

Prasna Upanishad, Class 18

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

He summarized the first four chapters as follows:

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

Q1. What are the things that are asleep?

A: Except Prana all other organs are asleep.

Q 2. What are the things that are awake?

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

Q 3. Who experiences the dream?

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

Q 4. When everything is resolved, who is enjoying the sleep, Sushupthi?

A: Sushupthi is enjoyed by the mind in a "dormant" form. It is called Karana Shariram. Kevala Karana Shariram cannot enjoy.

The Chaithanya infused Karana Shariram also known as Pragyaha is the one who enjoys Sushupthi.

Q 5. Where is everything supported?

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

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

Chapter # 5 or the Fifth Question:

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

Shloka # 1:

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

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

Any Upasana gives phalam when practiced till death. He has to remember Omkara at time of death as well. He must withdraw from sense organs. Therefore, no relatives should be near him at time of death. He must be detached from Samsara. At time of Maranam, we should not think of anything else. You must start remembering (Upasana) right now until and including at death. Marana Upasana is very important. Imagine one's own death and

practice it. The death rehearsal is very important. At time of death, I must remember my Ishta Devatha. When concentration comes in, Dhyana occurs. Dhyana is a part of Ashtanga Yoga. If one has to perform dhyana or concentrate, one must follow the eight requirements of Yoga.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Dharana: means concentration, introspective focus and one-

pointedness of mind. The root of word is dhr̥, which has a meaning of “to hold, maintain, keep”.

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

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

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

Dhyanam is of two types.

A) Deity separate from me and

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

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

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

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

Mukthi.

Shloka # 2:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Kara, from Rig Veda, leads to Manushya loka or Bhu loka.

U Kara, from Yajur Veda, leads to Soma Loka or Bhuvar Loka also called Antharikshaha.

M Kara, from Sama Veda, leads to Brahma Loka-or Suvar Loka.
This is called Krama Mukthi.

A Kara is associated with Vishwa.

U Kara is associated with Tejas.

M Kara is associated with Brahma Loka.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy