

Tattva Bodha of Adi Sankaracharya – A Vedantic Primer : Part 2 (contd.)

(Lecture Notes compiled by Venkat Ganesan from the series of
SVBF Lectures given by Dr. S. YEGNASUBRAMANIAN)

(Note: Section Number change in the previous issue: PT 4.1 - In the last article on this series, please change section and sub-section numbers 3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 to 2.5, 2.5.1, 2.5.2, 2.5.3, 2.5.4 and 2.5.5 respectively. Accordingly, present article will continue with Section 2.6)

2. Analysis of the Individual - *jIva vicAra:* (continued)

In the discussion on the Analysis of the Individual -जीवविचारः-, in the previous issue, the Author showed how the Atman is the witness or illuminator of the three states of experience (avasthA:) and is different from the five sheaths (panca koSA:) of the body. The Author proceeds to explain the qualities or attributes of the Atman, which will be discussed now.

2.6. Atman tanscends all five sheaths (*pancakoSAItIta:*)

मदीयं शरीरं मदीयाः प्राणाः मदीयं मनश्च
मदीया बुद्धिर्मदीयं अज्ञानमिति
स्वेनैव ज्ञायते तद्यथा-मदीयत्वेन ज्ञातं
कटककुण्डलगृहादिकं स्वस्माद्भिन्नंतथा
पञ्चकोशादिकं स्वस्माद्भिन्नं
मदीयत्वेन ज्ञातमात्मा न भवति ।।

[As bangles, ear-ornaments, homes etc. are known as "mine", but are different from the owner, so also, the five sheaths which are known by the Self as "my body, my mind, my prANas, my mind, my intellect and my ignorance" , are different from the knower and so cannot be the Atman]

यथा - just as

कटककुण्डलगृहादिकं - bangles, ear-ornaments, homes etc.

मदीयत्वेन ज्ञातं - are known as "mine"

स्वस्माद्भिन्नं - and different from the owner

तथा - likewise

पञ्चकोशादिकं - the five sheaths (and three bodies and three avasthAs - which are known by the Self) as

मदीयं शरीरम् - My body- *annamaya*

मदीयाः प्राणाः - My prANas - *prANamaya*

मदीयं मनश्च - My mind (also) - *manomaya*

मदीया बुद्धिः - My intellect - *vijnAnamaya*

मदीयं अज्ञानम् - My Bliss (due to ignornace) - *aanandamaya*

स्वेन एव तत् ज्ञायते - (by oneself - these) are known
स्वस्माद्भिन्नं as different from oneself

आत्मा न भवति - Therefore that does not become the Atman. Why? Because of *mohA* (delusion), they appear to be mine.

Then the question arises, what is Atman?

2.7 Atman

So far, the Author elaborately analyzed what Atman is not, through a series of negations. He concludes that the Atman is neither the five sheaths, nor the three bodies, nor the three states. Now on he proceeds to discuss what Atman is.

तर्हि - Then,

आत्मा कः ? - what is *Atman*?

सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः । - It is of the nature of *satchit-Ananda* (existence-knowledge-bliss)

सत्किम् ? - *What is sat (Truth, Reality) ?*

कालत्रयेऽपि तिष्ठतीति सत् । - *sat* is that which remains in all the three periods of time - the past, the present and the future. For example, the *sat* aspect of a ring is gold, which existed before the ring was made, which is in the ring and which will remain even after the destruction of the ring. Similarly, since the world (*jagat*) can also perish (like the ring), it should be the result of a fundamental substance (like the gold), which is the Atman - which was, which is and which will be (like the gold), regardless of the existence of the *jagat*.

चित्किम् ? - *What is cit or caitanyam ?*

ज्ञानस्वरूपम् । - It is of the nature of Knowledge (Absolute) - of Awareness, and is present during all states of experience and during all periods of time, the knowledge of which leads to perfection. That which changes is unreal. If one talks about change, there should be some entity to witness that change (to distinguish between the condition before change and after the change), which (with respect to that change) is a changeless principle, called *sat*. If that principle is changeless, then the question arises as to whether that is inert or conscious. It should be only conscious since it is aware of the change and witnesses the change. So it is described as ज्ञानस्वरूपम् or चित् . Whatever changes is असत् ।

आनन्दः कः ? - *What is Ananda?*

सुखस्वरूपः । - It is of the nature of True Happiness (Bliss).

