

Long Term Course at AVG During January 2015 - February 2015

A summary of the Vedanta classes held during January 2015 – February 2015 is presented below:

CLASSES ON GENERAL TOPICS BY PUJYA SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati gave insightful talks on various topics requested by the students:

SURRENDER: Surrender to *Ishvara* is a relative surrender. The ego is temporarily kept suspended. **Absolute surrender takes place when there is understanding that all that is here is *Ishvara*.** The individual ego is a part of the total ego. **The more one understands *Ishvara*, more is the surrender.**

VEDA AS THE PRAMANA: One needs to understand what we are trying to understand from the Veda. The Veda has a vision about me - that I'm the whole, I'm the meaning to security, happiness. I cannot arrive at this vision by any other means of knowledge. No other *pramana* has access to it. No will is involved. **Just as one surrenders to the sense organs like one's own eyes for sight, the Veda has to be operated as a *pramana* to know the truth.** Veda being an external *pramana*, the ego interferes. The more one sees that the Veda is the only means of knowing the reality about myself, the more is the attitude of *sraddha* towards the Veda.

GURU: Guru is the one who teaches the *Mahavakya*- the equation between the *jiva* and *Ishvara*. The Guru handles the *Shastra pramana* in a way that makes one see that 'I'm the cause of the entire universe'. The

Guru is praised as the very same *vastu* that he teaches about. All the praise goes to *Brahma vastu* alone. Guru as an institution transcends the individual. **The wielder of the *pramana* is also looked upon as *pramana*.** The ego is kept suspended by acceptance of *pramana*. Only then learning can take place.

GURU SEVA: In olden days, *sishtyas* had lot of physical work to do at the Gurukulam and also personal *seva* to the Guru. But in today's context of large Gurukulams, **attending classes regularly is *Guru seva*.** After gaining knowledge, **sharing that knowledge with others is a great way for *Guru seva*.**

IS BRAHMAN TO BE EXPERIENCED? There is a wrong popular belief that *Brahman* should be studied first. Later it has to be experienced in meditation. This is because there is no understanding that the Vedas are the only *pramana* to know *Brahman*. *Brahman* has to be known only through the Vedas. **It is not something that can be experienced. Every experience is *Brahman*.**

TIME MANAGEMENT FOR STUDENTS: Pujya Swamiji advised the students to do what is to be done. The suggested **order of priority for the students: Vedanta study, Sanskrit study, Japa and Prayer, Meditation and Chanting.** All the programmes are important. During earlier long term courses, those who sincerely attended the entire programme are frontline teachers now.

SELF APPROVAL: Welcome yourself means welcome all facts about your life

such as: parentage, upbringing, social status, education, economical status, looks and all emotions. You are connected to others. Welcome them as well. *Ishvara* is both the maker and the material of the whole universe. All emotions are within the order of *Ishvara*. You can never go wrong in the eyes of *Ishvara*. He is the super-therapist. Resolve your emotions in the understanding of *Ishvara* as the Infallible. **Your own awareness of *Ishvara* as the orders, validates you. You do not require anybody's approval.** Everybody's approval will come when you have no complaint.

PURIFICATION OF MIND: The whole set of instruments like mind, *buddhi*, *chittam* are referred to by one word, *antahkarana*. *Antahkarana* is momentary. How to clean it? **No one can escape from likes and dislike when one encounters the world.** They by themselves are not a problem. **Only when likes and dislikes dictate your actions that are unacceptable according to *dharma*, can it be called an impurity.**

Antahkarana shuddhi means *raga-dvesha* neutralization. Likes and dislikes can be neutralized only through *adrshtha*. **One gains *adrshtha* (*punya*) and neutralize *duritas* (*papa*) through performance of prayer and reaching out actions.** It is important to understand the significance of the role of *karma* in producing purity of the mind.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A JNANI: Chapter XII of Bhagavad Gita talks about some characteristics of a *Jnani*. This is not intended to judge someone, but **it is meant for the seeker to imbibe and emulate.** What is spontaneous for the *jnani* becomes a *sadhana* for the seeker. A *jnani* doesn't acquire these qualities at once. They must have to exist in relative measure even before, for it to become spontaneous. **A deliberate act, with practice, becomes spontaneous.**

A JNANI IS HAPPY BEING HIMSELF: *Jnani* has a sublated ego, like a roasted seed – there is **no real sense of doer-ship/ enjoyer-ship.** He **sees everything as manifestation of *Ishvara* and *Ishvara's* order.** He is compassionate, free from doer-ship, accommodative and free from elation, fear and anxiety.

