

Baghawat Geeta, Class 14

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Swamiji starts off by reminding us that Arjuna expresses his helplessness and surrenders to Sri Krishna and requests him to teach. Sri Krishna accepts Arjuna as a student and starts teaching him the Gita. The teaching begins from Shloka 11 of Chapter 2 and continues till Shloka 66 in chapter 18. Krishna is no more Parthasarthy. He has become Gita Acharya and Jagatguru.

Shloka # 11:

Sri Krishna says: You grieve for those who call for no grief; at the same time, you utter words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the dead nor for the living.

This verse expresses the essence of Gita. Briefly, Ignorance is the cause of all human problems and therefore Self Knowledge is the only solution for all human problems. It is Atma Agyanam versus Atma Gyanam that results in moksha. Brahma Vidya is Self-knowledge. Many topics are discussed in the Gita. They all, however, support Atma Vidya.

“Wise people do not grieve at all”, says Sri Krishna. A wise person is one who is an Atma Gyani. Arjuna is profusely grieving. Therefore, Arjuna is otherwise or ignorant. Through this shloka, Sri Krishna is informing the entire humanity that if you are grieving, then you are ignorant. If anybody is upset, without nimmadi (tamil for peace of mind), they are ignorant. The medicine for ignorance is Gyanam. If there is darkness in the room the only remedy is to bring in light. Can Karma or Action remove ignorance? No, says Swamiji. If that were the case abolish all colleges and just give work to all children. Meditation, Japa etc., also

cannot remove ignorance. "therefore Arjuna, become a wise person. Wise men do not grieve for living or for the dead ones." This goes for things as well. Giving an example, Swamiji says:

A man was travelling with his wife on train. She was very thirsty. She kept nagging him. Then, when a station came, he got her water. Later, She started nagging him again. Now she nagged him as to why she was thirsty to begin with.

Arjuna , you grieve for those who do not deserve grief such as Duryodhana (an adharmic person) at the same time you are speaking like a wise man about kulakshaya, kuladharmā etc., and contradicting yourselves. You need Atmagyanam.

Shloka # 12:

Sri Krishna says: Never, at any time, have I been not; neither you nor these rulers of men. And never shall we all cease to be.

In the last verse Sri Krishna presented the condensed version of Gita Shastra. In this shloka now, he expands on it. Krishna's immediate problem is to have Arjuna stand up and fight. Here Arjuna faces an incidental problem. It is only a short-term problem. It is not a universal problem. The deeper problem, however is, attachment and sorrow. They are eternal and universal problems. Krishna has to solve both these problems of Arjuna.

Sri Krishna takes a three-pronged approach to this.

1. Philosophical: you have to fight;
2. Ethical: You have to fight;
3. Worldly/ materialistic: you have to fight.

From whichever angle you look, you have to fight.

Philosophical approach is primary while ethical approach is also important. The worldly approach is not that important.

Philosophical is important because Arjuna is a very learned person; he knows the dharma shastras. He knows ethics. His problem is his self-ignorance.

From verse 12-25 it is the philosophical approach describing the true nature of Arjuna, Bhishma and Drona or the Atma Tatvam. Then, Sri Krishna discusses the ethical approach. Here he convinces him that it is not ahimsa; it is more like giving capital punishment for a criminal. Lastly, he discusses the worldly approach exhorting Arjuna as to how to maintain his name and fame.

Swamiji now talking about Tatva Bodha, raises the question: Atma Kaha (Who is Atma?) Every individual is a conscious individual. Every living being is a conscious being, i.e., consciousness is in the body mind complex. It is not found outside the body. The Mike, table, fan etc. are insentient or inert objects. There is, however, sentience in the body. What is consciousness? What makes it sentient? Consciousness is a formless and separate entity. It is comparable to light. This consciousness is not part of body, not a property of body, nor a product of body. It is a separate entity that pervades and enlivens the body. We take the example of Light; light is not part of the body, light is not a property of the body; light is not even a product of the body. On the other hand, light pervades my body and makes this body visible. When you are seeing the hand, you are seeing the two things, one is the hand, another thing is the light. It is on the hand, but it is not a Property, a part or a product.

While the Light is not a part or product of body nevertheless it makes the body visible. This separate consciousness is not bound by limitations of the body. The body does not limit the light pervading the body. Consciousness survives death. The space and time aspects of the body do not bind it.

When the hand is removed the light is not removed. It

continues, however, it is invisible. As long as a body is alive consciousness is there, however, once the body dies, consciousness continues, only in an invisible form. Hence it is called Vyakta chaitanya, when it is visible, and Avyakta chaitanya when it is invisible. Thus, consciousness is always there.

Consciousness is called Atma while the body mind complex is called Anatma. Every individual is a mixture of Atma and Anatma. Now, I am able to read because here are two things, one is the book, and the other is the light pervading it. But generally, we take the light lightly. But remember not to take the light lightly because without light, you will not be able to see anything. Therefore, all of us are Atma plus Anatma.

Next lesson of Tatva Bodha is to shift our identification from the perishable Anatma to imperishable Atma. This method of thinking is called Drk Drsya Viveka. When I say I am the body, I accept mortality. How many people can accept mortality? With this acceptance also comes old age and mortality. The other approach is to shift my identity to Atma. I do not change the body. You can love the body as an instrument of transaction, rather than loving the body as myself. Even if the instrument goes away, the "I" still remains.

Asatho Maa Sadgamaya. Tamsa Maa Jyotirgamaya. Mrtyo Ma Amrtam Gamaya.

(God! lead me from ignorance to knowledge. Lead me from mortality to immortality.)

Atma is already immortal. Anatma is mortal. We are shifting our identity from mortal to immortal. Scriptures are giving us the some methods to perform this shifting. One of the most powerful methods is:

"Whatever I am experiencing, I am not it ". Why? Because, whatever I am experiencing is an object, while I am the

subject. Our Eye sees everything but it does not see itself. From that it is very clear, the eyes are ever the seer and never the seen. Therefore, the subject is always different from the object.

The world is an object of experience, arriving and departing. The body is something I experience only in waking state, not in sleep state and dream states. What about the mind? We experience it only in the waking state, and dream state but not in sleep state. There is no Raga or Dvesha in sleep state. "I" am the Experiencer of all the three states. This "I" is the Atma.

Features of the Atma:

1. "I " am ever the Subject (Experiencer) not the object of experiences (experienced). Example: a camera takes pictures but it is not in the picture. Do we need proof that a camera took the picture? No, without a camera there will be no picture. "I" am never in the picture but "I " am ever existent, and hence called Aprameya.
2. Atma is Nithyaha or it is eternal. It exists as a Vyaktha or Avyaktha.
3. Atma is Nirvikara. It is changeless. Even when the hand moves the light does not change. The light is all pervading. The light here is Prakasha, not the bulb.
4. Atma is Sarvagathaha. It is all pervading. It does not have spatial boundaries.
5. Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha. Atma does not perform any action nor does it reap any result. The hand may act; it can touch and in the act may get dirty. The light pervading the hand does not act nor is it affected. Example of hand touching a blade was given. If the hand touches a blade, it is karta, and for touching that, what is the phalam, the fingers are cut; thus hand is karta, hand is bhokta, but the light is neither karta, neither bhokta, it is karta and abhokta. Thus Aprameya; nityaha; nirvikaraḥ; sarvagataḥ, akarta and abhokta are

Atma's

attributes. The Atma, like the light, is changeless, the all pervading and the experiencer.

Therefore Arjuna, You are not killing Bhishma, the Atma and Drona, the Atma. They are not killed. Why are you worried about their death? You are also not a killer. Arjuna, the Atma, is an Akartha. So, why are you in anguish? This is the philosophical argument.

Swamiji says every criminal can present this argument to a court. So, now, Sri Krishna presents the ethical angle. Normally, Himsa is not right. Here, however, you are fighting for Dharmasanthapanam. From this angle you can go ahead with the fight.

Atma is eternal. What does it mean?

Sri Krishna says the Eternal Atma was in the past, Atma is in the present and Atma will be in the future also. This is the essence of Shloka # 12.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawat Geeta, Class 13

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Swamiji starts off by reminding us that Vyasa now presents Arjuna as a seeker of moksha. The fundamental human problem characterized by Raga (Likes), Dvesha (Dislikes) and Moha

(delusion) is also called Samsara. Due to attachment, when we lose a person or an object, it causes us Shoka. In this state of Shoka our mind loses its discriminating faculty and is called Moha. This is the situation faced by Arjuna in battlefield. While we try making adjustments to the external world to solve such an internal problem, it only acts as a palliative or a first aid rather than as a remedy. In such a situation the aggrieved person should discuss his helplessness in solving the problem, and this state of helplessness is called Karpanya bhava or Dainya bhava. While Arjuna has discovered his problem he has not yet arrived at the helpless stage, the second stage of problem solving.

Shloka #5:

Arjuna says: If I fight and kill my two Gurus, I will only remember how they struggled and died in battle. Every moment I will remember how I killed Bhishma and Drona. My other option is not to fight and retire to the forest, where I will have to live on alms.

Swamiji says Arjuna has to decide which course of action to take. He chooses Adharma. He feels he will be better off living in forest, on alms. For a Kshatriya and Grihastha, Bhiksha is not allowed. Giving up one's Sva-Dharma is also a sin. Here Arjuna is giving up his Kshatriya Dharma, by not fighting. Furthermore, by planning to retire to the forest and begging for alms, he is taking up somebody else's dharma, which is yet another papam. Swamiji says, Sri Krishna is still quiet, as Arjuna has not yet asked him for help.

Shloka # 6:

Arjuna says: I am in a big conflict because my own cousins are arraigned against me. By killing these people, we will not like to live in this world, as they are both kith and kin. We are not even sure if they will defeat us or we will defeat them. I am not objective enough to analyze the situation. So,

I need your help. We do not know what to do? Victory over them or their victory over us, which to accept? In this, if I fight, it is dharma, a plus, however, Guru Vadham, is a minus point. Also, having to live in the forest and on alms is another minus point.

Shloka # 7:

Swamiji says human being is born ignorant. Ignorance is not a sin. We are "Self" ignorant as well. Perpetuation of ignorance is, however, a sin.

Arjuna says: My mind and intellect are incapacitated. It is not able to function. My intellect cannot discriminate. My intellect is afflicted by my misery. My confusion is with respect to dharma and adharma. Himsa is adharma. Killing one's own people is adharma. Killing one's Guru is certainly adharma. On the other side, Kauravas are the embodiment of Adharma and we need to fight them. What is my dharma, Sri Krishna? Tell me what is good for me. I am your disciple. I come with an open mind. I am surrendering at your feet.

Swamiji says a wise person does not give advice unless the other person requests for it. So, here also, Sri Krishna was waiting for Arjuna to ask for his help. The word Prapanna means surrender. Falling at the feet, Sharanagathi, is one way of surrendering. In this process the other person becomes the Guru. If I have to become a teacher, I need at least one person to ask me to teach him or her. So, here Arjuna has become a disciple and Krishna the Guru. After surrendering also there are expectations. Mantra Upadesha cannot remove ignorance. In such instances, a teaching that distinguishes between the right versus wrong is required.

Swamiji say advice does not help. Advice is a short-term direction and person keeps coming back for advice every time he faces a problem. Teaching, however, is for the long term and teaches how to make decisions. Advice makes one dependent

while teaching makes one independent. Swamiji gave example of giving a person a fish versus teaching him how to fish.

Shloka # 8:

Arjuna says: My grief is so intense that it dries up all my organs. My thinking faculty does not function. Can I do something to escape from this sorrow? I do not see any method to remove this sorrow other than your teaching. I may choose to fight, I may win, I may become a king and get an unrivalled kingdom, but I cannot remove my grief. (Swamiji says, money may buy food but it does not remove hunger.) Even If I became Indira, it will not solve my problem. Worldly accomplishments cannot solve my problem. So, he asks Sri Krishna to help. Swamiji says, at this stage, Arjuna has to go for a spiritual goal and hence he needs a guru.

Shloka # 9:

Sanjaya now says: In this manner Arjuna surrendered to Sri Krishna saying, I am not going to fight nor am I going to run away from battle. I want to hear from you (Sri Krishna) and then decide.

Swamiji gave some definitions:

- Paramtapa: Destroyer of enemies.
- Gudakesha: means master of Tamoguna or Satva Guna Pradhana. Human mind swings from Rajasic (very active) to Tamasic (dullness), while the Satvic mind is in the middle as a non-extrovert, but wakeful mind.
- Govinda: Protector of the world, is the Shastric meaning. Another meaning is, Go means scriptures, and Vinda means one who has grasped the scriptures. To this Govinda Arjuna surrenders. Ha: Means everything has become quiet.

