

# Bagawat Geeta, Class 3

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued with his discussion of the invocation prayer called Gitagyana Shloka. Madhusudhana Saraswathi wrote this Shloka. While this shloka was not originally a part of Gita, it is now accepted as one. The Gitagyana Shloka has nine verses. In these Shlokas we are offering namaskara to: Bharathi, Gita/ Saraswathi, Vyasa and Lord Krishna.

Expanding on the Shlokas related to Lord Krishna, Swamiji says:

Shloka # 3:

पारिजातवृक्षस्योत्तमं श्लोकं श्रीकृष्णाय नमः  
पारिजातवृक्षस्योत्तमं श्लोकं श्रीकृष्णाय नमः  
पारिजातवृक्षस्योत्तमं श्लोकं श्रीकृष्णाय नमः  
पारिजातवृक्षस्योत्तमं श्लोकं श्रीकृष्णाय नमः

This shola is a namaskara to Sri Krishna. Parijata is a mythical tree in heaven. If one stands under this tree and wishes for something, the tree grants that wish. It is also known as wish yielding tree. Here, Sri Krishna, is compared to the Parijatha tree. Any desire related to Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. he grants, to one who surrenders to him.

Sri Krishna, here is in the role of a charioteer to Arjuna. He does not consider his work as one without dignity. Preaching dignity of labor, Swamiji says Bhagwan did not feel inferior as a charioteer. Do your work with a good attitude and enthusiasm exhorts Swamiji.

Sri Krishna was the greatest Gyani, reflected in his Chin mudra, the mudra of gyanam. Chin mudra indicates Jivatma and Paramatma Aikyam. It is a threatening finger. This jeevatma is associated with the three fingers. They represent the three Gunas (Rajas, Tamas and Satva) and the three Sharirams (Karana, Sukshma and Sthula). All of them are associated with

the perishable body. The thumb represents Paramatama. Only with the thumb can all other fingers function. So also Paramatma is the aadhara, or basis, for the whole creation. JIvatma should get freed from matter and join Paramatma.

The circle or Chakra of Sri Krishna does not have a begining or an end. When Jivatma merges with Paramatma it becomes Poorna Atma. This wisdom of immortality is presented in the Chin mudra. To this wonderful Lord I present my Namskara. Krishna, explained Swamiji, means one who attracts the devotee.

Sholka # 5:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
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ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

This sholka is again a Sri Krishna Namaskara describing his contribution to family, society and the world. Krishna as a son of Vasudeva was a member of the family. As one who destroyed asuras Kamsa and Chanura he was a protector of society. He taught Gita not only to Arjuna but also to posterity. In this role he was a Jagatguru to the world.

Shloka # 6:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
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ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

This sholka is again a Sri Krishna Namaskara. In this Sholka Kaivartakaha means boatman. Even in a tempestuous situation a skilled boatman can cross the river. Here Mahabharatha is compared to a treacherous river with many dangers. Pandavas need to cross this river. Human beings also face such treacherous situations in life.

Aartaha means one who is n distress. Pandavas were caught in

the Aartaha and in this situation Sri Krishna was their savior.

Describing the dangers, Bhishma and Drona were like banks of the river determining its course. The river itself is compared to Jaydritha. Prince of Gandhara, Shakuni, is compared to the dangerous blue water lily; Shalya a relative of pandavas was on opposite side like a crocodile; Kripa Acharya, a great archer and teacher was there as an under current. Then, there was Karna like a turbulent wave and Ashwathama and others who were man-eating fish. Duryodhana was like a whirlpool. Pandavas crossed the river due to a skillful boatman named Krishna. Sri Krishna will also help you, if you surrender to him.

Shloka 8:

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥  
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥

This shloka is again a namaskara to Madhava or Lakhmi Pati. The greatest wealth (Lakshmi) is wisdom. Sri Krishna had the benefit of this support. Swamiji says, he (Krishna) can make a dumb person eloquent. He can make a lame person climb the mountains by his grace. Swamiji says the studies of 700 verses of Gita are the mountain that we can successfully scale if we surrender to Sri Krishna.

Shloka # 9:

This shloka again is a namskara to Sri Krishna. Krishna is one who is worshipped by Brahma, Varuna, Indira and Marutha. The chanters of the Sama and all Vedas invoke Sri Krishna. The six Angas of Vedas, secondary scriptures, all chant the Lord's name in Paatha, Krama and Ghana Paatha. **Paatha is to recite the mantras in a sentence straight. In Krama Paatha, the first word of the mantra is added to the second, the second to the third, the third to the fourth and so on, until the whole sentence of the mantras is completed. In Ghana**

Paatha one repeats the mantras in various ways back and forth and in different patterns.

Swamiji says great Sanyasis, with a one pointed mind, see the lord in their own mind. Devotees see the lord outside. Even though he is described as a person, the Lord is not a person. The personal God has limitations of space and time. The real God is limitless and many people are not aware of him. Thus God has a limited form for devotees and a limitless one as well. To this all pervading God, I bow in namskara.

Ending the Gita Dhyanam, Swamiji prays, May God bless us in our study of this great scripture.

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## Prasna Upanishad – Class 1

On November 8, 2015, the Vedantic Study Group of HTGC started to listen to Prasna Upanishad by Swami Paramarthananda.

Swamiji started the class with the meaning of Vedanta:

- Vedantaha: Because this comes at the end portion of vedas,
- brahma vidhya because this deals with the knowledge of Brahman
- gyana kandaha: In this part of vedas only knowledge is discussed and not karma

Then Swamiji discussed different meanings of the word Upanishad :

1. Destroyer of samsra or sorrow;
2. Upani means taking Jivatma near Brahman; Shath means destroys ignorance that causes division between jivatma and paramatma as well as anything born out of ignorance:

samsara, (ahangakra, karthrutwam, kama, karma, karma palam punarjenma and suga dhukkam )

3. That which unites paramatma and jivatma and destroys samsara.
4. The word Upanishad or vedanata can refer to the book or the knowledge that born out of the book is also Upanishad. Upanishad as sabtha or sound is Pramanam (means); Upanishads as knowledge is praman (result); the literature or the sound is pramanam and praman the result is gyanam. The knowledge born out of the Upanishad is the primary meaning of the Upanishad.

Prasna upanishad belongs to Atharvana Veda and one of the upanishads commented by Sankarachariyar.

This upanishad is a commentary on Mundaka Upanishad. Apara Vidya and apara vidya is mentioned in Mundaka Upanishads will be elaborated in Prasna upanishad. Condensed version in Mundaka Upanishads are manthro upanishad and elaborated versions in Prasna upanishads are brahmano Upanishads. Brahmno portions in Mundaka Upanishads are elaborated in Prasna upanishads. Chapters elaborated in Prasna Upanishad are:

1. Krishna and chukla Gathi
2. Upasana prana or hiranyagarba
3. Upasana
4. Brahma Vidya through susukthi
5. Om Kara upasana
6. Brahma Vidya through param Brahman

Prasnaha means question; each chapter begins with question and each chapter is answer to that question. Each question is asked by six different students.

Shanthi Pada: My sthula, shuksma sareeram should function in a fitting manner so that I can absorb the teaching. This shanthi pada is same as the one in Mundaka Upanishads and as a result,

Swamiji did not elaborate the meaning.

Verse 1

The first two mantras are introductions by way of bringing the teacher and student together. In this mantra six students are introduced. Each student has two names. The first name is an original name and second is based on parampara. They are: Sukesha Bharadvaja, Satyakama Sibi, Surya Garga, Kausalya Asvalayana, Bhargava Vidharbha, and Kabandhin Katya. The names tell us of their great parentage. It informs us that they had good Samskara. Samskaras are there to create Shraddha in Vedas. All of them are well qualified. They are all Gyani's. They have now come for higher knowledge. This mantra also teaches us:

- Upanishads should always be learned from a Guru
- Unlike Science where new or fresh information is constantly sought after, in the area of spirituality, the old and traditional knowledge is prized more. The teacher is thus following tradition. There is no new topic or new method. Thus the glory of Sampradaya is emphasized. While in most sciences, a scholar is recognized by their new contribution, in Vedanta it is important to follow the teachings of previous guru's and teachers.

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## **Discussion Summary, October 18, 2015**

Continuing his recap from last week of Mantra 9 in Part 2, Cantos 3, Swamiji reminded us of the prerequisites for realization.

First, we need a human body and then we need to use it wisely towards the goal of realization.

Second, the real meaning of I must be clear to us. In the statement You are That the You does not mean body or mind but it should remind us of the formless Consciousness. Whenever Upanishad says You, it must instantly remind me of the Consciousness. I should always be in this state. Twampada Vichara is essential.

