

TAITTIRĪYA UPANIṢAD

INTRODUCTION

Yajurveda is one among the 1130 branches enumerated by Patanjali in Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣyam as Ekaśatam Adhvaryu Śākhāḥ, Sahasravartmā Sāma Vedaḥ, Ekaviṃśatidhā Bāhvryam, Navadhā Ātharvaṇaḥ, where he mentions - Ekaśatam Adhvaryu Śākhāḥ. These one hundred branches of Yajurveda which were known as Adhvaryu Śākhāḥ have been split into two major groups via Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda and Śukla Yajurveda. Out of those one hundred branches of Yajurveda, now only few branches are available. Some branches of Yajurveda though available in scripts but do not have recitation tradition, such as Kāṭhaka and Sāñkhyāyana branches. However in the group of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda, Taittirīya branch is protected by the oral tradition without any change or modification and derivation.

This Taittirīya branch has a famous Upaniṣad known as Taittirīya Upaniṣad. In fact this Upaniṣad is not an independent part of Taittirīya branch such as Taittirīya Samhitā, Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa etc. It rather, forms part of Taittirīya Āraṇyaka. The 7th, 8th and 9th Anuvākas of Taittirīya Āraṇyaka came to be known as Taittirīya Upaniṣad. So as Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad that forms part of 10th Anuvāka of Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.

This Taittirīya Upaniṣad has three chapters popularly known as Vallī via Śīkṣā Vallī, Ānanda Vallī and Bhr̥gu Vallī. These three chapters are also known as Sāmhitī, Vāruṇī and Yājñikī Upaniṣads respectively. The first chapter deals with Samhitā, the second chapter defines Vāruṇī Vidyā and the third chapter presents those aspects related to Yajna. The first chapter – Śīkṣā Vallī deals with Varṇa (letter or sound), Mātrā (length) and Sāma (modulation). These are the basic epithets of this Upaniṣad which are essential for reciting and understanding the Upaniṣad. This Vallī mainly deals with Vedic Phonetics. One of the Vedāṅgas is Śīkṣā, which has Vedic source of this Vallī as far as Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda is concerned.

DATE OF COMPOSITION

The date of composition of this Upaniṣad though is not known, it is inferred that this Upaniṣad might have been composed between 5th and 6th Century BCE. Bhāṣya on Taittirīya Upaniṣad of Śāñkara was written in 8th century ACE, approximately after twelve centuries of its composition. Thus, this Upaniṣad could not have been composed after 8th century ACE. However, according to some critics the time of Śāñkara has been fixed 750 BCE. If this date is taken into view for consideration, there is every chance that this Upaniṣad might have been authored before that period. To ascertain precisely that this Upaniṣad might have been composed before 750 BCE that is as per general observations it should be between 5th and 6th century BCE. Western critics opine that oldest of Upaniṣads is Bṛhadāraṇyaka, which might have been composed in Pre-Buddhist era. Deussen believes that Upaniṣads might have been authored between 1000 or 800 and 500 BCE. However, Ranade and Radharishṇan differ with the views of Deussen. Ranade's chronology of Upaniṣads is 1200 to 600 BCE, whereas, Radhakrishṇan assigns date to these Upaniṣads as 800 to 600 BCE. Further, both disagree with the view of Deussen that earlier Upaniṣads were in prose form, then in verse form and later again in prose form. They do not find any logic or reason behind this view. Yet, Deussen classified Taittirīya Upaniṣad under first category of prose

form, whereas Ranade includes Taittirīya Upaniṣad under second category and Radhakrishṇan includes this under first category and believes that this must have been written before Pre-Buddhist era.

TRADITIONAL VIEW

However, traditional scholars' orthodox view is different from this date. Even Śāṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhvācārya and other propagators of various philosophical schools also did not accept this date or assigning date of composition of any Upaniṣad or Veda. They hold that all the Vedic literature is not of human-composition. They are seen by various Ṛṣis and exposed as they seen Vedas with the same order of letters. For them, all the Vedas are Apauruṣeya (non-composed or non-written). Naiyāyikas – one of the schools of philosophies are of the view that the Vedas are the works of Īśvara (God) as they hold the view that without composing no literature could exist. Hence, they hold that Vedas are composed by Īśvara. All other schools of philosophy hold that Vedas are non-composed. Even Naiyāyikas also did accept that Vedas are non-men-composed (Apauruṣeya). Thus, the traditional view regarding the date of composition of Vedas differs from that of modern critics.

Modern critics try to assign date of composition of Vedas by inference and by evidences available. They take into consideration the style of literature, language, descriptions in the composition, commentaries on a particular composition, citations available in other compositions, and also historical evidences for fixing a date of a particular composition. However, the traditional scholars hold the view that these Vedic literatures have been transferred to posterity through oral tradition from race to race (person to person) without any change in the order of letters or Svaras and without deviation from the said norms and procedures. This view holds validity as these Vedic literatures have been made available through times immemorial to till date and the tradition of recitation has been followed from Kanyakumari to Himalayas, which is perceptible evidence and stands as witness to this claim.

