

## Ashtaavakra Gita – Chapter 2

### October 4, 2023: Class 20. Summary 14

Hari Aum.

Vijayji started the second chapter of Ashtavakra Gita today which is titled *The Marvellous Self*.

In the introduction to this chapter, Pujya Gurudev explains that the incomprehensibility of an experience renders it a wonder to the human mind because the intellect is not able to decode it. When the intellect is able to comprehend and understand a concept, that concept is no more a wonder. The experience of the Self is such a wonder because of its uniqueness and being an experience beyond the intellect. When the intellect transcends the logic of explanation, it is able to see the entire world around as an illusion and extension of the very Self that is within and passes through an experience of amazement.

In this chapter, King Janaka, having been awakened to this realm of enlightenment, is able to express this wonderment with striking examples.

#### **Chapter 2, Verse 1:**

King Janaka is explaining how he has understood the nature of this Self and how he has wasted his days bewildered in Delusion (*moha*).

King Janaka exclaims that he is able to understand that the Self is taintless (*niranjanah*), Serene (*Santah*), of the nature of pure Consciousness (*bodhah*) and is beyond matter (*prakrteh parah*).

When we reach that state of Realization, just like King Janaka did upon contemplating the words of his Guru, Rshi Ashtavakra, we would be able to regret the time that we wasted in our past when we lived a life of illusion and delusion and being bound to the BMI. This *Moha* is due to the fact that, as an individualized Ego, we were always striving to go behind sense pursuits and seeking in them the satisfaction and happiness (which the sense objects never possessed and never gave) and thus lived in sorrow and pain for trillions of years. This delusion streams forth from our identification with the BMI and this is the job of the Ego – to bind us to this delusion.

Rshi Ashtavakra strikes a strong note here that Self is the only cause of everything and is the illuminator of both matter (Prakriti) and Spirit (Purusha).

Let us work to come out of this *moha* by disidentifying ourselves from the BMI.

## October 11, 2023: Class 21. Summary 15

Hari Aum.

### Review of verse 1:

Shri Vijayji started the last class by reviewing verse 1 of chapter 2. Raja Janaka starts chapter 2 by exclaiming how he has spent his entire life caught in delusion. The delusion that Raja Janaka is referring to is the identification with the body, mind and intellect (BMI). We are all caught in this cycle of identification wherein we think we are the body, mind and intellect. This attachment is the result of the Ego which causes agitations in our mind. We do not realise that we are the Self due to our limited Ego.

Raja Janaka exclaims in the state of understanding that he is not the BMI but the Self and, in the process, explains the nature of the one and the only Self.

He says that the Self:

- Is *taintless (niranjahah)* because the self is beyond Vasanas
- Is *serene (santih)* because the Self is beyond the agitation causing Ego/Mind/Intellect
- Is *beyond matter (prakrteh parah)*
- Is the nature of *pure consciousness (bodhah)*

We have to note that Raja Janaka is already a realised master and if he says that he has wasted his life in delusion, we have to introspect ourselves and should realise where we are and what we have to do come out of this samsara.

Because of the misidentification with the BMI, we seek satisfaction and happiness in worldly OET (Objects, emotions and thoughts) and not obtaining what we want from OET, we are agitated and frustrated and are in constant search of the permanent peace and happiness.

Ego → Identification with BMI → Delusion → Agitations

Breaking this cycle of ego and vasanas is the key to come out of the samsara.

### Verse 2:

Continuing on his revelation about the Self, Raja Janaka continues to exclaim that he understands that it is the Self that illumines the body and the entire Universe. In this verse, by stating that '*I illumine this body and the universe and everything is Mine*', he clearly makes us understand that *the I and Self are not different entities and the Self that illumines the body is the same as the Self that illumines the entire universe and that there is no second Self*.

Since matter does not have any life of its own and is only an equipment, it needs a life spark to function. The BMI, which are nothing other than matter, are only equipments. We experience all perceptions (through body), emotions (through mind) and thoughts (through intellect) due to the presence of Consciousness. Without Consciousness, matter is inert and cannot function on its own.

The statement, *the Consciousness illumines this world of objects*, will also result in the delusion of the pluralistic world. To negate this thought, Raja Janaka immediately states that *Nothing is mine*. This can be viewed from the state of non-dual Self indicating that there is no plurality and therefore it is the Self everywhere. Pujya Gurudev explains this in the last paragraph of the chapter that *The Self as Consciousness (Cit) illumines the plurality and as Existence (Sat) is the very substratum for the entire Universe*.

## October 18, 2023: Class 22. Summary 16

Hari Aum

Shri Vijayji started the class today by reviewing Verse 2 of Chapter 2 of Ashtaavakra Gita.

### Verse 2 review:

In verse 2, Raja Janaka reminds us that it is the one Consciousness that illumines the individual equipments (BMI) and the entire Universe.

This concept of one Consciousness illumining the entire Jagath is also explained in Shiva Gita in Ram Charith Manasa.

*Bhagwan Shiva is explaining to Mother Parvathi as below:*

*सुनु गिरिराज कुमारी, भ्रम तम रबि कर बचन मम॥115॥*

*MEANING : O PARVATI, TO DISPEL DARKNESS, LISTEN MY WORDS, IT IS LIKE SUN RAYS WHICH SHALL CLEAR YOUR DOUBTS.*

*Bhagwan Shiva says:*

*बिषय करन सुर जीव समेता। सकल एक तें एक सचेता॥*

*सब कर परम प्रकासक जोई। राम अनादि अवधपति सोई॥३॥*

*SENSE OBJECTS, SENSES & THEIR ILLUMINING POWERS, JEEVATMA, ALL ARE ILLUMINED BY ONE CHETNA - ONE CONSCIOUSNESS WHO IS BORN AS RAM, KING OF AYODHYA WHO HE IS BRAHMAN.*

The same concept is explained by Bhagwan in his own words in Srimad Bhagwad Gita, Chapter 9, Verse 4:

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

*The entire cosmic manifestation is pervaded by Me in My unmanifest form. All living beings' dwell in Me, but I do not dwell in them.*

Even though we read and recite the above slokhas, we are not able to get the entire grasp of what is said. The majority of us do not believe it and even if we believe it, we are not ready to live it. We understand Advaita philosophy but live in Parinaama Vaadha. We still think that the world and the transactions are real and are caught in the assumed plurality of the Universe.

### Verse 3:

In the third verse, Raja Janaka gives us a means to Liberation. He says that having abandoned the Universe together with the BMI and guided by a Guru, he himself has perceived the Supreme Self – meaning, He has been Self Realised.

While the previous 2 verses paint the nature of the Self, in this verse, he hints on how to get to the state of the Supreme Self.

The first step would be to understand that we are the limited Ego. Due to the Ego:

- this Universe exists for us, and we have taken this birth,
- We are aware of the equipments of BMI,
- We are aware of the experiences through the BMI.

As we are in this journey, we wonder about the state of that Supreme Self. Pujya Gurudev clearly explains to us that we cannot experience Self as a State or as something other than ourselves (this is the common experience that we are aware of.....we experience objects while being the subject) but we transcend the world of duality (or plurality!!) and realise that experienter and the experienced are One and the Same.

Since, Self is not a state or realm of experience, no sadhana can take us there. This leads us to the question of what we are to do to experience the Self. What is the purpose of all the religious practices and all other Sadhana that we do?

Through Raja Janaka's statements, we can understand that the only process to this experience of Self is to annihilate the Ego. All Sadhana are one of the steps towards this annihilation. Through religious practices and knowledge of the scriptures (and other Sadhana), the mind's agitation decreases and intellect becomes steadier and clearer. When these 2 stages are achieved, we transcend the mind and intellect. This will lead us to annihilate the ego. Once Ego is lifted, The Reality will be revealed.

Acharyaji gave an example of a glass vase with 3 sides with water inside. The 3 walls are the mind, memory and intellect containing the Ego within. If we can break one of the walls, the ego will not be able to stay within. Though sounding simple, this cannot be achieved by our practice alone. Raja Janaka is quick to indicate this is possible only with the dexterity (skill) of a Teacher. With devotion and Sewa (Sva Kripa), we need to surrender ourselves at the feet of the Guru (Guru Kripa) who will be able to guide us with the scriptures (Sashtra Kripa) to Bhagwan (with Ishvara Kripa).

Hari Aum.

## October 25, 2023: Class 23. Summary 17

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Iswar Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Astavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji completed verse 4 of Chapter 2 on October 25, 2023 and this was class 23.

Raja Janaka starts this chapter by enumerating the nature of the Self (Supreme Brahman) and that he has wasted his life so far without knowing this and being in delusion (that Anatma is Atma).

In verse 2, he declares that the One Self illumines the equipments of experience (BMI) and the entire Universe. This Self is not some other object that he is talking about but the living Principle in ourselves (The Subject). Since the living Principle in BMI and the Universe are the same, he equates that the body and Universe are no different.

In verse 3, Raja Janaka explains how this One Self can be perceived. The process involves quietening our mind and intellect. Because, when the mind and intellect are quietened or transcended, Ego fails to exist. It is with the mind and intellect that we perceive the entire work of experience. Hence, when the mind and intellect are transcended, there are no equipments to perceive the experience and hence the Ego does not have any substratum to exist. Raja Janaka also says that this cannot be achieved by our Sadhana only but has to be guided by a Guru. A guru can take us to the realm of the Self as the Guru will understand the state of the student, being a student themselves in the past.

### Verse 4:

As if understanding our ignorance in understanding the Self, Raja Janaka explains it with the example of water, ocean and waves. Even though there are numerous waves present in the ocean, the nature of both the ocean and the waves is nothing but water. Ocean and waves are different forms of water. In other words, the ocean and waves are the 'effect' and the water is the 'cause'. Since the effect cannot exist without a cause, the ocean and waves cannot exist without the water. Similarly, Self is the cause of everything in this Universe. Since, the Universe is an effect and Self being the cause, we can understand that the Universe (and all the field of experiences and the equipments) is Self in a different form.

We are trying to understand this with our limited intellect and hence we are deluded. Once the mind and intellect are transcended, Self will unveil itself. This is explained by the term 'trans-intellect' by Gurudev.

While answering a question in the class regarding the process by which Maya can be transcended, Shri Vijayji described Maya as a deluding power that cannot be explained by words (*avyaktanamni*) and is a power of the Ishvara (*paramesa-saktih*). In Vivekachudamani, Adi Sankaracharyaji explains the concept of Maya in verses 108-110. *Maya is the unmanifest and the power of the Lord (verse 108). It is neither existent nor non-existent nor both (verse 109). By realisation of the pure-non-dual Brahman, Maya can be destroyed.*

**Connecting this to our learning from the class, Maya can be destroyed by knowledge of the Brahman (Self) while Brahman is realised by transcending the mind and intellect through the guidance of a Guru.**

Hari Aum.

## November 1, 2023: Class 24. Summary 18

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Astavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji completed verse 5 of Chapter 2 on November 1, 2023 and this was class 24.

In the previous classes Shri Vijayji explained to us how Raja Janaka was reveling in the joy of discrimination (Self-Realization) and by transcending the intellect, he is able to just BE as Self is not something that can be attained through our intellectual faculties of logic and reasoning.

In verse 2, Raja Janaka declares that the One Self illumines the equipments of experience (BMI) and the entire Universe. In verse 3, Raja Janaka explains this One Self can be perceived by quietening our mind and intellect.

Raja Janaka continues to explain this using 3 examples in the next 3 verses.

### Review of Verse 4:

The first example was about the waves, ocean and water. Just as waves, foam and bubbles are water only, all manifestations are different forms of the One Reality. Even though the manifestations of the effects are different, the cause is one and the same. Even though the world gives us the illusion of plurality, it is the One Self in different forms.

Shri Vijayji explained this concept through a famous hindi verse:

*जल में कुंभ, कुंभ में जल है, बाहर भीतर पानी।  
फूटा कुंभ, जल जल ही समाया, यही तथ्य कथ्यो ज्ञानी।*

*JAL = WATER, KUMBH = POT*

*JAL MAIN KUMBH = POT IS IN THE WATER*

*KUMBH MAIN JAL = WATER IS INSIDE THE POT*

*BAHAR BHEETAR PANI = WATER IS INSIDE & OUTSIDE THE POT.*

*PHOOTA KUMBH = WHEN POT IS BROKEN*

*JAL JAL HI SAMAYA = WATER INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ARE THE SAME. THERE WERE NEVER 2 DIFFERENT ENTITIES OF WATER.*

*YAHY TATHYA KATHYO JNANI = THIS FACT ONLY REALIZED BY LEARNED PEOPLE.*

### Verse 5: Metaphor of Cloth/thread.

In verse 5 of Chapter 2, Raja Janaka explains this concept of One Self being the cause of the world of experience (BMI) and being the substratum of all with another example of thread and cloth.

All clothes are made up of individual threads. But when we see a piece of cloth, we do not appreciate the thread in the cloth and even forget that the cloth is made of thread. This is due to our ignorance (avidhya). Puja Gurudev explains that we need discriminative thinking in order to understand this.

The reason that this ignorance arises in us is because we analyze everything from an intellectual standpoint. We are rooted in body consciousness and try to comprehend Reality with our intellect. This is the reason Raja Janaka says that he is able to appreciate the Self having ***transcended the Intellect***.

Pujya Gurudev explains the reason for our ignorance of the Reality:

1. Because we view everything from a **Utility standpoint**.
2. We take the world of plurality for its **face value**.
3. Due to stress **in Consciousness**, a thought is created → delusory expression of mind → we see the names and forms projected on Consciousness.

How are we to come out of this cycle? Pujya Gurudev further explains:

By deep meditation → Relinquish the stresses that cause illusion and delusion → thoughts cease → Mind is lifted → All hallucinations roll away.

In order to achieve these, Shri Vijayji advised us to start with our sadhana of Shravanam, Mananam, Nidhidyasanam. Once practiced sincerely, these will move us to the next level in our quest of Self-Realization.

Hari Aum.

## November 8, 2023: Class 25. Summary 19

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Astavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji completed verse 6 of Chapter 2 on November 8, 2023, and this was class 25.

In verse 1, Raja Janaka exclaims in ascharya on how he has wasted his days in delusion without knowing the Self and goes on to enumerate the nature of the Self as taintless, serene, pure and beyond nature.

In verse 2, Raja Janaka declares that the Self is the one and the same in the equipment of experiences (BMI) and in the entire Universe.

In verse 3, he gives us a means to attain this supreme knowledge which is by the guidance of a Guru.

Starting in verse 4 until verse 6, Raja Janaka explains how the Self is the same in the entire Universe with 3 examples.

### Review of verse 4 and 5:

In verse 4, he uses the example of the ocean, waves, foams and bubbles. Even though these different forms, the substratum in all these various manifestations is Water. Without water, none of the manifestations can exist.

He asserts the same concept in verse 5 with the example of thread and cloth. Pujya Gurudev explains that we have, in our ignorance, forgotten that the cloth is made of thread and see the cloth only. Similarly, we look at the world of plurality but fail to understand that the substratum of the Universe and our experiences is the Self/Reality/Brahman.

### Verse 6:

In verse 6, Raja Janaka gives us the example of sugar and sugarcane juice. This example is given to negate the fact that even though a cloth is made up of thread, the thread does not pervade the entirety of the cloth and there are gaps in between.

Though we do not see the juice in the sugar crystals, it is the essence of the juice that gives the sweetness to the sugar. The juice pervades every particle of the sugar crystal and there is no part of the sugar where the juice is not.

Shri Vijayji explained to us the technique of analysing such examples through the concepts of Anvaya and Vyatireka.

*Anvaya means the presence of one thing along with the particular another, and Vyatireka means its absence when that other is absent. Anvaya is the positive form of explaining. Vyatireka, (vi+atireka, व्यतिरेक) is the negative form of explaining. It is the technique of synthesis and analysis (positive and negative method).*

*For example, clay is present when pot is present. This is anvaya which means pot can not exist without clay.*

*When clay is absent pot is absent. This is vyatireka which means pot cannot exist without clay.*

*This technique of analysis helps us to conclude that clay is the cause of the pot & the pot is effect. The Self is the substratum of everything and hence, nothing can exist without the Self. Self is both the cause and the effect in a different form.*

Shri Vijayji explained this further with a verse from Srimad Bhagavatham.

*एतावदेव जिज्ञास्यं तत्त्वजिज्ञासुनात्मनः ।  
अन्वयव्यतिरेकाभ्यां यत् स्यात् सर्वत्र सर्वदा ॥ ३६ ॥*

*A person who is searching after the Supreme Absolute Truth, must certainly search for it up to this, in all circumstances, in all space and time, and both directly and indirectly.*

This verse stresses that a seeker should be persistent in sadhana, both directly and indirectly, till transcending the BMI and attaining the state of Liberation.

Puja Gurudev in his commentary has mentioned that the world of plurality is nothing but infinite Consciousness in an **apparent** state of disturbance. This disturbance in Consciousness should not be confused as if there is a disturbance in Consciousness itself. It is only **apparent** – meaning it is an illusion that we perceive it as disturbance, and it is because of this disturbance that the entire world of plurality is experienced. Once this disturbance is transcended, we can understand that the world is nothing but Self alone.

PS: In the next verses, Raja Janaka explains the reasons for the experience of plurality.

Hari Aum.

## November 15, 2023: Class 26. Summary 20

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Astavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji completed verse 7 of Chapter 2 on November 15, 2023, and this was class 26.

The despair of a seeker who understands that time has been wasted in delusion without steps towards realization of the Self is explained in verse 1. Raja Janaka adds to this understanding the nature of the Self by enumerating Self as taintless, serene, pure and beyond nature.

Once Raja Janaka has realized the Self, he declares, in verse 2, that the Self is the one and the same in the equipment of experiences (BMI) and in the entire Universe.

In verse 3, Raja Janaka helps us with a means for realization which is to seek a Guru with utmost respect and dedication without whom this journey of Self-realization will not be complete.

Further, Raja Janaka explains how the Self is the same in the entire Universe with 3 examples - waves/ocean/water, cloth/thread, sugar/sugarcane juice in verse 4, 5 and 6 respectively.

This principle has been explained by Bhagwan in Bhagwad Gita, chapter 9, verse 4:

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

*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.*

In verse 5, Raja Janaka uses the work *vicaaritam*. Shri Vijayji explained this as a deep enquiry and careful examination of our inner world. In the secular world, we are trained to understand everything in the sequence of experience (anuboothi), logical thinking (yukthi) leading to knowledge (Shruthi). But in Vedanta, this sequence is not applicable as Shruthi is the Pramaan (authenticity). Whatever Shruthi says will be the law around which we have to arrange experience and logic.

Having explained this with 3 examples, a question is posed by Pujya Gurudev, as a prelude to the upcoming verses, on our experiences of plurality of the world. If the Self is the one in all, then why do we experience this Universe as something different from us? What makes the world appear? Who creates it? In the following verses, Raja Janaka explains the answers to the above questions.

### Verse 7:

In verse 7, Raja Janaka gives us a direct reason for our experience of plurality. He uses the example of superimposition of snake on rope which is a common and traditional example used in the Upanishads. He says, *'the universe appears from the ignorance of the Self and disappears with knowledge of the Self, just like the serpent that appears from the non-apprehension of the rope and disappears with its apprehension.'*

When the substratum of the rope is not clearly understood, it leads to a lot of doubts and confusion in the seer's mind which in turn leads to the misapprehension that the rope is the snake. Pujya Gurudev explains that doubts and confusions veil the intellect with this non-apprehension. In the absence of help

from the intellect, the mind is left alone to project and results in misapprehension which further creates doubts, confusions and sorrow. This is the cause for the development of our EGO.

The only way that this misapprehension can end is by the apprehension of the Reality. With knowledge, the ego rediscovers itself to be nothing other than the pure Self. When this happens, the whole world of plurality will merge to disappear into the One, non-dual Reality.

To a beginner in Vedanta, this might lead to the confusion that: If the plurality of the world is a superimposition of our ignorance of the Self, then what would happen to our/my individuality upon the realization of the Self? This confusion is common as we are bound to the world of BMI with our identity, space and time (*desh, kaal and vasthu*). Will I be able to survive in this world? These questions are answered by Raja Janaka in the upcoming verse.

Hari Aum.

## **November 22, 2023: Class 27. Summary 21**

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Astavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji completed verse 8 of Chapter 2 on November 22, 2023, and this was class 27.

Shri Vijayji started the class with a short review of the metaphors given in verse 4, 5 and 6. He related these examples with the concept of anvaya and vyatirekha. For our understanding, Shri Vijayji explained that the substratum (or cause) of all things would be anvaya and the effect is vyatirekha as the effect cannot exist without the cause. Hence,

Atma is anvaya, names and forms are vyatirekha.

Verse 4: Water is anvaya, waves are vyatirekha

Verse 5: Thread is anvaya, cloth is vyatirekha

Verse 6: Sugar is anvaya: sugar products are vyatirekha

### **Review of verse 7:**

Raja Janaka explains to us the reason for the existence of plurality in this Universe - our non apprehension of the Self leading to the misapprehension of the world of plurality. The metaphor used in this verse is the superimposition of the snake on the rope. For the snake to disappear, the knowledge of the rope should be understood and once we understand the existence of the rope, we realise that the snake ever existed, and it was our ignorance that created the snake.

The difference between this metaphor and the other examples used in verses 4, 5 and 6 was that we can see the substratum and the effect separately in the other examples (when we see the waves, we still see the water) but with respect to the snake and rope, one does not exist when the other is perceived.

Shri Vijayji explained that the reason for this superimposition is Maya, which through its 2 powers of Avarana (veiling) and viksepa (confusion/doubts) causes the non-apprehension and misapprehension. The only way that this ignorance will disappear is by the destruction of the ego. When the ego rediscovers itself to be nothing other than the pure Self, the plurality merges to disappear in the non-dual Reality.

### **Verse 8:**

In verse 8, Raja Janaka explains to us the concept of Light of Consciousness. *Light is my very nature. I am nothing other than that Light. When the Universe manifests, indeed, it is I alone who shines.*

Pujya Gurudev explains that this Light is not the light that we perceive in our day-to-day life. It is not the mass of light that we are used to. But in the words of Sri Ramakrishna Pramahansa, 'The Light or the Reality is the Light without its properties' because it is Self-illuminating (Self without any gunas).

In this verse, Raja Janaka dives deeper into the concept of Reality by explaining it as the *Light of Consciousness and that I am none other than this Light (Reality).*

Pujya Gurudev beautifully explains that once the ego ends, we realize that this Light of Consciousness is the one that illuminates both the subject and the object. This does not mean that the Consciousness and

the subject are different but rather the Consciousness which is the subject illumines itself by itself and also the world of plurality.

Puja Gurudev further explains the reason for the existence of the world of plurality. He explains that when the Consciousness expresses itself through the equipments of BMI (which includes the EGO), it is visualized as the world of OET. Contemplating on this train of thought will help us to understand that the Reality/Self/Consciousness just exists *AS IS* and that we perceive it as the world of plurality as we experience it through our limited BMI equipments fueled by the EGO.

We just have to understand that the Universe is nothing but a projection of the effulgent Self.

Breakout room question: Why is the destruction of our individuality very difficult for us?

Problem is avidhya, kaama, karma and the solution: Conviction, purity of mind, clarity of intellect.

Hari Aum.

## November 29, 2023: Class 28. Summary 22

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Astavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji completed verse 9 of Chapter 2 on November 29, 2023, and this was class 28.

'As we think, so we develop'. Shri Vijayji explained that we have to be in pursuit of liberation only if we think we are bound in this world of plurality. As long as we are in the bondage with the world of plurality, we need to continue our sadhana to get Liberated. Liberation is the subjective experience that we are not bound by this world of experiences and once we attain that state, we are already Liberated without the need of any sadhana to get us out of bondage.

Shri Vijayji explained that Raja Janaka, in Ashtavakra Gita, gives us his anuboothi (experience) in this journey of getting Liberated and his experience becomes our Sadhana.

In the train of thoughts starting from verse 4 of this chapter 2, Raja Janaka is giving examples to explain that the entire world of plurality is only an illusion and is a projection on the substratum, the Self/Reality/Divinity/Brahman/Infinity.

Verse 4: Example of water/bubbles/waves

Verse 5: Example of cloth/thread

Verse 6: Example of sugar and sugarcane juice

Verse 7: Example of snake/rope

### Review of verse 8: I AM THE ONLY LIGHT.

In verse 8, Raja Janaka explains the concept of Light as our very nature. It is because of this Light that we are aware of everything in and around us. Pujya Gurudev explains that this is not a physical light but instead is the Awareness (or the Life principle) that makes our very nature. Pujya Gurudev states that this awareness is itself a play of the Awareness.

