

तत्त्वबोधः

TATTVABODHAḤ

A PRIMER TO VEDĀNTA

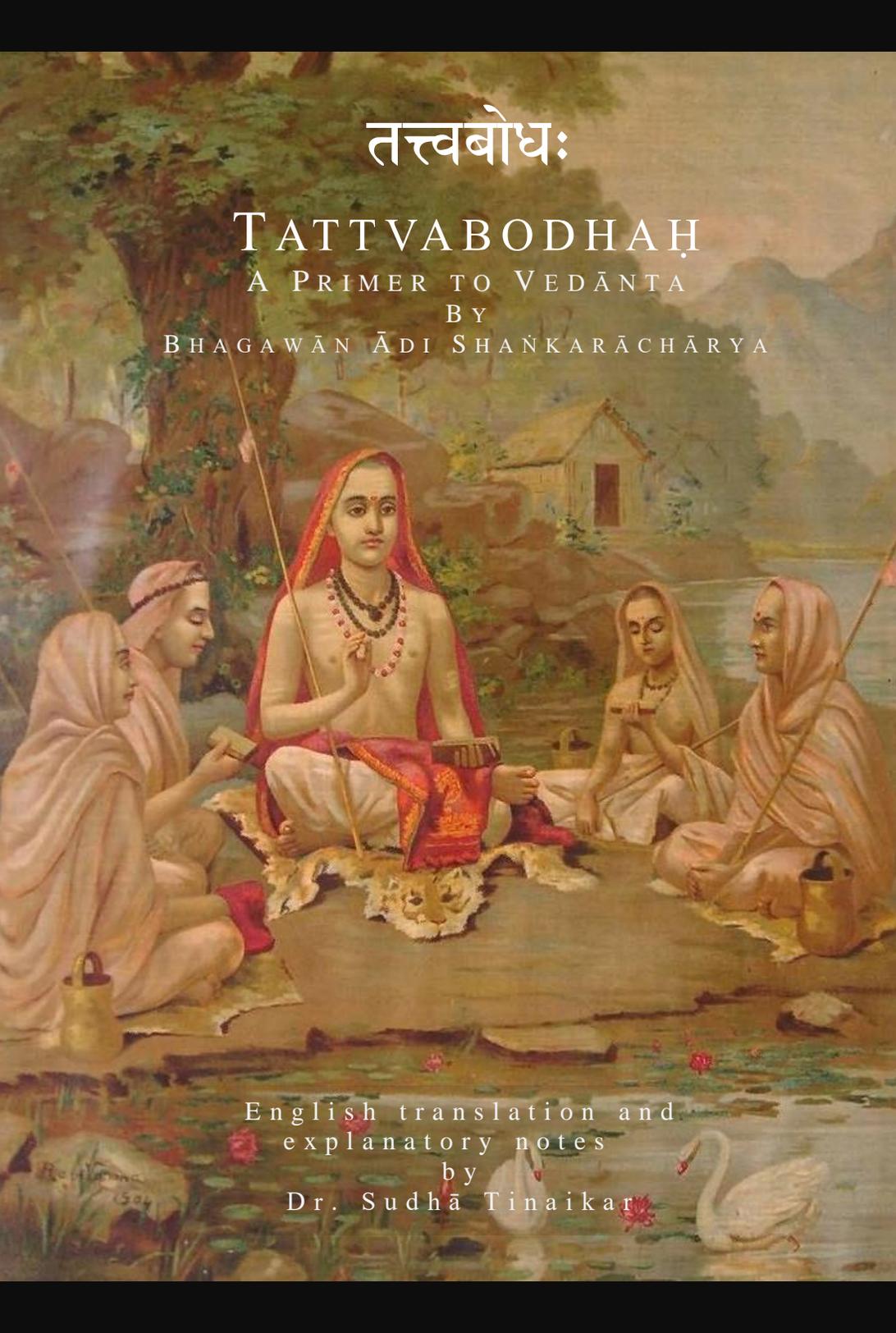
BY

BHAGAWĀN ĀDI SHANĀKARĀCHĀRYA

English translation and
explanatory notes

by

Dr. Sudhā Tinaikar





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Cover: Ādi Shankara (788-820), founder of Advaita Vedānta, with disciples. Painting by Rājā Ravi Varmā (1904)

Preface

Under the instructions and blessings of Parama Pūjya Sadyojāt Shaṅkarāshram Swāmījī and our entire Chitrāpur Guruparamparā, I was asked to write a commentary on this introductory primer to the study of our scriptures.

Tattvabodhaḥ and Ātma Bodhaḥ are two basic primers which introduce a student of Vedānta to the terms and concepts used in our scriptures. All students of Vedānta will be greatly benefited by a committed study of these texts.

Tattvabodhaḥ as a commentary appeared as a series in our well-known Kānarā Sāraswat Association (KSA) magazine in 23 parts from November 2016 until September 2018.

I offer my praṇāma-s to our Guruparamparā for this divine opportunity and seek the Blessings and Grace of our Parama Pūjya Sadyojāt Shaṅkarāshram Swāmījī, Lord Bhavānīshaṅkar, Devī Bhuvaneshwarī and our entire Guruparamparā before starting the interpretation of this book.

SUDHĀ TINAIKAR

August 2020

Beṅgalūru



Introduction

Veda-s are the source book of knowledge according to the *Sanātana Dharma*. Veda-s (also called our scriptures or *Shruti*) are the original and the most valid source of knowledge on all the four human pursuits that are talked about - *Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣha*. The veda-s were perceived, as such, by the *ṛshi*-s or seers as they were handed down during creation by the Lord. The *veda-pūrvā* or the first half of all the veda-s talk about the first three pursuits - *Dharma, Artha and Kāma*, which are the mundane or secular pursuits of all human beings.

However, there are a few individuals who have the pursuit of *Mokṣha* as their priority and for them - the knowledge of the Self, the world in which they are living and *Īshwara* or God - is the most important goal of their lives. The end portion of the veda-s, also known as *Vedānta*, deals exclusively with the knowledge of the *Tattva* or the Truth of the Individual, the world and God...commonly known as *Jīva, Jagat and Īshwara*. *Vedānta* is considered to be the most valid proof (*pramāṇa*) in this matter. *Vedānta* is also called *Upaniṣhad*. Thus, all the four veda-s... *Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma and Atharvaṇa* - talk about this Knowledge in their terminal parts.

The veda-s have their own style of presenting the matter and many-a-time the presentation is very cryptic. Therefore, it is said that a *mumuṣhu* or the one desirous of knowing the true nature or *Tattva* of *Jīva, Jagat and Īshwara* should never study the scriptures especially *Vedānta* individually. The enquiry or *Vedānta-vichāra* should always be under the guidance of a Guru, गुरु मुखेन शास्त्र अध्ययनम्.

For this study, a *sādhaka* needs to understand the words used by the scriptures and the particular format in which *Vedānta* deals with the subject of the Knowledge of the Self, the world and God. Many great *Āchārya-s* have written specific works called प्रकरणग्रन्थ to facilitate the *sādhaka* to enter into *Vedānta*.

One such *prakaraṇa* is Tattvabodhaḥ. *Tattva* means the Truth or the True Nature of anything and Bodhaḥ means Knowledge. Tattvabodhaḥ also means Self-Knowledge. This, beautiful, short work of about 45 verses is written in prose-form giving the basic concepts of Vedānta along with the glossary of terms used in the scriptures and explained as a question-answer dialogue between the Guru and the *Shishya*. However, it is commonly accepted that Bhagawān Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya is the author of Tattvabodhaḥ.

This simple, comprehensive, brief and graceful text is taken as the primer or the first text for all students of Vedānta. Tattvabodhaḥ being a primer does not have many references to other vedāntic texts. It not only introduces the *sādhaka* to the basic terms and concepts of Vedānta but also takes him through the complete journey of a *mumukshu*.



Invocation

मङ्गलाचरण श्लोकः

वासुदेवेन्द्रयोगीन्द्रं नत्वा ज्ञानप्रदं गुरुम् ।
मुमुक्षूणां हितार्थाय तत्त्वबोधोऽभिधीयते ॥

Having prostrated at the Feet of the Guru, Vāsudevendra, who is a *Jñānī* of the highest order, who is the giver of this knowledge, I present this work called *Tattvabodhaḥ*, for the benefit of all the *mumukshu-s*.

In our tradition, it is customary to start any work with invocation to *Īshwara* and the Guru. This is to invoke their blessings so that the work undertaken is completed without any obstacles. In this particular invocation, the author is invoking *Īshwara's* blessings through his Guru. The Guru is considered to be a manifestation of the Lord. He says - नत्वा having prostrated at the Feet of my Guru, Shrīmat Vāsudevendra, who is a *Jñānī* par excellence; वासुदेवेन्द्रयोगीन्द्रं who is the giver of this knowledge ज्ञानप्रदं गुरुम्; I take up this task of presenting this work called *Tattvabodhaḥ* or the Knowledge of the Truth of the Self तत्त्वबोधोऽभिधीयते; What for? मुमुक्षूणां हितार्थाय for the benefit of the *mumukshu-s*.

A *mumukshu* is one who is serious in his pursuit of freeing himself from the shackles of *saṁsāra*. Whether this bondage is real or assumed will be discussed later, but presently, he is afflicted by delusion and sorrow. *Vedānta-vichāra* and the knowledge of *Tattva* is the only thing that can liberate a *jīva* from sorrow and delusion. The

author, with his work, wants to help such *mumukshu*-s or seekers of freedom, with the preliminary and basic principles of Vedānta.

What are the advantages of this Knowledge to a *mumukshu*? It is said that a *mumukshu* has a deep desire to know the truth about Himself and the universe at large. This knowledge, at the first step, serves the purpose of जिज्ञासा निवृत्तिः which means the seeker finds relevant answers for his basic questions. Once the desire to know is fulfilled, the Knowledge itself gives a kind of satisfaction or happiness, which is called तृप्ति प्राप्तिः or आनन्द प्राप्तिः. This leads to relief from the stress making the *mumukshu* more efficient while transacting / interacting with the world, expressed as आघात निवृत्तिः. By the Knowledge of the *Tattva*, the *mumukshu* gets these three important benefits - मुमुक्षुणां हितार्थाय or for the benefit of the serious seekers of *moksha*.

This invocatory verse also serves as an introduction to the topic discussed in the work. The author mentions here 1) the subject matter, 2) the target audience, 3) the benefit of this subject to the target audience and also 4) the connection between the subject matter and the final benefit. This set of four points which is always mentioned in the introductory verse of any work is called *anubandha chatushtaya* (अनुबन्ध चतुष्टय). The author has innovatively combined the prayer- invoking blessing of the Guru and *Īshwara*, along with introducing the subject matter and its purpose.

In the next verse the *anubandha chatushtaya* (अनुबन्ध चतुष्टय) is explained in more detail.

साधनचतुष्टयसम्पन्नाधिकारिणां
मोक्षसाधनभूतं तत्त्वविवेकप्रकारं वक्ष्यामः ।

The Knowledge of the *Tattva* and the method into its enquiry is talked about to the *mumukshu*-s. They qualify for this Knowledge which is the means to attain *moksha*.

साधनचतुष्टयं किम्?

नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः । इहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविरागः । शमादिषट्कसम्पत्तिः। मुमुक्षत्वं चेति ।

Tattva-viveka or enquiry into the nature of the *Tattva* is the direct means to the goal called *Moksha* or freedom from *saṃsāra*. This is the ultimate goal of every *mumukshu*. Thus, the *Tattva-vichāra* or enquiry and the final goal called *moksha* have a direct means-and-end relationship which is technically called *sādhana-sādhya sambandhaḥ* (साधन-साध्य सम्बन्धः). This works for a person who is qualified to handle the means or *sādhana* for *moksha*. Just having a desire for *moksha* is not enough. One must acquire the necessary qualifications and make oneself an *adhikārī* or fit for using the means which will achieve the end. Unless the means are used properly, by a person fit to use them, the goal cannot be reached. In the matter of Self-Knowledge or *Tattva-viveka*, the *mumukshu* should have some other qualifications in addition to the desire for freedom. Such qualifications are grouped under *sādhana chatusṭaya sampattiḥ* (साधन चतुष्टय सम्पत्तिः) or the Four-Fold Qualifications.

Therefore, what is going to be explained in this entire work is for the benefit of serious seekers of *moksha* who are endowed with the

four-fold qualifications and for such *mumukshu*-s, this knowledge will serve as a means to their final goal of attaining *Moksha*.

नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकःकः?

What is meant by *Nitya-Anitya vastu vivekaḥ*?

नित्यवस्त्वेकं ब्रह्म तद्व्यतिरिक्तं सर्वमनित्यम् ।
अयमेव नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः ।

The permanent or imperishable is the one and only *Brahman*; everything else whatsoever is impermanent or perishable. This clear understanding is called *Nitya-Anitya vastu vivekaḥ*.

After enumerating the *sādhana chatuṣṭaya sampattiḥ* in the previous question, the Guru proceeds to elaborate on each of the four-fold qualifications in greater detail. This is the general order in which the four qualifications are enumerated by the scriptures. However, all the four have to happen concurrently as each of them support the other three. For example *vairāgya* cannot happen without the *nitya-anitya vastu vivekaḥ* and as the *viveka* becomes deeper, *vairāgya* also becomes stronger. Thus, all the four qualifications have to be taken as one interdependent unit. But for the sake of ease of communication, the Guru decides to enumerate them one by one and describe them in a particular accepted order.

The first and the most important of these qualifications is *viveka* or discrimination. Discrimination means clear understanding. What is it that a *mumukshu* needs to clearly understand?

It is the common experience of every one of us that, whatever we experience in the world (*jagat*) surrounding us is constantly changing. The *jagat* that we perceive is nothing but a combination of objects,

events and relationships. Change is the very nature of this *jagat*. However, we try to hold on to the changing *jagat*, cling to it for our security and happiness and sure enough, we do not find either in the ever-changing world. This leads to sorrow and insecurity which makes us go after the objective world with greater gusto, hoping that the more we strive for it, we may find some lasting happiness from it. This useless pursuit compounds sorrow and insecurity (*shoka* and *moha*). This whole cycle of useless human pursuit is described as *samsāra* in the scriptures.

