

Bagawat Geeta, Class 16

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Swamiji starts off by refreshing our memory of last week's talks and specifically Shlokas 14 and 15. Sri Krishna wants to solve Arjuna's sorrow and wants him to fight the dharma adharma yudham. He teaches a philosophical approach consisting of Atma Anatma Viveka, a Dharmic approach consisting of Dharma and Adharma and lastly the worldly or Laukika approach. At any level you still have to fight, he tells Arjuna.

Shlokas 12 through 25 deal with philosophical approach. Here he discusses the real nature of Atma. Atma is an Akartha and an Abhoktha. Hence, you are not fighting nor are you a killer. Similarly neither Bhishma nor Drona are being killed. Giving example of a wave, when you look at a wave in the ocean, from the standpoint of the wave, it has got birth as well as death but if you see the essential nature of the wave, i.e. water, from the standpoint of water, it is neither born nor it gets destroyed. Giving another example, a desk has got a beginning and it has got an end. But once you learn to look at it as a wood, then even when the desk is destroyed, the wood continues to exist. Therefore, Arjuna, there is no killer and there is no killed. This is the philosophical angle and hence, Sri Krishna says Atma is eternal. Eternal means it was in the past, it is in the present, and it will be in future as well.

In Shloka 14 Sri Krishna says the Anatma is subject to change. Body mind complex cannot expect immortality. Swamiji says, once the Kaya Kalpam process was considered able to make the body immortal. The reality is, the authors of Kaya Kalpa themselves are dead.

In USA attempts are being made to preserve the dead body with the hope that one day science can bring the body back to life.

He says, body has come from Pancha Bhuthas and has to go back to them. Therefore Anatma is ephemeral. So, Arjuna, change your attitude. Accept, that in Anatma everything has to go. For this, Titiksha or mental strength is required. Pray for sahana shakthi to accept arrivals and departures. Without Titiksha, Brahma Gyanam and Moksha are not possible. (Shloka # 15). Such a person is known as Dhiraha. Dhiraha does not mean courageous but discriminating one. One who knows what to accept and what not to accept. As somebody has said:

- Tab 1
- Tab 2
- Tab 3

Oh God, Give me the strength to change what can be changed.
Give me the strength to accept what cannot be changed.ab 2
content goes here.

Give me the wisdom to know the difference between what can be changed and what cannot be changed.

A Dhiraha is not irritated by the changing world. Arrival is welcome and departure is not resisted. Such a person is Samaha. Such a person enjoys a mind for philosophical inquiry. An irritated mind cannot probe the truth regarding self.

When Sri Krishna says Saḥa, he means a tough mind, which has got a shock absorber. We have the option of filling all potholes on the road to make it smooth or we can fit the vehicle with a shock absorber. This may be a better approach, as it is difficult to fill all potholes on the road. So, a shock absorber in your mind is a better solution, as it will help manage one's reaction much better. With this, our anger intensity is less, as is its duration. Even in an evolved person anger does come, but he recovers from it very quickly. In a lower person the anger remains through out the day. In the lowest person (in evolution) anger remains till death. Titiksha means ability to manage emotions.

Shloka # 16:

“ The unreal comes not into being, the real never lapses into non-being. The truth about both these has been perceived by the seers of Reality.”

Swamiji says this is one of the deepest Shlokas of the Gita. Atma is real. Anatma is unreal. Atma has independent existence. Anatma has borrowed existence. Every object has its own intrinsic nature or Swaroopam. It is its real nature, intrinsic nature, and true nature. And also every object can have certain nature which is borrowed from outside and that borrowed nature, we will call it Incidental nature. Thus there are two natures, intrinsic nature and incidental nature. In Sanskrit, Svabhavika dharma means one's own dharma and Agantuka dharma means one that is borrowed, or incidental nature.

Intrinsic nature is present all the time.

Incidental nature is present only temporarily.

Giving an example Swamiji says: A vessel is filled with water to make hot water. You light the fire. The vessel becomes hot. By contact, water also becomes hot. Vegetable in water also becomes hot.

Thus:

Fire is hot because it is fire.

Vegetable heat is incidental as it is borrowed from water.

Water's heat is incidental as it is borrowed from vessel.

Vessel's heat is incidental as it is borrowed from fire.

Fire is hot because of its intrinsic property. All others are incidental and subject to arrival and departure. Whatever is incidental is borrowed and is subject to loss.

Heat in fire is intrinsic and not subject to arrival and departure. Anything perishable is an impermanent thing and enjoys existence for a short time. This body also is impermanent. Before birth, it did not exist, after death too

body will not exist. Every impermanent thing enjoys existence for some time, but not before or after.