Shri Vijayji explained that this Light is the life-giving principle. This is dormant temporarily (but still functioning) when we are in deep sleep. When we wake up, this Light illumines all our equipments and we come into the awareness of plurality all at once indicating that the sense organs cannot even function for a second without this Light.

This concept of the Self being the Light/Life principle is also explained in Mundakopanishad and in Bhagwad Gita.

*Mundakopanishad: 2.2.10:*

*न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।  
तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ १० ॥*

*na tatra sūryo bhāti na candratāraḥ nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto'yamagniḥ |  
tameva bhāntamanubhāti sarvaṁ tasya bhāsā sarvamidaṁ vibhāti || 10 ||*

*There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor the stars, these lightnings also do not shine, how (then) can this earthly fire? Verily everything shines after Him reflecting His glory. This whole world is illumined with His Light.*

*Srimad Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 15, verse 6:*

*न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशाङ्को न पावकः ।*

*यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्भाम परमं मम ॥ 6 ॥*

*na tad bhāsayate sūryo na śhaśhāṅko na pāvakaḥ*

*yad gatvā na nivartante tad dhāma paramam mama*

*Neither the sun nor the moon, nor fire can illumine that Supreme Abode of Mine. Having gone There, one does not return to this material world again.*

Shri Vijayji explained that it is the EGO that prevents us from realise this. We should work on letting go on EGO, turn and see within.

### **Verse 9:**

We generally think that the Self is the cause, and the world of plurality is an effect which means that the Self has undergone certain changes to become the world of plurality. Raja Janaka thunders and ascertains in this verse, with 3 examples, that this is not the case because if anything modifies, it should also decay or end. Whereas the Self does not change, modify or perish. He explains again that the world of plurality is only an illusion and is a projection of the Self and not a modification of the Self.

The 3 examples used in the verse are:

1. Appearance of silvery shine in a seashell
2. Appearance of snake in a rope
3. Appearance of water in sunlight (mirage).

It is through our ignorance that we perceive an illusion on the substratum. We imagine, project and perceive silvery shine, snake and water in a seashell, rope and sunlight respectively just as we perceive the world of plurality and think that the substratum is the Self. With the discovery of the Self, all illusions ends.

### **Break out room question: What is the greatest illusion of our life?**

We also had a discussion on the concept of Manifest and Unmanifest and how this can be explained with the example of projection.

Sadh and Asadh Karya Vaadh: Asadh cannot be born because of Sadh. Nothing will come out of nothing and also out of something. If anything manifests from unmanifest, the manifested object should be in the unmanifest to start with. For example, vasanas are in an unmanifested state in the causal body and hence it can manifest. Shri Vijayji went on to explain that the greatest illusion is to think that we are the BMI.

Hari Aum.

## December 13, 2023: Class 29. Summary 23

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Ashtavakra Gita. Shri Vivekji reviewed verse 9 and completed verse 10 of Chapter 2 on December 14, 2023, 2023, and this was class 29.

Shri Vivekji started the class by explaining the meaning of the phrase Sahana vavathu in the Santhi Mantra recited at the beginning of every class. The literal meaning is praying for the safety of the teacher and the student. In the present circumstances it can be interpreted as praying for our purpose of life to be safe.

The reason for us engaging in various classes should be systematic self-development.

As we all are trying to be a Vanaprastha, Shri Vivekji explained we need to be Bheeshma. The term Bheeshma means '*intense*' and hence one should be intense in our journey to Self-Realization. By being intense, we have to fear less and apply more. We have to be less indulgent in articles and less interfering with beings and hence should not relate to beings (or atleast start decreasing our attachment to ABCs). We have to remember that time is running out.

Vanaprastha Satsanga: Satsanga is a particular space and time to invest in that which matters. We have to do that which is important (which means our indulgence and interference in ABCs should be avoided and totally stopped in Vanaprastha). This process is not passive as in just seeing or listening. Satsanga should be painful because as we feel what we are now mentally and intellectually, we should know that the nature of the Self is different from what we feel and perceive. This realization should encourage us to be more intense in our seeking.

In Ashtavakra Gita, Rshi Ashtavakra and Raja Janaka are teaching us that *Relative is not absolute*. If we feel absolute, everything around us is absolute. If we feel relative, all ABCs are relative. Do we know this? Are we ready to understand this and apply?

Shri Vivekji explained that the theme of the second chapter in Ashtavakra Gita is **Experience**.

There are 3 perspectives of subjective science explained in our scriptures:

1. Shruthi – As explained by our scriptures → Shravana
2. Yukthi – logic – rationale – Understanding the scriptures rationally → Manana
3. Anuboothi – Experience – Application of Shruthi and Yukthi → Nidhidhyasana

Rshi Ashtavakra offered Raja Janaka the knowledge of the scriptures who applied all the above 3 towards his Self-Realization.

### Review of Verse 9:

In verse 9, Raja Janaka explains his *Aha* moment when he experiences that the world of ABCs is ME but I am not in them (also explained by Bhagwan Krishna in Srimad Bhagwd Gita). Bhagwan says that the pluralistic world of ABCs depends on Me but I do not depend on them.

In Pujya Guruji's words: Thoughts depend on Awareness, Awareness does not depend on thoughts.

In order to understand and practice the above thought of *Mayi (in ME)*, we have to be more inward looking – talk less, listen more. A vanaprastha is one who engages in less doing and more being.

## Verse 10:

In verse 10, Raja Janaka explains how he has understood the process of creation and dissolution with more examples.

**Line 1:** In the first line of verse 10, Raja Janaka explains that he has realized that the whole world of plurality has been created from ME (*Self, Bhagwan, Infinity, Divinity*) and that everything will again come back to ME and dissolve/rest in ME (The world will be fulfilled or experienced by a Realized Master that the multiverse comes from HIM, goes into HIM).

Shri Vivekji explained that Ishvara has 5 functions:

1. Shristi → able to create
2. Sthithi → able to conserve
3. Samhara → able to consume
4. Nigraha → to control
5. Anugraha → to correct → to possess grace or blessing. Ishvara will have this quality/function for correction.

Raja Janaka says that the world of ABCs is created, conserved and consumed in ME.

This is further emphasized in the term Bhaagavatham which consists of 2 parts:

1. *Bhagavatha* means belonging to Bhagavan)
2. *Idham* indicates that everything starts, exists, ends in Bhagavan

Realizing this, we become Bhaagavatha.

Shri Vivekji gave a reference from Swami Advayananda who has stressed that:

Dream state is equivalent to Maaya state and

Sleep state is the Advaita state

**Line 2:** In line 2, Raja Janaka stresses and explains this concept by 3 more examples – presence of clay in pots, water in waves, bangle in gold.

Pot, wave, bangle → refer to Multiverse → particular name and forms (*naama, roopa*)

Clay, water, Gold → refer to the Self → substratum or the foundation which is the same in all ABCs.

As explained by Rshi Narada in Narada Bhakthi Sutra, being a Vanaprastha we have to engage in:

- Visaya thyaga → letting go of articles
- Sanga thyaga → letting go of beings

A reality check if we are doing this will be to check our dependence on ABCs. If our resources go to comfort, we are not dedicated to Bhagwan. When we engage in letting go, we are finding our way to feet of Bhagwan

Rshi Narada adds that we have to practice:

- Bhajana → service
- Shraddha → to hold on to the feet of Bhagwan.

**Breakout room question:**

In the last year, what were some indulgences and interferences that we are working on to decrease and what are the obstacles related to these?

Hari Aum.

## **December 20, 2023: Class 30. Summary 24**

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Ashtavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji reviewed verses 9 and 10 and completed verse 11 and 12 of Chapter 2 on December 20, 2023, and this was class 30.

### **Recap of Chapter 2:**

In Chapter 2, Raja Janaka is marveling at the state of Realization that he is reveling in with a sense of astonishment. This is due to the teachings of Rshi Ashtaavakra in Chapter 1 which has taken the student (Raja Janaka) to a subjective experience of Reality. In his sense of astonishment and Realization, Raja Janaka is making us understand that a sincere reflective mind can readily feel the extensive cosmos as oneself (or one's Self).

