

Vanaprastha Culture

Astaavakra Gita – Chapter 1 Summary

Introduction:

Astaavakra Gita is a short scripture on Advaita Vedanta. This is a dialogue between Rshi Astaavakra and Raja Janaka. This is present in Mahabharata where Maharshi Lomasa describes this to Raja Yudhisthira.

Brief Summary of previous verses:

Chapter 1:

Verse 1: Raja Janaka asks Rshi Astaavakra: *Please teach me 'how knowledge can be acquired? How Liberation can come? And How renunciation can be achieved?'*.

These questions are very significant as they form the source of dispelling our ignorance as Rshi Astaavakra answers these questions and in the process is enriching us with knowledge to remove our mis-apprehensions and thereby our non-apprehension.

The essence of these questions can be broken down as:

- How are we to withdraw our consciousness from our equipments (BMI)?
- How are we to experience the infinitude of the Self?

The answers that are to follow can be summarized as: Ignorance leads to Attachment and Knowledge leads to renunciation.

Verse 2:

Rshi Astaavakra answers: *Liberation can be achieved by rejecting the sense objects as poison and by seeking, as nectar, forgiveness, straightforwardness, kindness, cheerfulness and truth.*

Rshi Astaavakra refers to the sense objects as poison (and later on will mention that the ego is a serpent). Rejecting the sense objects is referred to as 'Dhama'. We have to reject the poison (sense objects) and taste the nectar (5 virtues referred above).

Verse 3: In verse 3, Rshi Astaavakra takes the style of negation to indicate 'what we are not?'

He says that we are neither the earth, nor water, not fire, nor air, nor space – 5 elements. We have to understand that the Self is only a witness of all that happens in the body and that the body is an embodiment of pure consciousness.

Even though our body is made up of the 5 elements, we are not the 5 elements. Through meditation, when we withdraw our identifications to BMI, we can be drawn towards the inward stillness while uplifting to the pure consciousness.

Verse 4:

Rshi Astaavakra gives the essential reason to detach us from these identifications. He says: *When we detach from BMI and abide in Consciousness, we will attain peace, be happy and will be free from bondage.*

We can note that peace, happiness and free of bondage are the nature of the Self and if we can only be free of the identifications, we can realize that we are the Self.

Verse 5:

Not only are we identifying ourselves with the BMI, but we also relate ourselves to the external world and consider us to be someone/something which we are not. Rshi Astaavakra clarifies: *We do not belong to any caste nor any ashrama. We (as in Atman) cannot be perceived by the senses. We are the unattached and formless witness and hence, be happy.*

Ashramas are not based on age, but it is the attitude of the mind.

Attitude of the mind + relationship of the mind with the world = Ashramas

Verse 6:

We are all relating to our emotions and thoughts. Rshi Astaavakra says: *Virtues and vices, happiness and sorrow are attributes of the mind and does not belong to the Self. We are not the doer, nor the enjoyer. We are the ever-free Atman.*

Ego + outer world = Doership

Ego + inner world = Deservership

Ego + Doer = Virtues and Vices

Ego + Enjoyer (deserver) = Happiness and sorrow

Ego + Intellect = Doership, virtues and vices

Ego + Mind = Deservership (enjoyer), happiness and sorrows.

March 8, 2023: Class 8

Verse 7: Verse 7 starts with *Eko drastaasi*. What does that imply?

Eko drastaasi: There is only one seer and this seer is the same for everyone even though we see different objects (projected plurality). To understand this, Taitriya Upanishad gives the definition of Brahman through the saying *Satyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma* which is synonymous with sat-cit-anandha.

Sat-Cit-Anandha:

Sat – Means existence: This existence is infinite and present everywhere.

Cit – Awareness. We are used to CIT which has been replaced here by Jnanam. Jnanam is infinite and can be developed only when we are aware.

Anandha – Infinite Joy.

All 3 are present always together and never can be separated. If we understand this definition, there can be no other seer just like there is one electricity expressing as light in different bulbs.

Vijayji introduced us to 2 identities: Spirit (consciousness) and Matter (Maya).

Matter is always inert and has no knowledge by itself. Spirit has its own knowledge and is self-effulgent. Matter is the object and Spirit is subject. The relationship between matter and spirit is the relationship between the seer and seen.

Why do we need to know this: There is no problem in the object or subject themselves but is in our understanding the relationship between the two. We try to rearrange the seen (object) for our experience of the Self. But since the object is as is, this rearrangement is not going to help. The subject and object will keep changing till we go inwards to the level of the intellect. Once beyond the intellect, Atman is always the subject and can never become the object. Hence, it is said *Eko Drashta*.

Verse 8: Verse 8 introduces the concept of *ego* which is the *doership*.

The ahankara (ego) is like a black serpent which is the problem between the seen and seer. To solve it, we need to have the FAITH that we are not the doer and once we get established in this understanding, this serpent will not affect us.

Vijayji explained this concept of misapprehension of identifying with the BMI with many examples. We are identifying with the BMI and think that we are the BMI and in the process, we forget that we are the SELF/BRAHMAN/INFINITE CONSCIOUSNESS (avidhya). We are given this BMI (on a temporary basis) for the purpose of growing out of viksepa and avarana and realize our Self, but we project ourselves on this BMI and live thinking that this is the real.

We have to realize that everything around us has been created to help us in our activities. But we forget this and think that we are responsible for everything that we do and for everything around us. We have to realize that situations are made to be conducive for us to act in this world and we are only instruments (NIMITTA MATHRAM – Bhagwad Gita: verse 33, Chapter 11). We are always dependent on

adi-daivika, adi-bouthika and adhyatmika factors for everything that we do. But we do not realize this and think that we are functioning by ourselves in this world.

Vijayji explained this with verses from Chapter 11 of Bhagwad Gita wherein Bhagwan explains how He does everything and we are just instruments (NIMITTA MATHRAM). Once we bow down surrendering our ego and doership, we will be able to proceed further in our journey.

We have to stop taking ownership for all we do. For this, if we can watch our way of talking/communicating wherein we do not take ownership of anything we do, it can be a start in this process/journey.

March 15, 2023: Class 9. Summary 2

Vijayji started today's class by stressing on the concept of one seer. When we can understand that only one seer can exist, it also leads us to the concept that there can be only one doer. There can be many doings and the results can be many, but the doer can always be only one.

Verse 8:

Continuing from last class, Vijayji explained that the concept of doer or ownership leads us to ego. This doership is only an illusion and we name it EGO. This ego is explained as the poison of black serpent.

As per Vedanta, any doing is considered as a sin or will lead to sin. Because, doership is always packed with deservership. We always expect something in return for whatever we do. The notion of doership cannot exist without deservership.

To make us understand the magnanimity of the problem of our sense of doership or ego, Vijayji explained it with the example of a python. Just as a python with a small mouth can swallow a big goat, ego also appears to be small but its effect on us is huge. It will never let us out of our samsara and we will always be caught in the cycle of birth and death and will never be able to come out of it.

The concept of doership is always problematic as it comes with the deservership. Explaining with an example from Yogavashisht, Vijayji explained that all results are always related with our vasanas (example of a coconut falling because of the weight of a crow sitting on it). There can be no event in this multiverse that can happen by itself unless our vasanas do not lead to us experiencing an event.

It is more important that we understand that life is short and that we should not waste a single minute of it. We have to hasten slowly. The best we can do is to practice what we learn and that has to be done today and now and here.

Ego + sense objects = agitations.

Once this ego starts functioning in us, we become polluted and poisoned by sensuality.

What can be done now to win over ego? We have to be vigilant. We should understand that we are not the doer (explained in the second line of verse 8) and have this understanding in our mental make-up. We should constantly remind ourselves that we are not the doer. This can be done only with faith on the Guru and on the scriptures (we do not have any other option). Our scriptures are our nectar and we should drink this nectar to create happiness in us. Once this is done, we will slowly realize that our nature is happiness instead of getting it from somewhere else. THIS IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR THIS POISON.

Verse 9:

Synopsis: In verse 9, we can understand what happens once this ego is burnt down. Once the ego is burnt down, we understand that we are happiness.

Explanation: We have to understand that we are Brahman. The concept of duality will create separation in us between ourselves and Bhagwan. We have to understand that there is no second thing that exists

in this world. Duality is always the superimposition of ego on everything around us. Once we have this understanding, we can burn down the forest of ignorance and be free of sorrow.

Vijayji explained to us the importance of the metaphor of forest while explaining our ego/ignorance. The metaphor of forest is used because a forest is infinite just like our vasanas and is present forever. Just like a forest can be burnt by fire, we can also burn this forest of ignorance by the fire of certitude and having the knowledge that we are Brahman.

Another reason for the metaphor of forest is that we can easily lose our way in the forest. Similarly we will lose our way in the jungle of samsara if we do not have the correct map of knowledge guided by our Guru. Else, not only we will lose our way but will be consumed by the beast called EGO.

Ego + senses = Beasts of prey

Once we obtain the knowledge, our mind and intellect will become calmer and thereby we can direct ourselves to the spiritual peace. This is the serene intellect that Vedanta is teaching us all through.

Conscious of objects = Knowledge of objects.

Consciousness devoid of objects = Pure knowledge (vishuddha bhuddhi).

Once we establish ourselves in this pure knowledge, we will be able to burn down the forest of ignorance.

March 22, 2023: Class 10. Summary 3

Vijayji started today's class by reviewing the concepts described in verses 7, 8 and 9 and ended the class by introducing us to verse 10.

The original question that Raja Janak asked Rshi Ashtaavakra was about the means to attain mukthi. The direct answer to this question is to have real and strong **Vairagya**.

As Rshi Ashtaavakra is answering this question, we can understand that the preparation required to attain mukthi is intense. We have to work towards **purity of mind and clarity of intellect** as a preparation in our journey to mukthi. Until we are working towards and focusing on gaining happiness from the external world through articles, beings and circumstances (ABCs), we are in the cycle of samsara and will be in bondage forever.

Purity of mind and clarity of intellect are indicators of strong vairagya. Real Vairagya or dispassion is not to be interested in any sort of materialistic or external ABCs irrespective of desh (place), kaal (time) and Vasthu (articles).

Summary of verse 7: Eko drashta – there is only one Sun, but the reflections are many. Similarly, there is only one seer but the seen are many.

Summary of verse 8: Vijayji explained the importance of the knowledge of one seer with an example. When a dog enters a room full of mirrors, it sees its own reflection in the mirrors. Not knowing (Avidhya) that it is its own reflection, the dog is scared and starts barking and finally becomes tired and if it had tried hitting the reflections, would end up bleeding. This is exactly what we do in our daily transactions. We tend to get attached to the illusion of plurality in this world, get entangled in the web of ABCs and end up tired, hurt and scared.

But when the dog's master enters the room, he is not scared because of the knowledge of the mirrors and the reflections. **The difference between the dog and the master is the knowledge that the reflections are the same as themselves.** Or in other words, the master possesses the knowledge of the subject and the object and is not deceived by what is actually seen.

The importance of knowledge can also be seen in Arjuna's question to Bhagwan in Chapter 3 of Bhagwad Gita. When Arjuna asks Bhagwan as to why he should fight (act) when knowledge (jnana) is superior to action, Bhagwan replies that the problem was never with the action but with a sense of doership (which is the actual serpent/poison).

Hence, we can enjoy the nectar of happiness with the knowledge that we are not the doer and that the seer or doer is Bhagwan himself.

Summary of verse 9: In verse 9, we are introduced to the concept of *eko visuddha*, which means pure and one consciousness. The concept of subject and object is more vividly explained here.

When we are conscious of a flower, we have the knowledge of the flower.

When we are conscious of the eye that sees the flower, we have the knowledge of the eye.

When we are conscious of the mind that enjoys the flower, we have the knowledge of the mind.

When we are conscious of the intellect that perceives the flower, we have the knowledge of the intellect.

But when we cannot be conscious of the Atma through which the intellect was able to think thoughts as atma is the consciousness itself and there is no other equipment to know atma or know knowledge. Do we need a light to see the Sun? Even though we have the pluralistic concept of experiencer, experienced and the experiencing, in reality, all these 3 concepts are happening in the atma only and there can be no division between the 3 when the knowledge of the Highest is gained.

Rshi Ashtaavakra says that when this concept of *eko visuddha* is obtained, a person attains *vita shokah and is sukhi bhava* (free from sorrows and will be happy).

Verse 10:

In order to ascertain the knowledge about one seer and one consciousness, verse 10 introduces us to the most famous example used in our shastras to explain the concept of illusion or projection – Snake and Rope.

When we see a rope in darkness, we do not comprehend that this is a rope. This non apprehension leads us to the misapprehension of the rope to be a snake. We project a nonexistent snake on the real rope. The snake was never real. In our avidhya of the rope, we project a snake on the rope.

This illusion or projection of non-real on the one reality is the cause of all sorrows. We project the nonexistent ABCs on the one reality and live a life of fear and sorrow. The only solution to end this misapprehension of snake (plurality) that happened due to non-apprehension (of reality) is through the knowledge of the reality (that I am the subject and there was never another seer).

Vijayji introduced the 3 kinds of people that are explained in the Vedas:

1. People who are not interested in liberation at all – Karma kaandi
2. People who are ritualistic only
3. People who are not interested in smaller gains in this world but are working towards liberation.

For us to understand the reality, one seer and one consciousness, we need the guidance of a Guru who can end our non-apprehension and the resultant misapprehension. Guru will make us change our thinking and our concept of reality. The misapprehension of the snake cannot be ended by any action but only by knowledge. We should also understand that we cannot accept someone as a Guru. It is the Guru who accepts us. When we are ready, Guru finds us. For this, we need to equip ourselves through continuous and consistent sadhana. Through this, we will have the faith that our Guru will find us which will eventually happen when we are ready.

Bhagwan Adi sankaracharya advises us on *sarva karma sannyasa poorvakam* which means we have to end the attitude of the doership and the resultant deservership.

Vijayji ended the class with the introduction of *Adhyaarokh Abhavaadha* which is the theory of superimposition.

- When the Reality acts as names and forms = Jagadh
- When the Reality acts within us in the pancha koshas = Jiva

- When the Reality acts with Maya (Maharani!!!) with attributes = Isvara.

Vijayji introduced briefly the 3 ways that Reality acts. These 3 ways will be explained in detail in the next class. The 3 ways are:

1. Paramarthika satyam – Absolute reality (We are the Pure Consciousness that we are talking about. We need to understand and acknowledge this).
2. Vyavaharika satyam – Reality in actions/duties (If we are the Pure Consciousness, where did the vehicles of experiences come from? Can unreal come from real?)
3. Pratibhasika Satyam – Illusion (We are this Pure consciousness upon which the world is superimposed. If we realise this, we are Self-realised!!!).

March 29, 2023: Class 11. Summary 4

Verse 10: Continued from last class:

Chapter 1 explains that self is witness for all. Once we understand this and reach there, we will be happy.

In verses 7, 8, 9, Rshi Ashtaavakra is explaining the reasons for our avidhya and how we can come out of this cycle of samsara. All we have to do is to understand that we are not the doer and renounce doership.

Bhagwan is the source of eternal happiness and can bestow on us eternal and unconditional happiness. The whole world is an illusion and cannot give the happiness that we are looking for. We have to understand that happiness is within us.

To remove the snake from the rope, we have to understand that there was no snake in the first place. This can be done only by the acquisition of this knowledge. If we try to remove the snake without this knowledge, we can never be successful in removing the snake. In the same way, we have to understand that this world of illusion can never give us happiness. To search for happiness in this world is like trying to remove the snake from the rope. Once we understand that this world is not real and is only a superimposition and that this world is not going to give us happiness, we will be directed to search for happiness from the eternal source (within ourselves/Bhagwan) and will find it and end in *sukhi bhava*.

Reality is perceived in 3 ways:

1. Paramarthika reality – Absolute reality which is transcendental and permanent – never changes. Example: Clay (out of which is pot is made)
2. Vyavaharika reality – empirical, relative, transactional. This also cannot be changed. Example: names and forms
3. Pratibhasika reality – Illusion. Unless we understand and apply the knowledge, we will be caught in the cycle of this reality. Example: Thinking that names and forms can give happiness. Ego manifests in illusion and makes us egoistic. We are EGOISTICALLY happy which is not permanent.

Types of desires that we have access to:

1. Paramarthika desire: Desire for the absolute. Self realization.
2. Vyavarika desire: Obligatory duties
3. Pratibaska desire: Desires that leads us to illusion of getting happiness from the world.

By creating the discussion about the guru of Shri Krishna, Vijayji explained that any philosophy or any Rshi or anyone else who explain the scriptures, they can only teach us what was already given in the Vedas and can never give any new details. This means that we have to try to access the source of knowledge which is Bhagwan/Vedas in order to proceed towards realization.

We will not achieve the Paramarthik happiness if we do not come out of the avidhya and turn our attention towards the absolute. We are stuck in the cycle created by our parabdha and unless we gain the knowledge, we cannot come out of the cycle of samsara.

Experiences from dream world cannot be carried to the waking world. We understand this theoretically. But in reality, we are stuck in names and forms and in the illusion believing that unreal BMI is real. Once we gain the knowledge of the illusion, we will be *sukhi bhava*.

Once we understand that the screen is the substratum and the world is a projection on the screen, our avidhya will end and we will be *sukhi bhava*.

We are the true Consciousness of the nature of Supreme Bliss. If we can understand and abide in this Supreme Bliss, we will be *sukhi bhava*.

April 5, 2023: Class 11. Summary 5

Introduction to verse 11:

Bhagwan has given us 2 greatest tools: Mind and Intellect. We are not using them well and also use them wrongly in a way that we are not supposed to. We should train when and how to use the mind and intellect.

The goal of this human birth is Self Realisation. This means that we have to do and engage in activities that will result in freeing us from the bondage of samsara. Living in Vyavarika and Pratibasika realities will immerse us in more bondage while Paramartika reality alone can free us from bondages.

In Samsara, We are caught in the unreal world of illusion. We think that the materialistic world will give us happiness. This happiness that we get from ABCs (articles, beings and circumstances) is unreal and temporary. We do not understand that the happiness from the materialistic world will change to sorrow in a fraction of second and take for granted that the joy from ABCs are going to be eternal. The transactional world creates bondage, and we are forever stuck in the cycle of samsara. When we are living in a world of superimposition, we are in the cycle of illusion and delusion and do not even know that we are in this cycle. This avidhya is the cause for the cycle of birth and death.

We have to analyse our thought process and examine ourselves as to which levels are we analyzing this world from: Is it from sense level or mind level or intellect level? In an ideal world as suggested by Vedanta, intellect should control the mind. But in Samsara, the mind controls the intellect.

Verse 11:

'As we think, so we become – yaa matih, saa gatih.'

Whatever the understanding of a person, he thinks and lives in that way. If one thinks that he is not in bondage, he will act in such a way that he is never in bondage and vice versa. Scriptures indicate that the mind has no knowledge but is acting from and through the intellect. But we think that the mind is the boss of the intellect and live our lives based on how the mind is thinking. We do not heed to the intellect and are driven by emotions and desires.

"In Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 3, Verse 42: Bhagwan gives us the technique of capturing our inner enemy – desire/mind/emotion. Superior to the body is the senses, superior to the senses is the mind, superior to the mind is the intellect, and Atman is even superior to the intellect.

Atman > Intellect > Mind > Body > Senses.

Gurudev, in his commentary on this verse, says that once we achieve the awareness of these delusory preoccupations (and the illusory world), all our efforts to separate us from the identification of BMI ends. This is the base of meditation (withdrawal of identification from BMI)."

"In Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 6, Verse 6: Bhagwan says that for those who have conquered their mind with their intellect, then the mind is their friend. Else, the same mind becomes the enemy.

This means, we have to let the higher SELF take control of the lower self. Even if there is a trace of the slightest ego, then the SELF becomes inimical (harmful) to the self. Hence, as indicated in verse 42 of chapter 3, we have to withdraw ourselves from the egoistic aspirations to allow Divinity to take control of us."

Is there a way to break this cycle?

“In Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 8, verse 6 Bhagwan explains the concept of ‘As you think, so you become’. Bhagwan says that whenever or whatever a being remembers at the time of death, the being attains the same in the next birth. To think of this as the single thought during the time of death is a lower level of understanding (Example: Story of Ajaamila chanting the name Narayana at the time of his death). At a higher level, Bhagwan refers to the constant thoughts all through that life and previous lives (vasanas).

Vasanas → Thoughts → Desires → Experiences → Actions

We will not be able to create thoughts about Bhagwan at the time of death if we have not trained our mind/intellect/memory/ego (man/buddhi/cit/ahankara) to be immersed in divinity all through our life. This needs extreme sadhana, self reflection, separation from identification with BMI/ABCs that we are taught by our Guru and Scriptures. Gurudev says that the mental equipment that has been striving all through life to detach from the identifications of the body will create new channels of divine aspirations (*Adhyatma Samskaras*) and these will decide our future path and direction of the ego’s pilgrimage.”

Following these principles, Rshi Ashtaavakra says that we will become the same person that we are thinking of all through our life. If we meditate on the reality continuously and consistently, we will surely become that reality itself.

Let us understand that we are that Reality and there was never a separation. The infinite Consciousness never modified itself. We came into existence just because of our identifications. Let us leave this non apprehension of the illusory world which will nullify our mis-apprehension and then we can experience *Aham Brahma-asmi*.

April 12, 2023: Class 12. Summary 6

Vijayji started the class by introducing us to the concept of Ashtaavakra Gita. Ashtaavakra talks about jiva and brahman and explains that there is no difference, and both are same.

In Verse 10, Rshi Ashtaavakra indicates and tries to remind us of the superimposition that we do on the world just like we see a snake on the rope. When we see a snake on the rope, the snake was not present at all and it is only our illusion of the snake on the rope.

In the changing world, we cannot find changing happiness as this world of plurality is only an illusion on the absolute reality which is the substratum.

Verse 11: In verse 11, Rshi Ashtaavakra is making us understand that “As we think, so we become.” If our goal is to attain the knowledge and end our illusion of the world of plurality, we have to start think correctly, associate with people correctly, collect the correct objects. This will enable us to become what we think.

In order to break this illusion, we have to understand that the concepts of mind and intellect. As long as the mind controls the intellect, we will not be able to gain the knowledge to grow out of the illusion of the world of plurality. Hence, controlling and taming the mind becomes all the more important.

Vijayji explained this with 3 examples.

Identification of Mind: Example 1 of Baby lion with sheep: A lion cub acts like a sheep while living amidst a herd of sheep. This was because it was identifying itself with the sheep. When it was given the true knowledge by another lion (Guru), the illusion was removed and it gained the knowledge that it was not a sheep but a lion. When our minds gets rid of the illusion and the identification with the world and understands that we are the jiva belonging to this world, we will gain the self-realization. Mind is the cub, intellect is the Lion. Intellect can be trained by guru and scriptures.

Taming the Mind: Example 2 of Taming of a wild horse: A wild horse keeps running around a limited field of experience in a bid to become free. As long as it is running without understanding, it will never get free. When the horse starts trusting the caregiver who feeds, it gives in to the control of the person gets tamed. This is the relationship between mind and intellect. When mind surrenders to the intellect, the habitual running stops. Mind has to be controlled and tamed by the intellect.

Surrendering to Guru: Example 3 of a Beedi maker Nisagadatta Maharaj: Nisagadatta Maharaj had no interest in religion or going to temple. When he attended a discourse due to the compulsion of his friend and when asking a question on where Bhagwan lives, he receives the answer Tatvamasi. Even though he did not understand this, he started trusting that the teacher would not lie. He started reflecting and contemplating on the words of the teacher and finally he got his knowledge and realization. His book is called *I am that*. In the whole world, we just have to BE.

Verse 12:

In verse 12, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains the qualities of the reality with the available finite words that are available. This is the process by which scriptures explains Reality to us as no finite words can explain Reality or Bhagwan. These finite words and qualities even though do not explain Reality, they lift our mind and intellect to the realm closer to Reality.

A mind which comes under the control of the intellect and surrenders to it, can reflect on these qualities of the Self and will be able to move closer to the experience of the voiceless inner world. This will help us in negating the illusion of the world of plurality and end the sufferings that the jiva undergoes in this world.

This verse gives the so-called qualities of the Self (as if). The Self is the witness, all pervading, perfect, non-dual, free, consciousness, actionless, unattached, desireless and quiet. Because of illusion, we do not understand this and search for everything in the materialistic world. We have to see the reality in the unreal.

Atma: Is the Brahman, reality, infinity, divinity. The different qualities of the Reality as explained in the scriptures and by Rshi Ashtaavakra are:

1. Sakshi: Self is a Witness: An observer without getting involved in any of the worldly transactions. Body is an equipment doing the action and the self is the Shakshi. Separate yourself from BMI.
2. Vibuh – all pervasive: The Self cannot be limited by space, time and things (gross) and which cannot be cut is all pervasiveness.
3. Purna: Perfect (as in Shanthi mantra): Self does not have differences of swagath (differences within), sajaathi (within group difference) and vijaathi (inter-group differences). Self is so full that nothing needs to be added to it or nothing can be taken out of it to render it less than infinite.
4. Eka: Self is Non dual. There is no entity other than the Self.
5. Mukta: Self has no bondage and is ever liberated
6. Consciousness: Self is the pure knowledge. Any other knowledge that we can have does not happen without pure knowledge which is the substratum.
7. Akriya: Self does not have to do any action as everything happens within it and hence it is Actionless.
8. Nispraha: Self has nothing else to desire except itself and hence is essentially desireless.
9. Asanga – Self is unattached to anything as there is no other entity that it can attach. Since it is actionless and does not have any desires, it also has no sense of possession.
10. Santah – quietude, Peace. Due to the above said qualities, Self is ever at Peace and Calm.

Once we reach this state of surrendering the mind to the intellect, we will attain a state where we will be able to treat pairs of opposites as the same (as explained in Gita Ch 2, verse 38) and eventually leading us into the state of realisation.

Bhagwad Gita: Ch 2, verse 38

**सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ 38 ॥**

*sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivaṁ pāpam avāpsyasi*

Fight for the sake of duty, treating alike happiness and distress, loss and gain, victory and defeat. Fulfilling your responsibility in this way, you will never incur sin.

Bhagwan explains in Gita: chapter 2, verse 38 that we should treat joy and sorrow, profit and loss as the same. Vijayji explained that the 1st line explains Vedanta, while the 2nd line is about Dharma.

April 19, 2023: Class 13. Summary 7

Vijayji started with the review of verses 6 to 12 during the last class to introduce us to verse 13.

The concept of this sacred scripture is to introduce us and to make us understand Kartha, bhoktha and Dhrastha.

Verse 6: In verse 6, Rshi Ashtaavakra advises us to know that *we are not the doer (kartha) and we are not the enjoyer (bhoktha)*. This doership and enjoyership are the work of the ego. As long as the ego exists, we will feel that we are the doer and the enjoyer.

Verse 7: In verse 7, he takes us a step higher and teaches us that *we are the seer of the doer and the seer of the enjoyer*. Self is the only subject and everything else is objects. The world of experience operates through the Consciousness residing within.

Verse 8: As mentioned earlier, the reason that we are not able to feel that we are the seer of the doer and enjoyer is the EGO. The ego does not allow us to go beyond its grip and binds us. We keep searching for happiness through the mind, intellect and ego. As long as the ego is the boss, we will never get out of this cycle even in a million years.

Verse 9: This ego pushes us into deep sorrow. Ego is the result of many million years of avidhya (ignorance). Once we are able to renounce this ego by the fire of knowledge, we get the supreme bliss/happiness.

