

**Kathopanishad**  
**Shibir 5 Summary**  
**Pravachan 1 (24.8.22)**

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.

There is a beautiful waterfall near Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh. Tourists from all over India and the world come to see it. The river flows into a steep fall creating a mist. This is a beautiful scene. A European tourist was watching it and taking photographs of it from the other hill. Suddenly, he saw a dead body flowing in the river and an eagle was eating its flesh sitting on that body. The tourist saw that the eagle kept looking at the river and knew that if the body reached the edge, it would fall, and the eagle itself would die. But it still felt it could eat a little more flesh. But in the last segment, the flow is very swift and finally, the dead body and the bird were just sucked into the whole thing and torn into fragments.

The flow of time is just the same. Time flows like the river, the bird is like the worldly soul, the body and the sensual pleasures related to it are like the dead body, and the worldly soul can fly away any time it wants but because of the greed of enjoying a little more, it cannot leave its desires, and then it becomes miserable. Everything happens due to ignorance. Ignorance begets desires, and desires make you miserable.

The non-living, material things can neither give happiness nor make you miserable. Because of ignorance, you are superimposing everything. You get attracted to material things, then get attached to them. The Enlightened One says that you are strange, adding your own sugar to your coffee, and then saying that coffee is sweet.

When a piece of paper is printed upon in a press and \$ 100 is written over it, you take it as \$ 100 as an ignorant soul. But the Enlightened One sees it as a piece of paper. When there is demonetisation of that note, the same note is seen as a piece of paper by you too. The Enlightened One always saw it as a piece of paper.

All souls aspire for eternal happiness and that too peacefully without any fear. The ignorant person goes towards momentary, worthless and false things. He expects a bar of chocolate and runs after a piece of cake. The chocolate is sweet everywhere, whereas, only the icing on the cake is sweet, the rest is bland. Even chocolate cannot

give you happiness. That is not its characteristic, but you have your projection in it out of delusion.

The Enlightened One talks about five things.

1. Material things should only be seen, they should not be tasted. They are the knowledge of the knower. Your illusion of happiness in it is also imagination. What brings unhappiness in the end is not real happiness.
2. Anandghanji Maharajsaheb had written, “Asha auran ki kya kije, jnan sudharas piye.” Why do you expect something from others? Drink the nectar of knowledge. Then he gave a beautiful example of a dog, where a dog goes from door to door for a piece of bread and only gets contempt from everywhere. Your inner state is just the same. You undergo many troubles, etc. but you keep asking for things from the world in the hope of becoming happy. When the dog gets a piece of bread, it is scared that the other dog should not come and snatch its bread away. You also have worries that whatever you have earned should not be snatched away by someone. You are scared and tense about where to keep the money after earning.
3. You are scared and tense even after getting desired things. You are always worried about the separation of that thing even when you have it. You are miserable even while having that thing and are not able to ‘enjoy’ it fully. Once your meritorious karma is over, you will be losing it forever and at that time, you become more miserable than before, when you never had that thing. When fevicol of meritorious karma gets over, you will be separated from that desired thing.
4. When you get a piece of bread, you try for another piece of bread. When you benefit from something, you become greedier.
5. When you get a piece of bread and someone else also gets a piece of bread, you start getting jealous and comparing yourself with him. You need to drink the nectar of knowledge.

If you continue to have these impure tendencies, how has satsang helped you? It is not possible to annihilate impure tendencies at once, but with the help of satsang, you need to weaken them. Your tendencies of the mind should get the right direction. If you write a proper address on a letter, the letter will reach the destination fast. If you

make some mistakes, you may wander a little, but you have the clarity, thus at most it may reach a little later. But if you write the wrong address, the letter will never reach its destination. The right address is the Lotus Feet of the Enlightened One and all your tendencies should reach and settle at His Lotus Feet.

If you label your history book as a geography book, your teacher is going to punish you for bringing the wrong book. You project your ideas on things, get attracted, get attached, have many thoughts, and finally, when you do not get what you expected, you have tears in your eyes. Now it is high time that you know the right address. Even if your mind is wandering, you should bring it to settle at the Lotus Feet of the Enlightened One. After years of satsang, if you are clear about this, good.

The Enlightened One says that through the preaching, determine the fundamental truth, and practice to focus inwards. Do this much to make your life a success. Understand the nature of the soul and the method of self-realisation from Him, then follow the right practice. A true businessman will not consider his bank balance to be his true wealth. He will work out his debit and credit against how much money he has in his account and accordingly know his true worth. If he has 7 crore rupees and his debt is 8 crore rupees, he won't say that he has 7 crore rupees. He is clear that he has to pay his debt before counting his total amount as profit. The Enlightened One says that you should minus the body, mind, anger, etc. and then look at your pure, peaceful, blissful, and powerful self.

You have love and faith for the Enlightened One but you have not attained self-realisation. Now with His preaching, understand about the soul, make your awareness focus inwards and stabilise there. When you switch the button of a torch on, the bulb of the torch gets lit. But if you switch the button off, what happens? All the energy goes into the cells. In exactly the same way, so far, your mind and senses take away your energy, you need to have the awareness to focus within and channelise your entire energy there. What should you do to practise focusing inward? In Kathopanishad, with the metaphor of a chariot, the soul, five senses, mind, intellect, sense objects, etc.; how to turn within will be explained. The initial and the final experience of turning within will be different.

When you were small, you waited for your school vacation. When you went to college, you wanted to go there every day, even if there were no lectures. In the same way, in the beginning, you would want to skip your spiritual practice of bhakti,

scriptural studies, meditation, etc. for a day, you may not be able to balance out things on the supreme path but as you go deeper, you will feel that you cannot do without them even for a minute.

When a child falls and gets hurt, you do not worry much, as that is a part of growing up. When you were learning to cycle, you fell many times. Once you learned it, you could go anywhere without a problem. Energy follows interest. You should increase your liking for the company of the Enlightened One. Swadhyay- scriptural studies is also a type of austerity. Get connected with it with a lot of joy and concentration, which also purifies your soul. Do not have an illusion that if you do not eat, you will be able to shed many karmas. Do not encourage your greediness for food in the name of swadhyay. Tattvarth Sutra says, 'There is more shedding of karma in doing swadhyay than fasting, as swadhyay has a long-lasting effect.' If you pursue your spiritual practice without getting affected by hindrances, you can gain success.

As a human being, you can understand it in a better way and attain the ultimate. As a human being, Paryushan Mahaparva is like the spring season. Take its support and take one more shot at inward focus. Clear your understanding and make your thoughts and feelings stronger. If one of the thoughts or feelings becomes stronger, you will be able to attain success. Your Paryushan has become joyful, now, make it worthwhile. Make the austerity of swadhyay stronger.

There are two adhyay - sections of Kathopanishad. Every section has three vallis - chapters. We have already done two vallis of the first section and during Paryushan, we will complete the third valli, which means we will complete half of this scripture. There are 17 shloks in this valli. This valli is also called 'Sadhana valli'- a chapter for spiritual practice. Till the second valli of the first section, we saw the ultimate aim of the soul. The third valli will talk about restraint, inward focus, method of self-realisation, and how to attain it. There are a lot of instructions in this valli. You will get practical methods for restraint, self-realisation, and experience of non-duality.

The first two shloks - verses are very philosophical. Based on this philosophy, a practical method will be shown in the next 15 shloks. The first two shloks are very different. You may or may not understand them. They have a philosophical and metaphysical touch to them.

Valli 3:

### Shlok 1

**The two who enjoy the fruits of their good works being seated in the cavity of the heart, the seat of the Supreme, the knowers of Brahma call them ‘shadow and light’; as also the performers of the fivefold - fire and those who have propitiated three times the Nachiketa fire.**

All the Enlightened Ones – spiritualistic and ritualistic people agree with this mantra. Here ‘rutam’ means fruits of karma and pibantau means the enjoyer of karma in the cave of the heart. The soul is enduring the fruits of karma while sitting in the cave of intellect-heart. The law of karma says that every action has a reaction. If you think or do something knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, publicly or privately, you will have to endure the fruits of that karma. You reap what you sow.

In Sanskrit grammar, there is singular - ekvachan, dual - dwivachan, and plural - bahuvachan. Here dwivachan is used. It is about two entities. In the cave of intellect-heart, two entities endure the fruits of karma. The soul is the doer and enjoyer. It is in the cave of intellect- the heart. Who are these two entities?

1. Jivatma - the entangled soul, who is the enjoyer of karma.
2. Parmatma - the supreme soul, who is the witness of karma but appears to be an enjoyer of the fruits of karma.

In Mandukya Upanishad, there is a story of two birds. On a tree, there is a bird sitting on the lower branch, and another bird sitting on the higher branch. The bird sitting on the lower branch is eating a fruit; the bird sitting on the higher branch is not eating the fruit and is not enjoying its taste but is just a witness. The bird sitting on the lower branch is unhappy, the bird sitting on the higher branch is happy. Once, the bird sitting on the lower branch glanced at the bird sitting at the higher branch.

Now, let us look at the same story with a different version. The bird on the lower branch is jivatma – the entangled soul and the bird on the upper branch is parmatma- supreme soul. Actually, two entities are only not there. Only one entity

is there. Jivatma means the entangled soul who is conscious about his body, mind, and intellect. It stays in the heart and endures the fruits of karma.

In Nyay, there is one Nyay called 'Chhatri Nyay'. When five people are sharing an umbrella, they will be called an umbrella group. When the group of people is walking with a person in orange clothes, the group will be called an orange group. When a person is cooking and others are just chatting with her in the kitchen, still, they say that they all cooked food.

The witness and enjoyer are one soul only. The entangled soul is an endurer and the supreme soul is the witness, the supreme soul always remains a witness. The pure soul substance is not the enjoyer of the fruits of karma, the modification of the soul is the enjoyer of the karma. The worldly soul and supreme soul are non-dual. Relatively speaking, we say that they are different because we see the soul having attachments and aversions but it is only there in the modifications.

Two words are used in this shlok - shadow, and light. There is a form and a shadow. There is the sun and the reflection of the sun. The image of pure self is reflected as consciousness and shadow is reflected as a contaminated state of the soul. On one hand, there is the wandering mind (chittvrutti), and on the other, pure consciousness (Chaitanya satta) is there. Basically, Jivatma is Paramatma with worldly entanglements. If a red flower is kept next to the clear crystal, you will feel that the crystal is red. Electricity plus gadget is equal to television. When you fill the coloured water bottle, you feel that the water is also coloured. In the same way, with the special characteristics of the body, mind, and intellect, you feel that you are the worldly soul. Actually, Parmatma - the supreme soul passing through the mind is jivatma. Jivatma and Paramatma have opposite characteristics. The pure substance is permanent and the impure modification is temporary.

When you talk about these two in a fundamental way, it is one only, they are not separate. The body, mind, and intellect are jivatma. A character plus a role is equal to an actor. Your character remains permanently but your role keeps changing, it is temporary. Due to your ignorance, you feel that you are the body and you are enjoying it. Actually, the modification of the soul is enduring the fruits of karma but you say that the whole soul substance is enjoying the fruits of karma, that's why you say that two entities are enjoying it - but actually one is just a witness

When a robber goes to rob somewhere, he knows that he is a robber going to rob and he robs as well. This knowledge of the knower is spirituality.

