

Bagawat Geeta, Class 23

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Refreshing our memory, Swamiji says, after talking about Gyana Yoga now Sri Krishna wants to talk about Karma Yoga. Before starting his talk he has some general observations about Karma Yoga.

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.”

In Shloka # 40, Sri Krishna glorifies Karma Yoga. In Karma Yoga, the focus is on inner growth. In Karma Yoga there is no failure, rather the focus is on building capacity to learn from success and failure. Since he learns from experiences there is no failure involved.

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!”

In this shloka Sri Krishna glorifies a Karma Yogi. A Karma Yogi has a clear picture of the immediate, long term and ultimate goals. This he gets from life's experiences as well as from Scriptures. This clear thinking is the "inner freedom". Inner freedom means psychological freedom. Just as a child drops holding his mother's hand as he or she gains strength in the legs, so also the Yogi develops inner strength. The discovery of inner strength is Atma Gyanam. This Gyanam comes only to a prepared mind. The process is:

Obtain Gyana Yogyatha>Obtain Gyanam> Obtain Moksha.

The question is how to obtain Gyana Yogyatha? It can be obtained by leading a religious, ethical, moral and Karma yogic life. This is the clarity of vision. Many people, although of religious inclination, are not aware of these goals. So they end up following or performing different sadhanas at different times and are utterly confused. These confused people have different views or opinions as well. Swamiji says: " Fact is one, however, confusions are many".

Shlokas 42, 43 and 44 were combined.

Shloka # 42:

"They are the unwise who utter flowery speeches, O Arjuna! They revel in the letter of the Vedas and declare "there is nothing else".

Shloka # 43:

"Desire ridden, heaven bent, they utter words which lead to births and actions replete with specific rites that yield enjoyments and power".

Shloka # 44:

" In the case of those who have given themselves up to pleasures and power and whose minds have been enslaved by the words of the Vedas that command rites, there is no chance of the resolute mind addressing itself in concentration."

In these three verses Sri Krishna criticizes people who are confused about the ultimate goal of life. Non-Karma Yogi's or Karmi's are the confused people.

Swamiji says, in Chapter 17 of the Gita, Sri Krishna has divided human activities in three types: Sathvic, Rajasic and Tamasic Karmani.

Satvic actions benefit many people and are self-less actions.

Rajasic actions are individual oriented and are self-centered. "I" is the focus and actions are selfish.

Tamasic actions are not only selfish but in the process may also harm others. These actions often are cruel and harmful.

Thus, the three actions can be classified as: Selfless, Selfish and Harmful.

For inner growth what is the contribution of each one of them?

Satvic contributes to inner growth or purity and gives Gyana Yogyatha. It may produce material benefits as a by-product as well.

Rajasic contributes to growth of person only in outer and material sphere. Spiritual growth is slow or none at all.

Tamasic actions can be harmful and may result in some material growth. Scams, cheating etc., come to mind. Inner growth does not occur. It actually pulls one down spiritually. It retards inner growth.

The real peace and happiness of a person depends on inner growth alone not on material growth.

A person who has no inner growth but is materially well off cannot have peace of mind and joy. Peace and Joy are a given for a person of inner growth.

Suppose there is a person who does not have inner growth; even if he has got all the material wealth, he cannot enjoy life, because he will have conflicts because he would have gone against the conscience. So, when the inner growth is stunted the external things cannot give peace and joy, whereas when the inner growth is there, whether the external things are there or not, a person can enjoy peace and joy. This is the basic concept to be kept in mind about karma Yoga.

Sri Krishna criticizes those who are committed to rajasic actions, which means people are interested in their own personal benefit and that too material benefits alone. And they do not care about any other thing. And such selfish people are criticized strongly. Krishna does not criticize here tamasa karmaṇi. That is to be understood.

That material accomplishment alone can make the life successful; this notion is called here avivekaḥ. Whereas the conclusion of the Gita is, material accomplishment alone cannot give that. As they say, money can buy bed, but money cannot buy sleep; Money can buy food, but money cannot buy hunger; Money can buy people, but it cannot buy love. There are many important things in life, which money cannot buy. If I do not understand that, I am an aviveki.