Verse 10: In this verse, Rshi Ashtaavakra introduces the concept of illusion or our superimposition on the absolute reality. Due to non apprehension of the absolute reality, we misapprehend the world of experiences as real (just like seeing a snake in a rope). This illusion or imagination is called *kalpitam*. We can understand *kalpitam*, with the concept of relative reality. Relative reality is like the reflection that we see in the mirror. Even though the reflected object appears real to our eyes, it is not real.

Vijayji introduced us to the concepts of:

1. Shrshti Dhrshti Vaad: We understand the world of experience as it per our understanding (or vision).
2. Dhrshti Shrshti Vaad: As we see, so we think and understand.

Vijayji touched upon these 2 concepts with 2 examples and will elaborate on these 2 concepts in the next class. AS we understand these concepts, we will understand that the experiences in this world are temporary and short lived. We will not derive permanent and the highest bliss from this world as we are acting in this world through our available equipment of BMI and are caught by the serpent of avidhya.

Kartha (doer) – Rajas thoughts – Karma vasana

Bhoktha (enjoyer) – Tamas thoughts

Dhrshtha (seer) – Saatvic thoughts

Verse 11: *yaa matih, saa gatih*. As we see, so we become.

Verse 12: This world is *as if* an illusion. It is like the dream world, where being in the dream world, waking world is non existent. Because of this illusion, we are stuck in 3 problems in our world of experience – jiva, jagadh, jagadeeshwara. When our ego acts, we always think that jiva and jagadh are different and because of this, the absolute reality is seen as a separate entity.

Rshi Ashtaavakra explains the different qualities of this absolute reality which we also refer to as Self OR Bhagwan. The reason that these indicators or qualities are explained is to give us a picture to help us understand Bhagwan because in real terms, Bhagwan cannot be explained by any available terms.

Verse 13: Rshi Ashtaavakra explains 3 more qualities of Bhagwan in this verse. The first quality is *kutastham* which means immutable. The second quality in this verse is *bodham* which means awareness and the third quality explained in this verse is non-duality (*advaitam*). Rshi Ashtaavakra advises us to meditate on these qualities to move us from the reflected ego to the absolute reality. Since mukthi is not possible till the presence of illusion, we need to meditate on these qualities to get us out of the clutches of the *reflected ego*.

Vijayji will explain to us in detail about the Shrshti- Dhrsthi Vaadh and Dhrsti-Shrsti Vaadh and take us deeper into verse 13.

April 26, 2023: Class 14. Summary 8

We continue on the teachings of Rshi Ashtaavakra as he teaches us the techniques of understanding the Reality while asserting that we are not the doer or enjoyer but rather it is the Self that does and enjoys whatever is done in this realm of BMI. Our non-apprehension of Reality (not understanding the existence of a rope) leads us to misapprehension that we are the doer and enjoyer (misapprehending a snake instead of the rope).

In this journey of understanding the Reality, in Verse 13 Rshi Ashtaavakra explains how the perspectives from the inner and outer worlds will change our understanding of Reality.

Vijayji explained this through 2 different concepts (Vaadh).

Dhristi Shristi Vaadh: What we think about ourselves or what happens in our inner world shapes our understanding or our outlook of the world around us. As we think, so we become.

When we have a better understanding of ourselves, the changes in time, place and things outside will not affect us. A person well trained in taming the inner world will not be affected by whatever is happening in the outer world. While explaining this concept, Vijayji used the example of a disciple getting into a river to get a blanket out of the river. He later realizes that the blanket was actually a black bear which has got hold of him and does not let him go. In the same way, we are caught in the world of experiences. We let ourselves to be caught by the outer world because we thought the world is fascinating and we can indulge for some time. Our Dhristi of the world lead us into the Shristi (world of experience). Once being in the world, we understand that it is not what it looked like, but it is too late and we are already caught in it and it would not leave us....just like a bear catching the disciple and not letting him go.

This Dhristi Shristi Vaadh can also be explained as the pressure of our vasanas (causal body) leading us into the world. The stronger our worldly vasanas are, the more we are entangled in the world.

Shristi Dhristi Vaadh: This concept explains how the outer world affects our understanding and actions. Our experiences in the outer world shapes our understanding and in turn affects our inner world in terms of our thoughts and emotions. This will decide our actions in this world.

Understanding the world in terms of Space, Time and Things:

Vijayji explained how *bahyam antharam* affects our world. *Bahyam Antharam* means external and internal fluctuations (verse 13).

- Changes in space: As we move our perception from ourselves to the outer world, we can understand that there is only one space physically. Due to our limited understanding and conditioning, we have created various spaces like my body, my room, my car, my city, my country and so on which are in reality an illusion that we have been projecting in the field of PET.
- Time is created when our perception is affected by the changes and separations that happen around us.
- An example of change in things is seeing ornaments made out of gold instead of seeing the gold itself.

These separations are created by us and hence we are responsible for everything that happens inside and outside us.

What is the solution to this misapprehension of PET and projection of BMI:

- Lead an alert and vigilant life.

We should not get entangled in the Shristi – attachment to ABCs. All ABCs create an impression in us. Once we are not caught in Shristi, our vision for ABCs, space/thing/time changes and becomes clear.

The attachments that we have in this world can be removed only by consistent satsang. Once we are free from attachments through satsang, our delusions about this world also disappear.

*satsaṅgatvē nissaṅgatvaṃ
nissaṅgatvē nirmōhatvam /
nirmōhatvē niśchalatattvaṃ
niśchalatattvē jīvanmuktiḥ //*

We should understand that Meditation is not thoughtlessness. It is removing all thoughts except the 'I' thought. All the thoughts around 'I' should be removed and this will lead us to the 'I'.

Verse 13:

Pari bhavaya – understanding, mediating upon.

We have to give up all the external and internal fluctuations and the illusion that we are the EGO (reflected consciousness) and meditate upon the Brahman.

How do we identify these fluctuations and remove them: This is done through mediation. The process of meditation, as indicated already, is disturbed due to the various disturbances that arise within us and from sources outside. The meditation is the process of going from outside to inside – training our thoughts to look inward instead of outward (changing the direction of the thoughts along with quality and quantity of thoughts).

Vijayji explained the process of meditation with the teaching of Rshi Yajnavalkya in the second valli, fourth chapter of Brhadharanyaka Upanishad through the conversation between Maitreyi and Rshi Yajnavalkya.

The verses in Brhadharanyaka Upanishad explain the scenario leading to the teaching on the process of meditation as follows: When Rshi Yajnavalkya gave all his possessions to his 2 wives (Maitreyi and Kaatyayai), Maitreyi asked him as to why he is giving up all his possessions. He replied that he is going in search of immortality. Maitreyi is able to understand immediately that the wealth that was given to her will not give her immortality but will give her temporary comfort only. Hence, she asks Rshi Yajnavalkya to teach her about the means to achieve immortality and is ready to renounce the wealth given to her. Rshi Yajnavalkya teaches her the secret that we are all looking for – ways to immortality. This immortality does not mean the deathless condition of the physical body but the realization of the Self which will merge us with the Reality.

During this teaching, he teaches Maitreyi (and us) the technique of meditation. The process of meditation consists of 3 steps:

Shravan: Sit in front of the Guru and do seva (sitting in front of Guru means to be closely associated with your Guru). When Guru is pleased, Guru will answer your questions and listening to that is real shravan. Shravan can happen only in a class/satsang with Guru.

Mananam: Just like a cow chew on the grass that she accumulated in her mouth (when she gets time after work!!!), we have to reflect on all that the Guru has taught us and whatever we have listened to.

Nidhithyasan: As we contemplate on what we listened and reflected, we will get glimpses of the Reality. But this has to be done intensely. It is recommended that we have to reflect and contemplate at least 20 minutes every day for us to realize the tangible effect of meditation.

May 3, 2023: Class 15. Summary 9

Chapter 1: Verse 12: *Brhamaat samsaravaniva*:

Vijayji started the class referring to the words *Brhamaat Samsaravaniva*.

The literal meaning of these words are 'the immutable Self through our illusion appears as the limited jiva (ego) in this world'. When we hear or listen these 2 words, we think that we are considering the Self to be a jiva through illusion (resulting in *samsara*). A deep reflection and contemplation would make us understand that this is not a mere misapprehension of the Self. In the process of misapprehension through illusion, we have forgotten the great qualities of the Self.

Here are the qualities of the Self as explained in verse 12 for refreshing our learning:

The Self is:

1. Witness – meaning, the Self does not partake in any activities but is only observer. It is the illuminator and does not involve in anything that it illumines. A deeper reflection will make us understand that the Self is an observer because it has no identification with anything. It is as is.
2. All pervading – The Self pervades everything. This means that the jagadh is actually made of the Self. Just as an ornament is made of gold and cannot exist without gold, this whole world of experiences cannot exist if, theoretically, Self is removed from it.
3. Perfect – The Self is perfectly complete (or completely perfect). Nothing needs to be added to it nor does it become any less perfect if anything is taken out of it.
4. Non-dual – Since the Self pervades everything that is manifest and unmanifest, there can be no other Reality. Existence of a second Reality becomes impossible as there will be a question as to the substratum of the second Reality.
5. Ever-Free – Since the Self is non-dual, the Self has nothing else other than itself to hold on to. The Self is itself its own *alambana*. Hence, it is ever free and not dependent on anything else other than itself.
6. Consciousness – based on the above qualities, we can understand that the Self is of the nature of existence, awareness and bliss and it *nitya* (ever present).
7. Actionless – Since the Self is the base of all actions, it need not do anything as all actions are on the substratum of the Self. Just like everything in this universe is existing in space and space cannot stay anywhere else, Self, being the substratum of all actions, is termed to be actionless.
8. Unattached – When the qualities of the Self is *poorna* (Perfect) and Consciousness itself, the Self has no other entity to attach to and is ever-free and unattached.
9. Desireless – Desires are the result of *vasanas* which lead to thought and actions. The Self does not have any *vasanas* and hence cannot have desires. In a worldly explanation, we desire of something that we do not have or something that we like. Since the Self is perfect and is the base of anything and is free of likes and dislikes, there is no need for the Self to have any desires.
10. Quietude – If we summarise all the above qualities, we can conclude ourselves that the Self is ever calm (if we can develop a few of these qualities in our world of experiences, we too can be ever-calm!!!)

