

Kathopanishad
Shibir 5 Summary
Pravachan 5 (28.8.2022)

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.

We are doing the first adhyay of Kathopanishad. The 14th mantra of the third valli is very famous, it is widely quoted, and it is not possible that someone talks about the nature of the soul, and he does not mention this mantra. This is a very famous mantra amongst Vedantis. It is a clarion call for all spiritual seekers. Clarion call means a strong request, when we talk in terms of Rishis, it is a strong command (ajna) from them. Clarion actually means the sound of the trumpet.

Shlok 14:

Arise! Awake! Having reached the great (Teachers) learn (realise that Atman). Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path, difficult to cross and hard to tread – thus say the wise.

We will start to understand this shlok from ‘**tat kavayo vadanti**’. The path is difficult to access, long, and difficult to comprehend too. But with the help of a self-realised Sadguru, you can start taking baby steps by holding His finger. When I asked Nemiji what he liked in yesterday’s satsang he said the part which stated - had you started five years back, this would not have been your state. Instead of slipping into impure feelings, I would have probably seen myself slip into the self; this is what he liked the most. **Tat kavayo vadanti:** The poets (kavi) have said so in the shlok mentioned above.

We can relate to this very much as earlier people used to call Param Krupalu Dev ‘Kavi’- Poet. Once they surrendered to Him, they started saying, “Sahebji or Krupanath.” He did not like anyone calling Him Gurudev, as He still adorned the garb of a householder. The word ‘Saheb’ was used in normal parlance by many people, so He was okay with it and the word ‘Krupanath’ did not specify whether He was a householder or a monk.

In this shlok, the word ‘Kavi’ is written for the Rishis, as they used to write their message in a poetic form. **Thus say the wise** is what is said in this line. This poet was a seer, self-realised, and abided in the self. This is not the emotional judgment of a devotee, but Rishis have experienced the self and then made this divine

proclamation. They cultivated these virtues and then made this divine proclamation.

When a commoner achieves something, he wants to share it with his near and dear ones. An apple fell on Newton's nose, he discovered the law of gravitation and told everyone about it. When Archimedes, who was Greek, discovered his principle, he was having his bath, he was so happy that he forgot his body, and ran out without his clothes to the king shouting "Eureka! Eureka!" I have discovered a new principle. If a commoner can be so happy, Rishis are extremely compassionate, so when they attained something divine, enraptured, they shared it with their near and dear ones, who were, for them, the whole world.

When you develop equanimity, you develop three virtues. 1. Dispassion. 2. Universal love and the feeling of oneness with all. 3. Remembrance of the self.

The poets are telling you out of their compassion about what the truth is, how it is, how you can attain it, how the path is, and what you should remember while walking on this path. Upanishad teaches you how to attain the spiritual kingdom. Rishis are inspiring you to make sure that you do not get into depression or despair while walking on this path.

Uttishthatah Jagratah - Arise! Awake! These were the favourite words of Swami Vivekananda. He used these words in almost all of his discourses. Arise! Awake! Stop not till the goal is reached – these words have become symbolic of Ramkrishna Mission, as if it is their motto or Mission statement. Why are these two similar words used over here? As if our Guru is saying to us who are rotting in the muck of sansar, "O soul, you are surrounded by ignorance. Get up from your deep sleep of ignorance and walk on the path of the Enlightened One quickly, and you will definitely attain the brilliant peak."

When you get up from your bed, you are not completely awake. You still want to sleep. We can see this in children the most. Then the mother asks the child to have his bath, he becomes fresh, and then he is completely awake.

When there is some accident in life or some near and dear one dies, you undergo temporary dispassion, and find the world impermanent and worthless; but you have not awakened. In a short time, you become 'normal' again.

Here the Rishi spoke about 'Uttishthatah' - Arise, it is upadanlakshi – focusing on the principal cause or primary cause. Then he speaks about 'jagratah' - Awake, it is nimitlakshi – focusing on the instrumental cause. You have to get up in dispassion and go towards the soul.

You are in a deep sleep of ignorance. You will feel that going towards the soul is something dry. You love the external factors, with which you are familiar and keep

doing 'me and mine' in them. You are in a dream state, you need to arise and awake. Now have dispassion, and rise from the sleep of ignorance and go towards the soul.

You love to listen to the talks of the soul and you are interested in it. But if you go towards the talks of self-abidance without subsidence and dispassion having become your nature, if you have not imbibed the preaching, the principle is not only futile but is harmful to you. You have to follow the protocol. Arise in dispassion and awaken in your soul.

The world might get cheated with your dress, not you. Awaken towards the ultimate reality. You have to awaken towards the pure soul. Keep thinking, contemplating, and reflecting on the soul.

Your mind is the reason for bondage and liberation. Today your mind is sleeping in spiritual slumber. You should realise that your thoughts, feelings, and activities are false, only then, you will not have an attachment to them. Worldly things are like leftover food or a dream.

Prapya varan nibodhatah: - Having reached the great (Teachers) learn (realise that Atman). When you listen to the Enlightened One talking about the soul, you should contemplate what He said. While you reflect on the nature of the soul, your thoughts about sense objects will become milder and you will attain self-realisation.

A person has to purify the mind to attain self-realisation. In all the other life forms (gati), it is difficult to attain self-realisation. Heaven is a bhogbhumi - where there is no scope for fresh endeavours, but where one has simply to enjoy the fruits of his past actions. In a hellish abode, one has to endure pain. Tiryanch gati – animal and plant beings, lack a developed mind and intellect. Only human beings have an opportunity to attain self-realisation after listening to the Enlightened Guru. Human beings have vichar shakti - power of cognition, ichchha shakti- the power of volition, will, vivek shakti- the power of discernment, smaran shakti – memory, kalpana shakti - power of imagination, etc. With satsang, it is polished and has become samyak - right. Do not waste your time. Arise and awaken from deep spiritual slumber. If you are sleeping and dreaming, what are your feelings? If you feel that you are in spiritual slumber, this preaching is for you. Arise in dispassion and awake towards self. Because ignorance is the seed of all suffering and miseries.

O, miserable creature! Turn your attention towards the divinity within you. 'Aham Brahmasmi'- I am Brahma, I am a soul. You are a pure peaceful soul. Your nature is knowledge. Your name and form are false, just projections, pots. Clay is the truth. The truth is the soul. A pot was not there before, it was made, stayed for some time, and it will be destroyed too. What was not there gets created from the

clay, is destroyed and again turns into clay. You call yourself the permanent one. But Aryan was born in the year 2000 and there will be his death date too. His existence is not eternal. The existence of the pot is also not eternal, that of the clay is. You should realise that the soul is eternal and not your body, beauty, family, etc., you should realise that whatever is not eternal is false. If you realise this much, you have awakened as a soul. Awaken towards your true nature. Do not associate yourself with temporary existence. You should remember that you are a pure, peaceful, powerful soul at least 24 times in 24 hours. Do not have attachments in the external factors. Arise is the preliminary state of purity of mind. Awake is the advanced state of awareness of the pure self.

The purity of mind will give you dispassion and awareness of the self will beget self-realisation. For **durgam pathas tat kavayo vadanti** - difficult to cross and hard to tread – thus say the wise, **Prapya varan nibodhatah** - having reached the great (Teachers) learn and realise that Atman is there. Arise and awaken by the satsangs of the Enlightened Masters. You will need a lot of strength; an indolent person cannot do this work. You should be doing it with a lot of joy and focus. “Harino marag chhe shurano, nahin kayarnu kaam jo ne.” – the path of God is for brave people and not for cowardly, weak ones.

You will have to prepare yourself for this bravery. You will need innocence like a child. If you try to manipulate, that will be an obstruction. You will also need the enthusiasm of youth, and the maturity and experience of an old person. You need enthusiasm and alertness. If you cannot remain that way, be in the association of the One who is enthusiastic and alert.

If you want to awaken, you need guidance from the Enlightened Masters. Varan means worthy of worship, wise, adorable, and self-realised. If you do not have supreme humility for the Enlightened One, from whom you want to attain this preaching, you will not awaken. You will have doubts and suspicions constantly. If you go against His preaching, you will not awaken. Approach, serve and seek His guidance. You should have love, faith, and surrendership for Him. You must accept whatever He has accepted. Become engrossed in devotion towards the Enlightened One. He should be Brahmanishtha - the one who abides in the self. His flow of experience, the flow of awareness, and the flow of conviction should be towards the soul. He should be shrotriya – shrotriya not only means the knowledge of scriptures, but He should also be able to read you like a book, and skilfully communicate with you because now, we want to experience self-realisation.

All the other lectures transfer knowledge but Guru’s discourse transforms you. You should make the investment of love, faith, and surrendership. If you have these three things, you will become like Pujya Shri Ambalalbai, otherwise, you will

remain Popatbhai Manji, who did not benefit despite having close association with Param Krupalu Dev. Do not look for anything else, only look for the Enlightened One's words. The Enlightened One is the only one who should be searched for in the world. Once you meet Him, do not wander anywhere. All 68 pilgrimages are at His Lotus Feet.

The German philosopher Nietzsche said, "Happiness is a myth, it is only an imagination. It is only a hope, it is only like less happiness or more happiness, there is nothing like infinite bliss." The Indian saints say that you can attain infinite and unobstructed bliss if you abide in the self. You must have dispassion, which will lead you to focus within, leading to abidance in the self. A German philosopher Kant spoke about the ultimate reality. He used to keep servants just to wake him up. Ouspenski has written a book on the first page of which he wrote, 'Dedicated to Gurdjieff, who awakened me from my sleep'. Once you awaken, everything in the world seems false.

