

The Urban Well

The Mercy Seminar 2023, Term 1

Reading 1.6

The Taittiriya Upanishad

*May the Lord of day grant us peace.
May the Lord of night grant us peace.
May the Lord of sight grant us peace.
May the Lord of might grant us peace.
May the Lord of speech grant us peace.
May the Lord of space grant us peace.
I bow down to Brahman, source of all power.
I will speak the truth and follow the law.
Guard me and my teacher against all harm.
Guard me and my teacher against all harm.
OM shanti shanti shanti*

PART I

[4]

1 O Lord of Love, revealed in the scriptures,
Who have assumed the forms of all creatures,
Grant me wisdom to choose the path
That can lead me to immortality.
May my body be strong, my tongue be sweet;
May my ears hear always the sound of OM,
The supreme symbol of the Lord of Love,
And may my love for him grow more and more.

2 Lord, may I grow in spiritual wisdom,
And may I have food and clothes and cattle.
May students come to me from far and near,
Like a flowing river all the year;
May I be enabled to guide them all
To train their senses and still their minds;

3 May this be my wealth, may this be my fame.
O Lord of Love, may I enter into you,
And may you reveal yourself unto me,
The pure One masquerading as many.

You are the refuge of all devotees.
I am your devotee. Make me your own.

[8]

1 *OM* is the supreme symbol of the Lord.
OM is the whole. *OM* affirms; *OM* signals
The chanting of the hymns from the Vedas.
The priest begins with *OM*; spiritual teachers
And their students commence with *OM*.
The student who is established in *OM*
Becomes united with the Lord of Love.

[9]

To the Householder

1 Practice right conduct, learning and teaching;
Be truthful always, learning and teaching;
Master the passions, learning and teaching;
Control the senses, learning and teaching;
Strive for peace always, learning and teaching;
Rouse *kundalini*, learning and teaching;
Serve humanity, learning and teaching;
Beget progeny, learning and teaching.
Satyavacha says: “Be truthful always.”
Taponitya says: “Master the passions.”
Naka declares: “Learning and teaching are
Necessary for spiritual progress.”

[10]

1 “I have become one with the tree of life.
My glory rises like the mountain peak.
I have realized the Self, who is ever
Pure, all-knowing, radiant, and immortal.”
Thus spoke sage Trishanku when he became
United with the Lord of Love.

[11]

1 Having taught the Vedas, the teacher says:
“Speak the truth. Do your duty. Neglect not
The scriptures. Give your best to your teacher.
Do not cut off the line of progeny. Swerve not
From the truth. Swerve not from the good.
Protect your spiritual progress always.
Give your best in learning and teaching.

Never fail in respect to the sages.

2 See the divine in your mother, father,
Teacher, and guest. Never do what is wrong.
3 Honor those who are worthy of honor.
Give with faith. Give with love. Give with joy.
4–5 If you are in doubt about right conduct,
Follow the example of the sages,
Who know what is best for spiritual growth.

6 This is the instruction of the Vedas;
This is the secret; this is the message.”

PART II

1.1 They have attained the goal who realize
Brahman as the supreme reality,
The source of truth, wisdom, and boundless joy.
They see the Lord in the cave of the heart
And are granted all the blessings of life.
From Brahman came space; from space, air;
From air, fire; from fire, water; from water,
Earth; from earth, plants; from plants, food;
and from food,
The human body, head, arms, legs, and heart.

2.1 From food are made all bodies, which become
Food again for others after their death.
Food is the most important of all things
For the body; therefore it is the best
Medicine for all the body’s ailments.
They who look upon food as the Lord’s gift
Shall never lack life’s physical comforts.
From food are made all bodies. All bodies
Feed on food, and it feeds on all bodies.
The physical sheath is made up of food.
Within it is contained the vital sheath,
Which has the same form, with *prana* as head,
Vyana as right arm, *apana* as left,
Space as heart, and earth as foundation.

3.1 Man and woman, beast and bird live by breath.
Breath is therefore called the true sign of life.
It is the vital force in everyone
That determines how long we are to live.
Those who look upon breath as the Lord’s gift

Shall live to complete the full span of life.
 The vital sheath is made of living breath.
 Within it is contained the mental sheath,
 Which has the same form, with Yajur as head,
 Rig as right arm, Sama as left. The heart
 Is the wisdom of the Upanishads,
 And the Atharva is the foundation.

4.1 Realizing That from which all words turn back
 And thoughts can never reach, one knows
 The bliss of Brahman and fears no more.
 Within the mental sheath, made up of waves
 Of thought, there is contained the sheath of wisdom.
 It has the same form, with faith as the head,
 Righteousness as right arm and truth as left.
 Practice of meditation is its heart,
 And discrimination its foundation.

5.1 Wisdom means a life of selfless service.
 Even the gods seek spiritual wisdom.
 Those who attain wisdom are freed from sin,
 And find all their selfless desires granted.
 The wisdom sheath is made of detachment.
 Within it is contained the sheath of bliss,
 Which has the same form, with joy as the head,
 Contentment as right arm, and delight the left.
 Bliss is the heart, and Brahman the foundation.

6.1 Those who deny the Lord deny themselves;
 Those who affirm the Lord affirm themselves.
 The wise, not the unwise, realize the Lord.
 The Lord of Love willed: "Let me be many!"
 And in the depths of his meditation
 He created everything that exists.
 Meditating, he entered into everything.
 He who has no form assumed many forms;
 He who is infinite appeared finite;
 He who is everywhere assumed a place;
 He who is all wisdom caused ignorance;
 He who is real caused unreality.
 It is he who has become everything.
 It is he who gives reality to all.