Third, The importance of a sharp, subtle, focused, undistracted and total intellect is essential. Such an intellect is qualified to receive this teaching. Brahman can be known only through intellect. It is the instrument. In some other context Upanishads say intellect is not the instrument to know Brahman. Clarifying this, Swamiji says the Upanishads are referring to an unprepared mind.

Shankaracharya says, a mind that can listen deeply and absorb the teaching for a length of time is required. Only a proper understanding from a Guru following the Sampradaya illumines the Brahman. The example of a mirror was cited. The mirror must be clean as also the your eyes. So also the qualified intellect combined with knowledge of Shastras will help us "own up to" our own immortality.

Mantra 10:

Swamiji says, in mantras 10 and 11, Yama discusses Yoga Abhyasa or the mental discipline called meditation. This yogic discipline developed by Patanjali, as per Astanga yoga, helps in preparing the mind in its focusing capacity. The culmination of meditation results in Samadhi or Nirvikapla Samadhi or absorption in a chosen field. The object of meditation in this yoga is on Chakras. Swamiji says, Vedanta Shastras do not advocate Chakra meditation. He says meditation is also considered Upana. Thus, here we choose any Devata as object of meditation to develop our Chitta Samadhanam, the

focusing faculty.

Swamiji says meditation is not prescribed for Self Knowledge. It cannot provide self-knowledge. It provides Sadhana Chatushtaya Sampathi. Gyana alone can provides knowledge. Mystic experiences also do not have anything to do with knowledge, but it can be accepted. A person can be liberated only by purity, focus and Shastric knowledge.

Swamiji says, Samadhi Yoga is not for liberation; it is for developing deep listening skills. Yoga meditation can help us become absorbed in the Deity of meditation. It helps us focus. It helps us with Drishtaand Adrishta Phalam. In meditation, the five sense organs and mind remain without distraction. The intellect also does not think of anything other than the object of meditation. It maintains focus. It can be Savikalpa Samadhi (meditation with support of an object) or Nirvikalpa Samadhi (meditation without an object, which leads to knowledge of purusha or consciousness, the subtlest element.) In Nirvikalpa Samadhi, will recedes. It is the highest goal of Yoga.

Mantra 11:

This state of absorption and destination is also called Yoga (the means and the end). The absorption is the end. In this state of Samadhi all sense organs are undistracted, rested and silent for a length of time. Initially focus will be difficult. One should focus his or her attention to avoid distraction. Swamiji says, with increasing sophistication we have lost this faculty. We are now trying to get it back. Meditation (or focus) is subject of arrival and departure. One has to train the mind, and then it will be ready for Vedanta Sravanam.

Swamiji says, often our listening skill is superficial and not very powerful. As such, our knowledge will also be just academic. After Vedanta Sravanam, remembering the teaching

during meditation is also Nidhidhyasanam. Nidhidhyasana means to fully internalize and assimilate the teaching . This will make mind deep and with fullest impact of the teaching.

Mantra 12:

Now, Swamiji highlights another important preparation. He says we need to value Sraddha in Nirguna Brahman. Since Brahman cannot be seen, felt, or even logically understood, some think of it as Shunya. Shankara compared it to a man born to a barren woman. Even Philosophers do not accept Nirguna Brahman. Swamiji says, we have to go through the teachings of Shastras, and then we will understand. One cannot objectify Nirguna Brahman, because it is the very Subject. Describing the Nirguna Brahman, Swamiji says, words cannot convey it, Eyes cannot see it, and mind cannot grasp it. It cannot be grasped, as it is the Grasper. Only by understanding that "I am That", can a believer understand it. So, Sradhda is very important.

Mantra 13:

When one believes, one accepts Brahman is there. As he progresses, he will realize from Brahman "Is" to "I am Brahman". Converting from Is to I AM is the journey.

Thus: Brahman Nasti>Brahman Asti>Brahman Asmi is the journey. Thus, from this journey Satya Bhava Aikyam occurs. So, Sraddha is important.

Suggested Practice:

Consider performing meditation for some time every day. Reflect on the Nirguna Brahman.

