

Long Term Course at AVG during December 2014 - January 2015

A summary of the Vedanta classes held during December 2014 – January 2015 is presented below:

CLASSES ON GENERAL TOPICS BY PUJYA SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati gave talks on various topics of practical application for the students:

LOVE: The ego born of ignorance, separates the individual from the world which is nothing but Isvara. However ego is not absolute, it can resolve momentarily. In love, there is fusion of the ego with the object of love. This subject-object resolution causes one to experience ananda, which is but an expression of fullness, one's own nature. Love is the dynamic form of ananda or wholeness. Since this ananda is experiential, everyone seeks love.

Someone or something invokes love in you and you are one with it. You love the stars, the blue sky, the mountains, you become one with it. The mountains don't invoke the wanting person in you. You don't want the mountains to be any different.

Since I'm unable to command this experience of oneness, I need someone or something to evoke that love. Through knowledge one can be that person. Or one can act lovingly. Through loving action one can invoke the loving person, a non-demanding ego. One's actions can express love. Through such actions one can discover love. Initially even if it is not there in full measure in a person, he can later discover it.

COMPASSION: Compassion manifests as caring, giving, listening and sharing with all living beings. All living beings undergo pain. A human being is capable of empathizing with other's pain. The response can be of compassion and care. One needs to discover compassion. It helps one to expand oneself to wholeness. In Buddhism this is highly promoted. Ahimsa is based on compassion. Compassion accommodates people's irritant behavior. One can always reach out through giving time, knowledge, material help and kind words.

One, who retains his ego and at the same time has compassion to all living beings, can be said to be a grown up person. He can accommodate other's omissions and commissions. When such a person listens to Vedanta, understanding happens.

MARRIAGE: The individual feels isolated. That ego needs to undergo a fusion with another ego keeping with male/ female design. That resolves separation. Fusion of ego is marriage. Marriage is meant for having children. Father and Mother are associates of Isvara in the child birth. Marriage also helps one gain emotional growth. For the majority, getting married is suitable. For the exceptions, brahmacharya to sannyasa is suitable.

FEAR: A child up to the age of four cannot handle pain. Whenever there a violation of trust by Father or Mother, it goes to the unconscious. The pain is covered. After becoming an adult it comes out. Only with awareness of Isvara as the psychological order, this can be fully resolved.

The secret of dealing with fear is to welcome it. When one experiences fear, he should say "I welcome fear. I am not afraid of fear." It is like magic and fear will go.

SUMMARY OF VIVEKACUDAMANI CLASSES BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

Swamiji has taught this text with full details in the classes along with a detailed overview of Vedanta sastra. Only a brief summary of the classes is presented below.

ASI PADA ARTHA: Chandogya Upanisad states "tat tvam asi" nine times pointing to oneness of Jiva and Isvara. The vachyartha of Jiva and Isvara, have mutually opposite qualities like the glow-worm and the sun, the well and the ocean, the servant and the King and the atom and the Himalayas. The difference between Jiva and Isvara is only in the upadhi. Jiva's upadhi is panchakosa and Isvara's upadhi is maya. A king has the upadhi of kingdom and a soldier an armour. If the upadhi is removed both of them are nothing but human beings.

The implied meaning of Jiva and Isvara cannot be arrived by jahad lakshana or ajahand lakshana. But it can be arrived at by jahad ajahad laksana or bhaga tyaga laksana. The implied meaning of Jiva and Isvara can be arrived at, only after dismissing the upadhis (attributes) and understanding both of them as chaitanya.

From the statement "This is that Devadatta", we understand that it refers to the same substantive, a person although the place, time and qualities are different. Similarly oneness in the form of consciousness is understood between Jiva and Isvara as revealed by hundreds of mahavakyas. Only this Sat exists. The creation is nothing but super imposition of name, form and function to this Sat.

Dream is a pradhikasika satya or subjective reality, dismissed on waking. Similarly the world called vyavaharika satya or empirical

reality is dismissed from the stand point of paramartika satya or absolute reality.

FRUIT OF KNOWLEDGE: JIVAN MUKTI: Jnani understands himself as limitless consciousness. He is free while living. He has clear understanding of atma and has uninterrupted happiness. For him the world is as good as forgotten. He has no 'I' or 'mine' sense. His body follows just like a shadow.

He is not engaged in brooding of the past, anxiety about the future or obsession for the present. He sees everything as Isvara's order. He sees everything as manifestation of Isvara. In his vision, there are no desirable or undesirable qualities or objects. He has equanimity whether he is worshipped by noble people or criticized by immoral people. A Jnani will not depend upon external situations for happiness and security.

Actions done during dream are falsified on waking up. Similarly after getting Brahma jnana, sancita karma accumulated over millions of earlier births gets dissolved. Space is not tainted by liquor smell in a pot. Similarly agami karma done after Brahma jnana, do not affect the Jnani as he has no doer-ship.

PRARABDHA OF A JIVANMUKTA: From the view of an ajnani, it appears at the empirical (vyavaharika) level that even after jnana, prarabhdha karma continues. An arrow released thinking that the target is tiger, will hit even if it is known to be a cow later.

For a Jnani, from the absolute (paramartika) point of view, there is no prarabhdha., just as there is no connection for the waker with the dream objects after waking up. There is only non-dual Brahman.

THE ESSENCE OF TEACHING: The reality of Jiva and the Jagat is the same non-dual Brahman. They appear as different due to the various names, forms and functions. Abiding in the understanding of non-dual Brahman

is moksha. Sruti is the only pramana with reference to Brahman.

SISHYA'S GRATITUDE: Sishya expresses his gratitude to the Guru, since only due to the Guru's grace he gained atma jnana. He says that he is blessed; he has accomplished what is to be accomplished; he is able to clearly appreciate himself as happiness, i.e. fullness; he has gained his svarajya. He salutes the Guru again and again, due to the deep sense of gratitude.

GURU'S FINAL MESSAGE: The Guru blesses the Sishya and advises him to recognize atma everywhere, see himself as consciousness and enjoy atma ananda.

The Sishya reverentially salutes the Guru and take leave of him. The Guru moves around sanctifying the entire earth by his mere presence and teachings.

CLASSES ON GITA BHASYAM BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

Bhasyam is a commentary in prose form, where the meaning of a sutra is explained. By extension, similar commentary on Bhagavad Gita and Upanisads are also called bhasyam. In the bhasyam, first a brief explanation is given. Later it explains these words and describes further in detail.

The benefit of this study is that one gets the in depth meaning of the sutras/ mantras/ slokas. How the meaning is extracted is given in the bhasyam. The Vedanta teacher will have the tools of pada sastra (grammar) , vakya sastra (analysis of a sentence) and nyaya sastra (logic) in analyzing the subject. With this methodology any other text on Vedanta can be analysed.

Vedanta is not logical as the teaching is not established just by logic, but Vedanta cannot be dismissed as illogical either.

PRAYER: The dhyana sloka for Gita bhasyam is taken from Brahmanda Purana. It says Lord Narayana is beyond the cause

of the universe and beyond the effect in the form of gross and subtle universe including this world with seven continents.

UPODGHATA BHASYAM: Sri Sankara's introduction bhasyam on Bhagavad Gita called upodghata bhasyam, on Brahadaranyaka Upanisad called sambanda bhasyam and on Brahma Sutra called adhyasa bhasyam are all very popular and profound.

Upodghata bhasyam or introductory analysis of Gita, describes the essence and back ground of the Sastra. It explains the place, basis, purpose, speaker, listener, situation and benefit for the listener.

The introductory bhasyam can be seen as containing four parts; vedaarthasara, gita background explaining the purpose of avatara and the situation that called for the upadesha, the necessity for writing a commentary and finally to present the anubandachatustayam.

VEDA ARTHA SARA: Isvara after creating the world, for its sustenance created Mariichi and other Prajaapatis , who were the progenitors of subsequent lineage of householders, and taught them Vedas. They were taught pravrtti marga so that they can pursue artha and kama in a dharmic way.

