

# 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

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## Prasna Upanishads, Class 10

Greetings All,  
Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Second Question, Shloka # 7:

Swamiji says all mantras from #5 to # 13 are all Prana Devata Sruthi or praise. Glorification is done at both Subjective (Adhyathmika) level as well as Objective ( Adhi Daivika) level. Prana is the Shakthi animating the ten gyanendriyas such as Shravnam, Darshanam etc at the Adhyathmika level. At the Adhi-Daivika level all these Shakthis are manifestations of Prana. Prana as Hiranyagarbha is manifesting as Prithvi, Varuna, Surya etc. At both micro and macro cosmic levels it is the one Prana Shakthi appearing as many.

Shloka # 11: “O Prana, you are Vratyaha and the Eka Rishi fire as well. You are the eater of everything as the Eka Rishi fire. You are the One who goes to the Antahriksha (space). As the Mathrikshva, you are the father of Vayu.”

Explaining this glorification Swamiji says:

Vratyaha: Here a Ninda Shruthi is used. A Ninda Shruthi is one that criticizes. Vratyaha is a Brahmin or Dvijaha who has not gone through the Samskaras. All Dvijahas go through an Upanayanam ceremony at which point their second phase of life begins. Up to Upanayanam ones life is led as per his own raga and dvesha. After Upanayanam all his activities must be according to Shastras or as per three Vedas. The age for Upanayam for Brahmin is 5; Kshatriya is 11 and for Vaishya is

12.

A person born as a Dvigaha but has not had Upanyanam at appropriate age is called a Vratyaha or unpurified one. It is a term used only from a spiritual point of view. Here, however, Prana is praised as a Vratyaha in a ninda sruthi. As per Shankacharya, Prana is part of Sukshma Shariram and Samashthi Prana is considered Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagarbha is considered a Vratyaha as he was the first person born in the cosmos and did not have anybody to perform his Samskara.

Brahman+ Maya>Hiranyagarbha.

Samskara is necessary only for the impure. Hirayagarbha being ever pure, no purification rite is necessary.

Eka Rishihi: Eka Rishi is the fire used by Atharvana Vedis. For each ritual, shastras prescribe a specific fire. Thus, a grihasta is required to maintain a fire called Garbhapatya agni daily. There are different methods of kindling fire prescribed by shastras. There are also different forms of Homa Kunda (shapes) prescribed. Each fire has a name, as well, based upon the ritual and type of homa kunda used. Eka Rishihi is also a manifestation of Prana. Eka Rishihi belongs to the Athravana Veda as also Prasna Upanishad.

Attha: You are the eater of everything as the Eka Rishi fire.

Aadhyam: The offering or oblation. All Devatas are offering to Hiranyagarbha. At individual level also we are offering oblations by touch, sight, hearing etc to Prana Devata.

Matrikshva: One who goes to the antahriksha (space) or Vayu or Prana. As the mathrikshva you are the father of Vayu.

Shloka # 12: Prana Shakthi is present in every Indriya. Thus, it is present as the power of speech, power of hearing, power of sight and power of thinking. As death arrives Prana starts

to leave and indriyas become weak. Indriyas now ask Lord Prana to become peaceful and not leave.

1. Shloka # 13: This is upasamhara or conclusion of the chapter on Prana Sruthi. Indriyas now ask Prana "May you protect us like a mother protects a child. May you bless us with the wisdom that we do not repeat this mistake again."

All these things in front of you are under the control of Prana. Whatever is there in other worlds is also under control of Prana.

This concludes the Prana Shruthi.

Swamiji summarized the three questions and their respective answers:

1. What are the powers of the individual? All 19 indriyas and the panca (5) pranas are the powers of the individual.
2. Who glorify themselves? All 19 indriyas glorify themselves.
3. Who is most powerful? Prana alone is most powerful of all.
4. How to prove superiority of Prana? All 19 organs function due to Prana. At time of death, as Prana leaves, all organs also start failing.

With best wishes,

Ram Ramaswamy

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# Prasna Upanishad, Class 9

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

Second Question, Shloka # 6:, Swamiji said all mantras from #5 to # 13 are Prana Devata Sruthi or praise. Refreshing our memory on Shloka 6, he says all 10 Gyanendriyas are able to function because of Prana Shakthi. At Samashti (cosmic) level each Gyanendriya is also a Devata. Thus Hiranyagarbha Devata represents Prana. All Devatas are able to perform due to Prana Shakthi. At our individual level also we are able to perform due to the Prana Shakthi.

All powers in creation (rain, planetary motion, gravity, atomic etc.) perform because of one basic power called Prana Shakthi. When we worship Prana Shakti it is not the material aspect of the Shakti we worship, rather we are worshipping the intelligence behind the Prana Shakti. Although we are aware of the solar energy, the Shakti, the one we worship is Surya Devata, the intelligence behind it.

Upasana is always performed of an Utkrishta Vastu (A superior force). When we worship Chetana it is spiritual worship rather than worship of a material or inert substance. Swamiji says we should worship Shakti with Shiva. Shakti is the energy while Shiva is the intelligence principle behind Shakti.

Mantra # 6: Discussing this mantra, Swamiji says, the spokes are the many powers while the hub is the Prana where they get their power. Swamiji says rituals or Yagnas are performed in Rig, Yajur and Sama mantras. Yagnas have meaning when there is somebody to perform them. Thus:

Kshatram: means Kshatriya who performs the Yagna of protecting the Yaga and the Brahmana who performs it.

Brahman: Is the one who performs the Yagnas.

Prana Shakti supports all of them.

Mantra # 7:

Continuing praise of Prana Shakti, He says, Prana is the lord of Brahma, Rudra and Vishnu. They are divisions of Prana Shakti. This power is available in every being i.e., power of reproduction and propagation. It is divided into male and female. Every male and female has the creative power. Only when a male and female join a child is born. You alone are later born in the form of parents. Thus, all Beings are giving oblation to you alone. Each sense organ gives oblation to the Prana Shakti. When this offering or Oblation is stopped, death occurs.

Swamiji says each indriya has a Shakti such as Shrvanam, Darshanam etc. They are all manifestation of the Prana Shakti.

Mantra # 8:

You are the greatest carrier of Oblations. You are Agni, the carrier of oblations. You are the first oblation given to forefathers.

Before any puja, one has to perform Naandi Shradha, a worship of ancestors. This great Karma is performed for Kula-Parampara and Kula-Dharma. This offering is known as Shradha. The offering of Annam is also Prana Shakti.

The way of life of Rishis is the truthful way. Hence we remember them. Atharva and Angirasa are mentioned as Rishis.

Shankaracharya gives a different interpretation: He says Rishis are sense organs. Sense organs know color smell etc. Atharva is another name for sense organs. Angirsa is also another name for sense organs. Their functions nourish the individual Prana Shakti.

Mantra # 9: Hey Paran , by your power you are none other than



Indra or Rudra, the protector. You are moving in the sky as the Sun or as Vayu in the Anthariksa.

Every cause has an effect. Thus Brahman>Maya>Akasha>Vayu>Prithvi are examples of cause and effect. Prana is the cause of everything, says Swamiji.

Manta # 10: Here Prana is praised as rain. Hey Prana, You alone are poring as rain. All people become full of Ananda because sufficient food will now be available. Swamiji says our very living depends on rain.

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## Prasna Upanishad, Class 8

Questions:

1. What are the principles sustaining the body: Gyanendriyam, karmandhriyam panca boodha and andhagraganam (intellect.). 19 principles and 24 including panca pranas. But pranas are excluded as they will be introduced as the most superior.
2. Who all glorify themselves. All 19 principles (except panca prana) glorify themselves.
3. Among all the sustaining principles which is most powerful – varishtaha.