Sorrow or दुःखम् is an outcome of change - for example, birth, disease, old age etc, are responsible for sorrow. But the Atman has no change and so is free from sorrow or सुखस्वरूपः ।

Also, in the wakeful state, there is association with the gross body (स्थूल-शरीर —> अनात्मा) and so there is sorrow. During dream, there is as-

sociation with the subtle body (सूक्ष्म-शरीर—> अनात्मा), but during deep sleep, association with the body is dropped and so there is no sorrow. In *sushupti*, the association is with the कारण-शरीरम् and one has happiness, *Ananda*. So, *sat* implies the changeless principle; *cit* implies the awareness principle and *Ananda* implies the nature of bliss.

एवं सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपं स्वात्मानं विजानीयात् ।

Thus one should know oneself to be of the nature of absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.

From another angle, let us examine *sat cit AtmA*. *Atman* is सत् चित् स्वरूपः . What is the size of *Atman*? *SthUla Sareeram* is limited in size and so is *sUkshma Sareeram*. *kAraNa Sareeram* is behind these two and so is limited too. Also, there are as many *Sareeras* as individuals. If *caitanyam* is different from the body, what can be its size? If it is the property of the *Sareeram*, then wherever there is body, there should be Consciousness (*Atman*) and where there is no body, there should be no Consciousness. Also, Consciousness being distinct from the *Sareeram*, it does not have the limitations of the body, mind and intellect and is all pervading. Then, what about the Consciousness within any *Sareeram*? The all-pervading Consciousness is only manifest in that *Sareeram*. According to the scriptures, *Atma caitanyam* is limitless. Looking at it from two angles:

1) When *Atman* is *sat*, it is eternal and not bound by time - कालत्रयेऽपि तिष्ठति . For a similar reason, the *Atman* is not bound by space also. It is अनन्तः - limitless, all-pervading. Also it is पूर्णः - Full. *Sat cit AtmA* is *poorNa* .

Then, let us analyze what are sorrow and joy. Whenever one is unhappy, we ask what is needed or what is lacking? I.e sorrow is because of a limitation - money, health, love etc. Or, we can say that sorrow is an indication or symptom of the disease called limita-

tion. Similarly, joy is an indication of fulfillment or *poorNatvam*. In other words, unfulfillment of a desire leads to sorrow and the fulfillment leads to joy. That means, *Ananda:* is an expression of *poorNatvam* or *anantatvam*. Therefore, *Atman* is *sat cit ananta:* → *poorNa:* → *Ananda:*, and is of the nature of *saccidAnandasvarUpa:*

2) All-pervading principle: *Atman* is also known by another name called *brahman*, both indicating Consciousness. Why then two names? When we refer to an individual body, we call it by the word *Atman*, and when we refer to the total body (of all individual bodies), we call it by the term *brahman* – (*brahmaNatvAt*) which means that which is the biggest, the maximum etc.

In summary, *Atman* is *Sat-Cit-Ananda-svarupa:* *sat* is the existence principle; *cit* is the awareness or knowledge principle and *Ananda:* is the bliss *poorNa* (complete) principle. *Sat* is what remains unchanged during all the three

periods of time - past, present and future. *Atman* is not one of the three bodies but is present in every one of them as a fundamental element and does not ever change. *Cit* is the principle of absolute knowledge or awareness that is present as a witness in all three states of existence. The awareness is again present in all periods of time and of the nature of *sat*. *Ananda:* is the principle which comes from *poorNatvam* or completeness. *Atman* is *poorNa:* or does not lack anything. Since it does not lack anything, there is *Ananda* or bliss. Also, it transcends the mind and intellect (*koSAIta:*) and there are no emotions or expressions of joy in the *Ananda* and so there is the equanimity concept also in the *Ananda* principle.

Thus, after the negation of all *anAtmA* elements, the author asserts what the nature of the *Atman* is and concludes the section of *JivavicaAra:* or analysis of the individual.