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# Discussion Summary, October 11, 2015

Continuing his recap from last week of Mantra 6 in Part 2, Cantos 3, Swamiji reminded us that we have to know Brahman as Aham Brahma Asmi. He reminded us that the human being present in Manusha loka provides the best opportunity for us to gain this knowledge. Animals, he says, have only a Bhoga Shariram and do everything by instinct. We are lucky to have this human birth and he recommends we make the best use of this birth to obtain this great knowledge. Discussing Atma /Anatma , unless we understand that the “I” is the witness principle or Sakshi Chaitanya, we are still in Samsara and as such finite.

Tat Tvam Asi is only possible when one separates himself from this body mind complex. Swamiji reminds us that the body and mind are subject to arrival and departure while the “I” is constant and unchanging.

Mantra # 7:

Swamiji now presented another method of Atma / Anatma discrimination. He calls it the essence of Vedanta.

Refreshing our memory on the Pancha Koshas, Swamiji says we have to withdraw from each one of them. The Pancha Koshas are:

- 1) Annamaya kosha, “foodstuff” sheath (Anna),
- 2) Pranamaya kosha, “energy” sheath, (Prana /apana);
- 3) Manomaya kosha “mind-stuff” sheath (Manas),
- 4) Vijnanamaya kosha, “wisdom” sheath (*Vijnana*) and lastly
- 5) Anandamaya kosha, “bliss” sheath (*Ananda*)

This method sensitizes our mind, as it withdraws from gross to the subtle. Describing this process, Swamiji says, sense organs are controlled by the mind, which is subtler, stronger and more powerful. Superior to mind is the intellect, or Buddhi. Mind is the doubting faculty, while Buddhi is rationalizing capacity that removes doubts. Mind is given to emotion, Buddhi is not, and hence it is stronger. Thus, Buddhi is the Vijnanamaya Kosha. Describing adjectives we give ourselves such as: I am Tamilian> I am Indian> I am Asian> I am human> I am a Living Being (all beings)> and finally I am a "Being". Swamiji says we need to drop all adjectives. He says they all belong to Anatma. We have to realize I am a "Being". This is called Samashti Buddhi. Individual does not exist separate from Total. Micro does not exist separate from Macro.

Taking us to a different plane, Swamiji now says, "I am" Hiranyagarbha. Superior to Hiranyagarbha is the Avyaktam, the Total Karana Shariram. Karana Shariram is the state of blankness. In this blank state everything thing is in its potential state. He says blankness is not "nothing" rather it is in the Potential state or a state of Singularity. Learn to identify with Avyaktam. I am Turiyaha, the final state, state of Samashti Karana Sharira.

How to reach this state is now described.

Mantra # 8:

When all sensory operations are suspended we experience blankness. This state is called Avyaktam. Subtler than this blankness is Atma or Consciousness. So, where do we find Atma? Swamiji says Atma cannot be objectified. The One who is aware, the awareness, of the blankness , the Experiencer, is the Atma. There is nothing other than "my" self declares Swamiji. The unobjectifiable "I" is the Atma while the Blankness is the Anandamaya Kosha.

He says Purusha is also the Atma.

So, what type of consciousness is this? He says, it "all pervading" consciousness. So, like the wave we have a choice to identify with the small wave or the eternal water. Once we identify with the all pervading Atma, we will be removed from all suffering.

I am Nirguna Chaitanyam without any Linga attributes. As long as I identify with body, I am mortal. This small I needs to know the immortal I. Once I know it, I will be relieved of all "notion of mortality", as I do not identify with this body anymore. I can own up to my "natural" immortality. That is why, says Swamiji, Samsara is an intellectual problem.

Mantra # 9:

We have to use our human birth, our viveka shakthi. Atma / Anatma viveka should dawn on us.

Swamiji says for Viveka, a deep and complete mind is to be available for this teaching. A tremendous listening skill is required. A special mind, deep and total is required. We normally do not listen totally. If we can do this, the mahavakya sravanam can penetrate this state. Do we have a mind that is absorbed in the teaching? In such a person, knowledge dawns. It is called sukshma buddhi. This buddhi is required as the subject matter is very subtle.

Physical organs cannot perceive Brahman. Eyes cannot see him. So, how is he to be known?

He can only be known through Guru's teachings of Shastra. This is the Shastra mirror. I should also have the proper eyes to see in the mirror. The inner eye, Buddhi, should be qualified for this teaching. The nature of this Buddhi is a prepared intellect, subtle, deep and total. Only such an intellect can know the Brahman. The intellect is in our heart says Swamiji. The right understanding, provided by a qualified Teacher, received by a qualified man, results in knowledge.

