

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 experienter. 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

Bagawat Geeta, Class 17

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

Refreshing our memory of last class, Swamiji reminded us that Sri Krishna wants to persuade Arjuna to fight the war. He teaches him from three angles. The three angles are Philosophical, Ethical/Moral/Dharmic and finally from Laukika Drishthi. He shows Arjuna that when looked at from all three angles, he must still fight.

The first one, the philosophical argument, is about the nature of the individual. This is covered from Shlokas 12 through 25. Atma Anatma Viveka is discussed. The individual is not the body or mind, it is in fact the Atma. Nature of Atma is discussed. I am not this perishable body that is a temporary assemblage of the Pancha Bhutas or the mind.

If I am Atma, different from the body and mind, what is its nature?

Atma swaroopam is eternal. Body and mind will be destroyed. Atma is eternal. This is first lesson.

Shloka # 16:

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

In verse 16, Atma is Satyaha. Everything depends on Atma. Clay alone is Satyam, pot is dependent on it, and hence it is Mithya. The existence and utility of the pot is not disputed. It is just not independent of the Clay. Without Atma, Anatama

cannot exist. It is a borrowed existence. Remove the clay and the pot cannot enjoy existence anymore. Therefore Atma is Satyaha. This is the second lesson.

Only by holding onto reality or Satyaha one will be happy. Giving example of a chair made of cardboard, Swamiji says, you can show case such a chair but you cannot sit on it. If you sit, it will break. Anatma cannot provide lasting support and security. Lean on Atma never on Anatma.

Initially, when one does not understand this truth, one tends to lean on Bhagawan. Bhagawan is Atma. Moksha is relying on Atma. It does not mean hatred of Anatma. You can do everything with the cardboard chair except sit on it. Similarly, for lasting security depend on Atma.

In Shloka # 17:

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

Sri Krishna says Atma is all pervading and eternal. It is not bound by time or limited by space. Atma pervades everything. An all-pervading thing has to be formless, says, Swamiji. Anything limited is due to its boundary. The shape of the hall depends on its boundary. If walls are not there, it will not have a shape and the hall will be formless.

Atma is all pervading, formless and shapeless like space or Akasha. Swamiji says one important question that comes up often is, we would like to see Atma. He says we will not be able to see Atma. We can see an object because of its form. Atma however is formless. Just as we accept existence of space we should also accept existence of Atma, as it is invisible.

What happens to Atma when body is destroyed? What happens to space when the hall is destroyed? Space remains as is. The space, however, is useless. When body is there, it is useful for transactions. When body goes, Atma remains, but it cannot

perform any transaction.

Shloka 18:

“ These bodies that perish are said to pertain to the eternal Self that is embodied-the eternal Self, that is imperishable and indeterminable. Therefore, fight, O scion of the Bharathas”.

Sri Krishna repeats the main ideas again, here. Atma is Nithyaha. Atma cannot be destroyed. It is intimately associated within the body as well. Just like the space within the hall, Atma pervades the Sharira.

Now, defining Anatma, all bodies are perishable. As Atma, I am immortal. As Anatma, I am mortal. So, gracefully accept the mortality of the body including of Bhishma, Drona and Sri Krishna's. Sri Krishna's death is Swargarohanam.

Discussing another concept, Prameya means object of knowledge. Atma is never an object of knowledge. You can never know Atma. It is like “ What is that that is ever existing but cannot be known?” Giving example of photograph, you can see everything in a photograph but the person who took the picture or the camera as well. You don't see both. Similarly, entire creation is like a photograph. One thing you will never see is the field of experience or the observer or experiencer. Hence Aprameya means ever the experiencer, never the experienced. Thus, Atma is ever the subject, never the object. You can never see your own eyes. Similarly, Consciousness can never be seen.

Therefore, Arjuna you are not killing Bhishma, Drona or anybody else. Atma is eternal. Atma is reality. Atma is all pervading. Atma is never an object, but it is ever the subject.

Shloka # 19: “Both he who takes It for the slayer and he who takes It to be slain know not (the truth); It neither slays

nor is slain."

Atma is further described. Atma is Akarta (no action) and Abhoktha (does not take part). Space has accommodated all of us. But space is not involved in any of our actions. It does not participate. But without space nothing can exist. In sunlight many transactions occur. But light itself is not a participant. If you remove the light, the transaction cannot take place. So also, Atma's presence is required for all transactions. But without Atma nothing can occur. In example of cinema, the screen is not a participant in the movie, however, if the screen is removed, no movie can be shown.

Sri Krishna wants to convey the idea: Atma does not kill. Nor is Atma killed by anyone as well. Instead he says: Suppose a person says Atma is the killer (Karta) or Atma is killed (bhoktha) that person is an ignorant person. Atma has not killed anyone. Space cannot destroy anyone. Nor can Atma be killed.

This is an important verse says Swamiji. Akarta is one free from all Karmas. So, there is no punya or papa for Atma. Also, since it does not die it also has no punarjanmam. So, why talk of karma? Sukshma Shariram travels from place to place. It has punarjanmam. However, for a gyani there is no Shradham or Tarpanam. He does not have punarjanmam. For him there is only a remembrance day.

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."

This is another important verse. Highly philosophical. Until now, the verses were short, now they are longer. Essence of this shloka is Atma is free from all modifications or changes. Nirvikaraha means free from change. Change has been classified

into six types: They are:

1. Asti, existence in seed form;
2. Jayate, taking birth;
3. Vardhate, growing
4. Vipariṇamate, metamorphosis or changing
5. Apakṣiyate, decaying that is old age; and
6. Vinasyati, meaning perishes.

Atma is free from all above changes. Atma is never born. Atma does not die at any time. It never comes into existence at a particular time. And therefore, ātma is given the name Ajah, meaning birth less. It is also called nityaḥ, meaning deathless. It is called Sasvataḥ meaning it is free from decay; it does not get old; It is called Puraṇaḥ, which means it does not grow. It is called Janma rahitaḥ or without birth.

The body goes out of shape because of certain diseases; in some diseases the body bloats, in certain diseases the body shrinks. Different diseases attack the body in different forms. So while the body is afflicted and tormented by diseases, the Atma does not go out of shape. Why Atma does not go out of shape? First, there should be a shape. Only if there is a shape, it can go out of shape. In the case of Atma, there is no question of creating a shape, no question of maintaining it and therefore there is no question of losing it also.

Recapping the seven main features of Atma, Sri Krishna says they are: nirvikaraha, Satyaha, Nithyaha, Aprameya, Sarvagathaha, Akarta and Abhokta.

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad Class 15

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. It deals with Turiyam, an adhishtanam, when everything is resolved.

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. How do we know they are not functioning? Their experiences are not coming. As an example, there is no rupa darshanam, as the eyes are not functioning.

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. In this yaga Grahastha pours oblation into fire twice,

daily. Thus, two ahuthis are given. In a Yagya, fire is always involved. Fire is three fold in nature. Different rituals require different fires. Different fires mean different methods of kindling and different kinds of Homa kunda and different kinds of mantras are chanted. The moment a man gets married he is supposed to kindle a fire and this fire will have to be maintained through out his life. This fire can be removed or extinguished twice. The fire in such a case is ritually removed. First, when he takes Sanyasa then he becomes Nir-Agni. The fire can be used to burn the body as well. In case of Sanyasi, upon death, the body cannot be burned. He cannot be burned or cremated as he does not have a house hold, as such, there is no house hold fire as well to burn. For a householder Anyeshthi samsakara is performed.

Agniadhanam is a fire kindled during a wedding, which is maintained by Grihastha. The fire in the house is called Gahyapathya Agni and is maintained by a grihastha. If this fire is put out due to some reason, the second case, a prayaschittham has to be performed. He has to light a new fire from another Grihastha. From Grahya pathya Agni a fire is kindled in a separate homa, performed daily, and is called Aahavaniyagni. The remaining fire is put back into Grahya pathya Agni.

Dakshina Agni is another fire. This fire is always kept on the right hand side of Yajamana or southern side.

The above are the three fires. Dakshina Agni is also known as Anvayahapacana. During rituals some oblations have to be cooked and such an oblation is called Anvayah.

The fourth factor is any ritual requires the Hota, the Priest.

The fifth factor is Yajamanha or Grihastha for whom (sponsor) the ritual is performed.

The sixth factor is Punyam, the immediate phalam of the ritual.

The seventh factor is the goal attained by the punyam.

These are the seven factors involved in Agni Hotra Ritual. The pancha pranas and the mind are compared to these seven factors.

Apana is connected to Grahyapathya Agni, the inhalation air and later becomes the excretory air.

Prana is compared to Aahavaniyagni. Grahyapathya Agni is the first fire. From it the Ahavaniya fire is taken out. Similarly Apana goes in and the exhaled air, ahavaniya, comes out.

Grahyapathya Agni> Aahavaniyagni.

(Apana)

(Prana)

Dakshina Agni is compared to Vyana, the circulatory system. Vyana comes out of Hridayam from a special right hand hole in the heart.

Samana is compared to the Hota, the priest. The priest performs two oblations. He places them in the right ahuthi, in the right place. Inhalation and exhalation are the two ahuthis in us that has to be operated properly also called nithyakarma. Samana maintains these inhalations and exhalations by keeping our body healthy. If Samana is not maintained the prana will go away, (samam nayathi).

The fifth factor is Manaha and it is compared to Yajamanha.

Udana is compared to Punya Phalam.

Swarga Loka is compared to Sushupthi Ananda or Phalam. (I think Swamiji means from punya phalam we get the phalam of swarga loka.)

So, when Manas, the Yajamanha, performs the agnihotra yaga, then Udana takes the mind out of Sukshma Shariram to Sushupthi. In Sushupthi it is resolved into Brahman or Brahmandam. Thus, Manas performs Agni Hotra Yaga and enjoys

the Sushupthi.

In this body the Prana's are awake during dream. Garhyapathya is the Apana. Vyana coming out of right hand side of Hridayam, is Dakshina Agni. Ahavaniyagni, born out of Garhyapathya Agni is nothing but Prana or exhaling air. Thus inhalation is Garhyapathya and exhalation is Ahavaniyagni.

Mantra # 4:

Samana's definition is now given. It is that digestive prana that maintains Uchvasam and Nishvasam. The airs (Uchvasam and Nishvasam) are like ahuthi oblations. Therefore, Samana is compared to Hota.

Manaha Vav Yajamanha. Yajamana alone handles all equipment. So also, mind alone handles all types of Karanams.

Ishta phalam is the punyam in Udanaha. Punyam leads a person from one place to another world.

Swapna Loka>Sushupthi Avastha is led by Udana. Udana takes the mind to sushupthi. In sushupthi we are supposed to be with Brahman. In sushupthi we are not identified with any AnAtma. In waking state we identify with the body. In this state, Sushupthi, however, we do not know that we are with Brahman. We enjoy without knowing.

Aharaha, meaning daily, the Udana takes one to the Sushupthi due to the Agnihotra ritual. All people are dreaming and going to sleep. It does not mean all people are doing Agni Hotra Yagya. Shankara says Pipilllada's statement applies only to Upasakas. Like two people visiting a temple, one comes with Bhakti and gets spiritual pleasure and other comes to take pictures and gets materialistic pleasure. Only an Upasaka has the right attitude. With this the second question has been answered.

With best wishes,

Prasna Upanishad, Class 14

Greetings All

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Fourth Question

Summarizing the gist of last chapter (Question 3) Swamiji says, the Student asked Pippallada five questions.

1. Where does Prana come from? It comes out of Atma like a shadow.
2. How Prana arrives into the body? It arrives into the body due to Manokrithe from our Sankapla or Karma. So, it comes through our mind because of our Purva karmas.
3. How does Pranas divide itself? It divides into the pancha pranas known as: Apana, Udana, Samana, Vyana and Prana and each has its role defined. Shlokas 4,5 and 6 address this. Like an Emperor it delegates powers to other Pranas.
4. How does Pranas go out of the body? This is addressed in mantras 7, 9 and 10 respectively. Prana goes out through the susuhmna nadi, in case of Upasakas. In a Gyani and non-Upasaka it does not go through the Susuhmna Nadi. At time of death, all pranas are absorbed in Udana with the sense organs. So, Udana and Sankalpa are the only one's left and they together lead the Jivatma to various Lokas.
5. How does it function? This is addressed in mantra 8.

How does it sustain at individual and cosmic levels? At

individual level, through the pancha pranas although the individual level is not specifically mentioned. At Samashthi level, through Adithya, Prithvi, Akasha, Vayu and Agni Devatas.

Then Mantras 11 and 12 concluded with Prana Upasana. The benefits of the Upasana are described. In this world the person's children will not die due to an accident. In the next world one gets Krama Mukthi.

Second chapter was also Prana Upasana. Karma Kanda knowledge does not bring benefits unless it is used to perform Upasana. Vedas give a command or ask one to act and it is called Vidhivakyam. In Chapter 2, it was only glorification and there were no commands. In chapter 3 until mantra 10 it is glorification. Only mantras 11 and 12 are Vidhivakyam's and as such are an important part of the Upanishad.

In Chapter 1, Shukla and Krishna Gathi was discussed in context of Srishthi Prakaranam. In Chapter 2 and 3, it is glorification of Prana. In chapter 3 we got Purva Bhaga (Karma kanda) of the Veda. Now comes the Gyana Kanda or Vedanta from Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Shloka 1: Beginning Chapter 4, Question 4, the fourth student Sauryayini Gargyaha asks five questions. They are:

1. At time of dream what are the organs that are sleeping or not functioning? This is about the Swapna Avastha.
2. Related to dreams what are the organs that are awake?
3. Related to dreams, which Devaha (Karanam or Chetana Tatvam) is seeing the dream (Swapna Padarthaha)
4. To which person this sukham belongs? The benefit of Susushupthi avastha?
5. What is that Adishthanam on which all organs are supported (Turiya Rupa). This question, says Swamiji,

makes it Vedanta.

Jagrithi is not considered. If it is included we are discussing Avastha Trayam.

Shloka # 2: Teacher Pippallada now answered the questions.

Q 1: What organs are sleeping or are resolved or in dormant condition during dream state?

The five Gyana indriyas and five Karma indriyas, 10 in all, are all dormant. The Karma Indriyas are: Vak (organ of speech), Pani (hands), Pada (feet), Upashtam (organ of generation) and Payu or Guda (anus, the organ of excretion) are the five organs of action. All ten are resolved in the mind. It is not a permanent resolution. The 10 indriyas come forth during the Jagrithi Avastha. This is a daily affair. Giving example of the Sun and its rays, Sun is the mind and the rays are like the 10 indriyas. In early morning we are able to see the sun. As it rises the rays come in all directions. At sunset the rays are withdrawn. At sunset you can see the orb of the sun. You can see the same at dawn.

Similarly, in the morning the sense organs spring out and reaction becomes brighter and at sunset sense organs are withdrawn and everything becomes less bright. They are partially active until fully withdrawn.

In same manner all 10 sense organs resolve into the mind. What kind of a mind is it? It is the great mind, the effulgent one.

Mind, by itself, is Jadam. However, it is pervaded by Chetana or reflected consciousness (Chidabasha), hence it is consciousness now. Blessed by the mind, sense organs arise, as well as, get resolved. Hence, mind is supreme. Just like the moon gets its light from the sun, so also the sense organs get their light from the mind. Mind is Paraha or Supreme. Sense organs are Aparaha. All ten organs stop functioning when resolved during dream state.

During dream there is no taste, smell, touch, sight, all five gyanaindriyas are shut. The Krama indriyas of hold, grasp, movement, etc are also resolved. One is considered to be sleeping by other waking people.

With this the first question has been answered.

Q 2: What are the one's that are awake?

The Pancha Pranas are awake.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 16

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

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

Shlokas 12 through 25 deal with philosophical approach. Here he discusses the real nature of Atma. Atma is an Akartha and an Abhoktha. Hence, you are not fighting nor are you a killer. Similarly neither Bhishma nor Drona are being killed. Giving example of a wave, when you look at a wave in the ocean, from the standpoint of the wave, it has got birth as well as death but if you see the essential nature of the wave, i.e. water, from the standpoint of water, it is neither born nor it gets destroyed. Giving another example, a

desk has got a beginning and it has got an end. But once you learn to look at it as a wood, then even when the desk is destroyed, the wood continues to exist. Therefore, Arjuna, there is no killer and there is no killed. This is the philosophical angle and hence, Sri Krishna says Atma is eternal. Eternal means it was in the past, it is in the present, and it will be in future as well.

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

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

- Tab 1
- Tab 2
- Tab 3

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

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

A Dhirhaha is not irritated by the changing world. Arrival is welcome and departure is not resisted. Such a person is

Samaha. Such a person enjoys a mind for philosophical inquiry. An irritated mind cannot probe the truth regarding self.

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

Shloka # 16:

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

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

Intrinsic nature is present all the time.

Incidental nature is present only temporarily.

Giving an example Swamiji says: A vessel is filled with water to make hot water. You light the fire. The vessel becomes hot.

By contact, water also becomes hot. Vegetable in water also becomes hot.

Thus:

Fire is hot because it is fire.

Vegetable heat is incidental as it is borrowed from water.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Shloka # 17:

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

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

This Atma pervades this whole creation. Like space, Atma is all pervading. So, how many Atma's can be there? There is only one Atma while there are many bodies. Just as there is one space with many houses within it. Each house has space enclosed in it. Houses are counted, but not the space within them. Anatma are many and counted, but Atma is everywhere but not counted. This is the basis for our namaskara. You are really worshiping Atma. Other religions do not understand this. Even an ant and a cow have “Atma”.

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

With Regards,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 13

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Third Question

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

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

Shloka # 8:

Vyashti

Prana

Apana

Samana

Anthariksham)

Vyana

Udanaha

Samashthi

Aditya Devatha

Prithvi Devi

Akasha Devatha (Antar Akasha or

Vayuhu Devatha, all pervading.

Agni Devata or Tejaha.

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

Shloka # 9:

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

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

Although it was answered in shloka # 7 that Prana goes out of

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

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

In which direction does Prana go upon death?
It depends upon what Sankalpa is in the mind.

Shloka # 10:

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

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

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

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

Now Pipillada comes to Prana Upasana. Everything so far has been leading to this Upasana. Utkrishta means superior object.

Until now Prana's superiority has been described. So, now, Samashthi Prana Upasana starts.

Shloka # 11:

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

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

The description of the phalam is as follows: After death the Upasaka goes to Brahma Loka, attains knowledge there and obtains Krama mukthi or relative immortality and then gets real immortality as well. This shloka also quotes another shloka in support. This shloka comes from Brahmanas. Vedas are divided into Mantra, Brahmana, Aranyaka and Upanishads. Brahmana is a commentary on Mantra portion. The mantra bhaga is quoted for support. Prasna Upanishad also is a part of Brahmana.

The meaning of the Brahmana Shloka is:

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

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

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

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

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

Some definitions:

Upashantham means cold or colder.

