

# Knowledge and its Importance for Good Life in Reference to *Taittiriya Upanishad*

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## Abstract

*Unattached and abandoning all things are the key to living a good or happy life. One who contemplates, meditates and practices himself as great, mindfulness and supreme; he becomes Brahman – the creator, sustainer and dissolver of this world. The Brahman-jnani sees unity in the diversity, he achieves the qualities to become one with the all. He possesses the power to discard which are limiting and binding him. Faith in god, modesty and sympathy towards elders brings discipline in life which is very necessary for a happy and peaceful life. The presence of a guru helps us to attain the knowledge about self. Listening, study, teaching and practice of knowledge give blissful life or ananda jivan.*

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Good life, Happiness, Upanishad, Self, Guru, Brahman etc.

## Introduction

We all know the importance of knowledge in our life. What is knowledge? How can we attain knowledge which gives us permanent joy? What is the Self and its kosas or sheaths? These things are discussed in this paper. Our every action indicates that we want happiness in our life. But due to lack of knowledge we sometimes cannot enjoy our life. We always drive by unrefined desire and passion instead of reason, consequently we fall and are wrapped in sufferings. In this paper it is attempted to search the meaning of good or happy life and the importance of knowledge for living a peaceful life in reference to *Taittiriya Upanishda*.

## Discussion

Knowledge of the Supreme Self or *Pramatmajnana* is the source of happiness and peaceful life. *Taittiriya Upanishda* belongs to the *Yajur Veda*. For achieving true knowledge the presence of a *guru* or teacher and his instructions are necessary. The connection between teacher and disciple is established by the instruction. So Instructions are the connection, which is very necessary for attaining knowledge. *Maharshi Patanjali* in his *Mahabhasya*, said that there are four steps through which knowledge becomes effective. The first step is acquiring knowledge from the teacher, the second is to study it, the third step is teaching it to others and the final step is to apply it in

practical life. We can achieve true knowledge when we follow these four steps. For attaining knowledge, discipline and wealth is necessary. Wealth can bring evil to the undisciplined persons, but for a disciplined person's wealth is one of the important factors for a good life. Possession of wealth or non-possession of wealth is not the matter; the matter is how you manage your wealth is the main concern. Your attitude towards wealth may bring good or evil in your life. *Rishi Vasistha* said to *Rama*, acquire wealth, the root of this world is wealth. And there is no difference between a poor man and a dead man. For good and peaceful life, knowledge is necessary but in this world for acquiring knowledge we need wealth. That is why *Rishi* teaches the importance of wealth in this world.

Although the *Brahmajnana* - the knowledge of *Brahmana* is present everywhere yet it is said that the knowledge resides in the heart. All the psychical affections such as sorrows, joy, love etc. immediately affects the heart. Knowledge does not mean merely to know something, it is the matter of performance and practice. To know means to perform and to practice. Speaking truth, practice of virtue, welfare to the society, prosperity, teaching, study, duties to the father and gods, if we neglect these we cannot live a good life. *Taittiriya Upanishada* instructed that we should practice those actions which are blameless. We should act by believing that mother is a god, father is a god, teacher is a god and guest is a god.

“*matri devo bhava, pitri devo bhava, acharya devo bhava, atithi devo bhava...*” we should act with faith, modesty and sympathy towards our fellow beings and elders. Those who are superior or elder to us should be comforted by us by giving seats with faith, modesty and sympathy, but we should not serve out fear or to show off to others. Service is beneficial if it is done intentionally and without any desire. Service should be detached from desire.

*Taittiriya Upanishada* discusses the nature of self. The self is manifested through the five *kosas* or sheaths as the ego or *jivatman*. These are food or *annamayay*, life or *pranamaya*, instinctive and perceptual consciousness or *manamaya*, intelligence or *vijnana* and bliss or *ananda*. From food everything is produced and grows. Without food, self cannot manifest into *jivatman*. Food gives the *prana* – the breath which is considered as life. The breath is believed to be a life of beings. *Mana* is the faculty of perceptual consciousness and understanding. *Vijnana* directs the deeds; it is the intelligence which deals with the concepts. *Manas* deal with the perceptual object and *vijnana* deals with the concept of the perceptual objects. *Anandamaya* is the absolute Brahman, the pure realization of the self, getting the essence and the beatific consciousness. When a person finds his essence he becomes blissful. Bliss is the essence of all existence because it is the cause of all things. The world of objects is created because of *Ananda* or bliss. By *Karma* and *Jnana* (knowledge) we can acquire *Ananda*. Aristotle also believes that the idea of higher contemplation – the *eudaimonia* or happiness -- is beyond metaphysical knowledge. It is something which can only be realized and cannot be expressed by the words, the thing which we apprehend directly.