Part III: Analysis of Creation

सृष्टिविचारः *srushti vicAra:*

So far the discussion was focused on the analysis from the stand point of the individual, (the *koSAs*, *avasthAs*, *Sareeras* etc). - व्यष्टिः - microcosm. The true nature of the *Atman* has been explained. Then the question arises, 'What is the nature of all the objects seen in this world and what is the relation between oneself and the Universe?' The author subsequently discusses the analysis of creation, next, to answer these questions. So, this section is called *srusti vicAra:* or *srusti prakaraNam*. A new concept is introduced for the analysis namely *brahman-mAyA* couple. The word *brahman* is derived from the root *brh* which means "to grow". The noun, *brahman*, is derived from this root and

is in neuter gender. *Brahman* is the *cetanam* principle or *sat* and It does not undergo any change during the three periods of time. It is limitless and complete and transcends the concept of time and space and It is un-manifested. *mAyA* is of material origin in the causal (*kAraNa*) plane and is the material cause for the entire creation. For any creation, there is an efficient cause (*nimitta kAraNam* - knowledge part) and a material cause (*upAdAna kAraNam* - material part). For example to create a pot, there should be a pot maker, who has the knowledge of a pot and how to make it (*nimitta kAraNam*), and the clay which is of material origin and undergoes changes -

(*upAdAna kAraNam*). The pot is the outcome of the knowledge of the pot maker and has the characteristic(s) (*guNas*) of the material used, namely clay. Similarly, *mAyA* is the material reason for the entire creation which is composed of the three *guNas* (*triguNAtmikA* or *satva-rajas-tamo-guNatmikA*) namely *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. A characteristic or attribute (*guNa*) gives rise to an action (*kArya*). *satva* represents knowledge or tranquility; *rajas* represents agility or action, and *tamas* represents ignorance or inertness.

In the frame of analysis, *Isvara* is supposed to be a combination of *brahman* (which is the absolute knowledge and devoid of the three *guNas* or *nirguNa*) and *mAyA* (which is of material origin in causal form and of the three *guNas* in nature - *saguNA*). Both *brahman* and *mAyA* are *anAdi* (beginning less). *Brahman* is *satyam* and does not undergo any change. *mAyA* is *mithyA* and undergoes the process of modifications (*shadvikAra*). Every object in the Universe or creation has a *nAma* (name), *rUpa* (form) and *karma* (function or action). All objects in creation go through the process of modification and are changing. The infinite or limitless *Brahman* should be different from the changing or limited Universe. Universe or creation is supposed to be the manifested form of *mAyA* or the three *guNas*. *Brahman* by Its own desire has created the universe (so *kAmayata, bahusyAm prajAyeyeti* – Taittiriya Upanishad) and is independent. *mAyA* is dependent upon *Brahman* for its existence to create and manifest (*brahmASrayA*). Thus, *Isvara* has the power of creation through *mAyA* and is the manifestation of *Brahman* in all beings (animate and inanimate).

In the following section, the author continues the discussion from the point of view of the total - macrocosm - *समष्टिः* and deals with

topics such as, the Universe, the relationship between the individual and the Universe, etc.

3.1 *Jagat* (The Universe) and creation

अथ चतुर्विंशतितत्त्वोत्पत्तिप्रकारं वक्ष्यामः ।

अथ - Now, *वक्ष्यामः* - we shall explain, *चतुर्विंशतितत्त्वोत्पत्तिप्रकारम्* the method of evolution of the twenty four *tattvas*.

In *vedanta*, twenty four categories are mentioned, called *tattvas*, which when put together are responsible for creation.

What are the twenty four *tattvas* ?

- Five elements (5)
- Seventeen subtle bodies comprising of the five sense organs, five organs of action, five breaths, mind and intellect (17)
- *citta* (1)
- *ahamkAra* (1)

The author begins the discussion by saying, *ब्रम्हाश्रया सत्वरजस्तमोगुणात्मिका माया अस्ति ।*

ब्रम्हाश्रया - Depending on *brahman* for its existence, *माया अस्ति*- is *mAyA*, (which is) *सत्वरजस्तमोगुणात्मिका* - of the nature of the three qualities, *satva, rajas and tamas*.

Here the term *AtmA* is used in the context of the individual and the term *brahman* is used in the context of the total. *Brahman* is *caitanya*, is all-pervading and so is a part of the creation and not created.

The author introduces another important factor by saying, *mAyA asti*. *mAyA* is the seed or potential form of the entire creation, including the individual, *sthUla prapancam, sUkshma prapancam* and *kAraNa prapancam*. We have seen earlier that *kAraNa Sareeram* and hence *kAraNa prapancam* are without beginning (*anaadi*).