We are deluded that the *samsara* is real. But the *samsara* is due to karma phala and we forget to understand that it constitutes only 1/4th of our experience in this world as it does not exist in the states of dream, deep sleep and samadhi. Without this understanding, we spend all our lives trying to satisfy our desires of the 25% of our time (Aren't we wasting our entire existence trying to satisfy only 25% of our time in this world of experiences???)

Verse 13:

The key words that Vijayji explained in verse 13 are *pari bhavaya* and *Baahyam antharam*.

Pari bhavaya literally means 'to meditate upon.' Rshi Ashtaavakra advises us to meditate upon the non-dual Self transcending the illusion of the identification of the reflected ego. We should be aware of the external and internal disturbances that happen in us that will delude us to getting identified with the BMI and relate to the ABCs in this world of experiences. As long as this identification exists, ego is present and will continue to delude us that this world of experience is real. This identification is the cause of the chain reaction of:

Vasanas → Thoughts → Desires → Experiences → Actions

Rshi Ashtaavakra touches upon the concept of meditation in this verse only in the entire text. Later on (in verse 15) it will be explained that even the concept of meditation is *due to one's imperfection* as we try to identify with the Self in meditation and this sense of 'I'ness is also due to the presence of EGO. Self realisation is possible only when this thought of 'I'ness is being transcended.

Verse 14:

Ashtaavakra Gita is referred to as 'Maha Gita'. When Vijayji started verse 14, Vijayji referred to this verse as Maha Maha Gita.

In the earlier verses, Rshi Ashtaavakra explained how we are caught in the bondage due to the thoughts of doership and deservership (verses 6 and 7) and how to get rid of this bondage – destroy the forest of ignorance with faith and the fire of certitude (knowledge) – verse 8 and 9.

In this verse, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains in detail about the bondage (*dehabimaana paasena* – rope of body consciousness) that is limiting us all from Self Realisation.

We have lived trillions of lives identifying ourselves with the BMI. It is, indeed, difficult to break this identification in a few days or years. This requires intense sadhana and upasana. Sadhana and Upasana alone will not lead us to shed the bondage of body consciousness but it is the Guru's Kripa that is the most essential element that was missing in us through all these births. It is our Guru's Kripa that has brought us here to learn about Self Realisation. As Vijayji always says, "we are very fortunate to even be here in this class and nothing is an accident."

Rshi Ashtaavakra has already explained to us about the bondages of doership, deservership (enjoyership) and how to cut these bondages. Having gained this knowledge, Pujya Gurudev indicates that it is left to us to practice this or not. With Guru's Kripa, we must help ourselves and we have no other choice. As long as we leave ourselves to be caught in the Maya of ignorance (avidhya), we will be going in circles in this cycle of samsara.

Verse 15:

Vijayji explained a slokha in dhakshinamoorthi stotram where in Shri Adisankara explains that this world is a mirror. We are all lost in the reflections that we see.

In verse 15, Rshi Ashtaavakra again explains the qualities of the Self with the words *Nihanga*, *Niskriya*, *Svaprakasha* and *Niranjanah*.

- *Nihsanga* – Unattached. The Self is always contended and balanced as the Self is not driven by Vasanas.
- *Niskriya* – Actionless. The Self cannot do any actions as there is no field for the Self to act as it is the substratum for all activities (see explanation above)
- *Svaprakasha* – Self Effulgent. The Self is the absolute. A reflection, though appears similar to the original, is not the same as the absolute and will not have all the qualities that the absolute possess.
- *Niranjanah* – Pure. Again, due to the lack of vasanas, the Self is not driven into any desires, thoughts and actions and is ever pure.

In this verse, Rshi Ashtaavara explains how even meditation is a sign of bondage. As long as we are thinking that *I am meditating*, we are still bound as the identification with the subtle body is still present which is driven by the ego. Just like we are not asleep when we are trying to sleep and thinking that 'I am going to or trying to sleep', as long as we are *trying to meditate*, we are still bound by our body consciousness. We should also understand that the concept of body consciousness does not refer to the identification with the gross body, it also includes the identification with the subtle body also – Mind (*mún*), Intellect (*buddhi*), memory (*cit*), ego (*ahankara*). It is our fire of certitude (conviction that the Self is the absolute) and the sword of knowledge that we can obtain through our Guru's Kripa that will liberate us.

Finally, to conclude the class, Vijayji explained the words of Pujya Gurudev (page 34 in the book): When all thoughts are subsided, even the thought that *I am meditating* should be given up. Ego vanishes once this vanity (*I am meditating*) is given up. Give up doership that *I am meditating*. Being stuck in the result of meditation (that we will be liberated due to meditation) is the root of the problems. As per sureshvacharya – the means to transcend this bond in meditation is to follow our Guru. It is the Guru's knowledge that can kill the ego because EGO can only be destroyed by the higher power than itself who is the GURU.

May 10, 2023: Class 16. Summary 10

Verse 14: Reviewing verse 14, Vijayji reiterated how the identification with the body is a bondage and will limit us in our spiritual journey. This bondage is due to the EGO. Unless we renounce our ego, we will not be able to break this bondage.

dehabimaana paasena – rope of body consciousness – This body is an instrument and is given to us due to our vasanas and have to be used to get rid of the vasanas. Instead, we are using it in the world of experiences and in return, accumulate more vasanas than reducing it. We think we are related to the body and hence we think and act for the body.

In Brahma Jnanavali Maala, Acharya Sankara proclaims that Brahman alone is real and this universe is Mithya. Realizing this is the only sword that will cut this bondage and let us free.

ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः ।
अनेन वेद्यं सच्छास्त्रमिति वेदान्तदिण्डिमः ॥ २० ॥

*brahma satyam jaganmithya jivo brahmaiva nAparah
anena vedyam sacchAstram iti vedAntaDiNDimah–20*

Brahman is real, the universe is mithya (it cannot be categorized as either real or unreal). The jiva is Brahman itself and not different. This should be understood as the correct Sastra. This is proclaimed by Vedanta.

Verse 15:

In verse 15, Rshi Ashtaavakra gives a stunning message that even meditation, which we all use as a tool for controlling our subtle body, is also causing bondage.

Mediation creates a bondage when we meditate with the sense of “I am doing” and that “there will be a result due to the meditation”. The common result that we expect from mediation is calming our mind and transcending the subtle body and attaining realization. When we have the above result in our mind, meditation is going to tie us with the rope of bondage and instead becoming a tool, it becomes our nemesis.

Pujya Gurudev refers to Yogavashistha 5.62.24 for further reference in this regard.

सर्वगः सर्वदैवात्मा सर्वमेव च सर्वथा ।
असमाधिर्हि कोऽसौ स्यात्समाधिरपि कः स्मृतः ॥ २४ ॥

*sarvagaḥ sarvadaivātmā sarvameva ca sarvathā |
asamādirhi ko'sau syātsamādirapi kaḥ smṛtaḥ || 24 ||*

I see the all pervading and everlasting soul, in every thing and in every manner; and know not whether it be the rest or unrest on my soul, which has found both its quiet and employment, in its perpetual meditation of the Divine Spirit.

This is still a question and not the answer: When the self is all pervading and expressing as consciousness in everything at all times, what is happening in samadhi?

As per Brahma sutram: We are committing an action when we are doing – when we are engaging in activity either physically or mentally. When actions happen by themselves without our effort, it is not called as an action. Hence, when we think we are doing, it is an action committed mentally even though we do not act physically and hence, if the notion of doership and deservership exists in meditation, that becomes an action and will bound us further and further in the world of experiences instead of helping us out of it.

This does not mean that we do not do meditation. We have to renounce the sense of doership and deservership in meditation and just 'BE'. This is the only way out of the bondage. We have to start with Shraavan, Manan and Nidhityaasan in our process of meditation and should start meditating without starting with the above steps. Vijayji explained that we can attain Self realization through each of the above steps as indicated with examples in Shrimad Bhagavatham. Raja Parikshit attained Self-realization through shravanam, Arjun attained Self-realization through mananam and Rshi Uddhav attained Self-realization through Nidhityaasanam.

Verse 16:

After explaining about the nuances of meditation, Rshi Ashtaavakra proceeds to explain how the Self is all pervading and how we are part of it being that Self itself.

The first Universal law of nature is that 'the effect is the result of a cause and the cause will pervade the effect at all times.'

We have seen in the past verses that the Self is all pervading and pervades this entire Universe. Any article or being cannot exist by themselves and the Self or the Brahman or the Infinity or Divinity is the cause for everything in this Universe. Hence, the Self should also pervade them and is the substratum. In that case, the Self is the same in all articles and beings, meaning, the Self in person A, person B, article A, etc article B are the same.

Bhagwan Krishna explains in the Chapter 9, verse 4 of Bhagwad Gita that this entire cosmos is pervaded by HIM.

*मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना ।
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः ॥ ४ ॥*

*mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā
mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni na chāhaṁ teshvavasthitah*

Bhagwan says: This entire cosmic manifestation is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form. All living beings dwell in Me, but I do not dwell in them.

Applying the above rule that If Bhagwan is pervading this cosmos and is also the Self in YOU, YOU are that Self pervading the cosmos. Hence, Rshi Ashtaavakra directly indicates that it is YOU who is pervading the entire cosmos. This indicates that there was never a subject AND an object. Object is the effect of the Subject. The object is the subject in a different form. The world is for YOU and YOU created it.

A similar concept is also explained in Chapter 7, verse 7 of Bhagwad Gita:

*मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ ७ ॥*

*mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñchid asti dhanañjaya
mayi sarvam idam protam sūtre maṇi-gaṇā iva*

There is nothing higher than Myself, O Arjun. Everything rests in Me, as beads strung on a thread.

Bhagwan says that HE is the thread holding beads and without HIM, nothing exists as HE pervades all. We can conclude here that there was no world of plurality. There is no separation between jiva, jagadh jagadeeshwara. It is all HIM and indirectly, it is all YOU.

Understanding this, we should not give in to petty-mindedness. To live, act and behave as the limited EGO is truly contradicting your nature of the SELF. We should get rid of this delusory projection, gain the knowledge to end all non-apprehensions and resulting misapprehensions.

Verse 17:

In verse 17, six more qualities of the Self are indicated:

1. Nirapeksha –Unconditioned. (apeksha means wanting something). Self does not need anything as it is *Purna*.
2. Nirvikaaro – Changeless
3. Nirbhara – Dense, present everywhere.
4. Shitalaasayah – of cool disposition
5. Agaadha – Serene
6. Aksubdha – Unperturbed

These qualities are indicated as the nature of the Self. Applying the rule from verse 16, if YOU are the Self, YOU possess all these qualities too. When YOU realize that, YOU become serene, peace and calm and buddhih becomes clear and all avidhya will be removed.

In order to attain this state, YOU have to ‘Desire this Consciousness alone’ – *bhava cinmatra vaasanah*. Because, as our desires, so are our thoughts. As our thoughts, so are our actions and experiences.

Desires → Thoughts → Experiences → Actions

Chin matra vasanah: In the words of Pujya Gurudev, “If we ardently desire for direct apprehension of pure Consciousness, our thoughts will be of the Divine Self only and we shall come to experience the great grand Reality of the Universe and the life therein”.

Vijji explained that of the various vasanas, it *Chin matra vasanah* is good to have as it the vasana of desiring the consciousness alone. This vasana, while difficult to achieve, can be had only by 2 other vasanas:

- Guru bhakthi vasana and
- sastra jnana vasana

Guru bhakthi vasana: A sincere devotion and dedication to our Spiritual Guru is mandatory without which there will be no progress in our spiritual journey. It is essential that we approach our Guru with utmost sincerity and dedication and surrender ourselves in order to be ordained in our spiritual journey.

Sastra jnana vasana: When our guru imparts and teaches us the scriptures, our sastra jnana vasana will help us acquire the *vidhya* that is required to dispel our ignorance and cut down the bondage our ego.

This is a journey that we have been through for millions and millions of years. We are fortunate to be where we are in this journey and to be even part of the Ashtaavakra Gita Class. We need to strive hereforth in our journey to realize that we are the Supreme Self. May Pujya Gurudev's, Pujya Guruji's, Vijayji's and Hanumanji's blessing be with us and guide us.

Hari Aum.

May 17, 2023: Class 17. Summary 11

Hari Aum.

Ashtaavakra Gita was given to Raja Janak (and us) for the only purpose of teaching the gateway to Mukthi. Mukthi is possible only through *Viveka* and *Viveka* is possible only through *Vairagya*.

Viveka is discrimination or Jnana or Knowledge. *Vairagya* is dispassion from outer experiences of the world. We have to develop *Vairagya* to be free from any association with doership (karta), deservership or enjoyership (bhoktha) and knowership (Dhrashtha).

Verse 16:

While explaining the qualities of the Self and the ego, Rshi Ashtaavakra uses the term *ksudra-cittataam* in verse 16.

Ksudra Cittataam refers to the petty-mindedness associated with the ego. Pujya Gurudev indicates that 'To live feeling and acting as the limited ego is against our divine and infinite and true nature.' This body identification will limit our capacity to discriminate. As long as we are attached to the world of experiences and do not develop the required dispassion, we will not be even able to know the petty-mindedness that we are caught in and will be stuck in the cycle of this samsara. This is the avidhya that will lead us into the multiplicity of the world of experiences.

Verse 17:

In verse 17, Rshi Ashtaavakra thunders that 'we have to desire Consciousness alone (*bhava cinmaatra-vaasanah*). This is very crucial in our journey to realization because, *as our desires, so are our thoughts*. We cannot desire multiplicity and unity at the same time. The world of multiplicity is so powerful that it will easily distract us and pull us into its web. The irony is that we will not even know that we are caught in this web unless we are guided by our *trust triangle*.

Vijayji explained this as 4 mandatory qualifications needed for Self Realization.

Sva Krupa → Shastra Krupa → Guru Krupa → Isvara Krupa.

Unless we have the Sva Krupa (or the spiritual Vasana), we will not be able to engage in our spiritual Sadhana. The spiritual Sadhana will lead us to Shastra Krupa and once we are able to complete these 2 steps, our Guru will find us (Guru Krupa) and will leads us to Brahman (Isvara Krupa).

Having explained about ego and the qualities of the Self in the previous verses, Rshi Ashtaavakra proceeds to explain the steps to perceive this Self in ourselves. He uses 3 different theories to explain this. We have to reflect deeply on these theories as these theories form the essence of the questions raised by Bhagwan Shiva in the form of a *Chandaala* in *Maneesha Panchakam*.

Maneesha Panchakam:

Verse 1:

अन्नमयादन्नमयमथवा चैतन्यमेवचैतन्यात्
यतिवर दूरीकर्तुम् वाञ्छसि किम् ब्रूहि गच्छ गच्छेति
Annamayādannamayamathavā caitanyamevacaitanyāt
Yativara dūrīkartum vāṃchasi kim brūhi gaccha gaccheti

The Chandala questions: O great among the twice-born! What is it that you want to move away by saying, "Go, go"? Do you want the body made up of food to move away from another body made up of food? Or do you want consciousness to move away from consciousness?

Verse 2:

*किम् गंगाम्बुधि बिंबितेम्बर मणौ चंडाल वीधी पयः
पूरेवा अन्तरमस्ति कांचनघटी मृत्कुम्भयोर्वांबरे?
प्रत्यगवस्तुनि निस्तरन्ग सहजानन्दावबोधाम्बुधौ
विप्रोयम् क्षपचोयमित्यपि महान् को यम् विभेद भ्रमः*

*Kim gaṅgāmbudhi bimbitembara maṇau caṇḍāla vīdhī payah
Pūrevā antaramasti kāṇcanaghaṭī mṛtkumbhayorvāmbare?
Pratyagvastuni nistaranga sahaṇānandāvabodhāmbudhau
Viproyam śvapacoyamityapi mahān ko yam vibheda bhramah*

Is there any difference between the reflection of the sun in the waters of the Ganga and its reflection in the water in a ditch in the quarters of the outcastes? Or between the space in a gold pot and in a mud pot? What is this illusion of difference in the form, "This is a Brahmana and this is an outcaste" in the indwelling self which is the ripple-free ocean of bliss and pure consciousness?

Verse 18:

In verse 18, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains the **THEORY OF APPEARANCES (Aabhasa Vaadha)**.

Rshi Ashtaavakra reminds us in this verse that 'anything that has a form is false. Brahman is formless and hence is changeless.' We are assured in this verse that, if we are able to attain this knowledge of the falseness of the perceived forms, it will lead us to realizing the Brahman to be formless and changeless, and we are sure to attain Mukthi. This theory is called *Aabhasa Vaadha*. Sureshvaracharya explains *Aabhasa Vaadha* as the illusory appearance of the individual soul and is merely a projection of the all intelligent and all pervading Brahman. This illusory appearance will make our sense of doership stronger, and we will be believing the unreal world as real forgetting the very substratum in this world of appearances – the Brahman.

Reflection from Maneesha Panchakam:

As we can see from the explanation on the questions by the Chandaala, the appearances lead us to the differentiation of forms, and we label them according to our mental makeup. In the commentary on this question by the Chandaala, Pujya Gurudev explains that, if we can realize that the inner-core essence, the Self, as the one without any form and with no ripples of thoughts and is of the nature of eternal bliss, there can be no distinction between a Brahmana and Dog-eater (Chandaala).

Verse 19: THEORY OF REFLECTION – Prathibimba Vaadha.

The theory of appearances leads us to the theory of reflection.

Rshi Ashtaavakra explains that the Self exists inside and outside the body (or the world of experiences) just as a mirror exists inside and outside the reflected image in it.

The eternal Self is present within and without. In reality, this concept of within and without is also an imagination as it is present only from the perspective of an individual's body awareness. When the body is not perceived (as in deep sleep), the concepts of within and without does not exist.

