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... Tattva Bodha ...

By Acharya Tadany

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Questions

udāna and the Subtle Body

Question about Energy Transfer at Death

Q1: asked about the energy involved when the subtle body transfers from one physical body to another at death. Acharya Tadany explained this concept in detail:

- The Vedas describe **udāna**, a specific prana (energy) that facilitates the detachment of the subtle body (sūkṣma śarīram) from the physical body at death
- This is considered **non-verifiable knowledge** - we accept it based on the authority of the Vedas as a means of knowledge (śabda pramāṇa)
- While not physically verifiable, it can be analyzed logically and does not contradict reality or experience

Analogy: Childbirth Process

Acharya Tadany used childbirth as an analogy to explain this energy mechanism:

- Just as there is **Prasūti Maruta** (energy that pushes the baby out of the womb during natural delivery), there is energy required for the subtle body to detach from the physical body
- Modern medicine has developed cesarean sections for cases where natural delivery energy is insufficient, preventing fetal death
- However, there is **no surgical equivalent** for helping the subtle body detach from a dead physical body
- This demonstrates that specific energy (udāna) is necessary for this spiritual transition

Nature of Vedāntic Knowledge



Q2: Must We Accept Everything?

Q2 asked whether accepting Vedānta requires accepting every single statement in the scriptures. Acharya Tadany's response clarified the Vedāntic approach to knowledge:

Vedānta as pramāṇa (Means of Knowledge)

- Vedānta is **not blind faith** - it is a valid means of knowledge that can be questioned and examined
- Knowledge by definition is **subject to inquiry** and open to verification
- Questions and doubts are **encouraged** until clarity is achieved

Different Types of Vedic Content

1. **Ritual Prescriptions (Karma Kanda)**: These must be followed precisely as described (e.g., rituals for having a child)
2. **Vedāntic Philosophy**: This requires deep thinking and reflection through:
 - Shravanam (listening/exposure to teachings)
 - Mananam (thinking and reconciling different perspectives)
 - Nididhyasanam (deep meditation and assimilation)
3. **Belief-Based Teachings**: Some aspects are based on belief, but even these should be examined for their logical foundation and purpose

The Danger of Dismissiveness

Acharya Tadany warned against the modern trend of dismissing Vedāntic teachings:

- Many contemporary teachers have become **dismissive** to appeal to audiences with authority problems
- Vedānta **requires thinking** - dismissing it without deep reflection is harmful
- Even belief-based statements should be examined for their underlying purpose and logic
- **Misplaced knowledge is as good as ignorance** - partial or superficial understanding can be misleading

No Absolute Commandments

A key distinction of Vedānta:

- The Vedas do **not contain absolute commandments** like "you must do this" or "you must not do that"
- This makes Vedānta **highly complex and nuanced**
- There is **no one-size-fits-all solution** - context and intention matter



Example Given: A parent grabbing a child's hair to prevent them from being hit by a car is technically authoritarian (violating free will) and may cause pain, but the *intention* is to benefit the child. Vedānta analyzes such situations contextually rather than applying rigid rules. (Acharya Tadanu)

Summary

Structure of the Individual (Anātmā)

Broad Division

The individual is divided into two main portions:

Material Portion (Anātmā)

- Consists of 11 subdivisions
- Subject to change and limitation
- The focus of current study

Spiritual Portion (ātmā)

- The unchanging consciousness
- The true Self
- To be studied later

The 11 Subdivisions of Anātmā

These have been covered progressively:

1. **Three Bodies (śarīra Trayam):**
 - Sthula śarīram (Physical/Gross Body)
 - sūkṣma śarīram (Subtle Body)
 - Karana śarīram (Causal Body)
2. **Three States (avasthā Trayam):**
 - Jagrat avasthā (Waking State)
 - Swapna avasthā (Dream State)
 - Sushupti avasthā (Deep Sleep State)
3. **Five Layers (Pancha kośaḥ):**
 - Annamaya kośaḥ (Food/Physical Layer)
 - prāṇamaya kośaḥ (Energy Layer)
 - Manomaya kośaḥ (Emotional/Mental Layer)
 - Vijñānamaya kośaḥ (Intellectual Layer)
 - ānandamaya kośaḥ (Bliss Layer)



Relationship Between Bodies and kośaḥs

Same Reality, Different Classification

The three bodies and five kośaḥs are **the same reality classified from different perspectives**:

Body (śarīra)	Corresponding kośaḥ(s)
Sthula śarīram (Physical Body)	Annamaya kośaḥ (Food Layer)
sūkṣma śarīram (Subtle Body)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> prāṇamaya kośaḥ (Energy Layer) Manomaya kośaḥ (Mental Layer) Vijñānamaya kośaḥ (Intellectual Layer)
Karana śarīram (Causal Body)	ānandamaya kośaḥ (Contentment Layer)

The Three Powers (śakti Trayam)

Why Three Divisions of Subtle Body?

