

Bagawat Geeta, Class 22

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Refreshing our memory, Swamiji reminded us that Arjuna was suffering from problems of attachment and his internal conflict of whether to fight or not on the battlefield. He had delusions about what is dharma and what is not. Nevertheless he surrenders to Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna has a two-fold job before him. He has to remove Arjuna's sorrow as well as convince him that it is a dharma yudha and it is proper to fight the battle.

Sri Krishna takes three approaches to convince Arjuna. The first one is Philosophical, where he discusses the true nature of the individual and how it is free from all actions. The Atma does not perform any action. Thus, there is no question of proper or improper action. Discussing the Ethical or Dharmic Drishthi here also Arjuna has to fight. Even if a person does not believe in the Philosophical and Dharmic approach, from a Laukika approach too Arjuna has to fight. If not, you will lose your name and fame. From any of the three angles you still have to fight.

Shloka # 38:

“Looking with an equal eye on pleasure and pain, gain and loss,

victory and defeat, strive to fight; thus will you incur no sin.”

Sri Krishna tells Arjuna the attitude he needs to take in the fight. It is an attitude that needs to be taken by all of us. It is called Samatvam or balance of mind. Not being carried away by any situation. Samatvam is very important as it allows

our thinking power to work. In a disturbed mind the mind does not think clearly. Also, the person does not learn from the experience. Tragedy teaches us more than any other experience. One must have a relatively calm mind and maintain balance.

Previously IQ was thought to be the cause of success. Now it is felt that EQ helps one succeed. Student who does not know the first question of the examination loses his balance and is thrown off in an examination, although he knows the rest of the questions. EQ is more important than IQ for human success. So, prepare to build your EQ.

No human being can always be successful. Success in life is nothing but the capacity to face success and failure without disturbance. So, Arjuna, keep your mind in balance.

Whether in gain or loss, victory or defeat, face the situation with equanimity. Swamiji says, Sri Krishna does not teach how to succeed all the time; rather he teaches how to face success and failure.

Arjuna having prepared the mind, get ready to do your duty. Ups and downs will be there, face them with proper attitude. Even from worst of situations, learn from it. I can find fault with another person or find fault with one self for lack of preparation. Adversity introduces a person to himself, says Swamiji.

Shloka # 39:

“This knowledge of Samkhya has so far been imparted to you. Now, listen to (a statement of) the knowledge of Yoga by acquiring which , O Arjuna! You will discard the bondage of works.”

Here Sri Krishna is changing from one topic to another. Until now I spoke about Gyana Yoga (Atma Anatma Viveka) or Self Knowledge. It is also the discovery of freedom from external situations. The chapter is called Sankhya and here Sankhyam

means Atman.

Sankhya Upanishad , the Truth about oneself or Atma Gyanam, is what I have given to you. From now on I am going to deal with Karma Yoga.

Why does Sri Krishna introduce Karma Yoga, asks Swamiji? Gyana Yoga alone frees one from sorrow. Why then teach Karma Yoga? Even though Gyana Yoga is only way for liberation, everyone is not fit for Gyana Yoga. Thus, Karma Yoga is a stepping-stone towards Gyana Yoga. So, prepare your mind, and then go to Gyana Yoga. Karma Yoga is incomplete without Gyana Yoga. In Kali Yuga, Gyana Yoga is difficult. If Gyana Yoga is difficult then we need to find ways to make it easier. Preparation of mind through Karma Yoga will make it easier. Like mathematics, for some it is easy and others it is difficult. For a prepared mind the math is easy. So also it is with Karma Yoga.

So listen to this teaching. Once you learn this, you will attain liberation. Liberation means freedom from all emotional problems, enjoying a wonderful mind.

Shloka # 40:

“Here in the sphere of Karma Yoga there is no loss of good beginnings ; nor is there any sin involved. Even a little of this righteous law delivers one from great peril.”

Sri Krishna glorifies Karma Yoga in this shloka although he has not yet described what Karma Yoga is. Karma Yoga is the way of life where we grow internally, more. Here we give importance to internal growth rather than external growth. **Swamiji Says: “Peace of mind depends upon what you are, not what you have.** “The more we have the more we feel secure. Gita, however, says, it is otherwise. This is biggest myth, says Sri Krishna.

Saints and Sages did not possess anything, yet they enjoyed the greatest life. Outer accomplishments are less important

than inner growth. Such a life is called Karma Yoga.

In Karma Yoga there is no such thing as failure. Even if one fails in worldly affairs, the Karma Yogi will only look at it as lessons learned. This is inner growth. A Karma Yogi knows no failure.

Adverse results (business, family etc.) only bring positive results to a Karma Yogi. He learns from the adverse experiences.

“ Building castles from stones thrown by others” is an analogy used by Swamiji to describe the Karma Yogi.

Even practicing Karma Yoga to a limited extent will bring results. In outer world unless a job is completed the result is not there. In Karma Yoga, however, even if an action is not completed, inner growth occurs.

Swamiji cited an example. Suppose a person wants to chant Vishnu Sahasranamam because the astrologer tells him to. The astrologer will tell him how many times to chant, at what time, what naivedyam to offer after chanting etc. This called Sakama Karma.

Another person also chants Vishnu Sahasranamam, however, he does it just for his inner growth. This is Nishkama Karma.

The first person will get result only when everything is performed the way it is prescribed. The second person's inner growth will occur irrespective of the number of times he chants.

In Karma Yoga, even alpa, will produce result.

Therefore, Arjuna, be a Karma Yogi, Says Sri Krishna.

Shloka # 41:

“This conviction as regards this (two fold yoga), marked by

resolution , is single; the convictions of the irresolute are indeed many-branched and endless, O Arjuna!"

One of the problems while reading scriptures is that there are countless sadhanas prescribed. Other religions with fewer sadhanas appear to be much easier.

In some places Puja, Japa, Meditation, Bhajan, Pilgrimage, etc are prescribed. We often do not know what to do? Many ways are prescribed and I am confused. To successfully practice spirituality we must know the role of each sadhana. A Karma Yogi has a clear understanding of Sadhana he has to practice. Clarity of means is essential. Clarity of what I want in life is essential. Our ultimate goal is freedom. All of us are working towards this goal. Even a child that holds its mothers hands drops it later on. It is inner freedom that we seek. I should be happy in myself without depending on any other human being. Dependence is sorrow. Independence is happiness. Then, how to obtain this independence? A Karma Yogi understands that Gyanam is the means to gain this freedom. For Gyanam, I require a prepared mind. Gyan Yogyata or Self Knowledge requires tremendous preparation. Karma Yoga is the path that gives us this Yogyata. This will take you to Gyanam, which will lead to liberation. Karma Yogi knows that this is the ultimate goal. This understanding is one and is unchanging. However, a person who is not a Karma Yogi will be confused and his sadhana will be a waste of time. When religion is not properly understood, he will blame religion. He will end up a Nasthika. It is not a problem of religion. All fields require learning such as computers, playing tennis etc. In olden times, in a Gurukula, Brahmacharya was taught. In present time this does not happen.

With Best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 19

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Chapter 5 of Prasna Upanishad.

In this chapter, Question 5, student Satyakama asked about Omkara Upasana that leads to Krama Mukthi. This chapter is also under Vedanta, as Omkara Upasana indirectly leads to Moksha. Other types of Upasana are not part of Vedanta as they provide benefits only in this world and not Moksha.

Shloka # 2:

The teacher introduces glory of Omakara. It stands for Param and Aparam Brahman. It is a symbol for Param and Aparam Brahman. A person who wants to reach either can use Omkara.

Through this Ayatanam (established in one self) symbol, a person can get Aikyam with Aparam or Param Brahman.

How to reach Param or Aparam Brahman is now explained. Omkara Upasana is now detailed.

Shloka # 3:

Omkara Upasana is of three types.

- Eka Matra Omkara Upasana or A kara is concentrated upon.
- Next upasana is on A kara and U kara.
- Third one is on A, U and M Karas.

- First Upasana leads to Manushya Loka or Bhu Loka.
- Second Upasana Leads to Pitra Loka or Bhuvan Loka.

- Third Upasana Leads to Brahma Loka or Suvar Loka.
- First Upana gets its phalam from Rig Veda Devata.
- Second Upasana gets its phalam from Yajur Veda Devata.
- Third Upsana gets its phalam from Sama Veda Devata.
- A Kara is Vishva or Virat.
- U Kara is Tejas or Hiranyagarbha.
- M Kara is Pragyaha or Ishwara

If a person meditates on Eka Mantra Omkara, to what extent does he meditate? He should meditate till he is completely absorbed in the Upasyam; only then he gets the phalam. Thus, if he meditates on say Rama, then Rama should be reached as Savikalpa Samadhi. It should then move to Nirvikalpa Samadhi. The Upasya Devata should be Sakshat Sara.

Sakshat Sara is Nirvikalpa Samadhi where in Upasya Upasaka Bheda does not exist. The phalam he will get is Rama or the Devata he meditate upon.

The Upasaka gets enlightened in the Upasya. Upasana includes all parts of Vedas except Vedanta.

Swamiji says, in Vedanta knowledge alone leads to moksha, not nirvikalpa or savikalpa Samadhi. They are not part of Vedanta.

By this Upasana, the phalam is that he will be born again in this Loka as a Manushya. He can avoid lower Janma through A Kara Upasana immediately.

As per Rig Veda, the presiding deity of A Kara Upsana, it takes one to manusha loka within Bhu Loka. Bhu Loka has many other lokas as well.

Even as a Manushya, he will be born again as a Vaidic Manushya. He will be full of Tapas, Brahmacharya and Shradha. He enjoys the glory of Manushya Janma. If these three qualities are not there, life will not be enjoyable.

Problems do come to such a person, but his attitude insulates

him from them. His Shradha helps him.

Shloka 4:

On the other hand if under Dvimatram a person meditates on both A kara and U kara then the phalam is Manas or intermediary world, also called Bhuvan or Soma Loka. Manas is Swapna Pradhana. Mind alone experiences dream. Dream is between waking and sleep state, hence called intermediary state.

Chandra Loka or Soma Loka belongs to Manas. By this meditation on A and U Kara one attains the intermediary world.

The Upasaka is taken to Soma Loka or Bhuvan Loka or Anthariksham, intermediate world, through the Yajur Devata who presides over U kara.

In Soma Loka (or Bhuvan, Antariksha, Pitra Loka) he enjoys the glories and powers as a Devata. Then he returns. For U kara, it is Krishna Gathi.

Shloka # 5:

On the other hand one who meditates on full Omkara (A, U and M) he attains Surya Loka or Tejas. This is also identified with Param Purusha or Saguna Ishwara. Sama Veda Devata takes the Upasaka to Brahma Loka. In Brahma Loka one is free from all papams.

Comparing the process to a snake shedding its skin, a snake gets freed from its skin without getting any wound. Right now papam sticks to us. But in Brahma Loka all sins are sloughed off. Padodara (snake), just like a snake becomes free of its skin without effort, so also our papams drop away without effort.

All three Loka's come under Aparam Brahman.

For Mukthi one has to perform Omkara Vichara (Not Sadhana).

Then he comes to know Param Brahman as Parat Param. In short he comes to know Nirguna Brahma in Brahma Loka.

Thus, in this Loka, Omkara Upasana>Brahma Loka
In Brahma Loka, Omkara Vichara > Leads to Mukthi.

With this Omakara Upasana is concluded. Pippilada now quotes supporting shlokas from Brahmana Upanishad.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 21

Greetings All,
Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Shloka # 30:

“This embodied self (dwelling) in the bodies of all, O Bharatha Prince ! is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you ought not to grieve for any being at all.”

Shloka # 31:

“Having regard to the law of your own life, you ought not to be perturbed. A Kshatriya cannot have a greater good than a righteous battle.”

Refreshing our memory of last class, including shlokas 30 and 31, Swamiji reminded us Sri Krishna wants to remove Arjuna's sorrow caused by attachment. He also wants Arjuna to fight the Dharma Yudha. He has tried convincing him using a philosophical approach, a dharmic approach and finally a Laukika approach as well. In philosophical approach he clarifies the Atma Anatma Viveka. Atma does not kill nor is it killed. Anatma means mortality of this body has

to be accepted. Atma is immortal and Anatma is mortal. One who understands this is wise. So, Arjuna, accept this fact and there will be no sorrow.

Shloka # 32:

“An open gateway to heaven has, by a happy chance, offered itself to you, O Arjuna! For, fortunate Ksatriyas alone gain an occasion to wage a war like this.”

Sri Krishna says from a Dharmic point of view as well, Arjuna should fight. While scriptures do say Ahimsa is param dharma, it is a Samanya Dharma. There are, however, exceptions to this. In Aapaat Dharma, Asatyam (non truth) and Ahmisa are allowed. This happens with government rules also where there are exceptions. It happens with traffic rules where some important people are exempted from normal traffic rules. Samanya Dharma or Upasarga has an opposite called Apa-Vada. In Apa- Vada, killing is allowed. Only after trying Sama, Dana and Bheda that Danda or violence is resorted to.

Ksahtriya means, one who protects against Adharma. If there is adharma one can try to convert adharmic people. If that does not work then their elimination is the only way. A Doctor tries to heal a limb, however, if it does not heal, he may have to amputate it to protect the rest of the body.

Arjuna, You are a Kshatriya, so you have to fight. Maintenance of law and order is not everybody's responsibility. Only some have this right. A Brahmin cannot punish. Punishment is the Sva-Dharma of a segment of society. A Kshatriya alone has the right to punish.

Consider your own Varna-dharma , Arjuna, you should not act like a Brahmin. A Kshatriya should take to violence in particular cases. Drona is a brahmana. He is not supposed to take to war. He has a right to teach but no right to fight.

So, Arjuna, if you do not fight it is wrong. Don't look at this war as a curse, but as a way to sacrifice your life for

Dharma. Thus, the freedom fighters that went to jail were considered Tyagis. There is nothing greater than a Dharma Yudha for a Kshatriya, says Sri Krishna. You should look upon this as a great opportunity. Some communities have suicide squads that sacrifice their life for their country. Here also a Kshatriya should be ready to commit suicide; that is to sacrifice his life, he does not consider it a tragedy. Among the Rajput families, when their women sent off the Rajput princes for war, they did so without any tears. They did not want you to be alive when there is a cause. Rajput princes were sent off to war with blessings by their women.

This kind of opportunity for a great sacrifice for dharma has come in your life. If you are going to sacrifice life for Dharma you will get the heaven called Vira swarga. This is the gate to this Svarga. It is an open door. Who gets such an opportunity? Only a fortunate and blessed Kshatriya gets called for such a noble cause.

Shloka # 33:

“on the other hand, if you refuse to fight this righteous war, sacrificing both the law of your life and renown, you will incur sin.”

Sri Krishna says you have to fight this war. Suppose Arjuna says I am not interested in the war for sake of Bhishma or Drona? If you do not fight the war you will get only hell. If a person renounces his duty, it is considered Papam.

Swamiji says there are two kinds of Papam.

1) Doing what should not be done, Nishidhakarana papam. Example is one should not drink liquor.

2) Not doing what should be done, called Vihitha akarana Papam. An example is not paying taxes that are owed by you.

If Arjuna does not fight, it is an act of omission, or Vihitha akaranam or pratyavaya sin. Vihitha akaranam is called

pratyavaya papam. Arjuna, if you do not fight this dharmic war then you will be shirking your Sva-Dharma and you will get Papam. Papam means suffering in this life or next. So to avoid Naraka you should fight. If not, you will lose your name and fame.

With this the dharmic view is completed.

Shloka # 34:

“ All will recount your ever lasting infamy! For one honored, infamy is worse than death.”