All these impermanent things are incidental. While intrinsic nature exists forever. Therefore, all impermanent things do not have existence as their own nature. They only have a "borrowed" existence. Like a "Make up" beauty, as long as "make up" lasts, it is there. This is called Mithya or Unreal. Whereas, whatever is permanent, enjoys an intrinsic nature. It is defined as Sathyam.

Example of lump of clay converted to a pot was given. Now, there is a Pot. Pot got destroyed. Pot enjoyed "borrowed" existence from Clay. Clay alone lends existence to Pot. Clay was there before pot, even during pot's existence and after pot broke as well.

Thus, Clay has an intrinsic nature or a permanent one. This is called Sathyam.

The pot has a borrowed existence and is hence called Mithya.

Vedanta is trying to understand Sathyam and Mithya. Thus, Atma is Sathyam Anatma is Mithya.

Swamiji says, my mind changes. Other peoples minds also change. As I love you, I may also un-love you.

Shloka # 17:

" on the contrary, know that to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can destroy that which is immutable."

In Pot the clay is like the Atma. If pot is destroyed, Clay is not destroyed. Anatma can be and will be destroyed, while Atma will always be there. So, Arjuna, internalize this concept well. Bhishma and Drona are all Atma's whom you cannot destroy.

This Atma pervades this whole creation. Like space, Atma is all pervading. So, how many Atma's can be there? There is only

one Atma while there are many bodies. Just as there is one space with many houses within it. Each house has space enclosed in it. Houses are counted, but not the space within them. Anatma are many and counted, but Atma is everywhere but not counted. This is the basis for our namaskara. You are really worshiping Atma. Other religions do not understand this. Even an ant and a cow have "Atma".

Atma is Nithyaha. Atma is Satyaha. Atma is Sarvagathaha.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 13

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Third Question

Summarizing his talks from last week, Swamiji says, the last part of the third question was how does this Prana (Samasthi) sustain the external universe? How does the Prana, as Vyashthi, sustain the individual?

Prana does not sustain Atma, it only sustains Anatma. Vyashthi Prana sustains Vyashti and Samashthi Prana sustains Samashthi. The Pancha pranas (Apana, Udana, Samana and Vyana) sustain the Vyashthi. How it sustains the Samashthi Prana is described in shloka # 8.

Shloka # 8:

Vyashti

Samashthi

Prana	Aditya Devatha
Apana	Prithvi Devi
Samana	Akasha Devatha (Antar Akasha or Anthariksham)
Vyana	Vayuhu Devatha, all pervading.
Udanaha	Agni Devata or Tejaha.

Adithya is the external expression of Prana, also called Bahya Prana. Adithya blesses the eye as well. Prithvi is Bahya Apana. Anthariksha or intermediate world (Bhuvar Loka) is Samana. Bahya Vayu is Vyana and Tejas or Agni Devata is Udana.

Shloka # 9:

Vava means indeed. The fire principle pervades at the cosmic (virat) level and is the external expression of Udana. In form of Udana it sustains whole cosmos and individual Udana. So, the question of how does Prana sustain the external universe has been answered. It sustains the universe as the Pancha Prana named Adithya, Prithvi, Akasha, Vayuhu and Agni.

The next question is how does Prana get out of the body?

Although it was answered in shloka # 7 that Prana goes out of Susushmna Nadi, this process is elaborated in Shloka 9. At time of death all five Pranas are withdrawn and absorbed in Udana. All pancha pranas start failing. This Udana now leaves body as Agni Tatvam. Thus, the heat of the body also leaves. The body becomes cold. One whose body has become cold moves to another body along with same Indriyas or organs.

Udana Vayu takes the fragrance of life away with Indriyas. Indriyas are resolved or packed in the mind. The moment Udana enters another body the mind unpacks. The life goes to another body through the Susushmna Nadi.

In which direction does Prana go upon death?

It depends upon what Sankalpa is in the mind.

Shloka # 10:

The Sankalpa is the innate craving deep in each one of us. Everyone has a deep ambition called Bhavana or Sankalpa. Sankapla comes about from thinking deeply about an idea all the time. Thus, all four pranas go out with Udana. The Jivatma also goes with the Sankapla. Thus:

At death, Chidabhasha Comes to Prana> All four Pranas+Jivatma+Sankapla come to> Udana>Goes out in search of a Loka.

Tejas means Udana. This Udana is packed with everything and takes Jivatma to various Lokas. According to Sankapla, the Udana takes one to a particular Loka. In case of Jivatma's, the Udana gets confused, as they do not have any Sankalpa and does not know where to go. " I have no intention of going anywhere as I have no Sankapla,"

With this, all questions raised by student have been answered. How Prana goes out of body has been answered as well.

Now Pipillada comes to Prana Upasana. Everything so far has been leading to this Upasana. Utkrishta means superior object. Until now Prana's superiority has been described. So, now, Samashthi Prana Upasana starts.