The subtle body is divided into three kośaḥs to indicate three fundamental powers available to human beings:

kośaḥ	Power (śakti)	Function
prāṇamaya kośaḥ	kriyā śakti	Power of Acting - ability to perform actions and accomplish tasks
Manomaya kośaḥ	icchā śakti	Power of Desiring - ability to want, wish, and set goals
Vijñānamaya kośaḥ	jñāna śakti	Power of Knowing - ability to acquire knowledge and understand

The Flow of Human Life

Acharya Tadany explained that **entire human life is driven by these three powers** in a continuous cycle:

- Knowing (jñāna śakti):** Through our senses, we come to know about objects, circumstances, opportunities, and possibilities in the world
- Desiring (icchā śakti):** Some of the things we know about become goals and desires
 - Not everything we know becomes a desire (e.g., we know about cancer but don't desire it)
 - However, **we can never desire something we don't know about**
 - Example: "Have you ever been to GaborDabalam?" - You cannot desire to go somewhere you've never heard of
- Acting (kriyā śakti):** Once desires arise, we take action to fulfill them
 - Nobody remains passive with unfulfilled desires



- We use our energy and capabilities to accomplish our goals

The Cycle Continues: After fulfilling one desire, we move to the next on our list. The process of knowing → desiring → acting repeats throughout life. (Acharya Tadany)

Unique Faculty of Human Beings

Comparison with Animals

Acharya Tadany emphasized that while animals also possess these three powers, they exist in a **rudimentary, basic stage**:

Animal Limitations

- Animal knowledge is limited to **survival needs**: protection, food acquisition, and basic survival skills
- Animals do not have sophisticated desires (e.g., a pet will never ask for a smartphone or gourmet food with parmesan cheese)
- Animals do not desire the latest technologies or trends

Human Capabilities

- In humans, these three powers are **fully manifested**
- Humans can know about and desire the latest technologies, trends, and abstract concepts
- Humans can accomplish extraordinary things through these powers

Evidence of Human Achievement

Acharya Tadany provided examples of human progress over the past 50-100 years:

- From no electricity to global electrification
- From basic transportation to jets, helicopters, and space travel
- From limited communication to instantaneous global connectivity
- From local observation to live cameras anywhere in the world (e.g., Broadway live feeds)
- Humans are **changing the surface of the entire planet** through knowledge and action

These Three Powers Are Blessings: Acharya Tadany emphasized that we should view our intellectual, emotional, and physical capabilities as *Bhagavan's blessing* (grace of the Lord). We should never look down upon these faculties.

Refinement of Desires

The Role of Education

Even though desires themselves are a blessing, they need refinement:

- The **Karma Kanda** (ritual portion) of the Vedas contains teachings (śāstra) that train us to refine ourselves



- **Internal growth and maturity are measured by the quality of desires**
- The main goal of the śāstra is to **refine our desires**

The Four Purusharthas (Goals of Life)

The Vedas describe a progressive refinement of desires through four stages:

1. **Artha (Security/Wealth)**
 - Desire for money, property, houses, stocks, better salary
 - Anything that provides security
 - Basic and necessary because we need food, clothes, shelter, and income
2. **kāma (Pleasure/Enjoyment)**
 - Desires for sensual pleasures and entertainment
 - Leisure activities and pleasant experiences
 - Natural progression after basic needs are met
3. **Dharma (Righteous Living/Service)**
 - Spending time serving and contributing to society
 - A desire that gives **total fulfillment in life**
 - Life becomes available for contribution without personal agenda
 - No longer seeking individual goals to accomplish
 - As Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita: "*Loka Sangraha*" - continuous contribution to societal welfare
 - Contributing **without expecting thanks or gratitude**
4. **mokṣa (Liberation)**
 - The ultimate spiritual goal
 - Freedom from all limitations
 - To be discussed in detail later

Composition of Each kośaḥ

prāṇamaya kośaḥ (Energy Layer)

Consists of **10 organs/components**:

- **Pancha Karma Indriyas (5 Organs of Action):**
 - Vak (speech)
 - Pani (hands)
 - Pada (feet)
 - Payu (excretion)
 - Upastha (reproduction)
- **Pancha prāṇas (5 Vital Energies):**
 - prāṇa (Respiratory energy)



- apāna (cleansing energy)
- vyāna (circulatory energy)
- udāna (reversing energy)
- Samana (digestive energy)

Rationale: prāṇa energy is necessary to get things moving and accomplished. Without energy, action is impossible.

Manomaya kośaḥ (Mental/Emotional Layer)

Consists of **6 organs/components**:

- **Manas** (Mind) - the desiring faculty
- **pañca karmendriyāṇi** (5 Sense Organs of Knowledge):
 - Shrotra (ears/hearing)
 - Tvak (skin/touch)
 - Chakshu (eyes/sight)
 - Rasana (tongue/taste)
 - Ghrana (nose/smell)

Rationale: The five sense organs are the **gateway through which external data enters the mind**. The mind is fed by the pañca karmendriyāṇi . Without sensory input, the mind would have no desires. External stimuli through sense organs create awareness, which then triggers the mind's capacity to desire.

Vijñānamaya kośaḥ (Intellectual Layer)

Consists of **6 organs/components**:

- **Buddhi** (Intellect) - the knowing and discriminating faculty
- **pañca karmendriyāṇi** (5 Sense Organs of Knowledge) - same as in Manomaya kośaḥ

Why pañca karmendriyāṇi Appear Twice

The five sense organs appear in both Manomaya kośaḥ and Vijñānamaya kośaḥ because:

- For **knowing** (jñāna): External data comes through sense organs and becomes knowledge
- For **desiring** (icchā): The same sensory data triggers desires, wishes, and wants
- Both functions require the sense organs as the interface with the external world

The Challenge of Desire Management

The Rate Problem

Acharya Tadany highlighted a fundamental challenge in human life:

The rate at which desires are generated is much higher than the rate at which we can fulfill them.



- We are constantly wishing and wishing
- Not all desires can be fulfilled due to limitations of:
 - Time
 - Energy
 - Money
 - Resources
- Some desires require **substantial time to accomplish** (e.g., buying a luxury car, owning multiple properties)

The Wish vs. Achievement Gap

Acharya Tadany illustrated this with vivid examples:

- **Wishing is instantaneous:** "It takes just a split second" - a spark in the mind
- Daydreaming can elaborate wishes for hours, "building castles in the sky"
- **Achievement can take a lifetime:** Some desires may require years or decades of work

The Santa Claus Example

Acharya Tadany shared a personal anecdote from visiting Santa Claus's house in Rovaniemi, Finland (Arctic North Pole):

- One room contains boxes with names of all countries in the world
- Filled with letters Santa Claus receives from children globally
- They maintain statistics on which countries send the most letters
- The year Acharya Tadany visited: UK was #1, Poland was #2
- They open and respond to letters
- The variety of wishes - material, emotional, sentimental - is **vast, far bigger than the number of species on the planet**

The Endless Wish List

Key observations about human desires:

- After fulfilling one desire, there's always a **long list waiting**
- This is a **unique faculty of human beings** - the wish list is bigger than available time
- "We have wishes for the next 10 lives!"
- If we objectively assess all our desires and plan them considering our resources, **one life would not be enough**

The Role of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence)

The Need for Prioritization

Given the impossibility of fulfilling all desires, the intellect must intervene:

- The intellect (**Buddhi**) must **rationalize and prioritize** desires
- Certain desires become less appealing over time



- Some desires must be "canceled" - like flights on an airport departure board

The Airport Analogy

Acharya Tadany used an extended metaphor of an airport departure board:

- Desires are like flights: scheduled, boarding, on runway, took off
- Life milestones appear on the board: degree, marriage, children, house, car
- The board keeps updating, with items moving up or down in priority
- For a spiritual seeker, eventually **mokṣa appears at the top**: "mokṣa is scheduled"
- After Shravanam and Mananam: "mokṣa is boarding"
- After more time: "mokṣa took off"

Making mokṣa a Priority

The challenge of spiritual pursuit:

- mokṣa must become not just a desire, but a **prioritized desire**
- We must **find time to execute** on this desire
- Otherwise, mokṣa remains perpetually "scheduled" while other desires take precedence
- There are always "so many other things that must be accomplished, must be done, must be acquired, must be fulfilled"

This is where Viveka (discriminative intelligence) plays its role: The intellect (jñāna śakti) must prioritize. Prioritizing means some desires must be "cast off" or "canceled" - like the airport boards in Europe during snowstorms showing "cancel, cancel, cancel, cancel."

Summary of the Three Faculties

Blessings of Bhagavan

Acharya Tadany concluded this section by reiterating:

- All three faculties - **icchā śakti, kriyā śakti, and jñāna śakti** - are blessings
- They are **grace of Bhagavan** (the Lord)
- They are **extraordinarily elegant, sophisticated, and refined**
- All three belong to the **sūkṣma śarīram** (Subtle Body)
- They are stratified into the three kośaḥ: prāṇamaya, Manomaya, and Vijñānamaya

Human Beings as Crown of Creation

Because these powers are fully manifested in humans:

- Human beings are considered the **"roof and crown of the entire manifestation"**
- This doesn't mean the potential is fully *used*, but it is fully *available*
- This unique position comes with the responsibility to refine and properly direct these powers

Class Conclusion



Review of Vijñānamaya kośaḥ

The class ended with a recap:

- **Vijñānamaya kośaḥ** = Buddhi (Intellect) + pañca karmendriyāṇi (5 Sense Organs)
- This combination corresponds to **jñāna śakti** (Power of Knowing)
- The intellectual layer of personality is crucial for the spiritual journey toward mokṣa

Key Takeaways

1. **Vedānta Requires Thinking:** It is not blind faith but a system of knowledge open to questioning and logical analysis
2. **Three Powers Drive Life:** Knowing → Desiring → Acting is the fundamental cycle of human existence
3. **Desires Outpace Fulfillment:** The rate of desire generation far exceeds our capacity to fulfill them
4. **Refinement is Essential:** Spiritual growth is measured by the quality and refinement of our desires
5. **Viveka is Critical:** Discriminative intelligence must prioritize desires, especially elevating mokṣa
6. **Human Faculties are Blessings:** Our intellectual, emotional, and physical capabilities are divine grace to be honored and properly utilized