Having given his philosophical and dharmic views now Sri Krishna addresses the Laukika drishti. Some people do not believe in punyam or papam, as they are adrishtam (invisible). Punyam and papam is only known through Shastra Pramanam. If so, can I run away from this war?

Arjuna, you still have to fight, says Sri Krishna. You will lose your name, fame, and status in society, if you do not fight.

Swamiji says, in society everybody is worried about how other people perceive him or her. People are worried about social status, family's name, fame etc. So, Arjuna, your name and fame as the greatest warrior will be lost.

You decided to fight, and then, at the last minute you had weakness. People will talk of the Arjuna who ran away from battlefield. Maanam and Apamaanam are more important than life for many. Thus, there are students who commit suicide when they do not get a good rank in examination. So, Arjuna your Apamaanam should be considered. Human beings will spread the bad name. Having enjoyed fame, this ill fame will be worse than death.

Shloka # 35:

“Great heroes will deem that out of fear you withdrew from battle. You will fall in the esteem of those very heroes who

have honored you (so far).”

How Apamaana will afflict Arjuna is now explained. Arjuna’s reason for withdrawal is not clear. Society will not know his true intentions. This can only lead to spread of rumors. Citing example of journalists, Swamiji says, for sensationalism they contact people to get information and publish information, rumors, with a question mark. Public will not remember the question mark. Once a name is bad it is difficult to get it back. Then, one comes to know, that fame is hell.

Great warriors will say Arjuna withdrew out of fear. Even Karna will say this. Karna has been insulted very often as a Suta Putra and he is waiting for this opportunity. He will use this opportunity to say Arjuna ran away because of Karna.

Shloka # 36:

“Your foes will hurl many unmentionable insults at you-foes bent on down grading your competence. What can be more painful than that?”

Sri Krishna continues with his description of Apamaana.

Arjuna, your enemies, Kauravas, will spread rumors against you that are difficult for me even to mention. They have the advantage, as they are the rulers of the state. They will belittle your skill in archery. What is more painful than Apamaana?

Giving example of the dialogue between Kaikeyi and Dasartha, in Ramayana, when Dasaratha refuses to give boon to Kaikeyi because he does not want to sacrifice Rama. Kaikeyi uses an argument that all your forefathers have kept their words. By not keeping your word you will sacrifice the name that you enjoy. You will bring a blot in the blotless family of Raghu vamsa. Fearing Apamaana, Dasaratha caved in. Example of Kamsa and Devaki was also cited. Similarly when Kamsa decides to kill Devaki when the asariri

comes and tells that Devaki's 8th son will be his killer, Vasudeva uses many arguments but ultimately says your family has got wonderful name. Your name will go down as the killer of your own sister, out of a fear of a son to be born. Do you want such an apamaana. The moment the word apamaana is mentioned, Kamsa says: OK. I will try some other method. Manam, pride, is very important. Apamaanam, insult, is not bearable.

Shloka # 37:

"Getting slain, you will gain heaven; victorious, you will enjoy this world. Therefore, O son of Kunti! Stand up, determined to fight."

If you do not want ill fame or naraka, then fight. If killed you will get Vir-svarga. If you win, you will get back your kingdom you have wanted for the last 13 years. Either way you gain. So, Arjuna, get up. Having decided to fight this war, Arjuna, please get up. With this the third line of argument or Laukika Drsihthi is also concluded.

Adhyathmike. Dharmica and Laukika approaches have all been addressed. So, Arjuna, fight this war.

Now, Sri Krishna gives advise on how to fight. Swamji says duties are of two types.

- 1) Pleasant duty
- 2) Unpleasant duty.

That is why whenever there is a function; they will say that it is my pleasant duty to introduce the speaker, etc. The word pleasant duty makes it clear that there is another called unpleasant duty waiting. How to do the pleasant duty, everybody knows. The problem is with unpleasant duty. Therefore, how one should perform the unpleasant duty is subject of 38th verse:

Shloka # 38:

"Looking with an equal eye on pleasure and pain, gain and

loss, victory and defeat, strive to fight; thus will you incur no sin.”

Sri Krishna concluded his first phase of teaching and is introducing his next phase of teaching. This is an introduction to Karma Yoga. Veda is divided into two portions, religion and philosophy. Religion is a way of life; Philosophy is the right view of life. The philosophy part is over, now the religion part is coming. Veda-antha is over; Veda-poorva is coming; jnana-kandam is over; karma-kandam is coming; Brahma sastram is over; dharma sastram is going to come.

If a person has to efficiently act in the world, most important characteristic is learning to be balanced in mind; therefore, samatvaṃ as karma yoga is being introduced in this sloka. It will be elaborated in the later verses.

With Best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

2016 Sivaratri Message from Swamiji: Five Features of Bakthi

This is the recording of the special talk given by Swamiji for the Sivatri festival in 2016.

2016 Sivaratri Talk

Prasna Upanishad, Class 18

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

He summarized the first four chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 dealt with Srishti Prakaranam and it addressed Shukla Gathi and Krishna Gathi. Chapters 2 and 3 dealt with Prana. Chapter 2 was about the superiority of Prana and this was described in a story where Prana is about to walk out when all sense organs joined together in singing his glory to keep him from walking out. Chapter 3 was about how Prana sustains the whole individual as well as the Samashthi. At end of the chapter Prana Mahima and Prana Upasana was mentioned. Chapter 4 discussed Swapna, Sushupthi and Adhishtana Atma. While Chapters 1 through 3 had Apra Vidya, Chapter 4 had Para Vidya. In chapter 4, the student # 4 asked Pippallada five questions centered on the dream state.

Q1. What are the things that are asleep?

A: Except Prana all other organs are asleep.

Q 2. What are the things that are awake?

A: Prana and the Mind or Antahakarana are awake during dream state. The Agnihotra story was described as an analogy to this state.

Q 3. Who experiences the dream?

A: Manaha or mind enjoys the dream state. Pure mind is Jadam. The mind pervaded by Chaithanyam is the one who enjoys the dream state.

Q 4. When everything is resolved, who is enjoying the

sleep, Sushupthi?

A: Sushupthi is enjoyed by the mind in a "dormant" form. It is called Karana Shariram. Kevala Karana Shariram cannot enjoy. The Chaithanya infused Karana Shariram also known as Pragyaha is the one who enjoys Sushupthi.

Q 5. Where is everything supported?

A: This answer qualifies it as Brahma Vidya, says, Swamiji. Shlokas 7 through 9 answers this question. It is Turiyam alone in which everything gets resolved. Triputi was explained. All Triputi's and Pancha Bhuthas are all resolved in Atma.

In Shlokas 10 and 11 the Phalam is given. One who knows Atma or Turiyam, he becomes omniscient or liberated. Because of this question it is a part of Vedantha. With the fourth Question answered the fourth student goes back to his seat.

Chapter # 5 or the Fifth Question:

Shaibya Satyakama ,the fifth student, now asked his question. Shaibya means from Shibi Parampara. Satyakama means one who desires to know the truth.

Shloka # 1:

The question is regarding Omkara Upasana. This is the topic of Chapter 5. Why is Omkara Upasana part of Para Vidya? Upasana generally comes under Aparā Vidya. Para is considered higher while Aparā is considered lower. Omkara Upasana is introduced as a means for Krama Mukthi. Para Vidya also gives Mukthi. Both Vidyas' goal is Mukthi.

The question is: "O Lord Pippilada, suppose a person among people, who meditates on Omkara up to death, where does he go?"

Any Upasana gives phalam when practiced till death. He has to remember Omkara at time of death as well. He must withdraw from sense organs. Therefore, no relatives should be near him at time of death. He must be detached from Samsara. At time of

Maranam, we should not think of anything else. You must start remembering (Upasana) right now until and including at death. Marana Upasana is very important. Imagine one's own death and practice it. The death rehearsal is very important. At time of death, I must remember my Ishta Devatha. When concentration comes in, Dhyana occurs. Dhyana is a part of Ashtanga Yoga. If one has to perform dhyana or concentrate, one must follow the eight requirements of Yoga.

