

Long Term Course at AVG During April - May 2015

A summary of the Vedanta classes held during April-May 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:

BEING AN INSTRUMENT OF ISVARA: Flute in the hands of Lord Krishna produces enchanting music. Without the flute, there's no music, but Krishna is the producer of the music. Flute remains just an instrument.

Similarly one can surrender totally without the sense of doer-ship just like an instrument in the hands of *Ishvara* and relax. *Ishvara* is the real author of the end result. This attitude makes one's life enjoyable to oneself and others. The understanding that results happen as the manifestation of *Ishvara's* order, (as per Law of Karma), enable one to accept all situations with equanimity (as *Ishvaraprasada*).

COMMITMENT TO VEDANTA: Commitment to Vedanta implies that one is committed to oneself. Commitment means that it is not open to choice, there is single pointedness.

When one is happy, one does not want the situation to be different. One is not a wanting person. If one is unhappy, it implies that this world is not adequate enough to make one happy, and he/she continues to be a wanting person. *Viveka* is discerning that the problem is not what I miss but that I miss. Vedanta teaches that "I am satisfaction. Satisfaction is not an

object but the subject." Then why am I not satisfied all the time? Something is stopping it. One doesn't know what it is. Not knowing oneself, one becomes committed to knowing oneself.

ASSIMILATION OF VEDANTA: A psycho-therapist tells his client that his feelings and emotions are valid as per his given background. Vedanta is a super therapist. It tells that in the absolute level there is no duality. The world is *mithya*. Assimilation of Vedanta is going against this orientation of duality. It is the understanding that all that is here is one non-dual Brahman.

FREEDOM IN ACTION: All actions are result oriented. There is pressure to achieve the desired result. But the results depend upon *Ishvara* in the form of the order of *Karma*. If one has the capacity to take the results in the form they come, more or less with the same response, then there is freedom in action. The results are taken as *prasada* coming directly from *Ishvara* with readiness and prayerfulness.

STRESS FREE LIVING: This world is a manifestation of *Ishvara*. Everyone is connected to other individuals. In dealing with different people the roles and script are dynamic. One has to play roles as father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, employer, employee, etc. One understands that these are one's roles only. The one who is mature, does his *svakarma* cheerfully. When one understands that he merely plays roles in this world, he has stress free living.

BEING A CONTRIBUTOR: The growth of a person is measured by how much one

contributes. A fully grown person is the one who consumes the least and contributes the maximum. In Indian culture, renunciation is the ideal. Mahatma Gandhi understood that the Indian genius is in consuming the least. Hence he was a successful leader.

LIFE OF LEAST DISTURBANCE: One should remain undisturbed and also not disturb others. One should have sensitivity to one's surroundings and environment. This sensitivity also becomes a liability and one feels helpless and disturbed. Being disturbed one disturbs others. As a community, society, family and individual we disturb others. We have to reinforce ourselves to remain undisturbed and at the same time remain sensitive. Those exposed to Vedanta teaching can do that.

PRAYER: A seeker asks for grace, purity of mind, power to manage likes and dislikes, power to manage emotional outbursts like anger and jealousy and manage unconscious emotions. He prays for happiness of all living beings. Prayer is three fold of mental worship, chant and physical worship. Prayer helps to neutralize *duritas* or unpleasant situations that unfold and positively earn grace. Before prayer one can declare the *sankalpa* i.e. for what result one does the prayer.

PRAYERFULNESS: One recognizes *Ishvara* as the order and as one who manifests as this universe. He understands that everything including the body, mind and material wealth, are all given by *Ishvara*. There is no room for arrogance. Prayerfulness is the attitude that pervades breathing, thinking, while playing various roles in life and while doing one's own duty. The attitude is that all actions one does are *puja* to *Ishvara*.

IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER: Prayer is based on one's *sraddha*. In prayer free will is totally free because the result is not

immediate generally. One needs grace to be in the right place at the right time. The side effect is that one feels good due to exercising free will, as it is meant to be.

ROLE PLAY AS A DEVOTEE: Understanding *Ishvara* is restricted by the ego. Ego wants to survive. It fights until it has no chance to win. *Ahankara* can be enlightened understanding that I am *sat chit ananda*. It can continue to complete the *prarabdha karma*.

BRINGING ISVARA IN ONE'S LIFE: *Ishvara* is the maker and material of this universe. Whatever one sees is one aspect of *Ishvara*. One can *Ishvarise* one's emotions as there is leisure. But it is difficult to *Ishvarise* one's pain and illness. The unfavourable situations that unfold are due to the order of *Karma*. There is *Ishvara* when one opens the eye. There is *Ishvara* when one closes the eye. There is nothing but *Ishvara*.

SENSE OF ALIENATION FROM THE WHOLE: If an Indian child grows up in America, the home is like India and outside the home everything is America. The child experiences a sense of cultural, linguistic and ethnic alienation. This alienation cannot be solved by a Therapist. The solution is there only at the absolute level in Vedanta. At every stage, at every turn, in every move and in any focus there is a connection. When one understands that *Ishvara* is this connection, there is no more alienation.

WELCOMING EMOTIONS: One has emotions of fear, anger, jealousy and hatred. When one cannot avoid them, better welcome them without labeling them as 'negative emotions'. By welcoming them one takes away the strength of those emotions. It works. As one grows up likes and dislikes change. In fulfilling one's likes and dislikes let dharma, common sense and wisdom rule. One ought to be objective.

REACHING OUT ACTION: It is natural for a living being to seek security. *Moksha*

is freedom from insecurity. We have to address the incapacity to give. We should start giving small things in terms of time, materials and knowledge. Later giving becomes bigger and bigger. In Indian culture renunciation is a big thing. By reaching out action we become bigger than the universe because universe is *mithya*.

CLASSES ON GITA BHASYAM BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

Swamiji has taught this text in full detail in the classes. A brief summary of the classes is presented below.

CHAPTER 2: Having explained from the *paramartika* stand-point, Lord Krishna explains why there is no reason for sorrow for Arjuna at the empirical level (from sloka 2.31 to 2.47) from *svadharma* point (*karmayoga* attitude) and also purely from pragmatic point of war.

Lord Krishna then pointed out how *karmayoga* attitude is superior to mere *karma*.

CLASSES ON KATHOPANISAD BHASYAM BY SWAMI SADATMANANDA

CHAPTER I VALLI II

Naciketas requested for self knowledge as his third boon. Lord Yama tried to tempt Naciketas with material wealth. As he rejected the offer, Lord Yama was satisfied that Naciketas was qualified to receive self knowledge.

Lord Yama told that human beings have two different pursuits of *sreyas* and *preyas*. The one who chooses *sreyas* or spiritual goal attains good and auspicious end. The one who chooses *preyas* or material goal is deprived of the highest goal. The intelligent person chooses *sreyas* like a swan which separates milk from water. The dull witted

person chooses *preyas* for the sake of acquiring and preserving progeny and wealth.

Lord Yama praised Naciketas for discarding the pleasant and attractive objects and also not accepting to receive the ritual to gain wealth. There are two different goals, of ignorance and knowledge. Naciketas was a true seeker of knowledge and numerous sense objects could not distract him.

The deluded ones are in deep ignorance, but consider themselves to be wise and learned and wander all over like the blind led by the blind. They come to the control of death again and again.

The self is not available even for listening for many people. Even after listening, many people do not understand this self. The teacher of this self is rare. One who understands this self being instructed by a competent teacher is also rare. The self is understood when taught by a competent teacher.

Lord Yama praised that Naciketas for his fortitude towards attaining self-knowledge and he may have more qualified students like Naciketas. Lord Yama told that when he was a human being earlier, he knew that permanent end cannot be attained by impermanent means. Yet he performed Naciketa fire ritual and attained the relatively permanent position of Lord Yama. He praised Naciketas for his dispassion and firmly rejecting the vast, adorable and glorious position of Hiranyagarbha with all its incidental pleasures.

Atma is located in the cave of intellect, is difficult to understand. A competent seeker is able to know that by fixing his mind on *atma*. A *Jnani* transcends both elation and depression.

Report by N. Avinashilingam