**Verse 1:** Raja Janaka says that 'I' is the serene, pure, taintless Consciousness and he also kicks himself that he has not understood this for so long having lived in delusion.

**Verse 2:** Raja Janaka ascertains that 'I' and this cosmos are not 2 different entities but are one and the same.

**Verse 3:** Raja Janaka emphasizes the importance of a teacher (preceptor/guide) in this journey towards Realization and says that this journey and the ends (of Realization) is not possible without a Guru.

In the next 4 verses, Raja Janaka explains with examples how he has realized that the Self and the world of plurality are not different from each other.

**Verse 4:** Example of water/bubbles/waves

**Verse 5:** Example of cloth/thread

**Verse 6:** Example of sugar and sugarcane juice

**Verse 7:** Example of snake/rope

In all these examples, he ascertains that it is due to ignorance that the Universe appears different from Self. Once the ignorance is overcome through the knowledge (Vidhya), non apprehension of the Self will disappear ending all misapprehensions.

**Verse 8:** Raja Janaka emphasizes that the nature of the Self is Light. This does not refer to the physical light. Self is referred to as the nature of Light because of its essential expression in all living beings as Consciousness.

Shri Vijayji reviewed verses 9 and 10 in our last class before proceeding to complete verses 11 and 12.

### **Verse 9:**

In verse 9, Raja Janaka again uses 3 examples to explain that the universe of names and forms are only an apparent illusion projected by the mind of the observer.

The 3 examples used in this verse also indicate the 3 kinds of bondages that we are stuck with:

1. Silver in the mother of pearl: This indicates the bondage of Kaama or desire. This is our attraction to physical objects or roopa.

2. Snake on rope indicates the bondages of anger and fear.
3. Water in sunlight (mirage) indicates our lobha or greed – just as we end in a mirage searching for water in desert, we will end with nothing in our pursuit of worldly experiences.

Bhagwan has explained these qualities as gateways to hell in Srimad Bhagwad Gita, chapter 16, verse 21.

Srimad Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 16, verse 21:

*त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।  
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत् ॥ 21 ॥*

*tri-vidhaṁ narakasyedaṁ dvāraṁ nāśhanam ātmanaḥ  
kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas tasmād etat trayam tyajet*

*There are three gates leading to the hell of self-destruction for the soul—lust, anger, and greed.  
Therefore, one should abandon all three.*

It is important to understand that these 3 qualities are the most destructive as we are entangled in these 3 every second of our life. Desire is the root cause of all problems in this world. If desire is fulfilled, it leads to greed that we want more and more. If not fulfilled, we are directed to anger. Hence, giving up desire would be our first step towards our goal of Self Realization.

#### **Verse 10:**

In verse 10, Raja Janaka reminds us as to where we came from and where we will end (with 3 examples again – pot and clay, wave and water, bangle and gold). In the big picture of Reality, everything has (as if) come out of the Self and will eventually dissolve into the Self. Raja Janaka uses the first-person singular (ME) in this verse to again ascertain that Self and I are not different but the same.

In order to understand the difference in these examples, Shri Vijayji, indicated that purity of mind is important. Bhagwan has indicated in chapter 18, verse 5 of Srimad Bhagwad Gita that purity of mind can be obtained with actions based on sacrifice, charity and penance.

Srimad Bhagwad Gita: Chapter 18, verse 5:

*यज्ञदानतपःकर्म न त्याज्यं कार्यमेव तत् ।  
यज्ञो दानं तपश्चैव पावनानि मनीषिणाम् ॥ 5 ॥*

*yajña-dāna-tapaḥ-karma na tyājyaṁ kāryam eva tat  
yajño dānaṁ tapaśh chaiva pāvanāni manīṣhiṇām*

*Actions based upon sacrifice, charity, and penance should never be abandoned; they must certainly be performed. Indeed, acts of sacrifice, charity, and penance are purifying even for those who are wise.*

Raja Janaka is practicing all the virtues and hence he has realized.

Starting from Verse 11 to 14, Raja Janaka explains the divinity of the Self and exclamation over the newfound glory.

#### **Verse 11:**

Divinity is most sacred and deserves to be revered. If one does not recognize the beauty and divinity in anything, reverence is not possible. Hence, in this set of 4 verses, Raja Janaka recognizes the marvel in the Self which is the substratum of himself and the entire Universe. While exclaiming this, he also indicates that the Self does not know any birth or death nor does it exist as an entity because these are qualities of those that perish. The Self is the substratum upon which the Creator and created come, play and disappear.

If we are able to understand this, Raja Janaka indicates that, we become the Self itself and will just BE.

**Verse 12:**

Being *Poorna*, the Self cannot go anywhere and come from anywhere as it pervades the entire Jagath. This concept of Self does not go or come from anywhere reveals to us that if Self pervades everything, the entire Universe of disturbances takes place in one insignificant part of ME. This revelation will help us in winning over the Kama, Krodha and Lobha explained through the examples in verse 9.

Shri Vijayji explained to us that Mukthi is easy and at the same time impossible. It is easy because we just have to realize that we are the Self which is not different from us. It is difficult because we always handle ourselves and everything else as 2 different entities. We must renounce something to get something. We cannot have both the world and Bhagwan. We must see Bhagwan in the world.

Break out question: Why is Mukthi easy/simple and at the same time difficult/impossible.

## January 17, 2024: Class 31. Summary 25

Hari Aum. Welcome to Vanaprastha Culture where we are exploring Ashtavakra Gita under the guidance of Shri Vijayji. We resumed our class on January 17<sup>th</sup> after the winter break. Before the break, we had completed studying Chapter 2, verse 12.

Shri Vijayji started the class with an overview of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ashrama in life – Vanaprastha.

A person who enters into Vanaprastha does not have any obligatory duties. He or she has already completed all responsibilities and a few or no obligatory duties left in the remainder of the life. This time in Vanaprastha ashrama is to reflect on the purpose of life and prepare us for Sanyasa or the greater realization.

Bhagwan Adisankaracharya explains the delusion that we are all caught with in Bhaja Govindham.

In verse 8, Bhagwan Adisankaracharya sings:

काते कान्ता कस्ते पुत्रः संसारोऽयमतीव विचित्रः ।  
कस्य त्वं कः कुत आयातः तत्त्वं चिन्तय तदिह भ्रातः ।

***Kāte kāntā kaste putrah saṁsāro'yamatīva vicitraḥ,  
kasya tvaṁ kaḥ kuta āyātaḥ tattvaṁ cintaya tadiha bhrātaḥ.***

*Who is your wife? Who is your son? Supremely wonderful indeed is this saṁsāra. Of whom are you? From where have you come? O brother! Think if that truth here.*

We are stuck in this world of ABCs due to attachment. We are ignorant of our purpose of life and think that this entire world of plurality is real and permanent.

When we analyse this further, we can understand that everything is an individual entity. Each person is an individual born as per their vasanas. We are in a journey of life where we will exit when it is time. Shri Vijayji explained this with the example of traveling in train where each one exits when their destination has arrived and are not (and cannot) wait for their co-passengers. Understanding this concept, will give us this clarity to untangle from the world of attachment.

Shri Vijayji reviewed a few verse of Ashtavakra Gita to refresh our memories!!!.

In Chapter 1, verse 1: Raja Janaka surrenders to Rshi Ashtavakra and asks a few questions:

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 entire text of Ashtavakra Gita is to seek answers to these questions. We have to go beyond logic if we strive to find the answers. It is through sastra Krupa, Guru Krupa and Isvara Krupa that we progress in this journey towards Self-Realization.

Sastra Krupa will give us the required knowledge, Guru will guide us in this knowledge and then Self-Realization can be obtained ONLY by Isvara Krupa.

## **Review of verses 11 and 12**

Verses 11 to 14 explains Raja Janaka's exclamation over his (as if) newly found glory and divinity of the Self.

In verse 11, he exclaims that Self does not know any decay and survives even the destruction of the Universe. Shir Vijayji used the term *Krithakrithya* which means that being beyond the destruction (or pralaya) which is possible only for the Self. Destruction or decay is with regards to time and Self is beyond time.

While explaining this verse, Puja Gurudev has quoted a verse from Mundakopanishad. If we realise this truth, Mudakopanishad says that we become that infinite, ever present Brahman.