## Suggested Practice

To obtain the full benefit of the teaching of a great teacher we all need to come to Vedanta class with a very focused mind. Do not let Samsara get in the way of this great knowledge.

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# Discussion Summary, October 4, 2015

Continuing his recap from last week of mantras 1 and 2 in Part 2, Cantos 3, Swamiji reminded us that this third and final section of Katho Upanishad deals with Atmavidya, Brahavidya Sadhanani and preparation for Brahavidya.

Describing the role of Brahman as the Creator, Swamiji says, Brahman is the keeper of law and order. Behind Brahman is Maya the female principle. Swamiji says Brahman and Ishwara are interchangeable. He also clarified that Brahman + Maya=Ishwara. He says we have to accept Brahman as the law. With law we need an enforcement agency. This enforcement principle is called Ishwara. Ishwara is like Vajra or the fear and threat principle. Human beings and Beings in general, have poor self-discipline. Fear enforces discipline, hence the use of word God fearing person. One who knows this truth will attain liberation.

Shloka # 3:

Here Yama explains why Brahman is feared. He says all Devatas of natural forces function as per law of the Earth, Prithvi Devta. Similarly for Sun, there is Surya Devata. Yama says Devatas are frightened of Ishwara. Fire, Sun, Vayu, Indira (rain), are all afraid of him, the invisible intelligence.

Mrutyu (Yama) also runs to perform his work fearing this law. Swamiji says only Ishwara Aikyam can help us. Markandeya's embrace of Shiva lingam is an example. Here Markandeya was not embracing just the lingam, he was embracing the Shiva Aikyam.

Shloka # 4:

Now Yama explains the conditions required for Brahma Gyanam. First condition is, we should be human beings. The Shastra's say there are 85 lacs (8.5 million) of species, so chances of being human are fairly small. Swamiji says we should use our human birth properly. It is a boat for crossing over to God. It is a costly boat. It needs a lot of Punyam. We should remember that this boat will disappear. If one squanders this opportunity, he or she will be fit only for another birth, in another body and not necessarily in a human body. The birth may also be in any one of the 14 lokas created by the Lord.

Shloka #5:

Yama now discusses if the knowledge of Atman can be acquired in any other loka? He accepts it can be obtained in other lokas, however, he feels the human birth is the best of all. Describing different lokas he says:

1. In a human intellect one can gain knowledge like seeing one's face in a clear mirror.
2. In Pitra Loka also knowledge can be obtained. However, here, it will not be very clear. It will be more a like a dream, as it moves very fast.
3. In Gandharva Loka, a world of music, dance, art and enjoyment, knowledge appears like the reflection of your face in water. Here also one can gain knowledge.
4. In Brahma Loka knowledge is very clear, like darkness and light. Here also knowledge can be obtained.

Swamiji says. Of the four, two are vague, while Brahma Loka is very difficult to obtain. To obtain Brahma Loka, one has to perform a lot of Upasana, including at the time of death.

Swamiji says getting human birth is difficult. And since we are already here, let us not postpone obtaining this knowledge.

Shloka # 6:

Giving us the method of reaching this knowledge, Swamiji says, Atma/AnAtma Viveka must be discriminated. The knowledge Aham Brahmasmi should dawn in us. While Aham refers to Sthula Sharira, Karna Sharira, Sukshma Sharira and Chaitanya, the Aham referred to here is only Chaitanya. Any other reference of Aham does not identify with Atman. Withdraw from Anatma to Atma , says Swamiji.

Swamiji says we should disown instruments of interaction. Sense organs are only temporary instruments, only for my use. Even without them, I continue to exist. Giving an example, Swamiji says we sometimes forget that spectacle is not part of us. Thus every instrument is an intimate object to subjects and often considered a part of subject. During waking state all sense organs , including mind, "come out" and during sleep state, they all get resolved. However, through all this, "I" continue as witness. Whatever is incidental, such as sense organs, are subject to departure. Incidental stuff is not my Nature. They are separate from me. They are separately born and gone. Even when eyes are gone, "I" continue to exist as awareness and consciousness. Once this is understood, we can understand " Aham Brahma Asmi". I am the limitless one.

Such a person of fine intellect, a Viveki, gets the advantage of having no grief in life, says Swamiji. Grief comes with identification with body. This causes us to think we are mortals. The thought " I am mortal" is however not comfortable to me. This is against my nature. When anything unnatural happens "I" reject it, naturally. It will go away when I do not identify with my mortal body. Body is mortal. "I" am immortal. This way, old age, separation etc. become more acceptable.