A serious *mumukshu* some time or the other understands that lasting happiness is not possible if he depends on the impermanent objects, situations and relationships in the world. At the same time, there must be something which is imperishable and permanent as the basis (*adhishtānam*) of this ever-changing world.

The scriptures explain this as follows...

The entire *jagat* is *anitya vastu*, which is timebound, limited by time and space. Being a product of matter (*kārya*) it is temporary and perishable. However, there is something (*asti kaschit*) which is not limited by time and space and therefore, permanent and imperishable. This imperishable *nitya vastu* is called *Brahman*. *Brahman* is the only and ultimate permanent Truth which can give that lasting peace and security that one looks for.

This clear understanding between the two is *nitya-anitya vastu vivekaḥ*.

Now, the next of the four-fold qualifications is being questioned by the *mumukshu*. It is called *virāgaḥ* or *vairāgya*, also explained as dispassion.

विरागः कः?

What is *vairāgya*?

इहस्वर्गभोगेषु इच्छाराहित्यम् ।

Dispersion from longing for the enjoyment of objects here and hereafter.

Vairāgya can be called dispassion or un-involvement with the world of objects in this world and also hereafter. It can also be explained as a desire to give up. Dispassion does not mean disgust, aversion or hate. One can get disenchanted when one goes through pain and suffering which over a period of time wanes away. This is not called *vairāgya*.

We all do various *karma-s* (actions) for fulfilling the three *purushārtha-s* (human pursuits of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*). *Dharma purushārtha* is for gaining puṇya in the form of gaining a good *loka* here, in this life and hereafter. It is the security one looks for in pursuing the *artha-purushārtha*. In *kāma-purushārtha* one is looking for all types of pleasures; sensual and aesthetic. Most of our *karma-s* are based on the longing for the results of actions (*karmaphala-s*).

Vairāgya is the freedom from this longing for the results of all the above *purushārtha-s*. *Vairāgya* has to be cultivated. This can happen only when one understands that all the three human pursuits and their results are timebound. Here, the *nitya-anitya vastu vivekaḥ* helps the *mumukshu* to see the fleeting and perishable nature of the three *purushārtha-s*. *Viveka* and *vairāgya* mutually enhance each other.

In *Viveka Chūdāmaṇi*, *vairāgya* is defined as इह अमुत्र फल भोग विरागः which means dispassion for the results of actions here in this world and hereafter. In *Aparokshānubhūti* (अपरोक्षानुभूति) Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya

says that a *mumukshu* should treat all the *karmaphala-s* as ककविष्टः (droppings of a crow). A *mumukshu* should cultivate such a dispassion for every object of desire.

Vairāgya is the most important of the four-fold qualifications for a *mumukshu*. He should understand that *vairāgya* is not hating or rejecting the world, but understanding that the world of objects has its limitations and cannot be the source of lasting happiness. This un-involvement with the objective world gives the *mumukshu* the commitment that is needed in the pursuit of *moksha-puruṣhārtha*.

Now, the next question the *mumukshu* asks, is the third of the four-fold qualifications to make himself fit for the Self-Knowledge. It is called *shamādi sādhana sampattiḥ* or *shamādi śhaṭka sampattiḥ*.

This group of the four-fold qualifications talks about the inner discipline that a serious seeker of *moksha* needs to have. We have seen that even for achieving excellence in worldly activities, one needs discipline. Discipline is that capacity of the mind, to pursue a particular goal, with singlemindedness, excluding all the other distractions to anything else other than the desired goal. This set of disciplines is called *śhaṭka sampattiḥ* as it encompasses a group of six related disciplines which actually support each other. It is also called *sādhana sampattiḥ* as it is considered to be a great inner-wealth, to possess these disciplines. It is called inner-wealth because the more the six-fold discipline is practiced, the stronger it grows!

The question now addressed to the teacher is:

शमादिसाधनसम्पत्तिः का?

What is this inner-wealth of discipline starting with *shamaḥ*?

शमो दम उपरतिस्तितिक्षा श्रद्धा समाधानं च इति ॥

The six-fold inner wealth enumerated as *shamaḥ, damaḥ, uparamaḥ titikshā, shraddhā and samādhāna*.

Now, each of the six inner disciplines is going to be explained in a simple question-answer format.

शमः कः?

What is *shamaḥ*?

मनो निग्रहः ।

Resolution or mastery over the mind.

Many times *manonigrahaḥ* is explained as control or destroying the mind. This is not the meaning of *shamaḥ*.

Mind is the inner instrument (*antaḥkaraṇaḥ*) through which anything is known and it is the most important recipient of knowledge. The mind also being the seat of emotions can get distracted by things other than the pursuit of priority, which here is Self-Knowledge. Hence, it is very important for the *mumukshu* to direct the mind to his chosen pursuit and prevent it from wandering over to the things which may distract him from learning. This discipline to a great extent reduces the emotional upheavals such as anger, restlessness and sadness. The *mumukshu* then, can make his mind available to proceed in his chosen path. It means giving enough

time for the mind to dwell over the *Guru-Shāstra upadesha* and withdrawing the mind from other less desirable pursuits.

Shamaḥ also gives a sense of peace and leisure to the mind which are essential for a *mumukshu*. This is why most of the *Upanishad-s* talk about Self-Knowledge being easily assimilated by a person with *shamaḥ*.

The next in order of the six-fold inner disciplines is *damaḥ*.

दमः कः?

What is *damaḥ*?

चक्षुरादिबाह्येन्द्रियनिग्रहः |

It is the mastery over the external sense organs such as eyes etc;

It should be understood that the mind and the external sense-organs function as a single unit. The mind is the centre of the external sense-organs. A person without managing his mind cannot manage his sense-organs. Therefore, *shamaḥ* and *damaḥ* both go hand in hand. The restlessness or anger in the mind is expressed through the external sense-organs. Hence *damaḥ* is a natural consequence of *shamaḥ*. This is the reason for this order *shamaḥ* followed by *damaḥ*.

But, there are situations when *shamaḥ* is not adequate and the external sense-organs need to be controlled and it is here, that a *nigrahaḥ* over the sense-organs is needed. This situation can be seen when one is in extreme anger. Here, the *shamaḥ* is lost but the person has to forcefully control the expression of this anger by words or action and this is a typical situation of *damaḥ*.

Kathopanishad compares the sense-organs to horses in its beautiful *ratha-kalpanā mantra* (*Kathopanishad 1-3-3*). It says that for

a person with uncontrolled sense-organs like wild - untamed horses - reaching *mokṣha* as the goal, is difficult while the one who has his sense-organs under his control - like tamed horses - reaches his goal easily.

If the sense organs are forcibly controlled without the preparation of the mind, the mind can actually dwell more and more over sense pleasures and this is why Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagawadgītā that a person who is not having enough *shamaḥ* and tries to control only his external sense-organs is a hypocrite (*mithyāchārī*) (Bhagawadgītā chapter 3 verse 6).

Lord Kṛṣṇa also talks in detail about the role for *indriya-nigrahaḥ* or *damaḥ* in verses 58 to 61 of chapter 2 of *Bhagawadgītā* where he explains the character of a *sthitaprajña*.

Thus, the first two disciplines are mutually dependent on each other for the inner instrument (mind) and the outer instruments (the sense-organs) to function as one unit.

The teacher of Tattvabodhaḥ continues with the topic of *sādhana chatusṭaya*. The four-fold qualification is unfolded in a very systematic fashion by the Guru here. Now, the discussion on the six-fold discipline is going on. *Shamaḥ* and *damaḥ* deal with the disciplining of the mind and sense-organs. A *mumukṣhu* has to be an integrated person in body and mind. *Shamaḥ* and *damaḥ* talk about the discipline or the management of the mind and sense-organs. Just disciplining them once is not enough. They have a very natural tendency of constantly getting distracted outwards - to the world of objects and hence the mind and sense control needs to be constantly assessed. They need to be withdrawn from unnecessary exposure to the world of objects, at least initially, till the composure of mind and

senses becomes natural. With this in view, the next four disciplines are talked about.

Uparamaḥ is the next disciplinary practice which is very important for the *sādhaka*.

उपरमः कः?

What is *uparamaḥ*?

स्वधर्मानुष्ठानमेव ।

It is following one's own prescribed duties as per one's status in life.

Though a single word answer, it is extremely meaningful. *Uparamaḥ* is given different shades of meaning depending upon the context. In this context the meaning is - withdrawal from what is not to be done and doing what is to be done. *Swadharmā anuṣṭhāna* means following the tenets of what the veda-s prescribe for each *varṇa* and *āshrama* to be done on a regular basis (*vihiṭa karma*) and not doing what is prohibited by the veda-s for the same person (*nishiddha karma*). This way, the *mumukṣhu* is not given to unnecessary exposure to the world and does not waste time.

Uparamaḥ is also defined as renunciation (*sannyāsa*), dedicating one's time to the pursuit of Self-Knowledge. Renunciation need not be taken as a physical process, but withdrawing the mind from the scenarios where the mind and senses are likely to get distracted.

In Bhagawadgītā, Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the example of a *sthitaprajña* who is able to withdraw his senses and mind like a tortoise (chapter 2 verse 58). *Uparamaḥ*, in effect, means one being in control or in charge of what has to be done and what needs to be avoided, to continue his unobstructed pursuit.

Now the fourth among the six disciplines being discussed is *titikshā* or forbearance.

तितिक्षा का?

What is *titikshā*?

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखादिसहिष्णुत्वम् ।

Titikshā is the capacity to endure heat, cold, pleasure, pain etc.

Sahishṇutvam is the capacity to face difficult situations not just helplessly but cheerfully. Life is full of situations which are sometimes very conducive and sometimes very difficult to deal with. Forbearance (*titikshā*) is going through the inevitable situations with the understanding that every situation is short lived.

Is it possible to go through such inevitable situations cheerfully? According to our scriptures, it is possible if one understands that all experiences are temporary and therefore, come and go. Lord Kṛshṇa says to Arjuna, “contact between sense-organs and the objective world cannot but give rise to various pleasant and unpleasant experiences and the only way to go through them is with forbearance, understanding the temporary nature of all experiences” (Bhagawadgītā chapter 2 verse 14).

Titikshā simplifies the *mumukshu*’s life by making available to him a non-complaining and undistracted mind. *Titikshā* is a great supporting quality to *shamaḥ* and *damaḥ*.

The fifth value among the six-fold discipline is called *shraddhā* or trust and faith.

श्रद्धा कीदृशी ?

What is *shraddhā* and what is its nature?

गुरुवेदान्तवाक्येषु विश्वासः श्रद्धा ।

Shraddhā is the trust in the words of the Guru and Vedānta.

Every object in the world is available for a means of knowledge which is called *pramāṇa*. All our sense organs and the capacity to infer from them is enough to perceive and understand any object in the world. In *Ātma-jñāna*, what is to be known and understood is the very knower itself! The nature of this knower is not available for the usual *pramāṇa-s* like the sense-organs and mind. The subject being subtle, is entirely based on a *pramāṇa* called the *Vedānta-pramāṇa* or *Shabda-pramāṇa*. The words of Vedānta have to be dealt by an adept Guru to make them meaningful and interpret them in the right manner. Hence, a *mumukshu* should have an unfaltering trust or faith in the words of Vedānta and the Guru, till he is himself able to see the truth in them. *Shraddhā* is the understanding, that the words of scriptures are true and not mere speculation. *Shraddhā* is also called the *satya buddhiḥ* or *āstikya buddhiḥ*. It is not blind faith. Have we not seen that we need to have this trust and faith even in the pursuit of any branch of wordly knowledge?

Lord Kṛṣṇa in Bhagawadgītā (chapter 4 verse 39) enumerates *shraddhā* as the first among the various *sādhanā-s* involved in the pursuit of Self-Knowledge.

Shraddhā strengthens the conviction of the *mumukshu* in his pursuit.

समाधानं किम्?

What is *samādhānam*?

चित्तैकाग्रता |

It is focusing the mind

Focusing or concentration of the mind is *samādhānam*. Before focusing one's mind, it is necessary to know what one's ultimate goal in life is – one which the mind should be focussed on. It should be decided thoughtfully and seriously prioritized. This goal should be constantly in one's mind. For a *mumukshu*, the ultimate goal is in knowing the Truth of Oneself. It is therefore necessary to focus the mind on the words of *shāstra*, being taught by the Guru. It is obvious that even in worldly goals one has to be focused, till the goal is reached. Self-Knowledge is very subtle and difficult to comprehend and may take a long time. The mind should be capable of remaining with the subject till it is not only understood but well assimilated. A well-prepared mind, which is purified by *karmayogaḥ* and sharpened by *upāsanāyogaḥ* gets the capacity to concentrate on a subtle subject like Self-Knowledge. *Samādhānam* should not be mistaken for cajoling or mollicoddling the mind. In *Viveka Chūḍāmaṇi*, Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya gives a warning - न तु चित्तस्य लालनम्.

The entire process of knowing the Self is longdrawn and requires all the other *sādhana chatuṣṭaya sampattiḥ* which have been already talked about.

It should be understood that the six-fold discipline comprising of *shamaḥ*, *damaḥ*, *uparamaḥ*, *titikshā*, *shraddhā* and *samādhāna* should go on simultaneously. None of these six disciplines is isolated. Without the other five, any one of them cannot exclusively serve the

purpose. This is the reason all the six are included in one group as *shamādi śhaṭka sampattiḥ*.

मुमुक्षुत्वं किम्?

What is *mumukshutwam*?

मोक्षो मे भूयाद् इति इच्छा ।

The desire to be free (from bondage) as 'May I be free'.

The desire to be free from the presently perceived bondage is called *mumukshutwam*. This desire requires the *sādhaka* to be sure of his priority and what he wants in life. As we know, there are four *purushārtha-s* --- *dharma, artha, kāma and moksha*. The former three continue to keep the person immersed and lost in the world of objects. This makes him come back again and again into a new body and experience the events according to his *prārabdha*. A rare individual, as a result of many *janma-s* of *puṇyaphala* and the grace of *Īshwara* realizes the futility of the *artha-* and *kāma-purushārtha-s* and decides to choose *moksha* as his only priority. This determination or मोक्ष पुरुषार्थ निश्चय is called *mumukshutwam*.

Mumukshutwam is again graded by the scriptures into three types... मन्द, मध्यम and तीव्र depending upon the intensity of seriousness for freedom. A *manda mumukshu* is aware that he is bound and unhappy, but does not worry much about freeing himself from his bondage. A *madhyama mumukshu* is one who feels the bondage and wants to be free and also knows that there is a way out; but is so deeply involved with his worldly activities that he does not commit himself to freeing himself. A *teevra mumukshu* on the other hand, is so intensely and acutely aware of his bondage that he, at any cost, wants to free himself and is willing to do whatever is required. Some

scriptures compare this desperation for freedom from bondage to a drowning person who is desperate for a breath of air. It is only a *teevra mumukshu*, who has done the मोक्ष पुरुषार्थ निश्चय and not willing to compromise it for anything else, is an *uttama adhikārī*, for *Shāstra-vichāra*. Such a *teevra mumukshu* can go through the entire process of *karma, upāsana and jñānayogaḥ* and only such a *sādhaka* will be benefited by the *Guru and Shāstra-vachana*.

In *Viveka Chūḍāmaṇi*, Ādi Shaṅkarāchārya goes to the extent of saying that *mumukshutvam* is the first among all the *sādhana chatuṣṭaya sampattiḥ*. The other three will follow automatically when *mumukshutvam* is deep enough.

एतत् साधनचतुष्टयम्।

ततस्तत्त्वविवेकस्याधिकारिणो भवन्ति ।

This is *sādhana chatuṣṭayam* and persons with these qualifications are eligible for *moksha*.

Now, the topic on qualifications and eligibility for *moksha* and its route is concluded. *Tattvabodhaḥ* now summarises the *adhikāritvam* for the entire road to *moksha*. *Tattva-viveka*, here, means the Knowledge of the Self which frees one from bondage. This is the uniform declaration of all *Upaniṣad-s*— ज्ञानात्तु एव कैवल्यम् *jñānāt tu eva kaivalyam* or freedom from bondage is only by knowing the true nature of the Self. There is no other means.... *nānya panthā vidhyate ayanāya* (नान्यपन्था विध्यते अयनाय) - other than knowing Oneself.

For this *Tattva-viveka*, *sādhana chatuṣṭaya sampattiḥ* is an absolutely essential prerequisite. It is only such an *adhikārī* who successfully and effortlessly attains *moksha*, his chosen *puruṣhārtha*. For a person who is not qualified with this four-fold qualification, *moksha-puruṣhārtha* becomes a difficult goal to reach.

The scriptures are very categoric in their stand that only a person with the four-fold qualification (साधन चतुष्टय सम्पन्न अधिकारी), is capable of enquiring into this subtle subject of the Truth (Self); otherwise the whole effort becomes a useless pursuit. Every text on Vedānta, including the *Upaniṣhad-s* talk about this topic in the beginning. The very first sūtra in *Brahmasūtra* says अथातो ब्रह्म जिज्ञासा which means 'one should strive for this Knowledge after the necessary qualifications'.

Now the *Brahma-jijñāsā* or the enquiry into the subject begins with a question from the *shishya*.

तत्त्वविवेकः कः?

What is the discriminative knowledge of Truth? (*viveka* means discriminative knowledge and *Tattva* means the Truth).

आत्मा सत्यं तदन्यत् सर्वं मिथ्येति ।

Ātmā (I) is (am) the only truth and everything else other than the 'I' is *mithyā* (apparent or only an appearance).

Two most important words of Vedānta which form the central teaching of all the *Upaniṣhad-s* are introduced here. Of course, during the course of the text these two words will be discussed in more detail, but here the meaning and basic understanding of these two words is brought out.

A discriminative analysis leading to an understanding is called *Tattva-viveka*. *Vedānta* also leads us step-by-step into such an analysis so that one reaches the understanding effortlessly. What is this understanding? It is 'I' the Self, alone, is the ultimate Truth or *Satyam* and everything whatsoever is only an appearance or *mithyā*.

Satyam and *mithyā* are not tangible objects that can be seen or grasped. These are the words that reveal an object. Technically, they are called as अभिधान and अभिधेय respectively. Let us try to understand these two terms with a common example.

Let us take a clay pot. The clay pot has two words indicating two things. The basic substance of the pot is the clay and the pot is a name and form with a functional utility. Now, the pot exists as an object for practical reasons; but what is the truth of the pot? It is the clay. If we weigh the pot, the weight is that of the clay. Can we separate the pot from the clay? Can the pot exist independently of clay? If so, then we can separate the pot and clay and you can keep the pot and I can keep the clay. Is this possible? Before the pot came into existence there was only clay. After the pot came into existence, it is still clay and after the pot breaks into pieces - what remains is also only clay. So now, are clay and pot two different things?

Vedānta says that what really exists independently is only clay. The pot is only a name and form and utility for the same clay. The pot cannot exist independent of clay. Though the pot is experienced by us, it has no independent existence. Its existence depends upon the clay. Thus, the pot has an apparent or incidental or only a nominal existence; the clay exists independently with or without the pot. The clay, therefore, is *Satyam*. The pot or mug or plate or any other object made of this clay is only an apparent appearance, which comes at a period in time and disappears in time. Hence, all the objects of clay like the pot etc. are *mithyā*.

Mithyā also exists, but what kind of a reality is it? Its existence is entirely dependent upon something else. *Satyam* lends its existence to every *mithyā* object and every *mithyā* borrows existence from *Satyam*. Therefore, there is no such object called *mithyā*. *Mithyā* is

the understanding that - what I experience is only an apparent reality and there is some definite Reality (*satyam*) on which it depends for its existence. *Chāndogya Upanishad* explains this beautifully in its famous statement वाचारम्भणम् विकारो नामधेयम्, मृत्तिका इत्येव सत्यम् |

Extending the same example, our scriptures say that the only substance, the only truth, the only thing that exists which is the very substratum (अधिष्ठानम्) of the entire universe is the *Ātmā*. *Ātmā* will be explained in detail in the subsequent verses. *Ātmā* is the 'Self' which is the only *Satyam*; the whole universe of objects other than the *Ātmā* is only an apparent and dependent existence. *Ātmā* is another word for 'I'. In Sanskrit, the Self is called '*Ātman*' or 'I'.

This discriminative knowledge of *satyam-mithyā* is called *tattva-viveka*.

The question, "What is *Tattva-viveka*?" - was asked by the *sādhana chatuṣṭaya sampanna shishya*. The teacher answered that a clear understanding and conviction that 'Self (*Ātmā*) alone is real and everything other than That (*Ātmā*) is unreal'.

The teacher also explained in detail and also brought out the two most important words used in *Advaita Vedānta - Satyam and Mithyā* (absolute and apparent).

Now the *shishya* wants to understand the meaning of the word '*Ātmā*'. We can see here, how the text goes methodically word-by-word and step-by-step to make the *shishya* understand.

Naturally, the next question asked is –

आत्मा कः?

What is *Ātmā*?

स्थूलसूक्ष्मकारणशरीराद् व्यतिरिक्तः पञ्चकोशातीतः सन्
अवस्थात्रयसाक्षी सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः सन् यस्तिष्ठति स आत्मा ।

That which is other than the gross, subtle and causal bodies, beyond the five sheaths and the witness of the three states of a *jīva* and is always of the nature of Existence, Consciousness and completeness is called the *Ātmā*.

Now, the words '*Satyam*' and '*Mithyā*' need to be defined. To understand that *Ātmā* alone is '*satyam*', the scriptures take the help of different modules of communication which are called '*Prakriyā-s*' (प्रक्रिया). The most commonly used *prakriya-s* to define that *Ātmā* alone is *Satyam* and anything other than that - is *Mithyā* – are described below.

Here, the Guru uses the three *prakriyā-s* where *Ātmā* is described by negating experiential objects.

When one says 'I', this 'I' includes the body, mind, sense complexes and the individual ego. But the most important entity which enlivens or gives sentience but different from this body-mind-sense complex - individual is called the '*Consciousness*' or *Ātmā*.

The body-mind-sense complex is represented in different ways. In one *prakriyā*, it is looked upon as a composite of 3 bodies; the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body (स्थूल सूक्ष्म कारण शरीराणि). Such a module is called as the three-layered-body module (शरीर त्रय प्रक्रिया).

The same three layers of the body-mind-sense complex can be divided in another way into five sheaths (पञ्च कोशाः). These layers start

from the grossest physical body and go into the other four subtler sheaths. Describing the *Ātmā* using this module, is called the पञ्चकोश प्रक्रिया.

The individual body-mind-sense complex also goes through three states of experience - waking, dreaming and deep-sleep states (जाग्रत् स्वप्न सुषुप्ति अवस्था) - throughout the day for its entire life. It is strange but true, that every living being is always in one of these mutually exclusive states. This means, at any given time, the living being is only in one of the three states and these three keep coming one after the other. The module which uses these three states of experience of a living being to describe the *Ātmā* is called the अवस्था त्रय प्रक्रिया.

Now, using these three modules, the Guru defines the *Ātmā* as that which is distinct from the three bodies (स्थूल सूक्ष्म कारण शरीराद् व्यतिरिक्तः), beyond the five sheaths of experience (पञ्चकोशातीतः) and a mere witness of the three states of experience (अवस्थात्रयसाक्षी).

This clearly means that *Ātmā* is not the three bodies, not the five sheaths and not even the three states of experience of a *jīva*. Then, what is it?

After defining it by 'what it is not' (method of negation), the Guru goes on to define it in a positive way. This is very necessary because, if *Ātmā* is defined as neither this....nor this....not this...not that, then there is a possibility of misunderstanding it to be a void (शून्यः). Now therefore, the definition of *Ātmā* is given positively with respect to its inherent nature which is called *swarūpa lakṣṇaḥ* (स्वरूप लक्षणः).

That which remains forever in the nature of Existence (सत्), Consciousness/ awareness (चित्) and Fullness/completeness (आनन्दः) is *Ātmā*. The invariable pulsating 'I' Consciousness is the very nature of *Ātmā*.

The details of each and every aspect of the three bodies, the five sheaths, the three states of experience of the living being are going to be described in detail later.

The Guru, now, elaborately discusses each of these three bodies, the five sheaths and the three states of the *jīva* - after having defined *Ātmā* as that 'Consciousness – Awareness'.

The Gross Body:

स्थूलशरीरं किम्?

What is this gross body?

पञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतैः कृतं सत्कर्मजन्यम्
सुखदुःखादिभोगायतनं शरीरम्
अस्ति जायते वर्धते विपरिणमते अपक्षीयते विनश्यतीति
षड्विकारवदेतत् स्थूलशरीरम् ।

Sthūla sharīra is that which is a product of the five great elements which have undergone a process called *pañchīkaraṇam*, which is born as a result of good *karma* of the past, which is a locus of all experiences - such as joy and sorrow etc - which is subject to six types of modifications - exists in a potential form, born, grows, matures, decays and dies.

Now each of these definitions is explained by the Guru in a systematic manner and in detail -

The most basic thing about the gross body is that it is an 'elemental', which is made of the five elements. The five elements - space, air, fire, water and earth (which exist initially as subtle elements or तन्मात्राणि) go through a process of grossification. This process of subtle elements grossifying themselves to form the physical body is called *pañchīkaraṇam* (पञ्चीकरणम्). The exact process

of this grossification is dealt with in detail in the later sections. In short, the mixing up of all these five elements in various permutations and combinations is what constitutes the gross body and also the gross world of objects. It should be understood that the gross body also belongs to the world of objects and thus formed by the same process.

The next important part of the definition of the gross body is that it is *सकर्मजन्यम्* or the result of the good *karma-s* of the past. It is said that the human birth is rare and to be born as a human among about 1,84,000 *jīva-s*, one should have done enough good deeds in the past. Why is human birth considered to be the best in the creation? It is because in this birth, the *jīva* has the choice to attain *mokṣha* or to devolve into lower births. The four *purushārtha-s* or human pursuits are available only for the human organism. It is only in the human birth that the intellect can be used as an instrument in a discriminative and logical way. According to the scriptures, *jīva* gets a human birth as a result of many *janma-s* of good deeds and by the grace of *Īshwara*.

The next description of the human body is *सुखदुःखादिभोगायतनं शरीरम्*. The gross body is the locus or window of experience of all transactions - joys and sorrows of life. As long as the gross body exists (from its birth to its death), all the transactions with other *jīva-s* and with the world outside happen only at the level of the physical body. The scriptures describe this body as a nine-gated city. The gross body supported by the sense-organs carries out all the transactions. As a result of these transactions with the world, the resultant happiness and sorrow are also suffered by the body.

Lastly, the Guru describes the gross body to be constantly changing. The changes or *vikāra-s* that the physical body goes

through are described as six-fold modifications or षड्विकार-s. These are: 1) *Asti* (अस्ति) which means, it exists in the potential form as in the mother's womb, not yet manifest as an individual. 2) *Jāyate* (जायते) or it is born and has its own individual body-mind complex. 3) *Vardhate* (वर्धते) it grows in size nourished by food towards adulthood. 4) *Vipariṇamate* (विपरिणमते) metamorphoses into adulthood and attains the peak of its potential. 5) *Apakshīyate* (अपक्षीयते) slowly starts decaying after being in a plateau once adulthood is reached. The physical body weakens, its faculties slow down and general strength of the individual decreases. This is colloquially called ageing. This is the time; the body is most prone to illnesses (व्याधि). This process of *apakshaya* is also called *jarā* (जरा). For a human body this is the most difficult modification to handle. The last of the modification is 6) *Death* (विनश्यति). This is the final modification when the gross body totally disintegrates and merges into its constituent five elements. Out of the three bodies enumerated here, the gross body is the shortest lived - a maximum of 120 years.