The eight Ashtangas are: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyahara, Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samādhi.

Yamas: are ethical rules or moral imperatives. The five yamas listed are:

- 1 Ahimsā : Nonviolence, non-harming other living beings
- 2 Satya : truthfulness, non-falsehood
- 3 Asteya: non-stealing
- 4 Brahmachārya: chastity, marital fidelity or sexual restraint
- 5 Aparigraha: non-avarice, non-possessiveness[28]

Niyama: the five niyamas are virtuous habits such as: [

- 6 Śauca: purity, clearness of mind, speech and body
- 7 Santoṣa: contentment, acceptance of others, acceptance of one's circumstances as they are and optimism for self
- 8 Tapas: persistence, perseverance, austerity
- 9 Svādhyāya: study of Vedas, study of self, self-reflection, introspection of self's thoughts, speeches and actions
- 10 Īśvarapraṇidhāna: contemplation of the Ishvara (God/Supreme Being, Brahman, True Self, Unchanging Reality)

Asana: Asana is thus a posture that one can hold for a period of time, staying relaxed, steady, comfortable and motionless.

Prāṇāyāma: is the practice of consciously regulating breath (inhalation and exhalation).

Pratyahara: is the process of withdrawing one's thoughts from external objects, things, person and situation. It is turning one's attention to one's true Self, one's inner world,

experiencing and examining self

Dharana: means concentration, introspective focus and one-pointedness of mind. The root of word is dhṛ, which has a meaning of "to hold, maintain, keep".

Dhyana: means contemplating, reflecting on whatever Dharana has focused on. If in the sixth limb of yoga one focused on a personal deity, Dhyana is its contemplation. If the concentration was on one object, Dhyana is non-judgmental, non-presumptuous observation of that object. If the focus was on a concept/idea, Dhyana is contemplating that concept/idea in all its aspects, forms and consequences. Dhyana is uninterrupted train of thought, current of cognition, flow of awareness.

Samadhi: is oneness with the subject of meditation. There is no distinction, during the eighth limb of yoga, between the actor of meditation, the act of meditation and the subject of meditation. Samadhi is that spiritual state when one's mind is so absorbed in whatever it is contemplating on, that the mind loses the sense of its own identity. The thinker, the thought process and the thought fuse with the subject of thought. There is only oneness, samadhi.

In order to meditate, all parts of yoga must be practiced, in intense meditation.

Dhyanam is of two types.

A) Deity separate from me and

B) Deity as a part of me. Thus, Sandhya Vandanam is Abheda Upasanam.

When I imagine the Lord as identical with me it is Upasana. However, once I know Lord is Me, it is Gyanam or Abheda Gyanam. Upasana does not need Vichara. Atma Gyanam needs Vichara.

What is the phalam? Which Loka does such an Upasaka attain?

Through Upasana he does not attain Moksha. Upasana is Krama Mukthi but it does not lead to Moksha. Upasana only takes one to Brahma Loka. There, he still has to get Gyanam, to obtain Mukthi.

Shloka # 2:

Pippilada answers the disciple's question. He describes Omakara's glory. It represents Param Brahma as well as Aparam Brahma. Aparam Brahma includes Rama, Krishna etc. Thus Omakara is both Apra as well as Para Brahman.

Omakara has O, U, Ma and a fourth letter without sound.

Saguna Brahma cannot give moksha. It can only take one to Brahma Loka. Nirguna Brahma does lead to Moksha. Any qualification is not good. Every Viseshanam is a limitation.

Omkara is a symbol for both Saguna and Nirguna Brahman. Symbol of Alambanam is Omkara. Ālambana is a Sanskrit noun which variously means – support, foundation, supporting, base, sustaining, cause, reason, basis, or the five attributes of things, or the silent repetition of a prayer, or the natural and necessary connection of a sensation with the cause which excites it, or the mental exercise practiced by the yogis in endeavoring to realize the gross form of the Eternal.

There are two types of Alambana. First one is called Prathima Alambana or worship of a Devtha such as Shiva or Rama. Second one is Prathibha Alambana.

Any Upasaka can attain oneness with Aparam Brahman or Param through Omkara Upasanam. Within Omakra Upasanam there are different types of Upasana. One is on O kara. Another is on U kara. And the third one is on M kara. By meditation on Omkara symbol one attains oneness with Aparam and Param Brahma.

Through one type of Upasana one gets Krama Mukthi Through another, one attains Aikyam with Param Brahma.

A Kara, from Rig Veda, leads to Manushya loka or Bhu loka.
U Kara, from Yajur Veda, leads to Soma Loka or Bhuvar Loka also called Antharikshaha.
M Kara, from Sama Veda, leads to Brahma Loka-or Suvar Loka. This is called Krama Mukthi.

A Kara is associated with Vishwa.
U Kara is associated with Tejas.
M Kara is associated with Brahma Loka.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 20

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Shloka: 29:

“One beholds It as a marvel. Similarly, another talks of it as a marvel. Yet another hears of It as a marvel. Even after hearing, none indeed knows It aright.”

Refreshing our memory of last class, Swamiji reminded us that all the verses from Shloka 12 onwards are about Sri Krishna talking about Atma Swaroopa. He describes how Atma is different from Anatma, the body, and mind and thought complex. Atma and Anatma are mixed physically, because of which there is confusion. Sri Krishna separates Atma, the Consciousness, from the body. Anatma is a pseudo “You” that can be used for many purposes. The knowledge of the real “I” is Atma Gyanam or Samkhya Yoga. Shlokas 29 and 30 are the conclusion of Atma Gyanam.

Sri Krishna has gone through all this to help Arjuna overcome his sorrow. Self-realization is the only way one can totally remove sorrow. Shokha Nivriithi can only occur only through Atma Gyanam. This knowledge is also called Mahatmiyam.

This self-realization is the greatest wonder in the universe. What is the "wonder" asks Swamiji? Answering, he says, every human being is looking for certain fundamental goals in life such as success in business, politics etc. Even though the goals are superficially different, underneath they are all the same. One desires fulfillment in life, a sense of security, and happiness. There are many types of insecurity. If you have less money, you feel insecure. If you have more money, you feel insecure of about how to protect the money. So, these are the three basic goals every one has in life. Atma or Brahman represents all these goals. Atma represents fulfillment, security and happiness. Thus, we are all seeking Atma alone. This is the greatest wonder of this world. The greater wonder is that it, the Atma, is the very nature of the seeker. Atma is one's own intrinsic self. Every one is seeking himself or herself. We go all over the world seeking this knowledge, not knowing that it is within you. I am looking for myself, this is the greatest wonder. The greatest hiding place is our selves.

Describing the story of a rich man traveling on a long distance train, the man counts the money every morning. Sitting across him was a thief whose only goal was to get the money from him. The first three days the thief tried but could not retrieve the money. The last day, the fourth, he was desperate to know, so he told the rich man who he really was and wanted to know the secret of where he hid the money. The rich man said I hid it in a place you will never look for. I was hiding it every night under your pillow. Just as in this story we also do not look for fulfillment, security and happiness within ourselves.

I tried it get it from my toys, from the spouse, from the

children, from the grand children; from all over the world, but I never tried one thing; I, and that is myself. So, Atma is the greatest secret because it is never searched for. So, when the teacher says you are what you are seeking, it comes as a shock. Never look for Atma; you will never come across it. You are the Atma. It is not a new substance being revealed, however, it is a new status about myself revealed by Vedantha. "I" am the secure, happy and fulfilled "I".

Giving example of Karna, Swamiji says, when he meets Kunti, he becomes aware for the first time that he was a Kshatriya, the sixth Pandava. Until then he had an inferiority complex that he was a Suta Putra a non-Kshatriya. Once he learns he also is a Kshatriya his status changes. He drops the notion that he was not a Kshatriya. So also with Atman, it is a simple recognition of the Atman as a fact.