CLASSES ON GITA BHASYAM BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

Arjuna entered the battlefield for protection of *dharma*, but when he saw his Gurus and relatives on the opposite camp, he was overpowered by sorrow and delusion. He realized that the confusion was born of a deeper problem that he could not solve himself and sought a permanent solution from Lord Krishna to end that sorrow.

ESSENCE OF THE FIRST 57 SLOKAS:

Sri Adi Sankara, begins his commentary by presenting the summary of the ideas presented in the verses in Chapter-1 till the 10th verse of Chapter-2.

The preceding verses till verse 11 of Chapter 2 are meant to demonstrate the perpetuation of defects like **grief and delusion forming the seeds of samsara.** It is **caused due to ignorance.** Ignorance further causes delusion characterized by the notion of **"I belong to them and they belong to me"**. This leads to **intense attachment** causing grief and delusion. This further leads one to engage in actions that are **prohibited karma or karma to safeguard one's possessions.** These actions result in **punya-papa** which further cause **re-birth**, thereby **perpetuating samara.** Arjuna seeing his relatives in the opponent camp of the battle field was overcome with delusion and sorrow and in order to retain their lives, preferred to live as a mendicant, which was *paradhama* (Gita 2.4). Similarly **everyone under the spell of grief and delusion abandon their *svadharma* and take up prohibited action. Only *atma jnana* can remove grief and delusion.** The Lord

desirous of blessing all the people by teaching atma jnana starts his message by telling Arjuna “**you grieve for those who are not to be grieved for**” (Gita 2.11).

Bhasyakara presents possible opposing ideas and resolves them in the form of a objections raised by the Purvapakshi (opponent) and establishing the right idea in the form of Siddanti’s answer to the objections.

PURVAPAKSHI’S VIEW: Moksha can be gained by combination of knowledge and actions. The Vedaas seen as pramana with reference to both karma kanda and jnana kanda indicates that both karma and jnana have to be pursued to gain moksha. The following verses also support this view: “This righteous battle if you do not fight” (Gita 2.33), “your choice is for action alone” (Gita 2.47) and “therefore do action alone” (Gita 4.15). Even if some karma involves himsa, that which are ordained by the Veda do not result in papa. Sruti mandates that one shall perform sruti ordained karma as long as one lives.

SIDDHANTIN’S VIEW: Moksha can be gained by knowledge alone without combining with karma (as prescribed by the Sruti and Smruti). The verses starting with “those who should not be grieved for” (Gita 2.11) and ending with “even considering your duty” (Gita 2.31), the Lord explains that Samkhya is the nature of the self. Later he says that he will tell about (karma) yoga (Gita 2.39).

There is impossibility of commitment to knowledge and action by the same person at the same time as the two lifestyles have their basis in two different understandings and the candidates are different. **A life committed to jnana** is characterized by an understanding that “I’m not the doer” as Atma is not subject to changes. **A life committed to karma** is characterized by pursuit of means that lead to moksha with

the understanding that “I’m the doer” and “I am other than the body”.

Brahadaranyaka Upanisad 4.4.22 and 1.4.17 also tell that when one is exclusively interested in atma loka and not interested in son, wealth or svarga, he becomes a sannyasi.

This idea is further substantiated by citing Arjuna’s questions which would otherwise be untenable. Arjuna asks the Lord in Gita 3.1, “When you say knowledge is superior, why do you ask me to do action?” This implies that the Lord did not teach that knowledge and action can be combined but taught that knowledge is superior to action.

Further, in Gita 5.1, Arjuna asks the Lord to advise which among the two, knowledge or action is best for him. If knowledge and action were to be combined, the Lord would have told him that I already asked you to combine both.