Shloka # 10:

Sanjaya continues:

Oh Dhrithirashtra, Lord Krishna accepted the offer of Arjuna and taught him the Gita Shastra sitting between the two armies. The Gita Shastra begins from Shloka 11 of Chapter 2 and continues till Shloka 66 in chapter 18.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishads, Class 10

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Second Question, Shloka # 7:

Swamiji says all mantras from #5 to # 13 are all Prana Devata Sruthi or praise. Glorification is done at both Subjective (Adhyathmika) level as well as Objective (Adhi Daivika) level. Prana is the Shakthi animating the ten gyanendriyas such as Shravnam, Darshanam etc at the Adhyathmika level. At the Adhi-Daivika level all these Shakthis are manifestations of Prana. Prana as Hiranyagarbha is manifesting as Prithvi, Varuna, Surya etc. At both micro and macro cosmic levels it is the one Prana Shakthi appearing as many.

Shloka # 11: "O Prana, you are Vratyaha and the Eka Rishi fire as well. You are the eater of everything as the Eka Rishi fire. You are the One who goes to the Antahriksha (space). As the Mathrikshva, you are the father of Vayu."

Explaining this glorification Swamiji says:

Vratyaha: Here a Ninda Shruthi is used. A Ninda Shruthi is one that criticizes. Vratyaha is a Brahmin or Dvijaha who has

not gone through the Samskaras. All Dvijahas go through an Upanayanam ceremony at which point their second phase of life begins. Up to Upanayanam ones life is led as per his own raga and dvesha. After Upanayanam all his activities must be according to Shastras or as per three Vedas. The age for Upanayam for Brahmin is 5; Kshatriya is 11 and for Vaishya is 12.

A person born as a Dvigaha but has not had Upanyanam at appropriate age is called a Vratyaha or unpurified one. It is a term used only from a spiritual point of view. Here, however, Prana is praised as a Vratyaha in a ninda sruthi. As per Shankacharya, Prana is part of Sukshma Shariram and Samashthi Prana is considered Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha is considered a Vratyaha as he was the first person born in the cosmos and did not have anybody to perform his Samskara.

Brahman+ Maya>Hiranyagarbha.

Samskara is necessary only for the impure. Hirayagarbha being ever pure, no purification rite is necessary.

Eka Rishihi: Eka Rishi is the fire used by Atharvana Vedis. For each ritual, shastras prescribe a specific fire. Thus, a grihasta is required to maintain a fire called Garbhapatya agni daily. There are different methods of kindling fire prescribed by shastras. There are also different forms of Homa Kunda (shapes) prescribed. Each fire has a name, as well, based upon the ritual and type of homa kunda used. Eka Rishihi is also a manifestation of Prana. Eka Rishihi belongs to the Athravana Veda as also Prasna Upanishad.

Attha: You are the eater of everything as the Eka Rishi fire.

Aadhyam: The offering or oblation. All Devatas are offering to Hiranyagarbha. At individual level also we are offering oblations by touch, sight, hearing etc to Prana Devata.

Matrikshva: One who goes to the antahriksha (space) or Vayu or Prana. As the mathrikshva you are the father of Vayu.

Shloka # 12: Prana Shakthi is present in every Indriya. Thus, it is present as the power of speech, power of hearing, power of sight and power of thinking. As death arrives Prana starts to leave and indriyas become weak. Indriyas now ask Lord Prana to become peaceful and not leave.

1. Shloka # 13: This is upasamhara or conclusion of the chapter on Prana Sruthi. Indriyas now ask Prana "May you protect us like a mother protects a child. May you bless us with the wisdom that we do not repeat this mistake again."

All these things in front of you are under the control of Prana. Whatever is there in other worlds is also under control of Prana.

This concludes the Prana Shruthi.

Swamiji summarized the three questions and their respective answers:

1. What are the powers of the individual? All 19 indriyas and the panca (5) pranas are the powers of the individual.

2. Who glorify themselves? All 19 indriyas glorify themselves.

3. Who is most powerful? Prana alone is most powerful of all.

4. How to prove superiority of Prana? All 19 organs function due to Prana. At time of death, as Prana leaves, all organs also start failing.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawat Geeta, Class 11

Lecture 11 Notes : Bhagavad Gita Chapter 1 Summary 1/09/16

Swamiji gives a Summary of Chapter 1 and an Introduction to Chapter 2.

Summary of Chapter 1

To live a healthy life – consider these 2 factors:

1. The surroundings should be hygienic so that it doesn't cause diseases. This is an external factor; objective factor (the environment)
2. A person's body must have sufficient resistance to face the external world; build up immunity in your body. Subjective factor (immunity)

In addition to having a sterilized environment for surgery, the patient also needs to resistance. All vitals conditions are checked in order to proceed with the surgery. A physically healthy life depends on objective and subjective factors. The environment alone is not responsible for giving you the disease. You also have low immunity to catch it.

This same principle can be extended for mental health as well. Mental health means a mind free from all psychological diseases in the form of fear, anxiety, stress, strain, worry, jealousy, anger, inferiority complex (Kama, kroda, lobha, moha, madha, maatsarya are all psychological diseases). We have a tendency to blame the external factors ie. the world is responsible for my worry, my spouse is responsible for my tension, etc. Scriptures point out that we need to consider two factors for mental health. The external world is not totally responsible for my psychological problem. The weakness of the mind is also responsible for our psychological problem.

For a healthy life the environment and sufficient resistance are needed. For a healthy mental life (a secure, relaxed, happy life), you need to consider the environment and having sufficient mental strength to face the situation.

There are three benefits of having a strong mind. The number of psychological problems:

- frequency is less (thus family is saved)
- intensity of anger, frustration is less.
- duration of these are also less

The frequency, intensity and duration of these mental diseases are less in a healthy mind. The after effect is also less. So, a psychological healthy, happy life requires taking care of

1. adjusting the external conditions
2. improving one's own resistance

We usually only look into the external conditions. Vedanta talks about the subjective factor – your own inner strength. This freedom from mental diseases caused by external factors, is called mokshaH.

Swamiji recites from Chapter 2, Verse 56:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ 2.56 ॥

Lord Krishna says a jnani, a free person, also faces adversities but his resistance is very healthy and thus he is not shattered to handle this problem.

The subject matter of Gita is to strengthen the inner resistance (not change the external world) to obtain freedom from psychological disturbance. This is called mokshaH. Gita is also called "Moksha shaastram". Gita is meant for people who recognize that they have to improve their resistance (being aware of their psychological weakness, their

susceptibility to raga, dvesha, kama, kroda, etc and being aware of its affects on other people too).

Chapter 1 of Gita gives an introduction with Arjuna discovering that he has an inner weakness. And before he can change the world, he needs to strengthen himself. Arjuna discovers his weakness, and becomes a spiritual seeker, surrendering to Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna then gives him self knowledge. .

The first chapter can be divided into five parts:

1. Part 1: Vyasa presents the context, in which Arjuna feels the disease of samsaara; Verses 1-20

The context is the MB battlefield. In Kurukshetra, the Pandavas and Kauravas have gathered to settle their issue. Arjuna is very clear about the battle, he does not have any conflict or guilt because this war was the last resort after unsuccessful non-violent methods. Lord Krishna also goes as a messenger and tries to settle peacefully. But Duryodana tries to kill Lord Krishna even though he is just a messenger. Therefore, Arjuna, has come to the battlefield without any regrets. Duryodana enumerates the Pandavas' army and his won army to Drona. And he betrays his diffidence that the Pandava army is stronger. This is caused by adharma. In reality, Duryodana's army is stronger but the support of Dharma is not there. Seeing this, Bhishma enthuses Duryodana by blowing his conch. Then both sides blow the conches signaling the beginning of the MB battle.

1. Part 2: Arjuna goes near the Kaurava army to see them at closer range. Verse 21-25

Arjuna feels somehow that he should closely see whom he has to fight. This decision was a blessing in disguise even though it seemed it was not a good decision to delay the start of the battle. If this hadn't occurred, we would not have the Bhagavad Gita.

Swamiji recites Verse 20 and the first line of Verse 21:

॥ अर्जुन उवाच ॥ द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् ॥

॥ अर्जुन उवाच ॥ द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् ॥ 1.20 ॥

॥ अर्जुन उवाच ॥ द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् ॥

॥ अर्जुन उवाच ॥ द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् द्रुपदो वीर्यवान् ॥ 1.21 ॥

Arjuna requests Lord Krishna to place the chariot in between the two armies so that he can see his opposition. At this time, Arjuna is the master (not a student) and Lord Krishna is the humble charioteer (not the Guru). Lord Krishna obeys Arjuna and places the chariot in front of the people towards whom Arjuna has a strong attachment.

1. Part 3: Arjuna's discovery of his weakness and the consequent problem of RagaH. Verses 26 – 28

The first weakness presented is the problem of attachment or psychological dependence on external factors. This is called a weakness because psychological dependence for your happiness is no longer in your own hands but it is connected to external factors. Since the external factors are not under your control, depending upon an unpredictable, external factor is risky for your happiness. You should not allow an external factor to determine your state of happiness. For example, the disobedience of your child causing you sorrow is due to the fact that you are depending on your child being obedient for your happiness (external factor). This displays your lack of resistance. Vedanta says that you should not depend upon a certain condition to be happy. This psychological need or dependence is called the problem of ragaH. Arjuna has this problem because he expected these people to be around him all the time and could not imagine even a hypothetical separation. Arjuna imagined a life without Bhishma, Drona etc. and broke down.

आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति – Verse 28, discovery of RagaH (basic samsaara), psychological leaning. Physically, we depend on the world for food, clothing and shelter. Vedanta does not talk about physical independence but talks about emotional/psychological dependence, which is not required at all.

Gita's ultimate lesson is: आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति "atma, alone, by yourself, pleased" I am happy with myself, in spite of external factors being favorable or unfavorable. (Sounds so much sweeter in Samskritam). With any addiction, you imagine that you cannot do without it. This is not true. This is your intellect justifying your addiction. Don't have a crutch.

1. Part 4: ShokaH (consequence of RagaH) or VishadaH Verses 28 – 35

The title of the first chapter is Arjuna Vishada YogaH. Grief or sorrow is an inevitable consequence of dependence (leaning on an unpredictable, perishable, external factor). Arjuna faces this deep attachment आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति . The intensity of grief depends on the intensity of attachment. For Arjuna, his intense sorrow was overflowing into the physical body also.

आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति
॥ ॥ आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति 1.30

आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति
॥ ॥ आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति आत्मनि संतुष्टो भवति 1.31

1. Part 5: MohaH (consequence of RagaH and ShokaH); conflict, confusion, indecision Verse 36-47

Delusion, not able to determine what to do; MohaH or avivekaH. Arjuna can't decide whether to fight or not and draws a series of wrong conclusions.

Confusion 1: Arjuna sees Dharma Yuddham as adharma now. The

greatest irony is in Verse 36 line 2 where Arjuna says: $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ "By killing these criminals, we will incur sin". This confusion is similar to a judge saying he cannot render punishment to a criminal, as it is a sin. Imprisoning a criminal is a duty of the court. Arjuna as a Kshatriya has to protect dharma, even if it resorts to war.

Confusion 2: Arjuna sees running away from a righteous war as dharma. If a Kshatriya runs away from a righteous war, he is shirking his duty, which is considered a sin of omission. The sin of omission is called $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ "akaraney prathavayaH" (absence of action is a sin).

The 2nd type of sin is Sin of commission. Note – A common thread in all religions:

Sin of Commission – committing an amoral act

Sin of Omission – failure to do some ritualist act

If Arjuna runs away , this action is paapam for him but he sees this as the best decision. $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square$ "dharma adharma avivekaH" – utter delusion where he cannot distinguish between dhaarmic and adhaarmic actions. Arjuna's delusion is complete and it has overflowed into his intellect. The intellect will not be able to fight the weakened mind and so the intellect will justify the weakness.

Confusion 3: Arjuna's intellect tries to justify his delusion by telling Lord Krishna:

$\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square$
 $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square$ $\square\square$ $\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square\square$ 1.40

In his argument, Arjuna points out that family is very important for maintaining culture. This is a true statement. A society in which family life is not respected, culture will breakdown after one generation. The eternal dharma will be destroyed, pitr will be affected, people will lose faith in

karma, rituals, dharma, religion, God, etc.

Due to his confusion, Arjuna quotes these true facts incorrectly to support his stand. RagaH, ShokaH and MohaH (attachment, sorrow, delusion) are called samsaaraH. A samsaari is one who suffers from these three problems. If a person handles these three samsaaraH, he is a liberated person (muktaH). Throughout Gita, Lord Krishna emphasize, married or unmarried, being internally free is what matters.

Even though Arjuna has discovered the problem of samsaara, Lord Krishna has not started giving the solution yet. Discovery of the problem alone is not enough for the solution. Some more steps are required.

1. Diagnosis of having the problem(know that you have a problem); Discovery of problem.But when we discover the problem, we try self medication first. Only when you realize that you cannot solve it yourself, do you go to the next stage of feeling....
2. Discovery of helplessness (know that you cannot solve the problem) I have a problem don't know how to get out of it; I require help from another firm personVedanta Shaastra "Dainya bhavaH" affliction, state of being; or "kaarpanyam" pitiful circumstances.

We will be studying this in Chapter 2:

Arjuna's state of mind is described in Chapter 2.7. Arjuna is in a state of helplessness and is seeking help from someone else. This is the first stage of the process of liberation.

1. Surrender to someone who will give me a hand. Called (sharanaagati)
2. Solution is given, Medication Arjuna has only gone thorough the first stage – discovering the problem of samsaaraH. Arjuna has to go through stages 2 and 3 before Lord Krishna gives his advice. Therefore Lord

Krishna observes silently. Since Lord Krishna has not spoken, Arjuna thinks his conclusion is right and so throws down his bow/arrow and sits down in the chariot.

So, Vyasa completes the first chapter by saying that Arjuna sat down, afflicted by shokaH (ragaH shokaH mohaH):

Arjuna's state of mind is described in the following verse (1.47):

Introduction of Chapter 2

Chapter 2 gives a comprehensive picture of the whole "treatment" (for the disease) as given by the Gita. This chapter is the essence of the entire Gita and it can be divided into 4 portions. Swamiji gives a high level overview.

Portion 1: Arjuna surrenders to Lord Krishna; Arjuna sharanaagati Arjuna going through the other stages (he discovers the helplessness). Arjuna decides to quit the battlefield but his inner conscience feels that this is not a good decision. The decision to go to war was made after years and years of adhaarmic actions done by the Kauravas. This was a sudden decision to quit the battle. He realizes that he is confused and not able to make the correct decision. He knows he cannot solve the present problem.

Swamiji recites Chapter 2, Verse 6, Line 1:

Arjuna's dilemma is expressed in the following verse (2.6):

Hey Lord Krishna, I thought I had made the right decision but now my mind is wavering and I am not able to determine if my decision is right or wrong. On one hand, the war is for a dhaarmic cause; but my emotional mind is unable to come to terms with knowing the casualties of war (my guru and other relations). Arjuna realizes his wavering and accepts his

helplessness by saying(Ch 2, Verse 7, line 1):

ಉಪದ್ರವ್ಯವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ

Once he discovers his helplessness, he needs to surrender to some one. Voilà, he has the Jagadguru himself (universal guru). Arjuna surrenders and says (Ch2, Verse 7, line 2):

ಉಪದ್ರವ್ಯವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ
ಉಪದ್ರವ್ಯವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ 2.7

I am your disciple. The 3rd stage is surrendering (1st is discovery of the problem; 2nd is feeling helpless). The 4th stage is where Lord Krishna accepts the disciple Arjuna and gives the solution.

Gita Shaastram: ಉಪದ್ರವ್ಯವಿಹೀನಃ ಸರ್ವವಿಹೀನಃ ; ಉಪದ್ರವ್ಯವಿಹೀನಃ

Worldly illusion, warding off, medicine; state of being, disease, remedy The spiritual pursuit is two-fold:

1. Karma YogaH – to become a Jnana Yogyata
2. Jnana YogaH – to gain Jnanam

Portion 2: Krishna briefs Arjuna about Jnana YogaH; self-knowledge given to a Jnana Yogyata praptiH Jnana YogaH is self knowledge. Krishna will explain “self-knowledge” briefly . But in order to gain Jnana YogaH, one needs to be eligible to receive Jnanam(already be a yogyata praptiH).

Adi Shankara said Brahma Jnana is aushadam. The medicine is ಉಪದ್ರವ್ಯವಿಹೀನಃ Jnana yogaH(disease removal). A Jnana yogyata(worthiness to get Jnanam) is required; medicine will be given only for a yogyata praptiH(one who has acquired the eligibility).

Portion 3: Krishna talks about Karma YogaH: Actions taken to become a Jnana Yogyata praptiH Krishna explains how to become a ಉಪದ್ರವ್ಯವಿಹೀನಃ “Yogyata praptiH” (one who has acquired the eligibility to learn). Karma YogaH are the actions to be

taken without being attached to the results of one's deeds. The benefit of Karma Yoga is Jnana yoga yogyata.

Portion 4: Jeevan Mukti: Inner Freedom, Salvation: Explore the life of a psychologically healthy person, who has developed inner resistance, and who has solved raga, shoka, moha.

नन्दति नन्दति नन्दत्येव "Nandati nandati nandatyeva" Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice! A psychologically healthy person enjoys life thoroughly.

Tolerance: Swamiji Talk for New Year 2016

Namaste:

This are my notes from New Year talk given by Swamiji on January 1, 2016:

You can listen to this talk here.

The topic of this talk was six principles of tolerance.

Swamiji started the talk by pointing out that the topic of tolerance is in the news now a days and that both Tatva Bodha and Bagawat Geeta point out the need for tolerance. Tatva Bodha says one need thithiksha (mental shock absorbers) to withstand the ups and downs of life. Lord Krishna says in Chapter 2 of Bagawat Geeta that one need shama to withstand the up and downs of life.

Six principles of tolerance:

1. Non empowerment: Scriptures says the creation is full of pairs of opposites as per laws of karma. The creation is full of events like loss and gain and up and down. Swamiji says we classify all events as welcome and unwelcome. The first principle of tolerance is not to label any situation. By labeling an event we empower the world to hurt. Let all the pairs of worldly experiences happen, but do not label them as welcome or unwelcome. Be prepared to go through the results of karma without attaching a label of unwelcome. If one must attach a label, use the label "welcome" and accept all situations and experiences.
2. Empowering ourselves: Strengthening ourselves to withstand and move forward from any event. Worldly events are not the creation of Bahawan, but the results of karma. While creation includes both pavam and puniyam, the resources to handle the situation are also created within ourselves. Learn to rely on internal resources and not on external outside resources.
 - Arm ourselves with the ability to be strong
 - Understand and accept that there are resources within ourselves to withstand the ups and downs of life
 - Build up faith in ourselves with the realization that Lord resides in ourselves.
3. Non Magnification: Avoid dwelling upon unwelcome experiences and let it occupy our minds completely. Whenever there is an "unwelcome" situation, our tendency is to dwell on and magnify that situation. This results in worry, anxiety and fear. Dwell upon the solution and do not to dwell upon and magnify the situation. Apply the first two principles above and assimilate the thought that all difficult experiences are not given out by Bagawan but are the results of karma and the world is only a medium. This does not mean that we don't take any action, but take any action, including deliberate inaction, but do not contaminate the action with hatred

and vengeance. Cultivate tolerance at both “kartha” (doer) and ‘boktha” (experiencer) level.

4. Self Restraint: Avoidance of impulsive responses. Boktha becomes a kartha by following the first three principles. Impulsive actions prevents us from developing a long term solution. Boktha (the experiencer) gives the message; Kartha should filter the messages and take careful actions.
5. Objectivity: Avoid judgment based on incomplete data. Never judge a person in a hurry. No one should become a victim of prejudicial actions. Prejudicial actions and judgment only will result in accumulating more pavam. Before taking any action at others, stand in the position of others and determine if the proposed action is one that your would accept yourself.
6. Postpone violent measures: Whenever we face difficult situations, we face two options: one is aggressive and the other is peaceful. When we are faced with difficult situation, we prefer aggressive measures as they may appear to bring immediate results. Scriptures say that the peaceful measures must be tried first. Always remember ahimsa is an important virtue. Only after exhausting all ahimsa measures, more aggressive measures should be pursued.

Swamiji concluded that if we follow these six principles, then we will be able to handle and move on after any difficult experience.

Bagawat Geeta Class 8

Bagawat Geeta Class 8

Namaste!

Summary of class on December 19th:

Verses 29-34 continues with Arjuna's emotion of sh0ka (sorrow) and VyAsa here wants to show the intensity of the sorrow. Arjuna is describing how he is physically affected (limbs drooping, mouth drying up, body trembling, hairs standing, the Gandiva slipping, skin on fire, mind wandering). He cannot see how killing one's kin is going to be of any benefit. Those he is seeking to kill are the ones with whom he is associating pleasures and enjoyment, so what is the point?

Swamiji says that emotional problems do not happen in one thought but arise from continually repeated thoughts, with each repetition increasing the anger/frustration. It is a thought build-up process. A single or first thought is an experience and does not give rise to anger, jealousy or depression. Thereafter repetition of the thought is in our hands, as to whether or not we want to allow a small ripple to build into a big wave.

Swamiji contrasts Arjuna's attitude with what vedAnta is trying to teach us. Arjuna is a typical human being. He is attached to many things and thinks that all the relationships, etc., impact his life's meaningfulness. According to Vedanta, your life is worthwhile by itself. Nothing adds to it. Don't connect purpose or meaning to anything else. My life is complete because of itself, not because of anything else. A man of right vision sees dharma as the most important thing in life.

Krishna allows Arjuna to exhaust his feelings so he keeps quiet. Although it may appear that Arjuna is being compassionate towards his kin, it is not so. A person's vision of dharma gets clouded through attachment and not in compassion.

In **verses 35**, a transition is being made to the next stage of

depression, from sh0ka to m0ha (delusion, wrong judgements). His m0ha problem is exhibited in **verses 36-47**. The delusion is one of confusing dharma with adharma. In Ch 2 Krishna explains that, going to war is punnyam and running away from it is pApam. Arjuna thinks the opposite here.

Here Swamiji digresses to talk about pApams. Dharmashastra contains a huge list of pApams that are recited during the thread changing ceremonies. The 5 worst type of pApams (Pancha mahA pAthakAni) are as follows:

1. Burning down somebody's property
2. Poisoning someone
3. Using weapons to kill an unarmed person
4. Stealing others' property
5. Taking the land or the wife of another person

Dury0dana is guilty of all five and therefore if a kshatrya does not give him capital punishment, he is committing a sin.

In **verse 37**, Arjuna concludes indirectly that we can sacrifice dharma for happiness. In **verse 38**, Arjuna thinks he has a clear understanding of the situation and uses logic to justify his thoughts. When the mind is confused, the intellect often comes into play by providing logical arguments for the wrong thoughts. Here he is saying that it was not really the Kauravas' fault that greed has suppressed their wisdom and their inability to see the consequences of the war. Arjuna reflects on the potential killing of not only close relations but also close friends, whom he is supposed to protect.

Prasna Upanishad, Class 4

I had difficulty in comprehending and digesting this class and summarized as best as I can. I greatly appreciate any corrections, additions and comments to my summary.

In the last class, Swamiji stated that Rayee is a non translatable word. For my own sake of understanding this Upanishad, I equate Rayee to matter and Prana to energy with the full recognition that Rayee and Prana are spiritual and philosophical terms and they encompass much more than the modern scientific terms of energy and matter – for example, prana and rayee include formless thoughts and action. While equating Rayee and Prana to matter and energy is not recommended, I found it easier to understand these classes.

First creation is in form pairs or mithuna shristry or the creation of rayee and prana. Rayee and prana are two principles pairs of opposite mutually complementary; both of them together make a whole. This division between rayee and prana is superficial; rayee is prajapathi or cause or karanam; prajapathi alone becomes rayee and prana. Superficially we call amoortha as prana and moortha as rayee. But since both rayee and prana came from prajapathi, everything can be called rayee and similarly everything can be called prana. For example, ice is also be called water, stream is also called water. The ice/stream division is superficial and both are water. Similarly the division between rayee and prana is also superficial as both are prajapathi.

V6

After mithuna shrishty, Swamiji discussed loga shristry or sun (prana) and moon (rayee). By spreading the rays from the east, the sun is embracing all jivas and becoming one with all jivas. The sun alone is giving life and energy to all beings and therefore the existence of beings is due to sun's energy

and therefore there is no jivas other than sun. Physical energy, prana energy and intellectual energy all are given only by surya prakasha.

V7

The sun is known as vaisvanara, the macro gross body in waking stage. The surya alone is in the form all human beings.

Surya is known as visvaroopaa, prana (life of everyone), Agni (fire). When the fire principle is up above, we call it surya and when it is down on the earth, we call it Agni. Without sun, there will be no life. This principle is also supported by the following mantra in Rig Veda.

V8 (Mantra from Rig Veda)

Sun is omniscient because it illuminates everything. Rishis knew sun to be all of the following:

- Visva roopaha – Ever pervading
- Harinam – rays
- Jaata Vedhasam: One who is omniscient:
 - One who illumines all
 - A devada from Chainthanyam angle.
- Parayanam: The ultimate supporter of everything
- Joythihi: One who is effulgent
- Ekam: One
- Tapantam: The one who shines all the time
- Sahasra rahihi: With thousands of rays
- Satadha vartamana: Manifests in hundreds of form
- Pranaha: The very prana of all beings.

The conclusions of these three slokas is that prana or sun is everything.

V9

After loga shrishity, comes the kala shrishti, which is recognized by the movement of sun and moon. Surya prakasam

determines the day; Chandra's, on the other hand, determines thithi. The whole year is prajapathi because sun and moon are manifestation of prajapathi. So kalam is a manifestation of prajapathi. A year has two ayanam (solstice). Dhakshinayanam (rayee) and utharayanam (prana).

Prasna Upanishad, Class 2

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Shloka # 1: Refreshing our memory on Shloka 1, he says, this Upanishad begins with an introduction of Guru and Shishyas. It is similar to other Upanishads. The six qualified students are named and described. The way they were qualified is as follows:

1. They were committed to worship of Saguna Brahma Upasana.
2. They have gone through Karma Kanda and Upasana Kanda. They have Sadhana Chatushtiya Sampathi. (From Tatvabodha they are: Vivekaha – discrimination, Vairaḡyam – dispassion, Mumukshutvam – desire and Shatka Sampattihi – discipline.)
3. They are established in Saguna Brahman.
4. They are Nishtaha or grounded. They are followers of Vaidic Margaha.

It takes some time to develop Shraddha in Vedanta. However, as one follows Karma Kanda and Upasana Kanda, by the time they reach Vedanta, the student develops strong Shraddha.

What is the purpose of their visit to the Guru?

They are seeking Param Brahman. They understand the

limitations of Saguna Brahman. They are not satisfied with this knowledge.

Why was Pippiladaha chosen as the teacher?

He was Bhagwan Pippiladaha. Bhagwan is one who has knowledge of all Shastras. He also has superb communications skills.

How did they approach their teacher?

They approached with humility and respect to the teacher. Serving the teacher is not serving the person rather it is serving Shastram. Shastri puja is same as Shastram puja. They approached teacher with some offering as well. Swamiji says, usually fruits, nuts, fuel etc. are considered normal offerings. They approached the teacher as if he was the Lord in a temple.

What is their motive?

They wanted Pippiladaha to teach them everything. So they approached with respect and a proper attitude.

Shloka # 2:

Seeing them and their approach Pippiladaha knew their qualifications. He tells them: All of you must stay here for one year. Even after that there is no assurance that you will get an answer to your questions.

In ancient times teachers were hesitant to give answers. Teachers were not sure how casual the student was. Unless the student was sincere the teaching would not go in. Many tests were given to students. Also Teacher had to know if student was qualified or if they were lacking in any area such as intelligence, industry, shradha etc. The one-year was also important to develop rapport between teacher and student. Thus a loving relationship was developed.

Pippiladaha tells them "You should live in the ashram for a

year. You should live a life of Tapas, Penance and Brahmacharya. Swamiji says comfort and knowledge do not go together. Brahmacharya meant giving up comfort while maintaining Shraddha. Sanyasa means detachment from everything.

Illustrating the concept of sanyasa, Swamiji narrated story of a student who was asked to leave the ashram suddenly in the middle of the night. The student did not know what to do. He was lost as to why he was thrown out. He wandered around from village to village seeking food and shelter. After a few days the Teacher sent some students to call him back. The student asked the teacher why he was thrown out to begin with. The teacher told him that he saw the student was getting attached to the Ashram. He wanted the student to maintain his detachment even in Ashram. To teach him this lesson, he was thrown out.

Shloka # 3:

After one year of tapas and brahmacharya Pippiladaha allowed the students to raise their questions. The first one to go was Kabandhi Katyayana. They were called in reverse order as named in shloka #1.

Kabandhi asked: Bhagwan, from what source are all these living beings coming up or originating? Or, how did creation occur?

The teacher Pippiladaha answered by introducing Hiranyagarbha. He says, Ishwara created Hiranyagarbha also known as Brahma. Brahma in turn created the creation. Vishnu taught Brahma how to create. Kama is the force behind creation. Thus, after Brahma performed tapas on Ishwara, Lord gave him knowledge. Tapas here meant he was given the ability to visualize the previous Srishti or Creation. The creatures are created based upon their respective Karmas. Thus came the creation

Bagawat Geeta, Class 3

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued with his discussion of the invocation prayer called Gitagyana Shloka. Madhusudhana Saraswathi wrote this Shloka. While this shloka was not originally a part of Gita, it is now accepted as one. The Gitagyana Shloka has nine verses. In these Shlokas we are offering namaskara to: Bharathi, Gita/ Saraswathi, Vyasa and Lord Krishna.

Expanding on the Shlokas related to Lord Krishna, Swamiji says:

Shloka # 3:

पारिजातवृक्षस्यैव श्रीकृष्णोऽपि संश्रितः ।
सर्वकामसिद्धयैः सर्वभूतहिते रतः ॥

This shola is a namaskara to Sri Krishna. Parijata is a mythical tree in heaven. If one stands under this tree and wishes for something, the tree grants that wish. It is also known as wish yielding tree. Here, Sri Krishna, is compared to the Parijatha tree. Any desire related to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. he grants, to one who surrenders to him.

Sri Krishna, here is in the role of a charioteer to Arjuna. He does not consider his work as one without dignity. Preaching dignity of labor, Swamiji says Bhagwan did not feel inferior as a charioteer. Do your work with a good attitude and enthusiasm exhorts Swamiji.

Sri Krishna was the greatest Gyani, reflected in his Chin mudra, the mudra of gyanam. Chin mudra indicates Jivatma and Paramatma Aikyam. It is a threatening finger. This jeevatma is

associated with the three fingers. They represent the three Gunas (Rajas, Tamas and Satva) and the three Sharirams (Karana, Sukshma and Sthula). All of them are associated with the perishable body. The thumb represents Paramatama. Only with the thumb can all other fingers function. So also Paramatma is the aadhara, or basis, for the whole creation. JIvatma should get freed from matter and join Paramatma.

The circle or Chakra of Sri Krishna does not have a begining or an end. When Jivatma merges with Paramatma it becomes Poorna Atma. This wisdom of immortality is presented in the Chin mudra. To this wonderful Lord I present my Namskara. Krishna, explained Swamiji, means one who attracts the devotee.

Sholka # 5:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।
 भक्त्या स्यात्प्रणम्यैव नमस्कृत्य ।
 श्रीकृष्णाय नमः । ॥ ५ ॥

This sholka is again a Sri Krishna Namaskara describing his contribution to family, society and the world. Krishna as a son of Vasudeva was a member of the family. As one who destroyed asuras Kamsa and Chanura he was a protector of society. He taught Gita not only to Arjuna but also to posterity. In this role he was a Jagatguru to the world.

Shloka # 6:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।
 भक्त्या स्यात्प्रणम्यैव नमस्कृत्य ।
 श्रीकृष्णाय नमः । ॥ ६ ॥

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ।
 भक्त्या स्यात्प्रणम्यैव नमस्कृत्य ।
 श्रीकृष्णाय नमः । ॥ ६ ॥

This sholka is again a Sri Krishna Namaskara. In this Sholka Kaivartakaha means boatman. Even in a tempestuous situation a skilled boatman can cross the river. Here Mahabharatha is compared to a treacherous river with many dangers. Pandavas

need to cross this river. Human beings also face such treacherous situations in life.

Aartaha means one who is in distress. Pandavas were caught in the Aartaha and in this situation Sri Krishna was their savior.

Describing the dangers, Bhishma and Drona were like banks of the river determining its course. The river itself is compared to Jaydritha. Prince of Gandhara, Shakuni, is compared to the dangerous blue water lily; Shalya a relative of pandavas was on opposite side like a crocodile; Kripa Acharya, a great archer and teacher was there as an under current. Then, there was Karna like a turbulent wave and Ashwathama and others who were man-eating fish. Duryodhana was like a whirlpool. Pandavas crossed the river due to a skillful boatman named Krishna. Sri Krishna will also help you, if you surrender to him.

Shloka 8:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

This shloka is again a namaskara to Madhava or Lakhmi Pati. The greatest wealth (Lakshmi) is wisdom. Sri Krishna had the benefit of this support. Swamiji says, he (Krishna) can make a dumb person eloquent. He can make a lame person climb the mountains by his grace. Swamiji says the studies of 700 verses of Gita are the mountain that we can successfully scale if we surrender to Sri Krishna.

Shloka # 9:

This shloka again is a namskara to Sri Krishna. Krishna is one who is worshipped by Brahma, Varuna, Indira and Marutha. The chanters of the Sama and all Vedas invoke Sri Krishna. The six Angas of Vedas, secondary scriptures, all chant the Lord's name in Paatha, Krama and Ghana Paatha. **Paatha is to**

recite the mantras in a sentence straight. In Krama Paatha, the first word of the mantra is added to the second, the second to the third, the third to the fourth and so on, until the whole sentence of the mantras is completed. In Ghana Paatha one repeats the mantras in various ways back and forth and in different patterns.

Swamiji says great Sanyasis, with a one pointed mind, see the lord in their own mind. Devotees see the lord outside. Even though he is described as a person, the Lord is not a person. The personal God has limitations of space and time. The real God is limitless and many people are not aware of him. Thus God has a limited form for devotees and a limitless one as well. To this all pervading God, I bow in namskara.

Ending the Gita Dhyanam, Swamiji prays, May God bless us in our study of this great scripture.

Prasna Upanishad – Class 1

On November 8, 2015, the Vedantic Study Group of HTGC started to listen to Prasna Upanishad by Swami Paramarthananda.

Swamiji started the class with the meaning of Vedanta:

- Vedantaha: Because this comes at the end portion of vedas,
- brahma vidhya because this deals with the knowledge of Brahman
- gyana kandaha: In this part of vedas only knowledge is discussed and not karma

Then Swamiji discussed different meanings of the word Upanishad :

1. Destroyer of samsara or sorrow;
2. Upani means taking Jivatma near Brahman; Shath means destroys ignorance that causes division between jivatma and paramatma as well as anything born out of ignorance: samsara, (ahangakra, karthrutwam, kama, karma, karma palam punarjenma and suga dhukkam)
3. That which unites paramatma and jivatma and destroys samsara.
4. The word Upanishad or vedanata can refers to the book or the knowledge that born out of the book is also Upanishad. Upanishad as sabtha or sound is Pramanam (means); Upanishads as knowledge is praman (result); the literature or the sound is pramanam and praman the result is gyanam. The knowledge born out of the Upanishad is the primary meaning of the Upanishad.

Prasna upanishad belongs to Atharvana Veda and one of the upanishads commented by Sankarachariyar.

This upanishad is a commentary on Mundaka Upanishad. Apara Vidya and apara vidya is mentioned in Mundaka Upanishads will be elaborated in Prasna upanishad. Condensed version in Mundaka Upanisahds are manthro upanishad and elaborated versions in Prasna upanisahds are brahmano Upanishads. Brahmno portions in Mundaka Upanishads are elaborated in Prasna upanishads. Chapters elobarated in Prasna Upanishad are:

1. Krishna and chukla Gathi
2. Upasana prana or hiranyagarba
3. Upasana
4. Brahma Vidya through susukthi
5. Om Kara upasana
6. Brahma Vidya through param Brahman

Prasnaha means question; each chapter begins with question and each chapter is answer to that question. Each question is asked by six different students.

Shanthi Pada: My sthula, shuksma sareeram should function in a fitting manner so that I can absorb the teaching. This shanthi pada is same as the one in Mundaka Upanishads and as a result, Swamiji did not elaborate the meaning.

Verse 1

The first two mantras are introductions by way of bringing the teacher and student together. In this mantra six students are introduced. Each student has two names. The first name is an original name and second is based on parampara. They are: Sukesha Bharadvaja, Satyakama Sibi, Surya Garga, Kausalya Asvalayana, Bhargava Vidharbha, and Kabandhin Katya. The names tell us of their great parentage. It informs us that they had good Samskara. Samskaras are there to create Shraddha in Vedas. All of them are well qualified. They are all Gyani's. They have now come for higher knowledge. This mantra also teaches us:

- Upanishads should always be learned from a Guru
- Unlike Science where new or fresh information is constantly sought after, in the area of spirituality, the old and traditional knowledge is prized more. The teacher is thus following tradition. There is no new topic or new method. Thus the glory of Sampradaya is emphasized. While in most sciences, a scholar is recognized by their new contribution, in Vedanta it is important to follow the teachings of previous guru's and teachers.