Aham Brahmasmi is recognition of the fact about myself. Now I know security, fulfillment and happiness etc. are my name. A notion is dropped. Self- Knowledge is the greatest wonder.

So one student; one seeker sees this fact as a great wonder; because he wonders, how I missed this fact all along. When we were children, we postponed our peace of mind for youth. All the children envy their parents who did not have much to do. They thought the parents were happiest people. They did not have to study or take exams. Now interview them. We had pocket money, and so many other things; and no worries; we now envy our childhood days.

Now we again postpone. Swamiji, I plan to take voluntary retirement; so that I can spend more time. Before retirement, he was attending three classes; now he is hardly able to make to even one class.

We are always postponing for security and it seems like a wild goose chase and it is receding. Is my direction of search the right one? Perhaps, I am searching in the wrong direction.

And then we come to Vedanta and discover the right path.

Giving another example Swamiji says, a Brahmin went to bath in a pond. He lost his ring in the pond. He searched for some time and then decided to go to another pond to search for the ring. He felt the first pond was too crowded. Seeing him others also joined him in search. Until somebody asked him where did he lose his ring? So also with us, the world is searching like sheep for the ring. One who listens to Vedanta sees it as a wonder.

Therefore, teacher (Guru) is a wonder; knower (Shishya) is a wonder, and a non-knower, the one who does not understand is the greatest wonder.

The block is our objectification tendency. I look for It outside as well as inside. Atma is neither outside, nor inside me; it is Me. There is no preposition connecting Atma and myself. And the knack to get it is difficult for some people. Once we get the knack, it is a like a puzzle. But once you have seen the clue, it is the easiest thing.

Shloka # 30:

“This embodied self (dwelling) in the bodies of all, O Bharatha Prince ! is eternally indestructible. Therefore, you ought not to grieve for any being at all.”

Sri Krishna concludes Atma Gyanam in this shloka. Briefly it means: Body is mortal, subject to old age, disease and death. We cannot conquer these three. Once we are born, we should accept this reality. Unfortunately, we do not know when we will die. Therefore, please be ready to welcome death or mortality at anytime. Behind mortal body is the real “I”. Mortal body is superficial. The “I” behind it is the Dehi, the eternal “I”. Death will disturb the mind when it is in close quarters. Vedanta will make it tolerable. I will have to continue. Nothing shocks me. It is a manageable disturbance. So, Arjuna, accumulate this wisdom.

Ever indestructible, this Atma, is encased in the perishable body. It is the same with Bhishma and Drona. We accept mortality of others, but not our own or that of near ones. We should not grieve over death of any living being. Try to help them in their suffering but do not grieve over the death. It will not change the fact.

Shloka # 31:

“Having regard to the law of your own life, you ought not to be perturbed. A Kshatriya cannot have a greater good than a righteous battle.”

In Shloka # 30, Atma/ Anatma viveka was concluded as medicine for Arjuna's sorrow and his delusion whether to fight or not.

Sri Krishna says, misplaced Ahimsa is as bad as Himsa. Once non-violent methods are exhausted, a Kshatriya should be able to take to violence, as a last resort. For this to be accomplished Sri Krishna takes three approaches with Arjuna. The philosophical, Dharmic and Empirical or Laukika Drishthi.

With Shloka # 30 the philosophical approach is concluded. It is a difficult approach to grasp. It requires maturity or else it can be misinterpreted. Since Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha even a murderer can say his murder was justified based upon Vedanta. Real Vadanta is never against Dharma.

From Dharmic point of view the war is justified. Bhishma and Drona are to be killed because they are associated with an Adharmic group.

Slokas 31 through 33, the topic is Dharmic angle.

You may not understand Atma. However, as per your own Sva Dharma, that of a Kshatriya, you have to fight. This is as per Shastras.

Dharma is of two types: a) Samanya Dharma and b) Vishesha Dharma.

Samanya Dharma is universal; it does not depend upon one's caste, creed, gender, etc. Yama and Niyama are part of

Samanya Dharma. The five Yamas are:

1. Ahimsā : Nonviolence, non-harming other living beings
2. Satya : truthfulness, non-falsehood
3. Asteya : non-stealing
4. Brahmacharya : chastity, marital fidelity or sexual restraint
5. Aparigraha : non-avarice, non-possessiveness

The five Niyamas are:

1. Śauca: purity, clearness of mind, speech and body
2. Santoṣa: contentment, acceptance of others and of one's circumstances as they are, optimism for self
3. Tapas: accepting and not causing pain
4. Svādhyāya: study of self and scriptures, self-reflection, introspection of self's thoughts, speeches and actions
5. Īśvarapraṇidhāna: contemplation of the Ishvara (God/Supreme Being, Brahman, True Self, Unchanging Reality)

Visesha Dharma: Varies from group to group, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya, male, female, etc., depending on the duty of an individual on his designation in life. Thus, a Brahmin has no right to fight. It is a-dharmic. He can only report, he cannot fight.

For a Kshatriya, however, war is required. So, Arjuna, be aware of your social responsibility.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishads, Class 17

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Fourth Question

Mantra 7:

The teacher Pippilada is answering the questions of student number four, Sauryayana. He has asked five questions of which the fifth question is being answered now.

Q: Where does everything remain supported? What are the substrata of everything?

Answer: The mukhya atma or Turiyam supports everything.

In Turiyam alone everything exists. Everything comes out of Turiyam and then goes back into it. Just like the birds that come out at sunrise and go back to rest, in the tree residence, at sunset. The Tree is Turiyam and the birds represent the creation.

Shloka: 8:

Now the teacher refers to all Bhuthani and then to Triputi. Triputi, the threefold, is used for knower-known-act of knowing, seer-seen-act of seeing etc.

The Pancha Bhutas, the Pancha Karana Bhuthas, the Pancha Sthula Bhuthas and the Pancha Sukshma Bhutha's all rest in Turiyam.

The Pancha Bhuthas as: Prithvi and its subtle matter, Prithvi matra, Apas and Apas matra, Tejas and Tejas matra, Vayu and Vayu matra and Akasha and Akasha matra, all rest in Turiyam.

Sight and the object of sight drastavyam, Ear and object of hearing Srotavyam, Smell and the object of smelling Ghratavyam, Taste and object of taste Rasyitavyam, Touch and object of touch Sparasyithavyam, Speech and object of speech Vaktavyam, The two hands and object of taking Adatvayam, Organ of generation and its object

Anandayithavyam, Organ of excretion and its object Visarjayithavyam, The two feet and their object Gantavyam, the mind and its object Mantavyam, Buddhi, the intellect and its object Boddhavyam, Ahamkara the ego and its object Ahamkartavyam, Chittam (memory) and its object Chethayitavyam, Tejas, the light and its object Vidyotayitavyam, Prana (energy) and its object Vidharayitavyam (what can be held up), all these rest in the Atman as well.

All the pairs indicate instrument and object relationship.

Shloka # 9:

Now the Bhoktha is discussed. The Jiva is the Bhoktha. The experiencer is being defined.

Who is Jiva? The Jiva is Purusha or Jivatma. Purusha is referenced in Upanishads as Paramatma as well. It has to be interpreted in context of the use of the word. Here it is Jivatma that resolves into Paramatma. The Self, identifying with the body as the Drshta (Seer), Sprashta (toucher), Srotha (hearer), Grhatha (smeller), and Rasayitha (Taster) is the Jivatma. The Chidabasha is the one indicated by the "I". I is referring to a conscious being. The "I" references to myself as a limited conscious being. Therefore Jiva is an all-pervading consciousness. It is the primary I, Ahamkara. It identifies with each attribute (I am fat, I am old, I am young etc.) through Chiddabasha. This Chiddabasha identifies with each instrument. Thus we have seer, hearer etc., including for mind and budhi. This is called Vignatma. They all come together and get resolved.

The Triputi, (Bhoktha, Bhojanam and Bhojyam) all three come together in dream and are resolved. This Jivatma also rests on paramatma, here called Aksharam.