*स यो ह वै तत् परमं ब्रह्म वेद ब्रह्मैव भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति ।  
तरति शोकं तरति पाप्मानं गुहाग्रन्थिभ्यो विमुक्तोऽमृतो भवति ॥ ९ ॥*

*sa yo ha vai tat paramam brahma veda brahmaiva bhavati nasyābrahmavitkule bhavati |  
tarati śokaṃ tarati pāpmānaṃ guhāgranthibhyo vimukto'mṛto bhavati || 9 ||*

**9. He who knows that highest Brahman becomes even Brahman; and in his line, none who knows not the Brahman will be born. He crosses grief and virtue and vice and being freed from the knot of the heart, becomes immortal.**

In verse 12, staying in the similar line of thought, Raja Janaka exclaims Self does not go anywhere or come anywhere but is ever pervading the Universe. In this verse, Self is exclaimed with regards to space.

- Verse 11 – Self with regards to Time
- Verse 12 – Self with regards to Space.

Hence, in summary, verses 11 and 12 indicate that Self is the substratum of time and space.

### **Verse 13:**

This verse introduces us to the interesting term '*relationless relationship*'.

There is no direct relation between the Self and the world of plurality. Even though the Self is pervading the Universe, all the experiences of ABCs does not touch or affect the Self. Just like a waker is not affected by the tragedies of a dream, the Self is unscathed by the world of plurality. The world derives its existence from the Self but the Self is not affected by anything that happens in the world.

### **Verse 14:**

Raja Janka exclaims that Self as everything, yet it possesses nothing. Everything that is accessible by speech and mind, belongs to the Self only.

Self is the substratum and hence can claim everything. At the same time, jagadh is mithya and hence everything is an illusion and hence Self has nothing to possess as it is everything.

A realised person transcends the world of logic and plurality and lives in this elated state that the entire ABC experience becomes an illusory experience only while revelling in the Self is the only Reality.

**RAW** – reflect on 'All belongs to Me or I have nothing'.

## January 24, 2024: Class 32. Summary 26

Hari Aum. Please note that Shri Vijayji explained the subtler aspects of knowledge in this class - Vritti Vyapti and Phala Vyapti:

We are studying chapter 2 of Ashtavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji started last week's class with the review of verses 11 to 14. Verses 11 to 14 form a single train of thought where Raja Janaka exclaims in wonderment over the new found glory and divinity of the Essential Self.

Raja Janaka in his wonderment and Realization, exclaims the nature of Self. He says that there is no one cleverer than the Self, Self is everywhere, pervades everything, knows everything and is beyond, time, space, and the world of plurality. To an ordinary person, this will feel like an arrogant statement but it should be understood that Raja Janaka is exclaiming at a different realm which is not accessible in our present state (just like the waking state is not perceivable for a dreamer).

Bhagwan Krishna explains this in Bhagwad Gita Chapter 9, verse 4.

**मया ततमिदं सर्वं जगदव्यक्तमूर्तिना /  
मत्स्थानि सर्वभूतानि न चाहं तेष्ववस्थितः || 4||**

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

*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.*

In summary: Jiva, Jagad and Jagadeeswara (Isvara) are all superimposed on the Brahman.

In verse 11, Raja Janaka exclaims that the Self knows no decay. He explains the nature of Self relative to time. Self is Anaadhi and Anantha. Self is the knower of the Universe and as such is the maker and knower of time.

In verse 12, Self is explained as the seer of the movements and always pervades the Universe. In this verse, Self is explained with related to the Space.

In verse 13, Raja Janaka explains the Self with an interesting term – *relationless relationship*. Self is explained related to the body. The Self pervades the body but it never touches the body and is not affected by the experiences of the body.

Verse 14 explains that Self knows everything that is accessible to speech and mind which indicates everything that can be defined and felt.

### **Vritti Vyapti and Phala Vyapti:**

Before moving onto the next verse, Shri Vijayji explained the subtler aspects of Vritti Vyapthi and Phala Vyapthi using the BMI chart.

***Vritti Vyapti is the pervasion of the mind over an object.***

***Phala Vyapti is the illumination of an object by Consciousness through the medium of the mind.***

We all know that we perceive objects through our senses. An object is perceived by the mind by the mind travelling to the object, casting itself on the object (like forming a mould) and then, that object has

to be illumined by the consciousness to be perceived. Thus, in order to perceive the objects or an experience, they have to be perceived in our thoughts and has to be illumined by the consciousness. If an experience is not present in our thoughts, we will not be able to perceive an object or have an experience of the world of plurality. Both Vritti Vyapti and Phala Vyapti should work together for our world of experiences.

It is a habitual error that we think the transaction between us and the outer world happens from outside to inside. As already explained, if a thought is not present already or if not illumined by consciousness, any particular perception or experience cannot take place (realize that the mind and intellect are subtler than the objects perceived. A gross object cannot affect a subtler entity). Understanding this will help us realize that the actual transaction is from inner world to the outer world and not the other way around.

Our ignorance has a huge role in this habitual error.

Maya → Vasana → Avidhya → Ego (Experiencer) → Habitual error → perceiving that the gross objects affect the subtle body.

**Verse 15:** A new train of thought starts from this verse where in we learn how knowledge happens.

Knower → Knowable → Knowledge

The process of knowing or experiencing anything has to involve all the 3 above entities. Even if one is absent, then knowledge or experience cannot happen.

Raja Janaka says that in the realm of Self, the ego is transcended to be the pure Self. Hence, the entity of experiencer is not present after Self Realization and hence there is no more the play of this triad.

In our experiences of the world of plurality, we are caught in the whirlwind of experiences due to the presence of ego which is due to ignorance. For example, the dream can exist only as long as the waker is illusioned by the dream. Once an individual wakes up from sleep, the dream state cease to exist. In the same way, once our ego ceases and avidhya is overcome by knowledge (Self Realized), all our pluralistic experiences merge into the pure Self without any sense of doing (doershiplessness) or deserving (deservershiplessness). This is the **Supreme state of Oneness**.

Pujya Gurudev explains that this experience is beyond the comprehension of the finite intellect. Hence, it has to be best discovered through one's own meditation.

Hari Aum.

## **January 31, 2024: Class 33. Summary 27**

Hari Aum.

Shri Vijayji started today's class with a note on Brahma Vidhya and Maya. We have to make Brahma Vidhya our priority or else we will miss it having come close to it through all our sadhana.

Maya is a delusion that envelopes us forever because we are at the level of the world of plurality and use our limited tools of mind and intellect. Only when we get to Isvara, do we understand that Maya is a delusion.

### **Review of verse 15:**

Shri Vijayji reviewed verse 15 and explained about Vritti Vyapti and Phala Vyapti again (please refer to the summary from the previous class on January 24<sup>th</sup> for this explanation – Shri Vijayji took a lot of time explaining this again for our benefit).

A thought is made of 2 parts:

1. Pure Consciousness
2. Limited tools of mind and intellect when they are made sentient by the touch of Consciousness.

The 3 entities of Knower, Knowable and Knowing cause the world of plurality. When our ego is transcended, the world of plurality ceases to exist. We have to remember that there is no world outside. The entire world of experiences is created by our karma phala and by our projections (ego).

### **Verse 16:**

In verse 16, Raja Janaka explains the root of all misery that we experience. The sense of duality causes us to experience the world of ABCs. He also ascertains that this sense of duality can be transcended only by realizing that all the objects of experiences (articles, beings and circumstances) are unreal and that we are the non-dual, pure Consciousness and Bliss.

In order to cross the ocean of samsara, we have to transcend beyond the sense of duality which can be achieved by realizing that we are the pure, infinite, blissful Consciousness. Pujya Gurudev ascertains that there is no other remedy for this sense of misery and sorrow at the plane of the ego and that we have to lift ourselves to the level of realizing the Pure Brahman.

Shri Vijayji emphasized the importance of a *quieter mind*'. Only with a quieter mind can we be happy. Deep reflection will let us understand that happiness is nothing but having a quiet, serene mind. We feel happy at unreal experiences only due to the momentary quietening of the mind by achieving something that it was seeking. If we seek the eternal, infinite Brahman, this quietude will be everlasting leading to eternal happiness which is Bliss.

For this to happen, we have to decrease the quantity of thoughts, increase the quality of thoughts and change the direction of this thought flow from outward to inward.

Hari Aum.

## February 7, 2024: Class 34. Summary 28

Hari Aum.