Shloka # 11:

Swamiji says, here a carrot is held as to why one has to perform the Prana Upasana or what phalam they will get from it.

That person who knows Prana in this manner, as described in questions 2 and 3, is a Vidwan. One who meditates on Samshthi prana , Hiranyagarbha, his children will have a long life.

The description of the phalam is as follows: After death the Upasaka goes to Brahma Loka, attains knowledge there and obtains Krama mukthi or relative immortality and then gets

real immortality as well. This shloka also quotes another shloka in support. This shloka comes from Brahmanas. Vedas are divided into Mantra, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishads. Brahmana is a commentary on Mantra portion. The mantra bhaga is quoted for support. Prasna Upanishad also is a part of Brahmana.

The meaning of the Brahmana Shloka is:

One who knows the following details of Prana attains immortality. They are the answers to the five questions asked by students. Thus, they are:

1. How does Prana come into existence? It comes out of Atma like a shadow.
2. How Prana arrives in body? It arrives in body because of our purva karmas through the mind.
3. How are Pranas positioned? The pancha pranas, Apana, Udana, Samana, Vyana and Prana have their roles defined.
4. How is Pranas power distributed? Like an Emperor it delegates powers to other Pranas.
5. How does it function? By dividing itself into the fivefold pranas.

How does it sustain at individual and cosmic levels? At individual level, through the pancha pranas. At Samashthi level, through Adithya, Prithvi, Akasha, Vayu and Agni Devatas.

Having known these answers and having meditated upon them, one gets Brahma Loka. The result is definite and this concludes this chapter.

For one interested in Jivan mukthi, one obtains Vedantha and a proper teacher to teach it.

Some definitions:

Upashantham means cold or colder.

Mumukshuhu means dying person.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 15

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Swamiji starts off by refreshing our memory of last week's talks.

Arjuna expresses his helplessness and surrenders to Sri Krishna in grief and requests him to teach. He raises the question if it is correct to fight one's guru and kin.

Sri Krishna takes three approaches in answering Arjuna. The philosophical, the Ethical and the Worldly approach in teaching Arjuna.

In the philosophical approach he informs Arjuna that he is none other than the eternal Atma as are the others such as Bhishma and Drona. Everything is Atma. Atma is Chaitanya Swarupam. It is neither a karta nor a bhoktha. There is no one killing or being killed. When you are a pot, you think of the origin as a pot and destruction also of a pot.

However, when you shift your vision you realize it is the clay in the pot at all times. During the Pot's birth, life and death, the clay remains as is. It was clay at beginning and it continues to remain clay. So from the Pot's vision there is birth and death. From the Clay's vision there is no birth or death. In the ocean example, from standpoint of wave-vision, there is the birth of a wave and there is a death; but from the standpoint of water-vision, nothing is born and nothing is gone. Change the mind to understand that Atma alone is there. There is no birth or death. There is no punyam or papam. So,

Arjuna, you do your duty. This is the philosophical approach. To understand this, one has to have a sharp intellect. This is the topic (philosophical) discussed from Shloka #12-25.

If one does not understand or grasp the philosophical approach, for some reason, then Sri Krishna points out a Dharmic approach or ethical approach, as well. For sake of Dharma, a Kshatriya must be ready to fight and give up life, if all other doors are closed. Therefore Arjuna you should fight. So from philosophical angle, you must fight and from an ethical angle also you should fight.

Offering yet another approach Sri Krishna says, Arjuna, you may not believe in ethics itself. You may not believe in Dharma or Adharma. But as long as you are in society, aren't you conscious of your self-esteem, your social status, and how the other people think of you?

You are bothered about your name and fame and from that angle also, or Laukika Dr̥ṣṭi, you have to fight this war. Otherwise, you will get a very bad name. You will lose your honor.

So, these are the three angles taken by Sri Krishna. We will first deal with the philosophical angle, from 12 to 25.

Sri Krishna defines Atma as Chaitanyam and it is different from the body and it pervades the body. It is not a product, part or property of the body. It is a separate entity. Providing the hand analogy, when you are seeing the hand, you are seeing the two things, one is the hand, and another thing is the light. Light is on the hand, but it is not a property, part or a product of the hand. Atma is the conscious principle that makes the body sentient and alive. It is not bound by limitations of body. Again, giving example of light, it is not bound by the hand. Light pervades everywhere. Light continues even if hand is removed. However, now, when the hand is removed this light is not visible anymore. To see the light you need a hand or a

manifesting medium. Only when hand is placed, you see the light. Thus Atma becomes Vyaktham. After death Atma becomes Avaykatham.

This first property property of Atma is called Nithyaha or it is eternal. It exists as a Vyaktha (visible) or Avyaktha (invisible).

The second property of Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha.

It does not perform any action. When the hand moves, it does so, because it is a limited entity, while light is all pervading. Motion is possible only for limited bodies such as hand, the earth etc. Can space move? Space travel is not space traveling but it is traveling in space. Space cannot travel, as it is all pervading.

Any action requires motion. Any motion is a limitation. Even thinking requires thought motion. Atma being limitless, it cannot perform any action, hence it is called an Akartha. So, it is also Abhoktha or free from the results of action.

Kartha alone reaps karmaphalam. The eater alone gets benefit from hunger Nivriti. Kartha Eva Bhoktha Bhavathi. Whatever are experiences in life is due to our karma phalam. Other people can only serve as a medium for our experiences. Any problem created anywhere in the world is experienced only because of you. Similarly, any struggle, any problem created by anyone in the world, do not take it as their problem, it is my karma phalam, coming through those people. Because of what law does this occur? The law that states that Karta eva bhokta bhavathi. If atma is akarta, atma is abhokta. This is the second property of Atma. Atma is Nithya. Atma is akarta and abhokta.

Atma is Nirvikaraha. This is a third property of Atma. Whatever changes happens to hand, the light is not affected. Hand may get dirty, may get wounded but light is not affected. Body goes through modifications such as Childhood, Boyhood,

Youth and Old age. However, Atma does not have these experiences.

The Atma cannot be seen. The Atma is the seer, the subject, not the object. Eyes cannot see itself. Thus, Atma is Aprameya, another definition of Atma. Seer cannot be seen. Experiencer cannot be experienced. Aprameya is the fourth definition of Atma.

Shloka # 12:

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

In this shloka everything is in double negatives. Thus: You cannot say Atma was absent in the past. You cannot say Atma is absent in present. You cannot say Atma will not be there in future.

Swamiji noted that the Shloka does not address the present as Sri Krishna and Arjuna were already in the present.

Shloka # 13:

“Just as the embodied Self has, in the body, childhood, youth, and old age, so does it win another body. An intelligent man is not bewildered by it.”

What is birth and death? If I am eternal, then birth and death are only changing the medium of interaction, the body. The body has to change, as it will be worn out. We are the medium and it goes through changes. In the body there are four stages of experience. Balyam, Kaumaram, Youwanam, and Jara (old age). While body goes through changes, my identity does not change. The “I” remains the same. As per biology, all our body cells change very few years. Our cells are continuously changing, we are just not aware of it. “I” still remain amidst all changes. If you extend this, you can change the useless body with another body. It is like demolishing an old building and

building a new one. However, in all this, the space in the building does not change. It is forever.

Dhiraha: does not mean courageous. It means discriminating person. One who accepts body as a temporary medium? One who is not deluded? Therefore, Arjuna, in this war too, Bhishma shariram will go, however, Bhishma, the ātma will never go. Similarly with Droṇa shariram and Karṇa shariram. So why are you grieving?

Shloka # 14:

“O son of Kunti, contacts of senses with their objects cause cold and heat, pleasure and pain. These come and go-they are fleeting. O Bharatha Prince, endure them.”

Just as you understand and accept the nature of Atma, so also, become aware of the nature of Anatma and accept it. The nature of a thing cannot be changed. Giving an example, Swamiji says: One man did not like Onion. He wanted to change the smell of onion. He put the onion in Camphor powder, musk, and saffron and in scented water. After all

that it still smelled like an onion. So also, nature of a thing cannot be changed. It is a waste of time trying to change nature. Rather one should change our attitude towards nature, that nature cannot be changed. This change in attitude is to “accept” the nature of the body. Most of our problems are due to not accepting the nature of things. While Nature cannot be changed our attitude towards Nature can be changed. And in what way can we change the attitude? We can change our attitude to one of “acceptance”. I accept the nature of the body. This is the upāsana.

So, when summer comes, we feel hot. Rather than accepting the glory of the sun, we complain about the heat. So, we should change our attitude towards the body, nature etc. Until I learn to accept nature, problems will be there. In fact, resistance leads to sorrow. Learn to live with the situation,

rather than running away. This will increase your capacity to accept heat, cold, pain and pleasure. Life is a series of opposite experiences. Thus, if Manam (pride) comes, apamanam (insult) will come. If samyogaḥ takes place, there will be viyogaḥ. If there is growth, there will be decay. If there is gain, there will be loss. Life is a series of opposite experiences. This is the nature of Anatma. They are subject to arrival and departure. When they come, be mentally prepared to welcome them, when they depart, be mentally prepared to send them off. Thus, Atma is Anithya, impermanent. May you develop the endurance, both physical and mental, to bear this.

Shloka # 15:

“O hero, The man whom these do not agitate, who is the same in pain and pleasure, and who is wise, becomes fit indeed for immortality.”