Mumukshuhu means dying person.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Bagawat Geeta, Class 15

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

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

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

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

In the philosophical approach he informs Arjuna that he is

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

However, when you shift your vision you realize it is the clay in the pot at all times. During the Pot's birth, life and death, the clay remains as is. It was clay at beginning and it continues to remain clay. So from the Pot's vision there is birth and death. From the Clay's vision there is no birth or death. In the ocean example, from standpoint of wave-vision, there is the birth of a wave and there is a death; but from the standpoint of water-vision, nothing is born and nothing is gone. Change the mind to understand that Atma alone is there. There is no birth or death. There is no punyam or papam. So, Arjuna, you do your duty. This is the philosophical approach. To understand this, one has to have a sharp intellect. This is the topic (philosophical) discussed from Shloka #12-25.

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

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

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

So, these are the three angles taken by Sri Krishna. We will

first deal with the philosophical angle, from 12 to 25.

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

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

The second property of Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha.

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

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

Kartha alone reaps karmaphalam. The eater alone gets benefit from hunger Nivrithi. Kartha Eva Bhoktha Bhavathi. Whatever

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

Atma is Nirvikaraha. This is a third property of Atma. Whatever changes happens to hand, the light is not affected. Hand may get dirty, may get wounded but light is not affected. Body goes through modifications such as Childhood, Boyhood, Youth and Old age. However, Atma does not have these experiences.

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

Shloka # 12:

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

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

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

Shloka # 13:

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

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

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

Shloka # 14:

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

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

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

So, when summer comes, we feel hot. Rather than accepting the glory of the sun, we complain about the heat. So, we should change our attitude towards the body, nature etc. Until I learn to accept nature, problems will be there. In fact, resistance leads to sorrow. Learn to live with the situation, rather than running away. This will increase your capacity to accept heat, cold, pain and pleasure. Life is a series of opposite experiences. Thus, if Manam (pride) comes, apamanam (insult) will come. If samyogaḥ takes place, there will be viyogaḥ. If there is growth, there will be decay. If there is gain, there will be loss. Life is a series of opposite experiences. This is the nature of Anatma. They are subject to arrival and departure. When they come, be mentally prepared to welcome them, when they depart, be mentally prepared to send them off. Thus, Atma is Anithya, impermanent. May you develop the endurance, both physical and mental, to bear this.

Shloka # 15:

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

The faculty of endurance is called Titiksha. Titiksha is the quality where one does not get irritated immediately. When our endurance is less, we become irritated quickly. Not to react immediately, not to get irritated immediately, not to

punish the other person immediately; because when the endurance is less, we get irritated very quickly.

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

The lack of endurance is a modern problem.

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

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

Suggested take away from this class:

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

With my good wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 12

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Third Question

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

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

Answers to the questions are:

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

Shloka # 5:

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

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

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

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

Shloka # 6:

Vyana: Affects whole body and it moves through the Nadi's that pervade all over the body. All Nadis are connected to Hridayam. From Hridayam, Nadis branch out. Hridaya is the place of Atman. This Apraksha Atma resides in antahakaranam or the Hridayam (the physical heart).

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

Shloka # 7:

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

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

Prana escapes through Susuhumna Nadi. This happens only for Upanishads and not for normal people. Who takes the Prana? Urdha

Udana, at the upper part of body, leads Prana to various Lokas. At death, other Pranas are absorbed or merged in Udana. At death everything stops.

To which Loka does it take?

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

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

Shloka # 8:

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

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

Thus:

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

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

Prithvi supports Vyashti Apana and holds her down

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Baghawat Geeta, Class 14

Greetings All,

Gita, Chapter # 2, Samkhya Yoga:

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

Shloka # 11:

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

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

“Wise people do not grieve at all”, says Sri Krishna. A wise person is one who is an Atma Gyani. Arjuna is profusely

grieving. Therefore, Arjuna is otherwise or ignorant. Through this shloka, Sri Krishna is informing the entire humanity that if you are grieving, then you are ignorant. If anybody is upset, without nimmadi (tamil for peace of mind), they are ignorant. The medicine for ignorance is Gyanam. If there is darkness in the room the only remedy is to bring in light. Can Karma or Action remove ignorance? No, says Swamiji. If that were the case abolish all colleges and just give work to all children. Meditation, Japa etc., also cannot remove ignorance. "therefore Arjuna, become a wise person. Wise men do not grieve for living or for the dead ones." This goes for things as well. Giving an example, Swamiji says:

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

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

Shloka # 12:

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

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

Sri Krishna takes a three-pronged approach to this.