## Suggested Practice:

In context of Shloka # 6 following thoughts of Anusuyaji comes to mind: Eliminate the small "I" in all aspects of life. Don't think in terms of my wife, my son, and my house etc., where the "I" identification comes in. The eternal " I" will automatically arise.

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# Discussion Summary September 20, 2015

In today's class, Swamiji continued verses 11 to 15, of the third section of the second chapter of Kathopanishad. The subject of these verses are nature of paramatma, jivatma/paramtma aikyam and benefits of jivatma paramatma aikyam. Swamiji continued to mention the common features of surya prakasha (sun light) and chaithanyam or atma:

- They both are ekam, only one, without a second
- They both are all pervading
- They both are formless
- They both are indivisible
- They both are not tainted by any impurities; the impurities of sukshma sareeram do not affect atma because atma is higher than sukshma sareeram. This is very similar to the pictures projected on a movie theater screen; the screen is not affected by flood or fire that is projected onto the screen.
- They both illumine everything. Sun light illumines all objects; everything internal and external is known only because of atma or chaithanyam

Consciousness does not need matter for existence;

consciousness need body/mind complex only for manifestation, but consciousness can exist without body/mind complex. Consciousness does not depend on matter, but matter needs consciousness. Consciousness remains one but seemingly appear to be many because it manifests into many objects, and as a result we mistakenly think that the consciousness in one person is not the same as the consciousness in another person.

Yama dharma raja says that all pervading consciousness resides in your own self, in the form of witness principle, I the experiencer. Only rare seekers recognize this fact. Paramatma is neither inside you nor outside you; it is you. The seeker who recognizes this wisdom gets everlasting happiness and permanent fulfillment.

Explaining verse 13, Swamiji states that Paramatma is there in every sentient being in the form of consciousness. This consciousness with the power of Maya is Eeswara, and Eeswara fulfills all desires.

Brahmananda, the superlative, unexplainable, everlasting ananda, is never an object of experience because Brahman is not confined by time and space. Brahmananda is the nature of consciousness itself. One can get Brahmananda in the form of wisdom that Brahmananda is the very consciousness, I myself. Sunlight, moonlight, star lights, flashes of lightening or fire do not illumine consciousness. But all these are illumined and known because of consciousness. Swamiji says everything is known only because of self-evident consciousness.

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# Discussion Summary – September 6, 2015

Continuing his overview of Part 2, Cantos 2, Mantra # 5 again, Swamiji says, Atma alone blesses life. Sukshma Sharira allows this body to live. Prana is within Sukshma Sharira. As such, superficially, it appears as if Prana is the basis for life. Yama says, both Prana and Sukshma Sharira are Jadam (inanimate) as such they cannot give life. It is Atma alone that blesses the body with life.

Describing the mechanics of this: Jada Prana is able to borrow life from Atma and thus become sentient. This sentient Prana blesses the body with consciousness. Giving example of a mirror, it reflects sunlight to lighten a dark room. When mirror is removed, the room becomes dark again. The mirror is not the one illuminating, though.

The sun, while it illuminates, it cannot illuminate the room because of walls. The mirror borrows from sun and lightens the room.

Mantra 6: Hereon Yama discusses the very subtle topic of Brahman. He also describes what happens to an ignorant Jivatma after death. In a wise person, the Karana Sharira , Sthula Sharira and Jivatma, all dissolve in Ishwara. He is called a Videhimukta.

Mantra 7: This mantra is important because it discusses rebirth as well as what happens to an Agyani Jivatma after death. Swamiji says science has found no evidence of rebirth, to date. He says, as per Shastras, rebirth is an Aupurusheya subject. Shastras only provide supporting evidence, not direct evidence. So, when an Agyani dies the

Sthula Sharira mingles with Pancha Bhutam. His Jivatma also cannot travel. The subtle and invisible Sukshma Karana Sharira alone survives. It can travel. It travels to another body. The

type of body it gets depends on its punya papa Karmaphalani. God does not determine our rebirth, says Swamiji. The body may get its rebirth as a Superior one, such as Devas; as an inferior one such as Plants or animals; or Medium one, such as a Human being. The Sukshma Karana Sharira gets an appropriate body to exhaust its karma phalas. Even to experience a body in the dream state, a physical body is required, says Swamiji. It is not possible to predict the time of another birth, as time cannot be measured and it is relative. As an example, Swamiji says, in a dream we can experience a whole lifetime.