You will need the Enlightened Guru. You need a Guru or teacher everywhere, including swimming or typing. Varan means the best. You need guidance at every step when you are learning. In spirituality, you need to explore and experiment, for which, you need guidance. To get rid of flaws and doubts, you need a living Guru. You cannot do with indirect - paroksh Guru like the scriptures. As you go within, you will realise that the path is becoming narrower, unknown, and mysterious. The Guru will tell you how to interpret your experience. You must hold His hand to go within as you will need guidance even at that time.

You cannot work with maps alone in the difficult hilly region. Your map is old and you can get the latest report about the roads from the local guide only, who may not be able to speak to you fluently in your language, he will tell you with his sign language. He is the most useful person. Guru may not be able to teach you through the scriptures, but He should have self-realisation to make you reach your destination. He should have experience and skills to keep you motivated. Such a living Guru can be found always, in all times, take His refuge. You should feel the need. With your imagination and scriptural studies, you will only learn theory. Eg. If you read that Shirshasan - headstand, a type of yoga posture is very good for health and it should be done for three minutes every day. You decide not to have a Guru and do it yourself. You decide to do it for 30 minutes on the night of the full moon. In this case, you will become insane and all the minute nerves and veins of your brain will snap. The book is still saying the same benefits of Shirshasan, but you will harm yourself.

The Guru speaks with His wakefulness, discrimination, and experience. The camel has the strong instinct to be the tallest, so the desert is the best place for it and not the Himalayas. The camel feels that it is the best in the desert. If you take the

camel somewhere else, it will die soon because its ego is destroyed in front of the mountains. You are so scared of Asadguru – charlatan that you are scared of having a Guru in life. You should check it out yourself whether he is a charlatan or a real Guru. If your yearning for liberation is stable, the charlatan will run away.

Kshurasya dhara nishita duratyaya - like the sharp edge of a razor is that path. The path is very difficult; it is like walking on a razor's edge. The path is narrow and difficult because of a few reasons. 1. The subject matter is subtle, so it is difficult. You can understand your senses and sense objects, and attachments immediately. You understand dispassion to some extent, but you find it a bit difficult. But the formless substance is very difficult for you to grasp. You have to be very attentive.

The pursuit of the triangle is not difficult if you have dispassion. If you go into the attachments, you won't even remember this pursuit. Therefore, adhere to your dispassion, for only he can turn within.

2. You think that you have knowledge of words, so you have self-realisation and become egoistic. You can grasp it well, you share it too with others but you are not eligible. The pacifier is made in such a way that it feels like a mother's bosom. The baby sucks this pacifier, he feels full but he does not get nourished. In the same way, you may know the words but without experience, you will lose out on your spiritual welfare. Bhagwan Mahavir remained in silence for twelve and a half years before omniscience.

3. There are temptations, fears, etc. due to your past impressions. You may not be able to stand against the force of your past impressions. You should know how to balance against fear and temptations, there should be no other mental disease of cravings. The abbreviation of **Tina** is **there is no alternative** but to attain the soul. It is not your priority, this is the only option. You should have only one desire, to attain self-realisation and harbour no other mental diseases or cravings. There is no scope for laziness, casual behaviour and confusion. You need cogent clarity regarding your means- sadhan and spiritual practice – sadhana. It is easier to walk on the edge of the sword than to walk on the path of Jineshwar Bhagwan, but it is worth walking on this path as you will attain infinite and unobstructed peace.

If you have to walk on the road and lose your balance, you will miss out on everything. You should never lose the connection with your Guru, nothing is more important than Him. The path is slippery and you need self-restraint and discipline. You should be so spiritual that your mind and senses should listen to your intellect.

People who find this path difficult have very gross intelligence (sadharan buddhi) and not subtle intellect. Vivekchudamani clearly says that if you do not have the wealth of Sadhan Chatustay, the four-fold attributes of discernment, dispassion,

etc., the path will be very difficult. If you have a subtle intellect, purity, and eligibility, the path is not difficult.

If you remain depressed and dejected by one failure, the path is very difficult. When you fail, do not go to the Guru for consolation, take your own time, and rise yourself. Otherwise, more than hurt, you will enjoy the attention you get from the Guru. **A mistake is not a mistake if you learn from it, if you learn from it, it is a lesson.**

A Guru makes your journey safe, He knows your future. If you fall, you will have to start from zero. The Guru makes your journey easy, enjoyable, and effortless. He is there to teach you the tricks of the trade. In Christianity, there is only devotion. In the path of liberation, you need devotion. Hold your Guru's hand and start walking.