Aksharam means imperishable one. This word comes from Mundako Upanishad. Now with shlokas 7, 8 and 9 question # 5 has been answered. The Triputi are all resolved in Paramatma. The adhishtana of Triputi cannot be known. So long as you are the Knower, you cannot know the Brahman. The moment you try to know, you become the knower. So, Brahman cannot be known. This is the object of this knowledge. This is Brahma Gyanam.

Shloka # 10:

This is a Phala Shruthi.

The one who knows this knowledge will become Brahman. Own up That I am Brahman. O student, the One who knows Brahman as himself and not as an object to be known; he attains Aksharam or Parambrahman. Sometimes Aksharam also refers to Omkara.

What type of Aksharam is it?

That which is free from Maya or Agyana Karana Shariram or Karana Shariram at Vyashti level is Turiyam. The Turiyam is beyond Karanam and Kariyam. Chaya is used to describe Maya. Chaya is shadow.

You cannot say Shadow is non-existing. You also cannot say it is existing. On enquiry the shadow shows up as Asat. Hence it is called Anirvachaniyam. Like Chaya, Swapna, Raju and Maya are all also called Anirvachaniyam.

Description of Aksharam:

Aksharam means free from Sukhsma Shariram or indestructible.

Alohitham means free from all colors.

Sthula Sharira rahitham.

Subhram, meaning pure.

This Pratyatma is Paramatma. Qualified Atma is Jivatma. Qualifiers are the Sharirams. When the three Shariram's are removed, I am Paramatma. To become Paramatma "I" must be without qualifications. "I" must remove the three Sharirams. How can I do this? Removal of qualification is understanding that the qualifications are Mithya. You do not have to remove them physically. Just like a shadow is without substance, so even now "I" am the unqualified Atman. Even when "I" am experiencing the limitations, I am still the unqualified "I" or Paramatma. He, who becomes the knower of all, then becomes everything or one with everything.

Brahman is everything. I am Brahman. Therefore, I am everything. This is the Phala Shruthi.

Now being a part of Brahmana scripture, Prasna quotes some supporting shlokas.

Shloka # 11:

From mantra portion of Brahmanas:

The person who knows Aksharam, he enters everything as all pervading, as Brahman. As Aksharam, he is all pervading.

What type of Aksharam?

An Aksharam, in which, everything is resolved. Jivatma along with all organs (gyanaindriyas, karmaindriyas, pancha pranas, pancha bhuthani, gross and subtle, are all supported by the all-pervading paramatma. Disowning the limitation is the only way to enter this state. Thus, the Phala Shruthi is also over. The Phalam has been described. Now the student, Sauryayana, goes back to his seat.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 19

Greetings All,
Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Shloka #24:

“This Self cannot be cut, burned, wetted or dried. Eternal, allpervasive, stable, immovable and ever lasting is It.”

Refreshing our memory of last class, Swamiji reminded us that Sri

Krishna wants to help Arjuna get out of his sorrow as well as help him stand up and fight the war. He teaches from three angles. They are Philosophical, Dharmic and Laukika approaches to life.

In philosophical approach he describes Atma Gyanam from Shloka 12 to 25. In the first few sholkas Sri Krishna pointed out that our real nature is Consciousness or Caitanya svarupam. Our physical, emotional and intellectual personalities are only incidental features. None of them is our real nature.

Discussing Atma he points out that Atma is Nityaha, Satyaha, Sarvagathaha, Apremeya, Akartha, Abhokktha and Nirvikaraha. Atma has no papam or punyam, hence it is also called Karma Phala Athithaha. Discussing Nirvikaraha, Swamiji says, descriptions such as, the highest state of consciousness or lowest state of consciousness means

it is subject to change. Consciousness does not have such attributes. As such, it is only a state of mind. A Sattvic mind is highest, a Rajasic mind-very active, is in the middle, while a Tamasic mind is the lowest state of mind. Consciousness does not have different states of existence. So Sri Krishna concludes: Arjuna, you are the Atma, so are

Bhishma and Drona. There is no question of any Atma killing or being killed.

Shloka #25:

“This Self is said to be unmanifest, imponderable and immutable. Knowing It to be such, you ought not to grieve for It.”

In Shloka 25 Sri Krishna concludes Atma Swaroopam by telling Arjuna that he should not grieve nor should he shed his duty.

Shloka 26:

“Even if you think the Self is perpetually born and perpetually dies, still, O hero, you ought not to grieve for It thus.”

From Shloka 26 onwards Sri Krishna is giving a hypothetical argument, in case Arjuna does not accept Vedanta's teaching. Swamiji says the student has to be convinced and he must accept; there is no question of imposing the teaching. Sri Krishna says: You may conclude that there is no such thing as an Atma as one cannot see it. You may think it is an imagination. There are other systems of thoughts that don't accept the concept of an eternal Atma. Some systems believe that Atma is in the body and that it changes from birth to birth. In effect, they believe in a perishable Atma. Another system called Charavaha, closer to modern science, asks for proof of mind, intellect and Atma. According to Charvaha philosophy, body alone is Atma. They do not believe in reincarnation. They believe “ I am the body”. They believe in the temporary body with a temporary Atma. If you believe in this, even then you cannot get out of your duty. If you are born and if you die even then death should not be a source of sorrow. You should not grieve.

Shloka: 27:

Death is indeed certain for one who is born; and for one who dies; birth, too, is certain. Therefore, as regards, this

unavoidable sequence, you ought not to grieve.

Swamiji says this is an important sholka. Sri Krishna is giving some very practical advice.

Suppose, Arjuna, you are one of those who don't believe in the Atma, but believe you are the body. This body is born on a particular day and whatever is born will die one day. Everything born will die one day. And from simple common sense experience you know that as well. Learn to assimilate this; whatever is born will have to die one day. Just because I close my eyes, the fact is not going to be different. You cannot make the world dark by closing the eyes.

And that anything born is subject to death is proved by three pramaṇas. Pratyakṣa pramaṇa tells me that from daily reading of the newspaper, in obituary column, somebody or the other is dying. Therefore, I know that there is no difference between the body of that person and this particular body that I have; or the body of my mother; or the body of my father; etc. All of them are Panca bhutatmas; and if one is dying; that means every one of these bodies also has to die. This is pratyakṣa pramaṇam.

Whatever has a beginning should have an end. Whatever is a product will have an end. Therefore, logic also tells me this body, Bhishma's body and everyone else as well, will have to die. This is inference or Anumanaha Pramana.

Scriptures say anything born out of Karma will die. Karma is like oil in a lamp. Once oil is depleted the flame dies out. Similarly the oil of Karma is getting depleted. Meditate on this fact. Assimilate this fact. We are aware of this law but when it comes to us or one's near us we forget the philosophy. Assimilation means applying it in life. This is wisdom.

In ancient stories, Rakshasas did Tapas. When asked for a boon they always asked for eternal life. Brahmaji could not grant

them that. So, they accepted conditional immortality, such as I should not be killed at night or by weapons etc. Brahma granted the boon knowing that there is a loophole, if required. Then God takes an Avatara to finish the demon. In other religions death is the end. In Hinduism death is never an end of the individual. Which is why, in Hinduism, capital punishment is possible. You can still redeem yourself in the next life.

Accept life and death as an intrinsic part of physical body. Resistance to this idea, a choice-less situation, is the one that causes grief. With Choice-less situations it is best to accept and surrender. This is a very important lesson of Gita. Accept with maturity, without complaints, and without anger.

If I am not prepared to accept, there is only way out, that is prepare yourselves. First assimilate this fact by meditating on it. By praying to God, increase your psychological immune system and inner power. Thus, strengthen the mind so that you can accept all choice-less situations.

In Life we have many choice-less situations. There are more choice-less one's than ones with choice. My parentage, my education, my family, children, etc. All these are given and are in the past. Accept the past. Whatever I try, I cannot change the past, and it is choice -less.

Present is also choice-less. It is already here. You are in the middle of it. You cannot alter it.

