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... *Tattva Bodha* ...

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AI Summary – Class 28

Jan 5, 2025

Summary**The pañca-kośāḥ Teaching****Introduction to the Five Sheaths**

The class continued the study of the pañca-kośāḥ (five sheaths or layers of human personality), which are part of the sūkṣma śarīram (subtle body). The teaching follows a question-and-answer format between student and teacher.

prāṇamaya kośāḥ - The Physiological Sheath**Components of prāṇamaya kośāḥ**

The prāṇamaya kośāḥ represents the physiological personality and consists of 10 components:

- 5 pañca prāṇa (five vital energies)
- 5 pañca Karmendriyas (five organs of action)

The Five prāṇas

The external air (Vayu) becomes life energy (prāṇa) when inhaled. This pranic energy subdivides into five types:

1. prāṇa - Respiratory system
2. apāna - Excretory/disposal system
3. vyāna - Circulatory system
4. samāna - Digestive system
5. udāna - The special system responsible for:
 - Taking the sūkṣma śarīram (subtle body) out of the physical body at death
 - Acting as "packers and movers" for the subtle body's transition to the next physical body
 - During life, functioning as a protective/reversing system



- Expelling toxins and poisons from the body through vomiting when harmful substances are consumed
- Being highly active at the time of death to facilitate the departure of the subtle body

The nādī System

The pranic energy flows through the body via the nādī system:

- Similar to how blood vessels (arteries and veins) carry blood throughout the physical body
- nādīs are subtle energy vessels that carry pranic energy (prāṇa śaktih)
- The Suṣumnā nādī is at the center, with many other nādīs originating from it
- According to Ayurveda, there are 72,000 nādīs crisscrossing the entire body
- When pranic energy flows smoothly and completely through the nādīs, the subtle body remains healthy
- Blockages or obstructions in this flow lead to various diseases and ill health

Pranic Healing

Pranic healers work by:

- Sensing and perceiving the pranic energy flow in the body
- Identifying areas where there are blockages or obstructions in the nādīs
- Removing these obstacles to restore normal pranic flow
- Restoring health once the energy flows normally again

This requires extensive training and high sensitivity to perceive subtle energy.

The Five Karmendriyas (Organs of Action)

The pranic energy flows to and energizes the five organs of action:

1. vāk (organ of speech) - for speaking, singing, emitting sounds
2. pāṇi (hands) - for grasping and grappling
3. pāda (feet) - for locomotion
4. Upastha (reproductive organs) - for procreation and perpetuation of species
5. pāyu (excretory organs) - for excretion

All these organs require pranic energy to function. Together with the five prāṇas, they constitute the prāṇamaya kośah.

kriyā śaktih - The Power of Action

The pranic energy is also called kriyā śaktih (power of action), one of the three fundamental powers:

1. jñāna śaktih - Power of knowing



2. icchā śaktih - Power of desiring
3. kriyā śaktih - Power of acting

These three powers follow a natural sequence:

- First, you must know that something exists (jñāna śaktih)
- Once you know it exists, you can desire it (icchā śaktih)
- Once you desire it, you must act to acquire it (kriyā śaktih)

This applies to spiritual pursuits as well: one must know Vedānta exists, desire liberation, and then attend classes and practice sadhana.

Manomaya kośah - The Psychological Sheath

Importance of the Psychological Personality

The Manomaya kośah (psychological/emotional personality) is extremely important because:

- Problems at the psychological level can cause physical health issues
- Stress, anxiety, and fear are emotional disturbances that affect the immune system
- Many physical problems in contemporary society have roots in continuous stress, anxiety, and fear
- These emotional issues flow down to impact the physical body by weakening the immune system
- This connection is often dismissed or neglected by contemporary doctors

Components of Manomaya kośah

Out of the 17 components of the sūkṣma śarīram (subtle body), 6 form the Manomaya kośah:

1. Manas (mind principle) - 1 component
2. jñanendriyas (five sense organs of knowledge) - 5 components

The Five jñanendriyas (Sense Organs of Knowledge)

These are the gateways through which the external world enters the mind:

- Eyes (seeing)
- Ears (hearing)
- Nose (smelling)
- Tongue (tasting)
- Skin (touching)

The Mind's Relationship with the External World

Critical understanding about how the mind functions:

- The mind does NOT have direct access to the external world



- All contact with the external world comes through the five sense organs
- If these five sense organs are closed, the mind's connection with the world ceases
- The mind can only react, understand, and respond after external stimuli enter through these gates

Dream State vs. Waking State

This principle explains the difference between dream and waking states:

Dream State (svapna avasthā)

- During dreams, the mind does not contact the external world
- All imagery and scenery in dreams are NOT from the external world
- Dreams originate from the internal mind - from vasanas (stored impressions)
- Vasanas are memories of all past experiences from the waking state
- These stored experiences create samskaras (mental impressions)
- You will never dream about something you have not experienced yet

Waking State (Jagrat avasthā)

- The mind has access to the external world through the sense organs
- Upon waking, one immediately gets exposed to external stimuli
- You interact with people, hear speech, see behaviors, watch body language
- You perceive smells (coffee being made), tastes (chapati waiting)
- All these are experienced only during the waking state through the sense organs

Emotions and the Mind

All emotions are formed in the mind as external stimuli enter through the sense organs. We have emotional interactions with all external stimuli that enter through these gates.

icchā śaktih - The Power of Desire

The most powerful emotion human beings possess is icchā śaktih (the power of desiring). This is crucial to understand because:

Modern Manipulation of Desire

- The entire advertisement industry understands this structure
- Social media, TV, magazines, and newspapers conduct extensive research on triggering desires
- In the age of artificial intelligence, algorithms are created to trigger specific emotions
- These algorithms lead people to desire certain things and take specific actions
- Examples include: watching reels for hours, chasing products, performing actions, consuming goods

*Consumer Society*

Contemporary society is highly materialistic and consumption-based:

- People want to earn more money to spend more on material things
- Desires are triggered through messaging about status, beauty, power, etc.
- The goal is to bring people to the mall (online or physical) where they will be "mauled"
- Advertisers trigger emotions that lead to icchā (desire), ultimately driving consumption

The Vedantic View of Desire

Contrary to common misconceptions, the Vedas and śāstra do NOT condemn desires:

Desire as a Blessing

- Desiring is beautiful, a privilege, and a blessing
- It is especially elaborate, sophisticated, and diverse in human beings
- Lalita Sahasranama worships the Divine Mother as icchā śaktih, jñāna śaktih, and kriyā śaktih
- In Tamil Nadu, there are temples dedicated to each of these powers
- We take desire for granted, but the śāstra says it is a tremendous blessing

Refinement, Not Elimination

The śāstra's approach to desire:

- We do NOT have to eliminate, remove, or discard our desires
- Instead, we go through a process of purification and refinement of desires
- This is called culturalization of desire
- Even the finest, noblest human beings have desires
- The desire to help others is still a desire

Spiritual Desire

Even liberation requires desire:

- In the Upaṇishads, we find "Sanskrita Purusha" - the person with spiritual desire for mokṣa
- Even mokṣa (liberation) must be desired
- You can only pursue mokṣa if you have the desire for it
- Without icchā śaktih, there would be no desire for liberation or enlightenment
- The desire for mokṣa is what brings a person to Vedānta classes

Post-Liberation Desire

After attaining mokṣa, desire continues in refined form:

- Once a person attains mokṣa, they dedicate their life to serving mankind
- This is called Loka Sangraha (welfare of the world) in the Bhagavad Gita
- The author of Tattva Bodha had the desire to write this text to benefit mankind
- This text has benefited generations of Vedānta students



- The śāstra says: first get liberated, then serve mankind

The Proper Direction of Desire

The key teaching:

- Desire is a blessing and benefit
- We must direct it properly and channelize it correctly
- The Bhagavad Gita teaches continuous refinement and purification of desires
- The ultimate desire is mokṣa, followed by Loka Sangraha

Functions of Manomaya kośah

The mind has two primary faculties:

1. Thinking faculty - processing and contemplating information
2. Desiring faculty - generating wants and emotional responses

Vijñānamaya kośah - The Intellectual Sheath

Components and Nature

The Vijñānamaya kośah consists of 6 components from the 17 organs of the subtle body:

- Buddhi (intellect) - 1 component
- The same 5 jñanendriyas (sense organs of knowledge)

The same organ that collects information (as part of Manomaya kośah) is called Buddhi when it functions as intellect.

Functions of Buddhi

Buddhi represents:

- Intellect and reasoning capacity
- Thinking capacity
- Deciding capacity
- The power of knowing

What Makes Humans Superior to Animals

The intellectual capacity (Buddhi) is what makes human beings superior to animals:

Animal Desires

- All animals have desires, but they are instinctive and programmed
- Animal desires are not refined or sophisticated
- They are predominantly programmed for survival instinct
- Animals have two primary desires: surviving and propagation of species



- These desires repeat in a cycle: surviving and propagation, surviving and propagation

Human Desires

- Humans also have survival instinct and desire for propagation
- But humans have much, much more
- Humans have sophisticated, diverse, and refined desires
- No pet, no matter how close, will ever ask "When is Vedānta class?"
- Animals don't have desire for Vedānta, Tattva Bodha, or Bhagavad Gita classes

Animal Intellect

Animals have rudimentary, basic intellect used only for survival:

- They are qualified in their own spheres
- But their intellect is limited to survival functions

Example: Baby Monkeys

In North India, where monkeys are common, observe this phenomenon:

- A mother monkey gives birth to a baby
- The mother jumps from branch to branch, tree to tree
- The baby, even just 1-3 days old, clings to the mother
- No one taught the baby to cling - no "father monkey class" explaining survival
- The baby is born with this program
- All animals are programmed: vegetarian animals know to run from predators
- This is instinctive, not learned

Human Exceptionalism

Humans possess:

- Fantastic, elegant, qualified, diverse, multiverse icchā śaktih (power of desiring)
- Exuberant, extraordinary jñāna śaktih (power of knowing)
- Amazingly extraordinary, diverse kriyā śaktih (power of acting)

By using our jñāna śaktih (through Vijñānamaya kośah), we can:

- Make our lives meaningful
- Make the missions we set for ourselves successful
- Refine and direct our desires toward noble purposes
- Pursue liberation and serve humanity

The Three śaktihs in Worship

In the Lalita Sahasranama tradition, the Divine Mother is worshiped as the embodiment of all three powers:



- *icchā* śaktih - The power of desiring
- *jñāna* śaktih - The power of knowing
- *kriyā* śaktih - The power of acting