



॥ विवेकचूडामणि ॥
... Vivekacūḍāmaṇi ...

AI Summary – Class 106

For Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, by Acharya Tadany Cargnin dos Santos
Jan 28, 2026.

Summary

kāraṇa śarīraṁ (Causal Body)

From verse 108 onwards, Shankaracharya enters into the discussion of kāraṇa śarīraṁ (causal body), which represents the third and final part of anātmā (non-self), also known as śarīra Trayam (the three bodies).

Four Important Names of kāraṇa śarīraṁ

1. Avyaktam (Unmanifest) - Indicates it exists in an undifferentiated, seed form (Bija Rupa)
2. śaktiḥ (Power) - Reveals its potential to manifest the entire universe and indicates its dependent nature (cannot exist independently from its wielder)
3. avidyā (Ignorance) - Signifies that which does not have existence of its own; anything that cannot exist independent of its raw material
4. triḡuṇātmika (Consisting of Three guṇas) - Composed of three qualities in equilibrium

Understanding avidyā

avidyā has two meanings. One important meaning is "that which does not have existence of its own." Svayaṁ na vidyatē iti avidyā. According to this principle:

- A glass is avidyā because it cannot exist independent of its material
- No product exists independently from its raw material
- The entire universe (prapañca) can be called avidyā

The Three guṇas and Creation

The three guṇas exist in two states:

State	Sanskrit Term	Description
Equilibrium	guṇānāṁ sāmyāvasthā pralayaṁ (Pralaya)	Three guṇas in balanced, harmonious condition
Non-equilibrium	guṇānāṁ vaiṣamyāvasthā sṛṣṭi. (sṛṣṭi)	Disturbed equilibrium manifests as the entire universe



The Nature of Māyā - Verse 109

Māyā as Imperceptible Yet Inferable

Māyā is never pratyakṣa gocaram (perceptible to the senses). However:

- Māyā must be inferred from its products
- The product of Māyā is the entire universe (prapañca)
- The universe is available for our perception
- Through the perceptible universe, we can infer the imperceptible Māyā

Definition of Māyā

Māyā means logically inexplicable (anirvacanīya)

That which is logically inexplicable and uncategorizable, making it incomprehensible to the intellect.

The intellect comprehends things through:

- Logical division and fragmentation
- Compartmentalization into categories
- Structural frameworks

Science studies the universe by splitting it into parts (galaxies, systems, nova, supernova, black holes, dark matter) and analyzing each component. However, Māyā is not available for such logical categorization.

The Magic Show Analogy

Māyā can be experienced but cannot be explained - like a magic show.

In a magic show:

- You experience extraordinary feats
- You cannot rationally explain how they occur
- Doves appear, people emerge unharmed from boxes pierced with swords
- Objects appear and disappear mysteriously

Similarly, Bhagavan is the greatest magician (Māyā Viva) who unfolds this entire universe. This analogy appears in many Shastra texts, including Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotram.

मायावीव विजृम्भयत्यपि महायोगीव यः स्वेच्छया ।

तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥२॥



māyāvīva vijṛmbhayatyapi mahāyōgīva yaḥ svēcchayā ।
tasmai śrī gurumūrtayē nama idaṁ śrī dakṣiṇāmūrtayē ॥

Why Māyā Cannot Be Categorized

The Three Impossible Classifications

Shankaracharya asks: Can Māyā be called:

1. SAT (existent/independent)?
2. ASAT (non-existent)?
3. SAT-ASAT (mixture of both)?

The answer is NO to all three.

Why Māyā Cannot Be SAT

- If Māyā is SAT, it would be equal to Brahman
- Brahman is defined as SAT
- There would be no difference between Māyā and Brahman
- Māyā would become another name for Brahman
- But since Brahman is SAT and everything else is ASAT, Māyā cannot be SAT

Why Māyā Cannot Be ASAT

- A non-existent Māyā cannot produce the entire manifestation
- A non-existent entity cannot create or generate anything
- Māyā is the cause of the entire universe
- Brahman (pure SAT) is neither cause nor effect
- Therefore, there must be another entity (Māyā) as the source of creation
- This entity cannot be non-existent

Why Māyā Cannot Be SAT-ASAT

Principle: Opposite attributes cannot coexist

SAT and ASAT are completely opposite natures and are mutually exclusive.

Examples of mutually exclusive opposites:

- Light and darkness cannot be combined
- A person cannot be simultaneously tall and short
- A person cannot be simultaneously fat and lean
- A person cannot be simultaneously white and dark

Since SAT and ASAT are opposite attributes, they are mutually exclusive and cannot coexist in Māyā.



The Conclusion

Therefore:

- Māyā is not SAT
- Māyā is not ASAT
- Māyā is not SAT-ASAT

Yet we cannot say Māyā is not there at all. We must accept Māyā, but we cannot intellectually classify it.

The Shastra's Definition

Māyā is sadaśat vilakṣanā māya - distinct from both SAT and ASAT, and also distinct from their mixture.

The nearest translation: Māyā is "seemingly existent" or "as though existent."

Māyā's Relationship with Brahman

Three Possible Relationships

When discussing Māyā and Brahman, the intellect naturally asks:

1. Is Māyā identical to Brahman?
2. Is Māyā different from Brahman?
3. Is Māyā both identical and different from Brahman?

Why Māyā Cannot Be Identical to Brahman

If Māyā is identical with Brahman:

- Māyā would acquire cetana (sentience/consciousness)
- But Māyā is the material principle (jaḍa - inert)
- Māyā is the entire universe in potential form
- Matter is jaḍa (inert), while Brahman is cetana (conscious)
- A sentient Māyā cannot account for the jaḍa Srishti (inert universe)

The contradiction:

- Either Brahman would become jaḍa like Māyā
- Or Māyā would become cetana like Brahman
- Neither is acceptable

Why Māyā Cannot Be Different from Brahman

The Sankhya philosophy attempted this approach, establishing Māyā (matter principle) and Brahman (conscious principle) as separate entities, like father and mother.

However, this creates insurmountable problems:

1. If Māyā and Brahman are separate entities, each would limit the other
2. This creates the problem of duality and limitation



3. But Brahman by definition means infinite
4. Brahman means "that which does not have a second thing"

The Three Types of Duality

The Shastra defines Brahman as sajātīya-vijātīya-svagata-Bheda-Rahita (devoid of all three types of duality):

Type	Description and Examples
sajātīya bheda	Duality within the same class (e.g., two men, two women, two boys - all belonging to mankind)
vijātīya Bheda	Duality between different classes (e.g., human vs. table vs. airplane - mankind vs. furniture vs. transportation)
svagata Bheda	Internal divisions within a single entity (e.g., hands, feet, heart, legs, head - all parts of the same body)

Critical Implication

Māyā cannot be a second entity different from Brahman in any of these three ways. The very word Advaita (non-duality) with regards to Brahman would be meaningless if Māyā were separate.

The Remaining Possibility

Since Māyā cannot be:

- Identical to Brahman
- Different from Brahman

There remains one more possibility to be analyzed in the next session - the exploration of how Māyā relates to Brahman beyond these logical categories.