The first two questions are answered in verse 2. To answer the third question, a story is told, personifying all tatvas or principles.

Verse 3

One day prana called all 19 principles. Don't get deluded regarding the glory of who sustains the body, because I the prana alone divide into five, prana (respiratory), apana

(excretory) , vyana (circulatory), samana (digestive) and udhana (reversing), and sustain the whole individual. However, the 19 principles did not believe because of their vanity.

#### Verse 4

To prove the point, Prana pretended to go out. As prana started to leave other principles also followed prana because their very existences dependent on Prana. And prana came back and all the 19 principles came back. This is the direct proof that all principles are dependent on prana sakthi. The 19 principles were pleased as the Prana did not go away permanently. Swamiji gave the example of Queen Bee, where the entire beehive follows the Queen Bee without any question. Similarly, the 19 principles followed Prana without any question. With this the 19 principles understood the glory of prana.

The rest of the section is prana sthuthi by the 19 principles.

#### Verse 5

In this verse, prana is glorified at micro and macro levels.

Glorification at individual level – prana sakthi gives power to eyes, ears etc. At the cosmic or macro level, hiranyagarba alone appears as burning power of agni, appears as light energy in sun. Similarly, Indira, Vayu, Earth, Moon are all powered by Prana sakthi. Prana sakthi broken down is all Murtha (formed) and amurtha (formless) vasthu (objects).

#### Verse 6

All the vedas, yagyas, warriors, brahmanas, the whole creation is based on prana. Without prana nothing can survive. In a wheel, the outer rim appears to be supported by spokes, but in reality, the spokes are supported by the hub. The whole wheel supported by the hub. Similarly all principles are supported

by prana sakthi. In this example, each spoke can be taken as different principle; the wheel as the whole creation and prana as the hub.

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## Prasna Upanishad, Class 7

Important points made by first section:

Shristi is the first point: Life and death are not opposite but complementary pair of nature; similar is growth and decay. We must accept the pair. Shristi as a form of mithunam. Five shristies mentioned in the first section are:

1. Mithuna shristy
2. Loka shrishty
3. Kala shristy
4. Anna Shristy
5. Prajapathi

Second point is Chukla Krishna Gathi topic was discussed after shristi as a diversion.

Third point is discipline of brahmanacharyim

### Second Section

Para vidhya and apara vidhya are from Mundaka Upanishad. Apra Vidhya or preparatory knowledge consists of karma and upasana. First chapter of Mundaka Upanishad elaborately discussed karma (e.g. agni hothram) but upasana (mental activity for saguana brahman) was not discussed in detail. Physical activities like pooja are not upasana. Vedanta is mental activity for nirguna brahman.

Second section: Hiranyagarbha (prana) sthuthi. Prior to

upsana, the upsana deity should be glorified.

Hiranyagarbha is consciousness with the total (all) subtle body. This total subtle body is available as individual subtle body for everyone. Of the 17 organs of sukshma sareeram, prana is the most important one. Prana keeps body alive. Also during sleep, all sense organs come to a standstill except prana.

Third Section: Hiranyagarbha (prana) upasana is samashti prana, because Hiranyagarbha blesses everyone as prana.

V1

Question: What are the devadas that sustain the people (sareeram)? Devadas are various factors or principles behind every inert object. This consciousness principle is called Devada. Sun is not just an object, but when we consider that sun is pervaded by Eeswara, we call it Surya Deva. Each principle is called deva for this reason. So the first question is how many devas are sustaining the sareeram. Second question what principles (devas) are publicizing their own glories. Third Question is among these devas who is the greatest devada?

V2

First principle sustaining the sareeram is 19 devas. because it provides a place to live. The 24 devas are:

- Panca Botham (akasa – space, vayu – air, agni – fire, apaha – water and prithvi – earth)
- Panca indriyam (hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell)
- Panca karmandhra (Vak – express, upasatha – procreate, payu – excrete, Pani – grasp and Pada – move)
- Manaha
- Budhi
- Ahangaram
- Chitham

All 19 devas except prana claim they are the most important.

The rest of the section is answer to third question.

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## Prasna Upanishad, Class 6

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Continuation of explanation of verse 11.

*[divah: bhuvarlOkha. pare: beyond]*

SuryalOkha is in a place beyond bhuvarlokha. (bhUlOkha is earth, bhuverlOkha is intermediate, suverlOkha is in a higher space).

Adhithya is also purishinam (plenty of water). Why? Sun alone is responsible for rain. Some sages glorify the sun in these terms. Other sages glorify the sun in other terms, including vichakshanam (illuminator of all), Hiranyagarbha (which is samashti buddhi), omniscience, one with 7 chakras (7 horsed), 7 colours, six-spoked (each season being a spoke and life moves in seasons alone).

With this, the samvatsare shrishti is over but not the kAla srishti.

### **Verse 12. mAsa shrishtih: (division of month)**

mAsa is a manifest of PrajApathi. Must come in dual (mithuna) form. – complementary pair: krishna and shukla paksha. For those rishis that meditate on shukla prAna, their rituals will be as good as when done in shukla pakshi. Rituals during Shukla pakshi are more efficacious than in krishnapakshi. If you do upAsana on shuklaprAna, rituals on k-p will be as

effective as done in sh-paksha. Any karma done with upAsana will have better effect.

### **Verse 13. (division of day into day and night)**

Day and night are also prajApathi. Day is prAna and night is matter. The rule given to householders is that sthri samyoga should only occur at night, otherwise if during daytime, they lose all their energy. Daytime is presided over by prAna and they will be dissipating it. At night time, it is as good as observing bhramcharyam.

### **Verse 14. anna Shrishtih:**

After dEsah: and kAlaH:, now comes annam. PrajApathi alone is food. Annam also must consist of rayih: and prAna but this not mentioned here. From food is derived the seed (retah:) (meaning here sperm and ovum). All beings are borne from the combination of the male and female seed and hence from food and hence from PrajApathi.

### **Verse 15. phala stuthi**

Some vratham has to given to those not into vEdantam. PrajApathi vratham develops self control in sthri samyoga. Thos who follow this p-vratham will get mithunam (complementary pair). P-vratham is an important condition for attaining krishnagathi and shuklagathi. [in this verse bhulokha stands for chandra**l**Okha]. This will be attained for those who follow austerities'discipline and who are truthful. For vedAnta jnAnis also, brahmacharya vratam is highlighted.

### **Verse 16.**

Only for those following Brahmavratam is Brahma**l**Okha possible. Brahma**l**Okha's benefit is shukham. An important qualification is that one must be free from 3 evils:

1. Free from vakra buddhi (negative motives, seeing wrong side of things).
  2. Lying
  3. Fraud, cheating (mAyA chethi)
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## Prasna Upanishad, Class 5

Rayee and prana are conceptual pairs. Prajapathi alone comes as conceptual pairs of rayee and prana.

Samvatsara, consisting of dakshinayana and utharayana (kala) is prajapathhi.

Krishna kathi and chukla kathi are subtle or divine road through which a jiva travels to other logas. Krishna kathi leads to Chandra loga and chukla kathi leads surya loga or brahma loga. Those people who perform rituals go to Chandra kathi and those who perform upsaha will go to surya loga. Gyani does not go through either of the logas because he gets moksha here and now. Dhashinayanam represents Krishna kathi and represented by various dhashinayana devadas; utharayanam represents chukla kathi presided by utharayana devadas.

Krishna gathi, dakshinayanam and Chandra loga are all rayee; Utharayanam, surya loka and chukla gathi are all prana.

Verse 10

Chukla kathi is the path; the travelers are upasaha or karma upasa samuchayaha. Brahma loga is immortality because brahmaloga gives moksha which is immortality. Upasaha seek surya loga, upasana by following discipline (control of sense organs and faith in scriptures). For all pranas, this surya loga is the goal. This loga is mean for upsahas only and not

available to others.

## Verse 11

Adhithya praised as a destination of chukla gathi: Surya is endowed with five feet (five seasons are taken as feet of Surya loga because Surya moves creating the five seasons) so surya is called panca patham. Six seasons in scriptures are spring, summer, rainy, autum, pre-winter and winter. In this verse pre-winter and winter are combined as one season. There are 12 different appearance to sun one for each month. Due to utharayanam and dakshinayanam, sun is the father of all beings.

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# Prasna Upanishad, Class 4

I had difficulty in comprehending and digesting this class and summarized as best as I can. I greatly appreciate any corrections, additions and comments to my summary.

In the last class, Swamiji stated that Rayee is a non translatable word. For my own sake of understanding this Upanishad, I equate Rayee to matter and Prana to energy with the full recognition that Rayee and Prana are spiritual and philosophical terms and they encompass much more than the modern scientific terms of energy and matter – for example, prana and rayee include formless thoughts and action. While equating Rayee and Prana to matter and energy is not recommended, I found it easier to understand these classes.

First creation is in form pairs or mithuna shristy or the creation of rayee and prana. Rayee and prana are two



principles pairs of opposite mutually complementary; both of them together make a whole. This division between rayee and prana is superficial; rayee is prajapathi or cause or karanam; prajapathi alone becomes rayee and prana. Superficially we call amoortha as prana and moortha as rayee. But since both rayee and prana came from prajapathi, everything can be called rayee and similarly everything can be called prana. For example, ice is also be called water, stream is also called water. The ice/stream division is superficial and both are water. Similarly the division between rayee and prana is also superficial as both are prajapathi.

V6

After mithuna shrishty, Swamiji discussed loga shristy or sun (prana) and moon (rayee). By spreading the rays from the east, the sun is embracing all jivas and becoming one with all jivas. The sun alone is giving life and energy to all beings and therefore the existence of beings is due to sun's energy and therefore there is no jivas other than sun. Physical energy, prana energy and intellectual energy all are given only by surya prakasha.

V7

The sun is known as vaisvanara, the macro gross body in waking stage. The surya alone is in the form all human beings.

Surya is known as visvaroop, prana (life of everyone), Agni (fire). When the fire principle is up above, we call it surya and when it is down on the earth, we call it Agni. Without sun, there will be no life. This principle is also supported by the following mantra in Rig Veda.

V8 (Mantra from Rig Veda)

Sun is omniscient because it illuminates everything. Rishis knew sun to be all of the following:

- Visva roopaha – Ever pervading
- Harinam – rays
- Jaata Vedhasam: One who is omniscient:
  - One who illumines all
  - A devada from Chainthanyam angle.
- Parayanam: The ultimate supporter of everything
- Joythihi: One who is effulgent
- Ekam: One
- Tapantam: The one who shines all the time
- Sahasra rahihi: With thousands of rays
- Satadha vartamana: Manifests in hundreds of form
- Pranaha: The very prana of all beings.

The conclusions of these three slokas is that prana or sun is everything.

V9

After loga shrishity, comes the kala shrishti, which is recognized by the movement of sun and moon. Surya prakasam determines the day; Chandra's, on the other hand, determines thithi. The whole year is prajapathi because sun and moon are manifestation of prajapathi. So kalam is a manifestation of prajapathi. A year has two ayanam (solstice). Dhakshinayanam (rayee) and utharayanam (prana).

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## Prasna Upanishad, Class 2

Greetings All,

Swamiji continued his talks on Prasna Upanishad.

**Shloka # 1:** Refreshing our memory on Shloka 1, he says, this Upanishad begins with an introduction of Guru and Shishyas. It

is similar to other Upanishads. The six qualified students are named and described. The way they were qualified is as follows:

1. They were committed to worship of Saguna Brahma Upasana.
2. They have gone through Karma Kanda and Upasana Kanda. They have Sadhana Chatustiya Sampathi. (From Tatvabodha they are: Vivekaha – discrimination, Vairaḡyam – dispassion, Mumukshutvam – desire and Shatka Sampattihi – discipline.)
3. They are established in Saguna Brahman.
4. They are Nishtaha or grounded. They are followers of Vaidic Margaha.

It takes some time to develop Shraddha in Vedanta. However, as one follows Karma Kanda and Upasana Kanda, by the time they reach Vedanta, the student develops strong Shraddha.

### **What is the purpose of their visit to the Guru?**

They are seeking Param Brahman. They understand the limitations of Saguna Brahman. They are not satisfied with this knowledge.

### **Why was Pippiladaha chosen as the teacher?**

He was Bhagwan Pippiladaha. Bhagwan is one who has knowledge of all Shastras. He also has superb communications skills.

### **How did they approach their teacher?**

They approached with humility and respect to the teacher. Serving the teacher is not serving the person rather it is serving Shastram. Shastri puja is same as Shastram puja. They approached teacher with some offering as well. Swamiji says, usually fruits, nuts, fuel etc. are considered normal offerings. They approached the teacher as if he was the Lord in a temple.

### **What is their motive?**

They wanted Pippiladaha to teach them everything. So they approached with respect and a proper attitude.

## **Shloka # 2:**

Seeing them and their approach Pippiladaha knew their qualifications. He tells them: All of you must stay here for one year. Even after that there is no assurance that you will get an answer to your questions.

In ancient times teachers were hesitant to give answers. Teachers were not sure how casual the student was. Unless the student was sincere the teaching would not go in. Many tests were given to students. Also Teacher had to know if student was qualified or if they were lacking in any area such as intelligence, industry, shradha etc. The one-year was also important to develop rapport between teacher and student. Thus a loving relationship was developed.

Pippiladaha tells them "You should live in the ashram for a year. You should live a life of Tapas, Penance and Brahmacharya. Swamiji says comfort and knowledge do not go together. Brahmacharya meant giving up comfort while maintaining Shraddha. Sanyasa means detachment from everything.

Illustrating the concept of sanyasa, Swamiji narrated story of a student who was asked to leave the ashram suddenly in the middle of the night. The student did not know what to do. He was lost as to why he was thrown out. He wandered around from village to village seeking food and shelter. After a few days the Teacher sent some students to call him back. The student asked the teacher why he was thrown out to begin with. The teacher told him that he saw the student was getting attached to the Ashram. He wanted the student to maintain his detachment even in Ashram. To teach him this lesson, he was thrown out.

## **Shloka # 3:**

After one year of tapas and brahmacharya Pippiladaha allowed the students to raise their questions. The first one to go was Kabandhi Katyayana. They were called in reverse order as named in shloka #1.

Kabandhi asked: Bhagwan, from what source are all these living beings coming up or originating? Or, how did creation occur?

The teacher Pippiladaha answered by introducing Hiranyagarbha. He says, Ishwara created Hiranyagarbha also known as Brahma. Brahma in turn created the creation. Vishnu taught Brahma how to create. Kama is the force behind creation. Thus, after Brahma performed tapas on Ishwara, Lord gave him knowledge. Tapas here meant he was given the ability to visualize the previous Srishti or Creation. The creatures are created based upon their respective Karmas. Thus came the creation

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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 refers 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. Apra Vidya and apra vidya is mentioned in Mundaka Upanishads will be elaborated in Prasna upanishad. Condensed version in Mundaka Upanisahds are manthro upanishad and elaborated versions in Prasna upanisahds are brahmano Upanishads. Brahmno portions in Mundaka Upanishads are elaborated in Prasna upanishads. Chapters elobarated in Prasna Upanishad are:

1. Krishna and chukla Gathi
2. Upasana prana or hiranyagarba
3. Upasana
4. Brahama 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.