Why has the gross body been described in such a detail by the Tattvabodhaḥ? It is for the benefit of the *mumukshu* to contemplate that "I am the Consciousness which is the witness of this gross body (स्थूलशरीरम्). I am neither born, nor do I die, but I ever am".

After having described the gross body (स्थूलशरीरम्), now the Guru goes to the next layer of *anātmā*, which is the subtle body (सूक्ष्म शरीरम्). As typical of Tattvabodhaḥ, the student asks the question directly:

सूक्ष्मशरीरम् किम् ?

What is subtle body?

अपञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतैः कृतम् सत्कर्मजन्यम्

सुखदुःखादिभोगसाधनम् पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियाणि पञ्चप्राणादयः मनश्चैकम्
बुद्धिश्चैका एवं सप्तदशकलाभिः सह यत्तिष्ठति तत्सूक्ष्मशरीरम् ।

Subtle body is that which is made up of the ungrossified or subtle five elements, which is born of good actions of the past and which has seventeen parts in the form of five organs of perception, five organs of action, five prāṇa-s, a mind and an intellect. This conglomeration is called the subtle body.

This long definition of the subtle body (सूक्ष्म शरीरम्) needs to be explained in detail. The subtle body is not a single entity but a conglomeration or a methodical combination of many organs with different functions.

The subtle body is not grossly experienced by the individual or others. It can, of course, be felt by the particular individual in the form of functioning of the subtle body. The gross body is the 'anatomy' and the subtle body is the 'physiology' of the individual. The subtle body pervades the entire gross body and makes the gross body function. The subtle body is the indicator of life. Therefore, it is also called the लिङ्ग शरीरम्. When a living being dies, the subtle body leaves the gross body and what remains is the gross body without life. Thus, death is also called *sthūlasharīra sūksh_hmasharīra viyogaḥ* (स्थूलशरीर सूक्ष्मशरीर वियोगः).

What is it made up of?

This is explained in the first part of the definition as अपञ्चीकृतपञ्चमहाभूतैः कृतम्. It is made up of the five great elements

(पञ्चमहाभूतानि) in their original form as तन्मात्राणि. These five elements do not undergo any change or grossification which is called *pañcīkaraṇam* (पञ्चीकरणम्) as in the case of gross body. However they associate with each other in different combinations to form the various functional parts of the subtle body.

The next definition of the subtle body here is सत्कर्मजन्यम्. This means, the birth of such bodies as human or higher beings, is a result of the good actions done in the past lives. The scriptures say, that a *jīva* has a mixture of both good and bad *karmaphala-s* and a human birth is ideal to work out these *karmaphala-s*. As the proportion of good *karma-s* increase, the human being has better set of circumstances around him/her. This is the reason why we find no uniformity in the experiences of happiness and unhappiness in different individuals. According to the law of *Karma*, each subtle body brings with it a unique combination of *karmaphala-s* which have to be worked out.

The next definition that is given is सुखदुःखादिभोगसाधनम्. The mind and the intellect are an integral part of the subtle body which actually experience all the good as happiness and bad as sorrow. The gross body is the *āyatanam* of experiences (refer to the definition of gross body), but the subtle body is the instrument through which these are experienced. That is why the dead body does not experience anything.

The last part of the description talks about the components of the subtle body. It says that it is a composite of seventeen functioning parts (सप्तदशकलाभिः). What are these parts? Tattvabodhaḥ explains that they are five organs of perception (पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि), five organs of action (पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियाणि), five *prāṇa-s* (पञ्चप्राणादयः), *manah* or mind (मनश्चैकम्) and *buddhiḥ* or intellect (बुद्धिश्चैका).

The organs of perception (पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि) are not the anatomical parts we see as eyes, ears, nose etc, but the faculty of these external parts to perceive their respective objects. There may be a normal looking eye externally but it may lack the faculty of sight. The faculty of each organ of perception is called the *indriya* (इन्द्रियाणि). The *indriya*-s belong to the subtle body and their corresponding anatomical parts which are called *goṭakā*-s (गोळकाः) belong to the gross body.

The five *prāṇa*-s are the five important physiological functions which deal with digestion, circulation, respiration, excretion, reproduction etc.

The mind is the faculty with which the *jīva* experiences emotions, doubts and volition. The intellect (*buddhiḥ*) has the capacity to observe, learn, analyse and decide. These two are also called *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* (अन्तःकरणः) or the inner instrument. The अन्तःकरणः actually propels the body to act and transact in the world with other *jīva*-s and the objects of the world.

Can all these seventeen parts be demarcated in the subtle body? No, they are functional depictions of the subtle body.

How do all these seventeen organs function in unison almost like a perfect orchestra? This is explained in the following verses in detail.

After having given a brief introduction to the सूक्ष्म शरीरम् (with its seventeen components) now the Guru explains in detail the functions of all these components of the subtle body (सूक्ष्म शरीरम्) - the five organs of perception (पञ्चज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि), five organs of action (पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियाणि) the five physiological functions (पञ्चप्राणादयः) and the inner instrument which is composed of mind and intellect (मनश्चैकम्, बुद्धिश्चैका).

Now, each of these four sets of organs is explained. One very important point in the discussion is the mention of the presiding deity (अधिदेवता) for each of these organs. Our scriptures explain that no

organ in a *jīva* can function without the blessing of *Īshwara* in the form of a specific deity (इन्द्रिय देवताः) - the functionaries of every organ system in the body.

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 गन्धग्रहणम् इति ।

The meaning of these lines is self-explanatory. The five sense-organs (ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि or बुद्धीन्द्रियाणि) are the ears, the skin, the eyes, the tongue and the nose.

It is necessary to understand that the *indriya-s* are not the anatomical parts (गोळकाः meaning 'masses of flesh') but their capacity or functioning of that anatomical part. *Goīakā-s* are the gateways of the sense-organs.

The capacity to hear the sound is the function of the hearing *indriya* which is placed in the ears. The capacity to feel is the function of the skin *indriya* which is located in the skin of the entire body. By extension, we can say that the sense of sight is placed in the eyes, the sense of taste in the tongue and the sense of smell in the nose.

The entire world that we perceive is only through these five organs of perception. Hence, the world is also called five-fold experience (प्रपञ्च).

Each of these organs of perception has a presiding deity, which is common to all the living beings. *Digdevatā-s* are the deities for the faculty of hearing as sound travels in space. Sun is the deity for the faculty of vision, Sun being the source of light - lights up the whole

universe. *Vāyu devatā* is the presiding deity of the sense of touch, *Varuṇa* is the deity of taste as we all experience tastelessness in a dry tongue and the twin gods *Ashwinīkumāra-s* are the deities in charge of the faculty of smell.

Now the organs of action are being talked about. The same scheme of explanation follows as for the organs of perception.

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 ।

The organs of action are speech, hands, feet, the organs of excretion and the organ of procreation, also called the *karmendriya-s* (पञ्चकर्मेन्द्रियाणि). The words are self-explanatory. All the actions that happen during the transaction with the world happen through a combination of one or more of these organs of action.

Just as in the case of the organs of perception, the scriptures talk about the presiding deities which oversee the function of each of these organs in all the living beings. They are; Lord *Agni* for the speech, Lord *Indra* for the hands, Lord *Vishṇu* for the feet, Lord *Yama* for the organ of excretion and Lord *Prajāpati* for the organs of procreation. The function of the organ of speech is to speak, the hands to grasp the objects, the feet for movement from place to place, the organ of excretion for the evacuation of the waste material from the body and the organ of procreation is for the purpose of continuing the species.

In the verse naming the seventeen organs of the subtle body, the mind and intellect (मनश्चैक, बुद्धिश्चैका) are mentioned – which are faculties

of the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* or the inner instrument. However, the text does not describe this in detail here. It describes it later in the discussion. To complete the discussion, it would be appropriate to take it here itself.

Mind is the seat of emotions and is vacillating and doubting in nature (संशयात्मक विकल्पात्मक मनः). Moon is the presiding deity of the mind.

Intellect (*Buddhiḥ*) of the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ*, on the other hand, is the faculty deliberation and determination in any situation (निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः). *Bṛhaspati* is the presiding deity of the intellect.

The five *prāṇa*-s are described in the later section.

After having explained the subtle body (सूक्ष्म शरीरम्) with all its seventeen integral components, the third type of body - causal body (कारण शरीरम्) is described. Here, we should remember the question asked by the disciple, “What is *Ātmā*”? For which, the teacher said that it is other than the three bodies; the gross, the subtle and the causal.

कारण शरीरं किम्?

What is causal body?

अनिर्वाच्यानाद्यविद्यारूपं शरीरद्वयस्य कारणमात्रं सत्स्वरूपाज्ञानं निर्विकल्पकरूपं यदस्ति तत्कारणशरीरम् ।

That which is inexplicable, that which is without a beginning, that which exists in the form of ignorance, that which is the seed-cause of the other two bodies, that which is ignorant of its own nature, that which is free from any duality, is the causal body.

The gross body is visible to one-self and others and has a very short lifespan. The subtle body is only felt by oneself and not available for recognition by others, whereas the causal body is the most subtle of all the three bodies. It is not recognizable by one-self or others and can be concluded only by inference.

Now, let us see what each word in the description of the causal body means.

अनिर्वाच्यानाद्यविद्यारूपं - *Avidyā* is self-ignorance. It means that one does not know the true nature of oneself. The scriptures say that this self-ignorance does not begin any time. It is beginning-less. The only relief is that, it can be ended when one knows one's own true nature. If it was beginning-less and endless then, there was no chance for the human being to Know himself. Then, the entire process of Self-enquiry and our scriptures which only talk about the true nature of every one of us as '*Ātma-swarūpa*' would be useless. The very Self-enquiry is because I do not know who I am; I am constantly identifying myself with the body-mind-sense complex which I am not. This ignorance is called *satswarūpa ajñānam* (सत्स्वरूप अज्ञानम्).

Now, Tattvabodhaḥ teacher says that this *avidyā* is *anirvāchyam*. *Anirvāchyam* means that which appears to be true, but on investigation is not really there; seems to exist, but on enquiry it is really not there; it is experienced but not really there. Such a thing which cannot be said to be definitely present or absent is experienced by us daily - as a dream - which appears to be so true when we experience it, but has no reality. What a magician weaves with his magic is also a similar thing. The apt term used by the scriptures which means it is neither true nor false, that which cannot be explained accurately in words is *Nirvaktum ayogyam* or *Sadasadbhām anirvachaniyam* (निर्वक्तुम्-अयोग्यम् or सदसद्भाम् अनिर्वचनीयम्).

शरीरद्वयस्य कारणमात्रम् - The *kāraṇa sharīram* is the seed from which both the gross and the subtle bodies emerge. How does it happen? When I do not know my true nature, I project something which is not true and the scriptures say that both the gross and subtle bodies are the projections out of this ignorance. They are not the true self or 'Ātmā'. The very purpose of the scriptures is to show that all the three bodies are nothing but projected attributes (उपाधि-s).

सत्स्वरूपाज्ञानम् - I do not know - Who I am. I may wonder how such a statement can be made by the scriptures. It is true, that I know - who I am - only from the standpoint of - my gross body, my relationship with reference to some other gross bodies or what this gross body engages itself in. For example, "I am 5 feet tall, I am the son, husband or father of such and such a person, I do this particular job" etc etc.

At the most, I may know myself from the attributes of my subtle body with reference to the sense-organs or mind; as "I am blind or hard of hearing or intelligent or confused..." etc etc.

The scriptures say that "All these are mere attributes or उपाधि-s. They are not your true nature. Because you do not know your true nature (सत्स्वरूपम् / आत्मस्वरूपम्) you project everything else as You".

निर्विकल्पकरूपम् - Ignorance is a homogenous mass. It has no divisions or gradations. Ignorance cannot be divided as 'your ignorance' and 'my ignorance'. The object of ignorance may vary, but the nature of ignorance 'I do not know' is the same indivisible one. Knowledge can have gradations (partial knowledge, wrong knowledge, right knowledge) but not ignorance.

Ignorance is also called 'error' where - one is mistaken for the other or when - ignorance of 'what is', is mistaken for something else. This is the exact mechanism of self-ignorance. The typical example used by the scriptures is the rope-snake.

Ignorance can be destroyed by Knowledge. Therefore, causal body is not eternal. It vanishes on knowing the 'Self'.

After having defined the three bodies; the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body (स्थूल शरीरम्, सूक्ष्म शरीरम् and कारण शरीरम्), now Tattvabodhaḥ goes on to describe the three states of the mind.

The living organism experiences three states of being which belong to the mind. When the *jīva* is awake, the mind, intellect and the sense-organs along with the physical body interact with the external world. When the *jīva* sleeps and experiences a dream, the physical body and the sense-organs are inactive. However, the mind is active experiencing the dream. In deep-sleep, the same *jīva* is totally oblivious to the external world or the internal or private world of the dream. All these states (अवस्था-s) belong to the body-mind-sense complex and not to the *Ātmā* or Consciousness.

Thus, in the definition of the *Ātmā*, a term अवस्था त्रय साक्षी was used.

अवस्थात्रयं किम्?

What are the three states?

जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्त्यवस्थाः ।

They are waking, dreaming and sleep states.

जाग्रदवस्था का?

What is the waking state?

श्रोत्रादिज्ञानेन्द्रियैः शब्दादि विषयैश्च ज्ञायते इति या सा जाग्रदवस्था ।
स्थूलशरीराभिमानी आत्मा विश्व इत्युच्यते ।

It is a state, in which, the *jīva* experiences the world outside through his sense-organs - like the sound perceived through the ears

etc. Here, the *jīva* totally identifies with the gross body and interacts with the world. We have to recollect here that in the description of the gross body, Tattvabodhaḥ calls it भोग आयतनम् or the locus of experience. The gross body cannot function without the backing of the subtle body or *indriya-s* - the sense-organs of perception (ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि) and organs of action (कर्मेन्द्रियाणि). In the waking state, the *jīva* has the conviction that he is the doer and enjoyer (कर्ता and भोक्ता). Due to the identification with the gross body, the *jīva* is called *vishwah* (विश्वः) by the scriptures.

For the *vishwah*, the world is solid and real. However, it is only part of the day when *vishwah* is transacting with the world. The very same solid world disappears in the other two states.

Now, the dream state-

स्वप्नावस्था केति चेत् जाग्रदवस्थायां यद्
दृष्टं यत् श्रुतं तज्जनित-वासनया निद्रासमये यः
प्रपञ्चः प्रतीयते सा स्वप्नावस्था।
सूक्ष्मशरीराभिमानि आत्मा तैजस इत्युच्यते।

What is the state of dream?

One dreams, when one falls asleep. During sleep, the gross body is not available to transact with the world. All the *indriya-s* are folded up. However, the mind is partially active (not fully as in the waking state). The mind by itself, independently projects an inner world of objects and situations very similar to the waking state. What is the raw material from which the mind weaves the web of the dream state?

Tattvabodhaḥ says that all the experiences that the *jīva* goes through during the waking state are stored in the deep recesses of

the mind as impressions (*vāsanā-s*). During sleep, these impressions are culled out by the mind and a world of dream is created.

Here, the gross body being totally unavailable, the subtle body transacts by itself entirely with the dream world - similar to the waking world. The *jīva* thus, totally identifies with the subtle body (सूक्ष्मशरीराभिमानी). This *jīva* is called *taijasaḥ* (तैजसः - thought created). While dreaming, the dream appears absolutely real.

We often feel - what we see in the dream has never been experienced by us during waking state at any time - then how can the mind project the events as though experienced before? The mind can mix and match and warp the waking experiences and project a strange dream.

अथ सुषुप्त्यवस्था का?

अहं किमपि न जानामि सुखेन मया निद्राऽनुभूयत इति सुषुप्त्यवस्था।
कारणशरीराभिमानी आत्मा प्राज्ञ इत्युच्यते।

What is the state of deep sleep?

In deep-sleep state the identification with the gross and subtle bodies is totally given up. The two bodies are in the seed form and the *jīva* identifies with only the causal body (कारण शरीरम्). The person in deep sleep does not know anything. He is totally unaware of his gross and subtle bodies. Except for the प्राणः or the life force, all the other organs are temporarily shut off. This is a state of bliss too; the deep sleeper is unconcerned with his surroundings or any of his problems. Does the *jīva* know this in deep sleep? No. It is only when he wakes up, can he say that “I slept so peacefully and did not know anything”.

The sleeper *jīva* identified with the *kāraṇa sharīra* is given the name *Prājñāḥ* (प्राज्ञः). The waking and dream states differ for different

individuals depending upon the individual situations but the deep-sleep state is common for all the *jīva*-s.

The three states of experiences are mutually exclusive. It means that I can be only in one state at one time. But there is ‘someone’ who is the experiencer of all these states and that is the *Ātmā*.

Now, Tattvabodhaḥ teacher wants to explain the five sheaths of the living organism.

The body-mind-sense complex of any living being can be divided in different ways. We already saw the three-fold division of gross body, subtle body and the causal body. We also saw the three-fold division of the three states of the mind. Now, the same body-mind-sense complex which is also called अनात्मा कार्यकरण सङ्घातः can be considered in a five-fold way. The scriptures call this पञ्चकोश विवेकः|

पञ्च-कोशाः के?

What are the five sheaths?

अन्नमयः प्राणमयः मनोमयः विज्ञानमयः आनन्दमयश्चेति ।

They are *annamayah* (the food sheath), *prāṇamayah* (the vital air sheath), *manomayah* (the mind sheath), *vijñānamayah* (the intellect sheath) and *ānandamayah* (happiness sheath).

One can easily see that the gross body is the *annamayah*. The subtle body is divided into three subdivisions as *prāṇamayah*, *manomayah* and *vijñānamayah* and the causal body is called the *ānandamayah koshāḥ*.

Koshah means a sheath or a covering like the layers of clothes covering our body one after the other or a scabbard of a sword. The clothes and the scabbard cover their respective objects being of the

same shape and also conceal the underlying object from the eye. In the same way *Ātmā* or Consciousness is covered (as though) by these five sheaths. All these five sheaths have their dedicated functions and their functioning is possible only because of the presence of *Ātmā*.

Now the sheaths and their functions are explained in detail.

अन्नमयः कः ?

What is *annamayaḥ kosaḥ*?

अन्नरसेनैव भूत्वा अन्नरसेनैव वृद्धिं प्राप्य अन्नरूपपृथिव्यां यद्विलीयते तदन्नमयः कोशः स्थूलशरीरम् ।

That which is born out of the essence of food, grows by food and ultimately resolves into the earth is called the *annamayaḥ kosaḥ*. It is the gross body.

All the sheaths are given a suffix *mayaḥ* which means modification.

The gross body is born out of the modifications of the food eaten by the parents. Once the body is born, it is sustained and grows only by the modification of the food eaten and ultimately when it dies, it merges with the earth which is nothing but a modification of food. From that earth we are born back. This is the well-known 'food cycle' explained by modern science. The *annamayaḥ kosaḥ* is the gross body (स्थूलशरीरम्) which is the locus of all actions and experiences of the *jīva*. The same gross body is the food for various other living beings while alive and after death too.

The *annamayaḥ kosaḥ* can be called as the 'anatomy' of a living organism.

Now the next sheath, the vital-air sheath (*prāṇamayaḥ kosaḥ*) can be called the 'physiology' of the living being. The gross body

survives by breathing, digesting food, circulating the food and oxygen to various tissues, excreting the waste products, throwing out the unwanted and toxic substances by certain processes. All these functions are carried out by the five-fold *prāṇamayah koshah*.

प्राणमयः कः?

What is the *prāṇamayah koshah*?

प्राणाद्याःपञ्चवायवः वागादीन्द्रियपञ्चकं प्राणमयः कोशः ।

These five physiological functions of the living being along with the five organs are the modifications of air (वायु विकारः). These are -

प्राणः (Breathing) - Breathing is the most important function which keeps the living being alive. *Prāṇah* is used synonymously with breathing - a process of inhalation and exhalation.

अपानः (Excretion) - The process of excreting the waste material from the body is the evacuating *prāṇah* called *apānaprāṇah*.

व्यानः (Circulation) - Blood circulates throughout the body from the heart through miles of blood vessels only to supply oxygen and nutrients to each and every part of the body called *vyānaprāṇah*.

उदानः (Reversing process) - When the body is afflicted by unwanted and toxic substances, the body tries to get rid of them in the form of vomiting, purging, sneezing, coughing and tear production. At the time of death, *udānaprāṇah* is the one which pushes the subtle body out of the gross body, the final reversing process.

समानः (Digestion) - The food consumed by the living being is gross, it has to be digested at various levels by different processes and only the nutrients have to be circulated to the tissues. This digesting *prāṇah* is the *samānaprāṇah*.

It can be seen that all these five physiological functions have to work in harmony. One *prāṇaḥ* by itself cannot work without the support of the others. These five physiological functions work ceaselessly throughout the life of the individual - even in deep sleep, the *prāṇamayāḥ kosaḥ* functions silently.

This vital-air sheath along with the organs of action (कर्मेन्द्रियाणि) is called *prāṇamayāḥ kosaḥ*.

प्राणमयः कोशः - Hunger, thirst, weakness, exhaustion are some of the manifestations of this sheath.

We are now dealing with the five sheaths into which the three bodies are categorized. Of these five, the first two - the food sheath (अन्नमय कोशः) and the vital-air sheath (प्राणमय कोशः) were explained in detail by the teacher.

Now the Guru proceeds to explain the three innermost sheaths...the *mental* sheath, the *intellectual* sheath and the *bliss* sheath. We must remember that all these five sheaths are imagined to be like one within the other for the sake of description. In reality, these sheaths function as one unit and are not really one inside the other.

मनोमयः कोशः कः?

What is *manomayāḥ kosaḥ*?

मनश्च ज्ञानेन्द्रियपञ्चकम् मिलित्वा यो भवति स मनोमयः कोशः ।

The mind along with the five sense organs of perception together is known as *manomayāḥ kosaḥ*.

The sense-organs of perception (eyes, ears, skin, nose and the tongue) report their perceptions to the mind and it is the mind which

recognizes whatever is reported by them. We have often seen that even with our eyes open and ears open, if the mind does not back them, there is no perception at all. We can thus, say that the mind is the master of the orchestra of sense-organs. It is the mind which perceives the world through the sense-organs.

Mind is also described as the locus of emotions - sadness, happiness, uncertainty, insecurity, likes, dislikes etc. Mind predominantly has the faculty of doubt- "Should I do it or not?" "Did I do the right thing?" "Should I do this or that?" Technically, the mind is defined as *saṅkalpātmakaḥ vikalpātmakaḥ manaḥ* (सङ्कल्पात्मकः विकल्पात्मकः मनः) - The mind can never come to a conclusion. It keeps vacillating from thought to thought.

The mind is also called the inner-instrument (अन्तःकरणम्). This inner instrument is divided four-fold depending upon its functions as *mind, intellect, individual ego and memory*...मनः, बुद्धिः, अहङ्कारः and चित्तः respectively. These are not four distinct areas of the inner-instrument, but when the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* vacillates in doubt it is called *manaḥ*. When it is decisive it is called *buddhiḥ*, when it recollects from memory it is called *chittaḥ* and when it functions as an individual (ex; "I am eating, I am listening," etc), it is called *ahankāraḥ*.

The next sheath explained by the Tattvabodhaḥ teacher is the intellect sheath (विज्ञानमयः कोशः).

विज्ञानमयः कः?

What is *vijñānamayaḥ kośaḥ*?

बुद्धिज्ञानेन्द्रियपञ्चकं मिलित्वा यो भवति स विज्ञानमयः कोशः ।

The intellect and the five organs of perception together is the intellect sheath.

This sheath is subtler than the mind sheath. It is interesting to note that both the mind sheath and the intellect sheath have the five sense-organs as their integral parts. This is because, all the information that is reported by the five organs of perception have to be processed and cognized. This combination of perception and cognition requires the intellect sheath which has the faculty of 'discrimination' and 'decision-making'. Technically, therefore, the *buddhiḥ* or the intellect sheath is called 'निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः'. The mind carries the various perceptions from the sense-organs to the *buddhiḥ* and the *buddhiḥ* based on the memory of previous experiences cognizes the perceptions sent by the mind. Thus, the mind (*manaḥ*) and intellect (*buddhiḥ*) functions hand-in-hand as one integral unit.

The *prāṇamayaḥ*, *manomayaḥ* and *vijñānamayaḥ kośāḥ* all together form the subtle body.

Now, the fifth (inner most) sheath is explained -

आनन्दमयः कः ?

What is *Ānandamayāḥ kōshāḥ*?

एवमेव कारणशरीरभूताविद्यास्थमलिनसत्त्वम्

प्रियादिवृत्तिसहितं सत् आनन्दमयः कोशः ।

एतत् कोशपञ्चकम् ।

That which abides in the form of ignorance (*avidyā*) as causal body, having an impure nature associated with thoughts of various degrees of pleasure is *ānandamayāḥ* sheath. This is the system of five-fold sheaths.

Ānandamayāḥ means that sheath which is associated with degrees of pleasure or *ānanda*. The experience of pleasure is subject to change in intensity based upon the contact with the object of pleasure. When I see a desirable object, a degree of pleasure called *prīya* (प्रिय) is experienced. When that desirable object is possessed by me, the degree of pleasure is higher (मोदः). When I experience that object which I possess, my pleasure is the highest (प्रमोदः). All the three are the thoughts related to pleasure and happiness. These are experienced by the same experiencer 'me' the *bhoktr* (भोक्तृ) or the 'enjoyer'.

The *vijñānamayāḥ* is the 'doer me' and the *ānandamayāḥ* is the 'enjoyer me'. The *ānandamayāḥ* is the causal body (कारण शरीरम्). This sheath is the locus of the basic ignorance of 'who I am and what I am'. This ignorance is called *mūla-avidyā* (मूलाविद्या). This is the reason why, the teacher here, says that the *ānandamayāḥ kōshāḥ* is tainted

with impurity. Self-ignorance is the subtlest impurity afflicting every *jīva*. This sheath is most dominant during deep sleep.

After briefly explaining the five sheaths of *anātmā* (body-mind-sense complex), now onwards, Tattvabodhaḥ goes on with the deliberation on '*Ātmā*'.

After instructing the student in detail about the five sheaths starting from the food sheath (अन्नमयः) to happiness sheath (आनन्दमयः), the discussion now moves to the real 'I'.

मदीयं शरीरं मदीयाः प्राणाः मदीयं मनश्च मदीया बुद्धिर्मदीयम् अज्ञानमिति स्वेनैव ज्ञायते तद्यथा मदीयत्वेन ज्ञातं कटककुण्डल-गृहादिकं स्वस्माद्भिन्नं तथा पञ्चकोशादिकं स्वस्माद्भिन्नं मदीयत्वेन ज्ञातमात्मा न भवति ।

As various objects like ornaments or house considered as belonging to me or 'mine' are not 'me' the knower, the five sheaths explained are known as 'my body', 'my breath', 'my mind', 'my intellect' and 'my ignorance' cannot be 'Me' the Self.

It is common knowledge that whatever one perceives as an object, even if it is intimately related to the knower, cannot be the knower. For example, this book is mine but I am not the book. The book is the object of my perception and I am the very perceiver. It is very easy to understand this, when there is a spatial and time-wise distance from the object.

The scriptures say that even one's body, mind, breath, intellect, knowledge, ignorance, thoughts and whatever one perceives - is an object of one's perception and not the perceiver. Since the body-mind-sense complex is so close to the perceiver, it is easily mistaken to be a part-and-parcel of the perceiver self. The understanding that 'I - the perceiver' am different from the 'perceived body-mind-sense complex' is called the seer-seen discrimination (दृष्टश्य विवेकः)

Though this fact is very simple, that 'I am not the five sheaths', it is difficult to ownup this fact. This is because of many life times of identification with the five sheaths as 'myself'. The first step in the understanding of the Self (my true nature) is to understand myself (to be other than these five sheaths) by discrimination and constant practice.