In Vedas, under Karma Kanda's, many rituals are prescribed for material gains. One example is the Aavahanthi Homa. The purpose of this ritual is to obtain wealth. Since Vedas prescribe it, it means it accepts material accomplishments. However, one's life cannot be dedicated to material growth alone. It should include spiritual growth as well. Learning Gita is a fundamental necessity for spiritual growth including one's Emotional Quotient, EQ. EQ is the capacity to maintain mental balance.

Shloka 43:

Such people consider life is all about eating, drinking and merry making. They are the embodiment of material and sensory pleasures. Sri Krishna does not criticize sensory pleasures but criticizes giving undue importance to them at cost of inner growth. Their list does not include Dharmic activities. Their goal is Swargam. However, to reach Swarga you have to die first.

Such people cannot be Karma Yogi's. They also spread their philosophy to every one. Their philosophy is an attractive

one. It is "Maya" that is more attractive than Brahman. Shankara says choose your friends carefully.

Their speeches are flowery and seducing. They speak of varieties of projects, full of actions or rituals or varieties of ambitious projects. Such a person does not have time for the spiritual side. They do not know that one action leads to more actions until it becomes a whirlpool of actions, from which it is difficult to get out of. It is like a Chakravyuham. Thus, such a person goes through the cycle of life and death.

Gita says, know how to get out of actions. It does not mean Sanyasa. Gita does not say action is bad, but at some point we need to grow out of actions.

Actions lead to more actions and thus from birth to birth. These activities are not for purifying the mind. Even religious actions are performed for materialistic gains. Also called Bhoga Aishwarya, its goal is only more and more money.

Shloka 44:

They are totally attached to materialistic things. They find they cannot fulfill all desires of the mind. Increase in desires is fast but fulfillment is slow. Now, when increasing desires cannot be fulfilled by Dharmic means, one takes to Adharmic ways. Concepts of justice, honesty etc., are all lost. There is nothing pricking the conscience. If everybody is doing it, what is wrong with it, is the approach?

Swamiji says: Yatha Raja tatha Praja or Yatha Praja tatha Raja in a democracy. Conscience is stifled and viveka shakthi goes away.

Sri Krishna says such selfish and materialistic people cannot become Karma Yogi's.

Shloka # 45:

This is an important shloka describing who can be a Karma Yogi, what is their personality and what is their thinking etc.

Trigunya here means material accomplishments. Vedas do not condemn material accomplishments. However, a Karma Yogi should not be overwhelmed by material pleasures. While pleasures are allowed they should not be given too much importance, rather they should be subservient to a higher goal. Because ultimately, the peace of mind does not depend upon what we have; but peace of mind depends upon what we are. So if a healthy inner growth is there; he can enjoy both the presence and the absence of wealth; but if the inner growth is not there; then the wealth cannot offer much to that human being.

Shankaracharya says, reduce those activities, which are meant only for artha-kama, or reduce kama karmas; reduce rajasa, tamasa karmas and let there be an increase in satvika karmas. Sri Krishna does not say drop money oriented action; but he says the time and energy should not be spent for this alone.

Swamiji citing example of curd rice and pickle, for some, which is the main dish becomes a question. So also with Artha and Kama. Even as Dharmic entertainments are acceptable, one should constantly remember the ultimate goal.

Even if you reduce your kama karmas, you are going to face many ups and down in life; brought out by the prarabdha karma. Because of the past karmas that we have done, we are going to go through ups and downs in life; we are going to go through the pairs of opposites known as dvandvas. Examples of Dvandvas are mana-apamanah, labha-naṣṭa, jaya-apajaya, all these are called pairs. To resolve such problems we go to an astrologer who prescribes Parihar karma. For the many Akramas (wrong deeds) that we commit we have to perform a lot of parihara's, says Swamiji. Rather, we should accept minor difficulties of life and transcend the pair of opposites by strengthening our inner growth.

Karma Yoga's goal is to reduce Parihar Karmani or Prayaschitha Karmani.

With Best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 20

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Chapter 5 of Prasna Upanishad.

Omkaara Upasana is of three types. Eka Matra Omkaara 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, Eka Matra, leads to Manushya Loka or Bhu Loka.

Second Upasana, Dvi matra, Leads to Pitra Loka, Soma Loka or Bhuvar Loka. This is obtained through Krishna Gathi.

Third Upasana, Tri matra, Leads to Brahma Loka or Suvar Loka. Here all papam's are gone. Like a snake shedding its skin one sheds the entire past. The taint of the old skin is gone. It is an effortless and total process. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad also references the snake skinmanalogy. Here the path is Shukla Gathi.

In Brahma Loka he can perform Omakara Vichara to obtain Turiyam. Here he gains pure Brahman. Brahmaji is the teacher in Brahma Loka. So, an ideal condition exists in Brahma Loka and he becomes liberated on obtaining Krama Mukthi.

Eka and Dvi matras give only Samsara phalam. They do not result in Krama Mukthi. Therefore the Third Upasana is most

important.

Shloka # 6:

Atharvana Veda gives us the Rk Mantras. If Omkara Upasana of Eka and Dvi matras are used then it results in an incomplete Upasana. The phalam one gets is Manushya loka or Soma Loka. All three matras, when used separately, or not totally, only provide finite or ephemeral results.

They become properly employed when they are mutually connected as one whole Omkara. So they must be wholly used to become holy. Double negatives are used in these mantras to emphasize.

Why say properly employed? Only when it is done in totality as Omkara that one obtains Mukthi, also called Purna phalam or Nithya phalam.

When three matras are properly employed in meditation it means Jagat, Swapna and Sushupthi.

A Kara is Jagat, Vishva or Virat.

U Kara is Swapna or Tejas or Hiranyagarbha.

M Kara is Sushupthi or Pragyaha or Ishwara.

One who obtains mukthi will not tremble, will not have fear, will be free from Samsara or will obtain liberation.

Shloka # 7:

This shloka is another Rk mantra through Rig Devata. It says, if Omkara mantras are incompletely used, it gives only finite results. It also says, if Omkarar mantras are completely used, it will provide infinite results.

Thus:

A Kara results in manushya loka or Bhu loka.

U Kara results in anthariksha loka or Bhuvan or Soma Loka.

M Kara results in Brahma Loka.

Swamiji says all three results can be obtained in total Omkara Upasana or 3 in 1. Ayatanam means Symbol. After obtaining Brahma loka same Omkara mantra can be used for Vichara to obtain mukthi. The Mukthi phalam results in: Peacefulness, Freedom from Jara, Freedom from mortality, and Freedom from fear.

With this the Rk Veda quotation is over. The chapter 5 also has concluded.

Swamiji says the first two matras are only to glorify the third. The first two are not primary matras.

Sixth Question/ Sixth Chapter:

Shloka # 1:

After answering question of Satyakama, now the sixth student Bharadwaja Sukesha asks his question.

Swamiji reminded us that in the beginning, in introduction, the first student was Bhardwaja, however, in order of questioning, he is the last one.

He, Sukesha, narrates an incident to the Guru. He was approached by a Rajput prince, Hirayanabha, of Koshala Desa, who asked him a question.

“ Oh Pippilada Guru, He asked me: Oh Bhardwaja Sukesha, the Purusha with 16 parts, do you know him?” While Sukesha was well versed he did not know about this Purusha. He, Sukesha, was a man of great intellectual honesty. He said, I do not know. The prince did not accept this answer. I told him if I had known this Purusha, why would

I have not told you? I have no reason to hide. Moreover, I do not lie. Lying can destroy a person from his roots.

Pippilada, hearing this, gets a hint about the Sukesha, that he is a man of great values and a well-qualified student for Vedanta. In this context, Swamji says, study of scriptures

without values results in Agyanam, while one with values can obtain Gyanam.

Furthermore, Swamiji says, Satyam is speaking the truth. Brahman is also Satyam. Satyam as Brahman is known as Paramarthika Satyam, while Speaking the truth is known as Vyavaharika Satyam. First speak the truth only then the greater truth can be obtained.

(My note: The Vyavaharika state refers to the Dual (Dwaita) state of reference. Most people understand the Universe from this plane. They perceive the duality of object and the subject. There is the world (Jagat) and there is Individual (Jiva) and the God (Ishwara) all separate. The Paramarthika state refers to the Absolute Non-dual (Advaita) state of reference, where only Brahman/Atman is. There is no difference between God or Individual or the world. The former is a temporary and relative state of existence whereas the latter is the absolute-permanent state of existence. It should be kept in mind that world is constantly changing, so Vyavaharika is a relative state.)

So, therefore, I cannot tell you a lie. Hearing this, Hirayanabha was disappointed that he did not get an answer. He quietly got into his chariot and drove away. Swamiji says he was probably impressed with the honesty of Sukesha as well.

So Gurudev, now I want to ask you about this Purusha of 16 parts. Where is this 16-part Purusha available? This is my question.

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 21

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Chapter 6 of Prasna Upanishad.

Sukesha Bharadwaja asks the sixth and last question. Before asking his question he narrates an incident. The Rajput prince Hiranyanabha asked him about the sixteen-part Purusha. Sukesha told him he did not know about this Purusha. Now, Sukesha, asks his Guru, Pippilada, about this sixteen-part Purusha. Swamiji asked why narrate the incident at all?

Two reasons were presented:

- 1) To teach the value of Satyam. When one does not know the answer, one should not give the wrong answer. One should accept one's ignorance.
- 2) A prince approached Sukesha Bharadwaja. This indicates he, Sukesha, was held in high esteem. The fact that he did not know the answer indicates that it is a rare knowledge. Here rareness of knowledge is emphasized.

Finally student asks where the sixteen-part Purusha is? He does not ask who the sixteen-part Purusha is first. Swamiji says, this maybe because he may have some idea about whom he is. So the question is who is he? And where is he?

Shloka # 2:

To that student, who has approached his Guru properly, who is truthful and deserving this knowledge, Guru Pippilada says:

O Somya, or Pleasing one, He is within the body within Hridayam as the awareness.

Note: Shankara says: When a student is deserving, the teacher has to impart him knowledge.

Brahman in Antahakarana means it is manifest in anatahakarana. It is outside as well and as such all-pervasive. Being all-pervasive does not mean it manifests everywhere. This is the answer to the question where is the Purusha.

Now, who is this Purusha? Purusha, here, means Brahman. Upanishad says Purusha is Niravyavam or Niskalaha. Student is asking about Sakala Purusha, while Brahman is Nishkala.

Teacher is going to reveal Nishkala (without limbs) Brahman. How can Teacher reveal a Brahman without Limbs? Where eyes do not go, intellect does not go, how can one reveal such a Brahman? So, an extraordinary method is used. It is called Adhyaropa Apavada. It is a four-step process.

First step: Introduce the world itself as an effect or Karyam. Material world, according to our experience, is always there. The world of matter is always there. It is also called Jada Prapancha.

Second step: If the world is a Karyam, then there must be a Karanam, which people do not know about. The cause of the Material universe is Satyam or Gyanam. Gyanam or Chaitnaya is the cause of matter.

Note: As per Science, matter is the basis and Consciousness is the product of matter or life.

First and second step together are called Adyaropa or Srishti.

Third Step: Karyam does not have an existence separate from Karanam. I have to show this. I am negating Karyam as separate from Karanam. There is no matter separate from Consciousness.

Fourth Step: Once Karya Budhi is negated, Karana kartavyam is negated from Karanam.

The third and fourth steps together are known as Apavada.

From Pot thought to Clay thought or Clay Budhi. Keeping clay

thought , where is the pot? It does not exist. Keeping eye on clay, I negate the Pot (Karyam). Clay can be the cause only as long as Pot is there.

Therefore Clay thought is> Clay was>Clay will be. The word pot caused the confusion.

At this stage Avasishtam or Jada Rahita Chaitanya remains or Adhyaropa Chaitanya or consciousness alone is. Adhyaropa Parkriya begins as Srishti.

Srishti is explained in different Upanishads in different ways. Thus, there are Krama, Akrama, and Vikrama Srishti's. Why this inconsistency in Upanishads? It is only a temporary introduction, eventually it is all negated.

In Prasna Upanishad Srishti is introduced as the sixteen parts. Using the sixteen parts Purusha, the teacher reveals the Nishkala Purusha.

Thus, the sixteen-part Purusha is born from Nishkala Purusha and then again resolved in Brahman.

Thus: Sixteen part Purusha> Born from Brahman> Again Resolved in Brahman.

Sodasha Kala Adishtanam Param Brahma is a new name for Brahman. Swami says Shodasha Kala is only an indicator for Brahman.

One more question can come up. When we say Brahman is Karanam, how can Brahman be the Karanam? Karanam undergoes change. Thus, Clay becomes pot or changes to pot. Here Shankara says: Brahman is Karanam. It does not mean Brahman is Karanam. Karanatvam is only a temporary status assigned to Brahman. So, don't go deep into it. It is for this that the concept of Maya is introduced. Karanathvam is Maya.

This sixteen part Material universe is the basis for Universe. What are the sixteen Kalas?

{My Notes: Got this from internet on Adhyaropa Apavada. In the Vedanta, even though the Supreme Purport is in Advaita, we do encounter passages declaring creation implying the duality of a created world (and jIva-s) and the Creator Brahman. This suggests a cause-effect relationship between Brahman and the world. One can appreciate this seeming contradiction, that is, the declaration of Advaita on the one hand and the presence of creation passages on the other, by understanding the principle of adhyAropa – apavAda or the Method of Deliberate Superimposition and Negation.

The source of this idea is the explanation of the principle by Swami Paramarthananda in the course of his mANDUKya kArikA discourse.

The example of a pot is considered for the purpose of understanding the principle. I have a 'pot' vision. The teacher wants to change this vision of mine as he wants me to have the correct vision, that of the clay. This is accomplished in FOUR stages:

Stage 1. The pot is presented as the effect of clay.

Stage 2. Clay is presented as the cause of the pot.

Stage 3. Now, the teacher asks me to find out if I can see the pot without the clay. I look at the pot on all sides and conclude that everywhere it is clay alone. It is not available as different from clay, its cause. The conclusion: the effect is non-different from the cause.

Stage 4. This much is not enough, for the concept of cause and effect does exist. Now the teacher states that since it was concluded that the effect does not exist apart from the cause, it would be correct to hold that the cause alone really exists. But this still limits the cause as a cause. The vision born of wisdom is: There is no longer any need to call the clay as the cause. As clay alone matters in that wise vision, it would be appropriate to divest the clay of its status of a

cause. Thus, divested of this status, clay remains as the one that transcends the cause-effect duality.

The first two stages are the 'adhyAropa' stages where the 'effect'-hood of the pot and the 'cause'-hood of the clay were superimposed deliberately. This is done in order to afford the foundation for finally negating them and driving home the non-dual nature.

The latter two stages constitute the 'apavAda' stages where the supposed effect-hood of the pot is negated and even its substantiality is shown to be only in the clay. The pot is shown to be insubstantial as apart from its substance, the clay. Next, and finally, even the causehood of the clay is negated, for when the effect-hood is admitted to be of no consequence, to accord the cause- status to the clay is meaningless. The clay can exist without that definition as the cause.}

{My Notes: More From Internet on Adhyaropa Prakriya:

"May I add my own (2 cents), more with the idea of learning more on the fundamentals of Advaita Vedanta.

Adhyasa is not Knowledge. Adhyasa leads to **mithya-gnanam** and because of this **mithya-gnanam** one makes wrong conclusions about himself and the world. It is mithya-gnanam because such knowledge changes (budhi vyabhicharati) when one enquires into it.

Adhyasa takes place, just like cooking takes place, when the various factors required for adhyasa to take place are present. This is a natural law.

Adhyaropa and Apavada is the methodology or prakriya used in Vedanta for one to understand that Adhyasa exists and it is like a natural law, but it leads to mithya gnana and fools people. The prakriya is used only to correct the mithya-gnana, (and not to remove Adhyasa) because the appearance of one

thing as another thing, or one thing appears as having the qualities of another thing and vice-versa, can continue. The prakriya has nothing to do with the objects, as all it does is to correct one's Budhi, i.e. intellect, so that one does no more get fooled by the mithya-gnana resulting from Adhyasa.

Samsara, rather Samsara Budhi, takes place only because of Adhyasa i.e. Atmani Anatma Budhi and Anatmani Atma Budhi, (intellectual appreciation of what is real as unreal and what is unreal as real). The Adhyaropa-Apavada Prakriya removes this wrong intellectual appreciation, and corrects it with Atmani Atmabudhi and Anatmani Anatmabudhi (intellectual appreciation of what is real as real and what is unreal as unreal). “}

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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.

Kshatriya 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 akaraṇam or pratyavaya sin. Vihitha akaraṇam 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, samatvam 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 Adhishthana 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 Apara 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 Bhuvan 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 Swaropa. 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 Nivriti 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 Vedanta 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 Drashta (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 Vyashthi 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