

Kathopanishad
Shibir 5 Summary
Pravachan 4 (27.8.22)

Please Note: This is an English summary of the pravachan by a seeker, Rimaben Dhanky and has been uploaded here for the benefit of the English reader.

At the end of the 9th shlok, it was said that you can attain Vishnupad - liberation by undertaking the journey of discernment – it is an inner journey and it won't happen with walking from place to place. Who is the superior one - identification with which, begets only spiritual welfare? Identification with that should be the seeker's ultimate goal. Which is that subtlest and most superior substance - the pure nature of the self which gives eternal boundless bliss.

The next two shloks/ mantras are technical. What is that pure soul like? Who can attain it? What should be the material and instrumental causes for that? These are the considerations of the three shloks after that.

Shlok 10-11

Beyond the senses are the sense objects; beyond these objects is the mind; beyond the mind is the intellect and beyond the intellect is the great Self.

Beyond the great (mahat) is the unmanifested (avyaktam). Beyond the avyaktam (prakruti) is the Purush; beyond the Purush there is nothing; that is the end; that is the highest goal.

What is the supreme most? The most superior? There has been much fascination for the mind-intellect relationship, but don't stop at setting the intellect right - beyond that lies a substance in which you have to abide.

There are five factors that determine which substance is superior and they are described in the scriptures.

1. That which is subtle having less physical properties is superior.
2. That which is greater and has more important functions is superior.
3. That which is nearer is superior.
4. That which is the cause is superior.
5. That which is the controller is superior.

If you base your practice of spiritual pursuits on philosophy they will become tatvik, leading to understanding the fundamentals. Else they will only remain satvik – good, but temporary.

Let us take all the entities from the metaphor of the chariot and determine their superiority.

1. Sense objects are subtler than senses. That is, the objects of sound, touch etc. are subtler than senses. Logically we would think that senses are subtler than sense objects. But understand it this way: Sense objects reign over the senses. Here, sense object does not mean the physical objects, it is the impression of the object within you. What is bigger, the Taj Mahal or the photo of it? The Taj naturally. However, you have believed the impression of the Taj Mahal within you to be the Taj Mahal. That is subtler than the senses themselves. If otherwise occupied, the object may not even be registered, it makes no impression on you. So by sense objects, here what is meant is the impression of the objects formed in the mind.

The sense object is superior as it has the potential to distract the senses. Those sense objects control the senses, restrain them, and drag them away. The sense objects have all five physical attributes, but each sense can pick only one, so the sense objects are superior. These attributes may be beyond the range of the senses to catch, but machines can catch them, e.g. X-ray. Dogs have a more acute sense of smell, you can see some at the airport to catch drug trafficking. That is why sense objects are superior. Thus, senses have limitations but there is no limitation when it comes to sense objects. E.g. A villager visits a city for the first time. He sees some prettily attired mannequins in several shops. Though made of plaster of paris, he is so enamored by them that he keeps staring at them while walking and falls into a ditch. Therefore, the sense objects are superior than the senses.

2. Beyond the sense object is the mind. The supporter of the impression is the mind; thus, it is greater. Yet the senses cannot see it and sense objects cannot grasp it, so it is more subtle. The mind is nearer - cause and controller as it is at its command that the senses go towards sense objects. Mind is like the ocean, waves are the impressions. Where these impressions fall, that becomes superior. In the absence of the mind, even if the senses come in contact with the sense objects they will not know of them? This

happens during sleep. If the mind is not awake, there is zero interaction. If you are travelling from Dubai to Los Angeles, for example, you face jetlag. At that time, the mind is not awake and there is zero interaction. But otherwise, when the mind is awakened, it controls the sense objects. Therefore, the mind is superior. The mind is the knower (jnata) of the sense objects. The sense objects are its objects of knowledge (jney). The mind knows the sense objects but the sense objects do not know the mind. The mind is created from subtle five elements, while the sense objects are created from gross five elements.

3. Beyond the mind is the intellect. Here, intellect is the knower (jnata) and the mind is the object of knowledge (jney). The intellect knows the mind - its tendencies, impurities, etc. It is the controller of the mind. Mind is the clerk. It collects all the information, documents it, and sends the data to the intellect. The mind can be caught by psychology but intellect is subtler than the mind, so psychology cannot catch it as an energy or substance. This way the intellect is superior than the mind.

The inclination to discriminate between the self and the non-self -bhedjnan is very sensitive. For that, dispassion and subtlety have to be very much intact. Maulikji religiously adhered to the ajna of doing one thing at a time. E.g. While exercising, only exercise. Do not exercise and do bhakti together. However, abidance in this requires constant persistent practice, till it becomes your virtue and happens effortlessly.

It is of utmost importance to understand that discrimination between the self and non-self alone is dharma. Nothing else is dharma. And this discrimination you can do anywhere, anytime. The intellect evaluates, analyses, decides and dispatches the message to the mind that go and tell that particular sense not to drink that juice. The mind governs the execution.

4. Beyond the intellect is jeevatma - contaminated soul or worldly soul. Because of the atma- soul, you can know the senses, sense objects, mind, and intellect. Beyond Jeevatma, there is Parmatma – the supreme soul. The

virtue of knowledge in the soul is great. The soul as a substance is more superior than the modification of the soul.

There are three states of the soul. Bahiratma – outwardly focused soul, antaratma – inwardly focused soul and parmatma – pure soul. The soul was always pure, is pure, and will remain pure. The state of the soul has to become pure now. Jivatma is contaminated and reflected consciousness. You have to go towards pure consciousness.

Purush – This means the one who is lying in the place of the body. The pure soul remains in a witnessing mode and is not a doer or enjoyer.

In the game of cricket, an umpire is there. This umpire does not take any runs, or wickets, or does not do anything physically. Still, the match cannot be started without him. Even if the whole audience says that the player is out, if the umpire says that he is not out, the audience will have to sit quietly. The same thing happens with the soul. You should listen to 24 Tirthankar and not your thousands of friends. Even if the whole world says that there is happiness outside, do not listen to them, listen to what Param Krupalu Dev has said, “There is no happiness outside.”

There is no one superior to the purush- pure soul. There is nothing beyond that, so have oneness with the pure soul. If you connect with the pure soul, you will get liberated. You have done all the activities in the world. But once you attain self-realisation - purush prapti, you will feel great and satisfied.

Continue doing bhedjnan- discriminate between the self and the non-self. Whatever you can see, all those things are the objects of your knowledge- jney. You are the subject- jnata. Go on discarding all the layers one after the other like an onion, the one that remains at the end, **which cannot be destroyed is you. How can you attain this purush?**

Shlok 12:

This Atman is hidden in all beings and does not shine forth, but is seen by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellect.

To attain self-realisation or the pure soul is our only aim. It should be your only option. You should know the soul, remain engrossed in it, and abide in it. Your faith

should be so strong that your focus keeps turning towards the soul, that is samyag darshan – right faith, it knows - realises the soul, that is samyag jnan -right knowledge, and abides over there, which is samyag charitra- right conduct.

The pure soul is unchanging, unborn, and it has eternal bliss within. This soul abides in everyone. Still, it is so subtle, concealed, and hidden that it cannot be grasped.

One wants to be free from identification with the body and abide in ‘Aham Brahmasmi’- I am the soul, I am Brahman. When you abide in Aham Brahmasmi, you are liberated while living. Only then, your spiritual practice will be completed, when the feeling of duality is eliminated.

How can you grasp hidden, concealed, and subtle soul? The Enlightened One asks you a question, “Who told you that the soul is hidden? I can experience it. The soul can be concealed but it is not hidden.” When you see a rope in darkness, you feel it is a snake. When you switch on the light, you realise that it was a rope. The rope was not concealed but because of the darkness of your ignorance and attachment, you felt that it was a snake.

You are totally different from the dharma -functions of the body. When you see some gold ornaments, you see their designs and not gold. When you go to sell those ornaments, the goldsmith looks at gold and not the design. The design in this example is your illusion and real gold is the pure substance. In a garland, there are multi-coloured flowers. But it does not mean that the thread does not exist in the garland. The thread is the one that keeps all the flowers together in the garland. Since you are looking at flowers, you are not seeing the thread behind it. You need to make your intellect subtler. You have identified with the body, mind, and senses. You are always existing and the soul is always manifested.

When you go home, do not get too engrossed in your role, do not deviate. You are the supreme soul. You are liberation incarnate. The Enlightened One does not feel that the soul is subtle or non-manifested. He feels that the invisible has become visible now.

The person who does not have a Guru (naguro) will find this process very difficult. He will not understand sadhan chatusthay- The four means of the practice of sadhan chatusthaya are as follows:

1. Discrimination or viveka
2. Non-attachment or vairagya
3. Six virtues or shatsampati
4. Longing or mumukshuta

When the person does not have satsang in life, if he is not practising experimentation, he feels that the soul is difficult to attain. Those who have attained satsang, sadhan chatushtay, and are seekers can immediately catch the soul. If your intellect has become sharp and subtle, you can do bhedjnan. Your intellect can be sharpened with inner purity. With this inner purity, there is no confusion. The preparatory stage should be strong to attain inner purity. All the Enlightened Ones say, “Your preparedness should be excellent.” You need to practice meditation. You need to have only one desire- liberation. There should be no desire for LAPP – Lakshmi-wealth, adhikar- power, parivar- family, and prashansa- appreciation.

You do not need a great I.Q. or street smartness for attaining self-realisation. You only need inner purity. Bacteria are subtle but can be seen in the microscope. You need to make your intellect subtler to know the soul. Sharpen your intellect. Till the mind is wandering, the intellect will remain deprived. You need to withdraw from everywhere. If your horses-senses are tamed, trained, and disciplined, your attention will go towards the pure soul.

You do not need to be street smart or very intelligent academically. Jesus was the son of a carpenter and look at His state of being! Ramkrishna Paramhansa had studied up to grade 2 but today Ramkrishna Mission is there in the whole world. Narsinh Mehta failed in maths but he passed in spiritual maths. Morari Bapu failed in class 10 and today he is renowned ‘kathakar’. Kabir and Nanak did not have street smartness. All these Enlightened Ones had inner purity even if they did not have scriptural knowledge.

If your I.Q. is good and you have purity too, you can become an Acharya. Acharya establishes the path, that continues for thousands of years. If you have only purity, you are a saint. If you only have intelligence, you are an idiot.

The scientist dissects things to find something new. The seeker connects his inclinations to the higher to manifest something from within. There is a similarity between true love and meditation. In both things, you forget the body, there are no impure feelings meaning no foreign elements. The Enlightened One remembers the soul and has awareness of the soul too because of His purity.

Make your intellect sharp. Have inner purity. There should be only fire and no smoke should be there. The fire of knowledge can be caught with this purity. The one whose intellect within has become sharp, he can attain self-realisation.