Shri Vijayji started the last class by reviewing verses 15 and 16 and completed by teaching verse 17.

### Review of verse 15:

The three fold multiplicity exists because we perceive and understand the world of plurality with 3 instruments – jnanendriya (organs of knowledge), karmendriya (organs of action) and anthakarana (instruments of experience). These instruments are present inside us and hence we identify with them leading the three fold multiplicity of knower, knowable and known.

### Review of verse 16:

Rshi Ashtaavakra and Raja Janaka are taking us from this threefold multiplicity to the misery caused by duality in verse 16.

Duality is maha-dukkham. Whenever we see an entity other than us, it sows the seeds of dukha (sorrow). There is no other remedy for this sorrow of duality except for realization that all the objects of experience are unreal and that We (I) are the non-dual, pure Consciousness and Bliss.

Shri Vijayji explained that the experience of Reality is not created but is revealed and manifested. Our misconception that it is created leaves us searching for it in the world of plurality and eventually we fall into sorrow as we are searching in the wrong place.

Shri Adisankaracharya thunders in Brahma Jnana Vali Mala *Brahma Satyam Jagadgh Mitya*

***brahma satyam jaganmithyaa jlvo brahmaiva naaparah  
anena vedyam sacchaastram iti Vedanta dindiimah***

*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 17:

In verse 17, Raja Janaka gives us the way out of this samsara. We have seen in the previous verses that the reason for our bondage is the ignorance that we are the body. The way out of this bondage is to achieve the state of **NIRVIKALPA**.

Nirvikalpa is a new term used in this text. It means **a state devoid of all imaginations** suggesting **the spiritual state of thoughtlessness**.

*This state can be achieved only when we come to a CONSTANT understanding that the world of plurality are just illusions and that the secret of abiding myself in the Self is the supreme state which leads us out of our mental disturbances.*

Shri Vijayji explained the means of attaining this state with 2 examples: we must replicate the focus of a pregnant woman and women carrying water pots on head. Whatever they do, their focus is always on the infant and the water pots respectively. We have to do our obligatory duties with such a state and understand that anything other than the obligatory duties will lead us into samsara.

**How do we know what are obligatory duties?**

Bhagwan Krishna has explained what we must do to attain this state. We must follow what the scriptures direct us to do and that will be our obligatory duties. In Chapter 16, verse 24, Bhagwan says:

*तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते कार्यकार्यव्यवस्थितौ ।*

*ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि ॥ 24 ॥*

*tasmāch chhāstram pramāṇam te kāryākārya-vyavasthitau*

*jñātvā śhāstra-vidhānoktaṁ karma kartum ihārhasi*

*Therefore let the scriptures be your authority in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having learnt the injunctions of the scriptures, you should do your work in the world.*

Hari Aum.

## February 14, 2024: Class 34. Summary 29

Hari Aum.

Shri Vijayji reviewed verse 15, 16 and 17 and completed explanation on verse 18 today. Shri Vijayji asserted that the study of Ashtaavakra Gita is Jnana Pradhan and the experience of Realization is explained in different aspects. The only sadhana that we need to progress in our journey towards Realization is Vairagya. It is because of lack of Vairagya, we are stuck between Atma and Anatma.

### **Review of verse 15:**

Verse 15 explains the 3 dimensions which create division in undivided Consciousness. The Knower, through knowing sees/perceives the knowable. We must understand that the perception actually takes place inside us and not outside. Our senses are directed outside and through Maya, we think that the world of plurality exists outside. It is through our ignorance that we project everything outside and think that the creation is outside while in reality, it is inside us. This thought, vritti, exists due to Maya. Once we transcend this Maya, the world of plurality ceases to exist, and we can realize that there is no creation.

### **Review of verse 16:**

Verse 16 transcends one more level from verse 15 and explains that the field of experiences is due to the sense of duality – feeling of separateness between us and the Reality (Brahman). This duality causes all sorrows (and limited materialistic happiness), and the only remedy is to understand that all experiences are unreal and that we are the pure Consciousness and Bliss.

### **Review of verse 17:**

Verse 17 asserts the explanations in verse 16 and reminds us again that the reason for all the projection is our ignorance and to come out of this avidhya is to constantly reflect on the pure Consciousness and reach the state of Nirvikalpa – *state of thoughtlessness* - where we understand that all experiences are illusory projections upon the Self.

### **Verse 18:**

In this verse, Raja Janaka gives a glimpse of how it would feel after transcending the world of experiences. When the *illusion* that the world is real ends, the ego ceases to exist. We can also understand in this state that all the experiences are within us (and hence the Universe actually exists in us and not outside).

Attaining this state of Realization, from a relative standpoint, the Man of Realization will know that BMI are only equipments to help us in our experiences.

From the absolute standpoint, the same Man of Realization will know that there is neither equipments of experiences or fields of experiences.

Hari Aum.

## **February 21, 2024: Class 35. Summary 30**

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Ashtavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji reviewed verse 18 and completed verse 19 and 20 of Chapter 2 on February 21, 2024, and this was class 35.

### **Recap of Chapter 2:**

In Chapter 2, Raja Janaka is marveling at the state of Realization that he is reveling in with a sense of astonishment. This is due to the teachings of Rshi Ashtaavakra in Chapter 1 which has taken the student (Raja Janaka) to a subjective experience of Reality. In his sense of astonishment and Realization, Raja Janaka is making us understand that a sincere reflective mind can readily feel the extensive cosmos as oneself (or one's Self).

### **Review of Verse 18:**

Raja Janaka asserts in verse 18 that he is not in bondage nor does he need freedom because both are illusions in themselves. Upon realizing the Supreme Self, this illusion ends.

Shri Vijayji gave us 3 assertions based on this:

1. The pure Consciousness neither has bondage nor liberation.
2. The Self is the substratum of everything.
3. The Pure Self is ever free.

We also have to understand that this Universe (world of plurality, BMI, ABCs) cannot exist by themselves and are established in the Self. If we think that they exist, it is because of illusion and is a product of Maya. This ignorance will lead to desires which will in turn lead to actions.

Avidhya → Kaama → Karma

### **Verse 19:**

In verse 19 Raja Janaka again asserts that once the Self is realized, the illusion has no base to sustain, and the world of plurality will cease to exist.

Puja Gurudev explains this with the example of a waker and dreamer. As long as we are in the dream, we are bound to think that the dream world is real and nothing other than that we see and experience in the dream world exists. But once we wake up, the dream world is destroyed and the waking world alone exists. Understanding this in the words of the exclamation of Raja Janaka, the dream world will not have a substratum to exist when its existence is destroyed upon the attainment of the waking world. In the same world, once we realize the Self as the Real and pure existing principle, this world of plurality will not exist for us and will disappear.

### **Verse 20:**

In verse 20, Raja Janaka enumerates 6 imaginations that we all think as true and existing. They are the body, notions of heaven, hell, bondage, freedom and Anxiety.

Puja Gurudev explains that the gross, subtle and causal bodies survive feeding the above imaginations while they in turn feed our experiences of the world of plurality. This leads to the existence of our EGO.

But in a Self-realized master, these imaginations have no place or purpose to exist. These do not disturb him who has attained the state of the Self.

We have to remember *Brahma Satyam, Jagadh Mitya*.

Hari Aum.

## February 28, 2024: Class 36. Summary 31

Hari Aum.

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Ashtaavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji reviewed verses 19 and 20 of Chapter 2 and completed teaching verses 21 and 22 on February 28, 2024, and this was class 36.

### Essence of Chapter 2:

In chapter 2 of Ashtaavakra Gita, Rshi Janaka is expressing the joy of realization. He describes that a realizes mind can feel the extensive cosmos around as nothing but a projection of his own infinite Self. He continues that, for such a person, the knowledge-knower-knowable triad will disappear along with the ego.

### Review of Verse 19:

Raja Janaka exclaims that our body (BMI) and the world of plurality are nothing but the Pure Consciousness. What we think as the Universe is nothing but an illusion and in true sense is a projection of the Infinite Self.

### Review of Verse 20:

Continuing the same thought pattern as verse 19, Raja Janaka lists out 6 common imaginations that we all have:

1. Body
2. Heaven
3. Hell
4. Bondage
5. Freedom
6. Anxiety

Going slightly further in this thought, Raja Janaka says that we have no use of these 6 imaginations (body, feelings of the mind and judgements of the intellect) as we are the pure Consciousness.