The reflection in a mirror does not have any existence apart from the mirror. The mirror exists even without any reflections. Similarly, the Consciousness will exist even if does not reflect in the gross, subtle and causal bodies. Hence, we can understand that our identification with the world of experiences is only our illusion and that this is our superimposition (or reflection) on the real (just as we superimpose the nonexistent ghost on the post). *Jiva, Jagat and Isvara* are different manifestations of the infinite Consciousness perceived (or reflected) from various perspectives. Failure to understand this theory of reflection leads us to being the enjoyer (*bhoktha bhava*).

Reflection from Maneesha Panchakam:

Referring to the reflection theory, the Chandaala asks Bhagwan Sankara (and his disciples and all of us) if there is any difference to the Sun (and its rays) depending on the surface upon which it is reflecting (or illuminating). The reflecting surface can be the pure holy waters of Mother Ganga or filthy stagnant waters on the roadside, but the Sun remains the same and is never affected by the surfaces that it shines on. The reflections, of course, will depend on the surface – pure reflection can be perceived from the pure water of Mother Ganga and a muffled reflection from the filthy waters. Similarly, the Consciousness reflected from a Saatvic mind is the Saatvic Individual and from a Tamasic Mind is the Tamasic individual, but the absolute Consciousness is never changing.

Verse 20: THEORY OF SEPARATION or CONDITIONING THEORY or *Avacchedha Vaadha* or THEORY OF LIMITATION:

After explaining the *Pratibimba Vaadha*, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains the quality of the immutable Brahman through the *Theory of Conditioning*. Just as the mirror exists within and without, the space is the same both within a pot or outside a pot. There is no distinction between the spaces inside and outside. It is perceived as 2 different spaces only when observed through the conditioning of the pot. Again, this conditioning is only due to our identification with the matter envelopments because the space within and outside the pot is the same. As long as we identify with the pot (body), there exists different spaces (*Jiva, Jagat and Isvara*). Once this identification is broken or negated, the entire space is one without any distinction. Similarly, when we are able to realize that the Self is the substratum for all (Diversity in Unity - Bhagwad Gita Chapter 11) and all are manifestations of the immutable Self (Unity in Diversity - Bhagwad Gita Chapter 10), we will be able to see the one Self in all without any matter identifications. Just like the Sun's rays, the space is not affected by the conditionings of the pot.

Reflection from Maneesha Panchakam:

While posing this question, the Chandaala asks if there is any difference between the space in a gold pot or a mud pot? This is reference to indicate that the difference is only in the material, size, shape, color etc. of the pots but the space is one and the same everywhere. Also, space can never be conditioned by anything that exists in that space. Similarly, the Self is ever Immaculate in everyone and everything and there is not REAL difference at all. The difference is due to our petty-mindedness (identification with the world of experiences).

The various examples of mirror, sun's rays, space in the pot and the like are given in the scripture to help us understand and differentiate the unreal and turn our focus to the Real. This change in direction of our thought and attitude will help in our Sadhana and in our journey. Because, at present, we are lost in our

avidhya of the world of plurality. This can be burnt only by the *Viveka* of the true Self and the *Vairagya* from all the world of plurality – Articles, Beings and Circumstances.

Vijayji explained that the real problem that exists in us in the doership and enjoyership (and knowership). The action (karma) does not itself pose any issues but it is the attitude that 'I am the doer, I am enjoyer and I am the knower' that binds us in this pluralistic world. Vijayji explained that we have to do karma in the bhaava that we are doing all for Bhagwan and he is alone the enjoyer and not us. Vijayji advises to do live for someone else's sankalpa. This will be a great way to eliminate enjoyership. With this attitude, things will just happen and we do not need to do anything.

Reflection adventure for the summer:

Reflect on 'If we are identifying with the screen or the forms projecting on the screen.' JUST BE renouncing the karta bhaava (and thereby the bhoktha and dhrashta bhaava).

Hari Aum.

Semester 2:

September 20 2023: Class 18. Summary 12

Hari Aum.

While Ashtavakra Gita explains the Self and Witness principle, Pujya Gurudev has written in general introduction that Ashtavakra Gita does not allow to accept personal God. The concept is higher than personification of God and is about understanding the principle of Self-Liberation.

Vijayji started semester 2 explaining the meaning of Vanaprastha Culture/Ashrama.

Meaning of Vanaprastha Culture/Ashrama:

Vanaprastha Ashrama, the 3rd of the 4 ashramas, does not just mean refraining from luxury living and residing in a forest or living where no amenities are available.

It means a lifestyle of contentment – which involves simple living, high thinking, introspection, maximizing our thoughts to understand the nature of God and who we are.

It means that we are not to be involved in worldly duties or responsibilities (in this ashrama) and a rigorous change in our physical and mental states is required.

Meaning of the name/term Ashtavakra:

Vijayji gave a new perspective to the term/name Ashtavakra:. It can be understood as the presence of 8 crookedness or vices (*Ashta Vakra*) OR the absence of 8 crookedness or vices (*Asht Avakra*). We all have atleast 8 vices that we have to work on getting rid of and become Ash Avakra.

Ashtavakra also means the manifestations from a seed - Asht – Seed, Vakra – manifestation from seed.

Vijayji reviewed verse 1 to 10 in this first class of semester 2:

Verse 1: Raja Janaka asks Rshi Astavakra: *Please teach me 'how knowledge can be acquired? How Liberation can come? And How renunciation can be achieved?'*.

These questions are very significant as they form the source of dispelling our ignorance as Rshi Astavakra answers these questions and in the process is enriching us with knowledge to remove our mis-apprehensions and thereby our non-apprehension.

The deeper meaning of these questions can be broken down as:

- How are we to withdraw our consciousness from our equipments (BMI)?
- How are we to experience the infinitude of the Self?

When distilling these questions further, the essence/indicative meaning of all the 3 questions is '*how permanent happiness is achieved?*' We can imply from this deeper reflection that there is no other reason for living except achieving permanent happiness (Adhyanthik Sukh praapthi, Adhyanthik dukh nivarthi).

Verse 2:

Rshi Astavakra answers: *Liberation can be achieved by rejecting the sense objects as poison and by seeking (and following), as nectar, the virtues of forgiveness, straightforwardness, kindness, cheerfulness and truth.*

Rshi Astavakra refers to the sense objects as poison (and later on will mention that the ego is a serpent). Rejecting the sense objects is referred to as 'Dhaama'. We have to reject the poison (sense objects) and taste the nectar (5 virtues referred above).

We all need to be self-inspired in order to take this path of knowledge toward self-realization.

Verse 3: In verse 3, Rshi Astavakra takes the style of negation to indicate 'what we are not?'

He says that we are neither the earth, nor water, not fire, nor air, nor space – 5 elements. We have to understand that the Self is only a witness to all that happens in the body and that the body is an embodiment of pure consciousness.

Even though our body is made up of the 5 elements, we are not the 5 elements. Through meditation, when we withdraw our identifications to BMI, we can be drawn towards the inward stillness while uplifting to the pure consciousness. The Self is but a witness to these elements.

This concept is explained in In Bhagwad Gita Chapter 7, verses 4 and 5. Bhagwan explains the higher and lower prakriti which form the entire world of matter and Spirit.

In verse 4, Bhagwan explains these as the lower Prakriti (Bhagwan includes mind, intellect and ego in addition to the 5 elements to the list of lower Prakriti) and in verse 5, Bhagwan explains that the VERY LIFE ELEMENT by which this world is upheld forms the higher Prakriti.

*bhūmir-āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ kham mano buddhir eva cha
ahankāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā (7.4)*

Earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect, and ego—these are My eight fold PRAKRITI.

*apareyam itas tvanyāṁ prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho yayedāṁ dhāryate jagat*

This is the lower prakriti; different from it, know thou, O-mighty armed, My Higher Prakriti, the very Life element, by which this world is upheld.

Verse 4:

Rshi Ashtavakra gives the essential reason to detach us from these identifications. He says: *When we detach from BMI and abide in Consciousness, we will attain peace, be happy and will be free from bondage (liberation).*

We can note that peace, happiness and free of bondage are the nature of the Self and if we can only be free of the identifications, we can realize that we are the Self.

Vijayji explained that our problems started with our body identification. We should know that WE are different from the BMI. If we identify with the BMI, all the secondary identifications associated with the BMI will follow binding us with the liabilities associated with the BMI (see verse 5 below).

Verse 5:

Not only do we identify ourselves with the BMI, but we also relate ourselves to the external world and consider us to be someone/something which we are not. Rshi Astavakra clarifies: *We do not belong to any caste (body) nor any ashrama (mind or intellect). We (as in Atman) cannot be perceived by the senses. We are the unattached and formless witness and hence, be happy.*

Ashramas are not based on age, but it is the attitude of the mind.

Attitude of the mind + relationship of the mind with the world = Ashramas

When we identify with our body, we are associated with everything that is related to the body. Disassociate with the body and be happy.

Verse 6:

We are all relating to our emotions and thoughts. Rshi Astavakra says: *Virtues and vices, happiness and sorrow are attributes of the mind and does not belong to the Self. We are not the doer, nor the enjoyer. We are the ever-free Atman.*

Ego + outer world = Doership

Ego + inner world = Deservership

Ego + Doer = Virtues and Vices

Ego + Enjoyer (deserver) = Happiness and sorrow

Ego + Intellect = Doership, virtues and vices

Ego + Mind = Deservership (enjoyer), happiness and sorrows.

Verse 7:

Rshi Ashtavakra stresses that *we are the ONE SEER of all and that WE ARE ALREADY FREE. Our bondage is because we do not realize that we are the Seer but as something else (BMI).*

Verse 8: Verse 8 introduces the concept of *ego* which is the *doership*.

Our problem is that we think we are the doer of every action. This solidifies the Ego. More we think as doer, more vasanas are collected and ego gets solidified.

The ahankara (ego) is like a black serpent which is the problem between the seen and seer. To solve it, we need to have the FAITH that we are not the doer and once we get established in this understanding, this serpent will not affect us.

Remedy from this Ego is renunciation.

Verse 9: In verse 9, we can understand what happens once this ego is burnt down. *Once the ego (ignorance) is burnt down with the fire of certitude (that I am the pure Consciousness), we can discard all grief and be happy.*

Ego + senses = Beasts of prey

Ignorance = reason for us to be lost (not knowing the direction to proceed)

Once we obtain the Knowledge, our mind and intellect will become calmer and thereby we can direct ourselves to the spiritual peace. This is the serene intellect that Vedanta is teaching us all through.

Conscious of objects = Knowledge of objects.

Consciousness devoid of objects = Pure knowledge (vishuddha bhuddhi).

Once we establish ourselves in this pure Knowledge, we will be able to burn down the forest of ignorance.

Verse 10:

In order to ascertain the knowledge about one seer and one consciousness, verse 10 introduces us to the most famous example used in our shastras to explain the concept of illusion or projection – Snake and Rope.

When we see a rope in darkness, we do not comprehend that this is a rope. This non apprehension leads us to the misapprehension of the rope to be a snake. We project a nonexistent snake on the real rope. The snake was never real. In our avidhya of the rope, we project a snake on the rope.

This illusion or projection of non-real on the one Reality is the cause of all sorrows. We project the nonexistent ABCs on the one Reality and live a life of fear and sorrow. The only solution to end this misapprehension of snake (plurality) that happened due to non-apprehension (of Reality) is through the Knowledge of the Reality (that I am the Subject and there was never another Seer).

September 27, 2023: Class 19. Summary 13

Hari Aum.

Vijayji continued summarizing and reviewing verses 10 to 20 of Ashtavakra Gita which, in essence, is the theory of superimposition.

Verse 10:

Building on the example of rope and snake and explaining the theory of superimposition, Vijayji explained the different *bhaava* that we assume during the process of superimposition. During the superimposition of the snake on rope, we assume 3 processes happen simultaneously (apprehension, misapprehension, false apprehension) and we assume 3 different roles: Doership, enjoyership and knowership. These are called knots of heart - *hrdaya granti*.

1. When rope is not known – karta is born - doership
2. When snake is perceived – bhoktha is born – enjoyership (because we are expecting something from the visual)
3. When the above happen – knower is born

Verse 11:

In verse 11, Rshi Ashtaavakra is making us understand that “As we think, so we become.” If our goal is to attain the knowledge and end our illusion of the world of plurality, we have to start think correctly, associate with people correctly, and collect the correct objects. This will enable us to become what we think.

In order to break this illusion, we have to understand the concepts of mind and intellect. As long as the mind controls the intellect, we will not be able to gain the knowledge to grow out of the illusion of the world of plurality. Hence, controlling and taming the mind becomes all the more important.

Verse 12:

In verse 12, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains the qualities of the reality with the available finite words that are available. This is the process by which scriptures explain Reality to us as no finite words can explain Reality or Bhagwan. These finite words and qualities even though do not explain Reality, they lift our mind and intellect to the realm closer to Reality.

A mind which comes under the control of the intellect and surrenders to it, can reflect on these qualities of the Self and will be able to move closer to the experience of the voiceless inner world. This will help us in negating the illusion of the world of plurality and end the sufferings that the jiva undergoes in this world.

This verse gives the so-called qualities of the Self (as if). The Self is the witness, all pervading, perfect, non-dual, free, consciousness, actionless, unattached, desireless and quiet. Because of illusion, we do not understand this and search for everything in the materialistic world. We have to see the reality in the unreal.

Verse 13:

Rshi Ashtaavakra explains 3 more qualities of Bhagwan in this verse. The first quality is *kutastham* which means immutable. The second quality in this verse is *bodham* which means awareness and the third

quality explained in this verse is non-duality (*advaitam*). Rshi Ashtaavakra advises us to meditate on these qualities to move us from the reflected ego to the absolute reality. Since mukthi is not possible till the presence of illusion, we need to meditate on these qualities to get us out of the clutches of the *reflected ego*.

Vasanas → Thoughts → Desires → Experiences → Actions

Verse 14:

In this verse, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains in detail about the bondage (*dehabimaana paasena* – rope of body consciousness) that is limiting us all from Self Realisation.

We have lived trillions of lives identifying ourselves with the BMI. It is, indeed, difficult to break this identification in a few days or years. This requires intense sadhana and upasana and Guru Kripa. With all these 3 tools, we will gain the sword of knowledge to cut asunder the rope that bounds us.

Verse 15:

In verse 15, Rshi Ashtaavakra again explains the qualities of the Self with the words *Nihsanga*, *Niskriya*, *Svaprakasha* and *Niranjanah*.

- *Nihsanga* – Unattached.
- *Niskriya* – Actionless.
- *Svaprakasha* – Self Effulgent.
- *Niranjanah* – Pure.

In this verse, Rshi Ashtaavara explains how even mediation is a sign of bondage. As long as we are thinking that *I am meditating*, we are still bound as the identification with the subtle body is still present which is driven by the ego. Just like we are not asleep when we are trying to sleep and thinking that 'I am going to or trying to sleep', as long as we are *trying to meditate*, we are still bound by our body consciousness. We are unbound, actionless, self-illuminating, spotless. The cause of bondage is we are practicing meditation – as a verb.

Verse 16:

If Bhagwan is pervading this cosmos and is also the Self in YOU, YOU are that Self pervading the cosmos. Hence, Rshi Ashtaavakra directly indicates that it is YOU who is pervading the entire cosmos. This indicates that there was never a subject AND an object. Object is the effect of the Subject. The object is the subject in a different form.

Ksudra Cittataam refers to the petty-mindedness associated with the ego. Pujya Gurudev indicates that 'To live feeling and acting as the limited ego is against our divine and infinite and true nature.' This body identification will limit our capacity to discriminate. As long as we are attached to the world of experiences and do not develop the required dispassion, we will not be even able to know the petty-mindedness that we are caught in and will be stuck in the cycle of this samsara. This is the avidhya that will lead us into the multiplicity of the world of experiences.

Verse 17:

In verse 17, six more qualities of the Self are indicated:

1. Nirapeksha – Unconditioned.
2. Nirvikaaro – Changeless

3. Nirbhara – Dense, present everywhere.
4. Shitalaasayah – of cool disposition
5. Agaadha – Serene
6. Aksubdha – Unperturbed

In order to attain this state, YOU have to ‘Desire this Consciousness alone’ – *bhava cinmatra vaasanah*. Because, as our desires, so are our thoughts. As our thoughts, so are our actions and experiences.

Desires → Thoughts → Experiences → Actions

Vijayji explained 3 different types of mumukshutvam:

1. theevira mumukshutvam – who do not want anything else other than liberation
2. Mandha mumukshutvam – enjoy world and also desire liberation
3. Athi mandha mumukshutvam – involved in worldly activities and will desire liberation if time permits.

Verse 18:

In verse 18, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains the **THEORY OF APPEARANCES (*Aabhasa Vaadha*)**.

Rshi Ashtaavakra reminds us in this verse that ‘anything that has a form is false. Brahman is formless and hence is changeless.’ We are assured in this verse that, if we are able to attain this knowledge of the falseness of the perceived forms, it will lead us to realizing the Brahman to be formless and changeless, and we are sure to attain Mukthi. This theory is called *Aabhasa Vaadha*.

Verse 19: THEORY OF REFLECTION – *Prathibimba Vaadha*.

The theory of appearances leads us to the theory of reflection.

Rshi Ashtaavakra explains that the Self exists inside and outside the body (or the world of experiences) just as a mirror exists inside and outside the reflected image in it.

The eternal Self is present within and without. In reality, this concept of within and without is also an imagination as it is present only from the perspective of an individual’s body awareness. When the body is not perceived (as in deep sleep), the concepts of within and without do not exist.

Verse 20: THEORY OF SEPARATION or CONDITIONING THEORY or *Avacchedha Vaadha* or THEORY OF LIMITATION:

After explaining the *Pratibimba Vaadha*, Rshi Ashtaavakra explains the quality of the immutable Brahman through the *Theory of Conditioning*. Just as the mirror exists within and without, the space is the same both within a pot or outside a pot. There is no distinction between the spaces inside and outside. It is perceived as 2 different spaces only when observed through the conditioning of the pot. Again, this conditioning is only due to our identification with the matter envelopments because the space within and outside the pot is the same. As long as we identify with the pot (body), there exists different spaces (Jiva, Jagat and Isvara). Once this identification is broken or negated, the entire space is one without any distinction.

Vijayji concluded the class by explaining about 2 different concepts:

- Vivartha Vaadha – non duality
- Parinaama Vaadha – result of transformation.

End of Chapter 1 of Ashtaavakra Gita.