You have an association between I and my. Thus, you fail to believe that you are Pramatra. You always think that you are the entangled soul. The Enlightened One keeps trying to tell you that you are not 'the name associated with the body', you are a pure soul. do not associate yourself with your body, mind, and intellect. Do not say, "I am hungry, I am sick, I am angry" etc. You are always a pure, peaceful, blissful, and powerful soul. Do not use 'I' for the body.

You are a nirupadhik soul, who is free from passions or attachment. But you think that you are sopadhik soul - restricted by some conditions or limitations. That is what causes the duality. The pure soul and entangled worldly soul are like light and shadow. The shadow exists when there is an obstruction in the light. You are different from your modifications, you are not anger, pride, etc.

The light signifies Parmatra - the supreme soul. The shadow signifies jivatma - the entangled soul. A substance within you keeps knowing everything, it does not endure any fruits of karma. The light and shadow are one entity only and without the existence of light, the shadow cannot exist. The light is an independent entity, whereas the shadow is a dependent entity. The dependent personality is false. Independent personality is true. Vedanta speaks about non-duality only. You are beyond body, mind, and intellect, you are a pure soul. In Jainism you are one from the Absolute viewpoint and two from the Relative viewpoint.

You were born on 21<sup>st</sup> December as a husband (you got married on that day), but your actual date of birth is different from the date of your wedding. So, your title as a husband is an upadhi- a special characteristic or a role that you are playing. You may be a father to your son and a son to your father. But the constant is you and the one that is changing is not you. You are looking for a man as a husband. In the same way, out of ignorance, you are looking for the soul.

Ten people went for a picnic. They had to cross a river. After crossing the river, their leader counted and realised that one of the persons was missing. He counted three times over, but could not find the tenth person. He started crying that one of them drowned in the river. An Enlightened One was passing by and He helped the man count all ten, he had forgotten to count himself. What was lost to be

found? You are always a pure soul, how can you find the soul? You have only forgotten that you are the soul. Do not go to the Enlightened One saying that you found the soul, He will laugh at you.

A thief went to steal from the house of a policeman. He saw the uniform of the policeman and felt like wearing it. He wore it and inadvertently made some noise. The whole house got up and the real policeman was in a vest. He shouted that there was a thief in his house but the thief in the uniform of the policeman also shouted to find the thief. So the people went in the other direction to catch the thief. To catch the thief, his uniform has to be discarded. Look at the mirror of satsang and discriminate between the self and non-self to go towards the soul. Discard the body, mind, and intellect from you.

The pot and clay are the same, but when you focus on the name and shape, it is a pot, otherwise, it is clay. You may be a human being or an animal, but you are still a pure soul. The sky and the earth do not meet each other at the horizon. You think that two tracks will meet each other but they never meet. The sun never rises or sets. You only have an illusion, it is not true.

## **Shlok 2:**

**May we master that Nachiketa fire sacrifice which is the bridge for those who perform sacrifices, and also which is the highest immortal Brahma, fearless and the other shore for those who wish to cross the ocean of sansar.**

Now there will be a discussion on 'Jnanyog'- the path of knowledge. The Rishi says that before starting this jnanyog, he wants to pray. This mantra is a prayer. He is praying to God, "Bless us that all our auspicious or good activities are the source of self-realisation" Here Nachiketa fire is the symbol of good or auspicious activities. He wants to be powerful to make sure that every auspicious activity is done with the right purpose and he can cross over the ocean of transmigration. He should attain self-realisation in the end.

The main aim of this prayer is to attain the grace of the Parmatma- supreme soul.

'I bow to paramananda Madhava, whose grace transforms the dumb into a speaker and makes the lame climb the mountain. I remember and admire this grace flowing from Madhava's expression of supreme bliss.'



The Rishi has faith in the Lord. He prays that without the grace of God, nothing can be done. May we master that Nachiketa fire sacrifice which is the bridge for those who perform sacrifices, and also which is the highest immortal Brahma, fearless, and the other shore for those who wish to cross the ocean of sansar. He says that all our austerities, swadhyay - scriptural studies, and meditation should become a bridge for our self-realisation.