Further, our Bhāratiya historical view is different from that of Western. The foremost difference of our inference is that we accept Vedas as Supreme Authority and whatever reasoning we put forward should not be against Vedas. This, the Western Historians or critics do not accept as they simply view Vedas as a literature as of other literature. Hence, there is difference in ascertaining a date of this Upaniṣad. To sum up, as per Western critics and the followers of that tradition hold that this Upaniṣad might have been authored by unknown authors between 5th and 6th century BCE, whereas our Bhāratiya traditional scholars and their followers hold that this Upaniṣad is not authored by anybody, hence, it has no-beginning i.e. Anādi so that no date could be fixed for this Upaniṣad.

ELEMENTARY ISSUES

The configuration of this Upaniṣad is as observed earlier, into three Vallīs i.e. three chapters via Śikṣā, Ānanda and Bhṛgu Vallīs. This Upaniṣad starts from the basic phenomenon of syllable, sound, accent and letter and heads through physical entities of a human body ends with the Ultimate Reality (Brahman). Ānanda Vallī is also known as Brahmānanda Vallī in some traditions. These Vallīs in turn divided into Anuvākas (sub-sections or verses).

The first Vallī – Śīkṣā Vallī is the essence of first Vedāñga – the Auxiliary or the Supportive Part of Vedas. This Añga (Supportive Part) is known as Nose of Vedas. All other Supportive Parts come into operation if the substance is perceived by the eyes or come into proximity of organs of perception. Ghrāṇa (Nose) could be operative even before the substance come into contact of the eyes or come into proximity of nose. That is the reason; this Añga is known as Nose of Vedas. This Añga is able to perceive the imperceptible or distant substance and not like the other Añgas. Thus, Śīkṣā forms pertinent part of Vedas. The content of Śīkṣā is explained in this Vallī starting from the elementary level. Thus, this Vallī deals with (Phonetics and) pronunciation, which are essential in understanding and reciting Vedas – the Śabda Brahman. Here, it talks about five features of phonetics and pronunciation via Varṇa, Svāra, Mātrā, Balam, Sāma and Santāna. Varṇa is Sound that is ‘a’ etc. Svāra is Rhythm like Udātta, Anudātta, Svarita etc. Mātrā is Length (Quantity) such as short, long etc. Balam is Strength of human efforts such as Bāhya and Ābhyantara Prayatnas. Sāma is Modulation that is the ability to pronounce letters in medium level (middle tone). Santāna is Union that is the conjunction of several sounds. Thus, in this second Anuvāka guidelines for correct pronunciation are laid properly, which are necessary for further recitation. This Anuvāka emphasizes correct pronunciation for visible and invisible goods (benefits).

ACCENTUATION AND PRACTICE

Earlier, an invocation mantra for the welfare of both teacher and taught has been recited. Then, comes this Śīkṣā Vallī. Unless one is an expert in these elementary things cannot go ahead with recitation. As this tradition of Veda protected through oral tradition and the learners were prohibited from writing Vedas, these things become necessary. Further the accentuation of Taittirīya Upaniṣad bears speciality that it never changed like other Upaniṣads or branches of Vedas. Though, in some printed editions of Taittirīya Samhitā, it is pointed out in the introduction that there are variations in accentuation and one accentuation is named as Dākṣiṇātya Pāṭha or Svāra meaning South Indian reading or accentuation. In Vedas, there cannot be two or multiple accentuations as they are protected and transferred to posterity by oral tradition. How come there two types of recitation or accentuation? It explicitly means that either cannot be original and one must be true accentuation or recitation. However, it is difficult to decide which one is right. It does not mean that there existed two types of accentuation or kinds of recitation. Here, it is noteworthy that as far as Taittirīya Upaniṣad is concerned, there is not a single instance which has two types of recitation or accentuation. It is because of its tradition of recitation and adopted by almost all the recitors. Further, in the tradition of South, this Upaniṣad has been recited in few particular occasions such as during the Abhiṣekam (bathing) of the Deities in the temples and other occasions in performing house-hold rites. This tradition made this Upaniṣad a household property of every house. This is the reason that this Upaniṣad did not change as in the case of other branches of Vedas or Upaniṣads. In any corner of South India, one can experience the same way of recitation and accentuation. Of course recitors of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda are mainly spread over in the Southern part of the country only. Further, this is also a reason that this Upaniṣad did not change in type and pronunciation. If it would have spread in the other parts of the country, it would have changed as the climate conditions favor the change in accentuation. As this Upaniṣad occupying 7th position among the order of 108 Upaniṣads, is preserved without any change in accent and recitation by the Brahmins of South part of the country. It is almost learned by all the families of Brahmins in this part. Thus, it shows the importance of this Upaniṣad.