A *Brahma-jnani* person is not disturbed by any questions. He stands above right and wrong because he knows everything is Brahman. He knows that by every event some people gain and some lose. He knows that *Brahman* is the world creating, world sustaining and world dissolving cause. He also knows that *Brahman* is matter, life, mind and intelligence. Intellectual life is not the end; the life of intelligence is the life of seeking to know as well as to achieve the illumination, joy and power of *Ananda*.

For living a good life or *Ananda Jivan*, we need good food. We shall not speak ill about food and we should not neglect our food. Food is essential for life; the body is the eater of food. Life depends on the body and body developed by taking food. So he who knows the importance of food can achieve the splendor of sacred wisdom. Moreover one has to know that for producing food earth, water, ether and light is required. So earth, water, ether and light are food. We have to treat all these things honestly and conscientiously because life depends on these things.

If you want to achieve something, you have to first contemplate it. If one contemplates, meditates and practices himself as great, he becomes great. If one contemplates, meditates and practices himself as mind, he becomes mindfulness. If one contemplates, meditates and practices himself as supreme, he becomes the supreme. If one contemplates, meditates and practices himself as *Brahman*, he becomes *Brahman*. One who knows that the self consists of food, life, mind, understanding and bliss and can reach on to that place of self which consists of bliss, everything becomes wonderful for him. He sees the unity in the diversity, he knows that though the individual has the limitation, yet he possesses the qualities to become one with the all. To know and to achieve the essence or the highest form of life, one has to throw off the forms of matters, life, mind and intellect which is limiting and binding oneself.

The blissful person sits and chants “*aham annam, aham annam... aham annandah, aham annandah...*” I am in the center of immortality, who gives me the sufferings, and he surely saves me. By the grace of Him, I have the power to overcome this world. I am brilliant like the sun.

### **Buddha also said after Attaining *Bodhi***

Subdued have I all, all knowing am I now.

Unattached to all things, and abandoning all,

Finally freed on the destruction of all craving,

Knowing it myself, whom else should I credit?

There is no teacher of mine, nor is one like me;

There is none to rival me in the world of men and gods; (*Ariyaparyesana Sutta, Majjhima Nikaya*)

## Conclusion

To live a good and peaceful life we need *Brahman jnana* or the knowledge of absolute. And for attaining such knowledge we need a guru or teacher. We attain knowledge through the instruction of the *Guru*. We are not connected with knowledge without guru's guidance. The instruction of the *Guru*, helps us to achieve desired knowledge. *Guru* is the medium of our knowledge. True knowledge can only be attained when we study whatever we learn from our teacher, when we teach to other fellow whatever we study and when we apply our knowledge in practical life. Discipline is also necessary for living a good life. Wealth is another important criterion for a good life. But we have to know how to manage our wealth, for this we must be disciplined in our life. Moreover faith, modesty and sympathy towards our elders are necessary for living a good life. We should understand the Self which is manifested through the five *kosas* or sheaths as the ego or *jivatman*. These are food or *annamayay*, life or *pranamaya*, instinctive and perceptual consciousness or *manamaya*, intelligence or *vijnana* and bliss or *ananda*. Our ultimate aim of life is to achieve *Ananda* or blissful life which can be possible through the knowledge of *Brahman*

as the creator, sustainer and dissolver of the world. And we should treat all the created things respectfully and conscientiously because our life depends on everything which is existing in this world. Acknowledgement: I am very grateful to the author and publisher of the book *The Principal Upanishads*. I have collected most of the information and knowledge from this book for writing this paper.

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