So for example when the teacher says Infinite Conscious Existence the listener will have an experiential recognition then and there.
2. Manana: Here it is not just pondering over the word but it is taking the support of the knowledge gained in shravana, especially the portals, to remain as our real nature. When you use the portal like senses-mind-intellect-ego and when you enquire into the reality of this ego then you remain as Infinite Conscious Existence. Other portals of knowledge also aim to own your innate peace with ease, wherein you are directed to be conscious of the thoughts that come and that Consciousness is Infinite in your very experience.
3. Nididhyasana: It implies naturally remaining as our real nature even without the support of external sound and the pondering over the teachings.

We remain as our real nature in shravana, manana and nididhyasana too but the difference lies in the presence or absence of external aids. In shravana there is gross external aid (support of another individual), in manana there is subtle external aid (no support of individual but what is being heard is being applied to remain as peace) and in nididhyasana there is no aid at all (naturally remaining peaceful). Right now we are making nididhyasana our goal. If this abidance as our real nature is not affected by time, place and situations in life then that is the culmination wherein we remain as our real nature. This is called firm knowledge (druda jnana) as it is devoid of ignorance, doubt and habitual tendency to assume identity with individuality. This state is called niruddha or guna-atita state where there is no trace of any of these.

Have you graduated from the basic version to the advanced version? (Or) In which of the following categories do you belong to?

- (a) Are you able to recognise your real nature during shravana?
- (b) Are you able to remain as your real nature with the help of portals?
- (c) Can you effortlessly remain as real nature by default?

If you belong to (b) we need to go to (c) or, to put in another words, we need to transform from knowledge to firm knowledge. This means that we have knowledge which implies we have graduated from the basic version.

How do we go from knowledge to firm knowledge?

- We need to revisit the remaining five steps of Adhyatma Yoga in the light of knowledge which we have already gained through shravana and manana.
4. Yama: All the five values are default in place because of knowledge one has regarding Reality. Reality implies non dual Self or Infinite Conscious Existence. For one who is deriving his identity with Reality will effortlessly have all the values. These values will be like the litmus test for evaluating your qualifications for the advanced level. If they are in place you are fully qualified for the advanced version of Adhyatma Yoga.

Homework

1. Continue with your daily meditations for the time equivalent to your age.
2. Everyday, do shravana by listening to inspiring satsangs wherein you remain as Reality. You must do shravana for the time equivalent to your age.
3. Also do regular exercise and pranayama.

Points to Ponder-54

The basic version of Adhyatma Yoga ends with the effort of the aspirant to know the Self through shravana, manana and nididhyasana. The advanced version starts with knowledge of the Self and all the steps aim in strengthening the knowledge.

Advanced version of Adhyatma Yoga(continued)

5.Niyama

a) Saucha (Purity):

- To clean the external body, we take a bath regularly. Now, we need a bath that cleans our mind. This bath is called Svabodha Snanam (as quoted in Yoga Vasishtha). It is the bath of Self knowledge. An absolute purity of mind is possible only by deriving identity from the non dual Reality. Why?
- For anything to be impure there needs to be a second thing to contaminate it. In Infinite Conscious Existence there is no scope for a second thing to exist apart from the Infinite Conscious Existence. Hence it is naturally devoid of impurity (nirmalam).

b) Santosha (Contentment):

- True contentment is possible only by recognising one's identity with the Infinity.
- Deriving identity from the finite (body and mind) is the cause of discontentment which is commonly seen in the society. In their desperation to reach contentment people chase after external objects. These objects change with time and they seem to relieve the discontentment. In our ignorance about the cause of our inner discontentment we tend to overcome it by chasing the external objects. The only way to end this discontentment or the sense of lack is to derive identity from the Infinity. This is achieved by Tapas.

c) Tapas: Tapas in the advanced version of adhyatma yoga is rooted in knowledge where there is one pointed and sustained effort to remain as Reality.

How can we do such tapas?

- We can do tapas by practicing Svadhyaya. It means Self inquiry to remain as our real nature. As and when we are possessed with the body-am-I notion, we need to self educate or counsel our mind. This means that we must ask our mind if it wants to lead a miserable life with body-am-I notion or lead a peaceful life as Infinite Conscious Existence. A clever mind will always prefer a peaceful life. To achieve this peace, inquiry must be initiated. We need to consciously

acknowledge the presence of peace that accompanies this inquiry. Peace is like the perfume of Infinite Conscious Existence.

- We can strengthen Svadhyaya through Ishvara Pranidhana.

What is Ishvara Pranidhana?

- Ishvara Pranidhana: By knowing our real nature we know the reality of the entire manifestation including God. How? Infinity implies absence of finiteness. There is nothing other than Infinite Conscious Existence. This is what we all are aiming at in our meditations. Anything that you feel to be apart from Infinity is only an appearance of Infinity. So all forms are names given to the appearance of Infinity. This applies to everything in this manifestation including the manifest form of God.
- The manifest form of God is only an appearance of the unmanifest God or unmanifest Infinite Conscious Existence. This Infinite Conscious Existence in the unmanifest form is there in our experience as peace. In the Kali-Shiva example, Kali is the manifest God which is the appearance of the unmanifest God, i.e., Shiva. Kali's reality is Shiva.
- Ishvara Pranidhana implies complete surrender to Reality. We do this by remaining as the Reality itself and appreciating everything as Reality. As and when we feel swayed by our earlier tendencies of giving reality to the name and forms, we should surrender those notions to the Reality itself. Here surrender implies in a way sublation in the light of knowledge. Instead of getting lost in the names and forms we see the reality of the names and forms which is Infinite Conscious Existence. The meal prayer Brahmarpanam..... is in a way a reference to Ishvara Pranidhana wherein the notion of duality is offered in the fire of non duality.
- As long as you assume yourself to be a physical form (body) you will only see forms everywhere. But if you know your reality to be Infinite Conscious Existence then you will know that your body and all other bodies are appearances of Infinite Conscious Existence.