The Lord clearly says in Gita 3.3, that there are two distinct life styles; for people committed to knowledge and for people committed to action.

These arguments will apply equally with reference to the purvapakshi’s contention of combining just Smruti based karma with the pursuit of knowledge.

Therefore, in the Gita, none can show that there is the slightest proposal to combine pursuit of knowledge along with actions prescribed by Sruti or Smruti, for attaining moksha.

Gita says in 4.15, Janaka and others performed action and attained success. If for argument sake, we say Janaka is an ajnani, we can say that he did action and attained mental purity and later got jnana. If we say Janaka is a Jnani, we can say that he did action for protection of the world.

We may conclude that Lord Krishna and Jnanis like Raja Janaka performed action

with the understanding of non –doer ship. They did not perform action for getting purity of mind or for gaining punya. But they performed action for the welfare of the world and for setting an example for others to emulate.

KATHOPANISAD BHASYAM CLASSES BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

INTRODUCTION: We study mainly three **prasthanas** (texts) in Vedanta. The main prasthana is Sruti or **Upanisads**. The other two prasthanas are **Bhagavad Gita** called smarta prasthana and **Brahma Sutra** called nyaya prasthana, are based on Sruti.

Muktiko Upanisad gives the number of Upanisads in each of the four Vedas. There are totally **1180 Upanisads**. Of them Lord Rama lists to Hanumanji 108 **main Upanisads**. Out of them 10 are considered **major Upanisads** as Sri Adi Sankara has written bhasyam on them.

Vedas are revealed by the Lord to Rsis. Kathopanisad belongs to Katha saka of Krsnayajurveda. Katha rsi received Kathopanisad or Kathakopanisad. He was a disciple of Vaisampayana rsi. Vaisampayana rsi was a disciple of Sri Veda Vyasa.

Kathopanisad comprise of two adhyayas (chapters) each contains three vallis (sections) and totally 119 mantras. It is in the form of a dialogue between Lord Yama, the teacher and Naciketas, the disciple.

SANTI MANTRA: The most popular “**sahana vavatu**” is the santi mantra. The prayer is let the Lord protect both of us, the Teacher and the Student by nourishing us with the result of knowledge. Let both of us make adequate effort so that the study be effective. Let there not be any misunderstanding between us. Let there not be obstacles from the individual, surroundings and from one’s purva karma.

PRAYER FOR BHASYAM: The first sentence starts with ‘om’ and the second

sentence starts with ‘**atha**’ as these are the auspicious words used by Brahmaji, at the time of manifestation of this jagat. Salutations to Lord Yama, the Lord of death, son of Lord Sun and Teacher of Brahma Vidya. Salutations to the glorious student Naciketas. Sri Adi Sankara says that a brief explanation is given so that the students can grasp easily the teaching.

MEANING OF UPANISAD: The root ‘sad’ means destruction, reaching and weakening. The prefix ‘upa’ means going near the Teacher teaching Brahavidya. The prefix ‘ni’ means pursuit with determination. The suffix ‘kvip’ means the doer. The first meaning is, it is the **destroyer of the seed of samara** i.e. ignorance along with desire, karma and punya-papa by giving Nirguna Brahman jnanam. The second meaning is that the **knowledge of Nirguna Brahman makes the Mumuksu reach Brahman**. The third meaning is that the knowledge of Saguna Brahman can **weaken the effect of samsara** by taking the person to Brahmaloaka. To summarise, Upanisad means **Brahma Vidya**.

OBJECTION: The students who chant Upanisad say that we study Upanisad. The Teachers who teach chant of Upanisad also say that we teach Upanisad.

REPLY: The word Upanisad in the primary sense means brahma vidya. In the secondary sense it means the text of Upanisad.

ANUBANDHA CATUSTAYAM OF UPANISAD: ADIKARI- One possessing sadhana catustam. **VISAYA-** Param Brahman **PURPOSE-** Destruction of Samsara and attainment of Brahman **SAMBANDHA-** **Sadhana** (Knowledge is the means) **Sadhya** (Moksha is the end) Sambandha.

Report by N. Avinashilingam