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

From whichever angle you look, you have to fight.

Philosophical approach is primary while ethical approach is also important. The worldly approach is not that important. Philosophical is important because Arjuna is a very learned person; he knows the dharma shastras. He knows ethics. His problem is his self-ignorance.

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

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

the light. It is on the hand, but it is not a Property, a part or a product.

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

When the hand is removed the light is not removed. It continues, however, it is invisible. As long as a body is alive consciousness is there, however, once the body dies, consciousness continues, only in an invisible form. Hence it is called Vyakta chaitanya, when it is visible, and Avyakta chaitanya when it is invisible. Thus, consciousness is always there.

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

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

Asatho Maa Sadgamaya. Tamso Maa Jyotirgamaya. Mrtyo Ma Amṛtam Gamaya.

(God! lead me from ignorance to knowledge. Lead me from

mortality to
immortality.)

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

“Whatever I am experiencing, I am not it “. Why? Because, whatever I am experiencing is an object, while I am the subject. Our Eye sees everything but it does not see itself. From that it is very clear, the eyes are ever the seer and never the seen. Therefore, the subject is always different from the object.

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

Features of the Atma:

1. “I “ am ever the Subject (Experienter) not the object of experiences (experienced). Example: a camera takes pictures but it is not in the picture. Do we need proof that a camera took the picture? No, without a camera there will be no picture. “I” am never in the picture but “I “ am ever existent, and hence called Aprameya.
2. Atma is Nithyaha or it is eternal. It exists as a Vyaktha or Avyaktha.
3. Atma is Nirvikara. It is changeless. Even when the hand moves the light does not change. The light is all pervading. The light here is Prakasha, not the bulb.
4. Atma is Sarvagathaha. It is all pervading. It does not have spatial boundaries.

5. Atma is Akartha and Abhoktha. Atma does not perform any action nor does it reap any result. The hand may act; it can touch and in the act may get dirty. The light pervading the hand does not act nor is it affected. Example of hand touching a blade was given. If the hand touches a blade, it is karta, and for touching that, what is the phalam, the fingers are cut; thus hand is karta, hand is bhokta, but the light is neither karta, neither bhokta, it is karta and abhokta. Thus Aprameya; nityaḥ; nirvikaraḥ; sarvagataḥ, akarta and abhokta are Atma's attributes. The Atma, like the light, is changeless, the all pervading and the experiencer.

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

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

Atma is eternal. What does it mean?

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

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Prasna Upanishad, Class 11

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Third Question

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

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

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

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

Oh Bhagavan Pippalada:

1. From where does this Prana (Vyashti and Samashthi) come from?
2. What is the origin of Hiranyagarbha or of Brahma?
3. How does Prana enter this physical body?
4. How does that one Prana divide itself into the five fold functions and support this body?
5. Through which part does the Prana go out of this body at

death?

6. How does this Prana (Samasthi) sustain the external universe?
7. How does the Prana, as Vyashthi, sustain the individual or the 19 sense organs?

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

The entire chapter 3 is an answer to all these questions. The Prana Upasana comes only briefly at the end of the chapter. Why introduce this topic here, when the goal is Upasana, asks Swamiji? Answering, he says, in previous section we said Prana is the basis for everything. It clearly resembles the glorification of Brahman. The Teacher has to glorify Prana, so that it shows it is only a relative support, and not the Supreme support. The Pancha Bhutas are Prithvi, Jala (water), Agni (fire), Vayu (air), and Akasha (ether) and all originate from Prana. Prana's greatness, however, is only relative. Thus, Prana itself originates from some other source. That source is the Absolute. We discuss its relative power because we are performing Prana's Upasana.

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

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

Shloka # 3:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Question # 4: How does Prana divide itself?

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

With best wishes,
Ram Ramaswamy