DOCTRINE OF TAITTIRĪYA UPANIṢAD

This Upaniṣad is treated or regarded as the prime Upaniṣad among other Upaniṣads as it plays a vital role in establishing the religion of Veda. Of course there was and is no concept of religion in Bharat in the sense that it is used or in practice in modern days. However, there was only the concept of Dharma in ancient days. Thus, this Upaniṣad plays a prominent role in establishing Sanātana Dharma. This is the reason that all the three major Vedānta Darśanas via Advaita, Viśiṣṭadvaita and Dvaita mostly depend on this Upaniṣad and almost all the Ācāryas belong to these three schools wrote commentaries on this Upaniṣad. The commentary which can be treated first of its kind, by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya influenced almost all the later commentators. Though, Rāmānuja, the proponent of Viśiṣṭadvaita did not write commentary on any of the Upaniṣads, his follower Sri Raṅga Rāmānuja Muni has written commentaries on major Upaniṣads which represent and recast the meaning of this Upaniṣad as per Viśiṣṭadvaita School. Later Sāyaṇācārya has written commentary on this Upaniṣad. Sāyaṇācārya wrote commentaries almost all the branches of Vedas like Haradatta, Bhaṭṭa Bhāskara, Mahīdhara etc. Sureśvarācārya belonged to the Advaita School has also written a commentary on this Upaniṣad, which is known as Bhāṣya Vārtika. This Vārtika is a sort of commentary on Śaṅkara Bhāṣya. Without this Vārtika, Śaṅkara Bhāṣya could not be understood, however, this Vārtika came to light in the 19th century. Though, Śaṅkarācārya treated Bṛhadāraṇyaka in detail while writing Bhāṣya, he merely explains the meaning of the Vedic texts in the Bhāṣyas of other Upaniṣads. He did so because Bṛhadāraṇyaka has knotty sentences which need to be explained in detail according to the doctrine of Advaita School. Sureśvarācārya having imbibed the doctrine of Advaita has written commentary on Taittirīya Upaniṣad in detail on the Bhāṣya of Śaṅkara. His work is no less authority than the Bhāṣya. His power of exposition and expression is so exceptional in expounding the doctrine of Advaita. Raṅga Rāmānuja Muni's Bhāṣya is also an authority in expounding the doctrine of Viśiṣṭadvaita. He supplemented the efforts of Rāmānuja by his Bhāṣya on Upaniṣads. This is the reason that Ranga Rāmānuja Muni is known as Upaniṣad Bhāṣyakar in the circle of Viśiṣṭadvaitins. The commentary based on Dvaita philosophy is also a marvelous work and it holds the key of bringing out the etymological meaning from all points of view. The expression, language and the style establishing the Dvaita doctrine are so appealing and authentic. Besides, these commentaries of three schools of philosophy, there are several other commentaries in regional and other foreign languages. There are several other forms of commentaries based on this Upaniṣad such as Upaniṣad Sara and other regional works explain the doctrine of Taittirīya Upaniṣad.

TRANSLATIONS

This Upaniṣad has seen many translations in various languages. This is translated in Indian Regional languages also. Of course, obviously the foremost place is for the translation by Prof. Max Muller. This translation was done in 1884. Almost word by word translation is presented in this work of high order. Though, this work has been subjected to various criticisms, it is no doubt that this translation paved the way for further research and refined translations. Prof. Max Muller himself says that he experienced difficulties while translating various Vedic texts. In a letter written to one Sri V.C. Sheshacharya a renowned advocate of Madras High Court in 1923, Max Muller admits that the Upaniṣads are extremely difficult to translate into English, and many passages lend themselves to different translations. Thus it is not an easy task to translate the Upaniṣad in general and too difficult to translate Taittirīya Upaniṣad in particular. This opinion he expressed to the first edition of translation of Aitareya and Taittirīya

Upaniṣads translated by Sri S.Sitarama Sharma and published in 1923, which attracted academics very much and was regarded as the translation of high order. This edition appeared along with the commentary of Śāṅkarācārya. In 1911, Anandashrama Series has brought out Taittirīyopaniṣad Bhāṣyavārtika. As usual this publisher known for perfection and for publishing classical texts brought out this edition that opened the doors for the translation of Taittirīya Upaniṣad. This edition was published with Sureśvarācārya Bhāṣya Vārtikam along with Ṭīkā. Though this edition has no editor, it has been corrected and edited with the help of Pandits of Anandashrama Publisher. This was published by Narayana Apte. Later, in 1913 Taittirīya Upaniṣad has been published by Vani Vilasa Press, Sri Rangam. The special feature of this edition is that it contains the commentary on the Bhāṣya, named as Vanamālā by Achyutakrishnananda Tirtha and was edited and corrected by Sri Ramaswamy Shastri. This three tier edition i.e. Upaniṣad, Bhāṣyam and Commentary obviously was of great help of the scholars and the interested. Another edition of Translation of Taittirīya Upaniṣad was published in 1925 and translated by Ray Bahadur Srisha Chandra Vidyarnava and Mohan Lal Sandal along with the original text. This was published by Panini Office, Allahabad under the Series - Sacred Books of the Hindus. This translation was also appreciated by scholars. Yet another edition of Taittirīya Upaniṣad was brought out by Anandashrama in 1929. In the South one more edition of this Upaniṣad has been published by Sri L.Somayaji in 1950. This served the need of scholars in Andhra Pradesh. This was published from Gunturu, Andhra Pradesh. Svadhyaya Mandala, Paradi brought out one more edition of this Upaniṣad in 1956. Another edition of this Upaniṣad was published in 1961 with an introduction in English. This Upaniṣad has been translated into English by Sri M.R.Desai in 1971. This was published by Susheela Prakashan, Kolhapur. This was a detailed and free translation. The same author has brought out Īśa Upaniṣad, Nāsadiya Sūkta, and Yoga Sūtra of Patanjali in 1970 and 1972. Further, an edition with the commentary of Raṅga Rāmānuja Muni and other commentaries was published in Kolkata in Bengali script in 1962. Later in 1974, a collection of discourses on Taittirīya Upaniṣad by Swami Chinmayananda was published by Chinmaya Trust, Madras. This edition is regarded for its interpretation of the Upaniṣad and was published with text in Sanskrit and interpretation in English. Another edition of this Upaniṣad with Śāṅkara Bhāṣyam, Bhāṣya Vārtika of Sureśvarācārya, and Bhāṣya of Sāyaṇa (Vidyaranya) was published with English translation by Sri Mahadeva Shastri in 1980. This edition played a vital role in interpreting this Upaniṣad in various parts of the country in general and Southern parts of the country in particular. In 1985, one more edition of this Upaniṣad was brought out by Sri H.N.Ramaswamy. The special feature of this edition is it bears a foreword written by Dr.Karan Singh. Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, Mumbai published this edition. In 1990, an important edition authored by Swamy Nikhilananda was published. Here the book itself reveals its special features on its cover itself as – with an introduction embodying a study of Hindu ethics and also elaborate notes, comments, explanations, based upon the interpretations of Śāṅkarācārya the great eighth century philosopher and mystic of India. This edition has two volumes and has all the major Upaniṣads. This translation bears the caption as New Translation. Later, Muni Narayana Prasad has translated this Upaniṣad under the series Rediscovering Indian Literary Classics in 1994. Charles Johnston has interpreted this Upaniṣad in English under the series Mukhya Upaniṣads. This Taittirīya Upaniṣad has been translated and named as Instructions to Students. This is also available on Net. Taittirīya and Chāndogya Upaniṣads have been translated from Sanskrit with detailed Introductions and with Notes and Explanations based on the Commentary of Śri Śāṅkarācārya, the great Eighth-century Philosopher and Saint of India By Swami Nikhilananda. Another translation of

this Upaniṣad brought out by Advaita Ashram, Kolkata. Swamy Gambhirananda has translated without indulging in interpretation in lucid English. Another work - Insights into the Taittirīya Upaniṣad was published by Kautilya Institute of National Studies, Mysore in the recent time. This translation rather free interpretation was authored by Sri K.S.Narayanacharya, the author of several other such works. One translation by Mridul Kirti, which deserves mention here, is in poetic form. Here, the author of this translation attempted to present the Upaniṣad in verse form without deviating from the prime content of the Upaniṣad. Several other translations were also published in regional languages including Rajasthani which is not even in the 8th schedule of Constitution. Thus this Upaniṣad has been translated even in dialects and other foreign languages such as German, French etc.

INTERPRETATIVE TRADITION

Interpretation always plays a crucial role in explaining or expounding a doctrine. Translation is the first step towards interpretation. Once having known the meaning, then the scholarship indulges in interpreting as per the person's cognitive perception or concept. However, interpretation of Upaniṣads in India in the modern times or even in the ancient times does not deviate from the Vedic concepts and established schools of philosophies in India. Thus, the interpretation is generally based on Advaita, Viśiṣṭadvaita, Dvaita schools etc. Śaṅkara's interpretation of any Veda Vākya (Sentence of Vedas) would always be in support of Advaita philosophy, which he propounded. The same is the case with Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya and so on. However, Sāyaṇa's interpretation or Bhāṣya is based on Vedic rituals. Hence, one must understand the real meaning of Upaniṣads as per his own affiliation to the school of philosophy he belongs or as per his own perception. However, interpretation is very important in understanding Vedic sentences and it would help us to feel the academic intelligence of the Ācāryas. It would also help to further the interpretation or to refute or to supplement as per ones own understanding. We can find interpretation in the form of Bashyas, Vyākhyānas, Vṛttis, Vārtikas, and also in the form of independent works or criticisms on the Upaniṣads. Taittirīya Upaniṣad has all these forms of interpretation. Śaṅkarācārya's Bhāṣyam, Sureshvarācārya's Bhāṣya Vārtikam, Mahdvācārya's commentary, Raṅga Rāmānuja Muni's Bhāṣyam and the criticism of some Western scholars are available and published. Various Swamis of the modern days have also attempted free translations, commentaries, critical analysis of this Upaniṣad which are available in published form as well in soft forms on the Net.