Can Brahma - self-realisation be achieved with rituals? No. You cannot attain self-realisation with rituals alone. The rituals can only prepare you for the purity of the mind but they never let you get rid of your identification with the body. You keep saying that you are fasting today, etc.

Your mind should become calm, sharp, and concentrated. Rituals will prepare you for the purity of the mind. But when you contemplate on the soul, then only, you can attain self-realisation. You want to go on pilgrimage, do snatra pooja, and read new scriptures, but with all these things, you cannot get rid of your identification with the body.

‘O God, please help us to build a bridge through our rituals.’ When you perform these rituals with the right purpose, then you can make a bridge, otherwise, it will remain a road only which will not connect to Brahma. You are busy with your good activities. The bridge means you have to go beyond your chanting, austerities, books, etc. Guru will take away everything from you when you are eligible and ready to build the bridge. The support of the Enlightened One should help you to build the bridge. When you are lower in religion, you are ritualistic. When you go higher, you become spiritualistic.

You are always happy with the foundation, you need to build a tower now. If you have to remember God in your activities, all your rituals are of no use. You need to make a bridge of bhedjnan - discrimination between the self and non-self. There is no negation of rituals here. Nachiketa Agni is an example of it, but with that fire, you need to build a bridge for self-realisation. There is no negation or stopping of rituals, but do not stop at the rituals, go ahead towards the pure. Dance with love and joy, but without going beyond the body, you cannot attain self-realisation. You should be

aware that while doing snatra pooja, you are worshipping the Lord with water, but water actually never touched Him.

When you listen to the Enlightened One, you feel that you want to do this only. But you should do your rituals with an aim, awareness, bhakti, and faith. It should become a bridge for self-realisation.

Many times, you feel that if you do not have to do auspicious or good work, do you have to do something bad? No, the Enlightened Ones never ask you to fall, they always want you to get elevated. You should go from good to pure. They do not ask you to consume poison to leave a bitter medicine.

In Mokshmargprakashak, an example is given, where a man is happily giving 100 Rupees to a policeman because the policeman had asked for 500 Rupees and he convinced him for 100 Rupees. He is happy that he saved 400 Rupees. Similarly, the joy is having safeguarded yourself from the inauspicious not that you should stop at the auspicious.

The steps leading to the terrace are like a bridge. They should be followed. You have to get rid of your external activities and go within, practice going within, and focus inwardly. You need 1. Introspection 2. Contemplation 3. Meditation for the same. Add these three things to your auspicious activities and with the ajna of the Guru, you will be able to succeed. It will be slow, but have patience, do not stop in between.

A small plane is going at the speed of 300 miles per hour. Suddenly, it is caught in the storm also moving at 300 miles an hour in the opposite direction, and the pilot is not able to move ahead even though the engine of the plane is working. You also get stuck like this. You love your auspicious activities. There is a difference in the belief. The Enlightened One talks about doing things for a spiritual purpose and you like good activities for the sake of it. The Enlightened One is not interested in increasing the 'count' of His auspicious activities. He only wants to abide in the self.

Banarasidasji was from Agra and he was a good chess player. King Akbar called him when he wanted to play chess. Once Banarasidasji won and Akbar asked him to ask for a boon. Banarasidasji requested, "Next time, please do not call me for this game, I am engrossed in Samaysaar, I am only thinking about the soul." He wrote Natak Samaysaar. The Enlightened One does not like heaven, He feels that it is a jail for

Him. All the luxuries are also like a jail for Him. You have to leave the shore and build the bridge. The pot can be made of gold or copper, but if you want to get rid of its burden, you have to keep it aside. To attain liberation, you have to get rid of good and bad activities and go towards the pure. There is no negation of rituals but do not stop there.