Interconnectedness of the steps of Niyama:

Purity is possible through the knowledge of Infinite Conscious Existence. This alone will give contentment and the effort to recognise the contentment, which is our real nature, is tapas. Tapas is possible through Svadhyaya (inquiry) which will culminate as Ishvara Pranidhana i.e. knowing the entire manifestation as the appearance of Reality.

Some people may say that they can remain as Reality during shravana and manana. But when they are active during the day they are carried away with the body-am-I notion. So how can they integrate their active life with the peace of this understanding?

- Body-am-I notion is an universally accepted phenomenon. It is not a problem for 99.99% of the world. In spite of the recognition of Reality through shravana and manana, the recognition will be challenged from time to time throughout the rest of the day. Our job here is to protect the recognition and allow the peace that accompanies that recognition to dominate our daily lives. For this we need a steady practice or a one pointed effort.
- The last three steps of the advanced version of Adhyatma Yoga are therefore integrating our daily life with the peace that accompanies this understanding.

Last three steps of Adhyatma Yoga:

6. Asana: If you are spending some time everyday for physical fitness we now use that time for practicing integration of our bodily actions with the understanding of Reality. How? When we are engaged in physical exercises our mind is relatively free from the obligation to think. So we need to use that occasion where we have no obligation to use our mind in our effort to permeate our bodily actions in the light of awareness. How is this to be done? Before we start the exercise use your favorite portal to establish your identity with Reality (awareness). Tell yourself that you are not away from the Consciousness. Then slowly allow the activity to take place in this new identity. When you start your exercise you are aware of the bodily movements. So remain as that awareness which you are anyway. But now you consciously remain conscious of the awareness and continue your exercise. Here you are not worried of what you are conscious of but you are regaining your identity as Consciousness.

7. Pranayama: You are conscious of breathing. As you inhale you go within and recognise the Conscious Existence. As you exhale, know that Consciousness is manifesting as everything including the body. After continuing breathing like this for sometime, know that Infinite Conscious Existence is there within you and outside you. It is in this Infinite Conscious Existence everything is taking place spontaneously including your Pranayama.

8. Pratyahara: It is meant to integrate all the physical and mental activities in the light of Reality. Light of reality implies understanding Infinite Conscious Existence as an experiential reality. This understanding is there in our experience as peace. Hence it means performing all activities in the background of peace.

How are all the activities done in the background of peace?

- To do this first we have to know what is depriving us of peace or what is that which is eclipsing this peace which is the synonym for Infinity?
- Nothing is eclipsing the peace. But still we feel we are deprived of peace when we are active. This is because of a feeling of ignorance with which we have lived for many years.
- For the activities to be done in the background of peace first choose the activities that do not require a dynamic mind. While doing these activities, you should not get carried away with the mental chatter. Instead, aim at remaining as Consciousness throughout the activity. When you are successful here then choose the activities that need a dynamic mind.

Upanishad is concluding mantra 11 with a warning. It quotes 'Yogaha prabhavaapyaaou'. This means that yoga is subject to rise and fall implying that it fluctuates. The effort of recognising Reality and living in the light of peace is not a cakewalk for the majority. Unless we understand its necessity and initiate methods for a wholehearted approach we cannot be successful in this path just like in any other path.

To reach the states of ekagra and niruddha a complete overhauling (discipline) of the body and mind and a refined intellect is needed. You need to get rid of tamas and rajas and saturate yourself with satva. Then, you can remain as gunaatita which is a synonym for firm knowledge. This only is called 'sahaja samadhi' where you remain naturally as peace which is your real nature. It is not an uphill task for those who have grasped the essential knowledge that is needed for this journey. They have graduated from the basic version of Adhyatma Yoga. So they already have access to the peace of Infinite Conscious Existence. Still you have to be careful and protect this knowledge till it has matured into druda jnana or the advanced version of Adhyatma Yoga. That is why Upanishad is saying "Apramastha thadha bhavathi" which means you need to be alert and careful in protecting this knowledge until you naturally remain as peace.

Scriptures say Self/Reality cannot be known through the senses or the mind and on the other side it is saying that we need to put forth effort to own up the peace of the self. These statements look contradictory. Go over mantras #12 and #13 and find at what the Upanishad is hinting at.

To encourage the students in the vikshipta state of mind to advance into ekagra and then to niruddha, the Upanishad mentioned Yoga. Practicing yoga plays a key role for the aspirants to own up firm knowledge. We can devise a 10 point progress tracker based on the discussions we had regarding the advanced version.

10 point progress tracker:

1. Shravana: Hearing inspiring satsangs which will enable you to remain as Reality at least for the minutes that is equivalent to your age.
2. Manana: Meditation
3. Sathyam
4. Ahimsa
5. Astheya
6. Brahmacharya
7. Avoid intoxicants
8. Asana: As a process to remain as awareness.
9. Pranayama: As a process of inhaling and exhaling to connect with the Reality.
10. Pratyahara: It implies integrating all our activities with the peace of Reality.

Niyama is not included in the tracker because they are almost covered under the values. Saucha and santosha eliminates shad vairis which will be dealt by maintaining values. Tapas, Svadyaya and Ishvara Pranidhana are aiming at knowledge of Reality.

Apramathas thadha bhavathi: In a way, it means that those who try to implement the advanced version will naturally be careful, leaving less scope for their deviation from this path.

Do you believe in God?

- The Reality in you is the Reality in everybody and that alone is the absolute Reality called God.
- In some countries more than 60% do not believe in God. In the country with the largest population 90% do not believe in God. In India 6-8% do not believe in God. Even those who believe in God do not do so because they are convinced about His existence. They do so out of fear or with a hope that their desires get fulfilled. Out of those people who believe in God, most of them believe in God with some form. The form is a

representation of the eternal principle.

- If the believers of God are asked if they believe in the formless Infinite Conscious Existence which is beyond senses and mind and which is the reality of forms and the reality of all Gods, then they doubt if the questioner is insane. This is because they do not believe in the existence of something which cannot be known through the senses or mind. This looks sensible from the common sense standpoint.
- Then what is this advaitic jnanam? Is it for those who lack common sense? What is the use of Adhyatma Yoga? Who will know the Reality that is beyond the scope of senses and mind?

Mantra 12(naiva vacha na manasa.....)

- The Upanishad in this mantra is telling that Reality cannot be obtained through speech, sight (senses) or mind. Then how is it known? It is known by those who have faith in the scriptures and in their teacher. Initially this faith seems to be a blind faith but slowly it becomes faith based on their reasoning. How?
- A genuine scripture or a true teacher will only facilitate to awaken one's inherent power of reasoning. This reasoning is there in all living beings and this is the one which differentiates humans from animals. A teacher will try his best to inspire the students to have faith in themselves or faith in their sense of reasoning or discrimination. This discrimination allows the student to discriminate real from unreal. The result of such discrimination is clear recognition of Reality.
- The blind faith that the student has in their teacher matures to the faith in the scripture which will further mature into having faith in themselves and in their capability of discrimination. Finally it will culminate in unwavering faith in Reality. Upanishad is confirming the same in the next lines of the mantra that those who have such faith will know and not others. Only those who have faith will say Reality exists and not others.
- If you look at your own experience, you will say that what Upanishad is saying is correct. Initially you have faith in the teacher that what is said by the teacher will be beneficial to you. That faith in the teacher is used by the teacher to divert it as the faith in the scripture of Katopanishad. Then it has further matured as the faith in yourself by awakening your reasoning through the portals given. This in turn helps the capability to discriminate to blossom in you. Finally you say this is the Reality.
- The faith in the scriptures has matured into faith in yourself as the power of reasoning. Then that matures into the result of that reasoning which is recognising Reality. Now you have faith in the existence of Reality.

Upanishad is not satisfied yet even after giving so many mantras. It knows that some of the aspirants/listeners may lose confidence on the path after hearing the Yoga approach. They may feel that this process is not that easy even when it promises peace. So, for such aspirants Upanishad is presenting the truth in such a way that the listeners cannot miss its recognition. It wants to give us one more portal by which the aspirants will be able to own the Reality effortlessly. If this portal is grasped well then you may not need Adhyathma Yoga. In a way, this portal is the parting gift that the Upanishad is giving to its students who are eager to own true peace.

Mantra 13(Asthithi eva upalabdhavyaha.....)

- Even though Reality cannot be seen through the eyes, experienced through the senses or known by the mind, it still exists. On what basis are you saying that it exists? It is said on the basis that if that does not exist nothing in the Universe can exist. How?
- Everything that we assume to exist in this Universe including thoughts have one thing in common: they all exist (asthi). There is no difference in the Existence aspect even though there is a difference in the name and form aspect. It is this Existence that is rendering existence to everything. There is no change in this Existence in spite of inevitable change in the form of objects. So this Existence is the Reality as it is changeless and it is the substratum of the entire objectivity.

Then why do people not know about it naturally?

There are few reasons for this:

1. We have taken it for granted to such an extent that we miss its presence completely.
2. We are lost in the variety of forms (including our body and mind) which captivate us to a large extent. Therefore we fail to recognise their substratum which is Existence. For example, the reality of all the mud pots and toys is clay. But, we get carried away by the toys so we fail to recognise the clay which the toy is made of. Similarly, we get carried away with the objectivity to such an extent that we do not recognise their substratum which is Existence. We are lost in the utility aspect of the objects and naturally we ignore the reality of it.
3. We are not introduced to Reality and that's why we miss it.

So, we should be introduced to the Reality. This is what the Upanishad is doing by introducing us to Reality in the form of Existence.

It is being said that there is absolute Existence and that only is imparting existence to everything including the thought formations. But, can it also be the other way round? Why can't we say that because of the objects and thoughts there is scope for Existence to exist?

Logical Explanation:

- Even in the absence of objects and thoughts there is Existence. Absence of everything implies nothingness or emptiness. So even in nothingness and emptiness there is a -ness which is common. This -ness is Existence. We cannot establish anything too without taking the support of Existence because nothingness also exists. Hence it is not the objects that are giving existence to the Existence but it is the Existence that is giving existence to the objects.

Experiential explanation:

- The experiential proof for the experience of absolute Existence is deep sleep. In deep sleep even though you do not experience anything objectively still we cannot deny our Existence. At the most we say "I remained there" or "I existed there without knowing anything" if you want to comment on deep sleep. This means that you remained there as pure Existence. When you wake up, Existence alone is there in the waking state supporting the existence of the entire objectivity which includes physical objects and mental thought formations.

With this knowledge based on experience and logic we cannot be carried away by the forms and miss the substratum. We will be experiencing the Existence that supports all forms including thoughts. Before an object or thought casts a spell on us and gives an impression that it has independent Existence, we will now be able to appreciate the uniform Existence on which all these are dependent. Henceforth we will not be disturbed by the objective phenomenon and will instantly recognise the substratum within and outside the entire objectivity. This is what the Upanishad is hinting at in this mantra.

Asthithi eva upalabdhyaha: From now on we do not exist as the body and mind apparatus because we are the Existence only.

Upanishad is saying we have now recognised the Existence aspect of Reality and there is one more aspect to be known. This aspect is to know the Reality as it is (tatva bhavaha).

What is the difference between recognising the Existence aspect of Reality and knowing the Reality as it is?

- In the first step we are arriving at recognition of Reality from the objective standpoint. This means we know Reality as the substratum of the objective manifestation. (sopadhikam)
- In the second step we know the Reality as it is really even without inferring to the objective phenomenon. (nirupadhikam)

How do we know the Reality as it is without reference to any manifestation?

Asthiti eva upalabdhasya tatva bhavaha prasidhati : We have recognised the Existence aspect of the Reality which itself will reveal the absolute Reality.

- On recognising the Existence aspect we are thereafter not lost in the objects as such. Instead we are able to appreciate the substratum of the entire objectivity. This substratum is not visible to the eyes. Yet we logically inferred and have recognised it. This Existence itself which we have recognised will reveal its absolute Reality.

‘The Existence which we have recognised will reveal its absolute Reality’. This is the declaration made by Upanishad. But how will it reveal its absolute Reality? Or, how can we own it up?

As an answer to this question, we will first look into an experiment.

- Step 1: Take one object to your attention. Do not deviate and concentrate only on the object.
- Step 2: Appreciate the Existence aspect of the object and let that alone remain in your focus.
- Step 3: Now, recognise that what is there in your focus is not the existence of one object but the Existence of the entire objectivity including your body and mind (thoughts). This is because there is no difference from one object to the other object from the Existence stand point. Similarly, observe the space between you and your chosen object. The space is also existing. And this existence which is substratum of space is not different from the existence that you have already comprehended.

- Step 4: Who is appreciating this absolute Existence? We assume our body and mind apparatus is knowing the absolute Existence. But this is not correct because we have already taken the stand of the Existence which is the substratum of this body and mind. Then who is knowing? There should be something within the Existence which is enabling itself to be known. This is Consciousness which is inherent in the Existence. This is knowing itself or revealing itself.
- Step 5: The Existence is all pervading which cannot be missed. So the Consciousness which reveals it should also be all pervading or Infinite. This is Infinite Conscious Existence.
- Step 6: Reconcile the entire objectivity in the light of knowledge. The objectivity is sublated. This can be understood with an example. On a paper there are various words. First we focussed on the words to such an extent that we forsake their substratum which is paper. Now we are aware of the paper. In the same way the objects are sublated, meaning that the objects are there but our attention is on their substratum which is Infinite Conscious Existence.

When you are able to appreciate the Infinite Conscious Existence what will happen to the body?

- As the body, there will not be any difference physically. Earlier we were focussed on the form of the body but now we are focussed on the substratum of the body which is Infinite Conscious Existence. Then what happens to the body as such? The body will be the same before and after this knowledge but your focus is not exclusively on the body.

To summarise, the Existence itself has revealed its real nature first as the all pervading Existence and then as Consciousness and finally as all pervading Conscious Existence. Then, we reconciled the entire objectivity as the manifestation of Infinite Conscious Existence. Upanishad in a way has given these steps to establish ourselves in Reality.

This should be the experience of everyone from now on. Then you will no longer need Yoga. This portal is devised by the Upanishad in such a way that it cannot be missed once you get it and can be used for manana as and when needed.

Points to ponder-55

What does it mean to remain as Reality during shravana?

- We can answer this by taking into consideration the portal which we have seen in the last class. It is the six step portal by which we can remain as Reality. If that is understood well we can remain by default as Infinite Conscious Existence.
- If you are inspired enough by the six step portal or if you feel that by hearing itself we have reached the goal then that implies that by hearing (shravana) itself you remain as Reality. Also, you may feel inspired to hear it again and again because as you hear you are remaining there, not as an individual, but choicelessly as peace itself. Peace is pulling or drawing you towards it by which you repeatedly hear and remain peaceful.
- But if you feel you are not connected to the portal then that means you are not able to remain as Reality during shravana.

What happens to the objectivity in the strength of this knowledge?

- Two things can happen. One is everything gets faded in the light of knowledge and the second thing is everything is there as an appearance of Self. Is there any difference between these two statements or are they hinting at the same thing?
- There is no difference between the statements. How ? This could be understood only by experience of remaining as Infinite Conscious Existence. If Infinite Conscious Existence is the Reality it has the fragrance of peace. If this peace is there in our experience we will not forsake that experience. But if you feel that we have that experience and could not remain as it by default then it means we are forsaking it in spite of knowing it to be Reality. This is a big blunder that is being committed by forsaking the experience of remaining peaceful.
- Let us understand this with an example. Imagine that a person was encountered with a plane crash. Everybody in the plane died but he was partially injured lying alone in a desert. He was devoid of food and water suffering from the scorching heat in the day and cold breezes in the night surrounded by snakes and wolves. This is a horrible experience. But if this is a dream then he will feel relieved after waking from it. Still if he continues to suffer even after waking, is it not a blunder? It is a blunder.
- If the situation is carefully analysed, only those around him will feel that it is a blunder. He will feel that it is normal and that his suffering is justified. Only his well wishers will sympathise with his state and find remedies to get him out of the unfortunate situation. But why is it that one who is affected fails to understand the standpoint of those around him? Why does he continue to suffer? Why does he not care about the advice given by his well wishers? Why does he need to search for safety for his imaginary sufferings?