Bhagwan Adisankaracharya echoes this thought in Nirvana Shatakam:

*न मे द्वेष रागौ न मे लोभ मोहौ मदो नैव मे नैव मात्सर्य भावः  
न धर्मो न चार्थो न कामो ना मोक्षः चिदानन्द रूपः शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम् ॥*

*Na Me Dvesha Raagau Na Me Lobha Mohau, Mado Naiva Me Naiva Maatsarya Bhaavah  
Na Dharmo Na Chartho Na Kaamo Na Moksha, Chidaananda Rupah Shivoham Shivoham*

*I have no hatred or dislike, nor affiliation or liking, nor greed, nor delusion, nor pride or haughtiness, nor feelings of envy or jealousy. I have no duty (dharma), nor any money, nor any desire (refer: kama), nor even liberation (refer: moksha). I am indeed, That eternal knowing and bliss, Shiva, love and pure consciousness.*

### Verse 21:

After proclaiming that the BMI is an imagination, Raja Janaka states that a realised person will find solitude even in the midst of a crowd or gathering, having transcended the ego. Viewing everything from the seat of pure Consciousness, the realised master has no sense of duality and hence will not feel

disturbed as though he is alone in a forest. Since he is experiencing the vision of the Self everywhere, he has no attachments to create ego or duality.

**Verse 22:**

Comparing his state before and after Realization, Raja Janaka tries to reason the cause of his pitiable state of bondage before being Realized and narrows down the reason to *his desire to live*.

Raja Janaka states that the sense of ego had caused in him the bondage with this illusory world of plurality. The reason for this was the desire to live. This does not indicate any depressive thought but rather points out to the desire to enjoy, involve, and get attached to the joys of sense gratifications. This alone was the bondage. When this misconception ended, this bondage was cut asunder disappearing into the vision of the Self.

Hari Aum.

## **March 6, 2024: Class 37. Summary 32**

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Ashtaavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji reviewed verses 21 and 22 of Chapter 2 and completed teaching verse 23 on March 6, 2024, and this was class 37.

In chapter 2 of Ashtaavakra Gita, Raja Janaka continues to marvel at his experience of self realization and how he is established in the experience of the infinite self.

### **Review of verse 21:**

Raja Janaka says that he cannot feel duality even in a crowd of people. He says that he is living like being alone in a forest. This transcending can be obtained by going beyond likes and dislikes at the mind level and having the clarity of knowledge that we are pure Brahman.

### **Review of verse 22:**

In verse 22, Raja Janaka says that our failure to understand that we are not the BMI causes the bondage and the desire to live. This is the play of the ego or Maya.

### Excerpts from Rama Gita:

This same concept was asked by Shri Lakshmanji to Bhagwan Rama (by the following questions) in Rama Gita:

1. What is knowledge?
2. How to develop dispassion?
3. What is the difference between jiva and Bhagwan?

Shri Lakshmanji says If we do not develop Jnana and Vairagya, Bhakthi does not develop.

When we think that we are the body, duality starts. Knowledge is subtler than the concept of the BMI. Knowledge is eka – only one. The concept of ‘I’ (which happens in the intellect) is also inert as this also needs to be enlivened by the Self. Mind and Intellect are pure knowledge. When we explain the mind and intellect as flow of thoughts, we have to understand that this vritti is also inert and needs the knowledge to enliven it. But when the ego is attached to this vritti, the world of plurality starts.

There is no difference in the knowledge. Senses fool us making us think that there are 5 kinds of input which is not true.

Bhagwan Rama explains to Shri Lakshmanji that there is no difference in the outer world but is at the mind and intellect level only. Body is felt at the intellectual level and to feel that the world of plurality as real is a habitual error.

In deep sleep, the body is not present - meaning we do not have the concept that we are the body nor that we have a body. When awake, this thought of not identifying with the body disappears and vasanas take over resulting in bondage.

Bhagwan Rama adds that no one can get out of this Maya. This plurality is because of the Maya. If we try to transcend Maya through our intellect, we will never be able to do it and will be caught in the sea of samsara as intellect is the daughter of Maya.

We enter the next rain of thought in verses 23 to 26 where the definition of *Ananth* is explained. In these verses, Raja Janaka explains the state of our mind and intellect with the metaphor of the ocean and waves.

**Verse 23:**

The word *loka* has 2 meanings – physical world and also our subtle world of experiences (mind and intellect).

When the mind is calm, we are able to go beyond the world of plurality. Raja Janaka explains the very reason that this happens – the world of plurality disappearing when the subtle body is calm – shows that there exists nothing but the pure Self. Our true nature is *Ananth*. Only when we get agitated and mental disturbances happen due to our ego/Maya/attachment/Vasana/superimposition (all these terms are synonymous), do the world of plurality come into existence IN OUR MIND.

Explaining the steps to get to this state of mental stillness, Shri Vijayji explained the concept of Uttama Yoga – renouncing the Karma Phala which is superior to meditation: In chapter 3 of Bhagavad Gita, Bhagwan explains Karma Yoga, in chapter 4 - Jnana Karma Yoga and in chapter 5 Jnana Karma Sanyasa Yoga. We have to do Karma yoga which has to be fueled by Jnana. Once the karma is done with Jnana, we have to give up the fruits of our action by acting without the sense of doership. Bhagwan says that karma phala tyaga is better than meditation because once we have transcended our expectation of results, even meditation is not needed (if meditation is done with the expectation of a result). This attitude of Karma Phala Tyaga is the Uttama Yoga (please refer to verse 11 of chapter 12).

Hari Aum

### **March 13, 2024: Class 38. Summary 33**

With Guru Krupa, Isvara Krupa we are all part of the Vanaprastha Culture and immersing ourselves in the essence of Ashtaavakra Gita. Shri Vijayji reviewed verses 23 of Chapter 2 and completed teaching verses 24 and 25 on March 13, 2024, and this was class 38.

Hari Aum

In chapter 2 of Ashtaavakra Gita, Raja Janaka continues to marvel at his experience of self realization and how he is established in the experience of the infinite self.

Starting from verse 16, Raja Janaka explains the reasons for our bondage in the world of plurality and narrows it to our ignorance and illusion of thinking and believing that we are the equipments (body, mind, and intellect). This illusion is called the EGO.

In the triad of verse 23 to 25, Raja Janaka uses the metaphor of the ocean and waves to explain the reason for the experience of the world of plurality and how they can be overcome to create the experience of the Self.

#### **Review of verse 23:**

Raja Janaka explains that the reason for all the experience of the world of plurality is the agitations that arise in the mind. These agitations or mental storms rise **instantly** (within a period of 1/160 seconds which is the speed of the mind). When we understand that waves of the ocean (the various experiences and disturbances) are only an illusion, the mind becomes calm and the world of plurality rolls away.

I am the substratum which is infinite. Like the rise and fall of waves, thoughts also arise in the mind.

Shri Vijayji explained the reason for Raja Janaka using 3 verses for explaining the agitations of the mind.

Verse 23: uthpatthi – existence principle

Verse 24: sthithi – awareness principle – Jagadh.

Verse 25: pralaya – bliss – world of jivas.

#### **Verse 24:**

In verse 24, Raja Janaka explains what happens to the ego when the mind is calm. Ego, being the ship to move from port to port of experiences gathering vasanas, will have nowhere to go when the mind is at rest. All the experiences will die away leaving the limitless and shoreless sea of the Self alone.

#### **Verse 25:**

In verse 25, Raja Janaka explains the inevitable that happens to all the jivas that are caught in the web of samsara. Just as the waves arise, dance and die away after a while, the jivas (world of experiences) also rise, jostle, play and dance for a while before merging back in the Consciousness.

This can be likened to the dream state where various experiences arise, play, and then die off when the dreamer wakes up.

Shri Vijayji explained that the reason that we consider ourselves as an individual being separate from the Self and other jivas is due to the lack of mananam. With proper and deep reflection, we will consider everyone as part of the supreme Self and the concept of individuality will disappear. We have to understand that everything exists in our thoughts only. If something is not present in the thought, that entity does not exist for us. No object has sorrow or happiness. In Bliss there is no pair of opposites and no touch of happiness or sorrow.

**End of Chapter 2 of Ashtaavakra Gita – The Marvellous Self.**

**Hari Aum.**