STRUCTURE OF TAITTIRĪYA UPANIṢAD

The structure of Taittirīya Upaniṣad is marvelous and proceeds from simple to difficult as well primary to higher levels. What is the place or importance this Upaniṣad enjoys in the schools of various philosophies is to be discussed as preview. Various schools of philosophies propounded by Ācāryas of Bharat supported and based their views on Vedas and particularly on Upaniṣads. Upaniṣads which are known as Vedāntas, the term Vedānta itself speaks of their meaning. Vedānta means Anta of Vedas. Here the term Anta means conclusion, thus Vedānta means Conclusion of Vedas. As this part of Vedas presents conclusion on philosophical views, almost all the Ācāryas depended on Upaniṣads to support their claims. Rather, they wish to show that their propositions are not new but they are already in Vedas, which they propagate. Thus, all the schools of philosophies try to establish that they propagate only the views of Vedas which already existed in Vedas. This is the reason they plead that their points of

views are not established or founded by them, but they only exposed the views of Vedas. In India, every school of philosophy has this view and tried their level best with intelligence and interpretation to prove this point. However, the ultimate goal is Brahman. Irrespective of this Brahman whether this Brahman is one, or two or multiple, they try to prove on their part that Vedas are favourable to their argument.

ŚĪKṢĀ VALLĪ – THE FIRST CHAPTER

In this context, the structure of Taittirīya Upaniṣad plays an imperative role. This Upaniṣad starts with explaining or presenting the fundamentals of Varṇas and its characteristics. Before starting reciting this Upaniṣad, it is mandatory to recite the Śānti Mantra as per tradition. Thus, Varuṇa, Aryamā, Indra, and Viṣṇu, are prayed. Then immediately the Upaniṣad bows to Brahman. Again it bows to Vāyu. Later there is prayer for the protection of Mām – the Recitor, and then for the protection of Vaktā - the Teacher. From this Śānti Mantra onwards various philosophies differ in their views. As Vāyu is designated as Brahma, a branch of philosophy interprets the same in its favour. Whether these Mām and Vaktā are one and the same or different in nature is the matter of debate among the schools of philosophy. Thus, starts the difference of opinion quoting various instances as support in favour of their views or the interpretation.

Later, the Upaniṣad enters into explaining basics of Śīkṣā, which is one of the Vedāṅgas. In this introductory section, Varṇa, Svara, Mātrā, Balam, Sāma and Santāna, which are related to the Śīkṣā – one of six Vedāṅgas are presented. These elements deal with Vedic phonetics rather general or Universal Phonetics. The Upaniṣad presents these not only in the point of phonetics, but also on spiritual basis. Though there is no such indication on which these could be interpreted on spiritual base, yet, various schools interpret these also that too convincingly on spiritual background.

FIVE ADHIKARAṆAS

Having presented the elementary principles of phonetics, the Upaniṣad proceeds to Adhyātmam or in simple term to spirituality. Here, five Samhitās of Upaniṣad have been presented in respect of five Adhikaraṇas. Then the Upaniṣad continues to describe five Samhitās in respect of five Adhikaraṇas (Objects) viz. Adhilokam (in the World), Adhijyotiṣam (in the Lights), Adhiprajam (in Progeny), Adhividyam (in the Knowledge) and Adhyātmam (in the Self). Here again it is not mere enumeration of lokas, different aspect of jyotis etc., but it is an exposition of the presence of five forms of God i.e, Nārāyaṇa , Vāsudeva, Sañkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Even mere enumeration of Adhiloka , Adhijyotiṣa etc., given here makes a fascinating presentation of the cosmos. The realization of the Vyūha forms makes it a spiritual construction. These five Adhikaraṇas are known as Mahā Samhitās (the Great Conjunctions). Then the Upaniṣad goes on to explaining each Adhikaraṇas. First Adhikaraṇam i.e. Adhilokam comprises the Earth and the Heaven. The Space (Interspace) is the connection (junction) between these two, whereas the Air is the connecting force (Medium). And thus, explained Adhilokam. Next the Adhikaraṇam of Jyotiṣ is explained. This comprises Agni (Fire) and Āditya (Sun). The connection and connecting force are Āpah (Waters) and Vaidyuta (Lightening or Electricity). Here, the Adhikaraṇam of Vidyā or Knowledge is presented in a beautiful way. It comprises the Teacher, and the Pupil. The connection between these two is Vidyā (Knowledge) and the connecting force is Pravacanam i.e. Instruction or Interaction among these three basic elements. Then, the Adhikaraṇam of Prajā (Progeny)

is presented. This comprises Mātā (Mother) and Pitā (Father), the connection and connecting force are Prajā (Progeny) and Prajananam (Procreation). Now, the interesting Adhikaraṇam i.e Adhyātmam (in the Self) is explained. The explanation is so surprising and astonishing that there exists ample scope for further interpretation on spiritual as well as scientific terms. Both the lower and upper Jaws are the two elements of this Adhyātmam. Vāk (Speech) and Jihvā (Tongue) are the connection and connecting force. Phonetics and Physics involved in this Adhyātmam could be further interpreted in many spiritual and scientific aspects. Thus, the Mahā Samhitā (Great Conjunction) is explained in a simple terms involving wider scope for interpretation on many counts. Thus, ends the explanation of third Anuvāka of the first Vallī of this Upaniṣad.