7.1 Before the universe was created,
 Brahman existed as unmanifest.
 Brahman brought the Lord out of himself;

Therefore he is called the Self-existent.
 The Self is the source of abiding joy.
 Our hearts are filled with joy in seeing him
 Enshrined in the depths of our consciousness.
 If he were not there, who would breathe, who live?
 He it is who fills every heart with joy.
 When one realizes the Self, in whom
 All life is one, changeless, nameless, formless,
 Then one fears no more. Until we realize
 The unity of life, we live in fear.
 For the mere scholar who knows not the Self,
 His separateness becomes fear itself.

8.1 Through fear of Brahman the wind blows, sun shines,
 Fire burns, rain falls, and death snatches all away.
 What is the joy of realizing the Self?
 Take a young man, healthy, strong, good, and cultured,
 Who has all the wealth that earth can offer;
 Let us take this as one measure of joy.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of the gandharvas' joy; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of the joy of pitris; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of the joy of devas; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of the karmadevas' joy; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of the joy of Indra; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of Brihaspati's joy; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of the joy of Virat; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 One hundred times that joy is one measure
 Of Prajapati's joy; but no less joy
 Has one illumined, free from self-will.
 The Self in man and in the sun are one.
 Those who understand this see through the world
 And go beyond the various sheaths of being

To realize the unity of life.

9.1 Realizing That from which all words turn back
And thoughts can never reach, they know
The bliss of Brahman and fear no more.
No more are they oppressed by the question,
“How did I fail to perform what is right?
And how did I perform what is not right?”
Those who realize the joy of Brahman,
Having known what is right and what is wrong,
Are delivered forever from this duality.

PART III

1.1 Bhrigu went to his father, Varuna,
and asked respectfully: “What is Brahman?”

Varuna replied: “First learn about food,
Breath, eye, ear, speech, and mind; then seek to know
That from which these are born, by which they live,
For which they search, and to which they return.
That is Brahman.”

2.1 Bhrigu meditated and found that food
Is Brahman. From food are born all creatures,
By food they grow, and to food they return.
Not fully satisfied with his knowledge,
Bhrigu went to his father, Varuna,
And appealed: “Please teach me more of Brahman.”

“Seek it through meditation,” replied Varuna,
“For meditation is Brahman.”

3.1 Bhrigu meditated and found that life
Is Brahman. From life are born all creatures,
By life they grow, and to life they return.
Not fully satisfied with his knowledge,
Bhrigu went to his father, Varuna,
And appealed: “Please teach me more of Brahman.”

“Seek it through meditation,” replied Varuna,
“For meditation is Brahman.”

4.1 Bhrigu meditated and found that mind
Is Brahman. From mind are born all creatures,
By mind they grow, and to mind they return.

Not fully satisfied with his knowledge,
Bhrigu went to his father, Varuna,
And appealed: "Please teach me more of Brahman."

"Seek it through meditation," replied Varuna,
"For meditation is Brahman."

5.1 Bhrigu meditated and found that wisdom
Is Brahman. From wisdom come all creatures,
By wisdom they grow, to wisdom return.
Not fully satisfied with his knowledge,
Bhrigu went to his father, Varuna,
And appealed: "Please teach me more of Brahman."

"Seek it through meditation," replied Varuna,
"For meditation is Brahman."

6.1 Bhrigu meditated and found that joy
Is Brahman. From joy are born all creatures,
By joy they grow, and to joy they return.
Bhrigu, Varuna's son, realized this Self
In the very depths of meditation.
Those who realize the Self within the heart
Stand firm, grow rich, gather a family
Around them, and receive the love of all.

7.1 Respect food: the body is made of food;
Food and body exist to serve the Self.
Those who realize the Self within the heart
Stand firm, grow rich, gather a family
Around them, and receive the love of all.

8.1 Waste not food, waste not water, waste not fire;
Fire and water exist to serve the Self.
Those who realize the Self within the heart
Stand firm, grow rich, gather a family
Around them, and receive the love of all.

9.1 Increase food. The earth can yield much more.
Earth and space exist to serve the Self.
Those who realize the Self within the heart
Stand firm, grow rich, gather a family
Around them, and receive the love of all.

10.1 Refuse not food to those who are hungry.

When you feed the hungry, you serve the Lord,
 From whom is born every living creature.
 Those who realize the Self within the heart
 Stand firm, grow rich, gather a family
 Around them, and receive the love of all.

10.2 Realizing this makes our words pleasing,
 Our breathing deep, our arms ready to serve
 The Lord in all around, our feet ready
 To go to the help of everyone in need.

10.3–4 Realizing this we see the Lord of Love
 In beast and bird, in starlight and in joy,
 In sex energy and in the grateful rain,
 In everything the universe contains.
 Drawing on the Lord's resources within,
 Security, wisdom, and love in action,
 We conquer every enemy within
 To be united with the Lord of Love.
 The Self in man and in the sun are one.

10.5 Those who understand this see through the world
 And go beyond the various sheaths
 Of being to realize the unity of life.
 Those who realize that all life is one
 Are at home everywhere and see themselves
 In all beings. They sing in wonder:
 "I am the food of life, I am, I am;
 I eat the food of life, I eat, I eat.
 I link food and water, I link, I link.
 I am the first-born in the universe;
 Older than the gods, I am immortal.
 Who shares food with the hungry protects me;
 Who shares not with them is consumed by me.
 I am this world and I consume this world.
 They who understand this understand life."
 This is the Upanishad, the secret teaching.

OM shanti shanti shanti