That means all the three *Sareeras* should be

present in *mAyA*. In other words, both *brahman* and *mAyA* existed before creation itself. Similarly, during the time of dissolution – *pralaya* – also, *brahman* and *mAyA* exist.

The author introduces another piece of information also in this section, namely the three *guNas*.

सत्वरजस्तमोगुणात्मिका माया । That means, *mAyA* has three *gunAs*, namely, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and so it is *saguNA*, while *brahman* is *nirguNam*. The entire creation came about from this couple alone.

Because *mAyA* is the cause of creation and is endowed with the three *guNas*, we find the creation also with these three *guNas*. For example, *buddhi*: (intellect), which is a part of the *vijnAnamayakoSa*: is born out of *mAyA* and so also an inert object like a chair – *buddhi* and chair, both being inert. The difference is that *buddhi* is able to manifest Consciousness, while the chair is not. To understand this, we say, that the *sattva* part of *mAyA* is responsible for *buddhi*: while, the *tamas* part of *mAyA* is responsible for the creation of a chair, water etc. In the same way, the active part of creation, like the organs of action (which have no intelligence of their own, but can act), is the outcome of the *rajas* aspect of *mAyA*. In summary,

- Intelligence (knowledge, *jnAna*) part of creation – from *satva* aspect of *mAyA*
- Active part of creation – *kriya* - from *rajas* aspect of *mAyA*.
- Inert part of creation – *jaDa* - from *tamas* aspect of *mAyA*.

Because of the three aspects of creation, *mAyA* is described as *triguNAtmikA* or *sattvatrajastamoguNAtmikA*. Since *mAyA* is dependent on *brahman*, it is also described as *brahmASrayA*.

For a better understanding, let us compare *brahman* and *mAyA*:

Brahman	mAyA
1. <i>anaadi</i>	<i>anaadi</i>
2. <i>cetanam</i>	<i>acetanA</i>
3. <i>nirvikAram</i>	<i>savikArA</i>
4. <i>satyam</i>	<i>mithyA</i>
5. <i>nirguNam</i>	<i>saguNA</i>

3.1.1 Evolution of the five elements

ततः आकाशः संभूतः । From that (*mAyA*) the space (*AkASa*:) is born.

आकाशाद् वायुः । From *AkASa*, *vAyu* (air)

वायोस्तेजः । From *vAyu*, the Fire.

तेजसः आपः । From Fire, Water.

अद्भ्यः पृथिवी । From Water, the Earth.

Of the twenty four *tattvas* mentioned earlier, the creation of the five elements is divided in to subtle (*sUkshma*) and gross (*sthUla*) elements. First, the five subtle elements are born out of the *brahman-mAyA* couple, which will be grossified later by a process called *panceekaraNam*. . The subtle forms are not visible, while the gross forms are visible.

- ततः → ब्रह्मसहितमायायाः → From that *brahman-mAyA* couple, *AkASa*: is born. According to the scriptures, Space has only one attribute, namely, sound (शब्दः). (शब्दगुणकं आकाशम्)
- From the subtle *AkASa*:, subtle *vAyu*: is born, which has two attributes, namely, sound (शब्दः). and touch (स्पर्शः)
- From the subtle Air, subtle Fire is born, which has three attributes, namely, sound (शब्दः), touch (स्पर्शः) and form (रूपः)
- From subtle Fire, subtle Water is born, which has four attributes, namely, sound (शब्दः), touch (स्पर्शः), form (रूपः) and taste (रसः).
- From subtle Water, subtle Earth is born, which has five attributes, namely, sound (शब्दः), touch (स्पर्शः), form (रूपः), taste (रसः) and smell (गन्धः)

Element Attribute(s)

Space	sound
Air	sound, touch
Fire	sound, touch, form
Water	sound, touch, form, taste
Earth	sound, touch, form, taste, smell

Even though all the five are subtle elements, there is still a gradation among them – space being the most subtle with only one attribute, and earth being the least subtle with five attributes of perception. In the scheme of creation, these five *tanmAttras* evolve in the order of their grossness.

Since all these five elements are born out of *mAyA* which has three *guNas*, they should also have three *guNas* because the properties of the cause (*kAraNam*) should pervade the effect (*kAryam*) also. So, within subtle space itself, we have *saatvik AkASa*, *rAjasik AkASa* and *tAmasik AkASa*, etc.

