

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