Isvara later created Sanaka and other ascetics. They were taught nivrtti marga so that they can pursue moksha, withdrawing from activities of artha and kama.

One sincerely pursuing pravrtti marga will primarily have pleasure and will also get qualification to pursue nivrtti marga. Varna asrama dharma were prescribed to achieve the four purusharthas. If human beings follow dharma as prescribed in the Vedas, all living beings will be cared for.

BACK GROUND OF GITA: When there is a decline in dharma initially, the Brahmanas and Kshatrias can help restore dharma. But when dharma falls more, even the

Brahmanas and Kshatriyas do not follow dharma. Then Isvara incarnates for sustenance of the jagat and for re-establishment of dharma.

PURPOSE OF AVATARA: Isvara assuming the body is called avatara. Lord Vishnu assumed the avatara of Lord Krishna through Devaki and Vasudeva. His avatara was for protection of Brahmin-ness of Brahmins. Keeping maya under control, He appears to be born. He has covering power (avarana) and projecting power (vikshepa) under his control. His nature is timelessness (nithya), pure (suddha), consciousness (buddha) and is free (muktha).

CONTEXT FOR GITA: Lord Krishna taught Arjuna two fold life style of house holder and sannyasi. Arjuna was immersed in sorrow and delusion. He asked for the jnana. Considering that dharma received and practiced by a famous person with noble qualities will attain popularity, the Lord taught him. Veda Vyasa compiled the teaching. The teaching is in the form of dialogue between Lord as the Teacher and Arjuna as a disciple.

PURPOSE OF BHASYAM: Gita is the essence of all Vedas. Its central theme is difficult to comprehend. Existing commentaries at that time contained contradictory ideas. Hence Sri Adi Sankara wrote the brief commentary to ascertain the import of Gita distinctly.

ANUBANDHA CHATUSTAYAM: The purpose of Gita is to give moksha or the highest happiness with complete cessation of samsara or the life of becoming. The purpose is achieved by a life style committed to self knowledge. Sannyasa life style is more conducive to pursue moksha. Sannyasi has already weakened his ego, has more time available and has undistracted mind. Hence he is in a better position to assimilate Brahman.

During Sri Adi Sankara's time, there was a popular 'jnana karma samuchchaya vada'

that action and knowledge should be combined to gain moksha. He dismissed this view. He quotes four verses from Anu Gita (Mahabharata Aswamedika parva) where Lord Krishna says: "Nivrti dharma alone is enough for attainment of Brahman", "A wise person not doing any vedic karma becomes free by his wisdom", "One absorbed in non-dual Brahman becomes free", "Characteristic of jnanam is sannyasa". All these verses confirm that without karma and by jnana alone moksha is gained.

He also quotes the last verse of Bhagawad Gita teaching where Lord Krishna says "Give up identification with all your activities; surrender your individuality by understanding of non-dual Brahman; there will be no sorrow after oneness with Brahman".

Visaya is pravirti lakshana dharma (karma yoga), nivirti lakshana dharma (jnana yoga) and param Brahma. Adikari is a person having a mind purified by karma yoga. Sannyasa life style with commitment to self knowledge is preferable. Sambandha is pradipadya (revealed) and pradipadaka (revealer) sambandha.

ESSENCE OF THE FIRST 57 SLOKAS: Atma is asanga. Due to ignorance of this, one suffers from sambandha bhranthi. One thinks that I belong to them and they belong to me. This causes sneha or attachment. Actual or imaginary separation from them causes sorrow and delusion. Discriminative knowledge is totally over powered. This will make one do what is inappropriate or make one not do what is appropriate leading to punya/ papa. This leads to rebirth. There is perpetuation of samsara.

Arjuna although came for fighting a war for protection of dharma, on seeing his dear and near people on the other side decided not to fight. He preferred to live on alms. His discriminative knowledge was over powered by grief and delusion.

Report by N. Avinashilingam