Regarding future, how much choice do we really have? We will grow old; death and subsequent separation are all given. A big part of future is also choice-less. A very small portion of life presents choices to us. Learn to accept choice-less situations.

In some cases, even our fate can be changed. On Nonmbu consider the power of Savithri or power of Markandeya to change fate. Swamiji sayslike for a disease some fates can be

changed, some managed and some cannot be changed. Unfortunately, one cannot know fate. Even if there is a remedy it will take time and until then it is still a choice-less situation.

Therefore, it is important to have an attitude of accepting choice-less situations. So, do not grieve, Arjuna. If there is a choice, Act. However, if it a choice-less situation, just accept it.

Shloka 28:

The beginning of beings is unmanifest, O Bhartha prince! Their middle state is manifest. Their end , too, is unmanifest. In these circumstances why lament?

Here Sri Krishna explains the phenomenon of birth and death. He says once we understand this phenomena their capacity to hurt us is reduced. Ignorance creates projections. Some one has said: Ignorance is the dark room in which all the negatives are developed. The negatives include: Kama, krodha, moha, and lobha.

Really speaking, there is no question of destruction of anything or creation of anything. Total destruction does not exist. Total creation cannot exist. Even according to science, by the law of the conservation of matter, "nothing is created and nothing is destroyed". Bhagavan cannot create even a milligram of matter.

Omnipotent is one who can make everything possible. Creation of matter is not possible, even by God. Then what is birth and death? It means changing from one phenomenon to another. Thus, Tomorrow is death of Today. Water converting to steam, means water dies and steam is born. What is the birth and growth of this body? Destruction of lot of idlis and dosais and sambar is the creation and growth of the body.

All our bodies existed before. But in what form? They existed in a potential form called Prakrithi or energy. Prakṛti means

the most rudimentary form of matter which is not even energy.

Energy is at least there in four or five different forms. All of them put together come closest to a definition of Prakrithi. Prakrithi is also called Avyaktam or Maya or Shakthi. Therefore our bodies existed before, but in un-manifest form.

Therefore, everything is changing from one form to another; the previous condition is called un-manifest condition; the present condition is called the manifest condition.

All the physical bodies existed before creation in potential form as Parkrithi. In due course of time the un-manifest body becomes manifestbody for a few years. Again all manifest bodies will have to go back to un-condition.

Un-manifest> manifest (birth)

Manifest> un-manifest (death).

What happens before life or after life is not known.
In between period is known and is called life.

Shloka #29:

One beholds It as a marvel. Similarly, another talks of it as a marvel. Yet another hears of It as a marvel. Even after hearing, none indeed knows It aright.

Sri Krishna now says: Even if you are not able to understand Atma, believe in it and accept it. I can understand it is a very subtle knowledge and needs a lot of preparation. Atma is a wonder. Atma Gyanam is an even greater wonder. Beyond mind and senses the teaching itself is a wonder. Even if you teach it will not be known. This is a secret teaching. We think Atma is some object of creation and then we try to create the concept. Then we meditate upon it and hope to see Atma. All the time, we should remember, Atma is not an object that is being talked about but it is the subject. Therefore looking for the Atma is the basic mistake we make.

The objectification of Atma is the big mistake people make. Whatever we see is not Atma. When we have negated everything and we see Shunyam then the teacher has to come in and tell us that Shunyam is also not the Atma.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishads, Class 16

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Fourth Question

Summarizing last week's discussions, Swamiji says, the fourth student asked Pippallada five questions centered on the dream state.

1. What are the things that are asleep?
2. What are the things that are awake?
3. Who experiences the dream?
4. When everything is resolved, who is enjoying the sleep?
5. Where is everything supported?

First question was answered in the second mantra.

What are the organs that are sleeping? Which organs are nonfunctional at time of dream? The five Gyana Indriyas and five Karma Indriyas go to sleep. Example of Sun and its rays was given. At dawn the rays come out and at dusk the rays go back to the sun.

Second question was, what organs are awake during dream state? Third and fourth mantras answer the second question.

Mantra 3:

Answer is the Pancha Pranas are awake or functioning. Here Upanishad uses an imaginary situation to describe the answer to this question.

It looks at this state as an Agni Hotra Yaga. The pranas are compared to the three Agni's, the Hota, and the Yajamana. As a result punyam is compared to yaga phalam and takes Yajamana to higher Lokas. Here also it takes one to the deep sleep state or Brahmanada. Mind merges into Brahman. Udana is the one who takes one to this state; hence it is compared to Yagaphalam.

Shankara clarified that in the dream state Brahman Gamanan is there only for Upsakas. Only a Prasna Upasaka goes in dream state to Brahmanada.

Now coming to question # 3, who enjoys Shushupthi, the answer is in shloka # 5.

Shloka 5:

Here Devaha means mind. Devaha is effulgent as it is the mind pervaded by Chiddabasha. Here in dream the mind enjoys its own glory.

Shankara says: The mind can become everything in a dream. Everything in dreaming is from mind alone. The mind alone is Karta, Karma, Shrotha, Shreyam and Shruthihi. Because of thought patterns in dream we think of a tiger, elephant etc. Even the sense organs are created by the mind alone. What does the mind see? What ever is seen in the waking state that object is seen again in dream state. During waking state we gain Vasanas and they are recorded in Chitham. In dream state they are replayed.

It is not a fresh perception. It is exactly as in waking state, re-seen, reheard, and retold. What ever is experienced in waking state including emotions is repeated in dream . In different deshas, different quarters, what ever is experienced

is experienced in dream as well. We see what ever is seen before as well as whatever is not seen before. In dream we see what has not been seen before. Adrishtham, not seen before, per Shankara, it means not in this life but maybe in a previous life. If we had not experienced something we would not have experienced the Vasanas to begin with and as such it cannot come back. What about future? Perception of future is not a dream at all. Vasana Janyaha Swapnaha, only from Vasana come our dreams. Perception of future is due to Yogic power not dream. What is heard and what is not heard in previous birth comes in dreams. The reason is, there is no will or reason present in dream, and hence we feel we have something not previously heard.

Everything the mind sees the mind creates it also experiences. At cosmic level whatever is created by Maya, it can be created in mind also. (subject object duality). Mind becomes everything. This is called Lord's Mahima or Mano Mahima.

Thus the third question also has been answered. Mind is the experiencer of the dream.

Question 4: Who enjoys the Sushupthiananda? It is the Pragyaha or Chetana.

Shloka # 6:

Concept of dreams as per shastra is: In the Nadi's all vasanas are recorded and thrown out as well. When Nadi's are blocked function of mind stops. How does Nadi get blocked? Tejas is Chitham. All recordings of Vasana are in Chitham or the mind. Brahma Chaitanyam over powers individual Chaitanya. Particular knowledge is over powered by non-particular knowledge.

The mind then does not see any dreams. Nischiya, Aham and Anusandhanam vrithi's are not functioning. Karanam becomes Karana Avastha. Like the melting of a wax doll its specific nature is lost. In this case every thing becomes non-specific

when it is not functioning.

Limitations caused by duality, sukham, dukham, etc. vanish. Individuality is resolved. There is no more individual problem, when in Sushupthi. In this deep sleep state there are no dreams. Hence Karana Shariram is also called Ananda Maya Kosha. It is not just kevala Karana Shariram. It is actually Chaitanya filled Karana Shariram. Karnam in itself is Jadam.

Thus fourth question has been answered.

The Fifth question: What is the substrate in which everything is resolved?

Shloka 7:

The answer is in shlokas 7,8 and 9. Para Brahma is the substrate in which everything is resolved. Birds come out at sunrise and go back to rest in the tree residence at sun set. In the same manner everything gets resolved in the Para Atma or Turiyam.

The whole creation can be reduced to Object of experience, Instruments of experience and Subject of Experience. All three are resolved.

Shloka # 8:

The Pancha Bhutas & Tanmatras all rest in the Atman. The Pancha Bhuthas are: prithvi or earth, apas or water, tejas or fire, vayu or air and akasha or ether. In this, the first four elements are the active participants – space is the catalytic force.