3.1.2 Evolution of the *sattva* aspect

Since all these five elements are born out of *mAyA* which has three *guNas*, they should also have the three *guNas* because the properties of the cause (*kAraNam*) should pervade the effect (*kAryam*) also. So, within the subtle Space itself, we have *saatvik AkASa*, *rAjasik AkASa* and *tAmasik AkAa*., etc.

3.1.2.1 Sense Organs

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां मध्ये

आकाशस्य सात्विकांशात् श्रोत्रेन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

From among these five elements, from the saatvic aspect of AkASa:, the organ of hearing, the ear, evolved.

वायोः सात्विकांशात् त्वगिन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

From the saatvic aspect of vAyu, the organ of touch – the skin – evolved.

अग्नेः सात्विकांशात् चक्षुरिन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

From the saatvic aspect of Fire, the organ of sight – the eye- evolved.

जलस्य सात्विकांशात् रसनेन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

From the saatvic aspect of Water, the organ of taste – the tongue – evolved.

पृथिव्याः सात्विकांशात् घ्राणेन्द्रियं संभूतम् ।

From the saatvic aspect of Earth, the organ of smell – the nose – evolved.

The five sense organs evolved from the *sattva* aspect of the five elements. Every element has an essential property (*guNa* – for example, Water-taste) and the corresponding sense organ evolved from it (namely, tongue in this example). Similarly the property of Fire is form and the organ of perception of form is the eye, which evolved from it, and so on.

3.1.2.2 *antahkaraNa* (inner equipment)

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां समष्टिसात्विकांशात्

मनोबुद्ध्यहंकार चित्तान्तःकरणानि संभूतानि ॥

From the total saatvic aspect of these five elements, the antahkaraNa (inner equipment) comprising of manas, buddhi, ahamkAra and citta, evolved.

Here, two more parts are added to the list of subtle bodies (*sUkshma Sareeram*) mentioned earlier, which are *ahamkAra* and *citta*, thus making a total of 19. That means 19 parts are to be created from the subtle elements out of which five organs of perception and four inner equipment are created out of the *saatvic* aspect, since the sense organs and the inner instruments are related to knowledge. To summarize, the *sattva* aspect is responsible for the creation of the *jnAnendriyas* and the *antahkaraNas*.

From <i>saatvic</i> aspect of	<i>Evolves</i>
AkASa:	Ear
VAYu:	Skin
Agni:	Eye
Apah:	Tongue
Prithivi	Smell
Total of all five	anta:karaNa

Definition of antahkaraNa:

संकल्पविकल्पात्मकं मनः ।

Mind is of the nature of oscillations/doubt

Reflects the indecisive nature of a person when one's mind vacillates between opposite thoughts. Here *samkalpa* refers to positive thoughts and *vikalpa* refers to the opposite thoughts.

निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः ।

Intellect is of the nature of decision.

The inner equipment - intellect - is the same as the mind, except that when the equipment functions in a decisive manner, it is called *buddhi*: It is the deciding or cognitive faculty which involves in analysis and enquiry about any problem to arrive at a solution.

अहंकर्ता अहंकारः ।

"I am the doer" - this idea is the ego.

This refers to the the function of *antahkaraNa* which is responsible for the "I" notion in the individual. Also, refers to pride and has the sense of ownership or doer-ship.

चिन्तनकर्तृ चित्तम् ।

The thinking faculty (or the faculty of remembrance) is citta.

This is the function of the *antahkaraNa* responsible for the remembrance of past knowledge and experience (a storehouse of information) to provide guidance to the intellect in decision making.

Among these four inner instruments, *manas*, *buddhi* and *citta* replace each other depending on the situation, while, the ego - *ahamkara* - is present always!

Presiding Deities for the inner equipments:

मनसो देवता चन्द्रमाः ।

The presiding deity of the mind is the Moon.

बुद्धेः ब्रह्मा ।

For the intellect, it is brahma.

अहंकारस्य रुद्रः ।

For the ego, it is rudra.

चित्तस्य वासुदेवः ।

For citta, (the presiding deity is) vAsudeva.

Thus, the *saatvic* nature of all the five *tanmAttras* is responsible for the make-up of *manomaya* and *vijnAnamaya koSAs*, which include the mind, intellect and the five sense organs of perception.

We will continue with the discussion of the evolution of the *raajasic* and *taamasic* aspects in the next article.

References / Source Material

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