

Discussion Summary July 12, 2015

On July 12, 2015, the group listened to Swami Paramarthananda's 30th class on Katha Upaishad. This class covered verses 3 and 4 of first section of second chapter.

The following was captured by Ram Ramaswamy in today's lecture. If any body else has a different take on our discussion, we hope they will share it.

Discussing part 2 cantos 1 Shlokas 3 and 4 Swamiji today discussed the Atman or Consciousness. He described Consciousness as:

1. Independent of body and mind
2. Not limited by anything
3. All pervading
4. Eternal principle

The body is only a medium for its manifestation, similar to the bulb that manifests electricity. Death is the end of its manifestation. After death it continues in an un-manifest form. Swamiji says ownership of Consciousness is our goal. How to achieve this ownership? He lays out three methods. In a process that he calls Observer Observed Analysis, he recommends:

1. Keep negating the observed world of objects, the external world. The world of objects is experienced through: Touch, Color/Form, Taste, Smell and Interactions (mithuna). Interactions include all human interactions such as between man and woman, teacher and student etc.
2. Negating my body. Treat it as an object of experience
3. Observe the mind. Treat it as an object of experience. Negate the mind as well. Treat all properties of mind

including the thoughtless state experienced in meditation as an object of experience, hence to be negated.

Thus, when all experienced objects are removed through negation what is left is the Subject or Experiencer. Swamiji reiterates that once you know this Experiencer (Consciousness, Atman), from that time on there is no scope for sorrow.

So the question was how do we become aware of the Atman? What Practices can be adopted? Some of the suggestions from group were:

Pain is part of the human experience we have all been through sorrow of one kind or another but we can also use these painful episodes by a process of evaluation of ourselves, so we may grow spiritually, to determine where we are in this quest for enlightenment. The methodology is as follows:

We ask the questions: how deep is our sorrow? How long do these episodes last? How resilient is the human spirit in shaking off these situations so we come to the realization that our true identity is that we are inexorably bound to that Supreme Being who is always in a state of Satchidananda, and so by default as it were, we are also in that same state of mind.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy