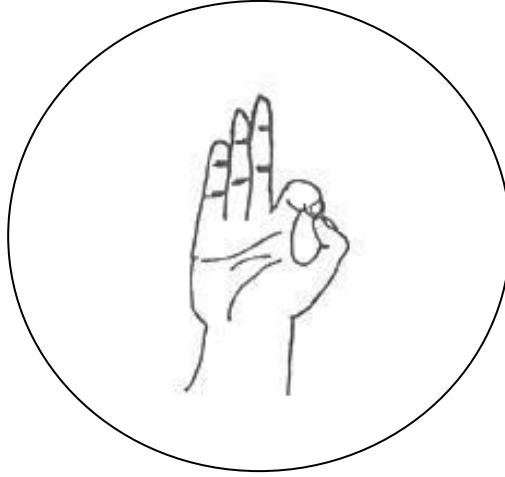


# तत्त्व बोधः Tattva bōdhaḥ

Transcription of *Pravacanams* (talks)

of

Swami Paramarthananda Saraswati



Transcribed by Raghu Ganapathy



## ***Contents***

Key to transliteration and pronunciation of Sanskrit letters .....	vii
Preface.....	ix
A Note on Hindu Religious Systems.....	xiii
Why learn Tattva Bōdhaḥ ? - Self knowledge and its benefits .....	1
Scheme of the Śāstrās .....	19
Invocation - Prayer .....	25
<b>Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Sampattiḥ- The Four-fold qualifications .....</b>	<b>35</b>
Introduction to the four-fold qualifications.....	36
<b>Qualification 1: Vivēkaḥ - Discrimination .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Qualification 2: Virāgaḥ - Dispassion .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Qualification 3: Śamādi Ṣaṭka sampattiḥ - The six disciplines.....</b>	<b>54</b>
Discipline 1: Śamaḥ- Mind Control .....	55
Discipline 2: Damaḥ- Sense Control .....	58
Discipline 3: Upamaḥ - Withdrawal or quietude .....	60
Discipline 4: Titikṣā – Endurance or forbearance .....	65
Discipline 5: Śraddhā – Faith or trust.....	70
Discipline 6: Samādhānaḥ – Concentration or focusing power .....	73
<b>Qualification 4: Mumukṣutvaḥ - Intense desire .....</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Vyaṣṭi vicāraḥ - Analysis of individual - Microcosm .....</b>	<b>83</b>
Tattvavivēkaḥ - Inquiry into Truth.....	84
Ātmā and anātmā - Real and unreal.....	85
Sthūlaśarīraḥ - The Gross body - its elements and functions.....	95
Sūkṣmaśarīraḥ and saptadaśa kalābhīḥ - The subtle body and its instruments.....	104

#### *iv Pravacanāṁś (talks) Swami Paramarthaṇanda*

Pañca jñānēndriyāṇi – Five organs of knowledge.....	112
Pañca karmēndriyāṇi –Five organs of action.....	117
Pañca prāṇaḥ - Five physiological systems.....	122
Antaḥkaraṇaṁ - Four inner equipments .....	124
Kāraṇaśarīraṁ - Causal body.....	128
Avasthātrayaṁ - The three states of existence.....	140
Jāgradavasthā – The waking state .....	140
Svapnāvasthā – The dream state.....	144
Suṣuptyavasthā – The deep sleep state .....	148
Pañca kōśāḥ - The five sheaths or covers .....	152
Annamayaḥ - The food sheath.....	154
Prāṇamayaḥ - The vital air sheath.....	157
Manōmayaḥ - The mental sheath.....	158
Vijñānamayaḥ - The intellectual sheath .....	159
Ānandamayaḥ- The bliss sheath.....	161
Ātmā – Atma.....	165
Cit – Consciousness.....	170
Sat - Existence .....	177
Ānandaḥ - Limitless happiness or bliss .....	178
<b>Samaṣṭi or Sṛṣṭiḥ Vicāraḥ – Analysis of the Cosmos- Macrocosm .....</b>	<b>181</b>
Caturviṁśati tattvōtpatti prakāraṁ -The process of evolution of 24 elements and elementals.....	182
a.Brahman māyā triguṇāḥ - Brahman, Maya and the three cosmic qualities or aspects .....	183
b. Pañca bhūtaḥ sṛṣṭiḥ - Evolution of five fundamental elements .....	190
c. Sāttvik guṇaḥ- Evolution of the Sāttvik aspect.....	196
d. Rājasik guṇaḥ- Evolution of Rajasik aspect.....	202
e. Tāmasik guṇaḥ- Evolution of Tamasik aspect.....	204
f. Pañcīkṛta pañcatattvaṁ - Evolution of five Grossified elements.....	205

<b>Fig. 1</b> Caturviṃśati Tattvōtpatti Prakāraṃ (with Sanskrit terms) .....	209
<b>Fig. 2</b> Caturviṃśati Tattvōtpatti Prakāraṃ (with English terms) .....	210
<b>Fig. 3</b> Pañcīkṛta pañcatattvaṃ - Evolution of the five Grossified elements .....	211
<b>Aikya vicāraḥ- Oneness of microcosm and macrocosm</b> .....	213
Jīvaḥ Īśvara – The individual and the total.....	215
<b>Fig.4</b> Jīva-Ishwara Aikyam.....	222
Mahā Vākyaṃ - The Great equation.....	229
<b>Aikya Jñāna phalaṃ- Benefits of the knowledge of oneness</b> .....	245
Jīvanmuktāḥ - Liberated individual.....	246
Law of Karma.....	262
Law of Karma for Jñānis.....	272
Important aspects of Law of Karma.....	277
Pramāṇaḥ - scriptural proofs.....	291



## Key to transliteration and pronunciation of Sanskrit letters

Sanskrit is a highly phonetic language and therefore accuracy in the pronunciation of the letters is very important. A change in the pronunciation could change the meaning of the word itself. For those who are not familiar with the *Dēvanāgarī* script, the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration is a guide to the correct pronunciation of the Sanskrit letters.

अ	a	<u>f</u> un	च	ca	<u>ch</u> unk 2	य	ya	<u>l</u> oyal
आ	ā	<u>f</u> ather	छ	cha	<u>ma</u> tch *2	र	ra	<u>r</u> ed
इ	i	it	ज	ja	<u>j</u> ump 2	ल	la	<u>l</u> uck
ई	ī	<u>f</u> ee	झ	jha	<u>h</u> edgehog *2	व	va	<u>y</u> irtue
उ	u	<u>f</u> ull	त्र	tra	<u>th</u> ree २८      ṭa	श	śa	<u>s</u> ure
ऊ	ū	<u>p</u> ool	ठ	ṭha	<u>ant</u> -hill *3	ष	ṣa	<u>sh</u> un
ऋ	ṛ	<u>r</u> hythm	ड	ḍa	<u>du</u> ck *3	स	sa	<u>s</u> ir
ॠ	ṝ	<u>ma</u> rine	ढ	ḍha	<u>god</u> head *3	ह	ha	<u>h</u> um
ऌ	ḷ	<u>re</u> velry	ण	ṇa	<u>th</u> under *3	क्ष	kṣa	<u>work</u> sheet
ए	e	<u>p</u> lay	त	ta	(close to) <u>th</u> ink *4	ज्ञ	jñā	*
ऐ	ai	<u>a</u> isle	थ	tha	(close to) <u>pa</u> thetic *4	ळ	(close to) wor <u>ld</u> *	
ओ	o	<u>g</u> o	द	da	(close to) <u>th</u> at*4	s	'	unpronounced
औ	au	<u>c</u> ow	ध	dha	(close to) <u>bre</u> athe *4			अ(a)
अं	aṁ	**	न	na	<u>n</u> umb *4	ss	"	unpronounced
अः	aḥ	***	प	pa	<u>p</u> urse 5			आ(ā)
क	ka	<u>S</u> ee <u>k</u> 1	फ	pha	<u>sap</u> phire *5			
ख	kha	<u>block</u> head*1	ब	ba	<u>b</u> ut 5			
ग	ga	<u>g</u> et 1	भ	bha	<u>ab</u> hor 5			
घ	gha	<u>log</u> - <u>h</u> ut * 1	म	ma	<u>m</u> other 5			
ङ	ṅa	<u>s</u> ing 1						

\* No English equivalent \*\* Nasalisation of preceding vowel \*\*\* Aspiration of preceding vowel.

1. Guttural      -      Pronounced from throat
2. Palatal      -      Pronounced from palate
3. Lingual      -      Pronounced from cerebrum
4. Dental      -      Pronounced from teeth
5. Labial-      -      Pronounced from lips.

The 5<sup>th</sup> letter of each of the above class – called nasals – is also pronounced nasally.





## **Preface**

A few words about this text.

This text is based on the series of 22 talks –the word *pravacanam* would probably be more appropriate - on the subject of *Tattva Bōdhaḥ* rendered by *Svami Paramārthānandā Sarasvatī (Svami Ji)*, a disciple of *Svami Dayānanda Sarasvatī* of *Arṣa Vidhyā Gurukulam* headquartered at Coimbatore in India.

While listening and understanding *Svami Ji's Pravacanams*, I took extensive notes, almost verbatim. I feel that it was the *Guru's* blessings and God's will that the thought to use my notes to produce this text book occurred to me. I feel that this text could help a lot of earnest students like me to get introduced to this subject of *Advaita* (non-dual) philosophy of *Sanātana Dharma* which is popularly known as Hinduism.

This text is in no way meant to be a substitute for *Svami Ji's pravacanams*. I would strongly urge any serious seeker to first listen to the *pravacanams* of *Svami Ji* in a systematic and regular manner as one would do in a class room in a school or a college. This text should help such students to revise their learning after listening to *Svami Ji's pravacanams*. In these *pravacanams* *Svami Ji* provides, in addition to the subject matter under discussion i.e *Tattva Bōdhaḥ*, a significant insight into the the various aspects of our *Dharma śāstrā*, the dos and don'ts for leading a spiritual life and answers to many questions that we may have concerning the religion, spirituality etc. which may only be indirectly related to

the topic under discussion. Listening to his *pravacanāṁs* is thus, a highly enriching and totally fulfilling experience.

While, I have tried to faithfully reproduce *Svami Ji* 's words in this text for the most part, I have taken the liberty to suitably edit the narrative to conform to the print and reading medium. For example, *Svami Ji*, like all effective teachers, uses repetition as a tool to drive home a point or make it easy for listeners to follow the line of thought. In this text, I have tried to avoid such repetitions, as much as possible.

Secondly, *Svami Ji*, like all traditional and proficient teachers, starts every class with a brief summary of what was taught in the previous class. I have excluded these summaries and the points therein wherever I found them repetitive.

*Tattva Bōdhaḥ* is written in Sanskrit language. So it will be a great advantage to one who has a good knowledge of this language, the script, the grammar, the interpretation rules etc., to study and understand the original text. In the absence of such knowledge one can of course fall back upon the available commentaries in English or a couple of other languages. However, in my view a basic knowledge of Sanskrit and the *Dēvanāgarī* script will make this journey of learning much more enjoyable. *Svami Ji*, in his *pravacanāṁs*, takes great pains to explain each and every word in the original *Tattva Bōdhaḥ* text. So I have reproduced the words in the text in *Dēvanāgarī* script. I admit that I have only a very preliminary knowledge of the Sanskrit language (middle school level) and hence I cannot rule out errors in the reproduction of the

words in *Dēvanāgarī* script. I humbly request the readers to give me feedback on such errors ([gana.gana@gmail.com](mailto:gana.gana@gmail.com)), so that they can be rectified. I have adopted the scheme of **International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST)** for Romanization of the *Dēvanāgarī* script. Of course the meaning of each word is elaborated by *Svami Ji* himself. The transliteration and pronunciation guide is given at the beginning of this text.

*Svami Ji* often emphasises in his *pravacanams* on other *vēdāntik* texts - especially the *Bhagavad Gītā* – that, it is not sufficient to merely acquire self-knowledge at the intellectual level. All this knowledge should be fully assimilated, actualized and converted into inner strength. Only then can we hope to escape from this whirlpool of *saṁsārā* and attain true liberation. I am reminded of an anecdote relating to *Svāmi Cinmayanandā* which *Svami Ji* recounts in one of his *pravacanams*. A person once proudly boasted to *Svāmi Cinmayanandā*, that he had gone through many *Upaniṣads* and also the *Bhagavad Gītā*. *Svāmi Cinmayanandā* with his characteristic wit responded - “I am glad that you have gone through many *Upaniṣads* and also the *Bhagavad Gītā*. I know that it is not an easy task. But tell me, how many *Upaniṣads* have gone through you?”

I, therefore, appeal to all those who want to pursue this study not to treat this merely as learning at the intellectual level but put the knowledge to practice on a day to day basis. This will most certainly change your attitude and your approach to life. I am only echoing the guarantee given by the scriptures.

I am indebted to scores of people who have helped me, directly and indirectly, in compiling this text. However, I would like to make a special mention of the contributions of my daughter Shruti and my son Shreyas and my good friend M. Janardan for the successful completion of this project.

I offer my humble pranams and prostrations at the lotus feet of *Svami Paramārthānandā Ji* and seek his blessings for the successful completion of this maiden endeavor of mine.

*Harih Om Tat Sat*

Raghu Ganapathy

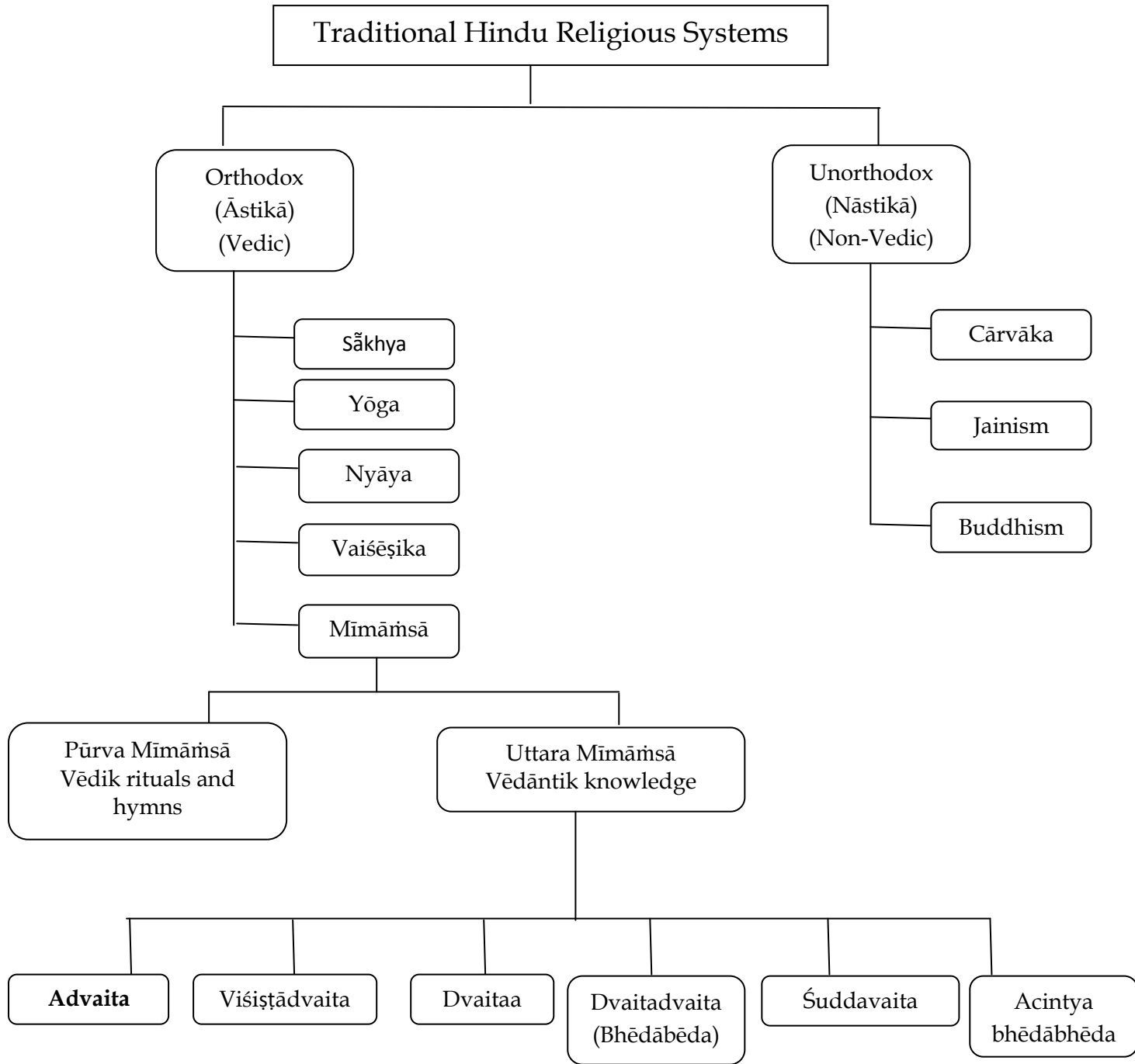
## ***A Note on Hindu Religious Systems***

*Sanātana Dharma* popularly known as Hinduisim is one of the oldest religions of the World. *Sanātana* means unending, perpetual, ever lasting, primeval etc. The word *Dharma* has several meanings. In this context, one could take the meaning as that customary observance or prescribed conduct which relates to justice, virtue or morality. More than a religion it is a way of life to be practiced by one and all. That is what *Sanātana Dharma* is all about.

The original scriptures of Hindus are called *Vēdās*. They were so vast – the mass of writings – that the largest library in the World today would be found to be insufficient to store all the texts in a printed form. Sadly, most of this literature has been lost forever. A large portion of the *Vēdās* has disappeared and what we have today is, perhaps, only a miniscule of the original volume.

The *Vēdās* which form part of the *Mīmāṃsā School* which deals with religious and spiritual thoughts, are divided into two parts - the *Karma Kāṇḍaḥ* which relates to action or work part. This consists of rituals and ceremonies, some of which are very elaborate, to be performed by the people and various hymns addressed to various Gods. The other part i.e. the *Jñāna Kāṇḍaḥ* consists of the *Upaniṣads* imparting the knowledge of the non-dual limitless reality.

This chart provides a brief overview of the traditional Hindu religious systems.



As can be seen from the Chart, the *Vēdāntik* School, a part of the *Āstikā* stream, has six branches. Of this, three branches viz. *Advaita* (Non-dualism), *Viśiṣṭādvaita* (Qualified dualism) and *Dvaita*

(Dualism) are very popular having been extensively commented upon by medieval philosophers and modern teachers of the philosophy.

*Tattva Bōdhaḥ* is an introductory text which expounds the philosophy of the *Advaita* branch i.e the non-dualistic philosophy contained in the *Upaniṣads*.

The contents of this text are broadly divided into 5 Sections.

The first section is called *Sādhana catuṣṭayaṁ*. This section deals with the four fold qualifications required for a spiritual seeker to undertake the *Vēdāntik* study.

The second section is *Vyaṣṭi vicārah* - the analysis of the individual. *Vyaṣṭi* means the individual – the microcosm; *Vicārah* means analysis.

The third section is *Samaṣṭi vicārah* - the analysis of the total. *Samaṣṭi* means the total, the universal, the cosmos, or the macrocosm.

The fourth section is called *Aikya vicārah* – the analysis of the essential oneness of the individual i.e *Vyaṣṭi* and *Samaṣṭi* the total; *Aikyaṁ* means essential oneness.

And the fifth and final section is *Jñāna phalaṁ* the benefit that will accrue to any one who gains this knowledge i.e. the *Aikya jñāna phalaṁ*. Within each section, the topics which have been discussed are arranged in the form of Chapters.

***xvi*** *Tattva Bōdhaḥ -Pravacanāṃs (talks) Swami Paramarthananda*

Now over to *Svami Ji's pravacanāṃs*.



## **Why learn Tattva Bōdhaḥ ? - Self knowledge and its benefits**

*Tattva Bōdhaḥ* is an introductory text generally prescribed at the initial stages of *Vēdāntā study* by a student who is keen to learn the scriptures like the *Bhagavad Gītā* or the *Upaniṣads* or even the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. All scriptural text books can be studied and understood well, if one goes through the *Tattva Bōdhaḥ* in the beginning. As the very title of this books shows, it deals with the knowledge of 'Tattva'. बोधः(*Bōdhaḥ*) means knowledge and

तत्त्व (*Tattva*) in this context means the reality or true nature. So

*Tattva Bōdhaḥ* means the knowledge of the reality or true nature.

Now a question may arise - True nature of what? The answer is the true nature of oneself, the true self, the real self. So we can understand that the meaning of the word *Tattva* here connotes the real nature of oneself. In short, *Tattva Bōdhaḥ* is 'self-knowledge'; that is, knowledge about ourselves.

Why should we gain this self-knowledge? Do we get any benefit from this self-knowledge? Is it not a fact that no one will undertake anything unless there is some benefit? These are natural questions which may arise in one's mind.

Every human being is benefit oriented. There is an old Sanskrit saying:

प्रयोजनमनुद्धिश्य न मन्दोऽपि प्रवर्तते

*Prayōjanamanudhdhiśya na mandō'pi pravartatē*

No thinking human being or even a dull witted person will undertake any activity unless he/she gets some benefit out of that. So the question is “What does one gain out of self-knowledge?”

There are numerous benefits that we can get out of this knowledge. But here are the five most significant benefits.

a) जिज्ञासा निवृत्तिः (*Jijñāsā nivṛttiḥ*) - Satisfaction of natural curiosity

Every human being, because of his advanced intellect as compared to other living things, has a natural curiosity to know about things which are around him. This natural curiosity expresses itself in the form of one's exploring tendency. Wherever we go, we tend to look around. What are the things here? Who are all present here? What is this place? Even as a baby we have done that exploration. In fact a mother gets tired of answering the child's questions that sometimes she may even get wild with the number and type of questions the child asks. It is this tendency to explore; it is this curiosity, which is responsible for the constant increase in human knowledge. The entire humanity has all the time explored. The lands have been explored, continents have been discovered and explored, oceans and deep sea bed have been explored to discover the flora and fauna present there. We are not only exploring the land and the ocean but we are also exploring deep into the sky, space, planets, other galaxies, distant stars etc. We even have dedicated TV channels which show the lives of animals and plants.

One cannot imagine the amount of exploration that is going on even to know the habits of a lobster! Such exploration prompts certain fundamental questions raised by our intellect.

What is this creation? How did this creation start? Is there somebody as the creator of the Universe? Is there a God? If there is God, where is he? Why did he create this world? Why did he create me and dumped me in this world? When did life start? Did I have a past life or birth? What will happen to me after my death? Where do I go? Do I survive at all? Such questions can be endless. When these fundamental questions are answered, there is total intellectual satisfaction.

Wherever there is a developed intellect, curiosity to know three things abounds - to know about the World, to know about God and ultimately to know about oneself – expressed in Sanskrit, these are जगत् (*Jagat*)- the World , ईश्वरः (*Īśvaraḥ*)- God and जीवः (*Jīvaḥ*)- Self. This natural curiosity is known as जिज्ञासा (*Jijñāsā*) in Sanskrit.

Amongst the three, the maximum curiosity is to know more and more about oneself. Am I a free individual or is my life governed by other forces which I cannot control at all? How come certain things happen in my life even though I cannot find any reason for such experiences? There are infinite questions about ourselves which we cannot avoid. We don't get answers from our parents. Parents generally evade these questions because they themselves do not know the answer. And as we grow up and become adults,

we get busy in setting up our life, our family etc. and consequently we are unable to find the answers in our pre-occupation with worldly affairs. So while these questions are always kept aside and never answered, the curiosity never wanes.

For example, let us suppose that in a class room, the teacher places a big box in the middle which is covered with a cloth. All the students will be unable to focus on the lecture because they will constantly be thinking about the box, guessing what it could contain and speculating why it was placed there etc. This highlights the basic human tendency of the inability to withstand ignorance. Ignorance always drives us to explore. Ignorance makes us restless. Man cannot stand any ignorance especially ignorance of the self. And this self-knowledge, once gained brings a big relief to us. Thus the first benefit of this study is removing or quenching the curiosity expressed in questions like “Who am I? Why am I here? What is my destination?” “Am I in the right direction or not?” which is जिज्ञासा निवृत्तिः (*Jijñāsā nivṛttiḥ*).

The second benefit of this knowledge is the experience of a great sense of fulfillment on attaining this knowledge. This is called विद्यानन्द प्राप्तिः (*Vidyānanda prāptiḥ*) – Gaining knowledge driven happiness.

It is a happiness or joy born out of the discovery of our real nature; gaining the knowledge of the self, which is so wonderful, so unique that we would not have ever imagined. *Vidyānandā* is *ānandā* or happiness born out of *vidyā* – Knowledge. In this

context *vidyā* means self-knowledge. And since this knowledge is permanent and is never lost, this *ānandā* or happiness also continues perennially. All other things are exhausted in time or exhausted because we spend them, just as the body is exhausted in time and money is exhausted when we spend. Whereas, knowledge never gets exhausted, even after we share it with others. There is a famous adage in Sanskrit.

न चोरहार्यं न च राजहार्यं न भ्रातृभाज्यं न च भारकारी ।

व्यये कृते वर्धते एव नित्यं विद्याधनं सर्वधनात् प्रधानम् ॥

*Na cōrahāryam na ca rājahāryam na bhrātṛbhājyam na ca bhārakārī.*

*Vyayē kṛtē vardhatē ēva nityam vidyāadhanam sarvadhanāt pradhānam.*

Knowledge cannot be stolen by a thief. Knowledge cannot be taken away by the King or the Government and attached. Knowledge cannot be taken away by our relatives and knowledge cannot be a burden also. When we share the knowledge with others *vyayē kṛtē vardhatē ēva nityam* i.e. the more we teach or 'spend' the knowledge, it only keeps growing perennially. So knowledge is the highest form of wealth.

Any knowledge or any discovery gives us happiness. Here it is a subtler form of happiness because it is an intellectual pleasure and not a sensory pleasure. When we eat something tasty, there is happiness but it is a gross form of happiness – gross sensory

pleasure. When we read poetry or appreciate some art work – we get a happiness which is a bit more refined. But when we get knowledge especially the knowledge of the self, we get a still more refined happiness which is very subtle. This is called *vidyānandā*. We all can recall how Archimedes behaved as a result of the happiness he experienced when he made his discovery in a bath tub. Is he not known to have taken to the streets naked crying “Eureka!”, so excited by his discovery that he had even forgotten to dress!!!

The knowledge about oneself is much more fulfilling as compared to any other knowledge because it is the knowledge about the most intimate thing i.e. oneself . This is the ultimate knowledge. There is no knowledge beyond the knowledge of the self. And this happiness is most wonderful because when the scriptures give us this self-knowledge, they tell us that we are not ordinary defective persons that we think we are and take ourselves to be. The scriptures point out that we are the most wonderful beings in this creation. And when we learn about our real nature, which is such a unique and wonderful thing – our self-image gets a huge boost.

At present our self-image is in a miserable state. That is why all the time we are working to improve our image. Right from changing the hair style, dying the hair, changing the eyebrow, changing the tip of the nose, changing the alignment of the teeth, doing plastic surgery to facial parts etc., we are constantly trying to improve our self image. We feel that we have an awful and miserable self-image and we indulge in these cosmetic improvements so as to

present a better self-image to the society, an image which we know we don't naturally have. The irony is that all the while we are fully aware that it is all a false façade or front. We do this because we are not happy with what we are. And that is why, perhaps, most of us do not want anyone to visit us without advance notice!!! We don't want to be caught unawares with our natural image!!!

So most of our struggles in our life are to constantly improve our miserable self-image with which we are never satisfied. The scriptures talk about our image which is far different from and far superior to what we think.

The scriptures affirm that:

त्वमसि (*twamasi*) - You are - नित्य (*nitya*) - Eternal; शुद्ध (*śudhdha*) - Pure; बुद्ध (*budhdha*) - Enlightened; मुक्त (*mukta*) - Liberated; असङ्ग (*asaṅga*) - Unattached; सर्वगत (*sarvagatha*) - All pervading - स्वरूपः (*svarūpaḥ*) - Self.

So contrary to what we think, our nature is eternal, pure, enlightened, liberated, unattached and all pervading. It sounds is unbelievable, but it is true.

So when we gain this self-knowledge, it gives us the greatest joy. Thus the second benefit is *vidyānanda prāptiḥ*, the knowledge that "I have the best image in the world". What a nice thing to know!!! Even if it is false (which it is not), it is worth rejoicing!!!

The third benefit is कर्पण्य निवृत्तिः (*kārpaṇya nivṛttiḥ*) - Freedom from desperation. It is also known as

पारातंत्रिय निवृत्तिः (*pārātantriya nivṛtṭiḥ*) or

पारावश्य निवृत्तिः (*pārāvaśya nivṛtṭiḥ*) – both meaning freedom from dependence.

The *vidyānandā* that we get by self-knowledge is such a unique happiness that it is available to us all the time, unlike any other happiness in the world which is bound by time and space. If we think about it, all other forms of happiness are all bound by time. The happiness that we derive from listening to music will last as long as the music is playing. It has a beginning and it has an end. Further the happiness depends upon so many collateral conditions, like a noise free environment, good sound equipments, good rendering by the musician and the like. There is a dependence on so many conditions including the proper functioning of our sense faculties. For example, a person hard of hearing cannot get the same happiness from hearing music which another one with excellent hearing faculty can get. Take any type of pleasure we can imagine, it will have a beginning and an end and also often the conditions will be unpredictable. All worldly pleasures are wonderful but they have certain associated negative points. Firstly, they are all finite. Secondly, they are unpredictable. In Sanskrit the worldly pleasures are called

विषयानन्दा (*viṣayānandā*) - experiential pleasures. They are time bound, conditional, unpredictable pleasures. Wherever there is unpredictability, the resultant experience will be one of stress,



strain and anxiety. So in such circumstances, *vidyānandā* can serve as a wonderful standby.

For example, in worldly affairs, if we have unpredictability about our income, we will want some other source of income to fall back upon as a standby. An intelligent person will never rely upon an unpredictable thing. The scriptures point out that *vidyānandā* is a standby for *viṣayānandā*. And once there is a standby, we will be totally relaxed. There is no desperation. Are we not relaxed when we have a UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply) device in our house as a standby for power cuts!!! Once we have *vidyānandā*, the advantage we enjoy is that with regard to worldly pleasures, we are not desperate. We have a standby.

Thus we don't become a slave of worldly pleasures because whether worldly pleasures come or not, we already have a permanent source of joy. Just as we have some bank balance for emergency or a borewell as a standby for water supply, when we have a perennial source for joy, our dependence on the unpredictable and unreliable worldly pleasures gets reduced. If worldly pleasures come, it is wonderful. If not, we have got some other source to tap from.

Thus the 3<sup>rd</sup> benefit is the reduction of the desperate dependence upon the joy given by worldly people, relatives, possession or even the Government. In short, it is the freedom from desperation or freedom from helplessness. There is no stress or strain. This is very important because in modern times, everyone keeps talking about stress and strain. Seminars are organized on the subject of

stress and strain and ways and means to manage them. And the irony is that more often than not, the organizers themselves are fully stressed in their anxiety about the successful conduct of the programme in the light of various uncertainties!!!

This freedom from desperation is *kārpaṇya nivṛttiḥ*, the third benefit.

The fourth benefit is आघात निवृत्तिः (*āghāta nivṛttiḥ*) – Freedom from shock, trauma.

We all know from our experience that our life is not always a bed of roses. It is not always smooth sailing. Of course a number of things do go according to our plans. But in spite of our best efforts, planning, knowledge, etc. things can go beyond our control and they can lead to painful experiences. There can be no disagreement that life is a mixture of pleasurable and painful experiences.

Wherever we would like to change the painful experiences, we would certainly work for that. So if electric power supply fails, we will buy a generator. If the atmospheric temperature goes too high, we will try to get an air-conditioner. If the local transport system infrastructure is awful in the City, we may think of buying a car. Thus we may have solutions to many problems.

However, we all know that there are many situations for which we have no remedy at all. Even doctors sometimes say that one has to live with a certain physical condition. Medical science, no doubt, is very advanced and there are cures for many diseases. Even then, there are diseases for which medical science doesn't have any cure.

Leave aside the cure, they don't even know the cause of these diseases e.g. idiopathic diseases. Have we not come across such cases? All the parameters in the pathological tests could be clear but we may have continuous stomach problem. Even the advanced tests may fail to diagnose the cause of illness. This is just an example, but there are so many such situations over which we have no control including the behavior of our family members, be it husband, wife, in-laws, teenage children etc.!!!

Self-knowledge serves as a wonderful shock absorber. When we are facing adverse and challenging situations in life, this knowledge serves as a cushion, just like a shock absorber in a car. The shock absorbers are not needed when the roads are fine and smooth but when the roads are rough and bumpy with lot of potholes, they become useful. So we need to have them in the car always. They help us to withstand the shock when the roads are terrible. They help us in the prevention of ailments like spondylitis. Similarly self-knowledge helps us to avoid psychological spondylitis which is depression, anxiety, fear etc.

We can change some situations but there are many which we cannot change. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* calls them in the *Gītā* अपरिहार्यार्थ (*aparihāryārtha*) - choiceless situations, which we cannot escape and will have to live with. Some people try to commit suicide by taking some poisonous medicine but even those don't work properly at times and they survive!!!

पारिहार्य (pārihārya) means remediable. अर्थ (artha) means situations. So *aparihāryārtha* means non-remediable or remedy-less situations – choice less situations. The scriptures point out that we cannot find a remedy for choice-less situations. Why? Because – they are choice-less!!! The scriptures also point out that, even though we may not be able to change the situation; we can modify or reduce and in some cases totally avoid their impact on us or how it affects us psychologically. So while the situations cannot be changed, their impact can be altered. And that is why we often observe even within one family itself, when a tragedy strikes, different people are affected by different degrees. Event is one but the reactions are different.

When a toy falls down and breaks, it is the greatest tragedy for the child. But the mother or father does not react in the same manner as the child does. They console the child. The situation is the same but the reaction is different. So the situations may not change but their impact can be controlled by us. There is a beautiful example to understand this.

Imagine there are three cups of water placed in a row. The cup on the left side has hot water and the one on the right has cold water. The one in the middle has luke-warm water- medium temperature. You dip your fingers on the extreme cups, say for half a minute. And then you take the two fingers and dip them in the cup in the middle. The temperature in the cup is the same for both fingers. But the two fingers will experience it differently. To the finger which was earlier dipped in hot water, the water in the

middle cup will appear cold. Similarly, to the finger which was earlier dipped in cold water, the water in the middle cup will appear hot. This shows that the situations remaining the same, what we experience could be different and what we experience could be altered. And the contention of the scriptures is that we cannot change many situations, peoples, events etc. in the world but we can alter their impact on us, reduce the impact and sometimes even totally wipe out the impact. And this is what is termed as *āghāta nivṛttiḥ*.

In Sanskrit, the word *āghātaḥ* means impact, blow, shock, trauma, deep and permanent injury etc. caused by certain experiences. Certain acts of our family members, certain acts of our close friends may sometimes cause a deep injury and scar and some people never come out of that experience. They call it trauma. And our scriptures assert that self-knowledge or *ātmā jñānaṁ* is a very powerful medicine which can reduce the *āghātaḥ* of all painful experiences in life. It is the greatest shock absorber. It can reduce the impact of any worst tragedy in life so that a person does not suffer any permanent scar. The person is able to wipe out the pain within a few days and start living again. This resilience of the mind, this immunity of the mind, this self re-generation capacity of the mind can be obtained through self-knowledge, so that we can avoid going to psychiatrists or even think of suicide!!! This strength we get from self-knowledge. A wise person never has a shock, irrespective of the experience the life gives.

The 5<sup>th</sup> benefit is – दक्षता प्राप्तिः (*dakṣatā prāptiḥ*) – Gaining efficiency.

When our mind is well balanced because we have got a shock absorber, the mind does not go through turbulent conditions at all. A poised mind is an effective mind. An emotionally disturbed mind is a handicapped mind. And even if we have high learning and we are highly educated, if we don't have emotional balance, our education becomes useless because in a disturbed mind, we cannot tap the knowledge. And that is why nowadays Psychologists say that Emotional Quotient (EQ) is more important than Intelligence Quotient (IQ). IQ represents high intellect, high knowledge, sharpness of mind etc. EQ represents the capacity to remain balanced when things go haywire. And they say a person with a high IQ cannot perform better if he has a low EQ. On the contrary, if a person has a high EQ, he can fully tap whatever knowledge he has, because emotionally balanced mind means intellectually available. In fact, emotional disturbance is like VIRUS for the brain computer – Vital Information Resources under Siege, which means that the information stored in our brain is not available for our tapping. The intelligence has been hijacked by the terrorists and militants called 'emotional problem'. And self-knowledge is an effective protection against this VIRUS. And once this VIRUS is handled, the IQ becomes fully available for our present performance and naturally a poised person is able to perform better. Thus even from a worldly angle, a person of self-knowledge can accomplish better than other people.

When we transact with the world on a day to day basis, there are two personalities of us, which are functioning all the time. The first is 'Receiver-Reactor' personality and the second the 'Doer' personality.

The 'Receiver-Reactor' personality is that which receives the experiences of life – the 'Receiver' by way of the inputs which keep coming continuously from the world – things, people, relationships and experiences etc. Even as we receive them we react to those inputs, as happy, unhappy, satisfied, joyous, miserable, terrible, elated etc. This is the 'Reactor' side of the 'Receiver-Reactor' personality. In the scriptures this is called भोक्ता (*bhōktā*) – the one who receives the experiences and goes through emotional reactions like राग (*rāga*) – attachment, द्वेष (*dvēṣa*) – hatred, काम (*kāma*) – pleasure, क्रोध (*krōdha*) – anger, मोह (*mōha*) – delusion, लोभ (*lōbha*) – greed, मद (*mada*) – conceit or pride and मात्सर्य (*mātsarya*) – envy or jealousy; they all belong to the *bhōktā*.

And there is a second personality which is constantly working – that is “I want to do a lot of things in my life. I have several goals, plans. I have got an agenda for the entire life and am continuously adding fresh ones, etc”. The one who is working in life to fulfill the agenda is called the कर्ता (*kartā*) – the doer.

These two personalities i.e. *bhōktā* and *kartā*, are closely interconnected i.e. the receiver of experiences and the performer of actions. They are like the two sides of the same coin. Since they are so intimately connected, the efficiency of the *kartā* is heavily dependent on the condition of the *bhōktā*. Even in sports, the performance of a sports person is heavily affected when he or she has some problem in the personal life, family life etc. We have numerous examples of this. If early in the morning we have some sour experience because of which our mind is disturbed, it will have a negative impact on all our actions during that day. So if the *bhōktā* is disturbed, it will affect the efficiency of the *kartā*. So it follows that, if *bhōktā* can be improved, the efficiency of the *kartā* can be improved.

We have already seen that the 4<sup>th</sup> benefit is *āghāta nivṛttiḥ*, which is a shock absorber. So as a *bhōktā*, if we have a shock absorber, as a *kartā*, we will perform better. So *āghāta nivṛttiḥ* leads to a better performance in life. We will be able to set aside those disturbing experiences because the *bhōktā* is not traumatized. Thus the 5<sup>th</sup> benefit is the improvement the efficiency of whatever we choose to do in life. This is because as a *bhōktā*, we have the shock absorber which will keep our mind calm and poised and which will help us to significantly improve our efficiency in all our actions. Many times children have this problem. The child would have studied very well for the examination and would be confident of scoring full marks. But when he or she gets the question paper in the examination hall, the child may not know the answer to the first



question. He or she is bound to get flustered and nervous. Even though there may be many alternate choices in the question paper, the poise and mental faculty is bound to get disturbed. But if the child can maintain the balance and forget the first question, read the other questions carefully and answer them properly, the *bhōktā* child will not be affected by the *kartā* child. But some children become panicky. Even though such children may know the answer to the second question, because of the panic, they are likely to forget the answer to the second question. And when this happens the panic multiplies and this leads to confusion and forgetfulness of the answers to all other questions.

Therefore, this capacity to shelve the *bhōktā*, not to get traumatized, have the emotional balance and be efficient in whatever we are doing, is called *dakṣatā prāptiḥ*. *Dakṣatā* means efficiency. Thus improving our efficiency in every field is the 5<sup>th</sup> benefit.

Thus all these 5 benefits will be achieved through acquiring self-knowledge.



## ***Scheme of the Śāstrās***

Once we have understood the benefits of self-knowledge, an obvious question is - Where can we find this knowledge? What are the sources of this self-knowledge?

People may be academically well qualified with degrees that literally run from A to Z - and are professionally well accomplished. But they often tend to break down when faced with life as a householder or even some competitive situations in their workplace. These issues could range from a simple difference of opinion with the spouse, disagreement with children, a misunderstanding with a close friend or differences with superiors and colleagues in office etc. When faced with such situations, all academic degrees and professional achievements, all the knowledge from these sources, do not come to the rescue, because all this knowledge and professional achievements do not provide any guidance . They do not deal with the moot question “Whom am I who is facing this world? In what capacity am I dealing with this world?”

And, therefore, when all the worldly knowledge fails, it follows that one should go in search of some other source for gaining the knowledge required to face the world. This is where our traditional scriptural literature plays a very very important role. In this vast ocean of literature, we have four layers of scriptures that concentrate on self-knowledge.

The first and original source is called the वेद (*Vēda*) or श्रुति (*Śruti*), which is said to be discovered by the ṛṣis or sages. It is said that the *Vēdās* were directly revealed to the ṛṣis by the Lord or ‘the Creator’ himself when they were in deep meditation. The sages were the ‘seers’ of the *Vēdās*. They did not compose them. They received the *Vēdās* directly when their minds were attuned to the frequency in which these were transmitted by the Lord. It’s just like television or radio where one can watch or listen to a particular program only by tuning into a specific transmission centre and a specific frequency channel.

Similarly the sages received these revelations called *Vēdās*, which are the source of knowledge. *Vēda* means true knowledge. This is the first layer - which we will call *Śruti*.

The second layer of knowledge is called स्मृति (*Smṛti*). *Smṛti* is a body of literature written by the ṛṣis – the sages elaborating the contents of the *Śruti*. So unlike the *Śrutis*, the ṛṣis are the authors of the *Smṛtis*.

The third layer of literature is called ब्रह्म सूत्राणि (*Brahma sūtrāṇi*) or the *sūtrā* literature, which is also written by ṛṣis. The most important *sūtrā* is the *Brahma sūtrā*. This literature is unique because it gives a logical support to the teachings in the *Śruti* and *Smṛti*. It reinforces the teachings, satisfying our reasoning and scientific intellect. Our intellect understands the language of reason only. And therefore the *sūtrā* literature reinforces the

knowledge contained in *Śruti* and *Smṛti* with तर्क (*tarka*) – reasoning and न्याय (*nyāya*) – logical inference. This is the third layer of literature and these three layers are considered to be the most important sources for self knowledge. These are the foundations or pillars of our traditional wisdom. These three are called प्रस्थान त्रयम् (*prasthāna trayam*). *Prasthāna* means the method of gaining knowledge or the path of knowing and *trayam* means three; the fundamental three; the original source of self-knowledge.

*Upaniṣads* come under the *Vēdās* or the original source. All the *Upaniṣads* are called *Śruti prasthānam*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* comes under *Smṛti* because it has been written by Sage *Vyāsācārya*, a great ṛṣi as a part of the great epic *Mahābhārata*.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is called *Smṛti prasthānam*. *Brahma sūtrā* is called *Nyāya prasthānam*.

And then we have a fourth layer which is called प्रकरणम् (*prakaraṇam*) which is authored by the various आचार्याः (*ācāryās*) - teachers or the *gurus* in our परम्परा (*paramparā*) or tradition. The original wisdom has been carried forward generation after generation by the गुरु-शिष्य (*guru-śiṣya*) *paramparā*. Several works have been written by traditional teachers like *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* and his disciples like *Surēśvarācārya* and *Vidyāranya Svāmi* who was a great *ācāryā* of *Śṛṅgērī pīṭham*.

Even today, great *ācāryās* are continuously adding to these teachings. Therefore, unlike the first three which are the works of sages or *ṛṣis*, the *prakaraṇaṃ* are works of the *ācāryās*. These are the four sources of self-knowledge.

We have innumerable *prakaraṇaṃs* written by innumerable *ācāryās*. And generally a systematic *Vēdāntik* study starts with *prakaraṇaṃs* rather than delving straight into the *prasthāna trayam* – the original sources. The reason we choose the *prakaraṇaṃs* is that they are written by later *ācāryās* who can understand the minds of the modern generation. They have the ability to present the teachings in a language and with modern examples that can be better understood by the present generation. The original works cannot give modern examples. Moreover, these works are in Sanskrit, a language which many people in the modern times do not follow. As the later *ācāryās* can render the teaching in a language understood by the modern students, it is easier to start with the *prakaraṇaṃs*.

One of the simplest *prakaraṇaṃ* is known as *Tattva bōdhaḥ*, a text we have selected for our current study. *Tattva bōdhaḥ* is based on on the teachings contained in the *prasthāna trayam*. It is written using a simple form and in a simple language. It is comprehensive and the thoughts are presented systematically. The author has adopted a prose style in this text. It is generally believed that the *Tattva bōdhaḥ* was originally written by *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*. However, opinions differ on this. Another school of thought claims that this was actually written by a disciple of an *ācāryā*

called *Vāsudēvēndra Sarasvatī* because, as we shall see later, the text starts with prayers offered to *Vāsudēvēndra* who is stated to be the *guru* of the author. It is the tradition of all *ācāryās* to start their works with a prayer offered to their *gurus* and God. The author's name does not appear anywhere in the text.

It can therefore be surmised that the *Tattva bōdhaḥ* was written by an un-named author who was a disciple of a *ācāryā* called *Vāsudēvēndra Sarasvatī*. Generally, this name is given to *ācāryās* belonging to the *Kāñcī pīṭham* tradition. *Indra Sarasvatī* is the suffix that all *ācāryās* of the *Kāñcī* tradition use. For example, we all know of *Candrasēkharēndra Sarasvatī*, *Jayēndra Sarasvatī*, *Śankara Vijayēndra Sarasvatī* – all *ācāryās* belonging to the *Kāñcī pīṭham paramparā*. And, therefore, the author could have been a *ācāryā* connected with the *Kāñcī pīṭham*. However, these are mere conjectures as no more details are available. Having said that, it does not really matter who the author of the text is? It is enough to understand that the author is a *ācāryā* who had complete knowledge of the scriptures and being of the modern times, has presented this knowledge in a simple and easy to understand format.

The studying of the *Tattva bōdhaḥ* has twin objectives. The first is to systematically acquire self-knowledge, which is the primary aim. We have already seen in the previous chapter that self-knowledge has a five-fold benefit. Therefore, gathering self-knowledge in a systematic manner is the first objective.

The second objective is, as even the author gives or imparts this knowledge; the author is systematically introducing us to the technical terms used in the scriptures. We call it the jargons of a particular science. Like a lawyer uses legal jargons, a doctor uses medical jargons, etc., every subject has got its own technical terms which are almost impossible to translate in any other language. An effective way to study any subject is to learn and understand the technical terms and start using them in learning that subject.

The author, through *Tattva bōdhaḥ* introduces us to these technical terms found in our scriptures. In Sanskrit these technical terms are called परिभाषा (*paribhāṣā*). The word भाषा (*bhāṣā*) means normal terms and *paribhāṣā* means technical terms used only in that particular śāstrā or scripture. For example, there are different śāstrās or scriptures like तर्क शास्त्र (*tarka śāstra*), व्याकरण शास्त्र (*vyākaraṇa śāstra*), मीमांसा शास्त्र (*mīmāṁsā śāstra*), योग शास्त्र (*Yōga śāstra*), वेदान्त शास्त्र (*vēdānta śāstra*), नाट्य शास्त्र (*nāṭya śāstra*) etc. and in every śāstrā there are *paribhāṣā* शब्दाः (*śabdāḥ*) – words or terms and we start our learning with these technical terms. Once we are equipped with this tool, it becomes a lot easier later on to read and understand the the *prasthāna trayam*. With this background we now enter the text proper.

The entire text of *Tattva bōdhaḥ* is in a prose form, except for the first and last portions, which are in the form of verses.



## **Invocation - Prayer**

वासुदेवेन्द्रयोगीन्द्रं नत्वा ज्ञानप्रदं गुरुम् ।

मुमुक्षूणां हितार्थाय तत्त्वबोधोऽभिधीयते । ।

*Vāsudēvēndrayōgīndraṁ natvā jñānapradaṁ gurum*

*Mumukṣūṇāṁ hitārthāya tattvabōdhō'bhidhīyatē*

In the Indian tradition, before starting any project, undertaking or endeavour - be it a worldly or a religious activity - it is customary to start with a prayer offering. A prayerful attitude is the uniqueness of the Indian culture. In this culture, prayer is not confined to a particular place and time but it is believed that our whole life should be conducted with a prayerful attitude. We believe that we have to convert every activity into a worship of the Lord. Work is worship for us. That is why at the end of the 9 days of *navarātri* (nine nights) *pūjā*, we celebrate the *āyudha* (Instruments) *pūjā*, which has nothing to do with the religious festival of *navarātri*. On this day, the instruments that a person uses to earn his living like a carpenter's tools, the tools of a goldsmith or an ironsmith, musical instruments and the like are worshipped. Another example of this reverential attitude is that a bus driver, when he takes out his bus in the morning, first offers a prayer. Also most drivers will not go in reverse while driving the bus for the first time in a day. They will go forward a little bit and then only go in the reverse. These are examples of attitude. The philosophy is that in life one should always go forward.

According to the philosophy, success always depends on two factors. The first factor is our own sincere effort, which we call प्रयत्नः (*prayatnaḥ*) – self effort. Without this self effort nothing can take place and nothing can be achieved. The second factor is ईश्वर अनुग्रहः (*Īśvara anugrahaḥ*) – the Grace of the Lord, which pertains to all the unseen, unpredictable factors. It is equally important that these factors are favourable to us for the success of our endeavour.

For example, as a farmer we can sow the seeds for a good crop, but rains must come on time. This is not in our control. We can set out on a journey or a trip, but we wouldn't know if we will get caught in the traffic or will have to reroute due to a road diversion. We may plan a grand party to entertain friends at home but we cannot know if the fun will be spoiled by a sudden power cut. There are a number of such factors that are beyond our control.

All these external uncontrollable factors are called दैवं (*Daivam*) in the scriptures. *Daivam* is equal to unpredictable, uncontrollable factors. Therefore before we start any endeavour, we pray that this *Daivam* must be favourable to us. Some may choose to call it luck or good luck. But the scriptures don't call it luck. It is called *Īśvara anugrahaḥ*.

Thus both self-effort and Grace of the Lord are equally important for success. Effort is something we can take care of. It is under our control. But the question is how to handle *Daivam*? This is

accomplished by offering prayers. The scriptures proclaim that prayers have the capacity to alter extraneous factors.

One can, therefore, fully understand the anxiety of the author of *Tattva bōdhaḥ*. He may start writing the book but he does not know if he will be able to complete it. He knows that there are factors beyond his control which will determine the success or otherwise of this endeavour. And therefore, the author invokes the grace of the Lord in the very first verse.

And for the students for whom this text is meant, their anxiety would be that the study, which they have commenced, should conclude successfully. Even for this, they require the grace of the Lord; to overcome obstacles that may come in the way of their pursuit. The first verse is, therefore, called the invocatory verse or in Sanskrit प्रार्थना श्लोका (*prārthanā ślōkā*).

Another uniqueness of the Hindu tradition is that the teachers or *gurus* are looked upon as manifestations of the Lord himself. They are the blessings given by the Lord himself. That the *guru* or teacher is held in the highest esteem is demonstrated in the following verse.

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।

गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः । ।

*Gururbrahmā gururviṣṇuḥ gururdēvō mahēśvaraḥ*

*Gururēva param brahma tasmai śrīguravē namaḥ.*

ब्रह्मा (*Brahmā*), विष्णुः (*Viṣṇuḥ*) and महेश्वरः (*Mahēśvaraḥ*) are the Hindu trinity Gods. So this verse means the teacher i.e. *guru* is *Brahmā*, the *guru* is *Viṣṇuḥ*, the *Guru* is *Mahēśvaraḥ*. The *guru* is verily the परब्रह्म *param Brahman* – the Supreme *Brahman*; Salutations to that *guru*.

As stated earlier, since *guru* and God are one and the same, often a prayer to the Lord is replaced by a prayer to the *guru*. ईश्वर प्रार्थना (*Īśvara prārthanā*) is replaced by गुरु प्रार्थना (*guru prārthanā*). And, therefore, this author also is offering his salutations to his *guru* – *Vāsudēvēndra yōgīndra*.

Now let's consider the meaning of the verse.

नत्वा (*natvā*) means I offer; my नमस्कारः (*namaskāraḥ*) i.e. salutations. (And alongwith the author we also offer our prostrations); to वासुदेवेन्द्रयोगीन्द्रं (*Vāsudēvēndra yōgīndraṁ*) – the *guru* whose name is *Vāsudēvēndra* and who is योगीन्द्रः (*yōgīndraḥ*) – a great *yōgi*. In Sanskrit, the word इन्द्रः (*indraḥ*) means 'great', when it occurs as a suffix at the end of a word. For example, सिम्हेन्द्रः (*simhēndraḥ*) means the 'Great Lion', मनुष्येन्द्रः (*manuṣyēndraḥ*) means 'Great man' etc.

The word *yōga* has several meanings. The most popular one refers to the *yōga āsanās*, which are physical exercises or postures.

But in this context, the word *yōga* means self-knowledge. Therefore, *yōgi* means the one who has self-knowledge – a wise person – a *jñāni*. So *yōgīndraḥ* means *jñānēndraḥ* that is a ‘Great *jñāni*’.

And interestingly *Vāsudēva* is also one of the names of Lord *Kṛṣṇa* who is also considered as a great *guru* as he gave the teachings contained in the *Bhagavad Gītā* to the world. Thus the author indirectly salutes Lord *Kṛṣṇa* also. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* is referred to as a *Jagadguru* – teacher to the world, in the following oft quoted verse.

वसुदेवसुतं देवं कंसचाणूरमर्दनम् देवकीपरमानन्दं कृष्णं वन्दे जगद्गुरुम् ।

*Vasudēvasutaṁ dēvaṁ kaṁsacāṇūramardanam*

*Dēvakīparamānandaṁ kṛṣṇaṁ vandē jagadgurum*

Thus indirectly the *namaskāraḥ* or salutations go to *Jagadguru Kṛṣṇa* also.

And why is the author offering salutations to *Vāsudēvēndra*? He gives the reason. The author says that *Vāsudēvēndra* is गुरुम् (*guruṁ*) that is, “my *guru*, my *ācāryaḥ*, my guide, my master, my teacher”. The word *guru* means the one who shines the light to remove the darkness or ignorance. In Sanskrit, *ru* means light and *gu* means darkness. So *guru* means the light which removes darkness. The derivation of this word is explained in the following verse.

गुकारस्त्वन्धकारो वै रुकारस्तन्निवर्तकः।

अन्धकारनिवर्तित्वात् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते॥

*Gukārastvandhakārō vai rukārastannivartakaḥ*

*Andhakāranivartitvāt gururityabhidhīyatē*

The meaning of this verse is that the local light will remove the external darkness whereas knowledge will remove the internal darkness. And the person who removes the internal darkness called ignorance through knowledge is called a *guru*.

And what has the *guru* given? ज्ञानप्रदं (*jñāna pradam*)-

ज्ञानम् (*jñānam*) means knowledge. प्रदं (*pradam*) means grant or bestow.

The author says that his *guru* has given him knowledge; he has blessed him with knowledge. And we need to understand in this context that the knowledge he is referring to is आत्मा ज्ञानम् (*ātma jñānam*) i.e knowledge of the self.

And through this verse the author is hinting at another important idea also. He implies that he did not beget this self-knowledge by self-study. He did not attain self-knowledge by his own *sādhana* – efforts. He took the help of a *guru*. Just as every person pursuing his Doctoral degree should have a guide, in the spiritual field also having a guide is compulsory. Without that, one is liable to be misguided, and confused. And therefore, the author says by

implication, that like him, every student should get this self knowledge only through a *guru*.

Thus the underlying message is that, one should obtain this knowledge from someone who is competent to teach this subject. One must not rely on translations. If sports like cricket, football, tennis etc. require a guide or a coach, what to talk of this highest pursuit in life of acquiring self-knowledge?

Having offered his salutations and also glorified his *guru*, the author next states the purpose of his endeavour.

तत्त्व बोधः अभिधीयते (*Tattva bōdhaḥ abhidhīyatē*). *Abhidhīyatē*

means teaching or imparting. He says that he is going to teach or impart; *bōdhaḥ* the knowledge of; the *Tattvam* i.e the real self, the real nature, the higher nature, the superior nature.

And here is another important message from the author. What we see, what we perceive with the help of our senses need not be the real nature of any thing or any object. Let us take the case of scientific progress. When the scientists initially entered into the enquiry of the creation, they found that the creation has some other truth than what they could perceive. This led to the discovery of many elements. Their first conclusion was that the combination of the elements was the creation. Thereafter, after further research, their views changed. They then thought that the elements were not the true nature but that they were made up of various molecules, and so the molecules were the true nature of

the creation. Thereafter, more research followed and they discovered that the molecules were made up of atoms. Now they surmised that it was not the molecules but the atoms which formed the fundamentals of the nature or creation. This theory also got negated when they discovered the sub-atomic particles and said that the creation was made up of sub-atomic particles. And now the current thinking is that creation is nothing but energy in motion.

So according to modern Science, the true nature of the solid tangible wall that we see with our eyes and feel with our hands is in fact, the non-tangible energy! Does this sound believable? Energy cannot be seen but we can see the wall. Energy cannot be touched, but the wall we can touch. This untouchable, imperceptible energy is the true nature of this tangible and perceptible wall. This means what the eyes see is not the true nature of anything. What the sense organs perceive is not the true nature of anything in the creation. So we can conclude that sense organs do not report the real nature.

Similarly, the author seems to be implying here that “When I am seeing your self, it is not the real you that I see. It is something different. I cannot trust my sense organs to see the real self in you. And that is why I am going to impart the knowledge of the real nature of the self”.

And all this is for whose benefit?



मुमुक्षूणां हितार्थाय (*mumukṣūṇāṃ hitārthāya*). *Hitārthāya* means for the benefit of; *mumukṣūṇāṃ* refers to those persons who are serious seekers of मोक्षः (*mōkṣaḥ*) - the five fold benefits discussed in the previous chapter, which collectively is called *mōkṣaḥ*. This is मंगल श्लोकः (*mangala ślōkaḥ*) - auspicious verse or *prārthanā ślōkaḥ* - prayer verse. In English, we call it the benedictory verse. In the *Vēdās* such a verse is called शान्ति पाठः (*śānti pāṭhaḥ*). This opening prayer is in verse form.

Hereafter we enter the text which is in prose form.



***Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Sampattiḥ- The Four-fold  
qualifications***

## ***Introduction to the four-fold qualifications***

The author commences his teaching by outlining the qualifications required for a serious seeker to pursue this knowledge. He briefly states that in the following sentence.

साधनचतुष्टयसंपन्नाधिकारिणां मोक्षसाधनभूतं तत्त्वविवेकप्रकारम् वक्ष्यामः

*Sādhana-catuṣṭaya sampannādhikāriṇāṁ mōkṣasādhānabhūtaṁ  
tattvavivēka-prakāram vakṣyāmaḥ*

The author introduces the text in a very beautiful and systematic manner. He expresses three points in this opening sentence.

1. What I am going to teach? What is the subject to be taught?
2. What is the purpose of this study? What benefit is to be derived from teaching? and
3. For whom is this teaching meant? What is the target group, if one were to borrow a term from the modern business management parlance?

The opening sentence, therefore, addresses what, for what and for whom?

First let us consider the question ‘What is being taught?’

The author says तत्त्वविवेकप्रकारम् (*tattvavivēka-prakāram*). *Tattva* in this context means oneself i.e. real nature of oneself which is popularly called as *ātmā* in the *śāstrās*. विवेकः (*vivēkaḥ*) means

analysis or enquiry. So *tattva vivēkaḥ* means self-analysis, self-enquiry or finding out whom really am I?

**प्रकारः** (*prakārah*) means the method, the procedures. So joining the three words *Tattva vivēka prakārah* means the method of self-enquiry, the method of self-analysis.

Self-enquiry will lead to self-knowledge. We know that an enquiry into any subject will lead to the knowledge of that subject. And, therefore, the author says that he is going to deal with the topic of self knowledge through self enquiry so that “you will know yourself better”.

Now if you say, “I already know about myself”, the response of the scriptures is ““you think you know. But really speaking, you don’t know who you are? And even if you don’t know, it doesn’t matter because ignorance, it is said, is bliss. The problem is that not only you don’t know who you are but you have got all kinds of misconceptions about yourself which makes the life worse.

Ignorance, by itself, will not create that much of a problem, but erroneous conclusions will lead to worse problems. Self-ignorance and self-error or misconception, are two problems that are causing havoc in your life. Therefore, better remove the ignorance and misconception and know who you really are”. This is the answer to the first question ‘What is the subject to be taught?’

The second question one may ask is “What is the benefit or purpose for which I have to gain this knowledge? I have successfully managed so many years. I have got married, I have

got children, I have got grand-children. If I have managed successfully for so many years, can I not manage a few more years without *Tattva bōdhaḥ*? Why are you interfering in my life”.

To this, the author responds “Do you really believe that all along you have led a quality life, a life free of strife and misery, life full of happiness and liberation? You have to be honest to yourself”. Other than a *jñāni*, a realized soul, no one can honestly answer this question in the affirmative. “So”, the author continues “why can’t you have a quality life for atleast the remaining few years of your life?”

And this knowledge is the only means to have that quality life which is मोक्ष साधन भूतम् (*mōkṣa sādhanā bhūtaṁ*). *Bhūtaṁ* means in the form of; *sādhanāṁ* means an instrument or a cause; *mōkṣa* means the five fold benefits described in the first Chapter. So, *mōkṣa sādhanā bhūtaṁ* means that which happens to be the means of attaining *mōkṣa*.

The author says “I shall teach you this knowledge”. This knowledge will give *mōkṣa* which would be a welcome benefit for every human being. This will transform the quality of one’s life. The advantage will be, when the quality of one’s life increases, it benefits other members of the family also. So atleast for the benefit of other members of the family, for the peace of mind of other members of the family, shouldn’t one improve?

The next question is “For whom, is this teaching meant for? What is the target audience?” Every institution, be it educational

institution, or a commercial organization or a scientific research institution etc., has to address this question right in the beginning of undertaking any venture. That is who is eligible to use the product?

For example, a student who has to seek admission in any institution has to have several qualifications or eligibility etc. If he has to study any professional course, he needs to go through an Aptitude Test. If he has to seek admission in a US University for a Master's level programme, he has to first qualify through the GMAT or GRE examinations. Even in sports one has to go through qualifying rounds.

In this case, the author calls the target audience for this knowledge as अधिकारिणां (*adhikāriṇām*). अधिकारी (*adhikārī*) means the eligible students, fit students, prepared students. So the author says that I am teaching this self-knowledge for those students who are fit, ready and prepared to receive this knowledge.

The eligible students are those who possess साधन चतुष्टय

संपत्तिः (*sādhana catuṣṭaya sampattiḥ*). संपन्नः (*sampannaḥ*) means the one who has or is endowed with virtue and this virtue is साधनचतुष्टयं (*sādhana catuṣṭayam*). *Catuṣṭaya* means the four fold virtues, the four fold disciplines or the four fold qualifications. Whoever possess these are called the *adhikārīs*.

So to sum up, the author says that he is imparting self-knowledge to the qualified students for attainment of *mōkṣa*. वक्ष्यामः

(*vakṣyāmaḥ*). The author completes the sentence stating “I am communicating, I am transferring this knowledge.”

Obviously, the next question would be “what are these virtues or qualifications?”, so that one can find out if one is eligible or not for receiving this self-knowledge.

It is worth pointing out here that the author presents the entire teaching in the form of a dialogue. This is one of the methods of teaching used by *ācāryās* especially philosophers. Even some Western philosophers use the format of dialogue for presenting their thoughts. Some of the philosophical books themselves are called ‘**Dialogues**’. The advantage of this method is that there is an imaginary student and an imaginary teacher. The student raises the questions and the teacher answers. And the questions raised by the students are generally the ones commonly asked by the people. In the modern parlance they are called FAQs – Frequently Asked Questions. So the author uses the FAQ method to communicate this teaching.

Now in a dialogue format, it is necessary to know what words are spoken by the student and what words are spoken by the teacher. Mostly, the context itself would supply this detail. However, if it is absent, like in this text, we have to supply the same.

So wherever a question is raised in this text, we have to assume that the student is raising the question. In scriptural parlance this would be stated as शिष्यः उवाच (*śiṣyaḥ uvāca*) – the student asks or



states. Similarly for the answers we have to supply गुरुः

उवाच (*guruḥ uvāca*) or आचार्यः उवाच (*ācāryāḥ uvāca*).

With this background let us look at this set of Q & A.

साधनचतुष्टयं किम् ?

नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः । इहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविरागः ।

शमादिषट्कसंपत्तिः । मुमुक्षुत्वम् चेति ।

*Sādhana catuṣṭayaṁ kiṁ?*

*Nityānityavastu vivēkaḥ. Ihāmutrārthaphalabhōga virāgaḥ.*

*Śamādi Ṣaṭka sampattiḥ. Mumukṣutvam cēti.*

The student asks:

*Sādhana catuṣṭayaṁ kiṁ?* What is the four fold requirement for self-knowledge, so that I can acquire them (if I do not have them)?

The teacher enumerates.

1) नित्य अनित्य वस्तु विवेकः (*nityānityavastu vivēkaḥ*).

The first one is *vivēkaḥ* which means discriminative knowledge or clarity in thinking. The most important virtue in life is freedom from muddled or confused thinking. Even in the worst crisis the one that can keep his cool and enjoy clarity in thinking, can win.

*Ādi Śaṅkarācārya* has written a very famous work called विवेक

चूडामणि (*Vivēka cūḍāmaṇi*) which consists of 580+ verses.

*Cūḍāmaṇi* means the Crest Jewel. The *ācāryā* says that

discrimination or clear thinking alone is the primary ornament of a human being. The gold ornaments and jewels are the not the real ornaments.

Of course, in the contemporary times, the word discrimination is used in the media and newspapers in a negative sense. For example, caste discrimination, gender discrimination, nationality discrimination etc. In these contexts, the word discrimination has the connotation of partiality. But in *Vēdāntā* the word used is *vivēkaḥ* which, in the absence of a better equivalent in English, is translated as discrimination in a positive sense which connotes clear thinking; insight; discernment. So the first qualification is *vivēkaḥ* or discrimination.

Before going into the details, let us briefly understand what is meant by *nitya anitya vastuvivēkaḥ*. *Nitya vastu* means a permanent one; a permanent thing or a permanent entity.

Whatever is permanent is called *nityam*. *Anitya Vastu* means that which is impermanent. And *vivēkaḥ*, as we have seen means discrimination. So the author says that the first qualification is to have a clear awareness of the fact of what is permanent and what is impermanent.

What is the purpose of knowing that? The purpose is that if one knows what is impermanent, he will never have wrong expectations. He will not expect permanence in an impermanent thing. For example, permanent happiness cannot come from an impermanent thing. This is a very simple fact. But we always expect otherwise. Permanent security cannot come from an

impermanent thing. So if one is expecting permanent happiness and permanent security from impermanent sources, then that becomes a foolish and unintelligent expectation. And every unintelligent expectation will lead to sorrows in life.

In fact most of our sorrows in life are not caused by the world or other people. If we examine carefully, we will find that our own wrong expectations are the causes for our sorrow. Every grief which comes into our life is caused by wrong expectations. In our younger days we might have liked something. And as we grew up, the likes changed. They would have been replaced by new likes and dislikes. It is, therefore, clear that no like is permanent and no dislike is permanent. And this is not only with regard to things but with regard to people also. And, therefore, the people who once upon a time said “I love you” may not all the time say “I love you”. Why? - Because mind changes; values change; ideas change; perceptions change. So we have to understand that our body changes, our mind changes and none of them can remain the same all the time. If we expect them to remain the same all the time, whose mistake is it? It is not the mistake of the changing world but it is the mistake of our unintelligent expectation. And if we want anything permanent, i.e. permanent happiness or permanent security, we should seek them from a permanent source. An intelligent person will seek permanent happiness from permanent source, temporary happiness from a temporary source. There is no harm in seeking temporary happiness or temporary security knowing fully well that it is temporary, because we know

that it will end, sooner or later. So there is no damage. There is no false expectation. We should, therefore, have clarity in thinking of what we should seek where?

For example, if we go an Apparel shop for Deepavali or Christmas shopping... What will we get there? – Only clothes and dresses. If we want shoes we have to go a shoe shop. So we must be very clear what we will get where. This clarity of thinking regarding what is permanent and what is impermanent is called *vivēkaḥ* .

As regards the second qualification i.e. dispassion the author states इहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविरागः (*ihāmutrārtha phala bhōga virāgaḥ*) – in short we can say, *virāgaḥ*. This means dispassion; freedom from all types of addiction; freedom from all types of sensory slavery; freedom from all types of emotional hooks. Freedom here connotes mastery.

Any type of addiction or slavery creates a stress in the mind. A slave can never think clearly and therefore, an important qualification for any learning is emotional relaxation. So *virāgaḥ* means freedom from slavery or addictions.

One should be very careful in understanding this qualification. There is a general misconception that dispassion means controlling the mind or suppressing the desires. *Vēdāntā* never advocates such an approach as it is dangerous and could lead to a lot of unpleasant consequences. What is meant by dispassion is gaining mastery over the mind and sense organs so that their activities can be carefully regulated. What *Vēdāntā* scorns at is addiction or

slavery to sensory pleasures. It does not advocate complete avoidance. Any addiction is bad and unhealthy and once a person is addicted to sensory pleasures, he will have no time for other useful pursuits, what to talk of learning *Vēdāntā*!

Thus the author is not against sense pleasures but he is against addiction to sense pleasures. And sense pleasures are again divided into two. इह अर्थ (*iha artha*) and अमुत्र अर्थ (*amutra artha*).

*Iha artha* means sense pleasures available at present or in current times. *Amutra artha* means the sense pleasures which would become available in future, in a different time and a different place.

We know that human beings are obsessed with both; not only with the present but we are also obsessed with the future. Building castles in the air is a favourite past time for most us!

“What will happen after my child completes his or her education? He/She will get a wonderful job, get enough money, get settled, get married, have children and take me for a world tour etc.” Such dreams are not uncommon. The irony is that the child being talked about will be only 2 years old now and this parent is imagining a world tour being sponsored by the child!!! This is called fantasy or fantasising. Our mind is trapped permanently in these two types of pleasures. Sometimes we are so obsessed and preoccupied with the future that we tend to ignore the present.

The author, therefore, talks about the फलम् (*phalam*) - the result of one's efforts, in both *iha* and *amutra arthās* i.e. present and future sensory pleasures. These are कर्म फलम् (*karma phalam*). भोग (*bhōga*) means enjoyment. So with regard to the sensory enjoyment of the present and future, the qualification required is *virāgaḥ* - i.e freedom from addiction, obsession, craving, madness etc.

The third qualification is शमादिषट्कसंपत्तिः (*śamādi Ṣaṭka sampattiḥ*). *Ṣaṭka sampattiḥ* means the six fold self-discipline. *Sampattiḥ* in general means wealth but in this context, this refers to the wealth of discipline. The scriptures consider discipline as the greatest inner wealth of a human being. One may possess or not possess external wealth. It does not matter. The scriptures consider inner wealth as crucial. And that inner wealth is self-discipline.

This self discipline; self organization; self-integration; self-focussing is categorized into six components. They are collectively called *Ṣaṭka sampattiḥ*.

The six fold discipline which begins with शमा (*śamā*). आदि (*ādi*) means 'and the like or etc'. So the author quotes the first discipline which is *śamā* and says 'etc.' *Śamā* means mind discipline; mental discipline; thought discipline. The author later explains what are all included in 'etc.'

The fourth qualification is मुमुक्षुत्वम् (*mumukṣutvaṁ*). We have seen the word *mumukṣūḥ* while discussing the prayer verse. So *mumukṣutvaṁ* means desire for *mōkṣaḥ*, which is the five fold benefits discussed in the first Chapter.

In any transaction of giving and receiving, one can give something, only if there was someone willing to receive it. Giving requires two people. A giver cannot give if the other person is not willing to receive. So the author may say that he is ready to give self-knowledge. He may say that he is ready ready to give *mōkṣaḥ*, but he can not move a step unless the person at the other end also wants that. This desire for *mōkṣaḥ* and that too an intense desire is called *mumukṣutvaṁ*.

And last but not the least, चेति (*cēti*) is not another qualification. It is a conjunction used in Sanskrit language which roughly means 'and'. In Sanskrit, unlike English language the conjunction 'and' can be placed either in between the two independent clauses or at the end of the sentence. *Cēti* has to be split as *C* and *Iti*.

Thus simply put, the four requirements are **Discrimination, Dispassion, Discipline and Desire – the 4 Ds** – it would be easy to remember.

Having listened to the above teaching, a *mumukṣūḥ* – a student with an intense desire to obtain this knowledge will naturally raise several questions, to get more details and complete clarity of the

concepts. He will be keen to know how these qualifications apply in the context of self-knowledge. So the next set of Q & A is:

***Qualification 1: Vivēka ḥ- Discrimination***

नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः कः?

*Nityānityavastu vivēkaḥ kaḥ?*

नित्यवस्त्वेकम् ब्रह्म तद्व्यतिरिक्तं सर्वमनित्यम् ।

अयमेव नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः ।

*Nityavastvēkaṃ Brahma tadvyatiriktaṃ sarvamanityaṃ.*

*Ayamēva nityānityavastuvivēkaḥ.*

The student asks कः विवेकः (*kaḥ vivēkaḥ*). What do you mean by discrimination between *nitya vastu* and *anitya vastu*, the impermanent thing?

The thought behind this question is “In fact I wonder if there is indeed a permanent thing at all. Because in life, what we have been seeing is that, whatever we come across is impermanent. One may live longer but that also will end at some time. The earth also has a very long period of life but the scientists and astronomers tell us that the earth also will not exist permanently. The Sun may live for millions of years, but one day the Sun will also collapse. The astronomers have studied how the stars explode – Nova, Super Nova etc. – so even the stars are impermanent. Thus the Solar system itself is impermanent. And, therefore, the question is “Is there such thing which is a permanent at all?”



The author says fortunately, there is something which is permanent. He says नित्य वस्तु एकं ब्रह्म (*nityavastu ēkaṁ Brahma*).

There is one permanent thing. *Ēkam* – One; Impermanent things are many but there is one permanent thing – *ēkam nitya vastu* and the name of that permanent things is *Brahma*. The word *Brahma* or *Brahman* means the infinite principle. It means infinitely big or a limitless entity. This word is derived from the root words बृह् (*bṛh*) and बृहत् (*bṛhat*) which mean big. So *Brahman* means the biggest thing; superlatively big; infinitely big; infinite or limitless means freedom from finitude or freedom from limitations. It is free from the two fold limitations which characterises every thing, every object in this world – space-wise limitation and time-wise limitation. That is spatial limitation and temporal limitation.

If we take the example of our own body, the space-wise limitation is that, at any given time, each one of us can be only at one place. If we are at place A, we cannot be at place B or anywhere else. We cannot be here and elsewhere simultaneously. This is spatial limitation.

Similarly time-wise limitation is that we are existent only during a particular period of time. Each one of us has a date of birth and we will also have a date of death in future. We did not exist before we were born and after our date of death we will cease to exist. This is called time-wise or temporal limitation.

When we say *Brahman* is limitless, it means that it doesn't have spatial limitation. It is here, there and everywhere at the same time. It is all pervading. That is why we say in our Hindu religion that God is all pervading. He is to be found everywhere, in every pillar and in every rust particle. This sentiment is expressed in the *mantrās* that are chanted in the *pūjās*. सर्व व्यापिने नमः (*sarva vyāpinē namaḥ*) or अनन्ताय नमः (*anantāya namaḥ*). *Namaḥ* - salutations to; *sarva* means all; *vyāpinē* means pervading and *anantā* means endless; boundless; eternal. If we are asked whether God is present in the heaven or a temple or in our heart, our answer should be God is present in heaven, temple and in our heart also, because he is present everywhere.

And when we say it doesn't have time-wise limitation, it means that it was always there in the past, it is there at present, and it will always be there in future. It means that *Brahman's* existence is eternal. Even during प्रलयम् (*pralayaṁ*) - the dissolution of the whole world; even when the whole universe resolves, *Brahman* will continue to exist.

So *Brahman* means eternal, all-pervading entity. That, the author says, is the only permanent thing - *nitya vastu ēkaṁ brahma*. It is everywhere. Only we have to discern what it is. Only we have to discover that *Brahman*. In the context of the religious scriptures, *Brahman* is popularly known as God but in philosophical literature, the name *Brahman* is used. So God or *Brahman* alone is permanent.

According to our scriptures, a real thing alone can give us real and permanent happiness. *Anantaṁ* – the permanent one alone can give *ānandaṁ* – happiness. And therefore, *Brahman* alone can be the real source of happiness. That *Brahman* alone is the real source of security also, because an impermanent entity cannot give us security. An impermanent thing itself is insecure. So how can one insecure thing give security to another insecure thing? How can one beggar give alms to another beggar? If he does, the giver will no longer be called a beggar!!! So, security and happiness can come only from a permanent source and that is *Brahman* alone. This knowledge is called *vivēkaḥ*.

The author further goes on to say तत् व्यतिरिक्तं सर्वं अनित्यं (*tat vyatiriktaṁ sarvaṁ anityaṁ*). *Sarvaṁ* means everything; *vyatiriktaṁ* means other than; *tat* refers to *Brahman*. So, the meaning is - other than *Brahman* everything else is *anityaṁ* – impermanent.

*ayameva* means this i.e this understanding is *nityānitya vastu vivēkaḥ*. So, understanding very clearly and assimilating this fact that other than *Brahman*, everything else that one can think of is, impermanent, situations are impermanent, people are impermanent and objects are impermanent, is called *vivēkaḥ*. This is the definition of discrimination.

### ***Qualification 2: Virāgaḥ - Dispassion***

Now for the next set of Q & A.

विरागः कः? [*Virāgaḥ kaḥ?*]

इहस्वर्गभोगेषु इच्छाराहित्यम् ।

*Iha svargabhōgēṣu icchārāhityaṁ*

The question is “What is meant by *virāgaḥ* or dispassion?”

The author says that dispassion refers to *icchārāhityaṁ*. *rāhityaṁ* means absence of or freedom from and *icchā* means desire, passion, addiction, slavery, total dependence etc. So absence of or freedom from addiction or total slavery is called *virāgaḥ* or dispassion.

And this dispassion is with reference to भोगेषु (*bhōgēṣu*) – sense pleasures. So the full answer is freedom from addiction or slavery to sensory pleasures.

The sensory pleasures are divided into two types.

(1) अधार्मिक (*adhārmik*) or immoral sensory pleasures. These are

धर्म विरुद्ध भोगः (*dharma viruddha bhōgaḥ*) those pleasures which are not supported by the *dharma* or righteous living. These are unethical, immoral sensory pleasures.

(2) The second category is ethical and moral sensory pleasures

which are called धार्मिक कामः (*dhārmika kāmah*) or *bhōgaḥ*.

The scriptures say that one has to be totally free from *adhārmika kāmāḥ*. Such pleasures should be totally rejected, totally avoided and that is dispassion. And with regard to *dhārmika kāmāḥ*, dispassion is indulgence in moderation.

These sense pleasures are further divided into two types. One is इह लोक भोगः (*iha loka bhōgaḥ*) and पर लोक भोगः (*para Loka bhōgaḥ*). *Iha loka* means this world or this life; *para loka* means after life or स्वर्ग (*svarga*) means heaven. That is the present pleasures and the future pleasures. The author advocates, *icchā rāhityam* or dispassion from the point of view of both and that is *virāgaḥ*.

This is the second qualification required for self-knowledge. The rationale behind insisting upon this qualification is very simple. A person who is addicted to sense pleasures will end up spending his whole life in the indulgence of such pleasures only. Where will he find time the time for *Vēdāntā*? An addict will not get time for any worthwhile pursuit in life. And that is why one should not be addicted to anything.

The scriptures say that in the final analysis one should not be addicted to even good things. That is the ultimate freedom. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* tells at the end of the *Gītā*, even addiction to *dharmā* is a form of addiction.

सर्व धर्मान परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं ब्रज  
अहम् त्वा सर्व पापेभ्यो मोक्षिष्यामी मा शुचः

*Sarva dharmān parityajya māmēkaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja  
Aham tvā sarva pāpēbhyō mōkṣiśyāmī mā śucaḥ.*

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* says this towards the end of *Gītā* teaching because, otherwise, people may take advantage of this statement and start following this advice from now itself by giving up all *dhārmik* actions!!!

So the right course is to first give up addiction to *adharma* by developing addiction to *dharma*. First develop good addiction to get rid of bad addiction - just as removing one thorn with the help of another thorn. And later, we need to transcend the good addiction also through wisdom. *Jñānaṁ* or self-knowledge helps us in transcending. That state is the state of absolute freedom.

The student now proceeds with his next question.

शमादिसाधनसंपत्तिः का?

*Śamādi sādhanā sampattiḥ kā?*

And the teacher replies:

शमो दम उपरतिस्तितिक्षा श्रद्धा समाधानं च इति ।

*Śamō dama uparatistitikṣā śraddhā samādhānaṁ ca iti*

***Qualification 3: Śamādi Ṣaṭka sampattiḥ- The six disciplines***

The third qualification is referred to as संपत्तिः (*sampattiḥ*). In Sanskrit, *sampattiḥ* means wealth but what is referred to here is the inner wealth. This is the wealth of discipline which is an internal wealth consisting of six types of discipline or six fold discipline referred to as शमादिसाधनं (*śamādi sādhanam*). The

student wants to know about the six disciplines of inner wealth starting from *śamā*.

The teacher enumerates them here. Later he will explain each one in detail.

1. शमः (*śamaḥ*) - Mind control
2. दमः (*damaḥ*) - Sense control or control of sensory faculties.
3. उपरमः (*uparamaḥ* or *uparatiḥ*) - Withdrawal or Quietude
4. तितीक्षा (*titīkṣā*) - Endurance, patience, forbearance etc.
5. श्रद्धा (*śraddhā*) - Faith or trust
6. समाधानं (*samādhānam*) - Concentration, focussing power
7. च इति (*ca Iti*) – just a conjunction meaning ‘and’.

Next is the detailed definition of each of these six disciplines. We will discuss each Q & A in relation to these.

### ***Discipline 1: Śamaḥ- Mind Control***

शमः कः? मनो-निग्रहः ।

*Śamaḥ kaḥ? Manō-nigrahaḥ*

The first discipline is *śamaḥ* or mind control. The word *śamaḥ* literally means *śāntiḥ* – peace, which also means *samatvaṁ* - equanimity. So, *śamaḥ* means peace of mind; poise of the mind; tranquillity of the mind. To use the modern terminology, it means a mind which is free from stress and strain. Stress is a very big problem that everybody faces today. *Śamaḥ* means freedom from mental stress.

But, why do we say peace of mind is important?

When the mind is stressed or tense or anxious, the mind becomes a

भारः (*bhārah*) or burden for us. It is said that अशान्त्यस्य मनो भारः

(*aśāntyasya manō bhārah*). For a person who does not have peace

of mind, the mind itself becomes a burden. Life itself becomes a

dragging life. That is why when we ask someone “How is life?

“We can hear hardly anyone saying that it is wonderful”. In every

language we have some word or the other to connote ‘pulling on’,

‘dragging on’, ‘surviving’, ‘chalta hai’ etc., because the very

journey of life becomes a burden and life becomes a drudgery.

Whereas, when the mind enjoys peace and freedom from stress,

the mind is a light mind. In such a state, the journey of life itself

becomes enjoyable. Only a light mind can be used as an

instrument for accomplishing our goal. If we study the human life,

the uniqueness of a human being is that we have an extraordinary

mind. The difference between other animals and a human being is

that we alone are endowed with a superior mind which is a

wonderful instrument for accomplishing any type of goal whether

it is material goal or spiritual goal. Therefore, the shastras call the

mind अन्तःकरणं (*antaḥkaraṇam*) – *antaḥ* means inner and *karaṇam*

means instrument.

Only a light mind can be carried by us and only a light mind can

be used as an instrument by us. Even in the case of weapons, we

can use them effectively only if they are light enough to be lifted



and carried by us. If the weapon is heavy and one cannot even lift it, how can one think of using it!!!

So मनःशान्ति (manahśānti) – peace of mind is required first for our very survival itself, what to talk of achieving the goals?

This *manahśānti* is required for maintaining physical health also. A person who has stress consistently for a long time is bound to have varieties of physical problems. Therefore, physical health also requires a stress free mind. Not only that, even our intelligence can be utilized effectively only when the mind is calm. When the mind is disturbed, however educated one may be, however rational one may be, all the knowledge that we have will not be available for us. Like the VIRUS infected computer where, even though a lot of information stored in the computer, it becomes inaccessible. Similarly all our knowledge, all our studies, all our IQ etc., will all be useless when the mind is disturbed. And that is why the management gurus these days are focussing on EQ – Emotional Quotient to tap the IQ - Intelligence Quotient. A balanced mind is a must to use our knowledge effectively. Thus, peace of mind is required for maintaining physical health, for the upkeep of the intellectual health and for the spiritual journey. *Śamaḥ* is, therefore, one of the most important qualifications. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* tells in the *Gītā*, that *śāntiḥ* alone can give us happiness. No happiness is possible when there is no *manah śānti*.

So the first discipline is stress management. We should learn to enjoy a poised mind. However, the author while advocating stress management or mind management does not talk about the method

or process to do that. He seems to say “I don’t care how you do that but if you want to come to *Vēdāntā*, you should have a balanced mind’!!! *Tattva bōdhaḥ* does not teach us how to get *śamaḥ*. For that we have to refer to the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where Lord *Kṛṣṇa* himself details the method of stress management.

### ***Discipline 2: Damaḥ- Sense Control***

The next discipline is *damaḥ*.

दमः कः? चक्षुरादिबाह्येन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।

*Damaḥ kaḥ? Cakṣurādi bāhyēndriya nigrahaḥ.*

*Damaḥ* means इन्द्रिय निग्रहः (*indriya nigrahaḥ*). *Nigrahaḥ* means mastery or control. *Indriyaḥ* means sense organs. *Bāhya indriyaḥ* means external sense organs. We have already seen that mind is the internal sense organ. The external sense organs are five in number and they are the eyes, ears, nose, skin and tongue.

चक्षुरादि (*cakṣurādi*). *Cakṣuḥ* means eyes and *ādi* as we have already seen means ‘etc.’

Now what is meant by control or management of the sense organs? As already discussed earlier and at the cost of repetition which is worthwhile, we need to understand this discipline very carefully. Control does not mean suppression. Our scriptures never believe in suppression. Any form of suppression is dangerous because it has the potential to explode later. So by control we mean, intelligently directing them or intelligently channelizing them. We shouldn’t allow the sense organs to go

where they want. We should direct them to go where we want or decide. It is like damming a river. If the dams are not constructed, the water resources will go to the ocean and will be a waste. By constructing a dam, we will be saving the water resources so that the same water can be channelized to areas and purposes that we want. Similarly here also *nigrahaḥ* means not allowing the sensory energy to go where they want but deciding to send them in the direction that we want.

For example, when a student comes to the class, his ears should be directed towards what is being taught. But if his sense organs are not co-operative, he will be here but will not hear! If he is here and can hear, he has *indriya nigrahaḥ*.

Now why do we insist upon proper direction of sense organs? Why do we say sensory control is required? There are several reasons. One reason is that our mental condition is dependent on our sense organs because sense organs alone are the gates, the doors for the external world to enter our mind. They decide which part of the world and which sound must enter us, which form must enter us, which smell must enter us. What enters our mind is determined by the sense organs. And if these organs are not properly managed, anything and everything will enter our mind and there will be a security problem. Whenever there is a security problem, militant problem or terrorist problem, what do the officials do? They employ metal detectors and every one is frisked at the Gate to determine if he is a threat to peace or not. Similarly the all worldly things can enter our mind and cause a lot of disturbances. We, therefore, have to have a check and control.

Whatever can disturb our mind, whatever can cause internal law and order problem – for such things there should be a strict ‘No admission’ policy. And this is called *damaḥ*. This is very important for mental health which is *śamaḥ* and which is required for the pursuit of knowledge. All these Lord *Kṛṣṇa* elaborately discusses in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

### ***Discipline 3: Upamaḥ- Withdrawal or quietude***

Going on to the third discipline the dialogue is

उपरमः कः? स्वधर्मानुष्ठानमेव ।

*Upamaḥ kaḥ? Svadharmānuṣṭhānaṁ ēva.*

This word *upamaḥ* has several meanings. One meaning is maintaining the peace of mind which has been acquired through *śamaḥ*. This means preventing the disturbance. So the difference between *śamaḥ* and *upamaḥ* is that *śamaḥ* means calming the disturbed mind and *upamaḥ* means maintaining the calmness. So the remedy for disturbance is *śamaḥ* and the prevention of disturbance or maintainance of the peace of mind is *upamaḥ*. One is a treatment and the other is prevention. This is one meaning.

The second meaning is सन्यास आश्रमः (*sanyāsa āśramaḥ*) – a monastic life or monasticism itself is called *upamaḥ*.

But here, the author gives yet another meaning and that is स्वधर्म अनुष्ठानम् (*svadharma anuṣṭhānam*). This is the third meaning.

Now let us see what is meant by *svadharma anuṣṭhānam*. The scriptures give a technical meaning to this term. In the scriptures our actions are divided into several types. Five types of activities are talked about in the scriptures. These are

1. नित्य कर्म (*nitya karma*) – *karmās* or rituals which have to be performed on a daily basis.
2. नैमित्तिक कर्म (*naimittika karma*) – *karmās* or rituals which have to be performed occasionally.
3. काम्य कर्म (*kāmya karma*) – *karmās* or rituals performed for the purpose of attaining some desired results e.g. going to heaven after death or for begetting children etc.
4. प्रायश्चित्त कर्म (*prāyaścitta karma*) – *karmās* or rituals performed for expiation of sins or making amends for sins.
5. निषिद्ध कर्म (*niṣiddha karma*) – *karmās* or rituals performed for causing some harm to someone. These are forbidden *karmās*.

Of these five types of *karmās*, the scriptures say that we should eliminate the last three to the extent possible and retain the first two. That is *nitya* and *naimittika karmās* should be performed without fail and *kāmya, prāyaścitta* and *niṣiddha karmās* should be reduced significantly.

The reason for this injunction is that the first two i.e. *nitya* and *naimittika* are supposed to be conducive for spiritual growth. They

can be called *Vēdāntā* friendly *karmās*. Just as we have a gymnasium where we can do certain types of exercises for the sake of our physical health or growth, we require a ‘gymnasium’ for our mental health and spiritual growth. According to the scriptures, the *nitya* and *naimittika karmās* act like that ‘gymnasium’. We can, therefore, term these two *karmās* as spiritual growth oriented activities or spiritual activities. The other three i.e. *kāmya*, *prāyaścitta* and *niṣiddha karmās* are supposed to be *Vēdāntā* unfriendly *karmās*.

*Kāmya karmās* are meant for the material growth of the individual or external growth of the individual for prosperity, name, fame etc. We can simply call them materialistic activities.

*Prāyaścitta karmās* are those activities which are meant to neutralize or nullify our own past negative actions or activities. They are like medicinal *karmās*. If we have eaten something which is not suitable to our system, we are bound to end up with a stomach upset. So there has been a wrong action on our part which is - eating the wrong food. We take certain medicines to treat this condition. This medicine consumption is an activity not meant for spiritual growth, not meant for material growth. But it is meant for neutralising the previous negative activities. They are called *prāyaścitta karmās* or *parihāra karmās*.

The fifth type of *Karmā* is known as *niṣiddha karmās*. They represents all those actions which may be beneficial to us but which are harmful to the other people. One should not, therefore, engage in those actions.

For example, let us take the case of a person wanting to smoke. It may give him some pleasure. But as long as it is damaging to other people, through passive smoking, he should not do that action, if he is sensible and considerate. It is a different matter that irrespective of giving him some pleasure, smoking is bad for his own health also. We can imagine any number of such activities. The scriptures ban such *karmās*. So *niṣiddha karmās* mean prohibited actions. The scriptures contain a huge a list of such actions. We need to study them not for following but for avoiding. Like in diet we have got what to eat and what to avoid. Similarly we have a huge list of such prohibited actions in the scriptures for diligently avoiding them.

*Upamaḥ*, therefore, is the gradual increase of the first two types of activities which are meant for spiritual growth and the gradual reduction of the other three activities. Thus we need to tilt the balance of activities in our life.

And here the use of the word *svadharma* by the author refers to the *nitya* and *naimittika karmās*. अनुष्ठानम् (*anuṣṭhānam*) means performance. And एव (*eva*) means only i.e. confining to those activities only.

One should, therefore, confine oneself only to the two *Vēdāntā* friendly activities and avoid or reduce the other three types of *karmās*.





***Discipline 4: Titikṣā – Endurance or forbearance***

तितिक्षा का? शीतोष्णसुखदुःखादिसहिष्णुत्वम् ।

*Titikṣā kā? Śītōṣṇa sukhaduḥkhādi sahiṣṇutvam*

The fourth discipline which is part of the third qualification is called *Titikṣā*. This is considered to be a very important and useful discipline not only for spiritual seekers but also for all others who may not be spiritually oriented. This is based on the idea that we, human beings will have to often face painful experiences in life. No human being's life is a uniform path of roses. Everyone will have to face painful experiences. And that is why we are advised to read the scriptures and the mythological stories i.e *Purānās* regularly because when we read them we find that all people, irrespective of whether they were good or bad, *dhārmik* or *adhārmik* - everyone confronts misery and pain.

And that is why *Bhagavān Rāmā* himself incarnated as a human being, and suffered painful experiences. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* was born in a jail. So from his birth itself he faced challenges. *Dharmaputra Yudhistirā* considered as an embodiment of *dharmā* and a paragon of virtue had to live in the forests for fourteen long years. Then we have the story of *Nala* and *Damayanti*. We have got stories after stories from which we learn that life has got lot of pleasurable moments but whether we like it or not, life involves various painful experiences also with various gradations.

Some of these are in the form of physical pain and some of them are in the form of mental anguish. Physical pain is called

व्याधि (*vyādhi*) in Sanskrit. Mental pain is called आधि (*ādhi*). So it is said that आधिव्याधि सहितं जन्म (*ādhivyādhi sahitam janma*) –

Physical pain and mental anguish are constant companions in life.

The unfortunate fact is that when we go through pain, be it physical or mental, it invariably results in the mind becoming burdensome. As we have seen earlier a burdened mind is good for nothing. Conducting life itself becomes very difficult. One cannot engage in any constructive activity – what to talk of spiritual studies! So it follows that every human being has to find a method of handling pain. When faced with such situation, we all first try some of the conventional methods.

The first method we generally try is finding out a solution or a remedy for the pain by bringing about the appropriate changes in the conditions. This is the remedial method and sometimes this method works also. But often the remedial measures may prove to be very expensive - physically, mentally, timewise, energy wise, tension wise, stress wise etc. And worse still, often we may find that with the remedy the present pain may go away but it may soon get replaced with another type of pain. *Bhāgawatham* gives an example of a person carrying a load on his right shoulder. When he switches the load from the right shoulder to the left shoulder, he gets immense relief for a short while but soon enough the pain starts in his left shoulder. Nevertheless, we do tend to take this approach which we may call the ‘solution’ approach.

Then there is a second method. We go on tolerating the pain because either there is no remedy, or the remedy is very expensive or we know that the remedy would lead to some other pain. Whatever be the reason, we go on experiencing the pain because of which pressure mounts up in our mind and body. A time comes when we are no longer able to handle the pain. And then the only solution we find is to convert the pain into anger and explode. It is called blowing the top, letting out the steam on any helpless victim who comes in the vicinity. This is the 'explosion' approach.

But there may situation when we cannot explode because the all the people around are elderly or seniors etc. and therefore, we may opt to suppress the pain and suffer it silently for years and years. And in such suppression, there will not be an explosion but an implosion. We will end up victimising ourselves resulting in a lot of psychological damage. One may feel that one has become a worthless, useless person, psychologically, because of deep trauma. Therefore suppression is also not a proper solution because that will cause immense self-damage.

We are aware of only these three methods to solve our problem. But our scriptures talk about a fourth method which we do not know or think about much.

*Bhagavān* or the Lord has given all of us a capacity to tolerate pain or withstand pain. This is called endurance or tolerance which is called *titikṣā*. Everyone has got this tolerance, but the only difference is that this tolerance threshold varies from individual to individual. Therefore, we talk about a short-tempered person. The

situation remaining the same, one person explodes immediately, another person after a few days and another person after a few more days. So all of us have *titikṣā* but the threshold varies.

When the pain is within the threshold limits or tolerance levels, we do not experience it as pain at all. Pain is not pain within our threshold. A pain is a pain only when it goes beyond the threshold. And so suppose if we find out a method by which the threshold levels or *titikṣā* is gradually increased by appropriate understanding and *sādhana* or practice? If we can thus increase the threshold, what is pain to others will not be one for us because feeling of pain is highly subjective. When the pain falls within the threshold, the mind calls it a situation. When it goes beyond the threshold, we call it pain.

So *titikṣā* means increasing the level of endurance or patience or immunity or resistance power – both physically and mentally. Like a healthy body is immune to diseases that are around, a healthy mind also has a high resistance or tolerance power.

The author, therefore, says that the fourth method is the elevation of the threshold level of our endurance or capacity. This capacity he refers to as *सहिष्णुत्वम् (sahiṣṇutvam)* which means endurance or forbearance. At the physical level it is called endurance and at the mental level it is called forbearance or patience. These two together is called *titikṣā*.

The author illustrates this qualification both at the physical and mental level. At the physical level, he refers to *sahiṣṇutvam* with

regard to शीत (*śīta*) i.e. cold and उष्ण (*uṣṇa*) i.e. heat. So one aspect of *sahiṣṇutvam* is the physical capacity to withstand the ups and downs in the physical conditions like summer winter, rain etc. For example, in hot summer season, one may use an airconditioner at home but airconditioners may not be available everywhere where one goes. If the physical body cannot tolerate the conditions in a non-airconditioned place like a class room, the student will not be able to concentrate in the class. It is, therefore, very important to develop physical toughness. This is referred to by the author as *śītōṣṇa sahiṣṇutvam*.

The author also talks about developing this endurance at the mental level and refers to it as सुख (*sukha*) – pleasure and दुःख (*duḥkha*) – mental agony. It is with regard to emotional pain we suffer, due to the actions of people around including our own family members. We usually have got high expectations. How our spouses should treat us, how our children should treat us or the daughter-in-law should treat us, how the grand children should treat us, how the taxi driver should treat us, how the vendor should treat us, how a beggar should treat us etc. We have expectations and any expectation not fulfilled comes as mental pain. It can be caused by their behaviour or it can be caused by their language. Suppose we are talking to a person and that person looks elsewhere. This will cause us pain. The more sensitive we are, the greater the pain we will suffer. So the greater the sensitivity, the greater should be the tolerance level. Otherwise the

life will be miserable. And even if we want to share the pain with someone, nobody will be available. Therefore, in all unfavourable situations - we should have the capacity to bring all of them within our tolerance limits. That means that we should make our tolerance limit higher and higher so that all situations which cause pain can come with those limits.

We need to understand one aspect carefully. Suppose after increasing our tolerance limits, we find that our child misbehaves or throws tantrums. What should we do? Do we say that because of the highly increased tolerance levels, we have now the capacity to tolerate the misbehaviour? That would be foolish. We will need to correct the child. Now we may correct the child for two reasons – one, because of our intolerance and the second because such a behaviour is not good for the child's growth. Therefore, it does not mean that a man or woman of *titikṣā* should go on endlessly tolerating such misbehaviour. They have also a responsibility to work to improve the situation, not because of intolerance but because the situation needs to be improved for the sake of the child's future. This is *titikṣā*, the fourth discipline.

The fifth discipline is *śraddhā*.

#### ***Discipline 5: Śraddhā – Faith or trust***

श्रद्धा कीदृशी ? गुरुवेदान्तवाक्यादिषु विश्वासः श्रद्धा ।

*Śraddhā kīdṛśī? Guru vēdāntavākyaḍiṣu viśvāsaḥ śraddhā*

*Guru* means teacher or the scriptural preceptor. Literally, it means the one who dispels the internal darkness which is ignorance.

All emotional problems, which are called *सम्सारा* (*samsārā*), are caused only due to ignorance. And according to *Vēdāntā*, the *samsārā* disease is caused by the bacteria called self-ignorance. And if we want to cure this *रोग* (*roga*) – disease, this *samsārā roga* or *bhava roga* as it also called, we have to approach that doctor who can destroy the bacteria called ignorance. . For the normal biological bacteria the antidote is anti-biotics. But for this ‘ignorance bacteria’, *jñānam* or knowledge tablet is the only medicine which can remove the bacteria. And therefore, we have to undergo a treatment, a therapy to cure this *bhava roga*.

The *shāstrās* say that, whenever we undergo a medical treatment, it is very important that we have faith in the doctor and also the course of treatment that he prescribes. Even the modern medical system accepts that. If the patient does not have faith in the doctor, even the best of the medicines will not work.

The researchers have found another factor also. If the patient has full faith in the doctor, even a dummy medicine or pure water injection i.e what is called a placebo, also will work wonders. So it is an accepted fact that faith plays a very very important role in any therapy and spiritual *sāadhanā* is also a form of treatment that we undergo to get out of *samsārā roga* or *bhava roga*. So the first requirement is to have faith in the doctor and also in the system. We have so many ‘pathys’ - Allopathy, Homeopathy, Naturopathy etc. The interesting aspect is that each one says the other system is useless. If we go to a Homeopathy doctor, he will advice us to stop

all Allopathic medicines because, he will say that if we continue to take Allopathic medicines, Homeopathy won't work!!! And within one 'pathy' itself, two doctors will not agree on a course of treatment. There is an interesting anecdote. Once a person went to a doctor and told him that till then he was taking the treatment from another neighbourhood doctor. So this doctor asked him "What foolish advice did the other doctor give?" To which the patient replied "He advised me to come to you!!!"

One doctor will insist that we have to undergo chemotherapy. Another doctor will say, 'No', we have to undergo surgery. Yet another doctor will say that we will have to take radiation. And an *Ayurvēda* doctor will say that he will give some paste and the ailment will vanish in thin air. It is humoursly said about *Ayurvēda* medicine that:

यस्य कस्य तरोर्मूलं येन केन प्रपेषयेत् ।

यस्मै कस्मै प्रदातव्यं यद्वा तद्वा भविष्यति ॥

*Yasya kasya tarōrmūlaṁ yēna kēna prapēṣayēt.*

*Yasmai kasmai pradātavyaṁ yadvā tadvā bhaviṣyati.*

It means, just pick up some root, any root and make a paste with something like milk, honey or butter milk etc. And administer the paste to whichever victim comes to you. What will happen? It says something or the other is sure to happen!!!

So given this state of affairs, it will not be surprising if we will be utterly confused especially in case of very serious diseases There



will be a terrible conflict in our minds. So what can we do? It is here that we need to have faith in a particular doctor and surrender to Lord *Vaidyanāthā* - the Lord of all medicines and go ahead. If this is true for physical diseases, this truth holds good for the spiritual disease also. So, whomsoever you have chosen for a *Guru*, pray that he is not a quack. This *guru* may practice a particular system called *Advaita Vēdāntā*. Here also there could be a conflict. There are other systems called *Dvaita*, *Vishistādvaita* etc. This *guru* may claim that he is teaching *Advaita Vēdāntā*. As we know nothing about any of these systems, we should hope and pray that this teaching will be useful to us. If that faith, that *śraddhā* is not there, it will not work.

So the student asks *śraddhā kīdrśī?* What is that *śraddhā* that one should have? And the author says *viśvāsaḥ* – faith; *Guru Vēdānta vākyēṣu* - in the words of the *guru* and *Vēdāntā* i.e. scriptures. Reverting to the example of doctor and medicine cited earlier, *guru* is the doctor and *Vēdāntā* is the system of medicine – we need to have faith in both.

### ***Discipline 6: Samādhānam– Concentration or focusing power***

Now the sixth and final discipline relating to the third qualification which it would be useful to remember is षट्क

संपत्तिः (*Ṣaṭka sampattiḥ*) – the six fold discipline. The Q & A is:

समाधानं किम्? चित्तैकाग्रता ।

*Samādhānaṁ kiṁ? Cittaikāgratā.*

*Citta ēkāgratā* is the focusing capacity of mind. Concentration or attention span is called *samādhānaṁ*.

In life we should be first clear about our goal. What do we want in life? For many of us, even this would not be clear. They would have lived their whole life of 70+ years without knowing what they wanted. They just follow others like sheep. It is a mechanical flow without any clear idea about the goal.

We, therefore, need to fix the goals, both short term and long term goals. We should be clear about our immediate goal and our long term goal. It should be thoughtfully decided and once we have decided them, we should carry them in our mind all the time. Is the ultimate goal of our life merely earning money, securing food, clothing and shelter and producing some children? Is that the life's goal? If that is the goal, animals are better than humans because some of them do these tasks much more efficiently than humans! On the contrary, if our goals are something more exalted, we should take them very seriously and have a clear idea about our priorities.

Once these short and long term goals are fixed, we should always remember these two goals. This capacity to keep the goals in the mind all the time is called *ēkāgratā*. Thus *citta ēkāgratā* is *samādhānaṁ* which includes our capacity to focus on the teachings given by the Guru. This is required not only for *Vēdāntā* but for

any achievement in life, be it sports or any other discipline. Success in any field requires concentration.

So this completes the six fold inner discipline as also the third qualification.

The next i.e. the fourth qualification that the author talks about is *mumukṣutvam*.

#### ***Qualification 4: Mumukṣutvaṁ - Intense desire***

मुमुक्षुत्वम् किम् ? मोक्षो मे भूयाद् इति इच्छा ।

*Mumukṣutvaṁ kiṁ? Mōkṣō mē bhūyād iti icchā.*

The student now raises the question “What is the fourth qualification called desire”? And the teacher answers *iti* – it is; *icchā* – an intense yearning, an intense desire, *teevra icchā* for *mōkṣō mē bhūyād* – for me to attain liberation; let me attain *mōkṣaḥ*.

As we have seen earlier, this desire for *mōkṣaḥ* is called *mumukṣutvaṁ*. The desire is called *mumukshaḥ* the person who has the desire is called *mumukshuḥ*. If a person has got desire for *mōkṣaḥ*, he should work to acquire self-knowledge because self-knowledge is the only means for attaining *mōkṣaḥ*.

This involves three stages. If one has a desire for *mōkṣaḥ*, one should get self-knowledge. And for acquiring self-knowledge, one should have the necessary qualifications. So qualifications to knowledge to liberation is the journey. But one may say that he is not interested in getting *mōkṣaḥ*. He or she may not, perhaps, be

interested only because of lack of knowledge of what the glory of *mōkṣaḥ* is! That is why, in the beginning itself, it was pointed out that *mōkṣaḥ* consists of five fold benefits. No rational person can say that he was not interested in those benefits.

Freedom from slavery to immunity from problems to efficiency in our undertakings – do we want these or not? That is the moot question. Will anyone say no? So if we want all these, they are collectively called *mōkṣaḥ*. And this *mōkṣaḥ* we can get only through self-knowledge. For self-knowledge, we first need to get the qualifications.

Having this enumerated the four fold qualification, the author concludes

एतत् साधनचतुष्टयम् ।

ततस्तत्त्वविवेकस्याधिकारिणो भवन्ति ।

*Ētat sādhanacatuṣṭayaṁ.*

*Tatastattva vivēkasyādhikāriṇō bhavanti.*

*Ētat* means these i.e. the four fold qualifications enumerated above which are discrimination, dispassion, discipline and desire. These four qualifications are technically known as *sādhana catuṣṭayaṁ*. So in our scriptural vocabulary we have to include this word so that while learning the *Bhagavad Gītā* whenever we come across this phrase, we should not look bewildered or perplexed. These qualifications comprising of 4 Ds should immediately spring in the mind.

The author continues ततः (*tataḥ*) – therefore or due to that which means साधन चतुष्टय संपन्न प्राप्ति अनन्तरम् (*sādhana catuṣṭaya sampanna prāpti anantaram*) – that is, after acquiring these qualifications; अधिकारिणः भवन्ति (*adhikāriṇaḥ bhavanti*) – that person becomes a अधिकारी (*adhikārī*). In *Vēdāntā* an *adhikārī* is any person who has managed to acquire the 4 Ds. And he becomes eligible for self-knowledge. So the author says तत्त्व विवेकस्य (*Tattva vivēkasya*). *Tattva vivekaḥ* means *Tattva bōdhaḥ* which we have seen right in the beginning which means self knowledge. Thus a person becomes eligible for self-knowledge.

Now one question that may naturally arise is that while the author has enumerated the four qualifications as conditions for self-knowledge, what should one do to acquire these qualifications? If one enjoys these qualifications right now, he should consider himself a very lucky person and he can straight away enter into the studies to acquire self-knowledge. But what if one doesn't have these qualifications? What is he to do? Unfortunately, the author is silent on this issue. He does not talk about how and where to get this training. Perhaps the author assumes that everyone who is taking up the study of *Tattva bōdhaḥ* is already eligible. But the question remains - how to become eligible, if we are not already eligible? What is the method of getting *sādhana catuṣṭayaṁ*?

Even though the author is silent in this text, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* gives an elaborate answer to this question in the *Bhagavad Gītā* which we

will be studying later But in this context, we can understand the the essence of the answer given by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* .

*Kṛṣṇa* says that there is only method to acquire *sādhana catuṣṭayam* and that method he calls as कर्म योगः (*karma yogaḥ*). *Kṛṣṇa* points out that *karma yogaḥ* is not any particular action but it is a particular way of life which a person has to follow for a length of time. It is not a crash programme. It is a not something like an instant coffee etc. But it is a particular way of life which has to be followed for, not a few days; not a few weeks; not a few months; but for a number of years. And *Kṛṣṇa* calls that *karma yogaḥ* way of life. In a simple language we can say, a religious life style.

*Karma yogaḥ* or a religious life style is the only method which will give a person this degree SCS- *Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Sampanna*. Even to acquire degrees like B.Sc, MSc etc. we spend 20+ years of study. Thus even for secular knowledge we have to spend such a long time. Then how can we expect to gain self-knowledge in a half-an hour crash programme? Whatever we achieve in a crash programme is bound to crash! Such a religious way of life has to be cultivated and nourished.

Then the next question would be what is that religious way of life conceived as *karma yogaḥ*?

To put it in a simple language, *karma yogaḥ* or religious life involves three aspects. Briefly stated, those three factors are

सत् कर्माणि (*sat karmāṇi*),

सत् गुणाः (*sat guṇāḥ*) and

सत् भावना (*sat bhāvanā*).

*Sat karmāṇi* means good actions or noble actions. A good action is defined as that in which the number of beneficiaries or the number of people who will benefit from the action is large. Higher the number of beneficiaries, superior is the action. Lesser the number of beneficiaries, the inferior the *karmā* is. So the most inferior *karmā* would be an action in which there is only one beneficiary i.e. oneself.

Therefore, *Sat karmāṇi*, otherwise called परोपकार

कर्माणि (*paropakāra karmāṇi*) – benevolent actions is the first factor.

It should be clarified that in an action where the number of beneficiaries is large, one can include oneself also as a beneficiary. There is no need to exclude the self.

The second part of *karma yogaḥ* is *sat guṇāḥ*. This connotes healthy virtues, healthy values like truthfulness, compassion, humility, consideration for others etc. These healthy virtues, healthy values, healthy morals are called *sat guṇāḥ*.

The third part is *sat bhāvanā*. This refers to a healthy attitude towards everything in the creation. This would include attitude towards the family members, the neighbours, fellow human beings, animals, plants, nature etc. One general attitude that our scriptures emphasize is a reverential attitude towards everything.

The scriptures beseech us not to look upon the creation as an enemy to be conquered but look upon it as a friend with which one has to co-exist, work and grow. And that is why in our *Hindu* culture, we treat everything reverentially. Earth is sacred for us, water is sacred, air is sacred, sun is sacred, moon is sacred, and food is sacred. Anything and everything is sacred. Money is sacred. Goddess *Lakṣmī Dēvī* symbolises wealth. This reverential attitude towards everything is a very important *bhāvanā*. In addition to that there are several other similar *bhāvanās* also. Collectively we call them *sat bhāvanā*.

One such sentiment talks about sitting down on the floor while learning from a *guru*. One may wonder why one should do that. After all, one may sit anywhere, where he or she is comfortable. Why should the *guru* be in a higher pedestal and the students in a lower pedestal? In fact, in modern times, some people feel that the *guru* should be in a lower pedestal and the students should be in a higher pedestal, like in a gallery, so that the *guru* can look up to the students. And the students look down upon the *guru*! So why do we insist upon even such simple things?

This is because *vidyā* or any knowledge is considered to be sacred symbolised by Goddess *Sarasvatī Dēvī* and *guru* is not looked upon as a person there, but *guru* is looked upon as a teacher who is equivalent to God. So the principle is that one should receive the knowledge with all humility. So if one were sitting in a higher pedestal than the preceptor, there is a risk of compromising with



the humility. Thus everything we do in our traditional culture is with a reverential attitude. And this is called *sat bhāvanā*.

So *sat karmāṇi* plus *sat guṇāḥ* plus *sat bhāvanā* is called *karma yogaḥ*, a religious life. This we have to practise for a number of years. In fact a considerable part of our early stages of life should be spent in practicing this *karma yogaḥ*. If we examine the entire *Vēdā* literature, the earlier or the first part of the *Vēdās* concentrate on the religious way of life or *karma yogaḥ* which will give us the the necessary qualifications of *sādhana catuṣṭayaṁ*. Once we have acquired them, the second or later part of the *Vēdās* called *Vēdāntā* takes over, like a relay race. This *Vēdāntā* part is meant for imparting self- knowledge.

Thus the first part gives ज्ञान योग्यता (*jñāna yōgyatā*) – the eligibility for receiving the knowledge of the self. And the second part imparts आत्म ज्ञानम् (*ātma jñānam*) – self knowledge. Thus the equation is *Vēdā + Vēdāntā = Mōkṣaḥ*. This is how our *Vēdik* culture is defined.

In this text the author is dealing with only the second part. He takes for granted that we have all gone through the first part and that is why he assumes that we are all eligible for receiving this self knowledge. Thus the author concludes the first part of his teaching stating that the one, who has acquired the necessary qualifications as outlined above, becomes the *adhikārī* for receiving *tattva vivekaḥ*.



***Vyaṣṭi vicāraḥ - Analysis of individual - Microcosm***

### *Tattvavivēkaḥ- Inquiry into Truth*

Having learnt the benefits of self knowledge and the qualifications required for seeking this knowledge, the student wants to go into further details now. He has heard the word *Tattva vivekaḥ* in the earlier section. His curiosity to know what this means leads to the following question and answer.

तत्त्वविवेकः कः?

आत्मा सत्यं तदन्यत् सर्व मिथ्येति ।

*Tattvavivēkaḥ kaḥ?*

*Ātmā satyaṁ tadanyat sarvaṁ mithyēti*

In his question, the student implies that he has already undergone *karma yogaḥ* and that he has already acquired *sādhana catuṣṭaya sampattiḥ*. That is why he pursues with the question. Otherwise, the teaching would have stopped here!

So the student is now ready for *Tattva bōdhaḥ* i.e self-knowledge. He refers to *Tattva bōdhaḥ* as *Tattva vivēkaḥ* and hence raises the question ‘what is *Tattva vivēkaḥ*’? He wants to know what type of knowledge it is.

The teacher first defines self-knowledge in a short statement which he will elaborate later. This is the method of communication mostly adopted in the scriptures. The entire teaching of a particular text is first presented in a nutshell. This is called संग्रह

वाक्यम् (*sangraha vākyam*) or सूत्र वाक्यम् (*sūtra vākyam*) or संक्षेप

वाक्यम् (*sankṣēpa vākyam*). In English it could be called synopsis, summary or abstract. This statement contains in a nutshell or gist of what is going to be talked about. And thereafter, the topic will be magnified or expanded. We can see this method being practiced in the newscasts in radio and television media. First the headlines are read. This would give us an opportunity to decide whether to continue to hear or watch the news or not. And thereafter the news reader will be heard to say “And now the news in detail”.

So here too the author employs a *sūtra vākyam* to give a synopsis of the teaching of self knowledge. His reply is *ātmā satyaṁ tadanyat sarvaṁ mithyā*. This means that the only reality is *ātmā*. Other than that everything else is false or an illusion.

It is to be noted that the author uses three technical words – *ātmā satyaṁ* and *mithyā*. All of them are significant words; unique words. It is almost impossible to translate them in English. So while each of them would be explained we should retain the Sanskrit words only, because the translation will spoil their connotation and lead to misinterpretation. Now let us look at these three words.

### ***Ātmā and anātmā - Real and unreal***

What is *ātmā*?

According to *Vēdāntā* scriptures, every mortal, perishable individual has got an inner essence, an inner core which is immortal and imperishable. And this immortal inner essence is not visible to our ordinary eyes.

Our ordinary eyes cannot see many things. Many people require spectacles to see even ordinary things! And this immortal essence is invisible and this invisible, immortal, inner essence of every mortal being is called *ātmā*. So hereafter whenever the word *ātmā* is spoken, we should understand it as the invisible and immortal inner essence of every individual entity in this universe.

The next words are *satyaṁ* and *mithyā*. These two are interconnected words. They come as a pair. Therefore, we need to understand them together. First let us consider an example to understand these words.

Suppose there is a desk in the room where we are sitting, which we all can see. All of us can clearly experience the desk. It is a solid, tangible desk having a specified weight of its own. And that is why it is able to hold or support books, other materials etc. So it is our direct experience that there is a tangible, weighty, visible and supportive desk in front of us. *Vēdāntā* says that if we enquire into the truth of this desk, we will have a surprising discovery. And that discovery is that there is no substance called desk at all! Desk is not a substantial entity. Desk is not a weighty entity. Desk is not a tangible entity. Desk is not supporting the book.

Are we surprised? Then what is it that is in front of us. *Vēdāntā* simply says that what is in front of us is not a desk. It is nothing but a piece of wood alone. Wood alone is the substance. Wood is tangible. It is wood alone we are touching. And the weight we talk about belongs to the wood alone. And wood alone supports the book. Other than the wood, there is no substance called desk at all.

And when there is no substance called desk at all, where is the question of the weight of the desk. All these are myths; all these are misconceptions which are continuing because we refuse to think. We have successfully continued not to think. *Vēdāntā* avers that if a question is raised as to what is a desk, we need to understand that a desk is only a new name given to the wood itself. There is no substance called desk. All along there is only a substance called wood. Desk being a new name given to wood has only a nominal existence.

Then the question may arise as to why do we give a new name to the wood? Why can't we retain the word wood itself? Why do we give a name called desk? Because when we give a new name, it is confusing. We commit a mistake that there is a substance called desk. So why do we invent such new names?

In response, *Vēdāntā* says that we give a new name because the wood is designed and given a particular form or shape by the carpenter. When the wood has got a particular form or shape we give a new name for that particular shape alone. The name does not belong to the substance wood. It is given only to the new shape given by the carpenter. Before the carpenter gave the new shape or form, the word 'desk' was not used. It is only after giving the new form that the new name 'desk' was used. And therefore, 'desk' is nothing but a name given to a form. So name desk is a name-form principle. In *Vēdāntā* it is called **नाम रूपम्** (*nāma rūpam*). Desk is only *nāma rūpam*. It is not a substance. The substance is wood. Similarly, Almirah is only *nāma rūpam*. Chair is only a *nāma*

*rūpam*. Non-substantial *nāma rūpams* are many. Substance is only one - wood. This is a very important principle we should know and remember in these studies.

And the next important principle is that this non-substantial *nāma rūpams* can never exist separate from wood. Desk, Chair, Dias etc. are all *nāma rūpams*. They cannot exist independent or separate from the substance wood and therefore, all non substantial *nāma rūpams* have got only a dependent existence. They borrow their existence from the substance called wood, whereas, the substance wood does not depend upon the *nāma rūpams* for its existence. Even if the name and form of a desk is destroyed, wood will continue to exist. Therefore, only the substance has got independent existence. The non-substantial *nāma rūpams* have got only dependent existence.

Other similar examples which we can use for our better understanding are Gold and ornaments; clay and pots; water and waves etc., where Gold, Clay and Water all have independent existence and ornaments, pots and waves have only a dependent existence.

Now, *Vēdāntā* wants to do a **नाम करणम्** (*nāma karaṇam*) that is give a specific common name to the objects which have a dependent existence. According to *Vēdāntā* all non-substantial *nāma rūpams* which have only dependent existence are called *mithyā*. In Sanskrit, it is called **परतन्त्र सत्ता** (*paratantra sattā*).

*Paratantra* means dependent and *sattā* means existence. This is



called *mithyā*. Thus all the ornaments are like, bangles; necklace, chain etc. are all non-substantial *nāma rūpams*. They have dependent existence on the substance gold or silver or platinum depending upon what the ornaments are made of.

So the substance is *satyaṁ*. *Nāma rūpams* are *mithyā*. Substance is one. *Nāma rūpams* are many. *Satyaṁ* is one, *mithyās* are many.

*Vēdāntā* declares that if we know this as a fact, all the problems of life will be solved. Even though it sounds incredible; unbelievable, that is the truth. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* states this truth in one pithy verse in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter of the *Gītā*.

नासतो विध्यते भावो नाभावो विध्यते सतः ।

उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः । ।

*Nāsatō vidhyatē bhāvō nābhāvō vidhyatē sataḥ.*

*Ubhayōrapi dr̥ṣṭō'ntastvanayōstatva darśibhiḥ.*

The literal meaning of this verse is that the unreal has no being or existence; there is no non-being i.e non-existence of the Real; the truth about both these has been seen by the knower of the Truth (or the seers of the Essence).

What Lord *Kṛṣṇa* wants to convey to *Arjuna* is that the whole creation consists of one (and only) *satyaṁ* or reality and innumerable *mithyās*. And what a foolish person does is, he holds on to *mithyā* and loses the sight of *satyaṁ*. This is root cause of the problems of life.

*Ātmā satyaṁ tadanyat sarvaṁ mithyēti*

The author, therefore, says that *ātmā satyaṁ* which means the invisible, immortal, inner essence is the only substance existing independently. *Tadanyat sarvaṁ*, everything else other than the *ātmā*, which we can call as *anātmā* or Non- *ātmā*, is all *mithyā*. Thus everything other than the *ātmā* in the creation is non-substantial *nāma-rūpams* having no independent existence. And that is why they are called *mithyā*.

So to summarise, self-knowledge is to understand and assimilate the fact that *ātmā satyaṁ*, *anātmā mithyā*.

Now the student has heard for the first time a new word *Ātmā*. So his curiosity is further aroused and he gets into the next logical question.

**आत्मा कः? (*ātmā kah*)**

The teacher gives a detailed explanation.

**स्थूलसूक्ष्मकारणशरीरादव्यतिरिक्तः पञ्चकोशातीतः सन्**

**अवस्थात्रयसाक्षी सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः सन् यस्तिष्ठति स आत्मा ।**

*Sthūlasūkṣmakāraṇa śarīrād vyatiriktaḥ pañcakōśātītaḥ san*

*Avasthātraya sākṣī saccidānandasvarūpaḥ san yastiṣṭati sa ātmā.*

The student asks “What is this *ātmā* which is the invisible, immortal, inner essence?” And hidden behind this question is another question also, which is “What is *anātmā*”, the external shell.

The author elaborates. He takes up the second part i.e. *Anātmā* first. In his answer, he divides *anātmā* into several portions or

several layers for the convenience of understanding, just as the modern biological scientists who for the convenience of study of the body's organs and structures, divide our body into various parts.

They talk about dermatology. The skin is a very important component of the body. It is the first defence system. And thereafter they go down to epidermis, dermis, bone, bone marrow etc. And then the heart, lung, liver, intestines, brain etc. The Psychologists study mind, thoughts, thought patterns etc. One body is divided into so many components so that we can have a focussed, threadbare study. The same method is used by our scriptures also and based on that, the *anātmā* part of the individual is divided into three groups. And each group is later further sub-divided.

The first group of *anātmā* is शरीर त्रयं (*śarīra trayam*) - the three fold division of the body. The second group is कोश पञ्चकं (*kōśa pañcakam*) - the five fold layers or strata of the human personality. The third group is called अवस्था त्रयं (*avasthā trayam*) - the three fold awasthas or states of experience.

So *śarīra trayam*, *kōśa pañcakam*, *avasthā trayam* (3+5+3=11), these eleven components or parts together comprise the *anātmā*. The author enumerates all these eleven ingredients and also later points out that the *ātmā* is different from all the eleven items

comprising the *anātmā*. This is the essence of this section of teaching.

So, in response to the student's question the author explains, that *ātmā* is व्यतिरिक्तः (*vyatiriktaḥ*) – separate from or different from; स्थूल सूक्ष्म कारण शरीरात् (*sthūla sūkṣma kāraṇa śarīrāt*). Even though he does not use the word '*anātmā*' used by us earlier, we need to understand that when he refers to *sthūla sūkṣma kāraṇa śarīraṃs*, he is referring to *anātmā* in the context of the self.

So, *ātmā* is different from *anātmā* which are the three *śarīraṃs* i.e bodies viz *sthūla śarīraṃ*, *sūkṣma śarīraṃ* and *kāraṇa śarīraṃ*. These are collectively called the *śarīra trayam*. *Trayam* means three. The author will elaborately define these later.

Next, he talks about पञ्चकोश अतीतः (*pañca kōśa atītaḥ*) - the five strata or layers of the human personality. Unlike in the case of *śarīra trayam*, where the author enumerates the three types of bodies, he does not enumerate the five *kōśas* here. But for the sake of our clear understanding these are अन्नमय कोशः (*annamaya kōśaḥ*), प्राणमय कोशः (*prāṇamaya kōśaḥ*), मनोमय कोशः (*manōmaya kōśaḥ*), विज्ञानमय कोशः (*viज्ञānamaya kōśaḥ*) and आनन्दमय कोशः (*ānandamaya kōśaḥ*). All these five put together is called *kōśa pañcakam*. And this group also belongs to *anātmā* category and *anātmā* is *atītaḥ* which means different from or transcending; that is beyond the कोश पञ्चकं (*kōśa pañcakam*).

The third group the author refers to is अवस्था त्रय साक्षी (*avasthā traya sākṣī*). *Sākṣī* means the witness or the observer who, therefore, is different from the *avasthā trayaṁ* – the three states of human experience. Here again the author does not enumerate the three states. So we need to understand that he is referring to जाग्रत् अवस्था (*jāgrat avasthā*) - the waking stage of experience, स्वप्न अवस्था (*svapna avasthā*) - the dream state of experience, and सुषुप्ति अवस्था (*suṣupti avasthā*) - the dreamless sleep or deep sleep state of experience. These are the three states of experience called *avasthā trayaṁ*. All of them are also *anātmā*. And *ātmā* is *avasthā traya sākṣī* i.e. the witness or the observer of the three states. And, therefore, it is different from all these three. Thus, the three groups and their eleven components have been enumerated.

Having said all this, the author still has to answer the student's question. He has stated what all is not *ātmā* i.e. what all is *anātmā*, but he has not yet explained what is the nature of the *ātmā*. He refers to it as सच्चिदानन्द स्वरूपः (*saccidānanda svarūpaḥ*). *Svarūpaḥ* means one's own form i.e. one's inherent nature. And this inherent nature, the author says is, सत् (*sat*), चित् (*cit*), and

आनन्दः (*ānandaḥ*); यः तिष्ठति (*yaḥ tiṣṭhati*) – abides in whom or in whom they inhere; सः आत्मा (*saḥ ātmā*) – that is called *ātmā*.

So *ātmā* is different from the eleven components of the self seen earlier which are *anātmā*. And *ātmā* is of the nature of

*saccidānanda*. Now even though the author has answered the student's question but in the process he has provided a ground for raising several more questions like 'What is *śarīra trayam*– the 3 fold body? What is *kōśa pañcakam*- the five fold layer? What is *avasthā trayam* - the three fold states of experience?'The author has to now explain each one in addition to explaining what he means by *saccidānanda svarūpaḥ*.

The Q & A continues.

***Sthūlaśarīraṁ - The Gross body - its elements and functions***

स्थूलशरीरं किम् ? (*sthūlaśarīraṁ kiṁ*).

And the author elaborates.

पञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतैः कृतं सत्कर्मजन्यं

सुखदुःखादि भोगायतनं शरीरम् अस्ति जायते वर्धते विपरिणमते अपक्षीयते

विनश्यतीति षड्विकारवदेतत् स्थूलशरीरम् ।

*Pañcīkṛtapañcamahābhūtaiḥ kṛtaṁ satkarmajanyaṁ*

*sukhaduḥkhādi bhōgāyatanaṁ śarīraṁ.*

*Asti jāyatē vardhatē vipariṇamatē apakṣīyatē vinaśyatīti*

*Ṣaḍvikāravadētat sthūlaśarīraṁ*

So, of the 11 components of *anātmā* which all are *mithyā* in nature, the student takes up the first viz. *sthūlaśarīraṁ* for a complete understanding and asks the question ‘What is *sthūlaśarīraṁ*?’.

The teacher gives a very elaborate explanation and covers four aspects viz. the cause, the function, the nature of and the condition of the *sthūlaśarīraṁ*. In English *sthūlaśarīraṁ* can be translated as the gross body or the physical body. And this very word *sthūla* indicates its condition. It means gross. Gross means visible, perceptible to the sense organs. The body can be seen, heard, smelt etc. So gross mean perceptible to the sense organs – इन्द्रिय

गोचरम् (*indriya gōcaram*). It is perceptible not only to us but also to others.

What is the cause of this physical body? He says that the physical body has two types of causes. One is the general cause – सामान्य कारणम् (*sāmānya kāraṇam*) – which is the same for every physical body. And the other is the specific cause – विशेष कारणम् (*viśēṣa kāraṇam*) – which varies from individual to individual.

The physical body is made up the five fundamental elements called पञ्च महाभूतानि (*pañca mahābhūtāni*), just as, in Science we talk about various elements, which alone combine and form varieties of compounds. We have studied about the various elements in the periodic tables and have understood that everything in the the Universe is made up their combination alone. For example, starting from Aluminium we know of Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, Calcium, Potassium upto Zircon. Just as Science talks about these elements, the *shāstrās* also have fundamental elements. In Science, the elements are more than hundred but in the scriptures the elements are only five. Another difference is that in Science all elements are components of the earth, whereas in the scriptures the elements are universal. Also what is an element in the scriptures is a compound according to Science e.g. water.

The first element is आकाशः (*ākāśaḥ*) which means the ‘space’. Space is not a vacuum. Space is a positive material and therefore it is called आकाश भूतम् (*ākāśa bhūtam*). The second element is वायुः (*vāyuh*) which means air, the third is अग्निः (*agniḥ*) i.e. the fire, The



fourth one is आपः (*āpah*) or जलं (*jalam*) which is water and the fifth one is पृथ्वी (*pr̥thvī*) i.e. earth. And all of them are called gross elements because we are able to physically perceive them. Earth is tangible. Water is tangible. We can feel the air through our skin. We can see fire. And we can recognize space sensorily. *Ākāśah* or space is experienced in a peculiar manner. And that is why before sitting on a chair or a bench we see whether there is space or not. And we sit only when there is some empty space. If it is empty it means there is space. Therefore we are able to sensorily experience the emptiness of the chair in a peculiar way which is also इन्द्रिय गोचरत्वम् (*indriya gōcaratvam*).

All these are called gross elements – स्थूल भूतानि (*sthūla bhūtāni*).

And the author says these five gross elements are the basic raw material for the production of all the physical bodies. The physical body of every one of us, not only human beings, but all things in the creation including animals, plants, inert things, *dēvatās* etc. is made up these five elements only.

The body has got a tangible part which is made of the Earth. From the Earth come the vegetables. From the vegetables the food comes. And from the food the body is formed. So Earth contributes to the formation of the tangible body. Next, the body has got Water element. In fact the very shape of the body is determined by 70% of Water. Then there is Fire principle because of that alone the body has got a standard temperature of 98.4 degree F. Even when go to Alaska or Arctic or Antartic Circle, the weather may be

freezing cold, but the body maintains the temperature because of the fire of life in the body. Then the body has got air in the form of life breadth which enters our lungs and comes out. The body occupies a lot of space outside and lot of space inside the body also – stomach is but an empty space and that is why we can push the food inside it. So the body is made up of the five elements and therefore, it is called पाञ्च भौतिक शरीरं (*pāñca bhautika śarīraṁ*).

Everybody is made of these five elements alone. It is a universal contributor. And that is why author says पञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतैः कृतं (*pañcīkṛta pañca mahābhūtaiḥ kṛtaṁ*). *Kṛtaṁ* means produced out of, manufactured out of, shaped out of. The manufacturing factory is the mother's womb. At the time of conception, the body is formed. Undoubtedly, this is the most wonderful factory in the creation. The body is created out of *pañca mahābhūtaiḥ* – the great five gross elements – *pañcī kṛta* means – grossified or made gross, visible and perceptible. This is the *sāmānya kāraṇam* – the general cause.

Now turning to *viśēṣa kāraṇam*, the author says

सत्कर्मजन्यं (*satkarmajanyaṁ*). The special cause is the *karma* – पुण्य (*puṇya*) and पाप (*pāpa*) कर्माः (*karmās*) - which one has earned in the past births or *janmās*. This *puṇya* and *pāpa karma*, is also known as *puṇya paapa अदृष्ट (adr̥ṣṭa)* – unseen or not see-able, The *karma* topic is dealt with in detail later in this book itself, where we will elaborately study what is *puṇyaṁ*, what is *pāpaṁ*, what is *karma*, what is the Law of *karma*, what is previous *janma* and what

is future *janma* etc. At this stage it is sufficient to understand that the specific cause for the body is that it is born out of *puṇya pāpa karmās*.

*Karma* alone determines the quality of the physical body and the type of physical body. Whether it should be an animal physical body, or whether it should be a human physical body or whether it should be a divine physical body. The raw material is the same but the type changes. For example, all houses are made out of the same bricks, cement, iron etc. but all houses are not the same. Each one is different because they have been built to different plans. So the raw material plus the architectural plan determines the type of house. The raw material is universal but plans will vary. Similarly our bodies are also made out of the same raw material but the shapes are different. Even among human beings one body is a male body and another is a female body. Both are made up of the same five elements only but what determines the body? Why should one body be male and another female? The author says it is because of *puṇya pāpa karmās*.

And within the male body or the female body itself, certain bodies are fat, some are not so, some are healthy, some are sick, some have congenital diseases, some have short life, some have long life, some have got dark hair, some have got grey hair, some have got no hair! Who determines all these? – The *karma*. If one disagrees and says that these are all determined by parental genetics, the question would be, what determines one to be born to a specific set of parents. Why should a person be born to such parents? And

that, the author says is determined by *karma*. And that is why he uses the term *karma janyam*. Since this *karma* varies from individual to individual, it is called *visēṣa kāraṇam*– specific cause. The *puṇya pāpa karmās* which we have done in the past births will be responsible for the type of our body. Whether, human or animal, whether male or female, whether healthy or sick etc. all these are not accidental. Our scriptures never accept anything as accidental. Any event is an incident. Even an accident is an incident whose cause we are not able to find out. There is no accident. Birth is not an accident. So if a baby is born with congenital diseases, like Down syndrome, it is not an accident. It is the result of the *karmās* of पूर्व जन्म (*pūrva janma*) - previous births. Our *shāstrās* very firmly emphasize the scientific fact that there can be no effect without a cause. So when a baby is born with such conditions, one has to logically trace the cause to the previous Janma only. And incidentally this conclusion also affirms the birth-death-rebirth cycle. So *pañca bhūtaḥ* plus *pūrva janma karmāḥ* is equal to the cause of the body.

Further, among the different type of bodies, being born in a human body itself is considered to be a great blessing. There are so many bodies like animals, plants, insects, and reptiles – even those not perceptible to our ordinary eyes. When we see the television channels like Animal Planet, we are amazed to know how many different types of bodies are there. We feel lucky that we are not one of them!

The human body is the most sacred body because in that alone we are able to probe into life, the mysteries of life, and the goal of life. Not only that, but we can choose a goal and accomplish it. And, therefore, the author says that irrespective of whether it is a male body or female body, we have got the human body i.e. *manuṣya śarīraṃ* only due to the *punyaṃ* of the previous births. He uses the term *sat karma*, which means *punya karma* to qualify the word *janyaṃ*. The the general cause and the specific cause together form the cause of the body.

We now turn our attention to the function of the body. And the author says the body's function is that it serves a temporary residence for the individual or जीव (*jīva*), or *jīvātmā*, remaining in which it can interact with the world.

For example, let us consider the case of a person transferred by his employer from one city to another. Before he starts any transaction in the new city, he will first search for a house to live in the new city from which he can carry out all his operations. So first he will fix a residence, occupy it and thereafter he may go and find out where the shops are, from where he will get cooking gas connection, where the schools are for his children etc. These are all later transactions. Before all these he will require an abode. Of couse, this will be a temporary rented abode because he knows that he will be transferred again to some other city after some time.

In like manner, this body is also a temporary residence, in which the *jīva* resides, transacts and later shifts the residence from this

body to another body. Then after some time it shifts to yet another body and this process goes on. We do not know since when this shifting business has been going on. It seems to have been doing this from beginningless times and it seems that it will continue to do this endlessly. And this present body has been only its temporary residence. So there is no reason why one should fall too much in love with this body. No doubt, even a temporary house has to be maintained and it must be livable. But we cannot hold on to that residence because it is only temporary and at the appropriate time we will have to vacate it. And if we don't voluntarily vacate, the owner will force us to vacate it. In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Bhagawān Kṛṣṇa* explains this phenomenon, using the analogy of a dress.

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।

तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा - न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

*Vāsāṁsi jīrṇāni yathā vihāya navāni grhṇāti narō'parāṇi.*

*Tathā śarīrāṇi vihāya jīrṇā - nyanyāni saṁyāti navāni dēhī.*

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* implies here that there is no reason to be carried away too much by the physical body. We need to give its due but never give it more importance than what it deserves or requires.

The author continues his explanation. He says भोग आयतनं (*bhōga āyatanam*). *Bhōga* here means experience. *Āyatanam* means abode. In this context the body is the abode for the experiences, which could be pleasurable or painful or mixed. सुख दुःख मिश्र

अनुभवात् (*sukha duḥkha miśra anubhavāt*) - *miśra* means mixed. *anubhavāt* means experiences. One may wonder how experiences can be a mixture of pleasure and pain at the same time. A numerous examples can be cited. For example, a person has two children and both of them take their annual examinations. One child passes with very good marks whereas the other child fails in the examination. What will be that person's experience - pleasure or pain? That is called *miśram*. The author uses the word *ādi* (*sukha duḥkhaadi*) to denote the mixture.

So out of the four attributes of *sthūla śarīram*, we have considered three viz condition, cause, and function. Then the fourth and final one is its nature. What is the nature of this body? The author says विकारवत् एतत् स्थूल शरीरं (*vikāravat ētat sthūla śarīram*). Our body is subject to constant change or modification. Every second, thousands and millions cells are dying and thousands and millions of new cells are born. As we keep on cutting them, the hair keeps growing; the nails keep growing. The food gets exhausted by digestion and that is why after some time we again feel hungry.

The author divides this modification of this body into six types - षड्विकारवत् (*Ṣaḍ vikāravat*). The body undergoes six types of changes viz. अस्ति (*asti*) - potential existence in the womb of the mother i.e. invisible existence as the fetus; जायते (*jāyatē*) - is born; comes out of the womb; वर्धते (*vardhatē*) -grows up (till about roughly 20 years). In this time it reaches full height. Every limb is

fully developed. It is an adult body; विपरिणमते (*vipariṇamatē*) - after 20 years and say upto the age of 50 or 55 years, the body does not undergo much of a change. It is neither growth nor decay but it is just maintaining the status quo i.e. travels in the same plane; And thereafter, अपक्षीयते (*apakṣīyatē*) - decays or disintegrates. And finally विनश्यति (*vinaśyatīti*) -perishes or dies. Death is also a form of transformation in which the body again gets merged into the *pañca bhūtani*, just as a pot, on destruction gets converted into clay form. Matter is never destroyed but it just gets converted. Destruction is also a form of transformation only. Continuous transformation is the nature of the body and the author calls it *Ṣaḍ vikāraḥ*.

These are the six modifications of the body - *ētat sthūla śarīraṁ*. This is called the physical body which is the *anātmā* no.1.

Now let us study Anātmā No.2.

*Sūkṣmaśarīraṁ and saptadaśa kalābhiḥ - The subtle body and its instruments*

सूक्ष्मशरीरं किम् ? *sūkṣmaśarīraṁ kiṁ?*

अपञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतैः कृतं सत्कर्मजन्यं

सुखदुःखादिभोगसाधनं पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियाणि

पञ्चप्राणादयः मनश्चैकं बुद्धिश्चैका एवं सप्तदशकलाभिः सह

यत्तिष्ठति तत्सूक्ष्मशरीरम् ।



*Apañcīkṛta pañcamahābhūtaiḥ kṛtaṁ satkarmajanyaṁ  
sukhaduḥkhādi bhōga sādhanam pañcajñānēndriyāṇi  
pañcakarmēndriyāṇi pañcapāṇādayaḥ manaścaikam buddhiścaikā  
ēvaṁ saptadaśakalābhiḥ saha yat tiṣṭhati tat sūkṣmaśarīram.*

So the student asks “what is *sūkṣma śarīram*”? - The subtle body.  
Some people call it the astral body also.

The teacher gives an elaborate definition. Here also we have to understand the different aspects i.e. the condition of the body, the cause, the function, the nature and its constituents.

The first is the condition of the body. It is called subtle body because, unlike the gross which is tangible and perceptible, the subtle body it is not visible to others. We can see each other's physical bodies but we cannot see the subtle bodies of others. So the subtle bodies are **इन्द्रिय अगोचरं** (*indriya agōcaram*) - imperceptible to others. We will see later that one of the constituents of the subtle body is the mind. We cannot see each other's minds. Just take the case of a teacher and students in a class room. The teacher can see physical bodies of the students but does not know if their minds are in the class room or not. He would have given an hour long lecture with the very optimistic hope that the minds of the students were also in the class room. If not all, at least a few of them! One can imagine what amount of optimism is required for a teacher because he cannot see the minds of the students and what all things are happening in the minds. Whether they are enjoying the class or getting bored or whether they are

wondering how to get out and escape this misery of a lecture! All this is because, the mind is subtle; *sūkṣmaṁ* - imperceptible.

But even though the mind is imperceptible to others, one can very well know one's own mind and what is going on there. Is it calm or disturbed? Is it happy or unhappy? Whether it understands what is being taught or everything is bouncing off the head? So we can conclude that it is partially knowable to one self but not to others, unlike the physical body which is knowable to the owner as well as others. So this is the condition of the subtle body.

Now what is the cause of this subtle body? The author says **अपञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतैः कृतं** (*apañcīkṛta pañca mahābhūtaiḥ kṛtaṁ*).

Like the physical or gross body, the subtle body is also created out of the same five great elements only - *pañca mahābhūtaiḥ* i.e. space, air, fire, water and earth. But unlike the gross body which is *pañcīkṛta* i.e. grossified, the subtle body is *apañcīkṛta* - not grossified; subtle. So if the gross body is created by the gross form of the elements, subtle body must be created out of subtle form of the same elements. Because the effect has to necessarily follow the cause. Physical body is born out of physical matter, visible matter. Subtle body must be made out of subtle matter. One may call it energy but it is a form of matter only. Because scientifically we know that energy is an invisible form of matter only and subtle body is born out of subtle matter. This is the general cause.

Then there is a specific cause also and that is similar to the gross body *sat karma janyaṁ*. So the specific cause of the subtle body is

also based on *pūrva janma karmās*. Thus the five great elements plus previous *karmās* are the cause of the subtle body.

Let us now understand the function of the subtle body? The author says सुखदुःखादिभोगसाधनं (*sukha duḥkhādi bhōga sādhanam*). It is like an instrument or a tool box with which a person contacts the external world. In the context of an office, a person contacts other people by various methods eg. Postal letters, telephone, email, fax and a cell phone etc. We always need an instrument to contact the world. Life is mostly a series of experiences born out of interaction with the external world. In sleep, there is no interaction and so there is no experience. In waking state we have experiences only because of the interaction. Interaction needs instruments of contact. And *sūkṣma śarīram* is a bundle of several such instruments of interaction. It is not one instrument. The author mentions seventeen instruments. He calls them भोगसाधनं (*bhōga sādhanam*). *Sādhanam* in this context means tool. *Bhōga* as we have already seen means experience of the world. *Sukha and duḥkha* experiences and a mixture of both, like in the case of the gross body. This is the function of the subtle body.

Now coming to the nature of the subtle body, even though the author has stated it specifically, we need to understand that like the gross physical body, the subtle body is also subject to transformation and change. To put in Sanskrit, it is सविकारं (*savikāram*) – subject to modification. For example, mind is a constituent of the subtle body. Mind is the most violently

changing instrument. All sense organs are also changing all the time. And all of them are also subject to destruction. But the only difference is that the subtle body has got a longer life as compared to the gross physical body. That means according to the scriptures, at the time of an individual's death only the gross physical body of the person dies and the subtle body continues to survive. Also, the subtle body is said to travel in search of another physical body. It is like any instrument. If one perishes, we get another.

But why should the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* goes in search of another physical body? That is because physical body is the residence or the shell remaining in which only the subtle body can undertake all transactions. It cannot otherwise function. That is why the subtle body survives and travels to find a new physical body. But because it is imperceptible, we cannot see it travelling.

But there could be an argument that since one cannot see the subtle body, it does not exist. At the outset it may look like a fair point but ability to see cannot be the only criterion for proving existence. One cannot see one's own eyes directly, but they exist. If someone argues he can see his eye in the mirror, the answer would be that he can see only the reflected image of his eyes and that too he has to trust the mirror. If it is a concave or a convex mirror, even that image will be distorted.

There is an interesting anecdote. One a person said to another that he does not believe in the existence of things that he cannot see. So to teach him a lesson, the latter person slapped him strongly in the back. Naturally the first one screamed compaining that he was in

pain. The latter said that it cannot be so because neither of them can see the pain. So what one cannot see cannot exist!!!

So, therefore, non-perception is not a proof for non-existence. We don't see other people's mind or emotions. But that does not mean they don't have a mind or emotions. The *shāstrās*, therefore, say that the subtle body survives the death of the physical body and takes another body. And at the loss of that body it goes on to acquire any physical body. This process continues for several births. And the subtle body dies only at the time of

**प्रलयं** (*pralayam*) - the cosmic dissolution. So compared to the physical body, the subtle body has a relatively very long life and continues until the destruction of this world. This is the nature of the subtle body.

The next aspect we need to know is the constituents of this subtle body. This is a long list. The author says there are seventeen components. **सप्तदशकलाभिः** (*saptadaśa kalābhiḥ*). *Kalā* means ingredients, parts or instruments.

He goes on to enumerate them.

**पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि** (*pañca jñānēndriyāṇi*) - The five instruments of knowledge; *jñānēndriyam* means instrument or organ of knowledge. We must remember that the reference here is to the subtle body and so these are not the organs of the physical body. They belong to the subtle body. So we need to understand that by organs the author is referring to the faculties. For example, our

eyes are only physical organs. They can see only if there are connected to the sight faculty in the brain. If that faculty is damaged, the eyes cannot see even if they are physically present.

Next is **पञ्चकर्मन्द्रियाणि** (*pañca karmēndriyāṇi*) – The five organs or instruments of action.

One set of five relating to the organs of knowledge relates to the input mechanism i.e. gathering information from the external world. They are entrance gates. The second set of five *karmēndriyās* is instruments of action – the output mechanism which help in responding to the inputs. So we require entrance gates and we also require exit gates.

Next is **पञ्चप्राणादयः** (*pañca prāṇādayaḥ*) - the five *prāṇās* or forms of energy. These are the power centres or energy centres because of which alone we are able to act. This is similar to any machine which can move or work only if it has energy. If we take the example of a car, we fill it with petrol and this petrol is converted into energy and with that energy alone the car moves. Our physical body moves, and for that movement it requires energy. So we require a fuel tank. And we do have a huge fuel tank which we constantly get replenished. Like the fuel in a car is converted into energy, the food in our body's fuel tank called stomach or tummy is converted into energy. This internal energy is called **प्राण**

**शक्तिः** (*prāṇa śaktiḥ*). These are five in number. Thus the five fold physiological functions which maintain the energy is the third set of the seventeen components. . These three sets add up to fifteen.

Then, **मनः** (*manah*) - the mind. And finally **बुद्धिः** (*buddhiḥ*) - the intellect is also present. Mind stands for the emotional faculty. And *buddhiḥ* stands for the rational or intellectual faculty. We all have emotions. We all have intelligence also. In some people emotions may be dominant and in some others intelligence may be dominant. In the rest it may be balanced. But we all have both these faculties. So in all, these are the seventeen constituents of the subtle body. **यत् तिष्ठति** (*yat tiṣṭhati*) - that which abides in these seventeen constituents is called *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* which is *anātmā* No. 2.

Before proceeding further to *anātmā* No. 3, the author feels the need to explain the composition of the five *jñānēndriyās*, the five *karmēndriyās* and the five *prāṇās*.

The author now enumerates the seventeen organs.

श्रोत्रं त्वक् चक्षुः रसना घ्राणम् इति पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि । श्रोत्रस्य दिग्देवता ।

त्वचो वायुः । चक्षुषः सूर्यः । रसनाया वरुणः ।

घ्राणस्य अश्विनौ । इति ज्ञानेन्द्रियदेवताः ।

श्रोत्रस्य विषयः शब्दग्रहणम् । त्वचो विषयः स्पर्शग्रहणम् ।

चक्षुषो विषयः रूपग्रहणम् । रसनाया विषयः रसग्रहणम् ।

घ्राणस्य विषयः गन्ध ग्रहणम् इति ।

*Śrōtraṁ tvak cakṣuḥ rasanā ghrāṇam iti pañcajñānēndriyāṇi.*

*Śrōtrasya digdēvatā. Tvacō vāyuh. Cakṣuṣaḥ sūryaḥ. Rasanāyā varuṇaḥ. Ghrāṇasya aśvinau. Iti jñānēndriyadēvatāḥ.*

*Śrōtrasya viṣayaḥ śabdagrahaṇam. Tvacō viṣayaḥ sparśagrahaṇam.  
Cakṣuṣō viṣayaḥ rūpagrahaṇam. Rasanāyā viṣayaḥ rasagrahaṇam.  
Ghrāṇasya viṣayaḥ gandha grahaṇam iti.*

***Pañca jñānēndriyāṇi – Five organs of knowledge***

Now the five *jñānēndriyās* are being explained. They are *śrōtram* - the ears, the organs of hearing; *tvak* - the skin, the organ of touch; *cakṣuḥ* - the eyes, the organs of sight or perception; *rasanā* - the tongue, the organ of taste; and *ghrāṇam* - the nose, the organ of smell. But here we need to note that when we are enumerating the eyes, ears etc. we do not refer to the anatomical parts because the physical part is there in a dead body also. The dead body also has skin but it cannot feel the touch, it has eyes but it cannot see etc. So the author does not refer to the anatomical part which belongs to *sthūla śarīram*. What he refers to is the subtle power behind each organ; that invisible शक्ति (*śakti*). श्रवण (*śravaṇa*) *śakti* is called *śrōtra indriyam*; दर्शन (*darśana*) *śakti* is called *cakṣu indriyam* etc. *indriyam* does not refer the physical part but to the subtle part. It belongs to *sūkṣma śarīram* and not to the *sthūla śarīram*.

The anatomical name of these parts in the physical body is called गोलकं (*gōḷakam*). *Gōḷakam* is the physical part and it belongs to the physical body including the dead body, whereas *indriyam* belongs to the subtle body. In a dead body *gōḷakam*s are present but *indriyam*s are not there. In a blind person also *gōḷakam* is there but *indriyam* is missing. These are the five sense organs.



Then the author talks about the देवता: (*dēvatāh*). 'Dēvatās' is a unique concept in our scriptures. Every sense organ has a faculty like seeing faculty, hearing faculty etc. Each faculty is a limited faculty. Eyes can see alright but it has got a limitation. Dogs can see more than us. An owl can see more than us. Dogs can hear sounds which we cannot. So every faculty that we enjoy is a finite faculty. And the *shāstrās* say that corresponding to every finite faculty, there must be a corresponding total power. So individual finite power or faculty is always a part of the corresponding total cosmic power. And this power which exists in the cosmos is called a *dēvatā*. So *dēvatā* is any power at the macro level. And from that macro level power each of us gets a small portion.

It is like a Chief Executive who has got power to govern the entire Company. But he picks up several General Managers for looking after each function like Finance, Sales, Marketing, Production, Human Relations etc. And he delegates part of his total power to each of these General Managers depending upon their respective function. Thus General Manager Finance will have power only with respect to the Finance function. He will not have any power relating to say the Marketing function and so on. Similarly there are so many powers in the creation. Each power has a corresponding total power. It is called a *dēvatā* and all the *dēvatās* put together is called *Īśvaraḥ* – God who, like the Chief Executive is a conglomeration of all the total seeing power, total smelling power, total hearing power, total thinking power, total touching power, total emotional power and so on.

Out of that total power relating to sight, every pair of eyes has got a miniscule. And therefore, the eyes are functioning only with the blessings of that respective *dēvatā*, just as every General Manager functions only with the blessings of the Chief Executive.

Each organ is capable of grasping one aspect individually viz. sound, form, touch, smell and taste. Thus the five fold organs gather the five fold stimuli. The five fold aspects of the creation are called *viṣayaḥ* and the organs are called *indriyaṁ*. So each *indriyaṁ* grasps each *viṣayaṁ*. And which organ will grasp which object is not based on our choice or will. If we want to hear a talk, we have no choice but to use our ears. We cannot say that it is boring to listen through the ears all the time. So we are now going to hear through the eyes! That will not be possible. It is fixed and determined by the Lord himself. Thus every organ can function only within its given field. One organ does not have an access into another field. Just as a ship can move only on water, car can move only on the road, aeroplane can fly only in the air; each sense organ can function only in its क्षेत्रं (*kṣētram*) - the field. Also each sense organ has got a finite capacity only. Ears can hear only within a range. But the range is not the same for all human beings as certain persons can hear certain sounds which others can't. Thus the organs have a finite faculty and the scriptures say that any finite power is a portion of the infinite potential. Thus the five sense organs have finite powers but the corresponding *dēvatās* have got infinite potential. The use of this information is like knowing which Minister or Department is responsible for what in

the Government. When we have a problem we can approach only the relevant Department and the relevant Minister. If we go to the Home Ministry with a college admission issue, we will draw a blank. So the worship of the relevant *dēvatās* is useful for improving the relevant sensory faculties.

The author mentions the names of the *dēvatās* i.e the corresponding macro or infinite power for each of the five *jñānēndriyāṇi*. For *śrōtriya* it is **दिक्** (*dik*) *dēvatā*. The total or macro hearing power is known by the name *dik dēvatā*; for *tvacaḥ* i.e. touch, it is **वायुः** (*vāyuh*). *Vāyu dēvatā* is the name of the total power of touch; for *cakṣuṣaḥ* **सूर्यः** (*sūryaḥ*) *dēvatā*. For the eyes the corresponding *dēvatā* is *sūrya dēvatā* or the Sun; for *rasanāyāḥ* it is **वरुणः** (*varuṇaḥ*) *dēvatā*. *Varuṇaḥ* is the name of the total power of taste; and for *ghrāṇasya* it is **अश्विनौ** (*aśvinau*) *dēvatās*. For the total power of smell, there are twin *dēvatās* called *aśvins* or *aśvini kumārās*. Thus, these are the five *dēvatās*.

After this the author also enumerates the objects of the knowledge of these *jñānēndriyās*.

**श्रोत्रस्य विषयः शब्दग्रहणम्** (*śrōtrasya viṣayaḥ śabdagrahaṇam*) – in this context *viṣayaḥ* means function – the function of *śrōtram* is *śabda grahaṇam* – *śabda* means sound and *grahaṇam* means grasping or experiencing. So the object of knowledge or function of the hearing faculty is to grasp sounds. **त्वचो विषयः स्पर्शग्रहणम्**

(*tvacō viṣayaḥ sparśa grahaṇam*); *Sparśa* means touch. So the function of skin is the perception of touch – soft, hard, hot, cold etc. चक्षुषो विषयः रूपग्रहणम् (*cakṣuṣō viṣayaḥ rūpa grahaṇam*) – the function of the sight faculty is the perception of the *rūpaṁ* which means colours. Form is also called *rūpaṁ* but the primary meaning of *rūpaṁ* is colours. रसनाया विषयः रसग्रहणम् (*rasanāyā viṣayaḥ rasa grahaṇam*) – *rasana* means the tongue. *Rasa grahaṇam* means grasping the *rasa* i.e taste; and घ्राणस्य विषयः गन्ध ग्रहणम् (*ghrāṇasya viṣayaḥ gandha grahaṇam*) – the function of nose is *gandha grahaṇam* – the perception of smell.

And that is why in the scriptures, the whole world is divided into five segments. Instead of enumerating the objects of the world, the scriptures divide the world into five segments i.e sound, smell, taste, form and touch. If we analyze carefully when we see an object what we see is the colour or shape. We never see an object. We always see the properties but never the substance. These are very interesting truths. Our sense organs never perceive the substance. They perceive only the properties called *śabda*, *sparśa*, *rūpa*, *rasa* and *gandha*. And we never know what the substance is! When we say you are sitting, we are only seeing your colour. If we say you are speaking, we are only hearing your sound. If you apply lot of perfumes, we only smell the perfumes. Thus we don't know what your substance is.

***Pañca karmēndriyāṇi – Five organs of action***

The author next talks about the different aspects viz. the functions, their field of activity and the corresponding *dēvatāḥ* which represents the total potential of **कर्मेन्द्रियः** (*karmēndriyaḥ*) - the sense organs of action or output. He explains:

**वाक्पाणिपादपायूपस्थानीति पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियाणि ।**

**वाचो देवता वह्निः । हस्तयोरिन्द्रः । पादयोर्विष्णुः ।**

**पायोर्मृत्युः । उपस्थस्य प्रजापतिः । इति कर्मेन्द्रियदेवताः ।**

**वाचो विषयः भाषणम् । पाण्योर्विषयः वस्तुग्रहणम् ।**

**पादयोर्विषयः गमनम् । पायोर्विषयः मलत्यागः ।**

**उपस्थस्य विषयः आनन्द इति ।**

*Vāk pāṇi pāda pāyūpasthānīti pañca karmēndriyāṇi.*

*Vācō dēvatā vahniḥ. Hastayōrindraḥ , Pādayōrviṣṇuḥ.*

*Pāyōrmṛtyuḥ. Upasthasya prajāpatiḥ. Iti karmēndriyadēvatāḥ.*

*Vācō viṣayaḥ bhāṣaṇam. Pāṇyōrviṣayaḥ vastugrahaṇam.*

*Pādayōrviṣayaḥ gamanam. Pāyōrviṣayaḥ malatyāgaḥ.*

*Upasthasya viṣayaḥ ānanda iti.*

First he enumerates the five organs – **वाक्** (*vāk*) - the organ of speech. It is useful to be reminded here that we are not talking about the the physical part which is the tongue. The physical part as we have seen is called *gōḷakaṁ* which may be there even in a person who is dumb. The reference here is to the invisible faculty because of which the tongue is able to express. This invisible part is called *vāk śaktiḥ* or *vāk indriya* – the organ of speech; **पाणिः** (*pāṇiḥ*) means the two hands because of which we are able to hold

handle the objects of the world. We always use our hands to do whatever we want to do i.e. the outputs we want to give. The reference here is to the faculty and not the physical part. In fact the very word handle must have come from hand. Handle means that we do with our hands; **पादः** (*pādaḥ*) - the foot or leg. The pair of legs we have is called *pādau* - feet. They are meant for movement. It is because of them that we have mobility. So, *pādaḥ* stands for locomotion or the power of movement; **पायुः** (*pāyuh*) - that internal organ which removes the waste from the body. Our body is a very big factory which takes in a lot of raw material. And in this factory of the body, the food is converted into energy for activity. Any factory will need to discharge the waste. So the body factory also has wastes which have to be evacuated. Otherwise there will be a health hazard. That organ which does this is called *pāyuh* - waste removing organ - both solid waste as well as liquid waste; **उपस्थः** (*upasthaḥ*) - the organ of reproduction because of which every living being reproduces and perpetuates its *paramparā* or lineage. Here also we should remember all references to the organs are not to the *gōlakam*, the physical part but to the *indriyam*, the invisible faculty. So *indriyāṁs* have been enumerated.

The next aspect is the corresponding *dēvatās*.

**वाचो देवता वह्निः** (*vācō dēvatā vahniḥ*) - *vahniḥ* or *agniḥ* is the name of the *dēvatā* for the total power of communications, which is a very important faculty. Many times we do not communicate properly and at the same time we are unable to keep our mouth

shut. At times we also fall victims to communication gap. In fact most of the problems in a family can be traced to communication gap. So the corresponding total potential that is called *Vāk Dēvatā Agniḥ*. It is also called *Sarasvatī – Vāk Dēvī*. Most of us only pray to *Lakṣmī Dēvī* for blessing us with wealth. But if we want to totally avoid the communication gap in the family; we have to pray more to *Sarasvatī* the *Vāk Dēvī*. Another name is *Bṛhaspatiḥ*. *Bṛhaḥ* means *vāk*. So *Bṛhaspatiḥ* means the *dēvatā* of *vāk*. Therefore, *Agni dēvatā*, *Sarasvatī dēvatā*, and *Bṛhaspati dēvatā* – all of them represent the total power of speech. Then **हस्तयोरिन्द्रः** (*hastayōḥ indrah*) – *Indra dēvatā* represents our total power of handling. We have only limited power and are barely able to carry our own weight – what to talk of extra weight. That is why someone was asked what ‘middle age’ was and he said that it was that period in life when one can carry only one’s own weight. In old age, even that would not be possible. A third hand would be required even to get up if sitting on the floor. The next is **पादयोर्विष्णुः** (*pādayōḥ viṣṇuḥ*). - *Viṣṇu dēvatā* or Lord *Nārāyanā* especially in his *Trivikramā* or *Vāmanā* form. *Viṣṇu* is considered to be the presiding deity for movement because only in his *Trivikrama avatārā*, he showed his power of movement. Please refer to the story of King *Mahābali* in the *Bhāgavata Purānā* to understand the connection between Lord *Viṣṇu* and the power of movement.

The next is **पायोर्मृत्युः** (*pāyōrmṛtyuḥ*) - The presiding deity of cleansing the residue or the remnant is *mṛtyuḥ* that is *Yama*

*Dharma Rājā. Yama* is the presiding deity for removing the waste. In the context of our body, only when the waste is removed can we eat afresh.

The duty of Lord *Yama* is to remove people from the world through death. For example, in old age what is there left in us? Only the old shell of the body which is a waste. When old people become a burden to the earth they have to be evacuated to make place for the new generation. So Lord *Yama* represents the power of evacuation, the power of removing the unwanted, paving way for the fresh creation. Any destruction in the universe is a stepping stone for the next construction. So destruction is always constructive destruction. We should never look down upon *mrutyuḥ* which literally means death. But in this context it refers to Lord *Yama Dharma Rājā*. That is why while taking the name, the word *DHARMĀ* is emphasized. He never does anything which is *adhārmik*. His activities are never unjust. He never takes to unfair activities. Our problem is that we don't mind everybody else dying but we have an unfair attitude that we and a few others close to us should live eternally. This is an unfair expectation on our part and Lord *Yama* will never fulfill this unfair expectation!

The fifth and last one is **उपस्थस्य प्रजापतिः** (*upasthasya prajāpatiḥ*) -

The presiding deity of *upastha*, the organ of reproduction, generation or creation is *Prajāpatiḥ* i.e. *Brahmā*, the four headed *dēvatā*. *Brahmā* is worshipped as the creator and that *Brahmā Jī's* total power of creation alone manifests in every living being. The only difference is that *Brahmā Jī* can create all the species whereas



human beings can create only human species. So we have got a limited power of reproducing only our species. But *Brahmā Ji* has the unlimited power of reproducing all creation. He stands for the total potential of creation and that is why he has four heads. The four heads stand for the four *Vēdās* and the four *Vēdās* stand for the total knowledge, omniscience. Any creation is knowledge. Any creativity requires knowledge.

**इति कर्मन्द्रियादेवताः** (*īti karmēndriyā dēvatāḥ*) - These are the *dēvatās* of organs of action.

Now what remains in this topic is a discussion on the functions of each one of the *karmēndriyās*.

**वाचो विषयः भाषणम्** (*vācō viṣayaḥ bhāṣaṇam*) - *viṣayaḥ* as we have seen earlier means function. The function of the organ of speech is *Bhāṣaṇam* i.e speech; **पाण्योर्विषयः वस्तुग्रहणम्** (*pāṇyōḥ viṣayaḥ vastu grahaṇam*) - The function of the two hands is the handling of the objects - *vastu* means objects or things and *grahaṇam* means handling; **पादयोर्विषयः गमनम्** (*pādayōḥ viṣayaḥ gamanam*) - The function of the feet is movement; **पायोर्विषयः मलत्यागः** (*pāyōḥ viṣayaḥ mala tyāgaḥ*) - The function of *pāyuh* is the elimination or the discharge of *malaṁ* i.e. waste. The waste discharged through sweat or excretion of any form of waste would come under the function of *mala tyāgaḥ*; and **उपस्थस्य विषयः आनन्दः** (*upasthasya viṣayaḥ ānandaḥ*) - The function of the organ of reproduction is

reproduction – begetting children. Becoming parents; raising the status of a person to parent hood. The scriptures point out that parent hood is *ānandaḥ* – whether one may agree or not – because one sees oneself in his or her child. Also when we die, we never look upon it as total disappearance but we perceive that we continue to survive in the form of our children. Children represent immortality. Therefore, *ānandaḥ*, otherwise called immortality, is the word used here for begetting children. So the perpetuation of the species is the function of the *upasthaḥ*.

That completes the description of ten out of seventeen organs.

### ***Pañca prāṇaḥ - Five physiological systems***

However, we find in a similar description of the *pañca prāṇās* i.e five praanas is missing in the original text. We do not know if these have been omitted inadvertently by the author. In the absence of their description by the author, we will still study them on the basis of the scriptures.

The five fold *prāṇik* system can be called the five fold physiological system. They are somewhat similar to the physiological system that we find in modern Biology. These physiologic functions are divided into five. This is the *Shāstrik* approach. These are called

**प्राणः** (*prāṇaḥ*), **अपानः** (*apānaḥ*), **व्यानः** (*vyānaḥ*), **समानः** (*samānaḥ*)

and **उदानः** (*udānaḥ*). The order has been slightly changed for ease of understanding sequentially.

*Prāṇaḥ* is the respiratory system. The external air is breathed in as the *prāṇa vāyu*, the energy is absorbed and thereafter the wastage is exhaled; the second one is *apānaḥ* which means the evacuatory or excretory system- that energy which gives the power for the removal of the waste from the body; next is *vyānaḥ* which is the circulatory system for the energy that is manufactured out of food. Food is first converted into energy and that energy is supplied or distributed to every cell of the body. This is done by *vyānaḥ* which is known as Circulatory system in biological terms; the fourth one is called *samānaḥ* which is digestive system, which alone converts the raw material called food into the invisible energy. We require energy for all our activities; and finally we have got *udānaḥ* - It is a unique system which functions only rarely. It is like an emergency exit. They are like the fire extinguishers which are not normally used but used only in an emergency. A similar concept can be observed in *Vishnu* temples. They have a door on the northern side of the deity which is called '*Svarga Vāsa*' – entrance to heaven. This door will not be opened at all on normal days. It is opened only once a year and that too on the *Vaikuṇṭha ēkādaśi* day. Similarly *Bhagavān* – God, the omniscient Lord has kept an emergency power to protect and save our body and health. And that power gets activated whenever any poison or toxin, which is threat to our health, enters our body. This power manifests either in the form of vomiting or purging until the poison is thrown out. If some foreign particle enters through the nose, we keep on sneezing till that particle is thrown out. Similarly, if some dust particles enter the eyes, the tear glands begin to put in extra efforts

till the dust particle is removed. Even when we are sorrowful or we experience certain unhealthy emotions, then also tears come down our eyes. According to the Scientists, those unhealthy toxins in the mind are removed through tears. But tears flow when we are extremely elated also. But the composition of these tears is different from the composition of the tears we shed due to a sorrowful and unhealthy emotion. All these are examples of the function of *udānaḥ* which we can call the reversing function or the emergency function which operates rarely.

This function also operates at the time of death when all the organs have to withdraw their respective functions. *Udānaḥ*, therefore, is active at the time of death also. All things inside the body are thrown out. Food cannot be taken inside. All this happens because the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* has to leave the *sthūla śarīraṁ*.

These are the *pañca prāṇās*, the five fold physiological system.

#### ***Antaḥkaraṇaṁ - Four inner equipments***

And finally we have two more - *manaḥ* and *buddhiḥ*, which are called *Antaḥkaraṇaṁ*.

*Manaḥ* is defined as the संशय (*saṁśaya*) or doubting faculty. *Samśaya* or doubting is a faculty. In fact this faculty is very active in many people. They are called 'Doubting Thomases'. In Sanskrit it is expressed as संकल्पविकल्पात्मकं मनः (*sankalpa vikalpātmakam manaḥ*) – oscillating faculty. The famous opening phrase of the soliloquy "To be, or not to be" in William Shakespeare's

play Hamlet comes to our mind. When in doubt, we keep on oscillating between two ideas like the pendulum of the clock – to be or not to be. The pendulum moving in one direction is called *sankalpa*. The pendulum moving in the opposite direction is called *vikalpa*. The *sankalpa vikalpa* oscillation or vacillation faculty is called *manaḥ*. It is also the emotional faculty. So mind stands for both faculties i.e. doubt as well as emotion.

Whereas, बुद्धिः (*buddhiḥ*) is the faculty we call the intellect. It is the rational faculty. In Sanskrit it is expressed as निश्चयात्मकं (*niścayātmakam*) that which puts an end to the vacillation; decisive. It is the *buddhiḥ* which puts an end to the vacillation of the mind by taking a decision. So this is the decisive or rational or intellectual faculty.

These are thus the seventeen components of *sūkṣma śarīraṁ*.

In some other texts, two more constituents are added to the seventeen to make them nineteen constituents. Those two additions are चित्तं (*cittam*) and अहङ्कारः (*ahaṅkāraḥ*). *Cittam* is the memory faculty. It is an extremely important faculty because without that we will have to keep learning everything again and again. Even for the study of this text, the basic assumption is that we remember what we have read and understood in the earlier chapters. But for that, we will for ever be struck on Page 1 only!

The last faculty is *ahaṅkāraḥ* which refers to the Ego - the 'I' notion because of which we identify with the *sthūla śarīraṁ* and the

*sūkṣma śarīraṁ*. Thus we can count these four also i.e. *manah*, *buddhiḥ*, *cittaṁ* and *ahaṅkāraḥ* alongwith the fifteen to make it a total of nineteen components of *sūkṣma śarīraṁ*.

Now to consider an interesting question before we proceed further. The scriptures say that after the death of the *sthūla śarīraṁ*, the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* travels to take up another gross body. And they also says that all information, data, memory etc. stored in the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* including the mind is transferred to this new gross body and this process goes on till *pralayaṁ*. This means that we carry the mind and memories from the previous births. Now a question is often asked as to why we don't remember anything from our previous birth/s.

This question is answered from two perspectives. It is not true that all of us do not remember anything from the previous births. The child prodigies we see are those persons who have memories of the previous births passed on to them which they can recall.

Otherwise there can be no explanation how a small child is able to our render music or play musical instruments or solve mathematical problems. We call them genius. So a genius is that person who has been able to recall the memory of his previous births and work on it in the present birth to produce extraordinary results in his chosen field of action. This is the first perspective.

Secondly, for most of us, when we cannot recall what happened a few days or a few weeks or a few years ago, how can we recall what happened in the last birth or a few births ago? As we are reading this book, if someone were to ask us what all was

discussed in the third Chapter, most of us will not be able to recall unless we refer back to the third chapter. So, just because the mind continues to exist from birth to birth, there is no rule that we should remember the experiences of the previous birth. There are many things we remember, many things we forget because of long passage of time.

***Kāraṇaśarīraṁ - Causal body***

The next topic is the 3<sup>rd</sup> *anātmā*, viz *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*. As usual the student asks:

कारणशरीरं किम् ? (*kāraṇaśarīraṁ kiṁ*). And the author explains:

अनिर्वाच्यानाध्यविध्यारूपं शरीरद्वयस्य कारणमात्रं सत्स्वरूपाज्ञानं

निर्विकल्पकरूपं यदस्ति तत्कारणशरीरम् ।

*Anirvācyānādhyavidhyārūpaṁ śarīradvayasya kāraṇamātraṁ  
satsvarūpā jñānaṁ nirvikalpakarūpaṁ yadasti tat kāraṇaśarīraṁ.*

*Kāraṇa śarīraṁ* can literally be translated as the causal body. *Kāraṇam* means cause. Here also we will study the four factors viz. the condition, cause, function and nature.

For the sake of convenience, we first take up the function. To understand the function of *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*, we need to know a very important law of the creation. It is very important from the point of view of the scriptures and also from the perspective of modern science.

This law of creation states is that nothing is ever created. In fact the word creation itself is a misnomer. Really speaking, because of the law of conservation of matter and energy, matter can never be created and matter can never be destroyed. In short, nothing can be created or destroyed. It means when we talk about the creation of a desk, really speaking the carpenter does not create anything. The desk was already existent in the form of wood. Carpenter does not add even one ounce of matter or even one milligram of matter.



By his effort he has only modified the wood into the desk form. That is only transformation of matter from one form to the other. This transformation alone we erroneously call creation. Similarly when an ornament is created, the goldsmith does not produce even a microgram of gold. Already matter was there in the form of gold and he has only given a particular shape to it. It is a sheer transformation from one form of matter to another form. Similarly when a tree is generated or produced, no tree is generated. It already existed in the form of a seed. And that seed is called the unmanifest form of the tree. The tree did exist very much in the seed in a potential form, in an unmanifest form. Production of the tree is not production, nor creation. It is only that the unmanifest tree comes to manifestation.

Similarly all our bodies existed in the womb of the mother in potential form and the creation of our body is the unmanifest again coming to manifestation. So everything existed all the time. This whole universe, this whole creation existed all the time. *Bhagawān* or God did not create even an ounce of matter.

A question may arise that, if that were be the case that the world existed all the time, why do we talk about the creation of the world called सृष्टिः (*sr̥ṣṭiḥ*) and why do we talk about the dissolution of the world called प्रलयः (*pralayaḥ*). The scriptures point out that the creation of the world is not really the 'creation' of the world. The creation existed before also. But the only the difference is, just as the tree existed before in an unmanifest form, similarly the

universe also existed in an unmanifest form. The scriptures call it the seed form of the universe. Just as there is a seed form for the tree, just as there is a seed form for the body, the whole universe also existed in an unmanifest, potential causal form.

When the scientists study cosmology, they also talk about the big bang theory. And according to that theory, before the big bang, the whole universe existed in a very very condensed form. In science they call it singularity. In *Vēdāntā* we call it अव्यक्त प्रपञ्च (*avyakta prapañca*). So the creation is nothing but the *avyaktaṁ*, the unmanifest coming to *vyaktaṁ* i.e. manifestation. Just as the seed becomes sprout, the sprout becomes the plant and the plant becomes the tree, similarly the tree of the universe also evolves.

And if creation is nothing but manifestation, what will be the dissolution of the universe? We have to extend the same principle. At the time of *pralayaḥ*, the world will not be destroyed. Due to the operation of the law of nature, matter can neither be created nor destroyed. Universe cannot be destroyed. At the time of *pralayaḥ*, the whole manifest universe again will go back to unmanifest condition.

Thus we need to understand that going from manifestation to unmanifest condition is called *pralayaḥ* and going from unmanifest condition to manifestation is called *sr̥ṣṭiḥ*. This means the universe will always exist either in *avyakta rūpaṁ* or *vyakta rūpaṁ*.

And this law applies to everything in the universe. When we destroy the desk, it will become pieces of wood. If we burn the pieces of wood, it will be reduced to ashes. If we mix the ashes with earth, it will reduce to mud form, from which again the wood will grow. We can only change the form. In fact the atom bomb explosion was based on this theory. When matter is converted into energy, it becomes an atomic explosion. Einstein's theory  $E=MC^2$  is based on this. When matter is destroyed, it will get converted into energy and when we recover the energy, it will again become matter. If this is true, we can say that every object in the creation existed even before its creation, but in an unmanifest form. Whether it is a fan, mike or carpet or even our own body, everything must have existed even before its creation in its potential form.

So our two bodies, i.e. *sthūla śarīraṃ* and *sūkṣma śarīraṃ* must have existed even before their 'creation'. And they would have existed in unmanifest form, seed form or causal form. That causal form of these two *śarīraṃs* is called *kāraṇa śarīraṃ*. The causal form for this mike will be *kāraṇa* mike, the causal for the desk will be *kāraṇa* desk, and the causal form of the Earth will be *kāraṇa* earth! And so on. And the most important aspect to understand is that each manifest form contains the seed for the unmanifest form. Like the seed of a mango tree is contained in the seed which is inside the mango fruit. And therefore, the author says *kāraṇa śarīraṃ* serves as the seed for the *sthūla* and *sūkṣma śarīraṃs* to originate.

The next logical question would be, when the whole creation is destroyed, what will happen to the *sthūla* and *sūkṣma śarīraṁs*?

The answer is that they will not get destroyed, but will get converted back into *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* and when the next *sṛṣṭiḥ* comes, again the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* will be transformed into *sthūla* and *sūkṣma śarīraṁs* and this process will go on eternally.

Unmanifest becomes manifest. Manifest again goes back to unmanifest. Water becomes vapour and vapour again becomes water. In the *Gītā*, *Bhagawān Kṛṣṇa* says in verse 28, Chapter 2:

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।

अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ।।

*Avyaktādīni bhūtāni vyaktamadhyāni bhārata.*

*Avyaktanidhanānyēva tatra kā paridēvanā.*

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* says that everything was unmanifest. It became manifest and it will again go back to unmanifest. This expansion contraction process will eternally continue. Expansion is falsely called creation. Contraction is falsely called destruction. Therefore Lord *Kṛṣṇa* addresses *Arjuna* “Who is dying? There is no phenomenon called death at all. It is all change of shape only. So where is birth and where is death. Birth and death are there only in your perspective.”

This is what the author explains in the text.

*Śarīradvayasya kāraṇamātraṁ.* The *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* is merely the seed. It does not do any function. It serves only as a seed. *Mātraṁ*

means only; so it is the only cause for *śarīra dvayasya* – the two bodies i.e. *sthūla śarīram* and *sūkṣma śarīram*.

Now what is the condition of this body? The author says *nirvikalpaka rūpam*. When anything is in causal form or seed form, it will be in an undifferentiated form. It means that the various parts will not be clearly visible or recognizable. In the tree form we can clearly see the branch, the leaf, the trunk, the flower; the fruit etc. all are clearly recognizable. But in the seed form, even though everything is present, it is in an undifferentiated form. In the small lump of flesh after conception of a baby, all the organs of the baby are present in the DNA of the baby, to use the language of genetics. If we do a DNA mapping we will find all the information coded in the genetic language. What type of baby will it be after 15 years? Whether it will have congenital diseases, whether it will be healthy or sick, whether it will have hair on top of the head or not, whether psychological problems will be there or not, all this information is in the DNA but we are not able to detect because we have not yet mastered to decode this language. That is why as the child is born and it grows, the parents are always anxious because we cannot recognize whatever is there in a potential form. And certain diseases like hypertension, diabetes, kidney problems etc. manifest only after several years. But all these are present in potential form, all the while. And therefore, the condition of the *Kāraṇa Śarīram* is such that we will not be able to differentiate or distinguish anything.

And such undistinguishable state is called *nirvikalpaka rūpaṁ*. *Vikalpa* means differences. In *sthūla śarīraṁ* the differences are clear. We are clearly able to see and distinguish the head, the hands, legs etc. So the *vikalpas* are clear.

In *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* the differences are less clear but we can still make out. We know what is mind, what is intellect, what is emotion, what is memory, what is *jñānēndriyaṁ* etc. These differences are evident. On the contrary, in *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*, the differences will not be detectable at all. This in Sanskrit is called *nirvikalpaka rūpaṁ*.

Now let us study the nature of that *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*. The author says its nature is *svarūpa ajñāna ṁ*. We need to understand this word *ajñānaṁ* very clearly.

We have seen that with respect to the Universe, the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* obtains before the creation or after the dissolution. And as per definition the differences will not be recognizable in the unmanifest form. This means that the subject-object duality will not be recognizable in *kāraṇa avasthā*.

In our present manifest form, we are able to clearly differentiate that 'I' am the subject, the knower and all other things are the objects i.e the known. In *kāraṇa avasthā* even that duality will not be recognizable. Since the knower-known division itself is not recognizable, we cannot talk about any knowledge in *kāraṇa avasthā*. We cannot talk about any form of knowledge.

We can talk about knowledge, only when there are divisions. Even in a class room, learning or knowing takes place because there is someone teaching and someone listening by using the mind and the ears. We can talk about knowledge when there are so many instruments. But when there is no division of subject, object, mind, sense organs, intellect etc. we cannot talk about knowledge. And therefore, the nature of that state of the *kāraṇa śarīram* is *ajñānam* i.e. total ignorance because the infrastructure for knowledge is absent. So the author says *kāraṇa śarīram* is that which consists of ignorance of *sat svarūpa* - the real nature of everything. It is in the nature of total blanket ignorance.

And that is why the cosmologists, through their research are trying to find out the condition before the 'Big Bang'. According to the theory of general relativity, the initial state of the universe, at the beginning of the Big Bang was singularity. But both general relativity and quantum mechanics break down in describing the Big Bang. They found a state which they call 'singularity' but they are unable to understand what caused the Big Bang. They, therefore, define singularity as a state of no information. We call it *kāraṇa śarīram*. They call it state of no information. We call it *ajñānam*. It is widely believed that despite all research the Scientists will never be able to know the cause!

Now what is the cause of *kāraṇa śarīram*? The question itself seems absurd because by definition, *kāraṇa śarīram* is the root cause of everything and being the root cause of everything it can never be an effect or a product. Everything is born out of *kāraṇa śarīram*,

but *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* itself is not born out of anything and that is why the author calls it *anādi*. *Anādi* means the beginningless. And this *anādi kāraṇa śarīraṁ* is given a technical name *avidyā* or *mūla avidyā*. The word *avidyā* is a technical word and is another word for *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*. And since it is the root cause, it is called *mūla avidyā*. It has several other names also. It is called *māyā*, *prakṛtiḥ*, *avyaktaṁ*, *śaktiḥ* etc. All these are synonyms. Of these, the author has chosen to use *anādi avidyā rūpaṁ*. Thus we can understand *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* as the causeless cause of the universe!

We are now left with the word *anirvācyā*. This is another technical word for *mithyā*. We have already learnt the meaning of this word when we discussed *ātmā satyaṁ tadanyat sarvaṁ mithyā*. We have learnt that *satyaṁ* has independent existence and *mithyā* has got only dependent existence. And we also considered the example of a desk and clay pot. In a clay pot, clay has got independent existence. Even if the pot is destroyed, clay will continue. But pot has got a dependent existence. If we remove the clay the pot cannot exist. So there we learnt that *anātmā* is *mithyā*. And here the author introduces another word *anirvācyā* which means *mithyā*. The entire *anātmā* is *mithyā*. The author has used this word only while discussing *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* but it can be used in the context of all the *śarīraṁs*. So one can say *anirvācyā sthūla śarīraṁ*, *anirvācyā sūkṣma śarīraṁ* and of course, *anirvācyā kāraṇa śarīraṁ*. All are *mithyā*.

There is another interesting aspect. This *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* by its very definition will exist only before creation or after dissolution.



Therefore, there is no way of seeing or experiencing the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* now. But the *shāstrās* say that we can get a taste of the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*, if we have a desire to know that. However, for that we cannot destroy the whole universe.

We all know that before the construction of a large building complex, the architects build a miniature model. The *shāstrās* say we get a similar model of the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* very easily and very regularly, whenever we go to sleep.

During our sleep, the *sthūla śarīraṁ* is as though dissolved because we are unaware of it. Thus we can say that sleep is a miniature model of the dissolution of the *sthūla śarīraṁ*. Not that it is actually dissolved but it is as though or seemingly dissolved because we don't experience the physical body. Similarly the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* is also as though dissolved during sleep, as none of them function as that time. Eyes, ears, emotions, knowledge, ego, intellect, memory etc. are all as though dissolved. We can never say that we are asleep – in the present tense. This is because all our faculties are dissolved. But, if we can say that we are asleep, it would mean that we are not asleep! In sleep everything is as though or seemingly dissolved. So, this sleep is a miniature version of *pralayaṁ* and therefore, the *shāstrās* call it *layaḥ*. *Layaḥ* is the miniature version of *pralayaḥ*. We can remove the *pra* and make it a miniature! During sleep we don't experience the world, we don't experience our physical body, we don't experience our subtle body, and we don't experience our mind, our intellect. We experience nothing but the sleep. Therefore, subject-object duality

is absent and even all the knowledge stored in our *cittaṁ* is dissolved. There is only total ignorance. There is only *sat svarūpa ajñānaṁ*.

There is an interesting story which highlights this fact. An orthodox person, who used to practice untouchability, was travelling in a train. There was another person sitting next to him. This orthodox person warned the other person not to touch him since he was very orthodox. The train started moving and both of them fell asleep. In the process, the orthodox person still asleep fell on the lap of the other person. At that time there was no issue of untouchability! When he woke up, he once again warned the other person not to touch him! So the lesson is that all these practices of touchable, untouchable etc. i.e. all divisions are only in waking state but not in deep sleep state. That is why sleep is given as an example for recognizing *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*. But the actual *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* will be available only in *pralayaḥ avasthā*, when the whole universe will be dissolved.

We need to understand this aspect very carefully. At the time of *pralayaṁ* i.e. dissolution of the universe, the subtle body also get dissolved. However, the causal body continues to exist even at the time of *pralayaṁ*, because that is going to be seed for the next creation of gross and subtle bodies, just as the farmers keep some seeds for the next crop. Similarly the Lord is an intelligent farmer and he keeps all the causal bodies with which he can create the physical and subtle bodies in the next round of creation. Causal bodies, therefore, have the longest life possible. The causal body

gets dissolved only under one condition. The gross body goes at the time of death; the subtle body goes at the time of *pralayaṁ*. The causal body goes or gets dissolved only once in a person's lifetime and that happens at the time of liberation or *mōkṣaḥ*. So the wise people or the *jñānis* at the time of their death become free from their *sthūla*, *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa śarīraṁs*. And that is why, the scriptures point out, that after *mōkṣaḥ* there will be no rebirth, as the cause for the rebirth itself would get destroyed. So *mōkṣaḥ* is the final end.

This completes the discussion on the three *śarīraṁs* – *sthūla*, *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa śarīraṁs*.

***Avasthātrayaṃ - The three states of existence***

Sequentially, the next topic is *kōśa pañcakaṃ*. However, the author has done a slight modification. Instead of dealing with *kōśa pañcakaṃ*, he first discusses *avasthā trayam*. The order is slightly changed and we will also follow the teacher.

अवस्थात्रयं किम्? (*avasthātrayaṃ kim*)

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्यवस्थाः ।

*Jāgrat svapna susuptyavasthāḥ*

The student asks “What are the three fold states of experience?”

The author enumerates them as **जाग्रत्** (*jāgrat*) - the waking state of experience; **स्वप्न** (*svapna*) - the dream state of experience; and **सुषुप्ति** (*susupti*) - the dreamless deep sleep state of experience. The author goes on to describe each of them more clearly.

***Jāgradavasthā - The waking state***

As per our *shāstrās* nothing should be taken for granted and there should be no doubt left in learning. So the author begins with *jāgrat avasthāḥ*.

जाग्रदवस्था का ? (*jāgradavasthā kā*)

श्रोत्रादिज्ञानेन्द्रियैः शब्दादि -

विषयैश्च ज्ञायते इति या सा जाग्रदवस्था ।

स्थूलशरीराभिमानी आत्मा विश्व इत्युच्यते ।

*Śrōtrādi jñānēndriyaiḥ śabdādi -*

*viṣayaiśca jñāyatē iti yā sā jāgradavasthā.*

*Sthūla śarīrābhimānī Ātmā viśva ityucyatē*

The student asks “What is the waking state of experience”?

The teacher explains *sā jāgrat avasthā*- that is called as the waking state – *yā jñāyatē* – which is experienced or which is known with the help of the interaction between two factors viz. *śrōtrādi jñānēndriyaiḥ* - the sense organs of knowledge which are the sense faculty of hearing etc. i.e. eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. But sense alone cannot generate experience. If sense organs should generate experience, they require the corresponding sense objects. And therefore, the author says *śabdādi viṣayaiśca* - *viṣayaḥ* means sense objects. And the sense objects are also divided into five - *śabdādi* i.e in the form of *śabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa and gandha*

We have discussed these earlier. Thus the *indriyam* group and the *viṣayaḥ* group interact. During the deep sleep state, the *indriyam* group i.e. the sense organs group is not functioning, they are withdrawn or resolved and that is why even when the world continues, we have no experience. We may be attending a music programme and if in between we doze off, the music programme will continue but the musical experience ends for us because one of the complementary pairs i.e. the sensory group has switched off or withdrawn. If we listen to some nice music it would give us happiness and if the music is terrible, it gives us sorrow. The entire waking state is a series of pleasures and pain. And pleasure leads

to further reactions and pain leads to further reactions. Emotional problems like desire, anger, delusion, greed, lust, envy etc. i.e all forms of emotions are based on these interactions only. And if these interactions are absent, these emotional problems will also be absent. And even the worry about the future will be absent. Therefore, the interactions as well as the interaction based reactions; all of them come under *jāgrat avasthā*.

Another important aspect is that if this interaction has to happen, we have to support the sense organs. We have to be behind the sense organs. Without our backing them up, the sense organs will not function. They cannot operate by their mere existence. Our co-operation is required. When we want to listen to something very carefully for example a feeble sound, we tend to encircle the back of our ears with our hand and we are all attention. This shows our backing up or supporting the ears to perform to their best. Taking another example, if in a class room we are not focussed on our ears but on our mind thinking about something outside the topic being discussed in the class, we will not be able to hear the talk properly because we would be failing to back up the sense organ i.e. ears, which is required for listening. Now the question could arise, by referring to ears are we talking about the physical ears or the hearing faculty i.e. the *sthūla* or *sūkṣma*? The answer is both. We have to identify with both i.e. the *gōḷakam* as well as *indriyam*. In this example, if we have to identify with the *indriyam*, we have to identify with the *gōḷakam* i.e physical ears and that is why we keep the hand near the ears as a gesture of identification.

Therefore, the functioning of the *indriya* requires *indriya* identification or *abhimānam* – identification. *Indriya abhimānam* requires *gōḷaka abhimānam*. And *gōḷakam* is a part of the physical body. Therefore *gōḷaka abhimānam* requires *śarīra* or *dēha abhimānam*. So we have to identify with our physical body.

Without identifying with our physical body, we cannot operate the sense organs and if we cannot operate them, we cannot experience the external world. That is why in sleep or in dream, even though our body is there, even though our ears are open also but we don't hear any sound. This is because in that state we don't identify with our body. So even though mosquitoes may be there all over our body, we are like *jīvan muktās*, liberated persons!!! Since we don't identify with our body, there is no experience of the mosquito bite. Our nostrils are open but we don't smell anything. A good example is somnambulism or sleep walking. These people have no *śarīra* or *dēha abhimānam* i.e. no identification with the physical body.

So waking state requires *sthūla śarīra abhimānam* and when we are in the waking state we are called विश्वः (*viśvaḥ*) - the waker.

इत्युच्यते (*iti ucyatē*) – so it is said.

Whereas in the dream state, we don't identify with the body and naturally we don't experience the external world. The body is non-operational and so, the external world is also non-existent for us. This is what the teacher is going to explain in the next Q & A.

***Svapnāvasthā – The dream state***

स्वप्नावस्था केति चेत् ? (*svapnāvasthā kēti cēt*)

जाग्रदवस्थायां यद् दृष्टं यत् श्रुतं तज्जनित-वासनया निद्रासमये यः

प्रपञ्चः प्रतीयते सा स्वप्नावस्था ।

सूक्ष्मशरीराभिमानि आत्मा तैजस इत्युच्यते ।

*Jāgradavasthāyām yad dr̥ṣṭam yat śrutam tajjanīta-vāsanayā  
nidrāsamayē yaḥ prapañcaḥ pratīyatē sā svapnāvasthā. Sūkṣma  
śarīrābhimānī ātmā taijasa ityucyatē.*

The author first talks about the mechanism or cause of the dream state. He says at the time of waking, we experience the external world and at this time, the mind records those experiences. The mind is the most sophisticated recording medium. In a tape recorder, we can record voices and in a video recorder, we can record both visuals and sound. But in the mind, we can not only the experiences of the world, in form and sound but it records all the five *viśayas* i.e. *śabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa and gandha* at the same time. In addition to these five sensory stimuli, even the emotions like anger, happiness, jealousy, anxiety, worry, greed, lust, etc. i.e. what all we experience in the *jāgrat avasthā*, they are all registered. The more powerful the experience, the more deep is the recording. And this recording medium has no limit in terms of memory capacity, unlike audio or video recorders, in which we have to frequently change the recording medium. But *Bhagavān* has given us the most sophisticated recording device that we can go on recording without changing the recording medium i.e. brain. We



can record any number of experiences and the medium lasts even for several births! These registered experiences are called *vāsanās*. Another word is **संस्कारा** (*saṁskārā*). We are all born with innumerable *vāsanās* or *saṁskārās* gathered in the previous births and that is why we have musical genius, mathematical genius, spiritual genius etc. because they all are born with inherited 'balance of talent' from the previous births.

So the waking state serves as a sophisticated recorder. Now when we feel tired of the waking state and switch off the light and go to bed, then what does that mind do? No more live programmes are available. The 'recorder' part of the instrument is switched off. But the 'player' part of the instrument takes over and whatever is registered in the mind, is replayed; like the action replay in the cricket match! The *vāsanās* are projected and this projected *vāsanās* are called the dream universe. Every experience creates an imprint or etching in the mind which produces a *vāsanā*.

This is what is explained by the author when he says *jāgradavasthāyām yad dr̥ṣṭam yat śrutam* - what is heard and what is seen in the waking state; (we need to add other things also like what is smelt, touched, tasted etc.); *tajjanita vāsanayā - tat janita* means born out of that experience;

During the waking state the *vāsanās* are not activated. We cannot do recording and playing simultaneously. So in the waking state only recording takes place. But *nidrā samayē* - at the time of sleep, *yaḥ prapañcaḥ pratīyatē* - the world which is recognized i.e.

whatever inner world, private world, mentally projected world is experienced; *sā svapnāvasthā* - that is called the dream state.

This world of dream is a purely private world for anyone. We cannot share the dreams with another person. For example, if we go to a temple, we can see the temple premises, the idol, the manner the idol is decorated etc. We can show this, share this experience with others. We can even take them to the temple and show them. We can take photos and videos of the temple and share them with others.

But suppose we see the temple, idol etc. in a dream, can we wake up the neighbour and show him the dream? We cannot because it is आन्तर प्रपञ्चः (*āntara prapañcaḥ*) – an inner world. It is subjective. In *jāgrat avasthā*, it is an objective, external world and in *svapna avasthā*, it is a subjective, internal world.

So in a dream we never gather any new experience. New experiences can be gathered only in waking state. In dream we can only relive whatever experiences we had before. However, some people may claim that they had new experiences in the dream! That is never possible. It is possible that the old experiences may be rearranged, all memories could be jumbled up and out of the jumbled memories one may have a seemingly new experience. But it cannot be anything new. It can only be a rearrangement of the old memories which may appear as new.

Suppose one still says that he had an experience in the dream which he never had before. The *shāstrās* say that the person has

had the experience before. It is only that he doesn't remember that experience. For example, we come across some people whose face looks very familiar but we cannot recollect where we have seen them earlier. So it may look like a new experience. In a dream, the mind can project only what is stored there.

If that person is adamant, he may still claim that he did have a new experience in the dream which he has never had in his life. In response, the *shāstrās* say that, in that case, he is bound to have had that experience in his previous birth/s. Those experiences also sometimes get projected in the dream.

Carrying this line of thought further; suppose a person claims that he sees the future in the dreams. Our response would be that, that experience is based on his imagination, which could have been registered in the waking state. For example, suppose a person is harassed by some other person in the waking state. This person is unable to respond because the person who is harassing is either a parent or an elderly person. But in his mind he feels like punching the nose of the person who is harassing! And he also imagines or visualizes that he is punching the nose! In his dream that person can see that scene of his punching the nose! So the scriptures say that the dreams also serve as a method built by nature to exhaust our desires! Some visualization is fulfilled in dreams.

But if one actually sees future events in dream, we don't call it a dream. We call it ESP – the Extra Sensory Perception. Dreams can never give us the experience of the future because dream by definition is the replay of the experiences of the waking state and

such an experience is called *svapna avasthā*. And the most interesting aspect is that when we are in a dream, we don't know that it is a dream. It all looks so real!!!

A dream is seen as a dream only in the waking state. That is why *Vēdāntā* says that experiences in the waking state are also another dream, which we are never able to believe. The scriptures say that the truth of this statement will be revealed to us when we attain *mōkṣaḥ*. It is a mind boggling statement. So a dream is not a dream in a dream state. A dream in a dream state is like waking because there also there are people, objects, places, experiences etc.

Everything is like in the waking state. So for the dream we require *vāsanā abhimānaḥ*. *Vāsanās* belong to the mind. Mind belongs to the *sūkṣma śarīraṃ*. And therefore we identify with our subtle body in the dream. So in the waking state we are *sthūla śarīra abhimānī* and in the dream state we are *sūkṣma śarīra abhimānī*. And the author gives a special name for this 'I' the *Ātmā* – the conscious being. He calls it तैजस (*taijasa*) – a dreamer; इत्युच्यते (*ity ucyatē*) – it is said.

So *viśva* is a waker and *taijasa* is a dreamer.

### ***Suṣuptyavasthā – The deep sleep state***

Next we move to the sleep state, which is very easy to understand.

अथ सुषुप्त्यवस्था का ? (*atha suṣuptyavasthā kā*)

अहं किमपि न जानामि

सुखेन मया निद्राऽनुभूयत इति सुषुप्त्यवस्था ।

कारणशरीराभिमानी आत्मा प्राज्ञ इत्युच्यते ।

*Ahaṁ kimapi na jñāmi. Sukhēna mayā nidrāsnubhūyata iti  
Suṣuptyavasthā.*

*Kāraṇaśarīrābhimānī ātmā prājña ityucyatē.*

The student asks *atah-* so hereafter; *suṣupti avasthā kā* - what is the sleep state of experience?

The teacher answers. In the sleep state, there is neither the external world seen through the sense organs nor is there the inner world projected through the *vāsanās*. Neither the sense organs are operational nor are the *vāsanās* activated.

We have these 2 in 1 musical players. They have a radio and also a cassette player and there is a selector switch. If we push the switch in one direction the radio will play. This represents the waking state. Then if we change the switch to the cassette player and it will play the recorded cassette which is already inserted in the player. This is like the dream state. And if we don't want to listen to either the radio or the tape recorder, we can select another switch which indicates 'sleep'. In this state it neither plays the live programme nor the recorded programme but the player is asleep – it is in *suṣupti avasthā*!

Similarly in our case also there is total non-experience in deep sleep state. But this is also a form of experience. And how do we experience that state? *Ahaṁ kimapi na jñāmi* - "I do not know anything!" .We don't experience anything, neither the external world nor the internal world of projection. And therefore, we do not have the reactions that we have in the two *avasthās*. We do not

have worries. We do not have anxieties. They all belong to waking and dream states. In *suṣupti* all the emotions are resolved, worries are resolved, anxieties are resolved, even pain of the body is also resolved. The author describes this state as *sukhēna* –comfortably; with total relaxation; *mayā nidrāsnubhūyatē* – ‘sleep is experienced by me’.

So we experience nothing except deep relaxation. This experience is called सुख अज्ञान अनुभवः (*sukha ajñāna anubhavaḥ*) – experience of total peace and ignorance of everything. But the interesting aspect is that we experience this not through an active mind – because in sleep the mind is also resolved; the *vāsanās* are not functioning; memories are not functioning; emotions are not functioning. Thus the mind is also in a resolved condition. Therefore this experience is registered in the dormant mind, the resolved mind, the passive mind. The passive mind or resolved mind is called *kāraṇa śarīram* as we have seen before.

Since the sense organs, the mind etc. are all resolved at the time of the sleep experience, we can never say we are experiencing sleep. If we are able to say that we are experiencing sleep it would mean that we are not in the sleep state. We need to be in a waking state to make this statement. Thus the experience cannot be claimed while undergoing the experience. We can claim the experience only after we return to the waking state. We can never use the present tense but can talk about this experience only in the past tense. We can say “I slept well”, “I knew nothing”, “I was very happy” etc.

Thus in *suṣupti avasthā*, we are identified with neither the *sthūla śarīraṁ* nor the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* but with the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* in which everything is in a potential latent condition - seed form. Therefore, here the *abhimānaṁ* is with the causal body and in this state we are called *kāraṇa śarīra abhimānī*. The author gives a technical name *prājña* to a person in this *suṣupti avasthā*.

To sum up,

*Sthūla śarīra abhimānī* is called *Viśva* – the waker;

*Sūkṣma śarīra abhimānī* is *Taijasa* - the dreamer; and

*Kāraṇa śarīra abhimānī* is *Prājña* – the sleeper.

This concludes the discussion on *avasthā trayāṁ*.

***Pañca kōśāḥ - The five sheaths or covers***

We now move on to the last set of five *anātmās* which are known as *kōśa pañcakam* - the *pañca kōśas* the five sheaths; the five encasements or five layers of personality. The student asks:

पञ्च कोशाः के ? (*pañca kōśāḥ kē*)

अन्नमयः प्राणमयः मनोमयः विज्ञानमयः आनन्दमयश्चेति

*Annamayaḥ prāṇamayaḥ manōmayaḥ vijñānamayaḥ ānandamayaścēti.*

The question is “What are the five layers or covers of the personality?” A layer can be compared to a case, just as we have a case to cover the knife or a sword. In the scriptures such a case with reference to the self is called *kōśaḥ*.

The teacher lists them starting with *annamayaḥ*. We have to add the word *kōśaḥ*. So *annamaya kōśaḥ* – food modified sheath – is a case or sheath or personality which is formed by the modification of the food that we consume;

The second is *prāṇamaya kōśaḥ* – the *prāṇik* energy - the invisible energy sheath. This is talked about by the *prāṇik* healers also;

The third is *manōmaya kōśaḥ* – the mental sheath or the psychological or emotional layer of personality;

The fourth is *vijñānamayaḥ kōśaḥ* – the intellectual sheath which corresponds to the rational, intelligent layer of personality; and



the last one is *ānandamaya kōśaḥ* - the deepest level of personality which is the source of *ānandā*; the source of relaxation; rejuvenation and re-vitalization.

*Cēti* is only a conjunction – *ca iti* – which means ‘and’ as we have seen earlier.

Having enumerated them, the author now goes on to define each of them. If we carefully follow, we will find that each subsequent one is subtler than the previous one with *ānandamaya* being the subtlest in this group.

*Annamaya* is the grossest visible layer. In fact we can see only this layer. We cannot see the *prāṇamaya* layer of others. Only when a person tries to get up from sitting on the floor, we will know how his *prāṇamaya* is working. If getting up is a difficult proposition for him, it would mean that his *prāṇik* layer is feeble!

Before we get into the detailed exposition of each of these layers, it is important to understand that these five *kōśās* are not five new *anātmās* but are only new names for the three *śarīraṁs* which we have already discussed. The same three *śarīraṁs* are divided into the *pañca kōśās* from another functional angle.

This is similar to the structure of our country or a State. We have several divisions based on the different standpoints. They are called Zones. If we take the functioning of the Railways, the entire rail network is divided in to 8 or 9 zones. If we take the functioning of the Metereological department, they have also

divided the country into 20 or 25 zones. The country is the same. But it is divided differently from different functional standpoints.

Likewise, the three *śarīraṁs* are divided into five *kōśās* from another functional angle. According to this classification, the physical body or the *sthūla śarīraṁ* is called *annamaya kōśaḥ*.

Similarly the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* corresponds to *ānandamaya kōśaḥ*. There is no difference between *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* and *ānandamaya kōśaḥ*. They are but two names given from different stand points. Just as the husband at home becomes the Managing Director at the Office.

*Sūkṣma śarīraṁ*, the subtle body is divided into three functional divisions which are the other three *kōśas* viz. *prāṇamayaḥ*, *manōmayaḥ* and *vijñānamayaḥ*.

Now let us look at the text to understand each of the five *kōśas* better.

#### *Annamayaḥ - The food sheath*

अन्नमयः कः? (*annamayaḥ kā ?*) – What is *annamayaḥ*?

अन्नरसेन्नैव भूत्वा अन्नरसेन्नैव वृद्धिं प्राप्य अन्नरूपपृथिव्यां यद्विलीयते  
तदन्नमयः कोशः स्थूलशरीरम् ।

*Annarasēnnaiva bhūtvā annarasēnnaiva vṛddhiṁ prāpya  
annarūpapṛthivyām yadvilīyatē tadannamayaḥ kōśaḥ sthūlaśarīram.*

The author explains why it is called *annamaya kōśaḥ*?

Before we see the answer, let us ask ourselves as to why the physical body is called *sthūla śarīram*? Since it is gross body perceptible to our own sense organs and also to other's sense organs, and because it is solid, tangible, concrete and really a heavy body, it is called *sthūla śarīram*.

Similarly, *annamaya kōśaḥ* is so called because it is a product of *annam* – food. The whole gross physical body is manufactured out of the raw material called *annam* or the food that we consume. Let us consider how a human body is formed in the womb of the mother. The parents have consumed food. There can be no doubt about it since they are alive! The food that is consumed by the father will get converted into the seed in the body of the father, which we call sperm and which is the main cause for the production of the physical body. But father alone is not enough. Similarly, the mother should have consumed food. That food consumed will get converted in the mother's body into an egg or ovum. That is, sperm or seed in the male body and ovum or egg in the female body. These two are called *anna rasaḥ*. Since the body is formed only by the joining together of these two, the authors says *anna rasēnnaiva bhūtvā* – come into being only due to *anna rasam*. In Sanskrit it is expressed as शुक्र शोणित रूप अन्नरसेन्नेव भूत्वा (*śukra śōṇita rūpa annarasēnnaiva bhūtvā*) - *śukra* means the seed, *śōṇita* means egg.

So, *anna rasa* is the *sṛṣṭi kāraṇam* - the cause of the creation of the body. After the body has been conceived, and the fetus has been formed in the mother's womb, how does it grow? The growth of

the body; the survival of the body also requires the same *annam*. So the mother has to consume healthy food and also extra food for the baby. If there is malnutrition in the mother, it will affect the baby indicating the baby is also sustained by the mother's food only through the special cord called the umbilical cord.

In the scriptures, there is an *Upaniṣad* dealing exclusively with maternity. It is called *Garbhōpaniṣad*. It deals with in detail, how the child is formed, how the child grows, etc. But we don't need to study that *Upaniṣad* now because here we are interested in *mōkṣaḥ* and not begetting children!!!

The author continues *annarasēnnaiva vṛddhiṁ prāpya*. The physical body grows because of *annam* and therefore, *annam* becomes not only *sṛṣṭi kāraṇam* but also the *sthithi kāraṇam*, the cause of the survival of the body.

Then after 9 months of conception the baby is born. Till then the body survives by the food eaten by the mother. But once the baby comes out and thereafter, if the body has to grow, the baby has to consume the food. So, once again *annam* gets converted into carbohydrates, proteins, salt, minerals, calcium, potassium, sodium, iron etc. which are collectively called *anna rasam*.

After this the body grows upto a particular time and then starts to decline after 50 or 60 years. At this time, the intake of *annam* also becomes lesser and lesser. On death, the body gets mingled with the earth and become fertilizers for the plants grown on the earth for the production of food. Thus the body becomes the source of

food for the next generation. The author says *anna rūpa pṛthivyām yat vilīyatē - vilīyatē* - means merges; *anna rūpa* means the source of food. Thus *anna rasam* is not only *sṛṣṭi kāraṇam*; not only *sthithi kāraṇam*, but also *laya kāraṇam*. From food we come and to food we go back! Since *annam* is *sṛṣṭi*, *sthithi* and *laya kāraṇam* of the body, it is called *annamaya kōśaḥ*. *Mayam* means product; i.e. product of *annam* and it is another name of *sthūla śarīram*.

### ***Prāṇamayah - The vital air sheath***

Next the student asks:

**प्राणमयः कः?** (*prāṇamayah kaḥ?*) – What is *prāṇamayah*? What is meant by the energy sheath? – The energy personality; the *prāṇik* personality which the *prāṇik* healers are supposed to read, rectify and correct the health problems. They talk about an invisible aura around our body.

The author explains:

**प्राणाध्याः पञ्चवायवः वागादीन्द्रियपञ्चकं प्राणमयः कोशः ।**

*Prāṇādhyāḥ pañcavāyavaḥ vāgādīndriyapañcakam prāṇamayah kōśaḥ.*

The author says *prāṇādhyāḥ pañca vāyavaḥ* – the *prāṇik* layer consists of the five fold physiological system.

These are *prāṇaḥ*- the respiratory system; *apānaḥ* - the excretory system; *vyānaḥ* - the circulatory system; *samānaḥ*- the digestive system and *udānaḥ* - the reversing system. These are called *pañca vāyavaḥ*. They alone are responsible for the generation of energy.

When this energy gets exhausted we feel hungry. This stored energy is expressed in the form of *kriyā śaktiḥ* – power of action – which expresses in the *pañca karmēndriyāṇi*. Every *karmēndriyaṁ* is an outlet through which the *kriyā śaktiḥ* expresses itself – through our walking or talking or even undertaking physical exercises. Thus the *pañca karmēndriyāṇi* also comes within *prāṇamayāḥ kōśaḥ*. Therefore the author says, *prāṇādhyāḥ pañcavāyavaḥ* the five fold physiological system – *vāk ādi indriya pañcakaṁ* – *vāk*, we know means the organ of speech – *ādi* means ‘etc.’ i.e the other four organs of action viz. *pāṇi, pāda pāyuh* and *upasthaḥ*.

In a dead body, *annamayāḥ* is present, but *prāṇamayāḥ* has left.

### ***Manōmayāḥ - The mental sheath***

मनोमयः कोशः कः ? (*manōmayāḥ kōśaḥ kaḥ*) –

मनश्च ज्ञानेन्द्रियपञ्चकं मिलित्वा यो भवति स मनोमयः कोशः ।

*Manaśca jñānēndriya pañcaka ṁ militvā yō bhavati sa manōmayāḥ kōśaḥ*

The main part of the psychological or emotional sheath is our mind. Mind is the seat of all emotions and also the seat of all desires. So *manōmayāḥ* represents *icchā śaktiḥ*. We have already seen that *prāṇamayāḥ* represents *kriyā śaktiḥ*.

*Manōmaya's* job is generating the desire and *prāṇamaya's* job is to fulfill those desires. So desire comes first and then fulfilment. In keeping with our want to learn *Tattva bōdhaḥ*, *manōmayāḥ* desires

and *prāṇamayāḥ* brings us to the class room and helps us to sit through the lectures! That is the job of *prāṇamayāḥ*.

*Manah* – is the emotional mind, the desiring mind, fancying mind, the mind which ‘builds castles in the air’ – that mind which goes on wishing and wishing irrespective of whether the body has any energy or not.

Now we can have a desire only for something which we know. We cannot desire an unknown thing. This is the principle people use in the advertisements. They repeatedly show their products on the television and other media so that we know all information about their product and the desire to buy is born in our mind. So desire requires collecting data with the help of *jñānēndriyam*.

And so the author says *manaśca jñānēndriya pañcakam militvā* – by combining the mind with the five sense organs of knowledge – eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the skin; *militvā* means combining; *yō bhavati sa manōmayāḥ kōśaḥ* – that which is born or that which results is *manōmayāḥ kōśaḥ* – the psychological or emotional sheath.

Thus *prāṇamayāḥ* is a combination of ten organs and *manōmayāḥ* is a combination of six organs - mind plus the five sense organs.

***Vijñānamayāḥ - The intellectual sheath***

**विज्ञानमयः कः ?** (*vijñānamayāḥ kaḥ*) – What is *vijñānamayāḥ* - the intellectual, rational or the knowledge layer of personality?

**बुद्धिज्ञानेन्द्रियपञ्चकं मिलित्वा यो भवति स विज्ञानमयः कोशः ।**

*Buddhijñānēndriyapañcakam militvā yō bhavati sa vijñānamaya ḥ kōśaḥ*

The authors answers that it is the expression of *jñāna śaktiḥ*. *Kriyā śaktiḥ* requires *icchā* – desire and desire requires *jñānam* – knowledge; without knowledge we can never desire!

A hundred years ago people would never have had a desire for a computer or computer games because they did not know that such a thing as a computer was possible. Action presupposes desire, desire presupposes knowledge and *vijñānamaya kōśaḥ* represents the knowledge.

That is why the author says *buddhi jñānēndriyapañcakam militvā* - by combining the intellectual faculty with the five sense organs of knowledge – eyes, ears, nose, tongue and the skin; *militvā* means combining; thus after knowing and discriminating, judging, weighing the pros and cons, the *buddhiḥ* decides; *yō bhavati sa vijñānamayaḥ kōśaḥ* – that which is born or that which results is *vijñānamayaḥ*.

Whatever we desire we know but whatever we know we don't necessarily desire. We know many things but we use our discriminative power to decide whether we should desire or not. There are many desires in our mind which we happily drop for various reasons. A bald headed person comes to know about a particular brand of shampoo which is supposed to be very good for smooth hair. But what can he do with this knowledge? It is



irrelevant for him. What will an advertisement for some hard to bite savouries mean for a toothless person? He might read about all such things. If teeth are not there, the new knowledge will not produce any desire. Taking another example, a new car might have been advertised costing say Rupees 50 lacs. Now, this person who sees the advertisement may like it but has no money to buy. So we have to remember that wherever there is desire, there is knowledge; but wherever there is knowledge, the desire need not arise.

So *jñānēndriyaṃ* are common to *manōmaya kōśaḥ* and *vijñānamaya kōśaḥ*. All these are components of the *sūkṣma śarīraṃ* i.e. *prāṇamaya kōśaḥ*, *manōmaya kōśaḥ* and *vijñānamaya kōśaḥ*. Just to recap, *prāṇamayaḥ* represents *kriyā śaktiḥ*, *manōmayaḥ* represents *icchā śaktiḥ* and *vijñānamayaḥ* represents *jñāna śaktiḥ*.

### *Ānandamayaḥ- The bliss sheath*

Now what is left is *ānandamaya kōśaḥ*.

आनन्दमयः कः ? (*ānandamayaḥ kaḥ*) – What is *ānandamayaḥ* ?

एवमेव कारणशरीरभूताविद्यास्थमलिनसत्त्वं

प्रियादिवृत्तिसहितं सत् आनन्दमयः कोशः ।

एतत् कोशपञ्चकम् ।

*Ēvamēva kāraṇa śarīra bhūtāvidhyāstha malinasattvaṃ*

*Priyādi vṛtti sahitaṃ sat ānandamayaḥ kōśaḥ.*

*Ētat kōśapancakam.*

*Ānandamayāḥ* is the same as *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*. And we have already defined *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* as the state when everything resolves into seed form at the time of *pralayaṁ*. The seed condition of everything is called *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* and at the time of deep sleep state we get a condition which is very nearly similar to *pralayaṁ*. It is not that the world is resolved but at the time of deep sleep the world is as though resolved for us. For others the world continues but for us it is seemingly disappeared. We don't experience the external world, we don't experience the dream world, we don't experience our own physical body, we don't experience any emotion, we don't experience any knowledge and we don't even experience our very individuality. Our ego is also totally resolved. At the time of deep sleep state, we are in seed state. This state we have already seen is called *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*.

So the author says that this *ānandamaya kōśaḥ* is *kāraṇa śarīra bhūtakāraṇa śarīra bhūtaṁ*; *bhūtaṁ* means born out of; of the nature of.

We should remember that *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* was given another technical name *avidyā*. It is not a regular Sanskrit word. Normally *avidyā* means ignorance. But here it is used in a technical sense called *mūla avidyā* or as the author prefers to call it *avidhyāstha*.

When we are in the *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* i.e. in the deep sleep state, we have got two fold experiences. One experience is total ignorance. We are unaware of anything. In fact we don't even know that we are sleeping. Sleep does not have a present tense. We can say 'he sleeps' but we can never say 'I sleep'. So in sleep or *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*,

we experience *ajñānam* or ignorance. And here *ajñānam* is called *malinasattvam* – this is again a technical word which means obstructed knowledge. Lord *Kṛṣṇa* discusses this in detail in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. We will learn this when we study the *Gītā*. Here it is sufficient to note that *malinasattvam* is a technical word for ignorance.

The second experience is total relief from stress, tension and worries. This is what is called *ānandaḥ*. Who does not love to sleep? Everybody loves sleep because of the *ānandaḥ* which the sleep gives not only to the sleeper but also to others who may feel happy because they enjoy some peace because of this person's sleep! For example, a baby and that too a naughty baby sleeping is the greatest relaxation for the mother. All young mothers know that.

So the second aspect is happiness which is indicated by *priyādi vṛtti sahitaṁ* which is associated with different states of happiness – *priyādi vṛtti* refers to degrees of happiness. The *shāstrās* grade happiness into three layers. Just as in English we have three degrees of comparison – happy, happier and happiest; in the *shāstrās* too, happiness is graded into three layers. When we see a desirable object, we get a feeling of happiness by merely seeing it. Suppose in a shop we see an object we like, the very sight gives us happiness. Then we buy that object. When we possess that object we are happier. And later on when we actually use the object we experience the highest happiness. This is called दर्शन सुखं (*darśana sukham*), ग्रहण सुखं (*grahaṇa sukham*) and अनुभव सुखं (*anubhava*

*sukham*) – seeing pleasure, owning pleasure and enjoying pleasure – in Sanskrit, the corresponding words are प्रियः (*priyaḥ*), मोदः (*mōdaḥ*) and प्रमोदः (*pramōdaḥ*). These three degrees of happiness are experienced in sleep also depending upon the depth of the sleep. We experience deep sleep, deeper sleep and deepest sleep. In deep sleep we wake up by ourselves. In deeper sleep we do not wake up by ourselves by somebody has to wake us up. In deepest sleep we neither wake up on our own nor even if somebody tries to wake us up! Thus depending upon the depth of the sleep our experience of joy varies. Thus *ānandamayaḥ* consists of *malinasattvaṁ* and *priyādi vṛttiḥ*. Such a *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* obtaining in sleep is called *ānandamayaḥ kōśaḥ*. *Priyādi* i.e. *priya ādi* means *priyaḥ* ‘etc.’ i.e. *mōdaḥ* and *pramōdaḥ*.

Finally the author says *ētat kōśapancakam*. These five put together is called *pañca kōśā ḥ*. But essentially they represent the three *śarīrams* only. So really speaking there are only six *anātmās* but if we separately count the *pañca kōśās* it will become eleven *anātmās*.

Now we go on to the topic of *ātmā*.

### *Ātmā – Atma*

Having enumerated the *anātmās*, the author now goes on to discuss the crucial subject matter of *ātmā*. We have previously roughly defined *ātmā* as the invisible, immortal, inner essence of every individual.

Earlier the author has stated that *ātmā* is the only real one and all others are *anātmās*. Then he went into a detailed discussion of the *anātmās*. But, he has still not defined what the *ātmā* is, except stating the *ātmā* alone represents our real self and the *anātmās* do not represent our real self. They are only our superficial personalities. Here he wants to reiterate this statement first and then go on to defining the *ātmā*.

मदीयं शरीरं मदीयाः प्राणाः मदीयं मनश्च मदीया बुद्धिर्मदीयम्

अज्ञानमिति स्वेनैव ज्ञायते तद्यथा मदीयत्वेन ज्ञातं

कटककुण्डल-गृहादिकं स्वस्माद्भिन्नम् तथा पञ्चकोशादिकं

स्वस्माद्भिन्नं मदीयत्वेन ज्ञातमात्मा न भवति ।

*Madīyaṁ śarīraṁ madīyāḥ prāṇāḥ madīyaṁ manaśca madīyā  
buddhirmadīyam ajñānamiti svēnaiṣṇāyatē tadhyathā  
madīyatvēna jñāta ṁ kaṭakakuṇḍala-grhādikaṁ svasmādbhinnam  
tathā pañcakōśādika ṁ svasmādbhinnam madīyatvēna jñātamātmā  
na bhavati.*

The author points out here that all the three *śarīrams*, otherwise known as the *pañca kōśāḥ*, are not the real self. They are only a

temporary medium through which 'I' the *ātmā* interacts with the world. They are all media meant for our transaction.

To demonstrate this, the author uses a line of thought or a particular logic. He says that whatever, we possess or use, we refer to them as 'my' or 'mine'. And whatever we claim as 'mine' only belongs to us. So whatever belongs to 'me' is not 'myself' but different from 'myself'. For example, a car, a pen, a book etc. which we possess and use, we refer to them as 'my car', 'my pen', 'my book' etc. They belong to 'me' but are not 'myself'. Thus if a house belongs to us, we are not the house. We use the house, we possess the house, we claim the house but we are not the house. So the author says whenever we claim something as 'mine', we are not that. We are different from that. Now if we analyse how we refer to the *pañca kōśāḥ*, we will find we claim them as our own possession, we claim them as 'mine'; we say 'my body', 'my mind', 'my intellect' etc. The author uses some other examples, *kaṭaka*-bangle, *kuṇḍala* – ear ring, *gṛhādikaṁ* – house etc. We claim all these as 'mine' and so therefore they are not 'me'. They are different from 'me'.

The author mentions in the first line *madīyaṁ śarīraṁ*. Often we say 'I am tired', 'I am hungry' or 'I am heavy' or 'I am out of shape', what we mean is that 'my body is tired, 'my body is hungry, 'my body is heavy', 'my body is out of shape' etc. In all these cases we refer to 'my body'. We don't say 'I' the body. We only say 'my body'. From this it is clear that we claim that the 'body is mine' and therefore it cannot be me. We have seen that the

body represents *annamaya kōśāḥ*. This is what the author means by *madīyaṁ śarīraṁ*.

The same is the case with *madīyāḥ prāṇāḥ*. In this also we say ‘my digestion is weak’, ‘my circulation is weak’, ‘and my breathing is heavy’ etc. In all these also we refer to them as ‘my’ and so they should be different from ‘me’. The word *prāṇāḥ* refers to *prāṇamaya kōśāḥ*.

Taking *madīyaṁ manaśca* – we refer to our mind as ‘my mind’. We say ‘my mind is disturbed today’, ‘my mind is calm after doing the prayer’ – so we refer to the mind also as an instrument possessed by us. It is an object of possessed by ‘me’ and therefore it cannot be ‘me’. The word *manaḥ* represents *manōmaya kōśāḥ*.

The same is the case with *madīyā buddhiḥ* – intellect. This also also we refer to ‘my intellect’, ‘my intelligence’, ‘my rational faculty’ – so here also we recognize the intellect as an instrument possessed by ‘me’ and therefore intellect is also a possessed one and not ‘I’ the possessor. The law is that the possessor is always different from the possessed. Here the word *buddhiḥ* refers to *vijñānamaya kōśāḥ*.

Also, *madīyam ajñānam* – we refer to ignorance as something belonging to ‘me’ i.e. ‘my ignorance’. So the ignorance is also not ‘me’ but which is something in ‘me’ and which is possessed by ‘me’. I am, therefore, different from ignorance also. *ajñānam* represents *ānandamaya kōśāḥ*.

*Svēnaiva jñāyatē*– all these are known as ‘mine’; the author quotes the examples like *kaṭaka kuṇḍala gṛhādikam* – the bangle, the ear ring, the house etc.; *madīyatvēna jñātam* – they are all claimed as mine; *svasmādbhinnam* – different from me.

Extending this logic, the author says *tathā* – likewise; *pañca kōśādi* – the five sheaths or layers etc. i.e. all the three *śarīrams*, all the three *avasthās* – all the eleven items; *svasmādbhinnam madīyatvēna jñātam*– are known to be or claimed to be mine and therefore they are not ‘me’. We have seen that all these are all called *anātmā*.

So the author says that all these *anātmās*, we claim as mine and logically, therefore, they can be ‘me’. They have to be different from ‘me’. *Ātmā na bhavati*– they are not the self, the ‘I’.

Now the question arises ‘whom am I?’

The author will deal with this question later. Before that, let us review this long sentence. Every word is clear. *Madīyam śarīram, madīyāḥ prāṇāḥ, madīyam manaḥ, madīyā buddhiḥ, madīyam ajñānam* – all these represent the five *kōśās* – all these are *svēnaiva jñāyatē*– they are all known as mine and never as ‘I’. Like in the example *Madīyatvēna jñāta m kaṭaka kuṇḍala gṛhādikam pañcakōśādikam* like any other worldly possessions, our body, mind etc., are also only our possessions but not ‘us’ the possessor. And therefore, *svasmādbhinnam madīyatvēna jñātam ātmā na bhavati* – they are different from ‘I’ and therefore, they cannot be ‘I’ the *ātmā*. So the logical question would be:



आत्मा तर्हि कः? (*ātmā tarhi kaḥ?*) – Then or in that case, what is *ātmā*?

The author gives a cryptic answer. सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः (*saccidānanda svarūpaḥ*)

This is the crucial portion. All the previous portions are only preparations for this position.

Now we will try to understand this subtle topic.

So the student asks the teacher: *tarhi* – then; if I am not the body, I am not my mind, I am not my intellect, I am not my physiological system, I am not the waker, I am not the dreamer, I am not the sleeper, if I am not any of them, if *ātmā* is none of them then what is this wonderful thing called *ātmā*?

The teacher says *ātmā* is *saccidānanda svarūpaḥ*. *Saccidānanda* is a compound word made up of three words viz *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* *svarūpaḥ* means of the nature of. So the teacher says *ātmā* is of the nature of the nature of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. The student is no wiser. So he goes on:

सत् किम्? चित् किम्? आनन्दः कः ? -

*Sat kiṃ? Cit kiṃ? Ānandaḥ kaḥ ?*

What is *sat*, what is *cit* and what is *ānandaḥ*?

The answers he gets for these questions are:

सत् किं? (*sat kiṃ?*)

कालत्रयेऽपि तिष्ठतीति सत् ।

*Kālatrayē'pi tiṣṭhatīti sat.*

चित् किं? (*cit kim?*)

ज्ञानस्वरूपः ।

*Jñānasvarūpaḥ.*

आनन्दः कः ? (*ānandaḥ kaḥ?*)

सुखस्वरूपः ।

*Sukhasvarūpaḥ*

We will now try to understand these three words independently. Then we will apply them in the text. Of the three crucial words, we will first take up the word *cit* for our understanding.

### ***Cit – Consciousness***

The word *cit* means consciousness; *caitanyaṁ*, *jñānaṁ*, *vijñānaṁ* – all these words convey the same meaning i.e. consciousness. So according to *Tattva bōdhaḥ*, the *Vedāntik* text, *ātmā* or the real 'I' is of the nature of consciousness, which makes the body sentient. *Ātmā* is that consciousness principle because of which the body is alive. This bundle of matter called the body is sentient. Sentient means capable of feeling the surrounding which makes the body different from an inert desk or an inert chair. The body is also made of chemicals. But this bundle of chemicals is different from the desk which is also made of chemicals only. We call it bio-chemistry because this bundle of body is alive and sentient.

Whatever makes this body alive and sentient, is called consciousness.

The next logical question would be ‘what is this consciousness which makes the body sentient?’

*Vēdāntā* analyzes the nature of this consciousness and we have to understand the fundamental principles regarding the nature of this consciousness. The first lesson we have to remember is consciousness is not a property of the body. According to *Vēdāntā* unlike the height, weight, complexion etc. which are the properties of the body, sentiency or consciousness is not the property of the body. Similarly *Vēdāntā* says consciousness is not even a part of the body. Like the hair, nail, skin etc. are all parts of the body, we cannot conclude that consciousness is a part of the body.

Having understood that, can we say that life or consciousness is generated in the body or the brain, just as enzymes are produced in the body, blood is manufactured in the body and cells are created in the body? The answer of *Vēdāntā* is that consciousness is not even a product generated by the material brain. Brain cannot generate consciousness. Body cannot generate life by itself. In short life is not a product of matter. So the first important lesson is that consciousness is not a part, nor a property nor a product of the body.

The second lesson is that, on the other hand, consciousness is an invisible independent entity which pervades the body and makes the body alive. This converts the chemistry into bio-chemistry. The

nearest example we can think of the electricity which makes the fan active. There is invisible electricity behind the visible fan and if the visible fan is moving it is because of the invisible electricity which drives the visible fan. And this invisible electricity is not a property of the fan; it is not a part of the fan. It is not even a product of the fan. It is a separate principle which exists independent of the fan. Even before the manufacture of the fan, the electricity existed. And it is this independent, invisible electricity which makes the fan active. All our bodies are like fans. Just as the invisible electricity makes the the fan rotate, just as the invisible electricity makes the bulb brilliant, similarly this inert bundle of matter called our body is alive and kicking because of the invisible principle called consciousness. So the second lesson is consciousness is an invisible and independent entity which pervades the body and makes it alive.

Now lesson No. 3. This invisible independent consciousness is not limited or circumscribed by or confined to the boundaries of the body. It extends beyond the body also, just as the electricity is not confined to the boundaries of the fan. And therefore, according to *Vēdāntā*, consciousness is boundless, limitless, dimension less – which means it has no height, no width, no length – it is beyond all these. All these belong to the body – just as the length belong to the blades of the fan and not to the electricity. So the third lesson is that consciousness has no boundaries. It is all pervading or limitless. So it is not limited by space.

The fourth lesson is that this invisible, independent consciousness will continue to survive even after the body medium dies, perishes or is destroyed. Like, even after the destruction of the bulb and the light, even after the destruction the fan and its rotation, the electricity continues to be present in the circuit, similarly even after the body dies, the consciousness continues to exist. It is, therefore, a permanent principle; an eternal principle. The fourth lesson is that the invisible consciousness is not limited by time.

So it is not space wise limited is the third lesson. It is not time wise limited is the fourth lesson.

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* explains this in the *Bhagavad Gītā*:

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचि- न्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

*Na jāyatē mriyatē vā kadāci- nnāyam bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ.*

*Ajō nityaḥ śāśvatō'yaṁ purāṇō na hanyatē hanyamānē śarīrē.*

He says that the soul is never born, nor it ever dies; nor does it become a soul after being born. For, it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval; even though the body is slain, the soul is not.

And the fifth and final lesson is that after death the surviving consciousness cannot be contacted by us or recognized by us, not because it is not present but because the medium of the body no longer exists. The surviving consciousness after the fall of the body is unrecognizable. The principle is similar to the examples of bulb

and fan given earlier. We recognize the electricity only through the gadgets like bulb, fan etc. If they break down, we cannot recognize the electricity even though it is always present.

For argument's sake if one says that we can recognize it by putting our fingers in the socket, the answer would be that one has to put on the switch for that also. Here we are able to recognize it only through the medium of the switch. We all know that electricity is always present in the atmosphere but are we in a state of shock continuously? We can recognize the electricity only when it flows through some medium and not otherwise. That is why at home, whenever we want to know if there is electricity or not, we check by putting on the light or fan. So in the absence of the body, the consciousness is unrecognizable but not non-existent. So even after death the *ātmā* survives. That is why it is called *cit rūpaḥ*, which means 'of the nature of consciousness.' And by naming the consciousness as *ātmā*, the author wants us to claim the consciousness as 'I' the self. By using the word *ātmā*, which means self, the author wants that we should train ourselves to claim this consciousness as *I AM*.

All along we have wrongly learnt to claim this body as 'I'. We have wrongly learnt to claim the *prāṇaḥ* the mind, the intellect etc. as 'I'. We have all along been the victims of wrong conditioning. The author says that we should no longer claim the body as 'I'. Instead we should learn to claim the inner, immortal, invisible essence i.e the consciousness as 'I'. So 'I' am the consciousness temporarily possessing the body. The body will come and go but

'I' will survive for ever. The physiological system, my intellect may all disappear but 'I' the consciousness will continue to survive. During sleep the mind may dissolve but 'I' survive. My intellect may disappear in a coma and it may stop thinking – already it might have stopped but that is a different matter! – But 'I' survive. Everything may go, but 'I' the *ātmā* will survive. 'I' the consciousness is ever present and 'I' know that as a fact. Therefore I am *jñāna svarūpaḥ*.

And to claim this consciousness as 'I' Lord *Kṛṣṇa* gives us a technique. This method is called दृक् दृश्य विवेकः (*dr̥k dr̥śya vivēkaḥ*). This is a technique to be used to claim the invisible consciousness as oneself. This is a very useful technique to remember.

According to this technique, we are different from whatever we experience. For example we experience an object say a pen. The pen is the object of our experience. The 'I' in us is the subject the experience. This 'I' is different from the experienced pen. Similarly, this 'I' is different from the wall that we experience. So we can conclude that we are not that which we experience. Now if we apply this principle and start negating whatever we experience we will be left only with 'I' which is the subject of the experience and not the object. 'I' is the experiencer and not the experienced. And how do we negate? For each experience, we question. Is this an object or subject of experience? If the answer is that this is an

object, we conclude that 'I' am not this. This is called the नेति नेति (*nēti nēti*) method also.

'I am not this', 'I am not this' – we have to negate everything that we experience. First the entire world will be negated. Why because, 'I' am experiencing the world and so 'I' am not the world. The world is an object of experience but 'I' am the subject.

Thereafter, we come to the body and the body also is an object of our experience. We intimately experience the body in the waking state, we experience another body in the dream state and we experience no body in the sleep state. The body is something that we experience in all the states and therefore 'I' is not the body. We need to go on applying the same logic to everything in the Universe including our *prāṇik* conditions, the physiological conditions, emotions etc. All these are the objects of experience. We clearly say 'I am restless now', 'I am happy now', 'I am jealous', 'I am compassionate' etc. We intimately experience our emotions and mind and therefore, we can say 'I am not the mind'. Similarly we experience knowledge. We know what we know. We experience ignorance also. We don't know what we don't know. Knowledge is also experienced by us and ignorance is also experienced by us. Therefore, we can say 'I am not the intellect'; 'I am not ignorant'. Thus we can go on negating anything that we experience. When everything is negated, nothing will be left out. And therefore when we negate everything and come to blank state, we ask the question "Is this blankness experienced or not"?



The answer is self evident. We are able to talk of the blankness only because we are able to experience it!

And that is the consciousness principle, because of which even the blankness is known - सर्व अभाव साक्षी (*sarva abhāva sākṣī*). *Sākṣī* means witness; the experiencer; of *sarva*, everything including the absence of even thought, total blankness. That consciousness principle I AM - अहं आत्मा अस्मि (*aham ātmā asmi*); चित् रूपः (*cit rūpaḥ*); this is the ज्ञान स्वरूपः आत्मा (*jñāna svarūpaḥ ātmā*). *Cit* is equated to ज्ञानं (*jñānam*).

Now let us understand the other two words viz. *sat* and *ānandaḥ*.

### ***Sat - Existence***

We have seen that this consciousness does not die when the body dies. It is eternally present. It was present in the past; it is present now; and it will be present in the future. The body arrives and departs but not this consciousness. In Sanskrit whatever is eternal is called *sat* or *satyaṁ*. Consciousness being eternal it is called *sat*.

This is the meaning of *kālatrayē'pi tiṣṭhatīti iti sat* or to put it differently, *trikālē api tiṣṭhatīti iti sat*. *Trikālam* means all the three periods of time i.e. past, present and future. In all these three periods of time; *tiṣṭhatīti* - what continues to remain - it is not the body, nor the mind; but it is *iti sat* - the invisible, independent consciousness. So *ātmā* is not only *cit rūpaḥ* but is also *sat rūpaḥ*.

***Ānandaḥ - Limitless happiness or bliss***

As regards *ātmā*, we have already studied earlier, while discussing the five lessons, that the consciousness is not limited by the boundaries of the body. It is boundless and all pervading. In Sanskrit the all pervading principle is called *anantaḥ*. *Anantaḥ* or *anantam*, means boundless, limitless or to use another *Vedāntik* expression *pūrṇaḥ*. *Pūrṇaḥ* means full and complete. This *pūrṇatvam* or limitlessness is always experienced in the form of *ānandā*. *Ananthā* is always experienced as *ānandā*. Whenever our mind is full, whenever we don't lack anything, we have a sense of completeness. Conversely, whenever we lack something in life it is expressed as sorrow. Sorrow, therefore, is defined as limitation and happiness is defined as limitlessness.

So *anantā* means *ānandaḥ*. "I don't miss anything in life. I don't lack anything in life" so says - not the body; not the mind; not the intellect (these have got infinite limits) - but " the *ātmā*. The *ātmā* does not lack anything because everything in the creation exists in the *ātmā* only and therefore it is *anantaḥ*; *pūrṇaḥ*; *ānandaḥ*. That is why the author says *ānandaḥ* is *sukha svarūpaḥ* - of the nature of happiness. In this state if some were to ask us 'what do you want', our answer will be 'I don't want anything' because 'I am *pūrṇaḥ*, complete in myself.

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* tells in the *Gītā* -

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान्।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते॥

*Prajahāti yadā kāmānsarvānpārtha manōgatān.*

*Ātmanyēvātmanā tuṣṭaḥ sthitaprajñastadōcyatē.*

The Bhagawan says to Arjuna – when one thoroughly casts off all cravings of the mind and is satisfied in the self through the joy of the self, he is said to be a ‘*sthitaprajña*’ – of a stable mind of an equanimous mind.

A sense of incompleteness always expresses itself as a desire in our mind. “We don’t have a house of our own; we don’t have children; we don’t have grand children etc.” All these are feelings are due to the sense of limitation. And this gives us sense of incompleteness; this sense of want gives rise to sorrow. Freedom from this limitation is called *pūrṇatvam* - when we have a feeling of complete contentment; when we want nothing more; when we miss nothing and that state is the state of *ānandaḥ*– superlative happiness. Thus *ātmā* is *sat, cit ānandaḥ svarūpaḥ*.

The author concludes

एवं सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपं स्वात्मानं विजानीयात् ।

*Ēvaṁ saccidānandasvarūpaṁ svātmānaṁ vijānīyāt.*

*Ēvaṁ* – in this manner – *svātmānaṁ vijānīyāt* – may you recognize the *ātmā* as yourself which is *saccidānanda svarūpaṁ* – the eternal all pervading invisible inner essence ‘I’. To assimilate this reality, one needs to contemplate a lot. With this *Ātmā* has also been defined by the author.

This completes the second major topic of Tattva bōdhaḥ which deals with *jīva vicāraḥ*. *Vicāraḥ* means analysis, study or enquiry. *jīva vicāraḥ* means the study of the individual; the study of the microcosm.

***Samaṣṭi or Sṛṣṭi Vicārah – Analysis of the Cosmos-  
Macrocosm***

***Caturviṁśati tattvōtpatti prakāraṁ -***

***The process of evolution of 24 elements and elementals***

The third major topic in this text is the study of the creation – *sṛṣṭiḥ vicāraḥ* i.e. the study of cosmology; the study of the macrocosm study of the totality – in Sanskrit it is called *samaṣṭi vicāraḥ*. The study of the microcosm is called *vyaṣṭi vicāraḥ*. *Vyaṣṭi* means microcosm and *samaṣṭi* means the macrocosm. *Vyaṣṭi* means the individual, *samaṣṭi* means the total.

While analysing the individual, we saw that the individual i.e the microcosm is a mixture of *ātmā* and *anātmā* - *ātmā* being *satyaṁ* and *anātmā* being *mithyā*. In this chapter we are going to discover what the macrocosm or the total is made up of. What is the composition of the creation? This is the *samaṣṭi vicāraḥ* or *sṛṣṭiḥ vicāraḥ*.

अथ चतुर्विंशतितत्त्वोत्पत्तिप्रकारं वक्ष्यामः ।

*Atha caturviṁśati tattvōtpattiprakāraṁ vakṣyāmaḥ.*

*Atha* – means hereafter – ie after the completion of the two major topics, the teacher takes up a discussion on *utpatti prakāraṁ* – the method of creation. *Utpatti* means creation or origination. *Prakāraḥ* or *prakāraṁ* means the mechanism; the method or the mode.

In modern science, we call it cosmology. In Vedic teaching it is called *sṛṣṭiḥ vicāraḥ*. So *utpatti prakāraḥ* refers to cosmology of - *caturviṁśati tattvaṁ*. The entire cosmos is technically called

*caturviṁśati tattvaṁ* because the scriptures divide the whole universe into 24 basic principles.

Just as the scientists, who have their own methods, divide the world into elements like Aluminium, Barium, and Carbon etc., *Vēdāntā* divides the whole universe into 24 basic principles. What these 24 principles are will be examined later. At this stage it is sufficient to understand that *caturviṁśati tattvaṁ* is equal to *prapañcaḥ* or *jagat* or the whole universe. And therefore, *caturviṁśati tattvōtpattiḥ* means *prapañca utpattiḥ*, *jagat utpattiḥ*; *vakṣyāmaḥ* means ‘we shall teach’.

We need to note an interesting aspect. The author uses the word ‘we’ and not ‘I’, in this sentence. This is because he wants to claim that this is not his own personal teaching but is based on what he has learnt from his *guru* and which his *guru* in turn has learnt from his *guru* and so on. So the author wants to convey that he has the backing of the entire *guru paramparā* while teaching. In order to identify with the entire *paramparā* he uses the word ‘we’.

**a. *Brahman māyā trigu ṇāḥ- Brahman, Maya and the three cosmic qualities or aspects***

ब्रह्माश्रया सत्त्वरजस्तमोगुणात्मिका माया अस्ति ।

*Brahmāśrayā sattvarajastamōguṇātmikā māyā asti.*

He starts by explaining the status at the time of the origination of the Universe i.e before the ‘Big Bang’ as the scientists prefer to call it now.

Before the origination of this universe, there were two primal factors as the very cause of this universe. Like in a family, there are two factors, i.e. father and mother, as the very cause of the children, before the origination of the children.

Just as the children have the parents, the whole universe has parents in the form of two basic principles. The first one is called *Brahman*. *Brahman* is another name of the *ātmā* itself – the invisible, immortal, inner essence of every individual. Therefore, the nature of this *Brahman* is also *sat cit ānandaḥ*. It is the eternal and immortal principle that existed even before creation. A revision of the discussion on the topic of *ātmā* will be helpful at this state to understand the nature of this *Brahman*.

Now one may ask ‘why are we using two different terms for the one and same consciousness?’ The answer is that when the consciousness is seen from the individual angle as the consciousness obtaining within the body, the microcosm, it is called *ātmā*. But the very same consciousness seen from the standpoint of the totality, the macrocosm, it is called *Brahman*. For example a person as the head of a particular family will be called the father, but the same person when he is the head of the Indian Government; he is called the Prime Minister! The person remaining the same, we give one name from the standpoint of the family but a different name from the standpoint of the totality. Similarly consciousness infused in the body is called *ātmā* and consciousness pervading everywhere in the universe is called *Brahman*.



Another example to understand this aspect is, the space obtained within the four walls of a room is called inner space. But when the walls are pulled down, the space remains the same but we no longer call it 'inner space' because the word 'inner' is relevant only when the walls are present. If we remove the walls, it will be called 'total space'.

Similarly consciousness when enclosed within the walls of the body is called *ātmā*. The same consciousness not limited by the body i.e. unenclosed is called *Brahman*. And this *Brahman* was in existence before the creation. This is the first of the two factors. For convenience sake, let us call it 'Father *Brahman*'.

Naturally a mother is required. Brahman has to be married! Bachelor *Brahman* cannot do anything alone!

So the author points out that there was another factor. Like *Brahman*, this whole material universe was also existent before creation but in a seed form or potential form, just as every plant exists under the ground in a seed form before sprouting. Even though we cannot see the seed, we can infer the presence of the seed because without a seed there can be neither a plant nor any tree. We can sometimes see in some corners of buildings or temples or old structures etc. some plants coming out from the walls made of brick and cement. But can cement and bricks produce the plants? We don't believe in the origination of the plants from bricks and cement but we infer that in the intermediary gap, some bird must have deposited a seed, because without a seed a plant cannot appear.

The law of conservation of matter and energy states that matter cannot be created out of nothing. It therefore follows that the universe, which is nothing but matter, cannot come out of nothing. The logical conclusion, therefore, is that universe must have existed in a potential form. And this potential form of the universe is called *māyā*, which is material and inert in nature. So, *Brahman* is the non-material conscious principle and *māyā* is the inert principle; material principle. *Māyā* is also known as प्रकृति (*prakṛti*), प्रधानं (*pradhānam*), शक्तिः (*śaktiḥ*), अव्यक्तं (*avyaktam*), अव्याकृतं (*avyākṛtam*) etc.

This *māyā* did not originate from some where. This *māyā* also existed from beginningless times. We can never know the origination of *māyā*. It is similar to a chicken and egg situation. No one can prove which came first!

So *Brahman* is beginningless and *māyā* is also beginningless. Consciousness is also beginningless. Matter is also beginningless. Both are *anādi*. And it is this *māyā* alone which is symbolically presented as the universal mother. *Brahman* represents the universal father as it were. *Māyā* represents the universal mother as it were. Both principles were always there.

Here the word *Brahma* or *Brahman* has to be carefully understood. In the scriptures there are two words, one is *Brahman* (short 'a') and another is *Brahmā* (long 'aa'). When we say *Brahmā*, we refer to one of the Trinities, *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇuḥ* and *Śiva*. Here

*Brahmā* is the name of a personal God with a body with four heads etc. But the word *Brahma* or *Brahman* does not refer to four headed *Brahmā*. This word represents the formless consciousness principle. So we should be careful not to mix up the words *Brahma* (short -‘a’) and *Brahmā* (long -‘aa’). And generally to avoid confusion, we refer to *Brahma* (short) as *Brahman*. We add one ‘n’ to avoid confusion. So *Brahman* means formless, eternal consciousness. And to avoid any residual confusion, we add a *Ji* to the name of the four headed *Brahmā* and call him *Brahmā Ji*.

Now coming back to *Brahman* and *māyā*, let us understand the relationship between these two. *Brahman*, the consciousness has independent existence and therefore, it is called *satyaṁ*. We have discussed this aspect while discussing *ātmā*. And what attributes we applied to *anātmā*, has to be applied here for *māyā*. So, *māyā*, the matter principle, does not have an independent existence. It has to depend upon *Brahman*. And for this reason *māyā* is called *mithyā*. *Ātmā* or *Brahman* is *satyaṁ* – the sentient consciousness principle. *Anātmā* or *māyā* is *mithyā* – the inert principle.

And so the author says *Brahma āśrayā māyā* – *āśrayā* means dependent; *Brahma āśrayā māyā* means *māyā* is dependent on *Brahman* for its very existence.

The assumption of *Brahman* as the father and *māyā* as the mother was made only for the better understanding of the principles behind these concepts. One should not misunderstand that *Brahman* stands for male and *māyā* for female. We cannot treat *Brahman* as a male because the formless conscious principle cannot

be treated as male or female. Similarly *māyā* is also not female because formless energy cannot be male or female. It is only symbolic. We should not take it literally.

The author further describes the attributes of *māyā*. He says *sattva, rajastamō guṇātmikā māyā*. *Māyā* has got three faculties, three powers, three attributes called *guṇāḥ*. Here *guṇāḥ* means *śaktiḥ* - faculty, power, aspect.

*Sattva* represents the faculty of knowledge; *jñāna śaktiḥ*; *rajō guṇaḥ* represents *kriyā śaktiḥ* – power of action or the faculty relating to activity; *tamō guṇaḥ* is called *dravya śaktiḥ* – the power of inertia that means that power which will suppress the other two powers – the suppressing power. When the power of inertia is dominant, it will suppress *jñāna śaktiḥ* and also *kriyā śaktiḥ*. For example an object like a pen is dominated by inertia as it does not have *jñāna śaktiḥ* in the sense it cannot know anything by itself and it does not have *kriyā śaktiḥ* – it cannot do any activity by itself – because it is overpowered by *dravya śaktiḥ*. The car parked outside does not have *jñāna śaktiḥ* or *kriyā śaktiḥ*. This is good because if it had *kriyā śaktiḥ* it would go away on its own and if it had *jñāna śaktiḥ*, it would go and hide in some place where we cannot find it! So the world requires *dravya śaktiḥ*, whereas our body requires *jñāna śaktiḥ*, *kriyā śaktiḥ* etc. These three faculties are present in *māyā*. That is why *māyā* is called *triguṇa māyā*. And what *śaktiḥ* does *Brahman* have? Poor *Brahman* has no *śaktiḥ* of its own and so it is called *nirguṇam* – attribute less, power less.

If we recall the opening verse of the famous work *Saundarya Laharī* of *Ādi Śaṅkarācārya*:

शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो यदि भवति शक्तः प्रभवितुम्।

न चेदेवं देवः न खलु कुशलः स्पन्दितुमपि॥

*Śivaḥ śaktyā yuktō yadi bhavati śaktaḥ prabhavituma.*

*na cēdēvaṁ dēvaḥ na khalu kuśalaḥ spanditumapi*

The literal meaning of this verse is that Lord *Śiva* acquires the ability to create this world only alongwith *Śaktiḥ*. Without her, he cannot move even an inch.

*Śivaḥ* here refers to *Brahman* and as *Brahman* he cannot do anything on his own unless he comes in to contact with *māyā*, the *śaktiḥ tattvaṁ*.

Nothing is possible for *Brahman*. Before creation *nirguṇaṁ Brahman* and *triguṇa māyā* were present. *Cētanam* or sentient *Brahman* and *acētanam* or insentient *māyā* was there.

We know that consciousness is eternal and so it cannot undergo any change. It is *nirvikāraṁ* – changeless. On the contrary *māyā* is *savikāraṁ* – subject to change. Matter and energy can change and evolve. It is out of this mixture of the changeless *Brahman* and the changeful *māyā* that the creation has evolved. The author next explains the process of this evolution.

**b. *Pañca bhūtaḥ sṛṣṭiḥ - Evolution of five fundamental elements***

ततः आकाशः संभूतः । आकाशाद् वायुः ।

वायोस्तेजः । तेजस आपः । अद्भ्यः पृथिवी ।

*Tataḥ ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ. Ākāśād vāyuh.*

*Vāyōstējaḥ, Tējasa āpaḥ. Aadbhyaḥ pṛthivī.*

The author after pointing out in the previous sentence that the *triguṇātmikā māyā* was dependent on *Brahman*, goes on to explain the sequence of events of creation.

But before we examine the sentence, it will be useful to understand the import of the sentence.

We have seen earlier that the creation was born out of a mixture of the *cētana, nirguṇa, nirvikāraṁ Brahman* and *acētana, triguṇa, savikāraṁ māyā*. The creation cannot evolve out of the consciousness principle because of evolution is a form of modification or change and consciousness is changeless. So it has to necessarily evolve out of this mixture only. This role is attributed to *māyā*.

Brahman's role is to exist and to bless *māyā*. It cannot do anything other than blessing. Like the light in a room. It does not do any action. It only blesses all the activities because of which we are able to see and do them. Light is required for the action but it itself does not do any activity. It cannot play the role of a teacher nor can it play the role of a student. But in its presence alone, the teacher and student can act and interact. So like the light which

blesses by its very presence, *Brahman* does not do or evolve anything but in the presence of *Brahman* alone *māyā* evolves; matter evolves. This evolution is called creation. The author presents this creation in four stages.

The first stage of evolution is the *pañca bhūta sṛṣṭiḥ* – the evolution of the five fundamental elements called the *pañca bhūtāni*. These are invisible - the subtle five elements – *sūkṣma pañca bhūtāni*.

The next stage is that these five subtle elements produce varieties of subtle bodies. All the subtle bodies consisting of the mind, the sense organs or the *prānās*, all are the products of the subtle elements and therefore these subtle bodies are called *sūkṣma bhautikāni*. The difference between *bhūtaṁ* and *bhautikaṁ* is that *bhūtaṁ* refers to the elements and *bhautikaṁ*s refer to the elementals which are the combination of the elements. Just as matter modified becomes material, *bhūtaṁ* modified produces *bhautikaṁ*. All the different invisible *lōkās* or worlds mentioned in the scriptures like *swarga lōka*, *mahar lōka*, *jana lōka*, *tapō lōka*, etc. are also products of the invisible five elements. This is called *sūkṣma bhautika sṛṣṭiḥ*. This is the second stage.

The third stage is called *sthūla bhūta sṛṣṭiḥ* - the evolution of the physical, gross elements, the visible, concrete, tangible *pañca bhūtaṁ*. In Sanskrit these are called *sthūla bhootani*.

In the fourth and final stage, through varieties of combination of these five gross elements, the gross bodies are created. This is called *sthūla bhautika srishti* which means creation of the gross

bodies, the tangible physical bodies. So our physical bodies come under the classification of *bhautikaṁ* and not *bhūtaṁ*. The body is a mixture of all the five elements. The body has got the earth part i.e. the *pr̥thivī tattvaṁ*; it has water, the *jala tattvaṁ* giving it the shape; the body has got *agni tattvaṁ* because of which we have temperature of 98.4° F, the warmth of life; the body has got *vāyu tattvaṁ*, air in the lungs and we call it *prāna tattvaṁ*. And finally the body occupies space which is the *ākāsha tattvaṁ*. Since the body is a combination of the elements, it is called *bhautikaṁ*. It is *sthūla bhautikaṁ* because it is tangible.

Thus the entire creation, the entire cosmos evolved in these four stages viz. *sūkṣma bhūta*, *sūkṣma bhautika*, *sthūla bhūta*, *sthūla bhautika*. Now the author deals with each of these in detail.

*Tataḥ*, says the author – that is from that beginningless *māyā*, blessed by *Brahman*, *ākāśaḥ sambhūtaḥ* – space, the first of the five elements evolved; it being in subtle form – it was *sūkṣma ākāśaḥ; sambhūtaḥ* means evolved.

This is a very interesting aspect and needs a bit of examination. According to the *śāstrās*, space is also a created element. It is not eternal. And this fact is now being accepted by Scientists also. Earlier under Plutonian physics, space was thought to be eternally present and it was thought that the planets and stars were created in the eternal space. But now after the Einsteinian physics, it is accepted that we cannot talk of space before creation i.e before the ‘big bang’. The Scientists say that one can talk of space only after the ‘big bang’. So space is also created like all other elements. This



is a very important aspect to understand. Not only that space is a created entity, it is not nothingness or vacuum. It is a positive material. It is very very subtle but still it is a positive material. These days the scientists also are talking about an elastic space, a bending space, a curving space etc. If the space is emptiness, how can it be elastic, bending, curving etc.? Science now accepts that space is a very very subtle elastic matter. This fact has been recognized in our scriptures thousands or even millions of years ago!

Space is a created element and it is the subtlest form of matter. According to our scriptures, the property of sound belongs to the space *śabdaḥ* i.e. sound is the property of *ākāśaḥ*. And this is the only property space has. It does not have the property of touch i.e. *sparsaṃ*; it does not have *rūpaṃ* i.e. colour and form; there is no smell, *gandhaṃ*, and it does not have *rasaṃ* i.e. taste. So it has no other property except one i.e. *śabdaḥ*.

Another interesting aspect pointed out in the scriptures is that this property of sound is ever present in the space. We can hear it only if we have a very fine and subtle hearing faculty. Due to the limitation of our ears, we are unable to hear this sound. It is similar to the seven colours present in the light. In the pure white light like sunlight, there are seven colours which we are unable to see because of the limitations of our eyes. But when the light passes through a prism, our eyes can recognize these colours. This phenomenon can be seen in the rainbows as well. Similarly, when other elements come into the picture, we will be able to recognize the

sound. In fact it is said that *yogis* in the deep meditative state can recognize the subtle sound of space. It is called *Ōnkāra Nādaḥ* the sound of 'OM'. In the scriptures it is called *anāhata śabdaḥ or avyakta śabdaḥ* – the unmanifest sound in space, which our ordinary ears cannot hear. Thus the *ēka guṇa ākāśaḥ* is born.

Then, *ākāśād vāyuh;* from the *ākāśa bhūtaṁ*, the second element *vāyuh* i.e air is born. We should remember that the reference here is to the subtle or *sūkṣma vāyuh*. This subtle air has two properties viz. *śabda* and *sparsā* – sound and touch. *Vāyuh* has got the quality of touch also. It can be felt by our skin. That is in a hot climate why we try to sit under the fan. We don't see the air but we can feel it – *sparsā guṇaḥ*.

Then, *vāyōstējaḥ;* from the subtle *vāyuh bhūtaṁ* the third element evolves which is *tējaḥ* –fire; the *agni tattvaṁ*. The *sūkṣma agniḥ bhūtaṁ* is born which has got three properties viz. *śabda*, *sparsā* and *rūpa*. *Vayu* cannot be seen but *agniḥ* can be seen also. *Agni* also has the other two properties i.e. sound and touch. We can feel it. So it is known as *triguṇakaḥ agniḥ*.

Thereafter, we get *tējasa āpaḥ* – water; the subtle *jala tattvaṁ*. The *sūkṣma jala bhūtaṁ* is born. It has four properties – *śabda*, *sparsā*, *rūpa* and *rasaḥ*. The additional one is *rasaḥ* – taste. Water has got a unique taste with the help of which we can separate it from all other liquids. It is a unique tasteless taste, differentiating taste. So *jalam* is *chaturguṇakaṁ*.

Then finally *adbhyaḥ pṛthivī*. From the water principle, *pṛthivī* the subtle earth principle is born. This is also known as *bhūmiḥ* which has got five properties i.e. *pañca guṇāḥ* – *śabda, sparśa, rūpa, rasa* and *gandhaḥ*. The additional property is *gandhaḥ* - smell. We can experience this when the first rains come in the monsoon. We get a unique smell which belongs to earth. None of the other elements have this property of smell.

Thus five elements are evolved. Another interesting aspect to note is that the first element can be recognized by one sense organ because it has got only one property; the second element can be recognized by two sense organs, because it has two properties; third one by three; the fourth by four and the fifth by five sense organs. Whatever can be recognized by more number of sense organs is called gross. Whatever can be recognized by lesser number of sense organs is called subtle. *ākāśaḥ* is *sūkṣmaṁ*, very subtle, whereas *pṛthivī*, the earth is *sthūlaṁ*, gross. Thus in a graded manner, the five elements are born. This is the first stage of creation *pañca sūkṣma bhūta sṛṣṭiḥ*. We will now consider the second stage of creation i.e. *sūkṣma bhautika sṛṣṭiḥ*.

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां मध्ये आकाशस्य सात्त्विकांशात् श्रोत्रेन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

वायोः सात्त्विकांशात् त्वगिन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

अग्नेः सात्त्विकांशात् चक्षुरिन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

जलस्य सात्त्विकांशात् रसनेन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

पृथिव्याः सात्त्विकांशात् घ्राणेन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

*Ētēṣāṁ pañcatattvānāṁ madhyē ākāśasya sāttvikāṁṣāt śrōtrēndriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ.*

*Vāyōḥ sāttvikāṁṣāt tvagindriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ.*

*Agnēḥ sāttvikāṁṣāt cakṣurindriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ.*

*Jalasya sāttvikāṁṣāt rasanēndriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ.*

*Pṛthivyāḥ sāttvikāṁṣāt ghrāṇēndriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ.*

**c. *Sāttvik guṇaḥ- Evolution of the Sattvik aspect***

We have studied the five subtle elements and also learnt that each one of them has three *guṇās* or properties viz. *sāttvik*, *rājasik* and *tāmasik*. Now the author explains that from the five subtle elements, the five sense organs of knowledge are born. We have already seen in the previous chapters that the five sense organs of knowledge i.e. *jñānēndriyaṁs* belong to the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ*, the subtle body. It is useful to remind ourselves that when we say sense organs, we are not referring to the physical part but to the subtle faculties.

So the five *indriyaṁs* are born out of the five elements. However, since each element has got three *guṇās*, a question will arise as to which element and which *guṇāḥ* of that element is responsible for the birth of the *jñānēndriyaṁs*.

The author says *ētēṣāṁ pañca tattvānāṁ madhyē* – amongst these five elements; here *tattvaṁ* refers the five *sūkṣma bhūtaṁs*, *madhyē* – amongst; *ākāśasya* – of the space element; *sāttvika aṁṣāt* – the *sāttvika* part; *śrōtrēndriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ* – the *indriyaṁ* or organ of ears is born. Thus the *sāttvik* property of the space element

produces the ears. And why do we say the space produces the ears and not the eyes or nose etc.? The answer is obvious. We have seen that the unique property of space is *śabda* or sound, and no other part of the body except ears is capable of recognizing sounds.

So यत् इन्द्रियं यस्मात् भूतात् जायते (*yat indriyaṁ yasmāt bhūtāt jāyatē*) - whichever organ is born out of whichever element; तत् इन्द्रियं तस्य भूतस्य विशेष गुणं जानाति (*tat indriyaṁ tasya bhūtasya viśēṣa guṇaṁ jānāti*) - that organ perceives the special property of those particular elements, because they owe their very existence to these elements.

Then *vāyōḥ sāttvikāṁṣāt* - from the *sāttvik* part of *vāyuh*; *tvagindriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ* - the organ of touch i.e. skin is born; this organ recognizes the property of *vāyuh* which is touch which is the special additional property of *vāyuh*. Similarly *Agnēḥ sāttvikāṁṣāt* - from the *sāttvik* part of *agni*, *cakṣurindriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ* - *cakṣuḥ* means eyes - the eyes are born. We have seen that *agniḥ* has three properties, sound, touch and form. Of these two i.e. sound and touch are properties of *ākāśaḥ* and *vāyuh* and so the special property of *agniḥ* is form and colour and this additional property is perceived by *agni's* child i.e. the eyes. Next is *jalasya sāttvikāṁṣāt rasanēndriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ* - *rasanaṁ* means tongue. It is also known as the *jihvēndriyaṁ* - *jihvā*, the tongue is born out of the *sāttvik* part of *jalam* - water and its *viśēṣa guṇaḥ* i.e. taste is recognized by the tongue; *pṛthivyāḥ sāttvikāṁṣāt ghrāṇēndriyaṁ sambhūtaṁ*. *Ghrāṇēndriyaṁ* as we have learnt earlier refers to the

smelling faculty. Thus the organ of smell is born out of the *sāttvik* part of *pr̥thivī* and it recognizes the *pr̥thivī's viśēṣa guṇaḥ* which is *gandaḥ*- smell.

The chart at the end of this chapter gives a pictorial depiction of the entire process of *caturviṁśati tattva utpatti prakāraṁ* - the evolution of the 24 basic elements.

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां समष्टिसात्त्विकांशात् मनोबुद्ध्यहंकार -

चित्तान्तःकरणानि संभूतानि ।

संकल्पविकल्पात्मकं मनः । निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः । अहंकर्ता अहंकारः ।

चिन्तनकर्तृ चित्तम् ।

मनसो देवता चन्द्रमाः । बुद्धेः ब्रह्मा । अहंकारस्य रुद्रः । चित्तस्य वासुदेवः ।

*Ētēṣāṁ pañcatattvānā ṁ samaṣṭisāttvikāṁ śāt manōbuddhyahankāra  
-cittāntaḥkaraṇāni sambhūtāni.*

*Sankalpavikalpātmakaṁ manaḥ. Niścayātmikā buddhiḥ. Ahankartā  
ahankāraḥ. Cintanakartṛ cittam.*

*Manasō dēvatā candramāḥ. Buddhēḥ brahmā. Ahankārasya  
rudraḥ. Cittasya vāsudēvaḥ.*

Now referring to the chart, we can see in left side bottom that mind is created from the *sattva guṇāḥ* of the all the five elements put together, which is called *samaṣṭi sattva guṇāḥ*. This is because, the mind which is the inner organ called *antaḥkaraṇaṁ* requires all the five *sattva guṇāḥ* for it to co-ordinate with all the sense organs. Since mind has to function behind all sense organs and collect all the stimuli and co-ordinate, it has to evolve out of the *sattva* of all

the five elements. Otherwise it will lead to a bizarre situation where what the eyes see, the ears will not know. The mind has to co-ordinate with all the five sense organs and it has to possess the property of *sattva guṇās* of all organs.

The author, therefore, says, *ētēṣāṁ pañcatattvānāṁ samaṣṭi sātvikāṁśāt* – from the total *sattva* taken from all the five elements; the inner organ containing *manah; buddhiḥ; ahankārah* and *cittḥ*, collectively known as *antaḥkaraṇāni; sambhūtāni* – is born. This inner organ has got four different functions. It is four-in-one. Depending upon the four functions, it is known by four different functional names. The organ is one but known by four different functional names like a person could be a Manager in a particular company, a Secretary in a religious organization, a father at home and a student studying this text. Thus, just as the same person discharges four different functions, the organ is one, but it has four different functions. *Antaḥkaraṇam* is the common name for the organ consisting of these functions.

The author goes to explain the nature of these four functions. He says *sankalpa vikalpātmakam manah*. We have already learnt that *sankalpa vikalpa* means doubting or vacillating or wavering function. Whenever we talk of vacillation or oscillation, it involves two directions - like a pendulum of a clock which keeps swinging between right and left. “Should I work or should I remain at home; should I attend the class or should go for a movie; should I study the scriptures or not study; should I get married or not; should I beget children or not” – so many such questions – “to do or not to

do” called pros and cons in English – *sankalpa* is ‘pros’ thinking; *vikalpa* is ‘cons’ thinking – so *sankalpa vikalpa* is vacillation called doubting faculty which includes emotions also since emotions also belong to the mind.

The second is *niścayātmikā buddhiḥ* – After lot of vacillation finally a decision is made. This deciding faculty is called *buddhiḥ*; *niścaya* means to decide.

The third is *ahankartā ahankāraḥ* – *aham kartā* means the sense of individuality – the notion of “I am the doer” – the ego which is called *ahankāraḥ*. It is because of this ego faculty that we treat the body as ourselves; we claim the *sūkṣma śarīraṁ* as ourselves. When the mind thinks, we don’t say the mind thinks but we say “I think”. When the mind is upset, we don’t say the mind is upset, we say “I am upset”. So, that faculty with which we identify with various factors, that identifying faculty is called *ahankāraḥ* – the ‘I’ notion.

The last is *cintanakartṛ cittam*. *Cittam* is the faculty of remembering, the faculty of memory. Another word for *cintanam* is *anusandhānam* which means recollection. So this memory faculty is called *cittam*.

And each organ has a presiding deity also which corresponds to the total power. When we discussed *jñānēndriyam* and *karmēndriyām* we named the corresponding total power as the presiding deity – *devatā*. The corresponding *devatās* are:



*Manasō dēvatā candramāḥ*– Moon is the presiding deity of the mind and therefore, if any body has mental problem, they are supposed to worship the moon. That is why, when the moon's blessing is missing, we call that person a lunatic. Lunar as we know means connected with moon.

*Buddhēḥ brahmā* – *Brahmā*, the four headed *devatā*, who is married to *Saraswati* the Goddess of knowledge. *Brahmā* according to the scriptures is the embodiment of the four *Vēdās* represented by the four heads. *Brahmā* presides over the knowing faculty or the thinking faculty known as the *buddhiḥ*.

*Ahankārasya Rudraḥ* – *ahankārah*, the ego; the individuality – the presiding deity is *Rudraḥ* or *Śiva* – because *ahankārah* is the cause of destruction. Ego alone is responsible for all our problems. In sleep we don't have an ego and so we are paragons of all virtues, wonderful people. The moment we wake up, the 'I' rises; the ego gets resurrected and then follow all the problems, which mostly leads to the destruction of relationships, destruction of businesses, destruction of projects and in the extreme, destruction of life itself. It is this *ahankārah* which leads people to commit suicide. That is why the presiding deity for *ahankārah* is *Rudraḥ* – the *dēvatā* known for his destructive powers.

*Cittasya vāsudēvaḥ* – *cittaṁ* or memory preserves what all we have experienced before. This faculty is represented by *Vāsudēvaḥ*, the Lord *Viṣṇuḥ* who is known as the protector; the *sthiti kartā*, *rakṣaṇa kartā*.

Thus, in all nine organs are born out of the *sattva guṇāḥ*; the four functions of the organ of *antaḥkaraṇam* out of the *samaṣṭi sattva guṇāḥ* and the five *jñānēndriyaṁs* i.e. the five sense organs out of *vyāṣṭi sattva guṇāḥ*.

**d. *Rājasik guṇaḥ- Evolution of Rajasik aspect***

Next we take up *rajō guṇaḥ*.

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां मध्ये आकाशस्य राजसांशात् वागिन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

वायोः राजसांशात् पाणीन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

वह्नेः राजसांशात् पादेन्द्रियं संभूतम् । जलस्य राजसांशात् उपस्थेन्द्रियं संभूतम्

। पृथिव्या राजसांशात् गुदेन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

एतेषां समष्टिराजसांशात् पञ्चप्राणाः संभूताः ।

*Ētēṣāṁ pañcatattvanāṁ madhyē ākāśasya rājasāṁśāt vāgindriyaṁ sambhūtam. Vāyōḥ rājasāṁśāt pāṇīndriyaṁ sambhūtam. Vahnēḥ rājasāṁśāt pādēndriyaṁ sambhūtam. Jalasya rājasāṁśāt upasthēndriyaṁ sambhūtam. Pṛthivyā rājasāṁśāt gudēndriyaṁ sambhūtam.*

*Ētēṣāṁ samaṣṭirājasāṁśāt pañcaprāṇāḥ sambhūtāḥ.*

From the *rājasik* part of the five elements, the five *karmēndriyās* are born. The *rājasik* aspect of space produces the organ of speech; from the *rājasik* air – the hands; from the *rājasik* fire – the legs; from the *rājasik* water – the anus and according to another version, the genitals and from the *rājasik* earth - the genitals according to one version or anus according to another. The last two can be

reversed. In short, the five *karmēndriyās* are born out of *rajō guṇaḥ* which stands for activity.

The author further explains that out of the total or *samaṣṭi rajō guṇaḥ*, *prāṇaḥ* is born – i.e. the *prāṇa śaktiḥ*. The energy for all types of activities must be born out of *samaṣṭi rajō guṇaḥ*, because the energy must bless all the five organs of action. For example, *prāṇa śaktiḥ* is required to support *vāk* – the speech faculty. That is why when we don't eat for a few days or we purge for a few times, the voice becomes feeble. The *prāṇa śaktiḥ* is very weak. Thus this power is required to support each *karmēndriyaḥ* in performing its action and that is why it evolves out of the *samaṣṭi rajō guṇaḥ*.

As we have seen earlier, *prāṇaḥ* has five fold functions. There is only one *prāṇaḥ*, there is only one power, one *śaktiḥ* – but it has five different functions based on which we give five different names. The names are five but the organ is only one. Just to recall, the five functions are *prāṇaḥ* – the respiratory function; *apānaḥ* – the excretory function; *vyānaḥ* – the circulatory function; *Udānaḥ* – the reversing function; and *samānaḥ* – the digestive function. We have already discussed this *pañca prāṇāḥ*, during the analysis of the *sūkṣma śarīram*. This is what the author says *samaṣṭi rājasāmśāt pañca prāṇāḥ* – from the *rajō guṇaḥ* of the macrocosm, the five organs of action are born.

So we now have the five organs of knowledge plus the four organs of *antaḥkaraṇam* plus five organs of action plus five *prāṇās* – in all nineteen organs are born out of the five elements i.e. *pañca bhūtāḥ*. And these nineteen items constitute the *sūkṣma śarīram*.

Earlier we had mentioned seventeen items only leaving aside memory and ego. Here we have included them to reach nineteen. Thus the number of *tattvaṁs* born out of *māyā* is twenty four i.e. five subtle elements plus the nineteen elementals. And that is why while introducing this topic, the author had said *caturviṁśati tattvōtpatti prakāraṁ*. *Caturviṁśati* means twenty four.

**e. *Tāmasik guṇaḥ- Evolution of Tamasik aspect***

If we refer to the chart now we will find that the *tāmasik* portion has not been discussed so far. And this portion will be utilized for the creation of the five gross elements. What we have discussed till now are the subtle elements creating only the subtle organs. Now the author will explain how *tamō guṇaḥ* is used for creating the gross elements which produces the gross body. The next discussion is, therefore, on the gross body.

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां तामसांशात् पञ्चीकृतपञ्चतत्त्वानि भवन्ति ।

पञ्चीकरणं कथम् इति चेत् । एतेषां पञ्चमहाभूतानां तामसांशस्वरूपम्

एकमेकं भूतं द्विधा विभज्य एकमेकमर्धं पृथक् तूष्णीं व्यवस्थाप्य

अपरमपरमर्धं चतुर्धा विभज्य स्वार्धमन्येषु अर्धेषु स्वभागचतुष्टयसंयोजनम्

कार्यम् । तदा पञ्चीकरणं भवति ।

एतेभ्यः पञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतेभ्यः स्थूलशरीरं भवति ।

एवं पिण्ड ब्रह्माण्डयोरैक्यं संभूतम् ।

*Ētēṣāṁ pañcatattvānāṁ tāmasāṁśāt pañcīkṛta pañcatattvāni bhavanti.*

*Pañcīkaraṇaṁ katham iti cēt. Ētēṣāṁ pañca mahābhūtānāṁ tāmasāṁśa svarūpam ēkamēkaṁ bhūtaṁ dvidhā vibhajya ēkamēkamardham pṛthak tūṣṇīm vyavasthāpya aparamaparamardham caturdhā vibhajya svārdhamanyēṣu ardhēṣu svabhāga catuṣṭayasam yōjanam kāryam. Tadā pañcīkaraṇam bhavati.*

*Ētēbhyaḥ pañcīkṛta pañcamahābhūtēbhyaḥ sthūlaśarīram bhavati.*

*Ēvaṁ piṇḍa brahmāṇḍayōraikyaṁ sambhūtam. Pañcatattvānāṁ tāmasāṁśāt pañcīkṛtapañcatattvāni bhavanti.*

**f. Pañcīkṛta pañcatattvaṁ - Evolution of five Grossified elements**

Having discussed the creation of subtle elements and the subtle elementals, the author now talks about the creation of gross elements. The gross elements are created out of the *tāmasik* part of the subtle elements.

So *ētēṣāṁ pañcatattvānāṁ tāmasāṁśāt* – from the *tāmasik* part of the five elements; *pañcīkṛta pañcatattvāni bhavanti*– the grossified five elements are born.

The author anticipates the question in the student's mind. "How do they become grossified? How does the invisible element become visible? How does this *pañcīkaraṇam* take place? *Pañcīkaraṇam katham iti cēt.* What is this *pañcīkaraṇam*? The teacher explains the process.

*Ētēṣāṁ pañcamahābhūtānāṁ tāmasāṁśa svarūpam* – first the *tāmasik* part of the five elements are taken. Then *ēkamēkaṁ*

*bhūtaṁ dvidhā vibhajya* –each of these five elements get divided into two.

Then *ēkamēkamardham pṛthak tūṣṇīm vyavasthāpya* - one half of the divided element is kept as it is, in tact; *pṛthak tūṣṇīm vyavasthāpya* means remains in tact.

*Aparamaparam ardhām caturdhā vibhajya* –The other half is divided into four parts. Now each of this part will be one-eighth part of the element.

*Svārdhamanyēṣu ardhēṣu svabhāga catuṣṭayasam yōjanam kāryam* – then each of the four parts of each element is distributed to the other four elements. Thus 1/8 *ākāśaḥ* will go to 1/2 of *vāyuḥ*, another 1/8 will go to 1/2 of *agniḥ* another 1/8 will go to 1/2 of *āpaḥ* and another 1/8 will go to 1/2 of *pṛthivī*.

Similarly, each 1/8<sup>th</sup> part of *vāyuḥ* is distributed to the 1/2 part of other four elements and so on. This process is illustrated in the chart at the end of this chapter for easy understanding.

Therefore, at the time of grossification, we find that each element becomes an alloy. Before grossification every element is pure, called *tanmātrā*, in Sanskrit. After grossification, every element is an alloy i.e. a combination of the five elements.

Now the challenge is that if each element has all the five elements in it, what name do we give to each of them? The solution is to name them based on the dominant element. For example, in the composition of the gross *ākāśaḥ* 1/2 will be space, 1/8 each of

*vāyuh, agniḥ, āpaḥ* and *pṛthivī*. And formula will be similar for the other four gross elements.

The author concludes *tadā pañcīkaraṇam bhavati* – Upon the creation of such compounds, the subtle elements become gross elements. And after that -

*Ētēbhyaḥ pañcīkṛta pañcamahābhūtēbhyaḥ sthūlaśarīram bhavati* – from the five gross elements so formed, the gross body is born. Without the *sthūla śarīram* each one of us will be a ghost. So this process creates our beautiful *śarīram*, a gross tangible cabinet, hardware for our functioning is created. The software cannot function unless there is hardware to install it. What a great creator of computer *Bhagavān* is!

Not only our *sthūla śarīram* but the entire *sthūla prapañcam* or the gross universe is also a mixture of the five gross elements. So *pañca sthūla bhūtāni* and also *sthūla bhautikāni* – all are created through this process.

The author has explained all the four stages of creation viz. *sūkṣma bhūtam, sūkṣma bhautikam, sthūla bhūtam* and *sthūla bhautikam*.

Lastly the author says *Ēvaṁ piṇḍa brahmāṇḍayōraikyam sambhūtam* - thus the *piṇḍa* – individual who has five elements; *brahmāṇḍayōḥ* - the cosmos also has five elements. And this is how the individual fits into the cosmological order. And that is the cosmos is called *prapañcam* which means made up of these five elements.

This concludes the discussion on ***Sṛṣṭiḥ Vicārah*** or the creation of the universe.



Fig. 1 Caturvīṃśati Tattvōtpatti Prakāraṁ (with Sanskrit terms)

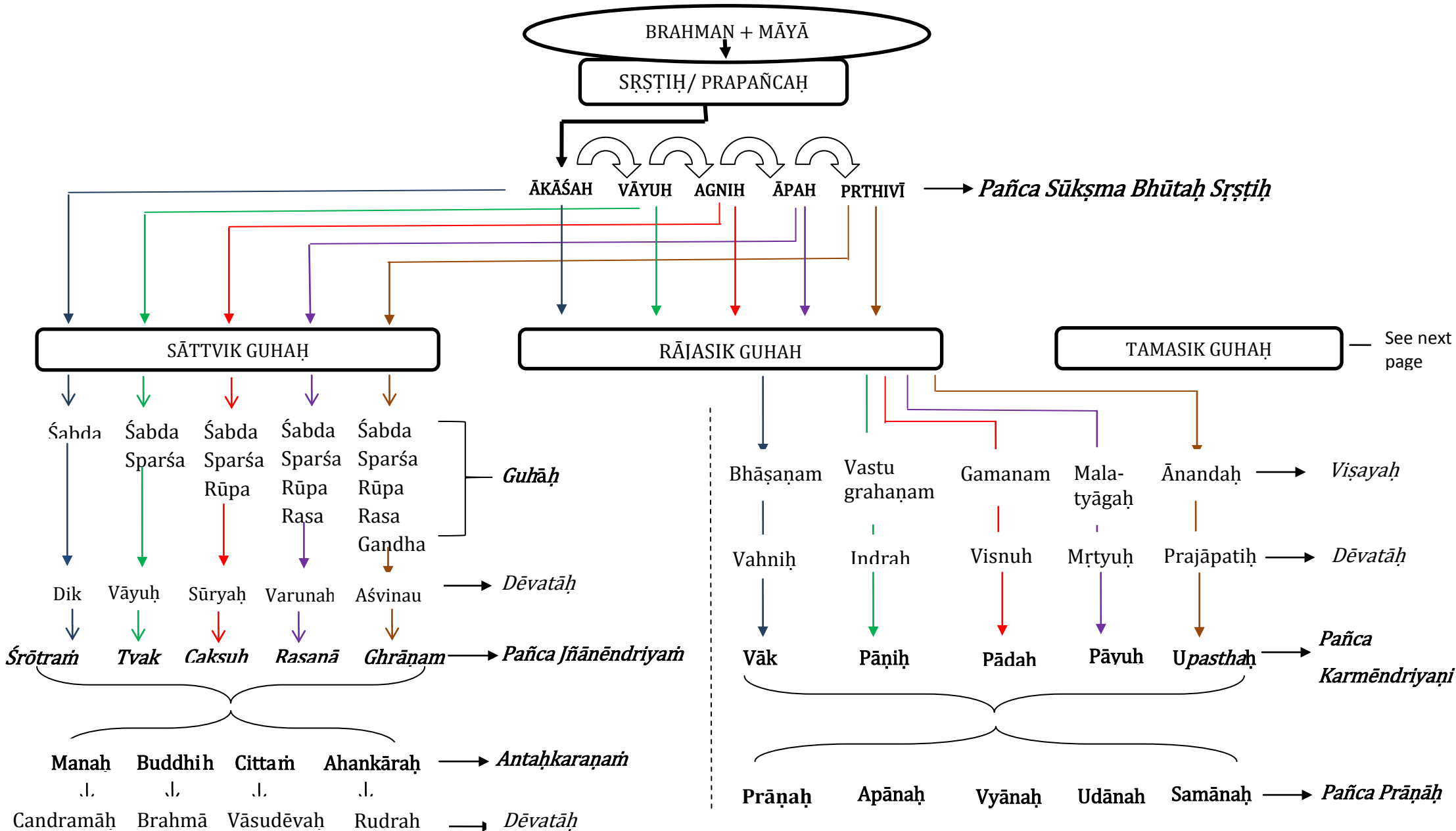
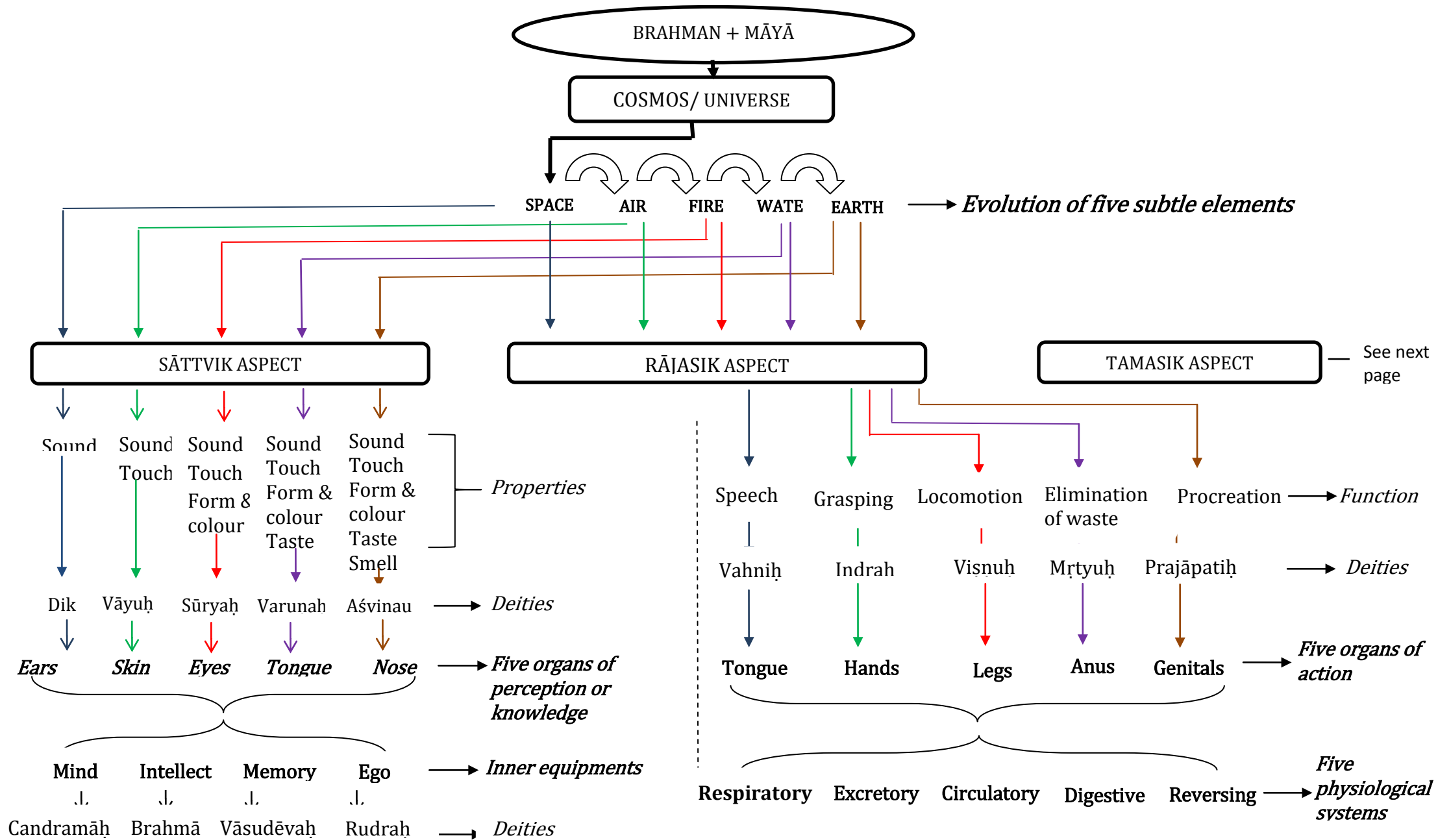
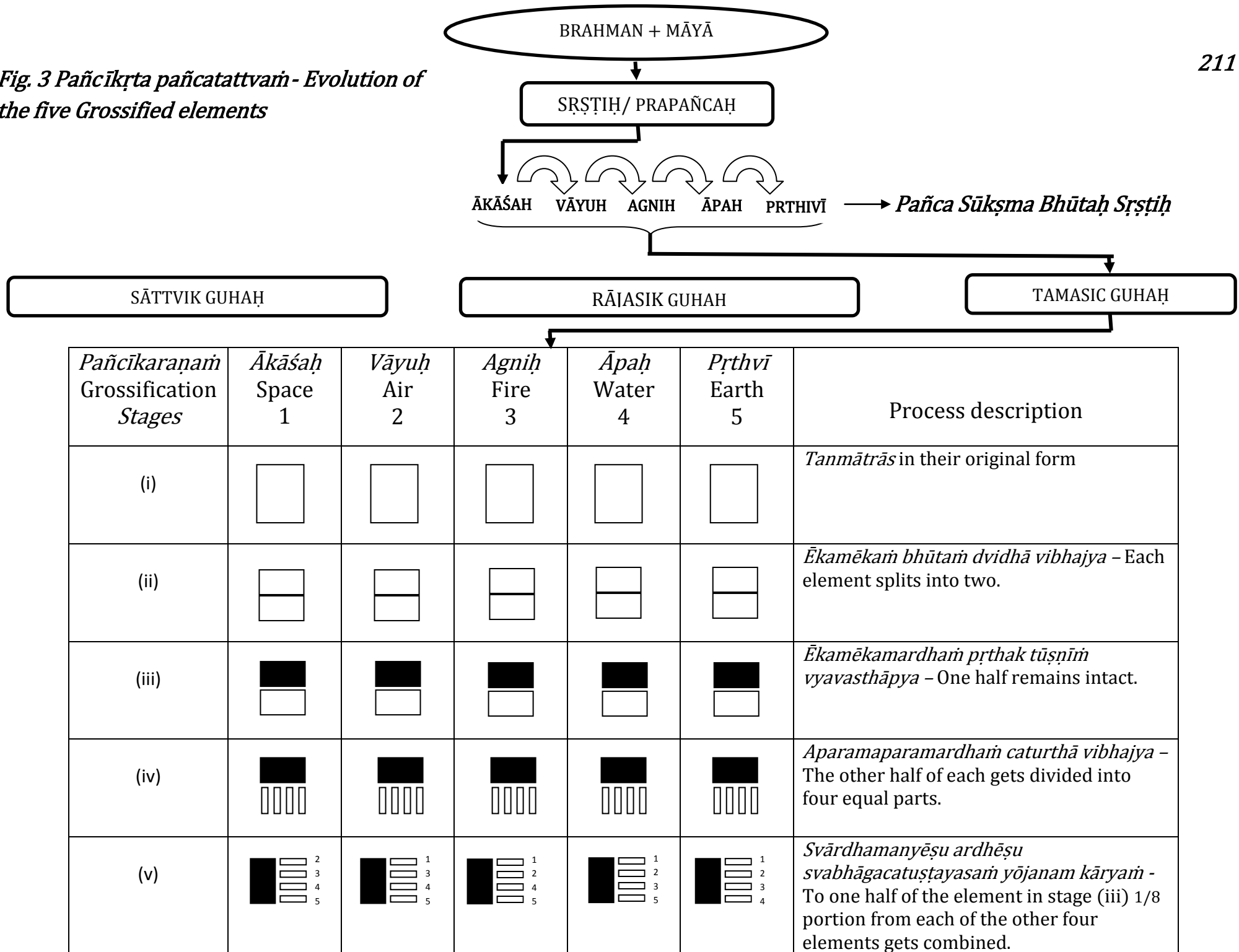


Fig. 2 Caturvīṃśati Tattvōtpatti Prakāraṃ (with English terms)



*Fig. 3 Pañcīkṛta pañcatattvaṁ - Evolution of the five Grossified elements*





***Aikya vicārah- Oneness of microcosm and  
macrocosm***

The fourth main topic will deal with revelation of the fact that the truth of the microcosm, the individual and the truth of the macrocosm, the total, is one and the same. The essence or core is one and same.

Like the essence of the wave is water, the essence of the ocean is also water. Wave is microcosm. Ocean is macrocosm. But the truth of both is water – a single entity. Similarly, the individual is like a wave and the total is like the ocean. The essence is one. This is called the *jīvātmā paramātmā aikyaṃ* which means identity or oneness or the essential oneness of the microcosm and macrocosm.

The recognition of the oneness of this identity of the microcosm and the macrocosm is the central theme of *Tattva bōdhaḥ*, all other *prakaraṇa granthās*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, all the *Upaniṣads*, the *Brahma sutras*, the *Itihāsa Purāṇās* – essentially all scriptural literature which deal with the *Advaita* philosophy.

The author commences the discussion of this topic with the following sentence.

स्थूलशरीराभिमानि जीवनामकं ब्रह्मप्रतिबिम्बं भवति ।

स एव जीवः प्रकृत्या स्वस्मात् ईश्वरं भिन्नत्वेन जानाति ।

अविध्योपाधिः सन् आत्मा जीव इत्युच्यते ।

मायोपाधिः सन् ईश्वर इत्युच्यते ।

*Sthūlaśarīrābhimāni jīvanāmakam brahmapratibimbaṃ bhavati.*

*Sa ēva jīvaḥ prakṛtyā svasmāt īśvaraṃ bhinnatvēna jānāti.*

*Avidhyōpādhiḥ san ātmā jīva ityucyatē.*

*Māyōpādhiḥ san īśvara ityucyatē.*

***Jīvaḥ Īśvara – The individual and the total***

Before we analyze the text, we need to thoroughly understand the concept discussed under this topic.

We have already learnt that we have the macrocosm consisting of three layers of universe viz. causal, subtle and gross which are all made up of inert matter and the three corresponding layers in the microcosm, which are also inert.

We have also seen that when all these processes were going on, when this evolution was taking place, nothing happens to *Brahman*. It is in the presence of *Brahman* only that all these happen but *Brahman* itself does not undergo any change or modification.

*Brahman* is like the Sun. The Sun does not do any transaction. Whereas, on the Earth, blessed by the Sun, in the presence of sunlight, lot of transactions take place. However, sunlight is itself not a participant in these transactions. Thus *Brahma caitanyaṁ* or *ātma caitanyaṁ*, being changeless, formless, attributeless etc. and without having any property like sound, taste, touch etc., does not participate in these activities of creation. So then what is the role of this *Brahman*?

Once the three *prapañcās* and three bodies viz. gross universe and gross body; subtle universe and subtle body; causal universe and causal body have evolved, these material universes and bodies serve as means for the manifestation of the consciousness principle *Brahman* or for reflecting the *ātma caitanyaṁ*; like a mirror capable

of reflecting the sunlight. The mirror does not have any light of its own. But when kept under the Sun, it has a special capacity to reflect the light of the Sun. Once the reflection is formed i.e once the reflected Sunlight is available on the mirror, the mirror itself becomes a bright luminous object even though on its own, it is not bright or luminous. Only when the *sūrya pratibimbam* or reflection is formed, the non-bright becomes bright. It becomes so bright that with the reflected light we can even illumine a dark room. The mirror is able to illumine the dark room not with the original Sunlight but with its borrowed light.

Similarly when the consciousness pervades the three universes and the three bodies, we get the reflected consciousness or manifested consciousness in these six media. Causal body, subtle body, gross body become a medium to reflect the consciousness and this matter, which is inert and naturally insentient, starts to behave as if it is sentient. The inert body becomes a live body. The life in the body, the sentiency of the body is not natural consciousness but it is a borrowed consciousness – borrowed from *ātmā* the original consciousness. Since there are three bodies, there are three reflections. Let us try to understand this concept better with an illustration.

Let us first consider the reflection in the causal body and label it Reflecting Medium No. 1 or RM1. Then let us label the reflection in the subtle body as RM 2 i.e. – Reflecting Medium No. 2. Similarly label the gross body as RM 3.



At the macro level, let us label the causal universe as RM4, the subtle universe as RM5 and the gross universe as RM6. So these are RM 1, RM2, RM3 at the micro level and RM4, RM5 and RM6 at the macro level.

Since there are six reflecting media, there will be six reflections but the original source will be only one. For example, if we keep six mirrors under the Sun, there will be six reflections of the Sun; one in each mirror, but the main source i.e. the Sun will be only one. Because of the plurality of the reflecting media, there is plurality in the reflected consciousness also. Let us similarly label the reflecting consciousnesses also.

RC1 will be the label for the reflected consciousness in RM 1 (causal body). Similarly we will label the others as RC2, RC3, RC4, RC5 and RC6 corresponding to each RM. RC 4 is the reflected consciousness manifest at the causal universe, the cosmic intelligence which unifies the cosmos. The *shāstrās* accord a special name for each of this reflected consciousness.

RC1 – *Prājñā*

RC2 – *Taijasa*

RC3 – *Viśva*

RC4 – *Antaryāmi*

RC5- *Hiraṇyagarbha*

RC6 – *Virāt*

Of these, the first three at the micro level and the last three are at the macro level. And they all represent but one *ātmā* alone. The reflections are many but the original is one.

Further, the micro reflections at the micro level consisting of *prājñā*, *taijasa*, and *viśva*, all the three put together is called *jīvātmā*. Thus *jīvātmā* is the name for the micro reflection group. Whereas, the macro reflection group comprising of *antaryāmi*, *hiraṇyagarbha* and *virāṭ* is called *paramātmā* or *Īśvaraḥ*. So *jīvātmā* is also a reflection and *paramātmā* is also a reflection. The original is neither *jīvātmā* nor *paramātmā*. The original is only *ātmā*. In the micro medium it is called *jīvātmā* and in the macro medium, it is called *paramātmā*.

Now let us consider the nature and size of these reflections. It goes without saying that the nature and size of the reflection will depend upon the reflecting medium. Even if the original Sun is big and bright, if the mirror is very small and that too dirty, naturally the reflection will be small and because of the dullness of the medium, the reflection will also be dull.

So the reflection in the *jīvātmā* is characterised by its smallness in size and also dullness due the variety of problems that the body experiences. And therefore, the *jīvātmā* has got limited qualities or negative attributes like अल्पज्ञत्वम् (*alpajñatvam*) – limited knowledge; अल्पैश्वरत्वम् (*alpaiśvaratvam*) – limited power etc.

Whereas the very same consciousness is manifest or reflected in the macro medium, the cosmic intelligence and it harmonizes the universe and maintains the planetary movements amongst other things. As a *jīvātmā* we are unable to control our own movement or even the movement of traffic on the roads. Imagine the cosmic intelligence which maintains the cosmic movements of the planet, the solar system, the galaxy etc. which are all constantly moving. Imagine if two planets were to collide! We cannot even imagine. But they are all following the cosmic law very very intelligently and accurately.

This intelligent cosmic order not only organizes the physical laws of the universe by even the moral laws of *dharma* and *adharma*, including the *jīvā's* birth and death. It determines what should be enjoyed by which *jīvā* and when and what should be suffered by which *jīvā* and when. They are not accidental. Even a mosquito bite is not accidental. It is *punyaṁ* for the mosquito and it is a small *pāpaṁ* for us! Such moral laws, cosmic laws are all very well maintained by a cosmic intelligence which is called *paramātmā*, which is the reflected consciousness at the macro medium level. And therefore *paramātmā's* qualities are all superior qualities. *Paramātmā* has got superior qualities or virtues because of the superior medium, which is the macro medium. *Ātmā* by itself has no quality at all. The reflected ones alone get the attributes of size and quality based on their own properties.

From this we can surmise that both the *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are distorted versions. The distortion is that the *ātmā* which does not

have any quality appears to have superior quality at the macro level on the one hand and the very same *ātmā* appears to have an inferior quality at the micro level. Both are but distortions.

Another example will make this very clear. Let us say you keep two mirrors in front of you. One is a convex mirror and another is a concave mirror. When you look into the two mirrors you get reflections of your face. Will the reflections will be like the original or distorted? These reflections will not be the true reflections of the original face but will be distorted. In the concave mirror it will be a flat face and in the convex mirror it will be an elongated face. The type of distortion will depend upon the type of the medium i.e the mirror - convex or concave. But the original face has no distortions at all.

Thus, the *jīvātmā* has got **निकृष्ट गुणः** (*nikṛṣṭa guṇaḥ*), *paramātmā* has got **उत्कृष्ट गुणः** (*utkṛṣṭa guṇaḥ*) and *ātmā* has no *guṇaḥ* – it is **निर्गुणः** (*nirguṇaḥ*).

Thus if we take the *jīvātmā* and remove the distorting medium and also take *paramātmā* and remove the distorting medium, what will be left will only be *ātmā*.

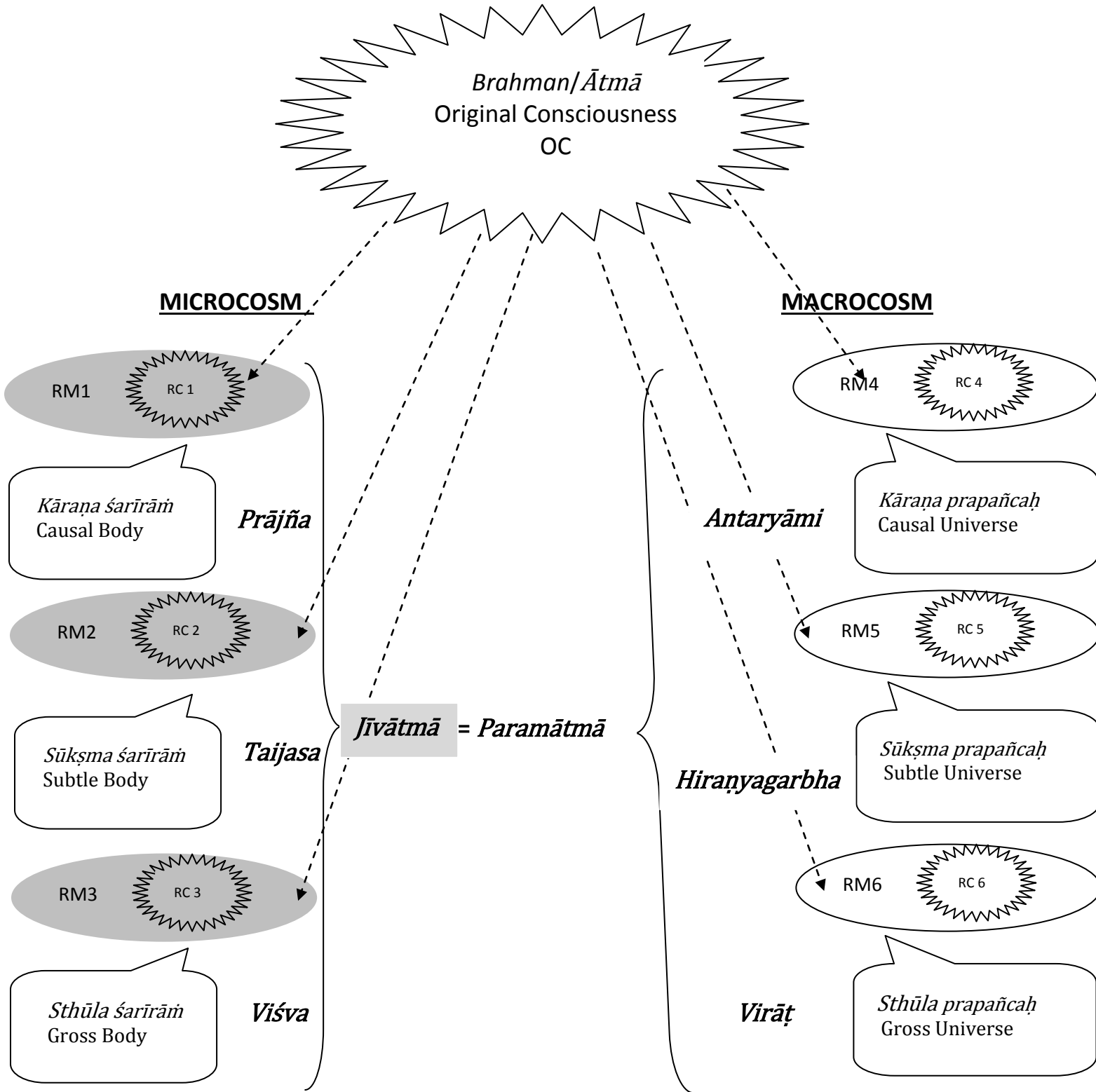
And a wise person is one who calls God and says “Oh God, You and I are one and same, even though now I look miserable. The misery is not because of me. It is because of the distorting medium. Minus the medium, I am the *nirguṇa ātmā*. And if I remove the distorting medium from you, you will also be the *nirguṇa ātmā*.

Therefore, both of us are in essence *nirguṇa ātmā* only. I am the same as you - *Aham Brahma Asmi*. I am not worried because I have a distorted look. If I see my face in the convex mirror or the concave mirror, my face will look ugly. But I never worry about that because I know that even though the image looks distorted, the distortion does not belong to my original face which is undistorted. The distortion is only incidental and caused only by the medium”.

Thus the wise person realizes this reality and assimilates this as a fact when he says *Aham Brahma Asmi* and it is this knowledge of the self, the *Tattva bōdhaḥ* which is called *jīvātmā paramātmā aikyaṁ*.

The chart on next page pictorially depicts the *Jīva-Ishwara Aikyaṁ*.

**Fig.4 Jīva-Ishwara Aikyam**



Now if we look at the chart *Jīva-Īśvaraḥ Aikyam, Brahman* the original consciousness is labeled as OC. So *ātmā* is OC. Then on the left side, we have the *kāraṇa śarīrām* or the causal body labeled as RM1 and the reflected consciousness is called RC1. The *shāstrās* have named it *prājñā*. Again on the left side, in the middle portion, the *sūkṣma śarīrām* or the subtle body is RM2 and the reflected consciousness is RC2. This is called *taijasa*. At the bottom portion of this side, the *sthūla śarīrām* i.e. the gross body is RM3 and the reflected consciousness is RC3 and it is called *viśva*. The reflected media are also depicted as grey in colour implying the impurities, the distortions. And *prājñā*, *taijasa* and *viśva* together are called *jīvaḥ*. Therefore, when we are a *jīva*, we mean the distorted consciousness which is manifesting through our causal, subtle and gross bodies.

Now let us look at the right side. First we have the *kāraṇa prapañcaḥ* or the causal universe which is also known as *māyā* or *avidyā*. That is labeled RM4 and the reflected consciousness is RC 4 and it is called *antaryāmi*. Then the *sūkṣma prapañcaḥ* i.e the subtle world is RM 5 with the corresponding RC5 and it is called *hiranyagarbhaḥ*. The *sthūla prapañcaḥ* or the gross world is RM6, the reflected consciousness is RC6 and it is called *virāṭ*. All the RMs are pure white depicting that there are no distortions in these media. So, *antaryāmi* + *hiranyagarbhaḥ* + *virāṭ* put together are called *Īśvaraḥ* or *Paramātmā*.

After the analysis, what do we find? Are these two i.e. *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*, the same or different? If we look at each of them through the distorting medium, they will be different, because the medium is bound to distort, because of its own qualities. The *paramātmā* may have superior qualities and the *jīvātmā* may have inferior qualities. Therefore, the difference between the two is caused by the distortions caused by the medium like the reflection of the face in the convex and concave mirrors. But in actual fact, there is no distortion in the original face. Similarly the original essence of both *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* is *ātmā* only and it is only one and the same *ātmā*. Now let us understand the text.

*Sthūlaśarīrābhimāni jīvanāmakam brahmapratibimbham bhavati*

– *jīvanāmakam* means the *ātmā* which is named as *jīvā*; *brahma pratibimbham bhavati* – is only the reflection of the original *Brahman* or *ātmā*; *sthūla śarīrābhimāni* – obtaining in the *sthūla śarīram*. We have to include the other two also i.e. *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa śarīrābhimāni*. And not only is the *jīvātmā* dull, it does not even know that it is the original consciousness reflected in this medium of the body. Even this truth, the *jīvātmā* is ignorant of. It mistakes the distorted version as its original nature. This ignorance is the cause of *saṁsārā*, and it suffers because of this problem. *Sa eva jīvaḥ*–This confused *jīvātmā* looks at the *paramātmā* which is also a distorted reflection and confuses that reflection of *paramātmā* as its original nature. He does not realize that *paramātmā* is also a distorted version.



Thus as long as we are absorbed in the distorted versions, we will always see different images. We will swear that they are different. We need to assimilate the fact that the original is the undistorted *ātmā* and that both the distorted images are incidental attributes and they don't belong to the *ātmā*. The author continues - *svasmāt prakṛtyā* - by his own natural ignorance; *Īśvaraṁ bhinnatvēna jānāti* - he looks at *paramātmā* as different from his own self i.e. *jīvātmā*. This is called *jīvātmā - paramātmā bhēdaḥ*. This ignorance is at the root of the *Dvaita* philosophy. It is called dualistic philosophy which proclaims that we, the *jīvātmās* are all ordinary mortals, and he the Great Lord is the *Mahā Paramātmā*. He is the creator and we are all his creations. He is the master and we are all his servants. All these confusions arise because; we compare our distorted inferior quality and then look at *paramātmā's* distorted superior qualities. That is why this perceived difference exists.

According to the *advaita* (non-dualist) philosophy, the *paramātmā* is neither a master, nor are we servants. They appear to be so only from the standpoint of the medium.

The author then goes on to define *jīvātmā*. He says - *avidhyōpādhiḥ san ātmā jīva ityucyatē*. *Avidhyā* refers to *kāraṇa śarīraṁ*, which includes the *sthūla* and *sūkṣma śarīraṁ*s also. We can therefore, consider *avidhyā* here as the *śarīra trayam*; *upādi* means medium. So *avidhyōpādhiḥ san ātmā* means the *ātmā* appearing or reflecting in the micro medium; *jīva ityucyatē* - is called *jīvaḥ*.

Similarly for *paramātmā*, he says *māyōpādhiḥ san īśvara ityucyatē* - reflected in *māyā* i.e. the *kāraṇa prapañca*, in which we should include *sūkṣma prapañca* and *sthūla prapañca* also. We can, therefore, consider *māyōpādhiḥ* as *prapañca trayam* – the macro medium. So *māyōpādhiḥ san* means appearing in the macro medium; *īśvara ityucyatē* - is called *īśvaraḥ* or *paramātmā*.

So *īśvaraḥ* is omniscient, omnipotent, all love, all compassion, all beauty etc. - everything is supremely beautiful. We poor souls have diametrically opposite qualities. But the author wants to point out that even though we seem to be different; the differences are only superficial and incidental. Essentially and intrinsically, the *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are one. This knowledge is called *jīvātmā paramātmā aikya jñānam*. This is the foundation principle of *advaita* philosophy.

At this stage, it is quite natural for questions like “What will I get if I gain this knowledge? Will it solve any of my day to day problems, family problems, national problems, religious problems – what will I get out of this knowledge?” etc. are bound to arise. Before the author deals with these questions, he wants to explain what one could lose by not gaining this knowledge.

एवं उपाधिभेदात् जीवेश्वरभेददृष्टिः यावत् पर्यन्तं तिष्ठति

तावत् पर्यन्तं जन्ममरणादिरूपसंसारो न निवर्तते ।

तस्मात्कारणात् न जीवेश्वरयोर्भेदबुद्धिः स्वीकार्या ।

*Ēvaṁ upādhibhēdāt jīvēśvarabhēdadṛṣṭiḥ yāvat paryantaṁ tiṣṭhati tāvat paryantaṁ janmamaraṇādirūpa saṁsārō na nivartatē. Tasmātkāraṇāt na jīvēśvarayōrbhēda buddhiḥ svīkāryā.*

Why do the human beings suffer in life? Suffering is not caused by the events in life; sufferings are not caused by the planetary position in life. But sufferings are caused by wrong perceptions, misconceptions based on the ignorance and misunderstanding of the distorted versions of *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*. So he says *ēvaṁ* – in this manner; *upādhibhēdāt* – because of the differences in the medium; *jīvēśvarabhēdadṛṣṭiḥ* – the wrong perception that *jīvātmā* and *Īśvaraḥ* are different; *dṛṣṭiḥ*, in this context means wrong vision, misunderstanding, misconception; *yāvat paryantaṁ tiṣṭhati* – as long as this misconception continues in life; *tāvat paryantaṁ* – till such time; *janma maraṇādi rūpa saṁsārō* – this *saṁsārā* which is characterised by repeated births and deaths. The author uses the word *ādi* which means ‘and the like’ and which includes all kinds of problems like old age, disease, separation from near and dear ones etc. - all these problems put together is called *saṁsāraḥ*. *Na nivartatē* – will never go away. *Tasmātkāraṇāt* - because of that reason; *jīvēśvarayōrbhēda buddhiḥ* - the misconception of the difference between *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*; this divisive vision – *na svīkāryā* – never accept; never entertain.

Let us ask ourselves if all our problems are internal or external? A person having cataract in his eyes said that the light in the room was very dull and that the brightness should be increased! Will any amount of increase in the brightness improve his sight? Then

there was a case of a deaf person who accused people of not eating properly because of which their voices were very feeble! This is what we tend to do for all our problems. We do not realize that the problem actually lies within us. We go on attributing the cause for all our problems to some external person or reason. There is no point in attacking the world; we have to change our misconceptions.

This is what *Vēdāntā* says. We are the problem and so the solution also has also to be in us only. Changing, the people, the family, the society are all struggles in the wrong direction. Solutions attempted in the wrong direction will never succeed. That is why all human beings are unhappy throughout their life because they are always, as the idiomatic expression goes, “barking up the wrong tree”.

We should never see a distance between us and God. The greater the perception of distance, the deeper will be the problems of *saṁsārā*. Lesser the distance, the lesser will be the problems of the *saṁsārā*. No distance, the *saṁsārā* will disappear. This state of ‘No distance’ is called *aikyaṁ*.

But, how does one do that? How to change the misconception? How can we remove our distorted misconception? The author provides the answers in the next chapter.

***Mahā Vākyam - The Great equation***

ननु साहंकारस्य किञ्चिज्ज्ञस्य जीवस्य निरहंकारस्य सर्वज्ञस्य ईश्वरस्य  
तत्त्वमसीति महावाक्यात् कथमभेदबुद्धिः स्यादुभयोः विरुद्ध धर्माक्रान्तत्वात् ।

*Nanu sāhankārasya kñcijjñasya jīvasya nirahankārasya sarvajñasya  
īśvarasya tattvamasīti mahāvākyāt kathamabhēdabuddhiḥ  
syādubhayōḥ viruddha dharmākrāntatvāt.*

This misconception in the form of the *bhēda* i.e. difference between the *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*; the division between the individual and God, is attacked by the *Vēdik* scriptures. Any misconception can go away by right knowledge. That is why even in our day to day life, if there is any doubt regarding anything, an enquiry commission is instituted. For example, if a space vehicle explodes, we set up an enquiry commission to find out. Different versions as to the cause could exist. Whenever there are several doubts, versions and misconceptions, they can be removed only by enquiry and confirmed knowledge. Such misconceptions will not go automatically. They cannot go by any other exercises. It requires the intellectual exercise of enquiry because misconception is an intellectual problem. For an intellectual problem, the solution also has to be intellectual.

And therefore, the *Vēdik* scriptures attempt to give the right knowledge regarding the relationship between *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*. This teaching is given at the end part of the *Vēdā* and that is why it is called *Vedāntik* i.e *Vēdā anta* teaching. Amongst the vast body of *Vēdik literature*, it is in *Vēdāntā* alone that the

*jīvātmā* - *paramātmā* relationship is enquired into. It is an elaborate and systematic teaching and the culmination of the teaching is that *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are one and the same original consciousness only. The differences are seeming, superficial; they are only apparent differences. We don't deny the superficial differences, like the two images in the two mirrors. We only say that the visible differences are superficial and non-factual. And that culminating statement, which reveals the non-difference or the oneness, is called a *Mahā Vākyaṁ*.

*Mahā vākyaṁ* is a *Vedāntik* statement, which reveals the fact that *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are really one *ātmā* one. So *bhēda* is negated, *abhēda* is revealed. Like any equation in mathematics, *Mahā vākyaṁ* can be called the great equation.

For example, when do we choose an equation in mathematics? We don't say  $8 = 8$  because it is very evident and because every body knows that  $8 = 8$ . We cannot say  $8 = 9$ , because we know that 8 is not equal to 9, they are evidently different. Thus when two things are evidently different, equation is not possible and when two things are evidently equal, the equation is not required!

Whereas, when two things are seemingly different but are really equal, we require an equation. Like  $5+3 = 9-1$ . When we look at this equation superficially, we can see only the differences. On the left side we have the number 5 and 3 added together. On the right hand side the number 1 is reduced from the number 9. On the face of it, we see the differences only and so we could question the 'equal to' sign in the equation. How can they be equal? The eyes

report the differences in numbers and also the arithemtical signs. What we fail to appreciate is that they report a superficial difference. We require a mathematical teacher to tell us that the differences are superficial and results of both sides are 8 only.

Similarly if *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are evidently identical, equation is not required. If *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are evidently different, equation is not possible. But when the *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are seemingly different because of the incidental distortion caused by the reflecting medium but really speaking, both are one and same all pervading consciousness, then the Vedāntik teacher gives the solution for the equation *Jīvātmā = Paramātmā*. And this great equation is called *Mahā vākyaṁ*.

This oneness is revealed by several scriptural statements and all those statements are called *Mahā vākyaṁ*, the great spiritual equation. For an English translation for *Mahā vākyaṁ*, we should not take the dictionary meaning. In the dictionary the meaning of 'Mahā' would be given as big or long and 'vākyaṁ' would be a sentence. So if we take the dictionary meaning, *Mahā Vākyaṁ* would mean a big or a long sentence. But *Tattvamasī* is small statement. So *Mahā vākyaṁ* should be understood to mean as the great spiritual equation which equates the *jīvātmā* with *paramātmā*. There are innumerable *Mahā vākyaṁs* occurring in all scriptures, all over the *Vēdās* and in all the *Upaniṣads* and the most popular *Mahā vākyaṁ* is *Tat Twam Asi*. And this is generally called *upadēśa vākyaṁ* because this *Mahā vākyaṁ* is normally used by a *guru* while teaching the student. This *Mahā vākyaṁ* occurs in the

*Sāma Vēdā* in an *Upaniṣad* called *Chāndōgyō Upaniṣad*, in a very significant section called *Sat vdyā*.

In the *Vēdāntik* literature the most popular *Mahā vākyam* is *Tat twam asi*. The equation states:

*Tat*, which means that *paramātmā* - the cosmic intelligence which is organizing the whole creation, maintaining the cosmic order, making the solar system move perfectly, helping the Sun rise and set accurately; this intelligence which maintains and unifies the cosmic order.

*Twam* refers to each one of us, the individual *jīvātmā*, struggling to organize this small little family and that too often failing miserably.

*Asi* means 'are'. So the equation says that "*Tat* - the *paramātmā*; *Twam* you, the *jīvātmā*; *asi* - are. The popular Latin equivalent is "*That thou art*". So this *vākyam* is called *abhēda bōdhaka vākyam* - the sentence which reveals or informs or gives knowledge of the non-difference or *aikya bōdhaka vākyam* - the sentence which gives the knowledge of or enlightens or reveals the oneness of the *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*.

When a student listens to a *Mahā vākyam* for the first time in his life, proclaiming that "*You are God - you, the jīvātmā, are the paramātmā*", what will be his reaction? He is bound to laugh and say this is the joke of the century. Or he may think that because of too much knowledge the teacher has lost it! But he may not say it!



For all of us steeped in a world of plurality and whose religious beliefs have been conditioned by a dualistic approach right through our live, this would sound as blasphemy! The moment we think of us and God, what comes to our mind is not oneness, but infinite differences. God is the creator and we are the created. God is all pervading. We are very small. God is omnipotent. We are powerless. God is the embodiment of positive virtues like love, compassion etc. We are the embodiment of .....better not said!

So how can this impure *jīvā* and the pure *Īśvarā* be ever identical? We have to worship God; we should never claim equality with God. Claiming equality with God is a sacrilege, it is a sin. This will be the first thought of every *Vedāntik* student.

The author realizes this fact very well and therefore raises a question on behalf of the student. And he says

*Nanu* means indeed or not at all – this indicates the student's protest. He is raising a red flag. He says *jīvasya* i.e. 'I' the *jīva*; *kiñcijjñasya* - am of limited knowledge. He means to say that "I know very few things in the world and there also half of it is wrong knowledge and another half doubtful knowledge. This is my condition." Therefore, किञ्चिज्: (*kiñcijjñah*) means a person with limited knowledge. Another popular word is अल्पज्: (*alpajñah*) to denote limited knowledge as opposed to सर्वज्: (*sarvajñah*) which means all knowing.

*Sāhankārasya* – *sāhankāraḥ* means endowed with a strong individuality. Here the student is referring to his own peculiar attribute which limits him and which makes him different from all others. So *sāhankāraḥ* can be understood as a limitation imposed by his individuality or ego. And about God he says”

*Īśvarasya* – the *paramātmā*; *sarvajñasya* – is omniscient. So the differences between me and God are so clear; *katham abhēda buddhiḥ syāt* – how can there be this vision of equality; *tattvamasi iti mahāvākyāt* – by listening to this great equation *tattvamasi*?

The student implies that while he will be able to listen to this theory, he will not be able to swallow it. He can never accept this because, he says – *ubhayōḥ* –both of them i.e. *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*; have got *viruddha dharma ākrāntatvāt* - *ākrāntam* means endowed with; *dharmā* means attributes; *viruddha* means opposite or contradictory. So he says, both *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are endowed with opposite attributes, *paramātmā* having superior attributes, *jīvātmā* having inferior attributes. These are not even closer attributes. On the contrary, they are diagonally opposite. So how can this *Mahā vākyam* be accepted?

The teacher is compassionate. He appreciates the student’s point. He is not at all angry. In fact he is happy to note the keenness of the student to learn, which is what has prompted the question in the first place. He explains what is meant by *Mahā vākyam* and what his intention was when he said that *Tattvamasi* was a *Mahā vākyam*. This is another unique feature of our scriptures. The scriptures always encourage the students to raise all questions, all

doubts and get them clarified before proceeding further. Our scriptures are not 'faith driven' but 'knowledge driven'. The goal is to gain knowledge and not to perfunctorily perform some rituals. The teacher continues:

इति चेन्न I स्थूलसूक्ष्मशरीराभिमानि त्वंपदवाच्यार्थः I

उपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं समाधिदशासंपन्नं शुद्धं चैतन्यं त्वंपदलक्ष्यार्थः I

एवं सर्वज्ञत्वादिविशिष्ट ईश्वरः तत्पदवाच्यार्थः I

उपाधिशून्यं शुद्धचैतन्यं तत्पदलक्ष्यार्थः I

एवं च जीवेश्वरयोः चैतन्यरूपेणाऽभेदे बाधकाभावः I

*Iti cēnna. Sthūlasūkṣmaśarīrābhimāni tvampada vācyārthaḥ.*

*Upādhivinirmuktaṁ samādhi daśāsampannaṁ śuddhaṁ caitanyaṁ  
tvampada lakṣyārthaḥ.*

*Ēvaṁ sarvajñatvādiviśiṣṭa īśvaraḥ tatpadavācyārthaḥ.*

*Upādhiśūnyaṁ śuddhacaitanyaṁ tatpada lakṣyārthaḥ.*

*Ēvaṁ ca jīvēśvarayōḥ caitanyarūpēṇā'bhēdē bādhakābhāvaḥ*

The teacher now goes into the technical aspect of the *Mahā vākyam* equation between *Jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* i.e *Tattvamasī*, where *tat* refers to *paramātmā*, *twam* refers to the *jīvātmā* and *asi* means equal.

The teacher explains that whenever we use a word, it is used to communicate a meaning to the listener. That is the purpose of speaking. So when a word is uttered, it reveals an object in the mind of the listener. Every *padam* or word reveals a *padārthaḥ*-

meaning of the word. And which word reveals which *padārthaḥ*, we learn by the study of language. That is literature.

For example, when the word ‘Table’ is uttered, the object of a table occurs in our mind. What we hear is the sound but what we understand is not the sound. If I say “bring the Table” you bring the object table. Thus every word conveys a particular object. This object which is referred to by a word is called its *vācyārthaḥ* – its primary meaning; the official meaning; the original meaning or the dictionary meaning.

But often we use the very same word not to convey the meaning of the total object but a part of the object which is also referred to by the same word. For example when one says ‘I’ it refers to that person. But the question is which part of that person does it refer to - the head or the trunk or the limbs? One inference would that it includes the entire body with entire *sūkṣma śarīram*, all sense organs, mind, intellect, the entire *kāraṇa śarīram* and the consciousness. So in this sense the word ‘I’ would refer to the three bodies plus consciousness, which is available in a distorted form.

Now suppose one says ‘I am writing’. What does that mean? Does it mean that he is writing with the whole body i.e. *sthūla śarīram+sūkṣma śarīram+kāraṇa śarīram* etc.? The writing is done by just one limb i.e. the hand and that too only one hand, which is one of the *karmēndriyaṁs*, with a portion of the mind involved in the process. But we don’t say hand is writing or hand backed by mind is writing. On the contrary we say “I am writing”. And the listener also does not get confused. He understands that the word

'I' refers to the hand. Similarly when we say 'I am overweight', it refers only to one part of i.e. that the physical body. Another example is, suppose one refers to a great mathematician and says "He is a giant in mathematics". The listener will understand that the use of the word 'giant' should not be understood literally but only in an implied manner i.e. to show his prowess in the subject. One can think of such numerous examples.

So a word can convey either the total object or it can refer to a part also. Similarly the meaning of a word could be literal or figurative depending upon the context. When it refers to the total object or literal meaning it is called primary meaning. When it conveys any other meaning other than the primary meaning, according to the context, is called secondary meaning, filtered meaning.

Similarly when one is asked to bring a banana, the banana includes the skin. When one is asked to eat the banana, it is understood that one should eat it without the skin. Thus most of the time when we speak, we use only the secondary meaning. And the intellect automatically filters and understands this very well because of which we don't see any contradiction.

Thus, when a word reveals the total object or the literal meaning, it is called *vācyārthaḥ* which is the direct meaning or primary meaning. But when the word reveals a part of the total object or a figurative meaning it is called *lakṣyārthaḥ* i.e. indirect meaning or implied meaning or secondary meaning. So a word can have either *vācyārthaḥ* or *lakṣyārthaḥ*. An intelligent listener should take the appropriate meaning according to the context.

Let us consider another example. As we have seen earlier normally the word 'I' refers to an individual – the direct meaning of which includes the body, the mind, the intellect, the consciousness. But when a person says 'I am fat', the meaning of the word 'I' contextually can be connected to only one part of the individual. Why? Because we know that mind cannot be fat; the intellect cannot be fat; the consciousness cannot be fat. So when he says 'I am fat', the word should refer to only the relevant part of 'I' and that is the physical body. When the word 'I' is used to refer to only the physical body, it is *lakṣyārthaḥ* only. Similarly when a person says 'I am an emotional person', the word 'I' has to be connected with the word emotional, and we know that the body cannot be emotional; the consciousness cannot be emotional; the sense organs cannot be emotional; and so the word 'I' can refer to only that part which is relevant in this context. We don't even need tell all these things because the listener is intelligent and he does this filtering job. Thus we use the word 'I' with different meanings in different context and the speaker doesn't even need explain but given the context the listener understands, by taking the appropriate *lakṣyārthaḥ* without taking the *vācyārthaḥ*.

The teacher says that the same principle has to be applied to understand the equation of the *Mahā vākyam*.

When it is said that the *jīvātmā* is one and the same as the *paramātmā*, the question arises as to which part is being referred to here. The author says that the three *śarīrams* cannot be taken here because from the standpoint of the *śarīram*, *jīvātmā* and

*paramātmā* are totally different. *Jīvātmā* is a micro medium consisting of *śarīra trayam*. Whereas, *paramātmā* is a macro medium consisting of *prapañca trayam*. So if we take the medium aspect of the two, the equation will not work.

Thus in defining *tvam* i.e you, what is left is the consciousness principle, which pervades the *śarīra trayam* and which makes the *śarīra trayam* sentient and that is *ātmā*, the *caitanya*. This is the *lakṣyārthaḥ* of the word '*tvam*'.

Similarly, what is '*tat*' the *paramātmā*? Here also we don't take the *paramātmā* as the macro medium. We disregard the *prapañca trayam*. So once again we take the consciousness principle which is manifesting through the *prapañca trayam*. Here again we should take the *lakṣyārthaḥ* instead of the *vācyārthaḥ*.

So *jīvātmā* is the consciousness principle; *paramātmā* is also the consciousness principle. The consciousness *ātmā* is common to both even though there is no commonality between the medium of both.

Therefore when it is said that 'you are God', it means that you and God are one original consciousness, manifesting through two different reflecting media, as explained earlier through the examples of concave and convex mirrors. And therefore, the author says that if we take the meaning of *tat* and *tvam* as consciousness, the *Mahā vākyam* will be meaningful. On the contrary, if we take the meaning of *tvam* as the body or the mind, the *Mahā vākyam* will make no sense.

So in the *Mahā vākyam*, *sthūla*, *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa śarīraṁs* won't fit. Similarly, *sthūla*, *sūkṣma*, and *kāraṇa prapañca* will not fit. The only entity which will fit is the all-pervading, undivided original consciousness. This is what the author clarifies in the sentence. He says

*Iti cēt-* if asked thus; *na* - no; *tvampada vācyārthaḥ* – the direct meaning of the word *tvam* i.e the individual includes – *sthūla* , *sūkṣma śarīraṁs*; we have to include *kāraṇa śarīraṁ* also even though the author does not mention it. So the definition of 'I' refers to the total object or the total individual which includes the gross body, the subtle body, the causal body and the consciousness. All these four factors are included in *tvampada* i.e. in the word *tvam* which is the *vācyārthaḥ* i.e.the primary or the direct meaning of the word. From this standpoint, this meaning of the *Mahā vākyam* will not work because the bodies are different between individual and God. Then what should we do? We should not take the primary meaning but should take the contextual meaning only. What should we do for that?

The author says *upādhi vinirmuktaṁ* – *upādhi* means the reflecting matter or medium i.e the *śarīra trayaṁ*; *vinirmuktaṁ* means segregate or set aside. So we need to segregate or set aside or filter the reflecting medium which is *śarīra trayaṁ*; but how do we do that? By *samādhi daśāsampannaṁ* – *samādhi* means discrimination which is *vivekaḥ*, which we have already learnt; *daśā* means at the time of. The discrimination the author is talking about is the separation of the consciousness from the reflecting medium. We



must remember that we are not talking about physical separation but only figurative separation i.e. only in our understanding. So by the process of discrimination, when we arrive at; *śuddhaṁ caitanyaṁ* – unmixed consciousness; filtered consciousness; it is called *lakṣyārthaḥ*. And after filtering we should know which part to retain and which part to throw away. If not, we would be acting like *Vidura*. As the *Mahābhārata* story goes, when Lord *Kṛṣṇa* came to *Vidura's* house, he was so thrilled, nervous and confused that he peeled a banana to offer to the Lord and threw the banana in the waste basket and gave the peel to poor *Kṛṣṇa* !.

Thus, after figuratively separating the body and consciousness, the pure consciousness - the *śuddhaṁ caitanyaṁ* is denoted by *tvam* or *aham* the 'I'. So when a person says 'I' am God, the word 'I' refers only to the consciousness part. This is the *tvampada lakṣyārthaḥ*.

Similarly the author analyses the *vācyārthaḥ* and *lakṣyārthaḥ* of the word *tat*. He says *ēvaṁ* – applying the same principle; *Īśvaraḥ* – the Lord or the *paramātmā*; *sarvajñatvādiviśiṣṭaḥ* – the one endowed with omniscience and who includes the four entities viz. *sthūla prapañcaḥ*, the total gross universe; *sūkṣma prapañcaḥ*, the total subtle universe; *kāraṇa prapañcaḥ*, the total causal universe; and *Brahman*, the universal or cosmic consciousness; is the direct meaning or *vācyārthaḥ* of the word *Īśvaraḥ* or God. God has total body, total mind, and total intellect at the cosmic level. Therefore, he possesses total knowledge, *sarvajñatvādi viśiṣṭaḥ* – omniscient. This is the *vācyārthaḥ*.

But in the context of the *Mahā vākyam*, we should not take the *vācyārthaḥ* of the word *Īśvaraḥ*. Like in the case of the *twampada*, we should figuratively segregate or filter or set aside the three reflecting matter media viz. *sthūla prapañca*, *sūkṣma prapañca* and *kāraṇa prapañca*. The *Īśvaraḥ* will then become *upādhi śūnyam* – bereft of three matter media; and what would be left would be *śuddha caitanyam* – the pure filtered cosmic consciousness separated from the three reflecting media. And this is *tatpada lakṣyārthaḥ* – the implied meaning of the word *Īśvaraḥ* or *paramātmā* or *tat*.

So in the presence of the reflecting media we get only a distorted image of the reflected consciousness both at the individual level and the cosmic level. But if the reflecting media are removed, albeit only figuratively, what will remain is the undistorted original consciousness.

But the tragedy is that we can never see the original consciousness like we can never see our own face. It is not an object of perception. This original consciousness is not the object but it is the subject 'I'.

For that reason, one cannot also argue that the original consciousness does not exist because it cannot be seen or perceived. This argument will be specious because it will be like stating that the face does not exist because it cannot be seen or the mind does not exist because it cannot be seen or for that matter, the brain of the arguer does not exist because it cannot be seen!!!

Non-perception of the original consciousness or face does not prove their non-existence. We can never see our original face. If we want to see the face, we will get only a reflected version in the mirror and this reflection will necessarily suffer from distortions either positive or negative. *Jīvātmā* is negative distortion, *paramātmā* is positive distortion and *ātmā* is without any distortion.

Therefore author says *ēvaṁ ca* – in this manner; *caitanya rūpēṇā* – in the form of original, undistorted consciousness; *jīvēśvarayōḥ abhēdē* – *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* have no difference; they are one and the same *abhēdē* means no difference at all;

We should remember that the distorted version is also temporary and also that the distortion is not a real distortion. When our face is distorted in the mirror, it is only an apparent distortion. The original face is not really distorted at all. Similarly the distortions of *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā* are incidental, temporary and apparent. The original real consciousness is ever the same. And that consciousness 'I am'. This is the *Tattva bōdhaḥ* – self knowledge. *Bādhakābhāvaḥ* – *bādhaka* means contradiction; *abhāvaḥ* means non-existent or absent.

So the author asserts that there is no contradiction in saying "I am God". Every *jñāni* claims, "I am God". And this is called *Mahā vākya janya aikya jñānam* – the knowledge of oneness born out of the study of *Mahā vākyaṁ*.

This completes the discussion of the topic *Jīva – Īśvara Aikyam*. This is the central topic of *Tattva bōdhaḥ*. What is given here is only a summary. This is the subject matter of all *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* and for that matter all *Vedāntik granthā* in which this topic is dealt with in full detail.

***Aikya Jñāna phalaṁ- Benefits of the knowledge of  
oneness***

***Jīvanmuktāḥ - Liberated individual***

We now move on to the fifth and final topic of *Tattva bōdhaḥ* which deals with the *aikya jñāna phalam*. In this section, the author addresses the question “What will I get out of this knowledge?” The author continues.

एवं च वेदान्तवाक्यैः सद्गुरुपदेशेन च सर्वेष्वपि भूतेषु येषां ब्रह्मबुद्धिरुत्पन्ना ते  
जीवन्मुक्ताः इत्यर्थः ।

*Ēvaṁ ca vēdāntavākyaiḥ sadgurupadēśēna ca sarvēṣvapi bhūtēṣu  
yēṣāṁ brahmabuddhirutpannā tē jīvanmuktāḥ ityarthāḥ.*

The author says that this knowledge is highly beneficial. It is highly practical. It can bring about a revolutionary change in our approach to life. In everything that we do, there will be a change of perspective and this benefit is called *mōkṣaḥ or muktiḥ*. So the result of this knowledge born out of the study is *mōkṣaḥ*.

The author also, in an implied manner, prescribes the mode of undertaking this study. He advises us to never undertake an independent self study. Self study will not work in *Vēdāntā*. Not only it may not work, it may prove to be counter productive also. Therefore, this knowledge has to be gained with the help of *shāstrās* and *guru*, scriptures and a scriptural master to guide you. This is what he means when he says *Vēdāntavākyaiḥ*- with the help of the *Vedāntik* statements - especially *Vēdānta Mahā vākyaiḥ* - *tattvamasī* is one example. There are others like *ahaṁ brahmāsmi, prajñānam brahma, ayaṁ ātma brahma, sa yaścāyaṁ puruṣē, yascāvādityē, sa ēkaḥ* - hundreds and thousands of *Mahā vākyams*

are there. So the author says that making use of those scriptural statements and *sadgurupadēśēna ca* – with the help of the systematic teaching of a *sadguru*.

The author himself has developed this topic systematically starting from *śarīra trayam* etc. This is a systematic *Vedāntik* study. The systematic study is here called *upadēśaḥ*. It is not like a *mantra* initiation. That is also called *upadēśaḥ*. It is a one time and two minutes job. That is initiation into a *mantra* for regular repetition for the purification of the mind. But here the word *upadēśaḥ* has a different connotation. It means systematic study imparted by *sadguru* – the one who has an effective method of communication the one who is a master in communicating in an appropriate way.

In the scriptures and tradition the method of teaching is discussed very elaborately. Imparting this knowledge is like feeding the baby which a mother knows. She does not put a huge ball of food in the baby's mouth. She starts with small portions only and then slowly increases the quantity. There is a prescribed method to feed the child. This methodology is called *sampradāyaḥ*. That is why in the scriptures, the *sadguru* is defined also as *sampradāya vit* – the one who has the skill of communication; the methodology of transferring this difficult knowledge. So with the help of *guru* and *shāstrās*; *sarvēṣvapi bhūtēṣu brahmabuddhirutpannā – buddiḥ* in this context means *jñānaṁ* i.e. knowledge; *utpannaḥ* means has arisen or has come; so knowledge comes through *guru shāstrā upadēśaḥ* and the knowledge referred to here is the *Brahma buddiḥ* – the knowledge of *Brahman* or *ātmā* which means the original

consciousness. We can find this original consciousness in *sarvēṣu api bhūtēṣu* - in every medium; in my body, in your body, in an ant's body; in a plant; in an animal etc. Of course, the distorted versions will be different depending upon the respective *upādhis* but we know that the distortions are only incidental caused by the medium. If we set aside the medium, the original is the same. The author says that the one who has understood this truth, this reality; in whom this *Brahma jñānam* has emerged; the one who has managed to assimilate and actualise this truth is called *jīvan muktāḥ*-liberated person. He will be liberated even while living in this very world. *Muktāḥ* means liberated and *jīvan* means while living.

We need to understand as to what is the liberation that is being talked about. "Liberated from what?"

We know that at present the 'I' in us is the original consciousness but temporarily manifesting in this reflecting medium in a distorted form. After a few years, the reflecting medium will perish and alongwith it the distorted reflection will perish. But even when these reflected consciousness (RC) and reflected medium (RM) perish; 'I' the original consciousness (OC) will continue to exist eternally.

It is like sleep. During sleep, we do not transact through the body medium but we very much exist. Similarly in death also the RC may end, the transaction may end, but we are immortal and so we will continue to exist.



The greatest fear of a human being is the fear of mortality and therefore, the greatest freedom is the freedom from the fear of mortality; freedom from the sense of insecurity. All of us suffer from a high sense of instinctive insecurity. Even as children we were instinctly clinging to our mothers or atleast their saris! When we grow old we try to cling to our children. When we are sick and immobile, we don't want them to go out even for a day. We say to them "I don't know when I will die and so be always by my side". It is this sense of insecurity which expresses itself in the form of all emotional problems. This insecurity is the seed for *raga*, *dvēśa*, *kāma*, *krōdha*, *mōha*, *lōbha*, *mada*, *mātsarya*, *asūyā* - all these are different versions of one fundamental problem which is insecurity. We struggle to earn money. We cling to money and wealth because we think that money and wealth will give us security. And why do we need security from money? Because we feel that we by ourselves are insecure and therefore we need money. We hold on to power, position, house, relationship - all for the same reason. *Bhayam* or fear is driving the humanity.

Therefore, freedom is *muktiḥ* which means freedom from the sense of insecurity and the consequent ramifications - all put together in a single word called *samsārah*. So *muktiḥ* or *mōkṣaḥ* means *samsāra nivṛttiḥ*.

The interesting aspect is that instinctively nobody wants to die; nobody wants to be erased from the earth. This is called survival instinct. There is always the desire for immortality which is instinctive. Once we understand and assimilate the fact that the

death of the reflecting medium, that is our body and that of the reflecting consciousness does not mean that we cease to exist, we will be fully liberated from this sense of insecurity which endlessly keeps haunting us. So when we gain this *jñānam*, this knowledge of the self, *jīvan muktiḥ* is the result.

This liberation can be gained in this very life itself. It is not something that we get after death. And since this liberation can be enjoyed even while living, it is called *jīvan muktiḥ*. The one who enjoys *jīvan muktiḥ* is called a *jīvan muktaḥ* – a liberated person.

Having heard the teacher define *jīvan muktiḥ* and *jīvan muktaḥ*, the student wants to know more about this *Jīvan Muktaḥ* and the type of life of such a person. This is important for us also to know because only then we can decide whether to become *Jīvan Muktaḥ* or not! We want to find out whether it is a worthwhile proposition! So the student asks this question on our behalf.

ननु जीवन्मुक्तः कः?

(*Nanu jīvan muktaḥ kah?*) – But, who is a *jīvan muktaḥ* or a liberated person?

The teacher defines:

यथा देहोऽहं पुरुषोऽहं ब्राह्मणोऽहं शूद्रोऽहमस्मीति दृढनिश्चयस्तथा नाहं

ब्राह्मणः न शूद्रः न पुरुषः किन्तु असंगः सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः प्रकाशरूपः

सर्वान्तर्यामि चिदाकाश-रूपोऽस्मीति दृढनिश्चयरूपोऽपरोक्षज्ञानवान्

जीवन्मुक्तः ।

*Yathā dēhō'ham puruṣō'ham brāhmaṇō'ham śūdrō'hamasmīti  
dṛḍhaniścayastathā nāham brāhmaṇaḥ na śūdraḥ na puruṣaḥ kintu  
asangaḥ saccidānandasvarūpaḥ prakāśarūpaḥ sarvāntaryāmi  
cidākāśa-rūpō'smīti dṛḍhaniścayarūpō'parōkṣa jñānavān  
jīvanmuktaḥ.*

The *guru's* detailed answer is summed up in three words at the end of the sentence - *aparōkṣa jñānavān jīvanmuktaḥ* – a person who has gained self knowledge is a liberated person – *jīvan muktaḥ*.

The main characteristic of a liberated person is self-knowledge and self knowledge is here is called *aparōkṣa jñānam*. This is a technical word used only for defining self-knowledge.

In the *śāstrās* knowledge is normally divided into three types. First is the knowledge of an object which is far away from us and which is not available for direct experience. This is beyond the range of our experience. For example, we have knowledge of existence of different galaxies in the universe, but we cannot experience them directly. This knowledge is called indirect knowledge. In Sanskrit, the term used is *parōkṣa jñānam*.

The second type of knowledge is the knowledge of an object which is available right in front of us and we can have a direct experience of that object. This knowledge is called *pratyakṣa jñānam*. Both *pratyakṣa jñānam* and *parōkṣa jñānam* refer to the knowledge of an object only. The difference is only in the proximity or remoteness of the object of experience.

Self knowledge does not fall under either of the above categories because 'I' the self, am not an object at all! It is neither a proximate object nor a remote object. 'I' am not the object but the very the subject, the knower. Self knowledge is, therefore, called *aparōkṣa jñānam*. So we should never say direct experience of the self. Direct experience can be only of an object nearby. So a *jīvan muktaḥ* is one who has got *aparōkṣa jñānam*. – Self-knowledge. And this knowledge he has is *dṛḍha niścaya rūpaḥ*– free from all forms of doubt; in the form of a firm conviction. *dṛḍha* means firm; *niścayaḥ* means conviction. So this knowledge refers to a firm conviction about oneself.

And what is the firm conviction? Totally convinced that *aham saccidānanda svarūpaḥ* – 'I' am of the nature of *sat*, *cit* and *ānandaḥ*. We have already discussed this topic in a previous chapter. So this knowledge which is held with firm conviction is that 'I' am of the nature of limitless existence, consciousness and superlative happiness. The nature of this *saccidānanda* is *asangaḥ* – though it pervades the body mind complex, it is not attached to it. We need to remind ourselves that if the all pervading consciousness is connected with body mind complex, when the body perishes, the consciousness will also perish. But since it is not attached and is independent of the body mind complex, even at the death of the body, the *ātmā* continues to exist. And this unconnected or unattached nature is called *asanga svarūpaḥ*.

The author continues, 'I' the *ātmā*, am *sarva antaryāmi* –the consciousness present in every body – just as the electricity is

normally present in every electrical gadget. Similarly every body is blessed by the *ātmā caitanyam*. The bodies are many but *ātmā* is one and therefore it is called *sarva antaryāmi*.

*Antaryāmi* means inherent like a thread which is behind every bead of a garland. The beads of the garland are visible but the thread which holds all the beads together is invisible. *Ātmā* is like the invisible thread and every one of us is like a bead. The thread is inside each bead but is not attached to the bead. The thread is one but the beads are many. So the properties of the thread are somewhat similar to *ātmā*. It is (1) invisible; (2) inside every bead; (3) holds all the beads together and (4) though it pervades all the beads it is unattached to the beads. This is a good example to understand this concept.

There are two more examples to understand this concept of *ātmā*. One example is *ākāśaḥ*.

Some of you might have heard about *Cidambara rahasyam*. A famous temple of Lord *Siva* is situated in *Cidambaram* town in South India. This temple is supposed to hold a secret. And the secret is that the temple does not have a deity. In place of the deity there is empty space. The significance is that Lord *Siva* is worshipped there as the space principle. So, first example is *ākāśaḥ*.

The second example is *prakāśaḥ* - the light principle, like the *sūrya prakāśaḥ*, the Sunlight which envelops or pervades the entire earth. Here the reference is not to the solar disc which is far away.

The reference here is to the Sunlight which not only spreads or pervades over the earth but every nook and corner of the solar system.

The *ātmā* can, therefore, be compared to the *ākāśaḥ* and *prakāśaḥ* because of certain common attributes.

Both *ākāśaḥ* and *prakāśaḥ* are formless. Space is formless, light is formless, *ātmā* is also formless consciousness.

The second common feature is that space is division less – space cannot be cut with a knife or otherwise divided. Similarly light also cannot be divided. And in the same way, *ātmā*, the consciousness, also cannot be divided.

Thirdly, the *ākāśaḥ* – space cannot be polluted by any dirty object. Air can be polluted but not the *ākāśaḥ*. So it is blotless, blemishless. In the same way, even though the light or *prakāśaḥ* spreads over every object, the dirt of the object cannot contaminate the light. So *prakāśaḥ* is also blemishless. Similarly *ātmā* the consciousness is also blemishless.

Next *ākāśaḥ* does not have a boundary. Every object has a boundary, dimension. But *ākāśaḥ* is boundless or limitless. Likewise, *sūrya prakāśaḥ*, the light also is not bounded or limited by any object. It goes beyond every object. It even goes beyond this earth. In the same way the *ātmā* also is boundless or limitless.

And finally, *ākāśaḥ*, even though, is associated with every object; it is not connected to any object. It is associated with all but not

connected to any one. Similarly, light also is associated with every object – light is on our body but is not connected to our body. If it were so, wherever we go, the light will go with us. We will never be in a dark place! And not only that, when we walk off a place with the light with us, that place will become dark till someone else walks in that place with the light! So because of its unconnected nature, the light remains in the place even when we go away. The nature of the *ātmā* is also the same. Even when our body perishes, the *ātmā* continues to remain and exist.

Thus, formless – *nirākāraḥ*; divisionless – *nirvikalpaḥ*; blemishless – *nirmalaḥ*; limitless – *nissīmaḥ* and finally connectionless – *nissangaḥ*; such is the nature of the *ātmā*.

A *jñāni* has assimilated this true nature of the *ātmā*. As a *jñāni*, he does not say “I am the body”. He only says “I temporarily use the body. I am only the user of the body and I am not the body”. And therefore, author says, *nāham brāhmaṇaḥ* – if we understand that we are not the body, we cannot say that “I am a *brahmin* or I am a *kṣatriya* or I am a *vaiśya*, or I am *sūdraḥ*” because they are divisions all based on the body mind complex. *Ātmā* the consciousness is *varṇa atītaḥ*– beyond all these classifications. So there is no superiority complex that one is a *brahmin* and because of the same logic there is no inferiority complex that one is a *sūdraḥ*. Body based consciousness, caste based consciousness - all drop off. The next is *na puruṣaḥ* - gender based complex; or gender discrimination. The word *puruṣaḥ* means men but includes

*strī* – women also. There is neither superiority nor inferiority based upon the gender. Gender identity is also dropped.

And how firm is this knowledge in a *jñāni*? The author implies that this knowledge in a *jñāni* is as firm as the knowledge of an ignorant person with regard to himself. The ignorant person has a firm knowledge that he is either a *brahmin* or *kṣatriya* etc. or a *puruṣaḥ* or *strī* etc. Just as an ignorant person has a firm wrong knowledge about himself, the wise person has a firm right knowledge.

Therefore, the author says by way of an example, *yathā* – like an ignorant person who says *dēhaḥ ahaṁ* – I am the body; *puruṣaḥ ahaṁ* – I am a male; *brāhmaṇaḥ ahaṁ* – I am a *brahmin*; *śūdraḥ ahaṁ* – I am a *śūdra*; *iti dṛḍha niścayaḥ* – such a strong but wrong conviction and misconception an *ajñāni* has; the *jñāni* has the same strong conviction about him being *sat cit ānanda svarūpaḥ prakāśa rūpaḥ sarvāntaryāmi cidākāśa rūpaḥ asmi iti*. So strong is the knowledge of the *jñāni* with regard to his real nature.

By using the word *dṛḍha niścayaḥ* i.e. conviction, the author wants to emphasise this knowledge is a spontaneous knowledge and never forgotten by the *jñāni* at any time. When one is growing old, the body identification becomes stronger; worry or concern about death becomes stronger; concern about the children becomes stronger; and it is at those times that the *jñāni* is aware of the fact that his body is only an incidental medium. It has to arrive, grow and finally it has to go. And because of this objectivity, he doesn't have any obsession either with his own physical body or with the



physical bodies of his near and dear ones. He accepts the fact of the temporary nature of the body. He doesn't look upon old age as a tragedy. He doesn't look upon death as a tragedy. He looks upon them as the most natural events which have to be accepted as they are.

And because of this conviction the *jñāni* attains *mōkṣaḥ* or freedom or liberation. We have already equated *mōkṣaḥ* as the five fold benefits in the introductory Chapter. It will be worthwhile to briefly revise these and remind ourselves of these benefits in this context.

a) जिज्ञासा निवृत्तिः (*jijñāsā nivṛttiḥ*) - Satisfaction of natural curiosity.

The satisfaction of the natural curiosity; quenching the thirst; finding an answer to the mysteries of life and to questions about one self - "Who am I? From where do I come? Where do I go? Why am I born? What is God? Is there a God? If so, where does he exist? What is the world? Who created it? How was it created? There are innumerable questions regarding one self, God and the world. All those questions and mysteries are cracked. Mystery is a pain for the intellect. Intellect cannot withstand mystery, it cannot withstand ignorance. Therefore, it has an instinctive curiosity to know answers to all these questions.

That curiosity is quenched by gaining self knowledge. This is intellectual satisfaction.

- b) विद्यानन्द प्राप्तिः (*vidyānanda prāptiḥ*) - Gaining knowledge driven happiness.

The self knowledge which teaches us that we exist eternally gives us total satisfaction. As we assimilate this knowledge more and more, the sense of insecurity goes away. The sense of fear goes away. In fact all emotional problems are based on this fear. When all of them go away, we enjoy the inner peace which in turn leads to superlative happiness which is called *Vidyānandaḥ*.

- c) कार्पण्य निवृत्तिः (*kārpaṇya nivṛttiḥ*) - Freedom from desperation.

This is also called *pāratāntṛa nivṛttiḥ*. Once we discover *ānandaḥ* in this knowledge, we no longer need to depend upon external sources of happiness. External pleasures become a bonus. So we have no desperate dependence on external sources of happiness. They only serve as a standby. Just like the back up power supply we have for computer installations. With this back up in place there will be no desperate dependence on the main power supply. So with the self knowledge the desperate craving for external pleasures go away.

- d) आघात निवृत्तिः (*āghāta nivṛttiḥ*) - freedom from shock, trauma.

This self knowledge is a great shock absorber. It gives us such an emotional cushion and an emotional insulation that no problem in life will give us a shock. We have the *jñāna kavacaḥ* – the shield of

knowledge. The worst of the tragedies, we can receive and react with great resilience of mind. We will learn to consider all such shocks as disturbances and carry on with life. Thus the self knowledge gives us freedom from shock and trauma inflicted on us by people, events and experiences.

e) दक्षता प्राप्तिः (*dakṣatā prāptiḥ*) – Gaining efficiency.

This knowledge also leads to an increase in our efficiency in our day to day life. Due to the fact that we do not have a desperate dependence and since we are free from the shocks of life, our mind is generally relaxed and calm. And this very calmness increases our efficiency. If a disturbing experience takes place, we take it in our own stride and do not brood over it. We are able to set aside such events to fully apply our mind and efforts to the task at hand. This focussed approach is a must for the efficient completion of any undertaking. And this is the fifth benefit of self knowledge.

These five fold benefits put together is called *mōkṣaḥ*. This is called *jīvan muktiḥ* because it happens when one is alive.

So a *jñāni* obtains these benefits or *aikya jñāna phalaṁ* while living. But the next question would be what will happen to such a person at the time of death? The author deals with this question also.

ब्रह्मैवाहमस्मीत्यपरोक्षज्ञानेन निखिलकर्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्तः स्यात् ।

*Brahmaivāhamasmi iti aparōkṣa jñānēna nikhila karma bandha vinirmuktaḥ syāt.*

The author says, *aparōkṣa jñānēna* – by the sheer power of self knowledge; that *Brahma ēva aham* – I am *Brahman* alone; not the temporary falling body, not the temporary wobbling mind, not the temporary confused intellect – but I am the *Brahman* the limitless consciousness – by this sheer knowledge; we have to add *maraṇakālē* i.e. at the time of death because that is the question being answered here; *nikhila karma bandha vinirmuktaḥ syāt* – *nikhila* means entire or all; *vinirmuktaḥ* means free from; so this *jīvan muktaḥ* becomes free from all the *karmās*, which are referred to as *bandaḥ*– shackles. Thus a *jñāni* will become free from all the shackles called *karmāḥ* – otherwise called *puṇya-pāpāṃs* which can be loosely translated as good deeds and bad deeds. From this the author is also hinting that at the time of an *ajñāni* 's death, he is not freed from all the *karmās*. Because, when the author says that at the time of death, a *jñāni* is free from *puṇya-pāpāṃs*, he implies that an *ajñāni* at the time of his death is not free from *puṇya-pāpāṃs*. *Jñāni* alone is totally free. Let us understand the implication of this statement.

We have to remember that *puṇya-pāpāṃs*, otherwise called *karmās* are responsible for rebirth. At the time of death, a *jñāni* is freed from all the *karmās*. Therefore, a *jñāni*, otherwise called a *jīvan muktaḥ*, will not have *punar janma* or rebirth. That means he will not take another body. He is freed from assuming a new body. And this freedom from a new body is called *vidēha muktiḥ*. *Vi* means free from; without. *Dēhaḥ* refers to a next body or a new body. So *vidēhaḥ* means freedom from a new body; which is

freedom from *punar janma*. So a *jñāni* while living is a *jīvan muktaḥ* and after death he becomes a *vidēha muktaḥ*. This is the benefit of *ātma jñānam*.

And this freedom from another human birth, this *vidēha muktiḥ* is in essence a merger into the Lord – freedom from individuality is merger into totality. When a river merges into the ocean, it loses its individuality as a river but it continues to survive as one with the total ocean. This cessation of individuality is *vidēha muktiḥ*. It is the merger of the microcosm with the macrocosm. The acquisition of the totality is called *Īśvara prāptiḥ*.

Now the author has introduced a new word *karmāḥ* in this sentence. This is another technical word from a *Vedāntik* standpoint. The dictionary meaning of *karmāḥ* is any action. That is why we earlier referred to the hands and legs as *karmēndriyam* – organs meant for *karmāḥ* or action.

But here the word *karmāḥ* does not mean action but it refers to *puṇya-pāpam*. This is a very very important teaching unique to the *Vēdās* – unique to our Hindu scriptures.

The author, therefore, feels that he needs to explain the law of *karmā* or the principle of *karmā*, which he does in the next chapter.

### ***Law of Karma***

What does the law of *karmā* say?

It says that every action that a person does will produce two types of results called *karma phalaṁ*. One result of action is the visible result which we can see and experience directly. In Sanskrit it is called *dr̥ṣṭa phalaṁ* which is purely based on the physical action we do. *Dr̥ṣṭa* means that which can be seen.

But we know that behind every action which is visible there is an invisible motive also. This motive also will produce a result which has to be invisible, because the invisible motive will have to produce a proportional result which is invisible. This invisible result is called *adr̥ṣṭa phalaṁ*.

So *dr̥ṣṭa phalaṁ* is one result and *adr̥ṣṭa phalaṁ* is the second result of any action. And since the results of any action can be positive or negative, the *adr̥ṣṭa phalaṁ* can be either positive or negative. The positive *adr̥ṣṭa phalaṁ* is called *puṇyam* and the negative *adr̥ṣṭa phalaṁ* is called *pāpam*. Thus depending upon our motive or intention for every action we do, we gather *puṇyam* and *pāpam*.

For example, suppose I am walking on the road which has no footpath. And I am walking almost on the edge of the road. It is a busy road and vehicles are moving up and down. Suppose all of a sudden, I feel a push from behind. Someone has pushed me. I fall down and get injured. Naturally, my first reaction will be anger. I will be very angry with that someone who had pushed me and

caused pain to me. So I get up and look angrily behind to see who had pushed me.

Just as I turn my head, I see a huge public transport bus run past me very closely, missing hitting me by a 'hair's breadth'. As I face that person who had pushed me, he says that "That bus was coming so close to you and was about to hit you. So in order to save you, I had to push you. I am extremely sorry".

Now what will be my reaction? There is bound to be a change in my attitude. It will turn from one of anger to one of gratitude. Now what has happened to my injury the *dṛṣṭa phalaṁ*, the visible result? The injury remaining the same, pain remaining the same, the action is approved, admired and thanked. In the normal course harming another person would have been *pāpaṁ*. But in this particular case even though that person has caused injury, we would certainly call it *puṇyaṁ*. This *puṇyaṁ* he begets on the basis of his main motive which was to save me from being hit by the bus. He never had any motive to cause injury to me. Thus behind every action there is an invisible motive which is responsible for the *puṇya pāpa phalaṁ*.

Now this *puṇyaṁ* and *pāpaṁ* which are the *adṛṣṭa phalaṁ* get accumulated in the name of the *jīva*. This is like the debits and credits which get accumulated in one's bank account. This *puṇyaṁ* and *pāpaṁ* later get converted into visible happy and unhappy experiences. *Puṇyaṁ* gets converted into favourable experiences. And *pāpaṁ* gets converted into unfavourable

experiences. Thus every *punyaṁ* and *pāpaṁ* is an invisible seed of future pleasure and pain.

To put this in Sanskrit, *adr̥ṣṭa puṇyaṁ sukhaṁ dadāti, adr̥ṣṭa pāpaṁ duḥkhaṁ dadāti.*

Now the next question that will arise is “How long do this *punyaṁ* and *pāpaṁ* take to get converted into pleasure and pain? How long will the seed take to fructify into *sukhaṁ* and *duḥkhaṁ*?”

The scriptures point out that this period is not uniform, just as all types of seeds do not take the same amount of time to become a tree and fructify. A *papayā* seed will quickly grow into a tree and we can get the *papayā* fruit in a short time. Whereas, a mango or coconut seed may perhaps take years grow into a tree and give out the fruits. Perhaps the benefit will not accrue to the present generation but only to the next generation. Thus the duration of fructification will vary from seed to seed, some of them may fructify tomorrow, some of them may fructify next week, next month, next year, next decade, next century etc. And some *punyaṁ* and *pāpaṁ* may not fructify in this *janmā* or birth!

This is because any seed to fructify requires a favourable atmosphere. A seed can grow into a plant only when the soil is proper, water is available, the temperature is appropriate, the elevation of the land is proper etc. So therefore, some *punyaṁ* and *pāpā* (plural) may not fructify in this birth. They will remain in a potential form and therefore they will require another birth for fructification. And all this unfructified *punyaṁ* and *pāpā* earned and



accumulated in several births, are called *sañcita karmā*. Just as savings accounts in banks, we have in *puṇyā* and *pāpā* also the balances gathered in past lives and brought forward to this life. These are *sañcita karmās*. *Sañcita* means accumulated.

Now suppose, out of the *sañcita* or accumulated *karmā*, one portion gets ready for fructification in the present life. They have completed their gestation period. Like the maturity of various fixed deposits over different periods of time. Similarly the different fixed deposits of *puṇyā* and *pāpā* mature at different times. A bunch of *sañcita karmā* which is mature and ready to fructify in the present birth is called *prārabdha karmā*.

*Prārabdha karmā* means maturing *sañcita karmā*; fructifying *sañcita karmā*. And this *prārabdha karmā* alone decides what type of body we should get in the present birth. If it is a *puṇyā prārabdham*; the body will be a very favourable body, irrespective of whether it is a plant body, an animal body or a human body. This is decided by, not *sañcita karmā* but by the *prārabdha karmā*. Even it is to be a human body, the *prārabdha karmā* determines whether it should be a male or a female. Further even after gender selection, whether the body should be a healthy one or have some congenital diseases is again determined by the fructifying *prārabdha*. Not only that, this *prārabdha* alone determines, the parentage, the place of birth, whether born in a rich family or a poor family etc. Even the duration of the life is controlled by this *prārabdha*.

It is not uncommon for us to sometimes have an experience for which we have not worked for. Whenever we work for something and achieve it, we are not surprised. But at times we get an experience, a certain condition for which we know that we have not worked for at all. If it is a favourable condition, we may call it good luck and if it is unfavourable, we could call it bad luck. Whatever comes to us without our working for is the job of *prārabdham*.

And while we are thus exhausting the *prārabdham*, reaping the *sukha* and *duḥkha* experiences, we keep on doing *karmā*. These present actions that we are doing now will also produce fresh *puṇyam* and *pāpam*. And this freshly acquired *puṇya pāpam* in this birth, this freshly augmented and replenished *puṇya pāpam* is called *āgāmi Karmā*. *Āgāmi* means the *puṇya pāpam* which is acquired in this *janmā*, in this birth. This *āgāmi puṇya pāpam* also will be partly exhausted in this birth itself since some *āgāmis* will fructify in this birth itself. But the other *āgāmis* will not fructify because the conditions are not conducive for fructification. This unfructified *āgāmi* will continue to remain in our account and at the time of death of the body, get added to the *sañcita karmā* balance. Thus we will exhaust our *prārabdha karmā* and a part of our *āgāmi karmā* and when *prārabdha* and the fructified part of *āgāmi* are exhausted, the body falls. This is because the very purpose of the body is exhaustion of these *karmās*.

Once the *prārabdha* and a part of *āgāmi* end, and the body falls, the other part of *āgāmi* which could not fructify at the time of

death will join the *sañcita* bundle. And out of this pool of *sañcita* another bunch of *karmās* get ready for fructification. The next fixed deposit matures! Which *karmās* are ready to mature and which one are not, we can never say. It is unpredictable. But it is definite all *karmās* will eventually fructify.

The next bunch of *prārabdha* gives another body. And in that body, those *prārabdha* gets exhausted. And during the process of this exhaustion, we replenish the stock with fresh *karmās*. Again a part will go to *sañcitam*. And again we have another birth. This is what the scriptures mean when they say *punarapi janānām punarapi maraṇam*. In this manner these *karmās* gets exhausted, replenished and again replenished and exhausted. This cycle goes on and on. This is the lot of an ordinary *ajñāni* or *saṁsārī*. He is caught in this vicious cycle. And this called the law of *karmā*.

Now the next logical question is “what will happen to these three *karmās* - i.e *sañcita*, *prārabdha* and *āgāmi* - accumulated, fructifying and arriving - of a *jñāni*? The author answers this question in the final part of the text which we will see later. The essence of the answer is that all the three are exhausted at the end of a *jñāni* 's life. His account will show 'nil' balance! So his file will be closed. Since he has no more *karmā* left to be exhausted, he does not have a rebirth.

But before he discusses this subject, the author wants to explain the types and nature of the the *karmās*. We should remember that the author had referred to this word *karmā* in his previous sentence. He continues:

कर्माणिकतिविधानि सन्तीति चेत् आगामिसञ्चितप्रारब्धभेदेन त्रिविधानि  
सन्ति ।

*Karmāṇi katividhāni santīti cēt āgāmi ~~īkṣita~~ prārabdha bhēdēna  
trividhāni santi.*

The author says that if it is asked i.e if such a question is raised - *iti cēt; karmāṇi katividhāni santi* - how many types of *karmās* are there? Here meaning of the word *karmā* is the *adrṣṭa puṇya pāpa phalaṁ* which we have seen earlier. He continues *trividhāni santi* - there are three types of *karmās*. And they are *āgāmi sañcita prārabdha bhēdēna* - *āgāmi karmā* i.e *āgāmi puṇya pāpaṁ*; *sañcita karmā* means *sañcita puṇya pāpaṁ* and *prārabdha karmā* means *prārabdha puṇya pāpaṁ*.

ज्ञानोत्पत्त्यनन्तरं ज्ञानिदेहकृतं पुण्यपापरूपं कर्म यदस्ति तदागामीत्यभिधीयते  
*Jñānōtpattyantaram jñānidēhakṛtaṁ puṇyapāparūpaṁ karma  
yadasti tadāgāmītyabhidhīyatē.*

The author first gives the definition of *āgāmi*. This definition will vary depending upon whether a person is a *jñāni* or an *ajñāni*. In the case of an *ajñāni*, the *āgāmi karmā* is the *puṇya pāpaṁ* acquired from birth in this life. So birth is the starting point. By birth, we mean whenever this person is capable of thinking independently. Since *puṇya pāpaṁ* get attached on the basis of the motive of action, the actions of the babies done without any motive do not result in any *puṇya pāpaṁ*. So that point whenever we start our deliberate and motivated action, *āgāmi* starts.

But in the case of a *jñāni*, there is a slight difference. *Jñāni's āgāmi* starts from the time he gains the *jñānam*. For him the time of *jñānam* is the starting point for *āgāmi karmā*. So from the time of *Jñānam* i.e. after gaining knowledge, whatever *karmā* he does, is called *āgāmi karmā* and upto the time of *jñānam* whatever *karmās* he has done will get added to his *sañcita karmā*. So in the case of *jñāni*, the cut off time is gaining the *jñānam*, in the case of *ajñāni*, the cut off time is the birth. This is what the author explains:

*Jñānōtpatti anantaram*. *Anantaram* – after; *jñāna utpatti* - gaining *jñānam* i.e *punya pāparūpaṁ karma* – all the good and bad actions; *jñāni dēhakṛtaṁ* – done by the body of a *jñāni*. We have to carefully note that the author uses the word *dēha* i.e the body of a *jñāni*. He doesn't say actions done by a *jñāni*. The author was to imply that the *jñāni* does not look upon his body as self; *yadasti* – whatever *karma* is there; *tat āgāmi iti abhidhīyatē* - that is called *āgāmi karma*. This is the definition of a *jñāni's āgāmi karma*. What happens to a *jñāni's āgāmi* will be explained later. The next question is:

सञ्चितं कर्म किम्? (*sañcitaṁ karma kim*) – What is *sañcitaṁ karma*?

अनन्तकोटिजन्मनां बीजभूतं सत् यत्कर्मजातं पूर्वार्जितं तिष्ठति तत् सञ्चितं ज्ञेयम् I

*Anantakōṭi janmanām bījabhūtaṁ sat yat karmajātaṁ pūrvārjitaṁ tiṣṭhati tat sañcitaṁ jñēyam*.

The author answers. *Yat karmajātaṁ pūrvārjitaṁ tiṣṭhati* – whatever *punya pāpā* is accumulated in all the past *janmas* – both

immediate past and remote past; *bīja bhūtaṁ sat* – is the seed; for *anantakoṭi janmanām* – the countless crores of future *janmas*; *yat tiṣṭhati tat sañcita karma* - all that past bundle is called *sañcita karma*.

So as said earlier even a *jñāni* has past *janmas*. So, whatever *punya pāpā* he has accumulated in the past *janmas*, and not only in the past *janmas* but in this *janma* also upto the attainment of *jñānaṁ*, will constitute his *sañcita karma*. This we cannot say in the case of *ajñāni*. This cut off is only for a *jñāni* since at the time of his *jñāna prāptiḥ* his *āgāmi karma* will stop.

Next the author defines *prārabdhaṁ*:

प्रारब्धं कर्म किमिति चेत् ।

इदं शरीरमुत्पाद्य इह लोके एव सुखदुःखादिप्रदं यत्कर्म तत्प्रारब्धं भोगेन नष्टं  
भवति प्रारब्धकर्मणां भोगादेव क्षय इति ।

*Prārabdhaṁ karma kimiti cēt.*

*Idaṁ śarīramutpādhyā iha lōkē ēva sukhaduḥkhādi pradāṁ yat karma tat prārabdhaṁ. Bhōgēna naṣṭaṁ bhavati. Prārabdha karmaṇāṁ bhōgādēva kṣaya iti.*

*Prārabdha* as we have seen earlier is that part of *sañcita karma* which has fructified and which has given rise to the body and its experiences. So he says *idaṁ śarīramutpādhyā* – that which produces this body; that *punya pāpa* which decides one's date of birth, including the placements of planets in the horoscope. There is a general misconception amongst many that all these are

determined by God. That is not true. The date birth, the type of body, the family in which one is born, all are determined by the type *punya pāpaṁ* of the past; *iha lōkē* – that too in this world and in the place where we are born; *yat sukha duḥkhādi pradāṁ* – that which is both pleasurable and painful experiences, without our working for it in this birth. We must remember that whatever work we do for pleasure in this birth will come under *āgāmi*. Obviously no one will work for pain! But if some pleasure or pain comes to us without our planning; whatever comes unasked *prārabdha phalaṁ*; *yat karma tat prārabdhaṁ* – that is called *karma*.

So this is the definition of *prārabdha karma*. It is the same in the case of *jñāni* and *ajñāni* alike. In the case of *āgāmi* and *sañcitaṁ*, the definition is different in the case of a *jñāni* and *ajñāni*. But in the case of *prārabdha* it is the same.

***Law of Karma for Jñānis***

Having defined the three types of *karmās*, the author now wants to explain as to what happens to the three *karmās* of a *jñāni*.

First he takes up *prārabdham* and says *bhōgēna naṣṭam bhavati* – it is exhausted only by experiencing the *karma phalaṁ* or fruits – bitter or sweet! *Prārabdham* will have to be exhausted both by *jñāni* and *ajñāni* alike. The *jñāni's* body is also under the influence of *prārabdha*. He may have long life or a short life, a healthy body or a sick body – it all is determined by the *prārabdham* at the time of his birth. So he cannot escape its effect. That is the law of *karma*. But the advantage of a *jñāni* is that he does not identify with his body. He has understood he is *sthūla, sūkṣma, kāraṇa śarīrāt vyatiriktaḥ* – he is different from the *śarīra trayaṁ*. Just as a dress has got its own life period, he looks upon his body also as an external object which has to go through its *karma*. Therefore, he doesn't react to the *prārabdha anubhava*. The author emphasises again - *prārabdha karmaṇāṁ bhōgādēva kṣayaḥ* - the *prārabdha karmas* will get exhausted only by experiencing the consequences.

With regard to *sañcitaṁ karma*, he says"

सञ्चितं कर्म ब्रह्मैवाहमिति निश्चयात्मकज्ञानेन नश्यति ।

*Sañcitaṁ karma brahmaivāhamiti niścayātmaka jñānēna naśyati*।

He says *niścayātmaka jñānēna* – by gaining the knowledge with total conviction; *brahmaiva aham iti* – that I am *Brahman*; *sañcitaṁ karma naśyati* - all the *sañcita karmas* are destroyed. One great benefit of this knowledge is that it is so powerful that it is capable



of destroying all the unfructified *karmas* known as *sañcitam karma*. Just as the radiation has the power to destroy the cancerous cells, this *ātma Jñānam* has the power to destroy all the *sañcita karma*.

Thus for a *Jñāni*, the *prārabdham* is exhausted and *sañcitam* is destroyed. What about *āgāmi*? The author says:

आगामि कर्म अपि ज्ञानेन नश्यति किञ्च आगामि-कर्मणां नलिनीदलगतजलवत्  
ज्ञानिनां सम्बन्धो नास्ति ।

*Āgāmi karma api jñānēna naśyati kiñca āgāmi-karmaṇām  
nalinīdalagatajalavat jñāninām sambandhō nāsti ।*

*Āgāmi karma api jñānēna naśyati* – this knowledge destroys *āgāmi karmas* also. Here we have to understand the import of the word *naśyati*. There is no actual destruction of *āgāmi karma* because for a *Jñāni*, *āgāmi karma* does not arise at all. According to the law of *karma*, the motivation for any action arises as a result of the ego or *ahankārah*. It means *dēha abhimānam* – identification with the body. It is this motivation which leads to *karmas*. It is the ego which is the cause of *puṇya* and *pāpaṁ*.

A *jñāni* does not have an ego when performing *karma*. He has no *ahankārah*. The world may praise him; he doesn't bother about it. The world may criticize him; he doesn't bother; because he does not have *dēha abhimānam*.

So he says, *āgāmi-karmaṇām jñāninām sambandhō nāsti* – the *āgāmi karmas* have no relationship with a *jñāni*; a *jñāni* does not have

any identification with the *karmas* done after attaining *jñānam*; the author provides a beautiful and apt comparison. He says this position is like *nalīnīdalagata jalavaṭ*; *nalīnīdalaṁ* means lotus leaf; *jalaṁ* means water. If we observe a drop of water on the lotus leaf, we will find that even though the drop sits on the leaf, it does not get attached to the leaf and the leaf does get wet by the water. Similarly, while we see the actions coming from a *jñāni*, those actions; *nāsti* do not have any *sambandhaḥ* or relationship with him because he does not identify with the body.

And now the author goes on to make a very interesting observation.

किञ्च ये ज्ञानिनां स्तुवन्ति भजन्ति अर्चयन्ति तान्प्रति ज्ञानिकृतं आगामि

पुण्यं गच्छति ।

ये ज्ञानिनां निन्दन्ति द्विषन्ति दुःखप्रदानं कुर्वन्ति तान्प्रति ज्ञानिकृतं

सर्वमागामि क्रियमाणं यदवाच्यं कर्म

पापात्मकं तद्गच्छति । सुहृदः पुण्यकृत्यं दुर्हृदः पापकृत्यं गृह्णन्ति ।

*Kiñca yē jñāninā m stuvanti bhajanti arcayanti tānprāpti jñānikṛtaṁ āgāmi puṇyaṁ gacchati.*

*Yē jñāninā m nindanti dviṣanti duḥkhapradānaṁ kurvanti tānprāpti jñānikṛtaṁ sarvamāgāmi kriyamāṇaṁ yadavācyaṁ karma pāpātmakaṁ tadgacchati. suhṛdaḥ puṇyakṛtyaṁ durhṛdaḥ pāpakṛtyaṁ gṛhṇanti.*

The author says the *Jñāni* does not have an ego. In whatever way we treat them, they are not going to reciprocate positively or

negatively. One has to be, therefore, very careful while relating to a *jñāni*. If a person ill treats a *jñāni*, the *jñāni* is not going to retaliate or take revenge or curse because he doesn't have an *abhimāna* or feeling of insult. But the author warns that if one mistreats a *jñāni*, all the *pāpa karmās* of the *jñāni*, which he has done knowingly or unknowingly, will get transferred to that person. Of course, we should not take this as a literal transfer. What the author wants to point out is that if we ill treat a *jñāni*, it will be *pāpa karma* for us. On the other hand, if we are going to revere and respect a *jñāni*, he is not going to feel elated and give us some reward because he is also indifferent to our reverence and respect. But *Bhagavān* will reward us by transferring some of his *puṇyam* s to us. So the idea behind this warning is that the worship of a *jñāni* is *puṇya karma* and the insult of a *jñāni* is *pāpa karma*.

He says *yē jñāninā m stuvanti bhajanti arcayanti* – those who worship, sing his glories and does puja of *jñānis*; *tānprati* – to them; *jñāni kṛtaṁ āgāmi puṇyam gacchati*– the *puṇyam* earned by the *jñāni* will accrue or get 'transferred'. We have already discussed earlier that there is no question of accruing of *āgāmi puṇyam* or *āgāmi pāpaṁ* for a *jñāni*. So the correct interpretation of this sentence is that one will get *puṇyam* if he reveres a *jñāni*.

On the other hand *yē jñāninā m nindanti* – he who criticizes the *jñānis*; *dviṣanti* – hates them; *duḥkha pradānaṁ kurvanti* – injures or hurts them; *tānprati* - to them; *jñānikṛtaṁ sarvaṁ āgāmi kriyamāṇaṁ yadavācyaṁ karma pāpātmakaṁ tadgacchati* - all the *āgāmi pāpaṁ* will accrue or get "transferred". Here also we have to

remember that a *jñāni* does not have *āgāmi pāpaṁ*. The idea is that we will get *pāpaṁ* if we insult or hurt a *jñāni*. So, these two sentences should not be taken literally. These types of sentences should not be taken literally but only their implied meaning should be understood. They are called अर्थ वाद वाक्य (*artha vāda vākya*).

The above idea or thought is re-emphasized in the end to highlight its importance. *Suhṛdaḥ puṇyakṛtyaṁ durhṛdaḥ pāpakṛtyaṁ grhṇanti* - those who worship and revere a *jñāni*, who can be called *suhṛdaḥ*, will acquire *puṇyaṁ* and those who hurt or ill treat a *jñāni*, who can be called *durhṛdaḥ* will acquire *pāpaṁ*.

### ***Important aspects of Law of Karma***

In the last chapter, we were in the midst of a discussion on the topic of benefits of self-knowledge and in that context we are now discussing the law of *karma*.

Before we proceed to the concluding sentences in the *Tattva Bōdhaḥ* text, we need to discuss a few important aspects of this law.

This law of *karma* is unique to the *Vēdik* teaching. It is very significant with a lot of practical corollaries. If we understand the law of *karma* and all the corollaries, then this understanding will give us a lot of mental relaxation.

The first corollary that we derive is that, every experience that we undergo in our life is either because of our *prārabdha karma* or the *āgāmi karma*. That is our own actions done in the previous births or those actions done in the immediate past in the current birth.

These *prārabdham* and *āgāmi* alone give us every pleasurable and painful experience. We can, therefore, never blame any third factor for our experiences. We cannot blame other human beings. We cannot blame the world and we cannot even blame the poor God.

Because the rule is यः कर्ता भवति सः एव कर्म फल भोक्ता भवति (*yaḥ kartā bhavati saḥ ēva karma phala bhōktā bhavati*) – whoever is the *kartā*, the doer, that person alone becomes the present *bhōktā* - reaper of the results. And therefore if at all one has to blame someone, if at all the *bhōktās* have to blame someone, then he can blame only one person and that is the past *kartā*. This past *kartā* is

none other than one's own self who is the present *bhōktā*. So the past 'me' is responsible for the present 'me'. We ourselves are responsible for our present. Thus the first corollary of this law of *karma* is that **we stop blaming others in the world for all our experiences.**

The second important corollary of the law of *karma* is that, if the past 'I' is responsible for the present 'I', by the same token i.e by extending this logic, we can say, the present 'I' is responsible for the future 'I'. The past cannot be corrected. There is no use grieving over spilt milk. It was our foolishness in the past and no purpose will be served by talking about it. But we can concentrate on the present and by doing so; we can very much influence, control, direct and manage our future. So the law of *karma* says most emphatically, "take responsibility for your future. Don't take to a fatalistic philosophy, saying that everything is in the hands of some unknown destiny; some unknown fate. Don't take refuge in some fatalism and wash off your own responsibility. You and you alone are responsible for your future". Therefore, the law of *karma* is the only remedy for fatalism.

Many people think law of *karma* is fatalism. On the contrary, the law of *karma* is the only remedy for the wrong philosophy of fatalism. Fatalism is a wrong philosophy because it makes us to wash away our responsibility.

Lord *Kṛṣṇa* tells Arjuna in the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the *Gītā*:

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं (*uddharēdātmanātmānam*) – "Arjuna do not expect

me to uplift you. I will never do that. I will encourage you but you and you alone will have to uplift you". In a children's race, the parents can cheer their children like the cheer leaders, enthuse them etc. but the running has to be done by the children only. Similarly *Bhagavān* can only cheer us, motivate us, boost our confidence and support our efforts but **we have to take charge of our life and that too right from this moment onwards.** This is the second important corollary.

The third corollary is also important. At any given time, a person is experiencing either *prārabdha phalaṁ* or *āgāmī phalaṁ*. We can call them the actions of the 'remote *kartā*' and 'current *kartā*'. Both are the same person only. The remote *kartā* has produced *prārabdham* and the current *kartā* has produced *āgāmī*.

Now when these experiences come, our human tendency always is to co-relate or connect the *kartā* and the experiences. When we try to thus co-relate, the *āgāmī phalaṁ* and its equation to the current *kartā*, they will match. We will say that he is a good person and therefore he has good experiences. So and so is a bad person and so he has bad experiences. Thus experiences and the person can be co-related when it is a case of *āgāmī phalaṁ*.

But we also come across numerous instances where a person whom we consider as good undergoes miserable experiences and the person whom we consider bad has very pleasurable experiences. We get confused and take the easy way out of blaming God for all these injustices. For example, in *Mahābhārata* itself, we see the *Pandavās* who follow *dharma* suffering all along

and even spending 13 long years of their life in the forests and we see *Duryōdhana* who is *adharma* incarnate enjoying all pleasures as a King.

What we fail to realize that we are trying to erroneously work out an equation between the *prārabdha phalaṁ* experiences and the current *kartā*. We need to bear in mind that *prārabdha* is not associated with the current *kartā* but *prārabdha* is the result of the action of the remote *kartā* – *pūrva janma kartā* – whom we don't see at all. Therefore, when we co-relate the *prārabdha anubhava* and the current *kartā* –they will not match. That is why when we see very good people suffering, we are disturbed because we think that good people should enjoy and bad people should suffer. This is the equation that our intellect can easily assimilate. But when we see a noble person suffering in life and a corrupt person having all prosperity, we are disturbed and get angry with the world. We are unable to accept such a situation. We get angry with the world and we get angry with God accusing him of being grossly unjust.

Seldom do we realize that the problem is neither with the world nor with the God nor with justice. The problem lies with our wrong equation. We are trying to equate the *prārabdha phalaṁ* and the current *kartā*, which will never work. Therefore, the third corollary is **“never make the wrong equation between karma phalam and kartā”**.

The fourth corollary is an interesting one. We have seen that our experiences are in the form of both *āgāmī* and *prārabdha*. The *prārabdha karma*, the *prārabdha puṇya pāpaṁ* is not generally



known to us. That is why it is called *adṛṣṭam* – that which cannot be seen. We have learnt this earlier. So fortunately or unfortunately, we don't know what our *prārabdha* is, until it fructifies.

When we get a *sukha* experience, we infer that we had a good *prārabdham*. And if it is a painful experience, we infer that we had a bad *prārabdham*. However, before fructification, normally we have no way of knowing what *prārabdha* is waiting for us tomorrow. And since this is unknown, we are unable deal with the *prārabdha* also. We struggle to deal with even the known issues; what to talk of unknown issues!

But the *shāstrās* say that there are different methods by which we can have access to our *prārabdha* and know it. However, it is preferable not to know it because even without that it is too much of an effort for us to handle the known world. One can imagine what would happen if we start handling the unknown also! So *shāstrās* point out that we should better thank *Bhagavān* for covering our vision from *prārabdha*!

Yet as per the *shāstrās*, one method to know the *prārabdham* is one's horoscope or *jātakam*. The horoscope of a person which indicates the planetary position is supposed to be an indicator or clue to one's *prārabdha*. The various positions of the planets and constellations at the time of one's birth as stated in the horoscope are supposed to indicate one's *prārabdha* based on which one can know if the experiences will be pleasurable or painful.

We need to understand this point very carefully. The planets do not cause pleasure and pain. The planets can never influence our life or give us pleasure and pain. The planets are not the cause of suffering. The planetary position is only the indicator of the *prārabdha* and it is the *prārabdha* alone which is the cause of suffering.

This is similar to the clock indicating the time of Sunrise and Sunset. Is the clock the indicator of Sunrise and Sunset or is the clock the cause of Sunrise and Sunset? There is a vast difference between an indicator and a cause. In Sanskrit they are called लक्षकं (*lakṣakam*) and ज्ञापकं (*jñāpakam*) or कारकं (*kārakam*) and ज्ञापकं (*jñāpakam*).

*Kārakam* means cause and *jñāpakam* means indicator. So a clock does not cause Sunrise. If the clock were to cause the sunrise, what will happen? If the clock stops, there will be no Sunrise!!! So like the clock is only an indicator, the planetary positions are also the indicators of one's *prārabdha*, both *punyaṁ* and *pāpaṁ*.

Now suppose we are able to know the *prārabdha* based on the horoscope or any other method, the *śāstrās* say there is a method of handling that! We know that our future experiences are not only dependent on our *prārabdha*, but also they are dependent on our *āgāmī* which we are continuously generating. So if we create such *āgāmī*, which is capable of countering or neutralising the *prārabdha* that *karma* is called *prāyaścitta karma* or *parihāra karma* – that is the production of an appropriate *āgāmī* to counter

or handle the effects of the arriving *prārabdha*. This is similar to carrying an umbrella while going out in the hot Sun. We cannot change the heat of the Sun and we cannot avoid going out also. So we take a *āgāmī* umbrella to counter the effect of the Sun's heat. So the *prārabdha* which is the Sun's heat can be remedied, at least partially, with the *āgāmī* which is the umbrella. So taking the umbrella is the *prāyaścitta karma*.

The next question will be “can *prāyaścitta karma* cure or remedy all the *prārabdha karmas*? Do we have *prāyaścittams* or *prāyaścitta āgāmī* for all types of *prārabdhas*”? Everyone will be eager to know the answer because then we can get total protection from the effects of *prārabdha karmas*!

The answer to this question lies in another question? And that is “Do we have medicines for all diseases or do medicines cure diseases. What will be the answer”? If we are intelligent, we will never answer. We will say that it will depend on the type of disease. We will not have a blanket ‘yes’ or ‘no’ as an answer.

For certain diseases, the medicines are sufficiently advanced and they can completely cure such diseases. Once upon a time, cholera was fatal, typhoid was fatal and tuberculosis was fatal. Now we can cure all such bacteria borne diseases. We have got anti-biotics which is a great blessing. So, in certain diseases, medicines can cure the disease.

In certain other diseases, medicines do not cure, but they give us the capacity to manage the diseases, thus saving us from death.

Suppose a person suffers from diabetes. The doctor advises him to take care of his diet, cut off sugar, go for regular walks and take the medicine prescribed by him. This medicine may not cure the diabetes but the person is not likely to succumb to the disease, at least in the near future. Thus medicines help us to manage in certain cases though they cannot cure.

Then there are certain other diseases which the medicines cannot cure at all. The doctor will pronounce them as a terminal case. There are hospitals and institutions where terminal patients are managed. These patients are also given medicines but these are not meant for curing. They are only meant for alleviating the suffering or pain.

Thus, medicines can cure some diseases, medicines can help us manage some diseases and in the case of some diseases even though the medicines cannot cure them, they can alleviate the pain or suffering. The *shāstrā* says that the *prāyaścitta karmas* also act as either a cure, or as a management or as alleviation. In a weaker *prārabdha*, it can cure. In an intermediary *prārabdha*, it will help us to manage. In a powerful *prārabdha*, it will alleviate the pain or suffering. This is also a corollary of the law of *karma*.

Also, sometimes the *prāyaścitta* is general and we call it prayer. When it is specific we call it *parihāra*. So *parihāra* and prayer are one and the same. Prayer or *prārthanā* is *sāmānyam* or general whereas *prāyaścitta* or *parihāra* is specific and well directed. So therefore, the fourth corollary of the law of *karma* is **the availability of *prāyaścitta*.**

Then the fifth and the final corollary of the law of *karma* is that in any particular *janma* or birth, we never exhaust all the *karmas*. We may exhaust the *prārabdha* or we may remedy or neutralize some *prārabdha*. At best all the *prārabdha* and a part of *āgāmī* also may be exhausted but certainly another part of *āgāmī* and the full baggage of *sañcita* can never be exhausted in one *janma*. The law of *karma*, therefore, says that *punar janma* or re-birth is a compulsory necessity. Thus the fifth and final corollary of the law of *karmā* is *punar janma* or re-birth. This is accepted by some other religions and some others reject it. But in the *Vēdik* teaching, the cycle of births and re-births is the natural corollary of the law of *karma*.

Even in the case of an animal, it will exhaust all the *prārabdha* by going through pleasure and pain. A dog, if it has got a lot of *puṇyam*, will become the dog of a cinema actress, all the time having cosy life. It will have an airconditioned room; imported biscuits. Many people in that city may not have food but the dog will have imported biscuits. In short, it will have all luxuries including a Mercedes Benz car ride while ordinary people struck by their *prārabdha* will be going in the miserable local transport bus! And from the window of the bus they will see the dog's face looking out of the window of the car with its tongue out as though it was mocking at them! Many people may sometimes wonder that the *janma* of that dog was better than their own *janma*! So this is the manifestation of *puṇyam*.

We can also see cases of some other dogs which we call street dogs being attacked by all the urchins etc. It has to scavenge for food and sleep in filthy surroundings. All this because of the manifestation of *pāpaṁ*! Thus even a dog exhausts all its *prārabdham*, through varieties of experiences. But fortunately, a dog does not have *āgāmī karma* because the dog does not have an ego to do a deliberate and planned action. And that is why, if the dog violates the traffic signal, no police man impose a fine because it doesn't have a will or *kartṛtvaṁ* or *bhōkṛtvaṁ*. So a dog avoids *āgāmī* like a *jñāni*. The dog is like a *jñāni*. It exhausts *prārabdham*. It avoids *āgāmī*. But we should not be tempted to believe that all this means that the dog is liberated! The problem is that a dog cannot gain *jñānaṁ*. Otherwise it will be a student a *Vēdānta* attending some class or reading this text on *Tattva bōdhaḥ*! And because it cannot gain *jñānaṁ*, it cannot burn the *sañcita karmās*, which only a *jñāni* can do. So for a dog also, *sañcita karmās* will be there which cannot be destroyed. So animals will have to be reborn. Therefore, *punarapī jananaṁ punarapī maraṇaṁ* cycle is the fifth corollary.

This is how the process works. At the time of death, the *prārabdha* is exhausted. In fact it is on exhaustion of the *prārabdha* that death occurs. At the time of death, a part of *āgāmī* is also experienced and exhausted. But the remaining part of *āgāmī* is still unexperienced. This unexperienced part of *āgāmī* will join the *sañcita karma*.

When *prārabdha* is exhausted *sthūla śarīram* or the physical body falls off. But only the *sthūla śarīram* goes away. The *sūkṣma śarīram* and *kāraṇa śarīram* continue even after death. The Reflected Consciousness, i.e RC also continues after death. Only the *sthūla śarīram* and its reflection go away. That is RM 1 goes away but RM2, RM3, RC2 and RC3, they all continue. And of course the OC, the original consciousness eternally exists.

The *jīva* consisting of the original consciousness, *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa śarīra* media and their respective reflected consciousnesses, survives. But we cannot see *sūkṣma* and *kāraṇa śarīrams* and the reflections in them. Thus this invisible *jīva* nucleus continues and travels to acquire another physical body depending upon the next fructifying *prārabdha*. Of this *jīva* nucleus, which part travels and which part does not travel?

The *sūkṣma śarīram* and *kāraṇa śarīram* travel as they are finite. The reflected consciousness also travels because it is also finite. Just as when the mirror moves, the reflection of the Sun also moves along with the mirror. When the reflected medium (RM) moves, the reflected consciousness (RC) also moves with it. So RC travels RM travels. However the original consciousness (OC) cannot travel because it is infinite and all pervading. What is infinite will have no space to move. So when we say the *jīvātmā* travels, we refer all parts other than OC, i.e. the RMs and RCs travel. This *jīvātmā* acquires another body, exhausts the *prārabdhams* of that body, collects some more *āgāmī* and on its

death, again travels and this *punarapi jananaṁ punarapi maraṇaṁ* cycle goes on.

Let us now look at this process for a *jñāni*. The author has already said the *jñāni* like an *ajñāni* has to exhaust his *prārabdha*. So this *sukha duḥkh anubhava*, the physical experiences of pleasure and pain cannot be avoided by *jñānis*. That is why even the great *jñānis* fall sick. They too have got diseases. They also undergo physical pain. But the difference is that because of the *jñānaṁ* of the nature of the self and the *ānandā* gained by that knowledge, the sorrow or the pain at the body level is overshadowed. Even *ajñānis* experience this occasionally. For example, let us consider the case of a person who has a severe body pain and is lying down on the bed. Suddenly he is visited by a dear old friend. That person's happiness will know no bounds. He will at least for sometime forget all pain, overcome the painful experience and get up from the bed to greet the friend. This is called **अभिभावः** (*abhihāvaḥ*). So, for a *jñāni*, the *prārabdha duḥkham* is overshadowed by *vidyānandā*.

We can cite another example to understand this. Suppose in a cricket match between India and Pakistan (that is the most emotionally charged event), an Indian batsman gets out after scoring 98 runs. Every team member and he himself will feel very sad. But suppose in the end the Indian team wins the match. Everyone, including the batsman will not feel the pain of having got out without scoring the century because the victory of the team



will overshadow his pain. The victory against Pakistan will be a greater *ānandā* than even *mōkṣaḥ!*

Similarly, for a *jñāni*, this *vidyānandā* overshadows *prārabdha duḥkham*. It will be made insignificant. Like a candle light or the stars in front of the bright sun. During the day time, it is not that the stars are not existent, but their light is overpowered by the light of Sun and therefore, we do not feel their presence. Similarly for a *Jñāni*, the *prārabdham* stars will be there, but the *vidyānandā* of Sunlight will overshadow the pain and therefore the will get reduced to something like pin pricks. He will exhaust his *prārabdha* without even bothering about it. Others around him may sympathise and feel the pain on seeing him suffer but he won't bother. Thus his *prārabdha* is exhausted. The lives of *jñānis* like *Swāmi RāmaKṛṣṇa Paramahamsā*, *Bhagawān Ramana Maharishi* etc. are proof for this truth.

Now as regards his *sañcita karma* is concerned, we have learnt that the *sañcitam karma jñānēna naśyati*. The *ātma jñānam* is so powerful. It is like a person waking up from the dream. The knowledge of the waker that "I am the waker" is so powerful that all the *pāpams* committed in the dream will get destroyed immediately. So it is like waking up from the dream.

Then what happens to *āgāmī*? We seen that *āgāmī* does not arrive at all. It is avoided because a *jñāni* does not have ego or *abhimāna*. For all practical purposes he is like an animal, without any negative connotation. Just as an animal's action does not produce

*puṇyam* or *pāpam* because they don't have the ego, a *jñāni* does not acquire *puṇyam* or *pāpam* because he does not have an ego.

***Pramāṇāḥ - scriptural proofs***

Now the author concludes his teaching with these words.

तथा चात्मवित्संसारं तीर्त्वा ब्रह्मानन्दमिहैव प्राप्नोति ।

तरति शोकमात्मवित् इति श्रुतेः ।

*Tathā cātmavit saṁsāraṁ tīrtvā brahmānandamihaiva prāpnōti.*

*Tarati śōkamātmavit iti śrutēḥ.*

*Tathā ca* – And therefore; *ātmavit*– a wise person; *saṁsāraṁ tīrtvā* - crosses over *saṁsāra* consisting of all the three *karmas*, *sañcita*, *āgāmī* and *prārabdha* which means that when a *jñāni* dies, all the three *śarīrams* dissolve and gets merged into the all pervading *Īśvaraḥ*; *brahmānandam iha eva prāpnōti*. – he enjoys *brahmānandā* even while living, in this life itself; and then the author says this has been stated in the original scriptures – *iti śrutēḥ* – *śrutēḥ* means the *Upaniṣadik* statements. This statement is made in the *Chandogyo Upaniṣad* - *tarati śōkam ātmavit* – *ātmavit* means the knower of *ātma*, a *Jñāni*; *tarati* – swims or crosses over; *śōkam* – sorrow. This means that even though *prārabdha karmas* do bring favourable and unfavourable situations for a *jñāni*, he wades through them, he swims through them. So this is *Upaniṣadik* support for *jīvan muktiḥ*.

Now author quotes another scriptural statement for *vidēha muktiḥ* which is a *śhlōka* or a verse from a *smṛti*.

तनुं त्यजतु वा काश्यां श्वपचस्य गृहेऽथ वा ।

ज्ञानसंप्राप्ति समये मुक्तोऽसौ विगताशयः । इति स्मृतेश्च ।

*Tanuṁ tyajatu vā kāśyāṁ śvapacasya grhē'tha vā.*

*Jñāna samprāpti samayē muktō'sau vigatāśayaḥ. Iti smṛtēśca.*

*Kāśyāṁ tanuṁ tyajatu* – a *jñāni* may die in a *Kāśā* – that means he may drop his body in a very sacred place like *Kāshī*; *śvapacasya grhē'tha vā* – or he may die in the house of a dog eater – *śvapaca* means a dog eater i.e. in the house of an uncultured person; therefore, let him die in a very sacred place or let him die in a very ordinary place – the place of death doesn't matter for him, the time of death doesn't matter for him, the mode of death doesn't matter for him – nothing matters for him because by the power of his knowledge, he will attain *Īśvaraḥ* . *Jñāna samprāpti samayē asau muktaḥ* – this *jñāni* is already liberated at the time of gaining the knowledge itself; that means even while he was alive he has been liberated and *vigata āśayaḥ* – is liberated from all the *karmās*. *Āśayaḥ* means the *karmās* which reside in the *sūkṣma śarīram*. We know that all the *karmās* are supposed to reside in the *sūkṣma śarīram*. So for him all the *karmās* are gone and also the *sūkṣma śarīram* has gone. And therefore, he is free from the cycle of birth and death. *Iti smṛtē ca* – so it is said in the *smṛti*. This is *vidēha muktiḥ*.

We have already seen in the introductory chapters that *smṛtis* are secondary literature based on the *Vēdās*. Thus *Śruti* and *Smṛti* point out that *jñānaṁ* gives both *jīvan muktiḥ* and *vidēha muktiḥ*.

*That is the power of jñānaṁ and so it is worthwhile to seek this knowledge with full commitment.*

The author concludes with:

**इति तत्त्वबोधप्रकरणं समाप्तम् ।**

*Iti tattvabōdha prakaraṇaṁ samāptaṁ.*

He says that with this concludes the *prakaraṇa grantha* known as *Tattva bōdhaḥ*. Thus with this, the fifth and final topic *jñāna phalaṁ*, the *Tattva bōdhaḥ* teaching is complete.

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥

pūrṇamadaḥ pūrṇamidaṁ pūrṇāt pūrṇamudacyatē.

pūrṇasya pūrṇamādāya pūrṇamēvāvaśiṣyatē..