- We should relate this illustration to our point of discussion. In spite of waking to our real nature we still find it difficult to remain as that innate peace. Why do we not listen to the advice of the teacher and scripture and why do we continue to suffer?
- The person is still suffering even after getting out of the dream because he has not fully awakened from the dream. If he has fully awakened by the dream he will not be carried away by it. So those who are deprived of owning up their innate peace still have not really awakened to the Self knowledge.
- The one who is haunted by the nightmare can be of two types. One type is someone who does not believe in the narrative of others who sympathise with him and offer him remedies. The second type is someone who trusts those who try to help him and puts forth effort to follow their advice. In the same way aspirants can be of two types. Those who do not take initiative to follow the words of their teacher and scripture and those who do. The difference between them is that, in spite of not being awakened to the Reality fully, those who try earnestly have the glimpse of Reality or peace which is the driving force. They only have a glimpse because if they have completely recognised it without doubt and have eradicated the habitual tendency of identity with the body, then that recognition is steady and Reality will be in their experience from that moment onwards.
- Implication of the illustration: The impact of the dream is so overwhelming that it dominates the peace of the waking state. Similarly, our conditioning with body-mind apparatus is so overwhelming that it seems to dominate our awakening to the Reality. What is the solution? The solution is offered by the Upanishad in mantra 14.

Mantra 14 (yada sarve pramuchyante kaama asya.....)

Upanishad first identifies the chief culprit within us that is preventing us from owning our innate peace. It says the culprit is desire which is preventing us from owning our innate peace. When all the desires which are within oneself are eliminated completely only then will one remain as Infinite Conscious Existence.

How do we eliminate desires?

- Through the knowledge of infinite Reality. With the knowledge of infinite Reality there is no more finite left to be desired. Hence the desire gets eliminated naturally due to the absence of an object apart from Reality to be desired.
- There is also absence of the desirer apart from Reality.

To comprehend Reality we need to eliminate desires. Without eliminating the desires we cannot truly comprehend Reality. Then what is the way out? The solution is given by the Upanishad in mantra 15.

Mantra 15 (yada sarve prabhidhyante hridayasta.....)

From the superficial standpoint of this mantra we can understand that we can own our real nature only when the knots in the heart are destroyed.

From this gross meaning we cannot find a solution to the problem that is concealed in this mantra. To recognise the hint that is given by the Upanishad and to use that to eliminate the desires we need to get to the subtle meaning of the mantra. To grasp the subtle meaning we should first know the mechanism of formation of desire.

What is this desire?

- Desire is basically a thought of wanting something emanating from the body-am-I identity. For this thought to exist it needs two things. On one end it needs to anchor to the owner of the thought (individuality) and on the other end it needs to hold on to the object (goals) which it is aiming to accomplish.
- One end is always constant which is body-am-I identity. The objects or goals on the other end will continuously change.

Why do the desires arise?

- Body- am-I identity is an identity with limitation. Any limitation is an obstruction for freedom and peace. To relieve from the limitation the ignorant mind will devise a way as per its samskaras and also based on the influence from society. Accordingly a desire is born. So desires are creations of our own mind with the noble intention of getting rid of limitation. Will it fulfill its noble intention? In a way it seems to achieve peace through the fulfillment of desire but this peace only lasts for a short period of time. Later. When it again feels limited, it assumes that the fault is in the object or the goal attained. Now it will modify the objects and goals wherein a new desire is created. In this way countless desires are created which we all have in our experience since our childhood.

- In its restlessness in creating desires and exerting to fulfill them, the mind is unfortunately missing a fundamental reality. What is it? It is that the seeming happiness or peace is in the Reality and not in the object. Happiness is intrinsic to the Reality or another name for the Reality. Where is this happiness coming from? It is coming from within. When the desires are fulfilled the body-am-I identity and the limitation which is inherent in it are temporarily eliminated. So we remain at that moment as limitless Reality. But because we are not introduced to this Reality we assume that happiness is coming from objects. This assumption is approved by everyone around. So we create desires ceaselessly and fill ourselves with unfulfilled desires among which only few will be fulfilled. Even those desires which are fulfilled will cause harm by reinforcing our assumption that objects are the cause of happiness. This is what will happen if we do not have knowledge.
- We feel we are justified to have desires in the name of duty though not for our sake but for the sake of children. But this is not correct.

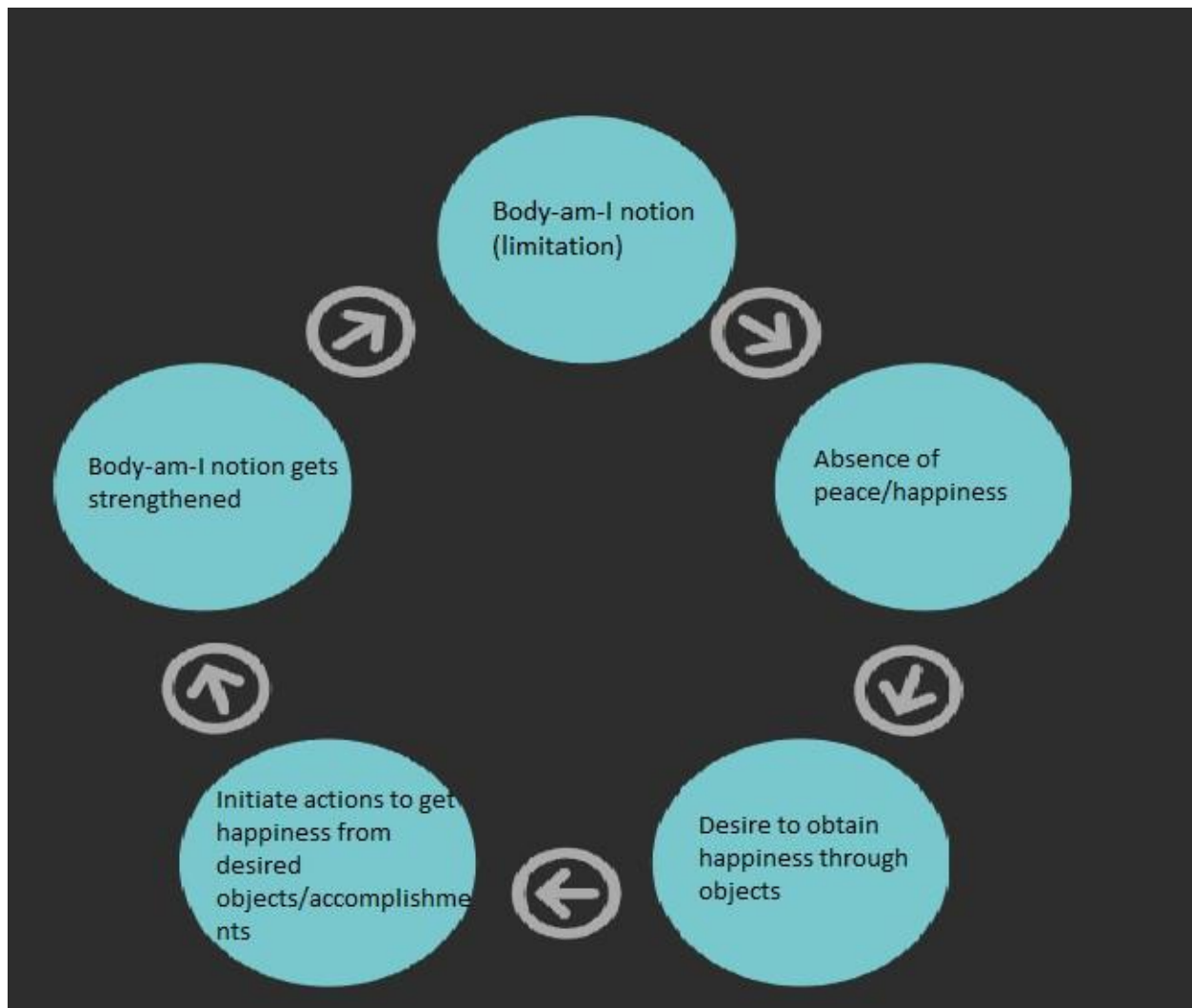
What is the difference between desire and duty?

- In essence, there is no difference between both. Duty is a noble name you give for desire so that you feel that those desires are justified. You are only glorifying your desires in disguise under the name of duty and responsibility.
- You feel that you have a responsibility towards someone/something only because they are dear to you. That someone/something appears dear to you only because you love yourself the most. In reality, nobody cares for anyone in this world. Everybody only cares about themselves.
- Example: You care for your children because they are *your* children. Also, caring for them gives you happiness. Furthermore, your parents have taken care of you by putting aside their comforts and because you have been born in that tradition, you naturally feel that it is your duty to take care of your children. and later they also may feel the same.
- There is nothing like duty. It is what you create to make yourself happy in the name of others. It is the truth which you need to understand by careful analysis. Then are we selfish? No. That is the way the world is. We are trying to point out a subtle and fundamental truth. You are trying to do all these for yourself because you yourself are the source of happiness but you do not know how to access it. So you are using desires to get the same happiness. Now we are trying to get that happiness directly without any of the desires. Whatever the society and the family customs demand or your aspirations demand you achieve them with peace that you are already experiencing within.

- The duty will be a real duty only if it is performed as a spontaneous manifestation of Reality. Otherwise it is a selfish desire that has masked itself in the name of duty. Remember that if the duty takes the form wherein it will obstruct you to own this Reality then the name of the duty will change into desire. If it is done with peace then it is duty.
- When selfless service is performed in the background of peace then only it is real service or seva.

How do I eliminate the desires based on the hint given by Upanishadin mantra 15?

Cycle of desire



- This is the cycle which has to be broken to eliminate the desires. Where do we break the cycle? We need to break it at the body-am-I identity with the strength of knowledge. Then you have access to unlimitation or peace wherein you remain as your real nature as peace. Now you can do activities with happiness but not for happiness. The body-am-I notion can be eliminated gradually by following the Adhyatma yoga progress tracker.

Does a man of knowledge or those who do not have body-am-I identity have desires? Will there be no drive in life for those who comprehend knowledge?