PRAYER FOR DISCIPLES

The next Anuvāka speaks of getting appropriate disciples. This pleads for good, able, self-controlled and peaceful disciples who could get name and fame. Further, it prays for the good health, sweet tongue, and ears for listening good deeds and to protect whatever heard (learned). Here, the prayer for a good disciple with good conduct, intelligence, from good Gotras and families is made and this is the characteristic of a good teacher. Further, it is prayed that pupils come to the teacher for learning as the water flows down in its natural way and like the months rolling over the years, so that the teacher could establish reputation in teaching such self-controlled and enthusiastic pupils. Thus, ends the fourth Anuvāka with the prayer for good disciples and good teaching.

MAHĀ VYĀHṚTIS

The fifth Anuvāka explains the Mahā Vyāhṛtis. Bhūḥ, Bhuvaḥ, and Suvaḥ are the Vyāhṛtis exposed along with the fourth Vyāhṛti Mahaḥ, which is discovered by the Son of Mahācamasa (Vedic Seer). This fourth Vyāhṛti Mahaḥ is presented as Brahma, and that is Self (Ātma). Other Devatās form parts of this Mahaḥ that is Brahman or Ātma. Here, various schools of philosophies interpret this four Vyāhṛtis according to their doctrines to establish their principles or point of view. Again these Bhūḥ and Bhuvaḥ are exposed as World and Mid-Region, whereas Suvaḥ and Mahaḥ are presented as the other World and Āditya (Sun). Again, here, schools of philosophies interpret on their own way to further support their Vedānta. This Mahaḥ is equated with Āditya and this Āditya is none other than Brahman is the interpretation every school derives from this. Thus, this Mahaḥ – the fourth Vyāhṛti is presented as Āditya (Sun), Candramā (Moon), Brahman (Ultimate Self) and Annam (Food). Thus, are the fourfold Vyāhṛtis explained. Who contemplates these four Vyāhṛtis, knows also the Brahman. All Devatās offer tribute to him. Thus ends the fifth Anuvāka. Again, the schools of philosophies differ in interpreting this Vyāhṛti. Dualism interprets as this Brahman is Saviśeṣa (with attributes) and non-dualism as Nirviśeṣa (without attributes) to defend their doctrines. The Upaniṣad goes on explaining various things till the Eighth Anuvāka.

UPĀSAKA DHARMA

From Ninth Anuvāka onwards, the Upaniṣad having concluded the description or narration of Brahman and the basic elements that facilitate in understanding or knowing Brahman, alights into explaining the Upāsaka Dharma that is to be hold by worldly persons and even this Dharma is to be uphold by other than worldly persons. Here, the Upaniṣad categorically emphasizes the importance of Svādhyāya

(recitation of Vedas) and teaching the same (Pravacana). It is said that Ultimate Truth is Learning and Teaching. Truth, Penance, Control, Peace etc., are only inferior to Learning and Teaching. Thus having stressed the prominence of Svādhyāya and Pravacana, the Upaniṣad presents that nothing in this world is above Svādhyāya and Pravachana in a narrative story-telling way. It presents the view of Satyavacas son of Rathitara – a Ṛṣi that Truth alone is ultimate in this world. Taponitya son of Puruṣiṣṭi – a Ṛṣi is of the opinion that Penance is the ultimate. Then comes the view of Nāka son of Mudgala that Svādhyāya and Pravacana (Study and Teaching) are the ultimate in this world. Then judgement is pronounced by the Veda Puruṣa that – that verily is penance and that verily is penance. Here, Veda Puruṣa considers by the word “that” the immediate past view presented by Maudgalya. Thus, the Upaniṣad pronounced that Svādhyāya and Pravacana are the ultimate truth in this world. Here, ends the ninth Anuvāka having emphasized the importance of Learning and Teaching.

The tenth Anuvaka is devoted to wisdom and illumination. It is explained here that I am the mover of the tree, (My) Fame is as the mountain peak, the High one making me pure and I am the very immortal as he (Self) is in the Sun, I am the radiant wealth, (I am) the high wisdom, immortal and uncorroded. Thus, ends this Anuvaka known as Triśanku’s Teaching of Wisdom.

INSTRUCTION TO DISCIPLES

Then from 11th Anuvāka onwards the Upaniṣad explains in detail the Dharma to be adopted by human. This Anuvāka is relevant even today as far as Dharma is concerned. As Vedas are considered as Prabhu Samhitās (Authoritative Codes), it gives Upadeśa (advice) to human in general and the pupils in particular. This is being recited even today at the time of Convocation in the Gurukulas or even at Universities. Speak Truth, Follow Dharma, Do not veer off from Svādhyāya, Do not veer off from the duties towards Gods and Ancestors, Treat mother as God, Treat father as God, Treat the teachers as God and Treat the Guests as Gods are the Upadeśa (advice) given to the pupils. The interesting part of this Upadeśa is that the teacher tells his pupils that you adopt only those actions of mine which are faultless and not the other actions. Further, teacher says to his pupils that good actions of ours are to be concentrated or imitated and not the other actions. How wonderful were the teachers in those days and how open were they towards their pupils are really worth mentioning here. It goes on enumerating the actions to be adopted and whenever you are in doubt about the actions and conducts, you have to consult the learned persons and imitate their actions as their actions are authentic. The Upaniṣad ends saying that this is the order, this is the advice and this is Veda and Upaniṣad. This is the discipline to be adopted and this is to be concentrated upon and this to be observed. These instructions are given as an exhortation. In fact, these directions are universal in nature and are applicable and appropriate even today. These are suitable for any community or a group in any country.