The faculty of endurance is called Titiksha. Titiksha is the quality where one does not get irritated immediately. When our endurance is less, we become irritated quickly. Not to react immediately, not to get irritated immediately, not to punish the other person immediately; because when the endurance is less, we get irritated very quickly.

Lack of endurance (patience)>causes Irritation>causes Anger>causes Himsa.

The lack of endurance is a modern problem.

Swamiji says the quality known as Titiksha is essential for Atmagyanam.

In olden times Gurus used to ask Shishyas to perform mundane and boring tasks such as tending the cows and cutting the firewood. If the student displayed patience, he was allowed to stay and learn. Therefore Sri Krishna says samdukkhasukham, One who is calm and tranquil, he alone is fit for this

knowledge.

Suggested take away from this class:

1. Learn to practice Titiksha.
2. While body goes through changes, my identity does not change. The “I” remains the same. Try to be aware consciously of this never changing “I” within you.

With my good wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 12

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Third Question

Summarizing his talks up to Shloka # 5 Swamiji says the third student asks for some more details about Prana. The third question has following five questions:

1. From where does this Prana (Vyashthi and Samashthi) come from? What is the origin of Hiranyagarbha or of Brahma?
2. How does Prana enter this physical body?
3. How does that one Prana divide itself into the five fold functions and support this body?
4. Through which part does the Prana go out of this body at death?
5. How does this Prana (Samasthi) sustain the external universe? How does the Prana, as Vyashthi, sustain the individual or the 19 sense organs

Answers to the questions are:

1. Origin of Prana is Brahman or Atman. Prana is compared to a shadow or Chaya. It is an apparent creation. The Shadow does not have a reality. Independent of the Brahman.
2. How does Prana enter the body? It is through the Mind, representing Prarabhda Karma born out of Sankalpa and Kama, that the Prana enters the body. Sankalpa is considered mild while Kama is considered intense.
3. How does Prana divide into five fold functions? Here Prana is compared to an Emperor who delegates responsibilities to others. He delegates powers to Apana, Udana, Samana and Vyana. He also keeps some powers to himself such as the power of respiration.
4. What parts of body are supervised by the Pancha Pranas?

Shloka # 5:

Swamiji says, Pippalada continues answering the above question. The role of each Prana is now pointed out.

Apana: Deals with Excretion and reproduction. It removes waste.

Prana: deals with the face including Eyes, Ears, Mouth and Nostrils. He controls inhalation and exhalation as well.

Samana: Deals with digestive power in the middle. The food, considered an offering or oblation, a Hutam (Homa Agni), is divided equally. The annam is broken into nutritious ingredients equally and distributed. The flame of oblation comes out in seven flames or Seven Sense organs, which are all kindled. The seven sense organs are: Two eyes, two ears, two nostrils and the tongue in the mouth. These seven organs function well when food is provided. The fire kindles the organs and activates their perceptual powers.

Shloka # 6:

Vyana: Affects whole body and it moves through the Nadi's that pervade all over the body. All Nadis are connected to

Hridayam. From Hridayam, Nadis branch out. Hridaya is the place of Atman. This Apraksha Atma resides in antahakaranam or the Hridayam (the physical heart).

In Physical heart is the subtle body and within it is located the subtle mind. In the subtle mind is located the Atma or Chaitanya. From Hridayam 100 Nadi's emerge. Shankara and some other Upanishads say there are 101 Nadi's. These are the main Nadi's. Each of them in turn has 100 Sub-Nadi's. Thus, these 10,000 Nadi's further divide into 72,000 Prathi-Shaka Nadi's. Into all these Nadi's Vyana travels. Thus Vyana travels through the whole body.

Shloka # 7:

Udana: affects the neck and above portion of body. It takes Prana above. Here it waits for Prana to leave the body.

This is the answer to question 3 and 4 as to how Prana escapes and from where?

Prana escapes through Susuhumna Nadi. This happens only for Upsakas and not for normal people. Who takes the Prana? Urdha Udana, at the upper part of body, leads Prana to various Lokas. At death, other Pranas are absorbed or merged in Udana. At death everything stops.

To which Loka does it take?

Through Punyam, it takes to Punya Loka (Swarga Loka). For Papam, it takes to Naraka Loka (lower birth). If both, papam and punyam are joined, then it takes to Manushya Loka.

The last question: How is Prana sustaining the cosmos at Samashthi level and the Body at Vyashthi level?

Shloka # 8:

Prana manifests internally through the Pancha Pranas. They support at the Vyashthi level.

Corresponding to each Pancha Prana there is an objective manifestation at Samashthi level.

Thus:

Prana (At Vyashthi level)	Adiyya Devatha
Apana	Prithvi Devi
Samana Anthariksham)	Akasha Devatha (Antar Akasha or
Vyana	Vayuhu Devatha, all pervading.
Udanaha	Agni Devata or Tejaha.

Adithya is the external expression of Prana. Between Vyashthi and Samashthi, Samashthi blesses Vyashthi. Vyashthi Prana blesses Vyashthi; Samashthi Prana blesses Samashthi Prana. Adithya blesses the eyes as well as it can only see with light. Adithya while blessing all Pranas specially blesses eyes.

Prithvi supports Vyashti Apana and holds her down

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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 Shashtra. 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 Amṛtam 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 Experienter of all the three states. This "I" is the Atma.

Features of the Atma:

1. "I " am ever the Subject (Experienter) 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; nirvikarah; sarvagatah, akarta and abhokta are Atma's attributes. The Atma, like the light, is changeless, the all pervading and the experienter.

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 Dharmasansthapanam. 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

Prasna Upanishad, Class 11

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Third Question

Swamiji says in first chapter Srishti was discussed. The Krishna Gathi and Shukla Gathi were emphasized. Having discussed these, the second and third chapters are dedicated to Prana (at Vyashti level) and Hiranyagarbha (at Samashti level).

For sake of Prana Upasana, glory of Prana was described in Chapter 2. Glorifying the deity is part of Mimasa Vada, before his or her Upasana.

Prana Sruthi was at the Vyashti and Samashthi levels. At Vyashthi level via the story of the organs, Prana was glorified. At the macrocosmic level or Hiranya-garbha every Karanam has a Devata. Prana sustains all individual organs. Everything is born of Samashthi Prana or Hiranya garbha. Since Prana is such a powerful deity, now an Upasana starts.

After answering the questions by previous two students the third student, Kausalya Asvalyana now asks the third series of questions:

Oh Bhagavan Pippalada:

1. From where does this Prana (Vyashti and Samashthi) come from?
2. What is the origin of Hiranyagarbha or of Brahma?
3. How does Prana enter this physical body?
4. How does that one Prana divide itself into the five fold functions and support this body?
5. Through which part does the Prana go out of this body at death?
6. How does this Prana (Samasthi) sustain the external universe?
7. How does the Prana, as Vyashthi, sustain the individual or the 19 sense organs?

Shakthi always belongs to Maya, says Swamiji. Thus, we have Kundalini, Kriya, Ichha, Para, Jnana, and Mantrika Shakti's. Why is no power or Shakthi attributed to Brahman? Power can change. Power can also be inter-convertible such as Solar to Electric. However, Brahman cannot change, hence no power attributed to Brahman.

The entire chapter 3 is an answer to all these questions. The Prana Upasana comes only briefly at the end of the chapter. Why introduce this topic here, when the goal is Upasana, asks Swamiji? Answering, he says, in previous section we said Prana

is the basis for everything. It clearly resembles the glorification of Brahman. The Teacher has to glorify Prana, so that it shows it is only a relative support, and not the Supreme support. The Pancha Bhutas are Prithvi, Jala (water), Agni (fire), Vayu (air), and Akasha (ether) and all originate from Prana. Prana's greatness, however, is only relative. Thus, Prana itself originates from some other source. That source is the Absolute. We discuss its relative power because we are performing Prana's Upasana.

Shloka # 2: Pippalada responds: Your questions are going beyond limits. Up to Prana, it is describable. Beyond that it is more mysterious as it is all Maya. Even Brahman cannot be intellectually conceived.

You are a great Brahma Yogi. You have been a Saguna Brahma Upasaka. (Per Shankara: You are a Brahma Gyani or you will become one). Therefore, I shall answer these very subtle questions.

Shloka # 3:

1. Here the first question is answered. From where does this Prana (Vyashti and Samashthi) come from?
2. What is the origin of Hiranyagarbha or of Brahma? The second question is also answered

Prana is born from Atma. Atma becomes the Karanam, yet it is only an "apparent" cause. In reality nothing is born out of Atma. Atma is not the real Karanam. If Atma is not the real Karanam, then Srishti is also a Mithya. (As Per Advaita it an apparent cause. As per Visishtadvaita-It is really born). Here, however, Prasna Upanishad says, it only an apparent cause, just as in a person there is a shadow nearby. The shadow comes without any effort. It comes automatically. So also the Brahman does not plan the shadow. Shadow does not have a reality independent of the Brahman, Because of the presence of Atman, Hiranyagarbha or Prana is born or thrown

out. Thus, Prana is born out of Atman, apparently as a shadow. Because of the number of shadows my weight is not decreased. Let any number of shadows come; I am still the complete Brahman.

Question # 3: How does Prana come to this body?

It is because of Karma says Pippalada. In the word Manokritena, Manaha is Karma.

Thus Manaha (Mind)> Sankalpa (Plan)>Kama (Desire)>Karma (Action)

Because of Karma, Prana enters the body and due to force of Karma it continues. Once Prarabdha Karma is completed, this body also goes or Prana leaves.

Question # 4: How does Prana divide itself?

Swamiji says an Emperor has infinite powers. He delegates them to his ministers. Power, however, remains with the Emperor. Similarly, Prana has total power. He delegates powers to Apana, Udana, Samana and Vyana. He also keeps some powers to himself such as the power of respiration

With best 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 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 one's life is led as per his own raga and dvesha. After Upanayanam all his activities must be according to Shastras or as per the three Vedas. The age for Upanayam for Brahmin is 5; Kshatriya is 11 and for Vaishya is 12.

A person born as a Dvijaha but has not had Upanayanam 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. Hiranyagarbha 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 Atharvana 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 12

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Before getting into details of Chapter 2, Swamiji refreshed our memory on the key concepts presented in chapter 1. He says the disease called Samsara plagues mankind. It is an internal and psychological disease. Raga (Likes), Dvesha (Dislikes) and Moha (delusion) characterize this Samsara disease. Often, not understanding the true problem we look to external factors as the root cause (s). Thus, a poor man thinks his poverty is the cause of his problem.

In another example, an unmarried person thinking of marriage to solve his problems sees that his friends with wives all still seem to have problems.

Giving yet another example of a man who while riding a bus heard a noise and thought it was a tire problem. When he asked others in the bus they said they did not hear a noise. He was not convinced. He asked the driver to stop the bus and check the tires. They found the tires were fine. Later the man went to an Ear Doctor and learned that he had a hearing problem that caused him to hear noises.

Similarly, all our problems are noises of Samsara (Kama, Krodha and Moha) and they are all internal as well. Performing an external adjustment will not work, says Swamiji.

Only a mature person, who has experienced the world, comes to know that the problem is within him. He, however, does not know how to solve it. This is known as Dainya Avastha or the helpless stage. Once he becomes aware of his helplessness he

then goes to Sharanagathi or going to an external power to solve the problem. At this stage, Shranagathi, one has to accept and be humble enough to surrender to someone. After Sharnagathi comes the stage of giving the solution and pursuit of spiritual knowledge. This is the Bhagavat Gita stage. So, the four stages of ones evolution are:

1. Discovery of the true problem of Samsara,
2. Reaching a state of helplessness in solving the problem,
3. Seeking the help and advice of some one, Sharanagathi and
4. The Solution to the Samsara problem

Of these four stages, while Arjuna has discovered his problem he has not yet arrived at the helpless stage. He, however, has doubts about his decision. Swamiji says a doubt is better than a wrong decision. At least here there is the possibility of help and a solution. In Chapter #1 Arjuna made a wrong decision. Now he progresses to the doubt stage.

Swamiji says it like progressing from: Tamas>Rajas> Satva.

Shloka # 1:

Arjuna has thrown down his bow and arrow. He has not yet asked Lord Krishna for help. Arjuna's attachment led to his blurred eyes that further obstructed his vision. This was the poignant condition of Arjuna, the Samsari, that Sri Krishna saw.

Kripa in this Shloka means attachment and not compassion. Also, Avishtam means overpowered. A man of compassion is also called a Swami while a man of attachment is called Kami.

Recognizing Arjuna's condition Sri Krishna decides to break the ice. He criticizes Arjuna with strong words so that he could motivate him to get up and fight.

Sri Krishna says, " From where did such a low thought (Kashamalam) come into you. You are known for courage. You

have fought many battles before. You have defeated Shiva. How come you are crying in this battlefield at such a critical time of battle? Such dejection can never come to an Arya (noble person). If you are a noble person, do your duty. If you do not do your duty it will give you papam in the next life. In this life, as well, you will live with ill-fame."

Some Clarification:

Arya: Discussing the meaning of the word Arya used in this shloka, Swamiji says, it does not mean people who migrated to Iran to India, nor does it mean fair complexioned people. The Shastric meaning of Arya includes:

- It is the character that makes a person an Arya, not his birth.
- One who does what has to be done, pleasant or unpleasant. Duty is duty.
- One who is without likes or dislikes.
- One who will not do anything that should not be done.
- One who leads a life of discipline.

Shloka # 3:

Sri Krishna continues: " Hey Arjuna, Kleivyam (unmanliness) does not suit you. You are known for your courage. How can you be frightened? Get away from this weak-heartedness that makes you a disgrace and get up."

Param tapa means scorcher of enemies.

Here Sri Krishna does not teach Arjuna the Gita Gyanam yet. The reason is, Arjuna has not yet surrendered himself to Sri Krishna and as such is not yet ready to listen or receive his teaching. Hence, says Swamiji, it is foolish to give him advice. Sri Krishna knows Arjuna has not yet exhausted his emotions.

Here Swamiji counsels that one should only advise a person who wants it, values it and asks for it. Without asking no advise

should be given.

Shloka # 3:

Now Arjuna says: "Oh Madhsudhana, how can I fight Bhishma and Drona who really deserve worship? They are my Gurus."

Shloka # 4:

If Arjuna decides not to fight he will have to go to the forest and live on bhiksha. This is considered a papam. As per Shastras, a Grihasta cannot live on Bhiksha. Only a Brahmachari or Vanaprastha can live on Bhiksha. A Grihasta has to give Bhiksha and not ask for it. Per Arjuna, killing Bhishma is also a papam. Thus, Arjuna has to choose between two papams. Both are bad choices. Here, normally, we humans, try to avoid making a decision. Arjuna, however, chooses to live on bhiksha.

Arjuna says: " If I fight and kill my two Gurus, I may get the kingdom, but Sri Krishna, will I be able to enjoy the pleasures of victory? I will only remember how they struggled and died in battle. Neither in this world or next will I enjoy life after seeing that. Therefore, I am not in favor of this war.

Suggested take away from this class:

Swamiji counsels that one should only advise a person who wants it, values it and asks for it. Without asking no advise should be given.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 9

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Second Question, Shloka # 6:, Swamiji said all mantras from #5 to # 13 are Prana Devata Sruthi or praise. Refreshing our memory on Shloka 6, he says all 10 Gyanendriyas are able to function because of Prana Shakthi. At Samashti (cosmic) level each Gyanendriya is also a Devata. Thus Hiranyagarbha Devata represents Prana. All Devatas are able to perform due to Prana Shakthi. At our individual level also we are able to perform due to the Prana Shakthi.

All powers in creation (rain, planetary motion, gravity, atomic etc.) perform because of one basic power called Prana Shakthi. When we worship Prana Shakti it is not the material aspect of the Shakti we worship, rather we are worshipping the intelligence behind the Prana Shakti. Although we are aware of the solar energy, the Shakti, the one we worship is Surya Devata, the intelligence behind it.

Upasana is always performed of an Utkrishta Vastu (A superior force). When we worship Chetana it is spiritual worship rather than worship of a material or inert substance. Swamiji says we should worship Shakti with Shiva. Shakti is the energy while Shiva is the intelligence principle behind Shakti.

Mantra # 6: Discussing this mantra, Swamiji says, the spokes are the many powers while the hub is the Prana where they get their power. Swamiji says rituals or Yagnas are performed in Rig, Yajur and Sama mantras. Yagnas have meaning when there is somebody to perform them. Thus:

Kshatram: means Kshatriya who performs the Yagna of protecting the Yaga and the Brahmana who performs it.

Brahman: Is the one who performs the Yagnas.

Prana Shakti supports all of them.

Mantra # 7:

Continuing praise of Prana Shakti, He says, Prana is the lord of Brahma, Rudra and Vishnu. They are divisions of Prana Shakti. This power is available in every being i.e., power of reproduction and propagation. It is divided into male and female. Every male and female has the creative power. Only when a male and female join a child is born. You alone are later born in the form of parents. Thus, all Beings are giving oblation to you alone. Each sense organ gives oblation to the Prana Shakti. When this offering or Oblation is stopped, death occurs.

Swamiji says each indriya has a Shakti such as Shruvanam, Darshanam etc. They are all manifestation of the Prana Shakti.

Mantra # 8:

You are the greatest carrier of Oblations. You are Agni, the carrier of oblations. You are the first oblation given to forefathers.

Before any puja, one has to perform Naandi Shradha, a worship of ancestors. This great Karma is performed for Kula-Parampara and Kula-Dharma. This offering is known as Shradha. The offering of Annam is also Prana Shakti.

The way of life of Rishis is the truthful way. Hence we remember them. Atharva and Angirasa are mentioned as Rishis.

Shankaracharya gives a different interpretation: He says Rishis are sense organs. Sense organs know color smell etc. Atharva is another name for sense organs. Angirsa is also another name for sense organs. Their functions nourish the individual Prana Shakti.

Mantra # 9: Hey Paraná, by your power you are none other than

Indra or Rudra, the protector. You are moving in the sky as the Sun or as Vayu in the Anthariksa.

Every cause has an effect. Thus Brahman>Maya>Akasha>Vayu>Prithvi are examples of cause and effect. Prana is the cause of everything, says Swamiji.

Manta # 10: Here Prana is praised as rain. Hey Prana, You alone are poring as rain. All people become full of Ananda because sufficient food will now be available. Swamiji says our very living depends on rain.