- For those who have established their identity with Infinite Conscious Existence firmly, there will not be desires that obscure their peace. They may have thoughts and desires which are spontaneous manifestations of Reality. They will not have desires born out of limitation or discontentment. With this knowledge they will not have compulsive or psychological thinking.

What will happen after death to those who have firm knowledge and are accomplishing their goals in life in the light of peace and contentment?

- This is the fundamental question of Nachiketa because of which this Upanishad was born. The final boon asked by him was, "What will happen after death".
- The answer to this question is complex because the fate after death is not uniform to everybody. It depends on how you live your life and perform actions based on the convictions you have. An ignorant person who lives with body-am-I identity because of the conviction that he is a body mind apparatus will perform actions based on that identity. Hence he will be born again.
- In these two mantras Upanishad discusses what will happen to the man of knowledge in relation to death. It is saying emphatically that one who has recognised Infinite Conscious Existence will remain as the immortal Reality itself while living and after death. His body may die but he does not have identity with the body-mind complex. He is free of death and rebirth too.

- With this the Upanishad is saying that the teaching is complete.

With the absence of knowledge about our real nature we get stuck with the body-am-I limitation and because of that we entertain endless desires culminating in misery. With knowledge of Reality we eliminate the body-am-I notion. Body -am-I notion itself is ignorance and if it's illusion is exposed that itself is knowledge. Then you have access to peace and will carry out your allocated duties in life with the background of peace. Only those with firm knowledge will live with peace as the immortal Reality itself. Then they are devoid of death and birth because they remain as Reality. Those who have cherished their identity with the body (ignorant) will have death and birth.

What will happen to those who have taken the path of vedic rites(practices) like Nachiketa agni upasana as mentioned in the Upanishad?

- All aspirants who are fortunate to have firm knowledge even while living are beyond birth and death. If those who exert selflessly as per their inclinations through vedic rites, upasana, yoga, devotion, knowledge, etc... die in the process, without gaining firm knowledge they will reach the Brahma loka.
- Vedic practices like Nachiketa sacrifice are not common these days. Instead, we see one pointed devotional practices. It is selfless devotion which will lay the foundation for jnana sadhana. As discussed earlier we have seen that jnana sadhanas are fruitful for those who undergo selfless service and selfless devotion. Why? In these practices, individuality is being diluted and the divine personality is given value gradually. So in a way the individuality (ego) is surrendered or subdued. With this, the veil of ego is gradually diluted, which makes it easy for comprehending knowledge. Through knowledge we have access to the Reality by understanding the illusion of ego. This Reality is the reality of God that we worshiped and to whom we have dedicated all our actions selflessly. So it is our devotion to God which has blossomed gradually into knowledge of Reality.

Mantra 16 (satham chaika cha hridayasya nadya....)

- Upanishad in this mantra is saying that those who are into vedic rites and upasana will depart the body through murdhana (brahma randhra). The subtle body will take the path of sushumna naadi to depart from the gross body through the brahma randhram. It will further travel through the unseen paths (shukla margam, utara margam) and reach Brahma loka. In Brahma loka they will find the presiding deity who will impart knowledge about their real

nature. They will have gradual liberation (krama mukthi). They will not take birth again in this world unlike the ignorant who are deprived of knowledge about Reality. Hence it is said that they will have immortality gradually.

- Upanishad stresses to take the path of knowledge here and now and know the Reality without any doubt by which you remain peaceful while living. Then we break the cycle of death and birth.

We are not bothered by the state after death. We are interested in leading a truly peaceful life and attain immortality here and now. What is the way? Upanishad answers this in Mantra 17.

Mantra 17 (angushta matra purusho....)

In this mantra Upanishad is asking the students to recognise the Purusha that is ever present within everybody. What is it that is always there in everybody? It is the Consciousness. Everybody without exceptions has access to it in all the states i.e. waking, dream and deep sleep. It is there in everybody because none will say that they are not knowing or they are not aware. Now Upanishad is saying you need to own this Consciousness which is ever present in you.

How do you own the Consciousness which is ever present in you?

- am svam sareeraath pravruheth: You need to separate it from one's own body.
- We naturally assume ourselves to be the body-mind apparatus because we believe that we are experiencing the world outside and the world within with this body-mind complex. But this is not true based on our experience. Why?
- The senses are only the outlets that give information about the world outside. Mind is only a processor which will further facilitate the processing of the information provided by the senses. Then who is the real experiencer or knower? It should be the knower of the external sense objects, senses, mind (fluctuating thoughts), and intellect. That principle within us which is conscious or aware of all these is Consciousness or awareness. This is to be known as our real nature because it is responsible for our cognitions and it remains changeless all our life and in all states. If this is known then you are not what you assumed yourself to be till now but you will remain with the identity of Consciousness (chaitanyam).

In the process of knowing our real nature to be Consciousness there is a possibility of committing an error. Hence Upanishad is warning us to be careful in the process of inquiry. It is stressing the need to be careful by quoting an example:

Munjaadhi veshikan dhairyena: The process of knowing Consciousness by differentiating it from the objective phenomenon or experiences is like separating the stalk of the munja grass from the sheath that holds the central stalk. By this example Upanishad wants us to be diligent in this path of discrimination. We should be careful in this path which is aiming at attaining the Reality.

What is the error that can prove to be fatal while owning our real nature as Consciousness?