आत्मा तर्हि कः?

Then what is the Self?

सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः।

It is of the nature of existence, consciousness and completeness.

This way of describing *Ātmā* pointing to its inherent nature is called *swarūpa lakṣṇaḥ* (स्वरूप लक्षणः). Existence-consciousness-completeness is the *swarūpa lakṣṇa* of the Self. There is another way of defining *Ātmā* with reference to the manifest universe which will be described in the topic - Creation of the Universe.

सत् किम्?

What is Existence?

कालत्रयेऽपि तिष्ठतीति सत् ।

That which remains the same without undergoing any change in all three periods of time is called *Sat* or existence.

Anything in this manifest universe 'is' because of its existence. The 'treeness' of the tree is the existence of the tree. The 'am-ness' of me - is my existence and I never cease to exist. Similarly, the 'is-ness' of anything remains, as is – 'is...is...is' - all the time, irrespective of the past, present or future. The whole *jagat* exists dependent upon this

Existence principle. 'Is-ness' is the support or *adhishtānam* (अधिष्ठानम्) of this entire universe. Such a support cannot undergo any change in itself. Just as, an anvil does not undergo any change during hammering of gold or iron, just as an axle does not rotate along with the wheels, *sat Ātmā* stays as the unchanging support of the entire changing universe.

चित् किम्?

What is Consciousness?

ज्ञानस्वरूपः ।

It is of the nature of Knowing-Consciousness.

One cognizes everything that one comes across in the form of “I know”, “I don’t know”, “I am hungry”, “I am sleepy”, “I am sick”. This knowing or awareness-Consciousness is aware of every thought and cognition. The knowing never ceases. It illumines everything and reveals ‘Itself’. When I know something- “I know, that I know”. When I don’t know something - “I know, that I don’t know”.

Even in deep sleep, this Awareness shines and that is why one says “I slept well” after getting up. This self-revealing, constant awareness is called *chit* which is my very nature.

आनन्दः कः?

What is *Ānandaḥ*?

सुखस्वरूपः ।

It is fullness or completeness.

Ānanda is expressed as ‘bliss’. However, absolute happiness or completeness (पूर्णत्वम्) is a more appropriate meaning. Anything which

is close and dear to me gives me happiness. I love anything which evokes joy and completeness in me. The *Upanishad-s* say - that one loves only oneself totally and unconditionally; anything else, is conditionally loved - as long as it evokes a pleased self in me. Therefore, the scriptures very boldly proclaim that *Ātmā* or 'Myself' is the very source of absolute fullness and completeness which is its very nature.

एवं सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपं स्वात्मानं विजानीयात् ।

In this way, may one know oneself to be Existence-Consciousness-Fullness.

The three - Existence-Consciousness-Fullness are not the attributes or qualities of the Self but my very nature. "*I am, I know and I am the dearest to me*"; this is how the scriptures want one to Know Oneself and not as the group of five sheaths.

The teacher of Tattvabodhaḥ has so far explained *jīva* - in its entirety. *Jīva* is a composite of the three bodies (also expressed in the form of five *kosha-s*) and three states of the mind which was called *anātmā*. The Consciousness makes the entire *anātmā* function as a sentient unit, while, Itself remains as pure Witness Consciousness. He also describes the *Ātmā* (the real Self) as the nature of *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda* which is the true nature of the *jīva*.

Now, the teacher describes the universe called the *jagat*. It is also called as creation because the universe appears to be created at a given point in time, exists for a few million years and finally undergoes resolution. We must remember here, that the *jagat* is the field of action of every *jīva*. If the *jagat* is a creation, then it must have a cause. That cause, of this entire universe or creation is *Īshwara* (the creator). The *jīva* and the *jagat* have a relationship of *microcosm* and

macrocosm. Technically, the *jīva* is the *vyashtīḥ* (व्यष्टिः) and the universe is *samashṭīḥ* (समष्टिः). The individual *jīva* cannot exist without the universe.

अथ चतुर्विंशतितत्त्वोत्पत्तिप्रकारं वक्ष्यामः ।

Now after discussing the *jīva*, we shall explain the twenty-four factors in the creation of universe.

It is accepted widely by the scriptures that 24 factors or *tattva-s* have gone into making this manifest universe. This is one model of understanding. Sometimes, the number of these factors may change in different works. These 24 factors are the material cause and there must be an intelligent principle which uses the materials in the creation of the final product. The material cause is technically called the *upādāna kāraṇam* (उपादान कारणम्). The intelligent principal or the creator is technically called the *nimitta kāraṇam* (निमित्त कारणम्).

It is explained by the scriptures that *Brahman* along with its power *Māyā* is the combined *nimitta-upādāna kāraṇam* for this entire jagat.

The twenty-four principles or materials are five elements, five sense organs of perception, five sense organs of action, the five *prāṇa-s* and the four aspects of mind (*manah*, *buddhiḥ*, *ahaṅkārah* and *chittaḥ*).

How the 24 *tattva-s* emerge and how they contribute to the final product - the universe is explained further.

ब्रह्माश्रया सत्वरजस्तमोगुणात्मिका माया अस्ति ।

Taking the support of *Brahman*, *Māyā* exists which has the three qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

The scriptures define *Brahman* (the same as the *Self*) as the cause of this universe. *Brahman* is called so, due to its infinitely big nature (बृहत्तमत्वात्). However, *Brahman* which is of the nature of *Existence-Consciousness-Completeness* (सत्, चित्, आनन्द स्वरूपः) is changeless and cannot create this universe with thousands of forms and names. Here, comes the power of *Brahman* called *Māyā* (माया). *Māyā* is not a second thing to *Brahman*, but depends on *Brahman* for its existence. *Brahman* along with *Māyā* (माया सहित ब्रह्मन्) is called *Īshwara* who is the single undivided material and intelligent cause of the universe.

What is this *Māyā*?

When something appears to be, yet on enquiry it is not really there - this is the concept of *Māyā*. The traditional examples are the rope-snake and our own dream experience. The snake appears on the rope, but in reality it is not; the dream appears so real while dreaming, but it is really not. The scriptures say that the whole universe is exactly like this - seems to appear in *Brahman*, but when enquired into, there is no universe at all except the name and forms. This is the handiwork of *Māyā*. Vedānta explains *Māyā* as या मा सा माया; 'that which is not, yet appears to be'.

Māyā projects a whole believable and experienced universe by its power of projection called *Vikshepa Shaktiḥ* (विक्षेप शक्तिः) by veiling the true nature of *Brahman*. The veiling power of *Māyā* is called the *Āvaraṇa Shaktiḥ* (आवरण शक्तिः).

At the individual level, the reality of rope is covered by the आवरण शक्तिः and a false snake is projected (which was never ever there) by the विक्षेप शक्तिः of *Māyā*.

Māyā has no separate existence from *Brahman* and hence called the power of *Brahman* and depends entirely on *Brahman* for its existence. *Māyā* is actually the material cause – matter, in its most

subtle form. Being matter, it has three qualities *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* (सत्त्व रजस् तमस्). The *sattvaguna* is characterized by the capacity for Knowledge. The *rajoguna* is of the nature of activity and the *tamoguna* indicates inertia. Every material object has these, three *guna*-s, in different proportions.

How does the *nimitta-upādāna karaṇa* *Īshwara* give rise to the universe? A long algorithm is given by the scriptures, which begins from the five great elements (पञ्चभूतानि).

The scriptures say that the universe actually is only a projection of unmanifest matter into a manifest form - which is the work of *Māyā*, described as *brahmāshrayā* (ब्रह्माश्रया). *Māyā* is the subtlest matter and the three *guna*-s (सत्त्व रजस् तमस्), in *Māyā* are responsible for starting the process of creation. It starts from the subtlest of the material universe and progresses to the grossest. It starts with the creation of five primary elements (पञ्च महाभूतानि). Now, the teacher unfolds the process of the evolution of these five subtle elements.

तत आकाशः सम्भूतः। आकाशाद् वायुः।
वायोस्तेजः। तेजस आपः। अद्द्रव्यः पृथिवी।

From that *Māyā*, space was born. From space, air. From air, fire.
From fire, water. From water, earth.

The evolution of the five elements in this serial order from *Māyā* shows that the space is the subtlest of all the five elements and so has maximum pervasiveness. As the elements serially become grosser, they become less pervasive. Earth, being the grossest is the least pervasive.

The grossness of the elements depends upon the number of qualities each element possesses. Space, being the first, is the

subtlest because it has only one quality of 'sound'. We are aware that space can carry the sound in the form of waves. The subtlety of space makes it pervade the entire universe. There is no place in the universe where there is no space.

Air is the next element which comes from its cause - the space. Now, air inherits the quality of sound from its cause - the space - and has its own unique quality the 'touch'. Having two qualities, air is grosser and less pervasive than space.

From air, emerges the element fire. Fire inherits the two qualities of sound and touch from its cause – the air - and has its own quality the 'form'.

We are aware that space cannot be seen but heard, air can be felt and heard but not be seen. Fire can be heard, felt and also seen by the eye with a distinct form. Thus, fire is the first element with a definite form.

Water comes next, born out of fire principle. In addition to the three qualities of its cause, it has its unique property of 'taste'. The unique taste of water (though it is described as tasteless) is a common experience. It is less pervasive than fire.

Earth is the last element to be born. It comes out of its cause water. Therefore, it has all the four qualities of its cause and its own unique quality of 'smell'. The scriptures say पृथिवी गन्धवती.

The five elements explained above are called *tanmātrā-s* because in spite of their multiple qualities, they are not available for sense perception until they are grossified. Whatever- fire, water and earth - we experience are not the original *tanmātrā-s* but the grossified elements which will be explained later.

All these five elements of *Māyā* therefore, are pervaded by the three *guṇa*-s. It is explained by the scriptures that the three *guṇa*-s of *Māyā* are in a state of mutual balance (गुण साम्य) before the process of creation begins. When the three *guṇa*-s go out of balance with each other (गुण वैशम्य), the evolution of the five elements begins.

It must be understood that the whole universe is perceived by us in a five-fold way, by - sound, touch, form, taste and smell. We cannot perceive the universe in any other way. Therefore, we need to have one sense-organ dedicated to perceive each of these five aspects of the universe. The scriptures say that the *sattva* aspect of each of the five elements goes into the formation of each of the sense-organs of perception in the individual (व्यष्टिः). The combined *sattva* aspects of the five elements together go into the formation of the individual mind and intellect (अन्तःकरणः).

Here, we see a beautiful scheme in which the *Tattvabodhaḥ* talks about the interaction between the individual and the total manifest universe. It describes in detail how the individual sense-organs and the individual mind-intellect come about from the five great elements.

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां मध्ये आकाशस्य सात्त्विकांशात् श्रोत्रेन्द्रियं संभूतम्।
वायोः सात्त्विकांशात् त्वगिन्द्रियं संभूतम्।
अग्नेः सात्त्विकांशात् चक्षुरिन्द्रियं संभूतम्।
जलस्य सात्त्विकांशात् रसनेन्द्रियं संभूतम्।
पृथिव्याः सात्त्विकांशात् घ्राणेन्द्रियं संभूतम्।

The five elements are also called the five *tattva*-s (पञ्च तत्त्वानि) or *tanmātrā*-s (तन्मात्रा).

All the five organs of perception (ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि) came out of the *sattva* aspect of each *tanmātrā* as follows. Space with its *sattva* aspect

contributed to the evolution of the organ of hearing, air to the sense organ of touch, fire to the organ of sight, water to the organ of taste and earth to the organ of smell. Our scriptures say that each individual sense organ (व्यष्टि ज्ञानेन्द्रियम्) is represented by a corresponding cosmic sense organ (समष्टि ज्ञानेन्द्रियम्) represented by a specific presiding deity (अधिष्ठान देवता).

Let us put it in the form of a table which becomes easy to remember this entire process.

Space	Sound	Ear	Dig Devatā
Air	Touch	Skin	Vāyu Devatā
Fire	Form	Eyes	Sūrya Devatā
Water	Taste	Tongue	Varuṇa Devatā
Earth	Smell	Nose	Ashwinī Devatā-s

It is explained that in every sentient being the organs of perception are represented by the same *Devatā*. When for some reason the sense-organ of perception ceases to function, the individual *indriya* merges with the *Samashṭiḥ Devatā*. At the time of death of a *jīva*, all the sense-organs merge into their respective cosmic deities.

Next, Tattvabodhaḥ teacher explains what happens to the combined *sattva* aspects of all the five *tanmātrā-s*.

As it is obvious, each and every sense-organ reports to the inner instrument of mind-intellect. Therefore, the combined *sattva* aspects of all the five subtle elements together form the mind (अन्तःकरणः).

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां समष्टिसात्त्विकांशात् मनोबुद्ध्यहङ्कारचित्तान्तःकरणानि संभूतानि ।
सङ्कल्पविकल्पात्मकं मनः । निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः ।
अहङ्कारकर्ता अहङ्कारः । चिन्तनकर्तृ चित्तम् ।
मनसो देवता चन्द्रमाः । बुद्धेः ब्रह्मा । अहङ्कारस्य रुद्रः । चित्तस्य वासुदेवः ।

The sense-organs are called outer-instruments (बहिष्करणानि) as they face the world outside and report what they perceive to the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* (अन्तःकरणः) as the mind cannot interact with the objects of the world directly. All the information given by the sense-organs is processed by the mind-intellect (inner-instrument) in a coordinated manner. The information then is passed on to the organs of action for an appropriate action. This is the normal interaction of every living being with the objects of the world.

The *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* is not a physical organ. It is a continuous flow of thoughts or *vṛtti-s* (वृत्तिः). There are four types of *vṛtti-s* or thoughts which the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* brings about depending upon the context.

When there is doubt and vacillation, the *vṛtṭiḥ* is of the mind. That means the mind can only doubt but cannot come to any definite conclusion (*saṅkalpa-vikalpātmaka*). The intellect or the *buddhiḥ* is a *vṛtṭiḥ* which is decisive, conclusive and firm (*niśchayātmikā*). When the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* is predominantly doing something with a strong individuality, it is called the *aḥaṅkāraḥ* or the *doer-ego*. When the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ* is involved with recalling / memory, this process happens by a thought of *chittaḥ*.

One must know that these are not four anatomical regions of the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ*, but when one particular type of these four thoughts occur, it is called by these four names. Thus *manāḥ*, *buddhiḥ*, *aḥaṅkāra* and *chitta* are four functional aspects of one and the same *antaḥkaraṇaḥ*.

As for the other sense-organs of perceptions, there are different deities for these four aspects of the *antaḥkaraṇaḥ*. Let us see this concept in a tabular form as before.

Manah	Saṅkalpa-vikalpa vṛttiḥ (vacillating/doubting)	Chandra Devatā
Buddhiḥ	Nishchayā vṛttiḥ (decisive/definite)	Brahmā/ Bṛhaspatiḥ Devatā
Ahaṅkāraḥ	Ahaṅkartā vṛttiḥ (individual/doership)	Rudra Devatā
Chittaḥ	Chintana kartṛ (recall/memory)	Vasudeva Devatā

It is common experience that when we are calm and of *sattvic* disposition, our *antaḥkaraṇaḥ vṛtti-s* function well. Our decisions are right and we can recollect facts easily.

Now, the teacher talks about what happens to the individual *rajas* portion (राजसिक अंशः) of each of the *tanmātrā-s* and also the combination of the *rajas* portion of all the *tanmātrā-s* together.

एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां मध्ये आकाशस्य रजसांशात् वागिन्द्रियम् संभूतम्।
वायोः राजसांशात् पाणीन्द्रियम् संभूतम्।
वह्नेः राजसांशात् पादेन्द्रियं संभूतम्।
जलस्य राजसांशात् उपस्थेन्द्रियं सम्भूतम्।
पृथिव्या राजसांशात् गुदेन्द्रियं संभूतम्।
एतेषां समष्टिराजसांशात् पञ्चप्राणाः संभूताः।

Rajoguna is the characteristic of activity. Therefore, all the organs of actions and the respiratory system (कर्मेन्द्रियाणि पञ्च प्राणाः) are formed by the *rajas* aspect of the five elements.

1. Rajas aspect of space contributes to the organ of speech.
2. Rajas aspect of air contributes to the organ of grasping or hands.
3. Rajas aspect of fire element contributes to the organ of movement or legs.
4. Rajas aspect of the water element contributes to the organ of procreation.
5. Rajas aspect of the earth element contributes to the organ of excretion.

The combination of the *rajas* aspects of all the five elements contributes to the five-fold physiological system called the पञ्चप्राणाः. These five-fold physiological functions are Respiration (प्राणः), Excretion (अपानः), Circulation (व्यानः), Digestion (समानः) and the Reversing functions as in vomiting, coughing, sneezing etc. (उदानः).

All the above have their own functionaries or *Devatā-s* which represent the cosmic counterpart of these organs as we saw with regards to the sense-organs of perception also. Let us put it in a tabular form as before.

Space	Organ of speech	Agni
Air	Organ of grasping or hands	Indra
Fire	Organ of movement or legs	Vishṇu
Water	Organ of procreation	Prajāpati
Earth	Organ of excretion	Yama

The functions of the organs of action have been explained earlier in the discussion on the subtle body.

Now, the *tamas* aspects of all the five elements contribute to the gross body and the gross world. This happens by a process of combination of the *tamas* aspects of the elements in a particular way called five-fold grossification (पञ्चीकरणम्).

We must remember that the *tamogūṇa* represents inertia or grossness. That means no perception or action is possible unless pushed by the *rajogūṇa*.

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।

From the *tamas* aspect of the five elements, with a process of five-fold grossification, the entire gross body and the gross world are formed.

1. The individual element's *tamas* aspect divides into two halves.
2. One half of each element remains unchanged.
3. The other half of each element divides further into four parts.
4. One portion of each of the divided second half joins the other four intact halves from the other four elements.

Pañchikaraṇam can be summarized as below:

Space	$\frac{1}{2}$ Space	$\frac{1}{8}$ Air	$\frac{1}{8}$ Fire	$\frac{1}{8}$ Water	$\frac{1}{8}$ Earth
Air	$\frac{1}{2}$ Air	$\frac{1}{8}$ Space	$\frac{1}{8}$ Fire	$\frac{1}{8}$ Water	$\frac{1}{8}$ Earth
Fire	$\frac{1}{2}$ Fire	$\frac{1}{8}$ Space	$\frac{1}{8}$ Air	$\frac{1}{8}$ Water	$\frac{1}{8}$ Earth
Water	$\frac{1}{2}$ Water	$\frac{1}{8}$ Space	$\frac{1}{8}$ Air	$\frac{1}{8}$ Fire	$\frac{1}{8}$ Earth
Earth	$\frac{1}{2}$ Earth	$\frac{1}{8}$ Space	$\frac{1}{8}$ Air	$\frac{1}{8}$ Fire	$\frac{1}{8}$ Water

Everything in the universe including our own body has all the five elements in it. Our own bodies have the earth element in the form of bones and muscles, water element in the form of blood and other secretions, air in the form of our own breath, space in the form of space within our hollow organs and our bodies are warm due to the fire principle.

एवं पिण्डब्रह्माण्डयोरैक्यं सम्भूतम्।

Thus, the Oneness of the Total and the Individual is established in all respects.

So far, Tattvabodhaḥ revealed the process of creation and pointed that the entire universe in totality and the individual body-mind-sense complex are nothing but the modified five elements in different combinations. Thus, the total gross universe and the individual gross body (स्थूल प्रपञ्चः and स्थूल शरीरः), total subtle universe and the individual

subtle bodies (सूक्ष्म प्रपञ्चः and शुक्ष्म शरीरः), total causal universe and causal body (कारण प्रपञ्चः कारण शरीरः) are made of the same matter principle *Māyā* supported by *Brahman*.

This *Brahman-Māyā* which is the inseparable immediate material-intelligent cause of the entire universe (अभिन्न निमित्त उपादान कारणम्) is called *Īshwara* by the scriptures. The individual body-mind-sense complex which is sentient and has a sense of individuality is called *jīva*.

Now the *Tattvabodhaḥ* talks about the *jīva* and *Īshwara* in greater detail and ultimately the oneness of both.

स्थूलशरीराभिमानि जीवनामकं ब्रह्मप्रतिबिम्बं भवति ।
 स एव जीवः प्रकृत्या स्वस्मात् ईश्वरं भिन्नत्वेन जानाति ।
 अविद्योपाधिः सन् आत्मा जीव इत्युच्यते ।
 मायोपाधिः सन् ईश्वर इत्युच्यते ।
 एवम् उपाधिभेदात् जीवेश्वरभेददृष्टिः यावत् पर्यन्तं तिष्ठति
 तावत् पर्यन्तं जन्ममरणादिरूपसंसारो न निवर्तते ।
 तस्मात्कारणात् न जीवेश्वरयोर्भेदबुद्धिः स्वीकार्या ।

Jīva is the reflection of that very Consciousness, *Brahman*. Where does the reflection take place? If *Brahman* is all-pervading, then where can it form any reflection? Our scriptures say that wherever there is a reflecting surface - subtle and sensitive enough to reflect this all-pervading Consciousness, a reflection is formed. Now, the next question would be - what are these reflecting surfaces and where are they found?

Again our scriptures say, that the subtle body (सूक्ष्म शरीरः), especially the intellect (बुद्धिः) being the subtlest part of the सूक्ष्म शरीरः is an excellent reflecting medium which forms a reflection of the original. This reflection is called the *ābhāsa chaitanyaḥ* (आभास चैतन्यः) which

forgets its true nature and identifies itself with the rest of the सूक्ष्म शरीरः and the स्थूल शरीरः and develops individuality. Just as *Brahman* is associated with *Māyā upādhi* and called *Īshwara*, the *jīva* is associated with ignorance (अविद्या) as its *upādhi*.

So now, is there any difference between *Īshwara* and *jīva*?

Our scriptures say that both ईश्वरः and जीवः are one and the same Consciousness but with different attributes (*upādhi-s*). As long as a *jīva* thinks of himself as an individual and separate from *Īshwara*, the cycle of birth and death continues for the *jīva*.

The entire purpose of the scriptures is to give this clear knowledge to the *jīva* that- “Essentially you, the *jīva*, is not really different or separate from *Īshwara*. The difference is only superficial in the form of different *upādhi-s*”.

This is the central message of the *Tattvabodhaḥ* also. Hence, here the Guru cautions the *shishya*, “May you not accept that you and *Īshwara* are different. This notion of difference is born out of ignorance of your true nature. As long as this wrong notion of difference (भेदबुद्धिः) exists, you will always remain in bondage”.

The one-ness of *jīva* and *Īshwara* (जीव ईश्वर अभेद) is explained in detail in *Vedānta* by *Mahāvākya-vichāraḥ* (महावाक्य विचारः) or an enquiry into the great equation which talks in detail about the non-difference between the *jīva* and *Īshwara*.

What is an equation and when is it necessary?

When two sides of the equation look superficially different, but when derived correctly, in the last step it is seen that both the sides of equation are the same. Let us take an example $2 + 3 = 6 - 1$.

In this equation, the left hand side and the right hand side have totally different numbers and different signs. But, when worked out,

we see that they are equal. Though there is a superficial and seeming difference, the final result is non-difference of both sides.

The scriptures say, that in a similar way, the *jīva* and *Īshwara* may look radically different as in the above example. But, the differences are only superficial and when an enquiry is made and the equation is solved, there is absolutely no difference between the two.

Every *Upanishad* has hundreds of such great equations which talk about the non-difference between the individual (*jīva*) and the total (*Īshwara*). However, four sample *Mahāvākya-s* from each of the four veda-s are enumerated below -

प्रज्ञानम् ब्रह्म from ऋग्वेदः

अहं ब्रह्मास्मि from यजुर्वेदः

तत् त्वम् असि from सामवेदः

अयमात्मा ब्रह्म from अथर्वण वेदः

From now on, the Tattvabodhaḥ starts its teaching with the explanation on the non-difference between the *jīva* and *Īshwara* and the *phala* (result) of this Knowledge.

The Guru, here, deals with the महावाक्य विचारः or the enquiry into the great equation which talks about the one-ness of the individual self and *Īshwara*. In the previous section, we saw the Guru explaining to the student that “unless you get rid of the difference (भेद) between you and *Īshwara* you will never be out of the bondage of *samsāra*”.

Now, the *shishya* has difficulty in understanding this statement. How can this be true? The differences between the two are so obvious! Is it not the same with all of us? When our scriptures repeatedly say “*You are that Īshwara*”, he cannot believe it though he has enough *shraddhā* in the words of the scriptures and the teacher. Still, there is a doubt whether the scriptures exaggerate their praise

for the *jīva*! This is because the *shishya* does not understand the great equation, the way it has to be understood. The Guru, here, is helping the *shishya* to see the absolute truth of this equation.

The doubt is expressed by the *shishya* in the following question;

ननु साहङ्कारस्य किञ्चिज्ज्ञस्य जीवस्य निरहङ्कारस्य सर्वज्ञस्य ईश्वरस्य तत्त्वमसीति
महावाक्यात् कथमभेदबुद्धिः स्यादुभयोः विरुद्धधर्माक्रान्तत्वात् ।

O Guru, as I see, the *jīva* is associated with a limiting ego (अहङ्कारः) and is so limited in his knowledge and in every aspect. On the other hand *Īshwara* has no limiting ego and he is all powerful, all knowledge, infinite, omniscient and omnipotent. How can there be any equality between the two as stated in the *Mahāvākya* “*Tat twam asi*” (“That you are”)?

The Guru explains the equation in his own unique way.

इति चेन्न । स्थूलसूक्ष्मशरीराभिमानी त्वंपदवाच्यार्थः ।
उपाधिविनिर्मुक्तं समाधिदशासंपन्नं शुद्धं चैतन्यं त्वंपदलक्ष्यार्थः ।
एवं सर्वज्ञत्वादिविशिष्ट ईश्वरः तत्पदवाच्यार्थः ।
उपाधिशून्यं शुद्धचैतन्यं तत्पदलक्ष्यार्थः ।
एवं च जीवेश्वरयोः चैतन्यरूपेणाऽभेदे बाधकाभावः ।

Superficially seen, *Īshwara* and *jīva* are poles apart and the *shishya* is right from his point of view. This difference is only from the point of the superficial attributes which the scriptures call *upādhi bhedaḥ* (उपाधि भेदः). The individual *jīva* has limited - gross, subtle and causal bodies- (विश्वः, तैजस्, प्राज्ञः) but *Īshwara*'s attributes are the limitless gross, subtle and causal universe (विराट्, हिरण्यगर्भः and माया). However, the content of both - the individual *jīva* and *Īshwara* - is that one and the same Consciousness or *Brahman*.

There are two ways in which a sentence can be understood. If we look at a sentence from its literal point of view, then it is called *vāchyārthaḥ* (वाच्यार्थः) which means 'literal meaning'. The sentence can also be looked from the point of its hidden or 'implied meaning' called *lakshyārthaḥ* (लक्ष्यार्थः).

Let us take an example- 'He is the pillar of this organization'. In this sentence, do we take the literal meaning? If we do, then it becomes meaningless. If we see the hidden or implied meaning of this sentence, it means - 'He is a solid support to the organization, like a pillar to a building'. In this way, in our daily conversations we have any number of examples, where we understand a sentence by its implied meaning. In the *Mahāvākya* too, the implied meaning has to be seen by intellectually negating the superficial meaning.

Our scriptures give another classic example. Suppose, I knew a person called Devadatta, and seen him say twenty years ago, when he was slim and had a head full of hair. Now, after twenty years, I come across the same person but he is obese and bald. Initially, I may not recognize him due to the changes in his superficial appearance. But, a third person tells me "This is the same Devadatta" (सोयम् देवदत्तः). How do I understand this? I intellectually ignore his previous appearance and the present appearance and am able to see the underlying person as the 'same one' I knew, twenty years ago. This intellectual process of separating the person from his past and present appearance and recognizing him as one and the same is called *bhāgatyāga lakṣaṇaḥ* (भागत्याग लक्षणः).

Similarly, the scriptures say that to understand the *Mahāvākya* one must intellectually separate the limitless उपाधि of *Īshwara* and the limited उपाधि of the *jīva* and see the essential one-ness of both as *sat chit ānanda swarūpaḥ* (सत् चित् आनन्द स्वरूपः)

This is the only way one can see the non-difference between the *individual jīva* and the *total Īshwara*.

एवं च वेदान्तवाक्यैः सद्गुरुरूपदेशेन च सर्वेष्वपि भूतेषु येषां ब्रह्मबुद्धिरुत्पन्ना ते जीवन्मुक्ताः इत्यर्थः ।

A person, who has understood the *Mahāvākya* and the one-ness or non-difference of himself with *Īshwara* - from the scriptures, through the Guru - gets the vision to see the same consciousness in all the beings. This is called the *brahmabuddhiḥ* (ब्रह्मबुद्धिः) or *sarvātma bhāvaḥ* (सर्वात्म भावः) and such a person is called a *Jīvanmuktaḥ* (जीवन्मुक्तः). This person is liberated or free from the bondage of *saṁsāra* while living and acting in the very same world.

The *Tattvabodhaḥ* Guru explains the *Mahāvākya-vichāra* in detail and says that a person who does not see any difference between himself and *Īshwara* has understood what the *Mahāvākya* is getting at. Such a person is called a *Jīvanmuktaḥ*. The wisdom of the *Mahāvākya* has freed him from the bondage of *saṁsāra*.

The *shishya* wants to know more about such a person who is free from all kinds of bondage. He thus, asks a relevant question.

ननु जीवन्मुक्तः कः ?

Who is a *Jīvanmuktaḥ*?

The answer given by the Guru is -

यथा देहोऽहं पुरुषोऽहं ब्राह्मणोऽहं शूद्रोऽहमस्मीति

दृढनिश्चयस्तथा नाहं ब्राह्मणः न शूद्रः न पुरुषः किन्तु असङ्गः

सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः प्रकाशरूपः सर्वान्तर्यामी चिदाकाशरूपोऽस्मीति

दृढनिश्चयरूपोऽपरोक्षज्ञानवान् जीवन्मुक्तः ।

For a person who has not understood the exact meaning of the *Mahāvākya*, the identification with his body-mind-sense complex is very strong and natural. This identification - leads to his individuality, separates him from all others and keeps him in bondage for lives and lives. The identification with a particular body-mind-sense complex is called *ahankārah* (अहङ्कारः). Identifying with a particular body, the person also identifies himself with a part of the world connected with him as, “this is mine”, “these are my people”, “this is my environment”, “I am the doer”, “I am suffering / enjoying” etc. Such an identification with the objective world outside is called *mamakārah* (ममकारः).

This becomes a natural way of conduct for all individuals. Our scriptures say that this very identification with one’s own *upādhi* and through it, with the people and the objects of the world, is the bondage. This is the very bondage which a *Jīvanmukta* gives up by wisdom of the *Mahāvākya-vichāra*.

The *Jīvanmuktaḥ* does not see himself as of a particular *varṇa* or *āshrama*, nor a man or woman but considers himself to be असङ्गः | “I am neither the body-mind nor the sense complex and I am totally unaffected by their properties or afflictions”. He moves around in the world without getting tainted by anything.

He also understands himself to be that *Sachchidānandaswarūpaḥ Ātmā* (सच्चिदानन्दस्वरूपः आत्मा) which is ever existent, light of Consciousness which is the witness of everything, infinite and imperishable. He is the *Prakāshrūpaḥ Ātmā* (प्रकाशरूपः आत्मा); which means, he is the light of Consciousness which not only reveals itself but also everything else.

Being this imperishable light of Consciousness, he is the Self (the *Ātmā*) in all the *jīva-s* (सर्वान्तर्यामी). Lord Kṛṣṇa talks about this in

various verses of Bhagawadgītā, “Understand me to be the *kshetrajñā* in every *kshetra*”, “I, as *Īshwara* exist in every *jīva*, O Arjuna”; etc. Being सर्वान्तर्यामी, He understands Himself to be the all-pervading Consciousness within and beyond the manifest universe (चिदाकाशरूपोऽहमस्मीति) .

Now, the Guru wants to describe this kind of wisdom. Here, a word *aparokshajñānam* (अपरोक्षज्ञानम्) is used by the Guru. Cognition or understanding is called ज्ञानम् | There are three types of understanding – (प्रत्यक्षज्ञानम्, परोक्षज्ञानम् and अपरोक्षज्ञानम्).

Pratyakshajñānam (प्रत्यक्षज्ञानम्) is the direct understanding when sense-organs contact the sense objects. Here the object is close to the person.

Parokshajñānam (परोक्षज्ञानम्) is that understanding which is gained by hearing about something from the others or reading about it. Here, the sense-organs are not involved because the object of understanding is away from the person.

Aparokshajñānam (अपरोक्षज्ञानम्) is the understanding of something which is neither an object of perception nor far away from the person. It is the Knowledge about Himself. This is also called ‘Immediate Knowledge’.

Here, a *Jīvanmuktaḥ* knows the truth of ‘Himself’ which is not an object of his senses nor is it far away from him. This immediate or अपरोक्षज्ञानम् releases the *Jīvanmuktaḥ* from all bondage. This fact is again stressed by the Guru in his statement

ब्रह्मैवाहमस्मीत्यपरोक्षज्ञानेन निखिलकर्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्तः स्यात् ।

The person who has understood his True Nature to be “I am that *sat chit ānanda Brahman*”, frees himself from the bondage of all types of *karmaphala-s*.

How is this so?

A *Jīvanmuktaḥ* has lost all identification with his body-mind-sense complex and has understood his true nature to be that of *akartā abhoktā Ātmā* (अकर्ता अभोक्ता आत्मा). Therefore, no results of actions accrue to him. It is only when one does any action with a sense of ‘doer-ship’, one accrues the results of his actions. This immediate knowledge born out of the *Mahāvākya* (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि) completely frees the person from all doer-ship and enjoyer-ship. No *karmaphala* accrues to him. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagawadgītā says that all the *karma-s* are burnt to ashes by this Knowledge. A *Jīvanmuktaḥ* has no कर्तव्यम् (to be done) or प्राप्तव्यम् (to be attained). All his actions are performed without any identification with them and out of sheer fulfillment.

In the next few verses the Guru explains the various types of *karma-s*.

Tattvabodhaḥ now, concludes the teaching by talking about what happens to a *Jīvanmuktaḥ’s karma-s*. Does the law of *karma* apply to the *Jīvanmuktaḥ jñānī* or not? Our scriptures say categorically that the *Jīvanmuktaḥ* is totally freed from the bondage of *saṁsāra*. What is *saṁsāra*? It is nothing but coming back again and again into the cycle of birth and death due to the *law of karma*.

कर्माणि कतिविधानि सन्तीति चेत् आगामिसञ्चितप्रारब्धभेदेन त्रिविधानि सन्ति ।

Once born, a *jīva* cannot live without doing any action. He interacts with the world through multiple actions. Every action as per the law of *karma* attracts an appropriate result. The results that may appear immediately are called *dr̥sh̥ta phalāni* (दृष्ट फलानि). Many, however, may not appear immediately, but may manifest after a length of time and these are called *adr̥sh̥ta phalāni* (अदृष्ट फलानि). Depending upon the time of fructification of the actions, *karma-s* are divided into आगामि, सञ्चित and प्रारब्ध *karmaphala-s*.

Āgāmikarma (phala-s)-

ज्ञानोत्पत्त्यनन्तरम् ज्ञानिदेहकृतं पुण्यपापरूपं कर्म यदस्ति तदागामीत्यभिधीयते ।

The results of actions performed by a *Jīvanmuktaḥ jñānī's* body are called the *āgāmikarma (phala-s)*. It is very clear here, that actions are performed by a *Jīvanmuktaḥ* without a sense of doer-ship, as He no longer identifies with His body-mind-sense complex. *Puṇya* and *pāpa* are relative terms dependent upon the intention behind the action. What happens to these *karmaphala-s* in a *Jīvanmuktaḥ* is discussed later. In an ignorant person, they appear as अदृष्ट फलानि which later join the baggage of सञ्चित *karma-s*.

Sañchitakarma (phala-s) -

सञ्चितं कर्म किम् ?

अनन्तकोटिजन्मनां बीजभूतं सत् यत्कर्मजातं पूर्वार्जितं तिष्ठति तत् सञ्चितं ज्ञेयम् ।

They are the results of actions performed in millions of previous lives which have not yet fructified, but remain in the *karmaphala* account of the doer of actions. These are the seeds for the further endless cycles of birth and death. The *karmaphala-s* here have been

collected and stored safely. In every birth, the *jīva* performs countless actions and thus the baggage of the *sañchitakarma-s* gets heavier in each lifetime. The only way this group of *karmaphala-s* can be exhausted is either by working them out life after life, or through acquiring Self-Knowledge.

Prārabdhakarma (phala-s) -

प्रारब्धं कर्म किमिति चेत्
इदं शरीरमुत्पाद्य इह लोके एव सुखदुःखादिप्रदं यत्कर्म तत्प्रारब्धं भोगेन नष्टं भवति
प्रारब्धकर्मणां भोगादेव क्षय इति।

Prārabdhakarmaphala-s have given birth to this particular body and their effects have to be worked out in this life itself. In another place the scriptures say that the ‘oil of *Prārabdha*’ is responsible for keeping the flame of this particular body going and once this oil is exhausted, the body is given up by the *jīva*. This type of *karmaphala* can be exhausted only in the form of happiness and sorrow. *Prārabdhakarmaphala-s* are just a portion of the entire baggage of the *sañchitakarmaphala* to be utilized during this particular life.

सञ्चितं कर्म ब्रह्मैवाहमिति निश्चयात्मकज्ञानेन नश्यति।

What happens to all these types of *karmaphalā-s* in the case of a wise man (*Jñānī*)?

The entire bundle of *sañchitakarma* is destroyed by the understanding that “I am the अकर्ता अभोक्ता *Ātmā*”. Lord Kṛṣṇa in Bhagawadgītā chapter 4 verse 37 says - “ज्ञानाग्निः सर्व कर्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा ।” The entire capital of all the previous actions with their accrued results become null and void.

आगामि कर्म अपि ज्ञानेन नश्यति किञ्च आगामि कर्मणां नलिनीदलगतजलवत् ज्ञानिनां सम्बन्धो नास्ति ।

The results of actions done in this life after attaining Self-Knowledge are also destroyed by this Knowledge. The effects of His actions do not affect a wise man just like a lotus leaf, in spite of being immersed in water, is not wet by it. Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the same example पद्मपत्र इवाम्भसा ।

किञ्च ये ज्ञानिनं स्तुवन्ति भजन्ति अर्चयन्ति तान्प्राति ज्ञानिकृतं आगामि पुण्यं गच्छति। ये ज्ञानिनं निन्दन्ति द्विषन्ति दुःखप्रादानं कुर्वन्ति तान्प्राति ज्ञानिकृतं सर्वमागामि क्रियमाणं पदवाच्यं कर्म पापात्मकं तद्गच्छति। सुहृदः पुण्यकृत्यं दुर्हृदः पापकृत्यं गृह्णन्ति।

Moreover, the *āgāmikarmaphala-s* of a *Jñānī* get distributed among his well-wishers. Those who value the *Jñānī* and have a reverential attitude towards him get the *puṇyaphala* of the *Jñānī's* actions and those who go out of their way to trouble and harm the *Jñānī* suffer the *pāpakarmaphala-s* of the *Jñānī's* actions.

This is not an exaggeration. The scriptures want to instill the value of respect and worshipfulness towards *Jñānī-s* in the society.

What happens to the *prārabdhakarmaphala* with which a *Jnānī's* body is born? The scriptures say that the *prārabdha* has already begun and its momentum continues till the body of the *Jñānī* is dropped. Thus, all his *karmaphala-s* become null and void.

तथा चात्मवित्संसारं तीर्त्वा ब्रह्मानन्दमिहैव प्राप्नोति ।
तरति शोकमात्मवित् इति श्रुतेः।
तनुं त्यजतु वा काश्यां श्वपचस्य गृहेऽथ वा ।
ज्ञानसंप्राप्तिसमये मुक्तोऽसौ विगताशयः। इति स्मृतेश्च ।

As explained above, the knower of the Self crosses the cycles of births and deaths and crosses the bondage of all sorrow. Whether or not such a *Jñānī* drops his body at the end of His *prārabdha*, in a sacred place like Kāshī or elsewhere, He is already liberated from the results of His actions. The *Smṛti-s* (secondary scriptures) also affirm this .

इति तत्त्वबोधप्रकरणं समाप्तम्।

ॐ तत्सत्

About the Author

Dr. Sudhā Tinaikar, a medical doctor by profession, started Vedānta studies in the late 1990s. She systematically studied the *Prasthāna Traya-s* and *Prakaraṇa Grantha-s* at the Ārshavidyā Gurukulam, through both direct tutelage as well as remote learning. Since 2012, she has been sharing this wealth of knowledge with different groups of people. With the blessings of His Holiness Sadyojāt Shaṅkarāshram Swāmījī, she started weekly Vedānta classes at Shrī Chitrāpur Math, Beṅgālūru in 2014 and *Prasthāna Traya Bhāshya Pathana* training to an interested group in 2015. She has been contributing her translations and commentaries on various vedāntic texts to the monthly magazine, Kānarā Sāraswat Association, starting with Hānva Āmmi and then moving onto explaining the Tattvabodhaḥ and Ātma Bodhaḥ. Her erudite and systematic method of teaching Vedāntic texts makes her classes very popular among interested students both young and old.