At the end of this Śīkṣā Vallī, again there is prayer for peace and welfare. It is proclaimed that I have declared True and it has protected me and the recitor. Again here various schools interpret this Śānti Mantra also according to their doctrine. Thus ends Śīkṣā Vallī.

BRAHMĀNANDA VALLĪ – THE SECOND CHAPTER

The second chapter Brahmānanda Vallī as the name suggests explains the Brahman. This chapter also begins with the prayer. This prayer pleads welfare and protection of teacher and taught. It prays that whatever learned by teacher and taught be vibrant (Tejasvi) and we two not hate each other. This simple prayer reveals global model characteristics of the teacher and taught.

Then, begins the definition of Brahman. At the first instance itself it defines Brahman as Satyam, Jnanam, and Anantam meaning the Truth (Real), the Knowledge (Consciousness) and the Infinite (Endless). He who knows this attains all desires together. Here, Satyam stands for creation, protection, control and destruction. Jnanam reveals Brahman's (God's) knowledge of all in general and in minute details. Anantam conveys that the Brahman is endless in respect of space, time and other attributes. Thus the concept of Brahman (God) is explained in this first section. Having said the purpose or benefit of knowing Brahman, the Upaniṣad again begins to define Brahman. Now the Upaniṣad advances to extract what are segregated from Brahman. In other words what are born out of Brahman. From Brahman, Ether has come out. From this Ether Air is born. From Air Fire has come out. Waters have born out of this Fire. From the Waters the Earth is born. Plants (Vegetations) are produced from the Earth. From the Plants food is produced. From the Food, the human is born. Thus, this Human (Puruṣa) is the essence of Food. By this explanation, the process of creation is dealt with in detail.

FIVE PURUṢAS

In the second Anuvāka, the Upaniṣad speaks of the importance of Food. All Creatures are born from Food. This Food forms prominent among the nature. That is why it is known as the Medicament of All, meaning medicine for all disorders. The Beings sprout out from Food. All the produced live by Food. It is being eaten and eats, that is the reason it is known as Annam (Food). As the Puruṣa is the essence of Anna and in this Puruṣa, there is another Self. By this, he becomes complete. He is a replica of this Puruṣa. He becomes that Puruṣa. He conjoins with that as replica. Three kinds of Air become his parts. Prāna, Vyāna and Apāna become head, right and left wings (hands). Ether is his Self. The Earth is his tail. Thus, concludes this Anuvāka.

Then the Upaniṣad explains Prānamaya Puruṣa, who is full of Prāna. It further proceeds to present Manomaya Puruṣa, who is full of Thought-Stuff, then Vijñanamaya Puruṣa, who is full of Intelligence. The parts of these two Puruṣas are named and end the third and fourth Anuvākas. Then, Ānandamaya Puruṣa, who is full of Bliss is explained; whose parts also convey the meaning of Ānanda (Bliss). Love is his head, joy is his right and delight is his left, Ānanda (Bliss) is the self and Brahman is his tail. Here ends this fifth Anuvāka.

In the next Anuvāka, the nature of Brahman is defined at micro level that needs to be concentrated for further thinking or research. He (Brahman) is not-being, if you know that not-being is Brahman. If you know that being is Brahman, then you can understand that Being is Brahman. The Upaniṣad continues to explain the process of creation. The Brahman wished that I become many and born. He did penance, having undergone penance, He created all this. Having created this, he penetrated into that. Having entered, He converted into Being and beyond. He became definite and indefinite, the abode and the non-abode, and the conscious and non-conscious. The Real and false become Real. Whatever is this is said as reality. Thus, having described the state of the Brahman in a meticulous and mystic way, this Anuvāka concludes.

The subsequent Anuvāka is treated as most important as this Anuvāka is being interpreted by various schools of philosophies according to their doctrine. This Anuvāka explains that Non-Being was existed first, from this Being is born. Non-Being made itself as Being. That is the reason that this action (of Non-Being) is said to be Good Deed or Self-cause. That is Good Deed (Self-cause) and that is quintessence (Rasa). Having obtained this quintessence, he became blissful.

ĀNANDA OF BRAHMAN

In the subsequent eighth Anuvāka, the distinctiveness of Brahman is described. It is described that with the fear, the Air blows, and the Sun rises. The Fire, the Moon and the Death – the fifth runs. Then, the Upaniṣad continues to explain Bliss of various creatures in multiples of hundred folds from Human, Human-Fairies (Mānuṣagandharvas), Celestial-Fairies (Deva-Gandharva), Ancestors, Gods born in Ajāna (Ajāna is the world just above the Ancestors' world), Deed-Gods (Karma-Devas), Gods (Devas), Indra, Bṛhaspati, Prajāpati, and Brahman. Thus, this Anuvāka concludes with the hundred-fold Bliss of Prajāpati is one Ānanda (Bliss) of Brahman. Then Upaniṣad goes on to explain that the Puruṣa who is in human is the same that who is in Āditya (Sun). Then it explains conjoining process from Prānamaya through Ānandamaya. The Upaniṣad, in the next Anuvāka speaks of Ānanda is Brahman. Who knows this that Ānanda is Brahman, attains Brahma Ānanda. Here, concludes the Brahma Ānanda Vallī, the second chapter.

BHṚGU VALLĪ – THE THIRD CHAPTER

The third chapter Bhṛgu Vallī narrates how Bhṛgu – son of Varuṇa (Rain God) realized Brahman by his repeated penance with the guidance of his father. Bhṛgu approached his father Varuṇa to know the Brahman. Varuṇa asked him to put his efforts to know first wherefrom these Beings are originated, that (source) is Brahman. Bhṛgu did penance (concentrate) and having did penance (concentrated) knew that Annam (Food) is Brahman as all the Beings originate from Annam (Food). Having known Anna (Food) is Brahman, he again approached his father to teach him Brahman. Varuṇa told him to know Brahman by penance. Again he did penance and knew that Prāna (Life) is Brahman. Repeatedly he was asked to know Brahman by penance. Bhṛgu also did penance and knew Manas (Mind) is Brahman at the third instance, and then he came to know that Vijñanam (Intelligence) is Brahman, at last, he knew by his penance that Ānanda (Ultimate Bliss) is Brahman. Ānanda is attaining Ultimate Reality by penance and attaining the Ultimate Bliss is known as Bhārgavī-Vāruṇī method or technique to realize Brahman.

IMPORTANCE OF ANNAM

In the successive Anuvākas, the greatness of Anna (Food) is being instructed. Do not condemn Anna. Practice it as a Vow. The connection between Prāna and Annam and Body and Annam is explained. Here, the relation between one who has Annam and one who consumes Annam is being emphatically described. And that Annavān is great by progeny, cattle and eminence in Ultimate Truth (Brahmavarca). He also becomes great by reputation. Then the relation between Annam and Waters and Fire (Jyotiṣ) are explained. Subsequently, the Upaniṣad instructs for producing more Annam (Food). Practice it as a Vow. The Earth is Annam and Annāda (Eater of Food) is Ether. The Ether is established in the Earth and the Earth is established in the Ether. And Annam is established in Annam. Who knows this is established well. The next Anuvāka instructs about the model behaviour to be adopted. Do not ignore or neglect any one in the place of abode. Practice it as a Vow. And in whatever way get Annam abundantly. Then, the Upaniṣad teaches the human orders. Welfare in speech, gain and welfare in Prāna and Apāna, action in hands, movement in legs, and discharge in anus are the human orders. Then, order of the Gods is enumerated. Satisfaction in Rain, Strength in Lightening, Fame in Cattle, Light in the Stars, Procreation, Immortal and Joy in Genitals and all these in Ether.

ĀNANDAMAYA SELF

The Upaniṣad furthers contemplations. Worship him as Established, you become Established. Worship him as Great, you become Great. Worship him as Mind (Thought), you become Mind. Worship him as Bow, all desires bow before you. Worship him as Brahman (Supreme), you become the Possessor of Brahman (Supreme). Worship him as Destructor, all around you who hate die and those whom do not like. Further, the Upaniṣad speaks of the fruits of this knowledge as he who knows this, departing this

world and gradually attains from Annamaya, to Prāṇamaya, Manomaya, Vijnānamaya and at the end Ānandamaya Self. Such person passing through these worlds having desired food, taking desired form, sits singing this Sama (Song) – Ah! Ah! Ah! I am Food, I am Food, I am Food. I am Food-eater, I am Food-eater, and I am Food-eater. I am the combiner, I am the combiner, and I am the combiner. I am the first-born of this ṛta (Real). Prior to Gods, (I was) the axis of immortal. Who gives me, certainly he saves. I, the Food eat who eats Food. I ruin the whole Being. (I am) the Radiance, as the Sun. Thus the Upaniṣad ends with this Sāma Gāna. Here, ends the third chapter – Bhṛgu Vallī with a concluding not – who knows thus and thus the Upaniṣad.

CONCLUSION

This Taittirīya Upaniṣad plays an important role in describing Brahman. That is the reason all the schools of philosophies depend on this Upaniṣad. Various Ācāryas have interpreted the sentences of this Upaniṣad in their own unique way to establish their doctrines. The Upaniṣad as it is heard and protected by oral tradition cannot have different meaning. However, one cannot prevent the interpreter from defining and unearthing the meaning as per their reasoning, intelligence and understanding. Thus, this Upaniṣad also as in the case other Veda Vākyas gives scope for various interpretations.

It is up to the reader or learner with inquisitiveness who seeks explanations to arrive at his or her own conclusion without deviating from the core meaning of the Upaniṣad. However, various commentaries, interpretations, and translations certainly help in the process of understanding the central theme of the Upaniṣad. Yet, one must be careful that he or she is not taken away by these and stands as per own thinking and judgement.

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