- We can easily discriminate Consciousness from gross objects which include our body and recognise Consciousness (Example: I am conscious of that table. I am conscious of my body. So, I am neither the table nor the body. I am the Consciousness which is conscious of all the other objects.). To some extent this can be applied to thoughts too.
- Be careful because there is a chance of still assuming one of the thought modifications to be Consciousness. This assumption is harmful since it gives a false sense of knowledge of Reality in spite of being caught with one of the modifications of your imaginative mind. It is in fact a trick played by the mind.
- This error can force you to end the search for the Self even before it is complete, with a false sense of accomplishment.

What is the way to prevent ourselves from falling into such tricks of the mind?

- aam vidya sukram amritam: Upanishad is again and again saying that what you have discriminated and labelled as Consciousness is pure and immortal.
- If this declaration of Upanishad does not match with your discovery of Consciousness then it implies you have mistaken a thought to be Consciousness.

How do we use this clue constructively?

- We should subject our conclusion about Reality to two tests.
 1. Is it immortal beyond the limitations of time? Everything changes with time but there is something that will not change with time. It is Consciousness. That which we have given the label Consciousness should not change with time. It remains constant.

2. Is it pure? Only that which is infinite will be pure. There is a chance for impurity when there is a second thing. Only the nondual can be infinite. Is the Consciousness that you feel to be the Reality infinite or not? If it is infinite that implies it is devoid of limitations and there is nothing apart from it.

Check within yourself whether that which you have labelled to be Consciousness is constant and infinite.

We can initiate a manana based on this discussion so that it remains as our very experience.

1. Take one object to attention. Now appreciate the Consciousness because of which you are conscious of the object.
2. Turn around and look at other objects. Do not get lost with objects. Recognise the Consciousness because of which you are conscious of all these objects. Sounds and other sensations too will help us in appreciating Consciousness.
3. Now close your eyes and be conscious of Consciousness with which you are conscious of thoughts within. Remain as Consciousness.
4. At this stage ask yourself 3 questions.
 1. Ask yourself if there is a difference in the nature of Consciousness in all the above three steps.
 2. Ask yourself if this Consciousness is changeless in your experience right from childhood till now.
 3. Is this Consciousness not the same Consciousness which was conscious of dream objects in dream and conscious of absence of manifestation in deep sleep?

On the authority of answers based on your experience you now know that Consciousness that is there in your experience is constant and changeless. It is not subject to loss at all. Even a feeling that it is lost is again appreciated because of this Consciousness only.

5. Does this Consciousness have any limitation? If your answer is no then it implies that it is infinite and non dual. Hence pure.
6. What about the external objects that include the body and internal thoughts. Do you have their experience apart from Consciousness? If your answer is no then it implies they all are appearances of Infinite Conscious Existence. They are spontaneous manifestations of this Infinite Consciousness. They are not spontaneous manifestations of *your* Consciousness (of an individual) but they are spontaneous manifestations of absolute Infinite Consciousness. Just as water which is one is

appearing as various waves towards the coast so to one non dual Consciousness is appearing as a variety of appearances.

7. Now open your eyes. The objects are the same as before. But now we know through experience that they are not apart from Consciousness. They are only appearances of one Consciousness.

What happened to Nachiketha who heard this Katopanishad?

This can be known clearly in Mantra 18.

Mantra 18 (mrythum prothva nachiketo....)

Upanishad is saying Nachiketa had a firm knowledge about his real nature that is Infinite Conscious Existence. As the Reality is pure and non dual he is freed of all impurities. Reality is immortal so he remained as immortal Reality. Impurities imply shad vairis which torment an individual and will be the cause of misery to oneself and even to others around. The one with firm non dual knowledge has contentment and is naturally freed of all the impurities that steal one's peace. With this knowledge Nachiketa lived a life on Earth as though it was heaven till his allotted life span lasts and then he continued as Infinite Conscious Existence without scope for future births. So he had a glorious life.

All the jnanis who have lived till now have taken up their identity with Infinite Conscious Existence. Now if you are owning up your real nature you too are there as Infinite Conscious Existence.

Nachiketa attained fulfillment in life but what will happen to us who are venturing in this path with faith in the Upanishad?

- Upanishad is giving an assurance to all its listeners by saying anyo pyevam yo vidhadhyaatma eva. All those who strive like Nachiketa in this path and attain firm knowledge will have similar results like Nachiketa. The result will be the same only when the effort is similar to that of Nachiketa's.

So let us once review Nachiketa's effort or mode of sadhana:

- He had concern for the parents and the society and so he dedicated boons for his parents and the society (Selfless service).
- He had all the values needed in this path.
- He prioritised knowledge (shreyas) over material gains (preyas) in life. Due to this he initiated shravana, manana and nididhyasana without fail.
- He showed interest in the Adhyatma Yoga which he followed meticulously.

To have similar results like Nachiketa we need to exert by those four ways as mentioned above and have a firm knowledge. We need to meticulously follow the advanced version of Adhyatma Yoga in which all the above are included. With the help of this tracker we too will have firm knowledge and will be peaceful in all circumstances of life. Everything is possible through sadhana. So let us not relax till we have firm knowledge. Firm knowledge means recognizing that we are not apart from peace. We lead our lives in the background of peace.

Upanishad is concluding with the shanti mantra:

Saha naavavathu

Sahanau bhunaktu

Sahaveeryam karava vahai

Tejaswi naavadheetamasthu

Maa vidvishavahai

Om shanthi, shanthi, shanthi hi

Let this knowledge glow within me throughout my life till all habitual tendencies are eliminated so that by default I can remain as Infinite Conscious Existence