

Discussion Summary July 5, 2015

Thanks to Ram Ramaswamy for this excellent summary of today's class and discussion.

Swamiji started chapter two canto 1 today. In the first three shlokas

swamiji says to realize Atman the mind has to be inward focused rather

than outwards towards the external/material world. He described the

three defects of external world. The defects are:

1. Pain or sorrow (दुःख)
2. Lack of satisfaction (असंतुष्टि)
3. Dependence or Attachment (अविद्या)

Swamiji further describe Anathma (contrary to Atman). The three Anathmas are:

1. The external world
2. The human body
3. Our mind

Body and mind are also required to realize Atman.

So the question was how do we make the mind inward focused? What

practices can be adopted? Some of the suggestions from group were:

1. Pujas and rituals are important in that they create the mood and set the tone for further forays into the world of enlightenment
2. When you have meditated for some time, and have listened to the

spiritual masters- you catch a glimpse of the divine or whatever else

you may call it- you thirst for more.

3. Markandeya embracing the lingam, becoming one with the supreme

consciousness, thus defying Yama was powerful imagery - suggesting that

when man becomes so one with the Divine, that he can even keep Death

at bay. With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Discussion Summary, June 28, 2015

Thanks to Ram Ramaswamy for this summary:

During our discussion today, Swamiji summarized the three cantos (also

called Valli's). In the first Valli (canto) Swamiji reminded us that

Nachiketas felt his first duty was to society, then to family and

lastly to himself as the individual self. The group discussed this

particular subject and the actions/practice(s) we can take away for

our daily lives.

In general, there appears to be a consensus that Hindus for some

reason do not seem to come together to benefit or serve society.

Rather, we seem to be more focused on our own self-improvement leading to self-knowledge. While our religion does teach service to society we seem to practice it at an individual level rather than as a collective.

What can we, the Vedanta group, do about it? How can we act on this teaching was the question?

Some ideas that came up:

1) Vedanta group should be a support group to all its members in times of their need such as death, disease or some other source of grief.

2) If any member is in need of help he or she should contact Ravi.

Ravi will let the rest of group know.

3) We should compile the Vedanta group members name, address, and phone and email details and publish it. Of course, if privacy is requested it should be honored. Some felt we do not know each other very well within the group, yet.

4) Another thought was each member should join some group of his or her choosing and perform their service to society.

There may be more ideas that were not brought up.

These are only food for thought for group to discuss and decide upon a

course of action. We can also choose to do nothing. We can also decide to leave it in a parking lot for consideration in future.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

Discussion Summary June 21, 2015

During our discussion today we discussed Karma yoga. For those who feel they are not prepared for Gyana yoga for them Swamiji recommends practice of Karma yoga. In this context the question was raised as to what are some practical applications of Karma yoga one can take away. Interesting ideas were brought out. I share some of them:

1. Speak Good, Hear good, See good and Think/Do good. This was a take from the three wise monkeys. Practice this.
2. Look at the unity in diversity.
3. Eliminate the "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. I was informed that this practice is very powerful.
4. Swamiji's lectures on Geeta are an excellent source to

go to.

With my good wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy