

August 24, 2019

Class 6

## REVIEW

We all want to achieve unconditional happiness/freedom, but the method we've been using to achieve this will not lead us there. We think our sense of freedom is not with us and we have to do something to achieve that sense of unconditional freedom. But since we don't have the experience of having it, deep down we think, "I'll probably never get what I want.", so we just settle for conditional freedom. It's a Catch 22: I probably won't get what I want, but I also can't give up wanting it. Proselytizing religions (aka "glorified travel agents") exploit this: In this life, it is not possible for unconditional freedom; we can provide you a way of reaching unconditional freedom in the future... just do/believe what we tell you!

This is also does not make sense from a mathematical standpoint. Unconditional freedom means infinity (not a finite large number)

1. We want infinite freedom.
2. Infinity cannot be gained b/c you are away from infinity now... means you're limiting infinity.

So what is to be done? You are either already infinite or you are not, and... it's not possible you're not infinite, because you are alive, and all our efforts are aimed in that direction.

Basic premise Vedanta wants us to consider: my sense of absolute freedom is already me, but not appreciated. *Praptasya Prapti*.

→ Our entire study must be imbued with this premise; here, as we saw earlier *jñāna* is more important. *Karma* plays a secondary/supportive role.

**Q:** If I have what I need, but don't know it or have any experience of it, then how do I get to know it?

**A:** The knowledge we need to have is in the form of *viveka*, a particular form of general thinking, which is called *vichara*. There are 2 similar-looking things involved and you have to resolve one of two. Vedanta asks us to develop maturity in *viveka*. I have to do a *viveka* between of different forms of reality: higher and lower (*mithya*—still looks real). I must develop this skill with increasing subtlety and sophistication in order to become knowledgeable, much a like from simple physics to advance, quantum physics.

## REVIEW: EXAMPLES OF VIVEKA

Each one brings out something different and has its own characteristic. At various points in our maturity/growth trajectory, we should develop to be able to distinguish between:

1. Life and a play.
  - a. In order to see life as a play, you must know what is non-play in order to distinguish b/t higher and lower of reality.
2. Movie and non-movie.

- a. Movie is much more immersive. You enter a different reality. You identify w/characters to a degree that you laugh and cry with them.
- 3. Person and her reflection in mirror.** (See discussion below.)
  - a. *Bimba* (original) vs. *pratibimba* (reflection)
- 4. Gold and ornaments.
  - a. Same gold, but the form/way you look at it is different. A young girl is totally involved with design and fashion. Her parents have more concerned with the quality and cost of gold
- 5. Dream state and waking state.
  - a. Advanced study—*Mandukya Upanishad* class is studying.
  - b. When you're in a dream, you have no awareness of or a way of understanding the waking state—unlike the movie, where you can be partially aware of both states.
- 6. Sun rising and not rising.
  - a. Possible for you to have an experience w/o knowledge. When you have the knowledge the experience doesn't have to change. You can know the earth is moving, but still enjoy the experience of the sunrise.
- 7. Rope and a perceived snake.
  - a. A harmless/static rope may be wrongly taken to be a harmful/moving snake. A harmless world which doesn't have the capacity to limit me is taken to be a somewhat dangerous world that has the capacity to.
- 8. Love and attachment.
  - a. Love represents your ability to help, whereas attachment has a much greater degree of falsity with it—you masquerade worrying about someone as love, which is not helpful.
- 9. *Karma* and *karma* yoga
  - a. Spending/enjoying now vs. saving/investing karma for when you understand in the future. One of favorite tenets of Bhagavad Gita.
- 10.\*\* Ātma and anātmā. "I" and "not-I."**
  - a. Mixing up the two creates a false sense of who I am/where I'm going.
  - b. \*\*This is a new example.**

→ ##1-9 are practice for #10. We need to resolve confusion b/t *ātma* and *anātmā*.

**Example 3: Person vs. his/her reflection**

ORIGINAL ( <i>bimba</i> ) (You and I)	REFLECTION ( <i>pratibimba</i> )
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cannot be 'seen' as an object</li> <li>• Is always there</li> <li>• Reflection's coming &amp; going has no effect on me</li> <li>• I am unaffected by the reflected surface</li> <li>• I am independent of my reflection</li> <li>• I have a 'higher' reality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be identified</li> <li>• Comes and goes</li> <li>• My reflection is affected by the surface</li> <li>• The reflection is dependent on me</li> <li>• The reflection is a 'lower' reality</li> </ul>

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Points to consider:

- Visualize your reflection in a moving reflecting surface, like water.
- I am not seeing myself as I am, but as I am reflected in some things.
- A reflection comes and goes. How do you feel at the moment? “I feel happy/unhappy etc.” That is an evaluation of your mind, body, memory, etc. That’s your reflection—you can never see yourself. You’re just describing your reflection. If the mirror breaks, the reflection breaks. But does it make any difference to you? You’re independent of the reflecting surface. Just because reflection goes doesn’t mean original goes. I am independent of my reflection, but my reflection is not independent of me.
- When we say, “I am happy,” that means your mind is a clear reflecting surface. When you say, “I am unhappy,” your mind is not reflecting you. It becomes a dark cloud.
- Reflecting surface: can have 2 forms of impurity/obstruction:
  - Dirt. Ex: Moss covering the surface of the pond.
  - Waviness. Movement also prevents reflection.\*Analysis of our mind is similar to the status of the water.
- I have a higher level of reality than my reflection. That is the *viveka*.

### **3 Qualities of the Mind**

**Tamas:** darkness, inertia

Like dirt. Lazy. React/get angry too quickly. Do not follow ethics. Cannot discern

**Rajas:** overactive, impatient, achiever

Waviness. Too many desires. Impatient to accomplish in life. Everyone wants to be unique.

**Sattva:** clarity, goodness, conducive for learning. Any learning is through *sattva*  
Clear mind. Calm reflection.

### **A quick introduction of terms which describe my own reality:**

- **Higher ‘I’:** The original, *bimba*. Does not change.
  - *Ātma*: the original
  - *Sākshi*: the witness
- **Lower ‘I’:** Reflection, *pratibimba*. Changing.
  - *Jīva*: the living being, one endowed with *prāna*
  - *Ahamkāra*: “I”-thought. May be pure when you first wake up, but does not stand alone for very long. Within in seconds, the I-thought is surrounded by “what am I?” Your name, memory, jobs, health etc. Soon extends to *Mamakāra*: “My-thought” - relationships, duties, etc.

### **Nididhyāsanam: Introduction to Vedantic Meditation**

Not thoughtlessness (as the goal of Samadhi in yoga meditation may be), but an immersion into a different viewpoint than the one you are used to. This is the non-movie in *viveka* example #2.

- A. **Preparation. Also called *dhyaanam*** (many things common with Patañjali's preparation)
1. ***Sankalpa***: framing the nature of the meditation  
*Listen, oh my mind. I am going to do meditation for the next few minutes, and the nature of meditation is to examine myself without the roles that I play. Myself and you, my mind, together are involved in playing various roles. But for this meditation, I just want to let you know that I do not want to spend time on the roles—that will come later. I just want to examine who I am without the roles.*
  2. ***Āsanam***. A posture most conducive to meditation.
    - a. Goal of perfect *āsanam*: you don't have to change position during the entire meditation. Comfortable, no strain.
    - b. Sit erect, hands clasping, feet/legs firmly planted on ground.
  3. **Awareness of *sparsha*, touch**, the one sense organ that is throughout the body:
    - a. Have awareness of all points of the body experiencing touch: feet on ground, hips on chair, hands, eyelashes, etc.
    - b. Good way to lead the mind into focus, without forcing it. Your mind will gently quietened with awareness.
  4. **Awareness of your entire body**. Scan the body, starting from top of head, examine if there is stored tension anywhere. Pause and make sure it's free of tension. Command: RELAX. Continue on.
    - a. Another technique: relax with each outgoing breath. Just let go.
    - b. You may have to spend extra time on the stomach area, notorious for storing tension.
    - c. When finished with the scan, revisit the body to see it as a unit.
  5. **Awareness of your breathing**.
    - a. Evenly distributed initially, relatively lengthy.
    - b. Become a witness to the breath.
  6. See if there are lingering thoughts, which come from 3 windows: past – present – future.
    - a. Tell your mind: I'm closing all 3 windows.
  7. Try for same place, same time every day.
- B. **Actual Meditation, called *nididhyāsanam***
1. Please see the distinction between *ātma/sākshi*/original and the reflection *jīva* or *Ahamkhāra*
  2. Original is just the thought "I am," "I know" (one and the same thing)
  3. Please see that all of us, at all times, in every conceivable experience, are of this nature.
    - a. You know your: experiences, memories, doubts, ignorance, knowledge, languages. You know.
    - b. What you know may change. That you know does not change.
    - c. "I know" is not your property, not something that got started—it is you. What you're aware of, what you know can have a beginning/end, may change. That is the *pratibimba*, the

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reflection. Your mind, body is the *pratibimba*, the *ahamkhāra*.  
It had a beginning; it may end.

- d. See the distinction very clearly. Constant, timeless,  
independent awareness whose main expression is "I know,"  
and the entire experience of life is in the form of the reflection.

Next week: special mixed class for holiday.

Coming soon: We will now translate these principles of Vedanta through the eyes of  
the Bhagavad Gita.