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... Vivekacūḍāmaṇi ...

AI Summary – Class 103

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Summary

kāraṇa śarīram

Introduction to the Three Bodies (śarīra Trayam)

After discussing sthūla śarīraṁ (gross body) and sūkṣma śarīraṁ (subtle body), Śankarācārya introduces kāraṇa śarīraṁ (causal body) in verses 108-123 of Vivekacudamani. kāraṇa śarīraṁ represents the final part of Anātmā (non-self) and completes the discussion of śarīra Trayam (the three bodies).

Definition of kāraṇa śarīraṁ

kāraṇa śarīraṁ is defined as the potential form of both sthūla śarīraṁ and sūkṣma śarīraṁ. This concept is based on the fundamental law of physics: matter can never be produced nor destroyed - it only gets converted into different forms, including conversion between manifest and unmanifest states.

Vyakta and Avyakta: Manifest and Unmanifest

The śāstra explains that matter has both manifest form (Vyakta rūpam) and unmanifest form (Avyakta rūpam). When matter is destroyed, it returns to its unmanifest form. This principle extends to all bodies:

- All sthūla śarīraṁ and sūkṣma śarīraṁ must have existed previously in potential form
- From that potential condition, they came into manifest existence
- At the time of Pralayam (cosmic dissolution), they return to unmanifest condition
- This creates an endless cycle: Avyaktam → Vyaktam → Avyaktam → Vyaktam

Microcosm and Macrocosm Levels

vyaṣṭi Level (Microcosm)

At the individual level, the potential form of the body is called kāraṇa śarīraṁ. This represents the unmanifest condition from which individual bodies arise.



samaṣṭi Level (Macrocosm)

The same principle applies to the universe (prapañca). The gross universe (sthūla prapañca) and subtle universe (sūkṣma prapañca) are also products that must have existed in potential form. This potential form of the entire universe is called **kāraṇa prapañca**.

Non-Distinction at kāraṇa Level

A crucial teaching point: At the kāraṇa level, the distinction between vyāṣṭi (microcosm) and samaṣṭi (macrocosm) is not evident. Why? Because kāraṇa itself is Avyaktam - unmanifest. The division between individual body and total universe becomes clear only at the sthūla and sūkṣma levels, not at the kāraṇa level.

In Vivekacudamani, the author treats kāraṇa śarīram and kāraṇa prapañca as identical, using them synonymously. This reflects one of two approaches found in the śāstra regarding the kāraṇa level. (Acharya Acharya Tadany)

Experiential Example: The Three States

Acharya Tadany provided an experiential example using the three states of consciousness:

- **Jagrat avasthā (Waking State):** The division between individual and universe is clearly evident
- **svapna avasthā (Dream State):** The division is also experienced, as one creates an entire universe with both samaṣṭi and vyāṣṭi
- **suṣupti avasthā (Deep Sleep State):** Everything exists in unmanifest, potential condition. No one can experience the division between oneself and the entire world. This state is called Nirvikalpa - without differentiation

During deep sleep, there is no information or knowledge derived from the senses because the senses are not available for perception. Similarly, at the kāraṇa level, distinctions are not evident because it is beyond sense perception (not available for Indriya).

Alternative Names for kāraṇa śarīram

avidyā and māyā

kāraṇa śarīram is also called **avidyā** (at the individual level) and **māyā** (at the cosmic level). However, in Vivekacudamani, the author does not distinguish between avidyā and māyā - they are treated synonymously. This differs from Tattva Bodha, which maintains the distinction between kāraṇa śarīram as avidyā and kāraṇa prapañca as māyā.

The logic behind treating avidyā and māyā as identical: At the kāraṇa level, there is no distinction, therefore avidyā = māyā and māyā = avidyā in this text.



Key Terms from Verse 108

Avyakta

The first name/feature of kāraṇa śarīram is **Avyakta** (unmanifest). It is called Avyakta because:

- It represents the seed condition of matter
- In the seed condition, distinctions are not clear
- It is not available for sense perception (Indriya)
- It is beyond instrument analysis

Acharya Tadany illustrated this with scientific inquiry: As science probes deeper - from gross elements to molecules to atoms to subatomic particles - things become hazier and hazier.

Eventually, science reaches a point where clear definition is no longer possible, leading to concepts like the "uncertainty principle." This is because at the most fundamental level, matter is not available for sense perception.

Paramēśa-śaktih

The second name/feature is **śaktih** (power). When matter is reduced or converted into energy, it is called śaktih or power. Just as individual powers (speaking power, walking power, writing power) are located in the individual, the total power of all creation is located in the consciousness principle known as īśvara (to be studied later).

Paramēśa-śaktih represents:

- The entire potential power of the whole creation
- All powers at both vyāsti (micro) and samaṣṭi (macro) levels
- The total power of all sthūla śarīram and sūkṣma śarīram
- The total power of all prapañca (universe)

Summary of Key Concepts

Level	Individual (vyāsti)	Cosmic (samaṣṭi)
Gross	sthūla śarīram	sthūla prapañca
Subtle	sūkṣma śarīram	sūkṣma prapañca
Causal	kāraṇa śarīram (avidyā)	kāraṇa prapañca (māyā)
Note	At kāraṇa level, distinction between vyāsti and samaṣṭi is not evident - treated as identical in Vivekacudamani	

Three Names for kāraṇa śarīram (from Verse 108)

1. māyā - The fundamental term (meaning to be explained in next verse)
2. Avyakta - The unmanifest, seed condition beyond sense perception
3. śaktih (Paramēśa-śaktih) - The total power of all creation located in consciousness



Each of these terms is highly significant and meaningful. Students are encouraged to remember all three names as they represent different aspects of understanding kāraṇa śarīram.

Teaching Methodology

Acharya Tadany emphasized that in this portion of the text, every word is very significant. The class will proceed carefully, studying one verse after another, one sentence after another, and even one word at a time, to ensure complete understanding of this crucial concept.

The detailed explanation of māyā and its characteristics will continue in the subsequent verses (109 onwards), building upon the foundation established in verse 108.