Birth is not an accident. Laws of Karma determine it. We may not remember our previous birth, but God remembers everything, says Swamiji. Our rebirth depends on our Upasana. Upasana here means the topic we dwell on or think of most of the time. He reminded us that: Thought>Action> Habit>Character>Destiny (or destination). Everything begins with thought, says Swamiji.

Mantra 8:

What is Brahman is the topic of this mantra. It is the Consciousness that resides in every being that is also called Purushaha. Puru-Shaha or In-Dweller. Consciousness is always awake, even in our sleeping state. It is the one that illumines the blank mind in sleep state.

Essence of Brahman

“I did not know anything in sleep” is a declaration. Swamiji asks who is this “I” who did not know anything in sleep? “I” am the eternal illuminator of the waking and sleep state of mind. “I” know, when the mind knows and “I” also know, when the mind does not know. “I” am also the creator, as I like, of my inner universe, through my Vasanas. I am also the creator of the external universe, during the waking state. “I” the illumining consciousness is ever pure. This consciousness is

Brahman. This "I" is "in" the body as well as "outside" the body. Like space it is all pervading. It is immortal and does not die, when body dies. Swamiji now says, "All bodies" are in this consciousness. Thus, "in" our body is consciousness. Nothing exists beyond this consciousness. That Atma is you, declares Swamiji. The whole world is in me; it arises in me and dissolves in me. We constantly think of ourselves as "in" this world and are buried with our worries and problems. Swamiji asks us to change our perception to: "The World is in me".

Take away from today's discussions:

Suggested Practice:

1. Constantly be aware of the eternal "I" within us. This is the greatest Upasana we can perform.
2. Essence of Brahman described above, try to understand it and internalize it.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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## **Discussion Summary July 26, 2015**

Discussing part 2 Cantos 1, Shlokas 6,7, 9 and 8, Swamiji continued the discussion of the Atman or Consciousness. The subtle universe was born out of Causal universe (the seed). The Causal universe was always there even before creation. He compares the Causal Universe to the state before the big bang.

Thus: Karana Sharira (Causal)>Sukshma Sharira (Subtle also

called Ishwara) > Hiranyagarbha (first born). Ishwara through tapas creates Hiranyagarbha. Tapas is the mere wish of Ishwara.

Thus, the one Samanya Chaitanya, general consciousness, expresses itself in micro and macrocosm. It expresses itself in the three pairs:

1. The Physical body, we all can experience it.
2. The Subtle body, that only I can experience and not others.
3. The Causal Body, that remains dormant and can be experienced only when it manifests itself. This is the subtlest stage of inner material.

And correspondingly we have:

1. Waker consciousness
2. Subtle body consciousness
3. Causal body consciousness

The total deity is born as Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha consists of the 17 Tatvas or elements They are: 5 organs of perception (Ear, Eye, Tongue, Skin and Nose), 5 organs of action (Speech, Hand, Leg, Excretion and Genital), 5 Vital air's (Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Samana), the Mind (manaha) and Intellect (budhi).

Swamiji says for each of the 17 Tatvas or elements there is a corresponding Devta. Prana Devta is most important, as without him we cannot survive. All Devtas are born, maintained and resolved in Hiranyagarbha, in its cycle of creation, maintenance and destruction.

Swamiji says Agni Devta represents Vishwavidya or Stula Prapancha. Virat- Agni is worshiped by a group of people by lighting the sacred fire. Rubbing two pieces of wood called Arani lights the sacred fire. Another form of Agni called Vaishwanar-agni (our internal digestive power) is also

worshiped by some. All of them, says Swamiji, represent our one consciousness, the Atman.

The take away from this session was the idea of a Yagna is making an offering to God. In the same spirit we should offer every action of ours as an offering to our Atman. Discussing Karma Yoga, Swamiji says "And when I perform the actions out of Ishvara Arpana Bhaṁana, and when I receive the processed Karma in form of Phalam, I don't call it Karma Phalam, but I call it Iṣhvara Prasaḁaha."

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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## **Goḷu Padi with PVC Pipes**

Navarathri/Dasara is fast approaching and many people from India celebrate by displaying goḷu. Here are some instructions on how to build a five step goḷu padi at less than \$100.