The five tanmatras are sound, touch, form, taste, and odor or smell; the five senses are hearing, tactile perception, vision, taste, and smell. The tanmatras are the ways in which the objective world is sensed.

The Sthula Bhutha is after Panci Karanam. Sthula Bhutha is an alloy of other Bhuthas. In Sukshma Bhutha each Bhutha is pure.

Thus we have Prithvi, Tejas, Akash, Apas and Vayu. All these rest upon the Turiyam or Para Atma.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 18

Greetings All,
Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Shloka #20:

“This Self is never born; It never dies either. Having been born, It never ceases to be, again. Unborn, eternal and everlasting, this ancient One is not slain when the body is slain.”

Refreshing our memory of last class, Swamiji reminded us that Sri Krishna is talking about the nature of the Self and shows how it is different from the body mind complex. Atma is eternal, Atma is reality, everything depends on Atma, and Atma is Sarvagathaha. Bodies are many, however the Atma behind them is actually one, all pervading and advaitham. Atma is Aprameya, not an object of experience. It is the experiencer. Repeating example of photograph, where while a camera is there, it is never in the picture. You cannot experience yourself, as you are Aprameya. Atma is Akartha and Abhokta, neither doer nor reaper of results. Atma is beyond Punyam, papam, sukham and dukham.

All these are a result of Karmaphalam. Atma is nirvikaraha, meaning free from all six modifications (existence, birth, growth, change, decay and death). Atma is intimately connected to body but whatever happens to body does not affect Atma. This is illustrated in the example of a movie shown on a

screen. The actors and story in the movie do not affect the screen in any way shape or form.

Shloka 21:

“ How can a man, O Arjuna! Who knows It as the imperishable, the eternal, the unborn, the undecaying, cause anyone to be slain? Whom can he slay?”

What is the goal of a spiritual seeker? It is Veda, says Swamiji. Veda here is a verb and does not mean scriptures, it means one who knows. He has to know Atma. The aim of the spiritual seeker is to know that Atma is indestructible, unborn and without decay. The knowing happens in two stages. First is separating the body and consciousness. Light is not an integral part of the hand, but it is a separate entity. Similarly, consciousness is not an integral part of body. Having differentiated this finding out which one of the two claims to be me? Body alone is “I am” is normally the claim. We are enamored with this body. So we have to disclaim the body and claim the consciousness as myself. Even understanding Atma/Anatma is possible but shifting to Atma is difficult. I have to go on telling myself that the body is a borrowed material. Even an iceberg is water, born out of water, floats on water until it dissolves in water.

This body belongs to matter. I am the consciousness. It will survive dissolution. Turning the eye from matter to consciousness or from Anatma to Atma is called Nididhyasanam. This shift, with practice, becomes natural. This is assimilated knowledge. What is its advantage? Before it, I would say Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha, now I am the Akartha and Abhoktha. Now I am Nityaha, all pervading. I am ever the Subject; I am free from all six modifications. Therefore a Gyani is Akartha. Action is direct or indirect in nature. Direct action is when I act; indirect action is when I instigate someone else to act. So when a person steals something; that is also crime. When a person engages someone to steal something, that person also has committed mistake.

Both actions have Karmaphalam. In this state of a Gyani, there is neither direct nor indirect action. And to indicate this we have two Sanskrit words; direct-doer, I am called kartah, if I am an indirect-doer; I am called a Karayitah; Kartah and Karayitah.

Atma is neither Kartha nor Karayitaha. How can such Atma kill or instigate some one to kill, asks Sri Krishna.

Shloka 22:

“ Just as a man puts on fresh clothes after discarding worn out ones, so does the embodied Self , discarding worn out bodies, proceed to take new ones”

Sri Krishna is now talking about Punarjanmam and death and what happens at these two stages. Death and re-birth are like changing the clothes. Before death we existed. After we remove a dress we still remain as is. Change is only for the dress I still remain as is. Every time a living being is born, it is freshly dressed up. How long you remain in a dress differs. You discard the dress or the body after sometime. You discard worn out clothes when it cannot serve its purpose. Now you put on another new cloth and go out. This body is used for sometime and when it is useless, a Jiva discards the body. It considers it a burden. Jiva is invisible, when the body is gone. Swamiji says it is in a green room of Bhagawan where it puts on another dress. Jiva then comes out in another body for transactions. This is the punarapijananam and punarapi maranam cycle. You can look at the world from two perspectives. Swamiji reminded us of Sthula sharira, Sukshma sharira, Karana sharira and Atma from Tatva bodha. Of these four, the physical body, Sthula Sharira, alone perishes. The other three survive.

Thus:

Sukshma Shariram with mind continues.

Karana Shariram continues.

Atma continues.

The Sukshma Shariram, with mind, travels to another place to experience in another body. Non-perception is not non-existence. Swamiji is referring to the travel of Sukhma Sharira. The travel is as per law of Karma. If a lot of punyam has accrued one gets a good shariram. If punyam and papam are in equal proportions one gets a manushya shariram.

Where does Atma Travel? Atma does not travel. It is all pervading. Atma just remains as is, while bodies keep changing. In a building the space does not change. If a building is erased and another one comes up the space still remains the same. Bodies appear and disappear. Atma remains.

Shloka 23:

“Weapons do not cut It, fire does not burn It, Neither does water wet It ; nor does the wind dry It”

Even though Atma is intimately associated with the body it is not affected by changes to body. The four of five elements except Akasha affects body.

Thus:

Prithvi—weapons can cut the body

Jalam drowns the body.

Fire burns the body.

Air dries the body.

But none of them can affect the Atma. Fire does not burn the Atma, water does not drown it, Wind does not dry it, and weapons cannot destroy it.

You are immortal. Your nature is immortal. “I” should not disappear. This is an inherent urge in us. I am mortal; we cannot accept this statement, because it is not natural. If it were natural we would have accepted it. What is unnatural, we reject. Example is the case of hip transplant where there are rejections by the body. Mortality everyone rejects. Everyone wants to live a day more. “I” am ever there. I am also all pervading. I am beyond time and space. Out of

shape is an example. Our body changes with time. Time cannot change "me". Lord Shiva is known as Sthanunathaha. I am motionless, Achalaha. Only a limited entity can move. The Atma is limitless and Sanatanaha, or ever fresh. Hence the same name for Hinduism. Purvabhaga related to Dharma, and Uttarabhaga related to Brahman, both do not change. Ahimsa is a value from time immemorial. Satyam, Ahimsa etc. are all Sanatanaha. Brahman also does not change. Sanatana Dharma teaches changeless values.

All sciences change from time to time. Physics, Chemistry, medicine etc. change. What does not change? Dharma does not change. Vedas too cannot become obsolete.

Shloka #25:

"This Self is said to be unmanifest, imponderable and immutable. Knowing It to be such, you ought not to grieve for It."

With this shloka Atma Swaroopam is concluded.

Avyaktha means not available to organs of perception. The five sense organs can perceive senses. Eyes can see color, nose can smell, tongue can taste, skin can touch etc. Atma is free from sabda, sparsa, rupa, rasa and gandha. These five properties belong to matter. They belong to the pañca bhuthas the five elements. Akasha, Vayu, Agni, Jalam and Prithvi the five elements have the five properties. Atma is non-material, hence Avyaktha.

All our perceptions cannot perceive Atma. In meditation we can only experience blankness. Mind cannot however conceive of and think of Atma. What you think of in meditation is not Atma. Then what is Atma? The thinker is ātma. So it is never thought, but it is ever the thinker. Never the object. It is ever the subject. It is Aprameya.

Arjuna, you are Atma, I am Atma, Bhishma is Atma. You are not

killing anyone. Do not grieve over any person. Nobody deserves grief. By grieving, the body will not come back. Atma will continue. Just do what you have to do. Do not grieve. If you understand this fact, why grieve? Grief is a delusion.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy